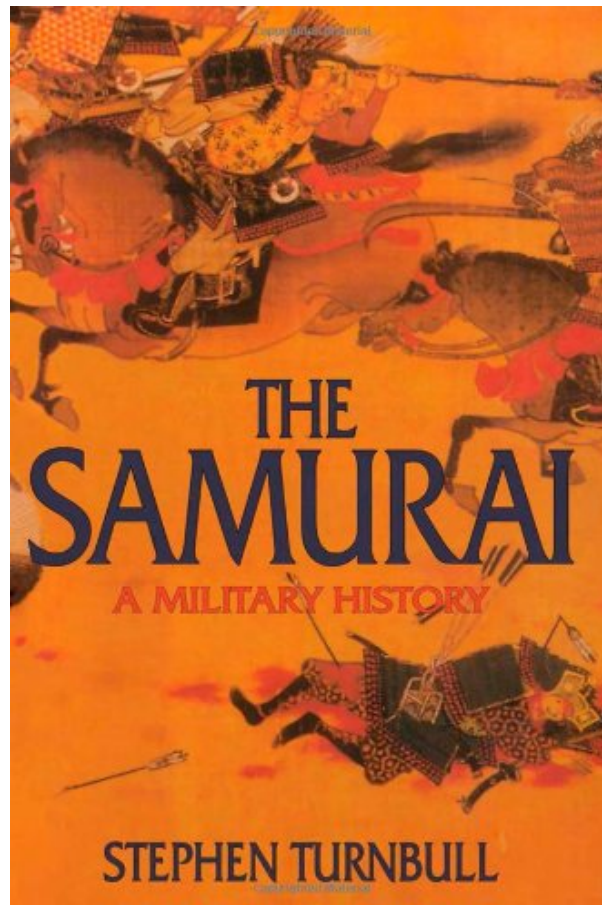
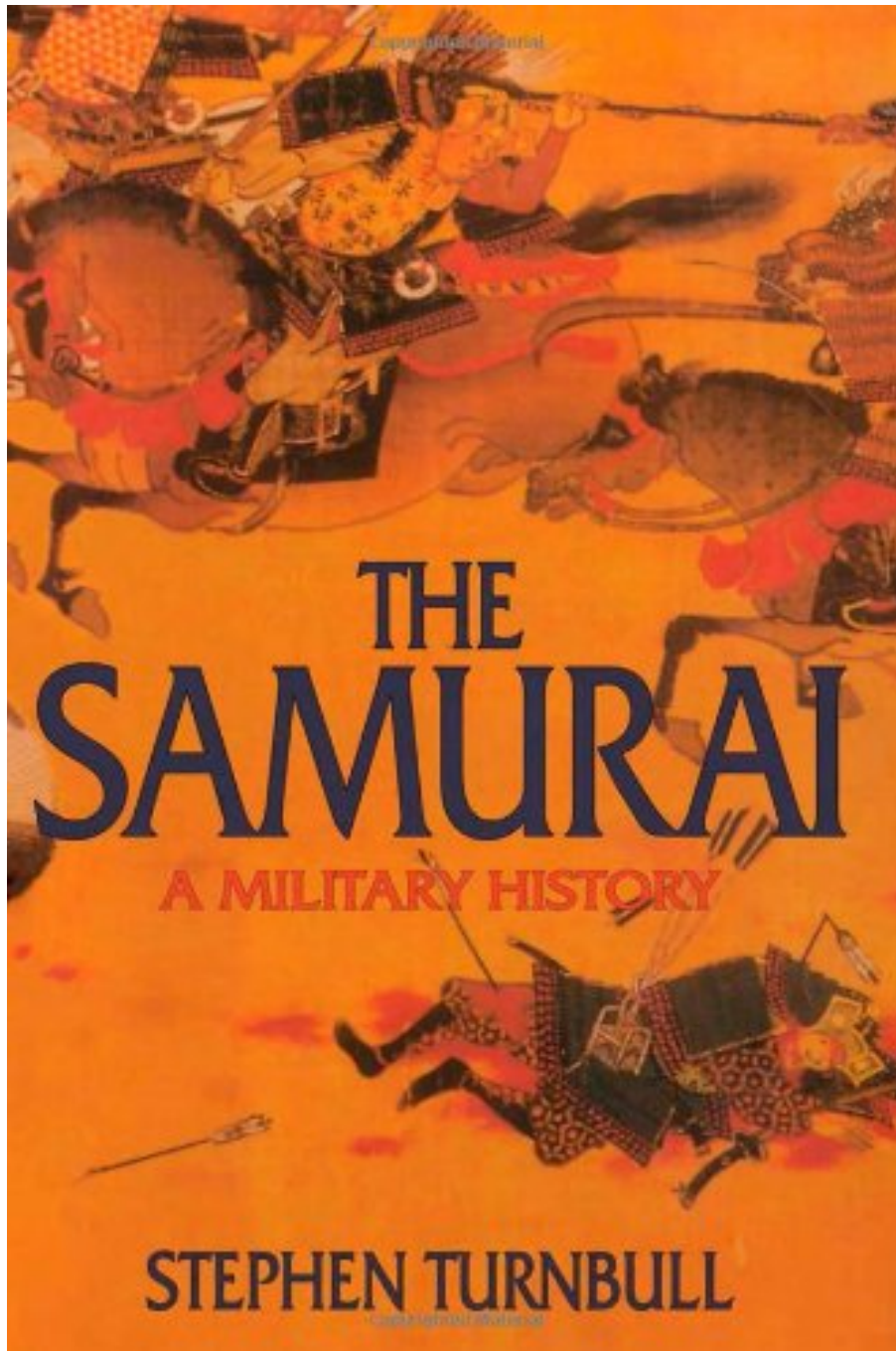


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First published in 1977, *The Samurai* has long since become a standard work of reference. It continues to be the most authoritative work on samurai life and warfare published outside Japan. Set against the background of Japan's social and political history, the book records the rise and rise of Japan's extraordinary warrior class from earliest times to the culmination of their culture, prowess and skills as manifested in the last great battle they were ever to fight - that of Osaka Castle in 1615.

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A great overview of the rise and fall of the samurai through the lens of their many and varied military campaigns.

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A fascinating and eye opening look into the feudal Japan

By Jason Radley

If you have ever had even a passing interest in the history of Japan from the perspective of the warrior class who played a major role in defining it, then this is probably the best choice of book on the subject. It approaches the topic from the earliest accounts of the samurai right through to the end of the samurai era, taking a fairly high level, "big picture" type view. The book looks more at the "why" something happened, than the "how" of events. This provides some fascinating insights into the history of Japan and allows the reader to grasp the overall history of feudal Japan with just the right balance of details and objectivity. That said, there is still quite a bit of detail of some of the more notable battles, but high level, campaign type information is not the purpose of this book. It is more interested in letting the reader understand what happened in Japanese history and why it unfolded as it did, with out bogging down in micro detail. The book is superbly researched and is very well written, and despite the fact that it is a "history" book, it is a very enjoyable, extremely informative read. It is thoroughly recommended.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Very Informative and Entertaining

By China Mike

Stephen Turnbull, in my opinion, is one of the foremost historians of Japanese military history, and certainly one of the most prolific. His writings are well researched and represent the various strata of the eras he writes. Starting with the early history of Japan and extending his writings through the Edo Period, events are written not only of the deeds of the samurai, but also of the political, religious, and cultural influences that helped form this unique class of warriors. Forces in society such as the Emperor, the establishment of Buddhism and later Christianity as a religion, and the numerous foreigners who entered Japan are all shown to have shaped them. Another aspect of this book which is very appealing is that where other historians will focus only upon the much broader aspects of Japanese history, Dr. Turnbull provides insight into the samurai culture by giving excerpts from chronicles of individual families within this warrior society, thereby stirring the imagination of his readers to a greater extent. This book is truly a great resource for understanding this fascinating military order.

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