



Sword (Tetoanea or Tewinnare)

Date

mid 19th Century

Primary Maker

I-Kiribati

Medium

Wood, shark teeth (*carcharhinus longimanu*), fiber, tapa, human hair

Description

This sword is a tetoanea or tewinnare, one of the many forms of shark tooth weapons found in the Gilbert Islands, a Micronesian island chain constituting most of the modern-day Republic of Kiribati. Kiribati warriors were particularly well-known for their elaborate weapons edged with shark teeth barbs. These swords were not only threatening in appearance, but were among the Kiribati Islands' most lethal weapons in close-quarters battle. They were also used in ceremonial duels to settle disputes. Sharks have an important cultural significance in

the Gilbert Islands—featuring heavily in the islands' mythological oral history. This and the ferocity of the beasts adds an additional intimidation factor in battle.

Dimensions

34 1/2 × 2 × 1 1/8 in. (87.6 × 5.1 × 2.9 cm) In stand: 36 3/8 × 4 1/2 × 4 1/2 in. (92.4 × 11.4 × 11.4 cm)