



## **Hidemi's Rambling No.61**

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It's the season for a year-end party in Japan. It's called 'Bonenkai' which means 'a party to forget this year'. Too negative. During the course of a year, there should be something good to remember, at least a couple. So, my partner and I adapted a new party with a different concept. My partner even created a new word for its name. We call it 'Obonenkai' which means 'a party to remember this year'. We threw it today. I found other different aspects in our party than the name. People have a 'Bonenkai' party with many colleagues and friends, over an expensive meal. Ours is just two of us, over half-price prepared foods that are left unsold at a grocery store. It's just like my style- or let's say, 'Hidemish' ...

## **Hidemi's Rambling No.62**

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A coffee company send me a newsletter once a week. They assigned a number to each member upon sign-up, and pick a winning number for the prize of two thousand dollars every week. When I checked email today, I saw my number on the newsletter. I screamed with surprise and joy. My heart beat weirdly, sweat poured off. As I fixed my eyes, the newsletter showed my number as a reminder, not as a winning number. I didn't win, of course. I buy a lottery ticket every week that you can win up to four million dollars. I learned today that I couldn't survive if I won that kind of money, because two thousand dollars was enough to almost kill me...

## **Hidemi's Rambling No.63**

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At a discount store, I found cans of soda on sale at five yen each – about six cents. Only six of them were left. My partner was pushing a shopping cart on the different aisle, and I had to secure the six cans lest anyone got them. After holding them in my arms, I walked toward my partner. He noticed me and for an instant, he seemed alarmed. He mistook me for a thief by my appearance. For fear of the flu, I usually put on a medical mask where people gather. Also in this case, I was holding goodies, hunched over, with a wicked smile in my eyes, somehow tiptoeing toward him. Maybe the deal was too good and made me feel like a thief...

## **Hidemi's Rambling No.64**

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I went to a grocery store in a mall connected to the train station, aiming at half-price prepared foods. I have enough knowledge about the times they put on half-price stickers to what remain unsold according to stores. For this store, it is usually past 8:30 p.m. I arrived at the store at 8:45 p.m., the perfect timing. The shelf was full of half-price items. At the same time, I saw a notice about a liquidation sale of a different store in the mall. The sale was up to 50% off for everything but the store was closing for the day at 9 p.m. Two stores of a half-price sale for only one of me. I often shop without finding any sale items but when I find them, they come all at once. A mystery. I need one more me for sale shopping...

## **Hidemi's Rambling No.65**

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People in Japan are everyday gourmets. They fuss over food all the time. Too sweet, too salty, too stringy or too dry. Even not so wealthy people are keen on taste. The TV shows on food are rampant all day long. People are willing to wait in line for hours in front of a small noodle restaurant. The shelf of prepared foods at grocery stores and supermarkets has a huge selection. Western, Japanese, Chinese, Italian, Korean, you name it. As for me, my tongue seems to appreciate pretty much anything. But ironically, I can't get as much as I like because I watch my weight. Before a splendid view of a wide variety of prepared foods, I bear a grudge against myself who is so easy to gain weight...

## **Hidemi's Rambling No.66**

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I took a test of translating an English article into Japanese, again. Last time I took one, I got 'C'. That didn't make sense to me at all. I was deeply offended enough to take a test again. Although I know so well that revenge never works, it seems I never learn my lesson. The result came today and it was 'C'. AGAIN. A grading comment said that I misunderstood the article. What's that supposed to mean? The article was such a simple one that I thought it was almost a joke. If I misunderstand those easy sentences, what do I not misunderstand? Perhaps I have misunderstood the whole thing in this world all my life up to now. Oh, by the way, do you kindly understand what I wrote? As a 'C' holder, my English can be misunderstood...

## **Hidemi's Rambling No.67**

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Today is my holiday shopping day. I have planned and looked forward it for some time. My plan is near perfect – what to get as a Christmas present for my partner, where to go, what to wear. First thing in the morning, I checked my horoscope on TV. Mine was the worst of all. It even elaborated carefully how bad it would be. According to it, everything I do today backfires, and I should spend the day quietly. I still don't want to think of myself a superstitious person, but how can I enjoy the holiday shopping bearing that negative information in mind? A trivial piece of a horoscope easily shattered my whole joyful plan...



## **Hidemi's Rambling No.68**

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In spite of my bad horoscope of the day that everything I do would backfire, I dared to do my holiday shopping anyway. Only I changed the place to shop. On my way to the mall, I had a snack at IKEA. They had an all-you-can-drink bar for soft drinks only at 55 cents at the cafeteria. The selection was coffee, tea and soda. Because I'm cheap, I challenged to drink to my limits even for 55 cents. I was fully content and beginning to think that it wasn't such a bad day as my horoscope had said. I arrived at the mall in a good mood. But then I started to feel queasy. It seemed I had too much drink. I ended up doing my holiday shopping this year with fending off the sick feeling all the way. I bought this difficulty for 55 cents. Backfire...

## **Hidemi's Rambling No.69**

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The finals of an annual comic tournament is going to be held this evening, in 30 minutes actually. It decides the best comic in Japan among both professionals and amateurs and is broadcast live on TV. I have been looking forward to this event for a whole year, predicting who would win this year. I have zest for comedy shows and it's like the Super Bowl to me. Every year I cheer and laugh excitingly in front of TV. But today, for some reason, I haven't been feeling well since this morning. This year I will watch the finals feebly after the yearlong excitement...

## **Hidemi's Rambling No.70**

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Mt. Fuji is regarded as a symbol of good luck. Looking out the window of my apartment, I can barely see the top of Mt. Fuji far away after the leaves fall off from the trees nearby. It's a season I can see it, but I haven't been able to find it this year where it's supposed to be. My partner told me that he has seen it for some time. I looked and looked for the unique shape of Mt. Fuji which was hardly overlooked. Then I noticed that the branches of the trees near my apartment had stretched upward. They block Mt. Fuji at my eye level but not at my partner's who is much taller than I am. No matter how hard I jump, I can't see the top. Starting this year, I am too short for good luck...