

Torisei Honten

Torisei Honten is a restaurant located in a 150-year-old sake warehouse in the heart of the Fushimi sake-making district. It serves freshly brewed sake alongside Japanese cuisine, most notably its famous grilled chicken. The building was originally part of the Yamamoto Honke brewery next-door and is next to the natural spring Shiragikui, which means “water of the white chrysanthemum.” Yamamoto Honke uses water from the spring in its sake.

A legend attached to the naming of the spring describes an old man who lovingly cultivated white chrysanthemums. During a drought, the man prayed for a small drop of dew which had fallen from the petal of one of his plants to be transformed into a stream to save the rice harvest. His prayer was answered, and water began to bubble out of the ground.

The Yamamoto Honke sake served at Torisei is fresh from the tank, known in the sake world as *hakariuri genshu*—literally, “undiluted sake sold by measure.” The literal translation hardly does justice to the sake’s fresh, lively taste, and a trip to Torisei Honten is a rare opportunity to try this type of sake.

Water from Shiragikui is freely available to the public and flows from a tap near the entrance to the restaurant. The soft spring waters of Fushimi are said to possess a feminine quality that was deemed not only suitable for sake-making but also for cooking the delicate *kyōryōri* cuisine that was favored by the Kyoto Imperial Court (794–1868).