

"PARIME LACUS" ON JAPANESE OLD MAPS OF THE WORLD

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"Parime Lacus" is a large lake which was imagined to be in Guiana Highlands, South America, by Walter Raleigh in the late 16th century. This lake is seen on many maps which were drawn in the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe and America.

Alexander v. Humboldt studied on this lake on the maps and showed its types as follows : Jodocus Hondius 1599, Sanson 1656, d'Anville 1760, Surville 1778 and so on, in his "Voyage aux régions équinoxiales du nouveau continent".

The "Parime Lacus" by Jodocus Hondius 1599 was a very large lake, about 10 degrees in the longitudinal direction and about 2 degrees in the latitudinal direction, and situated between 1°N and 2°S.

The lake by Sanson 1656 was smaller, but was a large lake, about 6 degrees in the longitudinal direction and more than 2 degrees in the latitudinal direction, and situated between 2.3° N and 0.5° S. This type of "Parime Lacus" is seen on the map of Guiana in the Atlas by Mercator-Hondius-Janssonius 1636, and also on Joan Blaeu's world map 1648.

The lake by d'Anville was much smaller, about 1 degree in the longitudinal direction and about a half degree in the latitudinal direction, and situated between 3.5° N and 4° N.

The lake by Surville 1778 was smaller than the antecedent lakes, and it is not seen on Japanese maps of the world.

Before the Portuguese came to Japan in the middle 16th century, the Japanese did not know the New World. It is said that "Theatrum Orbis Terrarum" by A. Ortelius was brought to Japan in the late 16th century.

"Konyo Bankoku Zenzu", Chinese map of the World by Father Matteo Ricci, was brought to Japan in the 17th century.

The Japanese government decided to take a national isolation policy and closed Japan from the outside world in 1630s. Only one port, Nagasaki, in the westernmost Japan, was open to the Netherlands and China in a restricted form. But the Japanese were so curious about the outside world that many maps of the world were drawn on "byobu" (ornamental folding screens) or printed on papers based on restricted informations.

"Parime Lacus" appeared in the early 17th century, changed its form and size, and disappeared in the middle 19th century on Japanese maps of the world, with a delay, for examples as follows :

The Map of the world on byobu of Hosshinji Temple, Obama, which is estimated to the early 17th century, depicts the world fundamentally similar to *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* and "Konyo Bankoku Zenzu". It does not depict any indication about the "Parime Lacus". No geographical names were shown on this map. (Fig.1)



Fig.1 Map of the world (a part), Hosshinji Temple

"Bankoku Sozu", Map of the world, published by Eya Shobe in woodcut print in the early 17th century, depicts the world similar to "Konyo Bankoku Zenzu" in a simplified form. (Fig. 2)

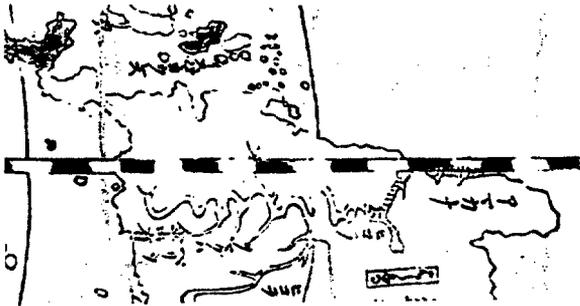


Fig.2 "Bankoku Sozu" (a part)

The Map of the world on byobu of Kosetsu Museum, Kobe, which is estimated also to the early 17th century, depicts the "Parime Lacus" similar to Jodocus Hondius 1599. It is said that this map on byobu was drawn on the basis of Wilem Blaeu's world map on Mercator projection, by the Japanese painters who worked for the Catholic seminarios before the prohibition of Christianity by Japanese government. The geographical name "Guiana" was shown on the map in the lake in Japanese Hirakana characters. (Fig.3)



Fig.3 Map of the world (a part), Kosetsu Museum

The Map of the world on byobu of Kobe Municipal Museum, which is estimated to the late 18th century, depicts the "Parime Lacus" similar to Sanson 1656. Geographical names "Guiana", "Amazonas" and "Canibales" were shown on the map around the lake in Chinese characters. (Fig.4)



Fig.4 Map of the world (a part), Kobe Municipal Museum

"Chikyu Bankoku Sankai Yochi Zenzusetsu" (Geographic and Hydrographic Map of the World) was drawn and published in woodcut print by Nagakubo Sekisui, geographer, in 1788. This map was composed according to the "Konyo Bankoku Zenzu" by Matteo Ricci in outline, but he added new informations partially. It depicts the "Parime Lacus" similar to Sanson 1656, but with free imagination about the river courses. The geographical name "Parime Lacus" was shown on the map under the lake in Chinese characters. (Fig.5)



Fig.5 "Chikyu Bankoku Sankai Yochi Zenzusetsu" (a part)

"Shintei Bankoku Zenzu" (Newly Revised Map of the World) was drawn by Takahashi Kageyasu, Official Astronomer of Tokugawa shogunate government, in 1810, based on Arrowsmith's map. This map depicts the "Parime Lacus" similar to d'Anville 1760. The geographical name "Parime Lacus" was shown on the map in Japanese Katakana characters. (Fig.6)



Fig.6 "Shintei Bankoku Zenzu" (a part)

"Chotei Bankoku Zenzu" (Second Revised Map of the World) was published in woodcut print by Yamaji Kaiko, Official Astronomer of Tokugawa shogunate government, in 1855. This map was based on the Universal-Handatlas by K.Sohr et al. 1848 and other resources. This map does not depict the "Parime Lacus" any more. (Fig.7)



Fig.7 "Chotei Bankoku Zenzu" (a part)

The above-mentioned maps are a part of the Japanese maps of the world which were drawn manually or printed during the Tokugawa shogunate era of Japan. These maps were selected to show the flow of the development of the cartographic expression of the "Parime Lacus" in a country separated from the outside world. Some of other maps were relatively older in contents because of older resources used. Some of the authors used secondary or tertiary resources and they could not find the way to judge which resources were more recent or appropriate.

The Japanese government began to open its ports gradually in 1850s and abandoned its national isolation policy from 1630s. The acquisition of the informations of the outside world became much easier, and Japanese maps of the world became up-to-date afterwards.