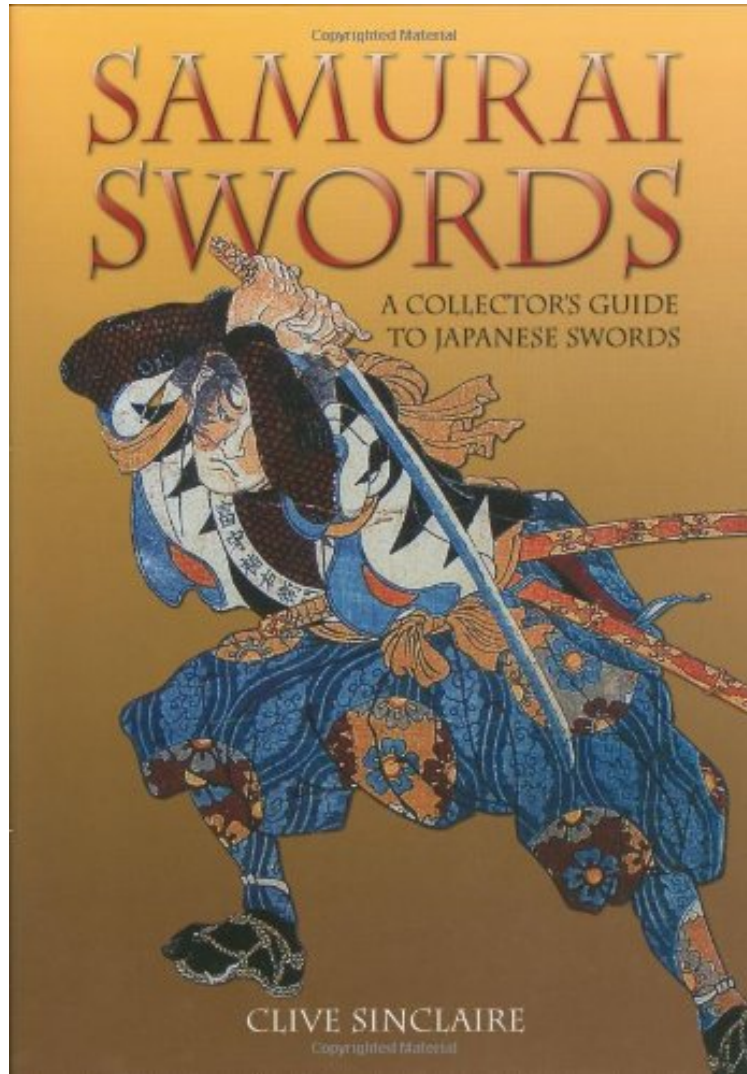


(Free) Samurai Swords

Samurai Swords

Clive Sinclair

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Clive Sinclair : Samurai Swords before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Samurai Swords:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. A decent new intro to nihonto and beyondBy Joe PierreThe number of in-print English-language books on Japanese swords (nihonto) is all too few, so just about any addition is a welcome asset. Clive Sinclair is the Chairman of the To-Ken Society of Great Britain (TSGB) and author of a previously published book, "Samurai: The Weapons and Spirit of the Japanese Warrior." Interestingly, his latest effort, "Samurai Swords: A Collector's Guide to Japanese Swords" comes out at a time when his previous book seems to gone out of print, but this is not a straight re-write. There are some duplicated sections (e.g. history, tameshigiri,

polearms, etiquette, care/restoration) and photographs, but whereas the previous book covered a history of samurai, armour, swords, polearms, archery, and even guns, "Samurai Swords," as you might guess from the name, almost exclusively addresses nihonto over its 200 pages. Mr. Sinclair has written numerous articles on nihonto and has been featured on one or another TV documentary, typically coming from a historical perspective with a somewhat dry British style. So too is the historical perspective emphasized in this new book, with the first half covering samurai history and the impact of historical events on the development of the Japanese sword. The first two chapters set the stage along these lines with a good, concise overview, similar to the one featured in his previous book. The third chapter then takes a different angle, focusing specifically on Hizen-to (swords from Hizen province forged during the Tokugawa era, 1600-1868), as exemplified by the Tadayoshi school, and valued by collectors for the sharpness, suguha hamon, and abundant ji-nie of the blades. Ignoring the fact that this chapter was essentially taken from an article written by Mr. Sinclair available on the TSGB website, one wishes that more of this kind of information on noteworthy schools of nihonto were more widely published in books. Interestingly, common wisdom about nihonto typically hails Koto swords ("old swords" made during the warring periods before 1596) as some of the best blades in terms of composition, forging, and functionality; whereas Shinto blades ("new swords" made during the Tokugawa era) while pretty as adornments for peacetime samurai and the newly risen merchant class, are often regarded as a devolution of these characteristics. Sinclair on the other hand highlights that the opposite was often true, that mass production during war negatively impacts quality (both in the Muromachi era and in World War II) and that the peacetime of the Shinto era permitted smiths to refine their art, as evidenced by the craftsmanship of Hizen-to. The fourth chapter follows the Japanese sword into the last century with the deleterious impact of WW II and its aftermath, as well as the revival of sword-making in Japan over the past 40 years with information on modern Japanese regulations over sword-smithing and the evolution of the the Nihon Bijutsu To-ken Hozon Kyokai (NBTHK), its forging competitions, and ranking system of both modern smiths and swords. In the second half of the book, there are chapters on polearms (naginata, yari, etc.) and the Japanese sword (tachi, katana, wakazashi, etc.), including a somewhat grisly coverage of traditional sword testing on prisoners and corpses. Then, in conclusion there are introductory chapters on collecting nihonto, sword etiquette, preservation, polishing, and the process of shinsa (the process of authenticating and judging antique swords by the NBTHK). Also included is an obligatory glossary of terms, a visual glossary of sword features (hamon, kissaki, hada, etc.), and an appendix featuring commonly featured kanji found on mei (Japanese characters found on signed swords) to get you on your way towards translation and kantei (sword identification and appreciation). Overall, this is a fairly large (12" x 9"), almost coffee-table book, with numerous full-color pictures, accompanying the information discussed above. It is clearly designed as an introductory text, and gives some good overviews of things not found in other such books, like details on Hizen-to, the NBTHK, and shinsa. But on the downside, there's not really enough detail here to really get you started on serious appreciation, kantei, or collecting. And while the color photographs are pretty, many of them are Japanese prints and portraits of people, and not enough of actual swords or blades (though there are some, as well as oshigata by the author). Also, the pictures themselves only loosely track the text, and on several occasions the author discusses various blades in his collection, but fails to post photographs of them. As a first edition, there is also the occasional editing or spelling error. Still, as I mentioned, any addition to English-language books on nihonto is more than welcome and this is a good book to get some basic information that may lead to greater interest, and contribute to the overall preservation of nihonto and the continued interest in modern sword-making. More than worth its selling price, for the Hizen-to chapter and the handy kanji-translator alone. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. HistoryBy Gabriel C. It's best described as History. Lots of beautiful photos and tons of detail to the historical accuracy of the Samurai Sword/Katana. Concepts on how to deal with the real deal swords and how to tell a real from a fake from a very real authentic sword dealer. It's a perfect buy for those curious about the history of the Japanese Sword. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Book By D. Gordon For somebody looking to learn about sword collecting this book is a must. What I think I would like to see more is more pictures of blades with kushiare.

For 700 years Japanese civilization was dominated by a single warrior caste. This project looks at the weaponry of Samurai men and women over the centuries with specifically commissioned photography of reenactors wearing and museum-quality clothing and weaponry.

About the Author Clive Sinclair is an instructor in the kendo form of martial arts and has been collecting Japanese swords for more than forty years. He is Chairman of the To-ken Society of Great Britain and frequently writes articles on Japanese sword culture and collecting that are featured on the society's website (www.To-ken.com) as well as in magazines. He has become a frequent visitor to Japan in the course of his research and studies, and in particular to the NBTHK (Nihon Bijutsu To-ken Hozon Kyodai) sword shows.