

The town where I was born and raised had a keirin (bicycle) racetrack.

If you went down the street in front of our house you immediately came to the railroad. To the right was the ticket gate for the private railway station, and the market. In the evening after a race, the station and the market were crowded with men on their way home from the keirin, drinking cheap One Cup sake.

As an elementary school student I used to come to the market on errands. I would quickly finish the shopping and hurry home, careful not to tread on the betting tickets scattered over the path. Near the barber's shop I knew, there was a "snack" bar with a purple sign to the side of its wooden door. In the evening, the door would be slightly ajar. I felt strangely happy to catch the dull glint of the mirror ball in the darkness. That was over 30 years ago.

Eleven years have passed since I left that town and came to live in Tokyo.

In the shopping street near my apartment there used to be a cluster of bars and eateries called Ryueru, which had been going since post-war black market times.



暮らしているアパートからほど近い商店街に戦後の闇市の頃から続く飲食店街「りゅえる」があった。夕方、連れ合いと千五百円ずつ持ち、「りゅえる」の外側にあるモツ肉屋に向かう。途中のコンビニで買った発泡酒を開け、軒先で焼かれている一本八十円のモツ焼きをつまんでいると、連れ立って来た小学生が一本だけ食べていったりする。発泡酒を飲み終えると、「りゅえる」の路地に入る。鮎屋やスナック、中華料理店の前を通り、フイリン国旗が掲げられたテラスの向かいの南仏料理屋の角を曲がれば立ち飲み屋がある。「飲み物は？」

生まれ育った街には競輪場があった。家の前の通りを行くとすぐに線路に突き当たる。そこを右に折れた先に、私鉄の駅の改札と市場がある。競輪開催日の夕方は、駅にも市場にもワンカップを飲む競輪帰りの男たちがたくさんいた。小学生のわたしは市場におつかいに来ている。足早に買い物物を済ませ、道に散らばる車券を踏まないように家へと急ぐ。線路まで来てなじみの散髪屋さんを過ぎると、木の扉の脇に紫色の看板を掲げたスナックがある。夕方になると扉はいつもほんの少しだけ開いていた。暗がりでも鈍く光るミラーボールが見えるのが妙にうれしかった。三十年以上も前のことだ。その街を離れ、東京に暮らすようになって十一年が経つ。

東京新陳代謝

Tokyo Transitions

変わるもの、変わらないもの。
日々ゆるる東京のストーリー。
*Things that change, things that don't.
the story of Tokyo, a city in daily flux*

写真・書・文：華雪
Text, Calligraphy and Photograph by Kasetsu

日 日 日 日 又 日 日
Passing days, days passing

と店のお兄さんはいつもぶつきらぼうに尋ねる。サワーを頼み、今日のおすすりめから目についたつまみをお兄さんに伝え、カウンターに千円札を置く。ごとんと置かれたジョッキと引き換えにお札は小銭になる。つまみが出されるたびに小銭は減り、なくなれば帰り時だ。喧噪の中、ふいにランドセルを背負った子供たちが路地に駆け込んでくる。開店前のスナックの扉の横にランドセルを置いて、たちまちどこかへ行ってしまう。かつて市場でワンカップを飲んでいた男たちの苛立った顔や小競り合いの声、赤ら顔で笑う姿が急に思い浮かぶ。男たちもミラーボールももういない。そして「りゅえる」も高層マンションを建てるための巨大な穴になった。穴の中には最近柱が立った。工事現場を囲う壁の隙間から大きな穴を時々眺め、それが飲み込んでしまったものについて考えている。



In the evening, my partner and I would make our way to an offal shop outside of the Ryueru area with 1,500 yen apiece. We opened our cans of cheap low-malt beer drink bought at a convenience store on the way, munching on our 80 yen skewers of offal grilled in front of the shop. Meanwhile elementary school students would arrive, eat one skewer and go.

When we'd finished our drink we went into the alleys of Ryueru. Past a sushi shop, a "snack" bar and a Chinese restaurant, and round the corner of a southern French restaurant that was opposite a terrace decorated with the national flag of the Philippines, there was a stand-up bar. "What are you drinking?" the barman would always ask curtly. We would ask for a shochu sour, tell the barman what had caught our eye from the side dishes of the day, and put a 1,000 yen bill on the counter. For that we got a beer mug thumped down in front of us and some change. Whenever food we'd ordered came out, the amount of change would go down, and when it had all gone it was time to go home.

In the middle of this hustle and bustle, children with rucksacks on their backs suddenly came rushing into the alley. They left their rucksacks at the side of the door to a "snack" bar that hadn't opened yet, and quickly disappeared somewhere. I was suddenly reminded of the irritated expressions, the squabbling voices and the red laughing faces of the men who used to drink One Cup sake at the market. The men and the mirror ball have all gone now.

As for Ryueru, it became a gigantic hole, ready for the construction of a high-rise residential building. Pillars recently went up in the middle of the hole. Sometimes I look at the big hole through the gaps in the wall around the construction site, and think about what has been swallowed up there.

華雪

書家。1975年、京都生まれ。92年より個展を中心に活動。「文字を使った表現の可能性を探ること」を主題に、国内外でワークショップを開催。他分野の作家との共同制作も多数。近年は「高橋コレクション」をはじめ、現代美術の場でも作品を発表。

Kasetsu

Calligrapher. Born in 1975 in Kyoto. Since 1992 she has focused on solo exhibitions. She holds workshops in Japan and overseas on the theme of exploring the possibilities of expression through characters. She has also collaborated with artists from other fields many times. In recent years her work has also featured in forums for contemporary art including the Takahashi Collection.

私の王国 - 好プレー

My Odd Plays and Fine Plays

スケラッコ

京都で漫画やイラストを描いています。ツイッター(@sukeracko)でしょうゆさしの食べ物漫画を不定期で公開中。リイド社より単行本『盆の国』発売中です!

Sukeracko

Kyoto-based manga artist and illustrator. Sukeracko's food manga featuring a cute little shoyusashi (soy sauce cruet) named Sukeracko appears irregularly on Twitter (@sukeracko). Her book *Bon no Kuni* [Country of Bon] published by Leed Publishing Co. is on sale!



I first encountered peanuts as a first-grader, when we had our snack.

crunch crunch

crunch They're hard.

Wow! Sukeracko eats the shells, too! What? Huh?

Kind of an embarrassing memory... Now I remove the shells, of course.

snap