

# The 1st Special SAKE Seminar



JAPAN SAKE AND SHOCHU MAKERS ASSOCIATION



Everyone toasts with sake, "Cheers!"

Special Sake Seminar for Select Foreign Nationals Living in Tokyo  
Fostering an Appreciation of Sake via a Lecture and Tasting

At 3 p.m. on June 14 the Japan Sake and Shochu Makers Association (JSS) kicked off a very special event called the 1st Sake Seminar. Held under the same roof as the Sake Fair 2013, this first-ever event of its kind unfolded on the 5th floor conference room of the Sunshine City World Importmart in Tokyo's Ikebukuro district. Designed for foreign nationals living in Tokyo, the seminar was a first step toward introducing the wonderful world of sake, Japan's *Kokushu* (national brew), to people around the world. Conducted as part of a national initiative to promote *Kokushu*, the seminar developed an appreciation for sake among foreign nationals of different backgrounds who call Tokyo home. Aiming to leverage their extensive personal network to spread the word about sake, the seminar laid the groundwork upon which Japanese sake brewers will make inroads into the global market. About fifty people including embassy officials from various countries, media people, distributors, etc. attended the seminar where they enjoyed an in-depth experience that gave them a real taste of what sake is all about.



A wide variety of sake brands were served during the seminar.



Sake tasting. Sake circles began to naturally pop up here and there throughout the venue.



Held Concurrently with the Sake Fair, the Seminar is a Golden Opportunity to Promote Sake to the International Community



JSS chairman,  
Mr. Shinohara

The 1st Sake Seminar provided a golden opportunity to really promote Japanese sake to foreign nationals living in Tokyo. Hoping to cultivate a greater appreciation for sake, JSS chairman Shigeyuki Shinohara kicked off the seminar with a few inspiring words. He began by telling the crowd, "It's my great pleasure to introduce a drink that represents Japanese culture to all of you." Moving on he noted that "sake brewing dates back two thousand years and today there are nearly 1500 brewers working to put their own unique imprint on that history." In wrapping up his speech, he urged the audience gathered that day to enjoy the array of "labels from six brewers as well as foods that pair well with sake."

After listening to a lecture all about Japanese sake, the participants got the chance to actually taste some samples and chat with the brewers. After the seminar many of the attendees made a line for the Sake Fair 2013, a sure sign that the seminar had successfully promoted Japanese sake to the international community.

► John Gauntner, a sake journalist and Sake Samurai delivered a 15-minute lecture entitled "Understanding and Enjoying Sake." John lecture covered an extensive array of topics related to sake, including its culture and history, the characteristics of different types of sake as well as how to drink them and enjoy them to the fullest. Succinctly summing up the essence of sake, he deftly explained to the audience how "it is brewed from rice and employs a complex as well as varied fermentation process." In conclusion John noted that "just like wine, sake pairs well with a variety of foods."



◀ Tokubee Masuda, committee chairman of Overseas Sake Promotion Committee who proposed who proposed the toast before the sake tasting session, reported that municipalities like Kyoto are currently implementing ordinances that promote "toasting with sake."

► Yonezawa beef wrapped in kelp, sesame tofu and other local delicacies of the exhibiting brewers' prefectures were served along with sake.



## Having a Pleasant Chat with Brewers. "I'm Grateful to Have This Opportunity."



### Participant comment 1

"Japanese sake is very good. I enjoy trying different labels every time I come to Japan. In America, it's easy to find sake in the big East Coast cities, but I don't think there are many places you can get it on the West Coast where I live. That's why I believe there's so much potential for it to gain popularity.

I'm looking forward to experiencing the Sake Fair." (U.S.A., male, press)



### Participant comment 2

"Although Japanese sake is not yet widely known in Australia, I'm sure most people will love it once they try it. There should be no barriers at all. I write about sake on my blog and I don't believe the Japanese sake industry has been doing enough to promote sake in Australia. I think it may be holding back a little too much." (Australia, male, press)



### Participant comment 3

"Japanese sake is becoming increasingly available at reasonable prices in Belgium. Since grapes don't grow in Belgium, people there tried to make wine using barley and ended up with Belgian beer. It's similar to sake in that both are brews, with sweeties so sake may not seem that strange to Belgians. I think there are more people who like it than like spirits." (Belgium, male, embassy)



### Participant comment 4

"There aren't many Danish people who are familiar with Japanese culture, but there aren't that many Japanese people who know a lot about Danish culture either, right? Hans Christian Andersen and the Vikings, that's about it, maybe? The important thing is to learn about each other's culture and sake is part of Japanese culture. (Denmark, male, embassy)

### Participant comment 5

"I just came to Japan and I'm going to study Japanese. I'm grateful to have this opportunity because it's my first time trying sake. Personally I liked the color and aroma of *nigori* sake. It goes well with sesame *tofu*." (Denmark, female, embassy)

