

## モンテペロとZoom 交流をしました

We promoted our sister city relationship with Montebello by way of an internet Zoom software.

### ACA副会長、国際事業委員長 田中 明



1961年芦屋市は全国でもいち早く米国のモンテペロ市と姉妹都市提携を結び、両市に姉妹都市協会が作られ（芦屋市国際交流協会の前身は芦屋姉妹都市協会）、他市が羨むような友好な関係を続けて参りました。

ACAは今年も例年通りモンテペロ市へ派遣する第56回学生親善使節（以下SA）の選考を進めておりました。しかし、新型コロナウイルスの問題が発生し、国や市の指導のもと当協会も活動を自粛せざるを得ず、今年度のSAの派遣を見送る決定を5月後半に行いました。

モンテペロ姉妹都市協会（以下MASCA）とお互いの友好関係の維持拡大のため、今年のSAに代わる事業を何か行おうと協議をした結果、Zoom Meetingを行う決定をし、去る7月12日（日）11:00（モンテペロ市時間 7月11日19:00）に総勢約60名（両市からそれぞれ30名）の参加のもと開催しました。

まず、ミーティングMC（進行役）のエマ・デルガードMASCA会長の挨拶から始まり、芦屋から戸田ACA会長、いとう市長、田中ACA副会長、そしてモンテペロからはメレンデス市長のスピーチと続きました。その後双方のSAのOB/OGによるビデオ・メッセージや、芦屋側で事前に取ったアンケートに基づき作成した過去のSAに関するクイズなどで盛り上がりました。笑いあり涙あり飛び入り参加ありなど、あっという間に約2時間が経ってしまいました。

最後にZoomで集合記念写真を撮り、終了後も皆、名残惜しくなかなか退室できませんでした。その直後のSNSでの反響も大きく、「楽しかった。」「みんなすごすぎる。」「達成感ハンパない。」「感謝。」などの絶賛の言葉が後を絶ちませんでした。

今回のMASCAとのリモート交流はACAにとって初めての経験であり、不慣れな中、Zoom設備の設置、元SAとの事前Zoom Meeting、ビデオ・メッセージの事前準備など関係各位の協力のお陰で大成功裏に終わることができました。特にSAのOB/OGの方々にはアンケート集計、ビデオ編集など多大なる協力を得たことに感謝したいと思います。

来年は姉妹都市提携60周年を迎え、記念行事と恒例のSAプログラムを予定しております。東京オリンピック・パラリンピック同様に新型コロナウイルスの動向が気になるところでありますが、今後ともMASCAと友好・親善を継続し深めて参りたいと思っております。

### Akira Tanaka, ACA Vice President and Chairperson of the International Affairs Committee

Among so many municipal governments throughout Japan, the Ashiya Municipal Government entered into the sister city relationship with Montebello city of America in as early as 1961. The both cities established a sister city association respectively and have maintained the friendly relationship which is an object of envy by other cities. Ashiya Cosmopolitan Association is formerly the Ashiya Sister City Association.

ACA proceeded as usual to the selection of the 56th Student Ambassadors, hereinafter shortened SA, however, we had to refrain from the project under the circumstance of the sudden occurrence and wide spread of the Corona type new virus. Accordingly, we were compelled in the latter part of May to postpone the current SA dispatch under the administrative suggestion and guidance by central and local governments.

In order to maintain and broaden our friendly relationship with the Montebello Ashiya Sister City Association, hereinafter shortened MASCA, we discussed on what we could do instead as an alternative of the SA project and subsequently agreed to hold a ZOOM meeting in Internet. On July 12, Sunday, at 11:00 a.m. in Ashiya and the day before at 19:00 p.m. in Montebello, we executed the meeting with the attendance of around 60 participants, 30 per each side.

Firstly, the MC, Ms. Emma Delgado, President of the MASCA greeted everyone, and followed by speeches from Mr. Toda, President of ACA, Ms. Itoh, Mayor of Ashiya city, Mr. Tanaka, Vice President of ACA, and Mr. Melendez, Mayor of Montebello.

In the aftermath, we warmed up by video messages on OB and OG of successive SAs created by both sides and a quiz regarding old SAs based on preliminary questionnaire prepared and compiled by Ashiya side. The scheduled two-hour program flew like an arrow with full of laughter, tears, and unofficial guests.

In closing, we took a group photo by ZOOM. We were quite reluctant to disconnect the line since all of us had lingering flavor of the contents. Our SNS received so many appreciative comments reporting "Cool!" "That's awesome!" "Much accomplishment!", and "Heartily appreciation" at a later date.

This remote exchange with MASCA was our first experience and raw to this type of event, however, we could quite successfully achieve this attempt thanks to the superb cooperation by all concerned parties on the installation of ZOOM equipment, preliminary ZOOM meeting with old SAs. Especially, we sincerely appreciate OB and OG of SAs for the compilation of questionnaire, video editing, and so forth.

Next year we are to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our sister city relationship and plan various commemorative events and usual SA project. As we are concerned with the trend of the Corona type new virus and Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, we are resolute to maintain and deepen our cordial relationship with MASCA.

