

第9章

ジョン・ハンコックビルの宵の月

“Depot”はラッシュ・ストリート界隈で、最も人気のあるバーの一つでした。アメリカのバーは、日本の不健康な酒場、ナイトクラブの類とはだいぶ様子が違い(といっても、日本のバーやナイトクラブがどんなものかという、実際の知識は私は無いので、かような勝手な発言は、許されないかもしれませんが)、たいてい椅子やテーブルは、ちらほらとしか無く、男たちはただ突っ立ってテレビのスポーツ番組などを見ながら、豪快に飲んじゃ冗談を交し合う。実に健康で開けっぴろげだし、まず耳を覆う騒々しさです。

私はジムの友人たちに次々紹介され、ひとしきりワイワイふざけ合っていました。ふとジムが

「少し風を入れにビーチに行ってみる？」と気軽に訊ねました。

私はワクワクする気持ちをひた隠しに隠して、軽やかに歩いていくジムについて行きました。

シカゴ市には、ミシガン湖の湖畔に沿って幾つかのビーチがあり、その時ジムが私を連れてってくれたのは“Depot”から歩いて数分の、すぐ右手には当時シカゴの高層ビル、ジョン・ハンコックビルが聳え立っている、オーク・ストリート・ビーチでした。日中は日光浴や水泳を楽しむ人々が溢れているのですが、その時刻はもう人影もまばらでした。

Chapter 9

Moon Over the John Hancock Building

“The Depot” was one of the popular bars in the area. American bars are quite different from the bars and night clubs as we know them in Japan. (Well, I don't know actually how bars and night clubs are in Japan, for I haven't been to one. It's just what I assume from the books and the movies.) “The Depot,” for example, had no tables and chairs to speak of. The customers simply enjoyed drinks while standing, watching sports on TV, and exchanging jokes. The atmosphere was quite healthy and open. It was extremely noisy. One by one, I was introduced to all of Jim's friends. I started to enjoy the casual and frank dialogues exchanged among them. After a while, Jim asked me, lightheartedly,

“Would you like to go to the beach to cool off a little?”

I tried my best not to show my happiness, and followed Jim, who was walking in front of me with a light step.

Chicago has several beaches along the shore of Lake Michigan. Jim was taking me to the Oak Street Beach, which was but a few minutes away on foot from “The Depot.” The towering John Hancock Building, the tallest structure in Chicago at that time, was near this beach. During the day, Oak Street Beach was filled with sun bathers and swimmers, but it was pretty much deserted at that hour.

その時、夕闇の中に黒々と広がる大ミシガン湖の力強さ、湖畔に沿って立ち並ぶ、高層ビルの窓の灯りの親しみ深さ、なま温かく頬をなでる、夏の夜風の心地よさ、そしてなによりも、いかにもハンサムで、いかにも明るい風貌のジムの存在に、私はいよいよ心浮き立ち、ジョン・ハンコックビルの肩に斜めに懸かる宵の月がいかにもきれいで好きだわ、と言ったそうで、後にジムが言うことによ、

「リョウコが月を愛でたあの言葉！ そうだ、あれだ、僕の心を捉えたのは、、、。」

夜風、うま風、恋の風、その時ジョン・ハンコックビルの月に照らされた、我が心の奥深く吹きまわったのは、恋の烈風以外の何ものにもあらざるべし。その時から、ジムとの交流が始まりました。

私は初対面の時から好もしく思っていた気持ちから、一気にジムが大好きで大好きでならない、という気持ちになりました。ジムは最初の印象通り、なにより明朗、冗談の連発で私を笑わせてばかりでしたが、その内側には、実に濃やかで、他人への思いやり深い、優しい暖かい魂が潜んでいるのが、すぐ分かりました。しかも、その優しさ暖かさが、漲る活力と、鋼鉄のごとく逞しい精神力に包み込まれている、という風で、ヘナヘナした優しさ暖かさでない。

私はその力強く、逞しい優しさに、なによりも惹かれたと思います。

Lake Michigan, which resembled an ocean, lay in front of us, dark and quiet, the waves on the shore-line shimmering in the moonlight. The lake had a sense of immense power. The lights in the windows of the high-rise buildings across Lake Shore Drive were warmly inviting. The gentle summer breeze caressing my cheeks was soothing. Jim was so handsome, so charming, so cheerful. I was overwhelmed with enormous joy and happiness, and said,

“Look at that lovely evening moon over John Hancock!”

Some months later, Jim told me that he liked the way I said how I liked the moon over John Hancock.

Was it the gentle breeze of the summer's evening, or the sweet comforting zephyr that was so soothing? No, it was the howling windstorm of love that blew deep within me at that moment.

I liked Jim from day one in that restaurant. But as he started to take me out, my initial sentiment of just casually liking him changed quickly to a deeper feeling. He was always cheerful, and smiling all the time. He made me laugh with his jokes. But, I sensed almost immediately that there was an unmistakable quality of character hidden behind his outward buoyancy. The sensitivity and thoughtfulness that he exhibited for others on all occasions was heartwarming. And yet, his overall warmth and kindness were wrapped within his brimming energy and

ジョン・ハンコックビルに続く二回目のデートの時は、自分の勤め先の法律事務所が所在する、ダウタウンの真中にあるファースト・ナショナル銀行ビルの40数階から、シカゴの眩い夜景をみせてくれたほか、ダウタウンをぐるぐるドライブして、シカゴ市の観光案内をしてくれました。

ジムには、非常にバラエティに富む友人たちがおり、たいいていの場合、その友人たちと一緒に私を引っ張りまわしました。行く先はすべてスポーツ。プロ野球、プロ・フットボール、プロ・バスケットボール、プロ・アイスホッケーでした。連中はみな超熱心なスポーツ・ファンで、大事な試合でもそうでないのでも、プロの試合でも、学生スポーツでも、又シカゴ市内でなく近隣の諸州の町で行われる試合でも、気軽に車を飛ばして追っかけて行き、スポーツというスポーツを享受していました。

彼らはアマチュアの、16インチ・ソフトボール・チームなんぞも結成しており、仕事の後や週末は、これで明け暮れていました。ジムと親しいマラー兄弟などは、二人揃ってこのスポーツ没頭が原因で、それぞれに夫人から愛想つかされ、離婚に至っています。しかしそれは5・6年先のことで、この頃は私はジムに連れられ、丈高く、磊落なアメリカ青年たちと行動を共にするのが楽しくてならず、あまり色々考えるということがなかったと思います。

ジムは二人だけで食事するとか、公園を歩くとか、観劇するとか、そういうことはほとんどしませんでした。そういう、ありふれたデートをしないところが、かえって大きな魅力でした。

inner strength that was as hard as a piece of steel. I liked his warmth and sweetness that were not syrupy. I was greatly attracted to him.

After the John Hancock Building and its moon, Jim took me for our second date to the 42nd floor of the First National Bank Building in downtown Chicago. He was working for a large law firm there. Through these 42nd floor windows, he showed me the dazzlingly beautiful panoramic night view of Chicago, and then he got his car and gave me a driving tour of the city.

Jim had a variety of friends. He took me along everywhere that he went to spend time with them. They were all avid sports fans. Whether baseball, football, basketball, or ice hockey, whether it was a critical game or not, whether it was a professional game or a college game, they chased all the sports events. Even if the game took place in another state, they would drive the long distance to watch their home team play.

They also had an amateur 16-inch softball team. They played regularly on weekends, and even most weekdays after work. A few of them who were married ended up being divorced because of their preoccupation with sports. I didn't think of them, at the time, as overindulging in sports, for I simply enjoyed being with Jim and his tall and lively friends. Whenever Jim was with them, I was there as his date. I thought of myself as his "unconventional" date, so to speak, for he never took me to have dinner alone with him, or to walk in the park hand in hand, or

ジムはとても説明好きで、どのスポーツでも私が知らないゲームのルールを、事細かに説明してくれ、私はだいぶ通のような気になっていきました。一番ひんぱんに通ったのが、プロ・バスケットボールだと思います。地元 Chicago Bulls の選手はほとんど黒人で、その鋼のような首から胸へ、ギラギラと玉の汗を光らせながら、かもしかのようにしなやかに、踊るようにして走る姿を眺めるのは実に小気味よく、ごうごうとどよめく観衆につい引き込まれて、私も夢中で叫んで応援しました。

ある時、試合の後、ジムとその友人たちが、シャワーを浴びに行く選手たちを廊下でつかまえて、

「やあ、チェット、今日は素晴らしい試合だったね」

などと言って握手したりしてるので、はじめは

「へえー、あんなプロの選手たちと個人的に知ってるのか」

と感心してたら、実はそうではなく、良い試合を見せてくれた地元チームの選手にひとことねぎらいの言葉をかけたいという、根っからのスポーツ・ファンの熱意であった、とわかるようになりました。すでに女房・子供のいる連中(ジムの友人の半数を占めていた)のこの少年っぽさが、私にはまた魅力の種でした。

その Chicago Bulls の試合が行われるシカゴ・スタジアムは、いわゆる黒人街にあり、ジムたちが周辺に路上パークすると同時に、黒人の少年たちがパラパラッと駆け寄ってきて、口々に

「俺に車を見張らせてくれ」

to a movie or to a theater. He was at all times enjoying being with his friends, and I liked the way I was his “unconventional” date while he was enjoying the companionship of his friends at the same time.

Jim loved all sports, and he loved to explain to me the rules of the games. I became quite knowledgeable. He took me to many Chicago Bulls basketball games. It was quite exciting to watch the Bulls’ giant players run as lightly as a herd of antelopes, with their steely necks and chests gleaming with sweat. Before I knew it, I was boisterously cheering for them, along with Jim and his friends, in the midst of the roar of the crowd.

One day after the game, Jim and his friends caught up with one of the players in the hallway on his way to the showers. They shook the player’s hand, saying “Hey, Chet, you had a good game today!” I was quite impressed by this, for I thought they knew a pro-basketball player personally. Well, it wasn’t so. Like true sports fans that they were, they simply wanted to thank the player of their favorite team after its great performance.

As I said, some of Jim’s friends were married and some had children. Yet, they were behaving as if they were middle-school boys. I found their boyishness attractive.

The Chicago Stadium was where the Chicago Bulls played basketball throughout the season, and it was located to the west

と言って手を差し出す。ジムたちがすぐ25セント玉を彼らの黒い手に渡しているの、何のこかと尋ねてみると、路上パークした車を悪い黒人たちがいたずらして破損したりしないよう、俺が見てやるからその見張り代をくれ、ということで、

「なに、あれはユスリで、もしも25セントくれなげりゃ、俺たちが車に悪さするぞ、という脅しなのさ」

とジムたちはこともなげに言いました。

冬場のスポーツは他にはなんといってもフットボールでした。カナダ国境を越え、凍りついたミシガン湖を渡ってくる北氷洋の烈風が、雪を交えてもろに吹きつける、地元 Chicago Bears のホームグラウンド、ソルジャー・フィールド。詰めかけた6万のファンの熱狂的怒号と、眼下に繰り広げられる華麗な力と技とスピードのドラマに、自分もいつか酔いしれて、シンシンと冷えてくる足の爪先に、もはや感覚が無くなったことも忘れてしまうのでした。

ジムもその友人たちもみなその頃は、一人二枚以上のシーズン・チケットを後生大事に所有しており、私はホーム・ゲームは欠かさず見せてもらう特権にあずかりました。

また、いかにも荒っぽい中に、個々の選手たちの動きが、なんともいえず優雅な雰囲気添える、プロ・アイスホッケーは、現在でも私の大好きなスポーツです。

of the city where the residents were mostly blacks. When Jim and his friends parked their cars on the street near the Stadium, young black children would come running and extend their open hands to them, saying, "Let me watch your car!"

Jim and his friends put a quarter in each hand, rather nonchalantly.

"Why are you giving them money?"

I would ask. Jim's response was that the black youths were asking for small reward for watching their parked cars so that "evil" blacks in the area would not try to steal or damage them. He added then,

"Well, that's actually extortion. They are saying, 'If you don't give us 25 cents, WE will steal or damage your car!'"

Jim said that he thought the kids could use the extra money. He didn't mind giving it to them.

Football was a spectacular winter sport. The arctic wind traveling over the Canadian border and Lake Michigan blew fiercely into the faces of 60,000 fervent Chicago fans who packed Soldier Field, home of the Chicago Bears. I was enraptured by the thundering roar of the packed crowd after each play. The relentless display of the players' skill, strength, and speed made me dizzy with excitement. I would forget that the toes of my feet were so cold that they were numb. Jim and his friends each held two season

ことに接戦で、双方の選手たちが殺気立っていると、誰か一人がちょっとルール違反の動きをしたりすると、両チーム全員が一斉に、巨大な手袋をボタバタッと白い氷上に落とし、いままらんとする殴り合いに、真っ先に加わらんと身構える様子は、思わず胸が熱くなり、ハッとその気迫に吞まれる、プロ・スポーツならではの光景でした。

ジムはその頃は、ひときわく活力溢れる>とか、<生命力漲る>とかいった表現がぴったりの、少しもじっとしていない行動派で、風のごとく現れ、私をあちこちへ拉致したのですが、その初期の頃は、私に

『あの痛快な男友だち連中と私と、どっちが大事かといったら、たぶんあいつらなんだろうナア』

と思わせるところがありました。ジムに置いてきぼりにされて、淋しい思いをした日々も多々あったと記憶しています。

ジムはその時シカゴ屈指の大法律事務所『リーブマン・ウィリアムズ・ベネット・ベアード・アンド・ミノウ』で働いていましたが、まだ正規の弁護士となる前の段階でした。彼はジョージタウン大学を出た年に、同期の数人とモスクワ大学のサマースクールに参加し、そのあとソ連・ヨーロッパ旅行をして帰国、続いてイリノイ工科大学の法科 Chicago-Kent College で法律を学びながら仕事

tickets for the Chicago Bears games. Quite often, I was granted special privileges to be taken to the Bears' home games.

The professional ice hockey game was my favorite. It was extremely rough and physical, but the movement of the players was quite graceful. When the game was close and players of both teams were battling head to head, someone might make a move in violation of the rules. Every player on the ice would instantly fling his gigantic gloves onto the ice, readying himself to join the fight that was about to happen. The energy that the big, strapping players produced in that instant was so powerful and awe-inspiring.

Jim was active and always on the go. He was full of life, full of energy. He appeared and disappeared like a whirlwind, and took me hither and thither. I was simply happy whenever I was with him, but I had a hunch that if anybody asked him, "Who is more important to you, your friends or Ryoko?," he would without hesitation respond that it was those guys who meant more to him. I know I had quite a few lonely days because Jim was busy playing with his friends, forgetting about me.

Jim was working at that time for a large Chicago law firm, "Liebman, Williams, Bennett, Baird & Minow," but he was not a lawyer yet. The year he graduated from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., he went to Moscow with some of his classmates to attend Moscow University's summer school. He then traveled to parts of the Soviet Union and Western Europe

をしていたところ、ベトナム兵役でサイゴンに行かされ、前線にこそ行かなかったが無駄な一年を過ごし、その帰路は朋友と二人でオーストラリアを旅行し、その年(1969年)の1月にやっと帰国し、以前勤めていたリーブマン法律事務所と、中断していた学業かけもちの生活に戻ったところでした。

司法試験を目指し勉強もかなり激しくやっていたようで、私は当時そうしょっちゅうジムに会っていたわけではなく、また私自身も日系法律事務所の仕事に就き、それとともに仕事を通して、アメリカ人・日本人の友人も増え、その新しい友人たちと付き合い合うこともしておりました。

ただ、我が魂はすでにジムのトリコとなっていたので、ジムのことを考えずに時を過ごしたことがこれ無く、来る夜来る夜、ジム礼賛の長文を我が父母のみか、日本の友人たちにも書き送っていたので、そのためなんだか四六時中ジムと会っているような気がしてたと思います。

<当時の母の書簡>

〔、、、路傍の人の件も、必要以上の関心を持つことは無駄なことだと思います。人間どんなことがあっても、その本質は変わる筈ありませんが、あなたの第二回目のアメリカ滞在の手紙は、その様相が第一回目と殆ど変わっておりません。お母さんが注意したいことは、つまらない報告的手紙を延々と書いて、眠る時間まで取らないこと。

before returning to Chicago. He enrolled at Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago-Kent College of Law, to study law. While working at the above-mentioned Liebman, Williams law firm, he was drafted and sent to Saigon. After a year, he returned home. That was January of 1969. He resumed the study of law at Chicago-Kent, and he also resumed working at the law firm of Liebman, Williams, et al. He also worked part-time at the Legal Aid Bureau.

Jim was busy with his friends, but he was also busy studying for the bar exam. I did not see him every day of my life in those days. I myself started to work for the Japanese-American law firm about that time. I made new friends at work, both Americans and Japanese, with whom I socialized. I kept myself quite busy. However, my thoughts were always with Jim, and the days and nights did not go by without my thinking about him. I wrote lengthy letters to my parents and my friends in Tokyo, singing the ode of admiration to Jim. Because I wrote so often about Jim, I might have had an illusion that I saw him more often.

One of my mother's letters in those days reads:

< People you meet on the roadside are not that important, I think. The essential qualities of a person stay unchanged even when the circumstance changes. However, I must say that the letters you send us, describing your second trip to the U.S., are quite similar to what you sent us during your first trip over there. Please don't spend too much time writing the mundane

日本の友達に長々と書くことも、どうかと思いません。そんなことであなたが慰められるのなら、何をかいわんや、ですが。

もっと欲張って、積極的であって欲しいのです。なにかいつも、道草・迂回の暮らしのようではありませんか。路傍の人との交流に消費するくらいなら、車の練習でもしたほうがいいのではないかとおもっていますが。

荷物は9月8日の船積み、サンフランシスコ陸揚げ、陸送でシカゴへ。和服は全体のアクセサリ的気持で一揃い入れました。例の航空嬢にでもあげてもいいと思います。]

『例の航空嬢』というのはダイアンのことには違いない。『路傍の人』とはジムのみを指したか、ジム以外の折々の登場人物をも含めたか、定かではありません。

母は私が日本に居る頃から、自分の日常生活に現れるすべての人間のことを、よきにつけ悪きにつけ話題とする幼稚さに

『お母さんはウンザリよ』

と、しばしば言っておりました。そういう厳しい女性ですから、私が綿々たるジム礼賛の長文を、何通書き送ろうが、その返信には、当時ジムのジの字も出さなかったのです。

report of your everyday life. Don't write that way to your friends over here, either. Sleep is more important for you. If you say it comforts you to write long letters in that fashion, I would be disappointed in you.

I want you to be more ambitious and take charge. I have the impression that you are just going around and around, nonchalantly. You stop too often, aimlessly looking at the roadside objects. Rather than consume yourself socializing with the person on the roadside, why not learn how to drive?

The shipment of your clothes finally left Port Yokohama on September 8. It will arrive at San Francisco, and from there it will go by freight train to Chicago. I put one Japanese Kimono set in there, though you might not need it at all. I suggest that you give it to that airline girl. >

"That airline girl" must mean Diane. I'm not sure if my mother meant, by the "person on the road side," Jim alone or Jim and other people who made appearances in my letters. As I was growing up, I used to tell my mother about everything that happened in my life. I used to discuss with her every person I came across, whether I liked him/her or not. My mother used to say, "Stop being childish!" or "I've heard enough!" I don't think she enjoyed seeing the flood of emotion that I displayed admiring Jim in my letters. The word "Jim" never appeared in her letters in those days.

My mother was shipping by boat a crate of clothes for me. She hoped that it would reach me before Chicago's cold weather,

母は、先に第6章で述べた通り、シカゴの厳しい冬が来る前に、衣類その他を梱包した船荷が、私の手元に届くよう手配したのに、日本の業者たちの手抜きで、出航日が遅れに遅れていることで、この頃さかんに業者たちと喧嘩していました。私宛には以下 -

[、、、費用は一切こちら払いですから、でたらめ業者からそちらへ運賃請求など行ったら、ウカウカ払ったりせぬこと。荷物が届いたらすぐ風通しをしてください。

、、、お父さんは、あなたの手紙の中の出場人物は、ひとりも記憶に留めていません。お母さんも、年齢のせいか、あまり路傍的なことには興味が薄くなったらしく、フツと忘れる場合もあるので、あなたが睡眠時間を削ってまで書く必要は無いと思います。人生を、無駄の無い合理一点張りで生きてゆく人間もいやだけど、あなたのようにいつも遊び半分でも困ります。]

私は、尊敬する母の教訓は、少しも不愉快でなく、彼女の手紙は、いつも待ちきれない思いで読みましたが、たまにはジムのことを一言でいいから云ってくれ、と不満に思ったことは確かです。母が、ジムのことを路傍呼ばわりしたのは、かなり痛快ですが、これは山本有三の名高い『路傍の石』のモジリに違いありません。父は、母ほどのイジワルではなかったのですが、ジムに対する思い入れはだいたい似たようなものだったらしく、その頃の手紙の中に、ジムへの言及はやはり

but due to the sloppiness on the part of the shipper, the date of shipment was delayed. She was highly annoyed by this, and quarreled with the shipper, while writing to me:

<The shipping fee has been paid in full. The slipshod shipper may send you another bill. Don't accept it and carelessly make the duplicate payment. As soon as you get the shipment, open the crate and air everything out.

.... Incidentally, your father does not remember any one of the people who made appearances in your letters so far. The names of the people you ran into on the road side often escape me, as well. (I'm getting old.) I don't think it's wise of you to forever write about them, shortening your sleep time. I don't like people who live their lives perfectly, without making any mistakes. But, your indifferent, somewhat unserious way of life is not good, either. >

I loved to read my mother's lecture, no matter how sharp and sometimes quite acerbic she was. Nevertheless, I wished that she would once mention that sweet name "Jim" in her letters. She never did. She repeatedly used the expression "people on the roadside." That's a takeoff from the well-known autobiographic novel by Yūzo Yamamoto called "Robō no Ishi," or "A Pebble by the Roadside."

My father was too kind to me to use a parody like that. Nonetheless, he too would not say a word about Jim in his letters in those days. Here's an example:

ありませんでした。当時の父からの手紙を一つ：

〔、、、儂はもうどう見ても引退の時が来たので、惜しまれる？うちにと思ふが、明子(姉)はともかくも、Youと哲(兄)がはっきりせぬので、できれば恥を忍んでいま少し頑張る心算なり。亮子は併し自分のことのみ考へて、愉しく過ごして欲しい。ただ、間違ひだけはせぬように、また世間的の年齢のことを思い煩ふような愚はせぬように。

今年は台風ひとつも来ず、狭い庭に萩とかいどうが寂しく咲いている。檜その他落葉も、例年より早いようなり。『モンテクリスト伯』の手入れ済ませた。(これは私が日本橋の丸善で買ったフランス語の愛読書。父は後にシカゴに送ってくれた)。

有楽町のアメリカン・ファーマシーに入って、薄汚いのに呆れた。亮子、無事で元気を失わぬように、とそれのみなり。これから一杯やって寝るとしよう。午前3時近し。〕

本章閉じる前に、ベトナム時代のジムの写真を2・3次のページに。

< The time has come, I'm afraid, for me to step down. I should do so while my work is still in demand. I'm not worried about Akiko (my older, novelist sister), but I was hoping to see you and your brother settle down before I retire. Well, I think I should keep working a bit longer.

Ryoko, just think about yourself, and have a good time. Do not err in your decision-making. Do not be so stupid as to make yourself worry about getting up in years.

We have had no typhoon this year. We have 'hagi' and 'kaidō' blooming quietly in our small yard. Our oak and other trees are shedding leaves a little earlier this year. I dusted your "Count of Monte Cristo" recently. (Note: The two-volume French book I bought some years prior at Maruzen bookstore in Nihonbashi, Tokyo. My father sent them to me later.)

I was at the American Pharmacy in Yūrakuchō the other day. Not the spotless store that it used to be. Ryoko, stay well. Be safe. Chin up. I'm going to have a drink of sake now before going to bed. It's 3:00 a.m. >

A few photos from Jim's Vietnam days follow in the next page.

< End of Chapter 9 >



The Army headquarters office near Saigon where Jim worked. The Vietnamese woman is about to give him the doll she is holding in her hands. She wanted him to send it to his mother. His mother gave it to me later.



Jim in Saigon. The hotel in the background was the Army "barracks."



Scenes from Saigon, showing the old and the new.