

MANEKI - NEKO

*Presentation provided by
www.ManekiNeko4U.com*

maneki-neko 招き猫

maneki-neko "beckoning cat" is a common Japanese lucky charm depicting a cat who is beckoning with an upright paw.

You will find maneki-neko at the entrance or at the cashier of restaurants and shops. Their beckoning is inviting customers. They are also popular in private homes where they shall bring good fortune and fight off evil.

Japanese origin

In Japanese maneki (招き) comes from the verb maneko (招く) which means to invite and

the name neko (猫) which means cat.

maneki-neko means literally
"the cat who invites".

maneki-neko



Picture by www.origami-papier.eu

History

It is believed that the first maneki-neko appeared at the end of the EDO era (1603-1867) in Japan but the first documented proof is from the year 1870 during the Meiji era.

Ancient legend

There are many legends surrounding the origin of the maneki-neko, perhaps the most popular being the legend of the Gotoku-ji Temple.

There was once a temple in ancient Japan where a priest lived with his cat companion, Tama. The Gotoku-ji temple was not well endowed, so its priest was very poor. Although the temple was falling into pieces, the monk fulfilled his duties and fed the cat with a share of his meager rations.

Ancient legend

One day, a feudal lord, Naotaka Li, Lord of Hikone district, was passing the Gotoku-ji temple when it started to rain. As the Lord took shelter under a tree on the grounds, the priest's cat peeked out of the temple and raised a paw to invite the Lord inside.

The Lord was curious about this unusual behavior and walked to the temple courtyard for a closer look. When Naotako Li was standing in front of Tama in the courtyard, a bolt of lightening struck the tree under which he had been sheltering.

Ancient legend

Knowing that the cat had saved his life, Lord Li became the temple's patron, bringing it prosperity. Eventually the cat died and was buried in the temple's cat cemetery.

In his honor a monument of a beckoning cat, the maneki-neko was erected. The Gotoku-ji temple still stands in Tokyo and is home to many maneki-neko statues.

The model

maneki-neko are modeled after a Japanese Bobtail cat. This species is called Kazoku-neko ("Family cat") in Japan. As her model, the maneki-neko has the same pointed ears and stumpy tail.



The gesture

The origin of maneki-neko are in the Japanese tradition as well as in the Chinese tradition. The gesture has its origin most likely in an old Chinese proverb of the Tang dynasty:

"The cat who washes his face, wipes so long over the ear until the invites arrive".

猫洗面过耳则客至, māo xǐmiàn guò ěr zé kè zhì.

The gesture

maneki-neko can be found with either the right or left paw raised.

Right paw (masculine)



"invites money and fortune"

Left paw (feminine)



"invites visitors and clients"

maneki-neko who raise both paws are rare, as this is considered exaggerated in Japan.

The colors

maneki-neko statues come in different colors with different meanings, whereas the interpretation may vary.



Three - color - cat

Traditionally the best lucky charm of all! The cat is white with black and red patches. These cats are called mi-ke neko ("Three-fur-cats") in Japanese.

The colors

The black cat



A black maneki-neko fights off daemons.

The white cat



A white maneki-neko stands for purity and innocence.

The red cat



A red maneki-neko fights off illnesses and brings good health.

The colors

The golden cat



A golden maneki-neko brings monetary fortune.

The pink cat



A pink maneki-neko brings you love. (not a traditional color but nowadays very popular).

The green cat



A green maneki-neko brings success in school and university.

Examples

Modern



In red



Japanese style



Puristic



Some colors



In gold



maneki-neko in a street in Asakusa (Tokyo)

*And now, we are
going to start
drawing.*



Create your own maneki-neko

- Just have fun and create your own maneki-neko.
- Don't think too long!
- Trust your inspiration and let your creativity flow.
- There's no right or wrong.
There is only your maneki-neko.
- Write, draw, paint, make a collage, use symbols ... anything you like.

Artworks of the first event



Have fun and enjoy

Please do send the pictures of your
maneki-neko artworks to

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for the upload on the website

www.manekineko4u.com.

All the best,

Uwe

Chief Joy Officer