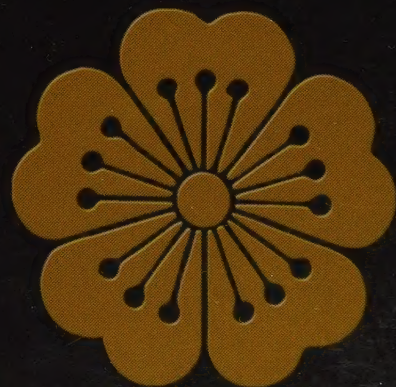
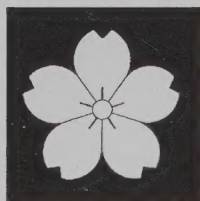


**FAMILY
CRESTS
OF JAPAN**



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INTRODUCTION

Japanese family crests, or *kamon*, are traditional designs used to symbolize family names. Although there are various theories about their exact origin, it is generally accepted that *kamon* started as patterns on the palanquins, oxcarts, and garments of court nobles around the twelfth century. Gradually, use of the crests spread to the warrior class, and later to the common classes.

The motifs for many of the crests were plants, probably because the Japanese have admired and respected nature since ancient times. Unlike the highly colorful family crests of Europe, Japanese *kamon* are black and white, and most of the designs are two-dimensional and symmetrical.

Initially, the images of some *kamon* were more true to life and colorful. But when it became common practice for families to place *kamon* on clothing as a form of identification, *kamon* designs developed gradually into the style seen today. Although they are monochrome, *kamon* make the best artistic use of sharp black-and-white contrast, straight and curved lines, sharp angles, and simple geometric shapes. As a result, the traditional symbols achieve a surprisingly fresh, clear, sophisticated, and aesthetically pleasing style. Furthermore, *kamon* designs depict Japanese life, thought, and even history, making them valuable cultural assets as well as works of art.

Outside of Japan, crests were used only in Europe, where they seem to have originated around the twelfth century. In those days, Europe was fraught with wars between feudal lords and kingdoms. The style at the time was for European warriors to wear helmets that covered their heads entirely. These protective yet confining helmets narrowed the wearer's field of vision, and as a result, the custom of drawing symbols on shields to identify allies and enemies developed. These symbols were the source of the European crest, called a "coat of arms."

European knights often depicted animals as motifs on their crests, probably because Europe had a long cultural tradition of hunting and stock farming. Today, European coats of arms are still used on buildings, labels, stamps, and other prominent items. Though the crests of Europe and those of Japan contrast greatly in color, style, and motifs, it is interesting to note that both originated at about the same time in history.

In Japan, crests were regarded as an important symbol of a household, so by tradition, they were closely related with families. After World War II, however, as the definition of family changed, so did the meaning of the family crest. Modernization caused a rapid trend toward the nuclear family, resulting in the emergence of new, untraditional lifestyles, as well as increased societal emphasis on the individual and less on the family. Therefore, crests gradually lost their significance in society, and it was feared that their usage might die out.

Despite all this, *kamon* still prevail today and seem to have established a permanent place in Japanese society. They can be seen in modern Japan, especially at ceremonial events. Men wear kimono such as *montsuki haori hakama* (kimono jackets with family crests and full, flowing, pleated trousers), and women often wear *tomesode* (regular-sleeve-length kimono with patterns and family crests). These

formal kimono, worn especially at traditional Japanese-style weddings, are in the seemingly sober colors of black and white; nevertheless, their refined and quiet elegance rivals the beauty of bright colors and showy patterns.

During wakes, mourners light lanterns marked with their kamon, brightly illuminating the dark night. The scene always impresses visitors with the strong, continued sense of “the family” and encourages visiting relatives to reaffirm their family ties. In graveyards, family crests appear in a wide variety of designs and motifs. Most of them are engraved on tombstones, distinguishing the burial sites of different families.

Kamon are not only found at weddings and funerals. You can still find crests in many places as you walk along the streets of Japan today. The crests of shop names or trade symbols are displayed on special curtains (called *noren*) and on the signs of old establishments. Some kamon tell what the shops sell, while others symbolize the business’s tradition and good reputation. Restaurants, especially those that specialize in traditional Japanese cuisine, display crests to evoke a sense of long-time establishment and family ownership.

Even large companies and corporations sometimes adopt the founder’s family crest to represent the entire company, and some local governments use crests to symbolize their communities.

The prevalence of kamon today seems to signify that they have found a permanent place in Japanese life and will survive as an important aspect of cultural identity, even in modern Japanese society. It is hoped that this book will provide an opportunity for people in and outside of Japan to know more about family crests, a precious cultural heritage left by Japan’s ancestors.

All Japanese words in this book have been romanized in the Hepburn system, with macrons to indicate “long vowels,” except for common place names.

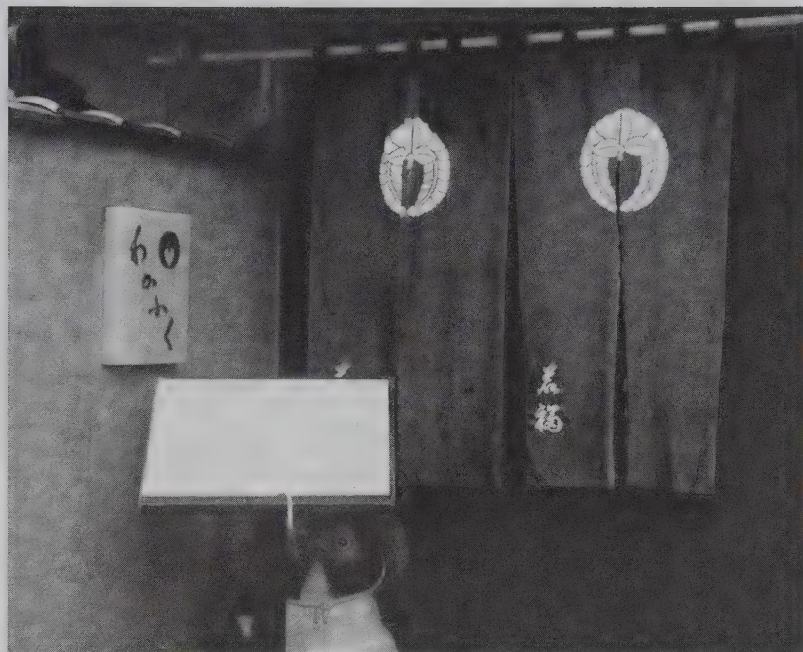
The photos on these pages and elsewhere in this book depict examples of the way kamon are used on everyday objects in Japan. The kamon may not be immediately apparent, but look closely at each image and you will find a crest adorning each object. The circular form of the designs should help you find the crest.



Paper lantern of Kanda Shrine



End post of the wall of Sengen Shrine



Shop curtains (*noren*)



Gable of a warehouse



The actors Kataoka Nizaemon VII and Sawamura Sōjūrō III in the roles of Ki no Natora and Kujaku Saburō, by Tōshūsai Sharaku (Ota Memorial Museum of Art)

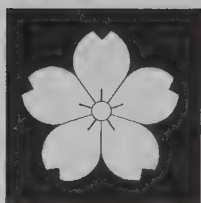


Daimyō in ceremonial costume of *daimon* and *naga-bakama* trousers (The Costume Museum)



Painting of the Battle of Sekigahara on a folding screen (Gifu City Museum of History)





I. CRESTS AND THE CLASS SYSTEM

There are several theories about how and when crests originated. The common belief, however, is that they were first used in the twelfth century by the noble class to decorate clothing and furniture.

Symbols or patterns adopted by members of the noble class were passed down to their descendants over generations. In this way, specific symbols and patterns were gradually established as each family's crest (*kamon*). During this time, crests were used mostly for decorative purposes, and their designs were often ornate and complicated. Some were made in commemoration of important events or special people.

Samurai (warrior) families began to use crests after the court nobles started the trend. Most of the samurai families' crests developed from symbols used on their battle flags and encampment curtains. In the Kamakura period (from the late twelfth to mid-fourteenth century), when different clans united and fought for influence and power, the samurai needed symbols to represent new coalitions and distinguish allies from enemies.

Because of the strict hierarchical nature of Japanese society during the Edo period (1603–1867), commoners were not formally permitted to have family crests until after the Meiji Restoration (in the latter half of the nineteenth century), when they began using surnames. However, the use of crests had already spread to the peasant, merchant, and artisan classes in the Edo period, much

earlier than officially allowed. Rich commoners who had special permission to wear *haori* (kimono jackets) and *hakama* (full, pleated trousers) and carry *wakizashi* (short swords) had already begun to decorate their jackets and lanterns with family crests.

Some merchants, eager to make their shops conspicuous, displayed crests on their *noren* (shop curtains). Actors, public performers, and prostitutes also made use of *kamon*, employing them as personal trademarks. Farming villages would sometimes band together and form an association. The creation of a new design for the official crest of the new community was a very important part of the unification process.

II. CRESTS THROUGH THE AGES

Because the lineage of court nobles remained self-contained and relatively unbroken, the ruling class did not need to develop a wide variety of designs. On the other hand, in the much larger warrior class, family crests spread rapidly and extensively.

After the Kamakura shogunate was formed, a series of major battles among samurai families erupted. During this time, family crests were commonly used as symbols on flags, encampment curtains, and other battle paraphernalia. Some lords began to bestow official family crests to retainers who performed meritorious deeds. During the Nanbokuchō period (from the mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth century), family crests continued to increase in importance and authority for both court nobles and samurai, becoming potent symbols for families.

At first, each family was represented by a single kamon. However, in the Nanbokuchō and Muromachi periods (continuing through the first half of the sixteenth century), internal fighting caused samurai families to divide into competing factions. As these factions were established, they developed new designs to symbolize their allegiance, contributing to the increased use of family crests during these periods.

In the Edo period when wars were suppressed, flags and other battle-related items were no longer needed. During this relatively stable time, family crests were used mainly to enforce adherence to rules of conduct. For example, when

daimyō (feudal lords) traveling to Edo Castle passed each other on the road, they were required to give an appropriate greeting in accordance with their relative positions in the social hierarchy. The lords often hired special retainers who were experts on *kamon* to help them identify an approaching *daimyō*.

Since the Edo period was an era of peace, people had more time to pursue leisure and luxury. Clothes in particular became much more extravagant and ornate than before, and family crests that had originally been symbols of family names were used simply for decoration. People sometimes modified or even replaced their original family crests, opting for something more elegant or refined. The *kamon* used by playboys were often altered considerably.

As altered crests became the norm, three new varieties of *kamon* came into fashion. *Date-mon* portrayed characters and pictures based on famous places and old poems. *Kaga-mon* incorporated color for the first time. *Hiyoku-mon* were those created by couples combining elements from their respective family crests.

The phenomenon of creating new crest styles and designs occurred not only among commoners, but also in the samurai class. As a result, the system of using a single design to represent each family line was thrown into confusion. After the Meiji Restoration, as traditional Japanese clothing was rapidly replaced by Western-style apparel, ceremonial clothing decorated with family crests went largely out of use.

III. DESIGN EVOLUTION

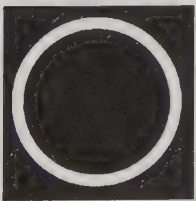
As a family prospered and its lineage expanded, it became necessary to distinguish between the main family and its branches, and also between legitimate and illegitimate children. To do this, the growing family modified its original crest to create a variety of related crests. Some of the basic techniques for altering kamon are addition, alteration, combination, and division.

Addition

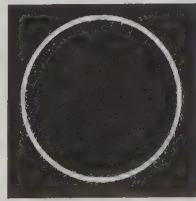
The addition method involves introducing new stylistic elements into the original crest. There are two basic types of addition—adding something around the crest and adding something within the crest.

Adding Around

The most common method of addition is to make a circle or square frame around the crest. When families first started to use kamon on battle flags and encampment curtains, the crests' shape and size were not restricted. But in the Sengoku period (1467–1568), two formal kimono styles that displayed kamon were created. They were *suō* and *kataginu*. These kimono styles standardized the crests' shape and size, so crests were often enclosed in round or square frames.



1



2

1. Ring
2. Threadlike ring

3. Thin and thick rings

4. Double ring



3



4

5. Bamboo circle

6. Wisteria circle



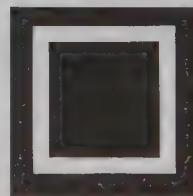
5



6

7. Square frame

8. Tiled square frame with cropped corners



7



8

Adding Within

Adding something within the crest involves adding another picture or symbol to the original design. For example, adding *ken* (sword) to *katabami* (wood sorrel) yields the new design, *ken katabami*.

9. Wood sorrel and swords



9

Alteration

The alteration technique entails making more substantial changes to the original crest design. Some specific kinds of alteration include:



10

Shadowed (*kage*), Yin and Yang (*in'yo*)

The white and black parts of the design are reversed, creating a shadowed effect. The word *kage* (shadow) is added to the original name of the crest; for example, *tsuta* (ivy) would become *kage tsuta*. When the original design is placed next to the shadowed version, it is called *in'yo* (yin and yang).

10. Shadowed ivy

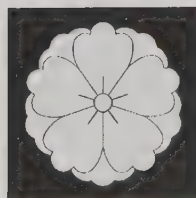


11

Front and Back (*omote*, *ura*)

Most kamon portray the front (*omote*) of objects. However, the design can be changed to show what the object looks like from behind. For these crests, the word *ura* (backside) is added to the original name; for example, *ura kikyō* (bellflower).

11. Backside-view bellflower



12

Single and Double (*tanpuku*)

Flowers depicted in crests are usually single-petaled, but some are double-petaled. In this case, *yae* (double-petaled) is added, as in *yae karahana* (Chinese flower).

12. Double-petaled Chinese flower

Imitating an Artistic Style

The original design is altered to imitate the style of a popular artist. The most common of these were the style of Ogata Kōrin, a Japanese painter in the mid-Edo period known for his decorative style. The name of this crest, for example, is *Kōrin ume*.

13. *Kōrin*-style plum blossom



13

Top View (*mukō*)

An object can be depicted as seen from above. An example is *mukō botan*.

14. Top-view peony



14

Side View (*yoko-mi*)

The motif is depicted as seen from the side; an example is *yoko-mi ume*.

15. Side-view plum blossom

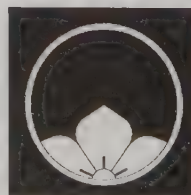


15

Peephole View (*nozoki*)

The motif is only partially depicted, as if the object were viewed through a peephole. *Nozoki kikyō* is a good example.

16. Peephole-view bellflower in circle



16

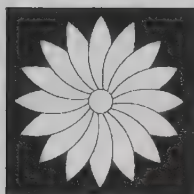


17

Reshaping

The shape of the object is altered to resemble that of a different crest. For example, depicting a cherry blossom (*sakura*) in the shape of a butterfly (*chō*) results in *sakura chō*.

17. Butterfly-shaped cherry blossom



18

Other Types of Alteration

Twisting (*nejiri*)

18. Twisted chrysanthemum



19

Looping (*musubi*)

19. Looped wild goose



20

Folding (*ore*)

20. Folded hawk feather

Combination

As the name suggests, the combination technique creates a new crest by combining two or more motifs.

Facing (*mukai*)

Two like designs are placed symmetrically, facing each other; e.g., *mukai ichō*.

21. Facing ginkgo leaves



21

Embracing (*daki*)

Two crests which have a relatively long shape are portrayed facing each other, their lower parts crossing one or more times as if embracing; e.g., *daki tachibana*.

22. Embracing mandarins



22

Intersecting (*chigai*)

Two crests which have a relatively long shape are crossed in the center; e.g., *maru ni chigai takanoha*.

23. Intersecting hawk feathers, encircled



23



24

Parallel (*narabi*)

Two or more of the same crests are positioned side by side, parallel to each other; e.g., *sanmai narabi kashiwa*.

24. Three parallel oak leaves



25

Layered or Overlapping (*kasane*)

Crests are depicted in a layered or overlapping arrangement; e.g., *kasane i-geta*.

25. Overlapping well frames



26

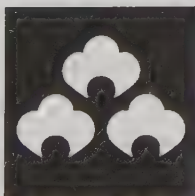


27

Linked (*tsunagi*), With Child (*ko-mochi*)

26. Chain-linked circles

27. Embracing arrowheads with child (*ko-mochi*)



28



29

Other Types of Combination

Piled or stacked (*mori*)

28. Three piled wisteria blooms

Following, head-to-tail (*oi*)

29. Three head-to-tail paper mulberry leaves

Nested (*ire-ko*)

30. Wooden measures nested inside each other, encircled



30

Merging

Another possibility is that of combining two or more different designs. An example is *ichi-moji ni mitsu-domoe*.

31. Kanji numeral *ichi* (one) and three swirls



31

Division

The division method entails dividing a crest into two or more pieces, then rearranging them to create a new crest. This is one way to create a new crest design using the same basic motif. These divided crests are called *wari-mon*. An example is *mitsu-wari katabami*.

32. Trisected wood sorrels



32

IV. DISTRIBUTION

In general, only one kamon per surname existed because the function of the crest was to symbolize the family name itself. However, crests were sometimes passed on to other families with different surnames in the following ways:

Bestowal

The family head could make a gift of his family crest to one of his retainers who had performed a meritorious deed, or to one who would carry on the family name through marriage.

Grant

A kamon was sometimes transferred between families within the same social class. This type of transfer was commonly used to ensure family-name succession through marriage.

Borrowing

Sometimes a family took the crest of another important, well-respected family and used it as their own. This was usually considered an honorable practice.

Capture

After defeating a rival, the victor often commandeered the enemy's crest. The enemy's kamon was celebrated as a symbol of the victory.

Because of all the various ways in which crests were transferred, it was not uncommon for a given surname to be represented by more than one crest. In these cases, it was necessary for the family to determine which symbol would officially represent its family name. The official crest for a surname was called *jō-mon* (regular crest) or *sei-mon* (official crest) and was used for official ceremonies and documents.

A crest did not necessarily become official just because it had been passed down through many generations. A crest received as a gift from an honorable lord or one representing successful military exploits often took precedence over the hereditary one and was used as the *sei-mon*.

To distinguish the official crest from all others, the unofficial crests were called *kae-mon* (alternative crest), *fuku-mon* (second crest), *ura-mon* (extra crest), etc. They could not be used in official situations.

V. WIDESPREAD ADOPTION

As eras changed and trends evolved, crests came to be used for a surprisingly wide variety of purposes.

Clothes

It was rare for court nobles to decorate their clothes with kamon, but samurai families in the Kamakura period (late twelfth to mid-fourteenth century) made the practice popular. When samurai started adorning their *hitatare* (traditional clothing) with crests in the Nanbokuchō period (mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth century), decorating formal garments with family crests gradually became an accepted custom.

Daimon, a special kind of *hitatare* marked prominently with kamon, became the accepted formal wear among samurai in the Muromachi period (from the early fourteenth to the first half of the sixteenth century). *Daimon* had five crests on the jacket and five on the *hakama* (trousers), all of which were left black and white without color embellishments.

Around the mid-Edo period (circa mid-eighteenth century), the *haori-hakama*, which had five crests emblazoned on the back, front, and sleeves, became the preferred formal wear for men. They were approved as official garments in the mid-nineteenth century, and still remain in use in modern Japan.

Buildings

Crests were displayed on roof tiles in the Nanbokuchō period, and were used as a design element throughout buildings in the Sengoku period (1467–1568). The legendary Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Japan's greatest rags-to-riches figure, put his paulownia crest on tiles, indoor decorations, clothing, and furnishings within his castles.

Shrines and temples also began using crests during this period. They usually adopted the crests of powerful clans in return for financial support, although some shrines kept the traditional crest that represented their patron god.



Osaka Castle

It became the norm for samurai families to display family crests on castles and residences in the Edo period (1603–1867). Gradually the trend spread to the lower classes. Particularly in Edo (the former name of Tokyo), businesses, stores, and warehouses used crests to represent the company or owner, similar to how businesses today use trademarks.

Ships

It was common in the Edo period to put family crests on the sails and banners of ships. When the feudal lords from western regions of the country made their journey to Edo to fulfill the *sankin kotai* (a requirement to attend the court in Edo for a full year, every other year), they often came in ships, which prominently displayed their family crests.

Gravestones and Mortuary Tablets

In the Insei era (mid-eleventh to late twelfth century), patterns were sometimes carved on gravestones. In the Sengoku period, when Christianity spread, the cross was often carved on the gravestones of Christians.



Gravestone

In the Edo period, it became popular to carve family crests on gravestones. On a woman's gravestone, the crests of both her husband and her parents were often displayed side by side.

Battle Gear

On the battlefield, family crests were emblazoned on armor, shields, bow sheaths, and quivers. The designs helped warriors distinguish enemies from allies, and made for good fashion as well.

VI. SYMBOLISM AND MEANING

As more and more families and businesses began to use crests, the number of designs and motifs greatly increased, and the ways in which they were selected became complex. Each crest developed its own symbolic meaning over the years, and families chose an appropriate design based on the meaning of the symbols. There were seven classifications of symbolism that were considered when choosing a crest.

Patterns

Many crests originated from decorative patterns. Court nobles favored them because their designs were elegant. Most of these patterns were based on plant motifs, in contrast to the animal designs preferred by samurai.

Family Name Symbolism

Some crests were chosen because of their connection to certain surnames. The correlations between crests and names were either direct or indirect. Two good examples of a direct relationship are the *sakura* (cherry blossom) crest used by the Sakurai family, and the *torii* (shrine gate) crest used by the Torii clan. An example of an indirect link between a family name and a crest is the case of the Yoshino family, which adopted the *sakura* pattern because the town of Yoshino (in Nara) is famous for cherry blossoms.

Auspicious Symbolism

Kamon sometimes represent a family's wish for good fortune, longevity, good health, prosperity, happiness, or property. Some crests express this directly through kanji characters, such as: 天 (*ten*, heaven), 長 (*chō*, long), 大 (*dai*, big), 福 (*fuku*, fortune), 寿 (*kotobuki*, happiness), or 吉 (*kichi*, good luck). Other families chose pictorial designs that symbolized good fortune, such as the paulownia, on which the auspicious Chinese phoenix is said to perch.

Commemoration

A symbolic kamon design was sometimes adopted to commemorate an ancestor's origin or heroic deed. For example, legend says that when the Nanbu clan fought against the Akita clan, two cranes landed in the Nanbus' encampment, and after this, the Nanbu clan was victorious in the battle. So the Nanbu clan adopted the pattern of a pair of cranes as its family crest to commemorate the event.

Martial Spirit

Samurai families often took the elegant crests of court nobles and altered them in a way that expressed their fighting spirit. One possible method was adding weapons such as swords, armor, or bows and arrows. Sometimes kamon depicting brave animals like hawks, lions, or tigers were adopted.

Religious Symbolism

Some crests were based on religious symbolism related to Shintō, Buddhism, Christianity, or Confucianism. Kamon were developed in spiritual and superstitious eras when deities were very influential in people's lives. People prayed

earnestly to their gods or Buddhas and asked for their protection. Many crests expressing religious beliefs were created particularly in the Sengoku period.

Shintō

Since ancient times, the Japanese have believed in the existence of a great number of gods and goddesses. The worship of war gods was prevalent in the age of samurai rule. Warriors worshiped Hachiman (or Yawata), the deity of the bow and arrow, as well as others such as Kumano Gongen, Suwa Myōjin, and Kamo Myōjin. The devotees of these gods adopted sacred animals, plants, or heavenly bodies as their crests.

Buddhism

Some crests symbolize faith in Buddhism. Examples include the *rinpō* (Dharma Chakra), which is said to destroy all hardships; the tin crosiers which ascetics carry to punish evil; the Myōken Bosatsu (a symbol of the Big Dipper); the three “general stars” which preside over weapons; the swastika; the kanji character 無 (*mu*, meaning “nothing”); and the symbol which represented karma.

Christianity

Christianity was first introduced to Japan in the mid-sixteenth century, and its practice proliferated from Kyushu through Ōshū. However, since Toyotomi Hideyoshi outlawed its practice, there are only a few crests related to Christianity. These crests depict the cross, either directly or in disguise. The Ikeda clan wanted to express their Christian beliefs, but were afraid to display the cross openly, so they chose the Gion *mamori* (talisman), a Shintō good-luck charm from the Gion Shrine that bears a resemblance to the cross.

Confucianism

Confucianism was brought to Japan from China in ancient times, but there are only a few crests related to this philosophy. One example is the *hakke*, the eight patterns of divining sticks from the *I Ching* (Book of Changes), a fortune-telling book thought to have been composed in the Zhou period in China. Another is the *tai ji* diagram, which Zhou Dun'yi illustrated during the Song Dynasty to depict the formation and development of all things based on the theory of yin-yang and the five elements.

Superstitious Symbolism

Long ago, when superstition was an integral part of life, people tried to cure illness and bring good luck by using charms and talismans. They sometimes adopted these talismans as their crests. The motifs of these crests include the *jūmonji* (crisscross), Abeno Seimei's seal (the pentagram-like seal of a legendary doctor), and the *kagome* (basket).

VII. MOTIFS

Heaven and Earth Crests

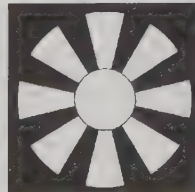
Motifs depicting astronomical bodies and atmospheric phenomena belong to the category of heaven and earth crests.

The Sun (*hi* or *hinomaru*)

Crests modeled after the sun were not often used as family crests. In the latter part of the Edo period, Japanese ships entering the sea near Japan began raising the *hinomaru* (rising-sun flag) to distinguish themselves from foreign ships. Later, *hinomaru* came to be used as the national flag of Japan.



33



34



35



36



37

33. Sunbeams

34. Eight-rayed sun

35. Rising sun with rays

36. Rising sun

37. Sunbeams and running water

The Moon (*tsuki*)

Crests modeled after the moon have several names, depending on the shape or brightness of the moon depicted such as *mika-zuki* (new moon), *han-getsu* (half-moon), *man-getsu* (full moon), and *oboro-zuki* (hazy moon). They were probably adopted as family crests for religious reasons. The devotees of Myōken Bosatsu* (or Sudarsti, a Bodhisattva) often used these crests.

Moreover, because a half-moon looks like a bow with a string, it is also called *gen-getsu* (string moon) or *yumihari-zuki* (stretched-bow moon). Thus, the design was sometimes chosen to express the samurai spirit.

38. Half-moon

39. Hazy moon for the Ōzeki family

40. Moon and rabbit



38



39



40

41. Moon and cuckoo



41

*The belief in Myōken is thought to have begun in the early Heian period (794–1185). Myōken was worshiped as a war god, mostly by samurai.

The Moon and Stars (*tsuki-boshi*)

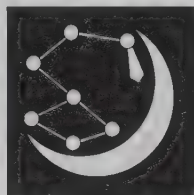
The moon and stars were worshiped by ancient people as powerful heavenly bodies. Buddhists referred to the Big Dipper as *Hokushin* (the north dragon), believing that it protected their country and helped relieve people's suffering. The Bodhisattva Myōken was referred to as the incarnation of that constellation.



42



43



44

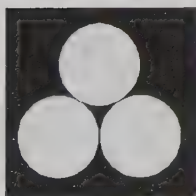
42. Moon and star

43. Upward-facing moon and star

44. Moon and Big Dipper

Three Stars (*mitsu-boshi*)

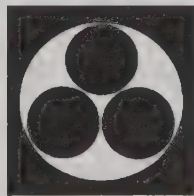
The three stars represent the three fixed stars of Orion's belt, which have had various symbolic meanings through the years. Because they were called "three warriors" or "general stars" in China, they became important designs for warrior families.



45



46

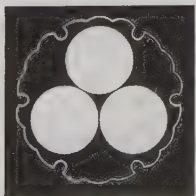


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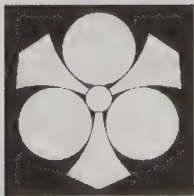
45. Three stars

46. Three stars, encircled

47. Three stars in rice cake



48



49

48. Three stars in snow wheel

49. Three swords and stars

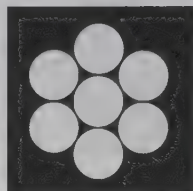
Seven Stars (*shichiyō*)

Seven-star crests were modeled after the Big Dipper, and like *tsuki-boshi*, were based on the belief in *Myōken*.

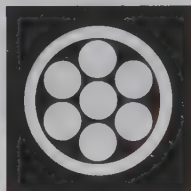
50. Seven stars

51. Seven stars, encircled

52. Seven stars in rice cake



50



51



52

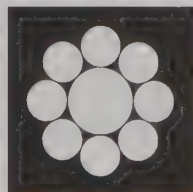
Nine Stars (*kuyō*)

The nine stars were originally used for fortune-telling in ancient India; later, Buddhists modeled nine Buddhas after these stars and worshiped them as the gods that protected all the earth. *Kuyō* was used as a pattern for clothes, palanquins, and oxcarts in the Heian period (794–1185), and was also the symbol of a prayer for safety and protection.

53. Nine stars

54. Nine stars, encircled

55. Nine stars, shadowed



53



54

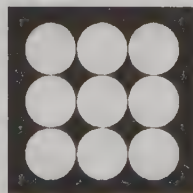


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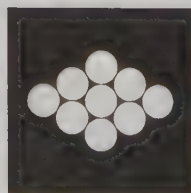
56. Square of nine stars

57. Rhombus of nine stars

58. Nine divided stars



56



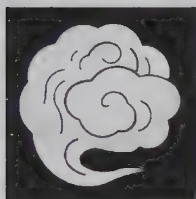
57



58

Cloud (*kumo*)

The cloud seen in crests is referred to as *zuun*, meaning a cloud that appears as a lucky omen. Cloud patterns were imported with Buddhism and were later developed into crests. They were often used as temple *kamon*.



59



60



61



62

59. Cloud

60. Lucky cloud

61. Rhombic cloud

62. Two cloud swirls

Mist (*kasumi*)

The mist pattern never appears by itself, but rather is used as a background for a mountain or the moon.



63

63. Moon in the mist

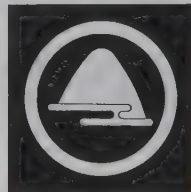
Mountain (*yama*)

Certain mountains have been worshiped as gods since ancient times, and their beauty has been the object of awe and admiration, thus they came to be used as *kamon* designs.

- 64. Mount Fuji for the Aoki family
- 65. Distant mountain, encircled
- 66. Three mountains



64



65



66

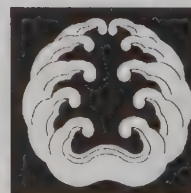
Waves (*nami*)

Waves were first used as patterns in the Fujiwara period (897–1185), and they later became motifs for crests. Though they are elegant, samurai often used wave crests because they symbolized battle. The waves' persistent motion of crashing onto the shore and returning back to the sea evoked the charge and retreat of battle.

- 67. Standing waves
- 68. Swirled facing waves
- 69. Swirled waves, clockwise



67



68



69

- 70. Three swirled waves
- 71. Swirled facing waves and plovers
- 72. Shadowed overlapping waves



70



71



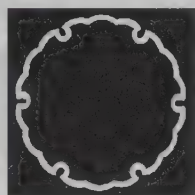
72

Snow (yuki)

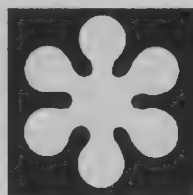
The pure white, six-pointed snowflake has long been admired as a thing of beauty. The snow, moon, and flowers (*setsu-getsu-ka*) hold a special place in Japanese culture as representatives of seasonal beauty. Besides adding beauty to winter scenery, snow is also regarded as a harbinger of a good harvest in the coming year.



73



74



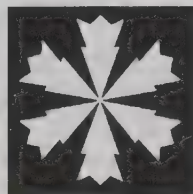
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76



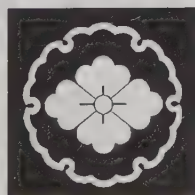
77



78



79



80



81



82



83

73. Snowflake

74. Snow wheel

75. First snowflake

76. Spring-wind snowflake

77. Arrow snowflake

78. Blizzard snowflake

79. Linked snow wheels

80. Rhombic flower in snow wheel

81. Plum blossom in moon-and-snow wheel

82. Three fans in snow wheel

83. Four seasons

Plant Crests

Plant motifs are the most prevalent in Japanese family crests.

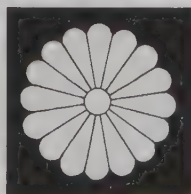
Chrysanthemum (*kiku*)

Chrysanthemums had a special role in ancient Chinese culture. People not only admired the beautiful blooms, but also used them as medicinal herbs to promote longevity. After the idea was introduced into Japan, chrysanthemums came to be regarded as the noblest of all flowers.

The emperor Gotoba enjoyed using the chrysanthemum pattern, and the three succeeding emperors followed suit; thus, the pattern came to be reserved for Imperial Household crests. The design, however, was sometimes granted to other persons for their distinguished service to the Imperial Household. It was only after the Meiji Restoration that the use of chrysanthemum crests was officially reserved for the Imperial Household.

The crest for the Imperial Family is the open design with sixteen double petals, while other royalty use the backside-view fourteen-petaled version (although each royal family informally uses another chrysanthemum design). Even today the chrysanthemum is used as the official crest for the Imperial Household.

84. Sixteen-petaled
chrysanthemum



84

85. Bisected chrysanthemums



85

86. Trisected chrysanthemums,
encircled



86

87. Three side-view
chrysanthemums



87

88. Quadrisected chrysanthemums
and square flowers



88

89. Thousand-petaled
chrysanthemum



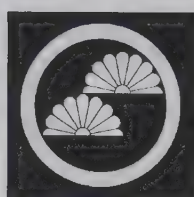
89



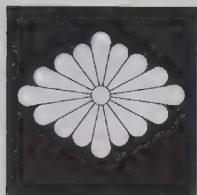
90



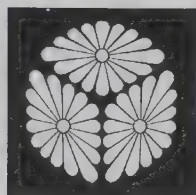
91



92



93



94



95



96



97



98



99



100



101



102



103



104

- 90. Chrysanthemum and water
- 91. Half-chrysanthemum and kanji numeral *ichi* (one)
- 92. Two half-chrysanthemums, encircled
- 93. Rhombic chrysanthemum
- 94. Three rhombic chrysanthemums
- 95. Three piled rhombic chrysanthemums
- 96. *Gyōyō*-style chrysanthemum
- 97. Side-view chrysanthemum between two leaves
- 98. Trisected chrysanthemum and leaves in tortoiseshell
- 99. Embracing chrysanthemum leaves
- 100. Three chrysanthemum leaves
- 101. Chrysanthemum between half-leaves
- 102. Chrysanthemum branch circle
- 103. Chrysanthemum branch
- 104. Chrysanthemum petals in disarray

105. Crane-shaped chrysanthemum

106. Butterfly-shaped
chrysanthemum

107. Boat-shaped chrysanthemum

108. Wood sorrel leaves and
swords in *fusen*-style*
chrysanthemum wheel



105



106



107



108

Paulownia (*kiri*)

A deciduous tree of the figwort family, the paulownia has light purple flowers that bloom around May. Its wood is light and easy to work with, so it is a popular material for furniture such as chests.

The paulownia was adopted as a crest motif because it is a symbol of good fortune. In ancient China, paulownias were considered to be lucky trees where phoenixes lived. In the Chinese poetry collection, *Anthology of Bai Juyi*, there is a poem in which a phoenix lives in the high branches of a blooming paulownia and sings, "Long live the king!" Thus, paulownia patterns came to be used for the emperor's garments, and later as crests at the end of the Kamakura period.

The Imperial Court bestowed the paulownia crests to retainers such as Ashikaga Takauji, and later the Ashikagas gave the crests to vassals who had performed meritorious deeds, such as Oda Nobunaga. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who had also been allowed to use paulownia crests, distributed them so often that even people to whom they had not been given started using them.

**Fusen* (*ryō*)

This term originally referred to a diagonal cloth woven into a design. It now describes both an arabesque pattern with petals in the corners and a special pattern in the shape of a butterfly with wings spread.

Though Hideyoshi prohibited the use of both chrysanthemum and paulownia crests, the ban had little effect and quite a number of *daimyō* used these patterns during the Edo period. Tokugawa Ieyasu was another notable figure who was allowed to use this popular crest, but he refused it and used a hollyhock design instead.



109



110



111



112



113



114



115



116



117



118



119



120

109. Paulownia with 5/3 blooms, encircled

110. Trisected paulownias with 5/3 blooms

111. Three paulownias with 5/3 blooms

112. Paulownia with 5/7 blooms

113. Pointed-leaf paulownia with 5/7 blooms

114. Bisected paulownias with 5/7 blooms

115. Paulownia wheel

116. Paulownia-bloom wheel

117. Trisected paulownia blooms

118. *Fusen*-style paulownia

119. Peephole-view paulownia in rhombus

120. Facing paulownias in rhombus

121. Paulownia blossoms
 122. Dancing paulownia
 123. *Kōrin*-style paulownia



121



122



123

124. Seven paulownia leaves, encircled
 125. Paulownia blossoms in disarray
 126. Paulownia with hanging flowers



124



125



126

127. Heron-shaped paulownia
 128. Shadowed butterfly-shaped paulownia
 129. Bat-shaped paulownia



127



128



129

130. Boat-shaped paulownia



130

Hollyhock (*aoi*)

Though usually translated as hollyhock, *aoi* crests were actually modeled after the leaves (and sometimes flowers) of a slightly different perennial plant of the birthwort family, also called *futaba-aoi* or *kamo-aoi*.

Though the origin of the crest is uncertain, it is said that some court nobles used the young leaves of hollyhocks to decorate their clothes, carts, horses, etc., during the “Hollyhock Festival,” a Shintō ritual at the Kamo Shrine in Kyoto. Hollyhocks thereafter became associated with the gods worshiped there. Devotees of these deities sanctified hollyhocks and began using them as their crests. Hollyhock crests are an example of *kamon* selected for their religious symbolism.

When Tokugawa Ieyasu became the first shōgun of the Edo Bakufu, his use of the hollyhock crest made it superior to both the chrysanthemum and paulownia, the motifs traditionally used by the emperors before him. During the ensuing Edo period, only the Tokugawa family was permitted to use the hollyhock design.



131



132



133



134



135



136

131. Two-leaf hollyhock

132. Standing hollyhock and water

133. Standing hollyhock, encircled

134. Trisected standing hollyhocks

135. Three hollyhocks in vine circle

136. Three hollyhocks and swords

137. Trisected hollyhocks

138. Facing hollyhocks with
flowers

139. Trisected hollyhocks with
flowers

140. Five hollyhocks

141. Rhombic standing hollyhocks

142. Rhombic bisected hollyhocks
with vine

143. Three hollyhocks for the
Tokugawa family

144. Bundled hollyhocks for the
Honda family

145. *Fusen*-style hollyhock

146. Hollyhock circle

147. Hollyhock in vine circle

148. Three hollyhocks with vines

149. Wheel of six hollyhocks

150. Paulownia-shaped hollyhock



137



138



139



140



141



142



143



144



145



146



147



148



149



150

Wisteria (*fuji*)

The wisteria is a deciduous shrub of the legume family. These crests were modeled after the shape of the wisteria's leaves and blossoms. People have enjoyed wisteria blooms since the Nara period (710–94), and there are poems about them in the anthology *Man'yōshū* (Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves). Wisteria bloom-viewing feasts were common. The plant was also frequently used as a pattern for clothes, which were illustrated in *Eiga Monogatari* (The Glory Story) and *Genji Monogatari* (The Tale of Genji). After that, the pattern was altered into a crest design, and families that have the kanji for wisteria in their names often adopted this kamon.



151



152



153



154



155



156



157



158



159

151. Climbing wisteria

152. Hanging wisteria, encircled

153. Rhombic climbing wisteria

154. Wisteria bloom

155. Three wisteria blooms with
leaves

156. Three wisteria blooms with
vines

157. Six wisterias

158. Two wisterias

159. Three wisterias

160. Swirled wisteria

161. Two swirled wisterias

162. Three swirled wisterias



160



161



162

163. Three swirls in hanging wisteria

164. Sickle in climbing wisteria

165. Rhombic flower in wisteria ring



163



164



165

166. Wisteria ring

167. Wisteria wheel

168. Wisteria branch circle



166



167



168

169. Circle of hanging wisterias and branches

170. Two wisteria branches in shape of rhombus

171. Gyōyō-style wisteria bloom with leaves

172. Paulownia-shaped wisteria

173. Butterfly-shaped wisteria



169



170



171



172



173

Gentian (*rindō*)

Gentians, perennial plants of the gentian family, have been admired by people since the Fujiwara period. They appear in both *Genji Monogatari* and *Makura no Sōshi* (The Pillow Book of Sei Shōnagon). These plants were first depicted in decorative patterns, and then were made into kamon designs. These crests were used mostly by court nobles.



174



175



176

174. Bamboo-style gentian

175. Bamboo-style gentian in rice cake

176. Bisected bamboo-style gentians



177



178



179

177. Trisected bamboo-style gentians

178. Three bamboo-style gentians

179. Three bamboo-style gentians, flowers inward-facing



180



181



182

180. Gentian wheel

181. Embracing gentians

182. Three gentian flowers and leaves



183



184



185

183. Rhombic bamboo-style gentian

184. Gyōyō-style gentian

185. Butterfly-shaped gentian

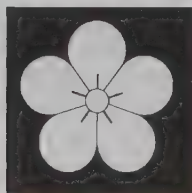
Japanese Plum (*ume*)

The *ume* is a small deciduous tree of the rose family. Crests that depict its blossom in a realistic style are called *ume*, while those that portray it in a geometrical pattern are called *umebachi*, meaning, “*ume* bowl.” Plum blossoms, along with pines and bamboos, became an auspicious symbol because of their resistance to cold weather. They were used as patterns for clothing and other household items. Sugawara Michizane loved plum blossoms, and it is said that this may be the reason they were used for religious crests at the Tenmangū shrines, where Michizane was deified.

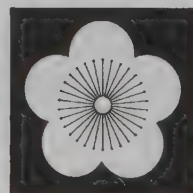
186. Plum blossom

187. Top-view plum blossom

188. Three plum blossoms and leaves, top view



186



187

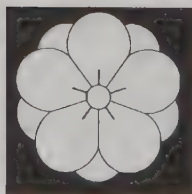


188

189. Double-flowered plum blossom

190. Shadowed double-petaled top-view plum blossom

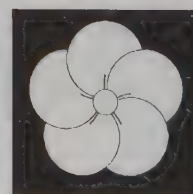
191. Twisted plum blossom



189



190

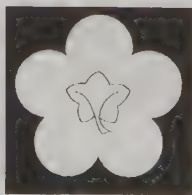


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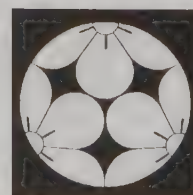
192. Bottom-view plum blossom

193. Trisected plum blossoms

194. Three piled plum blossoms



192



193



194



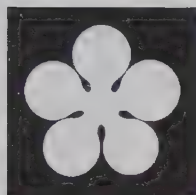
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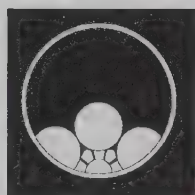
197



198



199



200



201



202



203



204



205



206



207

195. *Umebachi*-style plum blossom, encircled

196. Swords and *umebachi*-style plum blossom

197. *Umebachi*-style divided plum blossom

198. *Kōrin*-style *umebachi* plum blossom

199. Three side-view plum blossoms

200. *Umebachi*-style peephole-view plum blossom

201. Rhombic bisected plum blossom

202. Plum branch

203. Plum branch circle

204. *Fusen*-style plum blossom

205. Crane-shaped plum blossom

206. Side-view snow-covered plum blossom

207. Shadowed butterfly-shaped plum blossom

Peony (*botan*)

A deciduous shrub of the peony family, this plant was introduced from China, where people used the petals for food and the roots for medicine in addition to appreciating the colorful blooms. The Japanese also admired the peony, which was first used in patterns for clothes and ox carts, and later became a motif for family crests.

208. Standing peony

209. Twisted peony

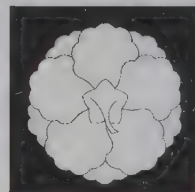
210. Backside-view peony



208



209



210

211. Embracing peony

212. Fallen peony

213. Pile of three fallen peonies



211



212



213

214. Gyōyō-style peony

215. Intersecting peony leaves, encircled

216. Five peony leaves



214



215



216

217. Intersecting peonies

218. Head-to-tail peonies, encircled

219. Peony branch



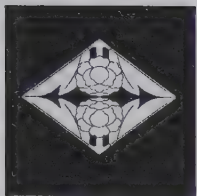
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218



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220



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222



223



224



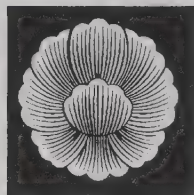
225



226



227



228

220. Facing peonies in shape of rhombus

221. Fallen peony in rhombus, peephole-view

222. *Fusen*-style peony

223. Peony and demon

224. Peony and butterfly

225. Crane-shaped peony

226. Paulownia-shaped peony

227. Crab-shaped peony

228. Peony for the Nabeshima family

Bellflower (*kikyō*)

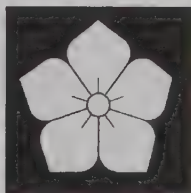
The perennial bellflower produces beautiful indigo-blue flowers from summer to autumn. The flower was used as a family crest simply for its beauty, although the crest also held symbolic meaning for the Toki clan. According to legend, an ancestor of the Toki clan picked a bellflower to put on his armor at a time of war, then proceeded to win the battle. Thus, the family adopted the flower for their family crest to commemorate the event.

As a matter of historical interest, the pale-blue bellflower is the family crest of Akechi Mitsuhide, who defeated Oda Nobunaga at Honnōji temple just before Nobunaga could succeed in unifying the nation.

229. Bellflower

230. Bellflower in rice cake

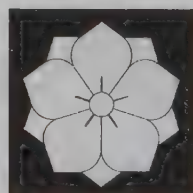
231. Double-flowered bellflower



229



230



231

232. Side-view bellflower

233. *Kōrin*-style bellflower

234. Twisted bellflower



232



233

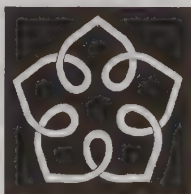


234

235. Looped bellflower

236. Three piled bellflowers

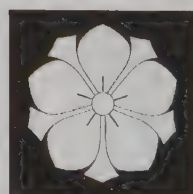
237. Bellflower and swords



235



236



237



238

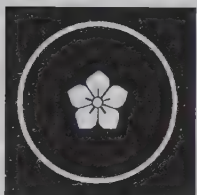


239



240

- 238. Bisected bellflowers
- 239. Trisected bellflowers
- 240. Bellflower between two leaves



241



242



243

- 241. Small bellflower, encircled
- 242. Peephole-view bellflower in rhombus
- 243. Gyōyō-style bellflower



244



245

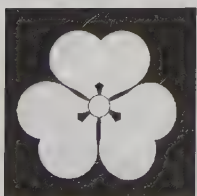


246

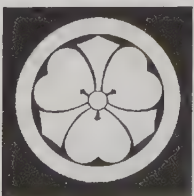
- 244. Paulownia-shaped bellflower
- 245. Butterfly-shaped bellflower
- 246. Shadowed crane-shaped bellflower

Wood Sorrel (*katabami*)

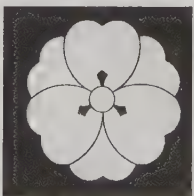
A perpetual of the oxalis family, the wood sorrel seems to have been used in patterns because of its elegant shape, although another view holds that it was chosen for its fecundity.



247



248



249

- 247. Wood sorrel
- 248. Wood sorrel and swords, encircled
- 249. Double-flowered wood sorrel

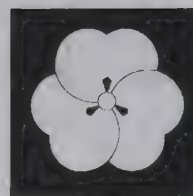
250. Four-petaled wood sorrel,
encircled

251. Twisted wood sorrel

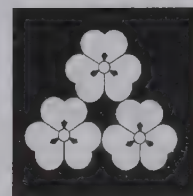
252. Three piled wood sorrels



250



251



252

253. Shadowed looped wood
sorrel

254. Shadowed *Kōrin*-style wood
sorrel

255. Vine in shape of wood sorrel



253



254



255

256. Trisected wood sorrels,
encircled

257. Trisected wood sorrels in
shape of tortoiseshell

258. Trisected wood sorrels and
swords

259. Peephole-view wood sorrel in
circle

260. Wood sorrel in rhombus

261. Rhombic bisected wood
sorrel



256



257



258



259



260

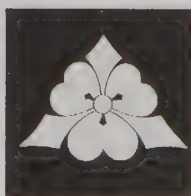


261

262. Scale-shaped wood sorrel and
swords

263. Fan-shaped wood sorrel

264. Butterfly-shaped wood sorrel
and swords



262



263



264

Arrowhead (*omodaka*)

The arrowhead, a perpetual plant of the water plantain family, was also called *shōgunsō* (victorious army grass). Because of this martial connotation, it was a design favored for the crests of samurai families.



265



266



267



268



269



270



271



272



273



274



275



276

265. Standing arrowhead

266. Standing arrowhead in rice cake

267. Embracing arrowheads, encircled

268. Bisected arrowheads

269. Three head-to-tail arrowheads

270. Five arrowheads

271. Arrowhead swirl

272. Top-view arrowhead with blossoms

273. Arrowheads and water

274. Intersecting arrowhead leaves

275. Single arrowhead with blossoms

276. Single arrowhead and blossoms with circled stem

277. Rhombic facing arrowheads

278. *Fusen*-style arrowhead

279. Wheel of arrowheads



277



278



279

280. Paulownia-shaped arrowhead

281. Butterfly-shaped arrowhead

282. Crane-shaped arrowhead



280



281



282

Mandarin (*tachibana*)

The mandarin tree is an evergreen of the rue family. In a historical fable, it is referred to as the sacred tree planted in the land of eternity. Emperor Genmei (661–721, in the Nara period) loved this plant dearly and gave the name Tachibana to the prince, Katsuragi Oh. The Tachibana clan then adopted the plant as their family crest. Mandarin blossoms were also used as patterns in the Fujiwara period, and later developed into family crest designs.

283. Encircled mandarin

284. Shadowed mandarin

285. Vertically facing mandarins



283



284



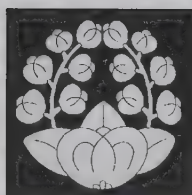
285



286



287



288

286. Circle of three mandarins
287. Top-view trisected mandarins
288. Mandarin blooms



289



290

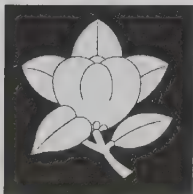


291

289. Mandarin circle
290. Mandarin branch
291. *Kōrin*-style mandarin branch



292



293

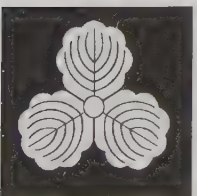


294

292. *Gyōyō*-style mandarin
293. Fan-shaped mandarin
294. Crane-shaped mandarin

Oak (*kashiwa*)

It is believed that the leaves of these deciduous trees were used as platters to offer food to the gods. The tree came to be revered, and families that had been admitted to the Shintō priesthood often used it for their kamon.



295



296



297

295. Three oak leaves
296. Oak leaves and vines, encircled
297. Three oak leaves and swords, encircled

298. Three oak leaves in rhombus

299. Peephole-view oak leaves,
encircled

300. Trisected oak leaves



298



299



300

301. Five oak leaves, encircled

302. Three swirled oak leaves

303. Facing oak leaves and
rhombic flower



301



302



303

304. Three double oak leaves

305. Single oak leaf, encircled

306. Two parallel oak leaves,
encircled



304



305



306

307. Embracing oak leaves

308. Intersecting oak leaves

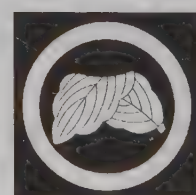
309. Folded oak leaf, encircled



307



308



309

310. Crane-shaped oak leaves

311. Paulownia-shaped oak leaves

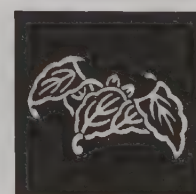
312. Shadowed bat-shaped oak
leaves



310



311



312

Paper Mulberry (*kaji*)

A deciduous tree of the mulberry family, the paper mulberry also had leaves that were used to offer food to the gods. They were depicted in patterns on the clothes of Shintō priests, and eventually they were established as religious crests.



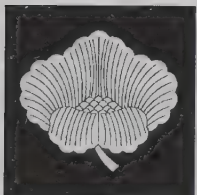
313



314



315



316



317



318



319



320



321



322



323



324

313. Standing paper mulberry leaf

314. Paper mulberry leaf in rice cake

315. Embracing paper mulberry leaves

316. Paper mulberry bloom

317. Rhombic paper mulberry leaf

318. Three paper mulberry leaves

319. Pair of head-to-tail paper mulberry leaves

320. Bisected paper mulberry leaves

321. Trisected paper mulberry leaves

322. Gyōyō-style paper mulberry leaves

323. Paper mulberry leaves in shape of feather fan

324. Butterfly-shaped paper mulberry leaves

Myōga

A perpetual of the ginger family, this plant is sometimes translated as “Japanese ginger.” *Myōga* is homophonic with another word that means “blessings from the gods,” so it has long been considered auspicious. People who adopted *myōga* as their kamon probably hoped to invoke good fortune. *Myōga* crests look similar to *gyōyō* crests, so they are sometimes confused.

325. Embracing *myōga*

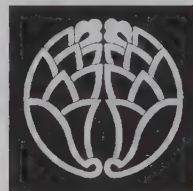
326. Shadowed embracing *myōga*,

Kōrin-style

327. *Myōga* circle



325



326



327

328. Circle of *myōga* and vines

329. Three intersecting *myōga*

330. Three *myōga*



328



329

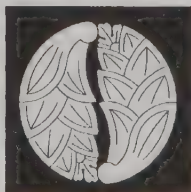


330

331. Pair of head-to-tail *myōga*

332. Intersecting *myōga*

333. Pile of three embracing
myōga



331



332



333

334. Three *myōga* swirls

335. Paulownia-shaped *myōga*

336. *Myōga* with blossom



334



335



336



337

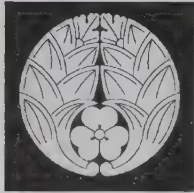


338



339

337. Rhombic embracing *myōga*
 338. Three blooming *myōga*
 339. Circle of *myōga* and branch



340



341

340. Wood sorrel in embracing
myōga circle
 341. Butterfly-shaped *myōga*

Pine (*matsu*)

These evergreens have been used in religious ceremonies and considered auspicious since ancient times. *Kadomatsu* (New Year's decorations made of pine branches) are still displayed at the gates and entryways of Japanese homes at New Year's. Since the Heian period, pine patterns have been used on ox carts and other items; later, they became family crests.



342



343



344

342. Single pine
 343. Comb-shaped pine
 344. Three-tiered pine, encircled



345



346



347

345. Rhombic facing pines
 346. Three pines
 347. Five pines, encircled

348. Embracing pine saplings
 349. Six pine saplings
 350. Shadowed rhombic pine bark



348



349



350

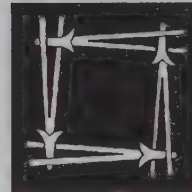
351. Rhombic pine bark in rice cake
 352. Pinecone with needles
 353. Pine needles in shape of well frame



351



352

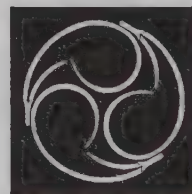


353

354. Rhombic pine needles
 355. Pine needles in shape of three swirls
 356. Peephole-view bellflower in rhombic pine needles



354



355



356

357. *Torii* in swirled pine needles
 358. Pine needles in shape of wood sorrel
 359. Paulownia-shaped pine needles and cones



357



358



359

360. Rhombus of pine and bamboo leaves
 361. Three scale-shaped pines
 362. *Kōrin*-style pine



360



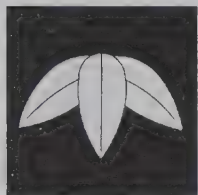
361



362

Bamboo (*take*, *sasa*)

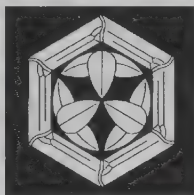
Evergreens of the grass family, *take* and *sasa* are two different species, but are often confused. Generally, smaller types of *take* (bamboo) are called *sasa*. According to Chinese legend, the phoenix ate bamboo fruit. It is probably this story that caused bamboo to be regarded as a lucky plant. Bamboo designs were first used as decorative patterns and later became family crests.



363



364



365



366



367



368



369



370



371



372



373



374

363. Three bamboo leaves

364. Bamboo leaves, encircled

365. Nine bamboo leaves in tortoiseshell-shaped bamboo

366. Bisected bamboo leaves

367. Bamboo leaves and facing sparrows

368. Bamboo leaves

369. Wheel of bamboo leaves

370. Snow-covered bamboo leaves

371. Circle of bamboo leaves

372. Boat-shaped bamboo leaves

373. Pudgy sparrow in bamboo hut

374. Bamboo and sparrows

375. Three bamboo pieces,
encircled



375

376. Three interlocking bamboo
rings



376

377. Bamboo and sedge hat



377

Japanese Cedar (*sugi*)

An evergreen of the genus *Cryptomeria*, the cedar has been deified as a sacred tree in the Shintō tradition because of its enormity and solemnity. Patterns using this tree were usually adopted as family crests for religious reasons. On the other hand, the Uesugi clan, the Sugi clan, and others who had *sugi* in their family names were also known to adopt these kamon.

378. Japanese cedar, encircled



378

379. Three Japanese cedars



379

380. Bisected Japanese cedars



380

381. Two Japanese cedars, peep-
hole-view



381

382. Five-tiered Japanese cedars,
encircled



382

383. Swirled Japanese cedars



383

384. Three Japanese cedars, head-
to-tail



384

385. Rhombic bisected Japanese
cedars



385

386. Rhombic Japanese cedar



386

Rice Plant (*ine*)

Since ancient times, rice was a form of currency for the Japanese, so it was held in very high regard. It seems that the rice plant was used as a kamon because of its symbolism as a good omen. Many Inari shrines, found all over Japan, use this crest.



387



388



389



390



391



392



393



394



395



396



397

387. Circle of rice plant, counter-clockwise

388. Intersecting rice plants

389. Embracing rice plants

390. Bundled rice plants, encircled

391. Circle of two head-to-tail rice plants

392. Rhombus of two head-to-tail rice plants

393. Embracing rice plants and sparrows

394. Sparrow in rice-plant circle

395. Three stars in embracing rice plants

396. Crane-shaped rice plant

397. Butterfly-shaped rice plant

Ivy (*tsuta*)

A deciduous liana of the grape family, ivy was used in patterns and family crests because of its elegant beauty. In the Edo period, ivy crests were used by both the Matsudaira clan and the shōgun Tokugawa Yoshimune, so they became associated with power and authority. Geisha and prostitutes also loved to use these crests, but for quite a different reason. The way ivy twines around other plants and grows thick was said to symbolize the way these women depended upon their regular customers and never left them.

398. Ivy leaf, encircled



398

399. Ivy leaf in rice cake



399

400. Twisted ivy leaf



400

401. Pointed-leaf ivy



401

402. *Kōrin*-style shadowed ivy



402

403. Looped ivy



403

404. Pile of three ivy leaves



404

405. Three ivy leaves, encircled



405

406. Small ivy leaf, encircled



406



407



408



409

- 407. Trisected ivy leaves
- 408. Ivy leaf in snow ring
- 409. Shadowed ivy in shape of rhombus



410



411



412

- 410. Rhombic peephole-view ivy
- 411. Ivy branch
- 412. Ivy branch circle



413



414



415

- 413. Ivy leaves and branch
- 414. *Fusen*-style ivy
- 415. Crab-shaped ivy leaves

Clove (*chōji*)

An evergreen shrub of the potato family, the clove is native to Mexico. The crests depict the fruit of the clove plant, which was introduced to Japan in the beginning of the Heian period and appreciated for its medicinal and aromatic properties.



416



417



418

- 416. Encircled clove
- 417. Shadowed clove swirl, counterclockwise
- 418. Two clove swirls, clockwise

419. Three counterclockwise clove
swirls, encircled

420. Trisected cloves

421. Intersecting cloves, encircled



419



420



421

422. Intersecting cloves

423. Three piled intersecting
cloves

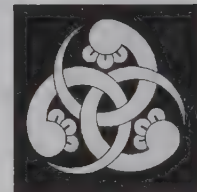
424. Three interlocking clove
swirls



422



423



424

425. Four cloves and vines in shape
of rhombus

426. Six cloves

427. Eight cloves, encircled



425



426



427

Ginkgo (*ichō*)

The Tokugawa clan was said to have used a crest depicting this deciduous tree's leaves before adopting the hollyhock.

428. Ginkgo leaf, encircled

429. Three ginkgo leaves

430. Three shadowed ginkgo
leaves



428



429



430



431



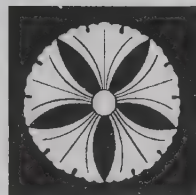
432



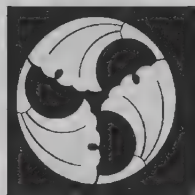
433



434



435



436



437



438



439



440



441



442



443



444



445

431. Three ginkgo leaves and
swords, encircled

432. Facing ginkgo leaves

433. Facing ginkgo leaves in shape
of rhombus

434. Rhombic ginkgo leaves

435. Five ginkgo leaves

436. Trisected ginkgo leaves

437. Trisected overlapping ginkgo
leaves

438. Swirled ginkgo leaf

439. Linked ginkgo leaf circles

440. Ginkgo branch circle

441. Yin and yang ginkgo leaves,
encircled

442. Wood sorrel in ginkgo ring

443. Rhombic flower in ginkgo ring

444. Crane-shaped ginkgo leaf

445. Butterfly-shaped ginkgo leaves

Iris (*kakitsubata*)

A perpetual plant, the iris has beautiful dark-purple flowers that bloom around May. Iris crests are known as the *kamon* of court nobles. Iris flowers were first depicted in patterns on the garments and palanquins of the nobility, and then later became family crests.

446. Iris bloom



446

447. Three iris blooms



447

448. Iris circle



448

449. Two irises



449

450. Circle of three irises



450

451. Embracing irises



451

452. Iris for the Nakayama family



452

453. Stem-to-stem irises in shape
of rhombus



453

454. Standing iris



454

455. Looped iris



455

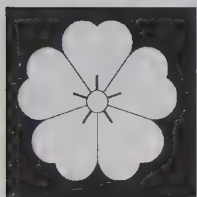
456. Crane-shaped iris



456

Cherry Blossom (*sakura*)

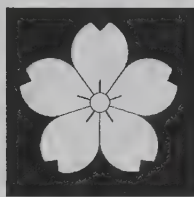
The cherry is a deciduous shrub or tree of the rose family. People enjoyed the elegant appearance of these trees and modeled crests after their beautiful blossoms. The Sakurai clan and the Yoshino clan adopted *sakura* kamon because of the association with their family names.



457



458



459

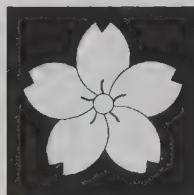
457. Cherry blossom

458. Cherry blossom, encircled

459. Wild cherry blossom



460



461

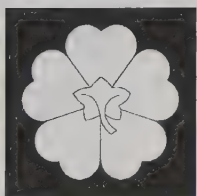


462

460. Shadowed wild cherry blossom

461. Twisted wild cherry blossom

462. Top-view wild cherry blossom



463



464



465

463. Bottom-view cherry blossom

464. Double-flowered cherry blossom

465. Trisected cherry blossoms



466



467



468

466. Shadowed trisected cherry blossoms

467. Side-view cherry blossom with leaf

468. Three side-view cherry blossoms

469. Cherry blossom branch
 470. Circle of cherry blossom and
 branch
 471. Circle of three cherry
 blossoms and leaves



469



470



471

472. Cherry blossom branch in
 disarray
 473. Cherry blossom and
 embracing leaves
 474. Gyōyō-style cherry blossom



472



473



474

475. *Fusen*-style cherry blossom
 476. *Fusen*-style cherry blossom
 477. Cherry blossom under cres-
 cent moon



475



476



477

Animal Crests

Although there are fewer crests modeled after animals than plants, several major animal patterns exist, including those depicting mythological animals.

Lion and Peony (*shishi ni botan*)

The lion and peony combination has been used since the Heian period. The pattern seems to have originated from the belief that lions loved and ate peonies. The lion is a symbol of boldness and has been regarded as the king of beasts since ancient times, while peonies have been admired as noble, beautiful flowers. Since this pattern combines bravery and elegance, it was thought to embody the essence of the samurai, and was used to decorate armor and helmets.



478



479

478, 479. Peony and Chinese lion

Chinese Phoenix (*hō-ō*)

The phoenix, a mythological bird, was respected in China as one of the four spirits, along with *qilin* (a winged beast with one horn, a deer's body, a cow's tail, a horse's hooves, and a wolf's face), turtles, and dragons. It is said that the bird's appearance heralds the arrival of the holy king. This idea was introduced into Japan and the phoenix was often used in decorative patterns.



480



481



482

480. Phoenix circle

481. Circle of flying phoenix

482. Decorative phoenix for court celebrations

Crane (*tsuru*)

Since ancient times, cranes have been said to live for a thousand years, so they have been considered omens of longevity. According to legend, there was a Japanese crane of great beauty that flew with a hermit on its back.

Crane motifs became quite popular, especially in the Kamakura period, and when the Kamakura shogunate dedicated swords to the shrine of each region in Japan, they were decorated with the pattern of a crane in a circle (*tsuru-maru*). Later, the crane pattern became widely used for family crests.

483. Crane circle

484. Circle of *Kōrin*-style crane

485. Facing cranes



483



484



485

486. Facing cranes in shape of rhombus

487. *Kōrin*-style cranes in shape of bellflower

488. Standing crane in tortoiseshell



486



487



488

489. Dancing crane in flight

490. Paper crane



489



490

Turtle (*kame*)

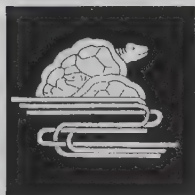
The model for turtle kamon is a kind of turtle design called *minogame*, in which the turtle has seaweed trailing behind it, making it appear as if wearing a *mino* (straw raincoat). The turtle is also drawn with ears, which the real animal does not have. Like cranes, turtles were regarded as a symbol of long life. Before becoming family crests, turtle patterns were used for various decorative purposes in the Fujiwara period (897–1185).



491



492



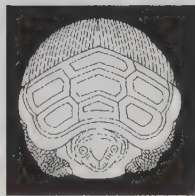
493



494



495



496



497

491. Single turtle

492. Turtle circle

493. Turtle and water

494. Turtle with child

495. Three head-to-tail turtles

496. Head-on turtle

497. Disordered character turtle

Dragon (*ryū*)

The dragon is another mythical beast, often referred to as king of the scaled animals. This monstrous creature was thought to have supernatural powers, like the phoenix. The pattern was used not only for clothes and swords, but also to decorate palaces, shrines, and temples in the Kamakura and Muromachi periods. Samurai warriors were especially partial to dragon kamon.

498. Dragon circle



498

499. Dragon circle



499

500. Rain dragon



500

501. Three rain dragons



501

502. Intersecting dragon talons



502

Hawk (*taka*), Hawk Feathers (*takano-ha*)

Because of their bold, predatory nature, hawks were a symbol of war and fighting spirit, therefore, it was common for military commanders to adopt these kamon. High-level members of the ancient Imperial Guard were known to use hawk feathers on their elaborate ceremonial crowns.

503. Hawk circle



503

504. Facing hawks



504

505. Intersecting hawk feathers



505



506



507



508

506. Two parallel hawk feathers,
encircled

507. Wheel of hawk feathers

508. Circle of hawk feather



509



510



511

509. Nail puller (*kugi-nuki*) in circle
of facing hawk feathers

510. Fan of hawk feathers

511. Butterfly-shaped hawk
feathers

Wild Goose (*kari*)

Wild geese arrive in large flocks in southern regions during the autumn months, and following their migratory instincts, head back north in spring. The Japanese have written poems and songs expressing an affinity for wild geese since ancient times. In the Fujiwara period, the bird was depicted in various decorative patterns; later it was turned into a *kamon* motif.



512



513



514

512. Wild goose

513. Looped wild goose, encircled

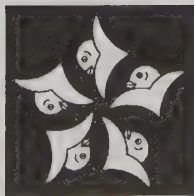
514. Three looped wild geese,
heads facing outward



515



516



517

515. Three wild geese inward-
facing, encircled

516. Interlocking wild geese

517. Wild-geese wheel

518. Wild geese in shape of rhombus



518

519. Peephole-view wild goose in rhombus



519

520. Flying wild goose



520

521. Three flying wild geese



521

Dove (*hato*)

Doves were referred to as sacred animals of Hachiman, a Bodhisattva worshiped as a god of war. It was said that if military commanders wrote the name of the Bodhisattva on their banners, doves would flock to their camp. Thus, it became common for military leaders to adopt dove patterns as their kamon. In these crests, doves are often combined with other motifs, such as *hoya* (mistletoe) and *torii*.

522. Dove



522

523. Facing doves



523

524. Facing doves in flight



524

525. Dove with children



525

526. Facing doves and *torii*



526

527. Dove circle



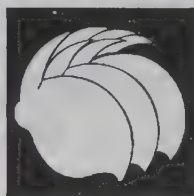
527

Rabbit (*usagi*)

Rabbits, like cranes and turtles, have long been considered lucky animals. Their crests were probably chosen for auspicious symbolism.



528



529



530



531

528. Head-on rabbit

529. Three back-view rabbits

530. Three rabbits

531. Rabbit and waves

Butterfly (*chō*)

Butterflies have been used in patterns since the Nara period. These designs were used not only for clothes and furnishings but also for armor, helmets, and other battle gear. Both samurai and court nobles loved butterfly designs.



532



533



534

532. Encircled butterfly

533. Facing butterflies

534. Three butterflies

535. Shadowed *Kōrin*-style
butterfly
536. Three flying butterflies
537. Circle of three butterflies



535



536



537

538. Butterfly wheel
539. Peephole-view butterfly,
encircled
540. *Fusen*-style butterfly



538



539



540

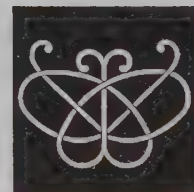
541. Facing butterflies and three
swirls
542. Three butterflies and *mokkō*
543. Butterfly-shaped looped vine



541



542



543

Dragonfly (*tonbo*)

Emperor Yūryaku was once bitten on the elbow by a horsefly, soon after which the horsefly was captured by a dragonfly. His admiration of this scene was so great that he composed a poem about it, and the poem was included in the *Nihon Shoki* (Chronicle of Japan). Thereafter, samurai came to refer to dragonflies as *kachi-mushi* (victorious insect); they were often used as decorations for quivers and other battle gear.

544. Three dragonflies



544

Tool and Implement Crests

These kamon depict everyday items of ancient Japan.

Prayer Rod (*nusa* or *hei*)

These wooden rods with long strands of paper trailing from them were used in Shintō deification rituals, and thus were respected as sacred tools. Samurai believed that spirits dwelled in the rods, so they invoked the help and protection of the gods by using prayer-rod designs as their kamon. Some Shintō priests also used these kamon because of their religious symbolism.



Prayer rod (right) and
earthenware pot (left)



545

545. Prayer rod



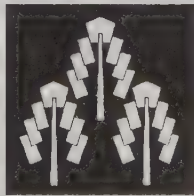
546

546. Prayer rod, encircled



547

547. Crossed prayer rod



548

548. Three prayer rods

Tray (*oshiki*)

In ancient times, people folded up the edges of leaves to make tray-like platters. Over time, the bark of the *hinoki* (Japanese cypress) was used instead of leaves. *Oshiki* were mainly used to offer food to the gods, so these crests were adopted for religious reasons. *Oshiki* crests depict the tray as seen from above, usually with some object or kanji character on it, probably to emphasize its function as an offering tray.

549. Tray

550. Well frame on tray

551. Ivy on tray



549



550



551



Oshiki

Earthenware Pot (*heishi*)

Special bottles used to offer sake to the gods were considered holy vessels. Shintō priests and their relatives often used them as kamon designs.



552



553



554



555



556



557

552. Earthenware pot

553. Parallel earthenware pots

554. Shrine earthenware pots,
encircled

555. Trisected earthenware pots

556. Five earthenware pots

557. Earthenware pot on tray

Cross (*kurusu*)

The Japanese word for this Christian symbol is from the Portuguese, *cruz*. Christian converts originally adopted these crests to express their religious beliefs. However, after the Tokugawa shogunate banned the religion, most Christians hid their faith and adopted different kamon designs. Consequently, most cross designs have disappeared.



558



559



560

558. Cross

559. Cut-bamboo cross

560. Flower cross

Gion Talisman (Gion *mamori*)

These crests were modeled after the religious charm of the Gion Shrine, where Gozu Tennō (a guardian deity) was worshiped. Originally, people who worshiped at the Gion Shrine adopted these crests. Later, Christians used the crests as a disguised symbol of the cross.

561. Gion talisman, encircled

562. Cylindrical Gion talisman

563. Talisman for the Ikeda family



561



562



563

Dharma Chakra (*rinpō*)

Ancient Indians worshiped the *rinpō*, a legendary weapon. According to legend, it is one of the weapons of the emperor Tenrin Jō-ō (Chakravartin). When he turns the wheel of the *rinpō* in the battlefield, it smooths out uneven ground, removes obstacles, and brings peace and happiness to the world. It is also one of the symbols used in Esoteric Buddhism.

564. Dharma Chakra

565. Rhombic Dharma Chakra

566. Trisected Dharma Chakra



564



565



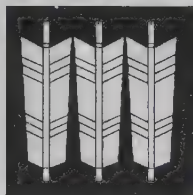
566

Bow and Arrow (*yumi-ya*)

The bow and arrow was used both for hunting and as a weapon of war. It seems to have been adopted into kamon designs because it symbolized the samurai spirit, although it was also used in non-martial ceremonies and rituals.



567



568



569



570



571



572



573



574



575



576



577



578

567. One arrow, encircled

568. Three parallel arrows

569. Pair of head-to-tail arrows

570. Intersecting arrows

571. Intersecting arrows with heads

572. Three bundled arrows

573. Wheel of eight arrows

574. Three arrows and swords, encircled

575. Three swirls inside facing arrows

576. Arrow fan

577. Intersecting bow and arrows

578. Two bows, encircled

579. Five bows

580. Four bows in shape of
rhombus

581. Arrow nock



579



580



581

582. Folded arrow nock

583. Three overlapping arrow
nocks

584. Three arrow nocks and swords



582



583



584

Snake Eye (*janome*)

These kamon were originally modeled after *tsurumaki*, a leather, ring-shaped spool used to reel bowstring. The *tsurumaki* was an essential part of a samurai's battle gear. Later, the design came to be called *janome* simply because of its resemblance to a snake's eye. It was usually adopted by samurai families for its warrior symbolism.

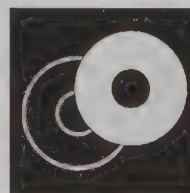
585. Snake eye

586. Yin and yang snake eyes

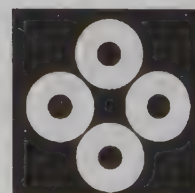
587. Four snake eyes



585



586



587

588. Seven snake eyes

589. Trisected snake eyes,
encircled

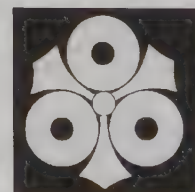
590. Three snake eyes and swords



588



589



590

Apricot-Leaf Harness Accessory (*gyōyō*)

Gyōyō was a harness accessory made either of metal or leather, originally introduced from China. It apparently got its name from its shape, which resembles an apricot leaf. As a horse galloped, the *gyōyō* was considered a beautiful sight as it fluttered in the wind. These crests are often confused with *myōga* crests because of their similarity in shape.

In the Ashikaga period (1333–1568), samurai often adopted *gyōyō* crests. The Ōtomo clan in Kyushu greatly expanded their territory after adopting the crest, so *gyōyō* crests became the envy of all the generals in Kyushu. They envied it so much that when a general was victorious, he would steal the enemy's *gyōyō* crests, which would then be taken by another general in the same way.



591



592



593



594



595



596

591. Embracing *gyōyō*

592. Encircled *gyōyō*

593. Intersecting *gyōyō*, encircled

594. Embracing *gyōyō* with rhombic flowers

595. Embracing *gyōyō* in shape of rhombus

596. Trisected *gyōyō*



597

597. Swirled *gyōyō* with blossoms

Bit (*kutsuwa*)

Kutsuwa is supposedly a dialectal variation of *kuchiwa* (muzzle). The bit is an iron fitting which is inserted into a horse's mouth to fasten the reins. The ends of the bit are circular, and it is these circles that were depicted. These crests were mostly used to symbolize martial spirit, but Christians seeking to covertly display their faith also adopted the cross-like patterns.

598. Bit



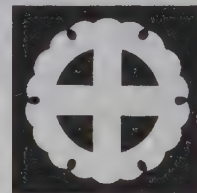
598

599. Flower bit



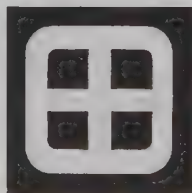
599

600. Snow-covered bit



600

601. Square bit



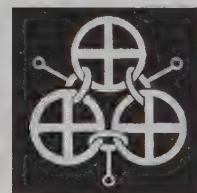
601

602. Rhombic bit



602

603. Three connected bits



603

Genji Cart (*Genji-guruma*)

The Genji cart, or oxcart, also called *gosho guruma* (cart for the Imperial Palace), was often symbolized by depicting only the wheel of the cart. After the Fujiwara period, the wheel was depicted in decorative patterns and later used as family crests.

604. Genji cart



604

605. Flowered Genji carts,
overlapping



605

606. Japanese pinwheel



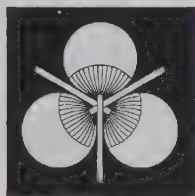
606

Round Fan (*uchiwa*)

The round fan is made by covering bamboo ribs with rice paper, and is still used in modern Japan to cool off during the summer. Both court nobles and commoners have used these patterns through the years, but the reason it became a family crest is uncertain.



607



608



609

607. Round fan, encircled

608. Three round fans

609. Chinese fan



610

610. Three Chinese fans

Feather Fan (*ha-uchiwa*)

Fans made from feathers are said to be a distinctive possession of the *tengu*, a magical long-nosed goblin of Japanese folklore. These designs have been used for shrine crests and temple crests.



611



612

611. Feather fan

612. Trisected feather fans

Military Leader's Fan (*gunbai uchiwa*)

Military leaders in the Sengoku period used this special fan when commanding their armies. It was usually made of leather and iron. In the Battle of Kawanakajima, Uesugi Kenshin attacked Takeda Shingen with his sword, but Shingen is said to have protected himself with this fan. Using this crest seems to have symbolized faith in the war god Marishiten.

613. Military leader's fan



613

Fan (*ōgi*)

When a fan is opened, it spreads out from a single point, symbolizing the way life develops. Because of this association, the fan is used in ceremonies as an auspicious object, expressing a celebration of life. Also, because of its elegant form, fan patterns were often depicted in picture scrolls from the Fujiwara period to the Kamakura period.

614. Rising sun on fan



614

615. Cherry blossom on fan



615

616. Layered fans



616

617. Three fans, encircled



617

618. Pile of three fans



618

619. Five interlaced fans



619



620



621



622

620. Two parallel fans, encircled
621. Intersecting fans, encircled
622. Fans in shape of well frame



623



624



625

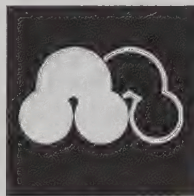
623. Japanese cypress fan
624. Rhombic fans
625. Butterfly-shaped fans

Sandbank (*suhamu*)

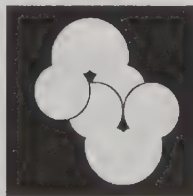
The sandbank kamon depicts a pattern in the shape of a sandbank, which represents a certain holy place on Mount Hōrai. In the Fujiwara period, these patterns were used as celebratory decorations, so the motif was used on clothes and furnishings as a pattern of good fortune.



626

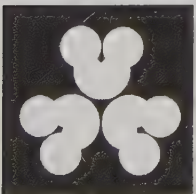


627



628

626. Sandbank
627. Yin and yang sandbanks
628. Intersecting sandbanks



629



630



631

629. Three sandbanks
inward-facing
630. Kōrin-style sandbank
631. Trisected sandbanks

632. Flower-shaped sandbank
 633. Three sandbanks and vines,
 encircled



632



633

Nail Puller (*kugi-nuki*)

The *kugi-nuki* kamon depicts an ancient carpenter's tool that was used to pull nails. It consisted of a square metal washer and a lever. The lever was put into the hole of the washer, and the nail was pulled out. *Kugi-nuki* were also called *kuki wo nuku*, an ambiguous phrase which could be taken to mean either "pull nails" or "capture nine castles." It is thought that because of this alternate meaning, the kamon was adopted as an omen of victory.

634. Nail puller
 635. Linked nail pullers, encircled
 636. Nail puller, encircled



634



635



636

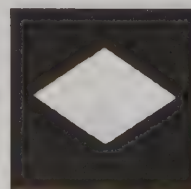
Rice Cake (*mochi*)

Sticky rice is steamed and pounded to make the Japanese rice cake, used for both Shintō and Buddhist ceremonies since ancient times. Crest designs include both *kuro-mochi* (black rice cake) and *shiro-mochi* (white rice cake). The kanji for *kuro-mochi* can also be read *koku-mochi*, which means "military leader's raise in income," so this kamon was used in the hope of bringing good fortune.

637. Black rice cake
 638. Rhombic rice cake



637



638

Coin (zeni or sen)

Some coins depicted in kamon are inscribed with kanji characters. *Kan'eitsūhō* (of Japanese origin), *seiwatsūhō*, and *eirakutsūhō* (both of Chinese origin) are common examples of kanji coins. Because the characters on these coins signified good luck, it is likely that they were used as crest motifs for their auspicious symbolism.

Blank coins were usually arranged in a pattern of one to six coins on a crest, although sometimes as many as nine were shown. Kamon depicting more than six coins are called *rensen* (a series of coins). These designs seem to have been chosen for their religious meaning.

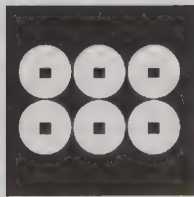
Rokurenzen is a special design in which six blank coins are arranged in two rows of three. This pattern represents *rokudō*, the six worlds of Buddhism. These include hell, the world of starvation, the world of animality, the world of constant war, the human world, and the world of joy. After death, it is thought that the deceased will journey into the next world, and six coins are put into the coffin as fare for crossing the Sanzu River (comparable to the River Styx in Greek mythology). The coins may also have been adopted as a kamon design in the hope that Jizōson, or Ksitigarbha, would save all beings in all the six worlds.



639



640



641

639. *Eiraku* coin

640. Wave coin

641. Six coins for the Sanada family

Weight (*fundō*)

Weight motifs depict the weights that were used on old-fashioned scales. Though the reason why the motif was adopted as a family crest is uncertain, one opinion holds that it was because of a weight's fanciful design and ability to measure weight accurately.

642. Weight



642

643. Weight in rhombus



643

644. Yin and yang weights



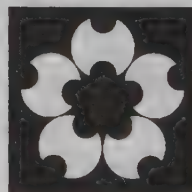
644

645. Three weights



645

646. Weights in shape of cherry blossom



646

Wooden Measure (*masu*)

Masu is the name of a wooden measure, but it is also a homophone that means “to increase,” so this design was thought to bring good fortune.

647. Wooden measure



647

648. Three nested wooden measures, encircled



648

649. Pile of three wooden measures



649

Others

Other everyday items that were adapted into kamon include the traditional gift decoration (*noshi*), ship (*fune*), sail (*ho*), paddle (*kai*), helmet ornament (*kuwagata*), sword (*ken*), *aka-tori* (tool used to remove dirt from a comb), umbrella (*kasa*), sedge hat (*kasa*), and sickle (*kama*).



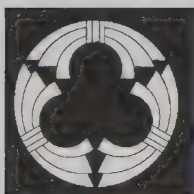
650



651



652



653



654



655



656



657



658



659



660



661

650. Intersecting *noshi*

651. Facing *noshi*

652. Embracing and tied *noshi*

653. Circle of three *noshi*

654. Weight-shaped *noshi*

655. Tied *noshi*

656. Rhombic facing *noshi*

657. Three folded *noshi*

658. Wave-like *noshi* circle

659. Paulownia-shaped *noshi*

660. Butterfly-shaped *noshi*

661. Crane-shaped *noshi*

662. Sailboat

663. Treasure boat and waves



662



663

664. Encircled sail

665. Sail and mist

666. Circle of five sails



664



665



666

667. Intersecting paddles,
encircled

668. Three intersecting paddles

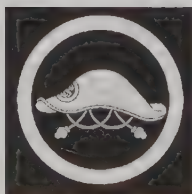


667



668

669. Samurai helmet, encircled



669

670. Three swords

671. Eight swords in shape of
rhombus



670



671



672

672. Helmet ornament with star



673

673. Intersecting sickles, encircled



674



675

674, 675. *Aka-tori*



676

676. Single umbrella



677

677. Three-tiered sedge hat

Construction Crests

Torii

It is thought that *torii*, the famous Shintō shrine gates, originated from the perches on which sacrificial chickens for the gods sat. *Torii* crests were chosen for their religious symbolism.

678. *Torii*



678

679. *Torii* and Japanese cedars

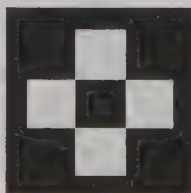


679

Flagstone (*ishi-datami*)

Flagstone crests were modeled after various arrangements of square flagstones used to pave the ground. The checkerboard-like designs were first used as decorative patterns, and then evolved into crests.

680. Four flagstones



680

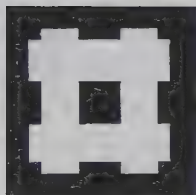
681. Encircled flagstones



681

Well Frame (*i-zutsu*, *i-geta*)

The square frame gives Japanese wells their distinctive appearance. It was quite common for people with the kanji for *i* (well) in their family names to use these crests.



682



683



684



685



686



687



688



689

682. Well frame

683. Folded well frame, encircled

684. Yin and yang overlapping well frames

685. Three swirls in well frame

686. Rhombic well frame

687. Linked well frames

688. Three well frames

689. Mokkō in well frame

Pattern Crests

Although some pattern crests depicted real objects, most were used for their aesthetic shape and geometrical design.

Swirl (*tomoe*)

There are various views about the origin of the swirl design. One holds that it was originally modeled after a *tomo*, a leather elbow pad used by archers long ago to protect skin from chafing against the bowstring. Another opinion holds that it was based on a comma-shaped bead, which was a symbol of family prosperity, while still another conjecture holds that the pattern may have been introduced from China.

Because of its resemblance to swirling water, the *tomoe* design became a symbol for water. As a result, it was placed on the roof tiles and gables of houses and temples as a charm to ward off fire. *Tomoe* is the kamon of Hachiman, the war god, so it was also used as a divine crest in shrines throughout Japan.

690. Single counterclockwise swirl



690

691. Three clockwise swirls



691

692. Three clockwise swirls in rhombus



692

693. Three swirls in shape of square



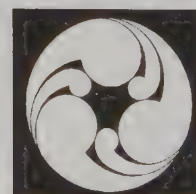
693

694. Three long-tailed swirls



694

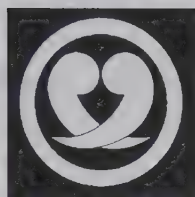
695. Three big and small swirls, clockwise



695



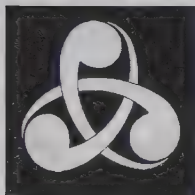
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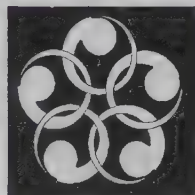
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698



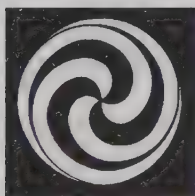
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700



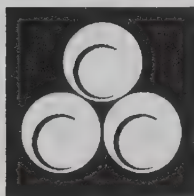
701



702



703



704



705



706



707

696. Yin and yang *magatama* (fang-shaped accessories), swirled

697. Intersecting swirls, encircled

698. Two linked swirls

699. Three looped swirls

700. Five interlocking swirls

701. Twisted swirls

702. Swirls in shape of ball

703. Whirlpool

704. Pile of three single swirls

705. Seven swirls

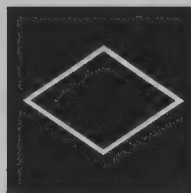
706. Kanji character for *tomoe* (swirl), encircled

707. Circle of three *tomoe* characters

Rhombus (*hishi*)

The symbolic meaning of the rhombus is uncertain, but it has been common in decorative patterns since the Nara period and appears very frequently in kamon designs.

708. Shadowed rhombus



708

709. Thin and thick rhombus



709

710. Two-tiered rhombuses



710

711. Three-tiered rhombuses,
encircled



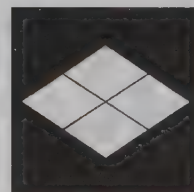
711

712. Rhombic pine bark



712

713. Divided rhombus



713

714. Four rhombic flowers



714

715. Linked rhombuses



715

716. Four layered rhombuses,
encircled



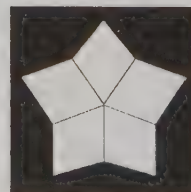
716

717. Three rhombuses, encircled



717

718. Bellflower-shaped rhombuses



718

719. Three three-tiered
rhombuses



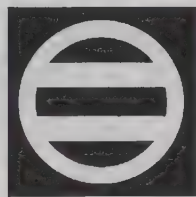
719

Line (*hikiryō*)

There are various views on the origin of encircled lines or bars. The word *hikiryō* can be written several different ways in Japanese, so its meaning is ambiguous. It may simply mean “two parallel lines,” which is a straightforward geometrical description of the pattern. Another possible origin of the design is the encampment curtains used long ago by samurai families. These curtains consisted of five pieces of cloth dyed different colors such as black and dark blue that were sewn together horizontally. A different combination of colors represented each family. Yet a third view holds that because the *ryō* of *hikiryō* also means “spirit” or “dragon,” the design was a superstitious or religious symbol of some kind.



720



721



722



723



724

720. Single line, encircled

721. Two lines, encircled

722. Three vertical lines, encircled

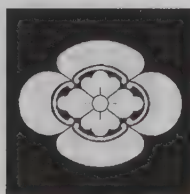
723. Single line for the Nitta family

724. Two lines in rhombus

Japanese Quince (*mokkō*)

Although the name of this pattern is *mokkō* (Japanese quince, a small tree of the rose family), its origin is unclear. It may at one time have had some relationship to the Japanese quince itself, but there is another theory that it symbolized the cross-section cut of a cucumber. A third view holds that it was a pattern used to decorate *sudare* (bamboo blinds) that were imported from China in ancient times. Whatever the case, these patterns have been used as decorations for oxcarts, palanquins, and clothing since ancient times, and eventually came to be used in *kamon* as well.

725. *Mokkō*



725

726. Pile of three *mokkō*



726

727. Bisected *mokkō*



727

728. *Mokkō* in rhombus



728

729. Peephole-view *mokkō*,
encircled



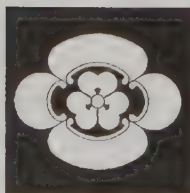
729

730. *Mokkō* and vines



730

731. Wood sorrel in *mokkō*



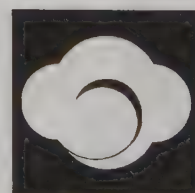
731

732. Three swirls in shadowed
mokkō



732

733. *Mokkō*-shaped swirl



733



734



735



736

734. Intersecting hawk feathers in *mikkō*

735. *Mikkō* in rice cake

736. *Mikkō* under mountain shape

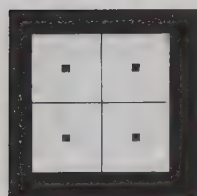


737

737. *Mikkō* in hut

Square-eyes (*meyui*)

The *meyui* pattern is made of squares with small dots in the center that look like eyes. It was popular in the Kamakura period, and later came to be used in family crests.



738



739

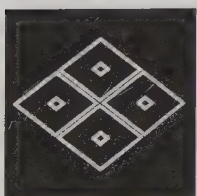


740

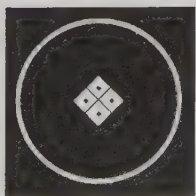
738. Four-square-eyes

739. Tilted four-square-eyes, encircled

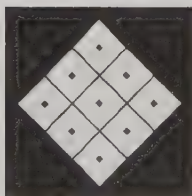
740. Three-square-eyes, encircled



741



742



743

741. Shadowed rhombic four-square-eyes

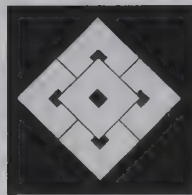
742. Small four-square-eyes in threadlike circle

743. Nine-square-eyes

744. Layered five-square-eyes

745. Looped four-square-eyes

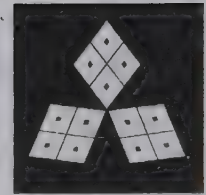
746. Three rhombic
four-square-eyes



744



745

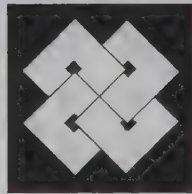


746

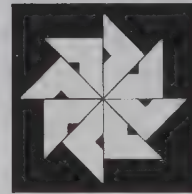
747. Twisted four-square-eyes

748. Wheel of four-square-eyes

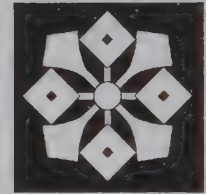
749. Four-square-eyes and swords



747



748



749

Chain-Linked Circles (*wachigai*)

The simple *wachigai* pattern depicts two or more circles connected like a chain. *Wachigai* seems to have been adopted as a family crest design because the elegant pattern was used prevalently in the Fujiwara period.

750. Linked circles

751. Linked circles in rice cake

752. Linked circle and square



750



751



752

753. Three interlocking circles,
encircled

754. Four interlocking circles

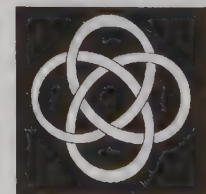
755. Looped interlocking circles



753



754



755



756



757



758

756. Interlocking circles and flower circle

757. Six interlocking circles

758. Mokkō-shaped interlocking circles

Scales (*uroko*)

The scale design was made famous by the Hōjō clan. According to the *Taiheiki* (Chronicle of the Great Peace), when Hōjō Tokimasa went to Enoshima Benzaiten to pray, a beautiful woman appeared, turned into a giant snake, and disappeared into the sea. The snake left behind three big scales, so he modeled his kamon after the scales to commemorate the event.



759



760



761

759. Encircled scale

760. Facing scales in double circle

761. Yin and yang layered scales, encircled



762



763

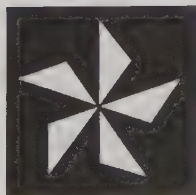


764

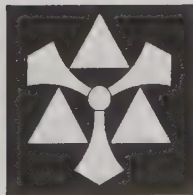
762. Three scales

763. Three scales in rice cake

764. Six scales



765



766

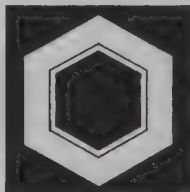
765. Wheel of five scales

766. Three scales and swords

Tortoiseshell (*kikkō*)

Hexagonal patterns like those shown below were modeled after the shell of a tortoise. They were especially popular as family crests in the Heian period because of their well-proportioned, attractive hexagonal shape, and because tortoises were considered auspicious animals.

767. Tortoiseshell



767

768. Linked tortoiseshells



768

769. Three intersecting tortoiseshells



769

770. Square flower in tortoiseshell



770

771. Three oak leaves in tortoiseshell



771

772. Two arrows in tortoiseshell



772

773. Trisected tortoiseshells and rhombic flowers



773

774. Pile of three tortoiseshells



774

775. Pile of three tortoiseshells and rhombic flowers



775

776. Bishamon-style tortoiseshells



776

777. Flower in tortoiseshell



777

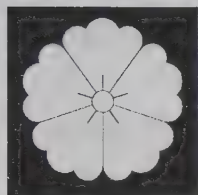
778. Tortoiseshell in disarray



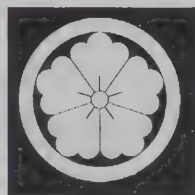
778

Chinese Flower (*karahana*)

The Chinese flower motif is not patterned after a specific plant. Rather, it is simply a flower drawn in the Chinese style. The design was introduced from the Asian continent and became quite common during the Heian period.



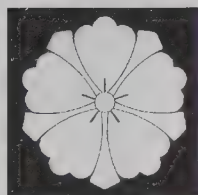
779



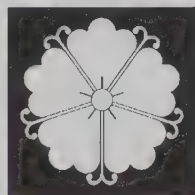
780



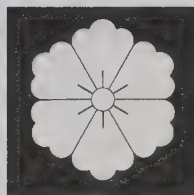
781



782



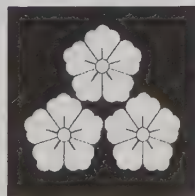
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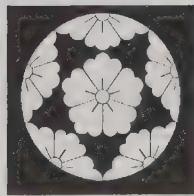
784



785



786



787



788



789



790

779. Chinese flower

780. Chinese flower, encircled

781. Chinese flower in rice cake

782. Chinese flower and swords

783. Chinese flower and vines

784. Six-petaled Chinese flower

785. Shadowed trisected Chinese flowers

786. Pile of three Chinese flowers

787. Fusen-style Chinese flower

788. Side-view Chinese flower

789. Circle of Chinese flower and branch

790. Butterfly-shaped Chinese flower

Kanji Character Crests

Characters were used in crests because of the characters' meaning, historical background, or both. Many of them symbolize luck, prosperity, or religious belief, and some commemorate special events or people.

Although a few kamon portray the syllabic *kana* characters, most are kanji (Chinese-derived) characters. Basic character fonts include: *kakuji-gata*, block style; *kaisho*, regular brush-stroke style; *gyōsho*, semi-cursive; and *sōsho*, cursive.

In addition to these basic fonts, various stylized characters were also depicted in kamon. Some of these kept the original form of the character, while others were quite abstract. It was also common to combine the kanji characters with other motifs and patterns, such as in *kikkō ni yūnoji* (kanji for “existence” enclosed in a tortoiseshell).

— (*ichi*, one)

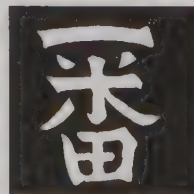
The kanji numeral one symbolized being the first to arrive at the battlefield, and may have also represented a spearhead. The character can also be read *katsu*, which means “to win.” For these reasons, it was considered symbolic of the samurai spirit.

791. Kanji numeral *ichi*, encircled

792. Kanji characters for *ichi-ban*
(the first)



791



792

八 (*hachi*, eight)

The numeral eight was appreciated because its shape broadens toward the bottom, symbolizing eternal expansion. Also, it is the initial character of Hachiman, a war god. These seem to be the main reasons why this character was used for family crests.



793



794

793. Kanji numeral *hachi*

794. Kanji numeral *hachi*, encircled

十 (*jū*, ten)

The origin of kamon depicting the numeral ten is unclear. One theory is that it was a modification of *hikiryō*, another claims that the two lines symbolize two dragons, and yet a third view holds that it was used to represent the Christian cross. None of these theories, however, is widely accepted. The Shimazu clan is well known for this kamon.



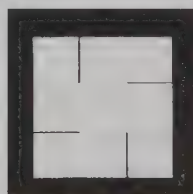
795

795. Kanji numeral *jū*, encircled

卐 (*manji*, swastika)

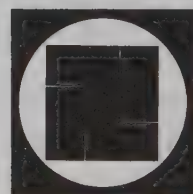
This Buddhist symbol was initially introduced from India, and it became widely associated with temples in Japan. Called *svastika* in Sanskrit, it is a lucky omen which appears on Buddha's chest and the soles of his feet, where good fortune and virtue gather. The symbol has appeared in many places throughout history, such as ancient Babylon, Assyria, Greece, and the Roman Empire. It is unclear whether these swastikas had a single common origin, but they seem to have often represented the sun. In Japan, the mark was and is widely used as a symbol of Buddhism and Buddhist temples, and was adopted as a family crest in the hope of receiving good fortune.

796. Clockwise swastika



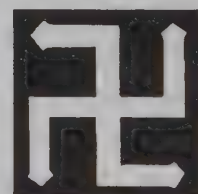
796

797. Swastika in rice cake



797

798. Swords in shape of swastika



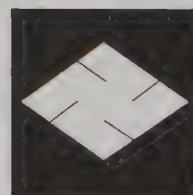
798

799. Stylized swastika



799

800. Rhombic swastika



800

801. Tilted swastika in disarray



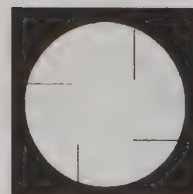
801

802. Five swastikas



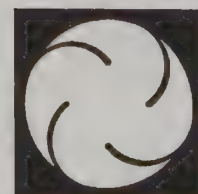
802

803. Circular swastika



803

804. Twisted swastika



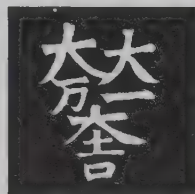
804

大 (*dai*, big)

The *dai* character connotes development and growth; therefore, it was adopted as a kamon in hopes of bringing success and fortune to the family. Families who have the character in their surnames also used these crests.



805



806



807



808



809

805. Kanji character for *dai*

806. Kanji characters for:

dai-ichi (big one),

dai-man (big ten thousand),

dai-kichi (big fortune)

807. Stylized kanji for *dai*, encircled

808. Kanji characters for *dai* in shape of wood sorrel

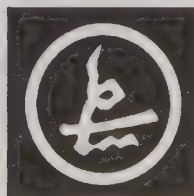
809. Kanji characters for *dai* in shape of cherry blossom

無 (*mu*, nothing)

The character 無 expresses the basic principles of Zen Buddhism. Zen philosophers frequently mention it as a straightforward expression of fundamental Zen concepts such as *shogyō mujō* (all things are in flux, nothing is permanent) and *issai kaikū* (all of existence is unsubstantial and empty). Therefore, it is likely that Zen practitioners adopted crests bearing this character.



810



811

810, 811. Kanji character for *mu*, encircled

Others

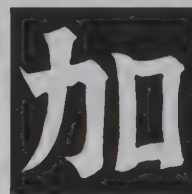
Other characters commonly found in crests are 吉 (*kichi*, good luck), 加 (*ka*, add) 丸 (*maru*, circle), 上 (*ue*, top), 寿 (*kotobuki*, happiness), 福 (*fuku*, fortune), 鶴 (*tsuru*, crane), and 亀 (*kame*, turtle).

812. Kanji character for *kichi*



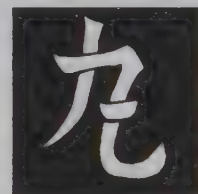
812

813. Kanji character for *ka*



813

814. Kanji character for *maru*



814

815. Kanji character for *jō*,
encircled



815

816. Kanji character for *kotobuki*,
encircled



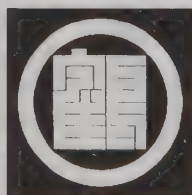
816

817. Kanji character for *fuku*,
encircled



817

818. Kanji character for *tsuru*,
encircled



818

819. Kanji character for *kame*,
encircled



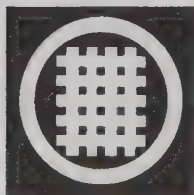
819

Diagram and Charm Crests

Some crests originated from diagrams or charms. The designs of these *kamon* are neither characters nor patterns.

Kuji Mantra

The nine lines of this grid-like design symbolize the nine characters of the *Kuji* Mantra. *Kuji* consists of “臨兵闘者皆陣列在前.” This sacred incantation was derived from *Bao-pu Zi*, an ancient Chinese book that explained the ideas of Taoism. It is said that you can escape from disaster by chanting the mantra while drawing four vertical lines and five horizontal lines in the air. Not only Taoists, but also Buddhists of the Shingon sect and mountain ascetics were known to recite this mantra. The *kuji* design, therefore, seems to have been adopted for religious reasons.



820

820. *Kuji* symbol, encircled

Genji Incense Diagram (*Genjikō-zu*)

The Genji incense diagram shows the symbols used in *Genjikō*, an incense guessing game. *Kō* (incense) is said to have first been used for mortuary tablet purification rituals in India and China, and it was introduced to Japan by the sixth century. It became a popular item among the rich noble class around the eighth century. In addition to its use in religious rituals, incense was also burned to scent rooms and clothes.

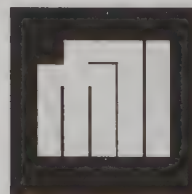
Kumikō, a game where the object was to match and guess scents correctly, was fashionable in Japan at one time. The host burned incense combinations, and the guests were to guess what scents they were. *Genjikō* was one particular version of the game. In it, guests used fifty-two symbols named after the fifty-four chapters of *Genji Monogatari* (The Tale of Genji, a famous novel written by Murasaki Shikibu during the Heian period). Of the fifty-two symbols, only *hana-chiru-sato* and *hatsu-ne* were used as family crest motifs. Though the reason why they were used for family crests is unclear, it is probably because the forms were elegant.

821. *Hana-chiru-sato*

822. *Hatsu-ne*



821



822

VIII. GOD CRESTS

Just as families use crests, so too do shrines. Their crests are known as “god crests.” These crests symbolize the different shrines, and much can be learned about the origin and history of each shrine by studying its crest.



823



824



825



826

825. Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine
(Kanagawa): *tsuru* (crane)

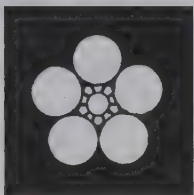
826. Hie Shrine (Tokyo): *aoi*
(hollyhock)

823. Kasuga Shrine (Nara): *sagari fuji* (hanging wisteria)

824. Fushimi Inari Shrine (Kyoto): *ine* (rice plant)



Storehouse of Hie Shrine



827



828



829



830

827. Yushima Shrine (Tokyo): *umebachi* (umebachi-style plum blossom)

828. Kumano Shrine (Wakayama): *karasu* (crow)

829. Izumo Shrine (Shimane): *kikkō ni ken hanabishi* (swords and rhombic flower in tortoiseshell)

830. Kotohira Shrine (Kagawa): *maru kon* (kanji character for *kon*, encircled)



Wall of Yushima Shrine



Gable of Yushima Shrine

IX. TEMPLE CRESTS

Temples also have crests. Some temples adopted the crests that their founders had used before they renounced the world, others were based on the doctrines of the various sects, and still others were modeled after the religious implements used by ascetics.

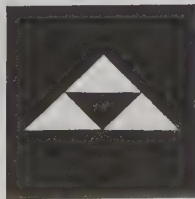
In addition, authorities such as the Imperial Household and the shogunate sometimes bestowed their crests upon certain temples. Powerful clans and feudal lords also had their family crests put on the buildings and utensils of temples to exhibit the families' power and influence.

831. Kongōbuji temple (Wakayama): *kiri*
(paulownia)

832. Kenchōji temple (Kanagawa): *uroko*
(scales)



831



832



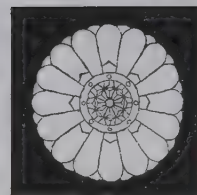
Roof of Kenchōji temple

833. Zōjōji temple (Tokyo): *aoi* (hollyhock)

834. Enryakuji temple (Shiga): *kikurinpō* (Dharma
Chakra at center of chrysanthemum)



833



834



Incense burner of Zōjōji temple

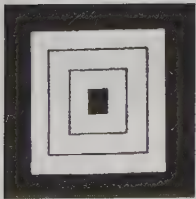


Zōjōji temple

X. ENTERTAINMENT CRESTS

In the entertainment world of old Japan, various schools competed for influence and prestige within any given field of art. Entertainers usually took on the kamon of their school's master to promote the school's reputation of tradition and artful mastery. When a student of a certain school became established and well known, he would create his own identity or style of performance by combining his teacher's crest with his own. This identified him independently and also gave credit to his teacher. Sometimes when an actor became popular, his crest became the latest fashion around Edo (Tokyo).

Kabuki and Nō actors, Nō farce entertainers, and traditional dancers all had their own crests. The examples listed below show the crests of Kabuki actors.



835



836

835. Ichikawa Danjūrō: *mitsumasa* (three wooden measures)

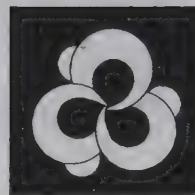
836. Nakamura Kichiemon: *ageha no chō* (butterfly)

837. Ichikawa Ennosuke: *mitsuzaru* (three monkeys)

838. Onoe Kikugorō: *kasane ōgi ni daki kashiwa*
(embracing oak leaves on layered fans)

839. Sawamura Sōjūrō: *maruni inoji* (*hiragana* character
for *i*, encircled)

840. Kataoka Nizaemon: *maruni futatsu biki* (two lines
encircled)



837



838



839



840

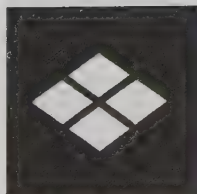
XI. CRESTS OF THE SENGOKU-PERIOD GENERALS



Mōri Motonari (1497–1571)

Motonari was a famous *daimyō* who ruled ten provinces in the Chūgoku region. There is a very famous story about the time Motonari advised his three children, saying, “One arrow breaks easily, but if three arrows are bound together and become one, they will never break. In the same way, the three of you should cooperate with each other to support and expand the Mōri clan.”

Ich-moji ni mitsu-boshi (kanji numeral one and three stars)



Takeda Shingen (1521–73)

Takeda Shingen had jurisdiction over the whole Shinano region. The battle of Kawanakajima, where Shingen fought against Uesugi Kenshin, is well known. Shingen was an excellent military strategist.

Wari-bishi or *Takeda-bishi* (divided rhombus)



Uesugi Kenshin (1530–78)

Kenshin, a general of the Echigo region, was another outstanding tactician. He went to Kyoto attempting to attack Oda Nobunaga, but died suddenly.

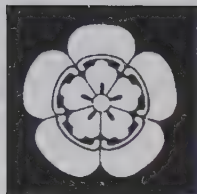
Take ni suzume or *Uesugi zasa* (sparrow and bamboo)



Shiba Tōshōgū shrine



Paper lantern at Shiba Tōshōgū shrine



Oda Nobunaga (1534–82)

Nobunaga, a general known for his daring and insolent personality, ruled Owari province and laid the groundwork for national unification.

Mokkō

Though his lineage was actually of the Inbe or Fujiwara clan, Nobunaga claimed that he was a descendant of Taira no Sukemori. Thus, he used the *mokkō* crest, which was well known as the crest of the Taira clan.



Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–98)

Originally from a peasant family in Owari, Hideyoshi was promoted to responsible positions by Oda Nobunaga, and eventually unified the country after his master's death.

Kiri (paulownia)

Hideyoshi seems to have had this crest granted to him by Nobunaga, when he had the surname Hashiba.



Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616)

Ieyasu was the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate.

Mitsuba aoi (three hollyhock leaves, encircled)

The hollyhock originally belonged to the Matsudaira clan but, because of close family connections, it was also adopted by the Tokugawa clan.



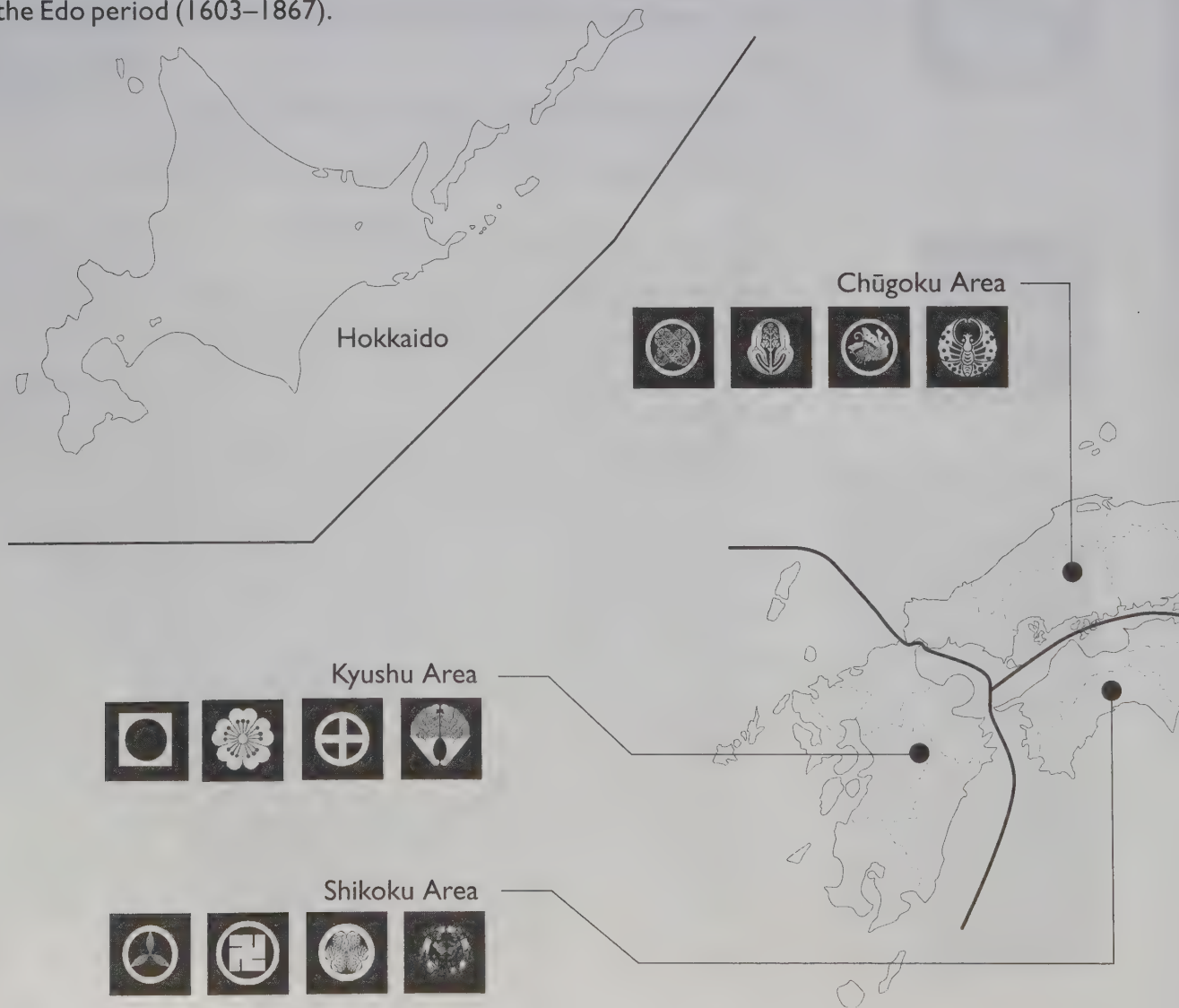
Date Masamune (1567–1636)

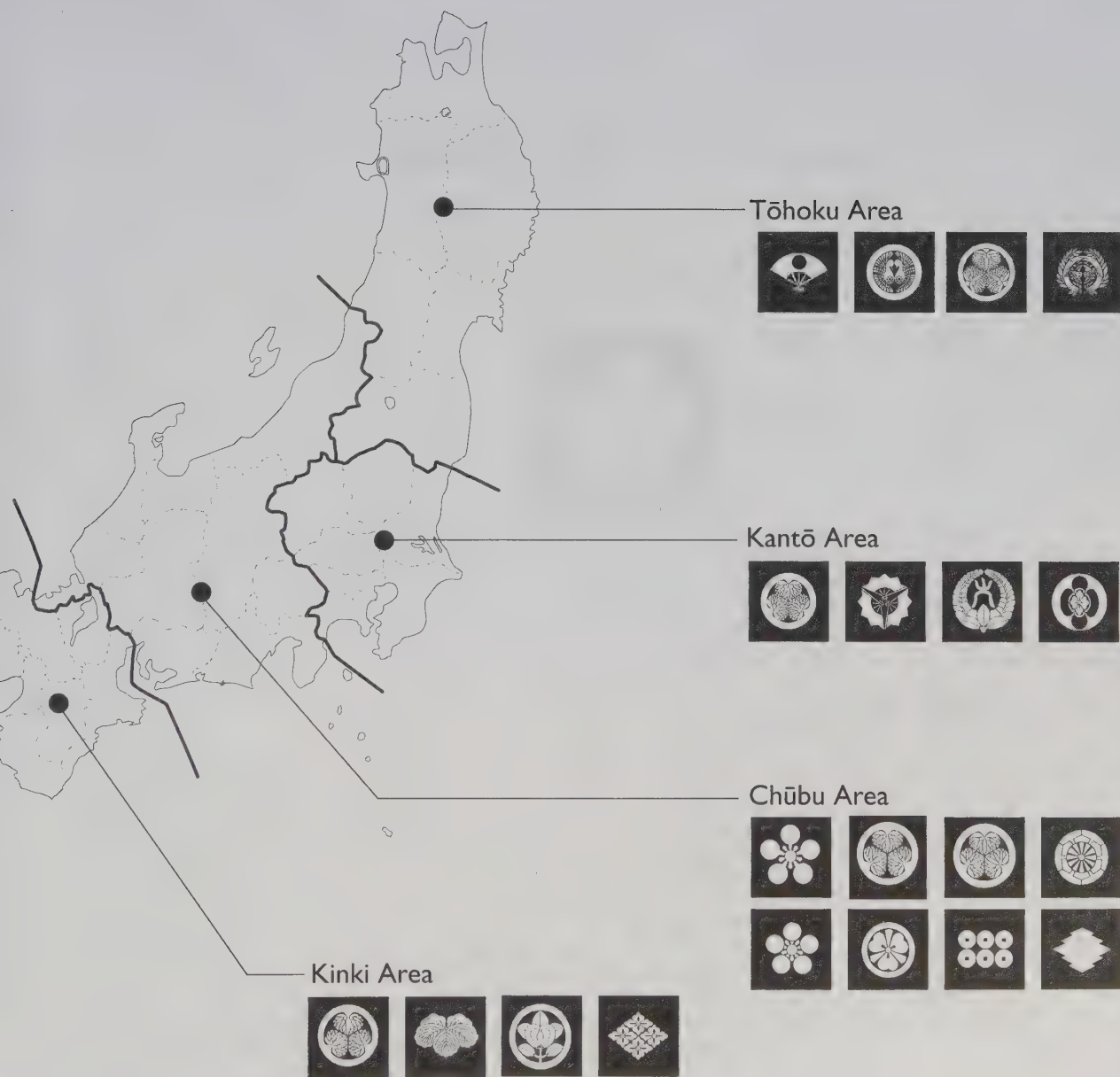
Masamune was a one-eyed general known for his bravery. He fought for supremacy in the Tōhoku region.

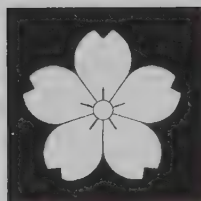
Take ni suzume or Sendai zasa (sparrow and bamboo)

MAP: DOMINANT CRESTS OF THE EDO PERIOD

The crests depicted on this map are those of regionally powerful *daimyō* during the Edo period (1603–1867).







INDEX OF FAMILY CRESTS

Figures in this list refer to the sequence number of each crest.

Aka-Tori

Aka-tori

赤鳥

674, 675

Apricot-Leaf Harness

Accessory see Gyōyō

Arrowhead

Arrowhead swirl	沢瀉巴	271
Arrowheads and water	沢瀉に水	273
Bisected arrowheads	割り沢瀉	268
Butterfly-shaped arrowhead	沢瀉蝶	281
Crane-shaped arrowhead	沢瀉鶴	282
Embracing arrowheads with child	子持ち抱き沢瀉	29
Embracing arrowheads, encircled	丸に抱き沢瀉	267
Five arrowheads	変わり五つ沢瀉	270
Fusen-style arrowhead	浮線沢瀉	278
Intersecting arrowhead leaves	違い葉沢瀉	274
Paulownia-shaped arrowhead	沢瀉桐	280
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Bellflower	桔梗	229
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Trisected bellflowers	三つ割り桔梗	239
Twisted bellflower	捻じ桔梗	234

Bit

Bit	轡	598
Flower bit	花轡	599
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Square bit	角轡	601
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Arrow nock	矢筈	581
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Butterfly	中村吉右衛門 / 揚羽の蝶	836
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Encircled butterfly	丸に揚羽蝶	532
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Linked circles	輪違い	750
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Mōkō-shaped interlocking circles	輪違い木瓜	758

Six interlocking circles	六つ組輪違い	757	Cherry blossom	桜	457
Three interlocking circles, encircled	丸に三つ輪違い	753	Cherry blossom and embracing leaves	抱き桜	473
Character					
Hiragana character for <i>i</i> , encircled	沢村宗十郎 / 丸にいの字	839	Cherry blossom branch	枝桜	469
Kanji character for <i>dai</i>	大文字	805	Cherry blossom branch in disarray	枝桜崩し	472
Kanji character for <i>fuku</i> , encircled	丸に福の角字	817	Cherry blossom under crescent moon	月落ち桜	477
Kanji character for <i>jō</i> , encircled	丸に上文字	815	Cherry blossom, encircled	丸に桜	458
Kanji character for <i>ka</i>	加文字	813	Circle of cherry blossom and branch	桜枝丸	470
Kanji character for <i>kame</i> , encircled	丸に龜の角字	819	Circle of three cherry blossoms and leaves	葉付き三つ桜の丸	471
Kanji character for <i>kichi</i>	吉文字	812	Double-flowered cherry blossom	八重桜	464
Kanji character for <i>kon</i> , encircled	金刀比羅宮 / 丸に金	830	<i>Fusen</i> -style cherry blossom	桜浮線綾	475
Kanji character for <i>kotobuki</i> , encircled	細輪に寿の字	816	<i>Fusen</i> -style cherry blossom	変わり桜浮線綾	476
Kanji character for <i>maru</i>	丸文字	814	<i>Gyōyō</i> -style cherry blossom	杏葉桜	474
Kanji character for <i>mu</i> , encircled	無文字	810, 811	Shadowed trisected cherry blossoms	陰三つ割り桜	466
Kanji character for <i>tsuru</i> , encircled	丸に鶴の角字	818	Shadowed wild cherry blossom	陰山桜	460
Kanji characters for <i>dai</i> in shape of cherry blossom	大文字桜	809	Side-view cherry blossom with leaf	葉付き横見桜	467
Kanji characters for <i>dai</i> in shape of wood sorrel	大文字酢漿草	808	Three side-view cherry blossoms	三つ横見桜	468
Kanji characters for <i>dai-ichi</i> , <i>dai-man</i> , <i>dai-kichi</i>	一大万大吉字	806	Top-view wild cherry blossom	向こう山桜	462
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Kanji numeral <i>hachi</i>	八文字	793	Twisted wild cherry blossom	捻じ山桜	461
Kanji numeral <i>hachi</i> , encircled	丸に八文字	794	Wild cherry blossom	山桜	459
Kanji numeral <i>ichi</i> and three swirls	一文字に三つ巴	31	Chinese Flower		
Kanji numeral <i>ichi</i> , encircled	丸に一文字	791	Butterfly-shaped Chinese flower	唐花胡蝶	790
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Stylized kanji for <i>dai</i> , encircled	丸に変わり大文字	807	Chinese flower and swords	剣唐花	782
Cherry Blossom					
Bottom-view cherry blossom	裏桜	463	Chinese flower and vines	蔓唐花	783
Butterfly-shaped cherry blossom	桜蝶	17	Chinese flower in rice cake	石持ち地抜き唐花	781
			Chinese flower, encircled	丸に唐花	780
			Circle of Chinese flower and branch	唐花枝丸	789
			Double-petaled Chinese flower	八重唐花	12
			<i>Fusen</i> -style Chinese flower	変わり浮線綾唐花	787
			Pile of three Chinese flowers	三つ盛り唐花	786

Shadowed trisected Chinese flowers	陰三つ割り唐花	785	Three side-view chrysanthemums	三つ横見菊	87
Side-view Chinese flower	横見唐花	788	Trisected chrysanthemums and leaves in tortoiseshell	三つ割り亀甲葉菊	98
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Chinese Phoenix			Twisted chrysanthemum	捻じ菊	18
Decorative phoenix for court celebrations	有職鳳凰	482	Two half-chrysanthemums, encircled	丸に二つ半菊	92
Circle of flying phoenix	飛び鳳凰の丸	481	Wood sorrel leaves and swords in <i>fusen</i> -style chrysanthemum wheel	菊浮線綾に剣酢漿草	108
Phoenix circle	鳳凰の丸	480			
Chrysanthemum			Circle		
Bisected chrysanthemums	割り菊	85	Bamboo circle	竹輪	5
Boat-shaped chrysanthemum	菊舟	107	Wisteria circle	藤輪	6
Butterfly-shaped chrysanthemum	菊蝶	106			
Chrysanthemum and water	菊水	90	Cloud		
Chrysanthemum between half-leaves	細割り菊の葉に菊	101	Cloud	雲	59
Chrysanthemum branch	枝菊	103	Lucky cloud	瑞雲	60
Chrysanthemum branch circle	菊枝丸	102	Rhombic cloud	雲菱	61
Chrysanthemum petals in disarray	乱れ菊	104	Two cloud swirls	二つ雲巴	62
Crane-shaped chrysanthemum	菊鶴	105	Clove		
Embracing chrysanthemum leaves	抱き菊の葉	99	Eight cloves, encircled	糸輪に八つ丁子	427
Gyōyō-style chrysanthemum	杏葉菊	96	Encircled clove	中輪に一つ丁子	416
Half-chrysanthemum and kanji numeral <i>ichi</i>	半菊に一の字	91	Four cloves and vines in shape of rhombus	蔓四つ丁子菱	425
Quadrisectioned chrysanthemums and square flower	四つ割り菊に花角	88	Intersecting cloves	変わり違い丁子	422
Rhombic chrysanthemum	菊菱	93	Intersecting cloves, encircled	丸に違い丁子	421
Side-view chrysanthemum between two leaves	二葉抱き菊	97	Shadowed clove swirl, counterclockwise	陰左一つ丁子巴	417
Sixteen-petaled chrysanthemum	十六菊	84	Six cloves	六つ丁子	426
Thousand-petaled chrysanthemum	千重菊	89	Three counterclockwise clove swirls, encircled	丸に左三つ丁子巴	419
Three chrysanthemum leaves	三つ追い菊の葉	100	Three interlocking clove swirls	金輪丁子巴	424
Three rhombic chrysanthemums	三つ寄せ菊菱	94	Three piled intersecting cloves	三つ盛り違い丁子	423
Three rhombic chrysanthemums	三つ盛り菊菱	95	Trisected cloves	三つ割り丁子	420
			Two clove swirls, clockwise	変わり右二つ丁子巴	418
			Coin		
			Eiraku coin	永樂銭	639

Six coins for the Sanada family	真田六連銭	641	Rain dragon	雨龍	500
Wave coin	裏浪銭	640	Three rain dragons	三つ雨龍	501
Crane			Dragonfly		
Circle of <i>kōrin</i> -style crane	光琳鶴の丸	484	Three dragonflies	三つ蜻蛉	544
Crane	鶴ヶ岡八幡宮 / 鶴	825	Earthenware Pot		
Crane circle	鶴の丸	483	Earthenware pot	瓶子	552
Dancing crane in flight	対い鶴	489	Earthenware pot on tray	折り敷に瓶子	557
Facing cranes	飛び舞鶴	485	Five earthenware pots	五つ瓶子	556
Facing cranes in shape of rhombus	対い鶴菱	486	Parallel earthenware pots	並び瓶子	553
<i>Kōrin</i> -style cranes in shape of bellflower	桔梗形光琳鶴	487	Shrine earthenware pots, encircled	丸に神社瓶子	554
Paper crane	折り鶴	490	Trisected earthenware pots	三つ割り瓶子	555
Standing crane in tortoiseshell	子持ち亀甲に立ち鶴	488	Fan		
Cross			Butterfly-shaped fans	扇蝶	625
Cross	久留子	558	Cherry blossom on fan	扇に桜	615
Cut-bamboo cross	切り竹久留子	559	Embracing oak leaves on layered fans	尾上菊五郎 / 重ね扇に抱き柏	838
Flower cross	花久留子	560	Fans in shape of well frame	扇井桁	622
Crow			Five interlaced fans	五つ捻じ扇	619
Crow	熊野神社 / 烏	828	Intersecting fans, encircled	中輪に違い扇	621
Dharma Chakra			Japanese cypress fan	檜扇	623
Dharma Chakra	輪宝	564	Layered fans	横重ね扇	616
Dharma Chakra at center of chrysanthemum	比叡山延暦寺 / 菊輪宝	834	Pile of three fans	三つ盛り扇	618
Rhombic Dharma Chakra	輪宝菱	565	Rhombic fans	扇菱	624
Trisected Dharma Chakra	三つ割り輪宝	566	Rising sun on fan	日の丸扇	614
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Dove	鳩	522	Two parallel fans, encircled	丸に並び扇	620
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Dove with children	親子鳩	525	Feather fan	羽団扇	611
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Facing doves and <i>torii</i>	鳥居に對い鳩	526	Flagstone		
Facing doves in flight	向かい飛び鳩	524	Encircled flagstones	丸に石畳	681
Dragon			Four flagstones	四つ石畳	680
Dragon circle	龍の丸	498	Genji Cart		
Dragon circle	下がり龍の丸	499	Flowered Genji carts, overlapping	重ね花形源氏車	605
Intersecting dragon talons	違い龍の爪	502	Genji cart	源氏車	604
			Japanese pinwheel	風車	606

Genji Incense Diagram

Hana-chiru-sato

Hatsu-ne

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初音 822

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Bamboo-style gentian in rice cake 石持ち地抜き笹竜胆 175
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Ginkgo

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Facing ginkgo leaves 対い銀杏 21
Facing ginkgo leaves 抱き銀杏 432
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Five ginkgo leaves 五つ銀杏 435
Ginkgo branch circle 銀杏枝丸 440
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Gion talisman, encircled 丸に祇園守 561
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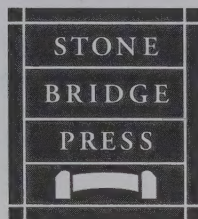
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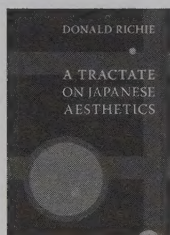
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			Kanji character for tomoe, encircled	糸輪に巴の角字	706
Square-Eye			Pile of three single swirls	三つ盛り一つ巴	704
Four-square-eyes	平四つ目	738	Seven swirls	巴七曜	705
Four-square-eyes and swords	剣四つ目	749	Single counterclockwise swirl	右一つ巴	690
Layered five-square-eyes	重ね五つ目	744	Swirls in shape of ball	鞠巴	702
Looped four-square-eyes	結び四つ目菱	745	Three big and small swirls, clockwise	左子持ち三つ巴	695
Nine-square-eyes	九つ目	743	Three clockwise swirls	左三つ巴	691
Shadowed rhombic four-square-eyes	陰四つ目菱	741	Three clockwise swirls in rhombus	細菱に左三つ巴	692
Small four-square-eyes in threadlike circle	糸輪に豆四つ目	742	Three long-tailed swirls	三つ尾長巴	694
Three rhombic four-square-eyes	組み合わせ四つ目菱	746	Three looped swirls	結び巴	699
Three-square-eyes, encircled	丸に三つ目	740	Three swirls in shape of square	角形三つ巴	693
Tilted four-square-eyes, encircled	丸に隅立て四つ目	739	Twisted swirls	捻じ巴	701
Twisted four-square-eyes	捻じ四つ目	747	Two linked swirls	輪違い巴	698
Wheel of four-square-eyes	四つ目車	748	Whirlpool	渦巻き巴	703
			Yin and yang magatama, swirled	陰陽勾玉巴	696
Sun			Sword		
Eight-rayed sun	八つ日足	34	Eight swords in shape of rhombus	八つ剣菱	671
Rising sun	旭光	36	Three swords	三つ剣	670
Rising sun with rays	旭光日足	35			
Sunbeams	日足	33			
Sunbeams and running water	日足に流水	37			
Swastika			Three Stars		
Circular swastika	丸卍	803	Three stars	三つ星	45
Clockwise swastika	右卍	796	Three stars in rice cake	石持ち地抜き三つ星	47
Five swastikas	五卍	802	Three stars in snow wheel	雪輪に三つ星	48
Rhombic swastika	卍菱	800	Three stars, encircled	丸に三つ星	46
Stylized swastika	変わり卍	799	Three swords and stars	剣三つ星	49
Swastika in rice cake	石持ち地抜き卍	797			
Swords in shape of swastika	剣卍	798	Torii		
			Torii	鳥居	678
			Torii and Japanese cedars	鳥居に日本杉	679

Tortoiseshell					
Bishamon-style	毘沙門亀甲	776	Three swirled waves	三つ浪巴	70
tortoiseshells			Weight		
Flower in tortoiseshell	変わり花亀甲	777	Three weights	三つ寄せ分銅	645
Linked tortoiseshells	違い一重亀甲	768	Weight	分銅	642
Pile of three tortoiseshells	三つ盛り亀甲	774	Weight in rhombus	菱に分銅	643
Pile of three tortoiseshells and rhombic flowers	三つ盛り亀甲に花菱	775	Weights in shape of cherry blossom	分銅桜	646
Square flower in tortoiseshell	亀甲に花角	770	Yin and yang weights	陰陽分銅	644
Swords and rhombic flower in tortoiseshell	出雲大社 / 亀甲に剣花菱	829	Well Frame		
Three intersecting tortoiseshells	三つ組み合わせ一重亀甲	769	Folded well frame, encircled	丸に折れ井筒	683
Three oak leaves in tortoiseshell	亀甲に三つ柏	771	Linked well frames	違い井桁	687
Tortoiseshell	亀甲	767	Mokkō in well frame	井桁に木瓜	689
Tortoiseshell in disarray	変わり亀甲崩し	778	Overlapping well frames	重ね井桁	25
Trisected tortoiseshells and rhombic flowers	三つ割り亀甲に花菱	773	Three swirls in well frame	井筒に三つ巴	685
Two arrows in tortoiseshell	亀甲に並び矢	772	Three well frames	三つ井桁	688
Tray			Rhombic well frame	井桁	686
Ivy on tray	折敷に蔦	551	Well frame	平井筒	682
Tray	折敷	549	Yin and yang overlapping well frames	陰陽重ね井筒	684
Well frame on tray	折敷に井筒	550	Wild Goose		
Turtle			Flying wild goose	飛び雁金	520
Disordered character turtle	亀字崩し	497	Interlocking wild geese	金輪雁金	516
Head-on turtle	真向き亀	496	Looped wild goose	結び雁金	19
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Three head-to-tail turtles	三つ追い亀	495	Peephole-view wild goose in rhombus	菱に覗き雁金	519
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Turtle circle	養亀の丸	492	Three looped wild geese, heads facing outward	尻合わせ三つ結び雁金	514
Turtle with child	子持ち亀	494	Three wild geese inward- facing, encircled	丸に頭合わせ三つ雁金	515
Umbrella			Wild geese in shape of rhombus	雁金菱	518
Single umbrella	一本傘	676	Wild-geese wheel	五つ雁金車	517
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			Wooden measure	樹	647
			Wooden measures nested inside each other, encircled	糸輪に入れ子樹	30



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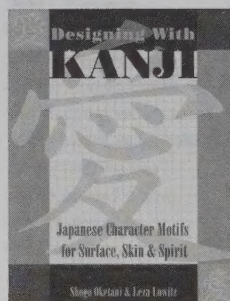


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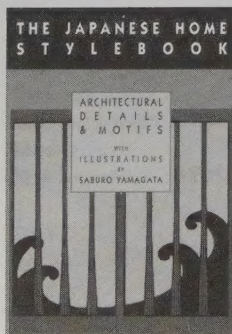
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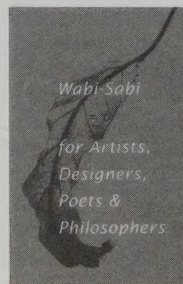
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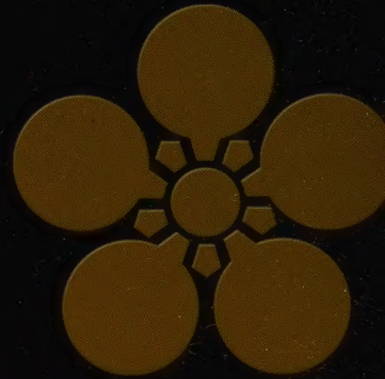
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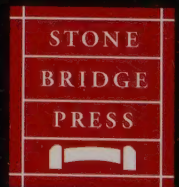
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