Chapter 11

Utsunomiya

by Saito Yoshifumi

Tochigi Prefecture
Area: 6,408.28km²
Population: 1,993,523

Utsunomiya City
Area: 416.84km²
Population: 514,626

Vocabulary Check

☐ evoke  [他動] ～を呼び起こす、呼び覚ます
☐ relish  [他動] ～を楽しむ、味わう
☐ launch  [他動] ＜活動、事業など＞を始める
☐ initiate  [他動] 手ほどきをする
☐ proficiency (in...)  [名] （～に）堪能であること
☐ enthrall  [他動] 魅了する、とりこにする
☐ lucid  [形] 明晰な
☐ abortive  [形] 実を結ばない、失敗に終わった
☐ voraciously  [副] むさぼるように([形] voracious)
☐ rustic  [形] 田舎の
Reading Bertrand Russell in Utsunomiya

Last autumn, I was intramurally transferred from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences to the Graduate School of Education, and, after clearing the backlog of work, I am now in the final stage of moving out of my old office. There are hundreds of things I am not good at in life, but one of the things I am hopelessly bad at is packing books. It takes me ages because, every time I take some books down from the bookshelf, I cannot resist flicking through the pages, which then evokes various memories of studying English and leads me to relish them for a while. Yesterday, when I was clearing the bookshelves, my eyes rested on an old file of Bertrand Russell Society of Japan bulletins.

When you are tidying up your room, old bulletins and magazines, as a general rule, should be the first to go. However, I hesitated to throw the file into a recycling bin. It was something special to me, closely tied up with my memory of Utsunomiya, my hometown, where I started learning English.

Utsunomiya, the capital of Tochigi Prefecture, is located approximately one hundred kilometres to the north of Tokyo. The name of the city is now associated nationwide with gyōza, but it was only some twenty years ago that the city, in collaboration with one of the then popular TV programmes, launched a town revitalization project with this Chinese-style dish as its new specialty. I never imagined my hometown would someday be known as a gyōza town. My boyhood impression of Utsunomiya was that it was a comfortable place to live, on one hand, with many good-hearted people around, but a featureless provincial city, on the other hand, critically barren of sophisticated culture. It also seemed to be making ambitious efforts to produce a local attraction, which finally bore fruit in the shape of gyōza.

To the best of my knowledge, Utsunomiya has nothing to do with English studies. I would have led a life totally unrelated to English, if I had not been initiated by two good teachers into foreign language learning. One of them was Usui-sensei, language teacher at my junior high school, who excited my admiration with his proficiency in English and
motivated me to become a teacher like him. The other was Suzuki-sensei, an old acquaintance of my mother’s, who was privately teaching English in the suburbs of Utsunomiya. I visited him every Sunday and took one-to-one lessons in reading and writing. Many of our reading materials were selections from literary writings by American and British authors, one of whom was Bertrand Russell. This encounter with Russell thoroughly changed my way of studying English. I was so enthralled by his lucid style and logical ways of reasoning that I started eagerly searching for Russell-related books. In those days, he was well known as one of the best English prose writers, and it was not very difficult, even at a medium-sized bookstore, to find a couple of textbooks or supplementary readers containing his essays. I walked up and down the city centre, often through Orion Street, treading on ‘Celebrity Handprints’—a cheap imitation of the famous Hollywood attraction and one of the remaining traces of the city’s abortive publicity campaigns—and bought as many of them as possible. I read them voraciously, consulting a dictionary every time I came across an unknown word. I even wrote to the Bertrand Russell Society of Japan, ordering all the obtainable back numbers of its bulletins. Come to think of it, it is amazing how foreign language education, provided by two good teachers in the country, could thus open a rustic boy’s eyes to the world and liberate his mind from the bounds of local convention.

Thumbing through the file of Russell bulletins, I decided to keep it, of course. I cannot, should not part with this file, I thought. Yes, this is where I started from.

Notes
Chapter 15

Urasoe

by Yamazato Katsunori

Okinawa Prefecture
Area: 2,276.49 km²
Population: 1,407,531

Urasoe City
Area: 19.27 km²
Population: 111,658

Vocabulary Check

☐ paperboy [名] 新聞配達の少年（新聞配達の少女は Papergirl）
☐ deliver [他動] ～を配達する、届ける
☐ abbreviate [他動]（語・句などを）短縮する、短縮して書く
☐ subscriber [名]（新聞、雑誌などの）定期購読者（[動] subscribe）
☐ elderly [形] 年配の、初老の（60 歳前後の人在を指す場合が多い）
☐ stinky [形] 臭い、いやなにおいのある（[動] stink）
☐ intolerable [形] 耐えられない、我慢できない
☐ fridge [名]《話》冷蔵庫（refrigerator の短縮形）
☐ correct [他動]（間違い、誤りなどを）正す、直す
☐ encounter [名] 出会い、遭遇
Reading

A Paperboy on an American Military Base

I was a paperboy for five years, from the time I was an eighth grader until I graduated from high school. I woke up at five thirty every morning to deliver newspapers on an American military base. Rain or shine, I would ride an old bicycle carrying newspapers tied to the bike. The newspaper was called The Morning Star, and the newspaper company hired Okinawan boys to deliver it. I was one of them, and my route was the Bachelor Officers’ Quarters (abbreviated as BOQ) on the military base now called Camp Kinser in Urasoe City.

There were flat-roofed houses and apartment buildings in the BOQ, and male officers and female schoolteachers lived there. The officers shared the houses. Most of the schoolteachers lived in the apartment buildings. A few of them lived in the houses by themselves, with no housemates.

Almost every day, I went to the BOQ twice a day: in the morning to deliver the paper and in the evening to collect monthly payments from the subscribers. This was part of my job. I rarely saw the officers, however. The war was raging in Vietnam, and some of them suddenly disappeared. Standing on the hill inside the base, I saw big military aircraft returning one by one from the south to Kadena Air Base. Those airplanes flying through the dawn twilight could have been bombers returning from Vietnam.

An elderly schoolteacher lived with her bulldog in one of the houses. I don’t remember her name now. She would invite me to eat with her whenever she thought I was early enough to spare time for a “simple” breakfast. Yes, it was a “simple” breakfast for her, but to me it was a luxurious American meal: a glass of orange juice, bacon and eggs, and bread with thick butter and jam spread on it. She would correct my English pronunciation, teach me the names of things, and ask me questions about what I was studying at school. She once gave me a fifty-cent silver coin, telling me to buy a new cap because the one I was wearing looked old and dirty. Boys at that time were proud of their “old and dirty” caps, but for this
American lady, my cap was stinky and thus intolerable. What could I do but listen to my kind and generous subscriber?

One early morning, she again invited me to breakfast. Taking out a brown bag from her fringe, she said that she had brought back a doggy bag from a Chinese restaurant the previous night and that she was going to warm it up for me. A doggy bag? What’s that? I saw her bulldog under the table, peeking at me. Oh, no, she must have brought home the leftovers from the restaurant to feed her dog, and now I would have to eat it . . . I did eat what she warmed up in her frying pan, but did not feel well all day at school because I thought I had eaten dog food. I was fifteen at that time, and it was only after I started majoring in English at college that I really understood what she had done for me.

I met many Americans in those days. It was often a brief encounter, however, and I did not learn where they came from or when they left my island. But I now know why I decided to major in English. I had always wanted to be able to read the newspaper I delivered and to understand what was going on in the world. Above all, though, I wanted to understand why the elderly schoolteacher invited me to breakfast, gave me the silver coin, and warmed up for me the contents of the doggy bag. I wanted to know who she was and why she lived at the BOQ. I guess this is the reason I started studying English seriously.

Notes

p. 86, l. 3 an American military base: 「米軍基地」。沖縄本島の西側には広大な米軍基地が存在する。p. 86, l. 3 rain or shine: 「雨が降ろうが降らないが」「どんなことがあっても」 p. 86, l. 5 The Morning Star: 「モーニングスター」紙。米軍関係者やその家族向けの新聞として、1954年に沖縄で創刊された英文の日刊新聞。1975年廃刊。p. 86, l. 7-8 Bachelor Officers’ Quarters: 「独身将校宿舍」。quarterは「（軍事）宿舍、兵舎」。米軍基地内にある小中高的アメリカ人の女性教員たちもそこに住んでいた。p. 86, l. 9 Camp Kinser in Urasoe City: 「浦添市にあるキャンプ・キンザー（米軍基地）」。p. 86, l. 10 flat-roofed houses: 陸屋根の住宅。戦後米軍が基地の内外に数多く建築したコンクリートを使用した規格住宅。沖縄では「外人住宅」と呼ばれる。p. 86, l. 17 monthly payments: 「毎月の支払い（新聞代）」。当時は現金が小切手で支払っていた。p. 86, l. 18-19 The war was raging in Vietnam: 「ヴェトナムでは激しい戦争が続いていた」 p. 86, l. 20-21 Kadena Air Base: 「嘉手納航空基地」。沖縄中部にある極東最大の空軍基地。ヴェトナム戦争中はここからB52爆撃機が飛び立って北ヴェトナムを爆撃した。p. 86, l. 26-27 a glass of orange juice, bacon and eggs, and bread with thick butter and jam spread on it: 「グラス一杯のオレンジジュース、ベーコン・エッグ、バターとジャムを厚く塗ったパン」。アメリカの朝食の定番メニューの一つ。p. 86, l. 29-30 a fifty-cent silver coin: 「50セント銀貨」。a half dollar coinともいう。p. 87, l. 38 a doggy bag: 「持ち帰り箱（袋）」。レストランなどでの食べ残しを持ち帰るために使われる。表向きは飼い犬に食べさせるというところだが、実際には人が食べることが多い。doggie bagとも続く。p. 87, l. 50 what was going on in the world: 「世界で起きている出来事」