

THE CRESTS OF THE SAMURAI CLANS (KAMON)

Family crests used to be very important in Japan. Each clan had a family crest of its own and these crests were widely displayed on war flags, armors, helmets, swords, kimonos, roof tiles, curtains and even on the sidelines of the tatami flooring. Most family crests had different colors that influenced the color choice of the samurai armors. Initially only the samurai clans had a family crest. During the late Edo period almost every large family had a family crest that must be worn on the right and left sides of the kimono.



Yamauchi Family Crest
Mitsu-gashiwa
(three oak leaves)

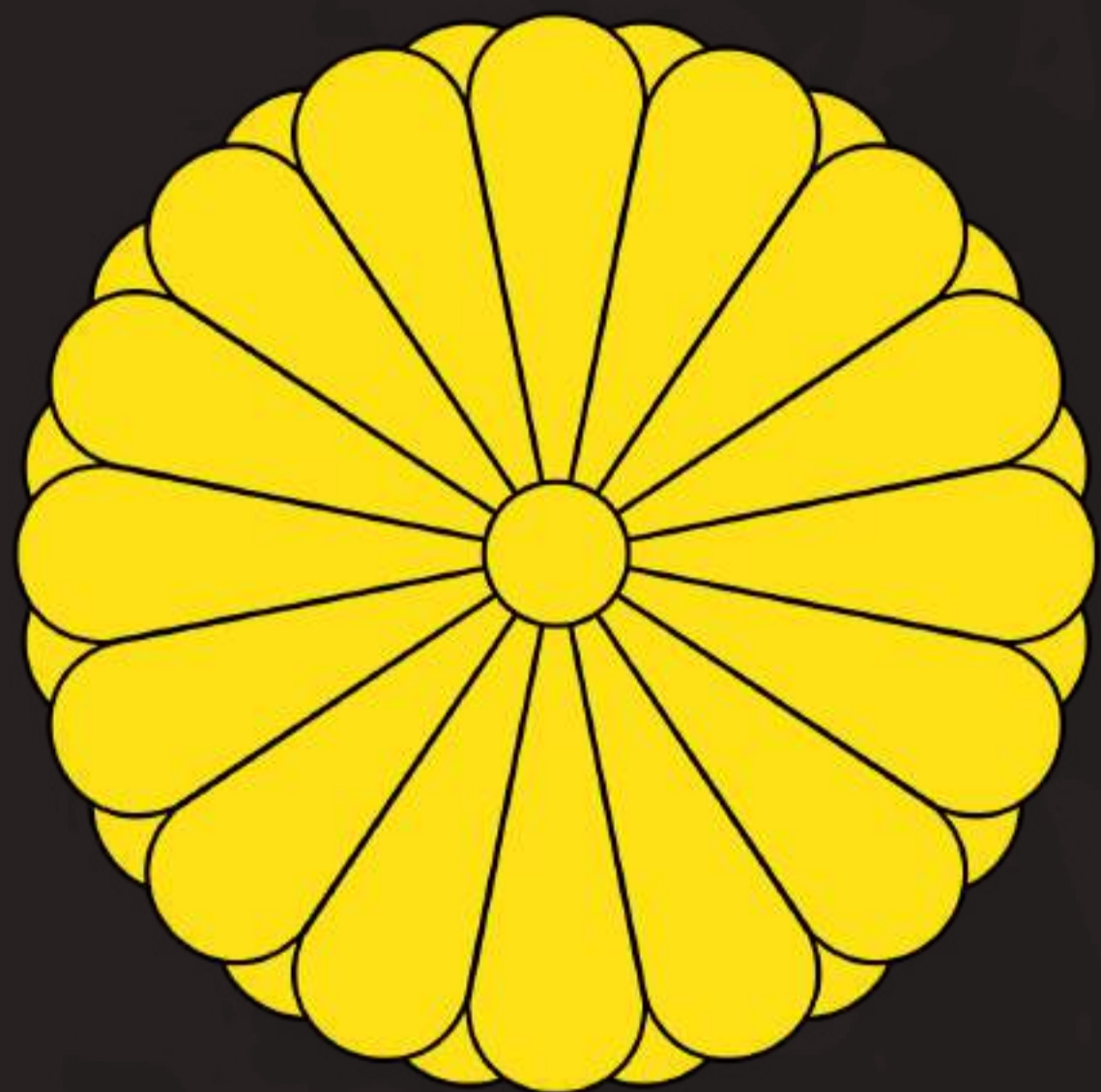


Iwasaki Family Crest
Sangai-bishi
(three-tiered water chestnut)



Mitsubishi trademark
(registered in 1914.)

The crests usually feature various flowers with strong roots (paulownia), leaves, crane and pine tree that represents longevity. The crest that looks like 3 swirls, mitsudomoe, is the common crest in Japan. It is used on the roof tiles of shinto temples, on taiko drums and on some samurai armors. The 3 commas or 3 swirls symbolize 3 separate entities: man, earth, god. It is also used to represent Hachiman, the shinto war god. Today some of the old family crests are reflected on famous company logos such as the Mitsubishi logo which has some roots in the founding families' crests.



Imperial Family crest



Tokugawa clan



Oda Clan



Toyotomi clan



Hojo Clan



Minamoto Clan



Taira Clan



Fujiwara clan



Tachibana Clan



Takeda Clan



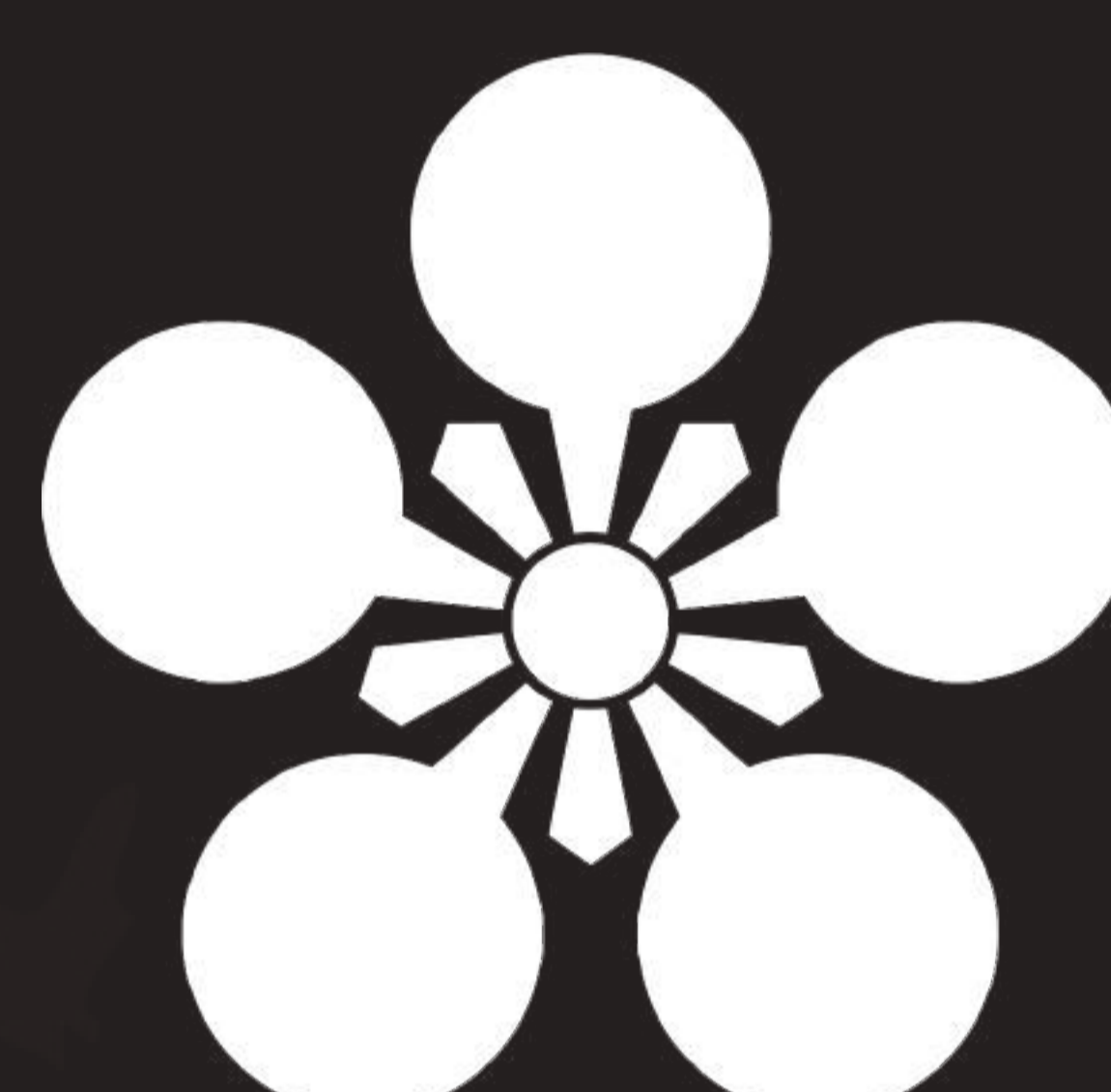
Uesugi Clan



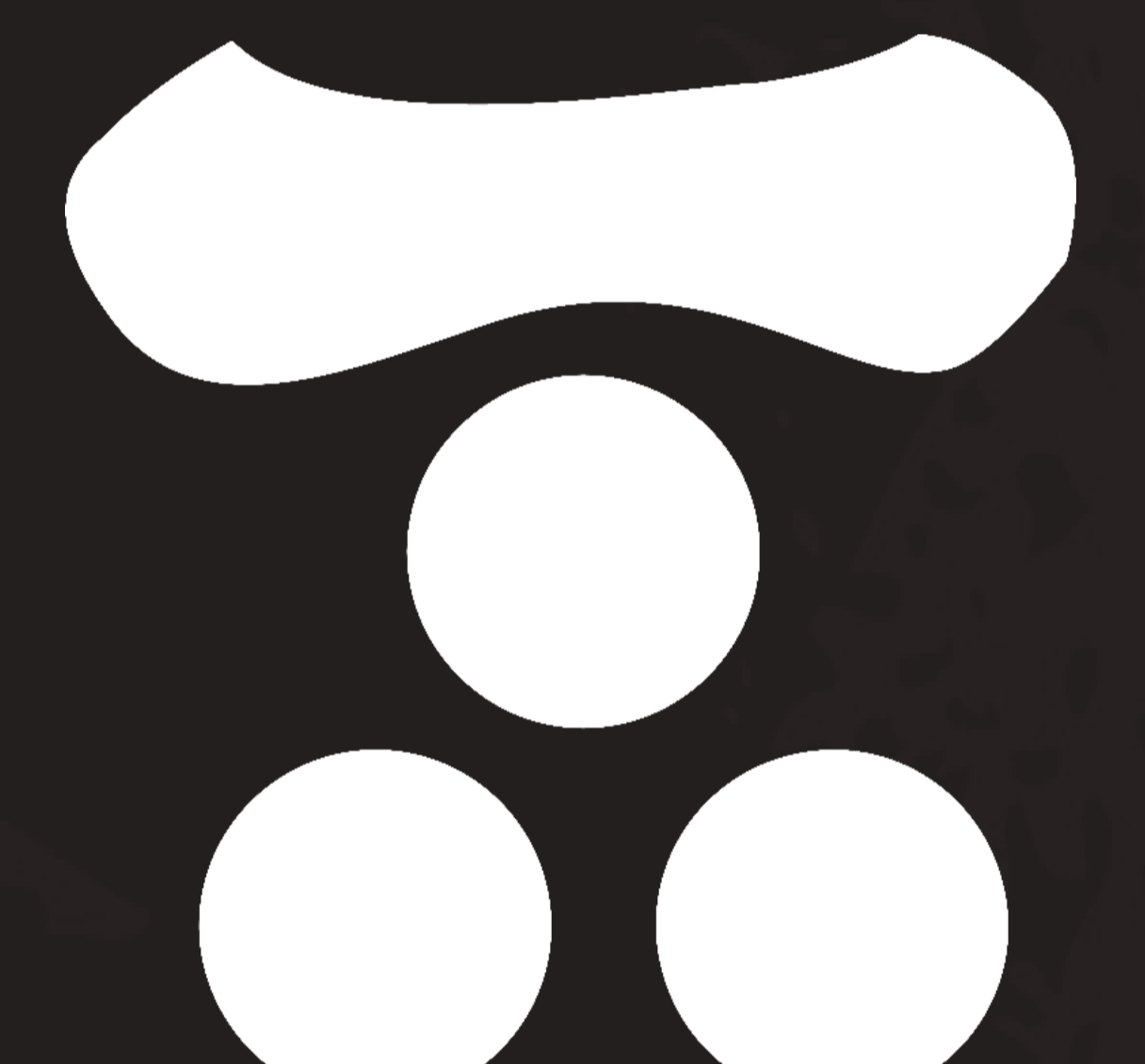
Shimazu Clan



Date Clan



Maeda Clan



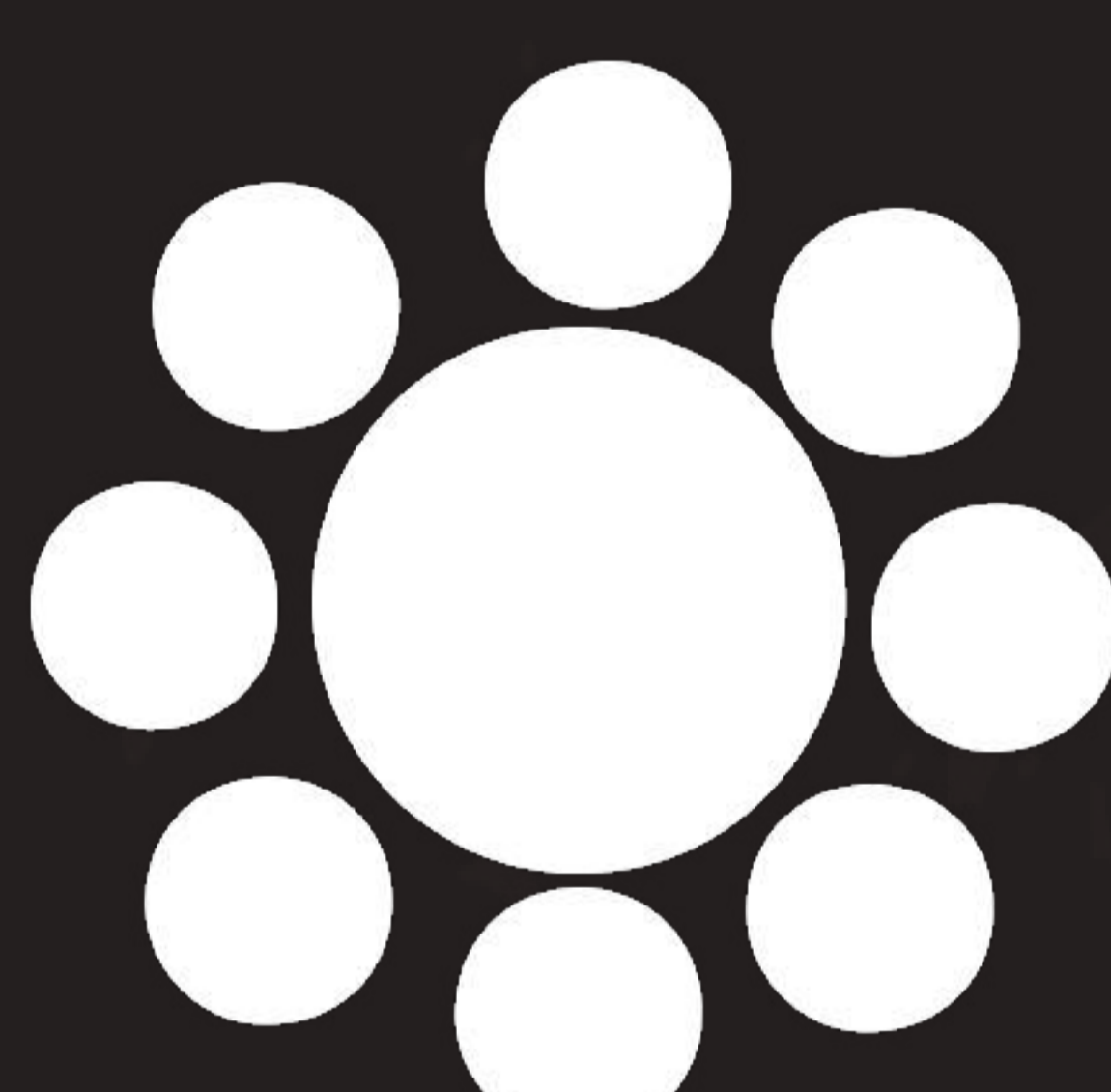
Mori Clan & Choshu I



Mori Clan II



Ashikaga Clan



Hosokawa Clan



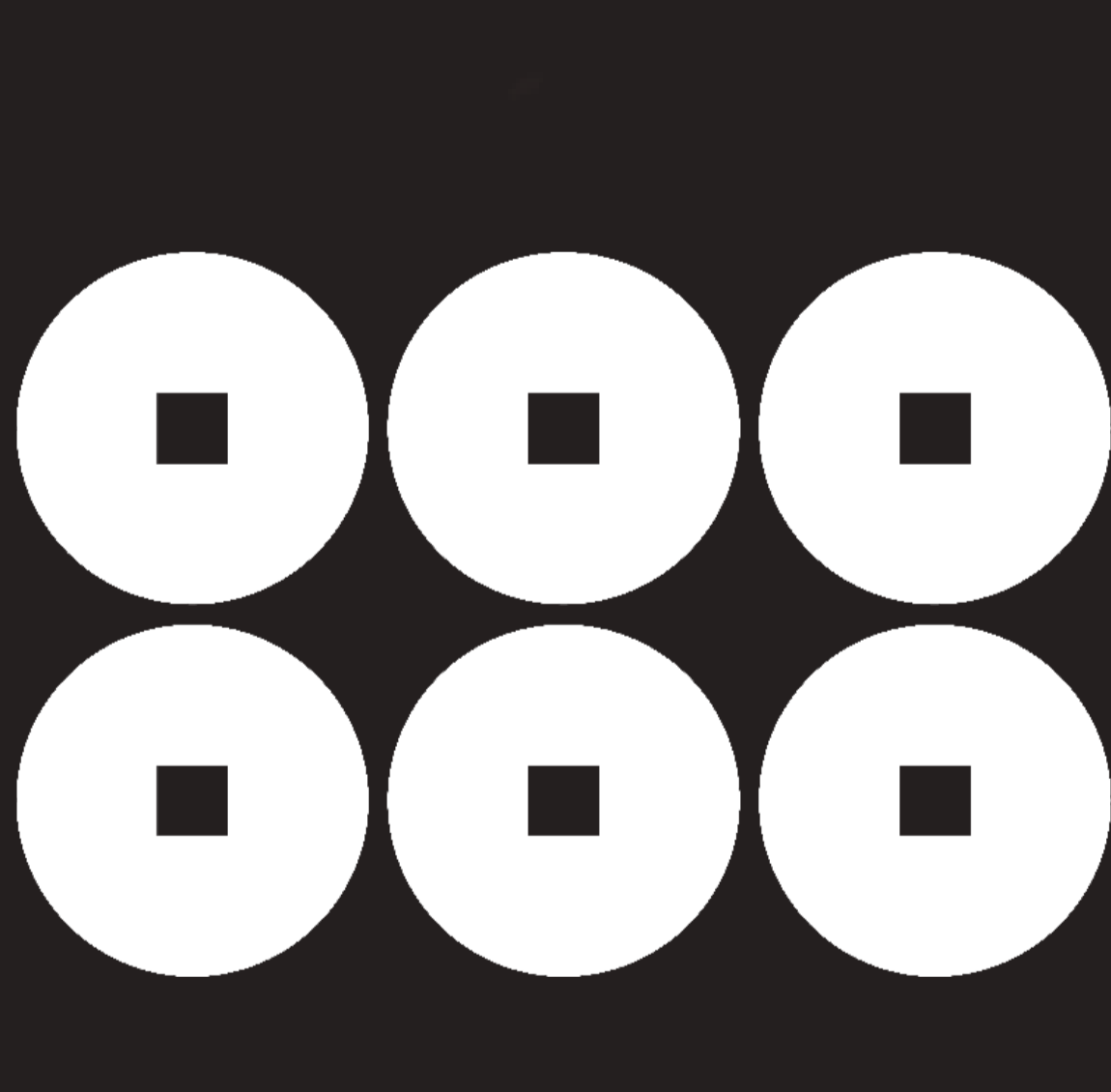
Asano Clan



Akechi Mitsuhide



Ishida Mitsunari



Sanada Clan



Mizuno Clan



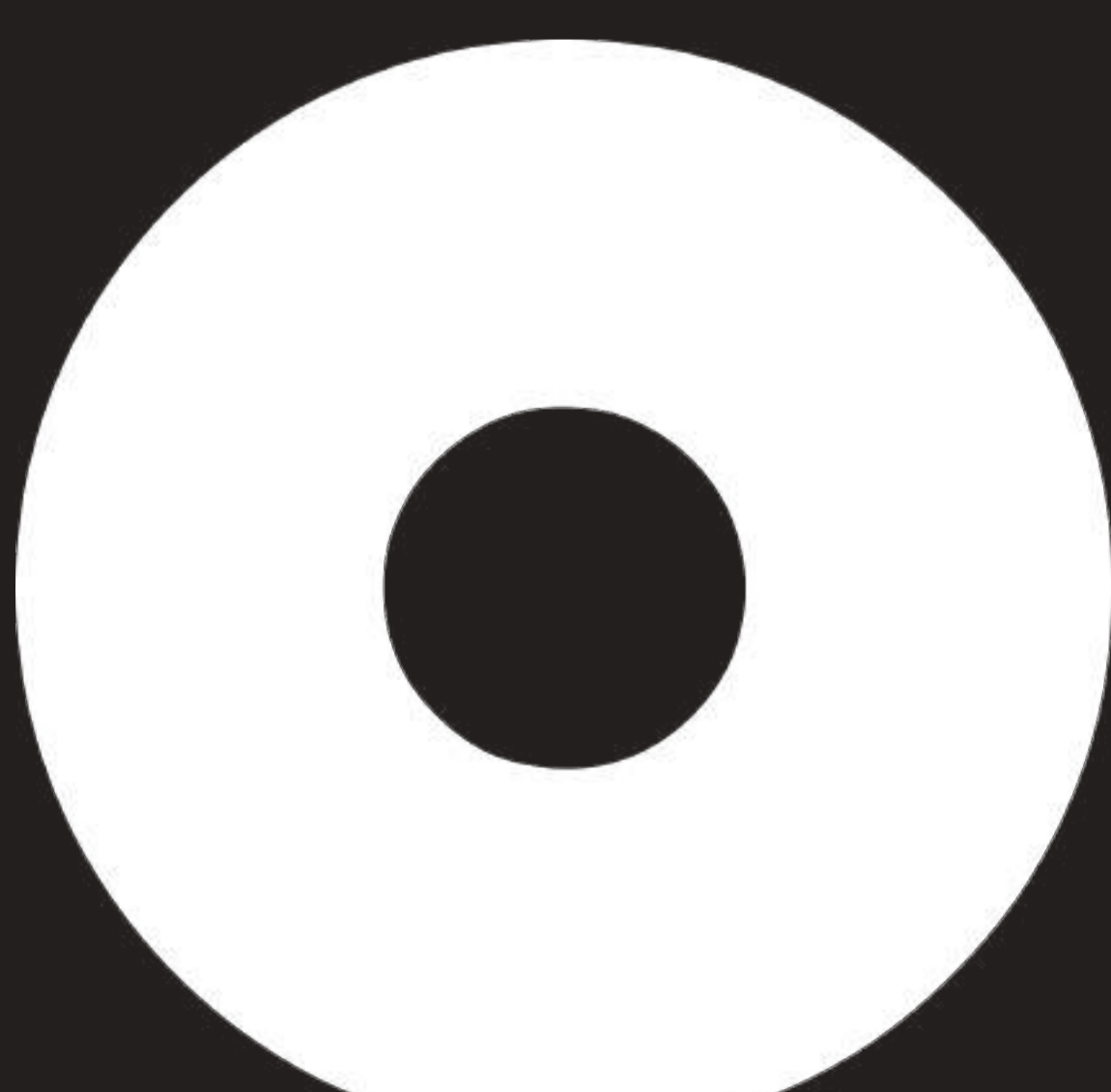
Satake Clan



Ikeda Clan



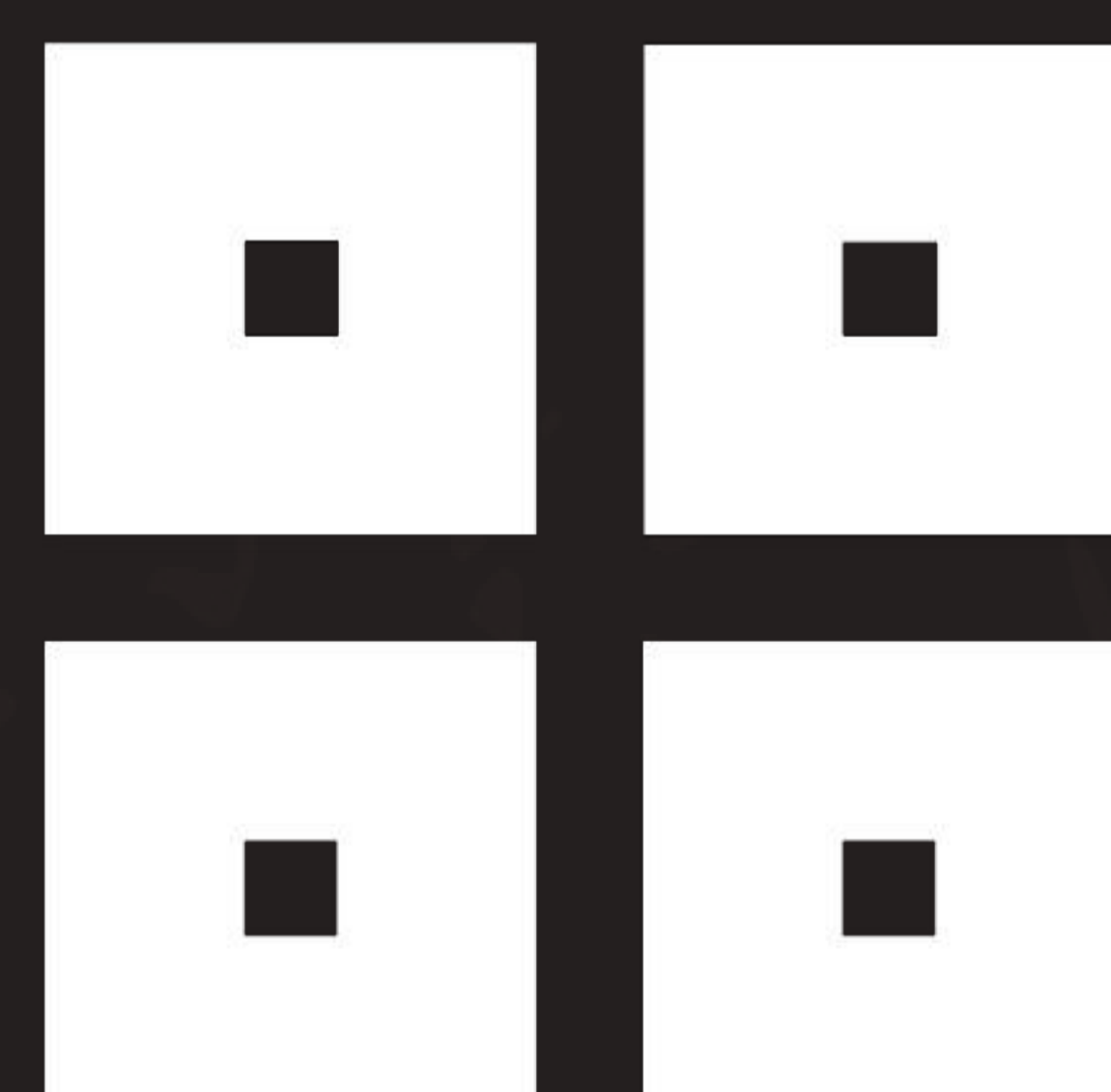
Fukushima Clan



Kato Clan



Honda Clan



Amako Clan



Asai Clan



Kobayakawa Clan
(Also the symbol of Shinto Gods)



Hachisuka Clan
(Also the Buddhist Symbol of peace)



Japanese Police crest



Japanese Government crest