

**Life is Always in Progress**

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From: Silicon Valley's



Google Silicon Valley's

◆ Prologue

I excelled in middle-distance running and advanced from a public junior high school to Kochi Technical High School, which had a strong record in the national high school ekiden at the time. However, due to continuous injuries, I never had the chance to run the coveted "Miyako Oji" (Kyoto). During my junior and senior high school years, I was solely focused on the track and field club, and had no connection with English or international exchange. I used to think of foreigners as beings from another planet and believed that those who went abroad were either people who had been studying English since childhood or those raised in special environments. What changed me was meeting various people, learning from them, and gradually growing through challenges. Now, I am working in Silicon Valley, California, USA, an area concentrated with IT companies. Until I graduated from high school, I had no connection with English or overseas. I would like to share "how I ended up in Silicon Valley."

◆ Regrets of an 18-year-old

The turning point was the new employee training at a company in Tokushima Prefecture where I started working after graduating from high school. While talking with a colleague who had graduated from a university overseas, I began to aspire to work abroad. I immediately went to consult with the human resources department. Their response was that "it is difficult to work outside the factory due to the hiring conditions." I was greatly shocked. "I regret not having thought deeply about life until now."

◆ Life-changing experiences

A year and a half later, I submitted my resignation to the company and began studying for university entrance exams with my back against the wall. I somehow managed to successfully enter Kochi University, but I felt an inferiority complex about my English conversation skills. In my second year of university, a major turning point arrived. A university friend who participated in the "Global Human Resources Development Project," a Japanese government initiative under the catchphrase "Life-changing experiences," informed me about it. Hearing that the "Ship for World Youth" project he participated in was the most impactful, I quickly aimed for the same project. Thanks to my exam preparation, I successfully passed the second exam in Tokyo. After six days of preliminary training for the Japanese youth participants, I became a representative youth of Japan for the 23rd "Ship for World Youth" project in 2010. In late January 2011, 126 Japanese youth and 136 foreign youth boarded the "Fujimaru" under the slogan "One Ship, One Heart, One World," embarking on a 41-day ocean voyage. The route included four countries—Solomon Islands, Fiji, Australia, and Vanuatu—and Okinawa. The official visit countries were Fiji and Australia. Other stops were for refueling and resupplying, but the youth had free time to disembark and enjoy themselves. I describe this project as a "world version of a school trip," but the seniors typically say, "It's something only those who have experienced it can understand, so you just have to participate."

◆Working holiday

After the dreamy training on the "Fujimaru" ended,
a new dream emerged: "I want to be able to speak English better."
I quickly decided to take a leave of absence from university
and implemented a one-year
"Australia Working Holiday & English Study Plan."



Ship of "FUJI MARU"

◆Silicon Valley

After graduating from university, I sought opportunities to work abroad and got a job at a company in Tokyo. However, after joining, the company's policy changed, and that dream disappeared. Still unable to give up on my dream of working overseas, I changed jobs a year later to a company in Kyoto that had potential for overseas assignments. I was thrilled to be assigned as a sales representative for American clients, but soon found it difficult to keep up with the English spoken by Americans, and I continued to struggle to complete my tasks.

A few years later, my long-desired overseas assignment came true, and I am now working in Silicon Valley.

This is the journey from Kochi to Silicon Valley.

◆We have a chance

Nowadays, even without much money, you can live abroad using a working holiday, take affordable online English lessons while living in Kochi, or study at the University of the People, an American online university.

Don't think "Is it too late for me?" There is never too late for "dreaming," "working hard," and "changing your life." This is because the path we are walking on has no endpoint and is always in progress.

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