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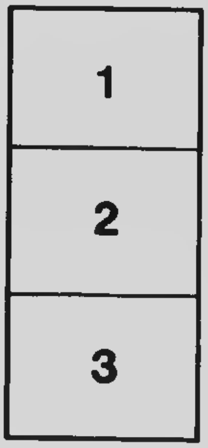
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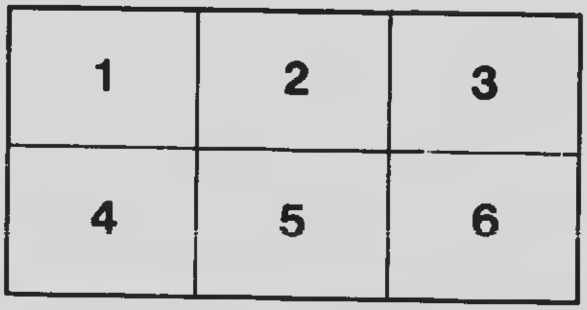
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GEMS OF
JAPANESE ART
AND HANDICRAFT

BY

GEORGE ASHDOWN AUDSLEY, LL.D.

ARCHITECT

AUTHOR OF "*THE ORNAMENTAL ARTS OF JAPAN*," "*NOTES
ON JAPANESE ART*," JOINT AUTHOR OF "*KERAMIC ART
OF JAPAN*," AND AUTHOR OF SEVERAL WORKS ON ART,
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LIST OF PLATES

SELECTED AS ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE ACCOMPANYING ESSAY

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PLATE II.—From a Gold and Silk Fabric of great beauty. The design, though based on geometrical forms, is wonderfully rich in its variety of detail, and is well brought out in different colourings in the repeats.

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PLATE III.—From four Boxes of exceptionally fine old gold Lacquer, displaying some of the choice varieties of manipulation and the use of the different metallic powders and scales.

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PLATE X. From a Screen Panel of black, gold, and tinted Lacquer. The incrustations are of several materials. The face and hands of the old *bodzu* are of ivory; his garments are of wood, and his white sleeve of mother-of-pearl; and the basket he carries is of carved wood. The head of the boy is of ivory; his garments are of wood and mother-of-pearl; and his shoes (like those of the *bodzu*) are of dark green pearl.

SERIES V. INCRUSTED-WORK

PLATE I. From a Panel of fine black Lacquer beautifully incrusted with different materials carved in relief. The basket, corn, leaves, pomegranates, flowers, bird, and chestnuts are of carved and stained ivory. The pomegranate seeds are of white mother-of-pearl; the stag-beetle and the stems of the flowers are of wood; the grapes are of tortoiseshell; and the small berries are of red coral. The artistic handling throughout is absolutely perfect. The whole is a poem of Autumn.

Plate II. From a Panel of tawny-coloured Lacquer, on which is incrusted a bold design. The nelumbium flower is of carved ivory, while the seed vessel and the large leaves are of carved wood covered with green and gold lacquer. The dewdrops on the large leaf are of pearl. The open chrysanthemum flower is of light mother-of-pearl, while the bud, stems, and leaves are of stained ivory. The vase is modelled and lacquered to represent cast iron, decorated with gold and coloured lacquer. The square flower-pot is in imitation of bronze, and the plant is of stained ivory.

Plate III.—From a Panel of black Lacquer, incrusted with figures of demons in carved and stained ivory and wood, partly lacquered. The large box is of dark wood cleverly modelled.

Plate IV. From a Panel of dark, close-grained wood, incrusted with figures in carved, stained, and lacquered ivory. The moon and the birds are of mother-of-pearl; the wicker-work objects in the stream are of perforated ivory; the large basket is of lacquer; and the bank, stream, etc., are rendered in lacquer.

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Plate VI.—From a Panel of Wood modelled to represent a decayed plank. The tree and the mound are of raised gold lacquer; the blossoms are of mother-of-pearl. The bird nearest the tree is executed in carved, clear tortoiseshell, with ivory eye and pearl legs. The other pheasant is of black and gold lacquer, with wings of rich green and opal mother-of-pearl, and tail is of clear tortoiseshell, tinted red underneath.

Plate VIII.—From a Panel of dark Wood on which the figure of finely carved and stained ivory is incrusted. The bell is cleverly executed in lacquer representing ancient bronze. The subject is Ben-kei stealing the great bell of the Temple of Mi-i-dera, and conveying it to the distant Temple of Mi-yei-zan—a popular legend.

Series VI. METAL-WORK

Plate I. From a Gold Jar of repoussé work relieved with bold engraving and punching. The interior lining is an alloy of copper and gold plated with silver. Originally in the treasury of the great Buddhist Temple, Nishi-hongwan-ji, at Kioto.

Plate III.—From a large Dish of Wrought Iron, incrusted and inlaid with gold, silver, copper, and certain alloys. The medallion is of repoussé work, most elaborately and minutely incrusted and inlaid with gold, *coban*, and silver. The face is of iron, darkly browned, with eyes of silver and *shakudō*, teeth of silver, and tongue of deep red copper. The entire dish is an exquisite example of the work called *syakfdo*, made by Koumai of Kiōto.

Plate IV.—From a Bronze Figore of Bisjamon, the God of Glory. The statue is stated to have originally belonged to the Buddhist Temple, Nishi-hongwan-ji, at Kiōto.

Plate V.—From a Bronze Incense Burner, of great age, which belonged to the Temple, Nishi-hongwan-ji. It is stated to be made of an alloy of thirty parts gold, twenty parts silver, and fifty parts copper.

Plate VI.—From a large Vase of Cast Iron, probably the finest specimen of the ironfounder's art brought to Europe. With the exception of a few touches of the graver on some details of the dragon the vase is a pure casting, showing remarkable skill in moulding.

Plate VII.—From a collection of *Kodzuka* Handles, executed, in the most artistic and beautiful manner, in bronzes of various colours, alloys of copper and silver, *shakudō*, iron, etc. The devices are either chased in relief or engraved in the surface, with the addition, in some cases, of incrustations and inlays of gold, silver, and richly-coloured bronzes, exquisitely formed and chased.

Series VII. CLOISONNÉ ENAMEL

Plate I.—From an octagonal Dish of Cloisonné Enamel of the middle period. It presents remarkable specimens of the diaper-work and powderings so largely employed by the old enamellers. The colouring is unusually effective and vivid in work of the period.

Plate II.—From a circular Dish of Cloisonné Enamel of the earliest period, in which translucent and opaque pastes both appear. The age of the piece is, however, unknown.

Plate III. From a beautiful Bottle of Cloisonné Enamel, in which a liberal use is made of translucent paste. The bulb is decorated with scrollwork and flowers, in opaque pastes, on a ground of translucent enamel, through which the polished and apparently gilded metal body glistens with a rich effect. The neck is very beautifully treated. The work is of considerable age.

Plate IV. Three Segments from the border of a circular Tray of late period Cloisonné Enamel, illustrating the marvellous accuracy attained by the Japanese enamellers. It would be difficult to imagine manipulative skill carried to a greater length than is shown in this cloisonné. Reproduced actual size.

Plate V.—From a Covered Jar of Cloisonné Enamel of the early period. Although of Japanese manufacture, this specimen bears in its decoration strong evidences of foreign influence, probably Chinese through a Korean channel. The date of its fabrication is in all probability late in the fifteenth century.

Plate VI. Examples of Japanese enamels of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are extremely rare, and especially those of the champlevé variety. The *kiri* badge, Fig. 4, is of cast bronze, enamelled in the champlevé method. The ornamentation of the dagger handle and sheath, Fig. 1, is also champlevé. All the other objects sword guards except Fig. 3, are decorated with cloisonné enamel.

Plate IX.—From a large Jar of old Cloisonné Enamel, represented full size so as clearly to show the ornamental forms and irregular disposition characteristic of old Japanese workmanship in this branch of ornamental art.

Plate X. From a remarkably beautiful *Sara*, or saucer-dish, of the highest quality of late period cloisonné. The design throughout is of the most delicate and complex character. The metal work is extremely delicate; the very thin cloisons being formed and adjusted in a faultless manner. The enamel pastes are dense, even, and carefully ground to a uniform surface.

Plate XI.—From another beautiful *Sara* of late period Cloisonné, resembling in all essentials the style and workmanship of the preceding example.

Plate XII.—From a large *Sara* of late period Cloisonné, characterised by extreme boldness of design and breadth of treatment; in these respects contrasting with the laboured and almost painfully minute essays of the best handicraftsmen of the period at its culmination, as illustrated on the preceding plates. The full size of the dish is 21½ inches in diameter.

Series VIII.—MODELLING AND CARVING

Plate I.—From a Group modelled in Terra Cotta. This is a remarkably fine example of Japanese handicraft: in every respect, as a specimen of artistic modelling and technical handling, it is a masterpiece. The natural colour of the terra cotta appears in the faces and hands, while all the garments are richly enamelled with refined colours. The ornaments are for the most part stamped and applied.

Plate II.—From a large Ivory Carving, representing the great bowman Tametomo and his sword bearer. With the exception of the top piece of the bow, the whole is carved from a single piece of ivory 12 inches high and about 6 inches in diameter. The execution is singularly bold and effective.

Plate III.*—From six Carvings in Ivory, representing different subjects, and illustrating the older school of Japanese handicraft in this branch of art.

Plate IV.—From another six Carvings in Ivory, representing different subjects. In all respects the handicraft resembles that of the examples illustrated on the preceding plate.

Plate VI.—From a Porcelain Figure, modelled by Kakiyemon, a celebrated artist of the seventeenth century. The work is replete with singular grace of form, while its decoration with coloured enamels and gold is beyond criticism. Nothing finer than this of its class has left Japan. The figure represents Usugumo, a celebrated and accomplished lady of Yoshiwara, who lived in the seventeenth century.

Plate VII.—From a Faience Group, modelled by Kenzan, a younger brother of the great Kōrin. Kenzan devoted his attention to pottery and became renowned at the beginning of the eighteenth century. He died in 1743. He produced the hard faience which now bears the name "Kenzan Kiōto ware." The decoration of the principal figure is extremely characteristic and beautiful both in design and colouring.

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* This Plate has its numerals counterchanged. It should have been marked Series VIII., Pl. III.

JAPANESE ART

AND HANDICRAFT

IT is only proper to put on record in the present Essay that it was due to the personal exertions of Sir Rutherford Alcock, K.C.B., that the attention of English art lovers was for the first time specially directed to the marvels of Japanese Art and Handicraft. On this subject we prefer to give the necessary information in Sir Rutherford Alcock's own words. Writing in the year 1878, he says:—

"When preparations were being made for the Great International Exhibition of 1862, the official announcement of this undertaking reached me in Japan, where I had for some time been resident as Her Majesty's Minister. In that capacity I was instructed to promote the objects in view by obtaining contributions illustrative of the arts and industries of Japan, either from the Japanese themselves or from any of the foreign mercantile community willing to assist in the work. The Government of Japan in that day, however, was little disposed to take any steps in this direction. So far as the Tycoon and the Daimios, who constituted the ruling classes, were concerned, their most earnest desire was to preserve as far as possible the long-cherished isolation of the country from foreign influences and interests, not to promote increased intercourse and extended knowledge of the nation or its resources. The few residents at the treaty ports were chiefly merchants, too much occupied with their own affairs and efforts to establish trade on a profitable and less precarious footing to give either time or money to spread a knowledge of Japanese products out of the range of their own operations. Finding it thus impossible to count on co-operation or assistance from natives or foreigners in a work the importance of which was manifest to me, I determined to undertake the task myself, rather than permit Japan to be unrepresented. I had been long enough in the country, both in the capital at Yédo and as a traveller through the interior, to appreciate as they deserved the artistic excellence and merits of Japanese industrial work; and had already collected, for my own instruction and pleasure, a considerable number of objects illustrative of the progress and the originality of their Art. It only remained to make such further outlay as might be required to enlarge the field, carefully selecting in all the different departments of Art and Industry the most instructive and typical specimens of their workmanship and ingenuity. For this purpose I visited frequently not only the various magazines and shops in Yokohama, where the articles deemed by the Japanese themselves most attractive, or most likely to find purchasers among foreigners, were to be seen, but the less known and more important trading quarters of the capital, where only the members of the Foreign Legations were at that time allowed access. In these rich and busy quarters of a populous city, every day brought some new and interesting fabric to light, some original application of Art to industrial purposes, or examples of artistic work of unrivalled beauty. My self-imposed duty became a labour of love, which long survived the immediate object of providing the International Exhibition with such a varied collection as should make known in England, and through England to the rest of the world, an almost unsuspected source of instruction as well as delight, in a wide range of Art industries and manufactures. I found an original school of Art existing in Japan, worthy of serious study, rich in new Art motives, and showing a rare development of the artistic faculty in a people of Oriental race too far removed from Western intercourse to have been materially influenced by any ideas of European origin."

The collection exhibited was extremely interesting, and led to the delivery of the first lecture on Japanese Art in England, and, indeed, in Europe, so far as our knowledge extends. This lecture was given by Mr. John Leighton, the then well-known artist, at the Royal Institution during the spring of 1863. In the same year Sir Rutherford Alcock delivered an address on the instruction to be derived from the study of Japanese Art and its application to industrial purposes, before the Philosophical Society at Leeds.

Nothing further of any importance happened in this direction until the opening of the truly national and magnificent display of art works in the Japanese Court of the French International Exhibition of 1867. As we have said in another work*: Interesting and instructive as were all the Sections embraced in that immense Palace of Art and Industry, few, if any, were more fascinating and suggestive to the art student than that which was devoted to the exhibition of the varied productions of the Empire of Japan. The collection of exhibits was made by the Japanese Commissioners, under the direction of the late (and last) Shôgun, with the view of fully illustrating the natural and artificial productions of their country. With one remarkable exception (Cloisonné Enamelling) every link was perfect, and every branch of industry with which we are acquainted was fully represented. It was from the careful study of this wonderful collection that we first derived our knowledge of and ardent love for Japanese Art—a love that was only increased by further study during the subsequent years. The next important collection that we had the privilege of examining was that in the International Exhibition at Vienna in 1873. In the previous year we had delivered a lecture, entitled "Notes on Japanese Art," before the Architectural Association of London, in which we directed special attention to the enamels, lacquer-work, porcelain and faïence, metal-work, textile art, and carving, as produced by the Japanese artists and handicraftsmen.

It is very much to be regretted that no descriptive and illustrated catalogue of the Paris collection was prepared. Commencing with life-size warriors, mounted on wonderfully modelled horses, and rendered in all the glory of their inlaid steel, gold lacquer, and elaborately wrought silk armour and horse trappings, this superb collection embraced almost all the artistic productions of the country down to the toy porcelain *saké* cup and the commonest sheet of paper, valuable only for the few but truly artistic strokes of the brush it displayed.

As we have substantially said elsewhere, Japanese Art, viewed from any standpoint, presents characteristics peculiarly its own, which distinguish it from the arts of all other nations. On examining a map of the eastern hemisphere, and observing the close proximity of the two countries, Japan and China, one would naturally expect to find a great similarity in their manners and customs, and, accordingly, and of necessity, in their arts. Such, however, is not to any marked degree the case, for very few bonds of sympathy exist, and indeed one rarely

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* "Keramic Art of Japan."

observes any pronounced marks of resemblance in their respective works, except, perhaps, in what is known as the Chinese School of Painting, practised by certain of the noted Japanese artists. In the manipulation of their respective art works, even when the materials used are practically identical, there are in every instance so many and such important differences, that one might come to the conclusion that intercourse of a friendly nature never existed between the countries.

There can be little doubt, however, that intercourse of some kind existed between Japan and China long before European traders attempted to open communication with the former country, but we have no proof that the intercourse was either of long duration or of a friendly nature. Let the intercourse between the two countries have been what it may, it evidently failed to affect their respective arts, for a careful survey of the works of both nations fails to prove, save in the single school of painting alluded to, a systematic copyism on one side or the other.

The want of artistic sympathy with, and the absence of evidences of direct copyism from, Chinese art methods, may reasonably be accounted for when we bear in mind the different thoughts and sentiments of the two countries. The Chinese have ever been too conservative and self-opinionated to seek to learn from others, believing all the world to be wrong, and right only to obtain in their own methods, while the Japanese, although ready (as recent history has proved) to benefit from the superior knowledge and achievements of those they were brought in contact with, evidently found little in Chinese art, thoughts, and methods from which they could derive inspiration and instruction. Their own ornamental and industrial arts were equal, and in some respects superior, to those of the Chinese, and their natural artistic sense, cultivated by their keen appreciation and earnest observation of the beauties and phenomena of Nature, was more correct and refined than that commonly displayed by the more conceited artists of the Celestial Empire. It is true that there are several objects frequently introduced in Japanese decorative art which are common also to Chinese, and may have been at a very early period derived from China, but beyond the original ideas no absolute copyism can be observed; indeed, so marked are the respective treatments of similar objects by the artists of the two countries that there is seldom the slightest difficulty in pronouncing their nationality.

JAPANESE ART

No one who gives any critical attention to the various essays of the painstaking and clever artists of Japan can avoid being impressed with the loving appreciation of the works of Nature they display. That the Japanese artist is an ardent student of Nature cannot for a moment be questioned; he watches her silent operations with keen perception, and notes her constant changes of mood, form, and colour with loving and observant eyes, until each detail of her marvellous handiwork, and each expression of her ever-changing face, becomes imprinted on his retentive mind, to be truthfully represented on almost every work he sets his hands to do. In the animal and vegetable worlds he is ever studying expressive action, and seeking for lovely forms and harmonious combinations of colour; and when satisfied with his research, how boldly or tenderly, or how truthfully or freely, he depicts that which has appealed to his artistic sense.

Another noteworthy trait in the character of the artists of Japan is their keen appreciation and enjoyment of the humorous and the grotesque. Nearly all branches of their decorative and ornamental art bear evidence of this love; and one frequently finds that their humour has led them into broad caricature, and throughout its extreme phases into representations of indecent subjects; these, however, are rare and must be sought for to be found.

In addition to the wonderful skill the Japanese artist displays in the rendering of animate and inanimate natural forms for decorative purposes, he displays the greatest ingenuity in the designing of geometrical and other conventional devices and patterns, and in their application to the ornamentation of surfaces of all shapes and of different materials. Among patterns of the more severe character we find frets of different designs frequently introduced in the shape of borders and diapers, and with unvarying good effect. A critical examination of a large number of representative decorative works clearly proves that the Japanese artist is unerring in his judgment respecting the fitness of things; his disposition of such severe forms as frets and diapers, in combination with floral and other free and flowing designs, is always satisfactory, and invariably tends to impart steadiness and repose to designs which, at first glance, may seem erratic. The artistic combination of the straight, the inclined, and the curved is evidently carefully studied by the Japanese designer; and while this is done, his love for irregularity finds full scope in the disposition of his varied devices. In the accompanying illustration, Fig. 1, Plate A, are shown a series of frets and diaper patterns based on the fret, all of which have been copied from Japanese works of art.

Pages could be written on the innate repugnance in the mind of the Japanese decorative artist to resort to any method of diametrical division or exact repetition of any prominent space or form in any one work, but the subject can only be alluded to in this brief Essay. It is doubtless due to the close study of Nature—"who never repeats herself, whether in spangling the skies with stars or the earth with daisies of the field"—that the pronounced love for irregularity has become firmly implanted in the Japanese mind. This element of irregularity is one of the most pronounced characteristics of Japanese Art, while it is practically absent in every other known national art. The more one studies it in the art-works of the Japanese the more one becomes fascinated with its special and unique beauty.

There is one class of surface ornamentation, much used by Japanese artists, which would seem to defy the adoption of anything approaching an irregular disposition; we allude to the repeating patterns commonly called diapers. In the hands of the native artists these patterns are made conservient to their universal love for irregularity and freedom. Diaper patterns are applied as a surface decoration in the following ways.

1. Uniformly distributed over the entire surface, either alone, or bearing some marked device upon it in the form of badge or medallion containing some special design.
2. A single pattern applied to an undiametrical or irregular division of the surface.
3. Two or more different patterns applied to unsymmetrical divisions of the surface and simply divided by a line.
4. Broken-up or irregular masses of diaper-work erratically disposed on the surface, without any regular boundary or inclosing lines.
5. Straight or curved bands of different patterns, placed vertically, horizontally, or diagonally across the surface.
6. Diapers of different patterns inclosed in medallions of various shapes, placed, separately or overlapping, at irregular intervals on the surface: in this style of medallion ornamentation the Japanese are past-masters.

In Fig. 2, Plate A, are given a series of nine diapers copied from Japanese works of art. The fret diapers shown in Fig. 1, in the same Plate, are also of frequent occurrence, notably the large one at the bottom of the illustration.

The method of dividing a surface into unsymmetrical angular spaces and filling them with different designs, which may have no relation to the form of the spaces, appears to be peculiar to the decorative artists of Japan, and has, no doubt, arisen out of their objection to diametrical division, and their universal love of variety. They follow the same practice in their inlaid and veneered woodwork, in which pieces of differently grained and coloured woods never fail to produce a very striking and pleasing effect. Frets and geometrical diapers, in black and light-tinted woods, are cut into triangular and other unequal-sided figures, and frequently introduced along with plain grained woods in this veneered work.

The Japanese seem to have been, from the earliest period of their art, fond of simple geometrical forms; this is very evident in their heraldic badges which present a large assortment of purely geometrical forms. The badges are found in great numbers in old works of art which were originally made for the Princes and Daimios.

Of all the methods adopted for the ornamentation of suitable surfaces, those in which flowers and foliage enter are, perhaps, the most characteristic and beautiful; certainly in these designs the Japanese decorative artists have no rivals. Their treatments of flowers and foliage are of endless variety, and are invariably harmonious with the nature of the surface or article decorated: unerring taste is always evident, even in the simplest design, which may not extend beyond a few blades of grass bent by the wind. In designing floral diapers the artists very rarely follow the principle of uniform and accurate spacing and repetition followed by European designers; on the contrary they strive to disguise the "repeat," and to destroy to as great an extent as possible the feeling of uniformity.

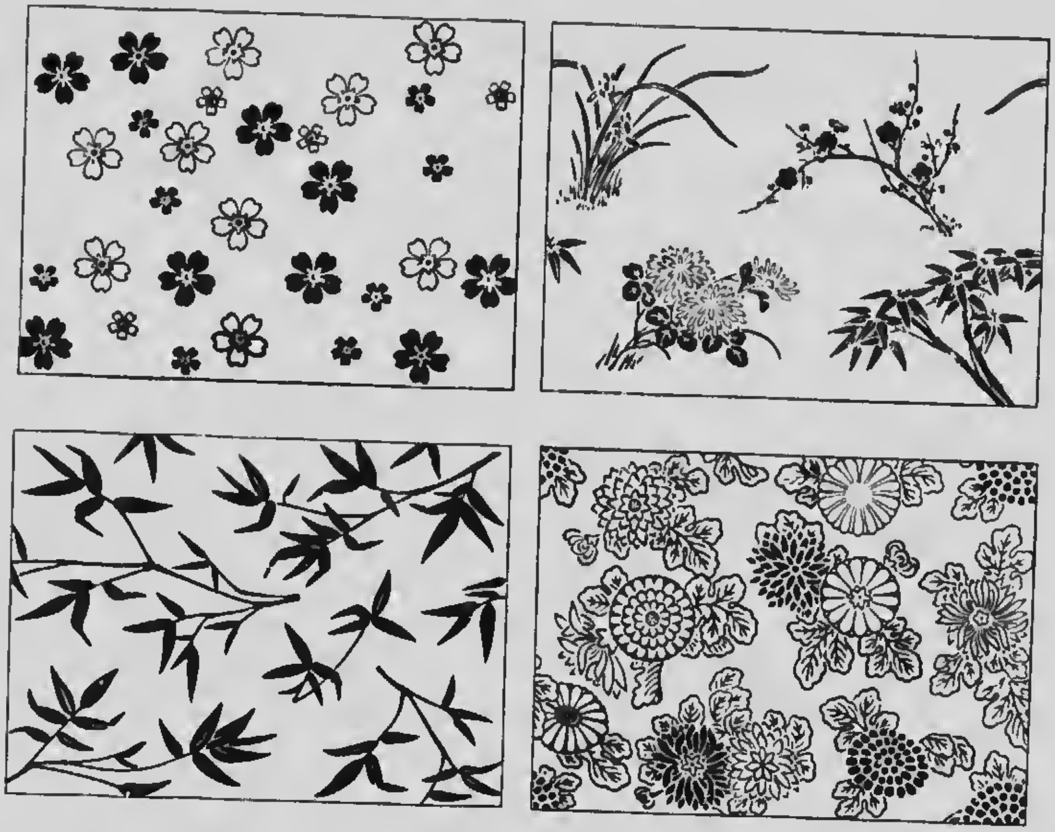

FIG. 1. JAPANESE POWDERINGS.

Free, flowing, or scrollwork designs of foliage or flowers, which may be said to approximate more or less closely to European treatments, are frequently met with in the old textile fabrics, embroideries, embossed papers in imitation of leather, and papers used for covering the partition screens (*shoji*) of houses.

Next in order to the styles of design already alluded to comes the class of ornament commonly designated powdering, in which detached designs or devices are distributed or powdered at regular or irregular intervals over a field or surface. In Western Art the rule has been to repeat a design at uniform intervals, producing a tiresome sameness; but, contrary to European methods and ideas, the Japanese artists almost invariably practise irregular distribution, and commonly employ different designs or different renderings of the same design or motive in their powderings. In the accompanying illustration, Fig. 1, are shown some characteristic powderings reproduced direct from screen papers, which clearly show the principles on which the designers work, if indeed they can be said to work on any defined principles. We are strongly of opinion that the Japanese artist depends entirely upon that inborn taste and keenness of perception of the beautiful which appear to guide him at every turn; far better, indeed, than all the teaching of the art schools assists us in decorative art. In decorating surfaces of limited dimensions by the hand direct, the Japanese artist invariably endeavours to avoid repetition of similar forms or a regular disposition of his powderings; this is to be continually observed in his beautiful lacquer-work. Of course, in such things as screen-papers and stamped or stencilled leathers, a certain repeat, more or less remote, must of necessity exist; but he displays much skill and ingenuity in disguising the repetition and avoiding any feeling of stiffness or formality. How this is done can be readily realised on examining the designs in Fig. 1.

Japanese artists are fond of introducing in the ornamentation of their various wares a system of decoration which may be considered peculiar to themselves. This is known as the medallion system, and although it strictly belongs to powdering, of which it is an extended form, it produces very different results. A medallion is a distinct and clearly defined form, usually geometrical in its outline, separated from the general ground of the object decorated by difference of colour, material, or by a boldly defined margin or border, and filled with some special decoration. In the same manner as powderings, the medallions are disposed irregularly, singly, or in groups overlapping in the most eccentric, but always happy, manner. The treatment of medallion decoration illustrates, perhaps more forcibly than any other class of surface enrichment, the positive antipathy of the Japanese artist to uniformity and diametrical division. When two or more medallions are introduced, they are almost always of different forms, and, as a general rule, contain different designs; and when combined, by overlapping, the most diverse forms are commonly selected for that purpose, unless the artist has chosen to employ circular medallions only, when, for the sake of variety, he adopts those of different sizes for combination. Medallions are frequently associated with floral designs, or with irregularly disposed masses of diaper-work.

As we have already remarked, no one could well glance over the wide field of Japanese Art without being impressed by the loving appreciation of the works of Nature it displays. In representations of such objects as flowers, foliage, and birds, for purely ornamental purposes, the Japanese artist has no rival. So true in form, so tender in feeling, and yet so graphic and bold are his drawings, that one can simply wonder and admire—attempt to imitate, and fail. To so accurate and tasteful a craftsman one would imagine that the most beautiful objects and the bright side of Nature would alone recommend themselves; such, however, is far from being the case; for one finds every aspect of Nature, and all classes of suitable objects, furnishing materials for his art. From the magnificent flowers, which the skill of the native gardeners have cultivated to gigantic proportions, down to the modest daisy in the field; from the lofty fir, down to the dwarf tree which can be almost covered by a man's hand; from the mythical *Ho-ho*, with its superb tail of waving plumes, down to the tiniest feathered inhabitant of his island home, everything comes in for an equal share of his careful study, and receives an equally truthful rendering at his hands. The flowers are shown in the bud, in full bloom, and in decay; the trees covered with the profuse blossom of spring, still in the sultry air of summer, waving in the gentle breeze from the sea, bending under the stripping blasts of autumn, and with branches weighted down with winter's snows; and the birds in all their habits, and in all their varied positions and graceful movements.

The flowers most commonly met with in Japanese Art are the chrysanthemum, peony, wistaria, iris, lily, hydrangea, carnation, convolvulus, and water lily; but nearly all the varieties of flowers common to the country are used for ornamentation, in combination with the above. The trees most frequently introduced are the *Paulownia imperialis (kiri)*, plum, fir, and palm. Reeds, creeping plants, and grasses, of all descriptions, are favourites with the Japanese artist; and, in the first class, the stately and invaluable bamboo holds the most prominent position, chiefly on account of its almost universal utility, its grace, and the emblematic value attached to it.

It is evident that vegetation of all kinds, and of all seasons, forms an untiring source of delight to the natives of Japan, and especially to those residing in the large towns. Doubtless, the natural richness of the country, and the profusion and beauty of its vegetation, cultivate the love of and taste for trees and flowers; and we can safely say that in no other country in the world is this taste and love so general and so firmly rooted in the minds of all classes of the community. During the various holidays, and in the long spring and summer evenings, the people resort to the temples and suburban places of amusement, which are invariably situated in romantic and highly picturesque spots, and planted and cultivated with the greatest skill and care. Here, from earliest infancy, the dwellers in towns learn to love and enjoy the beauties of Nature and Art—for the temples are wondrous works of art and handicraft—and so strong does this love become that under all possible circumstances they endeavour to surround themselves with objects which tend to recall to their imaginations those beautiful scenes which they so keenly enjoyed.

The accompanying Plates B and C, reproduced directly from Japanese books, will convey some idea of the truth and artistic spirit with which the native artists depict trees, flowers, and birds.

Of all the flowers introduced in ornamentation the chrysanthemum is unquestionably the favourite: it is cultivated in the highest perfection throughout the country, and is largely used for floral decorations and ceremonial bouquets on certain occasions.

The Japanese name for the chrysanthemum is *kiku;* and the ninth month of the year, during which it is in full bloom, is called *Kiku-dzuki.* On the ninth day of the month one of the most popular festivals of the country is held,—the Festival of Happiness,—and the chrysanthemum enters largely, as the Japanese emblem of happiness, into all the ceremonies of the day. In the large towns people expend considerable time and ingenuity in forming figures of historical persons, and models of interesting objects of natural scenery, such as the beautiful mountain Fusiyama, and the like, entirely of different varieties of *kiku* flowers. Last, but not least, in importance, the chrysanthemum, conventionally rendered, forms one of the Imperial badges or crests, termed the *Kiku-mon.*

In works of art the *kiku* figures very largely, and is treated in a great variety of ways, sometimes conventionally, and at other times naturally. In decorating a flat surface, such as the lid of a lacquer box, the artist covers it with conventionalised flowers, the upper or outer ones being carefully detailed and most beautifully finished and coloured, each succeeding layer underneath, so to speak, seen through the interstices of, or appearing from behind, the others being less and less manipulated and assertive in tone. Some examples of this overlapping mode of ornamentation are of great beauty and refinement. Still considering the radiating treatment of the flower, we find the *kiku* commonly disposed as a powdering in all branches of art handicraft. In genuine high-class old work, made for the palace of the Mikado or Emperor, the badge form of the *kiku*, as shown in Fig. 2, was almost invariably adopted as the ornamentation, and usually disposed as a powdering. Of the free or natural treatments of the chrysanthemum in all the branches of Japanese decorative art it is impossible for us to speak; their name is legion; ever varying with the caprice or inventive taste of the artist, and the form, material, and use of the object decorated. A few passing remarks may, however, be made respecting the different methods followed by the Japanese handicraftsmen in accentuating floral designs for decorative purposes. In lacquer-work we frequently find the flowers richly raised in the material, or delicately carved out of ivory, white and purple mother-of-pearl, coral, lapis lazuli, gold, silver, bronzes of different colours, porcelain, and faience, and inlaid or incrusted on the surface; while the stems and foliage remain in raised gold or coloured lacquer, or are, after the fashion of the flowers, applied in carved wood or some variegated green material. In works in ivory a similar practice obtains, and is carried to the highest point of delicacy and accuracy. In metal-work the floral designs are very frequently applied in the precious metals, or in variously coloured alloys enriched with incrustations or inlays of gold or silver. In keramic ware, the necessary employment of extreme heat of course renders it impracticable to apply any of the materials mentioned above in the process of manufacture. The floral decorations are, accordingly, either rendered in relief in the clay, richly decorated, or in enamel colours painted on. Ornamentation in lacquer has, however, been frequently applied to the surface of otherwise finished articles of porcelain and faience. As an example of the rendering of the natural *kiku* in pictorial art we give, in Fig. 1, Plate D, an engraving from a page of a large book of Japanese drawings in our possession. The grace and freedom of the treatment are truly characteristic of the Japanese delineator.

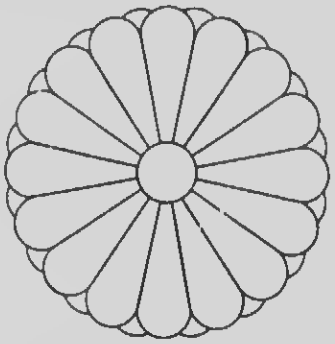

FIG. 2. THE IMPERIAL KIKU-MON.

Associated with the chrysanthemum, naturally represented, in decorative works is very commonly found the peony (*botan*), which, with its luxuriant crimson-coloured and fully opened flowers, imparts great richness to the composition into which it enters. Perhaps the most beautiful renderings of the peony are to be found in the celebrated Satsuma faience, where it is commonly sufficiently conventionalised to render it a harmonious and refined decoration.

Another flowering plant, almost as frequently met with in works of art as the peony, and quite as highly admired by the Japanese, is the wistaria (*fuji*). Siebold speaks very highly of the richness and beauty of this plant as it grows in Japan, he also gives some interesting particulars regarding it. The *fuji* is a creeping plant which grows to a great size, and is of such a spreading habit that the natives train it so as to form arbours and covered walks in the large gardens and temple grounds. Its roots extend a considerable distance, producing several stems, which grow to from three to four inches in diameter, and climbing like our honeysuckle, frequently attain the height of eighteen feet, where, supported by a trellis-work, they spread out into foliage covering a space of twenty to thirty feet square. Below this the graceful racemes hang in luxuriant masses, often three feet in length; and, waving in the spring breeze, produce a most beautiful effect. It is almost invariably in this pendant position that the flowers of the wistaria are represented in art. Pictures of the plant are on certain festivals and holidays placed in the principal reception rooms of the Japanese houses, and occupy the place of honour—the *toko* or recess. In this must be exhibited a single picture (*kakemono*) at one time—no more—beneath which is placed the ceremonial bouquet, suitable for the occasion. Siebold mentions a curious custom which obtained in his day. During a journey to Yédo, he noticed in the court of a temple, on the racemes of a *fuji* not yet in full bloom, small notes of all colours; and was informed that young persons fastened them there, ultimately accepting the more or less vigorous development of their respective racemes as presage of their fate in their future married lives.

As a simple example of the artistic and free rendering and disposition of the racemes of the *fuji* in pictorial art, we give the engraving, from the book already alluded to, Fig. 2, on Plate D. In the original both the purple and white wistaria are represented.

The iris (*kosai*) is a very general favourite with the Japanese artist, doubtless on account of its stately yet graceful habit, which forms a pleasing variety of lines in combination with those of other and freer-growing plants and flowers. The iris is largely cultivated in Japan, often in fields of large size.

In works of lacquer, incrusted-work, ivory, and metal the iris frequently appears, beautifully rendered in different materials. Its leaves and stems may be of stained ivory or some metal or alloy, while its flowers may be of white ivory or of mother-of-pearl, the purple and white varieties of the latter beautifully representing, when carefully carved, the purple and white varieties. In bronze-work the flowers are usually applied in gold and silver. Of all artistic handicraftsmen, the Japanese are the most distinguished in the art of producing coloured designs by the combination of different materials. On this branch of our subject more will be said farther on.

Although lilies of many varieties grow to the greatest perfection in Japan, and are met with almost everywhere, even in profusion by the roadside, they are not so frequently represented on works of art as are the flowers already mentioned. This fact is not readily accounted for, objects far more common and of less intrinsic beauty being more used for decorative purposes. The fact that the lily is more difficult to render satisfactorily in a natural manner may, to some extent, influence the Japanese handicraftsmen. We meet with fine representations of some of the choice varieties in pictorial art, proving the flower (*yuri*) is not undervalued.

The hydrangea (*otaksa*), the convolvulus (*asagao*), and the water-lily (*hasu*) are very often depicted in paintings and represented on works of lacquer, porcelain, and faïence; the convolvulus, from its creeping habit, being an especial favourite in designs of a free character. The water-lily flowers and leaves supply many suggestions to the watchful artist, which we see faithfully carried out in his works in pottery and bronze. From the plant alone, using its leaves, flowers, and buds, he designs teapots, cups, dishes, and other similar articles in pottery; and perfume burners, candlesticks, and numerous other articles of everyday use in bronze.

The water-lily has for centuries been held both in India and China in a sort of veneration, being accepted as an emblem of fertility and reproduction; and apparently the same idea obtained in the minds of Japanese artists. The figures of Buddha and numerous other deities appear in all these countries seated or standing on the flowers or leaves of this water-plant.

Trees next claim our notice, figuring largely as they do in almost all branches of pictorial and decorative art, and being closely connected with the ceremonial observances of the Japanese.

First in rank, as the grandest of all the trees of Japan, comes the *kiri*, to which Siebold gave the name by which it is best known to botanists, *Paulownia imperialis*. Speaking of this tree, the learned doctor, in his "Flora Japonica," says: "We have given the name *Paulownia* to the new species formed by the *kiri*, which up to the present time wrongly passed for a *Bignonia*, in order to pay our homage to the name of Her Imperial and Royal Highness the hereditary Princess of the Netherlands. It is not merely the beauty of the tree which induced us to distinguish it, but rather because the leaf of the *kiri*, surmounted with three stems of flowers, was used as armorial bearings by the renowned hero TAIKOSAMA, and for this reason is still held in honour in Japan." *

While Siebold notices that, from the fact of the favourite and renowned hero TAIKOSAMA having adopted the leaves and flowers of the *kiri* as his armorial badge, the tree is held in high estimation by the natives of Japan, he does not mention that a similar badge or crest forms one of the two adopted by the Emperors of Japan, probably after TAIKOSAMA's death. The usual form of the *kiri-mon* is shown in Fig. 3. The *kiri* in this form frequently appears in art works, both naturally and conventionally rendered. In the former treatment it often appears in combination with representations of the mythical bird, the *ho-ho*, to which allusion will be made later on.

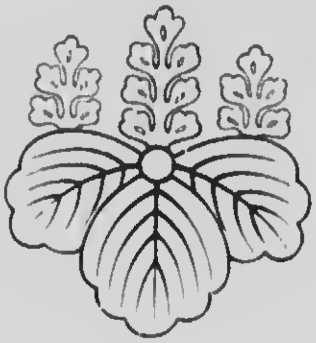

FIG. 3. THE IMPERIAL KIRI-MON.

The *kiri-mon*, when used as a decoration, is disposed as a powdering, but seldom alone, being generally associated with the other Imperial badge, the *kiku-mon*.

There is no tree so frequently represented in Japanese Art as the plum (*ume*), and its flowers (*ume no hana*) are special favourites in ornamentation. The *ume* is largely cultivated both on account of the beauty of its blossom and the value of its fruit. The flowers are, however, the most highly esteemed, and are almost exclusively represented in works of art. The tree is covered with blossom in the beginning of February; and, as Siebold states, at that time all the shrines in the temples, and the private dwellings of the natives are decorated with branches of *ume* in bloom, as the emblems and heralds of the spring.

In art, the *ume* is usually represented as a tree of a peculiarly angular and spiky habit, so much so, that when represented, as in winter, with neither leaves nor flowers, it is readily distinguished from all other trees. The wild *ume* has single flowers of a whitish tint, while the cultivated varieties have double flowers of all colours between white and red. The wild *ume* is, however, most commonly used by the native artists, and when executed in ivory or white mother-of-pearl, in relief, in incrusted-work, or simply rendered on blue and white

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* "The *kiri* is one of the most magnificent vegetable productions of Japan. Its stem, with a diameter of two to three feet, rises to a height of thirty to forty feet. It branches into limbs, not numerous but strong, at right angles, forming a vast crown. The broad leaves are opposed, have stalks, are notched at the base in the shape of a heart, oval and perfectly unbroken, or else cut in three unequal lobes (the middle one of which is the longest), pointed and covered with a whitish down. The beautiful and odoriferous flowers grow from the beginning of the month of April, after the leaves are developed. They are disposed in large double bunches, and thereby resemble our horse-chestnut blossoms, as they also resemble, by their form, size and colour, the flowers of the purple foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)." "Flora Japonica."

porcelain, it forms an exquisite decoration. The so-called and highly-valued "hawthorn" blue-and-white ware, is simply decorated with single *ume* flowers on a blue ground.

The *ume* is found in all branches of Japanese Art; when applied to faience, such as that of Satsuma and Kyoto, it is usually somewhat conventionalised, and rendered in colours hatched with gold. In blue and white porcelain it appears either in white on a blue ground, as already mentioned, or outlined and shaded with blue on a white ground; in lacquer-work it is treated, like the chrysanthemum, in variously tinted raised lacquers; in incrusted-work it appears with flowers carved from ivory or mother-of-pearl; and in bronze-work the *ume* flowers are commonly applied in wrought silver.

Next in importance comes the fir tree (*matsu*), appearing on works of art as frequently as the *ume*. The *matsu* is grown all over Japan; where it does not grow wild it is acclimatised by careful cultivation. It is held in the highest estimation by the people; and has wound around it a mantle woven of pretty fables and miraculous tales and legends, which secures it great consideration from both old and young. The *matsu* is one of the accepted emblems of long life and prosperity. The tree appears in Japanese Art in its natural habit of growth; sometimes whole trees being depicted, and at others branches only. It is not so frequently found on works of pottery as in bronzes and lacquer-work. Nothing can well surpass the masterly manner in which the fir trees are rendered in the fine cast and highly relieved bronzes of Japan, except, perhaps, the superb and life-like modelling of the falcons or eagles which very commonly appear perched on their branches, in these same bronzes. In almost all instances the *matsu* is introduced as the emblem of longevity; and as such it is frequently associated with the bamboo, the crane, and the tailed tortoise, all of which are accepted emblems of long life and happiness, in the *kakemonos* and pictured wall-screens in dwellings, and, indeed, throughout every branch of the Japanese Art and Handicraft. The *matsu* is sometimes depicted bearing a load of snow, a fitting emblem of the strength of old age and the blessings of long life, even when the snow of its winter has fallen. It is a strange thing that the whole range of Japanese artistic symbolism alludes to temporal blessings, and may be summed up in a happy springtime, a prosperous manhood, and a long old age. Much of this, no doubt, arises from the simple mode of living common to all classes of the people, and their intense appreciation of, and love for, the beautiful in Nature—a love which in all seasons and places is fully satisfied in their picturesque and fertile country.

The bamboo (*take*), one of the most useful of the vegetable productions of Japan, is much used by artists for ornamental purposes. Its straight ascending habit, totally unlike that of any other natural object they depict, no doubt commends it to their attention; relieved by its frequent jointings and graceful crown of foliage, it becomes in their skilful hands a beautiful and effective decoration. For narrow, upright spaces, nothing can be more appropriate: a few jointed stems, with an occasional leaf or two, and a deftly drawn little bird in flight, make one of those compositions which the mind will ever associate with the Nature-loving and painstaking artists of Japan. Bamboos are also depicted in graceful curves, either naturally inclined or bent under a strong wind; an example of this treatment is shown in Fig. 2, Plate E, from Hokusai's "Fugaku Hiyaku-kei." Many beautiful ornamental articles are fashioned from the bamboo wood, carved, inlaid, incrusted, or lacquered.

The Japanese handicraftsmen fashion flower-pots of the quaintest possible description from short lengths of bamboo, by cutting openings of various shapes between the natural joints, through which the plants grow in a very pretty manner; but perhaps the most ingenious and, indeed, astonishing work they do in this material is their extremely delicate and faultless basket-work.

Flowers, trees, and grasses are used for ornamental purposes in all the varied productions of the Japanese workshops, down to the humblest article of everyday use. Simplicity of taste is a distinct characteristic of the Japanese artist, and perhaps the most eloquent proof of this is to be seen in his tender little sketches of blades of grass. These trifles, as they may be considered in comparison with his grander essays in pictorial and decorative art, are not, however, tender only; they are almost invariably expressive of something beyond themselves, often poetic. Here is a little medallion, with a few bent strokes in black against a half-displayed disc of white; the grass-blades say, "How pleasant it is to bend to the soft night-wind in the bright moonlight." Here is another, rich in growth are its grasses, laden with seed, and bending in beautiful fern-curves; each blade seems to sing, "How delightful are the summer breezes as they sweep over the meadows." And here is yet another, with its blades crushed, withered and broken, which tells that autumn has dried them, and that the cruel blasts of winter have rushed over them like destroying angels. How easy it is to realise, in even such insignificant sketches as these, the deep-seated love for Nature which is inborn in the Japanese mind, and also the refined simplicity of that love, which is content to select such humble elements as grass-blades wherewith to express itself. It will be realised, from the few foregoing remarks relative to vegetation in general, that the artists of Japan are not content with producing artistic combinations in their ornamental and decorative works, but that they aim at conveying some thought, or expressing some poetical idea, or some power or operation in Nature, which in itself has no physical form, and we have ample proof that such are their ideas by the names they so frequently give to their graphic designs.

Next to vegetation, the artists of Japan are most skilled in the representation of birds; and they show an intense love for depicting them, either alone or in conjunction with trees and flowers. The natural habits of birds supply an inexhaustible page of Nature for their study; and one can observe everywhere in their works how painstaking and enthusiastic they are in its prosecution, by the care and accuracy with which every action and favourite position of their birds are rendered. It is chiefly in their illustrated books and original drawings, in the decoration of their pottery, and in their exquisite lacquer and incrusted-work that one finds the best specimens of their skill in this branch of art, although some remarkably choice specimens are to be found in metal-work and carvings in wood and ivory. Let the material, however, be what it may, wherever a bird is depicted there is food for our study and cause for our admiration.

The birds most frequently represented, and consequently the most attentively studied by the Japanese artists, are the crane, tame and wild ducks, the wild goose, peacock, pheasant, raven, hawk, falcon, the ordinary domestic fowls, and several of the small birds common to the country.

The crane *(tsuru)* is held in a sort of semi-veneration by all classes of the community in Japan, and is, on account of its supposed long life, very generally accepted as an emblem of longevity. For these reasons it is one of the greatest favourites with the artists of the country, and is introduced in ornamentation and decoration throughout the entire range of their arts. The crane is treated in countless ways; indeed, it is impossible to imagine any position the living bird could assume which is not depicted by the Japanese artist; and it is difficult to conceive anything more artistic, from a decorative point of view, than their manner of treating it in these varied positions. There is one noteworthy fact in connection with the bird, which is, that the Japanese avoid representing the bird dead. This may be satisfactorily accounted for by the symbolic value attached to the crane—a dead crane would scarcely be an expressive emblem of longevity.[*]

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[*] Kæmpfer tells us, "The *Tsuru*, or *Crane*, is the chief of the wild birds of the country, and hath this peculiar Imperial Privilege, that nobody may shoot him without an express order from the Emperor, and only for the Emperor's own pleasure or use. The *Cranes* and *Tortoises* are reckon'd very happy animals in themselves, and thought to portend good luck to others, and this by reason of their pretended long and fabulous life, of which there are several remarkable instances recorded in their Historical Writings. For this reason, the Imperial Apartments, walls of Temples, and other happy places, are commonly adorn'd with Figures of them, as also with figures of Firs and Bamboos, for the like reason. I never heard the Country people and Carriers call this Bird otherwise than *O Tsurusama*, that is, *My great Lord Crane*. There are two different kinds of them, one white as snow, the other grey or ash coloured."

In works of keramic art, the crane is very frequently represented, in some cases singly, either resting or in flight; and in others in numbers, in all possible positions. In some specimens of faience, the birds are cleverly rendered in relief by using thick opaque white and black enamels for the body and tail feathers. In lacquer-work, cranes are very often introduced in the decoration, and are exquisitely manipulated in gold and coloured lacquers, or carved in ivory or mother-of-pearl and incrusted on some artistic groundwork. In embroidery, cranes are favourites with the skilful handicraftsmen of Japan; and, executed in fine twisted silk, with every important feather accurately wrought, very beautiful objects they are. In metal-work, the bird is frequently to be seen, either cast in bronze or wrought in the precious metals, relieved in the coloured portions with other metals or alloys. In original sketches, on fans, and in woodcuts, the Japanese artist depicts the crane in countless attitudes, expressing every habit and motion of the bird, but of all these, those which show his skill in foreshortening are the most interesting. This remark, however, applies with equal force to all his essays in bird delineation.

Fig. 4. The Falcon.

Falcons (*taka*) and eagles (*washi*), though not so frequently introduced as decorations on works of keramic art and lacquer as cranes, wherever they do appear they are rendered with consummate skill. The accompanying illustration, Fig. 4, from a native book on Falconry, gives some idea of the graphic manner the Japanese depicts such birds.

Pheasants (*kiji*) are great favourites, and are very often introduced in ornamentation. The birds are rendered with great fidelity and frequently in their natural colouring by the use of different materials: this is especially the case in incrusted work. There is one variety of great beauty which Kæmpfer thus describes, evidently alluding to the "golden pheasant": "One kind, particularly, is remarkable for the various colours and lustre of its feathers, and for the beauty of its tail, which equals half a man's length, and in a curious variety and mixture of the finest colours, chiefly blue and gold, is no ways inferior to that of a peacock." This beautiful bird is a favourite decoration with the faïence painters of Satsuma and Kyoto, and is usually accompanied by its hen, which is greatly inferior in form and plumage.

Ducks of several varieties are pressed into the service of the decorator as effective models; but one variety in particular, called by the Japanese *oshi kamo*, is a favourite study, chiefly on account of the beauty of its colours. Kæmpfer mentions this bird (which he names "*Kinmodsui*" in his "History of Japan," in the following words: "One kind, particularly, I cannot forbear mentioning, because of the surprising beauty of the male, which is so great, that being showed its picture in colour, I could hardly believe my own eyes, until I saw the bird itself, it being a very common one. Its feathers are wonderfully diversified with the finest colours imaginable, about the neck and breast chiefly they are red. The head is crowned with a most magnificent topping. The tail rises obliquely, and the wings standing up over the back in a very singular manner, afford to the eye a sight as curious as uncommon." In Japanese Art, it is understood that the beautiful drake and duck, when represented together, form the emblem of conjugal felicity.

The peacock (*kujaku*) frequently receives careful study by the Japanese artists, being represented as a decoration in all materials. It is common in all schools of pottery painting, being painted in blue by the Hizen artists, and in brilliant enamels by those of Satsuma and Kyoto. A graphic drawing is given in Fig. 2, Plate C.

The wild goose (*gan*) also receives very skilful treatment at the hands of the artists of Japan; and is, like the crane, delineated in every conceivable attitude. The ordinary domestic fowls are often depicted, the cock (*ondori*) being the greatest favourite. A spirited drawing of this bird, attended by the modest hen, is given in Plate B, Fig. 2, where it is depicted in its usual proud and pompous carriage

We have thus briefly alluded to the more important birds introduced in the works of the Japanese artists and handicraftsmen. It is not necessary for us to enlarge upon the subject of the lesser birds which are so frequently represented in their charming drawings and ornamental work, further than to say they are invariably rendered with care and strict truthfulness to Nature. In short, wherever one finds a bird depicted in Japanese Art, there one finds the result of careful study, and an object worthy of earnest attention. Specimens of bird drawing are given in Plates B, C, and D.

Kæmpfer remarks: "Considering the largeness and extent of the Japanese Empire, it is but sparingly supplied with four-footed beasts, wild or tame. The former find but few desert places, where they could increase and multiply, and follow their usual shy way of life. The latter are bred up only for carriage and agriculture. Pythagoras's doctrine of the transmigration of the soul being received almost universally, the natives eat no flesh-meat; and living, as they do, chiefly upon vegetables, they know how to improve the ground to much better advantage than by turning it into meadows and pastures for breeding of cattle." Such being the case, we cannot be surprised that natural quadrupeds are comparatively seldom depicted by the Japanese artists, and when depicted are rarely very truthful or satisfactory. Japan is almost entirely devoid of wild beasts of prey, the lion, tiger, leopard, and such-like animals being unknown in the country. Some attempts have been made by native artists to depict these animals from descriptions or crude representations which may have reached them from other countries; but the absence of personal examination and study from the life are clearly manifest in all these attempts.

Of all quadrupeds the horse (*uma*) is most frequently delineated by the Japanese artists, and it is often rendered with considerable skill and knowledge of foreshortening. The votive pictures hung in the Shinto temples, called by the natives *yema*, most frequently represent the horse, and are amongst the most skilful efforts of the Japanese artists in animal drawing. In the ordinary block books of the country the horse is a common illustration, and in some instances pages are devoted to numerous small studies of the animal in almost every possible position and action, with and without a rider.

The fox (*kitsune*) was commonly believed by the Japanese to be closely allied to the devil; in fact to be possessed of some spirit more or less mischievous in its habits and disposition; and the literature of the country contains frequent allusions to peculiar events in which fox-demons play no insignificant part. There can be little doubt, judging from popular tales and legends, that at no very remote period there existed, and even to some extent there still exists, in Japan a firm belief that foxes and certain other animals were endowed with the power of assuming human and other forms at will, or at the bidding of some ruling being; therefore, we can scarcely be surprised at any vagaries or fanciful conceits we meet with in the art works of the country. Unfortunately the key to all these is not easily obtained, if not absolutely beyond our reach. Of all the other animals which are supposed to be endowed with similar supernatural powers, the badger (*tanuki*) appears to be most frequently mentioned in the popular tales; but its imaginary pranks, made use of by the artists of Japan, like those of the fox, call for no description in the present Essay.

In the skilful drawings and in the grotesque and humorous ivory carvings of the Japanese, no animal is more often met with than the monkey or ape (*saru*), and the greatest skill is displayed in its representation; its natural propensities to mimic human actions are carefully noted and turned to good account in these curiosities of handicraft. In some of the drawings on silk the monkey is portrayed with surprising fidelity, and its fur is exquisitely rendered.

The other animals which figure in works of Japanese Art, such as oxen, deer, bears, dogs, cats, rabbits, rats, and frogs, scarcely call for particular comment, being fairly well represented in drawings, and generally rendered with great artistic power in carvings and metal-work.

Fishes and other productions of the sea are very favourite objects with the Japanese artists and handicraftsmen, and are constantly found in their works, and always rendered with the greatest truthfulness and skill. They are depicted with the greatest freedom of hand in Indian ink, a few dashes of the brush sufficing to represent them in the stiffness of death or in the most lissom action of life. Laboriously drawn, with the greatest accuracy of detail, and in their natural colours, they sport amidst the curling waves, or dart up a waterfall. Carved in ivory, they form beautiful *netsuke*, or tasteful cosmetic boxes for a lady's toilet; they are cast in bronze for water vessels, or sculptured in steel and the precious metals for a warrior's sword hilt, or modelled in porcelain or faïence for flower vases or dishes for food; they are worked in wood and lacquer, forming dainty boxes or ornaments for the cabinet; and, lastly, they are formed of oiled paper or silk, expanded with air, and elevated on tall poles to indicate some occasion of great festivity.

Judging by native drawings, the seas around the Japanese islands appear to yield a great variety of fishes, crustaceans, and other marine animals, many being remarkable for their uncommon forms and the brilliancy of their colouring. The carp (*koi*), drawn in the act of ascending a waterfall, is a subject very frequently met with in painting, drawing, and lacquer. It is also rendered in various other situations, and, indeed, it is more commonly represented than any other fish, being an especial favourite with the native artists.

The octopus, or devil fish (*tako*), is also frequently depicted, especially in the quaint ivory *netsuke* or humorous carvings; and one sometimes realises that the artist has indulged in broad humour indeed, not altogether free from indecency; but it is unnecessary to dwell upon this questionable phase of Oriental art-thought.

Shells are great favourites in ornamentation, and particularly in that of lacquer-work, in which, executed in richly raised gold and tinted lacs, mother-of-pearl, and ivory, they produce very pleasing effects. Coral and seaweed are likewise introduced, sometimes along with fishes or shells, and at other times alone, but invariably in a most artistic and successful manner.

Both reptiles and insects are pressed into the service of the ornamentist, and are represented with rare fidelity to Nature wherever they are introduced. We have had the opportunity of examining some rolls of silk fabric, painted with representations of snakes, lizards, frogs, land-crabs, and all the varieties of the more important insects common to Japan; executed in thin body-colour, the paintings combine with the greatest delicacy and beauty of detail the soft effect of the natural colours, indicating the most accurate observation and painstaking study on the part of the painter. Several important specimens of lacquer-work in the form of large saucer-shaped dishes have been brought to Europe, upon which magnificent coiled serpents are represented in raised metallic work and coloured lacs, with eyes of crystal and teeth of ivory. Snakes are favourite objects for *netsuke* and other ivory carvings, in which they are usually found associated with a human skull, decayed fruit, or some such emblem of death.

Insects are almost as frequently introduced in art objects as birds and fishes; they are wrought in coloured materials, such as stained ivory, choice woods, mother-of-pearl, tortoiseshell, amber, coral, and gold and tinted lacs; and incrusted upon such articles as ivory boxes, fan handles, buttons, and the like; carved with the utmost truth to Nature in *netsuke*; sculptured, applied, and inlaid in bronzes; painted on fans, screens, and on all articles of porcelain, faience, and lacquer.

The immense variety of treatment of natural objects to be found in Japanese Art renders the subject almost inexhaustible. There is, perhaps, nothing which astonishes the student of Japanese Art so much as the endless variety it presents; this is accounted for by the fact that each work is the result of individual genius and fancy. In the old days, in which truly characteristic and fine work was done, manufactories, in our sense of the word, were unknown; each and every artist and handicraftsman worked out his own inspirations, according to his own ideas, and in his own way; hence it is that we find so much variety and originality in almost every gem of art that has come from Japan. All this is greatly altered now, and constant changes are going on in the footprints of Western methods and trade demands; and, alas! in writing a dissertation on the Art of Japan, the essayist must look almost exclusively to its works in the past, and shut his eyes to its purely modern phase under trade direction. Recent exhibitions have, however, very clearly shown that the manipulative skill of the Japanese handicraftsmen has in no way deteriorated; this is especially the case in their enamels and embroideries.

We may now briefly touch on the fabulous or chimerical creatures which make their appearance in old works of Japanese Art. First in rank of all these imaginary creatures comes the dragon (*riyo*), which was doubtless derived at some early time from Chinese Art or mythology. In all essentials the dragons of China and Japan are very similar, the only practical difference being their imperial renderings; the former having five claws while the latter have only three.

The dragon is invariably represented in Japanese Art with great force and spirit, and in every conceivable attitude. Its body is long, snake-like in its proportions, covered with scales, and furnished with rows of prominent pointed spikes along its back; its legs are four in number, and likewise scaled and armed with spikes on the outside of the joints; the feet, divided into three members, terminating in curved claws, are represented as very muscular and supple. The most characteristic and fearful-looking part of this monstrous creation of the Eastern mind is its head; derived in the first instance from the most angry type of serpent head, it has been added to and elaborated into an object altogether fearful. Around both lower and upper jaws, the corners of the capacious mouth, and the eyebrows, are rows of formidable spikes; from the base of the skull double-pronged horns extend backward; long flexible appendages, or gigantic antennæ, grow from the sides of the nose; the mouth is armed with pointed teeth and cruel-looking tusks; and about the head and the junctions of the legs with the body are flame-like forms, which appear to coil, burning, around those portions. From such a description one would imagine the dragon to be the incarnation of every evil principle, but such does not appear to have been the Japanese view; and here the difficulty commences, for while we feel assured thus far, we cannot arrive at the definite ideas once held, and perhaps still held in some quarters, with reference to the monster. So far as one can learn, the dragon is believed to exert a potent influence over all important and national events connected with emperors and heroes. Kæmpfer says: "The chronicles and histories of their gods and heroes are full of fabulous stories of this animal. They believe that it dwells at the bottom of the sea, as in its proper element. . . . Some of the Japanese Emperor's cloth, his arms, scimitars, knives, and the like, as also the furniture and hangings of the Imperial Palace, are adorned with figures of this dragon holding a round jewel or pearl in the right fore-claw." Although water appears to be the accepted element of the Japanese dragon, it is by no means confined to it, being at times depicted amidst clouds and flame in the same manner as the Chinese animal is commonly represented. In the accompanying illustration, Fig. 5 (1), is given a rendering of the dragon among clouds. The representation of a dragon rising from the sea is common in Japanese Art. A dragon with four claws on each foot is to be seen in certain old works.

FIG. 5. SERIES OF JAPANESE FABULOUS CREATURES.

Of the fabulous animals of the Japanese, the next in importance is the *kirin*. This creature is represented with the head and breast of a dragon, the body and legs of a deer, and a tail somewhat similar to that of the conventionalised lion of China and Japan; the flame-like appendages of the dragon are also given to this compound creation: a representation is given in Fig. 5 (2). The *kirin* is believed to be an animal of good omen, and of such remarkable gentleness that, although gifted with extreme swiftness of foot, it will swerve from its direct path to avoid injuring an insect or crushing a leaf. The Japanese have described the *kirin* as a supernatural animal, requiring for its creation the occurrence of a certain constellation in the heavens and the birth of a *seijin*—a man endowed with an incomparable understanding and penetration—upon earth. Representations of the *kirin* are frequently met with in all branches of decorative art, but we have only seen one instance of the creature depicted under its constellation, a drawing of which is given in Fig. 5.

A highly imaginative or conventionalised lion (*shishi*) is of constant occurrence in Japanese Art, a drawing of which, in its most spirited treatment, is given in Fig. 5 (3). The *shishi* is frequently introduced in Buddhist pictures, sometimes along with the elephant (*zō*), and clearly with a similar intention, both the lion and the elephant being natives of India, the birthplace of the religion of Buddha.

Kæmpfer gives two additional kinds of chimerical animals, to which the names *sungu* and *kait su* are attached, but his descriptions afford literally no information relative to their attributes or significance. The *sungu* is somewhat like a tiger in shape and marks, but not of a very ferocious aspect, and has the flame-like appendages apparently common to the more important Japanese fabulous animals. We do not remember to have seen this creature rendered in any work of art. The *kait su*, on the contrary, is often introduced by Japanese artists. In Fig. 5 (4) is given a drawing of this creature as conceived by the Japanese.

Of all the chimerical animals the tailed tortoise (*kame*) is unquestionably the favourite, and the most frequently introduced in ordinary works of art. Unlike the other fabulous creatures, which are altogether unnatural in appearance, and born of the imagination, it is perfectly natural in the form of its body, differing only from the ordinary tortoise by having the addition of a long and broad hairy appendage or tail. The Japanese believe that the tortoise lives, under favourable circumstances, for hundreds of years, and, accordingly, they have accepted it as one of their emblems of longevity, and have introduced it with that significance into every department of their art and handicraft. The tail indicates great age, being supposed to grow only after the lapse of centuries.

It is absolutely impossible to enumerate the ways in which the emblematical tortoise is presented in Japanese Art: it appears in almost every possible variety of treatment, alone or in compositions with other emblems or objects, and in a great variety of materials. In porcelain and faïence it is formed into boxes, dishes, teapots, bottles, and quaint and tasteful ornaments; painted on *kakemonos*, screens, fans, and all descriptions of keramic ware; embroidered in many beautiful ways on silk; carved in wood and ivory; cast and wrought in metal, forming ornamental perfume-burners and other articles of utility; and introduced as an expressive ornament on all objects finished in lacquer.

There remains only one other fabulous creature belonging to the Japanese, and, artistically considered, it is unquestionably the most refined and beautiful of all their fanciful creations. This is in the form of a large bird, of rich plumage, furnished with a superb tail of long waving feathers. In Fig. 5 (5) is given a representation of the bird (*ho-ho* *) copied from a roll of hand drawings. In the original it is rendered in rich colours, such as scarlet, yellow, light and dark blues, light and dark greens, etc.

The *ho-ho* is a great and deserved favourite with the Japanese artist, and he never fails

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* It is somewhat difficult to give a key to the true pronunciation of its name according to the Japanese, there not being an English equivalent for the sound of the second syllable of the word. Listening to a native repeating the name, we wrote it down *ho-ho*, but the usual sounds of these letters produce too hard an effect. Hepburn spells it *howo*, and although his method is probably better, it falls short of conveying the liquid sound of the Japanese. Many years' use of our original spelling has naturally made it agreeable to our ideas, and, with these few words by way of apology, we shall continue to adopt it.

to depict it with a display of elegance and gracefulness. As a purely decorative object it gives practically unlimited scope to the designer, who can with facility and propriety dispose the wings and pliant tail plumage to suit any form of object. Like the generality of chimerical creatures, the *ho-ho* appears more frequently in old than in modern art-works, having been introduced at a time when its existence was more firmly believed in than it is at the present day.

In art, the bird is treated in various ways, from which fact one would infer that there were no prescribed rules for its representation. Its head, body, and wings do not differ greatly in the numerous renderings; but its tail is seldom found alike in any two examples; sometimes it closely resembles natural feathers, while at others it is conventionally treated, the likeness to feathers altogether giving place to ornamental scrollwork. When two birds are represented together it usually happens that their tails are differently designed. We have in our possession a large and very old painting, in which the pair of birds are represented standing on a tall rock amidst waves. The male *ho-ho* is depicted full of dignity and character, and with its plumage rendered in almost all the colours of the rainbow; its tail feathers, in warm brown and light green, are of great length, forked at the end, and curling slightly. The wings are beautifully rendered, resembling those of the golden pheasant and the *oshi kamo* combined. The legs are long like those of the crane. The neck, painted blue and green, has a rich fringe of pointed feathers along its back; it is long like that of the crane, and carries a large head, depicted with immense eyes and a beak like that of the falcon. The female bird is somewhat similar, but with a much smaller tail, and is differently coloured, for instance, its neck has crimson and green feathers instead of the blue and green feathers of its mate. The general treatment differs widely from that shown in Fig. 3, and is unique so far as our observation extends.

The portion of our Essay which we now enter upon, the subject of which may be designated *Graphic Delineation*, is one to which it is most difficult to do full justice; at the same time it is of the greatest interest to the student of Japanese Art. It embraces methods of representing, in a singularly expressive and artistic manner, objects of Nature at rest or in motion, as well as the modes of expressing, by simple delineation, ideas or fancies present in the mind of the artist.

It must be borne in mind that all branches of Japanese Art are decorative, and that the correct principles of decorative art vary essentially from those which of necessity obtain in pictorial art. The Japanese are, in every sense of the term, devoted students and admirers of natural scenery; yet there is no record of the old artists of the native schools having essayed to portray landscapes or similar subjects after the Western methods. We have our treasures of pictorial art hanging in the closed mansions of the wealthy or in our few picture galleries, and the generality of our manufactures are more or less ugly. Here art and taste are for the wealthy; the poor must needs forget that there are such things in existence. In Japan the poorest peasant has his beautifully fashioned and tastefully decorated rice-bowl or *saké*-cup of porcelain or lacquer-ware, and enjoys his graphically painted fan.

There is no reason why decorative art should be looked upon as unworthy of high effort, for, indeed, it has a noble mission to fulfil. No other description of art can be so widely spread, or can exert so beneficial an influence on all classes of mankind: it is the only art which can be linked with every waking hour of our lives, which can meet us at every turn. Ruskin truly remarks: "Observe, then, first. The only distinction between decorative and other art is the being fitted for a fixed place; and in that place related, either in subordination or in command, to the effect of other pieces of art. And all the greatest art which the world has produced is thus fitted for a place, and subordinated to a purpose. There is no existing highest-order art but is decorative. The best sculpture yet produced has been the decoration of a temple front; the best painting the decoration of a room. Raphael's best doing is merely the wall-colouring of a suite of apartments in the Vatican, and his cartoons were made for tapestries."

It must not be understood that, in quoting Ruskin's words, we claim for the decorative art of Japan any such high position as is readily accorded to the great masters he alludes to; in short, the arts of Japan cannot be considered of a monumental character. We simply claim for the Japanese phase of decorative and graphic art that it shall be recognised as a local development, unique in itself, and perfectly satisfactory so far as it goes. It has been misunderstood, and, accordingly, condemned in many quarters by men who have not thought it worthy of study, and who have never asked themselves if it is just, or even sensible, to compare it with the advanced and highly cultivated works (not decorative) of Western genius and study. "The Japanese artist knows nothing of perspective"; "he does not understand aerial effects"; are remarks that have been frequently made concerning the Nature-adoring islander of the East; but we question if any Western artist has ever loved Nature more keenly, or studied more attentively her wondrous works, than the humble decorative artist and handicraftsman of Japan. He knows and uses as much of perspective as his works call for, and quite as much as is commonly found in the similar efforts of other countries; he is infinitely more appreciative of, and more truthful to, the principles of Nature in his representations of animate and inanimate creation than any ordinary Western artist, while as a colourist he is in many respects unsurpassed.

Few things claim the admiration of the student more than the power of expression, combined with simplicity of treatment, which Japanese Art invariably displays. The term graphic delineation, as used in the present Essay, must not be understood to refer to drawing only; it includes the representation of any object or idea in any material; but it does not refer to the material so much as to the characteristic method adopted to represent the object or express the idea in that material.

It must be freely admitted, by all who have paid any attention to Japanese Art, that its weakest department is the delineation of the human figure. There is a strange conventionalism, not easily accounted for, which almost invariably presents itself in a Japanese drawing of the figure; it is not the same conventionalism which one observes in the miniatures of early manuscripts, or the quaint glass of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Europe, nor is it indicative of a total disregard for, or ignorance of, anatomy; but rather bears the impress of traditional mannerism or popular caprice. No doubt the clumsy and withal gorgeous armour of warlike times, and the peculiar stiffness of the national ceremonial costume had much to do with this conventionalism. That the Japanese artists are not incapable of representing the human figure in the manner we consider artistic, is clearly shown in the beautiful and expressive ivory carvings which have come to this country. That they study anatomy there have been many satisfactory proofs. In the International Exhibition of 1874 there was shown an ivory skeleton, about nine inches high, in which every individual bone was rendered distinct, and carved with the greatest precision and fidelity to Nature. This truly wonderful little work must have been the result of most careful study and accurate observation; and it is quite impossible to do justice to its merits as a piece of handicraft in words without appearing to exaggerate. We have also seen statues of nude figures which touched the extreme limit of realism, and which were pronounced by surgeons to be absolutely true to Nature in every particular.

The Japanese are fond of certain kinds of athletic sports, particularly wrestling; and in their drawings of athletes the muscles are invariably represented unnaturally developed. This practice seriously mars the otherwise truthful and expressive character of the delineation. We say the muscles are invariably exaggerated; this applies to all drawings of athletic sports, save those intended as caricatures, in which may be traced every imaginable deformity and attenuation of which the human frame can be conceived to be capable, thus imparting to the drawings a most ludicrous character. While examining the better-class drawings of the human figure, the student of Japanese Art cannot fail to be struck with the life-like action they express. These drawings are rarely highly finished or minutely detailed; sometimes less than a dozen strokes of the brush complete the figure. In this branch of graphic delineation the Japanese artists equal the French character sketchers. A simple example is given in Fig 6.

To find the highest development of facial expression portrayed by the Japanese, we must look to their wood and ivory carvings, bronzes, and theatrical masks: in the carvings, every passion which belongs to humanity, and every shade of humour, is to be traced on their expressive faces; while in the masks every abnormal development and every extravagant distortion is presented which the human features could be supposed to suggest to the most fevered and fanciful imagination. In the representation of demons and other supernatural beings fancy is allowed to run wild, but never without some aim in view. As an example of this phase of graphic delineation, we give in Fig. 7 a convivial party of demons, reproduced from a block print. It will be observed that every face has its suggestive expression, while action is everywhere appropriate.

FIG. 6. CHILD WITH A SAKÉ CUP.

It is unquestionably the expressiveness of Japanese graphic art which imparts to it its high claim upon our attention. There may be, in the generality of instances, indications of a peculiar carelessness of mere technical art or studied skill in outward form; but we cannot avoid realising that there is present that which appeals directly and very strongly to the imagination; which creates strong emotions in the mind, rather than merely satisfies the eye. Now, this is by no means the case with the generality of European Art, in which more attention is paid to the gratification of the eye than to the stirring of the mind with varied emotions. Japanese Art has its inspiration in the brain, and does not, in purely graphic delineation, affect the studied and laboured renderings of the Western modern schools; and, accordingly, it speaks directly to the mind, not with one voice only, but in strains, powerful or weak, according to the nature of each individual imagination.

If we take up carelessly a sketch of a figure, or group of figures, such as is readily to be found in the block-books or off-hand drawings of the Japanese, at first sight we are struck only with the freedom, simplicity, and spirit of the delineation; on second view, we begin to marvel how so much that is suggestive can be told by so few touches of the brush; and at this point the mere delight of the eye practically ceases, and the mind takes hold of the matter, finding an intellectual exercise of such interest, in proportion to the humble cause, that we are drawn into communion with the artist's thought, and realise that the drawing is but an outward and visible sign of that thought, and, perhaps, a symbol of some great moral reality.

Some of the most satisfactory and pleasing representations of the human face and figure are to be found in the paintings of a Buddhist character. These paintings are remarkable specimens of delicate and skilful manipulation, resembling in this respect the finest miniatures of the Middle Age manuscripts. As might be expected, they are treated in a severe, religious style, like the *icons* of the Greek Church, and are most accurately detailed, painted in full-toned body-colours, and richly gilded. The decorative character of the paintings is carefully maintained throughout by the avoidance of much relief shading and all cast shadows.

FIG. 7. A PARTY OF DEMONS.

Generally speaking, the Japanese artists do not introduce much shading, preferring the simplicity of broad outline drawing, so suitable for their prevailing description of decorative work.

In the foregoing remarks it must not be understood that any allusion has been made to the representations of warlike scenes, or warriors in all the glory of their rich and complex armour of steel, lacquer, and silk. Such representations are of necessity stiff and conventional, and may be placed in the same scale of art as the drawings of theatrical figures clad in fantastic garments, imitating birds or butterflies, or scenes of court life, with the figures of nobles or ladies clothed in the stiff and many-folded brocade costumes of ceremony. In old times in Japan all matters of dress were regulated by strict rules. All classes of society had prescribed costumes and modes of wearing them, and they were of such a fashion as to render graceful drapery lines impossible. Such being the case, it is not surprising that in Japanese Art we find drapery very indifferently represented, according to our ideas, more attention having been paid to its details and decoration than to its disposition in graceful folds and flowing lines.

In monumental sculpture the Japanese have reached their highest point of excellence in the representation of Buddha, and notably in that wonderful work at Kama Koura. Much has been said and written about this extraordinary statue, but the remarks of Mr. James J. Jarvis, the talented writer on art, appear so eminently suitable for our present purpose that we venture to quote them *in extenso.* "The highest use to which the art of the Orient has ever put the human figure is very happily exemplified in the statue of Daiboudhs at Kama Koura, in Japan, more than six centuries old; a bronze effigy of Buddha, sixty feet in height, sitting with his knees doubled beneath him on the customary lotus flower, forming a colossal statuesque whole of severe grandeur, and even majesty, combined with extreme simplicity of appearance and treatment. The great Hindoo reformer is enjoying his nirvana, or ecstatic disregard of outward things which he held out to his disciples as their final compensation for various probatory reincarnations on the earth and having extirpated every feeling which unites the heart to the world and its fleeting pleasures and illusive hopes. Absorbed in the Eternal Soul, and forming an integral part of it, yet according to some believers conserving a complete individuality, whilst others hold its entire loss, in either case the soul no longer suffers changes or modifications of its everlasting beatitude. Christian Art presents no motives equally abstract and destructive to all the forms of human self-consciousness. In every example we find absolute individuality, active or passive, but positive of some degree. But in Daiboudhs there was to portray a human face reflecting a sentient soul absorbed in its own impassive bliss, having attained to all knowledge, yet disclosing none of it, baffling all enquiry into the unknown, and promising as consolation for all personal ills a like impersonal happiness, or else an absolute annihilation, just according to the interpretation each believer gave to this spiritual riddle. The artist has met with no common success in dealing with so mystical an idea. Retaining the general characteristics of the human model, largely and majestically conceived, he has constructed this gigantic statue, which, while suggesting man, inspires less awe from its massive severity of form than its inscrutable calm and measureless distance from mundane interests and cares. Whether as an immense idol for the unlettered, or an elegant symbol for the uncultivated, it is wonderfully impressive. Long wave-like ripples of drapery flow over its shore-like limbs; a head-dress of shells forms an effective ornament, whilst the broad contours and masses, and the unspeakable repose and benediction which illumines its every feature, each and all harmoniously unite into a stupendous image of intensified enigma. A people who could thus embody the most elusive of metaphysical mysteries must have had an exceedingly lofty conception of the capacities of art." With such a key as this, the student of Oriental Art must look with far deeper interest upon the numerous representations of Buddha which have come from Japan. They all bear more or less the semblance of the great statue of Kama Koura, and are one and all remarkable for that air of holy calm and passionless repose of soul and body which sets it apart from every other statue known in the world.

The natural habits and ways of life of the few quadrupeds which are well known to the artists of Japan supply many choice studies for graphic delineation, and considerable skill is displayed by these cunning draughtsmen in their portrayal. The most noteworthy peculiarity observable in the generality of Japanese drawings of animals is their extreme simplicity—a few lines or brush strokes only being employed to represent an animal, and, at the same time, to express the most violent action, or the most profound repose. Of all the larger animals the horse is the greatest favourite, and is generally delineated with much force and character, and, indeed, in many examples skill of no mean order is displayed in difficult foreshortening. We may remark that a large proportion of the higher-class drawings of animals which have come under our observation bear evidences of most rapid and impulsive execution, and a power of graphic delineation certainly unequalled by the artists of any other Eastern country. It may be questioned whether this impulsive, off-hand style of drawing is in itself conducive to real progress in art, and whether, being so fascinating in itself, it tends to direct the mind and hand to more sustained efforts, and to the production of matured works; but it cannot be doubted that it displays great freedom of hand, quick perception of effects, and an intimate knowledge of Nature. It is a strange thing that the simplicity just alluded to should be so much sought after by the artists of Japan. Judging from the marvellous delicacy and minute and faultless detail in all the art manufactures of the country, it would be reasonable to expect to find in all the drawings of animals almost every hair shown, and every characteristic detail depicted with microscopic accuracy. While examining these graphic sketches, one cannot help feeling that in every instance the artist has endeavoured to call to the mind of the observer some characteristic and natural habit of the animal he has portrayed; rather than the mere outward semblance or peculiarity of the animal itself: thus tameness, wildness, affection, ferocity, gracefulness, swiftness, suppleness, or playfulness are in turn suggested to the mind by these drawings as readily as they would be conveyed by the pen of the poet.

Birds are still greater favourites for the brush of the graphic delineator, and, as might be expected, are depicted more frequently, and with greater skill and care, than any of the four-footed animals. The soft plumage of birds renders them fit objects for the rapid and feather-like brush strokes of the Japanese artists. Some of the most artistic and beautiful drawings are those which are executed with the fewest applications of the brush, and shaded by graduated pressure only.

As before remarked, the crane is of all the birds of Japan the best beloved of the native artists. It lends itself in every way to graphic delineation, and is invariably depicted with a character and feeling which it seems hopeless to imitate. Both resting and in flight, its position is represented in the most natural and life-like manner; and one examines few drawings of groups of these stately birds without finding satisfactory proofs of Japanese skill in foreshortening. But it is unnecessary to individualise any of the birds introduced by the artists of Japan, for all varieties are drawn with equal truthfulness and graphic power.

The Japanese are very skilful in the graphic delineation of fishes and other marine objects, which, however, do not supply the range of studies of pose and action as do birds and animals. Nevertheless, they are, wherever they appear, invariably drawn with considerable force, indicating graphically their characteristic grace and swift motion.

Of insect drawings it is unnecessary to speak in detail; like everything the Japanese graphic delineator essays, they are treated with full justice. Insects, of course, do not present many points of view to the ordinary observer, neither are they susceptible of much artistic expression; we accordingly find them generally introduced as adjuncts in drawings of birds and flowers, and always carefully depicted. We have met with one remarkable specimen of the artistic treatment of insects; it is painted on a vase of Kioto faence. On a broad band around the vase are depicted a number of insects marching like soldiers, bearing weapons and other warlike objects; the whole composition is treated with considerable force and humour, conveying the idea of a very important ceremonial. When insects are depicted alone, for their own beauty or peculiarity, they are finished with the accuracy of an entomological study.

We have already remarked at some length on the subject of vegetation, and have little to add here, excepting a few words on the graphic rendering of it in drawings and other art works. In the most ambitious drawings on *kakemonos* and in high-class books; in decorative pictures on fans, in block-books, and on screens; and in other more substantial works of art and handicraft, complete trees are seldom depicted; indeed, it is rarely that entire trees are attempted save in their dwarfed form. A branch thrown artistically across the picture; a cluster of bamboos, rising from the ground—shown or understood—and disappearing at the top line of the drawing, giving a most graphic idea of their tall and slender growth; graceful racemes of the wistaria, pendant from incomplete branches, disposed at the upper part of the picture, and waving in the summer air; and spiky sprays of the favourite *ume*, alone or associated with branches of fir or bamboo, are the most usual methods of introducing vegetation in pictorial subjects.

Many of the ordinary block-printed books of the country contain studies of trees as they appear during the different seasons of the year, as seen by daylight and moonlight, and in wind, rain, and snowstorms. All these studies are rendered with a freedom, power of expression, and truthfulness to Nature which place them abreast of high-art work, and which are calculated to surprise those who examine them, with any degree of appreciation, for the first time; especially if they have held the popular notion that there is little, if any, true art feeling amongst the natives of Japan. In one book, amongst the many in our possession, there are about eighty distinct studies of the kind alluded to; and we much regret that they are of such a nature as to render it impossible for us to reproduce them in these pages without destroying their peculiar charms. On the examination of the countless sketches of this class one thing is quite evident; the Japanese artists are open-air draughtsmen, and attentively watch and record the natural changes that vegetation undergoes during the passing seasons, and the apparent alterations and effects produced upon it by the different lights of the day and of the night. The Japanese artists are particularly fond of moonlight effects, and cleverly delineate the forms of peculiar types of vegetation by throwing them across the moon's disc. Of course they appear simply black, and in hard contrast to the white surface of the moon; yet their individual characters are so graphically portrayed, that they are, by their silhouettes only, distinguished with perfect ease.

An examination of the charming little medallion drawings which are constantly met with in Japanese art works and illustrated books, clearly proves that their artists have a decided intention of expressing in each some definite idea. Sometimes this is done by the introduction of vegetation and sometimes of other objects. Wind is graphically expressed by a few bent blades of grass; by a tree with every pliant branch bent in one direction, and its leaves quivering; by a bird, powerless, and drifting with a sideward motion; or by a human figure bent forward, and holding on a hat with both hands. Rain, gentle as that of summer, is expressed by a few light, almost vertical lines, wide apart, much broken, and appearing to have no effect upon the flowers or other objects upon which it falls; spring showers, by thin lines, slightly opaque, falling freely upon early sprouting vegetation; and winter or stormy rain, by heavy lines, closely placed, very oblique, and falling at different angles, as the unequal and fitful gusts of wind deflect the drops. Snow is always cleverly expressed; if falling, by a multitude of white dots; or after having fallen, by the branches of trees, roofs of houses, and countless other common objects, being laden with a thick mantle of white. Clouds, high and fleecy, are indicated by a few curved lines placed far above the tops of mountains or tall-growing trees; when low and rain-charged, they are disposed in horizontal masses across the outline of a mountain or high rock. Mist is depicted somewhat in the manner of the rain-clouds, but by thinner and lighter layers crossing objects near the ground, such as rocks and trees. A fog on the sea is always cleverly shown by the total absence of anything save the immediate foreground and the tops of a few masts and sails of vessels; a fog at sea, by the tops of the masts and outlines of the sails only, placed about the centre of the picture.

In Plate F are given four illustrations reduced from wood engravings in Hokusai's celebrated "Fugaku Hiyaku-Kei" (A Hundred Views of Fusiyama); these go far to explain what has been stated above. Fig. 1 is a subject which most graphically shows a high wind. It will be observed that the thatch of the hut-like erection is almost blown from the roof, while the men in the foreground have enough to do to withstand the fury of the blast. Note the garments of one, and the slung baskets of the other. The distance is partly obscured by a morning mist. The "beautiful mountain"—Fusiyama—is shown with the clouds being blown from its graceful side. Fig. 2 shows men gazing at Fusiyama through a summer downpour. The drenched path, and the dripping basket and raincoats leave little to the imagination. Fig. 3 gives a truly graphic rendering of a snow scene. Flakes are falling and adding to the heavily-laden branch of a fir tree, upon which stand a couple of unhappy cranes. Fusiyama is clearly seen through the falling flakes, itself covered with snow. Fig. 4 is a scene almost entirely obscured by mist, through which appear trees assuming weird forms, while the beautiful mountain shows itself in the distance. In the valley is the river Oi, on the waters of which appear through the mist the dim forms of river boats.

This branch of Japanese Art might be enlarged upon indefinitely; but we have said enough to show how deftly, and with what simple means the artists of the country tell their loving tales about Nature; and it is this habit of story-telling which gives the piquant character to all the works which leave their hands. Look over a collection of Japanese paper fans: they are painted simply, perhaps somewhat roughly; but, nevertheless, take them up, one by one, and name them. Spring-rain fan, moonlight fan, sunset fan, snowy-pine fan, rainbow fan, emblem-of-spring fan, summer-wind fan, would, in all probability, be amongst the pretty and appropriate titles which their graphic little pictures would suggest even to the cold and unpoetical mind of a European. There is much to be learned from a box of common paper fans, which cost about a penny a-piece in the streets of Tokio.

But we must return to the subject of vegetation and add a few words to what has already been said. The most truly artistic efforts of the Japanese artist are those which display the simplest modes of delineation, and are generally executed in ink only. Many descriptions have been given by those who have had the opportunity of watching the native artists at work; and all bear witness to the remarkable quickness of imagination and dexterity they display. A traveller in the country related to us that on one occasion he had the pleasure of observing a screen painter at work in his studio, which consisted of a portion of the house screened off from the rest by his own finished productions, but open to the street; being struck with his great freedom of hand, he requested him to draw a bunch of grapes: this was given as a difficult task and a test of skill, for the traveller had in his mind the laboured works of his own country, and naturally expected that, from the time required to depict the fruit, the artist would laugh and shake his head. Judge of his surprise when the artist seized a piece of screen-paper, and, dipping the point of his thumb into a dish of ink, proceeded to make a number of softly-shaded crescent-like forms close together. Thinking that he must have been misunderstood, but saying nothing, he watched with growing interest the rapid movements of the artist. The crescent forms being finished, his first finger and thumb were together dipped into the ink and then transferred to the paper, and with a few rapid movements produced two shaded forms of irregular outline. With his thumb-nail he added some dark lines and sundry other trifling touches, and politely handed the finished sketch, which displayed a bunch of plump round grapes, with stalks and leaves complete. This is by no means a bad illustration of the ready methods resorted to by the Japanese artists in graphically representing simple objects, for which they are justly celebrated. We have seen several drawings in which artists are shown painting in various positions and using more than one brush at the same time. We have an illustration in a Japanese book, which shows an artist seated on a stool, opposite a screen, which he is painting with no fewer than five brushes, one held in each foot, one in each hand, and one in his mouth. This is obviously a humorous exaggeration. Another characteristic sketch, on the same page, shows the artist to be so transcendent a genius that the horse he has been painting has proved so true to

Nature as to become endowed with vitality, and is shown running away from the paper. The amazement of the artist is cleverly expressed.

We shall conclude this branch of our Essay by briefly mentioning the principal inanimate objects introduced into works of Japanese Art, and the characteristic manner of representing them.

Throughout the entire range of native art there is one peculiar form introduced; that of a truncated cone, with gently curving sides: this represents Fusiyama, an extinct volcano. This mountain is held in the highest admiration by the natives of the empire, on account of its great beauty and religious associations. E. B. de Fonblanque, in his work, "Niphon and Pe-che-li," speaking of Fusiyama, says: "If there is one sentiment universal among all classes of Japanese, it is a deep and earnest reverence for their sacred mountain Fusiyama—the temple, the grave, and the monument of the Father of their faith. Two hundred centuries are supposed to have elapsed since, created by a convulsion of Nature in a single night, Fusiyama reared its proud crest, and challenged the worship and the love of millions who, from the extreme ends of the island, gazed with awe and devotion upon its snowy peak as it glittered for the first time in the morning sun, or faded into the mist of evening. And this reverence has survived time and change; has grown with the growth and strengthened with the strength of the Japanese people. Fusiyama is their ideal of the beautiful in Nature; and they never weary of admiring, glorifying, and reproducing it. It is painted, embossed, carved, engraved, lacquered, modelled on all their wares; men carry it in their pockets, women wear it on their persons, and children by the roadsides build miniature Fusiyamas of mud, as our own make dirt-pies. . . . While all share in the admiration, it may be doubted whether they partake alike in the religious associations connected with Fusiyama, or in the perfect confidence with which the mass of the people view it, not only as the shrine of their dearest gods, but the certain panacea for their worst evils, from impending bankruptcy or cutaneous diseases, to unrequited love or ill luck at play. The annual pilgrimage is accordingly performed by thousands upon thousands. If attended with beneficial results, the gods are praised and Fusiyama is glorified; if otherwise, the pilgrim has the melancholy satisfaction to know that his own sins are at fault and require further expiation. Men of rank never take part in these pilgrimages, and women are only allowed to do so once in every sixty years."

The love and veneration for this beautiful mountain is well exemplified by the work of Japan's most renowned artist, Hokusai, entitled, "Fugaku Hiyaku-Kei," from the engravings in which we have given the six illustrations in Plates E and F; but as some of these are only halves of the original engravings, Fusiyama does not appear in them. In the accompanying Plate G is given a reproduction of a Japanese painting on silk, in which Fusiyama is beautifully rendered, with its cresting of snow and its girdle of clouds. Looking on this picture one can understand the feelings of Rozankô when he wrote the following panegyric:—

"Like that of a carefully worked gem is the form of Fuji; its hue is that of polished silver. From whatever quarter beheld, it is seen to rise, not sheer into the sky, but as a perfect cone not more inclined on one side than on another. Eight are the sloping faces of Fuji; the pure, gem-like mountain, standing out against the blue sky like a lotus-flower emergent from the surface of a pool. Exalted over all hills is the lofty summit of Fuji, majestic monarch of our land. How splendid is the Peerless Mountain illuminated by the red rays of the rising sun! how beautiful its purple mass set in the midst of the glory of sunset!—at birth and death of day, alike calling forth the wonder and admiration of men. It changes in hue and form as we approach it or recede from it. A hundred aspects has the Great Mountain; in spring its peak is tipped by spiral cloud-wreaths; in autumn the vast mass is blown by the winds clear of all mists. Now vapours encircle its top, now haze clings round its base."* This passage conveys an accurate idea of the way in which the "Peerless Mountain" is viewed by the admiring Japanese.

Mountainous and rocky scenery are special favourites with the Japanese; and all objects, such as isolated rocks or conformations of the land, which, by natural causes, have assumed some unusual or fantastical appearance, are enthusiastically admired, forming studies eagerly sought after by the artists of the country. Indeed, we may say that any object out of the common order of things in Nature is prized and admired by the Japanese; and these feelings have suggested the practice of mounting curious and unique specimens of native ores and other valuable and rare minerals as ornaments; and of dwarfing and unnaturally distorting trees and plants for the embellishment of their miniature pleasure-gardens and the interior of their dwellings. The ordinary block-printed books of the country teem with graphic sketches of mountain scenery, which in many instances are remarkably artistic, and in every case expressive and truthful; indeed, the observer cannot fail to be struck with the remarkable graphic power of these sketches; so much is told by so few lines, and told so clearly, that there is no possibility of misunderstanding the artist's intentions.

In the high-class books of hand drawings, and in the albums or sketch-books of distinguished artists, several of which have reached Europe and have become the highly-prized possessions of collectors of Oriental Art, drawings of scenery of all descriptions are to be found, and are, in the generality of cases, rendered with the freedom and truthfulness which great artistic culture and loving study alone can give. Of necessity they all display the mannerisms peculiar to works of Japanese Art, but there are instances, especially in late works, where the drawings closely partake of what is, in popular opinion, the more correct school of landscape painting; such as the painting shown in Plate G.

A careful study of Japanese Art clearly proves that it is weakest where it deals with natural objects which do not present hard outlines: rocks, mountains, trees, flowers, birds, and such like are rendered with great fidelity and artistic power; but clouds and waves are always indifferently represented. These latter are, however, satisfactorily portrayed, from a decorative-art point of view, where expression is studied rather than realistic representation; but they appear never to have received the painstaking attention and skilful manipulation bestowed upon other more favourite objects.

Very much more might be said upon this interesting subject, but we consider our brief remarks sufficient for the purposes of this Essay. Students will find in Japanese Art a most interesting field; and a great deal can be learnt from the humble labours of the Nature-adoring artists of those beautiful islands of the Pacific. There is no question that in the art of Graphic Delineation the artists of Japan have no rivals throughout the entire Eastern world.

In concluding this section of our Essay, we have only a few words to say on the religious or mythological aspect of Japanese Art, and, with our necessarily limited knowledge of the religious ideas and dogmas of the Japanese sects, and of their mythological literature, we have to express our views with due caution and reserve. We have certainly more to do with the outward semblance of the artistic representations than with their religious or dogmatic signification; yet it is necessary to realise to some extent their origin and intention in order to form an intelligent appreciation of their artistic excellence and expression.

At the outset we must recognise the great importance of the purely religious art of the Japanese, linked as it is with their most valuable and beautiful paintings and carvings, and clearly embodying their highest ideal powers and contemplative faculties. Religion and hero worship have in all times and in all places supplied the highest inspiration in Art. On this subject Mr. Jarves remarks:—

"The religious motive is the alpha and omega of inspiration of all art of races as

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* Translation by F. V. Dickins, Sc.B.

regards its influence and power. It antedates and outlasts all others. To it the soul instinctively turns as by an irrepressible impulse, to find its deepest solace in present life, and to express its passionate longings for another. No matter whether it assumes the forms which we loosely classify under the generic divisions of Paganism and Christianity, or the specific shapes engendered of the numerous sects; the vital, human emotion at the root of all is one and the same: viz., the desire to realise to the outward senses, in appropriate material language, the abstract ideas which underlie the soul's consciousness of a creative force superior to itself, and which sways its destiny for good or evil by occult or visible means. There is in principle no more idolatry in one form of its expression than another. Idolatry consists in the ignorant or superstitious use to which the art-forms born of this desire are put. Paganism, as exhibited under the rites of the primitive [Japanese] Shinto worship, is as free from idolatry as any monotheistic religion, as even the strictest Judaism, whilst Buddhism is not more coarsely materialistic in its sacred mythology as rendered by art than is Romanism. In dealing with the sacred art of any people whatever, despite the fetichism of the absolutely ignorant, whether the object of a blind devotion be a holy book, an image, or any abstract dogma put in the place of the creative will itself, which is past all finding out; in fine, despite sheer idolatry in individual or race, we should place all art consecrated to religious uses on an equal footing as regards its fundamental motive, view the feeling which originates it with respect, and, in judging it exclusively on the side of art, esteem it according as it successfully incarnates its fundamental motives into pure artistic forms."

Turning our attention without more preface to Japanese Art in its religious development, we meet with several classes or systems of representation; the first confines itself to the depiction of single figures of deities, saints, and heroes; the second to the representation of one or more of these sacred personages in communication with human beings; the third displays groups of gods or saints, engaged in various occupations, and sometimes attended by ordinary human beings, the mythological creatures, or other animals which appear to have sacred functions or attributes; and the fourth confines itself to the representation of dogmatic subjects, chiefly with allusion to a future existence and the awards which await the good and evil beyond the grave. There are, of course, certain other subjects met with which can hardly be classed under any of the systems mentioned above.

In treating of Japanese mythology, we must confine our remarks to the representations or subjects found in works of art; and, therefore, we do not intend to touch upon the complex question in connection with the religions of the country to which certain of the subjects allude more or less directly.

It has not been our good fortune to find a complete series of drawings depicting the Creation according to Japanese ideas, although we have found isolated subjects which evidently represent certain events in the scheme of Creation according to Buddhist teaching. We learn from Siebold that the native artists have essayed the rather uncertain and difficult task: of course, from their point of view, the Creation was confined to Japan—the original Sun Country. In a series of six engravings given in Siebold's "Japan" the works of creation are thus set forth. The first is simply a white disc, representing the beginning of all things; the globular mass of uncreated matter, which, in the beginning, consisted of the clear and the turbid in an undivided state. The second is a disc divided into two portions, the upper of which is white and the lower dark, representing the result of primal motion; the separation of the solid from the gaseous; the creation of the heaven and the earth. The third displays the first effect of the consolidation of turbid matter, which the Japanese say was like mud covered with water and clouds. Out of the centre of this mud sprang a shoot, like that of a plant, which grew and transformed itself into a primal being, called *Kuni-soko-tatsino-mikoto.* The fourth represents the epoch in which, on the complete division of the solid, aqueous, and gaseous matter, *Pan-ko*, or primitive man, is self-created, invested with god-like powers, to promote the foundation of the universe. The fifth represents the creation of the Islands of Japan by the god *Iza-na-gi* and the goddess *Iza-na-mi* (the third and fourth self-created beings), who stand on the bridge of heaven and direct the work. The sixth shows the same deities creating living creatures, desiring to perfect the labours they had undertaken.

In a pamphlet written by Yasukawa Sigenari, a Japanese who resided and studied for some time in England, we find the following outline of the Japanese Creation. "The first period of Japanese history may be termed the age of '*kami*' or the spiritual age, the word '*kami*' meaning god or spirit. There are five of these spiritual rulers mentioned in the ancient history of the country. The third and fourth stood in relation to each other of male and female. The first four were supposed to have been self-created, the fifth being the son of the third and fourth. Their names in order are *Ame-no-minaka-nushi*, the second being *Matzubi-no-kami*; the third and fourth do not appear to have had any particular cognomen,* and the fifth was called *Amateratzu-ogami*. It was the second of these *kami* who made the country, and the third and fourth created the mountains, rivers, and animal and vegetable life. During this time the country was called *Miszho-no-kuni*.

"The real history of Japan begins 2,533 years ago, the first emperor being Ninigi-no-Mikoto, who is supposed to have been the grandson of Amateratzu, who conferred great honour upon him by presenting him with three sacred things—a stone or jewel, a sword, and a mirror. The possession of these things showed that Ninigi was to be the ruler of the country. From this time to the present day the Japanese gods are always represented with a mirror; and from this period also dates the worship of the *Kami*."†

There are no mythological personages so frequently met with in Japanese works of art as the seven Gods of Good Fortune—the true household deities of the laughter-loving Japanese. Separate representations of these gods are much more common than collective ones, and statuettes or figures of them appear to have been made in great numbers as household ornaments or charms. The accompanying illustration, Fig. 8, copied from a tray of Kioto faience painted in enamel colours and gold, furnishes, in seven overlapping medallions of different shapes, representations of the Gods of Good Fortune. It is somewhat difficult to clearly grasp the beliefs held by the Japanese with reference to their household deities: that they do not worship them in any direct manner as idols is quite certain; nor do they hold them to have the remotest connection with a future state. In all their relations and good offices they deal with temporal benefits, and have to do with living humanity.

These seven gods are linked with the universal ideas of earthly welfare and happiness; they are impersonations of powers, unknown, undefined, and capable, it is believed, of granting those gifts and blessings upon which the Japanese artists and handicraftsmen base all their happiness in this life. The seven deities appear to have been elected by common consent, and to have no connection with any peculiar sect, or to be supported in their position by priestcraft. "We desire long life, happiness, wealth, contentment, and those gifts which can best secure these blessings; let us up and make gods according to our needs." So spoke the multitudes who had to toil for their daily bread or bowl of rice, and who yet loved ease and excitement sufficiently to envy the idleness and luxury of those they had to bow down to as their lords and taskmasters. Out of the popular longing for those things which all mankind desired but few received in the ordinary course of events, sprang these seven incarnations of the blessings of life; and the Gods of Long Life, Wealth, Daily Food, Contentment, Ability, Love, and Glory were taken into the people's hearts and homes, to be reverenced and, perhaps, appealed to with a strange mixture of superstition and faith. Each man's choice deities were those which embodied or dispensed his most pressing wants, or his most wished-

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* These are *Isa-na-gi* and *Isa-na-mi*, given by Siebold.

† "A Sketch of the Japanese Empire," by Yasukawa Sigenari. London, 1873.

for gifts; so he took them according to his own needs, and reverenced and besought them after his individual fashion, and at his good pleasure.

With such a beginning, it is not to be wondered at that a childlike simplicity of trust should in time grow around these beneficent beings—deities who gave all good things required to make the rich happy, the tradesman prosperous, and the poor contented, but who imposed no slavish worship, demanded no self-denial, and threatened no punishments and required no penance for breach of reverence. The humble devotee was safe at home with his kindly little gods; he had to seek the precincts of the beautiful temples—marvels of Japanese architectural taste and skill—dedicated to the celestial deities, before even promises or threats affecting his future state were pressed upon his notice; and where he could be impressed with the fearful tortures of hell, so graphically represented by the Buddhist artists, as shown in one of the Plates accompanying this Essay. Such being the case, he naturally turned with a mixture of respect and fear from the deities of the priestly religions, and patted, with self-satisfied complacency, the high and polished head of his giver of long life; the staid and venerable SHIOU-RÔ, the kindly being who would indefinitely postpone the hour when he would have to set his household gods aside, and face the offended deities of the eternal existence.

FIG. 8. THE SEVEN GODS OF GOOD FORTUNE.

A family rarely places itself under the guardianship or patronage of all the household deities; from two to four being commonly chosen according to the ideas of the aspirants to their favours. The God of Long Life is, however, very rarely left out of the household list. The poor ask for long life, daily bread, and contentment; the artisan for long life, ability, and daily food; the soldier for long life, love, and glory; and the noble for long life, wealth, talents, love, and glory, the union of which, he believes, will secure him happiness and contentment.

We may now describe these popular deities, which, as already said, are frequently represented in works of art, and we shall do so very briefly.

First in order of importance is the God of Long Life, called by the Japanese SHIOU-RÔ, and sometimes GIROGAN. This is a venerable and staid figure with a head having an enormous development upwards. This abnormal development is believed by his votaries to be due to his continually scheming and racking his brains how best to promote human happiness, and secure to his believers their wished-for long life. This God of Longevity is usually represented in art with considerable respect, due to his sacred and venerable character, and his countenance usually bears a solemn and contemplative cast. But, nevertheless, at times the native love of humour breaks through even the peculiar respect due to SHIOU-RÔ, and imparts to his image that which rarely fails to produce laughter in the beholder. He is usually represented accompanied with one or other of his special attributes—the crane and tailed tortoise, both of which, as before mentioned, are the popular emblems of longevity. When represented in a standing position, he usually carries a staff in one hand, and frequently a fixed fan in the other. In the medallion in Fig. 8 he is represented reclining, with his heavy head supported by his hands, contemplative in expression, and with books beside him.

The second in importance is DAIKOKU, the God of Riches. He is usually represented as a short, stout man, with a good-natured countenance, dressed as a daimio of the old school, and wearing a cap which is placed low down on his brow. He is seated on or beside bags of rice or bales of goods, and carries a bag over his shoulder containing treasure: in his right hand is his characteristic attribute—a miner's hammer. The moral of the figure is thus described. Human nature is prone to excess of ambition and pride, and it is most fit that the god should be low in stature, to incline it to assume a humble attitude at all times; the cap is placed low so as to prevent the eyes from looking too high, and to dispose them to view with clearness and due attention the sad realities of human life. The bag, carried over the shoulder, and the neck of which is usually grasped by the left hand, represents wealth, difficult to attain, and equally difficult to retain; accordingly, the outlet has to be firmly controlled. The miner's hammer is the emblem of hard labour, by which alone the good things of this life can be honestly obtained; and the bags and bales represent property acquired by honest industry—that which alone serves to raise the lowly to position and comfort. The Japanese, however, are not content with investing their much-respected deity with the attributes of wealth, they needs must indulge in a little touch of humour at his expense by sometimes depicting a living and active companion along with him. This companion is a rat, the embodiment of the thief and destroyer of property. As the old Japanese idea of wealth is almost exclusively associated with rice, the rat is peculiarly appropriate as its destroyer.

As Kæmpfer informs us, DAIKOKU is believed by the Japanese to have the power, by knocking with his hammer, of producing from his treasure bag whatever his votaries require; and they have the greatest faith in his generosity and kindly feeling, and are importunate in their demands on his favour. The Day of the Rat is the time at which all classes are most zealous at the shrines of the god. Nothing is too great, nothing too trivial to ask of him; the heavens must resound with the blows of his hammer, and his hand must indeed relax its hold of the sack-mouth if all petitions are granted on that day. Whether the gifts are obtained or not, the day is certain to be a happy one from the amount of hope its devotions have inspired in the hearts of the supplicants.

In the central medallion in Fig. 8, Daikoku is depicted reclining alongside his bags and bales, resting his hand on his potent hammer, and gazing, with a smiling face, on a little bird perched upon a branch of bamboo. The bird is, like the rat, very fond of stealing rice; and is, in this case, the emblem of the flight of riches.

Next in order is the favourite God of Daily Food, named Yébis or Jébisu. The ancient Japanese believed him to be a brother of the Sun God, disgraced, and reduced from his original high estate to the lot of a fisherman. He was not, however, less esteemed on this account, for the vocation of fisherman was highly respected amongst the old Japanese; indeed, fish and rice were to them what meat and bread have been to Western nations. Speaking of this god, Kaempfer informs us that "Jébisu was Tensio Daisin's brother, but by him disgraced and banished to an uninhabited island. It is said of him that he could live under water for two or three days. He is, as it were, the Neptune of the country, and the Protector of Fishermen and Sea-faring people."

Yébis is certainly one of the most popular of the household gods, as the giver of daily food ought to be. He is usually represented as a short, stout figure, with a happy and humorous countenance, dressed in loose garments, wearing on his head the *yeboshi*, the black cap worn by persons of rank, and invariably with his attribute the fish *tai*, and generally with the fishing-rod or line by which he caught it, as in the medallion in Fig. 8. A figure of Yébis is to be found in almost every house, reverently placed on the *kami-dan* or *butsu-dan*. At Nishi-no-miya, between Osaki and Kobe, is the chief temple to his honour in Japan, a shrine much frequented by all classes, but more especially by merchants, fishermen, and artisans, who have need to pray without ceasing for daily food and other good things the gods can give. The twentieth day of the tenth month is the great annual festival of the favourite Yébis.

The fourth of the household deities is Hoteï, the God of Contentment. He is the personification of a contented spirit in the midst of poverty. Without home, fire, or other domestic comforts, he leads a roaming Bohemian life, wandering about with a wallet or sack, sometimes full, but more often almost empty; when in the latter condition, instead of being discontented and unhappy, he sits down among his special friends, little children, telling them amusing stories, and allowing them to play with his wallet, or roll over his portly body. So say the popular legends.

Hoteï is usually represented as a squat, stout figure, with a large belly, which is generally freely exposed by the scantiness of his attire; his head is uncovered, and he commonly carries a sack, fan, and lamp. In the medallion in Fig. 8 he is characteristically portrayed, carrying his sack from which issues a child holding his fan. Jarves truly remarks: "The Japanese are very shrewd in the ethical distinctions of their deities. Hoteï is the pattern God of Contentment, not of riches, which they know cannot be, but in poverty; so they leave the wealthy and famous to their own moral and material sources, and reserve the pure sentiment for those who have nothing else to rely on for their daily happiness. A dreamy, yawning, obese vagabond is Hoteï, of the Diogenes pattern, minus his sham philosophy and shameless egoism, but equally liking to bask in sunshine."

Tossi-Tokû, the learned and venerable doctor, God of Genius and Talents, comes next in order. He is, however, notwithstanding his grave and learned seigniorship, said to be very accessible to little children, casting aside his dignity and condescending to inspire them in all sensible amusements which require both thinking heads and skilful fingers. He is usually represented as a grave and amiable old man, clad in an ample gown with long sleeves and a stole, sometimes attended by a fawn, and carrying in his hands a fan and a long staff on which are suspended his manuscripts. His deep learning is expressed by the highly developed upper portion of his head, and his quickness of perception by his large ears and sharp eyes. In the medallion in Fig. 8 he is depicted reclining and gazing intently on something of interest, but is attended by none of his special attributes. He is a perpetual wanderer, distributing as he goes his precious gifts of knowledge and skill. He is specially worshipped at the New Year, when his votaries earnestly beseech him to grant them wisdom and foresight to guide them in all their undertakings during the coming months.

The most remarkable of all the household deities of the Japanese is BENZAITEN or BENTEN, the Goddess of Love, Beauty, and Wealth. This divinity does not appear to be looked upon, like the Aryan Venus, as the goddess of mere physical beauty and sensual love, but rather as the type of perfect womanhood, an accomplished, staid, and motherly individual. She is generally represented seated, in a contemplative mood, running her fingers over the strings of an instrument understood to have been invented by her, just as she appears in the medallion in Fig. 8. As the personification of the sea, that fertile source of food and wealth to the Japanese, she is sometimes represented standing or sitting on the seashore, playing some heavenly melody to the wave accompaniment. When she is depicted without her special instrument, she carries in one hand a key and the other the mystic pearl, and she is richly attired in a blue mantle, with the sacred stole, and wears a diadem.

BENZAITEN is spoken of as the prolific goddess, being the mother of fifteen sons. Jarves, for instance, says: "BENTEN is prolific, I confess. She has fifteen sons, all of whom, save one, are well educated and trained to follow either a useful occupation or a learned profession. The first is an author, another is an office-holder; still another a metal-founder, a banker, a farmer, a merchant, a tailor, a silk grower, a brewer, a clergyman, a doctor, an expressman, a breeder of animals, and lastly, a baker, only the fifteenth son has no profession. Possibly he is the 'spoilt child,' or the 'black sheep,' which, like mistakes, will creep into the best families to their utter vexation. . . . Be this as it may, fourteen serviceable citizens given to the state, and an ornamental one thrown in as loose change, are as good credentials of sound womanhood and as strong arguments for its rights as we can conceive. The Japanese are right in honouring BENTEN as the best type of her sex. They do more. She is worshipped on a far higher plane as the fecund principle of virtue and benefaction, personifying the nourishing ocean that provides, feeds, enriches, and also glorifies the great empire of the far Eastern seas. In this shape the Japanese encircle her head with an imperial diadem, and clothe her in magnificent robes. Under any of her forms, however, there is none of the mythical, illogical, and undesirable virginity attributed to the Romish ideal woman. BENTEN is always the *mother*, the fecund generator, provider, educator; a substantial benefactor and producer of mankind, the completest embodiment of the virtues and deeds most useful and pleasurable to man."

Women of all creeds pray to BENZAITEN for attractiveness, ability, and riches; and men seek her aid to enable them to become wealthy by the exercise of their genius. The Day of the Snake is considered the one most propitious on which to visit her shrines, which are usually built on small islands or near water; and, accordingly, on that day they are crowded by devotees who, as actors and poets, live by the skilful use of their natural talents. The snake is held sacred to BENZAITEN, and is, therefore, frequently represented in her shrines, and encouraged to frequent their neighbourhood.

We now come to the seventh and last of the household deities of the Japanese, BISJAMON or BISHAMON, the God of Glory. He is less frequently met with in works of art than the preceding six, and may be said to be peculiarly the king of men, the personification of all knightly virtues. He is the patron of princes and warriors, and is held in special veneration by them. BISJAMON never finds a place in the humble house alongside the merry YEBIS and HOTEI. He is not a popular deity; for war, by means of which his chief honours are dispensed, seldom brings blessings to the tradesman and labourer: he frequently empties their purses, destroys the fruit of their toil, and burns down their houses, that his special votaries may be rewarded with the victor's or hero's laurels. Bisjamon is also the heavenly protector of the priestly class, and the *bonzes* show him much respect out of flattery to the nobles. He is represented as a warrior clad in rich armour, commonly with a lance in his right hand, adorned with streamers. Sometimes he holds in his hand the model of a pagoda or small temple, as the patron of priests. In Fig. 8 he is represented sitting with the pagoda on his right. In the coloured Plate VII. (Series I.) is given a fine representation of Bisjamon on the right hand of the central figure of Kokuzo Bosatsu—the Bodhisattva of Eternal Benevolence. Bisjamon stands on a crouching lion, clad in gorgeous robes which almost cover his cuirass and the rest of his defensive armour; his head is protected by a richly ornamented helmet surmounted by a scarlet plume; his right hand holds a triple-pronged spear, and his left carries the usual pagoda. Behind his head is a large circular nimbus, on the rim of which are three flaming orbs. The figure on the left of the main central one is that of Fudo, the God of Fire and Punishment, having a deep blue body, partly robed and surrounded with flames: he stands on a rock, and carries in his hands a sword and a coil of rope. This subject is from a *kakemono* in our possession, very beautifully painted and gilded.

Demons are frequently portrayed in Buddhist pictures and other works of art, and are, in nearly all instances, distinguished from saints or human beings by being painted red, blue, green, or some other rich colour; a mode of treatment which very materially adds to their infernal aspect. They are sometimes tusked and horned, but we have never seen them represented either with cloven hoofs or tails. The Japanese do not appear to have reached to the height of the devil in Western Art either in his bestial or Mephistophelian development.

We cannot pass over the subject of demons without giving a brief description of the Buddhist Inferno, as rendered by Japanese artists. The Inferno is rendered in different ways, but all agreeing in the tale of horrors they graphically portray. One version is shown in Plate XIII. (Series I.), and the original is before us as we write. This latter is a roll of silk tissue mounted on paper, about eleven feet six inches in length by ten and a half inches in width; the painting, which is continuous, is ten feet in length. For convenience of description, the painting may be divided into four sections. The first section opens with three human figures, dressed in grave clothes, finding their way from a dark valley toward a direction-post which marks the ford of a mighty rushing river; one being is depicted passing across, with a staff in one hand and holding up his shroud with the other; and on the left bank are two pallid creatures peering into the dreadful land they have now to enter. The valley of the shadow and the river are emblems of death and the grave, the cold passage to the world beyond. Far on the bank is seated a terrible grey-headed giantess—*San zu no Kane-baba*—resting against the trunk of a dead tree: she is grinning in a fearful manner at a group of four miserable beings kneeling before her, and from whom she is removing the grave clothes before she orders them to proceed on their journey into the presence of the dread judge who is to pronounce their awful punishments.

The second section opens with the great tribunal, presided over by the judge—*Emma-oh*—a huge red giant, seated behind a table upon which is spread a page of the book of records. He holds in his right hand a sort of bat or club, with blows of which he may frighten his culprits or emphasise his awards. On his left are two assistants, and a blue demon, horned, tusked, and holding a ponderous mace: on the right of the judge is a recording scribe, with a brush and a tablet covered with writing. Near the right end of the table is an elevated stand supporting two heads, one that of a kind-looking female, and the other that of a red demon with glaring eyes and open mouth, from which latter issues a red, blasting stream, directed downward upon the miserable human beings cowering before the table. The red head with the searching eyes and accusing mouth is Seeing—

Mi-ru-me—an awful witness; the other, less active, is Hearing—*Ki-ru-me*—pale-faced and thoughtful, waiting to reveal. These two are watching to check the completeness of the confessions of the wretched sinners, who crouch, groaning and entreating, before the relentless judge. The tribunal is held on an elevated platform, from which steps lead down to the floor of hell. An entrance is now made into the realms of punishment, and the first scene presented is a red demon holding up a yelling, terrified being to see, in a huge mirror (the truthful mirror of memory), a reflection of the crime which has consigned him to eternal and infernal torture. We learn his crime from the scene dimly shown in the mirror—a farm-house in flames and the incendiary hurrying away through the darkness of the night holding his still burning torch. Adjoining the mirror another red demon is weighing a sinner against a ponderous rock, and watching, with infernal glee, the effect of the weight of mortal sin which carries down the scale. Still farther on, a green demon is hurrying away with a blazing chariot full of agonised creatures whose immediate destination, burning as they are, appears to be the lake of ice—*Hachi-kan-zigoku* (the eight times cold)—where we see struggling, burning creatures endeavouring to keep their heads above the surface.

In the third section a new phase of torture is entered upon: it may be termed the section of blood, for in it we see the numerous wretched sinners beaten to pieces with a club, torn by carrion birds, cut and tortured with stake and knife, crushed between huge rocks, and pounded in a mortar with an immense spiked pestle. Blue, red, and green fiends are engaged in this fearful butchery, and streams of blood are flowing everywhere. The horror of these punishments is increased tenfold to the Buddhist mind by the belief that after every infliction the body is restored, to experience to the full extent the recurring tortures.

The final section, which may be termed that of flame, is the most fearful and imaginative of the series. It seems to be a composition in which fire, lightning, and whirlwind struggle for the mastery; and combine to torture the lost in their eternal agony. This section represents the final pit called "eight times deep"; its whole series of horrors being seen through raging flames, flashes of blood-red lightning, and a fearful storm. Serpents writhe, ever watchful to prevent escape, and demons pursue their awful tasks. We see a three-headed monster, girdled with skulls, whirling a flaming, red-hot club. Another demon, with a bull's head, is gathering the miserable sinners and thrusting them, wounded and bleeding, into a mighty cauldron that boils in the heart of a blazing furnace; while over this finale of horrors and torments there hang, head downwards, poor creatures whose anguish is even there increased by the fear or the certainty of falling into the hellish soup. Over the abyss floats a gigantic head of Seeing—that terrible accuser—here torturing still more every sinner with an everlasting memory of his crimes.

With the description of this thrilling picture we may almost take leave of Japanese demonology, although it must not be understood, by what has been alluded to, that it exists entirely in the fearful phase presented by Buddhist superstition and craft. There is much fun and cruel humour mixed up with the purely national demonology of Japan. Jarves sums up the matter thus: "Japanese devils do not seem to be the incarnate enemies of men, bent on destroying their souls, like the orthodox Christian demon. On the contrary, they have a marked preference for playing tricks with their bodies, and getting out of them while in the flesh all sort of impish entertainment. I refer to the aboriginal devils, not the imported Buddhist varieties. The former roast their victims by coarse jokes and pointed jeers, which is better fun for them than to broil sinners on real coals of fire in an eternal place of torment. Sometimes the living men, by the aid of superior spirits, get the better of these devils, and turn the laugh on their teasers and frighteners. Psychologically, it is a singular recognition and treatment of evil in life, accepting it thus half-seriously and half-jocosely; but the spirit seems characteristic of the Japanese in almost everything in their art. And yet in matters of etiquette they are unsurpassed in gravity, suavity, and elaborated, complicated ceremony."

It is quite impossible for us to go deeply even into the artistic aspect of the complicated mythology of Japan in an Essay like the present: with its theological aspect we have nothing whatever to do. We may, therefore, pass over without comment the numerous drawings and representations of deities and saints which appear, in great profusion, on hanging pictures, in books and rolls, in statues, and as decorations on vases, bowls, dishes, perfume-burners, and the like. There are three impersonations, however, which we must not omit to mention, as they form striking objects in Japanese works of art: these are the Gods of Wind, Thunder, and War. The God of the Wind—*Kaze-no-kami*—is represented as a grotesque monster drifting about in a hurricane, with an immense inflated bag over his shoulders, the two mouths of which he holds in his hands, and from which the blast is depicted issuing with great force. The God of Thunder—*Kaminari-sama*—is another grotesque creature, half man, half beast, depicted leaping about amidst dark clouds, and striking, with the sticks he carries in his hands, a ring of drums which encircles his head. The God of War is a figure with three heads and many arms, which wield different weapons, such as the bow, sword, and spear. He is depicted rushing through the air, standing on the back of a wild boar or a wild horse. These three creatures of the imagination are singularly expressive, and are invariably rendered in a manner which fully sustains the special power of the Japanese artists in graphic delineation.

In concluding this branch of our Essay, we may remark that a careful study of the accompanying Plates will substantiate much of what has been said respecting the characteristics of Japanese Art, and will fill up gaps that have been unavoidable in so condensed a dissertation. The subject of Japanese Art is of the greatest interest, while it is one most difficult to do adequate justice to. We have endeavoured, by classifying our remarks as much as possible, to increase their utility, and to render them convenient for reference; but the adoption of such a method has imparted a certain hardness of composition which a more flowing and artistic treatment would have avoided. After all, simple facts are of more importance than considerations of style.

JAPANESE HANDICRAFT

DRAWING AND PAINTING

It is only necessary to add a few words to what has been said above on the subject of Japanese pictorial art, and these may be confined to matters of technique. There have been three early schools of drawing and painting followed by native artists, namely, the *Kara-ye riu*, or Chinese school; the *Kaurai-ye riu*, or Korean school; and the *Butsu-ye riu*, or Buddhist school. The Chinese school appears to have been introduced into Japan, about the middle of the fifth century, by a Chinese painter, and was continued by his descendants for some centuries later. Indeed, from its foundation it has been handed down to the present day by a continuous chain of talented artists with all its mannerisms and technique intact. As we have said elsewhere, "For some time it languished while the greater geniuses were espousing the *Butsu-ye riu*, or Buddhist school; but as it directly appealed to the love of Nature, ever prominent in the Japanese mind, it ran on through all obstacles, and may be said to obtain in almost its original purity at the present hour." The six drawings given in the coloured Plate XII., Series I., are characteristic examples of the Chinese school in its later methods. The Chinese school of painting has always held an honourable place in the estimation of Japanese art critics. So far has this been the case that, as Mr. Anderson remarks, "in the biographical accounts of distinguished Japanese artists we find that the majority avowedly modelled their styles upon the works of one or other of the old Chinese masters, such as Ma Yuen, Mu K'i, Hia Kwei, etc., and native critics can find no higher expression of praise than that implied in a comparison with one of these."

The greatest Japanese artist of early times was KOSE NO KANAWOKA, who practised his art during the reigns of MONTOKU-TENNŌ (851–858) and SEIWA-TENNŌ (859–876). His chief fount of inspiration is said to have been the paintings of WU TAOTSZ', a renowned Chinese painter of the T'ang period. KANAWOKA is reputed to have been a most skilful delineator of landscapes and horses, and his success as a figure painter is established by a few precious relics of his brush which still exist.

It is unnecessary to comment on the Korean school of painting in the present brief Essay. It was closely allied to the Chinese school; and so far as its influence on later Japanese pictorial art is concerned, it may be considered subordinate to that school.

The *Butsu-ye riu*, or Buddhist school, deserves special notice. Speaking of this school, Mr. Anderson remarks: "The Buddhist style was undoubtedly the first with which Japan made acquaintance, and nearly all the early paintings referred to in the native historical works were of this class. Internal evidence shows that although brought to Japan and taught there by Korean and Chinese painters, its origin is distinct from that of the *Kara-ye* and *Kaurai-ye*. The features given to the pictured deities are not Mongolian in type; the horizontal direction of the fissure between the eyelids, the comparative prominence and the delicate moulding of the nose and chin, and the sensual but well-formed lips unprotected by prognathous jaws, remind us of the Indian prince, but bear no resemblance to the Chinese mandarin. The colouring, too, in its richness, in its bold contrasts, in the use of bright body pigments, and in the overlaying of garments with scrolls and diapers of gold, recalls the decorative art of India, but offers no points of relationship to the comparatively sober hues of the best schools of Chinese painting. The drawing of Buddhist subjects is strictly conventional, but in the better specimens shows signs in the outline of the face, limbs, and uncovered portions of the body, of a higher sense of the beauty of natural form than is observable in the secular schools."

As in the Byzantine school of painting in the West, so in the Buddhist school in the East, there obtained clearly defined rules which were enforced on all disciples of religious art. Originality of conception or artistic treatment was condemned. Such being the case, it cannot be wondered at that so little variety is to be observed in the countless representations of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Devas, and the hosts of other beings—celestial and infernal—which crowd the Buddhist pantheon. But although fettered by rules, fixed by early usage, and handed down by tradition, which affected forms, attitudes, and attributes for each and all of the deities of the pantheon, Japanese artists were left comparatively free in all minor matters of detail, and were allowed to expend their highest manipulative skill in portraying them. The handicraft displayed by the generality of the Buddhist painters of Japan is altogether remarkable. Their works recall to the eye the finest miniatures of the illuminated MSS. of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Europe. Indeed, in gorgeousness of colouring, and in the lavish and effective use of gold, the Buddhist paintings of the highest class far surpass the most elaborate works of the Byzantine and Western Gothic schools.

The Buddhist artists of Japan were, like the mediæval miniaturists and illuminators of Christendom, monks, living apart from the distractions of civil life; and, in the quiet of their temple monasteries, devoting the time spared them from their religious offices to the cultivation of an art recognised by them as a handmaid of religion. It is interesting to know that the art of the illuminator was cultivated at an early date in Japan. In the great Buddhist monastery, Chi-on-In, at Kiōto, are several illuminated manuscripts, among which is a Buddhist *sūtra*, written in gold characters on dark blue paper, and enriched with a Buddhist miniature, attributed to the early part of the tenth century. In the seclusion of their monasteries the Buddhist monks worked lovingly at their temple pictures with untiring patience, painting, as Fra Angelico painted, in the atmosphere of religious fervour and unquestioning faith.

The Buddhist school of painting represents a high class of handicraft; it is strictly of a decorative character, observing all the laws which should govern pictorial embellishment applied to architecture. In all paintings of this school, executed during the finest and purest periods, the flat surface is recognised, neither chiaroscuro nor projected shadows being introduced. Of course a slight shading is resorted to to accentuate the folds of drapery and the outlines of important details, but this frequently extends no further than an increase in the thickness of the defining lines. Whatever the manner of this local shading may be, it does not disturb the flatness of the composition. The painting represented in Plate VII., Section I., is a perfectly characteristic example of the Buddhist school; it is executed in a fine description of body-colour, laid on in the most even manner and subsequently lined with black and dark colours and elaborately ornamented with patterns in gold. The large surfaces of gold as well as the minute ornamentation are produced by fine gold dust attached to the paper by some kind of varnish or size. The composition with all its brilliant colouring and gilding is greatly enhanced in value by the black ground adopted. The marvellous delicacy to be observed in the manipulation of Buddhist paintings, and the consummate handicraft displayed in the laying on of the pigments and gold, must strike everyone who examines them in the light of a practical knowledge of the difficulties attending work of the class.

In the eleventh century the first truly national school of painting was founded in Japan; this is known as the *Yamato riu*, and was doubtless led up to by the descendants of KANAWOKA although it is understood to have originated with an artist named FUJIWARA NO MOTO-MITSU. The following particulars of the style established by this artist are given by Mr. Anderson. "The work of the school was characterised partly by the motives illustrated, and partly by the mode of execution. The subjects most favoured were portraits of the great personages of the court, scenes of ceremony, records of temples, illustrations of the early romances, varied by careful drawings of falcons and horses taken from life, sketches of birds and flowers in the graphic Chinese style, and occasionally burlesques in which the ceremonials and amusements of human existence were mimicked by frogs and other animals or by goblins of the most comically grotesque aspect—a hint the modern artizan has not neglected to utilise. Landscape does not appear to have held so important a position in the list of motives as in later times. . . . The drawing was careful and traced with a fine brush, but more formal in style and less vigorous in execution than that of the older Chinese artists. The colouring in typical examples had all the attractions to be derived from a lavish use of gold and bright pigments, but possessed little breadth of effect, and suggested the influence rather of Buddhist than of Chinese example. The perspective was isometrical, but its effect was often varied by the curious practice of omitting the roofs of buildings in order to permit a better display of the incidents of the interior, an expedient which was afterwards adopted by other academies."

In the early part of the thirteenth century TOSA TSUNETAKA, a descendant of MOTO-MITSU, reached so great an eminence that he gave his family name to the school which, though founded on the *Yamato riu*, received a new impulse and starting-point from his labours. Henceforth the school was distinguished as the *Tosa riu*. It retains its individuality and name to the present day. As the subjects selected by the artists of this school required extremely accurate delineation, minute detail, and careful colouring, the brushes used were generally small and fine. In Fig. 9 are given, exactly full size, the fourteen brushes of the school as at present supplied. They are carefully made of different kinds of hair, all of a strong and springy nature. The hair of the horse and whit[illegible] pear to be employed for the larger number. With the smallest brush, which is [illegible], it is possible to draw lines so fine as to be almost invisible to the naked eye. All are beautifully set in bamboo handles, as indicated. On submitting the brushes to a careful trial, we found that it would be difficult to contrive a better series of brushes for illuminating after the fashion of the mediaeval artists. This is easily understood from the fact that much of the work of the Tosa school resembles the miniatures which adorn the manuscripts executed in Europe during the Middle Ages. Reference to Plate X., Series I., reproduced from a painting by a late artist of the school, will show, in another direction, the necessity for the employment of such brushes as are represented in Fig. 9. This work illustrates in an admirable manner the careful and laboured style of bird painting which owes its origin to the Tosa school.

Following the establishment of the Tosa school in the thirteenth century a taste for caricature and art of a humorous nature was started by the works of an abbot of the temple of Toba no In, near Kiōto, named Toba Sojo. Although this fun-loving dignitary cannot be said to have founded a school of painting, pictures in his style have received the name *Toba-ye*. In these one meets with all manner of grotesque representations, distortions of the human face and figure, impossible positions and situations, all descriptions of quaint conceits, and, as a rule, hasty and crude draughtsmanship. No stress appears to have been laid on the technique of the drawing, so long as it was sufficiently graphic, while everything depended on the quality of the humour and the ingenuity and bizarre invention displayed in the composition. The love for this class of pictorial art has obtained without any break up to very recent times.

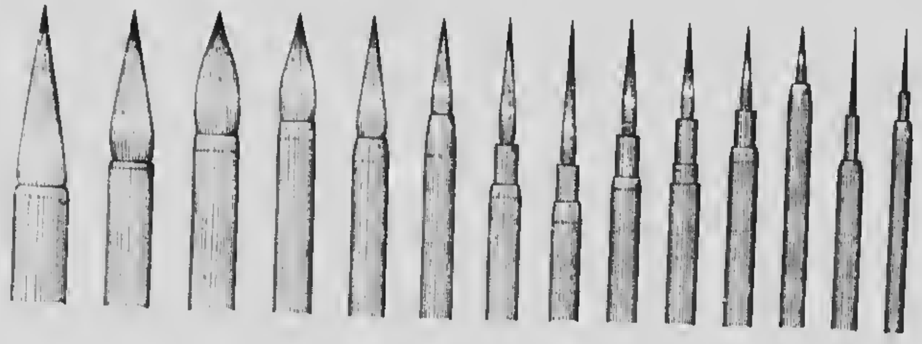


Fig. 9. Brushes used by the Artists of the *Tosa riu*—full size.

In the middle of the fifteenth century appeared Sesshiū, an artist who after acquiring great skill in Japan completed his studies in China. He founded the *Sesshiū riu*, and had numerous followers, among whom were the three acknowledged masters Yomon, Togan, and Toyeki. The last named lived some time in the sixteenth century, and was evidently a draughtsman of considerable powers. All the masters of this school were celebrated for the bold handling of the brush and their power of graphic delineation, chiefly in monochrome. Birds whose plumage offered favourable opportunities for the exercise of skilful single-stroke brush-work, were naturally favourite subjects; and in their simple and expressive rendering displayed a marked contrast to the laboured and minutely detailed work of the Tosa school. About the beginning of the seventeenth century the Sesshiū school appears to have died out. Its decline and death can hardly be wondered at, for it must be admitted that no school of Japanese pictorial art so entirely depended on the handicraft of the delineator.

The next great star in the firmament of Japanese pictorial art was Kano Masanobu, a contemporary of Sesshiū, and the nominal founder of what may justly be considered one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of all the Japanese schools—the *Kano riu*. Kano Masanobu studied under masters of the *Kara-ye riu*, his models were works of that school and its direct offshoots; and his natural tastes led him to adopt a kindred class of subjects: such being the case, the *Kano riu* at its inception can only be classed as a natural development of the Chinese school.

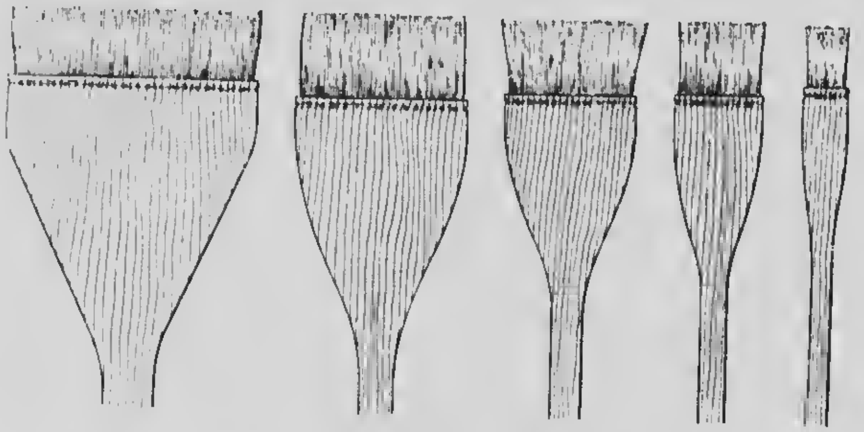
Masanobu died in the early years of the sixteenth century, leaving his son Kano Motonobu (born in 1476), who became the real founder of the *Kano riu*. As we are told by Mr. Anderson, he was the avowed imitator of certain Chinese masters of the Sung and Yuen dynasties, and like Sesshū adopted his motives almost entirely from Chinese sources, expending extraordinary powers of composition and manipulation in the delineation of scenery and personages that for him existed only in imagination or in the works of others. The Kano school nevertheless asserted its claims, and held a pre-eminent position for nearly three centuries.

The great range of the subjects and the different modes of representation, both in monochrome and varied colouring adopted by the artists of the *Kano riu*, led to the use of a large assortment of brushes varying greatly in size, form, and material. Accurate drawings of the complete set, as supplied to modern artists of the school, are given in Fig. 10. The five flat brushes delineated in the upper row are so large that we have been compelled to represent them half their actual dimensions. The largest brush measures 3½ inches in width. These brushes appear to be made of deer's hair, firmly stitched into thin pine handles, split to receive the cut ends of the hair, previously bound and cemented into a firm band; these are used for producing graduated effects of colour, and for laying on broad washes. The round brushes represented in the two lower rows—eighteen in number—are exactly the size of the originals. They are chiefly made of horses', deer's, and white hares' hair, inserted in bamboo handles about six inches in length. When a collection of paintings and drawings of the Kano school is examined it is not difficult to trace the operations of the different classes of brushes here represented, while it is practically impossible to describe them without a complete series of illustrations.

In the closing years of the sixteenth century a new school of painting found its origin in the works of a distinguished pupil of the Tosa school named Iwasa Matahei, who appears to have been the first notable delineator of ordinary every-day subjects. These drawings are known as *ukiyo-ye*. It was not, however, until about a century after his death that this strictly Japanese school was firmly established by Hishigawa Moronobu, a famous illustrator of numerous books. This popular school was materially advanced by the labours of Hanabusa Itchō, a contemporary artist, said to have been a pupil of the *Kano riu*. His works were varied in character, and became extremely popular on account of their new and amusing class of subjects, and the novel and spirited manner of their treatment. He does not appear to have, like his contemporary Moronobu, drawn for the then rapidly developing art of the wood engraver. Toward the close of the seventeenth century a great light in the Popular school appeared in the person of Ritsouō, an artist of varied accomplishments. In addition to being a painter, he was a sculptor of note, and a master of the first rank in Incrusted-work. All subsequent artists of this school appear to have followed the example of its founder in chiefly devoting their talents to the execution of drawings on wood for engraving. Original drawings on paper are, accordingly, very rarely met with.

In the seventeenth century arose the noted *Kōrin riu*, founded by Ogata Kōrin, an artist of remarkable originality. He was a painter, as proved by numerous fine works from his brush still existing; a decorative artist and designer, as shown by his interesting work entitled *Kōrin Shinsen Kiaku-dzu* (a new series of a hundred designs by Kōrin), in which are to be found beautiful designs for lacquer-work, embroidery, screen and fan decoration, etc.; and a worker in raised gold and incrusted lacquer of the first rank. From his varied style and accomplishments it is to be presumed that he studied under more than one contemporary master; but his creations bear the unmistakable stamp of originality. Both in his style of drawing and system of colouring he departed from the recognised methods which characterised the Tosa and Kano schools. In lacquer, his boldness and originality of treatment and design are remarkable. He was born in 1661 at Kiōto, and died in the same city in 1716.

All Kōrin's works must be judged from a certain point of view, being works of decorative



Brushes used by the Artists of the *Kano riu*—half full size.

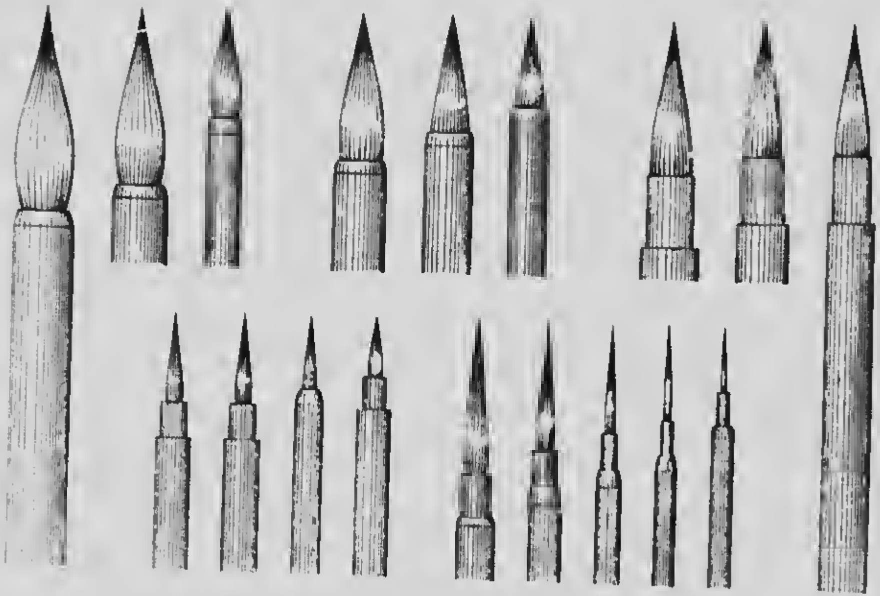


Fig. 10. Brushes used by the Artists of the *Kano riu*—full size.

art *par excellence*. It is not too much to say that no one can fully appreciate the genius of the master who has not a knowledge of the laws which govern decorative art, and a keen appreciation of the skill which bends those laws to its varied purpose. Kōrin's designs have never lost their effect: on the contrary, it may be safely presumed that much that is striking and excellent in Japanese Art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would not have existed had it not been for the unique genius and labours of this great artist. In the early years of the nineteenth century special attention was directed to his works, and a school was formed which exerted a decided influence on native decorative art. The twenty-one brushes represented in Fig. 11 are those used by the artists of the Kōrin school during its revival. No brush of the broad, flat form adopted by the *Kano riu* appears in the collection: all the brushes are round and inserted in bamboo handles. The hairs used in their formation appear to be chiefly those from the body of the horse, the deer, and the white hare. The great range in the size of the brushes admits of both extremely bold and very minute work being executed by their aid.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century arose the *Shijo riu*—the naturalistic school of painting, founded by MARUYAMA ŌKIO. The school took its name from the street in which ŌKIO painted. The founder and his pupils advocated the practice of painting directly from Nature. The subjects which were more directly affected by ŌKIO's teaching were landscapes, animals, and flowers. In all these, the accuracy secured by a direct reference to Nature was evident from the first, and no doubt went far to win supporters to the school.

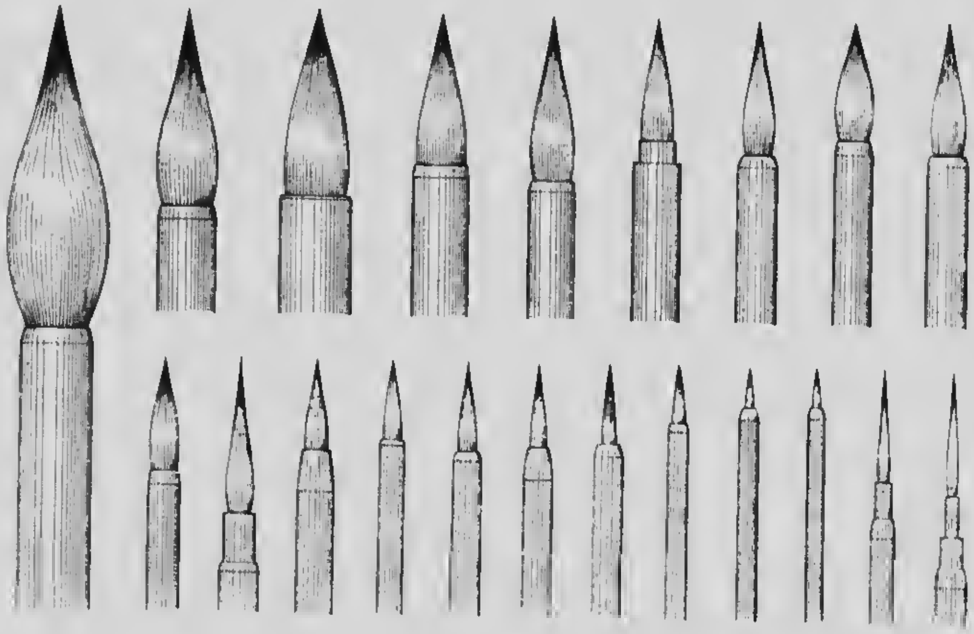


FIG. 11. BRUSHES USED BY THE ARTISTS OF THE *KŌRIN RIU*—FULL SIZE.*

The most noted pupils of the school were RŌ-SETSU, SHŪ-HO, a skilful delineator of animals; SO-SEN, the celebrated painter of monkeys; IPPŌ, a famous drawer of birds; and YŌSAI, probably the most versatile and original of all the followers of the school. KIKUCHI YŌSAI is best known to European students and collectors as the author of the work entitled *Zenken Kojitsu*, the twenty volumes of which lie before us as we write. They contain representations of the noted historical personages of Japan who have lived between the years 660 B.C. and 1300 A.D., compiled from four hundred different authorities. The drawings from which the engravings were made were in bold line with no attempt at shading. Many of the subjects are of great interest and artistic force. YŌSAI was a painter of great renown, and his *kakemonos* are prized on account of their highly artistic qualities.

The later part of the eighteenth century witnessed the founding of what is commonly known as the Artizan school of Japanese pictorial art. Speaking of this new school, Mr. Anderson remarks: "The most widely interesting phase in the art history of the period was

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* The three series of brushes given are reproduced from the Author's "Ornamental Arts of Japan."

the development of a new school recruited entirely from the working classes. The pioneers of the movement had been the older masters of the *Ukiyo-ye-riū*, Hishigawa Moronobu, Nishigawa Sukenobu, and Tachibana Morikuni, who were of Samurai grade, but the profession of drawing for engravers from about 1770 fell into the hands of *heimin* or commoners, of whom the Katsugawas, noted for colour-print designs of actors and courtesans, were amongst the earliest representatives. The mantle of the master, however, fell upon the reputed pupil of Katsugawa Shunshō, who at the end of the eighteenth century rose into fame under the assumed name of Hokusai, and from that time until his death, at the age of 89, in 1849, poured forth an unceasing stream of novel and vigorous creations in the form of book illustrations. The subject matter of Hokusai's works epitomised the whole range of Japanese art motives—scenes of history, drama, and novel; incidents in the daily life of his own class, realisations of familiar objects of animal and vegetable life, wonderful suggestions of the scenery of his beloved Yedo and its surroundings, and a hundred other inspirations that would require a volume to describe." Probably the best known of Hokusai's works are the *Mangwa*, or Ten Thousand Rough Sketches, and the *Fugaku Hiyaku-kei*, or A Hundred Views of Fuji. Examples from the latter work are given in Plates E and F which accompany this Essay. This work may be accepted as the masterpiece of Hokusai. It presents a skill in drawing, a tenderness of treatment, and a poetical fancy, which are not found so intimately interwoven in any other of the master's works, nor, indeed, in the works of any other Japanese artist. In this book, Hokusai has, in a hundred drawings, essayed the portrayal of the "Peerless Mountain" from numerous different points of view, and under varying conditions of atmosphere, and at different seasons of the year. As a specimen of mere handicraft the work claims attention. The whole of the illustrations are beautifully engraved and skilfully printed in black and shades of gray. In many cases three wood blocks have been employed to produce the effects. Amongst the most noteworthy pictures are: "A Thunderstorm on Fuji"; "On the Road to the Temple of Taiseki"; "Through a Bamboo Grove"; "Mid the Spring Blooms"; "On a Bright Day"; and "A Summer Shower." No description, however, can convey a correct idea of these characteristic compositions. The half-tone reproductions given in Plates E and F show, as closely as practicable, the technique of the wood engravings. The following quotation from the Preface to the first volume of the work, as translated by Mr. Dickens, will afford some idea of the master's mind, and of the motives selected for illustration.

"As Fuji is lifted high in solitary grandeur over all the high hills around, so shall we say that the productions of the genius of Hokusai stand alone in unapproachable excellence. Not only in the fifteen provinces that lie within sight of him who gazes from the summit of Fuji, but throughout the length and breadth of the land, dare we foretell—'tis no rash prophecy—that these volumes will bring home to thousands the marvellous and beautiful aspects of the Mountain. Ten titles did the Master bestow upon Fuji, after heedful comparison of the various names that the admiration of the people had given to the Peerless Hill. Men shall never tire of turning over these pages, and as we are shown in them the high, bare peak, viewed from the near shore of Tago, or seem to gaze upon the Great Mountain from the distant Cape of Miho, our hearts expanding in the broad moonlight, our souls penetrated with a delight subtle as the perfume that opening flowers lend the passing breeze, or are persuaded that we are admiring the majesty of Fuji as we rest on our staff on the remote plain of Fujimi, or alight from our *kago* at the top of the pass of Shiwomi; whether a glimpse of the vast snow-clad slope is granted us through the drooping willow-branches, or the mighty cone is shown towering high o'er the billowy sea breaking in angry surf upon a rocky coast; whether we have pictured for us hollow valleys hidden in rolling mists, or the arduous climb up the craggy mountain-side, or the perilous descent from the rugged top, we see the genius of the Master revealed in every effort of the brush!"

It is much to be regretted that so few original drawings of this versatile artist exist. None of those prepared for his published works were ever preserved. Owing to the mode adopted by the Japanese wood engravers, of which we say a few words later on, they were invariably destroyed in the process of reproduction.

MATERIALS USED IN PAINTING

The pictorial artists of Japan have used in all the great epochs both paper and silk for their drawings and paintings. The paper preferred for painting on is called *tō-shi*, the best quality of which was and possibly still is imported from China, but several kinds of home manufacture have been used for ordinary works. For drawings, "Indian ink," the *tō-shi* was preferred in its manufactured state, that is, without any further preparation; but for painting in colours and gold the paper, being too porous, was washed with a thin size called *dō-sa*, composed of glue 1·32 ounces, alum 0·66 ounce, and water 1·59 quarts. This wash was allowed to become perfectly dry before the painting was commenced.

The silk used by painters is called *e-giun* (picture silk). This is a fine gauzy material which is manufactured in several qualities. The silk is carefully prepared with *do-sa* in the following manner. The silk is stretched on a light frame of wood, its edges being secured by strips of paper pasted over them. When these are dry, the silk is washed very evenly with *dō-sa* and set aside to harden for a couple of days. One or two additional washes may be required according to circumstances and the description of painting to be executed. After all the washes have become perfectly set and dry, the silk is removed from the frame, and either used in its thin condition or after it has been carefully pasted to a paper ground.

Wood panels are also used by the Japanese artists. Those most commonly preferred are made of *hi-no-ki* (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*), a fine variety of white cedar, and of *sugi* (*Cryptomeria japonica*), Japanese cedar. These panels are simply washed over with *dō-sa* and allowed to become perfectly dry before being painted on. When a hard wood is used, such as *keya-ki* (*Zelkowa keaki*), the portions of the surface to be covered with painting have the grain filled up with a species of gesso prepared from calcined oyster shells, and then washed over with *dō-sa*.

As the forms of the brushes used by the artists of the leading schools are illustrated in preceding pages, it is unnecessary to allude to them here; but we may state that the different kinds of hair used in the fabrication of artists' brushes in Japan are obtained from the horse, deer, hare, cat, marten, and the racoon-faced dog. Imported goat hair is also used. The brush handles are of a fine species of bamboo called *me-dake*.

The colours which have been commonly used by the Japanese painters are precisely the same as those employed in high-class block printing; a list of these is given at the end of our brief remarks on the printing methods. Gold in very fine powder was largely used by the painters of certain schools: it was dusted on a surface prepared with a glue gold-size. The dusting-tubes used by the workers in lacquer, called *tsutsu*, were commonly resorted to by painters.

ENGRAVING AND PRINTING

The Japanese derived the art of wood engraving from China, but at what time is not clearly known; but the earliest known efforts in the preparation of wood blocks for printing characters date about the end of the eighth century. The earliest example of an illustrated book Mr. Satow was able to find is dated 1610. But previous to this there were wood cuts on a large scale representing the popular gods, and to some of these a much earlier period is ascribed.

The wood used for engraving is that of the cherry tree, *sakura* (*Prunus pseudocerasus*). The blocks are cut, in the direction of the grain, from the outer part of the log, the heartwood being rejected. Blocks of considerable size are obtained; and when made ready for the engraver are about three-quarters of an inch thick.

The paper preferred by the artist in preparing his drawing for the engraver is *Mino-gami*, made at Mino from the bark of the paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*). When both the drawing and the wood block are prepared, the engraver spreads on the surface of the latter a thin coating of very smooth rice paste. Upon this he immediately lays, face downwards, the drawing, gently smoothing and pressing the same with his hand into perfect contact with the block. After the paste is dry, the paper is carefully scraped away as much as possible, in order that the drawing next the block may be seen more distinctly. A slight smear of hempseed oil is now applied to increase the transparency of the remaining film of paper and bring the drawing up clearly and sharply. At this stage the block is ready for engraving. As the grain of the wood runs lengthwise, the process of engraving differs widely from that followed in European *ateliers*, and accordingly the Japanese engraving tools bear no resemblance to our gravers, which are only adapted for cutting in end-grain boxwood. The Japanese, however, use gouges, not dissimilar to ours, for cutting away the useless wood within and around the lines of the design. A set of Japanese wood-engraving tools comprises three *ko-gatana*, or outlining knives, in the form of firm blades of steel, from 1 to 1½ inches in length, and respectively ¼, ⅜, and ½ inch in width, ground at their ends to about the angle of 40°, and fixed in round wood handles about 3 inches in length; five chisels, varying from 1/16 to ⅜ inch in width, ground square, and fixed in flat handles; and eight *saraye-nomi*, or gouges, varying in width from 1/16 to nearly ½ inch in width, ground in the usual way on the convex side, and fixed in round handles.

In the process of engraving, the artist takes a suitable angular outlining knife, carefully sharpened, and holding it almost vertically cuts an incision on each side of every line of the drawing, leaving between them the exact width of line required. The experienced engraver attends to the minutest touch of the original drawing, cutting so as to produce a faultless facsimile. From the freest and most dashing brush stroke, with all its broken effects, down to the most delicate hair-line work, the skill of the Japanese engraver never falters. When all the outlines have been cut, the surface of the block between and around them is carefully cut away with the gouges and square chisels. No greater relief is given to the fine line-work than is absolutely necessary for their successful printing, while the larger spaces of the ground are gradually sloped down from them: by this treatment the maximum durability of the engraving is secured. Register marks are formed at one corner and on one side of the block, against which the paper is adjusted in the process of printing: these marks are called *kento* (literally, to take aim at). When all is finished up to this point, the thin film of paper still adhering to the portions left in relief is washed off, and the block is ready for the printer.

For designs which are to be printed in several colours several blocks are required. The outline is first engraved in the manner described above; and from it are printed as many impressions as there are to be colour blocks. These impressions are separately coloured or marked on those portions in which the respective tints are ultimately to appear, and subsequently pasted to blocks in the usual way. Care is of course taken to print the *kento* along with the outline, to enable the register to be correctly transferred to each block. The colour blocks are engraved in precisely the same way as the outline.

The printing of the colour blocks is a matter in which the Japanese have displayed both taste and skill of no mean order. The colour, properly prepared, is distributed on the block by means of a brush carefully charged and dexterously manipulated. By this method varying shades and tints of the same colour can be imparted to one block. The graduated tinting so greatly admired in the finer Japanese prints is obtained by first uniformly coating the block with the full colour and then wiping it partly off again, leaving the coating in a perfectly even gradation of body on the surface of the block. This is taken up by the paper which is instantly pressed on the block Different colours are blended by the same method, assisted by a blending brush. This mode of applying the colours to the blocks gives, under dexterous manipulation, all the charm of hand colouring to the impressions: indeed, we know of many prints so produced in which there are effects of colour that would be very difficult to imitate by the brush directly applied to the paper. For a very fine example of this class of chromo-printing we may direct attention to the ghost subject shown in Plate XVI., Series I., which is a reduced but faithful copy of a block-print in our possession, originally in the Collection in the French International Exhibition of 1867. For equally fine examples of the older style of colour printing, in which graduated colouring does not appear, reference may be made to Plates XIV. and XV., Series I., in which are accurate reproductions from a book printed in the year 1775. The colouring in these examples is of a most refined and harmonious character.

When the colour has been spread on the block to the printer's satisfaction, he takes a sheet of paper, on which the outline or black impression has already been printed, and, carefully adjusting it to the depressions of the *kento*, lets it fall on the block. Then with a nearly flat circular pad or rubber he presses, with a gentle sliding motion, the paper against the block until he is satisfied that it has taken up all the free colour. The same simple method is followed in printing all kinds of wood engravings. The rubber is usually made of twisted paper string, rolled spirally into the form of a circular mat, having several layers of paper pasted on its underside to make it smooth and durable. Over this is strained tightly a piece of the dried sheath of a bamboo sprout, slightly touched with *goma-abura* (*Sesamum orientalis* oil) to make it pass over the printed paper more easily. The block is laid on a board, the further side of which is slightly elevated, with its corners resting on four small, damp cotton cloth cushions to prevent its slipping. These are placed on the flooring mats of the room on which the printer also sits.

For ordinary black block printing the paper is not specially prepared beyond being very slightly damped; but that employed for colour printing of good quality is treated with *dō-sa* to prevent the tints spreading. Plates B, C, and D in this Essay are reproduced from a book of coloured block-prints in our possession, which measures 14½ inches by 9½ inches, and contains fifty beautiful examples of the Japanese printers' art, of the same dimensions.

"Printing in colours appears," says Mr. Satow, "to be nearly two centuries old. Sakakibara attributes its origin to the year 1695, when portraits of the actor Ichikaha Danzhifu-rau, coloured by this means, were sold in the streets of Yedo for five cash apiece. Before this, woodcuts were rudely coloured by hand, as in the illustrated edition of the *Hougen* and *Hei-ji Monogatari*, in six vols., of 1626. At first sight the colours may appear to have been printed, but closer examination shows that they sometimes overlie each other, which proves that they were laid on in succession with the ordinary hair pencil." The first artists of note in this branch of art and handicraft were the KATSUGAWAS, and notably KATSUGAWA SHUNSHŌ, the reputed master of the great HOKUSAI. The KATSUGAWAS were celebrated for their coloured prints of contemporary actors and courtesans; but SHUNSHŌ appears to have widened the range of his subjects. The eight figure subjects represented in Plates XIV. and XV., Series I., give a correct idea of the style of this school of colour printing as it obtained towards the end of the eighteenth century. The colour prints after HOKUSAI are of the most beautiful character and quite worthy of the master's genius. The principal contemporary colour-print artists were UTAMARU, the author of the *Seirō Nen-jin Gioji*, published in 1804, the UTAGAWAS—TOYOKUNI 1st and 2nd, KUNIYOSHI, and KUNISADA, all noted producers of theatrical prints, SADATSAGE, SADAHIDI, HIROSHIGE, KUNIYASU, SHUNYE, and SHUNTEI. The last two produced many works remarkable for their bold handling both in design and colouring.

COLOURS

The colours used by the old Japanese pictorial artists and colour printers were in all essentials similar. They were neither numerous nor expensive, as the following list will show.

Konjō or *Gunjō*, blue carbonate of copper, procured from gold and copper mines. Different tints were used, the lightest being *biaku-gunjō* (pale blue).

Roku-shō, green carbonate of copper, or ordinary malachite. Six tints of *awo* (green) were used, the lightest being *biaku-roku* (pale green).

Ai-rō-bū, dark blue, prepared from old rags by boiling out their colour, native indigo. The crude indigo was not considered sufficiently matured for high-class painting.

Shu, vermilion.

Benigara, red oxide of iron.

Tan, red oxide of lead.

Shō-yen-ji, apparently cochineal. Imported from China in the form of felt impregnated with colour.

Yō-kō, carmine, imported.

Shi-dō, brownish ochre, a native earth.

Tai-sha-bō, red ochre, a native earth.

Ō-do, yellow ochre, a native earth.

Shi-ō, gamboge, imported.

Go-fun, white, prepared from calcined oyster shells.

Sumi, black, "Indian Ink."

The medium used for all these pigments was commonly a very thin rice paste; but probably a thin glue or gum was also used.

JAPANESE ART

EMBROIDERY

The Embroiderers of Japan are to-day unrivalled in their beautiful art, and have for centuries held a proud position therein, surpassing those of all other nations in the combination of richness of fancy, beauty of colouring, and skill in manipulation. It may be safely said that many of the superb examples of the embroiderer's art shown at the recent Anglo-Japanese Exhibition held in London were absolute masterpieces, rivalling in their artistic treatments and colouring the works of the landscape and portrait painters of the West.

The art of embroidery, like most of the ornamental arts in which the Japanese have excelled, was unquestionably of foreign introduction; but whether its introduction into Japan was due to Chinese or Indian intercourse, or at what date it was first practised in the country, are questions which have not been answered in any satisfactory manner. The fact that specimens of Indian embroidery twelve hundred years old are known to have been preserved in the Imperial Treasury at Nara, may incline one to favour the Indian source of inspiration. Speaking of these embroideries, Mr. Dresser remarks: "There are some grand pieces of Indian embroidery, in which the simplicity and purity of the ornament is delightful. These certainly surpass in tenderness of line, precision of form, and just distribution of the parts, anything that I have before seen of the kind; and they have been in Japan for twelve hundred years." Here we have an assurance, based on fairly reliable historical records, that in the seventh century Indian embroidery had found its way into Japan; but as we know that at the same period, if not indeed earlier, Chinese embroidery was in an advanced state, if not as perfect as it has been at any subsequent time, it cannot be definitely assumed that the art was introduced through Indian channels. It must be remarked that the earliest known examples of Japanese embroidery show no direct evidences of Indian influence either in their design or execution, while there is much that links them with Chinese works of a similar class.

From the earliest known epoch of the art, the embroiderers of Kiōto have been the most celebrated, and they appear to have been invariably men. Embroidery does not seem ever to have been an accomplishment acquired by Japanese women. The objects upon which the embroiderers of Kiōto bestowed their greatest ingenuity and skill were robes of ceremony; the long and wide sashes worn round the waist by the Japanese ladies; and the squares of rich textile fabrics, used for covering ceremonial presents during their transmission. These articles formed the most important part of the trousseaus of the ladies of the aristocracy; and their production engaged the unremitting attention of the best designers and embroiderers in the imperial city during the periods of its greatness.

The embroidery executed during the eighteenth century surpassed, in richness of design and careful execution, everything previously produced, and the most celebrated artists of the time lent their aid to the advancement of the art. Towards the end of the century luxury in dress apparently reached its highest point in Japan, and embroidery was lavishly applied both on plain silk fabrics and on the gorgeous woven brocades of silk and gold. For the dresses of actors and courtesans, highly extravagant designs were produced and executed in the most brilliant colours and gold. For proofs of this one has only to examine the colour prints of KATSUGAWA SHUNSHŌ and his followers produced between the years 1770 and 1800. The designs on the dresses worn by the aristocracy were of rich and refined description, chiefly of a floral character, embroidered in delicate, harmonious colours, upon crapes and thin silk fabrics of quiet tints. On the other hand, the theatrical dresses and those worn by courtesans were of the most elaborate and sensational description, their designs presenting every object which the popular artists of the time could press into service. Of the colouring and gorgeous decorations of these costumes it is impossible to give a detailed description.

During the same period, the embroidery of the dainty squares of the richest silk (*fukusa*) attained the highest excellence, and were the recipients of the popular artists' happy thoughts, and the most painstaking handicraft of the embroiderers of the imperial city. When a *fukusa* is found with an inscription, it almost invariably records the name of the designer, not that of the embroiderer, as one might expect. The embroiderer was simply considered a copyist. He was much more than a copyist, however, for he had to translate the ideas of the designer, laid before him either in simple outline or in any free style of brush work, in the laborious methods of his art, producing a picture full of the most subtle colouring and careful detail. We need only direct attention to the *fukusa* represented on Plates IV. and V., Series II., in support of this statement. The geese in the latter example are embroidered with a skill in handicraft and a refined sense of colour almost marvellous. Indeed, it is not too much to say, that the result obtained in the lustrous silks is in this instance beyond the power of either water-colour or oil painting. This beautiful work was embroidered during the closing years of the eighteenth century. The decorative effect of the *fukusa*, illustrated on Plate IV., could not possibly be produced in any other known art materials or by any handicraft save that of the embroiderer. The designs generally applied to these dainty squares comprise birds in all positions, fishes, insects, trees, bamboos, figures, landscapes, buildings, sea scenes with ships, rocks, etc., while conventional devices, crests of the imperial and noble families of the country, and, of course, the fabulous dragon, *kirin*, *ho-ho*, and tailed tortoise are also pressed into service.

During the first half of the nineteenth century much beautiful embroidery was worked in Japan, as perfect in execution and, in many instances, as beautiful in harmonious colouring as any work of earlier date. Perhaps in pure artistic treatment and extreme delicacy of manipulation the masterpieces of the modern school of embroidery stand alone.

Of the stitches met with in Japanese embroidery, the most characteristic is that which has been called, *par excellence*, "the Japanese stitch": it is long and usually taken in a diagonal direction. Both floss and twisted silks are used according to the effect desired. The stitches are taken with great regularity so as to fall side by side, closely, and as nearly parallel as possible. In embroidering the graceful curved sweeps, of varying width, by means of which the Japanese artists so graphically represent waves and dashing spray, this class of stitch is invariably employed, and generally executed in fine white or pale blue floss silk.

The next variety of stitch requiring notice bears a strong resemblance to the one just described: it is the "feather stitch,"—the *opus plumarium* of the mediæval Western embroiderers,—deriving its name from the likeness which work executed in it has to the plumage of a bird. The silk generally used is a fine floss; and the stitches are laid long and short, and fitting in between each other, so as to appear to overlap. When skilfully executed, the result is exceedingly soft and down-like. The most delicate gradations of colour and the roundest shading can be produced by the dexterous intermixture of silks of different tints and shades. The beautiful geese on the *fukusa* on Plate V. have all the softer portions of their plumage rendered in this stitch. Rocks, trunks of trees, and objects of a similar nature, where many tones of different colours are required, and broken effects are aimed at, are commonly embroidered in a coarse variety of feather stitch.

The Japanese embroiderers make effective use of "laid work" or "couching." This class of embroidery properly includes all work in which threads of gold or silk are laid side by side on the surface of the fabric, and stitched down to it by fine silk threads. The gold used by the Japanese embroiderers is made of very narrow strips of gilded paper coiled spirally around cotton thread. It has a very brilliant appearance, and seems to be very durable. Its nature prevents its being readily passed through a fabric by a needle, so it is almost invariably applied in the form of couching. A much greater use is made of laid work by the Japanese than by the embroiderers of any other country; indeed, they appear to avoid passing the silk threads through the fabric whenever they can be successfully and effectively laid on its surface. This practice, however, is not conducive to durability, for the fine couching threads are very liable to break.

In addition to couching there is another species of work employed for surfaces of all sizes. The stitch employed is identical with that known in this country as the "knotted stitch" or "French knot," used by European embroiderers only in small spaces, such as the centres of flowers. This stitch is made by bringing the needle up exactly at the spot where the knot is to be formed, then by winding the silk thread several times around the needle and passing its point through the fabric close to the spot where it was brought up: the right hand draws the needle from the underside, while the thumb of the left hand keeps the thread in position until the knot is secure. It is unnecessary to mention particularly the other stitches—very few in number—used by the Japanese, for they are simple modifications of those already described, or such as are common to all schools of embroidery: one instance of the latter is the familiar "chain stitch," used by the Japanese precisely as by European embroiderers.

WEAVING

Although the textile fabrics produced by the clever weavers of Japan may not be so generally interesting, either from a technical or art point of view, as the productions of the greater and more distinctive art industries of the country; yet they well deserve careful consideration on the part of those interested in the processes of weaving and the application of ornamental art to the products of the loom. It is, however, only possible in this short Essay to give a few historical facts, and very brief remarks on the nature of the art fabrics peculiar to Japan.

The writer of the Reports of the Japanese Commission at the Paris Exhibition of 1878, speaking of the textile industry of Japan, makes the following statements, which (perhaps with the exception of the first date) may be accepted as founded on reliable authority. He says: "So far back as the year 660 B.C. mention is made of the rearing of silkworms and the manufacture of textile fabrics. Hence we have reason to believe that at that time the industry was established; but what the methods of manufacture were we have no means of knowing. Historical records inform us that in the year 283 A.D. Korea sent to us two women skilled in the art of weaving; and in all probability the fabrication of figured textiles in Japan had its starting point at that date. The Court at once recognised the importance of this new industry, and established a special department to direct the production of stuffs suitable for its use. This administration, known first under the name of *Hatoribe*, finally assumed that of *Oribi*. This Imperial administration exercised a great influence upon the advancement of the manufacture, for there were very fine stuffs produced as early as the year 500. At Nara, in the temple Tō-dai-ji, are still preserved brocades made seven hundred and fifty years ago [1128 A.D.]: these are of great beauty and are proofs that at the time of their production the art of weaving was of long standing. Towards the close of the tenth century native industries had made great progress; and we feel guaranteed in declaring that that connected with the cultivation of silk and the production of fine textiles in the loom was no stranger to the progressive movement. From this time, however, up to the seventeenth century it languished under the disturbed condition of the country, swept as it was with civil wars and continued political strife. The seventeenth century, inaugurating a period of peace, allowed a renewed attention to be given to the industrial arts, and that of silk weaving rapidly assumed its old importance, and has advanced ever since. At a very remote date cotton seed was imported into Japan from India; but as the plant was badly cultivated it gradually disappeared. In the year 1550 the Portuguese reintroduced it; and since that time the cultivation of cotton has gradually spread throughout the country, at the present day occupying an important place in the national industries."

The construction of the looms and modes of weaving in Japan appear to have been from the earliest period of the simplest character; but, judging from the examples we have examined of the beautiful old fabrics produced by such primitive appliances, great credit is due to the native weavers by whose handicraft, care, and taste such artistic materials were produced. The loom employed in weaving the plain cloths of the country differs in no essential point from the old hand loom used in Europe, although its construction, or the mode of putting together the simple parts, is far less substantial. While numerous illustrations are to be found of this primitive loom in Japanese block-books, we have been unable to find a satisfactory representation of such a loom as would be suitable for the weaving of the rich silk and gold brocades of the country. In Hokusai's work, *E-hon tei-kin o-rai*, there is a sketch which seems to indicate a loom of this class, but nothing can be gathered from it.

Speaking of the rich and beautiful textile fabrics of Japan, Sir Rutherford Alcock says: "The robes manufactured for the Court in past years were models of beautiful work, in design, colour, and texture. . . . From the thickest of satins, plain or decorated with designs in brocade, to the most gossamer-like gauzes, every combination of silk and gold thread has been carried to perfection by this people. It was the custom for each Daimio to have his private loom for weaving the brocade with his own crest, which he and his retainers wore on their dress; and these brocades were either of satin, with the design in dull silk, or of combined silk and gold thread; sometimes stiff as cardboard, and quite incapable of making folds. They weave a thick striped silk, with a cunning arrangement of white strands, which give the effect of a bloom on the surface, like the soft down on plum or peach, through which we see the rich purple or red of the fruit. Thick crapes are made with plain surfaces, and also curiously wrought in the fabrication with folds or wrinkles in the material, as if imitation of the skin of some animal."

As nothing but silk was worn by the aristocracy of Japan during the whole of the feudal period and up to the revolution of 1868, it is not to be wondered at that we find in every old fabric evidences of the most artistic thought and the highest handicraft. The immense variety of designs such textiles present is truly wonderful. Prior to the end of the sixteenth century the most luxurious robes were worn by the men on all ceremonial occasions; but about that time the dresses of the ladies of the Court and of the wives and daughters of the nobles became richer in material and colour; those of the princes and noblemen assuming a more sombre and retiring character in colour and design.

At what date the introduction of gold took place in the weaving of brocades is uncertain; but it was probably not used before the fourteenth century. During this century the designs adopted for rich silk fabrics were simple in character and generally small in scale; diaper and fret patterns and powderings of heraldic devices being most frequently used. Brocades in two colours or shades were produced in large quantities. Floral designs, such as we are familiar with in the later fabrics, do not appear to have been favourites with the early weavers. Good examples of such fabrics of late date are represented on Plates IX. and XI., Series III. The two fabrics represented on Plate X., woven about the end of the seventeenth century, are remarkable essays, presenting much of the beauty and refinement of hand embroidery in their floral decoration, and consummate skill in the production of their graduated grounds by simple warp and woof threads.

The commercial relations of the Dutch with Japan during the later half of the seventeenth century may have led to the introduction of Flemish, Italian, or French velvets into the country: and the very sight of these in Kioto would fire the imitative faculties of the weavers there, and spur them on to produce similar materials. It is also quite possible that the Portuguese may have brought such cos[illegible]ories as presents to the Court during the later part of the sixteenth century. Sir Rutherford Alcock believed the manufacture of velvet in Japan to be of very recent date when he wrote the following words: "We are now endeavouring to copy this emancipation" (alluding to the freedom of Japanese textile design) "from formality, and the soft crape and silk materials, with patterns in satin, so much introduced in Paris and London, are close imitations of Japanese materials. They" (the Japanese), "on the other hand, are learning to make our velvet, which is not a native manufacture." Mr. Dresser, who made a study of the native manufactures while in Japan, says: "The Japanese seem to understand most of the systems of weaving we employ, but they also have methods peculiar to themselves. It is common to find terry cloths with parts so cut as to produce a velvet pattern, when the velvet appears as the figure, and the terry as the ground; but when this is the case it generally happens that by looking into the cut surface of the velvet, gold may be seen, for the Japanese often weave gold into the substance of a fabric so that it can only be seen through the cut pile surface." Very few specimens which can lay claim to any great age have reached Europe, but the few that have come are remarkable for the vigour of their design and the perfection of their workmanship. We need only point to the velvet represented on Plate V., Series III., to prove the skill and artistic power which characterise the productions of the velvet weavers of Japan. In point of manufacture this fabric can compete with the finest Genoese velvet of the commencement of the seventeenth century. The pattern is produced by black cut velvet, and black and buff uncut velvet (terry), upon a ground of tightly woven silk having a slight satin finish.

In all the looms pattern-weaving in Japan the "drawboy" is an indispensable adjunct, for in old times no attempt was made to substitute a mechanical appliance for his monotonous labours. He remained, perched up aloft, pulling with wearisome regularity, group after group of healds until the pattern appeared complete, and then commenced the routine afresh; and so on from morning until night. The process of weaving patterned silks was of necessity slow; care had to be taken that no mistakes were made by the drawboy, and that the proper shuttle was used each time. As many shuttles were required as there were colours in the woof, and they were deliberately passed from hand to hand between the threads of the warp.

The gold used in the weaving of such brocades as are represented in the Plates is almost invariably in the form of very narrow strips of paper gilded on one side. The paper is extremely tough, and when covered with gold leaf is accurately cut into strips, averaging about 75 to the inch: in this condition they are woven into the fabric woofwise.

To go fully into details on the subject of the numerous textile-fabrics made in Japan, and to describe their peculiarities and modes of weaving, would occupy more space than the whole of this Essay, which only presumes to a brief sketch of the principal arts and handicrafts of the country.

LACQUER-WORK

Interesting as all the decorative arts and handicrafts of Japan unquestionably are, it may be safely said that none has aroused more interest among art lovers than the beautiful manufacture known as Lacquer. This industry, in its higher developments, is exclusively and characteristically Japanese: it is true that the Chinese have long produced some varieties of lacquer-work, but these are so inferior in point of artistic treatment and handicraft as in no way to disturb the high and unique position held by the lacquers of Japan. Much curiosity and speculation long existed among European collectors with reference to the special materials used and the processes employed in the production of the simply marvellous examples of old lacquer which adorned their collections. And it was not until the careful and painstaking investigations of Mr. John J. Quin, the English Acting Consul at Hakodate, that these speculations were set at rest. It is impossible in this necessarily brief Essay to describe the numerous ingenious processes employed by the Japanese lacquer worker, but we have much pleasure in referring those interested in this fascinating branch of handicraft to our work, "The Ornamental Arts of Japan," in which forty-three folio pages are devoted to the subject. A few notes respecting the more important materials used may, however, be given here.

The principal ingredient employed is the sap of the *Rhus vernicifera*—the lacquer tree of Japan. This valuable tree is cultivated all over the island of Nippon; and is also grown in several districts of the islands of Kiusiu and Shikoku. The sap is obtained by tapping the trees; and this branch of the industry is of considerable magnitude. Mr. Quin informs us that one good workman is expected during the season (which begins in June) to tap an average of 1,000 trees; and as the province of Yechizen alone sends about 1,500 tappers yearly to the various lacquer districts, it will be seen that an immense production annually takes place. The whole country produces on an average from 30,000 to 35,000 tubs per annum, each tub being about four gallons capacity.

The crude lacquer, as collected from the trees, termed *ki-urushi*, is sold to the wholesale dealers, who dispose of it to the lacquer merchants. These latter prepare it in different ways to suit the several purposes for which it will be required by the lacquer workers. Several of the methods of preparation are kept secret.

It is a remarkable fact that however it is prepared lacquer will not dry in the open air, but requires a damp, close atmosphere to perfect the operation. When an object is coated, it has to be inclosed in a box or cupboard of wood, the inside of which has been well saturated with water. Lacquer exposed to the open air will run and harden with a tack which cannot afterwards be got rid of.

The processes of manufacture are extremely numerous and somewhat complicated, although the implements used are few and simple: all are fully described and illustrated in the work previously mentioned. The preparation of the surface of the wooden article to be lacquered is in itself somewhat troublesome and tedious, especially so for high-class work; and several different materials are used. Grinding and smoothing the surface have to be repeatedly resorted to before the finishing coatings of lacquer are applied and completed by polishing. The high-class black lacquer which is much admired is called *honji*, or "real basis." The time necessary for the successful manufacture of a piece of *honji* cannot well be fixed, for it naturally depends upon the time of year, the skill and diligence of the workman, and the quality of the materials used. Calculating roughly, the total (minimum) time occupied in drying in the "damp-press" amounts to five hundred and thirty hours, or upwards of twenty-two days. This time is divided into twenty distinct periods. For the highest class *honji*, the total time will reach a far higher figure. The time occupied by the workman in the application of the several materials and coatings of lacquer, and in the grinding and smoothing processes which came between the periods of drying cannot be well decided: it will of course depend on his diligence and skill, as already said, as well as on the care he chooses to exercise, and largely on the form of the article lacquered. There are other varieties of black lacquer inferior in quality to *honji*: these are called, *kataji*, *handanji*, *manzo*, *sabi-sabi*, *kanoji*, *shibuji*, and *kaki-awase*, in the order of their quality, the last named being the poorest and cheapest.

The processes required for the production of coloured lacquer of fine quality do not differ materially from those followed in the production of *honji*. The first departure is made when the preparation of the grounding or basis has been completely finished, and the time has arrived for the coloured coats of lacquer to be applied. The pigments used are few in number, the most important being vermilion (*shu*), always employed in high-class work. For dull red lacquer, and for inferior articles, red oxide of iron (*benigara*) is used instead of vermilion. Chrome yellow (*kiō*) is employed for yellow lacquer; and in combination with Prussian blue (*bero-ai*) for the different hues of green lacquer. Purple lacquer is coloured with a mixture of white lead and magenta roseine (*tō-beni*). The pigments, reduced to impalpable powder, are thoroughly incorporated by grinding with *suki-urushi*, or transparent lacquer—the finest crude sap obtained from old trees,—or, for less expensive work, with *shu-urushi*, or vermilion lacquer (so called because it is commonly used with vermilion). For ordinary work the properly prepared basis is evenly coated with a layer of the coloured lacquer, laid on with a brush, and then inclosed in the damp press until it is perfectly dry. On removal it is found to have retained a brilliant polish, which may receive no further treatment. For the highest-class work several additional processes are followed before the surface is considered to have acquired its approved character.

In addition to the opaque black and coloured lacquers, the Japanese use transparent lacquer upon both plain and fancy woods, so that their natural grain may be seen: this class of lacquer-work is called *ki-ji-ro*,—"colour of the grain of wood." In the manufacture of *ki-ji-ro* only the choicer class of woods are used, and as the processes are somewhat numerous and call for careful handicraft, articles of this class are of necessity expensive.

Under the head of variegated lacquer are grouped various treatments, in which two or more colours are introduced for the purpose of imitating some choice natural material; for producing fanciful variegated surfaces; for producing variegated coloured patterns by grinding, engraving, or carving; for enriching with different colours carved or relieved surfaces of other materials; and, lastly, for rendering figures, animals, landscapes, etc., in one or more coloured lacquers upon grounds of plain or clouded colours. In almost any collection of good works of Japanese lacquer one seldom fails to find some specimens of what, for the sake of distinction, may be called imitative lacquer. These may be of little interest from an artistic point of view, but they invariably display great ingenuity and skill on the part of their fabricators. The processes required to produce the several effects, such as the delicate gradations of tone presented by the grain of a richly figured wood, or the markings of some choice mineral, are extremely complicated and uncertain in their results. This is so, because during the progress of his manipulation the artist has to depend entirely upon his experience; for he cannot see while conducting his special operations the effects he is producing. The result is only realised after the grinding down and the polishing processes are completed. Under the head of variegated lacquer must be included all those kinds which have been executed in imitation of natural productions, notably metals and alloys. Some of the latter, representing cast and wrought iron, and many varieties of bronze, are marvels of ingenuity and handicraft. As examples of such imitative lacquer we may mention the panel represented on Plate V., Series V., which is produced in imitation of a plate of old beaten copper. On Plate VIII., of the same series, the bell carried by Ben-kei is in imitation of old bell-metal covered with its green patina.

Of all the varieties of high-class lacquer produced by the skilful artists and handicraftsmen of Japan, those in which the precious metals play an important part are unquestionably the most beautiful and interesting. It is impossible to examine a fine specimen of old gold lacquer without a feeling of astonishment at the marvellous dexterity, patience, and taste it displays: some, indeed, are so perfect in every way as to almost raise the question in one's mind—Can these be works of the unaided hand of man? There is no exaggeration in such remarks as these; for it can be safely said, even with such essays of patience and skill as the illuminations of the "Book of Kells" before one's mind's eye, that in the whole range of ornamental art there is nothing which surpasses the finest examples of old gold lacquer. It is impossible within the limits of this Essay to attempt the veriest outline of the processes, implements, and materials employed in the manufacture of fine gold lacquer. This can be understood when it is stated that such an outline occupies sixteen pages (of the size of this) in our work, "The Ornamental Arts of Japan." To this work we must direct those who take an interest in Japanese industrial art, and lacquer working in particular.

INCRUSTED-WORK

Incrusted-work or Application has been brought to a higher and more artistic state of development, and been more successfully practised by the handicraftsmen of Japan than by those of any other Eastern nation. The term is understood to signify, in decorative and ornamental art, the superposition of one material on another. Incrustation is almost exclusively resorted to for the purpose of ornamentation, the materials applied being usually, though not necessarily, of a more precious nature than those to which they are attached. In incrusted-work, the applied material is understood to be simply attached to a uniform surface, from which it can be broken away or otherwise removed without permanently destroying that surface. In the case of Japanese incrusted-work it is usual, to secure durability, for the incrustations to be partly let in to the surface of the ground.

There can be no doubt that the Japanese derived their inspiration in this beautiful branch of ornamental art from the Chinese, who appear to have produced incrusted-work of a primitive class at a very early date. In later times large quantities of incrusted-work, both for house decoration and articles of furniture, have been made by Chinese workmen; and such materials as jade, and softer stones of various colours, coral, amber, mother-of-pearl, tortoise-shell, ivory, metal, wood, porcelain, and enamel have been resorted to to produce special effects. In the best works these materials are carved or modelled so as to produce the designs in high relief. The grounds of such works have commonly been of some dark hardwood either perfectly plain or carved in portions so as to aid and accentuate the incrusted details. Porcelain has been largely used by the Chinese, variously painted; but this material does not seem to have been much used by the Japanese; delicately tinted and painted faience, such as that of Satsuma and Kiōto, being wisely preferred.

At what period incrusted-work became an established branch of Japanese handicraft it is impossible to say; but there is evidence that it was adopted to a small extent by the early lacquer workers, and is, accordingly, several centuries old. Its highest development was, however, reserved for recent times. It is probably safe to say that the most important works have been executed during the nineteenth century; indeed, many of purely modern specimens of the art are unquestionably the finest the world has seen of their nature. The reason of this is obvious; the modern Japanese artists select designs in which their power of delineation is almost if not altogether unapproachable; and they render them in materials which readily admit of the most artistic and delicate manipulation, and of the most refined colour treatments.

The grounds commonly employed for the larger works are natural wood, the surface of which is variously treated, and wood lacquered of a uniform colour, or treated to imitate some other material, as shown in Plates II. and V., Series V. The grounds shown on Plates I. and III. are of plain black lacquer, while those on Plates IV. and VIII. are of dark wood of unpronounced character. The materials commonly adopted for the ornamental incrustations are ivory, mother-of-pearl, tortoise-shell, coral, amber, coloured stones, sea-shells, coloured woods, faience, porcelain, bronzes of several tints, iron, gold, and silver. In short, the lacquer artists press into their service every available material, natural and artificial, which furnishes colour for their relief designs, or presents facilities of artistic manipulation.

In the formation of a fine piece of incrusted-work many different hands are employed; the ivory carver, the workers in pearl and shell, the lacquer worker, the metal worker, the wood carver, the lapidary, and the potter: all are engaged in their respective industries, under the direction of some master mind, in producing fragments which are to be ultimately brought into harmonious grouping in the finished work. The production of an elaborate and really high-class piece of incrusted-work unquestionably demands the exercise of great ingenuity, skill, and patience on the part of all the handicraftsmen engaged; while the artistic conception of the work, and the talent displayed in the direction and superintendence of the several workers, may be said to amount to positive genius.

METAL-WORK

It must be admitted by every one who has paid special attention to Japanese handicraft, that as metallurgists and art-workmen in metals the Japanese may be pronounced as unsurpassed. In saying this we allude particularly to their knowledge of the properties of the metals, with special reference to the production of varied and useful alloys, and their skilful and artistic manipulation in works of utility and beauty. As we have said elsewhere, the range of the Japanese metal worker's art is immense, and even a cursory view of it is little short of confusing to the eye and mind. The more one sees of it the more one marvels at the new world of thought and labour it displays. Look at a thousand sword guards, taken at random, and not two will be found alike; indeed, it is more than probable that not two will embody or express the same idea. Yet every one will be an expressive work, telling its story with a clearness so great that he who runs may read. The same may be said of nearly every piece of Japanese art metal-work, from the smallest mountings of their old swords to the colossal images which adorn the shrines of Nara and Kamakura.

Of the date at which the art of casting and working in bronze was commenced in Japan absolutely no information exists. The earliest known efforts are in the form of arrow-heads and bells: these belong to an epoch anterior to the historical period. The next in point of antiquity are mirrors, which, according to a learned Japanese authority, have been attributed to the first century A.D.—a period about seven hundred years earlier than any existing historical records. Helmets and breastplates are said to have been fashioned of, or richly decorated with, gold as early as the fourth century. There seems to be no doubt that under the Emperor Shō-mu, in the fourth century, great proficiency was reached in the fabrication of armour and other articles in metal. Great metal lanterns, coronets of gilt silver or copper, ornaments for swords, sacred images, and temple utensils were made during this reign, which go far to show that the metal workers of the time had little to learn in the mastery of the metals and tools.

In the twelfth century a remarkable development took place in the fabrication of arms and defensive armour; and during the fifteenth century were produced works which for artistic conception and skilful workmanship were not unworthy of a Benvenuto Cellini, and which were chiefly applied to the adornment of the appendages of the national weapon—the sword. These special efforts naturally led to the development of the metal worker's art in other directions, culminating in the wonderful creations of the Miō-chins and Tō-uns of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Referring to metal-work as presented by weapons and armour, Mr. Anderson justly remarks: "The largest volume would fail to do justice to the qualities of versatility, originality, and dexterity, placed in evidence in this single section of glyptic art."

Space will prevent our going minutely into matters relating to bronze casting and bell founding in Japan, but it is evident that many progressive steps were taken before the existing great bells were successfully cast. The largest and probably the oldest of the celebrated temple bells in Japan is that which hangs in the bell tower on the hill adjoining the Buddhist temple, Tō-dai-ji, at Nara. This bell was cast in 732 A.D.: it measures about 13 feet 6 inches in height, and 9 feet 1 inch in diameter at its rim. About 40 tons of bronze are said to have been used in its casting. Another large bell hangs in the bell tower of the monastery of Chi-on-In, at Kiōto: it was cast in 1663, and weighs about 74 tons. It measures about 10 feet 9 inches in height, 9 feet in diameter, and 9½ inches thick at the sound-bow. From these fine examples it appears certain that the art of bell-founding was in a high state of development in Japan between the eighth and seventeenth centuries.

Travellers acquainted more or less with the industrial arts, who visit Japan are, perhaps, most impressed by the great dimensions and general excellence of the many castings in bronze which they see; and they stand in surprised admiration before such gigantic works as the Yaku-shi and Vāirōkana, at Nara, and the magnificent Amida or Dai-butsu, at Kamakura, the largest ancient bronze castings in the world. This latter statue has already been commented on.

Of course, the bells alluded to above were cast complete; while the statues were cast in numerous sections which had to be carefully fitted together and probably soldered: the head and hands being single castings.*

In the composition of bronzes, or alloys of copper with other metals, the Japanese metallurgists are surprisingly skilful. The variety of colours they produce, namely, black, certain hues of red, yellow, and brown, afford, in association with gold, silver, copper, and other pure metals, great scope for the metal workers of the country to display their artistic taste and ingenuity in ornamental work. Besides the ordinary bell-metals and mirror-metals, which are alloys of copper and tin, with in some instances a trace of silver, there is a special alloy, called by the Japanese *shakudō*, the exact composition of which we have not been able to ascertain. It is, however, known to contain copper and small quantities of gold and silver, with traces of lead, iron, and arsenic. This alloy is chiefly prized on account of its peculiar patina. *Shakudō* under the action of a chemical bath assumes a black surface with a semi-metallic lustre. Another fine alloy of copper and silver, called *shibu-ichi*, was much used by the old ornamental metal workers.

Alloys composed of gold and silver in different proportions are commonly met with in inlaid and incrusted-work. *Coban* or *koban-kin*, composed of ten parts of gold and two and six-tenth of silver; *jiki-ban*, composed of ten parts of gold and three and one-tenth of silver; and *nam-ban*, composed of ten parts of gold and three and six-tenths of silver, are alloys used by the ornamental metal workers, and commonly by the workers in gold lacquer.

Of the processes of casting, forging, welding, hammering, repoussé, chasing, engraving, inlaying or damascening, incrusting, oxidising, and corroding we cannot attempt to speak in this short Essay. A fair outline of all these processes occupies about twenty pages in our work, "The Ornamental Arts of Japan."

We may properly close our few remarks by a neat quotation from the writings of Mr. Dresser: "The Japanese are the only perfect metal workers which the world has yet produced, for they are the only people who do not think of the material, and regard the effect produced as of far greater moment than the metal employed. To them iron, zinc, bismuth, gold, silver, and copper, are so many materials with which things of beauty may be produced,

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* For particulars respecting the methods of casting practised by the Japanese, reference may be made to "The Ornamental Arts of Japan." Section VI.

and the one is as acceptable as the other, if perfect appropriateness is seen in the application of the material, and if the result produced be satisfactory and beautiful."

ENAMELLING

In the art of Cloisonné Enamelling the Japanese both of ancient and modern times stand unrivalled. Fine and remarkable as much of the early examples are, we must admit that on the score of mere handicraft they are surpassed by the works of the best modern artists.

There are several methods of enamelling commonly classified under the following three heads: The Incrusted; The Translucent; and The Painted. Strictly speaking, all enamels may be designated *incrusted*, inasmuch as they are formed by an incrustation of vitreous pastes upon a metallic ground; but in the nomenclature of art, incrusted enamels are accepted as signifying those in which the vitreous coloured pastes form a species of mosaic work, divided by strips of metal, which are either formed by hollowing out or cutting away the greater portion of the ground, or applied in the shape of thin and narrow ribbons of metal, set on edge. Those works which are formed by the hollowing out of the ground are appropriately designated by French antiquaries *champlevé*: while those fabricated with metal ribbons are, in like manner, called *cloisonné*, or *à cloisons mobiles*, that is, with movable *partitions*. Both these processes have been freely used by the Chinese enamellers; but the Japanese enamellers have almost exclusively confined themselves to the cloisonné method, and carried it to a perfection unknown by the handicraftsmen of other nations.

The objects which have been produced by the old enamellers of Japan have almost invariably been formed of thin copper beaten into the shapes required. So thin are the copper grounds of the finest specimens of their cloisonné ware, that, even with the cloisonné on one side and the plain, counteracting enamel coating on the other, the whole thickness does not exceed one-tenth of an inch. This fact alone must excite the wonder of any one conversant with the difficulties which beset the process of cloisonné enamelling. This process may be briefly outlined.

When the Japanese enameller received the vessel—vase, jar, or dish—from the coppersmith, his first proceeding was to transfer to its surface the outline of the design which he intended to reproduce in the metal partitions or cloisons. This was done by scratching the surface with a steel point. When the artist had traced in this simple manner what he considered sufficient to guide him, he proceeded to prepare the metal partitions. For these he took very thin and narrow ribbons of brass, formed by flattening fine wire by passing it between rollers, and by the aid of small pliers and other tools bent and fashioned them into the shapes of the design. In shaping each piece he had to make repeated reference to his tracing so that it should fall accurately into its place. When it is realised that every separate cloison to be seen in a large specimen of Japanese enamel has been thus carefully shaped, and that it is not unusual to find as many as one hundred separate pieces of bent ribbon in a space of about a square inch, some estimate can be formed of the time and patience necessary for this preliminary part of the enameller's labours.

When a sufficient number of pieces were formed to enable the workman to make a further step, he carefully laid them one by one on the copper ground, adjusting them accurately to the traced lines, and fixing them temporarily with rice paste or some other adhesive preparation. When a convenient portion of the surface was covered with the cloisons, fine solder filings were distributed along their lines of contact with the copper ground, and the whole subjected to the action of heat just sufficient to melt the solder without injuring the delicate ribbons of brass. In the fabrication of large pieces, the above process had to be continued until the entire surface was covered with its network of cloisons. When the article was entirely covered, and the solding completed, it was carefully cleaned and made ready to receive the vitreous pastes.

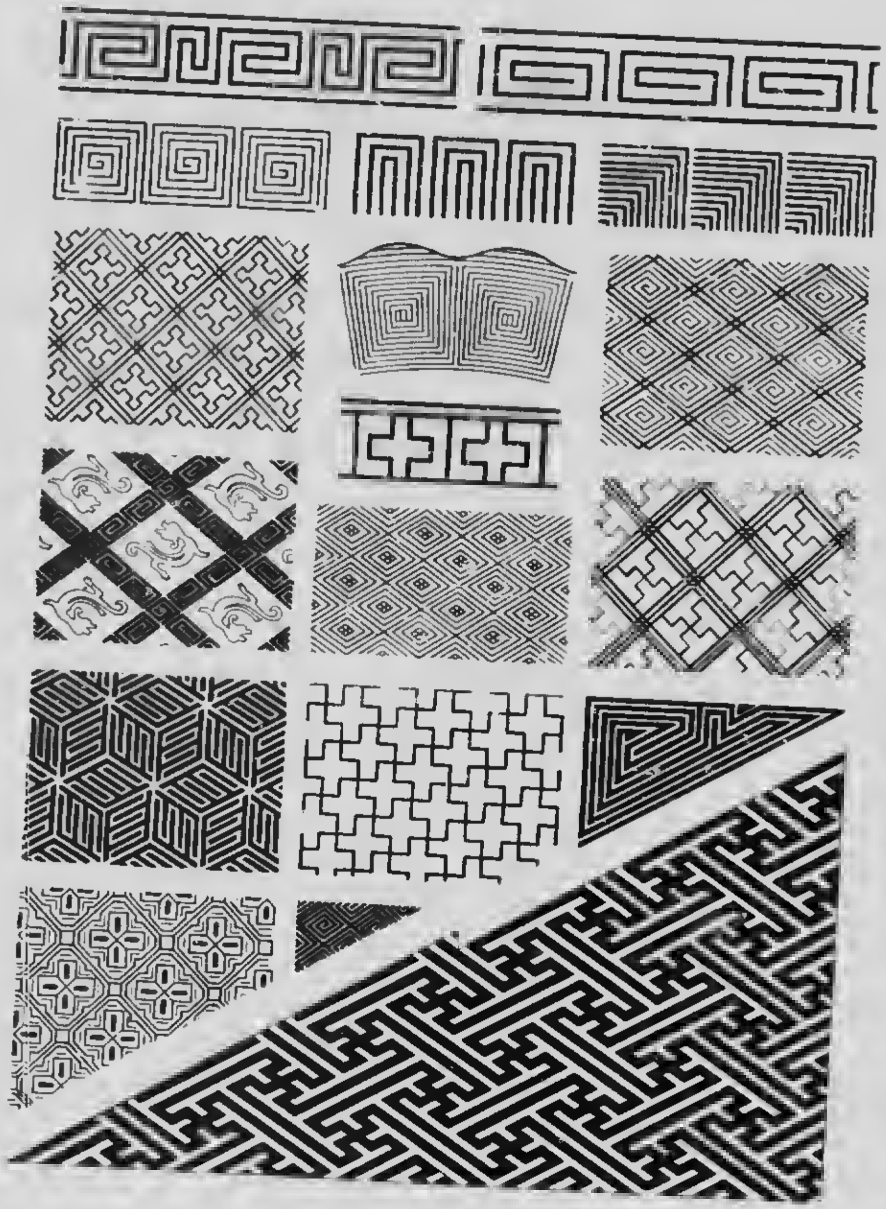
The pastes used by the Japanese enamellers are vitreous substances, usually opaque in cloisonné work, coloured by metallic oxides, and so composed as to fuse at a low temperature. In the process of applying the pastes, they were first ground to powder, mixed with some volatile oil or vehicle, easily dissipated or destroyed by heat, until they assumed the consistency of thick cream. In this condition they were carefully placed in the cells formed by the cloisons, so as to fill them as nearly as possible. In a short time the vehicle sets the paste sufficiently to allow of another portion or side of the article to be treated in a similar manner, until the entire surface to be incrusted was covered with the pastes. The article was then gently dried and the pastes firmly set in their cells. At this stage the article was in a fit state to undergo its first firing. We can only guess at the mode adopted by the old enamellers in firing their pieces of cloisonné, often of very large size, but their beautiful and uniform finish clearly proves that a perfect method was followed. When the first firing was completed and the article gradually cooled, the vitrified pastes were found to have sunk in the cells: this necessitated a refilling with the pastes and a second firing, and perhaps a third repetition of the process before a uniform surface was obtained. At this stage the article presented a rough and very unpromising appearance, giving little idea of the beautiful work which lay beneath its colour-smeared surface. To bring this work to light the enameller proceeded to grind down the vitrified pastes and the edges of the metal cloisons. This grinding process was continued, first with whetstones and afterwards with polishing powders, until the surface of the enamel assumed a perfectly uniform appearance, with the edge of every cloison visible and all inequalities of the pastes removed.

Such, then, is in brief the process followed in the fabrication of objects of cloisonné enamel; and while it may seem simple in description, a little consideration cannot fail to impress the mind with the difficulties which beset its every stage, to say nothing of the skill and almost superhuman patience required for its successful practice.

The name by which cloisonné is known in Japan, itself denotes a high appreciation. It is called *shippō*, a word which, according to Hepburn, literally signifies "the seven precious things, viz.: gold, silver, emerald, coral, agate, crystal, and pearl," or more probably the seven precious materials prescribed by the Buddhist scriptures to be buried under temples, viz.: gold, silver, agate, pearls, coral, amber, and *shako* (*Squilla mantis*, a species of crustacea). An examination of the Plates, accurately reproduced from fine specimens of old Japanese cloisonné, which accompany this Essay will convey a clear idea of the handicraft of the old enamellers.

There are some other branches of handicraft that cannot be done justice to in this necessarily brief Essay; among these are sculpture in stone, carving in ivory, and wood-carving as applied to architectural works, notably temples and shrines as are to be seen at Nikkō. Modelling in porcelain and faence is also a branch which must be passed over, reference only being made to the three examples represented in the present series of Plates. Examples of ivory carving are also illustrated. Of the potter's art we have written at length in the "Keramic Art of Japan."

PLATE A



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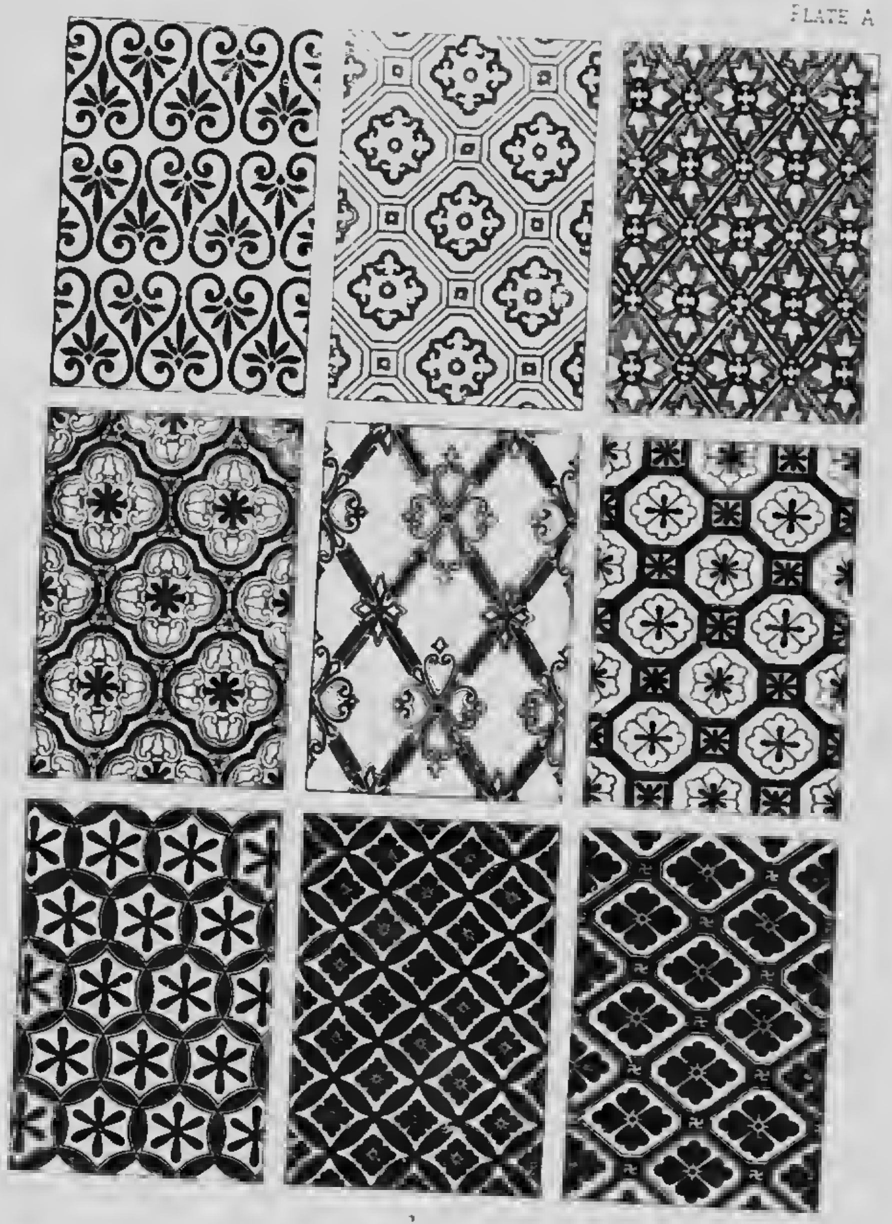

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PLATE B.

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PLATE C.

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PLATE D.

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PLATE E.

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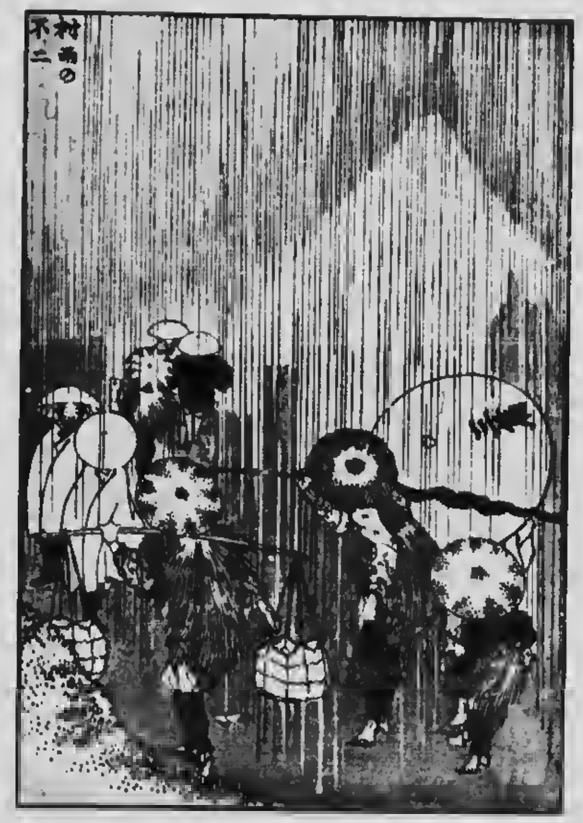

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PLATE G.


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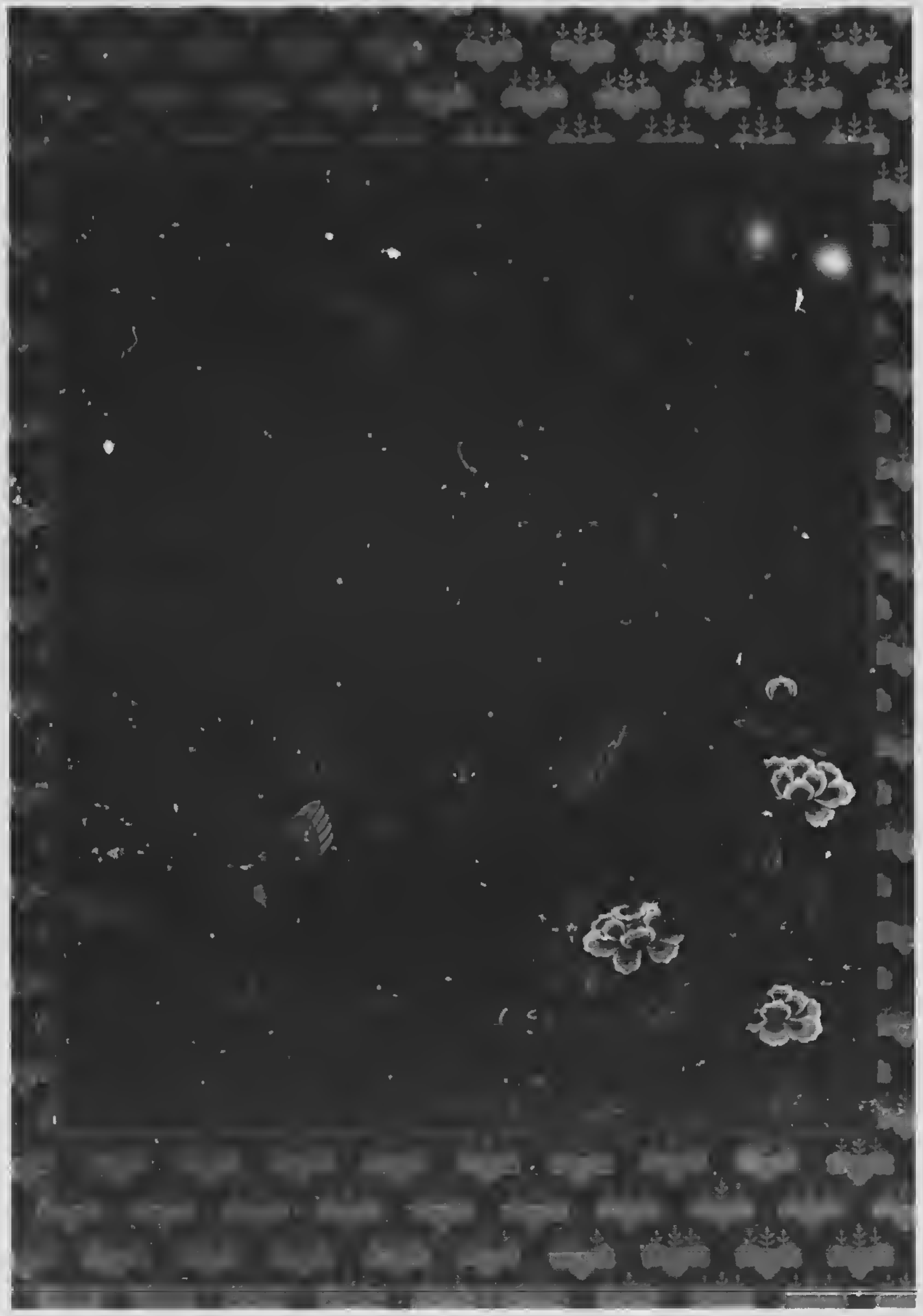

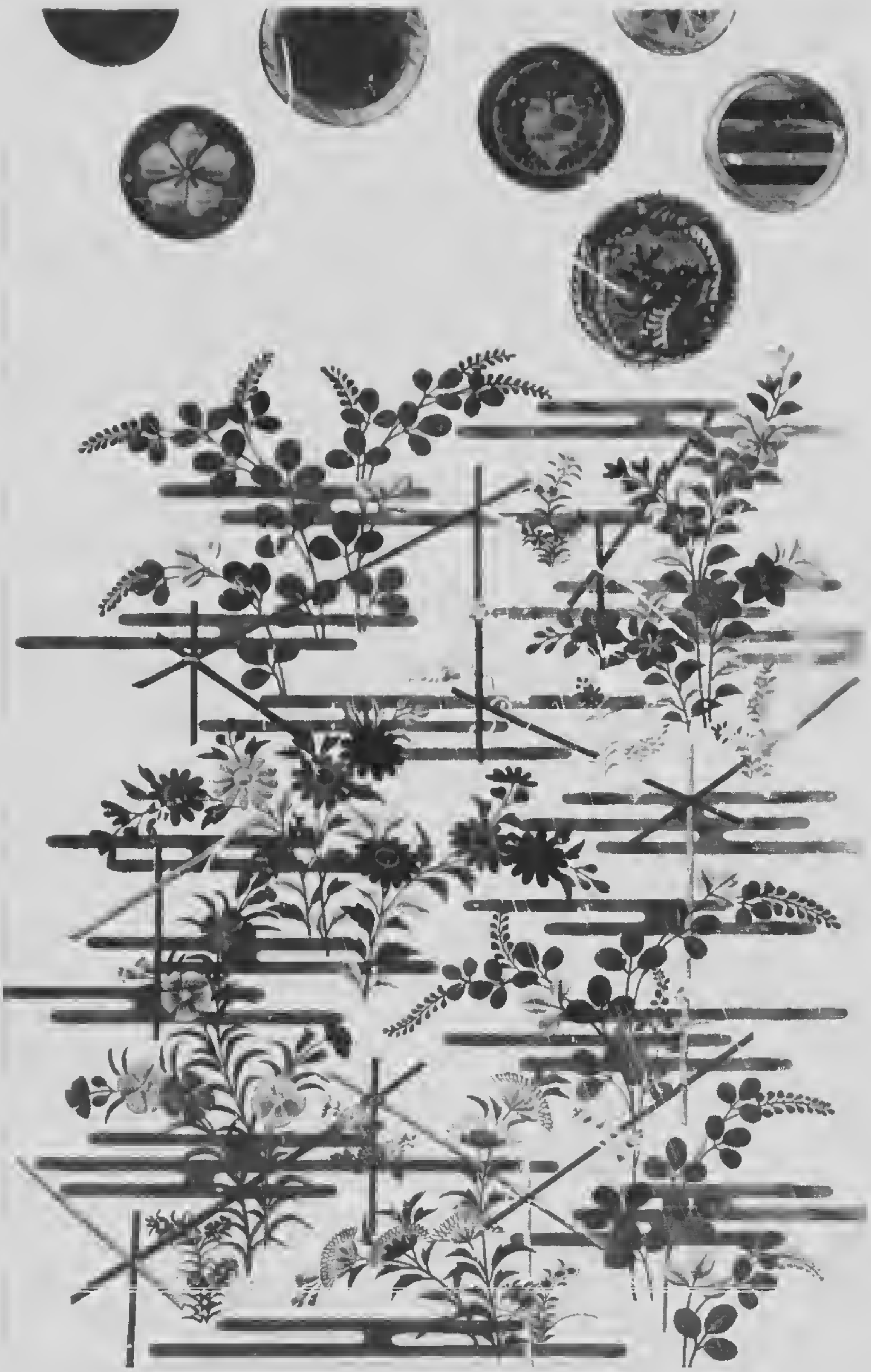

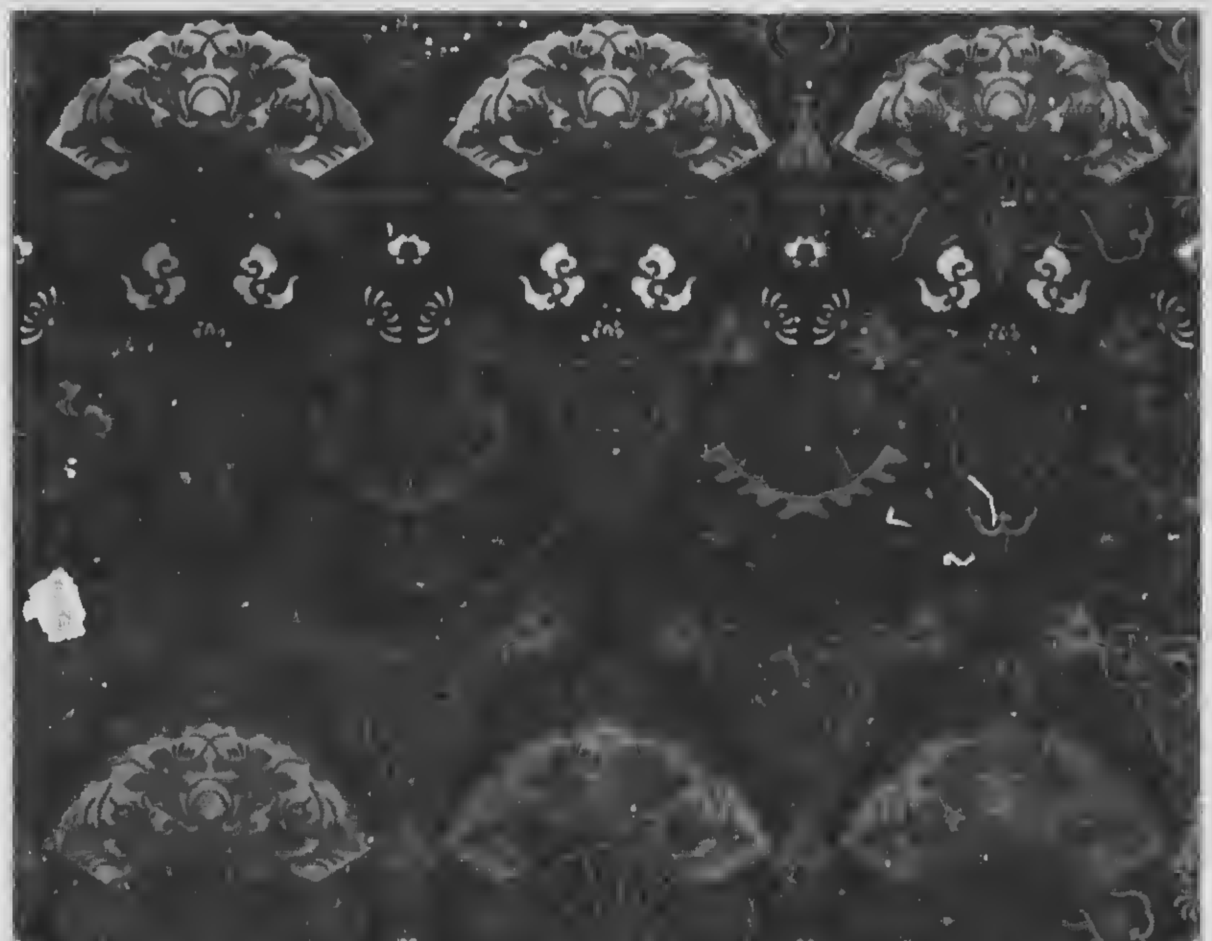

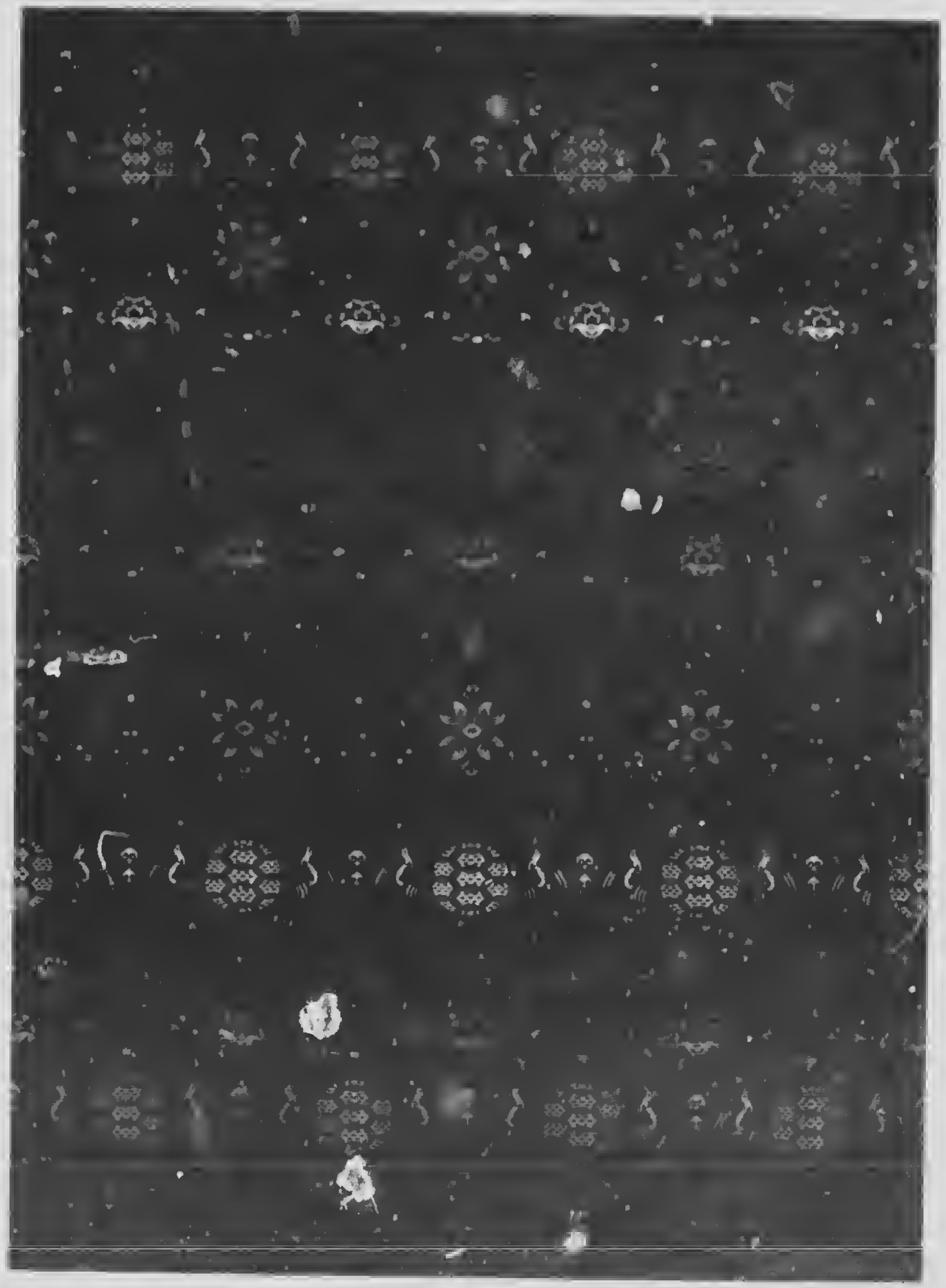

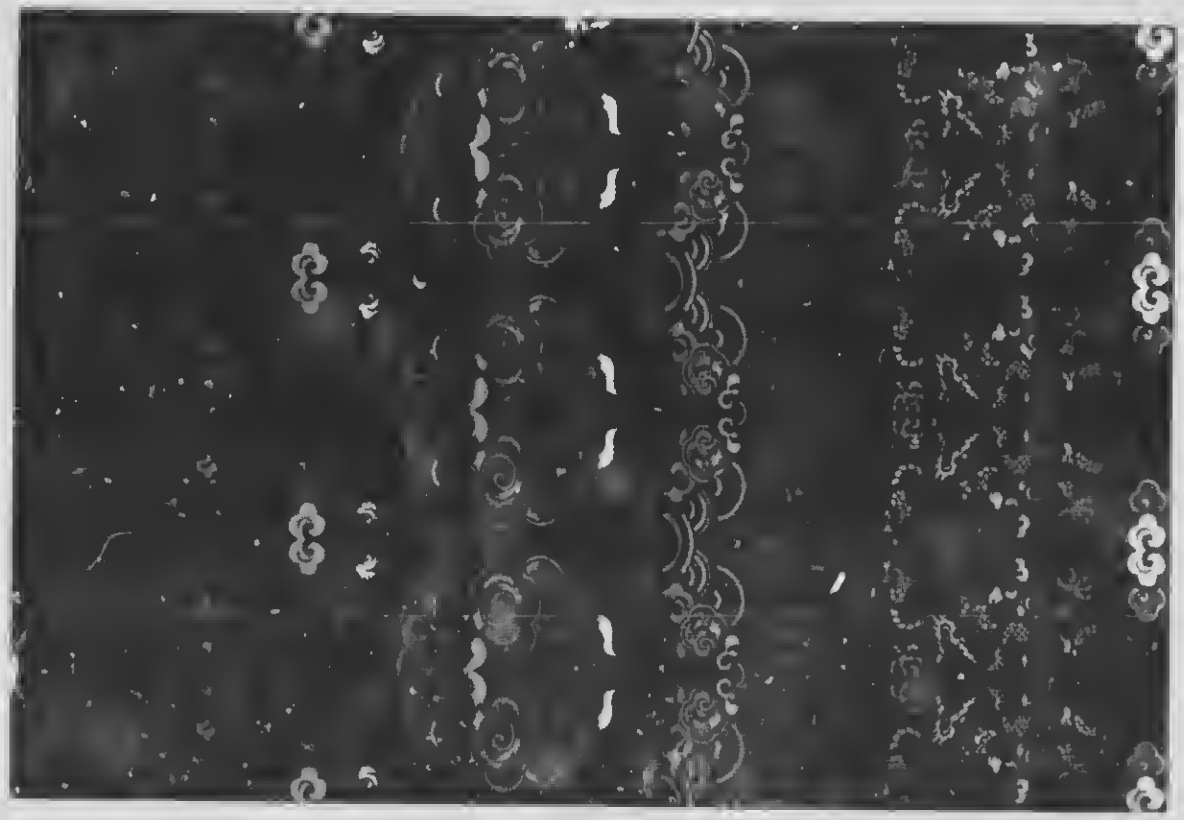

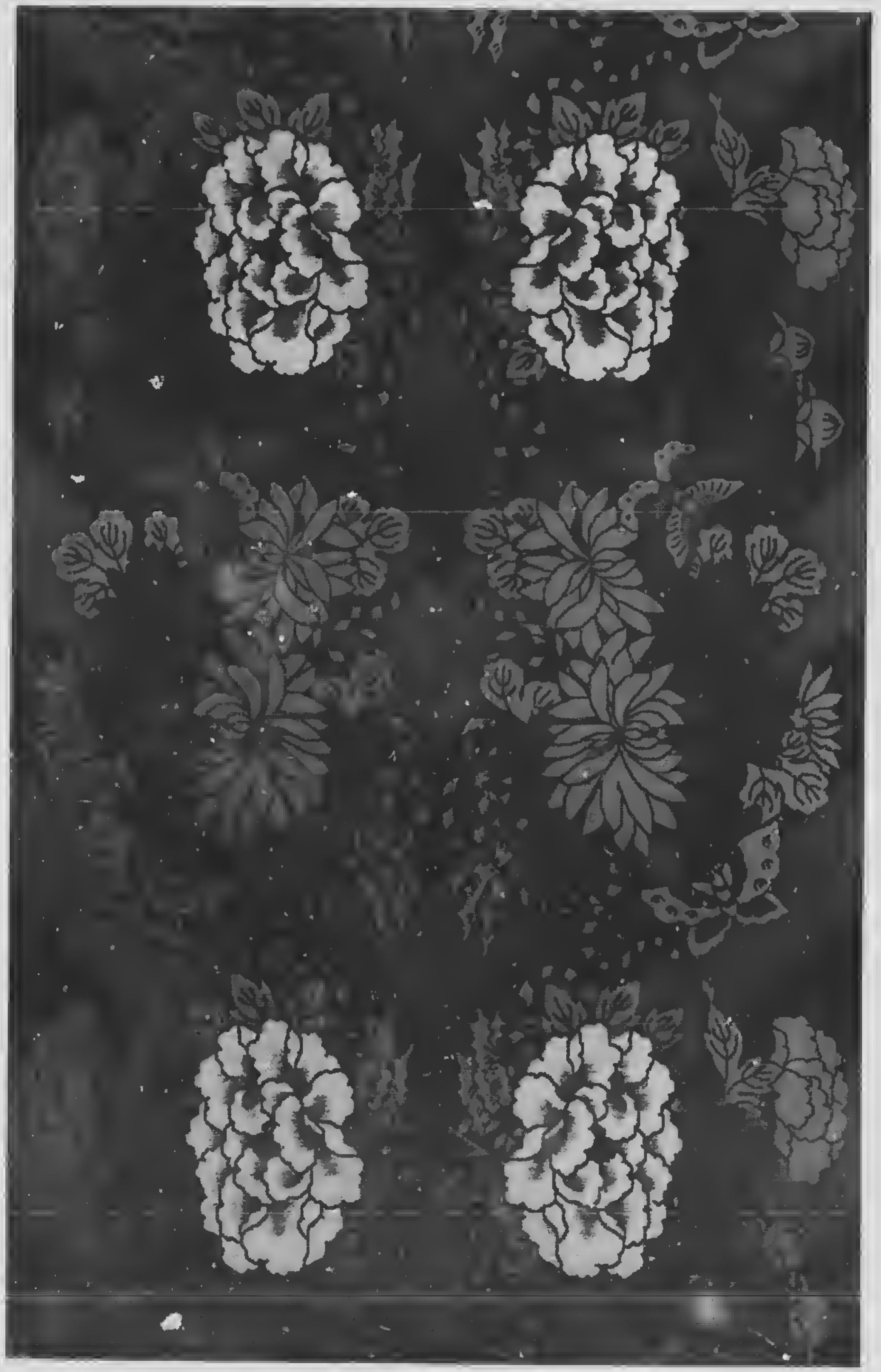

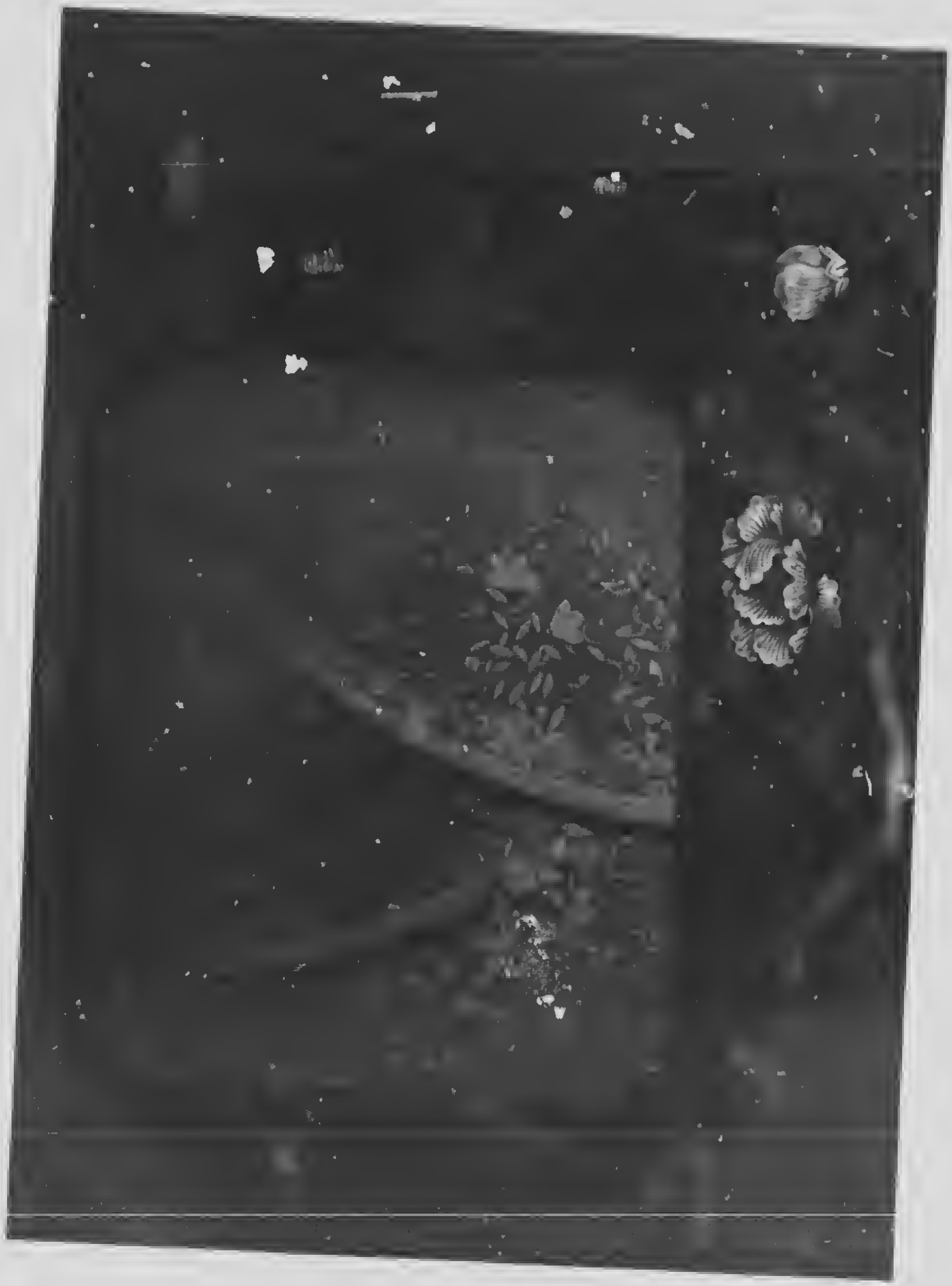

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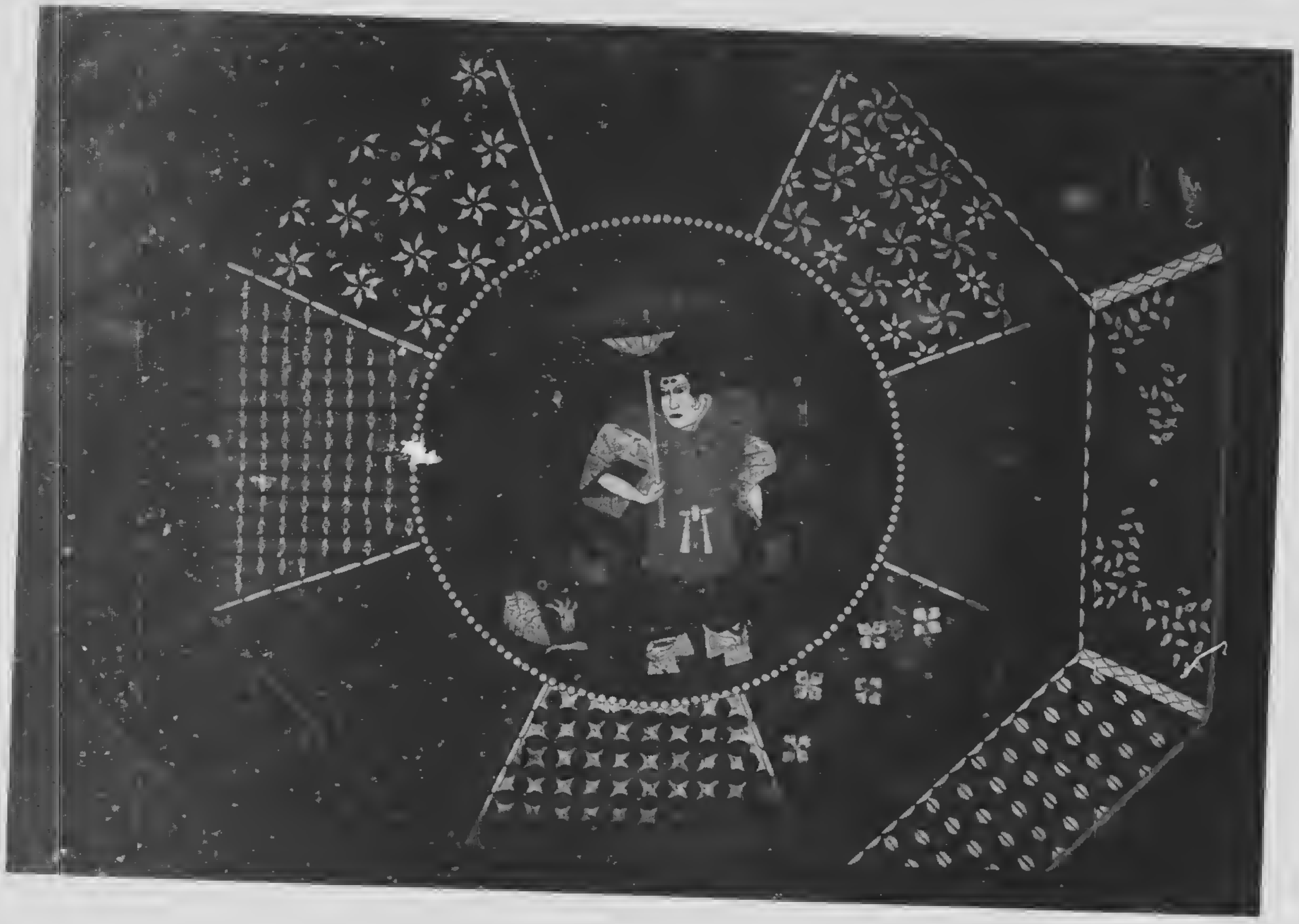

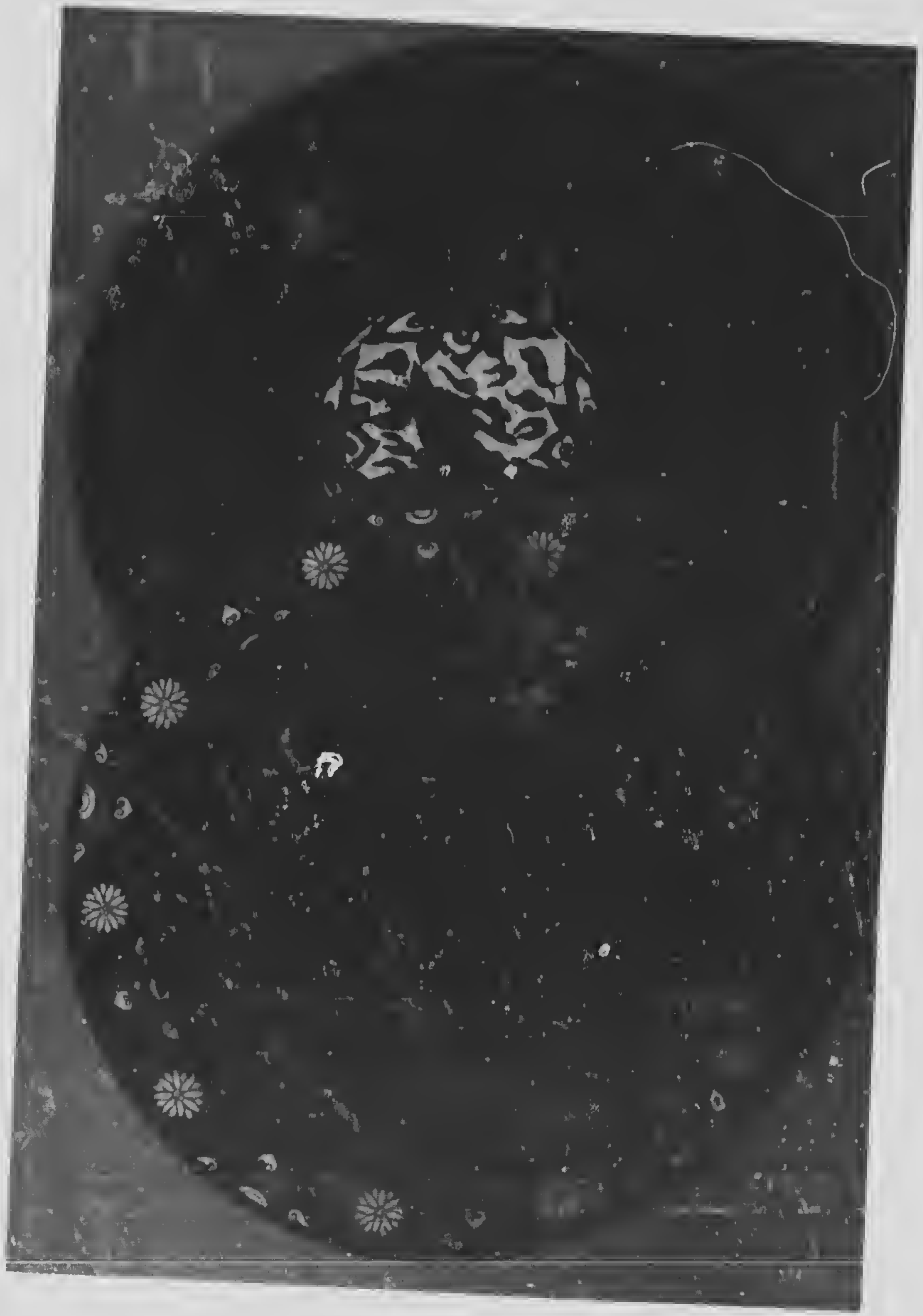

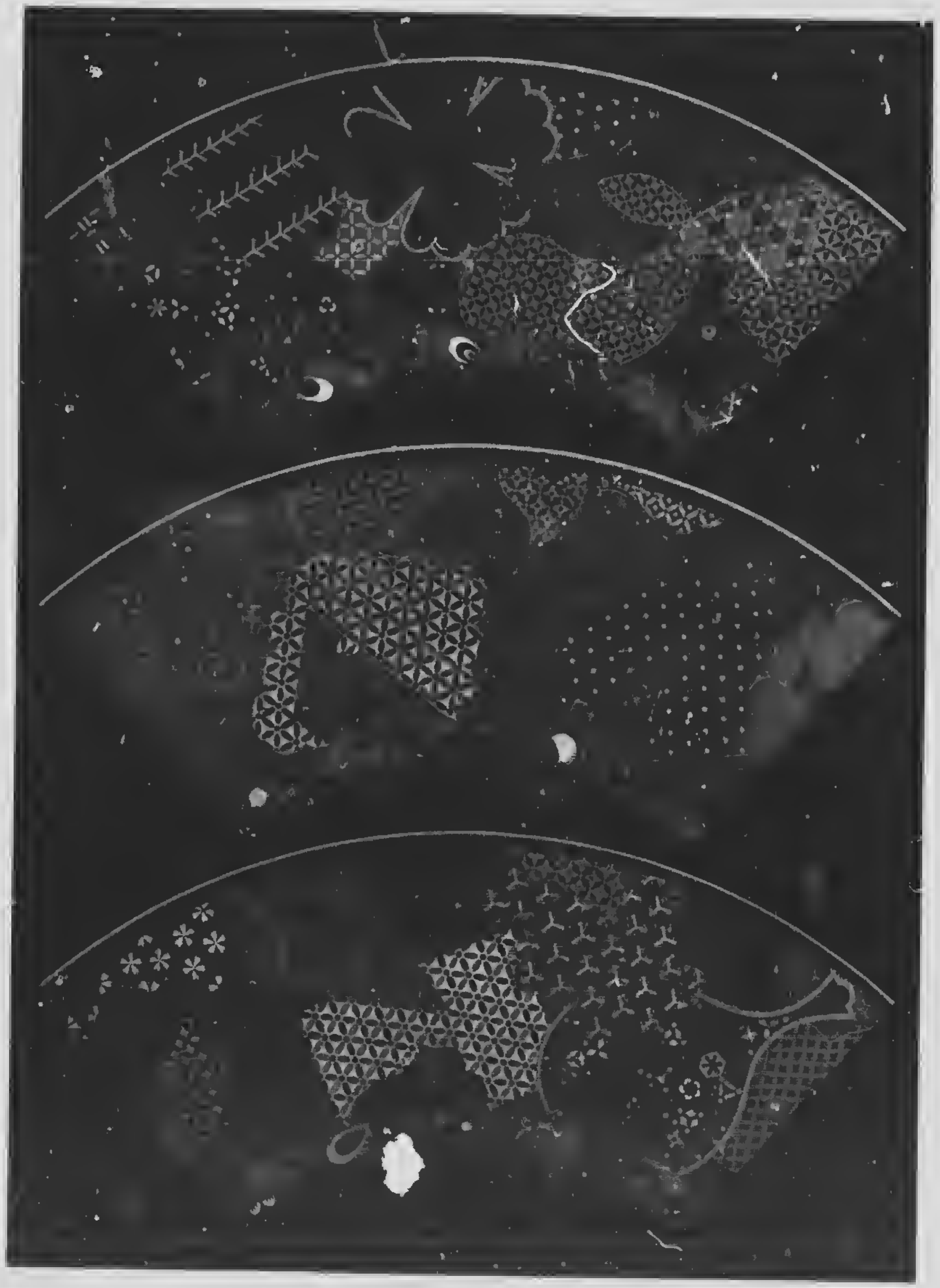


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