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[要約]

夢の話をするとき、最初によく心に浮かぶのは、夢の中では尋常でない現実離れた出来事が起こるということである。夢の中で私たちは何年も前に亡くなった人に出会う。気がつくやと突然遠く離れた土地にいる。動物が話しかけてきたり、目覚めているときであればまったく不可能であると居えるような力を自分が持っていたりする。もし誰かが、起きているときに同じような経験をしたことがあると言え、私たちはその人の正気を疑うことであろう。私たちの注意はある特定の出来事や物体に引きつけられ、そこから注意をそらすことができない。アメリカの睡眠研究者アラン＝レヒトシャフェンは、夢には想像力が欠けている、という逆説的ではあるが正しい意見を述べた。次に挙げる夢の話は、古い中国の文献に依るものであるが、夢の逆説的な閉じた世界を見事に説明している。頻繁に夢を見るレム睡眠に毎晩1、2時間は費やされることを思い起こすと、夢の記憶が消える度合いというものには実に著しいものであるように思われる。何かの夢を見た直後に目覚めて、この夢のイメージがまだ心の中に鮮明に残っている場合でも、そうしたイメージを説明するのは難しく、説明しようとしてもめったにうまくいかない。たとえ夢の中で起こったことを首尾よく正確に説明することができたとしても、その夢の独特の雰囲気を出して、それを別の人に伝えるのはやはり普通は不可能である。スイスの詩人カール＝シュピッテラーが言ったように、「夢は語るができない。理性ある心が夢を言葉でとらえようとすれば、夢は溶けて消えてしまう」のである。



[本文] **720**WORDSRTO **4-6**min / **RA 7-8**min

When we speak of dreams, the first thing that tends to come to mind is the presence of unusual and fantastic events in them. In our dreams we encounter people who have been dead for years. We suddenly find ourselves in far-off lands. Animals speak to us,
5 and we ourselves possess powers that would strike us as completely impossible in waking life. If someone were to tell us that he had similar experiences when awake, we would doubt his sanity.

Let us begin by describing the most important characteristics
10 of dreams more precisely. The dreamer finds himself in surroundings that often change abruptly, although sometimes a change of scene occurs more gradually. Scenes and people from our past appear. Obviously the laws of space and time are suspended in dreams. Another important trait of dreams is their riveting
15 nature. Our attention is captured by certain events or objects, from which we cannot free it; we cannot choose to direct our thoughts to something else. The American sleep researcher Allan Rechtschaffen made the paradoxical but correct observation that dreams are lacking in imagination. When we dream, our mind
20 does not wander, as it does when we are awake. The dream's images fill the dream entirely, and no room remains for other reveries. This "single-mindedness" of dreams accounts for that peculiar feeling that dreams take place in a self-contained world of their own. Although other people appear in them, we feel
25 fundamentally alone and cannot communicate our experiences to

anyone else. We are entirely in the grip of the experience, unable to reflect on it or evaluate it. As a result we accept the most astonishing circumstances in dreams without surprise and never exclaim or protest, "But that's impossible!"

30 The following account of a dream, from an ancient Chinese text, illustrates strikingly the paradoxical closed world of dreams:

Once upon a time, I dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious only of following my fancies as a butterfly and was unconscious of
35 my individuality as a man. Suddenly I awaked, and there I lay, myself again. Now I do not know whether I was a man dreaming I was a butterfly., or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a man.

Generally speaking, the world of dreams vanishes on
40 awakening, leaving a vague memory at the very most. We are often aware in the morning of having had a dream, but cannot remember what it was about. If we recall that one to two hours of every night are spent in REM sleep, when dreams frequently occur, then the extent to which memory of the dream disappears seems
45 quite remarkable. If we wake up just after dreaming about something and still have the images of this dream clearly in our minds, we find it difficult to describe those images, and our attempts to do so are seldom satisfactory. Even if we do succeed in giving an accurate account of what happened in our dream, it is

50 still usually impossible to recall to mind the peculiar atmosphere of the dream and to communicate it to another person. As the Swiss poet Carl Spitteler said, "Dreams cannot be told; they dissolve when the rational mind tries to grasp them in words."