

### **Hatsuzakura Sake Brewery**

Located just a stone's throw from the Kinokawa River, the structure housing this historic sake brewery is a Registered Tangible Cultural Property.

The pure underground river from the Izumi mountain range that provides water for the sake, along with the crisp, cold winter climate, make this area perfect for sake production. During the Edo period (1603–1868), this region, then known as Kawakami, was considered an important terroir for sake. During its heyday, Kawakami was home to more than 33 breweries; today, Hatsuzakura is the last brewery keeping up the tradition.

The brewery also has historical ties to Koyasan. According to the rules, monks undergoing training in Koyasan were forbidden to drink alcohol. With an understanding nod toward human nature, some exceptions were made, and monks have been allowed a few cups of *hannya to* (the “water of knowledge”) as a way to warm up on cold nights in the mountains.

Visitors to Hatsuzakura can sample this product of local culture, which is sold in ceramic bottles, and take a quick tour around the brewery where the heirs of Kawakami tradition make their artisanal sake.