

Incorporated Foundation Hakushika Memorial Museum of Sake (Hakushika Sake Museum)

Prospectus of Foundation

Sake brewing in Nishinomiya has a long history, which dates back to the Muromachi period (1336-1573). A regent and a scholar of the Muromachi period named Ichijō Kaneyoshi praised the delicious sake of Nishinomiya in his collection of essays called *Sekiso-ōrai*. This indicates that Nishinomiya has been well-known for sake brewing since at least that time. In the 17th century a combination of political measures by the Edo Shōgunate, the development of seagoing vessels devoted entirely to the transport of sake casks called *taru kaisen* and the discovery of underground water which was well-suited for sake brewing called *Miyamizu*, caused sake brewing in Nishinomiya to flourish and become widely known as the major sake brewing region in Japan and it has remained so ever since.

After sake brewing had become the main industry of Nishinomiya, the industry contributed to the financial and cultural development of the area. Before WW II, the scenery of large sake brewery buildings called *sengoku-gura* standing in long rows solidified Nishinomiya's image as the town of sake brewing. During the war, however, most of the brewery buildings were burnt down. Moreover, recent socio-economic turbulence has affected the rise and decline of the sake industry, and on top of that, modernization of sake brewing has made it possible to brew sake in all seasons. Greater aspects of the traditional sake brewing in Nishinomiya, such as the method of sake brewing in winter called *kanzukuri*, is being lost.

In response, the Incorporated Foundation Hakushika Memorial Museum of Sake (Hakushika Sake Museum) will be established in order to so as to permanently preserve the history of sake for future generations. Its creation was decided upon after receiving a request from the Nishinomiya city government, which was and is keenly aware of the importance of handing down the history of sake brewing as a cultural heritage of Japan. The purpose of its establishment is to preserve, to hand down, to study and to exhibit the old buildings which are important and highly valued architectural history – the brick-built sake brewery (completed on July 8, 1892), the western style house (completed on May 31, 1888), the wooden store building (completed on July 10, 1894). It is also crucial to preserve the enormous amount of brewing tools for Nada sake (all the tools are the important cultural properties of Hyogo Prefecture and Nishinomiya City), as well as the historical documents and works of art related to sake and the traditional sake brewing. Donations were made by Tatsuuma Yoshio, the fourteenth president of Tatsuuma-Honke Brewing Co., Ltd. and the company itself in order to fund the museum.

In addition to that, the enormous amount of works in regard to cherry blossom trees collected by the late Mr. Sasabe Shintarō and which were donated to Nishinomiya at his bequest - calligraphic works and paintings, documents, ceramics, tools for taking care of cherry blossom trees, et al. – will be entrusted to our museum by Nishinomiya City after its establishment. They will also be preserved, studied and exhibited in our museum.

Incorporated Foundation Hakushika Memorial Museum of Sake (Hakushika Sake Museum)

Foundation Representative Akio Tatsuuma