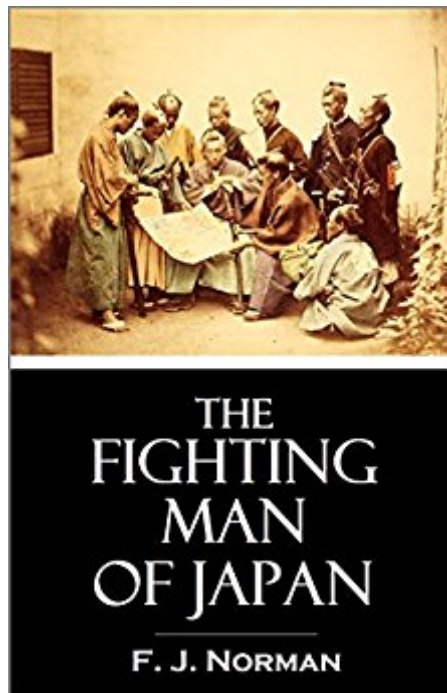




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The Fighting Man Of Japan: The Training And Exercises Of The Samurai (1905)



Synopsis

In "The Fighting Man of Japan" we have a very interesting little book by Mr. F. J. Norman, who is eminently fitted to discourse on the "Exercises and Training of the Samurai," having passed many years in Japan as instructor to some of the military and civilian colleges. THE writer, an old hussar, has been a long resident in Japan, and an instructor in its leading colleges. His book, though of but eighty pages, is one of the most interesting and most valuable of the contributions to our literature which we owe to the Russo-Japanese war, now happily ended. Had we all known what Mr. Norman knew, its results would scarcely have been so much of a surprise to the rest of the world as they have proved. The book is not didactic, but historical and personal, giving a concise account of the military and naval training in Japan and a sketch of Mr. Norman's own experiences in the fencing and wrestling schools in Tokyo. He had a unique experience with the great professors and reached an efficiency which astonished his masters. "Lately you have become greatly disciplined in fencing. I admire you much," as the great Ono wrote on his card. There is an admirably clear and concise history of Japan from its beginnings. Between the lines we can see the reasons why development was for so long impeded, and why, when the change began, the advance was so sudden and so decided. The book is divided into four chapters, each of which deals with a separate subject. The first gives a rapid sketch of Japanese military history dating from 1543, which is as far back as our European knowledge of it extends, and incidentally giving a description of the spirit which animated the "old Samurai" and a very different one, it would appear from Mr. Norman's account, from that which guided our knights and crusaders. An interesting chapter is that on the education of the naval and military officers, showing what a very fine sieve has to be passed through before the aspirants are thought capable and worthy of defending their country either as sailors or soldiers. The chapter on "Kenjutsu" deals with the affection the Japanese have always felt for the sword, and the great cleverness they exhibit when using it in a hand-to-hand fight. This cleverness would appear to be the result of much practice in "kenjutsu," for which a "shinai," or practice sword, is used, made from four strips of bamboo bound together at the handle with a strong leather covering. The last chapter describes the sumo or wrestling of the Japanese "to many a most repulsive spectacle on account of the enormously fat bodies of the particular class of men who follow this profession; but a fight between two expert sumotori is for the Japanese an event of almost national importance, and they flock in thousands to the huge amphitheatre in the centre of which the tussle takes place. The last few pages of the book are devoted to jujitsu. We think it will be safe to assert that no Englishman has so extensive a knowledge of Japanese methods of offence and defence as is possessed by Norman. Norman, who gave an

exhibition of Kenjitsu in Oxford, is an old soldier who had been for many years an instructor in Japan. In this little book he first describes with enthusiasm the early military history of the Japanese, and their present methods of education in Naval and Military Colleges. The latter chapters expound the " noble sciences" of fencing and of " rough-and-tumble" as practised throughout Japan. The account should interest a wide circle of readers. Originally published in 1905; reformatted for the Kindle; may contain an occasional imperfection; original spellings have been kept in place.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is a reprint of a 1905 book by British Army officer F. J. Norman. It provides a fascinating historical and includes 32 rare photographs and illustrations. Modern works provide a lot more in-depth historical information about these martial arts as well as comprehensive "how to" perform kendo, sumo, and jujutsu, etc. but this is one of the very first Western books about the subjects. Contents include Japanese military history, education of Japanese military and naval officers, kenjutsu (fencing), sumo and jujutsu (wrestling). A mere 96 pages it's a quick and easy read. Neat stuff; fascinating historical perspective. Lawrence Kane Author of Blinded by the Night, among other titles

A 1905 English retired Cavalry Officer over-views Kenjitsu, Sumo, and Jiu-Jitsu for a general audience after living in Japan long term. Fun read.

good historic book, the print is sometimes difficult to read but you get a window of Japanese martial arts at the time this was written

This is a very interesting book, if you are like me and enjoy seeing the history of martial arts through the eyes of a bygone era. This book covers the education of the Japanese military at the time of the book's writing, mainly the Naval branch. Next the author moves onto various areas of the budo arts practiced at that time. I found it to be a great quick read that I have gone back to several times.

Interesting read ! Its almost as if one is reading off F.J. Norman's private journal.

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