Tenryo Sake Brewery

Bountiful rice harvests and pure groundwater flowing down from the northern Japanese Alps have long provided favorable conditions for sake production in the region surrounding the Hida River. During the Edo period (1603–1867), there were roughly 20 sake breweries operating in the area, of which two remain today. One of these is Tenryo Sake Brewery, a family-owned business established in 1680.

The brewery is located several blocks from the Hida River in the Hagiwara district of Gero. A pleasant aroma lingers in the storefront, where various sake and shochu products are sold and can be sampled. Tenryo offers tours of its brewing facilities, which can be conducted in English if arranged in advance. Tours last around an hour and introduce the intricacies of sake production.

Tenryo's sake is brewed exclusively from two varieties of high-quality rice, one of which was developed and is grown locally in Gifu Prefecture. Rice must be polished before fermentation in a time and labor-intensive process that sake brewers commonly outsource to other companies. Tenryo uses its own high-tech equipment in order to oversee this process more closely. Water is another crucial ingredient that influences the taste and quality of sake. Tenryo uses exclusively natural groundwater that originates in the Hida Mountains and is drawn from 30 meters underground.

The brewery's main building was constructed in the late Meiji period (1868–1912) and has been registered as a Tangible Cultural Property in recognition of its architectural importance. This family enterprise proudly upholds artisanal traditions and offers a taste of the region's history.