

SPACE AND TRAVEL
AN INTERPRETATION OF THE TRAVEL POEMS OF THE *MAN'YŌSHŪ*

Herbert Plutschow

More than one fourth of the approximately 4,500 poems included in *Man'yōshū* (mid eighth century) are travel poems. Counting in addition the poems related to travel such as love poems and poems expressing homesickness, travel appears to have been one of the major themes of ancient Japanese poetry. A reading of travel and travel-related poems of *Man'yōshū*, reveals certain specific, often stereotype, patterns. In a collection of poetry such as *Man'yōshū*, which prides itself on spontaneity, these patterns were less determined by poetic traditions and rhetoric than by factors such as certain religious rituals only indirectly connected with poetry. It is the religious background rather than anything else which, I believe, has determined the uniformity of *Man'yōshū*, travel poetry. More often than not, the poets responded in their poetry to common public religious attitudes and practices and less to subjective poetic fancy.

The purpose of this study is an attempt to interpret the travel poems of *Man'yōshū* and their patterns in view of the religious attitudes and responses of the ancient Japanese towards specific qualities of space. A strong response to space in fact underlies most *Man'yōshū* travel poems, which therefore serve as relevant material to the study of what has most probably constituted the reality and environment of the ancient Japanese.

The point of departure is a hypothesis which I shall try to prove according to the overall structure as it appears in *Man'yōshū* travel poetry.

An important aspect of cosmogony in the so-called primitive cultures was, according to Mircea Eliade, a fundamental distinction made by man between wild aspects of nature untouched by man and those transformed by man to meet his needs.¹ In certain areas of the world, this distinction appears in terms of uncooked and cooked, and in others, such as ancient Greece, in terms of chaos and cosmos, whereas in Japan this distinction was made in terms of *ara* (wild, uncontrolled, rough, etc.) and *niki* (calm, peaceful, adapted to human needs. etc.).

As frequently encountered vocabulary in ancient Japanese texts, *ara* and *niki* refer to religion, ontology and space, all of which are closely interrelated and interdependent. Numerous examples in *Norito* (Shintō prayers) and *Fudoki* (Geographical surveys, 713), in *Man'yōshū* and in the structure of Shintō shrines (*miya*) as well as in festivals (*matsuri*), suggest that *ara* and *niki* were potential characteristics of deities *araburugami* 'unappeased, wild deities' versus *nikikami* 'appeased, calm deities'. As suggested in poem no. 1020 of *Man'yōshū* a wild deity can be transformed, by appropriate ritual, into a calm deity and as such protects man. This divine dualism is extended to space (e.g. *ara-no* 'wild space', *ara-michi* 'wild roads', etc. versus *nikitazu miyako* 'calm capital city', etc.) and to man (e.g. *araburu kimi* 'rough, ill-behaved man' versus *nikibu hito* 'calm, peaceful [and later] well-behaved person'. According to poem no. 79 of *Man'yōshū*, home is *niki*: nos. 567, 381, etc., the roads of travel are *ara*; and poem no. 556, a traveller is *ara*. According to nos. 928-9, a territory prior to its becoming the site of a capital is *ara-no* 'wild territory'; beaches are *ara* (poem no. 500); seas when unappeased are *ara* (*ara-umi*), etc.

According to Motoori Morinaga (1730-1801), *ara* and *niki* as applied to deities and man himself are potential manifestations of the same individuality.² Ancient tests suggest that the transformation of *ara* into *niki* as reflected in man depends upon circumstances often outside his immediate control. Thus the *ara* is less determined by personal circumstances such as anger, jealousy, etc... than by the position man happens to occupy in time and space and by socio-political changes.

It is therefore assumed that a transformation of one aspect to the other may be, among others, a reflection consequential to the space one stands upon, for instance. Also, at the end

¹ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane*, New York, Harper & Row, 1961, pp. 29-36.

² Quoted in J.L. Pierson, *The Man'yōshū*, Leiden, Brill, 1941, p. 186. He includes on the same other relevant quotations concerning the differences between *nigi-mi-tama* and *ara-mi-tama*.

of specific cycles when time falls back into chaos, man is apt, as one can still observe during certain Shintō festivals, to reflect in his wild and asocial behaviour the chaotic quality which time and space³ have temporarily assumed.

In *Nihongi* (720) for instance, it is revealed that man assumes, at least partially, the *ara* aspect during wartime (e.g. *The Empress Jingō*).⁴ As two human activities radically opposed to peace and rest, wars and the movements that wars cause are logically possible only through man's assumption of the *ara* aspect, however temporary and partial this assumption may be. The spiritual integrity of man maintained during peacetime and rest is dissolved in turbulent battles and movement. This means that man is apt to reflect in his personality and behaviour that aspect determined by outside factors. Should these change from a cosmic to a chaotic state, or vice-versa, it is likely that this change is reflected in the personality and behaviour of man.

The transformation of *niki* into *ara*, or vice-versa, also depends upon space. Depending on whether one occupies *ara* or *niki* space, one is likely to assume, potentially at least, the spatial aspect of one's immediate environment. A man at home is likely to be social and well-behaved: a man outside of home, occupying or moving through *ara* space, potentially adapts his personality and behaviour to the *ara* aspect of space.

It logically follows that *ara* and *niki* apply to the notions of rest versus movement, or home versus travel. Rest or home is basically *niki*, for instance in *Man'yōshū* poem no. 79 (*nikibi ni shi ie*), whereas movement is potentially *ara* or chaotic. Man, who changes from a state of rest into movement, faces, especially during movement through *ara* space, the danger of a radical change in his personality. Home is a cosmos artificially created by man's subjugation of chaos to a cosmological order of time, rhythms of agriculture, and connected with these, to a social and religious order. Home means 'being', a consciousness of self as part of the order. Travel by opposition means 'not being' a return to chaos and potentially a complete ontological disintegration of self.

In this respect, travel was a highly undesirable and potentially dangerous undertaking, carried out when unavoidable, only under strict observation of religious rittues and taboos by the traveller himself as well as by the traveller's relatives (mother, father, and most often the wife) at home. These rituals and taboos aimed not only the physical but also at the spiritual safety of the traveller. I presume that these rituals underly the very *raison d'être* of the travel and travel-related poems of *Man'yōshū*.

It is not known, but it is very likely that travel poetry was part of the ritual carried out by the traveller and his relatives. Often it seemed to accompany a ritual which it describes. A well known theory in fact sees in poetry, when subjected to a strict lythm, form and limitation of vocabulary, a power able to subdue chaos. For instance, when cosmos is re-enacted during the Shintō festival this is often done by song and poetry, dances and other art forms. As the poet Ki no Tsurayuki stated in the preface to the *Kokin-wakashū* collection of poetry (905), 'It is poetry which, without exertion, moves heaven and earth, stirs the feelings of gods and spirits invisible to the eye...'⁵

Imbued with such powers, poetry could be, among other art forms, used as a device to create a cosmos, to subdue chaos on a passage through chaotic, unaccustomed pace. As such it could function as a charm for the spiritualias well as the physical safety and well-being of the traveller.

Examples of such poetry are numbers 3253-4 of *Man'yōshū*:

The Land of Reed Plains rich in water and rice [Yamato]
Is a land of the gods, a land with no need to offer words
But now, I must offer words

³ Space turned into *ara* most probably due to the absence of cosmological time. On the return to chaos, the content of festivals, see Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris, Payot, 1974, pp. 334-336.

⁴ *Nihon shoki*, *Nihon koten zensho*, vol. 2, Tōkyō, Asahi shinbusha, 1957, p. 21 and passim.

⁵ Earle Miner, *An introduction to Japanese court poetry*, Stanford U.P., 1968. p. 18. On the divine power of poetry, see Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Sacred and profane beauty*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolis, 1965.

So that these words may protect you
So that no harm will come to you
So that in spite of the *ara* waves and shores
We may meet again
I offer you these words [to protect you from]
The waves rolling a hundred fold, a thousand fold.

Envoy

The Land of Yamato
Is a land where the word-soul protects us
Fare well!

The poem has a power—here called ‘word-soul’ (*kotodama*)—able to subdue chaos, to prepare the way for the traveller. Farewell poems such as this one are not only numerous in *Man'yōshū* but in classical Japanese poetry as a whole. Offered to prospective travellers, farewell poems, such as for instance those composed by Priest Nōin (b. 988) were particularly appreciated as charms securing travel safety. A similar farewell poem is no. 894. It begins by referring to the magical powers of the word-soul and continues:

The myriad of local deities⁶
Who dwell at the beaches and offings,
Confine them to the prow
And ask them to guide your boat;
The deities⁷ between heaven and earth
And the deities of Yamato
Will fly in the sky
And give you their protection,
And when your mission is accomplished
You will return home
Again confine the deities
To the prow of your boat
By clapping your hands
So that you will come directly
Like a black rope tended straight
From Chika Cape
Till Mitsu Beach in Otomo
Only anchoring at harbours
And without hindrance
Come home quickly.

This farewell poem suggests that the *ara* deities who inhabit specific places must be temporarily transformed into *niki* so that they may serve the traveller as guides.⁸ The image of the black, straight rope leading towards home probably refers to the danger, potentially faced by all travellers, of going astray and forgetting about returning home, having completely fallen prey to the *ara* world.

A common method a traveller used to avoid the *ara* assuming permanent aspects was for him to maintain, at specific points in time and space, a constant relationship with home. The heart of the traveller must remain at home for the time involved in order to maintain his spiritual integrity.

My body crossed indeed
The mountains and barriers
And is where it is
But as to my heart it is there
Where my wife is. (3757)

⁶ Basically chaos deities.

⁷ Basically cosmic ‘appeased’ deities.

⁸ As it is also visible in the Empress Jingō sequence of the *Nihongi*.

This spiritual and highly emotional relationship with home maintained during separation was, it seems, by necessity a two-way relationship. Not only did the traveller feel that he had to think of home during his journey but also the traveller's relatives at home had to think fondly of him and pray for his safety. This relationship constitutes the most common pattern of *Man'yōshū* travel poetry.

Poems composed by relatives, usually the wife, at home after the traveller's departure mostly express love but also describe specific taboos, the observation of which was to ensure the traveller's security. One of the taboos was for a wife to leave the house uncleaned, to prepare the meals and bed of the traveller as if he were at home, and to leave her hair uncombed. An example is poem no. 4263:

Looking not even at my comb,
Sweeping not even the rooms
I observe the taboos for your sake
While you are travelling.

Nos. 3927 and 4331 refer to the custom of placing a sacred (purified) bottle containing *sake* presumably where the pillow of the husband's bed was usually placed.

You who are travelling;
So that you will be safe
I placed a sacred *sake* bottle
At my bedside. (3927)

Also, a common means of maintaining the magical link with her travelling husband was for a wife never to loosen her sash until his return.

When I shall hear
That your boat has arrived
At Nanba Harbour .
I shall open my sash
And run toward you. (896)

Other practices for those who were, as it says in the poems, 'left behind' were to undergo purification rituals and to present prayers and paper strips⁹ (e.g. no. 1453).

Origuchi Shinobu explained the rituals performed at home by wife and relatives in terms of a ritual division of the traveller's soul, part of which he transforms into *ara* to allow him to change from a state of rest to movement and part of which he leaves at home preserved intact—as a *nikitama*¹⁰—by his wife's worship. Thus the spiritual integrity of the traveller is ensured and his relationship with home maintained. The description of such rituals is often combined in *Man'yōshū* poetry with the expression of love and yearning. In this context the poetry can be considered as an important part of the ritual.

Travellers were grateful towards their wife's prayers which they believed were effective in securing their safety. Their gratitude often finds expression in the poetry:

If you respectfully worship the gods
Even though the waves of the great ocean
May rise and rise a thousand fold
How can anything happen to me? (3583)

Tell my father and mother that
Thanks to their prayers at home
I have been able
To safely set out my boat. (4409)

Not only his relatives at home, but also the traveller himself was subjected, during his journey, to observations and cult.

A custom observed by both wife and travelling husband was the taboo against opening

⁹ Since at that time paper was highly valued, it was frequently used as an offering to the deities.

¹⁰ *Tama* is equivalent to "soul".

the sash from the time of departure until return. Such sashes worn by travellers were usually woven and presented by the wift or other relative. Quite a number of *Man'yōshū* poems point to this custom:

These days
As the nights of my journey accumulate
I keep my red sash tight
And long for my wife. (3144)

The purpose of the sash is explained in the following poem:

The sash my wife has woven
To protect me from all evil
Is already worn out and dirty. (3717)

According to No. 636, it is not a sash but a dress the wife presents to the traveller as a keepsake.

An important ritual for the traveller was to pray or present offerings of straw or paper to local deities. This was apparently done at certain, specific points in space. These points are clearly identifiable according to their specific geographical and topographical quality. Such points were: political or natural frontiers, highway barriers, river crossings, mountain passes, forests, capes and islands in case of coastal or sea voyages, lakes, ponds, and among others, simple turns of rivers and roads. Here is an example:

Dear wife, meet me in my dreams
As I present offerings
At each crossing of the rivers
Of the Yamato Road. (3128)

The traveller makes offerings to the deities at important points in space such as river crossings and at the same time and place establishes a link with home. This is why many *Man'yōshū* travel poems are also love poems. The dual function of the ritual—transformation into *niki* of a dangerous *ara* deity (river crossing) and a link with home—seems to be a response to the chaos which the traveller seeks to overcome.

Also mountain passes (often also political, natural frontiers and location of highway barriers) were inhabited by potentially dangerous local deities. According to poem no. 567 the roads leading over passes are *ara*:

The day you will cross
Mt. Iwakuni in Suwo Province
Well present your offerings
For rough (*ara*) is that road.

The topographical danger involved in the crossing over a mountain pass is translated into or seen as a reflection of the power of the pass deities. The custom of making offerings to pass deities (*tamuke*) meant that passes were named after the ritual, *tamuke* becoming *tōge* 'mountain pass'. What therefore distinguished a pass was not so much its common topographical characteristics but the ritual which the traveller performed *in situ*. The importance of the ritual on mountain passes furthermore appears in the epithet for passes (*yufu-datami*) suggesting an area covered by offered cloth (e.g. no. 1017). The pass par excellence in ancient Japan was Mt. Ausaka (also Mt. Tamuke) linking the provinces of Yamashiro and Ōmi, and it often appears in poetry.

Today I cross over .
The mountain pass [Ausaka] covered with cloth.
In what field am I going to
Build a lodging for the night? (1017)

And no. 3237:

I passed Mt. Nara

Crossed Uji River
And presented paper as an offering
At Ausaka Pass

Passes were not only places of 'physical' passage from one geo-political unit into the other but also points in space where a man could pass into a different ontological here, for instance from the profane into the sacred world (Saigyō and Bashō's poem Suzuka Pass and Nakazato Kaizan's novel *Daibosatsu Tōge* 'Pass of the Great Bodhisattva'). On a passage over a pass, man had to purify, 'renew' himself. Confessions at passes point to this. In *Man'yōshū* times, passes were believed to be passages between life and death.

If you offer straw
At the slope of the many curves
Then perhaps you will meet
The soul of the dead. (427)

Strongly related to mountain passes and rivers are the curves and turns of the roads of river courses. Not only were such turns inhabited by local deities but they also constituted points beyond which the vision of home is broken or at which such wakings have accumulated during the course of travel. At such points therefore, the travellers reinforce their link with home:

At the turns of the river
Not leaving out any turns
I look back many times. (79)

In no. 17, Mt Miwa appears as the symbol of home, a point of orientation at which traveller not only measures the course of his journey but at which his soul is strongly attached.

Beautiful Mt. Miwa
Until you are hidden behind the back
Of the blue Nara mountains
And until you become invisible
Beyond the many curves of the road
I shall look back toward you;
Or should the heartless clouds
Hide the mountain from me,
The mountain I always want to see again?

The curves of roads and rivers presented breaking-points with home, and as such bear in many a travel poem:

Beyond the turnings of the road, all the many turnings
My home farther and farther recedes. (3240)

And no. 131:

Although I look back many times
At each of the many turnings of the road
My home farther and farther recedes.

References such as 'all curves, without omission' point to the importance of curves in context of ancient travel.

The same principle applies to sea voyages, whereby the travellers speak of every island point or every turn (or cape) of the coast. According to poem no. 41, islands or their approaches are *ara* (*araki shima-mi*); according to no. 500 the beaches are *ara* (*araki hamabe*). No. 3637 refers to Iwai-jima 'Prayer Island', a name derived, like *tamuke* for passes, from the ritual performed by the passing travellers.

Travellers have come
To offer their prayers at Prayer Island
For how many generations now?

As on mountain passes and at road curves, at island and coastal points the travellers are reminded of home.

At Waka Bay the white waves rise
In the storm blowing from the sea the evening is cold;
I think of Yamato. (1219)

And:

Although I came across the plains of the sea
Touching at every island
I never forgot the city of Nara. (3613)

Strongly connected with their characteristic of breaking the vision of home and of being inhabited by local deities, is the fact that these places, whether passes, curves of rivers and roads, capes and islands, forests, lakes and ponds, etc., constitute breaking-points in the unity of space and topography. Mountains, for instance, are at the beginning and end of specific spatial units. So are forests and islands. Lakes and ponds may not break spatial units as much as they present different qualities of space. Curves of the road and river are, in a smaller dimension, such breaking-points. The local deities were most probably believed to inhabit such points from where they exercised power not only over the point itself but over the spatial unit which these points introduce. Ritual performed at such places aimed at the temporary transformation into *niki* of the *ara* deities and thereby at the safety of passage. At all the breaking-points in space the traveller had to renew his subjugation of chaos.

At such places most of the travel poems were composed. The poetry often describes the travel ritual as an offering of straw or strips but since such offerings were accompanied by poetry, one may presume that the poems formed an intimate if not indispensable part of the travel ritual. Stories of later times support the theory as, of course, does the practice common at the end of the Heian period (794-1185) and in the feudal period (1185-1868) of dedicating poems to temples, shrines and other sacred places. This widespread practice of poem dedications (*hōho-uta* or *hōraku*) may have well been a practice adapted to Buddhism (*honjisuijaku*) from archaic Shintoism.

As an epithet to 'road', *Man'yōshū* travel poetry often makes allusion to a pole (*tamahoko*). These poles, though no longer in actual use in *Man'yōshū* times, were, probably devices used by the ancient travellers to attract the wild deity of the territory and to transform it temporarily into an appeased deity. *Tama* in *tamahoko* refers to the divine spirit that descends upon the pole when called.¹¹ Such poles (or sometimes tones) were probably located at places which required the travel ritual on a more or less permanent basis. They were later replaced by more elaborate shrines. This does of preclude the possibility that in ancient times such poles were in fact carried along y the travellers. A *tamahoko* pole placed at geographical frontiers or at the points of passage between *niki* and *ara* such as at the exit of a village can be surmised from poem no. 2598 where *tamahoko* stands as an epithet for village rather than for road. Many avel poems of *Man'yōshū*, however, use the term *tamahoko* as the epithet for road, which indicates that the pole had once been an indispensable part of all travel and roads. For instance no. 4009:

Gods of the *tamahoko* roads
I present offerings to you
So that you protect my Lord so dear to me.

or no. 3335:

The travellers who travel on the (*tamahoko*) roads
Climbing over mountains, pushing through the plains
Crossing over streams
Embarking upon the ways of the ocean

¹¹ Such poles were used, for instance, in the Goryō Festival (now the Gion Festival) of Kyōto. In shrines and festivals, poles or pillars are often taken as places where deities dwell or to which they descend.

And during the crossing: a crossing of a fearful god indeed
The wind blows not calmly (*niki*) and
The waves do not rise evenly
The waves grow and grow and block the way yet
It is that, encouraged by my love for him
He only thought of crossing the sea, crossing it right away
[And drowned?]

It now remains to take up the evidence there is about the question of what may happen in the event in which the travel ritual is neglected or improperly carried out. From *Man'yōshū* there is one poem which is relevant. It suggests indeed that a traveller who neglects the ritual may in fact never come home again, no. 2380:

Who bewitches you, oh dear!
To forget that you are on a *tamahoko* road
So that you do not return?

Other such sources emerge from a period when such rituals were either questioned believed obsolete. From the Heian period two such stories came down to us. According to the *Toshiyori zuinō*, the poet Ki no Tsurayuki was on his way to the Sumiyoshi Shrine when he came across a section of the road (a small pass) which was difficult to cross. Suddenly his horse faltered and refused to go on. Asking a companion what to do, Tsurayuki discovered that this was the place inhabited by a powerful local god called Aritoshi. Tsurayuki, immediately realizing that he had neglected to offer the deity his respect, composed a poem using Aritoshi as a pivot word for *hoshi* 'stars'. This appeased the god, his horse recovered and Tsurayuki was able to proceed.¹²

This story reminds one of the Middle Captain Sanekata who in 995 was appointed governor of Michinoku Province for the purpose according to the *Shinchū shō* (vol. 7)¹³ of visiting the famous places in that area. When Sanekata passed through Kasashima he was unaware of the need to dismount and acknowledge the presence of the local god: as a result he was thrown from his horse and killed.¹⁴ Later travellers, like Saigyō and Bashō. etc., were careful to pay their respects when they happened to travel through Kasashima.

Mircea Eliade pointed out how important it was for man in ancient times to create a cosmos out of chaos wherever he moved or wherever he settled. I believe that this was the intention of the traveller poet of *Man'yōshū*. By poetry and other ritual, he transformed chaos into a cosmos to thereby secure his safety, his ontological integrity and his relations with home and family. To support this interpretation of *Man'yōshū* travel poetry, other sources may be of relevance. For instance, the custom of certain Melanesians to utter magical spells when they pass from one spatial unit to another, for example, from the inside to the outside of a house.¹⁵ Fletcher reports about the invocations that Pawnee make at various stages of a crossing of a river.¹⁶

Many questions remain to be answered. I have merely asked rather than resolved the problems of space as they appear to us in the reading of *Man'yōshū* travel poetry. So for instance, the problem of the ontological division of *ara* and *niki* and what in fact constituted the soul of the traveller needs further elaboration. It would be logical to conclude, however, that the soul of a traveller was divided into *ara* and *niki*, the *ara* aspect allowing the traveller to move and the *niki* aspect allowing the traveller to subdue chaos into cosmos at strategic points in space and when he stopped to rest. The poems he composes during the journey are an expression of the traveller's *niki* aspect. This was similar to the case of the Empress Jingō who, before embarking upon her military venture to Korea, enshrined an *ara* deity to guide her boat and a *niki* deity to allow her to come back. Once the war was finished and peace

¹² Sasaki Nobutsuna (ed.), *Nihon kagaku taikei*, vol. 1, Tōkyō, Kazama Shobō, 1957, p. 182. There is a Nō play about the episode.

¹³ *Kagaku bunko*, vol. 1, Tōkyō, 1901, p. 87.

¹⁴ *Jikkishō*, Kokumin bunko, vol. 11, Tōkyō, 1901, pp. 267-8.

¹⁵ A point made in a lecture at UCLA in May 1967 by George Matore, Professor of the Sorbonne, who spent several years in that area. See also Eliade, *The Sacred and the profane*, p. 25.

¹⁶ Quoted in Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The savage mind*, University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 10.

re-established, the empress enshrined, in other words appeased, the *ara* deity. Translated into personal spheres, this means that the empress returned to a complete *niki* state after her return from Korea.

A further problem appears in the place names of *Man'yōshū* travel poems. It is well known that place names often were at the same time names of local deities (e.g. *Asuka nimasu kami* 'Resident deity of Asuka'). It is also known that in Japan and elsewhere the naming of something was a device by which this something was made cosmic and thereby clearly differentiated from chaos. Thus it is not impossible to see the naming of places in *Man'yōshū* travel poetry as a magical device used by the travellers to 'cosmicize' local *ara* deities. Naming deities, territories, persons and things (*nanori*) often appears in ancient Japanese literature as a magical quest of possession. Naming something was aimed at transforming it from a chaotic into a cosmic state and at adapting it to human needs. Unnamed things remain chaotic, wild, and essentially hostile to man.

Furthermore, it is unknown how much physical danger a traveller faced during his journey. It is my interpretation that the religious magic by which I tried to understand *Man'yōshū* travel poetry was not directed so much to physical dangers (weather, robbers, wild animals, etc.) although this aspect cannot be entirely ignored. It was more directed towards the spiritual dangers of travel. What a traveller seemed to fear most was less the physical danger than the potential loss of his ontological integrity.

Ontological change during travel, however, is not a theme limited to classical Japanese literature. It is in fact a universal theme. There are numerous stories in European literature that describe, like the *Canterbury Tales*, morally depraved travelling priests, or, like the picaresque novels of Spain, the asocial behaviour of travellers. Furthermore much drama seems to depend upon travellers who, in spite of their edges, fail to return home, or upon the people at home who change just because they assume that something happened to the traveller on the road.

Another question is whether or not, or how far, the geographical points where the ancient travellers paid their respects can be considered as the origin of the *utamakura* the 'famous places' of Japanese poetry.