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| Title  |     | Ox-Cart Man  |           |          |     |
| Author (Text & Illustration)   |     | Donald Hall (text), Barbara Cooney (illustrations) |           |          |     |
| Publication Year   |     | 1979   | Publisher | Viking   |     |
| Translated Versions  |     | Japanese translation available                     |           |          |     |
| Words  | 652 | Pages  | 37        | YL Level | 2.5 |
| Synopsis   |     |  |           |          |     |
| <p>It is October, and Dad loads the wagons with all of the family’s produce from throughout the year against the backdrop of the farm colored by colorful autumn leaves. After filling his cart with sheared wool, mittens woven from wool, goose feathers, candles, linen, shingles, brooms, potatoes, apples, maple sugar, honey, turnips, and cabbages, he and his cart, pulled by oxen, would drive over hills and through tiny villages for ten days to travel to the big city, Portsmouth. He aims to sell “everything” he took with him to the market. The barrel that held the apples, the cart, and even the bull that pulled the cart for us will be sold with a kiss goodbye. With the money, he buys an iron kettle, embroidery needles, knives, and candy and trudges all the way back to the farm where his family will be waiting for him. The seasons will then turn once more, and everyone works together to make their living.</p>  |     |  |           |          |     |
| Introduction   |     |  |           |          |     |
| <p>Donald Hall and Barbara Cooney co-created <i>Ox-Cart Man</i>, a Caldecott Award winner. Donald Hall (1928–2018), a Connecticut-born poet, writer, and editor with more than 50 publications. Barbara Cooney (1917–2000) was an illustrator and picture book author born in Brooklyn, New York. While Cooney produced illustrations for <i>Ox-Cart Man</i>, she was also a co-author as well as illustrator for <i>Miss Rumphius</i>. Both <i>Ox-Cart Man</i> and <i>Miss Rumphius</i> are set on the United States’ east coast.</p> <p>The beautiful countryside and the dress and life of the farming family in this book reminded me of Tasha Tudor (1915–2008), a Boston-born picture book author who lived in rural Vermont later in life. Tasha Tudor was a person who lived a 19th Century life in today’s times with all its modern conveniences money can buy. Tudor enjoyed living along with the seasons, wearing long dresses with floral patterns and aprons that looked like they had stepped out of the pioneer era, making jams and sweets with berries and apples from her garden in season, and handcrafting</p> |     |  |           |          |     |

candles for the year by hand with the whole family. Tudor resembled Miss Rumphius in her passion for creating gardens with flowers planted throughout her vast estate.

Tasha Tudor started living in the country in 1972, the same decade that David Hall and Barbara Cooney published *Ox-Cart Man* (1979). Since the mid-1960s, when the problems of industrialization became more apparent to many people, there was an increase in environmental awareness in the United States. It may not have been a coincidence that authors of the generation that witnessed these changes and knew the lifestyles of their grandparents and parents in the 19th Century published a back-to-nature picture book around the same time.

The life of the self-sufficient American farmers depicted in this picture book differs little from that of Japanese farmers, in spite of differences in dress and customs. With changes in industrial structure, the nature of work, occupational choices, and people's lifestyles have changed drastically, and since the mid-1980s, a rethinking of the consumerist society has led to the emergence of the "slow life."

We would like to introduce the newspaper column "Words of the Moment" by Seiichi Washida.

I make more now, but things were a lot more fun when I had no money

Toru Iwasa

The magazine editor and his colleagues decided to move to the countryside while reflecting on the days when he started his company in an old apartment in Tokyo. He wondered about such a life where He could work overtime every day and go out for a feast with the money he earned even late at night. People live multiple times. As a creature, a family, a friend, a company employee, and a citizen. If the time for one is sacrificed for another, then it is all for nothing.

From the September 15, 2012 morning edition of "The Front Runner."  
(*Asahi Shimbun* morning edition, January 4, 2020)

In recent years, more and more people, even those younger than during Iwasa's generation (born in 1967), have been migrating to the countryside. A 2017 white paper by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism reported that one in four young people living in the three major metropolitan areas were interested in moving to the countryside. It is easy to see why people today, who live their lives under pressure, would be drawn to this picture book. Just picking up this book is a relief; *Ox-Cart Man* can be read in a variety of ways: as a beautiful picture book, as a nostalgic book, as a look at social change, or even as a manual for reassessing one's lifestyle.

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(Text: Yuka Kusanagi)