



tl;dr

Last month I came to a bit of a milestone in my printmaking work; I completed the My Solitudes project - the book with a series of 12 prints depicting some of my favourite camping places. Although the project had been originally expected to take about two years, I ended up spending close to three years on it. This was perhaps partly through procrastination when I reached difficult stages of the work, and partly because there was indeed, a huge amount of work involved in creating 12 original designs, carving all the blocks necessary, and then making 200 copies of each of the prints, not to mention writing the book itself.

But it is now finished, barring some final 'tidy up' steps, and most of my time is now being spent on my new project, the 'Mystique' series of prints.

After I shipped the final print out to the collectors, I found myself looking back at the project, and - as always in that circumstance - found myself wondering if it had been 'worth it'. Now I'm not going to try and get deeply philosophical here; the easy answer to that question is of course 'sure!'. I made a living from the project for nearly three years, the work was personally satisfying, and reaction from collectors was generally positive. And I managed to put paid to the thought that had been lurking in my mind for many years that I would never be able to create original work of my own, but would always be relegated to making reproductions.

So no problem. But the question then becomes, "Now what do I do with it?" Does this need to be answered? Yes, I think so. Just look at the numbers - so far, 78 people have purchased that set of prints. In addition to this, 10 complimentary sets were distributed (to my family members, the National Library, and some of the people who worked with me to create the series).

So thinking again about that 'was it worth it' question - my three years of work has been seen in its proper form (the full book with the prints) by only a hundred or so people! And those books now sit on their bookshelves, where to be honest, they won't be seen by very many other people at all.

And remember, this book was written *twice*! I did the English version first, and Sadako then created the Japanese edition - spending far more effort than is normal for most book translation. She felt that the quality level we were shooting for demanded that she work over each and every sentence again and again, trying to create a text that carried as much of the nuance of the original as possible. Just under half of the subscribers to the series were Japanese, so even after all her effort, only a few dozen people have ever had a chance to read the result!

One obvious 'solution' is to put it all - both versions - up onto my website, and let people read it there. That wouldn't help my income, but at least the book would be seen. But I'm not sure that this would be a good idea. This is a *book*, not something short and casual (like these A Story A Week stories!). It has an architecture, a 'stream' through the seasons, and really only makes sense when taken as a whole. If I were to put it on the website, it would simply get the 'tl;dr' treatment from most people ('too long; didn't read').

Well, I don't think there is much I can do about it at this point. As I mentioned, my energies are now directed towards the next project, and in truth, this is the way it has always gone with me, expending huge amounts of energy creating something, which is then seen (in its intended form) by only a few people.

What a strange situation to be in, here in this global internet age!

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