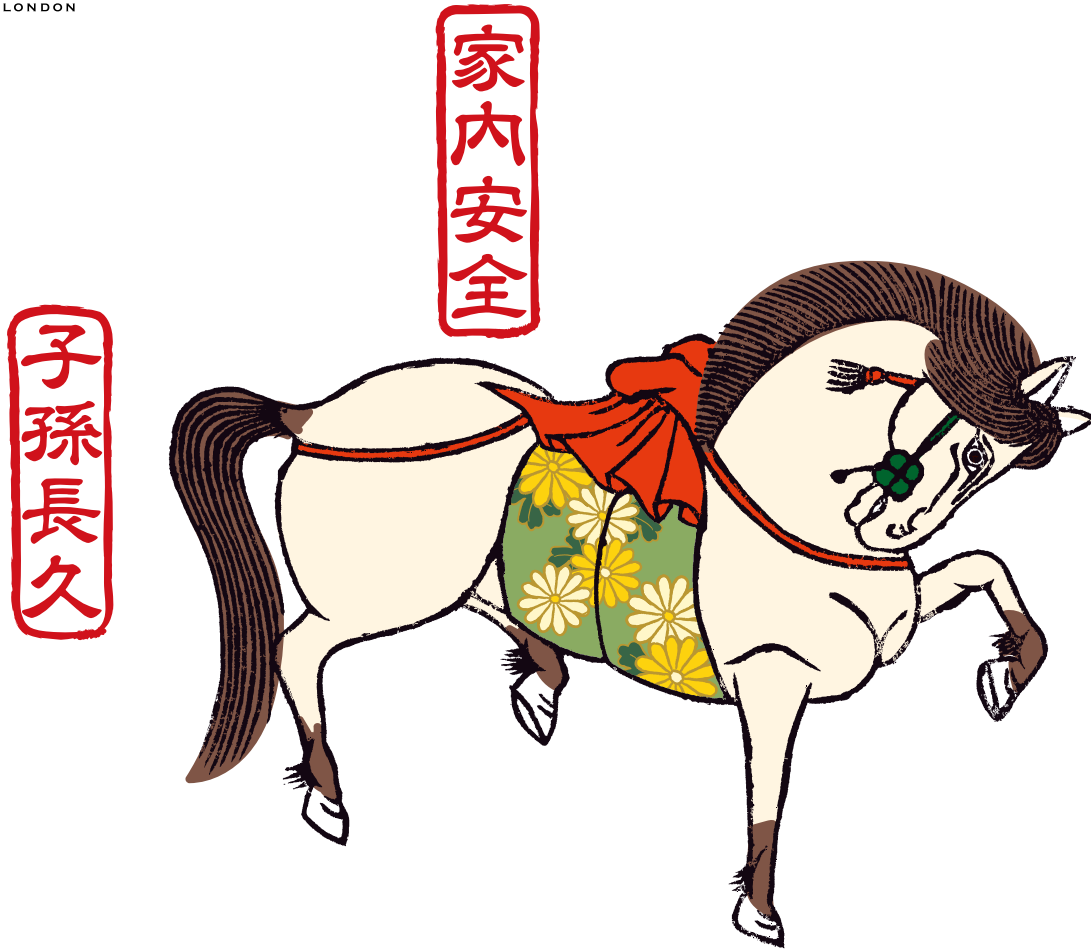




About Paper *Ema*

Ema (lit. 'picture horses') are palm-sized wooden tablets seen at shrines throughout Japan. Typically, shrine-goers write prayers or wishes on them and hang them at the shrine as offerings. In the Hida region, however, *ema* are made from *washi* (lit. 'Japanese paper') and decorated with a picture of a horse. Inscribed around the horse are prayers for success, family wellbeing,

safety and health. These paper *ema* are prized as auspicious objects and can be seen hanging in restaurants, businesses, and households throughout the region. *Ema* are always hung with the horse's head facing inwards, so as to carry good fortune into the building.

自分で作る紙絵馬 Make your own Paper *Ema*

Make your own paper *ema* with a template created by Ikemoto-ya, a famed *ema*-maker based in the Hida region of Gifu Prefecture. Decorate the horse with lucky patterns, add wishes for good fortune and good health and display the completed *ema* at the entrance of your home to invite in good luck.

You will need:

☐ Colouring materials ☐ Scissors ☐ Glue

Instructions

- 1 Choose which of the two horse templates you would like to use depending on where you intend to display your *ema*. The *ema* should be displayed so that the horse's head faces into the building.
- 2 Write your name and the date on the template. Write the date in the Japanese format (e.g., 31 December 2022 would be 2022年12月31日).
- 3 Colour in the horse black or brown or leave it white.
- 4 Choose the wishes for good fortune which you would like to include on your *ema* and colour them in red.
- 5 Choose a pattern for your horse's accessories and colour it in.
- 6 Cut out the illustrations you have coloured in and glue them onto your template to complete your *ema*. You can also add your own messages for good luck.

Wishes for Good Fortune

Paper *ema* are stamped with wishes written in red *kanji* characters which are believed to bring various forms of good luck and protection to the owner. Choose the stamps you would like to include on your *ema*, colour them in red, cut them out and glue them onto your template. You can also add your own messages for good luck.



Family safety and well-being



Professional success



Traffic safety



Prosperity of one's descendants



Commercial prosperity

Lucky Patterns

Paper *ema* are often decorated with lucky patterns which carry various meanings. Learn about the significance of four popular patterns and choose one for your *ema*. On the next page you can find a selection of patterned horse tack. Colour in the one decorated with your chosen pattern, cut it out and glue it onto your template.



宝珠の玉 | *Hōju no tama*

This pattern is based on a wish-fulfilling jewel found in Buddhist tradition. The jewel is usually depicted in the shape of a tear or droplet and it is sometimes surrounded by flames.



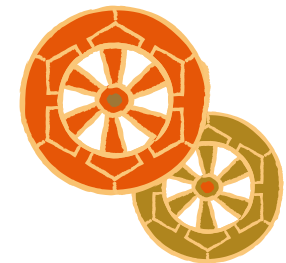
菊の花 | *Kiku no hana*

Chrysanthemum flower (*kiku no hana*) patterns are popular in Japan and symbolize longevity. The crest of the Japanese Imperial Family is also a chrysanthemum.



小槌 | *Kozuchi*

This hammer, carried by Daikokuten one of the Seven Gods of Fortune, is a symbol of wealth and good luck. It is said that if the mallet is waved while making a wish, the wish will come true.



御所車 | *Goshoguruma*

A *goshoguruma* is an ox-drawn cart used by Heian-period (794–1185 CE) aristocracy. It became a symbol of the elegant culture of the imperial court and a popular subject for decorative arts. This pattern shows the wheels of the ox cart.



宝珠の珠
Hōju no tama



小槌
Kozuchi



菊の花
Kiku no hana



御所車
Goshoguruma



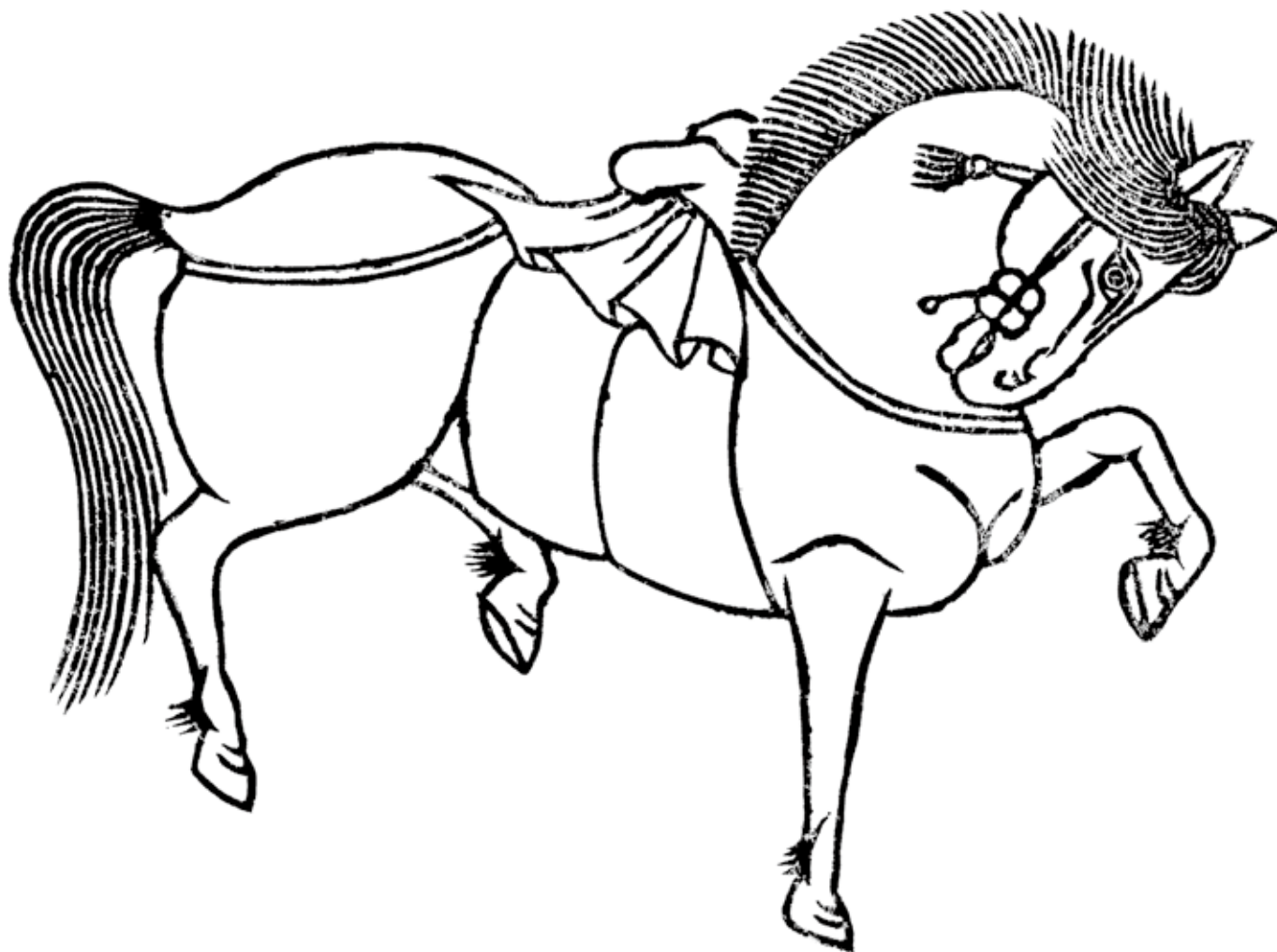
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