Hanami Celebration in Tsukuba, Japan (Siti Hafsah, May 2019)

Every year, Sakura's spring is a moment much awaited by local people and as well as tourists coming all the way to Japan, and likewise the Malaysian students studying in Japan. The beauty of cherry blossoms can be seen throughout Japan beginning in late March until early April for a week and it depends on the local weather condition.

I and Malaysian students studying at the University of Tsukuba do not miss the opportunity to enjoy the cherry blossom as our annual event called "Hanami Party" held at Sorimachinomori, Tsukuba. Besides being able to get acquainted with students, this activity is also able to strengthen the silaturahim relationship between us. Under the transient beauty of cherry trees, local people, students and tourists get to enjoy lunch with family and friends.

Hanami (flower viewing) is a tradition of local people ever since picnicking under the Sakura or Ume (plum) trees. This tradition has begun since the Nara Age (710-794) when Ume flowers began to attract attention but ended when Cherry blossoms attracted most attention of the people of the Heian Age (794-1185).

Sakura flowers in Japan are of various types and the most popular is Somei Yoshino. The cherry blossoms of this type of petals are white while the bud is pink in colour. This flower blooms within a week and will decay before the leaves grow again. There are various types of Cherry blossom varieties such as Yamazakura, Shidarezakura, Ichiyou, Kanhizakura, Kikuzakura and others.