

LEGEND AND FOLKLORE SYMBOLS: BENTEN

In Japanese folklore, Benten was the patron goddess of all artisans and she bestowed both eloquence and wealth.

The geishas, musicians and dancers of ancient Japan paid homage to the goddess Benten, patron of the arts. Her attributes were many: she was the goddess of love and beauty and could grant the gifts of eloquence, wisdom, music, wealth and good fortune. In the past, players of the biwa, a Japanese instrument, wouldn't marry for fear the goddess would become angry at their lack of devotion and take away their talents.

Beautiful goddess

Benten was beautiful and depicted with eight arms; six hands held a bow, an arrow, a sword, a key, a wheel and a jewel and two were joined in prayer. Originally a water goddess, the Japanese equivalent of the Hindu river goddess Saraswati, Benten became one of the seven gods of good fortune, the Shichifukujin. She has many shrines in Japan and, on the island of Kamakura, a temple was built to celebrate her marriage to a serpent king.

Benten was an inspirational goddess believed to bestow talent and fortune.



THE SYMBOLISM OF BENTEN



As a goddess of love and beauty, a water deity and a patron of the arts, and good fortune, Benten has a large array of symbols that you can use to call upon her aid.

All things that are regarded as beautiful

Benten is an artistic muse, so use a musical instrument to invoke her.

and desirable are commonly associated with Benten – such as flowers, jewels and silks.

A vessel of water or a water crystal may be used to represent Benten as a water deity.

Coins represent Benten in her role as one of the Shichifukujin, the seven gods of luck and good fortune.

You may play a musical instrument to tune into Benten's attributes of music, dance and eloquence.

Join your hands in prayer if you are seeking Benten's wisdom.

You can also harness Benten's power through the symbols of the bow and arrow, sword, key and wheel.