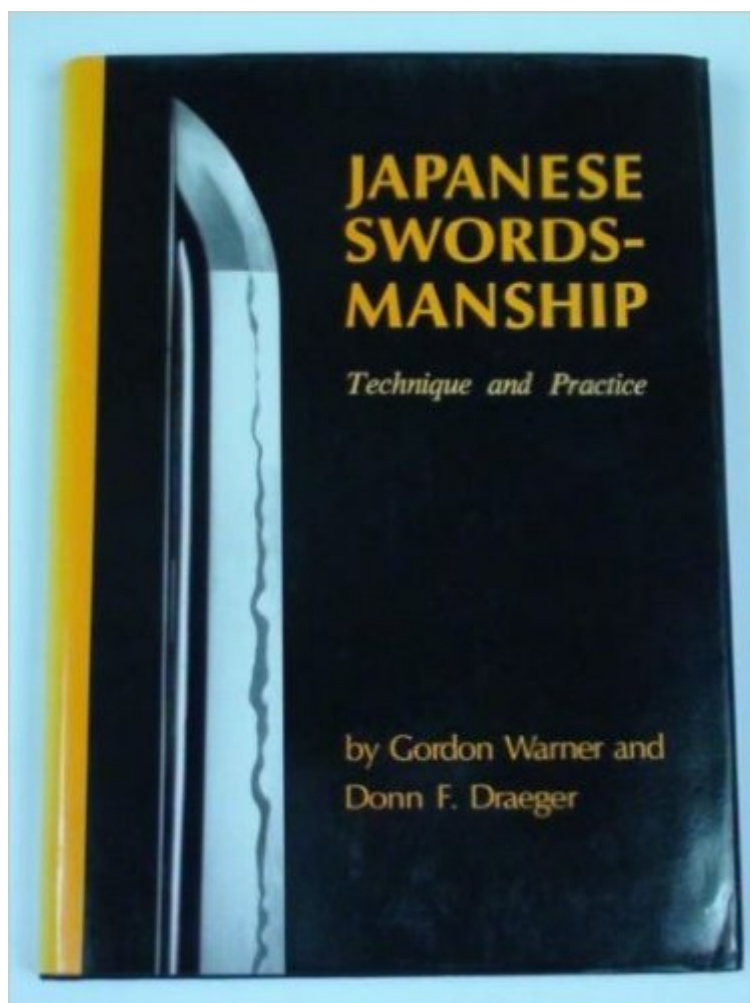


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Japanese Swordsmanship: Technique And Practice



Synopsis

This book offers a wonderful introduction to the martial artist who has been exposed to limited swordplay in a martial arts class and wants to continue learning separately. Illustrations and explanations of the moves and forms help readers fully learn each lesson. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Hardcover: 312 pages

Publisher: Weatherhill; First edition. edition (October 1979)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0834801469

ISBN-13: 978-0834801462

Product Dimensions: 7.4 x 7.3 x 1.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (14 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Swords have always fascinated mankind. Throughout the ages, a simple piece of steel has somehow managed to hold our attention and fascination like few things can. From the mystical and mighty Excalibur to the advanced lightsaber, swords have been and will remain a part of our society for generations. However, no culture has been able to create a sword quite like the smiths of Japan. The katana and tachi still serve as testaments to their incredible metallurgical talent and their rich history. Through the ages, these swords were refined, and so were the methods of making and using them. Warner's Japanese Swordsmanship deals with the history, etiquette, and use of the Japanese sword. It explains how the art evolved over the decades into what it is today, and why people still practice this ancient and deadly martial discipline. The first two-thirds of the book are filled with historic information, modern use of the art, and etiquette. All of this is very interesting, especially since many of these traditions are hundreds of years old and still practiced today. Each movement or change in position (in all of the sections ranging from etiquette to the actual practice) is meticulously detailed by high-quality black and white photographs taken from multiple angles of an experienced practitioner. The book also anticipates problem areas and attempts to correct these

by showing diagrams of the WRONG way to do things, and then emphasizing the CORRECT way. Typically, mistakes made early in training can become problems later on, but each and every section also brings to light important points that the beginning student should focus on.

Although a little outdated as the book now has only 10 of the 12 new Setei kata, which were added after the book was published, this is still an essential classic on the history and practice of Iaido. If you need info on the katas and practical techniques, however, there are better sources these days than a book--such as the many videos that are often available used for less than the price of this book new--so if it's that's what you're interested in, I would refer you to those. However, for an in-depth study of the history of the Japanese sword, the different styles and periods of craftsmanship and how they differ, the practical aspects of sword making, and many of the other cultural aspects surrounding the practice of the Japanese sword, and so on, Draeger's book is still the best one I know out there. I did have one other comment to make. Draeger comments that, especially since WWII, as a result of various changes in the teaching curriculum of Iaido it has become a more formalized, aesthetic art and has lost touch with the original combative, samurai aspect of the art. While I certainly respect Draeger, and his redoubtable skill, knowledge, and opinions in many arts, I would point out that this problem isn't unique to Iaido. It's a problem with all the martial and combative arts of both the east and west. For example, students of karate have the same problem. A student, even a skilled black belt, can do all the point sparring he wants, but unless he actually puts on the full-contact gear and risks getting his head bashed in, he isn't subjecting himself to the ultimate combative aspect of his art, either. So the problem isn't unique to Iaido.

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