

September 2011

ADAIR UPDATE

One of my first events (a BBQ with fireworks) from Okuchi in 2005



TEN YEARS AGO

It is hard to believe that it has been a decade since Robert first visited Japan with Asian Access

In summer 2001, I (Robert) spent 6 weeks on a team of five college students at Katsuta Church Japan with Asian Access (A2). I can't believe that was 10 years ago.

While at Texas A&M, our college ministry at Aldersgate UMC began sending teams to Japan. I thought missions were a good thing, so I prayed and decided to be a part of a team. That summer I felt a burden and satisfaction I had never experienced before in my life. In the summers of '01 (picture on the right), '02, and '03, I served in various parts of Japan and navigated what seemed to be a call to full time vocational Christian ministry in Japan. By the time I graduated I was convinced God was calling me into missions.

From 2005-2009, I served a 4-year term as a Church Planting Associate with A2. I went over wondering if God was calling me to Japan for a season or as a career. During those 4 years, we had the excitement of seeing people come to faith. We also had the difficulty of processing a church plant that did

not succeed in the terms we hoped it would. Yet I left Japan in 2009 with a greater love for Jesus and the nation I had been serving. Upon returning I headed to Wheaton College to continue my education.

Spring 2011 marked Roberta's first visit to Japan, and it was eventful. While at the Asian Access spring retreat in the mountains of Nagano prefecture, we experienced the March 11th earthquake. This was a significant time for Roberta as she sensed God burdening her heart for the people of Japan. This also led to my fourth short term experience in Japan as we spent the summer of 2011 leading relief teams for A2 in the areas impacted by the earthquake and tsunami.

As I start my second decade of ministering in Japan, I am excited to see what Jesus is going to do in lives of the Japanese people we have the privilege to serve. I also want to express my gratitude to all of you who have been involved for varying lengths in this journey.



Language Mistakes

During my third summer in Japan, I mistakenly and confidently referred to my pastor's favorite desert as:

- A) dirt
- B) gross
- C) dung
- D) garbage

"I AM LEARNING JAPANESE"

わたしはにほんごを
べんきょうしています。

"Watashi wa nihongo wo benkyoushite imasu." It's still a mouthful for me, too.

Toddler Talk

I (Roberta) am currently working on clever sentences such as, "He is playing a game. She is drinking coffee. This is a pen. My flower is yellow and orange. Is that Mr. Robert's car? No, that is Mr. Smith's car." And I feel my brain struggling to formulate these brilliant observations. So begins the language learning process all over again.

Although I studied some in January and February, I have not been proactive until now because of all of our traveling. Now, given that we have 4 or 5 weeks in one place, I am trying to spend a bit of time every day working on Japanese. As language learners everywhere can understand, I'm eager to not only grow in my observational abilities (beyond "The grass is green. The car is black.") to being able to have meaningful conversations ("Tell me about your family. Sure, I'd love to explain why I believe the Bible is inspired by God. Where were you when you heard about the earthquake and tsunami?"). Yet I'm hopeful that the little effort that I put in now will hopefully contribute to someday being able to understand and be understood - to communicate.

Alphabets

Although still a bit rough, I am now taking notes in *hiragana* and *katakana*. These are two phonetic alphabets used in Japanese. *Hiragana*

is used for native Japanese words, and *katakana* is used for borrowed words. For instance, coffee is pronounced "koohee" and is written in *katakana*. My name is pronounced "ro-be-ru-ta" and is also written in *katakana* (ロベルタ).

There is a combination of both alphabets in every sentence I listed in the first paragraph, which makes it nice that I can now read and write with a growing degree of proficiency.

That said, I still haven't touched *kangji*, which are the complex characters/symbols (sort of like Chinese) that are used in written Japanese. There are about 2,000 of these necessary to memorize before being able to read a newspaper.

Who am I?

Something I find rather unusual about Japan is the importance of business cards. I have never had a business card in my life, but Robert recently printed me out a neat little stack to carry around in my wallet. When people meet each other, they often exchange business cards. They do this with a great deal of respect and to, essentially, know their position in society.

The first time I was handed a business card, I was thinking, "Use two hands! Look at it



Visiting
where Robert
lived for 4 years
in March

appreciatively like you can actually make heads or tails out of whatever you're reading. Slowly look up and nod your head like you're impressed."

What I understand the card swap ritual to mean, however, is quite interesting. I am not just Roberta Adair. I am Roberta Adair of Asian Access (or the name of the church we're working with). Part of my significance comes from my association. People understand who I am and my "rank" in part based on my group whereas, in the US (to a large degree) I am who I am. There I am "whose" I am. It's such a different paradigm, and I have trouble relating to and understanding it.

I ask for prayer as I make baby steps on the long journey of learning the Japanese language. I also ask for a learner's posture, a growing desire to ..., and for grace as I process "who I am" in Japan.

Prayer Requests

Please joining us in prayer for our lives and future ministry. Above all we ask you to pray that we would daily grow in our relationships with Christ and each other. Also pray that our lives would be oriented in a way that facilitates good preparation for our future in Japan.

Specific Prayer Points

- ☞ Support development
- ☞ Language acquisition
- ☞ Rest when we are not traveling
- ☞ The 2 trainings coming up (second language acquisition for Roberta and pre-field training for both of us)
- ☞ Holiday travels
- ☞ Healthy life rhythms
- ☞ Jane and other people we ministered with this summer in Ishinomaki

CONTACT INFO

Robert

radair@asianaccess.org

Roberta

robertaclogg@gmail.com

Web: www.adairupdate.com