



LEFT. Classroom in the hall.

BELOW. Class for origami instructors and masters 2018



Susumu Nakajima teaches flower parts and Pierrot. Susumu with first timer Anna Keh, New York (Photo credit Andrew Cribb)

NIPPON ORIGAMI ASSOCIATION FLOURISHES

What to Know-a About NOA

Interview by Laura Rozenberg

1. What was the year when Nippon Origami Association (NOA) was founded and for what reason? How many members are part of the NOA today?

The Nippon Origami Association was established in October 1973. Since then, its mission has been to familiarize children and adults with origami and to spread origami culture around the world. Currently, there are approximately 10,000 members, including people who pay a membership, corporate members, donors, and others.

2. Where are you located? Do you meet frequently? What activities do you hold regularly?

Our office is located in Tokyo (see the address in the side box) It has a managing director responsible for business operations, and an administrative staff. The director joins a monthly board meeting to oversee the management and execution of our projects. In addition, there is a monthly Origami Editorial Meeting held by officers. There are no regular members in the office, but every Saturday and Sunday a member who is an origami certified teacher is present, and there is a corner where visitors can enjoy folding simple models.

3. You have an exhibition. Is it a gallery or a museum? Can you describe your exhibition goals and what do you exhibit? Do you

regularly change the displays, or are they permanently exhibited?

A: The Tokyo Origami Museum opened when NOA moved to the current location in 2010. There is a permanent exhibition where visitors can enjoy local and international artwork. Also there is an origami library and a training room where classes are given. We also show examples from our workshops and models to commemorate the Origami Day, on November 11th each year. Models on exhibit may be replaced at any time.

4. Based on the colorful pictures on your website, your organization seems to enjoy creating landscapes and dioramas. Akira Yoshizawa also combined his creatures in settings that evoke Japanese landscapes, the seasons of the year, or the forest, to name a few. Is this a tradition started by him or is it older?

A: Origami artist, Akira Yoshizawa, is a predecessor to the method of expression for the solo exhibition, and NOA highly appreciates his achievements. Each NOA diorama is very unique in that it is created by the general members using the models of many creators and is a portable display package.

5. What type of origami do you favor and why? Simple or more complex?

A: We work in various categories, such as single-sheet foldings, compound foldings, and panel compositions. Although we do not intend to avoid complicated things that have many processes, there are members who enjoy teaching rather than creative work, so now this is one of NOA's favorite origami tendencies. In any



ABOVE. Monthly magazine
ORIGAMI
LEFT. Gallery
in the Tokyo
Origami Museum

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case, our emphasis is on “what it looks like” and also the folding procedure and sense of rhythm.

Highly versatile basic forms are popular. They are easy to replicate, can be folded by children and adults, and can be used to create practical products and things that are season-related.

6. Do you teach at schools? What other type of community activities do you promote?

The classroom on the second floor of the Tokyo Origami Museum offers 15 courses monthly and is open to the local community. By request, we provide Origami Classes and Origami Workshops to schools and various other facilities. In 2017, the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education Origami incorporated origami to promote cultural exchange with foreigners. The goal is to create momentum for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. About 10,000 primary school children are being taught origami.

7. Do you hold origami conventions? If yes, how many times a year and where does the meeting take place?

NOA has an Origami Symposium that includes group study and social gathering based on the seminars. For many years it was held during summers at a hot spring hotel in a remote town. Now, it takes place in our training facility in Tokyo every other year. In addition to the symposium, we hold Kid's Origami Festa (Fiesta) mainly for children attending elementary school and their families. Other gatherings are "Moving! Origami Aquarium", "Fly! Origami Airplane", and "Easy! Paperfolding experience." The idea behind these venues is to experience the fun and the possibilities of origami.

8. Tell us about the NOA's course for teachers and the certificate that you issue once they complete the course. Is this the only

program of this kind or are there other associations in the world that certify origami teachers?

The Origami teacher's certification started in 1980. Members receive a certificate when they prove knowledge and ability to teach and fold origami. We provide a textbook and members must fold and submit all the works listed in this book. The top certification for instructors includes Origami Master and Senior Origami Master. Many overseas members have acquired the Origami Instructor certifications by NOA. Other countries seem to have similar certification systems, but the NOA is not aware of the details.

9. Does NOA publish books and magazines? If so, do you sell online?

The NOA newsletter “Monthly Origami Magazine” is celebrating its 45th year since the first one was published. NOA produces books called the NOA Book Series. The online site offers NOA books and also books from other publishers and creators. There is an annual product catalog focusing on the introduction of folding, and we sell and ship products in response to orders from members.

10. What are the association's plans for the future?

NOA is focusing on various programs. Kid's Origami Festa is growing at a national level. We also focus on the expansion of the Tokyo Origami Museum and the enhancement of models at the Nippon Origami Museum in Kaga City, Ishikawa Prefecture. In addition, we are planning a database of our monthly publications including back issues, e-books and a web gallery. 📌

Jun Sano helped translate this interview. Thank you, Jun!
Photos provided by NOA