



Hello Ino town

How are you in this hot weather? I hope you have all had the time to soak yourselves in the river and cooled down! I love the Niyodo River and have enjoyed it so for three years.

Although it is still quite hard to believe, my three years working in Ino have come to a close and I shall soon be leaving the town I have come to call home. Can three years really pass by so quickly? I came here to Kochi in the August 2003 and although I knew some words in Japanese it was very frustrating at times not to understand fully or have a decent conversation with anyone about anything! The challenge to learn Japanese has been a great one, but I have learnt enough to help me in daily situations and at least have some fun conversations with people around me. The biggest challenge for me has been translating for all my friends and family that have been over to see me. I also enjoyed studying Kanji and although I never managed the time I would like to have sat for the Kanji kentei!!!

So, besides learning Japanese I have travelled to many places around Japan. During my travels I have come to regard two spots as my favourite places in Japan. Last year I travelled around Kyushu (again), and I managed to get as far as Sakurajima. It was a stunningly beautiful island and so peaceful. The menacing volcano set a strange atmosphere on the island? but I loved the peace and the stillness. It was also to sit on the rocks at Furusato onsen and enjoy the sun setting over the sea. I also really love Takachiho valley and Amaterasu's cave that is there too. These places are wonders themselves and also make the road trip around Kyushu so worthwhile. I wish I had more time to explore Japan. The furthest south I have been to is Yakushima and the furthest north is Touyako town in Hokkaido. Maybe someday I can return and visit Yonaguni Island in the far south? that would be fantastic!

Despite all the travel my home has been Ino and I have really enjoyed living here. I would like to stay longer but then my family and friends are not here and I miss not seeing them so often. I will miss seeing the elementary students growing up and seeing them graduate from Junior school and also seeing my Junior school students graduate and move on to high school. But soon there will be a new British person coming to Ino to continue the work that an ALT does here.

I shall soon be heading back to England. Just in time for my sisters wedding. There are many things planned for the rest of this year and new challenges to encounter. So although I am very sad to be leaving Japan, I am happy that I can take away with me some very special memories and will never forget them.

We have a proverb in English:

When one door closes another one opens...

Bye Ino town

