



January, 2023
Nihonto Bunka Shinko Kyokai Public Foundation (NBSK)
Chairman: Yoshihara Kuniie
Chairman of the Exhibition Steering Committee:
Miyairi Kozaemon Yukihira

The 13th 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.

Last year, the NBSK also held the 12th Japanese Sword Craftsmen's Exhibition at the Meiji Shrine Treasure Museum, in Tokyo. It was a great success with many visitors from both home and abroad.

As part of our activities for this year (2023), the NBSK will host the 13th Japanese Sword Craftsmen's Exhibition at both Sakaki-machi Museum of Tetsu and the Sano Art Museum.

As explained below, the exhibition will be held in the form of a 'competition' that honors superior works with various awards, including the Minister's Award. It is an open competition, therefore regardless of whether you are a member or non-member of our association, the results of all the craftsmen involved in Japanese sword production will be open to the public in an effort to promote Japanese sword culture.

This year's exhibition will be the first travelling exhibition, and will be held at both, the Sakaki-machi Museum of Tetsu in Nagano Prefecture, and the Sano Art Museum in Shizuoka Prefecture. As a result, there are some areas where the application process differs from the previous year.

This year, will also include the *Sword Oshigata Art* section in addition to the regular categories of sword making, polishing, and mountings. 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 13th Japanese Sword Craftsmen's Exhibition.*

3. Venues.

(Sat) 27/5/2023~(Sun) 27/8/2023

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

(Sat) 28/10/2023~(Sun) 17/12/2023

Sano Art Museum
Nakata-machi 1-43
Mishima City
Shizuoka prefecture
Japan 411-0838

***Note. The Awards Ceremony and party are scheduled to take place at the Sakaki-machi Museum of Tetsu on the opening day of the exhibition.**

4. Categories. Sword-making (see Articles 8.1 and 8.2) and Horimono Carving, Polishing (licensed Japanese swords only), and three sections of fittings/mountings.

5. Sub-sections. Newly Made swords (see Articles 8.1 and 8.2), Horimono Carving, Polishing (see Article 8.1), Tsuba (and other tosogu), Shirogane (habaki and other kanagu), Shirasaya, Koshirae foundation, Tsuka-maki, Saya lacquering, and Koshirae.

6. Sponsors. We have applications with several relevant government agencies and private sponsors.

7. Awards. Special Awards

Minister's Award (the highest award in the competition in the Swordmaking and Horimono Divisions) *application pending.
The Governor of Nagano prefecture Award (Swordmaking and Horimono Divisions)
The Shinano Daily Newspaper Award (Polishing Division)
The Mayor of Sakaki-Machi Award (Fittings and Mountings Division)
The Sakaki-Machi Board of Education Chairman's Award (Fittings and Mountings Divisions)
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)

8. 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 Tosogukoshirae 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 categories. 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 30,000 JPY will be charged per item, per category for non-members (to cover insurance premiums, exhibition costs, transportation costs, etc, for 2 venues). The entry fee for NBSK full members is 20,000 JPY (for the above reasons). Entry fees must be paid in full by 4 pm (Japan time) on 15th (Sat) of April, 2023 or your entry will not be accepted (we accept payment by Paypal).

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.

9. 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 March 31 (Fri), 2023 (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 7, 2023.

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

10. Submissions. To be eligible to enter this year's competition, entries must be received in the two-day period of between the 15th (Sat) and 16th (Sun) of April, 2023 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

11. Judging. Judging takes place for a period of three days between the 19th (Wed) and 21st (Fri) of April, 2023.

12. 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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