



January, 2021  
The Society for the Promotion of Japanese Sword Culture (NBSK)  
Chairman: Yoshihara Kuniie

## The 11th Japanese Sword Craftsmens' Exhibition/Competition Guide

Greetings,

We thank you for your interest in the Nihonto Bunka Shinko Kyokai (NBSK), and look forward to your valued contributions and support of the NBSK's future activities.

In 2020, we unfortunately had to cancel our competition/exhibition due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. However, the NBSK's 11th Japanese Sword Craftsmens Exhibition 2021, will be held in both the Sakaki-machi Museum of Tetsu in Sakaki-machi, Hanishina county, Nagano prefecture (part one), and the Meiji Shrine Treasure Museum in Tokyo (part two) giving the opportunity to more sword enthusiasts to be able to see the exhibits.

Additionally, this November Meiji Shrine is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and next year a special event will be held in commemorating of the completion of the Museum Treasure Museum 100 years ago.

(\*please note that due to the changing Covid situation that the time and venue may change)

At the 10<sup>th</sup> exhibition, thanks to everyone's past efforts and achievements, we were able to include for the first time, the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Award

The exhibition as detailed below, will be in a competition format with awards to outstanding works in the competition, such as the Minister's Award and so forth. The results of which will be widely published. Based of last years results, we expecting to see even more entries this year.

In addition to the regular categories of sword making, polishing, and mountings, there is also an additional section for *Sword Oshigata Art*. For further information, please read the separate *Sword Oshigata Art Guidelines* sheet.

We would therefore advise all those interested in entering the competition to pay close attention to the following guidelines.

## Guidelines

### 1. Objectives.

- ① As part the NBSK's aims to contribute to the improvement of the craftsmen's skills involved in all aspects of Japanese sword making and the nurturing of future craftsmen, we hold an annual open competition based on a new standards with strict evaluations.
- ② The results of the competition will be displayed in the form of a comprehensive exhibition in an effort to deepen the understanding of Japanese swords, sword crafts and culture. Additionally, it is our hope that exhibition will broaden the appeal of modern Japanese swords and related crafts overseas.
- ③ The NBSK foundation aims to support modern craftsmen, and build upon the traditions by holding exhibitions and events at various venues.

**2. Title.** The exhibition will be called: The 11th Japanese Sword Craftsmens' Exhibition.

### 3. Venues.

Part One:  
The Sakaki-machi Museum of Tetsu  
6313-2 Sakaki-machi  
Sakaki, Hanishina County,  
Nagano prefecture,  
Japan 389-0601

Part Two:  
Meiji Shrine Treasure Museum  
1-1 Yoyogi-Kamizonocho  
Shibuya, Tokyo  
Japan 151-8557

### 4. Duration.

Part One: July 22 (Thurs) through August 29 (Sun), 2021.

Part Two: November 7 (Sun) through to December 19 (Sun), 2021.

(The awards ceremony and after party venue to be decided at a later date depending on the Covid situation).

**5. Categories.** Sword-making (see Articles 9.1 and 9.2) and Horimono Carving, Polishing (licensed Japanese swords only), and three sections of fittings/mountings.

**6. Sub-sections.** Newly Made swords (see Articles 9.1 and 9.2), Horimono Carving, Polishing (see Article 9.1), Tsuba (and other tosogu), Shirogane (habaki and other kanagu), Shirasaya, Koshirae foundation, Tsuka-maki, Saya lacquering, and Koshirae.

**7. Sponsors.** The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, The Agency for Cultural Affairs and other private sponsors.

**8. Awards.** Special Awards  
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology Award  
The Minister of Economy, Trade and Finance Award  
The Governor of Nagano prefecture Award (Blades and Horimono)  
The Shinano Daily Newspaper Award (Polishing Division)  
The Mayor of Sakaki-Machi Award (Fittings Division)  
The Sakaki-Machi Board of Education Chairman's Award (Fittings)  
The NBSK Chairman's Award (All Divisions)

Standard Awards  
The Award for Technical Endeavour, The Rookie Award,  
The Award for Merit, Gold prize, Silver prize, Bronze prize, and  
Nyusen (accepted for entry)

## **9. Points of note for applicants:**

### **All entries**

- ① All Japanese blades must be accompanied by its original 'Firearms and Swords Registration Certificate', and comply with all the regulations.
- ② All fields are by open invitation. The results of the competition will be presented in the form of an exhibition. Entry is not limited to NBSK members, and anyone inside or outside Japan can enter. However, newly made swords are only accepted from licensed swordsmiths.
- ③ Entries will be judged at the exhibition venue.
- ④ Entries must be made, polished, or carved by the entrant. In the Tosogu-koshirae section, joint entries are permitted. However, the blade, tsuba (and other tosogu) must all have the makers inscriptions. Please see the section on **Koshirae** for detailed information.
- ⑤ Works should be not have been entered previously. Therefore, works that have been made/performed within the past year.
- ⑥ Applicants can only make one entry per category. Different parts of a single koshirae cannot be submitted to different catagories. However, newly made swords can also be submitted to the polishing section.
- ⑦ Entries awarded prizes or nyusen may be included in the exhibition.

⑧ An entry fee of 15,000 JPY will be charged per item, per category for non-members. The entry fee for NBSK full members is 10,000 JPY. Entry fees must be paid in full by 4 pm (Japan time) on 8th (Sat) of May, 2021 or your entry will not be accepted.

### **Sword making**

- ① All swordsmiths entering works must hold a current license.
- ② Swords must be made using traditional materials and methods.
- ③ Swords must be in an appropriate polish befitting of a Japanese art sword.
- ④ Workmanship will be judged on its originality and individuality.
- ⑤ The submission of superior works of utsushi-mono (facsimile of famous works) is permitted.
- ⑥ There will be no distinction between tachi, katana, wakizashi and tanto. All will be judged on their merits.
- ⑦ Applicants who have held their license for less than three years are eligible for the Rookie Award.
- ⑧ Entries must be submitted within 12 months of the issue date on the license (torokusho).

### **Horimono carving**

- ① Migaki (polishing) should be completely finished.

### **Polishing (licensed Japanese swords only)**

- ① National Treasures, Important Cultural Property, and Important Art Objects are not allowed as entries.
- ② Polishes must be befitting of Japanese Art Swords.

### **Shirogane (habaki and other kanagu)**

- ① In the case of habaki with mon, foiled is preferred.

### **Saya-nuri (Saya lacquering)**

- ① Do not enter just the saya. The whole koshirae must be submitted.

### **Koshirae**

- ① Applicants must have contributed to the making of the koshirae, as well as the design and supervision. Just coordinating the manufacture of a koshirae is not in keeping with the spirit of the competition.
- ② In the case where older fittings have been used, the complete koshirae should be in accordance with that historical period.

### **Tosogu (fittings)**

① The submission of superior works of utsushi-mono (facsimile of famous works) is permitted.

### **10. How to Enter.**

① To enter, please fill out the supplied application form and send it to us by airmail, fax or as an email attachment. Application forms must be received by the NBSK by April 15 (Thurs), 2021 (Japan time). They can be submitted via airmail, fax or email attachments. Applicants should receive an official entry sheet and a form to wire the entry fee by around April 30, 2021.

② If we receive your works without receiving the entry form by the required date, your entry will be invalid.

**11. Submissions.** To be eligible to enter this years competition, entries must be received in the three day period of between the 6th (Thur) and 8th (Sat) of May, 2021 at the address below between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm.

The Sakaki-machi Museum of Tetsu  
6313-2 Sakaki-machi  
Sakaki, Hanishina County,  
Nagano prefecture  
Japan 389-0601

**12. Judging.** Judging takes place for a period of three days between the 12th (Wed) and 14th (Fri) of May, 2021.

**13. Additional.** Exhibition Catalogue. All entries that receive 'Nyusen' or above may be published in the exhibition catalogue.



※ For further details, please see the homepage or contact the head office via email.

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