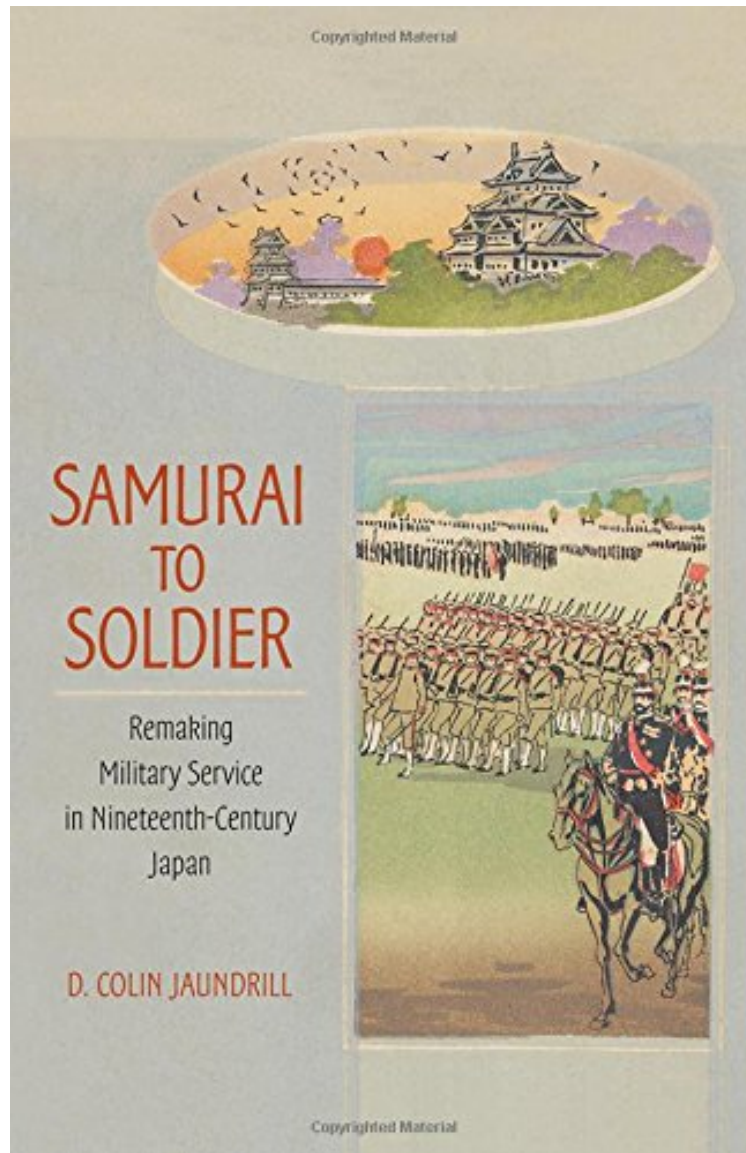


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Samurai to Soldier: Remaking Military Service in Nineteenth-Century Japan (Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University)

D. Colin Jaundrill

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D. Colin Jaundrill : Samurai to Soldier: Remaking Military Service in Nineteenth-Century Japan (Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Samurai to Soldier: Remaking Military Service in Nineteenth-Century

Japan (Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Creating a modern army required the end of the privileged samurai class. A somewhat obscure topic but fascinating. By lyndonbrecht On the face of it, this book will have appeal to readers interested in the transition from traditional to modern Japan, specifically from the shogunate to Meiji Japan. It actually offers more than that. The history of Japan from say 1850 to 1900 is not particularly well known to Americans, except for the "Opening of Japan" by an American fleet. This book describes how Japan responded to challenges from European colonialism. A few confrontations and the observation of the failures of Qing China motivated advocates of change. This era is complicated, but essentially the Japan of hundreds of domains and the shogunate itself cracked and collapsed. Authorities in a couple of progressive domains (think of Germany consisting of many small states before unification), notably Choshu, challenged the failing Tokugawa government, with power attained by appealing to tradition--defining the Shoguns as military usurpers and the revolt as restoring the Emperor--so, the origin in Meiji in 1868. The Tokugawas tried some modernizing but were not successful. The development of Meiji Japan was actually rather fast, but complicated. The old military aristocracy, the samurai class, military groups attached to the domains and so on, were part of the lingering old structure that had to be altered. Creation of a national army on the basis of conscription meant the demise of the old military privileges--these included the right to a surname, the right to carry swords in public and a few other rights, and losing this status was widely resented. A serious challenge occurred in 1877, the Satsuma rebellion. This history has recently been the inspiration for some film and books, on the romantic interpretation of the last samurai fighting a modernizing government. This book says the truth is that both sides used modern weapons, with little swordplay. The new government won, after some hard fighting, suffering some 6,000 soldiers killed. It was actually a kind of civil war. There's more detail, including how the government attempted (and finally largely succeeded) in inculcating patriotic sentiment in the recruits. It took some time for the idea of national service to take root, with some resistance to the draft early on. Recruits had to be at least 5' tall, among other things, which says worlds about traditional Japan's peasants; for many of the soldiers, the food was better than they had ever had. The book ends in 1894, when Japan fought a war, and won it, against heavily favored China (which had itself modernized its military somewhat). The book is concerned with the army, not the development of Japanese naval forces or the concurrent development of industry and creation of a modern economy--complex and difficult but ultimately successful. Japan became a potent regional power with its defeat of the Russians in 1905. One fascinating detail I have read nowhere else is the status of musketry in Japan. There is a common belief Japan gave up guns in the 1600s, but that is not quite true. The Japanese had access to information about European developments through the Dutch (they were allowed a small presence in Japan throughout the Tokugawa era). Musketry was considered a kind of martial art.

In *Samurai to Soldier*, D. Colin Jaundrill rewrites the military history of nineteenth-century Japan. In fifty years spanning the collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate and the rise of the Meiji nation-state, conscripts supplanted warriors as Japan's principal arms-bearers. The most common version of this story suggests that the Meiji institution of compulsory military service was the foundation of Japan's efforts to save itself from the imperial ambitions of the West and set the country on the path to great power status. Jaundrill argues, to the contrary, that the conscript army of the Meiji period was the culmination?and not the beginning?of a long process of experimentation with military organization and technology. Jaundrill traces the radical changes to Japanese military institutions, as well as the on-field consequences of military reforms in his accounts of the Boshin War (1868-1869) and the Satsuma Rebellions of 1877. He shows how pre-1868 developments laid the foundations for the army that would secure Japan's Asian empire.

"D. Colin Jaundrill's pathbreaking book is the definitive account of the tumultuous socio-military transformation that created the national army of Meiji Japan. His work opens fresh, fascinating perspectives on the military's role in an emerging state."?Edward Drea, author of *Japan's Imperial Army*"*Samurai to Soldier* is an important contribution to our understanding of nineteenth-century Japan in general and its military history in particular. D. Colin Jaundrill carefully traces the transformation of military organization and soldiering across the divide of the Meiji Restoration, when samurai warriors were replaced by modern soldiers. It's not a straightforward story, and its unexpected complications tell us much not only about the origins of Japan's modern military but also a key process in Japan's transition from early modernity to modernity."?David L. Howell, Harvard University, author of *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan*"In *Samurai to Soldier*, D. Colin Jaundrill presents a thoughtful, well-balanced analysis of the transformation of Japan's premodern warriors into the arms and legs of a modern, Western military system during the decades surrounding the Meiji Restoration. This is a shift of great significance, and Jaundrill guides readers through a complicated process with clarity and authority. On one hand, this is a new yet vital story of the Restoration, and, as such, Jaundrill's book will be greatly appreciated by college-level instructors who need to present to their students a clear narrative thread that must detail and explain an extremely convoluted event. On the other hand, this is an important analytical explanation of the birth of the modern-day Japanese serviceman, which means that

Samurai to Soldier will appeal to not only historians of Japan but also historians of modern-day military systems that exist all around the world."?Lee K. Pennington, United States Naval Academy, author of *Casualties of History: Wounded Japanese Servicemen and the Second World War*About the AuthorD. Colin Jaundrill is an Associate Professor of History at Providence College.