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Dear Friends,

2018 started off well here! I was skeptical whether the short time in January before students' tests would be very fruitful. But despite my expectations dwindling after an encouraging Christmas season, I used conversations about new years resolutions to meet a good handful of new students.

One of my favorite hangouts was with Yuka, a senior from Rikkyo who I met two summers ago. Before we met up, I contemplated how it can be difficult to get into deeper conversation with her. But as we ate, she asked me if I had done "hatsumode" (the first visit to a shrine in the New Year.) We then talked about my church service on New Year's Day, and she showed me the "omikiji" (fortune) she had gotten at the shrine. She shared her slight concern. The fortune indicated she shouldn't move this year, but she will in order to start her job in April. She concluded that as long as she's a good person, it should be ok. This led to the topic of good deeds versus grace, and I was able to share more about my faith in Christ with Yuka than ever before.



Yuka and I enjoyed a warm meal and time talking about New Year's as it relates to Shinto and Christian faiths.



At Waseda, Yukako and I were so excited Yuka (ultra popular name) brought a friend, Yuka, to our now weekly lunchtime, effortlessly growing.

Another surprise came on our way back to the station. Yuka asked if there were any countries I wanted to travel to. I said nowhere in particular but rattled off a few places I've never been. She then proceeded to show me majestic looking photos and invite me to go with her to a scenic nature reserve in China. It's still to be determined if the dates will work out, but it's an honor to have been invited! If it were an English speaking country, it would be more understandable why she chose me! Hopefully, I can take advantage of this opportunity to continue getting to know her. Either way, I'm thrilled Yuka and I have a close enough friendship for international travel right before she graduates! Please pray for these kinds of growing friendships to be used for the glory of God!

In Christ,

Christina

Please join me in praying for~

- ❖ Students like Yuka, looking to fortunes by also learning slowly about trust in Christ
- ❖ Praise for many new faces at our Christmas outreach and three friends coming to church

P.S.!!! I will be back and would love to see as many of you as possible! There will be an open house in Fullerton on 2/10 and Fallbrook on 2/17. Please email me for details or to find another time to meet! If anyone has a car available for any portion of the next 6 weeks, it would be very helpful for some parts of my trip.