



In Kobe, where Popoki lives, the season from autumn to winter is when apples are especially delicious. Popoki likes slightly tart apples. How about you? What kind of apples do you like? Let's eat a lot and be genki to meet the winter!

## Popoki's Hot News!



“Popoki’s Mask Gallery – Living the Covid-19 Pandemic”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjT1ZjVUsm8&t=3s>

Popoki’s House

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8OCzg64oH8>

Let’s make a Peace Pakupaku with the cat, Popoki

<https://youtu.be/FoT4pCWWRnQ>

NEW!

### Piece of Peace

One of Popoki's friends, Shiori-nyan, sent the following piece of peace.

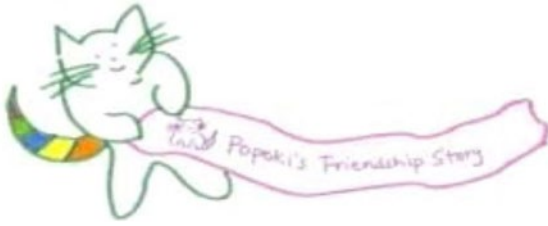
“Peace for me is...

‘When people love and are loved by each other.’

The relationship between people begins there.”



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) !



## \*Popoki's Interview\*

Mereoni-nyan  
(Mereoni Chung)

\* 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 strong message about nuclear, climate and COVID from a friend in Fiji!

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## November 2021 – Nuclear thoughts

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### what colour is nuclear?

When I think of the colour of nuclear, I see in my mind a big burning light. A colour of light that cuts unforgivingly through a timeless Pacific moment. A colour that pulls the ocean horizon in, towards my feet, close up and right in front of me. A colour that blinds, and leaves me in fear. Nuclear is light that diminishes.

### what colour is peace?

A living blue. It's the colour of a calm day connecting with the surface of the ocean. The colour of the sky above our heads and the waters at our toes sharing a harmony in one mood. There's a feeling when you stand before the vastness of the great blue ocean, which speaks to you about your place, your role, your purpose in the bigger shared living of life. That is peace, knowing that you have a part in the goodness of living.

### who you are,

My name is Mereoni Chung  
Hello and Bula from Fiji,  
I am a Fijian feminist,  
An ocean paddler,  
And a lover of rugby, nature and culture.

## what you are doing,

I am worrying about the Pacific Ocean. Everyday, I wake up with an intense awareness of the environment around me. The Ocean at my doorstep, the waves of powerful ocean interests floating into the harbour. The effects of climate change including warming oceans, sea level rise, and ocean acidification continue to disproportionately impact Pacific peoples. Yet, there are commercial mining companies, pushing Pacific Governments to sponsor their deepsea mining activities for economic blue benefits within Pacific Exclusive Economic Zones, and areas beyond national jurisdiction. I am part of a Pacific network of ocean minders/deep sea minders, and we are joining a global call to ban deepsea mining. You can join our voice by signing on our petition to stop deepsea mining at <https://www.pacificblue.org/>

For me, someone has taken a moment to place in front of my young eyes the story of the nuclear Pacific. I recall those videos of the explosion high in the sky, just above the ocean islands. Images I grew up watching at different stages in my life, as part of understanding what is going on around me, the politics, the weather, our problems & our solutions, our leaders, and their leaders, all happening in my home that is the Pacific.

## why you are doing it

The Pacific Ocean is under threat from pollution, plastic waste, nuclear waste, Fukushima Daiichi nuclear water waste, biodiversity destruction, and overfishing. We must act now to defend ocean integrity from these destructive corporate interests by governments and big corporations. Our lives depend on the health and respect for our ocean environment.

Right now there is the urgent need to join a movement that calls out and stops the exploitation of oceans. We have to demand that our leaders be brave and have courage in their leadership to make decisions that protect and enhance the integrity of nature, and do not repeat the history of wars, nuclear tests in the Pacific, and threats to Pacific Island sovereignty under an enduring geopolitical positioning by big states.

We must choose leaders who stand up against big corporations, military states and sinister big powers whose absolute disregard and value for our Pacific lives is witnessed in their ongoing nuclear legacy in the region, their carbon emissions, and their drive to plunder the last of the earth's natural resources in the ocean.

I am a Pacific Island woman, I have role to play to protect the oceans.

## The world is thinking about COVID - why is it important to think about nuclear too?

COVID is an all-encompassing vulnerability. The last 2 years, COVID has seeped into our lives, intensifying our daily experiences with existing vulnerabilities and on-going life challenges. COVID made available things that we never knew we could have, and took many things we thought we had secured. The outlook ahead remains uncertain, but maybe that was always the case.

The crisis of COVID has lessons to learn from the nuclear politics.

The nuclear legacy is not in the past, the nuclear moment reinvents itself in our daily politics. The pressures and injustices of political decision-making that robbed Pacific Islanders then, now and in the future, continues to permeate. Even today, we are under threat of nuclear wastewater being released into the Pacific Ocean from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant. The Government of Japan, with the support of some scientific experts who claim the nuclear wastewater is safe for release, has announced plans to release 1million tonnes of radioactive wastewater into the Pacific. This is so devastating and concerning, and a continued disregard for Pacific lives, values, and respect for nature.

Decisions on who gets to live or die, government policies that govern acceptable deaths, the disregard for the value of life, and the lack of visioning of a better more equitable world. Who gets to decide?

In every crisis we face now, there are lessons well taught through the destructiveness of the Pacific nuclear legacy, which should offer us today some solutions. Though at times these may elude our leaders, we can never deny what we know and saw tested among us. We have to remind our leaders and each other that no one can be left behind in this pandemic and the climate emergency. We must secure our right to determine what happens to us.

It's that never changing image of nuclear destruction that is locked in our journey, that makes me stop and wonder how COVID will impact the generation of Pacific islanders to come – the virus and the politics.

## Most of Popoki's friends are in Japan, but there are many all over the world. What is your message for them?

We are living in very uncertain times. The climate crisis is escalating, and the pandemic has stopped us in our tracks, yet the long-standing inequalities that have existed through the decades persist.

We can find solace in unity and shared actions that lessen the burden of the nuclear legacy, climate change impacts, and the pandemic. We have to not forget our histories, so that we cannot repeat them - the harm and the destruction. We have to bring justice. We can act more and talk more together in big waves and small waves, about our journeys, our common heritage, and our shared future. Teach each other about our experiences now, those of our families past and those of the future.





# POPOKI'S EASY POGA

Lesson 163 This month's theme is strengthening our whole body!



1. First, as always, sit up straight and look beautiful.
2. Now, stand on your knees with your right hand touching your right foot and left hand stretched high in the air! Now, like a plane circling in the sky, bring your right hand up and your left hand to your left foot! Repeat 6 times!
3. Next, start from the top of a push-up. Keeping your right arm and left straight, can you bring your left arm up into the air? How about raising your left leg? Hold, and then try the other side!
4. Okay! Now clasp your hands together and stretch your arms behind your back. With your feet in a wide stance, slowly bend forward and look through your legs! Raising and lowering your arms feels good, so give it a try!
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: 2021.12.18 @ zoom\* 19:00~ Online Ponenkai!

\*Preparation: Bring something that for you is the "taste of peace"!

Everyone is welcome. We always use the same link, so send an email if you need it.

2022.2.23 (around this time) Online workshop with children from Ofunato Elementary School.

More information in the next issue!

Reading Suggestions 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.

•アレキサンダー ロニー&桂木聡子 (2020)「被災体験後「今」を表現する : 絵から読み取れる被災ナラティブ」『国際協力論集』27(2)、17-32 (2020年1月発行) [http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/infolib/meta\\_pub/detail](http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/infolib/meta_pub/detail)

• Alexander, Ronni (2021) "The Meaning of Art in Disaster Support: Stories from the Popoki Peace Project" *Journal of International Cooperation Studies*, 28(2), 1-22. [http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/infolib/meta\\_pub/detail](http://www.lib.kobe-u.ac.jp/infolib/meta_pub/detail)

## Popoki in Print

\* Back issues of Popoki News: [http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/archives\\_e.html](http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/archives_e.html)  
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- “Voice for Peace made into a book” Masashi Saito. (in Japanese) *Kobe Shimbun*, 2012.1.19
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- “If we all participate, something will change! Reflecting on Palestine” *THE YMCA* No.607 June 2010, p.1 (YMCA Japan Monthly Newspaper)
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- *Yujo wo kangaete – Ningen to, Neko to, soshite Jibun to,* ‘*RST/ALN*, No.259 2009.6.28, p.11
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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

**Rebecca-nyan**

### Popoki's Gentle Art Activism

Everywhere I go, I tell people about Popoki. Last August, I was able to travel to California to visit my mother in her senior home. She was nearing the end of her life and I knew I had to see her. The trip was not easy: a PCR test, a long wait at the airport, a semi-quarantine when I got to San Francisco (and a much more difficult quarantine when I got back to Japan). But I'm very thankful that I was able to go. The nurses and care-givers at my mother's senior home were very understanding and helpful...they let my sister and me visit every day because we had "vaccine passports." (Most staff and visitors had to take a rapid-PCR test every day).

It was a difficult, but a very special time. And I again felt grateful to Popoki for reminding me that there is an "Oasis of Peace," or safe space even when we feel isolated, fearful or anxious about what will happen next. My mother and I talked a little, joked a little, and while we were watching a segment from Sesame Street on TV about baby chicks, she suddenly said, "Never eat baby chicks!...I ate one once!" I promised her that I never would do such a thing and told her that Popoki and friends would be keeping an eye on me to make sure!

While I was visiting the "assisted care" home where both of my parents spent their last years, I saw and felt again how important art and music and other non-verbal forms of expression are for all of us. Every day the care-givers would help elderly people who are ill or suffering from dementia come to the "common room" for an art or music program. One day, I heard a talk (via zoom, available to all of the residents in the home) by one of my favorite artists, Betty Sayre, an African American woman artist who has worked all her life to imagine and create powerful images of "Black women" in America. Another day, I found myself watching another "zoom" activity led by a woman playing the guitar and singing. We listened to some of our favorite old folk songs...songs my father taught us when we were little and that we all sang together. Even though I was slowly "saying goodbye" to my mother, I felt peace and a warm sense of connection. I thought about how Popoki always creates spaces for art and music, for sharing stories and a sense of peace. I have several older friends in Japan who are ill and need such an "Oasis of Peace" where they can feel safe and connected.

The last three days I was there, I told the staff I wanted to stay with my mother in her room. I told them “I’m used to sleeping on the floor as I live in Japan!” Every day I learned a little more about the amazing work that the caregivers (almost all “women of color”) do all day, every day. I felt truly humbled and truly grateful. After my mother passed away, I started to think about what I would give to them, how I could thank them for all that they did. That’s when I remembered Popoki’s Mask Gallery and had the idea of asking Ronni and Popoki if we could use one of Popoki’s masks and make masks to give all of them as a thank you gift! When I told the head nurse about my idea he was really happy to hear it. So, I am still thinking about this idea. And now I am very happy to hear that there will be a new book, *Popoki’s Mask Gallery*. One way or another, I want to thank Popoki and all of the amazing caregivers of the world. Thank you Popoki!



## 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)

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