

## 日本語流 19

### The Nihongo Way 19

< Today's dialogue >

You (U) are having lunch with your Taiwanese work colleague at the cafeteria.



J: 私はこの夏休みに北海道に行ってきましたけど、チェンさんはもう北海道には行きましたか？	<i>Watashi wa kono natsuyasumi ni Hokkaidô ni ittekimashita kedo, Chen-san wa mô Hokkaidô niwa ikimashita?</i>
U: いや、僕はまだ行っていません。北海道もまだ暑いでしょうかねえ。	<i>Iya, boku wa mada itteimasen. Hokkaidô mo mada atsui deshô nê.</i>
J: いいえ、もう暑くないでしょう。	<i>Iie, mô atsuku nai deshô.</i>
U: もう寒いですか。	<i>Mô samui desu ka?</i>
J: いや、まだ寒くはないでしょう。ちょうどいいですよ。いま最高じゃないでしょうか。	<i>Iya, mada samuku wa nai deshô. Chôdo ii desu yo. Ima saikô ja nai deshô ka.</i>
U: じゃあ、行ってみるかなあ。僕はまだ夏休みを取ってないから。	<i>Jâ, ittemiru ka nâ. Boku wa mada natsuyami o tottenai kara.</i>
J: あ、そうですか。じゃあ、行ってみてください。北海道はカニがおいしいですよ。	<i>A, sô desu ka. Ja, ittemite kudasai. Hokkaidô wa kani ga oishi desu yo.</i>
U: カニですか。いいですねえ。食べてみます。	<i>Kani desu ka. Ii desu nê. Tabetemimasu.</i>

#### DIALOGUE OVERVIEW

Here is the English version of the dialogue.

J: I went to Hokkaido (and came back) [during] this summer vacation.

Have you been to Hokkaido yet, Mr. Chen?

U: No, I have not been there yet.

I wonder if it is still hot in Hokkaido, too.

J: No, it's probably not hot anymore.

U: Is it cold already?

J: No, it's probably not cold yet.

It'll be just right [good].

I'm sure it's the best time now.

U: Well, shall I give it a try, I wonder.

Because I have not taken summer vacation yet.

J: Is that right. Please go and see.

The crabs are quite good in Hokkaido, you know.

U: Crabs! Good. I'll give them a try.

## VOCABULARY FOCUS

### **Adjectives**

<i>atsui</i>	hot
<i>hiroï</i>	wide, spacious
<i>samui</i>	cold (atmospherically)

### **Nouns**

<i>kani</i>	crab
<i>natsuyasumi</i>	summer vacation
<i>saikô</i>	highest, excellent
<i>tabemono</i>	food

### **Adverbs**

<i>mada</i>	still; (not) yet
<i>mô</i>	already; (not) anymore

## GRAMMAR FOCUS

### 1. *mô* and *mada*

As shown in the Vocabulary section, these two words cover the meanings provided by four different words in English. Let's look at this riddle.

The adverbial *mô* basically means "already," which indicates that something happens even before the time you would expect it to happen; hence:

<i>Mô ikimashita.</i>	He already went. I have already been there.
<i>Mô samui desu.</i>	It's already cold.

In contrast, *mada* basically means "still," which indicates that something persists even past the time you would expect it to be over; hence:

<i>Mada imasu.</i>	He is still here. I'll still remain.
<i>Mada atsui desu.</i>	It's still hot.

Now, let's see how these combine with negative sentences.

*Mô ikimasen.*

This sentence translates "Already I don't go," literally "The non-going has already happened." In English this can be expressed as "I'll no longer go there" or "I'll go there no more." Similarly:

*Mô samukunai desu.*

A literal translation is "Already it's not cold," meaning "It's not cold anymore" in natural English.

Let's look at *mada* in negative sentences. To reply negatively to a question like:

*Mô Hokkaidô ni ikimashita ka?*

it would sound odd to reply *Mada ikimasen deshita*.

This is because "*ikimasen deshita*" means "I did not go (at that time)." Here, the negative of *V-teimasu*, i.e., *itteimasen*, plays its role beautifully. The natural answer is:

*Mada itteimasen.*

This literally translates "Still I have not gone," which means "I have not been (there) yet." Similarly:

*Mada samukunai desu.*

This literally translates as "Still it's not cold," for which "It's not cold yet" is more natural in English.

Thus, Japanese uses two words to express the meanings for which English employs four.

## 2. *V-te miru*

Let's look at another *te*-form with auxiliary verb combination. Today's verb used as auxiliary is *miru* ("see"). This usage is pretty easy for English natives because English uses "see" similarly.

In today's dialog we have *itemiru*, and *tabetemiru*. These are combinations of *<iku and miru>*, and *<taberu and miru>*, respectively. Their respective translations are "go and see" and "eat and see," which happens to be what they mean in Japanese as well. (This sort of matching up of meanings is a coincidence, of course, as Japanese and English share no common ancestry, culturally, linguistically or historically.)

By adding "and see," one indicates that the first verb will be tried so as to learn how it goes ("do and see the result"). Happily, this works the same way in Japanese.

To my mind, the usage of "*verb and see*" is more limited in English than in Japanese. My impression is that combinations with *V-te miru* are more common in Japanese, with phrases like "See it and see" or "You'll know how you feel if you win the competition and see" all feeling very natural, compared to their English equivalents. *V-te miru* can be used with any verb that makes sense. Try and see!

## 3. Combined sentence-particles: *ka+nê*, *ka+nâ*

As already introduced, the sentence-particle *ka* is a question marker, and the sentence-particle *nê* is for seeking empathy. Japanese people combine these two when a person seeks to "wonder together" with a counterpart.

The sentence-particle *nâ* is added to *ka* when the speaker talks to him/herself, rather than posing a question to the counterpart. It is common when other people are around – indicating that the speaker is wondering. It used to be that men used *ka+nâ* and women used *ka+shira*. These days this old standard seems to be falling by the wayside.