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Origami: a history on the art of paper folding by [Heather Protz](#)

Article published on March 9th 2012 | [Writing](#)

Origami is an art form. It is the art of folding paper into figurines of any shape or form. The word origami means "folding paper"™ in Japanese- "oru"™ means to fold and "kami"™ means paper. Japanese name, the art began in China in the first or second century where paper was first invented. Subsequently, it migrated to Japan where Origami originally took shape.

However, the art of paper folding went on simultaneously in China, but under a different name. Traditional Chinese paper folding is called as Zhen Zhi and it is used to make paper figurines of inanimate objects such as boats or hats. At the same time, there are evidences of paper folding being practiced in European countries such as Spain during the fifth or sixth century. The art of paper folding was introduced as a part of the curriculum in Germany during the nineteenth century in kindergartens.

Japanese origami or just Origami involves folding paper to represent not only still life forms or inanimate objects. Origami art includes can be used to fold paper objects that can move. In ancient Japan, Origami was extensively used as presents or for wrapping them. It was custom for the Samurai to wrap pieces of dried fish or meat, Origami style and gift it as a token of good luck. This was called noshi. To newlyweds, a pair of swans was gifted wishing them everlasting love and a happy married life. Sometimes, Shinto wedding gifts included two glasses of sake or rice wine wrapped in the form of butterflies called as mecho or nocho.

In early times, during the sixth century, paper was scarce and expensive. Origami was practiced only in the rich societies. Later on, the Japanese produced a special kind of paper called as Washi. Washi is different from normal paper made from wood pulp in a way that it is tougher and it is manufactured from rice, hemp or the bark of the gampi tree. Gradually, washi was used in many art forms like flower arrangement, calligraphy, origami etc.

The substitution of washi instead of traditional Chinese paper in Origami popularized the art form. Washi was cheap and durable and the poor could afford it. Till then, there were no written instructions on Origami. Origami was transmitted through oral renditions. After that, Japanese clans and nobles started instigating etiquettes and protocols to Origami. The Japanese loved their gift wrapping and the noshi and nocho were compulsorily used as ornaments in gift wrapping. This was used as a proof authenticity or originality.

Even though speculations still exist on the origin of Origami, the Japanese deserve full credits to the development of the art form to such an extent. It was only during the eighteenth century that detailed instructions were recorded systematically on folding paper. Evidently, paper folding was first documented in the book titled Senbazuru Orikata (folding 1000 cranes). The Japanese believe that folding 1000 cranes will fulfill their wishes.

The modern forms of origami were developed by Yoshizawa Akira in the 1900s™. He along with Sam Rendlett created origami symbols that immensely simplified origami in a way in which it can be taught and further led to its development. He was the master-mind behind present day origami techniques and the creator of the wet folding method. The wet folding method involves folding the paper in smooth curves and blunt shapes rather than making objects with sharp edges.

In the nineteenth century, origami enthusiasts worldwide started viewing it from a mathematical and technical perspective. This gave rise to the folding of paper into complex and remarkable shapes. Master paper folders in the world today are capable of producing intricately designed objects.

Origami design has varied applications. It reduces stress, it has a great educational value and the concept is used in many technical industries.

Origami is an excellent hobby for people of all age groups. Origami master pieces from the ancient history are preserved in museums worldwide. Origami has gained wide popularity even in the Western world. With regards to this reason, traditional origami is taught online and reaches many across the seas. The availability of cheap Internet through great offers like Xfinity Deals has made it even more possible. In spite of its blurry past, Origami has become an irreplaceable part of the Japanese package.

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Heather is a cheery, enthusiastic college student. As an education major, she likes to research about the best suited learning methods. She is interested in cooking, pottery, creative visualization, and like all other teenagers surfs the Internet purchased via a [Xfinity Deals](#)

Article Keywords:

Xfinity Deals

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