

May 2025

Marshall Musings

Serving
the Lord in
Japan with
OMF.

Diaspora: multicultural Japan

We find ourselves brushing shoulders with more and more people who are best categorised as “diaspora”. The word has become far more known in the last 40 years, Wendy saw it on an ABC News story just the other day. It means “a group of people who spread from one original country to other countries”. The word was originally used in the late 1500s for the scattering of the Jews.

Our church is full of people who have spent part of their lives in other countries, many of them are Japanese who have returned to Japan. During

April we heard part of the story of one couple, Ace and Beth Kanda. Beth is American, she met Ace, a Japanese citizen, when they were both studying in the US. They married and she's lived in Japan for most of the last 50+ years. Her husband has much experience in Christian ministry including with Campus Crusade Japan in the 70s and 80s. When they got married, a mixed nationality marriage, especially for a Japanese man to marry a foreign woman, was very rare. There are many multi-national marriages in our church. It's a welcoming place for people from many different countries (though the main languages are Japanese and English). During March, Wendy discovered that a family from China live just one minute away from us, they are working with the Chinese congregation of a multi-cultural church in downtown Tokyo, their daughter goes to CAJ. OMF Japan also works with Japanese people who have been overseas and returned to Japan. For various reasons Japanese

people find it very difficult to integrate back into Japanese society after being overseas for a length of time. If they've encountered Christ overseas, then it's usually very hard for them to find a church where they feel welcomed and understood, and many times they fall away from Christian fellowship. OMF's “returnee” team is working hard to connect with people like this. It's long, slow work, but it's also God's work.

The number on internationals in Japan is rapidly rising. In 2023 almost 1.3 million more foreigners lived in Japan than in 2013. Some come from nations that have a strong Christian population, others don't. It's exciting times in Japan. Let's pray for God to work in Japanese returnees, as well as the nearly four million internationals who now live in Japan.



We celebrated a friend's 50th birthday party on a rare April day: perfect weather. Three families, four nationalities, but one Lord. It was a wonderful day.

Where do CAJ students come from?

Christian Academy in Japan (CAJ) is an international school; at the moment we have students from nineteen countries. About three quarters of them are from a single country, but the rest are from combinations of two or more.

Japan is the most common country for those students from just one nation, followed by the US and South Korea. India and China have more than a dozen students each, while all the other countries, including Australia, have four or less students. We have students from every continent, not including Antarctica.

Among the multiple-country students, Japan is also the most common, some more uncommon countries we have just now are Finland, Peru, and Fiji.

If you visited, you will see that most of our students have Asian features, but they aren't all originally from Asia. Some are citizens of the US or Canada and have European names. They rarely live by just one set of cultural norms.

Please pray for these amazing young people as they grow up between cultures and languages. They are often adaptable and talented at navigating cultural nuances and alternative viewpoints. May God use them as they graduate and spread around the world with their special talents.

Our staff are also from multiple countries, although most are from the US and Japan. Please pray for all of us to be sensitive to our differences, while still trying to work together for the good of the students.

CAJ
corner



April began with the 75th anniversary celebrations of CAJ.

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Prayer points

- CAJ and OMF Japan still need new people to fill positions in 2025. Please pray for two finance managers and a field medical advisor for OMF. And for a HR manager and librarian for CAJ.
- Pray for the students and teachers at CAJ as they daily navigate multiple cultures.
- That Callum, Sophie, Doug, and Jamie will all continue to grow and know God better.
- That in all we do, think, and say, we would glorify God and keep our eyes fixed on him.
- Wendy's leading an OMF Japan writing retreat (12–16 May) for nine people. Pray that each of the attendees will make good progress in the projects God has laid on their hearts.
- Pray for OMF Japan's field conference in June. There will be over 200 adults and over 50 kids at conference: there is a lot to organise.
- After conference David has meetings in Chiang Mai and Wendy in Singapore. Pray for the logistics for these. After these meetings we will be in Australia for five weeks.
- Pray for the social media team as we continue to adjust to changes and plan for the future.

Praise points

- CAJ 75th anniversary went well and God has provided most of the staffing needs.
- The beauty of spring.
- For visas for our pastor and his wife in Japan.
- That David's short trip to Taiwan to help a school with accreditation went smoothly.
- For time with friends.
- For Callum (it's his birthday this month).



Photos: (from top, clockwise) Cherry blossoms in a nearby park, Wendy's birthday, baking ANZAC biscuits, our balcony with washing and plants, CAJ in all its glory during the 75th celebrations.

Coming up...

May

11 Tokyo Musashino Evangelical Free Church (our church) worship in the park for Mother's Day

12–16 OMF Japan Writing retreat

29 Callum's 26th birthday

June

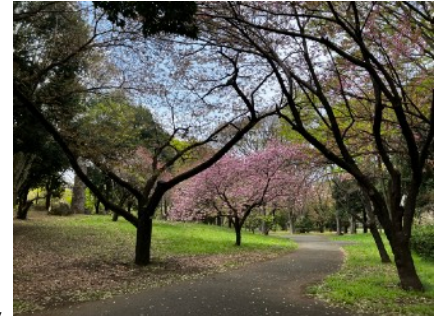
16–20 OMF Japan field conference

Family

Thank you for praying during April. Wendy always takes an abundance of nature photos during April in Tokyo—it truly is a beautiful month here, though stunning weather is not guaranteed. One Saturday we had the joy of joining friends for a party in

a large park (see photo and caption on pg 1) and the weather was perfect. The next Saturday we'd planned to meet our OMF Fellowship Group in another park, but the weather was not cooperative and we ended up in the nearby 10th floor apartment of our colleagues.

The month started with Wendy's birthday and CAJ's 75th anniversary celebrations. For the former, we went out to a Japanese restaurant and had ice cream cake for dessert.



The latter celebrations were multiple. Our main involvement was on the Friday afternoon when the elementary school hosted a musical presentation of the history of the school (a quite remarkable performance that included staff and older students). Then on the Saturday we attended a Spring Festival at school, the centrepiece of which, was a two-hour service that gave us many opportunities to thank God for all that he'd done.

We continue to catch up with our kids on Sunday afternoon and they are going well. Doug spent the Easter weekend with Wendy's parents and Jamie went to Easter Convention with one of his housemates' families. Both had good weekends.

David spent three nights in Taiwan helping a school with accreditation. He was well looked after by the school (but also worked hard) and came home with many presents that they gave him.

Wendy had further opportunities to bless our church with baked goods: at the Easter potluck and the end-of-month morning tea. She also made Hot Cross Buns for Easter and was able to share that with a couple of friends she happened to meet that week.

Thank you again for praying! We couldn't do what we do without you.

In Christ,

David and Wendy

