

The Sake "Like A Phoenix" Is Born!

The fruits of the earth from Iitate

In March 2011, nuclear accidents triggered by the Great East Japan Earthquake caused many areas in Fukushima Prefecture to be contaminated with radiation. Due to its influence, evacuation orders were issued from April 2011 to March 2017 to the village of Iitate as well. However, since 2012, a man has been decontaminating the farm land handed down from generation to generation, cultivating rice, and continuing to measure the radioactivity contained in the harvested rice, believing in the agricultural revitalization of Iitate. He is Mr. Muneo Kanno, Agriculture Committee Chairman at Iitate. He opened his house and farmland to the NPO "Resurrection of Fukushima". In collaboration with the NPO members and university researchers, sake rice named "Flavor of Dreams" was planted in the test field, and its safety was confirmed by test brewing in a laboratory of the University of Tokyo in 2016. They then began planting sake rice for the purpose of producing sake the following year. In 2017, the rice planting time was delayed considerably and there was concern about poor growth of rice due to unseasonable weather until early August. However, due to a miraculous weather recovery in late August, the sake rice could be harvested. After overcoming these many difficulties, the sake was then brewed by the Yamatogawa Brewery in Kitakata City, Fukushima Prefecture.

Origin of the Name "Like A Phoenix"

On 5th March 2018, the University of Tokyo, which has been working on agricultural revitalization activities in Iitate since the earthquake, and the village of Iitate signed a collaborative agreement. At the ceremony for the signing of this agreement, the Cheering Club of the University of Tokyo performed at Iitate to pray for its reconstruction.

"Like A Phoenix" is a fight song sung at the Tokyo Big 6 University Baseball League games when the University of Tokyo has a chance to score. It was composed with the thought of "coming from behind to revive like a phoenix". This is a song suitable for cheering on Iitate, which rises again and revives like a phoenix, even after the extensive damage due to the earthquake.

The Cheering Cart allowed us to name the sake after the title of the song as a symbol of agricultural reconstruction.

Prof. Masaru Mizoguchi
Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences
The University of Tokyo