



China-Chengdu City Marathon and Friend Reunion MIA Member MIURA TAKAMICHI

Marathons are truly an interesting sport. You are physically close to the roadside supporters, kinship immediately blossoms with runners you've never met, and if you finish the race despite reaching your physical limits, you'll be awarded a sense of personal accomplishment. Also, during practice, if you just step one foot out the house you can run to anywhere with no time limits and at your own pace. It's also fun to expand your connections and mingle by running in meets.

On another note, it certainly can't be said that the voyage to China proceeded smoothly. There was a five year travel ban due to Covid and the "short-term sightseeing visa exemption" that was previously established with China was abolished. I needed to acquire a Visa and that proved to be challenging. Fortunately, the requirements alleviated at the end of last year so I became able to apply via a travel agent. In the end, I didn't end up having to go to the consulate in Fukuoka and was able to acquire my visa through an agent. With both the marathon entry and the visa application, I heavily relied on the help of Miyakonojo City's Chinese Coordinator for International Relations, Reika Cho. With that, I was finally able to depart.



Lunch party at Mr. Li Biao's home

Adding on to the troubles, my plane's departure became delayed. Stuck in the Shanghai airport, without being able to make my connecting flight I went every which way lugging around my heavy suitcase, panicking in a cold sweat. Thankfully, I was helped by a fellow Japanese person (they were stationed in Shanghai for work and had excellent Chinese language proficiency) whose connecting flight was also delayed. Due to his help, I was able to connect to Chengdu. Coincidentally, they also came to Chengdu in order to participate in the marathon so we rode together from the airport all the way till Chengdu City. Biao Li came to pick us up in the middle of the

night from an airport different to the one we originally had planned for the first day. The car ride ended up being an hour long and we used the time to get thoroughly riled up talking about the marathon. We arrived safely at Biao Li's house, and when I looked back on our journey there I remembered the Chinese proverb "車到山前必有路" (When we get to the mountain, there'll be a way through). It was truly just like that.

All in all, this trip was very educational but the thing I learned the most was that I need to elevate my proficiency with my smartphone. On the scene information, payment, taxi's, translation apps, etc., are all smartphone-enabled practical features. The translation apps conversation ability (speed and timing) especially empowered me to communicate with people whom I normally don't understand a word. Being let to use my conversation partner's high function phone, I was able to experience conversation through an app. I saw Chinese people solve everything with their phones. I even thought it resembled Mary Poppins's carpetbag. (lol)

Before and after the marathon, I went sightseeing around Chengdu City, had dinner parties at mine and my friend's houses, and received warm hospitality at local specialty restaurants. We also brought our own condiments from home to prepare Japanese-flavored handmade meals for everyone, further deepening our cultural exchange.

Our stay was recorded with both still images and videos the entire time. I received an edited version in the form of a souvenir USB from Biao Li's wife. It was the happiest I've been upon receiving a souvenir gift. "Continuing to the future, I hope to continue this kind of 'sports mingling' for a long time", I thought as I began my departure back home.



Marathon participants wearing the event T-shirts



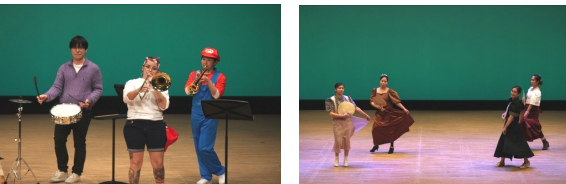
Information & Notices

We held the World Festa 2025

The event welcomed over 1200 attendees and 11 country booths from America, England, Australia, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, China, Denmark, Germany, Mongolia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, plus a booth from JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). Pictures displaying the countries' visages, tea and snack corners, trying on traditional garb or playing traditional games, coloring books and handicrafts were just some of the activities that attendees enjoyed while exchanging with people from diverse national backgrounds.

For the first time in 5 years, the stage was reopened. Songs, dance, and wind orchestra performances from around the world decorated the hall.

Towards the attendees who visited during their busy schedules and towards the performers and staff who assisted with the event, we would like to extend our deep gratitude.



Foreigner Livelihood and Safety Exchange Association

Targets towards those living in Miyakonojo with foreign residency, we learn about preparation for natural disasters and waste separation. The courses are held in simple Japanese. Interpreters for English, Chinese, Mongolian and Tagalog are available.



Target: Miyakonojo's foreign residents and their Families

Date and Time: 3/9/2025 (Sunday) 10:00-12:00

Location: Miyakonojo City Hall Office North Annex
2F Meeting room

Participation Fee: Free!

Seating: 15 (First come first serve!)

Application Method:

By 2/28/2025 (Friday), call or email the Miyakonojo International Exchange Association
 Miyakonojo International Exchange Association (MIA)
 Phone: 0986-23-2295 E-mail: mia@btvm.ne.jp



Movies In Theaters

C-Plaza Cine-port (Tel: 0986-24-2571)

17-9 Nakamachi, Miyakonojo, Miyazaki Map-Code (GPS): 117 488 540*55

- Doctor X: The Movie
- Moana 2: The Legend of the Sea
- Cells at Work: Movie
- Lion King: Mufasa
- Mobile Suit Gundam GQuuuuuuX

- Sunset/Sunrise
- Muromachi Outlaws