



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## [Japanese World Map] Kaisei Chikyu Bankoku sankai yochi zenzu setsu (Revised map of all countries on the globe/ Map of the world and its mountains and oceans)

**Stock#:** 43034  
**Map Maker:** Nagakubo / Ricci  
**Date:** 1785 (1834)  
**Place:** Edo & Osaka  
**Color:** Color  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 65 x 36 inches  
**Price:** \$ 12,500.00



### Description:

*Fine example of the 1834 printing of Sekisui Nagakubo's landmark map of the World, based upon Matteo Ricci's map of the World, published in China.*

Sekisui Nagakubo's world map is one of the earliest world maps published in Japan. First issued circa 1785, it is the work of one of Japan's most important mapmakers.

Sekisui adapted Ricci's Chinese world map to publish this marvelous world wall-map. The texts on the upper margin include a discussion of the contribution of the Dutch to world mapping. The map generally keeps the Chinese characters used by Ricci, but sometimes they are transformed into Japanese characters. The texts around the map include some interesting description of Brazil. It notes, "The inhabitants of this country do not build houses. They dig the earth and live in caverns. They like to eat human flesh, however they only eat men and not women. Their clothes are made from birds feathers."

Ricci, in turn, based this map upon Ortelius's world map. Ricci reorients the map to place Asia at the center of the World (Ortelius placed Europe at the center). The Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans traded places and China became the commanding landmass.

The geography on Nagakubo's map provides a superb example of Japan's view of the world during its long period of isolation. No Great Lakes are delineated in America, and California, which had been depicted as an island on many European maps of the 17th and 18th centuries, is a peninsula on his map. That is not because the mapmaker had access to the latest geographical information but because his model predated the island theory. The North Pole is made up of an unfamiliar group of islands while the South Pole is the fictional, unexplored continent of Magellanica.



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Ricci's map was covered with long commentaries and Nagakubo preserves a number of these on his map. One that he keeps is about the people of Brazil. He notes, "They like eating human flesh, but they eat men and not women." He omits, however, remarks that are unfavorable to the Japanese including, "The Japanese are warriors giving great importance to weapons, but don't appreciate intellectual activities." Nagakubo generally retains Ricci's Chinese characters, though sometimes they are adapted to make them more understandable to the Japanese readers. The name of Magellan, for example, is transformed into Mekara in the commentary.

Nagakubo (1717-1801) was a Confucian scholar and an accomplished surveyor who relied heavily on his own calculations as he created his maps. His specialty was mapping Japan itself and over a period of 16 years he traveled the country making surveys. The result was not only the most accurate map of his native country at the time, but also the first to include longitude and latitude. The world map being offered here is one of the first in Japan to employ longitude lines to a spherical earth.

Nagakubo's authority as a cartographer was held in high esteem until the mid-19th century. His world map made a strong impression on other mapmakers, and it was widely imitated, becoming the standard delineation for the rest of the 18th century and well into the 19th. An example of this map was featured in an exhibition as one of the new items acquired in 2002 by the National Museum of Japanese History.

***Historical Overview of the Matteo Ricci Map***

Ricci's map is one of the most important printed world maps. His Kunyu Wanguo Quantu map (A Map of the Myriad Countries of the World) was printed in China at the request of the Wanli Emperor in 1602 with the assistance of Chinese collaborators, Mandarin Zhong Wentao and the technical translator, Li Zhizao. The Ricci map is the earliest known Chinese world map with the style of European maps.

It has been referred to as the "Impossible Black Tulip of Cartography," because of its rarity, importance and exoticism. The map was crucial in expanding Chinese knowledge of the world. It was later exported to Japan and where it maintained its influence.

The 1602 Ricci map is a 5 feet high by 12 feet wide, woodcut map of the World, showing China at the center of the known world. It is the first map in Chinese to show the Americas. The map's mirror image originally was carved on six large blocks of wood and then printed in brownish ink on six mulberry paper panels, similar to the making of a folding screen.

Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) was one of the first Western scholars to live in China and he became a master of Chinese script and the Classical Chinese language. In 1583, Ricci was among the first Jesuits to enter



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China from Macao. The first Chinese world map was named, Yudi Shanhai Quanti, and made in Zhaoqing in 1584 by Matteo Ricci, with Chinese collaborators. Ricci had a small Italian wall map in his possession and created Chinese versions of it at the request of the governor of Zhaoqing, Wang Pan, who wanted the document to serve as a resource for explorers and scholars.

On January 24, 1601, Ricci was the first Jesuit - and one of the first Westerners - to enter the Ming capital Beijing, bringing atlases of Europe and the West that were unknown to his hosts. The Chinese had maps of the East that were equally unfamiliar to Western scholars.

In 1602, at the request of the Wanli Emperor, Ricci collaborated with Mandarin Zhong Wentao, a technical translator, Li Zhizao and other Chinese scholars, to create what was his third and largest world map, the Kunyu Wanguo Quantu. In this map, European geographic knowledge, new to the Chinese, was combined with Chinese information unknown to Europeans, to create the first Chinese and European cartography. Among other things, this map revealed the existence of America to the Chinese.

Ricci prepared four editions of Chinese world maps during his mission in China before 1603:

- a 1584 early woodblock print made in Zhaoqing, called *Yudi Shanhai Quantu*
- a 1596 map carved on a stele, called *Shanhai Yudi Tu*
- a 1600 revised version of the 1596, usually named *Shanhai Yudi Quantu*, engraved by Wu Zhongming
- a 1602 larger and much refined edition of the 1584 map, in six panels, printed in Beijing, called *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*

Several prints of the *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu* were made in 1602. Most of the original maps now are lost. Only six original copies of the map are known to exist, and only two are in good condition. Known copies are in the Vatican Apostolic Library Collection I and at the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota.

Other copies of the 1602 map are located at: Japan, Kyoto University Collection; Collection of Japan Miyagi Prefecture Library; Collection of the Library of the Japanese Cabinet; and a private collection in Paris, France. No original examples of the map are known to exist in China, where Ricci was revered and buried.

The maps received widespread attention and circulation. The governor, General of Guizhou, reproduced a copy of the map in a book about Guizhou published in Guiyang in 1604. Ricci estimated that more than 1,000 copies of the 1602 edition were reprinted.



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Various versions of the map were exported to Japan, and later Korea. An unattributed and very detailed two page colored edition of the map, known in Japanese as *Konyo Bankoku Zenzu*, was made in Japan circa 1604. Within this Japanese export copy, Japanese Katakana is utilized for foreign location names throughout the Western world.

**Detailed Condition:**

Original boards. Minor repairs.