Antedatings of Japanese Loanwords in the OED²

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The first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary gave particulars of some 60 Japanese words admitted as having existed or existing in the English language. However, it had an enormous number of unexpected omissions, and went out of date because of the drastic changes in the post-war world. The second edition that had been eagerly awaited appeared in 1989, and the most intriguing of its contents were the numerous additions of words of foreign origin. It contributed a generous quota to the words of Japanese origin, and contained approximately 380 Japanese loanwords, exclusive of their derivatives. The coverage of the words may be sufficient for users, but their lexical descriptions are assumed to be still far from complete.

The OED is particularly valuable because it attempts to provide the users with the earliest date and the context of the first appearance of a word in English literature. “The OED editors, however, have never claimed that the earliest quotations cited are the first to have appeared in print, and they were fully aware of the hazards of doing so. In fact, James Murray once observed that probably three-quarters of the headwords could be ante-dated.” (Donna Lee Berg: A Guide to the Oxford English Dictionary, OUP, 1993, p. 91) It is, therefore, safe to assert that many Japanese words have escaped the notice of hundreds of contributors to the OED, and have quotation citations as first appearing in much later works. Nevertheless, to the best of my knowledge, no comprehensive examinations of quotations for Japanese borrowings earlier than those given in the OED have been carried out since the publication of “The Influence of Japanese on English” by E.V. Gatenby in 1931. My detailed scrutiny of about forty English books on Japan has revealed that about 100 Japanese loanwords, including derivatives, appeared earlier than the dates assigned in the OED² and its Additions Series (1993). The following is a list of antedatings of the Japanese borrowings, and the texts in which they occur. The former date in round brackets following the word is that of the first recorded appearance found in the OED² and the latter is an earlier date found by me which is to be given after an arrow in the brackets.


- Japanese (1604 → 1588) . . . , that these Japones in old time were Chinas, and that they came from that mightie kingdome vnto these ilands, . . . [Vol. II, p. 294] [Japanese in the sense of a native of Japan.]
- Ryukyu (1808 → 1588) . . . : excepting such as would of their owne good will acknowledge vassalage, and giue him tribute, and remaine friends, as vnto this day the Lechios and other nations do. [I 94]


- dairi (1662 → 1613) From my castell in Sorongo this 4 daye of the 9 moneth, and in the 18th yeare of our Darye according to our Computacion. [8 October, 1613, 113]
- Japan (attrib.) (1673 → 1613) George Peeterson the Flushinger did willingly exchange with Mr. Cocks 2120 Tayes Japan monye for Royalls, . . . [17 November, 1613, 180]
- Japanner (1614 → 1613) . . . it is generally thought emongest vs that he is a naturalised Japanner. [29 July 1613, 109]
- shogun (1615 → 1613) Shongo sama, the Emperors sonne, . . . [2 August, 1613, 113] [Sama is a honorific affix.]
- tachi (1948 → 1613) And towards evening the King sent 2 varnished Armors, a present to his Majesty the King of England, Allso a
Tatch... and a wagadash a present from him to myselfe. [2 August, 1613, 134]


• Japanese (adj.) (1719 → 1614) the 8 daye wind Souther11 ffayr which we rod still theis being the 18 daye of the Iappanes reckninge being thvrsdaye [p. 14]
• kotatsu (1876 → 1615) Item bought a cotates for fire [59]
• miso (1727 —→ 1615) Item pd for a barrell of misso .........5 masse [55]
• tabi (1616 → 1615) Item bought 8 payr of tabbes cost .........012-00 mas [58]


• awabi (1889 → 1616) And Joco Conde Dono sent me a present of 3 hanches salt veneson, with certen shellfish called rodey. [March 14, 1616, Vol. I, p. 120]
• Japanese (sb.) (1828 → 1622) And Capt. Camps came and bought the articles which we ment to present to the King of Firandos brother and to Torazemon Dono, wrot in Japons, the coppies whereof we keepe; . . . [February 17, 1622, II 243]
• Kabuki (1899 → 1616) Capt. Adames envited all the english to a banket with cabokes. [December 15, 1616, I 220]
• kimono (1886 → 1615) And I made Tushma, my boy, a new kerimons of damask of Canton, with a cloake or gaberdyn of stript taffete. [September 4, 1615, I 51]
• koku (1727 → 1615) I receved 16 boates lading of wheate ashore this day, containing 1,198 sacks, is 300 gocos, wanting 2 sack laid out in henne meate. [June 12, 1615, I 8]
• matsu (1727 → 1616) 79 cakis mates nuque of 2 tattamy long. [April 20, 1616, I 129] [cakis mates nuque: square pine lumber]
• Nippon (1727 → 1615) Capt. Speck and the rest sent to thank me for their good entertainment, viz, nifon catange. [July 3, 1615, I 18] [nifon catange: according to the Japanese custom]
• obang (1662 → 1615) And Andrea Dittis, the China Capt., brought back a bar of Oban gould,... [September 7, 1615, I 53]


• Hizen (1727 → 1670) But whereas Fesen produces the best Porcelan [sic] in Japan; . . . [p. 434]
• Nippon (1727 → 1670) This Spacious and Wealthy Isle, by the Natives call'd Nippon, . . . [78] [See the above example.]


• daimio (1839 → 1727) Particular Provinces are govern'd by hereditary Princes, call'd Daimio, which signifies High-named, that is, Princes and Lords of the highest rank. [Vol. I, p. 80]
• Eta (1897 → 1727) They call them by the scandalous name of Katsuwa, which signifies the very worst sort of Rabble, and put them upon the same foot with the jetta, or Leather-Tanners, the most infamous sort of people in their opinion, . . . [I 261]

Antedatings of Japanese Loanwords in the OED2

• hiragana (1822 → 1727) The Firo Canna, and Catta Canna characters, as they are call'd at the top of the several colums [sic] wherein they are plac'd, are common to the Japanese in general, and understood by the common people. [II, Table XLV]
• kago (1857 → 1727) Besides going on horseback, there is another more stately and expensive way of travelling in this country, and that is to be carried in Norimons and Cagos, or particular sorts of chairs, or litters. [II 401]
• koniak, koniaku (1884 → 1727) Thus out of the Konjaf, which is a poisonous sort of a Dracunculus, they prepare a sweet mealy pap. [I 122]
• kudzu (1893 → 1727) ...; cakes of the jelly of the Kaads root, which root is found upon mountains, and cut into round slices like
carrots, and roasted; . . . [II 427]

- **kura** (1880 → 1727) The scot of rice, or corn, amounts to somewhat more than half the crop, which the husband-man must bring to the Okura, or Komegura, (Imperial Magazines, which stand near Mangome, or the North-suburb)... [I 292] [O is a honorific prefix.]

- **Obaku** (1883 → 1727) The same year, on the third day of the fourth month, died in the famous Convent Obaku, the above mention'd Chinese Missionary Ingen, in the fourscore and second year of his age... [I 199-200]

- **Rajtt** (1874 → 1727) The ministers of state, and other great men at court, some of whom we were only to visit, and to make presents to others, were the five chief Imperial councillors [sic] of state, call'd Goradzi, or the five elderly men... [II 527] [Go is a honorific prefix.]

- **Ryukyuan** (1958 → 1727) The Liqueians being subjects of Japan, you shall take none of their ships or boats... [II 384]

- **sakura** (1884 → 1727) Amidst the Plants stands sometimes a Saguer, as they call it, or scarce outlandish tree, sometimes a dwarf-tree or two... [II 426]

- **sasanqua** (1866 → 1727) Some put it up with common Mugwort flowers, or the young leaves of the Plant called Sasanqua, which they believe adds much to its agreeableness... [II, Appendix 15]

- **sho** (1876 → 1727) In the ninth year he [sc. Monmu] caus'd a square measure, (by the Japanese call'd Seo and Maas, by the Dutch Ganten... [I 173]

- **skimmia** (1853 → 1727) Often also they [sc. the Japanese] put a branch of the Fanna Skimmia Tree over their doors, which is in like manner believ'd to bring good luck into their houses... [II 418]

- **soto** (1893 → 1727) Kataisi, is the chief convent and temple of the Sensju, or Sect of Sen, which is of the order (or rather Schism) of Sotofa, or Sotoshu... [I 304] [Fa or sju signifies a sect.]

- **Tanabata** (1880 → 1727) They [sc. The Japanese] give it also the name of Sisseki Tanabatta, which implies as much, and Tanomanoseku, which is as much as to say, an Auxiliar [sic] Festival... [I 221]

- **uigigami** (1897 → 1727) Amongst the Sin or Cami, that is, the national Gods, I must mention in the first place, the Udigami of this Town. Udigami, is the chief God, Saint and Protector of a Province, City, or Village... [I 294]

- **uta** (1855 → 1727) ...as he [sc. Senmei] was at the same time a perfect master of the Cabalistick Sciences, he found out certain words, which he brought together into an Uta, or Verse... [II 449]


- **mousmee** (1880 → 1818) English Japanese Loo-Choo Daughter—Musme, gogo—Innago oongua.

- **sumi** (1911 → 1818) English Japanese Loo-Choo Ink — Sum, sumi — Simmee.

M. Malte-Brun: Universal Geography, or a Description of All the Parts of the World. Volume II. Edinburgh: Printed for Adam Black; and London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1822.

- **Aino** (1843 → 1822) The Jesuit Father Des Anges even saw this strait, described its terrible currents, and learned that the land beyond it, the island of Seghalien, was named Aino-Moxori. This name signifies the isle of the Años... [Book XLI, p. 508]


- **obi** (1878 → 1822) The sita-obi, a kind of under sash, the woewa-obi, or upper sash... [p. 260]


- **inkyo** (1871 → 1841) ...; that among no class of Japanese is the practice of inkioe, or abdicating in favour of a son, so prevalent as with these grandees... [p. 147]

- **manyogana** (1868 → 1841) ...; the manyokana and the yamatogana, the difference between which, either in their nature or use, is not explained, but they are said to exhibit the original type of the Japanese letters... [211]

- **shakudo** (1860 → 1841) In metallurgy they [sc. the Japanese] are, however, very skilful; and the beautiful article called syakfdo, in which...
various metals are partly blended, partly combined, producing an effect resembling fine enamel, . . . [227]


- **renga** (1877 → 1855) The poems called *renga*, composed in Chinese only, may extend to a hundred or a thousand verses, each verse dependent (as the name *renga* implies) upon that which immediately precedes it, or at least upon some word in it. [p. 550]


- **kuroshiwo** (1885 → 1857) Along this part of the coast, the influence of the stream, called by the Japanese, *Kuro-siwo*, was quite perceptible. [p. 495]

- **shogi** (1858 → 1857) On entering, they found some of the inmates playing at a game very similar, as it appeared, to chess. ( . . . ) The game is called *Sho-Ho-Yê*, and is a great favorite among the Japanese. [532]


- **keyaki** (1904 → 1863) *ki-a-ki*, . . . *Planera acuminata*. The Japanese elm. This is probably the finest timber in Japan. [Vol. II, p. 480]

- **sayonara** (1875 → 1863) And so ends our journey to Yeddo, and the panorama of the high road. — *Saionara!* the salutation of the Japanese, loses nothing in softness by contrast either with the French *adieu*, or the Italian *addio*; . . . [I 469]

- **tan** (1871 → 1863) In referring to the size of a farm, an *it-than* containing 300 *tsobo* is the measurement generally mentioned; . . . [I 318] (*it-than*: one *tan*)

- **to** (1871 → 1863)

  - 10 Ischo (1 *Itho*) = 30 1/3 lb.
  - 10 *Itho* (1 *Its'ko-koo*) = 333 1/3 lb [I 318] (*Itho*: one *to*)

- **uguisu** (1871 → 1863) As we toiled slowly up, leading our horses, we heard some very sweet notes of the *uguissu*, not unlike the notes of a nightingale, and I think nearly the only bird in Japan that sings. [II 127]


- **ronin** (1871 → 1863) On our arrival at Kanagawa we were startled by the intelligence that H. B. M. Legation at Yedo had been attacked the night before by a band of loonins, . . . [p. 241]

- **tycoonship** (1964 → 1863) Thus shorn of its jewels, the crown of the Tycoonship becomes that of head of the lower Daimios only. [261-2]


- **ama** (1954 → 1873) Thus *amma*, shampooer, must be pronounced differently from *ama*, a fisherwoman; . . . [p. 2]


- **hinin** (1884 → 1876) The *hinin* (not human) were the lowest class of beggars, the squatters on waste lands, who built huts along the road, and existed by soliciting alms. [p. 280]

- **netsuke** (1883 → 1876) Nearly all the ivory thus imported is put to a single use. It is carved into *nitsukis*, or large buttons perforated with two holes, . . . [364]

- **hanami** (1891 → 1876) The scrap of text, "*hanami*” ("to see the flowers"), is their term for junketing in the woods; . . . [487]

- **haori** (1877 → 1876) We shall see in most of them, however, the clear reflection of that human heart which beats responsive beneath the toga, the camel’s-hair raiment, the broadcloth, the silk *haori*. [504]

- **ken** (1882 → 1876) Great changes have taken place in the city since the departure of the prince, and the change of the *han* (feudal tenure) into *ken* (prefecture of the Imperial Government). [536]

- **Mikadoate** (1899 → 1876) XCIII. THE TEMPORARY MIKADOATE. [182]

- **mon** (1878 → 1876) Shallow observers—foreigners, of course—on first seeing these stretched canvas screens, supposed they were
“forts,” and the crests (mon) of the general, “port-holes” for cannon! [398]

- sensei (1884 → 1876) It is an honor to be addressed or spoken of as old. Every one called me “sensei” (elder-born, or teacher). [449]
- Shin (1877 → 1876) Among these were, in 1202, the Zen (Contemplation); in 1211, the Jōdō (Heavenly Road); in 1262, the Shin (New); in 1282, the Nichiren. [162]
- shugo (1893 → 1876) Also — and here was another step to military government and feudalism — that a shugo — a military chief, should be placed in each province, . . . [141]


- geisha (1891 → 1880) . . ; geishas (professional women with the accomplishments of dancing, singing, and playing) danced, accompanied by songs whose jerking discords were most laughable; . . . [Vol. I, p. 97]
- go (1890 → 1880) This great resource is called go, and is played with 180 white discs cut from a species of cockle shell, and 181 black ones, made from a black pebble. The board is divided into 361 squares, and the game consists in enclosing a certain space, and preventing the opponent from doing the same. The table on which the board is set, called the go-ban, has a square hollow beneath it, . . . [II 32]
- gobang (1886 → 1880) [See go. This is the original sense of gobang.] kagura (1884 → [1880]) The kagura fuyé, or Japanese flute, claims an antiquity of twelve centuries, . . . [II 209]
- kakemono (1890 → 1880) . . ; the kakemons, or wall-pictures on their side-walls, were extremely beautiful; . . . [I 98]
- shō (1888 → 1880) A young girl, daughter of a noble who has filled several high official positions, played on a most exquisitely made antique instrument, called the shō, formed of several reeds beautifully lacquered in gold, branded with silver, and set in a circular box of fine gold lacquer. [II 204–5]
- shochu (1938 → 1880) The only drinks in common use are tea, hot water, saké, and strochius, less palatable even than saké, a form of alcohol, which is taken cold at odd hours during the hot season. [I 240]
- soroban (1891 → 1880) Between your offers the saleswoman makes great use of the soroban, a frame enclosing some rows of balls moving on thick wires, which is used in all business transactions in Japan, . . . [I 142–3]


- mitsumata (1889 → 1880) Paper is also made from the mitsumata plant (Edgeworthia papyrifera), the first order of the eighth class, a deciduous shrub growing to seven or eight feet in height. [Vol. II, p. 43]
- Nashiji (1881 → 1880) In 410 an officer (Minamoto-no-Juin) published another work, in which he speaks of lacquers of gold, and likewise of other lacquers known as nashiji, which are of orange colour sown with sparks of gold, and the makers of which he speaks of as “very celebrated.” [II 32–3]
- Seto (1881 → 1880) A select display of the beautiful porcelain ware of Seto (Owari) had been brought together to interest us. [II 272]
- Shijō (1884 → 1880) Shijō Riu. This school was founded, as previously stated, by Okio, and was characterised by a more direct and loyal resort to nature than his predecessors had allowed themselves; . . . [II 92]
- sume (1938 → 1880) The practice of painting in Chinese (or “Indian”) ink is exceedingly common in Japan, and this form of art is designated Sumie. [II 92]
- tanto (1885 → 1880) Stillettos a foot long or less, known as tanto and mamori katana, were sometimes worn by nobles, officers, and gentlemen in place of the more cumbrous wakizashi. [II 270]


- shogunal (1899 → 1891) shogunal Pertaining to a shogun or the period when they flourished. [p. 5583]


- maiko (1904 → 1892) But you would be wrong to think that any Japanese woman may put on the splendid and showy kimonos borne by the Maiko. [p. 300]

- **suzuribako** (1967 → 1894) In the temple of Hachiman, Kamakura, also, there are several pieces of lacquer dating from the end of the 12th to the beginning of the 14th centuries, remarkable for their good taste and quality, among them, a suzuribako, or writing box, of nashiji, with chrysanthemums by a fence in gold; ... [p. xli]


- **haniwa** (1931 → 1896) So the things of clay were first set up at the tomb of Hibasu-hime no Mikoto. And a name was given to these clay objects. They were called Hami-wa. [Part I, pp. 180-181]

- **muraji** (1901 → 1896) Adzumi no Muraji is a title corresponding exactly to such English titles as "Duke of Wellington," Adzumi being the name of a place and Muraji a title of honour. It is derived from mura, a village or assemblage, and ushi, master. [I 27, Note 7]

- **omi** (1901 → 1896) Omi is a title of rank, probably derived from o, for oho, great and mi, person. The Chinese character with which it is written means minister or vassal. [I 36, Note 3]


- **terakoya** (1909 → 1901) Nearly every temple had a terakoya attached to it, where the children of peasants, mechanics, and tradespeople were instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic. [p. 235]


- **yokozuna** (1966 → 1901) The honour next fell on Yoshida Oikase, ... , and who is alone empowered to bestow upon the champion wrestler that badge of distinction which every ambitious follower of the order seeks as the ultimate reward of all his training and skill in over-
that conceals art, as an astringent (shibui) taste, reminding one of the tannin in tea. [p. 109]

The above antedatings will surely be incorporated into the third edition of the *OED* which is to be published in 2005. And the following is an alphabetically arranged table of the antedatings of the Japanese loanwords.

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Note: Japanese$^1$ (a native of Japan)  
Japanese$^2$ (the Japanese language)  

(1996 年 12月 20 日受理)