

Daily Life in Japan: At The Time of the Samurai, 1185-1603 (Routledge Library Editions: Japan)

Louis Frederic

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From the tenth century onwards the emperors of Japan gradually lost power. The local lords or clan chiefs waged ceaseless war against each other, while the court, wholly steeped in Chinese culture, seemed to take no further interest in the affairs of the nation. In 1191 the Minamoto clan mastered the disturbances and finally imposed its rule. Hard work, respect for the hierarchy, the cult of nationalism, a sense of self-sacrifice and duty – such was the new trend. The Buddhist doctrine of Zen made its appearance. It gave mystical support to the samurai, and the Japanese spirit was henceforth directed towards a political and religious asceticism which had an enormous influence on all aspects of art, thought and daily life. An acknowledged authority on the 'classical' period of Japanese history, the author reveals what the life of the Japanese people was like during these five centuries, and shows how a transformation of heart and mind produced a civilization as original as it was profound.



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