

When I was in high school, I was a member of the golf team at my high school. Not many high schools had golf teams, but mine did. After doing a lesson on golf in my physical education class, the teacher (who happened to also be the golf coach) encouraged me to join. I had taken some golf lessons when I was younger, and it sounded like fun, so my parents bought me a set of clubs for my birthday and I joined the team. It was a great experience. I was not the best golfer. I often got tired from just carrying my own bag on the golf course so I didn't play very well. Two summers while I was in high school, I worked as a caddy at a local golf club to earn money that I saved for college. It was fun being a caddy and I learned a lot about how to play golf. I always enjoyed the time I spent playing golf and working at a golf course during high school.

When I went to college, I was too busy to play golf for fun, and definitely not good enough to join my university's golf team. I played once or twice during the summer with my dad or my uncle, or went to the driving range in my free time. But it has been a long time since I played! That's why I was really nervous when some co-workers from the Board of Education asked me to play golf with them last Saturday. I had told them one time that I was a member of the golf team in high school, and they invited me to play golf with them sometime. It was a nice gesture, but people that I have met here often say things like that at an enkai and it never actually happens. I said, "Sure, I'd love to play golf!," thinking that it would never be mentioned again.

But sure enough, one of my co-workers came to me with his calendar when the weather started to get warm, to plan a golf outing. I couldn't make it to the first, but finally was able to join them last Saturday for a round of golf. I was nervous to say the least. It had been years since I played golf, and even then I wasn't very good. I worried that these guys would be really good and I would slow them down (not to mention the worries I had about speaking Japanese or having some kind of big misunderstanding). But last week my worries started to die down when they were really friendly, gave me lots of information about where we would be golfing and when, and even called the night before to tell me there was a bath at the course after we played. I wouldn't have expected to have a bath at a golf course at home!

I was already feeling more relaxed about my big golf day when I left my apartment on Saturday morning. After a nice train ride and drive from Ise to the golf course in Shima, we were ready to play and all the old feelings came back to me. It was nice to see that golfing in Japan is not much different than golfing at home. It felt good to be back on a golf course and play with other people who shared my interest. As it turns out, I played a lot better than I expected, and I wasn't too far behind the other guys. We had a fun time and it was a nice reminder that common interests definitely overcome any cultural or language barriers. I am really grateful that I was invited to go golfing with them this weekend, and I'm looking forward to going again!