



The Nichibunken Open Day (29 October, 2015)
日文研一般公開の様子 (2015年10月29日)

The Unexpected

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The experience of something unexpected brings bewilderment but also the discovery of something new. That is how my life at Nichibunken began.

Nichibunken is a global hub of research on Japanese culture. Scholars visiting here from overseas expect to find themselves in an environment within Japan suitable to the conduct of global-level Japanese studies. The diverse stimuli they encounter here is sure to nourish their research. That was what I expected and my expectations were fully satisfied.

Very soon after I arrived at Nichibunken, however, I encountered the totally unexpected and at first it was a bit bewildering. I went to the auditorium to attend a Nichibunken public lecture (gakujutsu kōenkai) thinking that because of the scholarly nature of the lecture, the audience would be mainly scholars and perhaps a small number of interested people from the general public. You must imagine my surprise to find the spacious 500-seat hall almost filled to capacity. Puzzled at what I saw, I hastily found a vacant seat and sat down, relieved to have a chance to assess what I saw. As I gazed around the room left and right, up and down, I was amazed to observe that the people filling the seats were almost all people of fairly advanced age.

They sat waiting for the event to start, their faces full of curiosity and eager anticipation. The lecture lasted two and a half hours, including the intermission, but they listened closely

予期せぬこと

李愛淑 (外国人研究員)

予想外の事は、困惑と同時に、思考を柔軟にさせ、新しい発見へと導いてくれる。私の日文研での生活はそのように始まった。

さて、日文研とは国際日本文化研究センターのこと、グローバルな日本研究の拠点である。来訪する外国人研究員は日本国内でのグローバルな日本研究の環境を期待する。そこでの多様な刺激は研究の滋養分になるはずである。そこまでが私の予想で、期待は大いに満たされた。

ところで、私は日文研に着いて早々、予想外の事に遭遇し、戸惑った。学術講演会でのことである。専門的な講演なので、関心のある少数の一般の方々や、研究者が参加するだろうと思った。しかし、会場に足を踏み入れた途端、自分の目を疑った。五〇〇名定員の広々した講堂は大勢の参加者でほぼ満席。困惑し、素早く空席を見つけ、腰を下ろし、まず一息。そして、会場を左右上下、隅から隅まで見渡しては、ビックリ仰天。会場を埋め尽くした参加者は殆ど高齢の方々ではないか！

皆さんは満面に笑みを浮かべ、好奇心旺盛な目で、開始を待っている。講演は休憩を挟

and seriously throughout. The lecture having ended, they looked quite satisfied as they stood up to leave, their steps apparently invigorated by the talk they had heard. With a topic to share, conversation bubbled up among them, even between people meeting for the first time. I could see how the vigor of each individual participant would connect to the vitality of the local community.

The scene I saw at the public lecture was repeated at the Nichibunken Forum and the Nichibunken Open Day. I witnessed how eagerly older people look forward to opportunities to hear the results of Nichibunken activities conducted in close connection to their local community, and how much they enjoy such occasions. What drives elderly people to come to the venue of such an event is Nichibunken's infrastructure as a global center of Japanese studies. One is tempted to try to calculate in numerical terms the economic effects of Nichibunken's glocalization.

The rapidly aging society is a worldwide phenomenon today, and it presents top-priority issues that must be grappled with for the sake of the future. With "practicality" made the measure of everything these days, the crisis of the humanities—the "unpractical sciences"—has now been a topic for some time. All the while, Nichibunken has been steadily carrying on with its programs and encouraging local senior citizens to attend its public meetings, which give them vigor and energy that in turn enlivens their local communities. This has greatly inspired me, for I have been thinking about how the humanities can better contribute to future-oriented education, lifelong learning included.

んで二時間三〇分にも及ぶ。参加の姿勢は真摯なのだ。講演終了後、席を立ち、会場を去る参加者たちの表情には充実感が溢れ、足取りまで軽快に見えた。共通の話題をもって、初対面の相手とも会話が弾む。個々の参加者の活気が地域社会の活力へと繋がっていた。

その風景は以後の日文研フォーラムや一般公開でも同じだった。地域密着の日文研の活動を高齢の皆さんがどれほど待ち望んでおり、楽しんでいくかを語る。高齢者の足を会場まで運ばせる動因はグローバルな日本研究の拠点としてのインフラにあるだろう。いわば日文研のグローカリゼーション、その経済的効果を数値で換算したくもなる。

昨今、急速な高齢化社会への移行は世界的な現象で、未来のために最優先すべき課題である。また「実用性」のもとで、「実用的でない人文学」の危機が云々されて久しい。その中で日文研は高齢者の参加を誘引し、活気を与え、地域社会の活力へと繋げていく活動を地道に進めていたのだ。生涯学習を含む未来型の教育における人文学の道を考えていた私は大いに啓発された。

(原文：日本語)



The Nichibunken Forum (15 September, 2015)
日文研フォーラムの様子 (2015年9月15日)