

## **Taketsuru Shuzo Sake Brewery**

Taketsuru Shuzo Sake Brewery is the oldest sake brewery in Takehara. It began operations as a salt maker in 1651 before starting sake production in 1733. The brewery is famous for being the birthplace of Taketsuru Masataka (also known as “Massan”), the father of Japanese whisky.

Masataka studied in Scotland in 1918 to learn the secrets of distilling scotch. He returned to Japan in 1920 with his wife, Scotswoman Jessie Roberta Cowan (known as Rita), and went on to found the Nikka Whisky Distilling Company. Their story is told in *Massan*, a 2014 television drama on NHK, Japan’s national broadcaster.

During the Edo period (1603–1867), local salt was shipped to Osaka and then on to Edo (present-day Tokyo) as well as to Akita and Hokkaido prefectures in northern Japan via the Japan Sea. The ships returned with rice, which was used with the pure local spring water to produce sake.

Taketsuru Shuzo Sake Brewery maintains its traditional production process of *kimoto-zukuri*, the oldest surviving style of sake making. The process uses a yeast mash cultured by naturally occurring lactic acid bacteria. Top-quality rice from local growers in Hiroshima Prefecture is used.

The brewery produces sake intended to match the local fish caught in the Seto Inland Sea.