

A path から a wagon track、
そして、the street へ
——ユードラ・ウェルティの「踏み慣れた一本道」
"A Worn Path" 精読——（上）

中 村 紘 一

アメリカ南部女流作家ユードラ・ウェルティ (Eudora Welty, 1909-2001) の短篇「踏み慣れた一本道」"A Worn Path" をできるだけ詳しく読んでみる。その過程で、この作品はいく通りかに解釈できることが判明してくるが、それについては精読後にまとめて整理する。

"A Worn Path" は 1941 年 2 月 *The Atlantic Monthly* に掲載され、同年処女短篇集『緑のカーテン』*A Curtain of Green* (New York: Doubleday, 1941) に収められた。なお、これを映画化したもの（題名 *A Worn Path*、監督 Bruce Schwartz、1994 年制作、上映時間 21 分 38 秒）は YouTube で観ることができる。

使用するテキストは上掲の短篇集、pp.271-85 である。以下では、テキストを便宜的に 1 から 23 までの部分に分けて註釈を施すが、もちろん原文ではこのような分断はない。

（なお、本稿はかなり長くなるので、上、下の 2 つに分け、本号では上を、次号では下を掲載することになる）。

テキスト 1

A WORN PATH

It was December — a bright frozen day in the early morning. Far out in the coun-

try there was an old Negro woman with her head tied in a red rag, coming along a path through the pinewoods. Her name was Phoenix Jackson. She was very old and small and she walked slowly in the dark pine shadows, moving a little from side to side in her steps, with the balanced heaviness and lightness of a pendulum in a grandfather clock. She carried a thin, small cane made from an umbrella, and with this she kept tapping the frozen earth in front of her. This made a grave and persistent noise in the still air that seemed meditative, like the chirping of a solitary little bird.

註 釈

It was December この物語の語り手は作者 Welty と考えてよい。いずれにしても、三人称の語り手である。

Welty はこの短篇の執筆の動機を次のように述べている。"One day I saw a solitary old woman like Phoenix. She was walking; I saw her, at middle distance, in a winter country landscape, and watched her slowly make her way across my line of vision. The sight of her made me write the story." Eudora Welty. *The Eye of the Story—Selected Essays and Reviews* (Random House, 1978), p.161. ここで Welty は "a solitary old woman" を "an old Negro woman" に、"a winter country landscape" を "It was December" に特定している。12月にしたのは、もちろん、この物語をクリスマスの物語にしているからである。テキスト 14, 17, 23 参照。

Far out in the country 「遙か離れた（ミシシッピ州の）田舎」。後にわかるように、ここにはミシシッピ州ナチェズ古道（the Old Natchez Trace）が通っている。語り手の居場所はどこか？ Welty が生涯のほとんどを過ごしたミシシッピ州都 Jackson か、それとも、the Old Natchez Trace の終点で、主人公 Phoenix の旅の目的地である Natchez の町か？ テキスト 19 註釈参照。

an old Negro woman 後にわかるように（テキスト 16 参照）、この黒人老女の年齢は 100 歳近くにも見える（実際は、彼女にはまだ幼い孫もいて、これか

ら困難な旅に出ることからも、もう少し若いと考えねばならない。さらに後にわかるように(テキスト21参照)、南北戦争で南軍降服(1865年)の時には、彼女は「学校に行くには歳を取りすぎていた」(入学適齢期6歳くらい?を超えていた)のだから、彼女の生年は1850-60年頃と推定して、それからよそ100年近く経った現在は1940-50年頃。これはこの作品の発表年1941年に大体一致する。

Nancy K. Butterworthは、この高年齢がゆえに、Phoenixをアメリカ黒人の化身 (avatar)と考へ、彼女が生きた100年は南北戦争前から公民権運動直前に至るまでのアメリカ黒人の歴史の象徴的役割を果たしていると解釈する。"The most compelling reason for seeing Phoenix as an avatar of her race is her almost mythic age. This extreme age serves a symbolic function of allowing her personally to have spanned the entire history of the black people from antebellum days to those just prior to the civil rights movement." Nancy K. Butterworth. "From Civil War to Civil Rights: Race Relations in Welty's 'A Worn Path.'" Dawn Trouard. ed. *Eudora Welty: Eye of the Storyteller* (Kent State University Press, 1989), p.167. このようにして、Butterworthはこの作品をアメリカ黒人の歴史をアレゴリカルに描いた作品と解釈している。

with her head tied in a red rag ragは俗語でバンダナ。「頭を赤いバンダナで包んだ」。

a path A way beaten or trodden by the feet of men or beasts; a track formed incidentally by passage between places, rather than expressly planned and constructed to accommodate traffic; a narrow unmade and (usually) unenclosed way across the open country, through woods or fields, over a mountain, etc.; a foot-way or footpath, as opposed to a road for vehicles; hence applied also to a walk made for foot-passengers, in a garden, park, wood, or the like. *OED*. 「(車の通れない) 小道、径」。彼女が旅を続けるにつれて、その辿る道は、pathから wagon track、road、streetへと替わっていく。ここでは、pathは pinewoods (マツ林) を通り抜ける。

なお、ここでは a path となっているが、作品のタイトルは a worn path で、worn という形容詞が添えられている。Worn=showing the results of use or attrition. *OED* であるから、この道はすでに (Phoenix によって?) 何度も往来されたことを意味している。

Phoenix Jackson Phoenix はエジプト神話で不死鳥。発音は /fiːniks/。Jackson は Mississippi 州の州都の名前でもある。Welty は Phoenix という名前をつけたことについて次のように語っている。"Of course I knew what that meant when I named Phoenix Jackson, but it was also a name that was common among old black women. White owners often gave their slaves mythological names, so we have a lot of Homers and Ulysses and Parthenias. Also, poor people in the South tend to give their children beautiful names. They think, 'Well, at least I can give her a pretty name.' And they do." Peggy Whitman Prentiss. ed. *More Conversations with Eudora Welty* (University Press of Mississippi, 1966), p.84.

with the balanced heaviness and lightness of a pendulum in a grandfather clock 「大時計の振り子のように重い足取りと軽い足取りをバランスよく」。

This made ... like the chirping of a solitary little bird. 「(杖の代わりに使っている雨傘で、凍った土を叩き続けると) 静かな空気の中に厳粛で執拗な音をたて、その音は寂しい小鳥のさえずりに似て、物思いに耽っているのを思わせるようだった」。彼女は何の思いに耽っているのか? 後でわかるように、病気の孫に対する思いである。Alfred Appel, Jr によれば、ここでの **a solitary little bird** は、物語最後 (テキスト 22) で、Phoenix は孫のことを holding his mouth open like a little bird と言っていることに通じるという。Alfred Appel, Jr. *A Season of Dreams: The Fiction of Eudora Welty* (Louisiana State University Press, 1965), p.166.

テキスト2

She wore a dark striped dress reaching down to her shoe tops, and an equally long apron of bleached sugar sacks, with a full pocket: all neat and tidy, but every time she took a step she might have fallen over her shoelaces, which dragged from her unlaced shoes. She looked straight ahead. Her eyes were blue with age. Her skin had a pattern all its own of numberless branching wrinkles and as though a whole little tree stood in the middle of her forehead, but a golden color ran underneath, and the two knobs of her cheeks were illumined by a yellow burning under the dark. Under the red rag her hair came down on her neck in the frailest of ringlets, still black, and with an odor like copper.

註 釈

bleached sugar sacks 「晒されて白くなった（砂糖運搬用の）麻袋」。

every time は接続詞。「…するたびごとに」(whenever)。

unlaced shoes 「靴ひもの解けた靴」。後にPhoenixはそれを白人婦人に結んでもらうことになる。しかし、ここではそれに眼もくれず、まっすぐ前方を見ている。

Her eyes were blue with age. 「老齢のせいで、彼女の眼は青かった」。黒人は老齢になると眼は青くなるらしい。Cf. "Why do elderly African Americans eyes turn blue? I know a lot of elderly people and when they were younger, they had brown eyes, but now they are blue. 'Her eyes were blue with age'—what do you think this quote mean?" Best Answer - Chosen by Voters. "Sounds like a wise person. If you said green it would have sounded greedy or earthy. If you said brown it would have sounded tainted yet stable. Blue sounds more clear so I associate it with wisdom perhaps? But it could also mean perhaps as aged her eyes grew to a faded blue not as clear coloured as it was before." 以上YAHOO! Answers から。

Her skin had a pattern all its own of numberless branching wrinkles.

「彼女の肌には枝分かれした無数の皴が織りなす特有の模様があった」。

the two knobs of her cheeks were illumined by a yellow burning under the dark. 「頬の2つの瘤は黒い肌の下で黄色く燃えるもので輝いていた」。「黄色く燃えるもの」(a yellow burning)とは何か？ 彼女が抱く希望、あるいは使命感か？ いずれにしても彼女の（小道を旅する）行動の重要な動機になる。テキスト1の meditative 「思いに耽る」の思いに通じる。

テキスト3

Now and then there was a quivering in the thicket. Old Phoenix said, "Out of my way, all you foxes, owls, beetles, jack rabbits, coons and wild animals! ... Keep out from under these feet, little bob-whites. ... Keep the big wild hogs out of my path. Don't let none of those come running my direction. I got a long way." Under her small black-freckled hand her cane, limber as a buggy whip, would switch at the brush as if to rouse up any hiding things.

On she went. The woods were deep and still. The sun made the pine needles almost too bright to look at, up where the wind rocked. The cones dropped as light as feathers. Down in the hollow was the mourning dove—it was not too late for him.

The path ran up a hill. "Seem like there is chains about my feet, time I get this far," she said, in the voice of argument old people keep to use with themselves. "Something always take a hold of me on this hill—pleads I should stay."

註 釈

Phoenixの "**Out of may way** ..."で始まる台詞のうち、最初の2つの文はそれぞれの動物たちに対する命令文。後の2つの文は神(?)に対する祈願(命令)文。

wild hogs = wild boars イノシシ。Pathとはこういった野生の動物たちが出没するケモノ道でもある。

I got a long way = I've got to go a long way. 「長い道のりを行かねばならない」。この短篇は旅物語でもある。旅をテーマにした文学作品は古今東西、枚挙にいとまがない。旅の途中さまざまな障害や試練を乗り越えて、最後に目的地に到達する（目的を達成する）ことになる。しかし、いったい何のための旅か？ それが出来まで明かされないことが読者をサスペンス状態にさせる。

Alfred Appel, Jr.によれば、Phoenixの旅は小規模の『オデュッセイア』で、彼女が旅の途中で克服しなければならない物理的・精神的障害は少なくとも12はあるという。(op. cit., p.167.) あるいは、Phoenixの旅は一種のクリスマス野外劇 (pageant)、巡礼劇 (pilgrimage) にも読めるという (op. cit. p.169)。

it was not too late for him. Mourning dove (ナゲキバト) は (朝遅く、ほかの小鳥が鳴きやんだ後も) 鳴き続けていたのである。

"Seem like there is chains about my feet, time I get this far," seem like
《口語》「…のように思われる」。「こんなに遠くに来るときには、いつも足に鎖を巻きつけているように思われる」。time = every time = whenever

Butterworthによれば、**chains about my feet** は解放以前の黒人奴隷の姿を思い起こさせるという (op. cit. p.169)。

Something always ... stay = Something always take(s) a hold of me on this hill—(it) pleads I should stay. 丘の上り道になると、うんと足取りが重くなる。ここではpathは丘を上る。

テキスト4

After she got to the top, she turned and gave a full, severe look behind her where she had come. "Up through pines," she said at length. "Now down through oaks."

Her eyes opened their widest, and she started down gently. But before she got to the bottom of the hill a bush caught her dress.

Her fingers were busy and intent, but her skirts were full and long, so that before she could pull them free in one place they were caught in another. It was not possible to allow the dress to tear. "I in the thorny bush," she said. "Thorns, you doing

your appointed work. Never want to let folks pass — no, sir. Old eyes thought you was a pretty little *green* bush."

Finally, trembling all over, she stood free, and after a moment dared to stoop for her cane.

註 釈

"Up through pines," she said at length. "Now down through oaks." Path は今まで（丘の上りで）はマツ林、これから下りではオーク林を通り抜けることになる。

her skirts were full and long. 「彼女のスカートはひだがあって長かった」。

no, sir 《口語》（性別に関係なく肯定・否定を強めて）「絶対に…ない」。

Old eyes thought you was a pretty little *green* bush 「若い未熟な茂みだ（したがって、棘を使って人を通さないという決められた仕事をしない）と老いた眼は思った（誤解した）のだ」。Pathを辿る Phoenix は上り坂に加えて、棘のある茂みにも旅の邪魔をされる。

テキスト5

"Sun so high!" she cried, leaning back and looking, while the thick tears went over her eyes. "The time getting all gone here."

At the foot of this hill was a place where a log was laid across the creek.

"Now comes the trial," said Phoenix. Putting her right foot out, she mounted the log and shut her eyes. Lifting her skirt, leveling her cane fiercely before her like a festival figure in some parade, she began to march across. Then she opened her eyes and she was safe on the other side.

"I wasn't as old as I thought," she said.

註 釈

The time getting all gone here. 「(予定していた) 時間がここではどんどんなくなっていく」。

"**Now comes the trial,**" Path を行く旅の途中で遭遇する新たな試練である。小川に架けられた丸太を渡らねばならない。これも克服することになる。

leveling her cane fiercely before her like a festival figure in some parade (怖いから目をつぶり、スカートとたくし上げて「パレードで見られるお祭りの(綱渡りの) 軽業師のように杖を (バランス棒のごとく) 体の前でしっかりと水平に持って」)。

テキスト6

But she sat down to rest. She spread her skirts on the bank around her and folded her hands over her knees. Up above her was a tree in a pearly cloud of mistletoe. She did not dare to close her eyes, and when a little boy brought her a plate with a slice of marble-cake on it she spoke to him. "That would be acceptable," she said. But when she went to take it there was just her own hand in the air.

So she left that tree, and had to go through a barbed-wire fence. There she had to creep and crawl, spreading her knees and stretching her fingers like a baby trying to climb the steps. But she talked loudly to herself: she could not let her dress be torn now, so late in the day, and she could not pay for having her arm or her leg sawed off if she got caught fast where she was.

註 釈

a tree in a pearly cloud of mistletoe 「真珠色をしたヤドリギの雲に包まれた一本の木」。ヤドリギはクリスマスの装飾に使われる。眩しくとも眼をつぶらないでいると、男の子が(クリスマスプレゼントとして) マーブルケーキの皿を持ってきてくれたという白昼夢(幻想)を見たのである。旅の途中に現れた幻想。

acceptable 「満足な (けっこうな)」。

But when she went to take it there was just her own hand in the air. 白昼夢 (幻想) は覚めたのである。もしこれが幻想でなかったなら、Phoenix は誘惑に負けてこのままここに滞って必要な旅を完遂できなかつたらうと Butterworth は考える (op. cit. p.169)。

So she left that tree, and had to go through a barbed-wire fence. Path を辿る旅にはさらなる試練が続く。**a barbed-wire fence** は、後に登場する黒犬とともに、黒人奴隷の監禁や逃亡時の恐怖を思わせるイメージであると、Butterworth は指摘する (op. cit. p.169)。

she could not let her dress be torn now, so late in the day, and she could not pay for having her arm or her leg sawed off if she got caught fast where she was Phoenix の独り言。自由間接話法で語られている。**she could not pay for having her arm or her leg sawed off** 一種のブラックユーモア。

テキスト7

At last she was safe through the fence and risen up out in the clearing. Big dead trees, like black men with one arm, were standing in the purple stalks of the withered cotton field. There sat a buzzard.

"Who you watching?"

In the furrow she made her way along.

"Glad this not the season for bulls," she said, looking sideways, "and the good Lord made his snakes to curl up and sleep in the winter. A pleasure I don't see no two-headed snake coming around that tree, where it come once. It took a while to get by him, back in the summer."

註 釈

the clearing 「(森林中の) 空き地」(開墾のためにそこだけ樹木を切り払った)。(野生動物の侵入を防ぐ) 鉄条網の垣を通り抜け、空き地に来るとそ

こはワタ畑である。Pathを辿るPhoenixの旅は少しずつ自然から人工へ、荒野から文明へと向かっている。

a buzzard [鳥] 「ノスリ (buteo)」、俗語で ばか、のろま、ぐずの意味もある。

"**Glad this not the season for bulls,**" = "I am glad this is not the season for bulls," **bull** はアメリカヤギユウ、(アメリカ) バイソン (= bison) 《北米産》。

A pleasure I don't see no two-headed snake coming around that tree, where it come once. = It is a pleasure that I see no two-headed snake coming around that tree, where it came once. ここでは予想される危険を避けられたことを神に感謝している。

It took a while to get by him, back in the summer 「前にここを通ったときは夏で、二頭へびの側を通り抜けるのに手間取った」。冬の旅と夏の旅とを比較するとともに、これが初めての旅でないことを示している。"She makes these trips just as regular as clockwork." (テキスト 19) を参照。Pathには、さらにこういった動物も出没する。

テキスト 8

She passed through the old cotton and went into a field of dead corn. It whispered and shook, and was taller than her head. "Through the maze now," she said, for there was no path.

Then there was something tall, black, and skinny there, moving before her.

At first she took it for a man. It could have been a man dancing in the field. But she stood still and listened, and it did not make a sound. It was as silent as a ghost.

"Ghost," she said sharply, "who be you the ghost of? For I have heard of nary death close by."

But there was no answer, only the ragged dancing in the wind.

註 釈

She passed through the old cotton and went into a field of dead corn.

彼女の歩み (path) は「古いワタ畑」から「枯れたトウモロコシ畑へ」と入っていく。

It whispered and shook, and was taller than her head. "Through the maze now," she said, for there was no path. トウモロコシの茎は背より高く、Phoenixは、今まで辿ってきたpathが見えなくなり、迷路 (maze) を歩まねばならない。これも試練の1つである。

who be you the ghost of? = whose ghost should you be?

Nary = no, or not a

only the ragged dancing in the wind. 「ぼろを纏ったものが風の中で踊っているだけだった」。

テキスト9

She shut her eyes, reached out her hand, and touched a sleeve. She found a coat and inside that an emptiness, cold as ice.

"You scarecrow," she said. Her face lighted. "I ought to be shut up for good," she said with laughter. "My senses is gone. I too old. I the oldest people I ever know. Dance, old scarecrow," she said, "while I dancing with you."

She kicked her foot over the furrow, and with mouth drawn down shook her head once or twice in a little strutting way. Some husks blew down and whirled in streamers about her skirts.

註 釈

for good (and all) 「永久に」、「これを最後に」。

I too old. I the oldest people I ever know. 先にも述べたように、そして、後でわかるように、Phoenixは100歳近く見える。老齢のために5感が働かなくなって ("My senses is gone.")、案山子を幽霊に見間違う。丸太を無事にわたり

終えたとき (テキスト5) には "I wasn't as old as I thought," と言ってはいたが、老齢も旅を遂行するための障害である (なお、ここでは path には案山子が登場している)。

She kicked her foot over the furrow Phoenix は踊り始めるのである。

with mouth drawn down 「口元を引き締めて」。

in streamers (トウモロコシの皮が何枚も) 「吹流しのように帯状になって」 (スカートのまわりを旋回した)。

テキスト10

Then she went on, parting her way from side to side with the cane, through the whispering field. At last she came to the end, to a wagon track where the silver grass blew between the red ruts. The quail were walking around like pullets, seeming all dainty and unseen.

"Walk pretty," she said. "This the easy place. This the easy going." She followed the track, swaying through the quiet bare fields, through the little strings of trees silver in their dead leaves, past cabins silver from weather, with the doors and windows boarded shut, all like old women under a spell sitting there. "I walking in their sleep," she said, nodding her head vigorously.

註 釈

At last she came to the end, to a wagon track where the silver grass blew between the red ruts. 「トウモロコシ畑の端に、つまり、赤土の轍の間に銀色の草がゆらめく荷馬車道にやってきた」。道は path から wagon track に替わる。

The quail were walking around like pullets, seeming all dainty and unseen.

この道 (a wagon track) では (野生の) ウズラ quail が (同じ大ききさくらの家畜の) 若鶏 pullets のように歩き回っていたが、とても上品ぶって人目につか

ないふりをしていた。

"Walk pretty," she said. "This the easy place. This the easy going." 直接にはウズラに対して述べているが、同時に自分自身に対しても言い聞かせている。Thisは a wagon trackのこと。今までの path と較べて歩きやすい(easyな)道であるから、容易に進むことが (easy going) できる。

trees silver in their dead leaves 「枯葉が銀色の木々」。

cabins silver from weather, with the doors and windows boarded shut 「風雨にさらされて銀色になり、ドアや窓は板で塞がれたいくつかの小屋」。人の住んだ気配はあるが、今は廃屋である。Wagon trackの道すがらには小屋があるのだ。Cabinという建物は南部ではもともと黒人奴隷の住居であった。

all like old women under a spell sitting there 「すべては、魔法にかけられてそこに腰を下ろしている老女たちのようである」。allはcabinsに限定したい。魔法(spell)とはかつて奴隷であった黒人女性たちが地位向上を願う夢であると、Butterworthは解釈する (op. cit. p.168)。

"I walking in their sleep," she said, nodding her head vigorously. 彼女たちは寝ていても自分は歩き続けるのだ、と納得して自分を奮い立たせる。Phoenixは彼女たちの夢を実現させるために邁進すると言っているのだとButterworthは解釈する (op. cit. p.168)。つまり、これはPhoenixのこの旅の目的であるというのだ。しかし、これは、あくまで、Butterworthのこの箇所解釈であって、Phoenixがこの旅の目的を明言したわけではないから、読者のサスペンスは続く。

テキスト 11

In a ravine she went where a spring was silently flowing through a hollow log. Old Phoenix bent and drank. "Sweet gum makes the water sweet," she said, and drank more. "Nobody know who made this well, for it was here when I was born."

The track crossed a swampy part where the moss hung as white as lace from every limb. "Sleep on, alligators, and blow your bubbles." Then the cypress trees

went into the road. Deep, deep it went down between the high green-colored banks. Overhead the live oaks met, and it was as dark as a cave.

註 釈

"Sweet gum makes the water sweet," 「モミジバフウ(紅葉葉楓の樹液)は水に溶けて芳しい香りにする」。Phoenixが旅の苦難の中で、この泉を通るのは心身を癒される出来事である。

the moss hung as white as lace from every limb the moss = Spanish moss [植物] 「サルオガセモドキ (= long moss)」。根をもたず、樹木の枝より白い顎鬚のように垂れる。米国南部によく見られる。

alligators 「アメリカン・アリゲーター」。ミシシッピワニ。アメリカ南部の沼などに棲息し、横穴で冬眠する。ここでは、wagon trackは沼地を通り抜けていて、夏ならワニに遭遇する危険がある。

blow your bubbles Cf. blow bubbles シャボン玉を吹く、空想にふける。

Then the cypress trees went into the road. the cypress はイトスギ(ヒノキ科イトスギ属の針葉樹の総称、墓地にも多く植えられ、葉が暗くイトスギ(の小枝)はしばしば喪の表象とされる)。ここでは、wagon trackはroadに言い換えられている。そのroadにはイトスギが道路に進入して茂っている。暗い。

テキスト 12

A big black dog with a lolling tongue came up out of the weeds by the ditch. She was meditating, and not ready, and when he came at her she only hit him a little with her cane. Over she went in the ditch, like a little puff of milkweed.

Down there, her senses drifted away. A dream visited her, and she reached her hand up, but nothing reached down and gave her a pull. So she lay there and presently went to talking. "Old woman," she said to herself, "that black dog come up out of the weeds to stall you off, and now there he sitting on his fine tail, smiling at you."

註 釈

A big black dog with a lolling tongue came up out of the weeds by the ditch. Butterworthはこの犬は逃亡奴隷が追跡されるとき恐怖を思わせるという (op. cit. p.169)。テキスト6註釈参照。

She was meditating テキスト1の meditative 「想いに耽る」に通じる。

Over she went in the ditch, like a little puff of milkweed 「彼女はトウワタの綿毛のようにふんわりと溝に落ちた」。Milkweedは乳液を分泌する草、特にトウワタ。**puff**はfluffに解したい。この事件も新たな試練である。

Down there, her senses drifted away. Phoenixが正気を失うのは3度目である。テキスト6, 9参照。

A dream visited her, and she reached her hand up, but nothing reached down and gave her a pull. Butterworthによれば、ここでは、アメリカ黒人は悲惨な境遇から救出されるという夢を抱いたが、救いの手を差し伸べてくれるものは誰もいなかったと読めるという (op. cit. p.170)。

"that black dog come up out of the weeds to stall you off, and now there he sitting on his fine tail, smiling at you." Wagon trackを辿る旅にも障害はあったことになる。

(以下、次号に続く)。