

# Samurai Fiction

Let's get it out of the way ...

Shogun

**James Clavell**

Can't live with it, can't live without it. Crap history, brilliantly told.

... quickly to Eiji Yoshikawa — The Boss

Musashi

A fictional biography of Shinmen Musashi No Kami Fujiwara No Genshin, whoever he might be.

Taiko

A fictional biography of Hideyoshi Hidenobu.

... and from his neck of the woods

Comrade Loves of the Samurai

**Saikaku Ihara**

Tales of the love 'that dare not speak its name'.

The Historical Fiction of Mori Ogai

**Mori Ogai**

Nearly twenty short stories, written after the death of the Emperor Meiji in 1912. Nearly every one deals with the samurai ethos, and most are set in the Edo period. Mori is acknowledged as a master of modern Japanese literature.

Legends of the Samurai

**Hiroaki Sato**

A collection of tales from ages gone by.

Pagoda, Skull & Samurai

**Rohan Koda**

The last of these three novellas, *The Bearded Samurai* covers the brief reign of Takeda Katsuyori and the destruction of the Takeda at Nagashino.

Samurai

**Shusaku Endo**

Endo is a Japanese literary giant, the Japanese Graham Greene. Samurai is a fiction woven onto the journey by a group of Japanese Christians to Rome in 1613, focussing on one of their number, Hasekura Rokueamon, and its tragic aftermath.

The Secret History of the Lord of Musashi

**Tanizaki Junichiro**

Tanizaki is one of Japan's foremost novelists. This novella is based on the perverse pleasures of a daimyo of the Sengoku Era.

## Shipwreck

**Akira Yoshimura**

No samurai here, but a stark and powerful novel of life in a remote fishing village in Medieval Japan. Useful to show just how bloody awful life for the peasant was.

## The Signore

**Kunio Tsuji**

A translation of the letters of an Italian adventurer who accompanied the Jesuit mission to Japan. The main subject and 'Signore' of the title is Oda Nobunaga, and Kunio's narrative brings the era to life from an outsider's perspective.

## The Soil

**Nagatsuka Takashi**

No samurai here either, but again another realistic portrait of rural life in Meiji Japan.

## The Story of Osaka Castle and Samurai

**Hasegawa Yasuhiro**

In which we meet the mournful lay priest Yumi, none other than the heir to the Tosa han, Chosokabe Morichika, under house arrest after siding with the wrong camp at Sekigahara. Loyal retainers harbour plans of his escape, however, and Morichika is something of a passenger in this tide of affairs.

## The Taiheiki

A Chronicle of Medieval Japan - the twelfth century epic of the fall of the Taira.

## The Tale of Genji

**Murasaki Shikibu**

Not a samurai novel, but perhaps 'the earliest true novel in the history of the world' according to the sleeve notes. A view of the aristocratic world before the rise of the samurai.

## Waves — a War Diary

**Masuji Ibuse**

The diary of a Taira prince driven from the decadence of Kamakura to the debacle of Ichinotani, realistically told, and reads like a classic film.

## ... and from over here

## Memoirs of the Warrior Kumagai

**Donald Richie**

How to get it right. Richie is an authority on the Japanese movie. He has made Japan his home for over 50 years and written some classics on Japan and the Japanese people. '*Memoirs*' is a work of fiction, the autobiography of Kumagai Naozane, the man who took the head of Atsumori, as recorded in *The Tales of the Heiki*.

## Ryoma — Life of a renaissance samurai

**Romulus Hillsborough**

A fictional biography of Ryoma Sakamoto, a samurai in the forefront of the turbulent overthrow of the Togugawa and the emergence of the Meiji Restoration.

Sensei I & Sensei II

**David Charney**

How to get it wrong. 'The mighty epic movel of the rise of the shoguns', cries the sleeve, but this is a bit of a mishmash, notably for its confusion of eras. It seems a Sengoku, even an Edo tale, set in the Kamakura, and the Rival Taira and Minamoto never come alive on the page.

Tales of the Samurai

**de Benneville**

A young lord undertakes the restoration of his family's fortunes and honor in this gripping if somewhat archaic retelling of the 15th-century Japanese epic *Oguri Hangwan Ichidaiki*. Sukeshide, Lord of Oguri, and his devoted wife, Terute-hime, are based on historical figures of the tumultuous Ashikaga era. Gripping and evocative, it recounts the rebellions, plots, and battles that culminate in a vendetta's thrilling resolution.

... and soon ...

Sengoku

**Thomas Davidson**

I wish. A thrilling tale of action, intrigue and the rise of the Tokugawa. A young warrior escorts his cousin to be bride of Matsudaira Hirotada, Lord of Mikawa. Within two years her father has rebelled and Hirotada's retainers are calling for our hero's head on a spike. Now read on...