



Hidemi's Rambling No.171

I shopped at Costco for the first time yesterday. Costco has only 9 stores in Japan and it takes 80 minutes by train and bus for me to get to the closest one to where I live. Several years ago, when I first stopped by the store, I didn't agree with the store policy that made a customer pay the annual membership fee to shop there. The fee was way too expensive for me. I had never visited the store since then. Recently I've found a few websites where I could get selected items from Costco and bought snacks and chocolates online because their prices were much lower than the ones of the supermarkets I usually shopped at. By this way, I was able to get Costco's items without paying the membership fee and the not-so-cheap transportation cost. Last month, a credit card company sent me a one-day free passport to shop there as their promotion. So I went. I saw their actual prices and got stunned. They were impossibly low, beyond my imagination. I felt like I was in low-price wonderland. Even after adding the membership fee and the transportation cost, the prices were still much lower than the ones of online shops. I thought I had been saving money by shopping online but in reality, I had been losing it. I hurriedly became a member. I can't believe I was passing through this wonderful place for years...

Hidemi's Rambling No.172

It was my partner's birthday yesterday. I got up early, put out prepared foods we got at Costco, opened a bottle of sparkling wine and celebrated with a pound cake also from Costco. We watched the season finale of 'Heroes Season 3' and comedy shows. I made every effort to fill the party with fun. In the end, my partner asked me to relax and act normally. He felt pressured to have fun because of my tension and begged me to make him pressure-free on this particular day. I tend to go overboard on everything. To me, nothing is ever enough and I feel something missing all the time. I spend a lot of energy looking for the missing piece which may or may not exist. And as usual, I was exhausted by the end of his birthday...

Hidemi's Rambling No.173

Since I shopped at Costco for the first time, I've been still in shock at their low prices and thinking about it all the time. I had decided to move out this apartment after getting some signs for that and had narrowed down the possible areas. But none of them has Costco nearby. I can't give up the pleasure to shop at those low prices. And it's a rare store where I can get products from the U.S. that I really like. Inside Costco, there is a very small, compact U.S. It's the easiest way to visit the U.S., in a way. Now that I knew Costco and became a member, I should move to the area close enough to shop there. So, my selection of the place to live went back to the starting point. Costco is beginning to take control of my life...

Hidemi's Rambling No.174

I went to Costco again today. I had a hot dog and a slice of pizza at the food court there for the first time. They had incredibly low prices and had the exactly similar taste to the ones I used to have in the U.S. The store also has the smell of U.S. I think people living there don't ever notice but supermarkets of U.S. have unique smell, which is very different from Japanese supermarkets. I could tell instantly by the smell which country's supermarket it is even if I entered blindfolded. While I was eating at the food court, I felt back in time when I lived in the U.S. The similar taste and smell gave me an illusion that I still lived there. But one big difference reminded me that this was Japan. The clerks have good attitudes. The hot dog came with an all-you-can-drink soft drink that Japanese food courts don't have, and I didn't get how to draw a straw from the container. While I was confused in front of it, a man standing next to me nimbly pushed down the bottom receiver and a straw came out. Now I recollected the American way after being embarrassed...

Hidemi's Rambling No.175

The weekend of Monaco GP has come. As an avid fan of Formula One racing, Monaco is a special place for me. To live there is my dream. When I was younger, I worked for my music in order to live there. I even told my late grandparents that I would take them there if I made a big success with music. Now, both of them have passed away without going there and I've found the right purpose of music. But watching beautiful Formula One cars weave through the breathtaking Monaco, I nearly lose my principles from the desire every year. No, I'm done being stupid. Even so, it's Monaco, I do want to live there someday...

Hidemi's Rambling No.176

I'm attached to my stuff once I get them and use them for many years. When I got my first cell phone two and a half years ago, I intended to use it for the rest of my life. I had treated it with care, even with leaving a protective film still on over the display screen. But a letter from a cell phone company disrupted my entire plan. It said that my cell phone would soon become useless because of some protocol change. In compensation, they offered a much lower rates and a big discount to the new phone. It's almost free. So, I got a new one. When I tried to charge the battery of it, I found that they had changed the configuration of a battery charger. I strongly doubt if it was really necessary. My cell phone charger has also become useless. I remembered that I had put a wind-up generator into my emergency bag and charged the battery by winding the handle of the generator. The new cell phone was turned on and my arm was strained. I realized I couldn't repeat this for the rest of my life and bought a new battery charger. My arm is still aching...

Hideki's Rambling No.177

It's raining with a strong wind. But even the bad weather didn't hinder me from going to Costco. There, I mainly get prepared foods. They carry them by a large volume at impossibly low prices. Those who live in the U.S. may regard it as the norm and they never know how happy I feel to see American-sized foods sold at low prices since we usually buy food by a very small portion at high prices in Japan. Costco is full of what I want to get and it's very difficult for me to be self-controlled. I can get only few items at a time for several reasons. For one, my fridge is very small. And, I can't eat that much for every meal. Then, there are clear limitations to carry them back home by bus and train, as I don't have a car. Thus, I have to select carefully what I get for the day and that's so hard because everything there is very attractive. Today, I reluctantly gave up most items and got only a few kinds of food as usual. But as being American-sized, they easily took up my hands and ability to carry and didn't give me any room to hold an umbrella in the rain. I came home soaking wet...

Hideki's Rambling No.178

I had a dream about my grandparents on my mother's side last night. Both of them have passed away, my grandfather 9 years ago and my grandmother 8 months ago. I attended both funerals but I didn't cry there because I was nervous about meeting a lot of relatives and ritual customs that I had to follow. It was quite later on when a sad feeling of having lost them sank in. In the dream, I was having dinner with my grandparents and some relatives. All of us knew my grandparents would soon die and it was a farewell party for them. They were sitting at the table, smiling, and seemed very happy although they also knew this would be the last time to get together. While I was talking to them casually, I got suddenly swept over by the fact that this was the last time to see them and talk with them. I felt madly that I didn't want to lose them. Then, tears spurted from my eyes like a cartoon. I tried to stop them with my hands but they were spurting too strongly. I woke up. I had never shed that large amount of tears before in my dream. Maybe I had this dream because I missed them badly, or, because I got drenched in the rain yesterday on my way home from Costco and the wet sensation still remained on my face...

Hidemi's Rambling No.179

When I was a teenager, I always wanted to be a singer-songwriter but I was inclined to become a mixer at one time. That was mainly because I believed that I was too ugly to be a singer-songwriter and should work behind the scenes in the music business. Also, I was a big fan of a Japanese band called Tulip then and I thought working as a mixer was the only way to get close to them. Besides, a person who worked on the console at a recording studio or a concert hall looked so cool to me.

When I was a senior in high school, there was a course guidance book in the classroom. I looked up how to become a mixer in it. A few technical colleges were introduced there but they required a high score on physics. I was good at math, but in physics, I had no hope. So, I couldn't find a way to be a mixer. Time passed, I noticed that I've been sitting at the computer console alone for the mix down of my new song all the time lately. It can mean that my dream came true after all. Only one thing is missing. I get no pay...

Hidemi's Rambling No.180

Today is the day that I've been waiting for since last December. A cable channel has the premiere of 'LOST Final Season' tonight, finally. Did the hydrogen bomb go off? Is Juliet alive? I heard the title of the first episode was 'LAX'. Does that mean the plane safely landed at LAX instead of crashing on the island? Those who live in the U.S. blessedly know the answers already, but I've been tortured by the countless questions for almost half a year in Japan. I happened to look at the rating chart of 'LOST' at Wikipedia and the rating is getting lower as the series goes through the seasons. I can't believe there are people who stopped watching that interesting show. For the premiere, I'm preparing snacks, food and drink. As the part of the special premiere, they will air the first episode of a new drama, 'Flash Forward' too. It's going to be an exciting night for me but I'm already afraid of days afterward. It's only a premiere and they're going to start airing the show regularly in July. I'll have to wait for more than a month for the second episode. Another excruciating waiting days are ahead...