

# Symbolism for Inspiration

Symbolism is a very large part of the art of temari as well as other arts and crafts in Japan. Make a very special gift for someone by considering the occasion and the person. Browse this symbolism section to inspire you to choose appropriate designs and colors. When you are finished stitching the temari, make a little card which lists the ingredients in the ball and the symbolism. The recipient will love the gift even more and the whole process will be rewarding and meaningful for you.

Remember: seasonal patterns always work!

**“3 Beauties of Nature” (Seisugekka)** snow, moon and flowers, reminder of the transience of life

**“3 Friends in Winter” (Shochikubai)** pine, plum, and bamboo are symbols of winter, long life, the cultured gentleman, happiness

**arrow (ya)** New Year good luck

**arrowhead flower (omodaka)** “high surface,” summer sign

**bamboo (take)** emptiness (a good thing in Taoism), resilience (strong even in the face of high winds), constancy, integrity and honor

**bat (komori)** good fortune – design of 5 bats represents 5 blessings (longevity, health, wealth, love of virtue, and a natural death)

**Y`Uc kYf (kikyo)** autumn sign

**bear (noshishi)** courage and ferocity, ward off evil influences, autumn sign

**bow (yumi)** twanging to ward off evil spirits especially during childbirth or childhood illness

**bridge (hashi)** holy object, link between this world and the next

**bush warbler (uguisu)** harbinger bird of spring depicted often with plum blossom

**Butterfly (chocho)** viewed as the souls of the living and the dead as well as symbols of joy, longevity, elegance, and rebirth. Butterfly in flight symbolizes pride of place, a warrior's attachment to his native soil.

**camellia (tsubaki)** associated with tea ceremony since it is a member of the tea family, longevity, “spring tree”

**carriage wheel (kari)** perseverance, faithfulness in marriage and general good fortune

**cat (neko)** ability to charm and bewitch passersby

**cedar (see cryptomeria)**

**cherry blossom (sakura)** most beloved flower, transience of life due to brief life of blossoms, spring sign

**chrysanthemum (kiku)** endurance, long life, integrity, premier symbol of autumn, symbol of the Imperial family

**cicada (semi)** sign of summer