



FROM A GROCER OF KOBE.

The gods of good fortune are polishing the soroban (abacus) to make counting easier in the New Year. Which is equivalent to expressing a wish for good fortune.



ISSUED BY AN OIL MERCHANT OF KOBE.

Picture represents two of the seven gods of good fortune. They hold a Japanese yearly calendar. Characters on the open fan: "It is lucky to have prosperity on top of prosperity."



FROM A KOBE LIQUOR DEALER.

Picture shows Ebisu, god of wealth, in a very happy mood. He is going fishing, and among the many bass one large red one (tai) leaps up before him, which causes him great joy, as his face will show.

NEW YEAR SOUVENIRS THAT ARE POPULAR IN JAPAN



FROM A DEALER IN RICE CAKES, KOBE.

The attendant is preparing a tai (red sea bass) for the celebration. The legend hanging on the plum tree is an invitation to all patrons to come and taste their special rice cakes. At New Year's it is customary to play battledore, and the lady is ready for a game.

THE prints shown on this page are New Year souvenirs. All Japanese merchants distribute such prints to their patrons at the beginning of the year. The characters on the left are the name of the merchant, his street address and the nature of his business. The picture generally is intended to express good wishes for the patron and a hope of prosperity for the proprietor. In carrying out this purpose an elaborate symbolism is used.

The stork (in Japan) is supposed to live a thousand years; the turtle 10,000 years. Hence they both express a wish for long life. The pine tree is always green, therefore it is a symbol of eternal good fortune. The fan is the symbol of increasing good fortune—as time passes good fortune increases as a fan opens out. The plum tree blossoms in the winter and is extremely fragrant. It has a very prominent place in Japanese life. There are seven gods of good fortune. These are always used in New Year greeting cards. These seven gods correspond to Billiken in this country, and nowadays Billiken himself is very popular in Japan. The prints have two purposes: They convey good wishes to the patron and they advertise the merchant.



FROM THE KITAMURA SHOP, DEALER IN COKE AND COAL FROM ALL COUNTRIES

The stork ship is bringing a mountain of treasures for the New Year. The character on the sail means "treasure."



FROM A DEALER IN HOUSEHOLD UTENSILS.

This is a picture of a warrior trying to cross a turbulent river. The significance is that if you strive and persist in life you will in the end achieve fame. The characters in the panel at the right are an ode to this effect.



FROM THE MATSUURA SHOP, DEALER IN KIOTO DYED GOODS, TOBACCO, FANCY GOODS AND BOOK LOANING, KOBE.

A schoolgirl is writing a kind of ode, something as follows: "Ah, the new spring! Deep green pine tree of thousand generations." The open fan expresses increasing prosperity.



FROM A DEALER IN OIL AND FANCY GOODS.

The picture shows a geisha in olden times. There is no particular significance in this picture excepting that the merchant deals in fancy goods and therefore uses a fancy picture of a geisha.



FROM A KOBE RICE DEALER.

This merchant also has disregarded symbolism in his New Year souvenir, and has gone right to the point by showing two wrestlers (strong men) carrying bags of rice.



FROM A CHARCOAL DEALER.

The picture shows a dragon ascending in a cloud. The dragon is supposed to make his home in the lake. The significance is that after years of striving and suffering, if one persists and is patient, he will be borne aloft to fame.