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The Great Clod: Notes and Memoirs on Nature and History in East Asia

Gary Snyder

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For the full course of his remarkable career, Gary Snyder has continued his study of Eastern culture and philosophies. From the Ainu to the Mongols, from Hokkaido to Kyoto, from the landscapes of China to the backcountry of contemporary Japan, from the temples of Daitokoji to the Yellow River Valley, it is now clear how this work has influenced his poetry, his stance as an environmental and political activist, and his long practice of Zen. Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, Asia became a vocation for Snyder. While most American writers looked to the capitals of Europe for their inspiration, Sndyer looked East. American letters is profoundly indebted to this geographical choice.

Long rumored to exist, *The Great Clod* collects more than a dozen chapters, several published in The Coevolution Quarterly almost forty years ago when Snyder briefly described this work as “The China Book,” and several others, the majority, never before published in any form. “Summer in Hokkaido,” “Wild in China,” “Ink and Charcoal, “ “Stories to Save the World,” “Walking the Great Ridge,” these essays turn from being memoirs of travel to prolonged considerations of art, culture, natural history and religion. Filled with Snyder’s remarkable insights and briskly beautiful descriptions, this collection adds enormously to the major corpus of his work, certain to delight and instruct his readers now and forever.

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