Fakes and Reproductions…A Primer

Can you tell a Nippon fake or reproduction simply by looking at the backstamp? The answer to that is both yes and no! The early fake backstamps can clearly be identified as fake as they were **never** used in the Nippon era. The 'hourglass' and 'K' backstamps are examples of that. **Any and all items bearing these two backstamps are FAKE.**

Found in red as shown and green.

But as time went on, those producing fake Nippon became much better at reproducing the same exact backstamps that were used on authentic Nippon that was originally produced by Morimura/Noritake. **They used these fake authentic-looking backstamps to deceive collectors!** Two of the most common backstamps used during the Nippon era were the Maple Leaf and the M in Wreath. They, along with three other Morimura/Noritake backstamps, the Spoke, RC, and Rising Sun, are backstamps that appear on a lot of fake Nippon. With the four backstamps shown below, if you take a close look at the backstamp, it is fairly easy to tell that it's a fake. They are close to the original but not exact:

Be Careful!
Fake Nippon is not food-safe!

FAKE BACKSTAMPS **AUTHENTIC BACKSTAMPS**

The authentic Maple Leaf backstamp can be found in both green and blue. Most of the fake Maple Leaf backstamps are in a shade of green but can also be found in magenta.

The Maple Leaf on the fake backstamp is approximately ½ inch wide while the authentic Maple Leaf is ¼ inch.

Note that the words 'Hand Painted' are arranged differently on the two backstamps. The authentic backstamp is always blue.

The fake RC backstamp is in all green. In the authentic backstamp 'Hand Painted' is in red and 'RC Nippon' is in green.

The authentic Rising Sun backstamp is always blue.

The back-stamps shown in this Primer are the most commonly found fake backstamps.

The vast majority of Nippon backstamps, including many obscure Nippon backstamps, are authentic.

Fake Nippon was meant to deceive collectors. Otherwise, there would have been no reason to copy authentic backstamps. Morimura/Noritake backstamps were 'faked' because they originally produced the best Nippon and that Nippon was, and still is, more popular with collectors. That is why you don't see the many other authentic Nippon backstamps (and there are hundreds of them) used on fakes.

There are NO fake moriage, coralene, tapestry, or sharkskin decorated pieces. These decorating techniques would be too difficult and expensive to reproduce.

This leaves us with the popular M in Wreath backstamp. It was used on many fake Nippon pieces and it was refined until it was almost impossible to tell the difference between the fake and the original backstamp.

FAKE M IN WREATH BACKSTAMPS

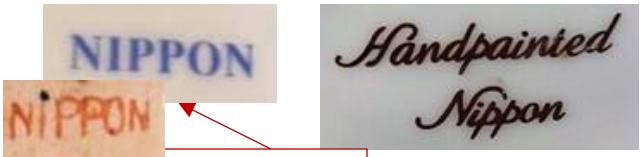
Circa 1996

Circa 1997

AUTHENTIC M IN WREATH BACKSTAMP

The authentic backstamp can be found in green, blue, magenta & gold. The fake is found only in shades of green.

Two more backstamps used on **FAKE Nippon** are:



Found in blue and red.

<u>But these backstamps can also be found on authentic Nippon so a collector must use other means to determine authenticity.</u>

Knowledge is key!

Consult known reliable sources including:

The INCC website with a listing of authentic Nippon backstamps and examples of fake Nippon: www.nipponcollectorsclub.com

The Nippon Collectors Club Facebook group with an album devoted solely to fakes and reproductions: https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=oa.1553731624783603&type=3

If you can't tell from the backstamp, how do you determine if a piece is fake or authentic?

Since you can not always tell if an item is authentic or a fake simply by examining the backstamp, you have to apply other tests in order to come to a conclusion. Here are some helpful tips for determining the difference between a fake and an authentic piece:

- **Weight**: Is the weight of the item heavier than expected when you pick it up? The fake pieces are usually much heavier. The material used is NOT the high-quality porcelain that was used during the Nippon era (1891-1921).
- **Decoration**: Is the decoration not as refined as you would expect to see on a Nippon-era item? Is the décor an unfamiliar or unexpected one? Or, is the decoration one that you see over and over? Fakes were mass produced and certain decorations show up repeatedly in malls, flea markets, and on-line. This is not the case with authentic Nippon. Another thing to look for is the gold that is used. New gold is generally either copper colored or is brassy with a highly reflective finish. New gold does not have the same patina as the gold used on authentic Nippon.
- **Glaze**: Is the glaze which has been applied to the piece poorly applied? Is it think and uneven? If the item is a vase or hatpin holder, has the glaze been applied all way inside the item? Or does it stop midway down the inside? Authentic Nippon is properly glazed and finished.
- **Shape**: Is the shape or mold an unexpected one? For example, wall pocket vases were not generally made during the Nippon era, yet fake wall pockets are currently on the market with the fake M in Wreath backstamp. The same holds true for jardinieres, umbrella stands, and oyster plates…not made during the Nippon era, but there are fake ones with 'authentic' backstamps.

If the item you're considering fails these 'tests' then be suspicious, very suspicious.

REMEMBER: THE QUALITY OF THE FAKE NIPPON IN TERMS OF BOTH PORCELAIN AND DECORATION IS NOT THE SAME AS THE AUTHENTIC MORIMURA/NORITAKE NIPPON.