



It is February but still cold. Popoki goes out and has fun playing with his friends. We hope you can have fun, too.

Popoki's Hot News!

Coming soon! Popoki's Mini Peace Film Festival!

Please mark your calendar for 28 March, 13:30~16:30!

Popoki's Peace Book 3!

You can get copies of the third book in the Popoki's Peace Book series, *Popoki, What Color is Genki? Popoki's Peace Book 3* at your local bookstore (in Japan), from the publisher Epic (<https://bookway.jp/epic/>), at the Kobe YMCA or from the Popoki Peace Project! We look forward to your orders and comments.



Pieces of Peace

One of Popoki's friends, Kiso-nyan, sent the following piece of peace:

"What is one of the meanings of peace? I thought about it when I came to Canada. I met a lot of new friends every day here, although there are many differences in our countries, languages and cultures. One day, my friends and I were talking and laughing together and then I found the answer to my question. If we can laugh together, it means we can understand one another in spite of our differences. I understand now that laughter is borderless. This is the meaning of peace to me."

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

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!**

Exhibition: “Popoki Friendship Story” at Kobe City Hall Public Gallery

Ari-pan-nyan

As was announced in the last Popoki News, we exhibited “Popoki Friendship Story” in the exhibition of “Messages for our Children” in Kobe from Jan. 15 to Jan. 21. Thank you for coming to see our exhibition!

The movement of “Messages for our Children” started in 2006 to pass on to the next generation the preciousness of life and lessons from the earthquake. This year is the 20 anniversary of the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, and there were many interesting exhibits such as collected messages, calligraphy, *origami* (folded paper) cranes, newborn baby pictures, and historical records from that time. We exhibited the Popoki Friendship Story cloths in a large space of the room. It was pleasing that we could share the feelings drawn on the cloths with those wonderful messages and art.



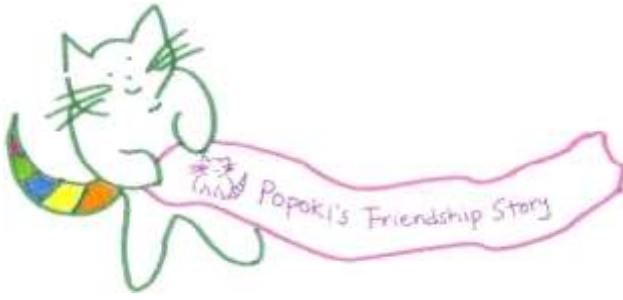
Children born in the year of the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake will reach majority (age 20) this year. This was the last exhibition for “Messages for our Children.” We would like to pay tribute to those who have worked so hard since the disaster. Their other activities will be continued. We, Popoki and his friends, will also continue to do something with them, supporting each other.



2015.1.17 Kobe Higashi Yuenchi Park

Photos: Satonyan





Popoki's Interview

Ronyan

Angela Thomas

This time I interviewed Angela Thomas in Fiji. Angela, a former student, now works for the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

R: It is so nice to be able to interview you for Popoki News! It makes me happy and proud to see how you have shaped your life since returning to Fiji from Japan. When were you at Kobe University?



A: I was there from October of 2001 to April of 2004. It has been more than ten years!

R: That is so hard to believe. It also means you were first in Kobe about six years after the earthquake.

A: Yes, I remember at our orientation a professor said, "Don't worry about earthquakes. They come in cycles of 80 years, so Kobe is the safest place in Japan now." You know for me, and for most of the other students who were also from developing countries, we had just gotten to Japan and were trying to get used to the sights and sounds and so many people. So that comment was a bit overwhelming.

R: Japan has a lot of earthquakes. Do you think it would be better not to say anything?

A: No, not that. Just that maybe it would be good instead to say how to be safe. I remember in 1995 when that earthquake happened, but it was on the other side of the world. Television was still new in Fiji, and we didn't have much programming or news. Now of course we see things in real time, but it was very far away and six years had passed. I don't think anybody was thinking about it when we had that orientation.

R: How was the city? Do you remember seeing or feeling signs that there had been an earthquake?

A: Well, there were a lot of empty lots and car parks. I don't remember seeing rubble, but there was a lot of construction going on. I remember they were building a museum near JICA. What I think was most surprising was seeing a broken dock and wall near the harbor. You could see how the earth had moved from the difference in the height of the wall. That gap, that really clear evidence, was the best illustration for me of the magnitude of the disaster.

R: Did you go to the harbor just to see that place? Actually it has been kept just as it was to help pass on the memory of what happened.

A: No actually I went with my friend because I heard that there were a lot of homeless people living in a park near there. When I first saw a homeless person in Japan I was really shocked. It took a long time to get used to the idea that they existed. When I saw them living with just a blue plastic sheet

and cardboard boxes I was so surprised. Coming from Fiji where it is never very cold...how could they survive!?! On the way back, we walked through that harbor area.

R: Where were you when the March 2011 disaster happened?

A: I was at a meeting in Tonga. It was at night and they put us in a bus and took us to the top of a hill. We spent the night in the bus, but in the morning we looked out and there was the ocean, right in front of us. There isn't really any place high enough to be safe. That day, the sea looked really strange. I don't know how to explain it.... You know how it normally takes a really long time for the tide to go in and out? Well that day, it was going in and out in just minutes, and the water level kept rising and dropping. Kiribati is another place that has no high ground; the stadium is the highest point. They really have a problem. My friend told me they just put all the kids in life jackets and attach two buckets and hope for the best. It is good to go to these places because it makes you appreciate what you have.

R: What about Fiji? Are people worried about earthquakes or other disasters?

A: There have been a lot of development projects in places that 20 or 30 years ago were mangroves. Denarau Island, a tourist resort, is one example. The development impedes the flow of the rivers to the sea and when there are heavy rains there is bad flooding.

R: I saw signs in villages near Nadi Town saying 'Disaster-ready village.' Is there a good disaster plan?

A: They say they are ready, but every time there is a flood a lot of people are left homeless. I heard they were talking to JICA about diverting the river.

R: Going back to your time in Japan, how was it for you to live in such a homogeneous society?

A: It was interesting. You know, Fiji is very diverse. People have such mixed backgrounds. People from different parts of Fiji or different islands, backgrounds.... Here I am of average size, but in Japan where people are so small and petite, it was strange. I was exotic. I had an African friend, and his family came to visit. Everywhere we went, people would comment. At first it was fun, but once the novelty wore off, it was sometimes hard to take.

R: Did your time in Japan help you or change your life?

A: People say that education is like a passport to a better job and life. I guess it has worked that way for me. I have a well-paying job that I enjoy and I can support myself, my son and my family. With education and also with my job, I am constantly exposed to new experiences and new ideas.

R: What does that mean for you?

A: It has taught me to appreciate other perspectives, and understand that there are different sides to every story. Living in the international dorm, there were people from all over the world. The best part was the food, but also the way people viewed things differently. I hope my son will also be able to have that experience and be able to appreciate different perspectives. I want him to know that different isn't necessarily wrong. I want him to have education, but when he grows up, I want him to be a mechanic. Not just so he can fix my car but so that wherever he goes in the world, he will always be able to have a job.

R: Tell me about your son. He is three and very energetic and cute. What is his name?

A: It is Mālu 'e hanisi. It means 'sheltered by love.' My uncle gave him that name. Having a child changes everything. I am much more conscious of my own personal safety and health, mental and physical, and of course that of my child, too. I am more sensible about what I do.

R: Has it changed how you think about peace?

A: My child is my peace of mind. When I am away from him, I think about all the worst possible scenarios. I know about cases of abuse, so he is never alone. My peace of mind is dependent on his safety. And on his mood, too (smile). I think it has made me think differently about peace, safety and mortality. I know there is only so much I can do, so I am more in touch with my faith now, and more appreciative of things. Religion has always been a part of my life, but I thought about it as a balance of good and bad. Now I understand it is more serious than that. Not just being adult and managing my finances or having life insurance, but how I live. My baby is like a rough sketch of the person he will become, and it is so wonderful to watch him grow.

R: Your work is related to governance. That must make you think about safety.

A: Well in some ways, yes. I do a lot of work in the Solomon Islands and there is a real disconnect between the rural areas and the city. Transportation and communication are really hard. But it is selective, too. Culture is something that evolves and changes. It is important to revive culture and to preserve customs and tradition, but culture is not static. Maybe now some changes are too fast but some things, like the patriarchal system, doesn't seem to be changing at all. Change is selective. Pornography, for example, is everywhere. I think that is where NGOs are important. I respect and appreciate women's NGOS but in terms of sexual violence, we need men to carry those messages and do it over several generations. I read that recently, the perpetrators of sexual assaults against children are getting younger. They link it to the accessibility of pornography and the ways pornography objectifies women. People read it and think that that is the way sex ought to be. Families are silent about it, and that makes it worse. It used to be that if you were the mother of a son, you didn't have to worry about sexual abuse, but today it is different. It is both girls and boys. So I worry about my son. But I have to find a balance between smothering him and letting him go outside.

R: Can you share with us what makes you feel safe?

A: I'm not sure I know the feeling of being safe until I am unsafe.

R: For example, sunshine makes me feel safe.

A: Yes, light and being able to see around me. If I'm out in the dark and can't see or hear, I feel unsafe.

R: Thank you, Angela! And thank you for this drawing on Popoki's Friendship Story, too!



Ronyan's Adventures in the Pacific 4: Marshall Islands (2)

Ronyan

It is so hard to choose what to write about from among all the interesting things that happened in the Marshall Islands. This time I will continue where I left off last time, and write a bit more about nuclear testing and Popoki's Friendship Story activities.

Let me start by introducing something that really surprised me. The photo is of a sign on a building in the middle of Majuro. This is an office where they measure the amount of radiation (cesium only) in a person's body. It is a local office under the authority of the US Department of Energy and run by technicians trained by Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. I went into the office and learned that the process is simple and open to anyone who wants to make use of it. It takes about 15 minutes to



take the measurement. The data is sent to Lawrence Livermore but each person gets a copy of their results. They do not do any treatment. My results came back negative,

which meant that I do not have cesium in my body. However, it was later pointed out to me that they only test for cesium and not for other radioactive substances such as plutonium. I asked whether anyone ever has a high level of cesium, and the answer was, "Sometimes, but only people from the northern atolls." In other words, people who come from the region where the nuclear tests were conducted show higher levels. There are two



other similar testing facilities in the northern atolls. Majuro is far away from the testing grounds and while the whole body count is available to anyone for free, it seems that not very many people do it. But it made me think. What if there were similar facilities in Iitate Mura, Fukushima city and Tokyo....

In a corner of the library at the College of the Marshall Islands is the Nuclear Institute. There I met Mary Silk, the librarian in charge. She shared with me about her efforts to disseminate information about the nuclear testing and the situation of education in the Marshall Islands. It was very informative and I learned a lot. I also came away with an assignment! It seems that children do not learn much in school about the nuclear testing, so Mary wanted me to write a story that is easy for primary school children to understand. I have begun work, and I hope to be able to share the results with Mary and others soon. I made a request, too. When I learned that Mary's mother remembers the Japanese time and the war, and speaks Japanese, I asked her if she would introduce me. She most kindly agreed.



Take a look at a map of the Pacific. Can you find Japan, Palau, the Mariana Islands and the Marshall Islands? The center of the Japanese Mandated territory was Palau. The Marshall Islands were part of the Mandate, but you can see that they are very far away from the Japanese mainland, Okinawa and Palau. As a result, there were many fewer Japanese in the Marshalls than in other islands, and there was less fighting there, too.

Even so, Mary's mother, Kapele Isabella Silk, remembers the horror of the war. She told me that people dug holes and hid in them when they heard the sound of planes. She said that in fact the bombers did not drop very many bombs, but they had no way of knowing whether they would or not. They led their 'normal' lives but kept their ears strained for the sound of planes and assigned someone to be a lookout. She told me about running away in the dark, and how instead of taking Americans prisoner the Japanese just shot them, and how there was not enough food to eat. It must have been really terrible. She told me that they could tell by watching that Japan and the United States were at war, but when I asked if anyone had ever told them why they were fighting, her reply was negative. Maybe it is obvious, but for me, this showed me a new aspect of what it means to be dragged into somebody else's war. This realization was an important discovery for me. Not know why must have made it even more frightening when bombs started falling. At the end of my visit, the Silk family drew 'feeling safe' on Popoki's cloth. I am so grateful to the Silks for inviting me to their home and sharing their stories, even though it was a holiday. Thank you!



Popoki's cloth began to get full of drawings not only the past, but of hopes for the future, too. I got to meet members of Jambo Arts and Jambo Arts juniors. The juniors, mostly primary and junior high school students, meet in a classroom after school at Co-op School, and I had a chance to spend some time with them. We looked at *Popoki's Friendship Story* together and talked about the 2011 disasters in



Japan. Many of the children are interested in Japan and they all listened intently. Then they drew about things they would like to share with people who 'can't go home.' They drew eagerly and I am sure that when people in Japan and other places see their drawings, they will feel their compassion, too. Thank you to the Jambo Juniors!

After leaving the Juniors, I went to a meeting of the Jambo Arts adults. They had a lot on the agenda, including preparation for an exhibit, but they took time for Popoki. Some people even drew on his cloth. Thank you so much!

POPOKI'S EASY POGA

Lesson 81

This month's Poga is about stretching!



1. First, as always, sit up straight and look beautiful.
2. Next, relax your neck and gently drop your head to the right, then the left.
3. Now try using your hand to gently pull your head down, stretching you neck.
4. Finally, stand and stretch! If you like, try stretching backward a bit.
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: / (Sat.) 19:00 ~ Kobe YMCA (Shin Kobe OPA, 2F)

2015.2.24 Hyogo University of Health Sciences. 12:50-13:20. Health and Peace

Workshop with Adelaide University nursing students. Interested? Call Satonyan.

2015.2.26-3.2 Popoki in Otsuchi-cho

2015.3.14-18 Popoki at 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Sendai

2015.3.28 Popoki's Mini Peace Film Festival 13:30~16:30 Kobe YWCA 4F.

Popoki in Print

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
- “Article 9 is at the base of Peace with Popoki” *Kodomo to Mamoru 9 jono kai News*, No.66, 2012.5.12
- “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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- 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*)
- “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 2010.3.15
- 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
- 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/>
- * **Back issues of Popoki News:** http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/archives_e.html





What Popoki Means to Me

Taro Taniguchi

Hi! I am Taro Taniguchi, called Taro nyan. I do not want to go out of my Kotatsu (one kind of home heater), because it is very cold outside. Today I would like to talk about what Popoki means to me.

For me, Popoki is an existence that makes me think deeply and feel a connection surrounding me all over the world.



Popoki as the existence that lets me think-

Popoki asks me difficult questions, which look easy at a first glance. For example, “What is peace?” “What color is peace?” “Who is peace for?” It is difficult for me to answer these questions. The question “what you need to be happy?” may easier than these questions. (Of course, this question is not easy either).

However, when you are asked about peace, it is much harder to figure out a specific answer. The condition that I am happy does not necessarily meet the requirements of peace. Well, whom are you talking to when you discuss peace?

I guess one of the reasons why peace is difficult is that the definition of peace is depends on each person. For instance, lions living in Africa and cats living in Japan may not have the same idea as to the meaning of peace. Groups of cats living in Town A and Town B who are enemies may hold opposite concepts of peace. Furthermore, dogs in Town A may hold different ideas from those in Town B. Knowing that peace has so many diverse meanings is one reason that it is difficult to understand. At the same time, these multifaceted ways to define peace make me feel connected to people all over the world.



-Popoki as the existence that connects me to the world-



Popoki let me think about different “peaces” in the world by asking me “What is peace?” I learned to imagine people who have different ways of answering that question.

Each peace for each person exists in pieces. Then, Popoki asks the big question, “what is peace?” to everyone. People answer with their own thoughts to Popoki, and Popoki receives them.

I ask Popoki to let me see these ideas of peace for those people. Those ideas make me think about why peace for lions in Africa and cats in Japan is so different. How did cats in Town A and Town B come to have opposite opinions on the word peace? What is their background? Sometimes I have images of their faces and their parents’ faces.

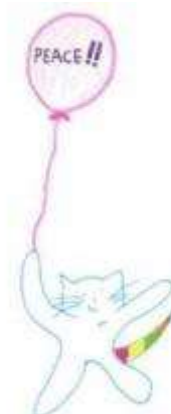
At the time, somehow I feel as if I have been connected to people (I mean creatures who have different opinions on peace) who live in other places. Popoki connects me to the world in such way.

Thank you Popoki
I’ll be counting on you



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 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 and the telephone number is 213.687.4480. The price is US\$20.00 plus tax.

Some ways to purchase *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 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(at)gmail(dot)com))



Contributions are always welcome!

Popoki Peace Project popokipeace-at-gmail.com

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