

Paper Cranes and the Children's Peace Monument

Peace Memorial Park is located in the center of Hiroshima, Japan. If you visit the park, you will see many brightly colored paper cranes everywhere. These paper cranes were folded by people from around the world and sent to the park to express a wish for peace.



On August 6, 1945, Hiroshima was devastated by an atomic bomb. Heartbreakingly, more than 100,000 people were killed, and an entire city was destroyed. Almost instantly, what had been a city was transformed into an empty field.

Peace Memorial Park was built in this field.

One of the main parts of the park is the Children's Peace Monument. This monument is dedicated to the memory of Sadako Sasaki, a young Japanese girl who died from being exposed to the radiation created by the bomb.

Sadako was two years old when the bomb exploded. At the time, she did not appear to have been hurt by the bomb. She grew up normally, and she was healthy and strong for nine years afterward.

In the fall of 1954, when Sadako was in the sixth grade, she suddenly became very ill. In February of 1955, Sadako was admitted to the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital. She was diagnosed with leukemia.

Origami is the Japanese art of paper folding. To help herself stay optimistic, Sadako began folding origami cranes. Sadako believed that if she was able to fold 1,000 cranes, she would be cured of her illness.

Sadly, Sadako's optimism wasn't enough to cure her illness. After struggling with leukemia for eight months, on October 25, 1955, Sadako Sasaki passed away.

Sadako's death inspired a campaign to build a monument to world peace and to the many children killed by the atomic bomb. Her classmates started the campaign, and with the support of students from more than 3,100 schools in Japan and several other countries, the monument was built.

The Children's Peace Monument stands nine meters high (29.5 feet). It is made of bronze, and it consists of a three-legged pedestal with a statue of a girl standing on top. The girl is holding up a gold-colored replica of an origami crane. There are two more figures suspended from opposite sides of the pedestal. These figures are of a boy and a girl, and they symbolize hope and a bright future. Underneath the pedestal, there is a stone with this inscription: "This is our cry. This is our prayer. For building peace in this world."

After the monument was built, Sadako's story spread throughout the world. People from all around the world began visiting the monument and placing paper cranes near it in her memory. Others began sending paper cranes to be placed at the monument. Now, approximately 10 million cranes are placed at the monument each year.

Would you like to place a paper crane at the monument? Well you can. There are two ways you can do it. You can either visit the monument itself in Hiroshima, or you can send your crane to the following address:

Peace Promotion Division
The City of Hiroshima
1-5 Nakajima-cho Naka-ku,
Hiroshima 730-0811 Japan