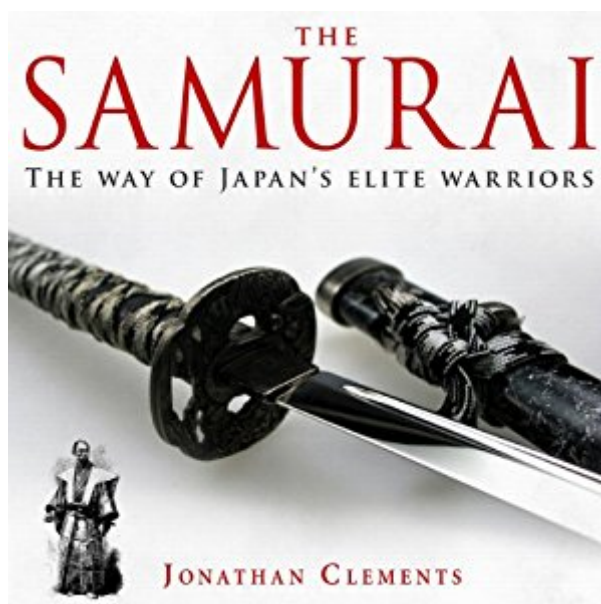


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A Brief History Of The Samurai: Brief Histories



Synopsis

From a leading expert in Japanese history, this is one of the first full histories of the art and culture of the Samurai warrior. The Samurai emerged as a warrior caste in Medieval Japan and would have a powerful influence on the history and culture of the country from the next 500 years. Clements also looks at the Samurai wars that tore Japan apart in the 17th and 18th centuries and how the caste was finally demolished in the advent of the mechanized world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

So you think you know samurai? Think again. Whether you're Japanese or Other, your knowledge of Japan's fabled warrior class is likely based more upon years of pop culture misinformation than upon solid historical fact. And while we all love TV's *Shogun* (my Japanese aunt owns the series and watches it yearly), James Clavell's depiction of the samurai of medieval Japan is geared more towards entertainment than education. *A Brief History of the Samurai: A New History of the Warrior Elite* by Jonathan Clements is more or less the opposite -- an accurate education on the origin and history of the samurai, cleverly disguised as entertainment. In its concise 300 pages, the book presents you with Clements' oceanic knowledge of the ways and workings of medieval Japan while avoiding the sort of dry, textbook prose that you might find in other books on the topic. Clements' lucid prose first paints in the background of Japanese history in brief, clear strokes, allowing you to picture the rise of Japan's warrior ethos from its occult origins in Nippon's pre-historic era to the era of the shogun. He then draws in the portraits of the famous samurai of history in flowing lines of narrative taken from the source documents of Japan's history. And Clements gives you that history with all its ambiguity and bite, not the sanitized soft tofu of popular entertainment. His tales of martial

prowess and chivalric derring-do are enjoyably readable, yet clear-eyed. As a nipponophile, Clements' makes no attempt to hide his love for the color and pomp of Japan's warring clans; as a scholar (and an honest man), he presents you with the poisonous chauvinism of medieval Japanese culture, the conquest and assimilation of the Ainu, and the genocide of Japan's Christian minority as well.

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