

2004年4月9日(金)

The Ubiquitous Flipside Experience

今年の桜の開花は3月20日過ぎだったが、その後、花冷えの寒い日が続いたので、長く花見を楽しめた。今日も葉桜が楽しめる一日だった。

母の72歳の誕生日である。

先月初旬に軽い脳梗塞で入院したが、その後の経過は順調とのこと。

母の世話をしてくれている80歳の父に感謝。

夕刻は永楽倶楽部にて、IFS Japanのステファン社長とアマシャム・バイオサイエンス情報システム室の箭内(やない)室長の三人で福島さんの Cocktail を楽しんだ。

箭内さんは、会社が昨年10月にGEに買収されることになり、今年2月、3月はそのワールドワイドプロジェクトのミーティングへの出席のため出張が多く、当方とのコンサルティングの日程調整も大変であった。

私の手帳に書き留めてある彼女のスケジュールは以下のとおりである。

2月上旬 イギリス

中旬 上海

同 香港

3月上旬 ローマ経由にてスウェーデン

中旬 上海



3月上旬のスウェーデン(ウプサラ)への出張の際には、現地で時間を取って頂きIFS社の本社も訪問して頂いた。

スウェーデンでは写真のようなゆったりとしたところでランチを取りながら打合せをするそうで、この写真からも「そのミーティングの空気」が伝わってくるようだ(写真は6月頃に撮影されたもので、今回の3月の時期とは異なる)。

一方のステファンさんは、3月末に米国フロリダ州オーランドで開催されたIFS World Conferenceと、そのカンファレンスで発表したNEC社からの出資を纏めるための日本法人の責任者として精力的に仕事をこなしてこられた。

この仕事が終わってから休暇を取り、奥さんと北陸へ旅行されたその初日、小松空港に着いた時には吐き気がして車の運転がやっとだったそうだ。

今晚の会食では、ほっと一息つかれたようで、北陸の能登で泊まった「ランプの宿」のお話、日本で聞いたヘルフゴットのコンサートのこと、故郷のスウェーデンのこと、その話題の豊富さと、どのお話も興味をそそられ、本当に楽しい一瞬を過ごさせて頂いた。

以下の英語のエッセーは、後日、ステファンさん個人から頂いたものだ。

こうやって三人がこの永楽倶楽部に集まるまでには、数回におよぶ個別のミーティングと数十通の電子メールでの情報のやり取りによるスケジュールの調整を要したが、この会食自体がエッセーの表題そのものだと思う。

The Ubiquitous Flipside Experience

Everyday, people all over the world connect to each other and in a city like Tokyo it's impossible not to interact with people in one or another way.

Then how is the interaction done nowadays?

Think subway or train and you see iPods and other tools connecting the music to the listeners.

Think office and you see PCs and people sitting next to each other sending e-mails back and forth, not just between themselves in the small group, but all over the world.

Even in the park the other day, my wife and I noticed a family sitting together in the comfortable shadow under the tree. But they were not talking to each other, but actually sending e-mails to someone else on their cell phones.

Of course, this is not a unique Japanese phenomenon, nor does it mean that other ways of mingling with people have disappeared. People still drink and eat together at Izakaya and chat like other generations before them have done.

Nevertheless, in our daily life, is this the way it has to be, an increasingly individualistic society where people are creating their own little communication bubbles and decide who they want to communicate with, and which tools to use?

Or is there still hope for "good old, live interaction"?

Personally, I somehow think that the one gives the other, which is the more we get of one side, the stronger the need for the other one.

That was definitely clear when my wife and I attended a concert last year by the Australian pianist David Helfgott.

At this concert, there was no doubt whatsoever that the most basic human feelings, for example compassion and love, is still intact and doing very well.

I think most of us have heard about David Helfgott, maybe from the movie Shine and from his recordings.

He has a web site (nothing wrong with hi tech....) where you can read more about him, his wife and life in general <http://www.davidhelfgott.com/>

And to complete the circle, naturally you can order his cd on the Internet and listen to it on your iPod on the train.

I will not go into any technicalities or review the concert; I'm not qualified for that task but will stay with the impression and feelings that his concert left on us.

As the concert was about to start, he ran on to the stage and was wearing a beautiful, what seemed like a very comfortable Russian inspired silk shirt.

He was waving to the audience and showed such happiness just to be there on the stage, right now at this moment.

It was from the sound of the first notes he played that myself and, I believe most people, were absorbed by the music and the very basic human feelings.

That was the fact for the rest as well, and what I appreciate most of Helfgott's music making. The purity, innocence and happiness, shared completely with the audience. That's why he inspires people to overcome difficulties in life (like he did himself) and leading the way, saying that life is so precious.



(スウェーデン、ウプサラの朝：写真提供、箭内美知子さん)

Sometimes he would sing along with the music or moan and from time to time also look up from the piano, smiling and just sharing the joy of making beautiful music with us.

And then showing thumbs-up and waving to us all during the applause, shaking hands and kissing the girls on the cheek as they brought him flowers after the concert.

It's the ultimate experience to see a human being showing such courage to be totally open and I hope that is a quality that we will not lose, as we run the risk of becoming technologically isolated individuals.

We can listen to him on the iPods, we can mail each other about his music, chat about him on the Internet

It sure is linked together in what is now often called a ubiquitous network society. However, without the human touch and feeling, the technology becomes obsolete and useless.

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