Landscape Aesthetics on the Sacred Island "Miyajima" in Hiroshima: In Terms of the Sublime, Grace, and the Picturesque

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聖なる島〈安芸ノ宮島〉の風景美学 一崇高・優美・ピクチャレスクから一

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ABSTRACT: The aesthetics of the "Aki-no-Miyajima (安芸 / 宮島)" landscape in Hiroshima constitute a form of scientific application of several western aesthetic categories to a specific Japanese site. Specially speaking, this study considers the adoption of 《the Sublime》, 《Grace》, and 《the Picturesque》, which were flourished and discussed in Europe (especially in Britain) around the 18th century, for one of the Best Three Views among Japan.

Additionally the present paper also incorporates the analytic method of "die Alpen-ästhetik" from Georg Simmel's *Philosophische Kultur* (1911). The Jewish-German philosopher divided the landscape of the Alps into the three aspects: grass-fields at the mountain-foot, rocky massif at the mountain-side, and perpetual snow at the heavenly peak.

Now we will make full use of the three aesthetic categories and Simmel's method, and examine to treat the rocky and rugged peak of Mt. "Misen (弥山)" in terms of 《the Sublime》, the floating "Itsukushimajinja (厳島神社)" shrine between land and sea (or heaven and earth, or gods and human beings) in terms of 《Grace》, and the entire landscape of the integrated

parts: mountains, coastal lines, and shrines with the large red "Oh-torii (大鳥居)" gate in the sea in terms of 《the Picturesque》.

The paper may also illustrate the reason why the Miyajima landscape has ever been called one of the "Nippon-sankei (日本三景)", The Best Three Views of Japan, defined by Shunsai HAYASHI (林春斎), a Confucian scholar at the early Edo period. And finally we will find it here a contest of the various sorts of the beauty, or their secret co-existence.

SECTION 1.

Rocky and Rugged Peak of Mt. Misen (弥山) and the Virgin Forest: Area (A): the Sublime (崇高)

The height from sea level of Mt. "Mi-sen (弥山)", the highest holy peak on "Miya-jima (宮島: Shrine-island in Japanese)" is 535m, followed by peaks of almost the same height, together named after Mt. "Sumeru (須弥山)", the centre of the world, like the "axis mundi" in Buddhism (仏教). Thus, we can say that there is a kind of Japanese

"Mi-tate (見立て)" aesthetics in the rocky and rugged mountainous part of Miyajima, strongly related to the views of Buddhism, in particular with the classification of the main Buddhist figures. Then, Mt. Misen is a so-called natural "Mandala (曼荼羅)", the Buddhist visual schema of the enlightened mind.



Pic. 1.: Sunset View of the Sacred Miyajima from the East Coast Hillside of the Hiroshima Bay /広島湾東岸(安芸郡府中町瀬戸ハイム付近)より遠望した西陽に輝く「宮島」〔Photo by the Author, January 26, 2011〕

In addition to the link with Buddhism, Miyajima is also a sacred island of the ancient Japanese gods, "Itsuki-shima (斎島: Purifying and Worshipping-island in Japanese)", relating to the native primitive Shintoism (神道), as a result of which, living there is strictly prohibited. Based upon ancient Japanese Shintoism of this kind, the upper part of the mountain, in other words, the rugged peaks of Misen mountains covered with huge rocks and stones above the virgin forest, are the huge stone seats of the gods "Iwa-kura (磐座)". Sometimes we cannot perceive these rocky peaks due to the heavy fog and mist in the more

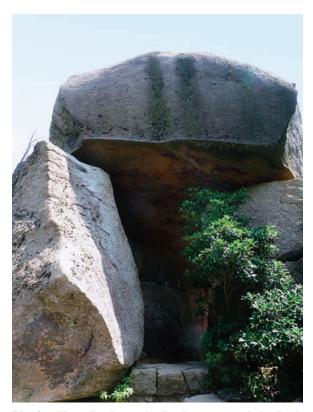
moist and warm climate of the island located in the inland sea "Seto-naikai (瀬戸内海)".

Here, let us apply the western aesthetical categories such as *the Sublime* (崇高), *Grace* (優美), and *the Picturesque* (絵様美/ピクチャレスク) into three areas: (A), (B) and (C) of the Miyajima landscape. My paper is a tentative illustration of the comparative studies of the Miyajima landscape. These categories are originally from the modern British Aesthetics, and the method of analysis is adopted based on the "Alpenästhetik (山岳美学)" in his work *Philosophische Kultur* (1911) by Jewish-German philosopher Georg Simmel, who spaciously divided the Alpine landscape into three realms.

See the Figures below: No. 1 and No. 2. In Area ⓐ, we can see that there are two connotations concerning Buddhism and Shintoism. This suggests that there is an invisible or non-representative phase at Area ⓐ. Thus, we might recognise Area ⓐ to be the realm of *the Sublime* (崇高), that is, the heavenly and metaphysical world of the god(s). In this context I will simply define The Sublime as a representation of that which is beyond our conception or perception, and apply it to the misty seats of the gods at the top of Mt. Misen.



Pic. 2.: Peak-scape of Mt. Misen, with the Gods' seats Iwakura /「磐座」としての弥山山頂の巨石群風景 [Photo by the Author, August 10, 2015]



Pic. 3.: Huge Rocks as the Iwakura around the Peak of Mt. Misen / 弥山山頂付近の折り重なる巨岩 [Photo by the Author, August 10, 2015]



Pic. 4.: The Peak, Misty Seats of the Gods /天上の雲間に隠れる神域たる弥山山頂 [Photo by the Author, August 31, 2015]

SECTION 2.

Floating "Itsukushima-jinja (厳島神社)" Shrine with Theatrical Stages: Area (B): *Grace* (優美)

The "Itsukushima-jinja" Shrine was reportedly founded by one of the local noble clans at "Aki-

koku (安芸国)" (the old name for the western part of Hiroshima) and later priest of this shrine, SAEKI-no-Kuramoto (佐伯鞍職) in 593 A.D. (推古元年 in the Japanese empirical calendar). At the end of the "Heian (平安)" period, around in 1168 A.D. (仁安三年), TAIRA-no-Kiyomori (平清盛) from the "Taira (平)" family, or "Hei-ke" (平家) clan, the most famous and powerful samurai warrior of his day, built the shrine as we see it today. TAIRA-no-Kiyomori had a strong connection with the emperor through intermarriages.

The floating style of the shrine buildings mirrors the style of the emperors' and aristocrats' mansion-houses, which featured large ponds at that time. This is known as "Shinden-zukuri (寝殿造)". In this way, the Heike clan played a role as patrons of the Itsukushima Shrine, and the gods became guardian spirits of them. The surviving parts of the old "Itsukushima-jinja" buildings date from 1240-43 A.D. (仁治年間).

After the downfall of the Heike clan during the Age of the Provincial Wars between the samurai warriors in Japan, "Sengoku-jidai (戦国時代)", Motonari MOURI (毛利元就) won the Battle of Itsukushima and ruled the province, including Miyajima, in 1555 A.D. (弘治元年). Then, the Mouri clan began worshipping at the shrine very intensively, and during the Edo period, pilgrimage to Miyajima, known as "Aki-no-miyajima-moude (安芸ノ宮島詣)", was flourishing among the ordinary people as a sort of tourism, along with the "Ise-moude" or "O-ise-mairi" bound for the "Ise-jingu (伊勢神宮)" Shrine located in the present-day Mie prefecture.

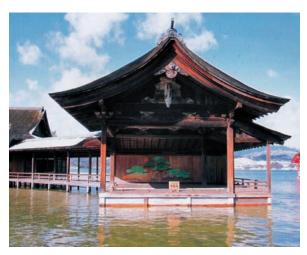
Now let us consider the aesthetical meaning of the Itsukushima-jinja Shrine again. The location of the shrine is right on the waterfront, just on the boundary between land (陸) and sea (海). The gods are descending from the mountain into the shrine and at the same time, people are coming across the sea from the mainland to go into the shrine.

The shrine is therefore an interface (境界/

界面/交流の場) between the realm of the gods and that of humans. There seems to arise a pleasing interactive playground between the heavenly world (天=神/彼岸) and the earthly world (地=人間/此岸). In this sense, the shrine must be built in a floating structure. Two theatrical stages annexed



Pic. 5.: Bugaku Play on the Front Stage of the Main Itsukushima Shrine /厳島神社中央「高舞台」での舞楽「陵王」〔Photo from: Miyajima wo Tanoshimu (2nd edition), Hiroshima: Chugoku Shimbun-sha, 2006, p. 9. /『世界文化遺産の島 宮島を楽しむ(改訂版)』中国新聞社,平成18年4月,9頁より〕



Pic. 6.: The Floating Noh Play Theatre attached to the Main Itsukushima Shrine / 厳島神社正面左手の海上に浮かぶ能舞台 [Photo from: Miyajima wo Tanoshimu (2nd edition), Hiroshima: Chugoku Shimbun-sha, April 2006, p. 32. /『世界文化遺産の島宮島を楽しむ(改訂版)』中国新聞社,平成18年4月,32頁より〕

with the shrines are inspired by, and result in, an intercommunication system set up deep in the Itsukushima-jinja.

One of these stages is the front stage of the main shrine for "Bu-gaku (舞楽)", a dance performed with masks that is an integration of Chinese and Korean traditions; and the other, on the left wing (to the right of the approaching viewer), is the separate theatre building for Nohplays (能樂), a traditional performing art in Japan.

This dynamics, in other words, the structure of waving and dancing set up in the shrine reflects the appearance and structure of the shrine as a whole. At first sight, the Itsukushima Shrine seems to be floating on the seashore, as if it were a swan resting on the waterfront unfolding her wings. With regard to the structure of the shrine building, the flooring is easily removable for protection from typhoons. Therefore, both in practical and aesthetical terms, the shrine has a kind of ever-dancing structure.



Pic. 7.: Floating Structure, the Dynamics of the Itsukushima Shrine /水鳥がやすらうように海面に浮かぶ厳島神社社殿 (正面 「大鳥居」越しに) [Photo from: Current Admission Ticket of the Itsukushima-jinja Shrine / 2015年8月現在、国宝・厳島神社参拝入場券写真より]

This is why Area ® should be called the realm of *Grace* (優美). Etymologically, the word grace stems from "gratia". There are two meanings: one indicates the feminine elegance in human attitude and posture inspired by heaven; the other suggests the three Goddesses originally from ancient Greece (*Euphrosyne*, *Aglaia* and *Thalia*). In the Itsukushima-jinja Shrine, the main deities (主祭神) are, coincidentally, three Goddesses

known as "Munakata-san-nyoshin (宗像三女神)": "Ichikishima-hime (市杵島姫)", "Tagitsu-hime (湍津姫)", and "Tagori-hime (田心姫)".

Finally, there exists a back gate for the sole use of the gods from Mt. Misen that connects with the forest (社叢林) behind the main shrine building, I supposed, relating to the ancient Shintoism places of worship, such as "Utaki / On (御嶽)" in Okinawa or as "Moto-miya (元宮: Original Shrine in Japanese)" at Aoshima-jinja (青島神社) in Miyazaki. Just in front of the shrine at the mouth of the cove, there also stands a huge Red Shrine-Gate "Tori-i (鳥居)", which also has a floating structure.



Pic. 8.: Back-forest behind the Main Shrine Hall with Red God's Gate / 厳島神社本殿裏の「社叢林(鎮守の杜)」(神のみが通る門「不明門」が見える)〔Photo by the Author, August 2, 2009〕



Pic. 9.: Original Worship Place with Large Tropical Woods ("Betel Palms") of the Moto-miya at Aoshima-jinja Shrine, Miyazaki prefecture / 宮崎・青島神社の「元宮」(亜熱帯常緑樹ビロウの叢林そのものが聖所) [Photo by the Author, march 26, 2009]



Pic. 10.: Aoshima-jinja facing at the Ocean /海にむかって開く青島神社の正門 [Photo by the Author, March 26, 2009]

SECTION 3.

Entire Scenery of the Mountain, Cove, and Shrine with the Large Red Shrine-Gate "Ohtorii (大鳥居)": Area ©: the Picturesque (絵様美)

There exist so-called "Nippon-sankei (日本三景)", the Three Best Sceneries in Japan, depended on Shunsai HAYASHI (林春斎) 's book Nihonkoku-jiseki-kou in 1643 (『日本国事跡考』 寛永20年). Generally speaking today, they are as follows: (1) the scattered islands with pine trees "Matsu-shima (松島: Pine-island)" near Sendai (仙台), Miyagi prefecture on the Pacific Ocean; (2) the long-shore bar "Ama-no-hashidate (天橋立: Bridge-to-Heaven)" near Maizuru (舞鶴), Kyoto on the Japan Sea; and (3) the "Miya-jima (宮島: Shrine-island)" just offshore in Hiroshima Bay in the inland sea "Seto-naikai (瀬戸内海)".

During the Edo period from the 17th century to the first half of 19th century, as I already mentioned in explaining the history of Miyajima, there was a pilgrimage or tourism "boom" relating to the great landscapes such as the Best Three Sceneries, or "Nippon-sankei". Since then, many images of the beautiful views at famous sightseeing locations have repeatedly been reproduced in travel

guidebooks and so on. Today of course, we also find many postcards depicting such beauty spots. In the tradition of beautiful coastal views in Japan, one keyword is "Hakusha-seisho (白沙青松)". Literally, this means just white sands and green



Pic. 11.: Monument of the The Best Three Senaries in Japan, "Nippon-sankei" near the Miyajima Pier / 1643年刊の儒者・林春斎『日本国事跡考』(陸奥国のくだり)に基づく「日本三景碑」(宮島桟橋付近) [Photo by the Author, October 28, 2008]



Pic. 12.: Long Curved Seashore Line with the traditional "Hakusha-seisho (white sands and green pine trees) /弧の曲線美を描く「白沙青松」の入江 [Photo by the Author, August 3, 2015]

pines. To be considered as having the elements of the Best Three Sceneries in Japan, the "white sand beach with evergreen pine trees" should be added to a curved coastline.

Let us refocus on Miyajima again. When we board a boat and approach Miyajima from the mainland opposite, we can easily find that the elegantly floating "Itsukushima-jinja (厳島神社)" Shrine rests with *Grace* (Area ®) on the waterfront of the cove, which has a curved shoreline with white sands and green pine trees. Within sight of our boat, the Large Red Shrine-gate "Oh-torii (大鳥居)" catches our eye and makes for very photogenic framing.



Pic. 13.: Itsukushima-jinja Shrine rests at the Bottom of the Beautiful Cove / 白沙青松の入江の奥にやすらう厳島神社社殿(海に浮かぶ社殿がよく分かる) [Photo by the Author, August 3, 2008]



Pic. 14.: The Large Red Shrine-gate, Oh-Torii standing in (exactly floating on) the Sea: Eye-catcher of the whole landscape in Miyajima / 宮島景観の「アイ・キャッチャー」としての海中の大鳥居〔Photo by the Author, August 10, 2015〕



Pic. 15.: The Large Red Shrine-gate framing the Main Shrine of the Itsukushima-jinja /大鳥居をフレームとして正面から厳島神社社殿を望む〔Photo by the Author, August 2, 2009〕

As our boat continues its approach to the island, our eyes are drawn from the shrine buildings up to the virgin forest beyond, and on up to the rocky, rugged mountain peaks, and finally up to the highest peak of Mt. Misen (弥山) itself (if weather conditions allow). Here, we feel the Sublime (Area (A)). The "uniformity amidst variety (多様性の統一)" woven out of the coastline, the shrine buildings and the mountains is a quality of the Miyajima landscape. The entire scenery of this sacred island depends upon the integration of all these beautiful elements: the Sublime (崇高) in "Mt. Misen (弥山)" and Grace (優美) in the "Itsukushima-jinja (厳島神社)" Shrine. Therefore, I conclude that the scenery-framing as a whole (Area ©) gives rise to the views being of the Picturesque (絵様美).

Remember, the aesthetical category of *the Picturesque* originally related to a boom in "picturesque-travels" at the end of the 18th century in the British Isles. Images of typical scenery, or Best Views for Tourists, of the type seen in postcards etc were produced. Imaginary or ideally representative sceneries (frequently inspired by literature) have encouraged us to go to see the very "picturesque" views at the famous Best Scenery Spots since the boom in the tourist industry, both in

Europe and in Japan.

Notes

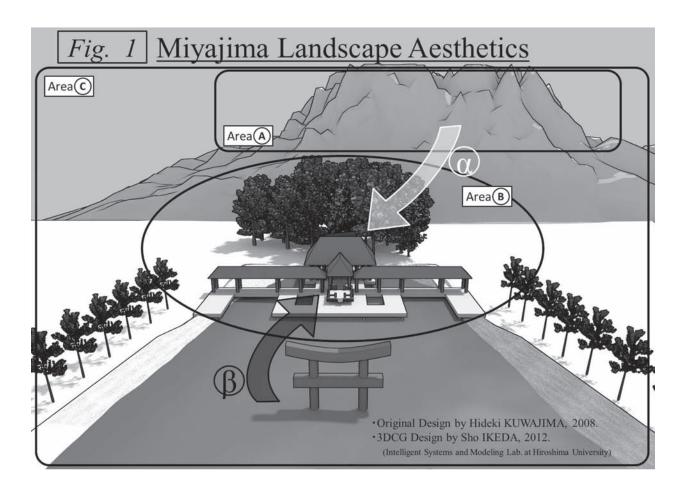
- 1. The first Japanese version of the concept of this paper was panel-presented at the 2nd Exhibition, Hiroshima University Museum (広島大学総合博物館・第2回企画展《世界遺産 宮島の魅力—発進!! 広大の宮島学—》パネル展示), July 18 August 7, 2008.
- 2. The Japanese summarized article on the relating theme was published in *Chugoku Shimbun* (中国新聞), the Hiroshima local newspaper, September 15 (Wednesday), 2010, p. 13 (平成22年9月15日付, 文化面:「緑地帯」コーナー,桑島秀樹「美学者、野を歩く」全8回連続エッセイ: 平成22年9月8日—17日掲載,第6回).
- The English version of the paper was presented at the Irish Institute of Japanese Studies (IIJS, directed by Professor Graham Parkes), University College Cork, March 8, 2012, during my one-year-research visit at Trinity College, Dublin as Visiting Research Associate (April 1, 2011- March 31, 2012).
- The present version was finely elaborated in English in cooperation with my Irish friend Ms. Juliette Nash, an alumina of Trinity College, Dublin, living in Sandymount, Dublin.
- 5. My interest on the Aki-no-Miyajima Landscape has repeatedly been evoked and strengthened by several participations in the regular summer seminar of Society for Human Culture at Faculty/Graduate School of Integrated Arts and Sciences, Hiroshima University (広島大学・人間文化研究会) since 2006.
- 6. The 3DCG Illustrations of Figure 1 and 2 at the end had originally been designed by the author in Spring 2008, and has digitally finished in assistance with Mr. Sho IKEDA (池田翔, 広島大学大学院工学研究科·情報工学専攻学生), a master course student at Intelligent Systems and Modelings Lab., supervised by Professor Kazufumi KANEDA (金田和文), Graduate School of Engneering, Hiroshima University in Autumn 2012.
- All the pictures relating to the Itsukushima-jinja in the paper have been thankfully authorized and given a permission to use by Cultural Department, Itsukushima-

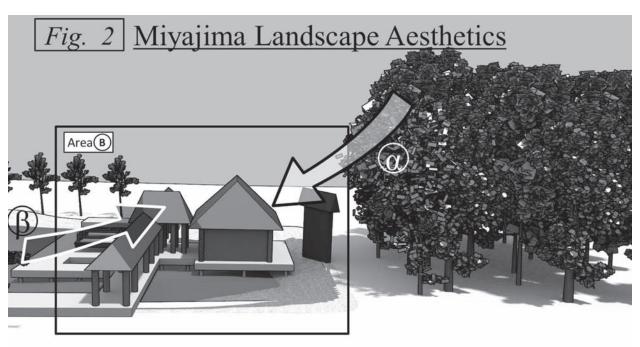
jinja Shrine Office on October 20, 2015 (Reference Number: Gen-bun FP270676:「画像掲載承諾証」嚴文 FP270676号, 平成27年10月20日).

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- ·Original Design by Hideki KUWAJIMA, 2008.
- 3DCG Design by Sho IKEDA, 2012.
 (Intelligent Systems and Modeling Lab. at Hiroshima University)

日本語要旨 (ABSTRACT in JAPANESE)

聖なる島〈安芸ノ宮島〉の風景美学 一崇高・優美・ピクチャレスクから一

本稿は、18世紀イギリスの主要な美的カテゴリーたる「崇高(サブライム)」・「優美(グレイス)」・「絵様美(ピクチャレスク)」を、「安芸ノ宮島」風景の美学的・芸術学的特性の分析に応用したものである。別言すれば、宮島風景のもつ「聖性」と「美」の関係を比較美学ないしは応用芸術学の観点から論じた視覚感性文化論の試みといえる。

なお、分析に当たっては、上記の美的カテゴリー論の採用にくわえ、19世紀末から20世紀初頭にかけて活躍した、ユダヤ系ドイツ人哲学者G・ジンメルの「山岳美学(アルペン=エステティーク)」に見られた景観分析手法をも援用している。

ジンメルによれば、「山」の風景とは、「山麓の草木」・「山腹の岩塊」・「山頂の氷雪」といった3つの異なるフェイズから成る。彼はこのような空間配置の差異に基づき、それぞれのトポス(場=景観)に働いている空間力学を考慮しながら、その美的特性のモードを分析・弁別していった。

さて、本稿でもジンメルに倣い、宮島風景を、①まずは「山頂部」の弥山を中心とする山林部(景観上層:垂直方向)、②次に、「海と陸の境界部(インターフェイス)」にある厳島神社本殿と附属社殿群(景観中層:水平方向)、③最後に、大鳥居を焦点に、山・社・海が織りなす絵葉書的な全体景観(景観低層:垂直方向+水平方向/全方位的スペクタクル)に分け、これら3種のトポスに分割して考察を試みる。そして結論として、各トポスの景観それぞれに働く視覚的・宗教的な感性力学の有様が描き出されることになろう。

以下,簡単に本稿各節のポイントを日本語で概括しておこう。

第1節 「崇高(サブライム)」: 弥山

主霊峰・弥山は、仏教上の「須弥山」に由来する。海面から屹立する峰々は「自然曼荼羅」である。宮島はまた、人間を寄せつけない「神の島(斎島)」でもあった。アニミスティックな古神道的な世界観からすれば、原生林上部に位置する弥山の巨岩山塊部は、神々の降臨する「磐座(いわくら)」だ。ここに偉大な神々の顕現を想うとき、そこに《崇高》が現出する。

第2節 「優美 (グレイス)」: 厳島神社

山から神が降り海から人が来て、インタラクティヴな交流・交感が起こる場所。そこに厳島神社の社殿はある。「聖」と「俗」(「山」と「海」/「天」と「地」/「彼岸」と「此岸」)が融けあうインターフェイス(境界/界面)に、水鳥が羽を広げたように、平安・寝殿造の《優美》な姿が浮遊する(じっさい社殿のもつ建築学的「浮板」構造は、暴風対策以上の感性的含意をもつものなのだ)。この構造は、しなやかに謡い舞う平安貴族の女性的美の象徴を具現しているといってもよかろう。

第3節 「絵様美(ピクチャレスク)」: 大鳥居と山・社・海の統一

対岸から宮島に向かうと、朱の大鳥居を焦点(ないしフレーム)として、美しい弧の曲線を描く「白沙青松」の入江が奥まったところに《優美》な厳島神社が見える。社殿から右後方へと原生林が迫りあがる。その先には霊峰の《崇高》な雄姿。ここにダイナミックに展開する全方位的なスペクタクル、すなわち「海」・「社」・「山」の景観が綜合的に紡ぐ「多様性の統一」こそ、まさに《絵様美(ピクチャレスク)》となる。こんなわけで、「日本三景」に数えられる宮島の「美」とは、多様な絵画的パースペクティヴが混淆した精華だと

考えることができよう。

以上を踏まえたうえで、対岸から「生も死もなき聖島」宮島を訪問する者の眼を借り、もういちど具体的な宮島風景に即して確認すれば、こうなろうか。

屹立する弥山山頂の巨石群は、天上世界の領域に属し、神々の降臨する磐座だ。これは《崇高(サブライム)》出来を予期させるトポスとなっている。山からは神々、海からは人々が来て交流・交歓・交易が起こる。まさに「彼岸」と「此岸」が触れあい、融けあうのが、この寝殿造の浮遊する社殿。そこはまた、能や舞を奉納する場であり、たおやかなダイナミックスがそこに生じ、この地上世界で《優美(グレイス)》が姿を現わす。

対岸から宮島へ向かって、「日本三景」と謳われる島全体を見渡してみよう。とりあえず船で近づくと想ってほしい(が、しかし、場合によっては想像力を駆使して、もっとダイナミックに大鳥居をかすめる鳥の眼となって、上空から社殿さらに弥山に迫ってもよかろう)。

まずは海中に屹立する朱の大鳥居を焦点(アイ・キャッチャー)に、おおきく弧をなして展開する白沙 青松の浜の海岸線が眼に入る。入江の奥まったところに、あたかも水鳥が羽を広げてやすらうがごとき神 社社殿が鎮座する。否、軽やかに浮かんでいるのが見える。社殿の背後から右後方へと——すくなくとも 視覚的には——社殿裏の社叢林から山腹の原生林までがひと筋に連なり、そのまま急激に迫りあがる。視 点を尾根づたいに急上昇させれば、そこに主霊峰群の峻厳な雄姿がぱっと現れ出づるだろう。畏怖すべき 神々と出逢う領域へのまなざしがそこにはある。

遠来の参拝客は、船で大鳥居をかすめて上陸を果たし、社殿の参道を一歩また一歩と社殿に近づきあゆむ。そのとき彼の眼に展開する「海」・「社」・「山」が織りなす多様な美的景観の動性は、「絵葉書」(あるいは、 江戸期なら名所図会)に象徴的に切り取られるがごとき《絵様美(ピクチャレスク)》として映じよう。

数種の「美」「聖性」が宮島の各トポスに立ち現れている。しかしながら、それらはみごとな配置とバランスをもつがゆえ、統合的に享受されうるものである。まさしく絶妙な感性力学が、つねにこの島の風景には働いているわけだ。安芸ノ宮島では、このような「美」の競演のダイナミクスが、その風景美の秘密を構成しているのである。