

Partner

As someone who spent the better part of their life living in a dry, arid climate, tsuyu (the East Asian rainy season) is taking some getting used to. In the past, I usually haphazardly stored a folding umbrella in my backpack, but I never really checked if it was actually in there or in usable condition. But since living in Japan, every day I check if my folding umbrella is in my bag and when the weather forecast says it'll rain I carry around a long umbrella too. But the gloomy rain and resulting soggy shoes are just depressing.

Although I haven't gotten used to the rain, I have gotten used to how ubiquitous umbrellas are in Japan. Ever since arriving at my new apartment in Japan, seeing ten umbrellas which previous ALTs had borrowed from the school, and returning all but one of them to the school one by one, the umbrella situation has been in the back of my mind.

You can buy cheap, sturdy umbrellas at any convenience store, and there are also many places you can borrow them. Umbrella stands are placed conveniently wherever you go, and you can use them without worrying about your umbrella getting stolen. At least, as someone who went to a university where I would come across bicycles which, despite being properly locked up, had had their wheels removed and stolen, I'm not too worried here.

Living in such a convenient environment for umbrellas, the average Japanese person owns three to four umbrellas, and by some surveys Japan has the highest ownership rate of umbrellas in the world. Along with this, however, comes high turnover, and Japan's consumption rate of umbrellas is also number one in the world, and this has come to be seen as an environmental issue. It's probably somewhat common to encounter a sudden downpour and quickly buy an umbrella at the

nearest convenience store, only to throw it away or aimlessly store it somewhere afterwards.

Despite this trend towards treating umbrellas as disposable, for some reason I've taken quite a liking to my used, jet black umbrella. It's my partner for weathering this season. As an umbrella whose previous owners always had ten other options lying around, I'm sure it's happy too.



雨の少ない乾燥した土地に長年生きてきた身として、梅雨は慣れないものです。あの折りたたみ傘を入れていたけど、本当に入っているのか、壊れてないのか、細かくチェックしませんでした。日本に住んでから毎日、鞆に折りたたみ傘があるか確認して、天気予報が雨だったから長い傘を持ち歩くようになってきました。雨が濡れておじメジメした靴に気が滅入ります。

雨に慣れずとも、すぐには日本では傘が至る所にあることに慣れたまじ。高知に着いたとき、前の「H」たちが学校の傘が借りっぱなしの本あるのを見て、一本だけを選んで保有して、残りを一本ずつ学校に返しながら意識して傘をいっしょに安くて丈夫な傘をどく借りてくれるところも多かったです。

もし、コンビニでも傘をどく借りては、盗まれないように気をつけておきましょう。

相棒

ます。少なくとも、しっかり施錠されたのに自転車の車輪だけが外されて盗まれたり、目を当たらににする、私を通っていた大学に比べたら、ここではあまり心配していません。

こんな便利な環境だから、日本の傘の平均所有数が三本から四本の数本で、いくつかの調査によると世界一の所有率らしいです。その反面、消費率も世界一で、環境問題として見られていきます。俄雨に遭ってすぐに買い、その後捨てるかどうかに放置するのが多いかもしれません。

傘を使い捨てる道具扱いは、傾向をよそに、私はなんとなく自分の中古で漆黒のわけあり傘を気に入っています。

この季節を乗り越える相棒です。前の持ち主たちはいつも十本を周りに置くような人だったので、この傘も喜んでいます。