



It is April! The weather is nice and Popoki loves to play outdoors. Sometimes he chases things, and sometimes he just sits quietly. What do you do to enjoy nice weather outside?

Popoki's Hot News!



Coming soon!

"Nada Challenge 2019"

2019.6.30 @ Togakawa Park

Please join us for a day of fun!

Piece of Peace



One of Popoki's friends, Agnesnyan, sent the following piece of peace: "My favorite part of camping week-ends is to wake up in the middle of a rainy night. It's really quiet and I feel like I'm the only person awake in the world. But the sound of the rain on the tent makes it a cosy place so I find it really peaceful."

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

Popoki's Tohoku Trip (2)

Nagisanyan

In the previous Popoki newsletter, Dinyan and Aasthanyan wrote about the first day of our Tohoku trip. This is the report about second day by Nagisanyan.



Our main activity of this day was the exhibition at Mast. It started from morning, but student nyans were allowed to visit “Oshacchi.” Oshacchi is a new facility built after the earthquake. It has a library and some multipurpose rooms. On this day, Sachiko Motomochi san, a woman who always supported us during the trip, organized an event. When we arrived there, some women were cooking rice cakes.

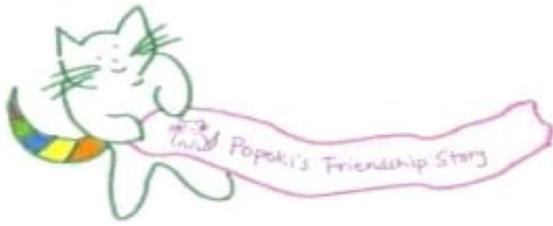
They gave us the fresh rice cakes and had some conversations with us. After that, a magic show was begun by two gentlemen from the town next to Otsuchi. They performed many magic tricks so easily, but I couldn't find out how they did any of them. The time at Oshacchi went by slowly. I wish I had such a nice interactive place in my town.



We went back to Mast and started the exhibition. We talked to people going around and asked them to draw something that shows “what is peace for you,” “what makes you feel anshin (relieved),” etc. Some people drew their families, and others drew their pets. There was even a man who drew his favorite Japanese sake. Those images made me feel again that “peace” and “anshin” are different depending on the person.

Eight years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake. Many of the children who joined our activity did not experience the earthquake, just like me because I was born one year after the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake. Especially in Otsuchi, everything was washed away by the tsunami, and it has been changing into a “new town.” Telling what was there in Otsuchi before the earthquake might be what victims have wished for. Through this day, I was made to think not only of the future of Otsuchi, but also what I can do to remember the experience of Hanshin Awaji Great Earthquake.





Popoki's Interview

Popoki Made a New Friend!!

An interview with Ms. Yukiko Esashi,
Executive Director. Ohanashi Kororin aka
'Rolling Stories' in Ofunato City, Iwate, Japan

Interviewers: *Aasthayan & Nagisayan*

Japanese Translations: *Nagisayan*

Photo credit: *Ohanashi Kororin*

On February 11, 2019, Popoki and his friends Ronyan, Satonyan, Dinyan, Lananyan, Nagisayan and Aasthayan visited a book reading and storytelling NPO called *Ohanashi Kororin* in Ofunato City, Iwate, Japan to conduct a workshop. During the workshop, Popoki and his friends wanted to interact with the visitors at the NPO and make a picture book with them. The theme and the plot for the picture book were open to imagination while the characters of the picture book were Popoki and his friends from around the world. It was on this day and during this event, we had the opportunity to meet Yukiko Esashi San. Esashi San had just returned to Ofunato from her visit to Thailand the previous day. Nevertheless, she came into work to meet us and help with the workshop. When Esashi San introduced herself to us, she either talked to us in our native language(s) or told us that she had visited our countries. She seemed like such a worldly person that soon after meeting her, Nagisayan and I decided to interview her for the Popoki newsletter. Below is a short interview with Esashi San that Nagisayan and I conducted...



Q: What is this place? What was the purpose of building it?

A: The name of this building is *Ofunato bosai kankoukoryu* center. In short, it is called *Ofunaport*. *Ofunaport* is Ofunato's disaster prevention and tourism interaction center. The building belongs to the city but it is run by private organizations. The second floor

of the building is managed by *Ohanashi Kororin* and the first floor by the tourism association of Ofunato. This building was built in the Spring of 2018 and began operation, especially on the second floor, from June of 2018. Before the devastating 2011 tsunami, Ofunato station used to be located where the building stands now.

Q: How did *Ohanashi Kororin* end up in this building?

A: The city asked *Ohanashi Kororin* to do “soft” activities, such as people-to-people interactions, provide study spaces for students, form reading clubs and similar events so they opened up their second office here. *Ohanashi Kororin* has its headquarters at another location, close to Sakari station.

Q: Why did you name your organization *Ohanashi Kororin*?

A: This organization was started fifteen years ago by ten people. The purpose of this organization is to engage children in reading books. If children read good books, they will grow up well. I was not picky about what to name to choose but three things were important to me: a) it had to be familiar, b) it had to be easy to remember, and c) it had to be easy to pronounce. I also wanted to keep the stories and communication going; keep them rolling. So, I decided to name the NPO *Ohanashi Kororin*. When I go around town, doing activities relating to my NPO, I do not use my personal name. I refer to myself as *Kororin*. People, including children, call me *Kororin San*.

Q: Why were you motivated to open this NPO?

A: Children are innocent. They learn from the adults around them. Children are very important. They will build the world we live in 15-20 years from now. I want children to smile, and believe it is the responsibility of adults to keep them happy. I have been to many countries and seen children from different societies. The children I have come across in India and other countries in the Global South living fully and working very hard to live their lives. I am just doing what I think is good at the individual level. By engaging children in reading books, I want to keep them *genki*. I do not know the reason why I do what I do but I am always happy to see children smiling and that’s a great motivator.

After the earthquake, we started reading aloud practice sessions for seniors at the temporary housing. It was a way for senior members of the society to read to the children. It is a great collaboration because the seniors who read to the children feel happy and *genki* as they feel like they are being useful for the children, which means they are contributing to their upbringing.

I have also started working with mothers of primary school children. The children I used to read to now have children of their own and come to *Ohanashi Kororin* with them. It's great! Through reading, I believe I can make people happy.

Q: What changed in *Ohanashi Kororin's* approach after the earthquake?

A: Before establishing *Ohanashi Kororin*, I was a graduate student in India. While in India, I often went to orphanages. Visiting the orphanages made me think about the power disparities between those providing support and those receiving it. I believe it is important that power be balanced.

When I returned to Japan after graduate school, I noticed that there was a trend towards promoting reading culture. I joined the trend and started an NPO that promoted reading among children. After the Great East Japan earthquake, there has been a slight change in *Ohanashi Kororin's* approach. After the devastation, I took picture books to evacuation centers to read to children. Through reading I tried to build relationships with children and show them they could have fun together. This helped us to connect and also helped the children to share their feelings. That was what the children wanted at that time. So, after the disaster and those experiences, I started focusing on not only reading, but also interactive activities. So, today the two pillars of *Ohanashi Kororin* are to: a) promote reading and b) promote interaction.

Q: What message would you like to convey to the world?

A: I would like to remind people that each individual is important. So, I think about how I can make each person happy. I also want everybody to think that others are important and giving others importance is important. I cannot do anything alone to end war and

poverty or to change the world. But, if everyone thinks highly of others, I believe our society can change towards being better.



Please visit

<https://www.ohanashikororin.org/about/>

to find out more about Popoki's new friend Esashi San and Ohanashi Kororin. Thank you!

POPOKI'S EASY POGA

Lesson 131

This month's theme is stretching our legs and lower backs!



1. First, as always, sit up straight and look beautiful.
2. Now, lying on your back, bend your knees and gently move your legs to the left until your knees are touching the floor. Now try the other side. How about rocking slowly back and forth?
3. Next, bend your knees and put your feet together. Do your legs touch the floor? Try moving your knees slowly up and down.
4. Now raise your legs and lower back, supporting yourself with your hands. Slowly open and close your legs to the sides. You can try front and back, too!
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: 2019.5.20 Nada Yakuzaishikai 19:00~

4.29 "Thinking about being safe, feeling safe and peace with Popoki" Workshop at Chiang Mai YMCA, Thailand

5.23-24 "Thinking about being safe, feeling safe and peace with Popoki" lecture and workshop @ National Kaohsiung University of Science and Technology, Taiwan (tentative)

6.30 Nada Challenge! Togagaku Park, 10:00~16:00

7.6 Popoki @ Kodomo no Sato!

8.5 Popoki Workshop at Seminar on Education for Living Together 2019, JICA Kansai

Popoki in Print * Back issues of Popoki News:



http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/archives_e.html

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- “Awards given to 37 groups Daiwa Securities Foundation” *Kobe Shimbun* (2013.8.23 p.8)
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- “Hope on 60 meters of cloth” Etsuko Akuzawa. (In Japanese) *Asahi Shimbun* 2012.1.21
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- ‘Not for But With...’ No.79, 2010.1 Notice of the Popoki Peace Challenge event. P.12
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- ‘Yujotte...Kangaeru Ehon.’ *Asahi Shimbun* 2009.7.2 AKUZAWA Etsuko
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- “An Interview with Dr. Ronni Alexander.” *The Newpeople*, Pittsburgh’s Peace and Justice Newspaper, Vol.38 No.9, October 2008, p.5
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What Popoki Means to Me

Aikonyan

Last October, my son, Minatonyan, was born. I hope that my son will develop a fertile imagination through reading picture books. Popoki's Peace books are among the picture books I want to read. I hope that he will grow up to be a person who, ever since he can remember, has been thinking about and creating peace.

One day, an old lady met Minatonyan's eye and spoke to him in a train. After a little while, he started to cry. I tried to pacify him so his crying would not disturb the other passengers. Sometimes I get cold looks in the train when the baby cries, but this time the old lady also tried to pacify him. I feel safe when I knew that there are people who are watching affectionately. It was a heart-warming story for me.

Crying is very important for babies. Unfortunately, I heard there are parents who close all the windows to avoid complaints from the neighbors. Many mothers are considering the best timing to go shopping or use public transportation. Still, babies will cry when they want. I know that there are people who dislike the cry of babies and irritated mothers. Is this situation peaceful? Popoki probably will talk to the crying baby. It reminds me that I want to be a person like Popoki with my son.



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

<http://popoki.cruisejapan.com>



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THANK YOU

FROM

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