

Temari 5 Pointed Star Pattern

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Historical Notes

In her book *Temari Techniques - A visual Guide to Making Japanese Embroidered Thread Balls*, the author Barbara B. Suess provided the following historical information.

(page 5) Temari is thought to have its origin in kemari, a game played with a deerskin ball. This kickball game was introduced to Japan from China during the Asuka Period (538 – 710AD), along with many significant artistic, social, political and religious ideas... Later onna-mari (literally translated as lady-ball) were made from silk threads by palace maidservants in competitions to please their princesses. The games ladies played with temari involved sitting on the floor and rolling the ball between them.

Temari were made with cotton from as early as 1600 AD, when cotton manufacturing started to become prevalent. This allowed temari making to be done by the common people. Children used temari to play tossing and juggling games.



Temari making was very popular during the Muromachi Period (1366 -1573 AD). From then until recently it was traditionally passed through female family members. Now there are many books that are keeping the art alive and letting the practice spread outside of Japan and around the world. Until the late 1900's there were no publications in the English language for potential artisans to use. This makes historical documentation very difficult.

I strongly recommend Barbara's book if you are planning to try this art form. The Painting on the left is from her collection as shown at the beginning of her book.

Martials & Tools:



There are many ways and materials used to build a Termari Ball.

The inner core of the ball is constructed by stuffing a container with material that will give the ball the correct firmness for applying the embroidery in the final stages. This is very important. It should be soft enough to get your needle through, but firm enough to form a base. These balls if stuffed and wrapped properly will bounce. Traditionally the stuffing used

was rice hulls. We will be using soft loose pillow stuffing material, stuffed into an odd sock (Yes there is a use for odd socks). You can also use clean carded fleece, shredded nylons, yarn ends, etc. You can add dried flowers such as lavender for a special gift. Then ball is wrapped in two stages. The first wrap is done with a fine knitting yarn.



The second wrap with sewing thread. It requires a fair amount so I always buy sewing thread sold on cones, the divide lines and accents are done with a fine metallic thread, the embroidery is done with #5 perle cotton in various colours.



The tools required to do this are long sharp needles (I like a 2 1/2" long needle), embroidery scissors, general scissors, paper, narrow tape measure and glass or plastic headed sewing pins in various colours. I also find that it is handy to have a pin cushion and a small pair of pliers.

The Creation:



To create the container I used the toe of an odd sock, cutting it away just below the heel.



It takes a lot of material to stuff the container to the correct firmness. The balls for this project are stuffed with loose polyester pillow stuffing. I will be using fleece in my demonstration.



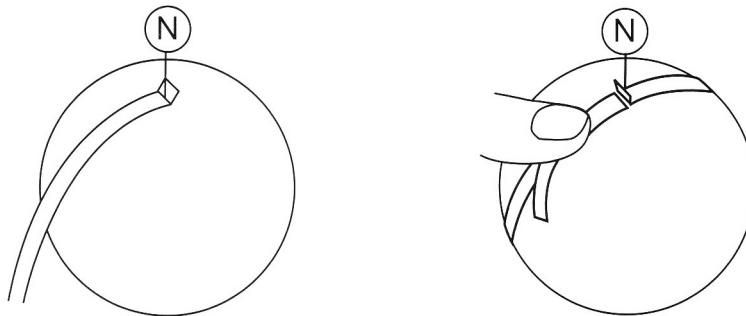
The stuffed container is then wrapped with a fine knitting yarn. It needs to be a yarn with some elasticity to obtain the correct firmness. The yarn should be of a fine baby, sock or fingerling weight. The wrap should be done in a completely random way. I find that rotating the ball a small amount with every wrap helps in doing this. It is good also to stop and squeeze the ball with both hands every so often, this helps to end up with a round ball. The tension of the wrapping should be a comfortable tight. The wrapping should continue until the sock can no longer be seen through the yarn.



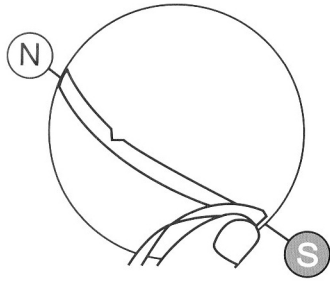
Next the ball is wrapped with sewing thread to provide a base for the embroidery. This should be done with the same technic as the yarn until the yarn can no longer be seen. The thread is then broken with a long tail and large stiches (about 2") are randomly taken all over the ball to secure the thread base. On the Last stitch the Thread is pulled tight and clipped close to the ball So that the end disappears into the ball.



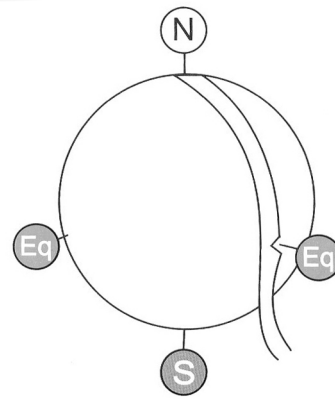
The ball is then measured and divided using a thin tape measure and a narrow strip of paper. The balls north and sound poles and equator are located. The ball is divided into sections. We will be making the 5 Pointed Star Pattern that uses what is called a simple 10 divide. This gives the guidelines for the pattern.



To start we locate the North and south poles and the equator. This is done by taking a narrow strip of paper (3/16" or 1cm) and longer then the circumference of your ball. Fold the end over a short ways and make a crease. Stick a pin of a one colour straight down through the center of the crease and into the ball. This marks the North Pole. Wrap the paper around the circumference of the ball until you come to the NP again fold the paper at the point where it butts into the pin. Cut the end of your paper off on this crease leaving the rest pinned to the ball. The next step is to bring the end of the paper up to the pin in the reverse direction and fold it in half. Cut a small notch to the half-way point of the crease.



Step 4 Place south pole pin



Step 4 Place equator pins

Then fold it in half again and clip another notch. Wrap the paper around the circumference again and put a pin in the notch at the south pole position, making sure that the pin goes straight in and not at an angle. Place a pin at the equator of your ball, then measure the circumference at the equator. Divide this measurement by 10. It is easier to do this if you use a narrow metric tape measure. Rotating your paper and place pins at 10 equal points around the equator.



Note: To start a thread tie a knot in the tread, cut tail very short, insert thread about 2" away from the point where you would like to begin working with it. Pull the thread through at that point and tough it until it disappears into the ball. A single knot works best. You can also poke the knot in and hide it with the end of you need.

The ball above on the left shows the placements of pins and the dividing threads. This illustration was for a ball marked for a S16 divide, but it shows the process. The ball on the right is a S10 divide which is what we will be using to make our star pattern.

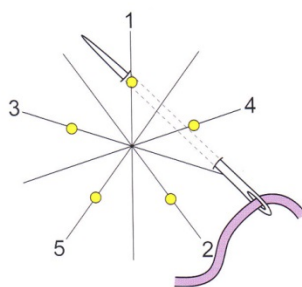


The dividing threads are wrapped around the ball from north to south poles and tacked down, then around the equator. This is also tacked down at every intersection.

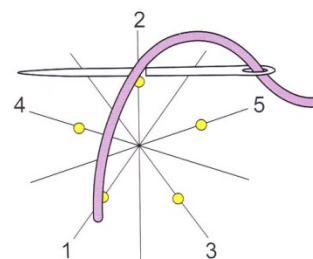
The next step is to measure the distance from the pole to the equator and divide this into 1/3s. Place a pin of one colour at 1/3 distance up from the equator, and 4 pins of a different colour one each on every second divider thread at the same distance from the equator.



The pin with a different coloured head will mark the starting point of your pattern.

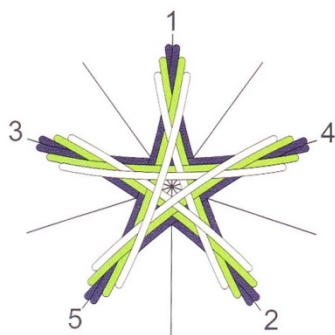


Begin at pin 1



Stitch at pin 2

Start your thread at the number 1 position using a herringbone stitch; it is like a back stitch. Continue around the pattern to points 2, 3, 4 & 5, and then back to the beginning.



Adding rows toward center

Continue the pattern moving each row slightly out and down with each row as shown in the illustration to the left.

In the sample ball the following number of rows for each of 3 colours were used:

- 6 first colour
- 6 second colour
- 3 third colour

An Obi or band is placed around the equator to finish the Temari. This is done by wrapping the thread around the ball and securing it with a herringbone stitch. This can be seen on the cover illustration.

