

Part 4
The third stage of my life as business consultant
(5)
Investigation trip plan to America Alone for a month

I wrote on the Owner-Operator System with the hope that the Japanese trucking industry would try to challenge the deregulation so that they would be ready to accept the new system. The next work for me to challenge was to make an investigation trip to the United States where the owner-operator system is very widely exercised. The trip story was supposed to be written for the newspaper in a series. For this purpose, I began to do something.

I secretly promised to myself that I will try to be able to be strong enough to walk without the cane when I travel in the States for a month. For that, I began to exercise walking in my neighborhood every morning. First time in my life, I walked five kilometers without using it. Sometimes I had a hard time with scratch in the skin for an abnormal touching to the braces. The longer the distance of a walk, the more chances of adjustment needed to the braces, which I made by myself.

I made a contract with the newspaper company for my writing the article about my investigation trip to the States.

I need to write something, however, before I go on with the story about my trip schedule. It was just a year ago in October 1992 when I was still in the company as the chairman, that I had a good opportunity for meeting a certain American, who became a key man for my trip in the States a year after.

The Japan Trucking Association, Inc. sponsored a symposium in Kyoto “the US-Japan Symposium for Environmental problem for trucking industry”. Three American guest panelists were supposed to be from the Departments of Transportation, Environment and American Trucking Association, Inc. My target for meeting was a man of ATA named Allen Sheaffer.

My anticipation was right in the spot. I succeeded in approaching the three especially to Allen. Good talk subject when I approached them was to tell them that my company has a license business with Zeibart rust protection business. The three all knew about it and seemed surprised that the American born business was active in Japan. Needless to say, Mr. Sheaffer became an important key man for my trip to the States a year after.

The corresponding with him started a few months before the new company establishment. The letters were all faxed, not the email as of nowadays. He remembered me quite well

even though the symposium and the party were attended by so many people. When I wrote him first, I wrote "I am a Zeibart man with a walking cane" My cripple with a walking cane plays unforgettable impression effect to the people as a good identification. He became an important man for my trip in the States, which I write so much later days.

Coming back to the day when I build a trip plan to the States, there came an objection from a man close to me. He was my cohabitant Junko's brother-in-law, her elder sister's husband. He was the vice president of a big auto company in Hiroshima. He used to be a vice president of its sister company in Troy, Michigan for six or seven years. He said to me, "Your single trip to America for 33-day!? It's too risky for a crippled man. Make it only for a week or so!" He intended to say that I should not think of my trip to America with that much of easiness. I thought he was right and kind, but I never changed my mind.

An episode was that I had made a reservation for a Hart rental car at the Detroit Airport on my arrival. The car I ordered was the same I used to have, Taurus Ford. It was my real schedule to make a drive trip around the continent, but this was a real reckless plan, that I was ashamed of to accept his stop with no condition.

Except the rental car plan abandoned, I decided to carry on as planned to leave Narita airport on December 18, 1993. My brother-in-law made three-day appointment for me with his staffs in the Troy factory. This three-day plan was the only one I ever made previously for my one-month trip to America. "Que Sera Ser" was my real way. I recall what an adventurous or careless plan it was, indeed. Strange to say, things happen to me from time to time to open the way for me to spend the one-month stay in the States with not a single trouble.