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Special Collections
Collection #111-04
Collection of Japanese Kawaraban
c.1800-c.1923

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Number: 111-04

Title: Collection of Japanese Kawaraban

Creator: Providence Public Library, collector

Dates: c.1800-c.1923

Quantity: 1 oversized folder, 21 items.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition: Purchased, 2020-2022

Accruals: Accruals are expected.

Custodial history: Acquired from booksellers, primarily Richard Neylon.

Processed by: The collection was processed by Jessica Rogers-Cerrato in 2022.

Conservation: Not applicable.

Language: Materials are in Japanese.

RIGHTS AND ACCESS

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Providence Public Library, Special Collections department.

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to use the following citation format:
[item number], [item title], Collection of Japanese Kawaraban, Special Collections, Providence Public Library, Providence, RI.

Property Rights: Providence Public Library owns the property rights to this collection. Consideration of the copyrights is the responsibility of the researcher.

INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

Separated material None.

Published description	Not applicable.
Location of originals	Not applicable.
Location of copies	Not applicable.
Publication note	Not applicable.
Subject headings	<p>LCSH:</p> <p>Edo period, Japan, 1600-1868</p> <p>Meiji period, 1868-1912</p> <p>Japan--History</p> <p>Japanese wit and humor</p> <p>Japanese language</p> <p>Shogunate</p> <p>Japanese newspapers</p> <p>Alternative mass media</p> <p>Visitors, Foreign</p> <p>Perry, Matthew Calbraith, 1794-1858</p> <p>Japan. Ansei gokakoku jōyaku (1858)</p> <p>Osaka Bay (Japan)</p> <p>Tokyo Bay (Japan)</p> <p>Nagasaki-ken (Japan)</p> <p>Yokohama-shi (Japan)</p> <p>Popular culture--Japan</p> <p>Gossip in mass media</p> <p>AAT:</p> <p>broad­sides (notices)</p> <p>block printing (relief printing process)</p> <p>illustrations (layout features)</p> <p>advertisements</p> <p>newspapers</p>

SEE ALSO

- The Updike Collection on the History of Printing, Special Collections, Providence Public Library, Providence, R.I.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Published in Japan primarily during the Edo period (1600-1868), kawaraban are cheaply mass produced broadsides that report newsworthy events in writings and illustrations. According to scholars, all kawaraban share particular features: newsworthy content, commercially sold, printed very soon after the event, illegally published without government authorization, and published

anonymously. The prints appeared in various formats and sizes and were printed in large quantities on cheap paper to keep costs down. As the material indicates, the prints were meant for short-term enjoyment rather than for preservation. Kawaraban addressed a range of topics, including natural disasters, superstitious happenings, murders, and occasionally political satire. Printers chose topics more to entertain readers than to educate them. Visual components such as illustrations, diagrams, and maps attracted the people to the print and helped them to understand the text, as well as sometimes offering additional information. The increase in publications coincided with the spread of literacy in both urban and rural areas.

While newsworthy events inspired the production of these broadsides, their journalistic integrity is somewhat questionable – kawaraban were prone to exaggeration and more in the vein of tabloid than newspaper, using humor, wit, and political satire to entice readers. It was for these aspects that the shogunate sought to quell the production of kawaraban. Throughout the Edo period the shogunate repeatedly restricted printing for a mass audience, particularly seeking to avoid rumors and political commentary. By the time Commodore Perry and the Black Ships arrived at the end of the Edo period in 1853, however, the system of censorship could not keep up with the number of prints in circulation. Banning the kawaraban proved nearly impossible because of their popularity and instead drove publishers underground, though these illicit broadsides could be found in just about every street and shop, particularly in port cities.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

Kawaraban appeared in various sizes and were mass produced using cheap materials. Thus, although millions were produced at a time, they were not made for preservation and relatively few survive today. The most common topics covered include gossip, crime, natural disasters, and the arrival of Commodore Matthew C. Perry's ships. Kawaraban specifically about Commodore Perry and his fleet are known as kurofune (black ship) kawaraban. This collection primarily includes kawaraban from the late Edo period (1800-1868) and early Meiji era (1868-1912), with very limited material from the 1920s as well.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

This collection has been organized into a single series containing oversized flat files. Within the collection, items 1-18 are arranged chronologically. Items 19 and above are arranged in order of acquisition.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Item	Title/Description	Date	Box	Folder
1	Title: 南京商船 [Nanjing Shosen] Description: Shipwreck of Nanjing merchant vessel at Shizuoka. Dimensions: 26.5 x 33.5 cm	c.1800	Flat File	1
2	Title: 北亞墨利加之部 ... [Kita Amerika Nobe? ...] Description: Illustrated guide to the foreigners who were beginning to infiltrate Japan. Dimensions: 33 x 48 cm	c.1850	Flat File	1
3	Title: Taiheiraku Bangokei? Description: News of the arrival of barbaric foreigners. Dimensions: 43 x 31 cm	c.1850	Flat File	1
4	Kurofune kawaraban Title: Jokisen no Zu Description: The arrival of Commodore Perry's fleet. Dimensions: 23.5 x 30.5 cm	c.1853	Flat File	1
5	Kurofune kawaraban Title: アメリカ蒸気船之図 ... 豆州 ... 海陸御固御役人附 [Amerika Jokisen no Zu ... Izu ... Kairiku o Kata o Yakunin Fu] Description: Portrait of Commodore Perry's steamship. Dimensions: 60 x 32 cm	1854	Flat File	1
6	Kurofune kawaraban Title: Amerika sengo jinbutsu seimei-roku Description: Details of the people from the American ships. Dimensions: 17 x 23.5 cm	1854	Flat File	1
7	Kurofune kawaraban Title: Amerika Yori Dainihon e Kenjo Mitsugimono Shinajina Description: Illustrates the gifts Commodore Perry presented to the emperor in March 1854. Dimensions: 24 x 30.5 *Note: Attached to item 10	1854	Flat File	1
8	Kurofune Kawaraban Title: 亜墨利加人本牧横浜上陸の図 [Amerikajin Honmoku Yokohama Joriku no Zu] Description: Commodore Perry and the black ships. Dimensions: 22.5 x 31.5 cm	1854	Flat File	1
9	Kurofune kawaraban Title: Kairiku Okatame Tsuke Description: Commodore Perry's ships and a defensive array of clans with thousands of troops along the shorelines. Dimensions: 38 x 61 cm	1854	Flat File	1

10	<p>Kurofune kawaraban Title: Kitaamerika Gasshukoku Teio Yori Kenjo Mitsugimono Shinajina Description: Illustrates the gifts Commodore Perry presented to the emperor in March 1854. Dimensions: 23.5 x 31.75 cm *Note: Attached to item 7</p>	1854	Flat File	1
11	<p>Title: 泰平鑑 : オロシヤ国船之図 [Miyo Taihei Kagami : Orosha Koku Fune no Zu] Description: News of a Russian ship off Tempoan in Osaka Bay. Dimensions: 37 x 49 cm</p>	c.1854	Flat File	1
12	<p>Kurofune Kawaraban Title: 日本力士名前 [Nihon Rikishi Namae] Description: Group portrait of five sumo wrestlers who loaded the gift of rice to Commodore Perry's squadron. Text lists the names of twenty of the rikishi. Accompanying this is a woodcut with a list of 50 names of unknown significance. Dimensions: 30.5 x 23 cm</p>	1854	Flat File	1
13	<p>Kurofune kawaraban Title: Unknown Description: Sumo wrestler defeating three American sailors while American and Japanese onlookers laugh and clap. Dimensions: 17 x 23.5 cm</p>	1854	Flat File	1
14	<p>Title: Ansei Treaties (1) Description: Relating to the Ansei treaties signed between Japan and the United States, Britain, Russia and Netherlands. Describes gifts given by Japan. Dimensions: 23 x 29 cm</p>	1858	Flat File	1
15	<p>Title: Ansei Treaties (2) Description: Relating to the Ansei treaties signed between Japan and the United States, Britain, Russia and Netherlands. Describes gifts given to Japan. Dimensions: 23 x 29 cm</p>	1858	Flat File	1
16	<p>Title: Ansei Treaties (3) Description: Relating to the Ansei treaties signed between Japan and the United States, Britain, Russia and Netherlands. Illustration of a Dutch translator. Dimensions: 23 x 29 cm</p>	1858	Flat File	1
17	<p>Title: 世界の転覆という妄説 [Sekai no Tenpuku to Iu Bosetsu] Description: Osaka, Kato Tomisaburo. Followed by rumors of a prophecy saying the world would end in 1881, this edition covers the subsequent hysteria, including a spate of suicides. Dimensions: 52 x 35 cm</p>	c.1881	Flat File	1

18	Title: Tenjiku Watari - Nama Taiho Description: An advertisement for the great elephant show. Dimensions: 33.5 x 47.5 cm	c.1883	Flat File	1
19	Kurofune kawaraban Title: Kaisei Taiheikan Description: After Perry's initial visit in 1853, the defense of Japan became paramount and defense or peace (taihei) prints began to appear. When Perry returned a year later, his ships were added to many prints, such as this one. This is called a 'revised' map. Dimensions: 40 x 61 cm	1854	Flat File	1
20	Kurofune kawaraban Title: Taihei Anmin Gazu Description: Top half is a detail of Japanese defenses and the bottom half is a view of incoming ships. The print includes images of Dutch ships and American paddle steamers. Dimensions: 56 x 39 cm	1854	Flat File	1
21	Title: 紫頭巾 : 大強盗 : 殺人事件 [Murasaki Zukin : Dai Goto : Satsujin Jiken] Description: News of the mysterious people's hero of late 18th century Tokyo, Purple Hood (Murasaki Zukin). The first cinematic appearance of Purple Hood was the 1923 movie 'Ukiyo-e Murasaki Zukin,' the debut film of screenwriter Susukita Rokuhei. This print was most likely created around the time of the movie's release as part of a publicity campaign. Dimensions: 33 x 66 cm	c.1923	Flat File	1
22	Title: 教育参考萬国動物大會々主宮城 [Kyoiku Sanko Mankoku Dobutsu Daikaikai Shu Miyagi?] Description: Menagerie featuring interpretive "animals of the world" illustrations, including kangaroos, bears, & sharks. Dimensions: 44 x 45 cm	c.1860	Flat File	1