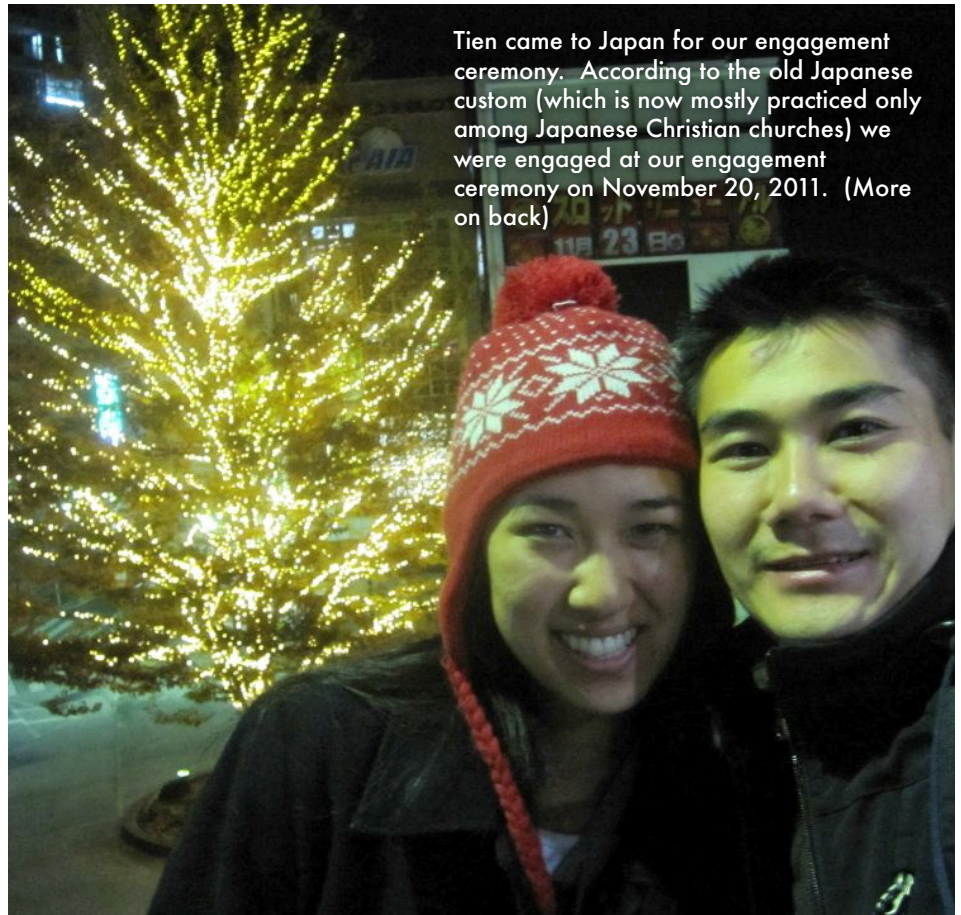


DECEMBER 11,
2011

Merry Christmas!



Tien came to Japan for our engagement ceremony. According to the old Japanese custom (which is now mostly practiced only among Japanese Christian churches) we were engaged at our engagement ceremony on November 20, 2011. (More on back)

Not even an electricity shortage can dampen Japan's "illumination" spirit!

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. - 2 Corinthians 4:6

Every November I look forward to Japan's "illumination" season. Especially since it gets cold and dark around 4:30 pm, tree-lit streets and light displays always cheer me up. Christmas isn't a real holiday here (people still go to work and kids still

go to school on Christmas day) so I can't rightfully say "Christmas" season though to me, that's what it is!! This year, due to the nuclear crisis/energy shortage, Japanese have had to get creative and illumination displays are solar powered, half-lit, or the illumination hours are cut down. But it's still crazy beautiful! Even though I absolutely love Jesus and am so excited to celebrate His birthday every year, sometimes I forget that this Christmas season really is about HIM (and not illumination)!! And He's the true Light!! The Light that

comforts, guides, never fades and lasts forever!!

Perhaps you've experienced the birth of a baby (or grandchild) this year and it's an especially special Christmas. Or maybe you've experienced hardship and loss like so many of my friends in Tohoku, so this season that's supposed to be bright seems extra dim. Whatever your situation, I pray you can experience the light, love and joy of Jesus in your heart. Merry Christmas!! (more on back)

*Blessings,
Jessica Jay*

Home for Christmas



2011

In case you don't get my e-mail updates, I'll be returning home from Japan in time for Christmas. This was initially a difficult decision as I wanted to spend my "last" Christmas in Japan. My roommate made that decision easier when she decided to move out with all of our furniture and household items on December 2nd (we're on good terms, moving out in the beginning for December was just better for her schedule). Also, one of my very closest friends here in Japan (Tomoko) will be coming to visit for Christmas which helps a lot! And even though I'm sad about not going to Tohoku, the team's already full and I'd rather have our students go than take up a spot. I look forward to seeing some of you this Christmas season!

As always, there's more at www.jessicatekawa.com or you can e-mail me at jessica.tekawa@gmail.com...love hearing from you!

Finishing well in Japan

No regrets

Since I first came to Tokyo in 2005 on a Cru summer project, I fell in love with Japan and the people here. My heart broke that so many of the people in Japan - my "home" country and also a country in need of HOPE didn't have a chance to hear about Jesus and the true hope that He provides. Many of the people that I first met that summer six years ago have become my dearest friends. I wanted to be able to leave Japan with no regrets. To be able to let the friends I made here know how much I love and appreciate them. And to be able to clearly share the gospel with those friends that I haven't shared with yet. By the grace of God, that was able to happen through individual meetings with friends and also, through Tien's visit



to Tokyo. Even though Tien was only here for six full days he got to share his testimony three times...at homeless ministry

(which I've been going to every Saturday morning for the past 6 months), ICUHS "Let's Talk" lunchtime and at our engagement ceremony. Most of my friends in Japan can actually relate to Tien's life more than mine because he grew up in a Buddhist home, suffered through depression and suicide attempts and used alcohol to escape his depression. Not all Japanese are depressed, suicidal and like to drink, but if you compare statistics to America...Tien's old lifestyle is very typical in Japan. At our ceremony (which took place during our normal church service) MANY of our friends and students who have never been to church before came and got to hear Tien's testimony, participate in songs of worship and hear my pastor's gospel-centered message which was so clear and easy to understand. Many people told me they were moved and touched by the service. And actually, just this past Sunday a college student (Eriko) came up to me after our normal church

service and told me she was really touched by our whole engagement ceremony. Which led to a spiritual conversation, which led to her asking questions, which led to sharing the gospel again, which led to praying together for her to receive Jesus in her heart!! AND last week (the Sunday before this past Sunday), Yoshimi, my close friend came up to me after church and said, "Jess, what are the 4 points of the gospel again? I think Erina (another college student) wants to receive Christ...can you come with me?" I was talking to another person and I wanted Yoshimi to have the experience of leading someone to Christ herself so I just gave her the Knowing God Personally booklet (Japanese version of the 4 Laws) and told her she could do it! All she had to do was ask God for help and read through it with Erina...so Yoshimi did just that and Erina accepted Jesus too!



Leaving with Peace and Joy

Even though there have been some disappointments recently (mainly this year's STINT team's visas were just denied so we won't have a STINT team this year), I have SO much peace and joy that God loves Japan and my friends here more than I do and is in control. With the lack of foreigners involved in our ministry here, I've been encouraged to see my Japanese Christian friends step up and pursue my friends who've come to Christ in 2011, Akari, Saori, Ayu, Erina and now Eriko so that when I leave, they have a strong support network and people to talk to in their own heart language. I don't feel like anyone is dependent on me for their faith (which wasn't always true) and that makes me so happy! I can't express enough how blessed I feel to have had these years in Japan. THANK YOU for making this possible by supporting me! I'll write again next month!!

Prayer Points

STINT team 2011-2012

For the first time in Tokyo STINT history, our 2011-2012 STINT team's visas were denied for no clear reason. This was very disappointing to each of the 8 members and us in Tokyo. Plus it's a logistical mess. Please pray for the team as they are now and being re-routed to Hilo, HI and our staff as they figure out what to do with the STINT apartments, cell phones and things and ministry!

ICUHS Ministry

In 2007, John (a senior staff member) two of my STINT teammates and I started "Let's Talk" at ICUHS. It's so exciting and satisfying to see our vision fulfilled of every ICUHS student knowing someone who truly follows Jesus as we've had a chance to go into every freshman class every year for the past four



years. Every year STINTers run "Let's Talk" but with me going back to the U.S. and no STINT team coming, it's just John.

Thankfully though, the high school students are more dedicated and consistent than ever. And for the first time we have two solid Christian students involved. Please pray for wisdom for John!

Love In Action team

Our Love In Action team is going back up to Tohoku during the students' Winter Break from December 22-29. Even though Christmas isn't so important to families in Japan, it marks the beginning of the New Year season which IS very important for families. This will be a sad and difficult Christmas for many tsunami-surviving families. Please pray for these families and are team!!

Transition Home

More than anything, I'm grateful that Jesus is with me and the same no matter where I go. Pray that my relationship with Jesus will stay strong and keep me grounded as I transition home. Thank you for your prayers!!