THE FLAG HERITAGE FOUNDATION MONOGRAPH AND TRANSLATION SERIES
PUBLICATION NO. 7

JAPANESE HERALDRY AND HERALDIC FLAGS

David F. Phillips
Editor

INCLUDING

Understanding Japanese Heraldry
by David F. Phillips

Japanese Heraldry, Battle Flags and Standards in the Age of the Samurai
by Emmanuel Valerio

Heraldic Devices on Modern Japanese Flags
by Nozomi Kariyasu

FLAG HERITAGE FOUNDATION
DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS
2018

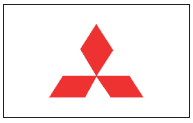
HERALDIC DEVICES ON MODERN JAPANESE FLAGS

by Nozomi Kariyasu

Keyed to his article beginning on page 137.

The dates are for the adoption of the emblems, not the flags.

① Imperial standard 1869

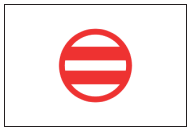


② Mitsubish Co. 1875

③ Mitsui Co. 1876

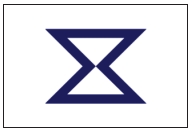
④ Kuroishi City 1889

⑤ Kanazawa City 1891



⑥ Tochiki Kisen Co. 1901

⑦ Nagoya City 1907



⑧ Toyohashi City 1909

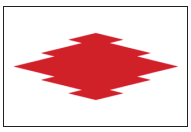
⑨ Maebashi City 1909

⑩ Yokosuka City 1912

⑪ Kitagata Town 1916

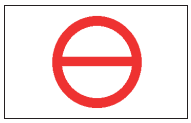
⑫ Sendai City 1933

⑬ Manchukuo imperial flag 1934



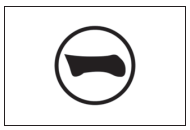
⑭ Shibata City 1934

⑮ Kanie Town 1934



⑯ Nippon Kisen Co. 1950

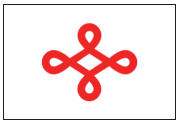
⑰ Former Coastal Safety Force 1952



⑱ Inuyama City 1954

⑲ Gamagori City 1955

⑳ Hashima City 1964



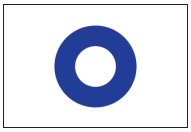
㉑ Nishio City 1965

㉒ Kagoshima City 1967

㉓ Shimamoto Town 1968

㉔ Chief of Staff, Ground Self-Defense Force 1972

㉕ Yamato-koriyama City 1974



㉖ Ozu City 2005

㉗ Fire and Disaster Management Agency 2005

㉘ Ota City 2005

㉙ Toyama City 2006

㉚ Hirosaki City 2006

Honjyo City

Misato Town

Kobayashi City

THE FLAG HERITAGE FOUNDATION MONOGRAPH AND TRANSLATION SERIES
PUBLICATION No. 7

JAPANESE HERALDRY AND HERALDIC FLAGS

David F. Phillips
Editor

INCLUDING:

Understanding Japanese Heraldry
by David F. Phillips

Japanese Heraldry, Battle Flags and Standards in the Age of the Samurai
by Emmanuel Valerio

Heraldic Devices on Modern Japanese Flags
by Nozomi Kariyasu

FLAG HERITAGE FOUNDATION
DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS
2018

THE FLAG HERITAGE FOUNDATION
MONOGRAPH AND TRANSLATION SERIES

The Flag Heritage Foundation was established in 1971 in order, among other purposes, "to collect, organize, and disseminate information concerning all aspects of flags and related symbols" and "to promote wide public knowledge of the rich history of flags which fosters international understanding and respect for national heritage." It is a registered charity in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Flag Heritage Foundation Monograph and Translation Series was established in 2009 to publish monographs on flags and related subjects, and to translate and publish in English works previously appearing in languages inaccessible to many scholars. This is the seventh publication in the Series.

Flag Heritage Foundation
301 Newbury Street #108
Danvers, Massachusetts 01923 USA
(424) 272-0701
www.flagheritagefoundation.org

Series Editor
David F. Phillips
2331 - 47th Avenue
San Francisco, California 94116 USA
(415) 753-6190
david@radbash.com

Price: US $20 (plus shipping)
Non-profit organizations, libraries, and vexillological and heraldic organizations may obtain copies *gratis* or at a reduced rate – inquire of the Foundation.

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

1: THE ESTONIAN FLAG, by Karl Aun (2009)
2: EMBLEMS OF THE INDIAN STATES, by David F. Phillips (2011)
3: THE HAITIAN FLAG OF INDEPENDENCE, by Odette Roy Fombrun (2013)
4: THE DOUBLE EAGLE, by David F. Phillips (2014)
5: FLAGS AND EMBLEMS OF COLOMBIA, by Pedro Julio Dousdebés (2016)
6: VEXILLOLOGY AS A SOCIAL SCIENCE, by Željko Heimer (2017)

ISBN No. 978-1-4507-2436-4

JAPANESE HERALDIC DEVICES AND THEIR USE ON FLAGS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor's Preface 7

Understanding Japanese Heraldry, by David F. Phillips 13

Blazon of Flags on Plate 16 81

Japanese Heraldry, Battle Flags and Standards in the Age of the Samurai, by Emmanuel Valerio 109

Heraldic Devices on Modern Japanese Flags, by Nozomi Kariyasu 137

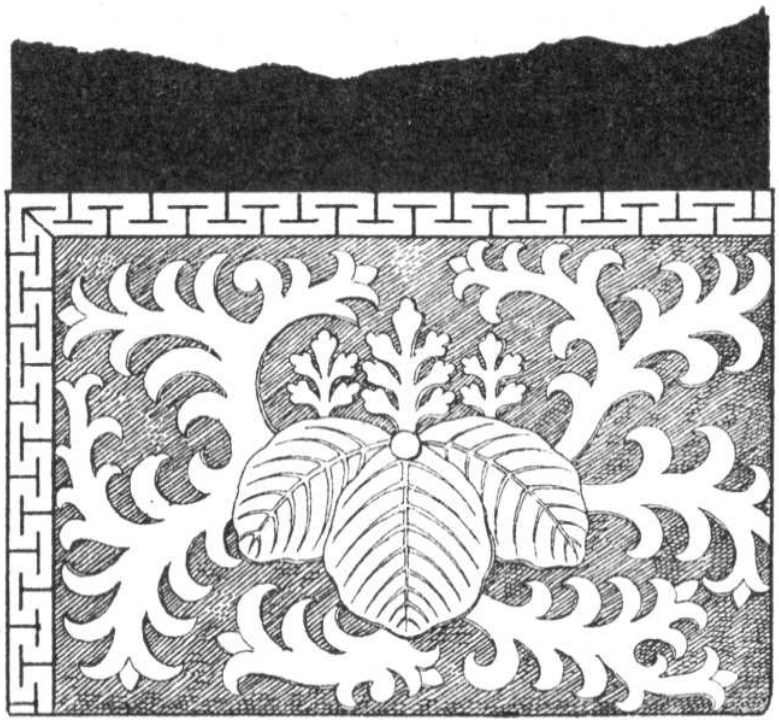
Introduction to the Literature on Japanese Heraldry 145

Sources of the Illustrations 149

Contributors 157

Colophon 158

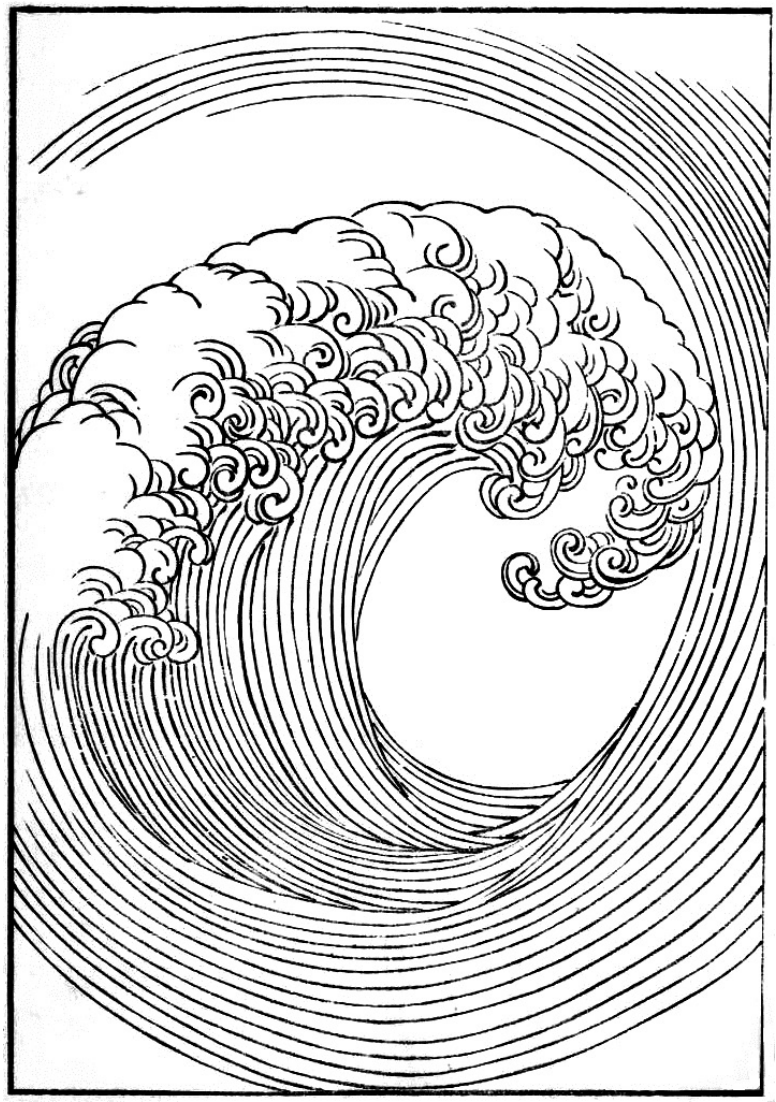
Key to the Flag Plates on the Inside Back Cover 159



IMPERIAL PAULOWNIA: EMBROIDERED CUFF DESIGN, FROM A JAPANESE SKETCH

LIST OF COLOR PLATES

Inside front cover	HERALDIC DEVICES ON MODERN JAPANESE FLAGS, by Nozomi Kariyasu, to accompany his article beginning on page 137.
Plates 1-10	TWENTY PAINTINGS BY EMMANUEL VALERIO, to accompany his article beginning on page 109.
	1A. THE GEMPEI WAR
	1B. THE MONGOL INVASIONS
	2A. THE NANBOKU-CHO PERIOD and THE ASHIKAGA SHOGUNATE
	2B. THE SENGOKU PERIOD: THE FIRST DAIMYO
	3A. THE SENGOKU PERIOD: THE COUNTRY AT WAR
	3B. TAKEDA SHINGEN 1
	4A. TAKEDA SHINGEN 2
	4B. DAIMYO COLORS
	5A. UMA JIRUSHI
	5B. O UMA JURISHI: THE GREAT STANDARD
	6A. THE GREAT AND LESSER STANDARDS
	6B. KO UMA JURUSHI: THE LESSER STANDARD
	7A. THE SASHIMONO
	7B. HERO SASHIMONO
	8A. THE HORO
	8B. SLOGANS, MOTTOES AND TREASURES
	9A. NAGAO KAGETORA AND UESUGI KENSHIN
	9B. TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI
	10A. ARMOR
	10B. JINBAORI
Plate 11	TWO VIEWS OF KAWANAKAJIMA
	11A. DAWN AT KAWANAKAJIMA, by Emmanuel Valerio (2017)
	11B. BATTLE OF KAWANAKAJIMA, by Utagawa Yoshikazu (1857)
Plate 12	ORIGINAL SOURCES
	12A. O UMA JURISHI (detail)
	12B. HATA UMA JURUSHI EZU (detail)
Plate 13	ICHIKAWA DANJURO IN THE KABUKI PLAY *SHIBARAKU*, by Utagawa Toyokuni I (1812)
Plate 14	COMBING THE HAIR, by Goyo Hashiguchi (1920)
Plate 15	JAPANESE IMPERIAL RANK FLAGS, from *Flags of All Nations* (1958)
Plate 16	A PAGE OF DAIMYO FLAGS, by George Ashdown Audsley (1883) (A key to heraldic charges appears on the facing page.)
Inside back cover	SEVEN DAIMYO FLAG PLATES, from the *Kaei Bukan* (1858).
Back cover	Top: SIEGE OF OSAKA, 1614-15
	Bottom: BATTLE OF SHIROYAMA, 1877



***Wave Forming a Circle*, by Mori Yuzan (1919)**

[Compare Figure 26e on page 28]

THE SAMURAI KATO KIYAMASA DURING THE WAR AGAINST KOREA IN 1597

EDITOR'S PREFACE

by David F. Phillips

GERMAN HERALDIC DECORATION FROM THE 15TH CENTURY

Japan's culture is the only one other than that of Western Europe to create a fully developed heraldic system. It is quite different from European heraldry in form and means of expression, but shares its basic function as a hereditary system of distinctive marks to identify individuals, families and institutions.

MON OF THE TOKUGAWA, JAPANESE SHOGUNS 1600-1868

Both systems began as military recognition techniques, fairly abruptly in the middle of the 12th century, at a time when battles were led by heavily armored warriors. Military recognition systems soon evolved into identification systems for the landed families who dominated the emerging military castes. These systems came to require a special class of officials to organize and interpret them – heralds in Europe, *hata bugyo* in Japan.

In both societies conditions of chronic factional warfare receded in favor of more unified central government. As this happened, military use of heraldry for battlefield recognition grew vestigial, but the system itself expanded beyond the military caste into the wider, more peaceful culture. In Europe civilians (including prelates and women) and institutions like schools, towns and religious corporations adopted coats of arms. In Japan heraldic devices in traditional form were eventually used by not only by temples but by businesses, actors, and even *geishas*, and as decorative elements without specific denotation.

Japanese feudalism came to an end in 1868 with the replacement of the Tokugawa Shogunate by a restored imperial power (the Meiji Restoration). The last of the independent warrior clans was defeated in the Satsuma Rebellion of the 1870s, and the military use of the *mon* (as the basic devices of Japanese heraldry are called) and mon-based military flags disappeared. A view of the Battle of Shiroyama, the final action of the rebellion (on the back cover of this book) shows only the modern Japanese war flag dominating the battlefield.

Finally, as in Europe, the Japanese heraldic system became a subject of mainly antiquarian interest, used only with conscious retrospection. It is only in relatively recent times that these beautiful and expressive emblematic systems, in Europe as well as in Japan, have been reassessed with fresh eyes.

The Japanese heraldic system is often seen as baffling and opaque, even by scholars trained in European heraldry. Japanese mon share with shield-based European heraldic devices the basic function of identifying individuals and families. But the European system relies on variation, rearrangement and multiplication of geometric and stylized figures in distinctive ways, combining them and differencing them by position, color, background, register (for example in quarters), external ornaments, and otherwise.

Japanese heraldry, by contrast, focuses on a single but often compound image. Small variations of rendition and accent, which in the European system would be a matter of artistic license, are sufficient to distinguish one mon from another, and there is hardly any scope for artistic variation. Color does not matter at all (although it can matter on mon-based flags), and there are no external ornaments to augment or amplify meaning. The result is a bewildering array of devices that European-trained observers find hard to understand. They are seen as both too varied for easy categorization, and too similar to distinguish. It does not help that they are usually presented to Western eyes either in a few isolated examples or in a dizzying array of hundreds or even thousands, often arranged in what seem like arbitrary ways.

I am a Western-trained heraldic scholar, and for many years I found the Japanese heraldic system frustrating to contemplate. It was obviously founded on comprehensible principles, but I could not comprehend it. Clearly there was great subtlety operating within that system, and great beauty hiding in plain sight, but I did not have the key to it, just as I had not had the key to the Western system when I first started learning it as a child. The difference was that there were books easily available to teach the European system at whatever level I needed, from basic introductions to learned treatises. But I found no easy way into the Japanese system, which remained for me like an enticing but forbidden walled garden.

But then I came across an essay called "The Construction and Blazonry of Mon," given as a lecture in 1911 by Albert J. Koop (1877-1945), then a prominent European scholar of Asian art.[1] It approached Japanese heraldry by descriptive means, using a form of blazon. Blazon is a method for technical description of a heraldic composition or device, so highly developed in Europe that a coat of arms can be reliably reproduced from it without aid of a picture. Japanese heraldry has blazon too, and this approach brought the principles of composition and differencing into focus for me in a way no other treatment had been able to do.[2] Koop's lecture was like a Rosetta stone – suddenly I was able to read Japanese heraldry the same way I could read European heraldry.

But not only was Koop's lecture obscure and hard to find, it was incomplete and did not really cover the subject in a systematic way. It seemed to me that a more thorough treatment of the principles of Japanese heraldry was needed to unlock this rich source of delight for Western observers.

My essay in this volume, which begins on page 13, is an attempt to make understanding and enjoyment of Japanese heraldry and heraldic flags available to non-specialists. It focuses on the structure of the mon itself. My aim is to help observers familiar only with Western heraldry (or perhaps with no heraldry at all) understand what they are looking at in Japanese mon – how to recognize their elements and composition, and how to distinguish one mon from another. In the first part I try to explain why the differences between the Japanese and European heraldic systems led to such visually and structurally different outcomes. Next I outline the basic grammar of Japanese heraldry, using a limited selection of charges as examples, and provide a

---

1 *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society* (London, 1911), 9:279.

2 I have since learned of other works using the same approach. See the Literature section, beginning on page 145.

glossary of English blazon for Japanese heraldry. Then I present the Japanese heraldic vocabulary in a comprehensive but non-exhaustive selection of charges, arranged by form (as in a field guide to wildlife) in order to allow easy identification. If I can demystify this fascinating study and make it more approachable by Western eyes, I will be satisfied.

In the next section of the book, beginning on page 109, the noted illustrator Emmanuel Valerio guides us historically, by period, through the flags and vexilloids (three-dimensional standards) used in Japanese military practice during the samurai period. This period runs from the Gempei Wars at the end of the 12th century to the start of the long peace under the Tokugawa Shogunate, beginning around 1600. Each section of his article is keyed to an original painting, found in the first ten plates in the color section that begins facing page 80.

Finally, with the abolition of feudalism and the beginning of the modern Japanese state at the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the use of mon in Japanese formal symbolic expression became markedly less common. Some Japanese flags, however, did continue to feature emblems derived from traditional mon. In the third and final essay in this book, beginning on page 137, Nozomi Kariyasu, a distinguished Japanese vexillologist and author of many flag books (including two about modern Japanese prefectural and municipal flags) describes this process through an examination of representative Japanese municipal and other flags bearing emblems derived from Japanese heraldic forms. A chart of these flags, in color, is found inside the front cover of this book.

The book closes with a brief review of the literature in English on Japanese heraldry, a comprehensive listing of the sources of the illustrations (including the covers and color plates), brief profiles of the contributors, and a selection of flags of 19th century Japanese feudal lords. Most of the images are in the public domain, or are reproduced with permission or under a general license governed by special protocols. But even where not, their reproduction here constitutes fair use under the copyright statute (17 U.S.C. § 107), which provides in pertinent part that

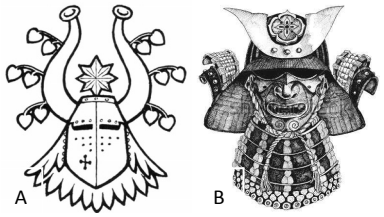
> [i]n determining whether the use made of a work in any particular case is a fair use the factors to be considered shall include (1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes; (2) the nature of the copyrighted work; (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

A few notes about language. Japanese words are given in transcription, sparingly and always defined (or equivalents given) in English. Japanese words in transcription are given the same form in the singular and the plural. Japanese characters are used only where they clarify those used in mon or on flags illustrated in the text or plates. I have not attempted Japanese transcription on any significant scale. Such transcriptions as I have included have been taken from English and German sources, from different periods, and so may reflect slightly different conventions. I hope they are all intelligible. I have omitted the macron from all transcriptions, thus *daimyo* instead of *daimyō*. English technical terms are usually italicized on first use only. All foreign words are italicized except for five used so often that italics would be distracting: these are *mon* and *kamon*, *shogun, samurai*, and *daimyo*.

- A kamon is a mon used specifically as the emblem of a family.

- The shogun was the military leader during the times of centralized government that alternated in Japan with periods of strife and anarchy.
- Samurai were the Japanese warrior class, corresponding roughly to European knights, among whom mon first came into widespread use as an identification system.
- After the rise of Japanese feudalism, the daimyo were the territorial lords to whom samurai who were not immediate adherents of the emperor or shogun owed their service. (Masterless samurai were called *ronin* and had their own mon and romantic traditions.)

The English heraldic word *charge* means an object represented in a heraldic design. I sometimes use the word *motif* to include all instances and varieties of a given charge. The word *device* means a particular completed heraldic design, whether European or Japanese. A mon is a Japanese heraldic device corresponding to a *badge* or *coat of arms* in the West. It has become conventional in Western writing to call a mon a *family crest*. This is wildly incorrect, as a crest in the Western heraldic sense is not a complete heraldic form. Although sometimes used independently of the coat of arms (as for example on uniform buttons, liveries, or cap badges), really in both cultures a crest is a figure worn on top of a helmet (which in a European coat of arms is placed above the shield). The Japanese in the samurai period used crests on their helmets (see the frontispiece) – these were called *kuwagata* and are quite distinct from the mon. It is improper to refer either to a coat of arms or a mon as a crest, and I avoid all such usage here. When describing a mon as a graphic designation for a family or institution, serving the function of a European coat of arms, I generally call it an *emblem*. If an English word is needed for a mon serving an identifying function specifically similar to that of a Western crest, it should be called a badge.



CRESTS
(A) EUROPEAN; (B) JAPANESE

Thanks are due to many people who helped in the creation of this book. It is only right, as with any work of scholarship, to begin by thanking the scholars who showed the way, without whom we would ourselves know little or nothing.

- The great Austrian heraldic scholar and artist Hugo Gerard Ströhl (1851-1919) led in 1906 with his pioneering *Japanisches Wappenbuch: Nihon Moncho*, which first brought this subject to wide notice among European artists and scholars.
- Rudolf Lange (1850-1933), whose 1903 study "Japanische Wappen," appearing in a scholarly journal in 1903, provided much of the raw material for Ströhl's work.
- Among the writers in English no one has been a better guide than John Dower, whose *Elements of Japanese Design* (New York, 1971) is still the best work available in a Western language on the history and meaning of Japanese heraldic forms, and to which (as my citations show) I am heavily indebted.
- Also deserving acknowledgment and gratitude is Stephen Turnbull, many of whose works illuminate the world of the samurai, especially *Samurai Heraldry* (illustrated by Angus McBride), *Samurai Warfare* and *Samurai Sourcebook*.
- I would thank the authors of two more works, if they were identified or credited anywhere within them: the authors of *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Japanese Family*

Crests (Graphic-sha/Japan Publications: Tokyo, 2001), which provided the bulk of the illustrations of individual mon, and *Family Crests of Japan* (Stone Bridge Press: Berkeley, revised edition 2007), the best introductory guide to the structure of mon I have found in English.

- Thanks are due to Yuzuru Okada, author of the excellent but unfortunately timed *Japanese Family Crests* (Tokyo, 1941) and Fumie Adachi, translator and editor of *Japanese Design Motifs* (New York, 1972), the Dover reprint of the 1913 Matsuya Piece-Goods Store catalogue of mon. These were the first books of Japanese heraldry I (and many other Westerners) ever encountered, and the fascinating glimpses they offered into this world kept it before my eyes until I could find a way in.
- And finally, thanks again to Albert J. Koop (1877-1945), whose lecture "The Construction and Blazonry of Mon" provided that way in for me.

Details of all these titles, and others, are given on the Literature pages, beginning on page 145.

And thanks to the many on-line resources without which large parts of the work supporting this book would not have been possible, including but not limited to Wikipedia, Google Search, Google Images, Google Translate, Worldcat, Pinterest, Bookfinder, and Flags of the World. Thanks also to TinyURL, which allowed me to substitute manageable Internet addresses for unmanageable ones, to the Harvard Law School Library for Perma.cc, which created the permanent links I used to archive Internet references, and to the San Francisco Public Library.

Closer to the production of this newest book on the subject, I would like to thank the Trustees of the Flag Heritage Foundation. Without their continued indispensible support for this publication series, and their trust in me as its editor, this volume, like the six that have preceded it, would never have been possible. Thanks also to my collaborators Nozomi Kariyasu and Emmanuel Valerio for their patient and professional work on this project and for what they have taught me about Japanese heraldry. Thanks to Kirby A. Baker for help in budgeting and in understanding symmetry, to Anne M. Platoff for obtaining a copy of Rudolf Lange's work for my use, to Scot Guenter for diplomatic assistance, to Nozomi Kariyasu (again), Makiko Wisner, Peter Miller and Christopher Phillips for help with Japanese language questions, and especially to Emmanuel Valerio (again) for his generosity in reviewing my manuscript (but all errors that remain are solely mine). Thanks also to Noah Phillips and Katherine Forer for Permalink help, to Raluca Ostasz and Noah Phillips (again) for Photoshop help, to Charles Waltmire for redrawing some images so they could be reproduced, to Ralf Hartemink from whose superb Heraldry of the World website I have taken some illustrations, to William Phillips for the picture of me on the contributors page, to Alex Best and Katherine Forer (again) for keeping my computer systems working, to Arnold Martinez for expertly repairing my 111-year-old copy of Ströhl's treatise so I could scan images from it without it falling apart, and especially to Debbie Waltmire of Specialty Graphics for her expert help throughout the production process, from the first layout to the final pushing of the button. Honor, praise and gratitude to Sri Lord GANESHA, blessed be He, the great god of India, Patron of Literature and Learning, Who for this as for all my books has been my Inspiration and Scribe. And finally, as always, thanks to Arianna L. Phillips for her unfailing support and understanding.

San Francisco
December 2017

SAMPLE PAGE OF BAMBOO MON, FROM GRAPHIC-SHA'S
***ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA OF JAPANESE FAMILY CRESTS* (2001)**

UNDERSTANDING JAPANESE HERALDRY:
RECOGNIZING AND DESCRIBING JAPANESE HERALDIC DEVICES

by David F. Phillips

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION
- A. About Japanese Heraldry
- B. Structure: East and West

II. GRAMMAR OF JAPANESE HERALDRY
- A. Methods of Differencing
- B. Field and Frames
- C. Representative Charges
- D. Single Charges
- E. Identical Charges
  1. Two Identical Charges
  2. Three Identical Charges
  3. Four or More Identical Charges
- F. Combined Charges
  1. Vines and Swords
  2. Two Forms of the Same Plant
  3. Composite Designs
- G. Special Cases
  1. False Paulownia
  2. Striped Roundels
  3. Tortoise Shells
  4. Stars
  5. Swirls
  6. Astroids
  7. Handles and Melons
  8. Brocade Flowers
  9. Lozenges
- H. Naturalistic Charges
- I. [Reserved]
- J. Figures of Notation
- K. Frames
- L. English and Japanese Blazon
- M. Experimenting with Western heraldry in the Japanese idiom
- N. How to look at mon

III. GLOSSARY OF ENGLISH BLAZON FOR JAPANESE HERALDRY

IV. VOCABULARY OF JAPANESE HERALDRY
- A. Plants
  1. Flowers
     a. Three-petalled blossoms
     b. Five-petalled blossoms
     c. Six-petalled blossoms
     d. Round blossoms
     e. Irregular blossoms
  2. Leaves
     a. Single leaves
     b. Complex leaf forms
     c. Leaves with blossoms or berries
     d. Stylized lobe forms
  3. Fruits and Vegetables
  4. Stalks and Shoots
  5. Trees
- B. Animals
  1. Quadrupeds
  2. Birds
  3. Shellfish
  4. Insects
  5. Animal Parts
- C. Inanimate Natural World
- D. Artifacts
  1. Round Shapes
  2. Rectangular Shapes
  3. Irregularly Shaped Objects
  4. Particular Categories
     a. Structures
     b. Hand tools
     c. Parts of an arrow
     d. Fittings of a ship
     e. Hats
     f. Fans
- E. Geometric Figures
- F. Figures of Notation

I: INTRODUCTION

A. ABOUT JAPANESE HERALDRY

Like European heraldry, Japanese heraldry has a *grammar* and a *vocabulary*. They are unfamiliar to most Western observers, but as in European heraldry both must be understood, at least in broad terms, before the system can make sense visually.

The principal figures of Japanese *mon* (as the compositions are called) sort very much as do the figures of European heraldry – plants, animals, artifacts, natural features, geometric charges, figures of notation. But they may not be clearly recognizable because the individual subjects and graphic conventions are so different from those used in the West. Many of the flowers and plants that are the most important class of Japanese heraldic charges look very similar to Western eyes – a five-petalled flower that would just be a generic cinquefoil in Europe could be any of more than a dozen distinct charges, and the artifacts (forming the next most important class of charges) are mostly as unfamiliar as a European heraldic maunch or a caltrap, a clarion or a portcullis, would be in Japan (or in modern-day Europe).

Also the European system of heraldic differencing and ramification involves changes in the color and position of elements, and the introduction of *ordinaries* (structural geometric charges like stripes and crosses), figured lines of partition, and common charges, and *marshalling* additional separate designs into the composition. But the Japanese system does not use color, or marshalling, or structural charges, and relies on distortion (often extreme distortion) of the charges, and their multiplication or segmentation within a single device, and the addition of sometimes only fractional elements of other charges, and slight modifications that would not make a difference in the West. A European-trained observer might therefore not be able recognize even familiar charges as they appear in the mon.[1]

As a result of these conditions, Japanese mon present to Western eyes an unnervingly protean quality, and a forbidding complexity whose organizing principles are not intuitively evident. It does not help that many resource materials on Japanese heraldry arrange these compositions according to their names in Japanese, an order not useful to outsiders learning the system.[2] Even where they are arranged topically by principal charge, they can be difficult to use – the vocabulary is hard to recognize without knowing the grammar, but the grammar is hard to learn without recognizing the vocabulary. A foreigner approaching this system does not know where to begin. It is like trying to use a dictionary without knowing the alphabet.

I will try to guide the reader to enough understanding of Japanese heraldry to grasp what she is looking at in a mon, and decode it enough to recognize, at least in a general way, what its elements are and how they relate to each other. Some will remain hard to decipher, but the observer will at least have a method of approach.

---

[1] By *European-trained* I mean *trained in the European system*, which includes Americans like myself.

[2] In the section on Literature, beginning at page 145, I mention several Western-produced reference books on Japanese heraldry and identify their means of organization.

A full understanding of Japanese heraldry requires more than visual comprehension. As with European heraldry, the connotative and denotative meanings of the imagery are also important. Denotative meanings proclaim the families or institutions to which the mon belong, and which they identify. There is a considerable literature on this subject, most but not all in Japanese. I do occasionally identify individual mon as relating to specific families, and Emmanuel Valerio in his essay on heraldic flags (beginning at page 109) does this more often. But this aspect of Japanese heraldry is not one of the subjects of this study.

The complicated sets of rules and customs by which heraldic emblems were assumed or transmitted, including inheritance, a leader's grant of his own mon to others, adoption of the mon of a conquered clan by its conqueror, exchange of mon by family compact, and assumption of mon by individuals in a personal, military or commercial context, are all outside the scope of this work. Likewise the custom of differencing a mon by subtle means to identify a cadet or affiliated branch of a family, when joining or breaking away from the original stem, is not covered here. It is more difficult than the European system because of the absence of codified rules and of such formal elements as quarterings, inescutcheons, specifically meaningful external ornaments, unique crests that could distinguish the holders of otherwise identical emblems (as German ones can), and the like. Also Japanese families often had more than one mon, and the various mon were classified by terms like *jomon* (formal emblem), *kamon* (family emblem), *fukumon* (supplementary emblem) and many more. I have made no attempt to explore this intricate structure here.

Finally, the charges and elements of Japanese mon have detailed connotative meanings. Some, like some European coats of arms and crests, have specific quasi-historical origin stories – a leader hiding in a tree, a well-aimed arrow passing through a fan − which may be no more reliable in Japan than they are in Europe. But apart from these, Japanese heraldic charges often take their meanings from a dense web of cultural and linguistic associations unlike that of European heraldry. They can be very difficult for outsiders to penetrate without a learned guide.

Some of these associations were taken from observations of nature. Thus the plum blossom was a popular figure in Japanese decorative art even before the appearance of heraldry, because it appears early in the year, sometimes while there is still snow on the ground, and so is an emblem of courage and a harbinger of spring. Others arose from an elaborate folklore imported from China during a period of wholesale Japanese cultural appropriation from the T'ang Dynasty (618-907 AD) – the elusive but auspicious phoenix, for example, nested in the paulownia tree, and lived on bamboo. Examples of these associations could be vastly multiplied − perhaps this is because the forms of Japanese heraldry, unlike most of those in Europe, had their origins in the vocabulary and well-developed conventions of pre-heraldic decorative art.

Many charges came from the imagery of Buddhism, and to a lesser extent that of Taoism and Confucianism, and even Christianity during the brief period between its introduction and its suppression. Most important among the religious influences was Shinto, the indigenous Japanese religion based on veneration of the spirits of place. Because Shinto veneration was so general, almost anything, and especially plants and natural features, could have associations with Shinto or with specific shrines. Thus mulberry was associated with the Sumo shrine, and bayberry grew around the Kumano shrine, and so these plants took on religious significance. Sometimes the

association was purely sentimental, as families chose mon that alluded to the flowers (or the names) of their places of origin. For example, for families named Yoshino "the crest very often may be of cherry blossom, as Mt. Yos[h]ino is so noted for its cherry-trees that the name is immediately associated with its blossoms."[3] How would anyone know this without a deep immersion in Japanese history and folklore?[4] Accordingly I do not try to give the reader an ability to read heraldic associations of this kind – my own ability to do so is limited, and is derivative of the work of others.

Finally there is a level of linguistic play at work in the connotative and denotative associations of Japanese mon, which likewise, and for the same reason (not knowing the Japanese language), I do not try to communicate. Like European *canting* charges, Japanese mon often play on the name of the bearer – thus wisteria (*fuji*) is carried by many families whose names begin with *Fuji-*, and the well-crib, which looks like the character 井 (*i*), is used by many families whose name begins with that character (a well-crib is illustrated on page 94, No. 325). Moreover, because of the not-quite-complete fusion of Japanese language and Chinese script, a character or a syllable may have more than one reading, and understanding an allusion can require a prodigious amount of linguistic sophistication and decoding of puns and rebuses.

So I leave questions of connotation and denotation to more expert hands than mine, and have focused this work closely on the visual. What is the image made of, and how are its elements arranged? And how can the composition be described (because it cannot be described until it is understood)? If I can bring non-Japanese observers to the point of recognizing what they are seeing, it will be enough.

B. STRUCTURE: WEST AND EAST

To understand the difference between European and Japanese heraldic systems, we begin from the fact that both systems needed to generate a theoretically unlimited number of unique emblems from a limited palette of choices. The visual and artistic differences in the two systems can be traced to their differing responses to this basic challenge.

European heraldry begins with a shield, a conventionally but irregularly shaped field for decoration. The Japanese do not begin with a shield, although in warfare they did sometimes use mon to decorate their shields. Instead they began, as will be seen below, with an invisible circle (or square).

---

[3] Yusuku Okada, *Japanese Family Crests* (Tokyo, 1941), 30.

[4] "Pride in place, the warrior's close attachment to his native soil, was … commemorated in crests, as in the flying butterfly (*fusencho*) of the Okochi, who came originally from Fusencho in Mikawa, and the oak leaf (*kaji-ba*) of the Matsura of Kaji-tani (Oak Valley) in Hirado. Another family used the *yamabuki*, or 'yellow rose,' because this flower grew in profusion on the riverbanks of the native village of a famous ancestor." John Dower, *Elements of Japanese Design* (New York, 1971), 27. Dower's great book is an invaluable guide to the history and subtleties of meaning in Japanese heraldry.

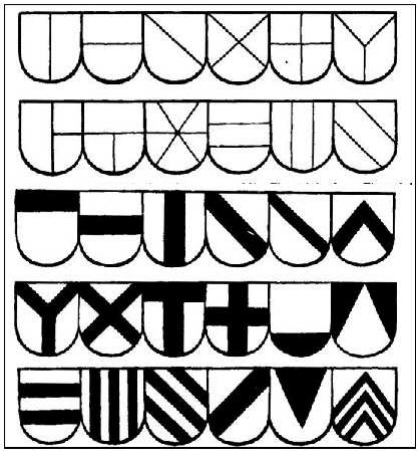


FIGURE 1: EUROPEAN HERALDIC PARTITIONS AND ORDINARIES

The next step for European heraldry was geometric. Early heraldry in the West is characterized mainly by geometric patterns, plus a couple of archetypal predators (lions and eagles) and canting charges alluding to the bearer's name. Primers of European heraldry traditionally begin first with the shield, and then with the points of the shield (on which lines and charges can be placed), and then with the partitions and ordinaries that can be formed by vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines, in different arrangements and formations (left).[5] Only then do they proceed to the common charges (animals, plants, artifacts).

Except in the limited case of roundels bearing horizontal lines, Japanese heraldry makes little use of partitions and geometric structures like European ordinaries. They do have some non-structural geometric charges like astroids and swirls, corresponding to *subordinaries* like lozenges and frets in the European system, but with a few exceptions these generally form a minor element in Japanese heraldry.

Although the possibilities of geometric patterns were never exhausted in the West, European heraldry ramified by other methods too. For example, the compartments created by the ordinaries could be populated with subordinaries or common charges. Thus a charge, or multiple or varied charges, could be placed on an ordinary, or on the field surrounding it, or both. Each such space was *independent of the others* – thus a chevron could be differenced by a roundel, or a shell or a flower or another charge, or by three roundels, or by three roundels on the surrounding field, or by changing the chevron, or one of those roundels or shells (or some of them, or all of them) to something else, or by changing their colors, or by adding supplementary charges on a chief, and varying or charging *them*, endlessly.

FIGURE 2: ARMS OF CARDINAL WOLSEY

We can see the effect of this approach by analyzing a European heraldic shield. At right are the personal arms of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey (1473-1530), the great minister of King Henry VIII of England.[6] They are somewhat cluttered but not atypical English arms of the Tudor period. The arms are based on a cross, formed of horizontal and vertical structural lines that have been varied in a pattern called *engrailed*. There are five charges on the cross; the cross itself forms four *cantons* in the corners, which have no charge on them but could have; a straight horizontal partition line forms a *chief* on which there are three charges. The colors are not shown in our

[5] The chart, by Alexander von Volborth, does not include many other geometric patterns based on straight lines, for example *barry*, *paly*, *bendy*, *gyronny*, *checky*, *lozengy* and *fretty*. Full credits for this and other illustrations appear in the Sources of the Illustrations, beginning on page 149.

[6] The arms, by E. E. Dorling, are actually those of Christ Church College, Oxford, which used the arms of its founder Wolsey as it own. They omit the impaled arms of his diocese.

figure, but the field is black, the lion is red, the leopards' faces are blue, the chief is yellow, the birds are black with red accents, and the rose is red with green accents.

It will be seen that (not counting the color accents on the birds and the rose), there are 16 loci for variation on this shield, meaning that there are 16 places where *even one* change would transform these arms into different arms.[7] If the black field were turned red (or any other color), the arms would be *differenced*. Likewise the arms would be differenced if the lines of the cross were made straight or wavy instead of engrailed, or if the upright cross were changed into a diagonal saltire, or if *any single one* of the charges on the cross were omitted or altered or changed in color, or another charge substituted for it. Likewise if any one (or more) of the cantons around the cross, now empty, were to be charged. And likewise with the chief: if changed in color, or bounded by a figured line instead of a straight one, or if any of its charges were to be altered or omitted, the arms would no longer be Wolsey's arms, but a new creation.

Any change in any *one* of the these loci would change the arms. As there are 16 loci of change, and changes could be made in any locus, or any combination of loci, there are 2^{16}-1 possibilities of change here, or more than 65,000 ways to change these arms. And that number assumes *just one* possible change for each locus. Actually the number of possible changes is enormously higher. The black field could be changed to red, or green, or blue (or to a heraldic fur, or a pattern such as checky). The engrailed line could be changed to straight, but also to wavy or embattled or raguly. And the charges could be changed to almost anything – in theory the number of possibilities, although perhaps not quite infinite, is practically unbounded.

It is unsurprising, then, that with so many possibilities for difference, only rarely do European heraldic charges change *in essence*. A rose is a rose is a rose, even if not barbed in green like Wolsey's was supposed to be; a lion is basically a lion. Lions are sometimes changed physically – for example with double tails, or by being given some attribute to wear or hold. But the *way* the lion is drawn signifies only artistically, but not essentially.[8]

Like European charges, Japanese charges could be varied or multiplied, but the European technique of reversing or substituting colors was not available because color played no role in the mon (although it did on flags). Likewise the absence of ordinaries and cantons and quarterings eliminated partition lines and restricted register as a vehicle of difference.

Because, as noted, in European heraldry a flower, or even a bird or animal, could be varied in color or position on the shield, it did not have to be varied in form. But because the structure of the mon was unitary, it could not be varied in sections – the entire design had to be varied. *This is the key to understanding the different development of the two systems.*

---

[7] I call them *loci*, meaning *places*, because *field* has a technical meaning as a heraldic term. For this shield they are the two ordinaries (cross and chief), the two partition lines that define them, the eight charges (five on the cross, three in the chief), and the four empty cantons defined by the cross.

[8] Wolsey's lion is *passant* (walking); it could have been *rampant* (rearing unlionlike on one leg) instead. But the difference between these two was originally just an artistic response to the form of the shield or other surface of display.

II. GRAMMAR OF JAPANESE HERALDRY

A. METHODS OF DIFFERENCING

The Japanese have several major methods of varying mon to distinguish them from each other.

- NUMBER: Multiply identical charges.
- LINE: Vary the lines that define the charges.
- VIEWPOINT: Alter the viewpoint from which the charges are seen.
- DISTORTION: Distort the charges themselves.
- RELATION OF ELEMENTS: Have the charges interact with each other in dynamic ways.
- ACCENTS: Embellish the charges – this may be done in ways that in the West would merely be artistic variation.
- COMBINATION: Combine different types of charge in a single emblem.
- FRAME: Place the device within a distinctive frame.

Except for the first and the last two (and diagonal crossing of elements), these methods are rarely used in the West. While distinctive borders are available, especially in Iberia and Scotland, there is nothing corresponding to the multiplicity of frames used in Japanese heraldry, and Japanese frames do not bear charges, or carry meaning beyond mere differencing. In the West variations of outer frame (such as lozenges for women, and baroque and rococo shield forms) do not constitute differences of the arms themselves.

With these ideas in mind, we can begin first to examine the grammar, and then the vocabulary, of Japanese heraldic devices. This review will be primarily structural, aiming to help Western observers understand these devices *visually*, as they see them on a page or on objects. As noted, I will not attempt to define *conventions of use* – details of heredity, filiation, clan attribution, differencing, and other such matters − or secondary associations of meaning.

B. FIELD AND FRAMES

Most mon are roughly circular in form, or can be inscribed within a circle. Others can be thought of as fitting within a square in which the circle is inscribed. So just as in European heraldry we begin by focusing on a shield, with Japanese heraldry we begin with a field formed by an imaginary circle. The device that forms the mon is placed within it. A charge bounded only by an imaginary circle or square presents as solitary and free-standing.

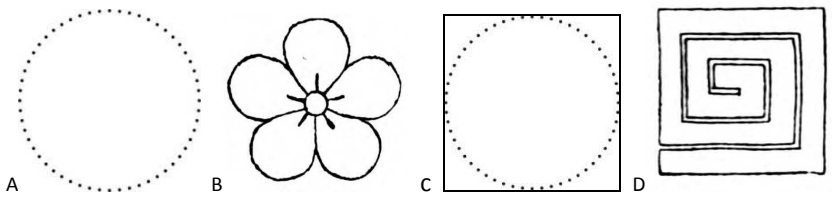


FIGURE 3: BACKGROUND FRAMING. (A) IMAGINARY CIRCLE; (B) PLUM BLOSSOM; (C) IMAGINARY CIRCLE IN SQUARE; (D) LIGHTNING.

Often the mon is shown within an actual rather than an imaginary circle. This circle is indicated by a hairline just sufficient to define the circle. We will blazon this as ON A DISK. In traditional Japanese blazon this disk is called a rice cake (*mochi*), but really it is just a geometric structure: either a framing element (as in Figure 4B below) or a definition of the surface like the European shield. Add another line (or a thicker, heavier line) and the mon is bounded IN A RING (Figure 4C).

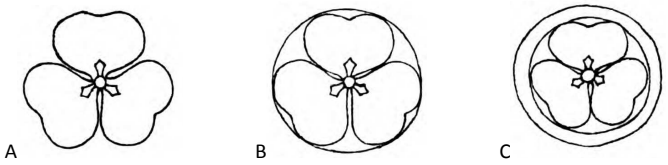


FIGURE 4: CIRCULAR FRAMING. (A) WOOD-SORREL; (B) WOOD-SORREL ON A DISK; (C) WOOD-SORREL IN A RING.

Although the frame around a mon is one of its least significant elements, I mention it here so it will be understood when encountered later among the examples chosen to illustrate other points. The frame (which need not be circular, and can be variously ornamented) will be discussed more fully at page 53 below. Terms of blazon are given in SMALL CAPITALS.

C. REPRESENTATIVE CHARGES

Because Japanese heraldic charges often appear in distorted forms, we cannot understand the vocabulary before we know the grammar. But we cannot understand the grammar without having some elements of vocabulary to work with. Accordingly, rather than introduce the broad range of Japanese heraldic charges now, I will select only a *few representative examples* of each class of charge and use them to demonstrate the grammar. Then we can proceed to a more comprehensive identification of the charges themselves.

Japanese heraldic charges are traditionally grouped into these classes.

- PLANTS. These are predominant and presented in stereotyped ways, focusing on highly stylized blossoms, leaves, fruit and stalks.
- ANIMALS. There are very few animals in Japanese heraldry, and almost none of the large predators common in European heraldry, or fish (except for shellfish). Insects are rare in European heraldry, but a few, especially the butterfly, are familiar in Japanese.
- ARTIFACTS. Collections of mon have more *examples* of plants than of artifacts, but more *different kinds* of artifacts than plants.
- INANIMATE NATURE. This includes elements of the inanimate natural world, like clouds, waves, mountains, snow and lightning, and heavenly bodies such as the sun, the moon, and the stars.
- GEOMETRIC CHARGES. Except for horizontal bars, there are no structural geometric charges in the European sense. Geometric charges are mostly non-structural shapes that function like common charges, and are often so designated. For example, squares are called paving stones, circles are stars, triangles are fish scales.

- FIGURES OF NOTATION. These are rare in European heraldry (except for initial letters and house marks in Central Europe and inscriptions in Iberia). But Japanese characters, in both regular and stylized form, are important as elements in Japanese heraldry, as are other kinds of written figures.
- FRAMES. As noted, these are of considerable graphic importance. They appear in many varieties and are a major method of difference among similar compositions.

The charges in the examples that follow have been chosen for simplicity, to illustrate the principles of Japanese heraldic grammar as they arise. We begin with what European heraldry calls a *cinquefoil*, namely a blossom of five petals. This is the most representative form of Japanese heraldic plant imagery. They can be of many species − plum, cherry, moonflower, bellflower, persimmon, wild pink − but the most characteristic is called in English *China flower* (*karabana*) (Figure 5E). This is not any particular species but a generic blossom form taken by Japanese artisans from Chinese sources during the T'ang Dynasty (618-907), when pre-heraldic Japan was adopting many aspects of Chinese culture into its own. In their basic form these cinquefoils are distinguishable mainly by the shapes of their petals. As will be seen, however, they are capable of the most extreme variations. An English heraldic rose (by Heather Child) is shown for comparison.

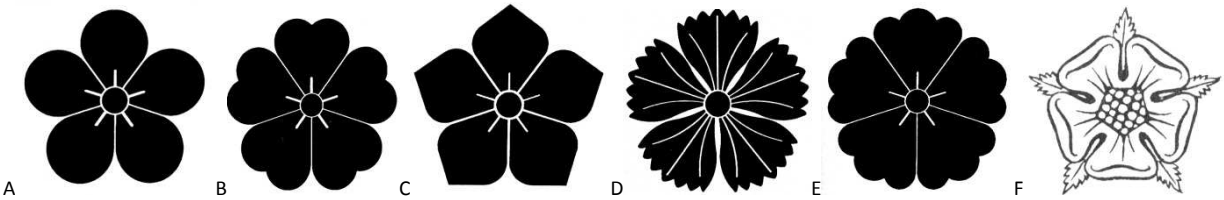


FIGURE 5: FIVE-PETALLED BLOSSOMS. (A) PLUM; (B) CHERRY; (C) BELLFLOWER; (D) WILD PINK; (E) CHINA FLOWER; (F) ENGLISH HERALDIC ROSE.

Other devices feature blossoms with more or fewer petals. Note that while most of the cinquefoil blossoms are seen in TOP VIEW (*muko*), the morning glory (Figure 6A below) is typically seen in SIDE VIEW (*yokomi*). This distinction need not always be mentioned in blazon unless the presentation departs from the customary form for the blossom. The first variety of chrysanthemum (in Figure 6C below) is of the type used for the imperial mon (see Figure 20C, page 148, and Plate 15), but it has only ten petals instead of the regulation sixteen. The third variety is called *thousand-petal* chrysanthemum; while at first it may seem more naturally drawn, in fact it is almost as highly stylized as the ten-petal variety.

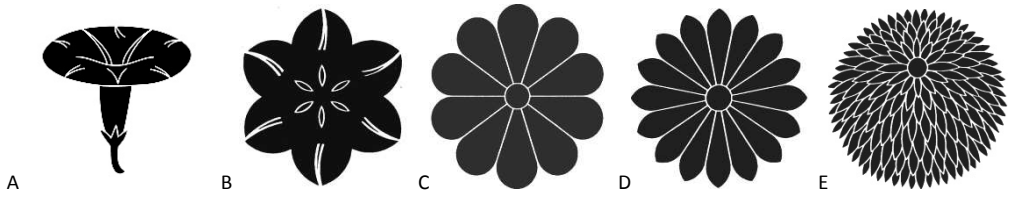


FIGURE 6: BLOSSOMS NOT OF FIVE PETALS. (A) MORNING GLORY; (B) CLEMATIS; (C, D, E) CHRYSANTHEMUM (THREE VARIETIES).

Another important group of plant images is made of leaves: a single one or an assemblage of leaves. Single leaf devices often but not always stand for trees. The cedar, although it looks like a leaf, actually represents the entire tree (note the roots).

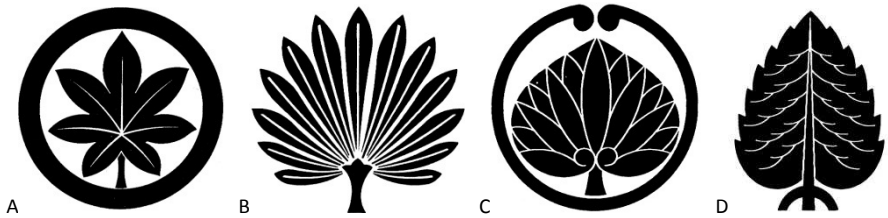


FIGURE 7: SINGLE LEAF FORMS. (A) MAPLE IN A RING; (B) PALM; (C) HOLLYHOCK IN A HANDLE FRAME;[9] (D) CEDAR.

Often the leaves are presented in a highly stylized form.

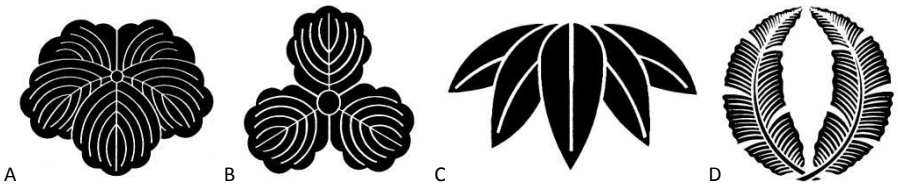


FIGURE 8: COMPLEX AND MULTIPLE LEAF FORMS. (A) IVY; (B) OAK; (C) BAMBOO; (D) PLANTAIN.

Other plants are known by their stalks or their fruit. Rice stalks are typically shown bound, as for an offering.

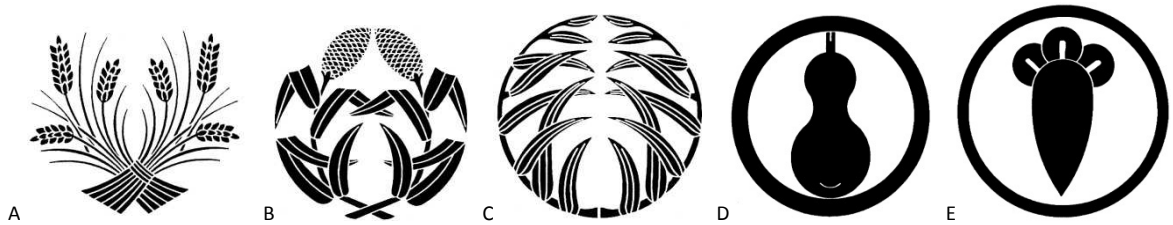


FIGURE 9: STALKS AND FRUIT. (A) RICE; (B) MILLET; (C) REED; (D) GOURD; (E) CLOVE.

A common arrangement is a spray of leaves and some portion of the blossom (sometimes just the stamens or pistils) rising up in back. The paulownia flower is of this type. It is one of the most important and influential mon motifs and an imperial badge (still used by the Japanese Prime Minister's office). The number of blossoms on the paulownia's spikes defines the mon and is mentioned in the blazon (the example below is 3-5; the imperial badge is 5-7). In wisteria the blossoms are shown on a spiky raceme, as in nature but in highly stylized form.

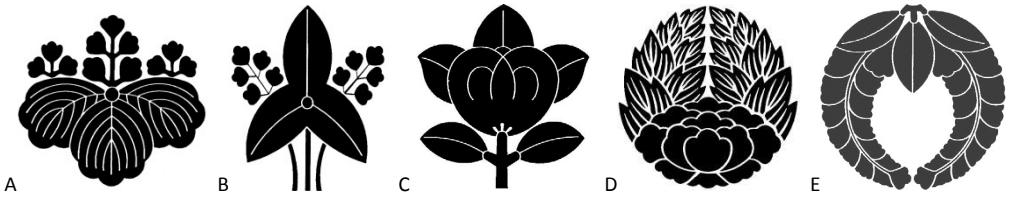


FIGURE 10: LEAVES WITH BLOSSOMS. (A) PAULOWNIA; (B) WATER PLANTAIN;
(C) MANDARIN ORANGE; (D) PEONY; (E) WISTERIA.

[9] Some writers see this framing element as a vine.

It is not uncommon in Japanese heraldry for the same plant to have several different kinds of stylized representation. The pine is a good example: here are examples of mon showing the pine by its boughs, its needles, its cones, its bark, and the tree as a whole.[10]

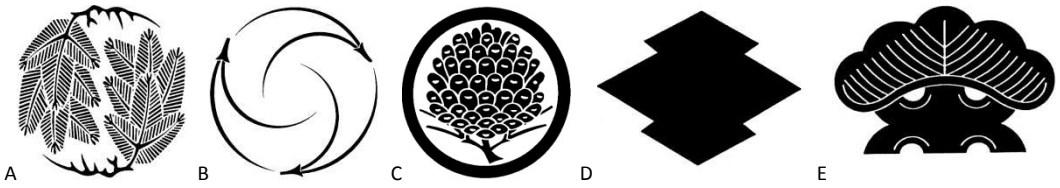


FIGURE 11: FORMS OF PINE. (A) BOUGHS; (B) NEEDLES; (C) CONE; (D) BARK; (E) TREE.

Animals are far less important in Japanese than in European heraldry. Especially notable is the almost complete absence of fierce predators (except dragons, usually represented only by claws or other parts), and prey animals (except for shellfish, very occasional deer and rabbits, and some birds). As examples in this section we will include the crane, the butterfly, and the scallop. Among animal parts, the hawk's feather is the most often seen.

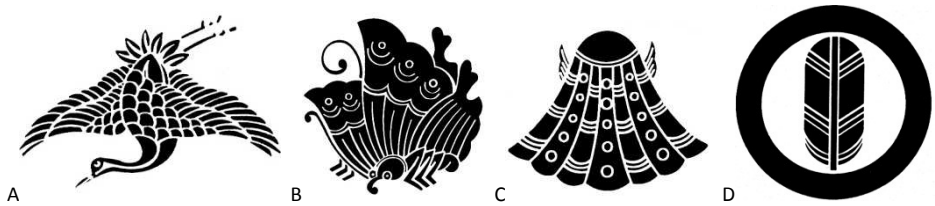


FIGURE 12: ANIMAL FORMS. (A) CRANE; (B) BUTTERFLY; (C) SCALLOP; (D) HAWK'S FEATHER.

Although there are more mon based on plants than on any other category, as noted there are more kinds of artifacts used in Japanese heraldry than types of plants. I have selected a few for illustration.

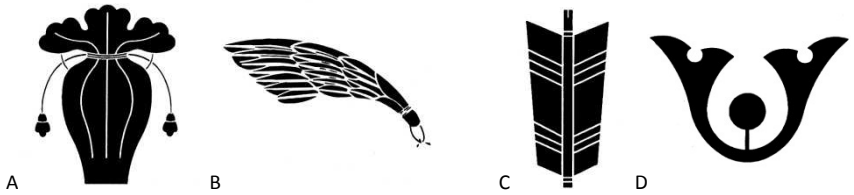


FIGURE 13: ARTIFACTS I. RELIGIOUS OBJECTS: (A) SAKE OFFERING-URN; (B) FEATHER BRUSH.
MARTIAL OBJECTS: (C) ARROW FLETCHING; (D) HELMET CREST.

FIGURE 14: ARTIFACTS II. NAUTICAL OBJECTS: (A) SAIL; (B) ANCHOR.
DOMESTIC OBJECTS: (C) THREE DRAWER-HANDLES; (D) ANGLED WELL-CRIB.

[10] The stylized form in Figure 11D is called *matsukawa*, meaning *pine bark*, but some writers see it as a stylized tree. We need not decide if one interpretation is righter than the other.

Note that the drawer-handle is a triple image: it is not often used singly as a stand-alone motif. It is not really a drawer-handle, but a geometric charge (a *double volute*) used more for frames and borders than as an independent device. See discussion at page 48 below.

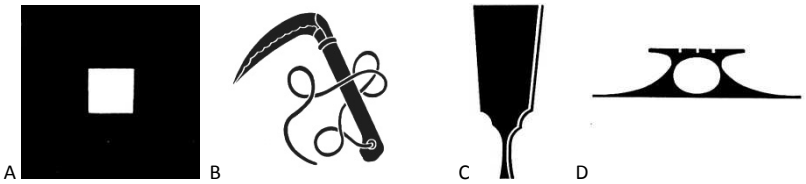


FIGURE 15: ARTIFACTS III. TOOLS: (A) NAIL-PULLER; (B) SICKLE.
RECREATIONAL OBJECTS: (C) BATTLEDORE; (D) *KOMA* (*SAMISEN* BRIDGE).

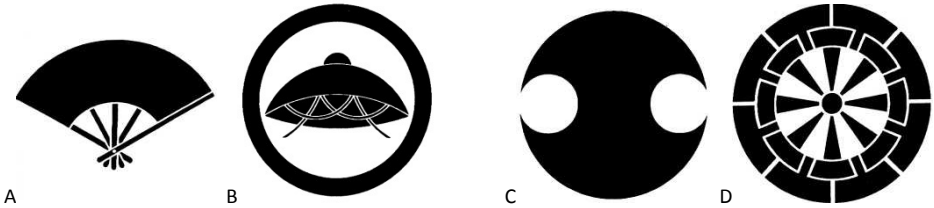


FIGURE 16: ARTIFACTS IV. PERSONAL OBJECTS: (A) FOLDING FAN; (B) SEDGE HAT.
OTHER OBJECTS: (C) BALANCE WEIGHT; (D) CART-WHEEL.

A battledore is a paddle used in a badminton-like game to hit a feathered shuttlecock; both battledore and shuttlecock (and both together) are Japanese heraldic devices. The *samisen* is a three-stringed musical instrument; the bridge of the *koto* is also used in Japanese heraldry. For a diagram showing the use of the nail-puller, see page 93, No. 321. The cart-wheel is so named to distinguish it from the WHEEL as a radial arrangement of charges (see page 37).

As examples of charges from the inanimate natural world, I have selected waves and lightning. Stars, the most important of this class, are treated later as a special case (page 44).

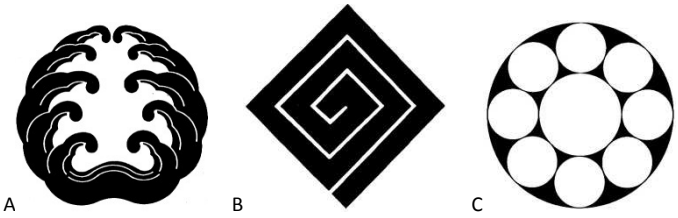


FIGURE 17: CHARGES FROM INANIMATE NATURAL WORLD. (A) WAVES; (B) LIGHTNING; (C) STARS.

Finally, many geometric shapes appear in Japanese heraldry, although they tend to be called by the names of physical objects. Thus, as noted, circles are called iron rings, and squares are called paving stones; triangles are called fish scales and hexagons are called tortoise shells. The nail-puller given as an example of a tool is really such a charge; so are the circular stars. The

horizontal lozenge (page 49) and the conventional figure called *shippo* (page 47) are important foundational elements in a great many mon and are treated separately as special cases.[11]

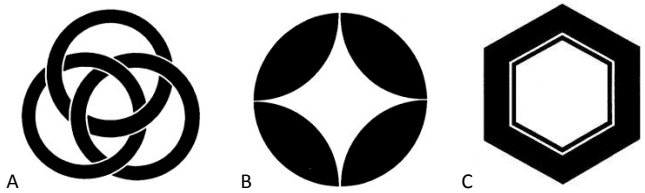


FIGURE 18: GEOMETRIC CHARGES. (A) RINGS; (B): *SHIPPO*; (C) TORTOISE-SHELL.

D. SINGLE CHARGES

A charge appearing alone, in undistorted form, is sometimes blazoned SINGLE (*hitotsu*). But we need not use this as a term of blazon – as in European heraldry, it is assumed. A single charge is also assumed to be upright (that is, with its axis parallel to a vertical line drawn through the center of the composition.[12] Likewise a single charge not facing outward or upward is assumed to be facing left as seen by the observer.[13]

It is unusual in Japanese heraldry for a single charge to be shown at an angle, or otherwise altered in position, but it does occur − we see charges placed diagonally (angled), or placed horizontally, or (not quite single) accompanied by one at half size.

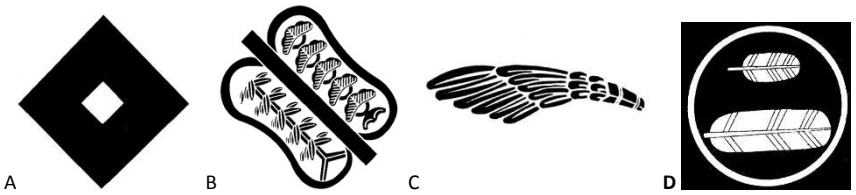


FIGURE 19: VARIANT POSITIONS. (A) ANGLED NAIL-PULLER; (B) DIAGONAL MILITARY FAN; (C) HORIZONTAL FEATHER-BRUSH; (D) SMALL HAWK'S FEATHER ABOVE A LARGER ONE.

Single charges can be shown BENT (*ori*, meaning folded in the middle), or SPLIT, or TWISTED (*nejiri*), or WARPED (*sori*, meaning having a concave outline), or altered in other many other ways. In Figure 20C below, the imperial chrysanthemum of 16 petals is shown DOUBLED (*yae*), with another set of 16 petals barely seen behind them – this technique is also used for other flowers, for example the plum blossom. As a European example, an English heraldic rose (by Heather Child), DOUBLED into a Tudor rose by adding a second set of petals, is shown in Figure 20E − compare Figure 5F.

---

[11] The three rings shown in Figure 18A are called in the West *Borromean rings* – if any one is removed the other two are automatically unlinked.

[12] This is the *palar line*, named for the European ordinary called a *pale*, a centered vertical stripe.

[13] In blazoning Japanese heraldry there is no reason to perpetuate the confusing European custom of assuming the viewpoint of the bearer of the device on a shield, so that *dexter* [right] means apparent left and *sinister* [left] means apparent right.

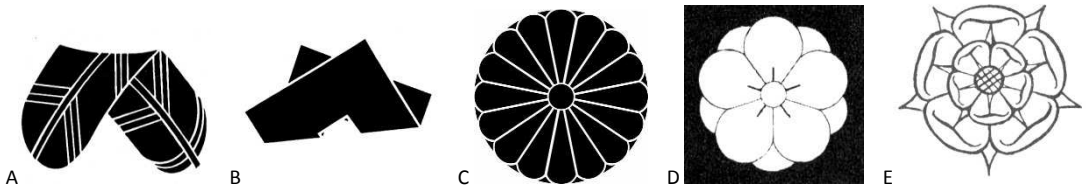


FIGURE 20: MODIFIED CHARGES I. (A) BENT HAWK'S FEATHER; (B) BENT NAIL-PULLER; (C) DOUBLED CHRYSANTHEMUM; (D) DOUBLED PLUM BLOSSOM; (E) ENGLISH TUDOR ROSE (DOUBLED WITH TWO RANKS OF PETALS).

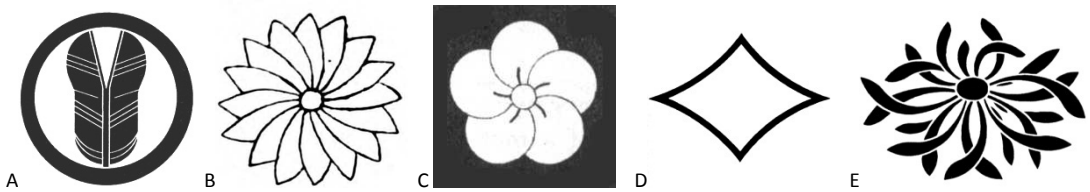


FIGURE 21: MODIFIED CHARGES II. (A) SPLIT HAWK'S FEATHER IN A RING; (B) CHRYSANTHEMUM TWISTED TO THE LEFT; (C) PLUM BLOSSOM TWISTED TO THE LEFT; (D) WARPED LOZENGE; (E) CHRYSANTHEMUM IN DISARRAY.

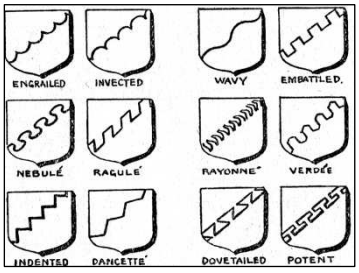


FIGURE 22: EUROPEAN HERALDIC PARTITION LINES

Charges can also be altered by variations of line. European heraldry has a wide assortment of figured lines – *wavy*, *indented*, *embattled*, *raguly*, *undy*, *dovetailed* and many others (see chart at left, by L. R. Brightwell). But these are generally used to modify partitions and ordinaries, not common charges. Because the Japanese do not use partitions or ordinaries, when they vary lines (except on borders) they have to do it on the charges themselves, which makes them seem disturbingly miscellaneous to Western eyes.

Among the line variations are DEMON-LINE (*oni*), which substitutes an indented line for a plain one, SHADOW (*kage*), where the outline is doubled, and BROADLY-SPLIT (*owari*), where *all* the lines are doubled and the sectors separated as in a stencil. These variations are illustrated below by Albert Koop (Figure 23).

Mon drawn with *kage* outlines are usually shown with dark and light reversed, so that within the double outline the body of the charge is the same shade as the field (see figure 24A below) – I will call such variations NEGATIVE. Other varieties include LOOPED (meaning formed by a continuous line), and mon presented in an extreme or historical manner (for example, what is called the KORIN STYLE), and BONELESS (*mokkotsu*, with no outline), also derivative of that style.[14]

[14] The Korin style is named for the artist Ogata Korin (1658-1716), known for the radical simplicity of his style, in which images were schematized and reduced to their essential outlines. Sometimes he rendered forms even without an outline, a technique called *mokkotsu*, meaning *boneless*. This style, characteristic of many early European heraldic manuscripts (for example the 13th century Matthew Paris shields and 14th century *Wappenbuch von der Ersten*), has been revived by recent masters such as Don Pottinger and Jiří Louda.

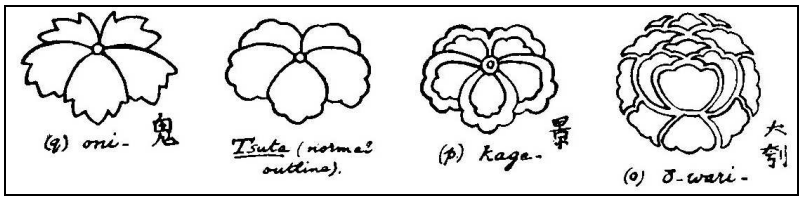


FIGURE 23: VARIETIES OF IVY I. (A) DEMON LINE; (B) NORMAL LINE; (C) SHADOW LINE; (D) BROADLY-SPLIT LINE.[15]

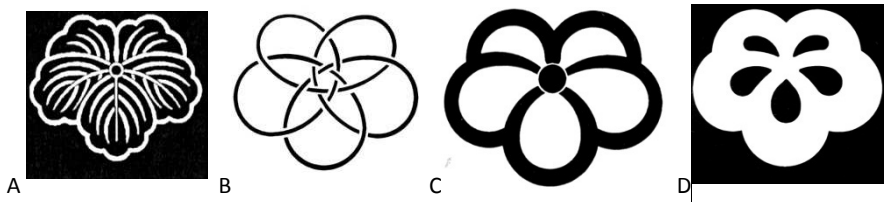


FIGURE 24: VARIETIES OF IVY II. (A) NEGATIVE; (B) LOOPED; (C) IN KORIN STYLE; (D) BONELESS.

As noted, in a NEGATIVE mon a DOUBLED (*kage*) line) sets off an outline in a shade (light or dark) contrasting both with the background and with the main body of the device. But apart from that special effect, Japanese heraldry recognizes no essential difference between a light pattern on a dark background and the reverse. It just depends on the material chosen to bear the mon. Neither version is reversed – they are equivalent. This differs from European practice, where a white cross on black is quite different from a black cross on white. Even in Europe, though, color and field were sometimes reversed, as for example in armorial book stampings in foil on leather.

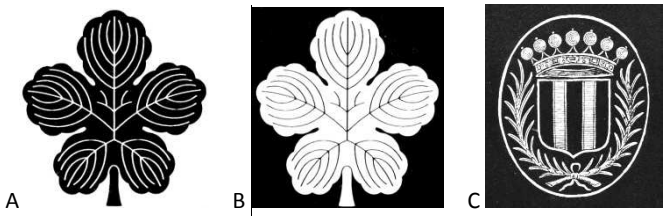


FIGURE 25: REVERSAL OF SHADES. (A) MULBERRY DARK ON LIGHT; (B) MULBERRY LIGHT ON DARK; (C) EUROPEAN COAT OF ARMS, DARK ON LIGHT, STAMPED ON A LEATHER BOOK COVER.[16]

In one distortion, called FORMING A CIRCLE (*no maru*), a charge is "curved out of its normal shape to form a circular device."[17] It is so arranged as to spread out along the border of the invisible circle and meet (or nearly meet) at the point of beginning, which is not always at the top. Many mon which seem indescribable in European terms become suddenly understandable if this operation, unknown in European heraldry, is understood. Among the examples in Figure 26 below, the crane is much more usually found *no maru* than in undistorted form (a crane forming a circle is the well-known trademark of Japan Airlines). Note the distinctions in my English blazon among ON A DISK (defining the decorated surface), IN A RING (referring to the frame) and FORMING A CIRCLE (referring to the distortion of the core image).

---

[15] The last motif in Figure 23 in a peony, not ivy.

[16] The arms, two black *pallets* [vertical stripes] on white, appear as two white pallets on black.

[17] Albert J. Koop, "The Construction and Blazonry of Mon," 288.

FIGURE 26: CHARGES FORMING A CIRCLE. (A) SAIL; (B) RICE; (C) CRANE; (D) HAWK'S FEATHER; (E) WAVE.[18]

Another way Japanese heraldry imposes a difference on a charge is to change the observer's view. For example, blossoms usually seen in TOP VIEW (*muko*) can also be seen in SIDE VIEW (*yokumi*), or TILTED, or even REAR VIEW (*ura*).

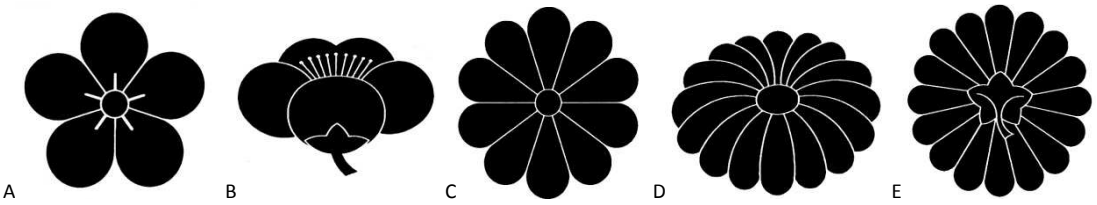


FIGURE 27: VARIATIONS IN OBSERVER'S VIEW. (A, B) PLUM BLOSSOM IN TOP VIEW AND SIDE VIEW; (C, D, E) CHRYSANTHEMUM IN TOP VIEW, TILTED, AND REAR VIEW.

PEEPING (*nozoki*) is another favored distortion. This view places the charge below the horizon of vision; only a portion is visible, usually issuing from the bottom of a frame. Squeezing the motif into a lozenge (*hishi*), a very widely used technique, is a special case − see discussion at page 49.

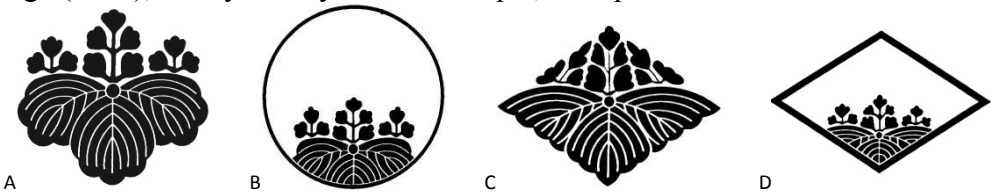


FIGURE 28: PEEPING. (A) PAULOWNIA; (B) PEEPING PAULOWNIA ON A DISK; (C) PAULOWNIA IN A LOZENGE; (D) PEEPING PAULOWNIA IN A LOZENGE.

Uniquely in the Japanese heraldic system, a charge can be made of another substance. This produces startling effects.

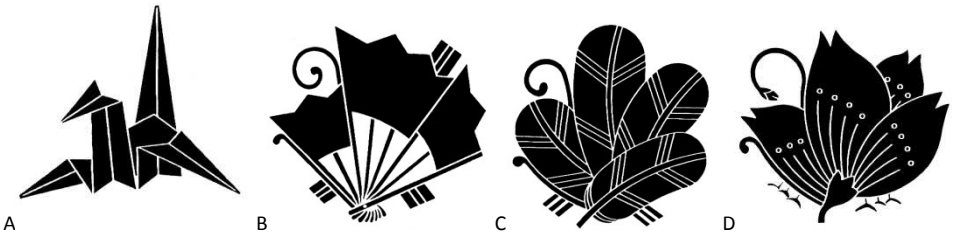


FIGURE 29: CHARGES MADE OF CONTRASTING SUBSTANCES. (A) CRANE MADE OF FOLDED PAPER (*ORIGAMI*); (B, C, D) BUTTERFLIES MADE OF FOLDING FANS, HAWK'S FEATHERS, AND A CHERRY BLOSSOM.

[18] Compare Figure 26E with the woodcut by Mori Yuzan, on page 5.

E. IDENTICAL CHARGES

1. Two Identical Charges

In Japanese heraldry two (or more) identical charges, not distorted or in a dynamic relationship with each other, are blazoned SIDE BY SIDE [*narabi*]. This assumes they are upright and facing either up, or out, or left. Two isolated but identical charges can also be arrayed horizontally, either pointing the same way, or HEAD TO TAIL (Figure 30C).

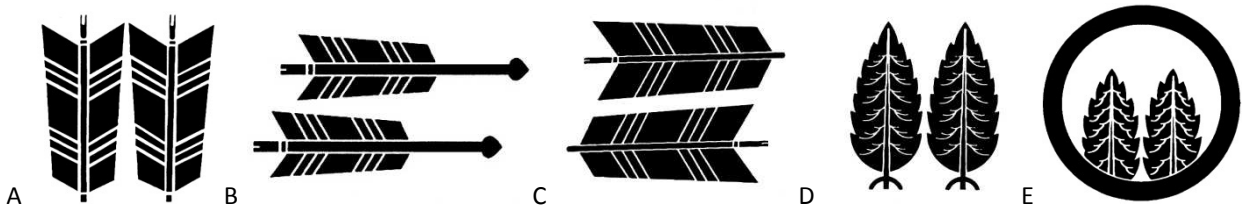


FIGURE 30: TWO IDENTICAL CHARGES SIDE BY SIDE. (A) TWO ARROW FLETCHINGS; (B) TWO HORIZONTAL ARROWS; (C) TWO HORIZONTAL ARROW FLETCHINGS, HEAD TO TAIL; (D) TWO CEDARS; (E) TWO PEEPING CEDARS IN A RING.

A simple way for two identical charges to interact dynamically is for them to cross diagonally. In the West this disposition (*chigai* in Japanese) would be called *in saltire*; in our evolving English blazon for Japanese heraldry we will just call them CROSSED. In European heraldry the charge proceeding from the lower left [dexter base] to the upper right [sinister chief] usually OVERLIES the other, but if shown the other way it does not change the arms.[19] In Japanese heraldry the same rule applies – the charge proceeding from the lower right and *leading toward the left* (that is, LEFT-LEADING) overlies the other – but if done the other way (RIGHT-LEADING) it becomes a different mon, and therefore this needs to be mentioned.[20] They can also physically INTERSECT (*kumiai)*. As will be seen below, this relation can apply to more than two objects – they are then blazoned OVERLAID, and the vertical one is assumed to be on top, LYING OVER the others. In our examples the feathers all point up, but in Figure 32F, a variant form called ONE REVERSED (*irechigai*, meaning *reversed crossing*), one of the two elements is reversed in relation to the other.

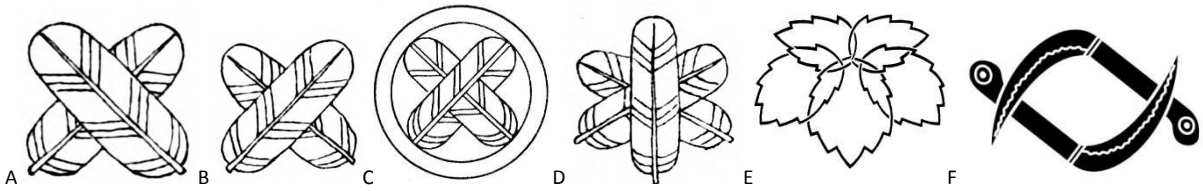


FIGURE 31: CROSSED, INTERSECTING, OVERLAID. (A) TWO CROSSED HAWK'S FEATHERS; (B) TWO CROSSED HAWK'S FEATHERS, RIGHT-LEADING ABOVE; (C) TWO INTERSECTING HAWK'S FEATHERS IN A RING;(D) THREE HAWK'S FEATHERS OVERLAID; (E) FIVE LEAF FORMS OVERLAID TO FORM ONE IVY LEAF; (F) TWO CROSSED SICKLES, ONE REVERSED.

---

[19] Except in some instances, such as German crests, where this can serve as a difference. In England this distinction (placing left-leading elements [*in bend dexter*] over right-leading [*in bend sinister*] is antiquated as a *rule*. It is still proper *practice*, but a contrary arrangement does not violate the blazon.

[20] The Japanese word for RIGHT-LEADING is *hidari-chigai*, meaning *right-crossing* – my choice of LEFT-LEADING seems less ambiguous. LEFT-LEADING would be *migi-chigai*.

Objects may be LINKED (*tsunagi*), DOUBLED one inside the other (*komoti*), or HEAPED (*kasane*, meaning overlapping). Grouped charges that do not overlap are called STACKED (*mori*) – these usually occur in groups of three or more, but an example is given below to contrast with HEAPED.

FIGURE 32: LINKED, HEAPED AND STACKED. (A) TWO LINKED ANGLED NAIL-PULLERS; (B) DOUBLED LOZENGE, THIN INSIDE THICK; (C) TWO SEDGE HATS, HEAPED BOTTOM OVER TOP; (D) TWO FOLDING FANS, HEAPED RIGHT OVER LEFT; (E) THREE STACKED FOLDING FANS.

Two motifs facing each other in profile (*mukai*) may be called CONFRONTED in English. Typically these figures exhibit *reflective symmetry*, as in a mirror, meaning that if one were folded back over the other, as a page turns, they would overlap exactly (demonstrating congruence). Usually the two figures face each other across a vertical division (corresponding to the European palar line), but they can also face across a horizontal diameter, or (very rarely) even diagonally. The phrase *confronted vertically* is inherently ambiguous – is the confrontation vertical or are the charges? Accordingly I blazon these as CONFRONTED ABOVE AND BELOW. Some devices, for example ginger (*myoga*) in Figure 33E below, use confronted elements as their basic form. Figure 33F shows the variant ONE REVERSED – it can be difficult to distinguish this form from CHASING (Figure 35).

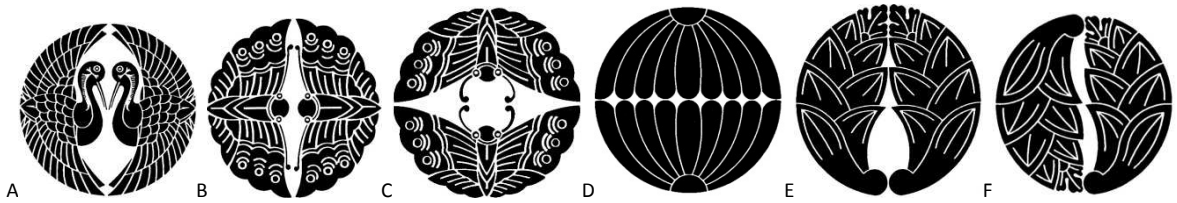


FIGURE 33: CONFRONTED. (A) CONFRONTED CRANES; (B) CONFRONTED BUTTERFLIES; (C) BUTTERFLIES CONFRONTED ABOVE AND BELOW; (D) DIVIDED CHRYSANTHEMUMS CONFRONTED ABOVE AND BELOW; (E) GINGER; (F) GINGER, ONE REVERSED.

In Japanese heraldry, the relation called CONFRONTED can be further refined. If the objects are curved, and incline toward each other, they can be called LEANING or EMBRACING (*daki*). As with CROSSING, this relation can unite three objects, or even more, rather than only two. But it seems best described as INCLINING TOWARD (or AWAY FROM) EACH OTHER, and I reserve the term EMBRACING for figures that transgress into each other's space, while retaining reflective symmetry. The figures in the last three examples in Figure 34 below are EMBRACING – each extends into the other's sector (the cranes only with their beaks) – but they still show reflective symmetry.

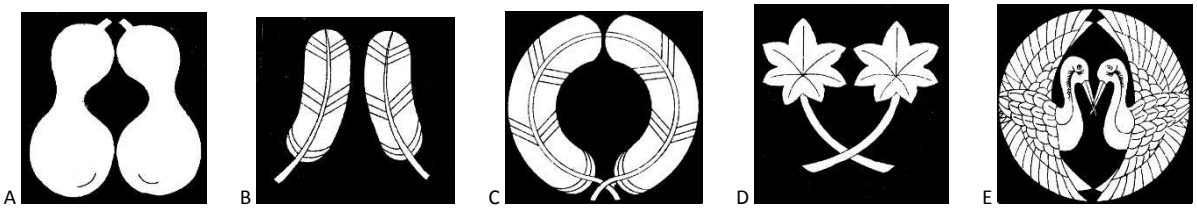


FIGURE 34: INCLINING AND EMBRACING. (A, B) TWO GOURDS AND TWO HAWK'S FEATHERS INCLINING IN; (C, D) TWO HAWK'S FEATHERS AND TWO MAPLE LEAVES INCLINING OUT AND EMBRACING; (E) TWO CRANES EMBRACING.

Another way Japanese heraldry displays pairs is by *rotational symmetry*, where the two figures do not map (that is, demonstrate congruence) by folding as on a hinge, the way pages of a book do, but by rotating around a common point in the center of the design. This is called CHASING (*oi*) in Japanese heraldry. While it is more often seen with three figures, it also occurs with two, and with more than three. It is a natural development of FORMING A CIRCLE.

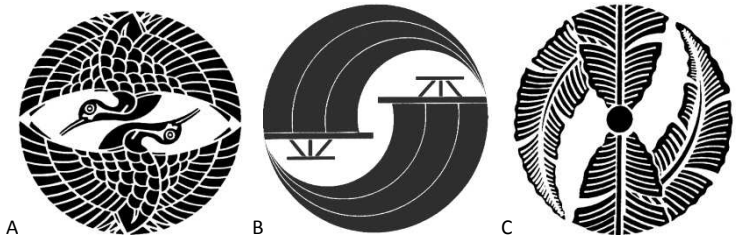


FIGURE 35: CHASING. (A) TWO CHASING CRANES; (B) TWO CHASING SAILS; (C) TWO BENT PLANTAIN LEAVES CHASING.

The following panel of examples of the feather-brush device is illuminating.

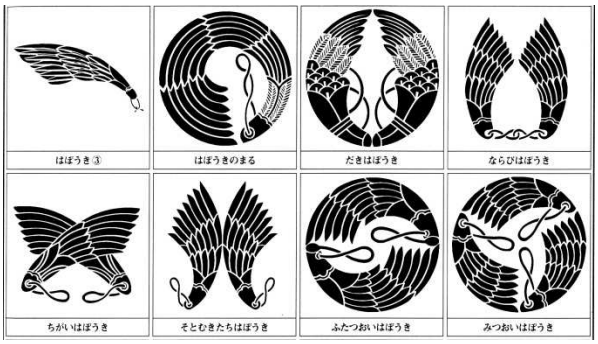


FIGURE 36: VARIATIONS ON FEATHER-BRUSH DEVICE.[21]

2. Three Identical Charges

Three identical charges can be shown SIDE BY SIDE (*narabi*), identically aligned or shown HEAD TO TAIL. They can be HEAPED (*kasane*) or STACKED (*mori*) one above the other (in European heraldry we would say *in pale*) in a straight, BOWED or diagonal line. (A BOWED line bends in the middle and then returns; a DIAGONAL line slants but does not return.) Or they can be STACKED

[21] From Graphic-sha Co., *Encyclopedia of Japanese Family Crests*, 301.

one over two. Heaped charges overlap; stacked charges don't. Diagonal stacks tend to be LEFT-LEADING, that is, proceeding from bottom right to top left.

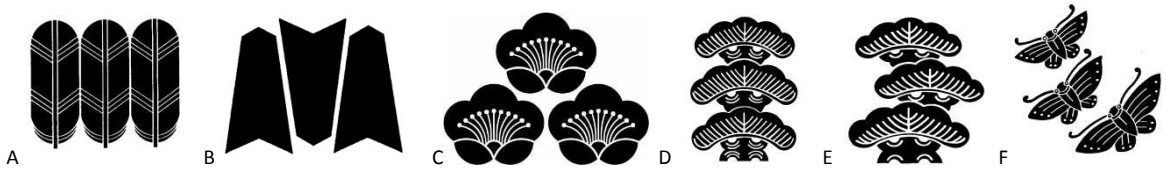


FIGURE 37: THREE IDENTICAL CHARGES. (A) THREE FEATHERS SIDE BY SIDE; (B) THREE ARROW-NOCKS SIDE BY SIDE, HEAD TO TAIL; (C) THREE STACKED SIDE-VIEW PLUM BLOSSOMS; (D) THREE PINE TREES HEAPED VERTICALLY; (E) THREE PINE TREES HEAPED VERTICALLY, BOWED RIGHT; (F) THREE BUTTERFLIES STACKED DIAGONALLY.

HEAPED charges can retain their individual outlines, or not – if the outlines are lost the charges are MERGED.

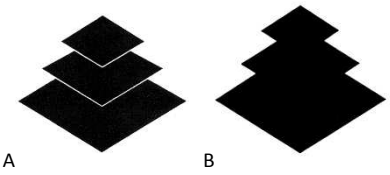


FIGURE 38: THREE CHARGES OVERLAPPING AND MERGING. (A) THREE HEAPED LOZENGES; (B) THREE LOZENGES HEAPED AND MERGED.

The default arrangement of charges in European heraldry is heavily dependent on the shape of the shield. In Britain and France, for example, the heater-shaped shield, narrowing below, lends itself to a 2,1 arrangement, while in Spain the rounded base of the shield allows for 2,1,2 or 2,2,2. The radical narrowing of Italian shields suggests 3,2,1 as a typical arrangement there. The default arrangement for three separate identical charges in Japanese heraldry is 1,2. Given the basically circular shape of the mon field, 1,2 is the most visually stable composition.

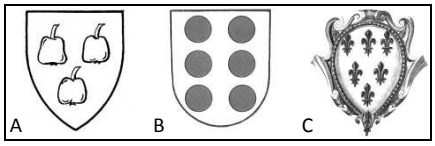


FIGURE 39: EUROPEAN HERALDIC SHIELDS AFFECTING PLACEMENT OF CHARGES. (A) ENGLISH; (B) SPANISH; (C) ITALIAN.

Three charges, like two, can OVERLIE, or INCLINE, or be LINKED, or be varied in other ways. In the STANDING hollyhock example (Figure 40F), it matters whether the stalk is split, and if so on which side.

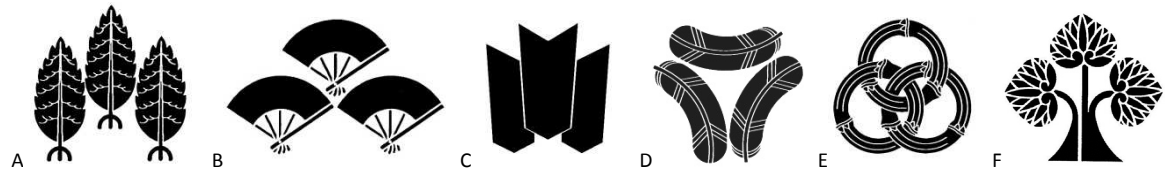


FIGURE 40: ARRANGEMENT OF THREE IDENTICAL CHARGES. (A) THREE CEDARS SIDE BY SIDE, 1,2; (B) THREE STACKED FOLDING FANS; (C) THREE HEAPED ARROW-NOCKS, 1 OVERLYING 2; (D) THREE FEATHERS INCLINING IN; (E) THREE LINKED BAMBOO RINGS; (F) THREE HOLLYHOCK LEAVES STANDING ON A LEFT-SPLIT STALK.

In many of the mon where three identical charges are displayed 2,1, each of the charges is upright. As a result the compositions have reflective symmetry (divided down the middle, each half matching the other), but have no symmetry along any other axis. The examples in Figure 42

below show reflective symmetry but also *radial symmetry*, meaning that if the mon were divided into sectors by lines proceeding from the center, all the sectors (like those of an ideal orange) would be identical.

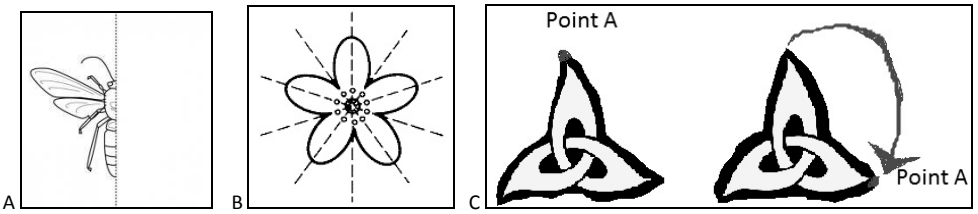


FIGURE 41: SYMMETRY. (A) REFLECTIVE SYMMETRY; (B) RADIAL SYMMETRY; (C) ROTATIONAL SYMMETRY.

Sector lines may isolate individual portions of the charge, but can also divide them (as in Figure 41B above). Of course multiple charges can also display radial symmetry. The charges may either FACE IN (as do the highly stylized folding fan-papers in Figure 42D) or FACE OUT (as in Figure 42E). Sometimes radial symmetry may not be easily apparent (as in Figure 42F) because the sectors are not coextensive with the charges. In each of these examples the sector lines may lie between the charges or bisect them. For example, in Figure 42B the sectors can be divided either along the stalk that bears the blossoms, or down the center of the leaf.

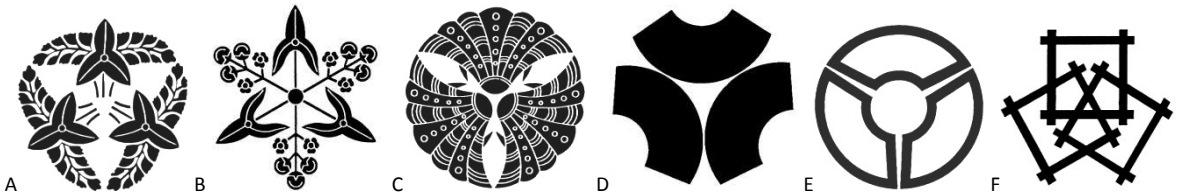


FIGURE 42: TRIPLED CHARGES WITH RADIAL SYMMETRY. (A, B) THREE SPRAYS OF WATER PLANTAIN (TWO VERSIONS); (C) THREE SCALLOPS; (D, E) THREE FAN-PAPERS (TWO VERSIONS); (F) THREE WELL-CRIBS 1,2, ANGLED AND OVERLAPPING.

Also very popular are devices where three elements proceed from a common hub. These usually show radial or rotational symmetry, and sometimes both, and often reflective symmetry as well. In Figure 43 below, the first three examples show all three kinds of symmetry, but the last one only rotational symmetry.

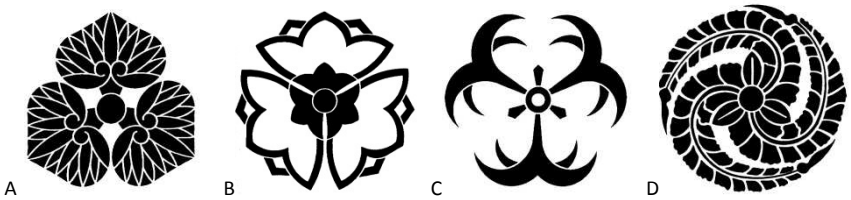


FIGURE 43: TRIPLE CHARGES PROCEEDING FROM A COMMON HUB.
(A) HOLLYHOCK LEAVES; (B) BELLFLOWERS IN SIDE VIEW; (C) ANCHORS; (D) WISTERIA.

A figure formed of three identical elements may lack radial symmetry (usually because a part of each element overlaps the line into the neighboring section), but still exhibit *rotational* symmetry. As noted such charges are called CHASING (*oi*), because they appear to chase each other from sector to sector. Right, a European example: the well-known Trinitarian symbol of three fish. We have seen this in the treatment of two elements, but three is more characteristic of Japanese heraldry. This effect is easier to see with animate charges like the cranes shown below (Figure

FIGURE 44: A EUROPEAN DESIGN OF THREE FISH CHASING

45A). Note that the first bamboo example shows only leaves, but the second includes elements of stalk *not drawn to scale*. This is highly typical of Japanese plant devices.

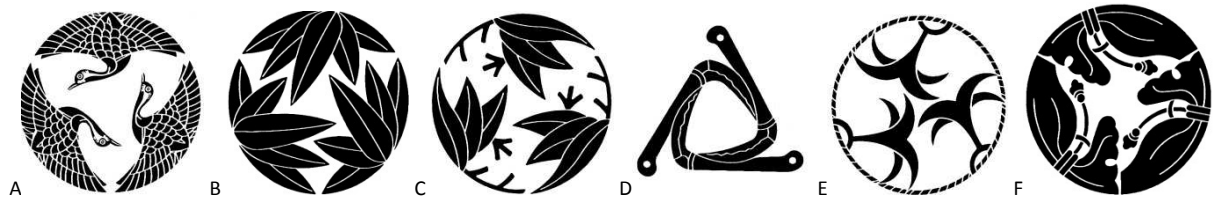


FIGURE 45: THREE CHARGES CHASING. (A) CRANES CHASING LEFT;
(B, C) BAMBOO (TWO EXAMPLES); (D) SICKLES; (E) ANCHORS; (F) SAKE URNS.

The Japanese word *yose*, meaning ASSEMBLED, refers to the arrangement of three (or more) iterations of a single charge into a complex pattern. It is contrasted with *wari*, meaning DIVIDED. I find that ASSEMBLED is not needed in English blazon of Japanese heraldry, as TRIPLED is sufficient to communicate a design formed of three assembled elements, and other numbers can be specifically stated. But DIVIDED is a very useful and necessary term. The sake urns in Figure 45F illustrate the *wari* construction. Charges are usually shown complete in direct view, but here only part of each flask is seen, in profile bounded by the edge of the field. So they are DIVIDED and then repeated in three sectors (or however many the plan of the mon calls for). *Wari* construction is used for all kinds of charges. It may be thought of as a multiplied variant of PEEPING, as a portion of each iteration is hidden outside the frame. In the examples below, the first three have radial symmetry but the last two have only rotational symmetry.

FIGURE 46: TRIPLED CHARGES, DIVIDED. (A) OAK LEAVES; (B) CHRYSANTHEMUMS;
(C) NAIL-PULLERS IN A RING; (E) TEA PLANTS; (F) ANCHORS.

Usually objects displayed with *wari* division are ranged along the side of the invisible circle, as above, leaving negative space in the center. But sometimes the divided objects fill the entire space of the mon, giving a pleasingly complex but sometimes confusing aspect. I call these designs by the European heraldic term ENTIRE, meaning they fill the entire design space.

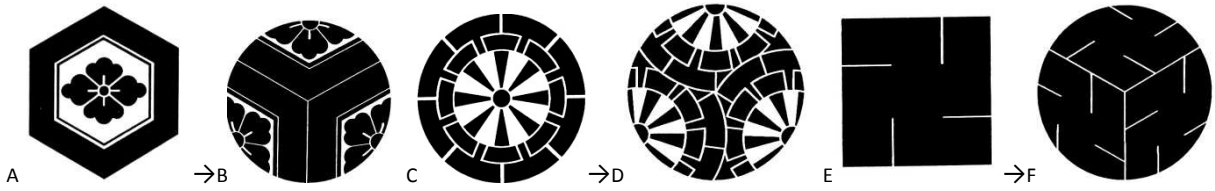


FIGURE 47: ENTIRE. (A) HEXAGON WITH *HANABISHI*; (B) THREE HEXAGONS WITH *HANABISHI*, DIVIDED AND ENTIRE;
(C) CART-WHEEL; (D) THREE DIVIDED INTERSECTING CART-WHEELS, ENTIRE; (E) SWASTIKA;
(F) THREE DIVIDED SWASTIKAS, ENTIRE.

These examples do not exhaust Japanese ingenuity in displaying three identical charges. One favored arrangement arrays the three charges over a common center, but with one (usually the upright charge) LAID OVER the others. This deprives them of rotational (although not necessarily reflective) symmetry – but it could be said that rotational symmetry is *latent*, because if the top charge were rotated, it would overlie the next one exactly. The two examples below are of this type.

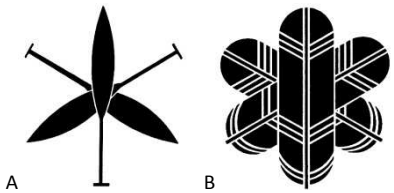


FIGURE 48: TRIPLED CHARGES, OVERLAID. (A) OARS; (B) HAWK'S FEATHERS.

Sometimes OVERLAID charges have no internal borders, so they present a united silhouette with none visibly on top. I call this effect MERGED, a term we have seen before with HEAPED charges (Figure 38). The example in Figure 49A below is of this class: it is the logo of the Yamaha Corporation. Yamaha makes musical instruments and motorcycles, and the three forks can represent either tuning forks or motorcycle forks, and suggest the initial Y.[22] Figure 49B has all three classes of symmetry, but the composition is dominated visually by the central triangle of negative space. The last example below looks tripled but is actually a single charge based on the leaves (not the flower) of the wood-sorrel (*katabami*).

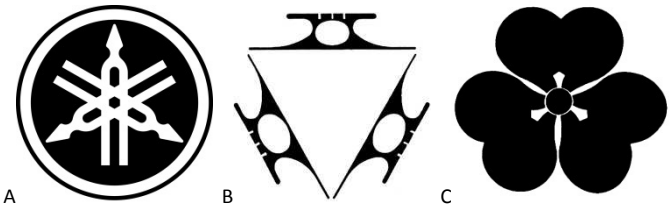


FIGURE 49: VARIATIONS IN SYMMETRY FOR TRIPLED CHARGES. (A) THREE TUNING-FORKS OVERLAID AND MERGED; (B) THREE *KOMA* FORMING A TRIANGLE; (C) WOOD-SORREL.

The first example below is three LINKED rings; the second shows three INTERSECTING *shippo* (*shippo,* a mathematical figure, is discussed as a special case at page 47 below). The last example below is the *tomoe* or Japanese swirl, also discussed separately below (page 45).

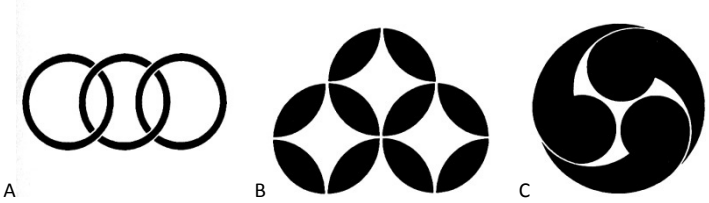


FIGURE 50: FURTHER VARIATIONS ON TRIPLED CHARGES. (A) THREE LINKED RINGS; (B) THREE INTERSECTING *SHIPPO*; (C) THREE LEFT-LEADING *TOMOE*.

[22] A motorcycle fork is the critical part of a motorcycle where the steering assembly fits over the front axle. As in European heraldry, the modernity of the charge is a ground for caution but not a bar to use. *Three mobile phones* would be a correct if daring modern mon.

3. Four or More Identical Charges

Few additional concepts are needed to understand identical charges above three. A sample follows, but there are many other possibilities. The objects in Figure 52D are not nail-pullers but "eyes" or mesh (*meyui*), a tool used for tie-dying fabric. The openings in these tools are smaller than in nail-pullers, but they are hard to distinguish from nail-pullers when drawn small.

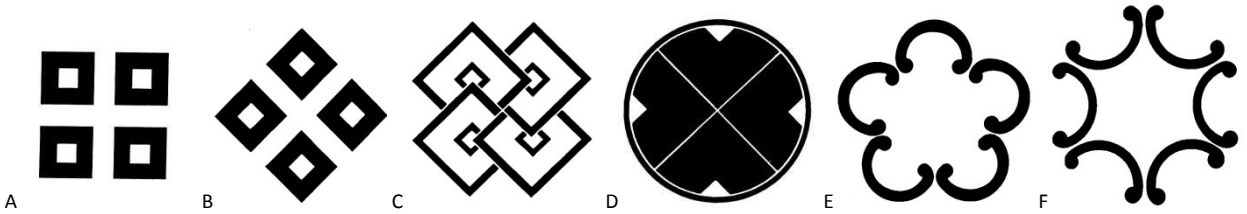


FIGURE 51: MULTIPLE CHARGES I. (A, B, C, D) FOUR NAIL-PULLERS (FOUR EXAMPLES); (E, F) FIVE AND SIX DRAWER-HANDLES.

FIGURE 52: MULTIPLE CHARGES II. (A) SIX COINS, 3,3; (B) SEVEN FISH-SCALES, 2,3 2; (C) SEVEN STARS, SIX DIVIDED; (D) NINE ANGLED EYES, DARK AND LIGHT; (E) NINE INTERSECTING *SHIPPO*.

Some mon show multiple charges in ways that form or suggest regular polygons. This arrangement is a frequent variation on familiar charges. Included among the following examples are two with only three identical elements, but arranged to form a hexagon that suggests a cube.

FIGURE 53: MULTIPLE CHARGES FORMING REGULAR POLYGONS. (A) FOUR ARROW-FLETCHINGS FORMING A RHOMBUS; (B) FIVE BATTLEDORES FORMING A PENTAGON; (C) SIX BATTLEDORES FORMING A HEXAGON AROUND A SHUTTLECOCK; (D) THREE CHASING BUTTERFLIES FORMING A CUBE; (E) THREE SIDE-VIEW CHRYSANTHEMUMS WITH LEAVES, FORMING A CUBE.

Charges can be shown exhibiting radial symmetry in more than three sectors.

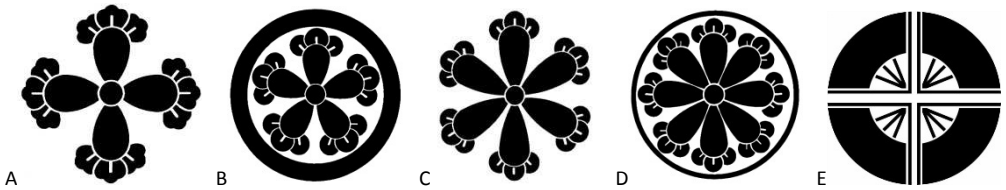


FIGURE 54: CHARGES SHOWING RADIAL SYMMETRY IN FOUR OR MORE SECTORS I. (A, B, C, D) FOUR, FIVE, SIX AND EIGHT RADIAL CLOVES; (E) FOUR FOLDING FANS.

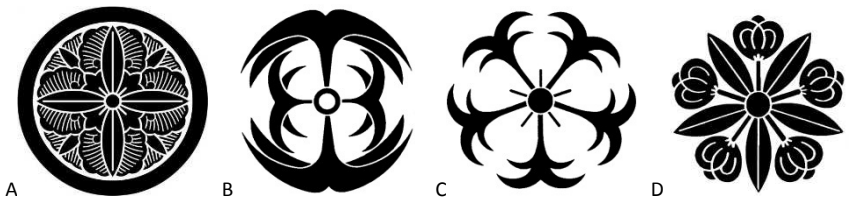


FIGURE 55: CHARGES SHOWING RADIAL SYMMETRY IN FOUR OR MORE SECTORS II.
(A) FOUR RADIAL SPATTERDOCK LEAVES IN A RING, DOUBLED AND ENTIRE;[23]
(B, C) FOUR AND FIVE RADIAL ANCHORS; (D) FIVE RADIAL TEA-PLANTS.

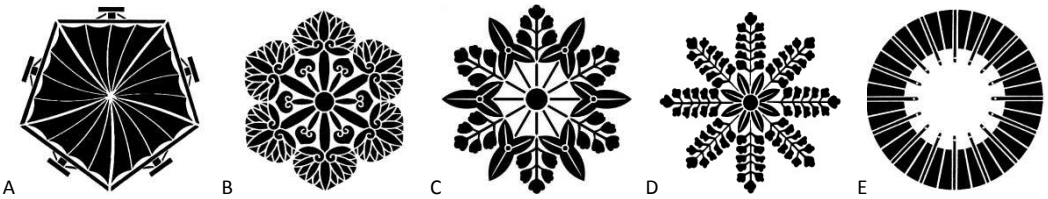


FIGURE 56: CHARGES SHOWING RADIAL SYMMETRY IN FOUR OR MORE SECTORS III.
(A) FIVE RADIAL SAILS; (B) SIX RADIAL HOLLYHOCKS; (C) SIX RADIAL WATER PLANTAINS;
(D) EIGHTFOLD RADIAL WISTERIA; (E) SIXTEEN CLOSED FANS, ARRANGED RADIALLY.

Mon may display rotational symmetry in similarly multiple sectors. Note that the four sickles in the first example below form a swastika.

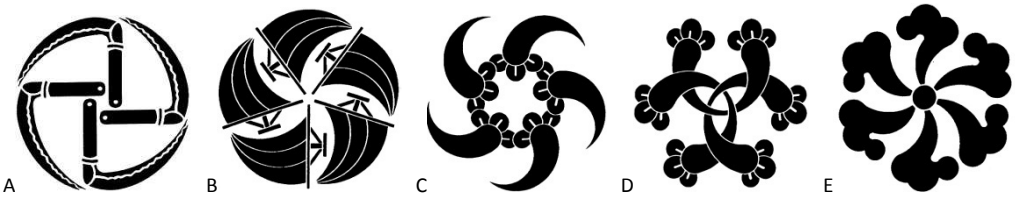


FIGURE 57: MULTIPLE CHASING CHARGES. (A) FOUR LEFT-CHASING SICKLES; (B) FIVE CHASING SAILS;
(C) FIVE CHASING CLOVES; (D) SIX INTERSECTING CLOVES; (E) SIX CHASING PASSION FLOWERS.

A special case of radial symmetry is the WHEEL (*guruma*), in which charges – typically six or eight, but sometimes as few as three or as many as 16 − are arranged RADIALLY. We have seen some of these already (for instance in Figure 57E above), but have not named them so. The symmetry of a *guruma* can be radial or rotational. It matters whether a *guruma* has a central hub – if not, its component figures are said to have TAILS UNITED (*shiri-awase*). Figures in a wheel ordinarily face out or in a direction to suggest LEFTWARD (that is, counter-clockwise) rotation.

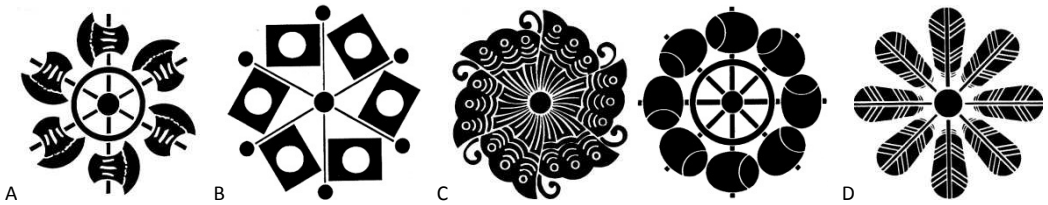


FIGURE 58: WHEELS I. (A) SIX AXES; (B) SIX FLAGS; (C) SIX BUTTERFLIES; (D) EIGHT MALLETS; (D) EIGHT HAWK'S FEATHERS.

[23] Spatterdock leaves look much like hollyhock leaves except they have a stronger central rib. Compare Nos. 152 and 153 on page 72.

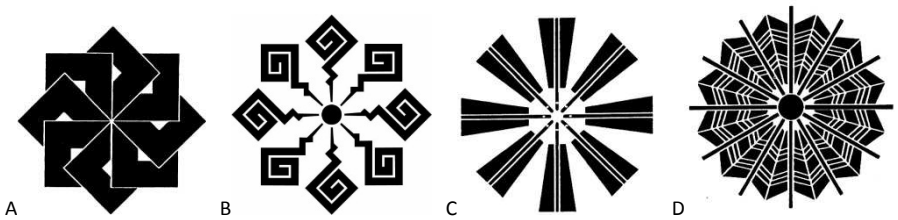


FIGURE 59: WHEELS II. (A) WHEEL OF EIGHT OVERLAPPING NAIL-PULLERS, TAILS UNITED; (B) WHEEL OF LIGHTNING; (C) WHEEL OF EIGHT CLOSED FANS, TAILS UNITED; (D) WHEEL OF TWELVE ARROW-FLETCHINGS.

Rings may be linked in many patterns.

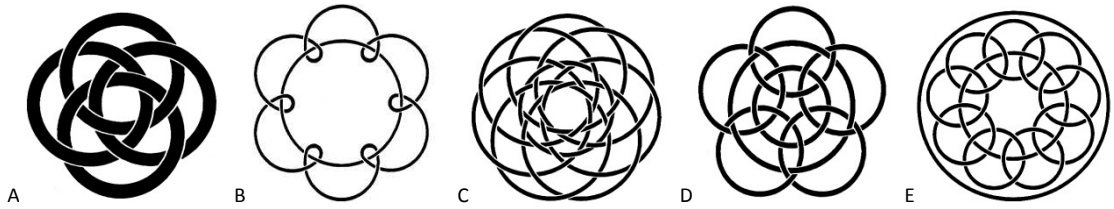


FIGURE 60: LINKED RINGS. (A) FOUR LINKED RINGS; (B) RING WITH SIX OUTER LOOPING RINGS; (C) SEVEN INTERSECTING RINGS AROUND ONE CENTRAL RING; (D) RINGS IN THREE REGISTERS, 1, 1, 5; (E) RINGS IN THREE REGISTERS, 1, 9, 1.

F. COMBINED CHARGES

1. Vines and Swords

The discussions above have concentrated on *identical* charges. But often the charges in a complex Japanese mon are not all identical. For example, plant charges can be varied by adding vines (*tsuru*) or swords (*ken*). These are decorative, but also functional in that they provide a difference. They have little intrinsic connection to the larger charge – plants given vines may (except for ivy) have no vines of their own in nature, and the swords do not look anything like the swords of the samurai period, when mon came into use, or of any period since.[24] While these differences are usually applied to plant charges, this is not a limitation: in Figure 62E below, swords are added to a mon made of arrow-nocks.

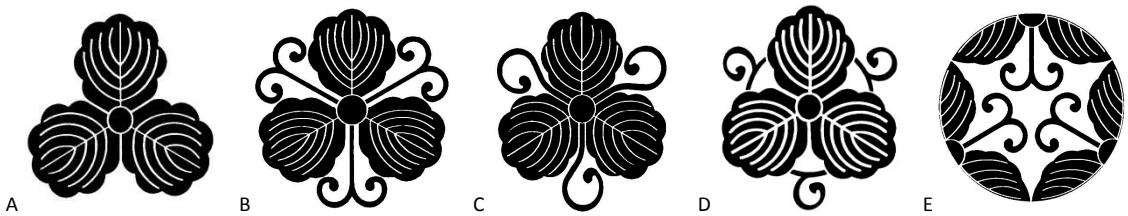


FIGURE 61: OAK AND VINES. (A) OAK; (B, C, D) OAK WITH VINES (THREE EXAMPLES); (E) DIVIDED OAK WITH VINES.

[24] "Apparently out of artistic considerations, Japanese draftsmen depicted in their designs not the slender, curved blade actually used on the battlefield but rather a broad, double-edged sword of Chinese origin used primarily for ceremonial functions in Japan." Dower, *Elements*, 28.

FIGURE 62: SWORDS AND VINES. (A) BELLFLOWER WITH SWORDS; (B) BELLFLOWER WITH VINES; (C) THREE HOLLYHOCK LEAVES WITH SWORDS; (D) TWO HOLLYHOCK LEAVES ONE ABOVE THE OTHER, WITH SWORDS AND VINES; (E) THREE ARROW-NOCKS WITH SWORDS.

2. Two Forms of the Same Plant

Mon built on plants often show two forms, or parts of them, at the same time. The classic expression of this design is the paulownia, traditionally (indeed, almost always) shown with leaves below and stalks of flowers rising above. Several examples appear in this study. Note that in Figure 64B below, gourds and their blossoms are arranged to echo the traditional paulownia (for more on the false paulownia, see page 41).

FIGURE 63: PLANTS SHOWN IN TWO FORMS I. (A) PAULOWNIA; (B, C) BAMBOO (TWO EXAMPLES); (D, E) CHRYSANTHEMUM (TWO EXAMPLES).

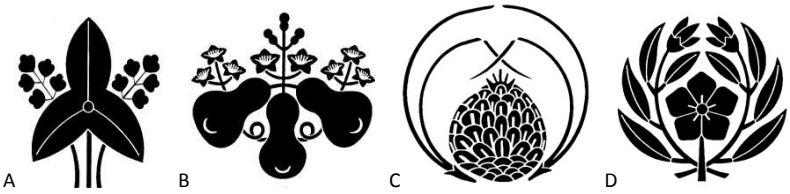


FIGURE 64: PLANTS SHOWN IN TWO FORMS II. (A) WATER PLANTAIN; (B) GOURD AS PAULOWNIA; (C) PINE CONE AND NEEDLES; (D) CHERRY BLOSSOM AND STEMS.

In WITH CHILD (*ko-mochi*), another conventional arrangements of two forms of a plant, one form is in the background, and another in front, as a baby would sit on its mother's lap. Sometimes one part is a blossom, other times both parts are leaves. The chrysanthemum in Figure 63E above is *ko-mochi*; compare the peony in Figure 65E below.

FIGURE 65: WITH CHILD. (A) GINGER; (B) HOLLYHOCK; (C) MAPLE; (D) CHRYSANTHEMUM; (E) PEONY (BLOSSOM DARK, LEAVES LIGHT).

Other arrangements show leaves alternating with blossoms or fruit in radial symmetry, usually of three to eight parts, a pattern I will call RADIATING. This is a special case of the radial symmetry discussed above, and illustrated in Figure 41. The examples below, having central hubs, could (less clearly) be blazoned as WHEELS.

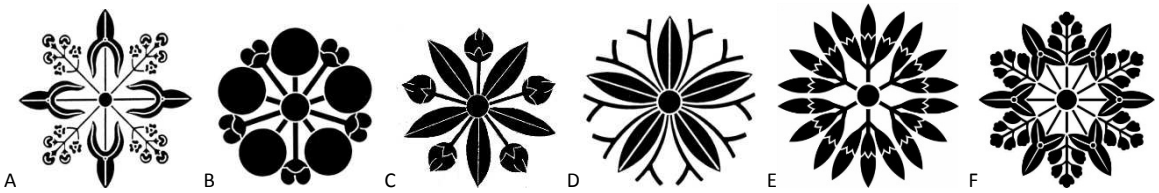
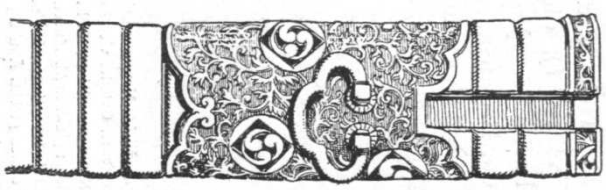


FIGURE 66: RADIATING FLOWERS. (A) FOURFOLD RADIATING WATER PLANTAIN; (B) FIVEFOLD RADIATING PLUM; (C) FIVEFOLD RADIATING PEPPER; (D) FIVEFOLD RADIATING BAMBOO; (E) SIXFOLD RADIATING TRIPLE PEPPER; (F) SIXFOLD RADIATING WATER PLANTAIN.

3. Composite Designs

Mon will often mix apparently discrete objects in a single composition. Sometimes they may be related, as in the first example below, where two nail-pullers appear with the associated lever. And often the association is a play on words in Japanese, or is an allusion to history. For instance Figure 67B below, called *kikusui* (chrysanthemum over water), was the mon of the Kusunoki clan. It was a special grant by the emperor to recognize support given him by one of his greatest commanders in the 14th century (see page 113). But while the doves in bamboo emblem of the Date clan (Figure 67C) has a story behind it too, it is a typical etiological tale (war leader hiding in a tree), likely made up or imagined later to explain it. The folding fan in Figure 67F is a special case – fans like this were frequently decorated with a mon, so this design can be looked at as mixing two motifs, or not.

FIGURE 67: COMPOUND EMBLEMS. (A) TWO ANGLED NAIL-PULLERS WITH INTERSECTING LEVER; (B) CHRYSANTHEMUM OVER WATER; (C) TWO DOVES AND THREE SPRAYS OF BAMBOO LEAVES WITHIN A RING OF BAMBOO; (D) MANDARIN ORANGE ENCLOSED IN A WELL-CRIB; (E) TWO HAWK'S FEATHERS IN A CART-WHEEL; (F) FOLDING FAN WITH MON OF ANGLED NAIL-PULLER IN A RING.



SCABBARD WITH *TOMOE* MON

G. Special Cases

Because of their wide influence or distinctive features, a number of Japanese heraldic charges merit separate discussion as special cases.

1. False Pauwlonia

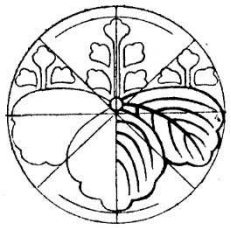


Figure 68: Construction of Paulownia, by Ströhl

The false paulownia is a particularly distinctive example of a Japanese heraldic charge cast in the form of another charge. Paulownia almost always appears in a very specific form, with leaves below and racemes of blossoms above. Heraldic paulownia does not look much like real paulownia − compare the construction diagram (left) and drawing from nature (right), both by Ströhl − but this near-arbitrary stylization is typical of Japanese heraldry.

Figure 69: Paulownia

Perhaps because of its prestige as an imperial emblem, paulownia has become a kind of template into which many others plants are forced, even if their natural forms do not suggest paulownia at all. A few examples are given below: first other plants, and then, strangely, inanimate objects presented as paulownia.

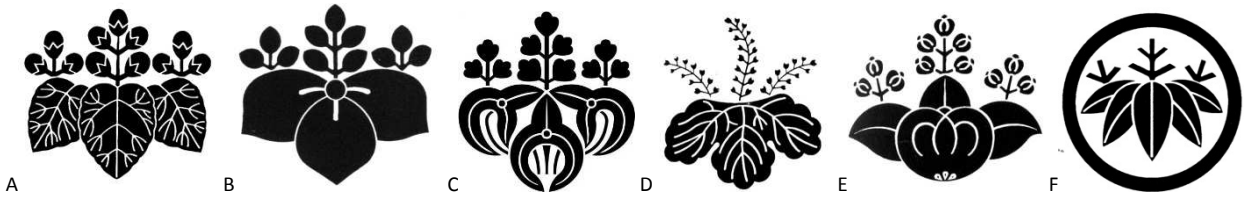


Figure 70: False Paulownia I (Plant Forms). (A) Eggplant; (B) Bellflower (using petals instead of leaves); (C) Water plantain; (D) Wisteria; (E) Mandarin orange; (F) Bamboo.

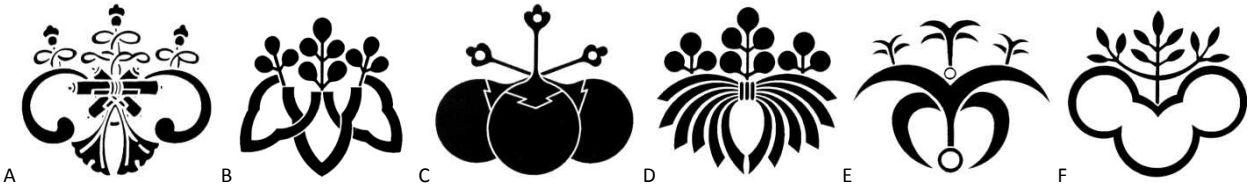


Figure 71: False Paulownia II (inorganic forms). (A) Amulet; (B) Mountains; (C) Round fans; (D) Paper decorations; (E) Anchors; (F) Sandbar (*suhama*).

2. Striped Roundels

These boldly geometric figures, called in Japanese *hikiryo*, have the closest resemblance to European heraldic charges of any in the Japanese vocabulary. Unlike European roundels, *hikiryo* usually (but not always) include a frame operating like a heraldic border. They nearly always form complete bars – the European pattern called *barry*, where an odd number of lines divides

the field into equal alternate portions, is not used (see Figure 72, right, by Pierre Joubert). Most *hikiryo* are horizontal, but there are vertical examples. The *hikiryo* is especially suited to use with an angled or otherwise varied frame, like the sixth example below – this one could be considered either octagonal, or angled with CHAMFERED edges.[25]

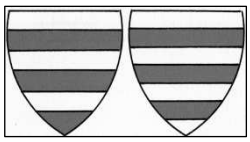


FIGURE 72: (A) BARRY OF SIX; (B)THREE BARS

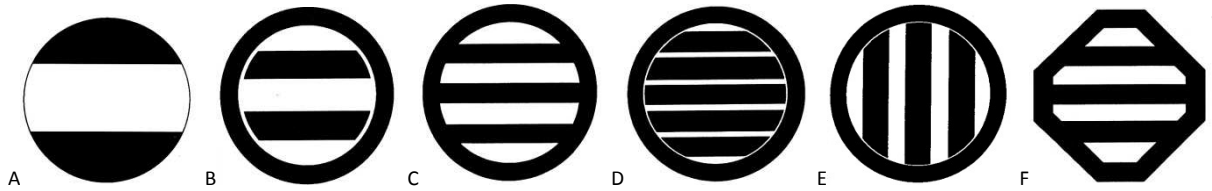


FIGURE 73: *HIKIRYO*. (A, B, C, D) HORIZONTAL STRIPES; (E) VERTICAL STRIPES; (F) OCTAGONAL FRAME.

At right is a diagram by Ströhl, showing the method of constructing the geometric roundel.[26] This particular design is called *nanatsu-wari*, meaning *divided into seven*, but this method of construction only works when the border, the stripes, and the negative space between the stripes are all of equal width, which is not always the case.

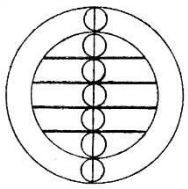


FIGURE 74: *HIKIRYO* CONSTRUCTION

Among the other examples shown in Figure 75 below, the rare checked roundel was the emblem of the Honda family of the pre-war nobility. The second example, which in the West would be called a *fess dancetty*, actually represents mountains. Designs where the stripes extend beyond the border, or are COUPED (stopping before it), are not geometric roundels but artifacts. Included below are a rice bowl with chopsticks, divination sticks (*sangi*), and an offering box (*oshiki*).

FIGURE 75: OTHER ROUNDELS WITH GEOMETRIC ELEMENTS. (A) CHECKS; (B) MOUNTAINS; (C) BOWL AND CHOPSTICKS; (D) DIVINATION STICKS; (E) OFFERING BOX.

3. Tortoise Shells

The hexagon is often used as a framing device and a basis for geometric designs. The Japanese word for this hexagonal motif, derived from a similarly shaped element of samurai armor, is *kikko*, meaning tortoise. Hexagons are a good design basis for emblems because (like squares

[25] It is probably better to think of it as octagonal, following the traditional form of the offering-box. Compare Figure 75E.

[26] Ströhl, *Wappenbuch*, 196.

and triangles, but no other figures) they have the property of *regular tiling*, allowing them to fit together exactly in an endless pattern.[27]

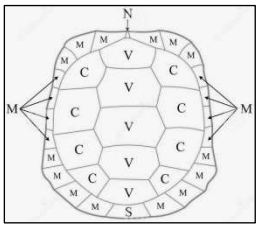


FIGURE 76: SCALES OF A TORTOISE SHELL

The individual scales of a tortoise's shell are called *scutes* (from Latin *scutum*, a shield); the hexagonal ones, called *vertebral scutes*, are found in the center of the carapace (upper shell) along the animal's spine (see diagram at left, by Valentina Moraru). But the animal used as a mon motif is not a land tortoise but a fresh-water turtle (right), often pictured with a train of aquatic grass attached to its shell.[28]

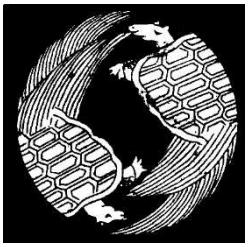


FIGURE 77: TWO TURTLES CHASING TO THE LEFT

The figures below give some idea of the versatility of the *kikko* motif. In the top row, note the concave hexagon in the second example blazoned as WARPED (*sori*). The background disk (seen behind the hexagon in Figure 78D) is sometimes called a rice cake (*mochi*), but as noted it is really just a geometric figure, and no more a rice cake than the *kikko* is really the vertebral scute of a tortoise's carapace. In Figure 78E, three *kikko* with *hanabishi* flowers are shown DIVIDED (*wari*) and ENTIRE, just as we have seen earlier with blossoms. Figure 78F, with intersecting fragments of a hexagon, is blazoned as a hexagon IN DISARRAY.[29] Figure 79 offers further variations on the hexagon form, usually (as in Figure 78A) but not always DOUBLED with a thin figure inside the main one.

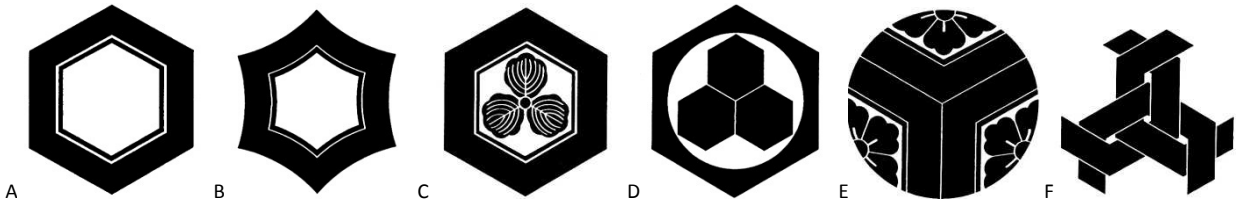


FIGURE 78: HEXAGON MOTIFS I. (A) HEXAGON; (B) WARPED HEXAGON; (C, D) HEXAGONS WITH SUBSIDIARY CHARGES; (E) THREE DIVIDED HEXAGONS WITH *HANABISHI*, ENTIRE; (F) HEXAGON IN DISARRAY.

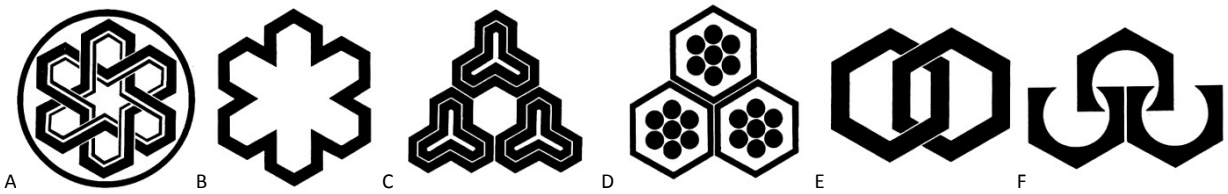


FIGURE 79: HEXAGON MOTIFS II. (A) INTERSECTING HEXAGON-DERIVED TRIPODAL FIGURES (B) SAME, MERGED; (C) THREE "BISHAMON HEXAGONS"[30]; (D) THREE HEXAGONS WITH SEVEN-STAR CONSTELLATIONS; (E) TWO LINKED HEXAGONS; (F) THREE HEAPED PARTIAL HEXAGONS.

---

27 When identical circles are tiled in boundless patterns, they do not share lines but are arrayed in groups of seven by the invisible hexagons into which they are inscribed. (Diagram, page 92, No. 315.)

28 And so, writes John Dower, it is sometimes called *minokame*, or *straw-raincoat turtle*. *Elements*, 100.

29 Stone Bridge Press, *Family Crests of Japan*, 116.

30 The term is from Motoji Niwa, *Japanese Traditional Patterns* (Tokyo, 1990), 2:116.

4. Stars

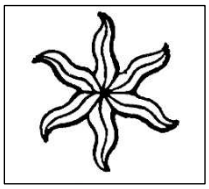


FIGURE 80: EUROPEAN STAR OR ESTOILE

Stars (*hoshi*) form an important class of motifs. Unlike European heraldic stars of six rays (see example at left by Heather Child), Japanese stars are perfectly round.[31] At right is a detail from the Kitora Tomb Star Chart, showing groups of stars as they appeared to Japanese astronomers in the seventh and eighth centuries.

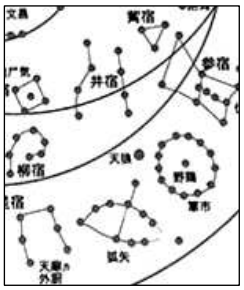


FIGURE 81: DETAIL OF JAPANESE STAR CHART

Although mon are found with stars in every number from 3 to 11, the most significant groupings are three (*mitsu-boshi*), seven (*shichiyo*) and nine (*kuyo*). (It is sometimes convenient in English blazon to call all star groupings CONSTELLATIONS and specify the number of stars.) Although three-star constellations show stars in the traditional 2,1 pattern, they can refer to the three stars found in a line in what we call the Belt of Orion, of great significance in pre-modern Japanese astronomy. Fourth in the examples below are three stars with swords; next to it the three stars beneath the character *ichi*, meaning *one* (Figure 82E) that was the emblem of Mori Motonari (see Plate 3A - D).

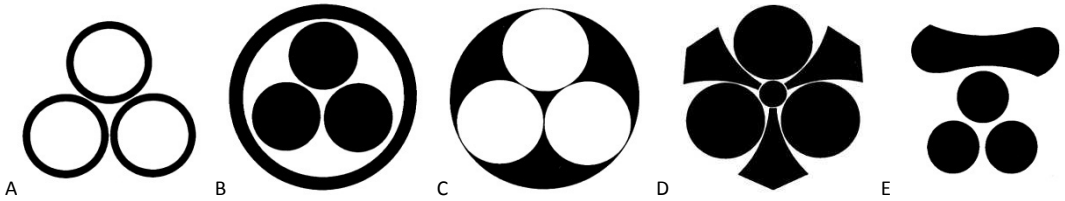


FIGURE 82: THREE-STAR FIGURES. (A) LIGHT *MITSU-BOSHI*; (B) DARK *MITSU-BOSHI* IN A RING; (C) LIGHT *MITSU-BOSHI* ON A DISK; (D) *MITSU-BOSHI* WITH SWORDS; (E) *MITSU-BOSHI* BELOW CHARACTER *ICHI*.

Hoshi mon with seven stars reflect the heavens known to astronomers before telescopes: the sun, the moon, and the five visible planets (the earth was of course not then known to be a heavenly body). The nine stars of the *kuyo* include two additional non-planetary points used in astrology.[32]

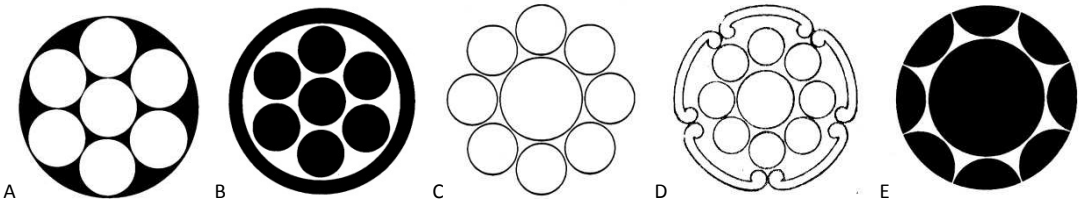


FIGURE 83: *HOSHI* WITH MORE THAN THREE STARS. (A, B) *SHICHIYO* (TWO EXAMPLES; (C) *KUYO*; (D) *KUYO* FRAMED BY FIVE *KAN*; (E) *KUYO* WITH OUTER STARS DIVIDED (*WARI*).

---

[31] The five-pointed figure now thought of as a European heraldic star is in origin not a star but a spur-rowel.

[32] These are the ascending and descending nodes, also called the dragon's head and tail, where the plane of the earth's orbit intersects the plane of the ecliptic (the *apparent* path of the sun through the stars in our sky).

Other round charges can substitute for the stars in the *kuyo* form.

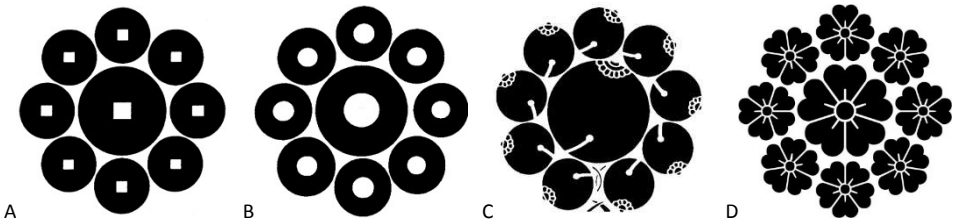


FIGURE 84: *KUYO* FORMED OF OTHER CHARGES. (A) COINS; (B) SNAKES' EYES; (C) BELLS; (D) CHERRY BLOSSOMS.

Similarly the plum blossom, with its perfectly round petals, can morph into a *hoshi* mon (called *ume-boshi*); other round charges can echo the plum as well.

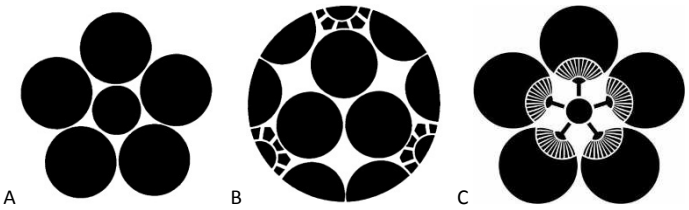


FIGURE 85: PLUM BLOSSOM VARIATIONS. (A) *UME-BOSHI*; (B) THREE DIVIDED REAR-VIEW *UME-BOSHI* FORMING A *MITSU-BOSHI*; (C) WHEEL OF FIVE ROUND FANS, FORMING A PLUM BLOSSOM.

5. Swirls

One of the most distinctive Japanese heraldic figures is the *tomoe*, a word meaning more or less a whirlpool vortex. I will call it a SWIRL. The Japanese character 巴, which in ideographic fashion even looks like a *tomoe*, means an eddy or whirlpool. We in the West are familiar with a Chinese version of the figure, called in Chinese *taijitu*, which we call the Tao emblem, or the *yin-yang* after the Chinese names for the two basic opposing principles (the creative and the receptive). It is constructed by imposing on the circle two smaller circles tangent to the circumference and to each other (Figures 86 A-B).

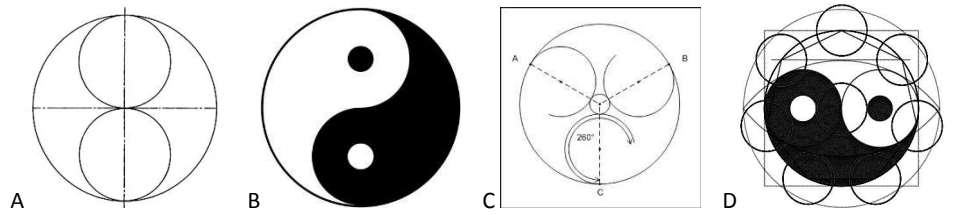


FIGURE 86: SWIRL CONSTRUCTIONS. (A, B) CONSTRUCTION OF THE YIN-YANG FIGURE; (C) CONSTRUCTION OF VARIANT THREE-SWIRL TOMOE; (D) RELATION OF THE YIN-YANG TO THE SEVEN-STAR CONSTELLATION.

Unlike the *yin-yang*, Japanese *tomoe* figures are composed (usually) of one, two or three swirls. These may occupy the entirety of the surrounding circle, Or they may instead be separated by the area of an invisible smaller circle, seen in Ströhl's construction diagram in Figure 86C. The designs are called *hitatsu-domoe*, *futatsu-tomoe* and *mitsu-domoe*, meaning single, double or triple swirls. The triple swirl is the most characteristic and more frequently encountered than the

others. Below: the three types of *tomoe*, and two reversed forms (one with the central swirl in the base, the other with the swirls facing left).[33] These variations constitute differences. Note that the example in Figure 87D below uses a doubled shadow-line (*kage*) or perhaps a broadly-split line (*owari*).

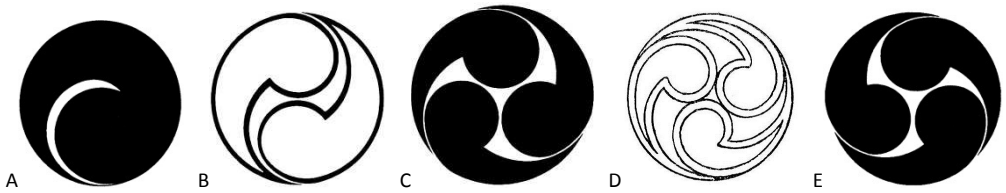


FIGURE 87: VARIETIES OF *TOMOE* I. (A) SINGLE-SWIRL; (B) DOUBLE-SWIRL; (C) TRIPLE-SWIRL; (D) REVERSED TRIPLE-SWIRL, IN DOUBLED LINE; (E) LEFT-LEADING TRIPLE-SWIRL.

These basic forms can be arranged in artful ways. Below are some arrangements of swirls not primarily forming divisions of the framing circle. *Tomoe* too narrow to fill the customary portion of the field are blazoned SLENDER; those not touching are blazoned SEPARATE (*hanare*). The final example in the row below omits the swirl entirely, and presents only the negative space between them. The three-armed figure thus formed (*tomoe-no-shin*) is called in the West by the Greek name *triskelion*.

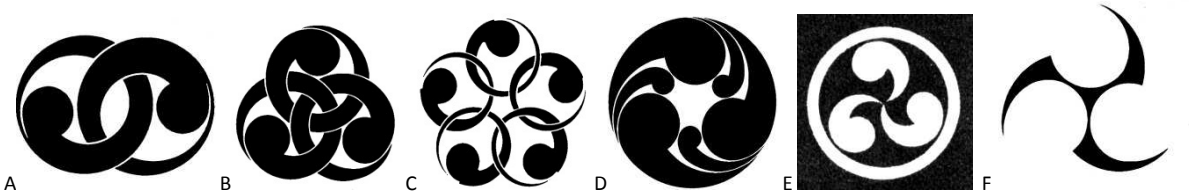


FIGURE 88: VARIETIES OF *TOMOE* II. (A) TWO SLENDER SWIRLS LINKED; (B) THREE SLENDER SWIRLS LINKED; (C) FIVE SLENDER SINGLE-SWIRLS LINKED, FORMING A PLUM BLOSSOM; (D) SIX SWIRLS, ALTERNATING LARGE AND SMALL; (E) THREE SEPARATE LEFT-LEADING SWIRLS IN A RING; (F) *TOMOE-NO-SHIN*.

Tomoe can be formed of other charges. Below left: the three orders of *tomoe*, formed by wisteria. Below right: the three orders of *tomoe*, formed by other plants.

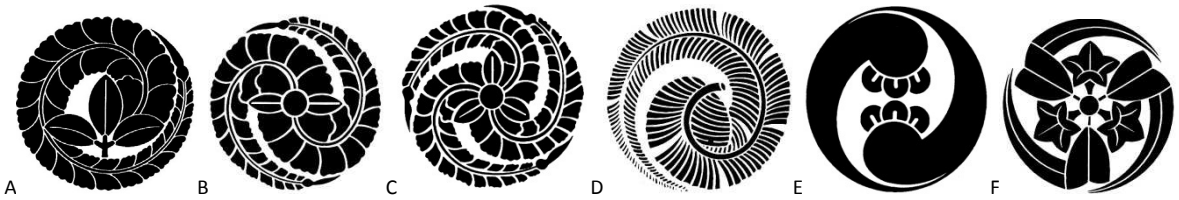


FIGURE 89: *TOMOE* FORMED OF PLANT MOTIFS. (A) SINGLE WISTERIA; (B) DOUBLE WISTERIA; (C) TRIPLE WISTERIA; (D) SINGLE PLANTAIN LEAF; (E) DOUBLE CLOVE; (F) TRIPLE GENTIAN.

In the next row are *mitsu-domoe* formed of oak leaves, pine needles and ocean waves (or perhaps clouds). The fourth example is one of the most beautiful mon: a *tomoe-no-shin* over a DOUBLED

[33] In Japanese left-leading swirls are blazoned *migi*; right-leading ones *hidari*. In English blazon it is sufficient to say LEFT-LEADING; swirls not otherwise labeled are assumed to be right-leading.

imperial chrysanthemum. Finally: two *hoshi* mon: a three-star construction formed of single-swirl *tomoe*, and a nine-star *kuyo* made of three-swirl *tomoe* (the mon of Nagao Kategora, see Plate 9A).

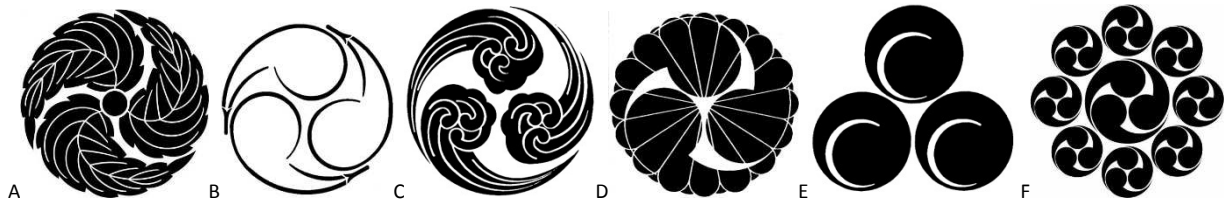


FIGURE 90: VARIETIES OF *TOMOE* III. (A) TRIPLE-SWIRL FORMED OF OAK LEAVES; (B) SAME FORMED OF PINE NEEDLES; (C) SAME FORMED OF WAVES OR CLOUDS; (D) *TOMOE-NO-SHIN* OVER CHRYSANTHEMUM; (E) CONSTELLATION FORMED OF THREE SINGLE SWIRLS; (F) *KUYO* OF *MITSU-DOMOE*.

It is important, in analyzing mon, to distinguish between a charge bent around itself to FORM A CIRCLE, as shown in Figure 26, and one forming a one-swirl figure. Likewise we should not confuse three charges CHASING (for instance the pine needles in No. 161 on page 73) with those forming a three-swirl figure (Figure 90B). The difference is not always clear graphically, but ideally *tomoe* figures have a bulbous central part the others lack.

6. Astroids

Another prominent charge in Japanese heraldry is the geometric figure called an ASTROID (*shippo* in Japanese), not to be confused with an asteroid (a small rocky body orbiting the sun). The curve described by a point on a circle as it wheels around inside a larger circle to which it is tangent is called a *hypocycloid*. Depending on the relative size of the two circles, the number of cusps on the path of a hypocycloid (where it touches the outer circle) will vary; the figure formed by a path of exactly four cusps is called an astroid. An astroid pattern is also created by the intersection of overlapping circles; a *shippo* is formed of an astroid and its enclosing circle.

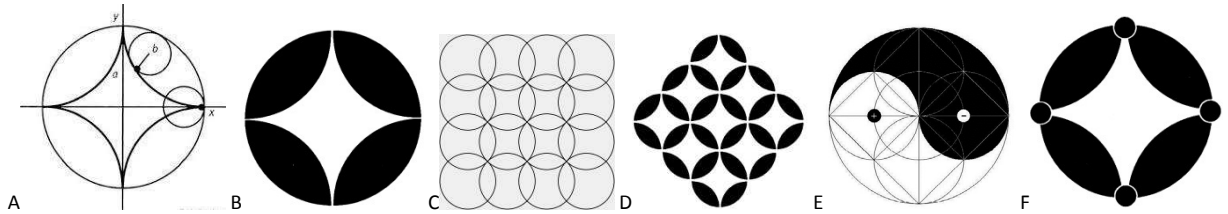


FIGURE 91: CONSTRUCTION OF *SHIPPO*. (A) CONSTRUCTION OF ASTROID; (B) *SHIPPO*; (C) TILING PATTERN OF OVERLAPPING CIRCLES; (D) NINE INTERSECTING *SHIPPO*; (E) RELATIONSHIP OF *YIN-YANG* TO *SHIPPO*; (F) *SHIPPO* WITH DOTTED CUSPS.

Because the astroid figure within the circle points in four directions, it has a religious meaning in Shinto. It is sometimes seen with dots or other accent marks at the cusps. The *shippo* characteristically encloses a *hanabishi* flower (see Figure 92), although it can enclose other charges and need not enclose anything. It appears in many decorative forms emphasizing its enclosing and tiling properties, and its characteristic arcs.

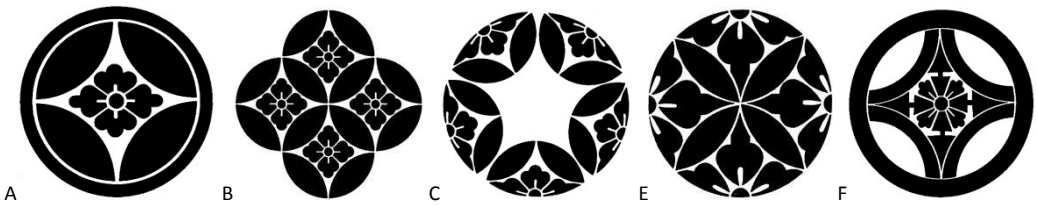


FIGURE 92: VARIETIES OF *SHIPPO* WITH *HANABISHI*. (A) IN A RING; (B) FOUR INTERSECTING; (C) FIVE DIVIDED; (D) FOUR DIVIDED, ENTIRE; (E) ASTROID CONSTRUCTION WITHIN A RING, ENCLOSING *HANABISHI*.

7. Handles and Melons

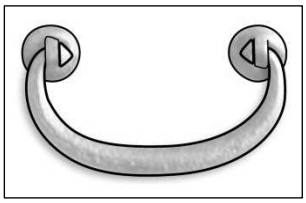


FIGURE 93:DRAWER-HANDLE

Next we consider two related framing and enclosing devices of considerable importance in the design of Japanese mon. One we have met before (Figure 14C): the double volute figure called *kan*, and named after the drawer handles on Japanese chests. The other is called *mokko*, meaning melon, after the forms suggested by the curving structures seen in cross-sections of fruits and vegetables (right: a tomato, by Thomas Rost).[34] These *mokko* are of course no more really melons than *kan* are really drawer-handles, but as abstract designs they were both well-known in Japanese decoration under those names before the heraldic period.

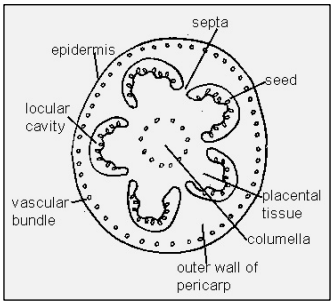


FIGURE 94: CROSS-SECTION OF TOMATO, REVEALING SEMI-CIRCULAR LOCULES

As we saw earlier, *kan* are used as independent charges, but also appear as framing elements (see Figure 7C). *Mokko* are used only as framing elements, but usually together with *kan* that share this function with them. The customary number of lobes for *mokko* is five, but they can be three, four or six. The third example below includes swords. Actual melons do occasionally appear as heraldic charges (sixth example).[35]

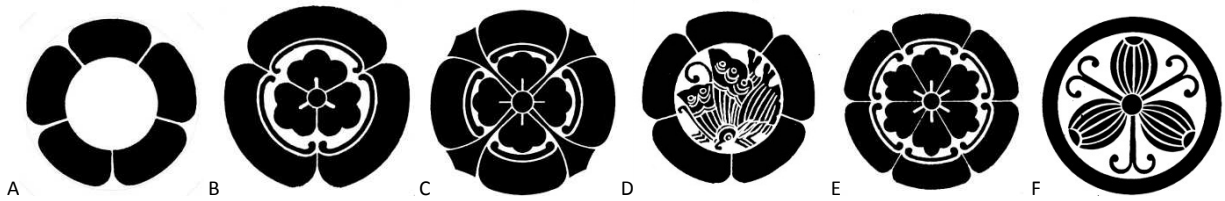


FIGURE 95: VARIETIES OF *MOKKO*. (A) BASIC FORM; (B) THREE LOBES WITH *KAN*; (C) FOUR LOBES, WITH SWORDS AND *KAN*; (D) FIVE LOBES; (E) SIX LOBES WITH *KAN*; (F) THREE MELONS WITH VINES, IN A RING (NOT A SCHEMATIC *MOKKO*).

---

[34] Some writers maintain *mokko* is really a quince. See Stone Bridge, *Family Crests*, 112. Others say it derives from the cross-section of the cucumber.

[35] Dower says the melon was used as a charge "because this shape resembled the pool of blood which formed" when a captured enemy was beheaded on the battlefield. *Elements*, 63. One can hope that he was mistaken about this.

8. Brocade Flowers

A special class of mon, called *fusen-ryo* (meaning *brocade flower*, literally *floating-line weave*), are complex compositions of several different charges. They give the impression that they are not self-contained, but sections of a pattern, like a brocade, that might continue beyond its round border. These designs are indeed modeled on brocade, and are visually quite distinct from other mon. The first example, a typical one, centers on a wood-sorrel with swords; on the edges are divided chrysanthemums in two sizes, with stubby vine elements near the smaller ones – a crowded and unusual pattern for a mon, but fine for a brocade. Note the four-lobe *mokko* framing Figure 92B. For more examples see pages 108 and 148.

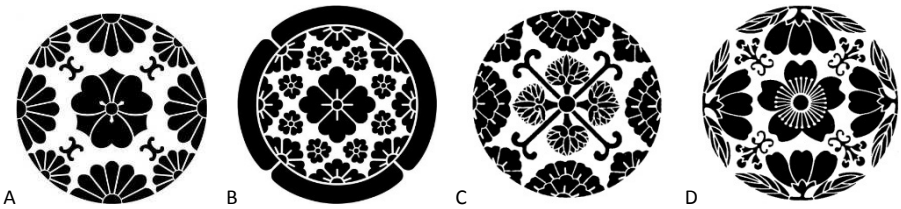


FIGURE 96: *FUSEN-RYO*. FOUR VARIETIES.

9. Lozenges

Finally we come to the lozenge (Japanese *hishi*, which turns to *-bishi* in compound words). Although said to be a plant charge derived from the water caltrop, actually it is a rhomboid shape like what European heraldry calls a *lozenge* or a *fusil*. Unlike the vertically oriented European lozenge, the *hishi*'s longer axis lies horizontal. It appears as a geometric form, solid or voided, or charged, often with a four-lobed figure called a *hanabishi* (fifth example below). The distinctive lozenge with an embattled frame, in Figures 97F below, was the emblem of the Ouchi clan (see Plate 2B - A1).

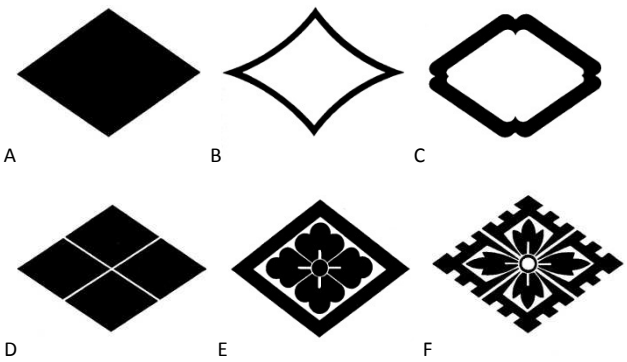


FIGURE 97: VARIETIES OF *HISHI* I. (A) BASIC FORM; (B) WARPED LOZENGE; (C) VOIDED LOZENGE WITH INDENTED CORNERS; (D) *WARI-BISHI* (DIVIDED LOZENGE EMBLEM OF TAKEDA); (E) LOZENGE ENCLOSING *HANABISHI*; (F) EMBATTLED LOZENGE ENCLOSING DIAGONALLY PARTED *HANABISHI*.

FIGURE 98: A LADY'S BOOKPLATE, BY GORDON MACPHERSON

But the main use of the *hishi* in Japanese heraldry is as a substitute for the ordinary round or square field. Sometimes this is moderately successful – while it doesn't improve on the traditional field, the result still works visually. But often, to the Western eye anyway, the result is uncomfortably cramped and truncated, leaving the viewer to figure out the subject from details.

In European heraldry the fortunately obsolescing practice of placing women's arms on a lozenge yields similarly unsatisfactory results (see Figure 98 above). The basilisk border in Mac-Pherson's bookplate invigorates the design but does not cure the distortion of the arms imposed by the lozenge form.

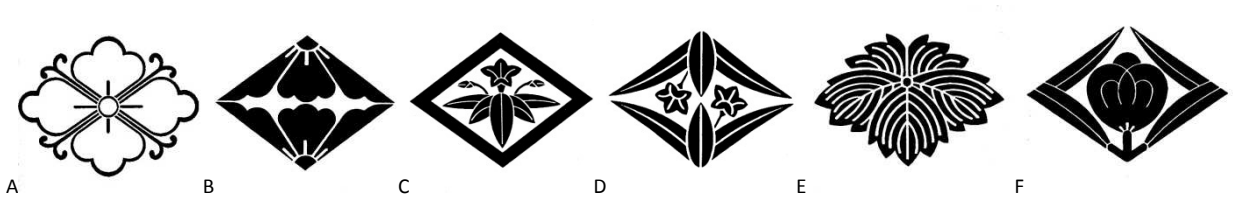


FIGURE 99: VARIETIES OF *HISHI* II. (A) *HANABISHI* WITH VINES; (B) DIVIDED *HANABISHI* CONFRONTED ABOVE AND BELOW; (C, D) GENTIAN; (E) DEMON-LINE OAK; (F) TEA PLANT.

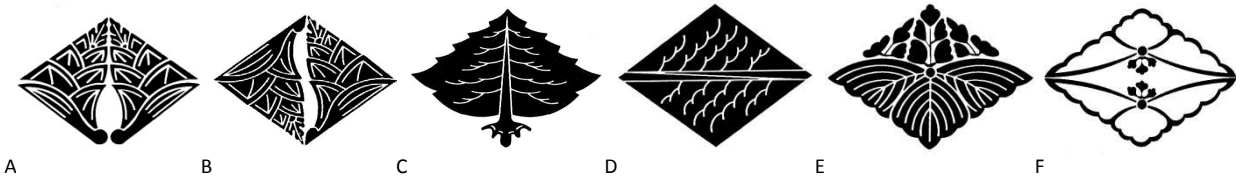


FIGURE 100: VARIETIES OF *HISHI* III. (A, B) GINGER; (C, D) CEDAR; (E, F) PAULOWNIA.

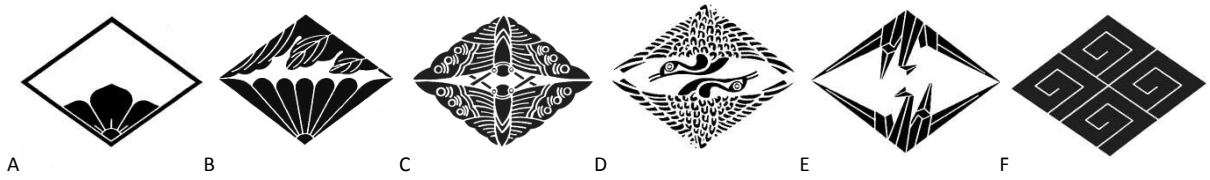


FIGURE 101: VARIETIES OF *HISHI* IV. (A) BELLFLOWER; (B) CHRYSANTHEMUM; (C) TWO BUTTERFLIES EMBRACING ONE ABOVE THE OTHER; (D) TWO CRANES CHASING LEFT; (E) TWO CHASING ORIGAMI CRANES; (F) DIVIDED LIGHTNING.

H. NATURALISTIC CHARGES

Naturalistic charges do not need much exposition here, because their elements are obvious. They are not heavily stylized, but clearly recognizable. Some of them actually attempt a naturalistic idiom; others show floral or leafy scenes in round medallions. With a few exceptions – notably alarm bells, Chinese coins, samurai helmets and demon faces – these were not part of classic Japanese heraldry. They often originate much later – sometimes in the 19th or 20th centuries – as decorative rather than heraldic emblems. Large collections of mon, like the highly influential Matsuya piece-goods catalogue of 1913,[36] have many of these designs, but collections focusing on mon actually in use by samurai families contain very few.

[36] Reprinted by Dover Books as Fumie Adachi, ed., *Japanese Design Motifs* (New York, 1971). See sample on page 144.

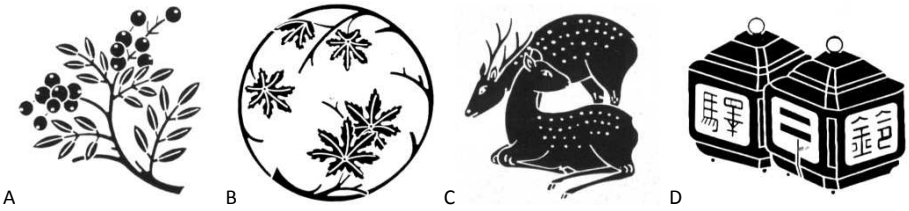


FIGURE 102: NATURALISTIC CHARGES. (A) SPRAY OF BARBERRY; (B) MAPLE VIGNETTE; (C) TWO DEER; (D) TWO LANTERNS.

J. FIGURES OF NOTATION

Mon derived from notation need special mention. Most of them are based on Japanese (originally Chinese) characters, but often in stylized, decorative or distorted form. Except for a few very simple expressive characters like *dai* 大 (*great*), and *yama* 山 (*mountain*), their meanings will of course usually be unknown to most Western observers. But for present purposes it is sufficient for the viewer to understand that a character is meant. In some of the examples below the characters are disguised in pictorial or other forms and may not be easily recognized, let alone read.[37]

Swastikas (Japanese *manji*) are Buddhist emblems. Unlike the later Nazi versions, Japanese swastikas are usually square rather than angled, and LEFT-LEADING (implying counter-clockwise rotation) – variations need to be noted in the blazon. The last example below (Figure 105F) is a *genjiko* symbol.[38]

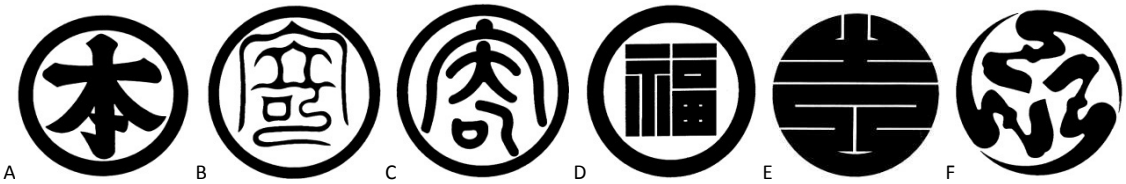


FIGURE 103: FIGURES OF NOTATION I. (A) 本 (*HON*, BOOK) IN TRADITIONAL JAPANESE BRUSH WRITING; (B, C) 寄 (*YORI*, NEAR) IN ANTIQUE SEAL SCRIPT; (D) 福 (*FUKU*, GOOD FORTUNE) IN A STYLIZED SQUARE CHARACTER; (E) 吉 (*YOSHI*, LUCK) IN A STYLIZED ROUND CHARACTER; (F) 弓 (*YUMI*, BOW), IN CALLIGRAPHIC SCRIPT, TRIPLED AND CHASING (THAT IS, ROTATIONALLY BUT NOT RADIALLY SYMMETRICAL).

[37] I am indebted to Nozomi Kariyasu and Makiko Wisner for interpreting some of these characters for me.

[38] *Genjiko* is a game of identifying incense by scent. There are 54 such symbols, to match the number of chapters in the classic Japanese novel *Tales of the Genji*, by Murasaki Shikibu.

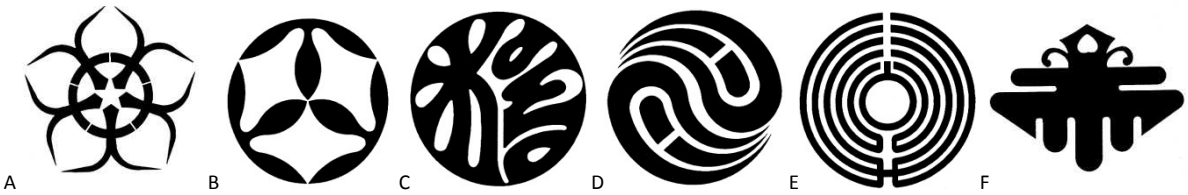


FIGURE 104: FIGURES OF NOTATION II. (A) 大 (*DAI,* GREAT), IN FIVE RADIAL CHARACTERS FORMING A BELLFLOWER; (B) 山 (*YAMA*, MOUNTAIN) IN THREE RADIAL CHARACTERS; (C) 橋 (*HASHI*, BRIDGE); (D, E) 明 (*MIN*, BRIGHT), FIRST AS A *TOMOE*, SECOND AS A MAZE; (F) 松 (*MATSU*, PINE), IN THE SHAPE OF A COMB (COMPARE NO. 382 ON PAGE 102).

FIGURE 105: FIGURES OF NOTATION III. (A) 岩 (*IWA*, ROCK); (B, C) 百 (*HYAKU*, HUNDRED); (D) SWASTIKA; (E) THREE DIVIDED SWASTIKAS, ENTIRE (F) *GENJIKO* INCENSE SYMBOL.

Occasionally mon are seen with stylized versions of characters from the *katakana* syllabary used in Japan for foreign words not represented by *kanji*. Figure 106A is the *katakana* character イ, corresponding to English *i.*

Japanese characters included in otherwise pictorial or geometric mon are often rebuses or plays on words, especially of the family name of the holder of the mon.[39] They are quite opaque without the Japanese language. Dower explains the second example below: the character 加 is pronounced *ka;* the device of the wisteria sounds as *to* in Chinese. Thus this emblem is a rebus for *Kato*, the family that bears the mon.[40] Third below is the rebus emblem of Kikkoman soy sauce: within a hexagon (*kikko*), the character *man* 萬 (meaning 10,000). Observers without this level of fluency in Japanese and Chinese may feel content just identifying it as a rebus. Below right is an example of a European rebus – an owl with the word *dom* signified Bishop Hugh Oldham (*owl* + *dom*) in this 16th century carving from Exeter Cathedral in England.

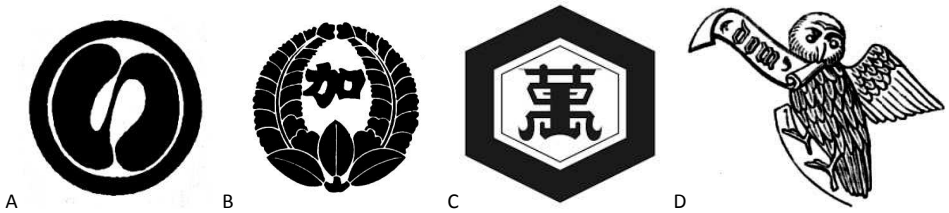


FIGURE 106: FIGURES OF NOTATION IV. (A) *KATAKANA*; (B) KATO REBUS; (C) KIKKOMAN REBUS; (D) ENGLISH REBUS.

[39] Rebuses playfully mix writing and pictures to suggest a word.

[40] *Elements*, 82.

K. FRAMES

As noted, the frames around mon are not usually carriers of meaning, but needed to be mentioned so the reader would not be confused at seeing them among the examples. Now as we close the grammar section, we have already seen rings of varying thickness, square and rhomboid frames, hexagonal and octagonal frames, and frames with chamfered and indented corners. Among the figured frames we have noticed *kan* and *mokko*. The chart at right, by Yuzuru Okada, shows a few more. These do not exhaust the possibilities, but they include enough variety to illustrate the form.[41] Below left: peony framed by bracken (sometimes called *arabesque*).[42] Below right: a branch of plum in an especially beautiful frame combining snow and the moon.

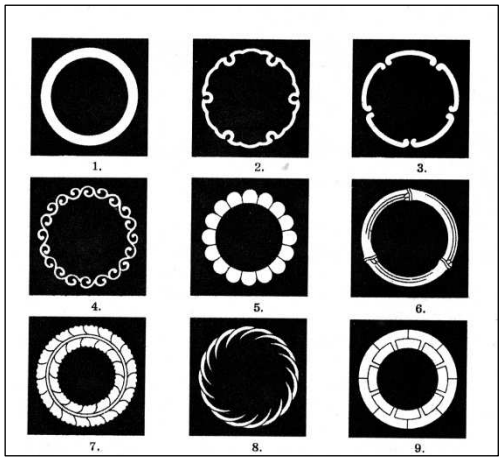


FIGURE 107: VARIETIES OF FRAME.
1: CIRCLE, 2: SNOW, 3: KAN, 4: ARABESQUE,
5: CHRYSANTHEMUM, 6: BAMBOO, 7: WISTERIA,
8: PAMPAS GRASS, 9: WHEEL.

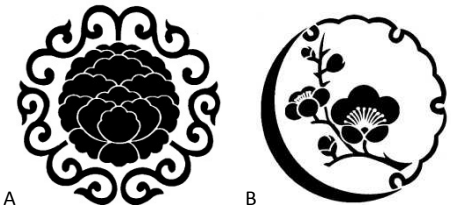


FIGURE 108: MORE FRAMES. (A) PEONY FRAMED IN BRACKEN;
(B) BRANCH OF PLUM IN MOON-SNOW FRAME.

Japanese heraldry uses frames, among many other methods, for differencing mon for branches of a family.

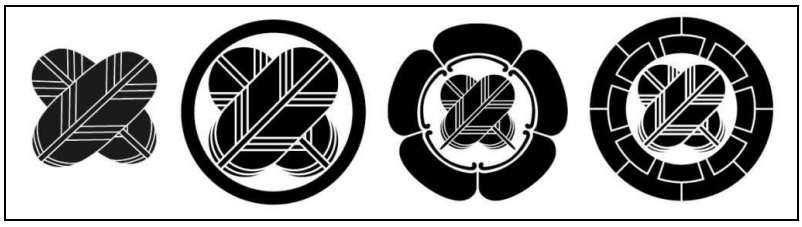


FIGURE 109. FRAMES USED FOR DIFFERENCING.[43]

---

[41] For instance, the anchors in Figure 45E are framed by a rope, the *itomaki* in No. 365 (page 100) by their own yarn.

[42] Okada, *Crests*, 42-3.

[43] The illustration is taken from the *Japanese Heraldry* website, but no author is credited. A full citation is given in the source notes.

L. JAPANESE AND EUROPEAN BLAZON

European blazon developed with the specific purpose of allowing a coat of arms to be described so exactly and uniquely that it could be reproduced exactly without a picture. Even in this day of imaging and copying so easy and precise we scarcely think about it, blazon is still a useful shorthand. Heraldists trained in this system can "see" a coat of arms in their mind's eye, and having to express a design in traditional blazon imposes a discipline helpful in ensuring that every design is unique and duplicable, and at least tending to keep it within an accepted tradition. It is also a matter of pride and satisfaction to use this system fluently and accurately, and its recondite but exquisitely precise legal vocabulary and (in English anyway) archaic dialect has enticed many a beginner into the inexhaustible study of heraldry.

Japanese blazon is quite different. It speaks informally, in ordinary language (although that language is normally Japanese). This is possible because in Japanese *the same blazon can apply to designs that are not the same*, but differ enough in detail to constitute distinct bearings. This is such heresy from a European point of view as to be fairly shocking.[44] But very minor differences that would be simply artistic variations in Europe matter in Japan.[45] One reason the Japanese system has seemed so forbidding to European-trained scholars and artists has been the recurring question *how could I possibly blazon that?* Often you couldn't in terms exact enough to be definitive in the European sense. And so Japanese heraldry remained hard for Europeans to understand, because it was so hard for them to talk about, or even think about in a disciplined and coherent way.[46] But when we accept that blazon has a different purpose and different requirements in the Japanese system, it suddenly becomes a lot easier to understand and express.

Thus, for example, in Japan an emblem within a thick ring differs from the same emblem within a slightly thinner ring, or a ring of "ordinary" width.[47] The width of the enclosing ring *could* be exactly measured to avoid confusion. In theory European ordinaries have diminutives ranged in precise proportions – for example, according to old writers, a *pale* (a vertical stripe) occupies a third of the shield, and a *pallet* half a pale, and an *endorse* half a pallet.[48] But in practice this view is obsolete in Europe, if indeed it was ever more than a fanciful conceit, and such details and proportions are left, within reason, to the discretion of the artist, because they do not really distinguish one coat of arms from another.

---

[44] From a British point of view, anyway. Continental European systems sometimes allow more flexibility.

[45] For examples, see the varieties of the Tokugawa hollyhock on the Japanese Heraldry website at tinyurl.com/tokuholly, archived at perma.cc/54r2-Lsgu.

[46] As noted, *Europeans* means here those trained in the European heraldic system, including Americans like myself.

[47] One source lists ten gradations of thickness, each with its own Japanese name but all unhelpfully subjective. Thus "*chu-wa* (medium circle) can sometimes be slightly thinner than *maru* (circle)." See Japanese Heraldry Database at tinyurl.com/frames34, archived at perma.cc/va52-djd6.

[48] See, *e.g.*, F. Schuyler Mathews, *The Writing Table of the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1900), 11, 15.

But if a heraldic device were really *different* with a ring of "ordinary" width than with a "thin" one, wouldn't blazon have to reflect this more precisely than such subjective terms would allow? Would it not become necessary to measure ring thickness objectively, for example as a proportion of the radius of the enclosing circle measured to its outer rim? This is technically possible but cumbersome, and unnecessary if we accept the more relaxed Japanese view of blazon not as an all-encompassing legal description that isolates every possible variation, but just as *a fair description of the device, even though other devices might be described the same way*, and a drawing (or nowadays a scan or photograph) might help.[49] Indeed, the name of the family is often the defining term in a Japanese blazon – thus the mon shown on page 7 in the preface can be called simply *Tokugawa-aoi* (Tokugawa's hollyhock). For present purposes it seems sufficient to identify as THIN a ring noticeably thinner than usual, and as STOUT one noticeably thicker (but not thick enough to be a SNAKE'S EYE) and leave it at that.

So rather than propose an English canon for Japanese blazon, as I had originally planned to do, it seems sufficient to name the parts – the grammatical structures and the distinctive individual charges, set them off in SMALL CAPITALS so they can be recognized, where appropriate give the Japanese term in parentheses. This allows the reader to understand and describe a Japanese heraldic device without attempting to create an argot as rigid and comprehensive and precise as European blazon. And unlike English blazon, the order in which terms are mentioned is not set, but can follow normal speech patterns for simplicity and clarity. But as with European blazon, *having an ordered way to describe a device in words brings the graphic system into sharp focus and makes its imagery comprehensible rather than arbitrary*.

I have also resisted the temptation to provide Japanese blazon along with my English terminology. But there is no reason to, as unlike European blazon it is just a description in ordinary speech, except in Japanese. Writers like Ströhl and Lange and Okada do give exact Japanese blazon, which I could copy.[50] But what would be the point of taking a device described as *within a ring, three divided hanabishi flowers with swords* (Figure 110), and then re-describing it in Japanese as *maru ni mitsu wari-ken-hanabishi*?[51] At best the non-Japanese-speaking reader could pick out it its meaning painstakingly, word by word, and end up knowing no more than my English description told her. And the Japanese-speaking reader would not need my transliteration. So I have limited myself to naming the parts and conventions, in reasonably non-technical English set off in

FIGURE 110

[49] In a few limited areas European blazon *does* try to describe everything. For example, blazoned descriptions of castles and fortifications are remarkably specific, down to the number of windows, and whether one or both doors are open, and the color of the mortar between the stones, and the shape of the machicolations. This is needed because so many civic arms derive from actual seals, which are unique despite showing generic or stylized structures − the arms need precise descriptions to retain their accuracy, specificity and fidelity to source.

[50] Lange's is in a somewhat outdated transliteration, which complicates its use.

[51] The example, and the Japanese blazon, are taken from Ströhl, 215, fig. 480.

SMALL CAPITALS, and adding a brief glossary (starting on page 59). I hope readers will find this sufficient.

M. EXPERIMENTING WITH WESTERN HERALDRY IN THE JAPANESE IDIOM

I hope that European-trained heraldists and especially heraldic artists who have come this far in the study of Japanese heraldry will be attracted by its beauty and economy, and will see in it an enlarged scope for expression. Western heraldic artists and designers know that *creativity flourishes in the space between the rules*. Finding a second set of rules to work with is like opening a locked door to find a spacious new apartment in a comfortable and long-inhabited house.

But it is important that that this new expression follow the traditional Japanese conventions and approach. To create mon based on Western tinctures and ordinaries and marshalling would do no more than substitute a circle for the shield as a decorated surface. My hope is that Western heraldic designers and artists will find a new method in the Japanese style. The vocabulary can and should be European (or at least include European forms), but it should use Japanese heraldic grammar, which proceeds from the same impulses as European heraldic grammar even though the specifics are different. For in both systems, as in poetry and many other arts, *it is the faithful adherence to voluntary limitations that releases beauty, and allows for the exercise of mastery*.

To start this process off I offer five mon based on the *erminespot*, a figure found nowhere else but in European heraldry. I hope this product of my own tentative and uncertain hand may inspire more accomplished artists to imagine what they could produce in this rich but unfamiliar idiom.[52]

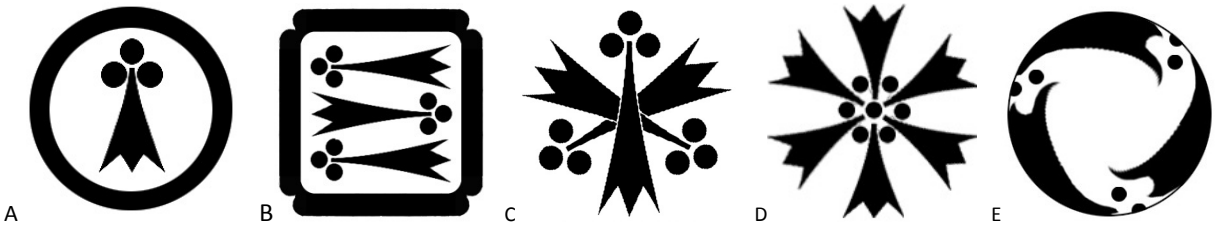


FIGURE 111: ERMINESPOT MON. (A) ERMINESPOT IN A RING; (B) WITHIN A SQUARE FRAME WITH INDENTED CORNERS, THREE HORIZONTAL ERMINESPOTS STACKED HEAD TO TAIL ; (C) THREE ERMINESPOTS OVERLAID; (D) A WHEEL OF SIX ERMINESPOTS FACING IN;[53] (E) THREE ERMINESPOTS, DIVIDED AND CHASING.

[52] Thanks to Raluca Ostasz for creating these images on Photoshop from my roughly-drawn designs.

[53] Note that in this example the erminespots form a seven-star constellation (*shichiyo*) at the hub.

N. How to Look at Mon

I try in this essay to present the grammar and vocabulary of Japanese mon in a demystifying way. My goal is to enable observers without prior exposure to recognize the elements of a Japanese mon, to understand how it is presented, and by decoding the image to uncover its identity. I recommend the following steps to recognize and identify a Japanese mon.

First, what is the structure of the design? Because charges are so often distorted, it helps to identify the structure before trying to name the charge. If the principal charge is forced into a circle, or tripled, divided and chasing, or presented as *tomoe*, it may be difficult to recognize. Five-fold radial designs can be especially hard to recognize as they suggest blossoms or other possibilities; complex designs may present the background as the principal figure.

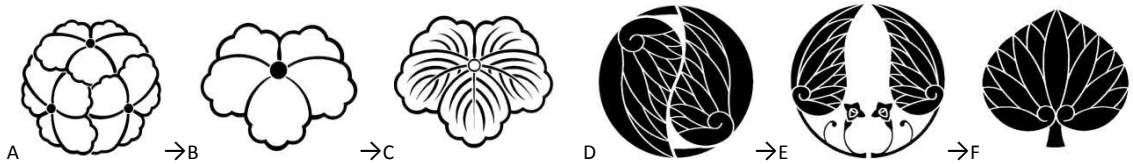


Figure 112: Resolving a distorted image I. (A, B, C) Ivy leaf; (D, E, F) Hollyhock.

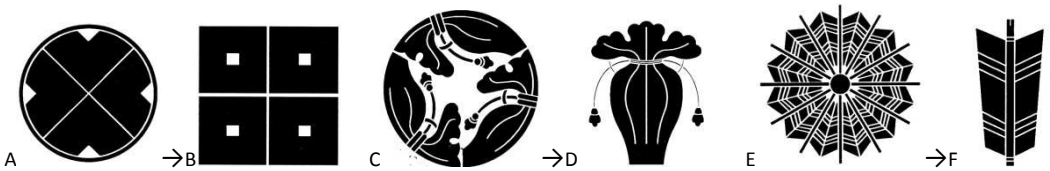


Figure 113: Resolving a distorted image II. (A, B) Eye tool; (C, D) Sake urn; (E, F) Arrow fletching.

Second, having compensated for distortion, identify the principal charge. Here the keys to identification given in the vocabulary section beginning on page 65 may be helpful: for plants the characteristic leaf or blossom, for artifacts some distinctive attribute such as the cord on the doll in Figures 104A-B below.

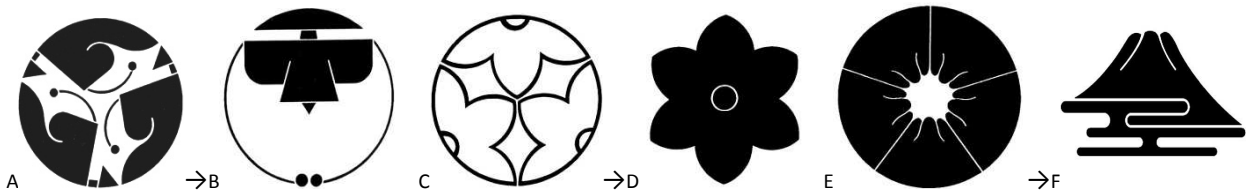


Figure 114: Identifying the Principal Charge I. (A, B) Doll; (C, D) Gardenia; (E, F) Mountain.

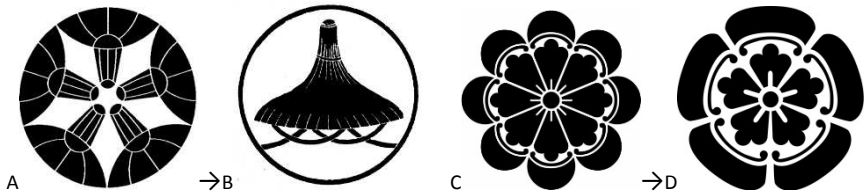


Figure 115: Identifying the Principal Charge II. (A, B) High-crowned sedge hat; (C, D) China flower enclosed by *kan* and *mokko*.

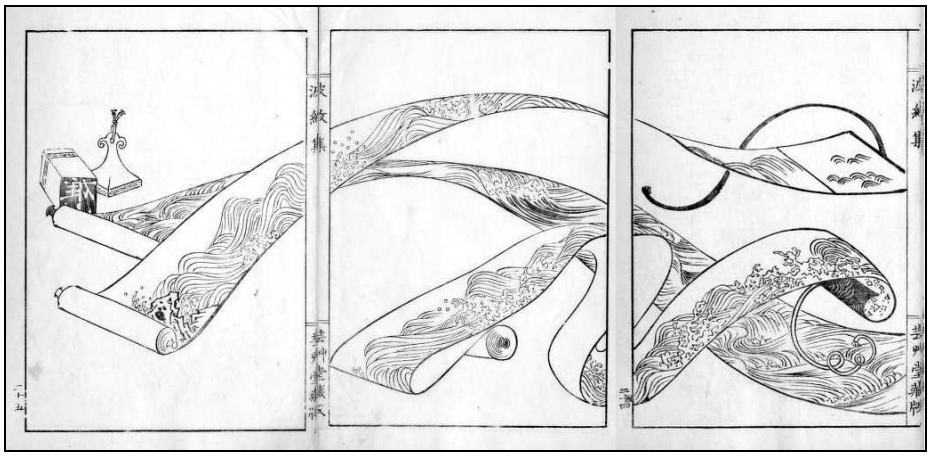
FIGURE 116: IDENTIFYING THE PRINCIPAL CHARGE III. (A, B, C) SCALLOP SHELL.

Third, what else is going on in the mon? Are there other charges besides the principal one? Are the charges enclosed in a frame, or arranged in a stereotyped way (for example as a constellation or swirl)? Is there a written character presented in some form?

Fourth, having identified the charges and their presentation, state a blazon in generally non-technical language, but using English or Japanese terms of blazon mentioned in this essay (for example DIVIDED or *wari*) to the extent they are helpful. A glossary of such terms begins on the next page. **This is an essential step**, because *while a design can be described in vague and ambiguous terms without really understanding it, it cannot be blazoned in a technical vocabulary until it is completely understood.*

Fifth, compare the blazon with the mon. Even if the blazon is not unique, does it describe the mon accurately and adequately?

Sixth, fill out your understanding of the mon with connotative and denotative meanings. The imagery of Japanese heraldry is redolent with associations: to nature, to religion, to history. The first steps in the process are aimed at understanding the visual composition, but there is more to the mon than that. John Dower's *Elements of Japanese Design* (New York, 1971) is a good resource for filling in connotations. Similarly, Japanese mon denote specific families or institutions, and identifying them is a complex task. Some families have more than one mon, and some mon apply to more than one family, and some are not family emblems at all. *Mon: The Japanese Family Crest*, by Willis M. Hawley and Kei Kaneda Chappelear (Hollywood, 1974) which lists mon by design and identifies the relevant family names, is a good place to begin this effort.



III. GLOSSARY OF ENGLISH BLAZON FOR JAPANESE HERALDRY

Japanese equivalents are limited to those in the heraldic literature.

Japanese heraldry is to be blazoned in English *as simple and direct as possible*.

IN GENERAL	
MON	A Japanese heraldic device.
CHARGE, COMMON CHARGE	An element in a mon. A *common charge* is one that is not structural, whether it appears frequently or rarely.
DIFFERENCE	An alteration in a mon that changes it enough to make a distinct new mon. The amount of change needed to accomplish this is much smaller for a Japanese mon than for a European coat of arms.
FRAME	A formal border extending to the edge of a mon and fully enclosing it.
FRAMING ELEMENT	An enclosure surrounding a charge, but not extending to the edge of the mon.
MOTIF	A Japanese heraldic charge, considered as a type rather than in a specific mon.

TERMS DEFINING THE POSITION OF A CHARGE			
English	**Japanese**	**Definition**	**Example**
ANGLED	*Sumidate*	Inclined 90 degrees, so in the case of a square it would be standing on a corner.	Fig. 14D
ASCENDING	*Nobori*	Said of wisteria when the racemes rise toward the top of the emblem.	Page 75, No. 172A
DESCENDING	*Sagari*	Said of wisteria when the racemes fall toward the bottom of the emblem.	Page 74, No. 172
DIAGONAL		Presented at an angle. Heraldic: *bendwise*, *in bend*. Similar to ANGLED.	Fig. 37F
HORIZONTAL		Perpendicular to the vertical axis of the device. Heraldic: *fesswise*, *in fess*.	Fig. 30C
REVERSED		Inverted; upside-down as compared to the usual representation of the charge. This is very unusual in Japanese heraldry, except in pairs – see ONE REVERSED.	Fig. 87D

TERMS DEFINING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CHARGE			
English	**Japanese**	**Definition**	**Example**
BENT	*Ori*	Folded in the middle.	Fig. 20A
COUPED		A European heraldic term meaning that a member or geometric charge is truncated and does not reach the limits of its field.	Fig. 75D
DOUBLED (1)	*Komoti*	Said of a charge, especially a lozenge, that appears inside another similar one. Similar to NESTED.	Fig. 32B
DOUBLED (2)	*Yae*	Said of a blossom with a second set of petals appearing behind the first.	Fig. 20D
FORMING A CIRCLE	*No maru*	Said of a charge distorted so it forms a circle.	Fig. 26

English	Japanese	Definition	Example
IN DISARRAY		Said of a charge when its elements are fallen or disordered, especially the petals of a blossom.	Fig. 21E
KNOTTED	*Musubi*	Twisted in a loop – said especially of the conventional wild goose (*karigane*).	Page 84, No. 242
NEGATIVE	*Kage*	Said of a charge drawn with a doubled line, when the body of the charge within the doubled line is of the same shade (light or dark) as the surrounding field.	Fig. 24A
NESTED		Said of measures fitting one inside the other. See DOUBLED (1).	Page 94, No. 323
TWISTED	*Nejiri*	With the edges bent at an angle to the center. Said of charges arranged radially, like petals on a flower.	Fig. 21B
WARPED	*Sori*	With concave outlines.	Fig. 21D

TERMS DEFINING THE OBSERVER'S VIEW OF A CHARGE			
English	**Japanese**	**Definition**	**Example**
PEEPING	*Nozoki*	Said of a charge placed below the horizon of vision, so only a portion is visible, usually issuing from the bottom of a frame. See also DIVIDED.	Fig. 28B
REAR VIEW	*Ura*	Said of a charge viewed from the back, especially a flower so arranged that a portion of the calyx (where the blossom attaches to the stem) is visible at the center instead of the reproductive parts.	Fig. 27E
SIDE VIEW	*Yoko-mi*	Seen from the side. Usually said of a flower, to distinguish it from the top view (*muko*).	Fig. 27B
TILTED		Portrayed in perspective as if canted at an angle away from the viewer.	Fig. 27D
TOP VIEW	*Muko*	Viewed from above, as distinguished from *yoko-mi* (side view) or *ura* (seen from behind). Usually said of a flower. As this is the default view it may be omitted from a blazon.	Fig. 27A

TERMS RELATING TO A CHARGE IN RELATION TO OTHER CHARGES			
English	**Japanese**	**Definition**	**Example**
ABOVE AND BELOW		Said of charges confronted across a horizontal axis. This term is preferred to CONFRONTED VERTICALLY to avoid ambiguity as to whether the confrontation or the charges themselves are vertical.	Fig. 33D
ASSEMBLED	*Yose*	Said of charges (usually but not always three) not shown in isolation, but in a dynamically relating group. The charges are complete, so *yose* is contrasted with *wari*, where the charges are DIVIDED and so not shown complete. In this English blazon ASSEMBLED is not needed as a term, because the type of assemblage is specifically stated: RADIAL, CHASING, etc.	

English	Japanese	Definition	Example
BOWED		When three charges are HEAPED or STACKED vertically, the charges are assumed to be evenly aligned; but if the middle charge is off center the line is said to be BOWED LEFT (or RIGHT).	Fig. 37E
CHASING	*Oi*	Said of charges expressing rotational symmetry but not radial symmetry. Each charge occupies some of the neighboring sector, and can suggest movement around the common center. The apparent direction of movement may be stated.	Fig. 35
CONFRONTED	*Mukai*	Said of two charges facing each other. They are assumed to be facing across the vertical axis unless blazoned ABOVE AND BELOW.	Fig. 33
CROSSED	*Chigai*	Crossed diagonally. Heraldic: *in saltire*.	Fig. 31A
DIVIDED	*Wari*	Said of charges (usually but not always three) when displayed in profile, usually along the outer rim of the circular field, so that the charges are seen only in incomplete profile.	Fig. 46
EMBRACING	*Daki*	Said of confronted charges when some element of each charge enters the space, or crosses an element, of the other.	Fig. 34D
ENTIRE		Said of a charge or group of charges so arranged as to fill all or nearly all of the design field.	Fig. 47B
FACING OUT (or IN); FACING TOWARD (or AWAY)		Refers to the direction in which the elements of a grouped charge (usually but not always RADIAL or CHASING) are facing or pointing.	Fig. 66E (out); p. 84, No. 243 (in)
HEAD TO TAIL		Said of two or more charges arrayed parallel but alternately reversed, so that the top of one adjoins the bottom of the next one.	Fig. 30C
HEAPED	*Kasane*	Said of multiple identical charges arrayed so as to overlap. Distinguish STACKED.	Fig. 32C
HUB		The center of a WHEEL. Even when there is no discrete central structure, a HUB is the center point of a RADIAL display.	Fig. 58
INCLINING IN (or OUT)	*Daki*	Leaning toward (or away from) the center of the composition, or the other charges that are part of it.	Fig. 34B (in); Fig. 34C (out)
INTERSECTING	*Kumiai*	Crossed, but in such a way that parts of the crossing charges penetrate each other, or interlace.	Fig. 31C
LEFT-LEADING (1)	*Migi-chigai*	For crossed elements, this is the element proceeding from below right, leading toward the left (*in bend*). It ordinarily OVERLIES the one proceeding from below left toward the right (that is, RIGHT-LEADING, *in bend sinister*). If the other OVERLIES, this should be stated.	Fig. 31A

English	Japanese	Definition	Example
LEFT-LEADING (2)	*Migi*	LEFT-LEADING is also used for swirls, or CHASING elements, that suggest a leftward or counter-clockwise motion. A Japanese swastika is assumed to be LEFT-LEADING unless otherwise stated. *Chigai* is used only for crossing elements.	Fig. 87E
LINKED	*Tsungai*	Connected like the links of a chain.	Fig. 32A
MERGED		Said of OVERLAPPING or HEAPED charges when their individual outlines do not remain distinct, but merge into an outline shared by all the elements.	Fig. 38B
ONE ABOVE THE OTHER		Said of two charges arranged in order vertically. Heraldic: *in pale*. Compare ABOVE AND BELOW.	Fig. 62D
ONE REVERSED	*Ire-chigai*	Where one of a pair of CROSSED or CONFRONTED figures is upside-down in relation to the other.	Fig. 33F
OVERLAID, OVERLYING	*Jigu-chigai*	Said of charges (typically three) where one (typically the central one) lies over the other two, thereby denying the composition either radial or rotational symmetry. The top one is OVERLYING – it is LAID OVER the others. The Japanese means *axis-crossing*. Distinguish HEAPED, where the uppermost charge is assumed to be on top. To avoid ambiguity, where necessary a blazon might say THE CENTRAL ONE OVERLYING or BOTTOM OVER TOP (Figs. 32C, 40C).	Fig. 48
OVERLAPPING		Sometimes a more natural expression in context than HEAPED or OVERLYING, but of similar meaning.	Fig. 59A
RADIAL, RADIATING		Said of identical charges expressing radial symmetry and proceeding from a common center. RADIATING is especially apt for motifs where elements (such as leaves and blossoms) alternate – see Fig. 66.	Fig. 54
RIGHT-LEADING	*Hidari-chigai*	The opposite of LEFT-LEADING – see that entry. If the RIGHT-LEADING element OVERLIES, it must be stated. *Chigai* is used only for crossing elements. RIGHT-LEADING is the default for swirls.	Fig. 31B
SEPARATE	*Hanare*	Said of elements, especially swirls, that are part of a common design but do not touch each other, and that are not well-described as SIDE BY SIDE or STACKED.	Fig. 88E
SIDE BY SIDE	*Narabi*	Said of two or more elements arrayed separately, upright but in a horizontal row. Heraldic: *fesswise*.	Fig. 30A
SINGLE	*Hitotsu*	A single upright charge. A single charge not facing outward or upward is assumed to be facing left as seen by the observer. This term can be omitted from a blazon.	Fig. 25A
SLENDER		Said of a swirl or other figure noticeably narrower than one designed, alone or with others, to fill out a composition.	Fig. 88A

English	Japanese	Definition	Example
STACKED	*Mori*	Multiple charges not touching each other. Distinguish HEAPED.	Fig. 32E
STANDING	*Tachi*	Said of a plant or flower supported by a stalk	Fig. 40F
TAILS UNITED	*Shiri-awase*	Said of elements in a WHEEL that face outward, but where the wheel lacks a distinct HUB.	Fig. 59C
TRIPLED		A group of three charges set into a new figure. They could be RADIAL, or CHASING, or even DIVIDED. Groups of three charges HEAPED or STACKED are not ordinarily called TRIPLED where they keep their individual shapes and do not form a new one.	Fig. 103F
WHEEL	*Guruma*	A group of charges, usually four or more, arranged RADIALLY and proceeding from a common center. Distinguish the cart-wheel, a common charge.	Fig. 58
WITH CHILD	*Ko-mochi*	Said of plant charges, where one element (usually a blossom) is positioned on the central axis, usually somewhat below center, against a background of another element of the same plant, for example leaves. It suggests a mother holding a baby on her lap.	Fig. 65

TERMS DESCRIBING THE LINE WITH WHICH A CHARGE IS DRAWN			
English	**Japanese**	**Definition**	**Example**
BONELESS	*Mokkotsu*	Said of a charge drawn without a ruled outline. See KORIN STYLE.	Fig. 24D
BROADLY-SPLIT LINE	*Owari*	Drawn with a doubled line and the parts separated, as if made for a stencil.	Fig. 23D
CHAMFERED		Said of the corners of a framing element where a square corner is replaced by a diagonal line.	Fig. 73F
DANCETTY		A European heraldic term to describe a line with a few broad indentations	Fig. 75B
DEMON LINE	*Oni*	Said of a charge whose outline is drawn with jagged rather than smooth lines.	Fig. 23A
DOUBLED (3)	*Kage*	See SHADOW LINE.	Fig. 23C
EMBATTLED		A European heraldic term to describe a line marked by alternate rectangular projections.	Fig. 97F
KORIN STYLE		In the style of the artist Ogata Korin, marked by radical simplicity, with images schematized and reduced to essential (or even no) outlines.	Fig. 24C
LOOPED		Drawn with a single continuous line.	Fig. 24B
SHADOW LINE	*Kage*	Drawn with a doubled outline. Typically the outline contrasts in shade with the field and the interior of the charge. Also called DOUBLED LINE.	Fig. 24A
VOIDED	*Chukage*	A European heraldic term meaning that a (usually geometric) charge is empty within its outline.	Fig. 97C

TERMS DESCRIBING THE FRAMING OF A MON			
English	**Japanese**	**Definition**	**Example**
ENCLOSED		Used when a charge is surrounded, but not by a formal frame. Thus: ENCLOSED IN A WELL-CRIB.	Fig. 67D
FRAMED		Enclosed in a formal frame at the outside of the mon.	Fig. 108A
IN A RING		Framed by a round border. The same construction is used for a device framed IN A SQUARE, A RHOMBUS, A LOZENGE, A SNOW WHEEL, or other form. Special treatment of corners is noted: IN A RHOMBUS WITH CHAMFERED (or INDENTED, or ROUNDED) CORNERS.	Fig. 7A
INDENTED		Said of the corners of a frame.	Fig. 111B
ON A DISK	*Mochi*	Framed by a circle (not a ring).	Fig. 4B
ROUNDED		Said of the corners of a frame.	
STOUT		Said of a framing ring noticeably thicker than usual.	
THIN		Said of a framing ring noticeably thinner than usual.	

ENGLISH NAMES FOR SELECTED CHARGES			
English	**Japanese**	**Definition**	**Example**
ASTROID	*Shippo*	A form made of four equal concave sides. See page 47.	Fig. 91B
BROCADE FLOWER	*Fusen-ryo*	A type of mon suggesting a part of a continuous complex pattern. See page 49.	Fig. 96
CONSTELLATION	*Hoshi*	One of several star-based figures. See page 44.	Figs. 82-83
HANABISHI	*Hanabishi*	A stylized flower designed to fit in a lozenge.	Fig. 97E
HANDLE	*Kan*	A double volute used as a framing device. See page 48. Also a common charge.	Figs 14C and 93
LOZENGE	*Hishi*	A compressed rhombus. See page 49.	Fig. 97A
MELON	*Mokko*	A lobed framing device. See page 48.	Fig. 95
SNOW WHEEL	*Yukiwa*	A stylized snow crystal, used as a framing device.	Page 89, No. 290
STARS	*Hoshi*	Small disks standing for stars – three to nine stars. See page 44.	Figs. 82-83
STRIPED ROUNDEL	*Hikiryo*	A specialized charge. See page 41.	Fig. 73
SWIRL	*Tomoe*	Nomenclature of swirl figures is discussed on page 45.	Fig. 87
SWORDS	*Ken*	Small bladelike additions to mon, sometimes serving as a DIFFERENCE. See page 38	Fig. 62A
TORTOISE SHELL	*Kikko*	A hexagonal figure. See page 42.	Fig. 78A
TRISKELION	*Tomoe-no-shin*	The negative space between the lobes of a triple swirl.	Fig. 88F
VINES	*Tsuru*	Small additions to mon, often serving as a DIFFERENCE. See page 38.	Fig. 62B

IV: VOCABULARY OF JAPANESE HERALDRY

A. PLANTS
1. FLOWERS
   a. Three-petalled blossoms
   b. Five-petalled blossoms
   c. Six-petalled blossoms
   d. Round blossoms
   e. Irregular blossoms
2. LEAVES
   a. Single leaves
   b. Complex leaf forms
   c. Leaves with blossoms or berries
   d. Stylized lobe forms
3. FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
4. STALKS AND SHOOTS
5. TREES

B. ANIMALS
1. QUADRUPEDS
2. BIRDS
3. SHELLFISH
4. INSECTS
5. ANIMAL PARTS

C. INANIMATE NATURAL WORLD

D. OBJECTS
1. ROUND OBJECTS
2. RECTANGULAR OBJECTS
3. IRREGULARLY SHAPED OBJECTS
4. PARTICULAR CATEGORIES
   a. Structures
   b. Hand tools
   c. Parts of an arrow
   d. Fittings of a ship
   e. Fans
   f. Hats

E. GEOMETRIC FIGURES

F. FIGURES OF NOTATION

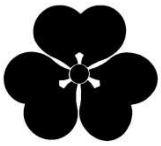
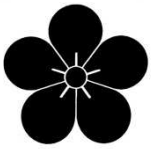
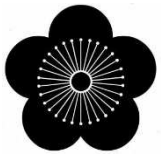
Having explored the grammar of Japanese heraldry with a few sample motifs, we are now ready to look at the larger population of charges. Of course not every charge used in Japanese heraldry is covered here, or needs to be. Many are seldom used, or appear only very late in the process after the strictly heraldic function of mon had been eclipsed. Many of these latecomers appear, when they do, in fairly straightforward rather than highly stylized form, and so even if they had heraldic significance they would be easily comprehensible without explanation.

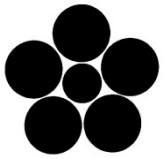
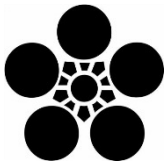
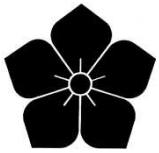
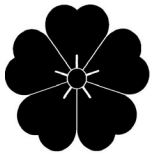
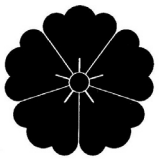
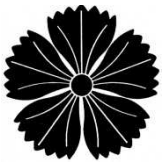
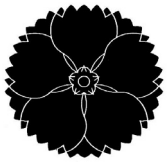
But that still leaves a great many charges. Below I have arranged the classic charges (and some later ones) by shape and category, with their most characteristic forms, so as to provide a sort of recognition guide like those used by bird-watchers and rock fanciers. This guide, and a basic understanding of the grammar of Japanese heraldry gathered from the previous chapters, should be enough for any careful observer to recognize what a given mon is about.

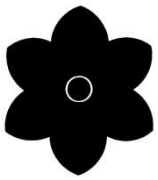
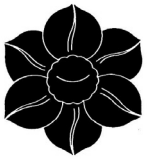
I have to sound a note of caution about the scientific names for plant charges. I have done the best I could to identify the species a Japanese heraldic charge is intended to approximate, but like much else about this subject, it is not always possible to be exact or precise. For example, is the *matsu* of Japanese heraldry the red pine, *Pinus denisflora*, or the black pine, *Pinus thunbergii*? Is the bamboo (*take*) *Phyllostachys edulis* or is it *Phyllostachys bambusoides*? Is the fern called *shida* really *Dryopteris sacrosancta*? There are many other kinds of ferns in Japan and China.

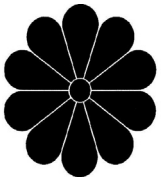
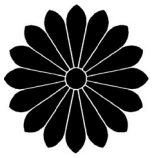
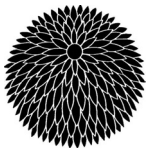
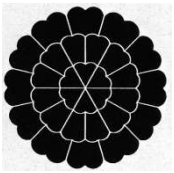
I have tried various lines of research to find expert identification, and have compared images of different species to see what matches best, and consulted both heraldic and botanic authorities, but in close cases I may have made a wrong choice, or the mon, which is essentially a folk image from a culture that did not organize its plants on Linnean lines, may not have a unique species at its root. But I hope in most cases my choice will be at least a reasonable guide. I am grateful to John Dower for the Japanese names for most of these charges, which I have adopted from his *Elements of Japanese Design*.

The examples have been arranged to permit relatively easy identification. Unlike the charges in European heraldry, which appear more or less the same whatever the composition, the charges in Japanese heraldry vary dramatically in form, and are subject to profound distortion as a matter of course. Accordingly I cannot possibly show every variety of every charge. In some cases I have included representative illustrations of the same charge in different categories, so bamboo, for example, is shown both in the section on stalks and the section on leaves, depending on what the example emphasizes. Reference numbers are given in the left-hand column.

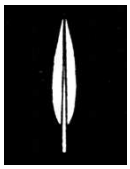
A. PLANT CHARGES		
A.1 FLOWERS		
A.1.a Three-Petalled Blossoms		
101		**Wood-sorrel (*katabami*).** *Oxalis corniculata.* Three lobes. Looks like a flower, but is really a kind of shamrock. A very common combining form in Japanese heraldry, usually with very small swords between the lobes.
102		**Mandarin orange (*tachibana*).** *Citrus tachibana.* The top view version, almost indistinguishable from the top view version of the tea plant (No. 103). *Tachibana* is usually viewed from the side (No. 188).
103		**Tea plant (*chanomi*).** *Gaultheria cuneata.* The top view version, almost indistinguishable from the top view version of the mandarin orange (No. 102). For a DOUBLED version, see No. 122. The tea plant is usually viewed from the side (No. 189).
A.1.b Five-Petalled Blossoms		
104		**Plum blossom (*ume*).** *Prunus mume.* The Chinese plum or Japanese apricot. A very popular charge. The petals of the heraldic blossom are perfectly round at the edges.
105		The plum blossom is sometimes highly abstracted, and the reproductive parts in the center more amply highlighted. Compare Nos. 106 and 107.

106		A *ume* so stylized as to be shown as five separate disks surrounding a central one is given the special name *umeboshi* (plum stars) – compare No. 107, and see Figure 85.
107		This *umeboshi* is a rear view (*ura*) – the part at the center represents the calyx, where the blossom attaches to the stem.
108		**Moonflower (*yugao*).** *Ipomoea alba.* The petals of the heraldic blossom are perfectly round at the edges, but are not separated like those of the plum. Easily confused with No. 105.
109		**Bellflower (*kikyo*).** *Platycodon grandiflora*. A popular charge. Sometimes called the balloon flower from the shape of its buds. The petals of the heraldic blossom are rounded but come to a point at the edge. See page 144 for many additional examples.
110		**Cherry (*sakura*).** *Prunus serrulata.* A favored flower in Japanese art and culture. The petals of the heraldic blossom are rounded, but with a single indentation in the edge of each petal.
111		**China flower (*karabana*).** This is a stylized form and does not represent any individual real-world flower. Its petals are rounded with two indentations in the edge of each petal.
112		**Persimmon (*kaki*).** *Diospyris kaki.* Not actually a flower, but the sepals between the fruit and its stem.
113		**Wild pink (*nadeshiko*).** *Dianthus superbus.* The heraldic blossom is marked by jagged indentations on each petal.
114		**Kerria (*yamabuki*).** *Kerria japonica*. Also called yellow rose. The petals are more fully rounded than on the wild pink. This one is DOUBLED. See also Nos. 128 and 193.

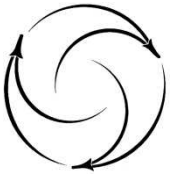
115		**Peony (*botan*).** *Paeonia lactiflora.* A motif formed of the leaves. Compare the blossom in Nos. 140 and 141.
116		**Shepherd's purse (*nazuna*).** *Capsella bursa-pastoris.* Also seen in five-, six-, and eight-lobed forms.
117		**Passion flower (*tokeiso*).** *Passiflora*. More often seen in six-petalled form (No. 119).
A.1.c Six-Petalled Blossoms		
118		**Gardenia (*kuchinachi*).** *Gardenia jasminoides.* Usually shown without any markings on the petals, it often appears DIVIDED or in profile, so only three petals are in view. See Figure 114C. Compare hemp (No. 429).
119		**Passion flower (*tokeiso*).** *Passiflora*. Also seen in five-petalled form (No. 117) or with leaves; the actual flower has ten petals. The heraldic passion flower has pronounced inner and outer rings (the inner rings bearing the reproductive parts). Shown here DOUBLED (*yae*), with a second ring of petals behind the first. Compare No. 174.
120		**Clematis (*kuremachisu*).** *Clematis florida.* Sometimes seen in five-petalled varieties. Compare No. 192.
121		**Narcissus (*suisen*).** *Narcissus tazetta.* Compare No. 190.
122		**Mandarin orange (*tachibana*).** *Citrus tachibana.* The top view version, DOUBLED. The single version is seen in No. 102. *Tachibana* is usually viewed from the side (No. 188).

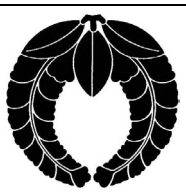
A.1.d Round Blossoms		
123		**Chrysanthemum (*kiku*).** *Chrysanthemum indicum*. This is one of the most important of the flower motifs because of its use by the imperial family. The imperial variety has rounded petals, like the example shown, but with 16 petals, often DOUBLED with another 16 petals behind, their tips emerging from between the others. See Figure 20C and further examples on page 148 and Plate 15. For the chrysanthemum leaf, see No. 144.
124		Another variety of the chrysanthemum has slightly pointed petals.
125		Yet another variety is called the thousand-petal chrysanthemum.
126		Chrysanthemum in the radically simplified Korin style – see page 26, note 14.
127		**Morning glory (*asagao*).** *Ipomoea nil.* This blossom is rarely shown from above, but almost always in side view (*yokomi*), either singly or in a radial pattern.
128		**Kerria (*yamabuki*).** *Kerria japonica*. Also called yellow rose. See also Nos. 114 and 193. Distinguished from chrysanthemum by lack of a round central hub.
A.1.e Irregular Blossoms		
129		**Mistletoe (*yadorigi*).** *Hoya carnosa.* Also called wax plant and porcelain flower. Not the European mistletoe. The heraldic flower is composed of several blossoms in profile, following their shape on the actual flower. The number can range widely, and can be radially symmetrical FACING OUT, or (as here) DIVIDED, FACING IN.
130		**Arrowroot (*kuzu*).** *Pueraria lobata*. Called kudzu in America. The heraldic blossom is rarely shown from above, but almost always from the side, either singly or radially. For the leaf pattern, see No. 159.
131		**Iris (*kakitsubata*).** *Iris laevigata.* Although seen in a variety of forms and combinations, the distinctively-shaped triple blossoms are the key to identification. Sometimes the mon shows just the blossom, and sometimes the spiky leaves also (No. 184).

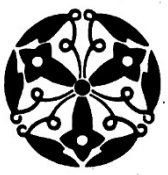
132		**Lily *(hiogi).*** *Iris domestica.* Sometimes called blackberry lily or leopard flower. The blossom can be open or (as in No. 133) closed.
133		Lily with closed blossoms. Shown: three DIVIDED sprays of three blossoms, CHASING (so only two blossoms of each spray are visible).
134		**Lotus (*hasu*).** *Nelumbo nucifera*. See also No. 147 (leaf) and 204 (root).
135		**Orchid (*fukiran*).** *Vanda falcata.* Despite its beauty and versatility as a graphic image, it was not used much in the classic period of Japanese heraldry. The long and languidly curved petals with pointed ends are the key to recognition; compare No. 341 (*moshi*: paper decorations), which usually have blunt ends. Compare No. 185, the flower on the Manchukuo imperial flag (page 139), sometimes called an orchid.
136		A version of orchid suggesting the construction FORMING A CIRCLE.
137		A version of orchid suggesting the construction CONFRONTED AND EMBRACING.
138		Three orchids arranged in a RADIATING pattern, but because of the innermost leaves it has only rotational symmetry.
139		This version looks random, IN DISARRAY, but is actually carefully constructed to express rotational symmetry.

140		**Peony (botan).** *Paeonia lactiflora.* A very popular and prestigious mon, although indistinct and ungainly in appearance. It is shown in many forms, some of them very complex and fussy, but the keys to recognition are the distinctive cloud-like shape of the blossom, and the three-pointed structure of the leaves (see No. 141 below).
141		Peony WITH CHILD.
A.2 LEAVES		
A.2.a Single Leaves		
142		**Oak (*kashiwa*).** *Quercus dentata.* A popular charge. Multiple leaves (No. 163) form the basic unit.
143		**Reed (*ashi*).** *Phragmites japonicus.* A single leaf is an unusual form for this plant – more often the entire stalk (No. 222) or DIVIDED halves of it (No. 223) are shown.
144		**Chrysanthemum (*kiku*).** *Chrysanthemum indicum*. Usually there will be some form of the blossom present too (see Figures 63D, E). The chrysanthemum leaf alone is almost indistinguishable from the narrow form of the mulberry leaf (No. 158). Shown: two chrysanthemum leaves, CONFRONTED and EMBRACING.
145		**Ivy (*tsuta*).** *Parthenocissus tricuspidata.* Called Japanese ivy; not really ivy, but a woodbine. A common and versatile charge.
146		**Plantain (*basho*).** *Musa basjoo.* Really the Japanese banana. The poet Basho took his pseudonym from the banana trees that grew near his hut. The leaves typically separate in several places. Shown: two plantain leaves INCLINING OUT and EMBRACING. Compare the fern (No. 219).
147		**Lotus (*hasu*).** *Nelumbo nucifera*. See also No. 134 (blossom) and 204 (lotus root).

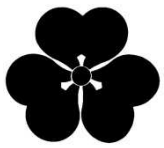
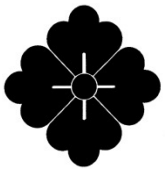
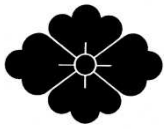
148		**Cedar (*sugi*).** *Cryptomeria japonica.* What appears to be a leaf-form is really the entire tree, as can be seen from the roots at the bottom.
149		**Hemp (*asanoha*).** *Cannabis sativa.* Known in classical Japan mainly as a source of fiber for ropes and fabric, not for its psychoactive properties (marijuana). Also appears as a compound leaf (No. 166), and as an abstract geometric form (No. 429). The plain leaf is shown facing down.
150		**Ginkgo (*icho*).** *Ginkgo biloba.* What looks like a blossom seen from the side is actually a leaf of a tree. See also the example on the front cover of this book.
151		**Holly (*hiragi*).** *Ilex crenata.*
152		**Hollyhock (*aoi*).** *Asarum caulescens* (actually a wild ginger). The emblem of the mighty Tokugawa clan (see text figure on page 7), and restricted by law during the period of the Shogunate. Shown here within a framing *kan*. Very often TRIPLED; sometimes as three STANDING leaves which may arise from a common stalk (see Figure 40F, and No. 291).
153		**Spatterdock (*kohone*).** *Nuphar lutea* (yellow pond lily). Popular because its leaf closely resembles the restricted hollyhock. The key to identification is the middle spear on the leaf, much more dominantly positioned over the others.
154		**Maple (*kaede*).** *Acer palmatum.* Only the leaves appear, singly or in a spray.
155		**Bayberry (*nagi*).** *Nageia nagi*. Sometimes a whole leafy branch is shown rather than a single leaf. Also called broadleaf pine. Shown: two leaves CROSSED, RIGHT-LEADING OVERLYING.

156		**Palm *(shuro).*** *Trachycarpus fortunei.* The hemp palm, or Chinese windmill palm. It is of course a tree, but only a single leaf is shown. Compare the almost indistinguishable palm fan (No. 409).
157		**Mulberry (*kaji*).** *Broussonetia papyrifera*. The paper mulberry tree. Sometimes seen flattened at the top, like a thistle. See also page 122, Figure A.
158		The version of mulberry used in multiplied form is considerable narrower than that seen alone. In this form the leaf is almost indistinguishable from the chrysanthemum leaf (No. 144). Shown: three mulberry leaves CHASING LEFT.
A.2.b Complex Leaf Forms		
159		**Arrowroot (*kuzu*).** *Pueraria lobata*. Called kudzu in America. For the blossom pattern, see No. 130.
160		**Bamboo (*take*).** *Phyllostachys edulis* or *bambusoides*. A very popular charge, seen in many forms, including leaves, leaves and stalk (No. 183), and sections of mature stalk (No. 213). See also No. 215 (bamboo shoots), and many additional examples on page 12.
161		**Pine (*matsu*).** *Pinus thunbergii.* A very versatile charge, found here as three pine needles CHASING, but also as a leafy bough (No. 162), a pine cone (No. 207), a complete tree (No. 226), and even as stylized geometric form (No. 227).
162		Two pine boughs, CHASING. Or they could be seen as CONFRONTED, ONE REVERSED.
163		**Oak (*kashiwa*).** *Quercus dentata.* A popular charge. Sometimes shown with vines or acorns, Compare No. 142 (single leaf).
164		**Ginger (*myoga*).** *Zinziber mioga.* The design is thought to have been derived from the horse-tassel (*gyoyo*), not a plant but military equipment − see discussion at No. 351. *Myoga* usually has veined leaves, while *gyoyo* has a kind of radial ornament at the broadest point of the largest lobe. The two motifs can be very difficult to distinguish. Unusually, the basic form of both motifs have two CONFRONTED elements.

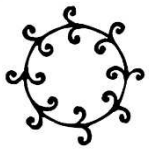
165		**Calamus (*shobu*).** *Acorus calamus.*
166		**Hemp (*asanoha*).** *Cannabis sativa.* Also appears as a single leaf (No. 149), and as an abstract geometric form (No. 429).
167		**Loquat (*biwa*).** *Eriobotrya japonica.* Also called Japanese medlar. Sometimes seen with fruit (No. 179). The narrow leaves, in compound form, are sometimes meant for oak.
168		**Reed (*ashi*).** *Phragmites japonicus.* A particularly graceful motif. This one is DIVIDED and CONFRONTED. See also Nos. 143 and 222.
169		**Barberry (*nandin*).** *Nandina domestica.* Sometimes just the leaves appear, or just the berries. Compare No. 186.
170		**Chinese plantain (*obako*).** *Plantago asiatica.* Compare No. 194.
A.2.c Leaves with Blossoms or Berries		
171		**Paulownia (*kiri*).** *Paulownia imperialis*. One of the most important and prestigious of the plant charges, an imperial emblem. It was granted by the emperor of the time to the Ashikaga shoguns, and to the regent Hideyoshi, and is now used as an emblem of office by the Japanese prime minister. Its characteristic form is the model for similar arrangements in many very different plants, from oak to eggplant, and even inanimate objects. See discussion on page 41. The number of blossoms on the racemes at the top can be defining qualities, and are often separately blazoned by stating the number on the side and central stalks. Thus this is paulownia 5,7.
172		**Wisteria (*fuji*).** *Wisteria floribunda.* A very popular charge. Usually shown with two racemes of flowers DESCENDING (*sagari*), and one spray of three leaves.

172A		Reversed, wisteria is called ASCENDING (*nobori*).
173		Wisteria in a RADIATING form.
174		**Passion flower (*tokeiso*).** *Passiflora*. Ordinarily shown as a six-petalled flower (see Nos. 117 and 119), but because *tokeiso*'s reproductive parts are very dramatic sometimes no petals are shown, but just the prominent anthers, ungainly arrayed in a rotationally symmetrical arrangement (see Figure 57E). This example adds leaves.
175		**Bush clover (*hagi*).** *Lespedeza bicolor.* Seen in many forms, but the plain oval leaf with the single division is the key to identification.
176		**Water plantain (*omodaka*).** *Sagittaria sagittifolia*. Also called arrowhead plant from the distinctive shape of the leaves. A popular, versatile and easily recognized charge.
177		**Knotweed (*itadori*).**
178		**Grape (*budo*).** *Vitis amurensis.* Sometimes seen with the fruit, sometimes just the leaves. Not a symbol of wine in Japan.
179		**Loquat (*biwa*).** *Eriobotrya japonica.* Also called Japanese medlar. Shown here: three BENT leaves, CHASING, with clusters of fruit. Also seen with leaves only (No. 167).
180		**Forsythia (*rengyo*).** *Forsythia japonica.* Unusual but distinctive. This version is TRIPLED and DIVIDED.

181		**Gentian (rindo).** *Gentiana scabra.* A very popular charge. The gentian is usually shown displayed like a pauwlonia. While many other arrangements are known, it almost always combines leaves and blossoms.
182		Here gentian appears WITH CHILD.
183		**Bamboo (*take*).** *Phyllostachys edulis* or *bambusoides*. A popular charge, seen here as leaves and stalk, but also in other forms including leaves only (No. 160) and sections of mature stalk (No. 213). See also bamboo shoots for the edible portion (No. 215). Many additional examples appear on page 12.
184		**Iris (*kakitsubata*).** *Iris laevigata.* The distinctively-shaped blossoms, with three petals seen from the side, are the key to identification. Shown: iris CONFRONTED, ONE REVERSED. Compare No. 131.
185		**Orchid (*fukiran*).** *Vanda falcata.* Variously indentified also as *eupatorium*, *Cymbidium goeringii*, and *Sorghum bicolor*. Despite its beauty and versatility as a graphic image, it was not used much in the classic period of Japanese heraldry. See the Manchukuo imperial flag on page 139, and compare Nos. 135-39.
186		**Barberry (*nandin*).** *Nandina domestica.* Sometimes just the leaves appear, or just the berries. Compare No. 169.
187		**Pepper (*togarishi*).** *Capsicum annuum.* A fruit, but it fits visually in this section. Compare No. 208 (fruit) and Figure 66E.
188		**Mandarin orange (*tachibana*).** *Citrus tachibana.* Very similar to the tea-plant (No. 189), except for additional leaves behind the blossom. Compare the top view (No. 102).
189		**Tea plant (*chanomi*).** *Gaultheria cuneata.* Very similar to the mandarin orange (No. 188), except for the lack of additional leaves behind the blossom. Compare the top view (No. 103).

190		**Narcissus (*suisen*).** *Narcissus tazetta.* The six-petalled blossom with the round center is a key to identification. Compare No. 121.
191		**Violet (*sumire*).** *Viola mandshurica.*
192		**Clematis (*kuremachisu*).** *Clematis florida.* The crease in the middle of the petal is not always present, but when it is it serves as a key to identification. Compare No. 120
193		**Kerria (*yamabuki*).** *Kerria japonica*. Also called yellow rose. Shown here WITH CHILD. Compare Nos. 114 and 128.
194		**Chinese plantain (*obako*).** *Plantago asiatica.* Compare No. 170.
A.2.d Stylized Lobe Forms		
195		**Wood-sorrel (*katabami*).** *Oxalis corniculata.* Three lobes. Looks like a flower, but is really a kind of shamrock. A very common combining form in Japanese heraldry, usually with swords (seen very small here) between the lobes.
196		**Paddy plant (*denjiso*).** *Marsilea quadrifolia.* Sometimes called water clover. Like the China flower but with four lobes.
197		***Hanabishi* flower.** Although it looks like the paddy plant (No. 196) compressed to fit a horizontal lozenge, I think it is a stylized form and not any particular plant. It is a very prominent feature of Japanese heraldry, used alone and to fill lozenges, *shippo*, and other standard figures.
198		**Five lobes**. Persimmon. Some five-lobed figures have petals rather than leaves or sepals; to aid identification they are displayed in the section on five-petalled flowers.

199		***Mokko***. This is the schematic melon (*mokko*), used as a frame, not the actual melon (No. 205) – see discussion at page 48. It is seen with as few as three or as many as six lobes.
200		**Pear (*nashi*).** *Pyrus pyrifolia*. Not really a leaf form, but derived from the cross-section of the fruit. Eight lobes of unequal size.
	A.3 FRUITS AND VEGETABLES	
201		**Clove (*choji*).** *Syzygium aromaticum.* A very versatile charge, shown in many distorted forms and combinations. Compare dragon claws (No. 269).
202		**Eggplant (*nasu*).** *Solanum melongena.* Sometimes shown without leaves. The bulbous fruit is the key to identification.
203		**Gourd (*hyotan*).** *Lagenaria siceraria.* Bottle gourd or calabash.
204		**Lotus root.** *Nelumbo nucifera.* See also Nos. 134 (blossom) and 147 (leaf).
205		**Melon (*uri*).** *Cucumis melo.* More of a cucumber, really. Distinguish *mokko* (No. 199), called a melon but actually a framing element.
206		**Peach (*momo*).** *Prunus persica.*
207		**Pine (*matsu*).** *Pinus thunbergii.* A very versatile charge, found here as a pine cone, but also seen as pine needles (No. 161), as a leafy bough (No. 162), as a complete tree (No. 226), and even as stylized geometric form (No. 227).

208		**Pepper (*togarishi*).** *Capsicum annuum.* An unusual charge, not used in the classic period of Japanese heraldry, but very versatile. Compare No. 187 (fruit and leaf), and see also Figure 66E.
209		**Radish (*daikon*).** *Raphanus sativus.*
210		**Turnip (*kabu*).** *Brassica rapa*.
211		**Walnut (*kurumi*).** *Juglans ailantifolia.* Also seen with leaves.
212		**Chestnut (*kuri*).** *Castanea crenata*. Shown: IN A RING, three chestnuts FACING IN, ENTIRE.
A.4 STALKS AND SHOOTS		
213		**Bamboo (*take*).** *Phyllostachys edulis* or *bambusoides*. A popular charge, seen in many forms, including also leaves (No. 160), leaves and stalk (No. 183), etc. See also bamboo shoots for the edible portion (No. 215), and many additional examples on page 12.
214		Intersecting rings of bamboo stalk.
215		**Bamboo shoots (*take*).** *Phyllostachys edulis*. Compare Nos. 160, 183, and 213).
216		**Bracken (*warabi*).** *Pteridium aquilinum*. Also called fernbrake. This graceful charge appears mainly as curly shoots and vines. The key to identification is the rounded fiddlehead structure at the end of the shoot. Also used as a frame – see Figure 108A.

217		Bracken forming a circle.
218		Severely stylized bracken.
219		**Fern (*shida*).** *Gleichenia longissima.* Usually shown in pairs or triplets, with a fiddlehead or other decorative element at the base of the fronds. Compare the plantain (No. 146).
220		**Millet (*awa*).** *Echinochloa esculenta.* Usually shows leaves, stalk and head. This CONFRONTED pair is INCLINING OUT and EMBRACING.
221		**Rice (*ine*).** *Oryza sativa.* Rice is usually shown in a sheaf, bound together as for an offering.
222		**Reed (*ashi*).** *Phragmites japonicus.* The channel down the length of the leaf is a key to identification. These reeds are EMBRACING, as they cross into each other's visual space. Compare Nos. 143 and 223.
223		Confronted reeds, DIVIDED but not EMBRACING.
224		**Pampas grass (*susuki*).** *Miscanthus sinensis.* Two stands of pampas grass, LEANING AWAY and EMBRACING. The delicate crossing of the bottom-most shoot constitutes the embrace. The multiple leaf structure at the top of the stalk distinguishes pampas grass from reed.

TABLE CONTINUES ON PAGE 82 →

PAINTINGS BY EMMANUEL VALERIO, TO ACCOMPANY HIS ESSAY
"JAPANESE HERALDRY, BATTLE FLAGS AND STANDARDS IN THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI"

PLATE 1

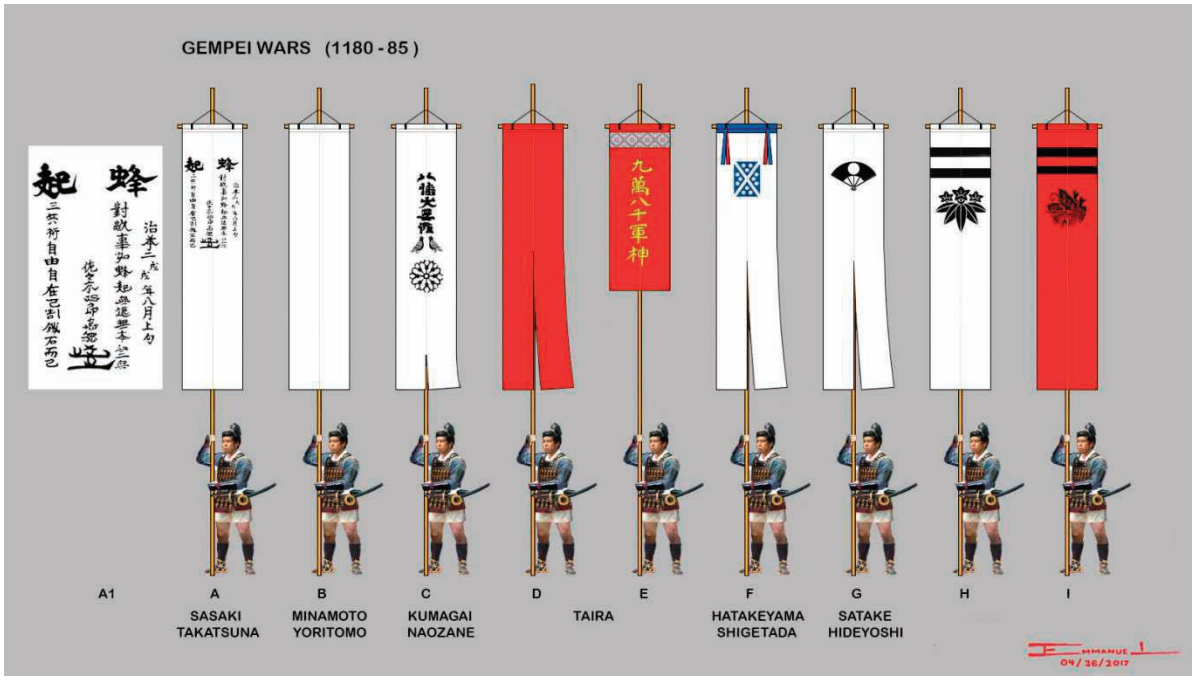


PLATE 1A. THE GEMPEI WARS (page 109)

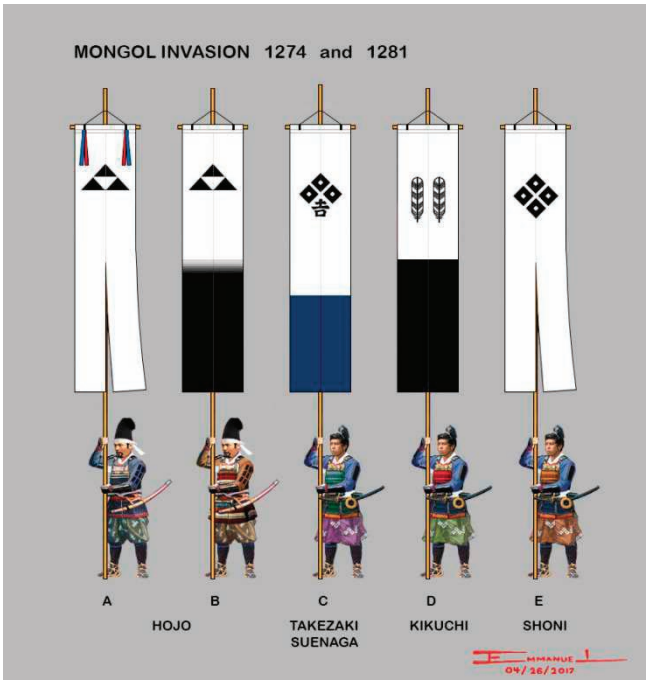


PLATE 1B. THE MONGOL INVASIONS (page 112)

PAINTINGS BY EMMANUEL VALERIO, TO ACCOMPANY HIS ESSAY
"JAPANESE HERALDRY, BATTLE FLAGS AND STANDARDS IN THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI"

PLATE 2

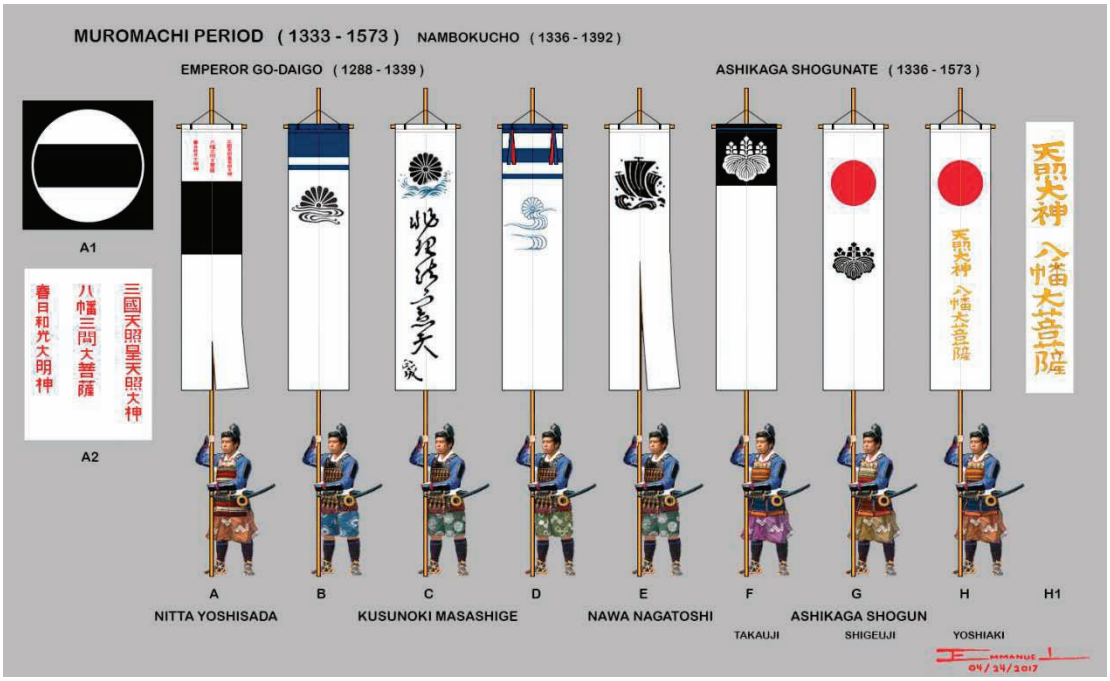


PLATE 2A. NANBOKU-CHO PERIOD (page 113
THE ASHIKAGA SHOGUNATE (page 114)

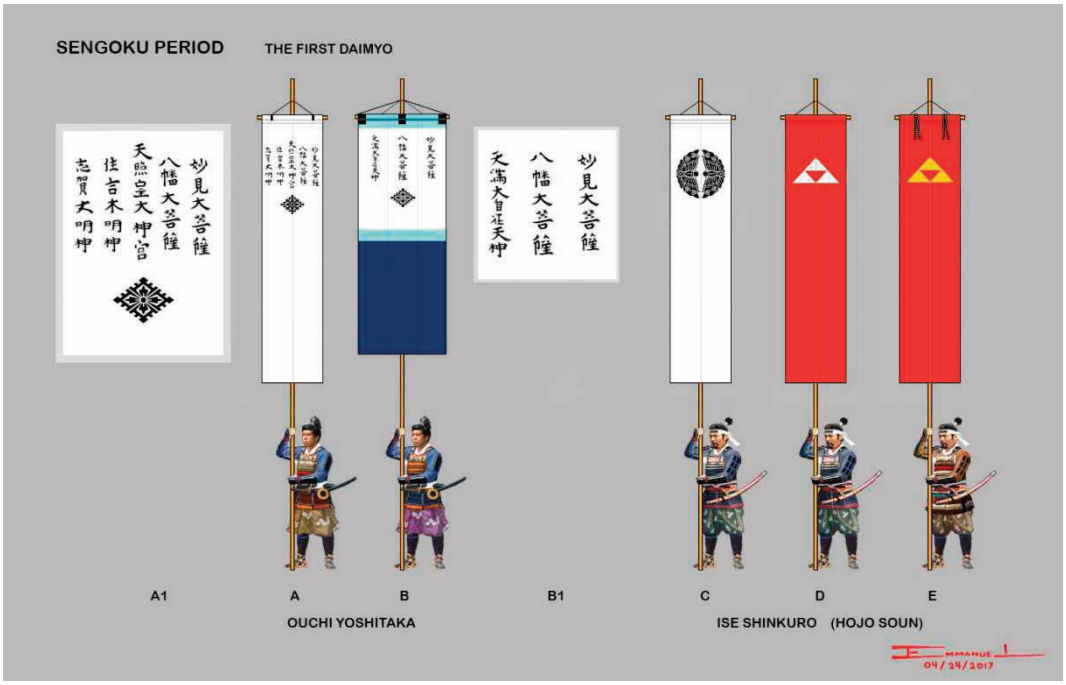


PLATE 2B. THE SENGOKU PERIOD: THE FIRST DAIMYO (page 115)

PAINTINGS BY EMMANUEL VALERIO, TO ACCOMPANY HIS ESSAY
"JAPANESE HERALDRY, BATTLE FLAGS AND STANDARDS IN THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI"

PLATE 3

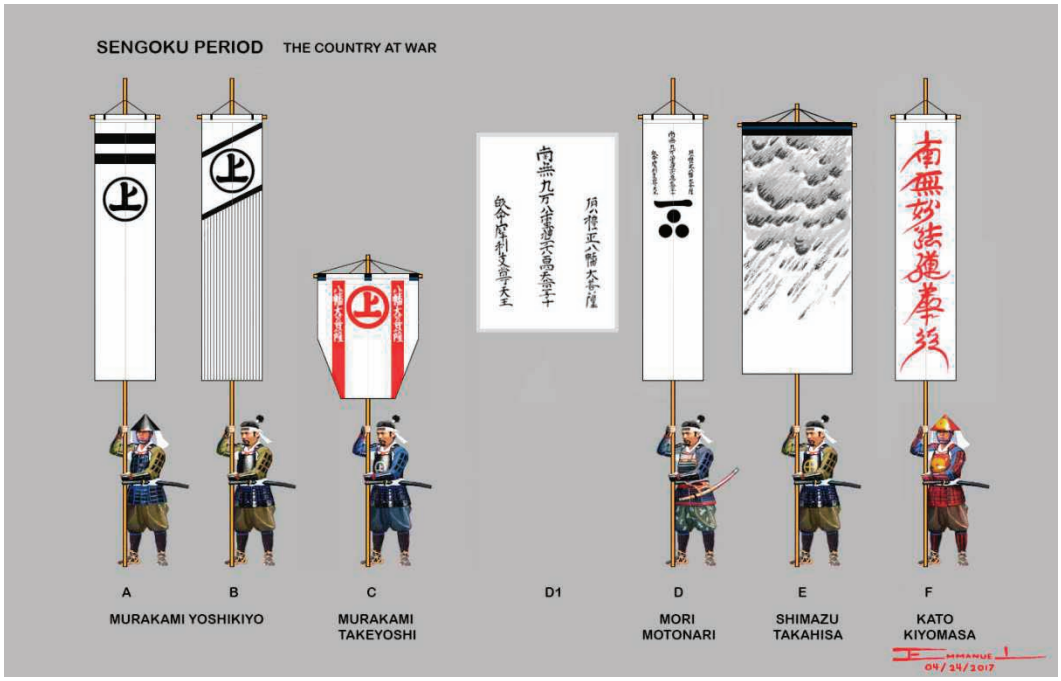


PLATE 3A. THE SENGOKU PERIOD: THE COUNTRY AT WAR (page 116)

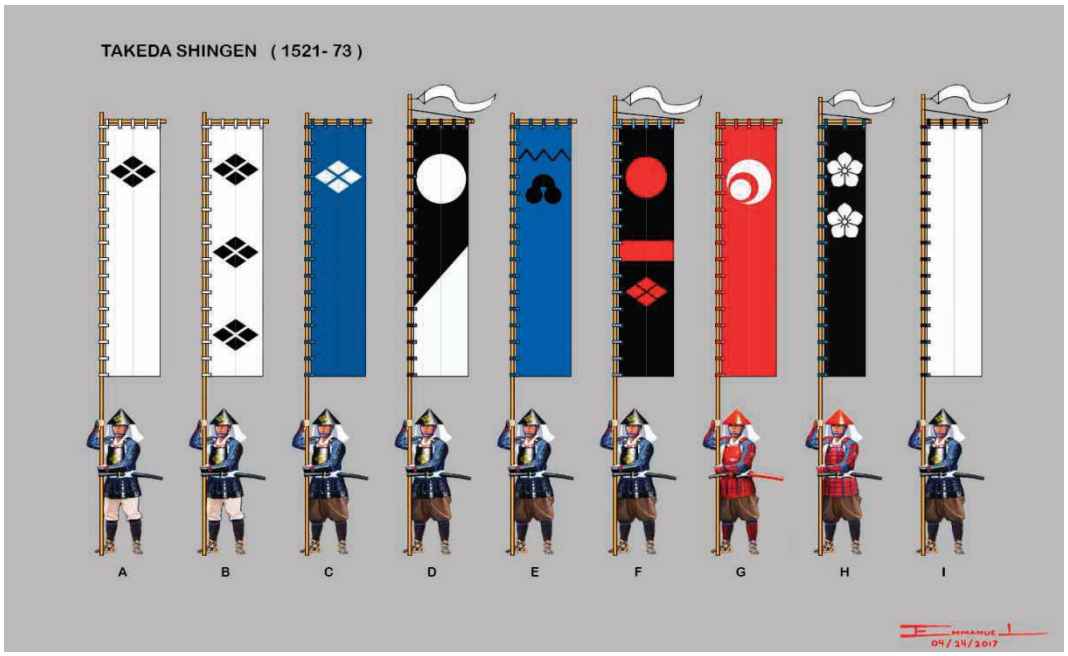


PLATE 3B. TAKEDA SHINGEN 1 (page 118)

PAINTINGS BY EMMANUEL VALERIO, TO ACCOMPANY HIS ESSAY
"JAPANESE HERALDRY, BATTLE FLAGS AND STANDARDS IN THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI"

PLATE 4

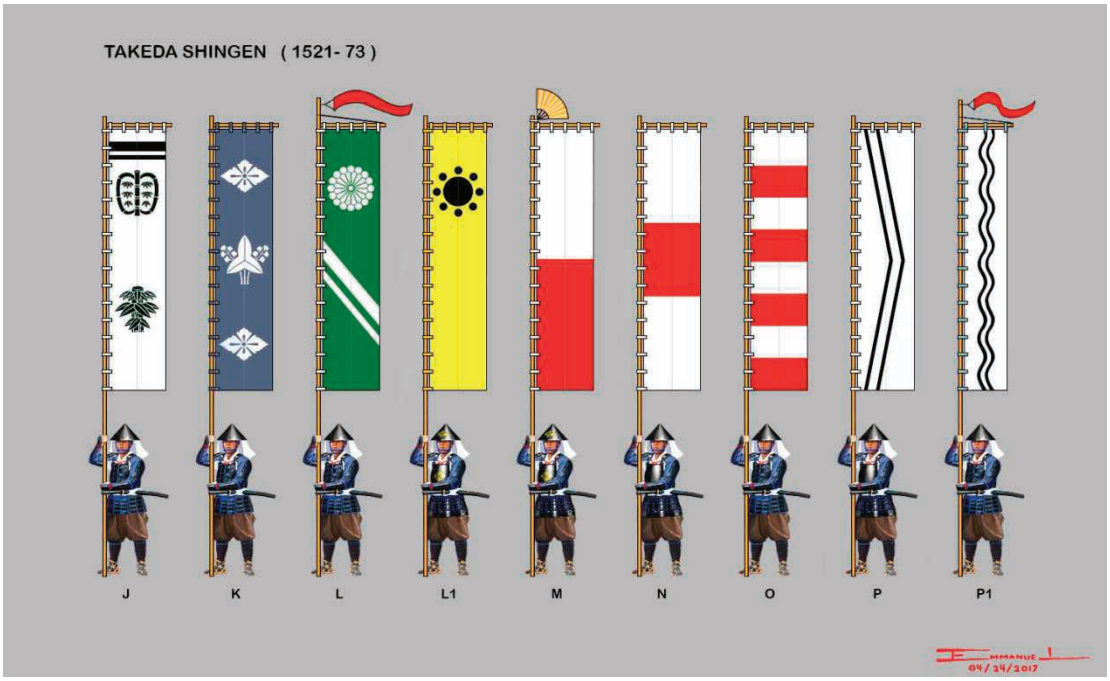


PLATE 4A. TAKEDA SHINGEN 2 (page 119)

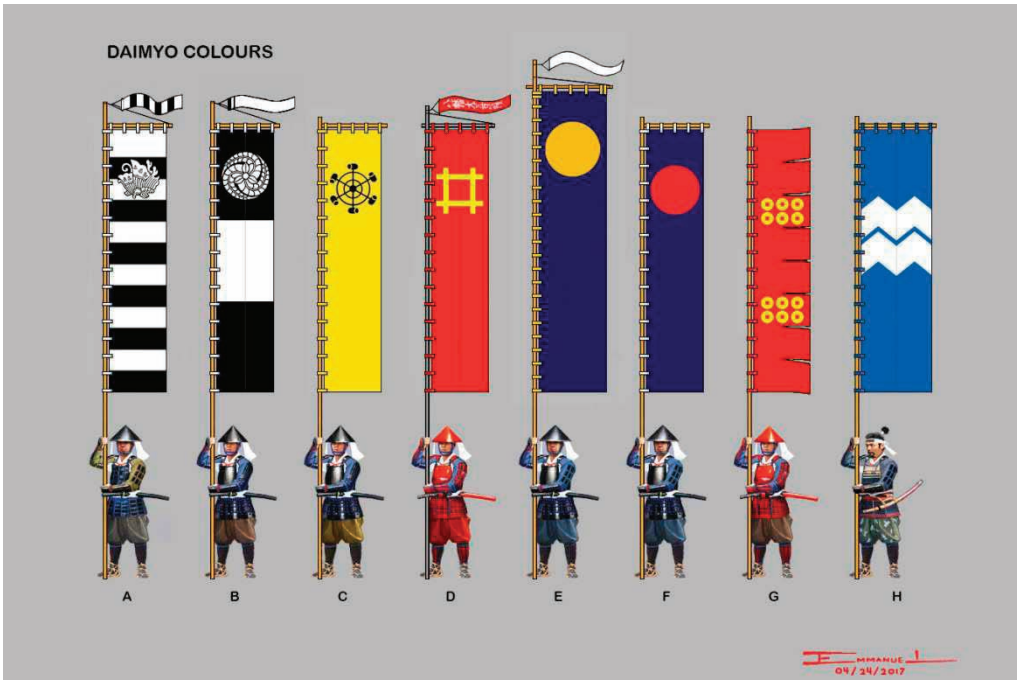


PLATE 4B. DAIMYO COLORS (page 120)

PAINTINGS BY EMMANUEL VALERIO, TO ACCOMPANY HIS ESSAY
"JAPANESE HERALDRY, BATTLE FLAGS AND STANDARDS IN THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI"

PLATE 5

PLATE 5A. UMA JIRUSHI (page 121)

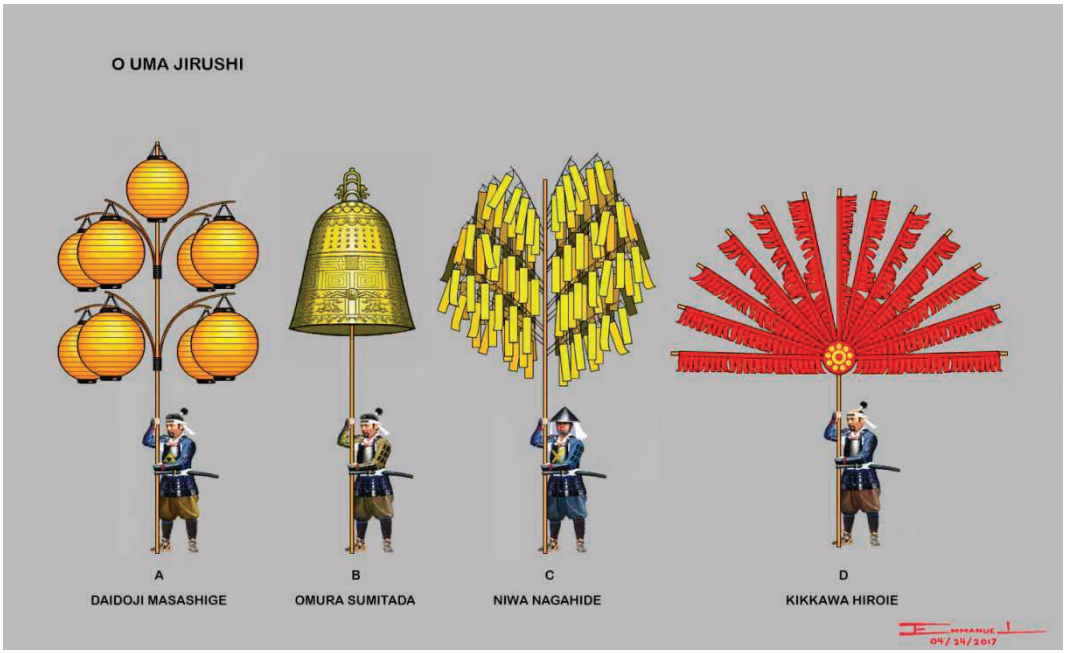


PLATE 5B. O UMA JURISHI: THE GREAT STANDARD (page 123)

PAINTINGS BY EMMANUEL VALERIO, TO ACCOMPANY HIS ESSAY
"JAPANESE HERALDRY, BATTLE FLAGS AND STANDARDS IN THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI"

PLATE 6

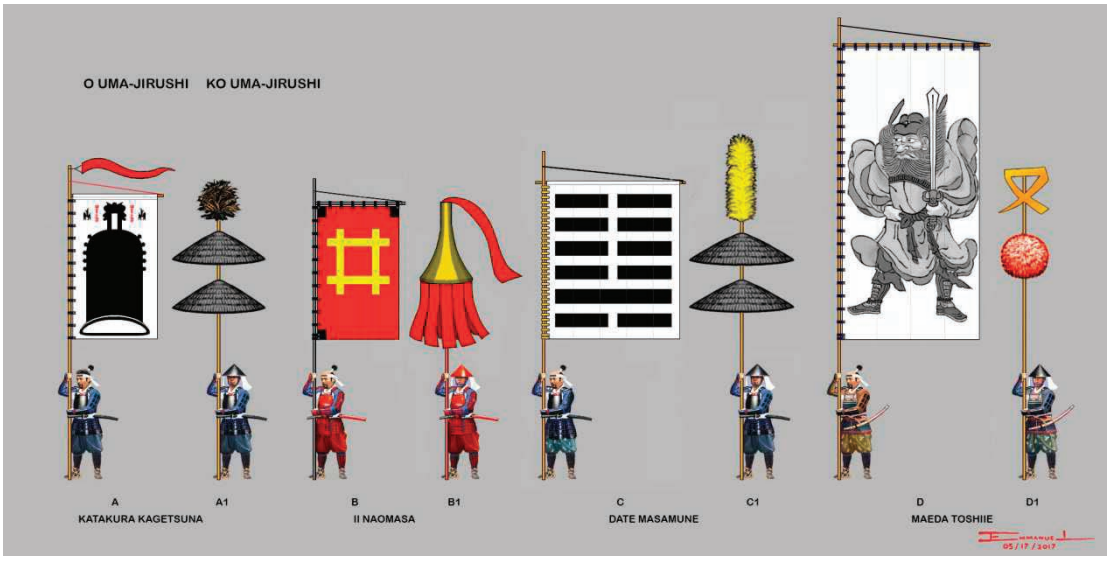


PLATE 6A. THE GREAT AND LESSER STANDARDS (page 124)

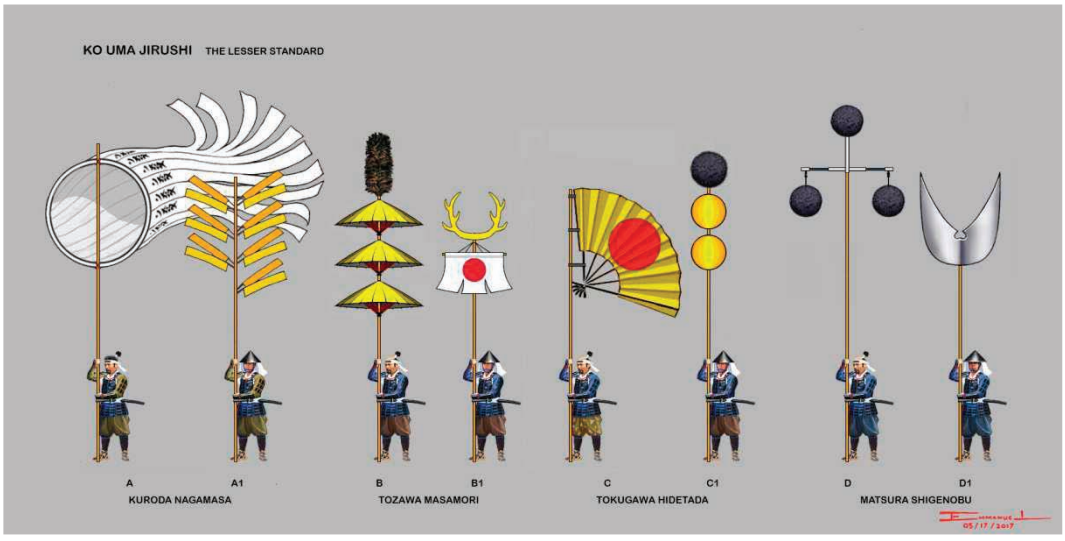


PLATE 6B. KO UMA JURUSHI: THE LESSER STANDARD (page 124)

PAINTINGS BY EMMANUEL VALERIO, TO ACCOMPANY HIS ESSAY
"JAPANESE HERALDRY, BATTLE FLAGS AND STANDARDS IN THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI"

PLATE 7

PLATE 7A. THE SASHIMONO (page 125)

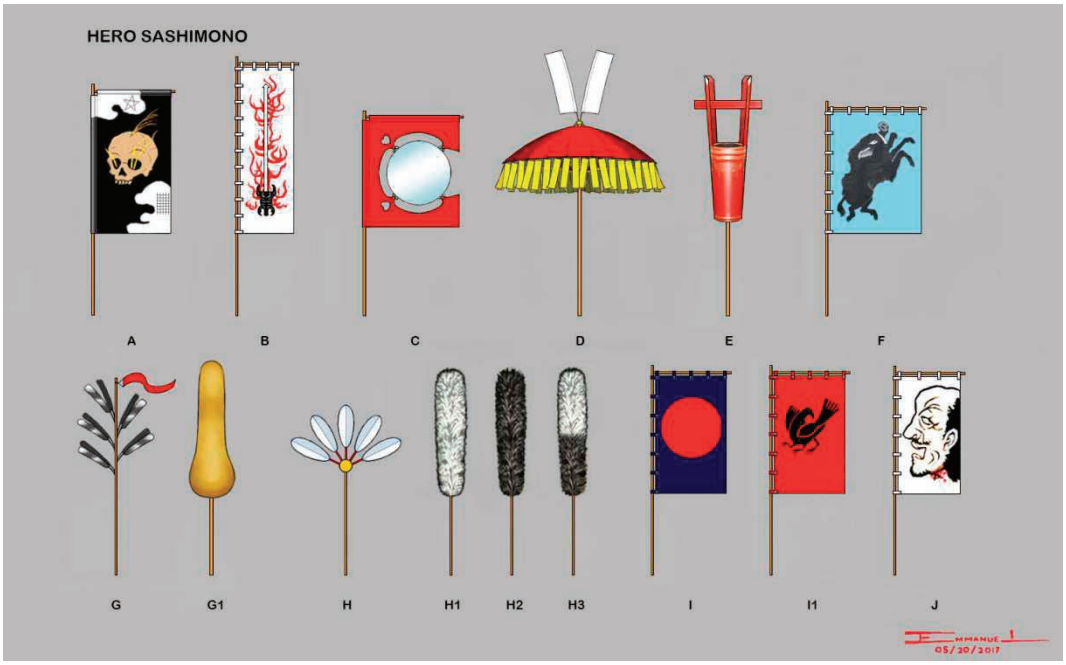


PLATE 7B. HERO SASHIMONO (page 127)

PAINTINGS BY EMMANUEL VALERIO, TO ACCOMPANY HIS ESSAY
"JAPANESE HERALDRY, BATTLE FLAGS AND STANDARDS IN THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI"

PLATE 8

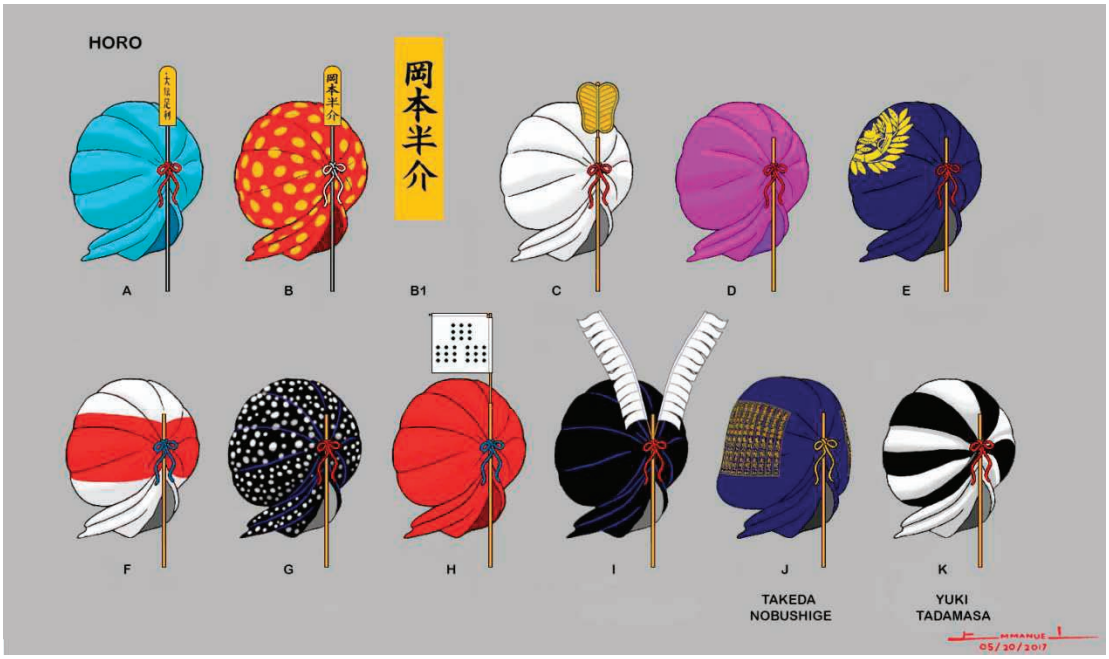


PLATE 8A. THE HORO (page 129)

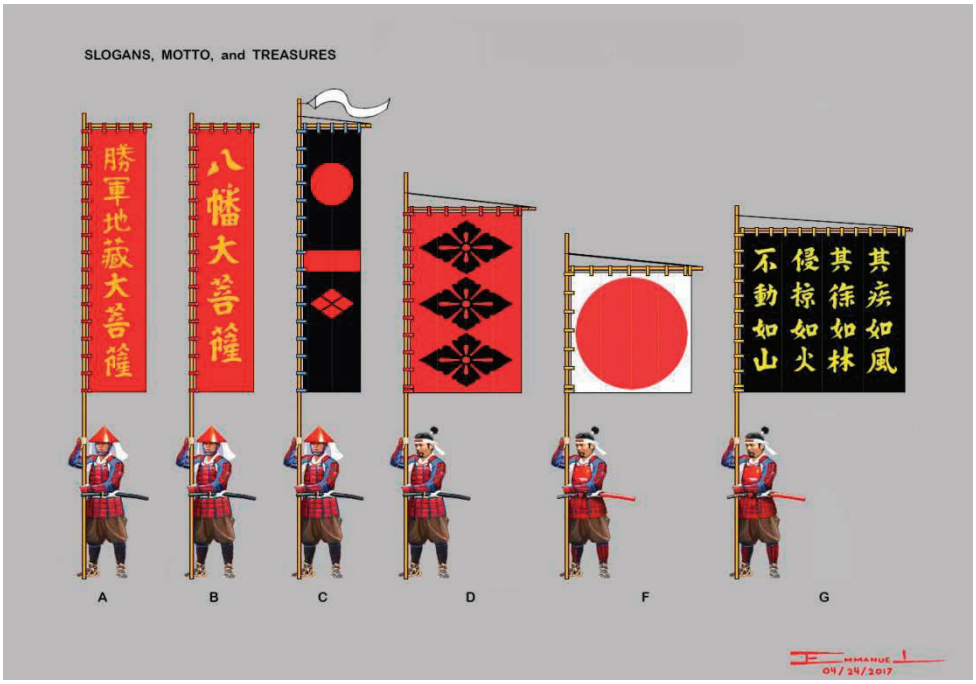


PLATE 8B. SLOGANS, MOTTOES AND TREASURES (page 130)

PAINTINGS BY EMMANUEL VALERIO, TO ACCOMPANY HIS ESSAY
"JAPANESE HERALDRY, BATTLE FLAGS AND STANDARDS IN THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI"

PLATE 9

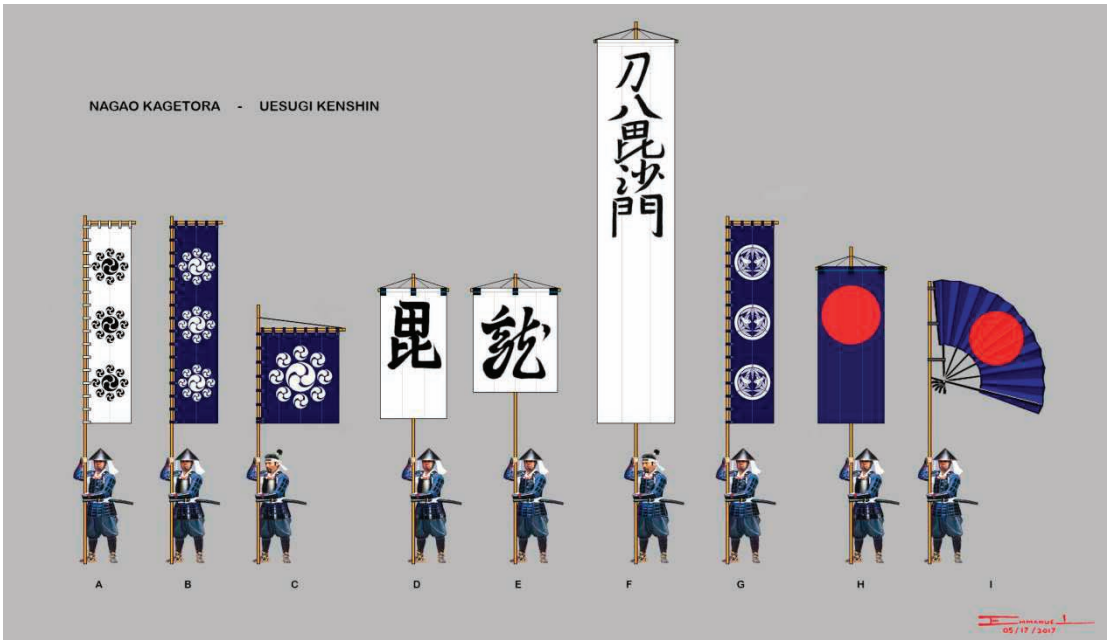


PLATE 9A. NAGAO KAGETORA AND UESUGI KENSHIN (page 131)

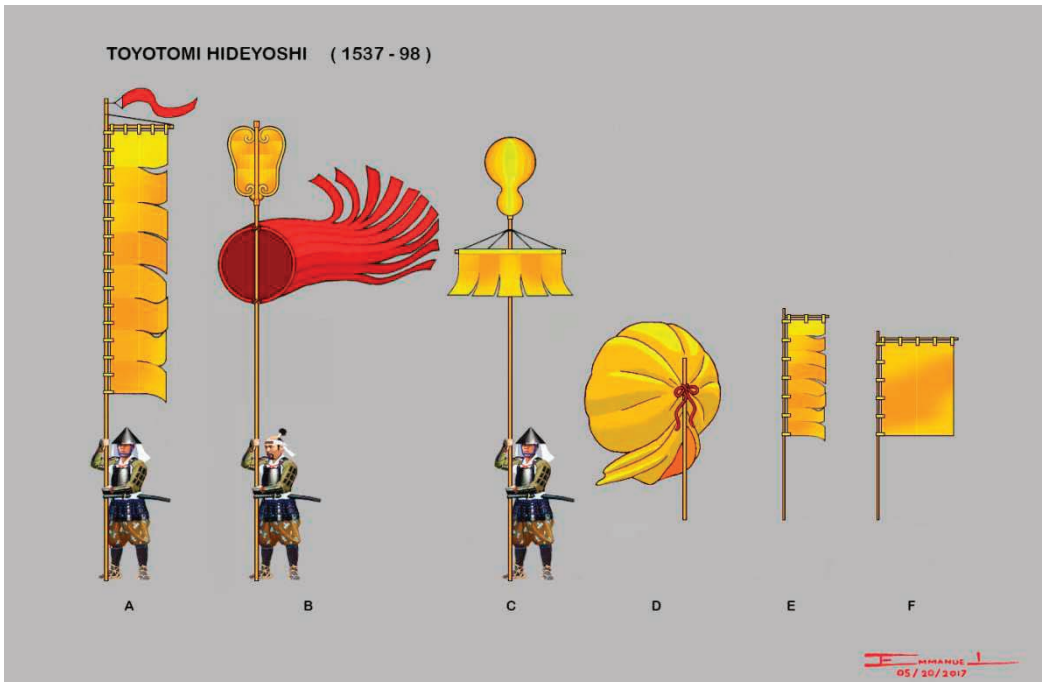


PLATE 9B. TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI (page 131)

PAINTINGS BY EMMANUEL VALERIO, TO ACCOMPANY HIS ESSAY
"JAPANESE HERALDRY, BATTLE FLAGS AND STANDARDS IN THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI"

PLATE 10

PLATE 10A. ARMOR (page 132)

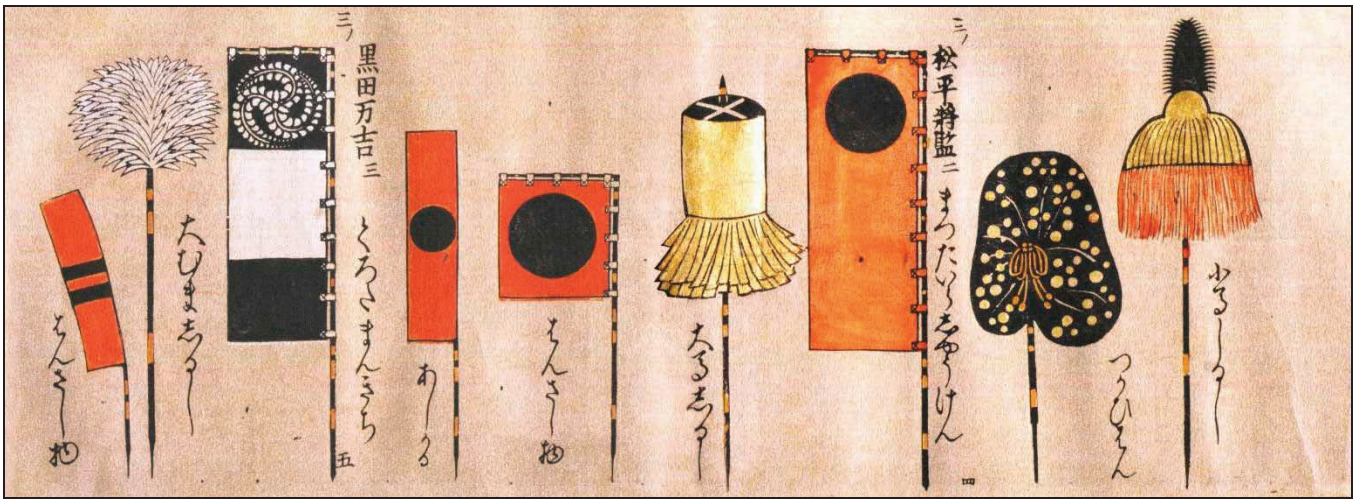
PLATE 10B. JINBAORI (page 133)

PLATE 11

A: DAWN AT KAWANAKAJIMA, by Emmanuel Valerio. Before the Fourth Battle of Kawanakajima in 1561, Takeda Shingen (H) receives an alarming report from his *tsukaiban* [battlefield messenger] (F2). The Uesugi army is not fleeing, but advancing in battle formation. Shingen's chief strategist Yamamoto Kansuke (G) knows he has been outmaeuvered by the great Uesugi Kenshin. [Artist's caption]

B: BATTLE OF KAWANAKAJIMA. Woodcut by Utagawa Yoshikazu (1857).

PLATE 12



A: Detail of the woodblock print *O Uma Jurushi* (17th century). *Standards of Ogasawara, Provincial Governor of Shinano*.

B: Page from the manuscript *Hata Uma–jirushi Ezu* (17th century). *Banner of Ikeda Mitsumasa* (1609-82): Black and white stripes; white pennant with black butterfly mon. *Standard of Todo Takatora* (1556-1630): Gold hat with vermilion fringe and black feather ornament.

PLATE 13

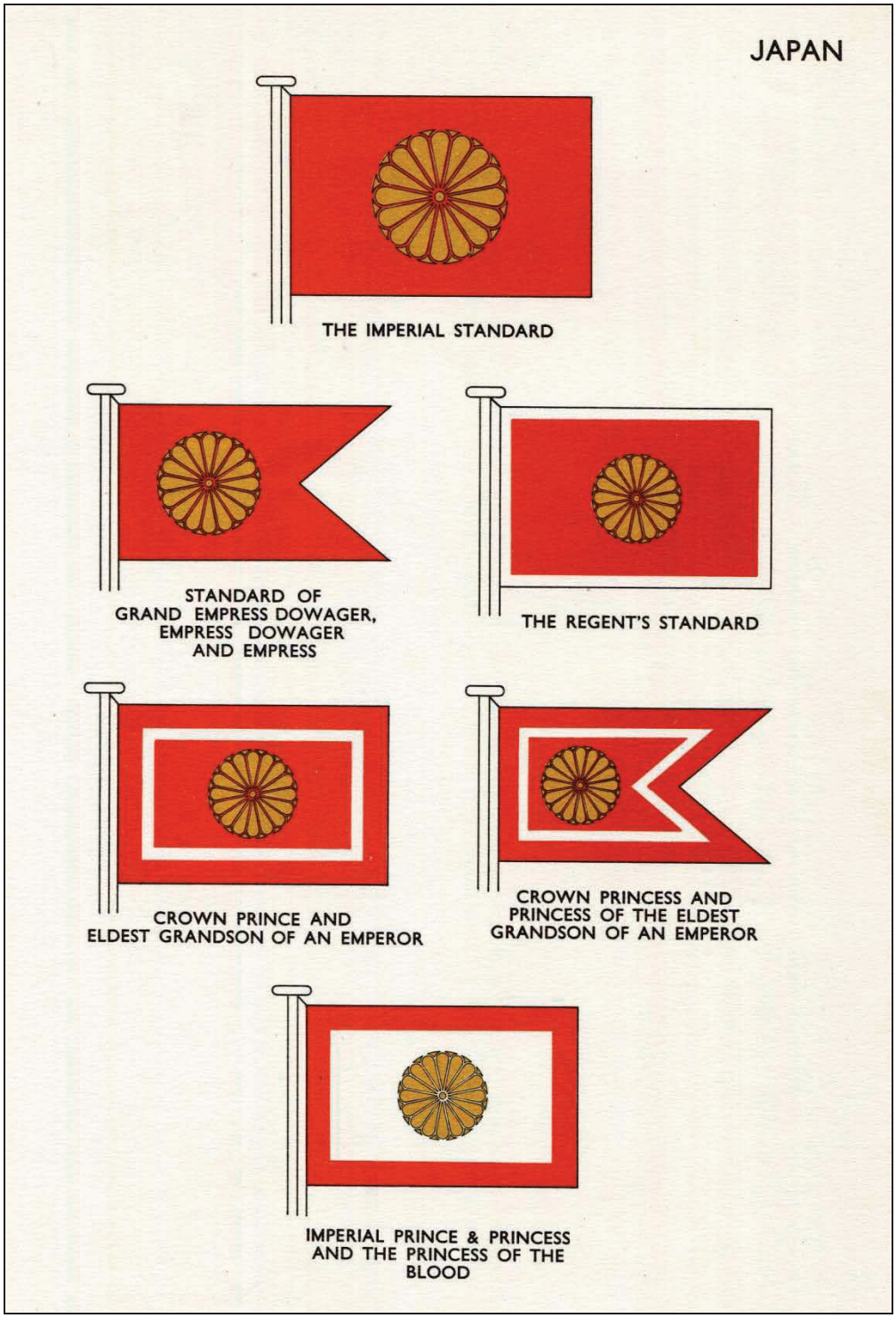
ICHIKAWA DANJURO IN THE KABUKI PLAY *SHIBARAKU* (1812)
By Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769-1825), now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
The mon is three nested measures.

PLATE 14

COMBING THE HAIR, by Goyo Hashiguchi (1920)

This 20th century painting is an example of the parallel non-heraldic use of mon motifs. This practice was widespread before heraldry and continues today. Notice that the flowers (the ragged edges of the petals, hard to see in this size, show them to be *nadeshiko*, or wild pink) appear randomly placed, but are actually stylized in that every blossom faces the viewer directly. This method was also used in European heraldic decoration and pre-heraldic art (especially for plant motifs), and in the art of many other cultures.

PLATE 15



JAPANESE IMPERIAL RANK FLAGS

From the British Admiralty's *Flags of All Nations* (1958).

PLATE 16

Daimyo flags, from George Ashdown Audsley, *Ornamental Arts of Japan* (London, 1882-4). A key to the heraldic charges on these flags appears on the facing page. →

KEY TO HERALDIC CHARGES ON PLATE 16

Below is a key to the heraldic charges on the daimyo flags on Plate 16, taken from George Ashdown Audsley, *Ornamental Arts of Japan* (London, 1882-4). It illustrates the method of blazon proposed in the lead article "Understanding Japanese Heraldry."

For each flag the blazon of the mon is provided below. The smaller charges in the lower corners of some of the flags are blazoned separately.

First column. 25: Within a ring, two cranes confronted. 26: Within a ring, two confronted sparrows laid over three sprays of three bamboo leaves. 27: A ring; *LOWER CORNER:* an *ume-boshi* [stylized plum blossom]. 37: An amulet. 38: Six coins, 3,3; *LOWER CORNER:* a knotted goose. 39: A snake's eye; *LOWER CORNER:* a constellation of nine stars.

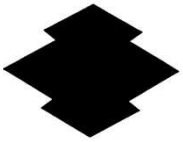
Second column. 28: Within a ring, three hollyhock leaves facing in, entire; *LOWER CORNER:* a constellation of nine stars. 29: An upright military fan decorated with pine trees; *LOWER CORNER:* three water plantain leaves side by side, the middle one overlying. 30: Within a stout ring, four *hanabishi* flowers tightly stacked in a lozenge. 40: Within a stout ring, four voided lozenges arranged in a lozenge; *LOWER CORNER:* paulownia [or it could be a false pauwlonia of oak or another plant]. 41: Oak within a thin ring; *LOWER CORNER:* a ladder. 42: Nine eyes [*meyui*], 3,3,3.

Third column. 31: Within a ring, three hollyhock leaves facing in, entire. 32: A chrysanthemum [or it could be a cart-wheel, as it has a central point uncharacteristic of chrysanthemum], bounded by five *kan* and enclosed by an alternately placed five-lobed *mokko*. 33: Within a ring, three hollyhock leaves standing on a right-split stalk; *LOWER CORNER:* the character *hon* 本 (book). 43: Mandarin orange; *LOWER CORNER:* two heaped folding fans. 44: Descending wisteria. 45: Mulberry with flattened top leaf; *LOWER CORNER:* a constellation of three stars.

Fourth column. 34: Three heaped lozenges, merged, smallest at the top. 35: In a ring, wood-sorrel with swords. 36: Ascending wisteria enclosing a stylized character *dai* 大 (great). 46: Within a *shippo* drawn in outline (*kage*), a paddy plant similarly drawn.[54] 47: A mulberry leaf. 48: A *hanabishi* flower in a stout ring; *LOWER CORNER:* a lozenge divided into four.

LATE MEIJI LACQUER BOX WITH MULTIPLE MON DESIGN

[54] I am grateful to Emmanuel Valerio for figuring out that what looks like a wheel of four arrows is really a rather degenerated four-lobed paddy plant (*denjiso*). Compare Figure 92E.

A.5 TREES		
225		**Cedar (*sugi*).** What appears to be a leaf-form is really the entire tree.
226		**Pine (*matsu*).** *Pinus thunbergii.* A very versatile charge, found here as a mature tree, but also seen as pine needles, No. 161), a leafy bough (No. 162), a pine cone (No. 207), and a stylized geometric form (No. 227).
227		This form of the pine, called ***matsukawa*** (pine bark) and formed of three HEAPED and MERGED lozenges, can be seen either as representing bark or as a graphic shorthand for a complete pine tree.

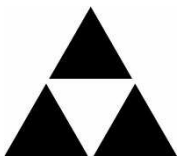
B. ANIMALS		
B.1 QUADRUPEDS		
228		**Rabbit (*usagi*).** The rabbit is often associated with the moon in Japanese heraldry – the figure of a rabbit is sometimes seen on its face the way Westerners see "The Man in the Moon."
229		A highly stylized form of rabbit. These three are barely distinguishable from a plant motif such as iris (No. 131).
230		RADIAL rabbits FACING OUT. Suggests a blossom.
231		**Monkey (*saru*).** Seen only in highly stylized form. Not a classic charge.

232		**Turtle (*came*).** Not a tortoise (*kikko*), although sometimes called by that name. Usually shown with fresh-water vegetation stuck to its shell.
233		**Dragon (*ryu*).** This is the Chinese dragon, taken from the T'ang Chinese decorative vocabulary and rare in Japanese mon. Not the European dragon. It is usually accompanied by a round figure intended as a jewel (No 320). Complete dragons are less common in Japanese heraldry than their parts – see Nos. 268-70.
234		**Lion (*shishi*).** This is the Chinese lion, taken from the T'ang Chinese decorative vocabulary and rare in Japanese mon. This one is CONFRONTING a peony.
235		**Rain dragon (*ambaru*).**
236		**Demon (*oni*).** Not a quadruped, but customarily classed among the animals by writers on Japanese heraldry. Like the helmet (No. 414), the demon is seen in many idiosyncratic forms. Shown: demon and maple leaves.[55]
237		Demon mask from the *Noh* drama.
	B.2 BIRDS	
238		**Crane (*tsuru*).** A very popular charge.
239		The crane forming a circle is even more common than the free-flying crane.

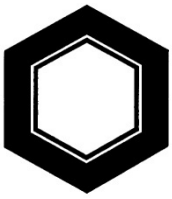
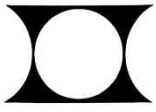
[55] I cannot resist the temptation to identify it as a Canadian demon.

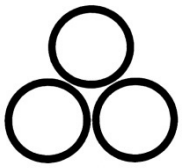
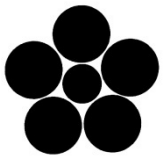
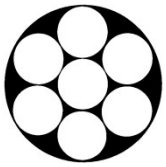
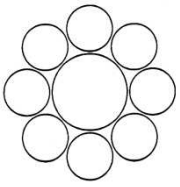
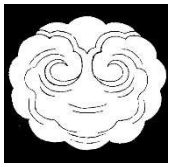
240		**Goose (*kari*).** The basic form is semi-naturalistic, and looks similar to the crane (No. 238).
241		But a curiously abbreviated version, called in English **wild goose (*karigane*)** is considerably more common.
242		So is an alternate version called **knotted goose (*misubi-karigane*)**.
243		**Sparrow (*suzume*).** Often found paired with other charges, as for example in the mon of the Date clan, where confronted sparrows nest among bamboo leaves. Shown: Three sparrows FACING IN. Compare the swallow (No. 244). Often found in circular form, where the short beak distinguishes it from the crane.
244		**Swallow (*tsubame*)**. The ruled-circle wing edges and its orientation facing the viewer distinguish it from the sparrow (No. 243). Some writers regard them both as sparrows.
245		**Dove (*hato*).** The same bird as the pigeon.
246		**Plover (*chidori*).** A motif going back to pre-heraldic times. Seen in highly stylized forms.
247		Stylized plover. Suggestive of the character *hachi* 八, meaning *eight*.
248		**Phoenix (*ho-o*).** A mythic bird of China. A T'ang Dynasty import and rare in Japanese mon.

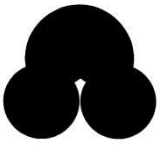
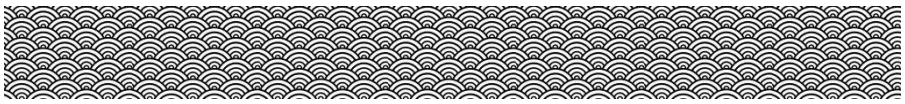
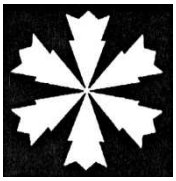
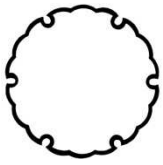
249		Phoenix forming a circle. In circular form the phoenix can resemble the crane (No. 239), but the shorter beak and long tail, and especially the crest above the beak, distinguish it.
	B.3 SHELLFISH	
250		**Scallop (*itayagai*).** Also called fan-shell. This charge is seen in many ingenious arrangements that exploit its complexity and symmetry. See Figure 116.
251		**Clam (*hamaguri*).** Looks just like a clam. Other shellfish such as the conch (*horagai*), helmet shell (*kabutogai*) and roll-shell (*kai*) also appear, looking much like they really look.
252		**Roll-shell (*kai*).** Shown: three *kai* CHASING (because their symmetry is only rotational). The roll-shell looks much like a croissant. Compare the jewel (No. 320).
253		**Shrimp (*emi*).** A popular charge due to pleasant associations. Sometimes thought of as a lobster.
254		**Crab (*kani*).** Many versions of the crab are very straightforward, but in others you have to look carefully. Here the crab is almost hidden in the wave. The claws are the key to identification.
	B.4 INSECTS	
255		**Butterfly (*cho*).** A very popular and versatile charge. There are three stereotyped forms for butterflies – this one, called ***ageha-cho*** (swallowtail butterfly) was the emblem of the Taira clan.
256		This form, called ***yoroi-cho*** (panther butterfly) or sometimes *fusen* butterfly, is really a butterfly FORMING A CIRCLE. Butterflies presented as CONFRONTED typically use this form, with straighter wings. See Figures 33B,C.
257		Finally there is the ***ko-cho***, a more naturalistic butterfly. Attributes of the three forms are often combined – for instance, a *ko-cho* may be positioned like an *ageha-cho*. See Figure 37F.

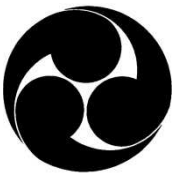
258		**Dragonfly (*tombo*).** Appears in groups.
259		The basic form of dragonfly is already quite stylized, but these are OVERLAID in a super-stylized form.
260		**Centipede (*mukade*).** See Plate 11A.
	B.5 ANIMAL PARTS	
261		**Antlers.** Japanese heraldry has two main kinds. These are **deer antlers (*shikatsuno*)**.
262		These are ***fukurotsuno***, which seem to be more like **antelope horns**.
263		This shows how *wari* division can make even distinctive forms like antlers hard to discern – the white ground almost becomes the figure and does not intuitively suggest animal horns.
264		**Feather (*takanoha*).** A popular and versatile charge.[56] Generally called a hawk's feather. Spots and other patterns are sometimes used instead of the traditional diagonal stripes. Compare arrow-fletching (No. 391)
265		**Fish scales (*uroko*).** Almost always shown in groups of three.

[56] "A large variety of this crest may be classified into more than ten species, according to the number of feathers and their different ways of arrangement." Okada, *Crests*, 73.

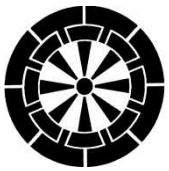
266		**Snake's eye (*janome*).** Sometimes called a bull's eye. In my view *janome* not really an animal part, but a voided disk presented as a geometric form, what European heraldry views as a ring and calls an *annulet*. See the frontispiece (page 6). Also called a **bowstring spool** (No. 293).
267		**Tortoise-shell (*kikko*).** See discussion at page 42.
268		**Dragon scales.** Compare fish scales (No. 265).
269		**Dragon claws.** CROSSED – note that the top one, though pointing down, is still LEFT-LEADING. Compare cloves (No. 201).
270		**Dragon tail.** Note the sword, and the sun-like figure presumably intended for the jewel.
C. INANIMATE NATURAL WORLD		
271		**Sun (*hi*).** Always shown with rays. The basis of the Japanese war flag adopted in 1870 (right) and still in use as a naval ensign. See the second painting on the back cover of this book. 
272		**Moon (*tsuki*).** An inclined crescent is the typical way to show the moon. Often it is accompanied by some other charge, for example a rabbit (see No. 228) or a bat.
273		Another traditional arrangement places a disk between the horns of the crescent. It is found, for example, on the modern flag of Okinawa Prefecture (where it also echoes the Roman initial O). The disk need not be oriented upward.
274		This unusual device is called *hazy moon*.

275		**Stars (*hoshi*).** Found in groups of three to nine. See discussion on page 44. A constellation of three stars is called ***mitsu-boshi***.
276		A constellation of six stars (five around one) is called ***ume-boshi***, because it resembles the plum blossom.
277		A constellation of seven stars, six around one, is called ***shichiyo***.
278		A constellation of nine stars, eight around one, is called ***kuyo***.
279		**Cloud (*kumo*).** Seen in a variety of forms, some easily confused with the wave (No. 287).
280		**Lightning (*inazuma*).** Angular spirals shown in various shapes. See also Figures 3D and 59B, and Plate 13.
281		**Mountain (*yama*).** Shown in many different forms. This one is a naturalistic view of a volcano looking a lot like Mt. Fuji, and includes the figure for mist (which almost never appears alone).
282		Distorted versions of the character *yama* 山 (*mountain*) can stand for a mountain − see Figures 104A,B.
283		A chevron (sometimes curved) also stands for a mountain. See also the roundel with the jagged stripe (Figure 75B).

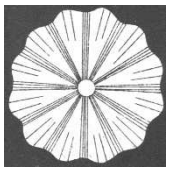
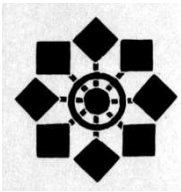
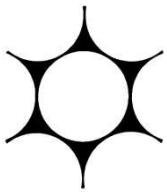
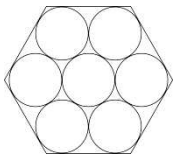
284		This figure and the next are compositions of mountain chevrons − they can be arranged and linked in any number of ways, including forming the shape of another geometric figure.
285		Mountain chevrons can look quite like *kikko* figures − compare Figure 79.
286		***Suhama.*** This curious figure, often encountered, is a stylized view of a sandbar at an estuary inlet. It is sometimes described as intended for the sweet Japanese rice cake of the same name, but actually the cake was named for the landform.
287		**Wave (*nami*).** Sometimes asymmetrical, shown with animals or other charges, with the spray (shown here as small dots) omitted, etc. Compare Figure 26E. The irregularity and dynamism of this motif exemplifies a kind of energy Japanese heraldry can express that European heraldry cannot reach.
288		Waves are also seen in this more highly stylized form. This pattern, called *seikaiha*, is used often in Japanese decorative art. 
289		***Snow (yuki).*** Snowflakes appear in many six-sided radial forms, not all of which resemble natural snowflakes. Many are blazoned in Japanese with individual names (this one is *blizzard snowflake* or *kerria snowflake*). Care must be taken not to confuse them with six-petalled blossoms, or with other charges arrayed in six-part radial order.
290		But one form, called **snow-wheel (*yukiwa*)**, is much more widely seen in Japanese heraldry than the snowflake, and is always the same. As well as an individual and combining charge, the snow wheel is often used as a framing element.
291		**Water.** This motif is rarely shown alone, but almost always with another element– here with three STANDING hollyhock leaves.
292		**Mist.** This motif is rarely shown alone, but almost always with another – here with the moon. This example is curious in that the mist is shown behind the moon rather than in front of it, as in nature.

D. OBJECTS		
D.1 ROUND OBJECTS		
293		**Bowstring spool (*tsurumaki*)** Quite an important charge − see the frontispiece, and page 135. Seen as a piece of equipment for carrying a military bowstring.[57] It is more likely a geometric figure like the European annulet rather than a representation of an actual object. Also called **snake's eye (*janome*)**.
294		**Disk.** Usually seen in a group, and understood as stars – see discussion of *hoshi* on page 44. A large disk, used as a background, is called *mochi*, meaning *rice cake*. Both can be light or dark.
295		***Shippo.*** See discussion of astroids, page 47.
296		**Swirl (*tomoe*).** See discussion at page 45. A one-swirl *tomoe* is called ***hitatsu-domoe***.
297		A two-swirl tomoe is called ***futatsu-domoe***.
298		A three -swirl tomoe, the most common kind, is called ***mitsu-domoe***.
299		**Bit ring (*kudzu*).** A metal fitting on a horse's bridle. See illustration on page 117. A very popular mon in samurai times. The cross led to its use by secret Christians.
299A		**Striped roundel (*hikiryo*).** See discussion at page 41.

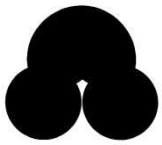
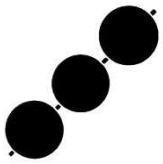
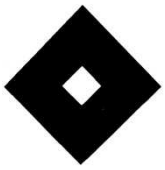
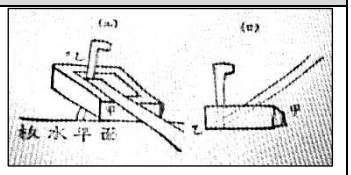
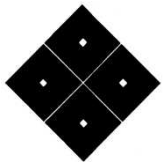
[57] Dower, *Elements*, 134.

300		**Bowl and chopsticks.** Compare striped roundels, Figures 73-74.
301		***Weight (fundo).*** Used on balance scales.
302		**Intersecting rings (*washita*).** Circle designs, seen in many combinations and patterns. This classic design of three rings is called in Europe *Borromean rings* – remove one and the others are no longer linked.
303		**Kettle rest (*kurashiki*).** Like the closely related intersecting rings motif (No. 302), this is really a vehicle for experimenting with circles.
304		**Coin (*sen*).** Quite a common charge. It is based on Chinese coins imported when Japan minted none of their own. The square hole was for stringing them on cords or rods. Often found in groups, especially of six, following Buddhist funeral practice. Sometimes the coin is marked with the *saikaiha* wave pattern seen in No. 288.
305		This is an example of a coin with a specific inscription, used as a mon device. It is called *eiraku tsuho*, minted in China during the Ming Dynasty, and served as a unit of account for the rice tribute. The inscription on this one (Yung-Lo 永樂 t'ung-pao 通寶) identifies it as money of the Yung-Lo Emperor, Chu Ti, who reigned in China 1402-24. For an example in actual heraldic use, see Plate 10A - C.
306		**Trivet (*gotoku*).** This is the stylized form – it is also seen in TILTED view. Dower says the charge was used because the word *gotoku* "literally means the five virtues of Confucianism.[58]
307		**Cart-wheel (*guruma*).** A sturdy wooden wheel. Designs vary. Sometimes seen as a half-wheel, or without spokes. Also used as frame or enclosure. The radial arrangement of charges called a WHEEL (page 37) is something quite different.

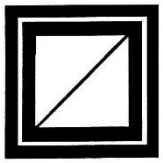
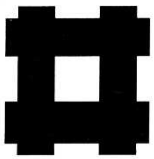
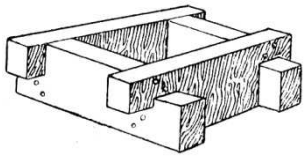
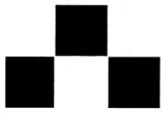
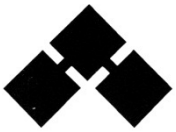
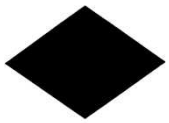
[58] *Elements*, 126.

308		**Mirror (*kagami*).** This represents a bronze mirror, an object with deep roots in Japanese culture. Sometimes in the shape of a snow crystal (No. 290).
309		**Ball (*mari*).** Sometimes covered in thread patterns. Not a charge in classical heraldry.
310		**Musical bell (*suzu*).** Often seen in groups and clusters. For the alarm bell, see No. 368.
311		**Charcoal.** Sometimes taken for a sand-dollar. Not to be confused with the chrysanthemum (No. 123). The lines on the sectors are the key to identification.
312		**Buddhist wheel (*ryugo*).** The wheel of the Dharma, also symbolizing the Noble Eightfold Path. It appears in many subtly different forms, a case study in the near-impossibility of exact blazon in Japanese heraldry. It even appears squashed into a lozenge, which would not work for a wheel (see discussion of lozenges at page 49).
313		**Water-wheel (*suisha*).** Shown here with the sign for water. The buckets are sometimes mistaken for mallets (see No. 318), which would make no sense except as a water-powered stamping mill, which it isn't.
314		**Windmill (*kaza-garuma*).** Some writers mistakenly call this a toy pin-wheel.
315		**Ball rack (*mari-hasami*).** So it may be called for convenience, but it makes more sense to regard it instead as a constellation (*hoshi*) with its six outer disks divided (see Figs. 52C and 83E). Dower feels the design preceded the object.[59] It illustrates the tiling property of a circle, which forms a hexagon when surrounded by six others (see right). 

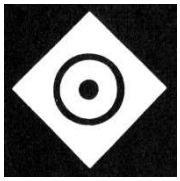
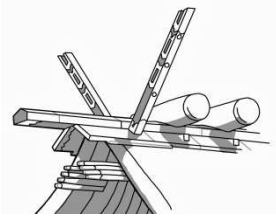
[59] *Elements*, 133.

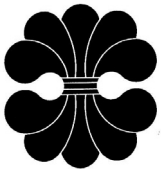
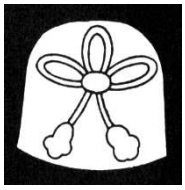
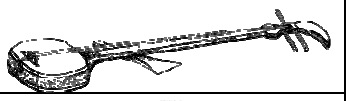
316		***Suhama.*** A sandbar. See No. 286.
317		**Dumplings (*dango*).** A peaceful-seeming charge, but Dower says it originated with a comment by Oda Nobunaga that he wanted to see the heads of his enemies "skewered like dumplings on a spit."[60] They can be as few as two in a line, or as many as eight arranged in a circle.
318		**Wooden mallet (*tsuchi*).** For other forms, with handles, see Nos. 376-77 among the hand tools.
319		**Drum (*tsuzumi*).** The top view. Compare side view (No. 352) and stylized renderings (Nos. 420-21).
320		**Jewel (*hoju*).** A figure from Buddhist and pre-Buddhist iconography. This is the treasure the dragon is guarding (see No. 233). Usually the jewel emits flames, but when it doesn't, it can look a lot like a roll-shell mollusk (No. 252).
	D.2 RECTANGULAR OBJECTS	
321		**Nail-puller (*kuginuki*).** Used with a lever – see diagram at right. Often shown angled, that is, resting on a corner. 
322		**Mesh** or **Eyes (*meyui*).** Seen in many patterns and combinations. Like the nail-puller, but with much smaller openings, and usually more than one square. The holes are used to pull fabric through in a tie-dying process. Groups of three or more may be assumed to be *meyui* and not *kuginuki*. The four-eyed version is called by the special name ***yotsume***.

[60] *Elements*, 110.

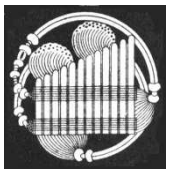
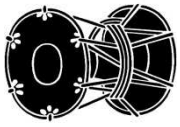
323		**Measure (*masu*).** Measures of different sizes nest together, like American measuring cups. Dower explains that this became a popular mon for shops and merchants after Japan standardized bulk measurements in 1669.[61] The diagonal partition is the key to identification, but nesting squares without the diagonal partition also represent measures. See Plate 13. Sometimes also shown in perspective.
324		**Paper (*kami*).** Sheets of paper, usually arranged in a rotary pattern. The pages may be light or dark, or a combination.
325		**Well-crib (*izutsu*).** A structure built around a well-head. See the image by Ströhl, right. This is one of the most popular charges in Japanese heraldry, and appears in countless forms and combinations, often angled like a rhombus or squashed into a lozenge. Overlapping at the corners is the key to identification. It is also used as an enclosure or framing device (see Figure 67D). Compare the hearth-rim (No. 326). 
326		**Hearth-rim (*robuchi*).** The enclosure around a fire-pit. Compare the well-curb (No. 325)
327		**Squares (*ishidatami*).** Called paving-stones, but really a geometric figure. They appear in many varieties and combinations.
328		***Chikiri.*** It is not entirely clear just what this is – it is usually identified as a warp wheel (a spool) used to hold thread for weaving, but is also called a steelyard-type beam weighing device and a builder's joint used to connect wood and stone. Possibly it did not always represent the same thing.
329		**Lozenge (*hishi*).** See discussion at page 49.
330		***Wari-bishi*** (divided *hishi*). A variety of lozenge. Emblem of the Takeda clan.

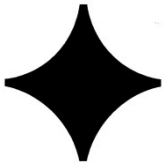
[61] *Elements*, 118.

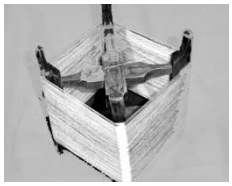
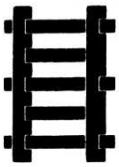
331		Another variety of lozenge. Emblem of the Ouchi clan.
332		**Target (*mato*).** For archery.
333		**Divining sticks (*sangi*).** Sometimes only one or two; sometimes vertical, sometimes without the framing ring, but always distinguished from the striped roundel (see No 299A, and page 41) by the COUPED ends. Horizontal lines form the characters *ichi* 一, *ni* 二 and *san* 三, meaning *one*, *two* and *three*.
334		**Offering box (*oshiki*).** Tripled lines similar to *sangi*, sometimes uneven or INDENTED, but in an octagonal ring.
335		**Crossed sticks (*chigaibo*).** They appear in many combinations, suggesting bracing members, wattle, etc. These figures are common charges, not structural elements like the European saltire.
336		**Letter (*fumi*).** Sometimes folded in other ways. While the European *billet* is more of a geometric charge, *fumi* really do represent letters, especially those exchanged by lovers in the *Tale of the Genji*.
337		**Plaque (*gaku*).** Used in temples. The characters here mean *twenty-eight*, the number of sectors in the Japanese celestial sphere.
D.3 IRREGULARLY SHAPED OBJECTS		
338		**Amulet (*mamori*).** Amulets called *omamori* are sold at Buddhist and Shinto shrines in Japan. This one is identified with the Gion shrine in Kyoto. They appear in various forms – the key to identification is the structure of crossed elements at the center, likely representing the *chigi*, or forked roof finial used in traditional Shinto temple construction (right). Also visible in this example are a beating-board (see No. 348) and ginkgo leaves (No. 150). 

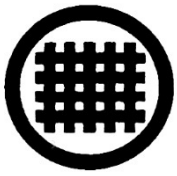
339		**Bundle (*yuiwata*).** A bundle of cotton or silk intended for an offering. A versatile charge; the rounded ends of the elements provide the key to identification. Compare *moshi* (No. 340), nearly identical except for this feature.
340		**Decorations (*moshi*).** Paper streamers added to gift wrappings in Japan, similar to the satin ribbons sometimes used in the United States. In bound form these can look very similar to bundles (No. 339), the straight edges of the strips offering the key distinction.
341		In freer forms decorations can resemble the orchid (No. 137). The binding holding the strips together distinguishes the decoration, and also the ends of the elements, as orchid leaves have pointed ends and bundles have rounded ones.
342		***Gohei.*** A Shinto object, made of paper pendants. In addition to temple use, they were carried into battle and worn on standards, uniforms, helmets etc. They appear heraldically in many forms, but the pendants are always nearly rectangular, with roughly straight edges and corners.
343		**Decorative cord (*agemaki*).** Used, says Dower, on furnishings and armor.[62]
344		**Treasure knot (*takara-musubi*).** An endless loop, this motif is found in the decorative art of many cultures, for example Ireland and Mongolia.
345		***Koma***. The bridge of the *samisen*, a classical Japanese stringed instrument. 
346		***Kotoji.*** The bridge of the *koto*, a classical Japanese stringed instrument. Shown here: three *kotoji* SIDE BY SIDE, the center one OVERLYING. They are also shown in patterns – HEAD TO HEAD, HEAD TO TAIL, etc. 
347		**Hairpin (*kogai*).** Shown here WITHIN A RING. Not used in classical military heraldry.

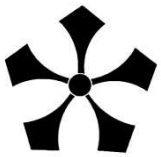
[62] *Elements*, 108.

348		**Beating-board (*choban*).** A gong. The curved cut is the key to recognizing the beating-board, especially when it appears in DIVIDED or distorted form. It was an emblem of Zen Buddhism because of its use in Zen monasteries.
349		**Helmet-crest (*kuwagata*).** Ornament worn on the front of samurai helmets, but used here as an independent charge. See frontispiece, and No. 414, and lower left-hand figure on page 135.
350		**Bamboo pipes.** Compare the raft (No. 374). On the raft the members are random; on the pipes they are ranged by length.
351		**Horse-tassel (*gyoyo*).** This motif looks very like ginger (*myoga*) (No. 164). But it is military equipment, not a plant – a covering for cord fastenings on armor, horse trappings, etc. Unusually, the basic form of both motifs have two CONFRONTED elements. The two motifs can be very difficult to distinguish. *Myoga* usually has veined leaves, while *gyoyo* has plain ones; also *gyoyo* usually (but not always) has a kind of radial ornament (seen here), reminiscent of the way Japanese heraldry stylizes the reproductive parts of flowers. Indeed *gyoyo* is sometimes identified as apricot leaf, but the Japanese apricot, *Prunus mume*, also called the Chinese plum and the source of the plum-blossom *ume* mon, does not look anything like this motif.
352		**Drum (*tsuzumi*).** This is the side view of a traditional Japanese drum. Compare the top view (No. 319) and stylized versions (Nos. 353 and 420-21).
353		**Stylized drum.** Compare Nos. 352 and 420-21; and distinguish the pestle (No. 381).
354		**Pouch (*fukura*).** For a temple offering. Distinguish the sake urn, No. 355, also a temple offering.
355		**Sake urn (*heishi*).** Wrapped for a temple offering. Distinguish the pouch, No. 354, similar but not for sake.

356		**Abacus bead (*soroban*).** Distinguish the sake cup (No. 357). Could be mistaken for a shell.
357		**Sake cup (*sakazuki*).** Distinguish the abacus bead (No. 356). The pedestal is the key to identification.
358		**Package.** For a temple offering, wrapped in decorative cloth.
359		***Origami* crane.** Made of folded paper. Other charges, like the butterfly, are occasionally shown made of *origami*.
360		**Shuttlecock (*hane*).** This was the object players of the game *hanetsuki* batted back and forth with battledores (No. 385). The game, although played without a net, was similar to modern badminton. Shown here within a snow-wheel. Observers should not be misled by the plant-like form of the *hane*. Shuttlecock and battledore (*hagoita*) are sometimes seen together in Japanese heraldry – see Figure 53C.
361		**Candle (*rosoku*).**
362		**Balancing doll (*mamezo*).** This was a toy used by street performers. The cords with knobs at the ends form the key to recognition, which can be helpful when (as in Figure 114A) division and distortion make the original form hard to discern. Not used in the classical period of Japanese heraldry.
363		**Top (*koma*).** Sometimes shown transfixed by a vertical pin. Can be confused with the mallet (No. 376).
364		***Itomaki.*** This word is used for various devices for gathering yarn or thread in the spinning process. This example shows the card before the thread is loaded. See also Nos. 366 and 424, and compare the *shippo* (No. 295).

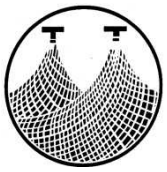
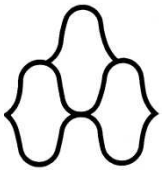
365		Here are two forms of loaded *itomaki*. Note how the enclosing ring is formed by the yarn itself. 
366		Another kind of spool for gathering yarn. See also the cross (No. 428).
367		**Umbrella (*kasa*).** For protection from sun or rain. Made of paper and bamboo, it is shown singly or combined, in open or closed position, or as here in both.
368		**Alarm bell (*hansho*).** Not a musical instrument; it was sounded from outside with a ram. For the musical bell, see No. 310.
D.4 PARTICULAR CATEGORIES		
D.4.a Structures		
369		***Torii.*** The gateway structure at the entrance to a Shinto shrine.
370		**Hermitage (*lori*).** This is the basic and combining form. The hermitage may also have a rounded, thatched or ornamented roof.
371		**Fence (*mizugaki*).** The members of the ladder are always squared; the upper ends of the fence can be pointed or rounded.
372		**Ladder (*hashigo*).** Distinguish the lattice (No. 373) and the fence (No. 371).

373		**Lattice (*kanji*).** A syncretic religious symbol (Buddhist, Taoist, Shinto). The lattice (always 4 x 5) stands for a mantra of nine characters.
374		**Raft (*ikada*).** Compare the bamboo pipes (No. 350). On the raft the members are random; on the pipes they are ranged by length. If in a similar structure the members are equal and even, it is likely a form of a fence (No. 371).
	D.4.b Hand Tools	
375		**Sickle (*kama*).**
376		**Wooden mallet (*tsuchi*).** Shown: three mallets FACING IN. The most common heraldic form (No. 318) does not have handles.
377		This form is somewhat like a polo mallet.
378		***Itomaki*.** A device for gathering thread or yarn in the spinning process. Distinguish mallets (No. 377) and axes (No. 379). For other types of *itomaki*, see Nos. 364-66, and *kurusu* (No. 428).
379		**Axe (*masakari*).** Shown: two CROSSED axes IN A RING. Distinguish mallets (No. 377) and *itomaki* (No. 378).
380		Five axe-heads, FACING OUT. When the handles are left off and only the axe-heads are shown, they can look like shells. The rounded edge and the straight or indented line at the widest point are the keys to identification.
381		**Pestle (*kine*).** An instrument for grinding substances in a mortar. Compare the stylized drum, No. 353. The pestle is distinguished by the sharply angled notch at its narrow point, while the drum narrows either with a curve or with a wide obtuse angle.

382		**Comb (*akadori*).** Or maybe a comb-pick (for cleaning a comb). Compare Figure 104F.
383		**Key (*kagi*).**
384		**Feather brush (*haboki*).** Sometimes called a feather duster, which seems unlikely for a mon used by aristocratic families.
385		**Battledore (*hagoita*).** See discussion under shuttlecock (No. 360).
386		**Scissor (*hasami*).** This is the Asian one-piece scissor.
387		**Pliers (*kuginuki*).** Known by the same name as the square nail-puller (No. 321). Note that in this example they are INTERSECTING.
388		**Sword (*ken*).** This curious charge is never seen alone, or even whole. All that is seen is the flaring blade (here a wheel of five *kan*). Even multiplied it is rarely the main element in a mon; usually it is shown as a counter-point, for example between the petals of a flower (see Figure 62A, and discussion at page 38). The swords actually used during the samurai period looked nothing like this.
389		***Katsuma*.** A Buddhist ritual implement, better known in the West by as a *dorje*, its name in Tibetan Buddhism. Shown here: two *katsuma* CROSSED, RIGHT-LEADING OVERLYING.

D.4.c Parts of an Arrow		
390		**Arrow (*ya*).** Highly stylized – in a real arrow the shaft is much longer than the fletching (the part with the feathers). The separate parts of the arrow, shown below, are more common as charges than the complete arrow.
391		**Arrow-fletching (*yabane*).** In Japanese heraldry just the fletching (the feathered part of an arrow) is an independent charge, seen more often than the arrow itself, perhaps because without the shaft it does not need to be so distorted. Compare the hawk's feather (No. 264).
392		**Nock (*yahazu*).** Also used as an independent charge is a highly stylized representation of the nock, the part of the arrow where the archer places the bowstring.
393		**Bow (*yumi*).** The bow as an independent charge may or may not have arrows associated with it. Note the arrowheads in this example. The plain arrowhead called *togari-ya* (pointed), without flairs or barbs, was designed to pierce armor, but the Japanese also used a flat turnip-shaped arrowhead called *yanagi-ba* (willow-leaf), highly decorated and often pierced or voided in a pattern, for example the cherry blossom device shown above right. They also had a kind with two points, called *karimata* (rope-cutter, below right); it was useful against sails and could cause very grievous wounds in people. The Japanese also had barbed, chisel-point and signaling arrowheads − this last kind made a buzzing sound, and was used to commence battles − but these do not figure in Japanese heraldry. They did not use the broad barbed arrowhead English heraldry calls a *pheon*.  

D.4.d Fittings of a Ship		
394		**Sail (*ho*).** A much more common charge than an entire ship. As well as the usual multiplications and distortions of other Japanese heraldic charges, it often appears with waves.
395		**Ship (*hogakebune*).** This is a highly stylized sailing ship, and faces the viewer. Profile views, with more realistic detail, are more common, but these present no difficulties of identification.

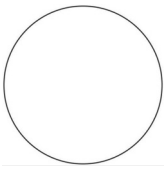
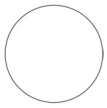
396		**Oar (*kai*).** Not usually seen singly. Shown: Three oars OVERLAID.
397		**Rudder (*kaji*).** Compare the court hat (No. 412), which looks somewhat similar.
398		**Anchor (*ikari*).** Usually but not always with four flukes. When multiplied, the anchors are usually joined at the ring end. Western-style heraldic anchors are also seen.
399		**Flag (*hinomaru* or *kokki*).** This flag became the official flag for Japanese merchant ships in the mid-19th century, but it was in use well before that.
400		**Net (*ami*).** This shows two fishing nets;
401		This is a stylized detail of the mesh structure of a net, formed by intersecting wavy lines. A popular Japanese decorative pattern.

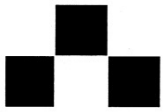
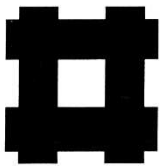
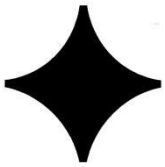
D.4.e Fans		
402		**Folding fan (*ogi*).** One of the most popular charges in Japanese heraldry. Made of paper and bamboo for use at court and in civilian society, metal versions were also used militarily, as shields and even weapons. *Ogi* is borne in a profusion of varieties and arrangements. The number of slats can be significant as an indicator of status and as a differencing device. Some fans, like this one, carried a mon or other design on the front – this decorated *ogi* was the emblem of the Nasu clan.
403		Fans with a serrated top edge are ***mai-ogi***, or **dancing fans**.

404		Folding fans in this pattern were called ***hiogi***, or **cypress fans**. Here too the number of slats was an indicator of status.
405		Another variant shows just the paper part of the fan. Some mon combine light and dark fan papers. There is also a variant showing only the ribs without the paper.
406		Two **closed fans**, SIDE BY SIDE.
407		**Round fan (*uchiwa*).** A Chinese import, for military officers. Shown here ON A DISK.
408		**Military fan (*gumbai uchiwa*).** Also a Chinese import, it was used as an emblem of command the way European armies used a marshal's baton. Usually but not always placed DIAGONALLY, it is often decorated with heraldic emblems (shown here: bamboo and pine).
409		**Feather fan (*hauchiwa*).** This was primarily a religious object for temple use. The design is based on the palm leaf – compare No. 156. The feather fan and the palm leaf can be difficult to distinguish.

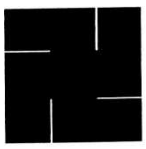
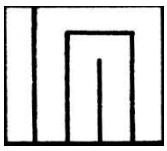
D.4.e Hats		
410		**Sedge hat (*kasa*)** Although made of plant material (sedge is a fibrous rush-like plant), *kasa* is not a peasant hat but an upper-class item. It appears in different varieties – with a high crown, complex weaving, etc. Sedge hats appear multiplied, and DIVIDED (*wari*), and can closely resemble flower motifs – Fig. 115A, for example, shows five high-crowned sedge hats arranged RADIALLY, with crowns FACING IN.
411		Sedge hats with attached veils were sometimes worn ceremonially and can be shown on poles. This one is called ***jingugasa***.

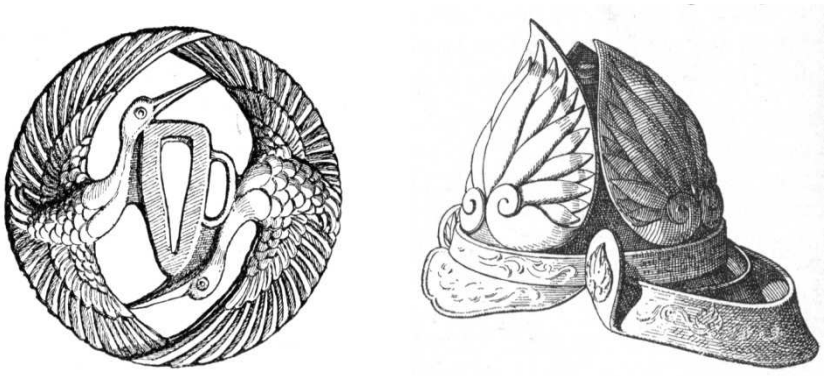
412		**Court Hat (*eboshi*).** This also appears in many forms – they were insignia of rank in the court hierarchy adopted on the Chinese model. There are also other hats, cowls, etc. that need not be mentioned here, as the viewer can readily recognize them as hats even if they cannot be precisely identified.
413		**Military hat (*ashigaru-gasa*).** For heraldically charged examples, see plate 10A.
414		**Samurai helmet (*kabuto*).** Usually shown in intricate detail, *kabuto* look quite similar but are nevertheless unique. The curved helmet crest (*kuwagata*) also appears as a separate charge (No. 349).

E. GEOMETRIC FIGURES		
415		**Disk (1).** In Japanese blazon this is sometimes called a rice cake (*mochi*). I don't think it really is intended for that, but rather is just a round field, corresponding to the Western shield as a basic frame for the heraldic design. In Japanese design terms it is a species of ring.
416		**Disk (2).** This is a charge rather than a background field. Regarded as a star (*hoshi*) and displayed in groups of 3-9, it can be dark or light. See discussion on page 44.
417		**Snake's Eye.** A voided disk. See No. 266.
417A		**Striped roundel (*hikiryo*).** See discussion at page 41.
418		**Triangle.** In Japanese blazon called a fish scale; usually displayed in groups of three. See No. 265.
419		**Chevron.** A conventional form for a mountain.

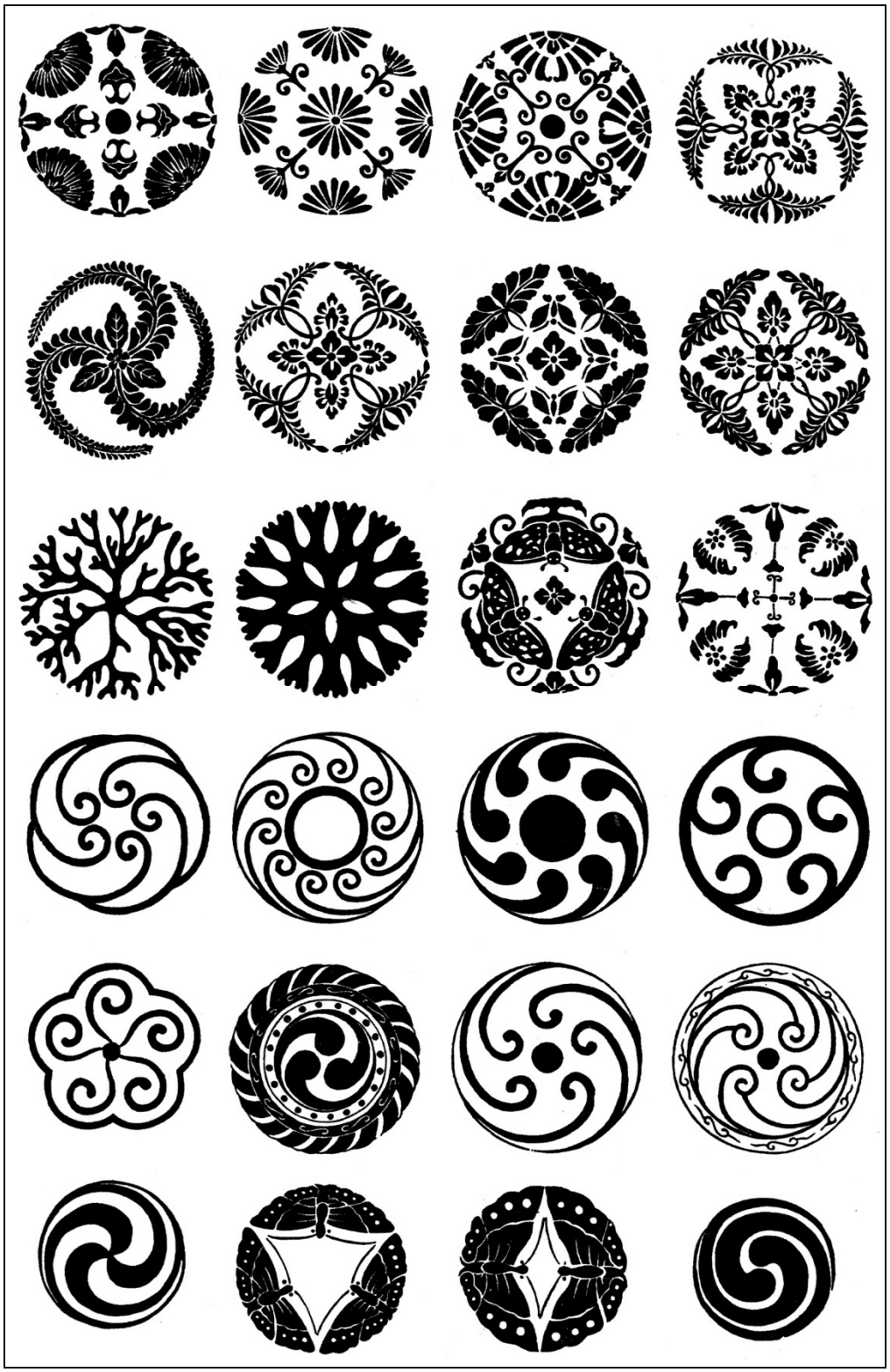
420		**Joined triangles.** A stylized hand drum. Compare Nos. 421 and 353.
421		Another version of the hand drum. It can also be understood as a pirn, or weaver's bobbin – see page 138, No. 8.
422		**Square.** In Japanese blazon called paving stones. The squares can be oblong. They appear in many arrangements and patterns.
423		**Enclosure.** A well-crib. See No. 325.
424		***Itomaki.*** Not quite an astroid (see discussion of *shippo*, page 47), because the cusps are flattened, but close. To the extent it reflects a real-world object, it is based on a spool or card for gathering yarn or thread in the spinning process. See Nos. 364-66 and 428.
425		**Rhombus.** A horizontal lozenge (*hishi*). Compare Nos. 330-31, and see discussion on page 49.
426		**Irregular pentagon.** *Koma*, a piece from the game of Chinese chess (*shogi*).
427		**Hexagon.** See discussion at page 42 (tortoise shell).
428		**Cross (*kurusu*).** This cross (which could be seen as made of bamboo or of four arrow-nocks, compare No. 392), is typical of a range of figures, mostly based on the equal-armed "Greek" cross, used by Christian families before the forcible suppression of Christianity in Japan. After that some Christian families used emblems with a hidden cross, for example the bit ring (No. 299), the amulet (No. 338), the spool (No. 366) and the character *ju* 十, meaning *ten*.

429		**Six-pointed polygon.** Developed from hemp leaves – see No. 166.

F. FIGURES OF NOTATION		
430		**Japanese character (*kanji*).** See discussion at page 50.
431		**Stylized character.** These appear in many versions – see discussion at page 50.
432		**Pictorial or disguised character.** Can look like almost anything. It's disguised!
433		**Swastika (*manji*).** A Buddhist emblem.
434		***Genjiko* symbol.** See page 51, note 37.



LEFT: SWORD-GUARD WITH THE MON OF NIWATSURU (EMBRACING CRANES, ONE REVERSED)
RIGHT: HELMET WITH HOLLYHOCK LEAVES (17TH CENTURY)



A PLATE OF CIRCULAR DESIGNS BY MASAO NAKOHIKO,
from his *Great Mirror of Japanese Decoration* (1915).
Note especially the asymmetrical coral wheel (left, third row).

JAPANESE HERALDRY, BATTLE FLAGS AND STANDARDS IN THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI

by Emmanuel Valerio

NOTE: Each section in the following article is illustrated by an original painting by the author. These paintings will be found on Plates 1-10 in the color section in the center of this book. The twenty paintings appear two on a page, identified for example as Plate 1A and Plate 1B. Individual illustrations within the paintings are identified by letter in this format: Plate 1A - C. The plate number is given along with the heading of each section, and is repeated with the first citation to a specific illustration within that section. After that further letter identifications within the same section are given alone, without repeating the plate number.

Japanese personal names in t his article give the surname first. Footnotes signed EV are by the author.

THE GEMPEI WAR[1] [Plate 1A]

The earliest display of heraldry on the Japanese battlefield was the *hata jirushi* (symbol flag, marker banner) in the *nagarebata* (floating banner) form, a streamer hung from a horizontal crossbar tied near the top of a tall pole. Some streamers were slit on the lower half to lessen wind resistance so the mon (the family emblem, sometimes translated as *crest*) could be seen even in strong winds. The first banners probably did not have mon or any device identifying one side or the other.

Early samurai armies consisted of mounted men appearing on the battlefield with their personal retainues of foot soldiers. The banners they carried could have had slogans that were personal to their mounted commanders. Sasaki Takatsuna (1160-1214) used a banner with a prayer to the war god Hachiman worshipped by the Minamoto, who were also called Genji (Plate 1A - A, A1). Prayers to Hachiman appear on banners on the battlefield throughout the history of samurai warfare.

[1] The Gempei War (1180-85) was a conflict between the Miramoto and Taira clans. The victory of the Miramoto marked the end of the Heian Period and the start of the Kamakura Shogunate, where the recently emerged samurai warrior class would supplant the former imperial court nobility. The image, by James Seguin, is from his *Saito Musashi-bo Benkei: Tales of the Wars of the Gempei* (Yokohama, 1910). *Ed.*

Minamoto Yoritomo (1147-99) leader of the Minamoto who became the first shogun, flew a plain white banner (B).[2] Yashima Temple, a shrine dedicated to the battle of Yashima (1184), has a Minamoto banner said to have been used in the battle. It is plain white with no emblem. Individuals and small groups of men who came to support Yoritomo would have brought plain white banners with them. The other great clan and rival of the Minamoto was the Taira, also called Heike. They flew red banners (D).

The mon associated with the Minamoto is the *rindo* (gentian) and for the Taira the mon is the *cho* (butterfly). Scrolls and wood-blocks from later periods show the Taira and Minamoto using their respective mon during the Gempei War; it is not definite that they actually did, but some sort of emblem or device would eventually have been used. There were battles involving Minamoto against Minamoto and Taira against Taira. The Hogen Rebellion of 1156 and the Second Battle of Uji in 1184 were two occasions where clansmen fought each other.

A red Taira banner from the illustrated scroll of the Kyuman-Hassen Shrine shows at the top a strip of *egawa* (printed leather used on samurai armor). Below it a slogan was written in gold (E); the lower half of the banner was missing where it was torn off to make supposedly therapeutic tea, a practice that survived to the Edo Period (after 1603). Devices such as a black band or two appear at the tops of the banners, some in different colors for unit identification and organization. Distinctions like these were used until the Sengoku Period (roughly 1467-1603) to identify squads or divisions within an army.

One of the earliest examples of a mon on a flag was that of Kumagai Naozane (1141-1208). His banner had symbols referring to Minamoto Yoritomo's escape in 1180 (C). While serving the Taira, Naozane is said to have discovered Yoritomo hiding in a tree. To help him escape, Naozane struck the tree with his bow and flushed out two sparrows, which convinced his Taira companions there was no one in the tree.[3] Naozane's banner bears the name of Hachiman, the first character *hachi* 八 written as two birds, which were regarded as messengers of Hachiman. Two more birds were painted below Hachiman's name. A mon of a snowflake was at the bottom, referring to the wintertime search for the fleeing Yoritomo.

Hatakeyama Shigetada (1164-1205) originally fought for the Taira but switched sides to the Minamoto and fought at the Battle of Dan no Ura (1185), one of the most decisive battles in Japanese history, where the complete destruction of the Taira ended the Gempei War.

---

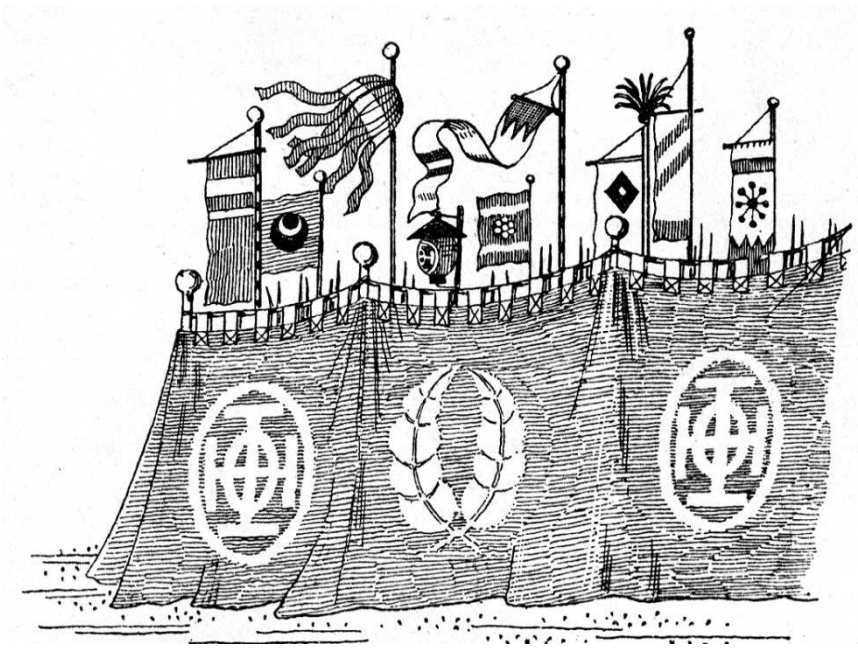
[2] *Shogun* was the title of the military leader who ruled in the name of a figurehead emperor. Under different names, this was the main form of national government in Japan from the end of the Gempei War in 1185 to the Meiji Restoration in 1868. The prime minister in the modern Japanese constitutional monarchy could be regarded as a kind of civilian shogun. *Ed*.

[3] Similar heraldic origin stories in European heraldry are usually now discounted as etiological fables, created long after the event to explain a form or device. Thus the three beakless birds (*alerions*) in the arms of Lorraine were said to commemorate the day an early duke shot three birds with one arrow, when in truth the alerion was just a canting charge (a play on the word *Lorraine*). Such stories from Japanese heraldry may be viewed with similar skepticism. *Ed*.

Shigetada's banner bears the *murago* mon given by Yoritomo when he came to serve the Minamoto (F).[4]

The Satake clan claimed descent from the Minamoto. During the Gempei War the Satake sided with the Taira. They were defeated by Yoritomo in 1180 and their territories confiscated. After nine years Yoritomo forgave the Satake and allowed them to become his vassals. The Satake banner was white with an *ogi* mon (a folding fan) (G). The descendants of the Hatakeyama and the Satake continued to display these mon on the later Sengoku Period battlefields.

In the Heike Monogatari Museum in Takamatsu 260 life-sized waxworks depict scenes from the Gempei War. The Minamoto banner is seen with complete heraldry: two black bands at the very top with the gentian mon below (H). This was also used on wooden shields (similar to the European *pavise*). In today's re-enactments, festivals, and in television and films, the Taira also show a complete heraldry of red banners with two black bands at the top and a black butterfly mon (I). They appear also on curtains around ships and on the *ibaku*, large cloth curtains suspended from ropes slung between poles to screen off a private area in a camp for the commander and his closest retinue. This display of complete heraldry is probably anachronistic, but it is how the Japanese love to recreate their heroes in film and festivals today. Below: an *ibaku* at the camp of the daimyo Nakagawa, showing his wheel and oak-leaf mon (image from H. G. Ströhl).[5]



[4] *Murago* is a Japanese dye pattern marked by irregular spots, and often having diagonal elements. The mon is a schematic representation of a fabric dyed in this pattern. *Ed*.

[5] All images in this article (other than solitary mon) are identified in the Sources of the Illustrations, beginning at page 149. The identification of the mon motifs in the *ibaku* image is by Ströhl

THE MONGOL INVASIONS [Plate 1B]

In 1274 the Mongols invaded Japan. The islands of Tsushima and Iki were the first to experience the horrors of the invasion. The defense of Iki was led by Taira Kagetaka, a descendant of the Taira defeated during the Gempei War. Kagetaka and his men fought to the death. The Mongols withdrew after a brief period, but returned in 1281 with a much larger invasion force. The Kamakura Shogunate established by Yoritomo had been supplanted in power by the Hojo Regency, and it was the Hojo who had to deal with the Mongol invasions. The Hojo mon was the *mitsu-uroko*, three triangles arranged in a triangle (A, B). According to legend this represented scales from the goddess Benten (Benzaiten), who appeared before Hojo Tokimasa, the first Hojo regent. When Benten dove into the sea Tokimasa noticed that her dragon tail left scales on the beach.

There are almost no pictorial sources of samurai heraldry at this time, before the creation of the *Moko Shurai Ekotoba* (Mongol Invasion Scroll), a very important contemporary source of the appearance of Samurai armies. Takezaki Suenaga (1246-1314) fought in the first and second invasions. He had the Mongol Invasion Scroll made to help his claim to a reward for his exploits against the Mongols. The scroll shows a foot soldier carrying the personal flag of Suenaga, a banner with two colors, the upper two-thirds in white and the lower third in dark blue (C). The Suenaga mon in black is of three eyes (*meyui*) above the character *yoshi* 吉, meaning *luck*.[6]

The scroll shows a row of samurai behind the wall at Hakata Bay. The banner of Kikuchi Takefusa (1245-85) can be seen there, with the upper half white and the lower half black (D). On the upper half we see the Kikuchi mon of *takanoha*, two hawk's feathers in black. Takefusa fought in both Mongol invasions and gained fame for collecting many Mongol heads.

Shoni Kagesuke (1246-85) was the commander of the Japanese forces at Hakata Bay. The scroll shows the Shoni banner with the *yotsume* mon ("four eyes," four *meyui* in black) (E). Kagesuke's older brother Shoni Tsunesuke (1226-89) is shown with the Shoni banner, leading one of the small boats in the night raids against the Mongol ships. The Shoni chased the withdrawing Mongols to Iki Island, where Kagesuke's nephew Shoni Suketoki was killed in the Mongols' final resistance. As if by divine intervention, a huge typhoon struck the anchored Mongol fleet. The typhoon, which came to be known as *kamikaze* (divine wind), caused such a staggering loss of men and ships that the Yüan Dynasty never attempted another invasion of Japan.[7] Suenaga's scroll provides an eyewitness account of heraldry during the invasion. It shows that the use of mon was now well established. Heraldry was displayed on shields used on land and on the water. Banners were planted along the walls defended by the samurai and were taken aboard small boats in their seaborne attack.

---

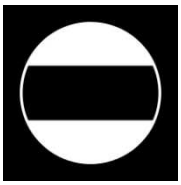
[6] *Meyui* were not actual eyes (organs of vision), but were mesh designed for tie-dying fabric. *Ed.*

[7] *Yüan* was the Chinese name of the Mongol Dynasty established by Kublai Khan (1215-1294). It ruled China from 1271 to 1368. Typhoons destroyed Mongol invasion fleets in 1274 and again in 1281. *Ed*.

NANBOKU-CHO PERIOD[8] [Plate 2A]

After the great victory against the Mongol invasion there was dissatisfaction and dissent against the Hojo-led Kamakura shoguns, who were unable to reward the samurai who defended Japan. Emperor Go-Daigo (reigned 1318-39) saw the opportunity to restore imperial power and destroy the Hojo usurpers. Kamakura fell to Go-Daigo's armies in 1333 and the Hojo committed mass suicide. Disillusioned with the re-established imperial court, a coalition of samurai led by Ashikaga Takauji (1305-58) marched on Kyoto against Go-Daigo. Takauji installed Emperor Komyo in an illegitimate Northern Court, resulting in 60 years of war against the exiled Southern Court of Emperor Go-Daigo.

Nitta Yoshisada (1301-38) was a descendant of a senior branch of the Minamoto that refused to join Yoritomo. Yoshisada hoped to restore his clan's standing by responding to Go-Daigo's call to arms, and led the forces that captured Kamakura. Go-Daigo then ordered him to put down Ashikaga Takauji's rebellion. After a series of battles, Yoshisada was defeated at Fujishima. Injured and surrounded, Yoshisada cut off his own head. The Nitta mon was a *hiki-mono* (drawn lines), a white disk with a black bar across the center (Plate 2A - A1). Nitta banners were white with a black bar cutting across them, which appear to echo the mon (A).



Kusunoki Masashige (1294-1336) was Go-Daigo's greatest commander. He excelled in guerrilla warfare and the defense of mountain forts, where the enemy suffered very heavy losses. He is forever remembered for his unwavering loyalty, obeying orders to go into a battle he knew he could not win. He died at the Battle of Minatogawa in 1336. Many scrolls and paintings survive recounting his deeds and in most cases they display his famous heraldry. A long white banner displays one of the most elegant mon, the *kikusui* (chrysanthemum on the water), given to him by the emperor and representing the imperial mon of the chrysanthemum kept afloat by the Kusunoki. For a samurai not a member of the imperial family to be granted use of the imperial mon was unique in Japanese history.

Several variations of Kusunoki's flags have survived in temples and contemporary paintings (B, C, D). One of Masashige's banners had a Chinese slogan written below the mon (C). Dark blue bands were used on his banners. Perhaps Masashige had a different version at each battle, displaying the more elaborate ones as his personal standards, while his household troops had simpler versions. Large numbers of banners kept an army together in the confusion of battle, and Masashige was known to use them in large numbers to mislead the enemy into thinking he had a much bigger army.

---

[8] The name means *South and North Courts*. In this period (1336-92) rival emperors reigned in the old capital of Kyoto and in Yoshino, only 44 miles (70 kilometers) to the south. The Northern Court was dominated by the Ashikaga clan. After the Southern Court capitulated in 1292, the Ashikaga Shogunate continued until overthrown by Oda Nobunaga in 1573. This era was later known as the *Muromachi Period* after the Kyoto residence of the third shogun. *Ed*.

Allied units supporting Kusunoki Masashige displayed their own banners. Nawa Nagatoshi showed his loyalty and support to his lord Masashige through his mon of a ship at sea (E). Following the example of the *kikusui* mon given by the emperor to Masashige, Nagatoshi was represented by the waves supporting his lord Kusunoki (represented by the ship). There are other examples of samurai who adopted their lord's mon or expressed their loyalty by changing their own mon to match their lord's more closely.

There were still examples of heraldry inspired by the old ways, and of individuals who proclaimed themselves with personal slogans. Some were very elaborate, resembling documents used as heraldic devices. The banner of Kojima Bingo bears a very long invocation of the gods. Asuke Jiro's banner could be described as a resume listing his pedigree and his accomplishments. An autobiography was used as a heraldic device in the way the old heroes used to call out their pedigrees and accomplishments on the battlefield, to challenge a worthy opponent.

THE ASHIKAGA SHOGUNATE [Plate 2A, continued]

The Ashikaga Shogunate arose from Go-Daigo's failure to restore imperial rule. The Ashikaga were descended from the Minamoto, making them qualified to supply shoguns for the next two centuries. The first heraldic device they used was an invocation to the Minamoto's deity *Hachiman Dai Bosatsu*. The banner of Akamatsu Enshin Norimura (1277-1350) had Hachiman written at the top, with the first two characters again in the form of two doves. A black band lay at the center, and below it the character for *matsu*, the last half of *Akamatsu*. The Akamatsu first served Go-Daigo but then switched sides to serve the Ashikaga.

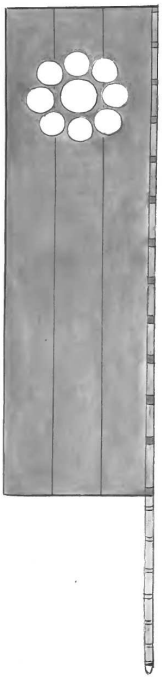
Just as Kusunoki Masashige received the *kikusui* mon from Go-Daigo, the Ashikaga family was granted the *kiri* mon (paulownia plant) for their service by the first emperor of the Northern Court. The *kiri* was an imperial emblem second only to the chrysanthemum in importance. In time the *kiri* came to stand for imperial acceptance and commission.[9] The *kiri* mon appeared in black on a white banner for the Ashikaga army. Ashikaga Takauji had a small black section at the top of his banner where the *kiri* mon was displayed in white (Plate 2A - F).

The Ashikaga commanders would have had a slightly more colorful version to stand out among their men. Ashikaga Shigeuji (1438-97) flew a white banner with the *kiri* mon in the center and the *hinomaru* red sun disk at the top (G). Ashikaga Yoshiaki (1537-97), the last of the Ashikaga shoguns, did not use the *kiri* mon for his personal flag. Instead he used the *hinomaru* at the top and below it the more ancient Ashikaga device of the name of Hachiman in gold characters (H, H1).

[9] Indeed even today the *kiri* mon is the emblem of the Japanese prime minister's office. *Ed*.

THE SENGOKU PERIOD: THE FIRST DAIMYO[10] [Plate 2B]

By the time of the great upheaval of almost constant warfare of the Sengoku Period, the freely-hanging *nagarebata* was gradually replaced by the *nobori* (right).[11] A *nobori* was a tall narrow flag – its top and one side were attached by loops to a pole with a short crosspiece above. This was an improvement over the *nagarebata*, where even in strong winds the mon or slogans could often not be clearly seen. The *nagarebata* did not completely disappear, as clans of ancient pedigree continued to display them as treasured relics.



The *daimyo* (meaning "great names") were a new breed of regional rulers that came out of the destructive Onin War. The first ones had claims to an ancient lineage. Ouchi Yoshitaka (1507-51) was a daimyo who ruled over half of the Inland Sea.[12] His heraldry reflected his pedigree (Plate 2B - A, B). The banner had a religious invocation with a list of *kami*: *Myomi Dai Bosatsu, Hachiman Dai Bosatsu, Amaterasu Dai Jingu, Sumiyoshi Dai Myojin, and Kasuga Dai Myojin*.[13] Underneath the invocation was the ancient *hishi* (lozenge) mon of the Ouchi family (A1).[14] One version was a wider *nagarebata* with the lower half in blue (B, B1). These would have served as Ouchi standards for Yoshitaka. The rest of the army would have had simpler banners with just the Ouchi mon.

The other type of daimyo were those who came from obscurity to gain power through talent and opportunity. Ise Shinkuro (1432-1519) first served under more powerful warlords, but steadily rose in rank and founded one of the most powerful dynasties of the Sengoku period, the Hojo of Odawara. His original mon was a pair of butterflies, confronted and forming a circle, with the mon in black on a white banner (C). He changed his clan's name from Ise to Hojo to be associated with the Kamakura Hojo. Shinkuro also took the Hojo's *mitsu-uroko* (three scales) mon as his own. Shinkuro's new heraldry had red banners with the Hojo mon in white or in gold (D, E).

---

[10] *Sengoku* means *Warring States*. This period of anarchy (1467-1603) was named for a similar historical period in China (453-221 BC). The period in Japan began with the Onin War between two important clans, the Hosokawa and the Yamana. This and subsequent wars and rebellions degraded the power of the Ashikawa shogunate. The Sengoku Period ended with the establishment of a new shogunate under the Tokugawa (1603). *Ed.*

[11] The image of the *nobori* is from the manuscript called *Hata Uma-jirushi Ezu* [Illustrated Banners and Battle Standards], now in the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University. It shows a *kuyo* (a constellation of nine stars). *Ed*.

[12] The Inland Sea, one of Japan's most important geographic features, is surrounded by three of Japan's four principal islands: Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu. *Ed*.

[13] *Kami* are objects of worship or veneration in the Shinto tradition. *Ed*.

[14] The *hishi* takes its Japanese name from the water-caltrop plant, which it resembles, but it was a decorative motif before the rise of Japanese heraldry. For more on *hishi* mon, see page 44. *Ed*.

THE SENGOKU PERIOD: THE COUNTRY AT WAR [Plate 3A]

Japanese heraldry became more sophisticated and organized as almost the whole country descended into civil war. Heraldry evolved and became more structured. Battles were fought not only in the plains and mountains, but at sea and on foreign soil. The *nobori* became the dominant banners and were used in greater numbers in armies than the old *nagarebata*. Very large numbers of flag-bearers were needed to keep ever-growing armies disciplined and controlled in the chaos of battle. A senior samurai was now appointed the important post of *hata bugyo*, a flag commissioner whose job was to see that all flags, standards and other devices were in place and displayed according to custom and regulations. Another task was to make sure that the army knew the heraldry of allies and enemies.[15] This was challenging as alliances were often fleeting, unreliable, and even treacherous.

The ancient *nagarebata* still found a place on the battlefield. Remote clans far away from the main arena in central Japan continued to use them alongside the *nobori*. Some even functioned as the daimyo's standard, the *uma jirushi*. Murakami Yoshikiyo (1501-73), a warlord of Shinano, fought in the mountains and in the plains of Kawanakajima against his nemesis the great warlord Takeda Shingen. His banners bore his mon, a ring containing the character 上 for the last half of the name Murakami.[16] A banner showing a mon under two black bands was the basic design for many *nagarebata* at this time (Plate 3A - A). Large numbers of these identified Murakami Yoshikiyo's army on the battlefield and the defensive walls and watchtowers of his *yamashiro* (mountaintop fortress). His *uma jirushi* was a unique *nagarebata* with two thirds of the lower part slashed to cut wind resistance (B); in strong winds it resembled an octopus with writhing tentacles.

In the numerous islands of the Inland Sea were three other branches of the Murakami clan. The Innoshima, Noshima, and Kurushima branches of the Murakami formed a sea-borne power; they were feared pirates who took on the ships of the mighty daimyo Oda Nobunaga. They provided ships for the invasion of Korea and fought naval battles with Korea's legendary admiral Yi Soon Shi. The heraldry of these branches of the Murakami was nearly identical to that of Murakami Yoshikiyo. Their banners were flown in their fighting ships; sails were often emblazoned with their mon. Banners flew over their *kaizoku umijiro* (island fortress), from which they ruled and controlled the waterways.

Murakami Takeyoshi (1533-1604) of the Innoshima branch ruled from his island of Noshima. A life-size wax figure of him, displayed today in Innoshima, includes a recreation of his *uma jirushi* (C). It shows the Murakami mon in red between two vertical red bands, with Hachiman's name in white. The shape of the standard is unique. It is wider than the average *nagarebata*, but

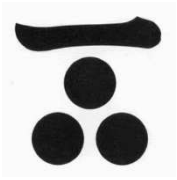
---

[15] This function of the *hata bugyo* was like that of the European herald in a similar stage of military culture. *Ed*.

[16] This character has the meaning *above* or *superior*. *Ed*.

a third of its length, with both lower corners cropped off. It appears designed for strong winds at sea.

Allied with the Murakami was the powerful Mori clan, which ruled 11 provinces in Chugoku.



Mori Motonari (1497-1571), regarded as one of the greatest warlords of mid-16th century, had talented sons who were his generals. With a large army and navy, the Mori took part in the invasion of Korea. The Mori mon was the "one line, three stars" emblem inherited from Oe Hiromoto, who served Minamoto Yoritomo. The Mori mon was one of the most recognised in Japan, displayed on *nagarebata* and *nobori*, on white and red banners. Motonari's personal banners had invocations that appealed to many deities like Hachiman, the 98,000 War Gods,[17] Shitenno Buddhist Guardians of the Four Directions, and the deity Marishi no Mikoto (D1, D). The list of deities was placed over the Mori mon.

The Shimazu dominated the island of Kyushu. They took part in the invasion of Korea and fought at Sekigahara. Shimazu Takahisa (1514-71), during the siege of Kajiki Castle, became the first daimyo to use European firearms. The Shimazu mon was a black cross within a ring, a representation of a fitting from a Japanese horse bit (*kutsuwa*). Compare the image by Ströhl, left. Takahisa's *uma jirushi* was a very large *nagarebata* with storm clouds and rain painted on it (E). The Shimazu invaded and conquered the Ryukyu Islands, including Okinawa, after the end of the Sengoku period.

Kato Kiyomasa (1562-1611) was one of the most successful commanders in Japanese history. He led one of the divisions in the invasion of Korea and holds the distinction of leading the only samurai army to cross the Chinese border. His mon was a ring, but many of his banners bear the motto of the Nichiren Buddhist sect: *Namu Myoho Renge Kyo* (Hail to the Lotus of the Divine Law). One of his prized banners is a white *nagarebata* with the Nichiren motto in bright red (F). At the Second Battle of Chinju in Korea in 1593, in the race to be the first into the breach in the walls of Chinju, Kiyomasa's flag-bearer threw the Nichiren flag over the wall to spur the Kato samurai forward. The ancient *nagarebata* saw action with the Mori, Shimazu and Kiyomasa at the high-water mark, the extreme edge of samurai military conquest.

In the past armies had assembled with very similar banners. But a Sengoku Period army could be composed of dozens or more formations coming together to fight for a single daimyo. Each of these armies could have a complex system of heraldry for unit organization, and for command and control. An army fully assembled would present a dizzying array of colors. Each specialized unit would have its own heraldry for identification.

The *nobori* gave each division or company its own distinct identity. The *nobori* identified the clan, but in time some commanders or daimyo came to use very distinct heraldry that identified

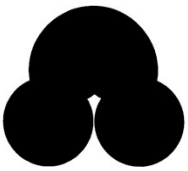
[17] "If there was any confusion about the [war] gods' identities rituals might simply be offered to the 98,000 gods of war." Stephen Turnbull, *The Samurai and the Sacred* (Oxford, 2006), 52. *Ed*.

them personally rather than their clan. An array of their distinct *nobori*, like a forest of banners, was displayed at the *honjin* (headquarters) to be seen by both friend and foe.[18] They served as a rallying point for the army. As a means of command and control, waving or raising the flags could transmit signals and orders to the whole army or to specific divisions.

TAKEDA SHINGEN [Plates 3B and 4A]

Takeda Shingen (1521-73), one of the most successful and colorful military commanders of the Sengoku period, was the powerful warlord of Kai Province.[19] He was well-served by some of the finest samurai commanders. His large force was composed of different armies: from allies, conquered clans, and from his famous "24 generals."[20] The *nobori* in Shingen's armies could describe the entire history of the *nobori* throughout Japan during the Sengoku period.

The Takeda mon was the *wari-bishi* (divided lozenge). The Takeda mon in black at the top of the *nobori* (Plate 3B - A), alongside versions with three mon in the banner (B), were the basic designs for these *nobori* throughout Japan. There were no set rules, but *nobori* with three mon were often used for the array at the *honjin*. The Takeda and the Hojo, for example, used the five lucky colors (yellow, dark blue, red. white and black) for divisions commanded by relatives or vassals. Shingen's brother Takeda Nobukado (1529-82), one of his 24 generals, displayed the Takeda mon in white over blue banners (C). Shingen's younger brother Takeda Nobushige, also one of the 24 and one his finest commanders, led the vanguard division. He flew black flags, but did not use the Takeda mon. His personal mon was a white disk (D).



Anayama Baisetsu (1532?-82) was Shingen's nephew. His personal banners and standard did not use the Takeda mon either. His mon was a *suhama* (E) in black over dark blue under a black zigzag line.[21] Takeda Yoshinobu (1536?-67) was Shingen's oldest son. His banners were black with the *hinomaru* red sun disk at the top, a red bar across the center and the Takeda mon in red below it (F). Yoshinobu was accused of treason and forced to commit suicide.

One of the most colorful divisions in Shingen's army was the Fire or Red Brigade commanded by Obu Toramasa (1504-65). His heraldry was a white *tsuki* mon (moon) on red banners and his best men wore red lacquered armor. They were the spearhead of attacks by the Takeda army. Toramasa was forced to commit suicide after he was implicated in the plot with Yoshinobu. His heraldry disappeared and his men were absorbed by his younger brother Yamagata Masakage (1524?-75).

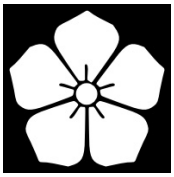
---

[18] *Honjin* were posthouses that developed into field headquarters for military commanders and other highly-placed official travelers. *Ed.*

[19] Kai Province, in central Honshu, is now called Yamanishi Prefecture. It is the site of Mount Fuji. *Ed.*

[20] A Wikipedia list of the 24 is archived at perma.cc/fz9u-nqun. *Ed.*

[21] A *suhama* is a conveentional Japanese heraldic form derived from a watery sandbar. *Ed.*



Masakage followed his brother's example and placed men in red armor in the front ranks. His heraldry was a white *kikyo* (bellflower) on a black banner (H). With Yoshinobu's death Takeda Katsuyori (1546-82) became Shingen's heir. Katsuyori was the head of the Suwa clan in Shinano; his mother was a Suwa princess and Shingen's concubine. When Katsuyori became head of the Takeda clan he did not use the Takeda mon, but flew plain white banners (I).

Samurai often had two or more mon, but it was rare for a *nobori* to have two different mon. Obata Nobusada (1540-92) had a *kara-uchiwa* (Chinese military fan) at the top of the nobori and a *sasa* (bamboo stalk with leaves) on the lower half (Plate 4A - J).[22] The personal flags (*sashimono*) of his troops also show both mon. Oyamada Nobushige (1539-82) had gray banners with two mon: a white Oyamada mon of the *omodaka* (water plantain) in the center, with a white Takeda *hishi* mon at the top and bottom (K).

Takeda Shingen had family members or favored commanders adopted as heirs by subjugated clans. Shingen's nephew Takeda Yoshikatsu (1551-75) became head of the Mochizuki clan of Shinano. He became Mochizuki Nobumasa and would have flown Mochizuki heraldry with the *hoshi* (stars) mon, a large disk surrounded by eight smaller disks.[23] Kasuga Toratsuna (1527-78) started as a page for Shingen, but became one of his 24 generals. As head of the Kosaka clan of Shinano, he became the more famous Kosaka Danjo Masanobu. He replaced his original Kasuga heraldry, a white *kiku* (chrysanthemum) mon on a green banner (L), with a black Kosaka *hoshi* mon on a yellow banner (L1).

Some clan or commanders did not show mon at all. They used different color designs or color combinations. Mon on *nobori* were difficult to see from far away, but brightly colored patterns could be identified quickly at long distances.[24] Ichijo Nobutatsu (1539-82) was another brother of Shingen. He did not use the Takeda mon. His banners had white upper half and a red lower half (M). This was the same heraldry used by an enemy, the Sanbonji who served the Uesugi. Kudo Genzaemon (1522-75) took over the Naito family and as Naito Masatoyo became one of Shingen's finest cavalry commanders. The Naito banners were white with a red central section (N). The allied Sanada clan from Shinano had identical banners to the Naito.

Even with almost limitless color combinations and designs, armies from opposite sides could still have divisions with identical heraldry. The banners of Amari Torayasu (1498-1548), one of Shingen's 24 generals, had alternating bands of red and white instead of mon (O). Baba Nobufasa (1514-75) another of the 24, did not display a mon either – instead he had two black chevrons which stretched vertically down the entire length of his banner (P). When he rose in rank as a daimyo he changed his heraldry to one or two black wavy lines going down white banners. The design was meant to represent a mountain path (P1).

---

[22] The Chinese military fan was distinct from the folding fan of Japanese design, the basis of a different mon. See discussion of fans at pages 103-4. *Ed*.

[23] A *kuyo*. See discussion at pages 44-45. *Ed*.

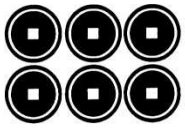
[24] This was the fundamental design principle of European heraldry in its formative period. *Ed*.

DAIMYO COLORS [Plate 4B]

Mon displayed with distinct colors or color combinations came to identify certain clans or armies. The Ikeda had the *cho* butterfly mon used by the ancient Taira, displayed on banners with alternating bands of white and black that came to identify the Ikeda (Plate 4B - A). The Kuroda of Harima province placed a *fuji* (wisteria) mon in white at the top of black banners with a white central band, colors that identified the Kuroda (B).

Doi Toshikatsu (1573-1644) was a counsellor and pillar of the Tokugawa house. His mon was a water wheel with buckets, worn on black on bright yellow flags (C). Toshikatsu led the *ki sonae* (Yellow Regiment). The Takeda Red Brigade so impressed Tokugawa Ieyasu that he took in its survivors after the destruction of the Takeda. He placed them under the command of Ii Naomasa (1561-1602) to form the *aka oni*, the Ii Red Devils. With every man clad in red-lacquered armor and red flags, the Red Devils were the feared vanguard and spearhead of Ieyasu's army. The Ii mon was the *maru ni tachibana* (mandarin orange flower in a ring), but their other mon, the *izutsu* (well-crib), suggested the first character of their name (井). This figure in gold on red became the famous emblem of the Ii clan (D, and on Plate 6A - B).[25]

Date Masamune (1566-1636) was a powerful daimyo who ruled from northern Japan. The Date of Sendai and their neighbor the legendary Uesugi of Echigo had almost identical heraldry. Both used variations of the *take ni suzume* mon, which shows two sparrows facing each other inside a ring of bamboo. Both armies used the mon in white over dark blue banners – only the daimyo's personal banner distinguished one from the other. Date Masamune used dark blue banners with a gold disk at the top (E). He displayed about thirty of these banners in his *honjin*, projecting power to awe and inspire.



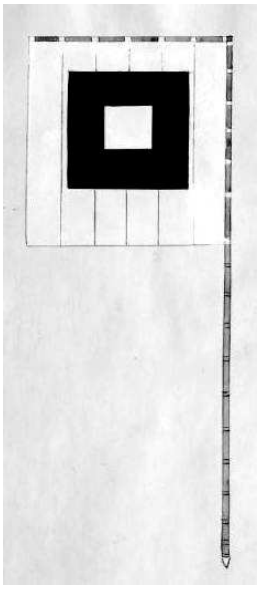
The Uesugi treasured an old *nagarebata* with a red disk on dark blue. *Nobori* versions of this flag identified the Uesugi army (F). Sanada Nobushige (Yukimura) (1567-1615) was the commander of rebel forces fighting for the Toyotomi in Osaka Castle in 1614-15. The Sanada were once an important part of Takeda Shingen's army. Nobushige chose red flags to inspire his men with the memory of the Takeda Red Brigade. His banners had slashed edges, with the Sanada mon of six gold coins on red (G).

There were rare examples of heraldry representing individuals or small family groups. The Anegawa screens show heroes who fought as individuals. Uozumi Muneyuki was a retainer of the Asakura who was killed at the Battle of Anegawa in 1570. His flag-bearer held a red banner with a white character *bi* 毘 for the deity Bishamonten, the god of treasure. He was once a vassal of Uesugi Kenshin, who flew a standard with the same character for Bishamonten. Makara Jurazaemon, another retainer of the Asakura, died heroically in a rear guard action that allowed the Asakura to withdraw safely from the Battle of Anegawa. His displayed a blue banner with two white horizontal zig-zag lines in the center, called *yama-gata* (mountain shapes) (H).

---

[25] For an illustration of a well-crib, see page 94, No. 325.

UMA JIRUSHI [Plate 5A]



A 16th century innovation was the *uma jirushi* (horse standard). It was most often a large square or rectangular flag displaying the mon in the largest and most visible form (right). A daimyo and all his generals could each have an *uma jirushi*. In some cases even captains or lieutenants had their own. While the array of *nobori* showed the location of the *honjin*, the standard would clearly show the location and identity of the daimyo or his generals.

The *uma jirushi* standard-bearer would always be close to his lord.[26] If the daimyo or general issued a proclamation or order, the standard-bearer would raise the standard higher as a signal for all to listen. If the daimyo or general were to move from his position, the standard-bearer always followed to indicate the location of his lord. If the daimyo or any samurai commander led an attack in person, his standard-bearer would follow and hold the standard up high, even in the thick of battle. A color guard would be assigned to follow and protect the standard-bearer at all times. If the standard-bearer were killed, a member of the color guard would replace him and carry on.

Taking the head of a brave enemy standard-bearer was considered as important as taking the head of an enemy general. At the Battle of Mikata ga Hara in 1572, Tokugawa Ieyasu sent Okubo Tadayo to plant his standard when the Tokugawa army started breaking before the onslaught of the Takeda army. The standard marked a rallying point that let the Tokugawa troops make a fighting withdrawal from the battlefield and allowed Ieyasu to escape.

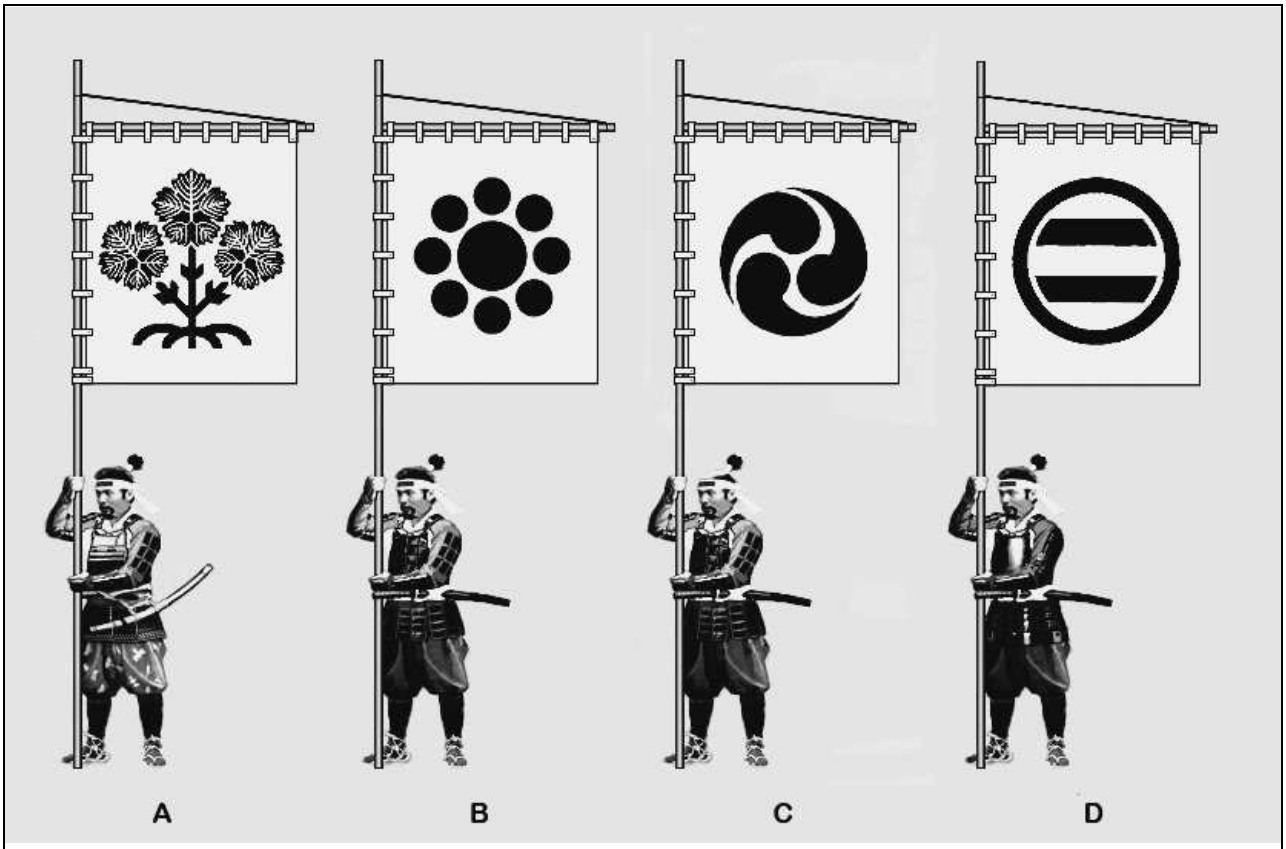
The most common design for an *uma jirushi* was a large square or rectangular flag with a large black mon on a white ground (Plate 5A - A). Many commanders used this pattern – see the box on the next page. The Suda had a gold swastika on dark blue (B) while the Matsuga had a gold saltire (a diagonally crossed figure) that stretched across their standards (C). These were rare examples of heraldry that looked more European than Japanese. Other standards were color opposites or completely different from the *nobori* so as to stand out better. Baba Nobufusa had two white wavy lines on a black standard, the opposite color of his *nobori* (D).

In some cases the *uma jirushi* did not represent the commander's clan, but the individual himself. Kakizaki Kageie (1513?-75) had a personal standard showing a wild boar that had nothing in common with the rest of his heraldry (Plate 5A - E). Hojo Ujinao (1562-91) had a personal standard with the character *mu* 無 (*nothingness*) in black on a gold flag (F).[27] Rare examples

---

[26] The closest English title for this officer this would be *ensign*. The image of the *uma jirushi* is from the *Hata Uma jirushi-Ezu* [Illustrated Banners and Battle Standards]. *Ed*.

[27] *Nothingness* is a crucial concept in Buddhism. The traditional answer to the classic Zen *koan* (riddle) *Does a dog have a Buddha nature?* is *mu*. *Ed*.



UMA JURUSHI

In the above illustration, the *kaji* or paper mulberry mon (A) was used by the Suwa of Shinano province. Many of their neighbors, such as the Takato and the Fujizawa, used the same design This happened often in the early Sengoku Period, leading to the later appearance of colorful versions to distinguish sides.

Uma jirushi (B) above, the *kuyo* mon, was also used in Shinano province by the Kosaka and the Mochizuki. The same flag was used by the powerful Hosokawa, the Yasuda and the Matsudaira. Almost every clan Kuroda Yoshitaka fought alongside or against, in and around Harima Province in the 16th century, flew flag (C), the triple *tomoe*.

Flag (D), the striped roundel (*hikiryo*) mon, was used by many clans in northern Japan. In Etchu Province, two neighboring clans had the same mon, but one used a version with vertical stripes.

Uma jirushi with these mon appeared so often as almost to be regional symbols.

represented an individual not in command of troops. Ochiai Michihisa had a macabre standard showing a crucified man (G). He was present during the siege of Nagashino Castle in 1575 where a captured enemy, Torii Sune'emon, was crucified to demoralize the Nagashino defenders. Michihisa was so moved by the bravery of Sune'emon that he had the standard made in his memory.[28]

O UMA JIRUSHI: THE GREAT STANDARD [Plate 5B]

The samurai had an almost obsessive need to distinguish themselves on the battlefield. This was shown, for example, in their colorful armor and their magnificent helmets, the *kawari kabuto*. The most spectacular devices for displaying their presence and status on the battlefield were the great standards, the *o uma jirushi*. Many of these were not flags, but large three-dimensional objects that ranged from the magnificent to the bizarre.[29] For example Daidoji Masashige (1533-90) a prominent retainer of the Hojo, had a "lantern tree" for a standard. It had a golden lantern at the top of a pole, and others suspended from four branches on each of two lower levels (Plate 5B - A).

Omura Sumitada (1532-87) was baptized in 1562 as Dom Bartolomeo and became the first Christian daimyo. His great standard was a very large golden bell made of *papier-mâché* and painted gold (B). Niwa Nagahide (1535-85) had a great standard resembling a large tree with many branches hung with strips of gold paper (C). Kikkawa Hiroie (1561-1625), a grandson of the great Mori Motonari, used a great standard with thirteen smaller poles radiating from the main one, in a sunburst pattern. Red slashed-edge flags hung from each of the thirteen poles (D).

Standard-bearers were aided by a leather pouch with straps tied around the waist above the groin or to the right side of the waist. The bottom of the flagpole would go into the pouch, which would take most of the weight, as the bearer held and steadied it with both hands.[30] Heavier standards could be carried on the back in special heavy-duty *sashimono* holders. The bearer would steady the standard by holding with each hand to ropes attached to the top of the standard. The biggest and heaviest standards required an entire team of standard-bearers. As many as four or even six men would help steady the standard, each man with ropes attached to the top of the standard. They would hold the ropes taut to prevent the huge standard from swaying in the wind in any direction. These men worked as a team, moving the standard from one position to another if the *honjin* advanced or withdrew from the battlefield, and even followed a daimyo leading an attack.

---

[28] This flag is now preserved in the University of Tokyo library. *Ed*.

[29] Three-dimensional objects displayed on poles, functioning like cloth flags, are called *vexilloids*, a term created by the vexillologist Whitney Smith (1940-2016). See his *Flags through the Ages and around the World* (New York, 1975), 30. *Ed*.

[30] Modern parade flag-carriers and flagpole holsters work the same way. *Ed*.

THE GREAT AND LESSER STANDARDS [Plate 6A]

The command posts of many daimyo were made even more colorful by having "lesser standards" alongside the "great standards." The *ko uma jirushi* or lesser standards were often three-dimensional objects secondary to the main standards. Katakura Kagetsuna (1557-1615) was a very important retainer of Date Masamune, serving as *gun bugyo* (army commissioner). His great standard was a large flag with a design of a temple bell (Plate 6A - A), while his lesser standard was two black umbrellas with a ball of black plumes on top of the pole (A1). Ii Naomasa, lord of the "Red Devils," had a large red flag with 井, the first character of his surname, in gold (B). His lesser standard is described (in the *Iike Gumpo* military manual) as a gold flycatcher. It looked like a very large gold cone with red *noren* [curtain flaps] hanging from it and a red streamer on top (B1).

Date Masamune had two great standards, both large white flags. One had a very large *hinomaru*, a red sun disk called the Dragon's Rising Sun. The second great standard, called the Small Dragon, displayed horizontal lines (C).[31] Masamune's lesser standard had two umbrellas which seemed to be covered in black fur and were surmounted by a tall golden plume (C1).

Maeda Toshiie (1538-99) started out as one of Oda Nobunaga's Horse Guards and became a commander of samurai. He grew to be one of the most powerful and wealthiest daimyo. His great standard was the largest example of an *o uma-jirushi*; the flag itself was taller than three men standing on each other. It had a large painting of Shoki the Demon-Queller (D). Toshiie's lesser standard had a gold character *mata* 又, the first character of his nickname, on top of a pole, with a ball of red plumes under it (D1).

KO UMA JIRUSHI: THE LESSER STANDARD [Plate 6B]

Daimyo often had more than one or two lesser standards. Some main standards became lesser standards after new standards were made during a long successful military career, or after being passed on down to successors. In some cases both the great and the lesser standards were three-dimensional objects. The Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 saw the largest assembly of samurai armies in Japan. There would have been a dizzying array of heraldry where great and lesser standards stood out prominently, proclaiming the identities of some of the greatest daimyo and samurai commanders.

The *fukinuki*, often used as a lesser standard, was a hollow streamer made out of strips of cloth on a ring, which was attached to a tall pole. When blown by the wind the *fukinuki* acted like a

---

[31] This design, combining broken and unbroken lines, was one of the 64 possible combinations of six such lines. They were called hexagrams and were the basis of the ancient Chinese book of divination and Confucian commentary called the *Book of Changes* (*I Ching*). The hexagram on the flag on Plate 6A - C is No. 7, *The Army*, whose judgment reads "the army needs perseverance and a strong man." *I Ching* (Richard Wilhelm and Cory Baynes translation) (Princeton, 1950), 32. The *I Ching* was an important text in medieval and Edo Period Japan. *Ed.*

wind sock. They were often displayed on top of fortress walls. Right: a *fukinuki* of the Matsudaira clan, showing ivy and hollyhock mon (by Ströhl).

The Kuroda clan used two of the largest *fukinuki* as their great standards. Kuroda Nagamasa (1568-1623) distinguished himself in the invasion of Korea and fought in the vanguard of the Eastern Army at Sekigahara. His *o uma jirushi* was the largest example of a *fukinuki* (Plate 6B - A) and dwarfed his lesser standard of *etsuru* form, which resembled a tree with seven pairs of small gold flags sticking out like leaves (A1). Tozawa Masamori (1585-1648) sided with the Tokugawa after Sekigahara. His great standard was three gold umbrellas topped by a black plume (B). His lesser standard was a small white flag with a red disk; it was split twice, suspended from above, and topped by golden antlers (B1). Tokugawa Hidetada (1579-1632), third son of Tokugawa Ieyasu, was disgraced for missing the battle of Sekigahara. His great standard was the same as his father's: a large golden folding fan, but with a red sun disk (C). His lesser standard was two gold balls topped by a ball of black feathers (C1).

Matsuura Shigenobu (1549-1614) took part in the invasions of Korea and gained fame during the attack on Namwon where his flag-bearer Urakawa Kon'emon led the attack up and over the walls. Shigenobu's lesser standard was a *saba no o*, representing a mackerel's tail in silver (D1). His great standard had three balls covered in black fur arranged in the same pattern as the Matsuura mon (D). This great standard would become a lesser standard by 1655.

THE SASHIMONO [Plate 7A]

With samurai armies employing larger and larger numbers of *ashigaru* (foot soldiers), a way to identify and organize them was needed to transform what started as mobs of fighting men into disciplined and professional soldiers. The first examples of heraldry for the common foot soldiers, in the middle of the 15th century, were small flags attached to the shoulder straps of armor, or sewn on the upper arm of *kote* (armored sleeves). These were basically strips of cloth with the mon painted on, called *kote jirushi*; they functioned like modern military unit shoulder patches. Some had designs painted to match the clan's banners. Samurai had these small flags attached to their *sode* (shoulder armor). These were called *sode jirushi,* and the samurai's name could be written on them if he were of high rank. Samurai could also have *kasa jirushi* (helmet insignia), small flags attached to rings in the back of the helmet or the crest in front of the helmet.

The most important flag innovation introduced during the Sengoku period was the *sashimono*. It resembled a small version of the *nobori*, attached to a small socket at the base of the back of the armor and held into position by a hinged holder at the upper back. The first basic, and most common, design had the mon in black in the upper half of a small white flag (Plate 7A - A).

In the beginning one *sashimono* design would equip an entire army, but as time went on, armies began to have different designs for different troop types, or for different squads and divisions. *Sashimono* for mounted samurai were larger than those used by foot soldiers. For the Ii Red Devils, mounted samurai wore *sashimono* of about five *shaku* long by two *shaku* wide.[32] The Ii samurai's *sashimono* featured their surnames in gold on red ground, in different styles of handwriting or brushstrokes so no two flags were alike (B).[33]

In one of Sekigahara screens a squad of Red Devil *teppo tai* (arquebusiers) are seen in the Tokugawa *honjin* wearing small narrow red flags with invocation to Hachiman in gold (C).[34] Tokugawa Ieyasu's *uma-mawari shu* (horse guards) wore flags with the character *go* 五.[35] Ieyasu's foot guards wore golden *uchiwa* fans with the *go* character in black (D). Okubo Tadayo (1531-93) was a general and advisor to Tokugawa Ieyasu who in 1572 rallied the troops at Mikata ga Hara with Ieyasu's golden folding fan standard. His troops wore *cho* (three-dimensional butterflies) as *sashimono*. Tadayo's own *sashimono* was a gold butterfly (E). His son Okubo Tadachika wore a silver butterfly and Okubo samurai wore black butterflies. Okubo *ashigaru* wore a *choha sashimono*, a single three-dimensional butterfly wing (F).

Sashimono also appeared as two (or as many as five) narrow flags sprouting from the main pole, worn often by *ashigaru* in many armies. The *ashigaru* of Wakizaka Yasuharu (1554-1626) wore two red flags with the mon of two linked rings in white. Matsudaira (Fujii) Tadakuni (1597-1659) had his *ashigaru* wear two black *sashimono* with two white central bands (G). Date Masamune's *teppo tai* arquebusiers wore *sanbon shinai*: three white flags with the mon in black (H).[36] The *ashigaru* of Sakakibara Yasumasa (1548-1606) had triple blue flags with three white mon on each flag. Matsudaira Mitsuyuki used *gohon-shinai* (five flags), four white with a black central flag. The *ashigaru* of Mori Hidemoto (1579-1650) had five black flags with a white disk mon on each. Tall, narrow flags with slashed or notched edges called *kirisake* were also common *sashimono*. Kato Kiyomasa, Ikeda Terumasa, Niwa Nagashige and Kato Yoshiaki all had identical white *kirisake* (I).

Elite mounted units like the *tsukaiban* wore very distinct and colorful flags to stand apart from their army. The *tsukaiban* were messengers, scouts, aides-de-camp and bodyguards, the daimyo's best. Takeda Shingen's *Mukade* (centipede) Group is probably the most famous, identified by the emblem of a busy centipede (J). The *mukade sashimono* came in several colors: a black centipede on white, white on red, white on black, and gold on dark blue The *tsukaiban*

---

[32] A *shaku*, or Japanese foot, was almost exactly equal to an English foot (0.3 meters). *Ed*.

[33] The *Iike Gunpo* manual says that Ii samurai who had earned the right had their surnames written on their *sashimono*. Mounted samurai had their surnames written in gold on red, while retainers had their surnames written in white on red. But surviving samples of some Ii *sashimono* do show full names on them, not just surnames. EV.

[34] An arquebus was a long-barreled firearm. It was introduced into Japan by the Portuguese in 1543 and became an important weapon in Japanese military practice. *Ed*.

[35] The word expressed by this character means *five*. *Ed.*

[36] *Teppo tai* were *ashigaru* with firearms. *Ed*.

sashimono of Ishikawa Tadafusa (1572-1650) had alternating bands of green and white with the mon of a gold ring in the top green section (K).

Three-dimensional objects were also used as *tsukaiban sashimono*. Matsudaira Mitsuyuki's *tsukaiban* wore a pair of very long gold horns called *tenpuu* (sky wind) (L). Abe Masakatsu (1541-1600) had served Tokugawa Ieyasu since childhood. His samurai carried a white folding fan *sashimono*, smaller versions of Ieyasu's great standard. His *tsukaiban* wore a light blue folding fan *sashimono* (M). Asano Nagaakira (1586-1632) was a noted Tokugawa retainer who took 44 heads during the Osaka Campaign. In his army, unusually, samurai of different status had different *sashimono*. Ordinary samurai wore white *kiritsuke-edsuru*, a tree-like structure with five pairs of notched flags branching out (O). Higher-ranking samurai worth more than 1000 *koku* wore a *baren* in gold, which looked like a three-dimensional representation of the upper part of a chrysanthemum (N).[37]

HERO SASHIMONO [Plate 7B]

Heroes in samurai history are often portrayed in woodblock prints and screens with unique *sashimono* to make them stand out. Japanese artists often took artistic license to portray the heroes, giving them some very colorful or outlandish designs, but samurai commanders did often wear *sashimono* very different and distinct from their men. The Anegawa Screen shows the battle that took place in the middle of the shallow river called Anegawa in 1570 with the forces of Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu against the Asai and the Asakura. The screen, now in the Fukui Prefectural Museum in Japan, is noted for the depiction of heraldry of the men on both sides who made names for themselves during the battle.

Sakai Tadatsugu (1527-96) was one of Tokugawa Ieyasu's most able commanders and was counted as one of his *shi-tenno*.[38] When Tadatsugu led the Tokugawa vanguard, his samurai wore a white *sashimono* with a red sun disk, like today's Japanese national flag. His own *sashimono* was black with a human skull as the emblem (Plate 7B - A). Ikeda Nobuteru (1536-84) served both Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi and was killed at Nagakute fighting against the Tokugawa. Nobuteru was in the Oda second division at Anegawa. His personal *sashimono* displayed the sword of the god *Fudo Myo-o* engulfed in red flames (B). Makara Jurozaemon (1536-70), who earned the respect of both sides for his heroic rear guard action, had an unusual *tsurikagami sashimono*: an actual hanging or suspended mirror (C). A mirror is a Buddhist symbol for overcoming earthly passions.

---

[37] A *koku* was a measure of volume; a *koku* of rice (10 cubic *shaku*, roughly 287 liters or 10 cubic feet) was held to be enough to feed a man for a year. Feudal holdings were measured in *koku*, corresponding in theory to the number of men a samurai could feed and supply for battle. The *baren* may have been a solar symbol. *Ed*.

[38] *Shi-tenno*, originally pre-Buddhist divinities, were the kings or guardians of the four directions. Groups of four especially notable military leaders were called *shi-tenno* in some Japanese regimes, including the Tokugawa. *Ed*.

Watanabe Kindayu was a vassal of the Ogasawara clan, which was positioned behind Sakai Tadatsugu at Anegawa. Kindayu distinguished himself during the battle and was recognised as one of the Tokugawa army's Seven Spears of Anegawa, the *Shichi hon Yari*. His *sashimono* was His sashimono was a *karakasa*, a red Chinese umbrella with gold strips dangling from the edges and two small white flags on top (D). Watanabe Hanzo Moritsuna (1542-1620) was one of Tokugawa Ieyasu's celebrated generals, known as Devil Hanzo. The screen shows him with a large blue standard with the character *myo* 妙 (mystery) in white. His personal *sashimono* was a red Japanese bucket (E).

A woodblock print of Okabe Gonnodayu, a member of the Hojo *hatamoto*, shows him with his personal *sashimono* of a wild boar.[39] The *sashimono* has been recreated and can be seen in the modern annual Soma Festival. It shows the wild boar in black on light blue (F).

The Shizugatake Screen is a colorful and detailed depiction of the battle for succession between Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Shibata Katsuie after the death of Oda Nobunaga in 1582. The heraldry of the opposing forces is shown in great detail, including men who distinguished themselves as Hideyoshi's Seven Spears of Shizugatake. Katagiri Katsumoto (1556-1615) was one of the Seven Spears. His personal *sashimono* was in *etsuru* form: five pairs of what look like feathers, with a red streamer on top (G).[40] After he rose in rank to command troops, his samurai wore objects shaped like gourds (G1) – the gourd was Hideyoshi's first emblem and standard.

Kato Kiyomasa was also one of the Seven Spears. His personal *sashimono* looked like a portion of a flower with five petals (H). When Kiyomasa commanded his own troops he was served by three loyal standard-bearers who took turns in carrying his prized Nichiren flag. These men wore *sashimono* of plumes. Iida Kakubei wore a plume of white feathers (H1), Morimoto Gendayu wore black (H2), and Shobayashi Shunjin white over black (H3). In the attack on Chinju in Korea in 1593, Iida Kakubei led the Kato troops by throwing the Nichiren banner over the wall.

Throughout Oda Nobunaga's military career, one of his most formidable opponents were the fanatical *Ikko ikki* (single-minded) warrior monks and their followers. It took Nobunaga ten years of siege to conquer Ishiyama Honganji, the primary cathedral fortress of the *Ikko ikki*.[41] Suzuki Shigeoki (1511-85) led 600 arquebusiers of the Saika *ikki* to the aid of Ishiyama Honganji.

---

[39] The *hatamoto* were personal retainers of samurai commanders, (from low ranking "captains" to daimyo). They were men loyal only to him and his direct superiors, men who served "under the flags." They included his grooms, sandal-bearers, weapon-bearers, standard-bearers, *tsukaiban*, bodyguards and pages. Their positions were similar to the *housecarls*, Anglo-Saxon household troops who fought for and died with King Harold at the Battle of Hastings in England (1066). EV.

[40] *Etsuru* means literally *bamboo broom*; it is a pole with multiple branches where various devices can be attached. *Tanzaku etsuru* have strips of paper with poetry dangling from the branches. *Nabiki etsuru* have ribbons attached to each branch; on *sumitori etsuru* it was folded paper. As noted, Katagiri Katsumoto's *sashimono* had feathers on each branch. EV.

[41] *Ikko ikki* were peasant-based irregulars led by Buddhist monks and animated by passionate devotion to Pure Land Buddhism (focused on Amita Buddha as the source of salvation). They first rose in rebellion against the feudal system in the 14th century and were finally defeated by Oda Nobunaga in the 1580s. *Ed*.

Shigeoki's personal *sashimono* was dark blue with a red sun disk (I) while the Saika *ikki* wore a red *sashimono* with their *yatagarasu* mon, a three-legged crow in black (I1).

Matsuno Hirochika had one of the most gruesome *sashimono*, showing a decapitated head (J). He had a flag made showing the head of a young enemy he killed in battle, as a way to pray for the dead man's entry into paradise.

THE HORO [Plate 8A]

During the later Heian Period (11th-12th centuries) high-ranking samurai wore capes attached to armor shoulder straps (called *shirohoro*) in order to stand out on the battlefield. They were also known as "arrow catchers," and modern tests have shown they did offer some protection by catching or deflecting arrows even at very close ranges. The bottom part of the cape was later held in place by the *obi* sash, the wind making the *horo* billow out like a sail as the samurai rode into battle.

By the Sengoku Period the introduction of firearms had negated the *horo*'s ability to protect the rider, but it was now the most eye-catching way to display heraldry, worn only by the most elite, the best of the best. *Horo* were made from silk or fine quality cotton cloth, stiffened by stretching over the *horo kago*, a framework of bamboo or whalebone. Samurai killed in battle wearing a *horo* would have their heads wrapped in their *horo* to display their status when presented to the enemy commander during the head-viewing ceremony held after every battle. The *tsukaiban*, elite scouts and the messenger corps, and the *uma-mawari shu*, the horse guards of daimyo, often wore the *horo*, as did some daimyo and samurai commanders. Oda Nobunaga had two units of elite horse guards called the *aka horo-shu* (Red *Horo* Guards) and the *kuro horo-shu* (Black *Horo* Guards). These two elite bodyguard units were given command of the armies fighting for Nobunaga at the Battle of Nagashino in 1575, where even daimyo and generals followed their orders.

Lord of the Red Devils Ii Naomasa had a unit of eight *tsukaiban*. Seven wore red *horo* and would be instantly recognized by allied units as being sent by Naomasa, the Tokugawa vanguard commander. One *tsukaiban* stood out from the rest by wearing a light blue *horo* (Plate 8A - A). The various divisions and squads of the Ii army would recognize this man as their daimyo Naomasa's personal *tsukaiban*. Naomasa's most forward division, the "tip of the spear," was led by Kimata Morikatsu. who was served by two *tsukaiban* with red *horo*. One of these was Okamoto Hansuke, who wore a patterned *horo* of gold spots on red (B). He was recognizable at once as having been sent by Morikatsu. All the Ii *tsukaiban* had their individual names written on gold plaques on top of their *horo* framework (B1).

Horo colors were often contrasting and not aligned with the clan's heraldry. The daimyo So Yoshitoshi (1568-1615) had red flags, but his *tsukaiban* wore a plain white *horo* topped by a gold *uchiwa* fan (C). Kato Yoshiaki had white flags, but his *tsukaiban* wore brilliant purple *horo* (D). The large stiffened *horo* was also a good place to show a large sized mon. Date Masamune's *tsukaiban* wore black and dark blue *horo* with the Date mon in gold (E).

There were *horo* that used the clan's colors. The *tsukaiban horo* of Sanada Nobuyoshi (1593-1634) matched the Sanada colors of white intersected by a red band (F). The *tsukaiban* of

Ogasawara Nagatoki (1529-83) used their flag colors of black and white in an ingenious way – their *horo* were black with white dots, looking like stars or snow against a black sky (G). Flags and other devices were often added to the *horo* to make them even more eye-catching. Hoshino Masamitsu (1561-1631) used green flags but his *tsukaiban* had a red *horo* topped by a small flag showing three Hoshino mon of nine dots (H). Tozawa Masamori's *tsukaiban* used a black *horo* topped by two tall slashed white flags (I).

Horo were also worn by commanders. Nakagawa Kiyohide (1542-83) was killed in the battle of Shizugatake. He is illustrated on the Shizugatake Screen with a black *horo.* Takeda Shingen's brother Nobushige was killed at the Fourth Battle of Kawanakajima. Shingen gave his brother a dark blue *horo* with religious invocations in gold, made from their late mother's kimono (J). Matsudaira (Yuki) Tadamasa (1597-1645) distinguished himself at his first battle in the Osaka Campaign where he took 57 heads. His personal *horo* had alternating bands of black and white (K).

SLOGANS, MOTTOS AND TREASURES [Plate 8B]

Slogans and invocations continued to appear on banners, just as they did during the Gempei War. While a few examples proclaimed the personal motto or beliefs of the daimyo, others were the main banners of the army. Takeda Shingen had flags made after his invasion and eventual conquest of Suwa province. The Suwa flags are red with writing in gold honoring Suwa *taisha* shrines (Plate 8B - A, B).[42] The Kawanakajima screens show Shingen's main camp with two sets of the Suwa flags, one on each side of the *mi-hata* banner (C, and compare Plate 3B - F) which was identical to Takeda Yoshinobu's *nobori*.

Some clans had flags that were treasured heirlooms from earlier times, passed down across generations. In front of the Suwa flags on the screen was the *bahyo umajirushi* (meaning roughly *location of the commander's horse*), a large red flag with three *hanabishi* mon in black (D). This flag, a Takeda clan family treasure, served as the *gunki* or war flag accompanying the army on campaign. Another treasure was the *hinomaru* flag, a white *uma jirushi* with a very large red sun disk (F). This flag did not go with the army when it went to war as it was considered too valuable to risk damage.

Many daimyo displayed flags with mottoes to inspire the troops. Shingen had the famous *Sonshi uma jirushi*. It had gold writing on a navy blue flag, meaning in loose translation *fast like the wind, silent as the forest, invasive like fire, steady as a mountain* (G).[43] Many versions of these *Sonshi* flags were made. Shingen appeared to have a different one in each major campaign. Only seven have survived as many were destroyed during the Edo period when these flags were boiled to make a tea believed to cure disease.

---

[42] *Taisha* shrines were ancient Shinto shrines constructed in archaic residential patterns. *Ed*.

[43] *Sonshi* is the Japanese rendering of Sun Tzu, the Chinese military strategist of the 6th century BC, whose book *The Art of War* is still studied. The words on Shingen's banner were from *The Art of War*. EV.

NAGAO KAGETORA AND UESUGI KENSHIN [Plate 9A]

The *honjin* of some of the most successful and powerful daimyo would have been a spectacle of fluttering flags of different types, designed to awe and inspire vassals and allies and strike fear into the enemy. Nagao Kagetora (1530-78), head of the Nagao family and ruler of Echigo Province, was feared and respected as the Dragon of Echigo. The Nagao mon had eight small *mitsu-tomoe* encircling a much larger one in a *kuyo* star pattern.[44] The Nagao banner was white with three such mon (Plate 9A - A). Kagetora's personal banner (B) and standard (C) were dark blue, the color of the heraldry of his overlord the Yamauchi branch of the Uesugi.

Kagetora had two great standards. One had the character *bi* 毘 for the god of war Bishamonten (D), the Shinto deity that Kagetora was attached to. The second standard had the character *ryu* 龍, meaning *dragon* (E). The dragon standard was only raised when Kagetora went on the attack. Towering over Kagetora's banners was the tallest *nagarebata*, inscribed *Tohachi Bishamon* (F).[45]

In 1551 Kagetora gave refuge to his overlord Uesugi Norimasa (1522?-79), who was fleeing from the Hojo. Eventually Norimasa adopted Kagetora, who would later become Uesugi Kenshin, one of the greatest daimyo. As Kenshin he took the Uesugi banner as his own: dark blue with three Uesugi mon of *take ni suzume* (sparrows in bamboo) (G). He also took possession of the Uesugi's prized dark blue banner with red sun disk (H), and a lesser standard in Uesugi colors, a huge dark blue folding fan with red disk (I). At the height of his career Kenshin would have displayed all these emblems, with an array of Uesugi banners prominent and Nagao banners most likely placed behind them.

TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI [Plate 9B]

At the height of his power, Toyotomi Hideyoshi's heraldry was the most dazzling example recorded in the scrolls of *O Uma-jirushi*.[46] It had no mon, but was almost entirely in gold. His *nobori* was notched in seven places and carried a small red streamer at the very top of the pole (Plate 9B - A). His great standard had a gold *uchiwa* military fan above a red *fukinuki* (B). His lesser standard was topped by a golden gourd, the emblem he first used early in his career, with a gold *noren* underneath, notched in four places (C). His *tsukaiban* are shown with two devices, a

---

[44] *Tomoe* are comma-like figures; *mitsu-tomoe* are mon with three *tomoe* arrayed in a circle. *Kuyo* is a figure consisting of a disk with (usually) eight smaller disks around it, representing the earth surrounded by sun, moon, five planets and two other astronomical points. For more see pages 44-45. *Ed.*

[45] *Tohachi Bishamon* translates to *Eight Swords of Bishamonten*. Bishamonten was a war god, one of the so-called Four Heavenly Kings. He was depicted in many forms, including one with eight arms (suitable for a god of Indian origin) all bearing swords. EV.

[46] This magnificent 17th century compendium of heraldic standards has been published in facsimile, with English translation and commentary by Xavid Pretzer, as *O-umajirushi* (Cambridge MA, 2015). Toyotomi Hideyoshi's standards appear there at pages 119-120. *Ed*.

gold *horo* (D) and a gold notched *sashimono* (E). One was for the horse guards and the other for the elite messenger corps. His samurai wore large gold *sashimono*. This was a most brilliant suite of heraldry for one who started out as a lowly *ashigaru* and sandal-bearer for Oda Nobunaga, the great unifier. Hideyoshi succeeded in unifying Japan; for a time everyone, the most powerful daimyo and their armies, submitted to him. His final suite of heraldry had no history or pedigree and disappeared with the death of his son Hideyori when Osaka Castle fell in 1615.

ARMOR [Plate 10A]

The introduction of firearms in large numbers on the Japanese battlefield resulted in the traditional armor of multiple colorful lacings being replaced by simpler, cheaper and more effective overlapping metal plates (later superseded for some warriors by solid armor breastplates). Originally worn by the *ashigaru*, use of metal armor spread to the samurai also. This somber armor was eventually made colorful, and mon applied to the breastplates, in order to serve the samurai's obsession to be seen and recognized on the battlefield.

Black lacquered armor was the most common type, with the mon painted in gold. A gold disk was used in many armies, painted on the breastplate and on the *jingasa* (a light flattened conical helmet issued to *ashigaru*) (Plate 10A - A). Date Masamune's *ashigaru* had gold disks on their armor matching the mon on Masamune's banners. Surviving examples of Niwa armor show their saltire mon (B).

Very complex mon were also painted in great detail. The *ashigaru* armor of Sengoku Hidehisa (1551-1614) displayed his coin mon in gold on black while the *jingasa* show the opposite with the mon in black on a gold *jingasa* (C).[47] Red lacquer was also used to paint mon. The Hojo had their mon in red (D). The red lacquered armor that equipped a few elite units usually didn't have mon painted on. One of the rare exceptions was red Mori armor with the mon painted in black (E).

Fewer in number were brown lacquered armor. Ishida Mitsunari (1560-1600) provided armor for his *ashigaru* marked with characters that read *o ichi o man o kitsu*, which translates to *great one, great myriad, great luck* (F). These characters appear in all of Mitsunari's flags. Some armies had different colored armor for different specialised units of *ashigaru*. Kato Kiyomasa's *ashigaru* had brown armor with the Kato mon of a gold ring on the breastplate and *jingasa* (G). Kato archers and arquebusiers had more colorful armor: brown or red, with the lower half and the breastplate in gold and the Nichiren sect motto written in black diagonally down the breastplate (G1). Their *jingasa* were either brown with a gold disk mon or gold with a red disk.

Some of the most complex and sophisticated *ashigaru* heraldry appears in the Matsuura *kakemono* (hanging scroll). The Matsuura *ashigaru* are shown with uniform armor and

---

[47] This mon was a Chinese coin of the Ming Dynasty widely used in Japan at the time. The coin type was common in both countries for centuries, varying only in material and in characters. The inscription on this one (Yung-Lo 永樂 t'ung-pao 通寶) identifies it as money of the Yung-Lo Emperor, Chu Ti, who reigned in China 1402-24. *Ed*.

sashimono. Nagaeyari *ashigaru* (pikemen) are shown in red armor with two vertical gold bands (H). The daimyo is protected in the rear by seated arqebusiers wearing red armor with two diagonal gold bands (H1). To the rear of these men are seated *ashigaru* with *kabuto* (metal helmets) instead of *jingasa*. They wear black armor with two red horizontal bands (H2). In the vanguard are seated arquebusiers in black armor, with the Matsuura mon of three disks in gold (H3).

JINBAORI [Plate 10B]

Jinbaori were battlefield jackets or surcoats worn over armor for warmth and to keep armor dry in the rain. These were worn in camp and taken off when going into battle. They were expensive luxury items to show off the wealth and status of the wearer and would not be exposed to battle damage. As a result fine examples still exist today. Many are very beautiful works of art, but they were also displays of heraldry, the mon appearing prominently on the upper back.

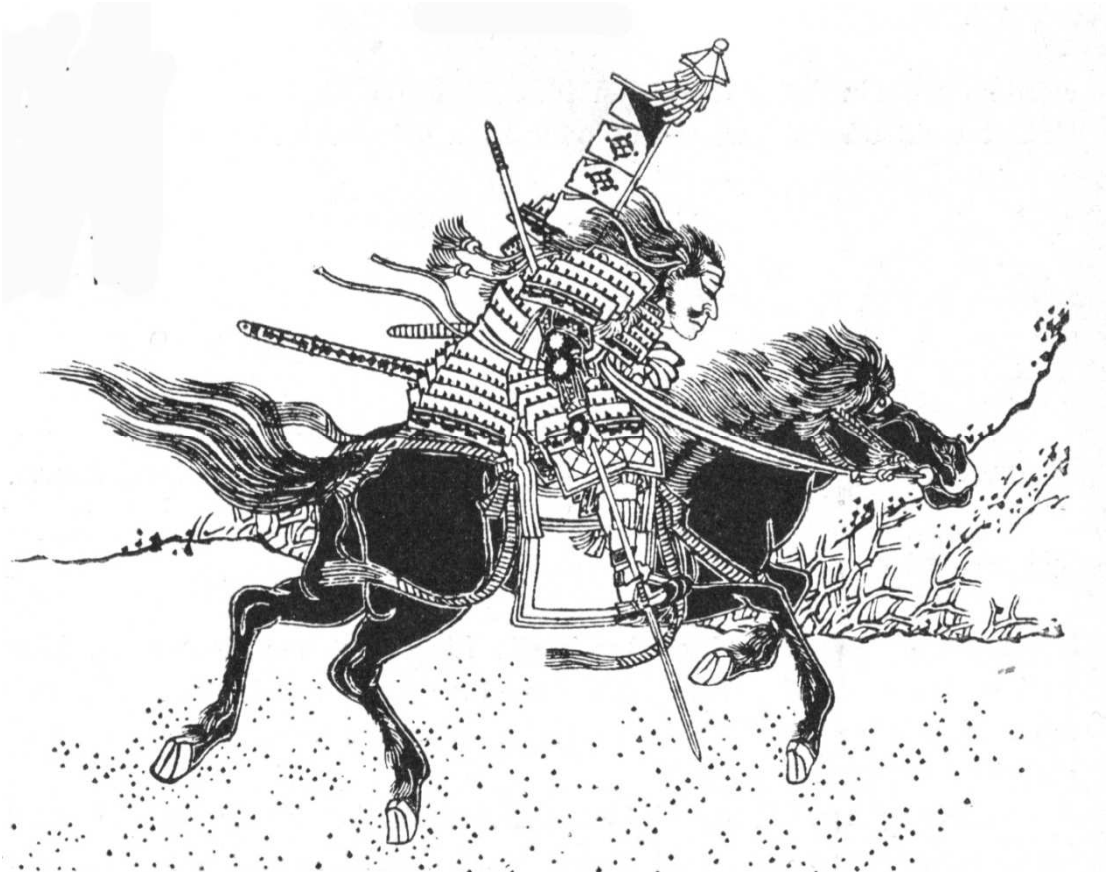
Gatherings of generals before a battle for roll call and discussion of strategies, and after a victory for celebration and viewing of heads, were very colorful events, with generals and daimyo wearing their heraldic *jinbaori*. Date Masamune had a famous dark blue one with his mon in gold, but the lower half of the *jinbaori* had disks of various sizes and various colors all around (Plate 10B - A). Kobayakawa Hideaki (1577-1602), who became infamous for switching sides during the battle of Sekigahara, wore a red *jinbaori* with large sleeves. His mon of crossed sickles appeared large, covering most of the upper back (B). Daimyo would have many *jinbaori* to choose from. Several of Oda Nobunaga's have survived, some of which he passed on or gave as gifts to his generals. One of these was a red *jinbaori* with his mon in gold in the upper back, but with *kiri* (paulownia) on the lower half. The same *kiri* mon had been bestowed upon the Ashikaga, to stand for imperial acceptance and commission.

After the fall of Osaka Castle in 1615, and with the exception of the tragic Shimabara Rebellion in 1637, samurai armies on the battlefield were becoming a distant memory. The Tokugawa Shogunate ordered daimyo whose loyalty was suspect to travel to the capital Edo (later renamed Tokyo) once every two years. In time the daimyo and clans saw the procession to Edo as an opportunity to display their wealth. These processions were always led by flag-bearers holding aloft banners that evoked faint memories of when they flew over some of the greatest battlefields of Japan.

In Japan today some of these displays of heraldry can still be seen in annual *samurai matsuri* festivals celebrating some of the greatest daimyo and their battles, including the war bands of Takeda Shingen and his nemesis Uesugi Kenshin and their legendary battles at Kawanakajima in the 16th century. Re-enactors in *jinbaori* portray the Hojo of Odawara and the Date of Sendai, Maeda Toshiie and Kato Kiyomasa. Decisive battles like Nagashino and Sekigahara, and even the defeated but beloved doomed commander of Osaka Castle, Sanada Nobushige Yukimura, are all remembered in festivals with displays of their magnificent heraldry.

SAMURAI VIGNETTES FROM STRÖHL'S *JAPANISCHES WAPPENBUCH*

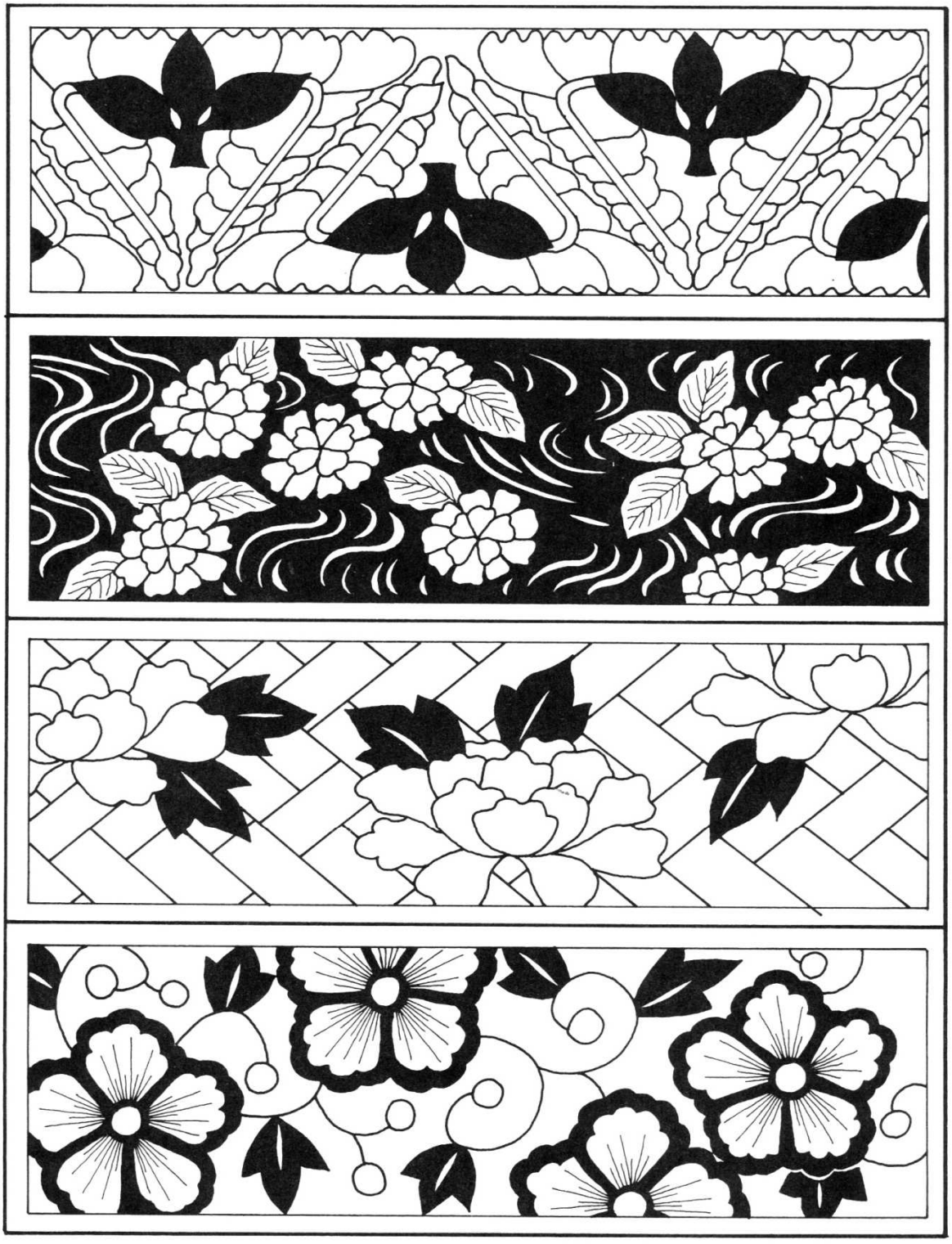
DAIMYO SASAKI TAKATSUNA (1160-1214) WEARING A JINBAORI WITH HIS MON OF FOUR EYES.



THE WARRIOR AHO SOZAEMON WITH HIS SASHIMOMO

LEFT: AN ARMORED WARRIOR BEARING A TRIPLED WILD GOOSE MON

RIGHT: A WARRIOR BEARING A SNAKE'S-EYE MON



JAPANESE DECORATIVE PANELS: WISTERIA, YELLOW ROSE (KERRIA), PEONY, CHINA FLOWER.

ARTIST UNKNOWN (NOT BY STRÖHL).

HERALDIC DEVICES ON MODERN JAPANESE FLAGS

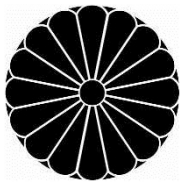
by Nozomi Kariyasu

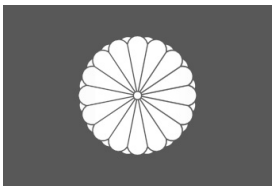
NOTE: The flags and emblems shown in here in black and white can be seen in color, with the same numbering, the inside front cover of this book. Footnotes signed NK are by the author.

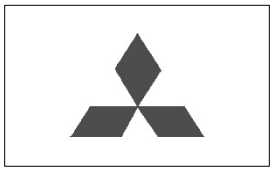
Modern Japanese history starts in 1868 with the so-called Meiji Restoration, which brought the end of daimyo feudalism and the Tokugawa Shogunate and led eventually to the establishment of constitutional government. The samurai military system had been rapidly eroding in response to Western penetration of Japanese society (especially by the American Commodore Matthew Perry in 1854). Its replacement by modern military methods was completed with the defeat of the Satsuma Rebellion by imperial military forces at the Battle of Shiroyama in 1877. A nearly-contemporary painting of the battle (reproduced on the back cover of this book) shows the imperial forces using only the modern Japanese state war flag.

With the end of the system based on samurai and daimyo (feudal lords), and the abolition of the old nobility in favor of a new-style peerage (itself abolished after the Pacific War), the use of kamon (mon used as family emblems) was sharply reduced. Nevertheless traditional kamon and graphically similar emblems continue to be used on some Japanese flags. The selection that follows is representative but not exhaustive.[1]

① The imperial emblem (the chrysanthemum mon with 16 petals, doubled), shown left, was officially adopted on August 25, 1869 by Great Council of State Proclamation No. 802. It had been the mon of the imperial family since early in the 13th century when Emperor Gotoba took a special liking to the design. It is as close as modern Japan has to a national coat of arms, used in front of embassies and (without the doubling of the petals) on Japanese passports. It is the basis of a full suite of flags for the imperial family (shown in this book on plate 15). Right: the imperial standard (gold mon on red).





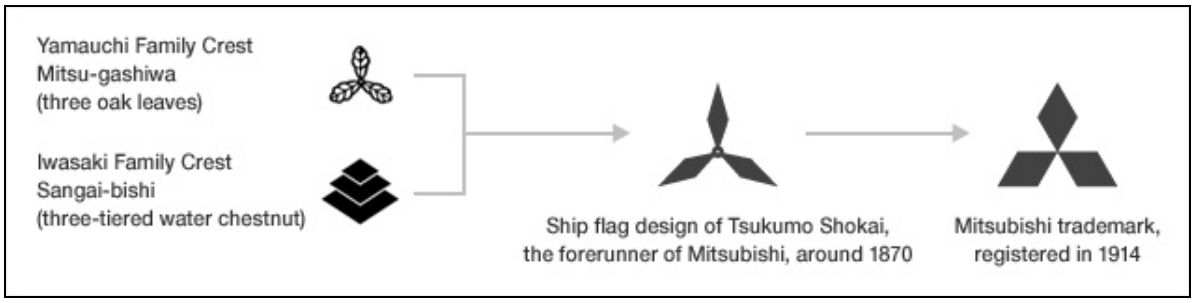


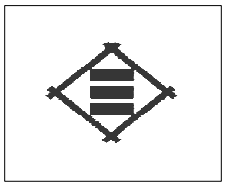
② The mon-like emblem of the Yubin Kisen Mitsubishi Kaisha (Mitsubishi Mail Steamship Company) was adopted in 1875. The name Mitsubishi refers to the three-diamond emblem − it is a combination of *mitsu* (three) and *hishi* (meaning *water chestnut*), a word the Japanese have long used to mean a rhombus or lozenge shape.[2] Japanese often bends the *h* sound to a *b* in the middle of a word. Yataro Iwasaki, the founder of the old Mitsubishi organization, chose the three-diamond mark as the emblem for his company. The mark is suggestive of the three-leaf kamon of the Tosa Clan, Yataro's first employer, and also of the three heaped lozenges of the Iwasaki kamon. The company uses a white flag charged with a red mark in the center.

---

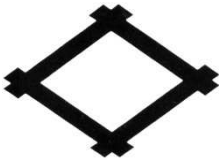
[1] For a comprehensive treatment, see Nozomi Kariyasu, *Prefectural Flags & Municipal Flags of Japan* (Tokyo, 2016), in Japanese but with illustrations captioned in English. *Ed*.

[2] For more on the *hishi*, see page 49. *Ed.*



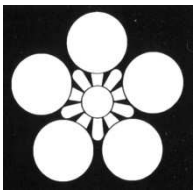


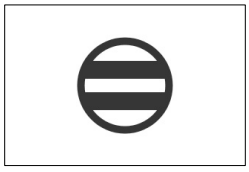
③ The emblem of the Mitsui Shipping Company was adopted in 1876, based on a mon-form trademark combining the initial character 三 (three; read as *mitsu*) of Mitsui with a figure (right) of a well curb. Their flag is white, charged with the company trademark in red.



④ The emblem of Kuroishi City was adopted on April 1, 1889. It is based on the two bows adopted by the daimyo Kuroishi Nobuhide as a samurai symbol and used for a war banner. Although there is no flag law, the city uses a blue flag with the city emblem in the center.

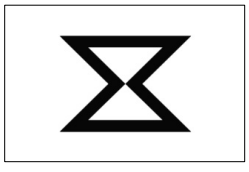
⑤ The emblem of Kanazawa City was adopted on March 7, 1891. The city emblem is a stylized kanji [character] *kana* 金 (gold), the first character in the city's name. It is placed inside the plum flower adapted from the kamon used by the lords of the Kaga domain, founded by the warlord Maeda Toshiie. Although there is no flag law, the city uses a blue flag charged with the city emblem in white.





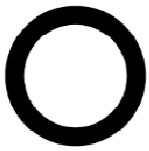
⑥ The Tochiki Kisen company kamon emblem of two bars in a ring was adopted in 1901. Tochiki uses this as its trademark, and in red on a white ground as its house flag.

⑦ Nagoya's city emblem was adopted on October 30, 1907, by City Notice No. 93. The city emblem is the kanji *hachi* 八 (eight) in a ring. This auspicious number was used as an emblem by a former local daimyo of the Owari clan, a branch of the Tokugawa. As a simplified mon it represents Nagoya City's developing without limits. Although there is no flag law, the city uses the city emblem in red on white.

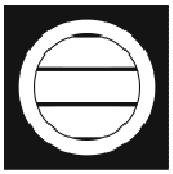


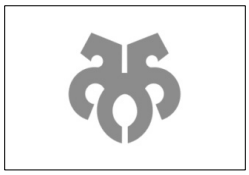
⑧ Toyohashi City's emblem was adopted on June 6, 1909, by City Notice No. 34. The city emblem is a stylized pirn, or weaver's bobbin, which inside a ring was the kamon of the Okochi, former daimyos of Yoshida domain. It symbolizes combination and solidarity, as yarn gathered on a spool joins into one mass. The city flag, showing the core emblem in blue on white, was adopted on July 1, 1963 by City Notice No 68.

⑨ Maebashi City's emblem was adopted in 1909. It is a ring adapted from the vexilloid used during war by the former Matsudaira lords.[3] Although there is no flag law, the city uses the ring in white on a dull purple field.



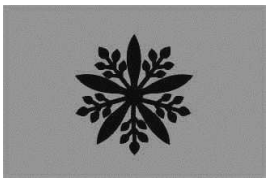
⑩ Yokosuka City's emblem was adopted by City Notice No. 17 on March 16, 1912. The emblem combines the stylized katakana *yoko* ヨコ and former Lord Miura's kamon of three wide bars in a ring, all within a compass that represents a port city. Although there is no flag law, the city uses the emblem in red on a white field.



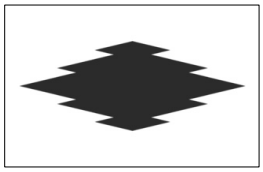


⑪ The Kitagata Town emblem was adopted in 1916. The town emblem combined a stylized kanji *kita* 北 (north) of Kitagata with a similarly stylized version of the ivy leaf, the Edo Period kamon of the former Lord Toda. The white flag has a green town emblem in the center.

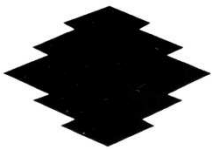
⑫ The Sendai City emblem was adopted on September 5, 1933, by City Notice No. 109. It is a stylized kanji *sen* 仙, meaning *wide river* in the Ainu language of Hokkaido. It was inspired by the former local daimyo Date's kamon of three vertical stripes in a ring. The city flag, adopted without a flag law, puts the emblem in white on a dark purplish-blue field.



⑬ The State of Manchuria, known in English by its Chinese name Manchukuo, was established as a Japanese satellite state in 1932. The former Chinese emperor Pu-yi was chief executive, and became emperor in 1934. Manchukuo adopted state symbols in the Japanese style, one of which was a floral mon, in Pu-yi's case a eupatorium flower. Following the Japanese example, his mon was used (in gold on yellow) on his imperial standard. The eupatorium was reportedly the emperor's favorite flower. It was adopted as the imperial emblem on April 25, 1934 by Manchu Imperial Family Instruction No. 11. It is sometimes identified as the Chinese spring orchid, but unlike the eupatorium that flower does not grow in Manchuria. The Manchu State was reincorporated into China after the war.

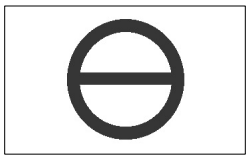


⑭ The emblem of Shibata City was adopted on July 9, 1934 by City Notice No. 17. It is the kamon of the Mizoguchi, the former Shibata daimyos: five heaped lozenges with merged outlines. The flag, adopted without a flag law, shows the emblem in vermilion on a white field.

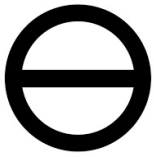


[3] These vexilloids, three-dimensional objects used in the same way as flags, were called *uma jirushi* and are discussed in Emmanuel Valerio's article, beginning at page 109. *Ed*.

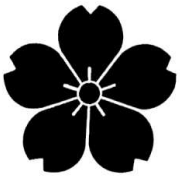
⑮ Kanie's town emblem, three horizontal bars in a ring, was adopted in 1934. It was the kamon of the Sakuma, the former owners of Kanie Castle. There is no flag law, but a white flag is used with a green town emblem in the center.

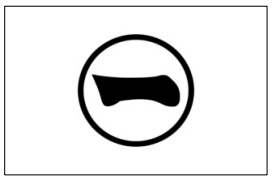


⑯ The Nippon Kisen shipping company's emblem of a stripe in a circle was adopted as its trademark in 1950. Its house flag is seen at left. The device is not really a kamon, but is a stylized character *hi* 日, meaning *sun*.



⑰ The Coastal Safety Force flag was adopted on Oct 31, 1952 by National Safety Agency Notification No. 2. It had a field 3x2 composed of fifteen horizontal stripes of equal width, eight white and seven blue; over all, in generous proportions, was a conventionalized cherry blossom in red. The cherry blossom is not a kamon but a kamon-style design. This flag went out of use in 1954 when the Coastal Safety Force was merged into the Japanese Self-Defense Force.

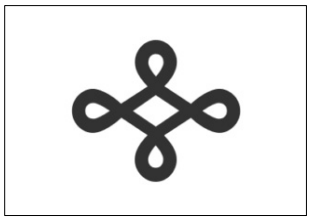




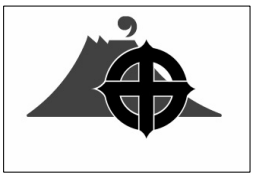
⑱ The Inuyama City emblem was adopted on Apr 1, 1954. It is the kanji *ichi* 一 (the number one) in a ring, and was the kamon of the Naruse family, the former lord of Inuyama Domain and owner of Inuyama Castle. There is no flag law, but the city uses this emblem in black on a white field.

⑲ The Gamagori City emblem was adopted on July 20, 1955. It is a horizontal stripe in a circle, a modified form of the kamon of the Kamagata Matsudaira family, relatives of the Tokugawa shogun. A blue flag with this emblem in white was adopted on April 8, 1989.

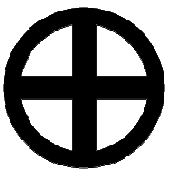
⑳ Hashima City's emblem was adopted on November 25, 1964 by City Notice No. 68. The city emblem is a stylized kanji *ha* 羽, meaning *wing*. the first character in the word *Hashima*. The association of 羽 with pigeon feathers represents a peaceful city administration, and alludes to the kamon of the former owners of Takehana Castle (right). A purple flag with the emblem in white is in use, although there is no flag law.

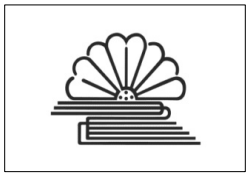


㉑ The Nishio City emblem was adopted on March 25, 1965 by Ordinance No. 5. The emblem was a travel insignia of the Ogyumatsudaira family, former owners of Nishio Castle.[4] The white flag, also adopted in 1965, has a red city emblem in the center. It represents orderly rows of streets and the solidarity of the citizens.

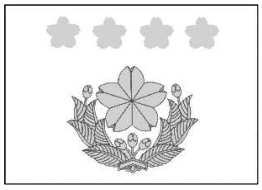


㉒ The Kagoshima City emblem was adopted on April 29, 1967 by City Notice No. 5. The city emblem combines a stylized kanji *shi* 市 (city) and the bit-ring kamon (right) used by the former Satuma clan lords the Shimazu. (Far right: a similar cross-based mon used by the Shimazu as early as 1274, based on the character *ju* 十, meaning *ten*.) The arrows facing four ways indicate a city developing in all directions. The city flag, white with the emblem in black and Sakurajima Island in red, was adopted on September 1, 1971 by City Notice No. 140.

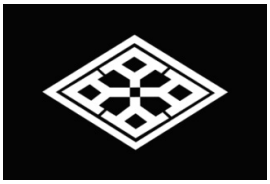




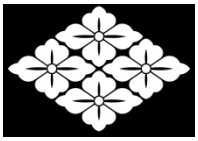
㉓ Shimamoto Town's emblem was adopted on Dec 10, 1968 by Town Notice No 50. The emblem is a stylized version of the town's name in kanji 島本 and a modified form of a historic Kusunoki kamon called *kikusui*, a chrysanthemum on water. (see page 113). The town flag, adopted on December 10, 1968 by Notice No. 51, shows the emblem in red on white. The legislation says it represents a bright future in a good circumstances.



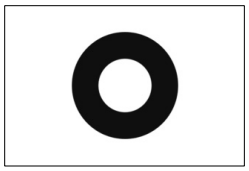
㉔ The flag of the Chief Staff of the Ground Self-Defense Force was adopted on March 14, 1972 by Defense Agency Instruction No. 3. It features four gold cherry blossoms as a national flower and a large cherry blossom on white field. Other Japanese military rank flags (and the flag of the prime minister) also use the cherry blossom, and it is an insignia of rank on military and naval uniforms. Right: the blossom from the prime minister's flag. The military cherry blossom is not a kamon but a kamon-style device.



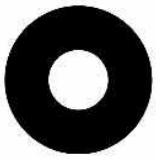
㉕ The Yamatokoriyama City emblem was adopted on January 17, 1974 by City Notice No. 3. The city emblem is four stylized kanji *yama* 山 (mountain) in a lozenge, which alludes to the kamon of the Yanagisawa family, four water caltrop plants (*hanabishi*) arranged as a lozenge (right). The flag is blue with a white emblem in the center.



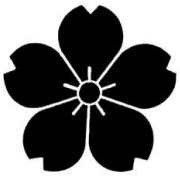
[4] Travel insignia were a means of marking luggage for the daimyo's procession. NK.



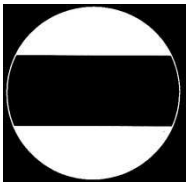
㉖ Ozu City's emblem was adopted on January 11, 2005 by City Notice No. 1. The city emblem is a modified kamon *jamone* (snake eye) used by the House of Kato in the former Ozu domain. According to the legislation, the blue color of the device (on a white field) stands for the clear Hijikawa River and an intellectual and pure heart of the people. There is no flag law, but a white flag is used with a blue city emblem in the center.

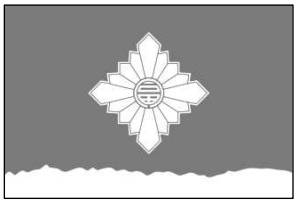


㉗ The Fire and Disaster Management Agency (FDMA) emblem was adopted on March 29, 2005. The emblem depicts sun rays, a snow crystal, hose pipes, water cannons and a plume of water, all on a cherry blossom. This cherry blossom is not a kamon but a kamon-style design. The purple flag has a white FDMA emblem in the center.

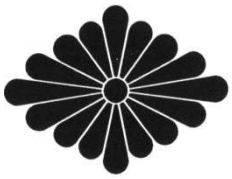


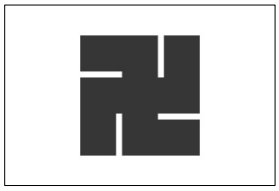
㉘ The Ota City emblem was adopted on June 28, 2005 by City Notice No. 91. The city emblem is a modification of the banner called onakaguro (大中黒), meaning the wide black horizontal striped white banner belonging to the Nitta family who ruled this area in former days. The emblem on the flag includes the city name in white at the lower right side. It represents a spirit of inherited tradition and innovation.





㉙ Toyama City's emblem was adopted on January 4, 2006, by City Notice No 1. The emblem is derived from former clan lord Maeda's kamon of a 16-petal chrysanthemum in a lozenge form, and adds a stylized kanji *to* 富, the first character in the city's name. The design represents Toyama developing in four directions. The city flag, adopted on March 1, 2006, depicts the Tateyama mountain range, rich in natural features such as mountains and rivers, while the basic blue tone represents Toyama Bay and the sky. Snowy mountains run along the bottom of the flag.





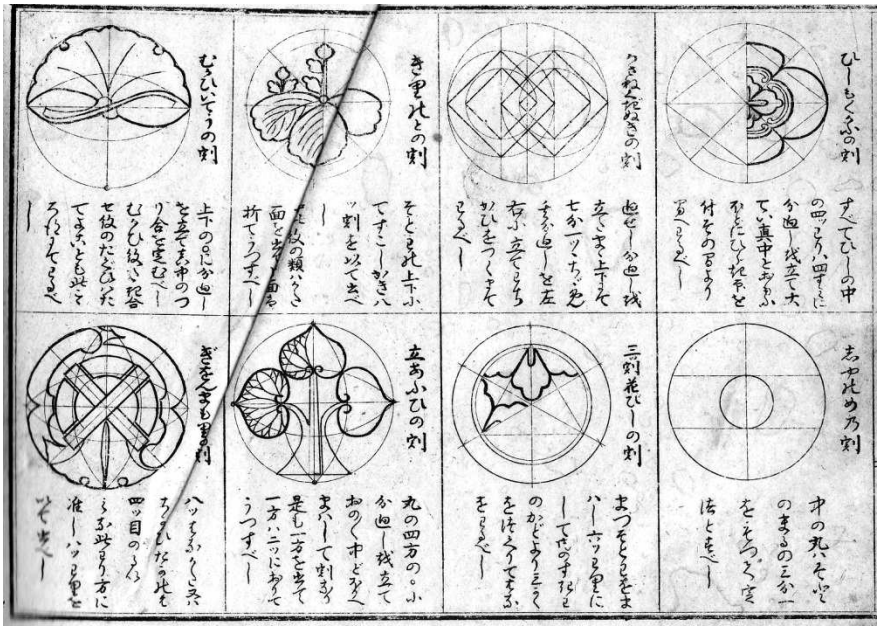
㉚ The Hirosaki City emblem was adopted on November 15, 2006 by City Notice No. 470. The emblem is a Buddhist swastika, which was kamon of the Tsugaru family, the former Hirosaki daimyo. It represents happiness and *kudoku* (blessing, grace or reward).[5] There is no flag law, but a white flag shows a black city emblem in the center.

[5] The swastika is a religious symbol in many cultures, including Hinduism and Buddhism. In Japanese Buddhism this compact left-oriented form is called *manji* and was used as a kamon by several clans. On Japanese maps it indicates the location of a Buddhist temple or shrine. *Ed*.

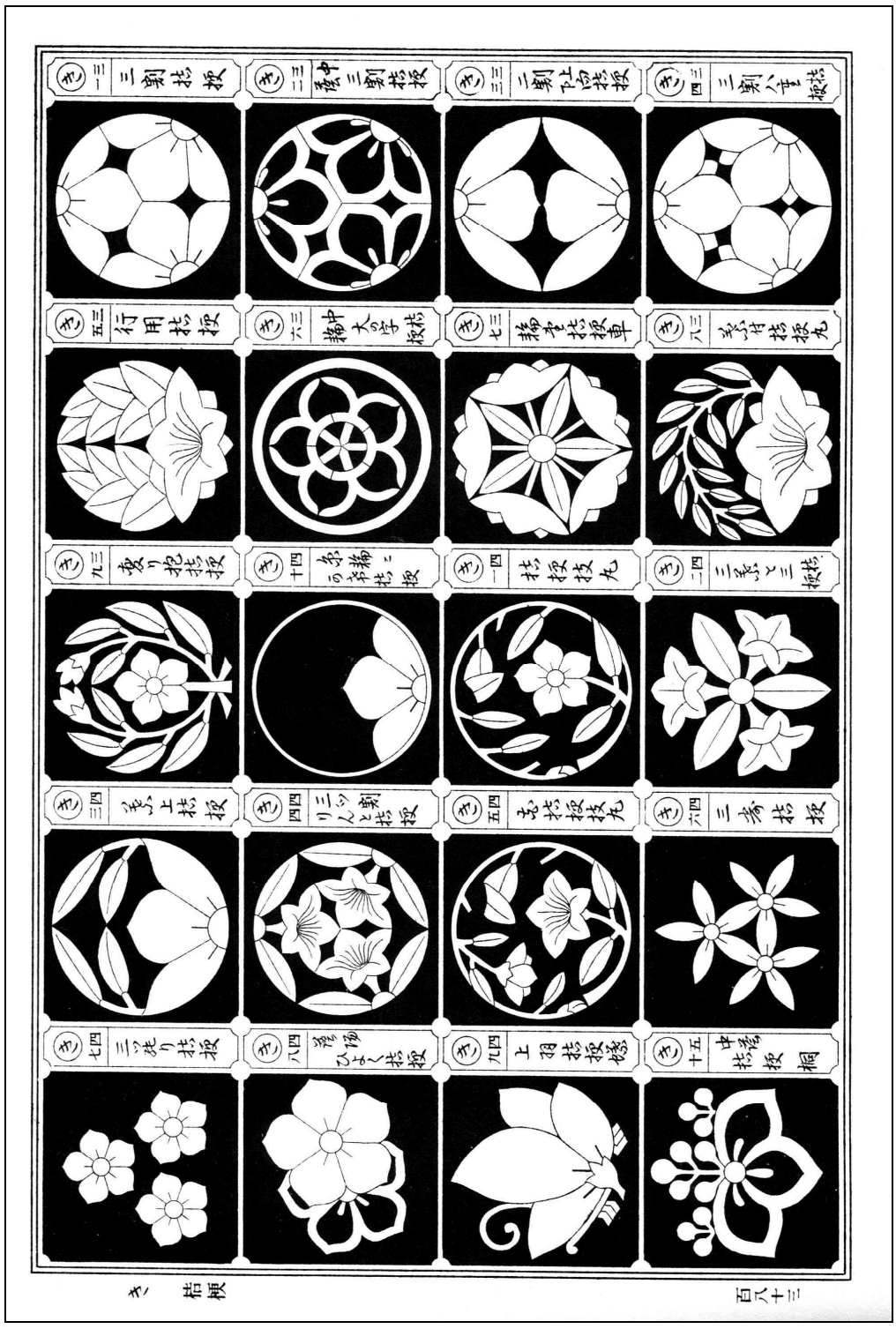
Many municipalities use kamon (or modified kamon) of former ruling clan lords to express their history. This was based on pre-war practice. In the past municipal emblems and flags were chosen from proposals designed by the residents who well understood the local history. In recent years, however, outside professional graphic designers tended to win municipal emblem and flag competitions. They were trained in Western-style design and did not understand or value the traditional kamon. The decreased social role of the old families since the Meiji Restoration 150 years ago contributed to the decline in the use and perceived relevance of their heraldry.

Another important factor was the program of municipal mergers and dissolution carried out in Japan in recent years (1995-2006). The number of municipalities decreased from 3,234 in 1995 to 1,741 in 2006. The need for new and neutral symbols led to the abandonment of kamon-based emblems no longer appropriate for merged municipalities. Most of them adopted new emblems and flags through public design competitions, and unfortunately favored dry and tasteless pictographic modern designs with little local character. Example are given below, left to right: Honjyo City in Saitama Prefecture, Misato Town in Shimane Prefecture, and Kobayashi City in Miyazaki Prefecture. All three emblems appear in blue and green with round accents in red. It would be hard to know which is which without a label.

The choice of background for local flags is made by the municipality, and is very conservative, usually a single color and more often than not an uninspiring white. It seems likely that the use of the Japanese kamon-style flag will diminish further in the future, as long as the Japanese government promotes a municipal merger program and municipalities follow the thoughtless fashions favored by professional graphic designers.



Construction diagrams from an old kimono design book. Artist unknown; crease in original source.



SAMPLE PAGE FROM THE *MATSUYA PIECE-GOODS CATALOGUE* (1913).

This page shows mon based on the bellflower motif, illustrating many of the variations described in "Understanding Japanese Heraldry." The top of the page is shown here on the left side; the page should be rotated clockwise, and then read right to left.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE ON JAPANESE HERALDRY

by David F. Phillips

The following works (in English with a few exceptions) are useful for understanding Japanese heraldry. Almost all of them are easily available, either new or used, from www.bookfinder.com.

John Dower, *Elements of Japanese Design* (New York, 1971). This is the best work available in English on the history and meaning of Japanese mon, and is indispensible to a study of the subject from English sources. However, it does not attempt a structural or heraldic analysis. The pictorial section includes 2715 mon, arranged thematically but with a good index. They were taken from an archive of original drawings by Kiyoshi Kawamoto.

Stone Bridge Press, *Family Crests of Japan* (Berkeley CA, revised edition 2007). This book, issued in paperback with no author credited, was when published the best modern guide in English to the structure and vocabulary of Japanese mon. It is simply presented and well-designed, with more than 800 mon and a helpful index organized by charge.

Yuzuru Okada, *Japanese Family Crests* (Tokyo, 1941). A small pamphlet, until recently it was the best English-language introduction to the subject. It was published by the Board of Tourist Industry of the Japanese Government Railways, as No. 37 in its "Tourist Library," a series on Japanese cultural subjects. Perhaps 1941 was not the best year for marketing Japanese tourism. Nevertheless this excellent work is still useful and easily obtainable in the second-hand market.

Graphic-sha/Japan Publications, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Japanese Family Crests* (Tokyo, 2001). No author is credited. This book collects 4080 mon and presents them in black on white and white on black on facing pages. Because of the exceptional quality of the images, all copyright-free, I have taken most of the text illustrations of mon from this source. There is, however, no index and only a suboptimal list of contents, which reduces the value of this resource for people not already familiar with the Japanese heraldic vocabulary. A sample appears on page 12.

Fumie Adachi, ed., *Japanese Design Motifs* (New York, 1972). A Dover book, it reprints the 4260 designs in the mon catalogue of the Matsuya Piece-Goods Store, published around 1913. It is arranged by the order of charges in the Japanese syllabary, arrayed right to left and numbered Japanese. An index identifying the charges by the pages on which they first appear helps somewhat, but readers unfamiliar with the visual vocabulary may have to go through the book and note on the margins of individual pages what they contain. A sample appears on page 144.

- The two volumes just mentioned, while not designed as teaching materials, are quite helpful once a reader has gained some familiarity with the basics of Japanese heraldic grammar and vocabulary. Then the grouping of mon by principal charge helps complete an understanding of how the grammar and vocabulary work in practice to create the rich variety of Japanese heraldic design. Every serious student of the form should become familiar with one or the other of these two books, and of the two Adachi's is less expensive and more easily available new and used.

Albert J. Koop, "The Construction and Blazonry of Mon," in *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society* (London, 1911), 9:279-312. A lecture by a distinguished expert in Asian art, with illustrative drawings. Somewhat limited and dated, but a useful introduction and the

first such work I am aware of in English that approaches mon as a structured heraldic system. Available on line through the Hathi Trust Digital Library.

Willis M. Hawley & Kei Kaneda Chappelear, *Mon: The Japanese Family Crest* (Hollywood CA, 1976). This arranges mon by design (forming a *heraldic ordinary*), and then identifies the family or families associated with each. A specialized but valuable reference work.

Motoji Niwa, *Japanese Traditional Patterns* (Tokyo, 1990), in two colorful bilingual volumes, gives a general background for many of the design elements found in Japanese heraldry, along with pictures of these elements in wider use on artifacts and works of art. In English and Japanese. Not essential but helpful. Volume 2 has a special section on mon.

There are a number of books that present a lot of mon, but with no useful organization at all. **P. K. Thomajan, *Handbook of Designs and Motifs* (New York, 1950)**, with more than 4000 designs, is the most extreme example of this problem – lack of *any* index or table of contents makes it unusable by the uninitiated. I had to go through and create my own index before I could make any use of this title. Similarly **Clarence Hornung, ed., *Traditional Japanese Crest Designs* (New York, 1986)**, a Dover book, contains 540 mon, but has no index, table of contents, or any other organizational structure. The same may be said of **Carol Belanger Grafton, *Treasury of Japanese Designs & Motifs for Artists and Craftsmen* (New York, 1986)**, another Dover title. All these books are nice for browsing, and can perhaps help artists and designers casting about for a pleasing design, as Grafton's subtitle suggests (Thomajan was an advertising art director). Indeed I have used Grafton' work to fill blank pages in this book. It has the virtue that the designs are presented in larger-than-usual clear black-and white line drawings. But they are of almost no value as an aid to understanding Japanese heraldry.

- A digital resource with some specialized value is **"Kamon Symbols of Japan,"** no author credited, archived at perma.cc/3lcy-ecxw. Hundreds of mon are presented, without much useful organization, but with transliterated Japanese blazon, a helpful feature for readers trying to learn Japanese blazon for themselves. A better resource for learning Japanese blazon is the **Japanese Heraldry** website at tinyurl.com/jaherp, which shows variations of selected plant devices blazoned in English and transliterated Japanese.
- Many historical resources, and an on-line forum for assistance with factual and historical questions by active scholars, are available at the **Samurai Archives Japanese History Forum** [tinyurl.com/samarch2] and related web pages.

Hugo Gerard Ströhl, *Japanisches Wappenbuch: Nihon Moncho* (Vienna, 1906). In German. This was for many years. the basic book on the subject in Western languages. Hugo Ströhl (1851-1919), one of the foremost heraldic artists and scholars of all time, wrote and illustrated many books on European heraldic subjects that are still definitive to this day. His exquisitely illustrated Japanese book begins with a general introduction and continues as a reference work, designed like a European heraldic peerage directory, to show the mon of Japanese noble families in the new peerage created by Emperor Meiji in 1869 as a replacement for feudalism. Japanese blazon in transcription accompanies German blazon. Although the original of this work is scarce and expensive, a new paperback edition is in print and available through Bookfinder and German Amazon. Even readers without German will find it beautiful and useful.

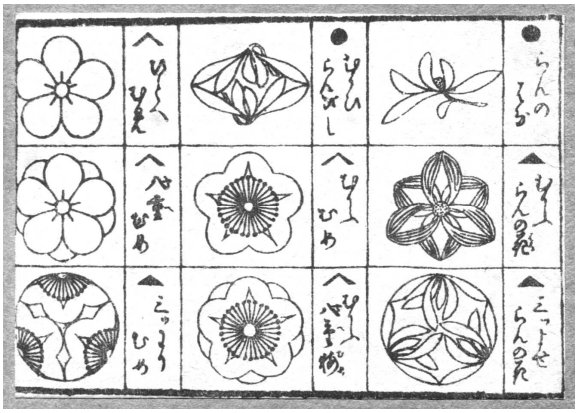
Rudolf Lange, "Japanische Wappen," in *Mittheilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen an der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin*, 6:63-282 (1903). In German. This is the academic work, exhaustively illustrated in line drawings, from which Ströhl, not himself an Orientalist, got his information. It was the pioneering scholarly study for European observers, with Japanese and German blazon. There is a helpful index that allows access to the deeply informative glosses on individual mon. It is available digitally through Hathi Trust. The old-fashioned German is more difficult than Ströhl's.

Xavid Pretzer, *O-umajirushi: A 17th Century Compendium of Samurai Heraldry* (Cambridge MA, 2015). A full-color facsimile of a Japanese manuscript (大馬印) illustrating heraldic flags and vexilloids, presented with useful introductions and substantial scholarly apparatus. A magnificent production.

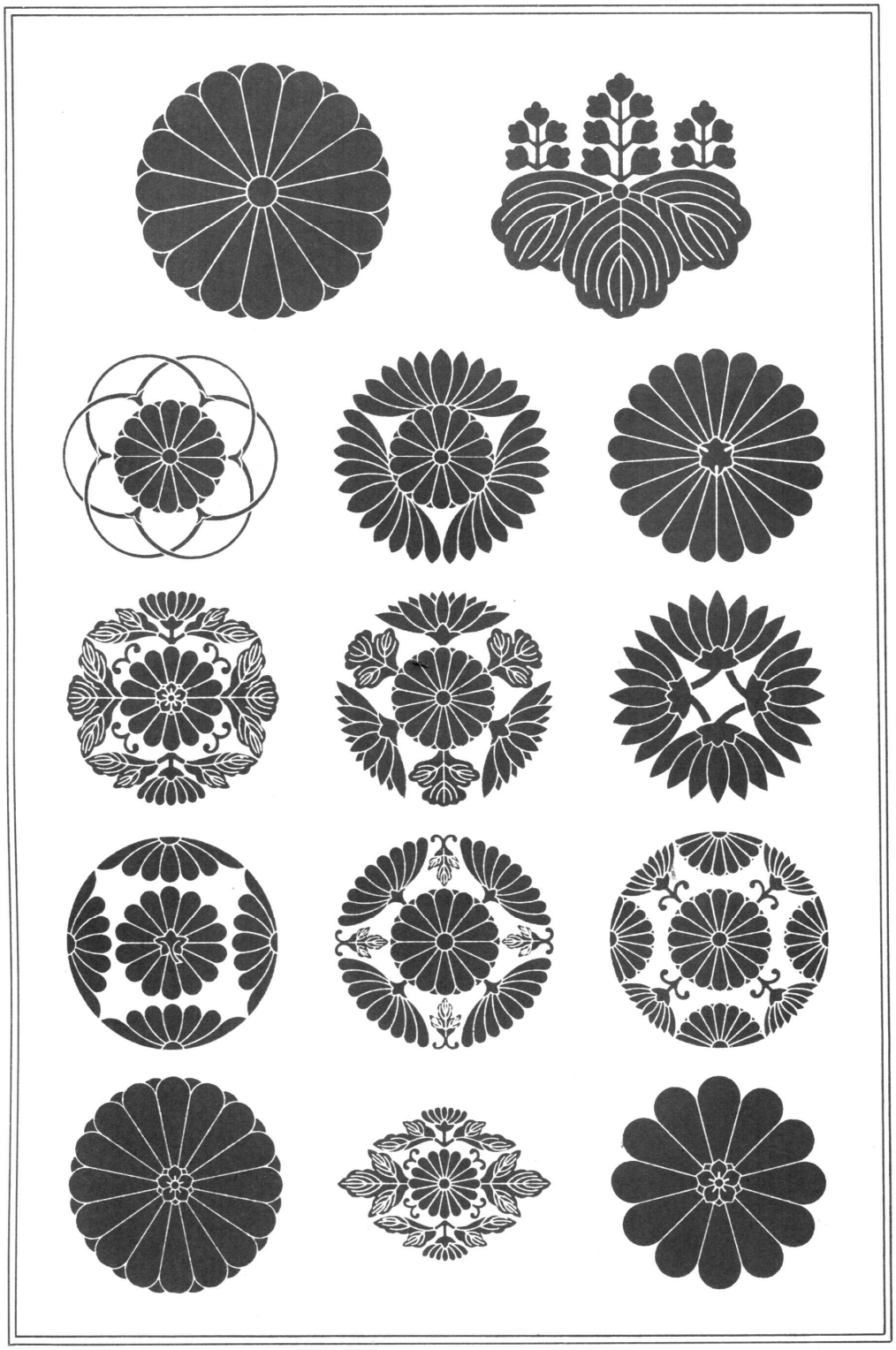
***Hata Uma–jirushi Ezu* [旗馬印繪圖].** Another notable 17th century compendium of Japanese battle flags and standards, displayed in two volumes as a pdf on the Brigham Young University website created to accompany the 2014 exhibition "Samurai Identities: Scrolls and Swords in Early Modern Japan," at BYU's Harold B. Lee Library. Although the pdfs are too large to archive at Perma.cc, at the time of writing they can be found at tinyurl.com/hatauma1 and tinyurl.com/hatauma2. The rest of the exhibition website is also relevant and useful.

Stephen Turnbull, *Samurai Heraldry* (Oxford, 2002). In the Osprey military history series, by a distinguished expert on samurai warfare. Richly illustrated, including eight color plates by Angus McBride. A detailed study of Japanese heraldry as used in war, concentrating on flags but not exclusively limited to them. Readers interested in this aspect might also learn from Turnbull's ***Samurai Warfare*** (London, 1996), a deeper study of the subject, and **Samurai Sourcebook** (London, 1996), which focuses on aspects of the samurai culture and on individual samurai.

Nozomi Kariyasu, *Prefectural Flags and Municipal Flags of Japan* (Tokyo, 2016) [日本「地方旗」図鑑] is the definitive treatment of this topic, reproducing 1788 flags in color. The text is in Japanese but the flags are also identified in English. A companion volume, ***Expository Book of Prefectural Flags and Municipal Flags of Japan* (Tokyo, 2017)** [日本「地方旗」図鑑・解読編], groups these flags by visual types. Both books are available from the publisher at info@enishishobo.co.jp.



PLUM AND ORCHID MON, FROM AN OLD JAPANESE WOODBLOCK BOOK TAKEN FROM THE COVER OF OKADA, *JAPANESE FAMILY CRESTS*.



Crests of the Imperial Family and Its Branches

FRONTISPIECE TO JOHN DOWER, *ELEMENTS OF JAPANESE DESIGN* (1971). BY KIYOSHI KAWAMOTO.

SOURCES OF THE ILLUSTRATIONS

The table that follows identifies the sources of all the illustrations in this book, except for the mon that are the used as text illustrations in the principal articles. Almost all of these were taken from Graphic-Sha/Japan Publications, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Japanese Family Crests* (Tokyo, 2006), with a few from other sources mentioned in the Literature section. I do not identify the specific sources of individual mon.

COLOR IMAGES

Line	Position	Subject	Source
1	Inside front cover	Chart of Selected Modern Heraldic Japanese Flags.	Prepared especially for this book by Nozomi Kariyasu.
2	Plates 1-10	Original paintings by Emmanuel Valerio.	Prepared especially for this book by the artist.
3	Plate 11 (top)	*Dawn at Kawanakajima.*	By Emmanuel Valerio. Reproduced by permission.
4	Plate 11 (bottom)	*The Battle at Kawanakajima.*	Woodblock print by Utagawa Yoshikazu. From the Library of Congress' Ukiyo-e site at tinyurl.com/kawan57, archived at perma.cc/vxL3-ju53.
5	Plate 12 (top)	Page from *O Uma Jirushi.*	Seventeenth century woodblock print. The entire work has been published in a beautifully designed and annotated facsimile: Xavid Pretzer, *O-umajirushi* (Cambridge MA, 2015). The image here corresponds to Volume 3, pages 5-6 of the original, pages 82-83 of the facsimile.
6	Plate 12 (bottom)	Page from *Hata Uma Jirushi Ezu.*	Volume 2, page 41, from the 17th century manuscript. Reproduced from the 2014 exhibition "Samurai Identities: Scrolls and Swords in Early Modern Japan," on the Harold B. Lee Library of Brigham Young University website at tinyurl.com/swords12, archived at perma.cc/54z6-x3zm. Volume 2 (too large to archive) can be found at tinyurl.com/hatauma2. Volume 1 is at tinyurl.com/hatauma1.
7	Plate 13	Actor wearing mon.	*Ichikawa Danjuro in the Kabuki Play* Shibaraku (1812). Woodblock print by Utagawa Toyokuni I (1769-1825). Image from Wikimedia Commons at tinyurl.com/danjuro, archived at perma.cc/d65c-ftzq, taken from an example in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
8	Plate 14	Lady in kimono.	*Combing the Hair* (1920). Woodblock print by Goyo Hashiguchi. Image from Wikimedia Commons at tinyurl.com/goyo22, archived at perma.cc/72dg-gcrn, taken from an example in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

Line	Position	Subject	Source
9	Plate 15	Japanese imperial rank flags.	From British Admiralty, *Flags of All Nations* (B.R. 20(2)) (London, 1958), Volume II, Original Plate 130.
10	Plate 16	Plate of daimyo flags.	From George Ashdown Audsley, *Ornamental Arts of Japan* (London 1882-4), Section IX, Plate II. Found on Pinterest at tinyurl.com/audsley2, archived at perma.cc/hhs3-g97x. The companion Plate I is also on Pinterest at tinyurl.com/audsley1; archived at perma.cc/jn9c-ndbx. These two plates are reprinted as Plates 47-48, along with 46 other plates from Aubrey's book, in *Japanese Ornament* (New York, 1991), without a named author or editor, in a series called *The Cambridge Library of Ornamental Art*. There, in the List of Plates, they are credited as "from a hand-painted *makimono* [scroll] entitled 'The badges of the Daimios, masters of the country of Great Japan.'"
11	Inside back cover	Six pages of daimyo flags.	Plates II-VII from Hugo Gerard Ströhl, *Japanisches Wappenbuch: Nihon Moncho* (Vienna, 1906). On line at Ralf Hartemink's Heraldry of the World website, www.ngw.nl, page at tinyurl.com/nihonmoncho, archived at perma.cc/5k5t-aLaw. Plates I and VIII, not included here, appear on the website. The plates were taken by Ströhl from the *Kaei Bukan* [嘉永武鑑], published in Japan in various editions 1848-59.
12	Back cover (top)	Siege of Osaka, 1614-15.	Hanging scroll, anonymous 19th century repainting of 17th century original. Private collection. Reproduced from the "Samurai Identities" exhibition cited at line 6 above.
13	Back cover, bottom	Battle of Shiroyama, 1877.	From Wikimedia Commons at tinyurl.com/shiroyama2, archived at perma.cc/hx3p-pz4c. The original (1880) is in Kagoshima Museum, Japan. I have not been able to identify the artist.

BLACK AND WHITE TEXT ILLUSTRATIONS

Line	Position	Subject	Source
14	Page 5	Wave forming a circle.	By Mori Yuzan, from his *Ha Bun Shu: A Japanese Book of Wave and Ripple Designs* (1919), 20. Digital facsimile on the Public Domain Review website at tinyurl.com/habunshu, archived at perma.cc/9cgw-xu9f, from an original in the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University. On-demand reprints are available on Bookfinder.

Line	Position	Subject	Source
15	Frontispiece (page 6)	Samurai Kato Kiyamasa.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 42. After an unspecified Japanese original.
16	Table of Contents tailpiece	Embroidered cuff design, from a Japanese sketch.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 16.
17	Page 7 (left)	Heraldic decoration.	From a 15th century votive monument in Kornelimünster, Germany. Drawing by Fr. Fidèle-Gabriel, from Émile Gevaert, *L'Héraldique: son ésprit, son langage et ses applications* (Brussels, 1923), 180 fig. 587.
18	Page 10	European crested helmet.	From an old German seal.
19	Page 10	Japanese crested helmet.	From an untraceable Japanese website.
20	Page 12	Page of bamboo mon.	Sample page from Graphic-Sha/Japan Publications, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Japanese Family Crests* (Tokyo, 2006), 183.
21	Page 17	Figure 1: European heraldic partitions and ordinaries.	By Alexander von Volborth, from his *Heraldry of the World* (New York, 1974), 24.
22	Page 17	Figure 2: Arms of Cardinal Wolsey.	By E. E. Dorling, from Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of Oxford* (London, 1939), 29.
23	Page 21	Figure 5F: English heraldic rose.	By Heather Child, from her *Heraldic Design* (London, 1965), 77 fig. 46.
24	Page 26	Figure 20E: English heraldic rose.	*Ibid.*
25	Page 26	Figure 22: European heraldic partition lines.	By L. R. Brightwell, from Gladys Davidson, *Tabard and Shield* (London, 1937), 52.
26	Page 27	Figure 23: Varieties of ivy I.	By Albert J. Koop, from his "The Construction and Blazonry of Mon," in *Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society* (London, 1911), 9:279-312, Plate I following page 290.
27	Page 27	Figure 25C: European coat of arms, from a stamped book cover.	French book stamp, 17th century (arms of Achille III de Harlay, comte de Beaumont), from Eugène Olivier *et al*., *Manuel de l'amateur de reliures armoriées françaises* (Paris, 1925), 7:744 (Fig. 1).
28	Page 31	Figure 36: Variations on feather-brush device.	From Graphic-Sha, line 20, page 301. Artist uncredited.
29	Page 32	Figure 39A: European heraldic shield affecting placement of charges (English shield).	Arms of Applegarth, by Heather Child, line 23, page 77 fig. 46.
30	Page 32	Figure 39B: European heraldic shield affecting placement of charges (Spanish shield).	Arms of Castro, from Eduardo Pardo de Guevara y Valdés, *Manual de Heraldica Española* (Madrid, 1987), 58 fig. 86, illustrations credited without specification to the author and to Jaime Bugallal y Vela.

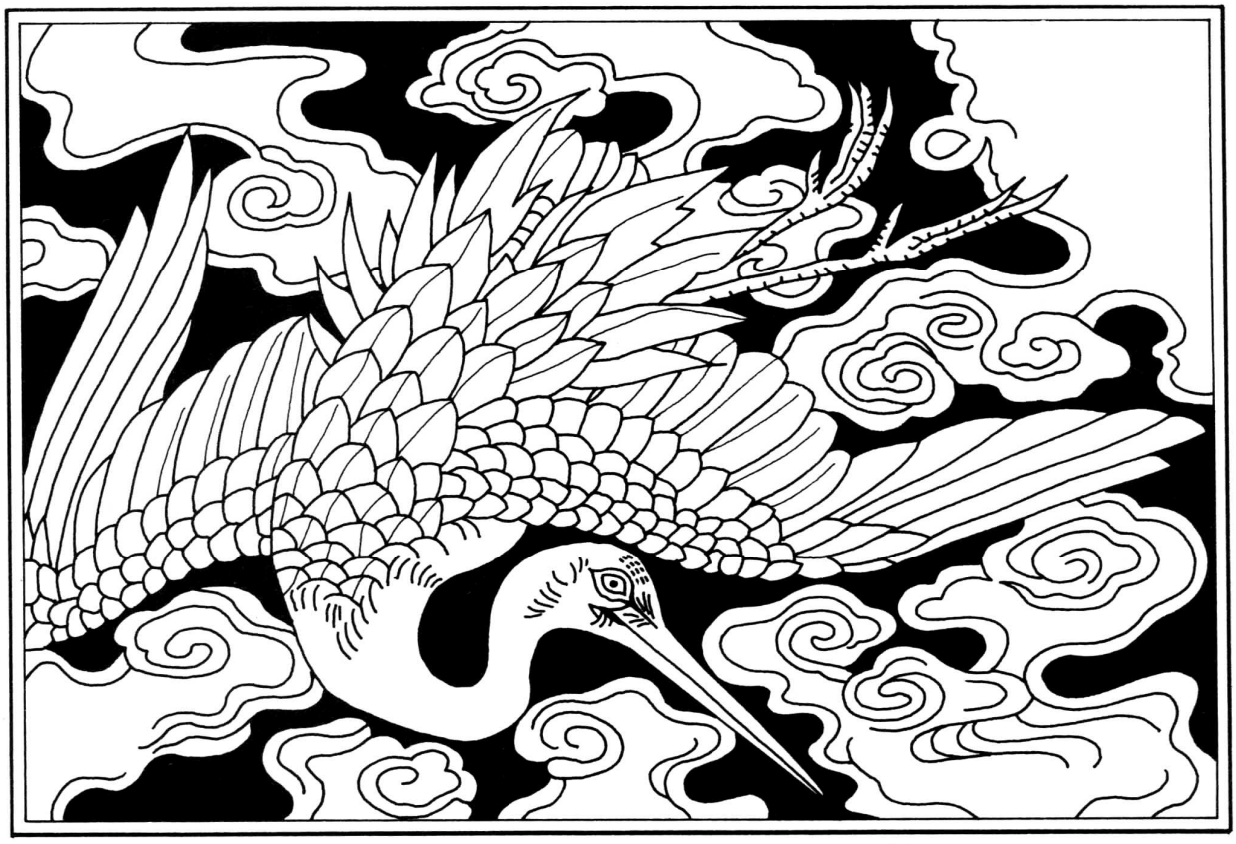
Line	Position	Subject	Source
31	Page 32	Figure 39C: European heraldic shield affecting placement of charges (Italian shield).	Arms of Farnese, artist unknown, from Wikipedia Commons, tinyurl.com/farnesearms, original source page 23 of a mid-16th century Italian manuscript "Insignia ... III. Insignia nobilium urbis Romae praecipuorum item Viterbiensium - BSB Cod.icon. 268 [S.l.]," digitized for the Bavarian State Library website, page 23, at tinyurl.com/farnese3, archived at perma.cc/g89v-uwsa.
32	Page 33	Figure 41A: Reflective symmetry.	From artforkids.com website at tinyurl.com/waspfig.
33	Page 33	Figure 41B: Radial symmetry.	From from pr-energy.info website at tinyurl.com/radialfig.
34	Page 33	Figure 41C: Rotational symmetry.	From study.com website at tinyurl.com/rotationalfig.
35	Page 33	Figure 44: European design of three fish chasing.	From the cachet of a first-day cover issued by the Liechtenstein Post Office for its 1988 Christmas stamps. Artist uncredited. Author's collection.
36	Page 40	Scabbard with *tomoe* mon.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 32, fig. XLII.
37	Page 41	Figure 68: Construction diagram of paulownia mon.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 68, fig. 52*a*.
38	Page 41	Figure 69: Paulownia.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 63, fig. 47*a*.
39	Page 42	Figure 72: Barry of six, and three bars.	By Pierre Joubert, *Nouveau guide de l'héraldique* (Rennes, 1984), 27.
40	Page 42	Figure 74: Hikiryo construction diagram.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 196, fig. 400*b*.
41	Page 43	Figure 76: Scales of a tortoise shell.	Illustration by Valentina Moraru from Dreamstime, "Nomenclature of the Tortoise," at tinyurl.com/tortoisefig, archived at perma.cc/fw85-zysa.
42	Page 44	Figure 80: European star or estoile.	By Heather Child, line 23, page 79, fig. 47.
43	Page 44	Figure 81: Detail of Japanese star chart.	From Crystalinks, in "Kitora Tomb Star Chart is Declared the Oldest in the World," in *Astronomy and Mythology in Ancient Japan*, at tinyurl.com/starfig, archived at perma.cc/q582-Lj92.
44	Page 45	Figure 86A: Yin-yang figure construction diagram.	From Wikimedia Commons at tinyurl.com/yinyang6, archived at perma.cc/qc26-utxr.
45	Page 45	Figure 86B: Yin-yang completed figure.	From Wikimedia Commons, at tinyurl.com/yinyangfig.
46	Page 45	Figure 86C: Construction of three-swirl *tomoe*.	From Pennine Tai Chi website at tinyurl.com/penninetai, archived at perma.cc/h5yq-geqp.
47	Page 45	Figure 86D: Relation of the swirl to the *hoshi*.	By Burt Janssen, from his Crop Circles and More website at tinyurl.com/swirl5, archived at perma.cc/vtn4-vqh7.

Line	Position	Subject	Source
48	Page 47	Figure 91A. Construction of astroid.	From Encyclopedia of Mathematics website at tinyurl.com/astroidfig, archived at perma.cc/kkt4-cz53, reproduced under Creative Commons license.
49	Page 47	Figure 91C: Overlapping circles.	From Wikimedia, "4x4 grid of overlapping circles," at tinyurl.com/overlapfig, archived at perma.cc/8etw-73Lc, reproduced under Creative Commons license.
50	Page 47	Figure 91E: Relationship of *yin-yang* to *shippo*.	By Shirley Two Feathers, posted on Pinterest at tinyurl.com/yinyangfig2, archived at perma.cc/r8Lv-vd29.
51	Page 48	Figure 93: Drawer-handle.	By Charles Waltmire, after an image on the Jtansu website at tinyurl.com/tansufig, archived at perma.cc/48rx-pkbj.
52	Page 48	Figure 94: Tomato section.	By Thomas L. Rost, from his "Tomato Anatomy," on the website of the Plant Biology Department at the University of California at Davis at tinyurl.com/tomatofig, archived at perma.cc/2D6V-ZU94.
53	Page 49	Figure 98: Lady's bookplate.	Bookplate of Máire Christina Magee Lawson, by Gordon Macpherson, from his website Heraldic Science Héraldique at tinyurl.com/bookplatefig, archived at perma.cc/k5cb-pqvu.
54	Page 52	Figure 106D: English rebus.	Rebus of Bishop Oldham, in Exeter Cathedral, c. 1513. Drawing by Charles Boutell, in his *Heraldry, Historical and Popular* (London, 3d ed. 1864), 124.
55	Page 53	Figure 107: Varieties of Frame.	From Yuzuru Okada, *Japanese Family Crests* (Tokyo, 1941), 42
56	Page 53	Figure 109: Frames used for differencing.	From the Japanese Heraldry website at tinyurl.com/jhdiff5, archived at perma.cc/7h3g-rxfc.
57	Page 56	Figure 111: Erminespot mon.	Created on Photoshop by Raluca Ostasz, from my designs; published first here.
58	Page 58	Tailpiece: Scrolls.	From Yuzan, line 14 (concluding triptych).
59	Page 81	Late Meiji lacquer box with multiple mon design.	From Invaluable.com art sale preview website at tinyurl.com/lacquer3, archived at perma.cc/VK6J-2RT3.
60	Page 87	No. 271: Japanese naval ensign.	From Wikimedia Commons at tinyurl.com/nvens6.
61	Page 89	No. 288. Seikaiha wave pattern.	From Paper Demon Jewelry blog site at tinyurl.com/wave453, archived at perma.cc/y382-d7uu. The vignette is multiplied to present as a strip.

Line	Position	Subject	Source
62	Page 92	No. 315: Figure of seven circles.	From "Seven Congruent Circles in a Regular Hexagon" on ClipArtETC website at tinyurl.com/7circles7, archived at perma.cc/499b-p7nd.. Reproduced under license from Florida Center for Instructional Technology, University of South Florida.
63	Page 93	No. 321: *Kuginuki*.	From an untraceable Japanese website. Thanks to Nozomi Kariyasu.
64	Page 94	No. 325: Well-crib.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 169, fig. 325*a*.
65	Page 95	No. 338: *Chigi* roof-finial.	From Shinto Shrines of Japan blogspot at tinyurl.com/chigifig2, archived at perma.cc/8tdh-b8xf. Artist uncredited.
66	Page 96	No. 345: Samisen.	From Waldo Selden Pratt, *The History of Music* (New York, 1907), 34, Fig. 10. Image on Wikimedia Commons at tinyurl.com/samisenfig, archived at perma.cc/pe36-au92. Artist uncredited.
67	Page 96	No. 346: Koto.	From Icelandic Toimaflak-Tónlist music timeline blogspot for May 7, 2012 at tinyurl.com/kotofig, archived at perma.cc/xzu8-stmn. Artist uncredited.
68	Page 99	No. 365: *Itomaki*.	From a listing on the Etsy crafts website, tinyurl.com/itomakifig, archived at perma.cc/zs4w-tzzv.
69	Page 102	No. 393 (top): Willow-leaf arrowhead.	From a photographic image on the Worthpoint website at tinyurl.com/arrowhead3, archived at perma.cc/sbs3-6q7u.
70	Page 102	No. 393 (bottom): Two-pointed arrowhead.	From a Pinterest post at tinyurl.com/arrowhead2, archived at perma.cc/ed48-etrw. Artist uncredited.
71	Page 107	Sword-guard with embracing cranes.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 32, fig. XLIII.
72	Page 107	Helmet with hollyhock leaves.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 30, fig. XXXIX*b*.
73	Page 108	Plate of circular designs	Plate 76 from Masao Nakohiko, *Great Mirror of Japanese Decoration* (Tokyo 1915), plates and later-added captions reprinted by Dover as *A Mirror of Japanese Ornament* (Mineola NY, 2010).
74	Page 109	Mounted samurai with banner.	By James S. de Belleville (James Seguin), from his *Saito Musashi-bo Benkei: Tales of the Wars of the Gempei* (Yokohama, 1915), vol. 1, plate facing page 124. Image from Internet Archive at tinyurl.com/seguin124, archived at perma.cc/d5ym-hhha.
75	Page 111	*Ibaku* field curtains.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 32, fig. XLV.
76	Page 115	*Nabori* banner.	From the *Hata Uma-jirushi Ezu*, vol. 2, p. 70, citation as on line 6.
77	Page 117	Horse's head, showing kutsuwa bridle bit.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 178, fig. 349*a*.

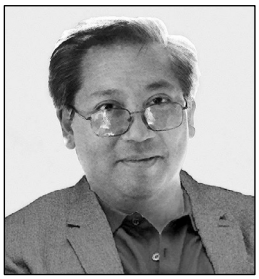
Line	Position	Subject	Source
78	Page 121	Uma Jirushi flag.	From the *Hata Uma-jirushi Ezu*, vol. 2, p. 53, citation as on line 6.
79	Page 122	Four warriors with flags.	By Emmanuel Valerio. Reproduced with permission.
80	Page 125	*Fukinuki* vexilloid standard.	From Ströhl, line 15, plate IX, No. 10.
81	Page 125	Samurai with sashimono.	Wood block print by Hayakawa Kyuukei, from his *Tanki Yoriaku: Hi Ko Ben* (1735). Image from Wikimedia Commons at tinyurl.com/sashimono2, archived at perma.cc/by3v-w2af.
82	Page 134	Daimyo Sasaki Takatsuna.	From Ströhl, line 15, page 31, fig. XLI*a*.
83	Page 135	Samurai vignettes from Ströhl.	From Ströhl, line 15. Top: page 30. Lower left: page 30, fig. XXXIX*a*. Lower right: page 32, fig. XL.
84	Page 136	Japanese decorative panels	From Carol Belanger Grafton, *Treasury of Japanese Designs & Motifs for Artists and Craftsmen* (New York, 1986), 29. Artist uncredited.
85	Pages 137-143	All flags in these pages, except as noted below.	By Nozomi Kariyasu.
86	Page 137, No. 1	Imperial standard.	By Kazutaka Nishiura, from the Japan page of the *Flags of the World* website at tinyurl.com/imperial33, archived at perma.cc/y6jd-jr9e.
87	Page 138, No. 2	Origin of Mitsubishi trademark.	From Mitsubishi website at tinyurl.com/mitsumark, archived at perma.cc/n97m-2qwe.
88	Page 139, No. 13	Manchukuo imperial standard.	By Jaume Ollé, from Manchukuo page of Flags of the World website at tinyurl.com/manchuk1, archived at perma.cc/w5sL-hfdf.
89	Page 140, No. 17	Former Japan Coastal Safety Force flag.	By Jaume Ollé, from the Japan page of the *Flags of the World* website at tinyurl.com/coastal12, archived at perma.cc/qfw4-pbjh.
90	Page 141, No. 24	Chief of Staff Ground Defense Force.	By Kazutaka Nishiura, from the Japan page of the *Flags of the World* website at tinyurl.com/chiefground, archived at perma.cc/7w6j-k5eu.
91	Page 142, No. 27	Fire and Disaster Management Agency flag.	By Kazutaka Nishiura, from the Japan page of the *Flags of the World* website at tinyurl.com/fdma999, archived at perma.cc/e4f8-2zfj.
92	Page 143	Page from "Old Kimono Design Book" (1884).	From Wafu Works blogspot, December 15, 2010, at tinyurl.com/wafu77, archived at perma.cc/9gsm-ak2r.
93	Page 144	Sample page from Matsuya Piece-Goods Store Catalogue (1913).	From Fumie Adachi, ed., *Japanese Design Motifs* (New York, 1972), 183

Line	Position	Subject	Source
94	Page 147	Plum and orchid mon, from an old Japanese woodblock book.	From the front cover of Okada, line 54. He does not identify his source.
95	Page 148	Crests of the Imperial Family and its Branches, by Kiyoshi Kawamoto.	Frontispiece of John Dower, *Elements of Japanese Design* (New York, 1971).
96	Page 156	Crane and clouds.	From Carol Belanger Grafton, line 82, page 75. Artist uncredited.
97	Page 157	Portraits of contributors.	Portraits of Valerio and Kariyasu from their private collections. Portrait of Ströhl by the artist, detail from an advertisement for his work, taken from Wikimedia Commons [German Wikipedia] at tinyurl.com/ hugopic75, archived at perma.cc/xgL6-7323. Portrait of Phillips by William Phillips.
98	Page 158	Bamboo panel.	From Carol Belanger Grafton, line 82, page 63. Artist uncredited.



JAPANESE DECORATIVE PANEL: CRANE AND CLOUDS

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



AUTHOR AND ARTIST. Emmanuel Valerio is an illustrator from Surrey, British Columbia. He specializes in historical and military subjects with over 30 years of research devoted to samurai armor and heraldry. He has been a regular contributor to the Samurai Forum since its creation. Valerio is also an award-winning sculptor known for the historical accuracy and intricate detail of his samurai and American Plains Indians sculptures which are sought after by private collectors. He can be reached at evalerio@shaw.ca.

AUTHOR AND ARTIST. Nozomi Kariyasu was educated in Tokyo, Japan. In 2000 he founded JAVA, the Japanese Vexillological Association (Nihon Kishogaku Kyokai) and serves as its president. Kariyasu has published many flag-related books in Japan. He has been named a Fellow of the Fédération internationale des associations vexillologiques (FIAV) and a Fellow of the Flag Research Center. He successfully organized the 23rd International Congress of Vexillology in Yokohama in 2009, which was the first such Congress held in Asia. He can be reached at melnk@s04.itscom.net; the JAVA website is found at https://j-flags-java.jimdo.com/.

ARTIST. Hugo Gerard Ströhl (1851-1919) was one of the greatest heraldic artists, scholars and writers ever. His books, published in German around the turn of the 20th century, are still definitive and have never been surpassed in depth or beauty. His pioneering work in Japanese heraldry, *Japanisches Wappenbuch: Nihon Moncho* (Vienna, 1906) remains, like his other works, a monument of accessible scholarship and exquisite drawing. His work fills so many of the illustrations in the empty spaces of this book that he felt like a contributor even though he died almost 100 years ago.

AUTHOR AND EDITOR. David F. Phillips is a heraldic scholar based in San Francisco. Trained as a lawyer and librarian, he is the author of *Emblems of the Indian States* and *The Double Eagle* in this series. His website www.radbash.com/heraldry reproduces or links to his other articles on heraldic topics. Phillips is a Trustee of the Flag Heritage Foundation and Editor of its Publication Series, and is a Craft Member of the Society of Heraldic Arts [UK]. He can be reached at dfp18@columbia.edu.

COLOPHON

This book was composed on a Microsoft Word word processing system, with the aid of a Hewlett-Packard Scanjet 3500c image scanner. It was printed with soy-based inks on 60 pound offset paper (12 point C2S paper for the covers) by Specialty Graphics, Inc., of San Leandro, California, on a Harris M-700 web press (text) and a Heidelberg 40 sheet-fed press (color plates and covers), using PDF Workflow and Kodak EVO digital publishing programs. The principal font is Times Roman: 12 point for body text, 11 point for footnotes and block quotations, 10 point for tables. Picture captions are set in Calibri: **12 point bold** for full page cuts, 11 point for insets, 10 point for block captions. Japanese characters are set in 11 point MS Mincho bold. The first printing was 1300 copies.

JAPANESE DECORATIVE PANEL: BAMBOO

KEY TO THE FLAG PLATES ON THE INSIDE BACK COVER

These plates were published by the Austrian heraldist Hugo Gerard Ströhl in his monumental *Japanisches Wappenbuch: Nihon Moncho* (Vienna, 1906). There were eight flag plates in the book, of which Nos. II-VII are presented here. All may be seen on the *Heraldry of the World* website, archived at perma.cc/5k5t-aLaw. Each column of each plate shows the flags of a clan of daimyo; for each Ströhl gives a blazon. They are translated here from German by David F. Phillips, using the English blazon for Japanese heraldry outlined in his article beginning on page 13. Ströhl, at page VI, identifies his source as the *Kaei Bukan* [嘉永武鑑], a contemporaneous record of the mon and flags of the samurai of the Kaei period (1848-54) during the reign of Emperor Komei. The word *daimyo* is translated here as *Lord*.

Plate II

I: Flags of the Arima, Lords of Kurume in Chikugo Province.

A: On blue, a white five-fold gentian-wheel. B: A red triple-swirl on white. C: On black with a white horizontal stripe, an angled white nail-puller. [In keeping with the simplicity of Japanese blazon, I avoid the technical European heraldic term *fess*.]

II: Flags of the Asano, Lords of Hiroshima in Aki Province.

A: In white on yellow, two crossed hawk's-feathers in a ring, right-leading [*hidari-chigai*] overlying. [The feathers are unusually patterned. Ströhl's blazon fails to mention that the right-leading feather is on top, but this is necessary.] B: On blue with a white horizontal stripe, an Asano-fan over a water-plantain leaf, both in white. [An *Asano-fan* is a dancing fan, or *mai-ogi*, with a serrated top edge, but with only two panes between three ribs.] C: On white, between two narrow red horizontal bars, two black crossed hawk's feathers, right-leading overlying. [These feathers are of the same unusual pattern as in A above – we could call them Asano-feathers. I use the European heraldic term *bar* because stripes would be thought to extend to the edge of the field.]

III: Flags of the Date, Lords of Uwajima in Iyo Province.

A: On black, a white nine-star constellation [*kuyo*]. B: On brown, three white vertical stripes in a ring. C: On white, a black nine-star constellation.

IV: Flags of the Date, Lords of Sendai in Mutsu Province.

A: On red, "the white mon called Sendai-Bamboo" [two sparrows within a garland formed of two curved bamboo canes decked with bamboo leaves.] B: On black. a white peony with leaves. [This peony is in a form Ströhl elsewhere (p. 114, fig. 162) calls a "variant."] C: In black on white, three vertical stripes in a ring.

Plate III

I: Flags of the Hachisuka, Lords of Tokushima in Awa Province.

A: In white on gray, three hollyhock leaves in a ring, facing in. B: On black with a white horizontal stripe, a black swastika in a white ring. C: A white swastika on brown.

II: Flags of the Hoshina Matsudaira, Lords of Aizu in Mutsu Province.

A: On gold with a white horizontal stripe, three white spatterdock leaves in a ring, facing in. B: In white on blue, three spatterdock leaves in a ring, facing in. C: A black horizontal stripe on white; overall in black the character 會. [The first character of the former Aizu Domain [會津藩], this character is now written in simplified form as 会].

III: Flags of the Hosokawa, Lords of Kumamoto in Higo Province.

A: A black nine-star constellation on white. [Ströhl blazons this as a *Hosokawa-kuyo*.] B: A white cherry blossom on black. C: On white, a red nine-star constellation between two black bars, the upper one thicker than the lower.

IV: Flags of the Ii, Lords of Hikone in Omi Province.

A: In white on yellow, a mandarin-orange plant in a ring. B: A white well-crib on red. C: On white, a black mandarin-orange plant on a white disk, bounded in black; two black vertical stripes in the fly, the broader one at the edge.

Plate IV

I: Flags of the Ikeda, Lords of Okayama in Bizen Province.

A: On yellow, a white butterfly forming a circle. B: On black, two white confronted butterflies. C: On white with a red horizontal stripe, a black butterfly forming a circle, the space between its upraised wings in red.

II: Flags of the Ikeda, Lords of Tottori in Inaba Province.

A: In blue on white, three hollyhock leaves, without veining, facing in, within a ring. B: On black. z white butterfly in a ring. C: In black on white, a butterfly enclosed by a five-lobed melon [*mokko*]; at the bottom of the flag a broad stripe divided into three tiers of five rectangles, alternating black and white.

III: Flags of the Kuroda, Lords of Kukuoka in Chikuzen Province.

A: On blue, a white three-swirl *tomoe* formed of wisteria. B: On black, a white three-swirl *tomoe* formed of wisteria. C: A white horizontal stripe on black, over all a large white disk bounded in black.

KEY TO THE FLAG PLATES ON THE INSIDE BACK COVER , continued

Plate IV, continued

IV: FLAGS OF THE MAKINO, LORDS OF NAGAOKA IN ECHIGO PROVINCE.

A: In white on yellow, a wheel of three oak leaves in a ring. B: A white ladder on black. [Ströhl says in a footnote that this ladder was really the emblem of the Makino lords of Kasama in Hitachi Province.] C: On white, a wheel of three black oak leaves; two black vertical stripes at the hoist, the broader one at the edge.

Plate V

I: FLAGS OF THE MAEDA, LORDS OF KANAZAWA IN KAGA PROVINCE.

A: On blue, a white *umebachi*, seen from behind. [Ströhl calls this a *Kaga-umebachi*; *umebachi* means a plum blossom so stylized as to be reduced to separate round forms. The marks in the center represent the calyx of the blossom as seen from behind (*ura*).] B: A white *Kaga-umebachi* on brown. C: A red *Kaga-umebachi* on white, with a black stripe at the top of the flag and a narrower black bar below the flower.

II: FLAGS OF THE MATSUDAIRA, LORDS OF FUKUI IN ECHIZEN PROVINCE.

A: On red, three white hollyhock leaves in a ring, facing in. B: On white, a wheel of six hollyhock leaves. C: On white, three red hollyhock leaves in a ring, facing in; at the fly, four vertical stripes, red, white, black, and white, the black wider than the others.

III: FLAGS OF THE MATSUDAIRA, LORDS OF KUWANA IN ISE PROVINCE.

A: A white *umebachi* on blue. B: A red ring on white. C: A black *umebachi* on white; at the fly, two red vertical stripes, the broader at the edge.

IV: FLAGS OF THE MORI, LORDS OF HAGI IN NAGATO PROVINCE.

A: In white on blue, two white water-plantain [*omodaka*] leaves arising from a central stalk, a blossom in the center [Ströhl blazons this *Nagato-omodaka*]. B: In white on black, a three-star constellation below the character *ichi* 一; the lower fly diagonal corner is white with a thin black diagonal stripe. C: In red on white, a three-star constellation below the character *ichi* [Ströhl blazons this *Nagatoboshi*].

Plate VI

I: FLAGS OF THE NABESHIMA, LORDS OF SAGA IN HIZEN PROVINCE.

A: On yellow, a white horse-tassel (*gyoyo*). [Ströhl blazons this *Saga-gyoyo*, even though it looks more like ginger. In German he calls it *Aprikosenblätter*: apricot-leaves.] B: In white on blue, a *Saga-gyoyo* in a ring. C: On white with a red horizontal stripe, a black *Nabeshima-gyoyo*. [This is also a horse-tassel, but of a different design: note the decoration.]

II: FLAGS OF THE NAMBU, LORDS OF MORIOKA IN MUTSU PROVINCE.

A: In white on black, two confronted cranes in a ring. B: In white on blue, a lozenge divided into four. C: On white, between two narrow horizontal red bars, a black lozenge divided into four.

III: FLAGS OF THE OGASAWARA, LORDS OF KOKURA IN BUZEN PROVINCE.

A: In white on blue, three heaped merged lozenges increasing in size downward. B: A white pauwlonia, 5-7, on black. C: On white, with a broad black stripe above a narrow one above and below, the character *ko* 小 in white on a red disk. [*Ko*, meaning *small*, is the first syllable of *Kokura*.]

IV: FLAGS OF THE OMURA, LORDS OF OMURA IN HIZEN PROVINCE.

A: A white mulberry leaf on blue. B: On white, a white blossom in a five-lobed melon. [Ströhl blazons this *Maruoka melon-flower*; Maruoka is a place name.] C: In white on black, a mulberry leaf between two narrow horizontal bars.

Plate VII

I: FLAGS OF THE SATAKE, LORDS OF AKITA IN DEWA PROVINCE.

A: On black, a white folding fan charged with a black disk. B: A white *Genjiko* symbol on blue. C: On white between two narrow horizontal bars, a black folding fan charged with a white disk.

II: FLAGS OF THE SHIMAZU, LORDS OF KAGOSHIMA IN SATSUMA PROVINCE.

A: A black horse-bit on white. B: A white horse-bit on blue. C: On white, a black horse-bit laid over two narrow horizontal bars.

III: FLAGS OF THE TODO, LORDS OF TSU IN ISE PROVINCE.

A: A white ivy leaf on black. B: In white on blue, a wood-sorrel blossom in a ring. [Ströhl blazons this as a triple hollyhock, but I believe this is incorrect.] C: A white ivy leaf on white; on a black dancetty base a red border bounded in white.

IV: FLAGS OF THE TOKUGAWA, LORDS OF WAKAYAMA IN KII PROVINCE.

A: In white on blue, three hollyhock leaves in a ring, facing in. B: In white on black, a wheel of six hollyhock leaves. C: In white on black, three hollyhock leaves in a ring, facing in; in the lower hoist, the character 紀 in black [first character of the name of the province 紀伊国].

SIX PLATES OF MID-19TH CENTURY DAIMYO FLAGS

Adapted from The *Kaei Bukan* (1858), they were published by Hugo Gerard Ströhl in his *Japanisches Wappenbuch: Nihon Moncho* (Vienna, 1906).

A KEY TO THE PLATES BEGINS ON PAGE 159.

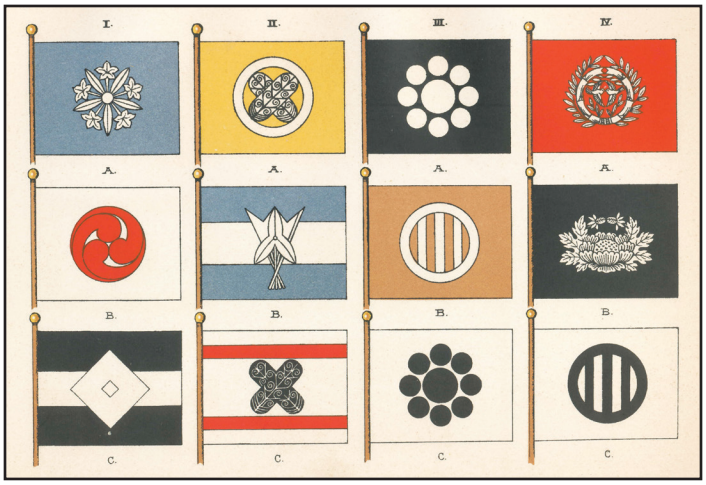


PLATE II

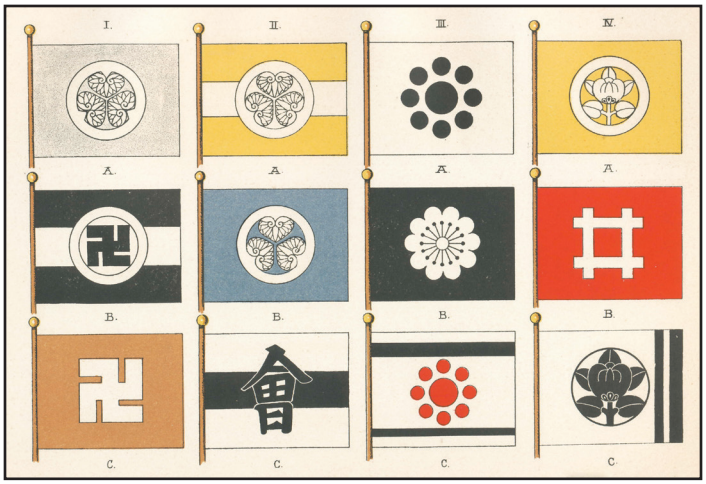


PLATE III

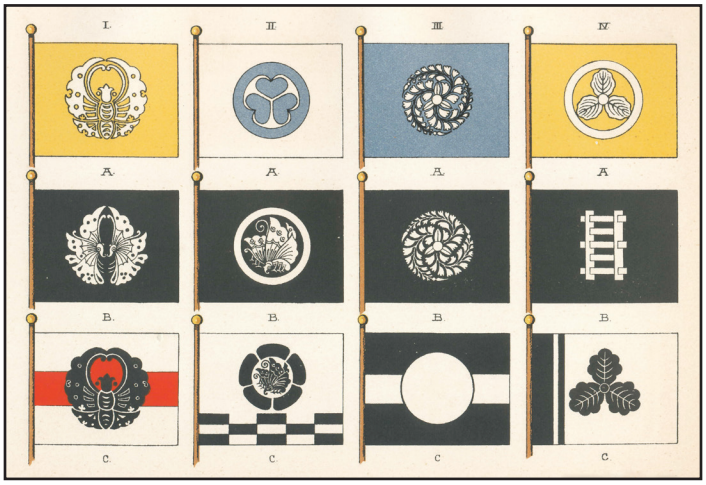


PLATE IV

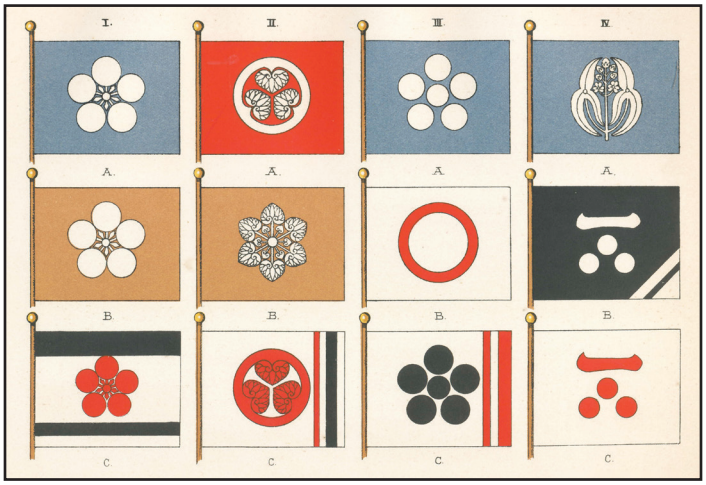


PLATE V

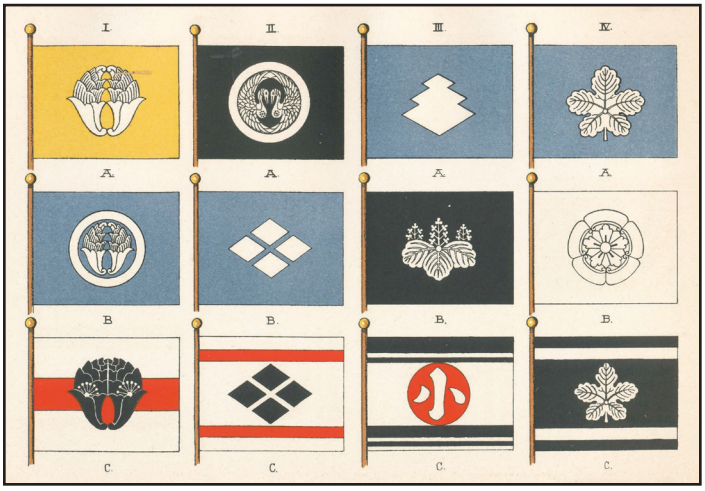


PLATE VI

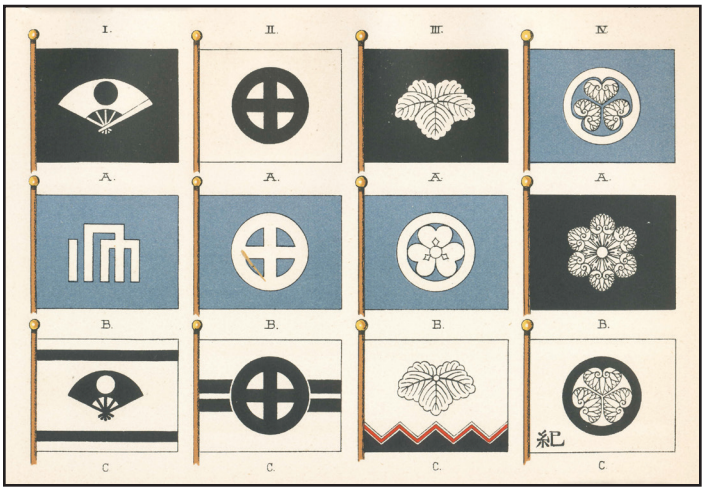


PLATE VII

SIEGE OF OSAKA 1614-15 ▲

In the final campaign to consolidate the national rule of the shogun Iesayu Tokugawa, heraldic flags of many daimyo and samurai may be seen on the field.

BATTLE OF SHIROYAMA 1877 ▶

In the final campaign to consolidate the national rule of the Meiji Emperor, the war flags of the modern Japanese state dominate the scene.

The beauty of Japanese heraldry is widely appreciated, but its structure and components are poorly understood in the West. In this volume the Flag Heritage Foundation offers three new essays by heraldic and flag scholars, comprehensively presenting the grammar and vocabulary of the Japanese heraldic mon, and explaining Japanese heraldic flag practice during the samurai period and in modern times. With 38 color pictures (including 21 new original paintings) and more than a thousand black and white text illustrations.

$20.00
ISBN 978-1-4507-2436-4
52000>
9 781450 724364