

# Land of the Risen Son

## イエス・キリストは日本を愛する

(Jesus loves Japan)

### Interesting Facts

#### Ryukyuan Kingdom

Before Okinawa was part of Japan, it was its own kingdom. The Ryukyuan Kingdom had its own culture, kings, castles, religion, and language.

#### Kings of the Islands

*In total there were 37 kings of the Ryukyuan Islands, who reigned from 1187 to 1879. Invaded by Japan in 1609, the islands were not fully annexed until 1879 when they were renamed "Okinawa".*



#### Castles

(Shuri Castle, in Naha City)

Many historical landmarks were destroyed in the WWII Battle of Okinawa (1945). Shuri Castle is the only one that has been rebuilt, and is a UNESCO world heritage site. All materials and construction methods are historically accurate.



### Update: A Singular Sojourn (Peter & Valerie Limmer)

#### Now Introducing...

We would like to introduce you to a friend we made about two months ago, named Theo. One evening, he saw us with the cats from his window, and received a "message from above" that he should come out and meet us.

Doing so, he invited us to a nearby sushi restaurant, owned by his friends. "We're so glad to have met you," I remarked at one point. "We're happy to become your friends."

"We're not friends," he responded. "I knew from the moment I saw you with the cats that you are kind people. My feeling is that we are family."

Two hours later, we finally parted ways, but not before exchanging phone numbers and promising to meet up again.

A few weeks later, we reconnected at the same restaurant. After eating together, we prepared to part ways again, but Theo had different ideas. He was surprisingly earnest in his request that we stay longer. We obliged, and that was when he started to initiate discussions on several spiritual topics.

"Why are there so many different Christian denominations?" he asked at one point. Based on the context, we knew that he wasn't confused by cults that claim to be Christian.



*Saying goodbye to Neil before he relocated to Tokyo to take care of his father. They'd been estranged, but after becoming a Christian, Neil began to mend the relationship.*

We asked God to guide us in our answer. "Jesus died to give us inner peace, and life, and forgiveness," I started. "He wants us, as Christians, to love the world and love one another. This is a hard teaching, and sometimes Christians don't follow it. Sometimes our own teachings become more important to us than the teachings of Jesus. The result is that we lose our love. But this is not the way of Jesus. The Bible tells us that Jesus prayed that all Christians would be one, united. In my opinion, if we are not united, then we are following our own teachings, and not Jesus'."

"In Okinawa," Peter added, "things are different. Churches work together. For example, Baptist churches work together with Pentecostal churches. They follow Jesus and are united."

Theo's eyes grew wide. "I want to meet your pastor. Can I come to your church? I have sin."

"We all have sin. It's okay for you to come."

After this, we went to karaoke, and in total spent 5 hours together with him that night!

Though Theo would later duck out of the meeting that he'd requested, we were excited to see his interest in Jesus blossoming. A few weeks later, he wanted to meet up again, but we were busy on the day that he suggested. This didn't stop him. He turned up, unannounced, at Seaside Chapel and introduced himself to Higa sensei. It turns out that Theo came to Seaside Chapel once many years ago, before the church changed locations.

Last week we met with Theo again, at our usual restaurant. He told us about meeting Higa sensei, and proudly pointed to a flyer hanging on the wall of the restaurant. "I put that there," he said. Looking closer, we realized that it was advertising a special gospel concert, to be held at Seaside Chapel this month. Theo had told all of his friends about it, and has emphatically told us on many occasions that he plans to come.

"It's part of the human condition to receive wounds in our hearts," Theo mused later that night.

"That's one thing I love about Jesus." I smiled. "He is very gentle. He can heal

wounds in our hearts, and in our bodies."

The pain gushed out of Theo. "My wife divorced me. It's been exactly two months since she left me."

Later, on Theo's request, we went to karaoke again. After Peter and I sang a couple of songs, the other patrons wouldn't let us stop, and ended up choosing an encore for us. By the end, everyone was clapping along and shaking tambourines. Karaoke bars in Okinawa have limited English song selections, so if this goes on much longer we'll need to brush up on some more oldies!

At the end of the night, we gave Theo an *omiyage* (a souvenir gift given to close friends) from our vacation in May. He seemed really touched that we'd been thinking of him during that time.

"After Higa sensei, I am your Okinawan father," he said. (He's 62.)

We can't wait to see what happens in Theo's life as he continues to question and explore Jesus and His love. What will God do next?

### Shuri Castle Pictures

*Having travelled to Shuri Castle, we thought we would share a few pictures with you!*



*Shuri Castle court... can you find Valerie?*



*The view from the castle wall.*



*The outside walls of the castle.*



*The primary residents of the castle!*



*The entrance to the courtyard.*



*The castle was restored using pre-war pictures found in the university archives.*



*A model of the Shuri Court, when crowning a new king.*

### Contact Information

#### Thank You!

Thank you for your interest in our work. We send out newsletters every two months. If at any point you decide that you don't want to receive them anymore, just write or email us ([japan@peterandvalerie.com](mailto:japan@peterandvalerie.com)).

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