PART 1

AT THE FOOT OF MOUNT FUJI
1.

At the Foot of Mt Fuji
Aiko Hamada

‘Let’s go and see Mt Fuji tomorrow!’ My younger daughter, who was looking at the weather forecast, suddenly said. It was just after dinner on Friday, 20 February last year.

‘We never get good weather like this in February,’ her sister chimed in.

‘That’s true!’ I agreed in spite of myself. Our family trips have always been like this ever since the girls were children. Whenever he could find the time for a holiday, my husband would take to the wheel and drive us somewhere as if acting on the proverb, ‘Make haste to do good’. Even now when there are only the three of us, my daughters and I have not outgrown that habit. The girls immediately began to discuss where to go.

‘How about Lake Kawaguchi? A hotel where we can see Mt Fuji.’ My words decided the destination. My older daughter phoned a hotel and reserved our rooms. ‘We’re leaving at ten o’clock,’ she reminded her sister, who is a late riser.

When I woke up at eight o’clock the next morning, the late riser was already having breakfast. ‘Mummy, hurry up. I’ll go to the garage, get the car washed and fill it up.’

Her sister was getting ready, too. Well, well! I decided to prepare a picnic lunch for all of us.

We left right on schedule, the younger one at the wheel. We joined the Tomei Expressway at the Yokohama Aoba junction and continued our pleasant drive.

‘Mummy, would you like to drive?’ We changed places at the service area and I took the wheel. I hadn’t driven on an expressway for a while and it was quite stimulating. We were fast approaching Mt Fuji.