

Toppan Printing Co., Ltd. (now TOPPAN Holdings Inc.)

Printing Museum, Tokyo (2): Experience Report

Temporary Exhibition: MAP and PRINTING

Since its establishment, [Printing Museum, Tokyo](#) has conducted research and studies into the relationship between printing and people from the viewpoint of the history of culture and civilization through a variety of activities, with the aim of creating Printing Culture Studies to be passed on to future generations. Among these activities is an exhibition that plays a central part in the dissemination of information. Join me as I take a room-by-room tour of the museum while preparing for a report on the temporary exhibition that is currently being held here.

[Temporary Exhibition: MAP and PRINTING \(September 17th, 2022 to December 11th, 2022\)](#)

It is customary for Printing Museum, Tokyo to hold a large-scale temporary exhibition annually, in addition to the general exhibition. The temporary exhibitions held by the museum have always clearly shown how printing has been deeply associated with and contributed to the development of society and culture in many ways.

The current [MAP and PRINTING exhibition](#) is also designed in such a way that from the angle of maps, visitors can get a clear view of the history of people's migration and expansion in the sphere of people's activities, as well as the transition of Japan's position from a global viewpoint and the existence of the world from Japan's viewpoint, through the development of printing technology.



The entrance to the MAP and PRINTING exhibition, featuring an impressive display of large maps in the exhibition room

Temporary exhibitions are usually held by using a part of the space for the general exhibition (half of the entire exhibition space), but for this temporary exhibition, in the Prologue space, the approach leading from the ticket counter to the exhibition room, where footprints are marked on the floor in line with cartographer Tadataka Ino's estimated stride length, visitors enjoy the feeling of how he measured distance as they walk toward the exhibition room.



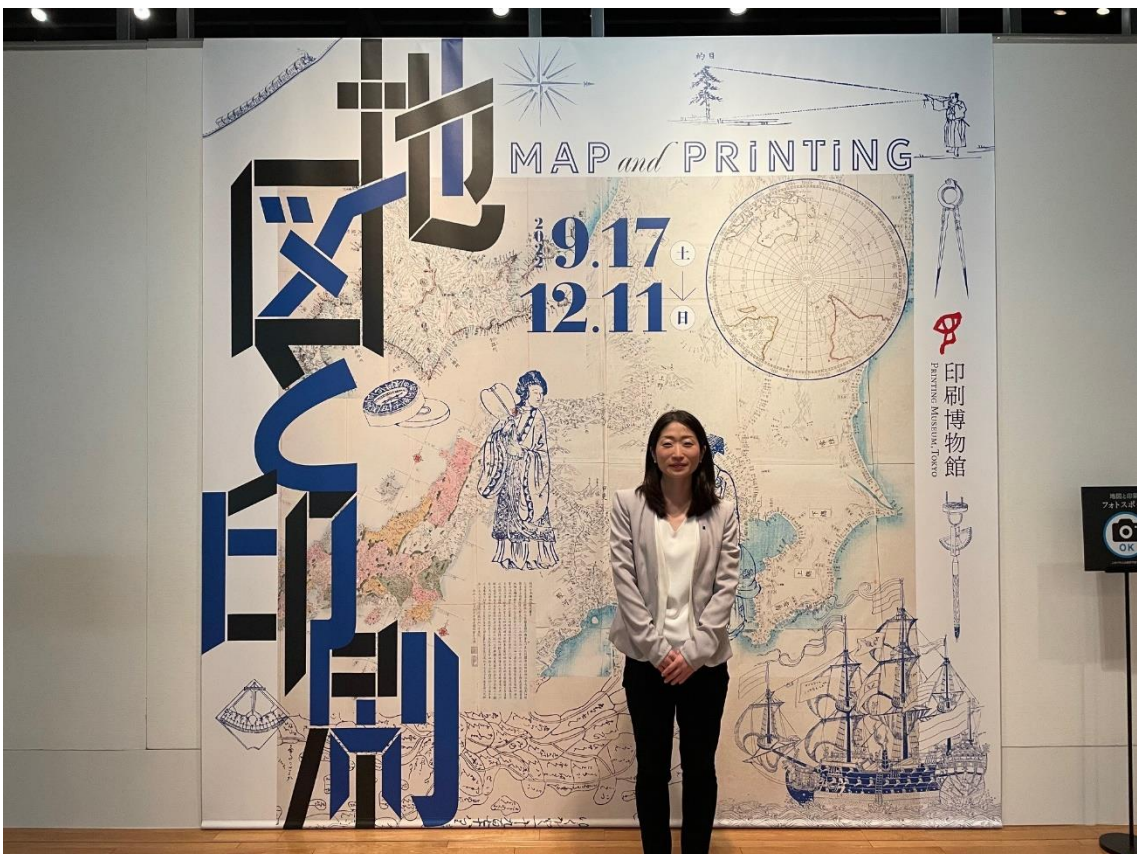
Looking at the footprints of Tadataka Ino, I was surprised by how long his stride was – perhaps he was a tall man...

This exhibition mainly displays Japanese maps created in the early modern period. Picture maps were created for domestic trips or as guides to territories based on human memories, records and impressions. However, as objectivity and accuracy came to be pursued in a unique manner along with the introduction of Chinese and Western geography, maps gradually came to assume more importance as a keystone for national defense in case of attacks by foreign countries. Visitors here can feel how the scale of maps expanded.



The exhibition consists of three parts and the meticulous descriptions of the maps make it easy to lose track of time.

Photography is not allowed within the exhibition room, but visitors can take pictures at a photo spot at the exit. Ms. Shiki, the curator who showed me around the exhibition room, was kind enough to take my commemorative photo.



The photo spot at the exit of the exhibition room

The Printing House, where visitors can experience printing to further deepen their interest

After leaving the exhibition room, visitors can see a glass-walled space like a laboratory in front of them, which is the Printing House. This room hosts various events such as a tour of the Printing House, letterpress workshops, letterpress workshops for adults, work experience programs for students, and corporate training programs. You can check the latest event information shared on the following social media sites by Printing Museum, Tokyo.

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PrintingMuseumTokyo>
- X: <https://twitter.com/PrintingMuseumT>



The Printing House is enclosed by glass, so visitors can look into the room from outside. The old printing machines are still on the active list.

Printing Museum, Tokyo can be enjoyed at home!

After enjoying a room-by-room tour of the museum, you should also visit the small section where a simple printing experiencing is offered. Here you can stamp a piece of paper with stamps of different colors in order to produce calendars for each season. This is a great place to make a souvenir.



The design of calendars seems to vary according to the season. The author enjoyed making an autumn calendar when visiting the museum.

Printing Museum, Tokyo can also be enjoyed in other ways outside the exhibition rooms.

The “Inpaku Podcast” launched in 2022 allows visitors to enjoy commentaries for the general exhibition online via voice navigation. In addition to being used as an audio guide within the exhibition room, its content can be obtained simply by scanning a QR code, so visitors can take this home as a souvenir to enjoy anytime and anywhere.

As may be expected of a museum specialized in printing, pictorial records for temporary exhibitions are meticulously designed and bound, proving very popular with visitors. The catalogue of the Astronomy and Printing exhibition held in 2018 received the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Award at the 60th Japan Catalogue Fair. Unusually for a catalogue, it continues to sell out even after being reprinted. (Now the sale has restarted as it was reprinted again in 2023)

In addition, the museum announced the long-awaited opening of Printing Museum, Tokyo Online Shop, which carries official goods of the museum and its temporary exhibitions. This online shop was opened in response to demand from those who cannot visit the museum for various reasons but want to get goods or purchase pictorial records published in the past. It is expected to expand its product lineup in the future.

After the interview

I realized that although a map is one of the essential items for our lives, I have taken maps for granted and always enjoyed benefiting from them without much opportunity to give thought to their origin and historical transition. This temporary exhibition enables us to understand how the development of printing technology has supported the widespread use of maps. Picture maps drawn based on what people saw and heard are interesting in that they show the luxuriance of people's imagination, and although they are lacking in accuracy, they give us a window into the values and interests of people in times gone by. On the other hand, maps appreciated and used for military and other purposes show that they were made meticulously and accurately with much emphasis placed on rationality and any chance of using discretion eliminated. It is in the relationship between MAP and PRINTING that we can find the key to understanding what society was aiming for and where it was heading in any given time.

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- Date of interview: Thursday, September 22th, 2022
- Site: [Printing Museum, Tokyo](#)
(TOPPAN Koishikawa Building, 1-3-3, Suido, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo)
- Release date for the article: October 14th, 2022