

# Report on the 1st Japanese Spey Clave



*Some of the spey clave attendees*

I had the great honor and privilege to be asked to the first ever Japanese Spey Clave, held on the Tone River, in the city of Maebashi - about a two hour drive north and west of Tokyo. The event took place on Saturday 17th December 2005 and combined a Spey casting distance championships with the usual demonstrations, instruction, whiskey tasting and tackle testing opportunities that spey claves are known for.

The event was run by Takashi (Tak) Shimosawa on his home water and was a wonderful opportunity for me to see the casting styles and standards of this nation of passionate spey casters. Great success. Tak had a limit of 40 contestants in the casting competition and an additional 40 people that signed up in advance to test gear and receive instruction. In addition there were probably another 20 onlookers, so not a bad turnout, all-in-all.



### *The Distance Competition*

Most of the Japanese tackle companies and distributors had been invited and there were rods from CND, Clan, Coatec, Loop, Sage, O-REX, Loomis, TSR, K11 and Vision to try. It was great to get the chance to try spey rods that I would never have been able to try in the US or the UK and I was particularly attracted to a beautifully made range of cane rods made by Kurihana Rod Craft that were on display. They certainly got full marks from me for their craftsmanship and beauty. Other rods of note were the K11 range, a cracking little 10 ft #5 two handed rod by O-REX and the new CND BS rods (Black Spey, in case you are wondering..).

These Japanese spey casters certainly know their stuff. The overall spey casting ability was very impressive and this showed in the tournament casting results. The top 9 competitors all made casts over 50 meters (164 feet) with the winning cast of 58 meters (190 feet) coming from Hideki Ozawa. Hideki made this cast using the CND "Beast" rod coupled with a new 11/12 tournament line designed by Tak. In fact the top six casters all used this new tournament line.



*Hideki Ozawa, the winner with a 58 meter cast*

To put the distances into perspective, the tournament was more for Switch casting, than spey casting as no change of direction was used. Also, a strong downstream wind certainly made for good distances, but the strength of the wind also made it a lot more difficult to create a good D-loop, and nothing should be taken away from the casting skill of the competitors.

The event went from 8.30 in the morning to around 4 pm and Nobuo's famous "Spey bar" (along with a variety of bottles from other manufacturers and distributors) helped keep the mood light and relaxed.



*The CND "Spey Bar"*



*Lunch at the clave*

All-in-all it was a great bash and particularly good to catch up with Nobuo, Tak and Hiroshi as well as to meet so many keen and great spey casters. I am sure this annual event will grow and I can only hope that I will be attending it again in the near future.

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