

日本語流 17

The Nihongo Way 17

< Today's dialogue >

Scene 1: You (U) are about to leave your office for lunch. J is your Japanese assistant.



U: これからちょっとお昼に行ってきます。	<i>Korekara chotto ohiru ni ittekimasu.</i>
J: どこにいらっしゃいます？	<i>Doko ni irasshaimasu?</i>
U: むかいのビルの新しいレストラン。	<i>Mukai no biru no atarashii resutoran.</i>
J: あ、あそこは私もこの前に行きましたけど、とてもおいしくて、サービスも雰囲気もなかなかよかったですよ。ちょっと高かったですけど。	<i>A, asoko wa watashi kono mae ikimashita kedo, totemo oishikute, sâbisu mo fun-iki mo nakanaka yokatta desu yo. Chotto Takakatta desu kedo.</i>
U: あ、そう。じゃ、行ってきます。	<i>A, sô. Ja, ittekimasu.</i>
J: 行って(い)らっしゃい。	<i>Itte (i)rasshai.</i>

Scene 2: You (U) have just returned. You are scheduled to meet Nagata, first thing in the afternoon.



U: ただいま。	<i>Tadaima.</i>
J: お帰りなさい。どうでした、あそこ？	<i>Okaerinasai. Dô deshita, asoko?</i>
U: とてもおいしかったです。 ところで、永田さんはもう来ていますか。	<i>Totemo oishikatta desu. Tokorode, Nagata-san wa mo- kite imasu ka?</i>
J: ええ、さっき来て会議室で待っていますよ。	<i>Ê, sakki kite kaigishitsu de matte imasu yo.</i>
U: ひとりですか。	<i>Hitori desu ka?</i>
J: いえ、山田さんとふたりです。	<i>Ie, Yamada-san to futari desu.</i>

Continuing on from last month, let's discuss how the *te*-form is used in combination with other verbs.

DIALOGUE OVERVIEW

Here is the English equivalent to the dialog.

[Scene 1]

U: I'm going out (and will come back) for lunch (from) now.

J: Where are you (honorably) going?

U: The new restaurant in the building across the street.

J: Oh, I went there the other day, too. It was very delicious and their service and atmosphere were both pretty good. It was a bit expensive, though.

U: Is that so? Well, see you later {I'll go and come back}.

J: See you {Go and come back}.

[Scene 2]

U: I'm back {Right now}.

J: Welcome back. How did you like it there?

U: It was very good.

By the way, has Mr. Nagata come (and is)?

J: Yes, he came a minute ago and is waiting in the meeting room.

U: Is he alone?

J: No, two [people], with Ms. Yamada.

VOCABULARY FOCUS

Verbs

<i>irassharu (irasshatte)</i>	be, come, go [honorific-polite]
<i>matsu (matte)</i>	wait

Nouns

<i>biru</i>	office building
<i>hitori</i>	one person
<i>hun-iki</i>	atmosphere, mood
<i>hutari</i>	two people
<i>kaigishitsu</i>	conference room
<i>konomae</i>	the other day
<i>mukai</i>	across (the street), opposite, in front
<i>ohiru</i>	lunch
<i>sâbisu</i>	service
<i>sakki</i>	a short time ago
<i>tadaima</i>	right now

Interjections

<i>jâ</i>	well, then
<i>tokorode</i>	by the way [used to change topic]

GRAMMAR FOCUS

1. *Irassharu*

The verb *irassharu* is an honorific-polite verb which essentially means “(someone) is/remains” but also covers “go” and “come” as well. Let me show you how this is possible.

You might agree that “I’ll go there” and “I’ll be there” mean virtually the same thing, at least in the practical sense, and you’d probably agree that “I’ll come (here) by noon” and “I’ll be (here) by noon” are the same, too. “Go” and “come” are movements from one place to another, and “be” is location once movement is completed.*

Because of its honorific-polite nature, the verb *irassharu* is never used to refer to the speaker’s own action. It always refers to someone else worthy of honorific treatment.

2. *Ittekimasu* and *Itterasshai*

When Japanese people leave their home or office, they are expected to say *Ittekimasu* and those who remain are conditioned to respond *Itterasshai*.

Itte is the *te*-form of *iku* (go), literally translating to “having gone,” which connects with the subsequent verb. So, *Itte kimasu* means “Having gone, I’ll come” or “I’ll go and come (back).” Similarly, *Itte rasshai* is an abbreviation of *Itte irasshaimase*, which is a polite imperative meaning “Please go and come (back).”

As shown above, these common phrases are created by combining two different verbs, though Japanese natives are hardly aware of this.

3. *Kiteiru*, *Matteiru*, etc.

Now, let’s look at the case where the verb’s *te*-form is followed by *iru*.

Kite iru literally translates as “Having come, he remains (in the resultant state)” or “he came and is.” In other words, it means “he (came and) is in (now).”

Matte iru means “Having waited, he remains (in the resultant state),” i.e., “He has been waiting” or “He is waiting.”

Note that interpreting *kite iru* as “[he is] coming” is a mistake, even though *matte iru* does correspond with the English “[he is] waiting.” *Kite iru* means that “the coming” is perfected and the subsequent state (being in this place) continues to exist. You might be surprised when Japanese people say “*Kimashita*” upon seeing a train some distance away heading to your station. You are thinking “the train is coming” and want to say “*kite iru*.” But, in Japanese, *kite iru* describes the already arrived train as shown above.

CULTURE FOCUS

Ittekimasu* – *Itterasshai*, and *Tadaima* – *Okaerinasai

Just as a person’s *ittekimasu* when leaving home or office is followed by the remaining persons’ response *itterasshai*, upon return the one who left is expected to say *Tadaima*, responded to with *okaerinasai* by those currently present in the “home” environment.

This back-and-forth communication is so conditioned among natives, that it feels odd, rude even, if counterparts do not give the due response.

Note that these set phrases imply a Japanese mindset of belongingness. The phrases serve also to confirm, and affirm, where one belongs.

End Note:

* In Japanese, most of polite verb structures describe the person treated honorably as existing in a state where the action is completed. Honor-worthy people don’t “do” things, but they exist in the state where the action “has been done and remains in existence.”