

9th(Final) Column (2017. 10. 15)

「Comfort zone」

By the time you are reading this, I hope the weather has cooled down enough for my floor fan (that has been pretty much turned on since May) to finally be put to rest. Also, I imagine the skies will be clear and the leaves turning colours to a beautiful autumn shade.

I have a small announcement to make. I will be leaving my position as a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) in Toyohashi as of November.

2 years has passed since I moved to Japan. Looking back, my time here was a pleasure. As a CIR in Toyohashi, my work gave me opportunities to use my language skills in a variety of situations in area that I have always been interested in. I would like to thank everyone at the Toyohashi City Hall for giving me such a valuable experience.

When I was first informed that I will be placed in Toyohashi, I was honestly worried. Coming to Japan to work, as opposed to a holiday or a study abroad program, meant that I will be leaving behind my family, friends, basically all the connections I've built up over years. Flying out of my comfort zone and relocating to a different country with no idea of what kind of environment I'll be in was quite unsettling. At the same time, I was optimistic about the chance to move forward with my life, and here I am now.

I was very lucky. Once I was in Toyohashi, I found that this city is easy to live in, and my worries quickly disappeared. There are friendly people here who came up to talk to me regularly at the grocery store, and not long after I started working I had friends to go out drinking with, so I feel like I got used to my life here quickly. The city of Toyohashi is also known for its beach, mountains and rivers, as well as a bustling city center. You can hop on a train and go exploring further away, like Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka, Shizuoka, Gifu and Tokyo without switching trains once. Despite all the worrying I did before coming here, I have so many fond memories of Toyohashi from the past 2 years, and now I have come to really like it here. As a soon to be ex-Toyohashi resident, I have a lot of good things to say to my new colleagues and friends of the future.

By the end November, I will be leaving Toyohashi, a city that has become my comfort zone. Again, I'm worried. However, thanks to the experiences I gained here, I am slightly more comfortable dealing with what's to come.

So to Toyohashi, to all the people I have had the pleasure of meeting, and to all the readers who tolerated my clumsy writing until this very end. Thank you very much.