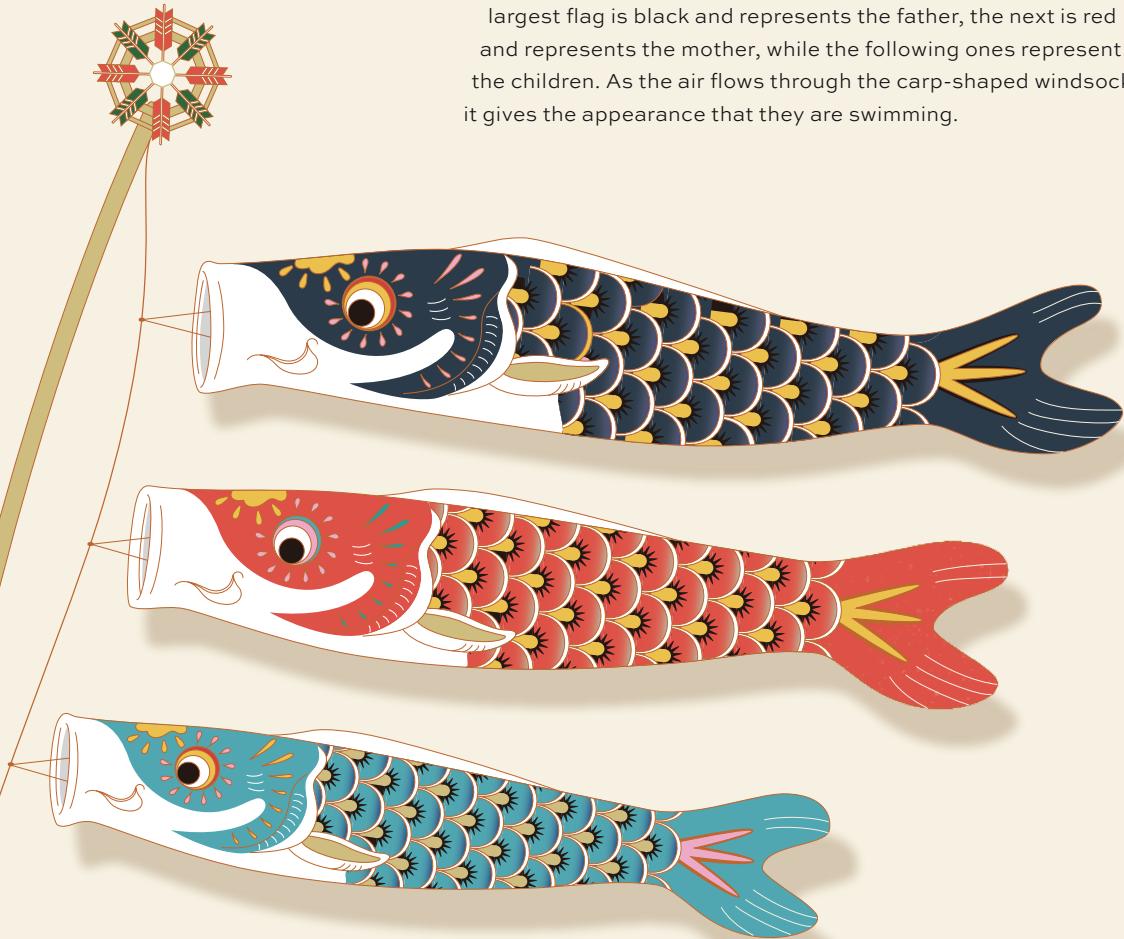


JAPAN'S CHILDREN'S DAY

Discover the symbols, meaning and history behind Japan's celebration of children.

Children's Day is a national holiday in Japan on 5 May which celebrates children's personalities and happiness. The day is represented by the flying of koi carp windsock flags known as *koinobori* – since carp swim upstream, they are used as a symbol of perseverance and courage. According to a Chinese legend adopted by Japan, a carp which completes the swim upstream turns into a dragon and flies to heaven.

A set of carp flags are usually flown outside of people's houses to represent the family and unity. Traditionally, the top and largest flag is black and represents the father, the next is red and represents the mother, while the following ones represent the children. As the air flows through the carp-shaped windsock, it gives the appearance that they are swimming.



The day was originally called *Tango no Sekku* and was one of the five annual ceremonies held at the Japanese Imperial Court. It's thought to have started in the 7th Century, taking place on the fifth day of the fifth moon in the lunar calendar.

WHAT ELSE IS PART OF THE CELEBRATION?

Children also wear samurai-style helmets called *kabuto* that are usually made with origami paper, while families display mini samurai warriors. The samurai are a symbol of strength and prosperity.

A special sweet called *kashiwa mochi* is also enjoyed. *Kashiwa mochi* are sticky rice cakes filled with a sweet red bean paste and wrapped in *kashiwa* (oak) leaves – the oak leaves are for decoration only and not to be eaten!

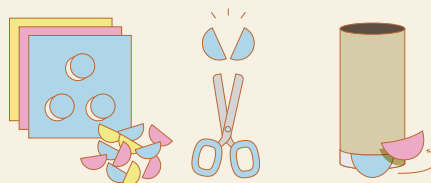
MAKE YOUR OWN KOINOBORI

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Double-sided tape (glue can alternatively be used for the scales)
- White paper
- A black marker
- Scissors
- Tissue paper – various colours
- Toilet paper roll
- Straw
- Pipe cleaner

STEP 1

In 3 colours, cut out several circles of tissue paper, approximately 4cm in diameter, then cut them in half to make semicircles. Place a piece of double-sided tape (or glue) all the way around the bottom of your toilet paper roll. Start placing the straight edge of each semicircle on the double-sided tape (or glue), overlapping slightly so no roll shows underneath. Ensure the curved end of the semicircle hangs off the roll so it isn't attached. This end will be the fish's tail. Complete all the way around.



STEP 2

Leaving a 5cm gap, place another strip of double-sided tape (or glue) around the roll and repeat with the semicircles. The colour order doesn't matter much, just do what you think looks good. You will have to overlap quite a bit and not all the ends will be stuck down. Leave them. The next layer should cover them.



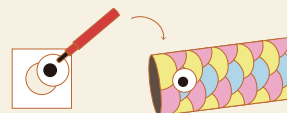
STEP 3

Repeat all the way to the top, making sure you finish with the tape and half circles around the very top of the roll. This is the head. At this point if there are any half circles that are still sticking up, use double-sided tape to stick them down.



STEP 4

Cut out a circle with white paper (approximately 2.5cm in diameter) then use a black marker to draw a large circle inside for the eye. Use double-sided tape or glue to stick onto the side of the head.



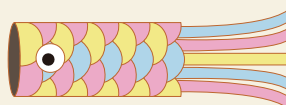
STEP 5

Cut strips of tissue paper using the same colours as your semicircles. At the tail end, carefully place a piece of double-sided tape inside, along the bottom of the roll. One by one, stick a long piece of tissue paper to the tape, going all the way around until it's covered.



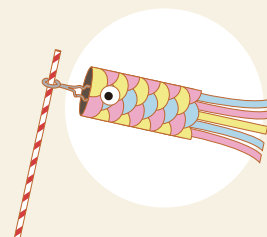
STEP 6

Trim any ends if necessary so they're about the same length.



STEP 7

Attach your koi carp to the straw with a pipe cleaner and double-sided tape.



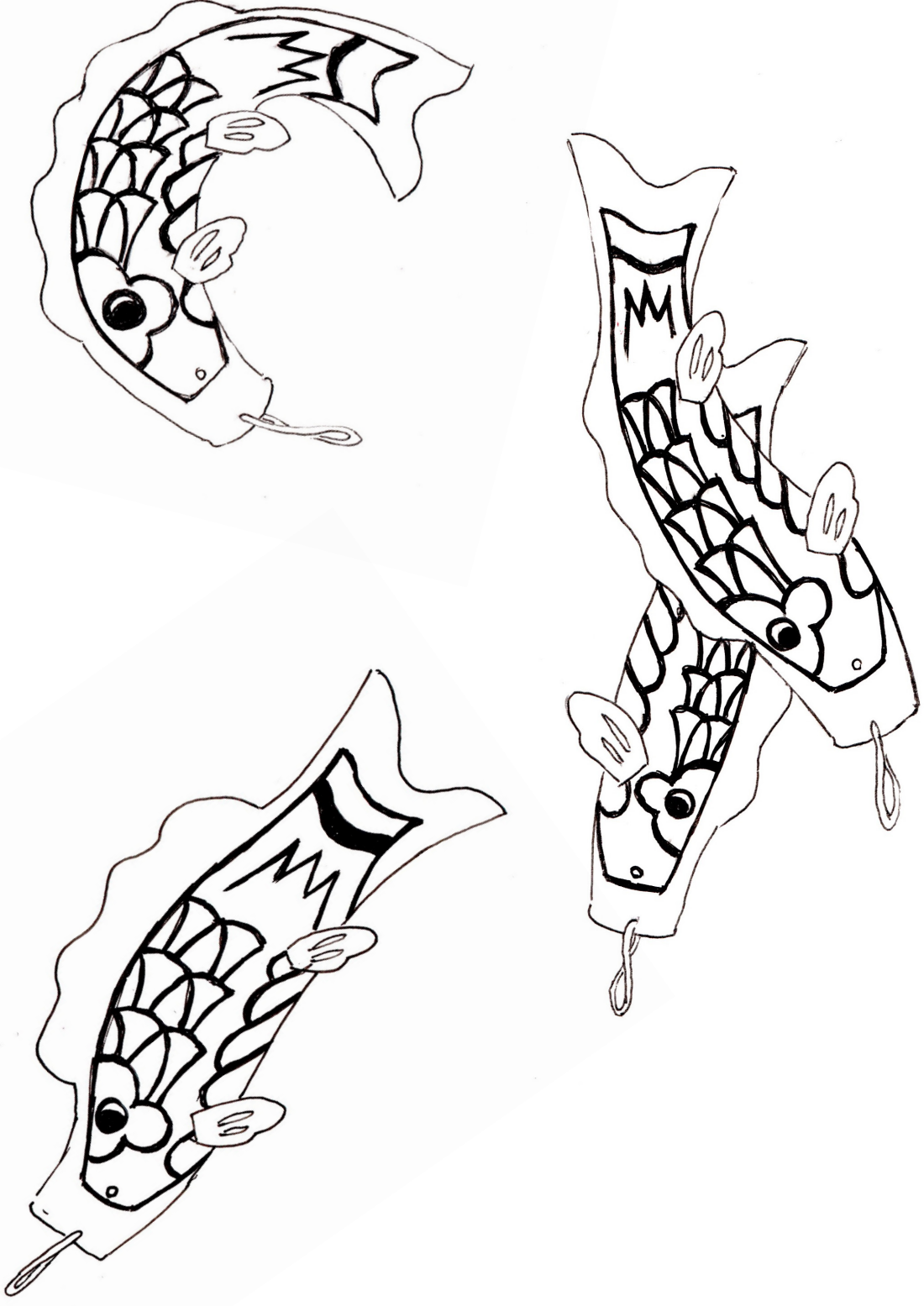


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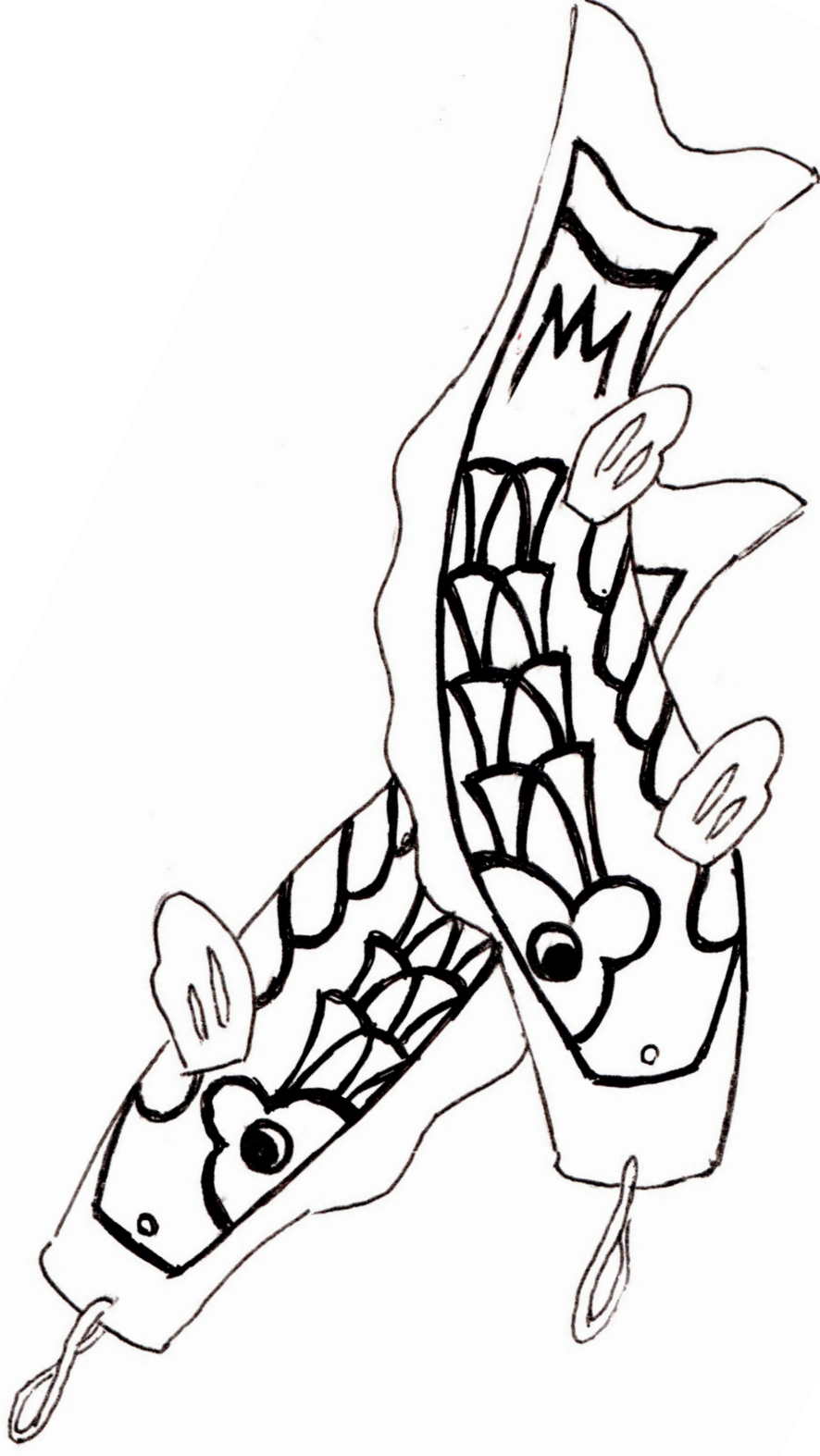


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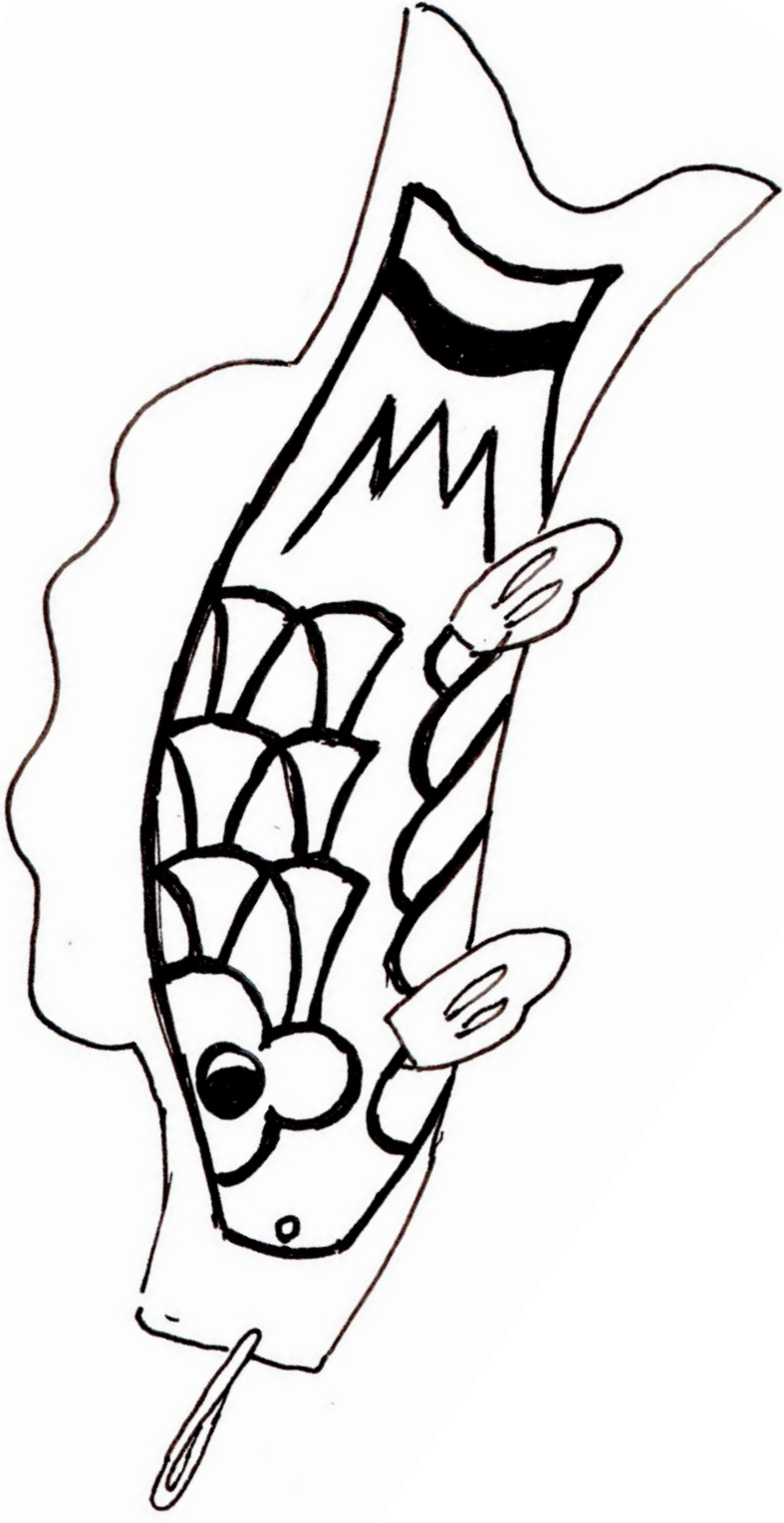


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