

May it be a year of hope, smiles and peace!

Thanking you for your continued support in the coming year!

Popoki Peace Project

## **Popoki' s Resolutions for 2021!**

1. Take positive action to create a non-violent and peaceful world!
2. Treasure our friends and all of our encounters, make new friends, learn from one another, and strengthen our connections!
3. Continue our work to support people affected by the 2011 East Japan disaster and other disasters!
4. Continue our work on peace and health, safety/security and feeling safe!
5. Be aware and interested in the world we live in, close and far away. Share our thoughts, feelings and impressions with one another and the world!
6. Bring a little bit of joy into the lives of those around us and share our joy!
7. Work to maintain our own health and well-being, and help our families, friends and communities to stay safe.



January! When it's cold, Popoki has a warm drink, finds a warm blanket, and shares a smile! What do you do?



## Popoki's Hot News!



“Popoki’s Mask Gallery – Living the Covid-19 Pandemic”  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjT1ZjVUsm8&t=3s>

### Piece of Peace



One of Popoki's friends, *Evanyan*, sent the following piece of peace.

"It was a lonely Christmas in 2020. My family was not in Kobe, and my friends here do not celebrate Christmas. I felt lonely celebrating Christmas alone. But then my friends arranged a Christmas celebration for me on the night of 25th December. They even gave me a Christmas present. It was a surprise. I was very happy, grateful and felt loved. If there were friends you can enjoy Christmas together, even though they are different, that is peace."

What sort of 'peace' did you encounter today? Please let us know by sending a message to Popoki's e-mail: [ronniandpopoki \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:ronniandpopoki@gmail.com) !



## Thoughts on 17 January 2021\*

\* The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake struck at 05:46 on 17 January 1995.

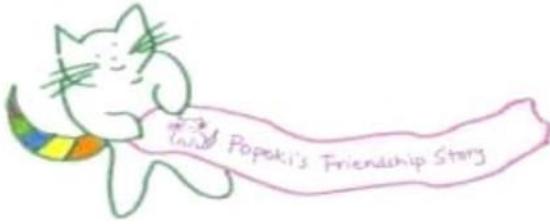
Ronyan

Twenty-six years might be a long time  
or short

That day, we reconfirmed  
The importance of life and connection.  
The pain of loneliness and fear  
Respect for nature  
The weight of small acts of kindness  
The warmth of a smile  
In the midst of this coronavirus pandemic  
We found them again

The loved ones we lost, the vanished city we loved  
Today, the brightness of the sun is  
Pulling us toward tomorrow  
We won't forget  
Together we can make a  
safer and kinder tomorrow  
Because we love all life





## \*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 a report about a conversation with Kobe University students about vulnerability and COVID-19. It has been summarized by Ronyan.

Q: Do you feel vulnerable with regard to COVID-19 now?

A: Since I am an international student, I am a little worried about my health. If I get infected and go to the hospital, I might not be given priority.

B: As an international student I try to avoid thinking that I am vulnerable. I have lots of friends here and life is good. But the healthcare system is very different from China, and I am not sure whether I can get good care. In China, I know what to do. Japan is different. I know that I need to stay home and telephone first, but it is complicated. I do not feel comfortable and am not sure I can get help from Japanese friends.

C: My mental health.... My source for energy and life is school. Without school (on-line because of COVID-19), it is mentally difficult to survive.

D: I came to Japan early in November. Before that I was in Jakarta. I was afraid that if I got sick, who would cover the costs? In Japan, too, I wonder who will be responsible if I get sick.

\*\*\* Brief response: The government covers the cost of treatment in Japan, but costs for hospitalization and transportation might be the responsibility of the patient. Kobe University, like many universities in Japan, has a fund for emergency loans for students, including costs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. If your application is approved, you can borrow money.



C: My parents had COVID but they recovered. After that, I stopped being afraid of getting it. I take care, but I'm not afraid any more and that makes me vulnerable.

B: I believe I can recover, but I am scared about the process. I don't want to say so, but I have to admit I feel vulnerable.

E: I feel vulnerable because of my neighbors. They look at me and wonder why I am not married. They know I am going to graduate school and not working. They think I go to school because I don't want to work. They think I don't need to go out if I'm a student, and that I should stay at home because I could be a threat to them. If I were a man, then I could go out and they wouldn't say anything. They think my not being married is some problem of my character. If I got infected, they would criticize me and my family. I want to know if this happens in other countries, too.

B: My mother works at the subway. Her work is important for people to get to work. I was worried about her, but she had to work. I don't think there was discrimination.

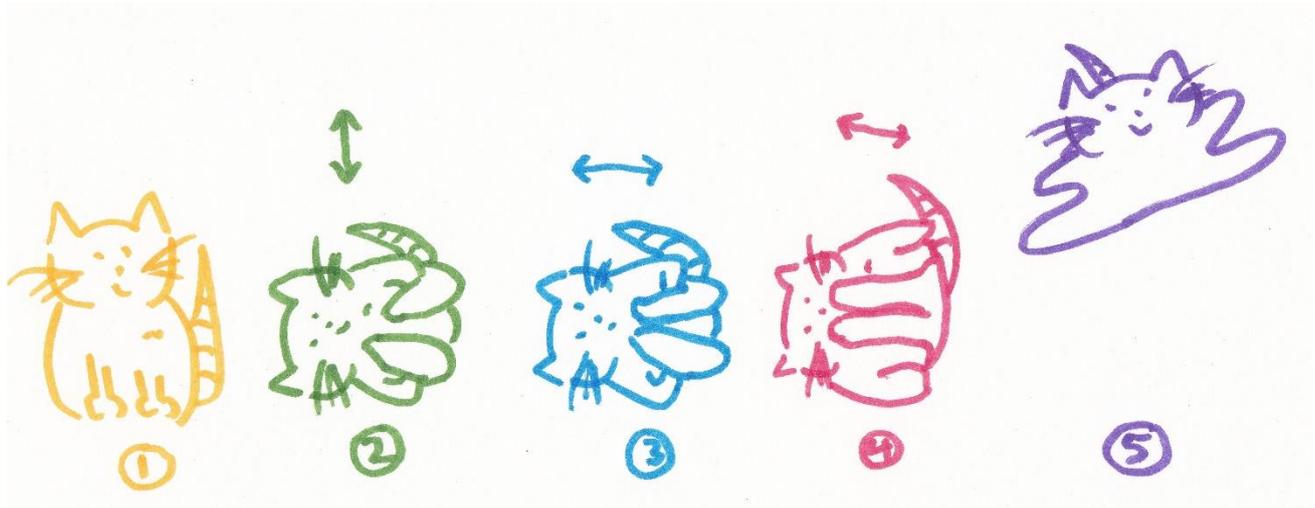
\*\* The students had an interesting conversation about marriage, too. Pressure from family, parents, friends and/or society to get married can make people feel vulnerable, too.

Popoki knows that especially during times like a pandemic, people might feel worried or unsafe. As a cat he can't do very much, but he is happy to listen and to help us share our concerns and try to support each other.



# POPOKI'S EASY POGA

Lesson 153 This month's theme is abs and relaxation!



1. First, as always, sit up straight and look beautiful.
2. Now, lie on your back with your knees bent. Hold onto your thighs or knees and gently rock to your left and then to your right.
3. Next, still holding your legs, try rocking toward your head and then toward your tail.
4. Okay! Now straighten your legs so they are vertical to your body and put your arms to your sides. Try rocking so that your bottom comes up off the floor, and then gently putting it back down.
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: 2020.2.1 @ zoom\* & Ponenkai! 19:00~\*\*

\* It is always the same link but please contact Popoki if you need it.

2.26 (Tentative) Workshop with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students at Ofunato Kita Elementary School  
3.10-31 (Tentative) Exhibition: "Listen to me! These are our dreams!" Fifth grade students from Ofunato City. Sponsor: Ohanashi Kororin; Support: Ofunato City Board of Education, Kobe University Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies; Cooperation: Popoki Peace Project. Venue: Ofuna Port.

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

Emmanuel Haruna

I suddenly focus on my beloved country-NIGERIA whenever I think of or take part in the *Popoki Peace Project*, including visiting the Orphanage Homes, the homeless, caring for the elderly, and awareness of disaster management.

Since the rise of "Boko Haram" (*western education is forbidden*) jihadist militia in 2002, peace has been expunged from our dictionary, as the residents of Northern-Nigeria, where I was born, *sleep-no-more*. Many residents continuously live in fear of being killed or brutally murdered by the Jihadist militia, including the young and the elderly. The famous atrocities were the abduction of 276 Chibok schoolgirls and the recent 344 schoolboys from Katsina State's Government Science Secondary School. In addition to a few other abductions and murders. Poverty and unemployment have risen in this situation in the country, as people were afraid to go to their farms and work in some remote areas where security forces were lacking. There is a far-fetched solution to lasting peace, either from the government, the local community or the international community.

I feel so sad to be here in Japan enjoying peace, when it's really hard to find peace in my country. I wish to become a political leader or a technocrat one day and **PEACE! PEACE!! PEACE!!!** will be my "watch-word". My sincere message to Popoki family is that, *let peace be the regular air we breathe!*



**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!**