Press Release

December 26th, 2017

ima Inc.

"Supporting traditional methods of Japanese sake brewing with Artificial Intelligence" Brewing AI-SAKE with the World Champion sake brewer

ima Inc. will launch a new project, "Art of Artificial Artisan".   For its first approach named "AI-SAKE", ima will support traditional methods of Japanese sake brewing with Artificial Intelligence, collaborating with Nambu Bijin, a Japanese sake brewer located in Ninohe, Iwate prefecture and ABEJA, the creator of a deep learning system "ABEJA Platform".

"Art of Artificial Artisan" project aims to support to inherit Japanese traditional artisan which are beginning to be lost. "AI-SAKE" targets to develop an AI tool that will visualize experienced artisan and notifying the best duration of the water absorbing process, which is one of the brewing processes rarely automated. This tool will enable to brew sustainable and high-quality Japanese sake.

This project will be supported and collaborated with Dr. Yutaka Matsuo who is a project associate professor at Institute of Engineering Innovation, the University of Tokyo.

1.   Background

The quality of Japanese sake brewed nowadays has improved thanks to installment of computers providing data management, thermometers, refrigerating equipment, and other electronic devices. But still, the "UMAMI" created by elements such as the philosophy of the brewers and their respect to the land they brew on is highly regarded internationally.

For example, the duration of the water absorbing process of the rice prior to steaming is been determined only by the experienced brewers called "Toji".

We focused on the possibilities that these processes relying on experienced human judgments could be standardize by the utilization of Artificial Intelligence and success these fading traditional artisans to the future.

2.   Project

The project's objective is to develop an AI tool that will determine the best timing to end the water absorbing process and drain the rice out of the water using an image authentication device.

Teacher Data will be collected under the same environment as Nambu Bijin brew their sake, using image recording devices and later processed through "ABEJA Platform".

3.   Definition of AI-SAKE

Japanese Sake that has used AI technology in more than one process of the brewing is defined as AI-SAKE.

4.   Team

Name	：	ima Inc.
Established	：	2013
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Bringing the World and Japan together through "Umami" and "Takumi", ima creates new values connecting Japanese cultural artisan and leading-edge technology. Founded "Japan Awasake Association" in February, 2016 and now serves as it's secretariat.

Name	：	NANBU BIJIN Co. LTD.
Established	：	1902
Address	：	Kamicho 13, Fukuoka, Ninohe, Iwate, Japan, 028-6101
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URL	：	https://www.nanbubijin.co.jp/

One of the long-established sake brewer. Nanbu Bijin has been keeping the tradition as well as expanding to the worldwide market from an early stage. In 2013, Nambu Bijin acquired Kocher Certification, and in 2017, became champion at the International Wine Challenge among 1,245 entry brands of Japanese sake.

[Adviser]

Dr. Yutaka Matsuo

Chair of ELSI committee, The Japanese Society for Artificial Intelligence, 2014-present

Editor-in-Chief, Transactions of the Japanese Society for Artificial Intelligence, 2012-2014

Specialize in Artificial Intelligence, Deep Learning, Web mining.

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