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Memories of my Hiyoshi days

Mitsuo Kondo

Introduction

In spring of 1962 I moved into a boarding house in Hiyoshi as a freshman. Hiyoshi looked like a Keio university town, but was such a country backwater, I wanted to cry. The thought of living here for four years saddened me deeply. I was a city youth, born and raised at the center of bustling Nagoya. But Yokohama was catching up. The population of Yokohama had almost doubled in recent years. In Nagoya, the population was standing still. There were lots of farms between Hiyoshi and Tsunashima back then. Little did I imagine I would one day be a resident of Tsunashima.

In 1962, the construction of the 500 building was completed. On the fourth floor the university installed the language laboratories and Keio Audio Visual Center, a predecessor of the Keio Research Center of Foreign Language Education. A Japanese professor of German moved our classroom into the new building that fall semester. The change was impressive and exciting.

The Hiyoshi area, including the Keio campus, had been controlled between 1945 and 1949 by the occupation forces. When I showed up as a student, some of the military barracks remained. They had been converted into a cafeteria, bookstore, and barbershop by the Coop, Niko cafeteria, and Umezushi restaurant. These makeshift businesses looked shabby amidst the gorgeous buildings around them on the campus. In the early 1970s the barracks were replaced by the buildings that stand today.

I spent only one year at Hiyoshi campus as a student, and most of my memories of the time are distant and fleeting. I do have clear memories of some of my classes, classmates, and a dandy professor or two. Some of the people I met that

year have remained life-long friends. My memories of Hiyoshi become vivid from the year I began to teach.

One day, during my junior year in the mid-1960s, I remember attending a class on Shakespeare taught by an elderly professor in a classroom at Mita. Without warning, someone rushed into the corridor and shouted that the tuition was to be raised from 40,000 yen a year to 300,000 yen for incoming students. The classroom burst into a roar of disbelief. A professor told us that the professors' meeting had not been informed and advised us not to take rash actions. The class broke up. The officials on the student council called a strike. The students decided to seize the Mita campus and take control. According to a newspaper report, the neighbors had wondered how things could have gotten so bad. "What does this say about our age," one man asked, "when the rich students of Keio University walk out because of a tuition hike?" A few days later the students voted to call off the strike. Classes were resumed. The students had disbanded the strike on their own volition. I had no clue that a similar thing would happen a few years later, but on a far larger scale. I am referring to a student takeover at Keio soon after I started to teach.

In the late 60s and early 70s, the campuses were cast into total confusion by the student takeovers. In the United States, anti-Vietnam war demonstrations were rampant everywhere. Around the same time, a scandal forced Nihon University to close the campuses of its medical school. The public learned that the medical school at Keio had been receiving financial assistance from the United States Central Intelligence Agency. The Hiyoshi campus was shut down for some months.

To face the protesting students, the elder professors were forced to work with the younger ones. In the confusion that gripped the campuses during the student demonstration, the associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, and assistants wrested power from the full professors. The process was trying and even tragic, especially to the young professors who had just joined the powerful professors' meeting. But it was clear to the full professors that they couldn't manage the entire student body without cooperation of the lower ranks of associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, and assistants. Through a long, arduous, unpleasant process, the professors' meeting was dissolved and the 'faculty meeting' was established.

After several months of occupation by the student rebels, the faculty and staff entered the Hiyoshi campus, escorted by a police task force. When we entered the teachers' room, many of us were shocked by the chaos and janitorial neglect. Dust as thick as five centimeters had settled on the floors and tabletops. Chairs were overturned. The doors of several offices had been pried open. The research

materials of the professors were haphazardly thrown about. From our perspective, the mess was an expression of overt distrust and hatred against teachers. A few days later, the economics faculty held a rally at Kinenkan to explain to students how to resume classes. The younger faculty worked as guards at the entrance. A violent group of students tried to break in with a long pole with a nail at the end, rushing towards the entrance. I was ambivalent for a moment, wondering which side to support. A few seconds later, I found myself amongst my colleagues fighting against the marching students.

The order of the day had been changed through destructive tumult. Amidst the confusion, I appreciated the meaning and value of freedom. Over the four decades since, I have been very thankful for the privilege of freedom. This was my rather violent introduction to the Keio faculty.

Changing Methods for Learning and Teaching

Methods of learning and teaching English have dramatically changed since my student days in the 1960s. Back then, only a few students studied abroad. Nowadays Keio sends about 200 students overseas for year-long study each year, plus another 400 for shorter stays.

The Fareast Network (now the American Forces Network) was one of the most popular radio stations for English learners. I began listening to English-language news and weather reports in my high school days, then continued at Hiyoshi.

In one broadcast, I heard President Kennedy addressing the American people during the Cuban Missile crisis. In another broadcast a year later, I heard the news of Kennedy's assassination. I remember the trembling voice of the reporter, and my own uncertainty. Diffident about my skills with English, I wasn't sure I could believe my ears. The next two assassinations, the killings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy, devastated me. Had the United States become a cowboy nation? Where was the U.S. heading?

All of the live coverage from the U.S. on the Fareast Network was broadcast by short wave. Only after I went to the U.S. in person did I notice the New York accent of Nelson Rockefeller and the German-Jewish accent of Henry Kissinger. People from my generation and older used to listen to the Fareast Network all the time.

My university English conversation class as a sophomore had about 100 students. However conscientiously and energetically the American gentleman teaching my class tried, he had no hope of improving our speaking abilities. He had more success with our hearing skills. Every week a British scholar spent the entire

class reading a textbook aloud to over 80 students. This experience would help me recite textbooks in later years. Another British scholar lectured us on poetry, with readings and commentary. This course was useful for my teaching days ahead.

English Curriculum

In 1968 I started teaching English, fledglingly, as a part-timer at the faculty of economics. I still remember my fear and trembling voice as I addressed my students in English in my first class. One day in January, 1969, my students told me that the Yasuda Auditorium at Tokyo University was burning. Three months later I became a tenured assistant. I was still working on my doctorate, and taught three classes a week. So I learned much through teaching.

Keio freshmen were required to take three English classes a week, two for reading and one for writing. A class typically lasted 100 minutes and had over 70 students. When the freshman became sophomores the next year, they had to take another three classes. At the Mita campus, all of students used to take an English reading class on economics in Japanese. All of the classes were mainly designed for reading, and all of them were too large.

In the middle of the 1970s, the teachers at Keio who had been educated abroad felt that their students weren't given the latitude enjoyed by their counterparts in the U.S. or Europe. They argued that their students had to devote too much time to the fixed university curriculum, at the expense of independent, self-directed studies. As a result, the class time for all subjects was reduced to 90 minutes and the English requirement for freshmen and sophomores was reduced to four classes from six. Students who before had registered for about twenty classes a week now enrolled in only about twelve. The English classes were attended by about 50 students.

In the 1980s, more and more students educated in English-speaking countries started to register for our English classes. At first these students were placed in the classes of our full-time teachers and expected to serve as role models for the others. The plan didn't work. A higher level English class was then prepared for them, with good success.

In the early 1990s we started an English seminar at Keio. Up to then, the English teachers at Hiyoshi had lacked opportunities to teach their main subjects in their English classes. In the new English seminars they could select and develop topics in their own fields. This plan was generally successful, although some teachers fretted that their topics might not interest the economics majors. Some

scholars in highly specialized or challenging fields decided to spare their students by selecting general topics instead.

The goal of the English seminar sections was to integrate all four skills of reading, writing, hearing and speaking through the study of certain topics. This, something I had long aimed for, was finally realized.

The first of the English seminars were three-hour sessions, held weekly for a year. In the spring semester the students read texts and discussed the topics, gradually honing their powers of discourse. In the second semester they selected topics for term papers, wrote the papers in an expository style, and presented them orally. All English seminar sections were held during the first and second or fourth and fifth period. This annual program worked quite well for my English seminar sections. Each of the seminars was taught by one full-time teacher.

Many of the younger teachers, however, complained that three-hour classes were too long and boring. To break up the tedium, the seminars were split into two 90-minute sessions per week and scheduled freely at the teachers' convenience. Next, the annual programs were divided into spring and fall semester programs. All of a sudden, classes that had been taught over a full year were condensed into a single semester. The students had to hunt for topics for their term papers from the very start, without knowing much about the fields. Papers had to be orally presented in communicable English to the other students. Each English seminar had about 20 or 30 students, taught by either a full-time or part-time instructor.

Some teachers complained that the students lacked the training to discuss in English in the English seminars. To answer this complaint, the English department of the faculty of economics agreed to set up a study skills program for classes of thirty or so students. This became a requirement for all freshmen in spring semester, except for the students with advanced English skills. All of the teachers, part-timers and full-timers alike, used the same materials for reading, writing, and oral presentation. Some of the full-time teachers thought it would be better not to use the same materials in similar ways for all of the students below the advanced level. These teachers were liberated from the study skill program: the English department allowed them to teach only the English seminar and reading sections.

Still other teachers complained that the study skills program was too jam-packed with material to teach to classes of 30 students in only one semester. They called out for student training at an individual level instead. It turned out that some of the students in the English seminars still lacked the skills in English to focus on the seminar topics alone.

In one way or another, English teachers are expected to develop topics

for training their students in English. To improve writing skills, I have used sample sentences in the vocabulary building section of William Clark's *Spoken American English*, intermediate and advanced. For speaking or doing listen-and-repeat exercises, I have used recorded dialogues from Clark's introductory and elementary courses. In the 1960s and 70s I used Senator Mansfield's and Ambassador Reischauer's speeches.

In about 2005, the faculty of economics started up the Professional Career Program at Mita. The program is designed for students who plan to study abroad or work for international organizations or corporations. Professors at Mita lecture on economics in English. This motivates some of the students at Hiyoshi to work harder. At the same time, a Research Project Program has been put together for juniors and seniors. Full-timers at Mita and Hiyoshi manage the program, running it as they would independent studies. The participants are required to present their research orally at meetings attended by their fellows in the program. This tends to encourage half-hearted economics majors, those with little apparent interest in economics, to switch their allegiance to other fields in the liberal arts. These two programs are regarded as important and prestigious as the traditional economics seminar.

Keio takes good care of its motivated and advanced students these days, though some may still have problems with their English. On the other hand, it also lets the students with less motivation and skills in English slip by. Students still unable to pass even junior high school level can complete their English seminars and graduate. This is deplorable! Students with poorer writing skills should be identified by careful screening in the study skills course. Before advancing to the English seminars, these students should be advised to enroll in lower intermediate level course, for training in basic speaking and writing at the Keio Research Center for Foreign Language Education. We urgently need this sort of improvement for our students.

English Seminar and Free Study

In the 1960s, most of the English teachers at Hiyoshi and Mita taught their classes by having their students translate English language novels into Japanese. And they taught English writing by translating short Japanese sentences into English. In 1968 I selected three textbooks: *Japan in World History* by George Bailey Sansom, and *America and the World Revolution* and *The Present-Day Experiment in Western Civilization* by Arnold Toynbee. All of these texts were easy

to read and useful, to a certain extent, in practicing the art of self-expression in English. On reflection I was very lucky to have access to these two great scholars in rather easy texts, as the U.S. and Japan were my main interests. In the 1960s, in my twenties, I practiced English by speaking it in classrooms. Looking back, I hope that my students learned something from my classes. In one writing class I selected a collection of articles from Japanese newspapers with model translations in English. I joined my students in learning these model translations by heart.

In my first days as a teacher I attended a training course for conference interpreters for my own training. Every weekday we worked with David Riesman's lecture at International Christian University, summarizing it, reproducing it in our own words, and doing listen-and-repeat exercises with audio tapes. This was the most helpful thing I could have done to improve my hearing and speaking. Through the experience I came to realize how effective the language laboratory could be. My methods of teaching in the future began to take shape from that time.

In my Free Study class in the late 1970s I used Thomas Bailey's *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace*. The class was conducted in Japanese. One student asked me why I didn't use the same sort of material for my regular English reading classes. Intrigued by the idea, I decided to try that out. Mary A. Hussey's *Expository Writing* was published in 1977. This changed my writing class altogether. Instead of translating Japanese newspapers into English, the students in my new classes had to write term papers. Longman published a *Dictionary of Contemporary English* in 1978. This was far more comprehensive in sample sentences than the counterpart, from Oxford. Longman's and the Kenkyusha *Dictionary of English Collocations* have been my full-time companions. No other reference works have helped me more in my quest to compose English.

The English learning environment nowadays is far more various than it once was. Commercial language schools are everywhere. Students can use sophisticated software and computer networks to learn. Cable television channels broadcast foreign programs. Keio has even started up an English lounge where students lounge about with a native English speaker to chat. There are also outstanding exchange programs from which to choose. Even the regular classes are taught with sophisticated learning tools of various types. Teachers should tell their students about all of the paths open to them in their struggles to master English. The importance of learning outside of the classroom must be stressed. I have my students spend 100 hours, including class time, on their course work for the English seminars. The time spent learning is an effective criterion for measuring achievement.

The present curriculum is very demanding for the faculty. The part-time instructors, for example, must visit campus twice a week and review the dozens of papers from their students. Sometimes they have to counsel students outside of their regular teaching hours. These tasks are reasonable for full-time instructors, but not for faculty with other obligations. We should treat our part-timers more appreciatively and give them the leeway to teach as they like. Full-timers must always be mindful of the pressures that the part-timers have to bear.

English Teachers of Yesteryear

When I joined the English staff on the faculty of economics, there were three factions of teachers: one made up of graduates from Keio University; another, of graduates of the former Tokyo University of Education; and a third, of graduates from various other universities. The distrust and animosity ran deep among these groups. A Japanese professor of French once likened the situation to a civil war. Fruitful and constructive discussion among them was too much to hope for.

From about 1980, Japanese instructors with doctorates from the U.S. started to join. With new blood in the system, communications within the faculty slowly started to improve, eroding our longstanding divisions. This isn't to say our differences didn't get in the way at the beginning. In one sad case, we were unable to constructively discuss how to accommodate our first tenured foreign teacher on the English staff, who spoke very little Japanese. Soon she gave up on us and moved from the economics faculty to a private university in Tokyo. Luckily she liked her new position: she remains there to this day. In ensuing years the older professors retired and younger Japanese staff joined along with foreign teachers. The latter built up a tradition of dynamic discussion among full-time English staff, gradually doing away the bitter feuds altogether.

American Studies

My Free Study courses are held in Japanese. Since 1977, I have worked out programs on ethnic studies, United States foreign policy, and intellectual exchanges between the United States and Japan. In 1996 the class evolved into a general education course, Area Studies-Contemporary State of Affairs in the United States.

In the late 70s, the United States-Japan Friendship Commission bestowed Keio a grant to fund an exchange of scholars. Two American scholars came for two years each, one after another, to teach American Cultural History at the International

Center, and two young Japanese scholars went to Yale and Johns Hopkins to research American Studies. Keio started offering American History as a subject for general education. Today we teach courses in American History, US Southern Culture, and Drama in Japanese. Aspects of American culture are also taught in our various English programs. This seems to be about all that we now teach. The faculty of law offers a minor program of American Studies, but this is open only to the students on their faculty. The other faculties should set up similar courses, but make them available to the students from other fields. Japanese studies are a success. The wide renown of *The Japanese* by Edwin Reischauer and 『美しき日本の残像』 (*Lost Japan*) by Alex Kerr in both Japan and abroad attests to this. I hope comparable counterparts in American Studies will emerge in Japan.

Study Abroad

I've lived for extended periods overseas three times over the past decades: once for a stint at George Washington University, from 1971 to 75, once for a two-year stint by 塾派遣, from 1984 to 1986, and once on sabbatical, from 1997 to 1998. All of these years were rewarding, meaningful and fun. Not having studied American culture systematically before setting foot on American soil, I had the opportunity to experience the basics first-hand on my visits.

On my way to Washington D.C., I spent a few days at a friend's home in Seattle. Her wooden house was built in the 1930s. Why, I wondered, did the United States, a country with a far shorter history than Japan's, have houses older than my parents' one. Never before had I so clearly understood the devastation wrought upon my own country by World War II.

Washington D.C. was a place rich in opportunities to learn about American culture. The universities in and around the city have formed an open consortium, allowing students to move from one institution to another. The Smithsonian Institute has immense archives in many categories, from natural science to cultural artifacts. The Library of Congress houses documents of every variety, from Thomas Jefferson's manuscripts to historic films. Research institutes abound throughout the city, as well as in the suburbs. D.C. is also a "company" town, populated by lobbyists, industry representatives, and associations vying for government contracts for every kind of activity. Contracts for defense research are of course included.

In 1968, three years before I arrived in D.C., the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had fomented riots around town. Stokely Carmichael started a

small demonstration on U Street, then moved it southward along 14th street. The crowd grew larger and larger as he led it forward, defying calls from the authorities to stand down. By afternoon the parade had grown to a mass protest covered by national media. The federal and city governments shut down, as did local businesses and shops. People fled homeward from the downtown neighborhoods, unsettled by the threat of violence. At last the protesters erupted, setting small fires throughout the city. The next early morning, President Johnson and Mayor Walter Washington called in federal troops to quell the outbreak. Tanks rolled into Washington D.C.

When I arrived at D.C., I found scars from the riots everywhere on U street, 14th street, and Georgia Avenue. My interest was piqued by tourist advisories warning visitors not to enter north of Massachusetts Avenue, so I decided to go and take a look. Actually, it was not so bad. Anacostia had quickly transformed, in the early 1960s, from a cluster of rich white neighborhoods into a knot of black ghettos. In retrospect, my foray into the area seems reckless. Since marrying, my wife and I have ventured into many places regarded as rather unsafe, usually in the company of social workers or community leaders or organizers. Riot scars could still be seen in many places as late as the 1990s. Since then, the subway stations for the new rail system in D.C. have helped these areas redevelop. I am to continue researching D.C. and publishing accounts of urban life there.

I spent the summer of 1997 in Montreal. This gave me my first glimpses of the U.S. from another country, besides Japan or the U.S. itself. Though surely influenced by their huge neighbor, the French Canadians were independent and stable, sustained by a strong cultural identity. The Anglo Canadians were forlorn, saddened by the decline of English dominance, but they had faith that their Anglo culture would live on, in its modest way. The Anglo and French cultures coexisted harmoniously, though there were occasional tensions. Many of the French Canadians couldn't speak English at all, even in Montreal. Others spoke English with strong French accents, even after exposure to the U.S. educational system. Contemplating this, I wondered if it was fair to criticize the Japanese for speaking poor English. My days in Montreal helped me gain a more detached perspective on the United States.

Interpreter Days

From 1972 to 1975 I worked as a contract interpreter for the U.S. Department of State. My status as a foreign resident deprived me of the opportunity to sit in at

cabinet level meetings. Japan was still quite far behind America economically in the early 1970s. Students today can fly to the U.S. on a whim, whereas even the established businessmen and journalists of the 1970s had trouble affording the exorbitant expense. The U.S. government regularly invited Japanese leaders in their forties—novelists, journalists, scholars, and politicians—to travel through the U.S. on forty-five day tours. I had the privilege to travel with some of these people for three years in a row, on my summer holidays. This served as a sort of on-the-job training for me; an opportunity to interact with decision-makers from many organizations, universities, and government agencies.

I have often rubbed shoulders with the posh classes of American society, sometimes gaining view of the sensitive ethnic situations in the United States. Over a lunch I shared with a group of businessmen, the vice president of an oil corporation opined that Kissinger was greatly privileged, as a Jew, to wield influence in the handling of the Middle East crisis. Moments later, he thundered at a Jewish American executive, asking him if any Jewish organizations had ever thought of assassinating Kissinger. At another social function, the host and hostess took me aside with another Japanese guest and apologized for what the United States had done to Japanese Americans during the Second World War. Then a western-looking lady with darker skin went on for about thirty minutes about the Americans' bad habit of tracing back their ethnic background. She spoke in a weeping tone, but oddly shed no tears. I was moved by the words of Al Gore, at the Democratic National Convention of 2008, when he told the convention: "Barack Obama's vision and his voice represent the best of America. His life experience embodies the essence of our motto, *E pluribus unum*, out of many one." The United States has come this far.

My generation of interpreters was mostly involved in intellectual rather than physical or practical activities. One interpreter of my previous generation in the 1950s told me that his colleagues had accompanied Japanese visitors to construction site after construction site, slaughterhouse after slaughterhouse, mine dig after mine dig. Some of the scenes had filled him with horror. Interpretation was a great way to deepen one's understanding of American culture.

Changes in America

On September 10, 2001, my wife and I flew from Seattle to Narita. Soon after arriving home, we learned that the World Trade Center had been being attacked by two airplanes; that the Pentagon had been hit by another; that a fourth plane had

crashed in Pennsylvania. I watched the ABC news live by NHK satellite in my living room. I spent several days, sprawled in my chair or on the floor, transfixed by the surreal events replayed again and again on the TV. I watched the news throughout the mornings, then napped in the afternoons, when the broadcasts from the U.S. time zone went off the air. The attack had been compared to Pearl Harbor. In the ensuing weeks war looked imminent. Later, when the U.S. administration turned its sights to Iraq, it expected to occupy that country as successfully as the U.S. had occupied Germany and Japan years earlier. The comparison seemed completely off the mark. I felt impotent anger at the Japanese prime minister and European leaders for failing to dissuade the White House. But no one expected the war in Iraq to last so long.

In Kennedy's days, the United States was strong and gave hope and dreams to the world. There was something bright behind the United States, something epitomized by the newspaper and magazine reports of the young President and his family. The exchange rate of 360 yen for a dollar was floated in 1971. Two decades later, the Cold War was over. The United States looked dominant. But now, fifteen years later, we find ourselves living in a post-American world. The changing face of America and its international roles are naturally reflected in English teaching and lecturing on American culture.

At school and university I learned the King's English on paper but was exposed to American English in everyday Japanese society. English as a foreign language is now accepted. To communicate with other cultures more deeply, Japan needs polyglots. Gradually they are starting to appear.

In the 1960s we learned about America by studying the history of American literature. Today we study various courses on the U.S. in the liberal arts. A host of courses on other cultures, such as those of China and the Latin world, are also taught.

New Environment

How do we speak English at the Hiyoshi campus? There are constant English interactions between the students and the faculty. The director of the Academic Affairs Center encourages students and colleagues to attend commercial foreign language schools. This is a good thing. Recently I had dinner with a former student, a Japanese man now teaching English at high school in Kobe. A waiter at the Faculty Lounge approached him and said, "Finished?" in English. He passed as a native English speaker of Asian descent.

The environment for teaching and research has been much improved. The new library was built in the middle of the 1980s. The old Fujiyama library had been much too crowded. Now there is ample space for students and faculty alike. The 300 building completed in the middle of the 1990s makes an excellent venue for foreign language teaching. The Raiosha office building provides an exciting environment for students and faculty as a new center for exchange at Hiyoshi. Sundry programs are available there, and there are many more interdepartmental exchanges among the faculty. My seven years there have been most pleasant. Hiyoshi Campus will continue to advance academically.

In closing, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all of the staff at Keio, full-time and part-time, for offering their consideration and support; to the late Marvin Fast and Vera Wongstedt Gunnarson, for kindly guiding me during my high school and university days; and to the late Chuck Schmidt, for stimulating my intellectual imagination over the last 25 years.