



Popoki, What Color is Peace? Popoki's Peace Book 1 (Epic, 2007, 1500 yen)
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Popoki in Niigata!



Fumiko TSUCHIYA

Kobe University

This report is from Niigata. Now in Niigata, you can feel an autumn flavor. On October 6, 2007, on a nice autumn day, Popoki came to Niigata

The title of this workshop was "What is Peace? Feeling Peace"

with Popoki Using All Five Senses.” On this day, around 40 participants enjoyed thinking about peace with Popoki, using their whole bodies. Especially during the “Popoki Story Time,” Popoki drew everyone into his world. Everyone, not only children but also adults were surprised, smiling, or sad when looking at Popoki’s pictures presented by Prof. Alexander.



I could feel their enjoyment on this day during the “Peace Lesson” which was the hands-on part of the workshop: each group chose one topic to draw from among the following: Peace Garden, Peace Lunch and Peace Page. (See following pictures)



I realized that everyone could make new discoveries and new friends, and also find many shapes for peace as each drew his or her own peace image using Popoki freely. This workshop might be a nice opportunity for people take peace for granted, people who have never thought about peace, people who have studied peace, and for everyone to think again

about peace close at hand by feeling and learning peace with Popoki.

As you know, Niigata has had some natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods in the past several years. Because of these kinds of unfortunate things and the difficulty of recovery, there are many people who have not been able to feel peace for a long time. Some people seem to have forgotten their peace, other people can not believe in peace, and above all, people are yearning for a peaceful in Niigata.



I am from Niigata and also one of the people who is hoping for peace in Niigata. When we face realities which seem to paralyze us, what encourages us to face up to



reality might be something close at hand or something precious – for example, family, friends, lovers, pets, favorite foods, or treasured things.

From the happy faces and continuous laughter of all participants in this workshop, I realized that Popoki is a very important factor to encourage and give us special power!

I hope that Popoki will stay in the hearts of people in Niigata and all people in Japan and keep asking us “what is peace?” Thank you Popoki! Please come to eat delicious Niigata food again!!

“I may never grow up to be an adult!” Glimpses of Niigata

Niigata YWCA/Nine Niigata Yumiko YOKOYAMA

Popoki Finally Arrives in Niigata 6 October 2007 This notice attracted 40 people who gathered to join Ronni and take part in a workshop entitled, “What is Peace? Feeling Peace with Popoki Using All Five Senses.” Rather than using more conventional approaches such as atomic-bomb or war photos and learning from what might be called ‘broken peace,’ Ronni’s workshop takes a more broad approach which brings peace closer to home. Workshop participants, ranging in age from one to seventy years old, enjoyed themselves while using five of their senses and their entire bodies. When Ronni slowly began to read Popoki’s book and talk about it with the children, they began to smile. We



divided into five groups, and our first assignment was difficult. We were given a list and told, “Choose the three items that are most important for living in peace.” In the second part of the workshop, we expressed ourselves through drawing. **Everybody’s peace message echoed through the room, along with their smiling faces.** Ronni, **thank you** so much for coming with Popoki to Niigata!



Having finished our work, we set off to show Ronni the best of Niigata. We went to the Jonnobi Spa in Makimachi, Niigata City and a restaurant which is part of a winery. There were a lot of

Popoki’s friends in the garden, and before we knew it, Ronni was surrounded by cats. The next day we went to a kite festival in Shirane (famous for its giant kites?) We bought plastic kites for 300 yen, and Ronni flew hers way up high while lying down on the ground. Ronni, famous for her kite skills, tried flying her kite while walking back to the car...and **got completely tangled with a big eagle kite!** **She looked a bit remorseful...apologized to the flier of the eagle kite and then, laughing, teasingly said, “I may never grow up to be an adult!”** Laughing, I replied that “I feel the same way...” This peaceful moment is etched in my memory.

Popoki can fly freely through the sky, and is now trying to be active in Niigata. **“What color is peace? What does it smell like?”** Popoki treasures his new friends in Niigata, and **continues to gently ask his questions.**



**SOK Say has recently translated Popoki into Khmer. When I asked him to contribute an essay for 'What Popoki Means to Me' he agreed, and also sent these photos, asking me to select the most appropriate ones. They were all so good and interesting, that I decided to include all of them. Enjoy! --- Ronni*

SOK Say Photo Collection

SOK Say Cambodia (for *Popoki News*, Nov. 2007)

Senior Lecturer, Language Education

English Department of the Institute of Foreign Languages

Royal University of Phnom Penh

Picture 1: A beggar sitting en route to the Kean Svay resort on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, the capital city.



Picture 2: Performers wearing the costumes of the Kola minority who inhabit the eastern province. This minority is severely marginalized and is the most vulnerable in Cambodia.



Picture 3: While the visitors (old and young) are playing happily on the beach, this young girl is selling snacks at the detriment of her learning time, I suppose. To those who support using children for the sake of the livelihood of the family, this is child work, but to me this is child labor.

Picture 4: These two cute girls are scavengers at the beach. They sometimes turn to petty thievery for their survival.



Picture 5: Another scavenger playing in the sea.

Picture 6: While the young girl (my friend's sister) is applying cream to protect her from sunburn, a group of scavengers at her back are looking for stuff of some value for their very survival.



Picture 7: The young girl is folding her arms, while the scavengers at her back are sharing a pack of snack which they have just stolen from a visitor nearby while he was in the sea. I saw them steal it with my own eyes.



Picture 8: A group of scavengers at the beach

Picture 9: Day laborers at the Olympic Market early in the morning waiting for shop owners to arrive so that they can help carry their stuff into the market for some wages. This picture reminds me of the Japanese day laborers in Osaka whom you, I and other friends went to meet for the end-of-the-course project.



Picture 10: Graves of the Tounpuon minority that I visited for my MA thesis. The collective graveyard was illegally transacted.



Picture 11: This cartoon depicts the forceful eviction of the poor in the pretext of development.



(Courtesy of Neak Chea Bulletin)

Picture 12: This cartoon depicts a powerful man telling the people that he strongly opposes illegal land acquisition, while his subordinate is whispering in his ear that those who grab land illegally are our men. (The sign reads: His Excellency's possession/ownership) (Courtesy of Neak Chea Bulletin)



What Popoki Means to Me

SOK Say

As an individual born during war time and growing up when the war was still going on, Popoki means a lot to me. Is peace the absence of war? Without thinking deeply, one is likely to promptly say “yes.” To me, it is more than the absence of war. It is the absence of war plus more importantly good quality of life. Due to lack of space, here I will confine myself to looking at peace in terms of freedom, poverty reduction, equality and equity, environmental conservation, and peace dissemination and building.

Popoki is equated to freedom – freedom to do what we want, freedom of movement, freedom of expression, freedom to receive information, etc. Popoki can bounce around the room making noise; he goes out for a walk; he plays by himself; he joins his friends singing, and so on. Although at times it is dangerous to go out, Popoki still goes out for a walk and to meet his friends. A look at any survey by Freedom House reveals that full freedom for people in many countries is still a distant goal. Hopefully, *all* human beings on this lovely planet will one day have freedoms – freedom to protest when they suffer from such unjust acts as land grabs, illegal land sales, inappropriate evacuation, being cheated by factory owners, etc., freedom to have a partner of one’s own choice, freedom to move freely from place to place, freedom to express their opinions, freedom to negotiate with the authorities, and so forth. My expectation is that one day my Burmese friends will have the freedom to express their discontent with the despotic authority peacefully. I hope, for example that my Burmese, Cuban, North Korean, and other friends who are living under authoritarian rule will have the freedom to decide who should lead their respective countries through free and fair elections.

Popoki is very fortunate as he was born in a rich, developed country, and much much luckier to have been adopted by his human friend, who is a kind, nice and helpful person. Therefore, he is able to live a luxurious life. (He is even much better off

than many people in developing countries). How many people still live in dire poverty? How many people still lack basic necessities, let alone luxuries? Billions of people still live on less than two dollars a day – the standard poverty line. Millions of my friends in every corner of the world are still threatened by starvation and the shortage of even the basic necessities. They are crying for help and mercy. Hopefully, the *whole* world will be lifted from poverty, or at worst, poverty will be able to be alleviated so that, for instance, *all* people will be fully fed, fully clothed, and adequately sheltered.

Popoki means equity and equality. I hope that Popoki will one day make males and females equal – that is, be able to change the misconception that men are superior and dominant. He will stand by the other vulnerable and the marginalized, be they children, indigenous people, tribal people, the handicapped, gays, lesbians, or trans-gendered individuals. He will be able to bring about basic rights for everyone regardless of their skin colors, race, or place of origin. He will be able to make wealth equitably shared between the rich and poor within and across countries; and he will be able to make every country equitably, if not equally, developed. He will be able to eliminate the (over)exploitation of the poor and poor countries. I hope that one day there will be one and *only one world* with property – no more third world, second world and first world.

Economic growth must be applauded, but environmental preservation must not be downplayed. Growth in this sense must have a human face. Popoki knows the value and usefulness of the environment, as well as its indispensability. He wants to see development – but one which is sustainable. One telling instance is that he approves of the rise of new buildings, but not at the expense of the natural greenery – and by extension human security. The world now is under threat from environmental destruction. More and more concrete and scientific evidence now points to the fact that the destruction is human-induced. Yet for their economy to grow, many polluters, including these main polluters - China, India, the USA, and Australia - still ignore the threat of environmental destruction, or point the finger at each other about responsibility for the plight. This is in part mirrored in their refusal to sign the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. To be sustainable, economic growth and development must go hand in hand with sustainable environment. It is hoped that one day Popoki

will be able to persuade the environmental polluters that economic growth without the proper care of the environment will bring them nowhere but to dead ends and self-destruction.

Some countries and people contend that to have peace one needs to prepare for war. Popoki takes the opposite, more peaceful and grassroots-oriented approach; that is, to have peace, one needs to disseminate and build peace. This goes in line with UNESCO's 1945 Constitution, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."¹ The world has seen enough preparation for war to attain peace, but it is still not a peaceful place. Maybe Popoki can provide us with an alternative approach or a supplementary one to have a more peaceful world. I have been very proud and supportive of Popoki's actions to date. Popoki stars in *Popoki, What Color Is Peace?* to carry his messages across to its audience. This is already a merit in itself. But Popoki has done more so that his voice will be heard – in-depth and in-breadth. Popoki has been traveling extensively and tirelessly to many corners of the earth, including East Timor, Japan, and Canada to build and disseminate peace through camping, seminars, workshops, etc. Hopefully, his cry for peace will be widely heard so that *all* human beings will be able to live in peace. I hope that the war-mongers in Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, the States, and elsewhere will listen to the pleas from Popoki.

Once again, let me underscore the meaning of the term "peace." It is not only the absence of war but also good quality of life. There are many countries which are not at war – internally or externally – yet are they in peace? Do the people enjoy life?

Chey You², Popoki! Long live the Popoki Peace Project and other similar projects! Long live everybody on this lovely planet! Ganbare³, Popoki! I thrust my fullest support to your peace building mission. In you I trust!

¹ Quoted in Ehrlich, Eugene & DeBruhl, Marshall (Compilers). (1996). *The International Thesaurus of Quotations: Revised and Updated*. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers), p. 496.

² Chey You is a Khmer word meaning "Long Live".

³ Ganbare is a Japanese word meaning "Work hard".

UPCOMING POPOKI EVENTS

- 10. 28 Peace as a Global Language, Kyoto University of Foreign Studies
- 12. 1 Workshop: What Color is International Cooperation? Thinking about the connection between international cooperation and peace with the cat Popoki. (Second in a lecture series on international understanding). Venue: *Nishinomiya Kokusai Koryu Kyokai* Time: 1:30—3:30 ¥500 35 people. Enquiries and reservations from 14 November at 0798—32—8680·8676 or e-mail nia@proff.ocn.ne.jp
- 2008.1.31 Keynote speech at the 'Globalization, Aboriginal Issue and Social Justice Conference' January 31 to February 2, 2008. University of Winnipeg.

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 and 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 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 !

