



Famous Japanese Swordsmen

The Two Courts Period

William de Lange

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From the author of the best-selling *Famous Japanese Swordsmen: The Warring States* comes more solid sword history in the guise of thrilling narrative. The Two Courts Period was a turning point in Japan's medieval era – a time when an unbridgeable rift appeared in the fragile fabric of Japanese feudal society. On each side stood a separate imperial court, each with its own army and its own agenda. As the schism deepened and the positions hardened, every warrior faced the terrible choice between loyalty and friendship. Two such men were Nennami Okuyama Jion and Chûjô Hyôgo no Kami Nagahide. Jion, an impoverished warrior monk who had lost his father through the treachery of a Bakufu official, joined the side of the loyalists, the forces fighting on behalf of the Southern Court. Nagahide, whose ancestors had stood at the cradle of feudal society and had risen to high rank within the Bakufu, was bound by duty to the Northern Court. Their stories, set against the greater historical backdrop of ruthless political intrigue and vast military campaigns, tell of loyalty, of betrayal, and of seemingly insurmountable setbacks; they describe the tragedy of civil war experienced at the personal level.