

# Ume to Uguisu

A collaboration between Dazaifu Tenmangu shrine, Makoto Kagoshima, and Suzukake

Every year in spring, the grounds of Dazaifu Tenmangu shrine are enveloped in the sweet fragrance of plum blossoms from roughly 6000 trees, starting with the blossoming of the sacred tree Tobiume.

With a motif inspired by these plum blossoms, the ceramist and artist Makoto Kagoshima has designed Ume to Uguisu (“plums and warblers”), a dry confectionery crafted with the exquisite skills of the confectioners at Suzukake, a long-established Japanese confectionery shop in Hakata.

This delicate, gently sweet confectionery melts in the mouth thanks to its abundant use of finely powdered traditional Japanese refined sugar, Wasanbon. One of the five pieces included in each wooden box is seasoned with cinnamon, a spice introduced to Japan from the Asian continent right here in Dazaifu. Once home to the Dazaifu government office, known as a remote outpost of the Imperial court, Dazaifu was a point at which the cultures of Asia and Japan intersected.

These sweets, which are somewhat large in size so that you can enjoy Kagoshima’s vision, express his design faithfully, with details including flower petals and expressive warblers.

They can be enjoyed as a snack accompanying Japanese green tea, with coffee or black tea, or even as an amuse-bouche together with wine or champagne. It is hoped that the dry confectionery Ume to Uguisu will prove a beloved snack similar to how Tenjin-sama dearly loved plum blossoms.



Wasanbon



Mugwort



Wasanbon



Plum



Cinammon

## Suzukake

This long-established Japanese confectionery in Hakata first opened more than 90 years ago. Based on the teachings of the master modern craftsman Saburo Nakaoka, it both pursues tastes and techniques that come from the use of carefully selected natural ingredients and takes care to employ contemporary designs and presentations, to provide Japanese confectioneries that can be loved by all generations.

## Makoto Kagoshima

Born in Fukuoka, Kagoshima produces works of art mainly in the genres of ceramics, fabric, and painting, at his studio in the city of Fukuoka. In addition to his fan base in Japan, his popularity has been growing around the world in recent years as well. He is active across a wide range of areas including not only ceramics but also the creation of murals and participating in international art projects.

## The history of Dazaifu Tenmangu shrine and art

Michizane Sugawara (Tenjin-sama), the deity (Kami) to whom Dazaifu Tenmangu shrine is dedicated, has been honored since old times as a Kami of culture and the arts as well as scholarship. His role as protector of culture and the arts carries on today, as the shrine focuses on introducing a wide range of art and design works to communicate this role to the world at large.

