



Hidemi's Rambling No.251

About my apartment hunting, I've written up to the point that the owner of the room wanted to consider his or her price, which was offered as 20 percent off by himself or herself in the first place. Two more weeks have passed and the owner offered 10 percent off. Since I was going to pay the full price to begin with, 10 percent off was still a good deal to me. I answered to take it. Then, the situation took an unbelievable twist, again. The real estate agent asked me to pick my convenient days for a contract among several days in the end of October. That means it would take two months to close the deal since I decided on the room. At first, I thought it would be done in a week because the process was simple – look at the room, make a decision, sign a contract and pay. How could it be possible to spend two months for this easy process? At this stage, it should be done only by signing a contract, and yet, they need three more weeks just to do that. Meanwhile, I noticed the owner had placed an ad for the very room I applied on a different real estate company's website. The room remains available there. Now, a suspicion crept into my mind. Is the owner waiting for someone who wants the room at the full price and prolonging the deal on purpose? But that someone was me because it was the owner who offered the discount while I didn't ask for anything. Whatever the plot is, it's beyond my comprehension. I wonder when and how the whole thing is settled...

Hidemi's Rambling No.252

A new supermarket opened one block away from my apartment. It's the closest supermarket and I can see it from my window. Since the construction started in spring, I'd been looking forward to its opening while seeing the progress of the construction site. I jumped in it on the long-awaited opening day and the store exceeded my expectation. Their prices were a lot lower than I'd thought. They have carried the opening sale and I've been there almost every day. Before the opening, a flier of the store came in, which said, 'Please use us as your fridge.' With this proximity to my place, I thought it would be a good idea, depending on the prices. Now that the prices are low, using the store as my fridge is becoming real. Because I found something at the lowest price ever each time there and couldn't resist getting them, I've brought home more food than I could eat. As a result, my home fridge is packed, too. Once I decided to move out my apartment, this nice supermarket appeared. Leaving the store behind makes me feel hesitant to move...

Hidemi's Rambling No.253

My preparing for moving recalls the time my family built a new house when I was nine years old. By then, our house got too old to live in, as it had stood for about 100 years. After the old house was destroyed, we had lived in our old barns that stood beside the old house until the new house was completed. That was when I became ill and got nephritis. In the middle of the construction, an executive of the construction company that was building our new house disappeared with the whole money our family paid. The construction stopped and our new house was left only as the wooden frame. Since my mother was extremely vain, reporting it to the police was out of the question. She turned to her relative who ran a construction company in a distant town from us. He kindly came all the way from there, fixed the plan and rearranged everything for us. Although we lost money, our new house was up at last thanks to him. A couple of years later, we read a news article on a local newspaper that the construction company executive had been found dead in a gutter. He must have had much bigger troubles other than his embezzlement of my family's money while he was on the run...

Hidemi's Rambling No.254

When the construction company executive disappeared with my family's money, his wife came to our place with his daughter. She wanted us to know that she wouldn't shelter him, that she didn't have any idea of his whereabouts either, and how sorry she felt. She begged not to report to the police. While the grave meeting was held, I was sent to play outside with his daughter. I was nine, and she was a year or two younger. I used to be shy and wasn't good at being friendly with someone so quickly. But with her, I got along so well at once for some reason. Along the narrow way at the back of my house, clovers grew rampantly. I taught her how to play 'clover wrestling' and it became uncontrollable fun. I had never laughed so hard so much in one day. That was the most fun I had ever had in my life. We promised to play together again and she left with her mother. I've never seen her since. As her father's body was found in a gutter a couple of years after the day we became friends, I wonder how her life turned out and how she is now. I hope she's happy somewhere now...

Hidemi's Rambling No.255

During the construction of my family's new house, many contractors and carpenters came and worked every day. As we lived in barns as a makeshift home at the edge of the construction site, I saw them regularly and had a crush on one of the carpenters. He would come to work by car and pass under a pedestrian bridge at the almost exact time every morning. I used the bridge to the elementary school, and every morning when I was walking on the bridge, his car passed beneath it. I waved at him and he waved back at me every time. One day, while I was hanging around near the construction site, he came up to me and handed me a key chain in which miniature playing cards were contained. He said it was a small gift for me. I was over the moon. But, that was the last time I saw him. Because the construction company executive ran away with all the money my family had paid, the pay for the workers stopped. The construction was abandoned and no one came to work anymore. Only a carpenter with craftsmanship who carved beautiful patterns on the wooden thresholds came to continue his work without pay after his new job. But the carpenter I had a crush on never showed, and his car never passed under the pedestrian bridge. I cherished the miniature playing cards for a long time...

Hidemi's Rambling No.256

Here is the finale of my apartment hunting. I had complained about delay of the contract to a real estate agent and she had advanced the date for it. Two days before signing, she called me and gave me yet another surprise. She went in the room to make sure everything was okay and found out that the owner had taken away all of the furniture and appliances although the room was supposed to be furnished. According to her, everything was gone except for a kitchen table. She sounded more shocked than I actually was. Because each piece of furniture and appliances had looked pretty old and worn-out when I saw the room, and even if unfurnished, the price was still a lot lower than the area's average, I asked her not to retrieve them as she offered. I accepted the present condition, and signed a contract at last. My six-month long apartment hunting is officially over. Starting now is my moving saga. It's decided for me to move 160 miles far from where I live now to the countryside surrounded by mountains. Is it really possible for me to live in the mountains secluded from people? More than anything else, please no more bad surprises for me...

Hidemi's Rambling No.257

Japan has a census every five years and now it's the time. Back in my hometown, the chair or a leader of the area used to be entrusted with distribution and collection of the forms for the whole block as voluntary work. Then, the forms would be handed to the area's public office by him or her. When my father took charge of it, he looked through all the forms after collecting them for possible errors in filling them out, that was also one of the responsibilities. But, as he was checking errors in the forms, he inevitably acquired neighbors' personal information, such as the income, the family members, the work place, and the academic background. I felt extremely unpleasant about it. After I left my hometown and was on my own, I had never submitted a census, as I knew what a person who came to collect the form did with my form. Probably because of the similar complaints, the government has changed rules for this year's census. They hired people to distribute and collect the forms and the form should be sealed by a person who filled it out. With this way, the personal information should be protected from some neighbor. Instead, the form collection person is persistent ever, now that it's a job. They keep coming up to my apartment and even call after me on the streets in the neighborhood. I go out sneakily, looking around for a collection person. I feel like a fugitive every day...

Hidemi's Rambling No.258

Last weekend, I went in my new apartment for the first time since I looked at the room with a real estate agent in September. Although the building was 20 years old and I had expected some fixtures would have been broken, everything worked fine including a heater and a boiler. Only, the room was dirty from the former resident's poor maintenance, meaning an extensive cleanup awaited me. The room was carpeted, and that carpet was extremely dirty with countless stains. I was talking with my partner how careless the former resident must have been, and at dinnertime, it was my partner who inadvertently spilled soy sauce on it. Already a new stain has been registered. My biggest concern about living in that room had been whether claustrophobia would fall on me or not. One of my ways to lessen the phobia is turn on the TV. My cell phone is capable of receiving TV and I carried it around as the most important emergency item for the phobia in the room. Thankfully, I didn't feel the phobia but tried to turn on the TV for fun before going to sleep. Then, my cell phone told me that it couldn't receive it. As the building stood surrounded by high mountains, the wave was too weak to be received. Once I realized the TV wouldn't be on, I felt a touch of claustrophobia all of a sudden. I shouldn't have tried TV...

Hidemi's Rambling No.259

I can't throw things away. Because I'm easily attached to my belongings and also I'm thrifty, I keep things for a possible future use, just in case. As a result, my tiny apartment has become even smaller with junk such as worn-out clothes, cracked shoes and sundries that I don't know what they are for anymore. As I've started moving to my new place, I realized how time-consuming packing all the junk was. Packing one cardboard box a day is a maximum addition to my daily life. So, my moving process is horribly slow. With this speed, I can't even imagine the day I finish packing everything into boxes will ever come. I feel like it lasts forever. But the longer it takes, the more money I end up spending, because I'll have to keep paying the rent for my old apartment. My junk, which I've kept to save money in the first place, took advantage of my weakness and began to take money away from me...

I had a dream last night that my mother left me in a shopping mall to enjoy shopping just with my younger sister. The sensation I felt in the dream was so familiar that I recalled the similar experiences in my real life. Since I started junior high school, my parents and my sister had often gone out without me because my school was far from home and I came home late every day. As I got furious each time when they came back, they usually lied that they went out just for an errand. But I always knew they went shopping together or in a worse case, visited my favorite grandparents' house without me. The main reason I could see through their deceit was because they bought something for my sister when going out, and I often found it later in her room, as the evidence. In my theory, parents should get something for a child they leave at home, but my parents do the opposite and get something for a child they are taking with them. And the luckier one who got into the car with my parents for fun was always my sister who came home much earlier from elementary school. I can't count how many times I shouted a word 'unfair' to my parents. Sometimes, they even ate out just three of them and still pretended that they hadn't had dinner yet. At dinnertime of those occasions, they had strangely little appetite while I was starving. My mother repeated, 'It's weird. I'm not hungry tonight', and my sister followed suit. Only my father tried to eat his second dinner for the night, contorting with fullness. Their acts were so poor that anyone could tell they had already eaten. But no matter how hard I demanded, my mother kept lying. I can still feel some sort of desperate loneliness with these old memories...