

東京郊外の天然記念物に 関する江戸時代の紀行文と地誌の英訳と その地理的、環境的、歴史的背景について

クレイ サイモン

Introduction

The number of overseas residents in, and visitors to, the twenty-three wards¹ of the Tokyo Metropolitan Area continues to increase² and more are finding their way to hitherto lesser-known tourist attractions outside of the central areas. This paper is concerned with Shakujii, an area of Nerima-ku (a ward in the northern part of the Tokyo Metropolitan Area), and in particular the nature reserve centring on the small lake known as Sanpoji-ike.³ The lake and its surroundings, which boast a rich biodiversity, are unusual in Tokyo as virtually no modern buildings can be seen from there, giving the place a timeless quality, enjoyed by local residents and increasingly sought out by visitors.

To cater for the increasing number of visitors to the Shakujii area, the Nerima Shakujii-koen Furusato Museum (練馬区立石神井公園ふるさと文化館), offering a per-

¹ Although “city” is the English translation of *ku* (区) often used by entities such as the *ku* themselves, to avoid confusion with the common understanding of Tokyo itself as a “city”, and to differentiate from the overall metropolitan area, *to* (都), this paper adopts the translation “ward”, which is used (in the phrase “special ward”) by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government. (https://www.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/english/about/documents/city_profile_fy2021.pdf, viewed on 22nd June, 2023)

² In the ten years before the pandemic, the annual number of tourists visiting Tokyo from overseas rose from 4,760,000 (in 2009) to 15,176,000 (in 2019). (<https://www.sangyo-rodo.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/toukei/tourism/c428685ec64ce2d3b4e1168d8a4e1f0a.pdf>, viewed on 10th October, 2023). The number of overseas residents in the 23 wards was 460,161 in July 2023. (<https://www.toukei.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/gaikoku/2023/ga23gf0100.pdf>, viewed on 10th October, 2023)

³ Although the word *ike* (池) is usually translated as “pond”, the dictionary definition of “pond” (“an area of water smaller than a lake, often artificially made” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/pond> viewed on 10th October, 2023) does not match the reality of the larger body of water in question here. Although “smaller than a lake” is somewhat subjective, “pond” is often associated, at least in British culture, with small garden ponds and here the translation “lake” has been used. The issue of naming (although not of translation into English) was also referred to in the Edo period (see below).

manent exhibition on the history of the area as well as regular temporary exhibitions, was opened by the Nerima-ku government in March 2010. The total number of visitors for the year 2021 was 146,476 (before the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2019, the number was 201,137. There are no records kept of the number of overseas visitors.)⁴ Tourist information is also available at the Shakuji Information Center (石神井観光案内所), which opened at the newly-renovated Shakuji Koen station on the Seibu Ikebukuro Line in 2017.

A limited amount of information in English can be found at the Nerima Shakujiikoen Furusato Museum, both in the form of simple pamphlets and in the partial translation of the information related to the permanent exhibition. There is no English information available at the Shakuji Information Center.⁵ There is some information online,⁶ including a relatively substantial amount of information related to the Teruhime story.⁷ There are, however, no translations of historical first-hand accounts of the area, although these would greatly add to overseas visitors' understanding and appreciation.

The purpose of this paper therefore is threefold. Firstly, to present for the first time (to the author's knowledge) English translations of three Edo Period descriptions of the area. Secondly, to put these in their geographical, environmental, and, drawing partly on the work of local historians, historical, contexts. Thirdly, to thus add to the cultural and historical information available in English for the benefit English-speaking residents and visitors.

⁴ Nerimakuritsu Shakujiikoen Furusato Bunkakan, *Nerimakuritsu Shakujiikoen Furusato Bunkakan Nenpo Reiwa 3 Nendo*, Nerimakuritsu Shakujiikoen Furusato Bunkakan, Tokyo, 2022, p. 33.

⁵ On a visit to the Information Center on 20th July 2023, staff informed the author that the number of overseas visitors was small, as was the number of Japanese tourists. The majority of visitors, they said, were local people looking for local products to buy as gifts. (Interview with staff of the Shakuji Information Center, 20th July, 2023).

⁶ The area appears in English-language guides for visitors (for example <https://www.gotokyo.org/en/spot/433/index.html>, viewed on 10th October, 2023) as well as for potential residents (for example <https://ja.sekaiproperty.com/article/2153/living-in-shakuji-koen>, viewed on 10th October, 2023)

⁷ In 1477, the castle in Shakuji (Shakuji-jo) fell to an enemy attack. The story goes that, rather than face capture, the lord of the castle, Yasutsune Toshima, drowned himself in the lake. In an act of filial piety his daughter, Teruhime, followed her father into the lake where she also drowned. Since 1988 the story has been celebrated with a local festival each May (The Teruhime Matsuri) and it is retold in English in print and online, including on the interactive "100 hidden stories of Tokyo" smartphone app. (<https://olympictravel.co.jp/en/> viewed on 10th October, 2023)

Geographical and environmental context



Figure 1. A public signboard in Shakuji Koen

The Shakuji area is situated on the Musashino Plateau, which covers most of the north-western part of the modern Tokyo Metropolitan Area. The plateau has as its base the alluvial fan of the original Tama River, which is overlaid by the thick layer of the Kanto Loam Foundation, formed largely by ash from Mt. Fuji. Several rivers run across the plateau, including the Shakuji River, which has given the Shakuji area its name. There is a line spring-fed lakes across the plateau, all lying 50m above sea level, one of these being Sanpoji-ike (others are Inokashira-ike and Zenpukuji-ike).

Modern Shakuji comprises of the neighbourhoods of Kami-Shakuji, Kami-Shakuji Minami-cho, Shakuji-dai, Shakuji-machi and Shimo-Shakuji, and lies in the south-west of Nerima-ku, immediately north of neighbouring Suginami-ku. Sanpoji-ike is situated within Shakuji-dai, on the north side of the Shakuji River, which runs through the centre of the area. The surface area of the lake is around 25,000 square metres, and it has a depth ranging from about 50cm to about 2m.⁸ Although the lake remains partly spring-fed, a drop in the water table, due mainly to post-war urban development, meant that there has been a constant need to top up the water supply. This was achieved by the digging of a 190m deep well, which took place in 1971.⁹

There was an island on the south side of the lake, now connected to the shore,

⁸ Shakuji Koen Yacho to Shizen no Kai, *Shakuji no Shiki 30 Nen Shiryozen*, Shakuji Koen Yacho to Shizen no Kai, Tokyo, 2019, p. 104

⁹ Tokyo-to Seibu Koen Ryokuchi Jimusho, *Shakuji Koen Sanpoji-ike Shuhen Shizen Kankyo Chousa Hokoku*, Tokyo-to Seibu Koen Ryokuchi Jimusho, Tokyo, 1988, p. 1

on which is built the Itsukushima Shrine (reconstructed in concrete in 1983). Steep, tree-covered banks surround the lake on the north, south and west sides. Beyond the trees on the north side is the Nerima-ku Shakujii Matsunokaze Culture Park, containing sports facilities and a museum. Woods lie to the west, and among the trees to the south is the Hikawajinja shrine, the site of Shakujii Castle, Sanpoji temple, from which the lake takes its name, and Dojoji temple. An area of small ponds to the east of the lake leads across the Tokyo municipal road number 444 to a second lake (Shakujii-ike, constructed in 1934), more woods and sports facilities. In March 1959 the two lakes, castle remains, woods and sports grounds were incorporated as Shakujii Koen, (a park established by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government).

The importance of Sanpoji-ike as a nature reserve was recognised as early as 1935 when it was designated as a National Natural Monument (国の天然記念物), although even at this stage there were concerns that due to housing development, the ecology of the area was changing.¹⁰ In spite of this designation however, increasing development through the twentieth century led to further degradation of the ecology of the area. Following a major survey beginning in 1987, plans to conserve and renew the ecology of the lake were put into place in 1993, continuing in earnest from 1996.¹¹ Ecological losses had been considerable, as seen in a report published in August 2019 by the volunteer organisation Shakujii Koen Yacho to Shizen no Kai.¹² The report details the ecological changes which took place between the years 1990 and 2018 and lists the number of species of trees, plants, insects, birds and fish in 2018 together with the loss of species since 1990. For example, a total of 105 species of trees are reported around the lake area, of which 12 had been lost and two removed (of these 46 species are described as being of “natural generation”).¹³

While ecological losses have been great, however, efforts to conserve and renew have had some success, as is evident from the series of increasingly green photographs of the area taken over several years, which appear in a report produced by Tokyo-to Tobu Koen Ryokuchi Jimusho in 2018.¹⁴ Sanpoji-ike and its surroundings re-

¹⁰ In an early attempt to reintroduce species thought to be in danger of being lost, this year saw the release of a large number of fireflies brought from Shiga Prefecture (A. Katsuragi, ‘Shakujii Koen Shi Nenpyo 2’, *Nerima Kyodoshi Kenkyukai Kaiho*, no. 362, October 2016, p. 4)

¹¹ Tokyo-to Tobu Koen Ryokuchi Jimusho, *Shakujii Koen Sanpoji-ike Shokubutsu Gunraku Fukugen Tsuiseki Chosa Hokukosho*, Tokyo, 2018

¹² A brief introduction to this organisation can be found at <http://shakujiiifb.o.oo7.jp/gosyoukai.html>

¹³ Shakujii Koen Yacho to Shizen no Kai, *Shakujii no Shiki 30 Nen*, pp. 3-5

¹⁴ Tokyo-to Tobu Koen Ryokuchi Jimusho, *Shakujii Koen Sanpoji-ike Shokubutsu Gunraku Hozon Hozon Katsuyo Keikaku*, Tokyo, 2018, pp. 5-8

main remarkable among the green spaces of the 23 wards of the Tokyo Metropolitan Area for their natural diversity. The Shakuji Koen Yacho to Shizen no Kai publish quarterly pamphlets, describing the natural features of the area, and providing pointers for visitors as to what to look out for. We are told that, in the winter and early spring, there are often *kinkuroharoji* (tufted duck, *aythya fuligula*) and *yoshigamo* (falcated duck, *mareca falcata*) on the water, *uguisu* (Japanese bush warbler, *horornis diphone*) and *otaka* (Eurasian goshawk, *accipiter gentilis*) in the woods. The delicate flowers of *sentoso* (*chamaele decumbens*) precede the spring blossoming of several species of cherry, *yamabuki* (Japanese rose, *kerria japonica*), and, later, *jiroboengokusa* (*corydalis decumbens*) and *amana* (*amana edulis*). *Oruri* (blue and white flycatchers, *cyanoptila cyanomelana*) and *yabusame* (Asian stubtail, *urosphena squameiceps*) are some of the birds that can be seen in the later part of spring, while into the summer the lake continues to be busy with its sizeable populations of *kawasemi* (kingfisher, *alcedo atthis*), *aosagi* (heron, *ardea cinerea*), *goisagi* (night heron *nycticorax nycticorax*), *kosagi* (egret, *egretta garzetta*), and *oban* (coot, *fulica atra*). From early summer, through the rainy season and later, the lake and its surroundings are rich with flowers, including *ayame* (iris, *iris sanguinea*), *hotarubukuko* (spotted bellflower, *campanula punctata*), *yabukanzo* (orange daylily, *hemerocallis fulva*), *misohagi* (loosestrife, *lythrum anceps*) and the delightfully named *kitsunenokamisori* (literally “foxes’ razor blades”, *lycoris sanguinea*). At this time, more than in any other season, the air above the lake is busy with dragon flies and other insects. The many species of trees provide a colourful display in the autumn while the flowers give way to autumn grasses such as *susuki* (Chinese silver grass, *miscanthus sinensis*) and *ogi* (Amur silver grass, *miscanthus sacchariflorus*).¹⁵

We can safely assume that much of this flora and fauna would have been seen by visitors in the Edo Period. According to the historian Nishiyama Matsunosuke, (translated by Gerald Groemer), “Until the end of the Edo Period, red-crested cranes could still be seen soaring through the skies over the city; swans and geese flocked to Shinobazu Pond in Ueno Park. Foxes and badgers were found everywhere, and cuckoos (hototogisu) flourished in such numbers that their song was considered a nuisance.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Shakuji Koen Yacho to Shizen no Kai, *Shakuji no Shiki*, no. 191, August 2022, no. 192, November 2022, no. 193, May 2023

¹⁶ M. Nishiyama, translated and edited by Gerald Groemer, *Edo Culture; Daily Life and Diversions in Urban Japan, 1600 - 1868*, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu 1997, p. 9

Historical context

Thanks to conservation efforts, and in spite of the wooden boardwalk and faux concrete bridges that now surround the lake, Sanpoji-ike is perhaps closer to its original natural state than at many other points in its history since the end of the Edo Period. Modern life began to encroach on the area in around 1880, when up-to-date technology (and, according to the memories of a local resident, much hard labour)¹⁷ was used to drain the lake in an unsuccessful attempt to find the treasure said to have been dropped there by the vanquished lord Toshima in 1477 (see footnote 7). Other attempts (equally unsuccessful) took place later, one in 1908, another in 1918 and yet another in the late 1920s or early 1930s.

Before and after the opening of the Musashino Tetsudo railway line and the new station north of the Sanpoji-ike area in 1915, the area was developed further.¹⁸ New houses were built, some as second homes, and tourists began to visit as the popularity of day-trips from central Tokyo increased. Around 1917 a restaurant, the “Toshima-kan” and hotel “Musashino-kan” were built at the top of the steep south bank, overlooking the lake, later becoming well-known as an early meeting place of the nascent Japanese Communist Party. In 1918, an area north-east of the lake was used to build Japan’s first outdoor 100m swimming pool, which visitors could reach from the station by a free bus service. The pool remained open until 1939 and was irretrievably damaged by bombing in 1944. Meanwhile, the lake itself became an attraction for swimmers and boaters. In 1920, an artificial waterfall was created near the castle remains and there is a photograph of a *fundoshi*-clad swimmer bathing beneath it.¹⁹ Sanpoji-ike became known for iris-viewing in the early summer, and “water bicycles” became available for hire (these were replaced by rowing boats after complaints that tourists’ clothes were getting soaked by the bicycles). In the mid-1930s, as concerns grew over the ecology of Sanpoji-ike, boating activity moved to the newly-constructed Shakujii-ike.

Around this time, the former Toshima-kan and Musashino-kan were reopened as the “Kanko Hotel”, later becoming the “Shakujii Hotel”. During the war, the Shakujii Hotel was used as a dormitory for workers of the newly established Hoya Glass Com-

¹⁷ K. Kato, ‘Shakujii Sanpoji-ike no Hanashi’, *Nerima Kyodoshi Kenkyukai Kaiho*, no. 164, March, 1983, p. 3

¹⁸ Today’s Seibu Ikebukuro Line runs roughly along the same route, with the original “Shakujii” station replaced by the modern “Shakujii Koen” station

¹⁹ Previously on display at the Nerima Shakujii-koen Furusato Museum, now housed in a private collection.

pany, before being requisitioned at the end of 1943 and turned into a brothel to serve personnel at the Narimasu airfield. After the war the buildings were used as dwellings, among other uses, before being demolished in 1977, when the bank where they stood returned to something close to its original, wooded, appearance. By this time, however, the effects of urban development had taken their toll, and the lake, always famous for its endless supply of spring water, had begun to dry up.

Returning to the Edo Period, in 1769, 230 households were recorded in the area around Sanpoji-ike, then known as Shakuji-mura (“Shakuji village”). The majority of the people living there were engaged in farming while others had duties connected to the local temples and shrines.²⁰ Contemporary maps,²¹ drawn to emphasise the existence of water sources, of which Sanpoji-ike was important, show the Shakuji river running through the centre of the area. To the north of the area was the Fujikaido road, which in the Edo Period would have been busy with pilgrims on their way to Mt. Fuji and to worship at Oyamadera temple. Also to the north, between the Shakuji river and Sanpoji temple, ran the Tokorozawado road (recorded in the Edo Period as “Tokorozawa he no michi”), the main route between Edo and the town of Tokorozawa in present-day Saitama Prefecture.

For the people of “the walking superpower that was Edo Period Japan” (my translation),²² a day-trip to Shakuji was easily achievable from Edo. By the mid Edo Period, particularly during the Kaisei Period (1804 – 1830), which was a period of peace, untroubled by natural disasters, and when material prosperity was accompanied by a higher level of education, travel for pleasure had become increasingly popular. “Throughout Japan, tourists and pilgrims made the rounds to famous scenic locations, historical spots, well-known temples, or holy sites. The popularity of such journeys led to the publication of numerous travel guides directing travellers to the desired destination.”²³ Meanwhile, the travel guides were supplemented by many detailed, personal accounts, written and published by men and women of letters.

Sanpoji temple was part of a pilgrim route of 88 temples, which had been established around 1755, and pilgrims would have visited there.²⁴ However, although visi-

²⁰ T. Miyana, ‘Musashino no Omokage’, *Shakai Shinrin*, vol. 62, no. 4, March 2016, p. 299

²¹ Shakujiikoen Furusato Bunkakaikan *Ezu ni Miru Nerima (1)*, Shakujiikoen Furusato Bunkakaikan, Tokyo, 2008,

Shakujiikoen Furusato Bunkakaikan *Ezu ni Miru Nerima (2)*, Shakujiikoen Furusato Bunkakaikan, Tokyo, 2009

²² H. Tanigama, *Aruku Edo no Tabibito-tachi*. Koyoshobo, Tokyo, 2023, p. 1

²³ Nishiyama, op. cit., p. 137

²⁴ A modern guidebook written by Wada Nobuko includes a description of Sanpoji Temple (“Number 16”) (N. Wada, *Oedo Meguri Gofunai Hachijuhachi ka Sho*, Shueisha, Tokyo, 2002, p. 208)

tors must also have walked down from the temple to worship at the shrine on its island on the lake (as recorded in the translations presented below) there are relatively few records of visits made to Sanpoji-ike. One local historian suggests that the area was unpopular as a place for Edo people to visit because “because they preferred high-up places with good views” (my translation)²⁵ and, although the area is praised for its natural beauty today, it seems that it wasn’t considered to be particularly remarkable then. The translations that follow, therefore, are important first-hand records of this once largely disregarded, but now increasingly popular, area of natural beauty.

The first of these translations has been included as the earliest remaining record of any substance and because it was written by a well-known and respected geographer and scholar. It is the record of an “official” visit made in 1794 as part of a project to survey the area surrounding Edo made at the request of the government. It is important because it not only gives a detailed and accurate description, but also a reflection of current superstitions and beliefs. The remaining two translations are records of personal visits, later made available for public consumption and offering a rare and vivid picture of the area in the first part of the nineteenth century.

²⁵ A. Katsuragi, ‘Sanpo Ike no Rekishi (2)’, *Nerima Kyodoshi Kenkyukai Kaiho*, no. 375, January 2020, p. 4

A translation of *Shijinchimeiroku* (四神地名録) (Shakujii and Sanpoji-ike in 1794)



Figure 2, Furukawa's illustration of Sanpoji-ike, taken from a version of the text appearing in *Edo Chishisoshō*, published by Arimineshoten in 1976

There is a lake known as Sanpoji Lake (see my illustration). It is not part of Sanpoji temple, however, the name "Sanpoji" being, in this case, merely a place name. The lake is smaller than the one at Inokashira, but is prettily situated, and the water is pure. The water level never drops, however dry the weather, and the lake provides an important source of water for the villages downstream.

There are many water fowl, carp and crucian carp here, and, from springtime, the lake is apparently visited by coots. These are far larger than the common moorhen and make good eating. In the west, around the capital, indeed, they are often enjoyed in the summer months.

It seems that the water course runs to Sanpoji Lake from Inokashira, by way of the lake at Zenpukuji in Yoshinoi village, perhaps also providing the water source for Seki village and Doshida village. All of these places are blessed with a bountiful supply of water, which remains bountiful, even in times of drought.

Like the lake at Inokashira, parts of Sanpoji Lake are said to be extremely deep, indeed bottomless. I understand that a serpent lives in the depths of the lake, appearing in the form of a fierce dragon.

Although the locals refer to Sanpoji Lake as a "pond", there are no embankments and the water springs up naturally. It may be small, but deserves to be called a "lake".

Nearby are the remains of an old castle. It was inhabited by one "Toshima Sae-mon", or some such name, who was murdered, and his clan brought to ruin by Ota Dokan.

The remains of the castle cover a wide, flat area, protected to the north by the deep lake, by flooded rice fields to the front and by deep ditches to the left and right. It is a good defensive position, and even today, the remains remain intact. One can see where the watchtowers would have stood, and there are mounds of earth. It is unclear what eventually became of the above-mentioned Toshima.

Notes on the translation

The main purpose of the translations presented in this paper is to give voice to writers who visited the area two centuries and more ago. It is hoped that those reading them in the future will be English-speaking visitors to, and residents in, Shakuji. Considering this, there are two main translation issues. First of all, the “voice” of those writers should come across clearly. An attempt has therefore been made to retain as much as possible the tone of original texts in order to convey their immediacy. Linked with this endeavour is the necessity to maintain the natural flow of the text, the main difficulty with this being the temptation to add explanatory information, which would add to the reader’s understanding, but also provide a distraction. In order to achieve this, extra explanations, although they appear in these notes, have been omitted from the translations. However, where an explanation was considered necessary and where it would not distract the reader, explanatory words and phrases (such as “Hikawa Myojin *shrine*”) have been used (as they have in places in the main body of the paper).

All the translations in this paper were taken from the original Edo Period texts (a version of *Edokingo Michishirube*, the third translation presented here, is also available in modern Japanese, but this was used as reference only).

The tone of *Shijinchimeiroku* is that of an official report, but one that is written from a somewhat subjective viewpoint. For example, the phrase 按に (defined in *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten* as being used in the Edo Period in the sense of “come to think of it” “seems to be” “often used to express a personal opinion” (my italics) (my translation of the explanation in modern Japanese²⁷)) is used when the author refers to the “serpent”. In an attempt to convey both the tone of the official report, and this sense of subjectivity, this has been translated as “I understand that...” Similarly, the subjective

²⁷ <https://japanknowledge.com/lib/display/?lid=2002002b536c26S0JstY>, viewed on 20th November, 2023

phrase “deserves to be called a lake” has been used to translate the phrase 小といへども湖といふべし. Slightly archaic English has been also been used (sparingly) to reflect the tone of the original and keeping in mind the time that it was written (1794). For example, the phrase 池の面きれひにて水清し, has been translated as “prettily situated and the water is pure”, it being possible that the phrase 水の面きれひにて refers to both the surface and the water, or the lake, itself. 味ひ佳 was translated “make good eating”.

Within *Shijinchimeiroku*, there are a number of phrases which, although they may not be immediately understood in detail by a reader unversed in Japanese culture, have been translated in order that they can be understood, at least in part, without disrupting the flow of the translation. One example is 蛟, translated here as “serpent”. The author of the report would probably have had a clear notion of what this word meant, but in *Eigo de Annaisuru Nihon no Dento Taishu Bunka Jiten*, a Japanese-English dictionary of Japanese traditions and popular culture, compiled with tourists in mind, 蛟 (*mizuchi*) is explained as “a river dragon, a sea serpent, a water deity, or a poisonous imaginary animal with four legs and horns. Its definition is unclear.”²⁸ The word “serpent” was chosen for its more mystical connotations than the word “snake”, the fact that this is a mystical animal being further clarified by the phrase “appearing in the form of a fierce dragon” (蛟は形粗竜に似て). Another example is the translation of 上方 which can refer to the present city of Kyoto (the capital of the time), the area around the capital, or, indeed, most of western Japan.²⁹ The phrase “in the west, around the capital” was chosen for its ambiguity regarding place, but also to suggest the author’s belief that the west of Japan (including Kyoto) was somehow superior to the east (see below).

Furukawa Koshoken

This report, and the attractive illustration which accompanies it, was the work of Furukawa Koshoken. Furukawa was a geographer, traveller and writer who was born in 1726 in present-day Okayama Prefecture. His family were medical practitioners who also made money by selling herbal medicines, professions that Furukawa studied from an early age. As a youth, he describes himself as having been “rebellious...

²⁸ M. Moriguchi (ed.), *Eigo de Annai Suru Nihon no Dento, Taishu Bunka Jiten*. Sanseido, Tokyo, 2018, p. 605

²⁹ <https://japanknowledge.com/lib/display/?kw=%E4%B8%8A%E6%96%B9&lid=200200e7c206B09Hh0w7>, viewed on 20th November, 2023

often mingling with children of the lower classes.”³⁰ However, his intelligence and enquiring mind led him to a life of study, travel and writing, gaining him the trust and patronage of the Shogunate, and a wide first-hand knowledge of Japan, not only its geography, but also its society and customs. He travelled more or less the length of Japan, although certainly not to “Manchuria and Siberia, and thence to China” as suggested in the hagiographical English preface to a book about Furukawa, published in 1911 by another well-travelled descendant who was a doctor in San Francisco.³¹ Ten years or so before his death at the age of eighty-two, Furukawa was granted samurai status by the Okada clan of Okayama. He was buried in their domain.

No doubt at least partly out of respect to his descendant, the 1911 preface describes Furukawa as an “eminent physician”.³² However, he was first and foremost a student of geography and is remembered, and was well-known during his own lifetime, not for his medical knowledge, but for the works he published about his travels. The most well-known are *Saiyu Zakki* (西遊雜記) about his travels in western Japan and *Toyu Zakki* (東遊雜記) about his travels in the north and east. The former, the work that “made his name”, was written about a tour he made of the regions west of the capital, Kyoto, including the island of Kyushu. It was illustrated with many maps and drawings, although most of these were subsequently lost in floods. The success of this work appears to have convinced the government to have Furukawa accompany officials on a tour of regions in the north and east.

Although the latter work was written by Furukawa in an official capacity, both *Saiyu Zakki* and *Toyu Zakki* clearly reflect his character and opinions (one historian describes him as “crotchety”³³). Indeed, he “has been described as an ‘opinionated’ observer whose ‘biases’ are revealed in his writings... he exercises his power of judgement freely, often criticizing other scholars and geographers whose work he found sub-standard.”³⁴ However, he also “clearly placed great value on accuracy, both in graphic description and in narrative description.”³⁵ Both of these are evident in his description of Shakujii.

Furukawa’s “biases” include a strong tendency to unfavourably compare much of

³⁰ Quoted in M Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan Space, Place, and Culture in the Tokugawa Period (1603 - 1868)*, University of California Press Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2003, p. 89

³¹ K. Kondo ed., *Furukawa Koshoken*, Hashimoto Byoin San Francisco, 1911 p. 2

³² Ibid., p. 2

³³ H. Bolitho, ‘Travelers’ Tales: Three Eighteenth-Century Travel Journals’, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 2, Dec., 1990, p. 491

³⁴ Yonemoto, op. cit., p. 82

³⁵ Ibid. p. 84

what he sees in his travels with his home province and with the Kyoto area. In the words of one historian, his “attitude to the country through which he traveled, and to its inhabitants in general, was one of patrician disdain.”³⁶ He is also described as “enlightened and agnostic”³⁷ and, while often suspicious of religion, could be scathing about anything that smacked of superstition. His attitude is perhaps well summed up in this quotation from *Saiyu Zakki* about a festival at Itsukushima (Miyajima) where food was floated on the water until birds come to eat it, their arrival being seen as a blessing from the gods: “Wherever there are many birds, when they see food they come for it. To say that this is mysterious and to spend much money on something like this is laughable and stupid. But one can respect this as an old custom. [Considering that] near the capital many old customs have vanished, this may in fact be preferable to the modern garish festivals.”³⁸ Although sceptical of the contemporary custom, here Furukawa also shows an interest in, and respect for, history and tradition, as well as an aesthetic sensibility.

Following his compilation of *Toyu Zakki*, Furukawa was commissioned by Matsudaira Sadanobu, a close advisor to the Shogun, to carry out a survey of the Musashi area which surrounded Edo. In 1794, he travelled through five districts (Ebara-gun, Tama-gun, Katsushika-gun, Adachi-gun and Toshima-gun, the location of Shakuji) documenting their natural features, shrines and temples, histories and traditions. This survey was the foundation for *Shijinchimeiroku*, a record in five volumes, which was accompanied by drawings and maps.

The record of Shakuji and Sanpoji-ike contained in *Shijinchimeiroku* and translated above is precise and succinct. Furukawa refers to the area around the capital, but makes no disparaging comparison as he often does elsewhere in records of his travels. Plutschow notes that as “a geographer, [Furukawa] was keenly interested in rivers”³⁹ and indeed, he refers to the importance of the area as a water source, and uses his geographical knowledge to speculate on the water course. While he mentions the legend of the serpent in the depths of the lake, he does so uncritically. For all the criticism of Furukawa as being “biased” and “disdainful”, here he writes as an experienced and rational observer, leaving us with a clear and accurate picture of the area as it was two hundred and thirty years ago.

³⁶ Bolitho, op. cit., p. 491

³⁷ H. Plutschow, *A Reader in Edo Period Travel*. Global Oriental Ltd., Folkestone, 2006 pp. 317-318

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 90 - 91

³⁹ Ibid., p. 103

A translation of *Yurekizakki* (遊歴雜記)⁴⁰ (Shakujii and Sanpoji-ike in the 1810s or 1820s)⁴¹

Following a brief description of the Shakujii area, the number of houses and its distance from Edo, together with a more detailed description on Sanpoji temple, the author goes on to write...

We left the temple by a gate to the north of the priest's living quarters, and turned left. From there, about two hundred yards or so in a north-westerly direction, lies the lake of Benzaiten, commonly known as Sanpoji Lake. There were no houses here, and the path was a lonely one, but to the right I could see the ancient Hikawa Myojin shrine with its old crimson fence.

A little farther, and we reached the lake, two or three hundred yards down a north-facing slope, the banks to the right and left of which were thickly wooded with a mixture of pine, cedar, fir and oak. The lake is about three to four hundred yards from east to west and perhaps a little more than two hundred yards from north to south.

The water is pure, with lotus growing in the shallows, and the yellow flowers of late-blooming water lilies and other floating plants beautifully reflected on the surface. The lake is surrounded by low hills to the south, west and north, with water flowing out from the east side only. This goes on to provide the water supply for some fifty-eight villages downstream before flowing into the Arakawa River in Toshima, and, I imagine, eventually joining the Sumida River at Senju.

In the centre of the lake is an island, of about sixty square feet, reached by an arched bridge. On this island is the shrine to Benzaiten, a square building with four pillars on each side, said to have been rebuilt long ago by carpenters from Hida. The overall impression is one of a venerable elegance. The statue of Benzaiten inside the shrine was apparently made by Kukai himself, and the prayer tablets and shrine bell seemed to be of great age.

I asked the hermit who lives there if he would allow us to come inside for a while, to which he readily agreed.

⁴⁰ The translation is taken from an online version of the original held at the National Diet Library, Tokyo (<https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/1912998/1/17>, <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/1912998/1/18>)

⁴¹ Although it is unclear as to when exactly this visit was made, it is likely to have been before 1827 when, according to an article in *Nerima Kyodoshi Kenkyukai Kaiho*, the shrine was rebuilt. (M. Egawa, 'Shakujii Itsukujima Jinja no Akogare', *Nerima Kyodoshi Kenkyukai Kaiho* No. 52, 28th March 1964, p. 21)

We settled down comfortably in his quarters. I took out my little folding stove, boiled some water that I scooped up from the lake, and offered the hermit a fresh cup of tea and some cakes. I also sipped my tea and, although the water was clear, found that it had a slight smell, the lake water being still rather than flowing. The hermit told us that he always used water from the lake, but of course for tea, water should be from a flowing river, the Ayase, the Koiwata, the Sumida, or even the water at Hikawa, behind the staging post at Itabashi.

And so we sat, Choha and I, taking out our bento and enjoying our lunch, sipping our tea and admiring the lovely scenery in a most elegant manner.

Later, the hermit took Choha to look for fungi. They went back up the hill and farther into the woods, returning after a while with fifty or sixty *shimeji* and *sasago* mushrooms. The hermit told us that *hatsutake*, *enoki*, *shimeji* and so on are all common here but that the locals get up early to come and pick them, so there aren't many left later in the day.

It was a lonely spot for the hermit; his nearest neighbours were a long way away. But I ventured to say, how fortunate he was to live in such a pretty place! It may certainly be out of the way, but, far from the commotions of everyday life, deaf to the good and evil of the world, away from the vilifications of others, able always to take his rest, gazing out at the lovely scenery of the lake and the hills... Why, this must truly be the recipe for a long and happy life!

It might well be beautiful, the hermit replied, but here in the shadow of the hill, it's freezing in winter. The summers are cool enough but there are clouds of mosquitos. It's inconvenient, and nigh on impossible to get any business in Edo done in a day.

On top of that, he went on, the place is full of wily foxes and badgers. When I first came here, he said, they'd come knocking on the door every night, and throwing stones ... I couldn't get a wink if sleep! Even now they'll come in the middle of the night and dance wildly about on this bridge. And they roar and bark right outside my sleeping quarters, just to annoy me.

Still, he added, now I've got used to living here, they are company. It's quite lonely on the nights when they don't come.

I asked the hermit about some small covered boats and he told me that when pilgrims came from Edo to worship at the Benzaiten Shrine they'd always row out on the boats to enjoy the scenery. He added that at those times there would be festive dancing and that I should come and see it.

“As evening approached”, the author writes, “we weren’t able to lodge at Sanpoji temple ...” and he goes on to describe the way back to Edo, complaining that there are no good places to rest and take refreshment on the way back. And so they leave, looking at the remains of Shakujii Castle before they go, taking some *sasago* mushrooms with them, and promising to come and see the festival at the shrine.

Notes on the translation

The text is notable for its relatively relaxed style, and its description of the author’s evident enjoyment, both in the trip he has made to Shakujii and in his encounter with the hermit on the island. To convey the directness and humour of the latter, the translation has come close in style to direct speech, although quotation marks have not been used in deference to the style of the original, where, in common with all Edo Period texts, the grammar is more fluid than that used in modern Japanese. Slightly archaic forms such as “I ventured to ask” have been used, together with “yards” and “feet”, chosen to translate 町 and 間.

Explanatory expressions have only been added where it was considered that they do not interrupt the flow of the text (*sasago* “mushrooms”). Explanations of the goddess Benzaiten, the saintly Kukai (ninth century founder of the Shingon Sect of Buddhism) and Hida (an area known for its forests and carpenters) have thus been omitted. It is assumed that at least the significance of these would be understood from the context in which they appear. Neither was an explanation given for the appearance of stone-throwing and dancing foxes and badgers, somewhat startling to the modern reader. The *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten* tells us that in pre-modern Japan, the phrase 狐狸 (literally “foxes and badgers” (or, in place of badgers, “raccoon dogs”) was used to mean “foxes and badgers; creatures, it was believed, that bewitched human beings” and, less often, “people who trick others slyly do evil things” (my translation).⁴² Although, to the modern reader, the latter, more prosaic, translation may sound likely, it was rejected on the grounds that a belief in the supernatural nature of these animals was common in the Edo Period and that the hermit goes on specifically to say that they “bark” 吠. Local historians are unanimous in agreeing that the phrase refers to animals and not people.

⁴² <https://japanknowledge.com/lib/display/?lid=200201a55cdbsqfhkDed>, viewed on 23rd November, 2023

Jippoan Keijun

Jippoan's *Yurekizakki* is a sprawling work; a huge number of essays making up fifteen books, which in turn are collected into five volumes. They were written between 1812 and 1829 and describe the author's journeys, sometimes alone, sometimes with a companion (as in the passage translated above) not only in and around Edo, but also to other parts of the Kanto and Tokai regions. In a relaxed style (pre-war historians criticised him for being "somewhat unlearned"⁴³) the books are an invaluable source of information about daily life in the Edo period, not only about the places that Jippoan visited, but also about local customs, festivals, and traditions, including records of conversations he had as he travelled. Described as "an elderly priest who liked his tea", just as he did on his visit to Sanpoji-ike, he liked to "carry something he called a 'little folding stove' together with things for making tea and would make day-trips into the countryside. There he would sit in the shade and drink tea, stopping local people who worked on the land and listening to their stories." (my translation)⁴⁴

"Elderly" by the time that he wrote *Yurekizakki* (he was 51 when it was begun and 68 by the time he wrote the last essays), Jippoan Keijun was born to the Tsuda family (said to be direct descendants of the famous warlord Oda Nobunaga) in Edo, in 1762.⁴⁵ At the age of twenty, Jippoan became head of Kakunenji temple in Edo. He became learned in the tea ceremony and known as a poet. At the age of 51 he retired as temple head, passing the role on to his son, devoting himself to a quiet life of tea, wandering and writing.

As mentioned above, the period in which Jippoan lived was one of peace and relative prosperity and he was one of many Edo residents who made use of their free time to travel in the city and its environs. Journeys, almost always made on foot, were leisurely but also with a purpose, and travellers would try and take in two or three sights in one day. The sights that people travelled to see included famous buildings (temples and shrines), picturesque views, gardens and, according to the season, trees and flowers. When published, *Yurekizakki* provided an abundance of useful information for the Edo period tourist and a visitor to Shakuji might well have used it to find pointers on how to pass their time there. A popular activity was to collect food

⁴³ T. Oshima, *Jippoan no Yureki to Minzoku*. Miyaishoten, Tokyo, 2013 p. 158

⁴⁴ K. Yanagita, *Hitome Kozo Sonota*. Kadokawa, Tokyo, 1971 p. 281

⁴⁵ As the records that Jippoan himself left are unclear about the date of his birth, this date remains contested although it is usually accepted as correct (Oshima, p. 169)

(shellfish on the shoreline, trout in rivers, mushrooms in the hills). Eating and drinking was also an important part of these journeys, both as picnics (for example under the cherry blossoms) and in one of the restaurants that sprang up near many popular destinations to save people the trouble of making and carrying heavy bento.

Among the many essays connected with travel that were written partly in reaction to its increasing popularity, Jippoan's writing is particularly engaging. His description of Sanpoji-ike and its surroundings is detailed and full of colour. Meanwhile, his warm and relaxed manner comes across very clearly in his conversation with the hermit, as does the hermit's grumbling. It's clear that he takes great pleasure in simply relaxing and enjoying his surroundings. He also writes with an attractive and self-deprecating sense of humour: "I'm not a drinker, and I've lost my teeth, so fine food's no good to me. All I can do is take my old bag of tea things and go for a walk"⁴⁶ he writes elsewhere. In doing so, he has left an authentic and engaging record of Shakujii.

A translation of *Edokingo Michishirube* (江戸近郊道しるべ)⁴⁷ (Shakujii and Sanpoji in 1822)

The author begins his essay, *Shakujii no Michikusa*, which forms part of *Edokingo Michishirube*, with a comment on the weather. Early on the day that he sets out for his "wander to Shakujii", he says that it was cloudy and "I was afraid that it might rain", but it soon cleared. It was around the 11th September, 1822.

After details of how he reached Shakujii from his home in Edo, including a stop for something to eat and drink, he describes arriving at the three temples of Jojoji, Dojoji and Sanpoji. The impressive main gate to Sanpoji is closed and "no one is permitted to use it"⁴⁸ so he enters the temple by the public gate a little farther along. He looks around the temple, which is deserted, then ...

I cut across in front of the main hall heading west and left the temple grounds. Along a path through fields, I came to the Hikawa Jinja shrine. Continuing farther west by the main shrine gate there is another little shrine among the trees on the left of the path. It is dedicated to the spirit of Sugawara Michizane.

⁴⁶ <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/pid/1912982/1/18>

⁴⁷ K. Murao, (H. Asakura ed.), *Edo Kingo Michishirube*, Heibonsha, Tokyo, 1985 pp. 52-59

⁴⁸ According to a history of the temple published in 1960, the Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu made two visits, in 1625 and 1644, while out hunting. The gate having been passed through by the Shogun himself, it was then kept closed and ordinary people were forbidden to use it until the end of the Edo Period. The gate was rebuilt in 1827 (and restored, at least once, in 1945). (Kichoan, Sanpoji, *Sanpoji Shi*, Kichoan Sanpoji, Tokyo, 1960, p. 24)

A little farther, to the north, there is a slope downwards and at the bottom I found myself in front of a shrine dedicated to Benzaiten. Beyond the shrine there is a lake, where reeds grow and where countless waterfowl were swimming here and there on the water. The lake is about 165 yards across. Apart from the eastern side, the lake is surrounded by low hills and I could see one hill, north-north west, on which nothing grew but red pine trees. The lake is similar in shape to the lake at Inokashira. Even in drought, it never dries up, being continually fed by a spring which wells up from the bottom. A quiet shrine faces in an east-south-easterly direction, an appropriate place for the goddess.

A man, Toshima Gonnokami, once lived on the hill behind Sanpoji temple, the hill being named after his castle, the remains of which can still be seen. I was told that there used to be a shrine dedicated to Toshima on top of the hill, but that it no longer was there (this was told to me by some local children, in exchange for a few coins).

I went to see for myself, and found the castle trench. I climbed up out of it, but my way became blocked, the path being overgrown with pine saplings, so I climbed down again. Beyond the trench, the stream running from the lake would have given protection to the castle. To the west, the hills mark the end of the trench, while, on the gently sloping land to the east, there are now one or two dwellings among the fields.

At this point, the author returns in the direction of Sanpoji temple, ruminating on the history of the castle, before describing his journey home.

Notes on the translation

Edokingo Michishirube is contemporaneous with *Yureki Zakki* and was also written as a personal account. However, the tone is more concise and less informal than the latter, and in the translation, sentences have been kept short. Once again imperial measurements been used. The writer's encounter with the locals and the small monetary transaction that occurred for information 銭とらせて聞所なり has been translated "in exchange for a few coins", reflecting something of the likely relationship between the children and the man from the big city.

To maintain the flow of the text, explanations such as that for Sugawara Michizane (enshrined as the god of learning) were omitted. "A quiet shrine faces in an east-south-easterly direction, an appropriate place for the goddess indeed" was finally

chosen as the translation of 社は巳の方に向て鎮もります、げにこの神に相応すといふべし. It is unclear whether the place or the direction (or both) are considered to be “appropriate” for the goddess (Benzaiten, unnamed, but in fact referred to in the original as “this goddess”). A more literal translation, “a quiet shrine faces in an east-south-easterly direction, the direction of the snake, very appropriately for the goddess enshrined there” was rejected, partly to avoid adding information that might puzzle a contemporary reader but mainly for lack of evidence that, although Benzaiten is associated with the snake, this is what was meant.

Omura Karyo and *Edokingo Michishirube*

Although not quite as vast as *Yurekizakki*, the collection of travel essays now known as *Edokingo Michishirube* contains descriptions of at least 41 one-day walks from central Edo.⁴⁹ Unlike *Yurekizakki* they remained unpublished during the Edo period and were only collected together to be published later. The author, Omura Karyo was born in 1760 to a family whose inherited role was to oversee the private quarters of the residence of the Shimizu-Tokogawa clan, one of the three *Gosankyo* branches of the ruling Tokugawa family. He died in his eighties in 1841.

A cultured samurai, Omura’s professional position was one of considerable responsibility, which probably left him relatively little time for the travel until his late forties or early fifties. The first essay in the *Edokingo Michishirube* collection (as described by Suzuki) dates from when he was 48; the last from when he was 75. In their *Study on Urban & Suburban Outing Sphere and Supporting System for Outing in Greater Edo*,⁵⁰ Okano, Watanabe and Hanyu describe the day-long journeys that Edo people undertook for pleasure as falling into two categories: “*mokuteki-kata*” journeys with a purpose and “*burabura kata*” wanderings with no particular purpose in mind. Most of Omura’s journeys fall into the former category. Visits to temples and shrines were most often his main purpose in setting out, but he also liked to visit (and see views of) mountains as well as to view flowers and, one visit to Fujiinari shrine (in present-day Shinjuku ward) was made in September 1824 when he was 65, to “listen to the in-

⁴⁹ These are compiled into a useful table by Suzuki Shosei in his essay ‘Omura Karyo “Edokingo Michishirube” ni Miru Kodo to Shinsei’ *Meiji Daigaku Bungaku Gogengaku Kenkyu*, vol. 2, Jan., 2002, pp 160-147. In the same essay, he discusses how these were distinguished from other writings by the same author, and how they were compiled into *Edokingo Michishirube*. The translation into modern Japanese includes 32 separate essays (K. Omura (T. Abe trans.), *Edokingo Michishirube Gendaiyaku*, Kodansha, Tokyo, 2013)

⁵⁰ Y Okano et.al., ‘Edoshichu oyobi Kinko Koraku Keniki to Sore wo Sasaeta Shikumi ni Kansuru Kenkyu’. *Nihon Toshikeikaku Gakujitsu Kenkyu Ronbunshu*, vol. 33, 2000, p. 736

sects.”⁵¹

Like Jippoan, Omura describes encounters with local people. On his way to Shakuji, he stops at a place selling tofu, where the elderly woman who owns it takes a great interest in his water cup, made from a coconut shell, and insists that she gives him some saké to drink out of it, which he does (“I’m not a great drinker but thought it might help me relieve my fatigue”) to the delight of the woman and her young relatives how have gathered to watch.⁵² However, his tone seems somehow less relaxed than Jippoan, perhaps reflecting his martial background. At Sanpoji-ike there is no leisurely tea drinking or good-humoured chat with the hermit but instead he records tipping a local child in return for information, before a vivid description of his 63-year-old self manfully clambering over the castle ruins while (like Furukawa did in his official report) making reference to its defensible position. A different, but again evocative, description of the area.

Conclusion

Largely destroyed by earthquake (in 1923) and then by bombing in the Second World War, relatively little remains of the old city of Edo, which remains buried under the great concrete metropolis which is modern Tokyo. Indeed, the attraction of Tokyo for many overseas visitors is its stimulating, modern, urban environment. There are ample opportunities to enjoy traditional arts (such as bunraku and kabuki) and buy examples of traditional crafts (cut glass, ceramics and knives, etc.) and there are many excellent museums, such as the Edo-Tokyo Museum, providing information on the city that preceded Tokyo. However, the city of Edo and the long period of history to which the city gave its name, remain something of a mystery to many overseas visitors. Some buildings remain, but areas such as Sanpoji-ike, still rich in nature and, which we know from contemporary accounts, would be recognisable today to any visitor from the Edo Period, are few. From this point of view, Sanpoji-ike provides an exceptional opportunity for modern visitors to experience an area seemingly unchanged since the Edo Period, as well as a break from the city centre, just as people did two hundred years ago (although the trip today is a convenient ten minutes by train rather than a day’s walking). Happily, the number of people taking this opportunity is increasing.

⁵¹ Suzuki op. cit., p. 158

⁵² Murao op. cit., p. 53

The translations presented in this paper, made with these English-speaking visitors and residents in mind, are important for several reasons. Unlike the information often available for tourists in Europe and North America, it is rare to find direct, contemporary accounts in Japan from the period before the country opened up to the west, even though the Edo Period ended only just over one hundred and fifty years ago. This is partly due to how different the language used then was – a barrier even to contemporary native Japanese speakers. The accounts presented here give an insight into a very different world. “I understand that a serpent lives in the depths of the lake, appearing in the form of a fierce dragon” writes the generally rationalist geographer, in a report for the government. However, they also speak directly to people’s experience today. “It might well be beautiful, the hermit replied, but here in the shadow of the hill, it’s freezing in winter. The summers are cool enough but there are clouds of mosquitos.” They also give us a direct insight into the feelings and actions of residents of, and visitors to, the area more than a century ago. “... now I’ve got used to living here they [the foxes and badgers] are company. It’s quite lonely on the nights when they don’t come.” Says the hermit, mournfully. Perhaps also, in this time of great change, there is comfort in knowing that, even in Tokyo, there are characters we can recognise and places which remain unchanging, as peaceful and as beautiful as they were before the modern world intruded.

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(本学教授)