An Examination of Travel Literature on the Shikoku Pilgrimage Route and Warnings Contained Within
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Introduction

During the early Tokugawa period (1603-1867), traveling throughout the Japan seemed to be something that only the nobility could easily participate in. However, as the economic state of the country developed and roads and lodging facilities were built, and with governmental restrictions regarding travel being lifted, travel became increasingly popular among the common people. One route on which a steady stream of traffic could be observed during this time was the Gokaidō or five roads leading to the capital, Edo. Of these five, the Tōkaidō, an approximately 500-kilometer route between Edo and Kyōto, became the most well known. This increase may have been due to the feudal lords who were compelled under the alternate residence system (sankin kotai) to travel annually from their domains to Edo where they kept their families. These feudal lords did not travel in small groups, but in large entourages that consisted of between 100 and 2,000 people. As a result, numerous towns, rest stations, teahouses and other facilities were constructed along the way to cater to their needs.

In 1691, Engelbert Kaempfer describes in detail such a procession and adds that not only did the feudal lords travel these routes but that “an incredible number of people daily use the highways of Japan’s provinces, indeed, at certain times of the year they are as crowded as the streets of a populous European city.”¹ Later in 1826, Franz von Siebold, a Dutch doctor, added that, “Except for a small portion of the Tōkaidō which passes through a mountainous region the road consists of almost a continuous line of towns, villages and teahouses.”²
However, these five roads were not the only ones used by travelers. It is said that, “Travel fever heightened after the middle of the Edo period. Throughout Japan, tourists and pilgrims made the rounds to famous scenic locations, historical spots, well-known temples or holy sites." For example, traveling to Ise Shrine became such a popular journey that even as early as 1585, a Catholic missionary, Luis Frois remarked, “As a pilgrimage destination from among the various countries of Japan, most gather to Ise Shrine where the extent of the numbers of people are so many that makes it impossible to believe." In fact, it is estimated that millions of people participated in the route during the late seventeenth and early nineteenth century. However, “as people traveled further and further away from the security of home, wayfarers were in need of information to assist them on their journey and travel diaries and guidebooks filled this need” Such books consisted of travel literature (kikō bungaku 紀行文学), travel diaries (tabi nikki 旅日記), guidebooks (annaiki 案内記, dōchūki 道中記), and gazetters (meisho ezu 名所絵図).

One of the earliest examples of such travel literature, in this case, a Meishoki (gazetter) for pilgrims, travelers and sightseers, was produced in 1640. Later, in 1658, Asai Ryoi (d. 1691) wrote the Tōkaidō Meishoki (東海道名所記), which contained practical advice about the journey along the Tōkaidō and included the history on noted spots along the route. In 1690, the Tōkaidō bunken ezu (東海道文献絵図), a map with distances and directions was created which also served as a travel guide containing such practical information as porterage fees, inn locations and prices. One of the best-known books produced during the Edo period was “A Collection of Precautions for Travellers” (Ryokō Yōjinsha 旅行用心集) written in 1810 by Yasumi Roan. This book
is considered to be “the first and only work as far as is known whose explicit purpose was to provide travelers with extensive counsel. It offers advice on practically all aspects of travel.” Roan includes sixty-one brief items of advice and gives some warnings to travelers. For example, he states that one must not share in medicine, food and accommodation with others in group that you have traveled with for 3 or 5, 6 days and with whom you feel you can trust. As well, he warns that often at a lodging facility, travelers must share a room and that if one is careful, nothing should occur. However, it is most important to make sure to lock your door and, as soon as possible, to check out the condition of the shared room. If there is someone who appears to be in an unusual state of mind or in a drunken rage prepare yourself to handle such a situation as quickly as possible. The numbers of cases where a traveler has been caught in an (unfortunate) incident are not rare. However, Roan was not the first to offer such warnings to travelers. Engelbert Kaempfer, approximately 120 years before Roan’s time wrote, “This is an area where my Japanese dōchūki or travel guide advises the traveler to be careful” and, “There are also a number of slippery customers who pretend that they are on this pilgrimage.”

In this paper I plan to describe some of the best travel literature available for another popular travel destination during the Edo Period, namely the eighty-eight temple Shikoku pilgrimage route. As well, I will highlight the warnings that were given
to potential travelers and pilgrims of this route over the past three hundred years. By
doing so, I will show that the amount of literature including guidebooks, travelogues
and the like increased in volume as the numbers of pilgrims grew and that admonitions
to potential pilgrims have continued throughout many centuries. Such warnings give
evidence that there has always been a `dark side’ to the pilgrimage, a topic that is rarely
touched upon in the travel literature. However, it is an aspect that has affected pilgrims
and travelers since the concept of traveling has become a national pastime.

The Shikoku Pilgrimage: The 17th Century- The Beginnings

The origins of the Shikoku Pilgrimage are not clear, however, this route is
strongly connected with the life of Kūkai or Kōbō Daishi (774-835), the 8th Patriarch of
Shingon Buddhism. In his writings, he mentions coming to a few places in Shikoku for
training and it can only be assumed that after his death, some of his disciples might have
come to Shikoku to visit such sites and participate in ascetic training. However, there
are no records to prove such. It is not until the 17th century that the first record of a
priest going around the Shikoku pilgrimage was published. This book is entitled, Kushō
Hōshinō Shikoku Reijō Ojungyoki (空性法親王四国霊場御行記) which was compiled
by Kemmyo of Sugozan in 1638. He wrote the details of the three-month pilgrim
experience of the Daitakuji imperial prince Kushō Hōshinō (1572-1650). Some years
later, in 1653, another priest Chozen (1612-1680) wrote the Shikoku Henro Nikki (四国
遍路日記) describing his journey around Shikoku. These two early records were
travelogues providing informative descriptions of the pilgrim’s daily events and the
various sites visited.
During the Genroku period (1688-1704), the first boom in this pilgrimage route occurred amongst the common people. In 1689, authorities from Nagoya said, “In recent years men and women from the castle town have been traveling on the pilgrimage to the Western (Saikoku) or Shikoku circuits, and their numbers continue to grow every year. We hear that for the past two years particularly large numbers have gone.” Around this time, three books about the Shikoku pilgrimage were published and made available for the general public. The first work entitled *Shikoku Henro Michishirube* (四國邊路道指南) was written in 1687 by Yuben Shinnen (d. 1691) who is said to have walked the pilgrimage route between ten and twenty times and who worked diligently to develop and popularize the route. Some of his lifetime contributions included the creation of over two hundred path markers along the route and by helping to create lodging facilities. In his book, he offers various forms of advice, such as what to take on the journey, temple procedures and travel hints. The second book, the *Shikoku Henro Reijōki* (四國靈禮場記) in 1689 was written by Jakuhon (1631-?) a priest of Mt Kōya and includes an explanation of each temple. The third *Shikoku Henro Kudokuki* (四國偏禮功德記) published in 1690 was also written by Shinnen (d. 1691) and contains stories of benevolence and emphasized the concept of 'reward the good and punish the evil' (*kanzen chōaku* 勧善懲惡). These three books that were made for the general public mainly describe each pilgrimage site and the diary activities of the pilgrims as well as present tales warning pilgrims that they must do good actions to prevent punishment.
The Second Peak: 18th Century. (1700-1800)

During this time, it is said that the numbers of pilgrims exceeded tens of thousands. For example, the Yamauchi family record from 1764 indicates that between 200 to 300 people from outside Tosa, present day Kochi prefecture, passed through daily between February and July of that year. Extrapolation of this data could mean that 30,000 to 40,000 people made the pilgrimage in one year but estimating annual figures based on the data is hazardous because of the seasonal nature of the pilgrimage. As well, due to unstable domestic situation throughout the century caused by the severe Kyoho (1732-1733) and Tenmei (1783-1787) famines, it is difficult to accept that there were such a high number of Shikoku pilgrims during this era.

The numbers of publications produced during this time seem to be very few and hard to find. However, one of the earliest maps on the pilgrimage was made available in 1763, the *Shikoku Henrei Ezu* (四国偏禮絵図) and various *nōkyōcho* or temple stamp books have been discovered and examined by a group called the `Shikoku Pilgrim Research Group` (*Shikoku Henro Kenkyukai*). One travel diary from 1747, the *Shikoku Henro Nakagata Oboe Nikki* (四国遍路中覚日記), describes the forty-three day pilgrimage of Saeki Fujihei (佐伯藤兵衛). In his book, Saeki provides evidence to the existence of travel guidebooks on the Shikoku pilgrimage route when he writes in March 4th, “I was carrying the guidebook for Shikoku and Saikoku” (四国西国手引き同行中へ罷申候). However, unfortunately no clues are given as to the title and author of that book.
The Third Peak: 19th Century (1800-1900)

During the 19th Century period, the Shikoku pilgrimage route experienced another boom in popularity especially during the Bunka-Bunsei period (1804-1830). One reference to the numbers of pilgrims in 1892 comes from a former head monk of Temple 19, Tatsueji who indicated that approximately 300 to 500 pilgrims visited his temple every day between March and May during that year. This period also saw a large increase in the number of publications on the pilgrimage - a number estimated to be approximately twice the total of the books published between 1687 and 1800.

The earliest document from this era is a gazetteer, Shikoku Henro Meisho Zue (四国遍路名所絵図絵) which was produced in 1800 and describes the travels of a pilgrim during his 73-day journey between March 21st and May 3rd of that year. However, the first definite example of a book containing warnings to travelers of the Shikoku Pilgrimage route can be seen in the 1819 Shikoku Jumpai Nikki (四国巡拝日記). This book was written by Arai Raisuke and describes his 57-day day pilgrimage. It is unfortunate that little is known about of Arai; however, from the book one can believe that he was well off, that he was retired and that he came from Aki country in Kochi prefecture. In his book he includes what items he took on the journey which included a guidebook (dōchūki 道中記) although once again no evidence is provided as to the title and author of this guidebook.

Arai provides a list which contains six items that need to be followed to ensure a safe and successful journey of which the first, fifth and sixth are warnings against possible theft or deceit:
1) Don't pay the boat fare or unnecessary guidance at a river crossing until you have crossed the river. (川渡りにて船賃等之事に付不知案内川から渡り不至事)

2) Be wary of sharing a room with others when you go to sleep at an inn. (宿にて寝る時、行詰伏し旅の油断の事)

3) Count and check the things necessary such as walking stick, hat, baggage, sandals, money at a rest station and when you set out in the morning. (出足の朝或いは休足所にて杖笠荷物わらじすご銭夫々指を折って見る用意の品算ふる事)

The first piece of advice warns against possible cheating of the people in charge of the boats; the second against those who might steal and the third, the possibility that you have forgotten something behind or that something has been taken when one was not looking.

Two years later, in 1821, Jippensha Ikku (十返舎一九) (1765-1831) toured Shikoku and recorded the details of his journey in a book entitled Kanenowaraji (金草鞋). The source of his materials come from the many journeys he made around Japan between 1802 and 1822 and while he did visit the Kompira shrine in Kagawa Prefecture in 1810 with two acquaintances, it was not until 1821 that he completed the whole 88-temple pilgrimage route of Shikoku. His record is fascinating not only for his written accounts of his experience and observations, but for his numerous illustrations which depict an accurate picture of the trails, rest stations, pilgrims attire, charity groups, etc., that were all part of the Shikoku pilgrimage.

Later in 1882, Natatsuka Mohei (1847-1922) published the book, Shikoku Reijō Ryaku Engi Dōchūki Taisei (四国霊場略縁起道中記大成) on his 88th pilgrimage around Shikoku. Mohei is best known for the number of times he did the pilgrimage – a total of 280 – and for the numerous path markers he erected along the way to assist future pilgrims. While he was in his 20s there were family problems with his elder
brother and he decided to leave home. He later met someone who introduced him to the Shikoku pilgrimage and after this meeting was determined to embark on this journey that would eventually become his life mission. He offers a few words of caution:

1) One should not, without reason, follow someone who offers to show you a shortcut. This year there has been an incident of a bandit at the foot of the Awa Tsuruno Mountain, so one should be careful.
   (近道を案内するとも、猥りに行くべからず。本年も阿波鶴山麓にて追い剥ぎさせられることあり用心すべし。)

2) When traveling together, a woman should not allow a man to touch her body because it will result in money being taken.
   (道づれに肌を許すべきからず、路銀をとられるなり。)

The first point warns of someone outside the pilgrim world taking advantages of pilgrims and travelers who perhaps are a long way from home and are carrying all their belongings, including money, with them. The second warns of deceiving men who have it in their heart to steal from a woman pilgrim.

**Modern Day: 20th Century (1900- present day)**

The 20th Century brought the creation of cars, buses and greater train service which allowed for easier and more comfortable travel around Shikoku. However the pilgrimage did suffer for many years due to the disturbances of war and post-war life. One reference to the number of pilgrims during the Taisho period (1912-1926) comes from the head priest of the temple 77, Dōryūji who said that on a busy day about 1000 pilgrims a day visited his temple. Some years later, Maeda Takashi, in 1969, conducted a year long survey at Temple 56, Taisanji and calculated that the annual number of pilgrims were 14, 257 which demonstrates a drop in previous periods. Today, however, it is estimated that 100,000 participate in the pilgrimage.
One of the earliest books available for this study is the *Shikoku Hachijuhakkasho Reijō Annai* (四国八十八カ所霊場案内記) published in 1911. It was written by Hirota Miyoshi (三好廣太) who acted as the representative of a group welcoming pilgrims of the Shikoku pilgrimage. Within the book, he gives the name of each sacred site, its origin, a picture of the main deity and directions to the next site. He also includes a section of `How to prepare for traveling` where costs and equipment needed are described and he offers advice such as keeping the gear light and paying individually, if in a group. However this book is unique because it gives the reader a specific indication of how many copies of this book were given away each year. In the Preface, it is stated:

Every year more than 50,000 copies of this book are published and are given away as charity to those people who conduct a pilgrimage on Shikoku. Those who receive numerous copies from various places send them home in packages, and as a memorial of the Shikoku pilgrimage and send them to their friends and relatives to recommend the Shikoku pilgrimage.

He also provides warnings. For example, he says to be careful when traveling with others because there are cases of people pretending to the pilgrims but who actually intend to steal your money. As well, one cannot let down one’s guard because there are ‘bad’ people who wander around trying to trick one out of money. It is essential to be careful in all things. Also, he writes that one must not place one’s belongings out of sight.

Nine years later, in 1920, Hirota published another book called *Shikoku Henro Dōgyō Ninin* (四国遍路同行) which provides practical advice. It is interesting because this book gives evidence as to the existence of other Shikoku guidebooks that were
written between Meiji 17 (1884) and Taisho 9 (1920). As well, it indicates how many pilgrims were found on the route when it states: That people came from all directions to be on the pilgrimage route and those who want to improve their merit every year numbered in the several ten thousands (今に霊験として四方より参詣し、襯法功に浴する者年々幾萬人ぞ). Advice to be heeded while on the road is also given. For example, Miyoshi writes that on the roads the pilgrim, if traveling in a group, one should split costs and beware of sneaky thieves who are everywhere dressed in pilgrim’s garb, and in general, be wary of bad people who are after your money. Even when a pilgrim had arrived at a place to stay, there were things one should do. There are also warnings given by Hirota advising the reader of the importance of sleeping close to one's belongings and keeping an eye on it. And that one should pay attention to one’s belongings or get someone to look after it while you are at the office getting your temple stamp or at the charity building receiving the gifts of charity.

From the 1930's until the end of World War II, the pilgrimage suffered greatly. Not only were many temples in a state of ruin, but also many no longer had resident priests to maintain the grounds and facilities. Perhaps the best guidebook from the pre-World War period is Shikoku Henro no Susume (四國遍路のすすめ) written by Yasuda Keimei in 1931. His book is a comprehensive guidebook, which presents various pieces of advice on how to do the pilgrimage. His book also includes descriptions of the sutras and of each temple. As well, he provides some warnings:

1) It is only natural to carefully watch your gear when at a lodging facility, but what is most important, which I have told you before about, is to watch your money waist pouch. It is something that you should not let out of your sight. (宿屋では自分の荷物に注意するは勿論なれど、殊に気を配らなければならぬ物は前にも注しておきました「お胴巻き」です。能々御用心なさるよう。 (p68)
2) Amongst the pilgrims with whom you stay the night with there are some, perhaps one in a hundred or one in a thousand, who have bad intentions. It is terrible that there are some people who cause bad feelings as they do the pilgrimage and being able to avoid such depends on our ability to not be caught off guard. It is imperative that you do not ask to join a group of strangers. One should stay with the group that you departed from your home country together with.

同宿する遍路の内にも百人に一人或いは、千人に一人心持ちの良くないものが居ります。御四国詣りして疑う心を起こしては悪いけれども防御として油断せざるに限る。必ず國元から一緒に出立した伴れ以外には、伴れを求めてはなりません。（p69）

3) At a lodging facility it is dangerous to share a room with someone who seems to have lost his mind. One must not be caught off guard even though for example it is one of your escorts. This case warrants extreme caution.

宿屋で気狂の人と同宿する場合は危険である。たとへ付き添いの人あるとも油断してはいけない、最も注意を要す。（p70）

Once again the admonition to look after one’s money and the need to be careful at all times are presented. It is interesting that Yasuda provides a ratio of the number of people who do not have an honest heart. If such a statistic is accurate then as the number of pilgrims increased over the ages, so did such ‘slippery’ characters and thus the frequency of warning to new travelers and pilgrims increased.

During the early 1950s, a resurgence in the number of pilgrims occurred in Shikoku. This was partly due to the creation of the first pilgrimage bus tours organized by the Iyo Tetsu bus company and as well due to the formal organization of the Shikoku Sacred Site Association (Shikoku Reijōkai 四国霊場会) in 1956. Over the next twenty years, numerous forms of travel literature were produced on the Shikoku pilgrimage of which I would like to highlight two of more prominent books. First of all, Hashimoto Tetsuma’s Shikoku Henroki (1950) is quite interesting because not only does he offer explanation of each temple, but he also includes many specific stories of temples, people and anecdotes of the Shikoku pilgrimage. However, Nishibata Sakae’s Shikoku
Hachijuhakkasho Henroki (四国八十八カ所遍路記) from 1965 could be considered to be the best guidebook from this period. She includes such details as advice on what to take, how to receive money and package while on the pilgrimage, the price of accommodation, language of the pilgrimage and the rules and commandments of the pilgrimage. She also provides the founding story and describes the present state of each site.

In the Preface, she mentions that it was her object to gather information on the pilgrimage and this book does in fact contain a lot of practical advice for potential pilgrims. She also provides a warning against ‘fake’ pilgrims or nisehenro by giving a couple of examples. One story goes as follows: One time a group of pilgrim women where staying at a lodge. A man and his wife were also there. The next morning the husband came into their room waving a knife and exclaiming, “If you pray to the knife, my sickness will be cured. Do it!” The women were so frightened that some could not stand, but did as they were told. After some time the man exclaimed, “OK, I’m cured. I’m cured” and left the room. Nishibata calls such people fake pilgrims who disgrace the Buddhist land of Shikoku. (四国の仏教国をけがす偽者である). 15

The 1970s saw an even more dramatic increase in the various forms of literature describing and explaining the Shikoku pilgrimage route. One reason is because 1974 was the 1200th year anniversary of Kobo Daishi’s birth. Around this time, the first book in English Japanese Pilgrimage (1971) written by Oliver Statler was published. This book describes his pilgrimages some years earlier including his daily activities mixed with historical stories and other significant facts. At the beginning of his trip, Statler relates how he received at Temple One, Ryōzenji, a leaflet entitled Exhortations for Pilgrims to the Sacred Places of Shikoku in which pilgrims are advised to do certain
things, which are very similar to items seen in previous guidebooks. It reads, “For there are bad people who have the most honest appearances; they approach and pretend that they want to point out a shorter way, to deliver efficacious prayers or to teach a secret magic; they end by forcibly taking money or even violating women. Such people are found here and there upon the roads of Shikoku…. Also one should not write the name and address too clearly on one’s pilgrim staff, nameslips and the like, since every year numerous people fall victim to swindling through the mail. However, he later adds that, “the warning against those who preyed on gullible henro is out of date. The shark that masqueraded as a pilgrim has disappeared.” However, others disagree with the part that there are no longer people out to take advantage of pilgrims. In another guidebook, the Rekishi no Tabi: Shikoku Hachijuhakkasho published a year later in 1972, a warning was given to potential pilgrims: It is said that before the war one could leave a wallet somewhere and it would not be taken, however, presently there are some people out there with bad intentions, so one must be careful. There is a story of a 22-year old woman who walked the pilgrimage six years ago and was robbed three times. It is very dangerous for a female pilgrim to travel by herself. Also advice contained within Shikoku Hachihakkasho from 1972 suggests not carrying a lot of money on you that can be easily taken. 

In the late 20th Century, what many consider the best ever guidebook was created. It is produced by by the Pilgrim Path Preservation Cooperative Association (Henromichi hozon kyorokukai へんろみち保存協力会) under the direction of Tateki Miyazaki (宮崎建樹). This 2-volume set was first published in 1990 with the 6th edition being published in 2004. It is estimated that over 40,000 copies have been sold and these books have become the standard texts to read, take and follow if one is preparing
to walk the Shikoku pilgrimage route. Volume I contains ways on how to prepare for
the trip with the latter part containing information about each temple, and Volume 2 is
an extremely detailed map of the entire route with a list of places to stay. Miyazaki has
included information regarding such things as: how to prevent theft; how to reserve
rooms; how to properly prepare for the trip; how to wrap sore feet; etiquette at the
temples. He also includes a section on the do's and don'ts of the pilgrimage and presents
commandments that should be obeyed while being a pilgrim. Besides this book, many
other forms of travel literature, such as travelogues, maps, Internet sites, guidebooks
had been created in the past decade to offer assistance to the continually increasing
number of people wanting to do the Shikoku pilgrimage each year.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of the Edo period until the present day, it is obvious that
guidebooks, gazetteers, travelogues and other travel literature have been an important
source of practical information for the traveler wanting to embark on a journey, whether
it is along the Tōkaidō, to the Ise Shrine or around the Shikoku pilgrimage route. As
well, it is evident that throughout the ages, as more and more people participated in
travel, the amount of available literature has increased and that warnings to travelers
have appeared in such books with more frequency. Warnings against people who
intended to take advantage of travelers and pilgrims. Asai Ryoi said more than three
hundred years ago that, "To travel along the long roads in the countryside remember
that there are many things that will make one happy or mad, or things that are
interesting, sad, scary, dangerous or funny."
Obviously pilgrims to the Shikoku Pilgrimage route were not different in their experiences from those traveling along others routes. Thus, people would use travel literature to read of other people’s experiences, to help them prepare for the journey and to assist them during the trip. As well as to warn of possible problems that might occur.

This examination on the history of travel literature on the Shikoku Pilgrimage route has demonstrated that not only has there been an abundance of material available to use for potential pilgrims over the past three hundred years, but also that warnings have been repeatedly offered against ‘slippery’ people as described by Engelbert Kaempfer in 1691 or ‘sharks that masqueraded as a pilgrim’ as described by Oliver Statler in 1971. It is clear that such deceiving people have existed throughout the ages and will continue to exist unfortunately casting a dark image on this religious journey yet not affecting the numbers of pilgrims who choose to embark on this pilgrimage.


Maeda. 126.


Maeda. 126.


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