

Greetings from the President's Office

2018.10.15 NO.12

An Experiment on Japanese Sake Turned out a Party

It has been five years and a half since my inauguration to Akita International University. I feel like that I quite enjoyed my life in Akita upon human connections, foods, events and everything. Sake in Akita is the most important item and that Akita should proud of.

The other day I had a conversation with Mr. Shinichiro Kodama, the chairperson of the Akita Sake Brewers Association. I was astonished by the fact that some of Sake-brewing rice is to be polished 20 %, which means a rice is ought to be turned into as small as a *jintan*, a Japanese famous medicine. I personally enjoy these delicious Sake on a daily basis, and when it comes to Sake, it definitely reminds me of one of my old stories. It is not a failure story but one of my memories back to more than 40 years as a graduate student taking a class of Marketing Research at Indiana University.

This class covers both humans and companies' behavior including consumer behavior, behavior psychology, and company strategies, and it was theoretically based on mathematics and statistics. Students are supposed to implement a research on their own these in the class and that is totally different from passive lecture-style.

Once decided a research theme, we were to conduct a pre-research, establish an analysis model, study the collected data and lead conclusions.

When I struggled to decide the theme, one of the professors suggested that I try to research the Sake Tasting because he was impressed with the taste of Japanese Sake at his visit to Japan. He knows that there is a way to enjoy Sake heated up and he also knows that the temperature would change its Sake taste. He emphasized that the change by temperature should be analyzed in terms of mathematics and statistics exploiting several lengthy numeral equations and formula. His persuasion was such intriguing and I finally decided to go on with it.

On the contrary, there was no liquor shop near by where sells Japanese Sake in the middle of east of the U.S. After a great struggle, I learned there was one in Chicago and jumped into a bus to get Sake. It took almost one day to reach the destination and obtained a bottle of Sake brewed in a brewery of California.

On a day of experiment, 6 or 7 American graduate students gathered my house and received a questionnaire made by me with full of numbers and numerical formulas, and they were required to fill in results after sipping based on my precious directions; starting normal temperature, and then a few drops of plus 2 degrees heated bottle of Sake was to be poured to a wine glass, and another a few drops. All participants looked serious to implement this project.

By the middle of experiment and I felt a good response, some of the subjects suddenly poured Sake directly from the bottle and started drinking without my procedures. One of them said "this is just because too delicious" with a grin. After all the experiment went wrong, people brought wines from my refrigerator, eventually a drinking party began. I had to choose another topic for my research afterall and submitted.



鈴木 典比古

This article was originally posted on Asahi Shimbun local version dated October 15th, 2018. Read the original article here (only in Japanese).
<http://www.asahi.com/area/akita/articles/MTW20181015051550001.html>