

Terms used
for
manufacturing
sake

Shubo (酒母)
Seed mash

In Japanese, *shubo* means 'mother of sake.' It is also called *moto*. *Shubo* is a yeast mash made from a nutritious mixture of rice, *koji* and water. It looks like *moromi* (page 13) but *shubo* has a strong sour taste and *moromi* does not. The sake yeast is tolerant of acidity, thus increasing the sake's yeast content. Undesirable bacteria cannot survive in *shubo* acidity.

Ki-moto method (生麴)

A traditional method of making *shubo*. Lactic acid is derived from lactobacilli, over a long period of time and through the attentive care of the brewers. This assists in increasing the sake's yeast content. This starter contains a lot of amino acid and is helpful in producing a dry sake with a rich flavor.

Yamahai-moto method (山麴)

The laborsaving *ki-moto* method was developed in the Meiji era (1868-1912). This method omits the troublesome process called *yamaoroshi* (page 12). Yet the finish and *kobo* characteristics resulting from the *yamahai-moto* method are the same as those from the *ki-moto* method.

Sokujo-moto method (速醸)

This method was also developed in the Meiji era (1868-1912). Lactic acid is produced during the previous methods, but in this method, lactic acid is added, thus shortening the production time. These days, this is one of the most popular methods, as it can produce any type of sake.

Kobo (酵母)

A yeast, called *Sacchromyces cerevisiae*, converts sugar to alcohol in the process of sake brewing. Both the Latin word *cerevisiae* and Japanese term *kobo* mean 'mother of fermentation.' There are over 700 species of wild and domesticated yeast but most of them have nothing to do with sake brewing. *S. cerevisiae* is 5 to 10 μm in size and is milky white and egg shaped. This yeast is used for producing sake and is cultured by human beings.

Kyokai-kobo (協会酵母)

Yeast strain distributed by the 'Brewing Society of Japan.' In the Meiji era (1868-1912), after the distribution of *kyokai-kobo* was started, the quality of sake improved dramatically at breweries that previously did not have yeast that performed well.

Yamaoroshi
One step in making *shubo*

In the traditional method of making *shubo*, brewers had to mash the rice and *koji* together well for better fermentation. They put steamed rice, *koji* and water in a shallow barrel. After the mixture had cooled down for 15 to 20 hours, it was mashed with a tool called *kabura kai*. This *yamaoroshi* process required patience and manpower, and was very strenuous work performed in the winter during the very cold night hours.

Kabura-kai
(Tama-kai)

Wooden or bamboo handle

Wood paddle

