

~Free Essay~

## My Challenge and Struggles

I wrote this essay on the road home after coming out to Gunma for a programming competition and losing miserably.

It's frustrating...too frustrating. On the train ride home, I had a messed up look on my face. I had spent the night coming here, taking late-night buses and trains. My team lost and it was my fault. What the hell was I doing here? The award ceremony was too painful to watch; I had entered a three-member team and lost to a junior high school student who had entered alone. I had worked so hard to get there. I don't want to do competitive programming anymore. I had lost many times before, but this time I was sick of it. It wasn't like I had friends at the same school who were insanely good at programming. I thought I could win a minor competition. My performance in competitive programming had been stagnant, and I wanted to win, no matter what the competition was.

Looking back, I had never been number 1 in anything. I've been in the top 10 nationally many times, but never once have I achieved a satisfactory result in a prefectural or national competition. Even when I won the RoboCup in Asia. I pretended to be happy but deep down inside. I was not happy with the victory. Whether it's abacus, volleyball, research, Astronomy Olympiad, Geology Olympiad, RoboCup, or competitive programming, I've never experienced a satisfying victory. No matter what I do, it's no good. It's really, really hard...

...How much time has passed? I don't know if it's a good thing or a bad thing to be a hypersomnia, to be able to escape sleep when times are tough. I was approaching the station where I was going to change trains. Come to think of it, I'm always alone when I'm having a hard time. Why do I always have a hard time? Everyone seems to be enjoying their lives so much, but I don't seem to be feeling much happiness.

Thinking back to the summer when I was 14 years old, I read a book about a woman who went to Harvard University from my hometown and graduated

first in her class. I thought the world I read about in Baymax might really exist. It was cool, it was so cool...but what was stronger than anything else was the feeling of frustration. There are such amazing people out there, and I have nothing to be proud of. I'm so frustrated, I'm going to do it, I'm going to make it as a researcher in the U.S. for sure!

Well, I chose this path. I wanted to be number 1, not only in my studies, but also in competing and pursuing what I wanted to do. Challenges are hard, adversity is the best reward. I'm only interested in improving myself, and I long to be the sparkling person who makes someone else happy someday, so the pain I'm feeling right now is probably a state of being in the middle of reaching my goal and fighting the rapids. When I pass through all the pain I'm going through and acquire a sense of accomplishment and superiority, I will have the confidence that I have reached the top of my path. So for now, I will suffer to the bitter end. I have no intention of giving up or stopping.

All right, all right. I understand. I'll stop by a public bath before taking the late-night bus home. Let's wash everything off and start working hard again tomorrow. At the top of the list of tomorrow's tasks, I added "Review today."