

DAVID & SUE VERWEY

The faithful prayers and financial support of friends of Japan Mission continue to play a critical role in the success of the work. The challenge has been to continue the mission work, while keeping supporters informed as to the progress of the work.

Due to COVID travel restrictions, it has been more than 7 years since representatives of Japan Mission visited parts of South Africa, the USA, UK and Canada.

David and Sue are scheduled to take meetings throughout South Africa (SA) during the months of May, June, October and November, 2026. During this time, the team of workers in Japan will continue the work to reach the lost and assist the churches.

Pray for David and Sue's protection and their ability to effectively communicate the vision of the work, as they take meetings as representatives of the Japan Mission.

BIBLES FOR CHINA

A ministry partner of Japan Mission recently shared:

"By God's grace, we were able to take in about 200,000 Bibles in the past 1 1/2 years. We are constantly receiving requests for more Bibles, so there is an urgent need to print more Bibles. A good quality Chinese Bible can now be printed for only JP¥350 (US\$2.50 or UK£1.75)."

"Activities slowed dramatically due to COVID, but the Lord is now opening up new opportunities, and Scriptures are again finding their way to those who need them."

Since *New Life Ministries* started printing Bibles for China in the late 1970s, they have taken in over 20 million Bibles! We are very grateful for those who have supported the work in China over the years.

Pray that God would provide the necessary resources. **Pray** also for wisdom and protection for the Bible couriers, who are often at great risk.



JAPAN MISSION

CALLED TO SERVE

March / April 2026

PRIORITIES CHANGED

Shinji Wakura was born in 1946 to a hard-working middle-class family in Osaka, Japan. It was just after World War II and everyone was struggling to make ends meet.



Shinji's mother was a devout Christian who desired to instill Christian values in him, so she told him that she would not give him his weekly allowance until he had attended Sunday School at the local church.

Shinji's father was a hard-working business man who established a number of companies. He respected the ways of Christianity, but did not take time to attend church. As Shinji grew older, he attended university in the USA. When he returned to Japan, he followed in his father's footsteps and became a business man who was dedicated to his work.

Shinji was later married to Rieko and they were blessed with two children. One day in 1978, Shinji arrived home from a long day's work to find 15-year-old Sue Verwey in his living room changing his son's diaper. Sue had made friends with Rieko and visited often to babysit their two children.

The Wakura family did not attend church, but the Lord answered the faithful prayers of Shinji's mother through the seeds that were sown

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in this friendship that God had ordained between Sue and Rieko.

In time, the Lord blessed Shinji and he became successful at running a number of companies. Rieko and Sue's friendship grew, and David Verwey and Shinji also became good friends.

David and Sue were able to witness to them on many occasions over the years. This was particularly true at Sue's mother's funeral (2009), and David's mother (2008) and father's funeral (2013). Shinji and Rieko attended each of these occasions and were left with a deeper understanding of the hope that Christians have in Jesus and the afterlife.

In 2013, after 68-year-old Shinji attended David's father's funeral, Shinji told David, "Attending today made me realize how much I need to return to my roots and what my mother taught me." In time, God slowly changed his attitude and he even started to give donations to Japan Mission.

In June 2025, as 80-year-old Shinji was contemplating retirement, he was diagnosed with late-stage brain cancer. When he learned that he had cancer, his priorities changed. The seeds that his mother had sowed in his heart for so many years came to fruition.

"Sometimes Sue would go shopping with Rieko and leave

me to visit with Shinji," David shared. "We had some precious talks and times of prayer on these occasions. It was so good to hear Shinji say, '**No matter what happens, now I do not worry because I know that Jesus is with me.**' I could see that the light had gone on in his mind and that God had changed his heart."

It was at this time that God gave Shinji an urgent desire to hold a *Farewell Party* for his close friends. Shinji wanted his unsaved friends to know that he was a Christian and that they could also have the same hope that he had in Jesus and the afterlife.

After a lot of planning, all the arrangements were made to hold this party on July 13, 2025. About 60 invitations were sent out and the food was ordered.

The day before the party, Shinji developed high blood pressure, felt dizzy and could not walk. Shinji was rushed to hospital where he received medication and was placed under observation. The *Farewell Party* was scheduled for the next day, leaving everyone to wonder if we would need to cancel the party and phone 60 people.

Providentially, the hospital released Shinji that night after his blood pressure went down.

The next day, Sue and I fetched Shinji and Rieko at their home by car and drove them to his

company in Osaka. There we held the *Farewell Party* where 60 of his friends gathered, all of whom were non-Christians.

We sang, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus* and *Amazing Grace*. David then shared a message of the hope we have in Jesus and the life to come in a city with streets of gold and gates of pearl. This was the first time most of Shinji's friends had heard the Gospel.

A few days later, Shinji was hospitalized for the long-term to receive radiation treatments and rehabilitation therapy. Sue and I visited Shinji and Rieko many times in the hospital. Each time David would print out a Bible verse to share with them and pray with them.

Shinji eagerly listened to Psalm 23 and prayed. On one occasion David shared John 14:27: **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.**

As David read these words, they were both moved to tears.

Shinji said, "Thank you, this verse is for me! I am going to keep it next to my pillow."

Rieko tearfully shared, "Thank you! There is a God! This is the Bible verse we needed! Shinji has had terrible dreams, and has had trouble differentiating his dreams from reality. One

time he woke up and did not recognize me. Another time he dreamed that he made a bomb and it was about to explode. He woke up in a panic and told me that we needed to evacuate!"

As the cancer progresses, Shinji is being given medication and he sleeps more as a result. We are keenly aware that for Shinji the battle was for his mind.

Our prayer is that the Holy Spirit would put a peaceful spirit in his heart and that he would be able to take every thought captive.

After this, when Shinji was about to go to sleep Rieko would play, *What A Friend We Have in Jesus*, in Japanese from her phone and Shinji would drop off to sleep. Later we sent them the YouTube link of *Amazing Grace* in Japanese.

The Holy Spirit spoke to Shinji through these songs. In this way, we have come to use smartphones to encourage the sick in their faith.

The Wakura family has been immensely grateful for the way we have stood with them through these difficult circumstances. It has been a privilege to be able to witness to them along the way. **Pray** that the Lord would continue to bless Shinji and his family. **Pray** that the entire family would come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. □