



## Hidemi's Rambling No.121

---

Let me tell you how my driving school days ended up. After a few classes of lectures, the day that I drove a real car finally came. Beside me was an instructor. He taught me how to shift up engaging higher gears, while I was driving on an oval course built in the school site. I had forgotten that I was afraid of speed. Although I was driving slowly, to me, it was a roller coaster ride with the view passing by so fast. I panicked completely, being unable to remember how to brake, thus just accelerating. The tires squealed at the curves and I kept screaming. Eventually, the instructor stopped the car with the auxiliary brake. It was one of the scariest rides in my life. But, the instructor was even more afraid than I was. He was afraid of me. He asked, 'Are you OK?' meaning mentally. And he advised me not to drive a car. I sort of agreed with him. Against the school's policy, they returned all the money I'd paid. I bought an electronic instrument with that money. Things must push me to music in every way...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.122

---

Vancouver is my favorite city. I've visited there, though I've only been in Richmond area near the airport. But a hotel, a shopping mall there and the airport attracted me enough. The airport was a completely different thing from LAX. I've seen Vancouver a lot lately on TV because of Winter Olympic Games. Japanese broadcasting treats the Games as if there can't be anyone who isn't interested in them. This kind of totalitarianism really annoys me. That's mainly because the coverage of the Games disrupts my recording of regular TV shows. Air times change without notice because they prioritize the Games. I want a quiet, orderly TV schedule back...

## **Hidemi's Rambling No.123**

---

The last time I was leaving Vancouver, I narrowly missed the hotel's free shuttle to the airport. I had enough time for my flight and waited for the next shuttle, which ran every 20 minutes. But the next one didn't show up. Half an hour passed. I was beginning to be worried. At the 35 minutes mark, I realized it was lunchtime. They skipped one service and the next one had been 40 minutes later. I told myself not to panic because it meant only five minutes more to wait. But five minutes later, it was still a no-show. It was running late. Now it was too late to call a cab and I started to panic. The shuttle finally came 10 minutes late. By then, I consumed the margin of time for the check-in counter. I was running almost crying through the airport, and found no line at all at the counter. I checked in right away without waiting and was easily be in time for my flight. It wasn't LAX after all. But I was already exhausted from the fuss before 10 hours' flight to Japan...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.124

---

The season of entrance examinations for school is now in full swing in Japan. People like to label everything, and the school name is very important for them. They evaluate a person not by what they do, but by the school they go to. So, to get in a renowned school, students are prepared for years ahead for their future. I wasn't an exception among those who were caught up in this stupid trend a long time ago. My mother was feverish to get me in the best junior high school in the city where I grew up. She didn't want me to be a highly paid worker at a big company in the future since the society was male-dominated. She wanted me to be in the best school out of vanity and in order to boost the possibility for me to meet a future candidate of a highly paid worker and marry him. I even took the entrance examination for an eminent supplementary private school to attend after classes of the elementary school, to be prepared for an entrance examination of a junior high school...

## Hideki's Rambling No.125

---

Today is the Doll's Festival in Japan. It's for celebrating girls and they decorate old style dolls on stepped shelves. The one I had when I was 12 years old coincided with the day to know whether I passed or failed the entrance examination for the best private junior high school in the city. In Japan, each candidate is given an applicant number and a school releases the numbers of the passed ones on big boards put up in a school. After excruciating two years that I attended the supplementary private school for the exam additionally after finishing a whole day at the elementary school, I was reasonably confident. I went to see the announcement boards with my parents and my younger sister. It was a big day for my family, as the result would more or less decide my future. In front of the boards, I was astounded. My number wasn't there. I failed. On our way home, we stopped at a bakery for cake for the Doll's Festival. While my mother and my sister went in the bakery, I was waiting in the car with my father. It started to snow. I still can vividly picture those snowflakes falling and melting on the windshield. I had never felt so devastated before. In the evening, my mother took a bath with me and she wailed saying 'I'm so disappointed!' again and again. Because I wasn't used to seeing her crying, my despair turned fear. The fear that I made a fatal, catastrophic error. Since then, every year on the Doll's Festival, I remember that year's festival...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.126

---

Stores have removed winter clothes from their floors, but I know one particular store that has out-of-season clothes left unsold at great discount prices. I went there and bingo! I found a nice down jacket at half price. I paid with my credit card and to get more discounts, with a \$5 gift certificate, a 5% off coupon, and a 2-cent discount for bringing my bag instead of using their plastic bag. As you can see, it's confusing, and the salesperson made a mistake on the total charge. I pointed it out but he didn't know how to fix it. He called another salesperson for help. He explained all the discounts showing the incorrect receipt to her. They read aloud the receipts together for whatever the reason was, and just gazed somewhere vacantly. It seemed that they thought doing just that would make the problem disappear. After a few more readings and gazing, they called one more person for help. She repeated exactly what had already happened and in dismay, they started looking for something all around the counter. Finally, they came to their senses and began to enter digits on the cash register. They cancelled the former total and charged the correct one. It took a long time and three people to do that. This kind of thing happens to me all the time because I always try to get a maximum discount by every conceivable means...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.127

---

I increased the volume of our new song's vocal track by using the normalize function. The track had been already processed by an auto-gate effect so that the unwanted noise was removed. Although I had spent a whole day to decide the best setting of the effect, the normalization spoiled the setting and I had to work on it all over again. This setback is nothing compared to the ones I experienced many times in the old days, though. When I first used a sequencer for our songs, I would enter all data by working over 12 hours, and often delete everything by accidentally stepping on its power cord, because the way of a backup was an external tape recorder back then. I'm so used to working very hard for something that eventually ends in vain...



## Hidemi's Rambling No.128

---

I'm an avid fan of Formula One racing. It's ironic that a person like me who is too afraid of speed to get a driver's license likes Formula One so much. I've been watching it over 20 years. I love the cars' beauty and the technical and psychological competition on and off the circuit. Its new season begins this weekend and I'm so excited. It's going to be a fantastic season, as one of my favorite drivers Fernando Alonso joined Ferrari and my most favorite driver's comeback was imminent. He is Jacques Villeneuve. He has been away from Formula One for three years but at least three teams had mentioned his name as their driver all winter. It wasn't a matter of whether he would come back, but a matter of which team he would drive for. I made a lot of predictions and expectations about the team with so much joy. But one by one, the teams announced other drivers, and last week, only possible team announced its withdrawal. I had been thrilled about which team to cheer for Jacques, but his comeback itself vanished...

## **Hidemi's Rambling No.129**

---

I found a tall wooden shelf discarded at a garbage dump of my apartment. It was as good as new and I carried it into my place. March is the end of both fiscal and academic year in Japan, which means it's the season of a move. The shelf seemed to be a product of someone's move. I cleaned it and made it my new shoe shelf. I felt so good seeing my shoes arranged beautifully on the shelves. The pitiful thing is, though, that almost all the shoes cost less than \$20, mainly \$10, and about half of them are worn out and have holes and cracks...

## Hidemi's Rambling No.130

---

Most of the time, a computer is loyal to me. But sometimes, it acts by a quirk. Today was one of those days. In the process of mixdown for our new song, I needed to gain volume of some MIDI tracks by mixing them down as audio tracks. To do so, other tracks must be muted. Although I double-checked it, one track remained unmuted for some reason and got mixed together. Because I noticed it at the end of today's work, most of it went up in smoke. I checked work of the last time, and found the similar problem. I spent two days working for almost nothing...