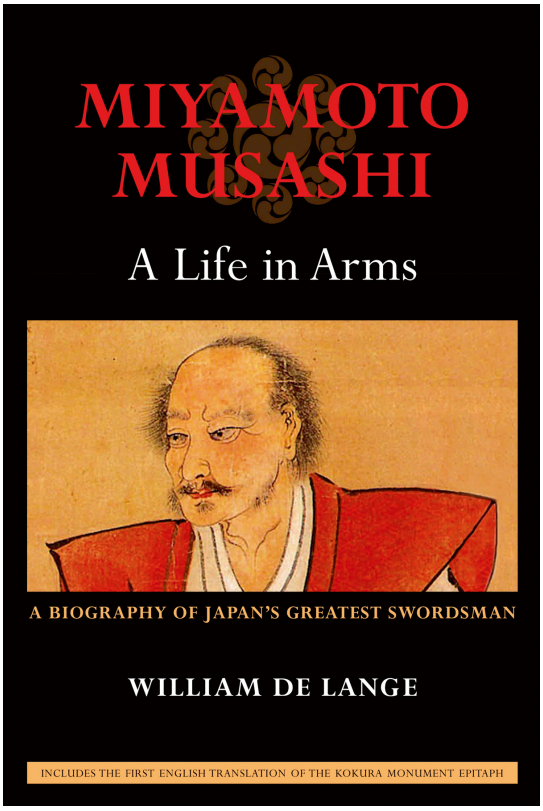
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Miyamoto Musashi: A Life in Arms

A Biography of Japan's Greatest Swordsman

William de Lange

ISBN	9781891640629
Publisher	Floating World Editions
Binding	Paperback / softback
Territory	USA & Canada
Size	6.11 in x 8.89 in
Pages	288 Pages
Price	$34.95

- A full biography of Japanese swordsman Miyamoto Musashi

First to translate two of the oldest accounts of Musashi's career – the *Bushû denraiki* and the *Bukôden* – William de Lange presents a full biography of the most famous yet enigmatic of swordsmen. In doing so, he draws extensively on a wealth of additional and often neglected sources to reconstruct the meandering course of Musashi's eventful life: his dramatic encounter with Sasaki Kojirô on Ganryû island, his multiple bouts with the famed Yoshioka brothers, and the remarkable gestation of his life's influential work: *The Book of Five Rings*. In the course of this highly readable account, many of the convenient myths that have arisen around Musashi are debunked. The more controversial incidents of the warrior's life that have been left hidden, perhaps deliberately, are uncovered: his troubled relationship with his father, his whereabouts during the battle of Sekigahara, the siege of Osaka castle, and the birth and death of an illegitimate child, which was an event that deeply influenced his art. The biography reveals how Musashi's path through life was shaped by strong personal traits: his reckless valor in the face of danger, his sensitive intelligence in the fields of art and architecture, his generosity toward peers and pupils, and his defiant stubbornness in old age. The complex yet human portrait that arises is a far cry from the accepted one-dimensional caricature of this medieval swordsman.

Published 12th Nov 2014