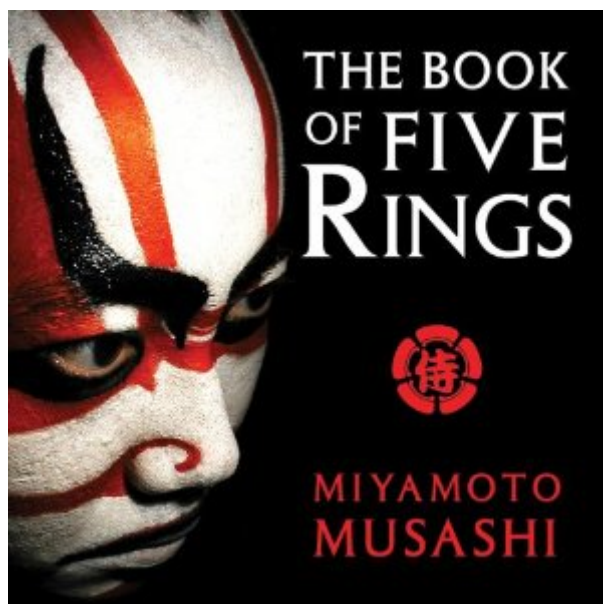


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# The Book Of Five Rings



## Synopsis

Setting down his thoughts on swordplay, on winning, and on spirituality, legendary swordsman Miyamoto Musashi intended this modest work as a guide for his immediate disciples and future generations of samurai. He had little idea he was penning a masterpiece that would be eagerly devoured by people in all walks of life centuries after his death. Along with *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu, *The Book of Five Rings* has long been regarded as an invaluable treatise on the strategy of winning. Musashi's timeless advice on defeating an adversary, throwing an opponent off-guard, creating confusion, and other techniques for overpowering an assailant was addressed to readers of earlier times on the battlefield and now serves the modern listener in the battle of life. In this new rendering by the translator of *Hagakure* and *The Unfettered Mind*, William Scott Wilson adheres rigorously to the 17th-century Japanese text and clarifies points of ambiguity in earlier translations. In addition, he offers an extensive introduction and a translation of Musashi's rarely published *The Way of Walking Alone*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As others have already written very complete reviews, I just had a few miscellaneous comments, mostly on how to understand Musashi's seemingly paradoxical ideas about technique. This has become a legendary book. Written by the famous swordsman, sometimes referred to in the west as "The Lone Ranger of Japan," Musashi claimed to have been in over 60 sword battles, triumphing each time, so it's no wonder Musashi's name has become legendary in both Japan and the

west. The book sets out Musashi's philosophy and correct Way of the Sword. But the principles Musashi espouses are bound to sound perplexing to many people. Musashi says that the best stance is no stance, that too much strength is bad (your sword may shatter when clashing swords), and that even too much speed is bad (it may upset your balance), and that none of these are the true Way of the Sword. The best technique is, in fact, no technique. This sort of philosophy is bound to be more than a little confusing, so I'll see if I can clarify it a little. I'm not sure I understand Musashi either, although I've studied martial arts for many years and have read my share of eastern philosophy, but I'll give you my ideas on how I relate to them just in case you find them useful. Basically what Musashi is saying is that once you've learned a technique and committed it to memory and especially "muscle memory," it becomes fixed and is no longer adaptive. Your body becomes channalized into this form or technique, which then becomes limiting, preventing you from achieving true mastery, which is the ability to adapt and flow with any of the infinite number of situations you may encounter. Fixity is therefore dysfunctional and is not the true Way of the Sword.

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