



September! In Kobe, there is a lot of rain in September, too!

It's useful to have rain boots! Popoki likes stylish ones.

What about you? What kind of shoes do you like?

## Popoki's Hot News!



“Popoki’s Mask Gallery – Living the Covid-19 Pandemic”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjT1ZjVUsm8&t=3s>

Popoki’s House

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8OCzg64oH8>

### Piece of Peace

One of Popoki’s friends, Gaby-nyan, sent the following piece of peace.

"To me peace always has meant to be able to see and hug my family and friends. Now because of the global pandemic I can't do this as often anymore and sometimes I will get sad, but I can still listen to their voices over the phone and see their faces and read their words through a screen. This is different, but it still gives me great peace and happiness every day."

What sort of 'peace' did you encounter today? Please let us know by sending a message to Popoki's e-mail: [ronniandpopoki \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:ronniandpopoki@gmail.com) !

## “Hiroshima Day Event” Report

Mori nyan (Kyoko MORI)

On 6th August, Popoki Peace Project made an opportunity to gather online this year, too. People joined from the Pittsburgh-based group Remembering Hiroshima, Imagining Peace Pittsburgh, U.S., Mexico, Fiji, and an international student from Indonesia studying in Kobe, a high school student and Popoki members also participated.

The meeting started at seven thirty a.m., early morning in Japan. First we watched the short documentary film, “The Last Generation” (“Ningen wo kaese” in Japanese). This film was made by a grass roots movement called the “10 Feet Campaign” in th 1980’s in Japan. It was a movement for getting back the film of Hiroshima and Nagasaki right after the bombing from the National Archives and Records Administration. The film was taken by the United States Strategic Bombing Survey film crew.

After watching the film, we spend the time until eight fifteen, the time the atomic bomb was dropped, together, each in his/her own style quietly for a few minutes. For me, it was particularly uncomfortable because we had just seen a film about what happened after the atomic bomb was dropped, and I thought about the fear and anxiety of how it would be to lose everything from my everyday life in just an instant.

After that, we reported about the situation of government policy for nuclear weapons or connected news in own country and talked about the impression of the film. From Japan, we reported about the “Black Rain” ruling, which was that a Hiroshima district court has ruled that people affected by the “black rain” after the bombing but were outside of the officially designated area can now be known as “Hibakusha”, or atomic bomb victims, making them eligible for assistance. The Japanese government decided to not appeal the court ruling. By this historical ruling, the people who had not been designated as atomic bomb victims for a long time can now find relief.

From Pittsburgh, due to the coronavirus crisis, it seems that the Americans were distracted and became unconcerned about the issue of nuclear weapons and military policy in U.S. From Mexico, news of gun control was shared. The Mexican government is trying to expand responsibility for gun violence, and has sued American gun-makers and distributors in U.S. federal court. The participant from Fiji talked about his trip last year. At that time, he went to an exhibition about World War 1 at a museum in Wellington, N.Z. He felt that since the victims of war were always innocent women and children, so we must eliminate nuclear weapons, not just prohibit them.

He also talked about the issue of the exposure to radiation from nuclear tests conducted by France and the United States in the Pacific from the 1960’s to 90’s. People in the south Pacific islands, including Fiji, were affected. There has been a grass roots movement for compensation from the French government for a long time. Even though the movement has become scaled down recently, young people have become concerned about this problem, and have started to join the movement again. This July, President Macron visited French Polynesia. He said France owes a debt to French Polynesia over the nuclear tests and will conduct an investigation to make clarify health damage to the local population. But he did not mention anything about an apology.

Ronyan shared her thoughts about telling to the next generation with her own experience. She shared a story, saying that one reason for deciding to become a scholar was from meeting “hibakusha”. She said that she was moved by their attitude to tell the real story of the atomic bomb to the whole world through sharing their own stories. To do that, each person has to show their own wounded body, in spite of not wanting to talk about their horrible experiences and not

wanting to show their bodies to others. They shared with her as well, even though she was an American.

Mr. Taniguchi, who was one of the famous hibakusha due to his severe burns on his back, was a special person to her. She remembered that she felt did not like her because she was American, saying that even though they were sometimes together during the making of the Ten Feet campaign films, he avoided her and did not talk with. However, one day about ten years later, he came to her after a panel discussion said “thank you” to her and shook her hand. It was an expression of his gratitude for the work she did trying to share the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. She said that was a really important moment for her, and she has never forgotten that experience.

Further, she said he, Mr. Taniguchi, really suffered both physically and mentally. The film was taken without his agreement and shows his terrible his situation. To keep anti-nuclear activities going means to make him, or other hibakusha, hurt repeatedly. So, she said while the anti-nuclear action by hibakusha means they have the pain of remembering, they do not lose their will to make peace.

Hearing about the experience of hibakusha makes us face the fact that for the war has not ended for many people, and that hibakusha are still here. This year, we in Japan hosted the Tokyo Olympics. The Olympics are sometimes referred to a ‘festival of peace’. However, the IOC refused to allow a moment of silence on the day, 6th August, at the time of the bombing. In addition, many TV stations showed the Olympics rather than their usual war document programs.

We are facing the problem that the hibakusha and others who experienced the war are decreasing every year. It means it is very difficult to spend time with them and to share their experiences and talk about the war directly. The film, The Last Generation, has not only the meaning of telling the real story of atomic bomb and hibakusha, but also the meaning of learning about the movement by the people who made the film. We can listen to the stories from people who knew hibakusha or joined in the movement. This is the important baton to pass on to the next generation.

Finally, I would like to touch on the fact that a high school student who reported in Popoki News last month, joined this event and made a comment. People of all generations, from many areas all over the world spent 8:15 together for first time. Finally, our anti-nuclear will has grown stronger. I would like to express my appreciation for making this opportunity to remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki and for talking with participants from different backgrounds.



This is my son. He is three years old now. How can we talk about the issue of war and nuclear weapons and peace and so on in the future? The first step is for him to become friends with Popoki!

## Workshop to think about Peace and Feeling Safe with Popoki

Takashi Sakamoto

Kobe YMCA

The 18th International Education and Development Education Online Seminar for Multicultural Coexistence was held from August 3rd to 6th, 2021. Due to the spread of the Covid-19 infection, it was held online, just like last year.

With the aim of realizing a global society where people can live together, more than 200 educators, school officials, and students came together to learn about international understanding education and development education based on such keywords as SDGs and covid-19. Since it was conducted online, there were participants from not only Hyogo prefecture, but also from the Kansai region of Osaka and Kyoto, as well as from distant places such as Miyagi, Aichi, and Ibaraki prefectures.

The workshop started with Professor Ronni Alexander of the Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies, Kobe University, introducing Popoki and the Popoki Peace Project. First, the words "peace," "safety," and "security," which are the keywords of the day, were confirmed. After relaxing and easing our minds and bodies with Poga, and engaging in some activities, we broke into groups to talk, draw, and think about a story to bring "safety" and "peace" to the crying Popoki. Various stories were shared, and I was able to think about "safety," "security," and "peace" with a fun and soft feeling.

This seminar was held in the middle of the Olympic Games, a symbol of world peace that was postponed for a year. Is Japan "peaceful" during this "Olympic Peace Festival"? "Is Japan" safe "during the festival of peace? These questions left a strong impression on me. Everyone is impressed by the appearance of the athletes who are desperately engaged in the competition on TV. At medical institutions in Japan, due to the effects of the Covid-19, medical personnel are working round the clock to cope with the pandemic. Some people have no time to sleep. This is very difficult, but it's a fact that's happening.

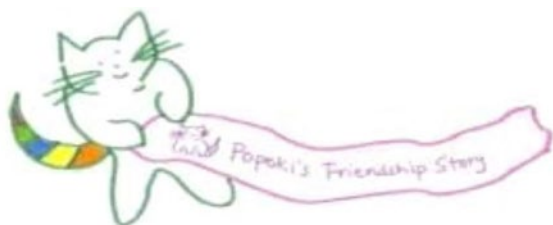
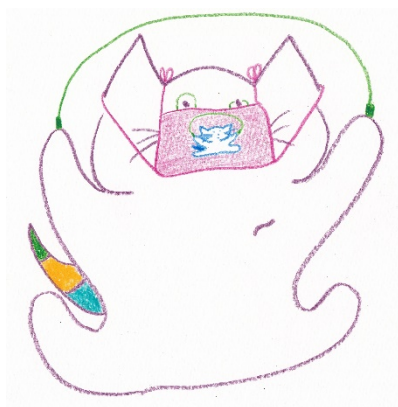
By thinking and talking together, I think we were given the courage to move forward again. It is very difficult to think about it, and it makes me feel

uncomfortable, but with Popoki, I feel that I can think calmly. Sometimes Popoki makes me aware of things I'm not always aware of or have forgotten.

By sharing what you have noticed and your thoughts with many people, you can bring new thoughts and feelings into yourself. One of the purposes of this seminar is for the participating educators and staff to put into practice what they learn with children at their schools.

I would like the children who will create the next era to share what they felt when they were taught by Popoki.

This seminar will be held next year as well.



### **\*Popoki's Interview\***



Interviewer: Gabynyan\* We have started a new series of interviews with Popoki's friends in different places. We are asking about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. This time we have a report from a student from El Salvador studying in Japan!

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Q: Could you introduce yourself?

A: My name is René and I'm from El Salvador. I'm 24 years old and I currently live in Kyoto. My hobbies are video games and reading. I am studying computer science at Kyoto Sangyo University.

Q: How long have you been living in Japan?

I came to Japan 4 years ago as a foreign student.

Q: Before the pandemic started and before the state of emergency in Japan was declared, what was your life like here in Japan?

A: I had an established routine. I had classes at my school during the week from morning until the afternoon. I would wake up, go to classes and on the days in which I had part-time jobs I would go there after school. And on the weekends, sometimes I would meet my friends and go visit a new place together.

Q: How did your life change after the pandemic/State of Emergency?

A: The biggest change was that many of my classes became online, but for some of them I would still have to go to school. I studied computer science, so I worked with computers, circuits and such, for those classes we had to go to school and were required to wear masks all the time, sit far apart from each other and we were told to avoid talking to each other. We also had to bring our own keyboards, mice, etc. so as not to use the ones at school and avoid infections. At my job I had to take my temperature every time I started my shift, we had to wear masks all the time and wash our hands more often.

Q: You graduated from a Professional Training College and started University while Japan was under state of emergency, was that experience any different from what you expected it to be?

A: My mother was planning to come and visit me for my graduation, but because of the pandemic and the travel restrictions in Japan and El Salvador she wasn't able to come. Regarding classes at university, it wasn't so different from what I expected. Because I started the whole process to enter university after the pandemic started and Japan was already in the state of emergency. So, I imagined that probably classes would still be held online and I would have to take them at home but it was still difficult. I started university this spring and I haven't yet had the opportunity to talk to my new classmates because even for the few classes I take in the campus we have to keep distance and professors ask us to avoid talking to each other too much.

Q: Have you found something positive in this situation?

A: I guess that with online classes, I like that I can wake up just 10 minutes before the class starts and turn on my computer and I'm ready, I don't have to wake up too early. Outside my academic life, I like that people respect your personal space more. People don't want to get too close to you because no one wants to risk infection. And I like that because I think it is important to respect people's personal space. In public transport for example, before, people in the train would sometimes squeeze in any available space and push against you and that would make me uncomfortable. Now people try to not get too close to each other and I feel more comfortable using public transportation.

Q: What would you like to do when the pandemic is over?

A: I don't know, I feel like after almost 2 years living like this, this is the new normal and it's difficult



to think about it. For example, now I feel weird taking my mask off outside because I think I will get sick or get others sick. Other than that, I guess I would like to visit my family in El Salvador without worry of quarantine times and travel restrictions. I also would love to go to new places in Japan.

Q: What would you like to say to other international students whose studies have been affected by the pandemic in Japan?

A: Hang in there, even if things are not the way you imagined them to be they will get better. At some point things will return to normal and all this will be nothing but a memory.



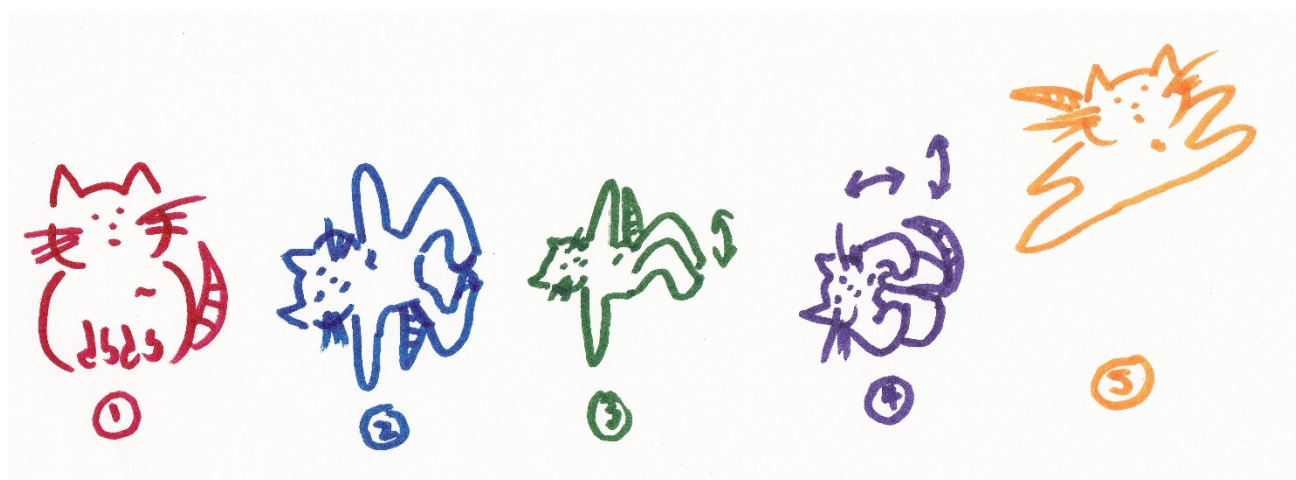
Photos: Left and lower left: Two places I used to visit frequently in Kyoto before the pandemic started

Lower right: One of Kyoto most famous streets for tourists, empty after the State of Emergency was declared.



# POPOKI'S EASY POGA

Lesson 161 This month's theme is stretch and feel good!



1. First, as always, sit up straight and look beautiful.
2. Now, lie on your back. Put the soles of your feet together and bend your knees out to the sides. Stretch your arms out to the sides, too. Now take 5 deep, slow breaths! Feel good?
3. Next, remaining on your back, bend your knees and then gently bring them down to the floor on the left side. You can turn your gaze to the right for a twist. If you like, try crossing your right ankle over your left thigh for a deeper stretch. After 5 deep breaths, try the other side.
4. Okay! Now return to center and hug your bent knees! You can put your arms over your legs, or under them. Try rocking gently from side to side or up and down.
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: 2021.10.29 @ zoom\* 19:00

Everyone is welcome. We always use the same link, so send an email if you need it.

11.20 Peace and Health Workshop (Hyogo University of Health Sciences, online) 14:00  
12.18? Ponenkai

### Reading Suggestions from Popoki's Friends

Otsuchi-cho (July, 2019). "Ikiru Akashi – Iwateken Otsuchi-cho Higashi nihon daishinsai kirokushi" (Testimony of Living: A Record of the Great East Japan Earthquake in Otsuchi-cho, Iwate Prefecture). Editorial Supervision: Otsuchi-cho Board of Education, others.

- アレキサンダー ロニー&桂木聡子 (2020)「被災体験後「今」を表現する : 絵から読み取れる被災ナラティブ」『国際協力論集』27(2)、17-32 (2020年1月発行) [http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/infolib/meta\\_pub/detail](http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/infolib/meta_pub/detail)
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# Popoki in Print

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Experiencing Disaster: Reading Disaster Narratives from Drawings." *Journal of International Cooperation Studies*, 27(2), 2020.2.

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- 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
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- "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
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- "If we all participate, something will change! Reflecting on Palestine" *THE YMCA* No.607 June 2010, p.1 (*YMCA Japan Monthly Newspaper*)
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- FM COCOLO 76.5 'Heart Lines' 2010.1.9 Japanese Interview: Ronni on Popoki in Palestine
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- 'Nada' notice of the Popoki Peace Challenge event, 2009.12, p.2
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- *Yujo wo kangaete – Ningen to, Neko to, soshite Jibun to*, 'RST/ALN, No.259 2009.6.28, p.11
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- "Thinking about Peace with a Cat: Second Peace Book Published." (SAITO Masashi) *Kobe Shimbun*, 2009.4.21
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- *Tomodachi ni Natte Kuremasenkai*, 'RST/ALN, 2009.2.22
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- 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/>





## What Popoki Means to Me

Yuka Asa

I think Popoki is the special cat who can make children smile. Children smile not only when they enjoy something, but also when they work together as a team, when they can do something that they were able to do yesterday, when they overcome their weakness, and so on. In this article, I would like to share one of the stories that I had experienced during my summer vacation. Previously, I worked as a group leader, living with 10 elementary school students (ages 6 to 12) for 3 days in a summer camp. I helped with management, too. The number of the children who participated in this event was about 120! Each group was organized with a college student like me as a group leader who took care of the children in our own group. We were divided into groups and the ice breaking began. All of the children in my group had never met each other before and many of them were shy when they introduced themselves. So, I decided to play a game with them of "finding things we have in common" in our group to help them relax. And they said one by one, "we're not wearing glasses!" "Everyone likes pink!" "I like chocolate!" and so on. This game gradually eased their tension and made them smile.

Thanks to the game, they were comfortable with each other quickly and we had more fun than any other group during activities like playing in the river and playing games in the evening. In addition, they worked together as a team. For example, the older children took care of the younger ones, they held the hands of the younger children to make sure they didn't get lost and helped them get ready to go out. When one of them tried to eat some vegetables that were not her favorite, everyone said, "congrats, you made it!". The children were enjoying the camp activities with their friends in my group.

This summer camp brought so many smiles to the children's faces so that on the last day, some of them were crying because they were sad to say goodbye to their new friends in my group. This memory of the summer was like Popoki who always brings a smile to our faces! I am convinced that Popoki gives us lots of opportunities to think about "what is peace?" and "when we feel safe and secure", and at the same time, he brings a smile to everyone's face (even adults of course) like this summer camp.



Photo: A present from the children

## 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:** *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 outside of Japan

1. Go to your local Japanese bookstore: Kinokuniya, Maruzen, etc. (or their website)
2. Write to us at [ronniandpopoki@gmail.com](mailto:ronniandpopoki@gmail.com) and we'll figure it out!

### 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 [ronniandpopoki@gmail.com](mailto:ronniandpopoki@gmail.com)



*Contributions are always welcome!*

**Popoki Peace Project** [popokipeace-at-gmail.com](mailto:popokipeace-at-gmail.com)

<http://popoki.cruisejapan.com>



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