

FAQs of Japanese Temari



Photo from two conjunctive art exhibitions this spring at WICEC, Whidbey Island:
Blooming with Color and Inspiring Artists: Meet the WICEC Art Instructors

Over the years I've been asked a lot of questions about Japanese temari. Here's my attempt to explain just a few of the most frequently asked questions.

Question: What on earth do you do with them?

Answer: I enjoy them. I display them around my house – in bowls or as a single piece of folk art. They can also be displayed on walls by hanging them. They also make nice Christmas ornaments. Sometimes I use temari as a focus point for my meditational practice. Since they are traditionally considered to bring good luck, I give them as gifts. On special occasions I incorporate Japanese symbolism in the design. Temari designs can include a range of symbolism - from overcoming difficulties to celebrating births.

Question: How long does it take to make one?

Answer: Well, that depends. The size of the ball and/or thread will play a big part in the time it takes to finish a temari. Also, the way you initially divide the ball into different shapes makes a difference. I can complete a very simple temari in about 4 hours or I can spend months on a large temari with many facets for the division.

Question: What is on the inside of a temari? Do you use Styrofoam?

Answer: I have used Styrofoam balls and many people still do, even in Japan. My preference is to make my own ball using rice hulls inside a nylon stocking, then wrapping yarn around the rice hulls, ending with the final layer of thread wrap. This creates a nice soft ball for me to stitch. I usually include in the rice hull bag a small box with broken

shells or pebbles from local beaches as a noisemaker. Sometimes I will include a special handwritten message inside the base if I am giving it to a friend or if someone requests a special message for a commissioned piece. I teach students this method of making a base from rice hulls.

If all this sounds interesting to you, space is still available for a beginner workshop I'll be teaching Saturday, June 1st from 10:00 to 3:30 and Sunday, June 2nd from 10:00 to 3:30 at the Asian Pacific Cultural Center located at 4851 South Tacoma Way, Tacoma WA. For more information or to register, contact Kathy Hewitt at kathy@kathleenhewitt.com or 253-229-3100. 2-day (10 hour) Workshop fee: \$100, Material fee: \$15 plus tax (all materials/supplies provided or included).