

Essays at will, “Soliloquy of Don Quixote”

The backstage of English and Spanish Pages of my website

While I am sleeping I have magicians working in my pillow!

The other day, one of my friends asked me, “I saw the English and Spanish pages on your website. How did you manage to do all the translations and proofreads?”



With this opportunity, let me introduce to you the backstage of my translation and proofreading magicians in my pillow. From my high school days, I have had great interest in learning English and I decided to dedicate to studying it through my life. However, during the time I was working for the NHK-Gakuen high school (after having graduated from Waseda University), I had no contact with English. This is because the subject I taught was bookkeeping.

Soon after, I began to work for the Seikyo Shimbun (the organizational newspaper of the Soka Gakkai). At that time, an opportunity arose to motivate some of us to be able to manage overseas communications, especially Spanish. I dared to take the challenge to master this foreign language. I began to study hard. I was already 34 years old then. Eventually, this risk I took became one of the reasons and I was fortunately appointed as the correspondent of the Seikyo Shimbun in Panama.

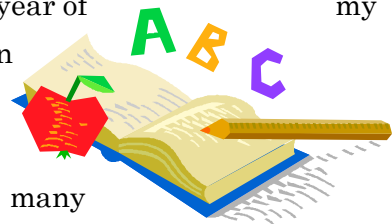
During my stay in Panama, I visited almost all the neighboring countries in Latin America. I keenly felt the Spanish origin of the cultures of these countries. From this knowledge I decided to study the culture of Spain in order to improve my Spanish. I even enrolled myself as a student at the Malaga University in Spain in the second year of my retirement.



In the class of Malaga University

Meanwhile, as for English, I kept studying continuously. At the age of 50, because I was living in Akishima city I was appointed as a chapter chief of the Soka Gakkai. Our chapter composed of American Buddhist members working on Yokota Air Base (an American military installation in Japan near Akishima city). Under

such circumstance, I realized that the more I can understand English, the more I can help the American members. Therefore, in the first year of my retirement, I took a class of English and American culture at the Central Texas College in Yokota Air Base.



As a result of all these efforts, I was able to have many encounters with foreigners; both in English and in Spanish. We also exchanged correspondence via the internet.

Two years ago, on my website, a few of my friends from overseas asked me to also add some of my reports and essays to my website in English and Spanish. In response to their requests I began to translate my writings that I presumed may be of interest to my friends from overseas.

Nevertheless, I lacked the confidence in my translations. I needed to ask native speakers to proofread my work. I had a numbers of foreign friends in Japan but most of them were too busy to do any proofreading for me. To my great surprise and pleasure, while I was trying to find capable translators locally, my friends living overseas offered me their support.

For English, I have Mr. K who lives in the United States. For Spanish, Mr. M from Panama volunteered. Mr. K was a pediatrician and Lieutenant Colonel at Yokota Air Base and Mr. M was a veterinarian and is now participating in editing the newsletters of our Buddhist organization in Panama. I am very grateful to them for their cordial supports. Thinking back, it is logical that almost 100% of native speakers would live in their own countries!

With the technology of the Internet, if I send my translated manuscript from Japan to the US or Panama in the evening, I would receive a proofread copy as early as the next morning. The time difference between Japan and these countries gives me this advantage. In another words, the task is done while I am sleeping!



The book, "The world is becoming flat" written by Thomas Freedman has become a best seller in Tokyo. In this book he cites an example of our information age as follows. "Within seconds, a message originated from a personal computer in the US can be sent to India via the Internet, from India to England, and from England to the US leaping through the different time zones of the globe." In short, a task relayed through the Internet is continuously being attended by someone else from another country around the clock, even though the people who started the task may be

sleeping.

At the time when I was dispatched to Panama as a correspondent 30 years ago, even facsimile didn't exist. E-mail did not exist. We proceeded with correspondences by telex, frantically typing Japanese in Romaji. We could never imagine the time like now would come. It's unbelievable that we are enjoying these tremendous present-day conveniences, don't you think so? For example, making use of these technologies, I am currently serializing monthly essays in a travel magazine published in Mexico and send them all over the world. "Whao! We can really do these miraculous things!?"

I, Don Quixote of Tokyo, who has completed 66 years on earth, am truly feeling fortunate and ecstatic to be alive in this wonderful time of ours!