



## Grass Sandals : The Travels of Basho

By Dawnine Spivak

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An evocative portrait of the great Japanese haiku poet describes Basho's many experiences as he traveled throughout his beloved native Japan, in a volume that also includes haiku written by Basho and Japanese characters that represent words from the verses.

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### Editorial Review

#### From School Library Journal

Grade 1-6. Basho, the most revered of Japanese haiku poets, walked through many parts of the country recording his travels in diaries of prose and poetry. This picture book offers Western children a glimpse of the 17th-century poet's classic work. Each double-page spread describes, in art and text, a notable event from one of his trips, and includes one relevant haiku and one kanji, or ideograph borrowed from written Chinese. Demi's richly colored paintings, executed with Asian brushes on textured rice paper, are freer than those found in much of her previous work, with the figures larger and more expressive. Readers familiar with Basho and his haiku will find a romanticized and tidied-up portrait of the stark, austere poet who was more interested in inanimate objects than the animals that surround him in Demi's pictures. That said, the author and artist accurately convey the sensibility of a man who was famous for seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary, for maintaining his individuality while prizing community. They have created an inviting introduction to his life and language. The widespread interest in haiku and in Japanese culture make Basho's story a valuable addition to any collection. —Margaret A. Chang, North Adams State College, MA

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#### From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 3^-5. This unusual picture book follows the seventeenth-century poet Basho on a journey across Japan. Based on his journal of prose and poetry, this is no travelogue, but a reflection on what the poet saw, what he did, and who he met as he traveled. With the exception of a verse by Issa, the haiku that appear in the book are Basho's own. While the text is agreeable enough, the book's page design and artwork are exceptional in their refreshing sense of freedom and spontaneity. An illustration note identifies the medium as colored ink applied with brushes, evidently on rice paper, but this doesn't begin to suggest the pictures' exquisite clarity of line and purity of color. Though surely inspired by Japanese art, the paintings are suffused with Demi's own sense of page design, decorative art, and good humor. Each double-page spread includes a segment of the story, a painting of Basho on his journey, a haiku reflecting some aspect of the text, and a word that appears in three forms: a painted Japanese character, its transliteration, and its translation into English. The Japanese characters are cogent visual expressions of concepts such as river, fire, or world. The same word appears in the haiku on that spread. A beautiful book and a fine resource for children studying haiku.

Carolyn Phelan

#### From Kirkus Reviews

Spivak compresses the travels of a 17th-century Japanese poet into one journey meant to convey the essence of his life. After an over-abundance of front matter--obtrusive but endearing dedication, two half-title pages, title page, prefatory notes on haiku and Japanese characters (kanji), and an odd spread devoted to old men in China who nest in trees, the story of Basho begins. He leaves his home with few belongings, writing haiku to describe his steady delight in his experiences. The haiku are displayed on the pages; nowhere in the book is it expressly stated that these are Basho's. One verse is credited to Issa, a poet who lived a century after Basho; the CIP states that examples of Basho's work appear but no information backs that assumption; no translator is listed. A map of places Basho visited and a list of what he saw, with place names, is followed by a biographical note. Demi does her best to create a feeling for historical Japan, but the book is dissected into so many notes and extraneous components that the simplicity of Basho's life--and haiku in general--will elude readers. (Picture book. 6-9) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

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#### **Adrian Kester:**

Why? Because this Grass Sandals : The Travels of Basho is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap this but latter it will jolt you with the secret that inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who write the book in such incredible way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book get such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to hold off having that book? If I were you I will go to the publication store hurriedly.

#### **Arlie Carrillo:**

Are you kind of occupied person, only have 10 as well as 15 minute in your time to upgrading your mind talent or thinking skill even analytical thinking? Then you are having problem with the book compared to can satisfy your short space of time to read it because pretty much everything time you only find reserve that need more time to be examine. Grass Sandals : The Travels of Basho can be your answer as it can be read by anyone who have those short extra time problems.

#### **Brandon Justice:**

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