



Paul Martin



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Welcome to the August issue of our newsletter

Hi Everyone,

Summer is in full swing here in Tokyo, the cicadas are in full song and the huge kabuto-mushi (helmet insects) beetles (that can also fly) with heads that resemble samurai helmets are being hunted by millions of school children, and even sold in department stores as a summer event. The cicadas have a special place in the Japanese hearts (see the article link below). It is also usually the beginning of Matsuri (festival) season as well, but for the second year running, the Covid situation has put paid to that.



Summers in Japan are full of various celebrations with many people donning yukata (cotton kimono type summer garments), strolling around, firework displays, lots of food stalls, and some fabulous street parties called Awa-Odori where competing teams from local

neighborhoods all parade down the main street of a town while playing traditional festival music while dancing performing in various brightly colored traditional team costumes. See this link for one of the largest festivals in Japan, the Tokushima Awa-Odori.:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9dVUSwoxGI&t=24s>

Additionally, this year we have the Tokyo Olympics which was originally planned for last year. There was much opposition and apprehension to it taking place, but to be honest, since it has started the excitement has kicked in, and lifted the people's spirits. It is a shadow of its usual magnitude, but a nice distraction after months of Covid monotony to actually have something different to focus on. The hot and humid weather this year has been somewhat brutal, probably due to an unusually heavy rainy season that preceded it. However, as of writing this newsletter another fear mongering weather report came out about an approaching typhoon, but the weather has actually cooled down considerably, and usually by the time these typhoons reach Tokyo they have pretty much blown themselves out (famous last words).

Summer is usually quiet sword wise in Japan. The museums continue their displays in their air-conditioned environments, but many swordsmiths extinguish the fires of their forge for the summer and focus on finishing work. The high humidity and the extra heat make it difficult to work. Additionally, August is seen as a kind of holiday month as it includes a long holiday for the Obon Festival so usually no shinsa or any events take place during this month. The Obon festival is where Japanese people honor their ancestors. Many people return to their home town for the holiday and pay their respects.

The Japanese Sword and Impermanence

I mentioned in the opening comments about the cicadas and their special place in Japanese hearts. Their life span is very short, their singing, and lack of it marks the beginning and end of summer. For this reason, Japanese people are very kind to cicadas. They are quite large in size, but they do not bite or sting. Towards the end of summer, you will see them littering the streets as they fall from the trees at the end of their life span. Sometimes, you will see them looking quite dead, when suddenly they will have last gasp at fluttering their wings and making a buzzing sound. People who are not used to them may consider them quite noisy and invasive. However, they are forgiven in Japan because of their transience. Their image has been used to adorn swords as a symbol of impermanence and summer since at least the Nanbokucho era (1336-1392). Please click the link below for the full article.:



https://45783fbb-b997-4513-932f-bbefb21ec5c8.filesusr.com/ugd/0152de_cbb13545ef504087a582bfb10f8795fb.pdf



Sword Exhibition at Himeiji City Museum of Art: Japanese Mindscapes, Resonances and Seascapes

A sword exhibition is currently on display at Himeiji City Museum of Art from July 3rd until September 5th, 2021. It is a collaboration between swordsmiths, photographers and artists and features old swords too. Close by is the majestic (must see) Himeiji Castle that has featured in many dramas and movies.

https://www.odawara-af.com/en/programs/himeiji_2021/

NBSK of Display at the TOKYO, Tokyo All Japan Collection Arts Fair

The sword display takes place between the 19th of July and the 1st of September. With talks by Japanese craftsmen on the 29th and 30th of August.

<https://en.all-japan-collection.tokyo/top/index.html>

Tokyo Tokyo
ALL JAPAN
 COLLECTION

Polishing Section (Blades with a Shinogi)



Kamiyama Yoshie, winner of the Kunzan Award in the blades with shinogi section, and the **NBTHK** Chairman's Award in the Hirazukuri section.

Special Award (Kiya) Inoue Satoshi

Special Award (Takeya) Ogawa Kazuhiko

Special Award (Chiba) Kikuchi Masamichi

Special Award (Kunzan) Kamiyama Yoshie

Special Award (Kanzan) Edamatsu Koji

NBTHK Chairman's Award Kashiwagi Ryo

Award for Excellence First Place Komiya Mitsutoshi

Award for Excellence Second Place Kawakami Yoichiro

Award for Excellence Third Place Hirai Takamori

Award for Excellence Fourth Place Tamaki Joji

Award for Excellence Fifth Place Sekiyama Kazumichi

Award for Excellence Sixth Place Tsukamoto Hiroyuki

Award for Excellence Seventh Place Kagami Genta

Award for Excellence Eighth Place Manazu Hitoaki

Award for Excellence Ninth Place Mori Tetsutaro

Award for Effort First Place Matsumoto Sotaro

Award for Effort Second Place Tada Yoshinori

Award for Effort Third Place Hosomura Masakatsu

Award for Effort Fourth Place Korezawa Mitsumasa

Award for Effort Fifth Place Matsuo Kiyotake

Award for Effort Sixth Place Fujishiro Tatsuya

Award for Effort Seventh Place Hosogoe Takayoshi

Award for Effort Seventh Place Hosogoe Takayoshi

Award for Effort Eighth Place Miura Hiroki

Award for Effort Ninth Place Nagaoka Yasumasa

Award for Effort Tenth Place Sagara Yuichi

Award for Effort Eleventh Place Morodomi Tsuyoshi

(Nyusen; Accepted for Entry)

Accepted for Entry First Place Fukumori Katsuichiro

Accepted for Entry Second Place Kurata Ryutaro

Accepted for Entry Third Place Okoshi Akitomo

Accepted for Entry Fourth Place Okishima Daiki

Accepted for Entry Fifth Place Kunikami Ryo

Accepted for Entry Sixth Place Kakinuma Shinichi

Accepted for Entry Seventh Place Abe Yoshisada

Accepted for Entry Eighth Place Nemoto Taku

Accepted for Entry Ninth Place Saito Hideo

Accepted for Entry Tenth Place Daimon Kenshiro

Accepted for Entry Others; Akita Yuki, Iwamasa Kaneteru, Onishi Hiroshi, Kamijo Tetsu, Kitawaki Yoshiharu, Kurasaki Ayako, Konno Katsuya, Sakai So, Sato Hideaki, Soga Fumimaru, Tanaka Kenjiro, Nakamura Yoshio, Hendrik Lindelauf, L. R. Stewart, Wakita Soichiro.

Polishing Section (Hira-zukuri Blades)

NBTHK Chairman's Award Kamiyama Yoshie

Award for Excellence First Place Kawakami Yoichiro

Award for Excellence Second Place Nakajimada Joji

Award for Excellence Third Place Tada Yoshinori

Award for Excellence Fourth Place Yokoyama Toshinobu

Award for Effort First Place Wada Yoichi

Award for Effort Second Place Abe Yoshisada

Award for Effort Third Place Okishima Daiki

Award for Effort Fourth Place Kashiwagi Ryo

Award for Effort Fifth Place Hirai Takamori

(Nyusen; Accepted for Entry)

Accepted for Entry First Place Matsuo Kiyotake

Accepted for Entry Second Place Daimon Kenshiro

Accepted for Entry Third Place Maeda Katsuro

Accepted for Entry Fourth Place Hori Soichiro

Accepted for Entry Fifth Place Okada Katsuhiro

Accepted for Entry Sixth Place Kami Saki

Accepted for Entry Seventh Place Iwamasa Kaneteru

Accepted for Entry Eighth Place Hosogoe Takayoshi

Accepted for Entry Ninth Place Minami Yukiko

Accepted for Entry Tenth Place Sakurai Toshihiko

Accepted for Entry Others; Sakai So, Yasui Takayuki

Shirasaya Section

NBTHK Chairman's Award for Shirasaya. NBTHK Chairman's Award Nagahora Osamu

Award for Excellence First Place Tsukamoto Takeyuki

Award for Excellence Second Place Kawai Hiroaki

Award for Effort First Place Hashimoto Yukinori

Award for Effort Second Place Morii Atsuhiko

Award for Effort Third Place Chiba Masayoshi

(Nyusen; Accepted for Entry)

Accepted for Entry First Place Chiba Toshikazu

Accepted for Entry Second Place Miyazawa Noriyuki

Accepted for Entry Third Place Noda Yoshitaka

Accepted for Entry Fourth Place Konno Toshiyuki

Koshirae Section

NBTHK Chairman's Award First Place Yamada Masaya

NBTHK Chairman's Award Second Place Sakuma Yasuo

Award for Excellence Kubo Kentaro

Award for Effort Maryana Yakovleva

Accepted for Entry Tsuchida Isao

Tsukamaki (Handle Wrapping) Section



Iiyama Kensen, **NBTHK Chairman's Award for Handle Wrapping.**

NBTHK Chairman's Award First Place Iiyama Kensen

NBTHK Chairman's Award Second Place Yamada Masaya

Award for Excellence First Place Hirayama Naoya

Award for Excellence Second Place Yagura Soichi

Award for Excellence Third Place Ito Toshikatsu

Award for Effort First Place Kubo Kentaro

Award for Effort Second Place Yamaguchi Toshiyuki

Award for Effort Third Place Hashimoto Yukinori

Award for Effort Fourth Place Matsuda Nayuta

(Nyusen; Accepted for Entry)

Accepted for Entry First Place Otsuki Ryoichi

Accepted for Entry Second Place Okuhara Kyoshiro

Accepted for Entry Third Place Oide Masaki

Accepted for Entry Fourth Place Ogata Junko

Accepted for Entry Fifth Place Nakayama Tsunehisa

Accepted for Entry Sixth Place Noda Yoshitaka

Habaki (Shirogane) Section

NBTHK Chairman's Award First Place Mishima Motonori



Ueno Hiroki, **NBTHK Chairman's Award Second Place**
Ueno Hiroki

Award for Excellence Takeda Noriaki

Award for Effort First Place Katayama Shigetsune

Award for Effort Second Place Noguchi Yasuhiro

(Nyusen; Accepted for Entry)**Accepted for Entry First Place** Sato Shu**Accepted for Entry Second Place** Maeda Kota**Accepted for Entry Third Place** Kakinuma Shinichi**Accepted for Entry Fourth Place** Nakamura Shinya**Accepted for Entry Fifth Place** Taketo Ken**Accepted for Entry Sixth Place** Noda Yoshitaka**Accepted for Entry Seventh Place** Okamura Asaka**Next month,**

I am being featured in a bilingual article for Hiden martial arts magazine. The new season of the popular Anime, Demon Slayer, is due to air soon. No doubt that this will cause a stir of excitement among some of the younger generation of sword enthusiasts. Hopefully, we will have some links to an article for that too next month.

Thank you very much for reading this month's newsletter. Please don't forget to subscribe to our [Youtube channel](#), and make sure that you click the notifications bell in order to be notified of all our new video releases including the competition giveaway ones. We regularly have competitions where we give away sword books, and other samurai/sword related prizes and martial arts equipment. We look forward to hearing from you in our comments sections on all our media, and we appreciate your likes and shares!

Take care out there, and we will see you next time!

Best regards

Paul Martin

The Japanese Sword