

# “Shogi” Japanese Camp Stools

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Shôgi are folding stools that date to ancient times in Japan. Originally, they were used in the field by military commanders. Over time they gained popularity as garden furniture, for any time you don't want to sit on the damp ground. They are still used today as formal seating for events or religious ceremonies, as well as historical recreation.

The stools have a familiar form. Hinged legs separate to support crossbars, and the crossbars support a flexible seat between them. The seat can be fabric or animal hide. The cross bars can be round or flat, though the top bars are most often round. The crossbars are typically at the extreme ends of the legs. This makes the bottom bars the “feet” of the stool, so they are sometimes flat.

One difference between shogi stools and similar Western camp stools is in the way they are used. Western usage places the legs at the front and back. This is thought to be a development from ecclesiastical folding stools so that a cross is displayed while seated. Shogi were used with the legs to either side. This can be discerned by the presence of footrests on some stools, in the way that the footrest is parallel to the crossbars. This “sidewise” usage also enables the crossbars to be extended with multiple seats and sets of legs to create a folding “bench”.

These stools can be built rapidly at home using dowels, 1-by lumber, basic hardware, and fabric. The process is somewhat involved and not for absolute beginners, though experienced woodworkers will only find as much challenge as they create for themselves. This class demonstrates two ways of forming the join between the crossbars and the legs.

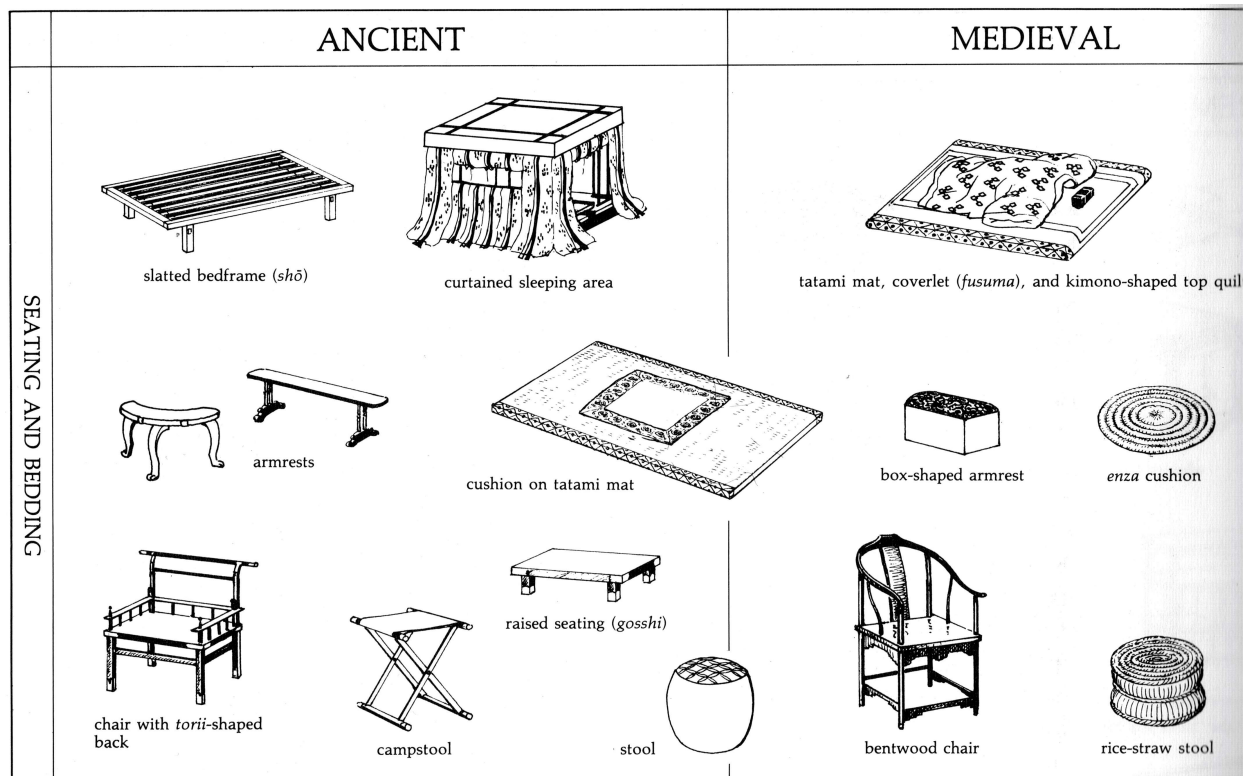
## References:

Koizumi, Kazuko; Traditional Japanese Furniture: A Definitive Guide; Tokyo and New York, Kodansha International, 1989 (1986)

Turnbull, Stephen, Samurai Sourcebook, The; London, Arms and Armour Press, 1998

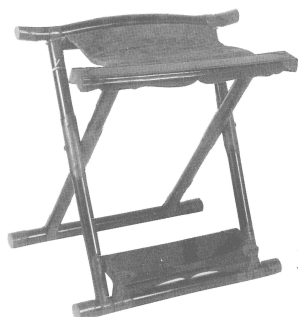
Izutsu Costume Store; <http://shouzokuten.izutsu.co.jp/> ; Retrieved June 20th, 2022





## CAMPSTOOLS *Shōgi*

The collapsible campstool (plate 160) features legs crossed in an X to draw taut a sling-seat of plaited cords, cloth, or leather. As the name suggests, it was used on military campaigns and hunting expeditions to provide seating outdoors. Its origins date back to ancient times, but it only came into popular use from the Edo period when it provided seating for outdoor tea functions and the like.



160. Campstool  
1611; H. 21, W. 15, D. 20 in. (54, 38, 52 cm.); made with cotton filling, copper fittings, black lacquer.

The commander on a battlefield would sit on a camp-stool, as shown here in this figure from the Smithsonian, and direct troop movements using his *saihai* (tasselled fan). The dummy here wears old-fashioned fur boots associated with the Gempai Wars. His helmet is forged into a sharp ridge. The armour is a gold-lacquered *ni mai* yozane *dō* laced in *sugake* *odoshi*, with the *kusazuri* (skirts) laced in *kebiki* *odoshi*.



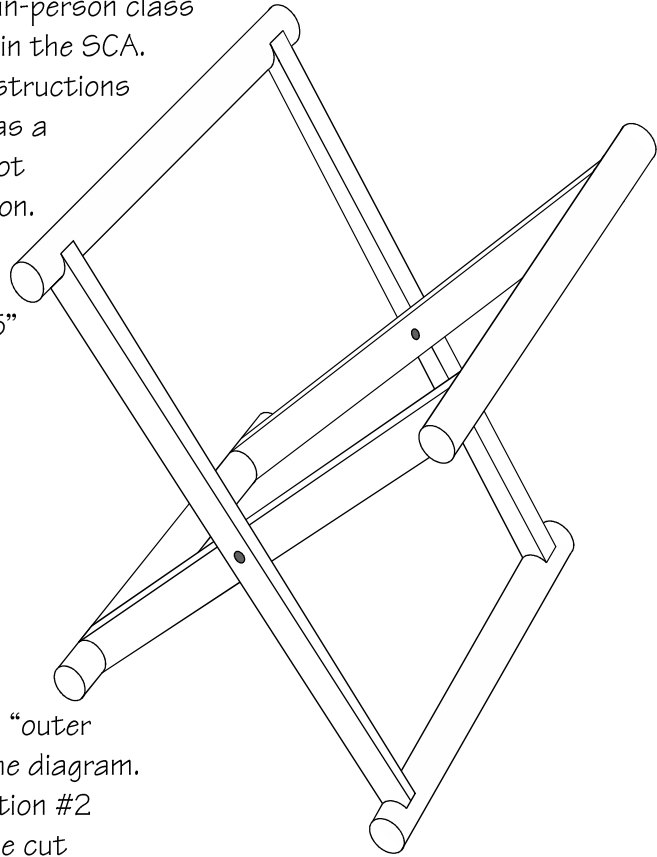
This document is intended to accompany an in-person class on constructing basic shogi of a style useful in the SCA. As such, it does not contain fully-detailed instructions or process diagrams. It is intended to serve as a reminder of what you learn in class, but cannot serve as a replacement for detailed instruction.

Required:

- 4 pieces flat wood  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 1.5" x 21" or 22.25"
- 4 pieces 1.25" dowel. 16" long
- 2 bolts or clevis pins 2" long
- 6 matching washers
- 2 matching nuts or cotter pins
- Heavy fabric 23.5" wide, 32" long

Optional:

- 8 brass strips  $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide by 12" long &
- 32 brass escutcheon pins



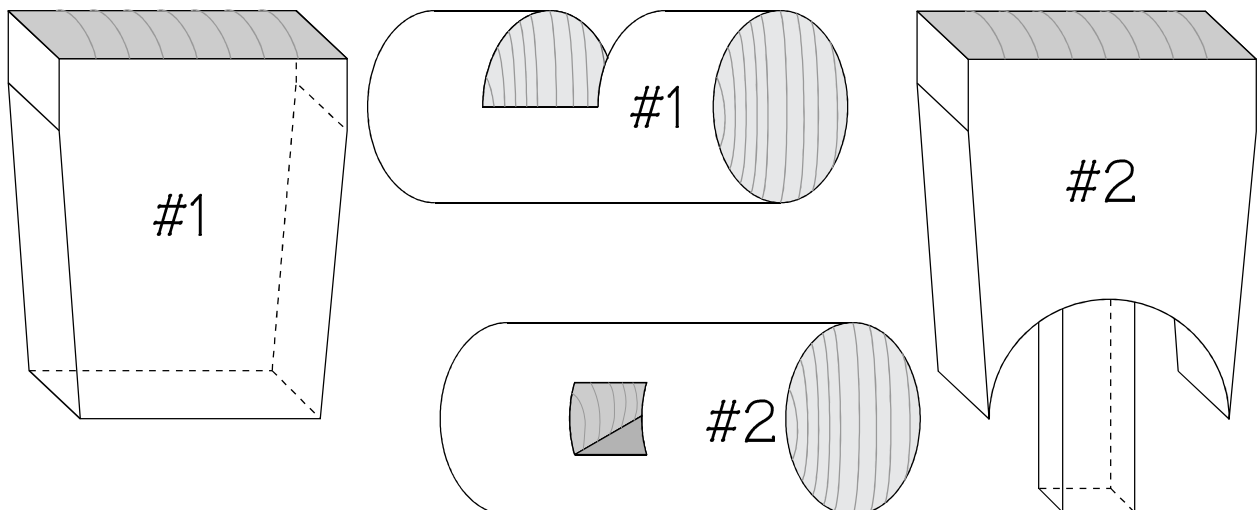
Leg positioning option #1 has "inner legs" and "outer legs" with matching crossbars as shown in the diagram.

Bars must be cut in pairs. Leg positioning option #2

has four identical crossbars. All 4 bars can be cut

the same, with a leg at one end placed  $\frac{3}{4}$ " in from the end and a leg at the other end placed 1.5" in from the end.

Leg joinery option #1 cuts the end of each leg blunt. The ends of the legs fit into slots cut in the crossbars. This joinery must be secured with glue, and probably long wood screws. Leg joinery option #2 cuts a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " square tenon with curved shoulders into the end of each leg. The tenons fit into  $\frac{1}{2}$ " square mortises cut through the crossbars. This join can be secured with wedges.



1. Cut *leg pieces* to length.

2. Drill *centers of leg pieces* to match diameter of hinge pins or bolts

### 3.1. Joinery Option #1

a. Cut four 3/4" wide, 5/8" deep notches in dowels, 3/4" from ends

b. Cut four 3/4" wide, 5/8" deep notches in dowels, 1.5" from ends

NOTE: CUT NOTCHES ACCORDING TO POSITIONING OPTION DESIRED

NOTE: CUT NOTCHES PERPENDICULAR TO GRAIN LINES

NOTE: CUT NOTCHES PARALLEL TO EACH OTHER

### 3.2 Joinery Option #2

a. Cut four 1/2" square mortises through dowels, 7/8" from ends

b. Cut four 1/2" square mortises through dowels, 1 5/8" from ends

c. Cut 1/2" square, curve-shouldered tenons on ends of legs.

NOTE: CUT MORTISES ACCORDING TO POSITIONING OPTION DESIRED

NOTE: CUT MORTISES PARALLEL TO EACH OTHER

4. Taper all 8 leg ends so they match diameter of dowels.

5. Assemble two crossbars with two legs, securing joinery as required.

NOTE: ALIGN CROSSBARS SO THAT LEGS STAY PERPENDICULAR TO CROSSBARS

NOTE: DO NOT ASSEMBLE HALVES SEPARATELY

6. Using bolts or pins (and washers), attach *second set of legs* to first set of legs

NOTE: OBSERVE INNER AND OUTER POSITIONING

7. Attach *second set of crossbars* to ends of legs, securing joinery as required.

NOTE: ALIGN CROSSBARS SO THAT LEGS STAY PERPENDICULAR TO CROSSBARS

8. Sew fabric into long tube and evert to put raw edges inside. topstitch if desired.

9. Collapse stool, wrap tube around two crossbars and sew ends of tube together.

10. Open stool to stretch seat.