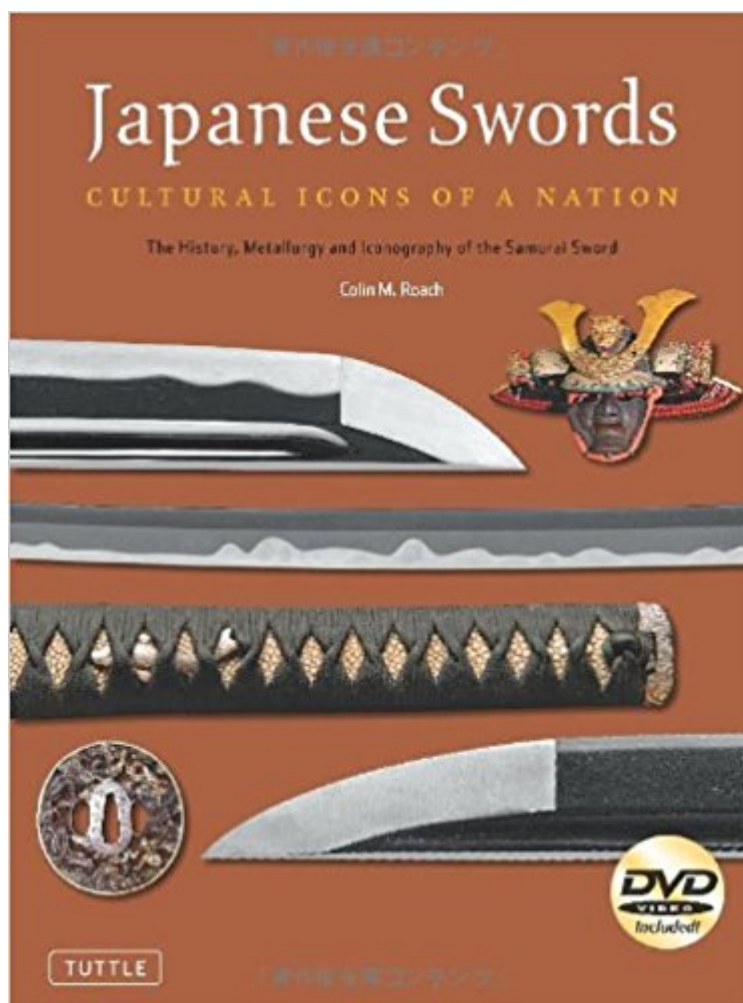


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# Japanese Swords: Cultural Icons Of A Nation



## Synopsis

Author Colin M. Roach collaborated with top-level artisans, historians, and martial arts experts to create a unique, in-depth study of these magnificent weapons from a historical, iconographical, and technological perspective. In addition to a foreword by seventh degree iaido black belt Nicklaus Suino and a sidebar by Mukansa-level polisher Abe Kazunori, *Japanese Swords* includes rare looks into the world of Mukansa-level swordsmiths Kawachi Kunihiro and Gassan Sadatoshi. Complemented by hundreds of stunning high-resolution photos and a DVD, *Japanese Swords* is a must-have addition to any Japanophile's library.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 176 pages

Publisher: Tuttle Publishing; Hardcover with DVD edition (December 10, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 4805310359

ISBN-13: 978-4805310359

Product Dimensions: 9 x 0.8 x 12 inches

Shipping Weight: 3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 33 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,536,024 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #63 in [Books > History > Military > Weapons & Warfare > Conventional > Firearms](#) #120 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Antiques & Collectibles > Firearms & Weapons > Swords & Knives](#) #2238 in [Books > History > Asia > Japan](#)

## Customer Reviews

Roach, a student of both iaido and aikido and a dedicated sword-enthusiast, passionately dissects the symbolic essence of the sword throughout history, emphasizing changes in social significance, technological influence, and iconography. The erudite prose is ameliorated by design, modern swordsmanship, traditional artwork, illustrative photos, and etiquette. Historical periods are elegantly punctuated with ornate depictions, highlighting shifts in katana design and value from early periods to the current interpretation of ancient disciplines. Roach's own deep-rooted interest and involvement in the subject ensures a seamless blend of historical and religious themes, as well as much "sword appreciation" (the author champions his comrades in promoting traditional craftsmanship and confronts the contemporary dilemma of commercial fraud and shameless profiteering). In order to truly understand the Japanese sword in its entirety one must, Roach

suggests, appreciate the "unique sociological, spiritual, and metallurgical environment in which it evolved." With this at the core of his book, he vividly tracks the fundamental transition from the sword as a mythological instrument to a functional tool for war, and finally to the display art commodity it is today. (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

"Beautiful photographs of swords, pictures of sword craftsmen at work, and illustrations of Japanese art and artifacts complement the thorough, scholarly text." — •Maine Antique Digest" This oversized 176-page hardcover is overflowing with color and black-and-white photographs." — •Black Belt" In order to truly understand the Japanese sword in its entirety one must, Roach suggests, appreciate the "unique sociological, spiritual, and metallurgical environment in which it evolved." With this at the core of his book, he vividly tracks the fundamental transition from the sword as a mythological instrument to a functional tool for war, and finally to the display art commodity it is today." — •Publishers Weekly

This book is a phenomenal compilation of information via literature, photographs and a compact disk. The information succinctly explains the cultural etiology of the Samurai Sword (Nihonto), its historical religious significance, and its relationship, influence and integration into modern Japanese society. The chapters are well categorized in a logical sequence that detail the cultural and religious lore associated with the genesis of the traditional steel used for a sword's production (tamahagane); historically, the manifest martial need, events and evolution that created the world-renowned Samurai Sword; the various methods of craftsmanship, technique and skill employed in a blade's production which, fantastically, have resulted in a cultural heritage integrated into a modern society and industry; the historical periods of the Samurai Sword and their distinguishing characteristics and features; the transition and transmutation of the Sword into an artistic and cultural icon; the modern craftsman who continue the cultural heritage of Samurai Sword and the its impact on the modern world. The book smartly utilizes a variety of photographs that effectively illustrate technical explanations. The illustrations provide a clear understanding of the subject matter. And the book serves well to dispel common myths and misunderstandings about the Samurai Sword. I would highly recommend the book for the connoisseur, aficionado, and the novice alike who appreciate the Samurai Sword and seek a continuing education on the subject.

As others have mentioned, the component parts of this work are all excellent. From the photography to the in-depth analysis of Japanese sword making and the sword's place in Japanese culture,

everything is well done. So why couldn't the publisher be troubled to actually proofread the book? It's astonishing to me that such a high quality work can be eroded by the carelessness of a publisher. On a single reading I found so many typos that they became a distraction from the content. I feel that this particular edition (I bought the hardcover) was given short shrift by Tuttle. That's a real tragedy considering the subject matter and the obvious care the author put into this work. The accompanying DVD provides some good "extras" similar to those found on movie releases. They left me wanting to see even more.

This is a beautiful book. I love just looking into it. Then reading about the history and background of this art is amazing. The work and love of sword craft is very special. The author has a great knowledge of what he's writing about. I never thought it could fetch my interest as it did. I really recommend this book. Just put it on your table and go back into it from time to time. Being a Norwegian it's very exotic to read about a far away culture such as the Japanese... I just had some knowledge about Samurais and their swords... I guess that's why this book caught my attention. I'm glad I bought it.

This is an excellent, comprehensive book on Japanese swords and their history. The pictures are high quality and really show off the different characteristics of sword creation. There is an excellent glossary of terms and definitions which is critical for any beginner who is interested in learning more about Japanese swords.

I appreciated the blending of history, eastern religion and practical sword making methods in this excellent book. Of course Japan changed with the entry of Christianity and western trade. For my purpose I learned the "Bushido" code was a westernized notion (invention) and has really no connection to Japanese culture. The title is an accurate descriptor of the content. I recommend this book if you have an interest in Japanese swords!

This book is very well done. The history of the Japanese sword and martial arts is amazingly researched and documented. The illustrations are beautiful. Just like the Japanese sword, this book is a work of art. The included DVD is a great bonus. If you want to learn more about the history and culture of the Japanese sword, this is a must have resource. Roach Sensei does an amazing job bringing the sword to life in this book.

Better than I anticipated. Book is full of everything, you would want to know, as a beginning collector,

I really enjoyed this book and the DVD. Lots of facts and pictures. The details are covered in words and clear illustrations and photographs. I would recommended this book to anyone wanting to start learning about Japanese Swords.

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