



## Shield

### Date

20th Century

### Primary Maker

Melpa

### Medium

Wood, plant fiber, and pigment

### Description

Little is written on the shields of Mt. Hagen Highland's Melpa tribe, but due to the proximity of groups in the Mt. Hagen area there was a lot of trading of ideas between these groups and so the shields of the area surrounding Mt. Hagen all share a number of features. Almost all full-sized shields had rattan binding or other decorative distinction along their top edge - it is likely that this shield's rattan top has since been lost. Shield size is also consistently large, around 60 in. in height and at least 20 in. wide. The neighboring Wahgi word for these shields

was kumbe reipe, roughly meaning wooden wall. The tree was cut and split with wedges into the desired shape. When dry, it was sanded down with rough leaves and holes were bored so that a fiber rope shoulder harness could be attached. The knotting used leaves woven in a distinctive triangle or square shape depending on whether three or four holes were used. Designs were rarely incised, but rather painted with geometric shapes in black, white, yellow, red, and blue pigment.

### Dimensions

62 1/4 × 28 1/4 × 5 7/8 in. (158.1 × 71.8 × 14.9 cm)