



Japanese Swords: Cultural Icons of a Nation; The History, Metallurgy and Iconography of the Samurai Sword

Colin M. Roach

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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 Colin 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*.

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