

# waggazasshi

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Who put the gold in  
**Golden week?**



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# waggazashi

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**H**olding both cultural and historical importance, March and April are arguably two of the most important months in Japan. Cultures around the world recognize spring as a time of rebirth and renewal and Japan is no exception. In fact, this idea is so inherent in Japanese culture that the former name for March is Yayoi, meaning “new life.” Japan has long since switched to the Gregorian calendar; however, April remains the start of the year in many aspects of Japanese life. In addition to marking the beginning of the fiscal and school year, many workers are transferred in late March to begin at their new workplaces amidst the cherry blossoms. Due in part to these world-famous cherry blossoms, late March to mid-May is also considered one of the best times for travel to and around Japan.

These beautiful, yet ephemeral blossoms accompany comfortable weather and plentiful holidays, including spring break and the four holidays making up Golden Week. If you live in Japan you are probably familiar with Golden Week, but not necessarily acquainted with the holidays it includes. To familiarize yourself with these individual holidays, check out our guide to Golden Week on page 10.

While there is much beauty and reason to celebrate in March and April, this March 11th will mark the one-year anniversary of one of the most tragic and devastating events in Japanese history. For years to come, March will be a time to remember those who were lost and those whose lives were affected by the earthquake and tsunami disaster that occurred just last year. In our progression, let that tragedy remind us that there is no time better than now to take a lesson from the cherry blossoms: life is fleeting so take the time to notice its ever changing beauty.

Kim Durinick, Editor-in-chief



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photo Carol Anne Stanton



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Photo: flickr.com/simonippon

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Photo: Ashleigh Allen



*Photo: Ashleigh Allen*

## Event of the month

**Isahaya Azalea Festival**  
**Isahaya, April 16-22**

The various colors of azalea lining the river next to Isahaya Spectacles Bridge create a beautiful backdrop for the spring festival held in Isahaya Park.

# Events

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## **Great Tulip Festival**

**Huis Ten Bosch, March 17-April 8**

Huis Ten Bosch welcomes spring with its annual tulip festival. Enjoy tulips all over the park in a variety of colors and designs. If you're looking for more adventure, you could try the zip line and obstacle course that will be available for a limited-time only.

## **Kanokaen Fire Festival**

**Unzen, March 31**

Two hundred warriors will parade with torches held high through the streets and parks of Chijiwa, Unzen in a festival based on the town's historical battle between the brothers of the Chijiwa family.

## **Matsushima Cherry Blossom Festival**

**Saikai, late March-early April**

With 160 cherry blossom trees forming a 600-meter tunnel over a walking path, Matsushima is an exceptional place to enjoy the cherry blossoms. The weeklong festival will include food, music, events for children and night illumination of the cherry blossoms.

## **Saikai Bridge Whirlpools**

**Saikai, late March-early April**

While visiting Matsushima, stop by Saikaibashi Park to check out the whirlpools under the Saikai Bridge. They only appear once a year and they act as a wonderful contrast to the peaceful cherry blossoms.

## **Nagasaki Kite Flying Tournament**

**Nagasaki, April 1**

The skies of Tohakkei Park come to life once a year with its annual kite flying tournament. Take kite flying lessons, compete in various kite flying events or simply sit back as a spectator.

## **Nagasaki Tall Ships Festival**

**Nagasaki Port, April 26-30**

Beginning with a boat parade as they enter the harbor, tall ships from all over the world will remain in Nagasaki Port for five days, holding such events as ship illuminations, sail drills and fireworks.

## **Shimabara Rebellion Memorial Festival**

**Minamishimabara, late April**

At night, more than 37,000 candles will line the grounds of Harajo in honor of the approximately 40,000 martyrs who were killed during the Shimabara Rebellion in 1637 and 1638. The main feature will be the handmade, 15-meter "One Night Castle."

## **Hasami Porcelain Festival**

**Hasami, April 29-May 5**

Nagasaki's famed pottery town will hold its annual sale during Golden Week. Along with renewing your kitchen supplies, this festival provides a great opportunity to take advantage of the comfortable springtime weather by taking a stroll through the beautiful Hasami countryside. □

# Matsuura's sunken treasure

**Audrey Akcasu** reports on the recent discovery of historical remains in northern Nagasaki

**K**amikaze. It's a word that most people associate with the aerial suicide attack units from the Second World War. However, that is not the origin of the word. In fact, the word is thought to have originated right here in Kyushu, being first used to describe the fortuitous typhoons that saved Japan from two Mongol invasions that occurred in 1274 and 1281. Due to a scarcity of evidence and documentation, this story was questioned for many years. However, recent discoveries in the Northern Nagasaki city of Matsuura have quelled this uncertainty.

Had Kublai Khan's invasions been successful, Japan would have suffered deeply. Fortunately, during both invasion attempts typhoons crashed into the area, leaving thousands of ships destroyed and tens of thousands dead.

In 1274, the Mongols succeeded in launching a land attack, setting Hakata aflame and killing hundreds of samurai, who were not accustomed to the warfare style of their attackers. It is not certain what drove the enemy back to their 600 awaiting ships, but in the end, roughly 13,000 Mongol troops died in the typhoon that thrashed through northern Kyushu.

In 1281, when the Mongols struck again, the Japanese were better prepared; defense walls had been built along the coast, 40,000 troops had been assembled and the Japanese people had prayed to Hachiman, the Shinto god of war. Despite their preparation, the Japanese were still vastly outnumbered. Kublai Khan sent 900 ships with 40,000 troops from Korea, and an even larger fleet from China, consisting of 3,500 ships and 100,000 men. This time, however, the Mongols didn't have



a chance to attack. The two Mongol-led armies met off the island of Takashima, near Matsuura. It is now suspected that it was here that the army took the brunt of the typhoon. The high winds and vicious waters destroyed much of the enemy fleet, believed to be mainly flat-bottomed boats. While it is thought that most of the Korean army was able to retreat, the bulk of the southern army was destroyed, with accounts suggesting that only 25% survived the typhoon. The Japanese thanked Hachiman for the “divine wind,” or kamikaze, that saved them yet again.

Japan was safe, but the Mongol fleet was nearly annihilated. With such devastation there must have been wreckage scattered around the seabed, but for some time no wreckage was found and there was little documentation of the typhoons, so scholars were doubtful that these events

even occurred. However, in the 1980s, a team conducted the first full-scale survey of Takashima. They found the floor littered with Chinese artifacts and over 500 fragments of ships. Through these findings and those of more recent examinations of the area, researchers have found evidence supporting not only the typhoon story, but also their own theories about the kinds of boats the Mongols were using: flat-bottomed Korean ships, flat-bottomed riverboats used in the Yangtze River, and Fujian V-shaped ships. The riverboats especially would have had a hard time staying afloat in the rocky waters of a typhoon. Although they did find many important pieces of the puzzle, the largest fragment was just that: a mere fragment.

Recently, however, researchers from Ryukyu University unearthed a game-changing piece of evidence buried under a

meter of sand: the most intact hull yet. The keel, found with planking still attached, measures 50 centimeters x 15 meters, the longest to-date. This find is not only exciting for the university, but also for the city of Matsuura, which will most likely gain ownership of the remnants once they are retrieved from the ocean.

The Culture and Heritage Section of the Matsuura Board

of Education handles the discovered artifacts and is currently working with the Agency for Cultural Affairs to have the area declared as a national historical site. Although currently under review, if approved this will become the first

underwater historical site in Japan.

The city already has a museum in Takashima exhibiting the salvaged relics, but hopes that the national media attention given to the new treasure will lead to more tourists, both local and foreign, and perhaps even a larger museum. Mr. Atsuyuki Nakata, head of the Culture and Heritage Section

of the Matsuura Board of Education and curator of Matsuura City Takashima Historical Centre of Underground Cultural Heritage, sums up the findings by saying, "This was a huge discovery of global importance." ■

**“ Although currently under review, if approved this will become the first underwater historical site in Japan ”**

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# Kanji of the Month

# 花

I do not like the winter. Last year, I made countless wishes on shooting stars, birthday cakes and, as a last ditch effort, the Thanksgiving wishbone, that it wouldn't come again. Ever. My attempts to liberate us all (you're welcome) from that ever-present chill that is winter in Japan, unfortunately, went unacknowledged by the 冬 (fuyu, winter) gods. They apparently decided that it was not their year to vacation in Thailand or go back home to Russia like I suggested, and that's fine. I'm (almost) over it because spring is just about here!

Here in Japan, a big sign of spring is the blossoming of the cherry trees. Having picnics under the blooming trees, complete with sake and music, is practically a national pastime in spring, and thus, it has inspired this month's kanji: 花.

花 (hana) means quite simply "flower," but it makes its way into numerous other words, phrases and even names in the Japanese language. The cherry blossom picnics mentioned before are called 桜花見 (Ohanami). "花見" combines the kanji for "flower" and "see," which creates a word meaning, "the viewing of cherry blossoms."

Another interesting usage of 花 includes the word for fireworks, 花火 (hanabi). 花火 literally translates to "fire flowers." Cool, huh? Interestingly, if you switch the order of the two kanji to 火花, it changes the word completely, and becomes, "spark," (hibana). Using the character 花, you can also make the word for "showy," or "brilliant," 花やか (hanayaka).

So this year, when you are at 桜花見, you can light a 火花 to set off your super 花やかな 花火, the perfect start to spring.

Hannah Conklin

**Katelyn Schwartz** fills us in on the weeklong holiday that graces Japan's spring calendar

**Photo:** flickr.com/yeowatzup



# Golden week



**T**he holiday *Golden Week* in Japan may make you feel as if you've struck it rich, but really its name originates from the 1950s film industry. Film industry executives noticed the higher-than-average ticket sales and revenue during that time and thus dubbed the holiday season *Golden Week* (named after *golden time*, which was radio lingo referring to a period in which listener ratings spiked). This holiday season in Japan is typically a two-week period with four public holidays in late April and early May. It consists of Showa Day, Constitution Memorial Day, Greenery Day and Children's Day.

We can thank Emperor Showa for two of the holidays that make up Golden Week: Greenery Day and, of course, Showa Day. Showa Day (April 29<sup>th</sup>) is the late Emperor's birthday, but was known as the National Day of

Rest until 2007. Emperor Showa was quite the nature buff, thus Greenery Day (May 4<sup>th</sup>) was created with the idea that one could dedicate a few hours to going to a park or taking some time to 'smell the roses,' as the saying goes.

Constitution Memorial Day (May 3<sup>rd</sup>) celebrates the signing of the constitution in 1947. This also happens to be the only day of the year when the public can visit official government buildings. If you're interested in Japanese politics, this may be the time to take a trip to Tokyo.

Children's Day (May 5<sup>th</sup>) is the most recognizable, as *koi* wind streamers are displayed outside homes and around cities. Historically, this holiday was known as *Tango no Sekku*, or Boy's Day. However in 1948, with the founding of the nine national holidays, it was changed to Children's Day; a time for children to show extra respect to their mothers. However, most of the traditional practices of Boy's Day continue. There is also *Hina Masturi* on March 3, which was traditionally Girl's Day, though it is not a national holiday. The weeks and days leading up to Children's Day are some of the most beautiful, as spring is in the air and vibrant *koinoburi* flit about the sky.

Many people use this holiday season for some much needed travel and relaxation. However, you will notice that around this time tourism prices spike. Even though it's not 1950 anymore, business owners still need their Golden Week. ■

# **History of** Nagasaki **101:** キリシタン

**Eric Brewer** offers  
a short Nagasaki  
history lesson,  
focussing on the  
origins of  
Christianity in the  
prefecture

**Photo:** [flickr.com/mshades](https://flickr.com/mshades)





**O**ne thing that distinguishes Nagasaki from other prefectures in Japan is its Christians. Odds are you've noticed this. There are churches in every town, nuns can often be seen in the larger cities, and monuments with crosses or images of people praying fill the prefecture. Statistics are unavailable for Protestants, but according to the Japanese Catholic Church, the percentage of the population of Nagasaki that is Catholic is nearly eight times that of any other prefecture.

This of course begs the question: Why? Answers abound, but perhaps the best ones lie in the history of Christianity in Nagasaki.

### **Part 1: The Rome of the Far East (1550 to 1613)**

In 1550 the first Christian missionary to Japan, St. Francis Xavier, spent about one month in Hirado. The history of Christianity in Nagasaki started in earnest, however, nearly twenty years later when Omura Sumitada became the first Christian *daimyou* (Japanese feudal lord). He promptly ceded the port of Nagasaki to the Jesuit missionaries, giving the young city a monopoly on foreign trade and causing its population to grow rapidly.

Outside of Nagasaki, Japanese Christianity never made much progress, particularly among the samurai and upper class. But in

## Historical Christian sites in Nagasaki

### Memorial to the 26 Saints of Japan

Even at the height of Christianity's influence in Nagasaki, signs of the coming storm could be seen. On Nishizaka Hill, a monument stands where twenty Japanese Christians and six foreign missionaries were crucified on February 5, 1597, as Toyotomi Hideyoshi sought to control the Christian movement in Japan.

### Memorial to the Martyrs of Unzen

From about 1625, officials in Nagasaki began sending Christians to Unzen's hot springs. There they would be tortured with boiling water until they renounced their faith or died as martyrs. Today, a memorial overlooks several hot springs that may have been used.

### Nyoko-do

When the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, it exploded over the Christian enclave of Urakami. Nagai Takashi, a Catholic and doctor of radiology, lost his wife and his home in the blast. Afterwards, he lived with his two children in a small hut that they built and named it Nyoko-do, referring to the command to love your neighbor as yourself. Until his death in 1951, Nagai devoted his life to prayer and writing both scientific and philosophical observations of the aftermath of the atomic bomb. Nyoko-do has been preserved and a museum built nearby.

Nagasaki, the *daimyou*'s early and strong support (perhaps also due to the *daimyou* forcing conversion), meant that few non-Christians could be found, earning it the nickname "The Rome of the Far East."

### Part 2: The Blood of the Martyrs... (1614 to 1864)

As Japanese Christianity grew, so did Japanese authorities' fears that their Christian subjects would prove more loyal to European powers than to them. As early as 1587, edicts were issued restricting the spread of Christianity, but the expulsion edict of 1614 was the first to be widely enforced. All foreign missionaries were deported and Japanese Christians had to choose between apostasy and martyrdom.

Apart from the Shimabara Rebellion (1637), a failed insurrection provoked by oppressive taxes but characterized by religious fervor, most Christians in Nagasaki either apostatized or went into hiding. Among this latter group, many fled to remote places like Goto and Sotome, where they continued practicing their faith secretly. In Nagasaki in 1622 and in what is now Omura in 1657, hundreds of these *kakure kirishitan*, or "hidden Christians," were discovered and martyred.

### Part 3: ...Is the Seed of the Church (1865 to the present)

Japan's closed country policy ended in 1854. Foreign missionaries returned

to Japan, expecting to start from scratch. However, shortly after Oura Catholic Church was completed in 1864, several Japanese from Urakami visited the church and revealed themselves as Christians. They were quickly followed by tens of thousands of others who had kept the faith in secret for over two hundred and fifty years.

Sadly, the Edo and Meiji governments continued to persecute Christians. In 1868, over three thousand Urakami Christians were exiled across Japan. Many were subjected to forced labor and an estimated twenty percent died before religious freedom was announced in 1873.

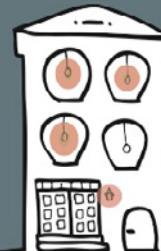
For the next sixty years the Christians, in spite of their poverty, celebrated being able to worship openly by building churches throughout the prefecture. These churches and other Christian sites in Nagasaki are now in the process of being registered as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The religious zeal with which these churches were built, however, appears to be on the decline. It is unclear what is happening among Nagasaki's tiny population of Protestants, but statistics show the attendance of Catholic Masses is steadily decreasing. Christianity in Nagasaki has already experienced one resurrection of sorts. If it is to continue as more than historical trivia, it will need another. ■

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# WHEN JAPANESE COMMUNICATION GOES WRONG

**Katelyn Schwartz** shares a personal story about the perils of the “nod and smile”

**M**any foreigners come to Japan with little knowledge of the Japanese language and forge on with the hope that one day they will be able to chatter around in Japanese like it's nothing. However, until that day comes, there's a good fall-back in the form of "Nod and Smile." Just as the name implies, someone says something in Japanese and, without really understanding, you "nod and smile." It's really quite convenient and usually works to get you around the seemingly not-so important conversations. That is, until you end up doing something like inadvertently telling your calligraphy class that your family members were Nazis.

That was me, hanging out in calligraphy class, trying to soak up a bit of Japanese culture with all my elderly classmates. Then, it happened. We were innocently discussing my last name and how it's of German origin (it means black, in fact). Then someone said something I didn't completely understand. I caught the word for family and then a word that sounded familiar; it started with "na." I start rolodex-ing my brain.

*What is that word?? I know it sounds familiar.*

As the mystery word continues to roll summersaults around my neurons, I nod and smile. There was the critical moment. I have just confirmed all

their suspicions of my family's political proclivities. We all move on to the graceful quiet of brush strokes on paper.

I had forgotten about the conversation until class finished and one of the cute, older ladies came up to me and told me, "not to worry because [they] all [knew I] was a good person with a kind heart." This struck me as odd. Where did that come from? Another elderly gent came over. He told me how good it was that I am honest. Not many people are honest, but I am, and that's a good thing.

All the sudden it clicked!! ナチズ

**“ I had forgotten about  
the conversation until one  
of the ladies told me not to  
worry because they knew  
I was a good person ”**

(*Nachizu*)!! Just the day before I had been helping grade tests and that's where I had seen the word. Holy cow,

did I just nod and smile my family into Nazidom?

Now, for the moral of the story (while not as eloquent as one of Aesop's, there is still a moral): as we're learning Japanese, we are going to mess up, agree to and say, for that matter, some pretty crazy stuff. However, it's not the be-all and end-all. I still show up for calligraphy every week and they still love me. It's hard to screw up any worse than I did. Don't be beaten down by your mistakes. People will give you a lot of slack and sometimes you may hang yourself with it, but usually they are right there to help you untie it and give you a pat on the back. ▀

# My two yen: Reviews



## Garçon Ken

10-2 Dejima-machi, Nagasaki-shi

050-7506-1955

11:30-15:00, 17:30 on, closed Sundays

Should you be out and about near Dejima – the old Dejima, not the Wharf – there is a new restaurant across the street from the entrance that is well worth stopping in for a bite. It is a small, intimate place run by a friendly guy named Ken. The decor is a mix of old



Photo: Ken Watanabe

and new, with an antique brass spyglass out front and contemporary magazine articles serving as wallpaper. Ken is a talkative guy who speaks English. He will keep you entertained and his food will keep you satisfied.

Ken has a special appreciation for French cuisine, as his wife is French. However, beware of some misnomers of some of the food on the menu. On a recent visit, I got a chuckle when crème brûlée was

passed off as cheesecake. I am sure the cheesecake would have been excellent, but the crème brûlée was exactly what I was looking for. It is difficult to find in Japan and this one had a rich custard topped by a perfectly caramelized cover. If you are a fan of French bread, Ken has found some of the best in the city. It is a required accompaniment to French cuisine and Ken lops off a chunk right in front of you.

The tables are a deep shade of red, one of the most visible things when you walk in. If you are short a knife or fork, there is a small drawer built into each table that holds the silverware that is both unobtrusive and sometimes overlooked. The ceiling is open to the roof, and you can see the wood beams and antique lanterns hung there.

Back to food, Ken has lunch specials that change daily. I had the *higawari* lunch (800 yen). The soup and main dish were just enough and the price was right. All in all, this restaurant offers a good combination of food, atmosphere and price. If you are in the neighborhood, or even if you aren't, you should drop in for a bite. **Chris Tierney**



## The Hunger Games

Suzanne Collins  
Scholastic

Over the last 15 years, adults have become much more receptive of “young adult” literature; perhaps the *Harry Potter* series was the first to start the recent trend. In the late 1990s, the *Harry Potter* books began receiving attention from less self-conscious adults. Publishers jumped on the newly discovered market niche, and to further encourage adult purchasing, they released the books with more subdued covers. As a result, sales soared. By the time the teen saga *Twilight* arrived on the scene in 2005, publishers did not bother producing separate editions. People of all ages, nations and tongues began buying the books without a second thought. *The Hunger Games* is the latest teen book series that adults are raving about. The final book of the trilogy was published in 2010 and the first movie installment is scheduled for release in March.

*The Hunger Games*, set in post-apocalyptic America, tells the story of a teenage girl named Katniss Everdeen who has to hunt daily – and illegally – for her family’s survival. Katniss lives in the poorest of 12 politically weak districts controlled by a much stronger region called the Capital. District citizens are forced to produce things such as coal, food and clothing for the Capital’s survival and enjoyment. Years ago, there

was a 13<sup>th</sup> district that tried to organize an uprising against the Capital. Not only did the Capital obliterate the district, but it also began coordinating a yearly tournament to remind citizens of their lack of power. In the tournament, known as the Hunger Games, 24 children (one boy and one girl from each district) are forced to fight to the death until only one survivor remains. Readers follow the story through the eyes of Katniss, who is appointed to fight for her district, her life and her integrity.

Does this story sound familiar to you? Many compare it to the 1999 Japanese book *Battle Royale* by Koushun Takami. However, Suzanne Collins, the author of *The Hunger Games*, promises that she has never read the Japanese book or seen the movie. She claims the similarities are purely coincidental. In the end, most agree that the stories have similar political environments, but the character development and overall tone of both stories are starkly different. *Battle Royale* unfolds through the perspective of many characters, and is filled with graphic violence. *The Hunger Games* focuses on one individual and while violence is present, it is balanced with deeply rooted relational sub-plots. While the books are available in Japanese, no release date for the American film has yet been listed for Japan. **Joanna Young**

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