

## Tofu Ling and the Carp Banner Expanded Glossary

Many references to Asian symbolism were incorporated into the illustrations of *Tofu and the Carp Banner*. Some of these references are given further explanation below. Please consult Discussion **Questions and Answers: Artistic Symbolism in the Illustrations** for additional explanations.

**Dragon**, In some Eastern references as far back as 200 A.D., the dragon is mentioned as the chief of all reptiles and water dwellers. It possesses the power to transform from visible to invisible, to change its' size and appearance, and can dwell at will in caverns in distant mountains, in thunderous clouds, or in the depths of the sea. It is seen as the highest holder of good, strength and the spirit of change. Its' body is made up of the best of other animals. The dragon is beneficent, honored, and revered. It is not seen as a frightening being, as mythological dragons are sometimes portrayed, but as helpful and protective. The theme of the dragon is often seen in Asian celebrations. It is often used as ornamental decoration on houses, clothing, art, and fabrics.

**Crane**, The crane represents longevity and good fortune. The Emperor was symbolized as a crane in ancient Japanese poetry. The image of a crane with uplifted wings standing on one leg is often depicted to represent long life and immortality. Origami cranes are often used in the Japanese art form of Origami.

**Koi, carp**, Koi is the same word as love in Japanese. The Koi is unique in its' ability to fight all odds and ascend against the flow of cascades, currents and waterfalls to reach its' destination. It is chosen for the symbol of Boys Day due to its' determination and its' example of ambition, energy, strength and perseverance. Koi are often seen in Japanese decorative arts, and on clothing. Small boys in Hawaii often wear kimonos decorated with Koi on Boys' Day. Koi often live in ponds within Japanese Gardens. They are beautiful with their unique designs and graceful movements among the lily pads and lotus flowers.

**Samurai Warrior**, The Samurai were a mainstay of Japanese society. They defended the country, were guardians of the people, and lived steadfastly to their Code of Ethics. Much of Japanese tradition is in reference to the warriors. The artistic design included in their armor was involved and intricate. It often depicted personal meanings to the warrior who wore it. Even the horse's gear was designed and ornamental. The *Musha Ningyo* dolls were fashioned to represent the warriors long ago; but soon became symbols of the honor by which the Samurai lived. They are placed in homes on Boys' Day as a visible symbol. Some Musha Ningyo dolls are very valuable and are seen as works of art within the Japanese culture. The intricate decoration, fabulous fabrics and artistic sculpture like poses create an artistic presentation.

**Tiger,** The tiger represents courage, dignity and fierceness; that of a soldier. The tiger head was often painted onto shields. The tiger was considered to be the lord of all land animals. An ancient Japanese proverb tells that the strong shall protect the weak, and the weak shall serve the strong. This is often illustrated in Japanese art with the pairing of bamboo and the tiger.

**Torii Gate,** Red Torii gates are seen in Japan in parks and outside areas. They are a symbol of Japan. Torii are found throughout the mountains by the Fushi-me Inari shrine in Kyoto, and on Lake Ashinoko near Mount Fuji.

Footnote to sources:

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2. Ishii, Minako (2007). *Girl's Day/Boy's Day*. Honolulu, Hawaii: Bess Press, Inc.
3. Web Site: Susan Yee, *Boy's Day: Strength, Determination and Success*, [http://www.sushiandtofu.com/sushi\\_and\\_tofu/culture\\_boysDay.htm](http://www.sushiandtofu.com/sushi_and_tofu/culture_boysDay.htm) (9/23/2008)
4. Williams, C.A.S. (1976). *Outlines of Chinese Symbolism & Art Motives*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc.
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7. Janet Gaylord Moore (1979). *The Eastern Gate An Invitation to the Arts of China and Japan*. Cleveland and New York: William Collins Publishers, Inc.
8. Web Site: Nadja Van Ghelue, *the seven virtues of bushido, Their kanji and spirit highlighted*, <http://www.theartofcalligraphy.com/seven-virtues-ofbushido.html>

