**Simply Peace**

**Peaceful Choices and Activities for Schools**

**by Mary Gavin**

**Introduction**

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**Message from Mary Gavin**

There is no pressure in this loving universe to be anything else other than who and what you are in this moment. Please accept and love who you are in this moment and what you have chosen to do. Accept and love who the children are in your care. They may have much to teach you so please be open to learning from them too.

During a recent visit to Japan the word 'omoiyari' stood out for me. Omoiyari means 'a heart of compassion'. This described Sadako Sasaki. She was the, now famous, little girl affected by the nuclear bomb that fell on Hiroshima in 1945.

Sadako hoped her paper cranes, carrying peace on their wings, would make her better. She wanted to fold one thousand origami cranes, since Japanese tradition said this would bring longevity of life. She believed in this with all her heart. Before she died she managed to fold six hundred and forty four, even though she was so ill and paper was not easily available. Her friends helped her to reach one thousand after her death. Sadako’s paper cranes now help to bring peace to the world. This tradition continues today. Beautiful compassionate understanding from Sadako's friends near and far reach out throughout time. As does the resilience and hope that showed itself in someone so young 'from her heart' in response to such devastation.

Omoiyari, 'a heart of compassion', seems to me to be the essence, the objective of peace education. Compassion for yourself too hopefully, in your difficult but meaningful work and for others and for the children in your care. What a privilege it is for you to touch so many lives, though realising too how heavy that responsibility can feel at times in this rapidly changing, uncertain world.

**About Mary Gavin**

Mary Gavin was a primary school teacher for 24 years. She was a PHSE and Global Citizenship coordinator, an Eco coordinator and she trained in Peace Education. Mary taught peace education and values education. She was interested initially in inclusion and visited Danish schools as part of her honours degree study. She undertook a postgraduate course in emotional literacy. She has experience of teaching Philosophy for Children too.

Mary looked at the Canadian education system and visited schools there regarding citizenship and eco issues in 2002 (TIPD study visit). Though now retired from teaching, she has continued her own research and has visited Japan twice to learn about the Eastern approach to peace. Mary now does voluntary work and is a writer of spiritual poetry mainly, though spiritual short stories for children are part of that too. The poetry has found a natural home in spiritual and interfaith settings in the past couple of years.

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