

Land of the Risen Son

イエス・キリストは日本を愛する

(Jesus loves Japan)



Community cleanup day tools

The Importance of a Wide Face

When talking about someone with a wide sphere of influence, in Okinawa people say that such a person has a 'wide face'. During our time in Japan, we have been doing our best to make relationships with as many people as possible, and hopefully develop wide faces of our own. If at some point our friends are interested in spiritual things and in hearing about Jesus, we are happy to share with them.

Four times per year, our local community association organizes cleanup days, when volunteers gather to tidy up communal living

spaces, trim hedges lining the roads, cut down long grass by community pathways, and so forth. I do my best to take part as often as I can. Cleanup days are usually on Sunday mornings, so I sweat away for a few hours before heading off to church. It's a great way to meet the neighbours!

A New Opportunity

In the last few weeks, another opportunity has presented itself, but first I must explain some background. Some of you may remember me (Valerie) wearing compression sleeves on my arms while we were in Canada. A few months ago, I finally got a diagnosis: 'thoracic outlet syndrome'. Apparently, because of some skeletal abnormalities, the nerves going to my arms and hands get stretched and painful. I'm receiving physiotherapy for this; stronger muscles can help reduce, though not completely eliminate, the discomfort. *

Over the past several months, I've been developing friendships with the hospital's Japanese-English interpreters. A few weeks ago, during my regular physiotherapy appointment, one of the interpreters came by to chat. Partway through our conversation, she went quiet and her face filled with excitement.

** Writing by hand can be quite bad for people with thoracic outlet syndrome. So I've created a new computer font out of my own handwriting, and now use it in correspondence. I apologize for the slightly computer-generated feel of my letters from now on. But hopefully my custom font will help make them feel a little more personal.*

"MY KIDS WERE SICK THIS WEEK, AND THEY STAYED HOME FROM SCHOOL. TODAY THEY WANTED TO COME TO ESL CLASS EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE STILL SICK! I COULDN'T KEEP THEM AWAY!"

- Chelsea, mother of two of our ESL students

Interesting Facts



New Twist, Old Game

Jan Ken Pon is the Japanese version of Rock, Paper, Scissors. Much more prevalent than in North America, the Japanese version predates the Western one.



How it's done

When there's a simple decision to be made between two people—whether adult or child—the Japanese often decide using this method. They start in the rock position, saying ("jan-ken-pon s-eye-show-wa-goo"). This basically means "Rock, Paper, Scissors, first is rock".



Many variations

There are many variations—some quite complex—depending on the situation. For instance, in the context of decision-making, only the simplest version is used. However, in the context of games, complexity abounds. The Japanese even have a variation where dozens of people can play against each other at the same time!

"Do you teach English?"

"Yes! That's one of the things I do in working with Seaside Chapel."

"This hospital has been looking for someone to teach English to employees in several departments. The government has recently given us a grant for this. When cruise ships come to the port in Naha (the capital city of Okinawa), sometimes they have people with medical emergencies on board. Ours is the hospital that they are transferred to. However, most of the employees don't speak English. They get very tense when interacting with foreigners. We want to help them loosen up so that they can deal more effectively with patients in off hours when interpreters aren't available. We've been having a really hard time finding a company to do teach our employees English. They all would send us a Japanese person. We want to learn from an English-speaker instead. Would you be interested?"

I smiled. "Maybe. I would have to talk with my husband and Higa sensei first. My schedule is very full. I'm not sure whether I would be able to fit it in."

Excited by my interest, she ended up taking me to the translation department, where I met *all* of the hospital translators. They crowded around, handing me their business cards and introducing themselves. The warmth radiating off them was remarkable!

That evening, I happened to already have an appointment scheduled with Higa sensei. I tried to contain my excitement when describing this opportunity, so that I wouldn't overly influence his reaction. However, he was just enthusiastic as I was! The following day I told the hospital that I could do this. There would be some restrictions on whom the grant money could go to (with our current Japanese visas we cannot accept any kind of payment from within Japan), so I suggested that I would volunteer and the hospital could give the money to the church.

The administrator had to double-check with the government that this would be acceptable, but he had an answer within a day. I was the teacher the hospital had chosen, and the government was on board. The first medical English class will be held on October 26. We are excited to see how this might open up even more doors for relationships with people in our community!



Pastor Sato, from the Japanese Gospel Church of Toronto, recently came to visit us. He was able to participate in a few events, guest speak, and meet many of the Seaside Chapel church members.

I finally remembered to take a picture of the attendees at English Worship!



Karen recently had an idea to make 'Seaside Cafe', where ladies in the church would make and sell goodies, and meet people in the community. Our trial run was for church members only, as we worked out the kinks. >>>



Contact Information

Thank You!

Thank you for your interest in our work. We send out newsletters every two months. If at any point you decide that you don't want to receive them anymore, just write or email us.



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