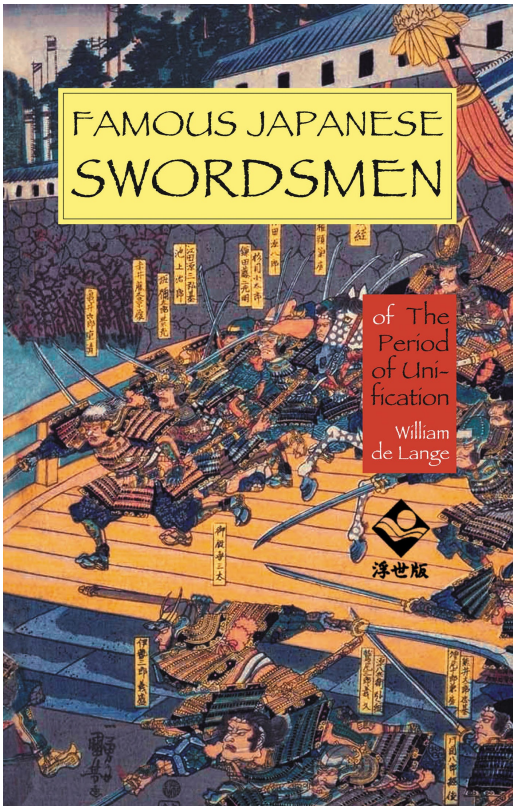
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Famous Japanese Swordsmen

of the Period of Unification

William de Lange

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- The final volume of the swordsmen trilogy tells the story of the greatest warriors of the two late-16th century, when war-ravaged Japan was brought under central control

This third and final volume of the *Famous Japanese Swordsmen* trilogy presents more thrilling narrative based on solid sword history. The Period of Unification was one of the great turning points in Japan's medieval era. After more than two centuries of civil strife Japan finally found its way back to peace and order under three successive rulers: Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa leyasu. The final drive came in the fall of 1600, when Japan's eastern and western warlords faced each other in the Battle of Sekigahara. It was a decisive battle, in which each and every man who called himself a warrior faced the stark choice between the forces of division and those of unification. Two such men were Ono Jirôemon Tadaaki and Yagyû Tajima no Kami Munenori. Tadaaki, a swordsman from the Kanto, had lost his family and home to become a *ronin*, a masterless samurai, forced to lead the life of a wanderer. Munenori hailed from the Home Provinces. His clan had first lost its castle, then its lands, until finally they were thrown upon the mercy of a local temple. Having lost everything, both men staked their lives and futures on the victory of the eastern forces.

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