

FEATURES

The Japanese and Cranes



Above left: A crane chick rests partially hidden in the feathers of its parent's back for protection from the cold and predators.

Above right: The *iro-uchikake* (colored *uchikake*) features the same pattern, worn in three colors: red, black, and white. Paired cranes are embroidered on both sleeves.

Below left: Ornate *hagoita* for the New Year, adorned with decorative elements including cranes and turtles, symbolizing longevity

Below right: *Rakugan* with crane and turtle designs

Seven species of cranes are found in Japan today, including the rare red-crowned crane or Japanese crane with its graceful form and distinctive red crest at the top of its head. Cranes have been loved by the people of Japan since ancient times as birds associated with good luck, a view that still persists today. This issue of *Highlighting Japan* introduces readers to these birds with special meaning for the Japanese, cranes, from a range of perspectives: from the types of cranes that live in Japan and their habitats to kimono with crane designs, *wagashi* confections related to cranes, paintings of cranes, and more.

