

## 第20章

### 米国再入国、ちょっとくら待った！

前章で述べた日本一時帰国(1972年4月)は、実は父の容態が少し芳しくないと母から聞いていたので、日本滞在は少し長引くであろうとの予想がありました。そのため私は、前年9月から働き出したばかりのベーカー・アンド・マッケンジー法律事務所は、どうせたいして面白くもなかっただし、いつもの調子でこともなげに退職して、父母の元に飛び戻った次第。

「こともなげに」などと放言すれば、少々怪しからんと考える読者もありそうですが、実際、それまでのシカゴにおける私の仕事歴は、今考えれば惨憺たるもので、ここに要約すると以下の通りです：

先ず最初に雇用された、例のユライア・ヒープの『ペンドルトン・ニューマン法律事務所』勤務は2ヶ月ほど。

次いで日系の『増田・舟井法律事務所』は、日本語も少しだが使えたし(註)、適材適所と思われたがさにあらず、たったの7・8ヶ月。但しここは、友人のメイ・川本がさっさと辞めてしまわなければ、もっと長続きしたはず。

註: トップのトマス・増田弁護士は日本語は片言喋るけれど読み書きはダメ。私の役目の一つは、毎朝、彼のデスクの前に立って、彼が指摘する日本の新聞の記事を読み上げることで、こういう仕事は私は大好きでした。

その次の『カミングス・アンド・ワイマン事務所』はほぼ一年。

## Chapter 20

### I'm Arrested at the Airport!

As I said in Chapter 18, I went back to Tokyo in April 1972 for the first time since having lived in Chicago for nearly 3 years. I thought I might have to stay longer than I had initially planned, for my mother had told me in her letters that my father's health was declining quickly. Thus, I had resigned from Baker & McKenzie prior to my departure for Japan. I had no qualms about quitting yet another law firm, for I was again engaged in the same old legal secretary routine there. Nothing exciting. Indeed, my career record was pretty unimpressive thus far. Let me recapitulate:

I lasted just two months with Uriah Heep at Pendleton, Newman, et al.

The Japanese-American law firm of Masuda, Spivak & Funai looked pretty promising. I had a chance to use my Japanese a little (Note). Still, after seven to eight months, I was disillusioned. I could have lasted a little longer, if my wonderful friend/room-mate/co-worker, May Kawamoto, had not quit so soon.

Note: Attorney Thomas Masuda spoke Japanese, but he was not proficient in reading or writing Japanese. One of my favorite tasks was to stand in front of his desk every morning, and read the daily Japanese newspaper for him. He would select the articles to be read, and he would ask me questions whenever he encountered a word or phrase with which he was not familiar. I liked that routine immensely.

I had a little better record with the next

次いで、シカゴ屈指の大法律事務所と言える、ベーカー・アンド・マッケンジー法律事務所が、1971年9月から1972年4月(帰国)の7ヶ月。

かくして私は、シカゴに腰を落ち着けてより3年に満たない短い期間中に、大小の法律事務所4社を渡り歩いたわけですが、これを誇らしく思うつもりはまったくありません。言い訳があるとすれば、もう少しやり甲斐のある仕事は無いものか、と終始焦っていたからだ、と言えます。

前述の通り、1972年3月に一時帰国で両親の元に帰り、続いてジムが4月の2週間ばかり我が家に滞在しました。ジムはまさに、風の如くに現れ、また風の如くに立ち去ったという感じでした。私はすぐさま後を追ってシカゴに戻りたいと思ったのですが、父の様子が急に悪くなり、とてもその決断に踏み切ることが出来ず、マンパワーから入ってくる仕事依頼を折々引き受けながら、結局、8月半ばに父が他界した直後まで、ほぼ6ヶ月東京にとどまることとなりました。母は、お父さんのことが気になるからと、いつまでマゴマゴしてもせんなし、思い切って、ジムの居るシカゴに戻りなさい、と何度も促したのです。

さて、父のお葬式を済ませて、ジムの待つアメリカへ。サンフランシスコ空港では、所持するグリーンカードを係官に示して、入国ゲートをスルリと通り過ぎようとしたら、ちょっと待ったが掛かり、別室へしょっ引かれました。話を聞くと、私が機内で書き込んだ『出入国管理カード』に

employer, Cummings & Wyman, i.e., one full year.

I lasted only seven months with Baker & McKenzie, from September 1971 to April 1972 when I left for Japan.

All in all, in less than three years after settling in Chicago, I changed jobs three times, working at four different law firms. I am not proud of it. The only excuse I have is that I was constantly looking for something more, a job that would give me a better sense of accomplishment.

Jim made a whirlwind visit to Tokyo in April 1972. In about the same fashion as his dating style back in Chicago, he appeared one day, and disappeared in less than three weeks, in the blink of an eye, so to speak. I had an urge to follow him back to Chicago as soon as possible, but my father's health was indeed deteriorating at an alarming rate, and I just didn't have the heart to leave him like that. My mother saw my dilemma, of course, and said that I should go back to Chicago, without dilly-dallying. I couldn't. I continued to take Manpower's temporary assignments, a few days a week.

My father passed away on August 15 of that year. Soon after the funeral, I returned to Chicago.

As I was going through the entry gate of San Francisco International Airport, I encountered an unexpected problem. An immigration officer questioned the validity of my Green Card, and I was taken to and

「現住所」として、東京の親の家の住所を書き込んだことがいけなかった。米国永住権所持者の現住所は、あくまで米国であるべきところを、私はつい昨日まで住んでいた、両親の家の住所を書き込んでしまったのでした。

しかもその別室での尋問に対し、

- ① 米国における雇用先は、6ヶ月前の出国時点で辞めていた。
- ② アパートも、出国直前にリース契約を解除していた。即ち、米国における居住所無し。
- ③ 日本滞在中パートで働き少々稼いだ。

などと、すべて正直に答えたのが、火に油を注ぐ結果となりました。

結論は、このグリーンカードを保持する東洋人は、米国移民法これこれしかじかの条項に照らすなれば、永住権放棄の意図があつたこと明白、との裁定が下され、私のグリーンカードはその場で没収。

「シカゴに着いたら所轄の移民局に出頭し、聴聞担当員に面会すべし。グリーンカード返却の可否は、その聴聞委員が判断するであろう」

という宣告。その場で本国送還とならなかったことを、よくよく有難く思え、といわんばかりの入国管理男の口調を激しく不快に思いつつ、ジムに電話したこと記憶します。

locked in a room to be interrogated. I felt like I had been arrested!

As you may know, all travelers must fill out an "arrival-departure record" form during flights into and out of the U.S. Well, I mistakenly wrote my parents' address in Tokyo as my "current address" on that form.

In answer to the questions posed by the pompous immigration official, I answered quite honestly that (1) I had quit the job in Chicago before leaving for Japan some six months prior; (2) I had terminated the apartment lease (and had no permanent U.S. address to return to); and (3) I took a temporary job while in Japan and had some income. That poured gasoline on the fire, and the triumphant officer concluded, then and there, that this Oriental woman had intended to abandon the U.S. permanent residency, in light of Sections such and such, of Articles such and such, of the U.S. Immigration Code. My green card was confiscated.

"I will let you go to Chicago. But, I order you to appear before a hearing officer of the Chicago immigration authority. He will determine whether or not you will have your Green Card returned. Consider yourself lucky that I'm not sending you back to Japan today." Well, he didn't really say that last sentence, but he certainly alluded to it. I didn't lose my head, nor did I panic at this, for I knew I could convince the official in Chicago that I had no intention of giving up my permanent residency, and that my conduct

予約を取ってあった乗り継ぎ便は、とうに出てしまっていました。別便に席を取り、シカゴへ向かいましたが、機中は、空港の圧制入国管理官と愚劣なやり取りをする羽目になった自分に腹を立てっぱなしでした。

しかし、懐かしのオヘア空港に着けば、ああ、あの我が魂を溶かしてしまう、初夏の朝風のようにさわやかな笑顔のジムが迎えてくれ、数時間前の不快な事件は、ただ一瞬の悪夢のように、消え去ったのです。

何日か後に、シカゴダウンタウンの移民局に出て、米国永住権を放棄する意図は全く無かつた、あくまでも私の無知からそういう事態になったのであると、正直に説明且つ陳謝し、無事グリーンカードを返却してもらった次第です。

これでこの逸話は終了ですが、一点つけ加えるなら、・・・。

このとき、シカゴ移民局の係官の前で私がまたヘマな発言をしては、と懸念したジムが、勤め先 Legal Aid Bureau の上司弁護士に前もって相談したところ、その人が、俺が懇意にしてる移民法専門弁護士がいるから、リョウコの移民局出頭には彼氏に同行してもらいましょう、と善意の提案。このため、ダウンタウンのど真ん中にある連邦司法ビル内の移民局公聴会へは、私はその移民法専門弁護士殿とジムの二人の弁護士に付き添われて出向いた次第。但し、

was solely as a result of my ignorance about the immigration regulations.

I was angry with myself, however, about this ignorance on my part. I called Jim from the airport, telling him that I had to miss my connecting flight to Chicago, thanks to the tyrannical entry gate official.

I arrived at O'Hare Airport. Ah, there was Jim, with his usual beaming smile that I had been missing for six long months!

A few days later, I went to the immigration hearing. I explained to the official who interrogated me that I had no intention of abandoning my U.S. permanent residency, and that my offense was entirely as a result of my ignorance. My Green Card was returned to me.

I could end this side story here, but actually I'd like to add a few more paragraphs to this somewhat unsettling anecdote, as follows:

I appeared before the Chicago immigration hearing officer, not alone, but with Jim and a lawyer who was an immigration specialist. Jim was worried that I might say something stupid and get in trouble again, so he talked to the director of Legal Aid Bureau, who made a quick arrangement in which his friend, the immigration lawyer, would accompany me to the hearing. I don't recall his name or what he looked like, but he did accompany me to the hearing that took place in the Federal Building in downtown Chicago.

ジムは自分の専門分野ではないから、発言はまったくしませんでした。

当然ながら、その聴聞会のポイントは、私に米国永住権を放棄する意図があったかなかつたか、でした。事情聴取が一応終わり、移民局係官はなにやらサラサラと書面に書き込んでいる。と、彼のデスクのこちら側、私の隣に坐ってた、イミグレ弁護士殿が、やおらジムの方を向いて、

「あなたは、このリョウコさんのフィアンセですね？」ともつたいたをつけて尋ねました。

えっ！ジムは私の心の友だけど、フィアンセなんかじゃないぞ、と私は一瞬どきり！でも頭の良いジムは、少しも動じることなく、涼しい顔で、

「はい、そうです。」

この時、いづれ将来俺達は結婚するんだ、との熱き思いがジムの胸中にあったのか、ウーン、実はこれつまびらかでありませんが、このジムの返答で、アメリカ人のフィアンセがアメリカで待ってるという外国人女性が、米国永住権を放棄するいわれ無し、と聴聞委員は疑心これなく納得して、その場でスラリと私のグリーンカードを返却してくれた、という決着です。めでたし！

オフィスの時間を割いて私に付き添ってくれたジムは、これで良かったと大安心。巨大な連邦ビルから路上に出るや、イミグレ弁護士と握手

Whether or not I had intended to abandon my U.S. permanent residency and throw out the privileges the U.S. government so kindly bestowed on me, was the focal point of the hearing. After several questions and answers, while the official was making some summary notes in his notebook, the immigration lawyer who was seated next to me across from the official's desk, turned towards Jim and asked, trying to look and sound dignified as much as possible:

"I believe you are Ryoko's fiancé?"

What!? Jim's my best friend in the entire world, but he is not my fiancé! I was agitated. Well, Jim was smart, as always. Quite unperturbed, he responded,

"Yes, that is correct."

I don't know if Jim was really thinking, for the first time, that we may marry sometime in the future. What's important was that Jim's four words above instantly convinced the hearing official that I did not intend to throw away my Green Card status, for what foreign national woman would do that if she's got an American fiancé waiting for her in the U.S.?

The officer took out my Green Card from a folder on his desk, and handed it to me.

Jim, feeling greatly relieved, naturally, shook the hands of the immigration lawyer and the hearing official, and went right back to his office from there.

し、すぐさま事務所に飛んで行きました。私は当然ウキウキしてたに違いなく、イミグレ弁護士と数ブロック一緒に歩きながら「本日のお支払いはお幾らでしょうか？」と尋ねた。すると彼氏「もしキャッシュがおありでしたら、50ドルでいいです。」

「はい、どうぞ」と私は50ドルを手渡し、お世話になりました、と礼を述べて別れました

後になってジムから聞いたところでは、このイミグレ弁護士が路上で私からキャッシュを受け取った件、ジムの上司弁護士がカンカンに怒ったそうです。聴聞委員と面会する私に、そのイミグレ弁護士は無償で付き合うという約束をしながら、その約束を無視したのみか、明細付きの請求書を発行もせず、キャッシュ支払いを求めたのは、言語道断であると。私はあの時、財布にキャッシュがあったのがまずかったなあ、と後悔しましたが、取り戻す術はありませんでした。

上記私の苦い経験から得た教訓があるとすれば、それは

- ① 入国ゲートで、イミグレ担当官と馬鹿なやり取りをする羽目になるなれ、
- ② 倫理感に欠如する弁護士殿も存在するから、しかるべき配慮せよ、です。

As the lawyer and I left the Federal Building, and walked a few blocks together, I felt triumphant and elated, of course. I said to the lawyer,

“How much shall I pay for your services today?”

He responded,

“Do you have cash on you? If so, \$50 will do.”

“Here you are,” I handed him \$50 in cash, and thanked him one more time.

I learned from Jim later that the Legal Aid Bureau’s director was furious about this immigration lawyer taking cash from me, for the agreement was that he would provide services without charge.

If Jim had been with me, he would have told the lawyer to send me a bill. “No one makes cash payments like that,” Jim told me later. It was unfortunate that I happened to have \$50 in my purse.

The lessons to be learned from this additional story of my life is: (1) Don’t be involved in any dialogue with the immigration officials at the U.S. port of entry; (2) Be aware that all lawyers are not necessarily generous like Jim.

＜End of Chapter 20＞