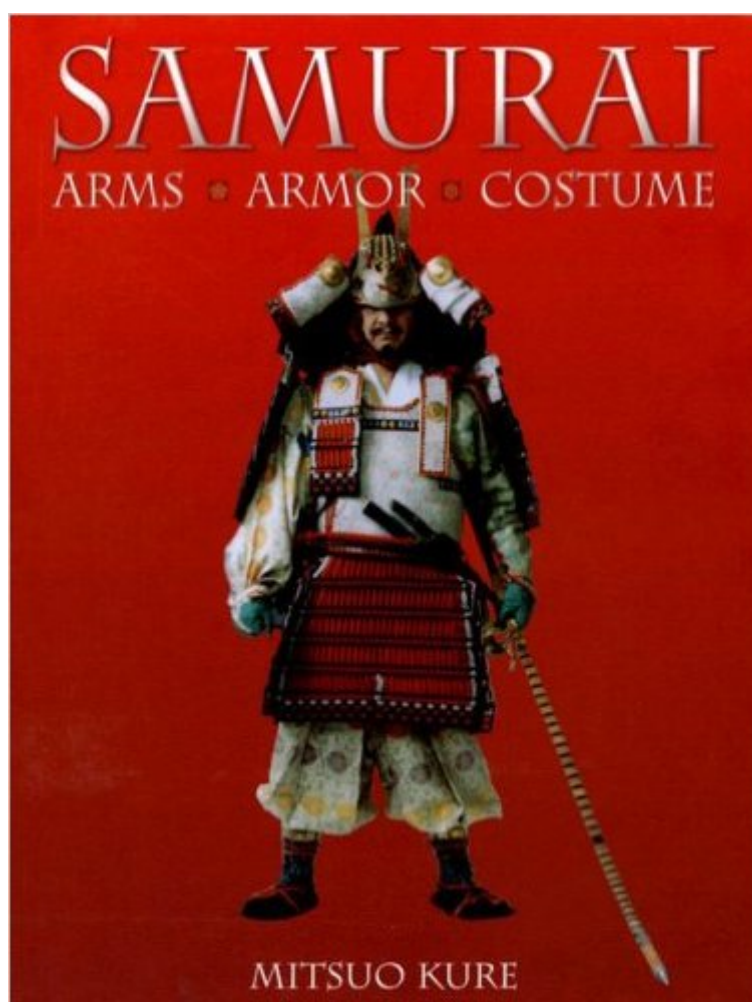


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Samurai: Arms, Armor, Costume



Synopsis

Samurai: An Illustrated History brings the violent, tumultuous, and, at the same time, elegant world of the medieval Japanese samurai to life. This book of Japanese history traces the story of a unique historical phenomenon: a period of 700 years—equivalent to the entire stretch of Western history between the reigns of the Crusader king Richard the Lionhearted and of Queen Victoria at the height of the British Empire—during which an enclosed civilization was dominated by a single warrior caste. The historical narrative of samurai history is supported by explanations of samurai armor, weapons, fortifications, tactics, and customs, and illustrated with nearly 800 fascinating color photographs, maps, and sketches, including ancient scroll paintings and surviving suits of armor preserved for centuries in Japanese shrines. From the 12th to the 19th centuries the history of Japan was effectively the history of the samurai—the class of professional fighting men. At first they were no more than lowly soldiery employed by the court aristocracy of Kyoto, but the growing power of the provincial warrior clans soon enabled them to brush aside the executive power of the imperial court and to form their own parallel military government. Though individual dynasties came and went in cycles of vigor and decadence, the dominance of the samurai as a class proved uniquely resilient. --This text refers to an alternate Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Well. It's big and red and shiny and has lots of very pretty photographs of live human beings posing in armor and costumes. It has a gushy description on the inside of the dust jacket about how

historically authentic everything is inside!!!!!!It also has a preface by its author in which he mentions "the curator of a private museum in Kyoto." He finally rambles around to mentioning the "Japanese costume museum in Kyoto." He never, ever thanks or acknowledges Izutsu-san by name either. Nor does he identify any of the collections or reproduction sources of any of the arms or armaments. Dr. Kure is a doctor of medicine. He got interested in researching samurai militaria while painting models for gaming. This led him to re-enacting. Great, as a hobbyist myself, I applaud that. It's just that if you're going to embark on "an obsessive quest for accuracy," how about telling us where you found this stuff so we can come along for the ride? Not a single footnote. (Am I weird for reading footnotes?) Not a single corroborating image from period artwork. No bibliography whatsoever. I am willing to cut some slack on some truly clunky prose descriptions of outfits as Dr. Kure is not writing in his first language. However, there's an awful lot of inconsistent spellings of phonetically rendered Japanese words. Utiki becomes uchigi and uchiki and wanders back again, for example. Clearly, while Dr. Kure was busy copying information off costume diagrams from the KCM, he wasn't actually reading them. Nor was the lady he credits for "correcting my poor English." This is sloppiness, plain and simple, and it's EXACTLY the sort of thing that's going to confuse a novice costumer or armorer and hinder their obsessive quest for accuracy. Dr.

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