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Miho and Chihiro are all smiles as Miho presents her belated birthday portrait.

Dear Friend,

Recently, I had three exciting encounters with Miho (a 2nd year student at Gakugei University). After she suddenly became more interested in English, it has been encouraging seeing her meet more and more Christians and open up a little bit. But I never could have imagined the text she sent me about a month ago. In Japanese, she asked, “How about going to England with me?”

After exchanging some more texts, it turned out that she is extremely interested in one of the British actors in *The Hobbit*. She later decided she wanted to go to America to see a special premier, but our schedules didn’t work out. So, she settled for a version coming out in Tokyo next month. I’m very much looking forward to joining her and seeing her newfound passion for movies I also love. I also really hope to venture to Europe together someday!

In the meantime, we were able to hang out twice last month in Japan. ☺ It is always so exciting for me when someone steps into church for the first time, and Miho made her debut. We went to see my co-worker Chihiro sing at a gathering for young adults. Over dinner, Miho said that one of her favorite ways to practice English is through song lyrics, so the event with English worship songs was a perfect fit! She also took the opportunity to give Chihiro a late birthday present, a manga style portrait. I can understand why they’re both smiling very big, and I look forward to December, when my birthday comes around and I get to see more from the very talented Miho.

Coincidentally, Miho’s birthday falls in between, so we made plans prior to summer break to have a birthday brunch. After seeing the portrait of Chihiro, pressure was really on for the right present. I somehow managed to make a decent picture collage of memories together. We took our time chatting over brunch and eventually even talked about Christ-like figures and spiritual themes in some of Miho’s favorite movies like *Lord of the Rings* and *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Please pray for our friendship and her continued openness to the gospel. Please also pray for more deepening relationships like with Miho.

In Christ,

Christina



Chihiro, Miho, and I then celebrate Miho’s birthday over brunch later in September.