



Hidemi's Rambling No.71

To avoid a crowded store, I did the grocery shopping online today for my holiday meals. In this way, I could enjoy shopping calmly and comfortably, sitting in front of a computer and sipping a cup of coffee. I was in a good mood adding sale items to a shopping cart one by one. And I found something wrong with the total amount. As I was taking time to shop around, the prices of the sale items were returning to their list prices. I didn't know that they were time limit offers because nothing mentioned. I guessed the quantity for a sale was limited, thus first come, first served. Now my relaxing shopping had changed into a battle. I shopped as fast as I could, sweating and hunching over a computer. and was done shopping exhausted. Even at home, the hustle and bustle catches you at this time of year...

Hidemi's Rambling No.72

Eve has come. Only one day to Christmas. To a person like me who anticipate Christmas too much, the rest of the year is just a sideshow. As an athlete prepares for the Olympics, I condition myself for Christmas. You should do everything in moderation though, otherwise you would end up like me who feel sad thinking Christmas is over tomorrow while feeling extremely happy to have it at last. My consolation is a concept of 'Twelve Days of Christmas'. I cheer up myself saying that Christmas Day is the beginning of the twelve days of Christmas, not the end of it. Well, how can I soothe this infantile myself twelve days later? Let's say just 11 months to go again...

Hidemi's Rambling No.73

Merry Christmas! How are you spending Christmas Day? I am having rotisserie chicken, pasta and pizza at my apartment with my partner. A box was delivered from my parents. It was a Christmas present of wine. My parents usually enclose an attacking message to deny what I do and I prepared myself for it. To my surprise, they didn't do so for once. No attacking words from my parents. That can be considered as a miracle to me. I wish each one of you a peaceful, joyful Christmas. Happy Holidays.

Hidemi's Rambling No.74

My mother's hobby is drawing. She drew a Christmas tree on her Christmas card that I received yesterday. Over the years, she has gotten influenced by me for a Christmas card which she didn't have a custom of sending. This year, she wrote 'Merry Xmas' in English baldly and decoratively across the tree. It must have been a big challenge for her who is not used to writing English. Sadly, she misspelled 'merry' and wrote 'Marry Xmas!' instead. For years, she has kept urging me to marry, and it finally got her. A word 'marry' automatically pops up in her brain when she tries to communicate with me...

Hidemi's Rambling No.75

A clothing store in the mall is going to close for good and I went there today for the closing sale. I often get a surprisingly discounted item when a store is closing. It has helped me save much money. Recently, more and more stores have gone out of business in the area I live, and the mall I went today has also had less and less shops. As a new shop hasn't opened, they put tables and chairs for customers to rest where the old store used to be. Now the mall has the break areas everywhere. While I enjoy a sale, I lose a store to shop one after another around me...

Hidemi's Rambling No.76

The Christmas card my mother sent me shows her character properly. My parents sent me a Christmas present of wine prior to the cards. They usually send in their joint names, but this time there was only my father's name on the box. I thought he sent it by himself. It made sense considering how she had snubbed me last time we met. On her Christmas card which came later, she added with pretense of being casual, 'Cheers with wine!'. She apparently had to imply that she had chipped in the present...

Hidemi's Rambling No.77

Many stores in Japan hand out a free calender for customers at the end of a year. When I was a child, my family never needed to buy a calender for a new year because we got amply for free. Some stores offer free-to-take calenders in front of the entrance at this time of year. I went rambling down the street near the train station to get some. There are many shops and I got a lot of calenders for free last year. This year, the recession was obvious here and I couldn't find one. A store put up a sign which said, 'Buy one and get a free calender'. It's not my option. The era of a free calender has passed...

Hidemi's Rambling No.78

A Happy New Year! It is said in Japan, 'New Year's Day sums up the new year'. To make the new year happy, I need to spend today happily. Yet, I can't feel pressured. Whatever I do today, it's supposed to be repeated all year long. So, no pressure. Just be happy. I wish you a wonderful, happy New Year.

Hidemi's Rambling No.79

Unlike Christmas cards, Japanese New Year cards arrive all at once on New Year's Day morning. I used to live with my grandfather and it was his biggest delight to take all cards for the whole family from our mail drop and sort them by family member's name. He kept a log of the number of cards that each of us received every year. To him, the number reflected power in our family. The one who received most cards had the biggest power. That was him every year because he represented our family. Distributing the sorted cards, he would announce proudly the standings of the year. My personal record was 63 cards when I was sixteen, and I got the second place to my grandfather, ahead of my father that year. Time has passed, I left home, my grandfather passed away, and the stupid competition ended. By the way, this year the number of New Year's cards for me was zero...

Hidemi's Rambling No.80

The first three days of the year are a major holiday in Japan. People go shopping for a so-called Happy Bag. It's an assortment bag of merchandise, which is worth several times as much as it's price and only available this time of year. The catch is you don't know what's inside. Some of the bags show its contents but basically, it's a surprise. To save money, I get a few Happy Bags of accessories every year. Thanks to them, I have got many accessories worth much more than I actually paid. The bags usually contain quite a lot of earrings besides rings or necklaces, but I don't have my ears pierced. I have numerous earrings I can't even wear...