



GEKKEIKAN SAKE
KYOTO SINCE 1637



Welcome to Fushimi, the home of sake

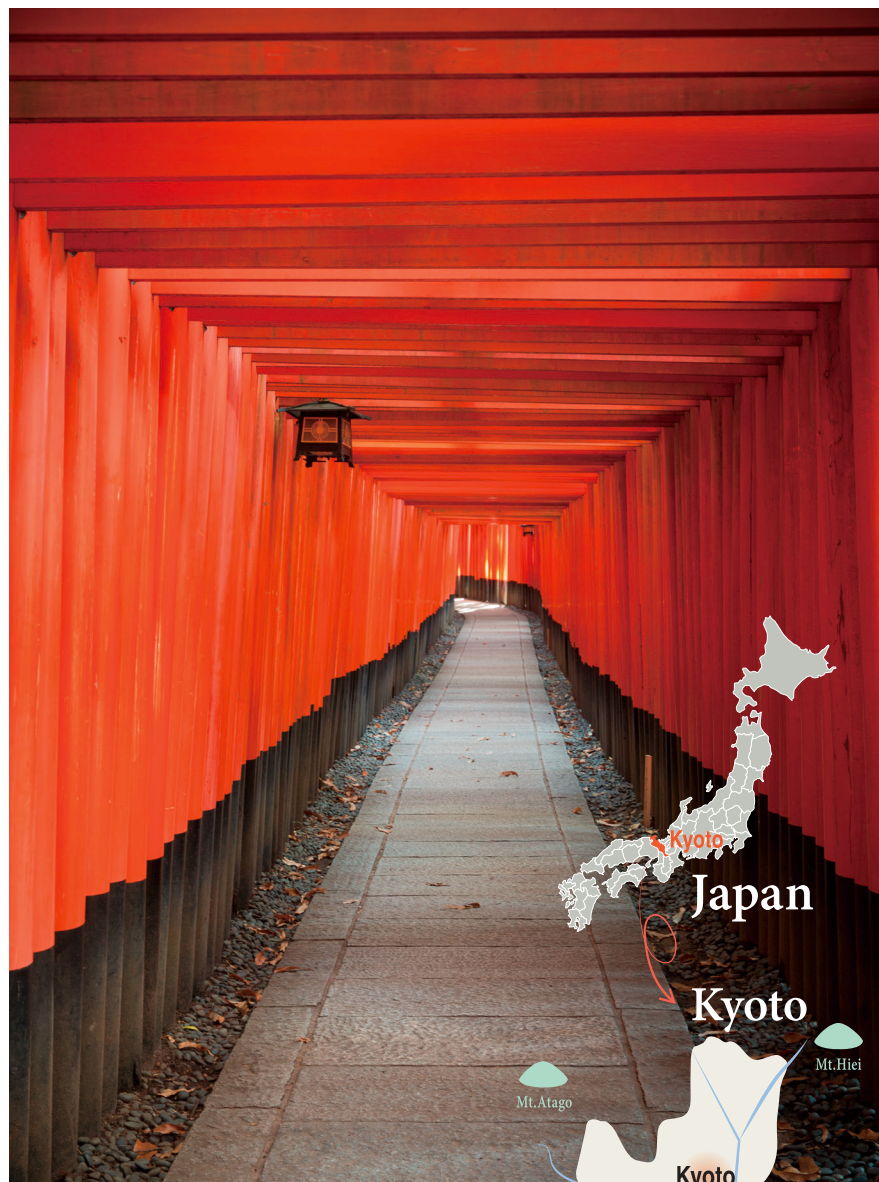
The suburb of Kyoto, located just seven kilometres south of the Kyoto city center, is one of the world's most famous *sake* producing areas. Blessed with a pleasant natural environment and some of Japan's highest quality water, the town retains its quiet, dignified traditional atmosphere even to this day.

Fushimi is also known as the home of one of Japan's most well-known sightseeing locations. The Fushimi Inari Shrine was founded in the year 711 on the hills to the east of the town, and has drawn visitors to its thousands of vermillion *torii* gates ever since.

When the area was first settled a hundreds of years ago, Fushimi was planned as a future national capital, and featured a magnificent castle, residences for the aristocracy, wide boulevards and residential areas. In addition, a river transportation system was developed to promote local trade. This ushered in an era of great prosperity for Fushimi. The town flourished, and some remnants of this Golden Age can still be found in this area.

Since the seventeenth century, sake brewing has been Fushimi's principal industry and the lifeblood of the town. The area is blessed with quality water, an ideal brewing climate and convenient transport links, and sake brewed here has long been beloved all over Japan and around the world.

Fushimi is now a something of a gourmet travel destination, not only for its ties to authentic sake, but also its Michelin-starred restaurant, historic streetscapes, and a pure, tangible passion for food and drink. It helps that the town is conveniently located in the centre of the Kansai region, accessible in fifteen minutes from



Kyoto Station or the city center, and only forty minutes from Osaka.

Fushimi now annually welcomes around eight million visitors from all over the world, and is becoming ever more famous. It's a place to experience the harmony between the traditional and the modern, the natural and the built, and the passionate and the serene.

Origins of the brewery

In 794 the Imperial Japanese capital Heiankyo was founded, laid out on a square grid design modelled after the Chinese capital city of Chang'an. In the center of the city stands the magnificent Imperial Palace, locus of national power and site of numerous ceremonies and rituals. Many of these ceremonies were deeply related with sake and brewing industry grew up in the city in order to supply capital with sake. At its peak in the fifteenth century, Kyoto was home to some 342 sake breweries, some of them were already located in Fushimi.

The company known today as Gekkeikan was founded in 1637 by Jiemon Okura, who named his brewery *Kasagiya* after his hometown of Kasagi in southern Kyoto. The house speciality sake he named *Tama no Izumi*, meaning 'jewel of the (water) spring.' When Gekkeikan was founded in the middle of the seventeenth century, the Fushimi area boasted a total of 83 breweries, producing about 2.7 million liters of sake annually.

Trials and successes

However, the early days of the company were not always easy. At the time, Fushimi was out of



favor with those in power, and its produce was rejected from market distribution. Logistically too, Fushimi was at a disadvantage, located inland and away



from then-predominant sea transport. Sake had to be slowly transported by road, which meant a less-than-fresh product hurt the brand's image. At its peak, Fushimi had been home to over 80 sake breweries, but by the 1860's, Gekkeikan was one of only two remaining.

But times change, and as the privileges and prejudices of the past faded, laws were changed to allow freer trade. At the same time, development and modernization of transportation networks cut delivery times and enabled breweries to supply sake of higher quality. The industry began to recover, and a century later Fushimi entered its second Golden Age, with over fifty sake breweries operating by the 1970's.

Today, sake is enjoyed all over the world, and the number of varieties and styles has exploded to meet changes in consumers' cultures and tastes. Premium *ginjo* sake, unpasteurised *namazake*, and sparkling sake have all become popular

over the past twenty years. With Japanese cuisine now a worldwide phenomenon, Fushimi's sake makers are dreaming of an even brighter future for their products.

An abundant source

Fushimi is located at the southern end of the Kyoto Basin, at the lowest elevation in Kyoto. Water flows from the surrounding mountains and filters through local soil and rock, where it absorbs minerals. This water is medium-hard in quality, and has the ideal balance of minerals for brewing sake. The Kyoto Basin sits above an vast underground reservoir said to extend over almost 400 square kilometers, to a depth of 900 metres. This enormous space holds an incredible 21 billion kiloliters of water. It's this plentiful underground well that has sustained sake brewing in Fushimi for centuries, and will continue to do so long into the future.

Gekkeikan's history

Edo Era Origins



1637

Gekkeikan founded by Jiemon Okura as Kasagiya, with *Tama no Izumi* its primary sake label. Kasagiya grows as a local brewery, increasing production from 148 *koku* in 1738 to 548 *koku* in 1869.

Meiji Era Innovations

1889

Tokaido Railway begins operation, opening up transport routes across Japan.

1902

Kasagiya sake is first exported to Hawaii, its first overseas market.

1905

The company changes its brand name to Gekkeikan, meaning 'laurel wreath'- a symbol of victory and glory.



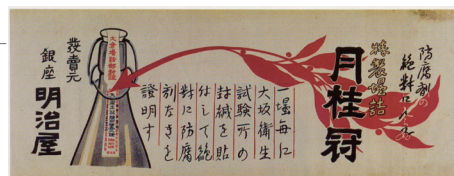
1909

The Okura Sake Brewing Research Institute (now known as the Gekkeikan General Research Institute) is established to further brewing technology.

1911

Gekkeikan is the first brewery in the industry to sell preservative-free bottled sake.

Around this time Gekkeikan updated its accounting system, and the company made steady profits. Annual production volume grew from 500 *koku* to 50,000 *koku* (equivalent to 9 million liters).



1 *koku* = 180 liters

Gekkeikan's history

20th Century Developments

1919

Gekkeikan officially appointed as supplier to the Japanese Imperial Household.

1931

In another industry first, Gekkeikan opens its glass bottle filling plant.



1961

Completion of the Otegura Brewing Plant, Japan's first all season sake-brewing facility.



Growing the Brand

1984

Gekkeikan is invited to join Henokiens, a worldwide association of companies who have been continuously operating and remain family-owned for 200 years or more, and whose descendants still operate at management level.



1987

On the occasion of the company's 350th anniversary Okura Sake Company, Ltd. is officially renamed as Gekkeikan Sake Company, Ltd.

1989

The company establishes a foreign based subsidiary, Gekkeikan Sake (USA), Inc.



2011

Gekkeikan (Shanghai) Trading Co., Ltd. is established.

2017

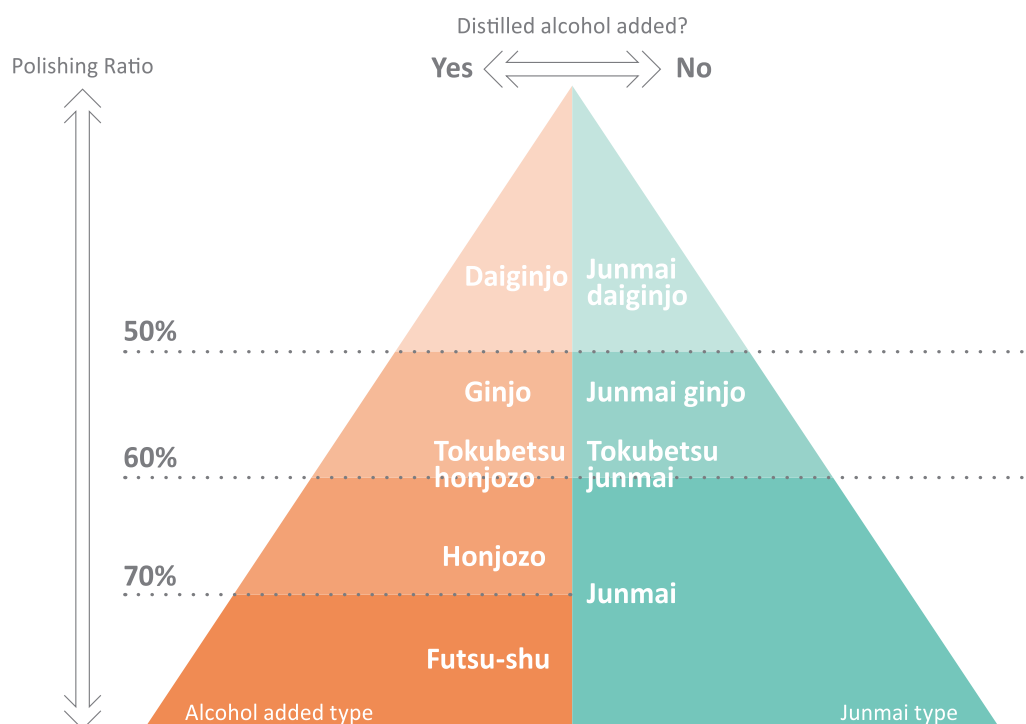
Gekkeikan celebrates its 380th anniversary.



Through technical innovations, a series of industry firsts, dedication to quality and sheer hard work, Gekkeikan has established a leading position. With its strategic entry into overseas markets, Gekkeikan is now known and loved in over than fifty countries, and is one of the world's top names in sake.

Types and grades of sake

► 9 categories of sake



Designation	Ingredients	Seimai-buai	Designation	Ingredients	Seimai-buai
Daiginjo*	rice, koji, alcohol	up to 50%	Junmai daiginjo*	rice, koji	up to 50%
Ginjo*		up to 60%	Junmai ginjo*		up to 60%
Tokubetsu honjozo		60% or special process	Tokubetsu junmai		60% or special process
Honjozo		up to 70%	Junmai		—

**Ginjo-zukuri*: usually refers to the process of using rice with a low *seimai-buai* (highly polished rice) and cold-temperature fermentation to create the characteristic fragrance of *ginjo-shu*.

► Other speciality categories

Designation	Other features	Designation	Other features
Namazake	Sake that has not been pasteurized.	Nigorizake	Roughly filtered sake.
Namachozo	Sake that has been pasteurized just once, after storage in bulk.	Koshu	Sake that has been stored and aged in a brewery at least one year.
Taruzake	Sake that has been stored in Japanese cedar barrels.	Sparkling Sake	Sake naturally carbonated in tank or bottles, or with gas injection at bottling.

The brewing process

