

# Swim, Swim, Koinobori











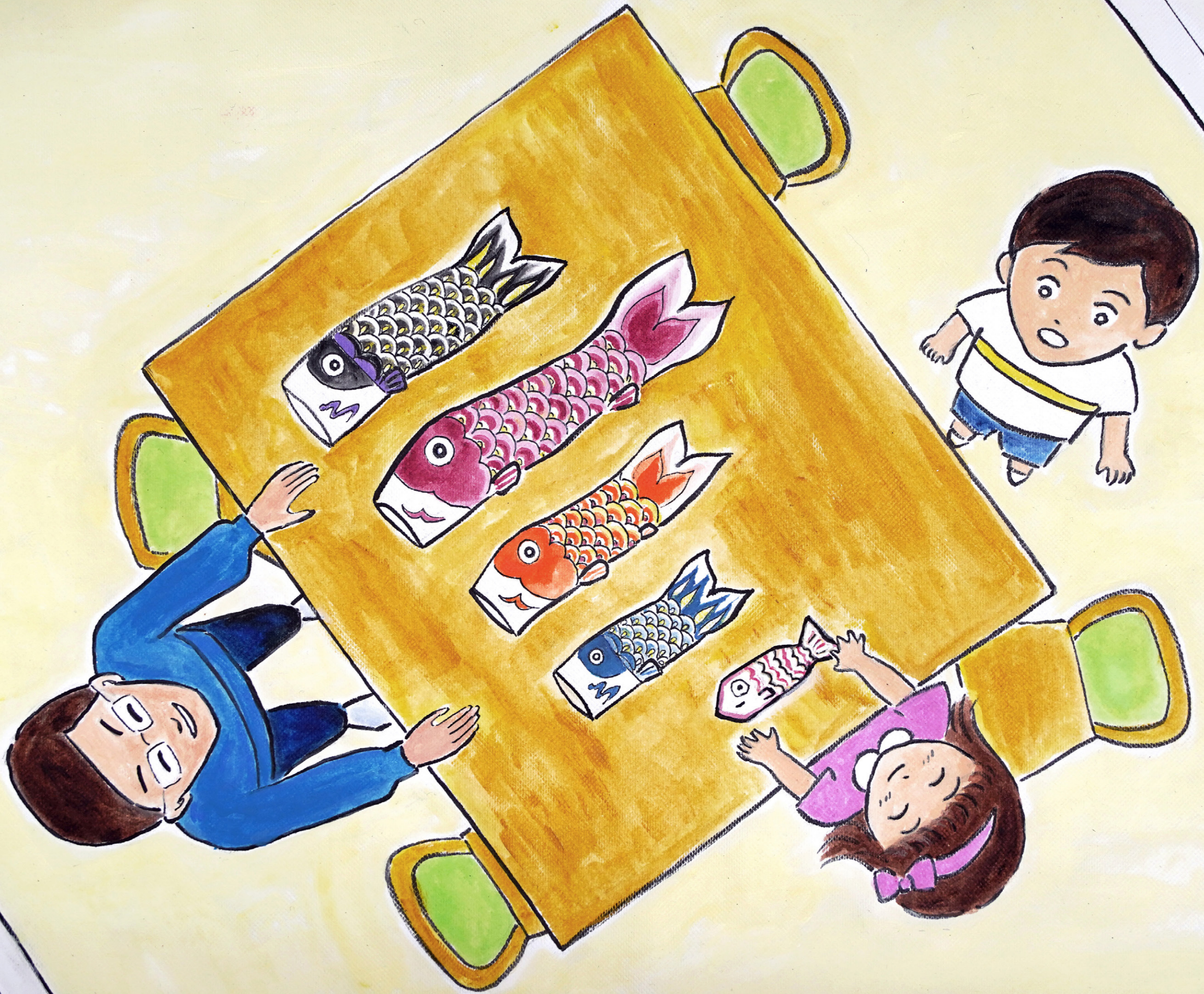












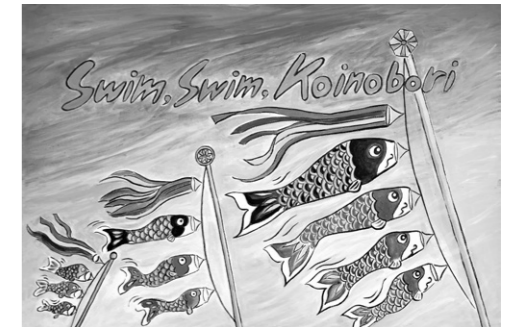






## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 1

It's May the 5th, the Children's Day Festival. Flags shaped like koi carp, koinobori, are everywhere. On one tall pole, there are three carp. The big black one is Daddy Carp, the smaller red one is Mummy Carp and the smallest one of all is Koisuke, the blue child carp. On this day, the sky becomes an enormous pond. It also happens to be satsuki bare – the time in May when the sun shines brightly. There are no clouds and the wind is blowing through the carp, making them look strong as they swim gracefully through the sky. *Pata Pata Pata.*

### About the Festival

Children's Day (kodomo no hi in Japanese) is a festival celebrated on May 5 in Japan. In the past, the day celebrated the health and happiness of boys, but nowadays it is for all children.

There is a legend in Japan about a carp which swam upstream and became so strong it turned into a dragon and flew to heaven. For this reason, koi carp are seen as a symbol of strength and perseverance in Japan; koinobori flags are hung up for the festival in the hope that all children will grow up to be strong and healthy.

The Japanese words in this story are

**Koinobori** (*koi-no-boree*): flags of koi carp

**Satsuki bare** (*satsu-kee-bah-ray*): the time in May when the sun shines brightly

**Koisuke** (*koi-sue-kay*): a story character

**Kashiwa mochi** (*kah-she-wa moch-ee*): a popular Children's Day snack made from pounded rice with a sweet red bean paste filling, wrapped in an oak leaf



## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 2

But Koisuke, the little child carp, has been dreading the festival. Daddy Carp wants their pole to look the best; he has demanded Koisuke swim in exactly the same way as him, but Koisuke's small tail just doesn't respond to the wind like Daddy and Mummy's big tails. After trying all morning, he was exhausted. He had had enough.

"I don't want to be with you anymore. I'm old enough to swim on my own." He shouted.

"Watch your mouth!" Daddy Carp snapped back. Mummy Carp just shook her head in disappointment.

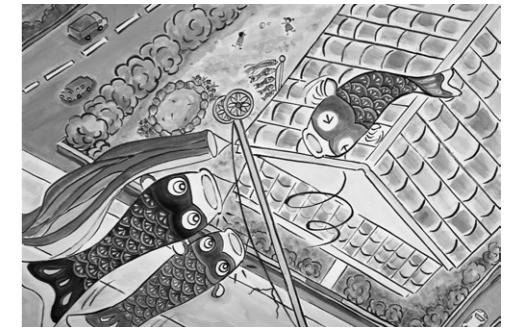
Koisuke continued, "Why do you always get to go at the top? Why can't I have a go?"

"Be quiet!" Daddy roared. "How dare you say that? You can't swim on your own. You should be grateful to be a part of this family."



## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 3

Koisuke twisted his body in anger and his blue scales became almost purple with rage. The wind was so strong now that his small body shook vigorously from side to side. As Koisuke moved, the knot anchoring him to the pole was getting looser and looser. *Shu shu!* The wind blew again and before he knew it, Koisuke's body was swept into the sky.

He swam freely into the wind, leaving Daddy and Mummy astonished with their mouths wide open. (Actually, it's quite difficult for them to close their mouths!).



## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 4

It was a great feeling to be swimming in the sky without anything holding him down. He felt so grown up. But this feeling didn't last long as the sky quickly changed colour and rain started to fall. Koisuke tried to continue swimming but there was no wind anymore. He tumbled down onto the balcony of a flat below. As he landed, he noticed a small set of koinobori flags attached to the fence.





## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 5

The flat belonged to Makoto's family. He only has a mummy. As far back as he can remember he has never had a daddy. Because of that Makoto hates Children's Day. He hates seeing all the koinobori sets with daddy carp. As Koisuke landed on the balcony, Makoto came rushing out and tore down the koinobori flags. In his rage, he pulled the daddy carp off and threw it off the balcony. Then Makoto went back inside, still raging. He didn't notice Koisuke, who was lying there horrified, wondering whether he might encounter the same fate as that daddy carp.



## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 6

Makoto's mummy went outside and picked up the remaining koinobori flags. She looked over the balcony wall to see where the daddy carp had landed but she couldn't see it. Instead she saw Koisuke on the balcony floor; she was puzzled, but picked him up too and brought them all inside. Koisuke was relieved.

Mummy looked at Makoto sulking but didn't say anything. She untied the two carp from the pole and hung them up with Koisuke on an empty hanger. Koisuke felt a bit undignified being upside down. He missed his own pole. The mother disappeared into the next room. Koisuke heard her talking on the phone for a while through the wall. Makoto picked up his tablet and started watching a cartoon. After a while, the doorbell rang.

Mummy peeped into the room and said, "That must be your Auntie" as she went to open the door.



## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 7

Two women came in with a huge basket. All three grown-ups looked very happy to see each other and Makoto's mummy was delighted to see what was inside the basket. Koisuke wondered if it was a big present. Then he heard a noise coming from the basket. It sounded like a strange animal with a breathing problem. Koisuke felt a bit worried. Makoto, who had been ignoring them, looked up. Makoto's mummy said to him, "They brought their new baby! It's his first outing!"

Auntie put both hands in the basket, lifted up a tiny baby and said, "Makoto-kun, this is your cousin, Hiroki-kun. Come and say hello."

The bell rang again. Auntie said, "I invited my friends, too. I hope you don't mind. I wanted us to all celebrate Children's Day together."



## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 8

Mummy went to open the door and there was a burst of noise. When she came back into the room, she was followed by a couple and two children - a boy and a girl, both a similar age to Makoto. Their daddy was holding yet another small baby. Everyone was very excited to see each other.

Makoto's mummy brought a mountain of kashiwa mochi with tea and juice. Makoto was still glued to his tablet but he enjoyed some juice and a couple of kashiwa mochi. He felt his mood beginning to change. The boy and the girl were so impressed by his tablet and joined him to watch the cartoon. Then they asked him if they could all play together. The children started to run around and almost knocked over the table, and then the babies started to cry. It was chaos! Makoto was starting to feel much better.



## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 9

Later on, Auntie said to Makoto, “I brought something to show you,” and she took out a koinobori set from her big bag. The set was even smaller than Makoto’s one. When she unfolded the flags, Koisuke saw that there were two mummy carp and a child carp.

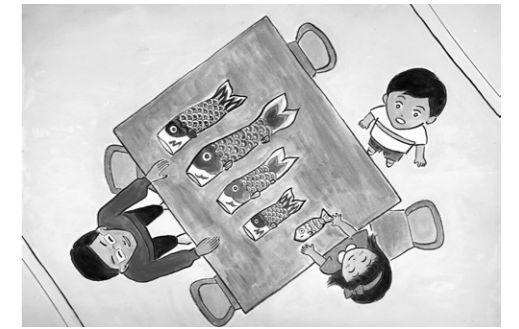
“This is a bit different from the usual ones, but we wanted it to reflect our family.” said Auntie, and she and her partner smiled at each other. Then Auntie said, “We couldn’t find a set like this, so we had to buy two sets. That’s why it’s so small – it was too expensive to buy two large sets!” and she laughed.

Her partner said, “With the spare daddy and child flags we will make a pillow for Hiroki and a nappy bag for us!” They laughed some more and everybody joined in.



## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 10

The dad from the couple said proudly, “We brought ours with us, too” as he took out a very odd looking set of koinobori flags. In this one, the mummy carp was bigger than the daddy carp, and the three child carp were all different sizes. The smallest one was obviously homemade.

The mum in the couple said, smiling, “We each had a child from a previous marriage when we met, so we’ve combined our sets. My set was quite large and that’s why the mummy carp is bigger than the daddy carp. No offence!”

There was more happy laughter. “Now we have a new baby sister, so we made the baby fish, too!” explained the girl as she pointed at the smallest carp, which attracted much admiration.



## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 11

Then the boy and girl asked Makoto where his koinobori set was. Makoto reluctantly pointed at the hanger on the wall, where Koisuke was hung up with the two other carp. Auntie said, “They look good there, but aren’t they a bit upside down? Shall we tie them together? Do you still have a pole?”

Makoto’s mummy went to get the carp and the pole, explaining that Koisuke was an accidental addition. Looking at them, Auntie said, “This is an interesting set too. It has two Makoto-kuns! A small one who is being looked after by mummy and a big one who is in charge of looking after Mummy!”

She put the three together in a row on the pole with Koisuke at the top. Koisuke felt a little embarrassed about it, but the other two carp looked happy so he started to feel rather proud. Now he had a family to look after and it felt so good not to be hanging upside down from the hanger, but attached to the pole the right way up.



## Swim, Swim, Koinobori

Story by Kazuko Hohki  
Illustrations by Aya Burbanks



story text for card 12

Everyone went out onto the balcony with the three koinobori sets. The weather had improved and the satsuki bare was back. The wind was blowing strongly again. *Hyyu Hyyu*. The three different koinobori sets were all swimming strong and gracefully. Makoto's set had pride of place in the corner of the balcony, looking out over the enormous pond of sky full of swimming carp. Each family was proud of their koinobori and even Makoto enjoyed looking at his set. Koisuke didn't want to leave the pole anymore. He was sure his parents would be proud if they saw him now. *Hata Hata Hata*.



## How to Read Kamishibai

Kamishibai stories are read from the back of illustrated cards. However, you can also tell the story from memory or even improvise a little to add to the story.

Move the front card to the back after you finish one part of the story. The text now showing will be the story for the card that is at the front.

The text for the title image (card 1) goes on the back of the last card, so when showing the title image to the audience, you can read the corresponding text without turning the card around.

When you finish the story for card 1, move it to the back of the pack. The story for card 2 which is on the back of card 1 will now be at the back for you to read. Once you have told that part of the story, you move this card to the back and again the story for the card 3 will now be at the back for you. You continue this for each part of the story until the end.

**Remember, the text on the back of a card does not correspond to the illustration on its front!**