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Japanese Way of Observation Concerning Nature

Masamichi Fujie

We, Japanese, have been fond of the journey from all time. The fact that many journey-poems (so-called Kiryo-uta) are included in Manyôshû, and that the journey literatures are occupied an important position in Japanese history of literature prove it evidently.

To make a journey all over the country is the most effective method for making friends with nature. Needless to say, Japan's natural beauty is her proud heritage, and our observation of nature is keen and sensitive. Therefore, it is worthy of special mention that our relation to nature should be more intimate and internal than foreigners'.

According to my personal opinion, Japanese way of observation concerning nature will be classified the following three types :

- (1) Wanderer's type . . the so-called "Yugyôsha" represented by Buddhist priest Ippen who founded Jishû, one of the Japanese sects of Buddhism.
- (2) Recluse's type . . . Zen philosopher Dôgen, the author of "Shôbôgenzô".
- (3) Artificial composer's type . . that is to say, the world of "Shinkokinwakashû"

And I should like to assert that the combination of two types, (1) and (3), have been produced the creative energy of Japan's medieval arts.