

***Sakazuki*: Landmarks of Japanese Life**

These small, delicate sake cups, called *sakazuki*, hold a deep cultural significance. Sake is a part of many of the most important occasions in a Japanese person's life, as expressed by the idea of "life's ten cups" (*jinsei jūhai*). From the *sansankudo* ritual, in which a newlywed couple drinks from three *sakazuki* representing the past, present, and future, to the drinks and memories shared at a wake, sake flows through Japanese life, marking occasions both celebratory and solemn. In that sense, holding a *sakazuki* in one's hand is like holding a microcosm of life.

The Ichinokura Sakazuki Art Museum has collected some 1,500 of these little treasures. Most of the pieces were created right here in Ichinokura, a small village that, despite its size, was nevertheless responsible for over half of the domestic output of *sakazuki* during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The collection also includes examples from other parts of Japan, allowing visitors to observe the ways glazing technology and regional styles have evolved over the years.