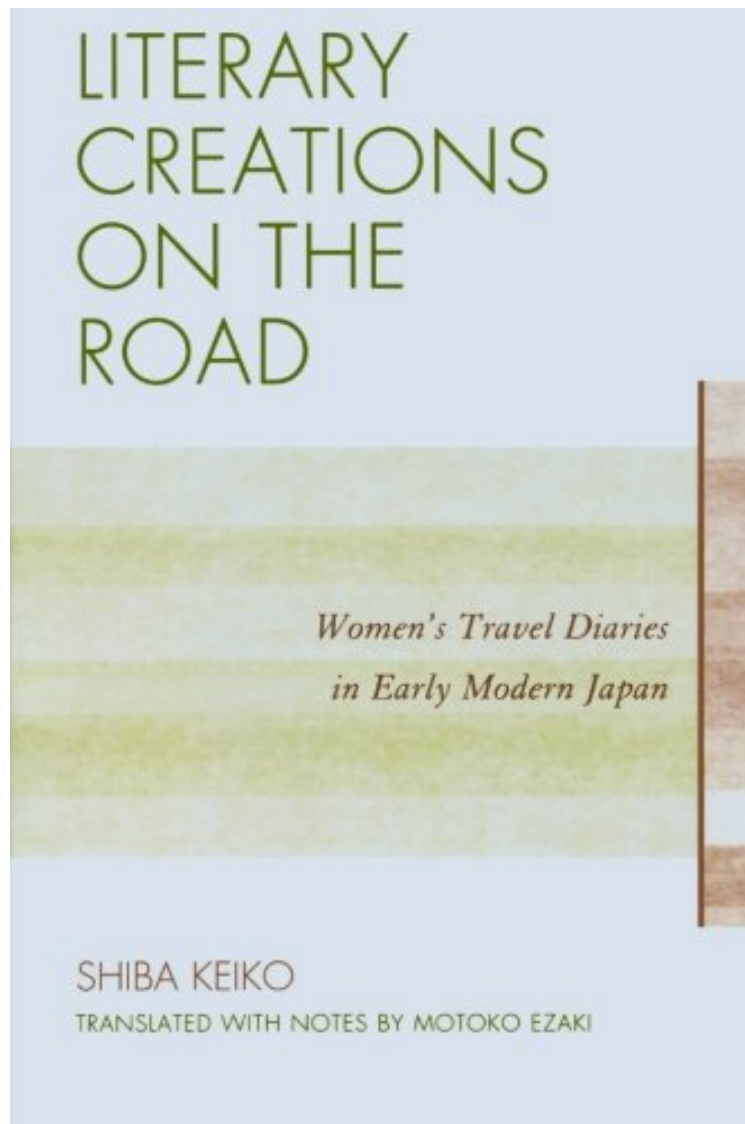


(Mobile book) Literary Creations on the Road: Women's Travel Diaries in Early Modern Japan

## Literary Creations on the Road: Women's Travel Diaries in Early Modern Japan

Keiko Shiba

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**Keiko Shiba : Literary Creations on the Road: Women's Travel Diaries in Early Modern Japan** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Literary Creations on the Road: Women's Travel Diaries in Early Modern Japan:

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Keiko Shiba, a noted researcher in early modern Japanese history, has spent years collecting hundreds of travel diaries written by women during the reign of the Tokugawa shogunate (17th through mid-19th centuries). The fruit of her research, originally published in Japanese, is now available in an English translation by Motoko Ezaki, with notes provided for general English readers. Shiba intersperses her narration abundantly with excerpts from the actual travel diaries; the book therefore is an invaluable source that offers us direct access to the individual voices of a large number of Tokugawa women, who energetically composed prose and poetry while traveling, sometimes in collaboration with their male companions. This work also sheds new light on women's literary activities in early modern Japan, which are still noticeably understudied compared to other genres of Japanese literary history.

Historian Keiko Shiba's work gathers travel diaries from women throughout the Tokugawa shogunate and further reveals the liberties of thought still present in the feminine mind. Motoko Ezaki, coordinator of the Japanese program at Occidental College in Los Angeles, offers a comprehensive English translation to Shiba's collection, with additional notes to further explain the historical and cultural significance of the many travel diaries. Stylistically Ezaki's commentaries are direct, clearly elucidating the historical or cultural references found in the diaries. These concrete diaries invariably contain abstract wonderings, and the literary reader will delight to uncover both practical and poetic reactions to life on the road. (Kris Kosaka, the Japan Times) Shiba's accomplishment in amplifying our knowledge of the Edo period is immense, and Dr. Motoko Ezaki's meticulous translation will throw new light on the era, supplying much-needed notes that aid English readers who may not be familiar with the places, people, and various facts of the period discussed in Shiba's book. Ezaki possesses a combination of truly educated fluency in Japanese, deep relevant knowledge, and crisp and lucid expression in English, which is rare in the field of Japanese studies. Ezaki has given us a superb work of translation and explanation. Aki Hirota, California State University, Northridge; recipient of the Japan Translation Culture Readers in the English-speaking world have long known about Basho and his poetic travel diaries. But he was not alone on those Edo period highways, and many of his fellow-travelers were women. Their remarkable narratives and poetry have largely been unavailable in English until now. With this fine new translation of Keiko Shiba's pioneering study of women's travel diaries, we finally learn how the Edo female writer had a road of her own. Michael K. Bourdaghs, The University of Chicago, author of *The Dawn That Never Comes: Shimazaki Toson and Japanese Nationalism* About the Author Keiko Shiba is an historian and author specializing in women's literary activities during Japan's early modern period. She is particularly renowned in the area of women's travel diaries. Motoko Ezaki is assistant professor at Occidental College where she teaches Japanese language and literature. Her areas of interest include semantics, pragmatics, and literature of early modern to contemporary Japan.