

Takehara City Museum of History and Folklore

The Takehara City Museum of History and Folklore displays materials related to the local salt production industry as well as exhibits on the city's people, history, and culture.

The light-blue Western-style building was built in 1929 as the Takehara Shoin Library. The site was once the residence of Doseki Shiotani (1703–1764), a Confucian scholar during the Edo period (1603–1867). After his death, it was turned into a school by his disciples, Rai Shunsui and Rai Shunpu. The school opened in 1793 and was named Takehara Shoin by Shunpu, who had become one of the teachers. It was an important center of learning that hosted poetry readings and other cultural events.

The Takehara Shoin Library was turned into a museum in 1980. One of its main displays features Taketsuru Masataka (1894–1979). Massan, as he was affectionately known, is considered the father of Japanese whisky. Masataka went to Scotland in 1918 to learn the secrets of distilling Scotch whisky. He took chemistry classes at the University of Glasgow and apprenticed at three whisky distilleries.

Upon his return to Japan in 1920 with his wife, Scotswoman Jessie Roberta Cowan (known as Rita), he went on to found the Nikka Whisky Distilling Company. Their story was told in *Massan*, a 2014 television drama on NHK, Japan's national broadcaster. Outside the museum is a bronze statue of Masataka and Rita.