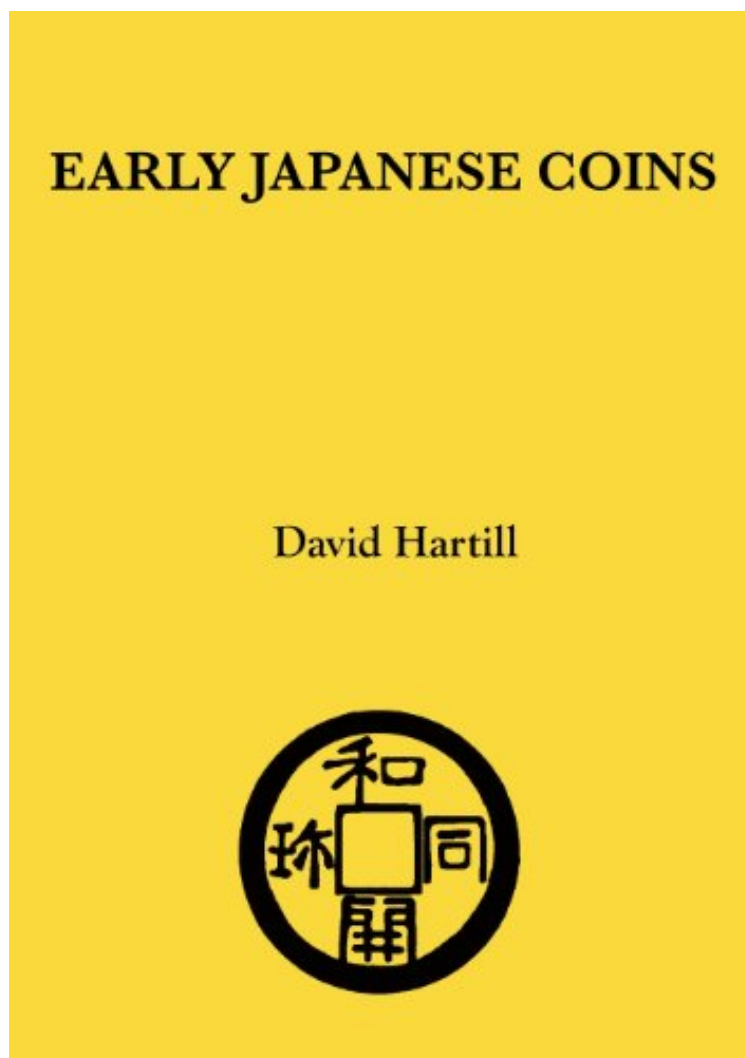


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[FREE] Early Japanese Coins

Early Japanese Coins

David Hartill : Early Japanese Coins before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Early Japanese Coins:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommended for novice and serious collector alikeBy ryutekiguyI must commend Mr. Hartill on a very organized, concise, very informative volume that seems to meet the collector between The Standard Catalog of World Coins and Ogawa/Munro/JNDA. The illustrations are plentiful and clear and, given time put into this volume, will aid the collector in cataloging and dating his coins. I was put off at first by the similarities of the various Kanei Tsuho, but Hartill guides you in differentiating these often difficult coins. Excellent layout /proportions of pages and images. Too, users will not have to identify items by correlating text and images back and forth from one page to another as in a number of other sources since they are conveniently located on the same page. I have used this volume ever since I purchased it and it has proven invaluable. Highly recommended

for novice and serious collector alike.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One of the only English language surveys of Japanese coinage up to the Meiji era...By ewomackThe 1868 Meiji Restoration changed Japan forever. To this day, it still marks an indelible dividing line between the modern and the pre-modern. Not only did the Emperor's role and power change significantly, but the once isolated country openly appropriated and embraced western ideals and lifestyles. Politics changed. Economics changed. Food changed. Clothing changed. All lives changed. Shifts of such magnitude have seismic impact and typically reverberate throughout all aspects of a culture. Not surprisingly, Japan's coinage also clearly reflected these explosive events. The stark differences between pre-Meiji and Meiji coins provides a luminous metallic equivalent of just how much the Restoration uprooted traditional Japanese ways. Comparing a Meiji-era 1 Yen silver coin, with its beautifully ornate obverse dragon coiling and writhing like wind blown tinsel, to a Kanei Tsuho copper coin, or even to a small rectangular silver Issu-Gin coin, of the same era says it all. Drastic change had occurred. This may qualify as one of modern coinage's most momentous transformations, mirroring Japan's overall unprecedented modernization through the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But what came before that leap still has a fascinating story to tell. Once again, coins can provide a window to history, assuming that sufficient information exists. Given the upheavals of World War II and the often overwhelming language and cultural barriers, Japanese coinage in general remains a niche field in English-language numismatics. Within this niche, the blazing aesthetic appeal and precious metal content of Meiji coins may distract collectors away from the generally cruder pre-Meiji coins. Information on these earlier coins in English had remained irritatingly sparse until very recently. A few books existed, including Munro's classic "Coins of Japan" from 1904 and "Japanese Coinage" from 1972, but they begged and pleaded for updates and revisions. A new work finally arrived in 2011, called "Early Japanese Coins," that greatly illuminates the often mysterious and ineffable field of pre-Meiji Japanese coinage. It provides a solid survey from Japan's first known coins to the final gold, silver and copper releases until the 1871 New Currency Act changed everything. "Pre-Meiji" is a slight misnomer here, since Japan did produce some traditional coinage during the Meiji era. Nonetheless, it provides a convenient historical demarcation despite the brief overlap. The book begins with a smattering of general information: a rarity and (very general) price guide, calligraphic conventions, symbolism, introductory information on Japanese pronunciation and writing, a chart of numbers and common words, units of measurement, era names, a fascinating description of the manufacture of traditional poured and cast coins, maps of provinces and a bibliography. The book does of course include plenty of Japanese characters, but it transliterates everything. No Japanese language knowledge is required. Concerning rarity and pricing, the book uses a simple scale ranging from "VC" or "Very Common" to "ER" or "Extremely Rare." Given this ranking, an accompanying chart gives an extremely general price range. For example, a "Scarce" coin can price anywhere from 10,000 to 14,999 Yen. As such, this is not really a price guide and prices don't appear next to individual coins. Regardless, it does provide a bridge to the annually published JNDA price guide, which does include more recent pricing information in Yen (but this guide does require considerably more Japanese language knowledge). Next, things unfold mostly chronologically, starting with "early coinage" such as the Fuhon coins excavated in 1999 and the enigmatic non-inscribed silver coins or "Mu Mon Gin Sen." These date to the 7th century. Historical information accompanies each section. The famous, and immensely rare, "Twelve Antique Coins" from the Nara and Heian periods follow. From roughly 710 to 1185 Japan made its own coins in 12 varieties that evolved through time. The first of these, the "Wado Kaichin" has become a ubiquitous symbol in Japan. It even appears on biscuits. Then a shock: a 600 year gap exists between the "Twelve Antique Coins" and the next officially made Japanese coins. Nothing. Barter prevailed, but Chinese and other unofficial coins, known as "Bita-Sen," did circulate. This lasted until the time of the "great unifiers" during the Momoyama period in the late 16th century, the time of such famous Japanese names as Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu. Not only did they unify Japan, they largely unified the coinage and re-introduced it as a medium of exchange. Coins returned for good. Various varieties exist, each differentiated by their cast Kanji characters. Apart from these characters, most of these coins look nearly identical. Some have writing on the reverse, some don't. The Edo Period didn't introduce many changes either apart from the Kanji. The book lists and pictures, in ink rubbings similar to Munro, seemingly endless varieties. The book's longest section deals with the widely circulated, and still quite easy to find, Kanei Tsuho coins. Many have interesting wave patterns on the reverse. So many varieties exist that the book limits itself to only the major ones. Even this limited scope provides for pages of information and coin rubbings. Other coins also appear, such as the common oval-shaped Tempo Tsuho coins, less common large square coins and various provincial issues. E-sen often feature interesting depictions of animals such as phoenix, horses, roosters, foxes, Gods such as Daikoku or Ebisu, volcanoes or Samurai helmets. The book categorizes these as "decorative coins" or amulets. Plenty of fascinating rubbings of these coins are included. The final sections discuss gold and silver coins and their context. Most gold coinage initially served ceremonial or political purposes and didn't circulate. This includes the famous hand-inlaid and gorgeous Oban, which evolved into the Koban and gradually saw significant debasement. Small rectangular electrum coins did circulate in numerous varieties. The Chogin and Mameita-gin stand out among silver issues. Chogin were elongated oval stamped slugs. Round Mameta-gin made up the value difference in Chogin and usually accompanied them. Small rectangular silver coins also circulated up and into the Meiji era. These remain generally affordable today. The book includes a

chart that helps determine the era of one of these small coins. The location of an inverted sakura on the obverse indicates its approximate age. Additional charts show Kanji varieties. Short discussions of the rare "Ansei Ni Shu Gin," and its fascinating back story, counterstamped foreign coins and local silver coins close this chapter. The book ends with "Coin Packages" or "Tsutsumi kin-ga." These beyond rare pieces feature multiple gold or silver coins wrapped in paper and certified. Apparently people trusted the certifiers so much they rarely opened the packages. The wealthy typically used these for large purchases or transfers of wealth. This section also includes four photos of these rare specimens. Anyone desiring knowledge of pre-modern Japanese coins will find a slew of helpful and easy to comprehend information in "Early Japanese Coins." Roughly the size of a sheet of paper, it contains only black and white coin rubbings and pictures, but the lack of color doesn't detract from the content. It's fair to say that another book, especially a recent one, with this much information doesn't even exist at this time. As such, if Japanese coins ever become more than a niche field in the English-speaking world, this book will have likely played a major role in that transformation.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Absolutely fabulous resource!!! By Jackie-the-Greyhound I only wish this book had been available when I was still living in Japan. Areas of coins that can be intimidating to the Western coin collector are the 'cash' type coins as well the other (gasp, not even round!) non-western style type coinages. I happen to have a fondness for things Japanese (including coins), but even so I did avoid the pre-Meiji era coins as the only reading resources I knew of were scarce, limited, difficult to understand, pricey or some combination of all these issues. The 'gold standard' resource would definitely be Munro, but as it was written in 1904 the writing style is not as accessible to the modern reader, not to mention it was hard to find (in nice copy that is-- the OCR and xerox copies floating around often left a lot to be desired, though there is a 2010 printing that is quite serviceable now). Enter this book--it gives an excellent introduction to the numbers, locations, era/Emperor names etc so when trying to look up specific coins they make sense. The illustrations and kanji depictions are clear and the layout of the information is very understandable. There is plenty of historical reference relating to the changes in the coinage as well which makes for interesting reading as well. Basically the coinage is covered starting from the 'twelve antique coins' dating back to the Nara period following through periods of Chinese coin usage, imitations of the Chinese designs etc. The changes are well described and depicted. There are also excellent descriptions and black and white illustrations showing the old and new Kanei Tsuho type coinage including mintmarks and a well done 'finding guide' in order to identify different styles. I can go on, but rather here is a listing of the contents (comments in parentheses are mine): Introduction Catalog conventions Rarity and price guide (not specific prices, but ranges which is more useful as they are relative and values change over time) Japanese Calligraphy (different styles) Japanese Pronunciation, Writing and Names Japanese Numbers and other common characters Traditional Units of Measurement Era Names of Modern Times (modern as in 1500s or so through Meiji/1868) Shoguns Method of Manufacture (with old woodcut type illustrations from Japan) Illustrating Coins Map of Japan and Neighbouring Countries (okay, I quibble here, Tokyo is really out of place on this map!) The Provinces of Feudal Japan Bibliography (very nice!) THE CATALOGUE 1. Early Coinage/the Twelve Antique Coins 2. Bita Sen 3. Momoyama and Early Edo Periods 4. Kanei Tsuho Coins 5. Other Edo Period Coins 6. Provincial Coins 7. Decorative Coins, Amulets and E-sen 8. Gold Coins 9. Silver Coins (the very many types..)

If I could have only one book referring to the pre-Meiji coinage this would be the one I would choose. The information is clear and well laid out, and has excellent descriptions, historical notes and illustrations, with research notes and citations provided. (Okay, if someone were to give me a well kept 1904 copy of Munro I'd take that too, but for readability, clarity and value I like this one!). Excellent resource and HIGHLY recommended!! JT Gedit because my grammar sucks (and I probably still have some typos left...)

[16:19:22] Jables (Jamie): Early Japanese Coins is an up-to-date catalogue of pre-Meiji copper, gold and silver coins. As well as official issues, the often decorative provincial issues are covered. A selection of the intriguing Japanese amulets known as E-sen is also included. It replaces Munro and other western works. It is designed to be used both by advanced collectors who have some knowledge of characters, and beginners who will find the layout easy to follow and will quickly gain a knowledge of this coinage. It draws on historical, as well as the latest western and Japanese numismatic sources, and describes the circumstances under which many of the coins were issued and used. Guides to the Japanese language are given, and maps and lists of era names and rulers add to the background information. There is a description of how the coins were made, illustrated from a contemporary document. A Finding Guide is provided for the difficult Kanei Tsuho series, which will enable these coins to be readily attributed from the differences in their calligraphy. A rarity guide, linked to an approximate value, is provided for each coin. The author has been studying and collecting Far Eastern coins for over fifty years, and has also written the prize winning Cast Chinese Coins, and the definitive Qing Cash.