七本鎗 在

滋賀県 長浜 木之本

Shichihonyari ZAI

Kinomoto Nagahama, Shiga



SAKÉ PASSION & CIE

Shichihonyari / Tomita Shuzo

—Nature, History, and Culture of Nagahama, Shiga—

1． History

One of the oldest brewery in Japan.
Over 480 years of History, Tradition, and Craftsmanship.

For centuries, generations of Japanese master brewers pursued a singular ideal: to create a sake that embodies the natural depth and complexity of rice while maintaining elegance, balance, and purity. Such a sake would not dominate the dining table but rather elevate and harmonize with Japan's finest cuisine.

At Tomita Shuzo, this pursuit continues today.

Founded more than 480 years ago in the Muromachi period (around 1336 to 1573), Tomita Shuzo is one of Japan's oldest surviving sake breweries. Located in Kinomoto, a historic town in northern Shiga Prefecture, the brewery stands in a region long celebrated for its rich agricultural heritage, culinary culture, and strategic importance as a crossroads connecting Kyoto, eastern Japan, and the Hokuriku region. During the Edo period, Kinomoto flourished as a major post town along the Hokkoku Kaido highway, welcoming feudal lords, merchants, and travelers from across the country. At the center of this community, Tomita Shuzo became deeply woven into the region's economic, cultural, and social life. The brewery's home region, known as Kohoku, has long attracted artists, intellectuals, and gastronomes. Among them was the celebrated gourmet and ceramic artist Kitaoji Rosanjin, who spent considerable time in Kinomoto. The calligraphy that still appears on Shichihonyari bottle today was created by Rosanjin himself. While modern sake often emphasizes expressive aromatics and pronounced sweetness, Shichihonyari follows a different path. Its philosophy is rooted in the belief that great sake should reveal the character of rice, complement food naturally, and gain depth through time rather than immediate impact. In 2002, 15th generation brewer Yasunobu Tomita returned to the family brewery with a vision: to pursue what he considered the highest expression of traditional Japanese sake. More than twenty years later, Shichihonyari has become one of the most respected names in Japan's traditional sake movement, recognized for its unwavering commitment to authenticity, balance, and gastronomic excellence.











Lake Biwa

七本鎗 “在”

Shichihonyari “ZAI”

SAKÉ PASSION Exclusive Brand

A new series brewed by the 15th-generation Yasunobu Tomita to propose a question to the world.

Pursuing to **“The ultimate local sake = expresses regional culture”**, made exclusively from local grown rice and pure water source, and brewed with the aim of creating **“The ultimate expression of the classic style”**, using only traditional techniques dating back to the Muromachi period(1336-1573).

Where the brewery is located, northern region of Lake Biwa—known as ‘Kohoku area’— is a historically renowned prime rice-growing area, blessed with ideal conditions: abundant sunshine, significant temperature variations between morning and evening and in the depths of winter, and mineral-rich pure water from upstream sources. ‘Shichihonyari Zai’ is brewed exclusively from ‘Shiga Asahi’, an indigenous rice variety with full of vitality and flavor, cultivated using pesticide-free or strictly reduced-pesticide methods by three passionate young local farmers. By brewing the region’s finest ingredients using only historical and traditional brewing techniques, based on the idea that dedicate to express the region’s character in an overwhelming manner, the brewery seeks to rediscover the true ‘essence of local sake’.

The name ‘在 Zai’ derives from the spirit and etiquette of the tea ceremony, to which Yasunobu is culturally devoted; meanwhile, it also encompasses the many other meanings he has imbued into the brewing of ‘Zai’. One stems from the exclusive use of ‘Shiga Asahi’ sake rice. It is the ‘Zai’ derived from ‘indigenous varieties’. Another is the ‘Zai’ derived from the ‘way of being’—the resilient of the brewery as an institution long established in Kohoku region, and as a community alongside local farmers and residents.



Launching in spring 2026

「真」 Pesticide-Free Yagura Mai Kimoto Kioke ’24

「行」 Pesticide-Free Dual-Farm Rice Kimoto ’24

「草」 Low-Pesticide Triple-Farm Rice Sokujo Moto BY 24（BY 24 is Pesticide-Free）

“真Shin”, “行Gyo”, and “草So” , a collections inspired by the spirit of tea ceremony.

At its core lies the philosophy of traditional tea ceremony “一期一会Ichigo Ichie”—treasuring each encounter as a once-in-a-lifetime moment. There exists a value within the tea ceremony that refines one‘s aesthetic sensibility by selecting what is most appropriate for the moment and one’s fellow guests. Each expression of “ZAI” is made to be enjoyed in company with those who matter most.

“真Shin” : The most flawless, formal and dignified presence

“行Gyo” : A slightly relaxed and lively presence, embodying a sense of balance and movement.

“草So” : A spirit that evokes sincerity towards others even within a relaxed setting—the essence of ”侘びwabi”







2． People and Philosophy

15th generation, Yasunobu's Commitment

Born as the youngest of three children in the Tomita family, Yasunobu Tomita graduated from a university in Kyoto before beginning his career in Tokyo, where he gained experience in the sales and marketing of shochu and wine. Seeking a broader understanding of the world's great beverage cultures, he traveled extensively throughout Europe and North America, visiting wineries and distilleries, and learning from their traditions and philosophies. In 2002, he returned to his hometown and succeeded the family brewery, carrying forward a legacy that spans nearly five centuries. Tomita's brewing philosophy is rooted in a deep pride in the culture of "Kohoku", the northern region of Lake Biwa. Through sake, he strives to express the richness of local agriculture, the character of the land, and the culinary traditions that have been cultivated in the region over generations. He is fully aware that producing a more contemporary style of sake—characterized by pronounced aromatics and immediate appeal—might offer greater commercial advantages in today's market. Yet he has chosen a different path. Guided by a profound respect for his homeland, its people, and its cultural heritage, he remains unwavering in his commitment to traditional brewing methods and values. The culture of Kohoku has long been shaped by Buddhism, the philosophy of Japan's warrior class, and the refined aesthetics of the tea ceremony. Tomita has devoted himself to the study of these traditions, particularly the Japanese tea ceremony, whose principles continue to influence his vision of sake.



His Vision of "True" Local Sake

Before returning to the family brewery, Yasunobu traveled extensively through Europe and North America, visiting wineries and distilleries that expressed the identity of their regions through what they produced. He was deeply inspired by how these beverages reflected the land, culture, history, and people from which they came. That experience led him to a simple conviction: sake, too, should serve as an expression of place.
For Yasunobu, a true local sake is one that embodies the climate, history, and culture of its region. This philosophy is guided by three commitments.



Commitment to Local Ingredients
Using only rice grown in Shiga Prefecture, Yasunobu works closely with local farmers to cultivate rice that reflects the character of the region. For "Zai在" series, rice is sourced exclusively from three dedicated local farmers.



Commitment to Traditional Brewing
Rather than pursuing modern trends, Yasunobu embraces traditional brewing methods. Rice is polished only to the extent necessary, preserving its natural character and complexity, while each sake is crafted to complement the local culinary culture.



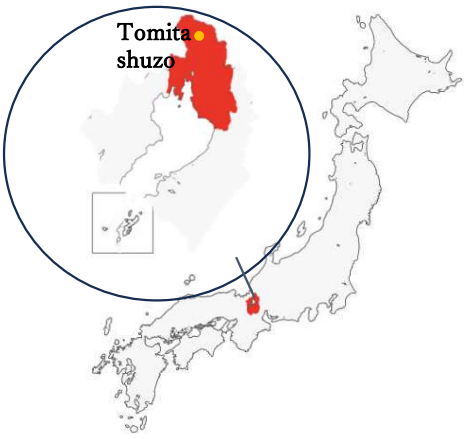
Commitment to Passing on Tradition
Yasunobu believes that tradition remains only through continual dedication and challenge. His ongoing efforts include Kimoto brewing, the use of traditional kioke wooden vats, pesticide-free rice cultivation, and the challenge for aging sake.

3． Nature・History・Culture of Nagahama, Shiga

Nagahama: Where the Presence of Numerous powerful figures of Japan Remains

—A land the finest cuisine and sake flourished, cherished by the powerful figures of the time —

For centuries, the Kohoku region of northern Lake Biwa occupied a strategically important position at the crossroads between eastern Japan and the Hokuriku region. Blessed with fertile land, abundant water resources, and the moderating influence of Lake Biwa, it developed into one of Japan's most productive agricultural areas. Kohoku also served as a vital transportation hub. Through the waterways of Lake Biwa, goods could be carried to Kyoto, the imperial capital, and further downstream to Osaka, one of Japan's great centers of commerce. This geographical advantage attracted many of the most powerful figures in Japanese history. The region preserves the legacy of the Azai Nagamasa, who rose to prominence here during the Sengoku period; Oda Nobunaga, who regarded control of the area as essential to his unification campaign; Toyotomi Hideyoshi and his Nagahama Castle; and Ishida Mitsunari, a key leader of the Western Army at the Battle of Sekigahara. Their presence remains woven into the landscape of Kohoku today.




Lake Yogo

‘The heartland larder of historic capital Kyoto, due to its waterways on Lake Biwa and overland routes; Hokkoku Kaidō

The Kohoku region developed as a strategic crossroads linking Hokuriku area, the Tokaido corridor, toward to Kyoto, and Osaka. Supported by the waterways of Lake Biwa, it flourished as an important center for transportation and trade.
Blessed with fertile farmland and abundant natural resources, the region became known for its exceptional ingredients, including premium Ōmi-rice, freshwater delicacies from Lake Biwa, duck, and seafood transported inland from the Sea of Japan. For centuries, these resources helped support the flourish of culinary culture of Kyoto and Osaka.
Located in the post town of Kinomoto along the historic Hokkoku Kaido route, Tomita Shuzo has long been immersed in this rich food culture. It is this environment that shaped the brewery's pursuit of a refined, classic style of sake—one crafted to accompany and elevate the finest traditions of Japanese cuisine.



Battle of Shizugatake

~A turning point in Japanese History~

The name Shichihonyari (“Seven Spears”) originates from the Battle of Shizugatake, fought in Nagahama in 1583. Widely regarded as a decisive turning point in Japanese history, the battle helped pave the way for the unification of Japan under Toyotomi Hideyoshi following the turmoil that followed the death of Oda Nobunaga. After the battle, seven warriors whose bravery contributed to Hideyoshi’s victory were celebrated as the “Seven Spears of Shizugatake.” Their legacy lives on in the name Shichihonyari, the flagship sake of Tomita Shuzo. The battle took place just forty-nine years after the Tomita family began brewing sake in Kinomoto. As one of Japan’s oldest surviving breweries, Tomita Shuzo carries a history that has unfolded alongside many of the defining events of the nation’s past.



Culinary Cradled by Lake Biwa’s Blessings

~Fermented delicacies unlike any other~

Blessed by the waters of Lake Biwa and shaped by generations of ingenuity in preserving food through snowy winters, the Kohoku region developed a unique culture of fermentation. The exchange of people, goods, and ideas along the Hokkoku Kaido further enriched this tradition, creating a culinary culture celebrated for its remarkable depth of flavor and fermented foods.



‘Rosanjin’—a master of the culinary arts in Japan— brought his talent bloom in Nagahama, devoted himself to studying cuisine and pursuing his creative works.

~ Tomita Family’s Strong Support and Donation of Inscription Plaques ~

The renowned artist and gastronome Kitaoji Rosanjin spent an extended period in Nagahama, where he developed a deep appreciation for the culinary culture of the Kohoku region. Recognizing his talent, the Tomita family became one of his early supporters. The calligraphic plaque he created for Shichihonyari is still displayed at the brewery today.







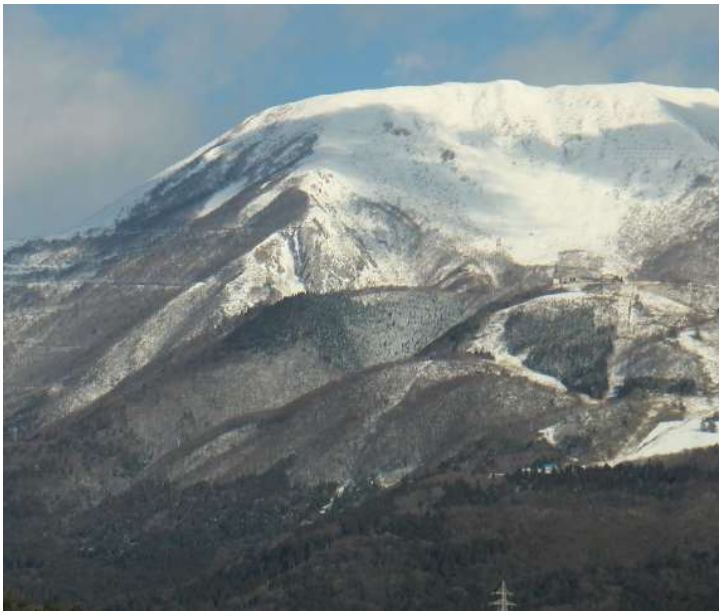
Shiga・Nagahama Terroir

1． Nagahama's Terroir ～Land, Climate, Water～

Located at the northernmost tip of Shiga Prefecture, Nagahama is a historic castle town renowned for its ideal conditions for rice cultivation. Fertile soils nourished by rivers flowing into Lake Biwa and abundant snowmelt from the surrounding mountains have supported agriculture in the region for generations.

The Blessings of Water from Mt.Ibuki and Lake Biwa

Rising on the border between Shiga and Gifu Prefectures, Mt. Ibuki (1,377 m) is renowned for its extraordinary snowfall, once recording the greatest snow accumulation ever observed at a mountain weather station. Moisture-laden winter winds from Siberia bring heavy snow to the mountain, where it gradually melts and filters through the ground, replenishing the groundwater that sustains the surrounding plains. In the Kohoku region, a major water management project completed over twenty-two years enabled water from Lake Biwa to be pumped to nearby Lake Yogo and stored for agricultural use throughout the area. This interconnected water system has fostered a strong awareness of environmental stewardship among local farmers. As a result, environmentally conscious farming practices are widely embraced, including efforts to reduce the use of agricultural chemicals and fertilizers while preserving the quality of the water that ultimately returns to Lake Biwa.



Nutrient-rich Soils from 40 Rivers flowing into Lake Biwa

The broad plains of the Nagahama and Kohoku region were formed by more than forty rivers flowing into Lake Biwa. Over centuries, these waterways deposited nutrient-rich soils abundant in organic matter, creating an environment exceptionally well suited to agriculture, particularly rice cultivation. Rice paddies account for 92% of Shiga Prefecture's farmland, one of the highest proportions in Japan, reflecting the region's long-standing agricultural heritage. The people of Kohoku share a strong commitment to protecting the waters of Lake Biwa, and environmentally responsible farming practices are widely embraced throughout the region.



Significant Day-to-Night Temperature Differences

Although the Kohoku region is one of Japan's snowiest areas and lies close to Fukui Prefecture and the Sea of Japan, it is situated at a latitude comparable to Yokohama and enjoys approximately 1,900 hours of sunshine each year. Cool winds from the Sea of Japan create significant temperature variations between day and night and across the seasons, while the surrounding mountains help shield the region from typhoons. Together, these conditions have made Kohoku one of Japan's most productive agricultural regions for centuries.

2． Shichihonyari’s Rice

Along with Local Farmers

For Yasunobu Tomita, locally grown rice is essential to his vision of creating “true local sake.” After returning to the brewery in 2002, he began working with dedicated farmers in the Kohoku region and, since 2010, has pursued the cultivation of exceptional sake rice together with them. These efforts have included the revival of indigenous rice varieties and the cultivation of pesticide-free rice. Even when harvests are limited or yields are unstable, Tomita remains committed to purchasing the rice through long-term agreements that provide sustainable support for local growers. Through these partnerships, he continues to work alongside farmers to preserve responsible agricultural practices in the Kohoku region.



Local Farmers in partnership with Shichihonyari

～Five dedicated local farmers who pursue organic cultivation of ‘Shichihon-yari’ sake rice～

- **“Okomeno-Yagura”** Takakazu Yagura (Odani-town Yono)
- **“Kusaoka Farm”** Mayumi Tanaka (Yogo-town Kuniyasu)
- **“Hyakusho-ya”** Daisuke Shimizu (Mita-town)
- **“Mitate Farm”** Shigeru Tatemi (Takatsuki-town Make)
- **“Morikawa Farm”** Takumi Morikawa (Takatsuki-town Higashiyanagino)
  (+ Nagahama Agricultural High School)



Farmers cultivating Shiga Asahi used in “在”—ZAI



“Okomeno-Yagura”
Takakazu Yagura



“Kusaoka Farm”
Mayumi Tanaka



“Mitate Farm”
Shigeru Tatemi

Commitment to Local Rice
(Achieved 100% Shiga-made rice)

Shiga Asahi

Once known as “Asahi in the West, Kame-no-O in the East,” this historic rice variety was widely grown throughout Japan before nearly disappearing in the postwar era. Today, it survives thanks to revival efforts led by local farmers in Shiga.

Other rice variations

- Tamasakae
- Shiga Yamadanishiki
- Shiga Wataribune



3． Water of Shichihonyari
~Pure Water with Unique Minerals~



~The Japan Sea/Pacific Ocean watershed~
Pristine Headwaters

The Kohoku region, located in northern Shiga Prefecture, lies at a watershed where rainwater begins its journey either toward the Sea of Japan or south through Lake Biwa and Kyoto to Osaka Bay. Tomita Shuzo draws its brewing water from the very headwaters of this southern water system. Situated at the foot of a mountain, the brewery benefits from a source whose upper reaches are home to little more than a small mountain village, with virtually no human activity beyond. It is an environment ideally suited to producing pure, pristine water—proof of the old saying that great sake begins with great water.

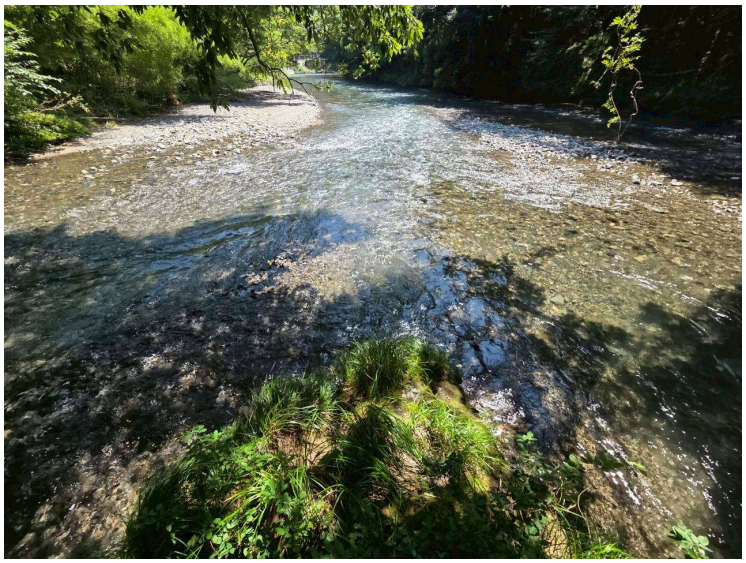
A Land with Cold Abundant Water



Few people realize that nearby Mt. Ibuki holds the record for the greatest snowfall ever recorded at a mountain observation site. This extraordinary snowfall is created when cold, moisture-laden air from the Sea of Japan is funneled through a narrow valley and collides with the mountain. Over time, vast quantities of snowmelt seep deep into the surrounding landscape, replenishing the abundant groundwater reserves that sustain the Kohoku region throughout the year. Together with the immense water resources of Lake Biwa, this reliable supply of fresh water has supported agriculture, settlement, and culinary culture for centuries. The naturally cool groundwater, which remains around 10–12°C year-round, also played an important role in preserving food and drink long before the advent of refrigeration, helping to foster the region's rich traditions of gastronomy and sake brewing.

Water containing both Magnesium and Calcium

Most Japanese brewing waters are either soft waters with relatively low mineral content or waters characterized by magnesium-rich minerals derived from volcanic geology. Calcium-rich water, more commonly associated with some of Europe's renowned wine-producing regions, is comparatively rare in Japan. The groundwater used by Shichihonyari is notable for containing both mineral profiles. This uncommon balance contributes to a sake that combines structure and depth with refinement and elegance. In traditional sake culture, the mineral-rich waters of Nada are often associated with bold, robust styles, while the calcium-rich waters of Fushimi are known for producing softer and more delicate expressions. The water of Shichihonyari is distinctive in that it reflects characteristics often associated with both traditions.

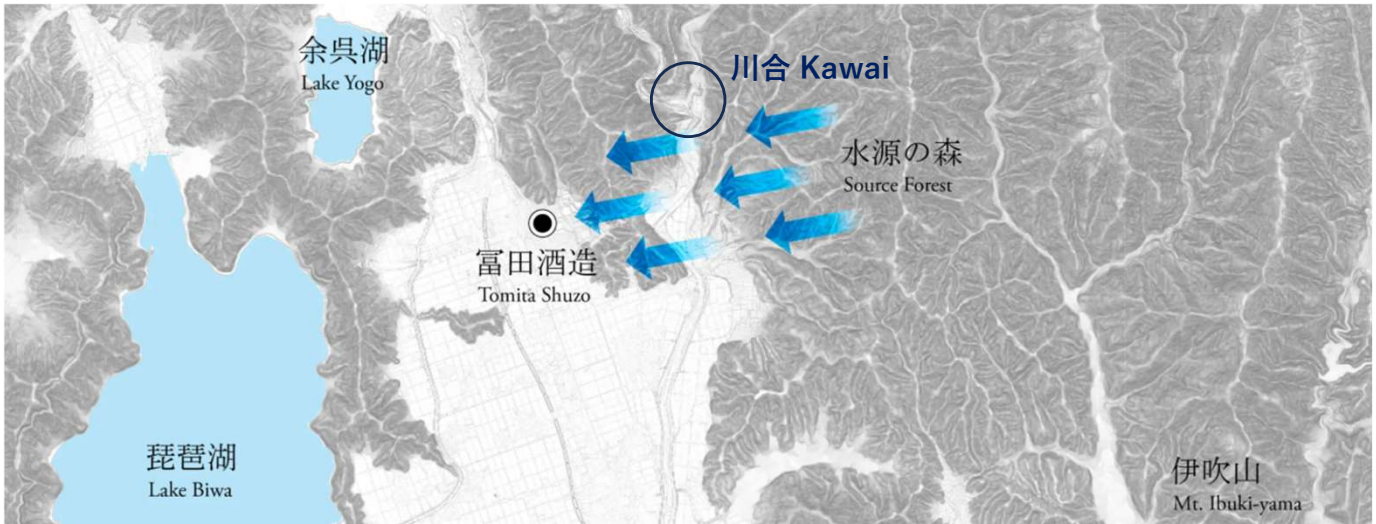


Left: Sugino river Bluish water（Magnesium, etc.）
Right: Takatoki river Translucent water（Calcium, etc.）

Brewery's Water

About five kilometers northeast of the brewery lies the small mountain village of Kawai, where two rivers meet: the Sugino River and the Takatoki River. One of the region's most striking natural features is that the two rivers often display subtly different colors, reflecting differences in the minerals they carry. The Sugino River flows through terrain rich in granite and carries water characterized by magnesium-rich minerals, while the Takatoki River passes through areas containing ancient limestone deposits and carries calcium-rich water.

After converging, these waters gradually seep underground and begin a long journey through the region's aquifers. Passing beneath the beech forests that blanket the mountains behind the brewery, the water is naturally filtered over the course of 35 to 40 years before emerging in the brewery's well. The result is a remarkably clear medium-hard water with low organic content and a distinctive mineral balance. This rare brewing water is one of the defining elements of Shichihonyari's character.



4． Shichihonyari Zai's Brewing

Preparatory Stages （polish / wash / soak / steam）









Rice polishing is entrusted to a local specialist. Careful and precise control of soaking is the foundation of Shichihonyari's koji making. Shiga Asahi tends to steam to a firmer texture than many other rice varieties, making water absorption particularly important. For this reason, the rice is typically soaked to absorb approximately 2% more water than other varieties before steaming.

Koji Making









In order to produce a sake with depth of flavor and umami, the koji is cultivated toward a slightly so-haze style, allowing the mold to develop more extensively across the surface of the rice. Because Shiga Asahi tends to mature relatively quickly after steaming, careful control of temperature and humidity is essential to encourage timely and even growth of the koji mold.

Moto (yeast starter) Preparation









Because Shiga Asahi tends to steam to a firmer texture, it takes longer for the rice to break down into the smooth porridge-like consistency desired during the moto-suri stage of Kimoto brewing. As a result, the process requires considerable time, attention, and careful monitoring. To minimize the risk of unwanted microbial contamination, fermentation is managed with close observation of indicators such as the nitrite reaction throughout the starter-making process.

For the Final Touch









The brewery's highest-tier sake, including "Zai" "Shin", is fermented in traditional wooden vats (kioke), while other expressions are brewed in small temperature-controlled tanks. Wooden vats contribute distinctive characteristics to the sake, but they also require careful process management. Because warmer conditions can more easily lead to unwanted flavors, brewing in kioke is generally completed by late February, while outside temperatures remain low. For pressing, the brewery's top-tier sake is extracted using the traditional "Fune" press(vertical press), a labor-intensive method. Other sake are pressed using a "Yabuta" system, which allows for efficient operation and consistent sanitary control.

Shichihonyari「ZAI」 Portfolio

Single Farm Rice
Single Parcel
Pesticide-free Siga Asahi
Kimoto
Kioke

「真－SHIN」

Kimoto Kioke Siga Asahi ’24

「Rice from Single Farm 」

(Pesticide-free rice)



’24 = “Yagura” Rice

Dual-Farm Rice
Two Parcel Blend
Pesticide-free Siga Asahi
Kimoto
Kioke /Tank

「行－GYO」

Kimoto Siga Asahi ’24

「Dual-Farm Rice」

(Pesticide-free rice)



Triple-Farm Rice
Three Parcel Blend
Low-pesticide Siga Asahi
Sokujo Moto
Tank

「草－SO」

Siga Asahi BY ’24

「Triple-Farms」

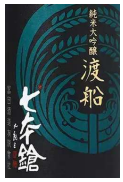
(Low-Pesticide)



BY’24 is Pesticide-free（dual-farm）
Special expression with 1/3 Kimoto blend



Shichihonyari's General Portfolio

	Tama Sakae	Other Rice Variations (Yamadanishiki、Ginfubuki、Wataribune)
Core Range	 Teiseihaku Junmai  Sparkling awaibuki  Junmai 14℃ Genshu Hiire  Junmai Daiginjo  Junmai	 Yamada Nishiki Junmai Daiginjo Shizuku Pressing  Gin Fubuki Junmai Ginjo  Watari Bune Junmai Daiginjo  Yamada Nishiki Junmai Daiginjo  Watari Bune Junmai 77%Polished
Exclusive Release	 Muu Pesticide-Free  Muu Aged 2015 Pesticide-Free  Muu Kimoto Pesticide-Free  Kinowa  Kinowa Kimoto  Junmai Shely Barrel-Aged  Kokoku	
Season Exclusive	 Shibori Tate Nama Genshu  Nigori Zake  Kassei Nigori Zake	 Yamada Nishiki Hiya Oroshi  Gin Fubuki Natsu Jun  Yamada Nishiki Usunigori Nama Genshu  Gin Fubuki Shiboritate Nama Genshu



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