

Shōtoku (Shōtoku Shuzō)

Shōtoku Shuzō has been brewing sake since 1645 and specializes in *junmai* sake, which is brewed without the addition of brewer's alcohol. The company was originally based in the central Rakuchū area of Kyoto until the Kimura family decided to move their business to Fushimi in the early 1900s, attracted by its plentiful spring water.

Shōtoku Shuzō is a boutique brewery, focusing on high-quality, small-batch *junmai* sake made with traditional brewing techniques and no added brewers alcohol. The name Shōtoku is derived from a Zen Buddhist phrase meaning “happiness comes from virtue.” The brewers describe their product as fine *shokuchūshu*—sake to be enjoyed with a good meal.

Historically, the company has enjoyed close relationships with master brewers from Fukui Prefecture and Hyogo Prefecture. Today, the rice it uses in their brews is mostly from a small group of farmers in rural Ayabe in Kyoto Prefecture. The close relationship it has with these farmers gives the company almost complete control over the production process from rice paddy to bottle. For some of its sake, Shōtoku Shuzō uses the traditional *kimoto* technique, which uses natural lactic acid fermentation to create an acidic sake mash. This process takes roughly a month and results in a flavorful sake that is rich in amino acids.

In early 2000, Shōtoku Shuzō's fourteenth-generation owner, Kimura Shikō, displayed his commitment to progressive sake production by recruiting Fushimi's first-ever female brewer, Ōtsuka Maho.