

湯川・中安（私たち）は、ある対象と対象の 距離の問題についてよく話をする。厳密には、対象と対象がとる「距離化」について。「距離化」の話とは、たとえば自分と先祖や家族との距離や、嗜好や仕事との距離、あるいは世界の出来事と身の回りに起きた出来事との距離、その距離が状況に応じて遠くに近くに变化する距離とその後の平衡のことであり、その間を媒介している物質についてである。

「距離化」の問題は、何も貨幣に限らず身の回りにあらゆる場面に顔を出す。たえず個人に干渉するあらゆる公共や市場や政治や習俗の中に。私たちは、その場面で伴われる物質的な媒介そのものや、媒介が作る距離化に意識的になることで糸口を見つけようとしている。社会や個人の救世主たりうる、寄り所たりうる媒介。それによって豊かさを感じとれる糸口を、私たちは探している。

日本の放射化学の父といわれる化学者・飯盛里安。彼の人生における、鉱石をめぐるいくつかの時代を私たちは知った。純粋な放射性鉱物との対峙していた若き日のこと。理化学研究所に入所し放射体化学研究のために海外留学していた日のこと。ときに、戦争を前に、軍部の命による鉱石の探索に従事した時代。能登の海岸でという鉱物を探し、それを見つけ無邪気に喜んだこと。研究者引退後、宝石の「美しさ」を追い求めて人造宝石を作り続けた晩年。彼にとっての鉱石は、まさに、各時代の物事との距離の伸縮に立ち会う媒介であり、そして鉱石が示す媒介としての振る舞いは、ときに史実として語られる彼よりも彼そのものを映すのではないか。

鳥取県西部、日本海に面した淀江には、古くから良縁のご利益を得るために、若者が望む相手の顔に似た小石を海辺から拾い山に奉養していたと伝えられる場所がある。その場所はサエノタワといい、サエ（境）のタワ（峠）、つまり村境の峠を表している。近世の往来道であったそのタワには、幾万におよぶ石が今も残されている。一面に覆われた枯葉を取り除くと、丸い石群の積み重なる異様な空間が現れる。時間軸を飛び越えて置かれ続けた、顔に見立てられたこの石群は、祈る対象と人のあいだの距離を示してくれる。

私たちはここに、日本海にあった二つの「媒介としての石」を持ち込む。「利益」のために拾われた石を私たちがまた拾い、そして追想する。私たち自身が今度は両者を対象化し、追想という行為によって距離化を図るのである。距離化の媒介になった作品一つ一つは、入れ子状の「利益の距離」としてこの空間に新たな関係性を立ち上げる。我々はいつも利益を追い求める。距離化という「柔らかな距離」が網の目状に張り巡らされたこの展示空間は、距離化の問題がごくごく一般的で普遍的であることを我々に気付かせる。

We Yukawa•Nakayasu, often find ourselves talking about issues regarding the distance between a certain subject and another subject. Strictly speaking, the discussion concerns the “distancing” (Distanzierung) that occurs between one object and another. The term “Distancing” as mentioned here, for example concerns the distance between us and our ancestors and family, the distance between us and leisure and work, or the distance between world affairs and the events that take place in our surroundings. It is about the way in which these distances change to become closer or further away depending on circumstances and their subsequent state of equilibrium, and further the materials that serve to mediate between them.

The issue of “distancing” is not only limited to the aspect of money, but is something that emerges in all that surrounds us, in the public sector, market, politics, and customs that constantly intervene with the individual. For instance, we find ourselves living our lives contingent on sensing the presence of that which exceeds human intellect, words devoid of substance, the fear and awe of the unknown, the relentless focus on capitalism, and the energy created by the anonymous masses of society. Amidst this context we discern our own “dynamics of distancing.” The sense of wanting to keep one’s distance / not wanting to distance oneself too far. It is to try and sense distant presences close to one through acts of prayer. It is an attempt to secure persistent ties to the writhing economy in a place within one’s reach through strings of numbers.

We try to find paths for indication by becoming aware of the very material mediation that is involved in these scenes, as well as the distancing conceived by means of mediation. It is a mediation that can be a savior or reliable foundation for society or the individual. Through this we continue to seek the paths for indication that enable us to feel enrichment. Satoyasu Iimori is recognized as the Japanese father of radiochemistry. Through our research we had learned of some the significant periods concerning minerals within his life. The days of his pure youth when he had confronted. The days when he had studied abroad as a member of the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (RIKEN) to engage in radiochemistry research. The times before the war when he engaged in the research of minerals by order of the military. The fact that he had searched for the mineral Nagatelite on the coast of Noto, and was genuinely overjoyed upon discovering it. How he had continued to create artificial jewels in the later years of his life after retiring from research in his on-going pursuit for the “beauty” of jewels. For him, minerals were indeed a mediation that bear witness to the expansion and contraction of distance between the events of these respective moments in his life. Furthermore, one can say that the behavior the minerals convey as a mediating subject, at times seemingly reflect Iimori himself more so than what is articulated as historical fact.

The town of Yodoe is situated in the west part of the Tottori Prefecture, and faces onto the Sea of Japan. In the town there is a place where according to ancient legend, young people who wished to gain the blessing of a good relationship, had gathered pebbles that resembled the faces of their beloved companion of choice from the coast and offered them to the mountain. The place is known as Saenotawa (“Sae” = border, “tawa” = pass), or in other words, refers to a village pass. The pass that had served as a passageway during the modern era, to this remains dotted with a myriad of gathered stones. When the layer of withered leaves is brushed away, what emerges is a strange space with numerous stacks of round-shaped stones. These groups of stones likened to faces have continued to be placed, transcending time and conveying to us the distance between the subject of prayer and the person praying.

Here, into this space, we bring two “stones for mediation” from the Sea of Japan. We too had again picked up the stones that were once gathered for means of “benefit,” reminiscing the narratives embodied within them. This time we ourselves objectify them both, and attempt distancing through the act of reminiscence. Each work that becomes a medium for distancing serves to establish a new relationship in this space as an interwoven network concerning the “distancing of benefit.” We always find ourselves in search of profit. This exhibition space where the “soft distance” we call distancing is stretched out like an extensive web, enables us to realize that distancing is indeed a very typical and universal issue.