



An important 18th century map of Nagasaki

KAEMPFER, Engelbert.

Urbs Nangasaki Cum Portu & Agro circumjacenti. Ex Ipsis Japonum mappis descriptis

London: Johann Caspar Scheuchzer, 1727. Coloured. 330 x 480mm.

£550

A map of Nagasaki Harbour, with the city's street layout shown. Strangely the names of the features are written on all angles. Under the plan are illustrations of gold, silver and copper coins. Of particular interest is the artificial island of Dejima (here Desima, also Tsukishima or 'built island'), linked to the city by a single bridge. This was used to keep first the Portuguese and then the Dutch merchants isolated. At the time of publication the Dutch were the only Europeans allowed to enter Japan, only at Nagasaki. After living in Japan between September 1690 and October 1692, employed as a physician by the Dutch East India Company, Kaempfer returned to his native Germany and wrote a description of the country. He died before he could find a publisher, but Sir Hans Sloane acquired his papers and instructed Scheuchzer, his librarian, to translate his account. Thus the first edition was published in London, with French and Dutch editions translated from the English.

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