



Philipp Franz von Siebold *Fauna Japonica* 1934-1937

Reprint, originally published in Lugduni Batavorum [Leiden], 1833-1850

Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796 ~ 1866) came to Japan in 1823 as a resident physician at the Dutch trading post on Dejima Island in Nagasaki Prefecture. Yet, his life was not confined to the island. In 1824, he opened an institute that served as a medical school and clinic in Narutaki, Nagasaki, and later in 1826 he accompanied the chief factor of the trading post on a court journey to Edo. In total, his tenure in Japan lasted approximately six years.

During his stay in Japan, Siebold socialized with Japanese doctors and “Dutch” scholars and shared his knowledge of Western medicine and natural sciences. He also devoted himself to researching and collecting information on a wide range of subjects including the Japanese land, society, culture, animals and plants. Even though he was unable to return home with maps of Japan, since the possession of maps was strictly forbidden by the Japanese government (Siebold Incident), he returned to the Netherlands with an enormous amount of collections.

Fauna Japonica is one of the publications that Siebold produced upon return to the Netherlands. It is a series of monographs based on animal specimens he collected in Japan and drawings by Japanese artist Keiga Kawahara. In cooperation with scholars at a museum in Leiden, it was published in the following five volumes between 1833 and 1850: *Aves*, *Pisces*, *Crustacea*, *Mammalia* and *Reptilia* including *Amphibians*. This is the first book ever written on Japanese animals in European languages, namely Latin and French. With its detailed descriptions and illustrations, *Fauna Japonica* widely introduced Japanese animals to Western Europe.

The series was reprinted in Japan by Shokubutsu Bunken Kankokai (a botanical publication society) between 1934 and 1937 with commentaries by Japanese scholars, and the *Aves* and *Crustacea* volumes are displayed in this exhibition.