

姉妹交流公園と桜の近況報告

高知県・ベンゲット州姉妹交流推進会議 会長 吉川 浩史

2020年は、姉妹交流協定締結45周年の節目の年に当たる年である。周年の年には、毎回、県訪問団が同州を訪れているが、今回は、是非、同州アトック町に整備中の姉妹交流公園の桜が咲く時期に訪問したいと願っている。

そういう希望を抱きつつ、2019年11月の終わりと12月の初めにかけて同州を訪れた際に、姉妹交流公園にも足を運び、公園の様子や桜の生育状況等を見てきたが、その近況をこの紙面を借りて報告したいと思う。

桜の生育状況

公園には雪割桜とセンダイヤが植えられている。雪割桜は元気旺盛で2メートル以上に成長しているが、センダイヤは、苗木が小さい時に風と寒さにやられ成長が遅れている。雪割桜はフィリピンでも2月末ごろから咲き始めるが、植物は元の場所から新しい場所へ移植されると、新しい場所で慣れる時間が何年か必要である。そんなことで雪割桜は調整時期にあると思う。

昨年は、開花時期に霜が降りたり、風が強くて花が飛ばされたりしたので、花見ができなかったと聞いている。

簡易宿泊施設とトイレ

簡易宿泊施設については、公園の隣接地に昨年造られたが、公園のそばに宿泊できるようになって大変便利になった。施設には客室3部屋のほか、食堂や調理室もある。また、15名ほどの集会もできる。

トイレについては、簡易トイレが設置されていたが、見栄えが悪かった。そ



公園内に完成したトイレ
New toilets in the Park

公園への観光客の入り状況

公園は標高2400メートルくらいのところにあり、これはフィリピン人にとって特別の気候である。ということで、花が咲かない時期にも観光客がやってくる。SNSで公園のことを知った観光客は、この冷涼な気候と山々が連なる雄大な景色があれば、十分楽しめるという。日本だけでなく、フィリピンでもSNS等で公園や桜の情報が拡がっていくことには目を見張るものがある。

駐車場とアクセス道路の拡張

幹線道路から公園までのアクセス道路に観光客が押し寄せて地域住民の生活に支障が出ている。駐車場はアクセス道路と密接な関係にあり、切り離すことができない。短い期間で言えば、簡易宿泊施設の駐車場では足りるが、根本的な解決には程遠い。アクセス道路の改良を約束した農業大臣が交代したので解決の道が遠くなった。再度、関係者を集めて仕切り直しが必要との結論に至った。

Status Report on the Sisterhood Park and its Cherry Blossoms

Kochi - Benguet Sisterhood Development Group: Chairman Hirofumi Yoshikawa

The year 2020 marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of the sisterhood exchange agreement between Kochi and Benguet. We send a delegation to Benguet every 5 years in celebration of this agreement, but this year we hope to schedule our next visit during a time when the cherry blossoms in Benguet's Sisterhood Park, in Atok, are in bloom.

In order to achieve this goal, during our last visit to Benguet (from late November to early December 2019), we paid a visit to the Sisterhood Park in order to ascertain the status of its ongoing development. This report will go over the condition of park facilities, as well as the growth of the cherry blossom trees within the park.

Status of the Cherry Blossoms

Yukiwarizakura (*P. introtsa*) and Sendaiya (*P. jamasakura*) were planted in the park. The Yukiwarizakura are thriving, growing to be over two meters tall. The Sendaiya, however, are growing slower, as the saplings were exposed to cold weather and wind when they were smaller. Though the Yukiwairzakura in the Philippines should bloom around the end of February, it can take several years for plants to acclimate to new locations after being moved from their original location. I believe the Yukiwarizakura are still adjusting.

I have heard that cherry blossom viewing events could not be held last year, as frost and strong winds blew the flowers away soon after they bloomed.

Lodging House and Toilets

The lodging house located adjacent to the park, which has become operational after finishing construction last year, proved to be very convenient. In addition to the three guest rooms, the facilities also include a dining room and a kitchen.

The lodging house should be able to hold meetings of up to 15 people at a time.

Though simple toilets were set up, they did not look very nice. Utilizing money from the State Government's budget, new toilets and equipment to treat the dirty water coming from the toilets and lodging house have been installed.

Park Tourism

The park is located approximately 2400 meters above sea level, making its climate a special feature for Filipinos. Tourists come to the park even during seasons when the flowers are not in bloom. According to people who found out about the park through social media, the cool climate and wondrous mountain scenery is more than enough to make a visit to the park an enjoyable experience. It was surprising to learn that information pertaining to the park and cherry blossoms was being successfully spread through social media not only in Japan, but in the Philippines as well.

The Parking Lot and Access Road Expansion

The narrow access road that connects the park and the main road is often flooded with tourists, which causes problems for the local residents. There is talk about widening the current parking lot, but if the access road is not widened, the influx of tourists will continue to cause problems. While, in the short term, making use of the lodging house parking lot solves issues related to parking, it does not address the root of the problems. Though the head of the Ministry of Agriculture had promised to improve the access road, a recent change in leadership means that the road to fixing these issues has gotten longer. It has been concluded that it is necessary to gather the concerned parties and start again from square one.

高知県・ベンゲット州友好新聞

MABUHAY ANG ATING SAMAHAN

(私たちの友情がいつまでも続きますように……)



東社長と実習生(左からリアさん、ブレンダさん、ファティさん、アナマリーさん、レイシェリンさん)

Mr. Higashi and the Trainees (from left to right: Ms. Dolinas, Ms. Bagtangan, Ms. Dapnit, Ms. Abansi, and Ms. Lauro)



姉妹交流公園にて地元の人達と記念撮影(左端が吉川会長)

A commemorative photo at the Sisterhood Park (far left: Chairman Yoshikawa)

目次

- 四万十町の農業実習生及び受入事業所を訪問しました
- 姉妹交流公園と桜の近況報告

Contents

- Visiting the Agricultural Trainees and Their Workplace in Shimanto
- Status Report on the Sisterhood Park and its Cherry Blossoms



四万十町の農業実習生及び受入事業所を訪問しました

高知県国際交流協会 マネージャー 吉田 進

高知県西部に位置する四万十町は、2006年に窪川町、大正町、十和村が合併し誕生した人口約1万6千人(2019年11月現在)、面積642.3km²の高知県内の市町村では最大の面積を誇る自治体です。2019年9月現在、8人のベンゲット州からの農業実習生が四万十町内で日々実習に励んでいます。

今回訪問したのは、町内で実習する5人の女性実習生と彼女らを受け入れる事業所「四万十みはら菜園」。これまでいくつかの受入農家を訪問してきた私ですが、今回、農業及び農業実習のこれまでの常識を覆してくれる訪問となりました。



作業台からハウス内を一望する
The view of the greenhouse from the workstation



オランダ製の作業台と東社長
Mr. Higashi with a workstation made in the Netherlands



ベテランの2人は
脇芽掻きと茎と茎の
間隔を調整する作業を行う

The two veteran trainees
remove unwanted buds and
adjust the stem spacing



新人の3人は
収穫作業から

The three beginners start
with harvesting



土を使わない農業

「四万十みはら菜園」の東宣雄社長に案内され向かったのは、広さ1.4haある大きなビニールハウス。ビニールハウスといっても、その高さは6メートルあり、主に生食用のトマトを栽培しています。5人の実習生の内、サリバッド・リア・ドリナスさん(バクン出身)、マテオ・ブレンダ・バグタンガンさん(バクン出身)の2人は2018年3月から、残りのマンダレス・ファティ・ダブニットさん(アトック出身)、アギャオ・アナマリー・アバンシさん(カパンガン出身)、エステバン・レイシェリン・ラウロさん(ツブライ出身)の3人は2019年10月から実習を開始しました。

ビニールハウスのあまりの大きさにいきなり目を奪われた私が次に目に留まったのは、トマトの茎が土ではなく宙に浮いた根から伸び、赤い実を付けていることでした。これは高知県がオランダのウエストランド市と友好園芸農業協定を結び、実現した栽培システムです。この土を一切使用せず、温度や湿度、二酸化炭素濃度などを自動制御し、作物の高品質化と安定生産を図る次世代型農業の現場で、5人の実習生はいったいどんな実習を行っているのでしょうか？



Visiting the Agricultural Trainees and Their Workplace in Shimanto

Kochi International Association: Yoshida Susumu, Manager



Shimanto Town is located in the western part of Kochi Prefecture and was established through the merger of the Kubokawa, Taisho, and Towa municipalities in 2006. The population of Shimanto Town is approximately 16,000 (November 2019), and it boasts the largest area of any municipality in Kochi at 642.3 km². As of September 2019, eight trainees from Benguet have been engaged in practical agricultural training in Shimanto Town.

I visited five female trainees at their workplace, Shimanto Mihara Farm. Although I have visited several organizations offering practical agricultural training already, this visit radically changed my views on both agriculture and practical agricultural training.

Soil-Free Farming

I was shown around Shimanto Mihara Farm by the owner Higashi Nobuo. We visited a 1.4 hectare greenhouse, six meters high and used mainly to cultivate tomatoes for fresh consumption. Of the five trainees, Salibad Leah Dolinas and Mateo Brenda Bagtangan (both from Bakun) started in March 2018, and Mandales Fathy Dapnit (from Atok), Agyao Annamarie Abansi (from Kapangan), and Esteban Rachelyn Lauro (from Tublay) in October 2019.

My attention was initially occupied by the large size of the greenhouse, but was soon drawn to the red fruits hanging, not from plants rooted in soil, but from roots and stems suspended in midair. This farming system was imported into Kochi prefecture from Westland, in the Netherlands, via the Friendship Horticulture Agriculture Agreement. Consistently producing high quality crops, it is a soil-free, temperature/humidity/carbon dioxide concentration-controlled, next-generation farming operation. Just what kind of practical experience were the trainees undergoing here?

Farm work ≠ Hard labor

While the trainees at organizations I had visited thus far were mostly male, those at Shimanto Mihara Farm were all female. This surprised me at first, but watching their training made me realize how much it was in fact oriented specifically towards female trainees. Automated workbenches carried all the heavy loads so there was none of the hard labor that normally accompanies farm work. As well as harvesting, the trainees remove unwanted buds from plants, adjust the height of overgrown stems, adjust the spacing between stems, and select and pack fruit. There is almost none of the repetitive standing and sitting commonly found in farm work. Mr. Higashi also claims that women perform this kind of work better, as it is less physically demanding but requires greater attention to detail.

Unlike the early morning starts common to other farm work, the trainees' start is at 8 a.m. and their work finishes at 5 p.m., almost like a typical company employee. It seems the trainees take weekends and public holidays off too, which they spend shopping or doing laundry, sometimes going out of town to visit friends from their hometowns. I got the impression that they are enjoying their lives in Kochi.

Living in an environment with a different language and culture, I am sure they must also face many difficulties. Nevertheless, as I left the farm, I was filled with hope that they would be able to get the most out of the remainder of their training, surrounded by the staff who work with them, especially the kindly smiling Mr. Higashi.

Shimanto Mihara Farm