

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON STUDYING ABROAD

COVID-19 SPECIAL

Hokusei Students
get 50k each from
the university

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Hokusei Events
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Things made
possible due to
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Special measures
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damage

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The Hokusei Times interviewed two Hokusei Gakuen University Students who have been faced with changing their plans of studying abroad. Sena Oi, a third-year student at the

Department of Economics, and Genki Yama, a second-year student at the Social Welfare Department. If it were not for the coronavirus, what did you plan to do while studying abroad?

Sena told us he was going to go on a working holiday to Germany in April for one year. He was supposed to go to a ...

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AROUND SAPPORO

Hokusei students
develop new gift

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STUDENT LIFE

ONLINE CLASS REALITY

Recently, online classes have attracted attention as a new style education. Many universities have adopted this style of education due to the coronavirus pandemic. Many students are taking online classes for the first time. What will the online class bring to students? In 2020,

the novel coronavirus was discovered in China and spread throughout the world. Many infected people were confirmed in Japan, and this resulted in many deaths. The Japanese government and municipalities around Japan instated a limit on...

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THE REALITY OF AN ONLINE DRINKING PARTY

An online drinking party has become popular because the spread of COVID-19 has discouraged people from going out for drinks. Many office workers or students have an online drinking party these days, but this fad will be over soon. With the spread of COVID-19, online drinking parties is a fad in Japan. As the name suggests, an online drinking party is a drinking session that is done online without meeting in person. Drinking sessions—or nomikai in Japanese—are an indispensable part of culture for Japanese people...

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TOURISM INDUSTRY COVID-19 DAMAGE



AN EMPTY INCHEON AIRPORT IN 2019.

THE WEAK POINTS OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

The greatest value of travel is out-of-the-ordinary experiences. However, due to the COVID-19 situation, people can no longer risk traveling. Under this situation, the idea that traveling is bad is widespread.

Moreover, a few years before this pandemic happened, travel agencies were already in a difficult situation because of the introduction of cheaper and more flexible travel services on the Internet such as Expedia and Airbnb. The challenge facing the tourism industry is to create a new business model by maximizing responses to customer needs.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HOTEL INDUSTRY

In the electronic version of Nikkei Business on March 13, Hoshino Resorts representative Kaji Hoshino talks about the impact of Covid-19 in an interview format. The following is a summary of the article.

Hoshino says domestic tourism demand dropped sharply from March to April this year. He does not know if the impact will continue further. If it continues for a long time, Japan's tourism industry will fall into a serious situation.

After the "Emergency Declaration", the decline in tourism in Hokkaido has been high. Hoshino thinks

COVID-19 IS SPREADING AROUND THE WORLD NOW, AND THIS PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED NOT ONLY OUR LIFESTYLES BUT ALSO BUSINESSES. ACCORDING TO THE JAPAN TOURISM BOARD'S ANNOUNCEMENT, SOME LODGING FACILITIES ARE BEING FORCED INTO BANKRUPTCY. IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT THE TOURISM INDUSTRY WILL SUFFER IF THIS SITUATION CONTINUES.

compared to Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, there is concern about infections everywhere this time, and the demand for tourism around the world is declining.

The Japan tourism industry has to work towards recovery. At the same time, there is no choice but to await the revival of world travel after the demand for travel has recovered in Japan.

Hokkaido.

The aim of doing this is not only to support a COVID-19 depressed economy, but also to make it easier for everyday people living in Hokkaido to get out. The tourism industry is trying to give people the image that traveling is precious, but also a familiar and healing thing.

THE FUTURE OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

The tourism industry was damaged hard by the impact of COVID-19, but it is a promising market that will never fade. Nobody knows how much impact this situation will have in the future.

Most of the companies that go bankrupt do so due to a deterioration of cash flow. Therefore, it is necessary to provide sufficient funds through national and local policies such as Douminwari, borrowing through financial institutions and the use of "crowd funding" and "accommodation ticket for the future". This ticket is a new service that people can buy travel ticket in advance. Lastly, it is important to promote travel in a different way than before, both in terms of funding and people's needs. ■

EXPECTED NEW SERVICE DIRECTIONS

In the tourism business, more casual services that can be enjoyed in a short time will be required. In other words, it is necessary to take advantage of this change in lifestyle and enter the market of a new 'daily life'. And, provide both the places where people can feel ordinary and extraordinary experiences while adjusting the balance.

WHAT IS AN "ORDINARY EXPERIENCE"?

Originally, traveling was regarded as a healing experience and special treat for people. For example, a new project called "Douminwari" has started in Hokkaido. This is a subsidy program for travel expenses for people living in

HOKUSEI STUDENTS GET 50K EACH FROM THE UNIVERSITY

IN JUNE, 2020, HOKUSEI GAKUEN UNIVERSITY DECIDED TO DISTRIBUTE 50,000YEN (ABOUT US\$475 EQUIVALENT) TO ALL ENROLLED STUDENTS TO HELP THEM GET KITTED UP FOR ONLINE CLASSES.

CORONAVIRUS CHANGED THE STYLE OF CLASSES

These days, the novel coronavirus is spreading around the world, including of course in Hokkaido, Japan. The virus has impacted many kinds of areas of society such as the economy, education and so on. In the education field, all educational institutions in Japan had to suspend their operations due to governmental requests arising from a national emergency declaration. Therefore, almost all educational institutions introduced online classes. As of writing in July 2019, there are still many institutions which are continuing to conduct online classes, including Hokusei. In those online classes, one online video chat service named 'Zoom' is being used. Zoom is an online video chat service which is very well-known and used for not only education but also business.

THE STYLE OF CLASS HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED IN UNIVERSITY

Many universities introduced online classes using Zoom. Students need to have an Internet connection and a device—such as a smartphone or PC—to use Zoom and attend online classes. There are a lot of students who did not

have the equipment required. So those students had to buy them, which cost a lot of money. Therefore, some universities created new mechanisms to help their students.

HOW DID HOKUSEI HELP STUDENTS?

Hokusei Gakuen University which is in Hokkaido Japan is one of those universities that helped their enrolled students. The university decided to distribute 50,000yen to each student. The support was a grant to help students equip themselves with facilities for attending online classes. According to the Hokkusei's administration when conducting distance learning, they asked that students make efforts to improve their computer and Internet environment so that they can take part in distance learning at home. As an urgent support to reduce the cost burden for that purpose, grants were made available to all students enrolled in the undergraduate and junior college departments. The subsidy was applied online and the earliest was a bank transfer from June 19th.

HOW DID STUDENTS FEEL ABOUT THE GRANT?

The Hokusei Times distrib-



uted a survey via SNS to 56 students at Hokusei Gakuen University, to ask about whether they are satisfied or unsatisfied with Hokusei Gakuen University's support. In addition, we also received comments regarding the support. As a result, 57% of students were satisfied, and 43% were dissatisfied. The results were divided and a little more student answered that they were somewhat satisfied.

COMMENTS FROM HOKUSEI'S STUDENTS

Positive Comments: After the declaration of an emergency was issued, I think it was speedy and good that the university responded with a subsidy payment (4th year male student).

Negative Comments: I wanted you to supply a tablet terminal and a Wi-fi router rather than money (3rd year male student).

For those who don't have a computer or tablet, 50,000 yen is not enough (3rd year male student).

Online classes cost internet fees. The cost does not come once, but every month, so we need continuous support (year not supplied).

We received more negative comments than positive ones. Therefore, there are a lot of students who are not satisfied with Hokkusei's support of 50,000yen.

In addition, there are some comments that there were many people who were satisfied with the grant, but were dissatisfied with the fact that the school fees were not reduced even though they did not use any facilities at the school. With the coronavirus pandemic still ongoing, students are paying close attention to the school authorities' future actions. ■

TAISEI SATO

HOKUSEI STUDENTS DEVELOP A NEW HOKKAIDO CLASSIC GIFT

HOKUSEI GAKUEN UNIVERSITY, HOKKAIDO ELECTRIC POWER CO. INC'S MEMBERSHIP WEB SERVICE, A PASTRY SHOP NAMED "SWEETS & CAFE SOSHUNRO" AND "HOKKAIDO SOUVENIR RESEARCH INSTITUTE" ALL HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON. DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT IS? IN THIS ARTICLE, WE GIVE YOU THE ANSWER.

KONKONSHUKIBIKETTO CORN FLAVOR

In May 2019, the above companies and students from Professor Katsunori Suzuki's seminar at Hokusei Gakuen University all launched a project to invent souvenir snacks that contribute to revitalizing local areas in Hokkaido. They invented

"Konkonshukibiketto corn flavor" which is a snack that tastes of corn. The shape of it is round and it has a layer of cookie dough on the corn puff, with corn powder and corn sugar sprinkled on top. It includes 20 pieces for 960 yen.

KICKOFF MEETING IN MAY

In the kickoff meeting in May, the students learned the trends of confectionery souvenirs in Hokkaido from

Yamato Ogasawara Shouten Co which runs Sky Shop Ogasawara and other souvenir shops. In addition, from Soshunro Co., they learned some policies about stocking. For example, the ingredients are purchased directly from the growers to ensure that they are always delicious. In addition, they use minimal preservatives to make delicious sweets.

The students also had some insights to share with the pros. They made a presentation about a survey that they previously took about "trendy sweets", "sweet styles that young people want to buy", and "sweets that youth like", and discussed some ideas with the people from each company



AT THE FIRST MEETING



SOME PROTOTYPES

who was in charge of this project.

THE SECOND MEETING IN JULY AND EARLY AUGUST

The second meeting was held as a tasting session in July. Based on the results of the kickoff meeting, Soshunro made two types of cannulas, four types of Choquette, and one type of cookie sandwich. Then, the students expressed

their opinions and impressions. Based on such opinions, a meeting was held in early August at the Sweets & Café Soshunro store. Getting hints from the appearance of the store and the products being sold, cannulas and Choquette were chosen as candidates.

THE THIRD MEETING IN LATE AUGUST

In the third meeting in late



PRODUCT CROSS SECTION



August, each group discussed some important points to decide which baked sweets use, naming, design of packages, price, and capacity of snack put it a box.

Finally, Chouquette was selected to make the product loved by all generations, to make people easy to accept. Chouquette is choux

bun coated with sugar.

Also, they imagined the customer's way of thinking and thought the packaging should be pretty, durable, and easy to carry.

THE FOURTH MEETING IN NOVEMBER

At the fourth meeting held in November, the product name and packaging were announced.

The name is "Konkonshukibiketto corn flavor". The part of the name, "Kon" is inspired by the image of fox's cry, "Kon Kon". "Shukibiketto" means a combination of Chouquette, and To"kibi", in English, corn. Also, this name for corn is a Hokkaido dialect.

The packaging was designed by Toriumi Kaori who is a graphic designer and illustrator who graduated from design school

and worked as a designer at a printing company for 6 years. Now she started her private design work. It's a cute design that shows Hokkaido's character.

They also tasted the refined chouquettes to check the final form of them. The products which combine sweetness and saltiness became a new flavor sweet.

THE REACTION OF PEOPLE WHO TRY THE PRODUCT

At a tasting event held at Shin-Chitose Airport, many people were impressed by the souvenir and they sold well.

Also, according to reviews on the product's page on Rakuten "The souvenir seems to be a new product that I have never eaten. I want to buy it again." It is expected to become one of the popular products among Hokkaido's souve-

nirs in the future.

In my opinion, after a few bites, it feels like the sweet corn is melting in my mouth. The combination of the crunchy texture of the pearl sugar on the outside and the corn puff that melts the moment I bite make a great combination of textures and people can enjoy that.

The "Konkonshukibiketto corn flavor" was released on December 14. However, now, because of COVID-19, in the co-op of the university, the product is out of stock. Also, Ogasawara Shouten at the International Terminal is closed due to the shutdown of the international flights. People can buy it in Sky Shop Ogasawara in Shinchitose Airport or Sky Shop Ogasawara's online shopping site and Rakuten. ■

MOE OSAWA

IMMIGRATION ISSUES

COVID-19 SPECIAL MEASURES FOR FOREIGN TECHNICAL INTERNS

THE IMMIGRATION SERVICES AGENCY OF JAPAN ANNOUNCED ON APRIL 17, 2020 THAT THEY WILL ALLOW FOREIGN TECHNICAL INTERNS, WHO WERE FIRED BECAUSE OF COVID-19 TO CHANGE STATUS OF RESIDENCE. IN THIS ARTICLE, WE WILL EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN "TECHNICAL TRAINING" AND "DESIGNATED ACTIVITIES" AND THE DIFFICULTY OF APPLYING SPECIAL MEASURES FOR COVID-19.

The Immigration Services Agency of Japan in Ministry of Justice announced special measures whereby foreign technical intern trainees, who were fired or who are not able to work due to the influence of COVID-19, will be allowed to change

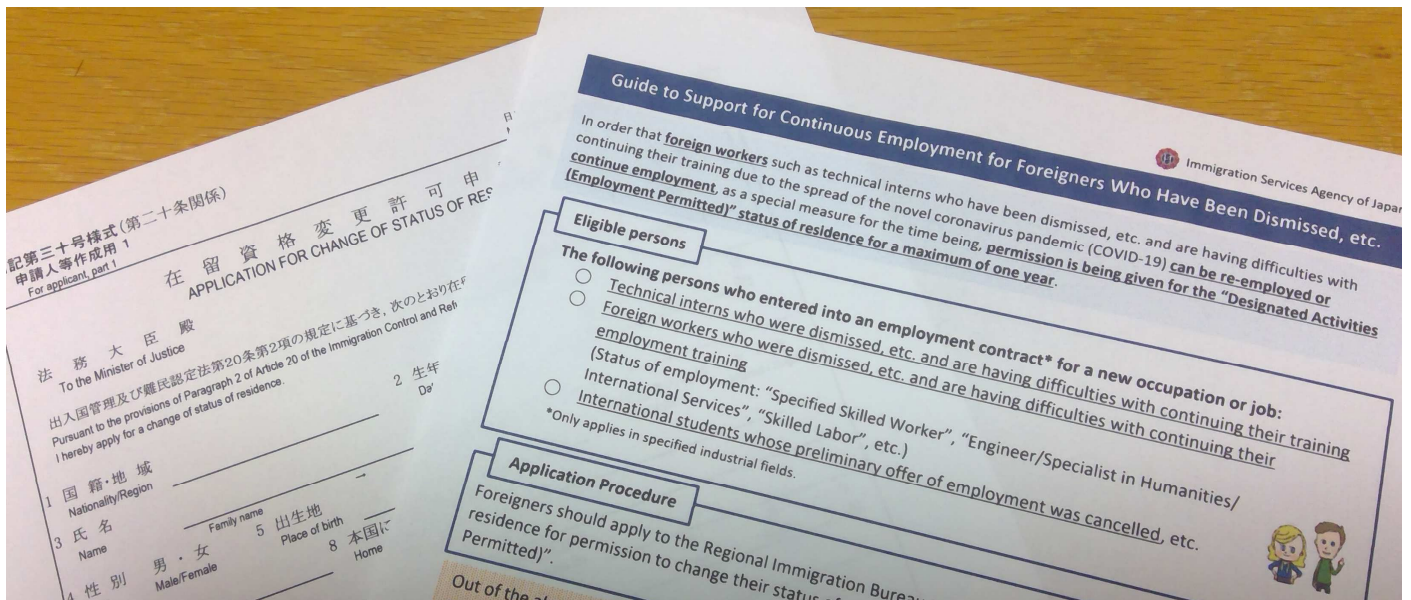
their status of residence from "Technical Training" to "Designated Activities". According to Akihiro Sawada, a journalist, however, this is a big hurdle.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN

"TECHNICAL TRAINING" AND "DESIGNATED ACTIVITIES"?

There are many differences between "Technical Training" and "Designated Activities". In particular, there are four main differ-

ences that readers should know about in order to understand foreign technical intern trainees' situation. Those are the purpose of the systems, terms under which visa holders can live in Japan, admittance of family to Japan, and con-



siderations when changing one's job.

First, the purpose of the two status of residence systems is different. The reason why Japan started the Technical Training system is to contribute to international cooperation. That is, to allow young foreigners in developing countries to learn technical skills and knowledge by working in Japan.

In this way, they can serve a good purpose for economic development after they go back to their countries.

In contrast, the Designated Activities system was developed to solve a lack of workforce in Japan. Therefore, people who apply to engage in designated activities need to be work-ready. They must pass technical and Japanese tests before they come Japan.

On the other hand, people who do not yet have technical ability and are not good at Japanese can apply to the technical training system.

Second, foreigners who apply to enter Japan under Type 2 Designated Activities can live in Japan with no limit. However,

foreigners who apply to Technical Training can live in Japan for 5 years at the most. Another difference is whether they can stay in Japan with their family or not. People who apply to Technical Training cannot bring their family with them to Japan.

In comparison, people who apply to Type 2 Designated Activities can bring their family to Ja-

pan.

Finally, whether they can change their jobs or not differs between the two systems. According to Naoko Sunai, a journalist, under the Technical Training system, residents cannot change their jobs as a rule. Changing one's job is allowed only in special situations such as when the company which welcomed the foreign technical intern trainee violates the rules.

Also, technical intern trainees are not allowed to change their jobs to a job in a different field even if they are able to change their job. Unlike the Technical Training system, people who apply under the Designated Activities system can change their jobs, just like an ordinary Japanese citizen.

WHAT SPECIAL MEASURES EXIST DUE TO COVID-19 ?

On the homepage of the Ministry of Justice, there is information for people who find it difficult to keep their internship because of dismissal and

so on. However, it is only for those who will aim to pass a technical test to change status of residence from "Technical Training" to "Designated Activities", which is quite difficult.

This information says that before they apply for a change of residence status, people who fall into the above situation need to seek employment from another company, which is in different fields or jobs, to work and make an employment contract.

According to Akihiro Sawada, a journalist, there are conditions attached to this changing of residence status. That is, the applicant can stay in Japan for 1 year, but they have to aim to get Designated Activities status which requires passing technical skills test and Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (N4 level), which is quite difficult. If they can't pass these tests, they have to go back to their countries.

It seems that the Japanese government should help the foreign technical intern trainees more to achieve their goals. ■

HINA IGARASHI

IT SEEMS THAT THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HELP THE FOREIGN TECHNICAL INTERN TRAINEES MORE TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS

HOKUSEI EVENTS DISAPPEARING ACTS

THESE DAYS A PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN VIRUS CALLED COVID-19 HAS SPREAD, AND AROUND THE WORLD PEOPLE ARE FORCED TO CHANGE LIFESTYLES. HOKUSEI UNIVERSITY IS ALSO INFLUENCED BY THIS PANDEMIC. COVID-19 HAS ROBBED STUDENTS OF MANY SCHOOL EVENTS.



USUALLY, THIS STAGE IS USED AS A PERFORMANCE STAGE TO INVITE NEW STUDENTS TO CLUB ACTIVITIES, BUT THIS YEAR, HERE IS QUIET.

WHAT SCHOOL EVENTS WERE CANCELED?

In an average year's schedule, Hokusei Gakuen University holds a lot of school events. Just to name a few large and well-known events, there's graduation ceremony, entrance ceremony, sports festival, school festival, and so on. These have all been cancelled.

These events are held only once in a university student's life, so students who have had their graduation ceremony or entrance cere-

mony cancelled must be sad. For students, entertaining events such as the sports festival and the school festival are like a break time from their hard study every year.

Moreover, these events are usually great chances to create memories for students.

THE EFFECTS ON HOKUSEI UNIVERSITY

In this unexpected situation, Hokusei Gakuen University was forced to deal with the problem very promptly. The Hokusei Times asked Mr. Cho from the Department of General Affairs at Hokusei how the university responded to this situation.

According to Mr. Cho, one example is sending diplomas for all the graduates by post. Due to the cancellation of the graduation ceremony, Hokusei was not able to present diplo-

mas in person, as well as many things for them. Such methods were exceptional and a first for the department, so it seemed to be so hard.

There were also other issues where students were especially affected. The annual course registration orientations were not conducted, the class schedules were delayed, and an online class support team was quickly organized. In these ways, Hokusei made efforts for students.

CLUB ACTIVITY FACILITIES

There are a lot of club activities at Hokusei Gakuen University. However, COVID-19 has forced a break on these activities. When will the extracurricular activities for students come back? Hokusei Times asked Mr. Cho, and according to him, it depends on the university's crisis management stage.

As of writing in July 2020, the university was at Stage 2. At Stage 2, facilities related to club activities such as the club building and the gymnasium are still not been available. Hokusei considers very carefully any removal restrictions because the current pandemic carries a high risk of the spread of infections. In this author's opinion, Hokusei's cautiousness is very good.

STUDENT'S VOICE

Hokusei Times interviewed Mr. M who belongs to the Hokusei baseball club. The club's activity has been suspended since April. He loves baseball, but he has not been able to play it for more than two months. He said that he is sad because of a lack of baseball in his life and he wants to play baseball as soon as possible.

Now, he does voluntary practice waiting for the restart of the club's activities. There is a strong passion in his heart. For him, he thinks that COVID-19 should calm down!

FUTURE CORRESPONDENCE TO RESTART THE EVENTS

Nobody can clearly predict how long this situation will continue. There are still people being infected with COVID-19 every day, so it is dangerous to return to the original style of life all at once. Hokusei Gakuen University will follow the policy of the Hokkaido government and consider school plans accordingly.

When people related to Hokusei hold some events or do some activities, we need to keep "social distance". There are many things that students can do. Student should take measures that match Hokusei's efforts. ■

RYO SASAYAMA

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON STUDYING ABROAD AT HOKUSEI

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED STUDYING ABROAD AROUND THE WORLD. HERE AT HOKUSEI, BOTH THE SPRING AND FALL 2020 STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN POSTPONED. BELOW, YOU'LL HEAR FROM STUDENTS WHO HAD TO CHANGE THEIR ORIGINAL PLANS OF STUDYING ABROAD DUE TO COVID-19.



contact from the study abroad agency. He's not currently attending Hokusei and he continues to study German by himself. Genki has decided to leave for Indonesia in August 2021. For now, he will be able to study abroad as per his original plan, just a year behind his original schedule. He cancelled his leave of absence from Hokusei and he is taking online classes.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE GREAT IMPACT ON YOUR PLANS?

We asked them how they feel about this unexpected situation. Sena said, "At first, I was very disappointed, and I couldn't believe that I can't go to Germany. But I believe I will be able to do it next year and I changed my way of thinking at once. I'm looking forward positively to coming next year," he answered cheerfully. Genki said, "I'm very sad and bitterly disappointed. But I have an opportunity to go to Indonesia next year. So, this makes me feel much better. I think this term will be a big chance to improve my Indonesian language skills. I will do my best!" He thinks this apparently bad situation as a big positive chance. Both were taking a

The Hokusei Times interviewed two Hokusei Gakuen University Students who have been faced with changing their plans of studying abroad. Sena Oi, a third-year student at the Department of Economics, and Genki Yama, a second-year student at the Social Welfare Department.

IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE CORONAVIRUS, WHAT DID YOU PLAN TO DO WHILE STUDYING ABROAD?

Sena told us he was going to go on a working holiday to Germany in April for one year. He was supposed to go to a language school

there for the first three months. Also, he would have stayed with a host family in Germany. Genki was going to go to Indonesia for six months. He was supposed to help teachers, who are non-native speakers teach Japanese to high school students. Both were going to take a leave of absence from university for a year.

HOW DID YOU CHANGE YOUR PLANS?

Both Sena and Genki had to postpone their plans because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the beginning of March, Sena went

to Tokyo to get a visa. But unfortunately, the German Embassy suddenly stopped accepting applications the day before he was going to apply for his visa. He plans to postpone his plan until next year, but there is a possibility of more changes to his plan. He still needs to wait for

I AM BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED BUT I BELIEVE I WILL BE ABLE TO DO IT NEXT YEAR

IF YOU CHANGE YOUR WAY OF THINKING, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO PREPARE A LOT OF THINGS TO CHASE YOUR DREAMS

positive attitude.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TELL STUDENTS WHO ARE IN THE SIMILAR SITUATION AS YOU?

We asked them if they had any message to give to students who are in a similar situation as them. Sena said, "at one glance, there is no hope. But if you change your way of think-

ing, you will be able to prepare a lot of things to chase your dreams. You can study a lot and gather a lot of information related to the country where you want to go. It is a time to build your motivation!" Genki said, "our efforts won't be wasted! We can step towards the next stage because we are young. This bad situation

will change into good one depending on you. Let's work hard together!" Throughout the interview, we could see how people are resilient. Although many students have faced difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they have an ability to think positively. People can always look forward.■

YURI KASHIMA

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

HOW COVID-19 AFFECTED THE ECONOMY

THESE DAYS, COVID-19 IS A BIG BLOW THE ECONOMY AROUND THE WORLD. THE NUMBER OF PATIENTS OF COVID-19 IN TOKYO HAS BEEN INCREASING GRADUALLY. WE HAD TO CHANGE OUR LIFESTYLE BECAUSE OF THE PANDEMIC, AND IT HAS CAUSED A LOT OF SERIOUS PROBLEMS. LET'S LOOK AT THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS IN JAPAN.

200 COMPANIES WENT OUT OF BUSINESS IN JAPAN

Company sales have decreased because of the effects COVID-19. This has had a serious impact on the management of Japanese companies.

Japanese news website Sputnik published an article that "200 companies went out of business because of COVID-19 all over Japan". As of June 1st, 134 companies went bankrupt after they filed for bankruptcy protection and 66 companies are working on legal measures such as cessation of business and 200 companies already went out of business.

In addition to the bankruptcy in May of Renown, a major apparel company, the impact is expanding in various industries, including funeral-related companies, which have increased family funerals, as well as accommodation-related and

food and beverage industries.

The number of bankruptcies because of the spread of the virus infection in Japan took two months to reach 100 companies, but after the number broke 100 the number of companies has increased rapidly, reaching 200 in just one month.

MANY PEOPLE LOST THEIR JOBS

Kyodo News reports that "In Tokyo, one in every 13 university students in Japan is considering leaving school as the COVID-19 outbreak has left many of them without a source of income or financial support, a recent survey has found. The survey, which covered some 500 universities and college students, said 37.4 percent said they were making less from their part-time jobs, while 23 percent they were bringing in no

income at all. In that time, how can we earn money? Which job will be required in the future?".

COVID-19 AND THE FUTURE: A DOUBLE-WHAMMY

Because of COVID-19, JAL and ANA which is airline company announced they will not hire a new graduates in 2021. Like this, in the future, job hunting will be very competitive. You may have many rivals, and the more skills and education are required more than ever. Moreover, it is said many businesses will be gone because of development of AI. Until now, in factories and other places, robots have been the focus of production instead of humans due to mechanization.

However, in recent years, technological innovations such as rapid progress in AI have been advancing in addition to robot produc-

tion. As a result, we are transforming into an era where human beings cannot survive the same way of work, not just at the factory but at every job. Jobs that were previously supported by humans may be replaced by robots and AI in the future. Isn't this a very important issue for job hunters who are choosing their jobs from now on?

Under these circumstances, it is no exaggeration to say that communication skills are the most important skills required for future professions. It is also difficult to substitute artificial intelligence for occupations that require negotiation, cooperation, bargaining power, and insight with others. In summary, communication skills, language ability and specialty will be important keywords to get job in the future.■

SAYAKA HIROTA

THE REALITY OF AN ONLINE DRINKING PARTY

ONLINE DRINKING PARTIES HAVE BECOME POPULAR BECAUSE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 HAS DISCOURAGED PEOPLE FROM GOING OUT FOR DRINKS. MANY OFFICE WORKERS OR STUDENTS HAVE ONLINE DRINKING PARTIES THESE DAYS, BUT THIS FAD WILL BE OVER SOON.



have had an online drinking party but most of them don't like it.

PROS AND CONS

The main reason why students don't like online drinking parties is that the conversation is less exciting than face-to-face parties. Many students said it's hard to have a smooth conversation smoothly because some people start to speak at the same time and there are many pauses in the conversation. In addition, people have to talk about the same thing in a large group, unlike an actual drinking party. Many students feel uncomfortable about that.

Although there are some bad points like these, an online drinking party has some attractive points for students. For example, people can go to bed as soon as the drinking is over. This is great for students who have classes or part-time jobs early in the morning. Besides this, people don't have to spend so much money compared to an actual drinking party. This is also great for students.

ONLINE DRINKING PARTIES & JAPANESE CULTURE

Online drinking parties have

WHAT IS AN ONLINE DRINKING PARTY?

With the spread of COVID-19, online drinking parties is a fad in Japan. As the name suggests, an online drinking party is a drinking session that is done online without meeting in person. Drinking sessions—or *nomikai* in Japanese—are an indispensable part of culture for Japanese people, but COVID-19 has made it impossible have *nomikai*.

Because of COVID-19, most shops that serve alcohol were temporarily closed from April to July and everyone stopped going out for a drink. In such a situation, many people have

started to have online drinking parties by using some video conferencing apps. It is not only popular among office workers, but also among students these days.

STUDENTS' HONEST OPINIONS

The results of a survey by Hitomi Sugiyama focused on students show that most students don't like online drinking parties. When asked if they enjoyed online drinking parties more than face-to-face parties, 22 out of 27 respondents said "No." Moreover, it became clear that 24 out of 27 respondents of students who have taken part in online drink-

ing parties don't want to have another online drinking party. It means that about 80% of students who answered this survey think an online drinking party is not fun.

In a survey conducted by Lip Pop, 75% of people in their 20s answered they would not want to have online drinking parties if they could. As these results show, many students

**VERY FEW PEOPLE
LIKE TO HAVE ONLINE
DRINKING PARTIES**

ONLINE DRINKING PARTIES WILL BE FORGOTTEN SOON

become a hot topic in Japan, but what about other countries? According to the article from the Sankei News, online drinking parties are not popular in Chi-

na. That's because most Chinese think the purpose of drinking is to interact with people in person, so there's no point in having an online drinking party. Moreover, the fact that most of the articles about online drinking parties are related to Japan suggests that they are not so popular overseas. Ordinarily, drinking with other office workers or friends from the same club is very common in Japan, so

many Japanese people want to have a drinking party even if it's online.

THE FUTURE OF ONLINE DRINKING PARTIES

An online drinking party is an appropriate way of drinking for our new lifestyles after the corona disaster, but will it become even more popular in the future? The answer might be "no." Many people have taken part in an online drinking party out of curi-

osity, but from survey data it seems most of them feel it's not fun. It's fair to say that people won't have online drinking parties when most pubs start operating as usual. However, some people may continue to have an online drinking party as a way to communicate with family or friends who live far away. ■

HITOMI SUGIYAMA

NEW POSSIBILITIES

WHAT WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE SELF-RESTRAINT PERIOD

DUE TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK, SOME COMPANIES AND CORPORATE GROUPS LAUNCHED NEW SERVICES IN ORDER TO HELP CONSUMERS AND INDUSTRIES THAT ARE HIT BY CORONAVIRUS. HOWEVER, THANKS TO THE SELF-RESTRAINT DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS, NEW THINGS HAVE BEEN CREATED AND DONE.

Since last year, coronavirus has been spreading all over the world. This pandemic caused a very serious situation and affects people working and living in various industries. There may be a silver lining though.

SERVICES FOR COMPANIES

"Komehei", which is one of the largest reuse department stores in Japan, has started a "corporate Purchase Service" that purchases accumulated inventory held by manufactures and retail stores and resells cheaply at online stores and real stores. In addition, "BASE", which provides online shopping site construction services, has also started to support businesses suffering from coronavirus. It introduces other factories and production destinations to business

operators who are suffering from coronavirus regardless of whether they use the service or not, using their own networks.

Furthermore, food delivery services have been enhanced these days. "Wolt", which operates a food delivery business in 80 cities in 22 countries, mainly in Europe, has expanded to Sapporo city, and now it can be found in the city. "Uber Eats", which is already popular in Honshu, will also be introduced.

The number of people who are reluctant to go to restaurants due to the pandemic, and the proportion of those who work at home increased. Therefore, food delivery services are used more often.



JOB HUNTING SUPPORT

The effects of coronavirus have a bad influence on student job hunting. Every year, job fairs are held in various place, but there is no opportunity to meet students and companies due to the coronavirus. ONE CAREER, which operates the job-hunting website, held a 'ONE CAREER LIVE' to deliver a job fair on online every day on weekdays in March using YouTube LIVE function. This is very convenient. For example, even people like us who don't live in

Tokyo can attend them that are usually held there. In fact, job interviews are being conducted on online. It is expected that the mainstream communication method will change from face-to-face to online.

NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Due to the announcement of the emergency declaration, many people are feeling stressed and tired never before, as they are

forced to stay at home during holidays. Various efforts are being made in the entertainment industry to eliminate such stresses of them. In Asahikawa city, 'Drive Theater' was held on 9th May at a parking area of Dinos Asahikawa to enjoy movies while getting in a car.

Most movie theatres are closed, so it is held for people who spend their most time at home. After that, it is held at TSUTAYA in Ebetsu city. People can watch it while eating some

foods you take out from there. It is more immersive and interesting for them to watch it outside than at home.

Furthermore, it is inconvenient for people who usually use fitness gym because it is closed. Therefore, some fitness gyms offer online instruction for them. Online instruction will become more popular as it can be done anytime and anywhere.■

AYANE KAIMAI

UNIVERSITY CLASSES

WHICH IS BETTER: ONLINE CLASSES OR FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES?

The COVID-19 pandemic started in December, 2019. It has caused a lot of troubles around the world, even in Japan. We cannot live our normal lives now. This will continue until COVID-19 stops. Accordingly, as of writing, universities could not do face-to-face classes. This is a very hard thing for everyone, include students and teachers. Here, I focus on how online classes have impacted teachers.

HOW DO HOKUSEI TEACHERS THINK ABOUT ONLINE CLASSES

I interviewed two teachers to find out teachers' real feelings about online classes. Both of them said, they prefer face-to-face classes than online classes. Why is that? We found out online classes' advantages and disadvantages through those two interviews.

THE ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE CLASSES

First, one teacher said that an advantage of online classes is that students and teachers can communicate with each other no matter where we are. That is, we do not need to care about location, which is a good thing. We can take a class in our favorite or comfortable places. This may motivate both students and teachers. Second, another teacher said that teachers do not have to wake up early and drive to school which would be especially nice if it were winter. That is, we can use time for something else because we get more free time. Finally, we were told that online classes allow students to give simple feedback anonymously, which might give students more confidence in replying. Students can give their opinions easier



in online classes than face-to-face classes because they do not need to worry about being recognized when replying.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE CLASSES

Next, our interviewee teachers told us about some disadvantages of online classes. First, they said "I have less class time, but a lot more prep time." Unlike face-to-face classes, they have to prepare many things. Such as

links, homework and sending feedback to students. Also, they said that, if students have a problem, it is difficult to communicate the solution to them compared to being with them face-to-face. When they help students, they need to send a lot of messages. It is difficult to explain what to do because they cannot give feedback directly. In addition, they said, it is difficult to connect with students more individually. In this way, there are a lot

of problems regarding communication. Therefore, it is not nearly as effective as teaching in person. Furthermore, there are problems regarding Internet connections. If a student has slower Internet connection, they may not be able to participate in class. They might feel unable to participate in lessons that require more verbal communication.■

KEITA TANAKA

DISCOVERIES BECAUSE OF COVID-19

One teacher gave a particularly important insight. He said "many students are not computer savvy and some of them do not even have a computer. I cannot believe that a developed nation like Japan has so many university students who do not have a computer or an internet connection. Japan is going to fall behind the rest of the world if this does not change. You cannot conduct business, domestic or international with a smartphone." Perhaps, it will take a very long time to stop COVID-19. We should take this opportunity to change. We should set up an internet connection and computer and we should adapt to this situation.

Some people prefer online classes more than face-to-face classes. However, these people are in the minority, it seems. I am sure there are good points of online classes but face-to-face classes is better for teachers and students. We hope to restart them soon.

INTERVIEW

WHAT MEASURES DID HOKUSEI TAKE FOR COVID-19?

DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, IN ADDITION TO THE INTRODUCTION OF ONLINE CLASSES, HOKUSEI GAKUEN UNIVERSITY HAS TAKEN SEVERAL MEASURES TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INFECTION ON CAMPUS.



A HANDWASHING STATION TAKEN IN FRONT OF THE LIBRARY

HANDWASHING STATIONS

At the time of writing, students at Hokusei are, in principal, not allowed to use campus facilities. When they have to come to school for some reason, however, they must be careful not to spread infection. As one of the ways to

prevent the spread of the Coronavirus, Hokusei set up a total of 15 temporary handwashing sinks in five places around the campus. They installed four sinks at the entrance of Building A and C, and another four of them are located in front of Hokusei library. Each of these buildings,

the college hall and the students' activities building has two sinks, and the rest of them are placed next to Faculty Office Building Two.

According to the Finance Division of Hokusei, these handwashing stations cost 2,794,000 yen (about US\$26,000) in total to set

up. The Finance Division added that whoever enters the university is supposed to wash and clean their hands with hand sanitizer before entering the buildings. The hand sanitizers are placed in front of the entrance of Building C, and on the first and second floors of the library. Also, wearing a mask is required while at the college in order to prevent droplet infection.

DISINFECTION

Hokusei Gakuen University has also been thorough in sanitizing around the campus to prevent the spread of infection. The campus is sterilized at least once a day. In particular, some common parts people often use, such as elevator buttons and hand railings are sanitized more than once a day. The cleaners also disinfect the desks, comput-

ers, as well as the classrooms that were used for lectures or other purposes every day.

OTHER PREVENTIONS

To prevent infection and provide students with detailed information about the school's response to the Coronavirus, they set up a crisis management system. This crisis management system has five stages, 0 to 5, and as of writing,

we are now in Stage 2 where only online classes are allowed. Students are also restricted from going to the campus. However, students who cannot take online classes at home are permitted to use computers at school. Other facilities, such as the school gym and the students' activities building are closed. In addition to limiting who can enter the university, the university

records every visitor's name on a list. This helps to know who came to the university in case someone is confirmed as infected. In the library, there is a box for sanitizing books. It is located near the entrance of second floor. There are only three steps: put a book in the box, press the blue button, and wait for 45 seconds until it is sanitized. Hokusei also makes a

school announcement of preventions of COVID-19 on PA system several times a day. Another thing they did was to display posters instructing how to wash one's hands and cough appropriately. These posters are displayed on the walls in all the restrooms in the campus.

JURI OYAMA

JOB HUNTING

ONLINE JOB HUNTING

There are many companies which have had to review the schedule to hire, due to coronavirus. Tokyo Olympics had been going to be held this year, so they tried to expedite the time of the recruitment activities to finish them before Tokyo Olympic. However, the government has issued the emergency declaration and stopped the activities. As a result, the activities have been moved later than any other year.

In such situation, Online job hunting, which has existed conventionally, matched the trend of Stay Home and has been increasing rapidly. Now people have to consider that effective internships are not only face-to-face but also using the Web. In addition, now more than sixty percent of Japanese companies are making their guidance and personal interviews online in their recruitment.

Also, a recent investigation shows that no more than 20% of companies in Japan do not use online systems. In other words, about eighty percent of

the companies use online recruitment. This trend is more common with companies which have more employees.

THE BENEFITS

There are merits of online job hunting: it's easy for students to join seminars, there's no cost for transportation, they can use their time efficiently, and so on. In other words, rural students have no disadvantages of cost and time, and all students can 'visit' several companies a day.

THE DISADVANTAGES

There demerits of online job hunting: people find it very difficult to grasp other peoples' reactions and the atmosphere in interviews, because of the difference from face to face, so they will get worried about whether they can communicate with each other.

Also, one must consider their network environment, the place to do online meetings, their manners, where they should look, and so on. As for the solutions, so far, they need to practice and



get lots of experience, as is the case of face-to-face job hunting.

Actually, universities in Japan can help them do that. For example, at Hokusei Gakuen university, the employment support department carries out various seminars, personal consultations and gives access to a web interview room by using vacant rooms in Hokusei, to decrease their anxieties even a little.

HIRING PROBLEMS

In changing times like today, people are required to be adaptable. In fact, now young people are more familiar with the Internet, so they will get better soon. On the other hand, elderly people struggle

with the Internet. Especially older-age recruiters must get used to working online, but it is almost impossible for them to get up to speed as quickly as young people. So, recruiters have to make up for that in other ways.

For instance, online interviews on Zoom, they need to try to create a professional atmosphere, because the atmosphere is often relaxed online. If not, recruiters will struggle to select successful candidates. Also, they had better prepare well-written questions and use non-verbal communication to improve the quality of the online interview. ■

RYOSUKE KOSAKA

THE REALITY OF ONLINE CLASSES FOR HOKUSEI STUDENTS

RECENTLY, ONLINE CLASSES HAVE ATTRACTED ATTENTION AS A NEW STYLE EDUCATION. MANY UNIVERSITIES HAVE ADOPTED THIS STYLE OF EDUCATION DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC. MANY STUDENTS ARE TAKING ONLINE CLASSES FOR THE FIRST TIME. WHAT WILL THE ONLINE CLASS BRING TO STUDENTS?

In 2020, the novel coronavirus was discovered in China and spread throughout the world. Many infected people were confirmed in Japan, and this resulted in many deaths.

The Japanese government and municipalities around Japan instated a limit on going out to prevent infection from spreading. Due to this situation, many universities including Hokusei Gakuen University decided to do online classes.

There are two styles of online classes. One is the *real-time class*. This is a class style where students can talk with teachers interactively, according to class schedules. The other is the *on-demand class*. A teacher assigns a reading and a lecture video to watch on the Internet, and students watch these.

Most Hokusei Students have experienced both types of online classes, so what is their opinion on both? How do the students feel about online classes? There are some merits and demerits to do online class. We summarized these based on the Internet article and interviews with Hokusei students.

MERITS

First of all, students can save time because they do not have to spend it commuting to school. By doing online classes, they seem to be able to use time for other things. Also, some students can reduce transportation expenses.

Second, online classes—especially on-demand classes—do not have the limitation of time and place. This is a valuable thing for students. They can take a class anytime, anywhere if the Internet is available.

Third, there is one great feature of the application ZOOM used to do real-time online classes, and that is called “breakout room”. Students can hold a meeting with a small number of people by using this. Some students say that they can express their opinion easier in breakout rooms than in regular classes.

DEMERITS

First, it's difficult to conduct active classes online. Classes with practical skills such as physical education or music is inefficient when conducted online.

In addition, online classes cannot be done without the Internet connec-

tion and computer. Without these, students must go to university to use computer rooms or buy some things to take part in online classes.

Furthermore, some students say that online classes are worse quality than regular classes. This is probably because the way of teaching has changed.

DIVIDED OPINIONS

There are both arguments for and against on online classes. For example, some students say that they can concentrate more in online classes, but other students have an opposite opinion.

There is also the issue of questions and answers during classes. During real-time classes, stu-

dents can ask questions and give comments to teachers during class by using the chat function or using their microphone. However, during an on-demand class, this is not possible. When students have a question, they have to send an email to the teacher. If the teacher does not notice the email, the question of the students is not solved.

CONCLUSION

Through this unplanned situation, not only students but also the university and teachers have proceeded by trial and error. After all, there are some merits and demerits, regardless of whether it is a regular class or an online class. What the students should do is to adapt themselves to the given circumstances. ■

JUNYA IZUMI



INTERNATIONAL RESORT NISEKO AT A CROSSROADS

NISEKO, WHERE CROWDS AND TOURISTS COME TO JAPAN FOR GOOD QUALITY SNOW, THE JAPANESE IN WINTER. HOWEVER, THIS SEASON LOOKED DIFFERENT THAN USUAL. THE HIRAFU AREA WAS QUIET AND THERE WERE VERY FEW TOURISTS AND HOLIDAY MAKERS EVEN IN MARCH. CORONAVIRUS HAD A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE REGION OF NISEKO.



EFFECT OF CORONAVIRUS

On February 14, the first case of coronavirus was confirmed in Hokkaido. Furthermore, on Feb. 28, after the first case was reported, there were an extra 66 cases, so the Governor of Hokkaido declared a state of emergency and called for residents to refrain from going out. Countries around the world restricted travel to Japan. One company in Niseko essentially dismissed foreign workers expecting that the pandemic would have a bad impact. The majority of businesses in Niseko would have lost their winter profits during the pandemic as there were so fewer tourists and holiday makers around Niseko as foreign

governments insisted that citizens return to their home country during this time.

BREAKING THROUGH THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

As time passed the infection rate of coronavirus increased more and more in Japan. After the emergency declaration was finally over in Japan on April 16, there are still quite a few foreigners still in Niseko. Even if they wanted to return to their country, the prices of flights have soared or have been cut off and they are forced to remain. On the other hand, some foreigners have chosen not to return to their home country. Mr. Garth Caleb

(25) came to Niseko from Australia on a working holiday visa in November 2019. He said he had 29 days of work in January but surprisingly only three days in March. He mentioned that "the company understood the economic situation due to Coronavirus, he did not want to miss out on any of the time of his working holiday visa as he could only apply once, and hoped that the situation would be back to normal and could travel around Japan" as a reason to stay in Japan. The company he worked for in the winter arranged for foreigners who decided to stay in Niseko to work on the farm, and he says he has been working at the farm five days a week since late April.

SUPPORT FOR LOCALS

In the Niseko area, various regional initiatives are underway that are for servicing restaurants damaged by the decreased number of tourists and the government requests to refrain from going out. One of these examples, aimed at residents in the local area, is opening the area in front of the promotion bureau government building entrance as a free of charge space to sell lunch boxes and creating a website for delivery and takeaway service. The purpose is to promote a "new Hokkaido style" in

Shiribeshi jurisdiction for restaurants trying new business styles.

PROBLEMS COME TO THE FOREFRONT

The coronavirus pandemic highlighted some problems in Niseko that have existed even before the pandemic. For example, Niseko relies on tourists from foreign countries and mainly relies on profits from the winter season. Most of the annual income for tourism-related companies in Niseko is earned in winter at facilities where foreigners are the main customers. Niseko must expand and improve the summer activities and create a new style that doesn't rely only on the benefits of winter. This will be a good opportunity to appeal not only to tourists in Hokkaido but also to Japanese tourists and to improve the pricing and hospitality of expensive food and drink which is focused on foreigners.

SUMMARY

There are still opportunities to seize new customers such as opening of the Shinkansen and holding the Olympics. It would be great to see and create a Niseko that can be flexible and respond to various situations and that many people want to visit regardless of country, region, or time of year. ■

SHIORI TAKEUCHI



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