

Popoki



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

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It's spring, the season of flowers and new greenery! Please join Popoki in taking a deep breath and bringing spring into our hearts!

Popoki's Hot News!



Thank you for your help!

Popoki's Friendship Story - Our Peace Journey Born out of the Great Northeastern Japan Earthquake is out and in bookstores!

This is the record of our 'Popoki's Friendship Story Project'. Some of the proceeds go to help recovery. (Published by Epic 2012, color, 64 pages, A5 size, bilingual in Japanese and English, 1500 yen including tax). It is available through your local bookstore,

amazon.co.jp, Epic, or the Popoki Peace Project. Please contact us for additional information.

Recently we went to Kobe Eiko Church and friends bought 41 copies! Thank you!!!

←It is on sale at the Kobe YMCA, too!



Pieces of Peace

One of Popoki's friends, Yoriko-nyan, an active member of the Kobe YMCA, sent the following piece of peace:

Peace I found in a YMCA gathering with people from 20 countries:
The moment our eyes meet and we smile while sitting in a circle listening to the guitar; the moment when a caring phrase that eases the tension of a hot discussion makes us laugh; the silence when we bow when someone says, "Let's pray."

Please contribute a bit of peace! What sort of 'peace' did you encounter today? Please let us know by sending a message to Popoki's e-mail.

We have many activities planned for this spring!

Please join us!



About joining Popoki Meeting "Thinking of Life"

Tadashi Shimizu

* Participants were asked to bring something that represented 'life' using their five senses. We divided into three groups: Japanese only, English only, and English & Japanese. Each group had both Japanese and international members.

I joined Popoki meeting "Thinking of LIFE" on March 11, 2012, one year since the catastrophic earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters. When we divided into groups, I took part in "Japanese and English group" with several international students studying in Japan.

In first group work, we discussed the meaning of "Life, Living, and Birth". Although we were not able to agree on one definition for each term, I enjoyed the differences in our understanding "Life and Living" and felt the difficulty of transmitting my opinion.

After a break, we shared what we had brought that made us "feel life" and told episodes about them from our lives. These included such items as something that represented childhood memories of a



much-loved grandmother, the picture of a close friend, and picture of one participant's daughter as representative of life going on to the next generation. During this discussion I felt that life is ongoing from the past to the future. Unfortunately, I was not able to convey all my thoughts in English, but I think my idea was represented by the presentation of the 'Japanese only' group. I regret to say I cannot explain to you about our display.

In this Po-poki meeting, I felt that each person has different feelings about life. If I have an opportunity, I'd like to join Po-poki meeting again.



3.11 Flying Kites for Hope (Suma Beach, Kobe)



On 3.11 there were events held all over the country to remember the disaster. Popoki joined an event held by the YMCA.

People at YMCAs throughout Japan sent their hopes flying high with their kites. The weather was not very nice, and the photos are hard to see, but many people participated, making an event full of hope!



Popoki in Fujiidera School for Children with Special Needs

suzanka

This time Popoki and I have visited Osaka Furitsu Fujiidera Shien Gakkou (Osaka Prefecture Fujiidera School for Children with Special Needs), located in a countryside area between Osaka and Nara. We spent a wonderful time, being welcomed by a collective of amazing children and teachers.

Normally I give English classes called "Let's play with English" for fourth- and fifth-graders here at Fujiidera Shien Gakkou, but this time we've used this space and time for Popoki's Friendship Story. The class started with an introduction of Popoki and then continued with cat greetings to each child and teacher to become good friends.



When I held their hands, I could feel a warm response from each of the children. Then we went on with...yes! Popoki's Yoga...Poga!!



We decided to exercise specially our tails...right, left, up and down...and stretch our who~~~~le bodies. Then, when we felt good and refreshed, we have started to talk, feel and remember the big earthquake and tsunami in northeast Japan, which has just had its 1 year anniversary. When we say Earthquake and Tsunami...we all feel fear, but we also agreed that when we are sad or we fear, we can

feel much better if there is someone beside us...someone who can support and encourage us. This time our mission is to share our happiness and deliver energy and spirit to the children, adults and animal friends who live in disaster area.



So when the moment of creating started and we put the Popoki's cloths in front of the pupils, immediately they took their favorite color pen and began to draw. And after just about 20 minutes, we've got amazing pieces by young talented artists!

When I asked: "what did you create?"...each of them gave me an eager answer..." I

drew Tsutenkaku (Tsutenkaku tower), because I love this place in Osaka...", "I drew takoyaki. Because when I eat takoyaki I always become so happy. I also want to deliver takoyaki to children in northeast Japan!"; "I drew my favorite game character 'Super Mario', because when I see this picture I become happy again", etc. In other words...with our friends in the disaster area we want to share something that we like, something that makes us always pleased and happy.



When we were almost going to end, there was a special request for Popoki... "This time only 2 classes from our school were able to join Popoki's Friendship Story. We would like to keep this piece of Popoki's cloth for a while, to let our friends from other classes, also teachers and parents to continue to draw." So then, for a period of 1 month, there was made a space called "Popoki Exhibition" with the cloth, the Friendship Story book and some of Popoki's pictures to let people look, learn and continue with creating.

Thanks to Popoki's Friendship Story we made lots of new friends and we connected our ideas and dreams. Thank you Fujiidera Shien Gakkou and thank you Popoki!!



This visit I felt to be..."light warm pink" like the Japanese plum flower and "lively red" like the noon hot sun.



Popoki's Earthquake Support Interview (9)

Interview: Kyoko Mori

I interviewed Mr. Suzuki, a member of Y's Men's club, which is a YMCA supporters club, in Nagoya. He is also a member of the Kansai Shinsai support network group. The group mainly works for "Hisaisha" (those who have been afflicted by the disaster), support. They have already been to Miyagi, Iwate, and Fukushima four times since 3.11. And also they work for the people who move from "Hisaichi", places damaged by the disaster, in Aichi. I asked him about his activity and the situation after one year.

Mr. Suzuki: S, interviewer: K.

K: What kinds of support do you do in your group? Please introduce your group.

S: What we do and who does it varies according to the place. For example, in the case of Kamaishi, we went there in April. We made two groups. One was Buddhist monks and ministers who worked as a mental healthcare team. The other one was a clean-up team made up of church and YMCA members. In Minamisouma, clinical psychotherapists and speech therapists, etc. made a talking space for mothers and a play space for kids linked with local group. One of the groups was led by Mr. Okada. He is an elementary school teacher at Minamisouma and went to Kobe YMCA last November to talk about tsunami damage and radioactivity effects at Minamisouma.

In Aichi, for supporting the people who moved there from the disaster area, we cooperated with making a place to meet and communicate. There we mainly did volunteer work at the day-care center for kids. Many high school students and university students are doing volunteer at the day care center.

K: The activities are so wide-ranging, and there is such a variety of people are involved.

K: Do you find any changes during this year of activity?

S: Even though I don't want to say easily "Fukko" or reconstruction, Iwate and Miyagi are moving forward by public and private sector linkage. On the other hand, the situation of Fukushima is difficult to make "one" feeling of moving toward "Fukko" because of nuclear power issue.

K: Do you have any discovery using your five senses in the local areas?

S: Each story from the people living in local areas or moving from the disaster area really made me so sad. When I went to Ookawara town in Miyagi, a person there said, "I started organic farming to make safe food, but now I cannot sell my products because of the loss of confidence in the safety due to radiation." Other story was from a doctor in Fukushima. "The symptoms such as low fever, headache and nosebleed are increasingly in many kids. However, we cannot say for sure whether it is caused by radiation. (Similar symptoms appear with allergies, for example). So it is hard for us not to be able to explain the situation of the children to their mothers. In case of people who moved as a result of the disaster, one person said, "We (mother and children) are strangers, so we tend to stay at home." Another people said, "People cannot understand our situation and are prejudiced against us because

of radiation. They complain if the children just walk around, and we are afraid of causing problems. So we go and spend most of the day at the playground or outside, since staying at home makes us uneasy.”

K: Please tell me why you like to go to the disaster area.

S: It’s a typical answer, but I get power from the people who I meet there, although I go to try to support them. Another thing I enjoy is eating local foods. We try to choose the local food and buy at local shops. It is also other way to support the disaster areas.

And I think that the how people really feel and their real needs can be only known if we visit the area and meet the people. Otherwise I cannot learn what they are really thinking. They are not completely honest and open. That’s my way of thinking. So, I go to the local area and use my five senses to feel them and their situation. This is what I can do.

K: What do you think about the problem of the local disaster areas?

S: I think the issue of “*Hisaisha*” and “*Hisaichi*” will become more individual and deepen along with the passage of time. For example, sometimes the husband does not work even though the unemployment payments have stopped. Another case is a husband who goes back to his hometown by himself because he cannot find a job in the new location. The mother and child stay Aichi for their safety. There are many cases of divided families. Recently some “*Hisaisha*” are unwilling to be identified or recognized as “*Hisaisha*”.

These problems are not only the issue of “*Hisaisha*” and “*Hisaichi*”. These are linked with our social problems in different ways. So, I think it is important for “supporters” to connect the local issues with each one’s experiences.

K: Actually Popoki friendship story project values “connection,” which can be beyond time and place. I think it helps use to support each other as individuals, not necessarily as “supporters” or “*hisaisha*.” What you say makes me think we could establish new relationships.

K: This is my final question. What is most important to you in doing this work?

S: For example, “independence of women” is important in helping support refugees. The men do not work and do not do anything. Instead, the women have to do everything such as take care of children and elders. Women have to do domestic work, too. The situation was not totally the same with *Hisaisha* support, but there are many similarities. I think it is important to have a gender viewpoint and to be aware of people in socially weak positions.

K: Thank you for the interview. I can know the real situation what “*Hisaisha*” are facing. And I am impressed that your group involves such a variety of people. Maybe that is the key to being able to connect and respond to wide range of needs. I am happy that I was able to connect with you through the meeting in Kobe and get to know more about your work.



Volunteers at a communication program in Aichi. Front lower left is Mr. Suzuki.



Dance with Kids. They move from "Hisaichi" to Aichi. Lovely music, Marumaru Morimori!



A mother's group who are involved in organic farming has a workshop. Ookawa town in Miyagi



Popoki's Easy Poga

Lesson 46

This month's theme is balance! It can help you feel better in many different ways!



1. As always, begin with sitting up straight and making yourself look thin.
2. First, take a deep breath and stretch!!!!
3. Now, stand on your right leg and hold your left ankle with your right hand. Keep your balance by stretching your left hand and tail high.
4. Now change sides!
5. Did it? Time for the 'success pose'.

Congratulations! You have successfully completed Lesson 46. Do you feel refreshed? Please remember to relax, breathe, laugh and practice for 3 minutes every day.

Please join us!

Next Po-kai: 4.24 Kobe YMCA Rm. 306 19:00-20:50

- 4.13 Popoki at GSPIA! A report on the Popoki FriendshipStory Project at a conference on disasters at the University of Pittsburgh
- 4.19 Popoki welcomes new students! Kobe University, Takigawa Kinenkan 17:30-19:00 (in Japanese)
- 4.21 A report on the Popoki FriendshipStory Project at a study group on disasters at Kobe University 14:00-17:00 (in Japanese)
- 5.12 Popoki at Kio University, Nara 9:00-12:10 (Japanese)
- 5.26 Popoki at Bochibochi no kai, Osaka 18:00- (Japanese)
- 6.3 Nada Challenge? (tentative)
- 6.9 Popoki at Kodomo no sato (tentative)
- 7.7 HIV/AIDS event in Kobe
- November 'Peace and Health Event' HUHS



Popoki in Print

- “Hope on 60 meters of cloth” Etsuko Akuzawa. (In Japanese) *Asahi Shimbun* 2012.1.21
- “Voice for Peace made into a book” Masashi Saito. (in Japanese) *Kobe Shimbun*, 2012.1.19
- K. Wada. “Conversations with Ronni Alexander: The Popoki Peace Project; Popoki, What Color is Peace? Popoki, What Color is Friendship?” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* Vol.13, No.2, 2011, 257-263
- S. McLaren. “The Art of Healing”(Popoki Friendship Story Project) *Kansai Scene*. Issue 133, June 2011, p.10. kansaiscene.com
- R. Alexander. (2010) “The Popoki Peace Project: Creating New Spaces for Peace in Demenchonok, E., ed. *Philosophy after Hiroshima*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp.399-418
- 省窓: Column in *Kobe YMCA News*, No.606, 2011.1, p.1 (In Japanese)
- “What is Behind ‘Popoki, What Color is Peace?’ 1st in a series in “Tosabori Life” No.19 2010.10:4 (In Japanese)
- HORIKOSHI Takeshi. “Kokusai no mado” (article about Palestine) *Kobe YMCA News* No.604 2010.9-10, p.3
- “If we all participate, something will change! Reflecting on Palestine” *THE YMCA* No.607 June 2010, p.1 (YMCA Japan Monthly Newspaper)
- Hiroshima and the World: What Color is Hiroshima? Chugoku Shimbun Peace Media Center, http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/mediacenter/article.php?story=20100312140608602_en 2010.3.15
- FM COCOLO 76.5 ‘Heart Lines’ 2010.1.9 Japanese Interview: Ronni on Popoki in Palestine
- “Human Rights, Popoki and Bare Life.” *In Factis Pax Journal of Peace Education and Social Justice* Vol.3, No.1, 2009, pp.46-63 (<http://www.infactispax.org/journal/>)
- Nishide, Ikuyo. “Popoki, What Color is Peace? Lecture by Ronni Alexander.” “PPSEAWA” (Pan-Pacific and south-East Asia Women’s Association of Japan), No.63, 2009.12, p.5
- ‘Friendship’ No.2 2009.11 Itami City International/Peace Exchange Commission, Annual Events, p.1-2.
- ‘Not for But With...’ No.79, 2010.1 Notice of the Popoki Peace Challenge event. P.12
- ‘Nada’ notice of the Popoki Peace Challenge event, 2009.12, p.2
- ‘Yujotte...Kangaeru Ehon.’ *Asahi Shimbun* 2009.7.2 AKUZAWA Etsuko
- ‘Yujo wo kangaete – Ningen to, Neko to, soshite Jibun to,’ *RST/ALN*, No.259 2009.6.28, p.11
- ‘New Books: *Popoki, What Color is Friendship? Popoki’s Peace Book 2*’ (Rebecca Jennison) “Cutting-Edge,” Vol.35 2009.6, p.3
- ‘Thinking about Peace with a Cat: Second Peace Book Published.’ (SAITO Masashi) *Kobe Shimbun*, 2009.4.21
- ‘Popoki, What Color is Peace?’ *Kobe YMCA News*, 2009.3.1. No.593. p.2
- ‘Popoki, What Color is Trash?’ *Kobe YMCA News*, 2009.1.1. No.592. p.2
- ‘Tomodachi ni Natte Kuremasenkai,’ *RST/ALN*, 2009.2.22
- Popoki on the radio. <http://www.kizzna.fm/> Click on 6CH to hear the program and reading of Popoki in Japanese
- *Yasashii kara hito nann desu* Exhibition Organizing Committee ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights.’ Hyogo Buraku Liberation and Human Rights Institute. 2008.10. ¥500. For information contact: blrhyg@osk3.3web.jp
- “KFAW College Seminar: What Color is Peace for Women? Thinking about Peace, Violence and Gender with Popoki.” *Asian Breeze* No.54 October 2008, p.8 (Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women)
- *Kobe Shimbun* “Human Rights Declaration Exhibition Panels: 6 Local Hyogo Artists Illustrate all 30 Articles” 2008.10.8. p.10
- “An Interview with Dr. Ronni Alexander.” *The Newpeople*, Pittsburgh’s Peace and Justice Newspaper, Vol.38 No.9, October 2008, p.5
- “Nuclear Security is Inhuman Security – Dr. Ronni Alexander speaks about Hiroshima and Nagasaki.” *The Newpeople*, Pittsburgh’s Peace and Justice Newspaper, Vol.38 No.9, Oct. 2008, p.4
- Popoki in Pittsburgh. Check out the Remembering Hiroshima/Imagining Peace URL: <http://www.rememberinghiroshima.org/>
- * **Back issues of Popoki News:** http://popoki.cruisejapan.com/archives_e.html





What Popoki Means to Me



SOK Say

When the tsunami hit Japan on 11th March, 2011, accompanied by Rosa, who is currently a student in Japan, I was in Battambang, a far-flung province in Cambodia, for my PhD fieldwork. We arrived at the hotel room and I learnt of the disaster from the BBC and CNN. My wife a bit later gave me a call to tell me that there was a tsunami in Japan. It was a feeling of shock, dismay and concern. We were following up as the events unfolded on TV



until late at night and in the next few weeks. When we learnt of the nuclear-reactors, we were wishing for the best. It was good that the effects were not as bad as we had thought.

I landed in Japan on 6th October, 2003 as a total alien to the land. I have always been missing Japan now and then and still do ever since I left in late September 2005. Nostalgically, I had oftentimes chatted with my wife how my student life in Japan was like, how I saw Japan and the Japanese, our future trip to Japan, and above all the part of Japan I love the most – Kobe. There was a feeling of connections and nostalgia. However, it was not until this disaster that I began to feel that I actually had a deep feeling of connections with this land. When I watched disastrous events unfolding elsewhere on TV, I had a feeling of concern for the affected and always wished them all the best. However, when I watched this tsunami on TV, there was a feeling of direct connections to the event. It was like this happened to the land where I used to live and called home and to people whom I knew and interacted. When I first met my PhD supervisor here in Australia in early 2009, he congratulated me for having another home – Australia, saying that I had three homes now: Cambodia as my first home, Japan my second home, and Australia my third home. I simply wore a smile. It was this disastrous event that brought me emotionally much closer to Japan, and yes, it truly is my second home.

On the 21st March, 2011, when I went back to Phnom Penh from my fieldwork, Rosa and I went to the Japanese Embassy in Cambodia to express our condolences with some

flowers and small contributions. We were amazed to see that many people were queuing up to express their condolences – some with packages/boxes of clothes, many with a bunch of flowers and all with financial contributions (big or small). We overheard many people saying: “Japan helps us a lot, so it is time that we show our support to and help Japan in return”. Probably, what surprised us the most was the fact that many high school students went in groups to offer their condolences and small cash contributions as well. These kids, as best as I guess, had never landed in Japan, but they too were showing their solidarity with Japan and the Japanese people. Professor Alexander correctly strikes the note to say, “Connecting with others begins from your heart.”¹ Many of the people who went to the embassy had never been to Japan, but they had a heart, and that was enough for them to connect with the Japanese people. And connections no doubt bring about relief, hope, joy, friendship,

strength, and above all positive peace.

All in all, we wish all the best to Japan and all the affected. As resilient individuals, you all will soon once again rise and stand strong on your feet. And we wish you the best of the best in this recovery journey. Also, all the best to Popoki in facilitating this connecting and healing process.



¹ Alexander, Ronni. *Popoki's Friendship Story*, 28.

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 have recently published a new 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, What Color is Peace? Popoki's Peace Book 1* 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. It is also available at Joseph-Beth Booksellers, Pittsburgh, PA.

***Popoki, What Color is Friendship? Popoki's Peace Book 2* is not yet available at these bookstores.**

Some ways to purchase *Popoki, What Color is Peace? Popoki's Peace Book 1* and *Popoki, What Color is Friendship? Popoki's Peace Book 2* 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)

Contributions are always welcome!

Popoki Peace Project popokipeace-at-gmail.com

<http://popoki.cruisejapan.com>



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