

# In Praise of Fine Sake

Vol. 11

## Toshimaya Brewery

Address: Hon-machi 3-9-1, Okaya-shi, Nagano  
Telephone: 0266-23-1123  
<http://jizake.miwatari.jp/>

- Alcohol content: 15% ● Seimaibuai (rice milling percentage): 39%
- Nihonshu-do (Sake Meter Value + dry, -sweet): +2
- Acidity: 1.4 ● Rice: Nagano Miyama-nishiki
- Volume: 720ml
- Price: 3,360 yen (tax inclusive)



## Miwatari Junmai Daiginjo

Text/ Kaori Haishi (sake sommelier) Photography/ Susumu Nagao



### High Quality Sake With a Regal Style

Perhaps you've heard of o-miwatari (the god's crossing) before? Occasionally it is mentioned on the news during the winter months. O-miwatari is the word used to describe a serrated pressure-ridge crack that runs across the frozen surface of Lake Suwa in Nagano prefecture. Local legend says that this natural phenomenon, which occurs during spells of severe winter cold, is the trail left by the Suwa-Taisha god when he crosses from a shrine on one side of the lake to the goddess in the shrine on the other. Miwatari sake is named after this legend. The Toshimaya brewery aims to produce good local

sake that will put a smile on people's faces. Youthful vigor infuses every step of its production, which is carried out with the greatest of care. Miwatari and Houka are two major brands from this brewery that are enjoying rising popularity amongst younger sake drinkers, and are in high demand at sake events.

Miwatari Junmai Daiginjo is at the top of the range in this same series. It exudes an air of class that heightens your anticipation even before you open the bottle. A gorgeous bouquet wafted up when I poured it into the glass. This heavenly aroma is a characteristic of sake that extracts the maximum potential from the rice. Its round texture on the palate conjures up an image of

good water and high-quality production.

The structure of its flavor can be imagined as a light acidity enveloping a core of high-class sweetness and umami, a superb blending of the five palate tastes. The aftertaste has a slow, clean and pleasant finish to it which is perfect in duration. Afterwards there is an indescribably lovely lingering acidity in the center of the palate.

Drink this sake chilled or at room temperature, but don't cool it too far if you want to make the most of its richness. The best food to accompany it would be something simple and lightly seasoned. I recommend white fish, cooked not with soy sauce but instead simmered in sake, a popular method in Edo times.