

A Yu Nakajima Film

KATSUO-BUSHI

Running Time: 25 Minutes

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/shortdockatsuobushi>

Contact Information

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KATSUO-BUSHI - Long Film Synopsis

Traditional Japanese cuisine "Washoku" was officially recognized as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013.

However, the circumstances surrounding modern Japanese cuisine are undergoing drastic changes today.

These ripples of changes are affecting the people who make and use "Katsuo-Bushi" Bonito flakes, the foundation of Japanese cuisine, and with this the taste of Japanese Cuisine is inevitably changing.

Amidst the turning tides of the food culture, there are so many people investing their time and craft into bringing Katsuo-Bushi to the consumer's tables. From the craftsmen who continue to take the traditional route of Katsuo-Bushi making, the Katsuo-Bushi graders who sort through the products everyday feeling the shift in its qualities, the fishermen who lament what little they can leave behind for the next generation, the chefs who create Michelin 2 star dishes bringing the Katsuo-Bushi directly to the consumers.

Through the world's tiniest Katsuo-Bushi manufacturer's craftsmanship, and his efforts to conserve tradition whilst adapting to the changing surroundings, we explore the question of what is sustainable food culture.

Katsuo-Bushi (Dried Bonito) in Japan

Katsuo-Bushi is known in the world as the world's stiffest food (Guinness Certified) and it acts as the most basic foundation of Japanese Cuisine, a defining factor of the fragrance and flavor. It has many usages other than making Dashi, the stock, and can be seen in many different dishes as the garnish or topping.

With the steady increase of Japanese restaurants worldwide, the consumption rate of Katsuo-Bushi is growing. However, the consumption rate in Japan along with the production of the highest grade Katsuo-Bushi that goes through the "Honkare-Bushi" molding process, are decreasing every year.

One of the main causes of the decline in Honkare-Bushi Katsuo-Bushi is the growth in the number of Bonito flake processed products. Bonito for processed food is cheap and requires very little human labor, appearance of the product is not an issue and it is suitable for mechanical mass production.

Meanwhile the Honkare-Bushi Katsuo-Bushi undergo a series of highly complicated processes

that are hard to recreate mechanically and it takes human hands and labor which calls for higher pricing. However, the rich flavors of Honkare-Bushi is an essential factor in creating the delicate and complex tastes of Japanese cuisine.

There used to be many Katsuo-Bushi manufacturers all over Japan but now the industry has shrunk to mainly three areas. This change is deeply connected to the evolution in Bonito fishing itself. Traditionally Bonito fishermen used inshore net fishing and pole fishing which over time shifted to large scale Roundhaul Fishery. With this came the change in the location and quality of Bonito and the need for manufacturers' to adapt accordingly.

Director's Statement

The manufacturers in Tago do most of the work by hand with almost no help of machinery at all. The most special process, characteristic to this manufacturer is the smoke drying section where they dry out the bonito with the heat and smoke of burning firewood.

The firewood pieces are put in place carefully and once they are lit they must be attended at all times to adjust the heat, the placement of the trays affect the degree of how well the bonitos are dried so it has to be switched out once in a while all by hand. The firewood used in this process are all from local forests and purchased from local lumberjacks.

After that comes the molding in the wooden barrels, which takes place in the basement, where the temperature is stove controlled.

Then comes the sun drying where they line up the bonitos on a rack.

Tago Katsuo-Bushi made with this traditional technique has a distinct flavor and aroma, comparable to the significance Islay malt has among Whiskeys with it's unique flavor of peat.

This is something that only these Tago craftsmen are able to achieve.

Ninben Co., Ltd, the main sponsor of our film is a long established Katsuo-Bushi speciality store with a history of over 315 years.

They have strong ties to the manufacturers and they play an important role in the preservation of the traditional techniques.

As the Katsuo-Bushi shavers that were essential to every Japanese family dinner table have disappeared over the years, with the emergence of convenient powder Dashi and shaved Katsuo-Bushi which now has become mainstream, Ninben has always had one wish that we want our customers to know what real Katsuo-Bushi looks and tastes like, and enjoy the true essence of Washoku. With this in our hearts, we thoroughly support the message of this film and thus have joined hands with this documentary short film "KASTUO-BUSHI".

When I visited this tiny Katsuo-Bushi shop in the middle of a small town in the mountains of Nishi-Izu town in Shizuoka, even though it was the first time I had ever seen this place, I somehow felt nostalgic.

Seeing the family who worked their, and how their traditional manufacturing was deeply in sync with not only the fishing industry but the local lumberjacks as well, I felt that this might be a key factor in exploring what "sustainable food culture" is.

One thing that surprised me when they showed me the whole Katsuo-Bushi making process is that these craftsmen do not throw away any part of the Bonito, the intestines, bones and heads all become fertilizers and feed without exception.

In Makurazaki in Kagoshima prefecture we found a Bonito mound that worshipped Bonitos. We humans take the lives of other creatures and we pay our respects to those lives, which made me aware of how animalistic our culture is.

I feel that our awareness towards food has been changing drastically these days. In the humongous food industry that is produced and consumed, sustainable food culture holds an important key to what we can leave behind for the future generation. The Katsuo-Bushi craftsmen prefer the more sustainable methods of pole fishing, they utilize every bit of the Bonitos and perfect a product in a 6 month span. It is not the most economical way, but I found this to be one valid form of sustainable food culture production that must not be overlooked.

Director Yu Nakajima

FILM MAKERS

Director **YU NAKAJIMA**

Producer **MIKA NISHIDE**

Editor **YUI AOKI**

Cinematographer **YU NAKAJIMA and KOICHI TAKAGI**

Composer **ONE hundred MONT BLANC**

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

YU NAKAJIMA, Director / Cinematographer

Nakajima started film production in Tokyo. He was involved in TV and independent film projects, both in front of and behind the camera.

He moved to New York in 2010, working in production at Fine Line Media Inc, a documentary production company. He was part of the production HERB & DOROTHY 50X50(Dir: Megumi Sasaki). The film made headlines as the most successful crowdsourcing film project ever in Japan, and kicked off a countrywide theatrical release in Spring 2013.

In 2013, his film "Remind" was screened at the historical Anthology Film Archives NY as an official selection of NewFilmmakers.

(The Anthology Film Archives, one of the leading theaters in New York City and the only theater truly dedicated to independent, underground and experimental film)

Other works include cover different medias including many short and feature films, music videos, commercials, he was also a director for a documentary TV show shot for TV-Asahi in 2014. He has relocated to Berlin in 2015 and is now in pre-production for his new documentary.

MIKA NISHIDE, Producer

Beethoven Inc President, Producer.

As a representative of a PR production company, Mika has extensive knowledge and experience in managing PR and promotion campaigns for various corporations.

She also runs a nation wide traveling school "School for Grown Ups" where her motto is "supporting busy adults!". She also gives lectures at school and universities for students aspiring to work in the events management industry.

<Theatre>

The following two plays were produced by Mika Nishide

"Kunitomi Three Sisters" Written/Direction by Yu Shibuya

black box #1 "Visual Poetry" Written/Direction by Yu Shibuya

The following three plays were produced by Beethoven inc.

Monologue Theatre "Hole", "Kunitomi Three Sisters" and black box #1"Visual Poetry"

Yui Aoki, Editor

2010 TV-Asahi Editor at Sports Editing Room

From 2010 he worked as an editor on many sports related shows such as "Yabecchi FC" "Houdou Station" "GET SPORTS". 2014

He branched out as a freelance editor. He has expanded his expertise from his sports background and works on commercials, corporate PR, music videos and short films.

He made his feature film debut on "Mou Shimasen" starring Lepro Entertainment's Yuta Nakano, which was screened at the Yubari Fantastic International Film Festival.

He has collaborated with many corporations including TV-Asahi, Hakuhodo, Kodansha, HP .

Koichi Takagi, Cinematographer

From Osaka, Japan.

Takagi started filmmaking in high school with friends.

After graduation he moved to Tokyo and studied photography. After some freelancing he started working for Iino Mediapro Studio, Japan's largest fashion and advertisement studio.

Upon leaving his studio job in 2010, he won the Canon New Cosmos of Photography prize and debuted as a photographer. His works were exhibited at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography.

In 2011 he moved to Berlin for a year for various production activities.

He came back to Japan in 2012, and is now a Tokyo based photographer and has also started film making. He is expanding his medium from magazines, documentaries, films, advertisement, music, fashion, art to drone filming. His first solo exhibition is coming soon in Tokyo 2015.

ONE hundred MONT BLANC, Composer

A world class music unit consisting of twin brothers DAI-STAR and GEN.

With their musicality that refuses to fit into a specific criteria, the duo has garnered attention in and outside of Japan and in 2010 became the first Japanese artists to be awarded the COOL FOREIGNERS AWARD in the "IN THE CITY" festival in Manchester, UK. They also received praise from Nick Mason of Pink Floyd.

The following year they appeared on "Liverpool SOUNDCITY". The reckless duo who recorded their "soon to be released" album claim to have found the roots of their creation in the music they were listening to whilst skateboarding through empty countryside roads.

2010 "IN THE CITY(UK)" First Japanese Recipients of COOL FOREIGNERS AWARD

2012 TOYOTA Concept Car "Camatte" Theme Music Songwriting credits

2013 TOYOTA Concept Car "Camatte 2" Theme Music Songwriting credits

2013 docomo Phone Application "4D" Theme Music Songwriting credits

2013 Limited Release Single EXS24 The world's first collaboration with the original illustrations of Keith Haring in their music video. Nakamura Keith Haring Museum Officially approved.