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To understand Japanese sword polishing is to understand the Japanese sword. Down through the years, the great sword connoisseurs in Japan have been sword polishers. A swordsmith can spend a large amount of time forging a classic sword, but refining and bringing out its final shape, color and texture so that all the details of the steel and hamon (the temper line) are clearly visible is the responsibility of another craftsman - the sword polisher. An experienced polisher can tell immediately by whom a blade was made, so distinctive is each smith's work and so vital is such knowledge to the skilled polisher. The Art of Japanese Sword Polishing is the first book in English to examine in great detail the polisher's techniques - skills it often takes up to ten years of apprenticeship to master. The book illustrates the methods, materials and tools used for this process. But its true aim is to enable the reader to fully appreciate the beauty of a well-crafted Japanese sword. As readers learn both how the sword polisher enhances the beauty of the blade and how he handles the problems of coaxing out its finest qualities through his polishing techniques, they will come to a deeper understanding of the fine art of making the Japanese sword and will be able to view, purchase or collect swords with greater pleasure. Nakamura Taisaburo's landmark book on the art of the sword includes technical information, thoughtful analysis, and fascinating recollections of his own training and teaching. One of the most famous Japanese swordsmen of the twentieth century, Nakamura sensei is widely acknowledged as the preeminent reinvigorator of the practice of tameshigiri (test cutting) as a test of technical and spiritual mastery. The Spirit of the Sword--first published in Japanese in 1980, now translated into English for the first time--is regarded by many as the most complete of Nakamura's writings on Japanese swordsmanship. Here Nakamura instructs the reader on the integration of iaido, kendo, and tameshigiri; the correct mental

approach to sword practice; training methods; numerous kata or forms; a guide to sword maintenance; and historical notes on the use of the sword as a weapon. Illustrated with over 800 original photographs, this book is a must-have for any student of the Japanese sword and an excellent resource for sword enthusiasts in general. As the "soul of the samurai," the sword is famously both the symbol and instrument of Japanese military prowess. Less known, at least in the west, is its role as a fashion accessory or status symbol. More than the weapon itself, it was the sword's metal fittings--from the hand guard to the small decorative plates on the hilt--that reflected the complexities of samurai life. Some fittings were meant to convey the honor and self-control expected of a samurai, while other, more flamboyant fittings reflected the samurai's leisure-time persona as "man about town." Later, when the wearing of swords spread beyond the samurai class, both the decorative function of the fittings and the variety of their designs increased, leading to some of the most accomplished metalwork ever created. Now in paperback for the first time, *Lethal Elegance* presents 150 of these remarkable sword fittings, and is one of the few books to focus on their styles and techniques. It discusses the visual effects achieved with different alloys, the evolution of fittings following changes in warfare, symbolism and standards for connoisseurship. Though these objects were created for violent ends, their variety and beauty also reveal them as wonders of self-expression.

ANCIENT POWER As the only female detective in Tokyo's most elite police unit, Mariko Oshiro has to fight for every ounce of respect, especially from her new boss. But when he gives her the least promising case possible--the attempted theft of an old samurai sword--it proves more dangerous than anyone on the force could have imagined. The owner of the sword, Professor Yasuo Yamada, says it was crafted by the legendary Master Inazuma, a sword smith whose blades are rumored to have magical qualities. The man trying to steal it already owns another Inazuma--one whose deadly power eventually comes to control all who wield it. Mariko's investigation has put her on a collision course with a curse centuries old and as bloodthirsty as ever. She is only the latest in a long line of warriors and soldiers to confront this power, and even the sword she learns to wield could turn against her. *The Samurai Sword* is the essential illustrated guide to the Japanese way of the sword. Japan's famous samurai warriors were more than just

soldiers – they were adherents to a strict code of honor who respected the deeper, spiritual meaning of the way of the sword. To the samurai, battle was sacred. This indispensable guide to theory and practice respects both the physical and spiritual aspects of martial arts practice with the katana. This sword book features: Beautiful, step-by-step photos and easy-to-understand text Guidance for selecting, maintaining, and using your sword Wisdom about the practical value of meditation Inspirational biographies of some of the greatest samurai swordsmen, men whose words and deeds embodied the true spirit of the samurai warrior Downloadable video Whether you're a beginner or an experienced swordsperson, this book will broaden your practical knowledge with detailed instruction on stances, cuts, guards, forms, and sparring techniques and strategy. To the Japanese, the sword is a spiritual weapon. It possesses a particular divinity, reflecting the soul of its maker, owner, and user. Around its mystical powers has grown the centuries-old ritual and practice of Samurai swordsmanship which is still avidly practiced today as is a fascinating and intricate martial art. This unique guide unlocks all the mysteries of the ancient tradition of Iaijutsu—explaining the history and significance of the sword in Samurai culture and documenting the techniques of swordsmanship as found in no other martial arts book. Darrell Max Craig is one of the foremost teachers of Kendo in the West. He spent many years in Japan competing and training at the very highest level. His book, *Drawing the Samurai Sword*, provides a thorough examination of all aspects of Iaijutsu—including information on sword care and selection, necessary gear, sword and dojo etiquette, and useful drills for practice and demonstration. This book also teaches readers about: How to evaluate your Samurai sword and handle it safely How to wear the traditional Hakama uniform How to perform the Kata forms to hone your technique The brutal history of sword testing, and today's more humane equivalent The classic and exciting story of "The Forty-Seven Ronin" And much more! Featuring a new preface by the author, original color photos and added information about sword testing, this generously-illustrated book is a treasure trove of information for aspiring students and experienced practitioners alike. The modern era of Japanese swords began with the Meiji restoration in 1868. The demand for new swords fell drastically, and by 1876, there was almost no work for most sword smiths. However, with the expansion of Japanese military organizations,

a new demand for traditional swords developed and this became very important by around 1930. As a result of this, there was a large increase in the number of swords being made, and there was an effort to train many new sword smiths. The major groups and people involved in these efforts are described here. In addition, there was a strong emphasis on making fully traditional Japanese swords, and all of these smiths tried to conform with these demands. However, there was not enough of the traditional Japanese steel called tama hagane to meet the demand, and consequently, not all swords were fully traditional, although most did appear to be fully traditional. Almost all of the swords made at this time were also mounted in functional mountings which were suitable for use at this time. These swords are shown and described along with the steel used in their construction, their shapes and hamon. Examples from some of the the most prominent smiths are shown and briefly discussed, and the major schools and groups of sword smiths working at the time are also described. This was the beginning of the Gendaito period for Japanese swords which began with the beginning of the Meiji period at the end of the feudal period. However, these early Gendaito are different in many respects from the traditional Gendaito made after WWII ended in 1945. The famed samurai sword (nihonto) represents the pinnacle of bladed weaponry in the Japanese warrior's arsenal. This book addresses the sword's intrinsic historic, monetary, military, and artistic values. The seven chapters for this particular anthology were selected from materials published in the Journal of Asian Martial Arts. Tharp's chapter details aspects of the nihonto that make it unique in the world as a valued objet d'art, protected by law codes specifically written to preserve these cultural relics even when made by contemporary master smiths. DiCristofano writes on sword sketchings, which allow the human eye to view details of the sword blade often unnoticed because of the subtlety inherent in the work. Hoshino's chapter presents a overview of various blade types. His focus on blades leads to the next chapter by Richard Babin on how to make a scabbard. "Test cutting" provides proof of the practicality of the sword and swordsman's technique. Peter Ward utilized an ancient diagram of main targets for body cuts and modern technology to actually view the inner structures of the blade's path along these targets. Peritz's chapter presents the Ainu, an indigenous group in Japan. They incorporated blades made by Japanese smiths

according to their own taste. Goedkoop's chapter deals with another medium, as the master craftsman creates wooden replicas of Japanese swords. As you read other books and articles about Japanese swords, or practice kendo or iaido, or see highly polished blades in a museum, the chapters here will enhance your knowledge and appreciation of nihonto and their intrinsic value. 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. New Generation of Japanese Swordsmiths is a Kodansha International publication. The Samurai sword of Japan is probably the finest edged weapon ever made. This volume by leading Samurai expert Stephen Turnbull reveals the story of how and why it achieved this distinction. Particular attention is paid to the development of the familiar curved blade from the original straight blades, the associated development of Japan's famous steel-making techniques and the challenges from contemporary warfare. Together with the technical details of forging, polishing, mounting and testing; this volume is brought to life with details of the great swordmakers themselves. Moreover, no history of the sword would be complete without a detailed examination of its use in combat, from the greatest Samurai armies to individual duels and revenge killings. Personal accounts allow the reader to discover the art of Japanese swordsmanship in the hands of masters such as Miyamoto Musashi to the unnamed Japanese warrior defending his family's honour. This lively text is perfectly complemented by artwork reconstructions of the sword in use and colour photographs of the swords in use. This completely new encyclopedic reference for the Japanese sword contains about 2,500 terms, many of them illustrated by photos and drawings. The Encyclopedia of Japanese Swords is an A-Z general encyclopedia covering each and every part of the sword: the blade, the mountings, the fittings, and all their different interpretations. Further, this encyclopedia also explains the literal or etymological meaning of each

Japanese term and provides an even deeper insight into the subject. Discover the colorful history of sword making, the ryu of Japan, the samurai code of honor and the Zen tradition of swordsmanship. Parulski covers the uniform and how it's worn, fighting postures, conditioning, training with the suburito and traditional etiquette. Photos and text reveal the kihon--prearranged attacks and defenses--and the kata of drawing one and two swords, with applications to actual attacks. First the author teaches basic sword movements: thrusts, slices etc. Although she keeps it fun, she draws on her years of martial arts training to teach the true movements that combine balance, focus and precised muscle control. Then the author explains the benefits of each movement and her sword fighting program as a whole. In part three of the book she brings it all together showing how to string movements together into a heart-pounding, full-throttle workout. A Book of Five Swords and a Scroll, is about five Japanese swords that came to the United States after W.W.II and a Japanese hanging scroll of a 'Seated Samurai. The book is richly illustrated with over 110 photographs of these swords, map segments, and other associated materials. There are three original short stories centered around three of the swords. The book also contains sections regarding Medieval Japan, the Samurai, Japanese Sword Smiths, and Japanese Sword Care and Cleaning; Detail Technical Data of these swords is included, and there is a short biography of artist of the scroll. The chapter about the scroll, regards a person famous in 14th Century Japanese History. Two of these swords are over 450 years old. n addition there is a short biography of a unique US Marine that fought at Wake Island, Dec 8, 1941 - Dec 23, 1941 in WWII and taken as a Prisiner Of War by the Japanese. He spent a total of 1350 Days as a POW in Camps in China and Japan. This version of the book is in Color. Connoisseur's Book Japanese Swords is a Kodansha International publication. From raw steel to tempered blade, this text presents a visual account of the ancient craft of swordmaking as practiced in modern Japan. Well over a thousand years old, the tradition of swordmaking in Japan is one of the most highly regarded metal crafts in the world. When all sword manufacture was prohibited in Japan for seven years after World War II, the age-old techniques were in danger of being lost forever. Today, in the hands of a new generation of practitioners, the craft is making a startling comeback. Connoisseurs say that the swords being produced Renowned budo

(martial arts) and ninja grandmaster Hatsumi explains how Japanese sword fighting embodies the essence of budo and the spirit of the samurai. For centuries, sword masters like Miyamoto Musashi have been revered, and have fascinated and inspired people everywhere. Now, in his definitive work, Masaaki Hatsumi, the world's most famous living budo and ninja grandmaster, shares his vast knowledge of Japanese sword fighting as it's been practiced through the ages: its history, techniques, styles, and core philosophies, along with the deepest secrets of this venerable martial art. Hatsumi covers a variety of classical techniques, including ninja kenpo and two-sword fighting, and also demonstrates applications using the stick, spear, naginata, and kusarigama. He then explores such secret techniques as those involving armor, and the mutodori (no-sword) forms, considered the ultimate samurai skill. Detailed demonstration photos, works of calligraphy by famous samurai artists, historical scrolls, and illustrations enhance the text. Within Hatsumi's technical descriptions and musings on the history of bushido (the way of the warrior) are sections in which he places budo and sword fighting in their cultural context, discusses their practical applications, and conveys his personal philosophy of promoting a world of peace and tolerance. This is a series of entry-level lectures on the Japanese sword and its history for those who are interested in studying Japanese art swords. The Japanese sword was basically designed as a weapon, but Japanese swordsmiths imbued qualities of grace and beauty into the blades as well as functional superiority. The intricate patterns of surface and texture formed by their highly developed forging and tempering techniques were made only in Japan. In the past, the Japanese looked at the swords as a spiritual symbol of Samurai, temples, and shrines. Nowadays, the Japanese regard swords as a cultural art object made of steel. Varieties of the appearance of swords are closely related to historical events. Textures, contours, and tempering designs are characteristics of a particular school (Den ?) of swordsmiths. This is a series of lectures that discuss each period's history then talk about the swordsmiths' schools that were active in a particular province at the time. Because of that, each section starts with the history of the time. It is necessary to discuss history to see the flow of the events that affected the swords' shape and style. Memorialized in countless books and movies, the history of Japan's fearsome samurai warriors is known all over

the world. Who can forget these Japanese masters' skills with the sword? Today, samurai warriors no longer exist, but their legacy of swordsmanship endures. Now, the way of the samurai sword is learned in the martial arts Iaijutsu and Kenjutsu. This book is the perfect introduction to using this beautiful and ancient weapon. In *Mastering the Samurai Sword*, you'll learn the sword's fascinating history, its evolution, and the philosophy behind its use. You'll also learn practical guidance for mastering the sword itself. Full-color, step-by-step photographs detail many of the most useful and famous samurai moves, including: drawing the samurai sword guard positions, cutting blows, and blocking falling and rolling techniques, and evasive strategies standing forms and kneeling forms. All of the martial arts techniques discussed in the book are performed for readers in the downloadable material to help you perfect your form. Beginners will learn everything from proper attire and behavior in the dojo to how they might practice at home, while more experienced samurai sword people will find a new appreciation for the deeper meaning and tradition behind the graceful way of the sword. For 700 years Japanese civilization was dominated by a single warrior caste. This project looks at the weaponry of Samurai men and women over the centuries with specifically commissioned photography of reenactors wearing and museum-quality clothing and weaponry. "Sensei Masa was a master swordsmith known throughout all of Japan." Young Michio is apprenticed to the master swordsmith. He watches and learns not only the skills to make a fine sword, but also lessons in humility, hard work, and compassion, elements of Bushido, the samurai code of honor. When he and Sensei create a sword that rivals all others, warriors from around Japan come to claim ownership of it. But only one can be worthy. Rich, symbolic art captures the Tokugawa period in ancient Japan. Includes an author's note about the history of Japanese samurai swords and a glossary of Japanese terms. The more than thousand-year-old art of sword making in Japan is one of the world's most brilliant metalworking traditions. In danger of being lost when sword manufacture was prohibited after the Second World War, today the art is making an astonishing comeback in the hands of a new generation of swordsmiths. In this book master swordsmith Kunihiro Kawachi introduces through beautiful color photographs examples of swords that he has created or restored. Questions and answers covering many aspects of sword culture are followed

by a thorough chapter teaching how to care for and appreciate Japanese swords, and a discussion of the many legends surrounding the swords of the most famous swordsmen in Japanese history. A central section illustrates the tools and techniques for making Japanese swords with more than 50 color and monochrome photos. Finally, a chapter of essays presenting the lives and opinions of those involved in sword making in Japan today is followed by appendixes listing such useful information as the best museums in which to view fine sword collections around the world. This modest book is packed with information of use to all connoisseurs and collectors of Japanese swords, as well as anyone interested in Japanese metal crafts or martial culture. Japanese Swords from American Collections is the first volume of an ongoing series. This effort aims to catalog some of the many swords here in the United States and share them with the world. There are 43 blades featured in this volume. Works span from the Kamakura period up to the 1940's. This book is richly illustrated with over 80 high resolution images, many of which are full-page composites of multiple photographs. The photography in this book presents the opportunity to study jigane and hataraki in combination with detailed text explanations, creating an excellent learning resource. Those who are new to the study of Japanese Swords will find this to be an exciting introduction to the variety, wonder and beauty of Nihonto. Seasoned students of sword study will look to this series as highly useful research reference. Lastly, this series hopes to convey the typical nature and level of private collections among life-long enthusiasts here in the United States. Focusing his expertise on the techniques and history of the bokken—the wooden training sword used by both ancient samurai and today's swordsmen—the author maintains that training with the bokken is important on two levels for the modern practitioner: to build the physical stamina, rhythms, and adroit body movements of traditional swordsmanship and to achieve something of the animating spirit of the traditional swordsman. This history of the bokken combines the author's concise, eloquent writing style with more than 100 photographs to provide the reader with the traditional and modern perspectives of this vital, historically rich practice tool. In *The Art of the Japanese Sword*, master swordsmith Yoshindo Yoshihara offers a detailed look at the entire process of Japanese sword making, including the finishing and appreciation of Japanese blades.

Japanese sword art stands out in many ways: functionality as a weapon, sophisticated metallurgy and metal smithing, the shape of the blade itself—all contribute to the beauty of these remarkable weapons. The Art of the Japanese Sword conveys to the reader Japanese samurai sword history and Japanese sword care, as well as explaining how to view and appreciate a blade. With 256 full-color pages, this sword book illustrates in meticulous detail how modern craftsmen use traditional methods to prepare their steel, forge the sword and create the unique hardened edge. By gaining a good understanding of how a sword is actually made, the reader will be able to appreciate the samurai sword more fully. Topics include: Appreciating the Japanese sword History of the Japanese sword Traditional Japanese steel making Making the sword Finishing the sword As the soul of the samurai, the sword is famously both the symbol and the instrument of Japanese military prowess. Less known, at least in the West, is its role as a fashion accessory or status symbol. And more than the weapon itself, it was the sword's metal fittings that reflected the complexities of samurai life, from codes of honor to flamboyant leisure - and that remain among the most sophisticated and accomplished metalwork ever created. Lethal Elegance presents 150 of these remarkable sword fittings, and is one of the few books in a Western language to focus on their styles and techniques. It discusses the visual effects achieved with different alloys, the evolution of fittings following changes in warfare, the symbolism of motifs, and standards for connoisseurship. Nearly all these fittings were once owned by trained swordsmen, and the weapons they ornamented could surely inflict fatal wounds. But their extraordinary variety and beauty also reveal them as wonders of self-expression and personal style. One of the foremost experts on the Japanese sword describes their history and appreciations in this book, with photographs and illustrations. The Japanese sword combines unbreakability, rigidity, and lethal cutting power, and it is in the resolution of these conflicting practical requirements that it emerges as a triumph of the forger's art. The mystique of the sword lingers on in our age of mechanized combat, but the aesthetic qualities for which swords are most valued by collectors today—the liveliness of the metal skin, the confidence in every aspect of the ' Well over a thousand years old, the tradition of swordmaking in Japan is one of the most highly regarded metal crafts in the world. When all sword

manufacture was prohibited in Japan for seven years after World War II, the age-old techniques were in danger of being lost forever. Today, in the hands of a new generation of practitioners, the craft is making a startling comeback. Connoisseurs say that the swords being produced now are the equal of anything made in Japan in the past few hundred years. This book takes the reader into the workshops of four of Japan's leading sword craftsmen. Each craftsman has a different role in the manufacture of a blade. Yoshindo Yoshihara, the swordsmith, begins with raw steel made in a traditional charcoal-fueled smelter and refines it by folding and forging, gradually shaping it into a sword with a hardened edge. Okisato Fujishiro then sharpens and polishes the sword with fine stones to reveal the color and texture of the steel. Metalworker Hiroshi Miyajima makes the small copper-and-gold habaki collar that fits between the blade and the scabbard. Finally, Kazuyuki Takayama carves the hilt and the scabbard out of a single piece of wood. Black-and-white photographs show every stage of the manufacture, while important information on history, metallurgy, and modern-day appraisal is presented in an extensive introduction. The swords made in Japan today are not, of course, intended for actual use. But their design, the quality of their steel, and the techniques used to create them still derive from the sword's historical function as a lethal hand-held weapon. A sword must be razor sharp, light, well balanced, and strong, but not so brittle it will break. In the perfect resolution of these qualities lie the beauty of the blade and the challenge of the craft. This book demonstrates how brilliantly Japan's sword craftsmen today have met this technological challenge. The impulse of the craft now is to preserve the utilitarian object and yet create an enduring art for the modern age. While many fine books on sword appreciation exist, these deal primarily with older blades or problems of appraisal. The Craft of the Japanese Sword is the first book in English devoted entirely to contemporary sword manufacture, and will thus be of enormous value to metal artists everywhere, as well as to collectors and students of weaponry. The samurai sword: a symbol of the spirit of old Japan, it embodies the samurai's steel discipline, unswerving devotion and peerless skill. With its creation, a feat of craftsmanship passed down by generations of artisans, the samurai sword is generally considered to be superior even to the famed blades of Western Damascus and Toledo. The Samurai Sword Handbook is a

precise exploration of the samurai sword designed for sword collectors as well as anyone intrigued by these ancient blades. Detailing the origins and development of the samurai sword, its historical background, styles, famous schools and differences in construction, this revised edition of the classic reference outlines methods of identifying and researching the sword, as well as caring for it properly. This must-have for sword lovers is sure to be a bestseller. Topics of this Samurai book include: Japanese History and the Samurai Sword Types of swords Parts of the sword Blade shape, construction, and grain The making of the sword Inscriptions and their readings Care and maintenance Appraisal and value Relative point values In his eye-opening new book, author Fumon Tanaka uses the life and accomplishments of sword master Miyamoto Musashi to look at the history of swords and sword fighting, and to discuss their role in Japanese history and in the development of traditional Japanese martial arts systems. The book opens with an introduction to Musashi as a real-life figure, not just the legend we've come to know. Musashi was born in 1584, a time of transition in Japan that saw centuries of violence and war give way to an era of peace. In his early years, Musashi studied kenjutsu (the technique of the sword) and trained as a warrior. Before he turned thirty, he had fought and won sixty-six duels, proving himself a truly gifted swordsman. When he was in his thirties, however, warriors were no longer called upon to do battle, and many, like Musashi, turned to the inner secrets and theories of kenjutsu as a way to find a deeper meaning to life. He became a first-class painter and wrote Zen poetry. By 1629, he had gone back to his ronin (masterless warrior) ways, and opened a kenjutsu dojo, where he taught two-sword fighting, the technique he perfected although didn't invent, as is widely believed. In 1643, when he was sixty years old, Musashi wrote his classic work, The Book of Five Rings. In the second chapter of the book, Tanaka introduces Musashi's major rivals, while the last two chapters go into great detail about the various traditional martial arts systems including the development and characteristics of each, as well as the techniques themselves. The long history of Japan is also the history of the martial arts, which evolved from swordsmanship. And since the mental, spiritual, and physical aspects are inseparable, an exploration of traditional martial arts is also a look at the very essence of Japanese culture. Drawing on the V&A's magnificent collection, this illustrated

survey examines the development of the Japanese sword in an historical and social context from the 8th to the 12th century. The development of the sword from its origins as one of the world's most effective cutting weapons is seen in the context of the emergence and development of Japan's ruling military class, the samurai, to whom it was indispensable both as a weapon and symbol of power. The book also deals with the techniques used in the making of the sword and the associated terminology. In addition to weapons from the V&A's own collections, illustrations include comparative materials from Japan's Tokyo National Museum, as well as prints showing graphic depictions of swords in action. I now complete the series with the „Nihon-shinshinto-shi“, the history of the shinshinto era of Japanese swords, starting from Suishinshi Masahide's initiation of a new trend around An'ei (1772-1781) to the ban on swords issued by the Meiji government in 1876. As with the „Nihon-koto-shi“ and the „Nihon-shinto-shi“, the reader should be able to grasp a coherent picture of the backgrounds and scholastic activities around the Japanese sword at the end of the feudal era. Finally, the time scale must not be overlooked: The „Nihon-koto-shi“ had to deal with roughly 800 years, from the Nara to the end of the Muromachi period, and the „Nihon-shinto-shi“ comprised „just“ about 200 years, whereas the shinshinto era lasted only about a century. The Japanese sword has long been appreciated both as a weapon and as an object of art. Only in Japanese culture has the sword been developed to such a level of technological excellence and spiritual importance. As a cutting weapon, the fully developed curved katana, or samurai sword, of the samurai warrior was uniquely effective. As a cultural object, it offers invaluable insights into the social and spiritual history of the Japanese people. Cutting Edge: Japanese Swords in the British Museum offers a fascinating introduction to the design, manufacture and collecting of these Japanese weapons. It covers the development of sword art and designs, traditional forging methods, regional variations in style and signature works by legendary craftsmen. Included are hundreds of photos of swords and other art objects. This best-selling handbook to the samurai sword details the origins and development; its historical background, styles and famous schools; differences in construction; and outlines methods of identifying and researching the sword, as well as caring for it properly. 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.

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