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Thoughts and Reflections from Turkey (Business Trip – Side Note)

June 30th, 2025

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As many of you may know, the world's three greatest cuisines are said to be French, Chinese, and Turkish. This was probably my fifth or sixth business trip to Turkey (I haven't kept an exact count), but it was the first time I truly realized: **Turkey is delicious**. A rather late realization, I must admit.

Let's start with coffee and tea. As you may know, Turkish coffee is made by boiling ground coffee together with water. When served, the grounds remain in the cup, so you first wait for them (and perhaps your emotions) to settle before taking a sip. The taste is a bit strong—somewhat like espresso—and once you get used to it, it suits the Japanese palate quite well. It used to be served with sugar by default, but these days they ask if you'd like sugar or prefer it black. Since it's often accompanied by dessert or Turkish delights, I went for the black version.

Turkish tea, or “çay,” is also widely known. It's served without milk—just tea, usually with an option to add sugar. I drank it without sugar throughout the trip. It has a slightly astringent edge, similar to the coffee—perhaps a Turkish trait. I personally like strong tea, so it was a perfect match. I found myself drinking çay the whole time, and was completely satisfied.



Turkish Delights

I only visited Ankara and Adana on this trip, so the meals were basically all about kebabs—lunch and dinner, kebabs every day. We even debated which kebab was better, lunch or dinner. The only other dishes were salads (usually tomato, cucumber, and onion with various dressings) and pide (Turkish-style pizza). That said, each meal came with a wide variety and large portions, more than I could finish. These kebabs are quite different from what we typically see in Japan—in Japanese terms, it's more like BBQ. So basically, I was having BBQ for both lunch and dinner, accompanied by several salads and pizza. What I really appreciated was that everything was served family-style, on large platters, allowing me to choose the amount I wanted. It helped prevent overeating—a rare luxury on overseas business trips.



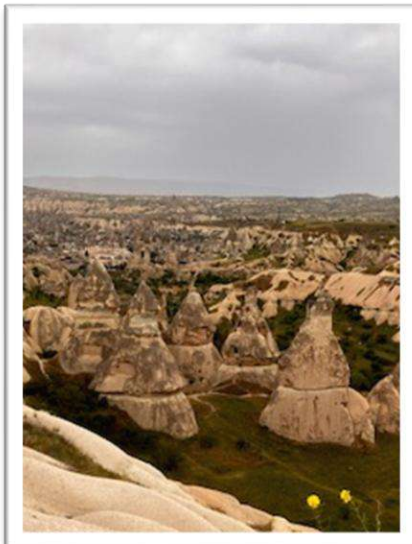
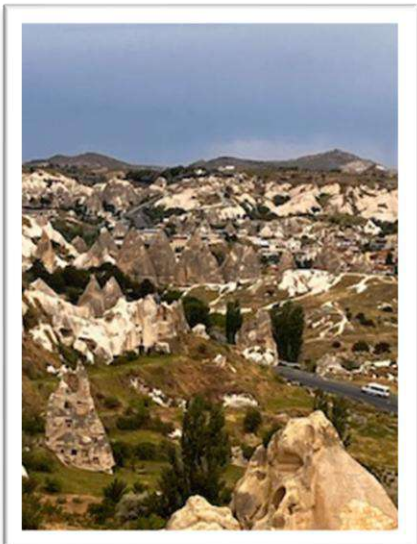
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One notable part of this trip was staying at a rather remarkable hotel in the Kozan district of Adana. I spent two nights there because it was near the factory, and it turned out to be quite an experience. Said to be the best hotel in the area, it's over 100 years old and was originally a nobleman's mansion, later "refurbished"—though stepping inside, I couldn't help but wonder how much of a refurbishment had actually taken place. The highlight was the bathroom. Actually, it wasn't really

a bathroom: it had only a toilet, no shower or bathtub. Instead, there was an old-style water heater and a shower head mounted next to the toilet. You had to light the heater yourself, then shower right there beside the toilet. Naturally, the entire toilet area ended up soaked. You had to think carefully whether to use the toilet before or after your shower to avoid a disastrous outcome. I had a similar experience once in rural Myanmar, so I had a bad feeling when I heard we'd be staying near the factory. Luckily, I brought sandals, which saved me.

On the first night, I checked in after 9 PM and couldn't see much of the surroundings. My room had an air conditioner—but it was leaking water from the duct. I placed my suitcase on the floor, and due to the tilt in the floor, it slowly rolled right under the leak. While I was inspecting the room, I suddenly realized my suitcase was being dripped on. It felt like some kind of scene from a Haunted Mansion ritual. Still, after the initial shock, it didn't seem like such a big deal. The real challenge was sleeping—the bed was fine, but the slanted floor made it feel off balance.



The trip had its own charm in many ways. On the way back from Adana, I made a stop in Cappadocia. Its vastness was far beyond what I expected. I didn't catch the famous hot air balloons (only visible early in the morning), but even without them, the landscape was stunning. In addition to the views above ground, there were also the

remains of underground dwellings—like an underground city—which were quite impressive. At the end of the tour, I enjoyed a glass of Turkish red wine made from a Pinot Noir-like grape, taking in the scenery. A lovely memory.

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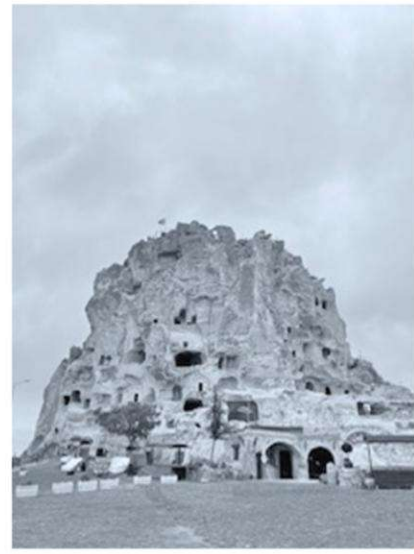
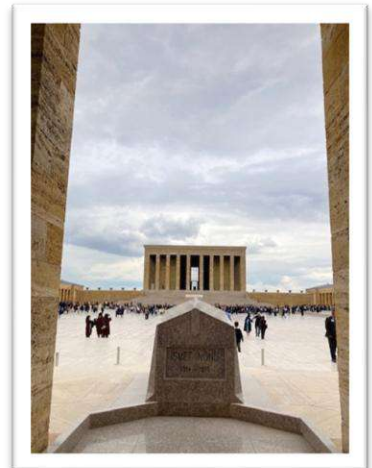
On the day before heading home, I visited Anıtkabir, the mausoleum of Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey. It was filled with domestic tourists, including school groups. Despite the crowd, the place had a strangely serene atmosphere. It was one of the few spots during this business trip where I felt genuinely calm and centered—a meaningful visit for me.

Turkey has long been considered a pro-Japan country. This is said to stem from events like the rescue of a Turkish shipwreck off the coast of Wakayama and Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War. (Whether today's Turks still feel a deep affinity for Japan is, frankly, something I personally question.) What I felt this time wasn't the result of historical

ties, but rather a strong emotional warmth and seriousness that seem intrinsic to Turkish people. Once they decide on something, they follow through—perhaps with a touch of conservatism. Compared to Japan—an island nation—Turkey sits at the crossroads of East and West, and that geographical context shapes cultural identity quite differently. Still, I found surprising similarities. Discovering these common threads is part of what makes business trips so enriching. While work often highlights the negatives, this

trip reminded me not to get trapped in my own narrow worldview.

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