



Japan Journal

| MARCH 5, 2015

Updating You on Ryan & Jungshin's Ministry to Students in Kobe

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! (This is our first letter of 2015, so we figured better late than never.) Now spring and a new school year are right around the corner. It's a season of transitions, when we reflect back on where God has brought us and look forward to new beginnings in our lives and ministry.

Our ministry welcomed 2015 by gathering to seek God's will and blessing for the year to come at our **New Year's Prayer and Fasting Camp**. To be honest, after a busy 2014, I was not too excited about using our short winter break to prepare for another event. But God used the camp to remind me that, even when I'm tired and busy and don't always feel like it, I need to be investing in my relationship with Him. I came away with a renewed commitment to make that my number one priority this year.

After a few more weeks of ministry, Japanese students began their final exams in late January. We took the chance to get away for a few days for our **End-of-the-Semester Retreat**. Besides us and another long-term staff family, our Kobe team is made up of **Short-Term INTERNATIONAL (STINT)** missionaries from the U.S. and Korea. Last month, we said goodbye to two of our Korean teammates who had served with us for the past year-and-a-half. We will have one new "STINTer" arriving from Korea on **March 30th**.

The Japanese school year ended in February, and the new school year starts in April. You may be wondering what we do when class is not in session. Well, mostly we just try to catch up on all the administrative work we missed during the school year! We also rest, raise funds, take Bible classes, or visit family. But in general, here in Japan, break time usually means two things: ministry conferences, and lots of meetings. This break has been no exception.

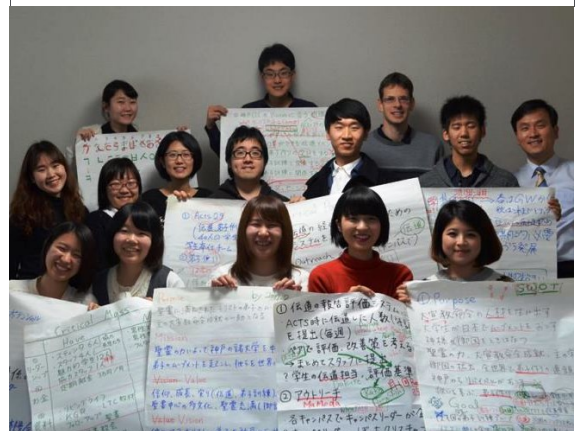
Every February, our Kobe team meets to evaluate the past year's ministry and plan for the year ahead. After we



Giving a message at our **New Year's Prayer and Fasting Camp** (1/1~1/3)



With teammates at our **End-of-the-Semester Retreat** (1/28~30)



Planning for next school year's ministry with Kobe student leaders (2/12~13)

decide what our team is going to do, we share it with our students, and hopefully they are excited to participate. **But this year, for the first time in our Kobe ministry's 3-year history, students were involved in the entire planning process!** That may not seem like much, but it shows that our students are committed to the ministry and ready to take on more active leadership roles going forward. God is working!

A couple weeks after those meetings, we attended the **National Campus Forum**, where staff from all over Japan gathered to learn from one another and discuss the “best practices” of our ministries. I was part of the team that put together the content and schedule for the forum, and it was encouraging to see how God used those preparations. Each team and staff member ultimately left with specific action points to apply on their campuses in the year ahead.

Next week we have one more national conference, the **“Challenge” Student Conference**. This year it is truly a conference for Japanese students, by Japanese students—because no staff are involved in leading it! Students (including from Kobe) will lead worship, give messages and testimonies, teach training sessions, and direct city outreach. **73 students from around Japan are planning to attend.** After it ends, our Kobe students will also gather for an extra day to prepare our ministry to freshmen next month.

Finally, on a personal note, we are excited to announce that after five years of marriage, **Jungshin is pregnant!** We are grateful that she has been healthy and able to take extra time to rest at home over the break. She is now 12 weeks along, with a due date of **September 14th**. Please keep her and the baby's health in your prayers, and please pray for us as we prepare for the transition to parenthood. We will keep you updated as the due date approaches.

Thank you again for your partnership in our ministry, through this and all of life's seasons. Have a great month!

Yours in Christ,

Ryan & Jungshin



Meeting with other leaders at **National Campus Forum (2/23~25)**; I helped to emcee and served on the design team



Baby Beneke at 11 weeks on 2/23:
coming to Japan in **September 2015!**

PRAISES & PRAYERS

- *Praise* God for a great start to 2015 and Jungshin's healthy pregnancy!
- *Pray* for ongoing planning and prep for the new school year's ministry
- *Pray* for the **National “Challenge” Student Conference (3/10~3/12)** and our **Kobe Camp (3/12~13)**
- *Pray* for Jungshin and Baby Beneke's health, for our spiritual growth and upcoming transition to parenthood

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