



## Happy New Year !

2018

希望、笑顔と平和の一年となりますように！

May it be a year of hope, smiles and peace!



Thanking you for your continued support in the coming year!

Popoki Peace Project

## Popoki's Resolutions for 2018!

1. Take positive action to create a non-violent and peaceful world!
2. Treasure our friends and all of our encounters, make new friends, learn from one another, and strengthen our connections!
3. Continue our work to support people affected by the 2011 East Japan disaster!
4. Continue our work on peace and health, safety/security and feeling safe!
5. Be aware and interested in the world we live in, close and far away. Share our thoughts, feelings and impressions with one another and the world!
6. Bring a little bit of joy into the lives of those around us and share our joy!





It's January! It is a bit late, but Happy New Year! In Japan, January has brought a big cold snap! But Popoki sends his warm greetings to everyone. He hopes we can enjoy ourselves while working together for peace this year, too!

## Popoki's Hot News!



COMING SOON!

17 March 13:00~16:00 @ Nada Kumin Hall!

"Drawings, picture books, disaster and medicine pot luck party" Event!  
2 guests from Otsuchi-cho, others from Nara, Osaka, Tokyo and of course Kobe.

We'll draw and talk and have fun! Please join us!



### Piece of Peace

One of Popoki's friends, **Chihiro-nyan**, sent the following piece of peace:

"There was my neighbour's cat, basking in the sun at the window on a cold winter day. I feel peace when I spend time relaxing in a cozy place."

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: [ronniandpopoki \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:ronniandpopoki@gmail.com) !

2018 IS THE YEAR OF THE DOG, SO LET'S MAKE IT A YEAR OF CATS AND DOGS BEING FRIENDS!



## Thoughts on 17 January 2018

Ronyan

There are days when cats are busy  
Days it's cold and they want to curl up  
Days when they search for a good napping spot  
Days when they have to be nice to humans  
Days when they smell flowers  
And so on  
So busy  
No time to just stand still.

Just one daffodil  
flower  
It seems so cold, so lonely  
I wonder if daffodils are busy, too  
I've been running without stopping  
but finding a daffodil blooming in the harsh cold  
made me think  
about being too busy  
about being stressed out  
about not standing still

No time to remember  
an earthquake that happened 23 years ago  
Maybe this is the moment  
to stop  
take a deep breath  
and reconfirm  
the message that that huge earthquake  
is trying to convey

What's important?  
Who's important?  
Family, friends, ourselves  
Animals, plants, homes, towns  
People we have not yet met  
What can we do to  
Keep them safe?

Because we are busy  
Because we don't want to remember  
Because we're alive  
Let's stand still today  
And remember  
For tomorrow



\* The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake struck at 05:46 on 17 January 1995.  
Every year I write a poem in the desire to keep the memory of that day alive.



## \*Popoki's Interview\*

Ronyan

Interviewee: Hafiz Amirrol

**In January, Mr. Harfiz Amirrol visited Kobe and talked with students at Kobe University and Kobe University Secondary School about gender and disaster. It was a very intense 3 days, and we talked about so many things! It wasn't until Hafiz had returned to Malaysia that I realized I had forgotten to interview him. I sent some questions, and here are his responses.**

**Thank you, Hafiz!**



### 1. Please tell us about yourself.

My name is Hafiz Amirrol. Trained as an architect and urban designer, my works range from art and humanities, to philosophy and engineering, and to strategically plan and develop programs and projects for both humanitarian and development causes. Throughout the years, I have been working, parallelly, in the realm of professional practice (planning and design consultancy), civil society organization/NGO (humanitarian) and academia (teaching and research).

I am currently the Head for Building Resilient Communities at MERCY Malaysia, an ASEAN-born NGO that provides humanitarian and developments services worldwide. My work at MERCY Malaysia focuses on strategic initiatives in building resilience across communities, with current project locations around the ASEAN member state countries and beyond. I am also trusted to become the network coordinator for the Asia Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN), a network of 52 civil society organizations across Asia that focuses on disaster risk reduction and disaster response and preparedness, with its secretariat and operational hubs in Kuala Lumpur, Delhi and Tokyo.

I am also running a planning and design consultancy firm, EXTRAURBAN Design in Kuala Lumpur, with services range from strategic planning for urban development, urban design, architectural design and branding services. The firm's clients include both the private and public sectors. Apart from my professional humanitarian and planning/design consultancy works, I teach at a local university in Kuala Lumpur, running its Urban Design program conducting research on urbanism and the city.

### 2. You work with a Malaysian NGO called MERCY Malaysia. Could you briefly describe what the organization does, and your role in it?

The Malaysian Medical Relief Society or MERCY Malaysia is a non-profit organization that focuses on providing medical relief, sustainable health-related development, risk reduction activities and building resilient communities for vulnerable

communities in crisis and non-crisis situations, both locally and internationally. MERCY Malaysia focuses on providing emergency medical and humanitarian aid, carry out sustainable development by helping communities find ways to prepare and protect themselves in the event of natural disasters; by rebuilding and refurbishing hospitals and health clinics; and by providing health-related trainings and educational programs, in both crisis and non-crisis situations.

The organization's experience and expertise within this area has grown over the years as our projects' scope and content have expanded, staffs' capacity and expertise enhanced through international trainings and involvement in high-level policy making. MERCY Malaysia has been an active participant in important global meetings such as the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Kobe, which led to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters in 2005, and in Sendai (2015) for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030. Most recently, MERCY Malaysia attended, co-hosted a side event and spoke at the high level session at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in Istanbul, Turkey, 2016. At the WHS, MERCY Malaysia launched its BRC program – Malaysia's first systematic module-based response for the direct action of the global agreement of the SFDRR and the regional framework of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) for both the national and international level of implementation.

Like many international organizations involved in the delivery of medical and humanitarian aid to vulnerable communities, MERCY Malaysia has been actively involved in providing emergency assistance to affected populations. In January 2005, MERCY Malaysia began implementing its key domestic and international projects and programs by utilizing a holistic approach to manage natural disasters, namely Total Disaster Risk Management (TDRM). After many years of responding to the occurrence of natural disasters, we came to realize that we needed to help communities to be prepared before a natural disaster strikes. Although traditionally more attention was paid to the post-disaster phase, we wanted to make sure that we give equal attention, if not more to the pre-disaster activities.

### **3. Have you always been interested in humanitarian support or volunteer work? What sparked your interest?**

My training as an architect has led to my interest in social development and justice for communities and the built environment. However, noticing the imbalanced priorities in the architectural industry, which is heavily influenced and controlled by the economics of things rather than needs of the societies, I decided to try practicing my architectural knowledge in the less known path (at least back then). I was called to volunteer with MERCY Malaysia when they needed an architect to help design and supervise their rebuilding and reconstruction projects for Aceh, Indonesia, which was devastated by the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. It was this event that not only sparked my interest in humanitarian works, but also strengthens my belief in humanitarian and development works for the larger interest of the civil society and for those in need.

### **4. Most of the Kobe University students and KU high school students said they had never thought about a relationship between gender and disaster. Do you think Malaysian students think about disaster and if so, do you think they relate disaster and gender?**

I personally think that the students of Kobe University and KU High School have experienced some relationship between

gender and disaster in their life. However, perhaps what they have not thought is the strong, formal and important connection between those two, and how they relate to the condition of humanity and community resilience in a broader sense. I also feel that Malaysian students might have the same, subconscious and informal experiences and knowledge too, but they never thought about it in a serious, structured or scientific way. This may have been for the fact that Malaysia had never experienced large-scale devastating disasters in our modern history.

But the recent 2014 East Coast Flood had opened our eyes to look into this matter seriously and also to practice the knowledge and understanding gained from the disaster. The direct relationship between disaster and gender might have not been discussed as a formal themes before, as the communities of Malaysia is not well aware of this issue, at least amongst the civil society, especially youth and students. However, Malaysia has been making strides to reduce gender inequalities since 1995 by pro-actively organizing and implementing various initiatives to strengthen equality and non-discrimination provisions in Malaysian legislation and in practice.

Malaysia is also addressing gender equality through the Eleventh Malaysia Plan Strategic Thrusts 1 and 3 and the uplifting of the B40\* households towards a middle class society. More concrete actions and initiatives are needed in advocating the importance and good practices within the realm of disaster and gender in Malaysia. This would include the establishment of a specific platform for disaster risk reduction (DRR) that covers the issues of gender, and also specific legislations for local government and humanitarian actors in the country.

\* B40 refers to the bottom 40% of households with monthly income of RM3,900 (approximately 109,000 JPY) and below.

## 5. Is there anything you want to share about your trip to Kobe?

My trip to Kobe was great! The collaborative work between Kobe University's Gender Equality Office and the Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies with MERCY Malaysia has not only allow us to share our limited experience in humanitarian works and disaster risk reduction, but has also reminded us again the importance of addressing gender-related issues while dealing with our works, the local communities and the beneficiaries in a more proper way.

## 6. Do you have a message for our readers?

I would like to share with your readers, a quote from one of my favorite historian, Arnold Toynbee:

*"The twentieth century will be remembered chiefly, not as an age of political conflicts and technical inventions, but as an age in which human society dared to think of the health of the whole human race as a practical objective."*



# POPOKI'S EASY POGA

## Lesson 116

This month's theme is relaxing our bodies that are stiff from the cold!



1. First, as always, sit up straight and look beautiful.
2. Now, stand and stretch your arms out, pretending you are an airplane making a turn. Try turning and right, switching your arms as you go.
3. Next, keeping your legs wide, bend forward. Can you put your hands behind your ankles?
4. Finally, stand up again and stretch your arms wide. Look up to the sky. Can you hug the sun?
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: 2018.2.28 19:00~ Nada Yakuzaishikai**

**2018.2.9-13 Popoki and his friends @ Otsuchi-cho**

**2018.3.17 Symposium and Workshop on Drawing, Picture books, Medicine and Disaster! At Nada Kumin Hall. Everyone welcome! Details soon!**

**2018.4.6 UNESCO Chair Kick-off Symposium@Kobe University! If you are interested in disaster, gender, and a summer program in Indonesia, please come and find out more!**

**4.21 Report meeting for Popoki Friendship Story Project activities in February, 2018. Former participants, interested nyans, people who might become interested, please join us at Kobe Student Youth Center (tentative) in the afternoon.**

**From Popoki's friends:**

**New children's book: text: Seiko Chujo; translation: Ronni Alexander, *The Cans of Forest* (English/Japanese version), Epic, 2017.**

# Popoki in Print

- “Popoki Mini Peace Film Festival,” Kobe YMCA News No.652, July/August 2017, p.3
- 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](http://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](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](mailto: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](http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/archives_e.html)





## *What Popoki means to Me*

By Angginyan

**'Being at home' is so meaningful >> inspired by my visit to the Great Awaji-Hanshin Earthquake Memorial Museum in Nada, Kobe**



Some say 'home' is not a physical description of where we live. Home is where we rest assured to feel safe and comfortable. Popoki's most favorite place must be 'at home'. It is the same with me – I am a homebody. To me, personally, 'being at home' could be best expressed as being accepted as who I truly am.

For many people, 'being at home' might mean different things. It could be 'to stay close to the ones you love'. It could be 'to feel free to express yourself'. It could be 'to stay safe and sound and warm after a tiring day'. Each is unique and true by the beholder.

We often relate being at home with a certain place or time.

However, I have to be away from home every day. I have to commute to school, to go to work, to meet friends, to shop for groceries, or just to feel the breeze outside.



I wonder how it would be if I have to be away from my home or worse, if I have to lose my home. It must have been very sad. That was what I imagined when I visited the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake Memorial Museum.

The great earthquake took place early in the morning this month (January) 23 years ago. It caused massive impact both physically and non-physically to the ones experiencing it firsthand. And it happened in a really cold winter where people would prefer to be inside their homes.

Popoki must be sad if his home was gone or destroyed so suddenly.



Difficult times could bring many possibilities, changes, or surprises. It could be a turning point where we could opt to take the best out of the worst situation.

I was surprised that the disaster has made significant impacts on many people who experienced it firsthand. I had the chance to meet the Amagasaki city major, Ms. Kazumi Inamura. She said the massive earthquake has been a turning point for her. It has motivated her to make a difference by becoming a female politician which is very rare in Japan. Another time, I had a class where I had the chance to talk with a member of Kobe City assembly. We were surprised that he has

already become a representative at a relatively young age. He said that his motivation is his experience in Hanshin-Awaji earthquake. They both are willing to be involved in public service after the disaster.



I wonder what Popoki will do if it's not only him who feels sad, but there are so many of people feel sad and hopeless.

It makes Popoki wonder: Does it take a massive disaster to help us realize how vulnerable we are? Does it take a massive disaster to realize that we cannot live on our own? Does it take a massive disaster to realize how the precious things we have are taken for granted like how it feels to be at home? Does it take a disaster to start to make a difference?

I think we learn the hardest way by experiencing disaster throughout our lives to not easily giving up, to be more grateful, to remind ourselves to be better, kinder, and more considerate of others.

What do you think Popoki? Popoki?

Aaaa, I see you are sound asleep in your new home...

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:popokipeace-at-gmail.com)

<http://popoki.cruisejapan.com>



From within Japan, please use our Postal account or Postal bank account:

Account Name ポーポキ・ピース・プロジェクト神戸

Postal Account number: 00920-4-28035

Postal Bank (Yuucho Ginko) account number: Branch No.:099; Branch name: 009 店、special account(当座) 0280350

THANK YOU FROM  
POPOKI!!