

日本語流 28

The Nihongo Way 28

< Today's dialogue >

You (U) are looking out the window wondering about the weather today. Your Japanese colleague (J) at work responds.



[Scene 1: It is cloudy but not yet raining]	
U: 天気予報は今日は雨だと言ってたけど、まだ降ってないね。① 降るかなあ。どう思う? ②	<i>Tenki-yohô wa kyôwa ame da to itteta kedo, mada huttenai ne. Huru kanâ. Dô omou?</i>
J: この頃の天気予報はわりとよく当たるから、そのうち降ってくる と思うよ。③	<i>Konogoro no tenki-yohô wa warito yoku ataru kara, sonouchi huttekuru to omou yo.</i>
[Scene 2: A while later]	
U: あ、やっぱり降ってきたねえ。④	<i>A, yappari huttekita nê.</i>
J: ほら、ね。	<i>Hora, ne?</i>
[Scene 3: A short while later]	
U: あ、すこし風も吹いてきた。⑤	<i>A, sukoshi kaze mo huitekita.</i>
J: 天気予報では、風も強くなるって言ってたから。⑥	<i>Tenki-yohô dewa kaze mo tsuyoku naru tte itteta kara.</i>
U: 空が急に暗くなってきたねえ。⑦	<i>Sora ga kyûni kuraku nattekita nê.</i>
J: あ、そうだ! 雷も鳴るんだって。⑧	<i>A, sô da! Kaminari mo naru n da tte.</i>
U: へえ、そう。	<i>Hê, sô.</i>

DIALOGUE OVERVIEW

[Scene 1]

U: The weather forecast was saying that it'll rain today, but it's not raining yet.

I wonder if it will. What do you think?

J: The forecast these days is generally pretty on target, so I think it'll start raining soon.

[Scene 2]

U: Oh, as expected, it has started raining, eh.

J: There, you see!

[Scene 3]

U: Oh, the wind has started to blow a little, too.

J: In the weather forecast they said the wind would strengthen, too, so...

U: The sky has suddenly started to get dark, hasn't it!

J: Oh, that's right! They said {it's that} we'd have thunder, too.

U: Wow, is that right.

VOCABULARY FOCUS

Nouns

<i>kaminari</i>	thunder {lit. god's roar}
<i>konogoro</i>	these days
<i>sonouchi</i>	eventually, soon
<i>sora</i>	sky
<i>tenki-yohô</i>	weather forecast

Verbs

<i>ataru</i>	hit right, guess right, be on target
<i>(kaze ga) huku</i>	(the wind) blows
<i>(ame ga) huru</i>	(the rain) falls
<i>(kaminari ga) naru</i>	it thunders

Adjectives

<i>kurai</i>	dark
<i>tsuyoi</i>	strong

Adverbials

<i>kyûni</i>	suddenly, acutely
<i>yappari</i>	as expected
<i>warito</i>	pretty much, relatively [casual]

Interjections

<i>A, sôda!</i>	Oh, I remember!; Oh, I've just remembered!
<i>Hê!</i>	Wow!
<i>Hora!</i>	See!; Look!

GRAMMAR FOCUS

- *V-te-kuru*

This month, we will continue with the “V-te V” form, the latter being an auxiliary verb adding nuance to the main verb’s action. Today we will discuss *kuru* (come) as the auxiliary.

You have already seen this construction in *Itte kimasu*. (I’ll go and come back.), which is a set phrase used commonly when leaving home or office knowing that you’ll return. Another example: *Tabete kimasu*. (I’ll eat and come back; i.e., “I’ll go eat.”)

Notice, however, that these main verbs represent actions people make; in such a case it simply means “someone will do (the action) and come back.”

All of today’s usages, however, represent natural phenomena:

③...*hutte kuru*: {(the rain) having fallen, it will come}

④...*hutte kita*: {(the rain) having fallen, it has come}

⑤...*huite kita*: {the wind} having blown, it has come}

⑦...*kuraku natte kita*: {(the sky) having become dark, it has come}

Kuru is a movement or approach toward the speaker’s place from elsewhere, and when this movement occurs, things come into view. In a temporal connotation “here” is equal to “now” and it refers to approaching the present. This image can also be added to the main verb’s action:

③ the rain will come to fall (i.e., it will rain)

④ the rain has come to fall (i.e., it has started raining)

⑤ the wind has started to blow

⑦ the sky has begun to (be)come dark

For the last, “go dark” is more natural English, but *kuru* is used in Japanese. It is interesting how similarly our two very different languages use “come” – purely coincidence, of course.

- Quotative particles: *to* and *tte*

Sometimes English speakers raise the index and middle fingers of both hands, palms out, with a quick dipping of the fingertips, to represent quotation marks while speaking. You will even hear “quote un-quote” said when introducing a quoted phrase or sentence. This is necessary because English does not have a word which means “this is a quote.” Japanese has such a tool, which can indicate an exact quote or a paraphrasing of some source: particle *to* when immediately following a phrase or clause.

① *Tenki-yohô wa kyô wa ame da to itteita...*

Here, the clause “kyô wa ame da” (it will rain today) is quoted from what the weather forecast was saying (though here not word-for-word).

③ *sonouchi huttekuru to omou yo.*

Here, the clause “sonouchi huttekuru” (it’ll come to rain eventually) is “quoted” as what J thinks. (When saying “I think” one quotes oneself, in Japanese.)

In conversation, this particle often transforms into *tte*, to sound more casual:

⑥ *...kaze mo tsuyoku naru tte itteta...*

Here, the clause “kaze mo tsuyoku naru” (the wind will also get strong) is followed by *tte* instead of *to*. This quotes the weather forecast. (This transformation is presumably a phonological phenomenon; the sound “to” was affected by the “i” sound of *iu* (say) which generally follows *to*. Notice that “te” is easier to say than *to* when connected to the subsequent “i” sound.)

⑧ *Kaminari mo naru n da tte.*

This sentence ends in *tte*. So, we know the speaker is quoting the forecast even though *itteita* is omitted. This independent usage could be regarded as a sentence-particle for quotation. Japanese speakers will frequently use *to* at the ends of sentences without indicating who is being quoted.

- Combined sentence-particles: *kanê* and *kanâ*

You know that the sentence-particle *ka* is a question-marker. Sentence-particle *nê* is used to seek confirmation, while *nâ* is used when the speaker expresses his/her feeling by him/herself, i.e., when talking to him/herself.

You use *kanê* when wondering together with your counterpart, and *kanâ* (②) when talking to yourself, mulling something over. So:

Huru kanê? I wonder if it'll rain; what do you think?

Huru kanâ? I wonder if it'll rain. (just wondering to myself.)

CULTURE FOCUS

Weather

As Japan is blessed with four clearly different seasons, weather has been a common topic since ancient days.

The oldest anthology of *tanka* poems, called *Man'yōshū* (Collection of Ten Thousand Poems), compiled in the 8th century, is a collection of about 4,500 poems written by poets from all walks of life. From emperors to commoners the poems are from a period of 450 years. While the themes range from love to nature, a good many are about natural phenomena including weather.

Most of the poems in the *Man'yōshū* were written in the ancient style, using *kanji* as a phonetic script to represent Japanese sounds. This was before simplified *kanji* were developed as *hiragana* and *katakana*.