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Insulae Nippon Partem Septentrionalem Repraesentans

Stock#: 55963
Map Maker: Siebold
Date: 1840 circa
Place: Leiden
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG
Size: 16 x 21 inches
Price: \$ 1,900.00



Description:

Rare Separately Published Example of the Map of Part of Honshu, by German physician and traveler Philipp Franz von Siebold.

Fine map of the most northern part of Honshu, including Fukushima, the island of Sado island. One of the few large scale maps, of Japan included in the rare work by Von Siebold.

The work is of the greatest rarity as probably no more than 100 copies were published and only a few where printed on large paper. The famous geographer Mogami Tokunai and Mamiya Rinzo provided Siebold with important information, including maps. Siebold was expelled from Japan in the autumn of 1829 because maps were considered by the authorities as secret.

The present example is from a Russian institutional collection which likely was disbanded at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution.



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Siebold created the first truly modern map of Japan printed in the Western world, based upon information obtained by Siebold during his travels in Japan, primarily the groundbreaking surveys made by the Japanese cartographer Ino Tadataka. It represents a radical improvement over all previous maps of Japan, and was by far the most accurate impression of the islands available during the opening of Japan to Westerners, following the visit of American Commodore Matthew C. Parry in 1854.

Phillip Franz von Siebold & the Mapping of Japan

Phillip Franz von Siebold (1796-1866) was a German physician, who joined the service of the Dutch East India Company (the VOC). In 1822-23, he travelled to Batavia (modern Jakarta), the capital of the Dutch East Indies. Residing in Japan from 1823, he quickly made contact with the country's leading scholars, as well as many senior political officials, and steadily acquired an unprecedented collection of botanical and ethnographic specimens. Siebold's intense intellectual curiosity also led him to search for the most advanced cartography of East Asia.

The present is from Siebold's epic study of Japan and Korea, *Nippon. Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan und dessen Neben- und Schutzländern: jezo mit den südlichen Kurilen, Krafto, Koorai und den Liukiu-Inseln* (7 volumes, printed in Leiden, Netherlands, 1832-1852). Highly detailed and profusely illustrated, it was by far the finest and most important European study of the history, ethnography, geography and flora and fauna of Japan and Korea published to date. More than any other work, it showcased Japan and Korea to western intelligentsia, on the eve of the wholesale opening of these countries to European trade and exchange.

Siebold's intense intellectual curiosity led him to search for the most advanced cartography of Japan and Korea. While on a visit to Edo (modern Tokyo) in 1826, he befriended Takahashi Kageyasu, the Japanese court astronomer, who provided him with a series of sophisticated maps, many of which were by the late Ino Tadataka (1745-1818). Tadataka famously conducted the first modern mapping of Japan, as well as compiling maps of Korea from the latest sources.

Curiously, it was Siebold's interest in cartography that led to the so-called "Siebold Incident", which resulted in his expulsion from Japan. While the Japanese authorities seemed tolerant, if not a little bemused, by Siebold's endeavors to collect natural specimens, this indulgence had its limitations. In 1829, when officials accidentally discovered Siebold's map collection, they were aghast that a foreigner possessed sources that contained such accurate and detailed geographical intelligence and military information. Accusing him of being a Russian spy, they placed him under house arrest, before expelling him from the country. Surprisingly, the Japanese authorities did not confiscate all of Siebold's maps, allowing him to take them back to Europe.



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Upon Siebold's return to Europe in 1830, he settled in the Dutch university town of Leiden. He soon opened a magnificent museum for his specimen collection, and set to work on his monumental publication of Nippon, a project that would last 20 years. During this period he carefully prepared finished manuscript maps, in preparation for them to be lithographed.

Rarity

We locate no examples of this map on the market for more than 30 years. One of the most historically important maps of Japan, it is also one of the most difficult to obtain.

Detailed Condition:

Original color. Dissected and laid on linen, as issued. Soiled.