

■ Ru Form

Japanese predicates possess contrast of tense between non-past (present and future) vs. past. The non-past form is called the *ru* form. The name comes from the fact that many non-past forms (same as the basic form) of verbs and verbal suffixes end with *ru*, as in *kiru*, *-(ra)reru*, *(te)iru*. The *ru* form at times is limited to the *suru* form unaccompanied by the continuous aspect, *teiru*.

The *ru* form of stative predicates expresses the current state, the state up to the present, or the future state.

- (1) *Ima Pekin ni iru* 'I am currently in Beijing.' (Current state)
- (2) *Sakunen kara Pekin ni iru* 'I've been in Beijing since last year.' (State up to the present)
- (3) *Asu no imagoro wa Pekin ni iru* 'I will be in Beijing by this time tomorrow.' (Future state)

The *ru* form (*suru* form) of non-stative verbs (action verbs, verbs of change) fundamentally expresses future movement and change. It may express a situation that is realized in a place other than the place of speech (4), and it may also express a situation that is realized in the place of speech (5).

- (4) *Asu Tarō ga kuru/Asu wa kitto hareru* 'Taro is coming tomorrow/It will definitely be sunny tomorrow.'
- (5) *Sentō gurūpu ga mamonaku orikaeshi chiten o tsūka shimasu. Ima, tsūka shimashita* 'The leading group will pass the halfway point shortly. It just passed the point.'

When the subject is in first person, the speaker may add a tone of confirmation of her/his intention.

- (6) *Kimi ga iku nara, boku mo iku yo* 'If you go, I'll go, too.'

The *ru* form is used to describe the current situation in the following instances.

(a) The speaker's thought and feeling at the time of speech.

- (7) *Boku mo sonohō ga yoi to omou* 'I, too, think that'd be better.'
- (8) *Kyō wa kinō yori atatakaku kanjiru* 'It feels warmer today than yesterday.'
- (9) *Nanika hen na oto ga kikoeru (hen na oto ga suru)* 'I hear some strange noises.'

(b) The speaker her/himself's speech act (Performative sentence).

- (10) *Supootsumanshippu ni nottori, seiseidōdō to tatakau koto o chikaimasu* 'I vow to compete fairly by the spirit of sportsmanship.'

- (11) *Pekin shiten e no tenkin o meizuru* 'I order you to transfer to the Beijing Branch.'

(c) Simultaneous description of a phenomenon that is happening right in front of the speaker.

- (12) (Stretching the freshly pounded rice) *O, nobiru, nobiru* 'Wow it stretches.'

(13) *A, hikōki ga tonde iku* ‘Oh, an airplane is flying away.’

The *ru* form is also used to describe current habits and events that generally take place without any time limit (permanent attributes, laws, steps and procedure).

(14) *Tarō wa maiasa 6ji ni okite sanpo suru* ‘Taro gets up at six and takes a walk every morning.’
(Habit)

(15) *Kare wa Eigo o jōzu ni hanashimasu* ‘He speaks English proficiently.’ (Attribute)

(16) *Mizu wa 100do de futtōsuru* ‘Water boils at 100 degrees.’ (Law)

(17) *Mazu tamanegi o mijingiri ni suru. Tsugini sono tamanegi o yowabi de yukkuri itameru* ‘First, mince the onion. Next, sauté the onion slowly on low heat.’ (Steps)

The *suru* form may be used to describe the feeling of wonderment and doubt about an existing situation.

(18) (Watching the rain continuously falling) *Yoku furu naa* ‘It sure rains a lot.’

(19) (Seeing that someone has shown up unexpectedly) *E, nande ano hito ga kuru no?* ‘What? Why is that person here?’

→テンス Tense (2-G), アスペクト Aspect (2-G), 動詞 Verbs (2-B)

● References

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