

10. Kataonami Park, Man'yo-no-Komichi Promenade (Vol. 7-1219)

Monument Text

wakanourani shiranamitachite okitsukaze samukiyūbewa yamatoshiomooyu

Explanation

This poem is from volume seven of the classical Japanese poetry collection *Man'yōshū* (poem number 1219), and it is believed that it was composed when Emperor Shōmu visited Tamatsushima in the Kinokuni area (present-day Wakayama Prefecture) in 724. The government officials retired to their lodgings after performing official ceremonies in the presence of the emperor, and the author stands alone on the seashore watching the fading light over Wakanoura's ocean. While feeling on their skin the chill of the white waves and the sea breeze that has started to blow, the author thinks of the capital of Nara and the family they have left there. They describe the loneliness of their travels and write, "In this twilight with its white-crested waves and the chilled sea breeze upon my skin, I think deeply of the capital of Nara."

Nara may be close to Wakayama in the context of our present-day, automobile-centric society, but in those days the journey took three to four days.

In *Man'yōshū*, *waka* in Wakanoura is not written with the modern usage of the *waka* referring to classical Japanese poetry, but is instead written with the character meaning young.

This poem was written by a figure called Fujiwara no Maetsukimi, and it is thought that this person was one of the four sons of Fujiwara no Mahito, most likely being either Fujiwara no Fusasaki or Fujiwara no Maro.

The inscription on the monument is the work of Kōsaka Jirō.