University Topics

Teams of Kochi University students performing at the 64th Yosakoi Festival

As is customary, Yosakoi—the summer festival that is a highlight of the summer in southern Kochi—began on August 11 to mark the Kochi’s first-annual summer festival on the traditional four-day period in mid-August. With the festivities properly organized and performed with pride for the next two days, the festival reached its peak with a post-festival event on the 12th. A total of 18,000 dancers in 205 teams, including teams from Kochi University and from other prefectures as well as overseas, performed at 16 venues around Kochi.

This year’s event was a great success, with a total of eight teams from Kochi University (MU—Murakumo, Saimin, Suibun, Tsukushi, Yamada, Kumami, Namiki, and Sannomiya) performing at the 64th Yosakoi Festival. The event was attended by a total of 2,500 people from all over Japan, including many students from Kochi University and Kochi Prefecture.

The event was held at the annual Yosakoi Festival, which is held every year in Kochi Prefecture. This year’s event included a variety of activities, including traditional Japanese dances, music, and culture, as well as a Kochi University team (Ao-no-Hara) with members from all over Japan, entertained crowds at the event with their unique style of performance incorporating the five unique elements of Yosakoi: the shishiai (a truck that leads the dance), music, costumes,Extensions, and electric dancing. Among the Ku teams where a team dressed in costumes based on the clothes worn by Ryoma Sakamoto, a famous character from the Edo period, a boys’ dormitory team with a shishiai decorated with eco-friendly tarpaulins featuring the theme of ‘ecology songs’; a team exhibiting the uniques of each of the dances, and a team of prefectural student association members. These and other teams lined up the festival venue in front of the audience, smiling and impressing us with their dancing, drawing enthusiastic cheers from the crowds.

Happiest memories of Student Exchanges

ALUMN MEMORIES

Representatives of Alumni Association of China, Thailand, and Sweden were invited to the Homecoming Day in Kochi University on November 10. They had lectures on their activities, and for fun with the Ku participants, foreign students, and themselves. Two participants mentioned about their memories in Kochi University.

Elin Antonius

Sweden University of Gothenburg student Bachelor of Japanese studies

My year in Kochi was full of wonderful memories, and photos that go with them. Thanks to all of the incredible people that I met there, I gained a lot of confidence from my first year at Kochi University. I was not only able to make friends with my classmates, but I also learned about the local culture and cuisine. Kochi University is such a special place, and I will never forget the memories I made there.

Maliwan Haruthithanassan, Ph.D.

Director, Kaustant Agricultural and Agro—Industrial Product Improvement Institute, KAIST, Kaustant University, Bangkok, Thailand

Kochi University, one of valuable places in memories.

In our lifetime there are always full of good and bad memories, but many of them can be forgotten easily but some will be with us for a long time. Last year, I first knew Kochi University from Prof. DoKatsumoto Sakata who was a visiting professor in Kaustant University, where I worked almost 20 years ago. Since then, I have often visited Kochi University, and as a plan I entered my Ph.D. course in April 2002. In Nagakusa, Monobe, in the Laboratory of Soil Sciences, I was the first to begin the experiment, but not long because there were many friendly office staffs, and of course supervisor and his assistants who were with you. They kindly brought me many helps and supports. In Nagakusa where is a small place but full of warm hearts, you will never feel lonely. From Nagakusa, I explored many beautiful places with bicycles, the beautiful rice fields, beach, Monobe River and the farming area. Three years at Kochi University provided a great lesson, it was not only for academic that I have learned a lot by doing experiments, hard working in the field and lab, but a greater lesson about how to live my life...this was the most precious lesson I have got. Last year I had a chance to go back to Kochi University, I felt like...I was home again.

The victorious Archery Club

The Japanese Archery Club wins the 61st West Japan Students Archery Championship, in the men’s and individual categories

Kochi University’s Japanese Archery Club won the men’s category of the 61st West Japan Students Archery Championship, which was held in Saga Prefecture over the weekend of July 1-2. After passing the preliminaries, the team won 6-1 in the final round, thus achieving their third championship win. Meanwhile, in the men’s individual category, third-year Faculty of Science student Uskio Kurisu, triumphed.

Asakura Campus

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Science and Technology, Faculty of Regional Collaboration, TOSA Innovative Human Development Programs

Oke Campus

Medical School, Medical School Hospital

Monobe Campus

Faculty of Agriculture and Marine Science

Kochi University

University Topics

CONTENTS

Kochi University Annual Bulletin 2017-2018

1. Kochi University remains proactive in international cooperation with JICA 3

2. Dissemination of Gabion techniques in Nepal 4

3. Mato Grosso do Sul and Kochi

4. Bridging the ocean through medical collaboration 5

5. University Topics 6

6. Happiest memories of Student Exchanges 7

Kochi University

URL: http://www.kochi-u.ac.jp/english/index.html

E-mail: info@kochi-u.ac.jp

2-5-1 Akebono-cho, Kochi City, Kochi, 780-8520 Japan

Oke Campus

Medical School, Medical School Hospital

Monobe Campus

Faculty of Agriculture and Marine Science

TOSA Innovative Human Development Programs

2-5-1 Akebono-cho, Kochi City, Kochi, 780-8520 Japan

E-mail: info@kochi-u.ac.jp

URL: http://www.kochi-u.ac.jp/english/index.html

2-5-1 Akebono-cho, Kochi City, Kochi, 780-8520 Japan

E-mail: info@kochi-u.ac.jp

2-5-1 Akebono-cho, Kochi City, Kochi, 780-8520 Japan

E-mail: info@kochi-u.ac.jp

2-5-1 Akebono-cho, Kochi City, Kochi, 780-8520 Japan

E-mail: info@kochi-u.ac.jp
Searching the oceans of Kochi for the effects of climate change

The rise in global sea temperatures—a consequence of global tropicalisation—is being experienced in the Kochi’s Tosa Bay area to a greater extent than in any other region of Japan. In many senses, this is a foretelling of the future of Japan’s marine environment. Professor Yohei Nakamura, who has chosen changes in the ocean environment as his research field, explains his work.

Surveying the seas off Yokonami aboard the vessel Tara

How many readers are aware that, in recent years, the oceanic waters off Kochi have been attracting worldwide attention? This spring the French research vessel Tara, which is engaged in studies of the world’s coral reefs and marine life, arrived in Kochi. While here, the crew surveyed the ocean waters offshore to Kochi University’s Yokonami Rinkai Experimental Station. Due to the previous affiliation between their laboratories, the professors in charge of the research facility that runs the Tara project requested Associate Professor Yohei Nakamura of the Faculty of Agriculture and Marine Science to take part in the study. “The researchers who I accompanied on the ship were very interested in the changes in the ocean environment of the Yokonami Peninsula and the effect these are having on the local fishing industry. The fact that Kochi waters are showing the effects of global warming so dramatically is known by researchers all around the world.”

Professor Nakamura is an expert in marine ecology. Since taking up his position at Kochi University in 2008 he has made frequent dives in local waters, and during these he has made meticulous observations into the environmental changes taking place.

Due to rising seawater temperatures, seaweed beds are turning into coral-dominated reefs!

In recent years the seas of Kochi have changed beyond all expectation, the main reason being the rise in global seawater temperatures. Illustrating this is the fact that compared to about 30 years ago, the average temperature has risen by 1.2 degrees. “The bay near Yokonami, which Tara surveyed, used to have a rocky area on the left, and coral-dominated reefs to the right. However, the coral-dominated reefs are now spreading steadily to the left side, too.”

The research that Professor Nakamura is working on explores the effects these environmental changes have on marine life. During his underwater surveys, certain sections are partitioned by ropes and all fishes within the area are recorded. “One major factor affecting the fish is the change in oceanic vegetation. Due to the rising seawater temperatures in the seas of Kochi, rapid shift from temperate to tropical Sargassum species has been occurring. One problem is, while the temperate species grows all year long, the tropical species only grows in spring. This may have an effect on the fish that use the seaweed beds as their habitat.”

Professor Nakamura is also researching the sea near Yazu in Kotoh. In this area also, the environmental changes are severe. An extensive kelp bed has disappeared, and coral-dominated reefs have appeared in their place. “It is important to carefully watch whether the fish that inhabit temperate marine ecosystems can survive in this changing marine environment” Professor Nakamura states.

Experience these unique seas through hands-on activities!

Boasting an extraordinary abundance of fish species, ichthyologists—researchers who study fish—Kochi’s waters are an optimal research location. About a half of the 4,000 species of fish in Japan, including both tropical and temperate species, inhabit the area.

Moreover, according to Professor Nakamura, “it is easy to track changes in marine life as a transition from temperate to tropical ecosystems occurs. On top of that, research sites are very close and accessible.”

Professor Nakamura also feels duty-bound to convey the fascination he has for the seas of Kochi to his students. In a general education course he designed titled “Environmental Studies of the Seas of Tosa,” Kashiwa Island, a well-known scuba diving destination at the southwestern end of the prefecture, serves as the field of study. The course includes snorkeling expeditions during which observations of the ocean are made, and ethnographic studies on inland life.

Furthermore, in the special freshman introduction course titled “Field Science Activities,” students go on snorkeling safaris in the seas near the Yokonami Rinkai Experimental Station. In this way, just after entering school, students have chance to experience ‘hands-on’ the abundance of marine life in local waters.

Professor Nakamura states, “They’re studying in Kochi University; it would be a shame not to give them a chance to experience the wonders of the seas of Kochi.” He says that field observation is the most important aspect, even in his own research.

“There are still many unknowns in the seas of Kochi. I plan to continue on my current research trajectory, steadily collecting data.”

The environmental changes occurring in the seas being witnessed here in Kochi more dramatically than in other regions. Professor Nakamura’s research, which shines a light on the future of Japan’s oceans, is gathering the attention of researchers around the world.
**Kochi University remains proactive in international cooperation with JICA**

**Kochi University’s global contribution to tackling global issues**

Kochi University (KU) is one of the most active universities in Japan in terms of international cooperation with developing countries. It implements five international training courses and one grass-root technical cooperation program in collaboration with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This is a realization of KU’s objective “To promote international cooperation with developing countries in Asia Pacific region”, laid out in the university’s overall “International Strategy”. Among the five international training courses, two are in disaster risk reduction, two in education, and one in medicine. Since “connecting the outcomes of research into local issues with the rest of the world” is one of the priorities of KU’s “International Strategy”, all these training courses place importance on combining local practice with theory.

**Kochi Prefecture alert to coming disaster risks**

Two Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) international training courses are worthy of special mention. In 2011, after the Great East Japan Earthquake and consequent tsunami disaster, the Central Disaster Management Council simulated the possible maximum seismic movement and tsunami height that will be experienced in Kochi in the event of an earthquake in the Nankai Trough (a subducting tectonic zone in the ocean floor to the south of Kochi). As predicted in the simulation, the fastest of the tsunami waves will hit the Kochi seashore within 3 minutes and the highest of them as much as 54 meters. The death toll is estimated to be up to 53,000—if no countermeasures are taken beforehand.

**Disaster Risk Reduction education at a primary school in a local town of Kochi Prefecture**

KU’s DRR-related international training courses are working in close collaboration with the prefectural government, its municipalities, and community-based DRR organizations. Course instructors teach the participants the most advanced mitigation and preparedness measures in Kochi prefecture. Participants also visit the reconstruction sites in areas affected by Great East Japan Earthquake and ensuing tsunami, and Kobe City, which in 1995 was severely damaged by the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake.

Under the guidance of KU professors, participants—mostly government officials attached to DRR authorities in developing countries—are required to draw up action plans in the last week of the 6-week long training courses.

As one participant commented “All subjects are useful. In particular country presentation, the lessons learnt from mega-earthquakes in Japan, field visit, simulation program, recovery situation and action plan preparation related subjects are very useful. We get real ideas and knowledge from these subjects.”

**Dissemination of Gabion techniques in Nepal**

In March, 2017 Kochi University together with Yusuhara Town municipal office came to an agreement with JICA to implement “Grassroots Technical Cooperation Project for Penetration of Local Adaptation-Based Gabion Techniques for Both Disaster Management and Environmental Protection in Nepal.”

**Mega-earthquake occurred in Nepal on 25th April in 2015 leaving the mountainous country devastating damage not only in human lives but also in social infrastructure. Professor Tadashi Hara of Kochi University had frequently visited Nepal since then for damage assessment and research for appropriate technology for the reconstruction and mitigation from the disaster. The conclusion was to upgrade of the local gabion technology to quake-resistant level because he found many gabions were collapsed or deformed.**

In this project, we leverage the technical expertise and knowledge of civil engineering, and local masonry technology of Yusuhara Town. This project, in partnership with the Yusuhara Town, and Nepalese counterparts, will advance this initiative in the Dhading District adjacent to Kathmandu for three years beginning from 2017. Kochi University aims at contributing the prompt reconstruction from the mega-disaster and improving the safety of local community roads in the district.

**For these purposes the project began installing high-standard experimental gabions in disaster-hit pilot areas in collaboration with local engineers in May 2017. Nepalese counterparts, local engineers and government infrastructure officials, also visited gabion experiment sites in Tsukuba and Yusuhara Town of Kochi Prefecture in July 2017 to observe Japanese gabion technology. The Nepalese engineers said they would adopt Japanese technology as much as possible in the government guideline of gabion construction.**

Kochi University together with Yusuhara Town will hold technical training courses for local engineers in cooperation with Nepalese counterparts in 2018, and will try to revise the government guideline with Japanese-Nepalese mixed appropriate method until 2019.
Kochi University has had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Brazil’s Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul (UFMS) since 2012. Together with the office of the State Secretary of Health, the two parties have held numerous discussions relating to regional healthcare systems with specific reference to referral hospitals.

Realizing the disparity in healthcare levels between urban and rural areas in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, especially concerning advanced medical procedures like endoscopy, Kochi Medical School Hospital donated 2 sets of endoscopy/colonoscopy apparatus to the UFMS hospital in 2016. A team of nine KU endoscopy specialists not only discussed advanced endoscopy/colonoscopy techniques with their Brazilian counterparts, but also provided a hands-on workshop that allowed the Brazilians to use a magnifying endoscope with narrow band imaging—equipment introduced to the state by the Kochi University team.

This summer, KU President Hiroshi Wakiwagi was invited by UFMS and the State Secretary of Health to visit Brazil, and was also requested to establish agreements with three other universities—the State University (UEMS), Universidade para o Desenvolvimento do Estado e da Regiao do Pantanal (Uniderp), and Federal University of Grande Dourados (UFGD).

A group of Brazilian residents of Japanese descent; joined the ceremony to welcome our president to UFMS. UEEMS has a top medical school in Brazil, and it is ranked among the top ten medical schools in the country. The 2nd year medical students who joined our medical services at a settlement for indigenous people in Brusque City; were quite fluent in English, and were of great assistance in the services that we provided in conjunction with the local NGO. For students in Brazil, community services are highly encouraged—they even get credit for the activity. In my view, we should also have such elective courses in Kochi University.

President Wakiwagi and his group then visited Santa Casa Hospital, a last bastion for emergency medical care in the state. Men and women in white coats or scrubs were gathered out front with big banners; at first sight it seemed that they were welcoming us, but eventually it turned out to be a strike of healthcare workers because of unpaid wages. Healthcare budgets in the country are very small; as we were told by the State politicians, there is an increasing number of traffic accident victims who require critical care, and provision of this care rapidly depletes the budget.

For five-week period between July 4 and August 5 Kochi University hosted a short-term summer program for exchange students from partner universities. Nineteen undergraduates from three American universities—California State University, Fresno University of Texas at Dallas; and University of Rhode Island—participated. The program was conducted jointly by the Center for International Collaboration and the International Education Program (of the Tosa Sakigake Program). The project; which has been running since FY2016; aims at giving practical study on Japanese language, Japanese culture, and natural environment in Kochi prefecture. All class work is conducted in English, and the program provides participating Kochi University students with opportunity for international cooperation. In addition to classroom lectures, there is a Zen meditation workshop at Gokakai Temple in Kochi, interactions with the children and students of an elementary and junior high school integration program that conducts activities in natural environments, and a visit to Kotohira-gu Shrine in Kagawa Prefecture; and color-making workshops. During their stay, students visited the museum of John Manjiri in Tosashimizu, in southwestern Kochi. Manjiri, a Tosashimizu native who was educated in the 19th century US, was in the first Japanese to experience study abroad. For the final assignment, students were put into groups to make presentations on the theme of “Cool Japan” and “Regional revitalization in Kochi.” This gave them opportunity to share the experience they had had in the five weeks that they studied.

The opening of “Satobito,” a volunteer project by professors and students from the Faculty of Regional Collaboration

Establishment of the Satobito company, which supports the sales and development of local products

With contributions by professors and students from the Faculty of Regional Collaboration, Satobito was established in March 2017 to support the development and sales of products made with local resources. On June 24, the “Satobito” store opened; a commercial outlet for products created in collaboration with locals. The store sells take-out foods such as homemade ice cream and sandwiches, while lunch dishes such as pasta and pizza are served on the premises. They also offer street-sales and mail order sales of blueberry wine, a specialty of the town of Ohoyo, as well as other local goods. (Business hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Holidays: Mondays and Thursdays)

Heated debate between students and researchers of the Kuroshio region at the International Symposium

The 11th International Symposium on Kuroshio Science was held from July 23 to July 27 at Askura Campus. This year, a total of 160 students (including 33 foreign exchange students) participated. The symposium, which is hosted by the Kuroshio Science (F3D course and Research Unit), promotes an interdisciplinary approach to education research. It has been held in collaboration with affiliated universities in the Philippines, Taiwan, and Indonesia, in rotation in the respective countries, since 2007.

The main theme of the symposium is “A vision for the structuring of international networks for Kuroshio Science research and education.” The program included a debate between students from each of the attending countries on the topic of plastic pollution in coastal regions. The keynote speeches were given by Professor Hiroshi Masuda of Yokohama National University, Professor Víctor Soliman (Vice President of Bucal University), and Professor Kiyoshi Fukami of Kochi University. General lectures on the topics of land and ocean ecosystems and how to protect them, the lifestyles of people and their use of resources, and a wide range of other announcements on research results were also on the program. During a scheduled excursion, students visited Green Vegetable Incorporation, a company run by students from the Graduate School of Kuroshio Science that is investigating ways of cultivating underwater vegetation on land using underground seawater. Students also visited Mururo UNESCO Global Geopark.