



The
May
2024
Issue



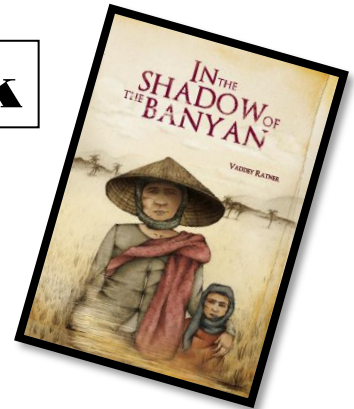
Vaddey Ratner

Volunteer Work

Helping People



Kingdom of Cambodia



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Helping People

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Bonus & Double Bonus: Free Palestine!



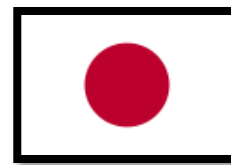
Do you know the country called **Cambodia** (カンボジア)? It is in Southeast Asia. The capital is **Phnom Penh**. The language is called **Khmer**. It is famous for the ancient Hindu-Buddhist temple complex called **Angkor Wat** (アンコール・ワット). *Guinness World Records* says that Angkor Wat is the largest **religious** structure in the world!

However, not too long ago, very bad things happened in Cambodia. People are still having **trouble** now. Let's learn more so maybe we can help!

In 1975, a group called the **Khmer Rouge** (クメールルージュ) took over the **government**. They became the rulers of Cambodia from 1975-1979. They **killed** about 25% of Cambodia's people in four years. They pushed people out of **cities** to do hard work in camps in the **countryside**. This time and these places were so bad that they are called '**Killing Fields**' (キリング・フィールド). One group that the Khmer Rouge killed were **teachers**. People with an **education** are harder to **control**, after all. Have you ever heard the famous phrase, "The pen is mightier than the **sword**."? 「ペンは剣よりも強し」

The children who grew up during this time could not go to school. They could not learn **properly**. They couldn't have a safe family life. So now, they have a hard time becoming parents to their own children. And even now Cambodia does not have enough teachers. So many were killed, and then, the children couldn't learn or become new teachers.

Had you ever heard of the **Cambodian Genocide** (カンボジア虐殺) before? It is a very important event to understand. We all have new things we must learn in and outside of school. Let's find out what we can do...



Helping People



Japan



In May 2022, Japanese **volunteer** groups came to talk at Keika Girls' Junior High School at our old **campus**. Two were **local** groups: Bunkyo Council of Social Welfare (文京区社会福祉協議会) and Bunkyo Volunteer Support Center (文京ボランティア支援センター). They **inspired** students to volunteer in our school area. For example, cleaning up Hakusan Shrine or visiting local elementary schools to **mentor** younger students.

The other group was called IVUSA (NPO 法人国際ボランティア学生協会公式ウェブサイト). It means: International **V**olunteer **U**niversity **S**tudent **A**ssociation. They talked about the **dark** history and big teacher problem in Cambodia. They showed us how their volunteer groups have been visiting Cambodia to **build** schools since 2008. In the new schools, the volunteers **teach**, play with, and **learn** from the children while working with local people. They also collect money and **supplies** to bring from Japan to Cambodia. It is amazing that these volunteers are both teachers and students at the same time. They can use both **perspectives** to help people. How can WE use our **unique** power to help others? We just moved into a new school building ourselves!



In fact, I (Sheila) already knew a little about this topic. Why? At Kalamazoo College, the new first year class all reads a book together. So, when I went off to college there in 2013, I read a special book. It was *In the Shadow of the Banyan* by Vaddey Ratner. A **banyan** is a type of tree. It is a story about the **author** growing up in Cambodia during the 1970's. She came to our college to tell us about her book and her family history.

Vaddey's family was **royalty** in Cambodia but then the Khmer Rouge took their house, killed her father, and **forced** the family to work in a camp. **Eventually**, Vaddey and her mother came to the United States as **refugees** (難民) in 1981. Now, she lives where I am from: Washington D.C. It was a very **painful** and **moving** story. In fact, one new student at my college was a student from Cambodia. He had **graduated** from a school named after Vaddey's father, Prince Sisowath Ayuravann. Education truly is **precious**, isn't it? Let's **treasure** Keika Girls' School & our new school building!



Volunteer Work

Helping Animals

Japan



Do you know this animal? It is a **tanuki** (たぬき、狸)! The official English name for tanuki is 'Japanese Raccoon Dog.' This can be **confusing** for us English speakers because **raccoons** (洗い熊, あらいぐま) are a different animal, and so are regular dogs (犬、いぬ). A tanuki is NOT a mix of common raccoons and dogs. It is also NOT a **badger** (穴熊、あなぐま) OR a **weasel** (鼬、いたち). So, then... what is it?!

It is a **furry** animal that eats **plants** and small animals. They live in pairs or in small groups. They are **nocturnal** which means they sleep during the day and stay awake at night. They are usually brown with special **markings** on their faces. It looks like they are wearing eye masks.

It is hard to name tanuki properly in English because so many countries use the language. Each country can have many different types of animals so we cannot always match the words. And most importantly, tanuki are **unique** to Japan! So, I will use the Japanese word from now on.

Recently, the Japanese word 'tanuki' has entered popular English. Why? It is because of Japanese **pop culture** like anime and video games. For example, Nintendo has added 'Tanooki Mario' in many Super Mario games. There is even a 'White Tanooki Mario' with extra power and **protection**. White tanuki are very **rare** and beautiful in real life! Or do you know the hit game Animal Crossing (どうぶつの森)? An important character named Tom Nook (たぬきち) and his family Timmy (まめきち) and Tommy (つぶきち) are all tanuki! **Traditional** Japanese culture has made tanuki popular too. Have you ever seen a tanuki **statue** outside of a store? They are **good luck**! Tanuki are believed to be both **tricky** and **jolly**. They can **shapeshift** and use **magic**, usually with **leaves**. Yet, they **trust** too much and are NOT very **clever** like **foxes** (狐、きつね).

Why do tanuki need help if they are **beloved** in Japan? Humans are **destroying** their homes! People are taking their space for golf courses, houses, and shopping malls. So, because of this, tanuki must live near humans. Many of them must eat human food **trash**. Then, many tanuki get hit by cars! They become **roadkill**. Sometimes their **fur** is used for **clothing** too. How can we help? Let's protect **nature** by picking up trash we see outside. We can also sign **petitions** to STOP new buildings on animals' **land**. Please watch the Studio Ghibli movie by Isao Takahata called *Pom Poko* (1994) [平成狸合戦ぽんぽこ]. We can understand tanuki!



Helping Animals

Australia



Koalas (コアラ) are unique Australian animals. I (Erin) think they might be our most famous animals. What do you think? Are koalas or **kangaroos (カンガルー)** more famous? Some people call them 'koala bears'- but this is wrong, they are NOT bears! Just koala is best.

The name 'koala' was originally a word in an **Aboriginal Australian** language. It meant 'no drink'. This was because the aboriginal people never saw the koalas come down from their trees to drink. Actually, koalas do come down and drink water sometimes. But they get most of their water from **eucalyptus leaves (ユーカリの葉っぱ)**. Although, eucalyptus leaves have very low **nutritional value**. They eat for 3-4 hours, and sleep in trees for about 20 hours a day. Eucalyptus leaves are also **poisonous**. Koala mothers train their babies to be able to eat them. This is a **rare** skill. So, they don't have to fight other animals for their food, which is great. But it's not great when there are no eucalyptus leaves!

Eucalyptus leaves are the only things Koalas can eat. This is a big problem! It is a big reason why Koalas are **endangered (絶滅危惧)**. Koalas are so cute but not so smart. Some of them can only **recognise** a few trees in the area they live in. If they lose their tree, they might find another eucalyptus tree and not even realise it is food. If there are eucalyptus leaves on the ground, instead of on the tree, some koalas won't know, 'This is food!'. If their home is cut down for **buildings**, or if it burns down from a **bushfire (山火事)**, they won't have a place to live, or anything to eat. And sadly, these trees can **burn** very easily. The eucalyptus **oils** in the tree are highly **flammable**. And they are very oily trees. If it gets too hot, they can even **explode**. When they explode, they send their oils and **seeds** flying to start more fires. And it gets very hot in Australia!

If you want to help Koalas you can give money at Saitama Children's Zoo (埼玉県こども動物自然公園)- the Koalas there come from Dreamworld, a theme park/zoo in my hometown. Or in Australia, of course, there are various zoos and **wildlife sanctuaries (保護区)** that help koalas. The most famous one is Australia Zoo on the Sunshine Coast, a couple hours north of me in Queensland. It is Steve Irwin's family's zoo. You can even buy a koala **stuffed animal** from the **WWF (World Wildlife Fund, 世界野生生物基金)** to help a real koala!

Junior High School students, please enjoy this year's Volunteerism Lecture (中学ボランティア講演会) on Saturday, May 18, 2024 in our new building!



Understanding the War Israel & Palestine

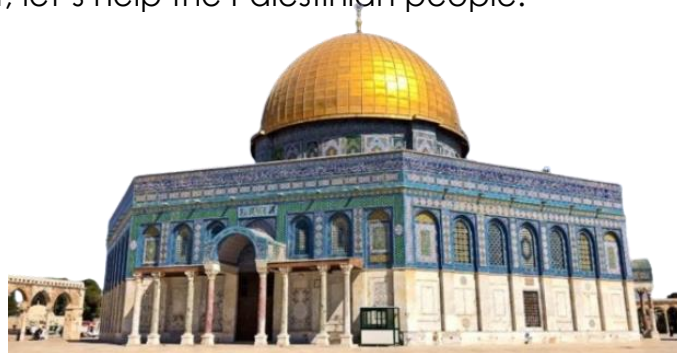


Do you know the famous city of **Jerusalem (エルサレム)**? It is a special, holy city for **Judaism**, **Islam**, and **Christianity**. Right now, it is **illegally** controlled by Israel, but it should be free for all! **Israel (イスラエル)** only became a country in 1948. Many **Jewish** people from all over the world wanted to make a home there after the **Holocaust (ホロコースト)** from 1941-1945. This is where millions of Jews across **Europe** were killed by the **Nazis**. They believed Israel was their home from a long, long time ago. Many knew the **Hebrew** language already.

However, people were already living there! They had been there for hundreds of years! They were Palestinian **Arab** people. They mostly spoke **Arabic** and were **Muslim** or **Christian**. The new Israeli people pushed the **Palestinians** out of their homes to make their own country. They only left a little land for the Palestinians, like **Gaza**. This event in 1948 is called *Al Nakba*, or the "**Catastrophe**." Before this, all **religions** had been able to live together **peacefully**.

The Israeli **military** still controls all the areas around **Palestine (パレスチナ)**, so people are NOT free. They cannot travel and it is not a full country. There has been dangerous fighting for years but now there is a full **war**. **Hamas (ハマス)** is a Muslim **resistance** group that controls Palestine. They want Palestine to be free and believe that **violence** is the best way, or maybe the only way left. They are officially fighting Israel after they took people from Israel **hostage** in October 2023.

NOT all Palestinian people are members of Hamas. Just like how NOT all Jewish people all over the world are **Israeli**. Some Jewish people in the U.S. are against the way that Israel treats the Palestinian people. They think that just like so many Jewish people died in the Holocaust, now Israel is doing the same thing by making a **genocide (民族大虐殺)** in Palestine. Israel is trying to **kill** the Palestinian people, their **language**, their **faith**, and their cultural **traditions**. I think the first thing we need is a '**ceasefire**' (一時休戦). This means both sides stop fighting right now. Then, more **negotiation** can happen. We don't know the perfect **solution** but first, let's help the Palestinian people.





Free Palestine!



How Can WE Help? Palestine & Japan



There are many events around Tokyo to **support** Palestine.

You can buy **traditional** Palestinian food and cultural **symbols** like the beautiful black and white **keffiyeh** scarf.

You can give money to groups that help the men, women, and children on the ground in Gaza right now. You can also **boycott!** This means that you do not buy things from **companies** that give money to Israel. For example, Starbucks or even Disney.

You can mix Japanese traditional culture with Palestinian culture. The Palestinian Obi Embroidery Project (パレスチナ刺繍帯プロジェクト) by Maki Yamamoto has been on NHK World News showing their beautiful kimono with Palestinian pattern obi by **refugee (難民)** women. They have also worked together with the **Embassy** of Palestine in Tokyo on events to raise money. After all, Japan as a country knows how **horrible** war can be.

You can make posts on **social media** (SNS) like the **world-famous** model Bella Hadid whose father was born in Palestine in the year of Al Nakba. Let's spread information!

"Hi, I am Sheila's friend Dena! I was born in the U.S., but my family is from Syria. However, my dad's mother and grandfather are Palestinian!

My great grandfather, Muhammad Izzat Darwazeh, was a big political activist and scholar. He was dedicated to the Arab nationalist cause and a member of groups that promoted Palestinian independence and unity with Syria. Even before the Holocaust, he was anti-Zionism and against the sale of Palestinian land to Jews! He was eventually exiled to Damascus, Syria, where he continued to write books and teach people about the history and importance of Palestine.

I think people around the world need to pay more attention to what is happening in Palestine. We need to listen to the Palestinian people calling for help. Israel has much support, but Palestinians have been left alone to suffer."



パレスチナ刺繍帯プロジェクト
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