



Owner is Toji Sake Master

Pursuing the Taste Actually Desired by Toji Himself

From Preparation through to Labeling

An 11 kiloliter tank was being demolished that had contained sake in the amount corresponding to about 4,000 isscho-bin (1.8 liter) bottles. About 30 tanks including some 20 kiloliter tanks were removed from the brewery and disposed of. They had been manufactured in around 1971 and 1972.

“My grandfather used to say he had been unable to catch up with the growing demand of Nada breweries, no matter how much he invested in his facility to increase production. A large number of tanks had all been full of sake. It must have been an amazing time.” Yuichi Tsubosaka (aged 36), the Managing Director of Sanyohai Shuzo K.K. (Shiso City) stated while glancing at the Okeuri symbol.



Yuichi Tsubosaka spreading out the Koji by carefully feeling it with the palms of his hands
(Sanyohai Shuzo Co., Ltd. in Yamasaki, Yamasaki Town, Shiso City)

The technical term Okeuri or Okegai means sales/purchase transactions of raw sake between brewing companies, something that was promoted by major brewing companies during the high growth period to meet increasing demand, but these days the number of transactions have been decreasing in accordance with declining consumption.

Since terminating a contractual relationship with a major brewing company three years ago, Sanyohai Shuzo has been improving the quality of its products under the brand name of “Banshu

Ikkon.” Tsubosaka is the seventh owner who also acts as the Toji sake master i.e. “Owner Toji.”

At first he was uninterested in taking over the family business. After graduating from a university in Tokyo he was employed by a major sake wholesaler. While struggling to meet his sales quota and selling sake products that were not to his taste, he grew increasingly doubtful about what he was doing, which, at that time, reminded him of his family business. “I then thought I could perhaps produce exactly what I really wanted to.”

Sake that is growing in popularity among young sake fans at taverns or inns is Jizake (locally produced sake), and which is produced using unique methods and bearing a uniquely designed label. Many movements like this are led by young owner Toji sake masters.

Through contact with his other young Toji peers across the nation, Tsubosaka continues to research traditional sake production methods such as Yamahai. He makes various types of sake in small tanks using a variety of sake-brewing rice and preparation methods. In the time of mass production, the brewers used to quench the steamed rice using machines, but now he takes a much longer time to dry it in thereby carefully nurturing Koji mold, even feeling the rice with his hands. “What I learn from my peers through chatting with them is that more and more brewers are returning to using traditional methods. We can only make creative types of sake by reviewing how our predecessors used to make it 100 years ago.”

“The rules were changed so that I could determine the timing of when squeeze the prepared ingredients,” said Yoichi Okada (aged 36), the Owner Toji of Okada Honke (Kakogawa City), while checking the flavor of the sake he was making. The brewery was founded in 1874. About six years ago, it shifted its strategy from producing sake using the Okeuri system to producing its own brand of “Seiten.”



Yoichi Okada checking the flavors and taste of freshly made sake
(Okada Honke in Yoshino, Noguchi Town, Kakogawa City)

The turning point came in 2007 when

