

Inaugural Statment  
Akatori (Alba) 1997  
XVIII Olympic Games  
Commemorative sculpture  
Nagano, Japan

Akatori (Alba)

How beautiful the Asakawa mountains are! I was deeply touched on my visit by the beauty of this region of Japan. My gratitude went to our ancestors and the gods of these mountains, for keeping the place before our eyes so beautiful for so many thousands of years. The sculpture, *Alba*, as in the Greek *agalma*, is intended as a gift to delight our ancestors and the gods of the Iizuna mountains.

One hopes the sculpture will find its completion in quiet harmony with the setting, that the mountains themselves will aid in concentrating the power of the stone and unfolding the upward movement of the form.

Perhaps the visitor to the Olympic Games, viewing the ensemble from a certain angle, may perceive in it the very moment in which the athlete concentrates his or her energy and projects it outward—a moment of tension but also of delight.

The white texture of the stone is best seen in the early light of dawn, of *alba*, or, in the words of the poet Lucretius, the “appointed hour when the goddess of Dawn ushers into the airy vestibule rosy-fingered Aurora and flings wide the doors of light”.<sup>1</sup>

I can only hope that the natural beauty of this region will be sustained through the coming millennium and that this sculpture, *Akatoki (Alba)*, proves to be both a pleasing offering to the gods of the Asakawa mountains and a continuing delight to the people of the region. Indeed, these thoughts were in my mind even as the piece was being cut in a small village in Canada.

Satoshi Saito  
Sculptor

<sup>1</sup>Lucretius, L. V,V. 650.