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葛飾北斎の浮世絵、俗称『波間の富士』（1831-1833年頃）

地球規模の水の大循環が起こす地球固有の造形美の典型的な例。日本の自然は雨風による浸食と四季が作り出す植物相の変化だけによるものではない。同じように四季を持つロンドンやニューヨークとは異なり、日本列島はプレート収束境界に位置する。それが日本の自然美を特徴づけている。日本列島の中でも富士山は地球上に二つしかない海溝三重点の上にあり、しかも、そこに火山を生じている例外的な特異点である。富士山はまたマントル深部へ循環する水がマグマとともに地表に戻る出口にもなっている。富士山のような高山は刻々とした変化を気象に与え、雲を湧かせ、高度に応じた彩色豊かな植物相の原因となる。風は波を引っ張り、その波が海岸を浸食し、日本列島の外形を変えてゆく。

北斎（1760-1849）は江戸時代後期に現れ、歌川広重と双璧をなし、日本の自然美、とりわけ富士山を題材にして、本質を誇張した奇抜なデザインと彩色で一世を風靡した。彼の描いた浮世絵は日本だけでなく、世界で賞賛されるが、北斎漫画（絵の描き方の教科書、1814年に初版、最終的に15版）はヨーロッパまで伝わり、ゴッホやゴーギャンに強い影響を与えた。日本人の独創性が世界を凌駕した希な例であり、北斎は日本の美術史の中で最高の画家にランクされる。その理由は彼の浮世絵技術だけでなく、富士山に象徴される日本の自然美の本質の理解が挙げられる。

（説明：丸山茂徳）

（表紙：葛飾北斎 富嶽三十六景「神奈川沖浪裏」、アダチ版画研究所復刻）

Mt. Fuji between Two Great Waves by Katsushika Hokusai (1831-1833)

This is a typical example of the natural beauty created by global-scale water circulation that is restricted to the Earth. Nature in Japan is not only created by a variety of plants and vegetation, which are affected extensively by seasonal erosion due to wind and rain, but also by active orogenic movements. Japan is quite different from London or New York, both of which have seasonal beauty, but are located on stable continental crust. The Japanese islands are located among the consuming plate boundaries of Pacific, North America, Eurasia, and Philippine Sea plates. For this reason, active seismicity, volcanism, and mountain-building are on-going, which produce the dynamic beauty of Japan.

Specifically, Mt. Fuji stands at a peculiar point, one of only two on the Earth with a triple junction of trench-trench-trench. Moreover, the triple junction generates a beautiful cone-shaped layered volcano capped by snow. Mt. Fuji is also the site of water output with magma, which was generated by the subduction of a hydrated Pacific plate, indicating global-scale water circulation from surface to a depth of 110 km in the mantle.

High mountains such as Mt. Fuji cause climate change, creating clouds and fertile vegetation. Winds carry waves that erode the coast line and shape the outline of the Japanese islands.

Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849) appeared in the late Edo period, with rival painter Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858). He treated Mt. Fuji as a symbolic target of Japan beauty, and established in his time an original design of over-deformed and coloring nature. His works have been famous not only in Japan but also in Europe and America going back to time of Vincent van Gogh (Dutch, 1853-1890) and Paul Gauguin (French, 1848-1903). His originality extended even to his textbooks "Hokusai-manga," which teach how to draw, and were exported to Europe. This is a rare example of Japanese artists dominating the European world, and who had a strong influence on European artists such as Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin. Hokusai is ranked as one of the leaders in the history of Japanese art, and the reason lies not only in his technique but also his understanding of the essential Japanese natural beauty symbolized by Mt. Fuji.

(Explanation: Shigenori MARUYAMA)

(Front Cover: Katsushika Hokusai, "The Great Wave off Kanagawa" from "Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji", reproduced by The Adachi Institute of Woodcut Prints.)