

魂の宿る本と部屋

土田 亮

「本のない部屋は魂のない肉体のようなものだ」と古代ローマの政治家であり、哲学者であるキケロは言ったそう。私はこの金言^{あやか}に肖り、敢えてその対偶を取り、少しリメイクしてこの題を表した。つまり、魂の宿る肉体は本のある部屋であり、その場所こそが図書館であろうと私は考える。

どうしてそう思うのか、手始めに私の研究内容から述べさせてほしい。私はフィールドワーカーで、スリランカの洪水常襲地域における洪水被害とその対策の在来知に関する調査研究を行っている。これまで4回スリランカを渡航し、計2ヶ月程滞在してきた。フィールドワーカーとしては滞在歴がかなり短いのはご容赦願いたい。いずれの滞在も新しい発見があったり、素敵な人との出会いがあったりした。濃密な時間であることに違いはないが、私はこれまで過ごしてきた2ヶ月の間でスリランカのことを全て把握したとは言えない。

フィールドワーカーとはその名の通り、現場に赴き動くこと、すなわち、人々の声を聞き、身を以てその人になる、あるいは、現地の人の肩越しから物事を見る人であり、これらの営為が何よりも大事である。だから、断続的な遠征や長く現場に行けない時間が続き、現地の人になる感覚が鈍ると、研究の生命線となるその勘を取り戻すべく早くフィールドに行きたいという思いが募りに募り、それはそれでストレスがたまるとの。

そういう時にこそとっておきのストレス解消の場所がある。そう、図書館である。図書館へふらりと入る。本は秩序正しく並べられている。書架のある部屋特有の、あの古びた紙や表紙、インクの染みた匂いはやはりどこの国でも共通のもので心が落ち着く。日本語であれ、英語であれ、時には現地語や国際語であれ、研究分野に近い本でも、直接関係しない本でもすぐさま手に取り、閲覧席に腰掛けて目次から目を通し、内容をさらさらと読む。欲しい本にうまく目星がつけば一発で当たれるし、なければ公立、大学、博物館、公文書館、さらには現地の図書

館へ赴いて探す。これもまた、広義のフィールドワークと言えよう。しかし、これだけ多くの本を抱える図書館を作るには、並々ならぬ努力と労力が必要であったことを様々な図書館を訪ねて本を読む度に推察する。本がたくさんある場所にこそ、本や資料を集めた人の思い、本を書いた人の情熱、すなわち、魂が漲^{みなぎ}っていると私は考える。私たちはその本やそこに記された先人たちの智慧を改めて知り、学び、今や未来に還元するべきであろう。そのエネルギーが図書館に宿されていると私は強く信じている。

所変わって、奇しくも、私がスリランカに渡航しフィールドワークに取り掛かる最中(2018年9月初旬に脱稿)に、関西ではこれまでにない猛烈な台風21号が直撃し、また、北海道でM6.7を記録した巨大地震が起き、稀に見る大規模な自然災害が立て続けに発生した。執筆している今でも大切な人たちや友人が無事かどうか気になるし、一人の災害研究者の卵として素直に言うと、すぐさま現場に入って調査や研究をやるという気持ちにはなれず、むしろとても居たたまれない気持ちに苛まれた。ただ願わくば、このような事態に直面してでも地域や大学、管轄を問わず、図書館にある大切に貴重な本や資料を守って欲しいと切に願う。そうして守られ続けてきた叡智の上に、私たちや学問は出来上がっていくのだ、その魂の宿る本と部屋で。

(大学院総合生存学館 博士一貫課程)



スリランカでお世話になったマヘーパラ・ヘラ中央図書館の写真を添えて

Books and Rooms with a Soul

TSUCHIDA Ryo

Marcus Tullius Cicero, an Ancient Roman politician and philosopher, once said, "A room without books is like a body without a soul." I decided to give my article this title by rewording this maxim with a contrapositive statement. That is to say, I believe a body with a soul is a room with books; therefore, a library would be such place. Why do I feel this way? Please allow me to start by describing the content of my research. As a field worker, I am conducting surveys and analysis in regions of Sri Lanka susceptible to frequent floods about the damages and indigenous know-how ingrained in the countermeasures. So far, I have traveled to Sri Lanka four times for a period of two months. Forgive me, as I still have little experience with staying on-site as a field worker. Nonetheless, I was able to learn new things and meet incredible people during each stay. While my time spent there was packed with activities, I still cannot say that I have learned everything about Sri Lanka in the short period of two months.

A field worker, as the name suggests, is someone who travels to a place, and hears what the local people have to say and sometimes becomes one of them. Sometimes, a field worker is someone who observes people's actions over their shoulders. Such tasks are the most important aspects of being a field worker. Therefore, if one doesn't continue their stay or leaves long gaps between their field study trips, then their sense of empathy for the locals will fade. As such, my urge to quickly return to the field in order to regain my intuition for understanding the locals as it drives the viability of my research becomes stronger and stronger, which in itself causes some stress to build up.

There is a special place for me to unwind in stressful times like what I just described. You guessed it, the library. It is somewhere you can just casually drop in, where books are neatly lined up. The universal features of a library, where books on shelves have aged paper and covers while the smell of ink diffused throughout the rooms is the same in every country. This commonality calms me down. No matter what language they are written in, be it Japanese, English, or at times a local or international language, no matter what subject they are in, whether it be something closely related to my research field or one that is unrelated, I can easily pick them up and start reading right there in the sitting area from the table of contents, right to the pages I'd like to read. If there is a book I want, I can either quickly find it in one try, or

search in a public, university, or museum library, an archives building, or a local library. I believe this type of search can also be considered field work in a wider sense. However, I feel with each visit to a different library that in order to curate libraries with a wide collection of books, a great of special efforts and labor must be invested. I believe a place with lots of books is what makes the ideas of those looking to find information and documents as well as the passion of authors, in other words, their souls, to swell and overflow. Through books and records of wisdom of those living before us, we must make something useful to benefit us now and in the future. I firmly believe this energy permeates libraries.

Strangely enough, while I was in the middle of my field work in Sri Lanka (writing completed in early September 2018), major natural disasters were taking place elsewhere, including Typhoon Jebi that directly hit Kansai (region) with an unprecedented intensity, as well as an earthquake of magnitude 6.7 that struck Hokkaido. While I am writing this, I am worried about the wellness of my loved ones and friends. As a disaster researcher in training, honestly, I feel the urge to go directly to the site to conduct surveys and research, or rather feel unease by staying where I am. I would hope that in disastrous events like these, the authorities, whether it be the municipality, university, or whichever jurisdiction, could help protect the precious books and documents housed in libraries. By doing so, it not only protects and passes on ancient wisdom from the soulful books and rooms in which they reside, but also allows us as humans to learn knowledge to evolve.

Doctoral Student at the Graduate School of Advanced
Integrated Studies in Human Survivability



Photograph of Maheepala Herath Central Library that provided great assistance during my stay in Sri Lanka