

Early Examples of Portable Atlases in England and Japan

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Abstract

The early modern period was a time when people began to travel more frequently and more casually. Maps were needed for travel, and there was a growing demand for practical ones. This study introduces two atlases from eighteenth-century England and Japan, *Chorographia Britanniae, or a new set of maps of all the counties in England and Wales*, and *Tokai Kiso Ryodochu Kaiho Zukan*, and tries to see how they were created and disseminated.

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The early modern period was a time when people began to travel more frequently and more casually. Maps were needed for travel, and there was also a demand for highly practical ones. This study introduces two atlases from early modern England and Japan, and tries to see how they were created and disseminated. Coincidentally, these two small books seem very much alike: *Chorographia Britanniae, or a new set of maps of all the counties in England and Wales*, first published in London in 1742, and *Tokai Kiso Ryodochu Kaiho Zukan*, first published in Edo (modern-day Tokyo), in 1765. Their use, the shape and the year of publication are very close. They were first published in the mid-eighteenth century and were both compactly made so that travellers could easily consult them on the road. The two atlases can be seen as precursors to modern travel maps, in that they were used by travellers and were portable in size. On the other hand, it may be possible to trace its roots back to the study of geography and topography in antiquarian studies or national studies in the earlier period, and

therefore to say that they both had their origin in the past and their successors in the later years.

Let us first examine the Japanese atlas, titled *Tokai Kiso Ryodochu Kaiho Zukan*. The size is approximately 11.5 cm x 16.0 cm, slightly smaller than the regular-sized octavo. The book is fully illustrated in woodblock print, by an unknown artist. The two facing pages are divided into halves horizontally and show the main highways of the Tokaido route in the upper half and the Kisoji route (also called Nakasendo) in the lower half. These two routes connected Kyoto and Edo, and they were naturally the most important highways of all. In 1601, Tokugawa Ieyasu began to develop five main highways connecting Edo to various places in the provinces to rule all over Japan, and Tokaido and Kisoji were among them.

The first edition of this atlas was published by Suhara-ya Mohei in 1765, and the book was reprinted several times, including in 1786 and 1842. Suhara-ya Mohei was a prominent book

dealer in Edo, which was active from the late seventeenth-century for over two centuries and was especially well known for their maps. It was in the seventeenth century when maps depicting highways began to be published in Japan. For example, “Shokoku Anken Kaibun no Ezu” was published around 1669 and “Tokaido Bunken Ezu” was published in 1690, and they were both folded maps. The “Ise Dochu Koteiki” published in 1751 is considered to be the first example of a portable book of maps. In 1752, “Shinpan Tokaido Bunken Ezu”, a smaller version of “Tokaido Bunken Ezu” at a scale of about one-third, was published. The first edition of “Kisoji Anken Ezu” in 1756 was a further development of this small, horizontally bound book, with a double-page spread showing a pictorial map of the route between two post towns, regardless of distance.¹⁾

As mentioned above, the pages with maps

are divided into two: the upper section shows the Tokaido highway and the lower section shows the Kisoji (Nakasendo) highway. The Tokaido starts from Nihonbashi, east to west (Tokyo to Kyoto), and the Nakasendo starts from Sanjo Bridge, west to east (Kyoto to Tokyo). The author of this book is unknown, and the maps were probably made after the seventeenth-century ukiyoe artist Hishikawa Moronobu’s “Tokaido Bunken Ezu”. The book consists of 150 pages. In addition to the Tokaido and Kisoji highways, it includes the side roads, although the details are omitted. The distances between the post towns are given, as well as the charges for the horses and men that carried people and luggage between the inns. Most people were travelling on foot, so they were important pieces of information.

Let’s take a look at an example (Figure 1).

The map above shows Narumi (in modern-day Aichi Prefecture) on the Tokaido highway,

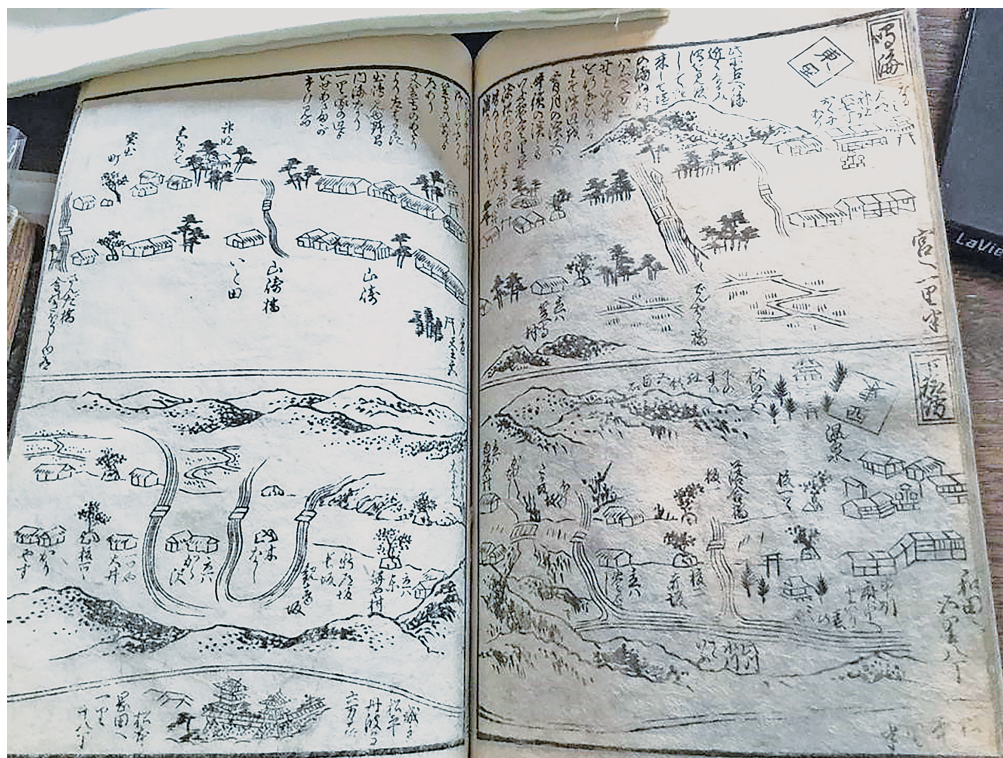


Figure 1

and the map below shows Shimosuwa (in modern-day Nagano Prefecture) on the Kisoji highway. Narumi was the 40th of the 53 post towns along the Tokaido route from Edo (Tokyo) to Kyoto, and was a rather well-known place for their history. Throughout the book, the place names and other characters are written in the map. The name of the post town is shown in the upper right corner, and the sign of cardinal directions is shown next to it. Below the name of the town is the distance to the next post town, which in this case is one and a half “ri” (5km or so) to the next town, Miya. The series of characters in the upper part of the inscription is a brief introduction about the area. For example, they say, in the ancient times, Narumi was close to the sea, and the next post town, Miya, could be reached by walking along the coast. Narumi was also called “Yoitsuki no hama” or “Yobitsugi no hama”, and its etymology is implied. There is a reference to the surrounding towns of Hoshizaki and Matsuzaki, which Matsuo Basho, the seventeenth-century poet, mentioned in his haiku.

It is interesting that the map depicts rows of pine trees along the road, as the pine trees used to create a typical landscape of the area. There are four rivers, and we can see that travellers had to go across the four bridges, among which the largest was Tenpaku (or Denbata) Bridge. The bridge on the far left was called Sanda Bridge, and there we can also see a short phrase referring to the ornament on the top of bridge railing. This bridge was historically famous for an anecdote which presumably attracted travellers. Other places of importance and interest are also marked on the map, such as Narumi Shrine, Kasadera Temple and Tobe Castle, for example.

At the end of the seventeenth century,

when the German physician Engelbert Kaempfer travelled along the Tokaido Highway, he recorded that there were about 400 houses of various sizes in Narumi. He also mentioned that people could be seen worshipping at Kasadera Temple. The map here does not show any human figures, and unfortunately there is no indication of such activity, although Kasadera has been a well-known spot among travellers. Kaempfer, who travelled along the Tokaido on four occasions, said that there were an amazing number of people walking along the roads in Japan. He wrote that the road was very crowded, not only with Daimyo parades, but also with ordinary people travelling on pilgrimages. Kaempfer also recorded that in the 1690s, the Japanese travellers were already using maps showing the teahouses and specialties of the local area.²⁾

The lower part of the pages depicts the town of Shimosuwa. It is in a mountainous area and the twenty-ninth post town of Kisoji highway. Kisoji was preferred to Tokaido especially in summer because of its cooler climate. In the map, we can see a castle in the bottom left, and that is Matsumoto-jo castle. This is an additional piece of information for the travellers since this well-known castle is located away from the main route of Kisoji. In this map, too, places of importance for travellers are indicated, such as shrines, hot spring spa, bridges and rivers in this post town of Shimosuwa. The information about the hot spring spa was probably the most important in that it was the only hot spring available in all the post towns along the Kisoji highway.

At the end of this book, there is information about the cost of travelling by horse or boat. People could use a horse or men to help them travelling, and there were three types

of charges for travelling: Honma, Karajiri and Ninsoku, depending on the weight of the luggage -- a Honma can carry 36 kan of luggage, Norikake, 1018 kan with a person on board, and Karajiri can carry 3-6 kan of luggage with a person on board, and Ninsoku (men) can carry 6 kan. (1 kan = about 3.75 kg). There is another chart showing the charges for horses and men. For example, the distance from Narumi to Miya is 1.5 ri, or about 6 km. From Narumi to Miya, the distance is 1.5 ri, or about 6 km, and the fare for a Honma horse is 83 mon, 64 mon for a Norikake horse, and 42 mon for a Karajiri horse. (1 mon = around 25 yen)

In addition, the book has the year of publication and the name of the publisher on the last page. This is unique to and typical of Japanese books. Beside this, there is a book advertisement by the same Suhara-ya about their publications related to travelling. One is Hokusai's "List of Famous Places on the Tokaido and Kisoji Roads", a single-colour woodblock print (43.6 x 58.4 cm) published around 1818. The second, entitled Zoho Nihon Chimei Binran, is also a compact, portable horizontal book, and is a guide for travellers, introducing shrines, temples as well as local specialties. Needless to say, these adverts were targeted to the same group of clients as the buyers of this atlas. In the 17th century, Japan was said to have enjoyed a period of peace and tranquility, when people's lives had settled down after a period of warfare, and more individuals had the opportunity to travel for pleasure. A visit to the shrines and temples could have been a casual one, and it goes without saying that many people as well as goods travelled for business and public purposes as well.

As outlined above, this *Kaiho Zukan* was

published as a portable book of maps for the convenience of travellers in the early modern period, when main roads were being developed and people were moving around more and more extensively in Japan. This atlas must have been particularly useful and popular as a guide to the roads linking Edo and Kyoto, the two central cities of Japan.

This atlas also bears some resemblance to John Ogilby's *Britannia*. Ogilby's *Britannia* is a road atlas published in 1675, a large folio in which the highways of the whole country are drawn in 100 long narrow strips, shown in parallel and arranged on facing pages. It is interesting to note that the reverse phenomenon has occurred, with diagrams placed vertically in Britain, a country with a horizontal writing culture, and in contrast, in Japan, a country with a vertical writing culture, the atlases are with horizontal maps. Ogilby's *Britannia* begins by showing the roads that connect London directly to the provinces, and then the roads that connect the provinces to the cities. The names of places are given, but places of interest are not mentioned. Ogilby's *Britannia* is said to have been very influential, and later publications doubtlessly benefited from it. For example, later in the early eighteenth century, a road atlas of smaller size was published, titled as *Britannia Depicta* which was based on Ogilby's *Britannia*. This (comparatively large) octavo atlas won a huge popularity and was reprinted many times.

As an early example of a portable atlas from England, let us examine *Chorographia Britanniae*, first published in 1742. This atlas is also known as the first genuine pocket-sized atlas of the eighteenth century. The book is made up of forty-eight maps and diagrams

bound together in a small octavo. The authors, or rather the creators, were Thomas Badeslade and William Henry Toms, the former was a cartographer, and the latter an engraver. This atlas is understudied, and not much is known about Badeslade, and neither is Toms.

This pocket atlas was originally made by order and for the use of his Majesty King George I for his intended tour through England and Wales, but the king died on June 11th, 1727 and the publication delayed. Finally published in 1742, the book was dedicated to Frederick Prince of Wales, son of George II. The subtitle of this book goes: “with the particular map of each county, is an account of all the cities, boroughs, market towns, parishes, and rivers therein, the number of members it sends to parliament, the market and fair days ... : to the whole is added an alphabetical index of all the cities, boroughs, & market towns ...” Thus, in the map of each county, on the left-hand side there is a blank column in which the number of MPs from the county, the number of boroughs and church parishes, and the names and days of the markets are shown. In the lower part of each map, there is a scale bar which would seem essential for the travellers to plan their journey. In the 1745 edition, there is an inserted list of fares for carriages and ships.³⁾ As mentioned above, the same kind of information for travellers was also given in the Japanese counterpart. It seems that fares are basically determined by distance, but there are specific sections where “a shilling will get you there”, such as from Westminster Hall to Bloomsbury Square or Soho Square. As in the Japanese book, there is also information on the cost of crossing rivers as well. All in all, it is a useful resource for travellers, and these lists imply that in both countries the monetary

system had been established by then.

This atlas *Chorographia Britanniae* is made up of forty-eight maps and charts in total. In addition to the maps for each county, there is a map of England and Wales, and a map of England. One of these maps shows the coastal ports, and the next shows the county boundaries. There are also maps showing the public roads from London to the provinces, and crossroads between provinces, as in Ogilby’s *Britannia*. The maps are arranged in alphabetical order by place name, with one map per county (shire) , so that Yorkshire, for example, is squeezed onto one map in facing pages. Because Yorkshire is such a large province, the small octavo map looks rather sketchy. On the other hand, both Camden’s *Britannia* and Strype’s *Theatre of Britain* include folio-sized maps, and moreover they divide Yorkshire into a few maps so that each map is far more detailed. Nevertheless, in *Chorographia Britanniae*, the distances to the different parts of the country are shown in a separate chart, which should enable the travellers to plan their journey with considerable certainty. It also covers all the main towns and the market towns. This, together with the main roads, would have been a useful guide for eating, shopping and spending a night on the way.

Yorkshire (Figure 2) is described as being divided into East, West and North Ridings and as having an Archbishop, but because of the vastness of the area, there are far too many market towns to list on the map. Then, the names of the thirteen boroughs only are mentioned on the map. There is no space to name all the forty-six market towns. A question occurs: Why wasn’t it divided into two or three maps? There should have been some detailed maps available for the travellers



Figure 2

to consult at that time. On the other hand, in the map of Durham, for example, you will see that all the market towns are named, thanks to the small size of Durham itself. There is even a geographical description which centred on the rivers. It mentions what the boundaries are between east and west, north and south, and what rivers flow through the area. It may be slightly reminiscent of Camden's *Britannia*. This overview of the book may imply that the work of seventeenth-century antiquarian studies especially in topography and geography, such as Camden's and Ogilby's, was influential and expanded in the eighteenth century, leading to modern travel guidebooks and road maps.

Coincidentally, these two atlases from eighteenth-century Japan and England show that in the early modern period, as people expanded their range of activities, there was a demand for compact maps and travel

guides to help travellers get around. It is very interesting to note that at about the same time similar social and cultural movements were taking place in the East and West. The developments of these portable maps in the two countries were caused by the need to respond to broadly similar economic circumstances: growing prosperity, more trade, more travel, and peaceful conditions in the country. This study introduced two early examples of pocket-size atlases from early modern England and Japan, and it seems that although they both were very popular, the use of these atlases would have been different in each country. The Japanese example was apparently more practical than the English atlas with two main roadmaps in the same book and it was fully appreciated by a wide range of people, whereas the latter might have embodied a somewhat political aim with references to the number of MPs and parishes in the county. It was originally

made by order of the king and was dedicated to the prince, so the book seems to spread the idea of a well-governed kingdom. A further look at the contemporary maps and travel guidebooks will enhance the understanding of the purposes and the functions of these early modern portable atlases.

Notes

- 1) See esp. Chapter 3 of Mitsumasa Yamamoto, *Formation and Development of Road Maps* (山本光正 著『街道絵図の成立と展開』臨川書店、2006).
- 2) See Engelbert Kaempfer, *The History of Japan: Together with a Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, 3 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose, 1906)
- 3) The 1742 edition lacks this, so presumably the charts were newly inserted in the later editions.

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