



**Sword (Tetoanea or Tewinnarei)**

**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 tewinnarei, 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 ceremonials 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)