

# 'My nail is sweet'? つめがあまい? tsume ga amai?

## Pera Pera Penguin's

5-minute Japanese Class by Hitomi Hirayama



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When I was in the elevator, one of my colleagues came in and asked me how the project was going. I said, "Well, the project was almost finished, but now we've had to go back and start again." He then said, "**Pole-san wa tsume ga amai kara na**" I know "**tsume**" means "nail" and "**amai**" means "sweet"; So does he mean "my nails are sweet"? After all, I hadn't eaten any doughnuts that day, so no sugar had "sweetened" my nails. Puzzled, I responded, "**watashi no tsume wa amakunai desu**" (my nails are not sweet). He said, "**ha? chigau chigau**" (Eh! That's not what I meant), and he started to laugh. Ms. Hirayama, what did he really mean?

■■■ Do you eat doughnuts very often? They are delicious, aren't they? Recently, there has been a doughnut boom in Japan, and I see many stores offering all kinds of doughnuts. Oops, sorry...I'm getting off the subject. What he meant by saying "**tsume ga amai**" was that your project did not end in the way it was supposed to.

Design: Masako Ban



Let me introduce expressions featuring the four basic "tastes" in today's lesson.

酸っぱい Sour  
**suppai**

- (1) to tell something over and over again / to give a warning  
口を酸っぱくして言う (注意する)  
**kuchi o suppakushite iu (chūi suru)**  
(to give the same counsel over and over again. It implies a negative meaning.)

辛い Hot  
**karai**

- (2) outspoken criticism  
辛口の批評  
**karakuchi no hihyō**  
(a biting criticism)
- (3) dry / salty  
辛口  
**karakuchi**
- (4) a drinker  
辛党  
**karatō**

苦い Bitter  
**nigai**

- (5) bitter experience  
苦い経験  
**nigai kēken**  
(Bitter and hard experiences that one does not even want to recall)

(6) wry smile  
苦笑い  
**nigawarai**

甘い Sweet  
**amai**

(7) weak conclusion  
詰めが甘い  
**tsume ga amai**

(8) to underestimate  
甘く見る  
**amaku miru**

(9) to have a sweet tooth  
甘党  
**amatō**

(10) sweet / mild  
甘口  
**amakuchi**

(11) to spoil  
甘やかす  
**amayakasu**

(12) sweet talk  
甘い言葉  
**amai kotoba**  
(Flattering or seductive words)

(13) superficial idea  
甘い考え  
**amai kangae**



Choose one of the 13 expressions to complete the following sentences.

- (A) I became a guarantor and had a bitter experience.  
保証人になって  をした。  
**hoshōnin ni natte  o shita**
- (B) I underestimated my opponent and lost the match.  
相手を  te form 試合に負けた。  
**aite o  shiai ni maketa**
- (C) Mothers are too indulgent of their children these days.  
最近の母親は子供を  masu form 過ぎです。  
**saikin no hahaoya wa kodomo o  sugi desu**
- (D) I was sweet-talked into investing.  
 に乗って投資をしたら失敗した。  
 **ni notte tōshi o shitara shippaishita**
- (E) If you have such superficial ideas, your studies will be a failure.  
そんな  では留学は無理ですね。  
**sonna  dewa ryūgaku wa muri desu ne**
- (F) When I gave my proposal to the general manager, he rejected it and said that the conclusion was weak.  
企画書を出したら部長に  と突き返された。  
**kikakusho o dashitara buchō ni  to tsukikaesareta**
- (G) Outspoken criticism of the new administration appeared in today's morning newspapers.  
今朝の新聞に新政権について  が載っていた。  
**kesa no shimbun ni shinsēken ni tsuite  ga notteita**
- (H) Ito-san, a dental hygienist, is always telling her patients to brush their teeth.  
歯科衛生士の伊藤さんは患者に“歯を磨くよう”にと   
**shikaēsēshi no Itō-san wa kanja ni "ha o migaku yō ni" to**

Answers

- (A) - (5) (B) - (8) **amaku mite** (C) - (11) **amayakashi** ~~masu~~ (D) - (12) (E) - (13)  
(F) - (7) (G) - (2) (H) - (1)