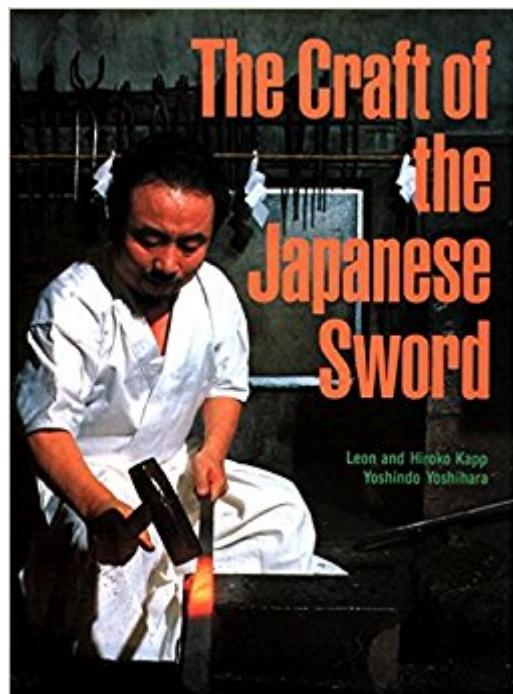


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The Craft Of The Japanese Sword



Synopsis

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.

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Customer Reviews

LEON KAPP is a molecular biologist at the University of California in San Francisco. He has studied swordmaking in Japan at the forge of the swordsmith Yoshindo Yoshihara. HIROKO KAPP was active as a graphic artist in Tokyo for ten years and is now a correspondent for the Tokyo-based Senken news organization. The Kapps live in San Rafael, California. YOSHINDO YOSHIHARA is a tenth-generation swordsmith who is ranked among the top sword craftsmen in Japan today. He began forging blades at the age of twelve and has exhibited several times in the United States. His son is currently working with him and will become the eleventh generation of the family to carry on the tradition.

Bought this for a family member who was looking for this book for the longest time. I first spotted this book in Japan and was regret not getting it then. Couldn't find it anywhere when I came back to the states. Great book, very detailed.

Very clear. Explains everything there is to know about Japanese swords. There is a point missing. The lamination of very old Japanese swords is not touched in this book. But apart from that a superb book

Great book that really taught me a lot about how katana are made and especially how to evaluate and appreciate them. Lots of terminology and all the little parts are explained. Lots of history and GREAT pictures.

I have a zillion books on Japanese swords, but never found one specifically detailing the metallurgical and technical side of how a sword is made. This is THE book to have if you want to know step by step how it's done. An incredible read. I don't care how much you know about swords,

you will learn something here and have a deeper understanding and appreciation for how brilliant a Japanese sword really is. 1000yrs of technology in one book. You will never look at a Japanese sword the same way again.

This was a gift for a knifemaker friend in South Africa. He told me that he really enjoyed it.

This Book was very formative and a great Aid in helping me create my first Tanto Knife

Fantastic Book !!!This book starts with some history and the respect to be shown for the swords, and from there, it tells (with an abundant amount of pictures) just how every step in the process of the construction of the sword is performed, by the master sword smith himself, Mr. Yoshindo Yoshihara. You will realize just how much effort goes into making a REAL sword, the CORRECT way. I highly recommend this book, one of my favorites.

A must for any sword collector or enthusiast or just for someone who wants to learn more about Japanese swords.

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