ForeWord Reviews

SPORTS & RECREATION

The Way of Kendo & Kenjitsu
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A legendary Samurai was once challenged to a fight to the death by a brash ronin, or masterless Samurai. The elder man tried to dissuade the younger from persisting, saying that he had so much to live for, to no avail. The ronin, cocksure in his abilities and convinced that the Samurai's reputation was unearned, would not be dissuaded. Finally, the Samurai had no choice but to accede to the challenge.

The two dueled, and the ronin's head was quickly split in two. "I am truly sorry it had to end like this," said the Samurai, "but some lessons are forever."

The author uses this story, which is said to be true, to illustrate the essence of kenjitsu, the forerunner to modern kendo, or the Way of the Sword. Ancient Japanese samurais lived the code of bushido, the Way of the Warrior, and they trained for life-or-death combat, where there were no rules of engagement. The modern martial art of kendo has rules, and real swords are not used. Yet the author strives to imbue the practitioner of the art with the historic background and attitude of the ancient Samurais. Like the knights of medieval Europe, the Samurais were prepared for battle at all times but were also highly principled men who only reluctantly drew blood.

This book is written for the students of kendo, to assist not only in their fighting ability but also in molding themselves into better people through strengthening their dignity, sense of duty, and honor. It contains numerous illustrations to show the student various kendo techniques and wazas, or practice forms, with such practical descriptions as the proper way to tie and wear the protective gear worn during training.

The author is also a collector of swords and provides some excellent advice on that art as well. The author holds multiple black belts
and is a U.S. Kendo champion as well as a highly regarded teacher of martial arts. He lives in Houston, Texas.

Anyone with an interest in the martial arts, particularly kendo, from the beginner to the adept, will enjoy this blending of ancient wisdom with modern techniques and may also want to read Craig's prior work, *The Heart*
of Kendo.

Alan J. Couture