



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

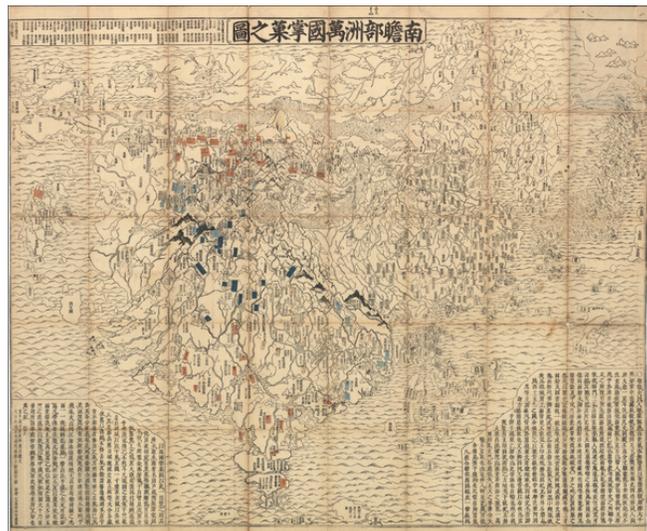
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Nansenbushu Bankoku Shoka No Zu (Outline Map of All Countries of the Universe)

Stock#: 54991
Map Maker: Rokashi Hotan
Date: 1710
Place: Japan
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 56.5 x 45 inches
Price: Not Available



Description:

A Buddhist Worldview -- From the Original Sanskrit

Nice example of Rokashi's world map, with the addition of small strips of paper translating placenames from the original Chinese/Sanskrit transliteration to a more modern Japanese version of the same placename. The original Rokashi map is a Chinese transliteration of Sanskrit placenames.

Rokashi's map is the first Japanese printed map to depict the world, including Europe and America, from a Buddhist cosmographical perspective. Inspired by the 1653 Si-yu-ki, a pilgrimage narrative of the Chinese monk Hsuang-Tsang's (602-604) travels to India in search of sacred Sanskrit writings, Rokashi intended the map as modernized depiction of Buddhist mythological cartography, as exemplified in the 1634 manuscript map Gotenjikuzu (Map of the Five Regions of India), to correspond with the Si-yu-ki, as well as with contemporary and ancient religious texts, Chinese annals, travel narratives, and even some European maps. Rokashi's lists 102 sources in the upper portion of the map.

Rokashi's map presents a traditional Buddhist world view in the Gotenjikuzu mold centered on the world, utilizing a single continent of Jambu-Dvipa. At the center is Lake Anavatapta, a whirlpool-like quadruple helix lake believed to be the center of the universe. This lake, which is commonly associated with Lake Manasarovar in northern India, is believed in Buddhist mythology to be the legendary site where Queen Maya conceived the Buddha. From the quadruple beast headed helix (heads of a horse, a lion, an elephant, and an ox) of Manasarovar or Lake Anavatapta, flow the four sacred rivers of the region: the Indus, the Ganges, the Bramaputra, and the Sutlej.



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South of Jambu-Dvipa, India is recognizable for in its peninsular form. Japan itself appears as a series of Islands in the upper right and, like India, is one of the few recognizable elements - at least from a cartographic perspective. China and Korea appear to the west of Japan and are vaguely identifiable geographically, which itself represents a significant advancement over the Gotenjiku map. Southeast Asia also makes one of its first appearances in a Japanese Buddhist map as an island cluster to the east of India.

On the opposite side of the map a series of islands is intended to represent Europe, which had no place at all in earlier Buddhist world maps, making this one of the first Japanese maps to depict Europe. Umukari (Hungary), Oranda, Baratan, Komo (Holland or the country of the red hair), Arubaniya (Albania?), Itarya (Italy), Suransa (France) and Inkeresu (England) are all named. Africa appears as a small island in the western sea identified as the 'Land of Western Women.'

Of special note is Rokashi Hotan's mapping of the Americas. Prior to this map America had rarely if ever been depicted on Japanese maps, so Rokashi Hotan turned to the Chinese map Daimin Kyuhen Zu (Map of China under the Ming Dynasty and its surrounding Countries), from which he copied both the small island-like form of South America (just south of Japan), and the curious land bridge (the Aelutian Islands?) connecting Asia to what the Japanese historians Nobuo Muroga and Kazutaka Unno conclude 'must undoubtedly be a reflection of North America' (p. 63). Whether this represents ancient knowledge from early Chinese navigations in this region, for which there is some literary if not historical evidence, or merely a printing error, we can only speculate.

While this map represents a significant step forward in the Japanese attempt to combine religious and contemporary geographic knowledge it remains in essence a Buddhist map. It is likely that Rokashi Hotan was aware important European style maps circulating in China at the time. The Mateo Ricci Map is one such example and copies were known to have reached Japan in the 17th century. It is curious that Rokashi Hotan chose to ignore it and other Eurocentric data in exchange for a religious world view, while at the same time attempting to reconcile Buddhist and modern geography. Ultimately, this map makes a lot more sense when one understands that Rokashi Hotan scaled his world map not by distance but rather by religious importance. India, the birthplace of the Buddha, is the central locale in the Jabmu-Dvipa conception and on this map. Other countries, including China, Japan itself, and even more so the distant continents of Africa, Europe and the Americas, Rokashi Hotan considered 'but mote-like countries in the Jambu-Dvipa' and 'as small as a millet-grain.'

Rokashi Hotan's map became the model on which all future Japanese Buddhist world maps were drawn well into the 19th century. The confused cosmological view upon which his map is based, referencing at once religious, secular, and non-Buddhist teachings, matched the growing religious secular conflict that would emerge in Japan during the coming centuries. Ultimately this is one of the most important,



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beautiful, and influential printed maps ever to emerge in Japan.

Two identical versions of this woodblock map appeared in 1710. The more common was published by Chobei Nagata of Kyoto. A less common example was published by the bookseller Bundaiken Uhei. The maps can be distinguished by Bundaiken Uhei's mark and name, which appear in the lower left quadrant.

Credit to Kevin Brown of Geographicus Rare Antique Maps for the description.

Detailed Condition:

Folding map, as issued. Minor worming. Small strips of paper added to include translations from Chinese to Japanese.