

address to hostel

Kumiko Yamamoto

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the letter

To Kumiko:

This is being written at 4:00AM [and a little more 9:00PM the next day]. You probably shouldn't read this.

Hahahah!

KUMIKO! Kumiko! I feel your name has to be yelled because you just have so much energy that your name must match it. **KUMIKUUUUMIIIIKOOOOOOO** [in exaggerated anime voice].

I was just going through my memory of people that I, at the time, desired / should have spent more time with, you know, if I weren't busy doing whatever I desired at the time.

Thus enters Kumiko!

Actually, I've been meaning to write, message, or send some form of communication for a long time. This is me being late as usual. I finally got my laptop (and backpack) back after living 6 months without it and finally got a little bit of time to sit, and talk to whoever I think of.

Warning: this entire letter may be of a bit of a surprise to you, but this is how I normally communicate and talk. I don't use Facebook, though I'm now using the separate Messenger app on my [smart]phone. I usually only talk to people face-to-face, one-on-one, which is why the Chinese class was such a strange thing for me — I was kind of forced to engage in shallow conversation. Maybe it's the introvert dilemma. Heh. However, when I do find reason, my communication can become quite long-winded, like this letter.

First of all, **I'm really sorry** I didn't communicate during / after your trip to Europe. I knew you had plans to come to Taiwan, but I myself was, as usual, busy in my own world, in Taiwan. I don't quite remember where I was or what exactly I was doing, but I definitely should not have completely ignored Facebook messages, and should have followed-up, even I did not have time to host you when you came to Taiwan. I'm guessing at the time I just didn't have an apartment or steady job, so I wouldn't have been able to really host you as well

as I had hoped. I really rarely ever have those things anyway! Haha. So sorry. I hope your trip turned out well regardless of this mishap.

The first thing that comes to mind is that time you uttered a truth statement: **everything was temporal** (referring to the time in Taiwan); A temporary experience; One that could not be extended. When you said that, I figured you must have felt that way because you worked at a hostel, and similarly, people go in and out, creating temporary experiences, and thus short-lived relationships.

At the time, I was staying at a hostel, and somewhat understood. Hostels in Asia are quite special places. They usually have a great, friendly staff. The travelers have good intentions. It's a kind of safe-haven from reality, like a good home, but with constant experiences being created. **Hostels in Asia are really a wonderful place to be in.** Perhaps even one of the best places to be in. In Taiwan, I often find myself coming back to them too. Anything outside of the hostel feels less diverse, less adventurous, less social, less interactive, less simple pleasures (talking, picnic, cooking, nature, sharing), less lively — less life.

The class was indeed really special. Great people all around. **Good, pure hearts.** Creative, though limited by having to learn Chinese, hah. All going about their own ways. Diverse in culture, age, maturity, and education. It was like having a great set of travelers at a hostel, except they stayed for three months, and were forced to be together for 3 hours for 5 days a week, hahah.

Strangely, I didn't write much about you during the class. I was probably living so much that I didn't spend any time to write at all. Normally, I write a lot to my thoughts text file. Here's the only thought I found: [27/8/2015?]

Talking to Kumiko, **I feel at ease**, on time, and somewhat normalized. I daydreamed that when she came, I had a scooter to pick her up from the airport. I took a week off of work so that we could go outdoors through the mountains south of Taipei to the east, camping, talking, hitching, volunteering.

Maybe we talked on Facebook? Perhaps that time you were traveling and planning to come to Taiwan?

No worries, I don't need past thoughts to remember what I wanted to say: the thoughts will re-surface.

During the [time of the] class **I was a bit aloof** because I had my own personal projects and groups of friends (Humans of Taiwan [project], friends at Fablab (a public design space, which contained some of my past interests), the staff at the hostel I was living in, and later, my room-mates). I just couldn't spend so much time with the class, classmates, or invest in deep personal relationships. I was exploring the city and its organizations to see if it was a viable place to live somewhat long-term. There was a lot of shit going on yo! Also perhaps because Taipei's weather is just awful: super humid, hot, and my apartment's air conditioner was only decent. My body was surely suffering. I had to take like three showers a day, and still felt gross. I'm guessing it's because I'm a city / society person as opposed to a household / family person. Or [that I] haven't quite figured out how to balance the two.

In retrospect, I'm a bit sorry if I gave [you] a hard-time about using digital technology, playing games on your phone with Koya, watching films, being indoors, etc. I was probably on a travel high, more in tune with reality, and probably found the more media-oriented indoors-Japanese culture a bit off-putting. Gladly, I don't think you found it offensive, or at least you didn't show it.

I also remember one day where we biked, but me being in my more explorative nature, took you the wrong way, and wasted some time. Hahahah, my bad. Living in cities, I kind of enjoy taking a new path during commutes, slowly exploring the city. I'm usually great with navigation, but I somehow screwed up, hehe.

Hmmm, surely there was more to say...?

I'm guessing I'm writing this after somewhat recently accidentally **breaking a heart** because I focused on other things for too long and failed to communicate, as usual, **then in turn breaking my own**. I guess it's quite difficult for my personality to consistently be with / communicate / spend time with more time-demanding, social-demanding, feeling, dynamic personalities.

You once said that ~"**I could talk to you about anything**". When you said that, I immediately felt comforted. Maybe that's why in the thought I wrote "I feel at ease". Thanks. Now, I just have to remember that you're always there, somewhere beyond this Facebook messenger technology.

I don't know of your current relationship, but it is from this experience that **I sincerely wish the best of your relationship** (current and/or future). Nothing else really matters: economic, environment, cultural, social problems of the world can be put aside. Though, I'm sure you're way way better than me at social

relations, communication, and so on; More in tune with the world; More feeling, less over-thinking; Naturally avoiding communication errors, doing more things together, spending more time together; Better able to adapt to each other, and the world around.

I'm guessing this reaction, this desire to talk with people in the past will fade with time, as I get along with people [physically] around me again. **If I don't message so frequently in the future again, sorry!** It seems that that's just the way I am; This is part of my communication problem. I'm a face-to-face kind of person, and prefer communicating within the same space, as opposed to messaging / telephone technology. It's a strange problem.

Actually, during that time, **I was somewhat attracted to you.** Perhaps only somewhat, because you had a boyfriend, and because my mind was super busy / aware of other things. But I was definitely attracted.

I'm guessing what I found attractive was those same characteristics found in hostel staff and in people in Taiwan: the simple ways to satisfaction / **simple pleasures** — a trip to nature (the beach, a mountain), the crafts (including foodstuffs) of towns, the cultures of peoples, talking. **Being playful**, yet understanding others. Being aware of everyday life. Being outgoing, adventurous (in the dirtiest night markets), willing to do anything, without complaint (in the girliest clothes, haha). Being patient of others. Gladly, many of my Taiwanese friends, room-mates, and hostel-mates had these characteristics, which is precisely why I love Taiwan so much.

On top of that: You're super energetic and optimistic. You're just a ball of fun and energy. The energy radiates from you to everyone around. Sincere laughter. A huge grin. **You're full of life**, Kumiko; You're also comfortable with anyone, anywhere. Maybe that's a difference between Japanese and Western culture. It results in comforting anyone around. It's quite nice to be around. You radiate the atmosphere of a great hostel. You're a moving hostel. Kumiko's Moving Hostel[!]; Furthermore, you were the most playful of the class. And I think everyone in that class had quite a bit of energy and playfulness. But you almost *needed* to play more, talk more, otherwise would quickly feel bored. Though it seems bad to lack patience and attention, I think the pros outweigh the cons: it's better to be constantly creative, social, playful.

Yet, I felt there was way more to Kumiko than the silly fun exterior shell. That was especially apparent when you said, somewhat solemnly, it was all a temporary experience. **Surely there's more in that little brain of yours, with all the experiences you've had in your lively life.** Unfortunately, we didn't have any other serious conversations, and I didn't make any attempts to, probably for the same reasons (boyfriend and my mind was focused on other goals). In retrospect, it's quite silly not to talk to someone simply because they have a partner. It's just talking. But also because so much time was spent in a group (the class), that there just wasn't any time to talk to anyone one-on-one. It was really only in those few bike rides. So, I was never able to really get to know you.

But too late now! I don't think I could handle love again for some time! Hahahaha. But I do desire a another home, or go back to an old one.

Love is so effing difficult yo! Especially because I'm more of the [stereotypical] woman of the relationship — I love more (, always unconditionally), I feel more emotion, I am more responsible, I constantly try to appreciate her mind / art / way of thinking, I use her language, I adapt to her cultural nuances, I try to help or allow her figure herself out and [help her] progress. Surely I'm doing something wrong here? Argh! Maybe I need to revert to my American self with full-time work, selfish of time, and only time to hang on weekends...

Anyway, after a week of dense communication [with her] and a few weeks of soul-crushing heartache, I'm slowly turning back to my former, independent, somewhat-American self. I think. It's such a strange process, to go from dependent Asian mind to independent American mind. Soon off to begin again, somewhere.

Hmmm, I have no idea where this letter was going. It's quite windy, like a road through mountains; and woozy, like the feeling after after a few drinks. I think I just needed to talk, and somehow (unfortunately?) you became the target. Haha, I'm still oh so selfish of time. It's like talking to myself about myself for the betterment of myself.

Anyway, **I sincerely hope you maintain you're lively, happy-go-lucky self, forever and ever** Kumiko. Travel, eat, talk, and enjoy. Do whatever you wish. The world needs more Kumikos.

...I wonder if Koya still lives in a rural area. I kind of feel like joining him on a farm!

—

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