



7211            A six-fold paper screen painted in ink and colour on a gold ground with a matsu (pine tree) and monmaku (curtain with family crest).

Japan Edo period early 17th century

Dimensions: H. 158cm x W. 309cm (62¼" x 121¾")

The Mon depicted on this screen refers to the Okabe family who were based in the province of Izumi from the late 16th to early 17th century

Monmaku were generally used to create private enclosed areas at outdoor events such as cherry blossom viewing.

Mitsu tomoe, a design comprised of three spherical head-like shapes each with a connected curving tail-like shape which ends in a point, stands for eddy or whirlpool. Some scholars are convinced that it stems from the design on a leather guard worn by ancient archers; others say it was originally a representation of a coiled snake. It may be the oldest design in Japan, because it is similar in shape to the magatama jewellery beads of the Yayoi period. It appears as a design on the wall paintings of the Byōdōin Hōdō (1053; Kyoto) and in the Illustrated scroll of the Tale of Genji of the early 12th century. It was widely used from the Kamakura period onward and is often found on utensils, roof tiles, and family and shrine heraldry.

For a screen with a monmaku as part of its design in the collection of the Kobe Municipal Museum of Namban Art, see: Momoyama Genre Painting by Yuzo Yamano pl.100 p.120