

The Katana: An overblown asset

Richard Perez
JAPN212
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What IS a/the katana?

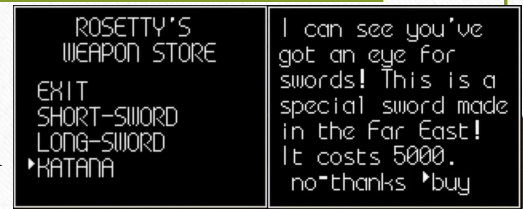
- “Katana” = Japanese word for sword in general
- Actual sword w/said name would come into production later
 - First mention: Kamakura Period

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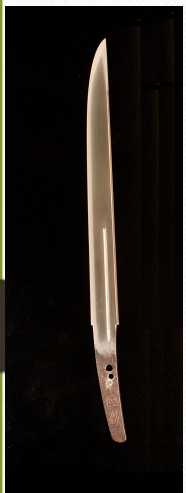
The way we see it



- The katana is considered to be a major aspect of samurai imagery and representative of the samurai as a whole
- The blade itself has garnered fame on par to that of the people who primarily wielded it
 - Media emphasizes it (alongside stereotypes) above other aspects of/utilities wielded by samurai



Steel that steals the show



- Short swords such as the *wakizashi* and *tanto* existed before the katana
- Most samurai used katana in conjunction with a wakizashi (*daisbo*); not just the katana alone



- Samurai primarily fought with bows on horseback
 - “The Lost Bow” from *Tales of the Heike* emphasized importance of bow
- Katanas were developed later on as a way of transitioning into infantry



Not-so-stern stuff

- The blade itself is forged through a process known as *kitae*
 - Metal-folding technique used to compensate for lack of iron ore availability
 - Katana used as a last resort on cloth/leather armor bearing opponents



Nowadays..
