

BUSHIDO CODE: PRIMARY SOURCE #1

Taken from Tales of the Heike (1185)

These tales were about heroic samurai who exemplified the virtues and valor every samurai should strive for.

1. *Why does he fight so fearlessly?*
2. *What two qualities do you admire about Nobutsura?*

Nobutsura is a samurai pledged to protect Prince Mochihito. Some soldiers arrive to arrest the Prince, but Nobutsura stands in their way...

...a bold, strong fellow named Kanetake, fixed his eyes on **Nobutsura** and leaped on the veranda, followed by fourteen or fifteen of his cohorts [soldiers]. Nobutsura tore loose the sash and collar of his hunting robe, threw off the garment, unsheathed his sword (a ceremonial blade, but one that had been forged under his careful supervision), and laid about him mercilessly. Although his adversaries [enemies] fought with oversized swords and long spears, the blows from the guardsman's sword sent them hopping down into the courtyard like leaves scattering in a gale.

The full moon, which had been hidden behind clouds, came out to flood the scene with light. The attackers were in unfamiliar surroundings, but Nobutsura was at home in the mansion. He chased them along passageways and struck ringing blows; he trapped them in cul-de-sacs and drove his sword thudding into their flesh.

Then his sword bent, he jumped aside and pushed and stamped it back into shape. In no time, he cut down fourteen or fifteen.....men. Then a three-inch piece of his sword tip broke off. Fumbling at his waist to cut open his belly, he discovered that his dagger had fallen out. In desperation, he tried to run through the small Takakura gate with out flung arms. When an adversary with a long spear challenged him, he leaped forward in the hope of hurdling the weapon, but he failed to clear it, and it pierced his thigh like a needle threading cloth. Still full of fight, he was surrounded and captured by a crowd of opponents.

BUSHIDO CODE: PRIMARY SOURCE #2

Yamaga Soko (1622-1685) wrote the first treatises analyzing the concept of Bushido while at the same time coining the term itself.

1. *What is the primary business of the samurai?*
2. *What two qualities must a samurai possess?*

"The way of the samurai is placing himself under the control of his lord, to follow absolutely unto death...."

"For a samurai nothing is more important than duty."

"...there are both major and minor matter to which the samurai must give his attention. In minor matters, such as dress, food, dwelling, and all implements and their uses, he must live up to the best samurai traditions of good form. This is particularly true in connection with training in the arts of war and with the manufacture and use of armour and horse trappings."

Among major matter there are the maintenance of peace and order in the world; rites and festivals; the control of feudal states and districts; mountains and forests, seas and rivers, farms and rice fields, temples and shrines.....

In addition, there is military command and organization, strategy in war and tactics in battle, the quartering and provisioning of troops, and the building of fortifications - all those preparations for war which are the daily concern of generals and officers....

If one follows this approach, one will attain to a state of mind which success and fame are of no account, in which unselfishness and self-forgetfulness will be the rule."

Bibliography: The Sources of Japanese Tradition by William de Bary

BUSHIDO CODE: PRIMARY SOURCE #3

The Code of the Samurai by Yuzan Daidoji #2 (1600's)

This code was written from the point of view of a retainer or vassal...

What is the samurai's chief business?

What virtues (qualities) must a samurai value? (Find two)

One who is a samurai must before all things keep constantly in mind by day and by night, for the morning when he takes up his chopsticks to eat his New Year's breakfast to Old Year's night when he pays his yearly bills, the fact that he has to die. That is his chief business. If he is always mindful of this, he will be able to live in accordance with the paths of Loyalty and Filial Duty, will avoid myriads of evils and adversities, keep himself free from disease and calamity and moreover enjoy a long life.

He will also be a fine personality with many admirable qualities.he can console himself with the idea of eternal service to his lord or unending devotion to his relatives.....

But if he determines simply to live for today and take no thought for the morrow, so that when he stands before his lord to receive his commands he thinks of it as his last appearance and when he looks on the faces of his relatives he feels that he will never see them again, then will his duty and regard for both of them be completely sincere, while his mind will be in accord with the path of loyalty and filial duty.

BUSHIDO CODE: PRIMARY SOURCE #4

Eihei Dogen (1200 - 1253), one of the foremost figures of Japanese philosophy and letters, was among the first Japanese monks to travel to China and transmit Zen back to Japan. He is the founder of the Soto Zen School in Japan.

The excerpt is a set of specific instructions for formal daily practice, which is an essential commitment for those who wish to be enlightened.

1. *What is Dogen's belief about book learning?*
2. *Name two things the samurai had to do to meditate.*
3. *Why was the samurai encouraged to meditate?*

Your search among books, sifting and shuffling through other people's words, may lead you to the depths of knowledge, but it cannot help you to see the reflection of your true self.

[guide for meditation]

To obtain the inestimable benefits of meditation, you should first make a firm decision to practice every day. Your meditation room should be clean and quiet. Wear loose clothing and remove your shoes. Sit on a cushion, with legs crossed, in as comfortable a manner as possible. Keep your back straight. Don't lean to the left or right; don't tip forward or bend back. Your ears should be in line with your shoulders. Keep your tongue at the roof of your mouth and close your lips. Your eyes should be slightly open, unfocused on the floor at a forty-five-degree angle. Breathe through your nostrils.

Before you begin meditation, take several slow, deep breaths. Hold your body erect, allowing your breathing to become normal again. Many thoughts will crowd into your mind. Don't dwell on thoughts of good or bad. Don't desire to attain enlightenment. Let your thoughts come and go, without getting involved in them or trying to suppress them. Think the unthinkable. In other words, think no-thinking.

Practice this meditation in the morning or in the evening or at any leisure time during the day. You will soon realize that your mental burdens are dropping away one by one, and...you will soon discover the treasure of wisdom...

Bibliography: The Enlightened Mind by Stephen Mitchell, ed.