

## Thoughts on cherry blossom viewing: from group to team

It is spring and the season for flower viewing. Each year, AAI organizes a barbecue party under fully blooming cherry blossoms, inviting participants at Tsukuba and other friends of the AAI. In this event, we try to provide support, which is a little different from the training sessions, to ensure that participants can take the lead in preparation, organization during the event and tidying up, dividing work between themselves.

Although we talk about independent work by the participants, it is the first experience like this for them, and the preparation work is very slow. They stare at the ingredients for a while and buzz around saying how different the meat looks compared to that in their own countries etc. We first show them the tools and methods for plate preparation, how to chop onions finely for the typical tomato and onion salad, show them how we use a stainless steel bowl used in the training for making Kimuchi cabbage salad, how we use a plastic bag to marinate meat with seasoning for the BBQ etc., then leave the rest to the participants.

They are a group of members participating in the vegetable cultivation training course. While a group is a collection of people, a team is a collection of people who work jointly. With a common objective, each team member's role is decided and through individuals fulfilling their roles, the objective is achieved. Sharing the sense of achievement leads to strengthening of trust and solidarity among team members.

Having said that, it is not that we started the BBQ

event thinking about this kind of grand vision. It is simply a seasonal enjoyment to have fun with our friends, eating and drinking while viewing exquisite cherry blossoms. But through working together for things like the BBQ, a group can become a team, leading to the concept of "collaboration: - helping each other and achieving a common goal." In addition, it is an opportunity to learn the importance of preparation to ensure that the BBQ will be a success. It may be retrospective thinking, but may speak to the point.

Furthermore, through the BBQ event, one sometimes discovers participants' true natures and unexpected characteristics. In the long 10-month vegetable cultivation training course, we have several opportunities for this kind of BBQ event. We would be very glad as the setters of the events, if these events contribute to mutual understanding and teamwork.



Ready to start BBQ



Smiles under the full cherry blossoms



Dancing participants



You grill and I eat....