

# [Bicentennial Event for Nagareyama Shiro-Mirin] Report Industry-Government-Academia Collaboration: Food Culture Seminar “Washoku and Mirin”

(July 20, Sunday, 2014 at Nagareyama City Lifelong Learning Center)

In 1814, during the late Edo period (1603–1868), Horikiri Monjiro II successfully developed and marketed shiro-mirin, a light-colored mirin, in Nagareyama in Shimousa Province (currently Nagareyama, Chiba Prefecture). As one of the events commemorating the 200th anniversary of this development, the Kikkoman Institute for International Food Culture hosted a food culture seminar called “Washoku and Mirin.” This was accomplished through an industry-government-academia collaboration involving Nagareyama City and Chiba Prefectural Nagareyama High School. In a packed auditorium, lectures on mirin were followed by announcements naming the best posters and original mirin recipes by students, as well as active open discussions between Naoyuki Yanagihara and the students.

## Lectures

### ◆ Nagareyama and Shiro-mirin

Historic background of what led to the birth of shiro-mirin, the predecessor of today’s mirin, in Nagareyama

Masanori Kawane, Chief curator at Nagareyama City Museum

### ◆ Edo Cuisine and Mirin

Mirin recipes in cookbooks from the Edo period

Naoyuki Yanagihara, Successor at Edo-Kaiseki Kinsaryu Culinary Discipline



### ◆ Basic Knowledge of Mirin

Characteristics of mirin and its usage

Takashi Yoda, Director of the Product Development Dept. at Nagareyama Kikkoman Co., Ltd.

## Open Discussion: Our Dietary Habits and the Succession of Washoku

Referring to the results of a survey given to 156 third-year students, Mr. Naoyuki Yanagihara and three student representatives had an open discussion. They started by discussing the students’ interest in eating and cooking, and the current status of their meals at home. Following that, a wide range of themes were covered, including discussions on whether Japanese food culture should be preserved and passed on to future generations (in the context of the addition of washoku to UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage List in December 2013). They also discussed their reasons for skipping breakfast or not dining together with other family members. The students expressed their opinions frankly, with such direct statements as “I prioritize sleep over breakfast.” The discussion frequently drew laughter from the audience.



## Announcement of Best Posters and Original Mirin Recipes

### ◆ Posters

As part of a regional cooperation project they had been engaged in since the previous year, the commercial course students produced posters for this event. From among the 125 entries in which the essence of the history and appeal of Nagareyama shiro-mirin were incorporated, the six best posters were introduced.



### ◆ Recipes

For the category of original recipes using mirin, each student who studied food processing and food design developed an original recipe using their specialized knowledge. They presented special recipes with innovative uses of mirin, including *nikujaga* buns and blueberry custard pies using produce grown in the school garden, *fuwa-toro* noodles topped with meringue, and four season’s pasta & Macedonia incorporating the healthy features of washoku.



#### Four Season’s Pasta

A pasta dish in which fresh ingredients representing the season are used. Pasta in autumn uses mirin to impart a Japanese flavor.



#### Fuwa-Toro Noodles

Noodles are topped with a meringue (mixed with a sauce in which mirin is used), tomatoes, avocado and other ingredients.



#### Nikujaga Buns

Japanese-style buns filled with nikujaga. Mirin is not just added to the filling, but to the dough, to make it soft and fluffy.



#### Blueberry Custard Pies

The crispy piecrust and the texture of the mirin enhanced filling can be enjoyed together.

This event was realized through industry-government-academia collaboration, and offered an excellent opportunity for the younger generations, who are the successors of the tradition of Japanese food culture, to think about washoku. It also offered a chance for everyone to learn more about mirin, which, like soy sauce, has been an essential seasoning for Japanese food culture.