

Not too much new has been happening in my life in Japan recently. Even though this winter has been unusually warm, the only traveling I've done in the past few weeks has been to go snowboarding, first in Nagano and then again in Gifu last week. I went snowboarding for the first time when I lived in France, and then for the second time last year in Hokkaido. I am still a beginner! But I was happy to have the chance to go snowboarding again this year.

I organized the first trip to Nagano with a group of about 30 ALTs from around Mie, and everyone had a good time. I spent all of my weekend on the bunny slopes, learning the basics of snowboarding and by the time we came back to Mie I was excited to go on my next trip. But the trip to Gifu wasn't as nice! Even though I still got to practice my new techniques, the weather was warm so the snow in Gifu was icy and hard. I took two small falls (on a flat spot at the bottom of the mountain!) and I broke my tailbone. It was very painful! The worst part about it is that I was still getting better at snowboarding. I didn't have a dramatic tumble down the mountainside, but just fell straight backwards on a flat part. After coming back to Mie, I went to the doctor to see if I was ok. Even though there was a small break in my tailbone, he said there is nothing to do except rest and wait for it to get better. And what's worse—I can't go snowboarding again until next year!

I know a lot of people who have broken their tailbones at home too—from falling on the stairs, falling on skis, falling on an ice skating rink, and other ways too. And everyone told me that it was the most painful thing and it takes forever to heal. I was not happy to hear it! But at least I know that I'm not alone. The worst part about seeing the doctor in Japan is that I didn't get any painkillers! It's common knowledge among Americans that medicine in Japan is much weaker than in America. It's better—and probably more healthy—not to take so many drugs, but since my body is used to the medicine I get in America, it feels strange for me to have a broken bone and no kind of painkiller to make it feel better! Maybe after a few years living in Japan I will become a stronger person. But for now, I miss the medicine from America!

Now it's been about 10 days since I first broke my tailbone, and it's starting to feel better. It really does take a long time to heal! I am very grateful that I had a car to drive around, and now that I have a donut cushion to sit on at work (even though I'm a little embarrassed that the cartoon character pattern makes it look like a stuffed animal!) I feel much better. I hope that none of you ever have a broken tailbone, so if you go snowboarding, make sure that you wear padded shorts!!