



Hidemi's Rambling No.151

In place of my parents who were busy working out in a field as farmers from dawn till late night, I was raised by my grandmother. Although I spent most of time at home with her, we had a quite distant relationship. She was rigid and quiet, and I had felt tense all the time. She was friendly to my younger sister but with me, she herself seemed strained. I was regarded as a successor of the family back then and she treated me like some sort of VIP. She didn't accept idle talk and didn't understand any joke. Whenever I was talking casually, she stopped what she was doing right away and fixed her eyes on me to listen. So, it was impossible to have relaxed conversation with her. Also, she was strict about manners and chided me for my way of eating, sitting at the table, or walking. Consequently, our mealtimes were silent. Sometimes, she would set my meal at the table perfectly and retreat to her room like a servant. She hardly talked about anything personal, and even when I asked, she just shrugged it off as if it was irrelevant. I had lived with her for over 20 years but I never knew her. Three years have passed since she passed away, and she still remains as a mystery to me...

Hideki's Rambling No.152

It was my grandfather's birthday on Sunday. He would be 100 years old if he was still alive. His motto was to live until 100 years old. The reason was simple. A TV show. There was a show in Japan that introduced people who were 100 years old along with their family and their daily life. My grandfather's dream was to appear and be introduced in the show. He always had to be the center of attention. Every time his name happened to be mentioned in a local paper or a community bulletin, he would underline his name, clip the article, and show it to everyone. To me, it looked so stupid because he kept pointing at the underlined name although I knew his name duly. He craved to be famous. So, to be 100 years old was the chance of a lifetime for him to be on TV. He instructed us to be prepared for the filming. For instance, he told me to return home on the day of filming and answer questions about him from a reporter in front of the camera. His dream didn't come true and I was the only one who celebrated his 100th birthday...

Hidemi's Rambling No.153

When my grandfather was young, his father wanted him to be a schoolteacher. He had been visiting schools to have his son hired. Behind his back, my grandfather, who didn't want to be a teacher, secretly applied to the biggest department store in the city and got accepted for the job there without any connections. It was a famous, long-standing department store and before he started his job there was a three-way interview, the company personnel, my grandfather and his father. Now he came to a point to tell the truth to his father. Because he knew how much his father wanted to see him as a teacher, he braced himself for a stormy opposition. Instead, his father came to the interview, suggested to eat out on their way home, and ordered unusually expensive dishes for both of them, saying, 'This is the best day of my life. I've never been this happy.' My grandfather was quickly regarded as an executive candidate for his earnest and diligent work. But only a few months later, his father suddenly died. He was a farmer and the family lost its breadwinner and the master of the house. My grandfather had no choice other than quitting his job to take care of the family as a successor. He gave up his dream, became a farmer and dedicated his life solely to succeed the family, which I left although I was supposed to succeed...

Hidemi's Rambling No.154

I saw an episode of 'LOST' in which Mr. Eko on his deathbed told Locke that he was next. I was stunned because I knew the similar thing happened in real life. It seems that people look back and judge themselves when they are nearing their ends. Not long before his death, my grandfather suddenly told my parents that he wanted to go to the department store where he once worked vigorously and had to leave to succeed the family. My parents thought his consciousness grew dim because they assumed that he meant shopping, which he was too frail to do. I know what he really meant. He realized that he should not have given up what he wanted to do for his life. On his deathbed, he pointed at my mother and said, 'You're next.' I wonder if she would end up like him. Surely she looks a strong candidate for that matter...

Hideki's Rambling No.155

I had a haircut at the beauty salon after an interval of eleven months. I'm not a big fan of a beauty salon. It's too time-consuming and inefficient. It takes two hours for a haircut, with hairdressers hearing a customer's desired style at a different space, washing hair twice, damping hair again for a set after drying it completely, serving a cup of tea, adjusting the style over and over, etc. My hair was very long and I wanted it to be much shorter. But the hairdresser was quite reluctant to cut that much and I had to ask twice to get it shorter. A different hairdresser was in charge of drying my hair before my hairdresser came for a set. She talked to me at the same volume whether a hairdryer was on or not, which meant I couldn't hear her while the hairdryer was on. I got tired of asking again after a few attempts and just nodded to whatever she was talking about. The best thing at the beauty salon for me is the magazine they put in front of me. I'm not interested in the contents, but in the kind. They usually select the magazines for a much younger reader than I am. That makes me feel good because it means I look younger for my actual age. I've boasted it for years. But this time, they selected the ones targeted at my actual age group. Also, they asked me if I apply gray hair coloring at home. My glorious days of looking younger are finally gone...

Hidemi's Rambling No.156

I finished the mix down of our new song and had my partner listen to it for further adjustments. Unexpectedly, while he OK'd the mix, he suggested a shorter ending. It is long, to be sure. I tend to go into arrangements more deeply than composition. In this case, I represent getting alone gradually by removing one instrument at a time at the end of the song. As a result, the song has an unusually long ending. I decided to reconsider it. After all, my work for the new song still continues. I never expected to revise its structure at this final stage instead of the mix...

Hidemi's Rambling No.157

I had an interesting dream the other night. In it, I was in my parents' house in my hometown. My father set a bomb in my purse to blow up the house. I ran out to escape and found that the house was placed at the bottom of a deep pit. The only way to survive was to climb up a steep slope to the edge of the pit. While climbing it desperately with all my force, I saw a rainbow on the edge. Finally I reached to the edge. There was nobody else except me who was out of the pit. I looked up at the sky and saw a gigantic red dragon. When I was awed by the beautiful sight, fireworks began. And I woke up. I thought something very good might happen to me because I saw several items which are regarded as of good omen, such as a rainbow, a dragon, and fireworks. But then again, I know nothing will happen from my experience. I once saw a dream of picking up a large coin of \$10 million and yet nothing has happened...

Hidemi's Rambling No.158

Around this time of year, a festival for a local shrine is held in my hometown. Once a year, the regional god comes out of the shrine, travels by a sacred portable shrine to a temporary lodging and stays there for a while. Young men in the area help the god travel by carrying the portable shrine and it's sort of a parade. By tradition, my father would take a bath first thing in the morning, get dressed in white and leave for the shrine with the neighbor men. Meanwhile, women prepare the festival meal at home as all the relatives come together. We would eat sushi and sukiyaki and go see my father carry the portable shrine as the parade passed near our home. To me, it was a dismal event. For one thing, I didn't like a family gathering. For another, it was a grudge. Every twelfth year, the shrine holds a special version of the festival. As it's a bigger celebration, they choose a child from the area to accompany with the god on the portable shrine. They tend to choose from old families residing there for generations. Once, my family was chosen for the blessed child for the occasion. I'm a firstborn and was to be chosen. But I was denied only because I was a girl. Only men were allowed to carry or touch the portable shrine and I still hold grudges to date...

Hidemi's Rambling No.159

A family gathering brings uncomfortable incidents to me. The festival for the local shrine of my hometown was a typical occasion in my childhood. We would have sukiyaki as a special treat for the festival at home with our relatives. All of us would eat from one big pan, which was set at the center of a table on a portable stove. I have seven cousins and two of them are younger than I am. They're my uncle's kids and used to be very ill behaved. I largely attribute my strong dislike of children to them. They wouldn't touch vegetables in sukiyaki and ate only beef. When someone asked them why, they said it was because their mother had strictly told them to eat as much beef as they could, which was the most expensive item cooked in sukiyaki and was free here since the meal was our house's treat. Their father, my uncle, would get nasty when he drank. He came to me and said, 'You, peasant! Peasant!' again and again because I was a daughter of farmers. Looking at these wretched relatives of mine, I broke into tears with a feeling of misery...

Hidemi's Rambling No.160

Once, on the festival for the local shrine of my hometown, my favorite grandfather on my mother's side and I were talking alone at the front yard of my house. He knew a lot about plants and taught me the names of trees in the yard. There was a rooftop space above the garage and it was surrounded by a fence. We went up the rooftop and my grandfather began to climb the fence. I tried to stop him but he said he could walk along the top of the fence. He was a war veteran and had been a POW in Russia for many years. In those days, according to him, Russian soldiers made POWs climb up tall chimneys and shot them from the ground for fun. His fellow POWs fell or got shot to death. Luckier men continued to climb up and survived. My grandfather was one of the latter. Although he was old and a little drunk after the festival meal, he balanced himself and walked on the narrow fence, which was merely 3 inches wide and 13 feet above the ground. Watching him easily walking on the fence, I understood how dreadful his life as a POW was. This must be a cinch for him compared to forced acrobatics. He jumped off the fence and said smiling, 'See? It's easy!' while I was crying for many reasons...