

# My new life

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My life has changed a lot since I retired from Okayama University five years ago, when my academic life of almost 40 years came to an end. Now, I am trying very hard to find something to do, something worthwhile.

The change, however, came gradually. For a while, for around four years to be more precise, after my retirement, I was rather busy organizing the research results I established while I was in office and publishing them in monographs and textbooks. At last, I have finished them; I have published five books since my retirement; two in Japanese and three in English.

Suddenly, I feel that I need to organize my life in a new mode. This may be the widely talked-about psychological crisis that retirees invariably face after their retirement. I now realize that I have few local friends. In the past, I have made friends and acquaintances through my academic activities. Every time I attend conferences, domestic and international, I meet a lot of people having common interests. It is my greatest joy to go abroad for a conference, meet my old colleagues, and discuss our mutual interest. But they are scattered all over the world. Locally, on the other hand, I have few friends, even among Okayama University professors, because they have different academic disciplines with their own distinct academic circles.

In view of this, I have joined the alumni activities of Okayama University, although I am not an Okayama University alumni myself; I graduated from the University of Tokyo. From time to time, there are parties and luncheons, where graduates and former professors of Okayama University get together. I enjoy such occasions very much. Recently, I have decided to join a class of learning French.

I have studied French for a long time, almost 30 years, but only intermittently, so I am still not able to speak French very well. This is partly because English has been sufficient for communication abroad even with French people and partly because I have also been learning other languages, including German and Chinese; I like studying foreign languages.

Now, my real purpose of attending the French class is not really to become proficient in French but rather to enjoy the learning activities with other people.