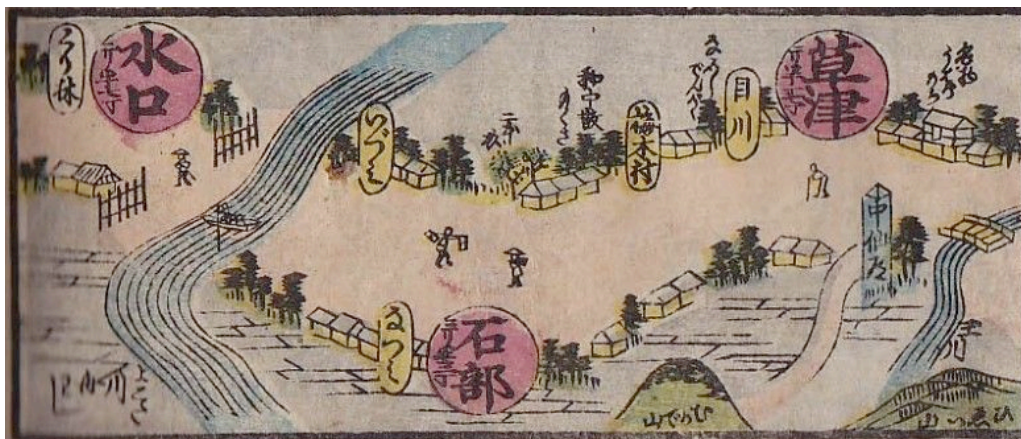
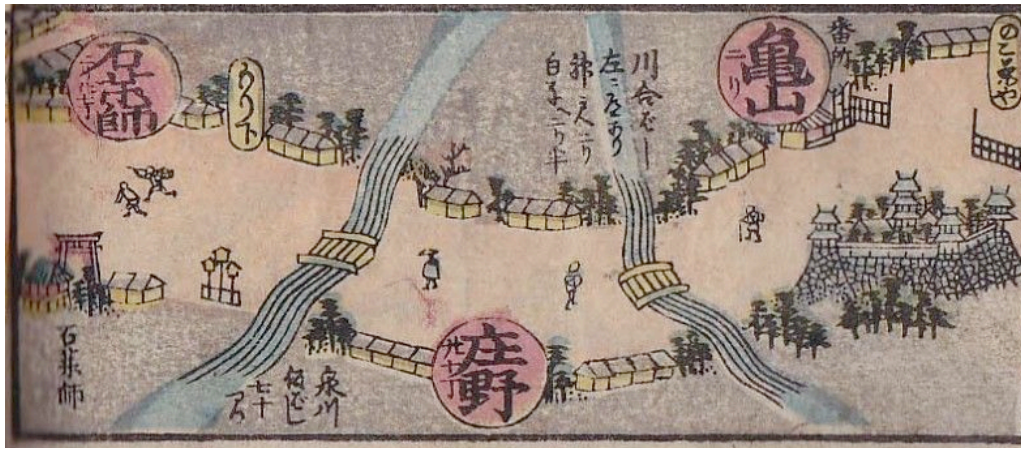


In the Japanese Edo Period [prior to 1868] the Tokaido was the most important and famous highway in the Gokaido [Japan's road system]. It linked Kyoto, the imperial capital, with Edo [Tokyo], the seat of the Tokugawa Shogunate, which regulated travel in Japan. Ordinary people had to walk the roads but the elite used horses or palanquins, a kind of oriental sedan chair. Compared with all the other highways, the Tokaido [eastern sea route] was crowded, safer and more easy going, with only one mountainous section, and the complete journey took about two weeks.



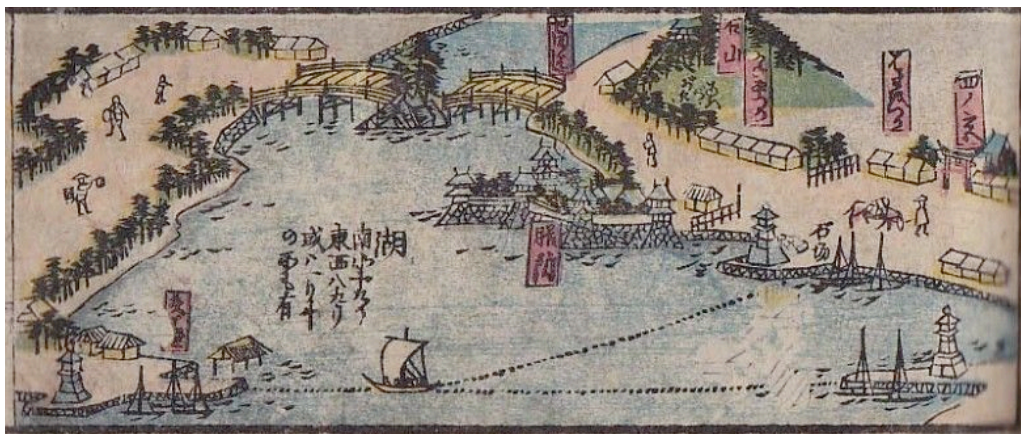
There were various guidebooks to the highway system which listed all the information travellers needed: inns and fees, river crossings and tolls, places to see and things to avoid. These were printed from woodblocks in a small format, for ease of carrying on the person, and they usually included road maps of the pictorial kind. One of them which was published in 1842 had the map pages divided horizontally into two strips, one above the other. Different smaller versions were also published over many decades, in oblong or landscape format measuring about 70 x 155 mm.



A very nice example of this latter genre, dating from 1851, was compiled by Fujitani Toyushi, whose name appears at the end of the preface. As usual the book has soft covers and is side sewn with a title-slip on the cover. From a European perspective everything is back to front, with the reader starting at the rear. Its 270 pages of washi [Japanese paper] folded in concertina fashion include twenty-two hand-coloured wood block maps of the Tokaido road, each about 135 x 57 mm. These run east from Osaka, through Kyoto and end with the famous Nihonbashi Bridge in Edo.

道中細見定宿帳 ... 富士谷東遊志. 大阪, 藤屋菊治郎, Kaei 4.

*Dochu saiken joyado-cho* [Detailed route map and directory of inns] ... Fujitani Toyushi. Osaka, Fujiya Kikujiro, 1851.



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