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Dear Friend,



With Chihiro in my Japanese summer kimono, or "yukata."

After going to camp with students in July, I went with my peers in mid-August. Since there are far fewer Christians in Japan than in America, I love chances to be surrounded by friends from church. This camp joined together young adults from all over Japan, but the highlight was meeting Chihiro, also from Tokyo.

The seminars to choose from all intrigued me, but I decided on stress management. We shared about ourselves and our jobs and then divided into pairs to elaborate. I panicked, because the poor girl next to me already had enough stress as an author. The last thing she needed was to get stuck with the foreigner in the group. I tried to see if someone from my own church would partner with me, but Chihiro didn't hesitate and we became a pair.

Of course my insecurity was silly, and although I didn't understand every single word, I was able to hear about Chihiro's life. She writes manga for young girls and feels tremendous pressure to entertain them while also sending a good message. Her relationship with her dad has also been strained for many years. She lives with her parents and works from home, which has been challenging with her father's recent retirement.

After some time back with the group discussing types and causes of stress as well as some Bible passages, we broke into pairs again. I learned that a fellow author had invited Chihiro to the camp. She has been joining her for church for almost 10 months, but still has some major reservations about putting faith in God. If she were to believe, her family would say that she had gone crazy. Also, she doesn't practice Buddhism seriously, but she performs daily rituals in her room at the shine to her deceased grandmother. Since considering faith in God, Chihiro has started feeling uncomfortable practicing those rituals.

Later that night, Chihiro approached me with questions about the evening message. I thought, there are over 100 Japanese people here who understood way better than I did. Why are you asking me? Nevertheless we had another beautiful conversation and now have plans to meet up in one of the cafes where she creates her stories.

Please pray for us. Sometimes I forget that God is in control and doesn't care how well I can speak Japanese or understand the culture. Please pray that He would use me as His light in Chihiro's life and in others'. Please also pray that Chihiro would know God is the only true hope in the midst of her stress, and that I would replace God's joy with my needless worry.

In Christ,

Christina

Please pray for the~

- young adults who returned from camp to remember the fellowship and messages they heard from God, especially for Chihiro
- planning for and start of a new semester of ministry on campuses this fall