

**HI FROM**

# **SAGA**

Provided by SUISA Newsletter Team and Centre for promotion of International Exchange, Saga Univ

**THIS MONTH' S TOPIC**

**Events during COVID-19 pandemic**

**AUTUMN 2020 Vol.5**

## EVENTS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

On the 24th and 25th of October, Saga held four events (Saga saikou festival 2020, Thailand festival in SAGA 2020, Saga revolution Festival, and 3 X 3 Basketball SAGA Super Games 2020 3 X 3 basketball) about culture and art and sports at the Saga Castle Park area. It seemed that Saga became livelier after being quiet for such a long time because of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Saga festival has been held five times since its start in 2016. Saga festival is a festival of art and music that features the theme of "revival (saikou in Japanese)" of Saga and Saga of "the best (saikou in Japanese)". Live shows by popular and famous musicians, art performances, and workshops that artists and participants make arts and crafts together were held.

The Thai festival is an event for the purpose of cultural exchange between Saga and Thailand where Saga is the host town for Thailand's Olympic team for Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics. The festival was bustling with various activities such as Thai foods, workshops, dances, muay-thai, and traditional entertainment.

Saga revolution Festival was held for the third time and is a festival that praises Saga's great achievements and great people and keeps their "ambition" to the future. They scaled down the festival this time and merged it into the program of Saga saikou festival.

In order to thank and respect the medical professionals who are working to prevent the spread of the coronavirus infection, the program that spotlighted the great men who marked new phases into Japanese medical care from Saga were carried out.


3 X 3 basketball is an event that professional basketball teams play 3x3 basketball (a form of the game played three a side on one basketball hoop) in the downtown area of Saga city. The audiences could experience the powerful and speedy play of professional players at just around the players.

Each event livened up Saga city and made people excited even though all events were carried out in a different atmosphere because of various COVID-19 control measures this year. After these events ended, no spread of coronavirus infection was seen in Saga Prefecture. We might be able to say that people understood how big events should be during this pandemic and made actions focused on infection prevention.


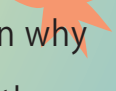










I mentioned that Saga is the host town for Thailand's Olympic team for Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics in a Thai festival section. There are four more countries (Netherlands, New Zealand, Fiji, and Finland) where Saga is the host town for them. Toward 2020, Saga Prefecture has promoted cultural programs through cultural exchanges with foreign countries as a "Saga Cultural Program Promotion Project" to disseminate the appeal of Saga Prefecture both domestically and internationally, and at the same time, Saga Prefecture also aims for expansion of the numbers of tourists and visitors and leads to mutual understanding about cultures between people in Saga and foreigners.



With the Olympics being postponed for one year from the summer of 2020, it seems that events by cultural programs with the host town partner countries in Saga are still being held. The Finnish Fair will be held on 12th and 13th of December 2020 at the city library "Dondondon no mori". You can check the details at the HP of Saga Cultural Program Promotion Project.



There are still many interesting events in Saga in the near future. Is the reason why COVID-19 has not spread in Saga recently because we have acted to prevent the spread of COVID-19? We had no new infections in Saga for a while, but the number of infections has increased from around 20th of July until 15th of August. During September and October, the number has decreased again. This term is same as the summer vacation. Some people will have winter vacation soon. Let's keep raising awareness and take actions to prevent the spread of Covid-19.



## INTERNATIONAL MEETUP EVENT BY LIFE

We have been having welcome parties for new exchange students arriving in Saga every year. But unfortunately, due to the ongoing pandemic, we were unable to hold the party this year, because not so many new students could come to Saga for the new semester. However, our classes still can be held online thanks to technology. Via WEBEX online meeting program which we use the most here, one of the international exchange clubs at our university called "LIFE" came up with the idea to hold **"Online International Meetup"** so students who were supposed to come and study in Saga and international students who are already studying in Saga could meet for the first time. In this issue, we got a great opportunity to interview Ms. Yuka Goriki, the representative of LIFE.



## INTERVIEW



**Q:** Can you please introduce yourself and your role in LIFE? How long have you belonged to the club?

**A:** I am Yuka Goriki, a third-year student from the Faculty of Economics. I have been a member of LIFE since I was a freshman. Now I am the representative of LIFE.

**Q:** What is LIFE? What kind of activities does LIFE do?

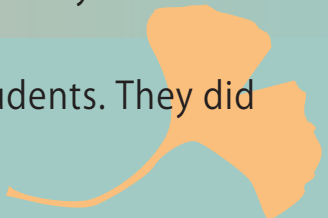
**A:** LIFE mainly hosts international exchange events to create a space for international students and Japanese students to communicate with each other. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of International students decreases, thus it is very difficult to hold events like in a normal time. But, in October we came up with an idea for this online event.

**Q:** What is the starting point of this event?

**A:** I would like to do something for the students whose foreign exchange plans were canceled, international students who are still unable to come to Japan, and first and second year students who have not met each other since the breakout of the pandemic. After talking with Ms. Kimura from the international affair, we decided to hold this event.

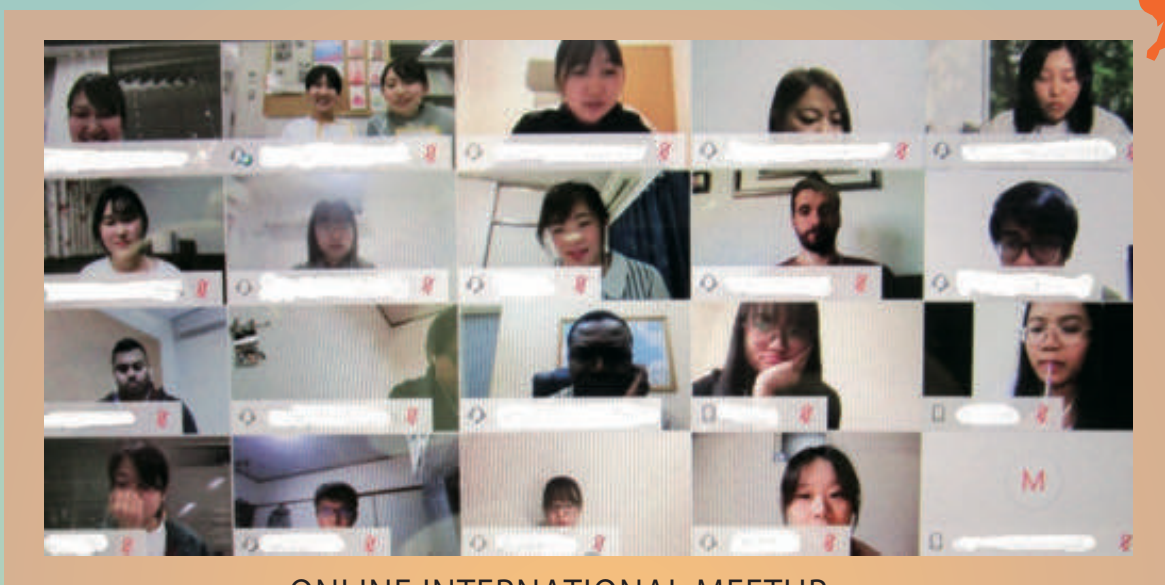
**Q:** How many students have participated in the event? What did you do?

**A:** There were 10 Japanese students and 15 international students. They did self-introductions, free talks, and mini-games.



**Q:** Were there any differences between face-to-face activities that LIFE has done in the past and this event that was held online??

**A:** There obviously were differences in the process. Online events have a benefit in which students can participate no matter where you are right now. However the instability of the wi-fi and other technical problem could cause.



ONLINE INTERNATIONAL MEETUP

**Q:** Lastly, can you please give some words to the new students this semester?

**A:** Welcome to Saga university! We are glad that you have chosen Saga university as your destination for your exchange. If the pandemic situation eases up, I hope we can meet in person next time. In the current situation, it will be hard for us, but let's keep looking forward to the good things in the future. Also, if possible, please join LIFE's event again!

That is all for the interview. I would like to welcome the new students too and hope to meet you all soon. Please look forward to our next winter issue.

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