



A Popoki Peace Project Team visited Palestine from 4-11 August. This issue of 'Popoki News' is a report of our visit.

Popoki in Palestine

The mostly prose version...

** Participants

IWANAGA Atsushi, URAI Kana, KATSURAGI Satoko, HORIKOSHI Takeshi, MORI Kyoko, Ronni ALEXANDER

** Purpose

To see and feel the reality of Palestine

To introduce Popoki to people in Palestine and to discuss peace with them



Schedule

8/4 Bethlehem (holy sites), Hebron (visit to NGOs, etc.). Home stay.

8/5 Apartheid Wall followed by visit to holy sites in Jerusalem. Viewed 60th Anniversary of NAKBA Exhibition at Jerusalem YWCA and then were invited to the home of Dalia Landau, the founder of Open House, a program in Israel for Arab and Jewish children. Home stay.

8/6 Jenin (Refugee Camp and Women's Union), Sabastia (Roman ruins), Nablus (Turkish bath!?!). (Ate...and fought with...prickly pears and were treated to wonderful grapes!)

8/7 Visit to An-Najah University, the graves of martyrs, and exploration of Nablus. Evening meeting with Prof. Mariam Awad from Bethlehem University. (With the help of our guide, we got a watermelon!)

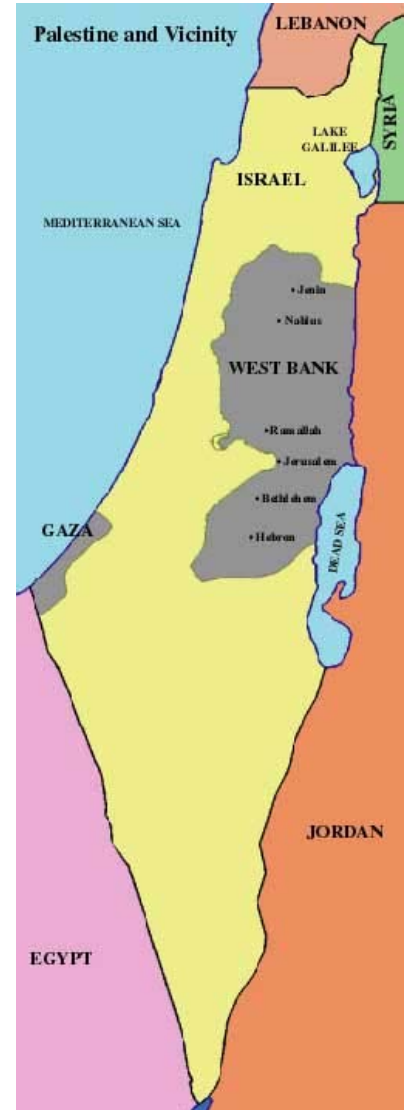
8/8 Popoki workshop at a youth organization, Pyalara. Participate in weekly Friday demonstration against the wall at Bi'llin. Were treated to a wonderful feast at Mariam's house. We all ate too much. Thank you, Mariam!!!

8/9 Popoki workshop for staff at a community mental health clinic that works primarily with young people. Mariam brought fresh figs and pomegranates. In the afternoon, went to Masada, the Dead Sea and Jericho. Got bananas!

8/10 Atsushi and Takeshi, left on their own for their last day, visited the Holocaust Museum and then played soccer with the neighborhood children!

* We got to Palestine by taking a taxi from Israel's Ben Gurion Airport to our hotel in Bethlehem. We did the opposite when we left. We were told that if we had materials from Palestine they might be taken away from us at the airport, so we sent them by post before we left. Some of our photo memory cards were also included. The box should arrive in time for next month's issue of 'Popoki News,' so please look forward to the photographic record of Popoki in Palestine.

Map: http://www.palestinecenter.org/cpap/maps/basic_vicinity.html



My Trip to Palestine

Urai Kana

My friend told me, "Professor Alexander is going to Israel. And it seems we will be able to go with her. Would you like to go together?" Maybe I was the person who decided to join the trip with the lightest feeling.

Before I went to Palestine, I just knew that "Israel and Palestine had conflict for land," but this was too little knowledge to join the tour. So I read some books and some articles about the situation there from the Internet, hoping that information acquired by cramming could be better than nothing. (Of course it was not enough knowledge). From these books, I gradually understood that a lot of refugees are waiting to go back home, keeping their keys for some decades, and that Israel often makes blockades and Palestinians are not able to move around for weeks.

We saw and heard about these kinds of inconvenience almost all the time during the trip. Our Palestinian guide could not go with us when we went to Jerusalem. Many Palestinians are not allowed to enter the holy Jerusalem without special permission. Around the Wall, a lot of shops are closed because of a decrease in people. At a checkpoint, Israeli soldiers didn't allow us to pass, and we needed to take a useless roundabout way. "You know how much we are humiliated, don't you?" "This is like a big prison. We can't go anywhere freely." These are the words that I heard so many times.

But still what I felt in Palestine was the human's power and hope. We visited an organization that is making great efforts to promote people to come back who left their homeland because of Israel's unreasonable occupation. We went to a village in which people have a nonviolent demonstration every week continually. Our guide tried to explain their history and the situation now with great passion. Of course, everybody has anger toward Israel and is depressed by the situation. But none of them has malicious intention to change it by hurting someone. They are making every effort to tell how they have suffered from the conflict and occupation, and to change it with positive attitude. Thanks to them, I am personally encouraged very much.

Contrary to the hope that I found, the Walls that surrounded Palestine and the settlements in the West Bank are both under construction even now. I also could really understand that there is no way to know when people's hope might change to despair and when they might explode.

At the end, I appreciate all the members of the traveling party. Thanks to you, it became a wonderful trip and it was possible to return home safely. I wish to express my gratitude again.



The trip to Palestine/ Israel

ATSUSHI IWANAGA

I was able to experience much during this journey. I heard the stories of various groups and the people who had suffered direct damage, participated at the back of a demonstration held every Friday against the Israeli settlements/occupation, saw the separation wall, visited some ruins, watched a superb view, floated in the Dead Sea, and played football with children. Among all these experiences, when I first stood in front of the wall which divides Israeli and Palestinian territory, I was at a total loss for words. I was overwhelmed by the presence of the wall. In addition, there were many checkpoints and there were many soldiers on guard with guns. That's a scene entirely



different from Japan.

In particular, I have begun to be interested in peace and education since I entered graduate school. Therefore I took peace and education into consideration on this journey. It is easy to say that a peaceful coexistence society is desirable and I understand that it is important. However, after having heard their stories, I felt I cannot say to the people who were damaged directly by Israel that a peaceful coexistence society is desirable. It is wrong for me to say this to the victim, and I felt it was more proper that I should accuse the assailant. But, it

is difficult because Israelis were victims who were persecuted, too. It is hard to distinguish between the victim and the assailant, and neither side is completely at fault. I do understand only one thing: the present situation in which Israel invades and attacks one-sidedly is not good. I wanted to hear how the Israelis think about this situation. In addition, I had various questions such as, "Can third parties do anything to solve such a problem?" "Is it better to do nothing at all?" and so on. But I think that I must think while running, because time does not wait for me.

The students who guided us at An-Najah University and children with whom we played football were very cheerful, and their smiles were wonderful. From this trip to Palestine/Israel I thought I want to help them if possible.

Photograph : Palestinian village



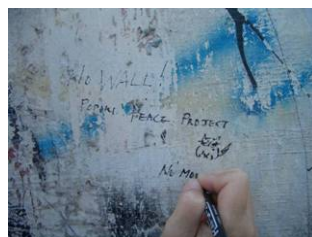
Participating in a Popoki Peace Workshop in Palestine

Satoko



In the past, I have participated in Popoki workshops and have asked the questions, "What color is peace?" and "Is your peace related to the peace others?" many times.

I went to Israel and Palestine, and learned that this question is very difficult.



What is "Peace"?





At a support center for children in Bethlehem, the psychiatrist said that children's current status is not PTSD because they continue to live with big stress every day, while PTSD is a symptom that develops in one month after mental and/or bodily injuries. But the social worker at the same center said that Popoki was very good for children who suffer and are unable to express themselves with words

When the staff at the center engaged in paper folding and art work with the Popoki Peace Project members, their expressions lightened just as those of workshop participants in Japan. Maybe the response was small, but it was a moment that I felt it to be worth our effort.



During this trip, I met many Palestinian people were really kind and to whom I am greatly indebted. People who welcomed us, our host family, and those who arranged our tour.



Our guide, who suggested we might want to use his tip for the Popoki Peace Project, deserves special mention.

Also our Number 1 driver who took us to various places to see the Palestine that he loves, even though it made him late for a wedding party.



Thank you very much.



And also to Professor Alexander and the Popoki Peace Project members, thank you very much !!



The Elements of Peace

Kyoko MORI

It was a quite short trip, but I felt that time moved so slowly for the first time in a long while, since usually my hard schedule excites my senses.

What made the biggest impression on me in this trip was the way that the Palestinian people we met have hope and try to work for change, even though they were in such a hard situation that I was shocked. Their actions made me feel I could not say that it was not my problem. And so I felt I could not be unconcerned. I also learned from meeting a particular person that a person's passion for someone or for something can be very important to create peace.

The person's name is Dalia. She is Jewish and lives in Jerusalem. She manages "Open House," which is an education place for the Arab and Jewish children to get to know each other. She invited us her house, and explained her life, her passion for peace and her work, Open House. She said that the passion could fly in the air. It was like a magic word for me, because even though I had begun to know the situation in Palestine, I felt that I could do nothing for changing it. Her words helped me to change my negative idea to a positive one. It means that I can pray for peace and for the Palestinian people. Even my small prayer, it can support their activity for creating their peace. I told her that I would keep on praying for peace in Palestine from Japan. She smiled at me with warm and kind eyes. I do not think only prayer can change the world, but it can help to change something. She taught me that.

There were so many things that I found shocking. The giant separation barrier which has changed the lives of those who lived around there, lots of check points run by Israeli army to control the interaction between the Jewish and the Palestinian people, the nonviolent demonstration held every Friday, the posters in towns for Palestinian soldiers and children killed by Israeli army, the cold soldiers holding guns in Jerusalem, the settlements, the destroyed Palestinian houses and towns, etc. All the things had the idea of violence in their background.

Why does the conflict continue? Why does someone try to control and isolate someone who is nonviolent? Where is there such authority? The young students have to go through the check points every day to go to school or university, even elementary school students. They have a lot of stress in their daily life. Despite the

fact that they are the creators of the future, their freedom is threatened.

I thought to myself, I have the freedom to decide for myself such things as to go to Palestine to learn. I can go anywhere if I want to. I try to do everything I want to do. However, such good thoughts like wanting to study something or the right to study freely are seen as being suspicious and controlled by the Israelis. I experienced for the first time the reality of threats to rights and freedom.

Palestinian people said that Palestine is like a big prison. On the surface, it seems that there are no problems in their lives. But once they go out their house or town, they have to be in tremendous stress and difficulty. I wonder how the parents worry about their children going to school everyday. The anxiety must be immeasurable if one of the family does not come back home as always.

What is the necessary element for peace? I think it is imagination. During our trip, I often heard that word used by our guide and driver in their explanations. They often said, "Just imagine...." I recognized it as a message for us saying, "Even though you are in a different situation, you can imagine our life, our situation, and our passion for peace."

I learned the condition of the Palestinian people, their daily life, and their history by meeting many people and spending some time. It was a piece of the reality, but big step for me to know that. Ms. Dalia told me that passion and prayer can fly in the air. I will keep imagining the daily life of the people I met, and pray their peace could come true someday. I reaffirmed that imagination is one of the important element for creating peace.



Reflections about my Trip to Palestine

Takeshi Horikoshi

The biggest reason I thought to go to Israel is that is I thought "It seems to be interesting" when I heard about it from my academic supervisor for the first time. I also wanted to make sure myself what actually the situation is in a region where the conflict continues.

I stayed in Israel/Palestine for about two weeks. The first week, I participated in

IIPE2008 with my academic supervisor at Haifa. The second week, we visited the West Bank. As I visited cities in both Israel and Palestine, I realized the difference between them. On the one hand, in Haifa the road was neatly paved, and the entire town was firmly maintained, giving a very modern impression. On the other hand, in the West Bank, though the road was paved, it was rough, and garbage was scattered everywhere. Compared with Haifa, I felt that the insufficiency of maintenance stood out. I realized that this was the difference between the occupying side and occupied side.

Then I realized the real situation of Palestine: that the land of Palestine is occupied. I learned through this trip that Palestinians are oppressed. When we went to other cities, we had to go through check points set up by the Israeli military forces, and sometimes we needed to take a roundabout course. I thought that Palestinians who have to do this every day will have a lot of frustration. And then, when I saw, and touched, the apartheid wall, I felt the weight, and the feeling of cold and pressure were overwhelming. I even cried a little because I was overcome with a rush of feelings that I cannot describe. Through this trip, I realized that people in Palestine are putting their energy into life, even though they are oppressed in such a situation. It was surprise, and pleasure to me who had a darker image about Palestine. I felt a lump in my throat from my desire that there be no more occupation.

Lastly, this photograph is Palestinian children who played soccer together with us by chance on our last day in Palestine. When I was playing soccer with them, and saw that they smiled as they played, I thought that I felt peace. I strongly hope that someday the situation will allow Palestinians and Jews to play soccer together on one ground.



What Color is Freedom? Thoughts from Palestine

Ronni Alexander

What color is freedom? When I first saw the blue Palestinian sky stretching upward without a single cloud, I thought that it was the color of freedom. With that blue sky you can fly anywhere. It makes your dreams grow larger and when you breathe in, it feels like your lungs will never be full. It makes you want to laugh, and hug those around you and raise your voice in happiness. It is a blue sky that gives each individual the freedom to be themselves....

A week is only a short visit, but the first thing I discovered is that the reality beneath Palestine's blue sky is not free. Under the harsh occupation, not only are people's movements restricted but even their right to life is being taken from them. Why? Why does Israel do this?

The first time I felt the reality of the situation in Palestine was when I touched the apartheid wall. Looking up, the blue sky was still there, but between us were nine meters of concrete and one additional meter of barbed wire. It is huge and hard and unmovable! Israel says it wants security, but what is security when in order to achieve it they destroy people's houses, destroy their lives, and eventually destroy



even their hearts. I sought Popoki's help to express the anger, sorrow and powerlessness that engulfed me. "No wall!" "No more occupation!" Our names are written next to Popoki's appeal. We are back in Japan now, but Popoki stays on the wall, continuing to demand an end to the occupation.

Before going to Palestine, I attended an international conference in Israel. Through discussions with my Israeli and Palestinian friends, my understanding of the so-called 'Palestinian problem' grew and I felt quite overwhelmed in the face of its complexity. Friends from the West Bank had great difficulty getting permission to attend. Friends from Israel said that Israeli law prevents them from going to the West Bank. In the name of 'security,' Israel is trying to restrict exchange among the two populations. At a weekly demonstration against the wall in a Palestinian village, I gained a bit of hope from two Jewish Israelis who participate regularly. Of course,

we gave them a copy of Popoki's book.

In general, few people used the word 'peace,' but judging from what they said, I thought that most people want to live in peace. At the same time, as we were confronted again and again with the wall and checkpoints which interfere with peoples' lives, and the settlements with their exclusive roads, I felt myself becoming more and more confused. What is the meaning of peace if you are under occupation? What is the color of peace for Palestine? I still do not have an answer.



There is only one thing I can say with confidence. I do not know what form it will take, but eventually the occupation will end. At that time, Palestine will need as many people capable of making a peaceful country as it can get. Preparations are being made for that day, but there is no indication of when the time will actually come. I certainly do not know. On our last day, we learned that the majority of children exhibit symptoms of PTSD. We also learned that in general Palestinians do not like cats very much, but I'd like to deliver a big Popoki hug to each of those children.

Toward the end of our trip, we had a chance to give a workshop to an organization that conducts activities for youth. After seeing the reality of Palestine,



I had lost some of my confidence, but I decided to trust in Popoki's power. In that workshop, something new happened. Popoki asks, "Is your peace related to the peace of others? Can you have peace if others do not?" The two Palestinian staff members had contradictory answers; one said "definitely yes," while the other said "definitely no," and

they both made a clear distinction between individuals and groups. What they were saying made sense to me, but I really wanted a chance to know more about what they were thinking.

I had two objectives in visiting Palestine. One was that I wanted to deepen my understanding of the culture, history, land and emotions that underlie the current conflict. The other was to use Popoki as a way to learn what people think about peace and to test Popoki's (and perhaps my own) ability to make a contribution. As

for the first objective, we experienced fabulous scenery, delicious food, and history that challenged our imaginations, but what moved me most were the people: People who welcomed us warmly and shared their lives with us; people who relived painful experiences in order to share them with us; people who laughed and enjoyed themselves with us; people who came to us as we strolled about town, worried that we might be lost. People who became our friends. I learned that even under occupation, it is possible to be welcoming. As one who received that welcome, I offer you my heartfelt thanks.

I think we succeeded in meeting the second objective too. Not everyone understood our purpose in introducing Popoki, but we were able to have many discussions about peace. Moreover, I am sure that in trying to respond to the questions raised by our Palestinian friends, we will add a new dimension to the work of the Popoki Peace Project. To all of you who shared your ideas so honestly, you have my sincere gratitude.

It is said that “Palestine is a frightening place, filled with violence and terrorists,” but what we discovered during our travels was a totally different place. It is true that Palestine is under occupation and definitely has many serious problems, but it is also a rich country and a country with people who love others, their families, and peace.

What color is Palestine? It is not only the color of anger, resistance and tears. It contains the colors of freedom, justice, love and life, too. I pray that soon the color of Palestine truly becomes the color of peace. To that end, I will continue to seek and exercise my own small part in trying to make that day come just a little bit sooner.

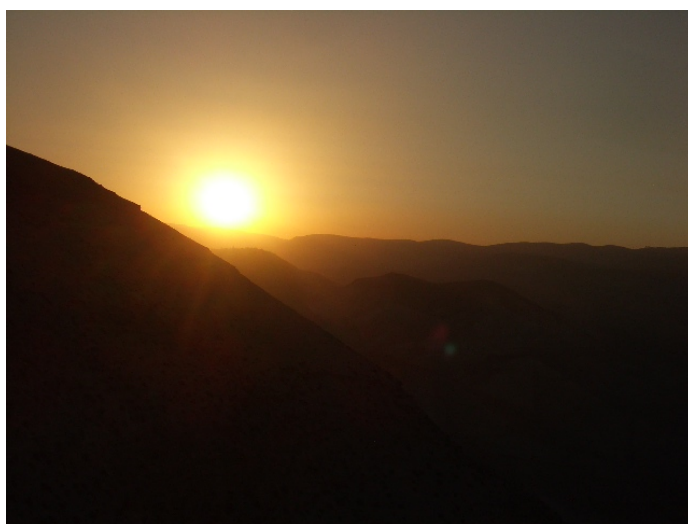


Photo 1: The apartheid wall outside of Jerusalem

Photo 2: Weekly non-violent resistance at Bi'lin Village

Photo 3: Workshop with a youth organization

Photo 4: The sun setting over the desert

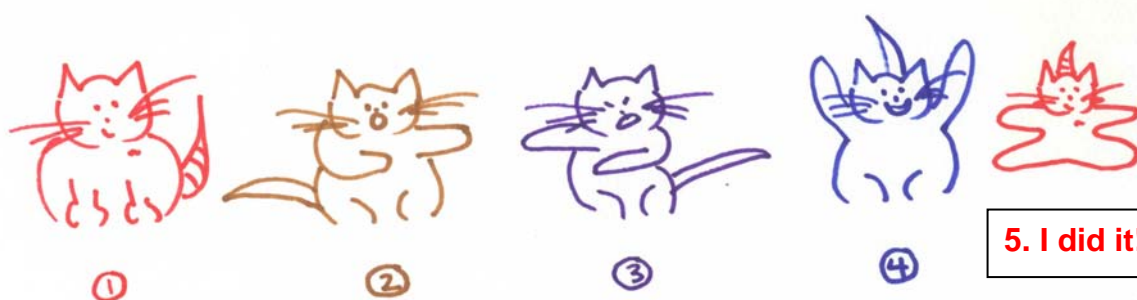
NEW!!!

Popoki's Easy POGA

Lesson 3

You must be exhausted from all that reading. It is time to relax with our next easy Poga lesson!

1. Sit up straight, making yourself look thin.
 2. Following the picture, stretch both of your arms out to one side, and your tail to the other. Make sure your facial expression follows the picture, too....
 3. Now bring your arms and tail to the opposite side. Don't forget your face!
 4. Finally, raise both your hands and your tail above your head, and look happy! You did it! Very good! Time for the "success pose."
- Congratulations! You have successfully completed Lesson 3.



That was easy, wasn't it! Try practicing every day for at least 3 minutes. See you next month for lesson 4!



Please join us!

- 9.6 Popoki at Kumamoto YMCA
 - 9.13 Popoki at the Children's Museum, Pittsburgh (USA)
 - 9.30 Po-Kai 19 :00- Kobe YMCA
- EVERYONE WELCOME !**
- 10.6-10 The 6th International Conference of Museums for Peace, Kyoto & Hiroshima [Information: 6peace-m@st.ritsumei.ac.jp](mailto:6peace-m@st.ritsumei.ac.jp)
 - 10.16-18 Popoki at "Learning Democracy by Doing: Alternative Practices in

Citizenship Learning and Participatory Democracy” Conference, Toronto (Canada)

- 11.16 29th Hyogo Prefecture Buraku Liberation Institute Conference. Lasse Hall, Kobe. Ronni will give a keynote, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 60th Anniversary Posters will be on display.

Popoki in Print



- Editorial “The Anniversary of the End of the War” *Kobe Shimbun* 2008.8.15
- “Looking toward the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons.” *Chugoku Shimbun* 2008.7.27 (A three-hour interview about nuclear deterrence. Even though I spoke a lot about Popoki, he wasn’t included!)
- *Hyogo Buraku Kaiho*, 2008.6 (Summer). Buraku Liberation Research Institute of Hyogo. This features some of the Human Rights Posters.
- International Peace Research Association Peace Education Committee. PEC Newsletter, May, 2008
- Kansai Time Out, March 2008

What Popoki Means to Me

What Color is Popoki?

NIIKURA Osamu

(Aoyama Gakuin University + Co-Chair, Japanese Organizing Committee for the Global Article 9 Conference)



‘Popoki’ is a common noun which means “cat” in Hawaiian, but if you name your cat “Cat,” does that mean you are turning a common noun into a proper one? As I was wondering about the various changes in the function of nouns, I realized that it was similar games where you swap roles or positions. Years ago (too many

years ago?) in Barnett's *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, one of the important motifs was the interchanging of the main characters. In Germany, a sociologist took on the role of a



Turk in order to experience the cold attitude toward, and discrimination against, migrant workers that lies deeply entrenched in German society. I understand that when a common noun is used as a proper noun, one of the implications is that the original language, including the common noun itself, attains a special place within the structure of a completely different language. It is easy to imagine how the ability to

change position or perspective plays an essential role in movements to create peace.

Now that I think about it, in spite of the UN Paris Conference decision which called for establishing domestic human rights commissions, when countries start to make those committees, they get stalled because of insistence that members be citizens of that country. Or how about national organizations for the promotion of scholarly work which insist on citizenship requirements, and by so doing



refuse to allow the creation of transnational spaces for scholarship. It is a sad thing to have to live in such a country. At such times, maybe Popoki becomes a sad sapphire color, or perhaps sepia, the color of memories.

Photos: (1) Youth Conference in Hiroshima, (2): Hiroshima march; (3) Lawyer Robin Alexander at the Global Article 9 Conference; (4) International Panel at the Global Article 9 Conference

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 including work on *Popoki's Peace Book 2. Popoki, What Color is Peace?* has been translated into Thai, Chinese, Korean, Khmer, Indonesian, Tetun and Bengali. Farsi, Lao, Swahili, Arabic and Hebrew 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, What Color is Peace? Popoki's Peace Book 1* from outside of Japan



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

How to purchase *Popoki, What Color is Peace? Popoki's Peace Book 1* from inside Japan

There are various ways.

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.yahoo.co.jp)

Contributions are always welcome!

Popoki Peace Project popokipeace@yahoo.co.jp



<http://popoki.cruisejapan.com>

From within Japan, please use Popoki's Postal account.

Account Name ポーポキ・ピース・プロジェクト神戸

Account number: 00920-4-280350



THANK YOU FROM POPOKI !