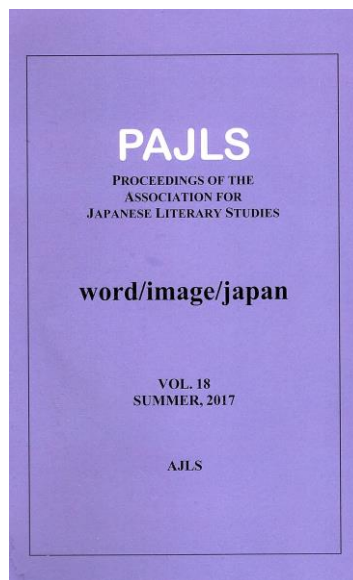


“Traversing a World of Moonlight and Blossoms:  
Tagami Kikusha’s Fifty-Three Stations of the  
Tōkaidō *Haiga* (Haikai Paintings)”

Cheryl Crowley 

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**TRAVERSING A WORLD OF MOONLIGHT AND BLOSSOMS:  
TAGAMI KIKUSHA'S FIFTY-THREE STATIONS OF THE  
TŌKAI DŌ HAIGA (HAIKAI PAINTINGS)**

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Tagami Kikusha (1753-1826) spent thirty-three years of her life as a traveler. Widowed at the age of twenty-four, she devoted the remainder of her life to the arts, with haikai at the center. Her journeys took her over the length and breadth of Japan; she sometimes took the same routes as those followed by Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694); at other times she forged new paths to meet and collaborate with some of the most prominent poets, tea practitioners, artists, and musicians of her day. She chronicled her lifetime on the road in the haibun *Taorigiku* 手折菊 (Hand-picked chrysanthemums) a four-volume journal published in 1812 which weaves together hokku, renku fragments, prose, poetry in Chinese, and paintings.

My paper considers *Taorigiku*'s second volume, a collection of *haiga* 俳画 (haikai paintings) in which Kikusha portrays the famous fifty-three stations of the Tōkaidō, where she passed on her second journey home from Edo to Chōfu 長府 (modern Yamaguchi), in 1794. Like all haiga, they combine text and image, each of which are incomplete without the other. I will discuss key examples and explore the ways that they resonate with the rest of Kikusha's diverse work.

On the one hand, the renown that Kikusha achieved for her haikai is noteworthy given that fewer than ten percent of haikai poets were female. The Bashō school attributed to their founder the dictum, "women must not be your companions in haikai — they are appropriate neither as teachers nor as disciples"<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, Kikusha's position was by no means singular. Indeed, while Kikusha was outstandingly accomplished among the women haikai poets of her time, she was just one of

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<sup>1</sup> Kinkaen Genkei 錦花園玄生, ed., *Angya jūhakkajō no okite* 行脚十八ヶ條の掟, in *Bashō-ō ichidai kagami* 芭蕉翁一代鏡 (Tokyo: Kōbunkan, 1898) 42.

many wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers who were able to make a name for herself as a poet and haikai teacher in a context frequently unwelcoming to women.

In this paper I will give a short overview of Kikusha, her travels, and her work; I will then briefly consider the significance of travel in haikai, and then discuss haiga and how to read them in *Taorigiku*.

### **Kikusha and Taorigiku**

Kikusha died at the age of seventy-four, and had an extremely productive and well-documented life. Although the two-volume set of her collected works completed in the year 2000 contains only two texts published during her lifetime, it also includes about thirty-five manuscripts of prose and poetry and thirty letters, and represents a formidable amount of material.<sup>2</sup> In this paper I will only touch briefly on Kikusha's early life and journeys, one that began in 1781 and took her from Shimonoseki as far north as Niigata, to Edo, and back again in the course of about three-and-a-half years, and the second, which became the basis for the Tōkaidō haiga series of *Taorigiku*.

Kikusha was a member of a samurai family. She was born in Tasuki, a rural area in modern Yamaguchi, and was given the name Michi. Her father, a retainer of the Chōfu 長府 domain, was a doctor. She married at 16 to a man named Murata Rinosuke 村田利之助 who was distantly related both to her mother and to her father. She and Rinosuke had no children by the time he died when she was 24. Within the next two years she settled the property from her marriage onto an adopted son and daughter-in-law, moved back in with her father and mother who had since relocated to the branch domain capital in Chōfu (Shimonoseki), and caused her name to be reentered onto her natal family register.

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<sup>2</sup> Ueno Sachiko 上野さち子, *Tagami Kikusha zenshū* 田上菊舎全集 (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 2000).

From this point it was as if she began a new existence, one that was remarkably autonomous and self-directed.<sup>3</sup>

Kikusha's father wrote kanshi and may also have been interested in haikai. Documentary evidence of Kikusha's association with other haikai poets dates from 1778, when she was 26. This is in the form of a collection of fifty-seven verses contributed by local haikai poets in celebration of her receiving her *haigō* 俳号 Kikusha.<sup>4</sup>

Three years later, when she was 29, Kikusha left for her first journey in late summer. Her first stop was Yawato Hitomaru Shrine 八幡人丸神社 in Nagato, and second stop was at the Jōdo Shinshū temple Seikōji 清光寺 in the castle town of Hagi. She took the tonsure at Seikōji. Here she also asked a local poet for a letter of introduction to Chōboen Sankyō 朝暮園傘狂 (Ōno Zejūbō 大野是什坊, 1727-1793) the sixth generation leader of the Mino haikai school 美濃派. It was Sankyō who gave her the studio name that she used for the rest of her life, Ichiji-an 一字庵.<sup>5</sup>

The sites Kikusha visited on her earliest travels were of significance both to haikai poets and to Jōdo Shinshū believers: they included areas that Bashō visited on his many journeys and were also places important in the life story of Shinran (1173-1263). Later, she visited Kyūshū several times. Cultivating relationships with haikai poets were important on these trips as well. However, by this time she focused on meeting Chinese visitors to Japan in order to develop her knowledge of kanshi and playing the koto, as well as practicing tea ceremony. The range of her acquaintance was varied, and frequently included writers, artists, and socially prominent people from a wide range of status groups. Making the most of her affiliation with the Mino school, she networked extensively with its members in this region. Her last journey was

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<sup>3</sup> Shinsō Nakagawa 中川真昭, *Tagami kikusha: Joryū haijin: Inochi o aruku yasashisa o mitsumeru* 田上菊舎: 女流俳人: いのちを歩く・やさしさをみつめる (Kyoto: Honganji Shuppansha, 2003) 4-7.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 838.

two years before her death, when she traveled from Chōfu to her birthplace in Tasuki.

*Taorigiku* was published to celebrate her 60th birthday by Kyoto publisher Tachibanaya Jihei 橘屋治兵衛. Part travel memoir, part poetry anthology, it collects examples of haikai, waka, kanshi, and prose that she created over the course of her lifetime. It also includes fragments of verse sequences in which she participated and writing addressed to her by other poets. The verses cited in this paper are all contained in the second volume. There are several versions of the haiga extant, each with some differences in terms of execution, but these differences are very subtle except for one case where a variant hokku is matched with a completely different image.

What are haiga, then? Haiga are works that combine haikai texts with drawings or paintings. They are created by either single or multiple poet-artists. They can be as simple as a single *hokku* 発句 (17-mora verse) and a few contour lines sketched in monochrome. Others are more elaborate, including handscrolls or screen paintings combining calligraphy, illustrations, and literary works running into hundreds of lines of text and multiple images.

The link between words and pictures in haiga can be straightforward, such as illustrations where the artist represents in easily recognizable visualization some scene, object, or action that is described by the text in words. A verse about Mount Fuji, for example, might be paired with the familiar cone-like outline of the great mountain. Other more challenging haiga connect text and image according to the principles governing linkages within haikai sequences, using complex chains of association which require decoding, much like puzzles.

### **Travel and Haikai**

A second topic worth considering here is this relationship between travel and haikai. I will start by drawing attention to a few comments on the subject of travel that are attributed to Bashō.

東海道の一筋しらぬ人、風雅におぼつかなし

People who do not know the Tōkaidō have no understanding of fūga. (*Sanzōshi* 三冊子; Hattori Dohō, ed. 服部土芳)<sup>6</sup>

旅は風雅の花、風雅は過客の魂

Travel is the flower of fūga; fūga is the spirit of the traveler. (*Infutagi* 韻塞, Morikawa Kyoriku, ed. 森川 許六)<sup>7</sup>

Tōkaidō, of course, is the major highway linking the city of Edo, the shōgunal administrative center, to Kyōto, the residence of the emperor. In Bashō school treatises, *fūga* 風雅 is generally viewed to be synonymous with haikai. Why did Bashō and his followers emphasize travel so much? There are a number of answers to this question. One is that they could: developments in physical and cultural infrastructure related to travel during the early modern period made it more of an option. Another is that aspects of the persona of the traveler as it was envisioned during this period were very much consistent with those that haikai poets wished to project.

Travel was increasingly large part of the life of commoners in early modern Japan. Though travel was not easy, especially during the early seventeenth century, as the decades passed roads improved, conditions became safer and accommodations more numerous. As the roads improved they were increasingly frequented by merchants, peddlers, and various service people plying their trades. Tourism, especially in the name of pilgrimage, was increasingly popular also.

Of course, as those quotations indicate, Bashō was the greatest exemplar of the haikai-travel connection. The destruction of his

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<sup>6</sup> Ebara Taizō 頼原退蔵, *Kyorai shō, Sanzōshi, Tabine ron* 去来抄・三冊子・旅寝論 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991) 89.

<sup>7</sup> Yamashita Kazumi 山下一海, *Bashō hyaku meigen* 芭蕉百名言 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Bunko, 2010) 50.

home in the great fire of 1682 gave him a reason to live an itinerant lifestyle. In pragmatic terms, moving from place to place enabled Bashō to cultivate relationships with clients and spread his message; furthermore, the philosophical and literary precedents that he found in Zen, Taoism, and the example of Japanese poets like Nōin and Saigyō gave cultural legitimacy to what was in fact a practical necessity. Bashō's successors also found this to be a useful strategy in fashioning a professional self and in developing relationships with clients, and thus the image of the unattached but keenly observant traveler, at home nowhere and everywhere, became characteristic of poets of the Bashō school. Thus, as travel increasingly became a feature of commoner life, the romanticized, saintly image of the poet-traveler came to hold deep resonance with Bashō's audience, and eventually with their successors as well. While not all of Bashō's readers were themselves able to follow his example, the simple act of reading about his journeys was enough to make them feel like they had.

Of equal significance to Kikusha's story, though, is the fact that haikai's very success as a genre absolutely depended on travelers. While the great cities of the day -- Edo, Kyōto, and Ōsaka -- were naturally centers of this most urban if not urbane literary form, haikai also flourished in the provinces. The routes that Kikusha herself traced during her journeys were testimony to this: virtually everywhere she stayed she was able to compose haikai with her hosts, and interest in haikai turned up in the least likely of places. For example, she tells this story in Volume 1 of *Taorigiku*:

I traveled from Naka Komatsu to Koide on horseback, but came to a broad, wild field, and the horse-handler, in a restrained way, said, "This is called the Encampment Field because right there, long ago, Lord Minamoto no Yoshiie 源義家 had stationed his battalions there. Could you write a verse about it and give it to me?" From a gap under his sash that was as soiled as the rest of his appearance he drew a sheet of paper and tucked it into the pommel of my saddle. Feeling that this

was inconsistent with his rough appearance, I wrote:

rows of drying rice  
in a peaceful world –  
Encampment Field

*ina hoshite odayaka na yo ya jin no haru*

稲干ておだやかな世や陣の原<sup>8</sup>

In Kikusha's case, much of the credit for this remarkable level of proliferation can be given to the founder of the Mino School, Kagami Shikō 各務支考 (1665 - 1731), one of Matsuo Bashō's most enthusiastic and energetic disciples. After Bashō's death, Shikō started a program of promoting his brand of Bashō school haikai. He did this in part by publishing numerous poetic treatises; however, even more importantly, he was a tireless traveler, circulating the image of the Saint of Haikai not only through print materials but also through his presence, creating a far-flung network of poets that were affiliated with his school. Many of the routes Kikusha followed retraced Shikō's, and perhaps the most important travel document she carried was the current Mino School leader's official endorsement.

### **A Journey Home through Literature and Images**

Kikusha set out on the journey that she took along the Tōkaidō in 1793. She traveled to Ōsaka, Kyōto, Mino, Edo. After visiting Kyoto again, she returned to Edo before heading back home to Chōfu. She introduces her Tōkaidō haiga, published in the second volume of *Taorigiku*, with a brief preface, no other commentary is offered in the remainder of the volume.

These images are from the time when I was on my return journey the second time I visited Edo; the landscapes that impressed me most in various places, after some time had

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<sup>8</sup> Ueno 840.



passed I made one image per verse, and entrusted it to the publisher Senritei, and it became a book that was sent to the 53 post stations. Though I am embarrassed about it, I have added it to these volumes.

### Ichiji-an Kikusha

#### 1. Nihonbashi

stretching out under moon and blossoms  
the world through which I travel --  
Nihonbashi

*tsuki ni hana ni wataru yo hiroshi Nihonbashi*

月に花にわたる世広し日本橋<sup>9</sup>

The painting depicts a row of three warehouses alongside the rails, posts and planks of the famous Nihonbashi Bridge in Edo, beginning point of the Tōkaidō. Kikusha's verse sets up her journey as one that takes her through a literary landscape. The reference to moon and blossoms is a metonym for imagery used in haikai in general; the moon (*tsuki* 月) an autumn *kigo* 季語 (season word), and blossoms (*hana* 花) a spring *kigo* together imply the poetic language of the entire year.

#### 2. Shinagawa

Shinagawa --  
passing over sleeves  
blossoming in waves

*shinagawa ya sode ni uchikosu hana no nami*

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<sup>9</sup> These interpretations draw on the commentary of Oka Masako 岡昌子, especially as noted in *Tagami Kikusha: Tōkaidō gojūyo eki gazan* 田上菊舎: 東海道五十余駅画賛, Kikusha Kenkyūkai 菊舎研究会, eds. (Shimonoseki, 2005).

品川や袖に打越す花のなみ

The image is a simple sketch of the triangular masts and rigging of boats in the port at Shinagawa post-station. Busy with travelers, the area was crowded with travelers and the those who catered to them. The “sleeves” in the verse (*sode* 袖) may refer to those of people seeing off acquaintances, or entertainment workers waving to attract the attention of potential customers. “Waves” (*nami* なみ) may be visible in the harbor or in branches of cherry trees tossed by the sea breeze.

### 3. Kawasaki

vision --  
a wonder of holy Kūkai  
at Kawasaki

*kagerō ya Daishi no fushigi Kawasaki ni*

陽炎や大師の不思議川崎に

The painting shows a bridge. Historically, the bridge at Kawasaki post-station was often destroyed by floods. There is little indication in the verse itself, but perhaps the mirage mentioned is of the missing bridge. The nearby temple Kongōzan Kinjōin Heiken-ji 金剛山金乗院平間寺, popularly known as Kawasaki Daishi, is associated with Shingon Buddhist monk Kūkai 空海 (Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師, 774–835).

### 7. Fujisawa

blossoming --  
its history is also lengthy  
wisteria of Fujisawa

*sakitari na iware mo nagaki sawa no fuji*

咲たりないはれも長き沢の藤

The medieval hero Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源義経 is enshrined at Fujisawa's Shirahata Jinja 白旗神社, and a site identified as the grave of his loyal retainer Benkei 弁慶 is not far away. At the shrine trellises of white wisteria (associated with Yoshitsune) and purple wisteria (associated with Benkei) bloom in the spring. The racemes of wisteria fall from tangling vines in long trails, which Kikusha compares to the place's lengthy history. The image depicts a wisteria vine in bloom.

The last example I will discuss here is:

#### 9. Oiso

what was it,  
the lone bird I startled into flight?  
evening in late spring

*nanzo ichiwa tatasete mitashi haru no kure*

何ぞ一羽立せて見たし春の暮

The image here shows a traveler's waking stick and sedge hat (*kasa* 笠). This is the sort of gear that Kikusha herself would have carried with her, but the place name and verse points to a different traveling poet: the monk Saigyō 西行 (1118-1190) whose Shigitatsu-an (ascending snipe hermitage) was in Oiso. "Ascending snipe" refers to Saigyō's famous *Shin Kokinshū* verse: "even someone / in a state of indifference / would feel something / a snipe ascends over the marsh / at dusk in autumn" (こころなき身にもあはれは知られけり鴨立沢の秋の夕暮).

The life and work of a poet, artist, and traveler as complex and multifaceted as Tagami Kikusha requires a study of great scope and depth. In a paper as brief as this one, I can do no more than present these few examples in order to offer a sense of the text and images included in the elegant second volume of the long and varied collection *Taorigiku*.