

5. Shiogama Shrine (Vol. 6-919)

Monument Text

Yamabe no Akahito

wakanourani shiomichikureba kataonami ashiheosashite tazunakiwataru

Explanation

This poem is from volume six of the classical Japanese poetry collection *Man'yōshū* (poem number 919). Wakanoura is a bay that has a great difference between high and low tide, and said tide now begins to come in. The cranes that were searching for food in the tidal flats, as if being chased by the tide, take flight and flap their wings as they head for the reed-covered coast. The tide rising, the cranes embarking on their flight, and the grand nature of Wakanoura make for a dynamic poem.

This poem was referenced during the Heian period (794-1185) in the preface of *Kokin Wakashū*, the oldest imperial collection of poetry, and from then on it has continued to be the beloved poem that represents Wakanoura.

The writing on the monument was carved by Onoe Hachirō (Saishū). It can be called the preeminent monument of *Man'yōshū* poems in the Wakayama Prefecture with its exquisitely carved brush strokes on elegant, natural rock.