

Earthsong Event: **"Dialogue and Commons"**

~Robin Allison's Performance in Kamakura~

Are you familiar with Earthsong, a co-housing community located in the suburbs of Auckland, New Zealand? Based on the principles of permaculture, it started in 1995, construction began in 1999, and for over 25 years, it has been self-governing by its 32 households.

I (Hikaru Ishii) visited it seven years ago and was shocked! I couldn't believe something like this could be realized! Not only is there a lifestyle in harmony with nature, but it's also self-governing through dialogue among the 32 households, whose opinions aren't always the same (it's rare for them to completely agree, after all).

This time, we've invited Robin Allison, the initiator of this project and an architect, to speak on the theme of "Dialogue and Commons."

Family, parent-child relationships, marriage, friendships, communities, wars, conflicts... no matter where we go, human relationships are our constant source of worry. To navigate these challenges, we need dialogue—listening to each other's opinions—rather than debates with clear winners and losers.

In an era where clear answers are unclear, such as the climate crisis and population decline, building a life together with people from diverse backgrounds (nationality, culture, origin, religion, etc.) will become increasingly important.

How can we foster dialogue in the realm of daily life? What kind of living environment (including buildings and the surrounding environment) can gently support this? Based

on the experiences of EARTHSONG, which has been practicing this for over 20 years, we hope this will be a time to explore our future ways of living.

Yuki Kamiya, who has lived in Earthsong for 20 years, will be the interpreter.

Following a presentation on Earthsong's case studies, we will hold a cross-talk session with Robin, Yuki Kamiya, and myself (Hikaru Ishii), the landlord of a small, village-like rental housing complex called "Chicchai Tsujido" in Tsujido, Fujisawa City. (I have found Earthsong to be a great source of inspiration for Chicchai Tsujido.)

Finally, there will be time for participants to network with each other. I hope this will be a place where people can think about the future of living in the Shonan area and where connections can be made.

■Event Details

【Date & Time】October 9th (Fri) 18:30-20:30

【Venue】NIHO Kamakura, 11-12 Onarimachi, Kamakura City, Kanagawa Prefecture 248-0012, 2F (2-minute walk from JR Kamakura Station West Exit)

【Participation Fee】3,000 yen (includes light refreshments)

【Capacity】30 people

[Keywords] Dialogue (not Debate), Commons, Self-governance

[Schedule for the day]

18:30~18:45 Participant introductions

18:45~19:45 Introduction to Earthsong by Robin (interpreted by Kamiya)

19:45~20:00 Introduction to Chichai Tsujido (by Ishii Hikaru)

20:00~20:30

Three-way discussion between Robin, Yuki Kamiya (interpreter and resident of Earthsong), and Ishii Hikaru

~21:00 Networking time

Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood (New Zealand)

Located in New Zealand's North Island, 40 minutes by train from Auckland and a 7-minute walk from the station (not rural, but a suburb like Shonan), this is NZ's first co-housing community with 32 households.

Permaculture is the basis of its design, and the community has been self-governing by its residents for over 25 years.

■Speaker Profile

Robin Allison

She studied architecture at the University of Auckland in the early 1980s and runs a design firm specializing in sustainable architecture. In 1995, she founded "Earthsong Eco-Neighbourhood" based on the principles of co-housing, eco-architecture, and permaculture. While fostering a culture of respect, participation, and collaboration, she leverages her experience as an architect to lead the entire process from development to construction of this innovative project, aiming to realize a more socially and environmentally sustainable living space. She led a wide range of roles, from vision building, consensus-based decision-making, group processes, and formulating design agreements, to contract management, budget management, and detailed supervision of construction work.

Currently based in New Zealand, she works to promote regenerative building materials and construction methods intended for environmental restoration and regeneration, while supporting community building in various locations, organizing seminars and workshops, writing, and consulting.

Yuki Kamiya

Earthsong Resident, 23 Years in NZ

Her main occupation is interpreter. Born in Japan, she grew up in Bangkok, Thailand due to her father's job transfer. Returning to Japanese schools from the relaxed environment of the tropics, she spent her student life with a strong sense of unease about the exclusiveness and competitive society that did not accept differences. Since becoming a working adult, she has been involved in environmental education, team-building corporate training, and coaching, and continues to search for a place where she can be herself. After starting a family, the difficulties of living in Japanese society, including the isolation of nuclear family parenting, a lack of connection and circulation in daily life, and gender and age biases, added to the challenges. In 2003, before the birth of her third child, she decided to emigrate to New Zealand. Through her child's Steiner kindergarten, she encountered Earthsong and found a "place" in this immigrant society based on DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion). Currently, she continues to practice sustainability primarily through her life at Earthsong, while also exploring a dual-residence lifestyle, combining it with living with her elderly mother in Japan. Her goal is to maintain a place where she can live grounded and secure, no matter where she is.

Hikaru Ishii

Landlord of Chichai Tsujido. Born in Tsujido, Fujisawa City, Kanagawa Prefecture. 13th generation landowner (part-time farmer, part-time landlord).

After graduating from the Faculty of Agriculture, Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology, he practices permaculture and organic farming.

He is committed to "creating communities where living things and people coexist."

* "Chicchai Tsujido," a rental housing complex resembling a small village. Phase 1 completed in 2023, Phase 2 completed in 2024.

* Organizer of "Maimi RICE COMMONS," a 900-tsubo (approx. 3,970 sq m) rice paddy project run by the community.

* Former representative of "EdiblePark Chigasaki," an 800-tsubo (approx. 2,640 sq m) membership-based community farm (2019-2025).

Haruko Matsumoto

8th year living in Kamakura.

After building her own home and moving there, she wanted to work locally and is now a salaried architect working as a project manager at Gitaku, a builder in the city. She enjoys connecting people and seeing the chemical reactions that occur. Seeking something to do with living together with local people, she took the second term of the Earth Song course a year ago.

Keiko Kubota

Lives in Chigasak.
An architect who "creates comfortable living."
Head of 5'st Architectural Design Office.
With the theme of "landscape and architecture," she aims to focus on sustainable living and weave connections with food, people, and the community.
I am a second-generation student of the Earth Song course.
* Graduated from the Permaculture Design Course @ Fujino
* Member of the Japan Institute of Architects and Kanagawa Heritage
* Instructor at Machida Hiroko Academy
* Representative of "Sunayama Tonbo," a fun way to clear sand from coastal cycling paths
* Conducts coastal activities such as "Clean & Green," which protects, cultivates, and creates coastal landscapes
* Board Member of the NPO Chigasaki Coastal Development Promotion Organization
* Favorite books: "The Drops of God" and "Oishinbo"

Organizers: Hikaru Ishii, Keiko Kubota, Haruko Matsumoto