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姉崎とイタリア Anesaki and Italy

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姉崎とイタリア

1908年（明治41年）、35歳の時には、姉崎正治氏は二回目にヨーロッパ及びアメリカ合衆国へ向かった。この旅はフランスのカーン財団の世界巡回資金の提供で出来、学者（つまり、姉崎氏）が世界を巡り、諸国民の事情を研究するという目的であった。その時、姉崎氏は東京帝国大学文科大学教授であった。専門は比較宗教学であったが、実はその学科のパイオネアールとして見られていた。氏のイタリア及びスイスでの旅に対する感想が「花つみ日記」という紀行文に書かれてある。

この旅行の重点は主として宗教学的なこと、姉崎氏はアッシシのフランシス聖について詳しく研究する上、聖フランシスと日本の法然上人を比較する様にした。さらに、姉崎の研究目的はローマのカトリック教会およびその教皇制度を思案し、ある程度に、カトリック教会が西洋での発展は浄土宗が日本での発展との類例を挙げられることができることを提案した。しかも、14世紀の画家、特にフラ・アンジェリコ、がどういう風にフランシスとほかの聖者を描写したかということも思案した。

姉崎は1907年（明治40年）にフランスに至り、パリからスイス、イタリア、オーストリア、ドイツを廻り、1908年6月に再びパリへ向かった。同年の9月、オックスフォード大学で開催された第三回国際宗教学宗教史会議に出席、第二部会「中国と日本の宗教」において“Buddhist Influences upon the Japanese Hōnen”を発表した。

彼がイタリアにいた間、主としてフィレンツェ、アッシシ、とローマで過ごした。その間、イタリアの雑誌 *Coenobium* の編者エンリコ・ビニヤミ氏（Enrico Bignami）とフラ

ンシスの伝記の著者ポール・サバチエー氏（Paul Sabatier）を含み、スイスやイタリアの知人達に訪問した。

姉崎氏のイタリアに対しての印象は宗教的や歴史的の傾向に影響された。つまり、14世紀のイタリアは、国家教会が不調、もしくは墮落したとも言える状態で、復活する為にフランシス見たいなカリスマ的、受けが良い先導者が必要であったと思っていた。ここで、日本との比較が強い：鎌倉時代の仏教は同じ様に不調で、法然上人が確立された宗派に反対し、ああいう受けが良い先導者として民衆に抱かれた。果たして法然が流罪となり、フランシスも同様に国教会に避けられた。姉崎氏の立場から見ると、20世紀には、同様な事象がまた現象され、カトリック教会が不調し、民衆との差が広がった。その上、はっきり言わないが、もしかしたら日本の仏教では、同じ問題があるという事も提案する。

ベデカーという旅行案内書を持ち、美術史や歴史のことを詳しく勉強する20世紀の典型的な観光客と違い、姉崎氏はルネサンス時代が美術が復活した時期というよりも、美術が高度に装飾的過ぎるになったという時期だったと思い、フィレンツェに至った次第、もちろんルネサンス画を観賞したが、下記の決心した：

食事後ジオットーに関する本とフランシスの一代記の一節とを読み、それからあすの用意に聖マルコの寺に関する本を見た。そこで考えるには、この花の都、詩の里、ルネサンスの本據に来ては、どうしても心がルネサンスの華麗な美術に奪われる。此処一つ決心してアッシシを経てローマに行くまでは聖フランシスとジオットーとフラ・アンジェリコとのみに心を

凝らさなければならぬ。ラファエルにせよ誰にせよそれ等の画には目を向
けずに、二人の画聖に集中しなければならぬ。フィレンツェに来てラファ
エルを見ないのは御馳走を前において断食するに均しいが、断然この断食
を実行しよう。ルネサンスの御馳走は浮世の珍味である。いくらラファエ
ルが聖母を画いても人間世界のものである。それに勝れた醍醐味を嘗める
には浮世の断食をしなければならぬ。ジオットーの信仰、フラー・アンジ
ェリコの法悦に出来た画は天上の不死の味である。それさえあれば他は入
用なしとなる修行をしよう。此う決心をした。人は何と見るとも、又自分
にも苦しくとも、ルネサンスの美術は見ない。只リッピと (Lippi) マサ
ッチオ (Masaccio¹) との画だけはアンジェリコと同じものとしてそれも
ブランカッチ堂²だけをみよう。この覚悟であすから見物、否巡礼をしよ
う。今日の一日、日のくれの二時間は実に有りがたい教訓を得た。³

つきまして、姉崎は絶対典型的な観光客ではなかった。イタリアでの体験は楽しくなる
というよりも宗教学的に勉強になるようにした。それゆえに、美術、建築、歴史などに
感受性があっても、彼の趣味は違う。

イタリアに至る前に姉崎のイタリアに対しての印象は色々な書物から与えられた。

特に強い影響があったのはサバチエ著のフランシス伝記と *Il Fioretti (Fioretti di S.*

¹ マサッチオは Tommaso di Ser Giovanni Guidi da Castel San Giovanni (1401-28) である。

² ブランカッチ堂は Santa Maria del Carmine に付属され、ベデカーに書かれてあるように、“[it was] embellished after 1423 (?) by Masaccio, probably with the assistance of Masolino, with celebrated frescoes from the traditions regarding the Apostles, especially St. Peter, to which Filippino Lippi added others about 1484.” (Karl Baedeker, *Italy Handbook for Travellers: Northern Italy* (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1903), p. 509).

³ 「花つみ日記」 (博文館, 1909) , pp. 87-88.

Francesco d'Assisi 又は「聖フランシスコの小さき花」)であろう。実際には、「花つみ日記」のイタリア語の表題紙に「*Fioretti d'Italia*」と書いてある。他の影響あった書物はフォガツザロの小説「聖者」 (*Il Santo*) とエミール・ゾラの三都市叢書「*Lourdes*」「*Rome*」と「*Paris*」である。姉崎はフォガツザロとゾラの主人公達と同情し、自分の旅行にも彼らを探していたような感じがある。東アジアに基づいた仏教にしたがって、ローマのカトリック教会への興味は当たり前かもしれない。しかし、皆さんのご存知のように、明治時代に欧米旅行した日本人のうちに、大体イタリアではなくて、イギリス、フランス、ドイツ、ロシアとアメリカを集中した。姉崎氏はイタリアを選び、その上、大衆的なところではなくて、知識的な面を集中したのがここで注目すべきところである。確かに、彼の目には、イタリアは信仰の中央であり、しかも歴史的の周期を通しながら、人間に関しての永遠希望を現れた。

姉崎はフランシス時期の様な宗教的な信仰復活を希望したが、彼の知り合いのうちに同情した者がいたかどうかは明確ではない。マルクス主義のビニヤミ氏は姉崎の宗教的な傾きについてどう考えたであろう。「花つみ日記」にはビニヤミとの会話を描写するところは珍しく簡潔と曖昧である。それどころか、ビニヤミ氏との会話よりも、ビニヤミ婦人と子供との会話を詳しく述べる。ただ、ビニヤミとの関係は悪くないらしく、姉崎が書いた記事が二三回ビニヤミが編集した雑誌「*Coenobium*」に出版された。

「小さな花」をポケットに持ち、アッシシへ行く巡礼者と同じ様に、姉崎は「法然上人絵伝」を持ち、イタリアで巡礼した。彼はこの絵伝によって促され、知り合いに見せながらその促しを分け合おうとしていた。ある場合「花つみ日記」にも絵伝を述べる：

食事後は又イギリスの人等と画の話し。その中にフランシスの伝をかいたお婆さんのミス・ストダート (Miss Stoddart⁴) という人に紹介されて、法然上人の事を少し話したが、日本にも誰れかフランシスに似た人があろうと思って居たが、一寸書物などで見ても分からなかったと大喜び。法然上人絵伝の写しを見せ、又それから画の話しに帰って、ラファエル以後の墮落の原因や、ジオットーの画いたフランシスの顔が必しも肖像でないが、当時の人心に映じた跡である事や、面白く有益な話しで互に別をつけて、各部屋に帰った。⁵

法然上人の影は姉崎をアッシシのどこでも追いた。機会さえあれば法然のことを述べた一哲学者レンシ (Guiseppe Rensi) の婦人に何かを書いてくれと頼まれた時に法然上人の和歌⁶を引用し、フランシスの「日光の頌」(Cantica del sole) について考えると、法然の和歌を思い出す。⁷ 上記のストダートさんともう一人のイギリスからの知り合い、ゴード氏との食後の会話で、又法然を述べた：

⁴ Anna M. Stoddart (1840-1911)のフランシス伝記「Francis of Assisi」は1903年に出版された(London: Methuen).

⁵ 「花つみ日記」, p. 200.

⁶ この和歌は 勅修御伝の三十四巻にある：「露の身はこゝかしこにてきえぬともこゝろはおなし花のうてなぞ」

⁷ この和歌は 勅修御伝の三十巻にあり、ここで姉崎が誤って記憶する。姉崎の引用は「月影のてらさぬくまはなけれどもながむる人の心にぞすむ」ですが、勅修御伝には「月かげのいたらぬさとはなけれどもながむる人のところにぞすむ」である。続千載集にも出る (981)。

食後には、ストダートとゴード⁸と三人で、色々な話しが出、互に今日の昼見て来た事や、学校の事、それから話しは法然上人に移った。勅修御伝の画の写しを見せて、上人の一生や信仰の話しをしたが、二人は喜んできいてくれ、又上人とフランシスと相似ておる事も十分に賛成してくれた。

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旅行中の姉崎が西洋人に浄土宗に転向させた訳はないであろうが、本人の宗教的な意志は誠実的、または急用であったということは間違いない。観念論的であったということでも言えよう。

姉崎氏はフィレンツェで14世紀の美術に浸され、アッシシで聖フランシスの生涯の勉強に熱中させた以後、ヴァチカンを見ようとしてローマに向かった。ゾラの「ローマ」やフォガツザロの「聖者」を読んだばかりの姉崎はいわゆる永遠の都に入た時に強い先入観があったであろう。もちろん、ローマの建築や旧跡の美、衰れを無視するのが不可能であったが、見たところのあらをよく探した。聖ピエトロで行われた礼式の威風が好きであったが、それを見ながら教皇及びローマ教会全体が教会区民との差があり、結局、教会の世界におけるの位地が不安定であったと思っていた。回顧すると、ローマ教会及びイタリア全国は主要な変更の先端にあったことを知っているが、姉崎の立場から見ると、その将来は不明上で、歴史の（見かけな）繰返しは凶兆であった。ローマ市の最初の記入の最初の文章は「アッシシを去って、ローマに来た。山中の静かな古風の

⁸ Harold Goad 氏(1878-1956)は Laboratorio San Francesco (アッシシの Via Metastasio にある貧しい子供のための学校)のを創立し、フランシス派について研究もした。

⁹ 「花つみ日記」, pp. 229-230.

町から賑かな混雑な町に来ていやな気がする。」実は、悪い兆しは多数である：宿が全部一杯で、市内の電車はどれも満員だから聖ピエトロまで歩くしかなかった。聖ピエトロに着いた次第、「此の前にもこの堂の正面には失望したが、今度は特にアッシシの奥ゆかしい古物を見て来た眼には一層面白くない」と書いた。聖ピエトロは「俗気」であり、「田舎の順礼は驚いても、目のあるものは却ていやに思う。」姉崎の宿には相手が居ないので寂しくなった。その次の記入、五月四日、教皇の分離を思案し、色んな面からヴァチカノを批評する。とりわけ同じような批評があった禁止されたフォガツザロの小説を述べる。果たして、和歌をうたう：

世を救ふあとにはつげども、ヴチカノに

こもる^{**}召うど足ふみも出ず

同様に、ローマの深い歴史は彼に興味を起こさせたが、感心させた訳はない。おそらく、彼の聴衆は数少なくの博識なものであったが、とにかく様々な場所を旅行し、見たものの細部を記述した。その記述は例の旅行ガイドにある歴史資料と個人的な注釈との混合であり、ある場合には六年前の欧米紀行のことも入られ、ある場合には西洋の伝説も入られる。例えば、サンタ・マリア・アラコリにて「ローマ帝国衰亡史を書いたギボンはフォロの廃墟からこの寺に這って、つくづく古今の変を思って、その大歴史を書く考えを起したというが、いかにもそういう感じが誰れにも起る。」¹⁰ このギボンについての

¹⁰ ギボンの自叙伝には「It was at Rome, on the 15th of October 1764, as I sat musing amid the ruins of the capitol, while the bare-footed friars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind.” (*The Autobiographies of Gibbon*, p. 303)

話は西洋学者によく知られたと思うが、日本学者に知られなかったであろう。ともかく、姉崎はイタリア史を詳しく知ったのが確かで、ついでながらギボンを述べたのが聴衆も主題を同様によく知られたと期待したと仮定できよう。

ローマの景色への応答の別の例は彼がフォロ・ロマノを訪問した時である。まず、ローマの過去の栄光を思い出すが、つきまして、そこの人間の出来事の姿が全部消失され、その面影はなく、残っているのが花が多い緑色の景色しかない。和歌を書かせるほど感動させた。

色あせし宮居の跡に人のわざ

あざけらんとてや千々の花さく

ローマ帝国の上昇そして落下は姉崎の世界眺めに完全に合った。ローマ帝国の勝利は、人間のすべての事と同じく虚栄心の表現であり、運の尽くことであった。最終的に、姉崎氏に、イタリアにおけるの最も強い印象させたところが精神的な復活が生れられる面であろう。

Anesaki and Italy

Anesaki Masaharu traveled to Europe and the United States for the second time in his life in 1908 at the age of 35. The trip was financed by the Kahn Foundation, with the objective of learning more about a foreign culture and transmitting that knowledge to Japan. At this time, Anesaki was a professor of comparative religions at Tokyo Imperial University. Indeed, he was the first person to hold such a position, and is usually seen as a pioneer of the field. He produced the travelogue *Hanatsumi Nikki*, a lengthy account of his journey in Switzerland and Italy as a result.

Anesaki's focus on this trip was largely religious: he wanted to learn more about St. Francis of Assisi, to trace his life, and to compare him to the Japanese Buddhist priest Hōnen. Anesaki also wanted to examine the Roman Catholic church, the Papacy, and how the development of Catholicism mirrored, in some respects, the development of Pure Land Buddhism in medieval Japan. Finally, he examined how the life of Francis, and the Saints in general, were depicted by 14th century Italian painters, key of whom was Fra Angelico.

The journey began in November of 1907, when he arrived in France. From Paris, he went to Switzerland, Italy, Austria, and Germany, eventually returning to Paris in June of 1908. From Paris he went to London, where he participated in the Third International Congress for the history of Religion, held at Oxford University, presenting a paper titled *Buddhist Influences upon the Japanese Hōnen*.

While in Italy he spent most of his time in Florence, Assisi, and Rome. He visited with a number of intellectuals, including Enrico Bignami who edited the periodical *Coenobium* and Paul Sabatier, the renowned biographer of St. Francis.

Anesaki's impression of Italy was principally informed by religious trends. That is, he saw 14th century Italy as a place where organized religion had become stale, or worse, corrupt, and that needed a popular charismatic leader, such as Francis. The parallels to Japan are strong: in the Kamakura Period, aristocratically centered organized Buddhism was similarly stale, and Hōnen rose to appeal to the masses in a way that directly opposed the establishment. Hōnen was exiled; Francis was similarly shunned by the church. In early 20th century Italy, Anesaki saw a repeat of the same phenomenon, with the Catholic church establishment out of touch with the common man. And, by extension, he seems to feel that a similar problem existed in Japan (although he does not explicitly write this).

Unlike most other travelers to Italy in the early 20th century, when Baedeker's guide detailed art and political history with great minutiae, Anesaki saw the Renaissance as a time of artistic over-refinement. When he arrived in Florence, he could not but admire the Renaissance painting that he saw. However, he made this bold resolution:

After dinner I read a book about Giotto, and also a chapter in the life of St. Francis, plus, in preparation for tomorrow, I took a look at a book about San Marco. Lost in thought about these subjects, my heart could not but be taken over by the beautiful art of the Renaissance in this city of flowers, the hometown of poetry, and the center of the Renaissance. I resolved then and there that, as I went through Assisi and to Rome, I had to devote myself to St. Francis, Giotto, and Fra Angelico. I would not turn my eye toward Raphael or any other such painter, but rather would concentrate on the two saints of painting. Coming to Florence and not seeing Raphael was like refusing to eat at a feast, but resolutely I would refuse to eat. The Renaissance feast was a delicacy of the nether world. No matter how much Raphael painted the Virgin Mary, it was an object of this world. And, to taste the Buddha's excellent teachings, I had to fast in the nether world. Giotto's faith and the rapture in Fra Angelico's paintings give us a taste of heavenly immortality. Those and those alone were the means of religious austerities. Thus I was resolved. No matter what I saw, and no matter what I myself suffered, I would not look at Renaissance art with the exception of the works of Lippi and Masaccio¹¹ (who produced works like Angelico), and also the Brancacci Chapel.¹²

¹¹ "Masaccio" is Tommaso di Ser Giovanni Guidi da Castel San Giovanni (1401-28).

With this revelation I decided that from tomorrow on I would not sightsee but rather be a pilgrim. The two hours I spent at dusk today provided a lesson for which I was truly grateful.

In other words, Anesaki refused to be a typical tourist. He wanted his experience in Italy to be religiously edifying, not artistically entertaining. So, even though he toured Florence, Assisi, and Rome with a strong sensitivity to the art, architecture, and history before him, it was with an unusual focus.

Anesaki's impressions of Italy before he arrived were informed by many sources, but some were stronger than others. He had read Paul Sabatier's biography of St. Francis, and he had read *Il Fioretti*, about the life of Francis. Indeed, the title page of *Hanatsumi Nikki* includes the Italian title of *Fioretti d'Italia*. He had also read Fogazzaro's novel *Il Santo*, and Zola's trilogy *Lourdes, Rome, and Paris*. He sympathized with Fogazzaro's and Zola's protagonists, and seems at times to be searching for them in his travels. Perhaps, given his interest in the pan-Asian tradition of Buddhism, a focus on the Roman Catholic church, a pan-Western tradition, and its seat in Italy should not be surprising. But, as the participants of this conference know, the majority of Japanese scholars traveling in and studying the West focused on England, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States. That Anesaki chose Italy, and an aspect of Italy that was both highly intellectual and beyond the common popular view, is worthy of specific note. Clearly his view of Italy was that of a deeply-imbued center of religious faith, one that simultaneously showed the constant cycle of demise and life, and the subsequent eternal hope for mankind generated therein.

¹² The Brancacci Chapel was part of Santa Maria del Carmine. According to *Baedeker's*, it was "embellished after 1423 (?) by Masaccio, probably with the assistance of Masolino, with celebrated frescoes from the traditions regarding the Apostles, especially St. Peter, to which Filippino Lippi added others about 1484." (*Northern Italy*, p. 509)

It is unclear whether all of Anesaki's acquaintances shared his hope for the revival of a Franciscan-style faith. Enrico Bignami, given his Marxist sympathies, may have looked somewhat askance at Anesaki's religious bent. Anesaki is suspiciously non-committal and terse in his descriptions of their conversations. As a matter of fact, Anesaki tells us more about the conversations he had with Bignami's wife and children than those he had with Bignami himself. Yet, they had a good professional relationship and Anesaki published more than once in *Coenobium*.

Like pilgrims in Assisi with copies of *Il Fioretti* in their pockets, Anesaki traveled through Italy with a copy of the illustrated scroll of Hōnen's life, *Hōnen shōnin eden* 法然上人絵伝 in his own pocket. Anesaki found in it inspiration, and he tried to share his inspiration through showing it to some of the people he met and occasionally quoting it in his diary. While in Assisi he writes:

After dinner I spoke again with the British guests about painting. Among them I was introduced to a Miss Stoddart¹³ who had written a biography of Francis, and I spoke a little to her about Hōnen. She had thought that there must have been someone in Japanese history who was like Francis, but she had not been able to discern much from the books she had and so was very happy to speak with me. I showed her the painting of Hōnen's life (*Hōnen eden*), then we talked again about Western painting and the cause of its corruption after Raphael, about how Giotto's painting of Francis was not necessarily a true likeness but rather a reflection of people's spirits at that time—it was an interesting and beneficial conversation, after which we parted and went to our respective rooms. (April 26)

The shadow of Hōnen followed Anesaki everywhere in Assisi. He mentions Hōnen whenever the opportunity arises: when asked by the wife of Italian philosopher Giuseppe Reni (1871-1941)

¹³ Anna M. Stoddart (1840-1911) published her book *Francis of Assisi* in 1903 (London: Methuen).

for a calligraphic sample, Anesaki quotes a poem by Hōnen;¹⁴ he is reminded of a poem by Hōnen when he thinks of Francis' *Cantica del sole*.¹⁵ He brings up Hōnen again later in a dinner conversation with two acquaintances:

After dinner, I spoke with [Ms.] Stoddard and [Mr.] Goad about various things, such as the paintings I had seen in the day, the school, and then the conversation turned to Hōnen. I showed them a picture of the *Chokushū goden* and told them of the priest's life and faith, which the two were very happy to hear, and they agreed that there were many similarities between the Buddhist priest and Francis. (April 28th)¹⁶

Although it would seem that Anesaki did not convert any Europeans to Pure Land Buddhism on his journey, his religious intent was sincere and almost urgent. I would go so far as to say that he was idealistic.

After immersing himself in pre-Raphaelite art in Florence, and the life of Francis in Assisi, Anesaki headed for Rome to see the Vatican. With Zola's *Rome* and Fogazzaro's *Il Santo* fresh in his mind, he entered the Eternal City with a strong bias. Although he cannot deny the beauty and pathos of Rome, both in the present architecture and the ruins, he is clearly critical of what he sees. Although he likes the majesty of ceremonies in St Peter's, he never leaves far behind the idea that the Pope and the Church as a whole had become detached from Catholic followers, and that this left the church in a tenuous position. In retrospect, we know that the Catholic Church

¹⁴ Anesaki quotes the first three lines. The complete stanza is 露の身はこゝかしこにてきえぬともこゝろはおなし花のうてなぞ “Although my dew-like body will vanish, my heart will remain on a lotus dais” The poem appears in volume 34 of the *Chokushū goden*.

¹⁵ The Hōnen poem is in volume 30 of *Chokushū goden*. Curiously, it seems that Anesaki mis-remembers it. He quotes it as: 月影のてらさぬくまはなけれどもながむる人の心にぞすむ “Although there is not/ a moment when it does not shine/ the moon/ resides in the spirit/ of one's gaze”; the poem appears in the *Chokushū goden* as 月かげのいたらぬさとほなけれどもながむる人のところにぞすむ “Although there is not/ a village where it does not shine/ the moon/ resides in the spirit/ of one's gaze”. It is also in the *Shoku senzaishū* 続千載集, poem 981.

¹⁶ Harold Goad (1878-1956) founded the Laboratorio San Francesco on Via Metastasio for the poor children of Assisi. He later became a published scholar on the Franciscans.

was on the cusp of major changes, as was the entire country of Italy, but for Anesaki the future was uncertain, and the repetition of history, as he saw it, boded ill. In his first sentence in the first entry for Rome, he writes, “I left Assisi and came to Rome. It gave me an unpleasant feeling to leave an old-fashioned quiet town in the mountains and come to a raucous and chaotic city.” The bad portents are many: he has difficulty finding lodging; the trams are so crowded he is forced to walk to St. Peter’s, where he says, “I had been disappointed in the façade of this church before, and this time, having just seen the ancient interior of the church in Assisi I found it absolutely uninteresting”; it is “vulgar” and, he scoffs, “the country bumpkin pilgrims may be surprised by it, but anyone with eyes can see that it is awful.” At his inn, he has no one to talk to and he feels lonely. The entry for the next day, May 4, 1908, focuses on the improper isolation of the Pope. Anesaki criticizes the Vatican from many angles, and specifically mentions Fogazzaro’s novel, which had similar criticisms, being banned. In the end, he composes a *waka*:

Although he claims he will save the world, shut up in the Vatican
He cannot take one step outside

Similarly, the redolent history of Rome interested Anesaki, but rarely impressed him. He tours various locales and describes what he sees, providing great detail to what was probably a small, erudite audience in Japan. His descriptions are a mix of the standard history one would find in a guide book with some personal commentary, sometimes recalling his previous trip to Italy six years earlier, sometimes alluding to something in the Western tradition. For example, when he visits Santa Maria in Aracœli, he mentions that, “It is said that Gibbon, the historian who wrote of the Fall of the Roman Empire, went from the Forum ruins to this church, and was put in mind of the change from the olden days to today, and it was this that caused him to think

of writing his great history.”¹⁷ This story about Gibbon would have been fairly well-known among Western scholars, but probably not so among Japanese scholars. In any event, Anesaki is clearly well-read in Italian history, and by his passing mention of Gibbon we can assume that he expected his audience to be similarly familiar with his subject.

Another example of his response to the Roman landscape can be seen when he visits the Foro Romano, first recalling the glory of the Roman past, but then focusing on the fact that man’s accomplishments there had all passed, leaving nothing but a verdant, flowering landscape over the ruins. He is moved to write a poem:

It has lost its charm--
Thousands of flowers bloom
as if to ridicule
the acts of man
amongst the palace ruins

The rise and fall of the Roman Empire fit perfectly into Anesaki’s Buddhist view of the world. The triumph of the Roman Empire was, as all things human, an expression of vainglory, fated to cycle to an end. Ultimately, the aspect of Italy that most impressed Anesaki was her potential to birth a spiritual revival.

¹⁷ Anesaki is correct: in his autobiography, Gibbon wrote, ““It was at Rome, on the 15th of October 1764, as I sat musing amid the ruins of the capitol, while the bare-footed friars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter [presently the Church of Santa Maria in Aracœli], that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the City first started to my mind.” (*The Autobiographies of Gibbon*, p. 303)