



# Miyamoto Musashi: His Life and Writings

*Kenji Tokitsu*

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Undefeated swordsman, master of battlefield strategy, martial arts icon—Miyamoto Musashi, who lived in Japan in the 1600s, is the most famous samurai of all time. His masterwork, the *Book of Five Rings (Gorin no sho)*, is one of the most insightful texts on the subtle arts of confrontation and victory to emerge from Asian culture.

Over the centuries, Musashi's reputation has grown to mythic proportions, but, in fact, much about Musashi and his life remains a mystery. Here, Kenji Tokitsu, a modern martial arts master and scholar, turns a critical eye on Musashi's life and writings, separating fact from fiction, and providing a view of the man and his ideas that is accessible and relevant to today's readers and martial arts students.

Tokitsu provides a vivid and meticulously researched biography and a fresh translation of the *Book of Five Rings*, along with four other texts on strategy, all with extensive commentary. He is a thoughtful and informed guide, putting the historical and philosophical aspects of the text into context.

He also covers: The main periods in the history of Japanese swordsmanship Musashi's childhood and his first duel The founding of Musashi's School of Two Swords Musashi's influence on contemporary practice The evolution of budo, or martial arts practice for self-cultivation Musashi was also a respected artist, and this book contains color reproductions of his own calligraphies and paintings, with commentary by the well-known art historian Stephen Addiss.

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