

# Hokusai's Mount Fuji, Where Tea Fields Meet the Sky

静岡県富士市にある大淵笹場（おおぶちささば）では、茶畑の緑と雄大な富士山が織りなす風景が広がっています。200年前に北斎の浮世絵にも描かれたこの景色は、今も「日本の原風景」として外国人観光客の心をひきつけているそうです。自然と文化が調和したような風景、あなたならどんな景色を世界に伝えたいですか？



## 1. Article

### Read the following article aloud.

Sunlight spills across the tea fields, illuminating the fresh green shoots that glisten with morning dew. The melodic call of a Japanese bush warbler drifts through the air. At the far end of the neatly ordered rows, the snow-capped peak of Mount Fuji rises in serene majesty.

This breathtaking scene in Obuchi Sasaba was captured nearly 200 years ago by none other than Katsushika Hokusai in his renowned woodblock print, *Fuji from the Katakura Tea Fields in Suruga*. It is one of the many iconic works in his *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* series.

I first encountered this landscape more than a decade ago during a business trip to Vancouver, Canada. A café had used an image of it in an advertisement for matcha lattes.

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Source: Hokusai's Mount Fuji, Where Tea Fields Meet the Sky  
[JAPAN Forward](#)

# 1. Article

I remember thinking — could such a perfect, postcard-like view of Japan really exist? Being from Shizuoka Prefecture myself, I couldn't recall ever seeing a place like that. I assumed the image had been digitally altered, but some research revealed that the scene was real—and located in Fuji City.

Eager to see it with my own eyes, I made the journey. On the first day, thick clouds blanketed the sky, completely obscuring Mount Fuji, even though it was supposed to be close by. Undeterred, I returned the next morning before sunrise, quietly hoping for clearer weather. As dawn broke, the clouds parted and sunlight streamed across the fields. Slowly, the slopes of Mount Fuji emerged, deepening to a rich blue with every passing minute.

In June 2013, Mount Fuji was designated a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site. Since then, Shizuoka Prefecture, Fuji City, and local preservation groups have worked together to enhance the area, adding amenities such as parking lots and restrooms.

Yoshihiro Fujita, 70, chairman of the Obuchi 2-Chome Sasaba Scenic Preservation Association, collaborated with landowners to maintain the natural beauty of the site. "After the World Heritage registration, we removed many frost-protection devices to preserve the view," he explained. "We also built a small shop and a photo platform to better accommodate visitors. As a result, tourist numbers have increased nearly fivefold."

Yusuke Sano, 39, a senior official at the Mt Fuji Tourism Exchange Bureau, added, "Compared to the Yamanashi side, we haven't promoted Mount Fuji as much. We're now focused on improving the visitor experience and sharing the charm of this region with more people, including those from abroad."

Now, with summer approaching and the traditional eighty-eighth night—a special date marking the beginning of the new tea harvest—drawing near, the scene feels like something lifted from an old folk song. The fleeting harmony between Mount Fuji and the vibrant tea fields is a sight few are fortunate enough to witness, but once seen, it's never forgotten.

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## 2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

### 1. renowned 有名な、高名な

Though nearly unknown when she was alive, Rosalind Franklin is now a renowned biologist who helped discover the structure of DNA.

### 2. alter (予定・構造などを) 変える、変更する

The snowstorm forced us to alter our vacation plans.

### 3. obscure (景色・事実などを) 覆い隠す、見えにくくする

The glow from city lights obscures our view of the night sky.

### 4. accommodate (人を) 収容する、(要望などに) 対応する

The youth hostel nearby does everything it can to accommodate its guests.

### 5. witness (出来事・変化など) 目撃する、経験する

In the past twenty years, we have witnessed huge changes in computer technology.

## 3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What inspired the writer to travel to Obuchi Sasaba?
2. What words and phrases does the writer use to describe the view?
3. What changes were made to the site after 2013? Why?
4. Are there any places in Japan that you would like to see become UNESCO World Cultural Heritage sites?
5. Describe a view of nature that has left a strong impression on you.

## 4. 北斎も描いた富士と茶畑 競演 外国人が思い描く日本の原風景

陽光が茶畑を照らす。新芽は輝き、ウグイスの声が響く。幾何学模様を描く畝の先、残雪をかぶる富士の高嶺がそびえる。

ざっと200年前、葛飾北斎が富嶽三十六景「駿州片倉茶園ノ不二」に描いた景色でもある。

この風景を知ったのは10年以上前、出張先のカナダ・バンクーバー。カフェで抹茶ラテの広告に写真が使われていたのだ。外国人観光客が求める日本の象徴が都合よくそろう場所などあるだろうか…。静岡県出身だが思い当たらない。合成写真だと疑っていたが、調べてみると富士市にあるらしい。

取材初日は雲のせいで、間近にあるはずの富士の山影すらのぞめなかった。2日目、祈るように日の出を待っていると、あたりがうっすらと明るくなり、茶畑に陽（ひ）が差した。富士の山肌は少しずつ、青みを深めていった。

平成25（2013）年6月、富士山はユネスコの世界文化遺産に登録された。それ以降、静岡県や富士市、地元の景観保存会などが一体となって、駐車場やトイレなどの施設を整備した。

大淵二丁目ささば景観保存会の藤田好廣会長（70）は、人工物のない美しい景色を創るために地権者らとともに動いた。「世界遺産登録後、霜を防ぐ装置をたくさん撤去しました。観光客に来てもらえるように売店や撮影台もつくり、観光客は5倍ほどに増えました」と教えてくれた。

富士山観光交流ビューローの佐野佑輔主査（39）は「山梨県側と比べても富士山のPRが足りない。環境を整え、外国人を含めた多くの人に地域の魅力を知ってほしい」と話した。

夏も近づく八十八夜一。目の前に広がる茶摘み歌の情景。富士と茶畑の競演が見られるのは、わずかしかない。