

Publishing Kabukiland

Late Edo Culture and Kyokutei Bakin's *Yakusha meissho zue*

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THE PUBLICATION of *Yakusha meissho zue* 戯子名所図会 by Tsuruya Kiemon 鶴屋喜右衛門 on the first day of 1800 (January 25 in the solar calendar) altered the way publishers produced illustrated guidebooks to the kabuki theater.¹ In emulation of this imaginative three-volume work, other publishers based in Edo as well as their rivals in Ōsaka wasted no time in printing similar large-format deluxe guidebooks to enhance their inventories of publications related to the theater. Many such books appeared during the same year, featuring new *mitate* schemes in the treatment of kabuki, as had *Yakusha meissho zue*, which was the first theater book (*gekisho* 劇書) to utilize the strategies of illustrated gazetteers (*meissho zue* 名所図会).

Before year's end, Kiemon printed an expensive color edition—clear testament to the first edition's commercial success. Now the monochrome illustrations by Utagawa Toyokuni I 歌川豊国 (1769–1825) stood out even more as red, green, and yellow visualizations of a strange landscape created in collaboration with the book's author, Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 (1767–1848), who wrote the clever explanatory prose. Bakin's idea of fashioning a world in which the theaters and actors of Edo constituted famous places (*meissho* 名所) in a natural-looking topography represented a compelling innovation.²

What was the significance of this minor breakthrough in early-modern Japanese print culture? By focusing attention on the way *Yakusha meissho zue* blends kabuki culture and geographical description, much can be learned about the elastic boundaries of theater books, the artistic versatility of Toyokuni as an illustrator, and the experimental early career of Bakin, who went on to become one of the nineteenth century's most celebrated writers of fiction. Such an approach would be useful for

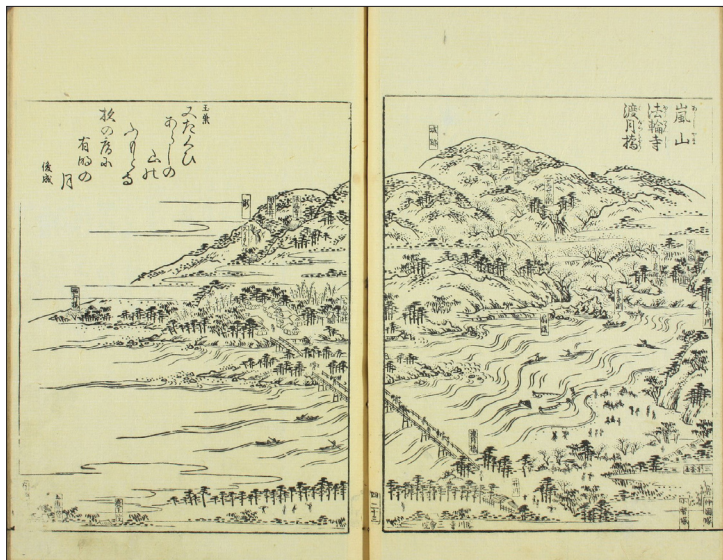


Fig. 1. A view of Arashiyama. From *Miyako meissho zue*, vol. 4. Waseda University Library.

articulating the evolving sophistication of illustrated books at a historical moment often considered to be a cultural nadir sagging under the stultifying censorship policies of the Kansei period (1789–1801).

But what might a contextualized examination of *Yakusha meissho zue* reveal about Japanese society and culture more generally at the turn of the century? In particular, what made it possible for the wildly popular culture of kabuki to become synthesized with the matter-of-fact structures of thought and representation operative in illustrated gazetteers? This study addresses both sets of concerns—*Yakusha meissho zue* as cultural development and historical event—by giving an account of how the book came into existence and what it ultimately set forth in image and text.

The first section describes illustrated gazetteer publishing in the late eighteenth century and offers an assessment of the revamped genre's innovative conventions. The next section examines Bakin's own relationship to illustrated gazetteers, highlighting his critical views about their handling of historical geography in particular. The account then turns to a discussion of the specific economic, political, and social factors that motivated Bakin to take on a project like *Yakusha meissho*

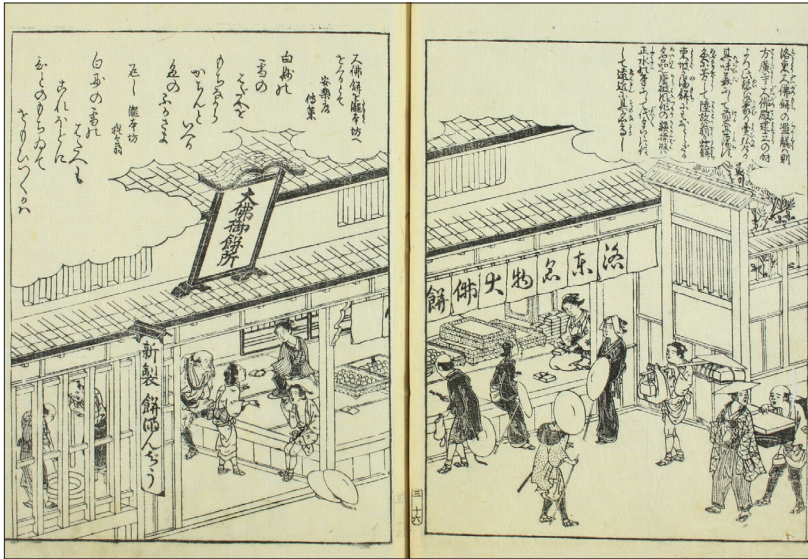


Fig. 2. A shop selling Great Buddha Mochi. From *Miyako meisho zue*, vol. 3. Waseda University Library.

zue. And in the fourth and final section, analysis of the images and text in *Yakusha meisho zue* reveals the book's historical significance as a strategic hybridization of illustrated gazetteers and kabuki culture.

ILLUSTRATED GAZETTEERS IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In 1780, twenty years before the publication of *Yakusha meisho zue*, Yoshinoya Tamehachi 吉野屋為八 introduced readers to a new kind of popular geography with the publication of *Miyako meisho zue* 都名所図会. Initially reluctant to publish the book, Tamehachi was eventually convinced to assume the financial risk. Akisato Ritō 秋里籬島, who proposed the book, had insisted that an illustrated encyclopedic compendium of Kyoto's famous places would appeal to a latent market of readers residing beyond the city or visiting it as tourists.³ The first of many more books like it to be compiled by Ritō, the six-volume gazetteer presented hundreds of sightseeing destinations located in and around the imperial capital with straightforward prose and sharply rendered realistic illustrations by Takehara Shunchōsai 竹原春朝齋. Together with showcasing the visual characteristics of many different kinds of sites renowned for everything from hoary poetic associations (e.g., Arashiyama, a moun-

tain prominent in traditional poetry; Fig. 1) to current commercial appeal (e.g., a shop selling “Great Buddha Mochi” near Tōdai-ji; Fig. 2), Ritō used his commentaries to historicize each place with as much credibility as possible, which meant prodigal but pragmatic inclusion of any useful source, whether it be an ancient history, a poem, a temple record, or the words of an elderly local. Even farfetched miracle stories were marshaled for the cause, not only as qualified evidence for making historical claims about the origins of places and their names, but also as proof that certain places did indeed have an historical record.

As a form of spatial historiography marketed expressly to a mass readership of literate sophisticates and less educated readers alike, *Miyako meisho zue* and the many other illustrated gazetteers it inspired provided a powerful stimulant to the growing interest across the Japanese archipelago in the interrelatedness of historical knowledge and geography. In contrast to illustrated gazetteers of previous generations, the new ones presented truly comprehensive topographical coverage of particular areas, much more realistic pictorial detail, a thoroughly objective tone, and a new depth of cumulative archival research.

Ever since Hayashi Razan 林羅山 had completed the Tokugawa period's first gazetteer, *Honchō chirishi ryaku* 本朝地理志略, in 1643 as a gift for Korean envoys, the number, scale, and sophistication of geographical treatises produced by the *bakufu* and individual *han* had steadily grown. Those made during the Kyōhō period (1716–1736), particularly *Gokinai shi* 五畿内志, drew inspiration from the large geographical archive imported by the *bakufu* from China during the reign of Tokugawa Yoshimune 徳川吉宗. According to Shirai Tetsuya, these treatises were designed to meet various political, economic, and juridical needs, ultimately providing models for the many geographical studies conducted by different *han* administrations in the last decades of the eighteenth century.⁴ As is well known, some of these projects were pursued with a new sense of political urgency in response to the arrival of menacing foreign ships. In 1792, for example, Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信 famously ordered a comprehensive coastal defense survey, and, in 1803, he followed up in much the same spirit of military preparedness by directing all *han* as well as *bakufu* administered lands to compile exhaustive gazetteers. One of the consequences of this surge in state-sponsored geographical investigation was widespread exposure and documentation of the past. But apart from state-driven projects,

unofficial investigations by scholars, literati, monks, and travelers benefited from and contributed to this broad-based effort to locate the past in particular places.⁵ Ruins were sought out and restored. New monuments were built. Temples and shrines reexamined their records. Travelers wrote accounts of their historical findings. New maps were made.

Illustrated gazetteers like *Miyako meisho zue* played a major role in publicizing the cumulative yields of these official and unofficial investigations of geography, while also introducing new famous places and providing fresh perspectives on old ones. Boosted by this encyclopedic functionality, the commercial performance of the book bore out Ritō's prediction that it would be a hit. Upwards of 4,000 copies were sold during its first year in print—a statistic usually associated with runaway bestselling *kana* booklets (*kanazōshi*) and single sheet woodblock prints. *Miyako meisho zue* was so successful, in fact, that a sequel titled *Shūi Miyako meisho zue* 拾遺都名所図会 was printed six years later, in 1786, filling in gaps and providing representations of additional places of interest in Kyoto.

Tamehachi, Ritō, and Shunchōsai could not have known how timely the books would turn out to be, for in 1788 a fire burned down much of the city, including the imperial palace. In the aftermath of the destruction, which was widely interpreted as a terrible portent for the realm according to the western observer Isaac Titsingh, those who wished to visit an unscathed Kyoto would have to rely on their memories and imaginations.⁶ Fortunately for them, *Miyako meisho zue* and its sequel would help, since it preserved the city in a comprehensive documentary record with accurately sketched illustrations. The potential for the books to play a safeguarding archival role for both the distant and recent past would not have been lost on Ritō, since in the aftermath of the fire he was recruited to help restore the charred imperial gardens in his capacity as garden design expert.

A boom in illustrated gazetteer production ensued. By 1800, twenty-one titles containing the words “*meisho zue*” and scores more with different titles but comparable content and form were in circulation, providing readers with an extensive range of geographical content from Sendai to Nagasaki to China. Widely available through networks of booksellers and book lenders around the country, the books exerted considerable influence on a generation of readers, writers, and artists. Moreover, the readership of illustrated gazetteers comprised a broad

demographic group that included men, women, and children of different social statuses, such as low- to high-ranking samurai, rōnin writers, elite rural farmers, and urban commoners.⁷

The influence and stature of illustrated gazetteers was made clear in *Ehon ikoku ichiran* 絵本異国一覽, a book published in 1802 that showcases foreign countries in single illustrations, with Japan represented by an illustration of a lively bookstore selling illustrated gazetteers along with other popular titles of the time. For the book's editor Shunkōen Hanamaru 春光園花丸 and illustrator Okada Gyokuzan 岡田玉山, print culture was emblematic of Japanese civilization, and illustrated gazetteers were integral to that print culture.

BAKIN, ILLUSTRATED GAZETTEERS, AND HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

The documentary source for deriving the 4,000-copy sales figure for *Miyako meisho zue* is *Ibun zakkō* 異聞雑稿, a collection of essays by Bakin published between 1833 and 1836. In the same essay, Bakin describes how Tamehachi recovered his initial investment in the first year of publication; demand for the book was of such a high degree that he sold it as loose sheets of paper with string and covers for the eager purchasers to bind on their own. So keen was Bakin's interest in *Miyako meisho zue* as a result that he wrote about the working relationship between its publisher, editor, and illustrator, which he describes in the following way.

Tamehachi invited Ritō and Shunchōsai to occupy a side room in his home. Here he had meals served to them three times a day, offered them tea and sweets in the afternoon, and entertained them with sake and fish from time to time. Before too long, Tamehachi took a look at their writings and drawings and was thrilled. They would often stay at Tamehachi's house for ten days on end without a break, but when growing weary they requested time off to be with their wives and children.⁸

For Bakin, who was busy producing the 106-volume historical tale *Nansō Satomi hakkenden* 南総里見八犬伝 between 1814 and 1842, such accommodating and uninterrupted stretches of time to work on a book must have seemed attractive. It certainly would have seemed so for those involved in making *Edo meisho zue* 江戸名所図会, the publication of which in 1834 and 1836 had prompted Bakin to include his reflections on *Miyako meisho zue* in *Ibun zakkō*.

Edo meissho zue, a monumental achievement in twenty volumes compiled by three generations of editors, represented the culmination of the form devised by Ritō, Shunchōsai and Tamehachi half a century earlier. Saitō Yukio 斎藤幸雄, the city headman of Kanda Kiji-chō 神田雛子町 and sections of Mikawa-chō 三河町, secured permission to publish the ambitious book in the 1790s after reading *Miyako meissho zue*, wishing to do better for Edo than what Ritō had done for Kyoto. But Yukio died before reaching his objective. Saitō Yukitaka 斎藤幸孝 inherited the project from his father, moving it closer to completion by managing the design of illustrations by Hasegawa Settan 長谷川雪旦 and his son Hasegawa Settei 長谷川雪堤. But like his father Yukio, Yukitaka died before he could make a clean copy, and so it fell to his son Saitō Gesshin 斎藤月岑 to shepherd the revised and corrected manuscript into the hands of the publisher Suharaya Mohei 須原屋茂兵衛. Gesshin, like his father and grandfather before him, had somehow managed to work on the ambitious project while tending to his time-consuming duties as city headman, but it had taken him years to do so.

Bakin recalls this compilation history in another essay from *Ibun zakkō*, in which he goes on to judge the book a success before adding the following revealing observations about his personal relationship to *Edo meissho zue*.

If *Edo meissho zue* had been published in the Kansei period [1789-1801], at the time when various illustrated gazetteers were in fashion, its price would have been much higher.⁹ I doubt readers now would find it particularly special if it were not for the illustrations, since there is already the expanded version of *Edo shi*.¹⁰ Fortunately, the splendid pictures in *Edo meissho zue* make for great armchair travel. I have met the artist Settan but once, nevertheless the likes of his detailed drawings have not been seen up until now. Had Hokusai¹¹ been the illustrator instead, the illustrations could not have been any better. Of the three generations of editors, I never knew Yukio or Gesshin, but I did meet Yukitaka. He started performing duties as a book censor in the Bunka period [1804-1818]. When visiting me for assistance in evaluating poetry by the Reizei,¹² he asked if I could help him find a way to meet Kameda Bōsai¹³ of Negishi and ask his opinion about the compilation of *Edo meissho zue*. The copyist Shimaoka¹⁴ came to show me sketches of the fishing village in Funamachi for the book, which I think was in Bunka 5 or 6 [1808 or 1809]. I have been hearing rumors about the editors since the Kansei period. A book compiled by three generations over the course of forty years is truly rare.¹⁵

Bakin's knowledge of *Edo meisho zue* is no superficial thing. He shows himself to be a sympathetic critic of the book, one who played the role of consultant to its lead illustrator, second editor, and copyist. Although the prose sections did not particularly impress him, since they duplicated the content of another book, he thought the illustrations were effective and lent the book its special power, which he characterizes here and elsewhere as the capacity to transport the imagination of readers to the sites of Edo. He also understood the commercial potential of such a book, and he lamented the fact that it had not been published at a more advantageous time, that is, when *Yakusha meisho zue*, his own adaptation of an illustrated gazetteer, had been published.

Despite his general favorable opinion of *Edo meisho zue*, Bakin does not refrain from making pointed criticisms about what he perceived to be its shortcomings, such as sloppy proofreading, misspelled words, inappropriately used diction, and organizational problems like the absence of section names and volume numbers on each page. As for content, Bakin is perplexed by the dearth of prose explanations for the many illustrations of the Sumida River appearing throughout the book. He complains that the book makes too much of the city's outskirts, and not enough of its urban center. He adds, moreover, that the coverage of the outskirts is regionally imbalanced anyway; the book ranges all the way to the southwestern border of Musashino, but only extends a few villages in other directions.

For Bakin, these are avoidable faults that mar a noble undertaking, but his most detailed criticisms—and the ones most relevant to our understanding of *Yakusha meisho zue*—are addressed to the handling of historical claims made about famous places. His first example is taken from the commentary on the residence of Nakarai Bokuyō 半井卜養 (1607–1678), a *bakufu* doctor and celebrated *kyōka* (comic *waka*) poet. The problem is with the poem that the editors cite as having been composed by Bokuyō:

Bokuyō wa	For Bokuyō
hondō to koso	internal medicine
omoishi ni	is the way to go,
umichi o toru wa	but is not surgery
geka ga nozomi ka	best for extracting pus?

The editors defend their attribution, which is meant to give the reader

a sense of the man who made the place famous, by dismissing a claim made in an earlier gazetteer, *Edo sunago* 江戸砂子 (1732), edited by Kikuoka Senryō 菊岡沾涼, that Bokuyō did not write this poem. Bakin responds that *Edo sunago* was in fact correct in questioning the identity of the poet, and that the editors of *Edo meisho zue* were wrong in assuming it to have been composed by Bokuyō.

The second and extremely detailed example Bakin gives of a dubious historical claim made in *Edo meisho zue* concerns Shibaura 芝浦, located just north of Shinagawa on the shoreline. To begin with, he notes, the editors identify the etymology for Shibaura as “grass turf” (shiba 芝), citing for proof the following poem composed by Ōta Dōkan 太田道灌 in the year 1480 when he made a stop at Shibaura during a trip he recounts in *Heian kikō* 平安紀行:

tsuyu shigeki	Prodding my horse
michi no shibafu o	to tread through
fumichirashi	the turf on the road
koma ni makasuru	drenched in dew—
akekure no sora	the sky at daybreak.

Bakin admits that using this poem for etymological proof is reasonable, but nevertheless notes the inadequacy of doing so in light of the editor’s groundless dismissal of a passage from the travelogue *Nankō chawa* 南向茶話 (1754), in which Nankōtei 南向亭 writes that elderly people living in Shibaura told him that the place took its name from “brushwood” (*shiba* 柴) gathered to construct racks for drying seaweed. Bakin considers this account to be persuasive enough, but emphasizes his point by citing a reference made in *Sarashina nikki* 更級日記 to “bamboo stalks” (*takeshiba* 竹柴) used in the construction of seaweed drying racks, then by arguing that Hibiya 日比谷 took its name from *hibi*, the word used by locals to refer to the same kind of seaweed drying racks used in nearby Shibaura. In arguing that the homophonous *shiba* refers to fibrous plants used for constructing drying racks, not to grass turf, Bakin refutes the larger claim about the natural history of the place made by the editors that seaweed was never harvested in the vicinity of Shibaura, but rather only in Asakusa 浅草. Pressing on, Bakin quips that Asakusa itself took its name from seaweed sent there from Shibaura to sell to pilgrims visiting Sensō-ji 浅草寺 during the Kamakura period.

Why Bakin should be so argumentative about these matters is something he himself addressed explicitly. His purpose in pointing out

misleading historical claims about different places is not to keep readers from enjoying the book, but to make sure unsuspecting readers, especially women and children, realize that some of the prose explanations might be misleading or erroneous. This warning to be on guard for editorial misrepresentation of historical sources may indicate a pedantic streak, but it also suggests that Bakin thought the book was influential in shaping the way people thought of the relationship between places, place-names, and history.

BAKIN'S DECISION TO COMPILE *YAKUSHA MEISHO ZUE*

In 1799, a little over thirty years before Bakin published these retrospective observations, his mentor Santō Kyōden 山東京伝 suggested that he take advantage of the popularity of illustrated gazetteers by coming up with a variation of his own.¹⁶ The chances of making money from such a book were just too great to pass up. At that point, Bakin may have already begun hearing rumors about *Edo meisho zue*, even if Settan, Yukitaka, or Shimaoka had not yet consulted him. In any case, he was fully aware of *Miyako meisho zue* and the trend in commercially successful books it had inspired. Kyōden, for his part, had published his version of an illustrated gazetteer in 1797, with *Sansai zue osana kōshaku* 三歳図会稚講釈, a comic illustrated book (*kibyōshi*) that parodied *Wakan sansai zue* 和漢三才図会, itself an adaptation of the Chinese encyclopedia *Sancai tuihui* 三才図会 and the book acknowledged by Ritō as one of his inspirations for *Miyako meisho zue*.¹⁷

Illustrated gazetteers may have been worth imitating for commercial reasons, but utilizing the genre was advantageous for other reasons as well in the decades following publication of *Miyako meisho zue*. It is well known that the political climate of the 1790s was one in which writers and artists were forced to exercise extreme caution. Under Sadanobu's Kansei Reforms, the *bakufu* issued new censorship edicts in 1790 to preempt publications critical of the state, in particular the boldly satirical *kibyōshi* that had appeared in 1788 and 1789. The first writer to feel the sting of the edicts was none other than Kyōden, whose books were singled out to make him an effective example for others—since he was by all accounts the most popular writer of the time—rather than for any politically sensitive content they contained. As a result, he spent fifty days in manacles, his father was reprimanded, the publisher

Tsutaya Jūzaburō 蔦屋重三郎 paid heavy fines, three of his books were banned, and the two book guild leaders responsible for approving the books under misleading titles were banished from Edo.¹⁸ In his study of Edo writers, Bakin himself noted the censorship of these notorious books and the titles of many more banned during the 1790s.¹⁹

So when a chastised and ever more cautious Kyōden approached Bakin with the suggestion for him to publish an illustrated gazetteer on the topic of kabuki, the prospect must have seemed prudent. Such a book about the floating world would be associated by title and formal conventions with a genre that was politically innocuous since it tended to portray the cultural geography of Japan as happily free from political friction and social unrest—exactly the stable environment the *bakufu* hoped to achieve. Publishers of illustrated gazetteers also appeared exemplary from the state's perspective. For example, Mohei, the publisher who accepted Saitō Yukio's proposal to publish *Edo meisho zue* in the 1790s, was no ordinary purveyor of books. As an officially authorized publisher (*goyō shoshi* 御用書肆), Mohei and others in the Suharaya group of publishers held exclusive rights for selling educational books to samurai and were even permitted to enter the residences of *daimyō*.²⁰ In addition, many of the editors, illustrators, preface writers, and backers of illustrated gazetteers were drawn from the ranks of samurai.

Associating his name with such a respectable genre and social network during a period of political crackdown could only have appealed to Bakin, who wished to maintain an unobjectionable reputation for social reasons. In short, he hoped to return to the samurai status he was born into, but had lost through no fault of his own.²¹ His father had been a low-ranking retainer in the Nabegorō 鍋五郎 branch of the Matsudaira family, but left his family in straitened circumstances upon his death in 1775. In order to earn an income, Bakin married into a footwear seller's household in 1793, thereby giving up his samurai status for that of a merchant. As long as his two older brothers, Keichū 鷄中 and Rabun 羅文, remained alive and theoretically capable of occupying samurai status, Bakin endured his social demotion tolerably. But when Keichū died in 1796, followed by Rabun in 1798, he despaired of ever returning to samurai status himself, and took measures to give his son Sōhaku 宗伯 an education in medicine with the hope of one day placing him in a samurai household and thereby restoring their family name. It was good strategy for Bakin to profit from a foray into the untainted

genre of illustrated gazetteers because he would thereby confer upon himself a modicum of socially sanctioned prestige, especially now that commercially produced illustrated gazetteers had begun influencing large-scale state sponsored geography projects like *Shinpen Musashi fudoki* 新編武蔵風土記.²²

However, a book about kabuki was not without political risks in the city of Edo, even in the last half of the eighteenth century when, as Andrew Gerstle argues, official *bakufu* scorn for kabuki was undercut by the unofficial popularity it enjoyed among the samurai class.²³ The Kansei Reforms cast a mood of cautiousness over Edo, since it was the center and symbol of a regime attempting to reassert its legitimacy, dominance, and intellectual discipline. For Moriyama Takamori 森山孝盛, a high-ranking *bakufu* official, the reforms thankfully put an end to the abandon with which samurai threw themselves into the delights of kabuki.²⁴ But despite its diminished influence and inevitable political precariousness, kabuki was still the leading force in popular culture, poised to become even more influential in the first three decades of the nineteenth century owing to the appeal of masterpieces like *Tōkaidō Yotsuya kaidan* 東海道四谷怪談 (first performed in 1825) by Tsuruya Nanboku 鶴屋南北.²⁵ So it made sense for Bakin, a kabuki fan himself, to give its actors in Edo a high-profile treatment of his own, all the more so because harnessing illustrated gazetteers to do so challenged those like Ritō in Kamigata who had used the genre to reassert the cultural caché of their own beloved region. What better rhetorical way was there for Bakin to proclaim the cultural capital of Edo than by presenting its celebrated actors—men responsible for swinging kabuki's center of gravity away from Osaka in the 1780s—on a topographical stage rooted in but extending far beyond the city? And what more mischievous way to do so than by fashioning this triumphant stage from the effective conventions of a genre developed to celebrate Kamigata?

YAKUSHA MEISHO ZUE AS STRATEGIC HYBRID

The illustrated frontispiece to *Yakusha meisho zue* introduces the author, Bakin, as an unshaven traveler wearing a broad-brimmed sedge hat (Fig. 3). The acrostic Chinese poem (*kanshi*) inscribed above his head, composed by Santō Kyōzan 山東京山, Kyōden's younger brother, describes the journey Bakin embarks on, while also spelling out his four-



Fig. 3. Illustrated frontispiece. From *Yakusha meisho zue*, vol. 1. Waseda University Library.

character name with the first characters of each of the four lines—a clue that Toyokuni will be lacing the book with visual puzzles:²⁶

曲几弄彤擢世塵	Playing with a brush at a crooked desk, removed from the world's dust.
亭窓月照野雲心	Moonlight through the window, the heart a cloud over fields.
馬蹄煙裡罩楊柳	The misty wake of horse hooves, the willow trees shrouded.
琴書耽思一老身	An old man at <i>koto</i> and books, deep in thought.

By way of a desk, music, and books, Bakin travels the kind of dream journey invoked in the prefaces and introductions to nearly all illustrated gazetteers, beginning with *Miyako meisho zue*. The frontispiece's framing band of pictorial detail reinforces this idea with books that resemble illustrated gazetteers in shape and cover color, and with the four directional deities (*shijin* 四神), which provided *Miyako meisho zue* with its layout rubric.²⁷ As for Bakin's specific destination, the message written on the paper before him—"submitted by an interloping pip-



Fig. 4. “The Three Famous Theaters of Edo.” From *Yakusha meisho zue*, vol. 1. Waseda University Library.

squeak at the theater”—indicates that the space he moves through is the theater. It also suggests that his short stature prevents him from getting a clear view of the stage.²⁸ The best he can do under the circumstances is learn from the taller spectators crowded around him, which in one sense is a dutiful expression of authorial modesty on the part of Bakin. But in another sense it suggests that instead of touring the realistically illustrated topographies of conventional illustrated gazetteers, he will be passing through an opaque theatrical world requiring guidance.

The journey begins with Toyokuni’s illustration of Edo’s three famous theaters—the Nakamura-za 中村座, the Morita-za 森田座, and the Ichimura-za 市村座 (Fig. 4). Compressed into a comically smaller area of the city than they actually occupied, the cramped theaters resemble the crowded people gathered in the street. Again, a poem explains why:

kite mitsu no	Crammed in to see
yagura ni shigeki	the three towers—
ashiganae	a foot stuck
fumikomu sune mo	in a tripod kettle,
nukenu kao mise	it’s opening day.

The three towers rising above the fray display the names of the theaters, and in the commentary by Bakin are likened to the green petal-like

parts of a flower that grow underneath or in between the petals, implying that they support the colorful part of the flowers, that is, the actors. The central concern of the commentary in this entry is to describe the origins of the theaters as a single entity, and thereby explain why such throngs of people turn out for opening day.

The commentary begins with a scene of three clumps of grass growing on a field in front of Nan'en Hall 南円堂 at Kōfuku-ji 興福寺 in faraway Nara. After the grasses had been growing there for a long time, a certain person named Nagoya Sanza 名古屋山三 transplanted them to Yoshino 吉野, then again to the Shijō riverbed 四条河原 in Kyoto. The reader is expected to infer that Sanza was the legendary actor of yore who performed a kabuki dance, first in Yoshino, then in Kyoto. Bakin goes on to describe how three springs appeared suddenly one day where the grasses had been uprooted and gushed eastward toward Edo. They were known as the three “field springs” (*shibai* 芝井) of Edo, and anyone drinking from them would find their sadness turn to happiness, their lives refreshed, and their minds washed clean. If someone threw coins into the wells, the water poured forth afresh. Even the penniless were allowed access to the springs. Eventually the water collected in Edo, requiring the construction of a bridge, and now people refer to the rejuvenating “field springs” as “theaters” (*shibai* 芝居).

Bakin plays the straight-faced chronicler, as it were, by mimicking the commentaries of conventional illustrated gazetteers, but he lets the reader in on the joke by punning on the word *shibai*,²⁹ and by suggesting imaginative origins for theater features like the flower runway (*hanamichi* 花道), which in his account was once a functional bridge built over the running water of Edo kabuki. Soon the exposé moves into theater interiors, and, paradoxically, this is when the kabuki topography begins to open up as a topographical expanse. The next illustration, entitled “View of the Stage at the Three Theaters” (*Sanza butai fūkei no zu* 三座戲廂風景の図), depicts a natural landscape replete with rice paddies, trees, a river, clouds, small buildings, and distant mountains, but with cartouches that identify these topographical features as elements of a theater’s built space (Fig. 5). What seems only to be a landscape is actually a kabuki theater oriented sideways with the stage located at the far right and the rear of the theater located at the far left. For example, the cartouche for the “Great Pillar Pine” (*Daijinbashira no matsu* 大



Fig. 5. “View of a Stage from the Three Theaters.” From *Yakusha meisho zue*, vol. 1. Waseda University Library.

臣柱の松) refers to a small grove of trees on the “stage.” For the reader who might not know what this means, Bakin writes that these are old magical trees; sometimes they yield plum blossoms, sometimes cherry blossoms. In other words, these trees are *really* the large pillars that flank the kabuki stage and indicate, with decorative flowers and foliage, the four seasons during live performances. The next cartouche in an upward counterclockwise motion reads “Arhat Hall” (*Rakandō* 羅漢堂) and refers to small seated stone figures on the path, which link up metaphorically to the cheapest seats in the theater, located at stage right, where they look like rows of statues lined up in a temple from the perspective of all the other seats in the theater. To take one more example, the cartouche labeling the distant mountains reads “Balcony Peak” (*Sajiki ga take* 棧敷ヶ嶽). Again the commentary provides a clue: “you can’t hear anything if you climb to the top.” The reader is meant to imagine the mountains as box seats high up on the sides of the theater far away from stage.

The cartouches, pictures, and commentaries work together in this way for several more elements in the illustration, guiding the reader through the different parts of a generalized theater interior. It is an

opportunity for Toyokuni to display his visual wit.³⁰ The geometric design of the illustration—executed by way of bridges positioned at right angles, the straight line of trees in the center, and the movement of the river at left and the clouds at right toward a vanishing point—refers to the frequent use of one-point perspective in *ukiyo-e* depictions of theater interiors by many artists of the period, including Toyokuni himself. In such prints, the gaze focuses on the stage at the very center of the design, but here, since the stage is rotated sideways, the focal point becomes the lithe top-heavy trees in the center, which, given the *mitate*, conjure up audience members, not actors, and fashionably clad women with elaborately large coiffeurs at that. This is but the opening gambit of Toyokuni's virtuosic designs for *Yakusha meissho zue*, for in the remaining illustrations, attention narrows to the kabuki actors posing as famous places. The overall effect of the illustrations, which contributed to Toyokuni's reputation as one of the most skilled illustrators of the period, reveals his mastery of actor portrait *nigao-e* 似顔絵, for which he was also already famous.³¹

In subsequent illustrations, the actors may seem to be posing in the ambient spaces of landscape, but various aspects of their identities, which were made known to kabuki fans through the printed ephemera supporting their celebrity—family crests, haiku names, physical characteristics, and performed roles—are in fact the very stuff that constitutes the landscape's features. This explains why an illustration of the elderly Ichikawa Danjūrō V 市川団十郎 features a cherry tree blooming with clusters of noses rather than flowers: Danjūrō V was known not only as a “flower of Edo” (*Edo no hana* 江戸の花) for his brilliant acting career, but also for his prodigious nose, to which the title of the illustration refers, i.e., “The Nose of Edo” (*Edo no hana* 江戸の鼻) (Fig. 6). Or, to take another example, it explains why an illustration titled “View of Iwai Mountain” (*Iwaizan fūkei* 岩井山風景) depicting three female-role actors (*onnagata*) features hair pins as clouds, a hair comb as a crescent moon, and a gigantic wig as a mountain labeled in the cartouche as “Osen ka Mikazuki yama” (おせんか三日月山) (Figure 7). The actor on the right, Iwai Hanshirō IV 岩井半四郎, was widely known for playing the role of Mikazuki Osen in the play titled *Ōfunamori ebi no kaomise* 大船盛蝦顔見世 at the Kawarasaki-za 川原崎座, which was located near the Morita-za in Edo. What we see in this illustration, then, is an actor's qualities constituting the sky in a landscape.



Fig. 6. “The Nose of Edo.” From *Yakusha meissho zue*, vol. 2. Waseda University Library.

Many more actors are portrayed in this way, providing the reader with a range of text-image puzzles to solve while becoming acquainted with, learning more about, or simply enjoying the biographical pagantry of kabuki in Edo. In one form or another, nearly thirty actors appear in *Yakusha meissho zue*, all from actor family lines with strong professional connections to kabuki theaters in Edo. Bakin allots a great deal of space to the Ichikawa line, for example, but also features actors from the Matsumoto, Bandō, Onoe, Segawa, Nakamura, Osagawa, and Iwai. Some of these actors of course performed outside Edo during their careers, but all of them were indebted to the city for their celebrity. For Bakin, the group of actors he included forms the nucleus of Edo kabuki, without which it could not have rivaled and eventually bested the theaters of Kamigata.

Besides sharing Edo as their home, many of the featured actors were elderly or recently deceased when *Yakusha meissho zue* came out. This was no accident. The strong commemorative quality running through *Yakusha meissho zue*, directed at these actors, was occasioned by the sudden death of Danjūrō VI 団十郎 in 1799 at the age of twenty-one.³² With the inevitable death of Danjūrō V in the foreseeable future, the



Fig. 7. “View of Iwai Mountain.” From *Yakusha meissho zue*, vol. 3. Waseda University Library.

Ichikawa Danjūrō line faced a major threat. Now its survival depended on the healthy maturation of Danjūrō VII 団十郎, the grandson of Danjūrō V portrayed tenderly in Figure 6. Particularly poignant, then, is Bakin’s description of the young Danjūrō as a famous mountain with auspicious geological origins.³³

Bakin’s central strategy of articulating amusing narratives about the origin of each “famous place” in a topographical mode takes on new meaning in light of this memorializing gesture. Embedded in these humorous topographical configurations is a serious attempt to make the current theater invulnerable to forgetfulness by furnishing it with mythical origins—a preservationist mode of remembrance motivated by what Jonathan Zwicker has called “the fear of effacement,” which drove writers in the early nineteenth century to save the contemporary world of kabuki from oblivion by documenting its ephemera.³⁴ In his role as myth-making historiographer, Bakin resembles chroniclers from bygone ages who dignified shrines, imperial lines, and cultural heroes with fantastic origin stories—flattering narratives and hagiography that would be deployed by antiquarian historians and tourist guides in

later periods to endow select sites with auras of cultural importance. *Yakusha meisho zue* externalizes the world of Edo kabuki as an incredible but durably natural topography transcending the political borders of the city. And yet, within the cosmos of the book, this boundless land grounds the floating world of kabuki in a discourse of origins.

CONCLUSION

Donald Shively's influential article on the development of kabuki during the first half of the Tokugawa period claims that restrictive *bakufu* interference in regulating the subject matter of plays, actor genders, and the physical spaces of theatrical production "must be given credit for accelerating or even causing the turn from vaudeville and burlesque toward dramatic art, from one-act dance pieces at best toward dramatically structured plays of five acts or more."³⁵ Though this top-down orientation to cultural history does not give nearly enough credit to the agency of those who twisted the regulations, bans, and censorship into generative constrictions for making artistically tenable and increasingly popular performances, it nevertheless helps to illuminate what the appearance of *Yakusha meisho zue* meant as an historical event. What the policy makers of the *bakufu* could not have foreseen and found impossible to control fully during the late eighteenth century onward was the effectiveness of print capitalists and their creative enablers to exempt kabuki from its dependence on the disciplined spaces of live performance, which they did by setting it forth as an evolving metaphorical framework within the ephemeral but no less real context of words and images. If *bakufu* policy squeezed kabuki into a regulatory box, then commercial publications turned it loose in the imagination.

In any case, there was little need for the authorities to regulate the publication of illustrated gazetteers like *Miyako meisho zue*. If anything, they endorsed them as a form of propitious educational entertainment on account of their reassuring portrayal of geography as the very thing that united a cheerful present with an august past to form a stable and peaceful Japan. With *Yakusha meisho zue*, Bakin, Toyokuni, and the publisher Tsuruya masterfully exploited the favorable reception of illustrated gazetteers by using the genre's physical format and conventions to package the precarious topic of kabuki, thereby forestalling any meddling by authorities during a period of heightened censorship.

Yakusha meissho zue not only engaged with kabuki in the context of print, where it was more difficult to control than in the finite spaces of theatrical performance on account of its protean novelty, but it did so in the safe context of a politically unsullied genre. The result was a book that synthesized kabuki with the deeply influential cultural geography of famous places, and in doing so masterfully exploited the enormous overlapping but distinct markets for theatrical publications and illustrated gazetteers. In its treatment of a fraught topic, *Yakusha meissho zue* successfully balanced the requirements of commercial gain, popular appeal, political approval, and artistic virtuosity.

Yakusha meissho zue spatialized the most recent history of kabuki as a game of interpretation, inviting readers to conceptualize the heroes of popular culture as monuments located in topographies of their own making. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, locating the recent and distant past in the present physical environment had become an increasingly widespread recreational activity, topic for commercial publication, and, it must be argued, epistemological goal. By 1800, as this essay has shown, the relationship between geography and history had become the viable concern, or rather surprising embodiment, of popular commercial culture, too. Access to the past through the conceptualization of place extended to pleasure seekers devoted to the ephemera of theatrical celebrity. History was now a commodified field for anyone to explore, and its methodology was symbolic play. Even interloping pipsqueaks at the theater could roam the past and make discoveries, including noses growing on trees and wigs rising up as mountains.

NOTES

1. This assessment of the impact of *Yakusha meissho zue* on the history of theater books is drawn from the analysis in Hamada Keisuke, “Kokkeibon toshite no gekisho,” *Bunkyo kokubungaku* 24 (1989): 74–90.

2. A color edition of *Yakusha meissho zue* was consulted for this essay. The edition, from which the illustrations in the figures were taken, is located at Waseda University Library under identification number ㊦13-3980.

3. Nishizawa Ippō, “Akisato Ritō okina no hanashi,” in reprint of *Denki sakusho*, in *Shin gunsho ruijū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1906), p. 183.

4. Shirai Tetsuya, *Nihon kinsei chishi hensanshi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2004), p. 115. See this monograph for a comprehensive study of geographical texts (*chishi* 地誌) produced in early modern Japan.

5. Haga Shōji, *Shisekiron: 19-seiki Nihon no chiiki shakai to rekishi ishiki* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 1998), p. 25. See this monograph for a detailed account of historical consciousness and regional society in nineteenth-century Japan.

6. Timon Screech, *Secret Memoirs of the Shoguns: Isaac Titsingh and Japan, 1779–1822* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 152–54.

7. For a detailed discussion of the readership of illustrated gazetteers produced between 1780 and 1840, see chapter three of my dissertation: Robert Goree, *Fantasies of the Real: Meisho Zue in Early Modern Japan* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 2010), pp. 95–146.

8. Takizawa Bakin, *Ibun zakkō*, in *Zoku enseki jishu*, vol. 2, ed. Iwamoto Sashichi (Tokyo: Okusho Kankōkai, 1909), pp. 278–80.

9. The price of the first edition of *Edo meisho zue* was one *ryō*, five silver *monme*. By comparison, the price of *Miyako meisho zue* was one-half *ryō*. The prices of other illustrated gazetteers has not been determined, but Bakin might be referring to expensive illustrated gazetteers like *Tōkaidō meisho zue*, which was edited by Ritō and included illustrations by several famous artists.

10. *Edo shi* 江戸志, a twenty volume geographic treatise, edited by Kondō Yoshiyasu 近藤義休 and Sena Sadao 瀬名貞雄. The revised edition Bakin refers to, and implies was published, is likely *Edo shi saizōho* 江戸志再増補, edited by Ryokuichidō Shujin 緑一堂主人, but is extant only in manuscript form.

11. Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎, a prominent *ukiyo-e* artist and one of Bakin's contemporaries.

12. The Reizei were a prominent hereditary family of *waka* poets who had served imperial courts and *bakufu* governments since the twelfth century.

13. Kameda Bōsai 亀田鵬斎, a prominent Confucian scholar and literati painter. Presumably, Yukitaka sought Bōsai's opinion about the illustrations for *Edo meisho zue*.

14. Shimaoka's full name is untraceable, but he was most likely one of many copyists who contributed to the production of *Edo meisho zue*.

15. Takizawa Bakin, *Ibun zakkō*, pp. 244–47.

16. Kyokutei Bakin, *Kinsei mono no hon Edo sakusha burui* 近世物之本江戸作者部類, quoted in Hamada Keisuke, “Kokkeibon toshite no gekisho,” p. 80.

17. Twelve years later, in 1813, Jippensha Ikku 十返舎一九 published a single-volume work titled *Edo meisho zue* 江戸名所図会, the exact same title used by the Saitō editors for their illustrated gazetteer.

18. Peter Kornicki, “Nishiki no ura: an Instance of Censorship and the Structure of Sharebon,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 32 (1977), p. 159.

19. Suwa Haruo, *Shuppan kotohajime: Edo no hon* (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1978), p. 171.

20. Yu Chang, *Publishing Culture in Eighteenth-Century Japan: The Case of the Edo Publisher Tsutaya Jūzaburō (1751–97)*, Master's Thesis (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1997), p. 33.

21. Leon M. Zolbrod, *Takizawa Bakin* (New York: Twayne, 1967), pp. 17–39. See also Thomas Glynne Walley, “I Would Rather be a Faithful Dog than an Unrighteous Man”: *Virtue and Vice in Kyokutei Bakin's Nansō Satomi hakkenden*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Ann Arbor: UMI, 2009), pp. 24–28.

22. Tsuruoka Akemi, “Kokuritsu kōbunsho kan zō ‘Shinpen Musashi fudoki’ sōzu

ni tsuite no kōsatsu (1),” *Ningen bunka ronsō* 8 (2005), pp. 1–3.

23. Andrew Gerstle, “Flowers of Edo: Eighteenth-Century Kabuki and Its Patrons,” *Asian Theatre Journal* 4 (1987), pp. 54–56.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

25. Masakatsu Gunji, “Kabuki and Its Social Background,” in *Tokugawa Japan: The Social and Economic Antecedents of Modern Japan*, ed. Chie Nakane and Shinzaburō Ōishi, trans. Conrad Totman (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1990), pp. 204–205.

26. My analysis of *Yakusha meissho zue* draws on annotations made in Daichō o Yomu Kai, ed. *Bakin no Yakusha meissho zue o yomu* (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 2001).

27. Volumes one and two of *Miyako meissho zue*, titled “Greater Capital” 平安城首 and “Lesser Capital” 平安城尾, respectively, correspond to the northern and southern sections of the city’s political center, where the imperial and *bakufu* palaces were located. Volumes three through six, the four remaining volumes, each correspond to one of the four guardian deities in the following order: Blue Dragon (*Seiryū* 青竜) to the east, White Tiger (*Byakko* 白虎) to the west, Red Phoenix (*Suzaku* 朱雀) to the south, and Black Tortoise (*Genbu* 玄武) to the north. In the frontispiece to *Yakusha meissho zue*, the deities appear, in clockwise order starting at the left: Blue Dragon, Red Phoenix, White Tiger, and Black Tortoise.

28. In Japanese, *Fumen shuju kanjō no gi* 不免侏儒觀場之議.

29. Bakin’s playful handling of the word “*shiba*” here and his commentary on the word’s etymology and use in *Edo meissho zue* suggest a point of convergence between his writing of *Yakusha meissho zue* and his critical reading of illustrated gazetteers.

30. A few years later, Toyokuni adapted this illustration to a map exhibiting the same parodic logic, in *Shibai kinmōzui* 戲場訓蒙図彙 (1803), which he collaborated on with Shikitei Sanba.

31. David Chibbett, *The History of Japanese Printing and Book Illustration* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1977), p. 183; and Sadao Kikuchi, *Utagawa Toyokuni (1769–1825)*, trans. Roy Andrew Miller (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle, 1959).

32. Takahashi Noriko, *Kusazōshi to engeki: yakusha nigaoe sōshiki o chūshin ni* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 2004), pp. 300–302.

33. Daichō o Yomu Kai, eds., *Bakin no Yakusha meissho zue o yomu*, p. 43.

34. Jonathan Zwicker, “Playbills, Ephemerata, and the Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Japan,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 35 (2008), p. 38.

35. Donald H. Shively, “*Bakufu* Versus Kabuki,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 18 (1955): 326–56.