LOT 221

OTSUKI GENTAKU

RANGAKU KAITEI, [INTRODUCTION TO THE DUTCH LANGUAGE]. (EDO, TENMEI, YEAR OF THE MONKEY) [1788]
FIRST EDITION, first issue, 2 volumes (225 x 157mm.), Japanese text, xylographic printing on mulberry paper, original covers and title-slips, preserved in a modern folding cloth case, stitching renewed, slight wear and stains to covers

ESTIMATE 2,000-3,000 GBP
Lot Sold: 2,250 GBP

LITERATURE

CATALOGUE NOTE
A RARE COPY OF THE FIRST DUTCH GRAMMAR IN JAPANESE. THE FIRST JAPANESE PRINTED BOOK TO INCLUDE WESTERN CHARACTERS. Only one copy is recorded in a European public library.
Otsuki Gentaku (1757-1827) was a highly celebrated physician and the first Japanese scholar to have an outstanding reading knowledge of the Dutch language, who studied Dutch medicine under Sugita Genpaku and learned the Dutch
language from Ryotaku Maeno. Otsuki opened the Shirando Academy in 1787 to teach and propagate Dutch
language, culture, and medicine. He is considered a major pioneer, leading to the opening and modernization of
Japan after about 250 years of self-imposed seclusion. A friend and admirer of Siebold (1796-1866), Otsuki Gentaku
introduced several new terms into Japanese medicine, still in use today.