

Leukemia and Origami Crane

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Opinion

Origami is a Japanese word, it's a combination of two words in Japanese: "ori" which means "to fold" and "kami" which means "paper". Origami began in the 6th century and was only used for religious ceremonial purposes, because of high cost of paper. Otherwise, in Japan the crane is a mystical creature and is believed to live for a thousand years.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the death of Sadako Sasaki (1943-1955) held. She was a Japanese girl who lived near Misasa Bridge, in Hiroshima (Japan), when the atomic bomb was dropped there. At the time of the explosion she was at home, about one mile from ground zero [1]. Most of Sadako's neighbors died but she survived the bomb. Less than 10 years later Sadako was diagnosed with leukemia (which people in Japan called the atom bomb disease), result of radiation from the explosion.

Chiziko, a Sadako's friend, made her a crane out of a single sheet of gold paper (in Japan cranes symbolize long life). The two friends began

to build 1.000 paper cranes in the hope that Sadako would recover. Unfortunately, Sadako completed only 644 cranes before she died, her friends made the rest [1]. She died on October 25, 1955, at the age 12. Actually in Hiroshima Peace Park there is a statue of Sadako standing with her hand holding a paper crane.

The information from Hiroshima and Nagasaki has contributed greatly to our knowledge of radiation-induced leukemia [2]. The types of leukemia found in survivors presented an unusual distribution: of 92 cases 52 were acute or subacute, of 40 chronic cases, 39 were myelogenous and only 1 was of the chronic lymphatic variety [3].

References

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