



**Sadako Sasaki**

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Sadako Sasaki was two years old when an atomic bomb was dropped on her home town of Hiroshima. Ten years later, in 1955, she became sick and was diagnosed with leukemia, a disease caused by radiation poisoning.

Sadako and her friend, Chizuko, began to make paper cranes, hoping to fulfil the Japanese belief that anyone who folds 1,000 cranes would have his or her wish granted. She was able to make 644 cranes before she died.

Sadako's story has become an important symbol for peace. Every year, thousands of children send paper cranes to Hiroshima and Sadako's memorial sites. These cranes are an expression of a gentle hope that people can work together for kindness and justice in our world.

### **The use of the atomic bomb in World War II**

On August 6, 1945 the world's first deployed atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Hiroshima was selected as the site by the US military. It was a manufacturing centre with a population of about 350,000 people.

The 9,000-pound uranium-235 bomb was loaded aboard a modified B-29 bomber christened *Enola Gay* (after the mother of its pilot, Colonel Paul Tibbets). The plane dropped the bomb—known as "Little Boy"—by parachute at 8:15 in the morning, and it exploded 2,000 feet above Hiroshima in a blast equal to 12-15,000 tons of TNT.

The bomb destroyed 90% of the city - five square miles. The explosion immediately killed 80,000 people. Thousands more (including Sadako) died later of radiation exposure.

Three days later, another A-bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, killing an estimated 40,000 people.

Japan's Emperor Hirohito announced his country's surrender in World War II in a radio address on August 15, citing the devastating power of "a new and most cruel bomb."