

Untangling masses of individuals

I first encountered the work of Mi-Yeon at her August 2016 solo exhibition at Niigata Eya.

On that occasion I also read her texts (essays and novels), and will never forget how she wrote, if I remember rightly, that as a young child she had believed herself to be the only “I,” until one day being genuinely surprised to learn that there were other “I’s” in the world. It strikes me that the unique texture of her photo book *Alone Together* is born not out of any expansion sensed by the “I” that thought it was all by itself (alone) when it learned of the existence of “I’s” other than itself, the alone (I) then disappearing and becoming together (we), but rather from that of a strong alone, remaining so as it becomes a together, that is, a community composed of unique “I’s.”

The photos brought back from India by Mi-Yeon in recent years are seductive in their generous, limitless expansiveness, and thus tempting to describe as a further extension of that original expansion. Light shimmering on the Ganges, people wearing, adorning, rubbing themselves with red, vermillion, crimson. The bright light and vibrant color that suffuse these photos are at once real light and color, and also the light and color found deep within the “alone” of each individual who visits here, prays, bathes, lingers on the riverbank. Light and color take alone and make it together, connecting. The photos of Mi-Yeon, who has apparently started visiting sacred sites in locations including Jeju Island and Okinawa, move like compass needles pointing to places far away yet very close by, untangling masses of divided individuals along the way. (Okura Hiroshi/Art critic, Sakyukan director)

「個の固をほどく」

ミーヨンの写真に接したのは2016年8月の新潟絵屋での個展だった。

そのとき、彼女が書いた言葉（エッセイ、小説）も読んだが、たしか幼いころ「私」は自分ひとりだと思っていて、ある日ほかの「私」もこの世にはあるのだと知った時心底おどろいたと書いてあったのが忘れられない。写真集『*Alone Together*』の独自の触感は、自分だけ (alone) だと思っていた「私」が、自分以外の「私」の存在を知って感じた拡張感、alone (私) が消えてtogether (私たち) になるのではなく、強度あるalone がそのままtogether に、つまり「私だけの私」で構成される共同体になるという感覚から生まれているという気がする。

彼女が近年インドから持ち帰った写真の、その拡張感のさらなる拡張とでも言いたくなるような、ゆるやかで、果てのない広がり魅了される。ガンジスの川面に揺れる光、赤や朱や紅を衣装に、身体にまとい、すりつけた人々。写真を隙間なく満たす明るい光と色は、現実の光と色でありながら、そこを訪れ、祈り、沐浴し、川辺にたたずむ人々一人ひとりのaloneの底に広がる光であり、色だ。光と色がaloneをtogether にしている、つないでいる。さらに済州島や沖縄の聖地をも訪ねだしたというミーヨンの写真は、分かたれた「個」の「固」をほどく、遠い、けれどすぐそこにある場所を示す羅針盤のように、動き出している。（大倉宏 / 美術評論家・砂丘館館長）