

第25章

兄の結婚、次いでジム二度目の訪日

<1973年12月30日、母より>

[ジムの横文字がたくさん書かれたカードありがとう。単語の拾い読みをして大体の見当を付け、暫に全文を訳してもらいました。

もうすでに何度か雪が降ったという、シカゴのアパートの部屋の中のジムと亮子を思っております。

昨日長文届きました。二人が一つ屋根の下に起き伏すようになってからの、初めての詳しい日常報告に感激。私は、結婚とは運動会でよくやる、二人三脚のようなもので、二人肩を組んで楽しく、しかし脚は三脚の大変不自由なものと思っておりますが、あなた方は、あのかなり長かった別々の生活をもって付き合った頃の、二人四脚といった生活の頃と、少しも気持ちが変わっていないことは、本当に驚くほどです。なんと幸福な二人であることよ。あなたの6ページにわたる長い報告のどこにも、ケシつぶほどの不安も見出せなかったことを、本当に嬉しく思っております。

来年7月、あなた方が、再度日本の私を訪れてくれることは嬉しい限りですが、、、。二人が、ジムが生まれ育って行ったシカゴの空の下で、仲

Chapter 25

My Brother Weds, and Jim Visits Tokyo Again

My Mother's Letter Dated December 30, 1973:

< I have read the letter written in English from Jim. I appreciate it very much. I picked the English words that I know, here and there, trying to see what he is saying. Your brother did the general translation for me. You say you've had snow a few times already. I am always thinking of you and Jim.

I received your long letter which arrived yesterday. I was deeply moved to read the first letter you wrote since you've been married, describing your daily life. I think marriage is like a three-legged race we do at a picnic. The partners are having fun, putting one arm happily on the shoulder of the other, running in step. However, your legs are tied together, and you are running quite uncomfortably. I am rejoiced and amazed how the two of you, who for quite some time lived separate and independent lives, maintain the same feeling toward each other, and carry on with the same degree of comfort. What a blessed couple you are! Nowhere in your six-page report letter to me did I sense a speckle of angst. I am overjoyed.

Your plan to come and see me again in July next year is good news to me.... But, I'll be happy and content, knowing that you and Jim are both in good health, love each other, work hard, living under the skies of

良く仕事に忠実に、そして健康に生きてくれさえすればいいのです。

今度の手紙で、ジムの将来の展望も分かせてもらえ、安心しました。それにしても、ジムの自動車の話は、私には心配の種です。どうか早く買い替えてもらいたいものです。生活の中の、つまらぬ無駄を省いて、どうぞ早く買い替えるべきです。あなたが勧めなければいけません。

スポーツを楽しむのは、アメリカの国民性だと云われているけれど、ジムの楽しそうな顔を思い浮かべております。

黒人の問題は、アメリカの一つの宿命みたいなものです。とやかく、第三者的な見方をするより、あなたもアメリカの中に溶け込むためには、その宿命を受け止めるよりほかはない、と思います。

「女の友達をリョウコは持たなければ、、、」というジムの優しい人間性にお母さんは打たれます。東洋でも西洋でも、男が男に熱中するということはあっても、女が女に惚れ込むということは、聞いたことも見たこともありません。それほど女は生来狭量なのです。優しくないのです。どうぞジムのその言葉の底に秘められた、優しさを大事にしてください。

冷徹な法律というもので、人間を裁く仕事に

Chicago, that great American city where Jim was born and grew up.

You have touched on Jim's professional vision, as it were, in your letter this time. That was good. However, his not purchasing the replacement car quickly worries me. He must do it soon. Don't spend money on other nonessential stuff. You must talk him into buying a new car quickly.

It is said that the love of sports is the national character of Americans. I picture to myself Jim's happy face, watching or participating in sports events with his friends.

The issue of the blacks is something that America as a nation cannot escape from. In order for you to fit in the U.S. society, you should accept whatever the society's trend is, rather than take the position of the disinterested bystander.

I was also deeply touched by Jim's words, "Ryoko, you need to have some female friends." They could only come from a man of compassion, who has a profound humanity. Whether in the Orient or in the Occident, a man could develop spectacular friendships with other men, but we've never heard about the great friendships between two women, for it has never happened. Women are not kind to each other. We think and act narrow-mindedly. I want you to appreciate Jim's profound humanity expressed by those words.

How deeply thankful and happy I was to know that Jim, who is engaged in the

従事してるジムが、心の中にそのような奥深い優しさを秘めていることを、私はどんなにか嬉しく、有難く思ったことでしょう。]

哲は、アフリカ、バングラデッシュから、約一ヶ月ぶりに帰ってきました。思ったほどの難儀はしなかった様子で、同じ開発途上国でも、ケニア、タンザニアは安定しているけれど、バングラデッシュは本当に哀れで、見ていられなかった由。それからビッグニュースを一つ、、、。]

このビッグニュースというのは、それまで何度か仲人口を通して嫁さん候補に会ってきたが、話しが実るところまで行き着かずにきた我が兄が、突如素晴らしい候補者に出会ってデートを始めたこと、相手の両親がメッポウ兄を気に入ったこともあり、見合いから2ヶ月も経たないのに、はや結納の段取りであること、です。母はさすが嬉しかったらしく、お嫁さん候補の22歳の女性のこと、その両親のことなどを書き記し、

「こんなわけで、1974年は、きっとお母さんの多忙な年となると思います」と、はしゃぎ、しかしこれまで通り、私への訓戒は決して忘れず、この1973年12月30日付けの手紙の最終文は、

[ジムの肉親たちに対することを、めんどうがらずに。あなたの肉親たちが、あなたにそれほど求めはしませんから、どうぞそのつもりで、そちらへつくして下さい。]

profession of law which demands cool, sometimes heartless dealings of human aspects, could entertain such unfathomable sweetness toward you.

Your brother has returned from his month-long trip to Africa and Bangladesh. He seemed to have enjoyed it. He says that among the under-developed countries that the group visited, Kenya and Tanzania were doing well, but that the plight of the people of Bangladesh was beyond description. Here's big news for you. >

The big news she gave me in the subsequent paragraphs was that my brother, after several unsuccessful meetings with potential brides arranged by various matchmakers, finally met one suitable candidate in early November. They hit it off from the beginning, and because the girl's parents were particularly pleased with my brother, the betrothal gift giving, *Yuinō (Note)*, was already about to take place. My mother joyfully writes about the young woman who was 22 and her parents, all quite likable in her view. She writes, excitedly, "Accordingly, the year 1974 will be a busy year for me." She never forgets, however, to give me the usual admonition, and concludes this 12/30/1973 letter, saying:

< Be nice at all times to Jim's family. Go out of your way to do a little something for them. Your own family over here does not ask anything from you. All the more, you should do your best for them. >



本1973年12月30日付け、及びそれより2週間
 足らず前の12月11日付けの母の手紙を、全文
 スキャンし、Walnut ブログに載せます。

<1974年2月29日、母より>

[日記を見たら、あなたの手紙を1月29日に受
 け取っていました。この一ヶ月、かなり色々忙
 しいことでした。]

母は、近づく兄の結婚が原因で忙しくなった
 日々を描写し、続いて、当時地獄の様相であっ
 た、東京の住宅問題に触れ、新婚夫妻の住居
 も、彼女の家の二階を改築するより他ないとの
 結論となったと述べ、そのことから発生する、彼
 女の経済的負担を憂えて、以下:

[こんなことなので、この夏あなたとジムが来て
 くれることも、嬉しいけれど一寸心配でもあるわ
 け。ジムを今度は、このむさ苦しい木造家屋の
 しかも階下に生活させるかと思うと、本当に心
 苦しい気がします。]

もしジムが承知するなら、あなた一人だけの帰
 国はどうでしょうか。或る期間離れて暮らしてみ
 ることも、夫婦にとって貴重なことではないで
 しょうか。

わずか二年足らずで、しかも云うなれば、あな
 たのホームシックを癒すために、またまた大金
 を消費することは、貧しく育ったこの日本の老
 女には、なにか勿体ない気もするのです。それ
 らの経費は、あなた方二人の将来のための

*Note: "Yuinō" is an old Japanese tradition in a
 wedding. Typically, the man's family presents
 the future wife's family with gifts. Once this
 formality has taken place, the parties are bound
 to marry.*



*I am posting my mother's original Japanese
 letters dated 12/11/1973 and 12/30/1973,
 for my Japanese readers.*

My Mother's Letter Dated February 29,
 1974:

*< I've just looked at my diary, and I found
 that I received your letter on January 29.
 I'm sorry, but I've been rather busy. >*

She goes on to describe her busy days
 due to her son's upcoming wedding
 ceremony. She then talks about the
 notorious housing problems from which all
 Tokyo residents were suffering at that
 time. She says that my brother and his
 fiancée would have no other recourse but
 to live in the upstairs of my mother's
 house. She was extremely worried about
 the cost of renovating the entire upstairs
 for them. She then adds:

*< I am of course happy that you and Jim
 are coming to see us again this summer.
 But, it worries me a little, for Jim will have
 to stay in the shabby downstairs this time.
 I don't like it. I don't want to make him
 experience discomfort. If Jim says O.K.,
 why don't you come alone this time? It's
 good for a husband and wife to live apart
 now and then.*

*You were both here only two years ago.
 To spend a large sum of money again "just
 because Ryoko is homesick for Japan"*

積み立てにしてもらいたいのです。

お金というものは魔物で、使い出すとまるっきり他愛が無く、アツという間に無くなってしまいます。世界中のインフレの中で、日本は最も悪質のインフレらしいですが、その中で一定の収入の無い我が家の家計は、引き締めるだけ引き締めなければならず、大変なことです。でもそのために、心のゆとりを失っては大変。亡きお父さんの寛さを思い出しています。

明子も、公務員という組織の中から出て、好きな道を究める意欲は強いのですが、あの対面恐怖症的性分では、編集者等との対話がうまく行かなかったりするらしく、あたら山のような大量の原稿も、空しく箱の底に静まりかえっているわけで、去年一ヶ年の間、わずかに中篇歴史小説を2篇だけ『歴史と人物』に発表しただけです。

しかし本人は、それらに満足の色も不満の色も表そうともせず、只毎日を遅々と過ごしているようです。これこそ本当に《春日遅遅》の図です。]

ここで母は、現代日本の結婚式とは、世界で類を見ない愚劣ショーであると、来るべき兄の結婚式の費用を憂える発言。続いて、

[3月は15日まで確定申告で忙しくなりますので、今日は取り急ぎ、近況報告を書いた次第

does not sound right to this old Japanese woman who grew up not having much money. Can't you save that money for your future together?

Money is a tricky thing. If you start spending it thoughtlessly, it will be all gone before you know it. The entire world is suffering from the worst kind of inflation now, but the type of inflation Japan is suffering from is the worst kind, they say. This household, where none of the members have regular income, must indeed tighten our budget as much as possible. It's a huge strain on our everyday life. But, I don't want to lose sight of a positive outlook in life. I always try to remember your father's broadmindedness.

Your sister Akiko has now resigned the position of stenographer with the House of Councilors. She is intent on pursuing the profession of a writer which is her niche. However, her fear of meeting people seems to be in the way, forever.

She cannot have a decent dialog with her publishers/editors. Volumes of her unpublished historical novels are sleeping at the bottom of boxes in her room. She was able to publish only 2 medium-length novels in a magazine last year. Was she happy, or was she not happy, about it? Nobody knows. She just carries on, unperturbed by anything and anybody. >

Then, my mother expresses her disdain towards the new wasteful trend of Japanese wedding ceremonies. "Why, they are the most ludicrous comic show of

です。

座卓と座椅子2個は、1月24日にほたか丸でシカゴに陸揚げされたとのこと(東急本店から)。もう家まで着いていますか？3月10日頃からは、大工の仕事も始まる予定です。

勝手なことを云ってジムを困らせないこと。ジムのお母さんに、気を使ってあげてください。]

と、締めくくりはお馴染み、私への訓戒。日本式の座卓と座椅子は、母からジムと私への結婚祝いの贈り物でした。



本、1974年2月29日付け母の手紙も、全文スキャンしたものを、Walnut ブログに載せます。

<1974年3月25日、母より>

[、、、新しい車も買わずに再びこちらへ来たいというジムの気持ち、涙の出るほど嬉しいことです。アメリカの大都会の中で育ったジムが、なんとも人間的な古風さを心の中に秘めているようで、最も現実的な職業の人として、珍しいことに思われます。そしてジムのお母さんもまた、ジムと同じ傾向が窺がえて、私としてはほんとうに嬉しいことです。

そんなことが、私の心の底に、いつもはっきりと、自信を持って印されている故か、ひとり異国に離れているあなたに、不安など感じたことは、一度もありません。10日ほど前、あなたのボス久保氏より電話があつて、あなたの健在を

all! Do I have to take part in it?" She worries about the absurd cost she'd incur.

< I will be busy working on the income tax return until March 15. I have written this latest news for you in a hurry.

Tokyū Department Store told me that your Japanese table and two chairs should have arrived at the Chicago port. Did you get them? Workers will start remodeling the upstairs on March 10. Do not pester Jim, bringing up to him every trivial matter of your life. Be thoughtful of his mother, as well. >

The Japanese table and two chairs were her wedding gift to us.



I am posting my mother's original 2/29/1974 letter in Japanese separately, in its entirety, for my Japanese readers.

My Mother's Letter Dated March 25, 1974:

< (snip) Jim's determination to come to Japan again, putting off the purchase of a new car, put me to tears. He grew up in the ultra modern metropolis of the U.S. He's engaged in the ultra hard-boiled profession of mankind. And yet, he has deep within himself an old world, quaint humanity, so to speak. He is special, indeed. And, I sense the same special quality in Jim's mother, from what you write about her. I am simply happy.

Never once did I feel uncertain, and worried about your living far from me because of the presence of Jim and his mother in your life. Your boss Mr. Yukio Kubo called me the other day. He said,

確かめ得た時も、「色々と火急のときは会社の本社を使ってシカゴと連絡取ってもいい」などと、親切に言って下さいましたが、私はその言葉を有難く受けながら、あなたはアメリカのシカゴ人です。つまらぬ郷愁など持ってもらいたくない、と思ったものでした。]

<1974年6月10日、母より>

[狭い庭いっぱい緑の中に、あじさいの水色が非常に美しく、ひとり起き出す朝の心は、至極落ち着いています。先月末に着いた手紙を、もういっぺん日記帳の中から取り出して、今読んだところです。母と娘の血を暫く断ち切って、冷静に、何回も読んでみましたが、やはり結論は同じで、即ちいつまでも精神の年齢を重ねない幼さ、です。]

母の不興を買いかなることを手紙で述べ立てたのか、今や記憶しませんが、私はこんな書簡が母から来るとすぐ英訳して、ジムに見せていました。ジムは私の他人を誹謗したり、弱きを挫きたがる悪い癖をよく承知してるので、母からの厳しい譴責の文章が来ると「リョウコハホントニショウガナイ」と、学校で覚えてきた日本語を使いました。

この年7月、ジムと私は2週間の日本訪問をしました。それに先立つ4月に、我が兄は朝子さんと結婚。母の手紙にある通り、新婚二人のために我が家は大々的改造がなされていました。それより少し前に母から貰った別の手紙には、

"Please do not hesitate to use our headquarters in Tokyo for any emergencies." I appreciated his words, but my thought was that you are now living in Chicago as a wife of Jim and as a member of the Popjoy family. You need not look for help and support from the Japanese employer's headquarters over here. >

My Mother's Letter Dated June 10, 1974:

< The purple green of the hydrangea in full bloom in our tiny backyard is simply beautiful. I got up, calm-minded, and well-composed in my head, as any other morning. I have just re-read your letter that I received at the end of May, for the umpteenth time. I read it in a level-headed, non-emotional manner, while mentally severing the relation of a mother to her daughter, momentarily. And, yet, the conclusion I have is the same: You are sadly immature. >

I have no idea what kind of a childish writing I had sent her to make her say those vastly reproachful words. I very often translated my mother's letters into English, and showed them to Jim. She would often lecture me, in her letters, regarding my old, bad habit of slandering others, or my propensity to side with the strong and beat on the weak. Every time he read how my mother deplored and chastised my writing, Jim would say, in his newly learned Japanese, "Ryoko wa hontoni shōganai!"

In July of that year, Jim and I went to Tokyo again for 2 weeks. My brother had

「魅力ある大都市とは言えないこの東京に二度も来て、その上こんな薄汚い廃屋の我が家に又泊まる、なんて、貴女のジムもちょっとどうかしてるんじゃない？ 考えてもごらんなさい。二人でアフリカの希望岬にでも行くほうが、ずっといいんじゃない？」

とありましたが、現実には、当時最悪といわれていた日本の住宅問題の真っ只中であって、新婚の息子夫妻のために、その廃屋を改築したことの財政負担は大きかったに違いありません。ただ私は、生来迂闊な人間で、そうした母の苦衷に、その時は気付かなかったのです。

ただ、我が家の建て直し作業が、かなり大々的なものだったことは、明瞭でした。先ず、母が大事にしていた庭の樹木・草花が全く姿を消し、冷たいコンクリートの建物が、敷地一杯に建造され、隣の家との間隙はわずか1フィートという、土地無き日本の住居問題、ここに歴然！ この年69歳だった母の、ただ一つの趣味だった庭いじりは、もはや叶わぬ夢となったのかと、私は愕然としたこと、記憶にあります。

<1974年8月19日、母より>

〔あなたの帰米第一信、受け取りました。今度の滞在は、ジムにはとても気の毒だったと思っております。気候の最も悪い時であったこともあり、私は殆ど元気が無く、なにひとつご馳走もしてあげず、ほんとうにジムに謝ってください。只ひとつ、今度の滞在中で最も嬉しかったことは、

just married in April, and they were living in the newly remodeled upstairs rooms of my parents' house. My mother said earlier, in another of her letters, "Jim must be out of his mind to want to re-visit this unattractive city of Tokyo, and stay in this rabbit-hut again. You'd be better off, visiting the southern tip of Africa."

I suspect she was under a great deal of financial strain from having to remodel her house for my brother and his wife, in the midst of Japan's worst housing crisis.

The remodeling of the house was quite extensive. The familiar wooden house was gone, and now a grey somber concrete building stood there, taking much of the ground space. Between her house and the house next door, there was only about a foot of space. Most of the trees, shrubs, and flowers, which my mother loved to tend to, were gone. I saw the evidence of Japan's housing problem with my own eyes, and I secretly wept for my mother, who was now deprived of her life's pleasure

My Mother's Letter Dated Aug. 19, 1974:

< I have just received your letter that you wrote soon after returning to Chicago. I am sorry for not going out of my way for you and Jim on your recent visit. For one thing, you picked the worst time of year to visit Japan, at the height of hot and humid season. I had not been feeling well throughout your stay. However, the one thing that made me exceptionally happy during your stay was that Jim had not changed from two years ago. Not one bit

ジムの調子が2年前と少しも変わっていなかったこと。あなたに対する態度などは、むしろ以前よりもっと細やかになっていたような気さえしました。あなたが毎度の手紙に、飽きもせず褒めちぎっているジムは本当なのだと、つくづく思ったものです。これだけは、今度の大きな収穫でした。どんなに遠く離れていても、私のこの安心感は、私を強く支えてくれることでしょう。]

has he changed. And, he was even sweeter to you now, I thought. He was the same Jim that you exalted to the skies in the interminable letters you sent to your Father and me. This indelible notion will stay with me as a gift from heaven. >

< I'm posting a few pictures from our 2nd trip to Tokyo in July 1974 in the following two pages.>



With my cousins, Sato-chan and Wakko-chan



Jim strolls the Ginza Street.



Jim with my cousins, Sato-chan and Wakko-chan



At a summer festival with Makiko-san, my cousin Sato-chan's wife





From left, Jim, me, my mother, Aunt Michiyo's parents, Makiko-san, Wakko-chan, Aunt Michiyo, Takashi-chan



Jim's masterpiece photograph of Mt. Fuji, which is rather invisible!

< End of Chapter 25 >