

Guide to WASAN

Welcome to Yonemitsu' homepage

WASAN

Traditional Japanese mathematics was developed during the 17th-19th centuries .

Western mathematics came from Europe to Japan in the 18th century .

It was called "YOSAN" and the Japanese mathematics was called "WASAN"

The first mathematics book was imported from China to Japan around the 15th century .

Japan was closed to foreigners in that time, so mathematics books weren't imported .

Japan still had a love for mathematics through and there were many mathematicians in Japan.

Takakazu-Seki(1642?—1708) was Japan's greatest mathematician.

1."SANGAKU"

These wooden boards are called "SANGAKU". The SANGAKU on Kyushu follow the SEKI school of

Though named after Takakazu-Seki(1642?—1708). Japan's greatest mathematician.

The mathematics used in Japan before the Meiji Restoration is called WASAN. Problems that were too difficult to be solved by a WASAN expert were presented as IDAI to the Public to be solved. When any student successfully solved an IDAI or other difficult Problem, s/he would dutifully show thanks and appreciation by dedicating a thick wooden Board on which s/he had recorded the actual solution.

The SANGAKU of Suwa shrin(pictured) dates back to Meiji Period 20(1887)

Currently, there are about 820 SANGAKU boards in Japan. Many of them are in the Tohoku And Kanto regions. There are only 9 boards in Kyushu.

These SANGAKU are in Hakozaki ,Sumiyoshi,Kumano,Mihashira, and Takami Shrines and Akizuki Kyodokan in Fukuoka Prefecture.

Ishuhara Shrin in Oita Prefecture , and 2 in Suwa Shrine here in Nagasaki Prefecture.

One many conclude that Kyushu has few problem solver or maybe just a few problems.

2."Yuureki Sanka"

During the Edo period(1903-1867) mathematicians traveled the country on foot ,teaching mathematics to common people with an interest in mathematics .

They were called, "Yuureki Sanka"

Some of these mathematicians wrote diaries accounting their journey and recorded solutions to difficult mathematical problems on "Sangaku", a wooden tablet with painted mathematical problems

Sangaku were hung in temples or shrines during the 17th-19th century in Japan.

3."Idai"

Mathematicians who wrote books put math problems at the back of book. People who read the solved the problems and they wrote their own books with problems at the back. The Problems at the back of these book are called "Idai" or "Konomi".

The first book with "Idai" at the back was written 1641. It took 10 years to solve this Problem. The book is named "Sanryoroku"