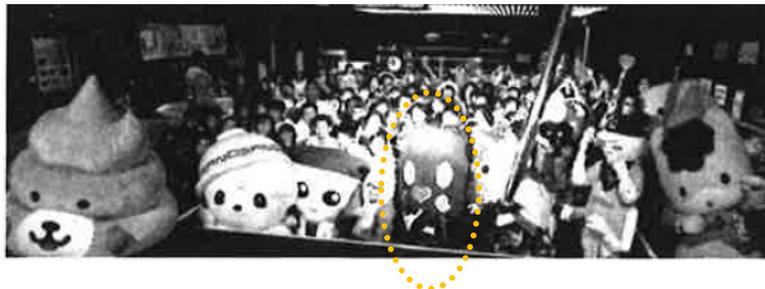


### ***Nebaarukun* (Natto Mascot Character) Gives a Lecture at a Natto Master Training Workshop – The First Natto Master Certificate Examination to be Held in September**

The office preparing for the establishment of the Natto Master Association held a “Natto Master Training Workshop” and “*Nebaarukun*’s Charity Birthday Party” on July 10 in Shibuya, Tokyo. It was announced that the Natto Master Association is planning to hold the first Natto Master Certificate Examination in Tokyo on September 10. More than 100 people joined the birthday party, and the profit from ticket



Tsales was donated as relief fund for the 2016 Kumamoto Earthquake.

*Nebaarukun* (**center in the top photo**), playing the leading role on the day, gave a lecture at the workshop and introduced the purpose of the first Natto Master Certificate Examination, which will be held in Tokyo on September 10. Participants were informed that those who succeed in the examination would have the privilege to serve as a judge in the National Natto Competition, which would be held in Kyoto in February 2017. After giving these announcements, *Nebaarukun* told a story titled "I don't like natto," using picture-story. It was a story about a child who did not like natto, who became fond of it by eating the food cooked with various recipes. *Nebaarukun* promoted the exam by saying that it would cover subjects such as what can be done by those who don't like natto, and encouraged people to take the exam.

### **Natto Masters Can Make the World a Happy Place through Natto—USSEC Supports the Natto Masters Project**

Then, a member of the Natto Boys (**middle photo**) took the rostrum as a Natto Master lecturer. Natto Boys are natto promoters involved in activities aimed at making the food popular around the world. He presented the 10 most popular toppings to go with natto selected by over 15,000 people in an internet-based contest, which were displayed in a "Topping bar." He also explained that Natto Masters would be expected to know everything about



natto, from how to produce natto, how to cultivate soybeans, to natto markets in the world. He added that Natto Masters are those who can make the world a happy place through natto.

As a first step to gaining the knowledge required for a natto master, the U. S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), a supporter of the Natto Master project, explained that 80% of edible soybeans in Japan are produced in the U.S. The USSEC explained that, under its initiative, soybean producers in the U.S. have adopted a certification system to assure sustainability of their products.

After the workshop, many mascot characters including *Hustle Komon*, a mascot character authorized by Ibaraki Prefecture and apparently the one who organized the party, gathered to celebrate *Nebaarukun*’s birthday (July 10 is the natto day, as the numbers make a pun with the word “natto”). A video message of congratulation was received from the air band Goldenbomber, whose live concert *Nebaarukun* has once joined. *Nebaarukun* appeared in a tuxedo specially made for this occasion, and was given a special natto cake (**bottom photo**), which was offered to those who came to the event. Later, *Nebaarukun* served as the disc jockey and the event went on full swing till the end.

