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1. Meet with a man who lives with an incurable disease
2. Making a film to break down barriers
3. American man and woman interviewing disabled people in many countries
4. An American man and a woman, who are making a documentary film on people with hearing disabilities throughout the world, visit Kochi. On the 27th, they visited a calligrapher who lives with an incurable disease.

5. Christy Smith (29 yrs old), who has a hearing disability, and Dave Justice (29 yrs old), a sign language interpreter. Through an American TV program she was in previously, Ms. Smith is a well-known deaf figure in the US.

Together, the two Americans embarked on a film-making project in order to connect people with hearing disabilities all over the world, as well as to educate societies on people with hearing disabilities. They started their one-year trip around the world last October, and Japan is the third country they visit, after New Zealand and Australia. They are continuing their report by asking questions such as “What can people who can hear learn from people who cannot?” and “What would you like the world to know about your school/organization?”

Today, they met with Shunsuke HIURA (19 yrs old, a resident of Ohtani-cho, Kochi-city), an artist who expresses his thoughts in his calligraphy while fighting against an incurable disease that is gradually taking away all of his body functions.

Shunsuke, with a brush tied to his left finger (which was set by his mother Hisako (49 yrs old)), slowly writes each letter on a piece of paper. While Mr. Justice’s camera captures the brush strokes and the expression on Shunsuke’s face thoroughly, the two pieces of work – Shoshin Shomei (Shunsuke’s original four-letter proverb which means “Smile-keep going, smile-keep being happy (bright/light)”, and PEACE (in English) - were completed.

Ms. Smith, sitting on the floor and keeping a very close eye on Shunsuke, waived both of her hands and “applauded” when he finished, and then eagerly interviewed Shunsuke and Hisako with questions such as “How do you communicate with each other when writing?” and “Was it easy from the beginning?”

With smiles, Ms. Smith commented “The eye-to-eye communication without any verbal communication was wonderful. It was very beautiful.” Mr. Justice said “Although Shunsuke does not have a hearing disability, his assertion that he wants to be seen as himself without any prejudice is the same as ours. I would like our documentary to break down various barriers, such as those between countries and languages, as well as between the abled and the disabled.

The two are planning to visit countries such as China, Thailand, and India after Japan. They will return to the US in September, and then commence making their film.

(Reported by Norihiko Kira)