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Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to the first ever The Japanese Sword newsletter. My apologies if you hadn't signed up and are receiving this. If you are not interested, please use the unsubscribe email below and we will remove you from the list. We also promise not to spam you. I am hoping to write a newsletter once a month to inform you of the activities of The Japanese Sword and promote our YouTube videos, competitions, etc. I realized that many of our supporters are spread over several platforms and those platforms do not necessarily post all of our posts/videos, etc. in everyone's feeds. In order to make sure that we get the right information to the right people we have decided to produce this newsletter. However, it may contain some items that you have already seen elsewhere, but hopefully also some newsletter exclusive content too.



Why I Live in Japan TV Program

This year is going to be a pretty busy year. I am due to appear this month on a program in Japan called, Why I live in Japan (BS Television East). It is presented by a famous Japanese actor, Takahashi Katsunori (pictured), and goes into your history of why you live in Japan, what happened when you first moved here, and looks at your life here. It is due to air in Japan later this month (June 23rd Japan Time), but pretty often people upload episodes with subtitles to

YouTube. Unfortunately, I cannot upload it to The Japanese Sword channel for risk of copyright strikes on the channel.

In the program we visit the forge of Yoshindo Yoshihara and see his current apprentices working, the studio of 4th Generation polisher, Fujishiro Tatsuya, the Ginza Seiyudo Swordshop of Shono Tadashi in Ginza 5 , and the specialist Art and Culture Tsutaya Bookshop in Ginza 6 that also sells Shinsakuto, as well as some other interesting places!



Samurai-Con

Later this month (June 12th USA time), I will be giving two recorded talks at the first ever virtual Samurai Convention. I'm sure that being the first one they will have lots of kinks to work out, but with the superb line up of guest speakers, it could be the beginning of something huge once the Pandemic is over.

I am giving a brief introductory talk on Japanese swords, and a second instructional talk on tips to better Seitei laido.

For more information and bookings,

<https://www.samurai-con.com>



2021 Gotoba-in 800

This year is the 800th anniversary of the Emperor Gotoba's exile to the Oki Islands. He is said to have surrounded himself with the best swordsmiths in the land on a monthly rotational basis (Gobankaji), and even taken part in sword making. It is said that even in exile, that he was allowed to continue his sword making and swordsmiths called, The Oki-Gobankaji were sent in bi-monthly rotation to the island.

We will be having several events, the main one that I am involved in is the possible creation of, The Heisei Gobankaji, a group of swordsmiths who were master smiths during the Heisei era. Hopefully in thirty years time, or in every new Imperial era, someone will take up the baton and create a new Gobankaji (For example, Reiwa) and make offerings of several representative smiths swords of that period to Oki shrine where the Emperor Gotoba's spirit is enshrined.

I am trying to cement a tradition, and replicate two events in the process. When Oki shrine was constructed in 1939, 10 swordsmiths donated 10 swords to the shrine, and 15 swords were also donated to Minase shrine (Emperor Gotoba's former beloved villa). These swordsmiths were called the Showa (1926-1989) Gobankaji. Then, in 1977, one of the Showa Gobankaji returned to the Island to perform a forging demonstration in front of the shrine. That smith was Living National Treasure, Gassan Sadaichi, and he brought his son, Sadatoshi. Later this year, Sadatoshi sensei will return to the island to recreate that event, this time with his own son, Gassan Sadanobu.

It has been my honor to create and coordinate this aspect of the overall events which include, Tea Ceremony, Poetry, and Traditional Japanese Bull-Fighting that is said to have been invented by Emperor Gotoba. Depending on the success of the crowd-funding, in the worst case scenario, we will only donate one sword made by Gassan Sadatoshi sensei. The ideal result would be to donate 12 swords to match the number of the original Gobankaji and continue to collect original data in the form of swords directly presented by the smiths for future generations of fans and connoisseurs to enjoy and reflect upon.



In my opinion, it could be argued that

Gotoba's contribution to swords raised them up to the level to which that Kamakura period swords are revered as the golden-era of sword making, therefore giving swords a special place in Japanese culture, in which case Japanese swords became incredibly famous throughout the world.

A link to the Official Gotoba 800 site which has articles in English and videos with subtitles.

<https://en.gotobain-kensyo.com>

A link to my collaboration essay with the Toshiba International Foundation

<https://topics.japan-insights.jp/#emperorgotoba>

A link to my Youtube video on Gotoba and the Oki Islands (Okinoshima).

<https://youtu.be/DLoz8ASu4oY>

YouTube

We are trying hard at the moment to reach a wider audience via the YouTube platform using informative videos. It is a delicate balance to try to meet the requirements of the YouTube algorithm and produce good content. We have plenty of subjects to cover, sword basics, historical events, craftsmen interviews.

However, at the current time, there are only so many hours in a day, and despite the majority of positive comments and likes, etc. we are still struggling to get the views in the first place. One of the ways to do that is to upload regularly. However, once a week is quite a task when YouTube is not a main source of income.

One way to combat this in the interim is to make lots of vlog type videos, and have lots of giveaways to increase our subscriber base. So please stick with us for the time being, it will get better! We have the remaining parts of the Gotoba and Oki Island vids to come, the final part of the Demon Slayer, Kamado Tanjiro Style Koshirae video (part 5 because they are out of sync), and an epic video on the search for the Kotetsu sword of Kondo Isami of the Shinsegumi in the works.

To see all of our videos with giveaway sword and samurai related prizes, make sure that you are subscribed to The Japanese Sword YouTube channel, but most importantly make sure that you have clicked the notifications bell so that you get the most recent videos in your feed as soon as they are released and you don't miss the chance to win some prizes.

We are also looking to send prizes and promotional items to dojos in need! Watch the videos for more details. Subscribe and Click that Notifications Button Now! www.youtube.com/TheJapaneseSword



Demon Slayer, Kamado Tanjiro Style Real Sword Mountings Project

Yet again we have another nihonto based manga/anime (Demon Slayer; Japanese-Kimetsu no Yaiba) that is causing ripples around the world. The story follows Kamado Tanjiro's quest to track down the demon that killed his family and left his sister (Kamado Netsuko) for dead. His sister had also turned into a demon, so Tanjiro trains as a Demon Slayer to join the demon slaying corps in an effort to track

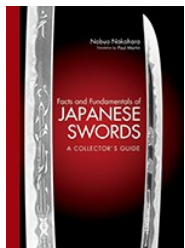
down the demon and find the antidote to cure his sister. The recent release of the movie in the US grossed over 21 million dollars at its box office opening. That is the greatest ever grossing anime box office release ever outside of Japan.

Every generation has an introduction point to Japanese swords. My generation was the Bruce Lee boom of the early 70's and martial arts, followed by Kurosawa movies and my all-time favorite, The Yakuza (1974 Dir. Sidney Pollack) featuring Japan's greatest star, Takakura Ken, and Robert Mitchum. I intend to do a video on a couple of the locations of the Yakuza movie as well as introduce some of the movie memorabilia. In the meantime, here is a play list of the construction of a real Nihonto koshirae, based upon the sword used by the main character, Kamado Tanjiro, in the early part of the series.

Demon Slayer, Kamado Tanjiro Style Real Sword Mountings Project Playlist

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCpCzLONRDVHoP_HFEqnguSFKQfYXX41A

Competition!!! Free Signed Copy of the Facts and Fundamentals of Japanese Swords Book.



Your chance to win a free signed copy (by the translator/contributor) of The Facts and Fundamentals of Japanese Swords. Make sure that you are signed up to both our Youtube Channel and our Newsletter so as to not miss out on this or future competition giveaways.

From Google Books:

"Facts and Fundamentals of Japanese Swords is a practical, comprehensive volume that offers information, along with 300 photos and illustrations, enabling collectors to evaluate the veracity and quality of swords that they are considering acquiring or already have in their collections. The book is divided into three sections: An Overview of the Japanese Sword, The Forged Sword, and Consequences of Modification and Wear. Each section provides very specific, useful lessons by the author that serve as virtual hands-on experiences. With easily understandable examples, the author precisely instructs readers on how to discern and obtain a "healthy" blade, while avoiding fakes or potentially problematic blades. In addition, he shows not only the difference in styles and shapes of blades, but explains what the differences mean and how to interpret them from a buyer's/collector's point of view.

Paul Martin, a Japanese sword researcher and curator, is a former member of the Department of Japanese Antiquities at the British Museum, London. He has translated the text, and drawn on his extensive experience and expertise in the field to adapt the author's theories and discussions, making them more accessible to Western readers."

Link to the video for the question/task

<https://youtu.be/h8qtshEKGek>

That is all for our first newsletter. We hope it was of interest. Next month should include some of the results of the sword craftsmen competitions in Japan. Hopefully links to the Why I Live in Japan program online, and other news from the Japanese sword world around the world. Feel free to share this newsletter with your friends, dojo members, and anyone that you think will be interested. Let us know who our fans are, and how we are doing on whichever platform you are on. We look forward to hearing from you!

Until next time, let's be careful out there!

Best

Paul Martin

The Japanese Sword