

## Japanese and Polish sabre – 20 years after historical confrontation

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**Abstract.** *The study concerns Polish fencing (hussar sabre fighting) and Japanese kenjutsu (art of sword). It focuses on forms of their promotion as well as popularization and its scope. In the light of history, theoretical sociology and anthropology of martial arts selected relevant facts are discussed in an attempt to explain the reasons for the changes which have occurred. An attempt is also made to compare the progress of the process of institutionalization in the case of both martial arts. Three complementary qualitative research methods were used: a long-term observation in the role of a participant (25 years), content analysis of the literature and the case study. In addition, the author presents the case study of an international seminar on kenjutsu of the Katori Shinto-ryu school organized in Kraków. The date of the seminar coincided with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle demonstration where a representative of the fencing school fought against W. Zabłocki, a master of the Polish hussar sabre, and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of practising martial arts of aikibudō and kobudō in Poland (including kenjutsu of the said school). Japanese kenjutsu is much more advanced in comparison to the Polish historical art of fencing in terms of institutionalization and popularization. However, the two-day seminar on old Japanese fencing in Krakow was an example of a cultural meeting, dialogue and educational experience confirming validity of the theory of dialogue between cultures. Polish martial arts as part of the national heritage need to be supported by the state government.*

**Keywords:** *fencing, kenjutsu, schools, tradition, popularity*

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### INTRODUCTION

This case study focuses on Polish hussar sabre fencing (fig. 1) and Japanese *kenjutsu* (swordsmanship) on the example of the *tenshin shōden katori shintō-ryū* school, usually referred to as the *katori shintō-ryū*. The study focuses on forms of promotion of the abovementioned fencing and sword fighting as well as their popularizing and the present scope of their popularity. Significant facts and changes are discussed and attempts are made to explain the reasons of such changes in the light of theoretical sociology, martial arts humanistic theory and anthropology [1,2,3] as well as in their historical (diachronic) perspective. The author also attempts to compare the advancement of the process of institutionalization in both martial arts presented [4].

Three complementary qualitative methods have been used and they include a 25-year observation in the role of a participant, content analysis of the literature on the subject and the case study itself. The analyses make room for the martial arts' adaptive changes within the scope of their training curricula and training methods applied.

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The attempted case study is illustrated in the discussion of the event which took place in Kraków in the form of an international seminar on *kenjutsu* of the *katori shintō-ryū* school. Interestingly, the event took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Polish hussar saber demonstration of the school and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *aikibudo* and *kobudō* having been practised in Poland (including *kenjutsu* of the abovementioned school). This kind of international events dedicated to martial arts are an example of a meeting where different cultures meet, dialogue and educate, which proves the theory of the dialogue of cultures to be right [5].

In general, fencing and sword fighting in their historical perspective with a special focus on their evolution towards sports fencing have been discussed by, among others, Zbigniew Czajkowski [6], Maciej Łuczak [7] and Zbigniew Borysiuk [8,9], to mention only a few Polish authors. Wojciech Zabłocki described construction and functions of the hussar sabre [10,11], and he is also making attempts at reactivating old techniques and teaching methods [12,13,14,15]. Present day researchers of Polish historical fencing including Zbigniew Sawicki [16,17] and Gabriel Szajna [18] both refer to swordsman Michał Starzewski's treatise on fencing.

As far as the teaching of the *katori shintō-ryū* school is concerned, it is discussed in a book by Risuke Otake, a *shihan* master, [19] which was written in cooperation with an American hoplologist Donald F. Draeger. The school was founded in 1447 and since then it has been teaching wielding a variety of combat weapons. Interestingly, the shorter one of the pair of the samurai sabres (55 cm) is shorter in this school than the Japanese *kenjutsu* standard (40-51 cm), while the *uchigatana* (97 cm) is longer than commonly used sabers of those times (61-90 cm) [20,21]. At the same time the author of this paper has been garnering hands-on experience as far as the curriculum of the school is concerned and he has also been conducting his own research both in Poland and in Japan.

Still, let us first make a few comments on the terminology being used and establish what is a sword and what is a sabre. In the case of the Polish hussar sabre, there is no doubt which weapon it actually is. However, as far as the Japanese *katana* blades are concerned the issue becomes a more complex one. Most weapon experts and hoplologists speak of the samurai sabre due to its curved blade. Nevertheless, there is no univocal agreement on this issue. Some Japanese martial arts experts including F. Tanaka, S. Mol, and W. Nowakowski [22,23] maintain that as it is generally assumed in the mass culture the samurai wielded "the samurai sword" or sometimes even two swords simultaneously. On other occasions only the longer sabre "tachi" (of 90-120 cm in length) is referred to as the sword.

For the purpose of this case study an assumption can be made that *uchigatana* (commonly called *katana* - fig. 2) and *tachi* (sword with a curved blade or bigger sabre) are categorized as sabres



Fig. 1: Hussar sabre (from the collection of the Museum of the Polish Army in Warsaw)

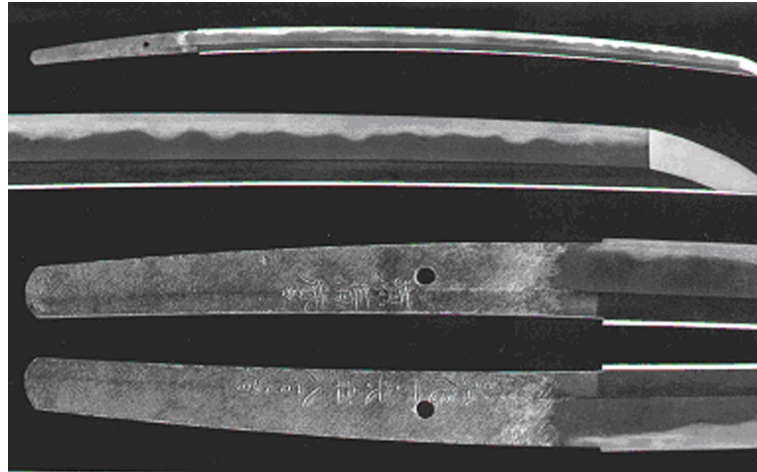


Fig. 2: Uchigatana blade (photograph from the author's private collection)

because of their curved blades while *ken* or *tsurugi* fall into the category of the sword (straight blade) [24]. This category also includes the shorter one of the pair of the sabres which is called *koshigatana*, *kodachi* or *wakizashi*. It still needs to be remembered that expressions *Ken wa bushi no tamashi* (the sword is the bushi's spirit), *Ken tai ich* (the sword and the body are one) as well as *Katsu jin ken* (the sword saves life) all refer to the sword at the times when the *uchigatana* was commonly used.

### Direct confrontation

What is undoubtedly more important than the issue of a curved blade is the ability to wield a given blade. Sabre wielding techniques, especially those of the hussar sabre, were supposed to be used in mounted combat. However, the sabre was also successfully used in unmounted combat. As far as their construction is concerned those both weapons reached their perfection – and so did the warriors/fencers who used them. Hence, discussions on advantages of one weapon over the other and Old-Polish and Japanese fencing techniques have continued for a number of years now. However, it was 20 years ago when a direct confrontation with the use of edged weapons between the advocates of the two weapons and techniques finally took place in Poland.

The event took place in November 1992 in Warsaw during the Japanese Culture Days as an event organized by the Polish Martial Arts Federation. Polish television recorded a fighting demonstration in the Japanese restaurant *Tsubame* while another staged fight took place in the gym of a secondary school situated at Emilii Plater Street. The opponents in those two events were prof. Wojciech Zabłocki, an outstanding sabre, Olympian and swordsman of Zabłocki School of the Polish hussar sabre and Wojciech J. Cynarski, a relatively little then known *kenjutsu* instructor of the Japanese medieval school of *katori shintō-ryū* and *iaidō* (way of drawing the sabre). The fact that the Polish Federation of Martial Arts chose that very representative of Japanese *budō* (way of war) could have resulted from the situation that no one else was willing to be an opponent in a dual against Wojciech Zabłocki. Both swordsmen have remembered that fight a number of times afterwards [25,26,27]. And understandably, its main reason was to promote classical fencing – both Polish and Japanese.

The Polish hussar sabre held with one hand provided a greater range of the strike (attack through a lunge and the arm movement from the shoulder) while the movements coming from

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the wrist made it possible to injure the opponent's arm by way of bypassing the opponent's weapon. On the other hand, the sabre of the *katorishintō-ryū* school held with two hands gives additional strength in downward cuts and cuts can be executed in all directions, which could be rather misleading when used in combinations. When standing in the same initial stance it is possible to attack using cuts aimed at various areas.

In the old days schools of martial arts used demonstrations, staged fights and contests between masters to become better known and more popular. Great winners and conquerors were praised in songs as heroes. Historic Europe and Japan cherished the same tradition. However, today there are new ways of promoting and advertising, in which demonstrations presenting various techniques are published as films on YouTube. There is accompanied by extremely important written advertising and photographs published on the Internet.

### Popularising the art of fencing

Japanese *kenjutsu* has been practised in Europe for over 30 years [2]. In 1984 French *kendōka* Alain Floquet introduced in France and Europe the *katorishintō-ryū* fencing (as handed down by master Yoshio Sugino) and the *daitō-ryū* fencing (as handed down by *sōke* T. Takeda, *daitōkan*). The person who brought those to Poland was *judo* and *jūjutsu* instructor Stanisław Cynarski, who established contact and cooperation with Alain Floquet in 1987. Stanisław Cynarski organized a number of both domestic and international apprentice training sessions [28]. He also facilitated organization of summer apprentice training sessions in France.

In 1989 W.J. Cynarski spent in France 3 months training under A. Floquet (as his *uchi-deshi* – inside student) and a few senior Japanese martial artists. He practiced *kodachi* forms of the *onoha ittō-ryū* school included in *daitō-ryū aikibudō* curriculum. However, he mainly concentrated on fencing based on the *katorishintō-ryū* school. The following years witnessed his progress along those lines. He obtained the *kyū* grade 1 from *hanshi* Y. Sugino 10<sup>th</sup> dan in July 1992 and 1<sup>st</sup> dan by way of an examination taken in front of G. Hatakeyama 9<sup>th</sup> dan and A. Floquet in 1993. At that time it was the first dan rank of the school to the East of France and Holland. At the same time W.J. Cynarski, now a *sensei*, trained *iaidō* and *battō-jutsu* (the *uchigatana* techniques) based on the *idōkan*, *jikiden eishin-ryū* and *takeda-ryū* schools.

As a result of the fight demonstration with W. Zabłocki (against the hussar sabre) *shihan* Hatakeyama entered in W.J. Cynarski's sports passport an honorary 6<sup>th</sup> dan and sent a *makimono* scroll which enabled Cynarski to establish *shibu* – a representative unit of the *katorishintō-ryū* school. In 1993 *Shibu Kobudō* was founded at Idōkan Poland Association (IPA) and Rzeszowski Ośrodek "Dōjō Budōkan" (Dōjō Budōkan Rzeszów Centre) in Poland. The people who started their successful careers there included, among others, M. Wywrocki (the 2<sup>nd</sup> *kyū*) and P. Tuszyński (at present 1<sup>st</sup> Dan in *kenjutsu*). W.J. Cynarski with his apprentices/students recorded for *TVN Turbo* (a Polish TV station) a demonstration of *kenjutsu* training sessions. Two training VHS tapes were also made. For over 20 years students of the *sensei* have practised at IPA summer camps. Sergio Mor-Stabilini from Italy holding the 7<sup>th</sup> D in *kenjutsu* joined this *Shibu* in 2011. *Shihan* Lothar Sieber from Germany holding the 7<sup>th</sup> Dan in *kenjutsu* and *iaidō* also joined the *Shibu*.

After the death of Yoshio Sugino (1904-1998) in the *katorishintō-ryū* school there arose particular two lines along which the tradition accepted by the heir of the tradition *sōke* Iizasa was handed down - *shihan* Risuke Otake and Tetsuka Sugawara (*dōjō* in Narita) and also Yukihiro Sugino 9<sup>th</sup> Dan (son of master Yoshio, Yuishinkan *dōjō* in Kawasaki). Master Sugino was also the headmaster of the French *Shibu* managed by A. Floquet.

Until the very death of Yoshio Sugino *sensei* Hatakeyama taught the same what the master taught by following the classical tradition. However, in the years that followed, between 2000 and 2009, he began to create his own school. He awarded a few senior instructors with the

7<sup>th</sup> dan. Sergio Mor-Stabilini and Andrea Ré from Italy hold the 7<sup>th</sup> dan and *menkyō okuden* licence. Hatakeyama awarded Floquet with the 7<sup>th</sup> dan and the *menkyō kaiden* licence confirming that he had acquired all the knowledge and abilities. However, in 2011 at an international seminar in Mszana Dolna (Poland) *sensei* Mor-Stabilini declared that there was no “*hatakeyama-ha*” -Hatakeyama school or method. *Sōke* Iizasa never came to accept this individual line of handing down this tradition.

The most common way of popularising a given martial art is a training seminar often called an apprenticeship. They have recently been organized by junior instructors – students of G. Hatakeyama’s late school. They often go to Italy for international apprenticeships run by the abovementioned instructors. Thus, apart from *Shibu Kobudō* Poland boasts three centres – in Cracow, Lublin and Warsaw.

The Japanese *uchigatana* is not only practiced within the *katori shintō-ryū* school. In the year of 1987 *takeda-ryū* school arrived in France and Europe, in which apart from *aikijutsu* hand techniques, wielding of the sabre and other weapons is also practiced. The then-pioneer of Europe was Roland J. Maroteaux. His *uchi-deshi* – W.J. Cynarski – started studying *iaidō takeda-ryū* in the year of 1994. The school also teaches *battōjutsu* and organises *kumi-battō-jiai* contests [29,30,31].

And what is the situation like in the case of the Polish hussar sabre? Apart from brotherhoods of knights, reconstruction groups and historical fencing interest groups (a few thousand people altogether), there exist two schools specializing in the Polish hussar sabre – the one of Wojciech Zabłocki (fig. 3) and that of Zbigniew Sawicki. Their leaders publish books, take part in television programmes, organize demonstrations and publish both academic and popular knowledge papers [10,17], and also take part in academic conferences. Wojciech Zabłocki, for example, was an active participant of the 1<sup>st</sup> World Scientific Congress of Combat



Fig. 3: *Polskie sztuki walki* – książka W. Zabłockiego

Sports and Martial Arts in Rzeszów, Poland in 2006 and during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress in 2010 he received from the European Nobility Club representative a *Homo Creator Nobilis* order of knighthood. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress Zbigniew Sawicki, on the other hand, delivered a demonstration of fencing, ran a workshop and gave a paper on *Polish Martial Art – Signum Polonicum* [17].

The demonstration by Z. Sawicki inspired the master of the *takeda-ryū* school – Dr R.J. Maroteaux. On his initiative, as a result of cooperation with Z. Rawicki, master of the *Signum Polonicum* school (Polish sign), the 55<sup>th</sup> issue of “Aiki Goshindo Kaishi” was devoted to a significant extent to a comparative analysis of techniques used in this Polish fencing school and the Japanese *takeda-ryū* school [32]. Nota bene, Maroteaux indicated numerous similarities between the two schools. We could actually as well enumerate numerous differences resulting from at least the very different way of holding the sabre with two hands, which is preferred in the Japanese fencing tradition. More importantly, however, the information on the Polish art of fencing reached the international martial arts environment. Thus, the cooperation between *shihan* Maroteaux and baron Sawicki resulted in promoting the Polish historical fencing school in a French-language magazine.

Polish martial arts traditions including Zabłocki’s and Sawicki’s schools as well as the earlier school of Michał Starzewski, are promoted in scholarly publications of the IPA Fencing Committee, which are available in English, Polish and Spanish [18,30,33,34,35,36,37,38]. Owing it to the author’s endeavours the subjects of Old-Polish and European fencing are present at academic conferences on martial arts because they fit into the definition of martial arts adopted in the humanistic theory of martial arts [2,33] and even more so into the broad definition adopted in the American anthropology of culture [1,3].



Fig. 4. *Signum Polonicum* in “Aiki Goshindo Kai Shi”



Fig. 5. Gripping the sabre to perform the *torii* block - *sensei* Andrea Ré ([www.zanshin-dojo.it](http://www.zanshin-dojo.it))

Nevertheless, it does not mean that the school's *kenjutsu* has been affected by the global McDonaldization process. Michael Finn advises that the *katori shintō-ryū* school is protected from being commercialised and only very few instructors from the West have managed to obtain a licence to teach. Japanese institutions like "Japanese Embassy or an authoritative body would take action such men who have taken the system as a living national cultural treasure and are using it in commercial gain" [39].

As far as the Polish hussar sabre schools are concerned, it is difficult to speak of their world-wide popularity. We can only speak of their local popularity since *Signum Polonicum* centres are mainly located in Poland with just one centre being situated abroad - in the neighbouring Czech Republic. The Polish State supports actions aiming at restoring this Old-Polish tradition only on a very modest scale. So far handsomely published albums have only been published in Polish [13,17,27]. It is possible that its popularity will grow if the interest among youth grows - if they develop a passionate interest in the glorious history of the Polish arms [44]. This aim has been supported by a popular quarterly "Sztuki Walki" (Martial Arts) where in each issue advertisements of the *Signum Polonicum* school are found. Both the *Signum Polonicum* school and Polish centres of the *katori shintō-ryū* school advertise on their Internet websites.

The Polish tradition of martial arts seems to have been forgotten due to rather turbulent Polish history - the partitions, Nazi occupation and years of communist regime. Its reconstruction was made possible due to the passionate efforts of such people as Wojciech Zabłocki and his son Michał, and also Zbigniew Sawicki. The *Signum Polonicum* school has been developing only since 1986. Its participation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Scientific Congress of Combat Sports and Martial Arts (2010) organized by the University of Rzeszów, IMACSSS and IPA is probably the beginning of popularizing Polish martial arts on a larger scale. The samurai tradition required its practitioners to train fencing on every day basis [38,39]. The same was actually true in the case of the Polish nobility. Now in Europe there is a growing interest in recreational traditional fencing [42]. So, there is a certain probability that practising sabre fencing might take off as well.

European knighthood had its background in Latin and Christian tradition. Being

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a knight was not only limited to being proficient in a battle [43]. The Polish tradition of sabre fencing took on similar values [16]. Generally, it has been a way of improving one's skills, abilities and character through practicing fencing routine and living a life based on Christian values. Japanese fencing, on the other hand, is not so strongly bound with religion although it does originate from indigenous Japanese religion of *shintō*. It actually involves self-discipline based on the *Bushidō* way of the warrior (Japanese chivalry), thus being more universal.

### Meeting of the 15th century Japanese fencing enthusiasts in Cracow

On 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> December 2012 an International Kenjutsu Seminar was organised in Cracow in the honor of master Gorō Hatakeyama, which commemorated the third anniversary of his death. His students from Poland and Italy met at a two-day training seminar. The organizers invited master and instructor Andrea Ré (fig. 5), who holds 7<sup>th</sup> dan *kenjutsu katori shintō-ryū*, 5<sup>th</sup> dan *iaidō hoki-ryū butokukai* and 4<sup>th</sup> dan *aikidō aikikai*. Mateusz Kuduk (3<sup>rd</sup> dan), a Cracow-based instructor, was the main organizer of the event. Since the event took place in the year celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *aikibudō* and *kobudō* martial arts in Poland (1987-2012), the famous guests and participants included the pioneers of Polish *aikijutsu* and *kenjutsu* of the *katori shintō-ryū* school – Stanisław Cynarski (8<sup>th</sup> dan *jūjutsu*, 7<sup>th</sup> dan *aikijūjutsu*) and Wojciech J. Cynarski (8<sup>th</sup> dan *jūjutsu*, 5<sup>th</sup> dan *kenjutsu*). The seminar was attended by instructors and students of the *katori shintō-ryū* school from Cracow, Lublin, Tarnów and Warsaw, as well as by *sensei* Ré's Italian students.

Twelve 60-minute sessions of practice included standing forms of *iaijutsu/iaidō* sword drawing art in the standing stance, 4 forms of *kenjutsu*, 6 forms of *bojutsu* – a long staff (fig. 6), 4 of *naginata* - the polearm (253 cm in length) and for the advanced practitioners also the *kodachi* (short sword) and *ryoto* (dual wielded swords), and the *yari* (spear of 290 cm in length). In that way the participants managed to practise a rather significant part of the *katori shintō-ryū* school. *Omote*, i.e. the basic scope of forms in this school comprises 11 *iaidō* forms and altogether 14 forms of the sabre against the sabre, the staff and the *naginata*. It is only till further stages that it is possible to practise more advanced forms. Interestingly, during the seminar four different languages were spoken including English, Japanese, Polish and Italian. This was a truly interesting example of a dialogue between different cultures [5], where in an old Polish capital city in the centre of Europe people met to study forms created in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in the Japanese medieval *bushi* culture.

The weapons used during the seminar and their wooden imitations as well as the clothing were very much in line with the samurai tradition. What is more, a *sayonara party* did not take place in a Japanese restaurant, but in a pizzeria. Additionally, in a situation where no English- or Japanese-speaking people were present, the seminar participants communicated using the semantic codes of the old *budō* and basic English.

And what about the fact that the destination of the martial arts tourism [37] was the city where legendary Krakus is said to have built the Wawel Castle? And yet another fact, that it was all about old Japanese art of fencing, and not the Old-Polish art of fencing? Well, that was the time when an instructor from the North of Italy and a group of European practitioners shared their knowledge and skills in Poland. Hence, the same Western (Latin-based) culture met to practice together a martial art which is officially included in the Japanese national cultural heritage. As Michael de Marco, the editor of the quarterly "Journal of Asian Martial Arts" points out "Martial arts are a culture-based practice". However, they are also an important and specific element of the physical culture as well.





Fig. 6: *Bōjutsu* – a long staff against the sabre (www.katorishintoryu.pl)

### Technical modifications – in curricula and methodology

After the death of master Hatakeyama Polish fencing practitioners of the *katori shintō-ryū* school have mainly practiced under his Italian disciples, i.e. Sergio Mor-Stabilini and Andrea Ré. Their teaching derives from the latest stage of Hatakeyama's teaching and seems to be a little different from the tradition handed down by master Yoshio Sugino (10<sup>th</sup> dan), who was the author's *kenjutsu* instructor between 1987 and 1992 and thus different from the tradition which the author is familiar with. At that time the Sugino school boasted such personages as *hanshi* Gorō Hatakeyama, a *menkyō kaiden* licence holder and the master's chief assistant A. Floquet (6<sup>th</sup> dan at the time), D. Dubreil (5<sup>th</sup> dan), E. Leuw (4<sup>th</sup> dan) and a few other rather advanced practitioners, mainly from France. It was then that the author met Mor-Stabilini. Other *yūdansha* and *kodansha* (black belt holders of different ranks) did not appear till later.

Some modifications in executing some of the technical forms took place. In form 2 of the *bōjutsu* (wielding the staff of 183 cm in length) called *sune hishigi-no bō* Hatakeyama changed the beginning of the *kata* (he changed the left *sune uchi* for the right *yokomen uchi*) so that it became different from the one in form 1. There were also some changes in some of the *iaidō* forms. The differences are often in the interpretation of the *kata* (technical forms), i.e. in the version of "the latest Hatakeyama stages", where executing forms is actually their interpretation executed at a shorter distance. This results in differences in technical details in "sabre to sabre" forms. Being acquainted with a few variants or interpretations of a form gives one broader knowledge, but it certainly makes it more difficult to obtain the level of movement automation.

The situation in the *Signum Polonicum* school seems similar; however, the change took less time. The year of 1992 still witnessed techniques similar to karate being taught in the school [45]. Then the school took to different kinds of melee weapons. However, recently the school mainly identifies itself with the hussar sabre. Special attention here needs to be drawn to fencing on horseback, which has also been of great interest to Wojciech Zabłocki.

*Bōken* (Japanese wooden sword) and other wooden imitations of weapons have never been regarded in the fencing tradition as weapons. Similarly, "*palcaty*" (Polish polearms – pole weapon) in the Polish fencing tradition have always been considered to be practice weapon when the student/apprentice is not yet ready to wield edged weapons. However, the method



Fig. 7: The group of participants of the Seminar in Cracow ([www.katorishintoryu.pl](http://www.katorishintoryu.pl))

of teaching in dual forms (forms performed by two practitioners – the instructor and the student) when using the *bōken* makes it possible not only to minimise the risk of an injury, but it also provides an opportunity to use equipment which is much cheaper than genuine weapon.

The *katori shintō-ryū* school was one of the first of the classic *bujutsu*, which actually gave the beginning to 14 other *kenjutsu* schools [46]. *Shurikenjutsu* (throwing sharp hand-held weapons) has been practised at SIP Summer Camps within the *Shibu Kobudō* in Poland since a consultation with master G. Hatakeyama in 1993. This art (the school of master Otake) is not taught in any other place outside Japan.

### Summary and conclusions

The advancement of the process of institutionalization in both martial arts – the Polish hussar sabre and Japanese *kenjutsu* – is completely different. The Japanese combat fencing has been developed over many a century within, for example, the *katori shintō-ryū* school. Owing it to films about samurai warriors, a fashion for Asian martial arts and the policy followed by the Japanese government, which is devoted to promoting their national culture, as well as the engagement on the part of Western researchers and enthusiasts and Japanese masters-instructors, the original *kenjutsu* is already practised in a number of countries all over the world. Seminars, both at national and international levels, are organized worldwide.

On the other hand, the long-forgotten Polish art of fencing, including the art of fencing, which has been undergoing the restoration process for about a quarter of a century is being practiced by only very few enthusiasts. Hence, its international promotion still needs to be greatly improved.

In the meantime, in December 2012 at the premises of the Department of Physical Education at the University of Science and Technology in Cracow practitioners of the *kenjutsu katori shintō-ryū* school from Poland and Italy (pioneers, the second generation of instructors and apprentices) met and worked together on the techniques of wielding of basic weapons. That was a greatly inspiring meeting – a feature of the intercultural dialogue and educational event devoted to the old Japanese art of fencing. The event became the then-destination for the present-day *budōka* - warriors of the way (fig. 7).

European towns and cities happen to be destinations of martial arts tourism for different reasons including the following: (1) they are the seat of a given organization, (2) they boast a convenient location, and particularly (3) as such they are often places of genuine interests for tourists.

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One more issue which still remains at the heart of the author is a kind of suggestion. We might live to witness enthusiasts from all over the world, including Japan, arriving in the country on the River Vistula in order to become acquainted with the art of Old-Polish fencing using the hussar sabre, possibly on horseback, and studying the history of the Polish weaponry. Should not this national heritage be supported by the state authorities?

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