



The infamous bear 'farm' on Hokkaido, nature in its place.
Below: A view of the sacred Mount Fuji, symbol of the perfect form. Its slopes are strewn with rubbish.

Cherry blossoms & concrete

Buddha-nature is in everything, the Japanese believe, and so there is no qualitative difference between a flower-filled meadow and a car-park, a mountain and a slag heap. On the other hand, a cherry blossom is natural perfection, while an orange blossom is just another flower.

Western-style progress is desirable at all costs, but appeals for moderation that are based on Western-style environmentalism are received with blank looks. Mark Brazil reports on the unfortunate consequences when the meeting of 'the twain' is incomplete.

