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Japan Squad: Mission Accomplished!



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SUPPORT PLEDGED



JAPAN

Have you ever had month where it is just a blur of activity? Since June 11, 2018, I felt like I was in constant motion. On that afternoon, I met the Japan Squad at Haneda Airport and so began our journey together. What is the Japan Squad? Five young men and women who volunteered through the IM Volunteer In Global Mission program to serve. Ben, Cole, Nathan, Sarah and Abigail came from West Virginia for a 17-day mission trip to Japan. Ben returns from last year as the leader of their group.



Japan Squad with Pastor Oya and Seng Bu

On our first full day, we visited the Japan Baptist Union (JBU) General Secretary, Pastor Oya and his wife Seng Bu at the JBU office near Waseda University. Pastor Oya took us on a short tour and treated us all to lunch. Nathan was unable to join us due to stomach illness.



Ben, Abigail, Sarah, Cole at Soshin School



Cole, Nathan, Ben, Sarah, and Abigail at Soshin Elementary







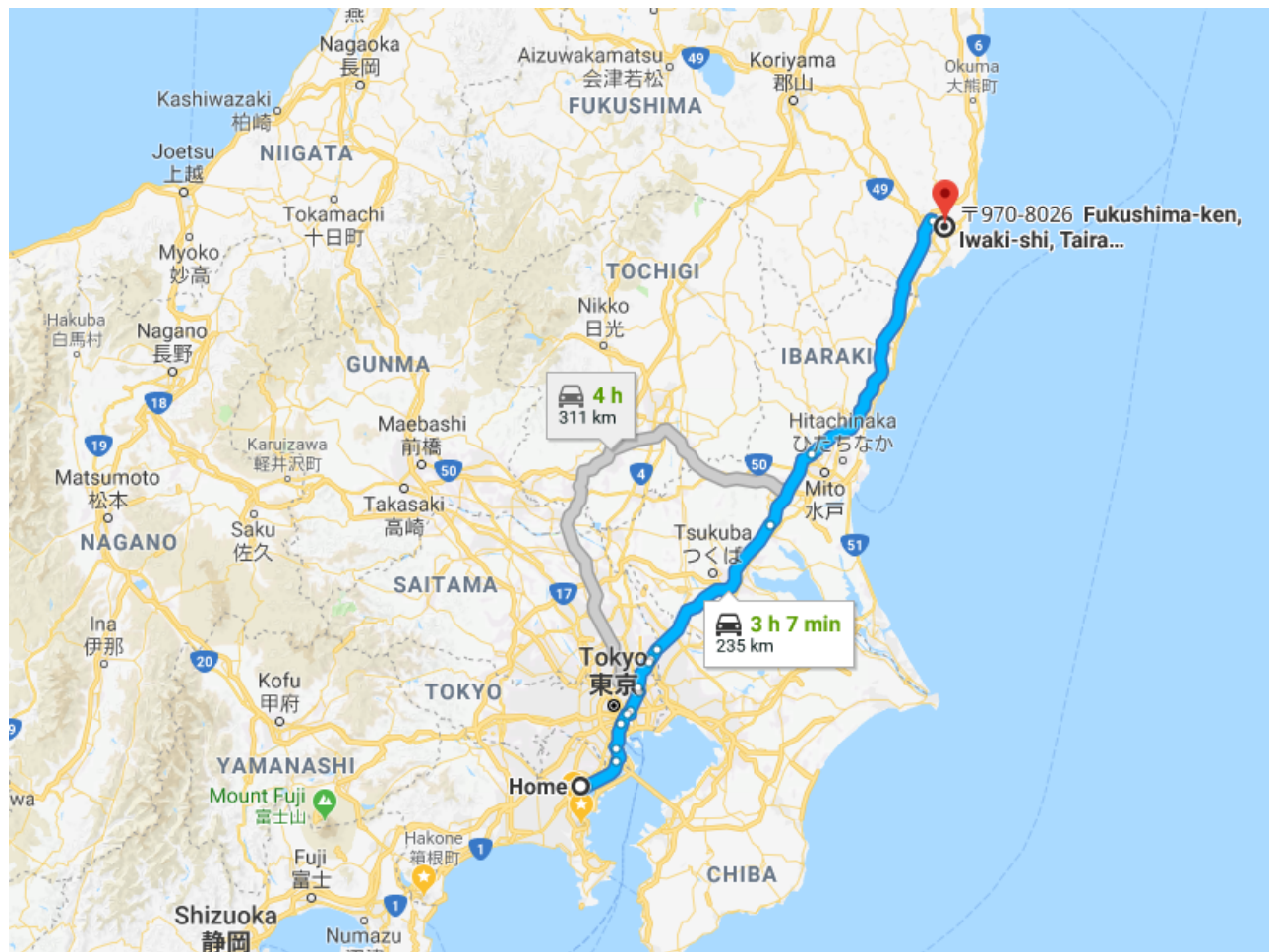
After recovering, Nathan rejoined the team for games with the Soshin Elementary kids. During the first week, the team helps with English conversation for the Jr. and Sr. High school girls. We celebrated with a party for the team and 23 girls came! They enjoyed games, pizza and hotdogs with dessert, a testimony and some Disney songs.



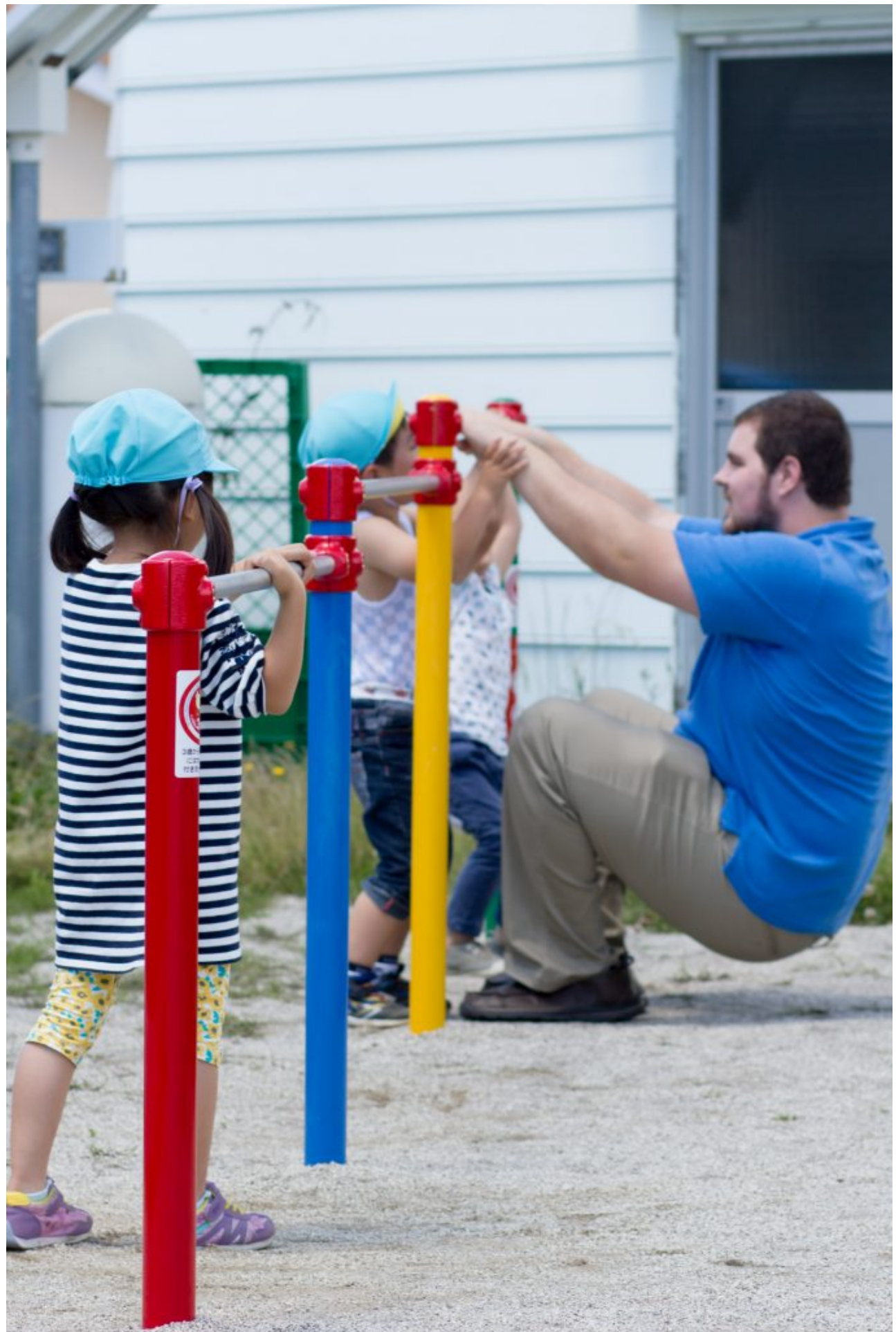




The team separated for the weekend to experience homestays with families that volunteered to host them. We reunited on Monday to travel to Iwaki, Fukushima. The team spent the next week with Pastor Tanno and served the kids at Taira Childcare Center *Kodomoen*. Pastor Tanno drove them back to our home and was very happy with their service including sharing their testimonies and a Sunday message at Taira Christ Church.



Pastor Tanno and Japan Squad sharing a song and motions











Upon returning to Yokohama, the team stayed at Kanto Gakkuin University to help with English classes and groups with our colleagues, Nita and Shigemi. On their return to our home, they had one last session with our Soshin girls preparing for an exchange program to Australia.

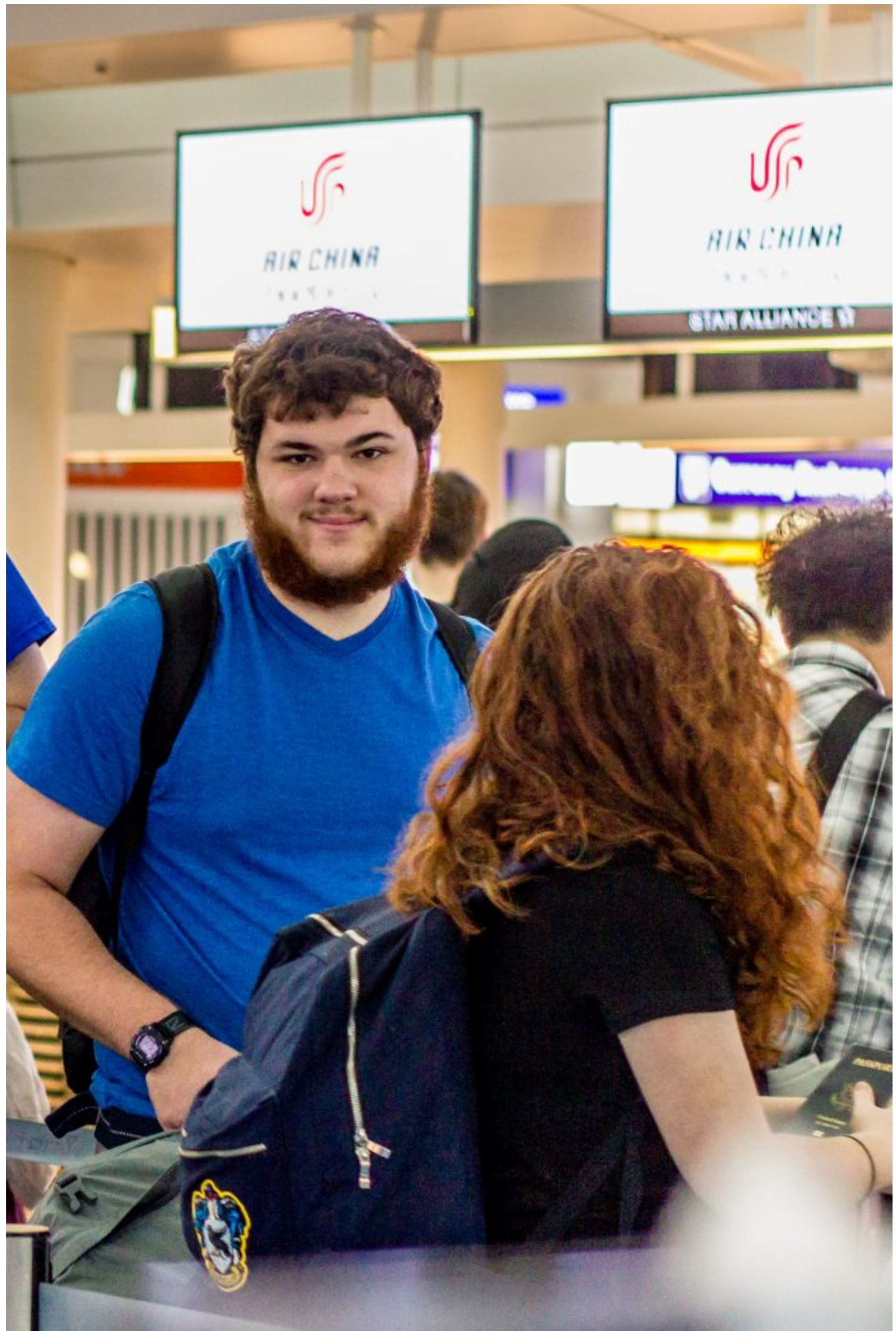








We celebrated with Chinese take-out and a debrief session on our last night together in our home, June 27. I was both happy and sad to take them early the next morning to the airport, as our time together was so special. I was exhausted from the effort but felt refreshment in my spirit from working together to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Lee Ann was also refreshed and we are having many more students come to our Friday night Bible study. We normally average around 3-4, but our final Bible study (before summer break) had 12 students! PTL!





The Japan Squad mission was to learn about Japanese people and culture, experience life with Japanese Christians, and help with ministry to the Japanese people. From our experience with them, I know they did these things and much more! Many prayers were answered and I can say, "Mission accomplished!"

With Thanks and much Love,

Gordon (and Lee Ann) Hwang