

Popoki



Newsletter

No.175 2020.3.25

ronniandpopoki (at) gmail.com

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

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It's March, and so many unusual things are happening. We hope you are healthy and taking care to stay that way! And if you are feeling badly, we hope you feel better soon! Popoki washes all four paws well and often! We hope you do, too!

Popoki's Hot News!



It's OK to hug me!



Coming up!

10 April Report on Popoki Friendship Story activities in Tohoku!

Kobe Student Youth Center, 18:00~20:00

21 June Nada Challenge! Tokagawa Park, 10:00~16:00.

Hope to see you there!

***Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these activities might be postponed/cancelled. Please check Popoki's FB, etc. to see if they are happening!**

Piece of Peace

One of Popoki's friends, Naokonyan, sent the following piece of peace. "Home sweet home".

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 !



March is the time for graduations
And saying "See you!" "Thank you!" "Take care!"
It is a time for preparing for new beginnings
School, jobs, lives.
This is for those who are ending something
And for those who are starting something new

We've all made it this far.
So even if you have no new endings or beginnings
This is for you, too!



Photographing Popoki Friendship Story

On 8 March, we spent most of the day photographing each of Popoki's Friendship Story cloths. The purpose was to preserve them and to make them available as digital data. A report from one of Popoki's friends follows!



POPOKI AND THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP

Emmanuel Haruna

Peace they say begins with a smile or a hug. In her words, Mother Teresa of Calcutta said “*if you want to change the world, go home and love your family*”. I would simply add that if anyone wants to see a peaceful and happy world, let him or her go out to sell ice cream, especially in the summer season. Popoki Friendship Story cloths show that a life not lived or sacrificed for others is not a life. It was a privilege to participate and watch with keen interest of how the Friendship Story cloths are filled with different kinds of art or designs that represent one’s feelings. It was also an exciting moment for me to know that Popoki symbolizes a special kind of peace, kindness, and inclusiveness that everyone wishes to see in the 21st century.

From one to around fifty Friendship Story cloths pasted on the wall, each one conveys messages of peace. The beautiful colorful paintings send a powerful message of tolerance, acceptance, and unity in different art languages across region, religion, gender, and race. I must say that God created Popoki so that harmony and peace can prevail. For me, everything on this Earth has a well-defined purpose. Ronni has found the “bridge-builder” called “Popoki”. The big question is how do we ensure Popoki serves that purpose? Popoki’s friends have a huge task of raising their voices from the far North to the West, and from East to the South with a common agenda of achieving a more peaceful and inclusive world.

Popoki Friendship Story cloths must continue the voyage of adventure. Each Popoki’s friend should reach one, and teach one. In so doing, we can experience a peaceful world where everyone is positioned to be the best and to achieve greatness in life. It is still not too late, let us together pledge to make a difference. My message to Popoki and friends is that the good we do today, people will often forget tomorrow; we should keep doing good anyway, and we live in an unjust world full of misery and sadness; we should be happy anyway. More grace to Po-Ronni and team!



Popoki Friendship Story Activities in Tohoku Report (8-10 February 2020) Part 1

* Popoki and 6 friends went to Otsuchi-cho (2/8-9) and Ofunato City (2/10) in Iwate Prefecture to hold Popoki activities. This month, we will have the report of the first day and the reports of the other two days will be in the April edition of 'Popoki News'.

2020.02.08

Reporters: Laurennyan and Naokonyan

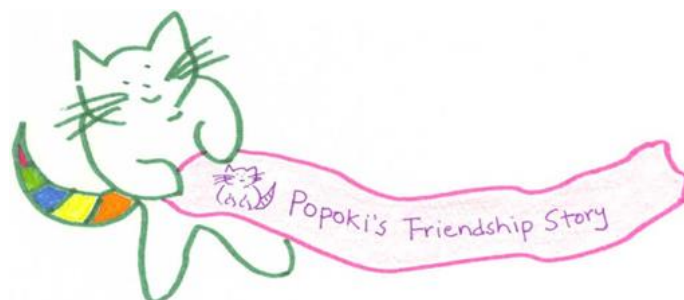
Time line of the day

- 8:00 Arrived at Otsuchi, Introduction video and Itoh san's talk.
- 9:00 Itoh san's tour in Otsuchi.
- 13:00 Reading at Library
- 15:00 Itoh san's short tour guide.

It was our first day in Otsuchi. As we arrived, photographer Itoh Yoko san showed us a short documentary that talked about the 2011 tsunami in Otsuchi. And then around 9:30 she took us to go around the town area for about an hour. During the tour, we saw the place from a whole different angle. It was much better than in 2011 of course, but the town still seemed lack something.

Itoh san stressed how high the Tsunami was, in many ways. She pointed out the exact height the tsunami reached with buildings and telegraph poles, etc. She showed us how much the land had been filled and raised to rebuild the town. She also tried to show where the tsunami reached, and where now people are not allowed to live. She repeatedly insisted that her motivation is to tell people, young people, how the tsunami was horrible and how to escape and survive from one.

After a short break, we started our reading at the library at Oshacchi. We read the picture book with various languages, for example, Chinese and English. And all the children seemed to enjoy the reading time which made us felt glad too. Children seemed to enjoy the sound of the language. It can be said that the experience was meaningful for us to see them enjoy the sound of the language. It was also a good experience to feel how the children's reaction can become our motivation for the activity. Finally, we went to see the exhibit of the 2011 tsunami at Oshacchi. The pain of the disaster won't be erased but we can build the new memory to make the wound less painful.





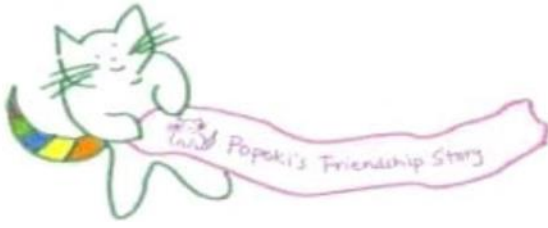
Residential area (front) and non-residential area (back)



A view from the hill where people evacuated when the Tsunami came.



Sea wall is under construction.



Popoki's Interview

Interview with people from Otsuchi!

In February, we interviewed two people in Otsuchi. One of them is Ms. Mitsuko Uchikanezaki, the representative of Otsuchi International Exchange Association, and the other is Mr. Mitsuru Ishii, a staff of Otsuchi Town Office. Please listen to their voices. Interviewees are Nagisanyan and Laurenyan.

- ◆ Ms. Uchikanezaki Mitsuko: Representative of Otsuchi International Exchange Association
Ms. Uchikanezaki was born in Otsuchi and moved to Tokyo and Kyoto for her work. She moved back to Otsuchi after getting married.

Q. What kind of activity does the Otsuchi International Exchange Association organize?

A. We organize exchange programs such as what we did with Popoki Peace Project this time, and exchange programs with Fort Bragg, a city of California, the U.S. and Otsuchi's sister city.

Q. What kind of program does the association do with Fort Bragg?

A. Fort Bragg has been the sister city of Otsuchi since 2001. In order to hold the "National Meeting for the Healthy Ocean" in 1997, we invited some people from Fort Bragg since we found out that the city was located on the same latitude as Otsuchi, which encouraged the two cities to start exchanges as sister cities. Afterwards, we have sent high school students from Otsuchi to Fort Bragg as a study abroad program, and students from Fort Bragg have also come to Otsuchi. We were surprised that not only students but also their parents come from Fort Bragg to Otsuchi.

Q. What kind of impression did people from Fort Bragg get in Otsuchi?

A. They were surprised that they could see green before them, which means that Otsuchi is surrounded by nature. They were also surprised that the ocean at Namiita Beach (located in Kirikiri, Otsuchi Town) was shallow. The things that were nothing special for us were surprising for them.

Q. Other than Fort Bragg, do people come to Otsuchi from abroad?

A. Recently, workers from Asia come here for fishery works. However, we don't have exchanges with them at this moment. We would like to organize some exchange programs with such people in the future.

Q. Please tell us about Taiwan Host Town for the Olympics and Paralympics 2020.

A. We recently heard about the host town. Taiwan donated to Otsuchi after the 2011 disaster, so we were thinking that we should have done something to show our gratitude to them. To commemorate

130 years of opening Otsuchi Town Office last year, some people from Taiwan came all the way to Otsuchi to celebrate together.

◆ Mr. Mitsuru Ishii: a staff member of Otsuchi Town Office

Mr. Ishii was born in Otsuchi, but after graduating from senior high school, he left and started working in Tokyo. After the 2011 tsunami, he moved back with all of his family and works in Otsuchi Town Office in order to revive the town.

Q. Why did you decide to move back?

A. When the disaster happened, my mother was living in Otsuchi alone. I was so worried about the situation of my mother so I came back from Tokyo to Otsuchi a day after the disaster. Thankfully, all of my family were safe from it but the scene of the city was terrible. When I saw the scene, I felt that it was my duty to make an effort for the city. So I quit my job in Tokyo and then moved back with all of my family in 2014.

Q. If there had not been a tsunami, would you still have come back?

A. To be honest, I would say no. I will still encourage the young generation in Otsuchi to go to a different city or even country. For the more you see, the more you can learn. And I sincerely believe that once you are able to make an effort for your hometown you will just do so whenever you are.

Q. Nine years have passed since the tsunami. How would you describe the circumstance in Otsuchi now?

A. The biggest task for Otsuchi now is an aging population and emigration. What we are trying to do is to attract foreigners, especially those from Vietnam, Indonesia or Philippines to work here. Or introduce some special skills from other countries in order to let more people come to stay in Otsuchi. However, all of the programs are still under discussion.



An event organized by Otsuchi International Exchange Association and Popoki Peace Project. Laurenyan introduced Taiwan.



Evening at Namiita Beach. After the earthquake, a tsunami of more than 20 meters came here.

POPOKI'S EASY POGA

Lesson 143

This month's theme is washing our hands!



1. First, as always, sit up straight and look beautiful.
2. Now, stand up. Our hands have to be very clean. Practice first! Keeping your back straight and arms bent at the elbows, scrub the back of one hand with the palm of the other, and then switch hands. Move your arms from your shoulders, pulling your elbows back and bringing them forward for a good stretch, too!
3. Next, spread your fingers. Repeat (2), but this time interlock your fingers.
4. Now, try spreading your arms wide and repeating 2 and 3! If you are feeling energetic, bend forward toward the floor and wash your hands behind your legs!
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: 2020.3.31 @ Nada Yakuzaishikai! The ventilation is good, and we can sit around the big table, keeping our distance! But maybe on-line?

4.10 Report on Popoki Friendship Story Activities in Tohoku @ Kobe Student Youth Center 18:00~20:00

6.21 Nada Challenge! 10:00 – 16:00. Popoki will have a booth and exhibit!

7.11 Popoki @ kodomo no sato! Morning program

*** Please note that these activities may be cancelled in order to prevent further spread of the Corona virus.**

Book Suggestion from Popoki's Friends

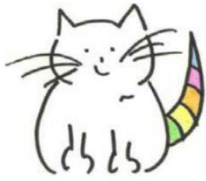
Riokun no susumu michi – Gakko ni ikenai kimitachi he – (Rio-kun's path: To those of you who can't go to school). Text & illustrations: Miyuki Kaneshiro. Gakken, 2019.

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What Popoki Means to Me

Aasthanyan

Lately, I am sad and worried about everything that is happening in the world. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is widespread panic and shortage of food and basic supplies (not just masks, hand sanitizers, toilet paper, and paper towels) in the city of my residence. Some people in the city, even though they do not have babies or are not even pregnant, have also been hoarding diapers, baby wipes, baby formula, and baby food. This has caused a real crisis. I am worried about bringing a baby into this world during such pandemic and crisis.

I am glad my brother and his wife are with us (my husband Cole, my dog Zoey, and I) in the United States but I am worried about my parents who are still in Nepal. The ports of entry and exits in Nepal have been closed to prevent risking the lives of people living in the country but for a landlocked country such as Nepal, that in itself is a crisis. Nepal depends heavily on its trade and imports with its neighbors, especially India and China, for survival. Without goods, services, and people coming in from the outside, Nepal - its economy and people - are severely impaired. Personally, I am especially worried that if the situation does not change, my parents will not be able to visit us in June. That would mean they would not be able to witness the birth of our son, their first grandchild...

There is a lot that brings me down these days, from the news, internet, phone conversations, and the self-inflicted social distancing. While all this is happening, I have my dog Zoey and Popoki by my side as my constant companions. They are my beacons of hope for better days to come.



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: *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 outside of Japan

1. Go to your local Japanese bookstore: Kinokuniya, Maruzen, etc. (or their website)
2. Write to us at ronniandpopoki@gmail.com and we'll figure it out!

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 ronniandpopoki@gmail.com



Contributions are always welcome!

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THANK YOU FROM POPOKI!