**HIST 110** 

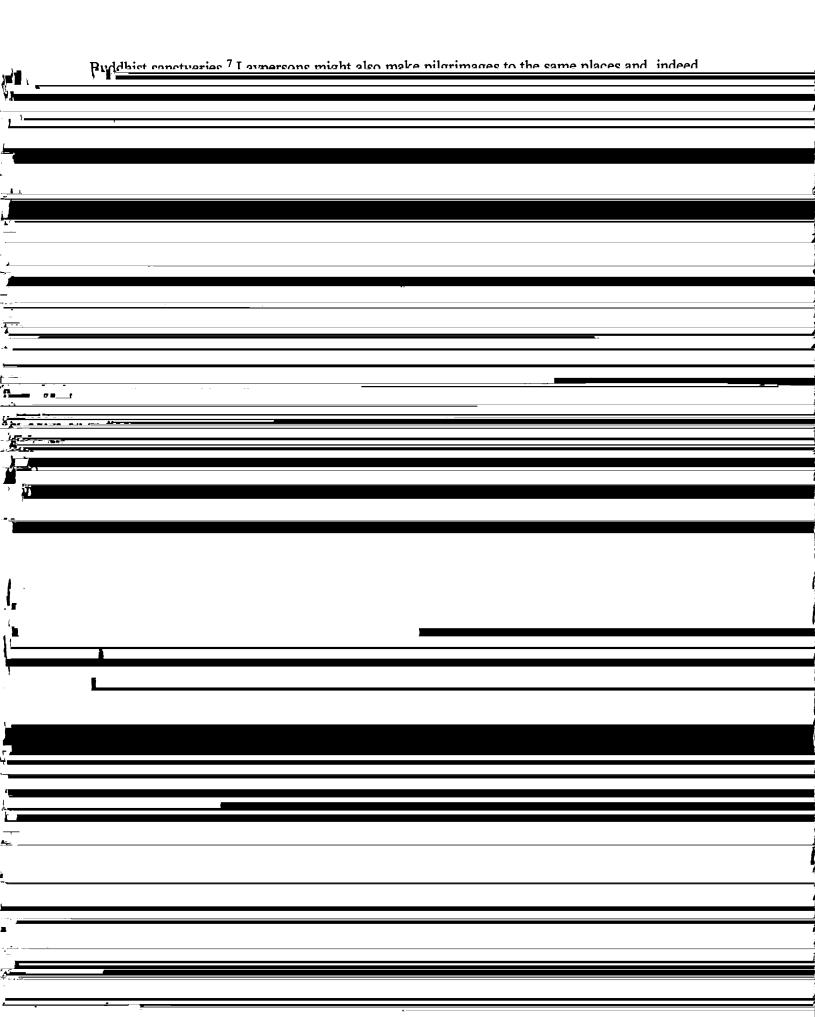
Prof. Ropers

Something in the Water: Hazards of Travel and Pilgrimage on the *Gokaido* in Tokugawa Japan By Phillip Spain.

The Tokugawa period is widely regarded as a period of unprecedented peace and

prosperity for pre-modern Japan. In the late 17th century, the economy was stable and growing due to the increased trade and traffic of goods and people. I Amidst all of this, Japan experienced a new phenomenon - the emergence of widespread recreational travel.<sup>2</sup> Both recreational travel and widespread religious pilgrimage amongst the laity became major components of Japanese culture during the Tokugawa period. Despite significant risks, the people of Tokugawa Japan

	as it happened on the road. Whether this is due to a lack of interest or simply because the details
	of travel were taken for granted remains to he seen
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	consequence of the relatively peaceful and prosperous conditions created by the Tokugawa
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be prepared to deal with all manner of dangers and risks. In fact, many writers of the period produced travel dairies with anecdotes of misadventures that served as warnings, or that provided

travel dairy of Matsuo Basho, Oku No Hosomichi, and Yasumi Roan's Ryoko Yojinshu, which is

dangers of travel and pilgrimage provided by these two gentlemen falls into three categories -1)

Natural forces; 2) physical conditions or illnesses; and 3) Other travelers or persons encountered

in the course of travel

specifically dedicated to providing expert travel advice. 12 In general, the information on the

Despite the well-cared-for nature of the Gokaido road system, travelers and pilgrims still had to

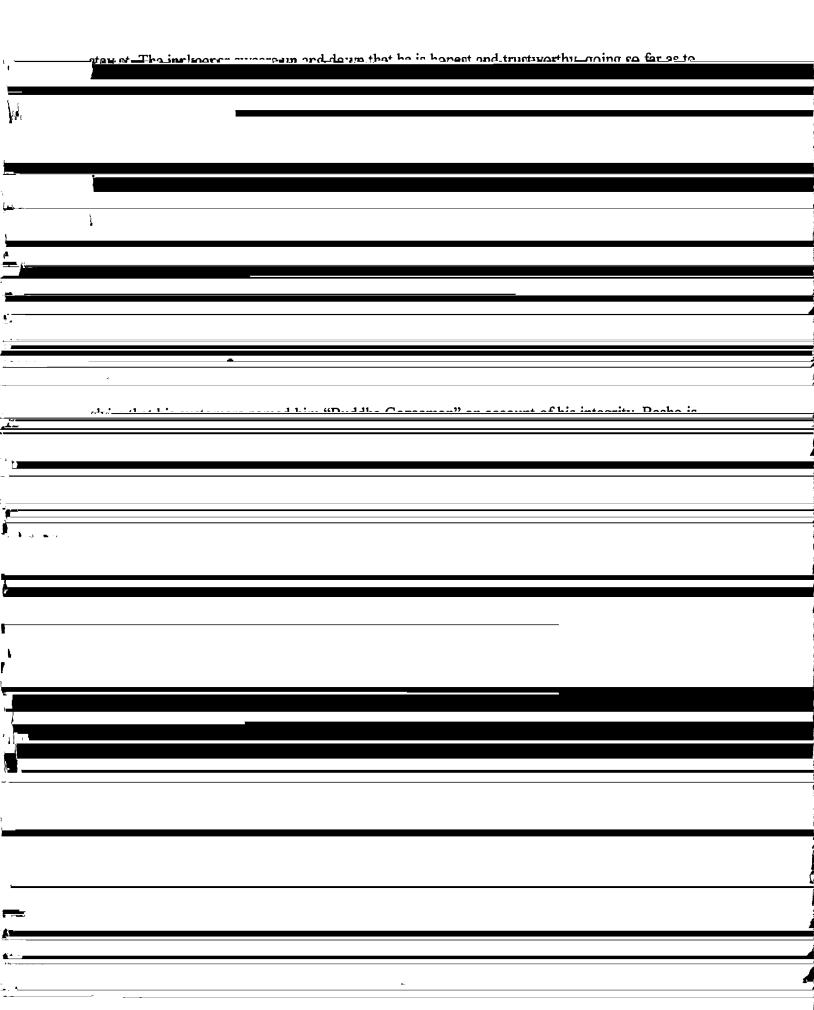
you do this, then things will turn out for the best no matter what the conditions are.  $^{\prime\prime}$ 14

	Swallen rivers were also a concern for host travel which was required in some cases in	
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specific warnings about drinking from unknown water sources while on the road, especially if the water is not perfectly clear. He provides some suggestions for remedies such as *goreisan*, which may be some type of drug or herb although this is not made clear, as well as hot peppers.<sup>20</sup> This is particularly sage advice, as water is something that every traveler and even modern-day

dehydration. Adding bacteria or toxic chemicals to the mix makes Yasumi's warning rather

dehydration. Adding bacteria or toxic chemicals to the mix makes Yasumi's warning rather sensible indeed.<sup>21</sup> Food management is an equally important task, and Yasumi offers some



bed.<sup>27</sup> Another warning appears against taking medicine from random inn guests or travelers. Yasumi sensibly advises that "If you are really in need of medicine, go to an established medicinal shop."<sup>28</sup>

Between Basho and Yasumi we are presented with a broad array of notential bezards to

foot traffic along the Gokaido. Ranging from the wrath of nature to personal carelessness, and the ever-present dangers of other humans, these journeys, whether for spiritual enlightenment or simply going from point 'A' to point 'B', were not to be taken lightly. Yet, despite all of these

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