**地震で決めた「住まいかた」**

The Lifestyle Imposed By the Earthquake

昭和３８年築の木造家屋のため、東京の我が家でも、１１日の地震は揺れに揺れた。２階で仕事をしていたのだが、本棚の本や机上のもの、額縁類は床に 落ちた。パソコンを押さえるのが精いっぱいだったが、ミシミシ・ガタガタ・ゴーッと窓や天井が音を鳴らしているのを見て怖くなり１階の安全そうな場所に逃 げた。私などの何十何百倍という恐怖の中にさらされた東北の方々を思うと、身が凍る。電気や食料や水のない避難所は、どれほど寒くひもじいことだろう。家 族の安否がわからない中、余震に震えながら避難所で過ごしている方々の映像を見ると、何とも言えない気持ちに包まれる。

Because our home in Tokyo is a wooden structure built in Showa 38, it swayed a lot in the earthquake on the 11th. I was working on the 2nd floor, but books fell out of their shelves, papers fell off my desk, and our family portrait fell onto the bed. At first, I held down my computer with all my strength, but then I heard the rattling, creaking, groaning noises coming from the window and ceiling, so I got scared and escaped to a safer-seeming place on the first floor. When I think of the people in the northeast, whose fearful experience must have been a hundred times worse than mine, my mind freezes. The people in the shelters, without electricity, food, or water, must be pitiably cold and hungry. When I look at the images of the people in the shelters, who still do not know if their families are safe, trying to live in the shelters while being rocked by aftershocks, I am overwhelmed by an inexpressible feeling.

　同じ光景を、私は阪神大震災のニュースで見た。長男がおなかにいたときのことだ。夫は長期に地方にロケで、１人で留守を守っていた。もしここで大 地震が来たらどうしよう。あるいは乳飲み子を抱えた自分が避難所にいたらどうなっただろうと、避難所の映像を見ながら思った。粉ミルクやわずかな紙おむつ を、乳飲み子を抱えるお母さん同士が分け合っているのを見て、私ならああできるだろうかと自問自答した。寒く狭い避難所で、赤ちゃんが泣いたらよそ様の迷 惑になる。老若男女のいる中では授乳もままならないだろう。子連れのお母さんたちのストレスがひとごとには思えなかった。

I saw the same scenes on the news at the time of the Great Hanshin Earthquake. It was when I was pregnant with my oldest son. My husband had been away, filming on location, and for a long time I was in the house by myself. What if the earthquake had hit here? While viewing the images from the shelters I thought: what if I had had to go to such a place, carrying a baby? As I saw the mothers with babies at the shelter sharing their milk powder and diapers, I answered my own question: probably I could do it, after all. In the cold, narrow shelter, the crying of a baby was a disturbance for the others. In the presence of all kinds of people, I probably wouldn’t be able to breastfeed. The stress of the mothers with children did not seem so terrible (???)

　そのなかでいちばん実感したことは、災害のときに助け合い、たよれるのは、「遠くの肉親より近くの他人」ということだ。近所づきあいを大切にする土地柄や、「みんなで助け合って乗り越えよう」という神戸の人々の高い精神性に、学ぶことは大きかった。

What I felt most was that the idea that will save you, and that you should rely upon, is the idea of “Neighbors above far away relatives”. The country learned a lot from the Kobe, with its emphasis on neighborly cooperation, and its philosophy of “let’s work together and overcome this”, and the deep spirituality of its citizens.

　夫と２人若い夫婦の気ままな生活で、それまでほとんどご近所づきあいをしたこともなければ、興味もなかったが、そのとき私は強く思った。子供を 持ったら、ひとりでは育てていけないこともある。人様に迷惑をかけたり、助けてもらったりする場面もあるかもしれない。どんなことがあるかわからないのだ から、ふだんからご近所の顔が見える関係になろう。人間なんて自然の猛威に比べたら非力でちっぽけな存在だ。自分も、肩寄せ合い、助け合う神戸の避難所の 人たちみたいな関係を、普段から築く努力をしなくては。

Because of my self-centered lifestyle as part of a young couple (??), until then I had not interacted much with my neighbors, and had little interest in doing so. But at that time I felt strongly (???). If I had a child, there were some things I could not do by myself. Maybe I would cause trouble for other people, or maybe I would need to be saved by them. I didn’t know what might happen, so I decided to start trying to meet my neighbors regularly. Compared to the power of nature, man is a weak and powerless creature. I wish to build up a relationship with my neighbors like the people I saw in the shelters of Kobe, linking arms together and helping one another.

　神戸の長屋の人たちが、助け合い、励まし合っているのを見て、本当に長屋住まいもいいかもしれないとさえ思った。その３年後、初めて家を買うとい うとき、私は迷わずコーポラティブハウスという住まいの形を選んだ。見ず知らずの人たちと土地を共同購入して、二年かけてマンションを作る。私にとっては まさに現代的長屋。理想のスタイルである。

When I saw the people in the row houses of Kobe helping and cheering for one another, I really thought it might be nice to live in a row house. Three years later, when it came time to buy a house, I chose without hesitation to live in a cooperative house. With some strangers, we jointly purchased a plot of land, during a period of two years, built a building. For me, it looked totally like a modern row house. It was the ideal situation.

　仕事場スペースや子どもの生活音の問題でしばらく離れたが、もう子どもたちも大きくなり、気を遣わなくてもいい年齢になった。なにかあればすぐグラス片手に集まる住人たちも、「戻っておいでよ」と言ってくれる。

The work space and the place for children was separated a bit because of noise, but the children had grown up, and were at an age where I didn’t have to worry about them constantly. If something happened, some nearby people would tell my kids “hurry home” for me.

　今回の地震で、ガスが止まった。携帯やメールがつながりにくい混乱の中、そのコーポラティブハウスの住人に「ガスが出ないんだけど、どう？」と メールをしたら、すぐに電話をくれ、きっとセンサーが落ちているんだよとていねいに、回復の手順を教えてくれた。「古いおうちだけど大丈夫？」と気遣いな がら。翌日は別の住人から「停電するかもしれれないから、みなさんこういうところに気をつけましょう」とコーポラティブハウス全員にメールが一斉送信され てきた。ああやはり隣人は大切だと再確認した。

In the recent earthquake, the gas stopped. I sent an email to a coop member that said “The gas won’t turn on, what do you think?”. Even though many mail and phone calls were not getting through, my neighbor quickly called back to say that the problem was probably that the sensor had failed, and politely taught me how to fix the problem. “Is it okay, even though the house is old?” I worried. The other day, a neighbor sent out an email saying “The electricity might go out, if that happens, let’s be careful everyone” to all the members of the coop. My belief in the importance of good neighborly relations was reconfirmed.

　東北の地の惨状を前に、この程度の話をつづるのもはばかられるが、避難所の生活が長くなりそうな様子を見て、書くことにした。

In the face of the Tohoku disaster, it seems pointless to relate this kind of story. But since I saw that the people in the shelters might have to stay for a while, I decided to write (???).

　小さなお子さんを抱える親御さんも、お年寄りや持病のある方も一同に寒い場所で過ごすのは辛いことの連続だと思うが、どうか心を強く持って、「向 こう三軒両隣」の日本人の精神を思い起こしながら、温かい場所に戻れる日まで気持ちをつなげていただきたい。「がんばろうＫＯＢＥ」をスローガンに苦難を 乗り越えた、あのときの神戸の皆さんのように。

It is painful to see parents with young children, and old people with chronic illness stuck, once again, in cold shelters. But please, believe with the strong spirit of Japanese in the day when you will return to a safe and warm place. Like the people of Kobe, who overcame their distress with the slogan “Let’s Go Kobe”, please pull through this disaster.