

One of the reasons that I write this journal each week is to share my impressions and experiences in Japan from an American point of view. It's what makes me unique! I don't see any of the Japanese staff in this office writing a weekly journal, so I always assumed this was the case. But recently, I have had a lot of experiences or situations that have shown me that my point of view might be getting less and less unique!

This weekend, I went to an ALT soccer tournament in Awaji. All of the teams stayed in one hotel, and there was a sento for all of us to use after the games. Most of the older ALTs went in easily, but there were a few first year ALTs who were really nervous or refused to use the sento at all. When we were finished, a lot of ALTs were talking. Many people were sharing their stories of their first time at an onsen, how they were nervous then but like it now. Some other people said that they still feel nervous to use a public bath. But me, I couldn't even remember the first time I went to an onsen. I guess I was nervous the first time I went there a few years ago. But now, I don't even remember! It seems totally normal to me. Perhaps I need to read through some old journals so that I can refresh my memory of that American point of view.

Another thing that often catches me off guard recently is when people ask me what things are like in America. How much are movies in America? How much are groceries in America? How many people drink Budweiser in America? These are all questions the answers to which I have long forgotten. Even if I did remember the prices of things in America (I don't), those prices would have been from more than 3 years ago. It's getting harder and harder to share my experiences at home in America as my experiences in Japan are slowly taking their places in my mind.

This week my parents are coming to visit. I am looking forward to seeing them again not only to catch up on lost time and show them around to new places in Japan, but also to ask them all the questions that people keep asking me about America. I'll bring them to my school festival, and then interested teachers and students can ask them their questions, and get good answers firsthand. I'm planning to bring them to the Education Center next Wednesday, as well. So if you have any questions that you want to ask them, think about it now! They'll be looking forward to meeting you next week.