

50 Japanese Names for Shiba Inu

History, Meanings and Legends

Choosing a name for a Shiba Inu is much more than a simple label. In Japan, a dog's name carries deep meanings, wishes for its character, references to nature or mythology. Japanese tradition considers the name as a gift that accompanies the animal throughout its life, influencing its destiny and personality.

This collection presents the fifty most popular names for Shiba Inu in Japan, each with its history, the meaning of the kanji used, and when present, the associated legends or popular sayings. Some names derive from nature, others from mythology, still others from character qualities that are wished for the dog. Jin, the name I chose for my Shiba, is among these.

The names are presented in alphabetical order according to Roman transliteration (romaji). For each name you will find the original kanji, the literal meaning, the history or cultural context, and when they exist, references to legends, proverbs or Japanese traditions.

1. Akari (明り)

Meaning: Bright light

Akari literally means "light" or "illumination". It is a name that evokes clarity, hope and warmth. In Japanese culture, light represents knowledge and spiritual guidance. A dog called Akari carries with it the wish to illuminate the family's life, to be a beacon in dark times. The kanji 明 (aki/mei) combines the characters for sun and moon, representing the totality of light. Traditionally it is believed that a dog with this name brings good fortune and keeps away evil spirits, just as light dispels darkness. It is a particularly popular name for females with red coats, whose color recalls the light of dawn.

2. Akira (明)

Meaning: Bright, brilliant

Akira uses the same kanji as Akari but with a different reading, more common for males. It means "bright", "clear", "intelligent". It is one of the most widespread names in Japan, not only for dogs but also for people. A Shiba called Akira carries the wish to be bright in spirit, perceptive, to have that lively intelligence typical of the breed. There is a Japanese saying: "Akira na kokoro wa akira na michi wo terasu" (a bright heart illuminates a bright path). Owners who choose this name often notice that their Shiba demonstrate particular mental acuity and problem-solving abilities.

3. Aoi (葵)

Meaning: Hollyhock/Blue

Aoi has a fascinating double meaning. The kanji 葵 represents the hollyhock, symbol flower of the Tokugawa family, the shogunate that ruled Japan for over 250 years. But "aoi" is also homophonic with "blue" (青い), creating a wordplay rich in meanings. As a name for Shiba, Aoi carries with it nobility, elegance, and that characteristic dignity of the breed. According to a legend from the Edo period, dogs called Aoi were considered protectors of samurai families. The hollyhock flower blooms always turned toward the sun, and it is said that dogs with this name have a faithful and constant nature, always oriented toward their owner as the flower toward the sun.

4. Azuki (小豆)

Meaning: Red bean

Azuki takes its name from the small red beans used in Japanese cuisine for traditional sweets. It is an affectionate name, often given to small Shiba or particularly round puppies. The red color of azuki perfectly recalls the red coat of Shiba. In Japanese culture, azuki has purifying properties: sekihan (rice with azuki beans) is served on fortunate occasions. A dog called Azuki therefore carries the wish for fortune and purity. There is a proverb: "Azuki no you ni chiisaku temo, aji wa fukaku" (small as an azuki bean, but with deep flavor), referring to how small things can have great value.

5. Chibi (ちび)

Meaning: Small, tiny

Chibi is a colloquial Japanese term meaning "small" or "tiny", often used affectionately. It has no specific kanji, being written in hiragana. It is a popular name for smaller than average Shiba or for those who maintain a particularly puppy-like appearance even as adults. In Japanese pop culture, "chibi" describes a drawing style with characters with childlike and adorable proportions. A Shiba called Chibi will carry this name all its life, maintaining that kawaii (adorable) quality so appreciated. Interestingly, many Shiba called Chibi develop particularly lively and playful personalities, as if the name influenced the character.

6. Choco (ちょこ)

Meaning: Chocolate

Choco is a modern name, a linguistic loan from English "chocolate", phonetically adapted to Japanese. It is particularly popular for Shiba with dark sesame or black-tan coat, whose color recalls chocolate. Although not traditional, Choco has become very common in the last twenty years, reflecting the influence of Western culture. Curiously, despite chocolate being toxic to dogs, the name is considered auspicious because chocolate in Japan is associated with sweetness and affection, especially through the Valentine's Day tradition. Owners choose this name for its sweet sound and for the evocation of something precious and delicious.

7. Daifuku (大福)

Meaning: Great fortune

Daifuku is both the name of a traditional Japanese sweet (mochi filled with sweet bean paste) and literally means "great fortune". The kanji 大 (great) and 福 (fortune/happiness) make this an extremely auspicious name. A Shiba called Daifuku carries with it the wish for a life full of happiness and prosperity for the whole family. The daifuku sweet is round, soft, white outside and sweet inside - characteristics that owners often see in their Shiba: seemingly tough outside but sweet with those they love. There is a saying: "Daifuku wa minna de wakeru" (great fortune is shared with everyone), emphasizing how a dog brings joy to the entire family.

8. Fubuki (吹雪)

Meaning: Snowstorm

Fubuki literally means "snowstorm", a combination of the kanji 吹 (to blow) and 雪 (snow). It is a powerful and evocative name, often chosen for white or cream Shiba, or for those born in winter. It recalls the force of nature, impetuous energy but also the beauty of the snowy landscape. In Japanese mythology, the Yuki-onna (snow woman) appears during snowstorms. A dog called Fubuki carries with it that wild beauty and that strong character typical of Shiba. Owners report that dogs with this name tend to have particularly energetic and independent personalities, just like a storm that cannot be controlled.

9. Fuku (福)

Meaning: Fortune, happiness

Fuku is one of the most traditional and auspicious names. The kanji 福 represents fortune, happiness, blessing. It is the same character seen on decorations during the Japanese new year, often hung upside down because the verb "to be upside down" is homophonic with "to arrive" - so it means "fortune arrives". A dog called Fuku is considered a living lucky charm for the family. According to tradition, petting a dog called Fuku before an important event brings good luck. The name is short, easy to call, and every time you pronounce it you are literally invoking fortune. It is particularly popular among older owners who keep traditions alive.

10. Hachi (八)

Meaning: Eight

Hachi means "eight" and is one of the most famous names for dogs in Japan thanks to Hachiko, the legendary Akita Inu who waited for his deceased owner at Shibuya station for almost ten years. Hachiko's story is a universal symbol of canine loyalty. The number eight in Japan is

considered lucky because the kanji 八 widens upward, symbolizing growing prosperity. Many Shiba owners choose this name as a tribute to Hachiko and as a wish that their dog demonstrates the same unwavering loyalty. There is a saying: "Hachi no you ni tadashii kokoro" (a righteous heart like Hachi), referring to absolute faithfulness.

11. Hana (花)

Meaning: Flower

Hana simply means "flower" and is one of the most popular female names. The kanji 花 evokes beauty, delicacy, the cyclical nature of nature. In Japan, flowers have deep meanings: sakura (cherry) represents ephemeral beauty, chrysanthemum longevity. A dog called Hana carries the wish to bring beauty and joy into the family's life, just as flowers beautify the landscape. The name is particularly chosen for elegant and graceful female Shiba. According to popular belief, dogs called with names of natural elements like Hana develop a particular bond with nature and particularly love outdoor walks.

12. Haru (春)

Meaning: Spring

Haru means "spring", the season of renewal, cherry blossoms, new beginnings. It is a name that brings hope, freshness, vital energy. Many Shiba born in spring receive this name, but it is popular all year round for its sweet sound and for what it represents. Spring in Japan is an almost sacred period, when everything is reborn after the cold winter. A dog called Haru carries the wish for a life full of renewal, happy moments that bloom like flowers. There is a famous haiku: "Haru tateba / hana to naru nari / waresenrin" - when spring arrives, everything becomes flower. Dogs with this name are often described as particularly playful and young at heart.

13. Hime (姫)

Meaning: Princess

Hime literally means "princess" and is reserved for females. The kanji 姫 was historically used only for members of the imperial family. It is a name that confers dignity, elegance, regality. A female Shiba called Hime carries with it the expectation of being treated with respect, just as the breed requires. Many owners report that Shiba called Hime develop particularly dignified bearing and demand royal attention. In Japanese tradition, princesses were both delicate and

strong, educated in martial arts as well as refined arts. A dog called Hime embodies this duality: sweet but strong, elegant but capable.

14. Hoshi (星)

Meaning: Star

Hoshi means "star" and is a poetic name that evokes the night, dreams, guidance. Stars in Japan are associated with the legend of Tanabata, where two stellar lovers (Orihime and Hikoboshi) meet once a year across the Milky Way. A dog called Hoshi carries the wish to be a guide, a light in dark nights, a constant reference point. It is a popular name for Shiba with prominent white markings that resemble stars. According to tradition, dogs called Hoshi have a particular intelligence for finding their way home and never get lost. There is a saying: "Hoshi wa yami wo terasu" (the star illuminates the darkness).

15. Ichigo (一五/莓)

Meaning: Number one/Strawberry

Ichigo has a fascinating double meaning. Written 一五 it means "one-five" (fifteen), but written 莓 it means "strawberry". As a name for dogs, it often refers to strawberry for its sweetness and for the red color that recalls the Shiba coat. Strawberries in Japan are considered a luxury fruit, symbol of perfection and care. A dog called Ichigo therefore carries the idea of being precious, sweet, perfect. It is particularly popular for small female puppies with intense red coats. Interestingly, "ichigo ichie" (一期一会) is a Zen concept meaning "one meeting, one opportunity", emphasizing the uniqueness of each moment.

16. Itsuki (樹)

Meaning: Tree

Itsuki means "tree" and is a name that evokes strength, stability, growth. The kanji 樹 represents a mature and strong tree, with deep roots and branches extending to the sky. It is a unisex name but more common for males. A Shiba called Itsuki carries the wish to grow strong and stable, to be a pillar for the family. In Japanese philosophy, trees are symbols of longevity and resilience: they bend in the wind but do not break. Dogs with this name are often described as particularly faithful and protective. There is a proverb: "Itsuki wa tooshi ni sodatsu" (the tree grows through the years), referring to how true strength develops over time.

17. Jin (仁/陣/刃)

Meaning: Benevolence/Formation/Blade

Jin is a deeply meaningful name with multiple interpretations depending on the kanji used. 仁 (Jin) means "benevolence", "humanity", "compassion" - it is one of the fundamental virtues of Confucianism. A dog called Jin with this kanji carries the wish to be kind in spirit, to have a noble heart. 陣 (Jin) means "battle formation" or "camp", evoking strategic strength and courage. 刃 (Jin) means "blade", representing mental sharpness and warrior spirit. All three meanings fit perfectly with the Shiba nature: noble and compassionate with family, strategic and intelligent, with that indomitable spirit typical of the breed. The name Jin is short, strong, easy to pronounce in any language. In samurai tradition, Jin represented the perfect warrior: strong in battle but compassionate in peace. A dog with this name embodies this ideal balance.

18. Kaede (楓)

Meaning: Maple

Kaede means "maple" and is intimately linked to Japanese autumn, when maple leaves turn bright red in what is called "koyo" (紅葉). The kanji 楓 specifically represents the Japanese maple. It is a very popular name for Shiba with intense red coats, whose color recalls autumn leaves. In Japanese culture, maple represents elegance and transformation. A dog called Kaede carries the wish for a beauty that changes and intensifies over time. There is a tradition of going to see koyo, and it is said that dogs called Kaede particularly love autumn walks among fallen leaves.

19. Kai (海/甲斐)

Meaning: Sea/Loyalty

Kai has different meanings depending on context. 海 (Kai) means "sea", evoking vastness, freedom, force of nature. 甲斐 (Kai) is the name of a Japanese region and also means "value", "utility", "merit". There is also the Kai Ken, a Japanese dog breed with brindle coat. As a name for Shiba, Kai carries the wish to have a spirit as vast as the sea, to be valorous and faithful. It is a short, strong, impactful name. Dogs called Kai are often described as particularly independent and adventurous, just like the sea that cannot be contained. There is a saying: "Kai no you ni fukaku" (deep as the sea), referring to loyalty and deep feelings.

20. Kiku (菊)

Meaning: Chrysanthemum

Kiku means "chrysanthemum", the symbol flower of the Japanese imperial family. The chrysanthemum represents longevity, nobility, perfection. The imperial seal itself is a stylized chrysanthemum with sixteen petals. It is a name charged with cultural and historical meaning. A dog called Kiku carries the wish for a long and noble life. The chrysanthemum blooms in autumn when other flowers have withered, symbolizing endurance and lasting beauty. In Japanese tradition, the "kiku matsuri" (chrysanthemum festival) celebrates this flower. Dogs with this name are often described as particularly dignified and long-lived. There is a traditional drink, kiku-zake (chrysanthemum sake), drunk to wish for long life.

21. Kinu (絹)

Meaning: Silk

Kinu means "silk" and evokes luxury, softness, preciousness. The kanji 絹 represents this precious fabric that for centuries was one of Japan's most prized products. It is a particularly suitable name for Shiba with exceptionally soft and silky coats. Silk in Japanese culture also represents refinement and high social class. A dog called Kinu carries the wish to be treated with the delicacy due to something precious. In tradition, silk was so precious it was used as a form of payment. Dogs with this name are often pampered and spoiled, truly treated as family treasures.

22. Kitsune (狐)

Meaning: Fox

Kitsune means "fox" and is a name charged with mythological meaning. In Japanese mythology, foxes are magical, intelligent, sometimes mischievous creatures that can transform into humans. The most powerful kitsune have multiple tails (up to nine). Since Shiba greatly resemble foxes, both in appearance and cunning character, this name is perfectly appropriate. A dog called Kitsune carries with it the wish for sharp intelligence and lively spirit. In legends, kitsune serve Inari, the kami of rice and prosperity, so the name also brings auspices of fortune. It is a name that openly recognizes the cunning and independent nature of the Shiba.

23. Kobo (小坊)

Meaning: Little monk

Kobo literally means "little monk" and is an affectionate name that evokes images of young Buddhist monks. The most famous reference is Kobo Daishi, a 9th-century monk founder of the Shingon Buddhist sect. It is a name that brings serenity, wisdom, spiritual dedication. A dog called Kobo carries the wish to have a calm and contemplative temperament. Curiously, many owners report that their Shiba called Kobo tend to be calmer and more meditative than the breed average. The name is particularly popular for Shiba who seem to have a wise and thoughtful expression.

24. Koma (駒)

Meaning: Colt/Chess piece

Koma has two main meanings. 駒 can mean "colt" (young horse) or "game piece", referring to shogi (Japanese chess). As a colt, it evokes youth, energy, growth potential. As a shogi piece, it suggests strategy and importance in the grand scheme. It is a versatile name that suits the Shiba well for its agility and tactical intelligence. A dog called Koma carries the wish to be always young at heart and to move through life with grace and strategy. In shogi, each piece has its vital role - so each dog has its irreplaceable place in the family.

25. Kuro (黒)

Meaning: Black

Kuro simply means "black" and is the most obvious name for Shiba with black-tan coats. The kanji 黒 represents the color in its essence. In Japanese culture, black is not associated with bad luck as in some Western cultures, but rather represents mystery, elegance, formality. A dog called Kuro carries that austere dignity and timeless elegance. It is a particularly popular name for males. Black in Japanese aesthetics is considered the color of maximum refinement - think of the tea ceremony or Noh theater. Dogs called Kuro are often described as particularly serious and dignified.

26. Mame (豆)

Meaning: Bean

Mame means "bean" and is an affectionate name for small dogs. "Mame-shiba" is the term for particularly small Shiba, below standard. The kanji 豆 represents legumes in general. It is a name that evokes adorable smallness, something precious enclosed in a small space. A dog called Mame carries the idea of being a concentrated treasure - small but full of personality. There is a Japanese proverb: "Mame de mo tako de mo, karada wa ichiban" (whether a bean or an octopus, the body is what counts), emphasizing that size does not determine value. Owners choose this name affectionately, celebrating smallness instead of seeing it as a defect.

27. Maru (丸)

Meaning: Circle, round

Maru means "circle" or "round" and is one of the most common suffixes for dog names in Japan. The kanji 丸 represents perfection and completeness - the circle is a perfect shape with no beginning or end. Historically, Japanese ships often had "maru" in their name. It is also used as an affectionate suffix. A dog simply called Maru carries the wish for completeness, to be perfect as it is. The circle in Zen philosophy represents enlightenment and the totality of the universe. Dogs with this name are often described as particularly balanced and serene. It is a simple but profound name.

28. Mei (明/芽生)

Meaning: Bright/Sprout

Mei can be written with different kanji. 明 means "bright", "clear", sharing the meaning with Akira but with a more feminine and delicate pronunciation. 芽生 means "sprout", evoking new life emerging. As a name for dogs, Mei carries the wish for brightness and continuous growth. It is particularly popular for females, having a sweet and delicate sound. In Japanese culture, sprouts represent potential and promise of future. A dog called Mei carries the idea of always growing, always developing, always new. The name is short, easy to call, and sounds musical.

29. Mikan (蜜柑)

Meaning: Mandarin

Mikan means "mandarin", the small orange citrus very popular in Japan. The kanji 蜜柑 combine "honey" and "sweet citrus". It is a name that evokes sweetness, vitality, bright orange color. It is particularly suitable for Shiba with intense red coats that recall the color of ripe fruit. Mikan are

associated with winter in Japan, when they are consumed in front of the kotatsu (heated table). A dog called Mikan carries the wish to bring sweetness and warmth even on the coldest days. It is a playful and affectionate name, evoking the image of something small, round and irresistibly sweet.

30. Mochi (餅)

Meaning: Rice cake

Mochi is the name of the famous Japanese glutinous rice cakes. The kanji 餅 represents this traditional food consumed especially during the new year. Mochi are soft, white, sticky, symbol of good fortune. It is an extremely popular name for white or cream Shiba, or for particularly chubby and soft puppies. A dog called Mochi carries the wish for longevity and fortune - mochi are in fact called "kagami mochi" when offered to the gods. There is a tradition called "mochitsuki" (pounding rice to make mochi) done in community, symbolizing unity. A dog called Mochi therefore also represents family union.

31. Momiji (紅葉)

Meaning: Autumn leaves

Momiji literally means "red autumn leaves", specifically those of the maple that turn bright red. The kanji 紅葉 combine "crimson" and "leaf". It is one of the most poetic names, evoking the ephemeral beauty of Japanese autumn, one of the most celebrated seasons in Japanese culture. A dog called Momiji carries with it the beauty of transformation, the elegance of natural change. It is particularly suitable for Shiba with intense red coats. In Japanese tradition, contemplating momiji is a spiritual activity almost as much as admiring cherry blossoms in spring. Dogs with this name are often described as particularly photogenic and admired.

32. Momo (桃)

Meaning: Peach

Momo means "peach" and is a name charged with mythological meaning. The kanji 桃 represents both the fruit and the tree. In Japanese mythology, Momotaro (the peach boy) is a popular hero born from a giant peach. Peaches are associated with longevity, protection against evil, and fortune. A dog called Momo carries these positive auspices. The pink color of the peach also recalls tenderness and sweetness. It is a particularly popular name for females, evoking

femininity and sweetness. In Japanese art, peach blossoms represent spring, rebirth, and purity. It is a name that sounds sweet and has deep cultural roots.

33. Mugi (麦)

Meaning: Wheat, barley

Mugi means "wheat" or "barley", fundamental cereals in Japanese agriculture. The kanji 麦 represents these grains essential for survival. It is a name that evokes simplicity, abundance, nourishment. A dog called Mugi carries the wish for a simple but rich life, to be a source of constant joy as grain is a source of nourishment. Wheat fields in Japan swaying in the wind are an image of peace and prosperity. The name is particularly suitable for Shiba with wheat-colored coats, that light golden tone. It is a humble but deeply meaningful name, reflecting the importance of simplicity in Japanese philosophy.

34. Natsu (夏)

Meaning: Summer

Natsu means "summer" and is perfect for dogs born in the warm season or for those with particularly lively and energetic temperaments. The kanji 夏 evokes sun, sea, summer festivals, fireworks - all the energy and joy of the season. A dog called Natsu carries the wish for a life full of energy, warmth, brilliant moments. Summer in Japan is the season of matsuri (festivals), so the name also brings the idea of celebration and community. Dogs with this name are often described as particularly playful and sociable. It is a name that sounds warm and welcoming, just like the season it represents.

35. Niko (にこ)

Meaning: Smile

Niko derives from "niko-niko", the Japanese onomatopoeia for smiling or being radiant with happiness. It has no specific kanji, being written in hiragana にこ. It is a modern and playful name, chosen for dogs with particularly cheerful and sunny character. A dog called Niko carries the wish to always bring smiles to the family. The expression "niko-niko suru" means to smile cheerfully, and it is believed that dogs with this name have that special quality of making people smile just by looking at them. It is a name that reflects the pure and simple joy that dogs bring to our lives.

36. Pochi (ポチ)

Meaning: Classic dog name

Pochi is probably the most stereotypically Japanese dog name, equivalent to "Fido" in Italy or "Rover" in English. Written in katakana ポチ, it has no literal meaning but has been the most common dog name in Japan for generations. The origin is uncertain: some say it derives from the French "petit" (small), others from the term for "spots" referring to spotted dogs. Despite being considered somewhat old-fashioned, it maintains nostalgic charm. A dog called Pochi carries with it the entire history of Japanese dogs, a connection to past generations. It's like naming a child "John" - classic, timeless, immediately recognizable.

37. Raiden (雷電)

Meaning: Thunder and lightning

Raiden combines the kanji 雷 (thunder) and 電 (lightning/electricity), creating a name of great power. In Japanese mythology, Raiden is the god of thunder and lightning, often represented as a demon who plays drums to create thunder. It is a dramatic and powerful name, suitable for Shiba with particularly strong and dynamic character. A dog called Raiden carries the wish to have electrifying energy and imposing presence. It is a popular name for dominant and self-confident males. In Japanese culture, thunderstorms are viewed with respect and awe - so a dog called Raiden commands respect.

38. Ren (蓮)

Meaning: Lotus

Ren means "lotus" and is one of the most spiritually meaningful names. The kanji 蓮 represents the lotus flower which, in Buddhism, symbolizes purity and enlightenment because it grows beautiful and pure even in muddy waters. It is a name that carries deep philosophical meaning: the ability to maintain one's beauty and purity regardless of external circumstances. A dog called Ren carries the wish to remain pure in spirit in any situation. It is a short, elegant name that works well for both males and females. In Buddhist tradition, the lotus is the throne of the gods.

39. Riku (陸/璃空)

Meaning: Land/Lapis lazuli sky

Riku can be written with different kanji. 陸 simply means "land", "mainland", evoking stability and solidity. 璃空 combines "lapis lazuli" and "sky", creating the poetic image of a deep blue sky. It is a versatile name very popular in recent years. A dog called Riku carries the wish to be both grounded and stable and capable of flying high. It is particularly suitable for adventurous but reliable male Shiba. The name is easy to pronounce, sounds modern, and has become one of the trendiest dog names in the last ten years.

40. Saku (咲/朔)

Meaning: Bloom/First day

Saku has beautiful meanings depending on the kanji. 咲 means "to bloom", "to flower", evoking growth and beauty that manifests. 朔 means "first day of the lunar month", new beginning. Both meanings bring hope and renewal. A dog called Saku carries the wish to be always in bloom, to constantly bring new joy. It is a short and dynamic name, suitable for both males and females. The act of blooming represents potential being realized, promise being fulfilled. Dogs with this name are often described as particularly vital and constantly evolving.

41. Sakura (桜)

Meaning: Cherry blossom

Sakura is one of the most iconically Japanese names, meaning "cherry" or specifically its pink flowers. The kanji 桜 is one of the most beloved in Japanese culture. Cherry blossoms represent ephemeral beauty, brief but intense life, the concept of "mono no aware" (the beauty of transience). The blooming of sakura in spring is the most celebrated natural event in Japan. A dog called Sakura carries the wish for a beautiful and precious life, to be appreciated every day. It is particularly popular for females. The sakura season, hanami, is when entire families gather under the flowering trees - so a Sakura dog unites the family.

42. Shiro (白)

Meaning: White

Shiro simply means "white" and is the perfect name for Shiba with cream or white coats. The kanji 白 represents the color in its purity. In Japanese culture, white symbolizes purity, honesty, simplicity. It is the color of Shinto priestly robes. A dog called Shiro carries the wish for a pure

and honest heart. It is a common but evergreen name, direct and unpretentious. Interestingly, Shiro and Kuro (white and black) are among the most traditional and long-lasting dog names in Japan, used for generations. It is a name that celebrates simplicity and essence.

43. Sora (空)

Meaning: Sky

Sora means "sky" and is a poetic name that evokes vastness, freedom, infinity. The kanji 空 represents the celestial space above us, but in Buddhism also means "emptiness" in the sense of infinite potential. It has become extremely popular in the last twenty years, for both dogs and children. A dog called Sora carries the wish for a free spirit, to know no limits. It is particularly suitable for adventurous-spirited Shiba. The sky constantly changes - clouds, colors, seasons - so a dog called Sora is always different, always interesting. It is a name that sounds modern but has deep roots in Eastern philosophy.

44. Sumi (墨/澄)

Meaning: Ink/Pure

Sumi has two main meanings. 墨 means "ink", the black used in calligraphy and ink painting. 澄 means "pure", "clear", "limpid". As ink, it evokes art, elegance, the tradition of Japanese calligraphy. As purity, it brings the wish for clarity of spirit. It is a particularly suitable name for black or dark sesame Shiba. Ink in Japanese culture is not just a medium for writing but an art in itself - the preparation of ink is a meditative act. A dog called Sumi carries that contemplative and artistic quality.

45. Tama (玉)

Meaning: Gem, pearl

Tama means "gem" or "pearl", something precious and perfect. The kanji 玉 represents precious round objects. It is one of the most common cat names in Japan (famous the film "Hachi and Tama"), but is also used for dogs. An animal called Tama is considered a family treasure. The name evokes something small, precious, to guard and protect. Pearls in Japanese culture symbolize purity and hidden perfection - beauty that forms in secret inside the oyster. It is a name that recognizes the inestimable value of the pet in family life.

46. Taro (太郎)

Meaning: First male child

Taro is traditionally the name given to the firstborn male in a Japanese family. The kanji 太 (great, robust) and 郎 (son, young man) combined mean "great eldest son". It is one of the most classic and recognizable Japanese male names. For a dog, Taro indicates that it is considered as the first "son" of the family, a full-fledged member. It is a name that brings responsibility, importance, respect. Many famous dogs in Japanese history were called Taro, including the sled dogs of the Japanese Antarctic expedition. It is a name that says: this dog is as important as a son.

47. Ume (梅)

Meaning: Plum

Ume means "plum" or more specifically its flowers that bloom at the end of winter, before sakura. The kanji 梅 represents this brave tree that flowers when it is still cold. Ume flowers symbolize perseverance, hope, strength in the face of adversity. A dog called Ume carries the wish to be strong and resilient. Ume flowers have a delicate but penetrating scent, so a dog with this name has subtle but significant presence. Ume is also used to make umeboshi (pickled plums), traditional food for fortune. It is a particularly chosen name for dogs born in winter or early spring.

48. Yuki (雪/幸)

Meaning: Snow/Fortune

Yuki is a versatile name with two main meanings. 雪 means "snow", perfect for white Shiba or those born in winter. 幸 means "fortune", "happiness". Both kanji create beautiful names. As snow, it evokes purity, quiet beauty, the muffled silence of a snowy landscape. As fortune, it brings the wish for a blessed life. It is a particularly popular name for females but also works for males. Snow in Japan is not viewed negatively - snowy landscapes are celebrated in art and poetry. A dog called Yuki brings that serene beauty and that magical quality of the first snow.

49. Yuri (百合)

Meaning: Lily

Yuri means "lily" and is an elegant and refined name. The kanji 百合 combines "hundred" and "unite", but together represent the lily. This flower symbolizes purity, chastity, nobility in Japanese culture. It is particularly associated with the Imperial House. A dog called Yuri carries the wish for elegance and refinement. It is an exclusively feminine name. White lilies are used in important ceremonies and weddings. The flower also has meaning in Buddhism, representing the pure soul that rises toward enlightenment. It is a name that confers dignity and grace.

50. Zen (禅)

Meaning: Zen meditation

Zen is perhaps the most philosophically charged name on this list. The kanji 禅 represents Zen meditation, the Buddhist practice of mindfulness and enlightenment. It is a modern name for dogs, reflecting the desire to have a calm, balanced animal that brings peace to the home. A dog called Zen carries the wish for serenity and mental presence. Ironically, given the lively nature of Shiba, choosing this name can be an act of hope that the dog helps the family find calm in chaos. It is a name that works both in Japanese and other languages, making it ideal for international families. It represents the aspiration to inner peace that dogs, paradoxically, help us find.

Conclusion

Choosing a name for your Shiba Inu is an act of profound significance. As we have seen through these fifty names, Japanese tradition considers the name not just an identification label, but a wish, a prophecy, a gift that accompanies the animal throughout its life.

Each name carries layers of meaning: the kanji with its visual and historical connotations, cultural and mythological references, seasons and natural elements, character qualities that are wished for. A well-chosen Japanese name is a small poem, a daily blessing that we pronounce every time we call our dog.

Shiba Inu, with their dignified nature and almost regal bearing, carry these names with particular grace. Whether called Hachi like the famous faithful dog, Sakura like the cherry blossoms, Jin like the benevolence of samurai, or any other name on this list, each Shiba incorporates and personifies the meaning that has been given to it.

Interestingly, many of these names reflect the Japanese philosophy of connection with nature (Sora, Hana, Yuki, Kaede), the value of ephemeral beauty (Sakura, Momiji), the importance of fortune and happiness (Fuku, Daifuku, Yuki), and respect for traditions (Taro, Pochi, Hachi). Choosing a Japanese name for your Shiba means embracing this philosophy, recognizing the breed's roots, honoring the culture that created and preserved these magnificent dogs.

Whether you have already chosen one of these names or are still deciding, remember that the name will become part of your Shiba's identity. You will pronounce it thousands of times in the years to come. It will become associated with happy moments, urgent calls, evening cuddles, daily adventures. The name you choose shapes not only how you see your dog, but somehow also how it sees itself and its role in the family.

In my case, Jin has become much more than a name. It has become synonymous with loyalty, silent but significant presence, that quiet benevolence that characterizes my life companion. Every time I call him, I pronounce not just his name but everything he represents to me. This is the power of a well-chosen name.

Whatever name you choose from this list - or perhaps a completely different one - the important thing is that it resonates with you, that it feels right when you pronounce it, that it makes your heart smile. Because in the end, no matter how much cultural meaning a name carries, what really matters is the bond you build with your Shiba, and the name simply becomes the sound of that love.