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Katana: The Samurai Sword (Weapon)

Stephen Turnbull

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The Samurai sword of Japan is probably the finest edged weapon ever made. This volume, written by leading Samurai expert Stephen Turnbull, reveals the story of how and why it achieved this distinction, from the sword's unique metallurgy to its use in combat, where one stroke often decided the victor.

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 honor. This lively text is perfectly complemented by artwork reconstructions of the sword in use and color photographs of the swords in use.

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