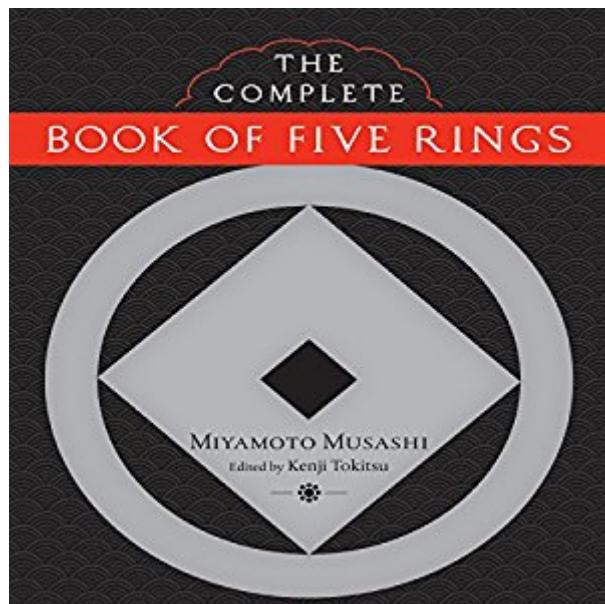


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The Complete Book Of Five Rings



Synopsis

The Complete Book of Five Rings is an authoritative version of Musashi's classic The Book of Five Rings, translated and annotated by a modern martial arts master, Kenji Tokitsu. Tokitsu has spent most of his life researching the legendary samurai swordsman and his works, and in this book he illuminates this seminal text, along with several other works by Musashi. These include "The Mirror of the Way of Strategy", which Musashi wrote when he was in his 20s; "Thirty-five Instructions on Strategy", and "Forty-two Instructions on Strategy", which were precursors to The Book of Five Rings; and "The Way to Be Followed Alone", which Musashi wrote just days before his death. Heard together, these five texts give listeners an unusually detailed, nuanced view of Musashi's ideas on swordsmanship, strategy, and self-cultivation. Tokitsu puts all these writings into historical and philosophical context and makes them accessible and relevant to today's listeners and martial arts students. Tokitsu understands Musashi's writings - and Musashi as a martial artist - unusually well and is able to provide a rare insight into the man and his historical contribution.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Book of Five Rings is a major classic and though it ought to be read by anyone interested in martial arts, Japan, warfare or oriental philosophy, it is NOT an easy book for learning strategy. The wisdom of the warrior-saint of Japan, a real person who has taken on the mantle of a myth or a demi-god is real, and it is writing of the highest order. But it is not easy to understand. Miyamoto Musashi, the sword-saint of Japan, was so advanced in his development as a warrior-philosopher

that he had stopped fighting with anything but wooden swords and finally retreated to a mountain cave to record his deepest thoughts about life. Unless you yourself have followed a life devoted to the principles of Bushido and its discipline, Musashi's writing is interesting but can you achieve a level of comprehension if you have not yourself studied martial arts? Even if you can't get deep into the psyche of Japanese bushido philosophy and Musashi's own wisdom, there is much to glean. For example, the chapter "The Void" is worth reading and reading again. Buddhism has some bearing on Musashi's writing since he was educated by his uncle Tatsumi in this religion and philosophy. One important tenet is that all desire leads to unhappiness, and the "void" is the place where you know nothing, that is, you place none of your own coloring on your interpretation of that which exists, and the Void thus contains only that which truly exists; you add "nothing" to it, thus you are in a place of nothingness (not that nothing exists, but you add nothing to that which exists--it is in its essential state.) To become truly enlightened, then one must be seeing things as they are and not as we desire.

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