

Terrific British Story Telling

SOUTH LAWN TERRACE

For Scenario

Dedicated to Mother - Kimi Morohashi

Masayoshi Koi

Another life ……

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Preface (まえがき)

前作“イギリスを創った離婚騒動”のあとがきに記した「ティー・ブレイク」からかなりの時間が経ちました。日本語から英文に翻訳する作業に想定外の時間がかかったためです。この間の経緯を難攻不落の山城にたとえたのですが、5年に及ぶ試行錯誤の末にようやく日の目を見ることになりました。

なぜ日本語ではなく英文に翻訳したのかについては、前作の前書きで述べたとおりです。その冒頭部分をここで振り返ってみます。

「冒頭に、本書を書くきっかけとなった日記を掲載することにした。日記そのものは、今をさかのぼること三十五年前に書き記したものである。何を今さら、と言われそうだが、一昨年、某ブログを通じて、英訳して投稿してみようなど思い立ったことが、ここに至った真の要因である」

日記の原文を、まず、イギリス(インターナショナルスクール)で習得した語学力を駆使して英訳してみました。つぎに英会話教室に所属する講師の方々にチェックをお願いし、プルーフリーダー(Proof-reader)と呼ばれる専属校正者の手による添削を経たのち、最終的に TOEIC にも通じたバイリンガルの先生の目を通して確認をしていただきました。かくして中高生にもわかりやすい、平易な英文による「South Lawn Terrace」の完成にたどり着いたというわけです。

滞在当初は普通の日記文のように、何をした何があったといった、ごくありふれた内容を書き記すつもりでした。ところが半年も経ちますと、人と人との関係性も入り組んできます。日記文がときに私小説的展開を見せる場面も出てきたりします。そのへんのストーリー的展開をとらえてのことでしょうか、プルーフリーダー氏からは 'Your British Soap Opera' とか 'Terrific British Story Telling' などの評価(feedback) がなされたのだと思います。

しかしそれよりも、英訳を続けて行く中で、日本語の表現がネイティブスピーカーには全く通用しないという局面に立ち会わねばならないときがありました。やむなく日本語の表現を変えて英訳せざるを得なかったことが何度かありました。まさに「難攻不落の山城を攻め倦む」状況だったのです。

努力が徒労に帰するのかと危ぶまれたりもしました。わずかワンフレーズの記述に対して何時間も費やしななければならないことがあったからです。一例を挙げてみましょう。

「ときどき窓の外に目を移し、単調に流れるコーンウォールの景色を眺めながら空っぽの箱のような空想を楽しんだりした」

アンダーラインの部分に、わたしは最初、次の英訳を当てました。

I sometimes turned my eyes to the outside from the train window and enjoyed indulging in fancy like an empty box, looking at the views of Cornwall passing monotonously.

ネイティブの先生方にとっては、この an empty box の概念が文脈の中で、イメージとしてどうしても頭に浮かんで来ないのだそうです。そこで box (箱) でなくて shell (貝) ではどうかと逆提案される始末、もちろん shell は日本人の私からみると違和感を覚える語彙でしたから却下させていただくことになりました。

いまとなっては貴重な経験ということになるのでしょうか。むしろ燃費の悪い車に乗り続けていたというブルーな体験、とでも形容したほうが的を射ているかもしれせん。

それはさておき、本文の中に適宜いくつかのイラストを挿入しました。一次資料である日記をもとに小説化するには途方もない時間がかかるような気がしましたし、そんな能力もありません。映像化するにはさらに費用がかかりすぎます。そこで "For Scenario" という副題をつけ、懐かしい往時の、そして現代的なテイストでリメイクした映画を見ているような追体験が出来れば、七十路を来年に控えたわたくしにとって、老境の余暇の楽しみのひとつになるだろうと考えた次第です。(2017.8.15)

Preface

It has been quite a while since I wrote “Tea Break” as a postscript of my previous work, “The Divorce Strife Forming the U.K.” It took much longer to translate Japanese into English than I had expected. I even compared this complicated process to a long hard struggle against an impregnable mountaintop castle. After as long as 5 years of a continuous process of trial and error, the work finally saw the light.

I already mentioned the reason why I struck to the idea that this book should be written in English not in Japanese in a preface of my previous work.

The beginning part of it goes like this; To start with, I decided to introduce my diary which had motivated me to start writing this book. The diary itself dates back as far as 35 years. You may ask “Why now?” but suddenly took it into my head to try posting it in English through a certain blog 2 years ago. And this is how things have come to this pass.

At first, I tried to translate the passages in the diary into English myself maximizing my English ability acquired at The International School in the U.K. After that, I got English conversation school native English teachers to check my translation, professional proofreaders to castigate it and finally a Japanese bilingual teacher who is familiar with TOEIC to confirm it through the whole. After many twists and turns, “South Lawn Terrace”, which was written so plain English that even junior and high school students can read easily, was finally completed.

When I started writing this diary at the beginning of my stay in the U.K., I was going to write about an everyday affair such as what I did or what happened as notes to self. After half a year passed off, however, human relations around me got so complicated that the diary sometimes turned into something like a novel depicting my private life. One of the proofreaders called my diary “Your British soap opera” or “Terrific British story telling” in his feedback because of this type of story line.

I, however, found it most difficult or even impossible to make native English speakers understand what I meant in some Japanese expressions. I sometimes had no choice but to change the original Japanese expressions in order to make them sound natural in English. It was just one of the situations as I mentioned earlier “a long and hard struggle against an impregnable mountaintop castle.”

I was afraid that all my efforts would go for nothing when I was confronted with a problem that translating just one Japanese phrase took hours and hours. Here is one of the examples;

「ときどき窓の外に目を移し、単調に流れるコーンウォルの景色を眺めながら空っぽの箱のような空想を楽しんだりした」

In my original manuscript, I translated the underlined phrase into “fancy like an empty box.”

It seemed to be too difficult for native English teachers to imagine what “an empty box” meant in the context. After all, they ended up suggesting to me that “shell” should be used instead of “box.” “Shell” didn’t sit right with me at all therefore I declined with thanks.

You might say that is a precious experience now, but a depressing experience like driving a car with bad mileage seems more appropriate comparison to my feelings.

Apart from that, this book is illustrated as necessary. It might take extraordinary time to fictionalize this diary, the primary source of this book; and besides it’s definitely beyond my ability. To make this diary into a movie will cost even more.

Consequently, I decided to subtitle this book “For Scenario” in order that this book enable me to experience for myself the fondly-remembered scenes as if I saw a movie remade with modern taste. I will celebrate my 70th birthday next year, which is considered as an important turning point in your life in Japan. Taking this opportunity, I believe looking back my good old days will serve to console my old age.

(Translated by Mari Kunugi)

South Lawn Terrace

Prologue

While I was year-end cleaning my room last year, I caught sight of a fat notebook bound in a black cover sitting on the bookshelf.

I took it out and flipped through the pages. It was musty.

An image of myself fearlessly enjoying the spring time of life popped up in my mind. What an artless face I had!

It was the diary of my time in England. The first line began with "9/6th It's now five past six in the morning — around 3:05 p.m. Japan time." I was in another country — England — for the first time in my life to study English.

In order to remember my time there, I thought I should try translating it into English. I might find something new in the diary. And even if I found nothing particular, as long as I could immerse myself once again in memories of that time, I thought I would have no regrets over giving it a try.

I The First Term

September 6th (Tuesday)

It's five past six in the morning — around 3:05 p.m. Japan time.

I arrived at Heathrow Airport at eight thirty last night. It took over an hour to get my luggage and get through the customs. Then I took a double-decker to Kensington bus stop — it cost one pound. My hotel was near Queen's Gate in Kensington.

It was getting late but a lot of taxis were still running. They were all black and old-fashioned, but looked so nice.

I arrived at the hotel after a 17 — hour flight via Moscow. There was a man standing behind the desk when I entered. He asked me to write my name in the guest book, then he took me to a small room on the fourth floor carrying my bag. The room was dirty and quite unpleasant, but this was my fault because I hadn't checked where I'd be staying on the first day until I was told by the agency on the telephone.

I didn't tip him because of the unsatisfactory room. He handed my bag to me and shut the door behind him after telling me where the bathroom was.

Looking around the room, I saw a color TV just under the window. I slept for four hours and woke up in the dark at around three o'clock. I couldn't sleep any longer.

I sat up, listened to my cassette tape recorder, and practiced English conversation by imagining various situations. Then, I thought of my departure, the deserted scenery at Moscow Airport, and the image of used

plastic plates after lunch on the plane.

Sep. 7th (Wednesday)

I went to the Japanese Embassy on Grosvenor Street early in the morning. After completing the procedures to enter the country, I left and walked southward through the city. I saw lots of old Western-style houses and buildings here and there.

I entered St. James's Park through Green Park and had lunch—ham and sausage sandwiches and milky coffee that tasted weaker than tea. Then I walked northward. I looked up at the statue of Admiral Nelson (Nelson's Column) towering above Trafalgar Square and passed by Soho.

Oxford Street was more crowded than I had expected. At one shop, a man selling radios and lighters was shouting excitedly through a loud-speaker. It reminded me of the busy streets in the eastern area of Tokyo, called Ameyoko. Unlike in Japan, where they sell goods indoors, here they sell goods outdoors. I thought it was too loud. I continued on to Kensington Park.

Sep. 8th (Thursday)

Yesterday I took the Tube to Monument. London Bridge, which spans the Thames, was not the bridge I had seen in a picture before. It was not an old bridge, so I was a little disappointed. In crossing it, I saw a cleaner wiping soot off the rails on the bridge. On the other side of the Thames was an area called