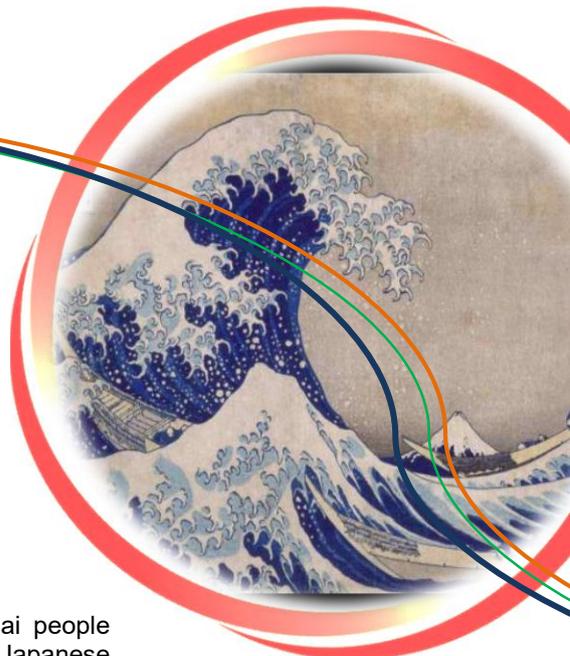


Why do I love Chiba?



Father: "Do you want to go study language in Japan...?"

Me: "Yes, yes! I do! I would love to!"

It didn't take long to give an answer. Actually, I agreed before he even finished the sentence. As a half Japanese, I have met so many people who expect me to speak fluent Japanese when I actually couldn't. It was a great chance to improve myself and explore the country I admired.

It was also not difficult to select where I wanted to stay. To me, Tokyo is a busy place packed with diverse people, a place full of fashion and trends. It might be fun to visit, but might be too exhausting to live. Chiba is the best choice as it's just next to Tokyo while being not too busy. It is also convenient with Narita airport and the cost of living was considerably lower. These were the reasons I considered in choosing Chiba.

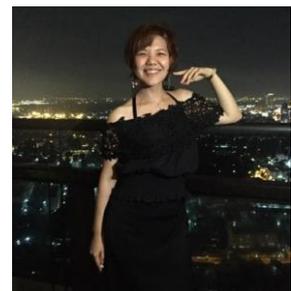
Chiba didn't let me down. The place where I lived was Chiba-Chuo. I studied at Futaba Foreign Languages School. At the school, I met people from different countries. Meeting different people, living at the same neighbor, sharing various moments together had intensively broadened my human experience. A number of them have become my great friends until now.

I didn't have local friends as many as I expected since local people were not as familiar to foreigners as people in bigger cities like Tokyo and Osaka. However, they were kind and willing to help whenever I approached them. Many were quite talkative especially aging people. Some were actually enthusiastic to talk to foreigners. At Chiba cultural center, you can meet a lot of Japanese people coming to talk to foreigners, teaching Japanese language, exchanging cultures as a volunteer. Sometimes they even invite their students to stay at their houses or go travel

together. I joined a group of Thai people learning from Ueda sensei, a kind Japanese uncle. It expanded my network to Thai people outside the school as well.

As for the living, there was, Trial, a cheap hypermarket nearby my place where I enjoyed buying ingredients for my cooking. Book Off was everywhere so I could save my budget on extra language reference books. I.e. manga! ;-). From Keisei Chiba-Chuo station to JR Chiba station, I enjoyed the passage full of shops and restaurants. There were big department stores like Sogo and Junnu as well. I had a part-time job at a food factory in Katsutadai area as well. This also gave me a valuable experience. For the foreigners who have just started to learn Japanese, finding a part-time job is not easy. Most of the jobs involve good language skills like waiter/waitress at restaurants, shops, convenient stores, etc. I also had gone through difficulty finding a job at first. Luckily, there're a large number of factories in Chiba and several jobs there didn't require high language skills. Getting a part-time job early really helped supporting my tuition fee.

Overall, I feel lucky that I choose to live in Chiba even it was for a short period. I had great friends, I got a job, my school was good, and people there were relatively nice. I am sure I can always say "It's one of the best parts of my life" even now and in the future. I am thankful to Chiba always.



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