

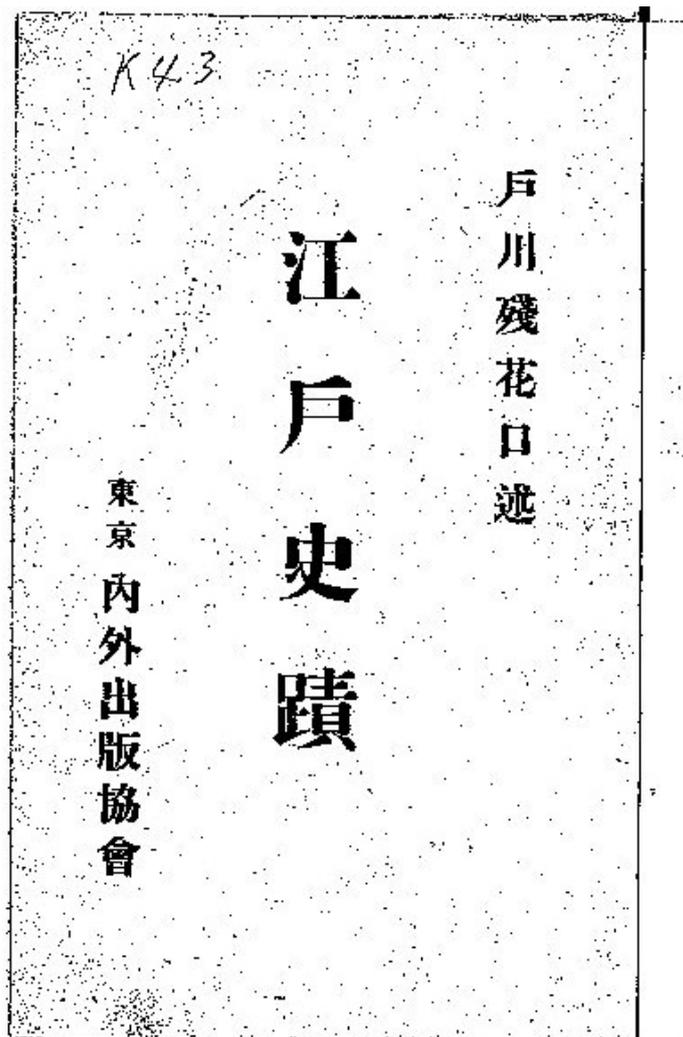
*Edo shiseki* (lit. Historic sites of Edo): Tokyo guide by Edokko Hatamoto

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Today, we can easily find guidebooks with titles like "Historical Landmarks in Tokyo" or "A Walking Tour of Old Tokyo" among the travel books at bookstores or libraries in greater Tokyo.

*Edo shiseki*,<sup>1</sup> written by Zanka TOGAWA, is one such book. Published in April 1912, it comprises a colloquial history, describing special historical sites and scenic landmarks from all 15 wards in contemporary Tokyo, starting with Shiba and Kyōbashi, then circling counterclockwise around the Imperial Palace to Azabu, from there reversing direction and moving clockwise through the outer areas of Yotsuya and Ushigome.

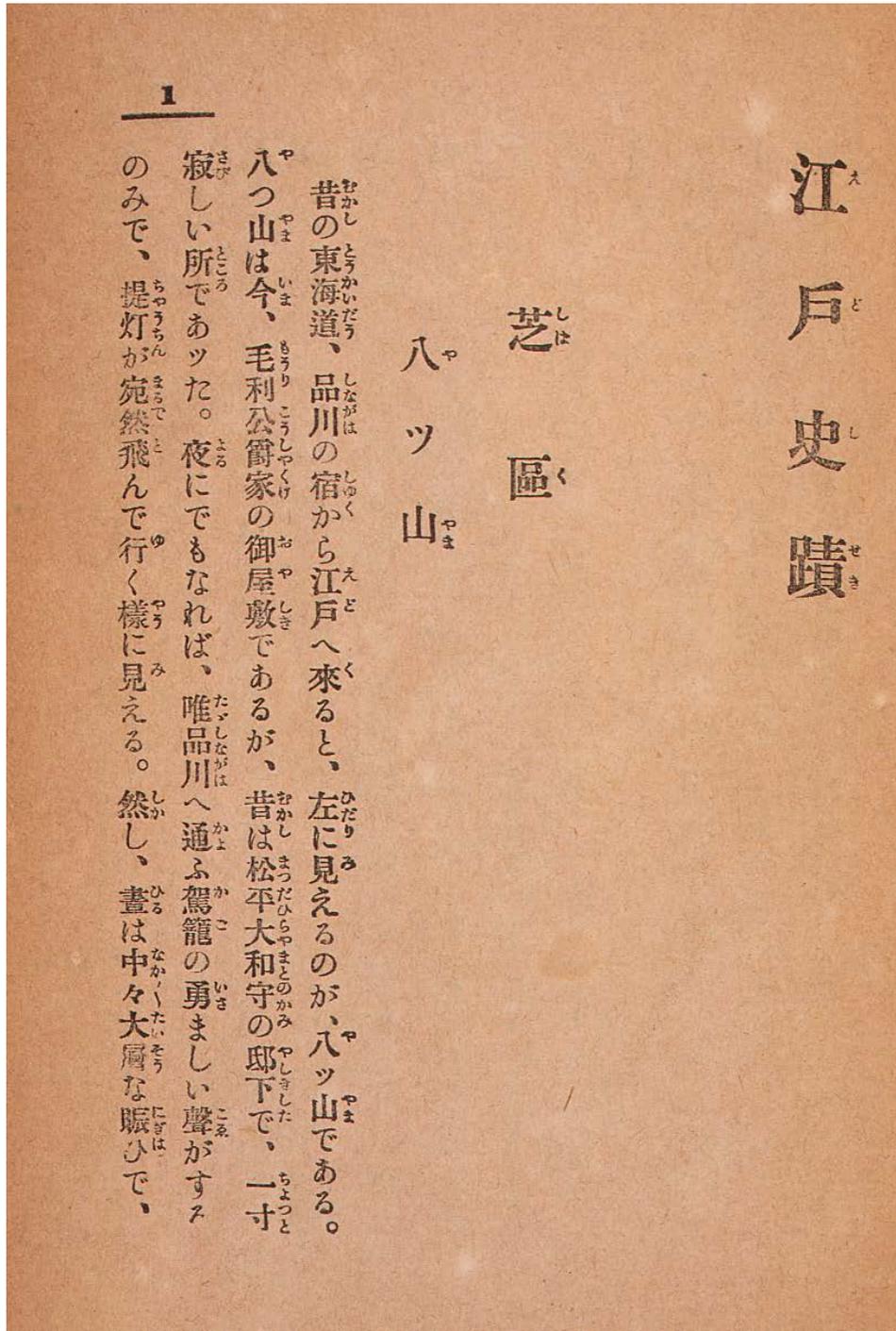


<<The cover of *Edo shiseki*>>

Zanka TOGAWA was born Yasuie TOGAWA in 1855 in Edo's Ushigome, which is in modern Shinjuku. The Togawa family was a vassal of the Tokugawa Shogunate, and administered a fief worth 3000 koku of rice<sup>2</sup> in Bitchū, which is in the western part of modern Okayama prefecture. But Yasuie was an *Edokko*—that is, he was born and raised in Edo—and at the age of 14 witnessed firsthand the last days of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the Meiji Restoration. In *Togawa Zanka den*,<sup>3</sup> he was described by his descendants as a curious and inquisitive youth. After the Meiji Restoration, he studied at Keio Gijuku and was known as both a minister and a poet. But he also wrote books describing the events at the end of Edo Period and the lifestyles of ordinary people of the time, including *Bakumatsu shoshi* (lit. A Concise History of the End of Edo Period) and *Sanbyaku shoko* (lit. 300 daimyo<sup>4</sup>), which were regarded at the time as valuable reference materials, incorporating actual experience that went beyond mere historical facts.



<<A portrait of Zanka (from *Hyoden Togawa Zanka*<sup>5</sup>  
(lit. A Critical Biography of Togawa Zanka))>>

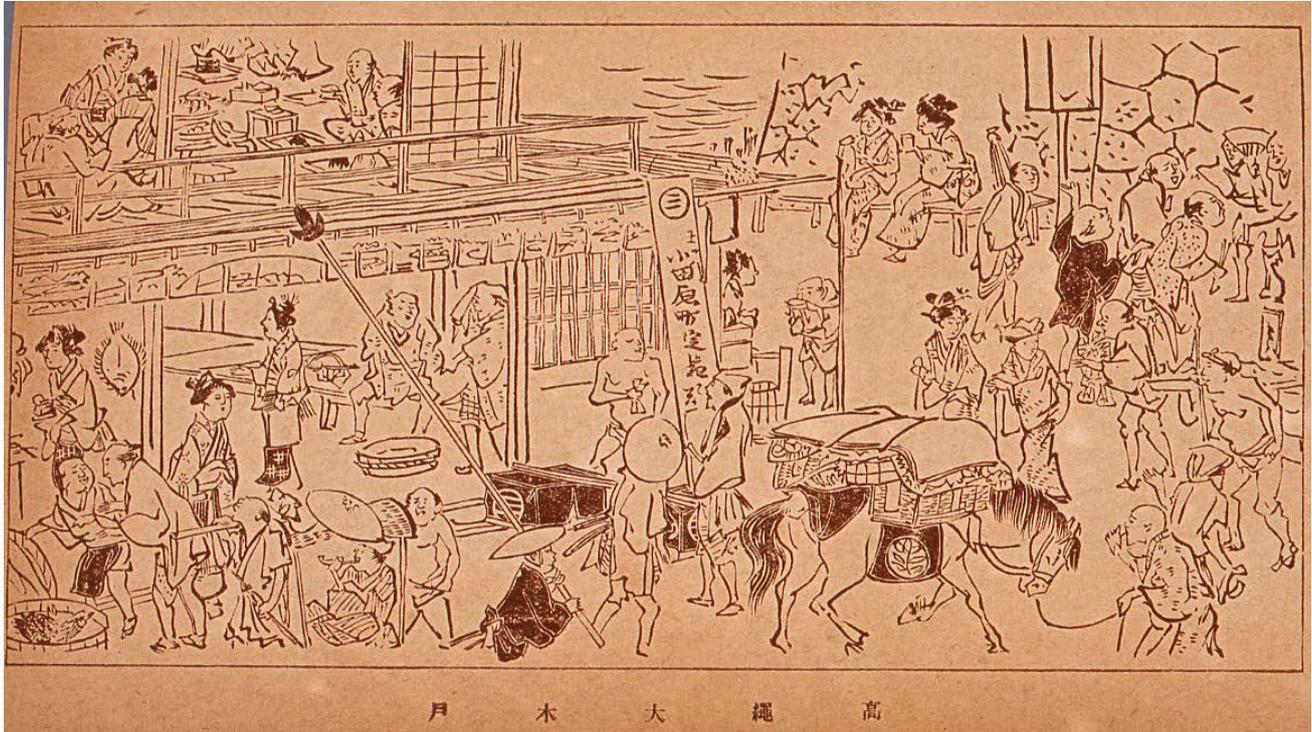


<<The first page of *Edo shiseki*>>

Some of his most energetic efforts were on behalf of the Association for Preservation of Special Historic Sites, Special Places of Scenic Beauty and Natural Monuments, which was established in April 1911, at the behest of Yorimichi TOKUGAWA, a descendent of the Tokugawa Shogun, for the research into and preservation of historical and scenic landmarks in Japan. Zanka headed the association, which in 1914 published *Tokyo shiseki shashincho*,<sup>6</sup> a collection of photographs of Tokyo, dedicated to the Emperor.

*Edo shiseki* was also presumably published on behalf of the association, and appears to be light reading compared to *Tokyo shiseki shashincho*, because it carries neither foreword,

afterword, nor photographs, and the five illustrations that are included seem to be a mere redesign of those in the *Edo meisho zue*,<sup>7</sup> which was published between 1834 and 1836. In my opinion, however, even without photos and illustrations, *Edo shiseki* has enormous appeal with modern readers, as well.

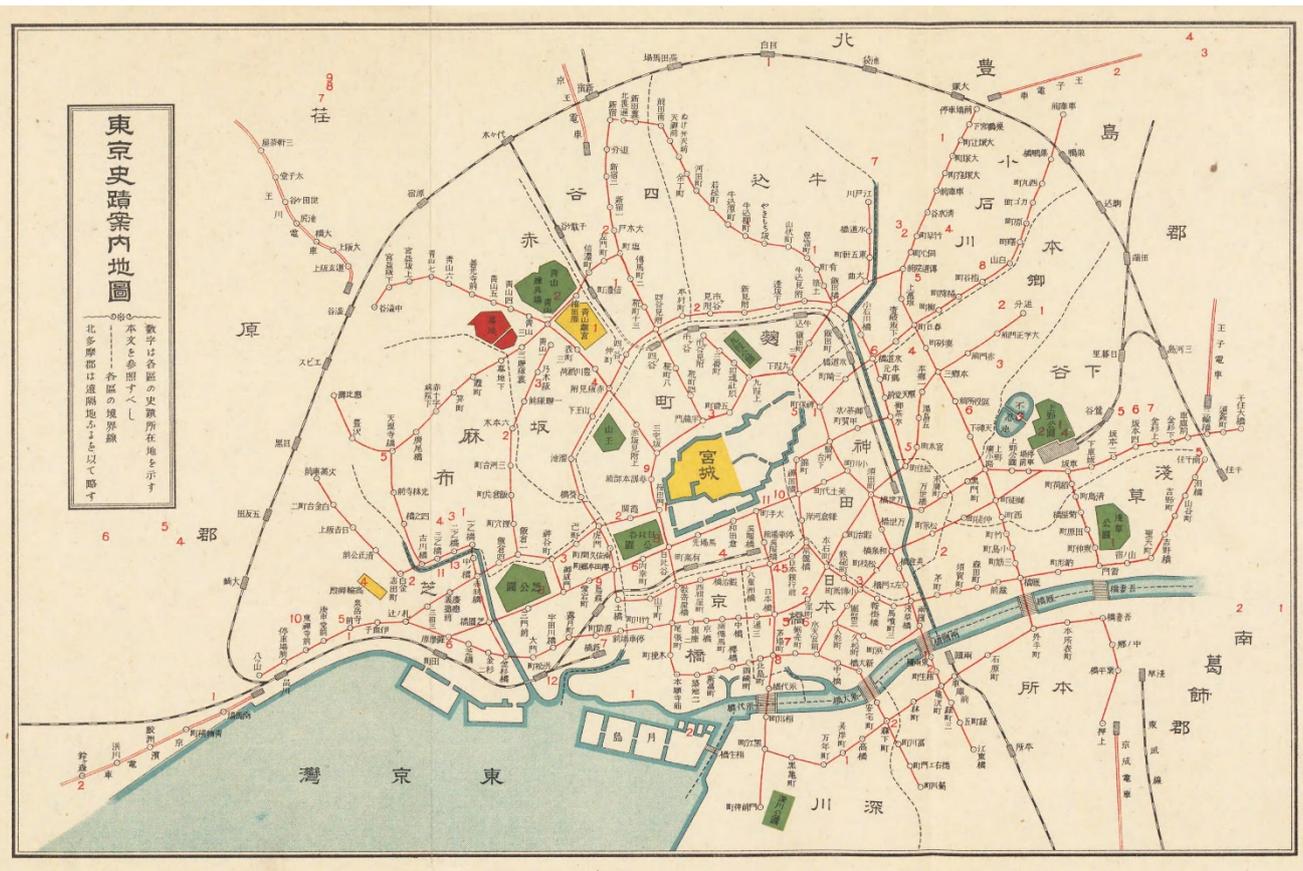


<<Illustration for the part of Takanawa Ookido>>

As anyone who has ever tried to read a book published during the Meiji Period will know that, no matter how interesting the subject may be, these books are often difficult to read, because they contain unfamiliar idioms and Chinese characters that are different from modern ones. Being a colloquial history, however, the text graphically describes the city of Edo in ordinary language, as if the author were speaking directly to an audience. Neither is there any worry about old Chinese characters, since the book includes kana printed alongside all the Chinese characters to show how they should be pronounced. The language itself is characteristic of the speech of people from Edo, and the lively narrative is engrossing. For example, in talking about the Shibaku Yatsuyama area, Togawa vividly describes the deep darkness of night in Edo, saying "After dark, there was nothing but the noise of the palanquin bearers hurrying across to Shinagawa, with the light of their lanterns moving through the darkness as if they were flying."

In reference to a contemporary controversy over whether the fish market at Nihonbashi should be moved elsewhere due to concerns over sanitation, Togawa says with typical *Edokko* disdain, "They should stop sweating the small stuff and look at the big picture. If you've ever walked through the market near Nihonbashi and seen sea bream splashing in and out of the water, octopus legs squirming all about, and sushi bars full of people flinging their money around, you'd realize that this is the kind of place we should keep exactly as it is even a hundred years from now."

Imagine how much fun it would be to spend a day or two on a walking tour of old Edo, guided by an *Edokko* Hatamoto.



<<Reference: "Tokyo Sightseeing Guide Map" in 1914 from *Tokyo shiseki shashincho*>>

- <sup>1</sup> Zanka Togawa, *Edo shiseki* published by Naigai Shuppan Kyokai, 1912, NDL Call No. 291.36-To376e; It is available on the National Diet Library Digital Collections at <<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/992344>>
- <sup>2</sup> The *koku* is a Japanese unit of volume. A *koku* of rice weighs about 150 kilograms.
- <sup>3</sup> Yasuo Togawa, *Togawa Zanka den* (lit. Memoirs of Togawa Zanka) published by Shogai Gakushu Kenkyusha in 1994; NDL Call No. HP113-E142
- <sup>4</sup> *Daimyo* is a lord in Japan who had a fief assessed at 10,000 *koku* (50,000 bushels) or more.
- <sup>5</sup> Sakie Betsuyaku, 'Kindai bungaku kenkyu shiryō (dai nihyakuhachiju hen) hyoden togawa zanka' (lit. Modern literature research material (part 280) Critical biography Togawa Zanka), *Gakuen* (305), 1965.5, Showa Joshi daigaku koyokai; NDL Call No. Z24-49
- <sup>6</sup> Yasuie Togawa [editor], *Tokyo shiseki shashincho* (lit. Photo album of historic sites in Tokyo) published by Gahosha in 1914; NDL Call No. 291.36-To376t; It is available only in the National Diet Library and partner libraries at <<http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1875895>>
- <sup>7</sup> Choshu Saito (Shotoken), *Edo meisho zue* (lit. Illustration of beauty spots in Edo) illustrated by Settan HASEGAWA, published by Ihachi Suharaya, etc. in 1834-1836; NDL Call No. 124-114