The Story of Shochu

Shochu 1 (Summary)

Shochu is a distilled alcoholic beverage unique to Japan. Unlike sake, wine or beer, the shochu distilling method includes a distillation process like whisky distilling and gin distilling. There are two types of distillation methods: (1) one is traditional pot distillation (virtually distilled once for a batch of shochu product) and (2) the other is continuous distillation invented in the 19th century. Based on this difference in the two distillation processes, shochu is classified as either pot distillation shochu or continuous distillation shochu. Pot distillation shochu is spirits which is distilled fermenting mash (ingredients such as starch and sugar are saccharified by koji and concurrently fermented by yeast) using pot still. And it has an alcoholic content of 45% alcohol (v/v) or less. Most honkaku shochu (authentic shochu) and awamori are classified as this category. Similarly, continuous distillation shochu is spirits which is distilled fermenting mash using continuous still. And it has an alcoholic content of under 36% (v/v). Continuous distillation shochu is often enjoyed straight or used as the base of cocktails such as a sour or a shochu highball (chu-hai) as well as used for making plum liqueur (umeshu).

Please deepen your knowledge on shochu and discover more delicious and pleasant way of drinking shochu.

History

The shochu distilling techniques are considered to have arrived in the Ryukyu Kingdom or present Okinawa prefecture, Japan, from the Kingdom of Siam (or Thailand today) through the route between Southeast Asia and China in around the 15th century. There are a number of theories as to how shochu was introduced to Kyushu island. Shochu is said to have arrived from Okinawa, Korea, China, or even Europe, but no definitive evidence supports any of these theories.

The oldest document on shochu was written by the Portuguese Jorge Alvares in 1546 in his report “Affairs Regarding Japan.” According to this report, rice shochu called “orraqua” was drunk in Yamagawa or currently Ibusuki-city in Kagoshima prefecture.

The oldest record of the word “shochu” was discovered on the wooden tag with the scribble that reads “shochu” was discovered at the Koriyama Hachiman Shrine in Iasa-city, Kagoshima prefecture in 1559. This scribble complains “The head priest is so stingy that he never serves us a cup of shochu! Having such a stingy head priest is a great nuisance for us.” Around that time shochu seems to have been distilled in this area. After that, shochu distilling techniques were introduced into other area of Kyushu island.

Although the origin of shochu distilling dates back over 400 years, continuous distillation techniques are a relatively new one invented in the 19th century. Thus, the first domestically produced continuous distillation shochu made an appearance in Japan until around in 1900. Since then, the development of production techniques suitable for bringing out for the fragrance of the different kind of ingredients, the discovery of excellent yeast, and the improvements in the continuous still equipments have all contributed to today’s continuous distillation shochu.
How to distill shochu

Pot distillation shochu

Pot distillation shochu is a spirit of no more than 45% (v/v) alcohol content, which distilled fermenting mash using pot still. Pot distillation shochu is classified into the following five categories:
1. Shochu made from some kind of grains or tubers and roots and their koji (e.g., rice shochu, barley shochu and sweet potato shochu)
2. Shochu made from grain koji only (e.g., awamori)
3. Shochu made from sake cake (sake cake shochu)
4. Shochu made from brown sugar and rice koji (brown sugar shochu)
5. Shochu made from ingredients other than 1–4. For example, shochu made from main ingredients such as sesame, pumpkin, or carrot can be labeled “honkaku shochu.”

Honkaku shochu and awamori are classified in the pot distillation shochu group. If the products implement certain standards, they are granted to be labeled “honkaku shochu (authentic shochu)” or “awamori.” Summary of the production processes are as follows.

Ingredients

Ingredients used for pot distillation shochu are classified into either main ingredients or that for koji. The main ingredients are starch feedstocks such as rice, barley, sweet potato, buckwheat, or brown sugar. The ingredients for koji are usually rice, however barley and sweet potatoes have been used in certain regions. Characteristics of shochu based on main ingredients and the diversity of koji across the region are explained in the second booklet of our Story of Shochu in more detail.

Koji

The role of koji

Although the production methods of most pot distillation shochu include koji making process, the variety of the koji mold used for shochu distilling is different from that used for sake.

Koji possesses a large number of enzymes that transform starch into sugars, which is called “saccharification.” Yeast produces alcohol from the sugar, which is called “fermentation”. Beer and whisky are produced by saccharifying starch into sugar with the use of the enzymes from the malt, and then by fermenting sugar into alcohol by yeast. Both of pot distillation shochu and sake are produced by saccharification with the use of enzymes of koji instead of those of malt and by fermenting sugar into alcohol. One of the characteristics of pot distillation shochu is the use of koji for saccharification.

The type of koji mold

Three types of koji molds are used in shochu distilling: (1) black koji mold, (2) white koji mold, and (3) yellow koji mold. While almost all of the sake brands are made with yellow koji mold, while pot distillation shochu is usually produced either with black or white koji mold.

The Story
The use of black or white koji mold for shochu distilling became prevalent at the beginning of the 20th century. One of the main reasons why we use black or white koji mold for shochu distilling is that they produce abundant citric acid. One of the most important works in producing any alcoholic beverage is to protect fermenting mash from potentially harmful bacteria. In the case of pot distillation shochu, the abundant citric acid secreted from black or white koji mold makes fermenting mash strongly acidic and suppresses bacterial growth with its acidity. Therefore, it is essential to make koji that contains sufficient citric acid as well as enzymes. The shochu production methods with the use of black or white koji mold were great discoveries of our ancestors, which are major distinctive characteristics of pot distillation shochu distilling.

**Koji making**

In case of rice koji making for shochu distilling, first steamed rice is cooled down, second koji spores are seeded over the whole surface of the steamed rice to be fully inoculated. Although this process takes approximately 40 hours in koji making for shochu distilling, it is shorter than making koji for sake.

The control of temperature for shochu koji making is usually set to be higher (40–42°C or 104–108°F) in the former half and to be lowered (30–35°C or 86–95°F) in the latter half. Unless the latter temperature is set to no more than 35°C, citric acid won’t be secreted enough.

**First moromi:** Growth of the yeast

First addition (First shikomi) is the yeast growth process in order to properly ferment main moromi. When this process is completed, it is referred to as first moromi.

When koji and a small amount of yeast are put together into a container (tank, earthenware jar etc.), the enzymes of koji saccharify starch into sugar, which yeast subsequently consumes to propagate itself. The first moromi for shochu distilling is proposed only from koji, yeast, and water without main ingredients. Lactic acid is used to prevent growth of harmful bacteria in sake brewing. In contrast, citric acid secreted from black or white koji mold inhibits the growth of harmful bacteria in shochu fermenting mash. When the first moromi is fermented around 30°C (86°F) for 3~8 days, yeast will grow well enough to ferment the main moromi properly.

**Main moromi:** Saccharification and fermentation

Second addition (Second shikomi) is the process that the main ingredients are added to the first moromi. This semi-finished product is referred to as the main moromi.

The type of pot distillation shochu is specified by the main ingredients added at this process such as rice, barley, sweet potato, or buckwheat. For example, when rice is added to the main moromi, it is termed rice shochu, likewise, the same applies for barley, sweet potato and buckwheat.

Steamed and cooled down main ingredients and water are added to the first moromi filled with fully grew yeast, and then the starch of main ingredients are saccharified into sugar, which yeast subsequently assimilates to ferment. The maximum temperature of the main moromi reaches 28–32°C (82–90°F). The fermenting temperature is much higher than that of sake and is vulnerable to potentially harmful bacteria. However relatively large amount of citric acid from koji and massively grew yeast protect fermenting mash from harmful bacteria. The fermentation lasts around two weeks and the alcohol content reaches approximately 14–20%.

The water content of sweet potato is so higher than any grains that the alcohol content of sweet potato shochu is lower than those of grain-based shochu.
How to distill shochu

Distillation

The distillation process follows the fermentation of main *moromi*. Main *moromi* which has completes fermentation is transferred into a pot still and is to be heated. The choice out of the two methods depends on the nature of ingredients used. For example, the direct injection method is employed for such a high viscous main *moromi* so as sweet potato not to be burnt and stuck on the inner surface of a pot still. As the temperature of the main *moromi* rises, the alcohol and other components come to evaporate. The vapor is cooled down while it passes through concentration column, lyne arm, cooling condenser and is collected as distillate.

![Pot still (left) and an overview of distillation (right)](image)

This distillation process makes spirit what it is, and is the decisively different feature from fermented liquor such as sake.

The various kinds of components included in the main *moromi* are separated and condensed due to their mutual differences in each boiling temperature or each volatility. For example, the boiling temperature of water is around 100°C (212°F) but that of alcohol is around 78°C (172°F). This means that alcohol will vaporize at the lower temperature than water. Therefore, the alcohol content is concentrated. This is why the alcohol content in distillate is higher than that of the main *moromi*. The alcohol content of the main *moromi* is usually around 14–20%, but due to distillation process it increases up to 37–43%.

Most whisky goes through two or more distillation processes. In contrast, pot distillation shochu is distilled only once single pot still. Thus, distillate collected in shochu production is likely to contain a small amount of substances in addition to alcohol, which makes characteristics of the main ingredients have more influence on the flavors of respective shochu. Therefore, the distillation process is one of the most important factors determining the flavor and quality of shochu.

Furthermore, each distillery has slightly different structure of a pot still, such as the height of concentration column or the angle of the lyne arm and etc. and slightly different strength of steam injection into the *moromi* each other, which are also important factors contributing to individual flavors of respective shochu.

The distillation methods of pot distillation shochu can be roughly classified into two methods: (1) atmospheric distillation and (2) vacuum distillation.

**Atmospheric distillation**

Atmospheric distillation is performed under atmospheric pressure. The main *moromi* is boiled at so high temperature that most of components easily transfer into the distillate. In addition, chemical reactions such as decomposition of the components and synthesis are facilitated at high temperature. Thus, new compounds are also generated and transferred to the distillate. Thus various kinds of components along with alcohol in main *moromi* are transferred into the distillate, so that the shochu features full of flavors and richness.

**Vacuum distillation**

Vacuum distillation is performed by decompressing the pressure inside the pot. For example, the pressure at the summit of Mt. Fuji is a little lower and water comes to the boil at around 87°C (189°F). Based on this principle, it is possible to distill at a lower temperature than 100°C.

When distillation is performed below(at less than) 100°C using vacuum pot still, its distillate contains less flavor substances which is hard to volatilize so that its finished shochu tastes lighter than shochu distilled using atmospheric pot still.

In the distilling of pot distillation shochu, whether each shochu distillery should use the atmospheric pot still or vacuum pot still depends on the diverse preferences of consumers today.

Furthermore, blending of shochu made with atmospheric and vacuum distillation methods has been used to retain both of individual flavors. Finally, improved vacuum distillation methods that distill under intermediate pressure of the atmospheric and vacuum pressure also exist.
Storage, Shipment

The distillate or genshu which is undiluted is stored in a storage tank to stabilize and harmonize its flavors after the filtration to remove oily components. Freshly distilled shochu usually has a pungent odor and a coarse, tingly sensation on the tongue. However, the maturing process during storage transforms these defects into the delicate and mellow flavor and taste.

The content of oily component derived from the ingredients is high, especially in atmospheric distillation. Once oxidized, these oily components in the distillate turn into unpleasant smelling components called “oxidized oil odor” through oxidative decomposition. Therefore, the oily components are removed by skimming or filtration, and precautions against oxidation are taken during storage.

Shochu is usually stored as genshu, fresh out of distillation without adding any ingredients or water. Thus, the alcohol content of genshu is 37–43%. However, the alcohol content is reduced to 20–25% by diluting genshu with water before the bottling and the shipment.

Most shochu are shipped after shorter period of maturation time than other kinds of spirits, which is one of characteristics of shochu. For example, the storage time for whisky or brandy in barrels is at least several years. In contrast, most shochu, except for special kinds of long matured shochu, is shipped within one year of distillation.

There are also cases in which shochu is stored in an earthenware jar or wooden barrel. When shochu is stored in a barrel, it can acquire deep aroma and taste due to elution of barrel components, slight amount of volatilization of shochu components and contact with oxygen. When shochu is stored in a earthenware jar for a long period of time, it can acquire mellow aroma and well-balanced flavor due to contact with oxygen and catalytic action of mineral constituents eluted from earthenware jar.

Continuous distillation shochu

One of the continuous distillation shochu, generally known as “white liquor”, belongs to the category of less than 36% alcohol content among liquors which are produced using continuous still.

Scottish Robert Stein invented the continuous still in 1826, and Irish Aeneas Coffey improved it in 1831. It is said that this facility was introduced into Japan and the making of continuous distillation shochu started around 1900.

The continuous distillation method can provide more refined pure alcohol due to continuous multi-stage distillation. Therefore, any characteristics of the ingredients are hardly detected in shochu distilled by this method. Waste molasses (liquid residue of sugar refining process) or maize (corn) are usually used as the main ingredients for continuous distillation shochu. Waste molasses are firstly diluted with hot water (ingredient liquid), secondly pasteurized, thirdly transferred to a tank, and finally added with a little yeast along with sterile aeration in order to grow yeast. After yeast has fully grown, it is moved to a larger fermentation tank with the rest ingredient liquid and the process of alcohol fermentation is started without ventilation. Fermentation is completed in 3–4 days, and then the raw fermented liquid with 10% of alcohol content is distilled by a continuous still up to the maximum level of nearly 97% alcohol, and finally is diluted with water and reduced to less than 36% alcohol. Almost all of the components except alcohol and water are virtually completely removed by distillation, so that continuous distillation shochu have a neutral character with slightly sweet flavor of alcohol and taste. Nowadays, crude alcohol is in advance produced by fermentation and rough distillation in Brazil or Southeast Asia and then is imported to Japan and is distilled using a highly sophisticated, continuous still to complete the quality continuous distillation shochu.

Mixed shochu

In order to gain a diverse range of aroma, there are also some product which is blend of pot distillation and continuous distillation shochu.

When pot distillation shochu is mixed with not less than 5% of its volume of continuous distillation shochu, this fact has to be indicated on the label, and vice versa. When the ratio of continuous distillation shochu is larger than that of pot distillation shochu, “continuous and pot distillation shochu admixture” or “ko-otsu konwa” has to be indicated, in the opposite case “pot and continuous distillation shochu admixture” or “otsu-ko konwa” has to be.
A couple, Rika and Mikio, come into the liquor store.

Rika: We would like to enjoy shochu, but we are confused because there are so many kinds of shochu to choose from.

Owner: That is because shochu is made from various kinds of ingredients. So, to fully appreciate shochu, you should begin by learning the differences of ingredients and that of distillation methods.

Rika: What kinds of ingredients are used for shochu distilling?

Owner: Some well-known main ingredients are sweet potatoes, barley, rice, brown sugar, buckwheat and sake cake and furthermore, Japanese chestnuts and “shiso” which is a Japanese aromatic herb like basil often used in Japanese cooking. Each kind of shochu has distinctive flavor and there are a lot of varieties.

Mikio: Can the flavor of the shochu which is even made from same ingredient vary due to the differences of distillation methods?

Owner: Yes. There are two distillation methods: (1) pot distillation and (2) continuous distillation. In addition, pot distillation method is classified into atmospheric and vacuum distillation. The atmospheric distillation shochu has clear distinctive aroma and rich flavor of ingredients, however the vacuum distillation shochu has mild distinctive aroma and light flavor of ingredients.

Mikio: Do the labels on shochu bottles show which distillation method was used?

Owner: Some of the shochu is produced by blending atmospheric with vacuum distillation shochu; and distilleries are not required to indicate the distillation method on the labels, actually, the indications are not always carried out. Still, you should be able to tell the difference between distinctive characteristics of shochu made from different distillation methods by tasting it. Would you like to try to taste some?

Rika: Wow! You’re right, I can tell that the shochu made by atmospheric distillation has a rich flavor and shochu made by vacuum distillation tastes light.

Mikio: What is the difference in flavor between pot distillation shochu and continuous distillation shochu?

Owner: Most of shochu made by pot distillation require only one time of distillation. But, shochu made by continuous distillation is equivalent to dozens of performances of distillation, so that it tastes light.

Rika: Hmm, I am little confused with different shochu served one after another. But, if we summarize what we’ve learned so far, the pot distillation shochu under atmospheric pressure has strong distinctive flavor which is derived from respective ingredients, and that under vacuum pressure has mild flavor, and finally continuous distillation shochu has clear light flavor.

Mikio: There is shochu with labeling that reads “otsu-ko konwa shochu.”

Owner: The continuous distillation shochu is also called “ko-rui shochu”, the pot distillation shochu is also called “otsu-rui shochu.” “Mixed shochu” is a blended product of ko-rui and otsu-rui of shochu. Based on the ratio of the two kinds in the mixture, shochu is called “ko-otsu konwa” or “otsu-ko konwa.” The first term indicates the larger ratio in the mixture.

Mikio: So, the mixture is complicated with the blend of shochu made from atmospheric and vacuum distillation or that of pot distillation and continuous distillation.

Owner: Yes, the mixtures have plenty of variety. There are also many kinds of ingredients—this is what makes shochu more interesting.

Rika: We often see shochu indicated “honkaku shochu,” which means “authentic shochu,” but which category does this product belong to?

Owner: Honkaku or authentic shochu belongs to pot distillation shochu. Shochu which fulfill certain requirements are granted to indicate “honkaku shochu” or “awamori.” Although the island of Kyushu is the center of honkaku shochu production in Japan, honkaku shochu is distilled throughout Japan. Awamori is produced primarily in Okinawa prefecture.

Mikio: I see that sweet potato and rice koji are indicated on the ingredients section of the label. Do you use rice when distilling sweet potato shochu?

Owner: Yes. It is easier to make koji on rice than on sweet potato. That is why they usually use rice, sometimes barley even for the distilling of sweet potato shochu. For example, the water content of sweet potato is higher than that of rice, so that it tends to lose its shape, which inhibits koji from growing sufficiently on it, and koji is unable to produce sufficient enzymes to break down starch. However, some shochu distilleries in Japan have overcome these difficulties by making koji on diced sweet potato and distilled shochu, which have different flavors from sweet potato shochu distilled using rice koji.
Mikio: Does this mean kōji has a large impact on the taste of shochu?
Owner: Main ingredients or distillation methods have large impacts on the taste of shochu. In contrast, taste of shochu does not rely very much on its kōji.
Rika: Do you use rice kōji for barley shochu distilling too?
Owner: They use rice kōji for barley shochu distilling in Ikishima island in Nagasaki prefecture, but use barley kōji for barley shochu distilling in Oita prefecture. Comparing the flavor of shochu made from various types of kōji is a fun and interesting experience.
Mikio: There are distilled alcoholic beverages such as whisky and brandy other than shochu on the market. How are they different from shochu?
Owner: The biggest difference is the ingredients used for distilling these spirits: whisky is made from malt, and brandy is made from fruits. According to the Liquor Tax Law, spirits made from malt (germinated barley) and fruits are not allowed to indicate “shochu.” Therefore, malt shochu and apple shochu cannot be existed.
Rika: I tend to associate whisky with a long maturation. Does pot distillation shochu require a long time for the maturation?
Owner: Most whiskies are usually matured at least 3 years before shipment to the market. But, as is usually the case with pot distillation shochu, it is shipped within one year.
Mikio: So, shochu is consumed early.
Owner: Yes, it’s one of the advantages of shochu.
Rika: Are there any shochu that is stored for a long period of time for maturation or aging?
Owner: It is a well-known vintage awamori, called “kusuz”, which is characterized by a sweet aroma, requires at least 3 years of maturation. There are also other vintage products that are matured in barrels or earthenware jars besides kusu, whose flavors vary during a long period of maturation time respectively.
Mikio: I have an image that whisky is usually served on the rocks with some light snacks at a bar in Japan. How is shochu served and entertained?
Owner: Whisky usually seems to be enjoyed only before or after a meal, however shochu is actually enjoyed during a meal. This merit is uncommon, and is almost unique to shochu among spirits throughout the world.
Rika: When I order a bottle of shochu or a glass of shochu at an izakaya, a casual Japanese gastropub, I am often asked, “How would you like to drink your shochu?” What is the best way to order my shochu at an izakaya?
Owner: Well, that is a very good question. But, this depends on what you prefer. You can enjoy full of flavor given off from the shochu with hot water, and enjoy soft flavor with cold water, and enjoy rich flavor on the rock or straight. How to drink shochu depends on the differences of ingredients used for respective shochu. It is enjoyable to actually try and quest for your own favorite way of drinking, or to change your way of drinking according as your own mood on each occasion. You seem to have different impressions even from the same shochu due to the above-mentioned ways of drinking. It is attractive for you to be able to change the way of drinking shochu among various options available.
Rika: I see—shochu is a drink worth experimenting with. What is the proper ratio of shochu to hot water or cold water?
Owner: The most common ratio of shochu to hot or cold water is 4:6, 5:5, or 6:4. But, I personally like to make shochu a little thinner than above-mentioned ratios because I think the original flavor of the shochu remains even with the light taste and I feel like drinking more and more. But, again, how to drink shochu is entirely up to you and your mood at that day.
Rika: How should we keep shochu?
Owner: Shochu is such a spirits which contains only small amount of components and is less changeable in quality. Still, you should keep shochu in a cool, dark place to avoid direct sunlight. Shochu can get cloudy if you store it in a refrigerator. This phenomenon occurs because a certain low temperature makes the oily component in the shochu insoluble. With a rise in temperature, the cloudiness should disappear and the shochu will become clear again.
Mikio: There is shochu that is originally cloudy.
Owner: Originally cloudy shochu is usually high in oily components. Cloudy shochu is usually pot distillation shochu, and this cloudiness is what makes it interesting. Pot distillation shochu is usually distilled only once, which leaves relatively strong original flavors of ingredients together with high content of oily components. Pot distillation shochu tastes rich due to high content of oily components, however the oily components will cause such stale odor as oily odor due to its oxidation during long time of storage. So, before the technology to remove oily content in shochu was invented, shochu could not be stored so long, that shochu distillery shipped it within one year of production date. Recently some shochu distilleries have intentionally started making shochu with high content of oily components. Unlike whisky, newly distilled shochu can be enjoyed right away—it’s a characteristic of shochu. Unlike whiskey, newly distilled shochu can be enjoyed within a few months after distillation, which is one of the merits of shochu.
Rika: Thank you very much for your lecture regarding shochu. I would like to buy several kinds of shochu and taste and evaluate the differences in flavor between them.
Owner: Please enjoy shopping.
How to enjoy shochu

The alcohol content of shochu is usually 20–43%. Therefore, shochu is usually diluted with water to enjoy. You can change the original flavor of shochu to your preferred flavor by diluting shochu with hot water, cold water, or fruit juice. The various ways of drinking shochu are the feature of shochu and arrange the pleasure of shochu drinking together with the flavor of shochu.

How to drink

Shochu with hot water
As I above-mentioned, the ratio of hot water to shochu is generally 4:6, 5:5, or 6:4. When the temperature of shochu is high after dilution with hot water, the aroma components are easier to evaporate. This enhances the aroma of shochu. In addition, the amount of alcohol vaporization increases and the stimulatingly sweet aroma of alcohol become sharper.

Shochu with cold water
How to make shochu with cold water is that firstly several pieces of ice are put into a glass, secondly aproper volume of shochu is poured into the glass, thirdly the glass is filled up with water. Finally the diluted shochu with cold water is mixed up with muddler. The alcohol content of shochu mixed with water comes to around 10–15%. The aroma of shochu becomes gentle in shochu with cold water. You’ll enjoy the harmony of mild taste and cold, refreshing exhalation with a shochu with cold water.

Shochu highball / shochu-based cocktail
A shochu highball is made by mixing shochu with soda and several preferred non-alcoholic beverages such as juice, and oolong tea. It is recommended that you mix pot distillation shochu with a non-alcoholic beverage of relatively rich flavor. There can be a case that the flavor of alcohol is not always easy to perceive depending on the nature of non-alcoholic beverage mixed with shochu, so that caution should be taken not to drink the shochu too much, and only after knowing its alcohol content, shochu can be enjoyed.

Shochu and food pairing
Any shochu never has strong flavor except for several ones. Therefore, it is unlikely for you to perceive any conflicting flavors between shochu and food inside your mouth. Actually, shochu can wash off greasy feeling left inside your mouth and refresh your mouth, which helps you appreciate the subtle flavor of your dish.

Sobering up
Some people point out that the favorable experience of sobering up with shochu. Although the authenticity of this experience is not clear, it is generally agreed that drinking appropriate amount of shochu with a meal avoids the discomfort associated with intoxication. The proper way of drinking shochu may precede the sobering experience.

Shochu tasting
The tasting (sensory evaluation) method of shochu is to evaluate color, aroma and flavor, which is the same as other alcoholic beverages. Color is evaluated by both extents of turbidity and coloring, and aroma is evaluated by harmonization of distinctive aroma derived from ingredients, and flavor is evaluated by both extents of mildness and moderate sweetness. Once you are adept at shochu tasting, please try to evaluate the balance between aroma and flavor.

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