

園芸と日本とジェイン・オースティン

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Garden, Japan and Jane Austen

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This paper examines Reginald Farrer's understanding of Japan and Jane Austen. He came to Asia in late nineteenth century, visiting gardens, forests and mountains in Japan, China and other countries in East Asia. He was a plant hunter, exploring remote parts of those countries for 'new' beautiful plants. In Japan he visited town gardens, enjoying sightseeing. He sees Japan as a person representing the British Empire, with the attitudes eulogising, patronising, cosmopolitan and condescending at times and also contemptuous sometimes. He was a literary person with an ambition to be a writer. His description of Japan is full of delicate articulation of acute observation. As a westerner, he finds Japan quite different from the world he has been familiar with. Accordingly his description abounds in differentiation. However, when he turns to Bonsai and Japanese garden, he uses Jane Austen to convey its essence. Indeed, he uses universal values Austen represents to offer to his readers peculiar features of unfamiliar Japanese gardening style.