



Literary business trip in the late Edo period: Jippensha Ikku and the Shinano district as documented by Takami Jinzaemon's diary

Talamo Mario

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STUDI E SAGGI

– 161 –

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(DE)CONSTRUCTING BORDERS:
JAPANESE CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE AND
TRANSLATION IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

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LITERARY BUSINESS TRIP IN THE LATE EDO PERIOD:
JIPPENSHA IKKU AND THE SHINANO DISTRICT AS
DOCUMENTED BY TAKAMI JINZAEMON'S DIARY

Mario Talamo
University of Catania

Abstract

In her short essay included in a miscellaneous dedicated to travels, the writer Hayashi Mariko argues that individuals leave their houses in order to amuse themselves, to relax from stress, and to discover hitherto unknown places and cultures. An important role in Jippensha Ikku's travels was surely played by the aforementioned motivations but, as I argue, the main reason why the author was induced to travel lies in his constant search for inspiration. By roaming the most remote districts of Japan, he found interesting and inventive ways to pay back the favors received by friends and acquaintances.

Keywords

Jippensha Ikku, travels, Shinano, Advertisement, Hizakurige series, Acquaintances

要旨

十返舎一九を旅に誘う動機として重要な役割を果たすのが未知の異文化との対話であった。それは文学作品の商品化と強い関わりがあった。各地の名所を紹介することにより、読者層の関心と支持を獲得できるからであった。

本稿は、松本の版元高美甚左衛門への訪問を中心にして、十返舎一九の旅に対する態度を明らかにすることを目的としている。

キーワード

十返舎一九、旅、信濃、広告、『膝栗毛』シリーズ、知人

玉くしげふたつにわかる国境
所かはればしなの坂より

Shinanosaka, border between two countries,
Here onward, different the places and different the
goods.

(*Hizakurige*, I, 84)¹

¹ The entire apparatus of quotations from the *Tōkaidōchū hizakurige* is from Nakamura 1976.

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1. Introduction

An appreciable amount of Japanese pre-modern literature is devoted to travels. From the Kamakura period (1192–1333) onwards, and even earlier, if we consider Ariwara no Narihira's journey from Kyoto to the eastern provinces, monks and occasional travelers, both men and women, recorded the main places along the route, including food and other attractions. By surveying the entire corpus we can clearly see the evolution and representation of social schemes related to travel, from a period when moving from a place to another was still dangerous, even risking death, to a new historical phase when the countrywide road network was provided, and old routes were connected to develop into what we nowadays call Gokaidō, the five main roads of the country, that, from Edo, connected the main financial and cultural centers of Japan, such as Kyoto, Nikkō, and the like.² It was during the Edo period (1603–1867) that travel became a commodity and a pleasure affordable for everyone, and literary productions reflected how funny and entertaining this development could be. These productions were no longer tied to old traditions, inspired by the famous places of poetry (*utamakura*), but, instead, they granted the author's creativity greater freedom of expression, resulting in immense and original literary production, whose nature was primarily secular.³

During the peace imposed by the Tokugawa regime, travel outside the country was prohibited; yet both travel and narratives of travel flourished domestically.⁴ It was during this period that Jippensha Ikku (1765–1831) released his very successful series of travels accounts, such as the *Tōkaidōchū hizakurige* (1802–09),⁵ the *Enoshima miyage* (Souvenir from Enoshima, 1809–10), and the several diaries and fictional travel accounts issued in the immediate aftermath

² The five main roads connecting the military capital with the rest of the civilized country were respectively: the Tōkaidō, the Nakasendō, the Nikkōdōchū, the Ōshūdōchū and the Kōshūdōchū. This system of five central highways served the need to bring together many regions, and to foster their interactions.

³ Yasumi Roan completed in the seventh year of Bunka (1810) a work largely devoted to travel do's and don'ts titled *Ryokō yōjinshū* (Precautions for Travelers), whose main purpose was to provide those who traveled with extensive advices.

⁴ The long years of peace, together with improved economic conditions, the development of an integrated transport network that increased commoners' needs, the spread of fraternity groups (*kō*), and the practice of alms-giving, according to Constantine Vaporis (1989), all played a part in making travel possible for a wider specter of populace.

⁵ The work has been brilliantly translated into English by Thomas Satchell under the title of *Shank's mare* (1960).

of the great fortune arrived at by the *Hizakurige*, which dealt with the adventures of two idiots from Edo, Yaji and Kita. This whole literary tradition was termed *hizakurigemono* after the first successful sample.

Ikku made an extensive use of highways connecting the center to the rest of the country to inform his travel accounts. For this, he travelled extensively throughout Japan, leaving Edo at least once a year in order to visit villages, to report travel time for distances, to judge the quality of the roads and inns, and to describe – often in relation with his plots – towns and locations, with the intention of weaving those data into the adventures of his two main characters. His travel records were then widely read by people willing to make the most of the flourishing printing industry and to follow the two protagonists' ribaldries. It was in this time that many Japanese wanted to know more about their country and to better understand it, and this quest was helped by the great popularity of his masterpiece. The pre-modern readers, namely those who enjoyed reading Ikku's works, and to whom the author referred, had a strong desire for travel, as they strove against being confined to their own localities.

A good part of the almost three-hundred works of Ikku is devoted to travel, and deals with the contrast between the *chihō*, the countryside, and the *chūō*, the center, referring to the city of Edo, and this contrast between Edo and the rest of the country, including Kyōto and Ōsaka, became increasingly evident during this period (Kishi 1963, 124). From the An'ei period (1772–81) onward, but particularly during Bunka and Bunsei (1804–30) periods, we notice how the *gesaku* (playful writings) tended to be countryside-oriented. Nakayama (1979) argued that this tendency originated in the publication of the *Inaka shibai* (The countryside theater) issued by Manzōtei (1756?–1810?) in the seventh year of Tenmei (1787). Farmers' and peasants' attitudes, slangs, and mispronunciations of the common language were often considered hilarious, and this contributed greatly to the widespread reading of these publications.⁶ In the immediate

⁶ There is a noteworthy quantity of Japanese pre-modern literature which dwells on an alleged contraposition between an individual, or a locus, considered the paradigm of normality – such as the inhabitants of the city, or the *tsūjin*, likewise known as the well-traveled man of the world, whose deep knowledge of brothels enabled him to cope with every situation – and a different entity, whose lack of conformity engendered something considered ironic. Behind this irony reflection was hidden. Shikitei Sanba (1776–1822)'s *Ukiyoburo* (The bathhouse of the floating world, 1810–20) and *Ukiyodoko* (The barbershop of the floating world, 1811–23) brought the strangers to the bathhouse and barber shop and there they interacted, and, by way of their interaction, they provoked laughter in the readers. They likewise allowed strangers to meet and to mingle. Contrary to Sanba, who allowed strangers to come to the cities, Jippensha Ikku sent his protagonists wandering in the countryside in his *Tōkaidōchū*

aftermath of the unpredictable and yet surprising popularity earned with the *Hizakurige*, the author, sometimes of his own accord, sometimes forced by the publisher aiming to profit from the success enjoyed by this type of production, edited works on travels, both long and short. Furthermore, by composing a sequel about the famous duo's travels to Miyajima, Kinpira, across the Nakasendō road, to Kusatsu and finally back to Edo, which kept him busy for more than twenty years, Ikku found new ways to cash in on the popularity of the two-some. At which point, he decided to focus on narrations of short trips, such as the *Roku amida mairi* (A comic account of the pilgrimage to the six Amida, 1811–13), about the six ritual pilgrimages to the Buddha Amida, very popular at the time, or his *Enoshima miyage*, a brief and entertaining description of the short trip of two rascals – no longer known as Yaji and Kita, but as Dontarō and Nesuke – to celebrate the ongoing exhibit of sacred images of the goddess Benzaiten in Enoshima, during the sixth year of Bunka (1809).

Jippensha Ikku's travel production can be divided into two subsections: the works dealing mainly with a hilarious enterprise, with two protagonists who closely resembled Yaji and Kita, with a plot constituted by short stories rearranged and adapted into a new format, written for the consumption of others in the third person, and, secondarily, more serious and introspective accounts. In this case the author happened to be the one and only protagonist, a cultured traveler who enjoyed the view and tended to place great emphasis on the literary dimension of his enterprise, such as his numerous diaries – *Ikku no kikō* (Ikku's travel account, 1815), *Kokkei tabigarasu* (The hilarious vagabond), but to mention a few – deciding to write his diary in the first person singular in imitation of a chronicle-writing poet.⁷

A vrai dire, no matter how prolific the author could be, works about travels were the only part of his oeuvre which gained a widespread reputation, proving the general appreciation by the readership of the perfect mix of entertainment and information. The capacity of this literary sub-genre to sell and to attract a multilayered and varied audience was the principal reason why it invaded the

hizakurige, a representative example of this more imaginative narrative. As Inouye (2007) argues, the development of a modern consciousness in Japan happened by way of challenging the mores of location, and travels had a great influence on this. Despite what many scholars think, Japan's modernity was not imported from western countries, in the immediate aftermath of Commodore Perry's arrival, as it was first felt during the Edo period, when the process was accelerated by urbanization and travels.

⁷ Much Edo-period travel writing is squarely self-centered; the individual, more than a pre-ordained rhetorical tradition, assumes center stage, with realistic observation and individualism that seem to go together.

late Edo publishing world. As the Tōkaidō road – which had a leveling effect, as it put the wealthy and the poor together on the same horse, and strangers in the same bed (Inouye 2007, 191) – the production inspired by this sort of journey had a great grip on society, and readers from whatever class enjoyed its reading, resulting in its great popularity. Economy and wealth were essential for the new professional author, born during the last part of the Edo period, in the aftermath of Kansei reform (1787–93), when the highest ambition of every literate became to publish and to make a living with his earnings. Therefore, no matter how abused a topic or a specific production could be, as long as it was popular, and if it sold well, publishers eagerly welcomed its publication.

According to Hayashi (2002, 46–47), we leave our houses to be able to relax and to get in touch with hitherto unknown culture and places; to Jippensha Ikku, however, undertaking a journey was not simply a delightful activity, it represented a suitable source of inspiration and a way of documentation. Ikku enjoyed observing people in their usual attitudes along the road, allowing their daily life, talks and activities to inspire him like every respectable travel writer. A rather large part of the *entr'actes* described in his masterpiece grew from his thorough and continual observation of the surrounding environment. However, travels had many peculiarities and offered the individual who decided to embark in this sort of activities a wide range of opportunities, ranging from the composition of poetries to, for example, the observation of flowers in full blossom or a crescent moon. Ikku, with his peculiar sense of business, tended to travel across Japan both for his pleasure and for his creative needs, while on the lookout for episodes that might interest his readers. During his life, he regularly left the city of Edo to undertake journeys which could last from one to several months, in order to become acquainted with regions and areas that he intended to describe, or in which he might set new episodes of his productions. Many of these travels were also financed by the publishers and, quite often, by accepting invitations from friends and long time admirers, he mixed business with pleasure. In the long list of journeys registered by Katō (1996), we see in particular how Ikku adapted travels to his means of documentation: in Bunka period, when he struggled with the publication of the *Hizakurige*, he moved to Ise in the second year of Bunka (1805) and then to the Kansai region during the following eighth year (1811), when he was forty-seven, in order to glean information on the Kisokaidō.⁸ Three years later, during the eleventh year of

⁸ The author intended to visit the Kamigata in order to record and to gather information on the region, that he knew only in part, due to his seven years in Ōsaka. As he recorded in the introduction of the seventh volume of the *Hizakurige*, “although I had lived in Kansai for many years, I spent my time mostly in Ōsaka and headed only

Bunka (1814), he left for the second time heading to the abovementioned highway, and then visited Matsumoto. We have many letters and correspondences exchanged between the author and his acquaintances, recording invitations to which the busy Ikku not always replied, it being impossible to accept all his friends' calls, due to publishing engagements that could not be postponed, in the need to serially produce more than thirty works per year. The list of his travels could be longer, but, this time, I intend to focus on the journey to Matsumoto, in order to look at this city as a case study, with the aim of showing in details the cultural interactions that often arose between host and guest, particularly when the latter was an eminent man of letters, and the former was an amateur composer eager to obtain literary visibility.

2. *Ikku's travels to Matsumoto and the Shinano district*

Throughout his prolific output, the author went regularly back and forth along the Tōkaidō road: “during these years many times I enjoyed travelling along the Tōkaidō” (*Hizakurige*, III, introduction), as he confirmed in his introduction to the third volume of the *Hizakurige*. The *kyōka* from which the epigraph at the opening of this present article was taken comes from the first volume and represents one of the several poetic spaces related to travel. However, whereas his trips along the coast were quite frequent, Ikku visited Shinano only four times: the first during the aforementioned eighth year of Bunka (1811), then subsequently in the eleventh year of the same period (1814), when he spent a good month visiting the local publisher Takami Jinzaemon, to collect information and details concerning the region and its dialects, as the fifth volume of the *Zoku hizakurige* (Sequel of the *Hizakurige*, 1810–21) – whose narrative was framed by a journey to Shinano – received some negative reviews, due to the author's lack of familiarity with local traditions and languages. His third travel, dated from the first year of Bunsei (1818), shortly before the publication of the first installment of the *Kokkei tabigarasu*, drew on the four months spent at Suzuki Bokushi's house; the fourth and last journey occurred the following year, during the preparation for the second volume of the abovementioned travelogue.

Shinano corresponded approximately to the prefecture of Nagano and, at that time, it was a quite popular and attracting place where, alongside amazing

sporadically to Kyōto”. Ikku had to cancel the trip to Kamigata due to a temporary blindness that prevented him from visiting the region. This may be the main reason why the author often recurred to travel guides in the last four volumes of the work, in particular, from the pilgrimage to Ise to the city of Ōsaka.

vistas, religious benefits from merciful deities (Zenkōji) and echoes of classic poetry, the availability of services and amenities was very much appreciated.⁹ Commoners nonetheless visited the region attracted by its gastronomic specialties and traditional lifestyle which differed considerably from those in the city of Edo. Ikku's travels to the region, besides having a strong marketing impact, as we will see, had also a strong cultural element, as he documented details of daily life and languages. There were two roads connecting the region to the military capital: Nakasendō, which ran parallel to the Tōkaidō, further inland toward the mountains, and Kōshūkaidō, with a constantly increasing number of commuters moving along them.

When Ikku moved toward Shinano found a place not lacking in any amenities, as the commodification of culture and the economy of consumerism had transformed it into a region easy to live in, in spite of the common feelings toward mountain regions. Conversely, only fifty years before, when other illustrious men of letters visited the district, as we will see with Takebe Ryōtai's journey, it was not so hospitable. Resulting from the beneficial outcomes that Kyōhō Reform (1716–45) had on the countryside, Matsumoto and the surrounding towns increased their population and moved toward a rapid industrialization process. However, it was only in the aftermath of the second important reform of the Edo period, held during the Kansei era (1789–1801), that the overall productive sectors of the region developed, resulting in a general raise of the living standards, economic growth, and cultural flourishing. The resultant consumerism turned many traditional *meisho*, or famous sites, into tourist attractions in which poetic reverberations were enhanced by the availability of material amenities and attractions for all tastes.¹⁰

⁹ According to Shinno (1993, 160), to the people of the eastern part of the country, Zenkōji was probably a sacred location as important as Ise. It had a pedigree dating to the ancient period and occupied a special place in the religious history of the eastern half of the country. Some scholars have argued for a link between Zenkōji and Shinran (1173–1262), when he was exiled to the east.

¹⁰ Further information concerning the *meisho* is available in the large bibliography by Plutschow and Elisonas, according to whom, a place, to be defined as famous, needed “political prominence, ritual status, or historical, poetical and prurient associations” (Elisonas 1994, 260). Hence, for a location to be recognized as a *meisho*, geographical assets had to be complemented and validated by a layer of additional symbolic attributes; a literary, historical, or religious aura was essential to make the transition from “pretty place” to “famous site” (Nenzi 2004, 289); travelers around Shinano could worship at the Zenkōji and enjoy the natural scenery in many places. However, in comparison with the far more visited and famous Sagami, along the coast, with its great number of *meisho*, such as Kamakura, Enoshima, but to mention a few, Shinano

3. *Takami Jinzaemon's diary*

The author's journeys to Shinano were recorded in diaries or short accounts by a local community of literati who jotted down notes illustrating the reputation Ikku enjoyed. The aforementioned Takami Jinzaemon owned a book shop in Matsumoto; in his diary he welcomes the author's arrival in the city in the eleventh year of Bunka (1814):

文化十一甲戌歳七月晦日、江戸より十返舎一九子并門弟花垣兩人遊歴に尋ね来る。尤も、著述の膝くり毛、近々出版江戸帰路二及び、木曾路迄、夫より此松本へかかり善光寺通りの趣き出版之もやうなれ共、土地の風俗并言葉なまり等しれかね、遊歴傍来る。

The last day of the seventh month of the eleventh year of Bunka, Jippensha Ikku visited our city accompanied by his disciple Hanagaki¹¹. His masterpiece, the *Hizakurige*, which will be soon issued, is along the road that would bring its twosome of protagonists back to Edo, more precisely at the height of the Kiso road. Subsequently, he is planning to take them to Matsumoto, and then to describe the entertaining journey to the Zenkōji. However, he came to make the most of his time and, besides traveling, he intends likewise to learn the mores and the dialects of the region. (Suzuki 2001, 7–8)¹²

The city of Matsumoto, despite its less favorable position, in the inner mountains of Japan, was a lively cultural place; it had many circles devoted to *haikai* poetry and to prose, and its relative nearness to the new cultural center enabled this region to receive from Edo, the pinnacle of Japanese civilization, an extensive range of new trends and popular productions. Takami Jinzaemon did not descend from a dynasty of publishers; he was the first in his family to set up an activity related to publishing. He was born in the fourth year of Tenmei era (1784) and died exactly eighty years later, in the first year of Genji (1864)¹³ and, before choosing the name under which we know him, he inaugurated his

could be considered as a newly developing region where the road to consumerism was yet to be fully marked.

¹¹ Hanagaki, likewise known for Tanbaya, was a carver from Bakurochō who specialized in *ukiyo-e* paintings.

¹² The entire collection of excerpts from Takami Jinzaemon's diary comes from Suzuki (2001). If the source is the same, from now onward, I will not specify its provenience, mentioning between brackets only the page number.

¹³ Takami Jinzaemon's old publishing house is still operating and at full production after more than two-hundred years, and, most importantly, it is the house that released Suzuki's work.

publishing activity under the pseudonym of Shimaya Yoichi. In a *zuihitsu* titled *Toshi no otamaki* (The New Year Columbine), issued by his house during the twelfth year of Bunka (1815), he recorded the milieu of the city of Matsumoto at the end of Kansei period, when he set up his book shop. We read:

おのれなりはひに書肆の事の起りハ、父母の家に有し総角の頃より、絵草紙、あるハ物語り軍書様すべて物の本を好みてみる事一壁なりき。

I became a publisher by occupation as, since I was a child, and my hairs still combed in the child fashion, I was fond of reading every sort of books, stories, tales of war and picture books. (186)

此松本二て其頃迄ハ文屋という店なく、皆片店二而わづかに売の已。大部の本類ハ都而三都へ見物に行人、あるハ偶タマタマ、飛脚等にたくして買うる事なり。こは寛政の年の末頃の事。

Heretofore, in the city of Matsumoto there was no bookstore, and all the shops sold only a small quantity of books, of a certain type. For the most part, books were indeed brought by those who travelled across the three main cities, who were able to buy them, and to serve as occasional couriers. This situation did not change as far as the end of Kansei period. (250)

Takami Jinzaemon opened his book shop during the ninth year of Kansei (1797). Heretofore *jōruribon* and *kusazōshi* were the only texts available in Matsumoto. Fortunately, the situation rapidly evolved and, in a few years, precisely during the Bunka period, we read the following excerpt:

夫より近々文花ハ盛りになりて、毎度江戸名古屋表へ仕入二行。近年学びの道大にひらけ而、先ハ此市中に予が店書肆一家を成せり。

Lately the culture is in blossom, thus we often trade with Edo and Nagoya. Recently the Way of Learning became accessible to everybody willing to study, and I set up the first bookstore in the city. (251)

It was during the Bunka period that the cultural policy held by the *han* of Matsumoto delivered the first benefits, which led to an increase in the demand for literature and culture in general. The city of Matsumoto was thus included as integral part of the communication net which linked Edo to Kyōto and Ōsaka, passing by Nagoya and other neighboring centers. The inhabitants of the city enjoyed poetry and novels, and measured themselves, from time to time, against the composition of prose and poetry.

The volume from the *Zoku* edition that is framed by the journey to the city of Matsumoto is the eighth, released during the fourteenth year of Bunka (1817); through its pages the author represents this place as rich and splendid as Edo. So far, this was not the first meeting that occurred between Ikku, who turned fifty at the time, and the young publisher. During the first year of Bunka (1804), in fact, Jinzaemon made his way to Edo to buy stocks and products for his bookstore. It was during this short trip that they met for the first time.

おのれ、江府へ文化甲子之年、店書物類并諸品仕入二行。其節通油丁蔦屋重三郎同道二而、両国万八楼二書画会江行。彼一九子并京伝子、外馬琴・画工菊丸等面会す。

I travelled to Edo during the first year of Bunka to buy books and other stuff for the store. On this occasion, by accompanying Tsutaya Jūsaburō from Edo Tōriaburachō, I participated in a composition meeting, in Ryōgoku, at the Manpachirō inn, and had the chance to meet his disciples Ikku, Kyōden, Bakin and the painter Kikumaro. (10)

In the first year of Bunka Jinzaemon visited the city of Edo, and met for the first time the local community of literati and painters. The Tsutaya Jūsaburō mentioned in the excerpt, who drove Jinzaemon around the city and to Ryōgoku, was the son and heir of the great publisher, who died at the age of forty-seven, during the ninth year of Kansei (1797). Jinzaemon's account continues:

わけて一九子と厚意二成。夫より吉原及び所々遊ぶ。吉原次郎庵といふ医者、其外通油丁〔書林〕村田や治郎兵衛〔ひざくり毛版元一九作〕、菊丸子などと角丁之中まん字や二遊ぶ。并大門通つたや〔茶や〕所々遊歴之内ちぎり置。

I got particularly close with Ikku, who was very kind to me. With him I visited the Yoshiwara and many other places: we went to encounter the doctor Yoshiwara Jirōan, and, most importantly, the publisher from Tōriaburachō named Murataya Jirōbee who releases the *Hizakurige*; then we celebrated with Kikumaro and many others to the Manjiya in Kadochō. Besides that, right when we were in a tea house called Tsutaya, in Daimondōri, he promised me to visit Matsumoto. (12)

Thus, in the aftermath of a joyful night, during which the happy fellows visited several *maisons de rendezvous*, the publisher invited Ikku to visit Matsumoto, but the author could not honor his promise. Jinzaemon had to make his way back to Edo another time before Ikku could live for Matsumoto:

其後、文化七年同仕入用二出府する。其せつも又々ねんごろに往来。漸々今年来る。

Subsequently, I left my province heading back to Edo for the same business, during the seventh year of Bunka (1810), and therefrom I went back and forth every year. He [Ikku] will finally pay all my visits back this year. (*Ibid.*)

The author, as we noticed by the list of travels to Shinano mentioned before, visited for the first time the region in the eighth year of Bunka (1811), but he could honor his friendship duties toward Jinzaemon only in the eleventh year of the same period (1814). His stopover was a long awaited event: Ikku was a real celebrity and his love for the countryside in general, being himself a native of Suruga, in Shizuoka prefecture, made him even more popular among the readers who lived far away from the principal cultural and political centers. The *Hizakurige*, with its description of villages and remote towns, was considered a form of production close to readers' tastes, which, as we may notice by the words recorded in many introductions and postfactions, held in due consideration the readership opinion.¹⁴ Suffice it to say that the travel to Matsumoto itself was due to suggestions from the audience, for the author's observant eye and acute sense of hearing presented an untruthful description of the local dialects.

However, the journey across the countryside was not only due to the author's need to record it. It played a way more practical role in Jippensha Ikku's creations. We read that several individuals, in the hopes of convincing him to represent the places they loved the most – perhaps their inn or teahouse – acclaimed Ikku during his trip to Shinano.

新田町大庄家長丸、是ハ彼新田通り之趣よりみのち橋など之景色、膝くり毛二かかせんとおのねぎ事二而兼而文通いたし、待居ル。

At the height of the town of Arada, Osamaru from the Daishō thought that, instead of the main road to Arada, the panorama from Minochi bridge would be worth viewing, and, since he has been in correspondence with Ikku for few months in the hopes to convince him to introduce these locations in his masterpiece, he waited for him. (14)

Events like this were the reason why Ikku's *chef d'oeuvre* established such a widespread reputation among the readers. The author not only drew inspiration from travels; he occasionally even accepted suggestions from passionate

¹⁴ Many episodes of the entire work were introduced by popular acclaim, with the audience who demanded to read Yaji and Kita in true-to-life situations, such as the episode of the *sakayaki*, presented in the fifth volume of the *Hizakurige*, for, as Ikku registered, readers were eager to see the two protagonists at the barbershop.

fans. Osamaru's dream, however, came true in the ninth volume of the *Zoku* edition, when the publisher decided to present his illustration of Minochi Bridge (figure 1), while his two *kyōka* were presented as *gasan* in books seven and eight respectively.

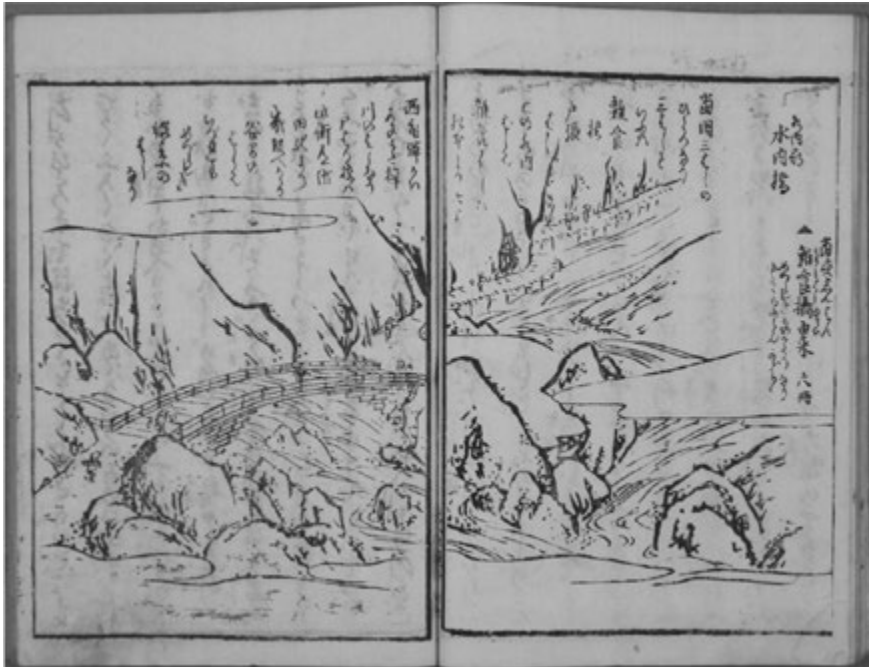


Figure 1. Minochi Bridge.

山ふかき木曾路ながらも名物のくしのはをひく往来の人
 Travelers, as numerous as teeth of combs,
 But not those renowned as special product from the Kiso road,
 In the deep of the mountain.
 (*Zoku hizakurige*, VII, 1, 6u)¹⁵

¹⁵ The entire collection of excerpts from the *Zoku hizakurige* comes from the text held by Waseda University Library, issued from the seventh year of Bunka (1810) to the fifth of Bunsei (1822), by Murataya Jirōbee, Ei'yūdō, and others publishers who shared the publication of the work in the immediate aftermath of Murataya's bankruptcy.

たち杉はますぐにのびて明王の利剣のなりにみやしろの山

Cedars, standing as swords,

Growing high and straight,

Akin to sharp sabers of wise lords.

(*Zoku hizakurige*, VIII, 2, 16u–17o)

These *kyōka* were signed by Osamaru and represented Ikku's personal expression of thanks for the generous hospitality received from him. *Kyōka* were one of the most useful and yet practical means of communication: their authors were generally chosen among Ikku's entourage and close collaborators.¹⁶ However, the first real exchange of favors between Ikku and Jinzaemon begun a few years before, during the Bunka period, when a collection of *senryū* composed by poets from the city of Matsumoto, the *Kokin inakadaru* (The Rustic Barrel, a Collection of Ancient and Modern Comic Verses),¹⁷ was issued; its introduction was drawn up by Ikku who pointed out: "the publisher came and asked me to write this introduction" (181). *Kyōka* and introductions were often used as means of exchange of courtesy between men of letters.

Ikku's trip to Shinano represented a rare and yet important occasion for several aspiring literati to attain visibility and to prove their skill at composing to one of the most popular authors of the time, who eagerly welcomed suggestions and contributions from local circles to introduce in his works. Although many people invited the author, he spent most of his sojourn at Jinzaemon's residence. The publisher thus wrote: "Jippensha and Hanagaki sojourned at my place, and everyday many painters and poets waited for them" (18). The author took part in several banquets, such as the gathering organized at the Seihōin,

¹⁶ Ikku's attitude to use his friends and acquaintances as poets was already clear in his *chef d'oeuvre*. In particular, book five, released during the third year of Bunka (1806), presents *gasan* signed by the members of three different local groups of amateurs, namely those from Owari, Suruga, and Mikawa. It has been demonstrated that, such a show of solidarity towards small groups of *gens de lettres*, often confined in isolated villages in the countryside, required a corresponding pecuniary compensation that the members of the circles paid to Ikku in exchange for some literary visibility in one of the most popular work of the time.

¹⁷ This collection of *senryū* was selected and edited by the first comic poet from Matsumoto, Inakabō Sōji; he played an eminent role in developing this genre in his city, and the abovementioned *Inakadaru* was meant to mark his consecration as man of letters. Unfortunately, he died shortly before the completion of the work, in the second year of Bunka (1805), assigning his disciples for the duty to end the collection, which presents no official date of publication, although many scholars argue that it was likely to have been released not that far from Sōji's death.

where he encountered the Misuzu *renga* circle that lavished him with food and, of course, a conspicuous amount of *sake*. Everyday composition meetings were organized in Ikku's honor, in several places, and the number of admirers and experts gathering for him increased day by day, with Jinzaemon who even noted their names in his diary: among them, he mentions Kiyosaburō Somendo, Atsumaru, Matsunari, Idemaru, Kimaru, Mitsuru, and Okazumi.

Ikku's trip to Shinano was not entirely devoted to celebrations, gatherings and banquets; as stated before, his real intention in engaging this month-long-trip was to collect information on the district. Hence, the three of them engaged in a trip around the most celebrated parts of the area, starting with the Manganji in Kurio:

八月十一日 新田より折々むかひ来る故、己も同道二而三人行。長丸方二一宿。夫より栗尾満願寺へ行く。雨ふる。待もふけの馳走種々。明朝御隠居此頃よりかこひの持山の内茸狩。松茸沢山二とり出す。兩人執持。さておのれは其せつ小笹原様十五日御着の処、兼而御宿わり被仰付あれば、種々用事故花垣子同道二而先へ帰る。一九は廿日頃迄遊ぶ。

The eleventh day of the eighth month, I met Ikku and his disciple coming from Arada and decided to join them so that we became three. We spent one night at Osamaru's place and then moved to the Manganji in Kurio. It rained. Many people treated us with food. The day after we went mushroom hunting on the mountain with a hermit and they collected many of them, especially the pine mushroom. They were both really good at it. At this point, as mister Kozasawara was supposed to visit me the fifteenth day of that month, and, since I had previously booked a room for them but also due to many other affairs, I decided to leave with Hanagaki in advance. Ikku enjoyed that place as far as the twentieth day. (24)

The Manganji temple in Kurio framed the narrative of the eighth volume of the *Zoku* edition: at the end of a very detailed descriptions of the thirty-six temples comprising the complex, and of Jūhachimachi no saka which, according to Ikku, led the travelers straight on top of the clouds, surrounded by a forest where old pine trees and ancient Japanese cedars grew wild, while the pure water gushed from the rocks, the text reads:

方丈をすこしはなれて、いんきよ所のある所へともなひてゆく。ここは見はらしのよき所にて、当山の隠寮なり。かけひの水にてあしをあらひ、ざしきへ打とほり見るに、小庵なれどもきれいにして、庭などもよく〔後略〕

They headed together to a place akin to a hermitage, quite far from the hut. As it was very suitable for panoramas, someone decided to turn it into a hermitage on top of the mountain. After washing their feet with the water of a bamboo

pipe, they passed through the *zashiki*, and realized how little this place was, but still it was very pretty. Also the garden was very good [*Omissis*] (*Zoku hiza-kurige*, VIII, 2, 32u)

Judging by the author's words, the narrative is very close to Jinzaemon's description of the location, with the hermitage occupying central stage. Here an old man of about sixty years, akin to a hermit, perhaps Jinzaemon's father, draw direct inspiration from the real man who showed Ikku his mercy, and who was rewarded with a walk-on in his work. However, the fourth of April, Jinzaemon recorded the following message:

此節、栗尾山観音開帳。七日より十六日迄。当年江戸より一九子、栗尾山れいげん御法の花といふ新板入本作し来ル。

Meanwhile, they are holding an exhibition of the sacred images of Kannon in Kuriosan. It goes from the seventh to the sixteenth day. This same year, Ikku will prepare a new illustrated book titled *Kuriosan reigen minori no hana*, especially for this event. He plans on sending us a copy directly from Edo. (32)

It goes without saying that the good hospitality Ikku received during his short visit at the Sanctuary of Kurio was paid back with a brand new publication, dwelling exclusively on the exhibition held there. Ikku's *cadeau* was published in the thirteenth year of Bunka (1816), and it was titled *Shinshū Kuriosan Kanzeon minori no hana* (The flowers of the Holy Law of the Kannon from the Mount Kurio in Shinano), in three volumes, decorated by the expert brush of Katsukawa Shuntei (1770–1820). Ikku's travels across Shinano continued with a pilgrimage to the Mizusawa yamadera, where he spent three or four nights. Along the road, the number of admirers grew richer and, in addition to the already large group, Jinzaemon reports that: "many of us visited Mizusawa, including my wife and my mother" (28). Subsequently they moved toward the Hofukuji and the baths in Asama.

其後、植原保福寺へ重宝の松二行。隠居家へ登り遊びて帰宅。此前二浅間湯へ一日行。

Then we headed to the Treasure Pine of the Hofukuji in Uehara; we went up to the hermit's house to celebrate and then went back home. But before that, we decided to spend one day at the baths in Asama. (31)

Ikku left Matsumoto in the thirtieth day of the eighth month, after a good month spent in the city, surrounded by a constant audience of admirers and friends. He moved back to Edo with plenty of memories and souvenirs of the warm hospitality that required to be rewarded.

4. *Senbetsu and payments*

As mentioned before, Ikku's journey across the countryside was not only an unrepeatable opportunity for local men of letters and amateurs to attain a widespread reputation by captivating the author's sympathy, in the hopes to be rewarded with a place in his masterpiece, or a very brief quotation among the *gasan* that decorated its illustrated apparatus; it constituted likewise a very rare if not unique event in the literary panorama of Shinano, a former remote province whose kaleidoscopically variegated cultural network was striving to obtain some literary visibility and to officially acquire a fair reputation. From the Edoites' perspective, Matsumoto and the entire Shinano region appeared as a remote land, dominated by wild mountains and nature – to pass through which almost five hundred tunnels were dug (Karaki 1986, 152) – and whose geographical proximity to the new political center did not bring any particular benefit. Conversely, at Ikku's arrival, he found a culturally lively milieu whose literary tradition had developed since a very long time. Takebe Ryōtai,¹⁸ more than fifty years before Ikku, in the thirteenth year of Hōreki (1763), traveled to Matsumoto and spent twenty-eight days in the city to discover that there was plenty of literary circles, with eminent and prestigious figures, unfortunately still unknown, such as Momohatatei and Tomoume (54).

Before Ikku's return home, Jinzaemon added a further paragraph to his diary:

所々より餞別集る。在町合せ五両斗凡出来る。悦び、又栗尾さして別る。池田〔中や瀬左衛門／角や源之助〕其外仁熊村などへ添書認遣ス。追々所々二滞留二而越後辺遊曆いたし、十月二入、江府へ帰宅之由書状来る。

Parting gifts gathered from several places. We barely collected from the neighboring villages an amount of five *ryō*. With great pleasure we headed to Kurio and then we parted. I handed him a presentation letter for the village of Ikeda [to Nakaya Sezaemon and Kadoya Gennosuke], and for the group of Nikumamura. He said that, little by little, he intends to stop by several places,

¹⁸ Takebe Ryōtai (1719–74), likewise known as Kitamura Hisamura, was the second son of the head of the Kitamura *han* in Hirosaki; he moved to Kyōto at the age of twenty-one, abandoning his parental household, and travelled then to Edo where he formed a *haikai* circle. However, he is way more renowned as Takebe Ayatari, popular writer of *yomihon* (reading books), such as the *Honchō suikoden*, and painter under the nickname of Kan'yōsai. He subsequently joined Kamo no Mabuchi's disciples and his Kokugaku School.

to visit Echigo,¹⁹ and to come back to Edo at the beginning of the tenth month. At which point, he will inform me of his return with a letter. (34–35)

In order to celebrate his departure, inhabitants and men of letters from Matsumoto regaled Ikku a parting gift of five *ryō*, not much of a large sum, especially considering that, as one of the leading writers of the period, he could afford to travel. This served to wish him a safe trip to Echigo, the neighboring region where the author intended to travel around in search of inspiration and sources of documentation. *Senbetsu*, or partying gift, was a common practice among those who gave hospitality to eminent travelers or friends, and Ikku, being a great voyager, was used to get money for his return trip. It goes without saying that five *ryō* were not a sum that could enable any individual to cope with a long journey, as the one the author intended to undertake, but they represented a kind show of affection if not a sign of thanksgiving for the good company and the entertainment donated to a usually isolated district. Jippensha Ikku often received friends or supposedly disinterested benefactors' gifts. As mentioned before, the most part of the poets of the fifth volume of the *Hizakurige* were unknown, and, most importantly, they did not belong to Ikku's entourage. Next to each name reported at the bottom of the composition, the author recorded its provenience, and we can point out three groups: Owari, Mikawa and Suruga. The former had a special status and it was numerically larger than the latter two; its leader was a man of letter named Kinometei Dengaku, who, according to Tanahashi (2008),²⁰ met Ikku during an *utaawase* and helped him collect verses to adapt in the fifth volume of the *Hizakurige*. Verses from the abovementioned section of the work aimed at introducing and promoting amateur circles from small villages along the Tōkaidō road, where Ikku had some acquaintances, as happened with his friends from Matsumoto. In both cases, as witnessed by Jinzaemon's diary, and by a letter that the author himself sent over Dengaku, he received a parting gift.

¹⁹ Jippensha Ikku visited Echigo three times: the first immediately after his sojourn in Matsumoto, the second in the first year of Bunsei (1818), while visiting his friend Suzuki Bokushi, and the third and last in the ninth year of the same period (1826). According to Ikku, Echigo was mainly the land of the so-called *shichi fushigi*, the seven wonders, and its purpose in travelling across that region was mainly secular.

²⁰ The letter, dated from the twenty-first day of the first month of the third year of Bunka (1806), was presented in Takahashi's article, and it is property of the University of Nara. The first scholar who deciphered its meaning was Professor Nagai Kazuaki.

5. Quotations as mean of thanksgiving

As we saw, Ikku visited the Shinano district and the city of Matsumoto, where he took advantage of his friend's hospitality. The most part of the advertisements in his productions, therefore, are reserved to this benefactor and host: firstly, Ikku presented three *kyōka* by Jinzaemon in the *Zoku hizakurige*:

丸山といふハ今井の四郎兼平の城跡なりといへば
What you call Maruyama is nothing but the vestiges of Imai Shirō Kenpei's
castle (*Zoku hizakurige*, VII, 1, 1*u*–2*o*)

はや春のおしよするかとしろ山の雲のはた手になくほととぎす
Sparrows singing on top of the clouds in Shiroyama;
Perhaps they think spring is coming soon. (*Zoku hizakurige*, VIII, 1, 17*o*)

鶴尾山松尾寺薬師
色かへぬ松尾寺なれはおのつからここにちとせをふるき霊場
Matsuodera Yakushi in Tsuruoyama:
The temple that keeps unchanged its colors,
In solitude an old hallowed ground stands here from centuries. (*Zoku hizakurige*, VIII, 2, 11*u*–12*o*)

Ikku's gratitude toward Takami and his activities did not conclude with this; during the thirteenth year of Bunka (1816) Jinzaemon headed back to Edo in order to accomplish other duties. According to his account, he left Matsumoto in the twelfth day of the fifth month and, after worshipping at the Myōgisan,²¹ one week later, he reached Edo accompanied by Moji no Fudehiko, a poet from the Mizusu group. Unfortunately, when the next day they visited Ikku's household, he was absent.

此せつ旅行二而留守也。内方の衆いろいろとてなし、又酒汲樂しみ
竈にのりて吉原仮宅浅草山の宿なるふしみや方江行。

When we visited him he was not home. All the people of the house, servants and maids, treated us very kindly; they poured us some sake and we really en-

²¹ Constantine Vaporis (1995) emphasizes the role of pilgrimage to explain how commoners came to engage in long-distance journeys. Because of their sacred nature, he argues, religious journey were not subject to the restrictions that the government placed on the movements of travelers. Thus, it is no surprise that a business trip, such as Jinzaemon's one to Edo, debuted with the worship at the Myōgisan, as, by taking advantage of this loophole, commoners used pilgrimages as an excuse for recreational journeys.

joyed the atmosphere, then we took a palanquin and headed to the Yoshiwara quarter, more precisely to a *karitaku*.²² We finally made our way to Asakusa, at the Fushimiya inn. (48)

Three years later, during the autumn of the second year of Bunsei (1819), Jippensha Ikku left his residence to go back for the third time to Matsumoto, kindly treated by his old friend Jinzaemon, in whose diary we read:

今日十返舎主外二供老人入来、滞留する
 [Twelfth day of the ninth month] Today Jippensha visited me in company of another friend; they are going to spend the night here. (*Ibid.*)

十返舎扇面など認。ハッ頃より一九子同道、平瀬村 [小松平十郎之隠宅へ行]。月晴るる夜九つ時帰宅。

[Thirteenth day of the ninth month] Jippensha chose the paper for the fans. Around the eighth hour, I left with him and his disciple for the village of Hirase [we visited Komatsudaira Jūrō's hermitage]. We made our way back home around the ninth hour of a night of shining moon. (49)

十返舎発枚。浅間へ送る二付、母并内行。[中略] 夜四つ頃別れ帰宅。

[Fourteenth day of the ninth month] Jippensha left. When I accompanied him to Asama, my mother joined us. [*Omissis*] I went back home at night, around the fourth hour. (*Ibidem*)

As the first excerpt clearly demonstrates, Ikku visited Matsumoto in order to partake of a composition meeting, in addition to his usual documenting activity. Materials collected during this brief staying became a part of the aforementioned *Kokkei tabigarasu* – specifically the fifth year of Bunsei (1822) issue – a *gōkan* dedicated to Ikku's solitary journey, in which he even mentions Takami Jinzaemon, referring to him as “an old friend of mine.”²³ In addition to that,

²² The *karitaku* was a provisional housing, built within the red light district, or in its immediate proximity, where inns, teahouses and brothels could have a temporary accommodation in the aftermath of fires, floods, and other cataclysms.

²³ *Kokkei tabigarasu* was created as a patchwork of several topics, with the travel being the leitmotif of the entire production. It is composed by twenty-six volumes, irregularly published along more than twenty years, and each of them presents a narrative framed by the description of a specific region; for a detailed list of contents see Katō 1996, 131–32. The work thus stands as a long record of annotations of weird and

perhaps the most important of the advertisements that the author could have possibly done to Jinzaemon with his literary output came with the thirteenth volume of another *gōkan* titled *Muda shūgyō kane no waraji* (Golden straw sandals for a useless study trip, 1813–33), which reports an illustration representing his publishing house with the inscription “Keirindō” and the variety of items sold, “Chinese and Japanese books” (figure 2). In his desire to promote his friend’s activity, Ikku prominently adopted the use of the visual image, a true-to-life picture which constituted the best promotion to Takami’s activity and the expression of the author’s feelings of gratitude.

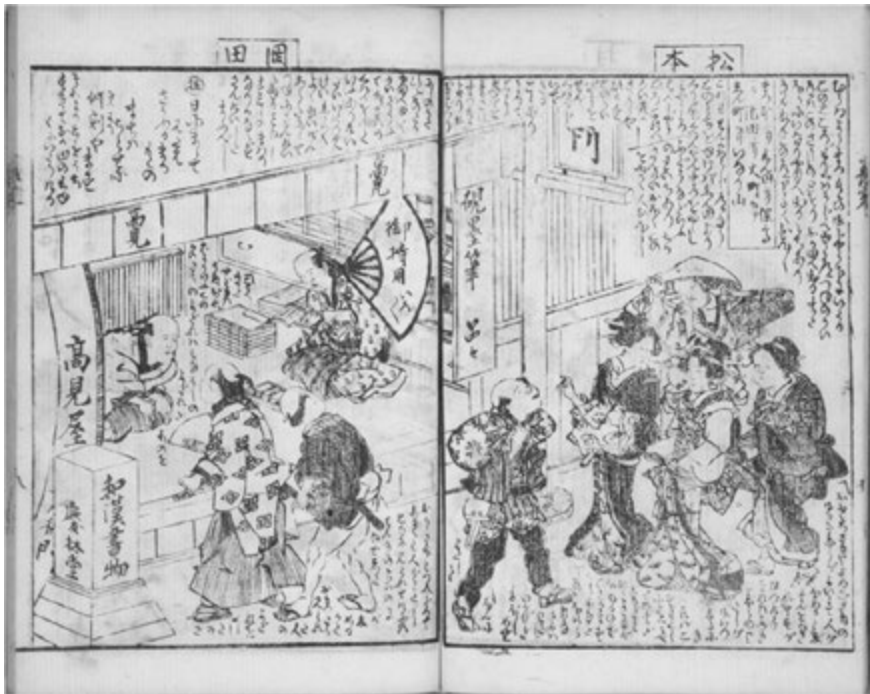


Figure 2. Takami Jinzaemon's shop.

singular things that Ikku observed during his journeys, and that struck his curiosity. To create long lists of *mezurashiki mono*, of rare things, as the author said, represented the real essence of the *Tabigarasu*, which stands far from Ikku's typical comic production. The author *de facto* felt the need to break away from his old style by writing a work in which the humor was deliberately not based on dialogues, and, furthermore, without characters that could stand as Yaji and Kita's imitations. We thus see that the real protagonist of the work is the author, who, by limiting the dialogues, wanted to put himself under the spotlight, and to enter a way more private dimension.

Conclusions

What I just recorded may apparently seem the description of a good friendship liaison between one of the mainstream *gesaku* writers and the publisher of a small city in the countryside, but it clearly shows many cultural dynamics which constituted the very foundation of the circulation of book during the late Edo period. We should not forget that this period, especially in the immediate aftermath of Kansei reform, besides being characterized by a culture mainly popular in its contents, was likewise renowned for the increasing importance placed on the countryside, whose number of potential users, or buyers in our case, could decree the success or the failure of a literary production. It was therefore Ikku's intention to attract those readerships to his masterpiece by involving directly some of the most notorious local literati.

During the first part of the Edo period, those who shared interests in literature and poetry were not that numerous, therefore, authors like Ikku, or as Takebe Ryōtai, as we saw, by travelling across the rural areas of Japan, were likely to find nothing more than a limited amount of circles, whose members entirely belonged to the upper class, and were totally devoted to composition. The massive development of the late Edo literary production leveled the differences between centers and countryside and brought to a general flourishing the entire productive panorama of small cities, especially when they were in the vicinity of the main centers.

As we noticed, the sojourn of perhaps the most renowned and yet – *stricto sensu* – popular literate of this period constituted an unrepeatable and rare event for both the author and the readers; the former was sure that, by spending a good month in Matsumoto, his rising popularity would grow richer and, by mentioning names of characters met along the road, or even by portraying publishing houses or locations particularly popular among the citizens of that specific part of the country, he would have met their interest and, at the same time, ensured a rise in the sale of his masterpiece. The popularity of Ikku's oeuvre was built on this presentation of places familiar among a certain readership; the collaborative attitude between the author and the audience constituted a part of his immense success, ergo one of the reasons why the *Hizakurige* enjoyed such a great reputation. As a professional writer, Ikku realized that he would have rendered the local space in order to capture the hearts and the imagination of the reading public, and this was the principal need that brought him to travel across the country.²⁴

²⁴ Other reasons why Ikku's narrative was so well appreciated lie in the prurient component of Yaji and Kita's adventures, which tickled the readers' curiosity. Secondly,

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one curious aspect of the *Hizakurige* is the financial status of the twosome: Yaji and Kita are poor but, although they never work, they do not run out of money, and they magically have enough to survive. Their poverty represents an easy to relate to aspect. In addition to that, we should mention the narrative conducted in the third person: as third-person characters, Yaji and Kita are available to the readers and impersonal to be shared by many. By quoting Inouye (2007, 194), they are empty place holders and movable existences. In terms of social class, too, Yaji and Kita are presented with an ambiguity that makes it impossible to position them precisely on any social mapping. However, their very likeable essence lies in their pretentiousness to be this or that person.