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Dear Friends,

As Haruna and I said goodbye after lunch, a little stroll in the park, and a belated birthday tea for her, it really left an impression on me what she told me. She said she wanted to meet up again soon, because we talked about so many things she can't discuss with other people.

The moment we sat down to eat it was clear that Haruna just wanted to talk. She wanted to share about the things that are important to her and get other opinions and ideas. First she told me about a group getting started up at her university. They desire to interact with foreigners and practice English, but the limited number of exchange students all want to practice Japanese. So they decided to make a volunteer group to help tourists who get lost in Tokyo. I thought it sounded pretty genius! (Win, win.)



Haruna then went on to ask about my life and experience as a foreigner. We talked about politics, education, and religion. Apparently not many students her age touch on these topics or express their thoughts freely about them. She just kept jumping from topic to topic, enthusiastically sharing and asking questions. I loved it. Of course we had fun and had a few good laughs, but we talked primarily about well thought out and meaningful content.

That day we didn't dive into the Bible by any means, but I think Haruna's desire to talk about social issues and deep subjects is also reflective about how she's thirsting to know more about her meaning in life and the hope found in Jesus. She actually attended church with one of our interns this past spring and expressed the desire to trust in Christ. However, when she shared about her experience with her mom, she was forbidden to go back. In fact, she was told she couldn't go to any Christian gatherings. The reason is that her mother works in realty. Through working in that field, she's seen people forced to move their families in order to escape cult involvement. Since she's aware there are churches that try to keep people in strict proximity and give them such trouble when trying to leave, she wants to protect her daughter from any risk. Haruna is, however, allowed to come to our English class and activities without spiritual content. Please pray she will continue to find Jesus through her relationships with believers and personal study of the Bible!

In Christ,

Christina

Please pray for~

- ❖ Haruna, who has a great desire to talk about the deeper things in life, to truly come to know Jesus
- ❖ Miho, a student who's feeling lost as she tries to see if she can pursue a future as a manga artist
- ❖ Megumiko, Marina, Koki, and I, the Tokyo members for our Okinawa mission trip (9/1-14)