

Today there were two small origami paper cranes on Moriguchi-san's desk, which made some of us think about origami and where it comes from. I read online that the definite origins of origami are not known, but most people assume that it comes from Japan. It certainly was perfected here!

When I was young, I had many origami books and a lot of different origami paper. But my experience might not be representative of most American children, because my mom was an art teacher and we had lots of different art supplies from all around the world. I always liked making origami, and made all sorts of different shapes from stars and houses to sumo wrestlers and Santa Clauses. I can't even remember all the different shapes that I used to make.

I remember when I was around 10 or 11 years old, learning the story of Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes. It was probably one of the first times that I learned about Japan in my classes at school. We read the story about Sadako and I think all the students were touched by the sad story about someone our own age that died such a tragic death. Many middle school students in America learn this same story as a way to start learning about World War II. My class made 1000 paper cranes and I remember enjoying it very much. When I visited Hiroshima with my parents last year, I thought back to this time. I was very impressed to see so many chains of paper cranes and I thought back to the ones that we made when I was in school.

Usually when I think of Americans' perceptions of Japan, I think people probably just know sushi, manga, and nice electronics and they think of a complicated alphabet that seems impossible to understand. Of course, this isn't my impression because I've learned so much about Japan in the past two years. But in thinking about origami today, I realized that this is definitely something that people associate with Japan as well. Many American people know the story of Sadako and the 1000 paper cranes and are interested to try origami, too. Is origami something that all Japanese people know how to do well? That's something you'll have to tell me, because I don't know!