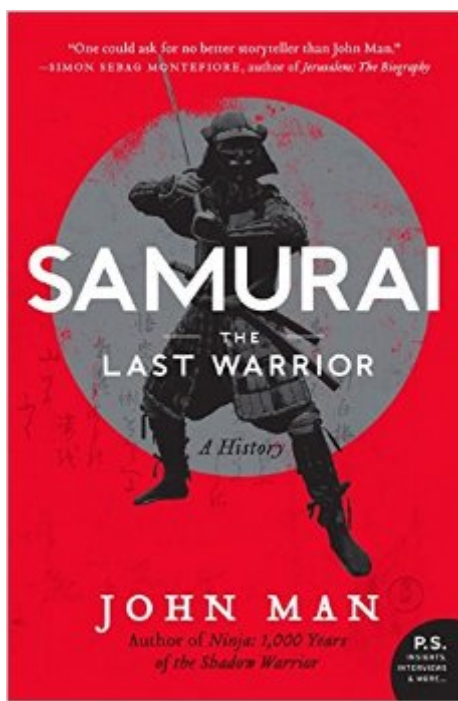


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Samurai: A History (P.S.)



Synopsis

The inspiration for the Jedi knights of Star Wars and the films of Akira Kurosawa, the legendary Japanese samurai have captured modern imaginations. Yet with these elite warriors who were bound by a code of honor called Bushidoâ "the Way of the Warriorâ "the reality behind the myth proves more fascinating than any fiction. In Samurai, celebrated author John Man provides a unique and captivating look at their true history, told through the life of one man: Saigo Takamori, known to many as "the last samurai." In 1877 Takamori led a rebel army of samurai in a heroic "last stand" against the Imperial Japanese Army, who sought to end the "way of the sword" in favor of firearms and modern warfare. Man's thrilling narrative brings to life the hidden world of the samurai as never before.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

SAMURAI: THE LAST WARRIOR, John Man This book is a semi-biographical history of the creation and early years of the Meiji state, which lasted from 1868 to the Meiji Emperor's death in 1912. The biographical narrative picks up steam after lengthy but interesting introductory material, and relates to Saigo Takamori - sometimes known as "The Last Samurai". Saigo was born into a low-ranking samurai family in the Satsuma domain (at the southwestern tip of Japan proper, on the island of Kyushu). He rose to become a key figure in the quasi-revolution which ended 265 years of shogunal rule and restored the Emperor to power (the "Meiji Restoration"). Ironically, Saigo's life was ended by the very Imperial army he helped create. The story of Saigo is important to understanding

Japanese history in the second half of the 19th century, and the author covers aspects of Saigo's life which generalized histories may omit - in favor of total focus on his key role in the 1877 Satsuma Rebellion. Saigo met his end in that rebellion, which was the last gasp of protest against a modernizing Meiji state. But it is the Satsuma Rebellion - the Meiji war against Satsuma samurai who refused to accept the new order - for which Saigo is best known. The great irony of this brief war is that the samurai rebels revered the emperor whose troops they fought. Their goal was a reversal of policies for which they blamed the emperor's advisors rather than the emperor himself. The Satsuma Rebellion handed the Imperial Army an opportunity to test its real-world capabilities on a significant scale for the first time, and it was not found wanting.

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