

no reason why such a folded book should not be at once stitched at the back, and have the leaves cut. The book would thus be rendered far more handy; but the idea seems never to have struck the Japanese.

The folded form of book described, seems to represent a first stage in improvement from the more ancient roll. Japanese paintings and manuscripts are extremely common, executed upon long rolls which are terribly tedious to unroll and roll up again. The folded picture books, such as described, may be pulled out into long strips, on which the pages or drawings follow in regular order, just as on an ordinary roll. Similarly, if ordinary printed Japanese and Chinese books were unstitched, the double leaves might be unfolded, and, if pasted on to a long strip, would follow one another consecutively on the roll.

It seems thus highly probable that the idea of the Chinese

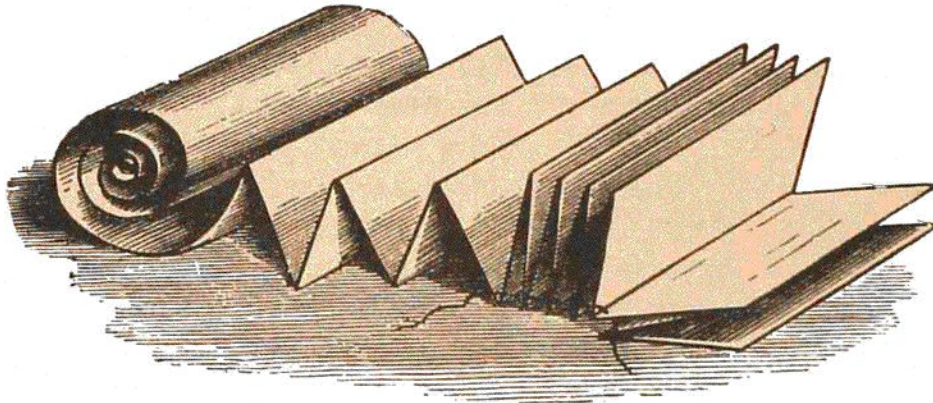


DIAGRAM SHOWING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHINESE FOLDED BOOK
OUT OF THE ROLL.

and Japanese book arose as an improvement on the roll; and that this is the reason why the leaves are all double, and the paper printed only on one side. The ordinary paper used in printing is possibly too thin to allow of both sides being printed on; but there is plenty of thicker paper available in both countries. Even when very thick paper is used in the folding Japanese books, often one side only of the paper is made use of. I have never seen an example with the front edges cut, although I possess several folded books made of extremely stout cardboard. The accompanying diagram will serve to illustrate the development of the book from the roll.

Nearly all Chinese and Japanese books are block books, printed from wooden blocks, each of which contains four pages, a pair of pages on each side. All the letters have to be carved out on every wooden block, so it is as cheap or cheaper to fill a page with illustrations as to fill it with characters. Hence,