

# 前田河広一郎の英文による短篇小説

「THE TWENTIETH CENTURY」(「二十世紀」)の紹介

## 浦西和彦

前田河広一郎は、明治40年から大正9年までの13年間におよぶアメリカ生活のなかで、英語で短篇小説を書いた。

明治44年に、アメリカの新聞に報道された大逆事件、幸徳秋水ら12名が処刑されたことを知ったのが契機となって「The Hangman」(絞刑吏)を執筆し、シカゴ市の週刊紙「The Coming Nation」に大正元年11月16日に掲載された。アメリカでの前田河広一郎の処女作であるこの「The Hangman」は、藤沢全が「前田河広一郎“*The Hangman*”発掘—THE COMING NATION所載作品—」(「国際関係研究—総合編—」平成12年3月27日、第20巻3号)で、その原文を復刻し、訳文を紹介したので、いまでは容易に読むことができる。

前田河広一郎が英語で書いた小説は、この「The Hangman」(絞刑吏)以外に、「アジアの連合」「鶴」「江戸の正月」「戦碑」「二十世紀」等がある。

遺稿となった『青春の自画像—遊びは学問なり—』(昭和33年5月<日付ナシ>、理論社)のなかで、「アジアの連合」という短篇小説の内容について、前田河広一郎は次のように記している。

『アジアの連合』は、白人の侵略から、アジア諸国の独立を保とうとして、一人の日本人がアジア連合体の組織を企てる。と、その秘書をしている一支那人が、それを裏切って、計画が水の泡になるという、愚にもつかぬ御話である。英雄気取りの主人公を、お芝居じみたピストル騒ぎと、あやしげな軍資金の入手関係など、探偵小説を日本の舞台で行った、ガラクタ小説である。

この「アジアの連合」は英文での題名は「The Unity of Asia」で、大正元年10月の「The Progressive Woman」に発表された。

「鶴」について、前田河広一郎は『青春の自画像—遊びは学問なり—』で、次のように述べている。

恥を話さないとわからぬが、『鶴』というのは、日本の画家に関する古い伝説に取材した、メルヘン的なもので、千羽の鶴を襖に描こうとした画師が、鶴のポー

ズを女の裸体にもとめて、千羽の鶴の姿を映し終わったときに、その飛翔の姿を壁に投げかけていた燭が外れて火災となる。あやうく火をのがれた画師が見ていると、その女の魂が鶴に移って、渦巻く火焰の中から、千羽の鶴が飛び去ったという話である。

「鶴」の英文での題名は「The Mikado's Crane-room」（ミカドの鶴の間）で、大正元年11月の「The Progressive Woman」に掲載された。中田幸子は『前田河広一郎における「アメリカ」』（平成12年10月20日、国書刊行会）で『「ミカドの鶴の間」は、あたかもラファディオ・ハーンのある面を想起させるような、幻想的・耽美的・退廃的、そしていわゆる西欧人の抱くロマンティックでエキゾチックな日本趣味を満足させるような一篇である』と評している。

「戦碑」については、同じく『青春の自画像―遊びは学問なり―』に、次のようにある。

『戦碑』というのは、日露戦争で死んだ一子の名をとどめようとして、一人の老石工が、山の上に碑を刻んで立てる。落雷で石工は急死して、名は刻まぬままに、碑は戦争の文字だけをのこして立っている。

「戦碑」の英文での題名は「The Monument」で、大正2年12月の「The Coming Nation」に登載された。中田幸子は前出の『前田河広一郎における「アメリカ」』で、「静かな東北地方の自然の中での父子の愛情が切々と語られ、反戦思想がはっきり底流にあり、前田河の本質に近いものが感じられる作品である」という。

「江戸の正月」の英文での題名は「A New Year Street in Yeddo」で大正2年1月の「The Progressive Woman」に発表された。前田河広一郎は『青春の自画像―遊びは学問なり―』で、「江戸の正月」には言及していない。そのあらすじをも述べていない。

「二十世紀」については、次のようにその内容を述べている。

『二十世紀』は、ある画家と美術批評家の話で、批評家が一日訪れると画家は『二十世紀』という画題で大幅の画に着手しているのを見る。女のモデルがあって、太陽を仰ぎながら春の天地にむかって双手をひろげている。ところが、間もなく日露戦争が起って、展覧会もさたやみになる。『二十世紀』は、塵に埋もれて投ったままにされている。戦争が終って、また展覧会が開かれる。画家と批評家は連れ立って、会場に行く。と、会場に、さきのモデルがきよろぎよろその辺を見廻している。顔はやつれて蒼白く、見るかげもない姿になっている。画家は、これこそ『二十世紀』だと叫んで、そのモデルを引張ってアトリエへ行き、その瘦せた、憔悴した姿を死色を使って描いて行く。

中田幸子は『前田河広一郎における「アメリカ」』で、『二十世紀』という作品を書き、ニューヨークの社会党機関誌The Internationalに掲載された（現物は未確認）。これはのちに彼（前田河広一郎）が編集長として関係する『日米時報』の二十周年記念号の英文頁に採録された（が残念ながらこれも未見。）と記している。

前田河広一郎の英文小説の復刻紹介は、さきにあげた藤沢全の「絞刑吏」以外に、西村頼男が「前田河広一郎の英文による短編」（札幌商科大学編集—人文編—昭和57年12月25日、第32号）で、「アジアの連合」「鶴（ミカドの鶴の間）」「江戸の正月」「戦碑」の四篇の原文を復刻した。「二十世紀」を掲載したニューヨークの社会党の雑誌「The International」が現在でもその所蔵先を確認することが出来ず、「二十世紀」の「現物は未確認」のままになっている。「二十世紀」の英文での題名は「THE TWENTIETH CENTURY」で、大正9年1月1日発行の「日米時報」20年号に再掲された。初出発表の「The International」は見ることが出来ないが、「日米時報」の方は手元にマイクロを所有しているので、ここに「二十世紀」の英文を復刻しておく。前田河広一郎のアメリカにおける英文の小説のなかで、「二十世紀」は「絞刑吏」と共に重要な位置を占める作品であると思われるからである。「日米時報」掲載時の署名は「H.Maidako」である。なお、中田幸子は「彼（前田河広一郎）の英文は、癖があり時にはだらだらと長い日本語にくらべて、むしろきちんとした読みやすいものである」（『前田河広一郎における「アメリカ」』）という。

（うらにし かずひこ／本学教授）

## THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

By H.Maidako.

My friend, Sato Noboru, began to paint his colossal work, "The Twentieth Century," on a half-house size canvas.

Beyond his eccentricities in either seizing his subjects or juxtaposing his pigments after the manner of the post-impressionists, all I knew about him as a painter was that he was a symbolist of the same school as the old Chinese Buddhist painters, Watts, or the gloomy Wiertz.

When I heard the idea of "The Twentieth Century" from him, one day while watching him working in his studio by the side of Yedo River, I was not much surprised to find that this work, too, was one of his ideal, symbolic productions.

"This," he said, a long pointed brush between his mobile, sensitive lips, "deals with a subject rather inclined to satirize our age. Art and Materialism; a stale enough subject! – Yet, my dear friend, I am going to paint it in my own way. No self-deception, no slavery of the Kingdom of Art will play on this canvas. That is, the picture will be my own. You understand?"

"See, M.Zola," – he often called me "Zola," for the simple reason that I often wrote miserable articles in favor of his school; I, a weak, sentimental youth, who could never dream of writing with such strength as is contained in "My Hatred," a Zola! – what an absurd mockery!" ...now, this female figure, with her outstretching hands toward the sky, will be the symbol of "Beauty," he continued.

"'Beauty?'" I asked, timidly leaning upon the ladder by the side of the canvas.

"Yes, 'Beauty.' But unlike those beauties of the Parisian millinery shops, or our geisha girls, 'Beauty' which could inspire Plato, as well as Byron or Rodin; an ancient figure with its well-balanced form, through which runs the warm blood, each droy the sacred bead of the soul.

"Now she stands here, naked, alone, in the foreground. There is nothing done about her expression, but I am going to paint her face so that you can hear her crying; yes, crying to heaven for her sad fate!"

"And then you see the background? Here is the black flood of humanity, of workmen, women, shop-boys, officers, fish merchants, prostitutes, policemen, street-jugglers, all passing by her, toward the row of factories, shops, and offices, without noticing her standing thus in the middle of the street, bathed in the transparent sunshine.

"The fact is, however, they are all too busy at their bread-earning, to care for her. So, each pricking up his ears to the hammer of the underground mint, they flow by like a river of the black pest! – Of course, this work will be my hobby, nothing else! I can take as much time as I wish in finishing it. But, when I do finish it, all the citizens of Tokyo will crowd before it, dazzled by this unexpected bomb-blast of our school."

There was, I admit, nothing in his words of the abhorrent disease of the artists' world, conceit; nothing of the novice painter who tries to earn the cost of his materials by perfunctory daubs. My impression of his soaring genius did not deceive me, for I had seen many of his symbolic works which were highly prized in Hakuba-Kai.

After a formal introduction, I learned much about the model who was going to play

so important a part on the canvas. Here it should be mentioned that, although Sato had learned much abroad, both in Paris and Florence, he was a Japanese to the core of his soul. After many years of study in foreign countries, the thing he learned best was – Japan! He saw her in the distance of “light, not heat,” according to Emerson. In the hazy distance of retrospection she alarmed him often with the realization that he had left many secrets of art untouched in his native country, while he went rambling in vain under the blue Italian skies, or by the side of the winding Seine.

It was his great satisfaction, since his return, to idealize Japanese women in his dreamy Oriental pride. Hence, the model of “Beauty” in “The Twentieth Century,” must be a Tokyo maid! Her name was Oyaye – san, one of the best of the Hakuba – Kai models. A frail creature, with supple limbs, pale, romantic temples, characteristic cheeks, large dark eyes, neck slightly a – stoop from wearing the kimono, and with a mass of nocturnal hair streaming to her elbow, a good enough form to nail an artist’s eyes on, and out of which he can visualize either a nymph or a Venus. Sato was satisfied with her in every way, and especially praised her bust, which he called a “European bust” quite unusual to the kimono – wearing Japanese women.

Sato, who philosophized on education as an a – posteriori matter, kept talking to her of something romantic and fantastic, which often brought response to the face of the girl, by a psycho – physical contraction.

So, thus keeping the same distance between them, they went to their daily toil; one half – mad with his passion for an idealization of life into a dream, the other standing before him to materialize his idea, for a few coins each month, with her motionless labor.

Not with standing all my advertising in “Art” and other magazines, after many months, the picture itself was not finished, not even the tip of the “Beauty’s” finger.

The truth was, Sato, like Whistler, always started anew whenever he found the effect mussy or unsatisfactory.

Some journals rallied around the work, though partly with sly allusions to me, “Show us your ‘Twentieth Century’ before the next century comes!”

Half a year, a year, and then, another half passed. But no sigh of haste arose from the sunny studio by the side of the Yedo river dyke on which many a cherry blossom rained. And then, one day, the artist called me up and said, “M.Zola, I have given up the work. I have utterly lost hope in my model; the central figure does not please me,

and I dismissed her long ago.”

A year later, with the smell of sulphur in the Yellow Sea, the horrible Russo-Japanese war began. Fortunately or otherwise, I was appointed war correspondent of one of the Tokyo newspapers, and started to the front, via Ting-Tsing. After two years, my soul hungry as ever for art, when I stepped upon the wharf at Yokohama with a sickening commotion of memories of the war, the first thing I did was to call upon my dear friend in his picturesque studio.

“Ah, welcome you, man of the pen! Having heard nothing from you since you wrote from New-Chang, I was much worried about you. I thought perhaps some stray bullet had fixed you.... It’s a good time, too, for your return. The annual exhibition of Tai-hei-yo-gakai has just begun a greater battle than that of Hoten; that is, the battle for the victory of art! Let us go and see it. I sent a few minor works, and my ‘Buddha and His Disciples,’ but having no time to spare, I did not go myself.”

Without, there was the huge gluttonous monster metropolis, Tokyo, gleaming with countless lanterns, fire-crackers, flags, monuments, and arches, with an avalanche of “Banzay!” roaring like a million cannons. Her narrow picturesque streets were all jumbled with the weary invalid soldiers, country folks, patriotic school children greeting their father-warriors, newspaper men, shrewd pickpockets, paupers – the haggard’ offsprings of the terrible mother “War,” all in all, rejoicing their country’s “Victory” with their husky voices.

Within, I saw the suave manners of the Yedo ages, the dancing damsels of the castle draped in the moonlight silk, their pink fans twirling around and around their ivory fingers with the falling petals of wisteria, or the noble spirit of samurais whose pride was the brilliant poverty and manly compassion for benevolence.

The streets dotted by the dreamy willows or the tall pines, often ran across the red varnished wooden bridges, undulated by the white castle-wings or by the mysterious staircases of the ancient Shinto temples, were not thronged by those famished deformed, sharp-eyed strangers as I see them now. Beneath the white canopies of white Shogun the jubilees and fetes of the people were simple and noble, like the flowers of the fragrant ume. – But now the same streets are outraged by those shameless, artless, brutal men and women....Ah, where is our Japan? The pure and mirthful idealist of Asia, Japan, where is she, now?

And I thought, how strange and cruel our Time is! to blot away all these misty

scenes of history from us, and present us such a shocking, bloody Modernism in such a short while. Beauty, then, was here, Beauty was everywhere; but now, it is nowhere!

I think I was not much mistaken if I guessed that Sato, too, was turning the same thought in his heart, much stronger, perhaps, in color and contour than mine.

“O, are you not Mr.Sato?”

We were thus suddenly aroused from our day – dream just in front of the Kai. Out of the ever – increasing stream of human heads, the person, a woman, had stepped, and addressed my friend, bowing as low as our knees.

“Yes, that is my name. Pray who are you? What do you wish?”

When she raised her disheveled head we saw a woman of medium height with high cheek bones, ugly nose, and purple spotted cheeks, shyly smiling at us.

“I believe you have forgotten me, sir. But – do you remember a model who used to sit for you, for the famous ‘The Twentieth Century’ ? Yake – Miki?”

What, this, so ugly a creature, the model of “Beauty” ? Impossible!

But the fact was as bizarre as romance. More so, in this case! Gradually we recognized our beautiful Oyaye – san in this poor, beggar – like woman who showed ugly yellow teeth when she sullenly smiled.

There was a period of silence, then Sato grasped her roughly by the arm and drew her to the light from the entrance, where he studied her for some time, like a physician does his patient.

At this awkward moment I heard the faint sobbing of the woman, which suddenly changed to a torrent of weeping, through which I caught a few discordant, monosyllabic words as follows; “I want to see my old self again. My old self!...What did you do with my picture, sir? Please show it to me, then I can die satisfied....O, how graceful I was at that time!... Yes, yes, this is the reason I came back from Formosa where I lived like a devil after losing my second husband!...”

“Capital! Capital! Now I have it! Let us start again! Yes, I have it!”

7 Instead of consoling this poor creature, my friend seized her arm and began to run with her along the street, quite forgetting me. What conduct! Perhaps he was seized by one of his divine whims. But, how, through that grotesque figure? I lost my head, and, in turn, began to run after them.

When I joined them in the studio a little later, he was mixing the pigments on his palette in the rampage of a man packing his valuables when his house is afire.

Then, blotch by blotch, Sato began to go over the same old canvas of “The Twentieth Century,” with some dirty, nauseous colors.

After an hour there stood before us the picture of a woman beautiful of body, which made a cutting contrast to the sickening ugliness of the face. There was the same background of the hurrying human tide and the vistas of modern industrial institutions. He, then, smiling at me complacently, said, with the peculiar waving his color-stained hand, “At last, M.Zola, – no, Mr.Mori, – I have my masterpiece!

“...Don’t you understand? The symbol is this: the twentieth century has turned our ‘Beauty’ into an ugly creature like this!” and he wiped his brush.

(注) 明らかな脱字、誤植は訂正したが、不明な部分は原文のままにしておく。