うつわに盛った中味は、そこでどう振る舞うか:

一柳慧×近藤高弘「消滅」展に寄せる

稲賀繁美

耐熱容器でないプラスティック・コップに、それとは気づかず沸騰した熱湯を注いだことがある。熱湯の温度に耐えない透明の器の側面は、腰が抜けたみたいに、上端から地面に向かって落下してゆく。中に貯まっていたはずのお湯は、器が消滅したのに驚いた、といった風情で、一瞬躊躇したのち、支えを失った当惑もろとも、周囲に溢れだしてゆく。まるで高速度写真で眺めるような奇妙な臨場感に囚われた事を覚えている。あとには、扇平な不定形に広がった半透明のプラスティックの残骸と、そこからこぼれでた水面が机のうえに広がるばかり。読者の皆様にも実験して頂くと、この不思議な体験を分かち合うこともできるだろう。ただ流れ出した熱湯で火傷をしたり、部屋を水浸しにしたりはしないよう、くれぐれも気をつけていただきたい。器が、そこに盛られた内容物ゆえに溶解し、蒸発すると、ありえない出来事が発生する。器とは、日常生活を無事に営むための安全弁なのだと悟られる。

焼成しない生の陶土を轆轤に投げて器を作り、そこに水を注ぐと、 先のプラスティックの溶解に似た現象が発生する。時間差攻撃を受け て、土がへたりこみ、中身が溢れ、あたりに零れる。思えば、自律し た造形という西欧啓蒙の美術の理念を盛ったために器が自壊するとい う実験を、生涯にわたって手を替え、品をかえて敢行したのが、前衛 陶芸家、八木一夫だった。八木の棲息した五条坂に生を受けた近藤高 弘の「消滅」はその衣鉢を継ぐ試みだろう。

作為と無作為のあいだ。そのあわいの探求が、芸術的意志と素材との駆け引きの界面を浮上させる。轆轤に粘土や陶土を投げる経験は、遠心力の働きで素材の粘性を手に感じながら、素材との鬩ぎ合いのうちに、掌に造形を巻き上げてゆく体験である。容易に言葉では分節できない経験であり、頭脳や眼ではなく、腕や指が思考する様が体得さ

れる。そこには温度や摩擦、粘性や硬軟といった様々な触覚が、場合によっては臭覚や聴音、舌での土の味覚をも動員しつつ、手や指の造形意思とも重なり合って、回転運動の内に素材と会話を交わす。

職人技では、轆轤の回転と陶土のクセと手や指の感触とが、相互に 予定調和を来す地点が模索される。そして調和が実現されていると、 自分がなにかを作っているという主観性はかえって遠のき、環境に溶 け込んだような無我感に包まれもする。それは手術が順調にすすん でいる折りの外科医や、作業が滞りなく進捗している翻訳者の現場感 覚にも近いだろうか。不思議なことに、功名心が働いたり、うまくい っているといった意識が戻ったりすると、とたんに不都合な障害が生 じ、この無我な充足感は失われてしまう。だがこの予定調和のような 境地に没入してしまうことにも、また別種の危険があろう。芸術が作 為であるかぎり、作為を殺すのは自殺行為とも見倣される。逆に無作 為であるような条件を整えることも、無作為をつくるという作為にほ かなるまい。ここで意識と意識の彼方とは循環した回路に入る。

器は意味という中身を育むが、中身は時に器を壊し、そこから流出する。だが流出したとたんに、中身は形態を失い、不定形な溶融状態に回帰する。それは意味の出現と喪失にも類比できよう。鍵穴と鍵との関係に託すならば、両者の摩擦のなかで初めて回転運動がうまれ、そこで立ち上がる形が、開かれた蓋に対応する。だが、蓋が開かれた時、中身は中空へと霧散することにもなる。イメージを言葉でつなぎ止めようとすることの困難も、これと似た性質を帯びる。音符に拾う端から零れ落ち、流れゆく音調も、それに近い。器にモノを盛るとは、そもそもいかなる営みか。盛った中身によって崩壊を遂げる器とは何なのか一。そうした問いに舞い戻る折に、人は置き去りにされた大切な忘れ物の在処に、ふと気づかされる。

How does a substance behave when put in a vessel? – Thoughts on Ichivanagi Toshi's and Kondo Takahiro's Erasure

Inaga Shigemi

I once poured boiling water into a plastic cup without realizing that it was not heat resistant. Unable to withstand the temperature of the water, the sides of the transparent vessel collapsed to the ground as if startled. The water hesitated for a split second before spilling into the surrounding space, as if perplexed by the cup's disappearance. Everything seemed to happen in slow motion, as if I was watching a super slow-motion replay. Eventually, the translucent plastic remains spread to form an irregular shape on the flat table top, beneath a growing puddle. If you try this at home, you will know what I am talking about – just take care not to get burned or wet your floor!

When the contents of a vessel cause it to melt and evaporate, the unthinkable happens. It is then that we realize that vessels act like safety valves that allow us to go about our lives safely.

A phenomenon similar to the above may be observed when a clay pot that has been thrown on a wheel, but not fired, is doused with water. The sides of the pot droop as if tricked, and the water overflows, wetting the surroundings. We are reminded of avantgarde potter Yagi Kazuo, who lived in Gojozaka, which is also the town in which Kondo Takahiro was born, and who for the duration of his career experimented with a variety of vessels and techniques as he tried to make pottery vessels implode by filling them with the Enlightenment concept of self-creation. Kondo Takahiro's Erasure appears to be an experiment in the same vein as Yagi's work.

It is when you start searching for a middle ground between intentionally-created and randomly-occurring forms that you start to notice the interplay between the artist's intent and the medium. When you work clay on a wheel, you experience what it is like to create a form with your hands while battling with the medium and sensing its viscosity through centrifugal force. It is an experience that is hard to put into words, in which you have to think using your arms and fingers rather than your brain and your eyes. Working clay is a conversation with the medium that takes place as the medium rotates, in which a variety of sensations including

temperature, friction, viscosity, hardness, and sometimes even smell and hearing come into play – you may even use your tongue to taste the clay – and combine with your hands' and fingers' urge to shape the clay.

Skilled potters attempt to find the point at which the rotation of the wheel, the characteristics of the clay, and the sensation in their hands and fingers all come together in harmony. When they succeed, the subjective sensation of creation recedes, and the potter is enveloped by the feeling that he or she has achieved a state of nothingness and become one with the environment. This may be similar to what a surgeon feels when an operation is going well, or what a translator feels when a job is going smoothly. Interestingly, the second the potter becomes ambitious or complacent, he or she will encounter problems and the fulfilled sensation of nothingness will vanish. At the same time, becoming overly absorbed and going on auto-pilot presents dangers too: as long as art remains a conscious endeavour, the suppression of conscious action is regarded to be suicidal. That said, the act of creating conditions that simulate randomness is also by its nature contrived. In this world, the conscious and the unconscious form a

A vessel nurtures the meaning that it contains. However, sometimes the contents of the vessel destroy their container and leak out. The second that the contents are spilled, they lose their form and revert to a shapeless, molten mass. This process may be compared to the manifestation and loss of meaning. We can also compare it to a key in a keyhole, in that only in the presence of friction will the key rotate, eventually allowing the lid of the box to open. However, when the lid is opened, the contents of the box are dispersed into the atmosphere. We might also compare this situation to the difficulty we sometimes have putting an idea into words. Or to a fleeting melody that drips from the musical notes on the stave. What does it actually mean to fill a vessel with content? What is the significance of a vessel that is destroyed by its contents? It is when we ask this question that we are reminded of a valuable possession that we forgot about.