

第27章

日系弁護士事務所に舞い戻る

<1974年9月16日、母より>

[今日は9月15日、敬老の日であります。新聞もテレビも、何だか不意に老人が出現したかのようなぎょうぎょうしさ。でも日本の福祉行政も、少しは文明国らしくなって、まるで当てにもしていなかった私も、老人年金なるものを、雀の涙ほど受けることになりました。

あなたが帰米して一ヶ月半、時の流れの早さ、年齢の故か今年の暑さは随分こたえましたが、やっとこの四・五日涼しくなりました。そちらはもう、涼しさを乗り越えたのでしょうか。

ジムは毎日通勤を続け、あなたは？職を見つけること、家を探すこと、大きな二つの仕事、大変なことでしょう。無理をしないで、慎重にお願いしますよ。

腹を立てることは、自分自身のストレスを拡大するだけです。それにしても、私はあなたの側に、あのおおらかな、優しいジムが居ることで、安心しています。

ジムのお母さんから丁寧なペン書きのお手紙を戴きました。あなたが渡したらしい手土産の

Chapter 27

Back to the Lawyers

From Mother, September 16, 1974:

< Today is "Respect-the-Aged Day," our national holiday. Newspapers and radios/TV's, all media are making grandiose statements as if the old people made an appearance for the first time. Nevertheless, Japan's welfare system seems to have improved a little to catch up with the advanced nations of the world. I will receive an unexpected pittance of an old-age pension one of these days.

Time flies, indeed. It has been a month and half since you left for Chicago. The oppressive heat truly got to me this summer. It's my aging body, I'm afraid. It's been finally less hot and humid the last few days. It must be already getting cold in Chicago.

Jim continues to work hard every day. Have you started to look for a new job? I understand you are planning to move to a new apartment. Don't rush. Be prudent.

Try not to lose your temper too easily. You'll end up having more stress. I feel well at ease, however, knowing that Jim stands beside you at all times, his gentle and caring persona shining all over you.

I have received a very gracious letter from Jim's mother. She thanks me for the present you must have handed to her.

礼と、あなたとジムのことを安心していただけることなど書いてあり(明子に訳してもらった)、いかにもジムの母親であることをしみじみと感じさせられました。ペン書きの好意に答えるべく、私も本当に久しぶりに、日本古来の筆と墨を使って、巻紙にお返事を書きました。あなたの訳文を付けてお渡し下さい。

ブリタニカは、前にも述べたように、哲と朝子に渋谷本局から8月20日に送らせました。送料は2万6千4百円、思ったより安かった(註)。

註: 立教大学を出て最初の仕事をした日本光学で、私と上司東条さんは、二人揃って同じ時に、Encyclopedia Britannica ブリタニカ百科事典24巻及びそのジュニア版15巻を買いこんだのですが、私は母に頼んで、その全39巻をシカゴに送ってもらった次第。

それから、8月から、完全に哲夫妻の生活費を分離しました。月末は相当感じた様子でしたが、これが本当の姿だと思います。私と明子は、わずかな貯蓄の利息と、お父さんの印税(これもわずかですが)で、細々暮らせるはずですし、今に明子も大作を物にすることだと思います。どうか、あなたは、こちらの心配などしないで、ジムと二人の将来のために、一生懸命働いてください。

クリスマス・カード、今年はどうしますか。実は一週間ほど前、ジムのお母さんに日本画のカードでも送ろうと思い、出かけてみたのですが、

She says that she is content, and has no worries about you and Jim (Akiko translated the letter for me). That she is the mother of your sweet Jim was felt in every line of her letter. To thank her for her writing, I wrote my response on our traditional Japanese 'washi' paper, using the ancient brush and ink. Please hand it to her, with your English translation.

As I said before, Satoshi and Asako (Note by Walnut: This is my brother and his wife) went to the Shibuya Main Post Office on August 20 to ship your Britannica. Shipping and handling was 26,400 Yen, not as high as I had initially expected. (Note)

Note: *Mr. Tojō of Nikon, under whom I worked as a translator (Chapter 1), and I both purchased the entire 24 volumes of the Encyclopedia Britannica, plus its Junior edition (15 volumes) at around the same time. I asked my mother to ship them all to Chicago.*

At the beginning of August, I asked your brother to be totally responsible for his and his wife's living expenses, so that we now have two separate family units, financially, under the same roof. By the end of August, they realized the hardship, but this is reality. Akiko and I will manage to live on our small savings and your father's royalties that will continue to be paid, even though they are not spectacularly large amounts. Akiko will publish one of her major works soon. Please don't worry about us, and work hard for your and Jim's future.

Would you like me to send you a bunch of Japanese Christmas cards again this year? I went out last week to check out the

純粹に日本的なものが無く、また、クリスマス・カードもまだ店頭に見えないようでしたが。そのうち出始めるのではないかと思います(註)。

長い手紙を書く時間があったら休むこと。私は時々短信をもらえれば安心ですから — 母より]

註: 母は毎年クリスマス前に、アメリカ人友人、ジムの家族らに私から送る日本式クリスマスカードを、束にして送ってくれました。

<1974年10月2日、母より>

[親愛なジム — 思いがけなく、昨日は世田谷の私の取引銀行から、ジェームス・ポップジョイ氏より振込みがあった、との通知を受けて大感激しました。その前28日着の亮子の手紙で、二人が私の経済状態を心配してくれて送ってくれるとのことでしたが、私はこんなにもすぐに実行されるとは思いませんでした。その実行力に驚き感心しました。おそらく亮子一人では、あんなにテキパキとは出来ないと思います。本当にありがとうございました。英文で書けませんが、とりあえず御礼申し上げます。健康第一にお願い致します。 — 亮子の母より]

<1974年11月5日、母より>

[前半省略 — 敏感な青春時代にお父さんを亡くしたジムと、ジムのお母さんお姉さんたちが、

stores for Christmas cards for you, and also for a nice greeting card to be sent to Jim's mother. I could not find a nice one for her, and also, it was a little too early for Christmas cards. When I find decent ones, I will buy them and send them to you (Note).

Don't waste your time writing long letters. If you have that time, lie down and rest. I will be happy to receive short notes every now and then. >

Note: My Mother sent to me every year a number of Christmas cards with typically Japanese scenes, for me to send to my American friends and Jim's family.

From Mother, October 2, 1974:

< Dear Jim — My bank in Setagaya where I have an account notified me yesterday that there was a deposit made by Mr. James Popjoy of the U.S. I was thrilled, indeed. Ryoko had written me in her letter that arrived on September 28, that you were concerned about my financial status, and that you were considering sending a remittance to me. I did not expect such a speedy action. I don't think Ryoko is capable of making a quick decision, or taking a quick action. Thank you so very much. I cannot write the thank-you note in English, and I am sending you my appreciation in Japanese. Stay well. Most sincerely — Ryoko's mother >

From Mother, November 5, 1974

< — Beginning snipped by Walnut — I can feel how Jim, his mother, and two sisters must have endured an unimaginable loss

いかに大変だったかは、私には分かるような気がします。私は女学校の一年で父を亡くし、それから託児所の保母として働き出した母に、有無を言わず協力させられたわけです。これら二つの例から考えても、哲の長い独身生活のどこかさは、他にちょっと例が無いのではないかと思います。その意味で、これからの彼の行路は本当の人生といえるかもしれません。]

堅信礼まで授けられて、カトリックのポップジョイ一家に深く溶け込んでゆくことを、心から喜んでおります。そしてあなたに信頼を寄せて下さるジムのお母さんによろしくと、伝えてください。

それにしても、和紙の手紙の筆の運びは、持ち慣れぬため、拙劣なものですから、額などはとんでもないと、ジムのお母さんに申し伝えてください。

ジムの忙しさが紙上に躍っておりますが、ジムの爆発で給料が上がったり、助手が増えたりすること、アメリカ社会の合理性が見える心地がします。年功序列の日本のサラリーマン社会のぬるま湯の中では、とうてい信じられないことです。それだけに、実力で立ち向かわなくてはならないアメリカ社会の厳しさは、又格別でしょう。

山之内嬢に日本語を教える、、、生活のアク

when Jim's father passed away. Jim was still very young at the time. I lost my father when I was a high-school freshman. My mother immediately took a job as a care-taker at a children's care facility. I had no choice but to help my struggling mother and my younger brother in every possible way. I don't think Jim had happy-go-lucky days as a young man. In contrast, the extended single life that your brother has enjoyed until now is quite remarkable, I should say. He is just starting to face, as it were, life's harsh reality.

I am extremely happy to learn that you have received the sacrament of confirmation. You have now made one additional step towards being thoroughly accepted by the Catholic Popjoy family. Please send my appreciation to Jim's mother who trusts and loves you so.

Please tell Jim's mother that framing my letter written on that Japanese 'washi' paper would be totally wrong. I had been out of practice when I used our ancient brush and ink to write to her, and the whole thing was not at all presentable.

How Jim is so busy every day at work is deftly described in your recent letter. You described how Jim lost his temper at work, and how it resulted in his salary increase. That's the American culture, I believe, a purely rational way of seeing the world, far cry from Japan's "promotion by seniority" business system where all salaried men sit still comfortably on a corporate ladder, without making any particular effort to

セントにもなることですし、疲れないように続けてください。嘗てシーベル・ヘグナーで、スイス人のボスに教えていた頃の面白さではないでしょうが、そのうち日本語の読み書きも勉強したい、という生徒が出てくることを祈ります(註)。

註: アリン・山之内嬢は日系三世の女性で、私が以前働いた増田・舟井法律事務所の弁護士。日本語は片言操る程度で、仕事上日本語に通じる必要があり、当時私たちのアパートを規則正しく訪ね、勉強していました。私が、喋る日本語より、書く日本語を教えるほうが好きなことを、母はよく知っていたのです。

今回の手紙5ページ中、またいつもの勤め先の周囲の人々に対する愚痴や非難が繰り返されて、いつもの調子で、ジムに慰められたり教えられたりすることに一ページ以上費やされております。私は只々、ジムがどんなにウルサイことだろうと思うばかりです。

規則正しく三菱銀行の私の口座に払い込んでくれて、ありがたいことです。然し、私としては、あんな形の送金は、決して嬉しいものではありません。そしてジムのお母さんやお姉さんたちに対して、あなたの立場が正當に評価されないくらいがありますから、よしてくるようジムにも言ってください。あなたが心配するほど、まだ逼迫してはおりません。あなた名義で長い間続けている生命保険などもあり、必要に迫られたら、そんなものでも取れるのです。明子と二人の生活費は、実に微々たるものです。それに、

improve his circumstance. The demand of society as a whole must be all the more tough and challenging over there.

I'm glad that you are teaching Ms. Yamanouchi Japanese conversation. Don't let it adversely affect your life by putting too much energy into it. I bet it's not as exciting as when you taught your Swiss boss Mr. Juchli at Siber Hegner several years ago. You were teaching him written Japanese. I hope that you'll have students eventually who want to learn Japanese reading and writing. (Note)

Note: *Ms. Allyn Yamanouchi was a young American-born Japanese lawyer at the Masuda, Funai law firm where I used to work. She came to our apartment regularly to improve her spoken Japanese. My mother knew that I much preferred to teach how to write Japanese than how to speak it.*

In your 5-page letter recently, you filled one complete page with complaints and criticisms of people at work. This isn't the first time, you know. And, you were consoled and lectured by Jim, as usual, for every little nonsensical issue you bring up to him. I can only imagine how Jim must be annoyed by your idiocy.

Incidentally, please tell Jim that I am deeply thankful about his remitting to my account at the Mitsubishi Bank regularly, but that I'd rather not receive such favors. For one thing, this might not look good in the eyes of his mother and two sisters. Jim's kindness towards me might interfere with their proper judgment of his wife. I'm not destitute, yet. I continue to have the life insurance in your name all these years, too. I could cash in that insurance, if

信託銀行の利息を積み立てるのを止めて、生活費に当てていくようにしてもいいのです。どうか心配しないでください。その代わりジムと二人の預金を増やして下さいお願いします。依頼心のある哲のためにも、こんな形の送金があることは大いにいけないことですし、明子にもまた、あのお金などに執着しない超俗的生活形態を、一層進める結果にもなりかねません。どうかこの点をよくよくお察しの上おやめ下さい。

ブリタニカもクリスマス・カードも無事着いた由、安心。お願い一つ。部屋の中の写真を撮って送ってください。11月に入ったらちょっと寒さを感じ、石油ストーブ、電気炬燵、と使い始めました。ジムの車はどうなりましたか？ - 母]

<1974年12月18日、母より>

[、、、書き好きのあなたから便りが無いのは、忙しさの故と却って安心していますが、、、。

その後、特に変わったこともなく、のんびり暮らしております。理屈の通らない便乗値上げなど、いかにも日本的な物価上昇の中で、弱音を吐かずに暮らして行けるのは、やはり年齢の故

necessary. The living expenses that your sister Akiko and I need are not at all significant. I could also start using the interest from our trust banking account, rather than just saving it every month. Please tell Jim to stop worrying about us. You should save money for yourselves, instead. Your brother Satoshi has a tendency to look for an easy way out. He might take advantage of your and Jim's monthly remittance. You know your sister's unworldly way about everything in life: She doesn't need money; she doesn't know what money is. She will not try to correct her way, knowing that we have a regular remittance from you. Think about the adverse effect that your generosity might create. Please stop sending us remittances.

I am glad to know that you have received the shipment of the "Encyclopedia Britannica" and also the Christmas cards. I have a request. Please send us photos of your apartment. It's getting pretty cold in Tokyo. We are already using the kerosene stove and the electric 'kotatsu.' Did Jim buy a new car? >

From Mother, December 18, 1974

< I believe your continued silence, though rather unusual, is due to your busy life.

でしょう。老人は身体さえ丈夫で、ある程度の貯えがあれば、ビクともするものではありません。その点どうぞ御安心下さい。同封の新聞記事を、そちらの生活と比較研究して、あなた方の生活の指針の一つとしてください。無我夢中で日々を送らないように(註)。



註: 同封の新聞記事とは昭和49年12月15日付け朝日新聞のもので、『新貧乏物語 - SOS Tokyo 世界に冠たる家賃・食費』というものです。その切り抜き記事を、別途PDFフォーマットで掲載しました。

二人共、健康診断を定期的に受けていますか？東京はたいへん暖かな(冬なりの)毎日です。霜も雪もまだ。裏日本は大変な雪らしいですが。シカゴは厳しい毎日でしょう。ジムによろしく。- 母]

この頃私は日本商社の仕事はあまりにつまらなく、次の仕事もまだ決まっていなのに辞めてしまい、家にこもって小川未明の童話をひとりよがりの英語にしたり、あとの時間は家事に向け、少々遊んでいました。ジムは、女が家にすっこんで料理だの掃除だのに精を出してる、というのは非常に嫌うひとで、以前ルームメートのメイ・川本と暮らしていた頃でも、彼が遊びに来た時、私がちょっと編物をしてたら、

「さような妊産婦がやりそうなことは、時間の無駄である、やめられよ」

The most unreasonable "me-too" price hikes are rampant across the nation. I am not unduly affected by it, however. I carry on. People my age carry on, without being easily succumbed to adversity, as long as we are generally healthy and have enough savings. Rest assured, you need not worry about my circumstance. I am enclosing a newspaper clipping. Please read it. You may learn the difference of the standard of living between the U.S. and Japan. (Note) >



Note: *The newspaper clipping that my mother enclosed in her letter is from the Asahi Newspaper dated December 15, 1974. The title of the article is: "The Story of Our New Poverty - SOS Tokyo." The sub-caption is "Housing and Food Costs Worst in the World." I have posted this old newspaper clipping on my "Walnut blog" in PDF, for the Japanese readers.*

Do you and Jim get periodic health checkups? We are having a rather unusually warm winter. No frost and no snow in Tokyo as yet, but our mountainous regions are being hit by heavy snow. I'm sure Chicago is pretty cold by now. Please say hello to Jim. - Mother >

I quit my job at the Japanese trading company about this time, for the work I did there was unbearably boring (Ref. Chapter 22). I did not make any effort to find the next job quickly. I stayed home, cleaning house and translating Ogawa Mimei's works into English, following my sister's advice. Jim never liked women staying home, occupied with cooking and cleaning

と言っただけ(その割には、そうして私が編み上げて、その年のクリスマスにプレゼントしたそのマフラーを、ことあるごとに他人に見せて自慢し、40年後の現在も、いと大切に使っているのだが)、この時も、私が家にいて家事ばかりやっっているのは不本意だったのです。

ちょうどそこへカナダから帰ってヒロシと結婚してから再び以前の増田法律事務所で働いていたメイから連絡があり、規模もはるかに大きくなった増田・舟井オフィスが日英両国語達人な人を求めている、

「あなた、戻ってきたら？」

ということで、再び彼女と共に舟井弁護士の手伝いをする事になりました。5年前と比べたら、弁護士の数はぐっと増え、ドイツ人弁護士のヘルムート・アイファート氏が昇格して経営陣へ、更にもう一人米人弁護士ジェームス・ミッチェル氏がパートナーとして加わり、事務所の名は『増田・舟井・アイファート&ミッチェル』に変わっていました。弁護士達の下で働くスタッフ陣も、5年前からは少し変わり、しかし顔なじみの連中も何人かいました。旧友の太陽娘、メイと又一緒に働けることで、私はウキウキしていました。

all day. While I was rooming with May a few years prior, he came to see me at our apartment. I happened to be knitting a winter scarf. He didn't like it, and said,

“Don't look like a pregnant woman. Stop wasting your time.”

Well, that scarf was my Christmas present to him that year. He liked it very much, and he has been using that same scarf every winter for the last 40 years, showing it off to his friends! In any event, the idea of a young and capable woman staying home, busying herself with the household chores, went against his grain.

My old roommate May called me one day. She'd been married to Hiroshi for a few years, and now she was working again at Masuda, Funai Law Firm. She said,

“Mr. Masuda and Mr. Funai are in need of a bilingual legal secretary. Why don't you come back?”

I was rehired by the law firm of “Masuda, Funai, Eifert & Mitchell.” Mr. Eifert was now one of the managing partners of the firm, and they had one other American partner, Mr. James Mitchell. Mr. Leo Spivak was gone, and the number of the lawyers was doubled compared with 5 years prior. There were several familiar faces among the staff. I was quite happy to work again with my good old friend May Nakano.

< End of Chapter 27 >