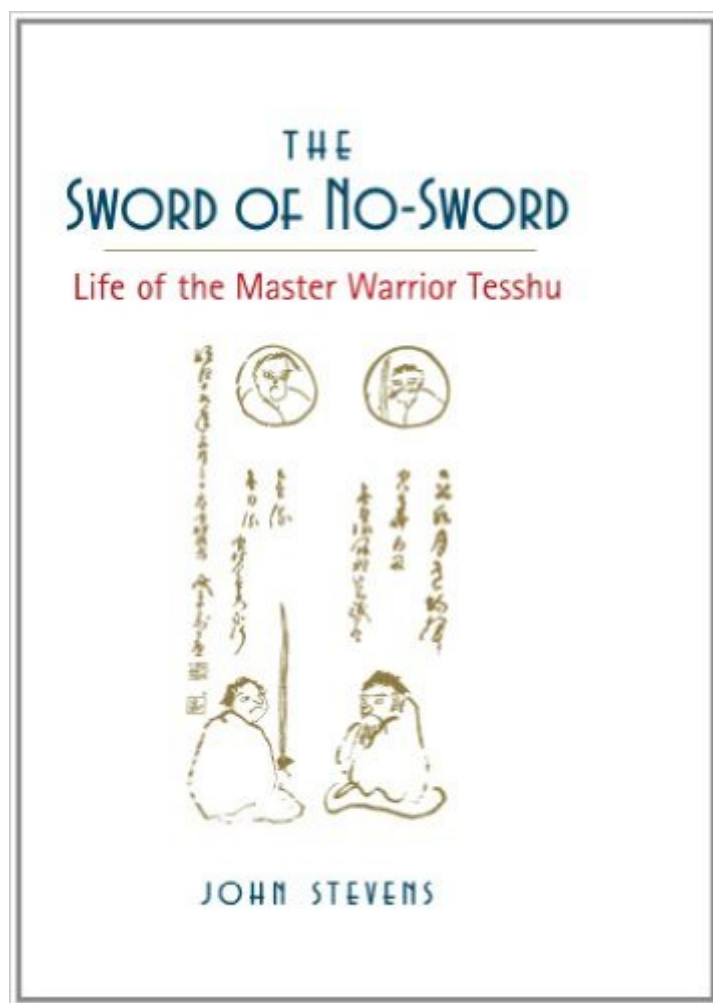


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The Sword Of No-Sword: Life Of The Master Warrior Tesshu



Synopsis

Master swordsman, calligrapher, and Zen practitioner, Yamaoka Tesshu is a seminal figure in martial arts history. John Stevens's biography is a fascinating, detailed account of Tesshu's remarkable life. From Tesshu's superhuman feats of endurance and keen perception in life-threatening situations, to his skillful handling of military affairs during the politically volatile era of early nineteenth-century Japan, Stevens recounts the stories that have made Tesshu a legend. This is the book all martial artists must own.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a very nice book by John Stevens, and if you have encountered his other books, you probably know that not only he knows what he is talking about himself being a practitioner of various Oriental arts, but his books have a certain readability that appeal to a mass reader, not just some one who is into the martial arts, or calligraphy etc. Yamaoka Tesshu was undoubtedly a very special man. Not only was he very tall for a Japanese man (over 2m) but was a powerful swordsman, calligrapher, and poet, many say the best, or one of the best of his day. John compares him to Miyamoto Musashi only somewhat more humane in his approach to dealing with the enemies. Of course it was a different era and required development of somewhat different sets of skills. To me though, Musashi remains unrivaled in his approach to strategy and battle tactic. Tesshu's life was complicated and he passed on sitting in Zazen. This is interesting as no one except him was able to do that in the Meiji Era. He passed away at will. The book talks about his life

in a very interesting context of his time and his friends, who are a story in themselves. But it was nice to know and come to value this individual, and be inspired by him, if not by his fanaticism, but by his immense stamina and spiritual strength. With his death, I really felt like the world has lost someone very kind and very important. I definitely recommend this book to the students of Zen, but especially swordsmanship, as there are Tesshu's writings in the back, as well as many of his calligraphy pieces in which you can see his stroke and judge how good of a swordsman he may actually have been without being able to see him fight on the video.

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