

URUSEI YATSURA
DISC 23, EPISODES 87 - 92

Episode 87, Story 110: Wow! The Mysterious Matsutake Mushroom Soup

“To be... To be... Ten made to be... Full In Care...” - Onsen.

We see bits and pieces of Onsen's English class throughout the series. Here, what Onsen is trying to read are basically random phrases that don't make any sense at all.

“What the heck is this?!” - Onsen.

“A daikon.” - Ataru.

“Damn right it's a daikon! And what are you gonna do with it?!” - Onsen

As most of our readers know, daikon are long, white radishes that are common in Asia. They are often used boiled, grated or pickled.

“Of course... It IS autumn, after all!” - Onsen.

“That's right. It's the best season for enjoying Nabemono.” - Ataru.

Think of “nabemono” (from “nabe” - big ceramic pot, “mono” - things) as the Japanese version of bouillabaisse. That is, lots of boiled goods, usually vegetables, tofu, fish and meat, that are prepared right on a dining table.

Oden (another popular dish) is very similar to Nabemono.

“Th...This is what they call Matsutake?!” - Megane.

“I haven't had any in a couple of years!” - Perm.

“Where did you steal the Matsutake from?” - Ataru.

“Mind your manners! I grew them myself!” - Cherry.

“Bull! You can't grow Matsutake so easily!” - Megane.

The reason why everyone is going crazy over “matsutake” is simply that these mushrooms are extremely expensive - a kind of delicacy that the average person rarely gets to enjoy.

Deforestation during the 1950's have not only cut down on the number of places where matsutake can be harvested (they grow on a kind of pine tree, and are extremely sensitive to the environment) but also diminished the spores of these unique, highly aromatic mushrooms.

Over the years, matsutake have gone up in price drastically. Cheaper matsutake are imported from Asia and Canada.

At the time of the broadcast, a single matsutake mushroom was often selling for 1,000 to 10,000 yen or more each. Imagine a hundred-dollar mushroom!

“I've got a beef with you, seeing you hiding that meat in your pocket! The meat ought to be in the pot; Let's square our beef that way!” - Principal.

“A meaty performance!” – Cherry.

In this scene, a few clever puns occur, and we've tried to recreate the original 'feel' in our

translation.

“Nikui” can express feelings of hate, disgust, but more often done so somewhat sarcastically to convey envy or amazement.

It so happens that meat is “niku” in Japanese, so based on these two words a pun is easily created.

Now, the difficult part is how to put a few variations of it in this sequence in English. Fortunately, the word ‘beef’ came to Shin's rescue, leading to a juicy translation victory.

“Number 683... Moroboshi Ataru!” - Ataru.

Careful viewers will notice one of the most common ways of saving expenses and time during production of anime, the repeated use of footage.

Here, after Cherry had left the school building, those who were left behind are supposedly continuing their matsutake chaos. Yet if you look carefully, Cherry is clearly visible! That is because the animation sequence here is the same as what was used earlier in the story.

Episode 88, Story 111: Enraged Lum!

“Naoko... Akina...” - Ataru.

Naoko and Akina are the names of two of the most popular idol singers at the time - Kawai Naoko and Nakamori Akina.

“Baked sweet potatoes...Get your hot baked 'tatoes here!” - Baked Potato Man.

“Y'know, I sure love potatoes.” - Cherry.

“Takoyaki...! How 'bout a quid of it, y'all?! Tho' it ain't squid, y'all! Takoyaki! How 'bout it y'all?!” - Takoyaki Man.

“You know, I sure love Takoyaki...” - Cherry.

Like ice-cream men, dealers of popular snacks “Yaki-imo” (baked sweet potato) and “tako-yaki” (doughballs with bits of octopus in them) are frequently seen selling their goods out in the streets, as seen here.

Episode 89, Story 112 : Lum & Ataru, A Night Alone

“Oh? In that case, let's go to bed!” - Lum.

“Yeah? You're seventeen? Is that right? C'mon now... You've gotta move your futon closer to mine, c'mon!” - Ataru.

Here, Ataru is doing a parody of older corporate bosses, who are notorious for seducing young women!

“Because my... my body belongs... to Darling!” - Lum.

The sequence that follows is of course a parody of “Return of the Jedi,” which had just been released at the time of original airing.

“Our mortgage will never be paid off! Gimme a seat cushion!” - Ataru’s Dad.

Because people sit on the floor in Japanese living rooms, most people need seating cushions (called “zabuton”). “Gimme a seat cushion!”, then, is like “I need to sit down and really think about it for a while!”

Episode 90, Story 113 : Lady Ryuunosuke!

“After much soul-searching, he set off on a journey...” - Narration.

This sequence is a parody of Herman Melville's “Moby Dick.”

“Point: Women may not address themselves using masculine pronouns.” - Onsen.

“Girls don't use “ore!” Just imitate me, OK?” - Lum.

In Japanese, there are various forms of pronouns, some gender-specific. “Ore” is a masculine pronoun that is also rough and quite informal; in some contexts it can be quite impolite.

“A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step!” - Onsen.

This line, with two lines that follow, doesn't make much sense in Japanese; they are all puns based on the use of “-ri”, a unit of distance somewhat like using “mile.”

The first line, “Sen-ri no...”, is straightforward, and makes sense as is. “A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.”

The second line, “Kuriyori umai Jyuusan-rihan...” or “9-ri 4-ri umai 13-ri...”, was actually an Edo-era slogan often used to advertise food. It's a pun, because “9-ri” and “4-ri” can be read “kuri” (homonym for “chestnut”) and “yori” (homonym to “...better than...”). And 9 and 4 add up to 13. Chestnuts are considered quite exquisite in Japan. So the phrase basically implies that “it tastes better than a chestnut”, and the Edo-era merchants used it quite a lot!

The third line, “Hyakushakushita no mizu no kokoro yo...” or “100-shaku-shita no mizu no kokoro yo...”, is a line from the “Miyamoto Musashi” novel, which literally translates to “oh, the mind/heart of the water, 100-shaku below...” A “Shaku” is a unit of distance, a little over a foot, so the line poetically implies how ‘deep’ something is.

“Coward! And you call yourself a girl?! You can't give up, girl! You're running away without giving it a shot! Loser! Get up! Get up, girl!” - Ataru.

This scene is a parody of a classic anime series “Attack No.1!”, a drama about a high school all-girls volleyball team. It remains to be one of the most successful shoujo (“young girls”) anime of all time.