

On September 17, 2023, the harvest festival of Uken village in Amami Oshima was held, and multiple activities were arranged to celebrate this traditional festival. It is the first harvest festival in the recent four years because of the impact of the pandemic. With the lead of Professor Ori and Tsuge, six students from Sophia University were assembled to Yuwan, and participated in the August dancing and sumo that performed to thank gods for the harvest and happiness brought to villagers in the past year. This event, a beloved highlight for villagers, proved to be an unforgettable cultural experience, as the students embraced the island's rich heritage.

The festival began with sumo. Sumo wrestling at the harvest festival is a traditional event, and the people of Uken village seemed to be looking forward to it very much, as it had been four years since the last time it was held.

*"We villagers are quite happy to hold such a festival, especially in the situation that the number of residents on the island is dwindling."* The mayor of Uken village said.

Father and senior brought infant babies and kids who hadn't done sumo before to the sumo field and held a special ceremony by performing representative actions of sumo. After the sumo wrestling for students of primary school and middle school, the highlight match of today's sumo showed up, which is the sumo between "sounendan" (age between 30 and 39) and "seinendan" (age no more than 29). Sixteen players including two students from Sophia University, Abe-san and Lin-san, participated in this match. Though students didn't rank, sumo wrestlers in the match still highly evaluated the performance of the students.



During the festival, special meal made of wild boar and miso was served. Those obento was packaged by students together with villagers in the very early of this day. The meat was cooked the day before festival and have been prepared for one whole day. Sumo wrestlers enjoys the meal after sumo match with beer, and regards it as a relax moment of the day.



August dancing plays an important role in the festival. It began at 8:30 and ended at 12:30 this year. Zhao-san and Gao-san had shown their talent on dancing in the middle rest of sumo, they also joined the August dancing at night. The beautiful yukata they wore attracted the eyesight of photographer in the crowd. The revelry kept going in the songs we sang, everyone enjoyed this moment. At the end of festival, a best wishes for next year had been made together, and it surly will be an unforgettable experience in the life of us.

