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2026 SPRING

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Special Issue

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KPP Group Holdings Expands
Recycling Network

Advance

Memo Pad Transforms Sheet by Sheet into Paper Sculpture
OMOSHIROI BLOCK

TSUNAGU 2026 Spring

TSUNAGU is a public relations magazine published by KPP GROUP HOLDINGS CO., LTD. An exploration in rediscovering a fascination with paper, we link paper and culture, paper and business, and paper and people.

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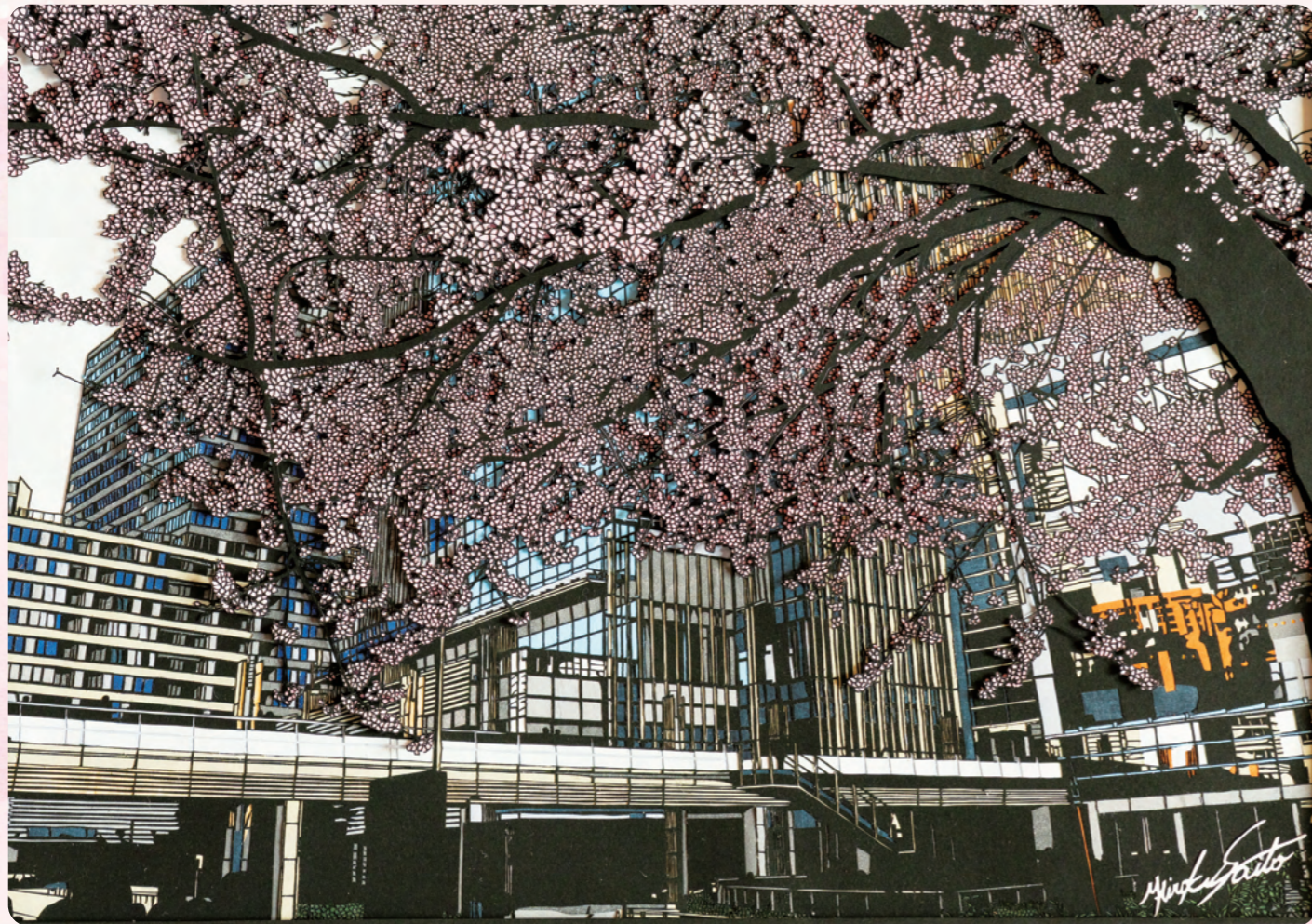
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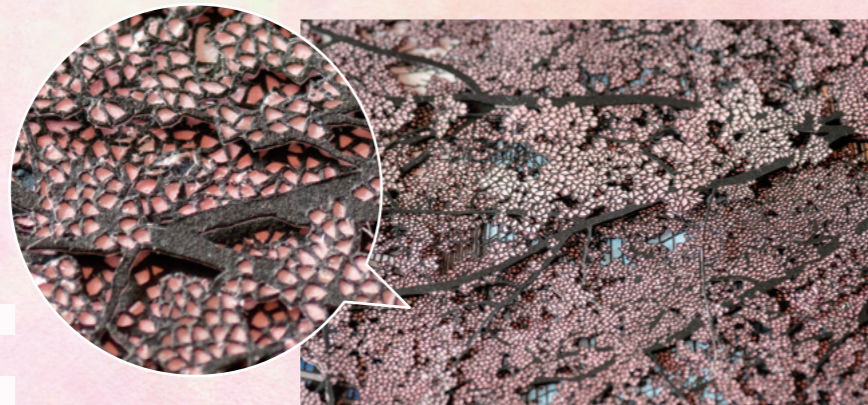
Kiri-e Paper-Cutting Art Captures the Flickering Light of Poignant Moments

Hiroki Saito is a *kiri-e* paper-cutting artist devoted to his own expressive form, using nothing more than single sheets of black paper and a precision craft knife with a pointed edge. Employing delicate lines and overlapping layers, his work depicts everyday scenes such as cherry blossoms bathed in spring light and drops of light shimmering on water surfaces. Filled with a mysterious sense of charm, it seems to capture special moments hidden within familiar landscapes. Saito has been creating a stream of unique works that evoke the qualities of light with subtle techniques that make full use of paper as a material. In our conversation, he spoke about the source of his creativity and his thoughts on the future.



Kimi no Katasumi ni ("In a Corner of You," 2022)

Capturing familiar scenery with *kiri-e* creates an overlap with a sense of beauty from the depths of memory.



Three overlapping *kiri-e* layers create depth in the work. Poster-colored *washi* paper is affixed to the backs of cut-out sections to achieve subtle, intricate coloration.

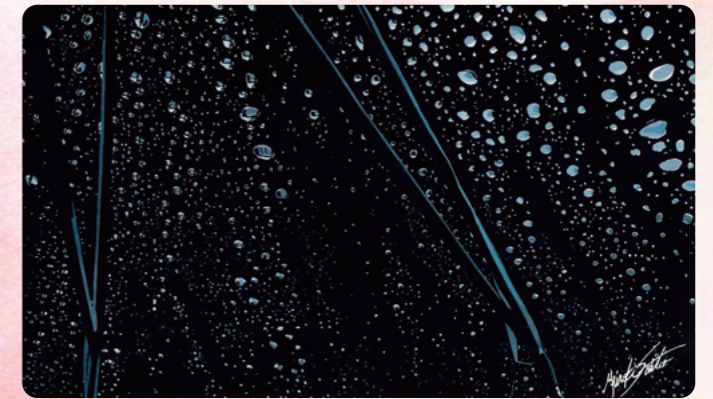


Nagano City is a place of quiet beauty where the surrounding mountains embrace the pulse of the city. The *kiri-e* paper cutouts of artist Hiroki Saito feature a lyrical beauty in which the transparency of the fresh, crisp air of the city, where he was born and raised, blends with the soft shadows cast by the nearby mountains and the dazzling morning light that streams down onto them. "Day-to-day life contains moments when familiar scenery suddenly takes on a look of beauty." True to these words of his, most of the motifs Saito chooses for his work feature not well-known landmarks but fragments of daily life: cherry blossoms flowering in a corner of the city, a cluster of buildings along a river, perhaps a rain-spattered plastic umbrella. Modeled after actual landscapes, his works serve as reminders that beauty is there to be found in ordinary everyday life.

Seeming to reflect the artist's inner world, the works are shared widely each time they are posted to social media. Having been featured extensively in media such as television also, Saito's work has won popularity from a very



Hotaru ni Nareru Bashi ("A Place Where You Can Become a Firefly," 2025)
A work featuring the motif of a bridge viewed from a riverside promenade with light shimmering on the water surface. *Washi* paper colored with *sumi* ink and transparent watercolors is affixed from the back.



Itte-shimattara Modorenaku Naru ("Once You Say It, There is No Going Back," 2025)
Washi paper colored with *sumi* ink, transparent watercolors, and other pigments is affixed, using subtle variations in color to capture the texture of raindrops.



Todorokanai Bashi ("A Place Beyond Reach," 2024)
Coloration is applied with contour lines intentionally left out to evoke the texture of the chain-link mesh and the subtle interplay of light and shadow.



Kimi to Deatta Ato no Sekai ("The World After Meeting You," 2023)
The starry sky in the background is created by first applying poster color, then spattering it with paint from a toothbrush.



After checking the overall balance of light and shadow, Saito proceeds with making cuts and applying color, starting from the areas deeper within the cherry blossom petals where less light reaches. The fine cut-out dots create subtle, intricate shading and texture reminiscent of a pointillist painting. At the right is *kiri-e* paper with the initial sketch removed, which serves as the background for the work.



A *kiri-e* work featuring a fireworks motif, rendered with multiple layers of fine lines. Many sheets of colored paper are affixed to the reverse to create vibrant colors radiating outward across the night sky.

broad audience. Enthusiastic receptions of exhibitions of his work in Tokyo and his native Nagano have contributed to his ever-rising profile.

Saito's creative process begins with photographing landscapes that catch his eye in the course of daily life or traveling. "When I go for walks or take trips by myself, I try to use photography to capture what I find to be moments of beauty. I also intentionally stock up on compositions with intricate elements suited to making satisfying representations with *kiri-e*, such as power lines, traffic lights, and fences."

Once he has decided on a photo to use as a motif, he first prints it on photocopy paper. He then places it on top of black *kiri-e* paper designed to be easy to cut with a craft knife ("do Art. Deep-black *Nokoku kiri-e yoshi* paper - Kiwami grade," sold by Kawachi Art Supplies) and cuts through both layers with the sheets temporarily secured in place. *Kiri-e* is an art technique that involves cutting out paper with scissors or a craft knife and mounting it on backing paper to create depictions of people, animals, landscapes, and other

subjects. While generally lines are left thick to maintain structural integrity, Saito's work features astonishingly fine cutting for elements such as utility pole wires and plants' leaf tips, maintaining an overall balance while incorporating ultra-fine lines cut to the absolute lower limit of around 0.1 mm. When asked about his secret to maintaining concentration during the long hours of meticulous work, Saito explains, "It is indeed detailed work, but since I set specific start and end times and take breaks, I do not find it too burdensome."

Watching his work, it is noticeable that he is not simply tracing photographs' outlines; instead, he uses a craft knife to make careful cuts, remaining keenly mindful of shading and areas where light should be let through. "My work is not simply a matter of making cuts to a sheet of black paper and calling it done. I prepare individual pieces to match the shapes of parts to be cut out on different sheets of paper, color them, then affix them from the back. I layer colored *washi* paper, watercolor paper, and other materials to adjust shades of

coloration and degrees of transparency. Right now, I am experimenting with new techniques, such as leaving out contour lines altogether or creating tama-boke effects, which are the soft, floating circles of light seen in photography.

Saito skillfully combines paper materials with varying degrees of light transmittance to achieve complex color gradation and subtle effects evoking ripples on water surfaces, transforming his work into art that transcends mere "precise reproduction."

Beyond this, the only tool he uses for his art production is essentially a single precision craft knife. He has been using the same type of blade for many years, he says. "While I may use tweezers for fine joining work at times, I do almost all of the main work with the craft knife alone. I view the simplicity of the tool as being the key to bringing out the lines just as I have intended."

Saito was a student in high school when he first encountered *kiri-e*. A hands-on experience with *kiri-e* in a special class alongside local community members

made a deep impression on him. "The instant I made a cut into the paper with the knife, I felt a jolt and got the sense that this was the thing for me," Saito shares.

Though for a time later he set his sights on a career in fine art, he reconsidered after experiencing a creative slump. While he went on to attend a vocational school to make his way as an athletic trainer, his sense of unease about his future grew as he took part in corporate training programs. "While I knew I would be able to lead a life of stability if I continued on this path, picturing what my future self might look like in that case was beyond me.

That led me to end up declining an initial job offer just before graduation. My family was supportive, telling me, 'Just follow the path you decide on yourself,' and people around me encouraged me to go professional.

Their support gave me the strength to decide upon my path as a *kiri-e* artist."

Subsequently he worked part-time jobs while continuing to create art and held his first exhibition in 2014. That opportunity prompted him to begin his



Kiete-itta Hitorigoto ("Faded Away Soliloquy," 2025)
Multiple sheets of colored *washi* paper are attached from the back to express the subtle interplay of light and shadow in the trees.

career as a full-time artist, and he has since held numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout Japan. "*Kiri-e* has a charm that cannot be fully captured with photographs: the three-dimensionality, the depth, the texture of the paper. These are aspects that have to be seen in person to be truly understood, and the impression given by the work is changeable as well, depending on the way the light hits it and the distance from which it is viewed. I really hope people will take opportunities to see the actual pieces for themselves and discover what a broad range of expression and profound charm *kiri-e* offers."

With the simplicity of its technique — making cuts to paper — Saito's art incorporates overlapping layers of time, feeling, and memory. Looking toward the future, his breadth of expression will undoubtedly continue to expand further as well.





PROFILE

Hiroki Saito
Kiri-e artist




@kirie_hiro @kiriehiro

Born in Nagano Prefecture in 1993. An encounter with *kiri-e* in high school prompted him to eventually establish his own unique coloring technique through self-study. In 2014, he began his career as an artist. His intricate, fantastical landscape works have attracted considerable attention, largely through social media. They have also frequently been featured in the media, including television and magazines. He has held exhibitions throughout Japan, including a solo exhibition titled *Tabi no Annainin* ("Travel Guide") at Ginza Tsutaya Books. He received the Encouragement Award at the 2019 Nagano Prefecture Crafts and Fine Arts Exhibition.

HALO! claz group exhibition: Halo World, vol. 3

Dates : Sept. 18 (Fri) – 20 (Sun), 2026
Venue : Design Festa Gallery EAST, 2F
(3-20-2 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo)
Admission : Free

Kiri-e Artist Hiroki Saito solo exhibition: *Yakusoku no Basho* ("The Promised Place")

Dates : Dec. 18 (Fri) – 21 (Mon), 2026
Venue : Design Festa Gallery EAST, 2F
(3-20-2 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo)
Admission : Free



ONLINE SHOP

<https://hiroki-saito.booth.pm/>



Acrylic keychains printed with perfume bottle *kiri-e* designs.
* Size: Approx. 50 mm

Deepen

Catch up on the Latest News at KPP



KPP Group Holdings Expands Recycling Network

KPP Group Holdings mission is to contribute to the realization of a recycling-oriented society. Accordingly, the Group is focused on strengthening its business foundation and expanding its recycling network. We are pleased to announce two new initiatives in our ongoing efforts to fulfill this mission: full-scale entry into the waste-to-fuel business and waste disposal industry, and the optimization of our group-wide recycling network.

Leveraging the network built and expertise gained as a comprehensive paper trading company, the KPP Group is accelerating efforts to help build a sustainable world by expanding its recycling business and promoting green transformation (GX).

Initiative 1

Acquired all shares of SINANEN ECOWORK Co., Ltd. to prepare for full-scale entry into the waste-to-fuel business and waste disposal industry (intermediate processing)

Kokusai Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd. has entered into an agreement with SINANEN HOLDINGS to acquire all shares of SINANEN ECOWORK.

Background

SINANEN ECOWORK operates intermediate waste treatment facilities in Chiba and Saitama prefectures and is engaged in the recycling of wood waste, as well as the production and sale of biomass fuel (wood chips). Its recycling network is highly compatible with KPP Group GX actions and will serve as a foundation for our efforts to help build a recycling-oriented society.

Strategic Significance

Acquiring this company is a crucial step for the KPP Group to fully enter the waste-to-fuel and intermediate processing businesses. It helps us further expand our recycling operations beyond our current wastepaper recycling business.

Future Outlook

With the completion of share acquisition on March 2, 2026, the company name was changed to KPP ECOWORKS Co., Ltd., to maximize synergies with our existing businesses and further enhance our corporate value.



Scan the 2D code for more details!



Company name	KPP ECOWORKS Co., Ltd.
Headquarters	6-24 Akashi-cho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo
Businesses	Industrial waste disposal services, general waste disposal services, industrial waste processing support services
Branches	<p>Regional Sales Office NBF Matsudo Bldg. 8F, 18-4 Honcho, Matsudo City, Chiba Prefecture</p> <p>Chiba Recycling Center 223-9 Shinminato, Mihama-ku, Chiba City, Chiba Prefecture</p> <p>Shiraoka Recycling Center 888 Shimo-osaki, Shiraoka City, Saitama Prefecture</p>

Initiative 2

Two KPP Group subsidiaries (Musashino Shigyo Co., Ltd. and Green Sanai Co., Ltd.) merged to optimize recycling network

The Kokusai Pulp & Paper subsidiaries Musashino Shigyo and Green Sanai were merged on April 1, 2026, in order to strengthen the group's recycling network.

Anticipated Results

The merger is expected simultaneously to improve the operational flexibility of our collection services in the Machida, Sagami-hara, and Atsugi areas, to strengthen our collection capacity by integrating our sales structure, and to enhance operational efficiency, including by reducing administrative costs. This will further strengthen our community-based collection system to ensure that we provide reliable recycling services.

Expanding List of Materials for Recycling

We will move beyond wastepaper to include other recyclables such as aluminum cans and plastic PET bottles in our collections. In addition, we will work to strengthen the collection of "hard-to-process" wastepaper, which is particularly difficult to recycle. Establishing a system that recycles a diverse range of resources will help us fulfill the KPP Group mission of helping to build a recycling-oriented society.

Overview of Merger

Through an absorption merger in which Green Sanai is absorbed by Musashino Shigyo, the Green Sanai facilities will be integrated into Musashino Shigyo's Machida Sales Office.



Scan the 2D code for more details!



Company name	Musashino Shigyo Co., Ltd.
Headquarters	404-1 Oaza Shimohiroya, Kawagoe City, Saitama Prefecture
Businesses	Collection, sorting, processing, and sales of recycled paper: Collection and hauling of recyclable materials (wastepaper, waste cloth, empty cans, empty bottles)
Branches	Kawagoe Sales Office, Fujimino Sales Office, Wako Sales Office, Nishitama Sales Office, Kitatama Sales Office, Shinkiba Sales Office, Yokohama Sales Office, Atsugi Sales Office, Machida Sales Office

▶ First KPP General Exhibition Held in Six Years Attended by Over 600 People

The 8th KPP General Exhibition, the first in six years, was held at Kokusai Pulp & Paper headquarters on December 8–9, 2025, and was attended by over 600 of our business partners. This exhibition focused on the theme, “Potential of Paper in Co-Creating a Sustainable Future.” Across a variety of exhibits and proposed solutions, we offered a concrete illustration of the future envisioned by our long-term management vision, GIFT 2030.

To highlight our latest products and solutions, the exhibition was divided into five sections: graphics (paper), packaging, visual communications, recycling, and functional materials/startups. Representatives from each department explained to visitors the new value that paper delivers and its potential applications. The exhibition also included a total of six seminars led by prominent industry experts and generated lively discussion on the role paper will play in the future in light of current market trends.

At the KPP Group, we are committed to expanding our product lineup and strengthening our solution proposals to help address social issues as we continue our efforts to help build a sustainable world.



Reception area



Functional Materials / Startups Section



Graphics (Paper) Section



Visitors received writing utensils, notebooks, and other items.



Recycling Section



Packaging Section



Visual Communications Section

▶ Revamped Kokusai Pulp & Paper Corporate Website Now Online

The Kokusai Pulp & Paper corporate website, which serves as our main communications hub, underwent a major update in February 2026. More than a mere cosmetic change, the redesign sought to make it easier for users to find information and to convey more authentically who we are today, while also making clear our commitments as we move to the next stage following our 100th anniversary in 2024. The website design was shaped via extensive discussion of how to express our commitment to exploring the potential of paper and creating new value in the digital realm. We hope our new website will foster deeper understanding and trust by connecting the KPP Group with all of our stakeholders, including our employees and business partners. We invite you to visit and check out the latest updates.



Desktop version homepage



Mobile version homepage



Company Information and Our Business pages feature an animation of a spinning globe.

POINT 01 Information reorganized and website redesigned to ensure comfortable browsing experience across all devices

One issue with our previous website was the amount of time required to reach a desired page due to the depth of the site structure.

In response, we have radically overhauled the site's information structure to create a layout that provides a clear overview, enabling users to smoothly navigate and understand our vast product range. The new site also employs responsive design so it also looks and functions great on smartphones. The improved interface balances usability and readability so that users are able to intuitively view details on any kind of device, using features such as drop-down menus.



Desktop version Products/solutions page



Mobile version Products/solutions page

POINT 02 Sharing individual employee sustainability stories

The KPP Employee Sustainability Activities page features stories told by employees about the sustainability initiatives that they put into practice in their daily work and personal lives. Engaging illustrations and photos portray how the small, everyday efforts of each person add up to help fulfill our mission of helping to build a recycling-oriented society.



KPP Employee Sustainable Activities page

POINT 03 Easier to use News sections

The Green KPP page, which introduces our environmentally responsible businesses, now features a new Green KPP News section that presents information in a news format. This change makes it easier for users to find information. In addition, the News section on our Homepage has been updated to allow users to switch between tabs to view information for Kokusai Pulp & Paper and KPP Group Holdings, respectively.



Green KPP News page



Mobile version Homepage News section

A Memo Pad That Reveals a Sculpture: The Transformative Magic of OMOSHIROI BLOCK

Every page you peel away brings a hidden sculpture closer to life. OMOSHIROI BLOCK is a memo pad born from a deep exploration of paper as a material, created through architectural model-making techniques and precise laser cutting, and spiced with a sense of play. As the stack gradually diminishes, a detailed 3D artwork emerges, whether it is a famous landmark, a work of art, or an everyday object. We interviewed Hideto Horiguchi, President and CEO of TRIAD Inc., about the appeal of this product design, which transforms everyday memo-writing into an unfolding artistic experience.

—What inspired you to develop OMOSHIROI BLOCK?

Since our founding, our main business has been producing architectural models, and we have a solid track-record of successes, such as winning the TV Champion Architectural Model King Championship on the TV TOKYO network. Our architectural models are made-to-order and employ advanced expert technology to deliver on our client's wishes, and they are seen by many people at various exhibitions. So, our idea was to bring *omoshiroi* things (interesting, fun things) to more people by making new products that leverage our combined strengths — inventive planning skills, design skills that leverage various methods of expression, and precision craftsmanship. This process ultimately led us to develop memo pads that express the very essence of *omoshiroi*.

—What kinds of hurdles did you face from the planning to commercialization stages?

At first, we started with the idea of conveying various information page by page, like an encyclopedia. From there, as we explored paper-art concepts for everyday use, the early form that would eventually become OMOSHIROI BLOCK gradually emerged. The path from idea to finished product, however, was far from smooth. We created countless prototypes while experimenting with expressive possibilities, and we faced challenges in many areas, including structure, durability, and processing precision. The process of securing a utility model and then a patent also took considerable time. In the end, it took five full years to go from planning to release.

—Can you tell us about the OMOSHIROI SERIES product lineup that is currently on sale?

In addition to the memo pad BLOCK, which transforms into elaborate 3D paper art after use, we have a total of 65 series products, including CALENDAR, which functions not only as a calendar but also reveals a small piece of structural art each time you turn a page FLAT, which can be used for things like message cards and wedding seating cards; and PETALS, which has the shape of carved petals. All brands accept made-to-order and modification requests, and we take requests and orders from all over the world.



TRIAD Inc.

This creative company, based in Osaka's Nishiyodogawa district, handles a wide range of projects, from architectural model production to product, graphic, and web design. The company's in-house brand, OMOSHIROI SERIES has earned a high reputation both in Japan and abroad. Its success is driven by the strength of the company's precise modeling technology and inventive planning skills.

—How do you choose the paper used in the products?

We value both practicality for use as a memo pad and safety so that anyone can use them with peace of mind. The thickness of each sheet is carefully selected to ensure it is easy to pull out, making the pads comfortable to handle for people of all ages and from all countries. We choose materials from a wide range of options for their pleasant feel and the uniquely Japanese color tones and tactile qualities that emerge the moment you touch them.

—What are your selection criteria for motifs?

The first motif was the main hall of Kiyomizu-dera Temple, which symbolizes the structural beauty of Japanese architecture. Even now, we draw on the perspective we have cultivated through architectural model making to choose motifs that represent "beautiful forms embodying technology." We select subjects that combine sculptural appeal and a sense of narrative, such as famous architecture in Japan and around the world, rich landscapes, and objects with intricate structures like musical instruments.

—What kinds of people typically buy OMOSHIROI BLOCK products?

In addition to people in Japan, customers from about 50 countries buy from our online store. Many tourists visit our physical stores in Kyoto's Higashiyama district, often choosing OMOSHIROI SERIES as mementos of their trip or as a gift for someone special. Both Japanese and international customers are amazed by the intricate details of the buildings and landscapes, all condensed into palm- or postcard-sized works of art. We receive enthusiastic feedback, with comments such as "Please sell them exactly as they're displayed," "Could you create a design based on an original motif?" and "I'd love to make this the centerpiece of my art collection." The line appeals to a wide range of customers for its distinctly Japanese aesthetic and meticulous craftsmanship.

—Please tell us about your future plans.

One new product we plan to develop is a World Heritage series. Going forward, we will continue to place great importance on delivering carefully made products so that more people around the world can enjoy the excitement and surprise our products are designed to evoke.



OMOSHIROI BLOCK (SHAPE) Kyoto -HANA-



OMOSHIROI BLOCK (SCENERY) Asakusa



OMOSHIROI BLOCK (SHAPE) Osaka Castle



OMOSHIROI BLOCK (SCENE) Nishikigoi



OMOSHIROI BLOCK (SHAPE) Heart Bouquet -Red-



OMOSHIROI BLOCK (SCENERY) Mt.Fuji with Cherry Blossom

The OMOSHIROI SERIES: A Variety of Uses

OMOSHIROI CALENDAR



There are three types: DAILY, which shows tourist attractions from around the globe and makes you feel like a world traveler; WEEKLY, which becomes a photo frame if you insert a photo or postcard; and MONTHLY, which has rose-scented paper.



OMOSHIROI CALENDAR (DAILY) World Travel -Blue-

OMOSHIROI FLAT



Enjoy various uses, such as message cards to use with gifts, seating cards for weddings and other events, price cards, POP displays, and bookmarks. Fold in half and you can use it as a business card to make an impression in the business scene.



OMOSHIROI FLAT Seasons

OMOSHIROI PETALS



A message card with delicate carvings on folded petals. You can take a petal off and spread it to open up a flower with 5 petals, and write your own messages and illustrations.



OMOSHIROI PETALS Sakura -Kyoto-

Available at official stores in Kyoto

OMOSHIROI-ya

Tel : +81-75-600-9311
Closed : Wednesdays
URL : <https://omoshiroi-ya.co.jp/en>

Main Store (top photo)
88-2 Hoshino-cho, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto City

Yasaka-dori Store (bottom photo)
3-346 Kiyomizu, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto City



INFORMATION TRIAD Inc.



Address : 2-18-25 Mitejima, Nishiyodogawa-ku, Osaka City
Corporate Site : <https://www.triad-japan.com/en>
Online Store : <https://www.omoshiroi-onlinestore.com/en>

* "OMOSHIROI BLOCK" and "OMOSHIROI" are registered trademarks of Triad Inc. (Japan, 26 countries of the EU, Australia, the United Kingdom, Singapore, the United States, China, India, Canada, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau)
* This product is manufactured under Patent No. 6628631.

For the latest information, please check the company's social media channels.



Corporate Site



Online Store



Instagram



X



Youtube

Making Letters Speak

Tomone Uemura

Humans are creatures who express their thoughts. I feel that letters are the most profound and noble form of human expression. When it comes to letters, hand-written letters are best.

When we try to read between the lines, we can see the personality of the writer.

Vol. 44: Naomichi Sugino

During my 41-year term at TV TOKYO Corporation, during which I served under six presidents, it was with Naomichi Sugino that I developed the closest relationship. Sugino, who had been an executive director at the *Nikkei Shimbun* newspaper and was considered one of the leading candidates for the next president, took office as president of TV TOKYO in 1989. As just an ordinary career employee myself, I had no particular concern regarding the matter of who might become the new president. The first initiative Sugino undertook as president, however, was a long-term management plan, and as a staff member in the newly established president's office tasked with drafting it, I found myself learning things that were altogether new to me. Having spent almost my entire career in the Programming section, which is tasked with drawing up program schedules, I had never been directly involved in management in the strictest sense. Here, though, I came to gain insights into the future of the television industry and matters of revenue for the first time, which truly opened my eyes. I had been aware that the phrase, "the expression of management's will," was associated with Programming and was about to experience that firsthand.

As this was over 30 years in the past, IT had not yet entered the picture. With the advent of the "multimedia, multi-channel" era, which would include broadcasting satellites and communications satellites, said to be upon us, however, we staff members discussed the future of traditional broadcast television with that in mind. Sugino, who had served as a correspondent in New York as well as editor-in-chief

of the *Nikkei Business* journal and *Nikkei Business Daily* newspaper, possessed a wealth of knowledge, and we staff members — who were biased toward visual imagery and footage — learned a great deal from him. "Individualization" was a key term associated with the "multimedia, multi-channel era," and that too was something I learned from Sugino. These days, when I see every media form heading in virtually the same direction, chasing ratings with crowd-pleasing content, I find myself thinking that they really ought to be looking for different paths of their own.

My historian father taught me — without ever spelling it out directly — the importance of maintaining a spirit of independence toward authority, and accordingly, I have tried to live my life avoiding flattery or sycophancy toward bosses as much as possible. Despite the eight-year age gap between us and the difference in our positions, however, that was never an issue with Sugino. He was never one to put on airs of superiority or play favorites with anyone. My social circle consisted mainly of writers and creative types; I had almost no connections in political or business circles. Still, whenever I hosted gatherings with them, Sugino was glad to attend and would pose quite in-depth, specialized questions.

Over the roughly 30 years I knew him — from the five years he served as president to his subsequent tenure as chairman and the time following his retirement from TV TOKYO, clear up until his passing in 2015 — our relationship remained consistent, just as it had been in the early days. Though I seem to remember receiving many letters from him, I came up with only a dozen or so pieces of correspondence from him, including New Year's greetings, when I made a search and tallied them. The oldest was a card from 1993, which included the following message along with a New Year's greeting.

"As Sun Tzu wrote, when you are on the 'death ground,' fight — and we are not ready for death, are we? I look forward to positive developments to come. Please take good care of yourself."

1993 would have been around the time I was serving as Director of Programming, and perhaps we were struggling with ratings at the time. I suppose that was the significance of his reference to the fight-or-die situation Sun Tzu referred to as the "death ground." I never felt pressed like that over a matter like mere ratings, though. Serving under the esteemed Sugino, I was blessed with freedom and joy in my work.

"I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the gathering you hosted in Hongo the other day to celebrate my 77th birthday, along with all your

other thoughtful gestures. My wife is deeply grateful, as well. While I, born in the year of the horse, plod along, stacking up years rather than accomplishments, I am blessed with the good fortune of such interactions with all of you."

This postcard is dated November 1995. Around that time, I would organize drinking parties with a few friends of similar age, and these gatherings centered around Sugino. My memory is not quite clear, but I believe we must have incorporated this 77th birthday celebration at one of the gatherings, inviting Sugino and his wife as the guests of honor. I seem to remember the venue was Toriei, a favorite restaurant of Sugino's in the Ikenohata neighborhood. His message suggests that his wife had been invited as well and enjoyed herself. Whether it was for that 77th birthday celebration or a later 80th birthday party for him, he presented me with a boxwood comb as a thank-you gift in return. For my bald head, however, it was of no use whatsoever and still lies at the corner of my dresser unused.

I have one more postcard from him, this one dated 1996.

"Thank you for your kindness the other day at Bunrin. As always, I offer my sincere gratitude. Also, thank you very much for your gift of fine *shirasu* (whitebait). There is no winter that does not bring cold, they say, and sure enough, recent days have been bearing that out. Please take good care of yourselves, both you and your wife. With appreciation."

He mentions Bunrin, which was a Chinese restaurant run by Yoshinori Kawada that I frequented. At the time, it was located in the Shinsen district, offering delicious food at reasonable prices. We often enjoyed meals together as an extended family, with Sugino bringing his wife, Miyuki, along. Sugino called her "Miyu." Those were times when we could speak our minds together and fully savor the joy of being alive in the moment.

"I was delighted to receive *Naoki Sanjugo-den* ('The Life Story of Sanjugo Naoki') and am reading through it with great interest. Considering you like family as I do, it even begins to feel like a story connected to me myself. You must feel a little weight has been lifted from your shoulders. I hope you will continue leading a long and happy life. With appreciation."

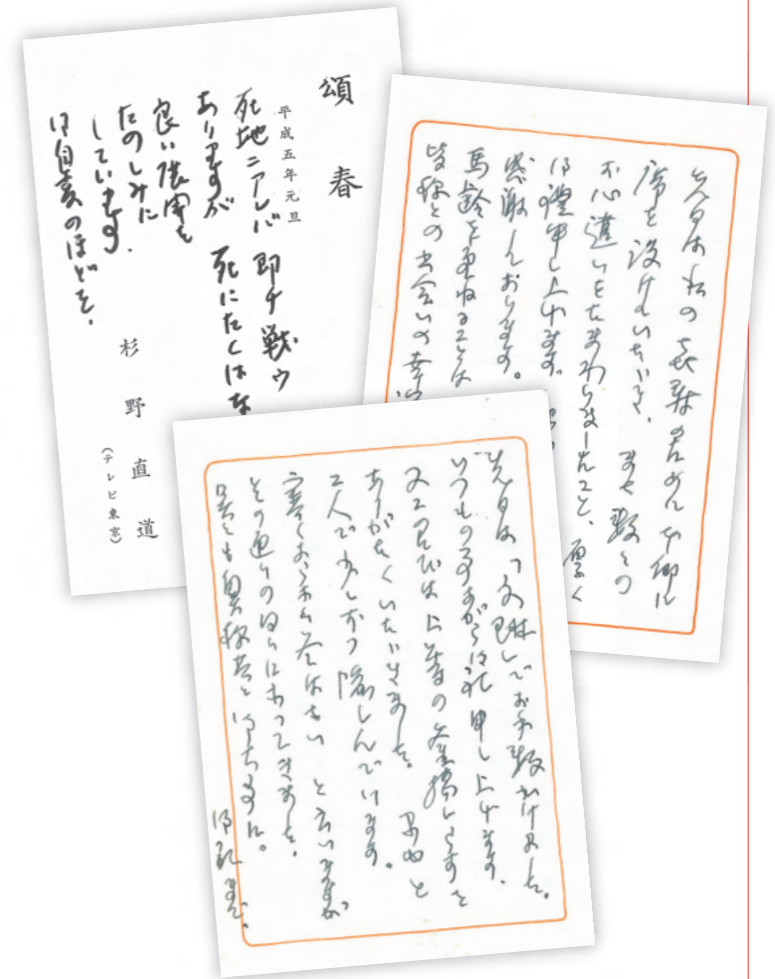
The Life Story of Sanjugo Naoki, a critical biography of my uncle, is the first work I completed after I began pursuing a career in writing after retiring from the salaryman's life. Sugino had sent this thank-you note, in response to my gifting him a copy. It seems that Sugino had hobbies such as calligraphy and photography, and while it escaped my notice at the time I received it, taking a second look now, I can see that his penmanship is indeed characteristic of someone with such inclinations. The biography was published in June 2005, with the launch party held at the Tokyo Kaikan, following the example of the Naoki Prize. It was a lively event, with attendees including Saiichi Maruya, Saburo Shiroyama, and Michiko Nagai. Sugino gave a speech as well. I was so nervous that I cannot recall exactly what he said, but I seem to remember something along the lines of, "There are many aspects to Uemura that have not come to light yet. He may turn into a major literary figure yet."

Contrary to his expectations, I continued to lead a quiet, unremarkable life after that, yet my close friendship with Sugino lasted until his passing at the age of 85. The last

time we had a meal together as a group was at a Mediterranean restaurant in Kichijoji, near his home. Dressed in a new suit, Sugino was cracking jokes just as he always had.

"Getting to see all your faces is something I've come to look forward to."

This little message he had added to the last New Year's card I received from him, using a writing brush to sign the card with his own name along with his wife's nickname "Miyu."



Naomichi Sugino

Businessman
1930 - 2015



Born in Fukuoka Prefecture in 1930. After graduating from the Faculty of Law at the University of Tokyo, he joined Nikkei Inc. in 1953. He was involved in establishing core Nikkei businesses, such as the 1969 launch of the *Nikkei Business* journal and databank creation. He served as president of TV TOKYO beginning in 1989 and became chairman in 1996. Acute liver failure brought his life to an end at the age of 85 in 2015.



Author
Tomone Uemura
Essayist

After graduating from the Department of History, the Faculty of Letters, Arts and Sciences at Waseda University in 1962, he worked at Toei Co., Ltd. before entering TV Tokyo Corporation, where he was later appointed to managing director of TV Tokyo and president and representative director of PROTX.

Presenting the KPP Group's Diligent Efforts toward Realizing a Sustainable Society

KPP Sustainable Times

Recycling and regenerating finite resources and energy are highly important priorities that today's society must address. With our mission to "contribute to the realization of a recycling-oriented society," the KPP Group strives to build a sustainable society and enhance corporate value through its business activities. In this issue, we present the latest updates on two symbolic examples of these efforts: Paper Turf®, a paper-based artificial turf that unlocks new potential for eco-friendly materials; and our original material, paper yarn OJO+.

01 Development of Paper Turf®, Paper-Based Artificial Turf for Outdoor Use That Reduces the Problem of Microplastics

ペーパーターフ
paper turf.

Oji Fiber Co., Ltd., a member of the KPP group, has newly developed Paper Turf®, an outdoor-use artificial turf that utilizes paper material for its pile (blades). Kokusai Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd. began marketing this product in April 2026.

In recent years, ocean pollution due to microplastics has become an environmental issue. Wear and tear on artificial turf can release these microplastics. This product, however, possesses the high biodegradability of paper, thereby minimizing impact on ecosystems even when worn off.

Paper Turf® is available in two types, matched to purpose of use: the long-pile type can be used in combination with natural fillers, while the short type offers superior flame-retardant properties. This product provides the optimal solution for modern landscape designs, where sustainability is a priority, including public facilities, shopping malls, and office environments.



Long-Pile Type

Features a design that recreates the soft texture of natural grass and is ideal for parks, playgrounds, and other spaces that require harmony with nature. We recommend using natural materials not only for the pile but also for the infill.



Short-Pile Type

This type incorporates our proprietary patented technology with a densely packed pile that achieves outstanding flame-retardant performance without using flame-retardant chemicals. Usable with confidence on rooftops, balconies, and semi-outdoor spaces.

02 Recycling Wooden Bats Used by Professional Baseball Players into Paper Yarn OJO+

Oji Fiber Co., Ltd. has partnered with Mizuno Corporation, Curelabo Co., Ltd., and Oji F-Tex Co., Ltd. to develop a groundbreaking paper yarn material made by recycling wooden bats used by professional baseball players. Baseball bags using this material will be provided to top teams under contract with Mizuno.

In the pro baseball scene, broken bats and wood deemed unsuitable for production during the manufacturing process come up on a daily basis. To breathe new life into these materials, we established a proprietary technology that blends wood powder into our paper yarn OJO+ base material. By leveraging paper's unique ability to incorporate materials other than wood pulp and integrating the advanced fiber and textile technologies of our partner companies, we have created a new material that both alleviates environmental impact and helps keep sports culture thriving.

This material not only uses resources efficiently but also possesses the unique lightness and functionality of paper yarn. Through Mizuno's products, which support top athletes, KPP is realizing our mission of contributing to a recycling-oriented society.



03 Komatsu Twisting Mill, A Key Production Hub for Paper Turf®, Completed In Komatsu City, Ishikawa Prefecture

The completion ceremony for the Komatsu Twisting Mill in Komatsu City, Ishikawa Prefecture was held on February 6, 2026. This plant is a key base responsible for the twisting process — the heart of manufacturing Paper Turf®, a paper-based artificial turf for outdoor use scheduled for release in April 2026.

The key to developing Paper Turf® was ensuring yarn strength that could withstand outdoor use. At the twisting mill, we overcame this challenge by using a newly developed proprietary twisting technique. We also concluded an OEM agreement with Sakai Shoten Co., Ltd., a long-established local company, and organized the production process under their exceptional technical prowess. The new mill is projected to have an annual production capacity of 25,000m² (product equivalent) by FY 2026, and we plan to phase in production increases in line with future demand trends.

The completion ceremony was attended by Komatsu City Mayor Shoei Miyahashi, city hall officials, and many of our business partners. To celebrate the kickoff of the new plant in grand fashion, the ceremony began with a solemn Shinto ritual, followed by congratulatory remarks from guests, a ribbon-cutting ceremony, and a demonstration of the latest twisting machines in operation.

The KPP Group will work to expand the market for this product while exploring the potential of paper and paper yarn to contribute to the realization of a sustainable society.

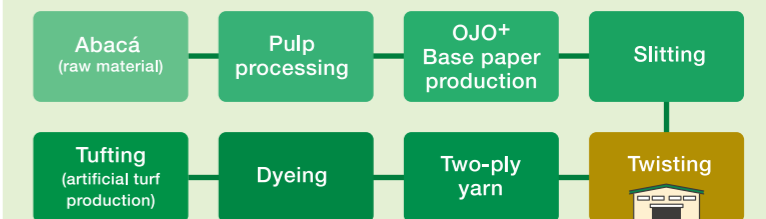


From left: Hiroyuki Shiraiishi, Adviser, Kokusai Pulp & Paper Co., Ltd.; Madoka Tanabe, Representative Director of the Board Chairman, KPP Group Holdings Co., Ltd.; Shoei Miyahashi, Mayor of Komatsu City; Hideaki Yamada, Product Development Division, Product Development Headquarters, Oji F-Tex Co., Ltd.; Masakazu Hirai, President, Oji Fiber Co., Ltd.

*Company names and job titles are as of the time of the photograph.



Manufacturing Process of Paper Turf®



Editorial postscript

Our key consideration for choosing a special feature is the freshness of its content — does it give the reader a feeling of "I've never seen this before." To give this kind of delight to our readers, I believe our editorial team has to maintain a sense of curiosity and be able to convey the appeal of the subject.

While we have featured cut paper many times, what felt out of the ordinary about this issue's focus — the work of Hiroki Saito — was his use of universal motifs. Rather than depictions of miraculous moments or fairy tales, we were drawn to his style, which transforms everyday

scenes into special expressions through paper cutting.

Saito first experienced paper cutting in a high school class, and he said that the moment he picked up a craft knife, he felt, "This is it!" That single opportunity started him out on what became a life path for him. TSUNAGU itself is also an opportunity to share with our readers these moments of "opening up" through paper, and we are once again made deeply aware of the importance of our work.

From the past and on into the future, paper continues to evolve in various ways, in step with people's lifestyles.

Just as myriad theories and philosophies have been passed down through books since ancient times and shed light on the world, paper and culture have always gone hand in hand. To make sense of this paper culture that has been passed down through the ages, we are launching a new series titled, "The Paper Chronicles." Why not join us as we take a small step back from the flood of digital information and immerse yourself in the underlying quietude hidden in the paper we take for granted?

Tomoka Kato

Discover

Reassessing the value of paper in daily life and culture

Vol.

00

Coming Soon

Title

New Feature Launches Next Issue

The Paper Chronicles

Throughout history, paper has always helped connect people's lives and cultures.

Invented around the 2nd century BCE, paper has throughout history been an integral part of people's lives, serving as a facilitator of cultural and industrial development. The crisp sound of the newspaper opened in the morning. The paper bag carrying your shopping on the way home. A short note to someone special. While seemingly unremarkable, paper has quietly played a part in daily life, shaping the way people live. We use it to record information, share thoughts, and organize living spaces. While paper's role may have evolved over time, it continues to be a familiar, unmistakable presence in people's lives.

Even today, despite the advance of digitalization and AI technology and the growing momentum for going paperless, paper delivers enduring value. In fact, it is beginning to be seen as even more valuable than before, as people appreciate the comfort of its texture and feel, the luxury of receiving written information, and the all-new uses for paper made possible by advances in processing technology. Paper will continue to be an integral part of life, delivering new value in the world of the future.

In our next issue, we will launch a new feature,

"The Paper Chronicles." Every issue, we will introduce a paper product and explore the many ways in which it has enriched people's lives, how it has evolved over time, and what possibilities it holds for the future. Tradition and innovation, sensibility and technology, environmental awareness — we invite you to join us as we discover paper's multifaceted appeal as a material that connects people around the world.



We have adopted a bookbinding method free of staples, paste and heat, taking into consideration recycling and the risk of injuries.



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