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TONIGHT, HAVE A GLASS

# 今宵は、一献傾けて

What do you like to drink? Beer, wine, whiskey, or sake?

お酒は何が好きですか。ビール、ワイン、ウイスキー、それとも日本酒？

I don't drink that much, but I like all kinds of alcohol. I am especially addicted to sake these days. When I get a rare brand of sake that I can rarely find, I get excited just imagining how it tastes.

私はそれほど量は飲みませんが、どのお酒も好き。とくに最近はまっているのは日本酒です。めったに出会えない希少な銘柄のお酒が手に入ったときは、どんな味わいなのかを想像するだけでワクワクします。

*Daiginjo* with its gorgeous aroma, *ginjo* with its elegant and refreshing taste, *junmai* with its deep flavor, *honjozo* with its refreshing taste, and sparkling sake with its effervescent type..... all have their own merits, so choose the one that best suits your mood and cuisine of the day.

華やかな香りの大吟醸、上品で爽やかな吟醸、重みのある純米、すっきりとした本醸造、発泡タイプのスパークリング日本酒……それぞれ良さがありますので、その日の気分やお料理に合わせて選びます。





製麹  
せいぎく  
Koji Making



酒米  
さかまい  
Sake rice

Good sake is always accompanied by good food. On cold days, hot sake goes great with pot dishes or served at room temperature with *sashimi*. Well-chilled dry *ginjo-shu* goes well with *tempura*. One of the charms of sake is that it can be enjoyed at a variety of temperatures, and that it can be paired with a variety of dishes, not just Japanese cuisine.

美味しいお酒に美味しいお料理はつきものです。寒い日ならお鍋に熱燗は最高ですし、そのまま常温でお刺身と一緒にいただくのもいい。キーンと冷やした辛口の吟醸酒は天ぷらによく合います。日本酒は、こうしたさまざまな温度で楽しめること、さらに、和食に限らずいろいろなお料理に合わせられることも魅力のひとつです。

Chef Joel ROBUCHON, who has received more Michelin stars than any other chef in France, has recently been gaining recognition overseas. He advocates the marriage of French cuisine and sake, and has been wowing food connoisseurs at his restaurants.

最近では海外での認知度も高まり、フランスで最もたくさんミシュランの星を獲得しているシェフ、ジョエル・ロブションは、フランス料理と日本酒のマリアージュを提唱し、レストランで食通たちをうならせているのだとか。

The flavor and aroma also depend on the sake container. There are various types of drinking vessels, such as *tokkuri* (ceramic sake bottles), *ochoko* (very small sake cups), crafts, “*guinomi* (sake cups slightly bigger than *ochoko*)” made by ceramic artists, glass sake cups, and wine glasses. Sake served in a wide-mouthed cup will allow you to enjoy the soft aroma of the sake.

また、味わいや香りは酒器によっても変わります。陶磁器の徳利やお猪口、工芸品、陶芸作家の手による「ぐい呑み」、ガラス製盃、ワイングラスなど、酒器もさまざま。口の大きく開いた器でいただければ、ふんわりと香りが立ちのぼるのを楽しめます。

Sake is made from sake rice (rice varieties for sake brewing), carefully selected clean water, and rice koji. There are about 100 varieties of sake rice used as raw materials, with Yamada-Nishiki at the top of the list. In recent years, ways have been created to grow the rice through contract farmers and self cultivating it.

日本酒は、酒米（酒造り用の米）と厳選されたきれいな水、米麹で造られます。原料となる酒米は、山田錦を筆頭に100品種ほどあり、近年では契約農家に栽培してもらったり自家栽培したりと工夫を凝らしています。

The sake brewing process, which involves four stages of rice polishing, steaming, brewing (fermentation), and pressing over a long period of time, can be described as a master craftsman's art. Sake brewers are passionate about sake brewing, and they devote themselves to making the best sake possible, cherishing the life of each grain of rice. Fermentation is encouraged in several stages, and the temperature and humidity are thoroughly controlled, and the time is managed down to the second. When you know the time, effort, experience, and wisdom that goes into making this product, the taste is doubled.

精米、蒸し、仕込み（発酵）、压榨という4段階の工程を、長い月日をかけて行う日本酒造りは、匠の技と

言えるでしょう。造り手たちは、酒造りに情熱を注ぎ、  
 米一粒一粒の命を大切に、良いものを造ろうと精魂  
 傾けています。何段階にも分けて発酵を促し、徹底し  
 た温度・湿度管理、秒単位での時間管理など、細心  
 の心配り・目配りをしています。その手間と時間と経験  
 値と叡智を知ると、美味しさも倍増です。

In Japan's oldest historical book, Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters), there is a story about a man who was given sake to kill the Yamata-no-orochi. The first documented brewing of sake using *koji* first appeared in the "Harima-no-kuni-fudoki" (written between the years of 713-715), a topography of the area around present-day Hyogo Prefecture. In the Nara period (8th century), the national government established the office of *miki no tsukasa*, or "sake brewer," to brew sake for the imperial court. In the Heian period (8th-12th century), temples, shrines, and private individuals began to brew sake, and it was during the Muromachi period (14th-16th century) that full-fledged sake breweries appeared on the scene. From that time on, the shogunate began imposing taxes on sake.

日本最古の歴史書「古事記」には、ヤマタノオロチを退治するのに酒を飲ませたという話が出てきます。麴を使った酒造りが初めて文献に登場したのは、今の兵庫県辺りの地誌である「播磨国風土記」(713～715年)。

奈良時代(8世紀)には国が造酒司という役所を設置し、朝廷に献上する酒を造らせていました。平安時代(8～12世紀)になると寺院や神社、民間でも酒造りが始まり、本格的な酒屋が登場したのは室町時代(14～16世紀)。その頃から幕府は酒に税金を課すうになりました。

During the Edo period (17th to 19th century), "kan-brewing" began, in which sake was brewed during the winter, enabling a stable supply of sake. It was also around this time that a system was introduced in which the owner of a sake brewery was called *kuramoto* and a group of craftsmen called *kurabito* worked under the supervision of a *touji* who managed the entire brewing process. In the Meiji era (19th to 20th century), sake brewing began to make full use of scientific knowledge, and a national research institute was established for the future of sake. It was not until World War II that the production and sale of sake was licensed, a system that continues to this day.

江戸時代(17～19世紀)には、冬に醸造する「寒仕込み」が始まったことから、お酒を安定供給できるようになりました。酒蔵のオーナーを蔵元と呼び、全工程を管理する杜氏を長として、蔵人と呼ばれる職人たちが働く体制になったのもこの頃です。明治時代(19～

山田錦の稲穂  
 Yamada Nishiki's ear of rice

本社蔵  
 Main Brewery





20世紀)になると科学的知識を駆使した酒造りが行われるようになり、日本酒の未来のための国立研究機関もできました。酒の製造・販売が免許制になったのは第二次世界大戦のときからで、これは現在も続いています。

Sake, by the way, has been associated with Shinto rituals since ancient times because of its enjoyment of nature's bounty. Sake dedicated to the gods is called "omiki," and is an integral part of festivals. It is also used at the ground-breaking ceremony to pray for safety when building a house. Sake is still indispensable in important ceremonies, such as the *sansankudo* ceremony (the exchanging of sake cups by the bride and groom to solidify their union) held at a shrine.

ところで、日本酒は自然の恵みを楽しむことから、古来、神事と結びついてきました。神様に奉納するお酒を「御神酒」と言い、祭りにはつきものですし、家建てるときに安全祈願を願う行う地鎮祭でも用います。神社での挙式では三三九度を交わす(新郎新婦が盃を交わして契りを結ぶ)など、今も重要な儀式にお酒は欠かせません。

Sake brewing itself is also sacred, and many *kurabito* pray to a Shinto altar every morning before starting work, with some breweries having a small shrine. Shinto priests perform rituals, and the *koji-muro*, is regarded as an inviolable place, and a sacred rope is tied around it.

酒造り自体も神聖なもので、毎朝、神棚に手を合わせながら作業に入る蔵人も多く、社を設置している蔵もあります。神職が儀式を執り行い、「麴室」を不可侵な場所と見なして、しめ縄を張ったりします。

Sake is attracting attention from around the world, but the number of sake breweries, which was about 7,000 at its peak, has declined to about 1,400 today. As the number of alcohol options has increased and the trend has shifted, sake consumption has decreased by one-third. However, exports are growing and have reached record highs for 12 consecutive years. Sake's popularity overseas is on the rise, with sake competitions being held in many parts of the world.

世界から注目される日本酒ですが、最盛期に約7千あった酒蔵が、現在は約1,400に減少。アルコールの選択肢が増えトレンドが移り変わり、日本酒の消費量は3分の1に減っています。ただ輸出は伸びており、12年連続で過去最高を更新しています。世界各地でコンクールが開催されるなど、海外での人気はうなぎのぼりです。

Sake breweries are relentlessly striving to improve Japan's unique brews, which are rooted in the region and bring delicate and complex flavors to the market. We want as many people as possible to realize the goodness of sake, to taste it, and to keep Japanese culture alive. And we hope that we can continue to preserve Japanese culture.

「 麴 作りの準備  
Preparation for making *koji* 」

「 発酵管理  
Fermentation Management 」



地域に根差した繊細で複雑な味わいをもたらしてくれる日本独  
自の醸造酒をより良いものにしようと、酒蔵は生き残りをかけ  
て、あくなき挑戦を続けています。1人でも多くの人に日本酒  
の良さに気づいてほしい。味わってみてほしい。そして、日本文  
化を守り続けることができると願います。

「 完成した酒  
Completed Sake  
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