



Hidemi's Rambling No.241

When 'LOST Final Season' started in July in Japan, the cable company also began to air 'Flash Forward'. Its characters' experiences of a glimpse of their future were weirdly familiar to me. Come to think of it, I've had a similar experience myself, in a way. As long as I could remember, my family members had told me that I was a successor of the family and I was to live with my family all my life as my father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather and on and on and on did, by taking a husband into our family to bear our family name. They kept saying that as a usual chant so repeatedly that I was sort of under the spell that I would be stuck to the house as a successor until the day I died. So, I was an outsider when other girls chatted giggly about what last name they would bear after their marriage or where they would live in the future. I knew what my last name and what my future address would be because they wouldn't be changed. My whole life was so predictable for that matter. Since I knew my future, I had no interest in my life, and days were so boring. That experience lets me perfectly understand the despair that the characters in 'Flash Forward' feel after they saw their future. In my case, I changed my future completely by abandoning my family, my friends, my hometown and the old tradition. Now, I'm free from my once-arranged future. Instead, I dread my uncertain future everyday...

Hidemi's Rambling No.242

I've been mastering our new song on my new computer, which has an updated version of Cubase. I'm more than satisfied with its effect line-up but sound itself was better on my old computer. In a timely manner, the sound card on my new computer got disconnected from the software suddenly and I installed the old physical one to replace it. Sound became much better but I found out that the overall volume of the new song wasn't as big as it was supposed to be. I had set some effects to boost the volume and it sounded on a par with audio CDs. As it turned out, the former sound card didn't support the direct monitoring and I had listened to amplified sound by the computer. It's the matter of a little more volume now that I've gained most of it with a variety of effects. From this point on, it has come down to my idea. The question is, do I still have any ideas left...?

Hidemi's Rambling No.243

An artist who has a contract with a major record company generally has a deadline for work. Due to the cost of studio use and the promotion schedule, they often need to finish recording in a couple of weeks. Sometimes, it requires compromise and the work results in what they didn't want. I, on the other hand, have no contract, no obligation, no bind. I've been working on the current song for seven years now, including two years of recording. These years have been the happiest time in my life, with contentment from work. I'm in an ideal position to pursue my music as much as I want, so to speak. I always wonder why people don't live like this. Of course, if they do, fame and money is almost certainly hopeless as is my case. I have no contract, no fame, no money, and call it ideal. Maybe I'm beginning to become a nutcase...

Hideki's Rambling No.244

Despite the ceaseless agitation that Japan's population has been decreasing and its birthrate has critically dropped, a population explosion has been happening in my neighborhood in particular. People keep moving in, kids keep being born, and houses and stores keep being built. Only the space around me is the exception of Japanese trend. The more the people, the higher the odds of crazy ones. I introduced here my neighbors who used the street as their own yard and let their kids shoot hoops from the busy street to their house. The noise of a bouncing ball was so annoying and I dropped a note to stop in their mailbox one day. It worked and I had retrieved peaceful sleep for a couple of weeks as I usually sleep in the daytime. A sad fact is that crazy people don't learn. They resumed playing basketball on the street last Sunday and I had to drop the note again. This neighborhood was once quiet and sparse, but now, it's close to the limit of my patience...

Hidemi's Rambling No.245

Here's an update on my ongoing apartment hunting. After I saw the room and deliberated, I decided on the place which price was 20 percent off. A week after I submitted the application form to the real estate company, its agent told me that she hadn't been able to reach the owner. A few days later, she called me again and said that she finally contacted the owner. But she asked me to wait a little more as the owner wanted to consider the price. From then on, both the agent and I have been just waiting. Now I noticed absurdity. The 20 percent off price was offered by the owner in the first place, not by me. Is he or she considering his or her own price? And is he or she going to decline the price by himself or herself? What kind of game are we playing? Two weeks have already passed since I applied for the room. I have no idea how it unfolds hereafter...

Hidemi's Rambling No.246

Whereas Japanese recent movies and dramas are intolerable, Japanese comedy performances are brilliant. There is an annual event for a short situation comedy performance on TV, which is a contest for both professional and amateur comedians. The winner takes one hundred thousand dollars. I look forward to the event every year. It's broadcast live on TV but this year, I set the timer to record the program on my computer, as I was busy. My plan was to watch it later by laying food and snacks as an annual party. About one hour into the three-hour event, I glanced at the computer casually during chores, and was horrified at the sight. The computer had shut down for no apparent reason. That meant it had stopped recording the show that I'd been waiting for a whole year. I panicked completely, turned on TV and rebooted the computer right away. I wasn't sure how long I had missed the event, but watched it live from that point on anyway, because I took it as a sign not to put off something you really want. By missing the former part of the event, my excitement was half ruined with my planned party all ruined. After it was over, I watched the recorded part on my computer. Miraculously, the time that the computer was off was during a commercial break. It shut down right at the moment when one of the performances got to its punch line and the stage was blacked out. When I turned on TV and resumed recording, it was at the start of the next performance. I didn't miss a thing. When I panicked, I shouted a lot of whys to my computer almost crying. It must have heard a cry of a soul and adjusted the timing by itself...

Hidemi's Rambling No.247

It was my birthday yesterday and my parents sent me presents. The gifts from my mother were exactly the same necklace as the one she had sent me a couple of years ago, a vinyl bag which she apparently had got as a freebie, and some towels she didn't use anymore. She also enclosed a bag of rice crackers. My hometown is in Kyoto that is a Japanese historic city with a lot of old temples and shrines. Many stores there take advantage of the location and use the historic sites and events as their signature design for wrapping. The store my mother bought rice crackers used a Japanese classic card game. It's played with 100 cards on each of which an ancient poem is written. For some reason, I was very good at the game when I was a teenager. I haven't played it for a long time. Some of the 100 poems were printed on the wrapping of the rice crackers and I remembered how good I was. The best present from my mother this year was a wrapper of a snack...

Hidemi's Rambling No.248

When I was in junior high school, there was a tournament of the Japanese classic card game that I wrote about. One hundred cards were laid out before competitors and each card had an ancient Japanese poem written on it. A teacher read a hundred poems one by one and competitors picked the corresponding card. The one who got the most cards would be a winner. The game isn't as simple as it sounds. While a poem reader reads the whole poem, only the latter half of the poem is written on a card. To pick a card fast before it's taken by your rivals, you memorize the whole poem. The instant the top of a poem is read, you recall the poem's latter half, find the card it's written among the laid 100 cards, and pick it. Because my family had the game at home and played it occasionally, the poems were quite familiar to me. I was able to memorize all 100 poems easily before the tournament, that let me beat a competitor one after another, as by the time the teacher read a first verse, the card of the poem's yet-unread latter half was already in my hand. At the finals, I even beat the smartest girl at school and won the tournament. I came home with great joy and told my mother I had won. Her response was, 'Where's a certificate?' According to her, without a certificate or a diploma, there's no way to show people the result, thus winning is pointless. She urged me to have a teacher issue the certificate and I asked the teacher. A few days later, I received a makeshift paper for the certificate. The pitiful paper was decorated proudly in a frame by my mother...

Hidemi's Rambling No.249

The classic card game is usually played during New Year's in Japan. There used to be a family gathering in New Year's in my house every year. On one New Year gathering after I won the tournament of the game at school, I suggested to play it because I had become extremely good at it. I played with my relatives and my grandfather. I won dominantly by getting most of the cards. Then, my grandfather began to be angry with me, saying I was unfair. In 100 poems the cards hold, a player often has his or her favorite poem. It's considered that person's specialty, called 'my eighteenth' in Japan. No player other than that person can take the card on which his or her favorite poem is written, even if the card is right in front of you. Other players concede it by letting the person pick the card on purpose. They say it's an unspoken rule of the game. I ignored it and just kept taking as many cards as I could whether it was somebody's eighteenth or not, because to me, the game was a matter of memory and speed. With my grandfather, my relatives also began to complain. Although the game was one of very few things I was good at, nobody had played it with me ever since...

Hidemi's Rambling No.250

It's one year since I started my blog. I've written my mishaps and embarrassing experiences both in the past and the present. I usually feel gloomy when thinking about those events and often feel like shouting madly to shake them off from my mind. At first, it seemed impossible for me to write them down and make them public because like most people, I wanted to look cool although I was completely the opposite. But once I started writing, I realized something unexpected. It soothed the pain. It's like writing brought closure to my agony that had until then seemed eternal. In other words, blog is a therapy for me. I know how pathetic that sounds, but it's been very helpful to make me feel easier. Curiously enough, whether music or writing, things that make me happy don't make money...