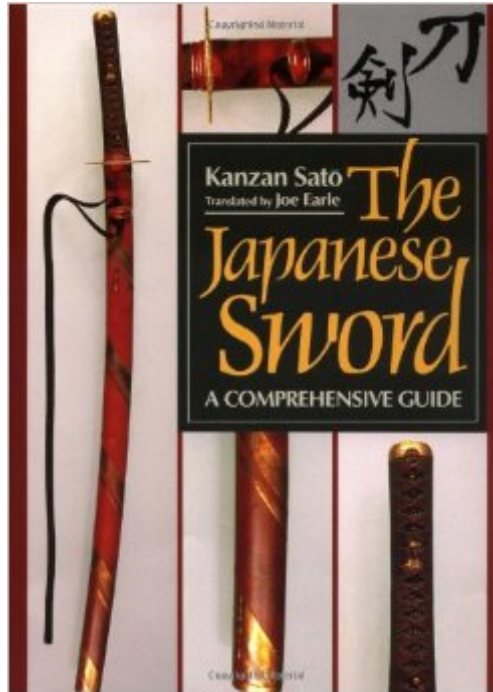


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# The Japanese Sword (Japanese Arts Library)



## **Synopsis**

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 design, the scrolling temper-line, the almost buoyant lightness of the hilt when the blade is held in the hand—all derive from what the Japanese sword demanded as a symbol of strength and as a weapon. As an instrument of clear persuasion, no other blade anywhere has ever been its equal. This volume, containing color and black-and-white plates, has been prepared as an introduction to the history and appreciation of the Japanese sword. Its author, until his death in 1978, was one of Japan's foremost sword experts, and his wide knowledge is here brought to bear on every aspect of sword lore, including forging techniques and problems of appraisal. Looking over the 1,500 years of sword history in Japan, Kanzan Sato notes how the major developments—the shift from the early straight blades to the tachi, which were longer curved blades slung edge downwards at the waist, to the familiar daisho pair of short and long swords worn by samurai until modern times—were the result of both technical innovation and changed fighting techniques. He examines the various fashions in sword mounts and the at times precious, highly decorated work of the smiths who specialized in sword guards, or tsuba, during the Momoyama and Edo periods. The centerpiece of this book, however, is a detailed examination of over a dozen of Japan's most revered blades, including the Kanehira and the Dojigiri by Yasutsuna, perhaps the two finest swords in Japan and as clear and beautiful today as when they were forged some 900 years ago. The discussion of what makes these blades special and how they have been passed down for generations offers the reader a wealth of insight into the sword in Japan as heirloom and cultural treasure.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

This is a new edition of a classic book on Japanese swords. So far as I can tell, the only difference from the earlier edition is the (very nice) dustjacket. The book includes a history of the sword, some basic information, though it's not a primer on collecting, and some good photographs of some truly excellent blades and fittings. The largest criticism I would make is that the photographs of blades don't show the subtle details, especially of the temper and "grain", which collectors are interested in. On the other hand, you can see the whole shape of the blade well in the photographs. If you're interested in swords, this book is a must-have. Serious collectors will find it a bit simplistic and general of course, but the blades included are some of the best, which makes up for a lot. For people who just are interested by Japanese swords and want to find something out about them, this book is perfect. For the beginning collector this is good, but something like Yumoto's "Japanese Sword: A Handbook" is more important.

This is one of the BEST books on the Japanese Sword including history, terminology, et cetera. I really don't know how anyone could have a sword collection or interest without this book. A friend bought this for me as a gift, way before I was interested in swords... now I have hundreds of books (mainly on swords), and this is certainly my favorite. Great book, GREAT illustrations and photographs, superb glossary. You certainly won't be disappointed.

Just when I thought there were new books of note on Japanese swords lacking, I discovered this fabulous volume in a Tokyo book store. The content is meaningful and constructive in building on an already developed foundation of knowledge. A must for both the collector and the fortunate chance owner of a possibly valuable war souvenir. You can learn much about the care of your possession here.

The pictures in this book are stunning! A real tribute to the sword and their beauty. This is a great book for someone who is just beginning their study in nihonto, or for anyone who enjoys the awesome creations that man has achieved, before the days of electricity and the power

tool!Wonderful book!

Although the title is a bit misleading, as the book also includes other edge weapons besides swords as well as their fittings, it was informative for a novice collector. The color photographs are outstanding.

The samurai sword was more than a weapon, it was literally an identity. These swords were so carefully crafted for hundreds of years. The Japanese officers who carried them, truly considered themselves to be samurai. Although the ancient samurai had been forced to evolve into the modern soldiers of Japan. To be forced to give up one's sword was like having to give up one's very life to the Japanese. The samurai sword was a badge of honor to the Japanese officers. The wearing of these swords, was tied up in Japanese history and culture. The way of the samurai was completely enmeshed in Japanese society. American forces sought out the samurai swords as prizes of war. But to the Japanese who wore them, these swords were like a very essential part of their existence.

JRV

This book is exactly what the title says it is. It truly is a comprehensive guide to various Japanese swords detailing the types and nomenclature of the swords.

An excellent introductory book. Pictures were of high quality which was surprising since they were not digital quality. Definitions were clear and the glossary of terms was excellent.

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