

After fighting the current of water uphill to the Education Center this afternoon, I think it's about time that I dedicate a whole journal to the weather in Japan since I got here. Everyone tells me that the past two months are not typical of Japanese weather. Some people even suggest that I've brought this strange weather with me from America! I don't think that's the case, but it does seem like the weather around the world is getting more and more extreme with every year. It is still a struggle to deal with such weather especially in a new place where I am still learning to decipher the weather forecast!

My brother, who has lived in Japan before, warned me that typhoons are nothing but a lot of rain and not to believe all the fuss that is made on the news during typhoon season. Maybe he was just trying to be cool, or maybe there were no bad typhoons in Gifu when he lived here, but he told me there was no reason to be concerned, so at first I was not too worried about typhoons.

My first night in Tsu I was met with my first typhoon, and because of an encounter with a HUGE spider in my apartment, I barely noticed the storm. In retrospect, I thought typhoons were a joke and that I would have no problems with them this year. Then another typhoon hit, and another, and another, and another. I am gradually getting used to hearing the wind howling outside my windows but I am lucky that the storms always seems to steer clear of Mie, leaving me safe in my apartment. If I keep my fingers crossed, I'll make it through the rest of the typhoon season unharmed.

Just when I was getting used to hearing typhoon lingo on the news, my apartment started to shake and I had lived through my first earthquake and all of its aftershocks. Luckily for me, the earthquake happened during the bilingual news, so I was able to find out what happened without struggling to learn new kanji and vocabulary in a stressful situation. In Ohio, we have very few earthquakes, and even the ones that make the news usually aren't felt by anyone in their day to day life. I had gotten used to the threat of typhoons because even if there is a big typhoon coming, we are usually forewarned. I don't like the uncertainty that an earthquake could rattle Tsu at any moment and without any warning. For a few days I was diving under my table every time I heard a noise from the apartment upstairs. Even now, I am still somewhat on edge and I'm always afraid that a seemingly harmless rumble of thunder is going to turn out to be the big Tokai earthquake.

Just when I thought Japan couldn't spring anymore crazy weather on me, last week's serious thunderstorms and this today's torrential rains caught me off guard yet

again. When I left for work this morning, I thought I was really ready for the rain because I brought a small towel to dry off in case my umbrella and raincoat didn't keep me totally dry. If I would have known what was going to happen, I would have brought a raft and a paddle instead! I never would have guessed that the 10 minute walk from the Board of Education to the Education center would turn into an upstream struggle through knee-deep water to get to work for the afternoon.

Sometimes this crazy weather just makes me want to go home! But today I realized that Japanese students or teachers doing an exchange in Florida this year are probably thinking the same thing about the weather in the US. Even though it seems like weather all around the world is a little bit weird this year, it can be difficult to have to deal with it in a new place. There's an English saying that when life hands you lemons, you should make lemonade. I'm trying to look at this as a good way to learn new kanji. I already know 台風、地震、and 雷! Besides, even though I almost lost my shoes, I had kind of a fun time swimming to work this week.