

Shiba Kōkan's
“Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō”
His Works, His Life,
and His Character

Tainaka Joun

Names of Japanese people are written in the order of, first their family name, then their first name.

Commentaries on each picture of the two "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō"

The series by Kōkan starts from Kyoto and goes down to Edo, so I will comment on each picture in that order. I will explain Hiroshige's works in the same order. Sequential numbers are given in accordance with the original order of each series. "Fifty-three Stations" stands for the "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" and "Zue", for "Tōkaidō Meisho Zue (The Pictures of the Famous Places of the Tōkaidō Highway)".

Kyoto: Kōkan (the first picture), Hiroshige (the last picture)

Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations" are "thinking pictures". It is filled with various allegories. I hope you will enjoy its mystery. Hiroshige's works are ukiyo-e and are for entertainment. The intent and purpose of the two works are different. What is drawn in Kōkan's picture is the *Kenshūmon* Gate of the Imperial Palace in Kyoto, where plum blossoms are in full bloom. Why is the starting point the Imperial Palace? This question commences the riddle-solving game concerning Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations".

Ōtsu: Kōkan 1, Hiroshige 53

Mt. Osaka is depicted realistically in the background of the Kōkan's painting. The boy in the red kimono walking in the lead is a "cattle boy," a custom peculiar to the locality. Kōkan heartily depicted the deep culture and history of Mt. Osaka in the oxcart and the boy. Hiroshige depicted travelers in the store to create a lively atmosphere. Here, the infant in the red kimono and the ox cart have nothing to do with each other. The two pictures might look similar but they are totally different.

Kusatsu: Kōkan 2, Hiroshige 52

Kusatsu was a busy junction/connecting point of the Tōkaidō Highway and the Nakasendo Highway. Both drawings depict stores of "*Ubagamochi*," a specialty of Kusatsu, referring to "Zue". Kōkan's drawing is based on actual sketches except for the people. Hiroshige's ukiyo-e is a close-up of the store and depicts the bustling store and the lively palanquin bearers.

Ishibe: Kōkan 3, Hiroshige 51

The scene of people dancing in front of a store in Kōkan's painting was taken from "Zue". Both Kōkan and Hiroshige added Mt. Hyuga in the background, which is not in "Zue," but the angles are different. In Kōkan's painting, Mt. Hyuga is depicted quite realistically. Here, too, the plum blossoms are in full bloom and the leaves of the trees are shining brightly. Kōkan made full use of camera obscura throughout the series.

Mizuguchi: Kōkan 4, Hiroshige 50

Both paintings depict the production of dried gourd shavings, a specialty of the region. The depiction of the rows of houses placed in the background of Kōkan's painting is valuable as a source of information on the history of architecture in the Edo period. The work of the women making dried gourd shows the customs of the Edo period. The white color of the dried gourds against the green grass is truly impressive. I would like my readers to focus on the white color used in Kōkan's paintings.

Tschiyama: Kōkan 5, Hiroshige 49

These are paintings of Tsuchiyama in the rain. The curved path in the Kōkan's painting was depicted using a compass. He used advanced mathematical perspective to express this road stretching forward to the left. Hiroshige boldly omitted the upper part of the Kōkan painting to focus on the expression of the heavy rainfall.

Sakanoshita: Kōkan 6, Hiroshige 48

The name "*Fude Sute Yama* (Brush Throwing Mountain)" comes from an episode in which the master painter Kano Motonobu tried to paint this spectacular mountain view, but was unable to do so and threw away his brush. Although the landscape in Kōkan's painting is an actual scenery (except for the waterfall), he borrowed the people's customs from "Zue". If this is the case, then Hiroshige's work would be a "second-hand borrowing". Both borrowing and second-hand borrowing were commonplace in this era. Sōtatsu, Kourin, and Hōitsu's "Wind God and Thunder God" are good examples.

Seki: Kōkan 7, Hiroshige 47

Both Kōkan and Hiroshige used the *Honjin Zu* (a picture of an inn for feudal lords) from "*Ise Sangu Meisho Zue* (Pictures of the Famous Places at Ise)". The two spears leaning against the building and the inn tag peeking out from under the curtain show that what was depicted in both pictures was the outside of the inn facing the road.

The tag of the "Senjo Kou" discussed in the text can also be seen. The crest on the curtain in Kōkan's painting implies Tanuma family (Tanum Okitsugu was a liberal shogunal advisor in Kōkan's time). Hiroshige replaced the samurai with red swords in the Kōkan's painting with a townsman, and depicted his own Tanaka family crest.

Kameyama: Kōkan 8, Hiroshige 46

In Kōkan's painting surreptitiously depicted a feudal lord procession advancing solemnly. Here, we would like to focus on the direction of the pine trees and branches in both paintings. At first glance, the pine trees in Hiroshige's picture look better balanced than those in Kōkan's painting. However, the winds blowing up the mountain are quite strong in the area, and the direction of the branches in the Kōkan's painting is more natural. It is a characteristic of Kōkan's painting style to stretch out trees, pillars, etc. vertically.

Shōno: Kōkan 9, Hiroshige 45

The title of Hiroshige's painting is "*Haku-u* (white rain)". *Haku-u* (white rain) is a seasonal term for summer. The green trees in the left down on Kōkan's painting are strikingly different from those in Hiroshige's painting. Hiroshige set the scene with a sudden evening shower and focused on the lively expression of the figures. Hiroshige's tastefully depicted ukiyo-e adds even more charm to these paintings.

Ishiyakushi: Kōkan 10, Hiroshige 44

These two pictures show how the way in which they are painted can transform them into different pictures, although the compositions of both pictures are almost the same. Hiroshige's picture is a dreary winter scene. The Kōkan's painting is a springtime rural scene overflowing with the joy of living. The plum blossoms in front are effective, too. The use of the camera obscura can also be seen in this painting.

Yokkaichi: Kōkan 11, Hiroshige 43

Hiroshige's picture is filled with sense of humor. Here, we would like to focus on the expression of the road in Kōkan's painting. It is drawn three-dimensionally. It is gently curved, and the water surface is beautiful, too. The drawing implies the use of a compass and a camera obscura. The color of the sky and the willow tree in both Hiroshige's and Kōkan's paintings are also noteworthy. The willow tree in Kōkan's painting has young buds, indicating that the season is spring.

Kuwana: Kōkan 12, Hiroshige 42

The route between Kuwana and Miya was the only sea route on the Tōkaidō Highway and took about four hours by boat. The castle in the background is Kuwana Castle. It was said to be one of the most beautiful castles along the Tōkaidō Highway. The blue roofs and stone walls of the castle show how the castle looked like, and are valuable as historical material. When I showed these pictures to a local fisherman, he laughed and said, "Hiroshige's boat will run aground!"

Miya: Kōkan 13, Hiroshige 41

Miya was the largest station on the Tōkaidō Highway. This is one of the three pictures that are completely different from each other. What is depicted in Kōkan's painting is not actually Atsuta Shrine. We will examine this in Chapter 3. Although Hiroshige titled his picture "Atsuta Shinto ritual," there was actually no such horse chasing festival at Atsuta Shrine at that time.

Narumi: Kōkan 14, Hiroshige 40

Both depict a store selling tie-dye, a specialty of this region. Kōkan's painting has a quiet and peaceful atmosphere. In Hiroshige's picture, the store is filled with customers and the horses are loaded with people, creating a lively atmosphere. The crest of the store in the foreground is Hiroshige's own family crest, another example of his playful spirit. In Kōkan's painting, we can see again the use of a camera obscura, which he claims "a painting technique that has never been used in Japan before."

Chiryu: Kōkan 15, Hiroshige 39

The horse market was held annually from April 25 to May 5. Hiroshige's picture depicts the bustle in the middle of the horse market. Kōkan's painting is estimated to be during the preparation period from February to March. The distant view of Kōkan's painting is a forest. The light rises into the sky from the forest, implying that the sun is rising. This casual difference clearly shows the difference in the intention for which these two works were produced.

Okazaki: Kōkan 16, Hiroshige 38

Yahagi bashi Bridge is almost 400 meters long, making it the longest bridge along the Tōkaidō Highway. In Kōkan's painting, the parapet is painted black to emphasize the bridge, and thereby expressing the abundance of water in the river. The castle standing across the bridge is Okazaki Castle, a castle associated with Tokugawa Ieyasu. A feudal lord procession is advancing. The mountains behind the castle seem unnatural in Kōkan's painting. Can we not sense some kind of allegory there?

Fujikawa: Kōkan 17, Hiroshige 37

"*Bo-bana*" means the place where a feudal lord procession was drawn up in order beside a pole at the entrance of an inn town, and it also meant the entrance to the inn town. It has been believed that Hiroshige's picture depicts a procession heading for Kyoto for "*Onma Shinken no Gi* (the horse-presenting ceremony)". The conventional theory is that Hiroshige accompanied this procession. Many people have questioned this theory which claims that Hiroshige used his imagination to depict the spring, summer, autumn, and winter sceneries of the Tōkaidō Highway, even though the journey took place in July of the lunar calendar.

Akasaka: Kōkan 18, Hiroshige 36

This is one of the completely different pictures by Kōkan and Hiroshige. Hiroshige's lively depiction of the interior of an inn is based on Hokusai's "*Tōkaidō Dōchū Zufu* (Pictures from the travel along the Tōkaidō Highway)" or "Hokusai's Fifty-three Stations". Kōkan seems to be depicting the calmness before the upcoming touting battle. The road in front is wide. This is one of the characteristics of the pictures drawn using a camera obscura.

Goyu: Kōkan 19, Hiroshige 35

The spatial expression of the road in Kōkan's painting, in which the curved road disappears into the rows of inns, is a quite advanced technique at the time, and probably depicted using camera obscura. On the right of Hiroshige's picture, the tag inside the inn has the names of the publisher, engraver, and printer, as well as his painter name, "*Ichiryusaizu*." The name of the inn on the left side of Hiroshige's picture reads "*Oo-Atari Ya* (Jackpot Inn)," which shows Hiroshige's playful intentions to pray for a big hit of his series.

Yoshida: Kōkan 20, Hiroshige 34

Both drew a bridge over the Toyokawa River, which was about 220 meter long, but the two pictures do not resemble each other so much. The mountain in Kōkan's painting is Ishimaki-Yama, depicted realistically. Hiroshige's picture borrowed the composition from "*Zue*" and added Yoshida Castle in the foreground on the right. Yoshida is present-day Toyohashi. As usual, Kōkan painted the bridge parapet with black lines. This enhances the expression of the river surface. The use of a compass is also assumed for drawing this bridge.

Futagawa: Kōkan 21, Hiroshige 33

Here, too, Kōkan did not stick to inn towns, but captured a nostalgic Japanese landscape. The mountain in Hiroshige's picture is a long ridge near Futagawa. The mountains in the background are completely different in the two pictures. *Kashiwa-mochi* (a rice cake wrapped in a *kashiwa* (oak) leaf) was a specialty of Sarugababa, the entrance to Futagawa Inn Town. Legend has it that Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who was on his way to conquer Odawara, tasted it and rewarded it for its good fortune, because *kashiwa-mochi* resembles in pronunciation with *kachi* (victory) -*wa-mochi*.

Shirasuka: Kōkan 22, Hiroshige 32

Here again, both pictures depict a feudal lord procession solemnly proceed over undulating hills. The sea is beautiful in both Kōkan's and Hiroshige's pictures. Which way was this procession headed? They were heading from Kyoto to Edo. Kōkan accented his painting by the black shadows of the ships in the distance. Notice how these small shadows sharpens the whole picture.

Arai: Kōkan 23, Hiroshige 31

This is one of the most noteworthy pictures in the series. In Kōkan's painting, two boats (catamarans) are connected with a curtain. There are various hypotheses about this, and it is said that "*Funagaku* (see the section "New Evidence Discovered in the Works" in Chapter 1)" is held on the boat, but the truth is unknown. In any case, this boat cannot be painted referring to Hiroshige's picture and using imagination. This is a significant piece of evidence that shows Hiroshige made his Fifty-three Stations based on Kōkan's paintings. Incidentally, the crest on the catamaran in Kōkan's painting is *sumitate yotsume mon*, the crest of the Kyogoku family, which was close to Kōkan.

Maisaka: Kōkan 24, Hiroshige 30

These pictures provide another strong piece of evidence to support the theory that Hiroshige produced his works

based on Kōkan's paintings. Hiroshige titled his painting "*Imagiri Shinkei* (The True Sceneries of the present day)" using Kōkan's painting, but this small mountain is not located in Maisaka. What Kōkan drew was not Maisaka on the Tōkaidō Highway, but Kanzanji Temple on the opposite shore of Lake Hamana. The existence of this mountain has been a mystery until now. In addition, in Hiroshige's picture, Mt. Fuji was not placed correctly.

Hamamatsu: Kōkan 25, Hiroshige 29

Hamamatsu Castle was known as the castle of promotion. This is because successive lords of Hamamatsu Castle took up important positions in the shogunate. Here, I would like you to take a moment to look at the Kōkan's painting. The blazing fire and the accurate depiction of the castle in the distant view contrasted with the man with his buttocks exposed. Here, too, we could sense an allegory by Kōkan, a liberal artist dissatisfied with the shogunate.

Mitsuke: Kōkan 26, Hiroshige 28

Mitsuke is a crossing point of the Tenryu River. It is 60 *ri* (240 kilometers) from Edo and 65 *ri* (260 kilometers) from Kyoto: the halfway point of the Tōkaidō Highway. And it was a strategic point in the Middle Ages where the castle of the Imagawa clan was located. Kōkan's painting is a three-dimensional painting with a grove of pine trees in the middle ground. The blue sky, the forest, and the morning mist to the surface of the water. On the other hand, Hiroshige kept his picture extremely monotonous, making the boatman waiting for his guests stand out impressively.

Fukuroi: Kōkan 27, Hiroshige 27

Both Kōkan and Hiroshige depicted "*cha-ya* (teahouse)" along the road. Note the white smoke rising in each picture. Kōkan knew what smoke was, and painted with the eye of a natural scientist. The use of perspective to make the path that once disappeared from the picture reappear is unique to Kōkan. The figure dressed in red and resting by the palanquin suggests a Dutch servant.

Takegawa: Kōkan 28, Hiroshige 26

The depicted Mt. Akiba is a sacred mountain. Kōkan depicted the fields that are embraced by the mountain and bring forth abundant harvests. A traveler walks tentatively across a narrow clay bridge. A local boy follows behind. This is the very landscape that many Japanese identify with nostalgia as a typical Japanese rural area. Hiroshige added a monk crossing the bridge and a kite flying in the air to create a frank and enjoyable picture.

Nissaka: Kōkan 29, Hiroshige 25

Hiroshige's picture is a dynamic work that shows off his talent. Kōkan's painting is extremely ordinary and realistic. The originality of Hiroshige is condensed in this picture, in which he deformed the slope into an extremely steep one. Kōkan's painting casually invites the viewer to look at the sky in the color of madder red. The stones in both drawings are called "night weeping stones," and there is a sad story told in the area.

Kanaya: Kōkan 30, Hiroshige 24

"You can cross the mountains of Hakone with a horse, but you can never cross the Ōigawa River." The east bank of Ōigawa River was Shimada Inn Town and the west bank was Kanaya. It is the border between Suruga and Tōtōumi. It is said that the shogunate, wary of the complicated history of the area since the Warring States Period, did not build a bridge across the river. Both pictures show a quiet view of the river crossing, but in Kōkan's painting, a mountain, not very realistic, stands on the opposite bank. This mountain may have a message from Kōkan.

Shimada: Kōkan 31, Hiroshige 23

Shimada Inn Town developed as an accumulation point for timber cut from the upper reaches of the Ōigawa River, but at the same time, when the water level rose, travelers from Edo to Kyoto were stranded, so the inn town was very prosperous and crowded. The crossing of the Ōigawa River was stopped for rising water for an average of 50 days a year. I would like to draw your attention to the depiction of the surface of the water in Kōkan's painting.

Fujieda: Kōkan 32, Hiroshige 22

Hiroshige's intention is obvious. Hiroshige omitted the upper half of the Kōkan painting, added more figures in front of the store, and depicted the sweat of working men. Ukiyo-e is for popular entertainment. This masterpiece is a glimpse of Hiroshige's natural talent as a graphic artist. The house and family crest behind Kōkan's painting attract attention.

Okabe: Kōkan 33, Hiroshige 21

Utsutani Pass was one of the most difficult passages on the Tōkaidō Highway. The whiteness of the water in Kōkan's painting skillfully expresses the speed and strength of the current. The mountain in the background is a real scenery. In fact, it has helped to identify the point of the sketch, which had been unknown for a long time. The mountain seen from the bridge near a local history museum, which was built recently, corresponds exactly to Kōkan's painting.

Mariko: Kōkan 34, Hiroshige 20

This is where Matsuo Basho comes in. "Plum and young buds, Yam soup at the Mariko inn". Hiroshige humorously depicted the common people devouring the famous yam soup. Kōkan, on the other hand, left us with a typical and nostalgic Japanese landscape of plum blossoms in full bloom. He used this painting as a reply to Basho, whom he respected. From the "Fifty-three Stations," we can decipher Kōkan's cultural, political, and ideological background.

Fuchu: Kōkan 35, Hiroshige 19

The mountain in the background is Mt. Tokuganji in both Kōkan's and Hiroshige's pictures. Kōkan beautifully depicted the pine grove in the distance and the movement of the river-crossing workers in white ripples. This distant view of Mt. Tokuganji and pine trees suggest the use of a camera obscura. Hiroshige livened up the picture and added a woman crossing the river, revitalizing it into an ukiyo-e that would please the general public.

Ejiri: Kōkan 36, Hiroshige 18

Hiroshige borrowed the composition from a picture in "Zue", in which the view of *Miho Matsubara* from the top of Mt. Kuno is drawn. Kōkan depicted a large pine tree and several sailing boats with their sails spread out in the foreground, with Mt. Satsuta as a distant view. He did not stick to the Tōkaidō route, but chose any scenery he liked and painted the actual view as he liked it. This single painting alone shows that Kōkan's series of paintings are completely independent works.

Okitsu: Kōkan 37, Hiroshige 17

The Okitsu River is a shallow river without much width. The figures crossing the river on palanquin are taken from "Zue" painting of the Abe River. Kōkan borrowed only the figures from "Zue," but the landscape is an actual view. Hiroshige humorously depicted a sumo wrestler being carried across the river on a horse. Incidentally, "Zue" was produced by the friends of Kōkan's in Kyoto.

Yui: Kōkan 38, Hiroshige 16

Here is a superb view of Mt. Fuji. Kōkan's painting was drawn on his return trip from Kyoto in 1812. He wrote in a letter to a friend "On my way back last winter, I could see Mt. Fuji very well and there was not a cloud in sight." He continues "Fuji, the most scenic view in Japan, drawn with the Dutch painting method that captures the real image," and he clearly indicates that he used a camera obscura. This very painting is the actual view of Mt. Fuji that Kōkan loved.

Kambara: Kōkan 39, Hiroshige 15

This is one of Hiroshige's most famous works. I will discuss it in detail in the text, but here I would like you to take your time and enjoy both masterpieces. Hiroshige's "Night Snow" is known around the world as one of the greatest ukiyo-e masterpieces. We hope that the appearance of Kōkan "Fifty-three Stations" will lead to the discovery of new charm and true value of the genius Hiroshige.

Yoshiwara: Kōkan 40, Hiroshige 14

Yoshiwara is the closest point to Mt. Fuji on the Tōkaidō Highway. Mt. Fuji in Kōkan's painting has a rounded summit. This is the actual view of the mountain seen from this point. Also, the road in Hiroshige's picture is flat, but in Kōkan's painting, it is a slope gently rising to the right, which is also an actual view. Above all, the black expression on the edge of Mt. Fuji, which is in the shade of the sun, suggests the use of a camera obscura.

Hara: Kōkan 41, Hiroshige 13

Hiroshige's painting is a dreary winter scene. Two egrets are feeding on the surface of a rice paddy, and a flock of birds fly in the distance. Kōkan's painting depicts a scene from spring to early summer, when willows are budding. Fuji in this painting is a true representation of Kōkan's maxim, "A painting is not a painting if it does not capture the real image." A row of willow trees and figures, with Mt. Fuji in the background, again suggests the use of a camera obscura. Incidentally, no bird appears in Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations."

Numazu: Kōkan 42, Hiroshige 12

A cameraman taught me that the moon in Kōkan's painting is the lingering moon around 5:00 a.m. early in the morning. If so, this is a picture of three people leaving early for Daiyuzan Saijo-ji Temple (Tengu-dera Temple) on Ashigara-michi Road to dedicate an *ema* (a votive picture). The golden glow of the river and the trees are beautiful. It is a masterpiece that can be compared to 17th century Dutch landscape paintings. Hiroshige titled the painting "Twilight" and draw an evening landscape. The travelers are like a father and son on a pilgrimage to *Konpira*. They look exhausted and hurrying to their lodgings.

Mishima: Kōkan 43, Hiroshige 12

In this single image, we find everything about Kōkan as a natural scientist, astronomer, thinker, and painter. In the depiction of the leaves on the trees, one can sense the use of camera obscura. We were informed by a person from the Mishima-taisha Shrine that the moon is called "*Ariake no Tsuki*," which is the moon around 5:00 a.m. in the early morning. Kōkan sometimes stayed at Mishima-taisha Shrine, and his "*Chikyu Daen Zu* (The Earth Drawn in an Ellipse)" is now housed in the Mishima-taisha Shrine Treasure House.

Hakone: Kōkan 44, Hiroshige 10

For a long time, researchers and photographers searched for the spot where Hiroshige's "Hakone" was drawn, but they could not find it. With the appearance of Kōkan's painting, it was identified as a view of Lake Ashinoko from the observatory on Tougashima Island. Kōkan brilliantly combined realism and deformation to depict the steepness of the mountains. A feudal lord procession advances as if marching through the steep mountains. The thrill of reading a mystery novel can be found in Kōkan's Fifty-three Stations.

Odawara: Kōkan 45, Hiroshige 9

The mountain in Kōkan's painting is not Hakone Mountains. It is Mt. Ōyama, a sacred mountain, and the river is the Sagami River. The sketching point was found to be "Tamura Ferry," which is close to the Samukawa Shrine. In the first place, Kōkan's paintings were "Japan's most scenic landscapes" and he did not stick to depicting the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō. When Hiroshige painted "Odawara," he replaced Mt. Ōyama with the Hakone Mountains and placed Odawara Castle at the foot of the mountains. However, the positions of the mountains and the castle in Hiroshige's picture were quite unreasonable.

Ōiso: Kōkan 46, Hiroshige 8

Hiroshige's picture is a gloomy landscape where it is raining. In Kōkan's paintings, not only this one, the human figures are depicted small compared to the nature and the scenery. This is an allegory of Kōkan's philosophy of life: "Human beings are small compared to the nature." Kōkan stretched the pine tree upward to fully show the background scenery beneath the tree.

Hiratsuka: Kōkan 47, Hiroshige 7

The mountain in the background is Mt. Koma. Mt. Fuji is in Hiroshige picture, but not in Kōkan's painting. The signature of Kōkan is written in white. This was rare in the Edo period and Kōkan is believed to be the only Japanese style painter who wrote his signatures in white. There are several examples in this series, including "Shōno". Throughout this series, there are three colors used for signatures: black, blue, and white. There might be some message or suggestion.

Fujisawa: Kōkan 48, Hiroshige 6

These two pictures provide important pieces of evidence that shows Hiroshige produced his works based on Kōkan's. (1) When Hiroshige made his ukiyo-e, Yugyo-ji Temple was destroyed by fire, leaving only the main hall, and the temple complex did not exist. (2) There are no stairs in Yugyo-ji Temple now, nor in the past, but Hiroshige drew stairs. (3) In the *torii* gate in the Kōkan painting, a small black gate can be seen. This black gate does exist, although it is not in Hiroshige's painting. From the above, it is natural to assume that Hiroshige produced his ukiyo-e based on Kōkan's painting.

Totsuka: Kōkan 49, Hiroshige 5

Totsuka-*juku* (inn town) was 10.5 *ri* (about 42 kilometers) from Edo. It was often the first place to stay in the journey from Edo and the last from Kyoto. Like the pine trees in "Ōiso," the house in Kōkan's painting has long pillars. This creates the effect that the mountains can be seen in the background behind the house. The figures in Kōkan's painting are samurais. On the other hand, Hiroshige humorously depicted a towns person dismounting from his horse.

Hodogaya: Kōkan 50, Hiroshige 4

Both Hiroshige and Kōkan depicted the bridge over the Shinmachi entrance and the Hodogaya Inn Town. The amber-tinted sky in Kōkan's painting is mesmerizing. Kōkan has the eye of a natural scientist. Here, too, we can assume the use of a camera obscura. The houses in Kōkan's painting are what we Japanese remember with nostalgia as a typical Japanese landscape in Edo period. The mountains in the background of Kōkan's painting are also the actual view.

Kanagawa: Kōkan 51, Hiroshige 3

Through the journey from Kyoto to here in the pictures, I hope the readers have sensed the use of the mathematical perspective and a camera obscura throughout Kōkan's series of the Fifty-three Stations. The rows of houses are three-dimensional, and don't the groves of trees in the back and the small figures on the street present similarity to those in Vermeer's paintings? In any case, Kōkan was strongly influenced by the 17th century Dutch landscape painting.

Kawasaki: Kōkan 52, Hiroshige 2

This is a view of a boat crossing on the Rokugo River (Tama River). First of all, note the houses and trees on the opposite bank of the river in Kōkan's painting. This is truly a Western style landscape painting. Kōkan casually painted a white Fuji in the back right corner to encourage viewers to "discover" the mountain. Hiroshige's picture has many people and horses, creating a lively atmosphere. The two pictures here show us that they were created with completely different intentions.

Shinagawa: Kōkan 53, Hiroshige 1

In Hiroshige's painting, the sky is colored in *Akane* (madder red), which shows his ingenuity. Now, Kōkan had returned to Edo. The fifty-five paintings by Kōkan are not mere landscapes or genre paintings. There are no signs of the intention to show them to the public. It is no exaggeration to say that they are "secret paintings," so to speak. Given the social background of the time, many of these paintings could inevitably be banned or condemned by the authority.

Nihonbashi: Kōkan (the last picture), Hiroshige (the first picture)

In Hiroshige's series, the picture is the starting point, while in Kōkan's, it is the arrival point. In the left foreground of Kōkan's painting, a Batavian umbrella bearer, a follower of the Dutch, is depicted. However, there is no historical evidence that Batavians came to Edo. Also, the samurai in Western clothing can be seen in the center, which is clearly an allegory. The seal and signature suggest that this work was created in Shichirigahama, Kamakura. It is known that Kōkan resided in Kamakura from the summer to the fall of 1813.

A Portrait of Shiba Kōkan painted by Takahashi Yuichi

(Lent by The University Art Museum of The Tokyo University of The Arts)

Yuichi, a pioneer of modern Western-style painting in the Meiji era, deeply admired Kōkan, the founder of Western-style painting in Japan, and after searching for a self-portrait of Kōkan, he found one that had survived in the home of Kōkan's friend in his later years, Ema Shunrei, and painted this portrait of him. This work is truly a tribute to Kōkan by Yuichi.

Introduction

Did Shiba Kōkan (1747-1818) originally paint The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Highway that later inspired the world-famous masterpiece edition of prints by Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858)?

This book was written to settle this long-standing debate. It is the culmination of the research I have devoted myself to during the last 20 years, with the cooperation by many people, since this work was first introduced to the world.

I am not the only one who has found Kōkan extraordinarily fascinating. The famous Columbia University professor of Japan said, "If I could only meet one historical Japanese figure, I might choose Shiba Kōkan". The famous post-war artist and writer Taro Okamoto said, "A true artist is one who keeps creating new things" – words directly applicable to Shiba Kōkan.

During his life, he changed his painting style from *ukiyo-e* to Chinese-inspired painting, copperplate engraving, Western oil painting – and in his last years, he mastered "a painting method that had never existed in Japan before". In this book, we examine Kōkan's last works as well as his extraordinary life.

Looking back, it is true that at the time of the publication of my previous book, "The Secrets of Hiroshige's Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō," much of the research was hypothetical. However, during the twenty-odd years since then, research has uncovered much new evidence to prove the Kōkan - Hiroshige connection.

Before going into the main text, I would like to point out that much of the research for this book was done not by me, but by researchers and independent scholars. Among them the Tōkaidō researcher Ohata Yoichi has spent many years studying the *Gojusantsugi* ("Fifty-three stations of the Tōkaidō" and has made numerous revealing discoveries. I would like to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Ohata Yoichi and all the other researchers for generously sharing their valuable research.

And now, I would like to talk about Utagawa Hiroshige. Surprisingly, the original title of Hiroshige's Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Highway was "*Shinkei Tōkaidō Gojusantsugi*" (The True Sceneries of the Fifty-three Stations of Tōkaidō) when it was published. Why did Hiroshige, who did not walk the Tōkaidō Highway, deliberately use the title "*Shinkei*" (true sceneries)? It may have been in homage to the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō by Shiba Kōkan, which preceded the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō by Hiroshige. If that is the case, it is understandable that he titled his work "*Shinkei*" without having walked along the Tōkaidō route.

The last years of Kōkan's life were spent in lonely seclusion, suffering from back pain and unable to go out. In one letter to a friend, he wrote, "I am now painting pictures with the sole purpose of passing them on to the future generations".

His wish was realized by Utagawa Hiroshige who had the artistic skill and youthful energy to create his world-famous edition of masterpiece prints.

October 10, 2020

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Chapter 1 The Truth Revealed

My Encounter with Kōkan's Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō (126)

The story goes back 30 years ago. One day in the heat of summer when I was then the director of the Izu Kogen Museum of Art (now closed), I heard from a tea-ceremony master associate that he had a copy of "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" by Shiba Kōkan that he wanted me to appraise.

The art dealer-owner wanted to separate the paintings and have them each mounted as a hanging scroll that he thought would be easier to sell. The art dealer consulted with a scroll mounter, a tea ceremony master and myself. He said that he would like to buy several pieces if they were made into hanging scrolls. However, the scroll mounter was highly reputed and his work was so meticulous that it would take at least a year before he could finish the order. He asked me to take a look at his work before he did so.

The fifty-five sheets were divided into two books, with gold and silk brocade covers, housed in a lacquer box. The work was consistent with that of the Edo period. It was this encounter with Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" that changed my life. Much discussion followed, but all parties involved agreed that it would be unforgivable to separate the paintings, which had been assembled so well and they were leased to the Museum and entrusted to my conservation and research. To be honest, at the time I had no idea that I would have such a long relationship with Kōkan.

The more I looked at his paintings, the more I realized that they were in an unfamiliar style that could neither be described as Western nor Japanese. The paintings depicted realistically the stations of the Tōkaidō Highway. Looking at the painting intently, it was clear that it was the work of a skilled painter, but what was surprising was that the design was almost identical to that of Hiroshige's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō".

The work had recently been acquired by an art dealer from an old house in Gifu. Of course, the art dealer who acquired the work, the hanging-scroll mounter who commissioned the work, and my friend, the tea ceremony master, all had a keen eye for appreciating works of art in their line of work. They also knew that there were many forgeries of Kōkan's work. In this case, too, he was not absolutely sure that it was a "true" Kōkan painting, but he had considerable confidence in it. That is why he came to me at the museum. I was not absolutely confident that it was Kōkan's "authentic work" at the beginning, either. However, when it was in my possession and I proceeded with my research, I found it to have a calm presence. Is it possible that this work is, or could be, an authentic work by Kōkan and that Hiroshige's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" may have been based on this original painting by Kōkan? I thought that it would be meaningful to present this "hypothesis" to the public as a "new theory." I have also found evidence to support it.

Words from Kuroda Genji (129)

At that time, I was encouraged by Kuroda Genji (1886-1957), former director of the Nara National Museum and a pioneer in the Japanese Western-style painting and the study of Kōkan. Dr. Kuroda, who have passed away long ago, did not push me directly. It was his book "Shiba Kōkan" (1972, Tokyo Bijutsu) that pushed me forward.

I would like to share with you a passage from the "Introduction" of the book.

There are a great many things called "Kōkan" that are not really Kōkan at all. However, the rampant existence of fakes has given rise to a tendency to consider genuine works of Kōkan as fakes. If the fakes become commonplace, then the autographs that do not conform to the format will be treated as fakes, and valuable materials, especially his early works, may fall victim to this trend. This is a very troubling trend, but one that is difficult to avoid for painters such as Kōkan, whose works have a large number of popular fictitious drawings. Therefore, the study of Kōkan requires us to examine these things especially carefully, and to make efforts to discover genuine works of Kōkan that do not look like Kōkan.

I felt as if the book were telling me: "To those who are following in the footsteps of Kōkan studies! You are charged with the duty and necessity of discovering true works of Kōkan that do not resemble Kōkan." It was a voice from heaven, for it was this "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" paintings that were so unlike Kōkan's work.

My previous book "*Hiroshige: Tōkaidō Gojyusantsugu no Himitsu*" (The Secret of Hiroshige's Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō) (1995, Shoudensha Publishing Co.) brought this Kōkan's work to the public's attention.

Upon its publication, controversy arose. Newspapers and magazines carried headlines such as "Hiroshige's masterpieces had original paintings" and "Hiroshige had never walked the Tōkaidō in the first place.

While some researchers enthusiastically supported me, I also received some unbearable slander in the form of vehement rebuttals. Art historians were generally silent.

It has been 25 years since I published my previous book. I have thoroughly examined the many arguments for and against the book, met with researchers in the natural sciences, local historians, and artists, asked for their advice, and made new discoveries in the course of my research. As a result, I have come to be convinced of the authenticity of this Kōkan's work.

Before going into the main subject here, there is something that I have been thinking about earnestly since my previous book. *Ukiyo-e* is the art of the world, and Hiroshige and his Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō are the treasure of the world. The Louvre, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and other prominent museums around the world have them in their collections and on display. Therefore, the fact that there are fifty-five hand-drawn original paintings should be promptly communicated to the world.

Sooner or later, the world will learn about the existence of this original paintings. Whether or not this work is by Kōkan might be a private matter for me, but whether or not Hiroshige's prints were produced based on this Kōkan's paintings is a public matter in the history of world art. I would like to first inform the reader of this fact.

Kōkan and Hiroshige, each of their "Fifty-three Stations" (131)

Now, for those readers who are new to this issue, I would like to give a brief overview of The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō by both Shiba Kōkan and Utagawa Hiroshige.

The publication of Hiroshige's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" began in 1833, and the following year, 1834, a set of 55 paintings was released. The set consisted of fifty-five pieces, including fifty-three stations, plus the starting and ending points of Tōkaidō Highway: Nihonbashi and Kyoto. Each of the fifty-five pictures is marked with a small subtitle in white letters on a red background next to the name of the station. For example, "Kambara" has the subtitle "Night Snow" and "Shono", "White Rain". The prints are 24.2 cm in length and 36.7 cm in width, and are multicolor prints.

The publisher was Hoeido, which at the time was still a fledgling publisher. The prints became very popular as soon as they were released, and propelled Hiroshige to become one of the most popular painters of his day. The prints were reprinted and reprinted many times. Each time, the work was modified, so there are several different editions of each work.

In contrast, Kōkan's painting is a vertical painting of 23.3 cm in height and 18.2 cm in width. It is a Western-style painting that makes full use of perspective and shading, but a subsequent investigation of the materials revealed that it is a watercolor painting using paints of Kōkan's own devising. The major difference between this painting and Hiroshige's is that it is composed of a series of paintings starting from Kyoto and travel down the Tōkaidō Highway to Edo (present-day Tokyo).

On Kōkan's paintings, there is no writing, of the name of the place etc., except for his signature and seal. However, in the final scene depicting the Nihonbashi Bridge, there are letters that read "*Kamakura Shichirigahama in Sōshū*," signed "Kōkan Shiba Shun" and signed by Kōkan in Dutch, and below it, a large seal with Kōkan's pseudonym name "Shunparō" is stamped in an orthodox and old-fashioned manner.

I have called this work "Kōkan's Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" for the sake of convenience. Each of the first and the second volumes has a title slip (in the shape of a strip of paper) on the front cover, which reads "The Book of the Pictures of the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō". However, these title slips are not in Kōkan's handwriting, they were affixed after his death. It is not very likely that Kōkan painted this work with the stations of Tōkaidō Highway in mind. Kōkan himself said that he painted the "Japanese Scenic Views and Mt. Fuji," which will be discussed in a later section of this book. However, since both Hiroshige's work and Kōkan's work include 55 pictures likewise, there should be no problem in referring to Kōkan's work as the "Fifty-three Stations". The reader should first be aware of this fact.

The period of production is estimated to be from the 10th year of Bunka era (1813) to around the 15th year of Bunka era (1818), which is the last period of Kōkan's life. It is not too much to say, then, that this is the last work of Kōkan that compiled his achievements of his paintings.

The theory that Hiroshige did not travel the Tōkaidō Highway (133)

Hiroshige was born in Kansei 9 (1797) and died in Ansei 5 (1858). He was trained under the *ukiyo-e* master Utagawa Toyohiro, and was 37 years old at the time of publication of *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō*.

According to the conventional theory, Hiroshige, who had been an *ukiyo-e* artist as well as a public firefighter until the previous year, accompanied the shogunate in 1832 as an accompanying painter to the "*Hassaku-oumashinken*" a ceremony to present horses from the shogunate to the Imperial Court in Kyoto. It has been believed that *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō* was created based on sketches made during the trip.

However, there have been many who have questioned this theory. First of all, while the ceremony took place in August, in the middle of summer, Hiroshige's "Fifty-three Stations" depicts scenes in spring, summer, fall, and winter. The best example of this is the snowy landscape of Kambara. In addition, it is impossible to determine from which point Hiroshige did his sketches for many of his pictures.

Therefore, there has long been a theory among researchers that Hiroshige did not actually walk the Tōkaidō Highway. The only source for the theory that Hiroshige accompanied to the horse presenting ceremony is a story told by a liquor store owner who was told by Hiroshige III (1842-94). It is true that Hiroshige II (1826-69) accompanied the same ceremony in 1863 and published "*Tōkaidō Meisho*" (Famous Places of Tōkaidō), so it is plausible that the "testimony" of Hiroshige III was based on a story by Hiroshige II, which was mistakenly applied to Hiroshige I.

In recent years, the theory that Hiroshige I accompanied to the horse presenting ceremony has rarely been heard of, even among experts. I think it is fair to say that it has become common knowledge that Hiroshige did not actually traveled the Tōkaidō Highway.

In contrast, Kōkan was born in Enkyō 4 (1747), 50 years earlier than Hiroshige. He died in Bunsei 1 (1818). He made at least three round trips along the Tōkaidō Highway during his lifetime. The last of these trips was from Kyoto to Edo in the spring of Bunka 10 (1813).

For all fifty-five paintings of Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations," the points from which he sketched can be identified. His depictions are extremely accurate, and there is no doubt that he visited the sites and depicted the actual sceneries. There are no elements in the depictions that contradict with the sceneries or customs of the 1810s.

Bases for and against the assumption of authenticity (134)

The following is the brief summary from my previous book about the grounds for judging Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" to be the genuine work of Kōkan.

- (1) It makes full use of extremely advanced techniques of Western painting, such as perspective, expression of three-dimensionality through shadows, and composition using a compass, and it is inconceivable that anyone other than Kōkan possessed such techniques before Hiroshige.
- (2) Comparing the two paintings, the Kōkan's paintings are more faithful to the actual sceneries than Hiroshige's. It is impossible to create a Kōkan's paintings based on Hiroshige's.
- (3) Among the various signs and seals used in the Kōkan paintings, the signs and seals used in the Kyoto, Seki, Kakegawa, and Kanagawa paintings match those of the "*Shungu-Zu*" painting, which is recognized as an authentic work by Kōkan.

In addition, the following are the grounds found after the publication of my previous book.

- (4) Scientific authentications in the U.S. have revealed that the painting materials used are consistent with those of Kōkan's period.
- (5) From Kōkan's writings and letters, we have found a number of supporting evidences that suggest the production of "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō". As a result, we are convinced that only Kōkan himself could have produced this work.
- (6) As the verification of individual works progressed, the evidence that Kōkan faithfully depicted actual sceneries and that his depictions were scientifically reasonable increased dramatically, and it became evident

that Hiroshige did not walk along the Tōkaidō Highway.

I will discuss these points in the rest of this book.

In contrast, the following points were the bases for objection.

- (i) At first glance, it appears to be of a newer period. It must have been produced in the early Meiji period.
- (ii) There is no similarity between the style of "The Fifty-three Stations" concerned and the style of other work that are known as Kōkan's.
- (iii) It is doubtful that the "*Shungu-Zu*" itself, which the seal claims to match, is an authentic work by Kōkan.
- (iv) The pointillism that came to be widely used in later periods can be seen in this work.
- (v) A close examination of Kōkan's works reveals some inconsistencies with the styles and customs of the period.

The first point is quite impressionistic, and can be clarified by a close examination of the works. A further scientific investigation of the silk books and painting materials on which the paintings are painted will further clarify the situation. We would be happy to cooperate if you would like to conduct such an investigation.

The second question is based on subjective opinions. I would like to reserve it for now and develop my own theory in later chapters.

As for the third point, "*Shungu-Zu*," it was determined to be a genuine work of Kōkan by researchers. It is perplexing to see the sudden change of the claim about the authenticity of *Shungu-Zu* with the appearance of this "Fifty-three Stations", but it was already the incident of the past, and "*Shungu-Zu*" is now recognized as a Kōkan's genuine work.

As for pointillism (iv), it is already well known that from the 1700s to the early 1800s, pointillism was widely used by literati painters and others.

Regarding the point (v), one important point was made. In "Seki," both Kōkan and Hiroshige depicted a tag with the inscription "*Senjo kou*" on the wall of the building on the left, in front of the *Hon-jin* (an inn for feudal lords). The theory is that "*Senjo kou*" was not yet widespread in Kōkan's time. If true, this is a major problem that shakes the very foundation of authenticity of Kōkan work. It must be thoroughly verified.

"*Senjo kou*" is the name of a face powder that was very popular at the time, and it is said to have been named after a popular *kabuki* actor of the time, Segawa Kikunojo III (Senjo). It was sold from a store called Sakamotoya Tomoshichi in Kyobashi Minami-Denma Cho, Edo, and became a very popular product.

Kikunojo III was born in 1752 (Horeki 2), was active from the 1770s, and died in 1810 (Bunka 7), which makes him a contemporary of Kōkan. Since the product is named after this actor, common sense naturally leads us to believe that his active period and the time of its release are not far apart. In fact, the fact that this cosmetic has been around during Kōkan's active period can be proven by the history of cosmetics and Edo studies.

The Edo Tokyo Museum's "Kabuki Biographical Dictionary" also mentions that *senjo kou* was "a face powder produced and sold from around 1807 (Bunka 4). There was no problem from the beginning.

There were also objections that presented detailed examples of how Kōkan did not necessarily faithfully depict the actual scene. It is true that Kōkan aimed to "copy the real image" and painted the actual view he saw in accordance with the law of nature. But as a painter, he would sometimes exaggerate or alter the scenery to make it look more effective. This is natural for an innovative painter and artist. The characteristics of Kōkan's painting style, which magnifies the vertical side compared to the actual scenery, appear in many paintings. In "Fujisawa," Kōkan raised the position of Yugyo-ji higher than it actually is, for example.

Inspection of painting materials at the McCrone Art Institute (139)

I would like to discuss a new piece of evidence for the theory of authenticity, scientific appraisal.

In 1997, three years after the publication of my previous book, TV Asahi, one of Japan's major television companies, decided to produce a special program on this issue, in which I proposed the scientific appraisal of art materials. This was because at that time, some people were still saying that the paintings were produced in the Meiji era. We thought that scientific evaluation would eliminate any unnecessary objections. The TV program

was broadcasted in January 1998.

The appraisal was conducted at the McCrone Art Institute in Chicago, where the director, Dr. Walter McCrone, was in charge. The research was focused on the yellow color. Yellow is said to be an easy color to use as an indicator, as a new product is developed about every 50 years.

A very small amount of paint was extracted from the Kōkan's Fifty-three Stations. Lead tin yellow, a mineral pigment made of lead and tin, was first detected. This painting material was very popular among 15th and 16th century painters, and its use almost disappeared around 1750. The detection of this paint is more than sufficient verification data.

Next, we investigated mineral pigments by X-ray irradiation. Chrome yellow was detected.

Dr. McCrone said that although there were a few cases of this paint being used from 1800, it was not mass-produced and widely used until 1818, even in Europe, and it is highly unlikely that Shiba Kōkan, who died in 1818, had access to it.

Dr. McCrone added, "It is possible that after Kōkan's death, a disciple who had access to the chrome yellow completed the work Kōkan had been painting."

At this point, since lead tin yellow was detected, it was almost proven that this work was older than Hiroshige's, even if it was supplemented by Kōkan's disciple. Also, it should be added that none of the pigments after the Meiji period were found.

Finally, let me mention one more example of a famous pigment. Berlin blue, a mineral pigment imported from Europe, known at that time in Japan as "*Bero Ai*," began to be widely used during the period of Hokusai and Hiroshige. However, there are records of its use by Hiraga Gennai and other Dutch scholars half a century earlier (see "*Butsurui Hinshitsu*" 1762, written by Hiraga Gennai). Kōkan used Berlin blue, too.

It is clear from the historical facts that Kōkan had access to the latest cultural relics and scientific knowledge through his contacts with the Dutch. If Kōkan could obtain Berlin Blue, it would be undoubtedly via the Dutch trading post. However, at that time, it was difficult for even feudal lords to make contact with the Dutch. Why was Kōkan able to do so?

I would like to discuss this in a separate section. Here, I will only note that it was not difficult for Kōkan to obtain painting materials thirteen years after it was developed in 1800.

New evidence discovered in the works (141)

Next, let us compare the fifty-five works by Hiroshige and Kōkan again. It has been more than 20 years since my previous book was published, and during that time, many new discoveries have been made. Although they are explained in the pages of color illustrations at the beginning of this book, I would like to introduce the most important discoveries here.

Kameyama (Kōkan 8, Hiroshige 46)

Both depict a grove of pine trees growing on a steep slope. Note the direction of the branches. In Kōkan's painting, the pine branches extend to the right, while in Hiroshige's, they extend to the left, the exactly in the opposite direction. In this case, the wind blows from the lower left along the ridge to the upper right. Therefore, it is Kōkan's work that is natural and reasonable.

The trees on Kameyama in this Kōkan's work are very tall. This is a characteristic of the Kōkan's painting method, also seen in his *ukiyo-e*; a unique deformation technique in which trees and pillars in the foreground are made thin and tall, and distant scenery and figures are placed in the space between.

Either Hiroshige did not see the actual scenery, or he arranged them for pictorial effect. In any way, Hiroshige's Kameyama is well-balanced, modern and beautiful as a picture. This is one of the pictures in which we can see Hiroshige's aesthetic sensibility.

Arai (Kōkan 23, Hiroshige 31)

"*Funa-gaku*," is a pastime of the nobility using a catamaran in which a nobleman is aboard on one ship and musicians, on the other playing *gagaku* (Japanese court music) and *warawa-mai* (dance by a young boy who

has not yet gone through his coming-of-age ceremony).

In addition to the catamaran, the family crests depicted in the two pictures should not be overlooked. Hiroshige depicted the family crest of his own family, the Tanaka family. In contrast, when Kōkan drew the family crest on the drapery covering, I presume, he had the crest of the Kyogoku family of the Toyo-oka domain in mind. The young lord of the Kyogoku family was a disciple of Kōkan, who was extremely close to Kōkan.

The Kyogoku family served Toyotomi Hideyoshi and was allowed to bear the surname Hashiba, and the first lord of the Kyogoku clan, Takatomo, was a Christian feudal lord.

I assume this painting has a strong sense of allegory, as typified by Aesop's Fables, implying Kōkan's strong respect for the imperial family and the nobility.

Incidentally, it is a historical fact that Kōkan had read "Aesop's Fables" in the Kishu family collection, one of the three Tokugawa families. He is also well aware of the existence of Western allegorical paintings.

The critical difference between Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" and Hiroshige's works is that the one is "secret paintings," which have no intention of being sold or exhibited to the public and are highly ideological and allegorical, while the other is for pure entertainment, which are completely open, cheerful, and intended for mass production.

Therefore, while I am impressed by Kōkan, I am also strongly impressed by Hiroshige's unique modifications. I highly appreciate Hiroshige's ability to make the secret painting more popular for ordinary people.

Numazu (Kōkan 42, Hiroshige 12)

In Kōkan's painting, the river surface, the road, and the leaves on the trees are beautifully illuminated by moonlight. Both paintings appear to depict the same location, and have been assumed to be the scenery of Kisegawa River. However, it had not been possible to determine where they were painted, until an amateur photographer, who walks along Tōkaidō, taking photographs of the Fifty-three Station paintings, pointed out to us that the place where this picture was painted was not the Kisegawa River, but the Kanogawa River, the downstream of Kisegawa river.

This photographer had originally seen Hiroshige's "Numazu" and wanted to take a picture of the same scenery. He had looked for the site where Hiroshige made his sketch, but had been unable to find it. When he saw the painting by Kōkan, he could finally specify the spot where the sketch was made. He sat up all night and finally could take a photograph of the scenery. Moreover, it was early in the morning at 5:00 a.m. when the moon came in the direction in Kōkan's painting. Kōkan's painting depicted an early morning scenery. Hiroshige thought it was evening because of the moonlight and subtitled his printing "*Tasogare-zu*" (A Picture of Twilight Dusk).

Kōkan was not sticking to painting the Fifty-three Stations at all. The scenery depicted in Kōkan's painting is not Numazu, one of the Fifty-three Stations, although Kōkan painted the place nearby. Also, in "Maisaka," he depicted a scene at Kanzanji Temple, which is off the road.

In Hiroshige's "Numazu," houses that look like inns can be seen at the end of the road, Hiroshige had to draw the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō, and he may have borrowed the composition from Kōkan's painting and then had to draw the inn town on top of it.

What is even more interesting is that in Kōkan's painting, the destination for the travelers, father, child and a person who accompanied them, is the Daiyuzan Ryoson (Saijoji Temple), known as the Tengu Temple. It was not a pilgrimage to the more popular *Kompira* as it has been said. Hiroshige's picture modifies it to depict a pilgrim and a man dressed in white, tired and hurrying to Numazu Station. The Kōkan's painting depicts people departing for "Doryoson Tengu-ji Temple" via Ashigara Michi Road, in high spirits.

Mishima (Kōkan 43, Hiroshige 11)

In Kōkan's painting, the *torii* gate and figures lit by moonlight cast shadows on the road, and the leaves of the trees reflecting the moonlight are beautifully depicted. At first glance, it appears to be a night scene. However, according to the shrine official, the moon is a dawn moon, which can be seen early in the morning, and the time of day can be specified. The actual moon can be seen from exactly the same direction as in Kōkan's painting. Like "Numazu," this one also depicts a departure early in the morning.

There is another striking difference between the two pictures of Mishima. It is the positioning of the *torii* gate and the stone lantern. In Kōkan, the lantern is inside the *torii* gate, while in Hiroshige's painting, it is outside of the gate. Which is correct?

Currently, the lantern at Mishima-taisha Shrine is located inside the *torii* gate. But we cannot jump to the conclusion to say that Kōkan is correct. Since Mishima-taisha Shrine was moved to its present location in the medieval times, it has been repeatedly rebuilt no less than 30 times due to fires, earthquakes, wars, and so on. The position of the *torii* gate and the lantern also changed each time. In fact, a photo taken in 1918, before the Great Kanto Earthquake, shows the *torii* gate on the outside. The *torii* gate was located this way after the shrine was completely destroyed by the great earthquake of 1855.

Then how was the location of the *torii* gate and the lantern before the earthquake in 1855? According to "*Tōkaidō Meisho Zue* (The Pictures of Famous Places of Tōkaidō)" published in 1797, the lanterns are located inside the *torii*. So, it is consistent with Kōkan painting.

It was in the 10th year of the Bunka era (1813) that Kōkan traveled down the Tōkaidō Highway, and in the 3rd year of Tempo (1832) that Hiroshige is said to have walked the Tōkaidō Highway. In any case, during this period, the lantern was located inside the *torii* gate. With the two "Mishima" pictures, we are now taught the history of earthquakes that Mishima Taisha Shrine went through.

We do not know why Hiroshige dared to depict them in the opposite positions from both the actual view and Kōkan's painting.

Odawara (Kōkan 45, Hiroshige 9)

Kōkan's painting does not look like Odawara at all. The shape of Mt. Hakone is completely different. As a result of the investigation, it was found that what Kōkan depicted was not Sakawa River, the river flowing through Odawara, but the Sagami River farther east. Either, it is not the famous *Banyu no Watashi* (Banyu ferry crossing) on the Tōkaidō Highway. This Kōkan's painting depicts the view of the sacred mountain Ōyama from *Tamura no Watashi* (Tamura ferry crossing), about 4 kilometers further up the river. The shape of the mountain's ridges matches perfectly. Again, Kōkan was not concerned at all with depicting the Fifty-three Stations.

The Tamura ferry is located within a short distance from Samukawa Shrine, which is worshipped as the most important shrine in Sagami. In other words, this Kōkan's painting can be thought of as a view of Mt. Ōyama from Samukawa Shrine. Isn't it possible to think that Kōkan's respect for the imperial family and Shinto is implied here, as in Ise Jingu Shrine in "Miya" painting?

What, then, should we make of Hiroshige's painting? The theme of Hiroshige's series is the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō. First of all, it is necessary to depict "Odawara station". When Hiroshige saw the Kōkan's painting, he must have thought that the river was Sakawa River and that he was looking at Mt. Hakone in the distance from the ferry. However, the shape of the mountain is different from that of Mt. Hakone, so Odawara Castle was placed at the foot of the rugged-looking Mt. Hakone to make it look like Odawara. The direction of the castle is different, but after all, this is not a map!

Fujisawa (Kōkan 48, Hiroshige 6)

The composition is the same, with the *torii* gate in the foreground and the main hall of Yugyo-ji Temple beyond the bridge, but if you look closely, in Kōkan's painting, you can see the right half of a small gate by the left pillar of the *torii* gate. This gate is not in Hiroshige's work. This gate is the main gate of Yugyo-ji Temple located across the Yugyo-ji Bridge. It is a temple gate without the roof called *Kuro-Mon* (Black Gate). The location is precise and cannot be drawn without knowing the site. This is another piece of evidence to show that Hiroshige's pictures could be drawn from Kōkan's paintings but not vice versa.

In addition, Hiroshige's painting depicts a staircase leading to the main hall on a high place, but not in Kōkan's painting. Both Kōkan and Hiroshige depicted the main hall of Yugyo-ji as being placed at a quite high place, but in reality, the main hall is not located at high place, and the path leading to the main hall of Yugyo-ji is a gentle slope, with no stairs.

If Yugyo-ji had been placed at its actual height, it would have overlapped with the *torii* gate and could not be seen, so Kōkan painted the temple's main hall higher than the *torii* gate, using his unique painting method of

stretching out the vertical side of the paintings. When Hiroshige saw Kōkan's painting, he mistakenly thought that Yugyo-ji was at such a high place, and added the stairs to the painting.

Most of the temple buildings, except for the main hall, were destroyed by fire in 1831, and it took five years from 1842 to rebuild the temple. In 1831, when Hiroshige is said to have traveled down the Tōkaidō Highway, there were no buildings other than the main hall. Here again, there is no doubt that Hiroshige used other drawings as a reference.

Totsuka (Kōkan 49, Hiroshige 5)

Look at the stone signpost in the center of the screen at the right of the stone lantern. In Hiroshige's painting, the tip of the signpost is shaped like a square pillar, but in Kōkan's painting, the tip is round. The signpost of the both pictures say "*kamakura-michi*" (The Kamakura Road). In Hiroshige's picture, "Kamakura" is written in *hiragana* (Japanese character) and "Michi" in Chinese character, while in Kōkan's painting all the characters used are *hiragana*. The stone signpost still exists at the site. Both the shape of the tip and the characters written on it match those of Kōkan's painting. "Michi" was written in *hiragana*.

The distant view of Kōkan's painting is drawn using perspective, depicting the "true scenery". The figures are a *samurai* and his companion. In the first print, Hiroshige used the image of a man climbing down from (getting off) a horse, but in the second print, he used the image of a man climbing up on a horse. This change cuddles the mentality of the common people who prefer 'up' rather than 'down' seeking for luck and prosperity.

Kambara (Kōkan 39, Hiroshige 15)

Now, let us look at Kambara. There is a monument in the town of Kambara that shows the point where Hiroshige painted his picture. However, it has been said that it is impossible to see the scenery as Hiroshige painted it from that point. In fact, until now, researchers and even local residents have been unable to identify the point of the sketch from Hiroshige's work.

However, the painting by Kōkan made it possible to identify the point. Behind the building on the right in Kōkan's painting, there appears to be something that look like a grove of trees or a mountain. In Hiroshige's work, only a few trees covered with snow are depicted in the night sky.

According to a local resident, the overhanging thing behind the building in Kōkan's painting is a mountain. It is said that the mountain was named "*Goten-yama*" (Mt. Goten) in reference to the teahouse that Tokugawa Ieyasu built to welcome Oda Nobunaga, who defeated the Takeda forces in the Warring States Period. Even today, it appears right in front of you as soon as you get off at Shin-Kambara Station on the Tōkaidō Line. On the other hand, the mountain depicted in the left of both pictures is called *Shiro-yama* (Castle Mountain), where a mountain castle was built in the Warring States Period. The presence of this *Goten-yama* on Kōkan's painting helped identify the location where it was drawn.

The building on the right is believed to be a *Hon-jin* (an inn for feudal lords) and the residence of Hiraoka Kyubei. The building depicted was probably its back side. The building was rebuilt in later years but it still stands at the same place. The old Tōkaidō Highway runs on the front side of the *Hon-jin*, beyond the row of houses on the left in the Kōkan's painting. The point where Kōkan did his sketch is probably just behind the *Hon-jin*. Although now it is difficult to pinpoint the exact location due to many houses, we can see a scenery that is almost the same composition as in Kōkan's painting (see photo). If we extend the line connecting the sketching point and the subject, we can almost reach the point where the "Night Snow" monument stands today.

In Kōkan's painting, there is a gate between the two buildings behind the *Hon-jin*, and it is clear that these two buildings are related. In Hiroshige's painting, on the other hand, the two buildings face different directions and are not related.

As for the depiction on the left, which at first glance seems like a cliff or a forest, an old illustration of the *Hon-jin* at the time shows that there was a bamboo thicket at that exact spot. Once again, the reliability of Kōkan's description was enhanced.

While Kōkan sketched the two buildings behind the *Hon-jin* and depicted the actual *Goten-yama*, Hiroshige simply made an *ukiyo-e* version. This is another proof that one can draw a Hiroshige's picture from a Kōkan's painting, but not vice versa.

I would like to present a bold hypothesis about "Kambara in Snow" in Chapter 3.

Artistic evaluation of Hiroshige (152)

The existence of the paintings which Hiroshige based on to draw his "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" does not change the value or appeal of Hiroshige's works at all. When it comes to faithfully copying something, no painting can compare to a photograph. The fact that a picture is not drawn precisely as it should be, or it violates the laws of nature, has no bearing on the evaluation criteria for the art of painting. Likewise, no matter how accurately a painting is depicted, its evaluation as a work of art is a different matter.

The true essence of Hiroshige's work is its evaluation as *ukiyo-e*. We should fully appreciate Hiroshige's appeal as a graphic designer rather than his originality. He does not care that he draws what is actually on the right on the left in the composition of his picture, or whether he adds things that do not exist or removes things that do exist in the actual scenery. Hiroshige borrowed and utilized Kōkan's compositions, and in "Kambara," he poetically depicted the tattered appearance of an inn town on a snowy night. It is unparalleled. There is not the slightest doubt that this work by Hiroshige is a masterpiece in the history of Japanese painting.

The appearance of the original Kōkan painting should further broaden Hiroshige's appeal and reputation as an artist, and further enhance his presence as an *ukiyo-e* artist that cuddled the hearts of the ordinary people. I once saw a hand-drawn sketch by Hiroshige at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, which was not well known in Japan. It was breathtaking. This is why the publisher entrusted him with this huge business, "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō," a work on which the company's future was at stake. Here, I would like to emphasize this point to the readers.

Relationship with "Tōkaidō Meisho Zue" (153)

Irrespective of Kōkan, there has been a theory among some researchers since around 1960 that Hiroshige's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" may have had an original source. It was "*Tōkaidō Meisho Zue*" (The Pictures of the Famous Places of the Tōkaidō Highway).

On January 23, 2004, an article appeared in the evening edition of the Asahi Shimbun newspaper with the headline "Hiroshige Did Not Travel the Tōkaidō Highway?". Suzuki Juzo, a leading scholar of *ukiyo-e*, who was 84 years old at the time, clarified that it is certain that Hiroshige painted the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō without traveling to Kyoto.

Mr. Suzuki pointed out the existence of three source books for at least 26 of Hiroshige's 55 pictures of The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō.

- (1) Eighteen paintings from "*Tōkaidō Meisho Zue*". Published in 1797 (by Akisato Rito)
- (2) Two paintings from "*Ise Sangu Meisho Zue*" (Pictures of Famous Places of Ise Shrine)" published in 1797 (by Akisato Rito)
- (3) Six paintings from the frontispiece of the fourth volume of "*Zoku Hizakurige*" (A Sequel to *Hizakurige*) Published in 1813 (by Jippensha Ikku)

Of these, "*Tōkaidō Meisho Zue*" and "*Ise Sangu Meisho Zue*" were produced by Kyoto-based artist Akisato Rito, and many famous painters from the Kyoto art world, including Maruyama Ōkyo, participated in these works.

So, if Hiroshige used Kōkan as the source for his work, and if there are similarities between Hiroshige and "*Tōkaidō Meisho Zue*," then naturally there must be similarities between Kōkan and "*Tōkaidō Meisho Zue*" as well. This is true. Although the similarities are not as striking as those of Hiroshige, there are many examples of depictions in Kōkan's paintings that appear to have been adapted from *Meisho Zue*.

In Kansei 11 (1799), two years after the publication of *Tōkaidō Meisho Zue*, Kōkan stayed in Kyoto for more than seven months. Naturally, he would have been able to obtain the book at a bookstore in Kyoto. Akisato Rito was a friend of Kōkan, and the participating artists were also acquaintances of his. In particular, the preface to the "*Zue*" was written by a court noble Nakayama Naruchika, who had a close relationship with Kōkan. It is quite natural that Kōkan referred to them when he produced his "Fifty-three Stations" in later years.

The three works that Suzuki Juzo pointed out as sources for Hiroshige's works were all published in the middle of Kōkan's active period. For Hiroshige, they were published long before his active period. Why did Hiroshige model his works on publications that were twenty or thirty years old? Some researchers have long felt that this was unnatural. In 20 years, manners, customs and fashions change, and buildings also change due to fires and earthquakes (just like Yugoji Temple and Mishima Taisha Shrine). *Ukiyo-e*, like *Kawaraban* (newspapers

in Edo period), is basically a publication that newsworthiness is required in the form of "contemporariness".

This question can be answered if we assume that Kōkan's 55 illustrations of the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō, as well as the set of materials used for reference including "*Tōkaidō Meisho Zue*", the illustrations and the camera obscura sketches of the Tōkaidō and other works, were all loaned to Hiroshige's publisher, Hoeido, by the owner at the time, after the death of Kōkan. Here, we have all the evidence, Kōkan's Fifty-three Stations of Tōkaidō, "*Tōkaidō Meisho Zue*", and so on.

"*Tōkaidō Meisho Zue*" can be easily accessed through the digital service of the National Diet Library and other libraries. If you are interested, please take the time to compare it with the illustrations in this book.

In the late Edo period blossomed the flowers of culture. 'Flower' and 'cherry blossom' are almost synonyms in Japan. *Somei-yoshino*, the representative breed of cherry blossom, is said to have been created in the Edo period by a gardener in Somei village, Sugamo, with the *Edo higan* as its mother and a hybrid of the *Ōshima* cherry and the *yamazakura* as its father. The SAKURA trees along the Potomac River in Washington D.C. and in Stockholm's Royal Park are now famous, but cherry trees had already been sent to various parts of the world as symbols of friendship more than a hundred years before.

Both Kōkan and Hiroshige created new art forms by 'grafting' the works by their predecessors on their own talents. The development of culture and art inevitably requires 'grafting'. Incidentally, Jigenji Temple, the family temple of Kōkan, is located in a corner of the former Somei Village, the hometown of *Somei Yoshino* (moved to its current location in Meiji 5 (1912)). In spring, *Somei Yoshino* in full bloom dance in the wind and on the tombstone of Kōkan.

Opinion of Watanabe Kaneo, a connoisseur (156)

It has been more than 20 years since the death of Watanabe Kaneo, a well-known connoisseur of old books and paintings. Many people might remember him featured in the popular TV program "*Kaiun! Nandemo Kanteidan*," a popular TV program in which experts evaluate antiques owned by ordinary citizens.

It seems like only yesterday that Mr. Watanabe was wearing an old-fashioned kimono in the popular TV show, saying "This is no good." Upon hearing Watanabe's merciless comments, the client, who had been so confident at the beginning, dropped his shoulders in disappointment. His relatives in the audience seat laughed loudly, saying, "I knew it!" I am sure many of you remember a scene like this.

Mr. Watanabe wrote a book in which he commented on The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō by Shiba Kōkan.

The book was titled "*Kosho-ga" Mekiki no Goku-i* (The Art of the Connoisseur of Ancient Calligraphy and Painting), published in 1996 by Futami Shobo. In the book, there is a comment on Shiba Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" (page 261), which I would like to introduce.

In addition to perspective, it was Shiba Kōkan who was the first (in Japan) to use Japanese paints in *Mitsuda-yu* (boiled *egoma* oil and lead oxide) to create Western-style paintings.

It seems that he was a man who did not like to fit into a mold. He liked astronomy and other subjects, and studied Western studies in Nagasaki. It was during this time that he came into contact with Western painting techniques, and he also experimented with copperplate engraving. He dabbled in various things as his talents dictated.

Here is a remarkable line.

Shiba Kōkan painted The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō using the oil painting method, and later Ando Hiroshige also made *ukiyo-e* prints of The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō.

With a single, casual shot, Mr. Watanabe gave us a precise insight into The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō. First, there was "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" painted in the Western style by Shiba Kōkan, and then Hiroshige made it into *Ukiyo-e*. It is a one-shot solution. How careless I was not to know that he left such a valuable comment.

Mr. Watanabe is a Japanese-style painter who received direct instruction from Yokoyama Taikan and Kawai Gyokudō at the Japanese Painting Department of Tokyo Fine Arts School, the predecessor of Tokyo University

of the Arts, and who devoted himself to restoring cultural properties and copying Horyuji murals and other works. He worked hard every day at the Tokyo Fine Arts School copying old paintings and works by Taikan, and Gyokudō. In his book, many of his reproductions are introduced alongside the original old paintings.

In this book, Mr. Watanabe also explains some other essentials and points of Japanese painting appraisal. He explains the focal point of the painting, the position of the signature and seal in the painting, and the composition and balance of the painting. He also explained that no two paints of the Edo period are the same because they were devised by the artist himself.

Signatures and seals consistent with existing authentic works (158)

I would like to mention the seal, which Mr. Watanabe points out as the most important requirement for the appraisal of old paintings.

I have already written about the issue of signatures and seals on The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō by Kōkan in my previous book, but since it is an important point, I would like to reiterate it very briefly.

First, the signatures in many different colors and styles of writing were used in Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō". This is something that is often seen in hand-drawn artwork of the Edo period.

The signatures are roughly divided into "Shiba Shun," "Shun," "Kōkan," and "Kōkan Shiba Shun," and the colors used are black and white. Details are as follows: 21 "Shiba Shun (including only Shun)" in black, 7 "Shiba Shun" in white, 16 "Kōkan" in black, 10 "Kōkan" in white, and only one "Kōkan Shiba Shun" ("Nihonbashi") in black. We do not deny the possibility that there is some allegory in this.

There are dozens of different signatures on the works recognized as authentic Kōkan, and if we judge only from the similarity of the shape of the signature, we might appraise a forgery as authentic. This is the difficult part of handwriting analysis.

It has been pointed out that one of the characteristics of the handwriting of Kōkan's signature is that the vertical bar of the character for "horse" penetrates all the way to the bottom and forms one of the four dots. In the present "Fifty-three Stations of Tōkaidō," however, there is no "horse" with the vertical bar protruding downward. In fact, this has been the basis for those who questioned this work, as well as the "*Senjo Kou*" as mentioned before.

But does this mean that there are no authentic works by Kōkan in which the vertical bar of the "horse" does not protrude? Yes, there is. The signature of "*Shunshū Kashiwabara Fuji*", a landscape painting considered to be a masterpiece of Kōkan's later years, does not have the vertical bar of the "horse" sticking out. It was found to be almost the same as that of the "Horse" in "The Fifty-three Stations of Tōkaidō". Since Kōkan used different handwritings for different paintings, it is not necessary to mind the difference of handwritings here.

In fact, this "*Fuji*" was produced in the 9th year of Bunka (1812), which is almost the same period as the estimated production date of the "Fifty-three Stations" (Bunka 10 or later). In his later years, Kōkan moved away from oil painting, and his paintings are mainly watercolors in a unique fusion of the Eastern and the Western culture.

There are more than ten types of Kōkan's seals inscribed with "Shiba Kōkan" alone, and about 50 types have been found including other seals. In addition, wooden seals are subject to wear during use, which limits the number of years they can be used. A perfect match is rare.

However, in the case of the "Fifty-three Stations," computer analysis by Moriya Seiji, then assistant professor at Yamagata University, revealed that the "Shiba Kōkan" seal used in "Kyoto," "Seki," "Kakegawa," and "Kanagawa" almost perfectly matched the seal used in "*Shungu-zu*," which is recognized as Kōkan's original work.

Chapter 2: Kōkan, The Giant, A Life Filled with Extraordinary Episodes

How to approach the truth (162)

I hope you have learned the following about this hand-drawn "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō".

(1) There are no elements that contradict with the assumption that both the contents and paints of these 55 paintings are older than the "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" by Utagawa Hiroshige.

(2) That Hiroshige succeeded in creating a *ukiyo-e* version of one of the greatest masterpieces as a tribute to Kōkan.

The only remaining task is to confirm that the work is indeed by Kōkan.

Basically, as a matter of common sense in art history, a work is almost always considered to be genuine if the seal matches. However, since this is a concern not only for Japan but for the rest of the world, it is only natural that more reliable proof is required.

Besides the signatures and seals, is there any other way to prove the authenticity of the work? A close inspection of the person Shiba Kōkan himself would provide strong evidence. The person who drew the "Fifty-three Stations" must be a painter of exceptional skill, able to create a three-dimensional composition by making full use of perspective and shading techniques, and, in addition, well versed in the scenery and customs along the Tōkaidō Highway.

In addition, it would be even better if the intention and background of the work, including the timing of its creation, can be proven or inferred from the literary materials left by the artist himself.

For example, a description in Kōkan's writings, diary, or letters, such as "In such and such month of such and such year did I paint this work," would be strong evidence. The only way to prove is to accumulate such circumstantial evidence. It is difficult to tell the truth and very easy to deny it.

Shiba Kōkan: an overview of his life (163)

Here, I would like to list some important points to be considered.

Mystery of his origin

As a painter

As a Dutch scholar

His association with the Dutch

His close contacts with the feudal lords and the secret agents of the shogunate

As a natural scientist

The great mistake of claiming that he was a "bluffer" and a "liar"

First, it is almost certain that Shiba Kōkan was born in Enkyo 4 (1747), but it is not clear what his father was. The theory of "townspeople origin" is the established theory among researchers. We would like to examine this first.

The 'townspeople' theory does not allow us to understand Kōkan. Many contradictions would be revealed. If we define Kōkan as a warrior or of similar origin, everything can be solved without difficulty. This is an important point. The problems surrounding Kōkan all stem from here.

Kōkan showed talent for painting very young, and before the age of 15, he was introduced to the Kano school and mastered traditional Japanese painting. He later became a student of the *ukiyo-e* artist Suzuki Harunobu, and showed considerable skill. Around the same time, he also studied Chinese painting from Sou Shiseki of the Nampin school, and became a grand master. As an *ukiyo-e* artist, he called himself Suzuki Harushige, and his fine works still remain today.

His association with Hiraga Gennai began before the age of 20, and he mastered some Western-style painting. At the age of thirty-seven, he succeeded in producing the first copperplate engraving in Japan. He had contact

with Dutch people in Edo, and acquired Dutch books and knowledge. He showed a relentless pursuit of natural science. It was Kōkan who first published the geocentric theory in Japan. He was in close contact with Japanese Dutch scholars of the time, and even caused friction with some of them.

He was also in the company of more than ten feudal lords, including those of the Kishu, Tosa, and Hirado domains. He also associated with Mamiya Rinzō, Ino Tadataka, Takadaya Kahei and others. A mere town painter would not make a true picture of this man. Even more curious is the fact that he criticized the supreme authority of the time, Matsudaira Sadanobu, but for some reason or other, he did not get any penalty from the shogunate. There are two possible reasons for this. Either Kōkan had some strong background, or he was actually connected to Sadanobu.

He traveled to Nagasaki when he was forty-two years old, to the Kinki region when he was fifty-five, and to Kyoto when he was sixty-six, making three round trips along Tōkaidō almost every ten years. He traveled freely and unrestrictedly, even staying at *Hon-jins* (inns for feudal lords).

In August of the same year that he returned to Edo from his last trip, he sent his own "death notice" to his acquaintances, the most fearless and eccentric of all his activities. Since this is related to the establishment of Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō," I will refer to it later.

He passed away in the first year of Bunsei (1818) at the age of seventy-two.

Misunderstandings and prejudices directed toward Kōkan (166)

Thus, the footprints left by Shiba Kōkan are not limited to the world of art. Not only an artist, he was a scientist, a thinker, and a man of letters. He was also a skilled engineer. The more one learns about his work, the more s/he realizes that he was a first-rate cultural figure of the Edo period. As mentioned earlier, his personal connections are astonishingly broad, and he has strong ties to important figures representing the era. The network of his connections, which transcended status and nationality, far exceeded the scope of the feudal era. The term "like glittering stars" best describes Kōkan's extensive network of connections.

Therefore, in order to discern who and what Sima Kōkan really was, we must approach the matter from all angles and perspectives. We need not only to examine his works and writings, but also, we must gather all information on the late Edo period. Simply discussing Kōkan as an artist is like touching an elephant's tail in the dark and declaring that "an elephant is an animal like a snake."

The reputation of Kōkan was full of misunderstandings and prejudice. Because of his radical views and mysterious eccentricities, he was thought to be a liar, bluffer, a man driven too much by ambition, and an eccentric. This is not far from the truth. But Okamoto Taro, Picasso, and even Einstein would proudly claim that the eccentric and the great are sometimes synonymous.

There is no small tendency in Kōkan's writings to flaunt his own prowess and disparage other painters and scholars. Yes, there is a great deal of it. In that sense, the misunderstandings and prejudice cannot be avoided.

Knowledge and information always give people power. When Kōkan found ancient shells buried in the strata near the top of a mountain during his travels, he immediately understood, "This place was once in the bottom of the sea". He spread the geocentric theory and knew that balloons were flying in the sky in Germany. Not only that, he even understood the principle of why balloons rise in the sky.

Kōkan must have sighed with deep regret that his homeland was so far behind Europe. In other words, Kōkan's criticism of cultural figures was not necessarily a lie or a bluff, but rather a warning, "You are not fulfilling an important duty for your nation and its people. Why don't you open your eyes to the world?" It is out of a sense of crisis.

It is a fact that he had been secretly contacted with Ino Tadataka and Mamiya Rinzō and exchanged information with them. The reason for the deep ties between the liberal feudal lords and Kōkan was because they shared this sense of crisis. "Concern for the country" is the key word in all of this.

The birth of *Akita ranga* (Akita Dutch painting) and Kōkan (168)

Where should we start? First of all, let us examine the subject matter of this book; his paintings.

As mentioned earlier, at a young age, Kōkan studied Japanese painting (Kano school), Chinese painting (Nampin school), and *Ukiyo-e* (it was not easy in the Edo period to become an apprentice in either of these schools), and then entered the path of Western painting. This, too, was not an easy path to follow.

According to the conventional theory, Kōkan learned Western painting from Odano Naotake, of *Akita Ranga*. *Akita Ranga* refers to a school of Western-style painting that emerged in the Akita region, and it was Hiraga Gennai who introduced Western-style painting to Naotake. In An-ei 2 (1773), Gennai was invited by Satake Shozan, the lord of the Akita domain, to visit Kakunodate for the development of Ani copper mine. There, Gennai met Naotake, who was a liegeman of a branch of Akita domain, was surprised at Naotake's talent for painting and taught him Western-style painting.

Naotake left for Edo at the end of the same year, where he became an apprentice of Gennai and later became an illustrator for "*Kaitai Shinsho*," a Dutch medical text translated by Sugita Genpaku, Maeno Ryōtaku, and others. It is commonly believed that Odano Naotake taught the painting technique to Satake Shozan, who was the lord of Akita domain and also had an artistic talent, and the Western-style painting flourished in the Akita domain. It is said that Kōkan also received instruction from Naotake.

However, this theory on the apprenticeship of Akita Dutch-style painting seems unnatural. Odano Naotake was just a local samurai with small *Karoku* (hereditary stipend). There was a huge gap in status between Naotake and Satake Shozan, the lord of Akita domain. For Naotake, Shozan was a man living in another world. It would be unnatural to instruct painting to someone whom it is difficult even to speak to. There must have been many other painters in Akita domain and it would be impossible for Naotake to instruct painting to his lord.

This theory is based on the premise that Hiraga Gennai and Shiba Kōkan met in 1773, when Kōkan was 27 years old. It is highly possible that Kōkan accompanied Gennai on his exploration of the Ani copper mine. If their first encounter took place in An-ei 2 (1773), then he would have accompanied Gennai to Akita immediately after their acquaintance. However, mine exploration is not a kind of work that can be undertaken with someone who one only acquainted with just for a short period of time.

Mine exploration in the Edo period was the most important task for both the shogunate and each domain to restore their finances. The domains did not want the shogunate to know that they had succeeded in developing mines. If the shogunate were to find out, the mine would most likely be placed under its direct control or the domain would be subjected to heavy administrative duties (shogunate construction work). Naturally, the results of the search must also be kept strictly confidential.

If Gennai accompanied Kōkan on such a job, it should be assumed that a considerable relationship of trust had been established between Gennai and Kōkan. In other words, it is impossible to explain unless Gennai and Kōkan had been in contact with each other for many years before the exploration. There is also some supporting evidence for this. This will be discussed in another section.

Meanwhile, Kōkan wrote in his writing "*Shunparō Hikki*" that the search for the mine ended in failure. However, this cannot be taken literally. Rather, we must think that Kōkan purposely wrote that it was a failure for the sake of strict confidentiality. At the very least, the development of the copper mine in Akita achieved a certain level of success by improving drainage, etc., and succeeded in increasing production.

In Kōkan's writings, such manipulation of information is not infrequent. This implies that Kōkan occupied an important and sensitive position as a source of information at that time. The Kōkan *onmitsu* (covert agent of the shogunate) theory is one of the most powerful hypotheses.

The lord of Akita domain painted the background for Kōkan's painting (171)

At any rate, Kōkan interacted with Gennai from an earlier date than Odano Naotake. In other words, it is highly possible that Kōkan received Western painting instruction from Gennai before Naotake. When Naotake left for Edo at the age of twenty-five, Kōkan was twenty-seven. At that time, Kōkan was already a first-rate painter and a grand master. So, Kōkan may have taught Naotake, but there would have been very little to learn from him. Some historical documents claim that Kōkan was taught by Naotake. However, this is a historical document from Naotake-related sources.

It is true that Naotake painted Western-style paintings earlier than Kōkan judging from the production period of existing Western-style paintings. However, this does not mean that Kōkan received instruction from Naotake. Kōkan, who was already famous as a Chinese painter, did not need to immediately turn his mastery of Western

painting into a career. At that time, there was still no demand for Western painting. It was, so to speak, a matter of "supply and demand".

On the other hand, there is an interesting fact about the relationship between Satake Shozan and Kōkan. In 1785, both artists collaborated on a work entitled "Western Man and Woman". Kōkan painted the central male and female figure, while Shozan painted the background. It would be the master or a senior apprentice who paints the central part of a painting and a lower-ranked apprentice might paint the background. The reverse could not be possible. In other words, it is no exaggeration to say that for Shozan, Kōkan was like a master of Western painting. It would be unnatural for feudal lords to paint the backgrounds for his junior disciples or even town painters.

Moreover, no matter how impudent Kōkan might be, there is no way that he could tell Shozan, "My lord, please paint the backgrounds for my paintings." I would rather assume that Shozan recognized Kōkan's artistic skill and told him, "Kōkan, I will help you with your paintings."

Therefore, the established theory of the genealogy of Edo Western-style painting needs to be reexamined. *Akita Ranga* was not born from Hiraga Gennai and continued by Shiba Kōkan, but the Western style painting was transferred from Gennai to Kōkan at the same time with the development of *Akita Ranga*.

Akita Ranga originated not in Akita, but in Edo. During the Edo period, the sons and daughters of the feudal lords were required to live in Edo. Shozan was born and raised in Edo, and entered Akita domain only after becoming a feudal lord, visiting Akita every other year thereafter. He could not speak Akita dialect. Originally, the Satake clan came from a powerful family in the Hitachi (now Ibaraki) region, and Akita was only their territory.

In other words, Dutch studies and Dutch painting were developed in the Edo residence of the Akita clan, and Gennai and Kōkan visited there. Shozan and Kōkan were in the relationship of junior and senior apprentices. It would be reasonable to assume that their relationship was so close that they collaborated on paintings.

Why was it possible to produce copperplate prints? (173)

Of course, there are other achievements that Kōkan left in the history of art. In 1783, he succeeded in producing Japan's first corroded copperplate etching. In etching, a pattern is engraved with a needle on a copper plate coated with an anticorrosive agent, which is then corroded by pouring nitric acid. Then ink is spread on the copper plate, and paper is pressed on top to copy the pattern.

Kōkan left more than 30 copperplate prints to the present day. All of the copperplate landscapes produced during the Tenmei era (1780s), including his first work, "*Mimeguri-no-kei* (The Scenery of Mimeguri)" were produced as *Megane-e*

Megane-e was a picture drawn using the perspective method, intending to show the scenery or object as three-dimensional, by viewing them through a device using a convex lens. The principle was the opposite of the camera obscura, which would appear later in this book.

Why was Kōkan able to make the first corroded copperplate prints in Japan? The biggest factor was the availability of the necessary materials. Of course, simply learning the knowledge of the method established by Rembrandt in Holland was a difficult task, but it could not be done without the materials.

At the time, the only way to obtain nitric acid, which was a necessary material for etching, was to import them from Europe or China through Nagasaki. However, imported materials were under strict control of the shogunate and could not be used without permission.

The reason why Kōkan was able to obtain such a valuable item was because of his interaction with Katsuragawa Hoshū. Hoshū, who was the shogunate's doctor, was able to use nitric acid because of his position. Without his help, Kōkan would not have been able to work on copperplate prints (although recent research has raised the possibility that Kōkan obtained the nitric acid directly from Nagasakiya, the Dutchman's lodging house in Edo).

Later, however, Kōkan stopped producing etching.

In "Seki" of "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" Kōkan drew a family crest that seems to belong to the

Tanuma family. It can be inferred that, as well as Gennai, Kōkan had an inseparable relationship with Tanuma Okitsugu, a liberal Shogunal advisor. In Tenmei 8 (1788), two years after Tanuma Okitsugu's downfall, Kōkan left Edo for a year and traveled to Nagasaki. This also suggests that there was a connection between the two men.

The mystery of the painting technique book presented by the head of the Dutch trading post (175)

Later, Kōkan painted the first oil painting picture (then called *rō-ga* (wax painting)) in Japan. In his "*Seiyo Gadan* (Western Painting Discussion)," Kōkan mentioned that during his trip to Nagasaki, he received "*Konst-Sikilde Buk*" ("The Great Book of Painting Techniques" by the Belgian painter Lillesse) from Isaac Chiching, the head of the Dutch trading post, which helped him make progress in the production of oil paintings.

This statement became one of the grounds for many researchers to treat Kōkan as a bluffer. When Kōkan visited Nagasaki in 1788, Chiching had already left Japan, after completing his term of office as the head of the trading post and was not in Nagasaki. Therefore, it was impossible that he was given "*Konst-Sikilde Bouk*" in Nagasaki.

However, it is too hasty to call Kōkan a "bluffer" because of this. As the Batavians (Indonesians) accompanying the Dutch are depicted in Kōkan's "Nihonbashi," the Dutch visited Edo once a year. Chiching visited Edo twice, in 1780 and 1782. At that time, Kōkan must have met Chiching at "Nagasakiya" in Nihonbashi, where Chiching was staying, and received a "*Konst-Sikilde Buk*" as a gift.

The reason why Kōkan wrote the book was given to him in Nagasaki is because he could not disclose that he was in contact with the Dutch in Edo. Normally, only those from the shogunate were allowed to meet privately with the Dutch in Edo, under strict restrictions. However, Kōkan, for some reason or other, was allowed to meet with them.

During a trip to Nagasaki in 1788, Kōkan disguised himself as a merchant and sneaked into *Dejima*, a place where ordinary people would not be allowed to enter. He had already known some Dutchmen and even had a pleasant chat with them. In his "*Saiyu Nikki* (The Diary of a Journey to the West)" Kōkan later boasted that translators who traveled with him were surprised to see it, and Kōkan himself wrote that he met these Dutchmen at "Nagasakiya" in Edo. It is certain that Kōkan had been in "Nagasakiya" from early on and got acquainted with them there.

Kōkan could not write about the production of oil paintings without mentioning the existence of this Lillesse's book. Therefore, he concealed the fact that he received the book in Edo and claimed to have received it in *Dejima*. This makes sense when we consider the fact that Kōkan states in his "*Shumparo Hikki*" that he began painting oil paintings around 1786.

Kōkan carried his own oil paintings with him on his trip to Nagasaki in 1788, showing them off to local painters, wealthy merchants, and feudal lords.

After returning to Edo from Nagasaki, he developed his own technique of using paper or silk instead of a canvas and dissolving oil paint with *egoma* (wild sesame) oil, and began actively producing oil paintings. His trip to Nagasaki no doubt inspired him through many oil paintings he came into contact with. The Kansei period (1790s) was the period of oil painting for Kōkan, and his masterpiece "*Sōshu Kamakura Shichirigahama*" was also created during this period.

In the 1800s, however, he stopped producing oil painting. The reason for this was that the demand for Western paintings was decreasing and also it was difficult to preserve them. Conversely, ink and light-colored portraits and landscapes began to be seen. The style of painting also changed significantly, suggesting some kind of his change of mind.

Mr. Yasumura Toshinobu, a specialist in the history of Japanese painting and the director of the Hokusai Museum, says, "From the Kyowa to the Bunka period (1801-18), Kōkan moved away from copperplate engraving and stopped making many oil paintings. Instead, he produced excellent works by applying the depiction methods acquired through Western-style painting to traditional light-colored works" (Jubi, No. 30, GAKKEN).

This comment is valuable because it is a statement made by the researcher not in relation to the issue of the "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō," but as a general discussion of Kōkan. The reason is that "applying the

depiction method acquired through Western-style painting to traditional light-colored works" is precisely a description of the characteristics of Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō.

In addition, Okamoto Taro, mentioned earlier, says that a true artist is one who moves forward, abandoning his previous careers. This is because "new things are already old when they are said to be new. This applies exactly the transition of Kōkan's painting style.

The relationship between Nagasakiya in Nihonbashi and Kōkan (179)

Let us consider the relationship between Nagasakiya and Kōkan a little more closely.

In the chronological table of Kōkan's achievements, Nagasakiya's name appears as follows.

1. In An-ei 9 (1780), Kōkan was 34 years old. In March, the head of the Dutch trading post Chiching visited Edo. Isn't it the case that Kōkan might have visited Nagasakiya where Chiching stayed at that time?
2. In Tenmei 2 (1782), at the age of 36. In March, when Chiching visited Edo. Wasn't it possible that they met again?
3. In Tenmei 8 (1788) at the age of 42. In March, Kōkan visited the Dutch envoys at Nagasakiya and met with the surgeon Stotzel, who had the "Jaiyo World Map", which Kōkan might have copied.

This chronology is a record of Kōkan's visit to Nagasakiya, taken from a voluminous book titled "*Shiba Kōkan no Kenkyu*" (A Study of Shiba Kōkan) edited by five Kōkan researchers including Naruse Fujio (Yasaka Shobo, published in 1994).

Of particular note is the description of the year Tenmei 8 (1788), in which the book by Naruse and others suggests the possibility that Kōkan might have copied the "Jaiyo World Map" owned by Dutch surgeon Stotzel at Nagasakiya. This would not have been possible without the tacit approval or support of Nagasakiya Gen-emon.

Jaiyo World Map was coveted by the lords, Japanese Dutch scholars, and wealthy merchants who were fond of Dutch studies. Incidentally, Ōtsuki Gentaku managed to obtain this map later with the permission of the shogunate after visiting Nagasakiya several times and pleading Stotzel.

It would have taken at least four or five days to copy Jaiyo World Map.

During the Edo period (1603-1867), visiting Dutch envoys to the Nagasakiya was strictly restricted. Furthermore, there was a rule that an inspector from *Edo machi-bugyo* (Edo magistrate) should be present. If the copying of the world map was a secret shogunate mission, it would be possible, but if it was a private business, it would have been impossible without the cooperation by Nagasakiya Gen-emon.

Nagasakiya was located in Nihonbashi Hongoku-cho. It was a large, long-established store whose head always called himself Gen-emon, and was also a purveyor to the shogunate. It was a famous place for Edo people to see the *Nanban* people (foreigners), and Katsushika Hokusai depicted "Nihonbashi Nagasakiya" as one of his works. However, historical materials are extremely scarce.

In the words of Katagiri Kazuo, a leading researcher on Nagasakiya, "The name is famous, but the true state is unknown.

The Dutch visited Edo 116 times during the Edo period. At some period of time, the rule was changed for Kapitán (the head of the Dutch trading post) to visit Edo once every five years, but the Dutch envoys seemed to come to Edo every year.

Also, the medicine wholesaler Nagasakiya was the only official merchant in Edo who had the privilege of importing and selling medicines. It sold the world-famous ginseng as well as Western medicines that were coveted by doctors. Nagasakiya was also the exclusive wholesaler of white sugar, which seems to have been a form of assistance as well as the payment from the Dutch to Nagasakiya.

Nagasakiya was a two-story building. The second floor was a salon and lodging space for the Dutch, and its security was very tight. It is known that the first floor was the drug wholesaler that dealt with imported

medicines and sometimes imported sundries.

No Kōkan without Hiraga Gennai (182)

It was through Hiraga Gennai that Kōkan first became acquainted with Nagasakiya.

Around Meiwa 3 (1766), when Kōkan was 20 years old, he was a close follower of Hiraga Gennai. It is highly likely that he accompanied Gennai to the medicine wholesaler Nagasakiya. Kōkan recalls that in Meiwa 5 (1768), Hiraga Gennai sold all of his household goods and painstakingly raised a sum of more than 50 *ryō* to obtain a copy of the Dutch book "Yongston's Illustrated Encyclopedia of Animals". The fact that he knew of such privacy is a proof that they were very close.

Nagasakiya and Hiraga Gennai had long been friends in the field of botany-herbal. In addition to "Yongston," Hiraga Gennai purchased many Dutch books from Nagasakiya from Horeki 11 (1761) onward. However, the name of Nagasakiya is not mentioned, as we have seen in Kōkan's case. Also, there is a record of Gennai visiting a Dutchman at Nagasakiya in March of Horeki 10 (1760) and meeting with the tribute envoy. At that time, Kōkan was only 14 years old. Gennai also held the "*Toto Yakuhin-kai* (Edo Medicine Meeting)" in Yushima, Edo in 1762. Gennai and Nagasakiya were both engaged in the same business of medicine. Gennai and Kōkan's trip to *Dejima* in Nagasaki must have been assisted by and with the cooperation of Nagasakiya. This is because Nagasakiya Gen-emon was one of the main members of the merchants' meeting dealing with the *Nanban* trade (the trade with the Dutch).

Gennai has the following episode. In March of Meiwa 6 (1769), Gennai visited Nagasakiya accompanied by a Japanese Dutch doctor. Kapitan Karanth was a person with a sense of humor. After the official business was finished, Karanth playfully took out a disentanglement puzzle and said, "Whoever solved this puzzle, I will give it to you. One after another, the Japanese people in the room tried to solve the puzzle, but no matter how hard they tried, they could not open the ring. Finally, it was Gennai's turn. Gennai thought for a while, and then opened the ring in a brilliant manner. Karanth was surprised, stared at Gennai, put the puzzle in a bag, and gave it to Gennai. After that, the friendship between Karanth and Gennai began.

Without Hiraga Gennai, Kōkan would not have left his mark on Japanese history. Let us consider this in terms of painting. In Meiwa 2 (1765), at the age of 19, Kōkan became a disciple of Suzuki Harunobu, one of the most popular *ukiyo-e* artists of the day, who lived in Shirakabe-cho, Kanda. Some researchers say that it was Hiraga Gennai who introduced Kōkan to Suzuki Harunobu. This theory came from the fact that Gennai was Harunobu's tenant when Kōkan became a disciple of Harunobu. Naturally, Kōkan would have been acquainted with Gennai at this point. Thereafter, Kōkan painted *ukiyo-e* for nearly six years.

Around this time, Kōkan also became a disciple of a *Nampin* school Chinese painter Sou Shiseki, who had just returned from Nagasaki. Sou Shiseki also lived in the same neighborhood of Kanda Shirakabe-cho. This is also no doubt another introduction by Gennai. In Kanda Shirakabe-cho, Gennai's close friend, Sugita Genpaku, a Dutch doctor, also lived. All the people who influenced Kōkan in such important ways were friends of Hiraga Gennai. Without Gennai, Kōkan could not have got in contact with *ukiyo-e*, Chinese painting, Western painting and Dutch studies. Odano Naotake became acquainted with Gennai in An-ei 2 (1773), eight years after Kōkan was introduced to Suzuki Harunobu. It is natural to assume that Gennai and Kōkan were already visiting the Edo mansion of the Akita clan often at that time.

It is certain that Kōkan often visited Nagasakiya Gen-emon, in the medicine wholesaler on the first floor of Nagasakiya. There are numerous corroborative evidences. In "*Shunparō Hikki*," we find Kōkan boasting of carrying a pocket watch. He also built a music box. In Tenmei 1 (1781), Kōkan obtained "A Neapolitan Horse", a copperplate prints by a German, and in Tenmei 5 (1785), a copy of "The Life of Man: One Hundred Occupations," by Lauken and his son, which became Kōkan's favorite book. He also obtained a compass and a thermometer. This was before his trip to *Dejima*, Nagasaki. Other items, such as a coffee mill and hearing aids made by Kōkan, would have been impossible to produce without reference books and actual items.

The first floor of the Nihonbashi Nagasakiya must have been a fascinating wonderland for Kōkan. Nagasakiya was an import merchant authorized by the shogunate. It was in a unique position to import miscellaneous imported goods, painting materials, imported books, and other rare Western items. Kōkan obtained imported goods from Nagasakiya, which he used as a model for his own production and made into his Japanese version one after another. Of course, he could purchase the latest Western paints for his main business, painting. The close relationship between Nagasakiya Gen-emon and Kōkan has finally come to the forefront of history.

Interactions with Daikokuya Kōdayu and Mamiya Rinzō (185)

The head of the Dutch trading post was not the only person with whom Kōkan was able to meet. No one could stop Kōkan taking action and broadening his network. One day he was at a *geisha* house, the next day he would be in the Kyoto Imperial Palace. He also met Daikokuya Kōdayu, who had drifted away and returned from Russia. This was during the period of national seclusion, so as a rule, people who once left the country could not meet with anyone. Kōdayu, too, was not allowed to have any contact with the outside world, and was not able to return to Ise, his hometown. He was placed almost under house arrest in his Edo residence. However, Kōkan did meet with him.

Mamiya Rinzō, known for his exploration of Karafuto and Sakhalin, also came to visit Kōkan at his home. Rinzō is an *onmitsu* (a secret agent) of the shogunate. This secret agent visited Kōkan immediately after returning from his expedition to Sakhalin. The visit could not be for asking him to paint a picture of a beautiful woman, could it? It is certain that it was to convey "information about the world."

Rinzō was a moderate scale farmer on the banks of the Kokaigawa River in Hitachi (now Ibaraki). He explored Sakhalin by the shogunate's order for two years from Bunka 5 (1808) and found out that Sakhalin was an island. This was the discovery of the so-called Mamiya Strait.

He returned to Soya the following year in Bunka 6 (1809), and returned to Edo in January Bunka 8 (1811), submitting reports to the shogunate including "*Toudatsu Chiho Kiko* (A Report of a travel to the North-East of China)" and "*Kita Ezo Zuzetsu* (An Illustration of the North Hokkaido)" and other search records. These were the first documents to record the customs of the people of Sakhalin and Ezo (Hokkaido), and were included in Siebold's book "Japan".

Rinzō was promoted to a subordinate rank in the Matsumae Magistrate's office in April 1811, and it was on June 2 of the same year that he visited Kōkan, who was then living at the Shinsenza in Shiba. Kōkan was 65 years old at the time and Rinzō was 31 years old.

Rinzō learned surveying techniques under Ino Tadataka, who had created the "*Dainippon Enkai Yochi Zenzu*", the first detailed map of Japan. For some reason, Ino Tadataka and Kōkan were good friends. It was February 25, Bunka 2 (1805), when Tadataka left for the western part of Japan for his fifth surveying trip. Kōkan and Aida Sanzaemon, a mathematician, visited Tadataka at his inn in Kawasaki and hosted a farewell banquet. They stayed there until the next morning to see him off on his journey, but this is not mentioned in any of Kōkan's writings. This historical fact remains in Tadataka's diary. Kōkan may have been an eccentric, but he was a sincere man with a lot of love for others.

Furthermore, there is a remarkable record in Tadataka's survey diary. When Ino Tadataka's survey team arrived at Saga Castle in Kyushu, they were met by Yamaryō Shume, the lord of Saga domain and a close friend of Kōkan's. This person will be mentioned again in Chapter 3 and thereafter. He was a very important person.

Similarly, Kondo Juzo, a secret agent known for his exploration of the Ezo region, presented Kōkan with expensive *warasuki-gami* (straw paper), a specialty of Mito. Naturally, they must have known each other. Using this expensive paper, Kōkan later wrote a letter to Yamaryō Shume, which could be considered as a testimony to solve the mystery of the production of the "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" picture book. Sometimes, history can be an excellent stage director.

Daikokuya Kōdayu, Mamiya Rinzō, and Kondo Juzo all held information that the shogunate would never want leaked to the outside world. Kōkan was in a position to easily access this top-secret information. This is a great mystery and an extremely important factor in revealing the true image of Shiba Kōkan.

Matsura Seizan personally serving tea for Kōkan (187)

Kōkan also met with many feudal lords. A review of historical documents reveals that he had connections with more than a dozen feudal lords, including Satake Shozan of the Akita domain, the Tokugawa family of Kishu, the Date family of Sendai, the Yamauchi family of Tosa, the Matsura family of Hirado, the Abe family of Fukuyama, the Nabeshima family of Hizen, and the Hachisuka family of Awa.

Those who are critical of Kōkan say that Kōkan was trying to sell his products to the feudal lords. However, at that time, the feudal lords were the ones to whom the general public would get down on their knees. No matter how hard a painter or a Dutch scholar tried to appeal to them, there was no way they could meet him. But

Kōkan actually did meet them.

It was not a short courtesy visit. In some cases, the meeting started in the afternoon and lasted until 1:00 or 2:00 am. Matura Seizan, the lord of Hirado, even personally served tea for Kōkan. The following is a quote from "*Kōkan Saiyuki Nikki* (Diary of a Trip to the West).

At 2:00 p.m. I visited Seizan's study... Seizan arrived on his horseback... met me in person... he let me take a look at various books from Europe. Then I made an impromptu drawing, then a banquet, sweets, and Seizan served tea for me in his own tea room. I returned to the inn after 10:00 p.m. There was a great commotion in the town" (from the article on November 21, Tenmei 8 (1788)).

When Kōkan told the innkeeper that Seizan served tea and sweets for him, the innkeeper was so moved that he cried, saying that having Kōkan was the same as having the lord, Kōkan wrote proudly.

There may be some exaggeration and enrichment, but Kōkan did not plead to meet Seizan. Rather Seizan was eager to meet Kōkan. They met again a few days later.

However, we do not know what Kōkan discussed there with the lords. Kōkan did not leave a single line in any of his writings about the content of the meeting.

In his later years, Kōkan refused invitations from feudal lords, as he wrote in his "*Kōkan Zange-ki* (Penitentiary)" (in "*Shunparō Hikki*"). Again, those who are critical to Kōkan would say that this was another bluff by Kōkan, but in fact, Kōkan was such a person that the feudal lords were eager to meet. For one thing, it was the information he had. For another, it was his paintings. Paintings are sometimes the secret information itself.

Kōkan was quite knowledgeable about world affairs. He was a kind of a person who made his own coffee grinder in the Edo period. He knew that a balloon had gone up in a foreign country and understood how they go up in the sky. He also made globes, hearing aids, and reading glasses. In modern parlance, he was ahead of the trends of the times. It is only natural that everyone would want to meet him, listen to what he had to say, and feudal lords would take him under their wings. Incidentally, the amount of information available in the Edo period was said to be 1/5,000 of what it is today. In any age, information is the key to success.

In particular, the feudal lords were thirsting for Kōkan's knowledge as a scientist. At that time, the most important issue for the economic prosperity of a territory was to increase the yield of rice and other agricultural products. To achieve this, information on weather and climatic conditions was a must. If they could predict cold-weather damages or droughts, they could take countermeasures in advance.

This is where Kōkan's knowledge of astronomical science came in handy.

He also had knowledge of mining, as evidenced by his mention of the "*Sanso Hiroku*," a book that described practical geomorphology in the possession of Koga-style ninja and clandestine warriors, and his knowledge of medicinal herbs and geology enabled him to suggest agricultural products that were suitable for the local soil. For feudal lords, Kōkan was a valuable source of information and a competent management consultant.

A night of *seki-ga* (impromptu painting) with the lord of Sendai domain (190)

In the Edo period, there was an event called "*ōmei seki-ga*," in which a painter produces a painting in response to a request on the spot in front of a nobleman. Let us reenact a scene from one day's performance by Kōkan.

It was the first year of the Tenmei Era (1781), when Kōkan was 35 years old. The stage was set in the Edo mansion of the Sendai clan, the leader of the Tohoku region, which had a total of 620,000 *goku*. The lord of Sendai domain at the time was the seventh generation Date Shigemura, and Kōkan was invited to sit in on the painting. Kōkan said, "Please tell me what you like. I will do whatever you want." He was a man of ability and confidence.

Date Shigemura immediately asked Kōkan to draw a portrait of a beautiful Japanese woman. Tension ran high among the vassals watching, because at that time, Kōkan was known as a "painter specializing in drawing Chinese objects" and had been recommended by an official of the Date family. Japanese ladies and Chinese ladies are very different in costume and atmosphere.

Also, what was unusual for that day was that Shigemura's lawful wife and her attendants were present, who

usually do not leave the inner sanctum of the house. Many of their eyes were staring at Kōkan curiously from inside the *Misu-noren* (the curtain). This *seki-ga* was the event of the whole Edo mansion of the Sendai clan. The official who had invited Kōkan as a "Chinese painter" did not expect that his lord would order a Japanese beauty. If Kōkan made a blunder, it would become a disaster for the official as well.

Even for a master painter, it would be extremely difficult to quickly complete a painting in the presence of the lord. His hands would tremble, and it would be difficult just to draw one straight line. However, Kōkan did not panic in the slightest, and drew a Japanese beauty without hesitation. The result satisfied the lord. Shigemura got excited and continued to order more paintings. "Good. Next, I would like a Japanese male that matches this beauty."

Kōkan drew a delicate looking man. The face of the 62,000-goku lord burst into laughter. He stepped down from his seat, walked up to Kōkan, received the painting, and went to show it to his wife, who had been from the Konoe family in Kyoto, behind the *Misu-noren*. Then, inside the *noren*, the flirtatious laughter of the ladies came and went, spreading throughout the hall. The Lord Date Shigemura was pleased and said, "I allow all of you to ask Kōkan to draw whatever you like."

Nothing could have been more gratifying for the vassals. One after another, they ordered Kōkan paintings. After all, it was the "permission from the Lord". On that day, Kōkan continued to draw from around 2:00 in the afternoon until around 2:00 in the morning of the next day.

The above is an excerpt from "*Shunparō Hikki*," with a few embellishments of the author's own, but the atmosphere of the event was not far off the mark.

Incidentally, the improvised painting "A Japanese Beauty and A Boy," which Date Shigemura requested, is still in existence (private collection). Both paintings are inscribed with the signature "*Kōkan Soku-ga* (impromptu painting by Kōkan).

At this *seki-ga*, a famous calligrapher Fukagawa Shinna and his son were present. On their way back with Kōkan at dawn, Shinna admired, "Kōkan, I heard that you are a Chinese painter, but I am impressed that you immediately painted Japanese and Chinese figures and landscapes as desired by the Lord. In 20 years from now, you will be a famous painter throughout the world," Kōkan wrote proudly in "*Shunparō-Hikki*".

I love this boastful Kōkan. After all, he was a human being, and it is natural that he took pride in his exploit. It well reminds me of his personality.

In his younger days, Kōkan became a disciple of Suzuki Harunobu, a famous *ukiyo-e* artist, and left his works by the name of "Harushige," so it must have been easy for him to draw a Japanese beauty. However, Kōkan himself did not want the world to know about it, but rather wanted to hide it. It is not likely that the Date domain officials knew Kōkan painted *ukiyo-e*.

According to the chronicle of Kōkan, he was invited twice by Yamauchi Toyochika, the lord of Tosa domain, on February 28 and April 18 in Tenmei 3 1783. The history of Tosa domain reveals the following. First, Yamauchi Toyochika, the ninth lord of Tosa domain, was a masterful ruler who worked frugally and restored the domain's impoverished finances. Second, in addition to the great earthquake that hit Edo on July 14 and 15 of the previous year, Tosa domain was in the midst of the Great Famine of Tenmei, and the situation within the domain, both for samurais and peasants alike, was dire.

At such a time, would Toyochika, who was reputed as a frugal, wise ruler, invite a painter for entertainment? I think not. Then, why did the lord of Tosa domain invite Kōkan twice in succession? It was because he was seeking for Kōkan's network and information. It is almost certain that Tosa domain sought Kōkan's help in restoring the domain's finances.

Meanwhile, this is just a guess, but if Kōkan wished, he could probably raise 10,000 *ryo* in a month. This is because most of the wealthy merchants of the time were "friends" of his.

There is another aspect of Shiba Kōkan that is not well known. I can't help but feel that there is a great mystery lies there.

Harsh exchange of accusations with Dutch scholars (196)

As well as his unimpeded access to the shogunate's confidential information, Kōkan's extreme remarks now offer a glimpse of how privileged he was.

Kōkan's writings are full of harsh criticisms about many politicians and cultural figures. Those criticisms are far much more than 'just bluffing', as he was not afraid to make enemies of those who were in authority at the time.

For example, he even referred to Hiraga Gennai, who was supposed to be his mentor, in one of his writings as "Hiraga Gennai, just a (countryman) native of Sanshū (one of the states of Shikoku Island)," in a manner that was rather arrogant, and described Gennai's *erekiteru* (static electricity discharger) as "... just a firelight is seen when the paper moves, and never influences on a human body", dismissing it as if it were a toy. It is no wonder that people hated him. I don't like this aspect of Kōkan either. But this is also a part of Kōkan. Let's be patient.

He does not hold back in the slightest, even when it comes to Katsuragawa Hoshū, who had helped Kōkan to obtain the nitric acid for his copperplate prints. After reading "*Hyomin Goran-No-Ki* (A Report from a Drifter)," a report written by Hoshū after meeting with Daikokuya Kōdayu, Kōkan criticized him directly.

He wrote, "Other than that, there are many major errors, which I will try to explain in my notes. It is a pity that even a man of common sense would believe what he read in the book, since it was written by (a famed scholar like) Katsuragawa. People say that Dutch scholars only tell strange stories. It is their disease that they mislead the public this way."

On reading this, the Dutch scholars, who took pride in their work, must have been shocked and got furious.

Kōkan's criticism was not only directed at Hoshū, but also at the entire school of Shiran-Dō, a school of Dutch studies. It was only natural that Kōkan was faced with fierce criticism from his fellow Dutch scholars. This may be the reason why Kōkan has been called a "liar," "bluffer," "eccentric," and other unfavorable criticisms to this day. Kōkan's personality, words, and actions sometimes become uncontrollable. It is truly a vice.

"*Moja* (Blind Snake)" was written in Kansei 6 (1794) by an anonymous person named Uyū Dōjin which scathingly attacks Kōkan. The above-mentioned Kōkan's writings were also quoted in the text. It is widely believed that this Uyū Dōjin was Ōtsuki Gentaku, but if this is the case, it is a mystery why Gentaku chose to remain anonymous instead of giving his name in full and honest fashion.

First, Uyū Dōjin calls his hateful Kōkan "a priest who calls himself Shiba something," who "dwells in around Shiba and makes his living on painting."

The criticism directed at Kōkan was so fierce. It can be summarized in a modern Japanese as follows:

"His character is naturally foolish and cunning. Even in painting, which is his specialty, he is just what is commonly known as a "bad amateur artist." It is out of the question to discuss his painting skill. He is proud to call himself a master even though he has only mastered a small part of it. He is a man of no talent when it comes to writing, and even his daily letters are unbearable to read. However, he has a nose for trend, and is showing off the piece of information he has learned from various Japanese, Chinese, and Dutch scholars as if he had learned it by himself."

I'll stop here, but the criticisms continue on and on. It is truly frightening that he could incur so much resentment.

However, we must not forget that Kōkan was a very popular figure at this time, receiving invitations from many feudal lords and even making their sons his disciples, and that he was the target of jealousy and envy of scholars such as Ōtsuki Gentaku.

His relationship afterwards with Katsuragawa Hoshū and Ōtsuki Gentaku (199)

Here I will briefly introduce the two main characters in this story, Katsuragawa Hoshū and Ōtsuki Gentaku.

Katsuragawa Hoshū (1751-1809) was the fourth shogun and his wife's official physician from the Katsuragawa family. He held the title of "*Hogen*," the highest rank for physicians. He was also one of Edo's "best eighteen cultural figures" and was known to the people of the time as a man of style. He was the sponsor and one of the

leading members of Shiran-Dō, a school for Dutch studies.

Ōtsuki Gentaku (1757-1827) was a brilliant man from Ichinoseki domain who was promoted to the position of Sendai domain doctor. In Kansei 10 (1798), he authored "*Rangaku Kaitel*" (A Step-by-Step Guide to the Dutch Studies), which effectively made him the head of Shiran-Dō. He had many students and trained them to become scholars of Dutch studies.

Kōkan's career as a Dutch scholar began when he first entered the school of Maeno Ryotaku. At that point, he was in the same class as Ōtsuki Gentaku, but later he learned Dutch studies from Gentaku as a student of Shiran-Dō. It was evident that Gentaku's assistance in Dutch was indispensable in the production of copperplate engravings. Kōkan himself wrote in his "*Seiyo Gadan* (A Discussion on the Western Painting)" that he and Gentaku worked together to translate a book written by a Dutchman named Beuys, which contained the "method for making copperplate engravings".

Also, nitric acid, which was under the strict control of the shogunate, is indispensable for copperplate engraving, and, as mentioned above, it is believed that Kōkan obtained it through the efforts of the shogunate's doctor, Katsuragawa Hoshū. Gentaku helped Kōkan to read and understand Dutch, and Hoshū helped him to procure nitric acid. It is no wonder that the students of the Shiran-Dō were furious at Kōkan for so cavalierly criticizing a benefactor who had done so much for him.

It was January 22, Kansei 8 (1796), when Kōkan was 50 years old. At Shiran-Dō, an annual event called "Dutch New Year" was held to celebrate the New Year of the solar calendar. A woodblock print handed out at the event still remains, which was a brochure of a make-belief theatrical play performed by Dutch scholars. The title of the play was "*Kinrai Han-ei Rangaku Soga* (A Heroic Story of the Recent Prosperity in Dutch Studies)," and although Kōkan was listed, his actor-name was very bad.

"*Karaeya no Decchi Sarumatsu* (Monkey, the apprentice of the Chinese Painting House)" was followed by "*Akaganeya no Tedai Koman Ushochi* (Arrogant Liar, the employee of the Copper House)". The word "*Akaganeya* (Copper House)" is probably a reference to the fact that Kōkan produced works of copperplate engraving. Kōkan had offended a party of Dutch scholars to such an extent that they disliked him so much. It was a self-inflicted wound.

Next is "*Rangakusha Sumo Banzuke* (The Ranking of the Dutch-Scholar Sumo Wrestlers)" distributed at the New Year's party (solar calendar) at Shiran-Dō on November 26, Kanei 10 (1798), when Kōkan was fifty-two years old.

Kōkan was "the sixth *maegashira* of the west. The *ozeki* of the east, Udagawa Genshin, was a Dutch physician and successor to Ōtsuki Gentaku, and the *ozeki* of the west, Ishii Shosuke, who was summoned by Matsudaira Sadanobu in Kansei 4 (1792) and became one of his vassals. A close friend of Kōkan and an Ōgaki domain doctor Ema Shunrei was the fourth *maegashira* of the east, and the sixth *maegashira* of the east was Matsubara Uchu, a Confucian scholar who also worked on copperplate engravings. The four leading figures were treated as advisors: Maeno Ryotaku and Sugita Genpaku were *toshiyori* (managers), Ōtsuki Gentaku was *kanjin-moto* (the promotor), and Katsuragawa Hoshū was *sashizoe* (the attendant). In all, sixty-four names are listed, and Kōkan's rank was the eighteenth from the top. This was not a bad ranking for a man who was disliked so badly.

Looking at the list, many Dutch scholars were doctors in Edo and other provinces. Kōkan was the only artist listed. Although some of them intended to study astronomy, we can safely consider Shiran-Dō as a "medical school for the lords of the domains where Dutch studies were taught."

Kōkan insulted the principal and the manager of Shiran-Dō. Normally, he should have been banned from the school. Both of them were higher ranking samurais to Kōkan. It is a wonder why he was not expelled.

However, Hoshū and Gentaku did not ban Kōkan from Shiran-Dō. Kōkan and Hoshū did not break off relations either. It is surprising that Ōtsuki Gentaku later ordered Kōkan a painting.

Nine years after the incident of "*Mo-ja* (The Blind Snake)", on October 18, Kyowa 3 (1803), when Kōkan was 57 years old, historical records show that Kōkan and Katsuragawa Hoshū were having fun at *Hirō Oyaji Jaya*, viewing autumn-colored trees and drinking sake. There must have been beautiful women with them.

What do we make of this "*Mo-ja* (The Blind Snake)" incident? We can only assume that there was something in Shiba Kōkan that prevented him from being banned or expelled from the school. In this era, for a samurai, an insult was a disgrace to the family name. The mystery of who Kōkan was deepened.

Ikeda Kanzan and Kōkan (202)

Here is an anecdote about Kōkan's language skills.

In the late Edo period, there were three wise men who were awarded the title of "Three Scholars of the *Yanagi no Ma* (The Room of Willow)" at Edo Castle. They were Mōri Takasue (the lord of Saiki domain in Bungo), Ichihashi Nagaaki (the lord of Nishoji domain in Omi), and Ikeda Sadatsune (His scholar name was Kanzan).

Ikeda Kanzan was the lord of Wakasa domain of 10,000 *goku*, a branch of Tottori domain of 325,000 *goku*. He was an outstanding politician and a man of high character, who also left his mark on history as a man of letters and a scholar. The Ikeda family is a prestigious one, as the first lord of Tottori domain, Ikeda Mitsunaka, was the great-grandson of Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Kwanzan was born in Meiwa 4 (1767), 20 years younger than Kōkan. Strangely, this super-elite lord got along very well with Kōkan. This world is so hard to understand.

Ikeda Kanzan wrote an essay titled "*Omoide-gusa* (Memoirs)" in Tempo 3 (1832). In it, there is the following story.

One day, Kanzan wrote "crane and turtle" in Dutch and showed it to Kōkan, asking him how to pronounce the two words. Kōkan immediately replied, "Karanhoegel, silkidbad, which means crane and turtle". Later that year, Kanzan encountered a Dutchman in Hakone, and on this occasion, he shouted "Karanhogel" at the top of his voice. The Dutchman immediately looked up at the sky and looked around. The Dutchman probably thought he saw a crane flying in the sky.

Kanzan praised Kōkan as a scholar who was able to grasp the truth. "Because Kōkan always concealed his talent and wisdom, and showed his foolishness on the outside, many people thought of him as a mediocre man. I know him well at a glance, and he knows me as well, and Ōta Zensai also knows this well.

Ōta Zensai in the text is a Confucian scholar who was a close confidant of Abe Masakiyo, the lord of Fukuyama domain. The deep relationship between Abe Masakiyo and Kōkan will be discussed in a later chapter.

Kanzan's review of Kōkan is noteworthy. The commonly accepted view of Kōkan's knowledge of Dutch studies should be reexamined. Of course, it fell far short compared to Ōtsuki Gentaku, but it is not incorrect to assume that Kōkan also had a considerable level of knowledge. Now, think about it. It was Kōkan himself who learned about many Dutch devices directly from Dutch books, understood their drawings, and produced them for the first time in Japan. Globes, coffee mills, copperplate engravings, and hearing aids are all the "proofs" that remain today.

In addition, the "*Omoide-gusa* (Memoirs)" includes another anecdote:

One day, I called out "Kungaku", but Kōkan did not answer. So, I repeated "Kungaku, Kungaku", he answered "Yes" after a while, forgetting his own name. We all laughed together at the uselessness of the Japanese use of many names.

Kungaku is one of the names of Kōkan. The two laughed at the fact that Japanese people in the Edo period had so many names, from their childhood names to the painter names, that even they themselves had forgotten their own names. Incidentally, Kōkan's real name is Ando Shun, and his *azana* (popular name) are Kungaku, Kunkou, and Shiba.

In any case, Kōkan was not just a town painter. Lord Kanzan did not treat Kōkan only as a painter. He clearly respected him as a scholar who seeks for and clarify the reasons. There is also a sentence in "*Omoide-gusa*" that suggests that the two met in secret in Kōkan's final years. It seems as if they were close friends. In the age of strict class system like Edo era, I can only wonder if it was possible for even a samurai to have a good laugh with a feudal lord.

One last thing. Although they had such a close relationship and Kōkan being a bragger as we have seen, there are no line left about Ikeda Kozan in Kōkan's writings.

Kōkan had no regard for Matsudaira Sadanobu (205)

Such is the relationship with the Dutch scholars, but what is even more mysterious is the relationship between Kōkan and Matsudaira Sadanobu. Matsudaira Sadanobu was a *rōju* (a shogunal advisor), and effectively the most influential man of the shogunate at the time. Despite this, Kōkan left behind such outspoken words as, "The Marquis of Shirakawa is still ignorant of geography," and "The people of Ōshu are too simple and honest." Needless to say, both "The Marquis of Shirakawa" and "people of Ōshu" refer to Sadanobu.

With such a defiant attitude, it was only natural that he would be suppressed by the shogunate. Matsudaira Sadanobu, in particular, was a politician who, through the Kansei Reforms, severely tightened the restrictions on the nation that had been loosened by the open reform policy of Tanuma Okitsugu.

The suppression on the thoughts and the arts of the common people was particularly severe, and many people in the vicinity of Kōkan were punished, including Kimura-Kenkadō, Yoshio Kousaku, Hayashi Shihei, Santō Kyōden, Kitagawa Utamaro, and Sharaku's publisher Tsutaya Juzaburō. In such an era, it would have been the same as committing a suicide to condemn those in power in the shogunate.

Yet, strangely enough, Kōkan was not suppressed in the slightest. Sadanobu, who was criticized by name, could have punished Kōkan as much as he wanted, but Kōkan did not get any penalty at all. In his "*Taikan Zakki* (Writings after Retirement)," Sadanobu wrote about Kōkan's copperplate engravings, "True, he was the first in Japan to produce copperplate engravings, but they are not elaborate, and it is inexcusable that he kept the method of production secret and did not teach it to others." That was all.

However, unlike the feudal lords, Katsuragawa Hoshū, and Ōtsuki Gentaku, Sadanobu did not have a friendly relationship with Kōkan. On one occasion, Kōkan presented Sadanobu with a globe he had made, but Sadanobu refused to receive it.

Some researchers believe that Kōkan was trying to curry favor with Sadanobu, but if this is the case, he would not have criticized Sadanobu in the first place. Rather, the globe says, "The world is so large, and Japan is so small in it. Sadanobu, open your eyes."

Looking at the globe as a whole, the Russian Empire was pursuing a policy of southward expansion, while the Western powers were expanding their colonial rule in Asia and Africa. Western warships were sailing across the Pacific Ocean. Japan, a frontier country, was still fishing in small boats that looked like dead leaves. Shiba Kōkan was greatly concerned about this. He has written several works that sound the alarm.

Shiba Kōkan was connected to Ino Tadataka, Mamiya Rinzō, and Kondo Juzo with the code of "patriotism". He was also connected to *kaimeisha* (liberal) feudal lords who felt Japan was in danger.

A contradiction that cannot be solved by the theory of townspeople origins (207)

Still, where did this strength and confidence of Kōkan come from? What is the reason why he was not punished by the power despite his free and unrestrained activities and anti-establishment remarks? It seems to me that this question can only be answered by placing Kōkan at a much higher position. If we treat him just as a painter, a scientist, or a thinker, as we have done in the past, there are too many puzzling aspects.

It has been said that Kōkan came from the townspeople class. However, in the Edo period, when status was very important, how could a man from the townspeople class have gained such a powerful position? No matter how talented a painter he might be, would a man from the townspeople class in the Edo period be allowed to have Satake Shozan, a feudal lord, paint the backgrounds of his paintings? Also, as we will discuss later, would he be able to teach the children of feudal lords (such as Abe Masakiyo of the Fukuyama domain), who would later become the chief retainers of the shogunate? Impossible.

I believe that Kōkan came from a very prestigious family. Otherwise, there would be a mountain of contradictions. He brought two swords with him on his waist when he traveled to Nagasaki.

Kōkan himself did not say much about his origins. The only mention of his origins in his writings is that he was a "leader of his town as a child." This is the sole basis of his townspeople theory. He also states, "My ancestors were from Kishu."

In his diary and writings, Kōkan often refers to himself as "yo." This single word has a very significant meaning.

The word "yo" is a first-person title reserved for those of a very high rank. No townspeople, nor even a low-ranking official, would refer to himself as "yo". Some may consider this to be a bluff, but it is doubtful that a townspeople would take the trouble of writing something as obvious as the leader "of his town."

If he was a samurai of high rank and a native of Kishu, one can imagine a connection to the Tokugawa family of Kishu. Tokugawa Yoshimune was the 8th shogun from the Kishu domain, and he brought many of his devoted retainers with him from Kishu. Tanuma Okuyuki, Tanuma Okitsugu's father, was one of them. Tanuma Okuyuki was a Kishu clan retainer who was paid 600 *goku*. It is possible that Kōkan's grandfather or father was one of those who came to Edo with Yoshimune at that time.

As noted above, the family crest of the Tanuma family is depicted on the "Seki" in Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" as an allegory for the Tanuma family. The theory that Kōkan was from the townspeople class, which is the established theory, needs to be reexamined all over. The initial data entry of "townspeople" is wrong, which leads to misunderstandings, and the compulsive attempt to make ends meet will end up with the conclusion of Kōkan being a "liar" and a "bluffer."

At any rate, Shiba Kōkan is a man of many aspects and an extraordinary giant who transcended the boundaries of the Edo period. At the same time, he is a fascinating person. He is passionate and honest. He is a kind-hearted man. This is the true image of Shiba Kōkan.

Chapter 3: Kōkan Himself Talks about His "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō"

(1) Kōkan and the Camera Obscura

***Bodai-ji* (the family temple) of Shiba Kōkan (212)**

This is a personal matter. After the World War II, our family returned to Nishigahara, Kita Ward, Tokyo, where the ruins of the war still remain, with a few chickens from where we had evacuated. blown by the cold wind of the winter. The Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and the Somei Cemetery were close to our house. In spring, the cherry blossoms are beautiful. It is natural because this is the birthplace of *Somei-Yoshino*, the most popular cherry species in Japan. In summer, the area is a treasure trove of insects, including beetles, stag beetles, and dragonflies. In the evening, I leave a piece of watermelon on an old tree and go to bed looking forward to the next morning. My mother would often ask me, somewhat skeptically, "Why do you always smile when you sleep?" In fall, I would pick nuts and ginkgo nuts. Looking up at the autumn-colored maple and ginkgo trees, the colors of autumn were gorgeous. In winter, strolling on stilts through the frost, and when it snowed, the area becomes a perfect skiing ground.

In a corner of Somei Cemetery, there is Jigenji Temple, the family temple of Shiba Kōkan. The graves of Kōkan and Kobayashi Heihachiro, a vassal of Kira Kōzukenosuke, stand side by side. We used to play hide and seek in the area. There were so many places to hide. I did not know whose grave it was. I hid behind Kōkan's grave with a poorly-cropped head, just hoping that it would not find me. Thus, my connection with Kōkan started in my childhood, although I was not aware of it.

Incidentally, the graves of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and Tanizaki Junichirō, both of them are great writers, are also located here in Jigenji Temple. Until recently, Somei Cemetery also housed the Edo mausoleum of the Mito Tokugawa family, but it has since been moved to Mito.

The year Reiwa 2 (2020) is the 202th year after the death of Shiba Kōkan. On October 21, 1818, he passed away at the age of 72 in a secret place in the residence of Katayama Seijūrō, a direct retainer of shogun.

Kōkan wrote a poem in his final moments.

"Kōkan will die of old age, and I will leave behind one sheet of *ukie* (three-dimensional picture)"

It is very typical of Kōkan. Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" is the culmination of his last years' work, and although it was not a sheet of *ukie*, I cannot help feeling that it was what Kōkan had in mind.

A letter to a close friend (214)

Yamaryō Shume, a vassal of the Nabeshima clan in Saga, was a close friend of Kōkan. There are nine known letters from Kōkan to Shume. There had probably been letters from Shume to Kōkan, but unfortunately, they have not been found.

Yamaryō Shume was nine years younger than Kōkan, and his talents were recognized by Harushige, the 8th lord of Nabeshima domain, and was given highly responsible posts. He was a liberal cultural figure with a background in *waka* poetry, Chinese literature, and Confucian studies. Nabeshima domain was famous for its chinaware, *Nabeshima yaki*, and their products were presented to the imperial family and the shogunate. Shume even served as *Sarayama Daikan* (the manager of the kiln) that produced products for the imperial family and the shogunate. This alone is a testament to his first-rate aesthetic sensibility. Incidentally, Kōkan asked Shume to make several pieces of Arita porcelain with his paintings on them.

From what was written in their remaining letters, it seems that Kōkan and Shume were in very good terms with each other. It would not be an exaggeration to say that they were "comrades" who had forgiven each other. It is not known whether the two met during Shume's tenure in Edo (early 1800's) or during Kōkan's trip to Nagasaki in Tenmei 8 (1788).

The letter presented here must have been written during Shume's tenure in Edo.

In his letter, Kōkan first expresses his gratitude for Shume's concern for Kōkan's recent poor health and his gift of fresh carp.

Kōkan was not just an ordinary man to receive a get-well-soon gift from the chief vassal of a domain. At the same time, he had a good friend like Shume. His social circle was also nationwide. The widely held theory that Kōkan was a "hated man" could be a preconception based on his relationship with some Dutch scholars.

And here is the important part. The first sentence says, "The music box is not ready yet, but I will give it to you as soon as it is finished," followed by "*dunker kamer*, which is indispensable for those who learn painting, so I will make one for you," and then, "The *erekiteru* (static electricity discharger) will be ready soon."

What is noteworthy is this "*dunker kamer*". This is also called a "camera obscura." Kōkan himself wrote the following commentary in his "*Oranda Tsuhaku* (A vessel from Holland)" in Bunka 2 (1805):

Western paintings imitate the true nature of the things, and regardless of the style or the technique, the shading is used to create a convex/concave perspective. There is a device for making paintings. It is called a "camera obscura". In Dutch, this is called *dunker kamer*.

Kōkan taught Shume that this is an indispensable device for those who learn to paint, and he even said that he would make one and present it to him. This proves that Kōkan himself made this equipment. Recall that this was the Edo period, when the country was closed to the outside world.

Kōkan and the camera obscura (216)

Let me briefly explain what a "camera obscura" is. In fact, there is a record that camera obscuras were already introduced in Japan in the early Edo period (1640s). However, it did not spread in Japan due to hearsay and superstition that "your soul is taken away" (later, there was a time when cameras were introduced in Japan, superstitious people said the same thing). In Japan, this was called in Latin *donkerkamol*, or *shashin kyō* (photographic mirror). One hundred and fifty years later, it was Dutch scholars who took notice of it.

Ransetsu Benkan written by the Dutch scholar Ōtsuki Gentaku (published in 1788) includes an illustration of the "DONKER KAMER". It is like a single-lens reflex camera without the shutter and aperture, and can capture images. The book explains, "A glass mirror is set inside the box to depict landscapes and figures. It is called a photographic mirror in this country. It was originally made in Europe."

To put it simply, an image passing through the lens on a dark box is reflected by a mirror mounted inside the box

at an angle of 45 degrees, and the image is projected on a glass plate on the top of the box. The principle is quite simple. Incidentally, the box is currently sold under the trade name "Vermeer's Photo Box" as an educational tool for children.

As the name suggests, Vermeer is particularly famous for his use of the camera obscura in the 17th century. However, even before that, it had been widely known in the West for a long time, as there is an uncertain theory that Leonardo da Vinci used it for the background of his "Mona Lisa."

The letter addressed to Yamaryō Shume is valuable because it shows that Kōkan not only knew about the camera obscura, but also made it himself and gave it to people he knew. Kōkan was also a skilled engineer.

There are other materials that show the usage of camera obscura by Kōkan. For example, in a letter dated April 16 of (presumed to be) Kansei 1 (1789) to the brothers Ōtsuka Tozō and Gunzō in Fujieda, who stayed with him on his outward trip to Nagasaki (1788-89), there is the following line: "How are you doing with your *dunker kamer*?"

The "*Kōkan Saiyu Nikki* (Diary of a Journey to the West)" mentions that during his stay in Fujieda, he wrote that when he told the brothers that Dutch paintings were painted with oil paint, and thus had a sheen like the real thing, the brothers kept asking Kōkan to paint one for them. So he sent a man to retrieve an oil painting he had left behind on the way to Fujieda. When Kōkan showed it to them, he wrote, "Everyone was astonished." which suggests that Kōkan presented a *dunker kamer* to the brothers at that time or at a later date. In other words, Kōkan was already making it himself in the early Kansei period.

Incidentally, in his own book, *Tenchiridan* (Bunka 13 (1816)), he illustrated the structure of the human eyeball and wrote, "The lens membrane is convex and reflects the shapes of things upside down. The image is inverted when it passes through the eyeball, pupil and hole." Kōkan understood the principle of how objects form images through a lens, and he could make glass and lenses. It was probably not too difficult for him to understand how a camera obscura worked and to build one himself.

What is "the painting method that has never existed in Japan before"? (218)

Among letters from Kōkan to Shume, there is one more noteworthy item. It is dated June 12, Bunka 10 (1813). This letter is extremely important among those written by Kōkan to Yamaryō Shume, and is a historical document that provides new facts to Shiba Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō." If it were not for this letter, the entire 55 paintings might have been buried beyond the darkness. A good friend saved Kōkan two hundred years later.

Incidentally, this long letter of Kōkan's lists the good and bad points of Edo and Kyoto respectively, which is extremely interesting by itself. It is often cited in studies of Edo period customs, and is considered a masterpiece of Edo essay literature.

I would like to add here that Natsume Soseki, a literary giant of the Meiji era, was so moved by his encounter with Kōkan that he hurriedly wrote a letter to Masaoka Shiki on his sickbed, saying, "It is like meeting a friend of mine from the past".

However, that is not the part we are focusing on now. Let us quote the following passage in its entirety (the use of characters, etc., have been rewritten in a modern style).

Very few people have seen Mt. Fuji in Kyoto, so I drew Mt. Fuji often for them. On my return last winter, I was able to see the entire mountain without a single cloud. Fuji was seen from the time I left Sunpu, and I drew as it was.

I have just finished a book of Dutch wonders, published from Yoshida Shinbei, located on the west side of Tomi no Koji, Sanjō Dōri, Kyoto. In it, I have painted "*Nihon Shokeshiki Fuji* (Mt. Fuji, the most scenic view in Japan)", using the Dutch method of capturing the real image. This is a method of painting that has never existed in Japan before. However, I am now tired of painting, enlightenment, Holland, crafts, science, astronomy, and so on. I have many more things to tell you, but I will come back to you later. Sincerely,

In addition, the postscript reads, "This paper was given to me recently by Mr. Kondo Juzo. It was made in Hitachi, Mito. It is made of straw. It is truly a rare piece of paper and the workmanship of a remote region."

The name of Kondo Juzo was mentioned in the previous chapter. He served in Edo as an assistant official of *Hitsuke Tozoku Aratame* (the fire-fighting and police agency) and *Shomotsu Bugyo* (an official in charge of books and documents). Juzo had close ties to the Mito Tokugawa family. He was a patriotic shogunate vassal who was so concerned about Russian warships around Japan that he volunteered to explore Ezo four times and erected a wooden post on the island of Etorofu to show that the island was Japanese territory. It is suggestive that Kōkan mentioned that his letter was written on a piece of high-quality paper sent from Mito by Juzo.

What should we make of Kōkan's letter? I would like you to read it over and over again. In the letter, Kōkan states that he painted a picture of "*Nihon Shokeshiki Fuji* (Mt. Fuji, the most scenic view of Japan)," and that he painted it "using the Dutch method of capturing the real image," and he declared that it is "a painting technique that has never existed in Japan." The painting was to be included in a book titled "*Oranda Kikou*", which was to be published soon by a publisher named Yoshida Shinbei in Kyoto, and he wrote that he had already completed the painting and handed it over to the publisher. (The publication of "*Oranda Kikou*" was eventually cancelled. I will discuss the details in the next chapter)

Judging from the date of Kōkan's letter, the picture of "*Nihon Shokeshiki Fuji*" described in the letter, was undoubtedly depicted while he was traveling on the Tōkaidō Highway from his residence in Kyoto, from which he departed on November 20, Bunka 9 (1812), the year before the letter, returning to Edo. It is clear from the letter that he drew the painting on his journey, after leaving Sunpu (present-day Shizuoka City), he had a clear view of Mount Fuji without a cloud, and that he drew the mountain as he saw it.

The "Dutch method of capturing the real image" used here to depict the "*Nihon Shokeshiki Fuji* (Mt. Fuji, the most scenic view of Japan)" is nothing other than a method of painting that uses a camera obscura to capture the real image. In other words, Kōkan claims that he was the first person in Japan to use a camera obscura to draw "*Nihon Shokeshiki Fuji*".

"I have painted "*Nihon Shokeshiki Fuji* (Mt. Fuji, the most scenic view in Japan)", using the Dutch method of capturing the real image. This is a method of painting that has never existed in Japan before."

I would like ask the readers to remember these Kōkan's words.

Kōkan and Fuji (221)

Kōkan had a deep connection with Mt. Fuji. On a trip to Nagasaki when he was forty-two years old, he saw Mt. Fuji for the first time. The sacred Mt. Fuji in front of his eyes! Every painter would be moved, and even more so for Shiba Kōkan.

According to Kōkan, no Japanese painter had ever painted the real image of Mt. Fuji. Kano Tanyu painted many Fuji paintings, but Kōkan criticized the purveying painter to the regime severely for saying, "It does not resemble Fuji in the slightest." He blamed painters in the past for depicting Mt. Fuji as they please and lamented, "This is the same as painting a dream.

Kōkan wrote the reason why he stuck to Mt. Fuji as follows.

Fuji is a mountain like no other in the world. If you want to see it, but if there is no painting of Mt. Fuji, you cannot see it. However, if the painting does not resemble Mt. Fuji, it is of no use. The method of depicting the real image of Mt. Fuji is Dutch painting. Dutch painting ... depicts the real image of things. If you see the landscape depicted with the Dutch painting method, you will feel as if you were actually standing in the landscape. There is a device called a "*shasin kyō* (camera obscura)," with which all things are depicted as they are." ("*Shunparō Hikki*).

Kōkan wrote "For more than 25 years, I had been depicting the real images of famous mountains and scenic spots in Japan, including the landscapes of Fuji, and using the Dutch painting method, I painted them in oil paintings." ("*Shunparō Hikki*) Kōkan framed them, and dedicated numerous works to temples and shrines in various districts.

In the summer of Kansei 8 (1796). Shiba Atagoyama Shrine was extremely crowded. The reason was that people in Edo had flocked to the area to see a single picture dedicated to the shrine. Among those looking up were many *ukiyo-e* artists, including Hokusai. There was a painting titled "*Sōshū Kamakura Shichirigahama Zu*

(Painting of Shichirigahama Beach in Kamakura, Sōshū (now Kanagawa))" by Shiba Kōkan. This oil painting depicts the majestic figure of Fuji rising over the shore of Shichirigahama beach with the waves lapping the shore. The crowd was looking at the first authentic oil painting ever painted in Japan. They were looking up, impressed, at a true Western-style painting of a seascape with waves lapping against the shore. And it was free of charge. It is a historical fact that the exhibition became very popular.

The relationship between Hokusai's "*Namiura no Fuji*" and Kōkan (223)

The dedication of framed pictures to temples and shrines was the best advertising medium of the time (although it was not allowed for mere town painters). Other framed paintings by Kōkan were exhibited in Siba Shinmeigū Shrine in Edo, Sensōji Temple in Asakusa, Yasaka Shrine in Kyoto, Ikukunitama Shrine in Osaka, and shrines and temples in Shikoku, Kyūshū, and even in Ōshū. It is no exaggeration that Kōkan said, "There is no one in this country who does not know my name." In fact, even Tokugawa Harutomi, the lord of the Kishu domain, said, "I have known the name of Kōkan for a long time."

Even today, we can see "*Sōshū Kamakura Shichirihama Zu*" dedicated to the Shiba Atagoyama Shrine in Edo (later remodeled as a folding screen, now in the Kōbe City Museum), and "*Kazusa Kisarazu Fuji Zu* (A Painting of Mt. Fuji from Kisarazu, Kazusa (now Chiba)," which is still in the possession of Itsukushima Shrine. Many of them are paintings of Mt. Fuji, which shows the depth of Kōkan's devotion to the subject.

It is said that most of the town painters in Edo, including Hokusai and Hiroshige, observed Kōkan's Western-style painting. The evidence could be seen in the fact that many similar works to this "*Shichirigahama Zu*" were later produced in different forms, including oil paintings, earth paintings, and *ukiyo-e* prints. I would like to assert that Kōkan was the number one creator and innovator of the Edo period.

Matty Foller of the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden points out that Hokusai's masterpiece "*Kanagawa-Okii Namiura*" also shows the influence of Kōkan's Fuji and waves.

Speaking of which, "*Katsushika Hokusai Den* (Biography of Katsushika Hokusai) (1893)" by Iijima Kyoshin, known as a pioneer in the study of *ukiyo-e* in the Meiji era, states that "Hokusai became a disciple of Shiba Kōkan and learned Western-style painting." Suzuki Juzo, the annotator of the Iwanami Bunko edition of the same book (1999), states that "there is no such evidence and this theory is not currently held," but above all, Hokusai's work shows the influence of Kōkan. It would be difficult to find an *ukiyo-e* landscape painter after Kōkan whose works do not show Kōkan's influence.

The view of Uchida Minoru, a Hiroshige researcher (226)

Uchida Minoru, a Hiroshige researcher, always said that "the person who had the greatest influence on Hiroshige was Kōkan. In his book "*Hiroshige*" (Iwanami Shoten, published in 1930), he wrote,

What has animated Hiroshige's landscape paintings most is Western painting. The influence of Western painting, even indirectly, is apparent in the composition of perspective, especially in the skillful expression of distant views, the finely detailed feeling of air and light rays, and the sense of temperature and humidity that is sometimes given. The *ukie* that had been produced since Toyoharu, domestic and foreign copperplate engravings, and the landscape paintings of Hokusai and Hokuju must have provided some suggestion.

He continues as follows.

However, in this respect, I imagine that Shiba Kōkan had a comparatively greater influence. The layered coloring techniques used by Hiroshige for the sky and water, or the faint tints applied to the distant sky, are the techniques of Kōkan's earth paintings or oil paintings,

Kōkan was not only an enlightener of natural science, but also a great enlightener in the world of painting. The reader might say that realism is not the absolute value of painting as an art form. This is true. However, this was the Edo period, a time when there were no photographs. No painters (except Kōkan) know how to draw a three-dimensional nose from the front, and had no choice but to draw a crooked nose. Let us not forget that. Shiba Kōkan was struggling alone to open the door to a new world of painting.

In Edo period, paintings that capture the real image were indispensable in the world of medicine, physics, and chemistry. Kōkan's passion for enlightenment is condensed in the phrase, "If it does not capture the reality, it is not a painting." Donald Keene said of Kōkan that he was "shocked to suddenly pass a modern man on a street

corner in Edo era," which is exactly to the point.

Vermeer and the camera obscura (227)

So, where in Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" can we find the evidence of the use of a camera obscura? However, it is not easy to specify and verify this. While there are theories that both Leonardo da Vinci and Vermeer used a camera obscura (for Vermeer, in particular, the use of camera obscura is more widely accepted), there are also researchers who deny it.

In the first place, a camera obscura can, in theory, capture an image as it is seen because it produces the same image as a photograph. It would be extremely useful if used by a painter who is not familiar with perspective, but it is also theoretically possible for a painter who is familiar with perspective to create a similar picture without using it.

Scientific perspective was established by Florentine painters and architects in the 1400s, and it is only natural that Leonardo da Vinci, who lived in that era and was particularly steeped in scientific spirit, was proficient in it, since he himself created various instruments, tools, and weapons as a scientist. In fact, the Atlântico Manuscript contains a diagram of a camera obscura. However, it is difficult to prove its use in his works.

Later, the camera obscura evolved and spread rapidly. Especially in the Netherlands in the 17th century, it is known that many painters, in addition to Vermeer, knew and used the camera obscura. Vermeer's name is referred to in particular because, in addition to being an outstanding painter, his works have been said to have characteristics of the images seen through a lens.

According to Kobayashi Yoriko, a specialist in Dutch art history, the figures in the foreground are much larger than the figures facing to it, the bread and the rim of the boat are dotted with light particles, and the colors in each work appear deeper and clearer than those of other artists.

However, it seems that the prevailing opinion among researchers is now to reject the theory that Vermeer used a camera obscura, on the grounds that "Vermeer gave priority to geometric compositions based on vanishing and remote points.

Cantin Buvelot of the Mauritshuis Museum in Hague, Holland, also says, "Vermeer's technique of imitating the light shining on the surface of an object with minute spots is truly a virtuoso art," and adds, "The theory that this 'pointillist' technique is the result of using optical instruments such as a camera obscura has also been raised. However, this has not been supported by sufficient evidence.

Peter C. Sutton, director of the Bruce Art Museum and a leading Vermeer researcher, also noted that "many features of Vermeer's art indicate that he was familiar with these new devices" but "there is no evidence, however, that he painted directly from the images provided by camera obscura. He stated.

We can say that Vermeer may have used a camera obscura in addition to being fully proficient in perspective and perspective painting.

Only Kōkan was well versed in mathematical perspective (230)

What about Kōkan? It is clear from the research of Yokochi Kiyoshi, a former professor at Yamanashi University, that Kōkan was well versed in mathematical perspective ("Ukiyo-e in Perspective," Sanseido, 1995), as mentioned in my previous book. Yokochi's book, which also makes extensive use of mathematical formulas as a professional mathematician, examines the works of painters who are said to have utilized perspective since the late Edo period, namely Okumura Masanobu, Maruyama Ōkyo, Shiba Kōkan, Satake Shozan, Odano Naotake, Aoudō Denzen, Hokusai, Hiroshige, etc. He found that only one of them had mastered perspective to a significant degree: Shiba Kōkan. Yokochi stated that many other painters, while making use of the perspective method, used the conventional techniques of Japanese painting here and there, and contradictions appeared in various parts of their works.

Yokochi also noted the value of Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" as a set of fifty-five paintings. This is because, "I believe that Japanese painters who have mastered perspective have their own philosophy of how to use it. In order to clarify this expectation, it is necessary to have a complete set of voluminous book by painters who have mastered perspective. It is not enough to examine individual paintings by the same artist, painted in different periods and in different places. If a painter has a book of large volume, he will be able to freely develop his art as much as his philosophy of perspective allows him to do.

Yokochi then thoroughly examined the works of the Japanese painters mentioned above, as well as works other than Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Highway," to prove that only Kōkan had a correct understanding of mathematical perspective, and that no other painter could have painted "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō." This is one of the major grounds for the theory of the authenticity of Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō."

Mr. Yokochi also stated, "Kōkan's paintings are certainly alive and well. They are not only realistic. Although they are two-dimensional paintings, they are vibrant and remind us of landscapes in three dimensions. This is made possible by the use of mathematical perspective."

How to prove the use of camera obscura (231)

How, then, is it possible that Kōkan, who was thus skilled in the use of mathematical perspective, used a camera obscura? It could be said of both Leonardo da Vinci and Vermeer that, given their knowledge of perspective, they probably could have painted works that capture the reality without using a camera obscura. However, their spirit of scientific demonstration must have strongly aroused their desire to actually check the image they had drawn in their minds with mathematical calculations in a reflected mirror.

But there must naturally be a difference between using a camera obscura with an understanding of correct perspective and using the device without understanding it. It is not difficult to imagine that there is a big difference between drawing a human figure without understanding the anatomy of the human skeleton or muscles and drawing a human figure with a thorough understanding of the anatomy, even if the human body is sketched "as it is" in the same way. A comparison of Leonardo's drawings of the human body and those of his contemporaries makes this point clear.

In the case of Kōkan, while understanding perspective, he also tried to make full use of the camera obscura.

It is difficult to prove the use of a camera obscura in the works of Leonardo da Vinci or Vermeer, and the above-mentioned Mr. Sutton asserts, "In fact, there is no way to be sure that the paintings were created using or referring to a camera obscura. However, we may be able to find some indication of this in Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō."

There is one hint. It is the dots of light grains, which are also pointed out in the case of Vermeer. It is thought that, although not visible in reality, when viewed through a lens, the light reflection is strong because the image is slightly out of focus, which appears as the light grains.

Let us turn our attention back to Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō."

The first two paintings that come to mind are "Numazu" and "Mishima," which depict leaves on trees bathed in early morning moonlight. The reflected light grains are expressed as fine dots. The beauty of this part of the painting is one of the highlights of the book, and we can recognize traces of the use of a camera obscura here.

In this way, we can recognize a number of common features, such as the leaves of trees in "Ishibe," "Hamamatsu," and "Kawasaki," the leaves of weeping willows in "Fujikawa," and the expression of the water surface in "Okitsu" and "Yui.

In the Edo period, there was a painter who paid attention to the utility of the camera obscura. The man had the eye of a natural scientist and the skill of an engineer. In his final years, he made full use of the device to reproduce the scenery of the Tōkaidō Highway, including the inns, the landscape, and Fuji, and produced 55 paintings. He boldly stated, "This is a painting method that has never existed in Japan before. Let us believe in these words together with the readers. If we believe in the pioneer, Shiba Kōkan, how will the answer change? We may find a path that leads to a world-class discovery.

The life of Shiba Kōkan, which is a compilation of the science, serenity of 17th century Dutch naturalistic painting represented by Vermeer, the mystery of Chinese painting, the elegance of the Kano school, the pride of Japan, and the popular appeal of ukiyo-e, all are crystalized in an ode to the early spring, Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō."

Watanabe Kazan and the camera obscura (234)

Let me conclude this section with an interesting story.

The Cleveland Museum of Art in the U.S. currently has a portrait (manuscript) from the late Edo period titled "Ōzora Busaemon Zō" (A Portrait of Ōzora Busaemon). He is a tall man, wearing a *haori hakama* (Japanese formal attire for men) with a crest, and is strikingly tall, with an unusually small head in comparison. The face and the creases in the kimono are shaded and painted in an extremely realistic manner, clearly indicating that the artist is a master of Western painting techniques.

The painter of this picture is Watanabe Kazan. The date of production is clearly dated 1827. Ōzora Busaemon was a sumo wrestler in the service of the Kumamoto domain. He went to Edo with his lord and was well known throughout Edo for his huge body, which was often featured in *nishiki-e* (woodblock prints) and essays of the time.

According to Matura Seizan's "Kasshi Yawa" (Kasshi Night Stories), he was "7' 3" tall, which is more than 220 cm if taken as is, and "his head was small, and his body looked rather long from the belt down. Naturally, the portrait was exaggerated in *nishiki-e* (woodblock prints) and in other media, but Kazan's manuscript is distinctly different from these, being extremely objective and highly realistic. Takizawa Bakin described his portraits as "not a single detail is out of place.

It is said that Kazan and Buzaemon visited Sato Issai, a famous Confucian scholar and Kazan's teacher. Together with Issai, Kazan copied Buzaemon's body parts on a camera obscura, which was widely used at that time, and drew this manuscript at almost life-size. In fact, this manuscript is 221.8 centimeters in size from top to bottom.

According to Issai's record attached to this work, he made a "live copy" at Issai's house on June 11, Bunsei 10 (1827)" using a camera obscura. This is a valuable "testimony" supporting the use of the camera obscura.

It seems that Kazan often used a camera obscura for production demonstrations. There is a record of a similar demonstration at the residence of Hayashi Jusai, the eighth head of the Hayashi family, who was involved in the shogunate administration.

The Bunsei 10 was 14 years after Bunka 10 (1813), when Kōkan returned to Edo from Kyoto and began work on the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō. By that time, the camera obscura was widely used, thanks in part to Kōkan's enlightenment. Kazan also made extensive use of the device for practical purposes. It is not inconsistent to assume that Kōkan had used the camera obscura 14 years earlier and made full use of a "painting method that had never been used in Japan before."

Kazan often visited the residence of Takami Senseki, a Dutch scholar and a retainer of Koga Domain, and left his portrait behind. Senseki was also a friend of Kōkan. If this is the case, the possibility that Kazan's camera obscura was the one made by Kōkan cannot be dismissed as a mere pipe dream.

Proposal of a hypothesis (237)

Shiba Kōkan's Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō is the only series of paintings in the world, drawn using a camera obscura. The entire book makes use of the camera obscura. It is a rare work of art in the history of world art, and a valuable work that "never existed in Japan" until then. This is the world cultural asset which needs to be farther researched.

In the words of Taro Okamoto, "Something new is not new when it is said to be new. It is a surprising fact that Shiba Kōkan had the same sensitivity.

I have already mentioned that it is difficult not only in Japan but also in the West to estimate the use of camera obscura from a single picture. Here, fifty-five pictures exist. We can compare and verify the pictures using the same principles with Professor Yokochi Kiyoshi. Mathematician, Yokochi Kiyoshi said that it is important that fifty-five consecutive works exist for verification. This is scientific thinking.

The painter himself testified that he painted using the method of capturing the real image, and the 55 pictures prove it. If Vermeer or da Vinci had said that he painted with a camera obscura, would later critics still deny it? Both the study of Kōkan and the study of these paintings are in their infancy. I sincerely hope that more and more people, including experts from around the world, will verify and test the hypothesis that this is the only series of paintings in the world that utilizes a camera obscura throughout the series.

"No hypothesis, no discovery" is the starting point of a research. If many people believe in it, it is no longer a hypothesis. It is no exaggeration to say that the history of human development is a history of verifying hypotheses.

(2) Snow in Kambara

An American researcher's prophecy (239)

Now comes the "Snow in Kambara". Together with the readers, I would like to build up my hypothesis boldly and carefully.

A great doubt has long been pointed out about Hiroshige's "Kambara," one of the most famous of all Hiroshige's masterpieces. Needless to say, it is the falling snow. Kambara Inn faces Suruga Bay and has a mild climate, and it rarely snows in winter. This heavy snowfall was an impossible sight.

It is commonly believed that Hiroshige's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" was created based on a sketch drawn in the summer of Tempo 3 (1832). However, it is unexplainable and totally unnatural for a sketch made in summer to become a snow-covered landscape. Nor is there any record that Hiroshige traveled through the Tōkaidō Highway before Tempo 3.

This has given rise to the theory that Hiroshige depicted 'Kambara' entirely from his imagination. In other words, the painting is a product of Hiroshige's genius and artistic imagination. This interpretation is currently the prevailing view.

However, there was one person who disagreed with this view.

In an article titled "The Road to Kambara" published in the "*Kikan Ukiyo-e 92 Fuyu Tsubaki Gō* (Ukiyo-e Quarterly 92 Winter Tsubaki Edition)" (Gabundo) in 1983, Richard Lane, a prominent American Ukiyo-e researcher, expressed his doubt for the "established theory" and said, "There must be an original painting of Kambara. We must search for them before it has got lost," he warned. Only one person disagreed with the "established theory," and that was an American researcher! "A snowy summer scene is mysterious," Lane said, "but Japan is even more mysterious, where "fantasies" are accepted by the academic community."

According to Lane, the existence of original paintings is commonplace in Ukiyo-e, whether it is by Hiroshige, Hokusai, or other artists. Why is this Kambara considered the only exception? Above all, Mr. Lane was convinced that this snow scene could not have been painted only through imagination. We are deeply impressed by Lane's keen eye and are pleased to report the discovery of the original painting of "Snow in Kambara" here.

Testimony by Kōkan in January, Bunka 10 (1813) (240)

In conclusion, Hiroshige undoubtedly saw the snowy landscape of Kambara. However, he did so through Kōkan's "Kambara."

The key to solve this mystery lies in Kōkan's letter. The letter is dated June 12, Bunka 10 (1813), and as mentioned in the previous section, it was addressed to Yamarō Shume, the lord of Saga domain. In the letter, Kōkan wrote as following.

The severe cold weather of the last year and this spring was something we haven't experienced for decades. It has been unusually cold in the eastern capital (Edo). The winter in Kyoto is different from the rest of Japan, for it is located in the mountains far from the sea. The tea we drink in the daytime becomes cold instantly, which is the case every winter. However, the cold weather of the last year and this spring was exceptional. The snow continued every day from January 3 to January 13. The drool of cows formed icicles, salted fish and vegetables got frozen, and it was like the ropes of a wheel well. Ferries crossing the Yodogawa River stopped.

These are the words by the natural scientist Shiba Kōkan written in a letter to a close friend.

The most important person in the discussion of Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" is Yamarō Shume. Shume was born in Horeki 6 (1756), nine years younger than Kōkan. Born as the third son of Sano Chu'an, the lord of Saga domain, Shume was adopted by Yamarō Ganri and became an important retainer who joined the

lord's courtesy visit to Edo more than a dozen times from Tenmei 5 (1785) to Bunka 9 (1812). As mentioned above, he even served as a *Sarayama Daikan* (the manager of the kiln that produced Nabeshima ware for the imperial family and the shogunate). He was a man of culture and a close friend of Kōkan's.

I found the following description of Kōkan in Nakano Yoshio's "*Shiba Kōkan Kou* (About Shiba Kōkan)," (Shinchō-sha 1986). First of all, I would like to make it clear that I have learned a lot from him through his writings. However, sometimes our interpretations differ. I felt a strong sense of discomfort when I read the following statement by him (pp. 51-52 of the same book).

The specific descriptions by Kōkan, such as "the severe cold weather of the last year and this spring" that "we have not experienced for decades" and the continuous snowfall lasted 'from January 3 to January 13,' as if he had experienced such things himself, are truly incomprehensible. It is a lie that he has turned what others have told him into his own personal experience. This may be one of the reasons why he has come to be disliked by his peers.

Nakano (1986) and I have completely different views on this part of the story. First, it is a fact that Kōkan has many close friends and associates. The term "come to be disliked" rather sounds like a preconceived notion.

Shiba Kōkan was certainly an eccentric person and there were not a few people who didn't like him. However, I do not consider him a liar. Kōkan is an honest and passionate man. What is the basis for Nakano to dismiss this description by Kōkan as a lie?

Kyoto area was hit by severe cold weather that had not been experienced for decades, and the Yodogawa River, which connects Kyoto and Osaka, froze and boat traffic stopped. Snow continued to fall from the third to the thirteenth day of the New Year. Is there any lie in that?

Above all, there was no reason for Kōkan to lie to his close friend.

It is true that many of Kōkan's writings are full of grandiose words and pretensions, but in his private correspondence, many of his letters reveal his honest feelings. In particular, his letters from around Bunka 10 (1813) onward lamented the decline of his energy and physical strength, and described that he was at a loss faced with his troubles surrounding his house.

At the end of the same letter, he writes, "But now I am tired of painting, enlightenment, Holland, craftsmanship, science, and astronomy, and at a loss for what to do." Another letter dated the same month to Ema Shunrei, a doctor of Ōgaki domain and another close friend of Kōkan's, also has similar lines.

What was the point of telling a lie to close friends like Yamaryō Shume and Ema Shunrei? His descriptions of the unusually cold weather in Kyoto, the slobbering of cows, and the passing boats on the Yodo River are among the many charms of the literary scholar Shiba Kōkan. Not to mention that Kōkan was one of the foremost natural scientists of his time. It is safe to say that there is no need to doubt him.

When did Kōkan return to Edo? (243)

The reason why Nakano (1986) is so dismissive of Kōkan's description, saying that it is a lie "as if he had experienced such things himself," is probably because there are actually two or three accounts that seem to indicate that Kōkan had already returned to Edo from Kyoto the previous year.

The reason for the opinion that Kōkan had already returned to Edo by the New Year's day of Bunka 10 (1813) and had not experienced the cold and snow in Kyoto is that he wrote in the same letter to Yamaryō Shume, "I suddenly left for Edo at the end of last year." Furthermore, in Kōkan's own book, "*Mugon Dōjin Hikki* (A Writing by A Person with No Words)", there is a description, "Suddenly, on the 21st of November in winter, I left Kyoto and returned to Edo."

It is true that Kōkan left his residence in Kyoto on November 21. Since there was more than a month before the end of the year, it was assumed that he must have arrived in Edo by the end of the previous year. Yes, it could be read that way, too.

In February of Bunka 9 (1812), Kōkan left Edo and ascended the Tōkaidō Highway for the first time in 13 years, dropped by at Yoshino on the way, and arrived in Kyoto in April. It seems that he had planned to live permanently in Kyoto for the rest of his life. In Kyoto, he was received hospitably by the local celebrities and

attended a meeting of cultural figures called "Ibunkai," and became completely fond of Kyoto. According to Kōkan, "I should have come to Kyoto ten or twenty years earlier." One can guess from this one comment how much Kōkan enjoyed his days in Kyoto and how well suited he was to the city. However, a trouble at his home in Edo forced him to return to Edo.

In a letter to Yamaryō Shume, dated June 12, Bunka 10 (1813), he wrote,

"I have been in Kyoto since last spring, and have come to take up residence in Kyoto, as I decided to live on the soil of Kyoto for the rest of my life. However, a trouble occurred among my family and relatives, and I suddenly returned to Edo at the end of the last year. We are not yet completely done with the trouble, but almost, so we can rest assured that the problem will be solved...I know that you share the same aim with me, and although you have been so kind to me, I have experienced many problems inside and outside of my home, and I know that no living things can stay in peace."

The "problem inside" refers to a loan problem with a family member in Edo. This must have troubled Kōkan a great deal. However, the real problem for Kōkan was the "problem outside." As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, this refers to the dispute over the geocentric theory with Entsū, a Tendai Buddhist monk, which led Kōkan to an unescapable situation. Many researchers have discussed the "internal" issue in detail, but not so much the "external" issue. However, this is the key.

The point is "I know that no living things can stay in peace." It is shocking that Kōkan was under such pressure from the "outside" that he could not even relax at home. To begin with, the "inside" problem was the financial trouble over the loan, and Kōkan was in the position of the "chaser," not "being chased." It is more reasonable to presume that it was the "external" problem that made Kōkan unable to relax even at home.

Anyway, on November 21, Bunka 9 (1812), Kōkan moved out of his residence in Kyoto and set out on a journey. However, Kōkan did not return to Edo immediately. It could be assumed that he remained around Kyoto until the end of the year and watched over the situation. While ostensibly being reserved from his activities, we can imagine that Kōkan met with many cultural figures he had been close to and told them good-bye. Incidentally, Kōkan's letters also state that he was planning to meet with acquaintances in Ōgaki and Nagoya on his way home (although it is unclear whether he did or not).

Regarding this, I would like to cite the explanation in Nakano (1986) (p.119 of the above book) of a portion of a letter written by Kōkan on June 13, Bunka 9 (1812) from his temporary residence in Kyoto to Ema Shunrei,

It is said that on November 21, near the end of the year, Kōkan suddenly gave up his life in Kyoto and returned to his old residence in Shinsenza... On his way home, he leisurely visited the Ema family in Ōgaki, and also had an appointment to visit an acquaintance in Nagoya. Which is the truth?... This is a clear contradiction, and ... this habit of his makes the work of reviewing Kōkan's biography very difficult.

So, this way, Kōkan made Nakano so puzzled. It is true that there are many contradictions in Kōkan's writings, and not only Nakano but also others are puzzled as to what to think about them. This is exactly the case here.

As well as the description of the cold weather in Kyoto could be well assumed to be based on Kōkan's actual experience with no reason to tell a lie, the reason why I have come to the conclusion that although Kōkan left his residence in Kyoto in November of the previous year, he remained in the Kyoto area until the beginning of the new year is because his "Fifty-three Stations of Tōkaidō" starts with the painting of the Imperial Palace in Kyoto, with plum trees in full blossom. As you know, plum blossom is a seasonal word for early spring. I will fully discuss the meaning of this in the next section.

There is also Kōkan's own statement that it was spring when he returned to Edo. In August of Bunka 10 (1813), Kōkan sent a "death notice" to all his acquaintances. It says, "(I stayed in Kyoto for one year and) returned in spring (of this year)."

This argument concerns with the fundamentals of the study of Shiba Kōkan. It proves that "Kōkan is not a liar." We would like to invite readers to share their opinions with us.

Estimating the date when snow was seen in Kambara (247)

If we accept the truthfulness of the description of the cold weather in Kōkan's letter and assume that Kōkan actually left Kyoto at the beginning of the New Year, what hypothesis can we draw?

On the first day of the New Year, Kōkan paid a visit to the Imperial Palace, with plum trees in full blossoms, to celebrate the New Year. Then he started his travel down the Tōkaidō Highway. He would pass through Kameyama on the 3rd or 4th of January. It was snowing, consistent with his description, "Snow has been falling every day since January 3 until the 13th."

If his journey continued smoothly, he would pass through Shōno, Ishiyakushi, Yokkaichi, Kuwana, and arrive at Kambara around the 13th of January. The total distance of the Tōkaidō Highway from Sanjo Ōhashi Bridge in Kyoto to Nihonbashi in Edo is 492 kilometers. The average person in the Edo period walked this distance in two weeks, which means that he or she walked 35 to 40 kilometers per day. There is no contradiction.

Of course, some may argue that the snow that continued to fall until the 13th was in Kyoto, and that the climate of Suruga would be a different story. However, a study of the history of meteorology shows that the world was in the midst of the Little Ice Age, and the latter half of the Edo period in Japan was no exception. In particular, from the winter of 1812 to the early spring of 1813, the Sumida River froze in Edo. The Yodogawa River was not the only river that froze. Incidentally, 1812 was the year that Napoleon's army invaded Russia and was defeated before "Jack Frost". The cold weather of that year was also record-breaking in Russia.

Two years later, in a letter to Yamaryō Shume dated March 20, Bunna 12 (1815), Kōkan wrote in his temporary residence in Azabu, Edo, "It snowed 21 times from last winter to this spring". The assumption that the snowfall in Kyoto from January 3 to 13 in Bunna 10 (1813) was nationwide is consistent with the weather history.

Recorded heavy snowfall in Kambara (248)

Furthermore, we obtained testimonies from the local people in Kambara. The Watanabe family, an old family from the early Edo period, held important positions such as village headman and the headman of the inn town. Watanabe family has a storehouse built in 1839 with a huge number of old documents stored inside, which are designated as cultural assets by Shizuoka City. Among them are the diaries of the successive heads of the family, including the nineteenth head, Watanabe Moriaki, who kept a detailed record of the weather conditions. The diaries, which date from Tenpo 9 (1838) to Ansei 5 (1858), contain at least five references to snowfall, the oldest of which mentions a snowfall of seven inches in Tenpo 13 (1842). Seven inches of snow means more than 20 centimeters of snowfall (the diary of the 19th generation has not yet been published).

The year Tenpo 13 was 30 years after Kōkan's trip and 10 years after Hiroshige's trip. It was corroborated by the fact that it snowed in Kambara at that time.

Kōkan had indeed seen snow in Kambara.

It snowed heavily in Kambara, just like in the northern part of Japan. Let's say it was January 13, 1813. On his return trip from Kyoto to Edo, Shiba Kōkan encountered a heavy snowfall in Kambara. He looked at the scene through a camera obscura and sketched it.

This is my hypothesis. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Kōkan's "Kambara" is a very faithful depiction of the actual scene. Richard Lane, mentioned above, also asserts that the reality of Hiroshige's painting could not have been realized without an original. As mentioned above, the depiction on the left side of the painting, which at first glance look either like a cliff or a forest, was made clear by an old map showing the inns of the time, in which a bamboo thicket was depicted at that exact spot. This once again showed the accuracy of Kōkan's depiction. On the same day, snow fell in Kambara, and Kōkan sketched the historical scene.

Establishment of "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" (250)

The theory that Shiba Kōkan was in Kambara on January 13, Bunna 10 (1813) is a hypothesis. Some people may consider it a "ridiculous" hypothesis. However, all hypotheses are "ridiculous" from the standpoint of established theories. If it were a theory that everyone would agree with, its role as a hypothesis would already be over.

Now, let me confirm.

1. Shiba Kōkan is a Western-style painter and a natural scientist who is also an astronomer. He is also well versed in meteorology. He brought a thermometer with him on this trip to Kyoto and recorded the weather and temperature day by day.
2. Kōkan firmly believed that "a painting is not a painting if it does not capture the things as they are."

Therefore, in Western-style painting, he made full use of mathematical perspective and a camera obscura to accurately copy wherever he painted (except in the case of impromptu paintings).

3. Yamyō Shume was one of Kōkan's most trusted confidants. Shume advised the lord of the Saga domain to send young domain retainers, including Murayama Tōkuro, to become apprentices of Shiba Kōkan. (Although this is not the purpose of this section, Kōkan's liberal philosophy was an important factor leading the Saga clan to play an important role at the end of the Edo period. Kōkan's influence certainly extended to the Meiji period.)

The following is my hypothesis about the establishment of Shiba Kōkan's Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō.

On New Year's Day of Bunka 10 (1813), Shiba Kōkan paid a visit to the Kyoto Imperial Palace, which was fragrant with the scent of plum blossoms, to pray for the eternal prosperity of the imperial family. He bid farewell to Kyoto and set out for his journey. It was lightly overcast at Ōtsu. He went through Kusatsu, Ishibe, Mizuguchi, Tsuchiyama, and it was snowing at Kameyama.

The snow would come and go while Kōkan was traveling from Kameyama to Kambara. However, I am inclined to assume that Kōkan painted snow scenes only on the third day of January, when it started snowing and on January 13, the last day of the snowy weather when Kōkan reached Kambara. The reason is because this painting was originally intended as an illustration for a book titled "*Oranda Kikou* (The Rare Technologies from Holland)". The paintings were for celebrating the beauty of early spring. It would be boring if there were a series of snow scenes for more than ten days in a row. Therefore, I would like to hypothesize that Kōkan used the snow scenes only the first and the last day of the snowy weather.

In his lifetime, Kōkan traveled along the Tōkaidō Highway three times, and the seasons were from early spring to summer. His Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō was the culmination of his travels. Therefore, it is natural to assume that he mainly used the actual sceneries he saw during his travel in Bunka 10 (1813), mixing them with his spring-scented sketches from his earlier two trips on the Tōkaidō Highway.

Oranda Kikou was originally scheduled to be published by Yoshida Shinbei, a well-known publisher in Kyoto and a friend of Kōkan's. Kōkan boasted, "I painted "*Nihon Shokeshiki Fuji* (Japan's most scenic view, Mt. Fuji)" using the method of Dutch painting, which draw things as they were seen. It is a method of painting that has never existed in Japan. " (From a letter to Yamyō Shume), and repeatedly announced the publication of this work. For some reason, however, the publication was cancelled, and new drawings were added based on the original ones, "with the sole hope of preserving them for future generations."

I presume that, for some reason or other, this series of paintings by Shiba Kōkan was later passed on to Hoeido and Hiroshige, and became the basis for Hiroshige's Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō. We do have these fifty-five works in front of us, here and now, so there is no contradiction.

Incidentally, Ukiyo-e fans know that Utagawa Kunisada also used exactly the same background as Hiroshige, placed beautiful women in the foreground, and published his work as "*Bijin Tōkaidō Gojusantsugi*" (Beauties and the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō). Not only Hiroshige, but also Kunisada, who was a higher-ranked artist at the time, used Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" as the basis for his ukiyo-e through Hiroshige.

Kōkan's thoughts passed on to Hiroshige (252)

So, it did snow in Kambara. On his way back from Kyoto, Kōkan encountered snow in Kambara. He painted it with a camera obscura. Hiroshige made the most of the designs of his great predecessor, Shiba Kōkan, and popularized them further, turning them into ukiyo-e. Utagawa Hiroshige realized Kōkan's "sole hope of preserving them (Kōkan's works) for future generations." It is truly a tribute.

Hiroshige must have been very highly motivated. "If it does not capture the things as they are, it is not a painting." This was the motto of Shiba Kōkan, who was famous throughout Japan. Of course, Hiroshige, who was exactly 50 years younger than Kōkan, did know this. Hiroshige might have met Kōkan in his teens.

The official title of Hiroshige's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" was "*Shinkei Tōkaidō Gojusantsugi Tsuzuki-e*" (The True Views of the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō Series), and he used "the true views" as the marketing slogan. It became an explosive hit, combining the realistic scenery of the Tōkaidō Highway, which was completely different from conventional ukiyo-e, with Hiroshige's natural talent and his style. For both Hoeido, then a fledgling publisher, and Hiroshige, then only a middle standing ukiyo-e artist, this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

The great success of the series led Hiroshige to publish a new series of "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" one after another, at the request of a number of publishers. The number of works produced by Hiroshige was more than 20, and the number of block-copy paintings numbered more than 1,000, but none of them could match the popularity of the first Hoeido version of "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō". Incidentally, Katsushika Hokusai also published seven series of works featuring the Tōkaidō Highway starting from Bunka 1 (1804). However, they, too, were far short of Hiroshige's "*Shinkei*" series of "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō."

We can estimate that Kōkan returned to Edo in April. This is because a Batavian man is depicted in Nihonbashi, the last picture of his Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō, carrying the umbrella for a Dutchman who were paying a courtesy visit to Edo. As a rule, the chief of the Dutch trading post stayed in Edo from April to May (of the lunar calendar). This estimate is also consistent with the description in the "death notice" of Kōkan.

However, there is no historical fact that the Batavians accompanied the Dutch to Edo. There is an allegory here. Also, a samurai dressed like a Dutchman lurks in the painting. Kōkan was a rare cosmopolitan of his time. He was also a man who loved the culture of the Holland, which he would never see.

Here arises a natural question: if Kōkan reached Kambara on January 13, didn't it take too much time for him to travel from Kambara to Edo? The distance from Kambara to Edo is about 160 km. Ordinarily, people would walk the distance in five or six days. I will leave that mystery for the next chapter.

(3) Shiba Kōkan, an Imperialist

Completely different paintings (1) "Kyoto" (255)

In the Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō by Kōkan and Hiroshige, there are three paintings that bear absolutely no resemblance in composition. They are "Kyoto," "Miya," and "Akasaka." Why are there paintings that bear no resemblance to each other?

Before examining the paintings, let us first consider the intent and purpose of their production.

As for Hiroshige, it is not necessary to consider his personal intention and purpose of production. Since the publisher is the actual producer of the ukiyo-e prints, if there is an intention, it is the publisher's intention. Hiroshige is in charge of the block-copy paintings, which are then completed by *hori-shi* (the engravers) and *suri-shi* (the printer). The artist is, so to speak, a member of the organization. "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" was for entertainment, and the publisher's and Hiroshige's goal was to please people and sell a large number of copies.

On the other hand, this was not the case with Kōkan. In his "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" lurks the intention and purpose that Kōkan wanted to convey. In particular, the message is clearly expressed in the three illustrations that differ in design from those of Hiroshige. The reason why Hiroshige did not use the original paintings of Kōkan only for these three paintings is thought to be because he judged that they lacked entertainment value, or because he sensed the danger of doing so.

Suppose Kōkan's Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō was a forgery of the later days, why did the painter take the trouble of inserting three works with completely different compositions. This fact also makes it unquestionable that Kōkan's Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō existed before Hiroshige's work.

First, let us look at "Kyoto," the first picture of Kōkan's work and the last picture of Hiroshige's work.

In Kōkan's painting, the Kyoto Imperial Palace in its early spring is depicted with plum trees in full blossoms. The Imperial Palace had just been reconstructed by the order of Matsudaira Sadanobu, a shogunal advisor, after being burnt down in the Great Fire of Tenmei (1788). The gate depicted in the center is Kenshun-mon, and the mountain in the background, Ōkitayama (Left Daimonji). They are depicted as could be seen in the actual scenery. Commoners and court nobles visiting the Imperial Palace, and *Ōhara-me* (peddler women from Ōhara selling firewood) pass by on the broad street in front of the palace, a typical New Year scene in Kyoto. Kōkan painted a large pine tree in the foreground and placed plum blossoms around the palace. Here, the message could be, "The journey to the Japanese history begins here."

On the other hand, Hiroshige had to end his series with the Sanjo Ōhashi Bridge, the last stop on the Tōkaidō

Highway. He could not use Kōkan's painting as the source for his prints.

Therefore, Hiroshige borrowed the design from "*Tōkaidō Meisho Zue* (The Pictures of the Famous Places on Tōkaidō). In doing so, he depicted the Sanjo Ōhashi Bridge as a wooden bridge, which was actually a stone bridge at that time. This triggered the suspicion that Hiroshige did not walk the Tōkaidō Highway. Looking at the Sanjo Ōhashi Bridge in "*Zue*," it is not clear whether the bridge is made of stone or wood. It is not surprising that Hiroshige took it wrong.

Completely different paintings (2) "Miya" (257)

Next, let us look at "Miya". Both Kōkan's and Hiroshige's pictures have many mysteries.

"Miya" refers to Atsuta Shrine in Nagoya. As a shrine associated with the imperial family, it has been known since before the Edo period as a shrine dedicated to *Kusanagi no Tsurugi* (the grass-mowing sword), one of the Three Sacred Treasures, and was crowded with visitors. The shrine is now built in *Shinmei-zukuri* style, but in the Edo period it was built in *Owari-zukuri* style, a style unique to this region. The *Owari-zukuri* style has a unique layout, with the gate, the hall for worship, the corridor, and the main hall were placed in a line stretching from the north to the south. This is thought to be due to the history of the region, Owari clan, which was a major power in the region in ancient times, was enshrined in Atsuta Shrine as the local deity.

Atsuta Jingu Ko-ezu (The old illustration of Atsuta Shrine), which was drawn around Kyōroku 2 (1529), is truly spectacular. Especially, the vermilion-colored buildings are unique and distinctive. The five-story pagoda and other structures in the *Owari-zukuri* style show the strong influence of Buddhism, and history will remember them as a unique style that shows a syncretism between Shintoism and Buddhism. The "*Miya-juku* (Miya Inn Town)" in front of the shrine was the busiest inn town around.

Now, let us look at the paintings. First, Hiroshige's "Miya" painting is a picture of the horse chasing festival of the shrine. The subtitle of the painting is "Atsuta Shinto ritual," and it depicts the *torii* gate of Atsuta Shrine and the heroic ritual of the horse chasing. This is an illustration of a festival called "Omma-To" held every year on May 5. The ritual was held only in the Owari and Nishi Mikawa regions, with its origin assumed to be the horse chasing ritual held in Atsuta Shrine. However, Atsuta Shrine stopped to hold the ritual by the middle Edo period.

Also, the *torii* gate of Atsuta Shrine should have had a rounded *kasa-gi* (roof wood) seen in the ancient *Shinmei-zukuri* style at that time, but Hiroshige's *torii* gate is in the common *Shinmei-zukuri* style. Since ukiyo-e is a work of entertainment, such detailed examination may not be necessary. As a work of art, both people and horses are depicted dynamically, and powerful illustration of the heroic festival customs is well worth appreciation, which is unique to Hiroshige's work.

Next, let us look at Kōkan's painting. The shrine depicted in here is a *Shinmei-zukuri* Shrine. In other words, this shrine is not Atsuta Shrine. What is depicted is actually the worship hall of the outer shrine of Ise Shrine. Why did Kōkan place Ise Shrine here? For one thing, Atsuta Shrine was the local deity for the Owari Tokugawa family, one of the three families ranked next to the Shogunate, and Kōkan might have been awed and avoided depicting it. At the same time, considering Kōkan's ideological leanings, it is likely that he was skeptical about the *Owari-zukuri* Atsuta Shrine, which had a strong Shinto/Buddhist syncretism.

What we can see from Kōkan's "Kyoto" and "Miya" (259)

What, then, do these two paintings of "Kyoto" and "Miya" reveal about Kōkan's thoughts and the message he wanted to convey to the future generations? His message is that our nation began with *Amaterasu Ōmikami* (the deity Amaterasu, the god of Japan), and that Japan should be ruled by the emperor. In fact, Kōkan was a pioneer of the imperial loyalists at the end of the Edo period, and a patriot of the nation.

In his "*Yochi Zenzu*" (Complete Map of Japan and its Environs), published in as early as 1791, he wrote, "*Tenshi Koku Nihon Touto Shunparō Shujin* (The Master of Shunparō, in eastern capital of Japan, the land of the emperor), and in his "Shunparō Hikki" (completed in October Bunka 8 (1811)) he wrote, "*Amaterasu Ōmikami* (God of Japan) opened the way for the people of this country. Before that there have been people here from ancient times, who fought with beasts for food. *Ōmikami* built the capital on the shores of *Ahagi-hara* in *Himuka-no-kuni*, and taught people the moral way of life." The imperial loyalist statements could be seen consistently in Kōkan's writings.

Incidentally, Kōkan's ancestors were from the land of Kishu (present day Wakayama, where Ise Shrine is

located). The fact that his strong attachment to the Ise Shrine was his moral support can be seen throughout his writings (the Ise Shrine itself was a Shrine territory, but was surrounded by the Kii domain's enclave territory). It causes no problem to presume that the same thoughts expressed by the allegory of the Kyoto Imperial Palace as a starting point was latent in Kōkan's "Miya" painting. The composition that includes court nobles in their costumes and Shinto priests are unique to "Kyoto" and "Miya," and it is not found in any other Edo period painting. Do we not sense an allegory in these costumes as well? Incidentally, Atsuta Shrine after the Meiji period had a copper shingle roof, and the *chigi* (the wood seen on top of the roof) is also different.

In any case, it was natural that Hiroshige could not borrow Kōkan for the "Miya" in his "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō."

By the way, some people may feel uncomfortable about the fact that Kōkan painted Ise Shrine, which is 100 kilometers away from Atsuta Shrine, in his "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō." However, as I have mentioned several times, "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" was not originally titled by Kōkan. Before the modern era, it was rather rare for painters themselves to give a title to their paintings. The Mona Lisa, for example, was not named by the artist. The same is true of Sōtatsu's "The Wind and Thunder Gods".

What Kōkan intended to depict was an early-spring sceneries of "The Most beautiful sceneries in Japan painted with the Dutch method that had never been used in Japan before" (letter to Yamyō Shume, Bunka 10 (1813). Therefore, the "Nihonbashi" at the end of the book is marked with the name of the place of production "Sōshū at Kamakura Shichirihama," Kōkan's signature in Roman characters, and the large seal "Shunparō." This was the official style of signing on paintings in the Edo period (the romanization is unique to Kōkan).

It was probably the owner of the picture book after the Meiji period who titled "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō." S/He might have imitated Hiroshige's series. Perhaps Kōkan had no idea that this pictorial record would be called "Kōkan's Fifty-three Stations of Tōkaidō" in later times.

It would be more suitable to title this work of Kōkan's "*Nihon Shōkeshiki Sōshunfu* (Japan's most scenic view in early spring)." This title would better include the places far from the Tōkaidō highway often appear in Kōkan's series.

Completely different paintings (3) "Akasaka" (261)

The remaining work is "Akasaka." In the case of this painting, the meaning of the difference between Hiroshige and Kōkan is different from that of the above two paintings, but this is really interesting.

The Akasaka Inn town was in close proximity to the next inn town, Goyu, and the distance between them is only 16 chou (about 1.7 km). Originally, it was a single inn town called "Akasaka Goi," and when it was most prosperous, there were about 80 inns. However, under the order of Tokugawa Iyasu, the town was divided into two, Akasaka and Goyu. At that time, it was decided that feudal lord processions traveling from Kyoto or the western part of Japan to Edo would use Akasaka, and those from Edo to Kyoto would use Goyu. This was done to avoid congestion during the feudal lord processions.

Here is Matsuo Basho's haiku, "*Natsu no tsuki: Goyu yori ide te Akasaka ya*, (The summer moon rising from Goyu and now in Akasaka)."

The distance between the two inn towns is the shortest of the 53 inn towns, so it could be interpreted simply as an allusion to the fact that the summer night dawns easily and the moon rises briefly. However, some people say that this haiku describes a traveler who stayed at Goyu was suspended by an inn runner lady at Akasaka

Since the two inn towns were originally a single inn town, a lustful traveler from Edo would make an excuse to himself, "I've walked one more station today, so I'll stop here," and buoyantly jumped into an inn town just next to it. In any case, Akasaka and Goyu were two of the most enjoyable entertainment districts on the Tōkaidō Highway. In particular, they were famous for the touts of *tome-onna* (runner ladies) and the deeply sympathetic *meshimori-onna* (waitresses).

At first glance, Kōkan's "Akasaka" is just an ordinary inn town, similar in composition to "Goyu." Hiroshige probably thought that two similar scenes in a row would be uninteresting, since ukiyo-e was for the general public. For this reason, Hiroshige's "Akasaka" is a scene inside of an inn, with women busily at work preparing for dinner. However, this composition was borrowed from Katsushika Hokusai's preceding work, "The Fifty-three Stages of the Tōkaidō Highway."

On the other hand, Kōkan's "Akasaka" and the following painting "Goyu," truly show that Kōkan was not an ordinary painter. He was an unprecedented artist. Here, I would like to draw your attention to the continuity between the two paintings.

The first, "Akasaka," depicts a quiet day before sunset. This can be seen in the color of the sky, the rooms of the inn, and the still calm demeanor of the people on the street. It is, so to speak, an overture.

Next, let's take a closer look at "Goyu" and see how it differs from "Akasaka." First, look at the windows of the inns lining along the street. Notice the lights in the rooms. The faintly colored lights leaking from the *shōji* screens on the windows indicate that guests have entered the inn and are there. The sky is slightly darker than in Akasaka. This is no less than a moving image that captures the passage of time as a continuum from Akasaka to Goyu.

Once again, look at the faint lights of the inns in "Goyu" as depicted by Kōkan. In these two paintings, Kōkan expressed the world changing with the passage of time.

"The summer moon rising from Goyu and now in Akasaka."

Without a doubt, Kōkan was replying to his beloved Matsuo Basho with a painting. In these two seemingly simple pictures, "Akasaka" and "Goyu," lies the "essence" of Shiba Kōkan, a man of letters and a natural scientist who sometimes composed poetry.

Shiba Kōkan, an imperialist (263)

Of the three paintings that Hiroshige was unable to borrow from Kōkan, "Kyoto" and "Miya" reveal Kōkan's hidden message. It is a clear "Imperialism." Imperialism is an ideology that places the authority of the emperor above that of the samurai government and aims for a pro-emperor government. Needless to say, it was the ideological backbone of the movement to overthrow the shogunate at the end of the Edo period, and it was an extremely dangerous ideology in the Edo period, when the shogunate ruled Japan. If someone expressed it overtly, they would be severely punished.

It is not clear whether Kōkan's Imperialism was so radical as to aim for the overthrow of the shogunate, or whether it aimed for a more peaceful union of the shogunate and the court, but there is no doubt that it was the issue that most concerned the shogunate.

Takayama Hikokuro (1747-93) was born in the same year as Kōkan. He was from Kōzuke and was known as an imperialist. He went to Kyoto, where he met with the nobles, and traveled around the country to appeal for his ideas. However, his actions were monitored by the shogunate, and in his final days he killed himself in a fit of rage.

Kōkan did not care the concern of the shogunate at all. In his writings, you will find an abundance of material that demonstrates his imperialism and Shintoism, and he remained consistent throughout his life. Let us begin by writing down some of the most notable passages from Kōkan's own writings.

1. The book was written by the master of Shunparō in the eastern capital of Japan, the land of the emperor (front cover of the "*Yochi Zenzu Complete Map of Japan and its environs*" Kansei 4, (1892).
2. The deity deifies the spirits of the ancestors of our country Japan. (*Shunparō Hikki*, Bunka 8 (1811))
3. The Ise Grand Shrine is the beginning of our nation, and it is clear that the emperors should worship. (*Shunparō Hikki*)
4. Everyone, including the peasants from east to west, north to south, always go worship the Ise Grand Shrine, showing the prosperity of the Shinto religion in our country. (*Shunparō Hikki*)
5. Everyone from the Emperor, the shogun, to the lowly samurai, farmers, artisans, merchants, and beggars, are human being. (*Shunparō Hikki*)
6. *Amaterasu Ōmikami* opened the way for the people of our country, Japan ... *Amaterasu*, built a capital on the shore of *Ahagi-hara* in *Himuko-no-kuni*, and taught people the moral way of life.

7. I was born in Japan, and I must not speak ill of my own country. However, being my country, the country of god, there is no committed theory about Ise Grand Shrine. (*Mugon Dōjin Hikki* God Around Bunka 11 (1812))

Furthermore, I mentioned "*Mo-ja* (The Blind Snake)" with which the Dutch scholars fiercely attacked Kōkan in Chapter 2. But why did Kōkan condemn Katsuragawa Hoshū to such an extent? This is a highlight of Kōkan's imperialism, which has been overlooked until today. The title of the report that Hoshū made after his visit to Daikokuya Kōdayu was "*Hyo-min Goran no ki* (A Report after Meeting Drifting Commoner). Kōkan attacked the title of the report, saying.

"If you are not the emperor, you should not use the word "commoner". It should be The Drifting "Person"."

Kōkan stated that even shogun could not use the word "the common people of Japan". He said that only the emperor, could use the word. This is stated to the shogun's official physician. It is an astonishing statement.

In any case, we cannot help but be amazed, as we always are, at the audacity of Kōkan, who is not afraid to put himself in danger if things go wrong.

Mysterious contacts with the Mito Tokugawa family (266)

The Jigenji Temple, now located in Sugamo, Tokyo, was mentioned above. The temple served as the family temple of the Mito Tokugawa family in Edo period (the temple was located in Fukagawa at that time, and Kōkan lived in Honjo, close to Fukagawa). The temple's head priest told me that the ceiling painting in the main hall was done by Shiba Kōkan. It is a pity that the ceiling painting has not survived. What does the fact that the graves of Kōkan and his parents are located in the precincts of the temple mean?

According to the head priest of the Jigenji Temple, the Jigenji Temple and the Mito Tokugawa family were in close contact with each other during the Tenmei, Kansei, and Bunka eras (1781 – 1816). The lord of Mito domain at that time was Tokugawa Harumori (1751-1805), the sixth lord of Mito domain, who is said to have been the initiator of the domain's economic recovery.

As for the ceiling painting, it is inconceivable that the chief priest of the time allowed Kōkan to paint the ceiling on his own. It is reasonable to think that either the Mito family or Harumori had given their permission, or that Harumori asked Kōkan to draw the ceiling painting. The significance of the ceiling painting overlooking the vice shogun was not small.

In other words, there was definitely a connection between Harumori and Kōkan. According to the materials of Mito family, Tokugawa Harumori was a rare Western connoisseur with deep knowledge of astronomy, geography, and herbalism. He also made efforts to revitalize the city by popularizing civic culture, accepting sumo wrestling and theatrical performances. It is possible that Kōkan's advice played a part in his effort.

The names inscribed on the gravestones of Kōkan and his parents at Jigenji Temple are: "Kasei-in Souei Nikki" for his father, "Kairenin Myōge Nippō" for his mother, and "Tōgen-in Kaiei Jyuenkoji" for Kōkan. According to the priest, all of these names seem to be those of very prestigious families or very important persons. At the very least, they are unlikely to be given to a townsman.

One of the reasons for this theory is that Kōkan wrote in his postscript to his book "*Waran Ten-setsu*," published in 1796, that "Since my childhood, I was in the leading position in the town. As a small child I went to the rural area around my town." The phrase "the leader of the town" implies that he could not have been a samurai.

However, if we think about it in the other way, would a townsman go out of his way to say, "I was in the leading position in the town"? It is such an obvious statement. To add more, throughout his entire life, Kōkan was strangely wealthy. There is no indication that he was ever in need of money. This suggests that he must have had at least some economic background, and the fact that he received a high level of education from early childhood is more samurai-like.

It was said that Kōkan went bankrupt after his father died, but even after that he moved into a house of his own rather than a run-down apartment, where Mamiya Rinzō and wealthy merchants visited him. There is no shadow of poverty at all in Kōkan's life.

Another basis for the "townsperson" theory is that his father's gravestone reads, "Horeki 11 February 22 Kasei-in Souei Nikki," and that there is an article in the temple's past records, "Horeki 11 Kasei-in Souei Nikki Maruya Ichiryōbei," which suggests that Kōkan's father was Maruya Ichiryōbei, and that the name Maruya means a merchant. This is a theory that has arisen in recent years.

What is puzzling, however, is that although Kōkan mentioned his mother repeatedly in his writings, he never mentioned his father. Kōkan recalled that his mother was from Ou clan and her name was Ritsu, and was "just like Mencius's mother". This alone is enough to make him a samurai. However, for some reason or other, he did not mention his own father. He did describe his memories of his uncle with nostalgia. There must be some hidden reasons behind this. During the Meiji era, there was a theory that Kōkan's father was this uncle, a man of high rank.

Even if his father's name was Maruya Ichiryōbei, we do not know whether Kōkan was his biological son or not. At the very least, it is strange that the son of Maruya Ichiryōbei, a merchant, was named Ando Kichijirō (Kōkan's real name) as a child. If he was the son of Maruya, his childhood name would naturally be Maruya Kichijirō.

The theory that Kōkan was a "covert agent" (269)

As we have seen, Kōkan had contact with many important feudal lords, including the Kishu Tokugawa family, but there was not a single line or word left about the Mito Tokugawa family, with whom he must have had a close relationship. This is another great mystery. We should not jump to the conclusion and assume that because Kōkan did not mention the Mito Tokugawa family in the records, he did not have any relationship with them.

If Kōkan was a high-level secret agent of the Mito clan, he could not mention it on his life. The Mito Tokugawa family is the key to understand the background of Kōkan.

When we consider the relationship between Kōkan and the Mito family, we realize that there was an ideological closeness between the two. Tokugawa Mitsukuni of the Mito clan is also known for the compilation of "*Dai Nihon Shi* (The History of Japan)", which is a large and lengthy work. Incidentally, Harumori is also known to have contributed to the completion of this *Dai Nihon Shi*.

The actual work was mainly done by Andō Tameakira (1659-1716), a scholar of the Japanese classical literature. Although he was a native of Tamba, he is believed to have had some contact with Kishu, and he was consistently an imperial loyalist.

In fact, being one of the three Tokugawa families, Mito Tokugawa family had long been a stronghold of imperialism, which is why *rōnin* (lordless samurais) from Mito killed Ii Naosuke, who had signed a treaty with USA. without imperial authorization at the end of the Edo period.

On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, Kōkan wrote "the master of *Shunparō* in the eastern capital of Japan, the land of the emperor" as the author's name on the title of the "*Yochi Zenzu*" in his "*Yochi Ryakusetsu*" published in 1792 (Kansei 4). In other words, he was stating that he was a citizen of the country ruled by the emperor.

Under the strict control of the shogunate, Kōkan was able to use the phrase "Japan, the land of the emperor," and he was not punished for doing so. The fourth year of the Kansei (1792) was the time when Matsudaira Sadanobu's power was at its peak. Takayama Hikokurō killed himself the following year, Kansei 5 (1793). It seems very strange. But we could see a reason why the shogunate overlooked Kōkan if we assume a hidden strong connection between Kōkan and the Mito family, which shared the same imperialistic ideology, Incidentally, Kōkan's family crest is a crest of three comma-shaped figures in a circle, which resembles the crest of the Mito Tokugawa family.

Interactions with Kyoto court nobles (270)

In speaking of Kōkan as an imperialist, I would like to mention Kōkan's another important relationship with the court noble Nakayama Naruchika (1741-1814).

The relationship between Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" and "*Tōkaidō Meisho Zue* (The Pictures of the Famous Places of Tōkaidō Highway)" (hereafter abbreviated as "*Zue*") has been described in Chapter 1, and it is recognized that Kōkan borrowed several works from "*Zue*" (and therefore, inevitably, Hiroshige also borrowed them). This "*Zue*" published in Kyoto in Kansei 9 (1797) is one of the important clues that lead to the

theory that "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" is a genuine work by Shiba Kōkan. The preface to "Zue" was written by Nakayama Naruchika, who was already acquainted with Kōkan in Kansei 1 (1789), when Kōkan stayed in Kyoto on his return trip from Nagasaki.

In that year, Kōkan was in Kyoto from February 27 to March 26, and was granted an audience by Kan-in-no-Miya (Prince) on March 20. Then, Nakayama Naruchika, a close associate of Kan-in-no-Miya, must have been present at that time.

Kōkan's second trip to Kyoto was in April and May of Kansei 11 (1799), two years after the publication of "Zue". Naturally, Kōkan must have obtained the book directly in Kyoto. Around 30 painters from the Kyoto art world, including Maruyama Ōkyo and Tosa Mitsusada, participated in the illustration of "Zue". Among them were many painters who were acquainted with Kōkan. In a sense, "Zue" was a book created by Kōkan's close friends.

It is not surprising that Kōkan was acquainted with the author of "Zue," Akisato Ritō, as Nakayama Naruchika, who Kōkan was already acquainted with, wrote the preface to the book. In addition, Yoshida Shinbei, the publisher, and Kōkan and Akisato Ritō participated in the production of "Keijō Gaen" (published in Bunka 11 (1814)). Kōkan was so famous that many writers and artists knew his name and visited him during his stay in Kyoto. It would be rather unrealistic that they did not know him. We can imagine Kōkan composing poems and drinking Kyoto's famous sake with Ritō, the publisher, and painters.

Incidentally, Hiroshige's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" was published in Tenpo 4 (1833), thirty-six years after the publication of "Zue". We can assume that Hiroshige made extensive use of the reference materials provided to him by the publisher, including "Tōkaidō Meisho Zue" and "Ise Sangu Meisho Zue" as well as Hokusai, in addition to the original illustrations for the production of "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō".

Ever since his first trip to Kyoto, Kōkan had been deeply in love with the city. He later wished he had come ten or twenty years earlier. His third trip to Kyoto in Bunka 9 (1812) was the trip during which he decided to live in Kyoto permanently. During his stay in Kyoto, he attended four "Ibunkai" meetings of Kyoto's cultural figures within a few months.

Incidentally, Emperor Meiji is a grandson of Nakayama Naruchika (the fifth grandson). Naruchika was also involved in a deep feud with Matsudaira Sadanobu, which was known as the "Songō Ikken" incident. This is also a strange coincidence concerning Shiba Kōkan. It is also said that Takayama Hikokurō, whom I mentioned earlier, was driven to suicide when he became acquainted with Nakayama Naruchika, which aroused Matsudaira Sadanobu's alarm.

Allegories and messages contained in Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" (273)

The connection with the Kishu Tokugawa family, his relationship with Tokugawa Harumori of Mito, his interactions with the court noble Nakayama Naruchika, and his Imperialist ideology. If Kōkan lived within the context of these relationships and ideological backgrounds, we can understand quite a bit of his puzzling words and deeds, including the fact that the shogunate did not blame him no matter what he did. A bold hypothesis that worth considering is that Kōkan may have taken advantage of his complicated relationships to work as a covert agent for the shogunate.

There are many depictions in Kōkan's Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō that cannot be explained without thinking so.

He was not afraid to sketch things that would violate the confidentiality of the feudal lord families.

For each domain, the height of the mountains and the topography of the area, as well as the location of the buildings such as castles and bridges, are not merely parts of the landscape. It is a piece of top-secret information that cannot be leaked to the outside.

However, in addition to castles and bridges, Kōkan, for example, clearly depicted a catamaran bearing the family crest of a feudal lord in "Arai". He also depicted the family crests of feudal lords in various other pictures.

If you look closely, you can see many feudal lord processions moving along the road, which is very suggestive. Also, there are more images of samurais compared to Hiroshige's paintings. The more you look into it, the more you realize that there are many mysteries in both Kōkan and his Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō.

If he was a secret agent of the shogunate, his overtly anti-establishment behavior could be considered a kind of camouflage. In "*Kōkan Saiyu Nikki*" (Diary of Kōkan's Trip to the West), Kōkan wrote with a wry smile that when he met Nagasaki officials to ask for permission to enter *Dejima*, he was suspected of being a covert agent of Matsudaira Sadanobu. He later entered safely by disguising as a townsman, but this one episode alone reveals how calm and composed Kōkan was. In addition, Kōkan embarked in the Dutch ship and measured the size of the cannon on the ship, which made me totally speechless.

In any case, we can safely assume that Kōkan's criticism of the shogunate was possible because of (some form of) his privileged position. One of the reasons would be his strong allies with the Mito and Kishu families, which had influence in the shogunate. After all, he was a rare man who had feudal lords serve tea for him and draw the background for his painting.

Of course, many of the views I have expressed so far are not beyond the realm of speculation. However, they are not mere speculation, but rather inferences based on careful investigation and examination of the facts. I believe that the Kōkan studies to this date made too much of academic cautiousness and are bound by the chains of positivism and unable to move. Considering his achievement and personality, imagination and hypotheses are indispensable in the study of Kōkan.

The character of Shiba Kōkan has been described in rather distorted way. However, Kōkan was an artist. An artist embodies an extraordinary world. "Bluffing" and "Boasting" could be the qualities of a great artist.

During the Edo period, when the Tokugawa shogunate was in absolute control, who could say "Japan, the land of the emperor" with such bravado? The ultimate example is found in "*Moja* (The Blind Snake)," which states, "Even the shogun must not call the people 'commoners'. Only the emperor can call the people 'commoners'." No matter how hard I look for, I cannot find a man other than Shiba Kōkan who could say such things in the Tokugawa period.

He also advocated the equality of human beings, saying, "Everyone is a human being, from the emperor to the shogun and the samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants below" ("*Shunparō Hikki*"). This was sixty years before Fukuzawa Yukichi's "*Gakumon no Susume*" which stated that the heaven did not create people above people neither it created people below people. The real image of Kōkan should be grasped from such broad perspective.

We cannot grasp this huge caliber if we only see Kōkan as a Western-style painter of the Edo period. The key to understanding this is Kōkan's lifetime masterpiece, "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō," or rather, "*Nihon Shokeshiki Fuji* (Fuji, the Most Scenic View of Japan).

Chapter 4: The False Death Incident

A sudden disaster (278)

In the spring of the Bunka 10 (1813), due to unavoidable circumstances inside and outside of his household, Kōkan hurriedly returned to Edo, and in August of the same year, he took a surprising action. Kōkan sent his own "death notice" to all his acquaintances and associates at once.

Shortly thereafter, an interesting episode remains that is typical of Kōkan.

Kōkan, who was always fond of going out, could not stay at home. Even after he sent his 'death notice', he often went out on his own. One day, he bumped into an acquaintance. Kōkan pretended not to recognize him and walked away quickly. The acquaintance chased after him, and when he caught up with him, he shouted loudly, "I knew you are Dr. Kōkan!" Kōkan kept calm and whispered softly in the acquaintance's ear, "Dead people do not talk, do they?" And he walked away quickly, leaving his acquaintance standing there in stunned silence.

This is an anecdote from "*Sekitei Gadan*" by Takemoto Sekitei (1822-1888), a painter and essayist, and, although it may have been somewhat fictionalized, it is a historical fact.

Now, let us return to the story. In Bunka 9 (1812), Kōkan settled in Kyoto from April 1, 1812, and stayed there until November 21, 1812. During his stay, he enjoyed the company of local writers and artists, as well as Dutch scholars Tsuji Ranshitsu, Fujibayashi Fuzan, a statesman Kaiho Seiryō, and Wada Gikei, whose portrait was painted by Kōkan. (Here again, the theories that Kōkan was "disliked" and that he had a 'townsperson' origin are no longer logical.)

As noted above, he often attended "Ibunkai," a gathering of cultural figures in Kyoto. In terms of paintings, he left such late masterpieces as "*Sunshū Kashiwabara Fuji Zu*" and "*Shimousa Kisarazu Bankei Zu*". His daily life in Kyoto was so fulfilling and joyful that he wished he had come to Kyoto ten or twenty years earlier.

However, as clouds always follow the sunshine, an unexpected disaster befell him. Maybe it was a payment for his harsh criticism. It was a severe rebuke to a letter of inquiry that Kōkan had sent to Shaku Entsū, a major figure in the Buddhist world.

Challenging the Buddhist tycoon to a debate (279)

Shaku Entsū (1754-1834) was a highly ranked priest of the Tendai sect. He held the title of *Fumon Ritsushi* and was a hidden power in the Buddhist world. He was a member of the Hokke school of Nichiren Buddhism, but later converted to Tendai Buddhism, and moved to Kyoto, where he lived at Sekizenin in Shōgoin.

In Bunka 7 (1810), Entsū compiled the Buddhist view of the universe and published a single volume in a prestigious classical Chinese style. On the inside cover was "*Tōei Daiō Fuzō-ban*," the endorsement of Tōei-zan Kan'eiji Temple. The book is titled "*Futsukoku Rekishō-Hen* (The Buddhist View of a Calendar)".

The earth is flat and the heavens are round. This was the basic teaching. He presented a conceptual image of the universe in which the earth is flat with *Shumisen* in its center, and the sun, the moon, and the stars revolve around the flat earth. The Buddhist world felt threatened by the geocentric theory, which was slowly spreading among Kōkan, advanced cultural figures, and Japanese classical scholars at the time, and published this book to counter the theory.

The time was when the country was closed to the outside world, and most of the people still did not know that the earth was a sphere. It was a time when ordinary people firmly believed that the stars in the night sky were holes in the sky. In addition, the common people of Edo period could not read classical Chinese.

And Kōkan bit on that. He sent a letter to Entsū, challenging him to a debate.

He also criticized Entsū, saying, "Why don't you write in Japanese so that the ordinary people can easily understand it? This is a plot that conceals the truth from the ordinary people and tries to mislead them." In the same letter, he even pointed the finger at his teacher of Dutch studies, Ōtsuki Gentaku for writing about cigarettes in Chinese, and vehemently criticized him, saying, "It do harm to the body of an uneducated person who cannot read Chinese, and is an example of ignorance of the truth often seen among literati who boast only of their knowledge."

Incidentally, it was Siba Kōkan who enlightened the public on various aspects of smoking cessation. Not only for health reasons, he also advised the shogunate that fires in Edo were mainly caused by mismanagement of tobacco, and called for stricter control of tobacco use. Here, Kōkan was truly living up to his name as a friend of the ordinary people and an Icarian enlightener in the age of national seclusion. It is also clear from his writings such as "*Kunmo Gakaishū* (Enlightenment Book of Japanese and Chinese Literature)" that Kōkan himself was well versed in both Chinese poetry and Chinese literature.

Be that as it may, it is an undeniable fact that the Buddhist world at this time did not change its old worldview and was already a denier of natural science, which was common knowledge in the West. On the other hand, Kōkan had already fully understood the geocentric theory. This is not surprising since he produced his globe in August of the same year. Furthermore, in July and August of the following year, Kōkan looked at the night sky and observed the shooting stars with a telescope every night (Perhaps he observed them with coffee or wine in his hand).

In "*Shunparō Hikki*", Entsū's "*Futsukoku Rekishō-Hen* (The Buddhist View of a Calendar)" was criticized as follows: "In reviewing the book, it accepts the existence of *Shumisen*. It says the earth is not a sphere, and that there is a heavenly son and his retainers in the sun and in the moon." and "It denies all the theories on the calendar which is used throughout the world and the theory that the earth is a sphere. It is based on the Dharma of the time during the reign of the Buddha." This was something that Kōkan, a man of enlightenment, could never accept.

In his essay "*Dokushū Mūgen*" and other writings, Kōkan was also scathing in his criticism of the decadent Buddhist world and monks. For Entsū, Shiba Kōkan was "the enemy of the Buddhism" while Kōkan saw Entsū as "the enemy of Japanese enlightenment," in other words, both were "the natural enemy" to each other.

Entsū's severe counterattack (282)

The correspondence between Entsū and Kōkan can be traced in the "*Kōkyō Ronten*" ("Kō" stands for Kōkan, "Kyō" for Entsū's alias, Kyōkan), a book of questions and answers written in September of Bunka 9 (1812j). It should be noted, however, that since it was compiled by Entsū, it may have been edited to suit his arguments.

The first sentence of Kōkan's letter is, "The astronomy of *Shumisen* is different from what I believe," followed by questions such as, "Why do you say that the Dutch theory is an evil doctrine?" and "Is the theory that the earth is a sphere and that the earth rotates is an evil theory?". He also inquired on Entsū's views on Christianity and even accused the corruption of the Buddhist monks. In the end, (it is typical of the fearless Kōkan) he finished his letter with a provocation not to use the name of the Buddha to spread the "delusion of falsehoods."

Kōkan's letter was, so to speak, a letter of inquiry with content certification. At first glance, Entsū responded in a very condescending manner. However, since there was no way he could argue the legitimacy of the geocentric theory, all he could do was to cleverly shift the point of contention and to trap Kōkan in his careless wording.

Entsū took issue with the following points.

- (1) The fact that Kōkan claimed to be a vassal of the magistrate of temples and shrines.
- (2) The fact that Kōkan provoked the magistrate of temples and shrines to file a complaint.
- (3) That he told him to stop speaking falsehoods (false theories about the earth).

And now he asked Kōkan to answer.

- (1) I answered all your questions. Now it is your turn to answer my questions.
- (2) I want you to answer without fail.
- (3) I would like a clear answer as to who in Edo told you to write your letter.
- (4) I request that you answer us as soon as possible.

The mistake of claiming to be a vassal of the magistrate of temples and shrines (284)

Entsū was indeed a highly insightful and knowledgeable monk in the tradition of High Priest Tenkai. Furthermore, he was even more intransigent because he had the endorsement of Tōei-zan Kan'eiji Temple for the publication of "*Futsukoku Rekishō-Hen* (The Buddhist View of a Calendar)".

What annoyed Kōkan here was the fact that as the sender of the letter of inquiry, he claimed himself to be "A vassal of Abe Bichū-no-kami, the current magistrate of temples and shrines, now retired, Shiba Kōkan." He boldly identified himself as a vassal of Abe Bichū-no-kami, the magistrate of temples and shrines then on active service. The time was the Tokugawa period of absolute feudalism. Along with the magistrate for accounts and the magistrate for towns, the magistrate for temples and shrines was one of the three most important magistrates, which was in charge of overseeing and managing the religious policy of the shogunate. Entsū went for the throat by demanding if it was true that Kōkan was a vassal of the magistrate?

It was not the argument about geocentric and celestial motion that put Kōkan in a tight spot in his debate with Entsū. He attacked on Kōkan's rashness of calling himself "the vassal of Abe Bichū-no-kami."

The letter of inquiry is equivalent to an official document. There must be no falsehoods in it. The recipient was one of the highest priests of the Tendai sect, and Kōkan's letter was picking a fight with him. If the letter was found to include any falsehood, a townsman or an ordinary painter would be imprisoned and beheaded, and even a samurai of some clan would be forced to commit *seppuku* (ritual suicide).

There is story that goes as follows. The landlord of a tenement house said to a drunken, single tenant,

“Listen, no matter how drunk you get, don't mess with a priest or an ugly-looking woman with a child.”

“Why is that?”

“Because they will chase you to the end of the hell.”

This is exactly what happened to Kōkan, who had messed with a priest. Either way, it is a big problem if he was or was not a vassal of the temple magistrate who manages and supervises the Buddhist world.

If Kōkan was really a vassal of Abe Masakiyo, it would mean that the then magistrate for temples and shrines denied the Buddhist theory authorized by Tōei-zan Kan'eiji Temple, where successive Tokugawa Shoguns are buried. If Kōkan had lied about claiming himself to be a vassal of the magistrate, there would be no chance he could get away with it.

The pleasant life with the literati in Kyoto changed drastically. He had dug his own grave by messing with a monk with a hollyhock (Tokugawa) crest.

Incidentally, High Priest Tenkai (around 1536 - 1643), the right-hand person for the divine sovereign Tokugawa Iyasu, was a monk of the Tendai sect of Buddhism. Kan'eiji Temple, still in Ueno today, was the family temple of the Tokugawa shoguns, whose founder was Tenkai. "Tōei-zan" literally means "Mount Hieizan in the East," and it is the base of the Tendai sect in the east. In Edo period, the Tendai Sect had tremendous power with the shogun family in the background.

“I would like a clear answer as to who in Edo told you to write your letter.”

Kōkan, who had never been afraid of anything before, must have been very depressed and lost himself in thought. The person he was fighting was a great power from another world, which he had never known.

Kōkan's relationship with Abe Masakiyo, the magistrate of temples and shrines (286)

Let us now turn to Abe Masakiyo (1774-1826). He was the fifth lord of Fukuyama domain, and played an active role in the center of the shogunate, serving as a *sōsha-ban* (a ceremony manager), a magistrate for temples and shrines, and a *rōju* (an advisor of shogun) in the Edo shogunate. Abe Masahiro, who later dealt with the arrival of Perry, concluded the Japan US Treaty of Peace and Amity, and led the opening of Japan to the outside world, was the fifth son of Masakiyo. Masakiyo had served as magistrate for temples and shrines since Bunka 7 (1810), and was in the very position when Kōkan stayed in Kyoto (he later assumed the position of *roju* in Bunka 14). Apart from his ostensible career, Masakiyo was also a man of letters, having established an academy and an observatory, and excelled in Chinese poetry and painting. He was also a scholar of Dutch studies, and was familiar with the Dutch books and apparatus of the time.

Kōkan was not so reckless as to claim himself to be a vassal of a feudal lord without any evidence to back it up. In fact, Kōkan and Masakiyo had a close relationship for a long time. As evidence of this, let me extract a few anecdotes from "*Shunparō Hikki*."

On the day of Marquis Abe's first departure for his domain, the weather was fine, everyone was with him until Shinagawa, but I was alone beyond there. We met again at Tanaka Hyogo's inn in Kawasaki and I asked him if he would like me to be with him to Hakone.

After seeing Masakiyo off at Kawasaki Inn, Kōkan handed a letter to Masakiyo's retainer, who delivered it to his lord.

In his letter, Kōkan wrote about his policy for ruling a domain.

He wrote, "As a leader, there is nothing better than treating your peasants with affection and care. You should treat them with affection, knowing that you are the parents of your people" and had his letter delivered. Later he received a reply from Masakiyo. Masakiyo wrote, "As you taught me, I called a very old man to the front of my palanquin and gave him a fan-like object by myself, sweets and other things to a middle-aged man. They shed tears for appreciation, and I shed tears with them."

Reading this, Kōkan wrote, "He is a rare person among the lords of today."

Since Masakiyo succeeded the head of the family in Kyowa 2 (1803), when he was 30 years old and entering his domain for the first time, it would be in that year or the following year that Kōkan wrote about the leader's attitude toward the people of the domain, and that Masakiyo responded well to his instructions.

One more thing. Kōkan wrote in *Shunparō Hikki* that people who met with the nobles did not tell them the truth that hit the nobles' sore spot, and the nobles turned their deaf ear to those words and gathered only sycophants around them, "making the nobles even more foolish."

He then continued, "Long ago, when Marquis Abe was a child, he met with me and he was the only one who could really talk with me. I told him honestly good things were good, and bad things were bad. He listened to every word I said. He is now around 40, and has become a rare marquis of great wisdom. The other day I had an audience with him after a long absence. We had very little time and talked only about how the things should be, and I returned home."

How could a townsman teach the moral principles to the son of a feudal lord? Here, too, the townsman theory completely collapses. The "*Shunparō Hikki*" was written in the Bunka 8 (1811), when Masakiyo was 38 years old and had just assumed the position of magistrate for temples and shrines the previous year. The close relationship between the two men is evident.

A Western-style painting by Abe Masakiyo discovered (288)

In recent years, new materials have been discovered that support the close relationship between Abe Masakiyo and Kōkan. In 2007, a Western-style painting was found in the home of a descendant of the Abe family.

According to a newspaper article (Asahi Shimbun, Bingo edition, October 9 of the same year), the painting was a small work, 7.5 cm in length and 8.7 cm in width, framed and painted in watercolor on Japanese paper. The painting "depicts a lakeside view of water, blue-roofed buildings with chimneys, a person on a small boat, and a small bird perched on a tree branch," according to the Bingo edition of the Asahi Shimbun.

Of particular note is that on the reverse side of the frame, in Roman and Dutch script, is the inscription "Abe Bittiuwnocami (Abe Bichu-no-kami) Maaker (painter)," indicating that it was presented to his close advisor, Wadati (Takagi Wadachi). Abe Bichū-no-kami was Abe Masakiyo, and the picture was painted between his late teens and 20s, which is between the 1790s and the 1800s.

It was Kōkan who taught him how to paint in the Western style. The friendship between Masakiyo and Kōkan was evident in the historical record, but the appearance of this "physical evidence" has made it definite.

However, Kōkan could not put his benevolent friend, Abe Masakiyo, in a difficult situation by showing such a fact. On the other hand, if he admitted he lied, he would lose his own life. What did Kōkan do in this desperate situation?

Kōkan pondered, and decided to escape quickly, as in the first article of "The Thirty-six Strategies of the Martial Art." Kōkan himself might have been a secret agent, or at least he had many friends who were covert agents of the shogunate, such as Mamiya Rinzō. In a situation like this, the first thing to do was to hide himself. On November 21, Bunka 9, (1811), Kōkan suddenly disappeared from his residence in Kyoto.

The mystery of how he returned to Edo from Kyoto (290)

Although there are many mysteries regarding how he returned to Edo, I would like to proceed in accordance with my hypothesis, which I have already presented in the previous chapter. My theory is that Kōkan left Kyoto on January 1 of Bunka 10 (1813) and returned to Edo in April.

The reason why Kōkan left Kyoto was to escape from Entsu's pursuit. Edo was not safe either. The Tendai sect has a nationwide network. Although he was heading for Edo, Kōkan wanted to take as much time as possible. This is why he spent more than a month in the vicinity of Kyoto and he spent nearly three months after passing through Kambara before returning to Edo. Kōkan naturally knew the importance of information. He had many disciples and friends in Edo and must have taken information about Edo through *haya hikyaku* (express mails of the time).

I imagine that Kōkan probably stayed in Atami after he left Kambara before returning to Edo. Even after he returned to Edo, Kōkan often went to Atami for a hot-spring cure, and he wrote pleasant sounding letters to his close friends, Yamarō Shume and Ema Shunrei, about his visit.

Another piece of supporting evidence is the fact that his "death notice," which we will discuss later, states, "After staying one year in Kyoto, I returned to the eastern capital (Edo) this spring."

Unprecedented, his own "death notice" (291)

The dispute with Entsu changed the rest of Kōkan's life. The pursuit by Entsu was so relentless that it reached as far as Edo. In fact, Kōkan changed his residence from one place to another, showing no signs of settling down in his familiar home after his return to Edo. And in the end, he had to be assumed to be dead.

Kōkan feared that this would have repercussions for Abe Masakiyo. He was already sixty-seven years old. His life did not mean very much to him anymore. Or, yes, perhaps it did. That is more like Kōkan.

This is how the false death incident occurred.

In August of Bunka 10 (1813), Kōkan sent a letter titled "*Shiba Mugon Jisei no Go* (Siba's farewell letter with no words)" to his acquaintances. This is the incident that made Kōkan one of the most eccentric figures in the history. Kōkan distributed this death notice with his self-portrait not only in Edo but also in Kyoto and Osaka. He announced to the world that he was dead. Here lies the melancholy of the troubled Shiba Kōkan in his final days. Here is the original text in its entirety.

Dr. Kōkan now grew old and feeble. He no more paints pictures even if he was requested, no more visits any lord even if he was invited. He is too tired to pursue Dutch studies and astronomy or to use rare instruments skillfully, and he only enjoys a life like old Zhuang Zi. Last year, he enjoyed the cherry blossom in Yoshino and stayed in Kyoto for a year. He returned to the eastern capital (Edo) this spring. He left for Kyoto the other day. On the way, he became a disciple of the Zen master Seisetsu at Engakuji Temple in Kamakura, Sōshū, and finally attained enlightenment and died of an illness.

Why did Kōkan leave his residence in Kyoto, where he had considered living for the rest of his life? According to the conventional theory, it was because of a scandalous incident involving his relatives in Edo. This is true. This greatly troubled Kōkan. Therefore, it is said that he left Kyoto in a hurry and returned to Edo at the end of the previous year, returning to his former residence at Shinsenza, Shiba.

However, even after Kōkan returned to Edo, there was no sign that he had settled down in his familiar home at Sinsenza, Shiba. He gave his home to his adopted son, changed the nameplate, and went to live in hiding in a nearby house. He then moved from summer to autumn, first to Kamakura (where he created "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō"), then to Azabu, Edo, and finally to Meguro, where he lived in seclusion. He also changed his name to "Mugon Dōjin."

In his final years, he moved into the residence of a Shogunal retainer Katayama Seijūrō, as if to be sheltered, and died there. This unnatural move also suggests the pursuit by Entsu. Entsu had a network in Edo, too. Kōkan's residence in Edo must not have been safe.

Incidentally, Katayama Seijūrō is presumed to be connected to Katayama Enzen (retired), a Kōkan's disciple in his later years. The Katayama family was a direct retainer of the Tokugawa shogunate. Even Entsu could not touch. If he did, he would be pursued in turn. Kōkan had many enemies, but he also had many allies.

The feud with Entsu even spilled over into the publication of "Waran Kikou," which had been almost done by Yoshida Shinbei, a publisher in Kyoto, was canceled. This can be seen in the fact that the announcement of the publication of the book, which had been repeated in letters to Yamao Shume and Ema Shunrei, stopped suddenly.

The Production of "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō," a celebration of early spring in Edo Period (294)

Kōkan's had made many fearless remarks. But this time, he picked a wrong opponent. Even if Kōkan's geocentric theory was correct, there was no way that Entsu could withdraw dejectedly, faced with the insultation and denial of the Buddhism itself. This was a religious war. It is not difficult to imagine that the entire Tendai sect launched a severe counterattack. Moreover, Entsu's Buddhist theory was backed by Kan'eiji Temple and officially approved by the shogunate.

There would have been no problem if the dispute was purely over the geocentric v. s. heliocentric theories. In

fact, three years later, Ino Tadataka published "*Futsukoku Rekishōhen Sekimou* (A Refutation to The Buddhist View of a Calendar) and overtly criticized Entsu's heliocentric theory, but he was not pursued or censured in any way. Kōkan's biggest mistake was that he called himself a "vassal of the magistrate of temples and shrines."

Kōkan did not mention this to his best friends. No, he could not. If anything went wrong, he might get Abe Masakiyo involved in this, which he must avoid by all means. In a letter to Yamaryō Shume, Kōkan just wrote "Various incidents have occurred inside and outside of my home, and I have learned that it is impossible for living things to live in peace" (dated June 12, Bunka 10 (1813)). This was Kōkan's confession. He was cautious in the extreme, telling his best friend just that and giving the instruction of how to send the letter, having many people mediate before Shume actually received the letter.

In the post script of a letter to Yamaryō Shume, presumably dated after June Bunka 12 (1815) (the last letter to Shume), there is a sentence telling him not to send the letter to his old residence in Sinsenza, but to have it delivered to him through people.

Nakano Yoshio ponders over this, saying, "It must be said that the state of Kōkan's mind in his later years was bizarre considering why he requested such a two or three-step detour even for a single letter to his hidden residence" ("*Shiba Kōkan Kou* (On Shiba Kōkan)" p. 85). If we consider the reason for his return to Edo was a private family trouble, it is only natural that Nakano could not understand it.

Incidentally, Kōkan's family trouble was a trouble over the loan of 100-odd *ryō*. It was not a debt. In the extreme, it was solved if Kōkan gave up retrieving the money.

Kōkan was enjoying his life in Kyoto. There was no trace of any problems other than the dispute with Entsu. It is reasonable to assume that Kōkan's situation was so serious that not only was he unable to stay at his residence in Kyoto, but his old residence in Edo (Shinsenza, Shiba) was no longer a safe place for him to live.

Shiba Kōkan's "false death," a bizarre act in his final years, was the "final" means for him.

In "*Bukou Nenpyō Hosei* (Corrected Chronological Table of Incidents around Edo)" (published in 1818) and "*Zoutei Bukou Nenpyō* (Revised Chronological Table of Incidents around Edo)" written by Kitamura Intei (1783-1856), introduced Entsu's story about Shiba Kōkan faking his death because he feared he would be suppressed due to the publication of "*Futsukoku Rekishōhen* (The Buddhist View of a Calendar)", which denied the geocentric theory, with the support of Kan'eiji temple. Kitamura Intei was a relative of a town official of Edo and a contemporary of Kōkan. He was well versed in the affairs of the city.

In the first volume of "*Sekitei Gadan*" by Takemoto Seketei, it was written that "Kōkan had an accident and faked his own death and went into hiding in a certain town in Shiba."

However, there is no problem in assuming that Kōkan's final masterpiece "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" was produced in Kamakura between Bunka 10 to Bunka 15 (1813 – 1818), after he entered this life of seclusion following the "false death" incident. In Kamakura, Kōkan stated that he had been trained by Zen master Seisetsu at Engakuji Temple and that he attained great enlightenment. In the final picture of the series, "Nihonbashi," he wrote "Kamakura, Shichirihama in Sōshū, Kōkan Shiba Shun" in large letters.

Incidentally, it was in 1816, two years before Kōkan's death, that Ino Tadataka published his only work, "*Futsukoku Rekishōhen Sekimou* (A Refutation to The Buddhist View of a Calendar)" in which he severely criticized Entsu's Buddhist theory (as if in support of Kōkan). The time was just before Japan opening the country. Shiba Kōkan must have known about the publication.

He might have heard the footsteps of the emperor's force heading for the eastern capital, just as the feudal lord processions were advancing silently in "The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō."

Postscript (298)

Shiba Kōkan's name was already well known in the late Edo period. He was begged by Tokugawa Harutomi, the lord of the Kishu domain, to be his retainer, was criticized by Matsudaira Sadanobu for being imprudent, and even collaborated with Satake Shozan, the lord of Akita domain, in painting, having Shozan paint the background for his picture. In an era of absolute feudalism, it would be rather unnatural to assume that Kōkan was a mere town painter.

Up to now, Kōkan research has been based on the assumption that he was a townsman. If this situation continues, it would be more difficult to elucidate the real image of Kōkan than to cross the rainbow, which Shiba Kōkan's "Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō" made clear.

That is why I wanted to say depart from the established theory in this book and review Shiba Kōkan in a revolutionary way. A change in viewpoint can completely change the landscape we see. Shiba Kōkan was a samurai with a considerable background. He could have been an illegitimate son of a samurai who grew up in the city, or a covert agent, or a member of the nobility, or a member of the Shinto priesthood.

For example, if we look into the historical materials, he met directly with Yamauchi Toyochika, a liberal lord of the Tosa domain, on February 28 and April 18, Tenmei 3 (1783). Then it would be natural to assume the two met more than twice. They must have met more than that. The same applies to Tokugawa Harutomi, the lord of the Kishu domain, and to Mamiya Rinzō, and Ino Tadataka. If there is a record in a historical material that says that they met with each other, we need to presume that they actually might have met more than once.

Shiba Kōkan is the most unresolved and enigmatic artist of the Edo period. Therefore, my point is that a bold hypothesis is essential to the study of Kōkan.

In the late Edo period, more than 200 years had passed in peace. But Japan at that time was a remote island nation where information on the global situation was hard to obtain. Kōkan was a patriotic samurai who, with that scarce information, fought a lone battle to open the door of modern civilization. This is the conclusion and summary of my research on Shiba Kōkan.

Printing Museum Tokyo (Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo) possesses and exhibits Kōkan's copperplate engraving "*Shinobazu-no-Ike Zu*" and "*Waran Tensetsu Zu*", praising him for his contribution to the printing culture of Japan.

Takahashi Yuiichi, a master of Western-style painting in the Meiji era, who deeply admired and respected Kōkan as "the founder of Western-style painting in Japan," searched for a self-portrait of Shiba Kōkan and finally found one at the home of a descendant of Ema Shunrei, a close friend of Kōkan in his later years, and managed to paint Kōkan's portrait. Even in the Meiji era, Western paints were expensive, scarce, and difficult to mix. Every time he painstakingly made and mixed oil paints, he must have wept, remembering the painstaking efforts and proud isolation of Kōkan. Today, Yuiichi's "A Portrait of Shiba Kōkan" is carefully preserved at the Tokyo University of the Arts.

I would like to close this book with the words of international journalist Morley Robertson: "I have lived in Japan for more than 30 years now, and I find that people tend to be reluctant to change, making it difficult to create new discussions. If we could listen to other people's opinions, think about things flexibly, and view things relatively, we could create a climate in which individuals, especially young people, can bring out their individual abilities. If that happens, I think the country will change." (Yomiuri Shimbun, evening edition, January 24, 2020).

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