

Last week, Moriguchi-san asked me what exactly it is that I do for fun. When I come to the Education Center, I write about work, studying Japanese, or other serious topics, but I didn't realize I was giving everyone the idea that I'm no fun! Maybe I don't seem like a barrel of laughs on Wednesday afternoons because I spend my time either working or studying Japanese. But on Friday afternoon, I leave my textbooks at school and almost never study on the weekend!

My favorite thing to do on the weekend with my friends is go to karaoke! I always wanted to be a singer, but from a very early age, it was obvious to me and everyone around me that I didn't have the talent to sing in front of anyone but my parents. Even so, I have still always enjoyed singing, and going to karaoke with my friends is the best way to do it. In America, karaoke bars are very different from in Japan. Most of the time, a normal bar or restaurant will have a "karaoke night" and people can sign up on a list to sing in front of everyone in the whole place. Usually, only the people with good voices who like to perform get up and sing for everyone else. I never sang in a place like this! Even though I like to sing, I was always too shy to get up and perform in front of a bunch of people I don't know. Luckily, since coming to Japan, I have been asked to sing in front of classes and do all sorts of other embarrassing things that have made me virtually immune to that kind of stage fright.

Japanese karaoke boxes are so much more fun than the American karaoke model. Just going with a group of friends is so much more fun because no one cares if they sound bad or not. Everyone just likes to sing together and have fun. In the past few weeks, I've been to karaoke a few times with my friends, and it just never stops being fun! Part of the novelty is probably because we don't have this kind of karaoke at home. This weekend, I talked to my brother who lives in New York City, and he told me that karaoke boxes are starting to open there. I think this is great news. Hopefully the US will be full of karaoke boxes by the time I get back!!