

第11章

映画の面白味は誰と見るかで決まる

太陽娘のメイには、好青年のフィアンセ、ヒロシ・中野(日系三世)がいました。二人は、三世たちの集まるパーティに、よく私を連れてってくれました。二人とも JACL-Japanese American Citizens League(日系米国市民協会)シカゴ支部の会員でした。JACL は、米国日系市民の立場を、保護・主張するグループが幾つかある中で、主に三世たちで結成されており、20代から30代前半の人々の集まりでした。(ついでながら、後に結婚にゴールインしたメイとヒロシの長女であるメーガン・中野が、現在の JACL シカゴ支部の会長です。)

メイはその明るい性格から沢山の友人がおり、また世話好きの、おセツカイ屋的なところがあり、私が増田法律事務所働き出して間もなく、まだお互いよく知りもしてなかった時に、ある三世の男性を私に紹介しました。

ヒューバート・K は、ノースウェスタン大学・生化学部の教授卵でインテリ、喋る英語が格調高く声がいい。電話で喋っていると魅力があるんだが、実際会ってみるとどうも冴えない。そもそも、一緒に食事に行くとか、映画・コンサートに出向くとかばかりで、第一話が面白くない。

Chapter 11

A Movie is Only as Good as Your Company

My roommate, May, had a fiancé, Hiroshi, a third generation Japanese-American. He was a very nice man. They were both members of the Chicago Chapter of the JACL (Japanese American Citizens League), and they often took me to its local meetings. JACL was one of the national organizations whose mission was to secure and maintain the civil rights of Japanese-Americans living in the U.S. They also worked to promote cultural values and preserve the heritage and legacy of the Japanese-American community. The members were young American-born Japanese whose ages were 20's and 30's. Incidentally, the daughter of May and Hiroshi, Megan Nakano, is the president of the JACL-Chicago Chapter today.

May had many friends. She was merry and cheery by nature. In her good-natured busy-body way, she made a special effort to find me a steady boyfriend. She and I had just met at work, and we really didn't know much about each other, but one day she introduced me to a Japanese-American man who was a biochemist, or some profession of that sort. His name was Hubert, quite an educated man. He was an assistant professor at Northwestern University. He spoke beautiful English, and he had a good speaking voice. As long as I was talking with him over the phone, he was attractive, but when I was with him face to face, I was

一度そのヒューバートと、当時大人気の『Butch Cassidy & The Sundance Kid』を見に行きました。ご存知、ポール・ニューマンとロバート・レッドフォード共演の、異色西部劇とでもいうのか、日本では『明日に向かって撃て！』という、なんか変な題名で紹介されました。まあまあ面白い、と思ったくらいでしたが、その同じ映画をちょっと後になって、今度はジムと二人で観た。するともう最初から最後まで、楽しくて楽しくて、こんな痛快な映画は近頃無かった、と思えたのです。

そのことをメイに伝えると、真っ正直な彼女は、

「リョウコ、あなたは狡いわ。ジム以外の人は必要もないのに、その時の都合でヒューバートとか(ジムのこと知らなかったから紹介したんだけど)その他の日本人のボーイたちと、チョコッとデートしたりするのは不見識というものよ」

でも私は、陰性のヒューバートに対しては、そんなことは言わなかつたらうと思いますが、ジムには、その映画はこれこれの奴ともう前に観たのよ、とちゃんと報告したし、大体ジムはそんなことてんで気にしないで、私がポール・ニューマンとレッドフォードの対話の分からないところなんか素早く説明してくれるし、それでおかしい所はちゃんとおかしいと分かり、ストーリーを十分呑み込めたから、尚楽しかったんだ、

「自分ひとりでヘラヘラ笑って、説明しようとし

bored. He took me to dinners and movies. He took me to "Hair," a smash hit stage show in Chicago in the early 70's. I just remember being extremely bored. We also saw "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," a highly popular Paul Newman and Robert Redford movie. I thought it was above-average, not bad, but not necessarily outstanding. Later, however, I saw this same movie with Jim, perhaps a few weeks later. "Wow!" I said to myself, "I haven't seen such a great movie in quite a while!"

I reported to May about this. That is, I found "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" hugely entertaining when I saw it with Jim, but it was just an average movie with Hubert.

"I can only say that you are rascally, Ryoko," said May.

"You like Jim and you don't need Hubert or any other guy. You are just using Hubert and some other Japanese guys. It is dishonorable of you to go out on a date with them just for fun. I didn't know about Jim when I introduced you to Hubert, you know."

I said to May, "You see, I told Jim that I had already seen that movie with somebody else. He didn't care. He would quickly explain to me the fast exchange of dialogue between Paul Newman and Robert Redford, which helped me understand the story. I was able to laugh with Jim. The brooding and insipid Hubert never thought of explaining the story for me. He was enjoying the movie all by himself, giggling

ないヒューバートが間抜けなんじゃない？」とか、
メイに向かってガムシャラを言ってました。

<1969年10月27日、母より>

[あなたは世界の情勢に疎いから困りもの、今回の勤め先の関係で、少しはそんな点に賢くならなくては困ります。アメリカと日本は、繊維製品の問題で喧々ごうごうなんですよ。生産高がアメリカに次いで、世界の二番目になった日本は、あらゆる国から金持ち扱いされて、その実困ってるんです。西独のマルク切り上げに次いで、日本の円も、切り上げを迫られているのですよ。それは日本が、どんなに景気がいいかとゆうことです。日米の貿易もずっと日本のほうが上位で、アメリカから、しきりに色んなことで、突き上げを食い、嫉妬の気持も持たれているのですよ。『エコノミック・アニマル』と悪口言われる、経済発展をした日本です。あなた個人の生活も、つまらぬ物質にお金を使わないこと。ジムのことはちゃんと記憶していますよ。]

<父より>

[12月22日冬至。大阪に往ってから疲労太し(はなはだしく)、塾々(つくづく)情けない。亮子併し少しも気にせず自分の途を往って(道を行って)欲しい。それだと農も安心だが、そうでないと此方(こちら)が参って仕舞ふ。今23日

all the time. That's not a man worth dating, don't you agree?"

My Mother's Letter Dated October 27, 1969:

< You are pretty ignorant about the world's affairs. Being employed by a law firm, you ought to be well-informed and knowledgeable. Don't you know that Japan is at war with the U.S. over the handling of textile products? Japan is No. 2 in the world's textile production, surpassed only by the United States. The whole world is treating Japan as a wealthy country now, but in reality, Japan is not doing well. We are pressed hard to take a step to appreciate the Yen, following suit to West Germany's Mark appreciation. Japan's economy is showing a huge upturn. We trade much more vigorously than the United States. We are constantly under pressure from the U.S., who is jealous of our prosperity. Remember, we were labeled "economic animals." In your private life, do not spend money unnecessarily. Rest assured that the name Jim is clearly chiseled in my heart. >

From my father:

< December 22, winter solstice - I've been so helplessly tired every day since I returned from my business trip to Osaka. Ryoko, keep your chin up, and go your own way. As long as I know that you have control of your life, I'm all right. It's actually 2:00 a.m. (Note), December 23. Your brother has just come to my room, saying that he's going to bed now, and that he'd close up the house. I think I will go to

午前2時近し(註)。オニイこれから少し寝るからとて雨戸を今閉めに来た。儂も一杯やって寝ようと思ふ。いつも乍ら太古の如き静けさ也]

註:

私の父は囲碁評論家という変な職業で、長年日本経済新聞のコラムニスト。姉は第1章で述べた通り歴史小説家、兄がこれまたシナリオライターで、この3人は夜を徹して机に向かう生活。母と、外で仕事をした私だけが、朝、普通に起きて、夜も普通の時間に寝ました。

また、食事を5人一緒にしたということは滅多になく、不定期に食事を摂るその他3人の家族メンバーのために、母は四・六時中、食事の世話で追い回されていました。

bed also, after having one more nightcap. As usual, it is totally quiet in the house – almost primeval silence. >

Note:

My father was a newspaper columnist. My sister was a historical novel writer. My brother was a screen-play writer. They all kept late hours. While I was still living with them, my mother and I were the only persons in the household who ate meals at, and slept at, regular hours. Rarely did five of us all sit together at the dinner table.

< End of Chapter 11 >