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# Past and Present States of the 53 Tokaido Stations Through the Utagawa Hiroshige's Ukiyo-e

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## Abstract

We will compare the landscape and customs that were the characteristic of each post town during the Edo period in the past with those of the present, and consider the factors behind the changes by Hiroshige Utagawa's "Toukaidou 53 Stations". We completed bibliographic survey and a field survey to analyze the landscape and customs that were characteristic of each post town during the Edo period in the past compared with those of the present, and considered the factors behind the changes. The characteristics that appear in Ukiyo-e, old tales, and legends are valued and easily remain. There are many characteristics that remain in rural areas and residential areas where development is difficult. However, in a big city or an industrial area, there are few characteristics that remain because it is in the commercial and industrial areas with national roads that have changed greatly between the past and the present.

## 1. Introduction

During the Edo period, Tokaido was one of the five routes connecting Edo and various places in Japan, for national control of Tokugawa Ieyasu. Hiroshige Utagawa's "Toukaidou 53 Stations" is a valuable document that collects the characteristics of each post town in the Edo period from the perspective of an excellent artist and consolidates them into a single picture.

Therefore, we will compare the landscape and customs that were characteristic of each post town during the Edo period in the past with those of the present, and consider the factors behind the changes.

## 2. Research Outline

### 2.1 Literature survey

Using the Utagawa Hiroshige's Ukiyo-e, Toukaidou 53 Stations, Hoeidou version, Gyosho version, and Clerical Script version (165 images), the characteristics of each post town can be shown at that time, such as scenery, famous places, people's life, work, and culture. The map of the Toukaidou 53 Stations is presented in Fig. 1.

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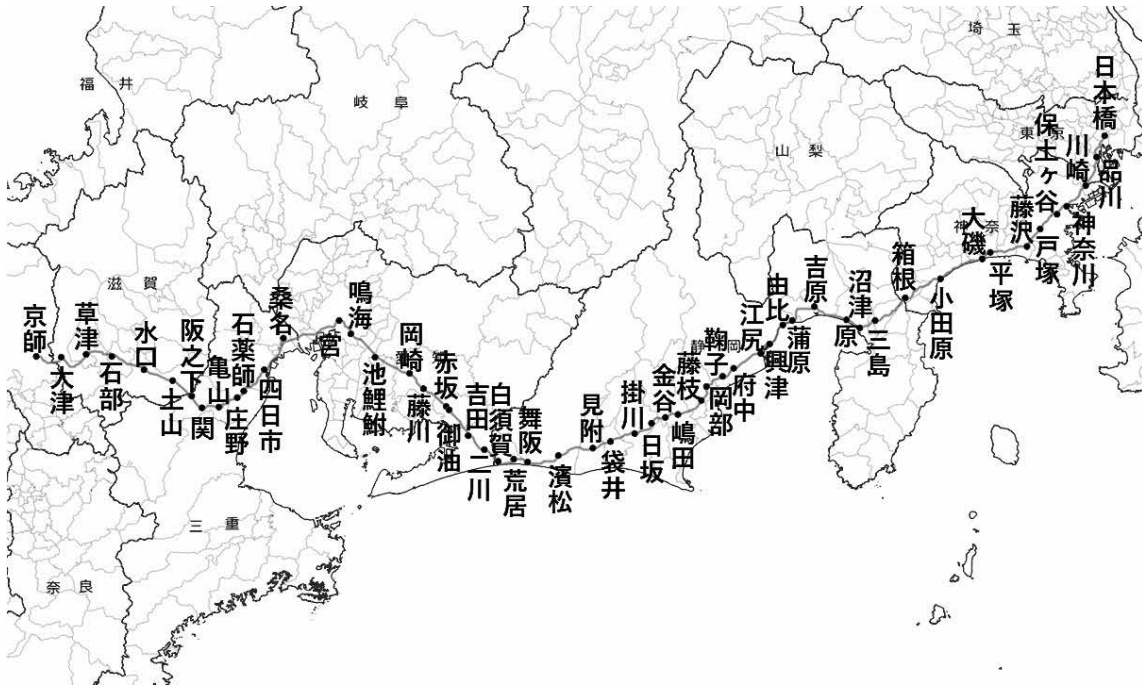


Fig 1. The map of Toukaidou 53 Stations (total 55 post town)

## 2.2 Field survey

We will compare the current location corresponding to the 53rd Ukiyo-e of Tokaido and the items such as the streets, sights, and customs with the characteristics of each post town using a field survey.

## 2.3 Analysis

“Characteristics” of each post town are classified based on the transition (remaining characteristics, changed characteristics, lost characteristics, new characteristics) and properties of the characteristics (buildings, places, roads, passing, specialties). Each post town was classified and considered based on the area use and the presence of national roads.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Remaining characteristics: Buildings

Long-established buildings such as restaurants, teahouses, shrines, temples, and castles remain in this area (Figs 2 and 3). Some buildings, such as Maruko’s Choji-ya, are still in use today because they have become Ukiyo-e models.



Fig 2. Hoeidou version "Specialty Teahouse"



Fig 3. Maruko clove shop

### 3.2 Remaining characteristics: Places

Yui's Satta Pass was a scenic spot and it is still a famous place for photography. The post town's townscape remains where the main industry is unchanged (Figs 4 and 5).



Fig 4. Hoeidou version "Satta Pass"



Fig 5. Satta Pass sightseeing tower

### 3.3 Remaining characteristics: Roads

The old road stone pavement, pine trees, and cedar trees remain in the post town (Figs 6 and 7). Around a previously dangerous spot on the pass, the road width and the steep hill easy remain as they were in the past. Utsunoyatoge of Okabe is registered as a national historic site.



Fig 6. Hoeidou version "Utsunoyama"



Fig 7. Utsunoyatoge of Okabe

### 3.4 Remaining characteristics: The crossway

The bridges in the Edo period were vulnerable to fires and high water levels. Thus, it is very rare for the old bridges to remain. Kyoshi's Sanjo Ohashi has genus hosta and wooden railings (Figs 8 and 9).



Fig 8. Hoeidou version "Sanjo Ohashi"



Fig 9. Sanjo Ohashi

### 3.5 Remaining characteristics: Specialty buildings

Buildings associated with myths that are related to old tales and legends, such as "The Stone that Cries at Night" at Nisaka, have been carefully preserved as specialties by setting up a special space and a shrine. Specialty products that appear in Ukiyo-e, such as Abekawa-an in Fuchu, Fukuroi-no-Maruto, and Arimatsu-dyed in Narumi, are still present.



Fig 10. Clerical Script version  
"The stone that cries at night"



Fig 11. The stone that cries at night

### 3.6 Changed characteristics: Places

The Nihonpei Yume Terrace of Ejiri is an observatory that was set up in the old famous scenic Nihondaira, and it provides a wider view of the area from a higher position than before (Figs12 and 13).



Fig 12. Hoeidou version "Minho Enbo"



Fig 13. The Nihonpei Yume Terrace

### 3.7. Changed characteristics: Roads

On Numazu's Kawamata Street, flat stone was laid to identify the old road in a way that it does not obstruct traffic (Figs 14 and 15).

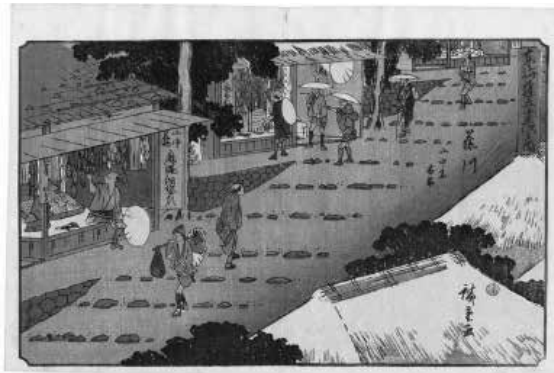


Fig 14. Hoeidou version  
"Old uneven stone pavement"



Fig 15. Kawamata Street

### 3.8 Changed characteristics: The cross way

The old wooden bridge is now made of iron and concrete. Previously, some rivers, lakes, and seas that used to be crossed by boat are now crossed by bridges (Figs 16 and 17).



Fig 16. Hoeidou version "Akekawa River"



Fig 17. Akekawa River bridge

### 3.9 Changed characteristics: Specialty items

The Daimyo procession, which is based on the Sankin-kotai system, is now an annual festival where gorgeous disguised local residents walk along the streets (Figs 18 and 19).



Fig 18. Hoeidou version "The Daimyo procession"



Fig 19. The Daimyo procession today

### 3.10 Lost characteristics: Buildings

The famous tea house "Fuji no Chaya" in Sakanoshita was drawn in Ukiyo-e, but it is now gone. Today, it is a dim road over a mountain pass with sparse tea fields (Figs 20 and 21).



Fig 20. Gyosho version "Fudesuteyama"



Fig 21. Sakanoshita today

### 3.11 Lost characteristics: Places

The fish market of the Nihonbashi and the horse fair of the Chirifu had characteristic roles in the post town, but they have been lost. In some places such as Shinagawa and Kanagawa, the beaches that were scenic spots were lost (Figs 22 and 23).

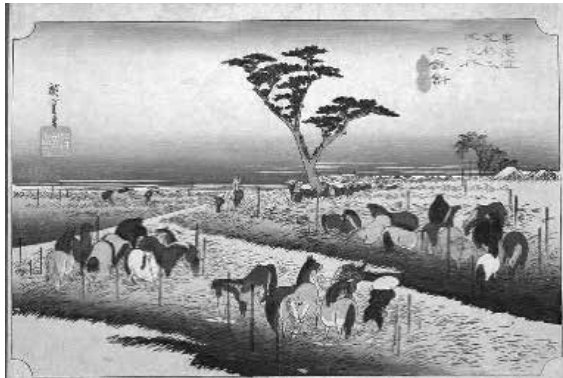


Fig 22. Hoeidou version "Kubi natsu umaichi"



Fig 23. Chirifu today

### 3.12 Lost characteristics: Roads

In Yoshiwara, Mt. Fuji is on the right side of the street, and pine trees are on the left side. This is called the Hidarifuji. Today, there are no pine trees in Yoshiwara (Figs 24 and 25).



Fig 24. Hoeidou version "Left fuji"



Fig 25. Left fuji today

### 3.13 Lost characteristics: The crossway

When heading for Arai from Maizaka, Lake Hamana used to be crossed by boat, but now the Hamana Bypass allows travelers to avoid the lake (Figs 26 and 27).



Fig 26. Hoeidou version "Watari fune no zu"



Fig 27. Hamana Bypass



### 3.14 Lost characteristics: Specialty buildings

Fujisawa's Otorii, Hamamatsu's Rustling pine tree and Mizuguchi's Dried Gourd Shavings structure were famous in Ukiyo-e, but they have been lost (Figs 28 and 29).



Fig 28. Hoeidou version "Specialty Torii"



Fig 29. Otorii Atochi

### 3.15 New characteristics: Buildings

The Astronomical Observatory in Sakanoshita and The Dam in Tsuchiyama are characteristic buildings that were created by the development of civilization. In Fujisawa, a new school has been established in Yogyoji and the old Mitsuke School is located in Mitsuke, which is the oldest wooden pseudo-western architecture in Japan.

### 3.16 New characteristics: Places

Shinagawa, Kawasaki, Hiratsuka, Numazu, Yoshiwara, Ejiri, Fujieda, Shimada, Kakegawa, and Yokkaichi are all shopping streets. It seems easy to make a transition because the towns where the shops are located at both ends of the pedestrian-preferred road are similar in the post town and the shopping street.

### 3.17 New characteristics: Specialty items

At Nihonbashi, Miya, and Kuwana, people can take a pleasure cruise. There are other specialties that are a result of the development of civilization, such as the Ejiri Ropeway and the Yoshida tramway.

## 4. Analysis

### 4.1 Characteristics of the post towns

The characteristics of the post town are as follows: remaining characteristics (71 characteristics), changed characteristics (19 characteristics), lost characteristics (12 characteristics), and new characteristics (31 characteristics). There are 133 characteristics in the 55 post towns. Each characteristic can be categorized as a building, place, road, crossing, or specialty. The characteristics of all of the 55 post towns are presented in Table 1.

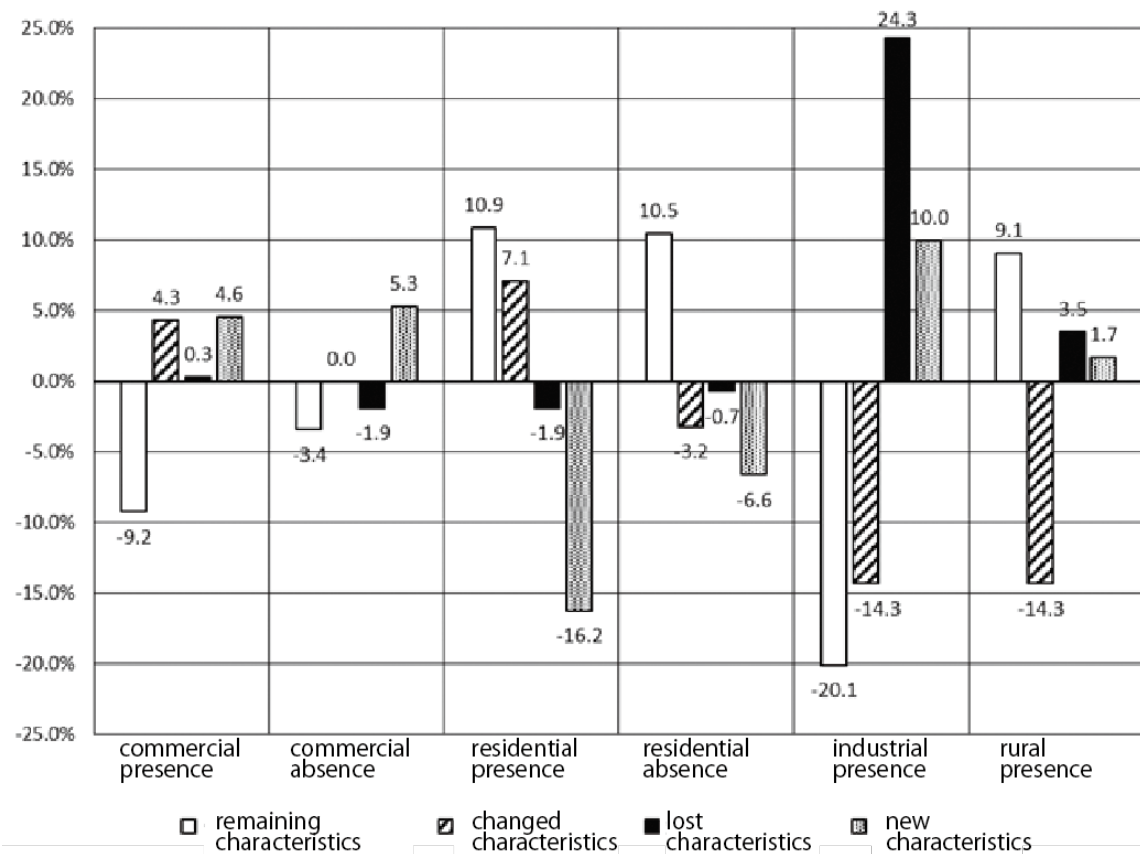
Table 1. Characteristics of 55 post towns

	Remaining characteristics	Changed characteristics	Lost characteristics	New characteristics
Building	27 (20.3%)	0 ( 0%)	1 (0.8%)	4 ( 3.0%)
Place	14 (10.5%)	2 ( 1.5%)	5 (3.8%)	18 (13.5%)
Road	18 (13.5%)	1 ( 0.8%)	1 (0.8%)	0 ( 0%)
Crossway	3 ( 2.3%)	15 (11.3%)	2 (1.5%)	0 ( 0%)
Specialty	9 ( 6.8%)	1 ( 0.8%)	3 (2.3%)	9 ( 6.8%)
Total	71 (53.4%)	19 (14.3%)	12 (9.0%)	31 (23.3%)

#### 4.2 Use district

The post towns are classified into six types according to the “use district” and “presence/absence of national roads” in each post town (note that where the Industrial/National: national is yes and the rural area/National: road is yes, because there is no applicable post town, the area was omitted). The difference from the average of all buildings in each accommodation type is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Difference from the average of all buildings within each accommodation type



##### 1) Commercial areas

In commercial areas with national roads, the “remaining characteristics” are considerably lower, at -9.2% compared to the average. This may be because of the commercial areas around the national road near cities that has extensively been developed. However, the “lost

characteristics” are +0.3%, which is not much different from the average. Both “changed characteristics” and “new characteristics” are more than 4% higher than the average. There may be many characteristics that change and are newly made because they are in a city where the cityscape and people’s lives are very different from people’s lives in the past. There is no difference between the average for the commercial area or for the national road post town.

#### 2) Residential areas

For the post town in residential areas with a national road, “remain characteristics” was +10.9%, which is higher than the average. Among them, the characteristics related to “buildings” were high at +8.3%. In residential areas and areas without national highways, the “remain characteristics” were +10.5%, which is higher than the average. Characteristics related to “buildings” were also high, at +8.3%. For “new characteristics”, the residential areas and national roads were -16.2%, which is very low compared to the average. For the post towns in residential areas without national roads, the average was -6.6%. In commercial and industrial areas, it is necessary to break existing buildings when new buildings and factories are built, but in residential areas, this is not necessary, so it is easy for the old buildings to remain.

#### 3) Industrial areas

There is only one post town in the industrial area with a national road. This post town, which has been densely populated with an inn and teahouses since the Edo period, seems to have been unsuitable for developing a factory area, for which a large area is required. Additionally, fewer data can be considered because there is only one post town, and this post town was not considered.

#### 4) Rural areas

In rural areas without a national road, the “remaining characteristics” were +9.1% more than the average of all post towns. Among them, the characteristics for “Road” were high, at +11.5%. In these areas, there were many steep hills and narrow roads that could not be reached by cars because they were once known as difficult places. The “changed characteristics” was very low at -14.3%. For the villages in rural areas, “changes” resulting from the development of civilization and towns are unlikely to occur and they remain as they were in the past.

### 5. Conclusions

The characteristics that appear in Ukiyo-e, old tales, and legends are valued and remain in the areas. There are many characteristics that remain in rural areas and residential areas where development was difficult. However, in a big city or an industrial area, there are few characteristics that remain because there have been many changes between the past and now in the commercial and industrial areas with national roads.

A bridge was built over the river and the stone pavement became flat. In some areas, the Daimyo procession changed to a festival. In the commercial and residential areas, the

remnants of the post town may be changed to a different shape to attract customers and revitalize the town, but this did not happen in the industrial areas. Additionally, the rural area has many characteristics that have undergone many changes.

Characteristics that are not needed today, such as Uogashi, Maichi, and The Teahouse of Sakai, were easily lost. Industrial areas also tend to lose their characteristics overwhelmingly among all post towns.

Most of the commercial districts without national roads are now shopping streets, probably because the streets with shops located at both ends of the pedestrian-preferred street are similar in post towns and on shopping streets. Residential areas with national roads are only passing points from one urban area to another urban area, making it difficult to create new features.

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