

洗礼への旅

クララ 辻上好子

「千年の都」と呼ばれる京都には数え切れない程沢山の神社・仏閣があります。私のキリスト教との出会いはこの寺の縁につながっています。

熱心な仏教徒であった母は、小さい頃の私を背負い、また手を引いて毎月お寺に説教を聴きに行っていました。そのお寺と垣根一つ隔てた隣りがキリスト教(新教)の幼稚園で、日曜毎に礼拝があり、ホールの尖塔には十字架が聳えていました。それが幼年期の私の心に刻まれた初めての十字架です。

小学校時代は、この十字架を見ながらお寺の日曜学校に通っていました。同じくこの頃夜のネオン・サインの中で、真っ赤な十字架を見つけました。傍らに書いてあった聖書の言葉「労苦して重荷を負える者よ、われに來たれ・・・」(マタイ 11:28)子供の頃でしたからくわしい意味はわかりません。でも、“われに來たれ”この意味だけはよくわかりました。

YWCA に賛美歌の練習に通った女学生時代、読書が好きだった私が初めて読んだカトリック関係の本はテレジアの「小さき花」(これは立派な本でした。)と「アシジのフランシスコと小さい兄弟」これはとても感動を持って読んだことを覚

えています。

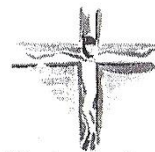
この頃はまた、同志社大学の栄光館へ日曜礼拝にも出かけていました。これは純粹に礼拝というよりパイプオルガンが聞きたくて出かけたのも半分あったかも知れません。

ある土曜日の夕方、同じ栄光館に大学生の劇を見に行きました。それは「若きウェルテルの悩み」だったでしょうか?・・・翌日の朝、日曜礼拝に出席したとき、いつものすてきなパイプオルガン、牧師の話、・・・しかし私の心は違和感で一杯でした。昨日の劇のシーンが目に浮かびます。同じステージで、昨日と今日のコントラスト、“否”、私が求めていたものはこれではない。こんなところで私は祈れない、わたしの教会は、静かに神に祈るところ、神様とお話するところでありたい・・・“これがその時の正直な気持ちでした。以後、私は「新教」の教会に行くことを止めました。

学校に就職してまもなく、カトリック信者の先生から声を掛けていただきました。しかもその教会は勤務校の近くにあり、当時はまだ日本家屋のままであまり目立たなくて、私は教会とは知りませんでした。(今年、99年は教会献堂50周年を迎え、教会らしい建物になっています。)ここで私はやっと自分の求める教会に出会ったのです。

神様の導きは不思議です。お寺参りから教会へ、しかもプ

ロテスタントの教会からカトリックへ、この道すがら身近なものを通して、神はご自分を示して下さいました。洗礼を受けると決まった日から受洗の日までの喜び、それは、入会を志願して、ノヴィシアに入るまでの「待つ」という喜びと同じであったと思っています。



MY PILGRIMAGE

Clara Yoshiko Tsujikami, C.N.D.

Kyoto, a city called “the Capital of a thousand years”, is full of beautiful Buddhist temples and well-known Shintoist shrines. My encounter with Christianity originated in my connection with one of these temples.

My mother, who was a devout Buddhist, went faithfully to a temple to listen to monthly sermons. She would take me, a small child, either carrying me on her back, or leading me by the hand. Right next to the temple, there was a Protestant church, where people gathered for worship every Sunday. Every time I went to the Buddhist temple with my mother, I would look up at the cross on the top of the steeple. That was the first and vivid sign of Christianity carved in my young heart.

I spent my grade school days going to the Sunday school of my mother’s temple, somewhat conscious of the cross on the neighbouring church. It was also about this time that I saw one night a bright red neon cross, and beside it was written, “Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden...” (Matthew 11:28) Of course I was too young to grasp what it really meant, but at least I was happy to understand “Come to me”.

In my high school days, I loved music and was going to the YWCA for singing practice, and I also loved books. The first Catholic book I came across was *Little Flower* by Thérèse de Lisieux, which was beautifully bound and impressive. I also remember being deeply moved by the history of St. Francis of Assisi and his Little Brothers.

At the same time I was fond of going to Sunday worship held in Glory Hall at Doshisha University (Protestant). However, the purpose of my attending it was not really genuine. I enjoyed the gorgeous organ played there.

On Saturday evening, I went to this Glory Hall to see a play put on by the students of Doshisha University. It was a sweet love story; perhaps it was *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. The following morning, I went to the same hall for Sunday worship. The organ music was beautiful as usual, and the minister's preaching and all - but my heart was totally unsettled. The scenes of last night's play would occupy my mind, and I could not control the contrast of yesterday and today unfolded on the same stage. "No, this is not what I want. I cannot pray in a place like this. *My church* should be a place really consecrated to God where I can pray and talk to God quietly" - that was my honest feeling that day. Since then, I stopped going to the Protestant services.

Soon after I took a teaching job, one of my fellow teachers who was a Catholic invited me to her church, which happened to be situated near the school where I worked. Since they were still using an ordinary Japanese house for the parish liturgy in those post war days, I did not realize I was passing by a Catholic church every day. (Today, the parish has an impressive church, which celebrated its 50th anniversary of establishment in 1999.) Here at last I encountered the kind of church I had searched for.

The way God leads us is a mystery. From Buddhist sermons to Christianity; and from the Protestant to the Catholic Church. In this pilgrimage, God showed himself through the people near me. I recall the joy of waiting for my baptism after the day I made the decision, which I think was the same type of joy of waiting after I wrote my letter of application to the C.N.D. novitiate.