

<Japanese Proverbs> *Kokyo e nishiki o kazaru* (“Return in splendor to your native place”)

Sometimes people also just say “Nishiki o kazaru.” It means to return to one’s birthplace having succeeded in life. You might say that this proverb is a perfect fit for trainees and technical interns, who study in Japan to learn technical skills, and then return to their home countries to put those skills into practice.

Nishiki is a cloth in which patterns are woven on a ground using different colored threads. The traditional nishijin-ori obi from Kyoto are a well-known example. Nishiki is a splendid and beautiful cloth, and by extension the term can therefore be used for other beautiful and splendid things. “Momiji no nishiki,” for example, can be used to refer to a splendid view of autumn leaves. “Nishiki o matou” does not necessarily mean that someone is wearing nishiki, but that they are wearing beautiful, luxurious clothes.

“Kokyo e nishiki o kazaru” literally means to dress oneself up in a nishiki kimono when one returns to one’s birthplace, but metaphorically this means to return having succeeded in life. This success does not only refer to wearing expensive clothes or being wealthy. This proverb is often used, for example, when a high school baseball team wins in the Koshien Tournament and returns to their school, or when sumo wrestlers go on a tour of regional areas. Or it might be used when someone who has been successful has used their fortune to build a hospital or a facility for people less fortunate than themselves in their hometown, or to provide a scholarship. “Kokyo e nishiki o kazatta” means to have remembered that one’s personal success is a result of the support and encouragement of one’s family, relatives, teachers and friends, and to have the people in one’s home place share in the happiness of one’s success.

<日本のことわざ> 故郷へ錦を飾る

「故郷へ錦を飾る」、または単に「錦を飾る」とも言います。「立身出世して故郷に帰る」という意味のことわざです。日本で技術・技能等を学び母国へ帰ってから日本で身に付けたことを活かして活躍することを期待されている研修生・技能実習生の皆さんにとって、まさにぴったりのことわざなのではないでしょうか。

錦とは様々な色の糸で地色と文様を織った織物のことで、京都の伝統の織物「西陣織（にしじんおり）」の着物の帯などに代表されるものです。美しく豪華な織物である「錦」は、転じて美しいもの、立派なものをたとえていう言葉ともなっており、「紅葉（もみじ）の錦」と言えば一面紅葉した様子を指し、「錦をまとう」は必ずしも錦そのものを着るという意味ではなく「美しく立派な服を着る」という意味になります。

「故郷へ錦を飾る」と言えば、「錦の着物で着飾って故郷に帰る」という意味が転じて「成功して戻る」という意味になるわけで、単に高価な服を着て帰るとか、たくさんのお金を持ち帰るということではありません。このことわざがよく使われるのは、高校野球のチームが甲子園大会に出場し、優勝して母校に戻ったり、大相撲の力士が地元の巡業などで活躍した時や、出世した人が自分の得た財で故郷に病院を建てたり、恵まれない人のための施設を寄付したり、奨学金を出したり、といった場合でしょうか。自分が成功することができたのは、家族や親戚、また恩師や友人などの支えや励ましがあつたからだという感謝の心を忘れず、また、故郷の人々みんなが自分の成功を喜んでくれる、そのような状態こそが「故郷へ錦を飾った」といわれるものです。