

Sharing Oki Islands' Rich History and Culture with the World

Paul Martin (Japanese Sword Specialist)

2021 marks the 800th anniversary of Emperor Gotoba's arrival on Oki Islands following his failed uprising against the military government. His legacy, after nineteen years in exile on the Island, can still be felt very strongly even today. Oki Islands' Gotoba-in Kenshō Executive Committee is making great efforts to share the Islands rich history and culture with the world.

As a Japanese sword and culture specialist, I am greatly honored to be included in the activities of the Gotoba-in Kenshō Executive Committee and be able to share my passion for Emperor Gotoba and his sword making with the world. I hope that this precious hidden treasure, not only Japanese swords, but all aspects of Japanese culture will be of great interest to many people around the world. Over the next couple of years, we are organizing several events that include an indigenous style of bull fighting that is said to have been introduced by Emperor Gotoba himself, as well as other activities such as Waka Poetry, and Tea, that he is said to have enjoyed. We are hoping to preserve and build upon these existing traditions and propel them into the future for the education and enjoyment of future generations.



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Paul Martin is a former curator in the Japanese section at the British Museum, London. He holds an M.A. in Asian Studies (Japan) from the University of Berkeley, California, and has resided in Japan working as a Japanese sword specialist for over fifteen years. A two-time winner of the sword appraisal contest in Tokyo, he is also a trustee of the Society for the Promotion of Japanese Sword Culture (NBSK), and a recognized specialist by the Ministry of Land Infrastructure, Tourism and Transport. He has his own column on Japan-Forward (Sankei Shinbun), and has published several books and DVDs on Japanese swords.