

[PDF] The Last Samurai: The Life And Battles Of Saigo Takamori

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Author: Mark Ravina

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Description:

From Within the complicated chronology of the Tokugawa shogunate's fall and succession by a modernizing monarchy, the so-called Satsuma Rebellion of 1877 is clearly the definitive last stand of Japanese feudalism. For that reason, the life of Saigo Takamori, who headed that rebellion, has acquired a romantic aura that doesn't strictly withstand Ravina's historical scrutiny; nevertheless, what survives the author's inspection contributes to an interesting portrait of a samurai in interesting times. Saigo rose from the bottom tiers of the warrior class, eventually leading the armies supporting the emperor against those of the shogun. His ascent was hardly smooth, though, entailing two exiles, a suicide pact that he survived, and three marriages. Ravina recounts the tumults that resulted in Saigo's acquiescence in revolt, capturing the protagonist's struggle with

loyalty and showing American readers the quality of enigmatic nobility that makes Saigo a well-known historical figure in Japan. *Gilbert Taylor*

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Review "In a pacy narrative that reads like a thriller, Ravina follows Takamori through his last battle..." (*Good Book Guide*, April 2005)

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