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Chiku Bankoku Ichizan no Zu [Comprehensive Image of the World's Myriad Countries]

Stock#: 62272
Map Maker: Blaeu / Anonymous
Date: 1750 circa
Place: Japan
Color: Pen & Ink with Wash Color
Condition: VG
Size: 42 x 27 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Previously Unrecorded Japanese Map of the World, Based on Blaeu's World Maps

Elegantly-conceived double hemisphere manuscript map of the world, made in Japan in the mid-eighteenth century. The map is based on Joan Blaeu's 1648 wall map of the World in 20 sheets and is a remarkable artifact of the cross-cultural exchange between Japan and Europe in the early modern period.

The original Blaeu twenty-sheet world map (a later 20 sheet 1678 Visscher world map), were known to have been in Japan by the early eighteenth century, although they remained virtually unknown in Japanese writings until the early 18th Century. Japanese-made world maps incorporating the information from these two maps began to appear in the mid-eighteenth century at the earliest, hence the date of ca. 1750 for this example.

Comparison with other Blaeu-derivative Japanese world maps suggests that this is a previously unknown and highly differentiated example of the genre. The map is so significantly different that it may be based on a now-lost manuscript copy of the Blaeu wall maps, rather than copied directly from the Blaeu map itself.

Geographical & Illustrative Observations

The continents are split into the Americas in one hemisphere, with Africa, Asia, and Europe in the other. Distinctive waves fill the oceans, with expressive brush strokes swirling around the landmasses. Several toponyms are included on each of the continents, and certain political or regional units are outlined in red and green.

In the western hemisphere, South America is scored by riverine networks. A large lake in the north approximates to Lake Parime, a feature included on Blaeu's maps. The lake was associated with the El



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Dorado myth and frequently featured on early modern European maps. Tierra del Fuego appears as an island unconnected to a massive southern continent, another feature of the Blaeu world maps.

North America remains unfinished in the northwest region, although the suggestion of a continued landmass is included by the mapmaker. California appears as an island, as it does in Blaeu's work. In the Pacific, several island coastlines are shown, including that of what approximates to New Zealand, New Guinea, and a northern island (labeled as Ezo, or Hokkaido).

The eastern hemisphere is crowded with Eurasia and Africa, as well as a southern continent and much of Australia. Australia appears connected to New Guinea via the Gulf of Carpentaria, again a feature suggested in Blaeu's work. Also as in Blaeu, Japan is split between the two hemispheres, with the tip of the northern islands peeking out of the western hemisphere's western edge.

Although not heavily annotated, the world map does include several toponyms and notes, particularly in the eastern hemisphere. South of New Guinea, an inscription reads, "no people have visited here." On the southern continent, a longer note explains, "It's said there are people and houses in this southerly land, but as nobody who knows has visited, so everything about it is unknown."

On Ceylon, a note says, "From this island started guns." The Caspian Sea, while unlabeled, has a note explaining that it is without "a mouth," or outlet. To the far north, the label is *yokoku*, or "night country," a reference to the long nights of the winter months close to the North Pole. Over Egypt, it says, "historically mummies come from here."

In the Americas, an inscription reads, "There are mountains that produce silver and gold," near what is today Chile. Tierra del Fuego is labeled simply, "Country of Giants" (*Daikinoku*), a reference to the giant myth that began with Magellan in 1520.

A variety of place names are included, such as Taiwan (*Takasago*), Mindanao (*Medanau*), Jakarta (*Jagatara*), Tonkin (*Tokkin*), Turkey (*Toruko*), Persia (*Harushiya*), and Armenia (*Arumeniya*). In Western Africa is Guinea (*Gineya*) and the "country of black people" (*Kokujinkoku*). In the Americas, America (*Amerika*) is listed on both continents. Brazil (*Barajiru*), New Spain (*Iuba Isupaniya*), and the capital of Mexico (*Meshiko miyako*) are also listed.

In Europe, there is Spain (*Isupanya*), France (*Furansa*), Rome (*Rouma*), Germany (*Zerumania*), England (*Yegeresu*), and Holland (*Woranda*). The distance from Japan to Holland is also stated (13,000 *ri*), underlining the relationship between the two countries. In Scandinavia, a label says "short people" (*Kobito*), a reference to the Sámi people.



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The label Nanban-koku, "Southern Barbarian Country," is applied to several countries, including Turkey ("Toruko"), Germany ("Zerumaniya"), France ("Furansa"), and Spain ("Isupanya"). However, Holland (Oranda) and England (Egeresu, spelled "Yegeresu") do not have this designation. Nanban was a term used to describe the Portuguese during the first years of European contact with Japan, as they sailed to Japan from the south. The label as it is used here suggests a political interpretation, or the influence of the Dutch sources.

Westerners in Japan

The first Westerners arrived in Japan in 1543, when three Portuguese travelers arrived via a Chinese ship. Five years later, Francis Xavier, a Jesuit, landed as a missionary from Goa, intent on converting the Japanese to Christianity. Trade, by the Portuguese, English, Dutch, and Spanish, and missionary work, mainly via the Jesuits, continued until the 1630s.

The Dutch were granted favorable trading rights in 1609, thanks to the negotiations of William Adams, an English interlocutor. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) set up a factory in Hirado. In 1637, when Japanese Christians rebelled against the Tokugawa shogunate, the Dutch helped the Shogun to crush the resistance. The Shogun banned Christianity, along with all the Westerners from powers who aided the rebels, leaving the Dutch the only Westerners allowed to trade with Japan.

The VOC factory was moved to Dejima in Nagasaki, the former Portuguese trading post on an artificial island. For the next two hundred years, the Dutch were the only Westerners officially allowed to trade and interact with Japan. Certain Japanese officials maintained an interest in Western knowledge, as will be seen. This also meant that the Dutch became the primary conduit for the transmission of European cartographic knowledge to Japan.

Western maps in Japan: the influence of Blaeu

Thanks in part to the long and relative stability of the Edo period (1603-1868), map consciousness was on the rise in Japan in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. New geography texts were published, as were maps. In the mid-eighteenth century, *rangaku*, or the study of Western knowledge, including cartography, via Dutch sources and scholars, was encouraged by the government. This map was made within this larger context.

The most famous Western influence in East Asian mapping was the work of the Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci, who produced the first Western-style map in China in the late-sixteenth century. The third edition of this map, produced in 1602, is the first to have examples which survive today. The map spread throughout East Asia by the early-seventeenth century, which is when Japanese reproductions of the map appear. However,



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many other world maps also entered Japan prior to the expulsion of the Westerners, as the Shogun, officials, and merchants all showed a keen interest in the world beyond Japan's shores.

After 1640, however, the Dutch became the only conduit for Western knowledge to enter Japan. At the same time, the Blaeu cartographic dynasty was ascendant in Amsterdam. In 1648, to honor the Peace of Westphalia, Joan Blaeu created a magisterial twenty-sheet world map in two hemispheres. As Minako Debergh has shown, an example of the 1648 Blaeu world map was in Japan by 1709, when it was mentioned Arai Hakuseki, a scholar and councilor to the Shogun.

Hakuseki shared the map with an Italian priest, Giovanni Battista Sidotti, and it was stored in the shogunate's depot. In 1710, he showed it again, this time to a Dutchman named Cornelis Lardijn. By 1786, the text below the 1648 map had been translated into Japanese by Katsuragawa Hoshu, but derivatives based on the map had already been appearing since mid-century.

Additionally, an example of the 1678 Visscher edition of the world map was also in Japan. Both maps are now in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum. Although it is not known precisely when the Blaeu maps arrived, it is known that a large world map and two other maps were given by the Dutch to the Shogunate in 1657 and 1659; in the latter year, an official, Hojo Masafusa, was appointed to look after the large world map. Two more world maps were given by the Dutch in 1672, and the Shogun also ordered several maps from his Dutch contacts.

Rarity

The map and its genre of Blaeu-derivative printed or manuscript maps are previously unknown in the literature of Japanese cartographic traditions. The map was so remote from published scholarship that the famed American map dealer Ken Nebenzahl was unable to locate another example or any meaningful reference data. He opined that the map was likely a Ricci derivative, this is clearly not the case.

This is the only cartographic evidence that the 1648 Blaeu wall map that was sent to Japan had an impact on Japanese mapmaking.

Conclusion

Based on the surviving evidence, it is likely that this map was drawn up during the period of *rangaku*, when Japanese scholars and officials were investigating Western knowledge, particularly its maps. From the dates of the other surviving double hemisphere maps, which appear to derive principally from Blaeu's world maps, this map would appear to date to the mid-eighteenth century.



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It is an exceptional example of an important genre of maps that show vividly the transmission and translation of knowledge between cultures and languages. This important map would enrich any collection of Japanese or world maps and it is certainly worth further scholarly attention.

Detailed Condition:

Manuscript folding map with original covers and title labels. Some minor worming, but overall fine.