



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## [ Japanese Shipwreck Survivor's Russian Map of the World ]. 地球図 [Oranda Chikyuzu] [Image of the Earth]

**Stock#:** 58461  
**Map Maker:** Toshiaki  
**Date:** 1804 circa 1818  
**Place:** [np, but Japan]  
**Color:** Pen & Ink with Wash Color  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 44.5 x 22.5 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



### Description:

#### *A Remarkable Japanese Manuscript Map of the World, Written in Russian, Copied from the Work of a Shipwrecked Japanese Sailor*

Striking double-hemisphere manuscript map of the world with toponyms written in Russian. The chart also includes the tracks of Captain James' Cook's three voyages.

This example is believed to have been copied from a manuscript world map drawn by a shipwrecked Japanese sailor during his captivity in Russia, which came into the hands of the Japanese when the Finnish-Swedish Lieutenant Adam Laxman, acting as an agent of Imperial Russia, visited Japan in Kansei 4 (1792). Laxman was facilitating the homecoming of the shipwrecked Japanese sailor Daikokuya Kōdayū and, in return, demanded a trade treaty between Japan and Russia.

Kōdayū managed to bring a world map with him. This map was likely based on a Russian mother map which in turn was the base map for several Japanese copies known to have been in circulation in the first half of the nineteenth century. The geographical content of the map suggests that the mother map was likely the work of renowned Russian cartographer Alexander Wilbrecht and made in circa 1788-1790.

This example is one of the earliest of these Japanese reproductions, most likely made by the innovative political economical thinker Honda Toshiaki. Toshiaki produced a practically identical map in 1813. His writings also mentioned the distinctive cartouche seen on this map in his letters, suggesting he is the author.

#### **Daikokuya Kōdayū: A Japanese Mapmaker Shipwrecked in Russia**



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Daikokuya Kōdayū (高島 道行) (1751 - May 28, 1828) was a Japanese castaway who spent eleven years in Russia. As captain of the *Shinsho-maru* (新勝丸), Kōdayū left on a voyage in 1782, but was quickly blown off course and cast adrift for seven months. Eventually, the crew was able to land at Amchitka, in the Aleutian Islands. Stranded, they awaited rescue, but a Russian vessel that was about to help them wrecked near the island. Together, the Russian and Japanese sailors constructed a new ship and managed to make it to Kamchatka, on the Russian mainland.

Once in Russia, Kirill Laxman, Adam Laxman's father, helped to champion the sailors' cause, which was to return to their homeland. Kōdayū, as the group's leader, met several times with Catherine the Great, who eventually granted their return, under the supervision of Lieutenant Laxman.

As he was accompanying a Japanese castaway, Adam Laxman was allowed a reception with Japanese authorities and treated with a degree of cool cordiality not usually extended to foreign visitors. Laxman eventually succeeded in procuring a document that granted permission for one Russian ship to dock in Nagasaki to engage in trade. However, when this was attempted some nine years later, the ship was refused. Japan would remain closed to the West, with the exception of the Dutch East India Company presence in Nagasaki, until the American Commodore Matthew Perry's 1854 expedition.

Unfortunately, only two of the crew ultimately made it back to Japan alive. Of these, one died while they were detained in Yezo (Hokkaidō). Of the original crew, two converted to Christianity and stayed in Irkutsk, and 11 others died while resident in Russia. Kōdayū was therefore the only castaway to return home and he brought with him Russian geographic knowledge and mapmaking skills.

It was this knowledge that was the lasting legacy of his tragic shipwreck. Kōdayū returned with geographic materials including, most likely, the map upon which this one was based. The map and his knowledge were clearly of value, as the map was copied several times and used in government reports about its policies towards the West.

Honda Toshiaki (1744-1821), the likely author, was a proponent of Japan opening itself to the West and engaging in trade. Toshiaki studied astronomy, mathematics and kendo in Edo. At 24, he opened his own school. He wrote *A Secret Plan of Government* (Keisei Hisaku; 経世秘策), in which he proposed lifting a ban of a foreign trade and colonization of Ezo, and *Tales of the West* (Seiiki Monogatari; 西暦物語), both in 1798. Toshiaki was a polymath who knew a bit about the Western world, and wrote that Japan ought to mimic the policies of England, another island country, and "called for more active official promotion of national wealth and strength".

This sort of map, showing the entire world, would have appealed to his arguments. However, these



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manuscript reproductions tended to only circulate in elite circles, making this one of the first examples available to a wider audience.

#### Use of the Russian Language: Toponymic Malaprops

The map was clearly executed by someone who did not have a full grasp of Russian nor of the Cyrillic alphabet. The author makes repeated errors, rendering letters as other visually similar characters. He is particularly confused by the letters "H" (i.e., "N") and "И" (i.e., "I" or hard "E") and frequently renders both as "I" and sometimes the latter as "N". For instance, in Natal he has written "ИАТАЛІВ" instead of "НАТАЛЬ", and in Florida, he has written "флооріла" instead of "Флорида". He also does not seem to understand the difference between "Д" (i.e., "D") and "Л" (i.e., "L"), and frequently renders the former as the latter, as in Canada, Florida, and Madagascar.

In some cases, he uses Latin characters that do not appear in the Cyrillic alphabet. For instance, writing Europe as "FRPONA" rather than "ЕВРОПА". Perhaps this indicates that the author was a student of other European languages.

This is an elite object that was created thanks to a thrilling story of shipwreck, international diplomacy, and remarkable survival. It would be a singular and fascinating addition to any collection of Japanese or world maps.

**Research Credit:** We acknowledge and thank Dr Edward Boyle of Kyushu University for his invaluable research and input on this description.

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Manuscript map of the world in ink and color wash, on unbacked, thick paper; original blue paper wrappers with brushed title, with modern cloth folder in the Japanese style; the map with expert worming repairs, as usual with Japanese maps, otherwise very well preserved, with no foxing evident.