

LEGEND AND FOLKLORE SYMBOLS: SUKUNA-BIKO

Small of stature and slow of gait, the Japanese dwarf god was a powerful and influential figure while he was living on Earth.

The disappearance of the Japanese dwarf god remains a mystery. Some say he departed from his lands after handing over rulership to a close ally; others say that the tiny deity was catapulted into space from a stalk of millet. Whatever his fate, Sukuna-biko was worshipped for his medicinal and agricultural powers while he was on Earth.

His mother, Kami-Musubi, was the goddess of divine generative force, and other stories also link him to Susanowo, the mighty storm god.

The small lord of renown

Sukuna-biko was small in stature, but his skills and deeds were famous. Legend credits him with amazing healing powers, governance over medicine and agriculture and rulership over hot springs.

His little legs could not walk very fast but the dwarf god travelled everywhere. He was omniscient and knew all that there was to know.

Legend says that Sukuna-biko was catapulted into space from a millet stalk.



THE SYMBOLISM OF SUKUNA-BIKO



The dwarf god is strongly connected to symbols of water, which he controls in some myths, and travel, agriculture and medicine. In older Japanese legends he is referred to as Sukuna-na-biko or Sukuna-biko-na and appears to inherit the divine creative qualities of his mother.

Use books and a globe as symbols to call upon Sukuna-biko's knowledge about the world.

As the god of hot springs, Sukuna-biko could be symbolised by the image of a small fountain or by running spring water.

In ancient texts, Sukuna-biko-na is described as a creator god, who rides upon the white crests of the waves in a heavenly boat.

Maps and globes of the world or images

and symbols of modes of transport represent Sukuna-biko's love of travel, while books show his unlimited knowledge.

Healing plants belong to Sukuna-biko for his role in medicine, while grains, seeds, fruits and vegetables represent his role in agriculture. But it might be best not to use a millet grain for fear of offending this little divine personage!