

Regarding standards for labeling Japanese whisky

Nearly 100 years has passed since commercial whisky production began in Japan and now, Japanese whisky-making is highly recognized all over the world.

It is unfortunate, however, that in recent years there have been cases where brands that only use imported foreign whiskies being sold as “Japanese whisky” and cases where brands that do not meet the qualification of “whisky” under the Japanese liquor tax law being sold as “whisky” in other countries, sowing confusion among consumers.

Looking back at the history of whisky making in Japan, it is important to note that our whisky making journey originally started by learning the arts and craft from the makers of Scotch whisky while our predecessors set about creating a different kind of whisky that was nurtured and perfected by the nature of Japan and establishing a uniquely Japanese blending technique over the years. In Scotland, it is common practice for Scotch producing companies to exchange whisky stocks. This enables these Scotch companies to blend the acquired whisky with whisky produced at their own distilleries for development purposes and to maintain the quality of their existing brands. On the other hand, since this practice is unfamiliar in Japan, Japanese whisky makers had to be self-sufficient by developing techniques to create various kind of whiskies at their own distilleries, by acquiring distilleries abroad, or by making use of imported whisky to skillfully blend and to create a product fit for the Japanese market. It goes without saying that these developments are part of the history, tradition, and culture of Japanese whisky-making. The products created through this process has enriched the Japanese drinking culture and is currently supported by many people around the world. We, the members of the Japan Spirits & Liqueur Association, take pride in that fact and are grateful for the efforts of our predecessors.

We, as the Japan Spirits & Liqueur Association, hereby define what “Japanese whisky” is and continue to build the reputation of Japanese whisky-making our predecessors have cultivated over the years. By clearly defining what “Japanese whisky” is and making that information available to the public in Japan and abroad, we aim to clarify the confusing situation for the consumers. We also hope that appealing the value of our whisky, which has evolved rather independently in the past century, to our customers and whisky enthusiasts around the globe, would lead to further prosperity of the whisky industry in Japan.

We will define it as bellow.

February 2021 Chairman of the Japan Spirits & Liqueurs Association