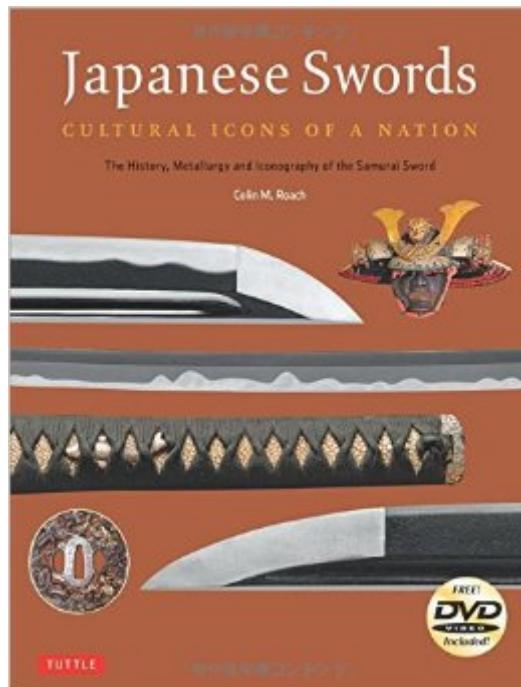


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Japanese Swords: Cultural Icons Of A Nation; The History, Metallurgy And Iconography Of The Samurai Sword



Synopsis

With over 300 stunning photographs and woodblock prints along with extensive historical and cultural commentary, Japanese Swords is the ultimate authority on Samurai weaponry. Historically, Japanese warriors considered their swords to be far greater than simple weaponry. Their swords were both lethal tools and divine companions – social and religious icons. Traditionally worn by the samurai as a sign of social status, the Japanese sword represented the junction between the reigning military class and those whom they ruled. Moreover, the samurai sword was a technological and artistic marvel. Many scholars consider it to be the finest sword ever constructed. In terms of symbolism and historical importance, no other blade comes close to the Japanese sword. With a historical, iconographical, and technological perspective, author Cohn M. Roach provides an in-depth study of these magnificent weapons in Japanese Swords. This richly illustrated sword book weaves the blade's primary influences together, tracking its history and illuminating its progress from infancy to grandeur. By studying the evolution of the Japanese sword from this perspective, we better understand Japan and its warrior archetype. Combining research materials from multiple disciplines, Roach uses his expertise as an educator to guide readers through the sword's rise to greatness in a unique way. This book discusses the history, development, and spiritual symbolism of the sword, as well as the esoteric metallurgical techniques used in making it. It also covers the difficult training practices used by skilled swordsmen. Japanese Swords also includes a companion DVD featuring a beautifully-filmed documentary that explores the traditional swordmaker's craft. The DVD also contains an introduction to the Japanese sword at a sword shop in Kyoto and a visit to a dojo for a beginner's class in the medieval sword-drawing art called iaido.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

For years, aficionados of the Japanese sword (nihonto) have been limited to the few works available in the English language by John Yumoto, Kanzan Sato, Clive Sinclair, and the partnership of Leon and Kiroki Kapp with Yoshihara Yoshindo. These are all valuable books that have gone a long way to introducing nihonto to an English-speaking audience, but there remains a dearth of information in print for those of us who do not read Japanese. Fortunately, the past few years have been kind, with a number of outstanding museum exhibitions displaying stunning works from Japan along with the publication of excellent exhibition catalogs (Art of the Samurai, Japanese Arms and Armor 1156-1868, from the Met; Art of the Samurai, Selections from the Tokyo National Museum, from the Bower Museum; Lords of the Samurai: Legacy of a Daimyo Family, from the Museum of Asian Art); a new book by Clive Sinclair (Samurai Swords: A Collector's Guide), an English translation of Nobuo Nakahara's Facts and Fundamental of Japanese Swords; and this book, Japanese Swords: Cultural Icons of a Nation by Colin Roach. This new 176-page book is a large, almost coffee-table sized volume (12"x 9") with lots of glossy photos that bears the subtitle, "The history, metallurgy, and iconography of the samurai sword." The author is a 4th Dan Muso Jikiden Eishen-Ryu Iaido practitioner whose source material is drawn heavily from meetings and study with one of his own iaido teachers Nicklaus Suino (author and 6th Dan instructor of Muso Jikiden Eishen-Ryu Iaido); 15th generation mukansa swordsmith Kawachi Kunihira; mukansa sword polisher Abe Kazunori; and professors, authors, and Kashima Shinryu practitioners Karl Friday and William Bodiford.

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