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Sanuki Udon Noodles

Kunitake Kaneko

A typical question from the people planning to visit Kagawa, where I am from, is: “Which udon noodle shop should I visit?” Unfortunately, there is no such thing as “the” Sanuki Udon shop or “the original” Sanuki Udon in Kagawa (= Sanuki). There are no long-established shops that have led the Sanuki Udon business down through generations. The fact is, udon shops exist in almost every community, and added to this are udon enthusiasts who open their own eateries that may be closed as the owners retire. The continuity of Sanuki Udon has been maintained in the Sanuki region as individual udon shops thus keep coming and going.

Udon shops differ from each other in every aspect. Speaking of noodles alone, elements include the thickness, length and texture (surface softness, chewiness, how much

strength is needed to bite it off, its movement when lifted with chopsticks, etc.). Other factors are: types of soup stock (sardines/bonito flakes, sweet/salty, soy sauce, etc.); how to eat (cold, warm, boiled, kamaage, in hot soup, dipping, cooked with other ingredients, etc.); toppings (green onion, ginger, red pepper, bits of tempura, wakame seaweed, egg, meat, curry, sudachi citrus, lemon, etc.); side dishes (tempura, oden, croquette, inari-sushi, chirashi-sushi, rice ball, etc.). By combining these variations, you can enjoy almost infinite varieties of udon dishes. Furthermore, each eatery has its own atmosphere, environment, and prices, and not least, whom you eat with all add to the variation.

From their experiences, local people of Sanuki understand these differences and choose where to eat, taking into account their feelings, weather, place, and time. This is why they can eat udon every day. The diversity of udon shops nurtures the Sanuki locals who understand the diversity of udon, and vice

versa. And these diversities is nothing less than the quintessence of the udon culture in Sanuki.

Sanuki Udon is now on the brink of extinction as a local culture. For example, shops are going out of business, one after another, due to the aging of the owners. The number of young successors is on the decline. To make the matter worse, udon shop chains are entering into the market. The future of Sanuki Udon is in danger.

In the study of digital archives and museum I cannot avoid facing with the word “culture.” Any culture is comprised of various customs and complex human relationships in our lives, which is further intertwined with impacts from the outside. As such, it cannot or should not be interpreted from a single point of view. With this in mind, I wish to develop digital technologies that will promote the creation of cultures by allowing coexistence of diverse interpretations and values. Hints I get by looking at Sanuki Udon are unexpectedly numerous.

Science and Technology Information

The 18th KEIO TECHNO-MALL 2017

“Develop Industry-Academia Collaboration and Nurture Dreams”

The KEIO TECHNO-MALL is an annual event to widely disseminate research results from the Keio Faculty and Graduate School of Science and Technology while also offering a vital venue of encounters for industry-academia collaborations such as joint research and technological transfer. More than 100 demonstration-oriented booths, the largest scale of its kind for Japanese universities, will be featured along with technical seminars and roundtables by researchers. Every year, this event attracts a large number of visitors – from businesses, government/public organizations, other universities, etc.

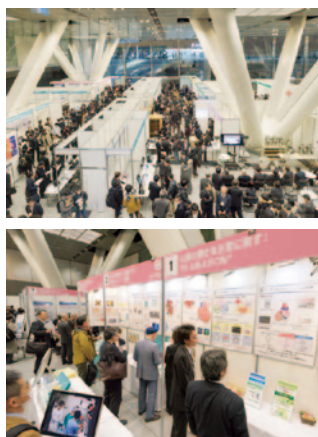
Date: December 15 (Fri.), 2017 10:00 ~ 18:00

Venue: Tokyo International Forum
(Exhibition Hall E2, Basement 2)

Contents: Exhibits of real objects and demonstration-oriented exhibits along with other attractive events

Admission free; Prior registration is not required for any event.

For details: www.kll.keio.ac.jp/ktm/



Keynote speech and talk session>

1. “View of Japan, the World and Beyond from Space”

Guest : Ms. Naoko Yamazaki (Astronaut)

2. The Role of Keio Faculty of Science and Technology: Industrial Expectations”

Guests : Mr. Genichi Tamatsuka (President & CEO, Hearts United Group, Co., Ltd.)

Mr. Kazutoshi Kobayashi (President & CEO, KOSÉ Corporation)

Mr. Hisataka Ikuta (President, Mikuni Corporation)

Editor's postscript

Dr. Kaneko is very active as a hope of the Department of Information and Computer Science. He actually wears more than one hat and is highly successful in the world of digital content, which is well known but to the few. I learned about it for the first time as we featured him in this issue. But he never bragged about himself and his multi-talented activities, which reflected his favorably unpretentious character. Asked about his early life, he provided us with more than one impressive episode that told of his sophisticated personality. I hope this issue will successfully convey to our readers Dr. Kaneko's attractive personality.

(Ayumi Higuchi)

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