Did You Know?

Japanese Armour
The distinctive appearance of Japanese armour derives from the padded styles imported from China and Korea more than a thousand years ago.

Archery
The early samurai were mounted warriors, the bow taking precedence over the sword. Mounted archery was the most respected form of Japanese warfare until the introduction of guns in the 16th century. As a reflection of this, archery equipment was beautifully crafted and decorated.

Nihon-to Swords
The legendary swordsmith Masamune Okazaki developed the classic nihon-to-sword, a two-piece blade formed by sandwiching shingane (a soft low-carbon core) within kawagane (a hard jacket steel) to make a light and strong blade.

Making a Sword
Making a Japanese sword is a complex process. It takes a swordsmith two weeks to forge a blade, as the steel may be folded up to 20 times. Polishing takes another two weeks, using polishing stones of ten or more different grit grades.
Weapons and armour

Example sketchbook