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# INFOCUS

Rooted and Established in Love

By Jennifer Stasak

On a bullet train speeding through the Japanese countryside, Sora Adachi and Uiko Yano pass a tablet back and forth to each other. They're drawing portraits of each other and then laughing at how badly the portraits turned out. Laughter is part of the foundation of Uiko and Sora's friendship, and it's a huge part of their personalities too. They lovingly joke around, play with social media face filters on their phones, travel and embark on adventures, and share a mutual love of chai tea lattes.

But what connects Sora and Uiko is deeper than coffee or laughter — it's their passion for God's Word in Japanese Sign Language.

Sora and Uiko work together on the ViBi (which stands for "Visual Bible and Video Bible") team, which is translating the Scriptures into Japanese Sign Language. Uiko serves as the project manager, and Sora is an exegetical research assistant who also works as the team's public relations staff member. There's one noticeable difference between Sora and Uiko: Sora is hearing, and Uiko is Deaf.

Before joining the ViBi team, Sora only knew spoken Japanese and English. "Because I'm a hearing person, I could not communicate in Japanese Sign Language when I first started working with [the team]," she recalled. "But they're so patient in teaching me how to sign and how to communicate with them. ... It's a completely different world [compared] to the environment and culture in

which I grew up. When I first started working here, I thought: 'There's not going to be any culture shock.' But Deaf culture is totally different. ... I had no idea that there were so many Deaf people within my community, within my city."

Watching Sora and Uiko interact, you'd never know that there's a cultural barrier between them. They communicate with ease, alternating between teasing each other and having deep conversations about passages they're trying to translate. Uiko will push her glasses up on her nose when they slip down because she's passionately signing. Sora takes long swigs of her bottled tea and nods along, following Uiko's hands. Both are incredibly intelligent, competent and fun women who have varied hobbies and interests.

Years ago, they probably never would have been part of the same community. But the ViBi team is knit together by something greater than their backgrounds, experiences or even their language. They're a family anchored in the truth; their roots are deep in Christ. "And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ" (Ephesians 3:17b-18, NIV).

"I'm really honored to be a part of this project and a part of this family," Sora said with a smile. "Because we are just like family."

## Share the Power of God's Word

Lives are changed when people are able to access God's Word in a language and format they clearly understand. And this summer, you can help people around the world meet Jesus through translated Scripture for the first time! Give today at [wycliffe.org/summercampaign](http://wycliffe.org/summercampaign).



## A GLIMPSE OF JAPAN

Japan is known for its islands, beautiful culture, and large and densely populated cities. If you travel throughout some of Japan's nearly 7,000 islands, you might see Mount Fuji, the Osaka castle, bamboo forests, historic temples and a unique blend of urban cities, mountainous regions and coastal plains.

There are over 250,000\* Deaf people living in Japan who communicate using Japanese Sign Language. Less than 2% of Japan's Deaf know Christ. Since 1993, portions of the Bible have been translated into Japanese Sign Language. But there is still a long way to go. As the Japanese Sign Language community awaits having all of Scripture in their language, be in prayer for the project and everyone on the translation team.

*You can make a difference in places like Japan by joining our prayer team. Sign up at [wycliffe.org/prayer](http://wycliffe.org/prayer) to receive prayer emails on various countries, people groups and more to help you pray about what God is doing around the world.*

## WAYS TO PRAY FOR JAPAN

- » More people like Sora and Uiko become involved in sign language translation work.
- » People and churches in Japan's Deaf community are encouraged by God's Word in Japanese Sign Language.
- » Access to training and technology that make sign language translation possible.

## JAPAN FAST FACTS



POPULATION:  
**124,687,293**

CAPITAL:  
**TOKYO**

AREA COMPARATIVE:  
**Slightly smaller  
than California.**

\*Source: [cia.gov](http://cia.gov)