

Original pen and ink and watercolour drawing on Japan paper, and laid down on heavier stock as a scroll, with a wooden batten at one end, and ties at the other.

A BEAUTIFUL PICTORIAL MAP OF KYOTO AND SURROUNDING HILLS

[Kyoto as the Imperial capital]

Author
ANONYMOUS

Publication date
[c.1800]

Publisher

Publication place

Physical description
Original pen and ink and watercolour drawing on Japan paper, and laid down on heavier stock as a scroll, with a wooden batten at one end, and ties at the other.

Dimensions
1150 by 800mm (45.25 by 31.5 inches).

Notes
A very fine manuscript map of Kyoto, showing the grid-pattern of the city proper, suburbs, and outlying towns and villages all surrounded by, and in contrast to, the soft gentle hills of the Kyoto Basin. The style is very typical of that which first practised in the last decades of the seventeenth century by Hayashi Yoshinaga, whose first guide map appeared in 1686. Hayashi published several maps of Kyoto with the title “Shinsen zōho Kyō ōezu” (Newly revised and Enlarged map of Kyoto),

“all typically shaped with the North-South direction longer than the East-West one, all not adhering to an exact scale, and all meant as guides to sightseeing in Kyoto. They are representative of the cartography of Kyoto in the mid-Edo period, and were greatly influential for other maps of the city. They introduced new graphic conventions (older maps tended, for example, to fill sections of the city in black ink, a feature absent in most of Hayashi’s maps), and new textual content, including detailed annotations about temples, shrines and other famous places, and catalogues of house names associated with family crests” (John Rylands Library).

Kyoto is one of Japan’s largest cities and also one its oldest. Originally founded as Heian in 794, it had its golden age during 794 to 1185. Home to many cultural landmarks and historical sites, Kyoto is thought of as “the heart of Japan”. The city still bears the name Kyoto, or ‘Capital City’, even though the emperor and the National Diet are located in Tokyo. For most of Japan’s history, Heian was the center not only of government but of learning and the arts.

Kyoto was laid out in 794 on the model of Chang’an (modern Xi’an), the capital of China’s Tang dynasty, by order of the emperor Kammu. The plan called for a “rectangular enclosure with a grid street pattern, a bit more than 3 miles north to south and a bit less then 3 miles east to west. The Imperial Palace, surrounded by government buildings, was in the city’s north-central section. Following Chinese precedent, care was taken when the site was selected to protect the northern corners, from which, it was believed, evil spirits could gain access. Thus, Hiei-zan (Mount Hiei) to the northeast and Atago-yama (Mount Atago) to the northwest were considered natural guardians. Hiei-zan especially came to figure prominently between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries, when warrior-monks from its Tendai Buddhist monastery complex frequently raided the city and influenced politics. The Kamo and Katsura rivers – before joining the Yodo-gawa (Yodo River) to the south – were, respectively, the original eastern and western boundaries. But the attraction of the eastern hills kept the city from filling out to its original western border until after World War II. Kyoto is actually cradled in a saucer of hills on three sides that opens to the southwest toward Osaka” (Encyclopedia Britannica online).

Bibliography
Hasegawa, ‘The History of Mapping of Kyoto – Between Picture and Survey’, online.

Provenance

Price: £10000

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