No, Mr. Pole! I've never had miso soup before. But there was no miso in the soup you ate. What your friend said was a proverb. "Tema-miso desu ga, oishii desu yo!" means, "I don't mean to sing my own praises, but this is delicious!" Japanese people frequently use proverbs in daily life, because being able to use "kotowaza" (proverbs) is considered to be a sign of intelligence. You should try to use some, too! It is a good opportunity to increase your Japanese vocabulary, and your Japanese friends will think that you are smart! Learning proverbs is useful even for busy people who do not have enough time to study Japanese as they can use proverbs for communication. By the way, you should try delicious "miso pan" (bread with miso inside), which is sold at a miso store in Kameido, Tokyo.

If you criticize or reprove someone too directly, he or she may be offended or even become defensive. However, if you offer your criticism in a subtle way by using kotowaza, you might soften the person up enough to accept your opinions, even though such a proverb might have a strong meaning.

A) To each his own
When 10 people get together in one place, each one will have a different hobby or likes and dislikes.

B) You reap what you sow
Whether what you do is good or bad, you will have to deal with the consequences generally used as a warning. Retribution is the result of the cause.

C) Stop beating around the bush
This means "speak directly," "get to the point," even if the subject is difficult to discuss. Japanese people use this phrase when they want to clear things up, since they are generally reluctant to speak directly right away.

D) Being inconsistent
It is used to criticize someone who says something different from what they have said before or whose actions do not match their words.

E) Unable to know what to do nor how to solve problems
You are unable to find any clues to help solve your problems. You have no idea what to do.

F) The right person for the right job
A person gets a right job according to his or her skills and knowledge.

G) A person who pays no attention
This proverb originally means "a horse just moves its ears when a spring wind blows." A person who pays no attention, or someone who hears the words, but let them go in one ear and out of the other.

H) Stay on your toes
Although everything is going well, an enemy may sneak up and overcome you if you are not careful. It teaches us to be on guard at all times.

I) Survival of the fittest
Big fish eat small fish.

J) Blowing one's own trumpet (horn)
If I may say so myself...

Miso was a traditional food that people made when they wanted to show off their culinary skills. Since Japanese people do not like to sing their own praises, use this phrase to show their humble attitude when they want to boast in a subtle way.

Homemade miso
(weak) (meat) (strong) (left)

Jaku niku kyo shoku

The personnel department did an excellent job of reorganizing!

I baked this cake myself. I don't mean to blow my own trumpet, but it's delicious!

Let's be careful.

Watch out for a strong horse.

A person who pays no attention

He doesn't know what he's talking about.

What he says is confusing.

A horse moves its ears when a spring wind blows.

I was very surprised to hear that his company went bankrupt. Did you hear any rumors about it?

No, it was "a thunderbolt out of the blue" for me, too.

No idea what I'm going to do.

I don't mean to sing my own praises, but this is delicious!

It is really hard to succeed in this company because people on the top have absolute authority.

It seems like we are still searching in the dark, and we have no idea what to do...

A person who pays no attention

He was always difficult to deal with, and last week, he got fired!

In the last meeting, we couldn't reach a consensus.