

Newsletter No.76 2011.12.23

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It is December and 2011 is almost gone. It was a hard year, especially for those in Northeastern Japan, but Popoki made many new friends. We hope the coming year will bring happiness and peace to everyone and be filled with joy and laughter!



HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM POPOKI AND THE POPOKI PEACE PROJECT



Popoki's Hot News!



It's almost done!

Popoki's Friendship Story - Our Peace Journey Born out of the Great Northeastern Japan Earthquake will be available by the end of the year.



Popoki's new book, a record of our work with Popoki's Friendship Story project in Tohoku and other places will be out in December. Some of the proceeds will go to the disaster area. Please help by getting copies for your friends. The book will be available in Japan from your local bookstore in January. You can get advance copies from Epic or Popoki Peace Project. Please contact the Popoki Peace Project for more information.





One of Popoki's friends, Masato-nyan, sent a piece of peace: "Getting phone calls from family or friends even though they have nothing particular to tell me; getting e-mails from family or friends even though they have nothing particular to tell me. I feel happy because I have family and friends who care about me "even though they

have nothing to tell me."

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

Popoki Peace Project

Interchange between SAS and Popoki's Friends

Saturday, November 12, 2011

Venue, Hyogo University of Health Sciences

Photos & Editor

Shiro Nagashige



Semester at Sea "Explorer"



On the way to venue

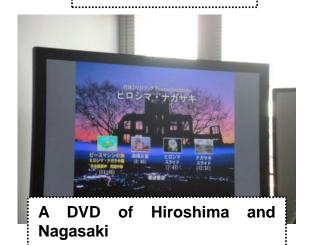


Self-introduction

Saturday, November 12, we performed a workshop organized by the Popoki Peace Project (Leader: Prof. Ronni Alexander), which is active in Kobe.

As for the guests, the students of the American University Semester At Sea came to Kobe on the morning of Saturday 12th. When I asked one of the students, she told me that they had called at the ports of 30 countries. The ship, "Explorer" which carried approximately 450 students and 70 teachers was a big ship. 9 students and 1 teacher participated from the group with us. Altogether 29 people participated including our 20 members.

In the morning, after introducing ourselves, we discussed the nuclear issue. Of course it was hard work to make the discussion in English. Our guests seemed to be very shocked to see a DVD of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but the discussion was sincere and active. The difference between the students and the elder members of society was very interesting. The students sympathized with the A-bomb victims, but didn't know how to express their feelings about it.





←Finding of the nuclear issue

Presentation about The nucleus



The elder members of society criticized nuclear energy policies and discussed the nuclear issue keenly.

In the afternoon, in order to make the peace map, we divided into four groups, strolled around Port Island, and got to know each other. We came back to the room after a search, and the peace map was made. As for the content, the characteristics came out in a message of "Peace" from each person: a smell, scenery, a sound, a color.......

The wonderful "Peace Map" was completed by the cooperation of all. Finally we promised to see each other again and it was over. Port Island is the artificial island which is 39 years old, but will become a town with a more sociable atmosphere in another 50 years. It was a splendid day for us, and we enjoyed it immensely.



They live together?



An another Po-love ?





Peace map making

Finished peace map and photography

Me Ka Mahalo!!

popokipeace (at) gm.... , ...,

Peace map of Port Island with semester at sea

English: Aastha Ranabhat Japanese translation: Satoshi Ariyama

On 12th of November 2011, Popoki and his friends had an opportunity to encounter an exceptional group of individuals from Semester at Sea (SAS). They were the most unconventional group of students and staff from a mobile university that voyaged the world, navigating from one port to another, discovering countries, culture, and people. Therefore, when Popoki and his friends were entrusted with the task of planning a day of events for them, they decided to step out of the box and into unexplored territories themselves. They decided on a short interactive workshop touching on the issues of 'peace and health' for the morning session, followed by an observational exploration and mapping of Port Island, one of the artificially created islands in Kobe. The objective of these programs was to encourage interchange of thoughts and ideas amongst different countries, cultures, and generations.





Morning Session:

The morning session was divided into four segments namely, a) Peace with sensory exercise, b) DVD viewing (Hiroshima and Nagasaki), c) Nuclear brainstorming with KJ method, and d) Peace with art.

a) Peace with sensory exercise

This segment touched the surface of the overarching goal of the day, i.e. understanding peace with sensitivity. Through it participants developed a sense of understanding, respect, comfort and bond with each other by sharing peaceful episodes from their life activated by their five senses (hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste). The stories that floated around the room helped build the idea that both good and bad sensations could lead to peaceful thoughts. For example: while the sight of tennis court made Megan think of friends and her childhood days, the smell of cigarettes made Miki think of a volunteer bus driver in Tohoku region with whom she shared wonderful conversations.

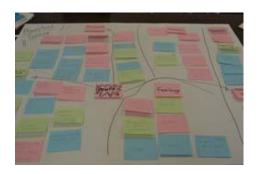
b) DVD viewing (Hiroshima and Nagasaki)

Under this segment, the participants watched a video on the 1945 nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This tragedy that is inseparable from the identity of Japan has been inked into the history of humanity. This video touched upon the issues of conflict, peace, nuclear disaster, and health hazards, among others. An air of silence spread across the room while the students watched the documentary.

c) Nuclear brainstorming with KJ method

This was the most interactive and dynamic segment of the morning session. Here the participants were divided into four groups of five or six where they expressed though KJ method, which allowed them to share and categorize their key words and concepts. The topic of the brainstorming was how it felt to be members of a 'nuclear society' and what their concerns about (un)intentionally being a part of the 'nuclear generations' and living in a nuclear (un)safe world were.





This task helped the members realize that in spite of their differing cultures and field of expertise, which to an extent was depicted in each group's labels, categories, mappings and presentations, their thoughts concurred on certain issues and ideas. Almost every group identified war, deterrence of war, political power, and energy generation as the uses of nuclear power. They stressed nuclear waste management, environmental pollution, radiation and diseases along with 'business of war', 'culture of excessive consumption', 'nuclear testing' and 'nuclear winter' as problems relating nuclear technologies. Certain feelings shared towards these issues such as such as fear, insecurity, regret, injustice, denial, mistrust, repressed memories and forgiveness were also alike. Finally, participants agreed on the following measures to be adopted to address current nuclear concerns: proactiveness of media and civil society in collection and dissemination of 'true' nuclear information, nuclear awareness, anti-nuclear movements, ban on production, testing and trade of nuclear weapons, sustainable use of existing energy, development, generation and use of alternative sources of energy, etc. All in all, members emphasized realizing the mistakes made in history and taking necessary steps to ensure that they remain unrepeated in the present and future.

This however was just a mini exercise that only touched upon some basic nuclear issues, participants are yet to address complex questions and concerns raised during the discussion such as: "Do we need the deterrence of Nuclear Weapons?", "Should countries be allowed to have Nuclear Technology?", "Is Nuclear Power Safe?", and "How do we rethink Nuclear Energy after Fukushima? This exercise nevertheless led to a realization that although worlds apart our understandings on nuclear issues, peace and health is not that different.

d) Peace with art

Under this segment, interested participants expressed peace through art in forms of drawings, messages and quotes on the Popoki Friendship Story cloth.

Afternoon Session:

Some members of the local community in Port Island joined the afternoon session. We began the session with Prof. Alexander's presentation and reading of her book *Popoki, What Color is Peace?* This then was followed by Satoko san's *poga* (Popoki's Yoga), an exercise to achieve peace and zen. Thirdly, the participants in groups tried to analyze the shape, sound and odor of peace. Finally, it was time for the much-awaited *Peace Map.*





Port Island's Peace Map: What color are Peace and Health?

For this event, participants of the workshop left Hyogo University of Health Science (HUHS) and set out in four different directions of the island in their designated groups in their quest to discover peace and understand life. They were asked to attentively observe the surrounding vicinity of their routes using their five senses and take pictures, notes and/or memos where they sensed peace. So, for about an hour everybody wandered around Port Island interacting with one another, sharing thoughts and ideas, observing minute and beautiful details of the island, capturing those details in photos or memos and most importantly "living and sharing the moment." After collecting a load of images and experiences, everybody returned to HUHS.





Each group then selected and printed four photos that best described their 'peace encounters' and pasted them to the enormous map of Port Island lying in the centre of the room. Participants also complemented the map with drawings and impressions of their brief excursion. Representatives from groups then shared their varied and exceptional experiences from the exercise. It was remarkable how every group observed minuscule details relating to peace and life often easily overlooked. For instance, Rebecca sensei and her group felt peace when they sensed the warmth of the sun on their backs. MC san felt

peace at the sight of co-existence of modern and traditional settings in the community; he recognized this harmony between the past and the present as peace. Hannah and her group identified peace in the word 'family' in Family Mart and stressed that family is the source of peace in our lives. Similarly, Megan and her friends caught some glimpses of peace at the sight of a girl playing in the snail park with her parents and an elderly person strolling along the street and concluded that peace is happiness, we experience in various stages of life.





Other moments of peace shared by the participants were the sensations triggered by the sound of waterfall, bells, music, birds and laughter of children, the smell of cake and freshly cut grass, and the sight of flying dragonflies and love between a grandmother and her grandchild. All in all, a state of tranquility, comfort, wellbeing, bliss, co-existence, understanding and respect and not just absence of conflict.

From the experience of the day it might be safe to say that "We are all surrounded by peace, we might however occasionally need to pay more attention to our surroundings, observe and value life, community and other interactions in our environment to feel it."

Thank you for joining us in this beautiful adventure for peace. Thank you for being friends with Popoki and Popoki Peace Project. Popoki wishes his friends at Semester at Sea bon voyage, good health and peace!! ©



MAKING PEACE WITH POPOKI ~ PEACE AND FILM

On 26 November from 10:00-14:00 we held Popoki's first Mini Film Festival. Another first was that this event was convened jointly by the Kobe YWCA, Kobe YMCA and Popoki Peace Project. About twenty of Popoki's friends from all three organizations participated in the program.

We watched three films which at first glance seemed to be unrelated. The first



was about the experience of first and second generation Vietnamese refugees and their families living in Japan. The second was about Okinawa, looking at situation of Okinawa during WW II, the Battle of Okinawa in which about one in four local people lost their lives, the post-war Occupation by the US which lasted until 1975, and finally today's US base issue. For some of us it was a good review, and for others of us it was a good introduction to a complicated problem. The third film, 'The Insular Empire,' is a the colonization film about

militarization of Guam. Most of the participants were surprised at their ignorance of the situation on Guam.

After each film we had time for discussion, which was lively and interesting. We were all surprised to find common themes among these films, such as the difficulty

of being 'different' and the importance of diversity. Many of us were surprised by our own ignorance of the issues raised, and we all wanted to learn more.

This was a very successful program, and we hope to do it again soon!

Thank you to everyone involved, and for those who couldn't make it, we are looking forward to your participation next time.









Popoki's Earthquake Support Interview (8)

This issue features an interview with a survivor of the disaster, Umeki Mizue.

Umeki Mizue and Haruna Ando
With help from Rebecca and Jun Yamaguchi

Umeki Mizue-san was living in Sendai with Rai, her big, black Labrador, when the earthquake and tsunami struck. Pets were not allowed at evacuation centers so they had to stay at home. But Rai panicked with every aftershock, so when friends of the Palestina Olive project chartered buses for evacuation, Mlzue and Rai got on board. Rai was dropped off in Yamanaka where he now stays with Mizue's father, and Mizue currently lives in Kyoto and continues her work for Palestina Olive. Milzue told Popoki's friend Haruna about her first trip back to Sendai with Jun Yamaguchi in late August.

- * Haruna~ Mizue, how did you get from Sendai to Kyoto after the quake?
- * Mizue~I came by bus. I was living with my big, black Labrador, Rai, and after the quake we had no electricity, gas or water—I really thought we weren't going to make it. Especially when we were completely running out of water...Big dogs like Rai can't drink anything but water. But then, when you couldn't even get gas, friends chartered a bus so we could evacuate.
- * Haruna~Did Rai get on the bus with you?
- *Mizue~Women with children and infants were going to be going too, so first they said they couldn't take responsibility for a large dog loose on the bus and couldn't take us. But then they were able to get a second bus so that Rai could go. We all left Sendai on those two buses.
- *Haruna~ so when were you able to go back to Sendai?
- * Mizue~I went back to Sendai for the first time after the quake at the end of August. I was surprised to see so many big banners and posters all over the center of town saying "GAMBAROU Touhoku!" (Do your Best, Touhoku!) Seeing this slogan everywhere made me uncomfortable. From the bus I took from town to my house, I could see so many houses covered with blue vinyl sheets—the moment I saw them, I was back in March, and couldn't hold back my tears. Seeing the blue sheets brought back the experience of that day, and the disaster suddenly felt real right there in front of me. I really didn't like that color "blue."

Since then I have come to hate that "blue."

*Haruna~ did you also go down to the shoreline? Yes, we went by car down to the shore.



"*What was that like? In the middle of empty space, there was a row of windbreak trees—the tops

were fresh and green, but the bottom halves were a reddish brown, showing that the sea water had come up all that way.

When we went to Sendai airport, we also saw a line marking the three meter high tsunami. I felt goose

bumps when I realized that the line was so much taller than my own height—a visceral sense of the tsunami you can't get just from numbers and images.

*I had heard about the efforts to remove all the rubble, but soon saw that there were literally "mountains" of rubble. I was overwhelmed by these "mountains" sitting in the middle of open spaces. They were divided up according to material, some piled high with wood, others with metal rubble and so on. It was the mountain of "cloth rubble" piled with things that the people had been using in everyday life until just before the tsunami. That most vividly and painfully conveyed the sense of the people who had been there. Traces of the life of the people who had used them, their smells, time, everything---whether they were men or women, children—futons, curtain, clothing, hats. The colors, the patterns, the size—you could see all of these things. This was different from the mountains of wood or metal rubble that didn't convey the same sense of human life.

*It was so intense that when I stood at this place linked to land, looking at these mountains of rubble with nothing around them, not as an image or photograph taken out of context, I had to keep trying to convince myself, "yes, this is real." I just couldn't take in what I was seeing.



* Haruna~Did you go up into the foothills too?

We also went up into the foothills to see villages there, but the houses were all turned upside down—the floors on top the ceilings on the ground. I thought, why? They were quite far from the sea, weren't they? But my friend told me that the tsunami plowed its way up the river. In the upside-down house, there were futons and dishes and pieces of furniture just lying there in the open—just no people. Just nothing living, no sound, nothing moving. Just "things"

where there had been people living were left.

From the car, we could see fields of grass growing all around. When I saw this spreading surface of grass. I felt it was covering over and hiding the wounds and scars of the tsunami. I also felt the passage of time from the day that the tsunami hit.

* Haruna~ I might think of that grass as a symbol of life and rebirth after the disaster....

* Mizue~My impression was quite different. I was looking at a continuous plain covered with this grass as we were driving through the area, and kept thinking, "No rice fields...none, gone, gone!" The landscape in Touhoku should be filled with rice fields and gardens and fruit farms....and now that's all changed and we have weed-like grass. I thought, how long will it

take, how much work will be needed to turn that land back into land that grows rice and vegetables?



*Haruna~So you really couldn't feel good about seeing all that grass?

*Mizue~That's right. For me, the grass was not a bright symbol of the future of rebuilding the area, but instead reminded me that it won't be easy to restore the Touhoku landscape to one filled with fields and gardens as it should be. It made me think of how hard it will really be to rebuild. When I saw that landscape I felt I understood why there are so many banners and posters saying "Ganbare Touhoku!"

Popoki's Easy Poga

Lesson 43

This month's theme is using Popoki's new book for Poga! This new book can help you feel better in many difference ways!



- 1. As always, begin with sitting up straight and making yourself look thin.
- 2. Now hold the book in both hands and place it at your feet. If you can, keep your knees and tail straight.
- 3. Next, hold the book straight out in front of you, stretching your arms. Your tail should be straight out behind you.
- 4. Finally, still holding the book, stretch your arms ways up!
- 5. Did it? Time for the 'success pose'. You can hold the book in one hand.

Congratulations! You have successfully completed Lesson 43. Do you feel refreshed? Please remember to relax, breathe, laugh and practice for 3 minutes every day.



Please join us!

Next Po-kai: 2012.1.23 Kobe YMCA Rm. 306 19:00-

December Publication of *Popoki's Friendship Story—Our Peace Journey Born Out of the Great Northeastern Japan Earthquake* and celebration!

2011.12.18 Opening of 'Kenbikan' ~ Health Support Center Yellow House (and a Popoki Friendship Story exhibit, too!) (Otsuchi-cho, Iwate Prefecture)

2012.2.10-11 Popoki Friendship Story Exhibit at Kenbikan (in the planning stages)

2012.2.25-26 Central Japan District YMCA Global seminar at Rokkosan YMCA (in Japanese).

3.8 Lecture on Human Rights in Amagasaki (Japanese)

Popoki in Print

- ➤ K. Wada. "Conversations with Ronni Alexander: The Popoki Peace Project; Popoki, What Color is Peae? 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)
- "What is Behind 'Popoki, What Color is Peace?' 1st in a series in "Tosabori Life" No.19 2010.10:4 (In Japanese)
- ➤ HORIKOSHI Takeshi. "Kokusai no mado" (article about Palestine) Kobe YMCA News No.604 2010.9-10, p.3
- "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
- 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
- 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
- "Nuclear Security is Inhuman 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



Sally McLaren

One of the most important things I have learnt in Japan is the concept "critical is creative". Criticizing, or being a critical person, is often seen as something negative. However, thinking critically actually offers so much potential for transformation. The problem



is that it's sometimes not easy to take a critical path to a creative destination. It requires energy, effort and concentration – which not everyone possesses or cares about. So, critical gets dismissed and overlooked as being too negative.

At the Popoki Peace Mapping event which I joined on Port Island in November, I was reminded of the validity of "critical is creative". We walked around

Port Island with very critical eyes, but we could also appreciate what already existed, and how it had gotten there. Finally, we thought creatively about what could be improved, and how Port Island could be re-envisioned. Learning about peace mapping, strolling around outside, and meeting new and interesting people, was fun and informative.



Popoki is a great example of "critical is creative"

because Popoki sees power. Whether we are talking about gender and race, or environmental justice and sustainable living, Popoki encourages us to have new ideas and seek new ways of being.

It's tough being critical in Japan right now. Discussing the effects of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident with friends, students or colleagues can be extremely difficult. Some people see criticism of current problems in Japan as being paranoid or "anti-Japanese". It's good to know that Popoki provides an opportunity and a place to share ideas and opinions. At a challenging time like this, I am glad that I'm empowered to be critical AND creative. Thanks to Popoki for reminding me of this!





http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/index_e.html popokipeace (at) gmail (dot) com

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 have recently published a new 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, 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 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

<u>www.los_angeles@kinokuniya.com</u> and the telephone number is 213.687.4480. The price is US\$20.00 plus tax. It is also available at Joseph-Beth Booksellers, Pittsburgh, PA.

Popoki, What Color is Friendship? Popoki's Peace Book 2 is not yet available at these bookstores.

Some ways to purchase *Popoki, What Color is Peace? Popoki's Peace Book 1* and *Popoki, What Color is Friendship? Popoki's Peace Book 2* 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

Contributions are always welcome!

Popoki Peace Project popokipeace-at-gmail.com

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THANK YOU FROM POPOK!!