

# Popoki



Newsletter

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[http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/index\\_e.html](http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/index_e.html)

<http://popoki.cruisejapan.com>



It's almost July! Popoki's life has changed, but every day he goes out on a treasure hunt, looking for something nice and fun. We hope you can find lots of nice and fun things, too. Please be well and stay safe!



## Popoki's Hot News!

Coming up!

Nada Challenge! Togakawa Park, 2020.9.13 10:00~16:00.

<https://nadachallenge.wixsite.com/nadachallenge/cny>

**\*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it might be postponed/cancelled. Please check Popoki's FB, etc. to make sure if it is happening!**



Piece of Peace

One of Popoki's friends, Nusrat-nyan, sent the following piece of peace. "Peace for me is being able to laugh without the fear of knowing or being constantly reminded that this happiness is temporary".

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 !



## On-line Report Meeting on Popoki Friendship Story Activities in Otsuchi and Ofunato 2020

Yakonyan

The Report Meeting on Popoki Friendship Story Activities in Tohoku this year was held online from 14:00 to 16:00 on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> of June. It was a lively and meaningful meeting with around twenty participants. Esashi-san, who is the director of the NPO Ohanashi Kororin, joined from Ofunato. We could communicate beyond geographical barriers, as some participants came from France and Indonesia. Moreover, we had a good time with Shiorinyan and her family member rabbit, Koumenyan. I would like to thank everyone for their participation in our meeting.

First of all, Ronyan gave a salutation. As the first session, Laurenyan, Yakonyan and Nagisanyan, who stayed for a day in Otsuchi and for two days in Ofunato, gave a presentation with a summary of activities this year. Laurenyan's photos for the presentation were marvelous.

As the second session, Ronyan's new picture book *Popoki's House* was shared on the screen and all the participants alternated to read each page aloud. Esashi-san's reading was fascinating with her clear voice and good rhythm. Each person's reading reflected her/his personality and our joint reading was the only version like this in the whole world. Next, we divided into several groups and enjoyed drawing on the whiteboard of Zoom to answer the question, 'Popoki is sad because of the quarantine. What do you want to share/bring for Popoki?'.



On-line presentation

Next, we had a discussion as the third session. Participants were divided into groups of three or four people to talk about three themes: the connection of disaster and the coronavirus pandemic, your priorities before and after the coronavirus, and passing down the stories of disaster. Firstly, as the similarities between disaster and the coronavirus pandemic, participants pointed out that people are fighting with invisible enemies such as virus and radioactivity, and the weak people in the social structure are suffering from their heavy burden. Secondly,

participants argued that the top priorities for them may not have changed before and after the coronavirus pandemic, however, the relationships with family, boyfriends, girlfriends and close friends have deepened because they spent more time with people with whom they live and enjoyed more communication with people who are physically distant to talk together about little things in daily life online. Lastly, as for passing on disaster stories to the future generation, participants mentioned the benefit of learning disaster prevention and the significance of listening to disaster stories with storytelling in their families or communities because such kinds of stories make listeners imagine the situation more closely to themselves and can enhance the lessons taught in school.

Furthermore, one of the participants expressed that a really horrible experience sometimes cannot ever be shared, such as the experience of the atomic bomb. That touched at my heart. Ronyan also shared that Popoki Friendship Story activities try to pass on the stories through drawings, as well as the process and the communication related to drawing, which are different from stories with words.



The beginning of the meeting



Let's hold hands!

Through this online meeting, I found it interesting and convenient to meet Popoki friends living far from Kobe including abroad. On the other hand, there are some weak points about online meetings such as the fact that people who do not have a good internet environment or internet skills cannot participate. Although some things have changed due to the influence of the coronavirus pandemic, I hope the good things we enjoyed before will come back soon and the wonderful aspects we have found recently will be added to our daily life newly.

I want to express appreciation to Nagisanyan for her amazing work as a facilitator in the meeting. I am also grateful to people in Otsuchi, Ofunato and at Kobe University for their support for Popoki Friendship Story.

Finally, I would like to introduce comments from participants. Thank you very much for giving me comments, Shiorinyan, Koumenyan, Esashi-san, Loïcnyan, Siwinyan and Tamura-san!

**Shiorinyan** -Yakonyan's English translation from the original comment in Japanese-

Although I was at home, I was happy to communicate with various people including people who live far from my place. I was surprised at being able to draw! – I did not know about that function in Zoom.

I enjoyed the Zoom of this meeting more than the one of my cram school!!

I would like to join again.

**Koumenyan** - The English translation from the original comment in Japanese-

I had a good time to see all of you.

I saw the one who gave me a carrot and those who petted me before, and I met some people for the first time.

I would like to see you again.

**Esashi Yukiko-san** -Yakonyan's English translation from the original comment in Japanese-

I was happy to see you again after a while and to look at your smiles. That reminded me of the activities in Ofunato.

I was grateful to have friends with whom to share the memories and impressed by being able to share the feeling with people from around the world.

**Loicnyan**

We started the meeting with a short presentation of the situation in Otsuchi. I didn't know the history of this town and I was very impressed to see the changes that have taken place over the last few years. Afterwards, we discussed our reactions to the disasters. No matter where we live, our reactions seem to be similar. We could see that the coronavirus, for example, has not changed our priorities, but rather the way we want to achieve them. In conclusion, it was a beautiful message of hope!

**Siwinyan**

I had a very joyful moment at Popoki Friendship Story in Tohoku 2020 Report Meeting. My youngest child was sick at the time, so with the meeting, I felt very comforted. I really enjoyed the discussion (and the effort to draw a gift for Popoki 😊), how Covid-19's relationship with disaster, and how Covid-19 influenced our priorities. But what was most exciting for me was meeting friends, some familiar faces that I missed and new friends. Thank you for inviting me and sharing an exciting moment with me.

**Tamura Kasumi-san** (Enrolled in Alexander Seminar in 2001)

Popoki is very good at going above and beyond.

First of all, he is not bound by space.

Many friends from Europe, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central America came together to listen to Popoki and his companions' reports. We could not only hear the report together, but we could also read a book together, with everyone taking a turn to read aloud.

Second of all, we can have conversations with companions who cannot use words. Not only among humans, but Popoki, Giraffe, and Penguin also can come up with their ideas and share them. Even if they do not know each other, they can have conversations.

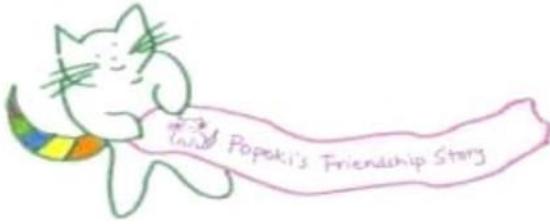
Third of all, we can share the same time as well. I met Popoki in 2001, and he was still alive at that time. I also met Ms. Rebecca, Mr. Bashir, and Ms. Satoko. It has been 10 years since the last time we met.

If we are with Popoki, we can transcend time. Surprisingly, I could talk with my father, too, although he has passed away. When my father was alive, he never told me about his experience of the atomic bombing. I asked him why. But he just said, "I don't know why myself," and he never answered my question. He just said, "continue to think about it from now on and forever".

We were holding hands with Popoki for two hours. We really enjoyed having conversation while having tea. "Isn't Zoom great!" said Popoki with big smile on his face.



A commemorative photo at the end of the report meeting



## \*Popoki's Interview\*

\* We have started a new series of interviews with Popoki's friends in different places. We are asking about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. This time we have three stories.

### **Experience in Lock-downed City (Wuhan, China) during COVID-19**

Interview: Zhou-san

Interviewer: Jean

Brief introduction of the interviewee

Zhou-san is a 55-year-old housewife living in Guangzhou, China. She experienced the whole locked-down period which lasted for 76 days in Wuhan, China. She also experienced the passing away of her mother.

#### **Q: Before Wuhan city was locked down due to COVID-19, what were you doing?**

A: I was living in another city (Guangzhou) before COVID-19 boomed. However, my mother's health was in danger suddenly. So, I went to Wuhan city for visiting her several days before the Chinese Spring Festival (January 25, 2020).

#### **Q: What did you think after hearing the news of the lockdown?**

A: People outside the locked-down city seemed very anxious about the situation inside the city. To be honest, I didn't feel any difference in my daily life. Except for wearing masks, people continued to do what they were used to doing. At that time, I just focused on taking care of my mother. Even if I had known Wuhan city would be locked down, I would have made the same decision.

#### **Q: How did you go through during lockdown?**

A: During lockdown, my mother's condition was getting worse and worse. I only wanted to take good care of her and talk with her in this short time. The hospital was only 20 minutes-walking away from my home. But I decided to stay in the hospital for reducing the risk of infection. I insisted on wearing a mask in the hospital room and canteen. I brought lots of masks, including N95, to Wuhan. However, I did not know when COVID-19 would come to an end, and was afraid that the masks I brought would be not enough. To expand the utility of my masks, I tried to use them repeatedly. Every time when I took off my mask, I would hang it in ventilated places for disinfection. Although I did not know whether it is useful to do so, I felt better if I had a mask.

**Q: Is there anything that warmed your heart during lockdown?**

A: I was encouraged and comforted by the citizens living in Wuhan. Sometimes I needed to go to the supermarket where people were required to keep a distance of more than one meter and to buy all their goods in 20 minutes. I saw everyone was polite and conscious to follow the regulations, which made me feel secure. When I entered the supermarket, the staff asked me to show my phone for scanning the QR code. But there was something wrong with my phone and I couldn't scan the QR code. Finally, the staff asked me to show my ID card and buy my goods quickly. I was thankful for his kindness and flexibility.

**Q: Did you have any difficulty when you were going home after the lockdown?**

A: Wuhan was reopened on April 8, 2020. Both airlines and trains were canceled so I had to take a bus for more than 22 hours to come back to Guangzhou. During COVID-19, there was something wrong with my mobile phone and I bought a new one with limited functions in order to keep in touch with my families in Guangzhou. However, I needed a better mobile phone with QR code function to buy bus tickets, which made me extremely worried. In the end, I bought a ticket successfully by scanning the QR code before my original phone was turned off. Now I think how lucky I am. On the bus to Guangzhou, the passengers were seated to maintain enough distance from others. A bus with more than 40 seats could only hold 20 passengers. Fortunately, the outbreak was under control and there was no need to isolate when I came back to Guangzhou.

**The situation of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Colombia**

Interviewer: Yakonyan

Interviewee: Ms. Macualu

Ms. Macualu shared with me about the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Colombia and about her daily life under the lockdown in Bogota.

**Q1) What is the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Colombia?**

More than 2,000 people had died due to COVID-19 in Colombia as of the 20th of June. In Colombia, local governments take measures against the COVID-19 pandemic in each area. Then, mayors authorize policies to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. In Bogota, the capital city of Colombia, the lockdown started in March. At first, no one could go out. After that, people were allowed to go out only to buy groceries, banking and legal issues on different days depending on the last number of their national ID. This was utilised as a way to prevent traffic jams. Then, as the lockdown was relaxed,

women and men were allowed to go out alternately for essentials every other day. But, the number of infected persons increased and now people are only allowed to go out on the allocated day based on the national ID number again.

**Q2) I think there are some people who do not recognise themselves by the description of man or women on their national ID. Did you hear some objections against the system divided by gender this time?**

Yes. There are transgender people and people with other gender recognition as well. They protested against it in Bogota. The mayor considered this and people were allowed to go out depending on their own gender identification.

**Q3) How is the situation of children in Bogota?**

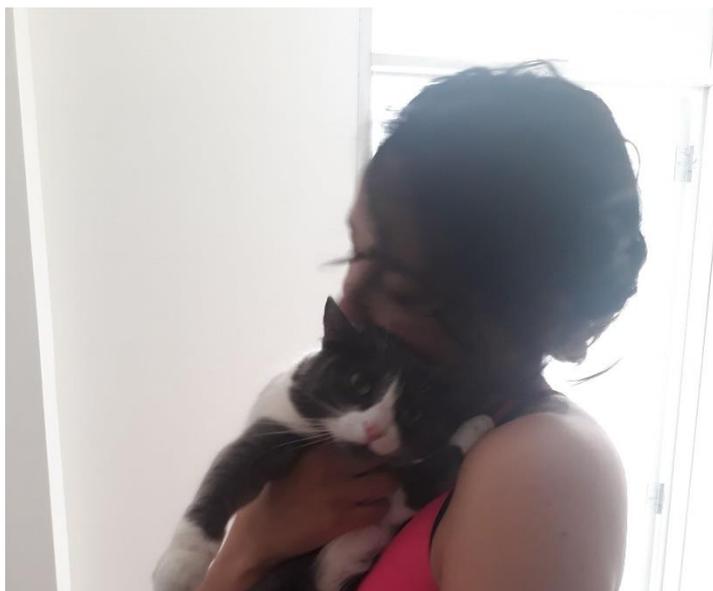
No schools are open in Bogota. All the classes are provided online. Now it is the time of long-time vacation. Schools are planning to open in July. However, many parents worry about the safety of their children and don't want to send them to school, because there is no guarantee for social distancing.

**Q4) Did you experience some changes in yourself as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Yes, I did. I became more patient. I learned how to control my emotions and frustration. Then, I became to feel thankful for the possibility to go out. I realised that many things are not as important as food. Also, during the lockdown, I started to spend more time for myself such as reading books and cooking better, healthy food for myself.

**Q5) What do you think about peace?**

Peace, now it is equality. It means the possibility to survive. It is the possibility to have access to food and the quality of life with dignity. To realize peace, solidarity is essential. We should support each other. We should work together to help the suffering people. Knowledge is also useful to develop the capacity for doing good things. So, education is important.



### **Voice from Colombia**

Interviewers: Yakonyan and Ms. Macualu

Interviewee: Mr. Gabi Spidy

Gabi Spidy is eleven years old. He lives in Bogotá, the capital city of Republic of Colombia. Yakonyan's friend, Ms. Macualu, helped her to conduct the interview with him and translate his answers from Spanish to English.

#### **Q1) What do you do every day?**

From Monday to Friday I study during the morning from 8-12. After I eat lunch, I do my homework. After that, I spend some time talking with my friends through whatsapp or zoom. On the weekends I rest and play videogames.

#### **Q2) What do you think about the coronavirus pandemic?**

I think that basically the earth got tired of environmental contamination and that's why it created the Coronavirus.

#### **Q3) What is your favorite thing now?**

A toy that I made with modelling clay. →



**Q4) Did you draw pictures recently?**

Yes. This is a drawing made with many colors. I wanted to show the radiation and painted it with my favorite colors.

**Q5) What do you enjoy the most?**

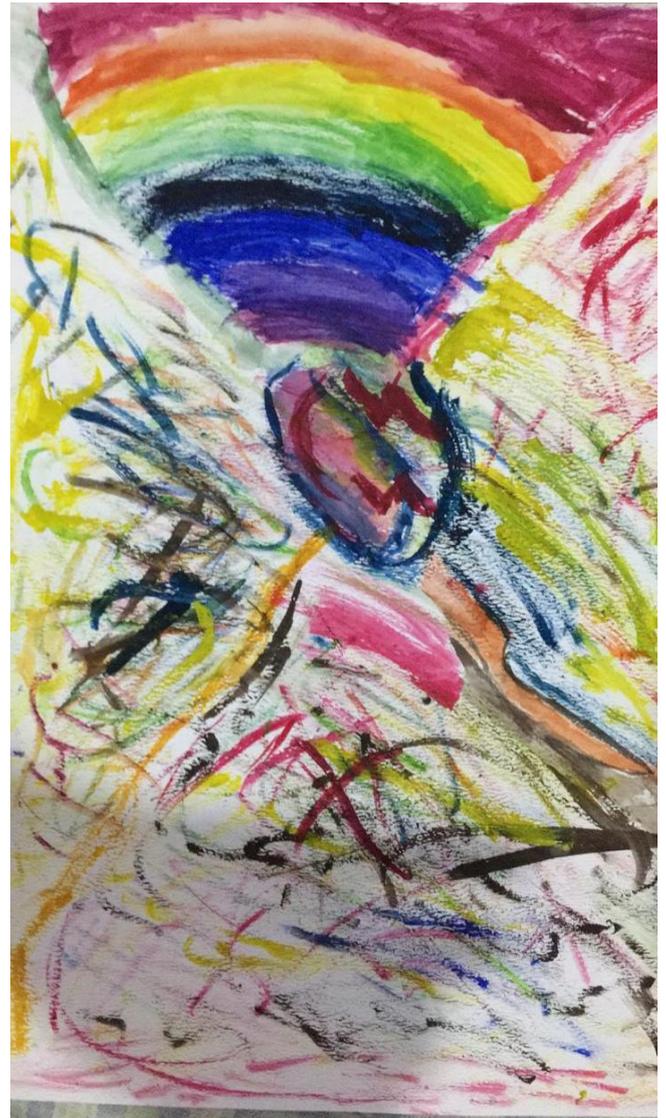
To relax at home.

**Q6) Is there something you don't like now? If your answer is yes, what is it?**

Yes, that I am not allowed to go out.

**Q7) What do you want to do after the lockdown (and you are allowed to go out)?**

The first thing that I want to do is to have a walk in the streets.



# POPOKI'S EASY POGA

Lesson 146 This month's theme is easing our eyes!



1. First, as always, sit up straight and look beautiful.
2. Now, place your hands with the heels resting gently over your eyes. Take a deep breath and enjoy the pressure and warmth.
3. Next, using your fingertips, gently press the area just under your eyebrows. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat, but be careful not to press too hard.
4. Now, bring your fingertips to press on your temples. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat. Are you still breathing deeply?
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.

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## Please join us!



Next Po-kai: 2020.7.21 @ zoom! 18:30~\*

\* Contact Popoki for the link

8.9? Hiroshima/Nagasaki Day Skype to discuss nuclear issues in Japan, U.S., Guam

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

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

Book Suggestion from Popoki's Friends

Otsuchi-cho (July, 2019). *"Ikiru Akashi – Iwateken Otsuchi-cho Higashi nihon daishinsai kirokushi"* (Testimony of Living: A Record of the Great East Japan Earthquake in Otsuchi-cho, Iwate Prefecture). Editorial Supervision: Otsuchi-cho Board of Education, others.

## Popoki in Print

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## What Popoki Means to Me

Eva Blenesi



It's been more than a decade since I came across POPOKI and ever since I have had a warm spot in my heart for HIM.

POPOKI is a great character: funny, playful and extremely witty and full of inventivity. His character is a rare combination of the playfulness of a curious cat and of a constant homo ludens full of curiosity, always open to the world, with unpredictable and autonomous mindset. So it is hard to know at all whether HE is a tiny cat endowed with the wisdom of a thoughtful, deep philosophical person or a fragile person in the skin of a creature with a deep sensitivity and deep understanding of the world. One thing is for sure: POPOKI is not an animal per se, rather an ANIMA or ANIMUS or both.

If we let ourselves be dragged into his created world, in his playful universe HE becomes an immense source of energy and a constant source of inspiration for us and above all magnificent company in encouraging us how to look at things from a different angle ready to reinvent ourselves and open up for the OTHER and for the ills that we witness day by day. Popoki is also a tiny piece of peace for me, not a steady island of peace, but rather a very mobile and alive spot, creating a space for fun where ANIMA and ANIMUS are pacified and are happily playing with each other thus ANIMATING and moving out of the box everything and everybody that surrounds us.

POPOKI is an energizer, thought provoking creature, a reminder with a playful gesture of a tiny paw that living and giving, caring and sharing can be a constant source of renewable energy stemming from joyful love.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:ronniandpopoki@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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# THANK YOU FROM POPOKI!