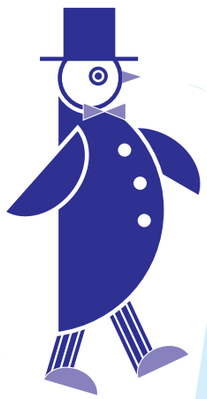

# " -mashita " is not a past tense!

# Pera Pera Penguin's

5-minute Japanese Class by Hitomi Hirayama

Vol. 26

Design: Masako Ban

*When I first came to Japan two years ago, my company introduced me to a Japanese host family so that I could live with them for several months and learn about Japanese culture firsthand. I was thin when I lived with them, but gained a lot of weight after moving to my own apartment, since I couldn't resist the temptation to eat all the Japanese food I had grown to love. I started exercising to lose some weight and thought I had become slim again. But when I visited my host family the other day, the mother asked, "sukoshi futori-mashita ka? (Did you used to be fat?)" I thought I gained weight only after I moved out, but why did she know that I used to be fat?*

■■■ I think you misunderstood what she said. It is really difficult to explain your mistake in general grammar terms, so please allow me to use my own grammar, which I call "Hitomi Grammar," to explain your misunderstanding. In the past, I think you have studied the form, "-mashita," as the past tense form of "-masu." But now what I want you to remember is that the conjugated verb "-mashita" is not just a past tense form but is also used to describe something else in daily conversations. It may seem hard to believe that this is true, but certainly you have noticed that Japanese people sometimes use this form in ways different from what you have studied.

■ Although you have learned "-mashita" as a past tense form, that is not the only way of using it. It is also used to describe present conditions.

There are two different usages of "-mashita," as described below. I'll focus on B) for this lesson, but please let me briefly explain A) for now. I will discuss it further in a future lesson.

A) '-mashita' or the ta-form is generally used to describe what is happening, such as " (something) ga ki-mashita. (something) is coming." (particle …ga (communication, vehicles, events, living things)

- (something) arrives
- is coming

e.g., (I waited at a train station, and I saw the train coming)
Here comes the train!

| (polite form) | (friendly form) |
|---|---|
| あ！電車 が 来ました！ | あ！電車 が 来た！ |
| a! densha ga ki-mashita ! | a! densha ga kita ! |

B) '-mashita' or ta-form is generally used when you want to describe a physical / mental condition.

- I feel _____ (at that moment)
- ____ appears to be ... (at that moment)

e.g., I'm so tired. (to be tired ... tsukare-masu)

| (polite form) | (friendly form) |
|---|---|
| 疲れました。 | 疲れた。 |
| tsukare-mashita | tsukareta |
| (past tense of 'masu-form') | (ta-form) |

"-mashita" is generally used when you are describing a physical or mental condition.

| | ・I feel _____ (at that moment) / ____ appears to be … (at that moment) (polite form) | (friendly form) | ・the condition continues (polite form) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I'm tired. | 疲れました。 tsukare-mashita | 疲れた。 tsukareta | ► |
| 2. I forgot. | 忘れました。 wasure-mashita | | ► |
| 3. I understand. | | わかった。 wakatta | ► わかっています。 wakatte-imasu |
| 4. I remember. | | 思い出した。 omoidashita | ► 覚えています。/ 知っています。 oboete-imasu / shitte-imasu |
| 5. I'm in trouble. | | 困った。 komatta | ► |
| 6. I got lost. | 迷いました。 mayoi-mashita | 迷った。 mayotta | ► |
| 7. I gained weight. | | 太った。 futotta | ► |
| 8. I lost weight. | やせました。 yase-mashita | やせた。 yaseta | ► |
| 9. I smiled / laughed. | 笑いました。 warai-mashita | | ► |
| 10. I have a cold. | 風邪 を ひきました。 kaze o hiki-mashita | 風邪 を ひいた。 kaze o hita | ► |
| 11. I'm hungry. | お腹 が 空きました。 onaka ga suki-mashita | | ► お腹 が 空いています。 onaka ga suite-imasu |
| 12. I'm thirsty. | のど が かわきました。 nodo ga kawaki-mashita | | ► のど が かわいています。 nodo ga kawaite-imasu |

・I feel... at that moment.
疲れました。 tsukare-mashita / 疲れた。 tsukareta
I'm tired.

・the condition continues.
► 疲れています。 tsukarete-imasu
I have been tired (since...).

1. Oh, man... it's already noon! No wonder I'm so hungry!
うわ〜 もう 12時。 どうりで [I'm hungry] と 思った。
uwā mō jū-ni-ji dōride to omotta
Oh already 12 o'clock no wonder I thought

2. (friendly form) Oh, I see! I've got it now!
あ〜 そう だったの か。 [I understand]
ā sō datta no ka
friendly form of "I didn't know that."

3. I have a fever and a cough that won't stop... It seems I've got a cold.
熱 が あるし …セキ も 出るし … 。 [I have a cold] みたい です。
netsu ga aru shi…seki mo deru shi… mitai desu
fever have cough also comes out seems

4. (friendly form) Oops! I forgot the keys!
あっ！ カギ を [I forgot]
a kagi o

5. (polite form) Geez, I've been working overtime lately, and I'm so tired.
ふう〜 ずっと 残業 が続いています ので [I'm tired] 。
fū zutto zangyō ga tsuzuite-imasu node
Geez for long time overtime have been...ing reason

6. (polite form) I have some trouble at home.
家庭 の 事 で [I'm troubled] 。
katē no koto de
home matter

7. (polite form) Now I remember!
やっと [I remember]
yatto

8. (friendly form) Gosh, I'm thirsty! "A draft beer, please!"
あ〜 [I'm thirsty] 『生ビール お願いします』
ā 『nama-beer onegaishimasu 』
draft please (request)

9. Mr. A: (friendly form) Did you lose weight ?
[Have you lost weight] ?

Mr. B: No, I gained some weight because of the stress at work.
ううん [I gained weight] 。ストレス太り です。
uun stress-butori desu
to gain weight because of stress

▲ Answers
1. onaka ga suita 2. wakatta 3. kaze o hita 4. wasureta
5. tsukarete-imasu 6. komatte-imasu 7. omoidashi-mashita
8. nodo ga kawaita 9. yaseta 10. futotta

◄ Answers
1. tsukarete-imasu 2. wasureta, wasurete-imasu 3. wakari-mashita
4. omoidashi-mashita 5. komari-mashita, komatte-imasu 6. mayotte-imasu
7. futori-mashita, futotte-imasu 8. yasete-imasu 9. waratta, waratte-imasu
10. kaze o hite-imasu 11. onaka ga suita 12. nodo ga kawaita

In cooperation with Yasuhiro Koga

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