



RANK BADGES FROM THE CHINESE COLLECTION OF THE NÁPRSTEK MUSEUM

Helena Heroldová*

ABSTRACT: The Chinese collection of the National Museum-Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures contains 44 “rank badges”, the official rank insignia of the Chinese bureaucracy from the second half of the 19th century. In this article I focus on description of the items including the techniques of their production, and their symbolic meaning. Their origin in the museum collection is also mentioned.

KEY WORDS: Rank badges – Chinese bureaucracy – China – second half of the 19th century – *Kesi* weaving technique – Chinese embroidery – Chinese symbols – Golden couching technique.

The Chinese collection of the National Museum-Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures contains 44 “rank badges”, the official rank insignia of the Chinese bureaucracy. In this article I focus on description of the items in the museum collection and their origin, and finally I compile their catalogue.

The rank badges (*buzi*, in Chinese), also called “mandarin square” or rank insignia in English, were used by the members of the bureaucracy in imperial China during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing dynasty (1644–1911) to indicate one of nine official ranks. The badges were worn on the front and back parts of the official surcoat. Men also wore other insignia according to their rank, such as hats with topped finials and belts with semi-precious stones or gold plaquettes. Wives of officials had the privilege of wearing their husbands’ rank badges during important social and family events.

The official rank badges are usually squares approximately 30 x 30 cm in size. Later, at the end of the 19th century, the roundel badges were also produced in order to imitate circular noblemen and court insignia. The rank badges were decorated with various colourful woven or embroidered designs such as auspicious symbols, flowers and geometric motifs. In the middle of the composition, an animal or bird was situated in order to indicate the official rank. The motifs developed in the course of time, and the squares can be dated according to the motifs.

* Contact: Helena Heroldová, National Museum-Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures, e-mail:helena_heroldova@nm.cz

A short introduction to rank badges and their rich symbolic order appears almost in every book about Chinese dress and textiles (here I quote Garrett, 1997 and 2007; Dickinson and Wrigglesworth, 2000; Zhao, 2005). However, scholarly studies providing detailed information are rare. Among the first the authoritative researchers belongs Schuyler V. R. Cammann as early as in the 1940s.¹ The description of rank badges in the present article is based on the recent study *Ladder to the Clouds. Intrigue and Tradition in Chinese Rank* by Beverly Jackson and David Hugus (Ten Speed Press, 1999), a work providing detailed information about symbols and motifs, technology, history and datation of rank badges.² Paul Haig and Marla Shelton's *Threads of Gold. Chinese Textiles. Ming to Ch'ing* (Schiffer Publishing Ltd. 2006) is a useful guide for collectors regarding the methodology of checking condition, precise date and evaluation of the rank badges.

Historical Outline

The history of the badges denoting official and military rank covers several centuries. During the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) animal and bird designs began to appearing on court dress, probably as a decoration (Jackson and Hugus: 102, Cammann: 5–6). During the Ming dynasty, chest badges depicting animals and birds were added to official and court costumes. Ming badges were large, and the number of birds and animals was not specified. As the result, the badges may have one to three birds or animals on them. However, the usual number was two. The badges often had various designs, because no precise regulations were employed (Jackson and Hugus: 103–104). During the Qing dynasty, the court and official dress regulations were established and the design of badges underwent changes as compared to the Ming period, becoming smaller in size and featuring only one animal or bird in the centre surrounded with the sky, the sea and rocks. At the same time, auspicious symbols were introduced. During the reform period of 1898, the design of the badges was simplified and the number of motifs reduced. After the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 during the first years of the Republic attempts appeared to establish a new system of official rank insignia for the republican bureaucracy (Jackson and Hugus: 130, 275–277 286–288, Cammann: 7–8).

Forms

The rank badges worn by civil and military official had square form, whereas badges for members of imperial household and nobility were usually roundels.

In the Náprstek Museum collection, there are squares and roundels badges (Nos. 39 to 44), and the transitive (No. 38) form is also found.

The square form is the basic type of the Qing dynasty badges. However, at the end of the 19th century, when imperial power began to weaken, a transitive style between square and roundel type was produced (Jackson and Hugus: 278). After the 1860s, to the corners of the

¹ "Notes on the Development of Mandarin Squares." *The Bulletin of the Needle and Bobbin Club*, V. 26, No. 1, 1942, "Development of Mandarin Squares." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, V. III, August 1944, pp. 71–130, "Birds and Animals as Ming and Ch'ing Badges of Rank." *Arts of Asia* (May-June): 1991 pp. 88–94, "Other Mandarin Squares: Korean, Annamese and Unfamiliar Examples." *Arts of Asia* (March-April): 1992, pp. 115–126.

² Jackson and David Hugus's book combines scholarly research with a fictional narrative framework, thus providing a vivid picture of Chinese society and lifestyle of the late Qing bureaucracy for a wide readership.

square badges, already decorated with floral or geometric motifs in the border, more flowers and auspicious symbols were added. The evolution led to the square form with a circular border, and the later development to circular badges with the central design enclosed with the border circle (Jackson and Hugus: 278). The roundel badges could indicate the “purchased” or “deceptive” ranks (Haig and Shelton: 80), because they resembled the circular insignia of noblemen or court.

Datation

The badges in the Náprstek Museum are dated after 1850, and the majority is represented by the late 19th century examples. The indicators of the second half of the 19th century badges is the deep-water design that was introduced in the mid-nineteenth century, and its presence is typical for the post-1850 badges. Vivid colours of bright red, violet, purple and green also indicate the late 19th century, when the aniline dyes were introduced to China.

Around 1890s, the badges catching one's eye with shining gold and silver and badges with large number of auspicious symbols including bats, Jewels, and Taoist and Buddhist symbols appeared. They reflected the change in political climate and social positions of the officials during the period of weakened imperial power. At the same time, many badges featured simplistic repetitive background and poorly executed motifs. The *kesi* badges have large parts rendered in paint instead of fine weaving, as is the case for many examples in the collection.

The decline of official power led to the practice of selling official ranks, the demand for which stimulated the manufacture of cheaply produced imitative “deceptive” badges (Jackson and Hugus: 271–273). The “empty-background” badges belong among these examples (Nos. 29, 31, 32, 38).

Technique and Colours

The following depiction is based on the Náprstek Museum collection, and on the description of the 19th century rank badges established according to Jackson and Hugus.

The badges were either woven (*kesi* technique) or embroidered on satin or twill weave. Some badges were executed with great care and skills, whereas others were only poorly elaborated, especially those from the late Qing period.

Kesi is a tapestry weaving technique that is especially suitable for multicoloured motifs. The patterning is achieved by weaving warp threads with polychrome weft threads, “each colour of which goes back and forth only in its particular pattern area” (Wilson: 20), thus achieving an intricate pattern of small format motifs. However, later in the 19th century, *kesi* technique with painted details became widespread. The *kesi* badges from the Náprstek Museum collection usually bear large painted parts, such as floral shading (No. 13).

Embroidery in silk threads was executed on twill or satin silk weave or on gauze weave, often displaying various stitches. The badges from the Náprstek Museum collection include satin stitch, counted stitch (on gauze), and also the Pekin knot³ (No. 1), an expensive and time-consuming technique (Jackson and Hugus: 22–23).

³ The Pekin knot is known also as a seed stitch. The thread is twisted once or twice around the needle in order to produce a knot (Bertin-Guest: 80).

Metallic thread couching of golden or silver colour often appeared in the late 19th century badges. The metallic thread was made of metallic foil or paper of golden or silver colour cut and twisted around a silk or cotton thread. There are several examples of this technique in the Náprstek Museum collection. Metallic threads were sewn onto the surface with green or red silk thread, thus giving colourful hue effect to shining metallic thread.

Golden metallic thread was also woven in the *kesi* badges or was used to outline embroidered motifs.

Aniline dyes were introduced to China during the second half of the 19th century. Badges created with their use have vivid colours, particularly bright purple, red or green.

Iron mordant (Haig and Shelton: 80) was also used, and as the result the black colour backgrounds are often damaged and have a tendency to disintegrate, as is observed on several rank badges from the Náprstek Museum collection.

Symbolic Motifs and Background

Presence of image of animals or birds on the rank badges served as indicator of the social position of the official, and the motifs used to embellish the background were said to represent his wishes and hopes (Jackson and Hugus: 95) in social context.

In the case of the badges from the Náprstek Museum collection, the background is usually covered with geometric patterns (grid pattern, swastika pattern, Nos. 18, 29), or with clouds (No. 36), and auspicious symbols. The symbols of luck, prosperity, wealth, longevity and social position appeared mostly during the second half of the 19th century, and this change marked the political unrest and decline of imperial power in China. Among the symbols, we see the images of the "Eight Taoist Immortals" (bamboo rattle, lotus, castanets, sword, gourd, crutch, flute, flower basket, Plate 1) and the "Eight Buddhist Emblems" (wheel of the law, royal canopy, state umbrella, lotus flower, vase, endless knot, conch shell, twin fish, Plate 2), the "Eight Jewels" (rhinoceros horns, ivory tusks, scroll painting, pearl, musical stone, ingot, *ruyi* sceptre, swastika, sacred fungus, coral, Artemisia leaf, books, scroll of silk – the selection of particular Jewels varies, Plate 3), bats, circular and rectangular ornament (Jackson and Hugus: 205, No. 5) and white pearls jutting from the waves (No. 41). Nature inspired many motifs with protective meaning: the citrus fruit known as "Buddha's hand" (*Citrus medica* "*Sarcodactylis*"), the genus *prunus*, orchids, peonies, narcissus, peaches, pomegranate, and the sacred fungus of longevity (*Polyporus lucidus*).

The borders of the rank badges are decorated with single or composite floral, animal or geometric motifs. Bats often accompany the pattern. Among the geometric designs, *ruyi* (sacred fungus-like pattern), the scroll pattern *juancaowen* and the meander *huiwen* (Welch: 212–213) are especially noted (Nos. 12, 13, 17, 28, 33, 35, 36). Chinese characters are also included, especially stylized forms of *shou* (longevity), Welch: 215), and *xi* (joy) (Jackson and Hugus: 212) (Nos. 9, 33).

After 1850, a new composition appeared. On the bottom section of the badge, a "deep-water" *lishui* (No. 33) design, with rocks symbolizing the sea and the land, was added (Jackson and Hugus: 268). The sea was represented by diagonal lines with tumbling waves on them, and three rocks usually projecting from the waters, with the animal and bird (indicators of the rank) sitting on the central one.

Symbols of Official Ranks: Animals and Birds

The nine official ranks were symbolized by birds for civil ranks and fierce animals for military ranks. The appearance of the symbolic beasts and birds and their position in the composition developed in time. During the Qing dynasty, the design included a single bird or animal at the centre of the composition. The birds were invariably based on real species, whereas the animals combined real and fantastic or imaginary ones. According to Schuyler Cammann, the birds symbolized the literary skills of civil ranked officials and the animals the courage of military personages (Cammann: 6).⁴ The following list of birds and animals is valid for the Qing dynasty – birds: 1. rank – *crane*, 2. rank – *golden pheasant*, 3. rank – *peacock*, 4. rank – *wild goose*, 5. rank – *silver pheasant*, 6. rank – *egret*, 7. rank – *mandarin duck*, 8. rank – *quail*, 9. rank – *paradise flycatcher*. Animals: 1. rank – *qilin*, 2. rank – *lion*, 3. rank – *leopard*, 4. rank – *tiger*, 5. rank – *bear*, 6. rank – *panther*, 7. and 8. rank – *rhinoceros*, 9. rank – *sea horse*.

The Náprstek Museum collection contains civil badges for all of the civil-service ranks, and military (5 items) badges mainly of the 5th rank. The animals or birds are either woven, embroidered or rendered through appliqué, a technique in which the image was embroidered on a piece of cloth and paper, cut out and glued to the background (No. 46).

The Sun

The sun was added during the Kangxi period (1662–1722). The reasons for its addition are still not fully explained, although there are many hypotheses. Traditionally, it is explained as a symbol of the emperor. However, Jackson, Hugus and Schuyler Cammann suggest that the bird or animal turning its head towards the sun symbolised the wearer's advance in rank (Jackson and Hugus: 139–140; Camman: 11).

The position of the sun is an important indicator of whether the badge was worn by a man or a woman, since the wives wore badges with identical motifs, only rendered in mirror image to their husbands. The sun is situated in the male civil rank badges on the wearer's upper right-hand, and the left-hand for their wives. In the military rank badges, it is possible to find a variety of animal positions and the sun placement. However, briefly summarised, the animal turns to the right and the sun is on the right position on female badges (Jackson and Hugus: 142).

The suns are executed in various techniques such as *kesi*, embroidery or appliqué made of metallic thread. In certain instances, the sun is made of coral beads stitched to the background surface (Nos. 19, 24, 45).

Origin of the Náprstek Museum Collection

The Náprstek Museum collection contains badges of 19th century origin, dated mainly after 1850.

Sixteen items of the total 44 were donated or sold to the museum by private owners in 1980s or later, and unfortunately no reliable information about the origin of the items can be

⁴ Besides the civil and military official rank badges, the badges for members of imperial censorate were also produced. Festival squares worn during important events of the year, squares for young boys, wedding and funeral squares were also used. However, none of them is kept in the collection of the Náprstek Museum.

traced either due to missing data or the legal impossibility of publishing personal facts of the owners. One item (No. 8) was transferred from a regional museum in Karlovy Vary in 1962, which has led to a hypothesis that the item belonged to a German collection confiscated after the second world war.

Only two donors to the Náprstek Museum collection of rank badges can be traced: Růžena Trnožková (1930s) and Rudolf Dvořák (late 19th and beginning of the 20th century).

Růžena Trnožková remains a mysterious figure for the museum's curators today. She died in 1936, and according to her will, her collection of Chinese and Japanese textiles was presented to the museum in the same year. Today only two letters dealing with her legacy remain, and they include a list of 207 items.⁵ From the letters, we know that she was the widow of a "general director", and the items were collected by her husband. The collection consists of very fine textile collectibles from China and Japan, including well presented large pieces as well as small ones, such as the rank badges. In the original list presented to the museum, the rank badges are described as "cushions" (Nos. 5, 6, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, and 42). Three items, including a lady's bag (Nos. 2, 18, 45), belonged to Rudolf Dvořák (1860–1920), the founder of Chinese studies in Bohemia.⁶ The lady's bag sewn from two rank badges was a common accessory during the early decades of the 20th century, and the rank badge with a border made of various embroidered pieces of woman's dress also represented European appreciation of Chinese textiles.

The part of the collection was purchased by the state-run enterprise, "Klenoty" ("Jewellery"), a network of shops offering luxury goods, antiquities and imported "oriental" items (Nos. 26–32). The "Klenoty" shops were the only legal possibility for Czech citizens to buy luxurious items in Czechoslovakia during the Communist regime from the 1950s to the end of the 1980s.⁷ The rank badges purchased from "Klenoty" shops are colourful, nicely worked embroideries, and probably well represented "oriental" arts and crafts as viewed by the shops customers in the 1970s and 1980s.

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⁵ A letter from Trnožková's lawyer Richard Aron to the director of the museum, dated 14.8.1936, and the director's reply. Both letters and the list of items are preserved among the administrative documentation in the Náprstek Museum.

⁶ Rudolf Dvořák published several fundamental translations and studies, for example Čiňana Konfucia život a nauka (The Life and Teaching of a Chinese named Confucius, 1887–91), Ši King (The Book of Odes, 1898–1912), Lao-Tsiova kanonická kniha o Tau a ctnosti Tao Tek-King (Laozi's Canonic Book of the Tao and Virtue Daodejing, 1920). His archive is kept in the library of the Náprstek Museum. His collection of 318 items (154 from China) was presented to the museum in 1961 by his heirs

⁷ Archival documents concerning the "Klenoty" are kept in The National Archives, however, they are still not open for research.

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Administrative documentation, file "Růžena Trnožková". Náprstek Museum. List of items.

Catalogue

I. Pekin knot badge

No. 1

Inv. no. A/4594

Official's rank badge. Civil. Paradise flycatcher (9th rank), male
30, 5 x 30,5 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: not known

Dated: 1830s (?)

Material: silk, satin weave, embroidery (Pekin knot), golden metallic thread in the border

Colour: dominant – blue with red and yellow

Border: bats and *shou* (longevity) stylized character

Background: clouds, bats, peaches, fungus, flowers (peony)

Deep-water design is missing. 8 Buddhist symbols in waves

Sun: position left

II. *Kesi* rank badges

a) Metallic golden thread background

No. 2

Inv. no. A/1786

Official's rank badge. Civil. Crane (1st rank), male

Two parts sewn together: 19 x 18 cm (badge only), underlined

Square type

Acquisition: Rudolf Dvořák. Donated in 1961

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* with painted details, golden metallic thread in weave

Colour: dominant – blue

Border: swastika pattern

Background: clouds, selection of Buddhist and Taoist symbols, fungus, flowers (peony, *prunus*, narcissus)

Deep-water design

Sun: position left

Note: Includes a border made of a sleeveband and other embroidered pieces of a woman's dress.

No. 3

Inv. no. A/5539

Official's rank badge. Civil. Quail (8th rank), male

Two parts sewn together: 28 x 30 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1963 from a private owner

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* with painted details, golden metallic thread

Colour: dominant – blue

Border: swastika pattern
Background: clouds, Taoist and Buddhist symbols, bats, flowers (peonies, *prunus*)
Deep-water design
Sun: position left

No. 4

Inv. no. A/5537
Official's rank badge. Civil. Quail (8th rank), male
28 x 30 cm, underlined
Square type
Acquisition: purchased in 1963 from a private owner
Dated: after 1850
Material: silk, *kesi* weave with painted details, golden metallic thread
Colour: dominant – blue
Border: swastika pattern
Background: dense clouds, Taoist symbols, bats, flowers (peonies, *prunus*)
Deep-water design, 8 Buddhist symbols in waves
Sun: position left

No. 5

Inv. no. A/5542
Official's rank badge. Civil. Paradise flycatcher (9th rank), male
Two parts sewn together: 29 x 27 cm, underlined
Square type
Acquisition: Růžena Trnožková, donated in 1937
Dated: after 1850
Material: silk, *kesi* weave with painted details, golden metallic thread
Colour: dominant – golden and blue
Border: meander
Background: Taoist symbols, clouds, bats, flowers (peonies)
Deep-water design, pearls and circular and rectangular ornaments in waves
Sun: position left

No. 6

Inv. no. A/9672
Official's rank badge. Civil. Wild goose (4th rank), female and male
1 back + 2 front parts sewn together: 28,5 x 31 cm
Square type
Acquisition: purchased in 1970 from a private owner
Dated: after 1850
Material: silk, gauze, *kesi* with painted details, golden metallic thread couching
Colour: dominant – blue
Border: swastika pattern
Background: clouds pattern, Buddhist and Taoist symbols
Deep-water design
Sun: position right

No. 7

Inv. no. A/5543

Official's rank badge. Civil. Paradise flycatcher (9th rank), male

28,5 x 30 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: Růžena Trnožková, donated in 1937

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* weave with painted details, golden metallic thread

Colour: dominant – golden and blue

Border: meander pattern

Background: clouds pattern, Taoist symbols, bats, flowers (peonies), fungus

Deep-water design

Sun: position left

b) Grid pattern background⁸**No. 8**

Inv. no. A/1069

Official's rank badge. Civil. Silver pheasant (5th rank), male

Right part, 29,5 x 15 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: transferred in 1962 from a regional museum

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* weave with painted details, metallic thread

Colour: dominant – blue and green

Border: bats and stylized character *shou* (longevity)

Background: grid pattern with swastikas and flowers covering the whole background, clouds,

8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition, flowers (*prunus*)

Deep-water design

Sun: position left

No. 9

Inv. no. A/5540

Official's rank badge. Military. Bear (5th rank), male

28 x 30 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1963 from a private owner

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* weave with painted details, golden metallic thread

Colour: dominant – blue and green

Border: bats and stylized character *xi* (joy)

Background: grid pattern with swastikas and flowers covering the whole background, Taoist

symbols, clouds, bats, flowers (peonies, *prunus*, fungus)

Deep-water design, 8 Buddhist symbols in waves

Animal: standing on a hill above the central rock

Sun: position right

⁸ For the grid pattern, see Haig and Shelton: 91.

No. 10

Inv. no. A/5538

Official's rank badge. Military. Bear (5th rank), male

28 x 30 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1963 from a private owner

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* with painted details, golden metallic thread

Colour: dominant – blue and green

Border: bats and stylized character *shou* (longevity)

Background: grid pattern with swastikas and flowers covering the whole background, clouds, Taoist symbols, flowers (magnolia, peonies, narcissus)

Deep-water design, in waves 8 Buddhist symbols

Animal: positioned on a hill over the central rock

Sun: position right

No. 11

Inv. no. A/5556

Official's rank badge. Civil. Mandarin duck (7th rank), male

28 x 30 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: not known

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* with painted details, metallic thread in weave

Colour: dominant – blue, green, white

Border: bats and stylized character *shou* (longevity)

Background: grid pattern with swastikas and flowers covering the whole background, clouds, selection of Buddhist and Taoist symbols, Jewels, bats, flower (peony, lotus, peaches, *prunus*)

Deep-water design

Sun: position left

c) With scroll pattern background

No. 12

Inv. no. A/4600

Official's rank badge. Civil. Peacock (3rd rank), female

29 x 30,5 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: Růžena Trnožková, donated in 1937

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* with painted details, golden metallic thread

Colour: dominant – blue with red and golden

Border: *ruyi* pattern

Background: repetitive scroll pattern covering the whole background, Taoist symbols, bats, fungus, flowers (narcissus)

Deep-water design, 8 Buddhist symbols in waves

Sun: position right

No. 13

Inv. no. A/5545

Official's rank badge. Civil. Golden pheasant (2nd rank), male

31 x 29,5 cm

Square type

Acquisition: Růžena Trnožková, donated in 1937

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* with painted details, golden metallic thread

Colour: dominant – vivid aniline, especially shades of red

Border: scroll and flower pattern

Background: dense scroll pattern, clouds, Buddhist symbols, bats, flowers (peony, fungus, narcissus)

Deep-water design

Sun: position left

No. 14

Inv. no. A/4597

Official's rank badge. Military. Bear (5th rank), ?

Right bottom part: 14 x 16 cm

Square type

Acquisition: not known

Dated: approx. 1830s

Material: silk, *kesi* weave with painted details, golden metallic thread in weave

Colour: dominant – blue

Border: flowers and scrolls

Background: scroll pattern, Buddhist symbols, coral, a lozenge, bats, flowers (lotus)

Animal: positioned on a hill above the central rock

No. 15

Inv. no. A/5547

Official's rank badge. Civil. Peacock (3rd rank), male

Two front parts: 30 x 28,5 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: Růžena Trnožková, donated in 1937

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* with painted details, golden metallic thread

Colour: dominant – golden

Border: swastika pattern

Background: scroll pattern, clouds Taoist symbols, bats, fungus, flowers (*prunus*, peony)

Deep-water design, 8 Buddhist symbols in waves

Sun: position left

No. 16

Inv. no. A/5544

Official's rank badge. Civil. Peacock (3rd rank), male

28 x 30 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: Růžena Trnožková, donated in 1937

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* technique with painted details, metallic thread

Colour: dominant – golden

Border: swastika pattern

Background: dense scroll pattern, clouds, Taoist symbols, bats, fungus, flowers (peonies, *prunus*)

Deep-water design, Buddhist symbols in waves

Sun: position left

No. 17

Inv. no. A/5541

Official's rank badge. Military. Bear (5th rank), male

30 x 30 cm

Square type

Acquisition: Růžena Trnožková, donated in 1937

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, *kesi* technique with painted details, metallic thread

Colour: dominant – blue

Border: swastika pattern

Background: swastika in geometric pattern covering the whole background, clouds, 8 Buddhist and Taoist symbols, bats, flowers (peonies, *prunus*)

Deep-water design

Animal: positioned on a hill above the central rock

Sun: position right

III. Embroidered badges

a) With grid, scroll and clouds pattern

No. 18

Inv. no. A/1792

Official's rank badge. Civil. Mandarin duck (7th rank), male

1 + 2 parts sewn together to form a single piece: 28,5 x 27,5 cm one badge

Square type

Acquisition: Rudolf Dvořák, donated in 1961

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, satin weave, golden metallic thread, embroidery (satin stitch)

Colour: dominant – blue and green with hints of red

Border: swastika pattern

Background: grid pattern with swastikas and flowers covering the whole background, clouds, Taoist and Buddhist symbols in circular composition, fungus, flowers (unspecified)

Deep-water design

Sun: position left

No. 19

Inv. no. A/4598

Official's rank badge. Civil. Silver pheasant (5th rank), female

30 x 30 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1966 from a private owner

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, satin weave, metallic thread couching

Colour: dominant – golden

Border: scroll patterns and flowers

Background: dense scroll patten, clouds, Taoist symbols, bats, flowers (peonies, *prunus*)

Deep-water design

Sun: position right, red coral beads

No. 20

Inv. no. A/4595

Official's rank badge. Civil. Wild goose (4th rank), female

Two parts sewn together: 43 x 43,5 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: not known

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, satin weave, embroidery (satin stitch), metallic thread couching

Colour: dominant – blue

Border: scroll pattern and Buddhist symbols

Background: clouds, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition, bats, flowers (peonies, *prunus*, magnolia)

Deep-water design

Sun: position right

No. 21

Inv. no. A/5557

Official's rank badge. Military. Tiger (4th rank), female

Two parts: 29 x 27,5 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: not known

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, satin weave, embroidery (satin stitch), metallic thread couching

Colour: multicoloured

Border: bats and stylized character *shou* (longevity)

Background: clouds, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Deep-water design

Animal: appliqué

Sun: position left

No. 22

Inv. no. A/5555

Official's rank badge. Military. Tiger (4th rank), female

29 x 27 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: not known

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, satin weave, metallic thread couching, embroidery (satin stitch)

Colour: vivid multicoloured

Border: bats and stylized character *shou* (longevity)

Background: clouds pattern covering the whole background, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Deep-water design

Animal: appliqué

Sun: position left

b) Repetitive cloud and circular ornament pattern

No. 23

Inv. no. 29073

Official's rank badge. Civil. Wild goose (4th rank), male

31 x 30 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1974 from a private owner

Dated: circa 1890

Material: silk, satin weave, metallic thread couching, embroidery (satin stitch)

Colour: dominant – blue

Border: bats and stylized character *shou* (longevity)

Background: repetitive clouds pattern covering the whole background, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Deep-water design

Animal: appliqué

Sun: position right (appliqué)

Note: For datation see Haig and Shelton: 87

No. 24

Inv. no. A/4596

Official's rank badge. Civil. Silver pheasant (5th rank), female

1 + 2 parts: 28,5 x 31 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1966 from a private owner

Dated: circa 1890

Material: silk, satin weave, embroidery, metallic golden thread couching

Colour: dominant – blue

Border: bats and stylized character *shou* (longevity)

Background: repetitive cloud pattern, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Deep-water design

Animal: appliqué

Sun: position right, red coral beads

Note: For datation, see Haig and Shelton: 114

No. 25

Inv. no. A/26219

Official's rank badge. Civil. Crane (1st rank), male

Two parts sewn together: 24 x 30 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1997 from a private owner

Dated: circa 1890

Material: silk, satin weave, embroidery (satin stitch), golden metallic thread couching

Colour: dominant – blue, golden

Border: bats and stylized character *shou* (longevity)

Background: repetitive circular pattern, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Deep-water design

Sun: position left

No. 26

Inv. no. 46681

Official's rank badge. Civil. Silver pheasant (5th rank), male

Two front parts and one back sewn together to form a single piece: 57 x 26,8 cm, one badge

28,4, x 26,8 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1977 from a "Klenoty" shop

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, satin weave, golden and silver metallic thread couching

Colour: dominant – blue and golden

Border: bats and stylized character *shou* (longevity)

Background: repetitive circular pattern covering the whole background, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Deep-water design

Animal: appliqué

Sun: none

c) Cloud and scroll pattern (in blue colour)

No. 27

Inv. no. 47645

Official's rank badge. Civil. Peacock (3rd rank), male

31 x 29 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1982 from a "Klenoty" shop

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, satin weave, embroidery (satin stitch)

Colours: dominant – blue and green

Border: flowers with hooked tendrils

Background: dense clouds and scrolls cover the whole background, stylized bats, Buddhist symbols, flowers (peony, lotus, *prunus*, narcissus, magnolia)

Deep-water design

Sun: position left

Note: Jackson and Hugus: 152

No. 28

Inv. no. 47644

Official's rank badge. Civil. Peacock (3rd rank), male

Two parts, 29 x 16 cm a piece, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1982 from a "Klenoty" shop

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, satin weave, metallic golden thread couching, embroidery (satin stitch)

Colour: dominant – blue and green

Border: flowers with hooked tendrils

Background: dense clouds pattern with scrolls covering the whole background, stylized bats,

Buddhist symbols, flowers (peony, lotus, *prunus*, narcissus)

Deep-water design

Sun: position left

Note: Jackson and Hugus: 152

IV. Gauze badges**No. 29**

Inv. no. 46620

Official's rank badge. Empty background

One piece: 27,5 x 24 cm

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1980 from a "Klenoty" shop

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, gauze, embroidery (counted stitch)

Colour: dominant – vivid colours, aniline

Border: meander and scroll pattern

Background: swastika pattern covering the whole background, with a large bat, two peaches with leaves

Deep-water design

Animal: none

Sun: none

No. 30

Inv. no. 46619

Official's rank badge. Empty background

Two parts, uncut: 27,5 x 24 cm, underlined

Square type. Transitive type

Acquisition: purchased in 1980 from a "Klenoty" shop

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, gauze, embroidery (counted stitch)

Colour: vivid colours, multicoloured, aniline dyes

Border: meander and scroll pattern

Background: swastika pattern covering the whole background, with a large bat, two peaches with leaves

Deep-water design

Sun: none
Animal: none

V. Metallic thread badges

No. 31

Inv. no. 46621
Official's rank badge. Empty background
Two parts on one piece of cloth, uncut: 27,5 x 24 cm
Square type
Acquisition: purchased in 1980 from a "Klenoty" shop
Dated: after 1850 (1890–1900?)
Material: silk, twill weave, metallic thread couching (golden and silver with green and red thread)
Colour: dominant – golden
Border: meander
Background: two *foshou* (*Citrus medica* "Sarcodactylis"), a leaf and a pomegranate
Deep-water design
Sun: none
Animal: none
Note: for datation see Haig and Shelton: 115

No. 32

Inv. no. 46622
Official's rank badge. Empty background
Two parts on one piece of cloth, uncut: 27,5 x 24 cm
Square type
Acquisition: purchased in 1980 from a "Klenoty" shop
Dated: after 1850 (1890–1900?)
Material: silk, twill weave, metallic thread couching (golden and silver with green and red thread)
Colour: dominant – golden
Border: meander
Background: two *foshou* (*Citrus medica* "Sarcodactylis"), a leaf and a pomegranate
Deep-water design
Animal: none
Sun: none
Note: for datation see Haig and Shelton: 115

No. 33

Inv. no. 20805
Official's rank badge. Military. Lion (2nd rank), male
1 back + 2 front parts sewn together: 23 x 25 cm, underlined
Square type
Acquisition: purchased in 1957 from a private owner
Dated: after 1850 (1890–1900?)
Material: silk, satin weave, metallic thread couching (golden and silver with green and red thread)

Colour: dominant – golden
Border: meander pattern and stylized character *shou* (longevity)
Background: tulip flower, peony, leaves (arrowroot, *Maranta arundinacea*, ?)
Deep-water design
Animal: appliqué
Sun: position right

No. 34

Inv. no. 29038
Official's rank badge. Military. Leopard (3rd rank), male
Two parts sewn together: 31 x 30 cm, underlined
Square type
Acquisition: purchased in 1983 from a private owner
Dated: late 19th century (1890–1900?)
Material: silk, twill weave, metallic thread couching (golden and silver with green and red thread)
Colour: dominant – golden
Border: meander, scroll and *ruyi* pattern
Background: two *foshou*, two pomegranates, two large peaches
Deep-water design
Animal: appliqué
Sun: position left on a *foshou* (appliqué)
Note: Jackson and Hugus: 191–192

No. 35

Inv. no. 29037
Official's rank badge. Military. Leopard (3rd rank), male
31 x 30 cm, underlined
Square type
Acquisition: purchased in 1983 from a private owner
Dated: late 19th century (1890–1900?)
Material: silk, satin weave, metallic thread couching (golden and silver with green and red thread)
Colour: dominant – golden
Border: meander, scroll and *ruyi* pattern
Background: two *foshou*, two pomegranates, two large peaches
Deep-water design
Animal: appliqué
Sun: position left on a *foshou* (appliqué)
Note: Jackson and Hugus: 191–192

No. 36

Inv. no. 29039
Official's rank badge. Civil. Crane (1st rank), male
31 x 30 cm
Square type
Acquisition: purchased in 1983 from a private owner

Dated: late 19th century (1890–1900?)

Material: silk, twill weave, metallic thread couching (golden and silver with green and red thread)

Colour: dominant – golden and silver

Border: bats and stylized character *shou* (longevity)

Background: dense clouds pattern covering the whole background, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Deep-water design

Animal: appliqué, with Pekin knot

Sun: position left

Note 1: Jackson and Hugus: 145–147

Note 2: The spectrograph analysis of the metallic thread couching shows three types of the metallic thread: a silvered copper thread, a silvered copper thread with a small amount of gold, and a gold-plated copper thread with silver.⁹

No. 37

Inv. no. 29040

Official's rank badge. Civil. Crane (1st rank), male

Two parts: 30 x 16 cm, underlined

Square type

Acquisition: purchased in 1983 from a private owner

Dated: late 19th century (1890–1900?)

Material: silk, twill weave, metallic thread couching (golden and silver with green and red thread)

Colour: dominant – golden and silver

Border: bats and stylized character *shou* (longevity)

Background: dense clouds pattern covering the whole background, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Deep-water design

Animal: appliqué, with Pekin knot

Sun: position left

Note: Jackson and Hugus: 145–147

VI. Transitive and roundel badges

a) Transitive badges

No. 38

Inv. no. A/17178

Official's rank badge. Empty background

Two parts, uncut: 22 x 25,5 cm

Transitive form between square and roundel type

Acquisition: purchased in 1980 from a private owner

Dated: late 19th century

⁹ The analysis was provided by Ing. Jan Josef (Preventive Conservation, Section of Deputy for Central Collection-building and Exhibition Activity of the National Museum) and Ing. Jana Kadeřábková (Conservation Department of the National Museum-Náprstek Museum).

Material: silk, metallic thread couching (golden and silver with green, purple and pink thread)

Colour: dominant – golden with pink and green

Border: meander, scroll and *ruyi* pattern, flower and scroll design in the corners

Background: dense clouds pattern, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Deep-water design

Sun: position right

Animal: none

b) Roundels

No. 39

Inv. no. A/16371

Official's rank badge. Civil. Golden pheasant (2nd rank), female

Ø 32 cm, underlined

Roundel type

Acquisition: purchased in 1984 from a private owner

Dated: late 19th century

Material: silk, satin weave, metallic thread couching (golden and silver with green and red thread)

Colour: dominant – golden

Border: meander, scroll and *ruyi* pattern

Background: dense clouds pattern covering the whole background, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Deep-water design

Animal: appliqué

Sun: position right

No. 40

Inv. no. A/16370

Official's rank badge. Civil. Golden pheasant (2nd rank), female

Ø 32 cm

Roundel type

Acquisition: purchased in 1984 from a private owner

Dated: after 1850

Material: silk, satin weave, metallic thread couching (golden and silver with green and red thread)

Colour: dominant – golden

Border: meander, scroll and *ruyi* pattern

Background: dense clouds pattern covering the whole background, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Deep-water design

Animal: appliqué

Sun: position right (silver metallic tread couching with red silk thread)

No. 41

Inv. no. 29119

Official's rank badge. Civil. Golden pheasant (2nd rank), female

Two parts sewn together, Ø 29 cm, underlined

Roundel type

Acquisition: not known

Dated: late 19th century

Material: silk, satin weave, embroidery (satin stitch)

Colour: vivid, multicoloured

Border: meander pattern

Background: clouds, 8 Buddhist symbols in circular composition

Sea surface (deep-water design missing), pearls in waves

Sun: position right

c) Roundels with dragon design

No. 42

Inv. no. A/4701

Nobleman's insignia

Two parts sewn together, Ø 30,5 cm, underlined

Roundel type

Acquisition: Růžena Trnožková, donated in 1937

Dated: 19th century

Material: silk, *kesi* technique, metallic golden thread

Colours: dominant – multicoloured

Background: clouds pattern, bats, a flaming pearl

Sea surface (deep-water design missing), with pearls and circular and rectangular ornaments

Animal: walking dragon en-profile with five claws, head turns to the left, walks to the right

No. 43

Inv. no. 29043

Nobleman's insignia

Ø 24 cm

Roundel type

Acquisition: purchased in 1983 from a private owner

Dated: 19th century

Material: silk, embroidery (satin stitch), metallic golden thread couching

Colours: dominant – golden, blue, brown, white, violet

Background: cloud pattern, with pearls

Sea surface (deep-water design missing)

Animal: five-claws walking dragon with horns en-profile, walks left, turns right

Note: Framed before museum purchase

No. 44

Inv. no. 29042

Nobleman's insignia

Ø 24 cm

Roundel type

Acquisition: purchased in 1983 from a private owner

Dated: 19th century

Material: silk, embroidery (satin stitch), metallic golden thread couching

Colours: dominant – golden, blue, brown, white, violet

Background: cloud pattern, with pearls

Sea surface (deep-water design missing)

Animal: five-claws walking dragon with horns en-profile, walks right, turns left

Note: Framed before museum purchase

VII. Others**No. 45**

Inv. no. A/1791

Lady's pouch made of two badges (Military. Leopard, 3rd rank, male)

27 x 27 cm

Square type

Acquisition: Rudolf Dvořák. Donated in 1961

Dated: after 1850 (1890?)

Material: silk, satin weave, metallic golden thread couching

Colour: dominant – golden

Border: scroll pattern and flowers (only on the upper rim)

Background: scroll pattern, bats, swastikas, fungus, flowers (unspecified), Taoist symbols

Deep-water design

Sun: position right, coral beads

Note: for datation see Haig and Shelton: 89

No. 46

Inv. no. A/17177

Official's rank appliqué (animal). Civil. Crane (1st rank), female

Two pieces. 12 x 12 cm

Acquisition: purchased in 1982 by a private owner

Material: silk, twill weave, metallic silver thread couching, embroidery (Pekin knot). Paper

Animal: (appliqué)



No. 1



No. 2



No. 3



No. 4



No. 5



No. 6



No. 7



No. 8



No. 9



No. 10



No. 11



No. 12



No. 13



No. 14



No. 15a, 15 b



No. 16



No. 17



No. 18



No. 19



No. 20



No. 21a, 21 b



No. 22



No. 23



No. 24



No. 25



No. 26



No. 27



No. 28



No. 29



No. 30



No. 31



No. 32



No. 33



No. 34



No. 35



No. 36



No. 37



No. 38



No. 39



No. 40



No. 41



No. 42



No. 43



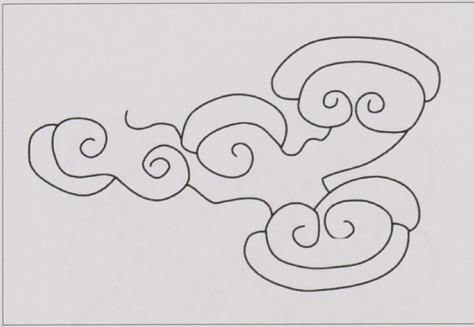
No. 44



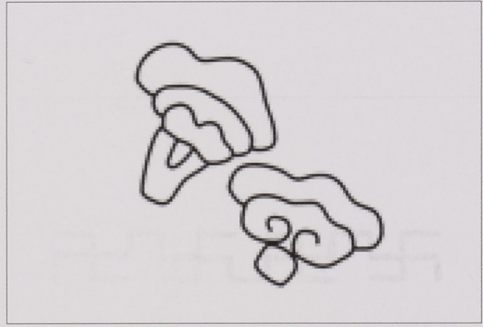
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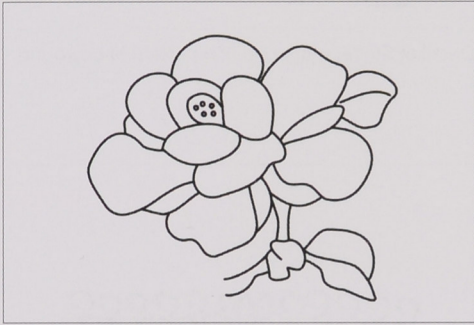
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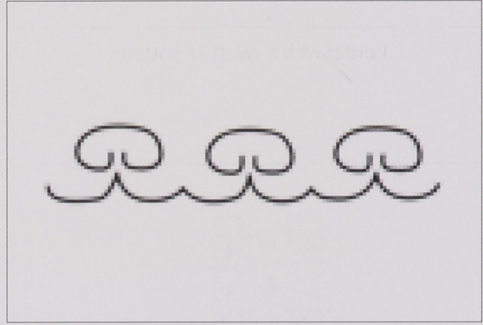
Clouds on the background



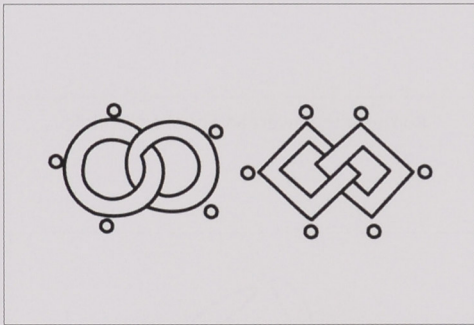
Two *lingzhi* fungi



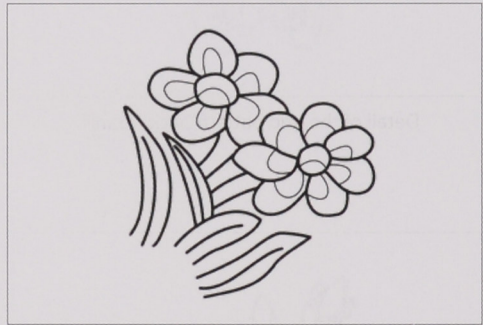
Peony



Border with *ruyi*-like pattern



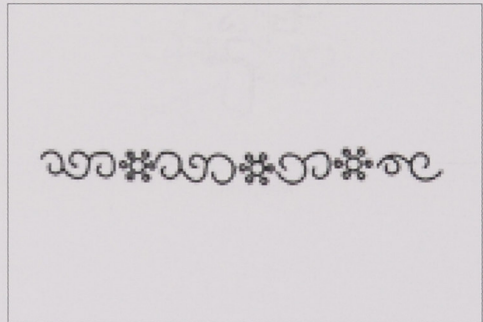
Circular and rectangular ornaments



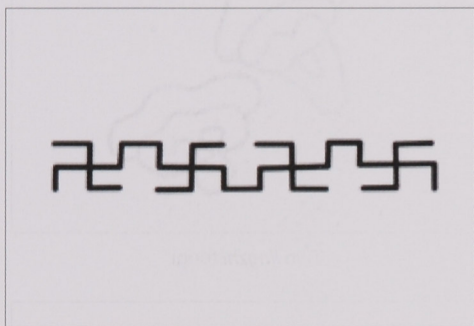
Narcissus



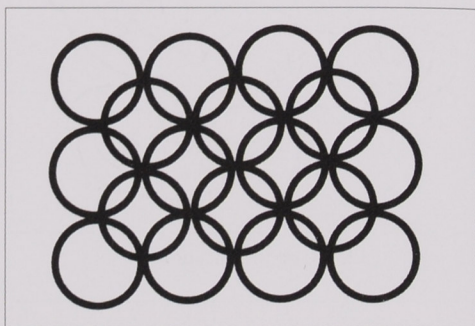
Stylized *xi* (joy) character



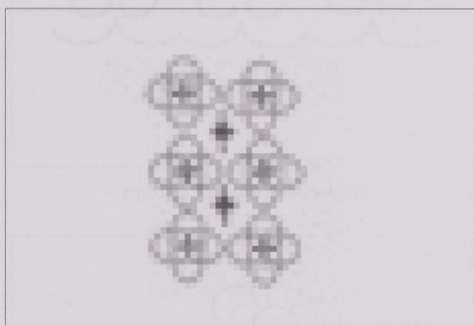
Border with a scroll and flower pattern



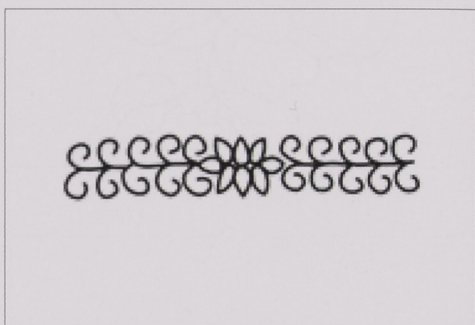
Border with a swastika pattern



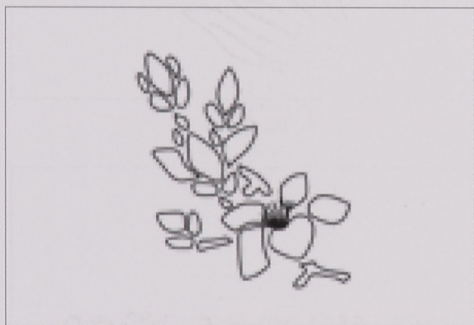
Detail of the repetitive circular pattern background



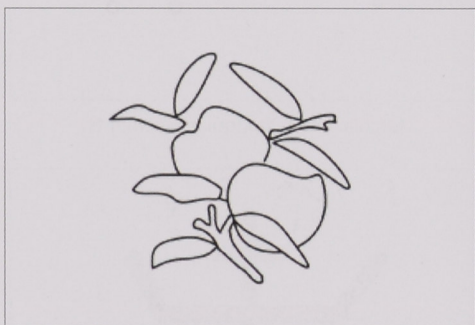
Detail of the grid pattern background



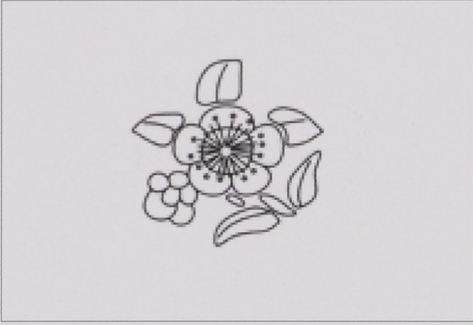
Border with flowers and hooked tendrils



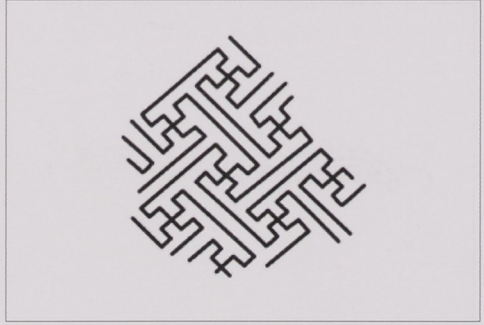
Magnolia



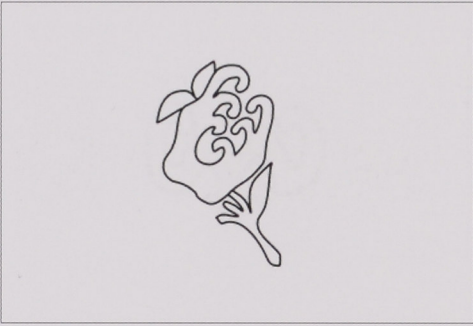
Peaches



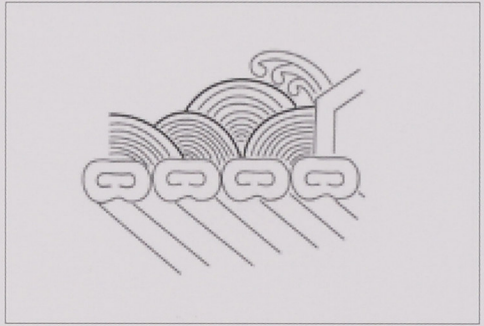
Prunus flower



Swastika pattern background



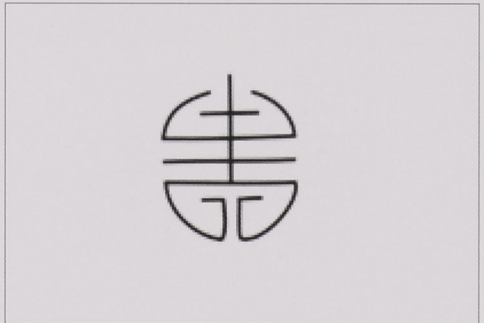
Foshou, *Citrus medica* "Sarcodactylis"



Deep-water design with turbulent waves



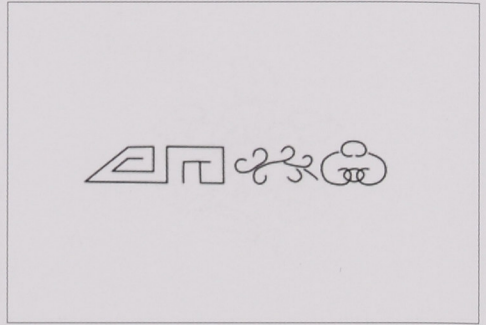
Pomegranate



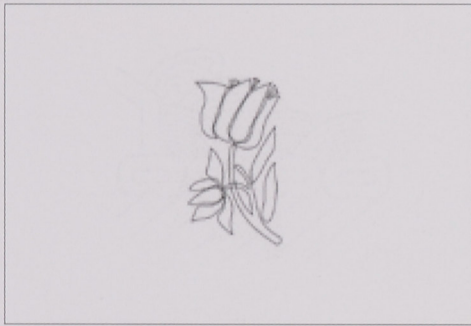
Stylized *shou* (longevity) character



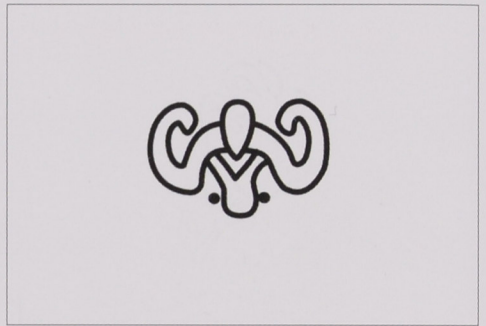
Border with a meander pattern



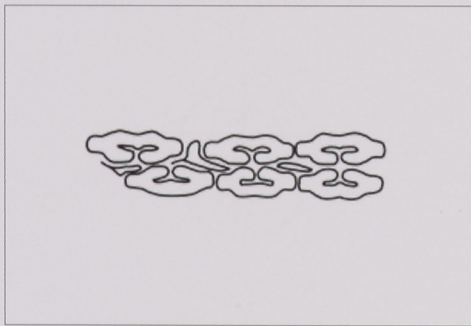
Border with a meander, a scroll and ruyi pattern



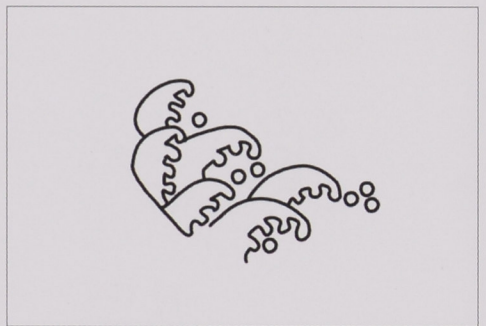
Tulip flower



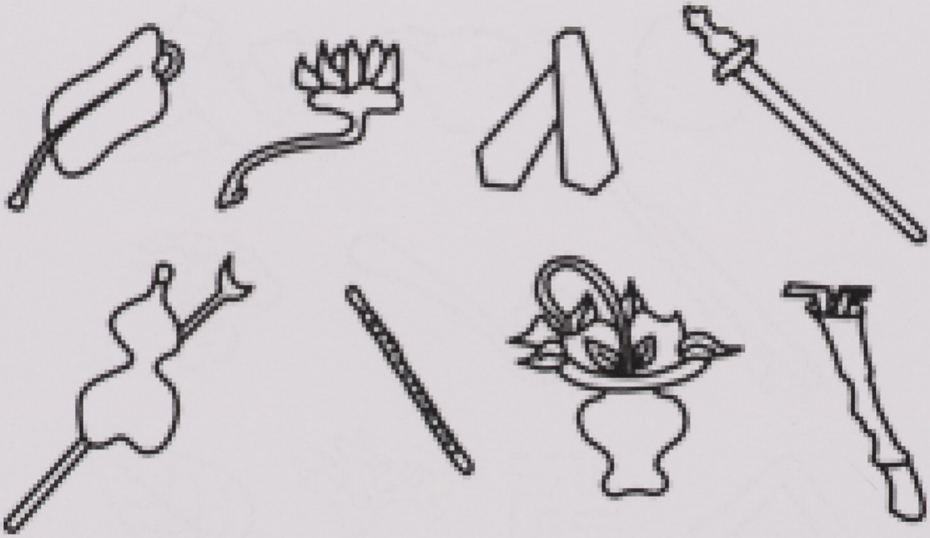
A bat from a border



Clouds in the background



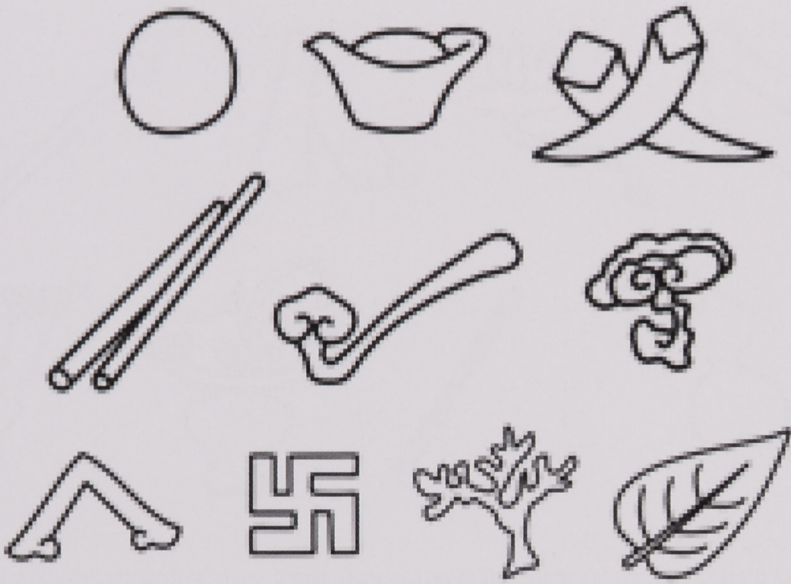
Pearls jutting from the waves



Symbols of the "Eight Taoist Immortals" (fan, lotus, castanets, sword, gourd and crutch, flute, flower basket, bamboo rattle)



The "Eight Buddhist Emblems" (wheel of the law, endless knot, vase, lotus flower, royal canopy, state umbrella, twin fish, conch shell)



The "Eight Jewels" (pearl, ingot, rhinoceros horns, scroll paintings, *ruyi* sceptre, sacred fungus, musical stone, swastika, coral, Artemisia leaf)