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DESIGNS OF THE OLD JAPANESE

OR LUCKY, SYMBOLS

NORIGINATION TO TOKYO

(多)

(With four plates).

According to an old record, the paper money was for the first time issued by the Emperor Godaigo in the first year of Kenbu (1884 A.D.) to pay the imperial expenditure. But this, being not well guaranteed, was not welcomed by the people and very soon fell into disuse. This system was since for a long time neglected, but coming down to the Tokugawa period, the paper money had to be issued by each clan to relieve the financial condition. There were various kinds of it and they had many different designs which are treated in the following lines.

It is, however, necessary to have a general idea of the Tokugawa period, in which the paper money in question was issued, and a certain knowledge of its capacity in connection with its circulation, before we enter into the main subject.

FEUDAL SYSTEM OF THE TOKUGAWA PERIOD.

The Tokugawa period includes about three centuries of peace under a feudal system. It is really wonderful to meet with such long peaceful ages of feudalism in the history of Japan, and also not less marvelous in the universal history, because the world never saw such a long life of feudalism. Now it may be questioned how it occurred in Japan. Its system was indeed nothing but the result attained after many years experience of feudalism under various conditions. The first Japanese feudal system was established by the Minamoto family on the close of the twelfth century, to be succeeded very soon by the Höjö-family which continued about one century; and then the Ashikaga feudal period appeared.

The later part of the Ashikaga period was the worst age of feudalism Japan ever experienced.

The whole empire was then divided and sighed in the clutches of many powerful warriors. Every chief was always at vigilance to catch any opportunity to fight against his neighbour to aggrandize his own domain. Under such circumstances the whole Empire was in a great confusion. As a rule, when the worse is reached, it naturally turns back into the better side. Here this was also the case, and it began to be seen in the person of a great general called Oda Nobunaga who gave all his efforts to bring the whole Empire under his reign.

But unfortunately half way, he fell under the treacherous sword of his under-

general Akechi Mitsuhide. His incompleted work was, however, achieved by his general Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

His achievement was but of very short duration. Indeed these great generals were only forerunners to pave the way for the long peace of the Tokugawa period.

Now the Tokugawa period under discussion was established by an able great statesman, Tokugawa Iyeyasu in the beginning of the 17th century.

On the outset of his regime the deliberate care was directed how to manage all the baronial chieves in order to avoid their conspiracy against the Tokugawa banner.

There were two branches among those feudal barons, one being the surrendered barons, and another, Iyeyasu's direct subjects. Iyeyasu distributed his own reliable barons in the neighbourhood of the surrendered and powerful barons to watch them. Moreover all the feudal barons were obliged to have their mansions in Yedo (present Tokyo) where was the Shogun's seat. And in those mansions their families had to live in a sense something like human mortigate. Furthermore, all the Daimyos themselves were requested to pay a visit to the Shogun in certain intervals, and to live for certain terms in Yedo. Thus the feudal system being established on a secured and sagacious foundation, the universal tranquility was the natural effect. As a rule, the peace was followed by the prosperity of architecture, literature, fine and industrial arts. An unprecedented phenomenon was thus made out for this universal peace.

All classes of society shared in the civilization of the time. The civilization of this period was therefore popular and in one sence vulgar and flowery.

The wild indulgence of all the people in the luxurious life often led the world into the financial strait.

Under such circomstances the issue of paper money was necessitated in each clan. And the Shogun's government was obliged to allow its issue for each clan. It was circulated only in the domain of its issuing clan. The face value of it was promised to be paid on demand in silver, copper, or in gold coins which circulated throughout the whole Empire.

There was also a kind which was promised to be paid on demand in rice, manure, or in some other products; on some of this kind the corresponding value was recorded together with the quantity of material, and on some other only the quantity of this was recorded. For example, there were some on which were recorded "two umbrellas" and nothing more. But all these kinds were circulated in the same capacity of money as the former in the limitted domain. The business of the issue of paper money was entrusted to some private persons by the lord of its clan.

MEANING AND DERIVATION OF DESIGNS.

We have given a general idea of the Tokugawa period and the paper money. We think it is now proper time to proceed to our principal subject.

The most designs on the paper money were popular subjects also in other art products.

It is very interesting to see how much those designs are related with the popular idea of wealth and happiness. We are, therefore, going to inquire the meaning of those

designs and their derivations, so that some light may be thrown over the phase of culture in this period.

We will first enumerate here most common and note-worthy kinds of design as follows: Shichi Fukujin or seven gods of luck, cranes, tortoise, bamboo, pine tree, plum tree, Horaizan, Takara-bune or ship loaded with treasures, Takara-dzukushi or design composed of various symbols of treasures, Lin or unicorn, dragon, tiger, lion, Fukki or Fu-Hsi, Kauko-dori, Idaten (Veda), Monju (Mañjusri), and so forth.

Shichi Fukujin are composed of Ebisu, Daikoku, Bishamon, Benzai-teu, Jurōjin, Fukurokuju, and Hotei. Some of these gods of fortune were introduced from abroad very early, and some were originated in the early japanese mythology. It is, however, in a relatively later period that these seven gods became one company.

Perhaps it might be in the Ashikaga period, and the number seven seems to have depended on a phrase in Buddhistic scripture called Ni-ō-kyō in which it is said that if the doctrine of Ni-ō-kyō is properly understood and observed as taught, seven calamities will instantly disappear, and seven fortunes will come immediately. What are then the seven fortunes? They were said to be longevity, wealthiness, popularity, purity, reverence with love, dignity, and generosity. To personify these seven aspirations, the above introduced seven gods of luck are said to have been selected. And each of these gods was and is still individually worshipped by the common people.

For example, in Tokyo there are seven places where they are enshrined respectively. People call round these shrines especially on New Year.

At the same time they were favourite subjects for the painter in olden times, and some of them were represented in caligraved subjects. Some were made as dolls, or ornaments, or even trade marks. The figures of Ebisu, Daikoku, and Hotei have been especially popular.

Ebisu is generally represented, bearded, smiling, with a cap called Oriyeboshi, clothed with a Japanese robe, sitting at a bank on his crossed legs, and holding a fishing rod and a big Tai fish, as seen in fig. 1 Tai. IX.

Ebisu is also called Ebisu-saburo, and this deity seems to have been in most intimate relation with the Japanese race. His rame Ebisu implies some meaning of smiling, and the word Saburo tells that he is a third son. His parent is not known, but he is identified with Hiruko who was the third son of the Japanese creative god and goddess according to the ancient tradition.

According to another tradition he is identified with Hikohodemi-no-mikoto who was also the third son born out of fire. The legend of Hiruko and Hikohodemi-no-mikoto alike relates to something about ocean. Considering all the legends and traditions about them, we may conclude that *Ebisu* is a mythological deity born out of the primitive sun conception, concerning the creation of the universe.

In such conception water and fire are always taken into account.

His fish symbolizes that he has the fortune of sea; and the tradition that he flowed away into the Western sea reveals us some archaic conception of the setting sun. Such legend of him was often told in old stories or songs. He was very early enshrined and is still attracting peoples favour and belief.

About the Ashikaga period (the 14th and 15th century), it seems that he happened to be one of seven gods of luck. He is often represented together with Daikoku.

Daikoku is generally represented with a smiling broad face with a headdress, having a great bag on his back, a hammer in his right hand, and seated on two straw rice bags, as shown in fig. 2 Taf. IX. This was originally a god of the Indian Brahmanism, Maha Kala, and was introduced into Japan with Buddhism. But in Japan it was mixed up with the Japanese deity Okuni-nushi-no-mikoto (Deity master of the great land) by a Buddhist priest.

This amalgamation seems to have originated in a false coincidence of both names, Okuni and Maha kala, because Okuni can be pronounced *Daikoku* which then phonetically means great black, accordingly corresponding with Maha Kala, as maha means great and kala black.

Maha Kala in Hinduism and Buddhism has had many different representations and attributes. And also in Japan various representations were made. At present, however, we are not going to study those distinctions and details very deeply. The figure of this deity such as illustrated here was most common in this period, and its representation owes to the Japanese conception to answer to the popular desire of getting wealth and happiness.

Putting aside the detailed derivation of this deity, it is not less interesting to take the most popular representation as illustrative of popular conception, because the deep esoteric meaning is always unaccessible to the common people. And this representation was most common also on the paper money in view; and his surrounding space is often filled with precious things called *Takara-sukushi*, pine trees, bamboos, clouds, or rice bags all in conventional and formal delineation. His large bag on his back symbolizes his wealth, and his hammer, his subduing power of land, or more popularly treasure-giving authority, and the rice bags his tranquilising power.

For such attributes, this figure was once very popularly worshipped in home shrine, and it continues still so in some degree in association with wealth.

There was once a funny custom in connection with his figure. In the olden times beggars were the masks of *Daikoku* and hammers in hands and called round upon every door, addressing themselves gods of fortune, to beg things on new Year.

Bishamon-teu is represented with a flerce expression, in full armour, carrying in his left hand a small stupa-shaped shrine, and in the right a lance, as shown in fig. 8 Taf. IX. This deity is originally the Hindu god of riches, Kuvera, and is also the regent of the North, one of the four Maharajahs (the four supporters of the universe) in Buddhism. He was introduced into our land already in the sixth century with Buddhism. Since he was very widely believed in as the protector of Buddhism. His stupa in which a so called bone (Sarira) of Buddha is enshrined, symbolizes the Buddhism and the lance, his defending power of it. This god is said to have been taken into the seven gods of fortune as representing the dignity and as the giver of wealth, and from the Tokugawa period he has been very popularly worshipped.

He is sometimes represented with centipedes. The meaning of centipedes with him is not known, but it seems to have been added in Japan. Bishamon-do temple in Kagura-zaka, Tokyo is still very popular and familiar to the people of Tokyo.

Benzai-ten is the only female deity among Shichi Fukujin, and is variously represented. In some cases she is represented with a musical instrument as shown in fig. 4 Taf. IX, in some with the sword and tama (jewel), and in some other eight handed, with vajra hilted

sword, chakra, axe, bow, arrow and so forth. This goddess is very often depicted with dragons, or serpents, and with water, see fig. 5 Taf. X. She is the equivalent with the Hindu goddess Saraswati, the consort of Brahma.

We shall quote a few lines on Saraswati from Moor's "Hindu Pantheon": "Saraswati, whose husband was the creator Brahma, possesses the powers of Imagination and Invention, which may justly be termed creative. She is, therefore, adorned as the patroness of fine arts, especially of Music and Rhetoric; as the inventress of Sanacrit language, of the Devanagry characters, and of sciences which writing perpetuates. The name Saraswati means flowing; applicable both to river and the goddess of eloquence. She is usually drawn either two or four handed, holding her Vina, or lyre, a lotos, a cup, and a scroll, or playing on her Vina with two hands; the others empty".

With these attributes and symbols as quoted above, she is represented also in Japan as seen in our illustrations, but as the goddess of fortune, it seems she is mingled with an other goddess Kichijō-ten, equivalent with Hindu goddess Laksimi, "who is considered as the goddess of riches, and would be invoked for increase of wealth by a desiring Hindoo." Bensai-ten is worshipped more popularly for the rich-attribute, and even to-day the amulet of this attribute is still conferred in a great number by the Benten shrine at Shinobasu pond near Uyeno park Tokyo, on the day of snake.

It is also a noteworthy fact that the most famous shrines of this goddess are erected at the vicinity of water or in a pond. For example, as the Benzai-ten at Yenojima island off Kamakura, the Benzai-ten at Chikubu-jima island in the Biwako lake, or as above introduced Benzai-ten in the Shinobazu pond.

Juro-jin is the god of longevity originated in China. He is depicted with solem mien and with a heavy gray beard. He wears a chinese costume and a peculiar head dress, carries a roll or makimono, either in hand or attached to his staff, and a fan in the other hand, and is often followed by a deer as shown in fig. 6 Taf. X.

A deer or antelope was a favourite subject with the moon in arts and songs since much earlier period in Japan. And also in the Hindu race antelope was an attribute of the god Chandra, the moon.

Fukurokuju is represented with the more elongated brain pan, than Jurō-jin, and a little smiling. He is often depicted with a tortoise or with a crane, which are said to be his favourite attendants. But on the whole, Jurō-jin and Fukurokuju resemble each other, see fig. 7, u. 6. As to his attendants the crane and tortoise, we will describe them later. Jurō-jin and Fukurokuju are traditionally said to have been the incarnations of stars of longevity, according to the Chinese conception of the astronomical mythology. The idea to foretell the human affairs by the astronomical phenomena, seems to be of Chinese origin. And the appearance of the star of longevity or so called south-pole-old-man star was very remotely believed to be the omen of the tranquility of the world. It is also the chinese conception that long lived man has the elongated head. The portraits of Jurō-jin and Fukurokuju seem to have been brought to Japan with the Chinese Buddhistic paintings for the first time in the Ashikaga period. The oldest portrait of Juro-jin now remaining in Japan seems to be that painted by the famous priest painter Sessitu. These two gods are enlisted into the seven gods of luck only for the sake of longevity, because their legendary personages are said to have been very poor.

Hotei is the only historical personage among the Shichi Fuku-jin. He was a chinese

priest in the 10th century, and was called Putai in chinese. He lived at Ming Chu (the present Nimpo in Chenkiang) and died in March, 917 A.D. He is generally represented as fat, almost beyond reason, with bulky stomach, joyously laughing, and carrying the linen bag (in chinese, Putai), in which he carried his scanty belongings and whatever edibles given to him, see fig. 8 Taf. X. It seems that he was a very popular priest in the Sung dynasty, and his portrait was widely painted in China after his death. He was often depicted playing with many children. It seems he paid no care for worldly things, and claimed himself to be the incarnation of Maitreya, the Tuture Buddha. And it seems that he was taken into the company of Shichi Fukujin for his disinterestedness and for his ever smiling attitude in whatever occasion.

These seven gods of luck are also often represented in company as shown in fig. 9 Taf. XI. Next come the crane and tortoise, and the grouped trio the pine, bamboo and prunus. Indeed only the enumeration of these names will give a lucky association to the people of Japan. They have been really popular and highly appreciated subjects of poems, paintings, and designs for various things, and especially of those to be used in lucky occassions. It is, therefore, very natural that these happy emblems were also applied to the paper money in question, see fig. 10 Taf. XI.

The crane and tortoise are both good augury and emblems of longevity, and were believed to live thousands of years, and were recognized by Chinese as sacred and divine from very remote ages.

Horaisan, one of the fortunate Islands of Paridise, or the home of ever lasting life, conceived by the Taoist, is, therefore, necessarily represented with the crane, tortoise, and pine trees. The picture of Horaisan was also sometimes printed on the paper money under discussion. The above mentioned grouped trio pine, bamboo, and prunus, were also of the taoistic idea as the sacred plants emblematic of longevity and happiness, see the bottom of the fig. 2. and 10. This trio was originally very much appreciated by Chinese as the triad in the early spring, the first two owing to their ever green foliage and the prunus because it throws out flowery twigs from its leafless stalks and adds the beauty to the trio. These emblems were very early introduced into Japan, and in the Tokugawa period they were most popularly used by the people in general.

Takara-bune und Takara-zukushi—Takara-bune (see the bottom of the fig. 7) is a treasure ship. The ship is loaded with various symbols of the traditional treasures, such as the hat of invisibility (kakuregasa), rolls of brocade (orimono), a purse of money inexhaustible (kansbukuro), the sacred keys of the godown of gods (kagi), clove (choji), Daikokus hammer (tsuchi), the lucky rain coat (kakure-mino), coral branches (Sangoji), sacred gem (Nyoi hoshu), etc., or sometimes with the seven gods of luck.

As to this Takara-bune, there is a quaint custom still to-day among the people. It is this: a picture of this treasure ship is placed under the pillow on the night of January 2nd as it is believed to bring a first lucky dream in the New Year. Takara-sukushi is a kind of design composed of the above enumerated symbols of treasure as shown at the middle of fig. 1 and at the bottom of fig. 3.

About the origin of these representations of treasure, it can not be certainly traced back, but it seems that they may have originated in the tributary ships from Korea in ancient time, and that they are also connected with the seven gods of fortune.

Lin or unicorn, phoenix, and dragon are the three of the so-called four sacred sym-

bols of good augury from very remote ages in China, together with the tortoise which is already described above.

Line is the fabulous animal, the symbol of all goodness, and benevolence. He is represented with the body of a deer, bushy tail of etc., the hoefs of a horse, one horn etc., see the bottom of fig. 11 Taf. XI. It is traditionally believed that his feet do not tread on any living things, and do not harm any living grass. His isolated horn is said to represent one supreme sovereign in a peaceful age. Its end is covered with flesh, to show that the creature, while able for war, wishes to have peace. He is supposed to appear, inaugurating a golden age, and his appearance is often recorded in Chinese classical books.

Ho-5 or phoenix is generally represented as something like a male peacock as shown in the upper part of the fig. 11. But it is described by the ancients as having the head of a cock, the beak of a sparrow, a neck like a moving snake, feathers like dragon scales piled one upon another, wings of unicorn, and a tail like that of a fish. Its plumage is brilliant with all the colors, the whole effect being one of supernatural beauty. It is said to ascend for nine thousand miles into heaven. The bird makes its home on the Kiri tree (Pawlownia imperialis), and lives only on the fruit of bamboo. It is said never to feed upon live insects nor to tread upon live grasses; hence it has become an emblem of holiness and mercy. It is further said to make its appearance only when a sovereign is on the throne whose rule is full of love and mercy, free from the destruction of life of man or the lower animals, and whose people are in enjoyment of peace and prosperity. It is because of these attributes that the phoenix has been made a decorative motif for objects of dignity and importance.

The word phoenix in Chinese with that of dragon is often used in China to describe the personality of the Emperor or of high personages. Also in Japan it was very remotely known, and in olden time, such as the top of the Imperial carriage was crowned with a figure of phoenix or an Imperial court chamber was called Phoenix room. Buddhistic temples were also sometimes modelled after its form. The famous Hō-ō-dō-temple at Uji, Yamashiro province, is one of the kind erected in the 11th century, and its roof is crowned with a bronze phoenix. But much older remains of the phoenix shape are found in those dug from the Japanese burial-mounds. For example, some gilt bronze heads of aword handles, decorated with phoenix shapes are exhibited in the Tokyo Imperial museum. They are generally recognized some fifteen centuries old according to the archaeologists.

Ryu or dragon was very commonly represented not only on the paper money, but also in various artistic achievements. Its Japanese representation is the same as that of China. It is still commonly depicted as having scales like a crocodile's, with fine clawed feet, terrible face, and two horned head, as shown in fig. 12 Taf. XI. It is represented as the symbol of national or individual prosperity. It was supposed that it rises into heaven by its own power transforming itself at pleasure. It can make itself large or little, and rise or fall, just as it chooses. The Chinese Emperor Wen Wang's description of the mysterious dragon in his Yth philosophy or the cannon of change, seems to have been the first in the chinese record. But later on it seems that it was mixed up with the Naga or Indian serpent, when Buddhism was introduced into China, and it was a very common subject in the Buddhistic painting at latest from the Tang dynasty. Also in feng Sui or wind and water superstition of China, the dragon is related with water which is believed to be the

element in which the dragon delights. The source of water is supposed to be the place wherefrom the influence commences that controls human destiny. But it is a pity to have no time to enter into its minute and wide investigation. We must satisfy ourselves this time with a hypothesis that those many various attributes and kinds of dragon described by the ancients in the Chinese and Japanese classical works, were nothing but the various superstitious creations derived from the dragon of Chinese origin, the Indian Naga, and of so-called Tatsu-maki or the water spout phenomenon on the sea.

Fukki, or Hu Hsi, is represented with Kwa figures and a pencil as shown in fig. 18 Taf. XI. He is said to have been the first of the Five Emperors of the legendary period of China. He taught his people to hunt, to fish, to keep flocks and many other things. From the markings on the back of a tortoise he is said to have constructed the Eight Diagrams, or series of lines from which was developed a whole system of philosophy. He was very

popular in the Tokugawa period by the prosperity of the Chinese culture.

Jo and Uba are the old and wrinkled couple. Jo is represented with a rake and Uba with a besom as shown in fig. 14 Taf. XII. These two old people, husband and wife, are usually accompanied by attributes of longevity, with crane, tortoise and pine tree. This figure is still very popular as the symbol of the long happy life of a married couple. It seems this figure was originally based upon the fictitious characters in the dramatic song composed in the 15th century for such happy occasions.

Kauko-dori, or cock on drum, was also a very common design as an allusion to a Chinese story, see fig. 15 Taf. XII. In the legendary time a large drum was kept at the main gate of the palace to assemble troops or for the people who wanted to call the attention of the officials when they had some appeals. Under the rule of the famous Emperor Yao, peace being universal, the drum fell into disuse, and a cock came and perched on it without being disturbed. This design, for such story, is emblematic of the peaceful age.

Tiger and lion are also very common designs. Tiger or Tora is generally represented with bamboo. He is said to live in the jungle, and it is also said that the tiger amongst the bamboo is emblematic of hospitality of the week tree to the strong animal.

Lion or Shishi is also a very popular subject in works of art. The lion is generally represented with flerce expression, large eyes, curly mane, bushy tail and curly locks of hair on its legs. Both were represented in the conventional form. They were also introduced from China.

Monju or Manjusri in sanscrit, an attendant of Shakyamuni Buddha, is also sometimes represented on the old paper maney.

Ida-teu or Veda in Sanscrit, one of guardian generals of Buddhism. He is often shown pursuing demons and is popularly known as the quickest runner.

Waves in the conventional delineation and rice plants were also common designs on the paper money under review.

The waves and the representation of Ida-teu seem to have meant the advantageous circulation of the money and the rice plant, good harvest.

CONCLUSION.

We have now given general meanings of the common designs on the paper money of the Tokugawa period. It must be borne in our reader's mind that most of these

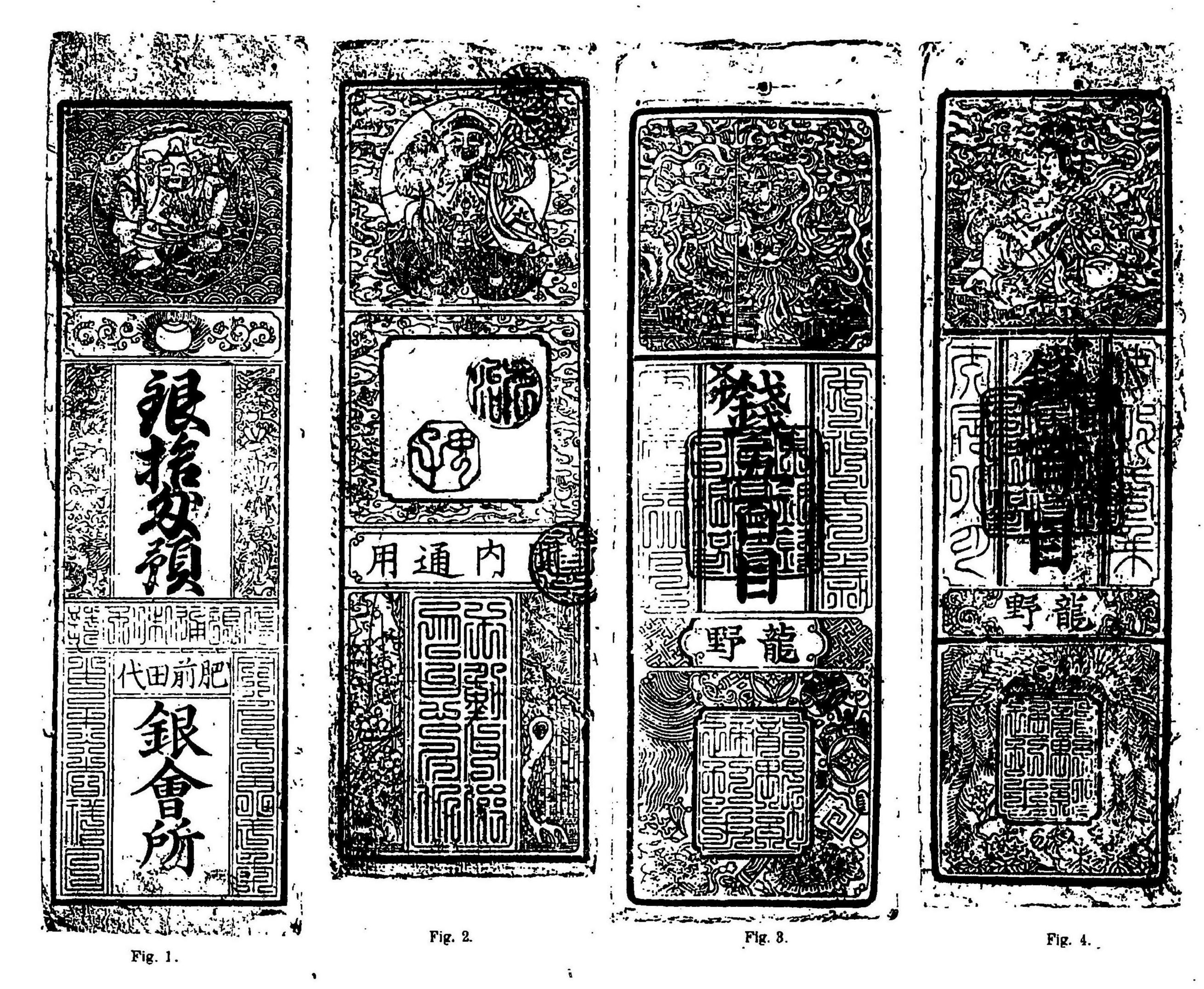
designs were very widely applied in the industrial fine art, painting and various other ornaments. If our readers come to Japan and see the artistic objects of the Tokugawa period, they will perhaps not fail to see some or other of the above described designs on the nine out of ten. Among others, pine, bamboo, prunus, crane, tortoise, phoenix, and dragon were most popular and favourite designs for costumes and other ornamental objects. When we see these designs on the paper money from the artistic point of view, there is little interest. They were all of conventional formalism. On the other hand if we see those designs applied to other artistic objects, there was only the elaborateness and heavy colouring in their delineation, and still there we will not fail to see the conventional form of the same nature. In a word, the designs of the Tokugawa period were too much toiled after the conventionalism and mannerism. Meanwhile, when we think of their origins, they have all an interesting history in the past as we have seen in each description mentioned above, and most of them have their origin in China, some in India, and another is native.

Therefore we may conclude that the Tokugawa culture contained three different origins, besides Dutch elements. But further if we proceed to devide these according to their nature, they were Shintoistic, Hinduistic, Taoistic, Confucioistic and Buddhistic. But in this period some influence was also made upon the Japanese civilization by the Dutch and Portuguese merchants. Its mark is visible also on the paper money issued by the Hamamatsu clan. It has the dutch word Voordeslig on its reverse.

In the Tokugawa period, generally speaking, these three elements, Indian, Chinese, and native were assimilated, and there was nearly no visible trace of Indian origin on artistic objects. But if we go back into remote antiquity it is assured that there was a certain connection with Indian culture, because the protohistoric objects (some fifteen hundred years or so old) from the Japanese Burial Mounds, give us proofs of it clearly. For example, the gold chain pendant as shown in fig. 16 Taf. XII and the gilt bronze bridle-bit ornaments as shown in fig. 17 Taf. XII are two of the most characteristic of Indian and Greek origin. They are now exhibited in the Tokyo Imperial museum. And their illustrations here have no direct connection with our present subject, but I hope that they may throw out some side light on the origin of our symbolic designs.

Next coming down to the historic period, namely in the 17th and 18th century Indian and Greek art was very prosperously introduced with Buddhism through China and Korea. But these Indian and Greek arts were of course modified in China and Korea when entered into Japan. But later on the intercourse with China was suspended for a long interval, and its influence gradually fades off. Finally in the Tokugawa period of three hundred years seclusion of peace, such continental marks almost quite disappeared from the Japanese world.

Let us put an end to this article with a few words of conclusion. When we see over the designs throughout all the kinds of paper money discussed above, they have various meanings and different origins, but after all their various representations can be condenced into the single word of happiness; and it can be understood how keen a desire the people had for peace and happiness.



N. Tsuda. Designs of the old japanese Paper money. Page 75-76.

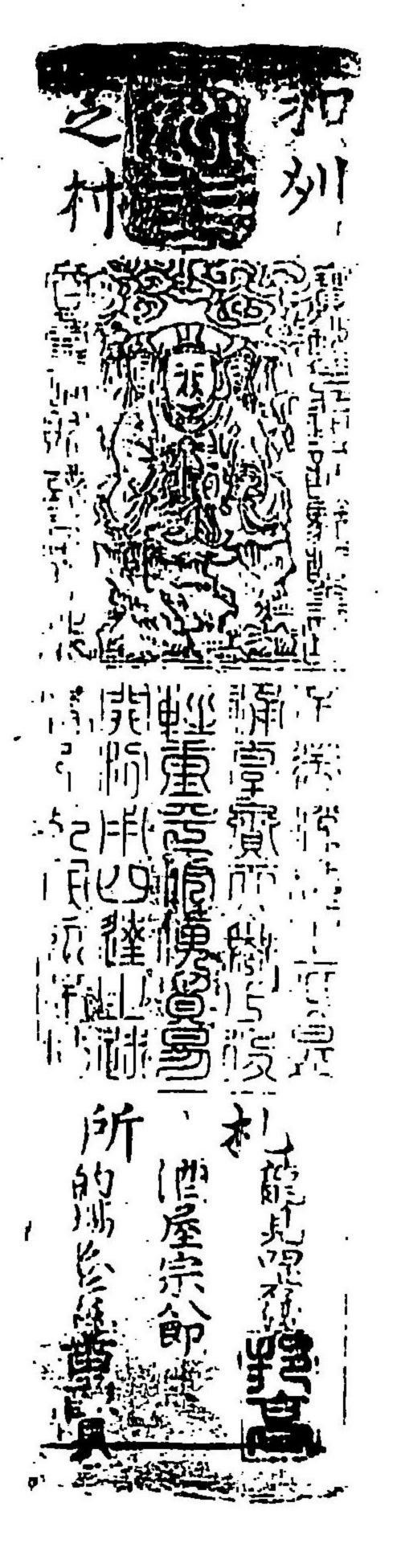








Fig. 5.

Fig. 8.

Fig. 7.

Fig. 8.

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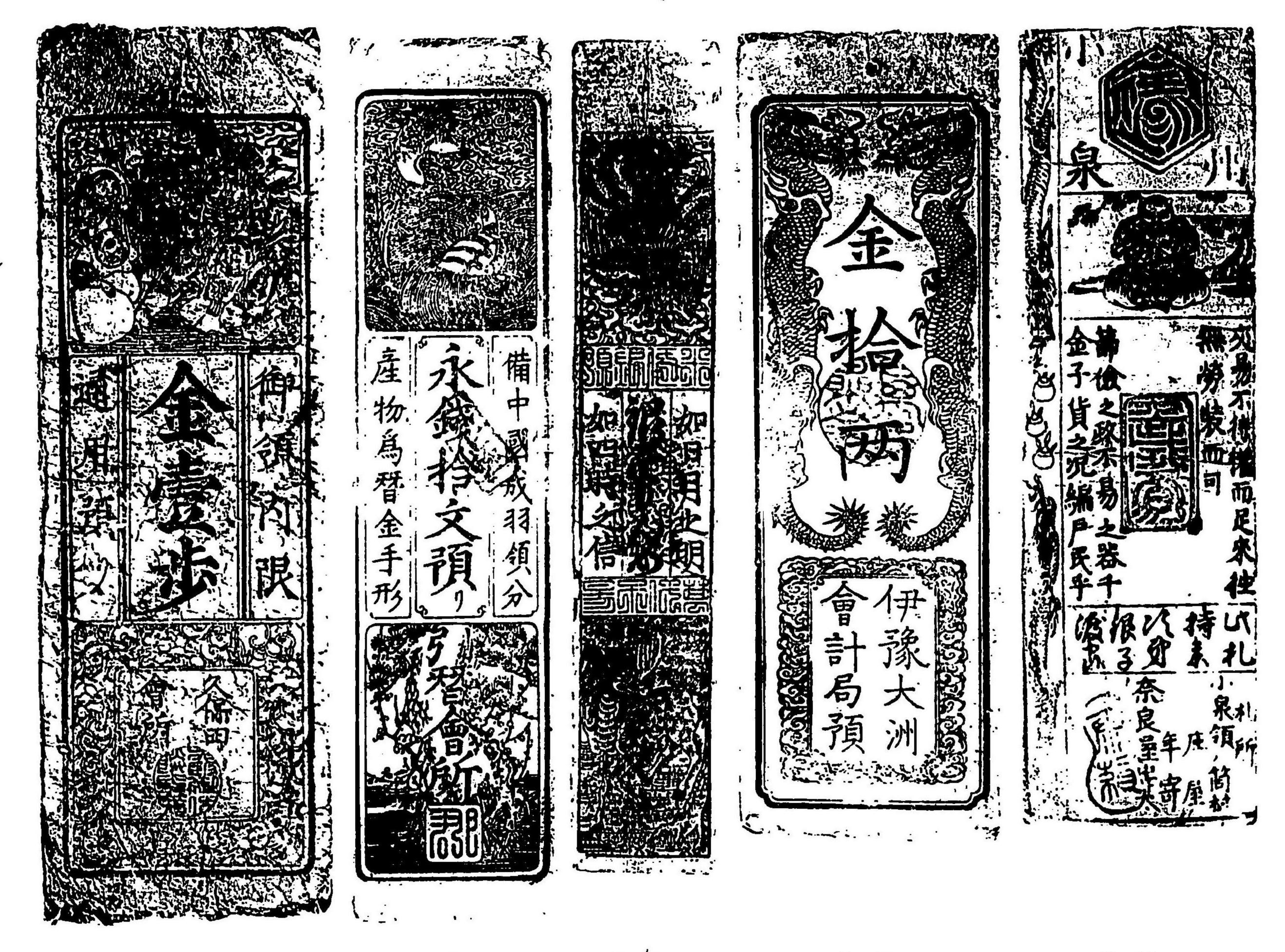


Fig. 9.

Fig. 10.

Fig. 11.

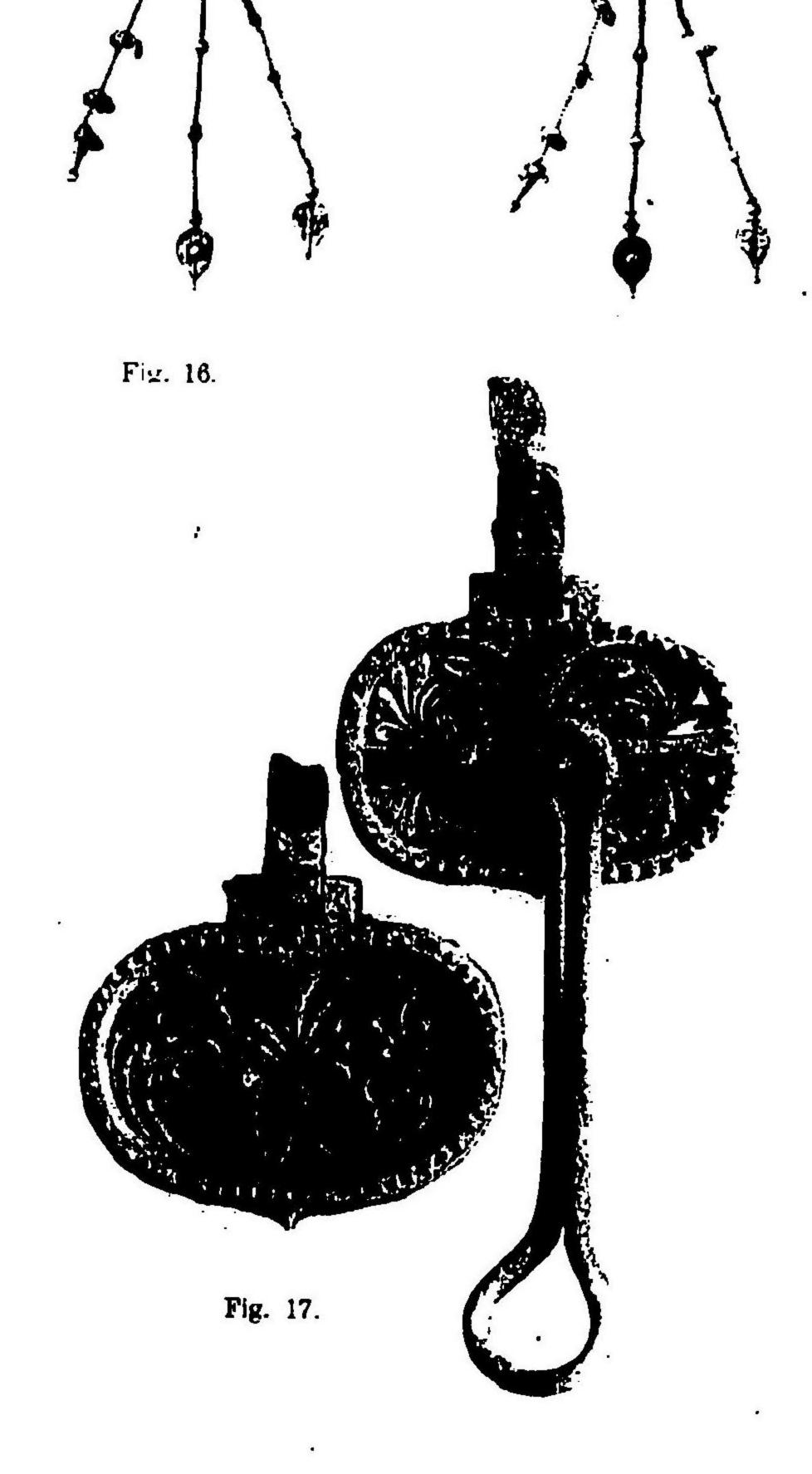
Fig. 12.

Fig. 18.

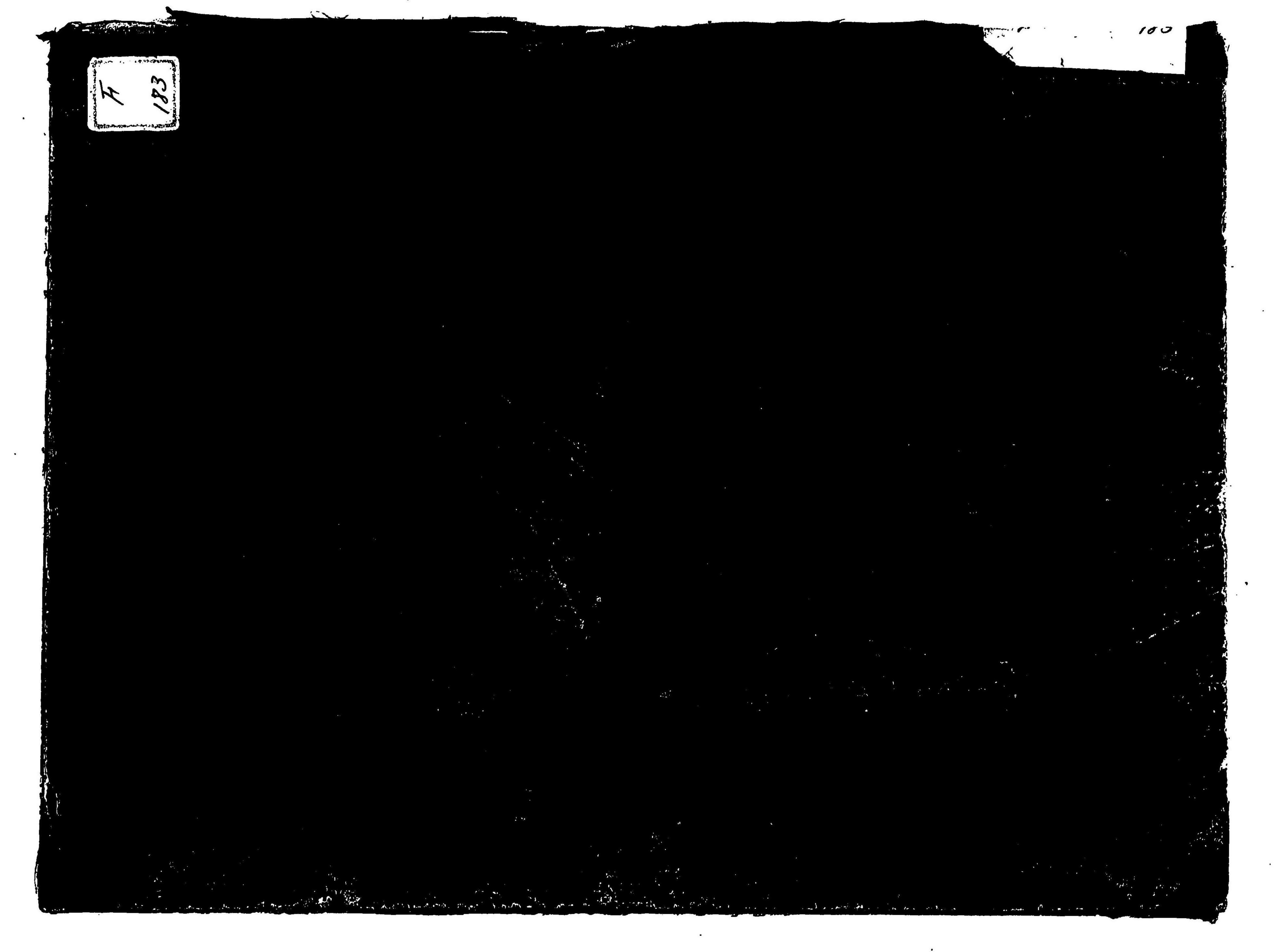
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