

Lithograph map, hand coloured, dissected and mounted on linen.

BRUNTON’S MAP OF JAPAN

NIPPON [JAPAN] 1876 COMPILED FROM NATIVE MAPS AND THE NOTES OF RECENT TRAVELLERS BY R. HENRY BRUNTON M.INST C.E. F.R.G.S. LATE ENGINEER IN CHIEF TO THE LIGHTHOUSE DEPARTMENT OF THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT.

Author
Brunton, Richard Henry

Publication date
1876

Publisher
Messrs Truebner & Co. 57-59 Ludgate Hill,

Publication place
London,

Physical description
Lithograph map, hand coloured, dissected and mounted on linen.

Dimensions
1400 by 1145mm. (55 by 45 inches).

Notes
First map of Japan made by a foreigner in Meiji Era.

In 1868, the new Meiji government hired Scottish engineer Richard Henry Brunton (1841-1901) to

construct a lighthouse. Brunton lived and worked in Japan from 1868 to 1876, being one of the first migrant workers who came to be known as ‘foreigner for hire’ (お雇い外国人), later known as “Father of Japanese lighthouses”. Alongside various lighthouses, Brunton also designed and constructed water and sewage systems, Japan’s first telegraph network and began work on a new railway. Brunton left a written record of his experiences in Japan, entitled ‘Modern Japan, as seen from a foreigner for hire’, which is a valuable source of information about the relationship between east and west during the nineteenth century.

The present map displays much of the research accumulated by Brunton during his eight years in Japan. He states in ‘Modern Japan’ that he was encouraged to make it by the British Embassy, and that it became popular with tradesmen and travellers throughout the country. First published in 1876, it was then reprinted four years later with a few minor changes: some information is added to index table in the lowe right corner, which lists Japan’s natural features, such as mountains, rivers and islands, and the trade and population statistics are updated with the correct data for 1880. Predictably, Japan’s lighthouses are clearly identified on Brunton’s map.

Surprisingly, very little research was done on the map until 1998, when two theses by Kiyonori Kanasaka brought important new information to light:

「（前略）ブラントン日本図は、電信・鉄道・灯台といった近代西欧文明が生み出したものや、詳細な水深データという、これまた西欧列強の側が推進した海図作成事業のための調査測量の成果をも積極的に盛り込んだ。そして、ここにはブラントンのお雇い外国人としての事蹟もが見事に組み込まれた。その意味で、西欧的なものを含む近代日本図の魁をなすものであり、急速に近代化・西欧化を進めていた明治初期という時代の特徴をよく示す日本図、外国製日本図であると言うことができる。　以上の意味で、ブラントン日本図は西欧近代地図と近世日本図の二つの要素がミックスされた、日本の地図作成史上の一大変革期を代表する地図だと位置づけることができる。」
（金坂清則「ブラントン日本図 Nippon [Japan] の表現内容とベースマップに関する考察」より）

‘…Blanton’s map of Japan is focused on the features of modern European civilization, such as telegraph, railway and lighthouse, as well as detailed water depth data, and is the result of surveys and nautical charting projects promoted by Western powers. It also reflects Brunton’s reputation as a foreigner for hire, and in that sense, he was one of the pioneers of modern Japanese maps, including Western ones. It can be said that Japanese maps and foreign-made maps of Japan often show the characteristics of the early Meiji era, when modernization and westernization were progressing… In the above sense, the map of Brunton Japan can be regarded as a map that represents a revolutionary period in the history of Japanese cartography, in which the two elements of Western European maps and early modern Japanese maps are mixed.’
(From Kiyonori Kanasaka, ‘Consideration on the expression, contents and basemap of Brunton’s Map of Japan Map)

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

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