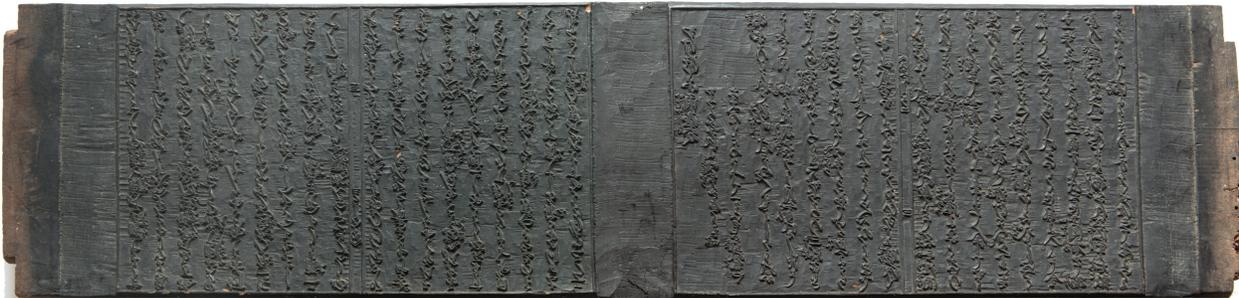




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Japanese Woodblocks



Printing Ukiyo-Zoshi

1. WOODBLOCK. A long wooden board (193 x 760 x 15 mm.), finely carved with text on both sides, employed in the printing of a *ukiyo-zoshi* erotic popular novel entitled *Yushoku hikaebashira* [*Tale of Playful Wit & Flirtation*]. N.p.: [ca. 1702-3]. \$2750.00

A large and early woodblock from a three-volume popular novel written in *kana*-based vernacular. This genre stood in contrast to *kanbun* works which were composed in classical Chinese and Japanese and intended for the intelligentsia. The Union Catalogue of Japanese Literature lists two editions of this novel, one published in 1702, the other a year later. NIJL records only one copy of each edition. We are unable to determine the edition for which our woodblock was used.

The present woodblock bears the text for leaves 2-3 and 4-5 (eight pages total) in volume three of this anonymously written novel. Between the two pairs of text blocks, the middle column, known as the *hashira* (pillar), provides the book's abbreviated title and the foliation. These pages of text describe the pleasure quarters in Kyoto, Osaka, and Tokyo, as well as courtesans.

In overall nice condition, a rare early woodblock from a popular erotic novel which was apparently read to death. There is some minor worming and wear to one edge of the board, but it is sturdy.

• See D. Chibbett, *The History of Japanese Printing and Book Illustration* (1977), p. 236 for an explanation of the *ukiyo-zoshi* genre and its significance.



An Important Text in Japanese Veterinary Medicine

2. WOODBLOCK: MA, Shih-wen (or Shiwen). Carved woodblock, with text on obverse & reverse sides, containing four leaves from the fourth volume of what we believe is the ca. 1728-30 Kyoto edition, published by the Nishimura dynasty, of *Bakyo taizen* [Complete Collection of Equine Classics]. Woodblock (217 x 805 x 20 mm.), including carved handles. \$2500.00

A fine woodblock from the fourth volume (“Winter”), pages 17-20, of an early Japanese edition of this adaptation of one of the three major publications during the Ming dynasty on veterinary medicine, the *Yuan Heng Liao Ma Chi* [Collation of Horse Ailments] by Yu Ben Yuan and Yu Ben Heng (there is some considerable controversy regarding authorship; see Buell, May, & Ramey’s “Chinese Horse Medicine: Texts and Illustrations” in Lo & Barrett, eds., *Imagining Chinese Medicine* (2018), p. 316). The first Chinese edition appeared 1608 and is considered by the above-mentioned authors to be “an extraordinarily rich work.”

Nishimura was a publisher in Kyoto and a specialist in books about medicine and veterinary medicine. The text is carved in Chinese with Japanese reading marks. The fourth and final volume is devoted to rules on how to feed and water horses correctly with many recipes.

In fine condition. The handles have some worming.



Printing Yomihon

3. WOODBLOCK. A woodblock board (184 x 295 x 15 mm.) with text carved on both sides, constituting

two folding leaves (i.e., four pages of text) from a mid-Edo book called *Izumo monogatari* [*Tale of Izumo*], a popular *yomihon*. N.p.: [1830]. \$1250.00

An interesting surviving text woodblock from a book unrecorded in WorldCat. We learn the text's author and publication year from the Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books. *Yomihon* were Edo-period moralistic novels loosely based on Chinese and Japanese historical sources which frequently feature fairy princesses and witches. Ki Yoshimaro (n.d.) composed this narrative with considerable influence from Chinese vernacular tales. The present woodblock bears the text for leaves 19 and 20 of volume one, with *kanji* and *hiragana* text. From the column in the middle, which is called a *hashira* (pillar), we learn the book's title, foliation (from the character near the bottom), and volume number. The raised ends function as handles for the printer as they pressed the block.

In overall excellent condition. Small crack to one side two inches long.



Printing a Mathematical Treatise

4. WOODBLOCK. A woodblock (203 x 390 x 25 mm.) with text & seven mathematical illustrations, delicately carved on both sides. From the late-Edo book entitled: *Saikoku kaisanki* [*Correction of Earlier Mathematical Theories*]; alternate title: *Koeki taiho kaisanki* [*Greatly Beneficial and Precious Information on Old Mathematics*] N.p.: [ca. 1865-7]. \$1950.00

An attractive woodblock from a mathematical treatise, bearing seven finely executed intricate illustrations. These two leaves (i.e., four pages) represent folding leaves number 21 and 24. The obverse, no. 21, illustrates (from left to right) a three-dimensional diagram; a *shogi* (Japanese chess) board; a structure with a deck composed of five segments marked "1 2 4 8 16" illustrating exponential growth; and an ox carrying straws bags of rice with a rice-farmer at its side.

The block's reverse depicts (from the lower left to right) a diagram for calculating the size of a circle; another diagram to measure distance; and a cylinder.

From the column in the middle, the *hashira* (pillar), we learn the book's title and foliation (from the character near the bottom). The raised ends function as handles for the printer to press the block down during printing.

A rare and beautifully rendered woodblock with mathematical diagrams, in near fine condition.



A Work on Children's Education

5. WOODBLOCK. Wooden board (275 x 187 x 8 mm.) carved on one side, divided into two panels, the left panel bearing a poem & a flowering branch for the book's frontispiece, the right panel with two *kanji* characters with the meaning "ethics." This woodblock was used for a book by Mochimasa Ogawa entitled *Domo kaidoku sekkyo tebiki gusa* [Methods for the Ethical Teaching of Children]. [Tokyo: Ryokodo], early Meiji. \$1500.00

An interesting survival, the woodblock for one folding leaf (frontispiece and page one) of an early Meiji manual for children's ethics. The left panel contains a poem composed by Emperor Godaigo above a natural motif. Text on the bottom right provides the author's name, whose dates are unknown. Between the panels, along the outer fold (*hashira*), is the abbreviated title of the book, below which is the *kanji* character for "Preface," and at the bottom is the character for "one," denoting the first page. The facing page one — on the right side — contains the name of the calligrapher responsible for its two beautifully carved characters.

In nice condition, with two inevitable splits, but strong.

Actor Prints

6. KABUKI WOODBLOCK. Wooden board (420 x 203 x 13 mm.), carved on both sides, the obverse side with an image of a kabuki actor dressed as a woman, the reverse bearing two small sections of added patterns for the actor's kimono, the title reads: "Agari yakkoren yo" ["View of a Woman Freshly Bathed"]. Above the title is the name of the actor: "Ganso Segawa Roko (or Kikunojo)." Japan: early Meiji. \$3950.00

A rare survival, this finely rendered example of *yakusha-e* (actor prints) depicts a cross-dressing kabuki actor named Segawa Roko (1693-1749), well-known for his performances of female roles. The reverse side bears two motifs, which seem to be for additional detail on the actor's kimono. When shown vertically, on the bottom left corner of both sides is a notch called a *kento*, which would help with the registration of the image. *Yakusha-e* was one of the most popular genres of *ukiyo-e* prints.

The artist and carver are unknown, however we find the carved seal of Wakai Kenzaburo (or Kanesaburo) (1834-1908), the art dealer and business partner of Hayashi Tadamasu. Kenzaburo became one of the principal exporters of Japanese art and curiosities to Europe.

In fine condition.



A Scene from Yoshiwara

7. WOODBLOCK. A wooden board (170 x 243 x 15 mm.) finely carved on both sides, each with text & an illustration. From an early Meiji book entitled *Tokyo ohayari Yoshiwara bushi* [Popular Lyrics from the Yoshiwara Pleasure Court] which contains witty lyrics from comical songs about the pleasure and entertainment quarter of Tokyo. N.p.: early Meiji. \$1750.00

An amusing survival which bears songs and illustrations about the famous Yoshiwara pleasure quarter. The obverse, signified with the Japanese *kanji* for "up," shows a male customer dancing and a female performer in a kimono playing the *shamisen*. The facing text has a related verse with several examples of wordplay about this type of entertainment.

Denoted by the character signifying "down," the reverse depicts a man clutching a musket on a mountain. It seems to be an allusion to current affairs, but we cannot be certain.

On three of the eight corners of the block there are notches called *kento*, which helped the printer with accurate registration.

In near fine condition. This also comes with modern ink printings of each side.

(Pictured below)



An Astrological Text; A Reused Woodblock

8. WOODBLOCK. A wooden board (167 x 233 x 18 mm.) finely carved on both sides, the obverse containing the images for one leaf (two pages) with an illustration on the left of a celestial globe upon which

the book's title is superimposed. Opposite is the first page of text. The reverse side bears six unrelated & separate images of a rabbit, a dog, two practitioners of *kendo*, a bald man with a cane, & a dealer for gambling. The title of this book is: *Eidai kyushu hitorikangae* [*Manual for Eternal Fortune-Telling by the Nine Stars*]. [Okayama: 1888]. \$1500.00

A very interesting woodblock, which bears, on the obverse side, an illustrated title-page within an elaborate border composed of clouds, and the first page of text. Written by Hideyoshi Ogura, this book concerns a method of fortune-telling derived from Chinese sources and based on reading the stars.

On the reverse, there are six unrelated comical images. Woodblocks in Japan would often be reused in this fashion. The carving on this side is also quite skillful and amusing to those who understand Japanese folk tales. For example, the rabbit comes from a Japanese folktale about a rabbit preparing *mochi* on the Moon.

In excellent condition.

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