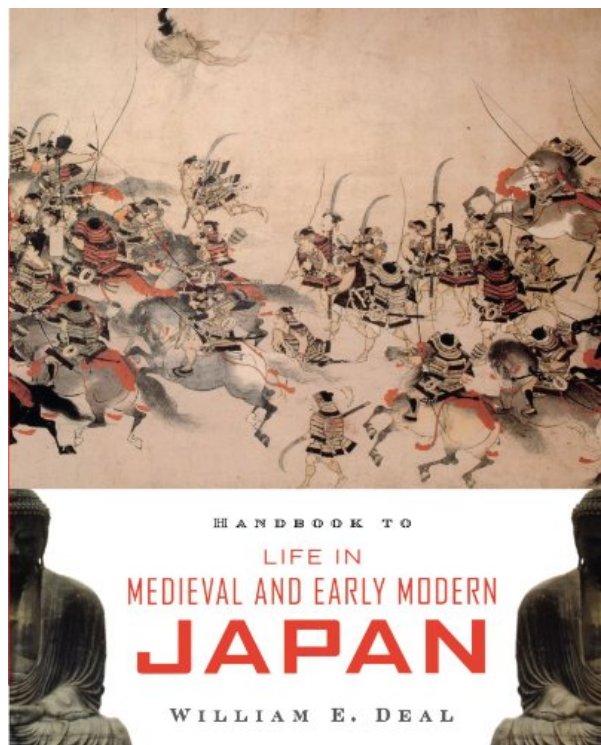
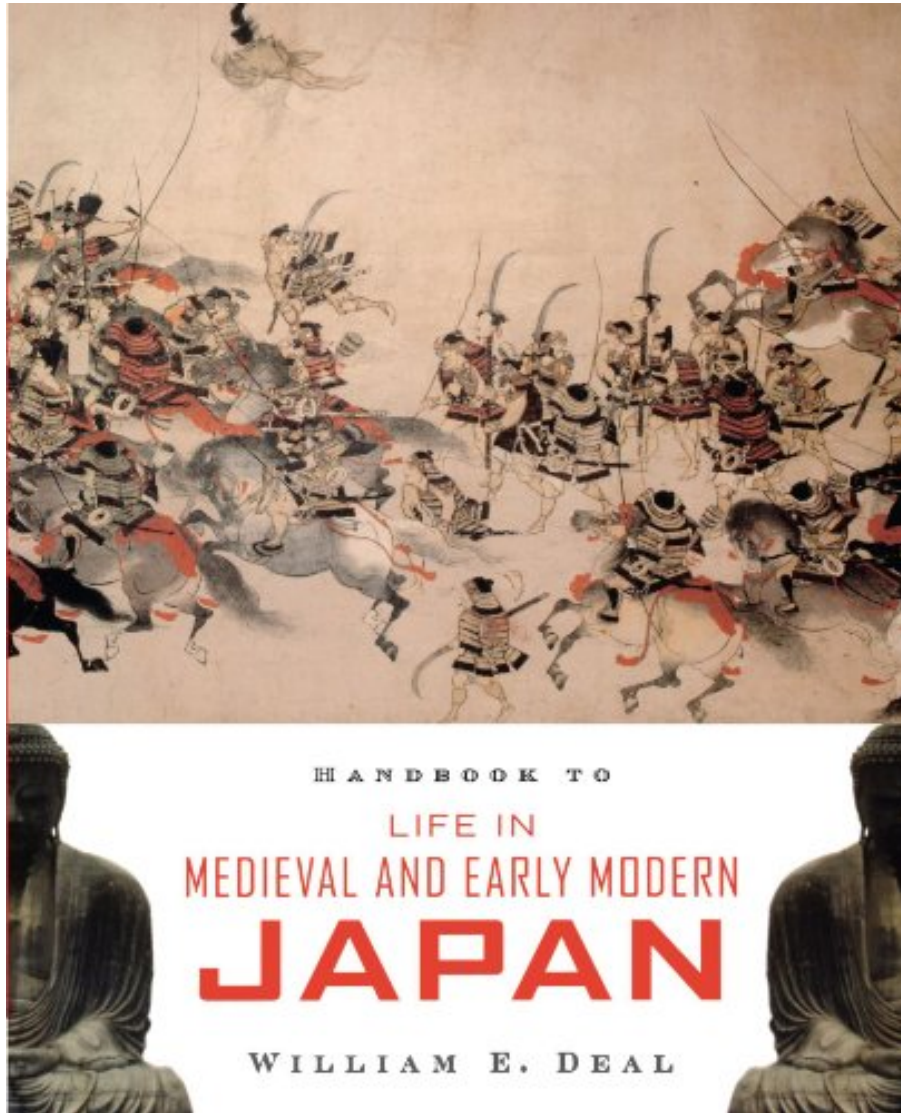


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# HANDBOOK TO LIFE IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN JAPAN BY WILLIAM E. DEAL PDF

Handbook to Life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan spans the beginning of the Kamakura period in 1185 through the end of the Edo (Tokugawa) period in 1868. The medieval and early modern eras in Japan were largely shaped by the rise of the warrior class. After 1603, with the founding of the Tokugawa shogunate, Japanese culture changed dramatically, but as cities grew and merchants thrived, the warrior class became less dominant. By the end of the Edo period, Japan's insular feudal society and military government became irrelevant in an increasingly consumer-oriented economy and thriving urban culture.

The contribution of military rulers, celebrated warriors, and cultural innovators to medieval and early modern Japanese culture are well documented. However, life at the village level also had a strong impact on the culture. Covering both levels of society, this comprehensive guide provides insightful information on well-known people and peasants, artisans, shopkeepers, and others outside the periphery of power. Handbook to Life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan introduces the reader to the significant people and events-cultural, social, political, and historical-and the everyday experiences and elements of material culture during this time.

Organized thematically, the text covers: History; Land, Environment, and Population; Government; Society and Economy; Warriors and Warfare; Religion; Philosophy, Education, and Science; Language and Literature; Performing Arts; Art and Architecture; Travel and Communication; Daily Life. Each chapter includes an extensive bibliography, and photographs and maps complement the text. Handbook to Life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan provides all the essential information for anyone interested in Japanese history, society, or culture.

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## Most helpful customer reviews

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Nicely organized by subject, a great reference

By Eric Griffith

I got this book because I am working on writing a historical novel. Of course the story is fiction and I take an author's "artistic liberty" at times, but I want to paint as accurate a picture as I can of life in those times while entertaining readers. It would be very easy for a western writer to add many unrealistic details. Japanese culture and thinking are not easy matters to comprehend for us westerners. I am also well aware that my American heritage and upbringing significantly colors my storyline ideas, so I like to check myself often.

I like this book because it briefly covers a host of topics, including daily life, religion, society, government, philosophy, and of course warfare and history. The book is organized in such a way that I can pick a very specific subject and go right to it. It serves as a starting point. For example: if I want to learn about the role of women in Japanese society I can read the 2 or 3 pages in the book, which might generate more specific questions for me to research.

Which leads me to another cool thing about this book: at the end of each section is a list of further reading references on each topic. This is a good thing, because so many topics are covered, but somewhat briefly and in summary, so being pointed in the right direction for further study is a welcome feature.

For my purposes, this book is a very useful reference tool.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Fantastic book (but with a few Turnbull errors)!

By A. Johansson

Really good book. Well organised with chapters dealing with specific subjects rather than a timeline with mixed info.

I own around 300 (!) books on Japan and Samurai (i.e. most of what is published in English + a lot of Japanese ones) and this is one of my all time favorites.

The only drawbacks are a few silly statements and "facts" that (mostly) can be traced back to having Turnbuls books as source material... IMHO: Dr Turnbull is in a different league (and not in a positive way) and this author (or anybody else for that matter) should not put too much trust in what that man has written ;)

Some false claims in this book:

- calling naginata with two meter long shafts "enormous ... more than one soldier would be required to deploy" (p.162).
- some of the usual bull about "ninja" and how entire villages "were devoted to instruction and mastery" (p.165) instead of embracing the fact that ninjutsu was just stealthy/espionage techniques used by ordinary warriors (and more often so in poorer provinces - like Iga and Koge - with weaker armies trying to avoid pitched battles).
- silly claims around "ninja weapons" and how they and their arts were less noble (p.166) - black clad ninjas and their supposedly special weapons are a myth that simply will not die (like that Vikings had horned helmets).
- how the horo was used as a protection against arrows (p.172) - typical Turnbull nonsense, probably derived from illustrations showing messengers with arrows stuck in the horo (which obviously is not the same as it providing protection).
- describing Go as a game were you \*move\* black and white stones across a wooden board (p.353).
- ...

Overall this book is still a fantastic source of information!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

No Fluff. No Bluff.

By soulfringe

I've just recently finished writing a term paper on the Kamakura era of Japan. I used this book as one of 7 print sources I checked out, along with various online texts and essays. Out of all of them, this was by far the best!

This is the way all historical books should be. In my time as a college student, most books I have used for lectures and research have been very "wordy", to say the least. This book does the opposite and breaks things down in a very simple easy to understand format. And while simple, it manages to cover a large magnitude of material.

I highly recommend this book if you are researching or have interest in any aspects that were a part of such early eras of Japan. I enjoyed it so much and found so invaluable to my research, that even though my paper is done and can recheck this book out whenever I so desire, I am still going to purchase a copy for myself. Amazing book.

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