



2012 is almost over. Thank you for being Popoki's friend this year, and hopefully next year, too.

Here is a special holiday hug for you and your loved ones, along with best wishes for happiness and peace in the New Year! I'm looking forward to seeing you again in January!



# Popoki's Hot News!



## POPOKI'S MINI PEACE FILM FESTIVAL!



Popoki Peace Project will hold a mini Peace Film Festival on 2 February. Please join us for film, tea and talk! More information? See page 7 of this issue of 'Popoki News' for more information.

## PIECES OF PEACE



One of Popoki's friends, **Ayaka-nyan**, sent the following piece of peace: ""Hungry. Sleepy. Hearing wonderful music. Studying and learning something. Talking with family on the telephone. Meeting friends at school. Happy. Angry. Crying. Worrying, and growing up. Ah, that is "living", and I feel that is peace."

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.

## DO YOU NEED A GIFT FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL?



How about giving Popoki's books or T-shirts?



Thank you for your continuing help!

*Popoki's Friendship Story - Our Peace Journey Born out of the Great Northeastern Japan Earthquake* is getting a good reception, thanks to help from his friends. Please help to let more people know!

More information about the book at:

<http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/monogatari.html>

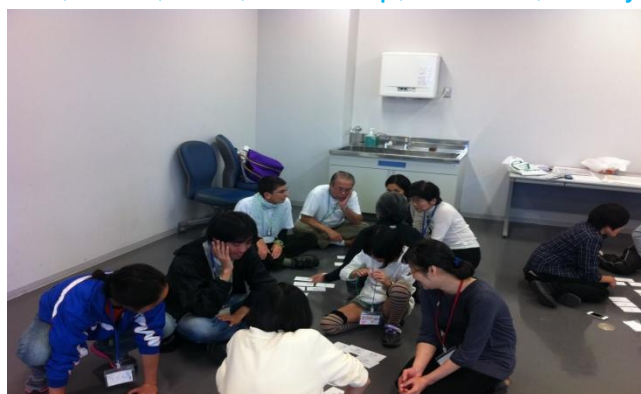
\* You can purchase a copy at the Kobe YMCA!

## PEACE AND HEALTH EVENT IN PORT ISLAND

**BASHIR-NYAN**

On November 10, 2012 we had a program entitled 'Peace and Health Event' at Hyogo University of Health Sciences on Port Island, Kobe. Many people including children participated in the program. The program was designed to explore the relationship between peace and health. What message does Popoki give us when we think about our physical and mental wellbeing and their connections with peace? Do we have peace if we have sound health? What are the preconditions for sound health? Can we be still in peace if those conditions are not met? Having these questions in mind, the program was divided mainly into four sessions. In the first session, reading through Popoki books (Popoki's Peace Books 1, 2, and 3) was conducted by the Popoki Peace Project members to understand and share with the audience ideas about how peace could be related with our bodies. In order to clarify the above questions the reading focused on various aspects such as nature, music, friendship, nutrition, nuclear radiation, etc., and how they are intertwined with health and peace. Different languages along with gestures and brief explanations were used for the reading. This was the starting point to introduce Popoki's peace activities to the participants.

The second session started with group discussion. Groups were made by using Bengali numerals from 1 to 5. Participants were asked to stand in a row and say the numbers up to 5 in turn. Later they were separated in several groups based on the same number they uttered. It was quite interesting to see how quickly they were able to learn a new language and apply it well to form the group. Once the groups were formed they were given several keywords to find the relationship that best fit with the meaning of peace and health. Hope, love, smile, trust, friendship, freedom, safety/security, life, imagination/creativity, education,



rules, diversity, communication, food, money were such keywords to think about this. Considering which are the most important and thus organizing them in order while thinking about their relationship with peace and health was the main task of the group discussion. Interestingly all the groups arranged them in different ways. Indeed it was a hard task to do!

Everyone spontaneously participated in the group discussion. All the groups came up with different but meaningful ideas. While for some love, friendship or trust were the most important factors, for others hope, imagination and freedom were more important conditions for peace. While for some food, money and rules were important to achieve good health, for others safety, education, or communication were deemed more necessary for sound health. Can we have peace without love, friendship or trust? Can we have it without hope, freedom or imagination? Can we achieve good health without money, food or rules in our daily lifestyles? Can we achieve it without safety, education or communication? The answer would be perhaps 'no.' Perhaps all these preconditions are equally important. Perhaps all of them are overlapping and to some extent are inseparable from each other. If peace and health are separate dishes or let's say a mixed one to cook, all these would be important and required ingredients to cook them properly. Hence, it is really difficult to put them in order of priority. Nevertheless, this kind of arrangement makes us to think seriously, and helps create innovative ways of thinking about the issues like peace and health in our personal, family and social lives. There is no one size-fits-all answer but we learnt important lessons through sharing our knowledge with each other. This is a very effective way to give the message to the society as well as to ourselves regarding the importance of peace and health and their relevance.



encourage their family and friends to do so.

The last session was about expressing necessary elements for both peace and health using our whole body. All the groups expressed their opinion through different postures and gestures. This part was difficult as it was hard to guess from the gestures of the different groups what exactly they were trying to express. However, it was really fun as everyone found it interesting and exciting at the end of the program. Some

The third and most interesting part of the program was POGA (Popoki's yoga) exercise. After the group discussion POGA helped us to warm up and get more connected to each other. Exercise, especially like POGA really could help us to have a peaceful mind. Exercise is a must to have sound health, and when we can have control of our body and mind through it we can have more peace. All the participants enjoyed POGA very much. It really helped us to eliminate our stress. It was suggested and hoped that participant would continue exercising POGA at least for a while everyday and





groups indicated friendship, trust, hope, while others focused on love, communication, etc. that are important for peace and health.

As a whole the program was very good and effective as everyone learnt more or less about peace and health and their interrelationships. All agreed that health is an important aspect to achieve peace. Group discussions helped us to boost our knowledge regarding the important elements for health and how they could bring peace in our lives. Especially, POGA was entertaining and helped us understand that exercise is important for a healthy life, a precondition for peace. It was indeed a good gathering where aged people as well as children could participate and share their valuable knowledge with each other.

To enjoy our life more and to have good health, a peaceful mind is a must. Absence of



peace in our mind, in other words, continued stress and a feeling of having nothing or little has a negative impact on our health. Exercise like POGA, for example, can help us to keep our mind in a peaceful state, which eventually can help us to control the stress that harms our bodies through causing various diseases. People with good health and peaceful minds can bring positive change in the society. Peace and health are closely interconnected and one cannot be achieved in the absence of the other. Discussion and sharing knowledge about peace and health is an effective

way to promote better understanding on this. This 'Peace and Health Event' was a place for such discussion where everyone had the opportunity to share their knowledge and learn valuable lessons from each other.

Thanks to all the participants, particularly the organizers Sato-nyan, Ronni-nyan, and of course to Popoki for providing us with this opportunity. We look forward to joining other such fruitful events again in the near future.



## MERRY CHRISTMAS TO FRIENDS IN PALESTINE!



POPOKI'S YOUNG FRIENDS AT THE KOBE YMCA NURSERY SCHOOL AND OTHER PROGRAMS MADE CARDS TO HELP THEIR FRIENDS AT THE GAZA YMCA TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS.

WE JOIN THE YMCA IN WORKING AND ACTING FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE AND IN THE REST OF THE WORLD!



## PonenKai!!!

This year's Ponenkai (Popoki's Year end party) was held on 18 December at the Kobe YMCA. Many of Popoki's new and old friends gathered to reflect on this year's work and to look forward to the coming year. Po-kai members made rice balls, and everyone brought something, so we had a huge array of delicious foods and drinks.

We all had a good time eating and drinking, and each person talked about things that left a big impression on them this year.

What about you?  
Was it a good year? A peaceful year?  
A healthy year? A happy year?  
What are your hopes for next year?

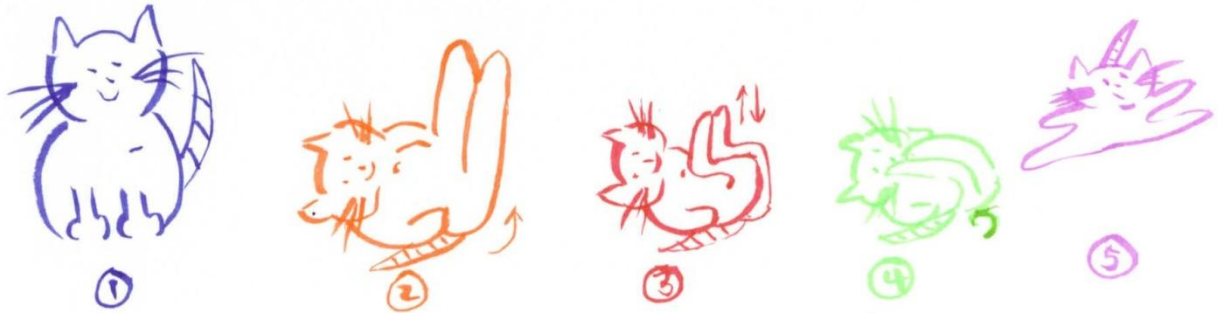
Let's work with Popoki to make next year a good year for everyone!



# POPOKI'S EASY POGA

## Lesson 55

This month's poga is about staying healthy during the holidays, even if you are lounging around!



1. As always, begin with sitting up straight and making yourself look thin.
2. Next, lying on your back, raise your legs. Can you lift up your bottom too? You might want to support your lower back with your hands.
3. OK, now try bending your knees, and then slowly raising your legs. Repeat 5 times.
4. Finally, straighten your legs and bring them down over your face. Can you go all the way to the floor behind you?
5. Did it? It is time for the 'success pose.'

Congratulations! You have successfully completed Lesson 55. Do you feel refreshed? Please remember to relax, breathe, laugh and practice for 3 minutes every day.



## Please join us!

**Next Po-kai: 1.22**

**Kobe YMCA 19:00-20:50**



2013.2.2 Popoki's Mini Peace Film Festival! Kobe YMCA 13:00-16:00 (in planning)

2013.2.9-11 Popoki in Tohoku (Otsuchi-cho)

2013.3.3 Popoki at Rotary Hyogo Prefecture District, Portopia Hotel, Kobe

2013.3.23 Popoki at International Rotary RYLA Conference, Yoshima Island

### \* Events by Popoki's Friends

• **2013.2.16** Film showing: "Don't Forget Fukushima" 14:00~16:00 / 17:00~19:00;  
Kobe YMCA Sannomiya Center 1F Chapel; Admission: 1,000 yen (jr. high and above); Content: film, talk by Director Shinomiya, Discussion. For information contact Kobe YMCA Earthquake support team  
TEL: 078-241-7204 (Staff: Nagai) <http://shinsai.weebly.com/1/post/2012/12/216.html>

• **2013.6.15-16 9<sup>th</sup> Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan Forum – Kobe 2013, Konan University**

<http://popoki.cruisejapan.com>

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

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- \* Back issues of Popoki News: [http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/archives\\_e.html](http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/archives_e.html)







# What Popoki Means to Me

## Bashir-nyan



This summer I was in Komagane to teach JICA volunteers in JICA Komagane Training Center. Komagane is a small village in Nagano prefecture surrounded by the Japan Alps and is full of green nature. The place is quiet and peaceful and far from downtown. The training center is situated in a beautiful location in the forest. On the way to the training center there are many rice and vegetable fields. Every day after work, I used to take a walk with my co-workers while heading back home. The fresh and gentle breeze, and nice smell of green and natural beauty over there always made me feel healthy and happy. During my stay in Komagane, I truly felt relieved from stress, perhaps because I could connect myself with the nature and feel more relaxed.

While staying in Komagane, I often asked myself the question: is there any connection among nature, health and peace? Then sometimes I recalled Popoki to find the answer to this question, and he helped me to understand from his own perception towards nature. Popoki loves nature. He loves blue sky, green fields, mountains, sea and every other part of it. He likes playing music with his friends in the nature. He likes to taste the smell of green. He loves the warmth of the sun and dewdrops on the grass. He likes to get peace that flows from nature as the sunshine flows on trees. He carefully observes nature and becomes happy with the endless beauty of it. Like him if we look deep into the nature we can feel more peaceful and happy. Whenever the pressure of our complex city life troubles our mind and body, we can find relief from nature.



Green grass, trees, rice fields, mountains, waterfalls everywhere there is a touch of peace. Nature helps us to recover from sickness, worries or stress through this touch of peace. Popoki helps us to understand such importance of nature and its link with health and peace.

Every day after work when I brought myself in front of nature, I realized the feeling of Popoki well. I got strength from nature that helped me to get back to work next day with a peaceful mind. I was inspired though this process and could interact with my students cheerfully. Teaching as a profession requires a lot of patience and mutual understanding with students and a peaceful state of mind helps a lot in this regard. I had a great experience to work with such a peaceful mind in a peaceful environment like Komagane. The lessons I learned from Popoki to some extent helped me to earn this experience.

Thanks to Popoki for his continued support in providing lessons on peace this year. I look forward to learning more lessons from him and accomplish them next year, too. I hope Popoki will bring more lessons on peace in his new year's resolution and help all of us in finding more peace.



## 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

[www.los\\_angeles@kinokuniya.com](http://www.los_angeles@kinokuniya.com) 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](mailto:popokipeace@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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