

There are a huge number of books on the martial arts out there. One of the difficult things about taking a closer look at the arts is that there are so few that are well written and/or well researched. The list below is not comprehensive. It includes some books that I have found good, or at least better than the usual schlock, and enjoyed. (Any comments are the personal opinion of Frederick Lohse.)

Goju Ryu

The History of Karate: Goju Ryu. Higaonna, Morio.

A decent history book, but with a strong political slant towards An'ichi Miyagi.

Goju Ryu Technical Series. Higaonna, Morio.

Kata and application books by one of the most popular Goju teachers today.

Okinawa Goju Ryu, vols. 1 & 2. Toguchi, Seikichi.

Books about Toguchi sensei's Shoreikan Goju Ryu. Interesting, and especially informative on the training kata Toguchi sensei developed.

Other Okinawan Martial Arts and Okinawan Martial Culture

The Bubushi. There are 2 translations of this Okinawan text available, one by George Alexander and one by Patrick McCarthy.

This is the only Okinawan text on karate from before the 20th century.

Karate-Do: My Way of Life. Funakoshi, Ginchin.

Good autobiography by one of karate's most important figures.

Ancient Okinawan Martial Arts: Koryu Uchinadi Vol. II. McCarthy, Patrick.

Interesting book including a translation of a piece by Miyagi sensei.

Okinawan Karate: Teachers, Styles, and Secret Techniques. Bishop, Mark.

An interesting overview of the Okinawan systems, though it has a few errors.

Tales of Okinawan Masters. Nagamine, Shoshin.

A great book on some of Okinawa's famous teachers.

Unante. Sells, John.

A good overall popular history of Okinawan karate.

100 Masters of Okinawan Karate. Hokama, Tetsuhiro. Translation by Joe Swift.

The Secret Royal Martial Arts of Ryukyu. Matsuo, Kanenori Sakon. Translation by Joe Swift.

Kobo Jizai Karate Kenpo Seipai no Kenkyu. Mabuni, Kenwa. E-book, translated by Mario McKenna and available on his website.
Interesting read by one of karate's early pioneers.

Kobo Jizai Goshin Jutsu Karate Kenpo. Mabuni, Kenwa. E-book, translated by Mario McKenna and available on his website
Another interesting read.

Shotokan Karate, a Precise History. Cook, Harry.
A tome on the history of Japan's most popular karate style.

Japanese and Chinese Arts

Classical Bujutsu, Classical Budo, and Modern Bujutsu and Budo. Draeger, Donn.
Classic 3 volume series on Japanese arts.

Koryu Bujutsu, Sword and Spirit, and Keiko Shokon. Diane Skoss, editor.
Interesting 3 volumes on Japanese Koryu and their western exponents

Armed Martial Arts of Japan. Hurst, Cameron.
History of some of Japan's armed arts, kendo and kyudo.

Complete Aikido. Suenaka, Roy.
Story of the author's studies with Usheiba Sensei and Aikido's growing pains, and his training with Hohan Soken, an Okinawan karate teacher.

Judo Inside-Out. Gleason, Geoff.
A psychologist's views on training, not specific to Judo.

Zen in the Art of Archery. Herrigel, Eugen.
A German philosophy student studying Kyudo in Japan.

General Martial Arts

Comprehensive Asian Fighting Arts. Draeger, Donn, and Robert Smith.
General information about Asian combatives.

The Weapons and Fighting Arts of Indonesia. Draeger, Donn.
Interesting read on Indonesian arts.

When the Body Becomes all Eyes. Zarilli, Phillip.
An anthropologist's look at Indian arts.

Other

Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai. Tsunetomo, Yamamoto. Translated by William Scott Wilson.

Views on living as a samurai, from the 17th century.

Angry White Pyjamas : A Scrawny Oxford Poet Takes Lessons From The Tokyo Riot Police. Twigger, Robert.

A hilarious look at Aikido training, and expat life, in Japan.

Iron & Silk. Salzmann, Mark.

Stories about living and training in China.

The Unfettered Mind. Takuan. Translated by William Scott Wilson.

Writings by a Zen master to a sword master.

The Book of Five Rings. Musashi, Miyamoto. There are a number of translations of this book on strategy by Japan's most famous swordsmen.