

Matsuura Takeshiro Memorial Museum



Exhibit Hall

About Us

The Matsuura Takeshiro Memorial Museum houses 1,505 Important Cultural Properties and 223 Mie Prefecture Designated Cultural Properties, the majority of which are historical documents.

Since opening in 1994, the museum has collected, preserved, and researched materials related to Matsuura Takeshiro, as well as organizing exhibitions and educational programs. The special exhibition gallery features a new exhibition every two months, showcasing the many facets of Matsuura Takeshiro's life and achievements to the public.

Matsusaka City Designated Historic Site

“Birthplace of Matsuura Takeshiro”



Address:

〒515-2109

Mie Prefecture,
Matsusaka City,
Onoe-cho 383



Website:

<https://takeshiro.net>



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Memorial Museum”



Kitchen & Bath

PERMANENT EXHIBITION GUIDE

Matsuura Takeshiro

The Man Who Named Hokkaido



A Mie-born Explorer (1818-1888)

In Edo-period Japan, there lived
a man in search of the truth.

With unwavering determination,
he turned his gaze towards
the far north...

INTRODUCTION

Who was Matsuura Takeshiro?

Matsuura Takeshiro played an active role in history from the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate to the beginning of the Meiji period, and spent his entire life walking across Japan. Traveler, explorer, writer, publisher, and scholar... He was a man of many talents and accomplishments, driven by a strong desire for knowledge and adventure. Today, he is most remembered as the man who named Hokkaido. He had an open heart that embraced different values, an open mind free from prejudice, and the strength to forge ever onward... Trace the footsteps of a man whose journeys helped shape Japan's history—discover his story at the Matsuura Takeshirō Memorial Museum.

AGE 16 ~ 27

Wandering the Provinces of Japan

Takeshiro took his first trip at the age of 16. He then traveled across the country, visiting historic ruins and sacred mountains. He tried to visit China and India from Kyushu (Japan's southernmost main island), but was forced to turn back, as Japanese were forbidden to leave the country. In Nagasaki, he became aware of Russian activity and its growing influence in northern Japan. Thus, decides to travel to Ezo (modern-day Hokkaido).



Takeshiro's Travel Memoirs (Around the Age of 19)

As he traveled, he made notes and sketches on each region's landmarks and ruins



Journal From the Shikoku Pilgrimage Root (Age of 19)

Records of his pilgrimage of the 88 Sacred Places in Shikoku (Japan's smallest main island)

AGE 28 ~ 41

Exploration of Ezo

After his first exploration of Ezo at the age of 28, he returned five more times to carry out detailed investigations with the support of the indigenous Ainu people. He produced as many as 151 investigative records from these expeditions.

By publishing his travel journals and maps, Takeshiro tried to communicate the unique nature of Ezo and the richness of Ainu culture.



Ezo Manga (Published 1859)

Mini-Encyclopedia of
Ainu Culture



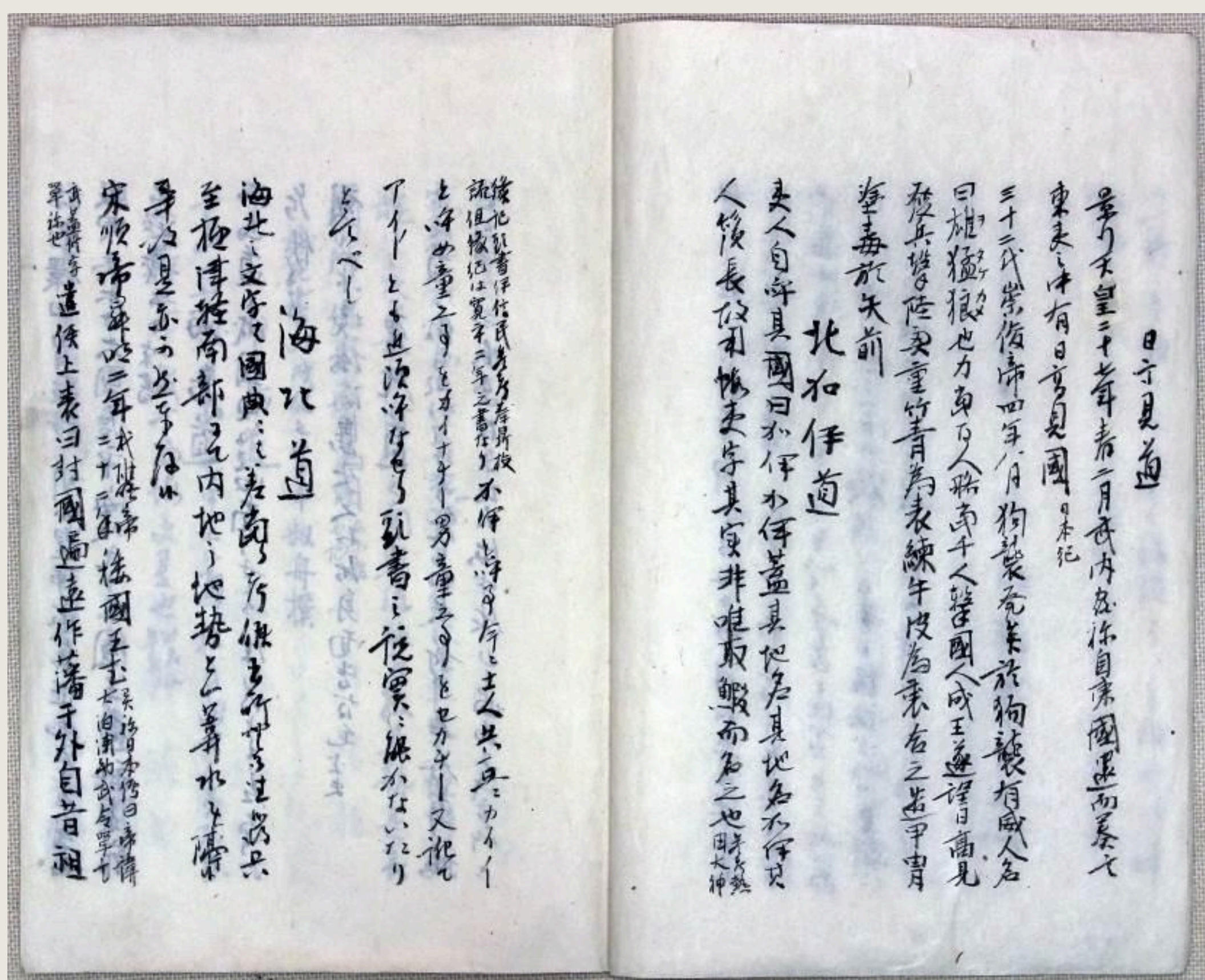
North Ezo Journal (Published 1860)

Takeshiro Exploring with
the Ainu People

AGE 51 ~ 53

Meiji Development Commission

During the Meiji Restoration, Takeshiro served as a *bakufu* (shogunate) magistrate for the Development Commission. During this time, he began to think of names for Ezo and its provinces, based on names used by the indigenous Ainu people. The origin of the name, “Hokkaido” lies in the Ainu word *kai*, meaning “people born on this land.” Takeshiro coined the name “Hokkaido”, which can be interpreted as “the land where the Ainu people of the north live.” The name was later officially adopted and remains in use today.



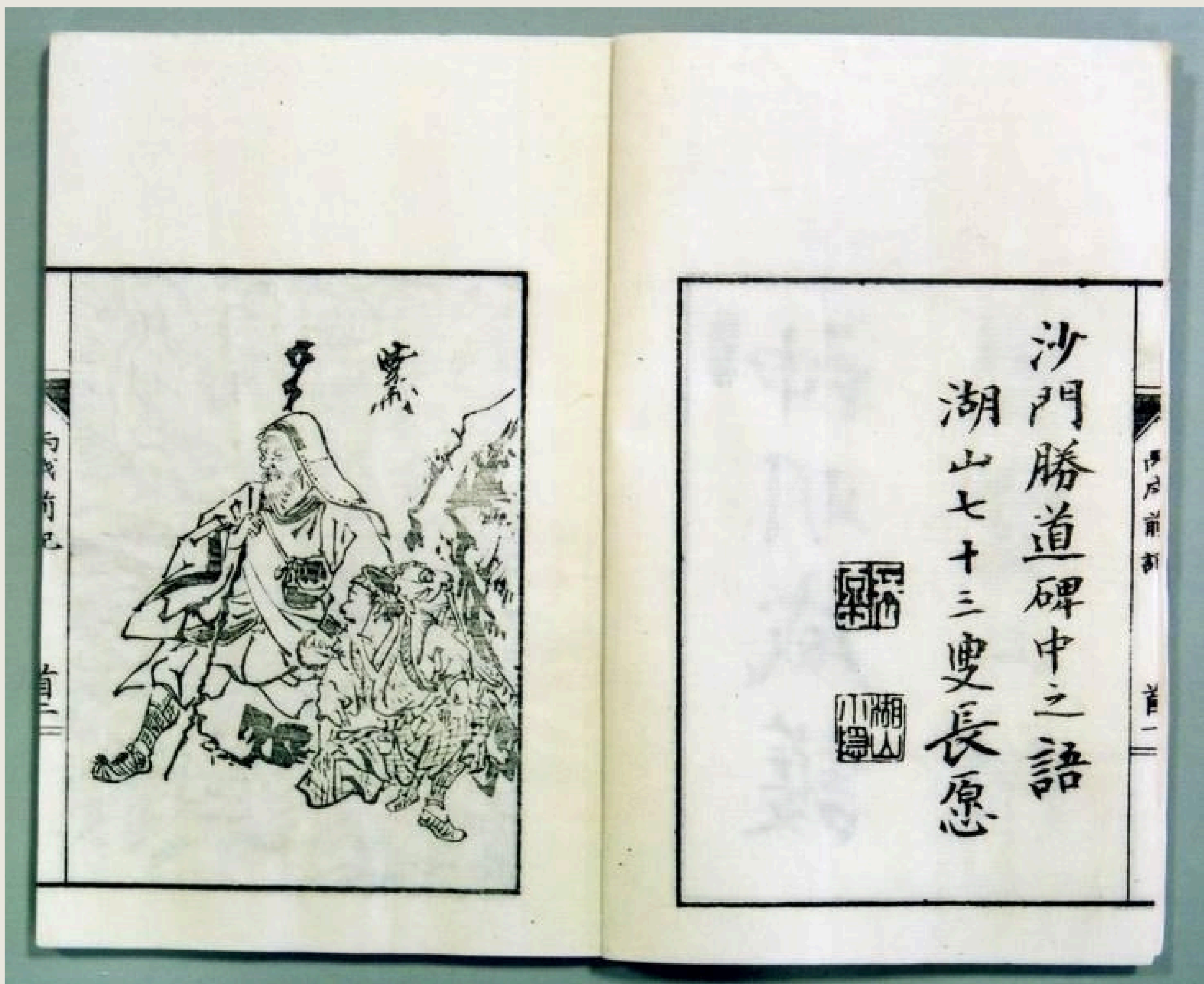
Report on the Name Selection for Hokkaido (1869)

The name in which Takeshiro proposed
—“Hokkaidou”— can be seen written here

AGE 69 ~ 71

Continuing the Journey: The One-Mat Room

In his twilight years, Takeshiro traveled throughout Japan, collecting antiques and visiting shrines dedicated to the God of Scholarship. Even in his old age, his spirit of adventure never faded; he climbed Mt. Ōdaigahara on the border of Mie and Nara Prefectures at the age of 68 and Mt. Fuji at 70. Takeshiro reflected on his life of travel in a study measuring just one tatami mat in size. This room was built from materials taken from historic buildings gifted to him from across Japan.



Heijyutsu Zenshi (Published 1886)

Takeshiro climbing Mt. Odaigahara



One-Mat Room

Original still remains today at
International Christian University (ICU) in Mitaka City, Tokyo

TIMELINE

The Life of Takeshiro – From Birth to Death –

1818 (Age 1)	Born in Sugawa Village of Ichishi County, Ise Province (current Onoe, Matsusaka City).
1830 (Age 13)	Studied in the academy of Tsu Domain from scholar, Hiramatsu Rakusai.
1833 (Age 16)	Travelled to Edo and studied seal engraving from Yamaguchi Gusho.
1834 (Age 17)	Sets out on a journey to travel across the entire country.
1835 (Age 19)	Visits all 88 sacred sites of Shikoku (Japan's smallest main island).
1839 (Age 22)	Ordained in Nagasaki and becomes chief priest of a temple in Hirado, Kyushu.
1842 (Age 25)	Tried to cross to the Korean Peninsula, but only makes it as far as Tsushima Island due to the national isolation policy at the time.
1843 (Age 26)	Through acquaintances in Nagasaki, became aware of Russian activity and its growing influence in northern Japan. Thus, decides to head to Ezo (present-day Hokkaido). Stops by his home to visit his parents' graves.
1844 (Age 27)	Tries to go to Ezo and gets as far as Aomori, but is forced to turn back due to strict security on travelers.
1845 (Age 28)	Reaches Ezo for the first time, and travels along the Pacific Coast and reaches the tip of Cape Shiretoko.
1846 (Age 29)	2nd Ezo expedition: investigates the island of Karafuto (Sakhalin). On the winter solstice in Esashi, holds the event "100 Stamps and 100 Poems" with Rai Mikisaburo.
1849 (Age 32)	3rd Ezo expedition: investigates Kunashir and Iturup islands.
1850 (Age 33)	Completed summarizing travel logs of the 3rd expedition.
1853 (Age 36)	Discusses the defense of Japanese waters with loyalist Shoin Yoshida.
1854 (Age 37)	At the request of the Uwajima Clan, investigates the activities of Commodore Perry and his party, who were in Shimoda City.
1855 (Age 38)	Appointed "Official Envoy to Ezo" by the Shogunate.
1856 (Age 39)	4th Ezo expedition: investigates the coastal line and Sakhalin Island.
1857 (Age 40)	5th Ezo expedition: investigates the Ishikari and Teshio Rivers.
1858 (Age 41)	6th Ezo expedition: investigates the Hokkaido coastal line, Tokachi, Kushiro, and Hidaka Provinces.
1859 (Age 42)	Submits reports of his 4th to 6th expeditions to the Shogunate. Publishes a book with detailed maps of Ezo and descriptions of Ainu culture. Married in the same year.
1860 (Age 43)	For a period until 1864, publishes popular traveler journals of his trips to Ezo.
1868 (Age 51)	Appointed Hakodate Development Commissioner by the Meiji Government.
1869 (Age 52)	Starts to come up with names for the island of Hokkaido, its government, and its counties.
1870 (Age 53)	Leaves his job as Development Commissioner, giving up his aristocratic rank of <i>jugoi</i> (During this time, he travels around Japan collecting historical artifacts and visiting shrines dedicated to the God of Scholarship, Tenjin).
1885 (Age 68)	Climbs Mt. Odaigahara for the first time and publishes a record of the climb.
1886 (Age 69)	Climbs Mt. Odaigahara for the second time.
1887 (Age 70)	Climbs Mt. Odaigahara for the third time, travels the breadth of western Japan, and climbs Mt. Fuji. Gathers materials from old shrines and temples across Japan to build the One-Mat Room in his home.
1888 (Age 71)	Passes away in his home in Kanda Goken-cho, Tokyo, on February 10th. A grave is erected for him at Shofukuji Temple in Asakusa, but is later moved to Somei Cemetery.
1889	As he requested, a memorial stone containing his ashes is erected at Mt. Odaigahara