

BY MIYAMOTO MUSASHI

BOOK OF FIVE RINGS



*A manifesto on swordsmanship,
strategy, strategic thinking, and
winning.*

TRANSLATED BY M M ABBASI





The Book of Five Rings, by Miyamoto Musashi

A long time ago, there was a famous warrior named Miyamoto Musashi. He was really good at fighting, but as he grew older, he decided to stop fighting and go to a cave. In that cave, he thought a lot about how to be a great warrior.

He wrote a special book called "The Book of Five Rings." In this book, he shared his important ideas and lessons about being a warrior. He talked about things like practicing a lot, finding balance in your mind and body, and how to win against any enemy in a fight.

Musashi believed that being a successful warrior wasn't just about being strong or naturally talented. It was about having a good strategy and being disciplined.

In this guide, we will learn about Musashi's main ideas and how they can be helpful in our own lives, both personal and professional. We will also look at what other people have said about being successful, like Sun Tzu in his book "The Art of War" and modern life coaches.

So, Musashi's book teaches us important lessons about being a warrior and succeeding in life.



The Time of Miyamoto Musashi

A long time ago in Japan, when Miyamoto Musashi was born in 1584, the country was not doing very well. There had been a lot of fighting and wars for more than 400 years. The emperor's power was reduced, and different groups like lords, warrior monks, and bandits were fighting each other for land and power.

During this time, the lords built big castles to protect themselves, and towns grew outside the walls of these castles. But because of the wars, trade couldn't grow much, and the whole country became poor.

Then, in 1573, a man named Oda Nobunaga became the military dictator of Japan. He gained control over most of the country for nine years. When he was killed in 1582, another man named Toyotomi Hideyoshi took over and continued Nobunaga's work of bringing Japan together. Hideyoshi made rules that only samurai, the warriors of Japan, could wear two swords. This made a distinction between the samurai and the rest of the people.

Even though Hideyoshi tried to settle Japan and increase trade, there were still problems when he died in 1598. The real isolation and unification of Japan started with Tokugawa Ieyasu becoming the Shogun in 1603. He established his government in Edo, which is now Tokyo, and it was a peaceful time that lasted for a long period in Japanese history.

Ieyasu wanted to make sure his family stayed in power, so he made the lords live in Edo every other year and limited their traveling. He gave land to people who promised to be loyal to him and his family. He also had a secret police and assassins to help him stay in control.

During the Tokugawa period, Japan changed a lot. The government controlled everything, including education, laws, and how people dressed and behaved. There were four main classes of people: samurai (warriors), farmers, artisans (craftsmen), and merchants. The samurai were the highest class, but the farmers had to give most of their crops to the lords and were not allowed to leave their farms. The merchants, who were initially looked down upon, eventually became important because they became very wealthy.

So, during Musashi's time, Japan was going through a lot of changes and struggles, but it also had a period of stability and control under the Tokugawa government.

Musashi was part of a special group in Japan called the samurai. The samurai started a long time ago in 792 AD. At that time, the Japanese army needed more skilled soldiers, so they trained young boys from important families to become warriors. These warriors were trained in horseback riding, wearing armor, and using weapons like bows and swords. They even had a special training hall called the Butokuden in Kyoto.

Before Musashi's time, there were many samurai in Japan because there were wars and battles. But when the country became peaceful, many samurai didn't have jobs anymore. Musashi was one of these samurai who didn't have much to do. They were like a group of people who didn't fit into society because there were no more wars. But they kept their warrior spirit alive by practicing martial arts like sword fighting, especially a style called Kendo.

Kendo has always been an important part of Japanese culture. Since the samurai class started in the eighth century, martial arts became a respected and noble pursuit. Kendo schools were created to teach the way of the sword, and they were influenced by Zen teachings and Shinto beliefs. Even during the peaceful times of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the sons of the rulers learned about the Chinese classics and practiced fencing. The Japanese say "Bunbu Itchi," which means that both studying and martial arts are important.

Musashi was a renin, which means he was a samurai without a job. Many renin became artisans, but Musashi chose to keep following the way of the warrior. He believed in finding enlightenment through martial arts, and he faced many duels and challenges. There were different schools of sword fighting, and some were supported by the Tokugawa rulers. These schools kept the traditions alive and even became part of the Tokugawa secret police.

Musashi lived in a time when samurai were considered special, but they didn't have much to do in a peaceful society. Musashi and others like him continued to practice martial arts, especially sword fighting, to find meaning and enlightenment. There were different schools of sword fighting, and some even became part of the government's secret police.



Kendo

Kendo is a traditional Japanese martial art that focuses on sword fighting. In the past, there were special places called Dojos where people practiced Kendo. These Dojos were often connected to shrines and temples, but during Musashi's time, many schools started in new castle towns. Each lord or important person sponsored a Kendo school for their warriors and children to learn.

Samurai, who were the warriors of Japan, wore two swords. The longer sword was used outside, and the shorter sword was worn all the time. In training, they sometimes used wooden or bamboo swords. They would have duels and practice fights using real or practice swords. These fights happened in special halls, in the streets, and even inside castles. Duels were serious, sometimes fought to the death or until one person couldn't continue. But as time passed, they started using softer bamboo swords and padded armour to reduce injuries.

Samurai didn't just learn sword fighting. They trained with other weapons too, like halberds, sticks, and chains. Many schools that teach these weapons still exist today in Japan.

To become skilled in Kendo, a person had to discipline themselves, endure tough training, and stay calm even when faced with danger. Kendo wasn't just about fighting, though. It also meant living by the samurai's code of honor. Warriors saw war as a part of their everyday life, and they were prepared to face death. Understanding the meaning of life and death through the sword was important. People today still follow the old traditions of Kendo, even if it means risking their lives for the practice.

In short, Kendo is a martial art focused on sword fighting. Samurai practiced it in special schools and learned to live with honor and courage. It was about more than just fighting—it was a way of life.



Kendo & Zen

Kendo and Zen are closely connected. Kendo is not only about sword fighting but also about the moral teachings of the samurai, who were the warriors of Japan. Zen is a type of philosophy and religion in Japan that focuses on simplicity and understanding the true nature of things.

In Zen, there are no complicated ceremonies or teachings. It aims to help people see things as they really are. It's about realizing the nature of ordinary life and finding simplicity. In Kendo, there is a secret technique called "Kiriotoshi," which means cutting your opponent at the same time they try to cut you. It's all about timing and not being angry. It's like treating your opponent as an honored guest and letting go of fear.

The first technique in Kendo is also the last, and both beginners and masters follow the same principles. Knowledge in Kendo is like a circle that goes around and around. Musashi, a famous swordsman, wrote a book about Kendo and Zen. In the beginning, he talks about the basics of Kendo, and at the end, he talks about understanding that can only be described as nothingness.

When someone learns Kendo and practices it intensely, they go through a journey similar to a Zen student. They face doubts and challenges, but their teacher guides them to realization and understanding. The Kendo student practices thousands of sword cuts every day, learning fierce techniques of war. But eventually, the sword becomes "no sword," and intention becomes "no intention." It's like having a deep understanding of every situation without even thinking. The first basic teachings become the highest knowledge, and even the master continues to practice these simple techniques every day.

Kendo, is not just about fighting with a sword, but also about finding inner peace, simplicity, and understanding.



Life of Miyamoto Musashi

Miyamoto Musashi, also known as Shinmen Musashi No Kami Fujiwara No Genshin, was born in 1584 in the village of Miyamoto in Japan. His ancestors were part of a powerful clan in Kyushu, an island in southern Japan. Musashi's father, Munisai, either died or left when Musashi was young, and his mother had also passed away. As an orphan, Musashi was raised by his uncle, who was a priest.

During the time of Hideyoshi's campaigns to unify Japan, Musashi was a strong-willed and energetic youth. It is not clear whether his uncle encouraged him or if his aggressive nature led him to pursue Kendo, but at the age of thirteen, Musashi engaged in a single combat and defeated Arima Kihei, a skilled samurai from the Shinto Ryu school of martial arts. Sadly, Kihei died from his injuries.

At the age of sixteen, Musashi defeated Tadashima Akiyama in another contest. After this victory, he embarked on a "Warrior Pilgrimage." During his journey, Musashi participated in numerous contests and fought in wars six times. He travelled alone, unlike Tsukahara Bokuden, a famous swordsman from the previous century who had a large retinue.

This period of Musashi's life was spent living apart from society, dedicating himself wholeheartedly to the study of the sword and the search for enlightenment. He focused solely on perfecting his skills, living a simple life and forgoing typical societal conventions. Musashi wandered throughout Japan, enduring the cold winter winds, never dressing his hair, avoiding baths for fear of being caught without a weapon, and not pursuing any profession other than his studies. He appeared rough and destitute.

During the battle of Seki ga Hara, which resulted in Ieyasu becoming the Shogun of Japan, Musashi joined the Ashikaga army against Ieyasu but survived the three-day conflict, which claimed the lives of seventy thousand people. He later went to Kyoto, where he sought vengeance against the Yoshioka family. The Yoshiokas had been fencing instructors for the Ashikaga house but were prohibited from teaching Kendo by Lord Tokugawa. Musashi's father, Munisai, had previously fought three duels against the Yoshiokas, winning two of them.

Musashi's first duel with the Yoshioka family took place outside the city, where he defeated the head of the family, Yoshioka Seijiro, who was armed with a real sword while Musashi used a wooden sword. Musashi continued to irritate the Yoshiokas, and Denshichiro, the second brother, challenged him to a duel. Musashi arrived late, but with one blow of his wooden sword, he fatally injured Denshichiro.

The Yoshioka family issued another challenge, this time with Hanshichiro, the young son of Seijiro, as their champion. Musashi arrived early at the meeting place near a pine tree by the rice fields, hiding until they arrived. When they thought Musashi had left, he suddenly appeared among them, swiftly cutting down Hanshichiro. He then drew both of his swords and fought his way through the Yoshioka retainers before making his escape.

This period of Musashi's life was marked by his relentless pursuit of martial excellence and his encounters with various opponents. His story is one of adventure, skill, and the path of a swordsman seeking enlightenment.

After the Yoshioka incident, Musashi continued his journey across Japan, gaining legendary status during his lifetime. His name and tales of his skill were recorded in registers, diaries, monuments, and passed down through folk memory from Tokyo to Kyushu. Before he reached the age of twenty-nine, Musashi had participated in over sixty contests, winning them all. The earliest account of his contests can be found in the "Niten Ki" or "Two Heavens Chronicle," a record compiled by his students a generation after his death.

In 1605, during the same year as the Yoshioka affair, Musashi visited Hozoin Temple in the southern part of the capital. There, he engaged in a contest with Oku Hozoin, a pupil of the Zen priest Hoin Inei from the Nichiren sect. Although Hoin Inei was a spearman, he was no match for Musashi, who defeated him twice using his short wooden sword. Musashi stayed at the temple for some time, studying fighting techniques and engaging in discussions with the priests. The monks of Hozoin still practice a traditional form of spear fighting today. It is noteworthy that in ancient times, the term "Osho," which now means priest, used to mean "spear teacher." Hoin Inei was a student of Izumi Musashi no Kami, a master of Shinto Kendo. The priest used spears with cross-shaped blades kept outside the temple under the eaves, which were also used for fire fighting.

While in Iga province, Musashi encountered a skilled chain and sickle fighter named Shishido Baikin. As Shishido twirled his chain, Musashi swiftly drew a dagger and pierced his opponent's chest, intending to finish him off. The onlooking pupils of Shishido then attacked Musashi, but he frightened them away in four directions.

In Edo, a fighter named Muso Gonosuke approached Musashi, requesting a duel. At that time, Musashi was cutting wood to make a bow. In response to Gonosuke's request, Musashi stood up and intended to use the slender wand he was cutting as a sword. Gonosuke launched a fierce attack, but Musashi stepped forward and struck him on the head, causing Gonosuke to retreat.

While passing through Izumo province, Musashi visited Lord Matsudaira and sought permission to fight against the lord's strongest expert. There were many skilled strategists in Izumo, and the request was granted against a samurai who wielded an eight-foot-long hexagonal wooden pole. The contest took place in the lord's library garden, with Musashi using two wooden swords. Musashi chased the samurai up the two wooden steps of the library veranda, thrust at his face on the second step, and struck him on both arms as he recoiled. Surprising the assembled retainers, Lord Matsudaira requested a duel with Musashi. Musashi once again drove the lord up the library steps, and when the lord attempted a determined fencing posture, Musashi broke his sword in two with the technique "Fire and Stones Cut." The defeated lord bowed, and Musashi stayed for some time as his teacher.

These episodes demonstrate Musashi's encounters with various opponents and his extraordinary skills as a swordsman. He continued to leave a lasting impression on those he encountered throughout his journey.

Musashi's most famous duel took place in the seventeenth year of Keicho, 1612, in Ogura, Bunzen province. His opponent was Sasaki Kojiro, a young man known for his unique fencing technique called Tsubame-gaeshi, inspired by the motion of a swallow's tail in flight. Kojiro was employed by the lord of the province, Hosokawa Tadaoki. Musashi sought permission from Tadaoki, through the help of Nagaoka Sato Okinaga, a former pupil of Musashi's father, to fight Kojiro. The duel was scheduled for eight o'clock the following morning on an island a few miles from Ogura.

That night, Musashi left his lodging and stayed at the house of Kobayashi Tare Zaemon. This sparked a rumor that Musashi had run away in fear of Kojiro's formidable technique. The next morning, Musashi couldn't be awakened until a prompter arrived from the officials gathered on the island. He quickly got up, washed with the water brought to him, and headed straight to the shore. As Sato rowed the boat to the island, Musashi fashioned a paper string to tie back his kimono sleeves and crafted a wooden sword from a spare oar. After completing these preparations, he lay down to rest.

As the boat approached the combat site, Kojiro and the officials were astounded to see Musashi, with his disheveled hair tied in a towel, leaping from the boat, brandishing the long wooden oar, and charging through the waves toward his opponent. Kojiro drew his long sword, a fine blade made by Nagamitsu of Bizen, and discarded his scabbard. Musashi remarked, "You have no more need of that," as he rushed forward with his sword held to the side. Kojiro was provoked into making the first attack, and Musashi swiftly dashed upward with the oar, striking Kojiro on the head. As Kojiro fell, his sword, which had sliced through the towel on Musashi's head, cut across the hem of Musashi's divided skirt. Observing Kojiro's condition, Musashi bowed to the astonished officials and swiftly returned to his boat. Some accounts suggest that after killing Kojiro, Musashi threw down the oar, leaped back several paces, drew both his swords, and flourished them with a triumphant shout at his fallen enemy.

Around this time, Musashi ceased using real swords in duels. Having proven himself invincible, he dedicated himself to the pursuit of perfect understanding through Kendo.

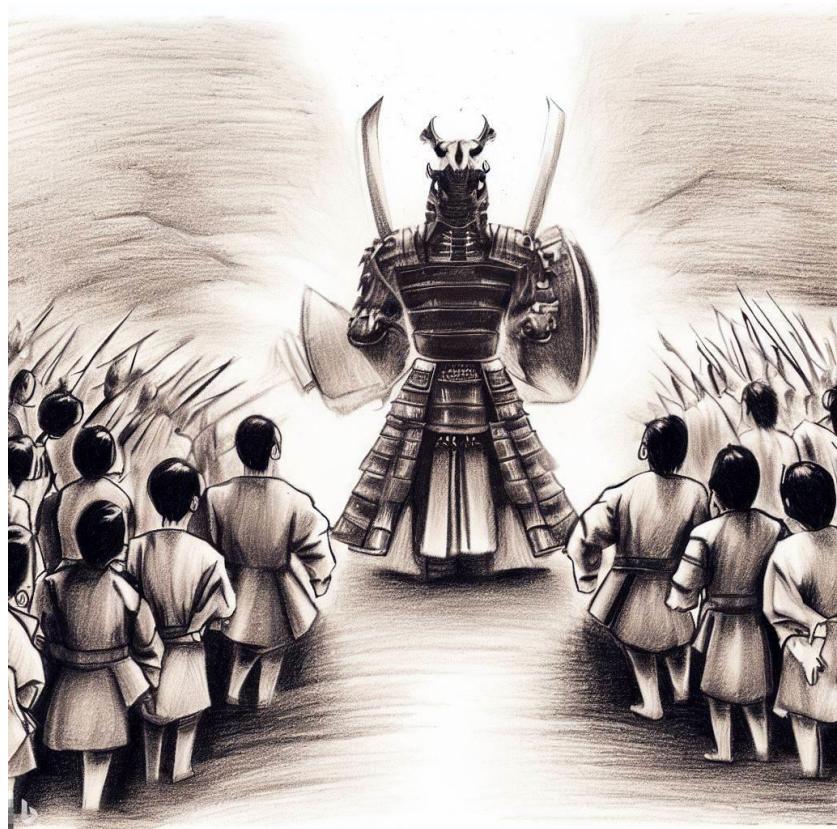
In 1614 and 1615, Musashi participated in warfare and sieges as the Tokugawa forces, led by Ieyasu, laid siege to Osaka Castle, where supporters of the Ashikaga family had gathered in rebellion. Musashi fought alongside the Tokugawa forces in both the winter and summer campaigns, now fighting against those he had previously fought for during his youth at Sekigahara.

According to his own writings, Musashi claimed to have achieved a deep understanding of strategy when he was fifty or fifty-one years old, around 1634. In the same year, he and his adopted son, Iori, whom he had encountered during his travels in Dewa province, settled in Ogura. Musashi never left Kyushu island again. The Hosokawa family held command over Kumamoto Castle, an important stronghold in Higo province, and the new lord of Bunzen was from the Ogasawara family. Iori found employment under Ogasawara Tadazane and served as a captain in Tadazane's army during the Shimabara uprising of 1638, when Musashi was approximately fifty-five years old. The lords of the southern provinces had long been at odds with the Tokugawas and were involved in intrigues with foreign powers and Japanese Christians. Musashi participated in the Shimabara campaign where the Christians were massacred. Subsequently, Ieyasu closed Japan's ports to foreign contact, and they remained closed for over two hundred years.

After spending six years in Ogura, Musashi was invited to stay as a guest with Churi, the Hosokawa lord of Kumamoto Castle. He stayed for a few years, teaching and painting. In 1643, Musashi retired to a life of seclusion in a cave called "Reigendo." It was here that he wrote "Go Rin No Sho" (The Book of Five Rings), addressed to his pupil Teruo Nobuyuki, just a few weeks before his death on May 19, 1645.

Musashi is revered in Japan as "Kensei," which translates to "Sword Saint." "Go Rin No Sho" is a renowned text in the field of Kendo and appears at the top of every Kendo bibliography. It stands out from other martial arts books as it deals with both the strategy of warfare and the methods of single combat in an integrated manner. Musashi referred to it as "a guide for men who want to learn strategy," and its contents are perpetually beyond the understanding of the reader, revealing deeper insights upon repeated readings. It serves as Musashi's final testament and provides the key to the path he followed. Even when he became a formidable fighter at a young age, he did not settle down and establish a school, but instead became even more absorbed in his studies. Even in his final days, he rejected a life of comfort offered by Lord Hosokawa and chose to spend two years alone in a mountain cave, deeply immersed in contemplation. Despite his reputation as a fierce and headstrong individual, his behavior was evidently humble and honest.

Musashi believed that once you have attained the Way of strategy, there would be nothing you cannot understand. He saw the Way in everything and became a master of arts and crafts. His ink paintings were highly valued in Japan and included subjects such as cormorants, herons, the Shinto god Hotoke, dragons, birds with flowers, bird in a dead tree, Daruma (Bodhidharma), and others. He was also skilled in calligraphy, as evidenced by his piece "Senki" (War spirit). There is a small wood sculpture of the Buddhist deity Fudo Myoo attributed to him, although a sculpture of Kwannon was recently lost. Musashi also worked with metal and established a school of sword guard makers who signed their works "Niten" after him.



Musashi's paintings often bear his seal, "Musashi," or his pen name "Niten," which some believe alludes to his fighting stance with a sword in each hand held above his head. He established schools known as "Niten-ryu" in some places and called it "Enmei-ryu" (clear circle) in others.

He emphasized the importance of studying the ways of all professions. Musashi sought out not only great swordsmen but also priests, strategists, artists, and craftsmen, eager to broaden his knowledge.

Musashi's writings on Kendo encompass various aspects in a way that allows beginners to study at a beginner's level while providing higher-level insights for Kendo masters. His teachings extend beyond military strategy and can be applied to any situation involving plans and tactics. Japanese businessmen have even used "Go Rin No Sho" as a guide for business practices, treating sales campaigns as military operations and employing similar energetic methods. This parallels how Musashi, despite his reputation for cruelty, followed a logical and honest ideal, while successful businesses may appear conscienceless to many people.

Musashi's life study remains relevant in the twentieth century and applies not only to the Japanese race but to all nations. His inspiration can be summed up as "humility and hard work."



Introduction

I have spent many years training in a strategy called Ni Ten Ichi Ryu, and now I believe it's time to explain it in writing for the first time. The date is in the first ten days of the tenth month in the year 1645. I have climbed Mount Iwato in Higo, Kyushu, to pay respects to heaven, pray to Kwannon, and kneel before Buddha. I am a warrior from Harima province named Shinmen Musashi No Kami Fujiwara No Geshin, and I am sixty years old.

Since I was young, I have been drawn to the Way of strategy. My first duel took place when I was thirteen, where I defeated a strategist named Arima Kihei from the Shinto school. At sixteen, I defeated another skilled strategist named Tadashima Akiyama. When I turned twenty-one, I traveled to the capital and faced various strategists, winning every contest without fail.

Afterward, I journeyed from province to province, engaging in duels with strategists from different schools. Even though I had as many as sixty encounters, I never lost a single one. These duels occurred between the ages of thirteen and twenty-eight or twenty-nine.

Upon reaching the age of thirty, I reflected on my past victories and realized that they were not solely due to my mastery of strategy. It might have been a natural talent, the will of heaven, or the inferiority of other schools' strategies. Following this realization, I dedicated myself to studying diligently, searching for the underlying principles. Finally, at the age of fifty, I truly understood the Way of strategy.

Since then, I have lived without strictly adhering to any specific path. Guided by the virtues of strategy, I have practiced numerous arts and abilities, all without a teacher. When writing this book, I did not rely on the teachings of Buddha, Confucius, ancient war chronicles, or books on martial tactics. Instead, I take up my brush to explain the true essence of the Ichi school, the school of strategy I follow.

- Miyamoto Musashi



The Ground Book

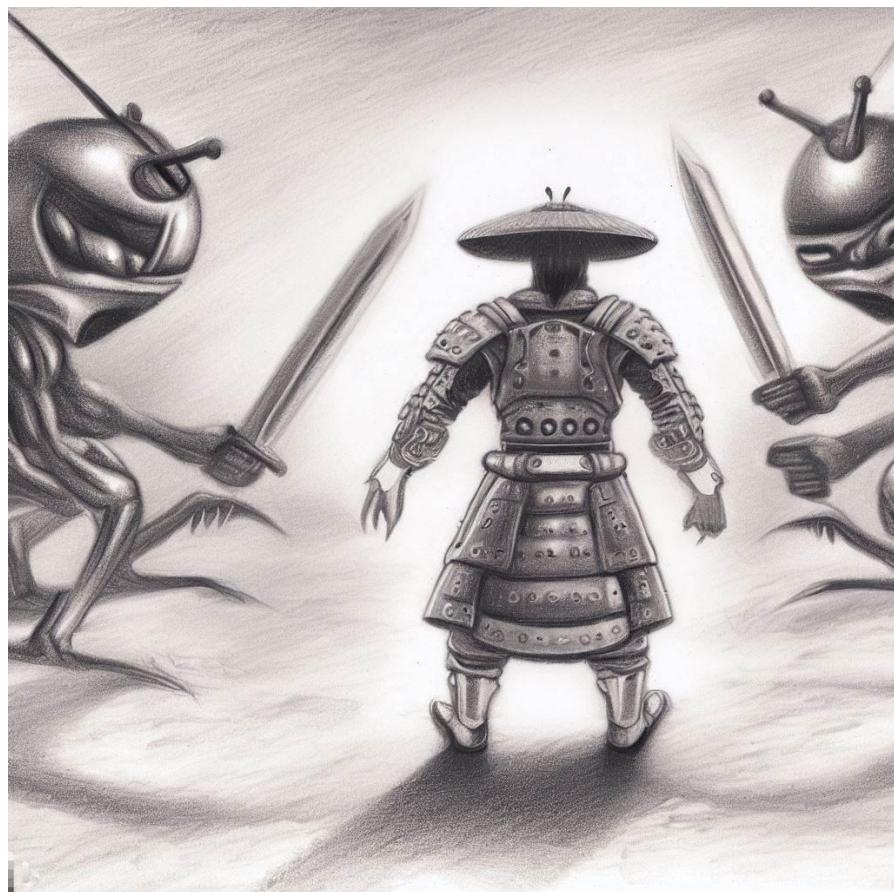
Strategy is the skill of a warrior.

Commanders must practice this skill, and soldiers should also be familiar with it. However, there is currently no warrior in the world who truly understands the Way of strategy.

There are different paths to follow. Some follow the Way of Buddha for salvation, others study the teachings of Confucius, and some pursue the Way of healing as doctors. There are also poets who teach the Way of Waka, practitioners of tea ceremonies, archery, and various other arts and skills. Each person chooses the path that suits them best.

It is often said that a warrior should have both the ability to write and to wield a sword, and they should appreciate both aspects. Even if someone lacks natural talent, they can still become a warrior by diligently pursuing both aspects of the Way. In general, the Way of the warrior involves accepting death without hesitation.

This philosophy applies not only to warriors but also to priests, women, peasants, and others who are willing to sacrifice their lives for duty or out of shame. However, the way of the warrior is distinct because it involves conquering opponents. By achieving victory in individual duels or in battles against larger forces, we can gain power and fame for ourselves or for our lord. This is the virtue of strategy.



The Way of Strategy

In China and Japan, those who follow the Way have been known as "masters of strategy." Warriors must learn this Way.

Recently, there have been people who gain recognition as strategists, but in reality, they are often just skilled sword-fighters. The attendants of the Kashima Kantori shrines in the Hitachi province received divine instruction and established schools based on this teaching. They travelled to different regions, imparting their knowledge to others. This is the modern interpretation of strategy.

In ancient times, strategy was considered one of the Ten Abilities and Seven Arts, seen as a beneficial practice. It was certainly an art, but its usefulness extended beyond just sword-fighting techniques. The true essence of sword-fighting cannot be fully understood by focusing solely on the technical aspects.

If we observe the world, we see various arts being sold. People use tools and techniques to sell themselves. However, like the nut overshadowed by the flower, the true essence often gets overlooked. In this approach to strategy, both the teachers and the students are more concerned with appearances and showing off their skills, trying to achieve quick success. They talk about "This Dojo" and "That Dojo," seeking personal gain. Someone once said, "Immature strategy is the cause of grief," and that holds true.

To truly embody the Way, one must diligently fulfill their responsibilities and perform their duties properly. A servant must genuinely consider the interests of their employer. Such an individual becomes an outstanding retainer. In our household, we have had generations of exceptional gentlemen, and we deeply appreciate their warm kindness and selfless dedication to their lord.

Furthermore, our lineage excels in wisdom and technical skills. It is a joyous thing if we can utilize these abilities for our advantage. Even an initially unremarkable person who earnestly thinks of their lord's well-being becomes a trusted retainer. Merely pursuing practical benefits from wisdom and expertise is vulgar.

Some individuals have sudden flashes of inspiration, while others arrive at solutions through careful deliberation. If we delve into the heart of the matter, regardless of people's natural talents, when their thoughts transcend self-interest and align with the Four Oaths, wisdom independent of conscious thinking emerges. Those who engage in profound contemplation often end up considering their own welfare as the basis. Such misguided thinking leads to wicked actions. It is challenging for most foolish individuals to rise above self-centered thoughts.

Therefore, when embarking on any endeavour, before starting, set your intention on the Four Oaths and leave selfishness behind. With this mindset, failure is impossible.

The Four Oaths:

Never be late in following the Way of the warrior.

Serve your lord with dedication.

Show respect to your parents.

Transcend love and grief, exist for the benefit of humanity.

(Note: The term "Dojo" refers to a place where something is studied, often used to refer to a training hall)

There are four Ways through which people live their lives: as gentlemen, farmers, artisans, and merchants.

The Way of the farmer involves using agricultural tools and observing the changes of seasons from spring to autumn.

The Way of the merchant revolves around obtaining ingredients or goods and using them to make a living. The merchant's Way is focused on profit-making.

The third Way is that of the gentleman warrior, who carries the weapons of his trade. The Way of the warrior lies in mastering the virtues of his weapons. If a gentleman dislikes strategy, he will not appreciate the benefits of weaponry. Therefore, it is necessary for him to have at least some understanding and appreciation of strategy.

Lastly, there is the Way of the artisan. The carpenter's Way is to become skilled in using tools, planning meticulously, and executing their work accordingly. This is how they navigate through life. These four Ways represent the paths of the gentleman, farmer, artisan, and merchant.

The comparison between the Way of the Carpenter and strategy lies in their connection to the construction of houses. Houses of nobility, warriors, and other types all have their own characteristics, styles, and traditions. The carpenter follows a master plan when building, and similarly, the Way of strategy involves having a well-thought-out plan of campaign. If you wish to learn the craft of war, reflect upon this book. The teacher is like a needle, and the disciple is like thread. Constant practice is essential.

Just as the foreman carpenter must understand the natural rules of carpentry, the rules of the land, and the rules of the specific house, so must the commander in warfare. The foreman carpenter should be familiar with architectural theories for constructing towers, temples, and palaces, and he must employ capable individuals to raise the houses. The Way of the foreman carpenter is akin to the Way of the commander of a warrior house.

When constructing houses, careful wood selection is crucial. Straight and unblemished timber is used for visible pillars, while timber with minor defects is suitable for hidden pillars. The finest-looking timber, even if somewhat weak, is used for thresholds, lintels, doors, sliding doors, and other prominent features. Good and sturdy timber, even if knotted or twisted, can be discreetly used in construction. Weaker or extensively knotted timber is reserved for scaffolding or later use as firewood.

The foreman carpenter assigns tasks to his workers based on their abilities. Some handle floor laying, while others specialize in making sliding doors, thresholds, lintels, ceilings, and more. Those with less expertise may be assigned to laying floor joists or performing miscellaneous tasks. If the foreman understands and appropriately utilizes the skills of his workers, the final work will be of high quality.

The foreman should consider the abilities and limitations of his workers, interact with them, and avoid making unreasonable demands. Understanding their morale and spirit, he should provide encouragement when necessary. This principle aligns with the core concept of strategy.

The Way of Strategy is akin to the work of a carpenter. Just like a trooper, the carpenter takes responsibility for sharpening his own tools. He carries his equipment in a toolbox and works under the guidance of his foreman. Using an axe, the carpenter crafts columns and girders. With a plane, he shapes floorboards and shelves. He skilfully creates intricate openwork and carvings, striving for an excellent finish based on his abilities. This is the craft of carpentry. As the carpenter gains skill and understanding of measurements, he can rise to the position of a foreman.

The carpenter's expertise lies in having well-cutting tools and creating items such as small shrines, writing shelves, tables, paper lanterns, chopping boards, and pot-lids. These are the specialties of the carpenter. Similar principles apply to a trooper. It is important for you to contemplate deeply on this comparison.

The goal of the carpenter is to produce work that is free from warping, with accurately aligned joints, and properly planed surfaces that fit together seamlessly, not merely finished in separate sections. This level of precision is crucial.

If you desire to learn this Way, it is essential to carefully consider the teachings written in this book, focusing on each aspect one by one. Sufficient research and understanding are required to master the principles of this Way.

This book of strategy is divided into five books, each focusing on different aspects. These books are Ground, Water, Fire, Tradition (Wind), and Void.

The Ground book, which encompasses the essence of the Way of strategy according to my Ichi school, explains that true understanding of the Way cannot be achieved through sword-fencing alone. It requires knowledge of both the smallest and the largest, the shallowest and the deepest aspects. Like a road mapped out on the ground, this book lays the foundation.

The Water book emphasizes the importance of water as a basis. The spirit should be fluid like water, capable of adapting to different situations. Water takes the shape of its container, whether a gentle trickle or a raging sea. In this book, the clarity of the Ichi school's teachings is revealed.

The Fire book is centred around the concept of fighting. The spirit of fire is fierce, regardless of its size. Battles, whether between individuals or massive armies, follow the same principles. Understanding that the spirit can be both large and small is crucial. Large groups tend to have predictable movements, while individuals can change their minds unpredictably. This book emphasizes the necessity of training day and night to make quick decisions and describes combat in battle.

The Wind book, unlike the previous books related to my Ichi school, focuses on other schools of strategy. "Wind" represents old traditions, present-day traditions, and family traditions of strategy. The author provides a clear explanation of various strategies employed worldwide. It emphasizes the importance of knowing oneself by knowing others and warns against deviating from the true Way. The strategies of other schools, often considered mere sword-fencing, are discussed in this book, while the author's own strategy encompasses a separate principle.

Lastly, the Void book explores the concept of the void, representing that which has no beginning or end. Attaining this principle means not attaining it. The Way of strategy aligns with the Way of nature. By appreciating the power of nature and understanding the rhythm of any situation, one can naturally strike the enemy. The book of the Void aims to demonstrate how to follow the true Way in harmony with nature.

Weapons in Strategy: Understanding Their Benefits

Weapons are tools used in specific situations. Let's explore their advantages.

The companion sword is great in tight spaces or when you're very close to your opponent. It allows for quick and precise movements. On the other hand, the long sword is versatile and can be effective in any situation.

When it comes to battlefield weapons, the spear is better than the halberd. The spear gives you an advantage, allowing you to take the lead, while the halberd is more defensive. If two people of equal skill use these weapons, the spear gives a slight advantage. However, both weapons are not very useful in confined spaces and cannot be used for capturing prisoners. They are mainly for open-field combat.

It's important not to focus only on "indoor" techniques, as it limits your thinking and strays from the true Way of strategy. This can make it difficult to handle real encounters.

The bow is effective at the beginning of a battle, especially in open areas where you can quickly shoot arrows among the spearmen. However, it becomes less useful in sieges or when the enemy is far away. That's why traditional archery schools are rare nowadays since this skill has limited applications.

In terms of fortifications, guns are unmatched. They are the best weapons before close combat begins. However, once swords clash, guns become useless.

A great advantage of the bow is that you can see the arrows in flight and adjust your aim accordingly. Gunshots, on the other hand, cannot be seen. This is an important factor to consider.

Just like a horse needs endurance and no weaknesses, weapons should also be strong. Horses should walk with strength, and swords and companion swords should cut effectively. Spears and halberds should withstand heavy use, while bows and guns should be sturdy. Weapons should prioritize functionality over decoration.

It's important not to have a favourite weapon. Being too attached to one weapon is a mistake, just like not knowing it well enough. Instead, use weapons that you can handle properly. Commanders and troops should not have personal preferences; they should be adaptable and learn various weapons thoroughly.



The Importance of Timing in Strategy

Timing is important in everything we do. Just like in dancing or playing music, we need good timing to be in rhythm. The same goes for military skills like shooting bows and guns or riding horses. Timing is everywhere!

Even in the "Void," there is timing. It means that timing plays a role in the whole life of a warrior, from their ups and downs, their moments of harmony and discord. It's also true in business, where timing affects the rise and fall of money. Timing is connected to everything that goes up and down in life, and it's important to understand it.

In strategy, there are different timing considerations. You have to know when the right time is and when it's not suitable. You have to find the relevant timing by observing the speed and slowness of things and seeing how far away they are. Understanding the background timing is especially crucial because it helps you make your strategy clear and certain.

To win battles, you need to use the timing that your enemy doesn't expect. You have to know their timing and use clever timing of your own. Timing is a major focus in all the books about strategy. To truly understand this, you must practice and train a lot.

If you practice the Ichi school strategy day and night, your spirit will naturally expand. This way of thinking about strategy applies to both big-scale battles and close combat. It's written down in the five books about Ground, Water, Fire, Tradition (Wind), and Void. These books are the first to record this kind of strategy. They show the way for people who want to learn from me:

- *Don't be dishonest.*
- *Don't cheat or deceive others.*

The Importance of Training and Strategy

Training is the key to success. You should learn about different things and become familiar with many skills. It's important to understand how different professions work and know the difference between gaining something and losing something in everyday life. Developing your intuition and understanding is also crucial. Sometimes you need to see things that cannot be seen and pay attention to even small details.

Remember, it's essential to focus on things that are useful. You need to keep these important principles in your heart and train in the way of strategy. By looking at things from a big perspective, you will become better at strategy. If you learn and practice this strategy, you will never lose even if you have to fight against many enemies. When you truly dedicate yourself to the way of strategy, you'll be able to defeat opponents in fights and win using your instincts. With enough training, you'll have control over your body and be able to overcome challenges. Eventually, you might even be able to defeat many opponents with your courage and determination. At that point, you'll become unbeatable!

In addition, a superior person who understands large-scale strategy can lead and manage many people well. They will act in the right way, govern a country, and support its people, thus maintaining order and discipline. If there's a way to not be defeated, to help yourself, and to earn respect, it's the way of strategy.

This knowledge comes from a great warrior named Teruo Magonojo, also known as Teruo Nobuyuki, to whom Musashi addressed his teachings.

Date: The second year of Shoho (1645), the fifth month, the twelfth day.

The Water Book

The Power of Water in Strategy

The Water Book is all about the Ni Ten Ichi school of strategy, which is based on the spirit of water. This book teaches us how to win using the techniques of the long-sword style of the Ichi school. The Way of strategy is not easy to explain with words, but if we think deeply, we can understand it intuitively. When you study this book, read each word carefully and think about its meaning. Be careful not to interpret things too loosely, or you might misunderstand the Way.

In this book, the principles of strategy are explained in terms of one-on-one combat, but it's important to think broadly and understand how they apply to battles with thousands of soldiers on each side. Strategy is different from other things because even a small mistake in understanding the Way can lead to confusion and bad decisions.

Just reading this book alone won't help you truly master the Way of strategy. You need to absorb the teachings and make them a part of yourself. Don't just read, memorize, or copy what's written here. Instead, study hard and try to understand the principles from deep within your own heart. Work on internalizing these teachings and making them a natural part of your being.



Having the Right Mindset in Strategy

In strategy, your mindset should be the same as in everyday life. Whether you're in a fight or going about your daily activities, you need to be determined yet calm. Approach situations without being too tense or reckless. Keep your spirit steady and unbiased. Even when you feel calm inside, don't let your body become too relaxed. And when your body is relaxed, don't let your spirit become lazy. Your spirit and body should work together, but they shouldn't control each other. Don't let your spirit be influenced by your body, and vice versa. Find a balance between being too spirited and not spirited enough. It's important not to show your true spirit to the enemy.

Small people should understand how big people think, and big people should understand how small people think. No matter your size, don't let your body's reactions mislead you. Keep an open and broad perspective in your mind. Cultivate your wisdom and spirit. Sharpen your wisdom by learning about fairness, telling right from wrong, and studying different arts one by one. When you can't be tricked or fooled by others, you will have gained the wisdom of strategy.

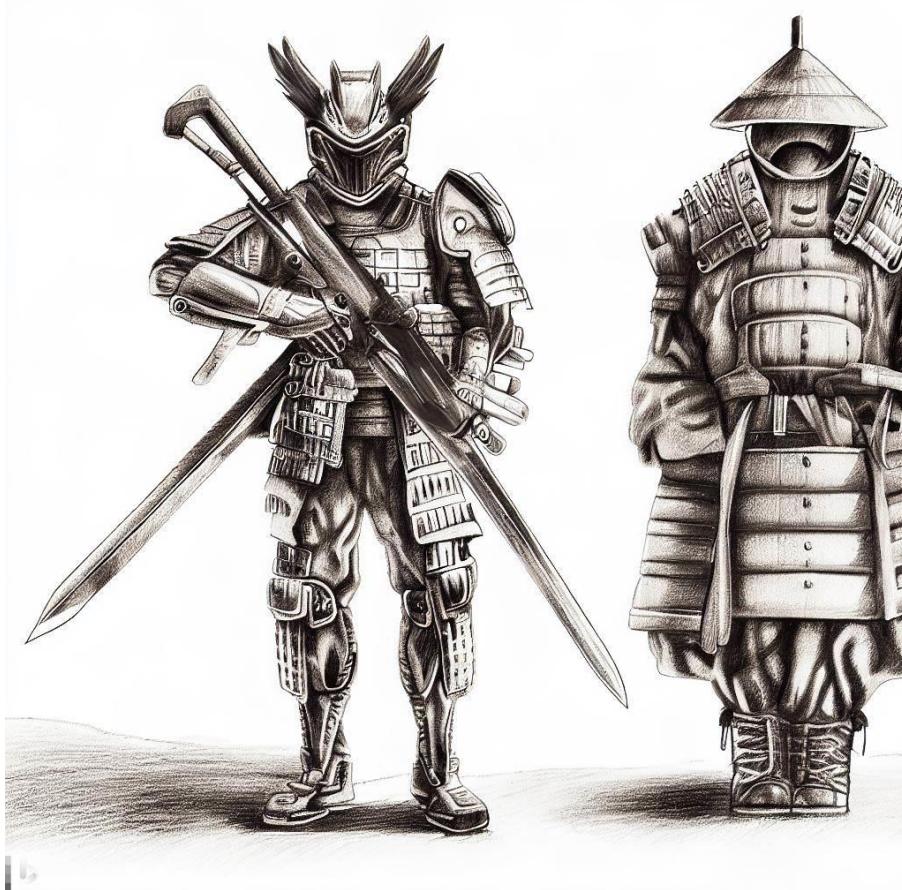
The wisdom of strategy is unique. Even when you're facing tough situations on the battlefield, you should always seek to understand the principles of strategy. By continuously learning and researching, you can develop a strong and unwavering spirit.



How to Stand in Strategy

When it comes to standing in strategy, you should have a certain posture. Keep your head up straight, not hanging down or looking up or twisted. Make sure your forehead and the area between your eyes are smooth and not wrinkled. Don't roll your eyes or blink too much, but slightly narrow them. Keep your face calm and composed, with your nose in a straight line and a sense of slightly flaring your nostrils. Keep the back of your neck straight and full of energy, extending all the way from your hairline to your shoulders and throughout your whole body. Relax your shoulders, and make sure your buttocks are not sticking out, while putting strength into your legs from your knees to your toes. Keep your abdomen firm so you don't bend at the hips. Slide your companion sword into your belt against your abdomen, so that your belt is not loose. This is called "wedging in."

In all aspects of strategy, it's important to maintain this stance not only during combat but also in your everyday life. Your everyday stance should be like your combat stance. It's something you should practice and study well to understand.



How to Look in Strategy

When it comes to looking in strategy, your gaze should be wide and broad. There are two parts to this gaze: "Perception and Sight." Perception is strong, while sight is weaker.

In strategy, it's important to see faraway things as if they were close and to have a distant view of things that are actually near. It's also important to focus on the enemy's sword and not get distracted by small movements of their sword. This is something you need to learn and understand. The way you look is the same whether you're in a one-on-one fight or a big battle.

In strategy, you should be able to look to both sides without moving your eyeballs. This is a skill that takes time to master. Remember what you've learned here and use this way of looking in your everyday life. Stick to it no matter what happens.

How to Hold the Long Sword

When you hold the long sword, it should feel light and floating in your thumb and forefinger. The middle finger should be neither too tight nor too loose, and the last two fingers should grip tightly. It's not good to have too much play in your hands.

When you pick up the sword, you should have the intention of cutting the enemy. As you swing the sword to attack, you shouldn't change your grip, and your hands shouldn't be afraid. When you deflect or block the enemy's sword, you may slightly adjust the feeling in your thumb and forefinger. But the most important thing is to focus on cutting the enemy with the way you hold the sword.

The grip you use in combat and when testing the sword is the same. There's no special grip just for cutting people.

In general, I don't like it when the grip and the hands feel stiff. Stiffness is like having a dead hand. Flexibility is like having a living hand. Remember this important point.

How to Move Your Feet in Sword Fighting

When you move, keep the tips of your toes slightly lifted and step firmly with your heels. It doesn't matter if you're moving fast or slow, taking big steps or small steps, your feet should always move like how you normally walk.

I don't like three specific ways of walking during sword fighting. These are called "jumping-foot," "floating-foot," and "fixed-steps." We won't use those methods.

Instead, we'll focus on something called "Yin-Yang foot." It means moving both your feet together when you attack, defend, or move back. You shouldn't favour moving only one foot. Both your feet should work together and move left-right and right-left.

The Five Ways to Hold Your Sword

There are five different ways you can hold your sword: Upper, Middle, Lower, Right Side, and Left Side. These are the five attitudes. Each attitude has a different position, but they all have the same goal: to cut the enemy. These are the only five attitudes we use.

No matter which attitude you choose, don't focus too much on how you hold the sword. Instead, focus on cutting the enemy.

The size of your attitude should change depending on the situation. Upper, Lower, and Middle attitudes are strong and powerful. Left Side and Right Side attitudes are more flexible. You use Left and Right attitudes when there's something blocking you from above or from the side. Whether you choose Left or Right depends on where you are.

The most important attitude to understand is the Middle attitude. It's like the heart of all the attitudes. If we think about strategy as a big picture, the Middle attitude is like the commander, and the other four attitudes follow the commander's lead. It's important to remember this.



The Art of Using a Long Sword

When we understand how to use a long sword, we can handle it with just two fingers, even though it looks big and heavy. Knowing the right way to use a sword makes it easy to handle.

But be careful, if you try to swing the sword too quickly, you'll make mistakes. To use a long sword properly, you need to be calm and focused. If you swing it quickly, like a folding fan or a short sword, you'll make the wrong moves. You can't cut your enemy effectively with a long sword using those quick movements.

When you swing the sword downwards, lift it straight back up. When you swing it sideways, bring it back along the same sideways path. Always return the sword in a smooth and controlled way, keeping your elbows stretched out. Swing the sword with strength and confidence. That's how you use a long sword correctly.

If you learn and practice the five approaches of my strategy, you'll become skilled at using a sword. But remember, you have to train regularly and keep practicing to improve.



The Five Ways to Use a Sword

There are five different ways to use a sword in a fight. Let's learn about each of them:

- 1. The Middle Approach: When you face the enemy, point your sword at their face. When they attack, quickly push their sword to the right and control it. It's like riding their sword.*
- 2. The Upper Approach: From a high position, cut the enemy as they attack. If they dodge the first cut, keep your sword in place and cut them again from below. You can keep repeating this move.*
- 3. The Lower Approach: Get ready in a low position and anticipate the enemy's move. When they attack, strike their hands from below. If they try to knock down your sword, cut their upper arm horizontally. It's all about timing and crossing their attack.*
- 4. The Left Side Approach: As the enemy attacks, hit their hands from below. If they try to push down your sword, parry their sword and cut across from above your shoulder. It's a way to defend and attack at the same time.*
- 5. The Right Side Approach: Hold your sword on the right side. When the enemy attacks, cross your sword from below to the high position and then cut straight down. This move allows you to use a heavy sword more effectively.*

Remember, it's not easy to explain all the details of these approaches. You need to practice a lot and learn how to use your sword in harmony. Understand the timing of each approach, know your enemy's moves, and get familiar with all five methods. By using these techniques wisely, you'll always have an advantage in a fight.

The Teaching of "Attitude-No-Attitude"

"Attitude-No-Attitude" means that you don't have to stick to specific sword positions. But there are still five ways to hold the sword that are helpful in different situations.

When you hold the sword, you should do it in a way that makes it easy to cut the enemy depending on the situation, the place you're in, and your relation to the enemy. You can start with the Upper attitude and then switch to the Middle attitude when you need to be more flexible. From the Middle attitude, you can raise the sword a bit and switch to the Upper attitude again. You can also raise the sword a bit from the Lower attitude and switch to the Middle attitude when it's necessary. By turning your sword from the Left Side or Right Side attitude toward the center, you can achieve the Middle or Lower attitude.

This is called the "Existing Attitude — Non-existing Attitude" principle.

When you hold a sword, your main goal is to cut the enemy, no matter what. Every time you block, hit, or touch the enemy's sword, you should do it in a way that cuts them too. Just thinking about hitting or touching the enemy won't help you actually cut them. Your focus should be on carrying your movement through to successfully cutting them. This is something you need to study and practice.

In larger battles, attitude in strategy is called "Battle Array." Different attitudes are used to win battles. It's important to be adaptable and not stick to fixed formations. Make sure to learn and understand this well.

To Hit the Enemy "In One Timing"

"In One Timing" means that when you're close to the enemy, you hit them quickly and directly, without moving your body or hesitating, while they are still unsure of what to do. It's like catching them off guard. You need to train to be able to hit them in an instant.

The "Abdomen Timing of Two"

When you attack and the enemy quickly moves back, you pretend to cut, making them tense up. Then, when they relax, you follow up and hit them. It's like tricking them with your moves. It's a bit tricky to understand just by reading, but with a little guidance, you'll get it.

No Design, No Conception

In this method, when the enemy attacks and you decide to attack too, you hit with your whole body, your spirit, and your hands, all together and with great strength. It's about acting instinctively and naturally without thinking too much. It's an important way of hitting, and you need to practice it a lot to understand it.

The Flowing Water Cut

The "Flowing Water Cut" is used when you're fighting closely with the enemy, and they try to escape quickly with their sword. You expand your body and spirit and cut them slowly with your long sword, like water flowing smoothly. If you learn this technique well, you can cut the enemy with confidence. You have to pay attention to the enemy's moves.

Continuous Cut

When you and the enemy attack at the same time and your swords clash, you quickly cut their head, hands, and legs all in one motion. It's like making multiple cuts with a single swing of the sword. It's a technique that requires practice, and it's often used in battles. With enough practice, you'll understand how to do it.

The Fire and Stones Cut

The Fire and Stones Cut means that when your long sword clashes with the enemy's sword, you cut strongly without lifting your sword even a little. You use your hands, body, and legs to cut with power. If you train well, you'll be able to strike strongly.

The Red Leaves Cut

The Red Leaves Cut is about knocking down the enemy's sword. You control their sword with your own spirit. When the enemy is in a position to cut, hit, or block with their sword, you strike their sword strongly using the Fire and Stones Cut technique, maybe with the same spirit as the No Design, No Conception Cut. If you then push down on the point of their sword, they will drop it. By practicing this technique, you can make the enemy drop their sword easily. Keep practicing!

The Body in Place of the Long Sword

Sometimes, instead of moving both your body and sword together to attack, you can first rush at the enemy with your body and then follow up with a sword cut. If the enemy is not moving, you can cut with the long sword first, but usually, you hit with your body first and then cut with the sword. It's important to understand and practice this strategy of hitting.

Cut and Slash

Cutting and slashing are different. Cutting is a decisive move with a determined spirit. Slashing is like just touching the enemy lightly. Even if you slash strongly and the enemy dies instantly, it's still considered slashing. When you cut, your spirit is strong and determined. If you first slash the enemy's hands or legs, then you must follow up with a strong cut. Slashing is similar to touching. Once you realize this, they become almost the same. Make sure to learn and understand this well.



Chinese Monkey's Body

The Chinese Monkey's Body is about not stretching out your arms when you fight. Instead, you quickly get close to the enemy without extending your arms at all, before they can attack you. If you focus on not stretching your arms, you'll be able to stay far away from the enemy while still using your whole body to move in. When you're within arm's reach, it becomes easier to move your body. Make sure to practice this technique.

Glue and Lacquer Emulsion Body

The Glue and Lacquer Emulsion Body means sticking to the enemy and not letting go. When you approach the enemy, stick firmly with your head, body, and legs. Some people tend to move their head and legs quickly, but their body lags behind. You need to stick closely to the enemy, so there's no gap between your body and theirs. Pay attention to this and practice it carefully.

To Strive for Height

To strive for height means when you're close to the enemy, you try to be higher than them without being afraid. Stretch your legs, hips, and neck to be at the same level as the enemy. When you think you have the advantage and are higher, attack with strength. This is something you should learn and practice.

To Apply Stickiness

When the enemy attacks and you also attack with your long sword, go in with a sticky feeling and press your sword against theirs as you block their attack. Stickiness means not hitting too hard but making sure the swords stay connected. Approach calmly when your sword sticks to the enemy's sword. Stickiness is different from entanglement because stickiness is strong, while entanglement is weak. Understand this difference and practice it.

The Body Strike

The Body Strike is when you find an opening in the enemy's defense and strike them with your body. Turn your face slightly and hit their chest with your left shoulder sticking out. Approach with the intention of pushing the enemy away, hitting as strongly as possible while coordinating with your breathing. If you can master this technique, you'll be able to knock the enemy back several feet. With enough practice, you can strike the enemy until they're defeated. Train hard!

Three Ways to Parry His Attack

There are three methods to block the enemy's attack:

- **First**, by quickly moving their sword to your right side, as if you're aiming for their eyes.
- **Second**, by deflecting the enemy's sword towards their right eye, as if you're trying to hit their neck.
- **Third**, when you have a shorter sword, you can ignore blocking the enemy's sword and instead move in quickly, thrusting at their face with your left hand. These are the three ways to block. Remember that you can also close your left hand into a fist and punch the enemy's face. To do this well, you need to practice a lot.

To Stab at the Face

When you're fighting an enemy, stabbing at their face means you focus on aiming your sword at their face. By doing this, their face and body become vulnerable. When the enemy is vulnerable, there are many opportunities for you to win. Remember to concentrate on this technique. If you can make the enemy vulnerable, you can defeat them quickly, so don't forget to aim for the face. Practice this technique a lot to understand its value.

To Stab at the Heart

Stabbing at the heart means that when you're in a fight and it's hard to make a cutting move because of obstacles, you thrust your sword at the enemy. You need to stab the enemy's chest without letting your sword waver, showing them the sharp edge of the sword and trying to push their sword away. This technique is helpful when you're tired or when your sword won't cut easily. Understand how to use this technique.

To Scold "Tut-TUT!"

"Scolding" means that when the enemy tries to counter-attack as you attack them, you counter-attack again from below, as if you're pushing them down. You quickly cut and scold the enemy. It's like saying "Tut!" and cutting. This timing happens a lot during a fight. To scold "Tut-TUT," you need to time your cut while raising your sword as if you're going to thrust it at the enemy. Practice this timing over and over again.

The Smacking Parry

The smacking parry is when you clash swords with the enemy, and you hit their sword with a rhythm like "tee-dum, tee-dum," smacking their sword and cutting them. The spirit of the smacking parry is not just about hitting or smacking strongly, but it's about hitting the enemy's sword at the right time and quickly cutting them. If you understand the timing of the smacking parry, even if your swords clash hard, your sword won't be pushed back. You need to practice this a lot to understand it well.

There are Many Enemies

"There are many enemies" applies when you're fighting against multiple enemies. You draw both your long sword and companion sword and take a wide stance. The spirit is to move from side to side, chasing the enemies even when they come from all directions. Pay attention to the order in which they attack and go first for those who attack first. Look around broadly, carefully watching the order of their attacks, and cut left and right alternately with your swords. Waiting is not good. Always quickly get ready on both sides, cut down the enemies as they come, and crush them from the direction they attack. You must drive the enemies together like a line of fishes and cut them down strongly without giving them room to move.

The Advantage When Coming to Blows

You can learn how to win with the long sword through strategy, but it's not easy to explain clearly in writing. You must practice diligently to understand how to win. Remember the saying, "The true Way of strategy is revealed in the long sword."

One Cut

You can win with certainty if you have the spirit of "one cut." But it's difficult to achieve this if you don't learn strategy well. If you train hard in this Way, strategy will come naturally from your heart, and you'll be able to win whenever you want. Keep practicing diligently.

Direct Communication

Direct Communication is about receiving and passing down the true Way of the NiTo Ichi school. It means teaching your body how to use strategy. This book contains an outline of the Ichi school sword fighting. To learn how to win with the long sword in strategy, first learn the five approaches and the five attitudes. Let the Way of the long sword become a part of your body naturally. Understand the spirit and timing, handle the sword naturally, and move your body and legs in harmony with your spirit. Whether you're fighting one person or two, you'll then know the values of strategy. Study the contents of this book, one item at a time, and through fighting with enemies, you'll gradually understand the principles of the Way.

Remember to patiently absorb the virtues of what you learn and occasionally apply them in combat. Maintain this spirit whenever you face an enemy. Step by step, walk the path of learning. Study strategy over the years and develop the spirit of a warrior. Today, your victory is over the person you were yesterday, and tomorrow, your victory will be over those who are not as skilled as you. To defeat more skilled opponents, train according to this book and don't let your focus be swayed. Even if you defeat an enemy, if it's not based on what you have learned, it's not the true Way. If you attain this Way of victory, you'll be able to defeat many opponents. What remains is the skill of sword fighting, which you can gain through battles and duels.

The Second Year of Shoho, the twelfth day of the fifth month (1645)

Teruo Magonojo SHINMEN MUSASHI



The Fire Book

The Fiery Way of Fighting

In this book, we'll talk about fighting like it's fire! Imagine using your fingertips to fight, just like using a small folding fan with your forearms. But real strategy is much bigger and more powerful, like a blazing fire!

To become a skilled fighter, you need to train hard and face many challenges. It's like learning the meaning of life and death, understanding the way of the sword, and knowing how to defend against attacks. When you wear full armour, small tricks won't work. My strategy is about winning even when you're outnumbered, like one person defeating five or ten foes!

You might not have a thousand people to train with, but you can become a master of strategy by practicing alone with a sword. By doing this, you'll understand your enemies better, their strengths, and how to defeat many of them at once. It's like gaining extraordinary power!

Now, let's talk about how to use your surroundings to your advantage in a fight. Stand in the sun or with the sun on your right if you can. If you're inside a building, have your back or right side towards the entrance. Make sure your back is clear, and you have space on your left side for your sword.

When the fight begins, try to move the enemy to your left side and lead them into awkward places. You should also push them into bad footholds or obstacles, making it harder for them to defend themselves. This way, you can have the upper hand in the battle!

Remember, always keep training and learning to become a skilled warrior!

The Three Ways to Outsmart Your Enemy

There are three ways to outsmart your enemy in a fight. The first is to attack before the enemy does. It's like setting a trap for them. The second way is to wait for the enemy to attack first and then surprise them. The third way is to attack at the same time as the enemy but be one step ahead.

Taking the lead is important because it helps you win quickly. To do this, you need to understand the situation, figure out the enemy's plan, and defeat them. It's a bit complicated to explain all the details, but I'll try to simplify it for you.

1. **The First Way - Attack First (Ken No Sen):** Stay calm and quickly move in to attack the enemy. Or you can act strong but keep a hidden plan, surprising the enemy. Another way is to attack with a strong spirit and move a little faster than usual, making the enemy feel unsettled and overwhelmed. You can also attack with a calm spirit, aiming to defeat the enemy completely. These are all examples of attacking first.
2. **The Second Way - Wait and Counter (Tai No Sen):** When the enemy attacks, pretend to be weak and let them come closer. Then, when they relax, quickly move and attack them strongly. Another way is to take advantage of the enemy's disorderly timing and attack even stronger. These are examples of waiting for the right moment to strike.
3. **The Third Way - Attack and Defend (Tai Tai No Sen):** If the enemy attacks quickly, you must stay strong and calm, aim for their weak point, and defeat them strongly. If the enemy attacks calmly, observe their movements and join in with their actions. Move quickly and attack them with strength. These are examples of attacking and defending at the same time.

These strategies can't be fully explained with just words. You need to study and practice them to understand better. Remember, it's not always about attacking first. You can lead the enemy and outsmart them. So, keep training and learning to become a skilled strategist!

Clever Strategies to Win

To Hold Down a Pillow: When you fight, you should stop the enemy from doing what they want. It's like not letting their head rise. You need to be in control and not let the enemy lead you around. You can do this by stopping their attacks, blocking their moves, and not letting them hold you. This strategy helps you see what the enemy plans to do and stop them. It's like checking their actions at every step of the way.

Crossing at a Ford: Sometimes in life, you have to take risks even if others are playing it safe. It's like crossing the sea at a narrow spot or traveling a long distance by boat. You need to be brave and smart. If everything is right, like having good weather and a good plan, you should go for it. But if things change, you need to adapt and keep going. This strategy helps you find the best way to attack the enemy and put yourself in a good position to win.

To Know the Times: To win in a fight, you must understand what the enemy is thinking and how they are feeling. You need to pay attention to their actions and position your own people in the best way. This way, you can attack when they least expect it and use the right timing. If you know what's going on, you will have more chances to win. So, it's important to study and learn about this.

To Tread Down the Sword: When the enemy attacks, you need to respond quickly and not let them keep attacking. In a big battle, if they shoot arrows or fire guns, you must attack before they have a chance to reload. In a one-on-one fight, you must stop their attack right at the beginning, so they can't strike again. Treading down the sword means using your body and spirit to stop the enemy and not give them a second chance. It's about being one step ahead and not letting them recover.

To Know "Collapse": Everything can fall apart, even houses, bodies, and enemies. When the enemy starts to weaken, you need to keep pushing and not give them a chance to recover. In a one-on-one fight, if they make a mistake or lose their balance, you must take advantage of it and keep attacking. Don't let them get back up. It's about cutting them down completely and not letting them regain their strength.

Remember, these strategies are not easy to understand at first. You need to practice and learn more to become a skilled fighter. Keep training and studying these clever strategies to improve your skills and win your battles!

Clever Tactics to Win

To Become the Enemy: Sometimes it helps to think like your enemy. Imagine being in their shoes and understanding how they think. Even if it feels like everyone is against you, you can find a way to overcome challenges. It's important to know your strengths and use clever strategies to beat the enemy. So, don't be afraid to put yourself in their position and think ahead.

To Release Four Hands: When you and the enemy are evenly matched and it's hard to decide who will win, you need to change your approach. Instead of sticking to the same plan, surprise the enemy with a different strategy they don't expect. In a big battle, if things get tough, don't give up. Find a new way to win that the enemy won't see coming. It's about being flexible and adapting to the situation.

To Move the Shade: Sometimes you can't see what the enemy is planning. In those moments, show them that you're about to attack strongly. This will force the enemy to reveal their plans and resources. Once you know what they're up to, you can use a different method to defeat them. In a one-on-one fight, if the enemy hides their intentions, make a fake attack to make them show their hand. It's about tricking the enemy and using that knowledge to your advantage.

To Hold Down a Shadow: When you can see the enemy's intention to attack, don't let them succeed. Show them that you can stop their technique and make them change their mind. By doing this, you can defeat them by anticipating their moves and attacking when they least expect it. In a one-on-one fight, if you can read the enemy's moves, hold them back with the right timing and defeat them by striking first. It's about staying one step ahead of the enemy.

To Pass On: Sometimes, you can influence the enemy's behavior. If the enemy is getting agitated and rushing into things, stay calm and act like nothing bothers you. This will make the enemy relax and lose their focus. Once you see this change, you can attack strongly with a clear mind and defeat them. In a one-on-one fight, wait for the right moment when the enemy lets their guard down, and then strike quickly. It's about taking advantage of the enemy's state of mind.

To Cause Loss of Balance: Many things can make the enemy lose their balance, like surprise, danger, or hardship. In strategy, it's important to create situations where the enemy is off balance. Attack when they least expect it, and while they're unsure, take the lead and defeat them. In a one-on-one fight, pretend to be slow at first, and then suddenly attack with full force. Don't give the enemy a chance to recover. It's about keeping the enemy off balance and seizing the opportunity to win.

To Frighten: Sometimes, fear can be a powerful weapon. In strategy, you can frighten the enemy by using tricks like making a small force seem big or surprising them from unexpected angles. By taking advantage of their fear, you can gain the upper hand and win. In a one-on-one fight, you can scare the enemy with your body, your weapon, or even your voice to make them lose focus and defeat them. It's about using fear to your advantage.

To Soak In: When you and the enemy are locked in a struggle and can't make progress, you need to adapt. Instead of pulling away, try to understand the enemy's moves and become one with them. Find the right technique to use while you're entangled with the enemy. In both big battles and small fights, you can often win by knowing how to adapt to the enemy's actions. It's about finding the right timing and technique to turn the situation in your favor.

To Injure the Corners: Sometimes it's hard to move something strong by pushing directly. Instead, focus on the weak spots. In strategy, aim for the corners of the enemy's force. When the corners fall, the whole enemy's spirit weakens. By attacking those weak points, you can defeat the enemy easily. It's important to understand how to exploit these weak spots, so keep studying and learning about them.

To Throw into Confusion: This means making the enemy lose their determination. In a big battle, we can confuse the enemy by using different tactics and strategies. By making the enemy unsure of our movements and intentions, we can easily win. In a one-on-one fight, we can confuse the enemy by using feints and tricks to make them uncertain and then defeat them easily. It's important to study and understand this strategy deeply.

The Three Shouts: Shouting is a powerful way to show energy and strength. In a big battle, we shout loudly at the start to show our strength. During the fight, our shouts are lower but powerful as we attack. After we win, we shout in celebration. In a one-on-one fight, we shout to distract the enemy and then strike with our sword. We shout again after defeating the enemy to show our victory. This is called "before and after voice." It's important to research and understand the power of shouting.

To Mingle: In battles, we attack the enemy's strong points. When we see that they are pushed back, we quickly attack another strong point. It's like moving on a winding mountain path, attacking different areas. This strategy is important when facing many enemies. We strike down the enemies in one area, then attack from the right and left. We must attack strongly without retreating. In a one-on-one fight, we use this strategy to target the enemy's weaknesses. It's important to understand and apply this spirit of engagement.

To Crush: This means defeating the enemy by considering them weak. In a big battle, when the enemy has fewer soldiers or their spirit is weak, we can completely defeat them. If we don't crush them strongly, they may recover. In a one-on-one fight, if the enemy is less skilled or their spirit is disorganized, we must crush them immediately without giving them a chance to recover. It's important to learn the spirit of crushing and not let the enemy regain their position.

The Mountain-Sea Change: This strategy means we shouldn't repeat the same approach when fighting the enemy. If our first attempt fails, trying the same thing again won't likely succeed. We must change our tactics. If the enemy expects us to attack like the mountains, we surprise them by attacking like the sea, and vice versa. It's important to deeply understand and research this strategy.

To Penetrate the Depths: Even when it seems we can win on the surface, the enemy's spirit may remain strong deep inside. To destroy their spirit completely, we must quickly change our own spirit and tactics. Penetrating the depths means using our sword, body, and spirit to overcome the enemy's resistance. It's important to train in this strategy for both big battles and one-on-one fights.

To Renew: When we are stuck in a situation where there seems to be no solution, we must change our spirit and find a new way to win. We need to think of the situation with a fresh perspective and use a different technique. This applies to both big battles and one-on-one fights. It's important to research and understand how to renew our approach.

Remember, these strategies require practice and understanding. Keep learning and using these clever strategies to improve your skills and become a master strategist!

Rat's Head, Ox's Neck: This means that when we are in a fight and both the enemy and we are stuck focusing on small details, we should remember to think big like an ox's neck and clever like a rat's head. We should switch between thinking about the big picture and the small details. This is really important in strategy, both in big battles and one-on-one fights.

The Commander Knows the Troops: This rule applies to all fights in my Way of strategy. It means we should understand the enemy's moves like they are our own team. When we can do that, we can control the enemy and make them do what we want. We become the leader, and the enemy becomes our followers. It's essential to learn and use this tactic.

To Let Go the Hilt: There are different ways to use the spirit of "letting go the hilt." One is to win without even using a sword, using your wits and strategy alone. Another way is to have a sword but not always use it to win. These methods are hard to explain in writing; you need to practice them well.

The Body of a Rock: When you master the Way of strategy, you can become as tough as a rock. Nothing can move or harm you. This is like having the body of a rock, strong and steady. It's a secret technique passed down orally.

I wrote down what I know about sword fencing in the Ichi school. Sometimes the order might be confusing, but it's not easy to explain everything clearly. This book is a guide for people who want to learn about the Way, which is like a spiritual path.

Since I was young, I've been interested in the Way of strategy. I've spent a lot of time training my body and learning the skills of sword fighting. When I see people from other schools talking about techniques and showing off their skills, they might look impressive, but they often lack the true spirit of the Way.

Some people believe they are training their body and spirit, but their way of practicing actually gets in the way of the true Way. Because of this, the real Way of strategy is slowly disappearing.

The true Way of sword fighting is about defeating your enemy in a fight, and nothing else. If you understand and follow my strategy, you can be confident that you will be successful.

This book was written on the twelfth day of the fifth month in the second year of Shoho, which was in 1645, by Teruo Magonojo Shinmen Musashi.



The Wind Book

In this book, I want to teach you about different schools of strategy. These schools have their own ways of fighting. Some focus on using long swords, while others prefer short swords. Some schools teach many fancy techniques, but they forget about the true essence of strategy.

My school, the Ichi school, is different. Other schools often care more about showing off and making money than about true strategy.

Some people think that being good at using a sword is enough to win, but that's not true. In this book, I talk about the weaknesses and strengths of other schools. You need to study these things to understand the benefits of my Ni To Ichi school.

Some schools like to use extra-long swords, thinking that the length will give them an advantage. But that's not always the case. Even with a short sword, we can still win. It's not just about the length of the sword, but about how we use strategy.

Sometimes, a few skilled fighters can defeat a larger group. It's not always about the size of the army, but about the tactics we use.

We shouldn't only focus on having a strong sword. If we rely too much on our strength, our attacks may become sloppy, and we won't be able to win. Instead, we should focus on killing the enemy and using strategy wisely.

In a big battle, relying on strength alone won't guarantee victory. Both sides may have strong armies, but without the right strategy, it's hard to win.

The spirit of my school is to win through smart thinking and strategy, not by being obsessed with little things. Study this well and understand the true essence of strategy

Use of the Shorter Long Sword in Other Schools

Some schools think that using a shorter long sword is the way to win, but that's not true. Skilled fighters can handle even long swords easily, so they don't need to rely on shorter ones. They can also use longer weapons like spears and halberds. Some people use shorter long swords to try to stab the enemy when they least expect it, but that's not a good strategy.

Trying to catch the enemy off guard is a defensive move and not effective in close combat. Besides, if there are many enemies, using a shorter long sword won't work because you'll have to keep defending against their attacks and get tangled up with them. It goes against the true essence of strategy.

The best way to win is to confuse the enemy and make them move around while you stay strong and focused. This applies to big battles too. The key is to attack the enemy with a large force and defeat them quickly. Many people in the world are used to defending, avoiding, and retreating, but that's not the right way. You must make the enemy obey your strategy and chase them down.

Other Schools with many Methods of using the Long Sword

In some schools, they teach many fancy techniques with the long sword to impress beginners. But that's just a way to show off and sell their way of fighting. It's not a good spirit in strategy.

The truth is, killing the enemy is the main goal in any fight, and there aren't many different ways to do it. Whether you're a man, woman, or child, the basics of fighting are the same. We may talk about different tactics like stabbing or slashing, but they're all variations of the same thing.

You don't need to complicate cutting down the enemy with many fancy moves. However, depending on the situation, your long sword may be obstructed from above or the sides, so you need to hold it in a way that allows you to use it effectively. There are five basic methods for this.

Any other methods like twisting your hand, bending your body, or jumping out to attack the enemy are not the true way of strategy. To defeat the enemy, you must keep your spirit and body strong and make the enemy twist and bend. The important thing is to attack when the enemy is vulnerable. Study this well and understand its true essence.

Use of Attitudes of the Long Sword in Other Schools

Some people in sword-fighting schools think that having a certain attitude with their sword is important, but that's not always true. Attitudes are like how you hold your sword when there's no enemy around. But in a real fight, you should be ready to attack and take the lead. You need to make the enemy feel confused and scared so that you can win.

I don't like being too defensive with an "attitude." In my way of fighting, I have something called "Attitude-No Attitude," which means I focus on attacking instead of waiting.

Fixing the Eyes in Other Schools

In some schools, they tell you to look at specific parts of the enemy, like their sword, hands, face, or feet. But that can make you confused and mess up your strategy. It's like in sports; good players don't always stare at the ball. They know how to play well without constantly looking at it.

In sword-fighting, you need to learn to see with your heart, not just your eyes. It means paying attention to the enemy's spirit and their strength. That's how you can win.

Use of the Feet in Other Schools

Different schools teach various ways of moving your feet during a fight, like jumping or springing. But I don't like those methods because they can make you lose control. In my way, I move my feet like I'm walking on the street, adjusting my pace according to the enemy's rhythm.

It's important to have good footwork in big battles too. If you attack too quickly without understanding the enemy, you might mess up. But if you're too slow, you'll miss the chance to win. So, you need to be smart and win by taking advantage of the enemy's mistakes.

Remember, in sword-fighting, it's not just about the moves, but also about understanding the enemy and using your skills wisely. Keep practicing and learning!

Speed in Other Schools

Some people think that being fast is important in sword-fighting, but it's not always true. Being fast means things seem to happen quickly or slowly depending on the rhythm. But a true master of strategy doesn't always appear fast. It's like running a long distance. Some people can walk really fast for a day, but they don't run all the time. Beginners who try to run all day can't keep up the pace.

In dancing, skilled performers can sing while dancing, but beginners slow down and lose focus when they try it. It's the same with beating a drum. Skilled people can keep a fast rhythm, but it's not good to rush. If you try to beat too quickly, you'll lose the rhythm. Being too slow is not good either. Skilled people never lose the rhythm, and they stay calm and focused. This teaches us an important lesson.

In sword-fighting, being fast is not always good. Depending on the place, like a marsh or swamp, you can't move quickly. It's even harder to swing a long sword fast in those situations. If you try to swing it quickly like a fan or a short sword, you won't be effective. You need to understand this.

Even in big battles, being too busy and rushing is not good. You need to be calm and focused, like holding down a pillow. When your opponent is rushing recklessly, you should act the opposite and stay calm. Don't let your opponent influence you. Practice diligently to have this kind of spirit.

"Interior" and "Surface" in Other Schools

In strategy, there is no "interior" or "surface." Some schools talk about hidden meanings and secrets, but in a real fight, there's no such thing as fighting on the surface or cutting with the interior. When I teach my strategy, I start with easy techniques and explanations that are easy to understand. As the student progresses, I gradually explain deeper principles that are harder to grasp. But because understanding comes from experience, I don't talk about "interior" and "gate."

In this world, when you go deeper into the mountains, you eventually reach a gate instead of going further in. Every Way has an interior, and sometimes it's good to point out the gate. In strategy, we can't say what is hidden and what is revealed.

That's why I don't like passing on my Way through written rules and regulations. I perceive the abilities of my students and teach them directly. I remove the influence of other schools and gradually introduce them to the true Way of the warrior. You must train diligently with a trustworthy spirit.

I have briefly described the strategies of other schools without naming them. The reason is that different schools have different interpretations. People have different opinions, so there are different ideas about the same thing. No one person's ideas are valid for every school.

In my school, there is no gate or interior. Sword attitudes don't have hidden meanings. You simply need to keep your spirit true to understand the virtue of strategy.

This was written by Teruo Magonojo Shinmen Musashi on the twelfth day of the fifth month in the second year of Shoho (1645).



The Book of the Void

The Ni To Ichi Way of strategy is written in this book, called the Book of the Void.

The spirit of the void is where there is nothing. It's something we don't really know or understand. The void is emptiness. When we know about things that exist, we can understand what doesn't exist, which is the void.

Sometimes, people look at things they don't understand and think that it must be the void. But that's not true. It's just confusion.

Even in the Way of strategy, warriors may think that anything they can't understand in their training is the void. But that's also not true.

To become a skilled warrior, you need to study other martial arts and stick to the Way of the warrior without deviating. Practice every day and every hour with a focused spirit. Train your heart and mind, and improve your perception and sight. When your mind is clear and free from confusion, that's when you find the true void.

Until you understand the true Way, whether it's in Buddhism or just common sense, you might think that everything is correct and in order. But if we look at things objectively, from the laws of the world, we see that there are different beliefs that don't follow the true Way. It's important to understand this and to be honest and true in our actions. Act with a broad, correct, and open-minded strategy.

When you start thinking about things in a bigger way and see the void as the Way, you will realize that the Way is like an empty space. In that emptiness, there is goodness and no evil. Wisdom, principles, and the Way itself exist, but the spirit is like nothingness.

Written on the twelfth day of the fifth month, in the second year of Shoho (1645) by Teruo Magonojo SHINMEN MUSASHI.



Your Ring
The Path of Harmonious Existence

From my notes I am writing an additional brief in the pursuit of life in the 21st century, from the timeless wisdom of Miyamoto Musashi's Book of Five Rings which resonates across the ages. As we navigate the complexities of relationships with friends, family, adversaries, and the diverse realms of business and school, Musashi's teachings offer guidance on fostering harmony and finding balance in our modern world.

1. ***The Way of Empathy:*** *To cultivate meaningful connections with others, we must cultivate empathy. Seek to understand the perspectives and feelings of those around you, whether they be friends, family, or even adversaries. Empathy builds bridges, fostering compassion and opening pathways for peaceful resolutions.*
2. ***The Strategy of Adaptability:*** *In a rapidly changing world, the ability to adapt becomes paramount. Embrace flexibility in your interactions, recognizing that each person and situation requires a unique approach. Adaptability empowers you to find common ground and forge harmonious relationships, even in challenging circumstances.*
3. ***The Art of Communication:*** *Effective communication is the cornerstone of harmonious existence. Practice active listening, giving others your undivided attention, and expressing yourself clearly and respectfully. Communicate your thoughts, needs, and boundaries while remaining open to the perspectives of others. Honest and compassionate dialogue is the key to fostering understanding and resolving conflicts.*
4. ***The Spirit of Cooperation:*** *Collaboration and cooperation are essential in all aspects of life. Recognize that we are interconnected and interdependent beings. Embrace the power of teamwork, whether it be in family dynamics, group projects, or professional endeavors. Together, we can achieve far greater outcomes than through individual efforts alone.*
5. ***The Wisdom of Balance:*** *Strive for equilibrium in all aspects of your life. Nurture relationships with loved ones while also tending to personal growth and aspirations. Find a harmonious rhythm between work, school, and leisure activities, allowing time for rest and self-care. Cultivate balance within yourself, embracing both strength and vulnerability.*

6. ***The Strategy of Discernment:*** In the intricate tapestry of life, learn to discern true allies from adversaries. Surround yourself with those who uplift and support you, while maintaining healthy boundaries with those who may bring negativity or harm. Exercise discernment in your choices, seeking alignment with your values and goals.
7. ***The Principle of Continuous Learning:*** Just as Musashi devoted himself to lifelong learning, embrace a similar mindset. Approach each interaction and experience as an opportunity for growth and self-improvement. Be open to new ideas, perspectives, and knowledge, expanding your horizons and enriching your understanding of the world.

By integrating these timeless principles into our daily lives, we can navigate the complexities of friendships, family dynamics, adversaries, and the multifaceted realms of business and school. Embracing harmony, adaptability, empathy, and balance, we can forge meaningful connections, foster understanding, and lead purposeful lives in the 21st century and beyond.

May the spirit of Miyamoto Musashi's wisdom guide us all on the path of harmonious existence, as we strive to create a world where empathy, cooperation, and growth flourish.

I hope you enjoyed reading this translation of Miyamoto Musashi's Book of Five Rings as much as I enjoyed studying and writing in my own words.

I am translating other books from our human past on this planet and offer my work freely to those who seek knowledge, should you desire to support my work by sending contributions for this book or future work you may do so.

You can get in touch with me via my social media (links are on my website) and or by email below.

Thank you again.

M M Abbasi

Mohammed.Abbasi@aobm.org

www.mmabbasi.com





In ancient Japan, there was a brave samurai named Miyamoto Musashi, known as the "Sword Saint." He survived 60 sword fights, the first at just 13 years old, and became a legendary figure admired for his strength and courage.

*– M M Abbasi
www.mmabbasi.com*

\$14.99