

Sharing the Gospel with a Japanese Man Based on the Meaning of His Own Name!



I hope the title of this article intrigues you to read it article because you won't understand what I mean by the title until I explain it.

Let me start from the beginning. An American friend of mine, Brenda, has a daughter who is dating a Japanese boy named Yoshi. Because I lived in Japan so long and studied the Chinese characters that the Japanese use, I wondered if Yoshi's name is the Chinese character meaning righteousness.

The following is a conversation with Brenda through messenger:

Please ask Yoshi if this is how he writes his name. If it is, I'll tell something surprising about it that even he may not know.

Yes that's his name!! What's that? His name means Justice. I already asked him

His name teaches part of the Gospel! That is the character for RIGHTEOUSNESS, rather than justice. The character is actually a combination of two characters. The top half is the character for sheep. 羊 The bottom half is the character for the personal pronoun, I. 我 The combination of the two is based on the Old Testament blood sacrifice of a sheep or lamb for the sins of the people. Jesus was the final sacrifice for our sins, the Lamb of God. Only through receiving His sacrifice and blood shed for our sins do we become righteous!!! Tell that to Yoshi. It might change his life for him to know the meaning in his name.

That is so awesome!!

Brenda tried to explain to Yoshi what I told her about the meaning of Yoshi's name, but because his understanding of English is not so good he didn't quite get the point. She therefore asked me to write him an explanation in Japanese which I did. And I included two Scriptures.

John 1:29 ¶The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the **Lamb of God**, which taketh away the sin of the world.

1 Corinthians 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and **righteousness**, and sanctification, and redemption:

Brenda sent my Japanese text to Yoshi and he replied:

Thank you so much! I didn't know my name has this meaning. It's really interesting.

Brenda asked:

What did you write?

I wrote much of what I told you in English with two added Bible verses. It seems to me he understood it. He absolutely knows his name is a combination of sheep and the pronoun, I. No Japanese can deny that. It's right in their face!

I explained to Brenda that though the Chinese character of Yoshi's name is in 1 Corinthians 10:30, but it's not pronounced the same way as his name. In the verse it's pronounced "gi", righteousness. For every loan word Japan gets from China, there is at least one Chinese way of saying it, and a Japanese way of saying it. As a general rule, the Japanese way is multisyllabic, and the Chinese way is a single syllable. But no matter how you say it, the meaning of the word remains the same.

Brenda is excited that Yoshi got a witness for Christ based on the meaning of his own name!