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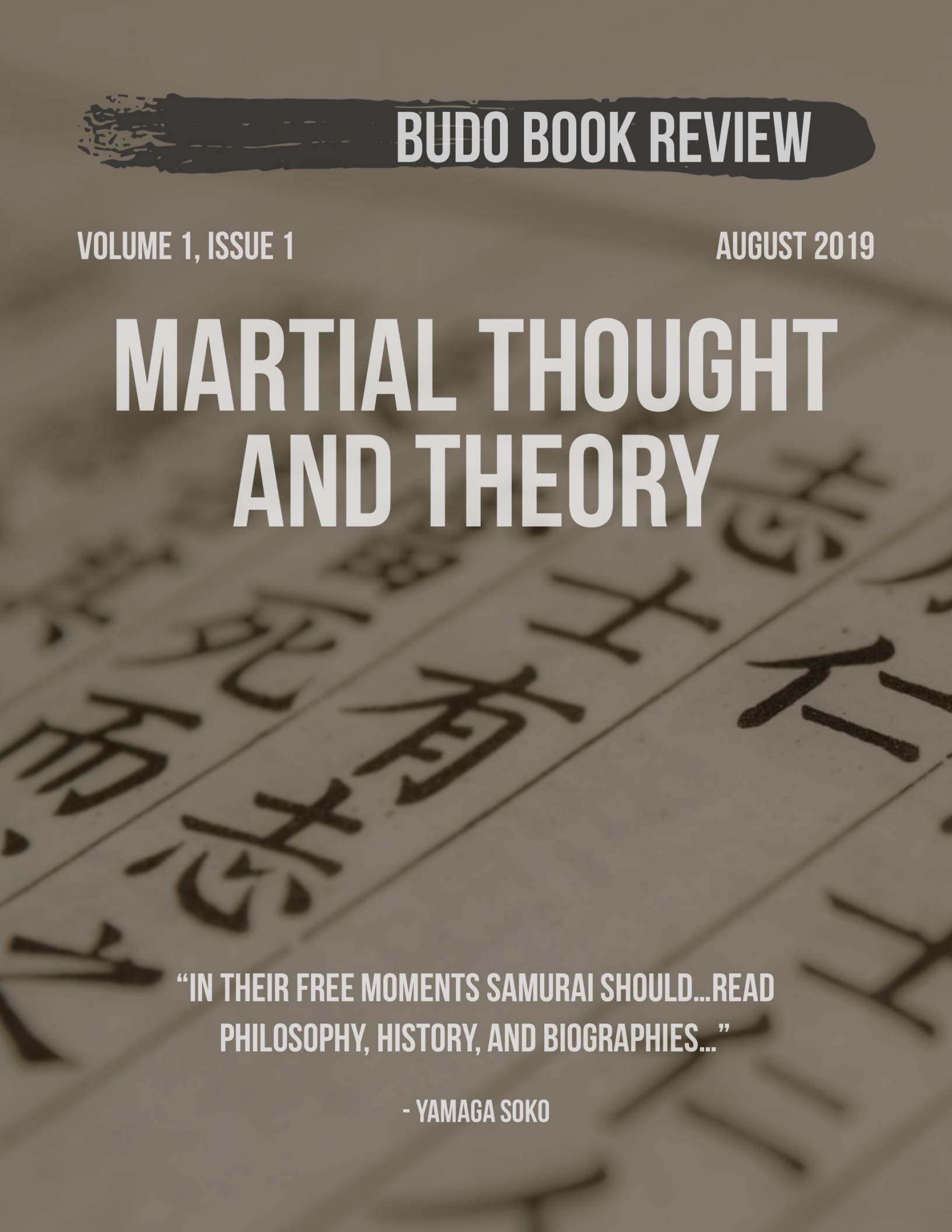
MARTIAL THOUGHT AND THEORY



"IN THEIR FREE MOMENTS SAMURAI SHOULD...READ PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY, AND BIOGRAPHIES..."

- YAMAGA SOKO

MARTIAL THOUGHT AND THEORY

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Edward N. Smith

Budo Book Review

文武両道 [ぶんぶりょうどう *bun bu ryo do*] lit. culture [and] martial are both ways; 1. well read in both literary and military (martial) arts; 2. well skilled in wielding both the sword and the pen.

In the spirit of 文武両道, the mission of Budo Book Review is to provide quality reviews of books and informative articles to the martial arts community.

All errors within are my own.

Budo Book Review 2019
Front and back covers designed by Edward N. Smith

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AUTHOR PROFILE

Edward N. Smith earned his MA with Honors in history from the University of Central Oklahoma in 2013. His research focuses on East Asian intellectual history and military thought and theory, with work appearing in *The American Review of China Studies* and *The Journal of Chinese Military History*. He has taught as an adjunct professor of history at the University of Central Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University, Oklahoma City since 2013. Courses he has delivered include World History II, Western Civilization I and II, US History Pre-1877 and Post-1877, and a specially designed course Military and the Arts.

He holds a 6th dan in Muso Jikiden Eishin Ryu Iaido (Seitokai) and is the kancho of Oklahoma City Iaido. He began studying martial arts in grade school and continued throughout college. In 2007 he began studying iaido under Susan Burke sensei (7th dan, renshi). After Burke-sensei retired from iaido, he began studying under her teacher, John Ray sensei (8th dan, hanshi) of the Denton Dojo.

ESSAYS

WEN AND *BU*

Chinese Civil Philosophy in Japanese Martial Thought and Philosophy

Edward N. Smith

The implementation[1] of Confucian values into Japanese martial thoughts and philosophies during the Tokugawa *Bakufu* maintained domestic peace and stability in a country where a ruling military elite had little outlet for their special purpose, *id est*, the development, maintenance, and exercise of martial skills. This implementation was not entirely a decision of the Tokugawa to preserve their hold on the office of *shōgun*, established following nearly two-hundred years of civil war, but also members of the *bushi*[2] class themselves to provide moral guidance for their peers. As the peace and stability of the *bakufu* spread, so too did an increased emphasis on literacy and, as such, *bushi* took up brush and ink in addition to bow and sword and developed interests in philosophy as a reaction to both their increased time for leisure and social concerns. As a result, *bushi* literati composed of lectures or dialogues on philosophical matters and manuals of martial skills.[3] Granted, the *bushi* of this time did not know that the Tokugawa *Bakufu* would continue for approximately two-hundred and fifty years, and thus they were not in a position to relax their training in martial skills; what was markedly different about this period was the addition of Confucian values into the exercises. The increase in literacy, combined with a traditional emphasis on the development of martial skills, meant that the *bushi* committed to paper their understandings and interpretations of their world as well as their particular methods of martial skills. This was an important development in the evolution of the Japanese martial philosophy of *Bushidō*, as it was not until the time of the Tokugawa *Bakufu* that a significant body of literature regarding martial practice and philosophies appeared. With the stability of the Tokugawa *Bakufu* came the need for increased skills in civil administration, provided by Confucianism, as well as a continued emphasis on martial skills. As a result, there was an interesting balance of civil (Chinese "*Wen,*" Japanese "*Bun*") and martial (C. "*Wu,*" J. "*Bu*") philosophies in the Japanese model where, it was not so much that one was significantly superior to the other, but that the two were balancing forces, both necessary parts of human relationships.

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[1] It is important here to note the word choice of "implementation" and not "inclusion." The first carries with it a connotation that these philosophies were already present in the larger thought systems of Japan and were, at this point, exercised and emphasized more. The later, however, carries with it a connotation that these beliefs were previously not part of the larger body of Japanese philosophies—an incorrect conclusion. All errors are the responsibility of the author.

[2] This paper places Japanese and Chinese names in their culturally original order, that is, surname followed by given name. This paper also uses, in the author's own writing, the term *bushi* to describe the ruling military elite of Japan. The term *samurai* appears only when translators or sources chose this descriptor instead.

[3] This paper uses the term "martial skills" to describe the various sets of skills, armed or unarmed, for individual or group implementation as a means of attack and defense. This descriptor arose out the complicated nature of the subtle nuances of existing descriptors such as "martial arts," "*budo*" ("martial way"), and "*bugei*" ("martial arts"), each with a slightly different meaning. For more detailed explanation, see Cameron G. Hurst III, *Armed Martial Arts of Japan: Swordsmanship and Archery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 1-26.

A quick search for "*Bushidō*" in either a physical or an electronic book repository returns a plethora of titles and sources for a modern investigation of *Bushidō*. While this at first seems promising due to the many leaves of ink-stained paper, this is in fact an unfortunate pitfall; many of these titles originate from a combination of popular interest, recycled sources, and cultural stereotypes. Because of a recent surge of interest in Chinese history and culture, there are several important works on Confucianism available in English. Unfortunately, there are few academic-quality secondary sources available in English on the subjects of Japanese military thought and philosophy, and even fewer on *Bushidō* and the interaction of Chinese philosophies and Japanese culture therein. These include the works of authors Ikegami Eiko, Karl Friday, Cameron G. Hurst III, Stephen Turnbull, and the scholars of the Cambridge History of Japan John Whitney Hall and Masahide Bato.

These works, when examined together as a historiographical body, contained two key arguments regarding the interaction between Confucianism and *Bushidō*. The first argument, put forth by Hurst, was that Confucianism was "a civil religion" of the Tokugawa *Bakufu*.[4] Hurts' conclusion places a significant role upon Confucianism in the Tokugawa *Bakufu*, indirectly providing it the same position in Japan as it enjoyed in China. This argument of the Tokugawa-Confucian civil religion is one of the major schools of study on the subject. It argues, in short, that the Tokugawa purposefully put in place elements of Confucian philosophy within the *bushi* class to maintain structural stability of the new government and peace throughout the country. What this argument fails to consider, however, is that the Tokugawa *Bakufu* did not institute a civil examination system like the *Jin Shi* of China.[5] Furthermore, this argument downplays the long tradition of Confucian philosophy in Japan.

The second argument concludes that Confucianism was a minimal influence upon the thought and philosophies of the *bushi*. This Confucian-minimalist theory has two subdivisions. The first approaches the issue from an analytical standpoint that states Confucianism had less influence on *Bushidō* than other philosophies, especially Buddhism (C. "*Ch'an,*" J. "*Zen*"). Turnbull addresses his work from this perspective, at least implicitly, as he provided only minimal inclusion of Confucianism in his analyses of *Bushidō*. The second approaches the examination from a historiographical standpoint. This argument accuses historians of placing too much emphasis on Confucianism. According to Ikegami, the influence of Confucianism on *bushi* thought and philosophy is "overemphasized to the point of misleading Western readers."[6] This assessment, however, unfairly downplays the significance of Chinese philosophies in Japanese culture overall. This historiographical revision seems to be another growing trend in the examination of Confucianism in *Bushidō*. According to John Whitney Hall, "Much of this recent [post World War II] scholarship [on Tokugawa thought] has sought to play down the importance of Confucianism as the official ideology of the Edo samurai establishment."[7] Whether this

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[4] Ibid., 69.

[5] Masahide Bato, "Thought and Religion: 1550-1700," *Cambridge History of Japan: Volume 4, Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 402.

[6] Ikegami Eiko, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 300.

[7] John Whitney Hall, "Introduction," *Cambridge History of Japan: Volume 4, Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 29.

scholarship is an attempt at emphasizing the uniqueness of Japanese intellectual history or a de-emphasis of the importance of Chinese intellectual history in Asia is a matter worth examining.

Laws, Philosophies, and Skills: The Sources for Examination[8]

The texts used to study the intellectual developments that influenced *Bushidō* were as diverse as the ideas themselves. The primary sources used in this work to evaluate the relationship between Confucianism and *Bushidō* come from three classes of literature: legal texts and laws, philosophical texts, and military texts. Each of these genres had a specific role unto itself, from explicitly spelling out the particular behaviors expected from and prohibited of the *bushi*, to examining questions of propriety, to preserving techniques and philosophies associated with particular schools of martial skills (J. "*ryū-ha*)." Though diverse in their overt purposes, a particularly strong focus on and attempted influence of the *bushi* readers' outward behavior linked these works together. Since *Bushidō* was a code of behavior, more than anything else, was is only appropriate then to examine these genres and their guidelines in order to glean therefrom why and how Confucianism became an important element of Japanese military thought and philosophy.

The laws of the Tokugawa *Bakufu* displayed an interesting intermingling of Confucianism and other philosophies. In the laws, for examples the Oath of Fealty (1611) and *Buke Shohatto* (1615), Confucian civil philosophy served to structure Japanese society into specific tiers of classes, each with a clearly delineated function, to preserve domestic peace and stability. This structuring, begun under the previous military rules of Japan, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, attempted to ensure that the Tokugawa *Bakufu* lasted longer than its predecessors, who were either displaced by military might, assassination, betrayal, or any number of interesting combinations of the these means. The Tokugawa's purposeful stratification of society was most evident from the emphasis these laws placed on understanding and conforming to defined relationships in society and the responsibilities that came with said roles. These relationships, as spelled out in Confucianism, included the state and the people, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, and friend and friend. Not only did these laws clarify the role of the *bushi* within a stable, civil-oriented society, but they also explain what the *bakufu* expected of the *bushi.* These expected duties ranged from training in letters and arms to prohibiting certain garments.[9] While the former occupied the time of the bushi, thereby preventing idle hands and minds that could lead to rebellion, the later served to reinforce outward distinctions between levels of society. These descriptions were, with the exception of the necessity to study martial skills, remarkably

[8] This examination makes frequent references to the *gunkimono* ("war tales"). While these works are useful in the study of the principals and evolution of *Bushidō*, they are, overall, outside the scope of this work's period of the Tokugawa *Bakufu*. Readers interested in the *gunkimono* should consult: Helen Craig McCullough, "A Tale of Mutsu," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25 (1964/5), 178-211; William H. McCullough, "Shokyuki: An Account of the Shokyu War of 1221," *Monumenta Nipponica* 19:4 (1964); *The Tale of the Heike*, trans. Helen Craig McCullough (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

[9] David J. Lu, ed., "Laws of Military Households (Buke Shohatto), 1615," *Japan: A Documentary History* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 206-7.

similar to the Confucian idea of the Rectification of Names (C. "*Zhèngmíng*") that advocated in order to preserve social harmony it was necessary to perceive, understand, and act according to appropriate social responsibilities and obligations based on social relationships. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that the law texts sought to preserve peace more of the sake of the Tokugawa *Bakufu* and the continued rule of the Tokugawa than for social tranquility overall.

In a fashion similar to the law texts, the philosophical texts sought to preserve peace and stability between the *bushi* themselves and the other classes of society, though not so much for the continuity of a ruling dynasty as for the preservation of the peace of the land. The majority of these works demonstrated the strongest overt connections with Confucianism because they stemmed directly from Chinese Confucian texts, especially the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the commentaries produced by Zhu Xi (1130-1200). These collections of Chinese works, being largely Neo-Confucian to be precise, were understandably better received in Japan than in China because of the established balance (or perhaps described more precisely as a careful selection of certain elements and abandonment of others) between confronting philosophies of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Though Neo-Confucianism was initially a response on the part of Confucians to preserve its influence in Chinese politics in the face of competing influences from Daoism and Buddhism, these circumstances were not entirely unlike the Japanese need to integrate a variety of philosophies into a larger cultural-philosophical framework.

In addition to the Chinese philosophical texts, there was also a body of Japanese philosophical texts that attempted to investigate, though not so much codify, *Bushidō*. These included the "first systematic exposition" of *Bushidō*[10] by Yamaga Soko (1622-1685) that encompassed *The Way of the Samurai*, *Essential Teachings of the Sages*, and *Elementary Learning for Samurai* and Yamamoto Tsunetomo's (1659-1719) *Hagakure*. These texts focused less on abstract commentaries often associated with philosophy and more on concrete and observable qualities sought from the behavior of the *bushi*. For example, Yamaga sought to explicate the importance of proper behavior in the *bushi* class because of their elevated status in society (discussed in detail later). Similarly, Yamamoto proscribed his ideal forms of behavior for the warrior class in response to the decline, in his assessment, of *bushi* decorum. It is an important note for readers to bear mind that the *Hagakure*, though arguably the most often cited primary source on *Bushidō* was neither the most influential nor the most widespread during the Tokugawa *Bakufu*. It had limited intellectual influence outside of the domain in which it was published, Nabeshima, on the far remote southwest corner of Kyūshū—though it was so influential in this domain that later generations came to know it was the way of the "Nabeshima samurai."[11]

It is interesting to note the overlap in time of these two authors (though Yamamoto's inspirational dialogues did not occur until the early eighteenth century, near the end or after the death of Yamaga) and their perspective reactions to the social position of the *bushi*. Both Yamaga and Yamamoto composed their works as efforts to explain the place of the *bushi* in

[10] John A. Tucker, "Yamaga Soko and the Civilizing of the Samurai," *Sources of Japanese Tradition, 1600 to 2000*, Vol. 2 (NewYork: Columbia University Press, 2006), 160.

[11] Honda Toshiaki, "I Want to Become the *Hagakure*," *A Classmate's War Experience*, last modified March 11, 2003, accessed May 2, 2011, http://www.warbirds.jp/senri/19english/dooki/01/index.html.

Japanese society. This explanation was especially relevant following the establishment of the Tokugawa Bakufu when, for the first time in nearly two centuries, the people of Japan enjoyed some semblance of domestic stability. With the peace came opportunities for the *bushi* to spend their time with less martial (or less cultured) pursuits. This is not to suggest that the *bushi* recognized that they lived in a uniquely peaceful time—considering the preceding unrest and time required to not only establish but also to solidify Tokugawa's hold, the *bushi* were not unlikely to be lulled into a sense of stability easily. Though these are merely two authors, considering the scarcity of philosophers that composed such works, there is certainly something to be said regarding the importance of their efforts and the social circumstances of the *bushi* that inspired them. Considering the emphasis that both authors place on, and the strong wordage used to describe, the importance of understanding the proper place of the *bushi* in society, as well as the relatively close span of time between the authorship of their works, there must have been some motivating factor that spurred their inquiries and responses. Yamaga, for example, argued that the *bushi* must be exemplars of behavior to the other classes because of their elevated status.[12] Yamamoto made similar urgings, but added to it descriptions of what *bushi* should not do in his descriptions of the deplorable behavior that the *bushi* of his day exhibited.

The final category of texts used to investigate Confucianism in *Bushidō* was military texts. These works, being the core works composed by and directed towards the military ruling elite, sought to influence them towards building their own morals through martial practice and in conjunction their quality of service as retainers within the Tokugawa *Bakufu*. These texts focused on key elements related to development of government/political skills such as understanding the importance of the place of the *bushi* in the social hierarchy, as well as using their position for the "good of many" and exercises of humanness.[13] An especially interesting subgenre of these texts were the manuals of swordsmanship because, for the first time in the history of the *bushi*, swords were no longer merely the primary markers of status and weapons of defense carried on a daily basis as was the case in previous eras. Manuals of swordsmanship included Miyamoto Musashi's *Go Rin No Sho* ("*Book of Five Rings*," c. 1645) and Yagyu Munenori's *Book of Family Traditions* (c. 1646). According to Hurst, the establishment of swordsmanship schools in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries represented a shift from martial skills purely for the sake of combat to one of self-improvement.[14] This change of focus not only coincided with the implementation of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan, but also possessed an important change in philosophical focus to developing military skills for the sake of making the practitioner a better person with superior moral character instead of a better combatant with superior techniques. Thus, because of the increase in the development and perfection of swordsmanship skills, coupled with the increasing emphases on literacy and a need to investigate and explore the role of the *bushi* in a new era, manuals of swordsmanship proved an especially useful source when investigating the myriad of thoughts and philosophies contained in *Bushidō*.[15] A few important later period texts also have hints regarding the influence of Confucianism in Japanese martial culture. These works more often than not fit into

[12] Stephen Turnbull, *The Samurai Sourcebook* (London: Cassel, 2004), 302.
[13] Yagyu Munenori, *The Book of Family Traditions on the Art of War*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Boston: Shambhala, 2005), 96.

[14] Hurst, 45.
[15] Ibid., 69.

both the philosophical texts and instruction manuals categories, but despite their recent publication, are relevant because these record the oral traditions of particular *ryū-ha*.

There is, to some extent, difficulty in relying on the works and oral traditions of *ryū-ha*. Academically speaking, these works are little different than relying on oral traditions such as legends. This is especially apparent when considering the feats of martial prowess associated with the more famous swordsmen such Yagyu Muneyoshi, who split a boulder with a blow from his sword during a duel with a *tengū* (J. "goblin"). Furthermore, there are details within these works that are obscure and difficult to understand without being inducted into the *okuden* (J. "inner chamber") of knowledge of the *ryū-ha*. Therefore, when dealing with the military texts, there are some details that researchers may simply not understand—indeed, may be unable to locate—due to unfamiliarity with the particular culture of the *ryū-ha*. Nevertheless, there are important details that reflected the socio-political and philosophical trends of the martial class within these texts that were, at least to some extent, visible upon the surface.

Conflicts of Cultures and Philosophies

Despite the variety of sources available to examine this issue, there were a number of theoretical conflicts between Confucianism and *Bushidō*. Confucianism and *Bushidō* were systems of thought with distinct origins that had important effects on the development and integration of the former into later. Without going into detail beyond this examination, it suffices to provide a brief background of the circumstances that encouraged the original composition of the core texts of Confucianism.[16] Confucianism originated in China during the sixth century BCE as a reaction to the degradation of the ruling Zhou dynasty's administration of the state and development of social harmony and culture (C. "*Wen*," J. "*Bun*"). Those whom Kongzi blamed most for this decline were the literati who in his opinion should have expended their efforts to rescue the Zhou from collapse through ardent preservation and study of classical rites and texts rather than delve into self-aggrandizement and debauchery.[17] During the twelfth century, the Song dynasty experienced a revival of Confucian philosophies. The Song not only further developed and implemented the exam system, but also benefited from the works of the influential philosopher, Zhu Xi. Where Kongzi reacted to social and political squalor, Zhu composed his works as an effort to revitalize Confucian philosophy itself as a reaction to what he observed as two-thousand years of misinterpretation and corruption brought on by the influences of Daoism and Buddhism. Most important for the examination of this paper was Zhu's selection of the "Four Books" of Confucianism that included *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, *The Analects*, and *Mencius*.

[16] For English language translations of Confucian and other Chinese classical Chinese philosophy, readers should consult Philip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden, ed., *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2005); WM. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, ed., *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); and Michael Nylan, *The Five "Confucian" Classics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).
[17] Ivanhoe, 2.

Bushidō was, however, at the opposite end of the spectrum of human behavior and philosophies. Where the former was a philosophy of humanness and civil virtues, the later was a general guide for the behavior of the military elite and sought to develop the martial class (C. "*Wu*," J. "*Bu*"). Furthermore, *Bushidō* lacked a significant body of literature and a long-standing tradition of literary development and study that accompanied Confucianism (indeed, approximately twelve hundred years separate the composition of the Confucian *Analects* and the importation of writing into Japan). The earliest written sources of *Bushidō* appeared in legendary war narratives such as the *Heike Monogatari*, *A Tale of Mutsu*, and others, collectively known as *gunkimono*. Through the grand narratives of battles contained therein, the *bushi* received *examples* of ideal behavior, not explicit guidelines. It was not until the seventeenth century that the *bushi* began to compose philosophical guiding principles—though not codifications—of *Bushidō*. In these works, just as in the *gunkimono*, authors emphasized not excessive, intellectual study of abstract philosophical principals, but rather action and outward displays of philosophical principals.

The association of outward displays of behavior with *Bushidō* was particularly strong, such that it created a certain prejudice against intellectualism. Tokugawa Ieyasu, the final unifier of Japan and progenitor of the Tokugawa *Bakufu*, made no reservations when he described the measure of *Bushidō* as action, best demonstrated in the relationship between him and his retainer, Torii Mototada. According to Tokugawa, "*Bushidō* […] owes nothing to any sterile formulation dreamt up by a scholar."[18] This testament deemphasized lofty, intellectual discourses in favor of observable action and behavior—the cornerstones of *Bushidō*. This description was important not only because it emphasized the prominence of action over scholarship but also because it was such a statement uttered by the *shōgun.* A similar sentiment pervaded other levels of the *bushi* class. During the mid-seventeenth century, Makae Toju noted that *bushi* that studied Confucian philosophy were "too soft and good-for-nothing when it comes to military service."[19] This conclusion could have developed from any number of sources. One source was the association of Confucianism with foreign influences.[20] A sentiment of xenophobia and ethnocentrism characterized the era of the Tokugawa *Bakufu*. Some of the most significant examples of these predispositions were its anti-foreign policies, such as the Closed Country Edict of 1635, though these were directed more at limiting the effects of trade and exchanges of goods, culture, and religions with the *Nanban* (J. "European") than Chinese. What is more, the gradual decline and eventual overthrow of the native Chinese Ming dynasty by the Manchurian horsemen who established the Qing dynasty occurred at concurrently or shortly before the period of greatest intellectual fervor and investigation of *Bushidō*. Thus, with the fall of the Ming and their military defeat at the hands and hooves of the Manchurians, in the eyes of the *bushi*, not only was Confucianism foreign, but also a philosophy that failed to provide the Chinese with the martial skills necessary to defend their borders. To reinforce this conclusion further, the *bushi* who studied Confucian philosophy focused less on individual martial prowess and more on statecraft and character building.[21] Therefore, not only was the study of Confucianism abroad seen as unable to provide martial prowess, but also was seen as militarily weak—and so too those who studied it—in Japan.

[18] Turnbull, 299.
[19] Ikegami, 301.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Hurst, 70.

Alternatively, this prejudice against intellectualism could have arisen from a bias against being too educated. Yamamoto possessed little regards for the literati. According to the *Hagakure*, "In general, a person who is versatile in many things is considered to be vulgar and to have only a broad knowledge of matters of importance."[22] If there was something worse than being too knowledgeable of too many things, it was to know too much about cultural arts. Yamamoto noted, "A person who is said to be proficient in the arts is like a fool…Because of his foolishness in concerning himself with just one thing…"[23] A careful reading of these statements revealed they were less contradictory than initially appearing. Knowing too little, according to the first, was a dangerous ignorance to matters that one's lord may need counsel regarding. The acquisition of deep knowledge was useful to *bushi* in order to be valuable retainers, unless this knowledge was regarding fine arts. It was not simply that the arts were something not worthy of appreciation, but also that to know too much about them was improper behavior for the *bushi* because time spent to gain such knowledge could have been spent in the perfection of more useful skills for a loyal retainer to employ in the service of his master. Yamamoto specifically addressed this issue (and seemingly challenged Yagyu's exaltations of the practice of arts[24]) when he noted that the *bushi* of Nabeshima had no need for the arts, whereas those of other domains did. He continued, "For samurai of the Nabeshima clan the arts bring ruin to the body. In all cases, the person who practices an art is an artist, not a samurai, and one should have the intention of being called a samurai."[25] There may be an important geographical influence behind Yamamoto's differing opinion of the role of arts in the curriculum of the *bushi* in that he hailed from the southern portions of Japan—a region notorious for being rural, hostile, uncultured, and generally a conservative counter culture to that in Edo.

Nevertheless, even some of the most outspoken proponents of Confucianism warned against bookishness. Yamaga, for example, wrote "Education will conflict with daily practical matters if we obsessively read books, neglecting to practice the moral Confucian was as well."[26] Though not as outspoken on the subject as Yamamoto, Yamaga did still warn the *bushi* that there was an appropriate time to study and another time to attend to their duties.[27] Thus, education was useful, but only when it did not distract from the regular duties assigned to the warrior elite; there was a balance to strike between civilian and military demands.

That said there was a certain draw towards the study of Confucianism for at least a few *bushi*. One noteworthy example in addition to Yamaga Soko was Nakae Tojo who, at the age of twenty-seven, forsook his life as a *bushi* to dedicate himself to the study of Confucianism.[28] He,

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[22] Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure*, Trans. William S. Wilson (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1992), 22.
[23] Ibid, 37.
[24] Yagyu described the practice of the arts "for the purpose of clearing away what is on your mind," Yagyu, 101.
[25] Yamamoto, 27.

[26] Yamaga Soko, "Essential Teachings of the Sages." in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, 1600 to 2000*, Vol. 2, trans. John A. Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006),169.
[27] Yamaga Soko, "Elementary Learning for Samurai," in *Sources of Japanese Tradition, 1600 to 2000*, Vol. 2, trans. John A. Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006),164.
[28] Masahide, 417.

and other *bushi*-turned-scholars, may have turned towards studying Chinese civil philosophy because it was more appealing to them than a life of crossed swords. Even Miyamoto makes concessions that there were some men better suited to certain lifestyles. For example, in *Go Rin No Sho*, he noted, "people practice the ways to which they are inclined, developing individual preferences."[29] Therefore, a *bushi* without preference towards martial prowess but rather one for scholarship exhibited outward displays of military weakness simply because these skill sets were not important to his predilections. Conversely, a *bushi* who had no interest in studying Chinese texts, but rather preferred to develop his military skills, exhibited a lack of knowledge in Confucian scholarship but exceled in arenas of martial prowess. In either case, however, the *bushi* in question was only of limited use to his lord because of his exceptional expertise in one field only: the literati was useless in preserving the peace of his lord's domain through arms; the warrior was useless in administering the day-to-day bureaucratic functions of the domain under the Tokugawa *Bakufu*.

Education under the Tokugawa Bakufu

Because of the need to function in the bureaucracy of the Tokugawa *Bakufu*, as well as an increase in the amount of time available for study, a new emphasis on education similar that during the time of Zhu Xi in China[30] appeared in Japan. For Tokugawa *bushi*, learning and self-cultivation were inseparable, so too were learning and *Bushido*.[31] It was with this new emphasis on broadening the knowledge base of *bushi* from military skills to include civil skills that Confucianism first made noticeable, and traceable, influences upon Japanese military elite. According to Hurst, the *bushi* adopted Confucianism "as a civil religion" concurrent with the growth of *bushi* literacy.[32] Yamaga described the most appropriate times to study as "In their free moments samurai should…read philosophy, history, and biographies…so that they will understand the nature of righteous and unrighteous conduct."[33] In this way, the reading of these works was much like the reading of the *gunkimono* in that they provided *bushi* with examples of proper behavior. From these examples, *bushi* adjusted their own habits and behaviors in order to promote self-cultivation and better fulfill their roles in the social hierarchy. Though a balance between civil and martial study was necessary, studying either of these subjects was something the *bushi* needed take neither lightly nor individually when able. According to Yamaga, "Unless taught, people do not understand the Confucian Way…If not ethically transformed through instruction, people fall prey to heterodoxies, believe perverse theories, and worship phantoms…"[34] Thus, though being overly educated was in the eyes of some *bushi* a stigma,

[29] Miyamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*, trans. Thomas Cleary (Boston: Shambhala, 2005), 5.
[30] de Bary, 668.
[31] Yamakoshi, 59.
[32] Hurst, 69.
[33] Yamaga, "Elementary," 164.
[34] Yamaga, "Essential," 169.

these educators were nevertheless useful to their peers with their expertise. Without proper guidance, Confucianism was an easily misunderstood Chinese philosophy.

More than a mere growth in literacy, Tokugawa laws, such as the *Buke Shohatto*, gave *bushi* a legal mandate to study both intellectual and military works. According to the laws, "One must wholly devote oneself to the civil and the military arts…to have the civil on the left and the military on the right is the ancient practice." There was in these instructions a subtle cultural instruction that placed a special emphasis on civil learning. In traditional, and especially within the martial elements, of Japanese culture, the left hand receives special precedence over the right. For example, the left side (according to the perspective of the wearer) of a kimono covered the right side in proper rituals for dressing. In addition, the left hand provided the power behind cutting with a *nihonto* (J. "Japanese sword") because to use the right hand was to use the "hand of greed." Finally, when meditating in Japanese *Zazen*, the left hand laid on top of the right hand. Thus, the careful emphasis of the civil on the left and the martial on the right bridges several strata of Japanese society and culture: social, martial, and religious.

The emphasis of studying both civil and military subjects carried over into the military texts. Miyamoto reminded readers of the *Go Rin No Sho* and students of his *ryū-ha*, *Ni Ten Ichi-ryū*, "…the way of the warriors means familiarity with both cultural and martial arts."[35] Considering that Miyamoto also stated explicitly in the introduction of his work that did not borrow "the old saying of Buddhism or Confucianism,"[36] and the similar wording found in his statement, this may be a repetition of the *Buke Shohatto* rather than a direct link to Confucian influences. If not a relation to the Tokugawa Laws, it may then be a reflection of just how deeply Confucianism and other philosophies penetrated Japanese culture. In addition to this warning, there were other links between *Go Rin No Sho* and Confucianism, though if readers take Miyamoto's words at face value, then these links must come from a deeper, cultural source than his own philosophical inclinations.

Instruction through Direct Transmission

To transmit the principles of Confucianism and inculcate them into the philosophies and behavior of the *bushi*, tutors implemented the concept of direct transmission. This method had several important consequences for the development of *Bushidō* and the spread of Confucian philosophies under the Tokugawa *Bakufu*. First, direct transmission of Confucianism from tutor to student meant that during instruction the tutor could better guide students to understand the unique constraining context of military dominated Tokugawa Japan on the civil philosophy. Reading the Confucian texts on their own, however, lacked such deeper understandings, as these works were originally composed for Chinese statesmen and civilian scholars.

Second, the direct transmission of information from tutor reinforced the social structure of superior to inferior and the interdependent function of the one to the other. Many of the *bushi* who came to the profession of tutors originated with the lower levels of the warrior class, and found themselves in the employ of members of the higher strata. It was essential that their

[35] Miyamoto, 5.
[36] Ibid., 4.

lessons emphasized on the one hand how deference to social superiors was an important trait to show both their own humility and to teach their students to understand their place under the *bakufu*. On the other hand, it was essential that they demonstrate that the lower echelons of society also held important positions that were useful to the ruling *bushi*.

Third, though the act of copying texts lent itself to supporting the stereotype of Confucian study as bookish, the importance of this exercise, especially related to *Bushidō*, was in the action itself of copying the classics and commentaries. Confucianism was important for *bushi* then because of the methods used to attain the idea of "sagehood." Sagehood was an understanding of all things earned through ardent study.[37] There were, according to this doctrine, two types of actions: those that lead one down the path to sagehood and those that did not. Within the accepted beliefs, there were multiple paths to sagehood, but all true paths lead to sagehood.[38] During the Tokugawa *Bakufu*, one of the most common forms of martial study that brought about this understanding was the examination of swordsmanship. As evident in the work of Miyamoto, the concept of sagehood, or at least a masterful understanding of a myriad of things through in-depth study of one path, appeared in his text. According to Miyamoto, "the true science of martial arts means practicing them in such a way that they will be useful at any time, and to teach them in such a way that they will be useful in all things."[39] Yagyu noted something similar, though Daoism also influenced his work significantly. In his work, Yagyu reminded readers that the purpose of martial skills, specifically swordsmanship, was "for the purpose of using all implements freely."[40] Though this specifically referred to developing martial skills to such a degree as to be able to defend oneself without weapons, it echoes the sentiment of sagehood in being able to perform multiple tasks with the expertise developed in one study.

Ritual

Direct transmission and ritual (C. "*li*") had an interesting connection in that the later was a tool of instruction for the former. Ritual, the practice of appropriate action and behavior at the appropriate time and with the appropriate measure, was already active in Japanese culture by the seventeenth century's period of Confucian influence. Admittedly, this may well also be descendant from Confucianism and Chinese courtly and social customs received by the Japanese earlier in their history. Furthermore, ritual played an important role in the instruction of students in reading, writing, and philosophy, as students were often required to copy important paradigms according to specific guidelines. According to Yamaga, ritual was an essential part of the successful functioning of everyday life for all levels of society: "rites are patterns of behavior that people should follow in their daily lives."[41] Such activities trained multiple levels of the consciousness into conforming to social principals.

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[37] Karl F. Friday with Humitake Seki, *Legacies of the Sword* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 17.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Miyamoto, 6.
[40] Yagyu, 149.
[41] Yamaga, "Essential," 172.

With the establishment of sword *ryū-ha* during the Tokugawa *Bakufu*, ritual was used to an even greater degree in the transmission and preservation of knowledge, especially in the instruction of swordsmanship. According to Yamaga, "Without rites, people would not know what to do with their hands and feet or what they should look at or listen to! Without rites, people would not know when to advance and when to retreat or when to press on and when to yield. With rites, peace prevails…in the civilian and military arenas."[42] This observation well described instruction of *kata*. The practice of *kata* (J. "patterns" or "forms") in *ryū-ha* received significant influence from Confucian philosophies of ritual propriety.[43] As the description implied, *kata* were patterns of offensive and defensive techniques designed by an instructor, for individual or paired practice. In the words of Friday, these were "structured experiences."[44] These patterns differed from *jiyu keiko* (J. "free sparring") because each movement, ranging from the largest activating of major muscle groups in the chest, back, and core, to the tiniest flexing for the little toes and fingers, was carefully prescribed by the instructors.

On the surface, the specific performance of these patterns was to instruct students in a specific *waza* (J. "technique"). It was easiest for a student to learn a technique from mimicking his seniors and instructor in the *kata*. Even if he failed to gain the tiniest movements initially, the larger, slower movements gave way to these details with time and practice. Overtime, students developed an appreciation for the subtleties of swordsmanship such as perceiving an opponent's intent in their posture and facial expressions, and appreciating when to advance or retreat based on the pressure given off from an opponent. Furthermore, the structure of the *kata* as prescribed—and therefore, predictable—sets of movements ensured safer practices, as gaining skill in swordsmanship is difficult when the dangers of severe injury or even death remained. Underneath these outward purposes of ritual within *kata*, however, was a deeper layer of instruction that only revealed with time and intense practice. Often, instructors hid subtle techniques, details, or variations hid within the *kata*. Instructors did not teacher these details, though useful, to new students either because they were too inexperienced to use this information responsibly or could injure themselves or others and thereby make practice unsafe. Alternatively, this information was part of the *okuden* set of instruction and instructors wanted to preserve it for only the most dedicated students.

Benevolence and Humaneness

Direct transmission and ritual combined instructed and reinforced one of the most important elements of Confucianism both in its original context and within the Tokugawa Bakufu: benevolence or humaneness (C. "*ren*"). According Tokugawa Ieyasu, "The things to be studied most deeply is benevolence."[45] Benevolence and humaneness are complex issues within Confucianism that combined understandings of the appropriate place of an individual in society as well as proper social behavior within that position. This emphasis on social constructs was especially important in the era of the Tokugawa *Bakufu*. As noted briefly afore, the ordering of relationships was especially important in that it established the supremacy of the Tokugawa

[42] Ibid.
[43] Friday, 105.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Turnbull, 299.

Bakufu government and clan at the top of Japanese society, supported by the various *daimyō* who presided over *bushi* retainers, and so on down the hierarchy. This structuring along Confucian lines added an ethical element to social conformity. It was proper to understand and act according to one's position in Japanese society and defer to the authority placed in the class strata above—to do otherwise, such as to foment rebellion, was unethical.

Despite the clear benefits the Tokugawa gained from the promulgation of Confucianism throughout the *bushi*, much support for Confucian thinking came from the lower ranks of *bushi*. Many of the Confucian thinking *bushi* came from the lower ranks. Where being in another strata of the *bushi* class provided opportunities that were more lucrative, due to their position these lower ranked *bushi* often sought employment as tutors of academics of instructors of swordsmanship. While Confucianism reinforced the position of the Tokugawa at the top, for these *bushi* the understanding of the importance of social roles and class distinctions encouraged the study of Confucianism as a psychological reinforcement that they were, though lowly, still an integral part of Japanese society. If nothing else, as a tutor to a son of a higher ranked *bushi* meant that, in time, they could gain influence and prestige with the heir to their employer. Upon his succession to the head of the lands, the skills of statecraft contained in Confucianism were of particular usefulness.

The increased emphasis on learning during this time, coupled with Confucian methods and philosophy, made the development of proper behavior within social contexts, or moral character, especially important. This is an important detail to bear in mind when examining the development of Japanese martial thought and philosophy. The earliest *gunkimono* emphasized that martial prowess and loyalty were the most important traits *bushi* exhibit. During the Tokugawa *Bakufu*, however, these skills required a moral code to preserve and control social and political stability. Without a moral code to govern the behavior of the *bushi*, their martial skills were just as much of an asset as they were a danger to the state and the civil population.

While benevolence preserved social order from the bottom up by reinforcing the place of the *bushi* and their role in relation to serving the *bakufu*, it also preserved civil peace by motivating the *bushi* to behave with benevolence towards all persons. This was especially important in an era when the ruling military elite no longer had persistent conflicts to occupy their time and energies. As a result, it was in the manuals of martial skills that the importance of benevolence towards a myriad of living persons was apparent. To the *bushi* of the Tokugawa *Bakufu, the* practice of martial skills was to facilitate "Expansion of Knowledge,"[46] or "self-cultivation." According to Yamakoshi, martial skills were matters of human and social relations that attempted to reveal to practitioners the value of human life of the self and others.[47] This conclusion had within it two important descriptions of the function of benevolence in *Bushidō*. First, it described the importance of understanding the social hierarchy. The *bushi* who understood and respected his place within the social hierarchy of Tokugawa Japan was less likely to cause conflict and social disturbances for trivial causes. Such disturbances manifested as any number of duels or killings not in the name of saving face for a clan or lord, but rather, arose out of inconsequential matters of social issues that ranged from failing to behave accordingly in the

[46] Ibid., 57.
[47] Ibid., 2.

presence of social superiors to mere street brawls that originated with too much sake. In addition to this, the *bushi* that understood the roles of other strata of the social hierarchy was better able to recognize that, while he and his class held the responsibility for ruling Japan, without the farmers, artisans, and (though admitted begrudgingly) merchants, he had neither country nor people to govern; he had neither the food of the farmer, nor the weapons and tools of the artisan, nor the goods sold through trade.

Benevolence also taught the *bushi* to think carefully about the value of human life (both their own and their opponent's) before drawing their swords. To paraphrase, martial skills are matters of human and social relations that attempt to reveal to practitioners the value of human life of the self and others. Even Tokugawa emphasized the importance of solving problems without the use of violence. According to Tokugawa, "The right use of a sword is that it should subdue the barbarians while lying gleaming in its scabbard."[48] The practice of martial skills emphasized benevolence in order to cultivate an appreciation for the value of life within men who learned skills expressly designed to extinguish it. These lessons of benevolence manifested in a number of ways, ranging from using *bokkuto* (J. "wooden sword") in practice to reduce the possibility of life threatening injuries to practitioners to explicit provisions against practicing *tameshigiri*, the testing of cutting techniques and swords on straw mats, corpses, and prisoners. There lies in here, a grave danger—those responsible for teaching martial arts needed to evaluate their students for a potential for maliciousness and correct this behavior. Therefore, the reason to develop martial skills was not explicitly for taking life but rather to give life to the practitioner in that he gained, with time, an understanding and appreciation for the life that surrounded him.

This is not to suggest that the development of martial skills was merely a means to attain sagehood and not still something *bushi* needed to hone and perfect. The *Buke Shohatto*, for example, required *bushi* to study both civil and military matters. The maintenance of martial sills was important not only in fulfilling the daily activities of the *bushi* as the ruling military elite, but also for use in the preservation of benevolence. According to Yagyu, the use of martial skills to protect others was one realization of benevolence. In his work, Yagyu noted, "It may happen that myriad people suffer because of the evil of one man. In such a case, myriad people are saved by killing one man. Would this not be a true example of 'the sword that kills is the sword that gives life'?"[49] This argument may well have been a rationalization for the continued development of martial skills during times of peace; it certainly is one that is not at the core Confucian considering the conflict between civil and martial found therein.

This confronted with the most often cited maxim of *Bushidō* from the *Hagakure*, "the Way of the samurai is found in death."[50] This line, however, rarely found its way to pages and commentaries with its context intact. In this instruction, Yamamoto advised young *bushi* that they should not be so entangled with the minutiae of their daily lives that they become soft and ineffectual in martial skills. Instead, he directed, they should be constantly aware of the inevitability of their own death so that when time came to cross swords, they already accepted

[48] Turnbull, 299.

[49] Yagyu, 96.

[50] Yamamoto, 17.

their fate and, as a result, fear had a minimal influence on their reactions and they were more free to combat their opponent and, perhaps, walk away from the encounter.

Loyalty and Filial Piety

From benevolence and the ordering of social structures came an emphasis on loyalty (C. "*zhong*")—a variation on the Confucian principal of filial piety (C. "*xiao*"). One of the earliest sources of *bushi* behavior, the *Tale of Mutsu*, noted, "Nothing is as important in a warrior as loyalty and filial piety."[51] Okubo Tadataka wrote in the *Mikawa Monogatari* (1622), "The master gives benevolence, the followers respond by loyal and faithful service."[52] According to Okubo's assessment, the lord that demonstrates benevolence in various forms of recognition for service, application of justice, and ruling his domain with benevolence received loyalty from his retainers. This loyalty was more than a simple pledge to follow a lord (though that was an important part). Loyalty also encompassed the ideas of carrying out one's duties to the best of their ability in the service of the lord. Yamamoto argued that even a retainer of average or lower ability was useful to his lord if he was dedicated and loyal. "But even a person who is good for nothing and exceedingly clumsy will be a reliable retainer if only he has the determination to earnestly of his master."[53] So important were these concepts to the successful completion of daily activities of the *bushi* and the preservation of peace that Yamaga instructed *bushi* to begin their day with reflection upon this. According to Yamaga's *Elementary Learning for Samurai*, "With due appreciation for the graciousness of their lord and their father, samurai should deliberate on their daily responsibilities to them…"[54] While the ordering of society was important for the Tokugawa *Bakufu* and civil stability, loyalty was arguably the most important Confucian value for the *bushi*.

This acting in the lord's best interest did not require a retainer to sit idly by while his lord made poor decisions. A truly loyal retainer, according to Yamamoto, was one who corrected his lord in the interests of saving him from danger created by his own hands. There were, however, guidelines of decorum that dictated how a retainer could correct his master; if, for example, he was not of the correct position he had to find someone of the proper position to provide the correction to the lord for him.[55]

Loyalty also harkened back to the more violent days of the *bushi*. According to Miyamoto, "Whether by victory in an individual duel or by winning a battle with several people, one thinks of serving the interests of one's employer, of serving one's own interests, or becoming well known and socially established."[56] Though the medium of being successful in these arenas was the study of martial skills, according to Miyamoto, there is a clear Confucian structure of relationships here in that the combatants' motivations originated with an intense desire to be loyal. Furthermore, this illustration made the idea of loyalty, though already established in

[51] McCullough, "Mutsu," 184.
[52] Turnbull, 300.
[53] Yamamoto, 18.
[54] Yamaga, "Elementary," 163.
[55] Yamamoto, 34.
[56] Miyamoto, 6.

Bushidō, more appealing to the *bushi's* traditional role as warriors because it made clear that their previous displays of service were still valid in the new era of peace. This specific description also tied together loyalty as dedicated service to a lord with an individual *bushi's* martial prowess. Instead of fomenting rebellion and disorder, Miyamoto's words cemented the position of the *bushi* within the context of using their skills to serve their lord and not their own interests.

Courage

This last element, courage (C. "*yong*") was essential throughout all periods of history for the *bushi*. It took on new meaning, however, during the Tokugawa *Bakufu*. Before the Tokugawa *Bakufu*, the exercise of courage was a matter of physical courage—accepting the inevitability of death, charging forward when faced with a hedgerow of spears and clouds of falling arrows, etc. Following the Tokugawa *Bakufu*, philosophical trends attached the exercise of courage with making proper decisions, such as those that benefited the whole of society over the individual, or possessing the courage to inform a feudal lord that his behavior or choice of action was not in accord with what was proper or most beneficial. Therefore, instead of physical courage, the *bushi* of the Tokugawa *Bakufu* required a moral and philosophical courage of sorts—indeed, it required great courage of this type for those few *bushi* who openly studied Confucianism to do so in the face of the criticism of their peers.

Conclusion

The interaction between civil and military philosophies found during the period of the Tokugawa *Bakufu* and within the culture of the *bushi* as examined in this work was indeed complex. The period authors who wrote on these subjects demonstrated that there was in that time a relationship between the civil and the military where neither was to be relied upon too exclusively. This was a situation created by a series of developments such as the cessation of widespread hostilities following the establishment of Tokugawa *Bakufu* and the need for the *bushi* to reestablish the purpose of a class of military elite in a time when their skills were not needed and many of their peers delved into licentious behaviors. Furthermore, there was a need to make clear that the skills of the military elite were still useful, even during a time of peace, and to show that these skills were valuable in achieving the aims of civil government. This was not pure Confucianism, however. Because the sources of Confucianism during the Tokugawa *Bakufu* came from Zen monks who studied in Kyoto, there was an intermingling of the two. In the words of Masahide, "they did not draw a sharp distinction between Confucianism and Buddhism."[57] This is important to bear in mind when examining the influence of the one philosophy on Japanese military thought and theory. While Confucianism was important and evident in all three of the genres of sources examined in this work, nearly equally important were precepts taken from Daoism and Buddhism (unfortunately, a detailed discussion of these is beyond the scope of this current investigation). Considering these conclusions, it certainly seems that Edo Period Japan could be one of the best illustrations of the Confucian ideal of a balance between *Wen* and *Wu* as both were necessary fields of expertise of the ruling military class. Nevertheless, much like any other element of Japanese culture, it takes cues from outside sources

[57] Masahide, 402.

and blends and mixes them to meet the needs of Japanese people. This also complicates this examination, as it not only broadens but also deepens the scope of research, analysis, and synthesis of exceptionally complex ideas.

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A BRIEF ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON *BUSHIDŌ*

Edward N. Smith

No matter the art, at some point, martial arts students become curious about the study of *Bushido*. This mountainous topic can seem impossible to scale because of the volumes of work online and in print. What's more, because the quality of scholarship on the topic varies greatly, it can be easy for readers to wander from quality reading. This brief list includes some of the most robust works on the study of *Bushido.*

To keep this reading list brief, it will only include works with the main drive of analyzing or contributing to the explicit study of the intellectual history of samurai.

Benesch, Oleg. *Inventing the Way of the Samurai: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Bushido in Modern Japan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

A thorough academic work, Benesch seeks to trace bushido as a tool of the post-Meiji Restoration government of Japan—an "invention of tradition." Benesch argues the invented tradition of *Bushido* was Designed to inculcate the populace with a sense of duty, nationalism, and as a response against foreign threats, or national "popular narcissism." To accomplish this mission, Benesch draws upon a plethora of primary and secondary sources in both English and Japanese, ranging from government documents to cultural studies. Rich in source material and thorough in addressing some of the most preeminent authors on the subject, Benesch's work will undoubtedly move the scholarship of *Bushido* forward.

Bennett, Alexander. *Bushido and the Art of Living: An Inquiry into Samurai Values*. Tokyo: Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, 2017.

An accomplished scholar and martial artist, Bennett takes on a scholarly and critical analysis of *Bushido*. The work begins with a brief yet informative intellectual history of *Bushido*, divided into four phases of development, framed by the social, political, and military events around each. A key argument implied in this section and carried over into the next chapter is the idea that *Bushido* is an ever-evolving philosophy and not one easily marked off a checklist set in stone. As the work proceeds, Bennett interweaves his studies with ideas such as *zanshin* and *koyo-gunkan*, as well as examining central works often cited in *Bushido* research: *Hagakure* and *Budo-Shoshinshu* as well as *The Life Giving Sword*. Finally, Bennett concludes the work with a critical analysis of bushido in modern Japan as told through interweaving his analysis with his experiences as both a kendo and university student. This is a rich, thorough work, appropriate for novice or experienced readers alike. Bennett's mastery of the content is second-to-none, and his ability to convey complex ideas and events succinctly makes this work informative and pleasurable at the same time.

Interestingly—perhaps, appropriately—Bennett's work stands as a bookend to Nitobe's. Nitobe, a Japanese author, wrote his *Bushido* first in English for foreign audiences only to later have a Japanese-language edition published; Bennett, a New Zealand-born author, first wrote his work in Japanese for a Japanese audience, only later to issue an English language edition.

Boylan, Peter. *Musings of a Budo Bum*. Peter Boylan, 2017.

Largely concerned with matters that would interest modern martial artists, Boylan's work consists of a number of essays based on his experiences studying a variety of martial arts, including Judo, Jodo, and Iaido, in the United States and Japan. While themes in *Bushido* thread throughout the work, the last section, "Philosophy," is most closely connected to the study. Here, Boylan examines a number of topics shared by ancient and modern scholars alike, from what makes an effective martial art, to what does it mean to be an instructor versus a professional. Throughout the works, Boylan references a handful of important primary sources for readers to examine, both Chinese and Japanese. At its core, this work stands as a text for others in martial arts today—it is not intended as a thorough, academic treatment of philosophy or intellectual history. It is critical for this list, however, in that it helps to demarcate a critical element of the post-war intellectual history of *Bushido* as a primary source.

Buke Shohatto

Laws of the Military Houses (Buke Shohatto)—this collection of laws put forth by Tokugawa Ieyasu exemplifies what the Tokugawa Shoguns expected of retainers. Reading through it, Tokugawa's concern of control and stability become clear, as a number of items prevent the consolidation and spread of power. What is most important for the study of *Bushido* is how this document outlines the roles and relationships that samurai had to follow (this, itself, was reinforced by the Tokugawa's implementation of New-Confucianism during their rule). A reasonable edition can be found here: https://edoflourishing.blogspot.com/2016/04/buke-shohatto-laws.html

Cleary, Thomas. *Training the Samurai Mind: A Bushido Sourcebook*. Boston: Shambhala, 2009.

Translated and edited by the prolific author Thomas Cleary, Training the Samurai Mind collects excerpts from several important primary sources in the intellectual development of samurai philosophies from the 14th- through 19th-centuries. While this 500 years of coverage does not address the same expanse of time other authors investigate, it does cover the core of an intellectual golden age in Japanese philosophy. Cleary's expertise in both Chinese and Japanese texts shows through in his translations, though at times he seems to place an emphasis on spirituality that other authors do not. The work includes a thorough glossary as well, to help readers explore more complicated elements of the text. Unfortunately, it includes neither footnotes nor endnotes—a quite peculiar feature for Cleary.

Friday, Karl F. "Bushidó or Bull? A Medieval Historian's Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition." *Electronic Journals of Martial Arts and Sciences* (March 2011): accessed August 27, 2019, https://ejmas.com/jalt/jaltart_friday_0301.htm.

In this article, reprinted from *The History Teacher*, Volume 27, Number 3, May 1994, pages 339-349, Friday argues that the *Bushido* ideals used by early twentieth century imperialist leaders in Japan had no connection to any code or philosophy of the samurai. He further goes on

to note that the *Bushido* of Imperial Japan was, in actuality, an invention of both western observers and the Japanese state to motivate and direct the Japanese people in wartime. In making his argument, Friday begins by reviewing briefly the history of the term *Bushido* and providing critical historical background to the issue, brief analyses of critical works often used when examining the topic. Perhaps most importantly in this section of the work, Friday notes that the use of philosophical or legal texts to outline a code of behavior like bushido does not adequately examine the day-to-day lives of samurai. From there, Friday uses his established history to examine the case against Imperial Japan's supposed continuation of bushido to great effect. While this work is 25 years old, it stands as a critical work in the English language scholarship on *Bushido*—indeed, it may well be the spark that lit the fire of critical review of this topic.

Nitobe, Inazo. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. Tokyo: Kodansha, 2002. Other editions available.

First composed around the turn of the 20th-century, Nitobe's work has one of the more curious histories of texts. Originally composed in English for Western audiences, Nitobe hoped *Bushido*would act as a bridge to help Western nations better understand Japan. Using a mixture of cultural references from both hemispheres, Nitobe creates a thoughtful essay to explain what he sees as the foundation of Japan's moral philosophies. The first half of the text aligns closely with Confucian principles; the second half contains a chapters on "Suicide and Redress," the sword as a national symbol, and the role of women. The final three chapters seek to outline the past, present, and future of bushido in Japan, c. 1900.

When working with Nitobe's *Bushido*, it is critical to keep in mind the intent, the method to deliver the content, and the time period that gave rise to the text.

Yamamoto, Tsunetomo. *Hagakure*. Translated by William Scott Wilson. New York: Kodansha, 1992.

This short treatise, recorded from the words of Yamamoto Tsunetomo, describes in no particular order the expected behavior of samurai of Nabeshima. This work is a relatively geographically localized in that it did not see widespread publication or reading until the Imperial Era and has since gained a reputation as a work associated with Japanese militarism. While an often-cited work, in the larger historical context, Hagakure is of little import. Because of its promulgation during and after World War II, it is a book readers may see reference towards made.

REVIEWS

Krensky, Stephen and RENSKY, STEPHEN. ILLUS. NOLL, CHERYL KIRK. *BOKUDEN AND THE BULLY*. MINNEAPOLIS: MILLBROOK PRESS, 2009.

A boastful warrior uses his bravado to bully an old farmer and others while during a ferry crossing. With each encounter, his bragging becomes more unbelievable--and his actions more aggressive and violent. The passengers on the ferryboat will either respect him or fear him.

Except one.

A sleepy samurai, Tsukahara Bokuden, is awakened by the young warrior's show. Despite his best efforts to explain he is not interested in a violent confrontation, Bokuden finds himself on the receiving end of a challenge to fight with sharp swords. While the bully may be stronger and faster than the men he fought in battles "too many to count," Bokuden's cleverness is more than a match to put this young warrior in his place.

The overall narrative divides into four short sections, like acts of a play, based on the setting of the action. This will help prepare young readers for tackling more-involved chapter books with chances to manage and track their place and read it over multiple sittings. If used in guided reading practice, this also give parents and teachers opportunities to have rich discussions about the plot development, predict what will happen next, and reflect on cause-and-effect.

For young readers, this work can be read alone or with help for students in second or third grades. Watercolor illustrations appear on every page to give visual clues to the content in the text. The book also contains a glossary to help with some of the more challenging or unfamiliar English words such as "ferry," "jab," "merchant," and "peasant." The use of foreign words and names is limited to Bokuden, making this work easily approachable for a wide audience while, impressively so, maintaining the critical connection of the folk tale to its Japanese roots.

If sharing this work aloud with young children, the structure and illustrations lend themselves to dramatic reading, with unique personae for each character.

At the end of the book, Krensky included an afterword. Here, he explains what a folk tale is, the role of folk tales in teaching lessons, and gives a brief account of the life and adventures of the renowned swordsman, Tsukahara Bokuden.

Readers can find the most important aspect of Bokuden and the Bully in the themes the book shares. Through descriptions and dialogue, Krensky reveals Bokuden as a model man of character in a dangerous age. Perhaps the best illustration of this is that, although he wears a sword, Bokuden's greatest strengths are his humility, patience, creative thinking, and peaceful ways of handling the bully. While there are many reasons why I picked up this book, the way it delivers these critical lessons in today's world are why it stays on my shelf.

Cummins, Antony & Minami, Yoshie. *Samurai War Stories: Teaching and Tales of Samurai Warfare*. Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2013.
A translation of Mishima's *Hagakure Nyūmon*.

Yukio Mishima, author, artist, and failed leader of a military coup in 1970, collected his commentary on *Hagakure* in a series of essays that kept *Hagakure* and himself in notoriety well into the twentieth century. In these, Mishima revealed a complicated and often incomplete intellectual relationship with *Hagakure*, perhaps in part because of his own limited reading of the work. Especially related to action and death, Mishima easily connected his fatalist appreciation to Yamamoto's works. In other places, however, Mishima expended considerable energy to construct weak arguments and in other places outright misinterpreted the material to justify his world view's supposed alignment with *Hagakure*. As an essayist, Mishima demonstrated minimal accomplishment in depth of analysis. His theses often lacked evidence and his arguments lacked structure. Reading through his thoughts, it is as if he found a brief glimpse of insight and fought in vain to construct a path to it, winding through philosophical traditions hundreds of years and thousands of miles removed from Yamamoto Tsunetomo.

The history of *Hagakure* began nearly two hundred years before The Pacific War, but its this conflict that brought it to Mishima's attention. Undoubtedly, the intense emotions surrounding this conflict undoubtedly informed his appreciation of it. Burning onto the literary scene from relative obscurity in the two hundred years before, it received a wide-sweeping interpretation and acceptance as a text to elevate the people of Japan to the image of the idealized samurai. The work grew from being a key text of a relatively isolated domain to a nationalized document. It served to reduce the ego to nothingness to better face death and glorify self-sacrifice for the Empire. In this, young men marching to war found comfort and those at home found it "...[S]ocially obligatory reading…"[58] is how Yukio Mishima described his memories of *Hagakure* during the war.

In few places can readers observe better the role of *Hagakure* as literature to drive nationalism than in the writings of *kamikaze* pilots. Yukio Mishima described this connection in his essay "How to Read *Hagakure*." According to Mishima, "...the spirit of those young men [Kamikaze] who for the sake of their country hurles themselves to certain death is closest in the long history of Japan to the clear ideal of action and death offered in *Hagakure*…"[59] Mishima's assessment found a supporting historical account in at least one instance--the life and death of Iwabe Keiziroo, a *kamikaze* pilot, as described by his acquaintance Honda Toshiaki. Through his meeting with Iwabe, Honda discovered *Hagakure* and witnessed the influence of the work--though only a fraction of it--as the textbook of the "Nabeshima's samurai's way" and a model of

[58] Mishima, "*Hagakure* and I," *The Way of the Samurai: Yukio Mishima on* Hagakure *in Modern Life*, trans. Kathryn Sparling (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 4.
[59] Mishima, "How to Read *Hagakure*," *The Way of the Samurai: Yukio Mishima on* Hagakure *in Modern Life*, trans. Kathryn Sparling (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 101.

behavior for young men thrust into cataclysmic violence of The Pacific War.[60] A particularly notable memory Honda shared about Iwabe's lessons from *Hagakure* appeared in his recitation of the opening lines: "[Iwabe] often told about the text of *Hagakure*. 'A samurai's way is understanding dying. When there are two ways, the samurai should choose to die early. So and so.'"[61] It gave teenage boys destined to pilot their aircraft to the death a world view that encouraged actions *without* the thought of consequence beyond death. In Honda's words, *Hagakure* gave the *kamikaze* "the frightful life of not considering a survival from the start."[62] Iwabe carried out his last mission on August 9, 1945.

With the surrender of Imperial Japan on August 15, 1945 (less than a week after Iwabe's fateful flight) the public opinion of *Hagakure* quickly changed. No longer did it hold a critical role in the cultural psyche but became something associated with painful memories or personal loss and national defeat. What's more, with the American occupation, the text itself became *verboten*. As Kathryn Sparling, translator of a collection of Mishima's essays, described it, "After the war, *Hagakure* was quickly abandoned as dangerous and subversive. Many copies were destroyed so they would not meet the eyes of the Occupation authorities."[63] All but forgotten, the work would have been relegated to memory were it not for Mishima's interest and writings.

Throughout his essays, also available in English, Mishima composed several passages where Yamamoto's voice--incorrectly so--seems to serve no other function than to add gravity to Mishima's own arguments through a dizzying and suspect use of sources to support a tenuous argument.[64] In an attempt to support his own ideas on health and fitness, he added Yamamoto's notes and explained, "[Yamamoto] says, 'If only you take good care of your health, eventually you will fulfill your greatest desire and serve your daimyo well.'"[65] Mishima continued to comment on how this is uncharacteristic of Yamamoto's nihilism, and explained the matter as one of developing individual resolution towards death. In doing so, however, he ignored the clear language of taking care of self to better serve another used by Yamamoto--selflessness and service being cornerstones of Yamamoto's philosophy as evident throughout the work.

This reduced emphasis on selflessness and service appeared throughout Mishima's essays. Nowhere else did Mishima draw such a strong contrast against Yamamoto than in his own sense of exceptionalism. According to Sparling's analysis, "Always, [Mishima's] emphasis is on the individual, whose ultimate goal is self-cultivation rather than contribution to his immediate

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[60] Honda Toshiaki. "I Want to Become the *Hagakure*." *A Classmate's War Experience*. Warbirds-JP. March 16, 2003. http://www.warbirds.jp/senri/19english/dooki/01/index.htm.
[61] Honda.
[62] Honda
[63] Kathryn Sparling, "Translator's Note," *The Way of the Samurai* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), xiii.
[64] Other scholars' work established and examined Mishima's questionable skills as an essayist. In his work *Japanese Confucianism: A Cultural History*, Paramore examined other instances of Mishima's superficial--or at times outright incorrect--understanding of works, especially related to his failed coup in 1970. For more, see Kiri Paramore, *Japanese Confucianism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
[65] Mishima, "*Hagakure* and I," 93.

environment or to society."[66] Here, Mishima failed to connect with Yamamoto, despite his best efforts to muster thousands of years of philosophy across several cultures. At the core of his philosophies, perhaps in part because of his Confucian education, Yamamoto frequently referenced the importance of service--to being a useful retainer that contributed to the success of his lord and by extension domain. Even when compared to the use of *Hagakure* by *Kamikaze* like Iwabe, Mishima's assessment missed the mark. Though death played a role in these interpretations, it did not serve as the focus. It served, rather, as an ends. The means to that end were selfless service, albeit selfless service that often ended in great sacrifice and death in the name of the glory of the Emperor. Ironically, it is here that he built his identity within the words of *Hagakure* and, in doing so, constructed a self-psyche that could only be defined by those things that were exceptional and different. "If there is still a reason for reading [*Hagakure*], I can only guess that it is for considerations completely opposite to those during the war."[67] Despite this observation, Mishima revealed his own fascination with death in his essays and in doing so ultimately demonstrated his thinking not far removed from wartime readers, except perhaps in his own omission of selflessness and service.

In other places, Mishima's logic fell short of constructing confident connections between ideas and strayed into areas of tenuous arguments to justify his world view. Often, this is done to support his own extremist or nonconforming conclusions. For example, in his essay "*Hagakure* and I," Mishima argued that "[Yamamoto] tries to be faithful to the Way of the Samurai by vigorously rejecting Shinto Taboos. Here the traditional Japanese idea of defilement is completely trampled underfoot before the desire for violent action."[68] Mishima then repeated the passage with this line and, in doing so, exposes his misunderstanding, highlighted by the opening line, "Although they say the gods dislike contamination, I have my own opinion on the subject. *I never neglect my daily worship.* Even when I get spattered with blood on the battlefield, or stumble over corpses underfoot as I fight, *I believe in the effectiveness of praying to the gods for military success and long life…*"[69]

Mishima's limited understanding of Japanese intellectualism remained consistent throughout his essays. Frequently, he seemed to either not understand or completely disregard the critical behavior and philosophies found in both *Hagakure*. This appeared notably in his essay "*Hagakure* and I" where he argued that *Hagakure* had to be his guiding book because, like him, it stood on outside the pale of mid-twentieth century Japanese acceptance: "What is more, it must be a book banned by contemporary society."[70] Mishima drew this connection as he sought a kindred spirit in Yamamoto, seeing himself too as an anachronism of a man meant to live in days long gone. Unfortunately, in this Mishima either failed to recognize--or outrightly ignored--the issue that his artistic pursuits were exactly the livelihood that Yamamoto spoke out against in his time. Mishima wrote elsewhere in the same essay that it is because of *Hagakure* that "In fact, to tell the truth, my firm insistence on the 'Combined Way of the Scholar and the Warrior' I owe to

[66] Kathryn Sparling, ix.
[67] Mishima, "*Hagakure* and I," 99.
[68] Mishima, "*Hagakure* and I," 89.
[69] Mishima, "*Hagakure* and I," 89. Emphasis added by author.
[70] Mishima, "*Hagakure* and I," 6.

the influence of *Hagakure*," because it is through this that art is no long art for art's sake, but a struggle of life and death.[71] Here, he returned to his personal fascination with death.

Examined carefully, readers discover that *Hagakure* is less about death as Mishima ascribed to it. This focus developed in his essays as Mishima made a great effort to find his voice in others--to justify his fatalistic philosophies with echoes from bygone eras--and tenuously so atbest. Yamamoto's words seemed more frequently to describe service and dedication of a man struggling to continue to uphold his duty despite his inability to follow his master. These values stood in stark contrast to Mishima's self-exceptionalism. Despite this, Mishima's essays and actions, and their influence on early translators, laid at his feet the responsibility for the transmission of the *Hagakure* cult of death and emphasis on extremism and violence in the English *Hagakure* tradition, as his influence through his art and his renowned death helped to introduce *Hagakure* to English readers.

[71] Mishima, "*Hagakure* and I," 10.

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"...THE WAY OF THE WARRIORS MEANS FAMILIARITY WITH BOTH CULTURAL AND MARTIAL ARTS."

- MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, BOOK OF FIVE RINGS

BUDO BOOK REVIEW