

Popoki



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http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/index_e.html

<http://popoki.cruisejapan.com>



It is autumn, but heavy rains are continuing in Japan, causing lots of damage. Popoki prays that everyone will be OK. He is also hoping for the safety of all the Popoki News readers, their friends and their families.

Popoki's Hot News!



COMING SOON!

Popoki's 'Peace and Health' Workshop at HUHS!
10/17 14:00~16:00! See page 12,13 for more information
Hope to see you there!

Popoki's Peace Book 3 and Popoki's Friendship Story -
Our Peace Journey Born out of the Great Northeastern Japan Earthquake



You can get copies of these and Popoki's other books at your local bookstore (in Japan), from the publisher Epic (<https://bookway.jp/epic/>), at the Kobe YMCA or from the Popoki Peace Project! We look forward to your orders and comments.



Pieces of Peace



One of Popoki's friends, Kao-nyan, sent the following piece of peace:
"When I can play an overhead ladder well without blisters on my hands,
I feel peace."

What sort of 'peace' did you encounter today? Please contribute a bit of peace! Please let us know by sending a message to Popoki's e-mail.



NEW! New videos of Nada Challenge 2015!!! Watch on Popoki's URL or YouTube
at:

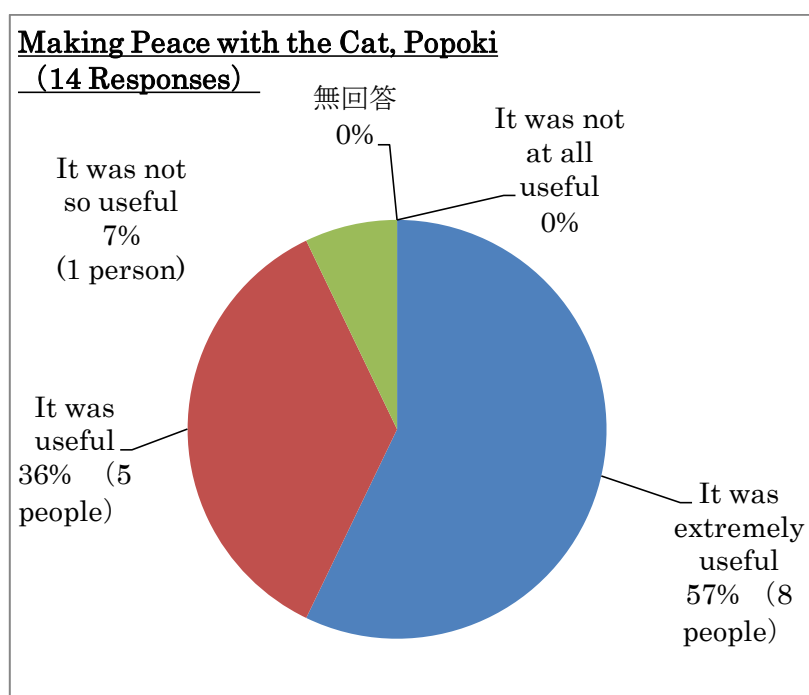
<https://youtu.be/7LcYzZzNQYg> and <https://youtu.be/WYdWwmwogKE>

“Let’s Make Peace with the Cat, Popoki!” Workshop at the

12th Seminar on Education for International Understanding and Development Education for Multicultural Living Together, 2015

Ronyan

Popoki came to the Seminar on Education for International Understanding and Development Education for Multicultural Living Together this year, too. The 2-day seminar was held on 10-11 August, and consists of joint sessions as well as a variety of workshops from which participants can choose according to their interests. Popoki’s workshop is usually at the very end, but this year it was at the beginning, right after the keynote address. There were fewer participants than usual, so we were able to have a rather intimate session, and everyone had a chance to speak, making it a meaningful session. Most of the participants were teachers, and come to the seminar looking for things they can use in their classrooms. I was conscious of this, and tried to design the content of the workshop so that Popoki will be able to make appearances in the classrooms of the participants. A questionnaire was distributed at the end of the session and the following is from the final report on the questionnaire responses.



Comments from those who found it extremely useful:


- Because I was looking for methods for education for international understanding at school levels;
- Because I was able to think about ‘peace’ and share it with others in my group with different opinions;
- There were aspects that I could agree with or that were the same as what I always think about, and I was also able to make new discoveries, so it was really a good opportunity; Thinking about peace is difficult, but I want to think deeply about it from now; It was fun and interesting;
- There was not much time but it made me think very deeply. I learned peace is not necessarily the opposite of war.

Comments from those who responded that it was useful:

• I was able to think more deeply about peace and international issues through participating and using my body; • I was able to think deeply. Thank you very much. • I teach elementary school, and there were parts I can use, but also parts where the words were too difficult and I don't think I can use them. But I want to give it a try. I think I can use the exercise with the rope.

It seems that the participants were pleased with the workshop. I would like to use their comments to make an even more useful workshop.

Thank you to everyone for your participation, cooperation and support.



Film 'X Years after Exposure to Radiation' and Talk Session

Ronyan

On 9 August at Kobe University, the university Student Volunteer Office hosted a showing of the film, 'X Years after Exposure to Radiation' followed by a talk session between the director, Hideaki Ito and Ronyan. This was not a Popoki event, but the content is very important so will briefly introduce it here.

Most Japanese, know that 'Lucky Dragon #5' refers to a tuna boat that was exposed to radiation after a US hydrogen bomb test on 1 March 1954. But there was not just one ship suffering radiation exposure due to US testing. In fact, about 10,000 other ships and their crews were exposed. When they returned to Japan, they were met by inspectors with Geiger counters who measured, and disposed of, most of their catch. The people were measured, too, and told, "Your count is," but were given no help or treatment. And with the exception of those directly involved, for some reason nobody knows this happened.

Ito works for Nankai Television and in 2004, he learned by coincidence of the existence of these other victims. He decided to investigate, but it was hard to find anyone who would talk with him, and even then, hardly any of those exposed was still alive. Ito kept at it, gradually earning the trust of the survivors and their families and learning of their suffering. He has told their stories in his film and in a book by the same title (Kodansha, 2014).

There were about 70 people at the film showing. The theme of the talk session was 'Rethinking Silence,' and focused on how and why an event of such importance has been kept draped in silence. The participants were from Kobe University and the community, including people who have relocated to Kansai because of the Fukushima Daiichi power plant accident, anti-nuclear and peace activists and others. It was a very interesting meeting and I am grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of it.



Searching for Peace in Tohoku

Minyonyan & Isanyan



Popoki and his friends left Kobe and traveled on buses and trains to Tohoku.

They curled up in their seats and told stories about baby Amur Leopards and warm islands in the Pacific. They were traveling north to visit the Tigers and the Rabbits of Tohoku to see if they had found peace.

Popoki had been to Tohoku before, and so had Satonyan. But their friends were visiting for the first time.



One friend was a big Chamorro kitten with very fluffy fur. He was almost too big for the bus! He came from Guam, an island in the Pacific Ocean, where he was called "Minagahet" which means truth in the Chamorro language. In Japan they gave him the name Minyonyan.

Following Minyonyan was his good friend Isanyan. She came from a land far away, where there were no oceans except for the endless fields of corn. She was an excitable puppy, who brightened every room she scampered into. When she came to Guam they called her "Isa," meaning "rainbow." When she visited Japan,

Popoki called her Isanyan.

Four years ago, in Tohoku the earth shook and created big waves came and destroyed towns and many Tigers were swept away into the sea. A power plant, which was a machine that created a terrible poison, was also destroyed. The earthquake let loose its nasty creation and the waters and winds carried the invisible poisons out into the rivers, mountains and forests. Many Rabbits had to flee their homes.



Even in Guam, Minyonyan and Isanyan had heard these stories. They hoped that the Tigers and Rabbits in Tohoku had found peace. In Guam, the animals sometimes use the word "inafa'maolek" to mean peace. It means when animals all work together to take care of each other so they can live good and happy lives. Were the animals in Tohoku being taken care of? Was there inafa'maolek?



When they reached Tohoku, they found dragons flying around the mountains and twilight mist over hills and hard-working ants with shovels crawling over piles of dirt. Popoki and his friends saw young Tigers dancing and holding fireworks. The Tigers on the coast were very friendly and shared their stories and their homes with Popoki and his friends.



Cats don't like water, but the water that visited the Tigers on the coast was water no animal likes. The earthquake turned the ocean, where the Tigers would catch fish, into a wave taller than buildings. Not all the Tigers escaped the wave. Some young Tigers told stories of how their Elder Cats sent them ahead to make sure that they would be

safe and then let the waves take them so they wouldn't slow the Tiger pups down. Satonyan had come right after the waves to provide medicine for sick animals. She told her own stories of how there was not only damage from the



water, but also fires. Nature is powerful she reminded the others, all animals must respect its power!



Popoki, Minyonyan, and Isanyan all fought back tears when they heard these stories. They asked each Tiger, now that the

waters had returned to the ocean, had they found peace? Each Tiger answered a different way, but all said no, they were still waiting for peace to appear. Some Tigers were living in small cages waiting for new homes to be built for them. The Tigers were frightened to see huge metal machines, driven by eager ants, spitting smoke and fumes, crawling around the empty village grounds where houses and restaurants once were. The metal machines were bringing dirt by the mountain and building huge walls to try to keep any waves from hurting the Tigers again. But the Tigers didn't feel safe. The walls were so tall they couldn't see the ocean anymore. If another big wave came, would they even know it was there? Some Tigers complained that the metal machines and their masters who were mice were taking all the money that could go to help build houses and schools and instead making that wall. The Tigers feared the walls were built not only with dirt, but also with lies.

In the Rabbit City, Popoki and his friends visited with the Rabbits who used to lie on the soft earth and be warmed by sunbeams. The Rabbits used to grow delicious peaches that everyone in Japan loved to eat. But after the invisible poison came, everything changed.



In the Rabbit City, the Rabbit Princes said that everything was ok and there was no need to fear the invisible poison. Most of the Rabbits wanted to believe them, because more than anything they wanted to be able to lie in the sunbeams again and grow their peaches and not worry about anything. But not all Rabbits believed this. Some of them took machines that could find the

poison in the earth and the water. They learned that the poison did reach the Rabbit City, and went even further, reaching the Animal Capital to the south, and even touching the beaches in Guam.

This made the visitors to Tohoku sad. They wanted all their friends, especially their new Tiger and Rabbit friends, to be safe. They agreed that this invisible poison was not good, and animals should no longer try to make it: they



shouldn't try to use it. This poison seemed to be the opposite of peace.

Most of the Rabbits didn't want to talk about the invisible poison. These Rabbits just wanted to go home. They wanted to go shopping in the bunny-feed stores again, they wanted to put their baby bunnies in school again, they wanted to grow peaches again! Everywhere in Rabbit City, the Rabbits were yelling to each other "Gambaru! Gambaru!" They told each other to hang in there, to stay strong! As long as they were strong, everything would be all right!

But Minyonyan was worried. With the invisible poison in the dirt, being strong and acting tough wouldn't protect you. It wouldn't keep an animal safe from invisible poisons. The Rabbits needed to be smart, but why weren't they worried about the invisible poison in the water and dirt?

Popoki shook his head. The Rabbits are afraid of the poison, as we all should be afraid of the poison. But they also want to go home and want the peace they felt before the earthquake. But that is dangerous. You are not safe if you are ignoring your problems.



Isanyan was scared. She said the Rabbits were facing a big angry creature that was standing right in front of them, snarling at them and threatening their families. But all they were doing was turning their backs and hoping the angry monster would go away.



Popoki and his friends realized that real peace must always be based on truth, or else you cannot truly be safe. If you lie to yourself, your family or the animals you are supposed to take care of, they may feel safe, but are they really safe? Is that peace? Is peace living in a bubble that you are always afraid to pop? Is it peace if you are always living in fear of what is outside the bubble?

Popoki and his friends hoped that the Rabbits would be able to find peace, although, wherever that invisible poison spread, it seemed impossible to find peace. They hoped

that the world's animals could learn this lesson and make sure no one ever tried to make the invisible poison again.

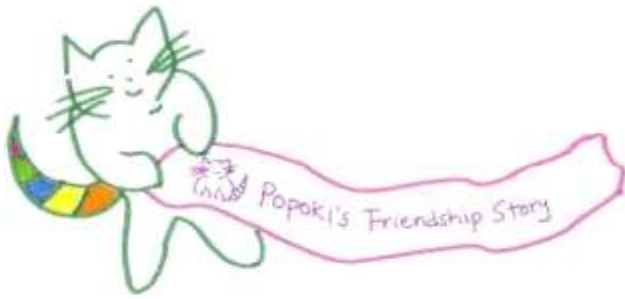


Popoki and his friends met many brave Tigers and Rabbits on their journey. They took pictures of beautiful flowers, broken buildings, and poisoned soil. They collected stories each like unique shells on the beach. These brave animals all told them the same thing, we are searching for peace in our cities and our villages and we need other animals, from close by and far away, to help us. To remind the cats who wear nice clothes and live in big houses, the mice that own the metal machines, the dragons that want to take money away from kittens and puppies and use it to buy guns and swords, that they must not only take care of themselves, but remember the rest of the animals in the land, especially those who live

in poisoned soil and watch worried as they are swallowed by the shadows of rising walls. We must work together and take care of each other, or else there might never be peace.

Minyonyan and Isanyan both promised that they would go back to the island of Guam and tell the animals there the stories of Tohoku. But first they wanted to write this story to say thank you to all their animal friends that they met in Japan.





Popoki's Interview

Nuclear Evacuee from Kanto area—case of Ms. U, a student—

Interviewer: Yukari Deguchi

(Kobe University, Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies)

In March 2011, because of the accident of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, many residents were forced to evacuate at the sacrifice of their personal lives. Here I will introduce the experience of a student evacuee from Kanto.

Evacuee: Ms. U (Kanagawa prefecture→Hyogo prefecture)

○The aftermath of the disaster and accident

At that time, Ms. U, who was a second year student at high school, had finished her final examinations and was enjoying school club activities. After the disaster, somehow she could reach her parents by mobile phone, and they were able reach their home by midnight, traveling on foot and by train.

On 12th March 2011, they knew from media coverage that one of the plants had exploded, and they started to take a series of measures to avoid radiation in their daily life. Ms. U was told to pack her bag by her parents so that she could evacuate whenever necessary. They sealed the windows and made some rules such as not to dry laundry outdoors, and not to use the air fan. They ate food that had been stocked up before the accident, and gave a lot of attention to the origin of food they bought. They always wore masks outdoors and stopped dining out as much as possible. A curfew was imposed on Ms. U so she spent a lot of time watching TV alone at home until the new semester started.

Thanks to her parents who have knowledge and information about radiation and nuclear power plants, she could take actions to avoid radiation immediately. She, a high school student at that time, didn't know anything about radiation and was not interested in it. Therefore, she wondered at her parents' words and actions,

○Applying to a university in Kansai to evacuate

In April, she became a third year student and she was conscious of university entrance examinations. Although she wished to go to university in Tokyo, she seriously thought about whether or not to go to university in Kansai, as recommended by her parents. She studied about radiation and nuclear issues, completely ignoring study for her entrance exams, and finally decided to go to university in Kansai.

Ms. U has had to change and sacrifice her life and to live with a gnawing anxiety

about radiation. She is surely angry about it, but on the other hand, she seems to be positive, rather than pessimistic. “If the accident hadn’t happened, I might not be interested in this society and our politics. Now, I have wider view”, she said with beautiful calm smile. I feel she has inner fortitude.

However, she said that she sometimes has mixed emotions. She has not revealed that she is an evacuee except to several friends. At the beginning of her life in Kansai, she had nobody to talk with about evacuation and radiation except her parents, and she tried not to say anything to anybody. When she met a new friend and dined out with her, she felt uneasy about where the food served at the restaurant had been produced. She decided to be brave and told her friend that she is an evacuee. She can’t forget that her friend responded that, “It’s only Fukushima’s problem, so you don’t have to be worried about it”.

OMessage to young people

I asked Ms. U what she wants to convey to young people in Kansai. She said, “Now you are in Kansai, so please do what you can in Kansai”. In other words, young people in Kansai don’t have to evacuate right now, so she wants them to empower themselves and take action to avoid radiation for their health. After the disaster, many students from all around Japan, myself included, went to Tohoku to work as volunteers. I wore a mask to shut out dust while working, but when I was finished I took off the mask and wore casual clothes. In Kansai, I didn’t care about where food was produced and ate what I wanted. And there were many students like me.

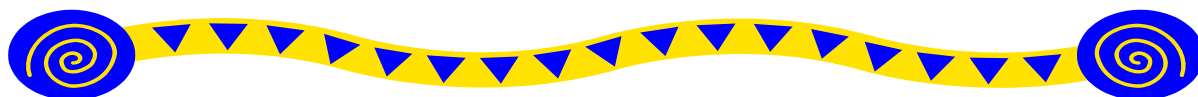
“If you understand the impact of radiation and still want to go to Tohoku, I can’t say anything to you. But I don’t want you to regret after you go there without knowing anything”, she said. The effects of radiation on the human body are not yet scientifically proven, and there is a lack of social consensus. Nobody can give a command, so we have no choice but to think and judge by ourselves, Ms. U said.

Ms. U is often asked “Why did you have to evacuate from Kanto?” and told “Kanto is not Fukushima, so everything is OK”. These words make her depressed. She has mixed feelings about her friends who affect an air of disinterest. This is not only Fukushima’s problem, or the evacuees’ problem, but also that of each person who lives in Japan. So Ms. U wants to share with as many people as she can about her experiences and thinking behind evacuation. She wants people to know that they still have to continue to evacuate, even from Kanto. I want to listen their voices deeply.

Thank you Ms. U!



“Hinan Support Hyogo” event (2015.9.5). Ms.U and I attended it together.



“Some things cats don’t understand about Prime Minister Abe’s security laws!”-No.2
Ronyan

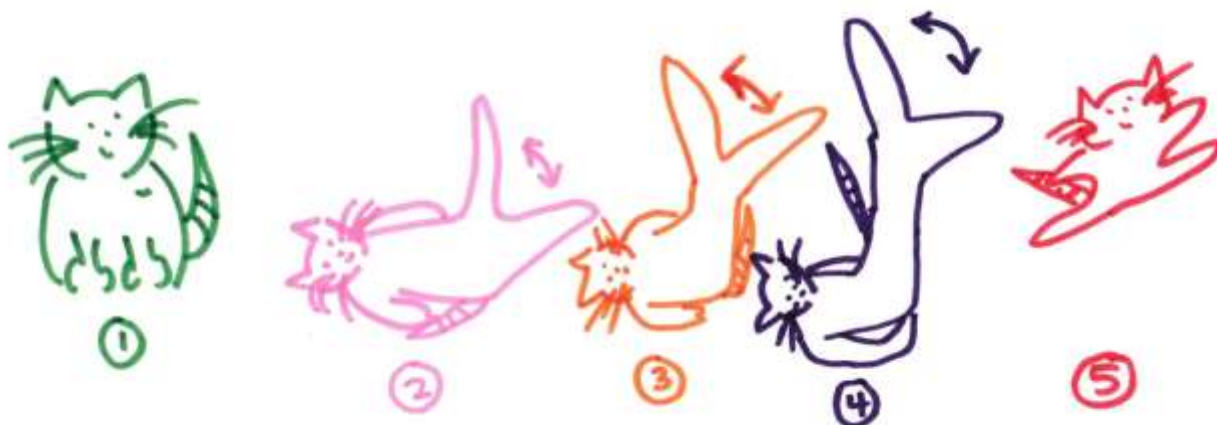


that 75% of those responding thought there was not enough discussion, 51% are opposed and only 30% support the bills (Asahi Shimbun, 2015.9.21). OK! Cats, bears, humans, we need to get to work! We must continue to speak out on security. At the same time, we need to thoroughly discuss what it means for everyone to live a life of peace, and do it. Henoko in Okinawa.... Nuclear power.... Security..... If we work together, we can make it happen!

POPOKI'S EASY POGA

Lesson 88

This month's theme is stretching our inner thighs and strengthening our abs!



1. First, as always, sit up straight and look beautiful.
2. Next, lie flat making sure your back is snugly against the floor. Keeping your legs straight, raise one leg slowly, and then lower it. Now try with the other leg.
3. Now, raise both of your legs and spread them wide to the sides, and then close them. Repeat several times slowly if you wish.
4. Next, raise your body so that you are resting on your shoulders, supported by your hands. Try slowly opening and closing your legs again.
5. Did it? Even if you didn't succeed, you tried! It is time for the 'success pose.' Congratulations! Do you feel refreshed? Please remember to relax, breathe, laugh and practice for 3 minutes every day.

Please join us!

Next Po-kai: 10/17 16:30 ~ HUHS after workshop event

Next next Po-kai: 11/20 19:15~ Kobe YMCA

10.3-4 Popoki at Doshisha with Betty Reardon and friends!

10.8 Popoki at JICA training seminar for friends from Africa!

10.9 Popoki Poster session (13:00~14:00 & 15:55~16:15) at Kobe University Symposium "Looking toward better recovery focusing on people – An approach from Kobe University that combines both humanities and sciences" Info, registration:
http://www.kobe-u.ac.jp/NEWS/event/2015_10_09_01.html

10.17 Peace and Health Workshop, HUHS. 14:00-16:00 (see next page). Staff meet at 13:00. For information contact Satonyan.

From Popoki's friends....

New photo collection! Akagi, Shunji. *Fukushima Traces 2011-2013*. Osiris, 2015. Orders:
<http://www.shashasha.co/en/book/fukushima-traces-2011-2013/>



兵庫医療大学 地域交流プロジェクト *HUHS Workshop* *Peace and Health*

Popoki, are health, feeling/being safe and peace the same color?

ポーポキ、健康は、安全・安心と同じ色？

ポーポキ・ピース・ネットワーク



あなたも 平和のねこと一緒に
健康・安全・安心と平和について感じたり、考えたりしませんか？

平和って何だろう？健康って何だろう？安全や安心は？

普段何気なく聞いたり見たり感じたりしていること。

ねこのポーポキと一緒に平和や健康の観点から暮らしを見直してみませんか？

健康は、安全・安心と同じ色？みんなで一緒に考えてみよう！！



スケジュール Program

13:30 受付 Registration

14:00 「ポガ」タイム Poga Time ※ポガ：ポーポキのヨガ

14:05 ワークショップ①「ポーポキ、安心や安全、健康って、なに色？」

Workshop 1: Popoki, what color is health and being/feeling safe?

14:30 散策して平和と健康、安全・安心を探そう *雨天は室内で決行

Walk outside and look for peace, health, being and feeling safe

*In case of rain, it will be held indoors

15:10 ワークショップ②「健康は、安全・安心と同じ色？」

Workshop 2: Is health the same color as being and feeling safe?

15:50 まとめ、発表 Conclusion, presentations

16:00 解散 Dismissal

*体を少し動かしますので動きやすい服装と靴でお越し下さい。

*お一人お一人にあった動きをしますので、どなたでも参加できます。

日時 2015年10月17日（土曜日）

Date: 17 October 2015

14:00~16:00

14:00-16:00

場所 兵庫医療大学 地域連携実践センター HUHS, community center

対象 どなたでも参加できます。 Participation: Anyone can participate

定員 30名

Maximum number: 30 participants

会費 100円

Fee: 100 yen

申込方法 FAX（裏面）にてお申し込み下さい。 Registration/Information

問合せ先 兵庫医療大学 地域連携実践センター Phone HUHS 9:00-16:00

電話 080-6204-8793（受付時間：平日9時半～16時）

担当者 兵庫医療大学薬学部 桂木聡子 HUHS Satoko Katsuragi

Popoki in Print

- ESD Digital Archives, Kansai Council of Organizations for International Exchange <http://www.interpeople.or.jp>
- "Peace Picture Book Published – linked to disaster support in East Japan" *Kobe Shimbun* (2014.3.25) KIHARA Kana
- "Awards given to 37 groups Daiwa Securities Foundation" *Kobe Shimbun* (2013.8.23 p.8)
- "Reproducing 'human shadows' and asserting no nukes" *Kobe Shimbun* (2013.8.7 p.22)
- 'Draw inner thoughts about disaster' *Yomiuri Shimbun* 2013.2.16:4 (evening edition; Japanese)
- "'Safe' and 'Secure' Society is from the bottom-up", *Mainichi Shimbun Interview with Ronni Alexander*, 2012.10.29, p.1 (evening edition; Japanese)
- R. Alexander. "Remembering Hiroshima: Bio-Politics, Popoki and Sensual Expressions of War." *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. Vol.14:2:202-222, June 2012
- "Article 9 is at the base of Peace with Popoki" *Kodomo to Mamoru 9 jono kai News*, No.66, 2012.5.12
- "Hope on 60 meters of cloth" Etsuko Akuzawa. (In Japanese) *Asahi Shimbun* 2012.1.21
- "Voice for Peace made into a book" Masashi Saito. (in Japanese) *Kobe Shimbun*, 2012.1.19
- K. Wada. "Conversations with Ronni Alexander: The Popoki Peace Project; Popoki, What Color is Peace? Popoki, What Color is Friendship?" *International Feminist Journal of Politics* Vol.13, No.2, 2011, 257-263
- S. McLaren. "The Art of Healing"(Popoki Friendship Story Project) *Kansai Scene*. Issue 133, June 2011, p.10. kansaiscene.com
- R. Alexander. (2010) "The Popoki Peace Project: Creating New Spaces for Peace in Demenchonok, E., ed. *Philosophy after Hiroshima*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.399-418
- 省窓: Column in *Kobe YMCA News*, No.606, 2011.1, p.1 (*In Japanese*)
- "If we all participate, something will change! Reflecting on Palestine" *THE YMCA* No.607 June 2010, p.1 (*YMCA Japan Monthly Newspaper*)
- Hiroshima and the World: What Color is Hiroshima? Chugoku Shimbun Peace Media Center, http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/mediacenter/article.php?story=20100312140608602_en 2010.3.15
- FM COCOLO 76.5 'Heart Lines' 2010.1.9 Japanese Interview: Ronni on Popoki in Palestine
- "Human Rights, Popoki and Bare Life." *In Factis Pax Journal of Peace Education and Social Justice* Vol.3, No.1, 2009, pp.46-63 (<http://www.infactispax.org/journal/>)
- Nishide, Ikuyo. "Popoki, What Color is Peace? Lecture by Ronni Alexander." "PPSEAWA" (Pan-Pacific and south-East Asia Women's Association of Japan), No.63, 2009.12, p.5
- 'Friendship' No.2 2009.11 Itami City International/Peace Exchange Commission, Annual Events, p.1-2.
- 'Not for But With...' No.79, 2010.1 Notice of the Popoki Peace Challenge event. P.12
- 'Nada' notice of the Popoki Peace Challenge event, 2009.12, p.2
- 'Yujotte...Kangaeru Ehon.' *Asahi Shimbun* 2009.7.2 AKUZAWA Etsuko
- 'Yujo wo kangaete – Ningen to, Neko to, soshite Jibun to,' *RST/ALN*, No.259 2009.6.28, p.11
- 'New Books: Popoki, What Color is Friendship? Popoki's Peace Book 2' (Rebecca Jennison) "Cutting-Edge," Vol.35 2009.6, p.3
- 'Thinking about Peace with a Cat: Second Peace Book Published.' (SAITO Masashi) *Kobe Shimbun*, 2009.4.21
- 'Popoki, What Color is Peace?' *Kobe YMCA News*, 2009.3.1. No.593. p.2
- 'Popoki, What Color is Trash?' *Kobe YMCA News*, 2009.1.1. No.592. p.2
- 'Tomodachi ni Natte Kuremasenkai,' *RST/ALN*, 2009.2.22
- Popoki on the radio. <http://www.kizzna.fm/> Click on 6CH to hear the program and reading of Popoki in Japanese (No longer available)
- *Yasashii kara hito nann desu* Exhibition Organizing Committee 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights.' Hyogo Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Institute. 2008.10. ¥500. For information contact: blrhyg@osk3.3web.jp
- "KFAW College Seminar: What Color is Peace for Women? Thinking about Peace, Violence and Gender with Popoki." *Asian Breeze* No.54 October 2008, p.8 (Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women)
- *Kobe Shimbun* "Human Rights Declaration Exhibition Panels: 6 Local Hyogo Artists Illustrate all 30 Articles" 2008.10.8. p.10
- "An Interview with Dr. Ronni Alexander." *The Newpeople*, Pittsburgh's Peace and Justice Newspaper, Vol.38 No.9, October 2008, p.5
- Human Security – Dr. Ronni Alexander speaks about Hiroshima and Nagasaki." *The Newpeople*, Pittsburgh's Peace and Justice Newspaper, Vol.38 No.9, Oct. 2008, p.4
- Popoki in Pittsburgh. Check out the Remembering Hiroshima/Imagining Peace URL: <http://www.rememberinghiroshima.org/>
- * **Back issues of Popoki News:** http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/archives_e.html





What Popoki Means to Me

Bashir-nyan

Hello Popoki! How are you doing today? Are you hungry? What would you like to eat? Beef steak? Fried chicken? Fish curry? Sashimi? Or, maybe you are a vegetarian? How about some vegetables?

I greet and ask these questions to a stray cat, who I have met in my new neighborhood lately. All he does in response is move his fluffy tail, making sound with a loud voice: NYAN... NYAAN.... NYAAAN, which means, I guess, YES...YEES....YEEES. Probably he wouldn't mind having any of those foods, especially when he is hungry and waiting to have anything that comes his way. Interestingly, while going back home, I find him waiting at the same place at the same time. We have been getting to know each other and enjoying our company. He is quite playful, curious and friendly, which reminds me of Popoki. So, I try to see Popoki in him. He plays with grasshoppers, tries to touch dragonflies and sometime keeps looking at butterflies or birds while sitting on a motorbike as if he wants to fly like them. He listens to the sound of the wind, looks at the sky and sometimes watches the ocean view. I find him very adorable and beautiful.

There are many stray cats living at the mountainside in the Kobe area. They always move around looking for food and shelter. The increasing number of stray cats seems to be a concern for the local governments in many municipalities in Japan. According to the Japan Times, they have been trying to curb the number of stray cats every year. A recent estimate shows that the number exceeds 130,000 nationwide (The Japan Times: 2013). Some decided to kill stray cats as a solution to stop the increasing number. Ironically, another report mentions that Japan may look like a heaven for animals, which might indicate that Japanese people are animal lovers as there are many products available for pets on the market (The Japan Times: 2014). However, it may only apply to those cats that pet owners buy from pet shops rather than adopting them from shelters. Many animal welfare organizations have been trying to save stray cats, but the problem still exists. How to deal with this? It would be hard to find the answer. One solution could be putting stray or abandoned cats in shelters and adopting them gradually through finding people who are interested in taking care of them.



Nonetheless, the problem remains, in my personal opinion, as many apartments/mansions in Japan do not allow pets. Even if they allow them, they charge extra money for pets for security reasons, which may hinder someone's willingness to adopt or just bring a stray cat to the house. It is an issue that everyone needs care about in order to save the animals. Why cannot we live together, stand by and take care of each other, regardless of being human or animal, or having different color/race, gender and so on? Why there is a feeling of 'otherness'? Already many have asked these sorts of questions. I

really don't know the answers to them, but I find some hints from Popoki when he tells us about solidarity, coexistence, love and peace.

When I see stray cats, I stop for a while and try to play with them and feed them and I feel peace. Every time when I have a chance to do that I remember Popoki and think he would do the same. For me, Popoki means someone who comes forward and stands by the helpless and voiceless. I am thankful to Popoki as he always reminds me about the love for animals and brings me into the peaceful world of animals and nature when I am lost.

PLEASE HELP SUPPORT THE POPOKI PEACE PROJECT!

The Popoki Peace Project is a voluntary project which uses Popoki's peace book and DVD to promote peace through various activities such as peace camps, peace workshops, seminars and other activities. Since the March 2011 earthquake, we have also worked in the disaster area and in 2012 published a book about that work: *Popoki's Friendship Story - Our Peace Journey Born Out of the Great Northeastern Japan Earthquake. Popoki, What Color is Peace?* has been translated into Thai, Chinese, Korean, Khmer, Indonesian, Tetun and Bengali, Vietnamese, Arabic and Hebrew. Spanish, Farsi, Lao, Swahili, translations are underway. If you would like to translate Popoki, or have a way to have the book sold at your local bookstore, please let us know.

How to purchase Popoki's books from outside of Japan



1. Go to your local Japanese bookstore: Kinokuniya, Maruzen, etc. (or their website)

2. In the US, thanks to a very satisfied customer, *Popoki, What Color is Peace? Popoki's Peace Book 1* can be ordered from Kinokuniya Bookstore in Los Angeles. The bookstore is at

www.los_angeles@kinokuniya.com and the telephone number is 213.687.4480. The price is US\$20.00 plus tax.

Some ways to purchase *Popoki, What Color is Peace? Popoki's Peace Book 1, Popoki, What Color is Friendship? Popoki's Peace Book 2, Popoki, What Color is Genki? Popoki's Peace Book 3* and *Popoki's Friendship Story* from inside Japan

From the publisher, Epic: TEL: 078-241-7561·FAX: 078-241-1918

From Amazon.co.jp or your local bookseller

From the Popoki Peace Project ([popokipeace\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:popokipeace(at)gmail(dot)com))



Contributions are always welcome!

Popoki Peace Project popokipeace-at-gmail.com

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