

LETTER FROM TOTTO-CHAN (Tetsuko Kuroyanagi)

Toto - Chan: The little girl in the window is a great Japanese book. The National Book Trust (NBT) India has brought out this book in Hindi and Assamese and other language editions will follow soon. Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, the author of this book, the grown-up Totto-chan is a much loved person by the children of Japan. She travels world over to mix up with and inspire children in different countries. We at NBT have been inviting her for the last 2-3 years to come to India. This time also she would not be able to spare time. She has written a lovely letter in reply to our invitation. We reproduce extracts here below. (The NBT has translated and printed Totto-chan in 11 Indian languages).

I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to the people in India who have read and enjoyed my Totto-chan and I am very much moved by this fact I think that children's heart, teacher's hearts that understand children, parents' love for their children, and affection between friends--all these are truly universal even though there may be different in manners, customs, and other ways. For that reason, I am delighted to learn that my book will be read in many different schools.

As for your invitation to India, as much as I would like to accept the wonderful opportunity that you have offered me, I regret to tell you that I am not able to come because this year's schedule is already full.

I have just finished a play in Tokyo yesterday. In the middle of May, UNICEF sends me to Bosnia Herzegovina. After returning from there, as I am an actress which I consider my primary occupation, I will go on a tour of theatre performance in Japan for the next 2 months and a half. While I am touring Japan, I will constantly come back to Tokyo in order to fulfill my commitment to television programmes, leaving me no break. This schedule pattern repeats itself every year. From mid-October to mid-November, I will perform in another play in Tokyo and its rehearsals will start in mid-August. Since this is a new play, it requires longer time for rehearsals. After having done this, I will go to the United States to give lectures in connection with UNICEF in New York and Los Angeles

I host a daily TV talk show and also have a TV quiz show that runs every week. When I go abroad, therefore, all the sessions that are to be on the air during my absence must have been taped beforehand. The daily talk show is an hour programme featuring one guest at a time and has lasted for 21 years (which I believe is the world's longest for a talk show).

I am very sorry that I am not able to visit your country for the above reasons. However, I hope you would be kind enough to understand that I have been working for India as part of my mission to UNICEF for the happiness of children in India. I also hope that Indian children will become fond of Totto-chan. I have many good memories from my previous visit to India when UNICEF sent me. I love children in any part of the world, and especially Indian children that have beautiful clear eyes. I always wish that they become happy with hopes. I also respect the arts of India. You might laugh at me, but I sometimes wear a sari when going out. Of course, I cannot dress as nicely as women in India. I think the Japanese kimono is beautiful but also think that the sari is incredibly beautiful, too.

I would be grateful if you could let me know when new stages are unfolded concerning the translations of Totto-chan.

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