

“Hikifuda” advertising handbill in the form of a calendar



- Author unknown
- Date of production 1912, the Meiji period (1868–1912)
- Dimensions height: 38 cm, width: 25.5 cm
- ID no. MSITJM0423
- Museum [The Manggha Centre of Japanese Art and Technology](#)
- Availability in stock
- Subjects [city](#), [daily life](#), [written](#)
- Technique [lithography](#)
- Material [paper](#)
- Acquired date purchased in 2008
- Object copyright The Manggha Centre of Japanese Art and Technology
- Digital images copyright public domain
- Digitalisation RDW MIC, Małopolska's Virtual Museums Plus project
- Tags [Japonia](#), [czas](#), [2D](#), [druk](#), [WMM Plus](#), [domena publiczna](#)

Among the many *hikifuda* advertising handbills distributed by publishers to their customers, the most popular were those with motifs connected with the New Year, such as cranes and pine trees, as well as calendars. In Japan, there is a tradition of offering New Year's wishes, and new year calendars are one of those obligatory presents given on this occasion.

Kanji signs create an interesting pattern when placed around a vertical panel intended for an individual advertising text. In the upper, horizontal panel, there is the title written from the right to the left: ??????? ? ("An abridged calendar for the 45th year of the Meiji period"; the 45th year of the Meiji period corresponds to 1912 in the Gregorian calendar). Below, there are the names of the two astrological types of calendar (horizontally written, as well). The first one, ???, is for the solar calendar. The name of the second calendar is difficult to read. In the columns below them, there are the dates and the names of the days related to astrology. In Japan, since ancient times, people have been unusually attached to the meaning of the days and position of the stars, and they have even adjusted their plans according to these meanings.

The direction in which the signs were written indicates the time when the calendar was printed. In ancient Japan, people used to write from the top downwards, and from the right to the left. Horizontal inscriptions, written from the right to the left, started appearing in printed materials of the 19th century, e.g. in woodcut illustrations. However, in the 20th century, a custom was established where vertical inscriptions are written from the right to the left, and horizontal inscriptions are written from the left to the right.

A *Hikifuda* in the form of a calendar was both an advertisement and a practical tool which would hang on the walls of houses for the whole year.

Elaborated by Aleksandra Görlich (The Manggha Centre of Japanese Art and Technology), editorial team of Małopolska's Virtual Museums, © all rights reserved