

Yoshi-P + Soken Interview

Me.) Hello Yoshida-san & Soken-san! It is good to see you again.

Yoshida + Soken.) It is good to see you!

Yoshida.) Have you slept?

Me.) Yeah I've managed to get a little sleep since Tuesday.

Yoshida.) I had seen the livestreams so I know you were just spending an insane amount of hours fighting Ultimate.

Me.) Luckily our team had a strict schedule that let me rest for 6-7 hours a night.

Yoshida.) That's good. We always worry about players sleeping or taking care of their health when they are pushing to clear the content as fast as possible.

Q1 - Yoshida.) The Weapon's Refrain (Ultimate) was defeated in just over 5 days. Was this a surprise or did the team expect the encounter to be defeated in about that time?

A.) It is always tough to calculate kill times as player skill is constantly improving. Not only that but you don't know how your players will respond to the new mechanics being thrown at them.

For the development team, we just want to ensure the battle doesn't drag on longer than two weeks. Once it gets passed that point, morale and excitement decrease drastically.

Me.) After Gordias, I agree.

Yoshida.) *laughs* Yes we have learned a lot from those days. Back to Ultimate, that took about 11 days to be defeated and this battle took about 5 days. Due to that, people might take that as face value and assume Ultima is easier. I think instead it just goes to show how skilled and dedicated the players who take on these encounters are. I have high respects for these players.

I wanted to ask you as well, what is your feedback regarding the "Woken" mechanic we implemented?

Me.) Genius

Yoshida.) *laughs* Thank you, thank you. I am very glad to hear you liked the concept. The dev team really wanted the players to feel good progressing through the Primals naturally the first time but were concerned players might find revisiting these primals via the "Woken"

mechanic...we were afraid they might feel as though they were cheated in some way. I'm very happy to hear you enjoyed the mechanic.

Q2 - Soken.) Speaking of the Weapon's Refrain, the Primals' themes there are the renditions created by your band. How does it feel having that work used in the game itself?

A.) With the Ultimate series the sound team wanted to really bring some new sound and atmosphere to these encounters. At some point the idea of using our renditions of the songs came up and when the sound team tried it, they were very happy to see how well it worked. They hope the players enjoyed this as well.

One extra note, during the Primals (band) version of Garuda, the original has Koji doing this sort of rap where he is almost mocking the players. We decided to take this out because we knew every time the players wiped they would be returned to the start. It almost felt bad having Koji literally laughing in your face right after you wipe every single time. It might have been too distracting so we cut it out.

Q3 - Yoshida.) Heaven on High is releasing in the coming weeks with Patch 4.35. Will the first 100 floors be the only floors or are there plans to expand upon this in future updates?

A.) With the release of Heaven on High, all of the floors will be available immediately. No new floors will be added later.

With the original Deep Dungeon, Palace of the Dead, we released 200 floors over two patches. However our feedback indicates that outside of leveling other jobs, players only really enjoyed the challenge of floors 180 to 200. With Heaven on High the leveling and story portion will end at floor 30, but floors 31 to 100 should feel closer to 180 to 200. Expect that kind of challenge from 31 to 100 and we hope the players enjoy accessing this content a little sooner.

Q4 - Soken.) After years of making music for FF14, how do you go about finding new inspiration for each new track you create?

A.) Its difficult to describe. With FF14 we do a lot of events and when we do these events, I get to see a lot of people. Every time I see these passionate players who encourage us, it serves as motivation for me to keep giving them new music.

Other than that, video games are a big inspirational factor for me. I love video games!

Yoshida.) From my perspective, our dev team is pretty competitive internally. When one develops something, another wants to develop something better. When Soken then has to compose a new song for this variety of content, I feel like he gets lots of inspiration from it.

Soken.) The plot of FF14 also helps a lot. Putting music to scenes or events can really help inspire!

Q5. Yoshida.) Eureka will be seeing the Pagos addition in 4.36. How does the team plan on making the weapon building experience different from the previous iteration, as well as going forward after Pagos?

A.) Our general rule for improving weapons in series such as this is that we need to make it vary. It's still the same idea of improving a weapon but it can't be the same thing every time. With this, expect improving your weapon in Pagos to be different from improving it in Anemos, and in future Eureka zones as well. I don't want to spoil what you'll be doing as I want the players to experience it first hand.

One thing I will say is that the conditions for spawning NMs will be very different in some cases than it was in Anemos. I am looking forward to players figuring them out.

Q6 Soken.) Are there any tracks in the game you'd really like to do a Primals' rendition of that you haven't been able to yet?

A.) Oh....that's tough. Hmmm... I suppose if I had to pick one it would be a very recent one, the theme used for Tsukuyomi. What about you? Which theme would you like for us to remix?

Me.) Also a recent one, Byakko.

Soken.) OH BYAKKO. YES! Thank you I appreciate that feedback. Perhaps we will be able to do these tracks soon.

Me.) FanFest?

Soken.) *laughs* I can't say any more. If we do another performance for FanFest though we would definitely like to prepare new tracks.

Q8. Yoshida.) Is there any intention of adding rank decay for ranked PVP?

A.) With recent changes to The Feast and the way you accumulate points, we'd like to see how that and our Regional Championships play out first. It has been a constant discussion and our fear is that players will feel like they are forced to participate just to keep their rank. Feeling forced can feel unfun, especially when there might be other content you want to do in addition to PVP.

We know players have expressed the thought that adding rank decay will improve queue times, how do you feel?

Me.) I am not a PVP expert nor do I actively participate in ranked matches. I do think it would help, though I suppose it'd mostly improve the activity of the higher ranks, specifically the top 100. Currently many players just get in range of the top 100 and stop, so perhaps it would improve the battle for end of season rewards? I suppose the big concern is how much Feast participation falls off after the first several weeks, especially for players who don't play during peak hours.

Yoshida.) Thank you for your feedback. Like I said it is a discussion we are having internally, among other things. I would definitely like to continue improving the matchmaking so that players can more consistently participate in PVP. We would just like to see how our Regional Championships play out first.

Q8 Soken.) Some months ago I had the chance to speak to Koji Fox. I asked him about his experience performing the "Rise" rap and how it came to be. I just wanted to hear your side of it. How did you come to choose and convince Koji Fox to do it?

A.) *laughs* Koji really did not want to do it. I approached him with the idea and he simply looked at me and said "I am a middle aged white man living in Japan and you want me to rap?". I, of course, told him yes. It wasn't a joke, I simply knew Koji was the best candidate to do it.

Earlier in my career I worked on a title called "Mario Hoops 3 on 3". Square Enix developed it while Nintendo published it. For one of the tracks, Koji Fox did the rap. So I knew when I needed him to do it for "Rise" that he was the right choice.

That being said, when he recorded "Rise" in the studio...it really didn't sound good. Let me just say that for that one I really had to science the shit out of it.

However, the live performance he did incredible. He must have practiced really, really hard for it.

Me.) He told me he was walking through a park practicing on his daily commute and he would hear locals calling him a "Crazy Gaijin". *Yoshida & Soken Laugh*

Q9 Yoshida.) When the next expansion releases, will the current Ultimate encounters still be level/ilvl synced? If so, do you think job changes could make these encounters more difficult than intended to revisit?

A.) Unfortunately we haven't given this much thought. Our goal right now is to produce encounters the players will love and find challenging, but it's hard to predict down the line how they will be received. I'd imagine we'd have to have discussions considering a few things. Do we want to keep these level/ilvl synced when expansions launch? Will we go back and retune the fights to keep them at "Ultimate" level if we do keep them synced? Perhaps we'd need to remove the fights for a time and then rerelease them balanced for their intended level. Like I

said we haven't really had any discussions considering this but when the time comes we will figure out exactly what we'd like to do.

Q10. Both) Have you considered making the Primals' (band) renditions available in game through the Orchestrion?

A.Both) We haven't had any discussions about this, but we are willing to do it if the player demand is high.

Me.) Would they have to be paid for through the Mog Station or could they be placed directly in the game? I'm not sure if there are any issues due to being available via iTunes or the album.

A.) Technically speaking they are our tracks, so we can just put them in if we want. We will have some discussions about this.

Q11 Yoshida.) The Mog Station has seemingly picked up the pace in which it has released new in game items for players to purchase. How is it determined what items will be placed in the Mog Station and which will be placed in the game?

A.) It may feel like the pace is being accelerated but the Mog Station releases are on a release schedule. More recently, we have been releasing items to the Chinese and Korean servers, which are separate from our global servers (NA/EU/JP). Since those games use a different payment model than the global version, those regions pay us to create these items and supplement the game itself.

What then happens if that the Global players find out about these items and request them for our region as well. While they are intended for those markets, with player demand we do make an effort to bring them to the global version. It can make the pace seem accelerated for sure, but our Mog Station releases are simply on schedule.

Q12. Yoshida.) Final question since we are running low on time, this was asked by one of the members of Elysium and the static I play with, Balana. During the Garuda encounter, the "Woken" status can be achieved early on in the encounter, or right at the very end. Since Titan and Ifrit MUST be woken at a specific time early on, was it intended that Garuda offer the players a choice on when to "Wake" her?

A.) It was not intended that players have the choice to "Woken" Garuda early or late. The dev team fully intended for players to achieve that status early on. However, we have no intention of adjusting this for multiple reasons. First is that the fight has already been cleared and we would not want to invalidate the efforts of the teams who have bested the encounter so far.

Second is that we actually have respect for those who discovered this strategy. Much of the fight is designed to be very strict, but the players found a way to handle another mechanic in a different way, without breaking the encounter and progress through the fight. It still gives Garuda this status, and even though it may be a bit easier than doing it early on, we like that the Garuda phase still works in its entirety regardless of which approach you take. Player creativity is always something we like to see.

Besides, with Titan and Ifrit, you won't have a choice. So good luck! *laughs*

Me.) Thank you for taking the time to speak with me!

Yoshida + Soken.) Thank you and have a good E3.

Yoshida.) Also tell Elysium congratulations on their successful kills and make sure to rest now!