



# wagazasshi

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Explore  
Okinawa

Events | Nagasaki Islands | Castella | Paper Cranes

# *nagazasshi*

Volume 7 Issue 1  
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**Shisa lion-dog, Okinawa**  
**By Doug Bonham**

Bring out that Cool Biz and Sea Breeze! Summer has officially hit, and it's hot, my friends! As someone who's lived in the UK for the past few years, I can officially say getting used to the sweltering heat of Japanese summers is a long and involved process.

However, I'm extremely happy to kick off the new *Nagazasshi* staff's first issue with a summer theme! What can you do to forget the sweat dripping down your back? Why not go travelling? Our *Nagazasshi* staff is going into detail about all the best things you can do in Okinawa! (p. 12) Too hot to stay inside? Why not go to the beach and leisure out your day on the pristine Okinawa beaches?

If you can't get yourself to Okinawa, no worries. We're also going to explore the islands of Nagasaki: Goto, Iki and Tsushima (p. 6). Summer is one of the most beautiful times in Japan. The beaches are idyllic, the nature is stunning, and every day it looks like we're living in a postcard, which is especially true for some of our outlying islands.

On an administrative note, it's my pleasure to introduce to you the new staff of the *Nagazasshi*. Unfortunately, most of our former staff will be departing from Nagasaki this August. They have worked tirelessly to make this magazine as beautiful and amazing as possible. It's my honor to take on the mantle of temporarily replacing Audrey as Editor in Chief, with Andrew, Doug, Niel, Karl, and Laurel on the staff to carry on this amazing legacy. We won't let you down!

**Katy Squicciarini,**  
**Interim Editor-in-chief**

photo Dan Cohen

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# Events



## Event of the Month

*The 63rd Nagoshi Festival*

**August 1-3**

**Omura**

Kicking off this three-day festival is a spectacular fireworks show, but the real excitement is during the following two days. Don't miss the taiko and dance performances, which conclude with a line of over 2,000 dancers parading through the street doing the traditional Nagoshi dance.



## **27th Hamagurihama Sand Art and Beach Day**

**July 19-20, Shin-kami Goto**

This two-day beach party promises beautiful beaches, warm water, treasure hunts, a sandcastle-making experience, competitions, games for kids, and more.

## **Isahaya Mando Festival**

**July 25, Isahaya**

Start the festival season out right in Isahaya by honoring the victims of the 1957 flood. Over 10,000 candles will illuminate the riverbed, while great fireworks and the usual festival food and attractions entertain you.

## **Nagasaki Dragon Boat Races and Minato Festival**

**July 26-27, Dejima, Nagasaki**

In this exciting event that dates back 350 years, 26-member teams race special longboats in Nagasaki Bay to the beat of a gong and drum. You can catch many races throughout the day and also try out rowing a dragon boat. End the day with a big festival including a fireworks show accompanied by music.

## **Kuchinotsu Marine Day**

**July 26-27, Minami Shimabara**

Kuchinotsu harbor, a famous historical port, will light up this weekend with tons of activities like a fishing boat parade, traditional arts, a brass band competition, sailing experience, and best of all, dolphin watching. The event concludes with a vivid fireworks show.

## **Gion Yamakasa Festival**

**July 26-27, Iki**

Iki's summer attractions don't end with the pristine beaches. They've been host-

ing this boisterous festival for over 270 years. A parade of men carrying huge portable shrines snakes through the streets in honor of Yamakasa, who ended a sickness that plagued the area long ago.

## **Seaside Festival**

**August 2-3, Sasebo**

Kyushu's biggest fireworks show is a must-see. In the daytime, you can participate in beach volleyball and other sports contests, or just enjoy the performances and festivities.

## **Shoro Nagashi Obon Parade**

**August 15, Nagasaki**

As dusk approaches, a long parade of floats is marched down the main streets of Nagasaki toward the sea to cast off the souls of the year's deceased. While it may sound like a solemn event, Nagasaki does it loud and lively, with copious firecrackers and amusing floats.

## **Sentoro Festival**

**August 23, Emukae**

Not only is this festival famous for its 10,000 lanterns and 25m high lantern tower (the tallest in Japan), but also its secondary Mizukakejizou festival, where children carry portable shrines honoring Jizou while getting drenched in water. The crowd is not spared, so be prepared!

## **Nagoya Festival**

**August 24, Nagoya**

Before you pack your yukata up, head out to this festival, which promises a magic show, a yosakoi performance, and of course, fireworks – a 2,000-charge display!

# Islands Travel Guide



**Krystal Korber, Becky Walsh and Niel Thompson** explore Nagasaki's islands of Goto, Iki and Tsushima for a more local summer getaway.

## Goto

**Krystal Korber**

**I**t's the time of year for sandy beaches and splashing around in blue waters. Many decide to head down to Okinawa for the perfect summer getaway, but for those of us tight on time and money, a little slice of tropical paradise lies closer than you think. I'm talking about Goto Island.

The main Goto island, Fukue, is accessible by catching a boat that runs from the Nagasaki ferry terminal three times a day. Alternative means of travel include the jet

foil and Goto Airport for those that are feeling ambitious.

But once you get there, what should you do? Well, the obvious answer is to hit the beach! The must-see beach is Takahama, which is noted as one of best beaches in Japan. Boasting long stretches of sand bars, turquoise waters and lush mountainous surroundings, this is a Goto highlight. With summer season in full swing, Fukue is the hot spot for all marine sports. Jet skis, banana boats and paragliding are open for business. Reef diving and snorkeling with tropical fish is another fun way to spend your time.

Besides soaking up the sun, Fukue is home to some great historical sites. Fukue has 13 of the 50 churches in Goto, including the more famous Dozaki Church, which are all collected for a UNESCO World Heritage Site bid. Besides churches, you can check

out the ruins of Ishida Castle in the center of the city or take a stroll through *Bukeyashiki Street*, which translates to “Samurai Residence”. If you prefer something more scenic, a drive out to the Osezaki lighthouse is on order.

Wondering about some good Goto grub? What would a visit be without sashimi so fresh it’s practically flopping its way back to the ocean? For meat lovers, Fukue is surprisingly famed for its beef, which ranks close to Kobe in quality. Goto *udon* is also worth mentioning as the handmade noodles are renowned for being delicious.



Goto provides a great chance to see a different side of Nagasaki and is sure to be an unforgettable trip in your summer travels around Japan!

## Iki

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### Becky Walsh

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**I**ki is a little-known island seeped in history and mystery, accessible by ferry from Karatsu in Saga or Fukuoka. Ask any Iki resident where to go during the summer, and their first recommendations are Iki’s staple hotspots of sandy beaches, pristine blue waters, and the imposing stature of monkey rock.

The main beaches in the town of Ishida – Nishikihama, Ohama and Tsutsukihama – can be visited by rental bicycle from the Indoji ferry terminal. Camping, water-sports and BBQs are also possible during high season. I’m often told with utmost sincerity that Iki is the unnamed birthplace of Shintoism, and you can seek out the island’s 300+ shrines hidden in and around winding roads and sweeping greenery.

However, if you want to venture a little further off the beaten track, then I would name the uninhabited island of Tatsunoshima as my top spot. It’s across from Katsumoto, on the northern coast of Iki. The age-old wooden house-lined streets of this town are a step back to a time long ago; it’s quiet apart from the odd ring of a bicycle bell as friendly pensioners pass by. If you’re lucky, you’ll stumble across the oldest samurai house in Iki, now home to the Mocha Java café Okubohonten, one of the many places you can sample Iki beef.

Once you’ve had your fill, head down to the harbor that’s packed with squid boats, and you’ll soon spot signs to the Tatsunoshima “ferry terminal.” A tiny boat will take you on the short 10-minute ride to Tatsunoshima. You will pass beautiful rocky cliffs, disembark, and walk along the stone path to the secluded beach and calm bathing waters that await. You can take a short



hike up the hill to see the striking rock formation called the Devil's Footprint, or even spot Tsushima on a clear day.

However, anywhere you go, you are bound to find beauty. A favored Iki ALT activity is shouting out 'left' or 'right' while driving at each turn in the road, and seeing where you end up. Each turn provides adventure: wind turbines, an ancient shrine, an overgrown abandoned house, a tiny fishing hamlet, or beautiful rice paddies. Watch the sun set on your day of adventure and scan the skies to see the herons swoop over the hills. Enjoy!

## Tsushima

**Niel Thompson**

**B**etween Kyushu and Korea lies an island that even most native Japanese people have never heard of: Tsushima. The island is far from a bustling metropolis, but if you're looking to connect with nature and witness unique Japanese culture, then Tsushima might be the place for you.

Although Tsushima is among the largest of the islands in Nagasaki prefecture, it is largely unpopulated. About 89 percent of the island is covered in mountain forests, meaning you'll get a personal, breathtaking view of nature in all its majesty almost everywhere you go. Maybe most famous is the Great Ginkgo Tree of Kin, which is said to be the oldest ginkgo tree in Japan: at 1,500 years old. It stands 40 meters tall and is prettiest in autumn,

when its leaves turn a variety of beautiful colors reminiscent of old scattered Koban coins as they fall to the ground.

There are also many activities for tourists on the island. Tourists can go on a sea kayaking tour in Aso Bay at beginner or advanced levels. If you are interested in a sea kayaking tour, you can contact either the Tsushima Eco Tour or Tsushima Kayaks in Mitsushima town. In addition to sea kayaking, there are places on the island where one can go scuba diving.






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The island of Tsushima is very close to Korea. A popular tourist attraction is the Korean Viewpoint in Kamitsushima town. The Korean Viewpoint is built in a style similar to Korean architecture, and on a clear day, it is possible to glimpse the bustling Korean port city of Busan. If you're interested in visiting, travelling from Tsushima to Busan is quick and affordable. Ferries run almost every day, and round trip tickets cost less than 20,000 yen for little more than an hour journey.

It's actually more difficult to travel between Tsushima and the rest of Japan than it is to travel between Tsushima and Korea. Nagasaki and Fukuoka are the only two airports that fly to Tsushima. Both flights are about 45 minutes long. You can also get to Tsushima by boat from Hakata Bay in Fukuoka.

It may be isolated and more difficult to get to than Tokyo, but Tsushima makes up for it in natural beauty, a mix of cultures, and rustic charm. 

## Photo Credits & Information

### Page 6

- Title (left to right): *Goto Jon Arnouts; Iki Johnny Tastepppe; Tsushima Meryl Nobin*

### P. 7

- Top right: *Goto Dan Cohen*

### P. 8

- Top left: *Iki Luis Zapata*
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Japanese Martial Arts:

# Judo

**Keith Lauher** shares his love for Judo through a brief account of its history and guiding principles.

**9**4, 95, 96..." A fellow student yells. It's 10:30 pm and after 3 hours of practice we're doing pushups. My already sore body is balking after doing only one third of them and faking the rest. "97, 98, 99... 100," the student calls out, and I immediately collapse on the mat. For me, this practice is an incredible challenge. For most of the students, however, this is just the end of a routine they repeat twice during their daily practice.

Judo was founded by Dr. Jigero Kano in 1882 after completing a comprehensive research of *jujitsu* and grappling techniques used by samurai for hundreds of years. Dr. Kano called it "*Kodokan Judo*." Kodokan translates into "A place to study the way,"

“ **Judo is equal parts philosophy and technical training** ”

and judo into "the way of gentleness." In judo, you will never learn how to punch, kick, or operate different pieces of weaponry. Instead, you learn how to use your opponent's strength and momentum to throw them onto their back for a pin, where chokes, and for black belts, joint locks, can be applied. This is "the way of gentleness."

” Judo is equal parts philosophy and technical training.

Traditionally, judo does not have a range of colored belts indicating progress like many modern martial arts do. Judo has just white and black. This originates from the Zen thought of receiving only one white belt. Through years of hard work and perspiration, this white belt will turn black solely from the sweat off your back. This

concept is the heart of judo training. It is about pushing your body past your known physical limits with strength and endurance drills, plus hundreds of daily throws, to the point where you are past thinking. This is to help create muscle memory for the split second when your body will know exactly which way to push and pull your opponent for the perfect throw.

This seemingly simple idea of manipulating an opponent's momentum is one of the core principles of judo, called "maximum efficiency." Maximum efficiency is the idea of correcting your body's natural tendency to meet an opponent's strength with your own opposite and equal force, and instead react with the precise timing and power necessary to throw your opponent. This skill takes years of training, and while most judo athletes study all of the 65 *kodokan* judo techniques, only a special few techniques will be drilled daily for years to reach a point of maximum efficiency. This training will, over time, turn that white belt black.

Judo training is not solely about physical prowess. The second core principal of judo is "Mutual welfare and benefit." For many, judo is a route to self-improvement. Dr. Kano believed that the discipline required for training was vital to becoming a valued member of society. Furthermore, being a good partner during training is just as important as your own improvement and is greatly emphasized.

In truth, I'm not that good of a judo athlete. I've only been practicing judo for 5 years, and my skill pales in comparison to some of the people I have trained with in the past. I've had multiple injuries under my belt, and am nowhere near finished completing my training. On top of this, drilling the same few techniques can be very tiring mentally. But the longer I practice judo and refuse to give up, the more I begin to see why, for many, judo training becomes not just a martial art and sport, but a way of life. It can be tremendously fulfilling. ■



*Check back next issue for a peek into a different Japanese marital art.*

# Okinawa



**Doug Bonham** gives readers an in-depth guide on the best places to go in Okinawa.

photo **Ashleigh Allen**

**F**rom the moment you step off the plane, Okinawa shows itself to be a different place from the rest of Japan. The sign that welcomes you says *Mensoree*, the traditional greeting in the Okinawan dialect of Japanese. If you're looking for a summertime getaway that feels like a whole different world without bringing your passport, head down to Okinawa and take in the island vibes.

## How to Get There

The best way to head to Okinawa is to fly to Naha Airport. Nagasaki Airport in Omura has one daily route to and from Naha, so for more flexibility and potentially cheaper flights, head up to Fukuoka. Naha is the hub of the Okinawan

islands, the biggest city, capital of the prefecture, and location from which you can reach other destinations.

Once you're in Naha, you'll want to get around. Naha has a short monorail system limited to just that city, so its usefulness only extends so far. Otherwise, Okinawa's history as an American-governed territory between the end of World War II and the 1972 return to Japanese control shows in its reliance on cars and buses. If you can afford it, a rental car is the best way to get around. Parking is cheap and tolls are even cheaper. There are also bus tours and private sightseeing taxis available to help you get down the road.



## Find Your Spot

Inside the city are a few token tourist locations. Prime among them is Shuri Castle, the former seat of the Ryukyu Kingdom and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The castle differs from traditional Japanese castles in a number of ways, and is recommended if there's extra time in the city. Along with that is Kokusai Dori, the international street that houses an assortment of restaurants, bars, and more gift shops than you can fathom. A highlight of my trip was seeing Kokusai Dori on a Saturday night: a slow-moving mass of cool cars, ostentatious bikes, and all kinds of people on the sidewalks. Everybody from sailors out on the town, to junior high kids on school trips, and tourists from all over, mingle under Kokusai Dori's neon-lit shops.

On Kokusai Dori and in most tourist-friendly spots, you can partake in local Okinawan delights as well. Okinawan food and drink is unique compared with most Japanese food, making use of copious amounts of pork, goya, and many more local specialties.

Goya *champuru* is a trademark dish, a stir-fry of the bitter goya, tofu,

pork and more. There are also plenty of shops inspired by the recent American cultural influence, including steak and burger restaurants, throughout the island. Even the drinks are localized – Orion beer and Okinawan *awamori* rice alcohol make for a great nightcap.

Outside of the city there are three primary regions to look at: north of Naha, south of Naha, and the islands located away from the prefectural capital. Head north and you wind up going through Chatan and Nago. These towns are home to a number of resort hotels, and Chatan may feel familiar to Americans thanks to the presence of the U.S. armed forces in the area (it even has a shopping center called American Village). Nago's claim to fame is the Churaumi Aquarium, one of the biggest and most famous aquariums in the world. The aquarium's showcase tank features an enormous glass panel and is large enough to house whale sharks. Even if you're not a fan of fish,





the adjacent Ocean Expo Park provides breathtaking views, especially at sunset.

South of Naha is a boon for history buffs. This is where a number of war memorials are located, including the main Peace Memorial Park and museum. Though a somber reminder of the battles of World War II, it's also now a wide, grassy space for picnics where kids of all ages can frolic and enjoy the natural beauty of the area. Near the park is the Himeyuri Monument and the disused Japanese Naval Headquarters, which has been turned into a museum and still bares the scars of the war's final days.

## Island Getaways

The real attraction for Okinawa is the access to pristine, tucked-away beaches. Okinawa is a chain of islands, and traffic to the smaller, outlying islands all route through Naha, either by charter airplane or ferry. Ferries are recommended for the budget-conscious, though keep in mind that service may be impacted by typhoons from June through September.

There are a number of small islands in the prefecture. The three groups are the Kerama Islands, the Miyako Islands and the Yaeyama Islands. Kerama is the closest group to Naha, and is about an hour and a half from Naha by ferry. A recommended spot here is the island of Zamami. Zamami is small enough to ride a bicycle or scooter around, and features gorgeous sandy beaches but isn't as overrun by tourists as some other locations.





If you're  
up for the

challenge, there

are a number of quiet, remote beaches  
accessible off the beaten path.

The Miyako Islands, including Miyako  
itself, are a little bigger – big enough to  
have more tourist amenities like golf  
courses and resorts. The beaches are  
renowned as some of the most beautiful  
in Japan, and like all of the islands out-  
side of Naha, are great for scuba diving  
and other aquatic sports and activities.  
Though Okinawa is a bigger hub for  
tourism for Japanese people than people  
from overseas, there are still plenty of  
English-speaking guides for just about  
anything you could want to do.

Last but not least are the Yaeyama  
Islands, which are actually closer to  
Taiwan than Naha! Ishigaki Island is  
famous for pineapple and sugar cane  
production, and plantations have  
tours available. For culture-loving  
tourists, Taketomi Island has a  
well-preserved Ryukyu-style vil-  
lage. And Hateruma Island lays  
claim to being the southern-  
most inhabited point in Japan.

No matter where you wind up,  
a trip to Okinawa will feel like

a breath of fresh air. Compared to  
the daily grind, Okinawa is much  
more of an island culture. The locals  
are friendly, relaxed, and distinct from  
the people you'll find on Kyushu or any  
other point in Japan. A blend of cultural  
influences and a backdrop of beautiful  
beaches make Okinawa a fantastic vaca-  
tion locale. The only worry is you might  
not want to come back. 🌴

## Photo Credits & Information

### Page 13

- Top right: Shisa lion-dog statues **Doug Bonham**
- Bottom left: Goya champuru  
[flickr.com/mako\\_side\\_b](https://www.flickr.com/photos/mako_side_b/)

### P. 14

- Top left: Whale shark, Churau-  
mi Aquarium **Doug Bonham**
- Bottom: Peace Park **Doug Bonham**

### P. 15


- Top left: Shuri Castle **Doug Bonham**
- Bottom: Okinawan house  
**Doug Bonham**





# Of Cake and Castles

A Brief Cultural History of Castella (カステラ)



**Andrew Massey** explains the origin of Castella and its historical significance to Nagasaki.

photo Luis Zapata

If you were to ask people in Japan about famous foods from Nagasaki, you'd likely end up with one of two answers. The first would be *champon*, the seafood and noodle soup popularized by the inexplicably ubiquitous Ringer Hut chain of restaurants. The second, perhaps surprising no one, would be castella (カステラ).

Castella has cemented itself as the de-facto official *omiyage* for Nagasaki; you'd be hard pressed to find a shop in the city

that doesn't sell it. So, what's the deal? Admittedly, I've never found it especially appealing. I once received a big brick of it as a gift, and after eating the entire thing in an embarrassingly short amount of time, I remember thinking to myself,

“ **Castella has cemented itself as the de-facto official *omiyage* for Nagasaki** ”

“Yep...that's a cake.” Considering that your typical Japanese bakery regularly churns out deli-

cious edible works of art, why is castella so revered?

In a country as old as Japan, history and culture are like two sheets of societal



fabric sewn together with a hearty thread of tradition. Within this structure, historical significance can often translate into cultural relevance. Castella proves to be no exception. Despite being little more than sweet, dense sponge

cake, castella is culturally associated with Western luxury. This idea goes back more than four centuries to Japan's initial

contact with the first Western Colonial power: the Portuguese, vis-à-vis the *Nanban Bōeki* (南蛮貿易). The Jesuits were among the first to give Japanese people a serving of daily bread, and it was due to Portuguese influence that the concept of bread as a whole was introduced to Japan. In fact, the Portuguese word for bread, *pão*, survives in the Japanese lexicon to this day as the word *pan* (パン).

Although introduced by the Portuguese, it is a common misconception that castella is also Portuguese in origin. Its original Portuguese name is "*pão de Castela*", which translates to "bread from Castile." Castile refers to part of the historical region that predates modern-day Spain, and means "land of castles." Bearing all that in mind, castella can be taken to mean "bread from the [Spanish] land of castles". So, castella is Spanish in origin. This probably explains why castella possesses such a striking resemblance to Spanish *bizcocho*.

“ **Although introduced by the Portuguese, it is a common misconception that castella is also Portuguese in origin** ”

Castella has remained incredibly popular to this day and is still considered to be an iconic symbol of Nagasaki and its history of foreign trade relations. One of Nagasaki's oldest shops, Fukusaya, is a family-owned castella shop that has

been selling the sweet since the Edo period. With the inclusion of *mizumae* as a base ingredient, today's castella has been adapted

to the Japanese palette and now comes in a variety of flavors: matcha, *hojicha* (roasted green tea), chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, honey, and peach. Rumor has it there's even a cheese flavored one, though actually finding it might not be such a piece of cake. 🍰

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# How to:

## Make a Thousand Paper Cranes

**Audrey Akcasu** shows you how to make your wishes come true with a guide to folding paper cranes.

### Materials:

- 1,000 pieces of origami paper (or quarter 250 sheets to make smaller cranes)
- a needle
- a few pieces of string or yarn (length and number based on your preference)
- some beads or buttons (optional)
- time – lots of time

**O**ne quintessential image of Japan is *origami* – the art of carefully folding paper to create, well, pretty much anything. The most commonly folded object is the paper crane.

Japanese legend suggests that cranes live for a thousand years. So, if you fold a thousand paper cranes and string them together, you can make a wish.

This tradition came into popularity after the Second World War, when Sadako Sasaki, a young cancer victim, attempted to fold a thousand cranes before her death, only to fall short. Her friends, however, picked up where she left off. This act has become a symbol of peace; students often string cranes together in memorial of the victims of the atomic bombs, and as a wish for continued peace. With the remembrance of the Nagasaki bombing on August 9th, why not learn how to make the cranes yourself?

### Step 1:

Fold the paper into a triangle, and then into a smaller triangle.



### Step 2:

Open one corner of the triangle and press the crease into the middle. This forms a square. Repeat on the other side.



### Step 3:

From the open sides, fold the edges to match up with the center line, creating a long triangle with the point at the bottom. Repeat on the other side.



### Step 4:

Fold the top triangle down on both sides, making a crease to be used in step 5.



### Step 5:

Open the long triangle and fold the top part upwards, reversing the creases, creating a long diamond shape. This can be tricky. Repeat on the other side.



### ❏ Step 6:

From the bottom, fold the edges to match up with the center line. Repeat on the other side.



### ❏ Step 7:

Close this section on itself, revealing a section you didn't fold on. Repeat on the other side.



### ❏ Step 8:

Fold the bottom tip up to the top point. Repeat on the other side.



### ❏ Step 9:

Close these sections on themselves again, and reveal the other sections.



### ❏ Step 10:

Fold the flaps down. These are the wings.



### ❏ Step 11:

Fold the tip of one of the thin flaps down to create the head and pull both the head and tail out a little. You're done! ...with one. Repeat 1-11 999 times.





### Step 12:

Take your needle and one piece of string, tie a bead (or just a fat knot) at the end.



### Step 13:

Start threading the cranes on to the string from the belly through the back of the crane.



### Step 14:

When you get to the end of that string tie it off and continue on a new string. Repeat until all the cranes have been strung.



### Step 15:

Tie all the chains together, make a wish, hang it somewhere or give it away.



\* The pictures were taken while using a normal-sized origami paper for ease of demonstration. It is recommended to use smaller paper.

*steps 1 - 14 photos Audrey Akcasu*  
*step 15 photo Laurel Williams*

# Deliciously Yummy!



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# Kanji of the Month

## 石

### Radical Kanji *ishi*, *ishihen*

This issue's character is a rock-solid addition to your kanji knowledge bank. 石 *ishi* means 'stone', and is used to make various pleasantly logical compounds, such as:

treasure + stone: 宝石 (*housekī*) – jewel, precious stone.  
stone + oil: 石油 (*sekiyu*) – petroleum (gasoline)  
change + stone: 化石 (*kaseki*) – fossil

As a radical, *ishi* never changes shape. It often appears on the left of a character, when it is called *ishihen*.

Examples include stony or hard things:

砂 (*suna*) sand  
磁 from 磁石 (*jishaku*) magnet, and 磁器 (*jiki*) porcelain  
硬い (*katai*) hard

And actions that could be carried out with or on a stone:

破る (*yaburu*) to smash, break  
砕く (*kudaku*) to crush, smash  
磨く (*migaku*) to polish (also to brush teeth), to improve

And some chemicals for good measure:

硝 in 硝酸 (*shousan*) nitric acid  
硫 in 硫酸 (*ryusuan*) sulphuric acid

This month's obscure proverb is 石の上にも三年 *ishi no ue ni mo sannen*: ('three years on a (cold) stone (will make the stone warm)', meaning 'perseverance prevails'). Try saying this to students or colleagues while gazing off into the middle distance.

Amy Gifford



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