

日本語流 7

The Nihongo Way 7

< Today's dialogue >

You (U) have invited several Japanese friends to your house. All the guests have arrived, except Mr. Kimura (J2).



[Scene 1]	[Scene 2]	[Scene 3]
<p>U: 木村さん、ちょっと遅いですねえ。 <i>Kimura-san chotto osoi desu nē.</i> 今、何時ですか。 Ima nanji desu ka?</p>	<p>U: あ、ほら、いらっしゃいましたよ。 <i>A, hora, irasshaimashita yo.</i></p>	<p>U: 木村さん、いらっしゃい。 <i>Kimura-san, irasshai.</i></p>
<p>J1: もう6時半ですよ。来ますかねえ。 <i>Mô rokujihan desu yo. Kimasu ka nē.</i></p>	<p>J1: あ、本当ですね。 <i>A, hontô desu nē.</i></p>	<p>J2: ごめんなさい。遅れました。 <i>Gomennasai. Okuremashita.</i></p>
<p>U: 大丈夫です。もう来ますよ。 <i>Daijôbu desu. Mô kimasu yo.</i></p>		<p>U: 渋滞でした？ <i>Jûtai deshita?</i></p>
		<p>J2: いえ、渋滞じゃなかったです。 <i>Ie, jûtai ja nakatta desu.</i> 少し迷いました。 <i>Sukoshi mayoimashita.</i></p>
		<p>U: あ、そうでしたか。 <i>A, sô deshita ka.</i></p>
		<p>J2: だめですねえ、僕。 <i>Dame desu nē, boku.</i></p>

Following the verb and adjective sentence types covered in the previous two installments, today I focus on the third and last type, the noun sentence. I will also introduce a few of the more basic Japanese particles.

DIALOGUE OVERVIEW

[Scene 1: You are talking to a guest next to you.]

U: Mr. Kimura is a bit late, isn't he. What time is it now?

J1: It's already half past six. I wonder if he's coming.

U: No problem. He'll come at any time now [lit. already].

[Scene 2: The door bell rings.]

U: Oh, see! He's come (honorably).

J1: Oh, that's true, isn't it.

[Scene 3: Mr. Kimura enters.]

U: Mr. Kimura, come in, please.

J2: Sorry. I'm late [lit. delayed].

U: Was it a traffic jam (that caused the delay)?

J2: No, it was not (a traffic jam).

I lost my way a little.

U: Oh, was that so.

J2: No good, I am.

VOCABULARY FOCUS

Nouns

<i>nanji</i>	what time?
<i>rokuji</i>	six o'clock
<i>han</i>	half
<i>rokujihan</i>	half past six
<i>hontô</i>	true
<i>jûtai</i>	traffic jam
<i>daijôbu</i>	alright, OK, no problem
<i>dame</i>	no good
<i>boku</i>	I [only used by males]
<i>ima</i>	now
<i>mô</i>	already, any time now [Adverbial]

Verbs

<i>irasshaimasu</i>	be, stay, come, go [honorific-polite] [<i>Irasshai</i> is an abbreviation of <i>Irasshaimase</i> , which is an imperative form; hence, "Please come in!" or "Welcome!"]
<i>okuremasu</i>	get late, delay
<i>mayoimasu</i>	get lost, lose one's way; hesitate

Adjectives

<i>osoi</i>	late; slow [cf. <i>hayai</i> : early; fast]
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GRAMMAR FOCUS

1. Again, no subject

Take the common English sentence: “What time is it?”; and also an answer to it: “It he negative perfective form if you follow this “The Nihongo Way” series closely; it follows the same pattern as adjective sentences:

X janakatta desu. (It was not X)

In future, I'll discuss phrase-particles combining to add nuance.

2. Inverted sentences

The very last sentence is an inverted sentence. In normal speech, the sentence would be:

Boku, dame desu nē. (I'm no good.)

Here, reflecting J2's (Mr Kimura's) desire to emphasize his being no good, the predicate (*dame desu nē*) which ends sentences, is brought to the front, while the subject (*boku*) is added afterwards. (The same kind of inversion occurs in English):

No good, I am!

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

1. Is it a noun or an adverb?

It is often a good question whether a certain word should be regarded as a noun or an adverb (verb modifier).

Take *ima* (now), for example. Is it a noun or an adverb?

It seems that the English word “now” is basically treated not as a noun but as an adverb, and that's why it is uncommon to say “Now is 6 o'clock.”

In contrast, *ima* is a noun in Japanese, so you can say: “*Ima desu*” (It's now) or “*Ima janai desu*” (It's not now).

2. What is “now”?

In Japanese all the following utterances are valid:

Ima tabemashita. (I've just eaten) [lit. I've eaten now]

Ima tabemasu. (I'll eat now, or I'm going to eat now.)

Ima tabeteimasu. (I'm eating now.)

In other words, *ima* covers slightly before and after this very moment (now).