

# Flying High

*Kodomo no hi* (KOH-doh-moh no HEE) is Children's Day, celebrated in Japan on May 5. This holiday is a day to encourage the health and happiness of the children of Japan, and everyone celebrates.

Children's Day has been celebrated for more than 700 years, but no one knows exactly when or why it began. One story says it started in the year 1282, as a celebration for a victory won by samurai warriors in a battle with invaders.

On *Kodomo no hi*, Japanese families fly kites in the shape of carp—*koi nobori* (KOH-ee no-BOH-ree). In Japan, carp—*koi*—are considered spirited and brave fish, so full of energy that they can swim upstream. They are symbols of strength and good health—a perfect symbol for children. Do you think carp, or *koi*, is a good symbol for kids? If so, why?

Adapted from an article by Jennifer A. King



# JAPAN

Japan is a chain of islands in the Pacific Ocean, about 120 miles east of China. There are four large islands and more than 4,000 smaller islands.

There are many mountains on these islands. Japan's highest peak is Mount Fuji, a volcano that towers 12,388 feet above sea level. Throughout the islands are many other volcanoes, a few of which are still active today.

Adapted from an article by Julie Doyle Durway  
Illustrated by Katrina Damkoehler

