



米国ブラウン大学
スラヴ語学科教授

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(高校30期)

Dear students at Tachikawa High School,

The editor of the Tachiko Alumni Newsletter (紫芳会だより) suggested I write (in English) about how I ended up becoming a professor at the Department of Slavic Languages at Brown University in the United States.

To be honest, I had no plan or ambition to build my career in the US. I wanted to finish my Master's Degree in Slavic linguistics at the University of Los Angeles, California, and come back to Japan to teach Russian. My plan didn't materialize in the end for personal reasons. It was actually a near accident that I finished my PhD from UCLA and received an offer from Brown to come and teach in Providence, Rhode Island.

There were many new things to learn at Brown where I started working. One big item was Czech. The Department wanted me to teach the language along with Slavic linguistics and Russian. I had studied Czech before at UCLA but had never taken it as part of my specialization, but the language was linguistically so interesting that I built the entire language program at Brown. Now I offer Czech at all levels and it is an important part of the undergraduate Slavic Studies major. Besides Czech I teach Czech culture, sociolinguistics, and Old Church Slavonic, which is the oldest Slavic language used for liturgical purposes.

Life in the academic world is not easy. In order to secure a permanent position (i.e. to be a tenured faculty) and to be promoted to the rank of Full Professor, you need to demonstrate that you are a recognized scholar and an excellent teacher at the same time. You cannot be "above the clouds" as a professor; you are there to engage in collaborative work with your students (it is exciting to work with Brown students!) With intense teaching duties and expectation to produce research, balancing one's work and personal life is extremely difficult. There seems at times to be no end to how much you must work. You could be totally obsessed with your work day and night, and perpetually unhappy because you feel you don't do enough research and don't spend enough time for your family.

I am lucky to have a life partner who can put things into perspective. My son, despite (or thanks to?) my rough handling, has grown up to be a healthy, independent, and intelligent young man. I also consider myself lucky that I was able to come back to active music making and occasional public performance. I made a number of friends I respect in and outside of the university. Although making time for my family life, friends, and music requires a lot of effort, it is these aspects of my life that keep me normal.

I was fortunate that I had supportive parents who let me go and study. I was fortunate to have met some wonderful mentors without whom I would not have continued in my career. I was fortunate that opportunities came at the time when I was ready to seize them.

I would be lying if I said everything worked out perfectly. I did have to reinvent myself every ten years at Brown. Changing circumstances forced me to do so, but this made life exciting. I had many defeats in life, but they actually helped me focus on what I wanted to do and made me stronger.

At your age I tried very hard to be accepted by my peers, but never felt I fit in perfectly in the school community. I also tried to do well in school largely because I felt that this was *expected* of me. Looking back, doing well in multiple things was counterproductive*; this can be a frequent trap for good students like yourselves. I urge you therefore to pursue what *you* feel passionate about. You will be responsible for your life, but at least you will be at peace with yourself regardless of the outcome.

もし、ここに書いてあることに疑問をお感じになったら、それはあなたが自分の考えと照らし合わせて考えているからで、これはとてもいいことです。皆さんはそれぞれに育った環境やものの感じ方が違うはずで。むやみにOBやOGのことを鵜呑みにしないことをおすすめいたします。

* In this regard I must admit Mr. Fukazawa, our homeroom teacher in 1G, was absolutely right. He told us it was natural to have mixed results (2赤や5) in your grade reports, but who would have listened to teachers at your age? I didn't!

ブラウン大学はアイヴィー・リーグ八校の一つで、1764年に米国で11番目の大学として設立された。合格者の約半数が高校で主席か次席とも言われる難関校で、2013年の合格率は9.2%。また福沢諭吉が慶應義塾大学の創設にあたって、西洋高等教育について学んだ事でも有名。



http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Slavic_Languages/people/facultypage.php?id=10121より