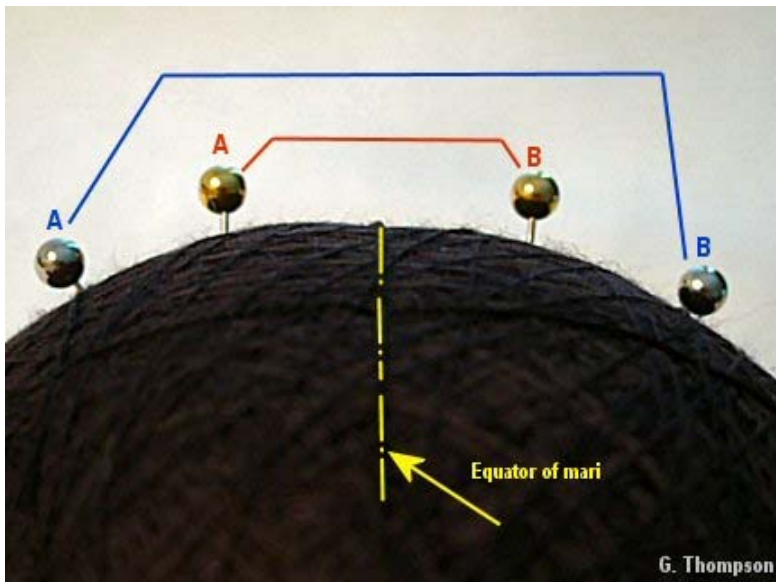


## Hints for Working Yubinuki / Thimble-inspired Obi Designs on Temari

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There are some delightful detailed woven-obi designs seen on temari that are inspired or directly interpreted from [Yubinuki \(Japanese thimble\)](#). They are usually worked as obi designs (bands), keeping in mind the proportional width of a yubinuki as well as the proportional width of an obi in kimono dress, as a baseline for size in relation to the temari. As mentioned in the [Yubinuki page](#), the designs can be simple, or rather intricate and involved. The same methods used in [Yubinuki making](#), such as multiple needles (threads), multiple layers, subdivided sections, and working in both directions around the mari are applicable to working yubinuki obi on temari. The info here is offered as some overall help in working the designs, as opposed to actual patterns. You will find Yubinuki-inspired obi designs in several Japanese books, and also some English ones.

In general, the designs are rather solid and dense, and worked so that the stitching completely comes together and covers the obi area on the temari, the same as when making a yubinuki the entire base ring is solidly covered. This usually takes a bit of practice in spacing and stitching, just as in making the thimbles. A combination of stitch angle, size of the mari, size of the design band and tension all comes together in sort of a "perfect storm" to create an effective design; changes to any one of these factors usually requires adapting the others a little bit. Many months of happily doing some learning and practicing (including learning how to make [thimbles](#), since the advice was offered to really learn how to apply the designs to temari, it helped to first learn the thimbles), has led to this info that can help working these designs.



It helps to remember that the wider you try to make the design, the more difficult it may be to achieve full and smooth coverage (you hit a similar issue when trying to reduce the width, if you try to go too small).

If you look at the equator/obi area "from the side", as though you were looking "over the top" of the equator with it held a 12 o'clock (see photo left), you can see the "curve" (or conversely, the "flatness") of the mari over the area that you are going to be stitching. The "flatter" the area, the easier it will be to attain a smooth, fully covered band of design - thus the larger the mari and/or more narrow the design band, usually the easier it will be to get a smooth outcome with full coverage. It will generally be easier to work a band using the red AB area than the wider, blue AB area.



The difference between working on larger mari with wider designs versus smaller and narrower can be seen in this photo example.

While the temari on the left with the wider design is still appealing, it's more difficult to get close coverage (given the same thread size) than a smaller mari and/or narrower band of design. You can see that the threads did not fill in as completely on the wider band (left) as compared to the narrower (i.e. "flatter") band on the right. The curve that the wider band is worked on (even though it is a larger mari) is sharper than the narrower one on the right, which resulted in a fully covered design.



Most times these designs are used to embellish the equator of a temari and create an obi design. The mari is prepped with a [Simple Division](#), according to the number of sections the yubinuki design requires, along with the equator. Use a marking thread the color of the mari wrap - you'll stitch over the marking lines for the yubinuki pattern, but the remainder of the Simple Division lines will show afterwards (and can be used to create designs around the obi to complete the temari, or removed and other finishings applied). Alternately the SD lines can be removed, and/or others added.

It's a great help to place additional guidelines around the mari, north and south of the equator, so that the total distance between these additional lines is the width of the finished yubinuki obi band. Thimble designs can be done without the extra lines but - they essentially are the upper and lower boundaries of the band, and since keeping these stitching borders as straight and even as possible is most important, having these extra lines keeps things accurate.



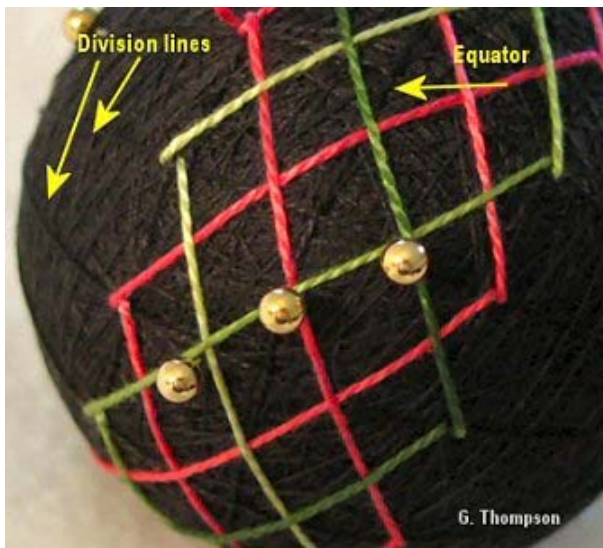
Stitching a yubinuki usually is done with an adapted zig-zag ([chidori kagari](#)) stitch. as you work up and down the threads will "weave" into a design. The zigzag yields a nicely "bound" edge as the thread is carried to the next stitch position. (Alternately, designs can be done by carrying the thread back and forth under the mari surface; this will give a smooth edge, but the stitching and tension need to be absolutely perfect; this also doubles the thread consumption.) Japanese references seem to rely more on the chidori method. The finished obi edges need to be as straight and even as possible. Place stitches just above/below the extra guidelines at the equator. Keep the tension even, especially as you continue to work. If you start pulling the thread tighter, the edge will "wobble" and creep downward to the equator, even if your stitch placement has been even.

There really is no shortcut other than some practice to get the stitching even and straight...



Designs form based on "skipping" from one section to the next, in particular sequence. The goal is to have even edges (straight horizontal stitch placement), with stitches of ensuing rounds snugly placed next to each other. Designs generally require complete coverage of the mari as the thimble pattern develops. Keep oriented as to which is north and south pole - changing orientation in the middle won't work. It also helps to mark your starting line. Placing the stitches on a slight angle also helps; allowing the angle of the stitch to correlate with the angle of the thread results in a closer alignment and smoother fill. This may be a matter of personal preference as you work, but it had a major impact on the outcome of my attempts - the angle will adjust based on the design, and sizes of mari and band.

Depending on the size of the mari, width of the band and the design itself, you will find the "right" combination of stitch size (although usually always rather small), angle and tension.



In addition to the stitching, keep track of the "horizontals" running in the design. The threads will cross each other at at least one place in the pattern (i.e., the equator), and more detailed patterns will have threads crossing at additional points.

In this example, the pink and green threads cross at the equator. Additionally, the pink threads and green threads each cross each other at points half way between the equator and the upper/lower extra horizontal marking lines. The pins show the crossing points. The weave of the design will create visible horizontal "lines" that need to appear straight in the finished design; paying attention to this as you stitch is a must (a little grooming can be done when finished, but it's tough to straighten after completion). Either eye-ball it well, or place pins to help, or even put down extra horizontal marking lines (you will stitch over them and the design should fill in completely so they will not be seen). The final outcome will be in trouble if the horizontal intersections are wobbly....



The verticals need to be on track also. Keep tabs on the vertical alignments that are created with the koma (pattern sections). If you drop a perpendicular (shown with the needle as well as blue line here), the koma (section) edges should be even with each other. The yellow brackets show a koma; at any given time at the end of a round, if you drop a vertical line from the top edge to the bottom of the last round of stitching in a koma, it should be perpendicular (straight up and down). If your stitch spacing has "crept", you'll lose the vertical alignment .

Vertical accuracy comes from keeping the spacing between the stitches even, as well as controlling tension and stitch size. If things start to creep the design will be skewed.



This shows an example of what things hopefully result in.... even sections, even borders, all sections filling in at the same time, horizontals and perpendiculars aligned. The more you work and get the feel for yubinuki designs the easier they become. It's very much worth keeping an eye on things as you work, and if you spot a stitch that has "wobbled", work back and correct it. For example, the stitches in the red section along the top were redone to straighten the top line. It's worth fixing errors like this, since it will really detract from the finished temari.

When the Yubinuki obi is complete, it should fill the defined band, and have straight, even, top and bottom edges. You can work a "border" along the edges after completion, using something like a back/outline stitch or chain stitch (in either single or double thread)..... it can be a nice enhancement to set off the edges of the obi. It might also help to cover some "wobbles" in the obi edges, but it will not compensate for anything other than a very minor uneven edge, so it's really worth trying to keep those edges as straight as you can. It really does get easier after

making a few. After completing the Yubinuki design, there are many options with the overall temari design. It can be attractive to just leave the open areas at the poles, perhaps with some straight-stitch/starburst embellishment. Or, additional designs can be stitched in the north and south pole areas - either use the Simple Division lines (add more if needed) or remove/change them to whatever you need.

**References/resources:** ["Kinu ito de Kagaru Kagano Yubinuki"](#); *"Atarashi Temari 3" (Cosmo 3)*; *"Tanoshii Temari Asobi" (Fun with Temari)*; *"Tsurusi-temari" (Stringed/Suspended Temari)*; much appreciation for guidance and translation goes to Ai M., Tomiko W., Setsuko A.

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