

Japanese Samurai Warriors

Japanese Samurai Warriors were members of the top social hierarchy of Japan. This social class existed for hundreds of years until about the 19th century. Around this period, the Shogun reigned supreme.

The samurai sword is said to be one of three sacred treasures of the Japan. The Sacred Mirror and the Comma Shaped Beads are the other two. As early as 3 B.C. the Samurai Sword was used as an offering to the Gods. It is said to possess the three critical holy elements of purity, rarity, and value. The sword would later become the symbol of the Samurai Code or the Code of the Warrior.

The samurai sword is considered by many to be the spirit of old Japan. The history of Japan in many ways reflects the history of the Samurai Sword. In the Samurai Sword, we can trace the lineage, the history and the countless wars. In the sword, we see the craftsmanship, the quality, the heart and soul of the people of Japan that would later go on to become a technological world leader. The sword was a predecessor to Modern Japan.

Japanese sword history can be divided into eight periods.

1. Ancient period (before A. D. 650): The art of making the weapon was introduced from the Mainland of China and Korea. Many artisans and skilled black smiths from China and Korea emigrated to Japan to further develop the art of sword making. Swords during this period was yet to be perfected and the blades were designed straight.
2. Nara period (650 ~ 793): In the year 710, the first permanent Japanese capital was established in Nara. It was a city modeled after the Chinese Capital. There were large Buddhist Temples and monasteries. Later the capital would be moved to Nagaoka and then finally to Heian (Kyoto) in 794 where it would remain there for over a thousand years. This was the "Golden Age" of religious art, architecture, painting and sculpture. The art of making the sword was still primitive but some progress had already been made. Many wars ensued during this period, and the national army's demand for swords were insatiable.
3. Heian period (794~1191): The Fujiwara family controlled the political climate during the Heian period over several centuries through strategic marriages with the Imperial Family and by occupying important political offices in Kyoto. Japanese smiths began to produce their own swords with their own distinctive styling. The art of Japanese sword making had already improved dramatically. This was also the period where Japan found its own identity, gradually "Japanizing" all of its imported ideas and customs. It would become a more distinct culture, a Japanese culture, apart from Korea and China.
4. Kamakura period (1192 ~ 1336): Zen Buddhism was introduced to Japan during this period from China and Korea, otherwise known as Chan Buddhism. Large number of Samurai warriors became followers of Zen. The Samurai class would become a leading social hierarchy. Also during this period, Confucianism became widespread, instilling loyalty and social order to the people. Another notable event in history during this period is the Mongol Invasion. The

Mongols had already conquered China and was eyeing Japan. A large fleet of Mongol ships had made it's way to Kyushu Japan, but was later forced to turn back because of horrendous weather conditions. A quite favorable event for the Japanese, as the Mongol army outnumbered the Japanese by a large number. Several more attempts would be made, but the Mongols would be forced back countless times due to hostile weather. Japanese smiths began experimenting with different kinds of metals and steel types to further improve the sword. The government demand for swords continued to fuel development and manufacturing.

5. Muromachi (Ashikaga) period (1337 ~ 1573): The Era of Civil Wars. Considered to be a very dark period in Japanese history. Bloody civil wars had broken out and the fuedal Lords and Shoguns of Japan raged relentless battles. The pouring of blood and death appeared to be without end. The demand for more fighting weapons and swords continued to rise. Ironically, this was the same period that the Portuguese traders and Jesuit missionaries arrived in Kyushu Japan and introduced the firearm and Christianity to the people.

6. Azuchi-Momoyama period (1574 ~ 1602): A more peaceful period. The arts in Japan began to flourish. Shogun Hedeyoshi made social distinctions between the Samurai Class and the Farmer Class. He forbade all Samurais from farming and had them live in castles. These attempts were made to create social order. With some new found peace, the people could now concentrate on developing their spirits. The art of sword making too, reached new heights.

7. Edo (Tokugawa) period (1603 ~ 1867) Edo was the Shogun's capital at the time. Continued peace brought much economic and cultural prosperity. This was also a period of international seclusion as the nation was closed from outsiders. Only a handful of foreigners including the Chinese, Koreans and some Dutch traders were allowed to enter the Land of The Rising Sun. It was a capital offense at the time to enter or leave the country. This closed border policy continued until the 19th century. Commodore Perry of the American Navy is credit with opening up trade relations with Japan. Shortly thereafter, internal strife combined with foreign pressure ended the Tokugawa period and initiated the emergence of Modern Japan.

8. Modern period (since 1868): After 1876, the national government forbade the public wearing of swords. Industrialization was introduced, factories were built, Japan became an active trading partner with the Europeans and Americans. Their military power continued to rise. They would later annex Korea and China. They would win a war against Russia and later lose in World War II. They would then rise from the ashes to become an economic power, manufacturing world class goods and their brands becoming household names such as Toyota, Honda, Sony and Panasonic.

There was a legend from the smiths of Yamato Province in the history of Japan. The legend was about that the smith Amakumi in Yamato about A. D. 700 made the first samurai sword. Amakumi and his son gathered and examined the sword remnants after they found that nearly half of the returning soldiers from the war were carrying broken swords that they made. At that moment, Amakumi made a vow to himself that, "If they are going to use our swords for such slashing, I shall make one which will not break." After that, Amakumi and his son prayed for seven days and nights to the Shinto gods. Besides, Amakumi selected the best sand ore he could obtain and refined it. They worked hard and tried to improve of making the better swords. Later,

the smiths emerged with a single-bladed sword, which had curvature. Finally, Amakumi and his son continued with their work and made many improved types of swords. After the other war during the spring, all the returning soldiers were carrying the swords in perfect condition.

Generally, there are four categories of samurai swords as weapons, which are made of steel, single bladed, curved, and tempered. Besides, there are four periods in the history of the samurai swords:

1. Ancient sword (Chokuto or Ken) Period (until A. D. 900): The swords chiefly made by the smiths from China or Korea or by the early Japanese smiths during this period. The swords were made of steel and mostly were straight (chokuto) type. The imitation of Chinese sword was gradually developed into the typical samurai sword. Top officials usually carried expensive swords made in China.

2. Old sword (Koto) period (900 ~ 1530): Power was obtained only by means of warfare during this time. So, the sword became an everyday weapon and was carried constantly by the samurai. The swords with the cutting edge of more than 4 feet were often employed. The straight sword for stabbing was replaced by a single-bladed sword with curvature. About the year 900, the smith Yasutsuna in Hoki began forging excellent samurai swords. The most famous swords' smiths appeared in Japanese history during the years 900 to 1450. After the year 1467, the smiths turned out blades in mass production due to the increasing demand for swords. So, there were only a few swords can be considered very good.

3. New sword (Shinto) period: The end of the long civil war caused the sword lost its functional value. The length of the long sword (daito) was shortened, the cutting edged being reduced to about 2 feet, and the samurai began carrying it by inserting it between the hip and the sash. The smiths engraved extravagant of flowers, shrubbery, and dragons on the swords, instead of the simple Sanskrit characters or grooves of older swords. Besides, pictures of maple leaves, cherry blossoms, chrysanthemums, or Mount Fuji could be found in the tempered lines of the swords. More than half of the samurai swords in today were made during this period.

4. Modern (Shin-shinto) period: The feudal system and the prestige of the samurai came to an end. Swords could no longer be worn. The smiths of swords lost their trade and turned to make hoes, scissors, and knives for their livelihood. So, a lot of the swords and its ornaments were exported to Europe and United States. Many books about the swords and its ornaments were published. Since 1926 until now, there has not been a single great smith of sword. A stamp of a cherry blossom with the character for Sho (1/8" diameter) could be found above the signature of the smith on the tang of many blades. Besides, many swords like police and parade sabers, which were manufactured during the last forty-year cannot be considered samurai swords because of the plating and methods of forging contrary to the conventional methods of hand-forging and tempering of samurai swords.

Statistically, there were around 1 1/2 million swords existing before World War II. Around 1/3 of them were over 2 feet in length (daito). At present, there are more samurai swords in the United States than there are in Japan. Japan has no more than 100,000 swords today. Around 250,000 to 350,000 swords has been brought into United States as war souvenirs by returning

servicemen after the end of Pacific War during the occupation of Japan. Most of them are long sword (daito) which is formerly used by Japanese commissioned and non-commissioned officers. Around 70% of the long sword are in United States today. Swords of buke-zukuri type, neo-army (shin-gunto) type, proto-army type (kyu-gunto) type, police sabers, army parade sabers, navy types, ken and jindachi-zukuri types have been brought into United States.

Samurai swords can be classified by length or by the types of mountings.

Classifications of swords by length

Japanese use the shaku to measure the length of the cutting edge of the samurai swords. 1 shaku = 11.903542 inches.

1. Long Sword (Daito): over 2 shaku in length; there are the longer of the two swords commonly worn by the samurai; difficult to temper a daito because of its length.
2. Medium Sword (Wakizashi): 1~2 shaku in length; worn by samurai as auxiliary sword, or by non-samurai, who were allowed to wear no more than one sword of this length.
3. Short Sword (Tanto): less than 1 shaku in length; the shorter of the two swords worn by the samurai as auxiliary swords. Women and tradesmen used them as protective weapons. Commonly called as hara-kiri knives. They are usually the hira-zukuri (without ridgeline) types.

Classifications of Swords by mountings

1. Ken mountings: The oldest type known for swords of the ancient sword period. Straight, either single or double-edged blades.
2. Jindachi-zukuri mountings: For the long sword of the Old Sword period and were 4 ~ 5 feet in length. There were two rings on the scabbard because the swords worn suspended from the hip by cords. Many imitations of these mountings copied in the past one hundred years in some areas of Japan.
3. Buke-zukuri mountings: Come from the New Sword period. The handle is bound with narrow tape or leather thongs. There were no rings attached to the scabbards because the words were worn on the left hip, inserted between the hip and the sash and not suspended. The full length of this mounting was 3 ½ ~ 4 ½ feet. This is the most common and is of great interest to connoisseurs. There have pockets for a kozuka (utility knife), a kogai (skewer), or a set of wari-bashi (split chopsticks) near the mouth of the scabbard. At the most, only two of these three items were carried in the pockets of a scabbard.
4. Shira-saya mountings: Made of plain wood and were used to protect the blade or to replace a damaged mounting. It has no guard. It is also called as yasume-zaya (resting scabbard). This type is convenient for protecting a blade or an original mounting. A substitute blade (tsunagi) of wood or bamboo will be inserted to preserve the mounting when a blade is not kept in its original mounting.

5. Gunto (Army and navy swords) and their mountings

- Kyu-gunto (proto-army sword) mountings: The scabbard was chrome plated. The handle was wrapped with shark or giant-ray skin and bound with gold-colored wire. There was a strip of metal starting at the base to the top of the hilt.
- Shin-gunto (neo-army sword) mountings: The scabbard of this type resembles that of jindachi-zukuri mounting but is made of brown-colored metal and usually covered with leather when used in combat area. The handle, which is bound by leather thongs or cord, resembles that of buke-zukuri type. The handle usually has cherry-blossom designs on its pommels and ornaments. Blue color of tassel is for company grade; red is for field grade; red and gold is for general grade.
- Kaigunto (naval sword) mountings: Three types of swords used by the officers of the Japanese navy: (1) about 15 inches long short sword; (2) long and bears a close resemblance to the jindachi-zukuri type or new-army type; having two rings attached to its dark scabbard. (3) long, but narrow and looks like a police saber.

6. Shikomi-zue (Sword cane) mountings: Made after the Meiji Restoration and most of them are of a poor grade.

There are two main parts of the sword:

- (1) The blade
- (2) The mountings

Composite of the blade

1. The point (Kissaki):

The point is the most difficult part of a sword to forge and to polish. The value of the sword is mainly determined by the condition of its point. Tempered lines (boshi) on a point need not necessarily be identical on both sides of the blade. Points can be classified into different types of the blade regardless of size, by size and shape, or by their tempered lines (boshi):

2. Dividing line of surface and point (Yokote)

3. Ridgeline (Shinogi): This line will not found on hira-zukuri blades.

4. Upper surface or ridge area (Shinogi-ji): Wide or narrow

5. Surface (Ji) and surface decoration:

- Grooves: were made for preventing the sword from bending and to lesser weight originally. Gradually were made for pure decoration.

- Carvings and inscriptions: A sword is not necessarily a good sword only because of its carvings or inscriptions on its surface or upper surface.

6. Tempered line (Yaki-ba): It is a continuous straight or wavelike line running the length of the blade. When skillfully polished, the tempered line, which is the hardest part of the steel, takes on a white color. It represents the most beautiful feature of samurai swords and is the most important item in their appraisal.

7. Back or top ridge (Mune)

8. Curvature (Sori): It is measured at the top ridge of a sword. Curvatures are classified into 2 types: deep and shallow.

9. Tang (Nakago): It fits in the handle or hilt. It is important in appraising samurai swords because they often reveal the date of a sword's construction and the identity of its maker. It can be classified by the shapes of tangs, shape of tips of tangs, file marks on tangs (yasuri-me), rivet hole in the tang (mekugi-ana) or the inscriptions on tangs.

Mountings

Including all the fittings and furniture of the sword exclusive of the blade. Mountings are classified by:

1. Long Sword (Daito): over 2 shaku in length; the longer of the two swords commonly worn by the samurai; difficult to temper a daito because of its length.

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4. Collar (Habaki): It is made to prevent the blade from rattling in the scabbard and from slipping out of the scabbard.

5. Spaces or washers (Seppa)

6. Pommel or metal sleeve (Fuchi)

7. Rivet hole of the hilt (Mekugi-ana)

8. Hilt ornaments (Menuki): A hilt has a pair of menuki with identical designs or companion or counterpart designs.

9. Pommel at base (Kashira)

Commonly, the samurai-sword blades are divided into the hira-zukuri type (without ridgeline) and the shinogi-zukuri type (with ridgeline). There are eight different types of the common samurai-sword blades:

1. Shinogi-zukuri, which is the most common and mostly found in long swords (daito).
2. Kanmuri-otoshi.
3. Unokubi-zukuri, which is found in short swords (tanto) after the late Kamakura period.
4. Shobu-zukuri, which was popular in the Muromachi period and generally, found in short blades.
5. Moro-ha, which is found in the tanto from the mid-Muromachi period. Straight blades with two cutting edges are known as ken.
6. Kata-kiri-ba, which is found in the short blades and was popular in the late Kamakura and the Momoyama period.
7. Kata-shinogi, the blades are generally short.
8. Hita-zukuri, which is the most common type for short blades without ridgeline.

Besides, there are five different types of construction of the blades:

1. Maru-gitae, which is with one grade of steel and used for mass production. Usually the swords reveal a smooth, grainless appearance on their surfaces.
2. Wariba-gitae, which is a better construction than Maru0gitae because harder blade-steel is applied to the blade.
3. Makuri-gitae, which is with the soft core that, surrounded by hard steel.
4. Hon-sanmai-awase-gitae, which is the skin steel cover the soft core and harder blade steel.
5. Shiho-zume-gitae, which is same as Hon-sanmai-awase-gitae with the addition of back steel.

The metal is heated, stretched and folded as many as twenty times before the sword assume its final form. Fine layers appear on the ridge area and surface that is called the grain (hada). There are different types of grains:

1. Plain (muji)
2. Straight grain (masame-hada)
3. Wood or wood-vein grain (itame-hada)

4. Burl grain (mokume-hada)

5. Curved grain (ayasugi-hada)

There were a lot of problems that faced by the smiths in the ancient times. The smiths discovered that a sword with a razor-sharp blade very often broke off when used against armor. However, an unbreakable blade made of soft steel would bend. Another issue was to make the light sword for use in combat. The smiths found that the most satisfactory weight for a sword is around 2 or 3 pounds. There are many methods of making swords. Some of the methods have to go through many times of repeating process of heating and folding of the steel. After that, the smith engraved his signature and the blade was transferred to the polisher. Meanwhile, different artist will work on different parts of the swords like hilt ornaments, handle bindings, guards, and the sheaths.

Care and maintenance of the sword

The beauty and the value of the samurai sword are chiefly on the excellence of its flawless polish. The blade should never be touched with the hand because it is dangerous and will lead to eventual rusting. The best way to prevent rust is to keep the sword lightly oiled with lightweight oil because the heavyweight oil will soil the interior of the scabbard by causing dust to collect. Apply oil once a month to the sword if it is kept in a salty atmosphere. If in mountainous areas, the sword should applied with oil once every three months. Do remember to wipe off the old oil from the sword with a soft fabric, such as soft tissue before we reapply the oil to the blade. Then, sprinkle special oil-removing powder or talcum powder on the blade surface. After that, wiping off the powder by a clean before apply the light oil to the blade. Please do not use metal polish on the blade or on the metal mountings, especially the guard (tsuba). Finally, the tang should never be polished because it contains vital information about the maker.

Ninja Sword (Ninja-to)

The ninja sword (ninja-to) was quite different from the samurai sword. The long sword that the samurai carried was made of high-carbon steel, and took months to make. They were hand made specially for each samurai warrior, taking great care to make a very high quality sword. Each sword was made by a highly trained Black Smith who practiced and studied the art of sword making. The Samurai Warrior truly had the finest swords in Japan. It was so sharp that it could easily cut a man in two, even through their armor. The length of the samurai swords averaged around 26 1/2 to 37 inches.

The ninja sword was considerably shorter, only 24 inches, and the quality of the swords was inferior. The reason for the poorer quality was the way they used the sword as opposed to the way the samurai used theirs. Samurai would swing their sword, severing limbs and slashing at the opponent. Ninja, on the other hand, used the sword more in a stabbing motion, almost like a spear. To use the blade of the ninja sword effectively you would have to use a sawing motion when the blade came in contact with the opponents flesh. The straight blade made them weaker but easier to make. The Ninja class was not a respected social group in Japan. They were an

underground society who did not work with the best commercial weapons. They were however highly trained guerilla warriors and used every weapon in the book.

Another reason for the poor quality of the swords is that since the ninja was mostly mountain people and outlaws, they could not afford to hire expert sword smiths like the samurai class. Also their own sword smiths did not have access to the right resources to be able to make curved edge swords with well constructed blades. If a Ninja could overcome a samurai he would take his swords, simply because they are better.

Although the ninja sword was smaller and poorer quality, it had many uses. The scabbard for instance was made longer than the sword, about 3 to 4 inches longer. At the end of the scabbard there was a hidden compartment that was used to hide small weapons such as spikes, daggers or small amounts of poisons.

Another use the sword had was that it could act as a small step by jamming the blade into the ground, the ninja could use the hand-guard as a step to get that extra height needed to scale a wall. Because the blade was not very sharp, the ninja could also use it as a hammer by holding onto the blade (carefully) and hitting with the handle. Also it was common to have the tip of the scabbard come off so it could be used as a snorkel.

Samurai Sword Terminology & Definitions

Katana: Long Sword

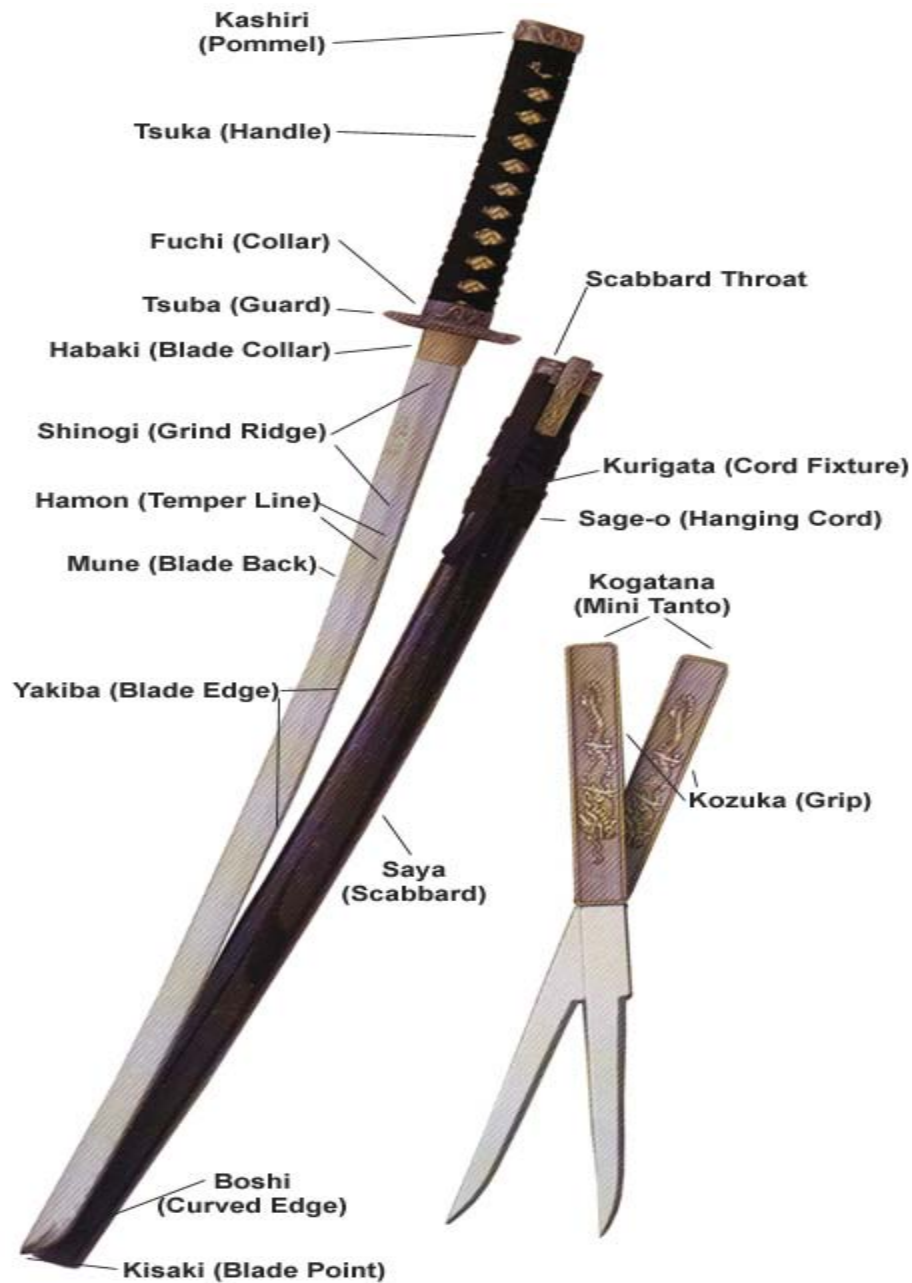
Wakizashi: Medium Sword

Tanto: Short Sword

Daisho: A Katana and Wakizashi Set. Traditionally, the swords of the samurai.

Kogatana: Mini Tanto

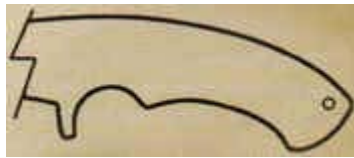
Tachi: The original Samurai Sword worn suspended from an intricate belt.



Tang Types

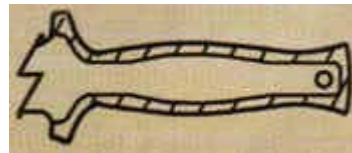
The tang is the portion of the blade that is inside the handle. Listed below are the different types.

Generally speaking, a sword will be stated if it is Full Tang. If not stated, then most likely it is a Half Push Tang.



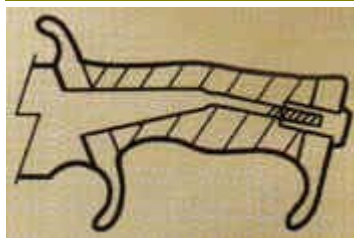
Full Tang

The entire handle is the tang with the handle scales attached to the sides.



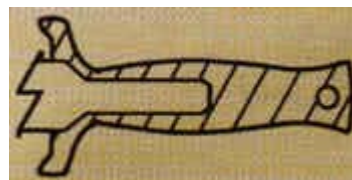
Encapsulated Tang

Handle is molded around the tang.



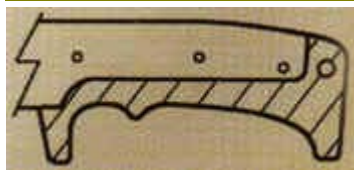
Rat Tail Tang

A bolt or threaded pommel secures the blade to the handle.



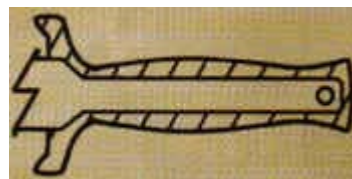
Half Push Tang

The tang is pushed into the handle and fixed in place.



Half Tang

Approximately 1/2 of the handle is tang.



Full Push Tang

The tang is pushed into the handle and fixed in place.

Japanese Weapons

Common Japanese weapons include: The samurai sword, the Ninja sword, the Sai, The Kubotan, the Tonfa and The Nunchaku. Japanese weapons originated from China, Korea, the original native Okinawans and through their own unique culturalism. The centuries of wars and battles engaged by the Japanese warlords and Shoguns helped further evolve the Japanese weapons collection into what we know of it today. Other widely known Japanese weapons include the Jutte, The Yumi, The Naginata, The Yari, The Shuriken (throwing star), The Ebo, The Keibo, The Jo (Staff), The Bo, and the Kama.

The Kama - Originally a farming tool to weed plants. Because the farmers were not allowed to carry weapons they used their tools to defend themselves. This weapon is most know for its use by ninjas.

The BO - A large staff (about 2 M) used as a self defense weapon by the common people, who were not allowed to carry weapons.

The Jo - A shorter staff (about 1.35 M) also used as a selfdefense weapon by the common people.

The Keibo - A small stick (about 35 cm) used for fighting in small area's.

The Ebo - A very small stick (about 15 cm) perfect as a defense weapon and easy to cary around.

The Tonfa - A nightstick with a handle attached to the side of it. many police forces have adopted it to replace the old police baton (nightstick).

The Nunchaku - Two sticks connected by either a small cord or chain. Originally it was used as a farming tool to thresh grain. and the farmers started using them as weapons to defend themselves.

The Shuriken - The word shuriken means ``a dagger hidden in a palm," so all daggers small enough to hide in a palm were called by this name. They have many variety in their shape and usage. Some are starlike shaped, and thrown with spin. Some other are needlelike shaped, and thrown just like a throwing dagger. Though a shuriken can hardly penetrate armor protection, it was enough because ninja threw it at unarmed target mainly. Venom was used with shuriken normally.

The Yari - The Japanese spear didn't differ largely from that of other countries. During the Civil War Era, spear was the most standard weapon of bushi.

The Naginata - A pole arm with a single, curved blade on one end, is employed with sweeping, circular motions and, as an extension of the wielder, channels energy in a harmonious display of beauty and precision. The Naginata is a weapon with a rich history, utilized and refined from the Nara Period (710-784 A.D.) to today. Employed initially by the Bushi, it later found itself the specific weapon of the Sohei or Buddhist monks. It is the school of the spear and, as such, is a shafted weapon. The length of its oval shaft varied, from 5' to 8', depending on battle conditions

and personal requests. The most striking feature, however, was the blade; it could be anywhere from 10 inches to more than 2 feet, and was sharpened on a single side, fashioned in the manner of either Sakizori or Uchizori. As with most shafted weapons, it was most devastating when utilizing sweeping, circular motions. However, thrusts with the blade and also the heavy Ishizuki on the butt end were acceptable tactical alternatives.

The Jutte - Jutte are implements that were used by the samurai as well as the feudal era police. They were used for trapping the blades edged weapons as well as jabbing, striking and trapping fingers.

The Yumi - The Japanese bow was the main battlefield weapon for the bushi until the 1530's. A typical Japanese bow is 2.3m length, made of bamboo with a string of silk and pine resin. An arrow is made of bamboo and bird feather. Bamboo is the best material for bow in the plant kingdom. Though inferior to modern composite archery bow in penetration and accuracy, it was a deadly weapon, too. Until the musket was brought from Europe in 17th century, the bow was most respected by bushi.

Chinese weapons

Chinese weapons can be considered to be the origin or mother of all asian oriental weapons. The ancient monks of Shaolin learned to use anything as a useful weapon. The most popular chinese weapon was the staff, considered to be the king of all weapons.

The most popular Shaolin Kung Fu 'tool' was the staff. A long stick that had a variety of uses and purposes. It is a multi-purpose implement that can be used for many things other than self defense. A staff is used as a walking stick, to carry loads on your back, carry and transport two water buckets, as a lever, tent pole, writing implement (in the sand) and many more. This is also the weapon that almost all Chinese martial arts consider to be "The Father of all Weapons". It is also highly effective and recommended for all martial artists to learn.

There were of course many staff types as there are different woods, people and ways of using. But in general most staffed weapons can be put into 5 specific sizes (general lengths - all Shaolin weapon dimensions were measured in 'natural' measurements relating to the user);

Dragon Staff (app 1½ person lengths or 8 to 9 foot)

Shaolin Staff (app 1 person length or 5½ to 6½ foot [also Rat Tail Staff, very flexible, Bai La Wood])

Carry Staff (app ¾ person length)

Cudgel or Walking Stick (app half person length and very stout)

Flute, Ruler (app fore arm to fore arm and hand length)

Virtually any item that comes to hand can be used as an item of defense.

Clubbing or blunt weapons were popular among the Shaolin Monk Kung Fu practitioner for several reasons. Because of their spiritual beliefs they didn't believe in hurting or killing. Although a blunt weapon could hurt, it was difficult to kill someone with a staff or stick. What you would most likely do is subdue the attacker and hurt them. Many of them originated as farm

tools and then became more refined and specialized with time.

Flexible weapons were the most difficult to master and the least understood. Few students ever mastered or took the time and discipline necessary to learn a flexible shaolin kung fu weapon. When we think about flexible weapons, we think of the 9 ring chain whip, the three sectional staff and many other. These weapons were the complete opposite to the sword and staff. They required a great deal of talent and training to master.

Some weapons of the China was designed to be used from a distance. Distance is preferable as a good defense and for secret attacks. Shaolin monks are normally not in the business of secretly attacking people, so these were rarely used and in very extreme circumstances. These weapons were common amongst vagabonds, assassins and ninjas. They were considered to be weapons of unfavorable reputation.

Shaolin Kung Fu and Chinese Martial Arts has 4 basic weapons: The staff, the broadsword, the spear, and the straight sword. These are the 4 basic weapons of Kung Fu and Chinese Martial arts and one that all serious martial artists should master.

- The Staff - The Father of All Weapons
- The Broad Sword - The Marshall of All Weapons
- The Spear - The King of All Weapons
- The Straight Sword - The Gentleman of all Weapons

The origin of all weapons are as follows: The knife, the stick, the spear, the rope, and the hammer. From here all the weapons of the martial arts have grew and flourished. From these basic tools, we can find every martial art weapon of the tree.

- Knife
- Stick
- Spear
- Rope
- Hammer

Non Standard Weapons	Pounding or Bludgeoning Weapons	Sharp Edged Weapons	Flexible Weapons	Throwing Weapons
Sash	Crutch or Cane	Arhat Coin	7-12 Section Whip	Bow & Arrow
Bench	Dragon Head Stick	Axe , Dagger	Bull Whip	Crossbow
Chopsticks	Eight Corner Hammer	Axe, Long Stick	Rope	Back Cross Bow
Iron Comb	Golden Melon Hammers	Axe	Weighted Rope	Fly Whisk
Flute	Buddha Hand	Brush Attacker	Kriss Sword Breaker	Flying Dart
Iron Ring	Cymbals	Brush, Wolf	Double Headed Comet	Flying Fork
Iron Ruler	Hammer	Claw, Long Handed	Star Hammer	Flying Locust
Iron Smoking	Hook	Claw, Talon	Double Headed Flying	Stone
Pipe	Lashing Staff	Comb, Palace Heaven	Maul	Flying Knife
Iron Toad	Mace	Crescent Rake	Iron Chain Linking	Flying Weight
Mandarin Duck	Mother and Son	Daggers, Twin	Club	Meteor Hammer
Spade	Hammer	Fist, Brass	Three Section Staff	Dart Knife
Monk Cudgel	Shield	Fork Short	Soft Hammer	Rope Javelin
Monk Spade	Three Section Staff	Fork, Flying	Stick Soft Whip	Rope Sling Shot
Whip Chain	Flail	Fork, Horse	Four Section 'Tang'	Sling Shot
Rake	Two Section Staff	Fork, Scholar	Rope Dart	Mother Sun
Ring Wheel	Water Parting Shield	Fork, Steel	Comet Star Hammer	Cross Darts
Scholar's Brush	Wolf Teeth Club	Fork, Wolf Teeth Spiked	Dragon Head Whip	Sleeve Arrow

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pen Sickle Tiger Fork Four Section Sickle Steel Fan Hoe Dragon Whisker Fork Ox Horn Fork Two Point Fork Two Teeth Fork Flail Rope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wolf Teeth Hammer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halberd , Horse Halberd , Large Horse Halberd, Single Ended Halberd, Twin Ended Halberd Hand, Buddha Heaven Lotus Phoenix Tail Heaven Lotus Wind Tail Tan Hoe Hook, Fire Hook, Nine Teeth Knives , Butterfly Knives , Deer Antler Knives, Double Deer Antler Kris (Sword Breaker) L Shaped Halberd Lance, Long Lance Pincers, Long Handed Rake Rod , Nine Chi Tapered Rod, Eighteen-Chi Tapered Rod Scissor & Ruler Shovel, Golden Bell Shovel, Golden Coin Shovel, Heaven Tangled Shovel, Lotus Flower Shovel/Spade Sickle Spade , Gold Coin Spade, Convenient Spade, Crescent Moon Spade, Golden Bell Spade, Lotus Flower Spear , Double Headed Spear , Hooked Single Spear, Hook-Scythe Double Spear, Hook-Scythe Spear, Snake Spear, Throwing Spear, throwing Spear, Wolf Spear Sting, Moon Tooth Sting, Emei Piercers Stirring Heaven Killer Sword, Cicada Wing Sword, Eagle Head Sword, Heaven & Earth, Sun & Moon Sword, Horse Chopping Sword, Large Long Handed Broad Sword, Broad, Ghost Head Sword, Broad, Long Sword, Broad, Nine Hook Sword, Broad, Nine Ring Sword, Broad, Southern Sword, Broad, Swallow Tail Sword, Broad, Twin Sword, Broad, Two-Handed Sword, Butterfly Double Sword, Dashing Sword, Eyebrow Tip Sword, Hook Sickle Sword, Kick Sword, Long Handed Elephant Nose Sword, Long Handled Sword, Long-Handed Yue Fei Sword, Ox Ear Sharp Sword, Sleeve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Club Dragon or Plum Flower Claw Flying Claw/Hook Lether Soft Whip Hook Swords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blow Dart Flying Sting Brass Chopsticks Iron Madarin Duck Blum Flower Needles (Red) Poison Sand
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	Sword, Slip or Thin Sword, Straight, Piercer Sword, Straight, Snake Sword, Straight, 3 Point Double-Blade Sword, Straight, Twin Sword, Straight, Two-handed Sword, Straight, Unicorn Horn Tree Knot	
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The Chinese Sword

Medieval China saw great advancements in the science of metallurgy. They were far ahead of the technology available in Europe. These advancements allowed China to become a major military power. The power of the sword and arrived.

The basic techniques of forging and tempering developed in China. From these techniques, the renowned Japanese samurai swords were crafted. These skills arrived in Japan as early as the Sui and Tang Dynasty China AD 589.

Research has shown that the sword smiths of China were able to combine the following attributes over the past 20 centuries: Hard and durable edge, a resilient body that absorbs shock without breaking. In a sword this is very difficult to achieve and found to be impossible to combine for centuries before.

Smiths were able to combine these two apparently incompatible attributes by combining hard and soft steels in various ways. Hard steel tends to be brittle but strong. Soft steel tends to be resilient and springy but not strong and easily bendable.

There are 3 basic methods: There is Baogang or wrapped steel method. The hard high carbon steel forms the cutting edge and encloses a softer core of mild steel. The core metal is often folded on itself to increase density and strength. A baogang blade must be made with fairly thick jacket of hard steel or else it will lose it's sharpness after some use.

A more common form of blade forging is qiangang, or "inserted" steel. The high-carbon edge forms a core with is sandwiched between "cheeks" of mild steel. The cheeks are often made of alternating layers of iron and steel, which produce a pattern on the surface when the blade is polished. A skilled smith can manipulate the layers to produce patterns of great beauty, in addition to providing structural strength to the sword.

The last major type of forging is known in the West as "twistcore". This type is formed of parallel bars of twisted layers of hard and soft steel, all welded into a single unit under heat and hammer. When ground and polished, the surface resembles rows of feathery, star-shaped, or swirling elements.

Other technological advancements involved hardening the blade through the use of heat and quenching in liquid. This technique is universal today wherever blades are manufactured. China was one of the few places in which techniques were devised to differentially heat treat the edge

as opposed to the entire blade. This technique was then further perfected by the Japanese, who used the skill labor of enslaved Chinese and Korean Smiths.

Filipino Kali

Filipino Kali is the art of stick fighting. They use hard, bamboo sticks to strike and defend. They have made this particular fighting style into an art form. Filipino Kali teaches weapons fighting before bare hand to hand combat as they do in other martial art styles. For example, a student in any Chinese martial arts is expected to master hand to hand combat before moving on to any form of weapons.

Definition: martial art specializing in fighting with two baton-length sticks, with techniques adaptable to empty-hand or edged weapons. The terms "escrima" is thought to originate from the Spanish word "escrime", meaning to fence with a sword--and is thought to have originated during the Spanish occupation of the Phillipine Islands. Often used synonymously for arnis and kali.

History of Kali, Arnis, Escrima

Kali is an ancient term used to signify the martial arts in the region of the Philippines. In Southern Philippines, it is called Kali-Silat. Silat refers to the movements of the lower body. During Spanish occupation, they forbade the practice of Kali. The Spaniards called the art Escrima or Arnis. Hence, after this period, the martial arts of the Philippines, all three words were used to describe their art.

Kali is a prefix for many Filipino languages. One of the oldest is Karay-a-Panay. Other words include Kalipay (happness), Kalibutan (world). Kali is also used as a suffix. A very common word as you can see.

Recorded history tells us that the early Filipinos migrated from the southern islands. Kali is also used in India. Kali is the name of an Indian God. Kali is also found in Indonesia.

In Indonesia, they fight more with Silat than Kali. In Pentjak Silat is included a study of the body's center of gravity and how to constantly topple it. In Southern Philippines, Silat is used in dances, as martial arts, and as games. They played it as young children of 6-8, and we never thought of it as a martial art, just as a funny game of physical wit.

Dance relates to the culture of the country. A study of the dance forms of the Philippines shows that the kali pattern is ingrained in all the hand gestures and footsteps for agility. None of these kali patterns are seen in the dances of India, Indochina, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, China, Japan, Pacific islanders. Only in the Philippines will you see these dance patterns similar to the kali patterns. So even if there is similarity to the Silat of Indonesia, Kali still developed into its own, in ancient Philippines.

The martial arts was taught and practice by both men and women in the Philippines. Combat was used amongst neighboring tribes and warlords. The Filipinos have a long history of women fighting in battle, wars and combat.

The Filipinos pride themselves in believing that the martial arts of their nation was a self originated art, not borrowed from the Chinese, Koreans, Japanese, or Spanish.

Kali, escrima or arnis de mano, stick fighting was developed over a period of many centuries in the Philippines as her people fought for their independence from foreign invaders. Each skirmish with a new culture added to the Filipino Martial Arts as Kali warriors developed techniques to combat foreign styles. Subsequently, more than 100 different Filipino Martial Arts styles developed, which can be grouped into three complete self-defense systems which utilize sticks, swords, empty hands and other weapons. The systems are called Northern, Southern, and Central.

"Kali," the mother of escrima and arnis de mano, is the preferred reference by its practitioners. Always assuming the use of the blade, whether it be the sword or knife (dagger), Kali employs many techniques, including strikes, stances and weapon handling, which have influence from China, Arab missionaries, Indonesia and Spain. This is due to immigration as well as invasion and occupation. The Philippines' colorful history records the immigration of several cultures to the islands, all of which influenced the Filipino Martial Arts. The Madjapahit, who settled in the Southern stretches of the islands, where influenced by Arab missionaries and became know as fierce Moslems (called "Moro Filipinos") who violently opposed foreign peoples on their native land. During the American occupation of the Philippines in the early 1900s, Moros, marked by tiger-eyes and red headbands - signifying a resolve to kill until killed - strode singly down the streets blading everything in their path, embracing the belief that every slain Christian assured their places in heaven. So tenacious was the Moros' rampage that hundreds of reports by American soldiers surfaced, stating that the slugs of .38-caliber pistols failed to stop the advancing Moros. As a result of those reports, the .45-caliber pistol was designed and issued to American servicemen. Although the Moros' religious fervor was a crucial element in their destruction, it was the use of their bladed weapons that allowed the bloody chaos to succeed. The art they so deftly employed was Kali.

Spanish conquistadors, led by Ferdinand Magellan, invaded the islands in the early 1500s. A pirate according to Filipino history, Magellan was slain by the heroic chieftain Lapu Lapu and his men. The armor-clad Spanish, overpowered by the fierce islanders and their fire-hardened sticks, retreated. In the 1570's, unable to match the conquistadors' muskets, the Philippines fell under Spanish rule. The Filipinos preserved their Martial Arts by integrating it into native costumes and dances, often performing Kali movements in the form of dance for the pleasure of Spanish dictators.

In 1935, the Philippines were recognized as an independent nation until occupied by Japan during World War II. Welcoming U.S. intervention during the occupation, Filipinos eagerly enlisted in American services. Known for close-in, hand-to-hand combat with bolo knives, the Filipino troops established themselves as fierce guerrilla forces, marching in triangle formation with the point, or lead, man disabling enemy soldiers, leaving the following formation to finish the job.

Following the war, many adventurous escrimadors and Kali men left the Philippines for Hawaii

and California. There they grouped together, working as farm laborers and practicing their art in secret, still adapting it to their environment by utilizing farm tools -asparagus knives, machetes, hoes and the like - as weapons.

After years of clandestine practice, the old masters have begun to teach a younger generation the beautiful and deadly Filipino Martial Arts. The "old men" of Kali and escrima believe the art is dead in the Philippines. However, they teach the younger generation to respect the art by a salutation, shown by touching the closed fist of the right hand to the forehead and the open hand to the heart. Some of these masters of Kali who have continued the art are Angel Cabales, Regino Ellustrisimo, Leo Giron, John LaCoste, Ben Largusa, and Floro Villabrille.