3. HUMOUR

I was taken to the hospital in South Africa. There I had a total of five operations. First, my arm was amputated from the elbow. Next, the bone of my leg was amputated. The doctors tried to save as much of my knee and elbow as possible. This would make it easier to fit an artificial leg and arm later.

Lying in my bed, I could not help thinking of people in Mozambique who had lost all their limbs. Most of them could not receive proper treatment. As a result, they got gangrene and their arms and legs had to be completely amputated. Compared to them, I was very lucky.

After six days in intensive care, I was moved to the general ward. Friends sent faxes to cheer me up. I was thankful to them, but their feelings of pity made me uncomfortable. After all, I was not a landmine victim. To clear mines was my own choice and I had gone to Cambodia freely. The real victims were those who had no choice but to live in that place, among the mines.

One day a visitor said to me, 'Poor Chris, what bad luck you've had!' My visitor was surprised when I started to laugh. 'No,' I replied, 'you're wrong. I'm really very lucky. I still have one arm and one leg.' Of course I meant it as a joke, but that was exactly how I felt. I didn't need pity.

When things are going badly, it's helpful to look at them from a different angle. From our new vision may come new hope. For me, humour was a way of responding to people's sadness. It cheered them up. Of course, laughter does not do away with misfortune. But it can help people to escape from it for a while.

Of two things I was sure. First, although I had lost an arm and a leg, I was still the same Chris. Besides that, I did not see myself as unfortunate and I had not lost heart.

The one thing that made me sad was to hear my father's and mother's worried voices over the phone. My mother said through tears that she wanted to come to South Africa right away. My father couldn't find words to express his feelings. I pictured the look on their faces all too clearly. This time, humour did not save me.

'I'll see you in London,' I told them. 'I'll be taken there three weeks from now. If you come here, I won't be able to attend to you.' Then, for the first time since my accident, tears came to my eyes. I wanted more than anything to return to my home.

EXERCISES (3)

Ａ　本文の内容に合うものにはＴ、合わないものにはＦを書きなさい．

(1) I thought I was lucky because I could receive proper treatment. ( )

(2) I did not think I was a landmine victim because going to Cambodia was my choice. ( )

(3) Laughter can not only help people to escape from misfortune for a while but can even do away with it altogether. ( )

(4) I did not cry when I talked with my parents on the phone. ( )

Ｂ　日本文の意味に合うように、（　）に適語を入れなさい．

(1) 自分の将来を考えないわけにはいかない．

I cannot ( ) thinking of my future.

(2) 携帯電話は友人間で連絡を取り合うのを容易にする．

Portable phones make ( ) easier ( ) make contact with friends.

(3) 彼女には働き続けるしか選択がなかった．

She had no choice ( ) to continue working.

(4) 彼らはその古い習慣をやめるべきだ．

They should do ( ) ( ) that old custom.

(5) 音楽は悲しみから逃れるのに役立つ．

Music can help people ( ) escape from sadness.