



退任なさる先生からのメッセージ

Remembering Atomi

WHITLOCK, Robert D.

Nearly twenty-eight years ago, in the 会議室, I stood up and, with trembling knees, gave my first 'speech' in Japanese. By the time this is published, I will have given my second speech. This time my knees will not be trembling. Some will call it a farewell speech, but I prefer not to do this as I hate farewells. Rather, I would prefer to call it a 'see you soon' sort of speech, because you will see me again. I have noticed that very seldom do I see either professors or students come back to Atomi to visit, and I do not understand why, but you will certainly see me again from time to time, haunting the halls of Atomi.

I have the problem that any foreigner who has been here for many years has. It is the problem of the divided heart. Someday I shall write a story about it. Forever we shall have a divided allegiance, and may never totally be happy staying permanently in only one country. We are never the same for having lived here. We are no longer totally American or British or whatever else we are. Even if we are not fluent in the Japanese language, Japan has become so much a part of us that there is no going back to the way we used to be, nor do we want to. The ideal for the future is to travel back and forth. Before I came to Japan, I had no idea that this would happen. I wish somebody had told me so that I could have prepared myself for it. Even though it is painful at times, I would not trade the feeling for anything in the world.

My friends in America, for the most part, seem to think that I shall be happy to 'come home'. Some of them seem to have the impression that I have missed the United States with all my heart. However, some of them know instinctively that Japan must have also become home for me. And it is. Japan has been one of my greatest teachers and it has taught me to have an object and critical view of the United States. And Japan has changed me. When I was on sabbatical back in the early 1990s, I had

an apartment in Seattle. I had a box of stones which I had collected on the Washington coast and I arranged them in front of the fireplace in what was unconsciously a very Japanese style. People who noticed it said that it looked very Japanese and, yes, my artistic viewpoint has been changed by Japan.

I'd like to take a moment to mention some things about Japan that I have come to like. I will mention only a few because the total list would be exhaustive. There is 神保町. It is for me a bit like Tiffany's was for Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. When I feel down or lonely or frustrated with life, I go there. I browse around through the bookstores, buy something and then settle into one of the coffee shops back behind 靖国通り and sit and read. I return to a contented state. I knew every coffee shop there and they know me. That is another aspect of Japan that will always be part of me. Most places in the world do not have an area like this. In the United States, I can only think of New York but even there, I am not aware of an area that offers so much in the way of books and coffee shops to sit and pore over what you have bought.

Over the years I have kept a diary sporadically. Like all foreigners here, it is filled with the experiences I had in Japan which are unique. I have already started turning some of them into short stories or just essays.

However, for the moment, it is time for me to have a major change in my life. Change is frightening any age, but it is especially so at sixty-five and especially when we are all facing an uncertain future. We are all in the same boat and it is a shared experience. It is not only us, but the whole world that is facing a future filled with uncertainty. However, it is something we cannot really worry about because what will happen will happen. I used to worry, but now I am merely concerned. I plan to teach Latin in the United States and this is a good time for me to do it. Latin was what I use to teach when I was in America and it was my first love.

Atomi has been very special to me. I remember when I first heard the name. I was a part-time lecturer at 成城学園 and there was a call through Tokyo University that someone there was interested in interviewing me for a job. I misunderstood the name and thought it was 'Atomic' instead of 'Atomi.' One of the other part-time teachers there

jumped up and made the call for me. I am glad she did. If it had not been her, it would have been a lost opportunity.

Memorable experiences? Falling into the こえだめ behind the school when Prof. Umemiya and I went exploring behind the school to see where the pigs live. When I came back to the school, one leg wet and smelling like pig and more, the cleaning ladies had to hose me down. I still manage to go to class and teach in spite of having a wet leg and soaked shoes. The students were not very happy about the way I smelled. I remember twice coming to school on a national holiday because I forgot that it was a holiday. I was so embarrassed that I went to my office and stayed for awhile, pretending to the guard that either I had forgotten something or had work to do.

The future? My friends here all are taking bets on my permanent return to Japan. I cannot say they are wrong because I do not know the future. However, I am thinking they are right. I am afraid to totally let go of Japan, so I am maintaining a presence here. I know that I have been rambling from topic to topic here, but somehow it seems like an appropriate way to write: stream of thought. Please remember that you are welcome to visit me at any time in the United States, and if I have some free time, I will take you on a tour. At worst, I will take you to a nice dinner. This invitation is not a matter of form only, but comes from the heart. I will miss Atomi. And thank you for reading this. Goodbye.

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教育方法の実践例

『『映画英語』の授業改善報告——History of My Own Use of Movies in the Classroom』、

『跡見学園女子大学短期大学部FD報告集』2005年3月15日

『『現代英語口語表現』の授業改善報告——Techniques for Teaching Idiomatic Expressions

in English』、『跡見学園女子大学短期大学部FD報告集』2006年3月15日

その他教育業績 (著書・学術論文は除く)

跡見学園女子大学公開講座 (実践講座) 英会話入門、2002年5月11日～7月13日

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平成17年度公開講座 講座名: 『アメリカ映画にみる老人問題』、2005年6月11日

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