

The Sake of Itami -Its Structure and Technique of Brewing Industry-

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Summary

The sake consumed in modern day Japan can be looked upon as the product of three developmental phases. The first phase began from the third quarter of the 16th century through to the end of the 17th century, or the stretch of time extending from the Azuchi-Momoyama period through the start of the Edo period, and saw the proliferation of what is referred to as Nara (or Nanto) morohaku, a type of sake brewed in the Nara region. The second phase began in the 1650s, the early part of the ascendancy of sake produced in the northern part of Settsu province, particularly Itami sake (called *Itami-zake* or *Tanjo*). The third phase began in the third quarter of the 18th century and can be described as the time when nada sake – sake produced along the coastal area of Settsu – established its superiority over all others.

The methods used to brew Nara morohaku, the first well-known sake to appear during the Azuchi-Momoyama period, were carried over to subsequent brewing processes but only in a very general manner. The brewing methods that flourished from the end of the 17th century into the earlier parts of the 18th century (Genroku to Kyoho periods) – ones that allowed for the production of fine-quality sake in large volumes – and that can be regarded as those of Itami, started to appear in the 1650s (Manji period).