Group discussion

28 April 2020, 17-20:00, Matsudai

Participants: Shibata, Ikeda, Keiko, Nagamo, Kita, Rika

Ikeda: His opinion… why it is not art, what they see, because farmers have such a hard time…100 years ago, they did not have their own land, they worked for someone’s land, they are kind of like slaves. It was so hard for the farmers to live through. After WWII, officially they could have their own land, this is one of the reasons why art is not something important for them, because they don’t have room to feel the art. It is not really important for them.

Q: He is talking about how they think about landscape, and what is important for them? Maybe first I can ask their feedback in general about the ideas I shared in the booklet.

Shibata: It is so different between how locals and visitors see nature. He mentioned how he feels the beauty of the snow would be different from someone who lives here for a whole year and all the seasons, and they change. The one who just comes and see the beauty of the snow in winter would be different.

Q: Can he give a specific example of how he feels the snow?

Shibata: It is the light and darkness about the beauty. If you don’t live for a year here, you don’t know how tough it is to live through the winter. The joy in winter is so different, he feels so deeply the joy and thankfulness in spring, it is the same for sunny day on a snowy day, it is such a happy and thankful day. It is something visitors could feel in their heart.

Keiko: my opinion as a local. The colors…all the colors are just comparing with the whiteness of snow. All the bright colors are just a comparison of the color of the snow, the colors just stand out. All the colors she sees is a comparison of the snow. Green is different from the city, it is not a comparison between city green and rural green, it is the comparison of green and white. She feels the brightness, in her memory she just compares the color.

Q: in general, what is landscape to them? It is the first question in the booklet.

Keiko: a good example her friend mentioned. After he worked so hard on rice planting, there is a mountainside which is covered by wild edible plants, he sat on there and he just felt the happiness. It is not just the landscape, it is just for being watched, it is for them to feel. Landscape is not what you see, it is what you feel in your daily life.

Q: what does it mean by what you feel?

Keikio: after he had such a day of hard work on rice planting, he just sat on there with wild edible plants, I can see it is a beautiful view. He felt so much happiness to be there because of the tough time he had when working on the rice fields. It is in his daily life.

Q: Do other people have similar experiences?

A: They think so too.

Ikeda: he thinks landscape never has the same moment, it is always changing, the light is changing, the wind is blowing, it is always changing, there is never a moment that stays the same. He mentioned the ocean, he is not interested in watching the ocean, it is not fun to see it.

Q: How does he compare the ocean and the mountain?

Ikeda: the ocean does not change, there is only water there, it is more interesting for him to stay in the mountains. In the mountain, the colors are different. He sees a lot of different things in the mountain, and it is changing everyday.

A: they are talking about whether people like the mountain or the ocean depends on how they grow up.

Q: How about the other people? What do they think?

Rika: She thinks that how one takes the beauty of the landscape would be different, depends on what they do. If you are a rice farmer, when you see rice terraces, one might recognize the growing conditions of the rice plants. If you are involved in some wood jobs, they could recognize different types of tree, it depends on what you are interested in, what you pay attention to, it would be different on how you take the view or see the landscape.

Q: To her, as a farmer, how would she look at it?

Rika: when she first came here, she was the same as ordinary visitor, she was impressed by the nature. Now she looks more practically, like what the rice terrace looks like, what the forest looks like, she sees the landscape more practically.

Q: What about the other people? Do they want to share something?

Kita: My view of seeing nature has completely changed since I started growing my own food 7 years ago. Before that, nature is something I see, it is an object in my surrounding. Now nature is myself, I am part of it. I see the whole world totally differently, upside down, my own thinking has changed. It did not happen right away, it happened 2 years ago, I started to notice different things. This is how I see nature and landscape. Especially this area, lots of mountains and forests, nature is like a textbook to me, when I need an answer, when I need to decide what to do for my orchid, I read nature. I see trees growing in very steep mountain with heavy snowfalls, even though everyone told me not to plant any trees here, but I see from nature and I see the answer here. Even when I see landscape, if I still cannot get the answer, I think of the universe I try to get an answer, how energy works. When I am lost, I don’t give up reading and asking people.

Q: Be getting answers, what do you mean?

Kita: first, I observe in nature.

A: there is a kind of maple tree, it is on the steep mountain, but they are never alone, they are 2/3 of them growing together, it is how they survive.

Kita: this is how I plant trees. People said don’t plant too close together, but I just plant them together so that they can support each other.

Q: you get the answer on how to design your orchid from the wild nature.

Nagamo: they have said everything I wanted to say already.