

武士道 - BUSHIDO:  
MILITARY AND MODERN SOCIO-CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Jayson Gold-Pambianchi  
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*I come to this place of my ancestors. And I remember...like these blossoms, we are all dying. To know life in every breath. Every cup of tea. Every life we take. That is the way of the warrior...That is Bushido.*<sup>1</sup>

- J. Logan

At the heart of every culture, there resides a deep historical connection between ritualistic spiritualism and tradition. Who are our people? Where do we come from? How do our ways define the past and present? Shall the lessons and traditions of the past shape our future? To explicate how manifestations of ancient history alter how we live today and contribute to the world of tomorrow, one can analyze the ancient code of honor and morals developed by the Japanese Samurai.

Since the days of the Kamakura Shogunate near a millennium ago, the “way of the warrior” has been an integral part of Japanese culture.<sup>2</sup> While aspects of this code of honor have influenced the Japanese people in a myriad of ways, comprehension of Bushido’s relevance to Japanese history through military and socio-cultural lenses is prudent. To fully ascertain the breadth and significance of Bushido, we must assess the ethical schools which have influenced it. Historiographical identification of ancient traditions will further emphasize how generations of historians, philosophers and Samurai have interpreted Bushido differently, bridging modern perceptions on the warrior code. Moreover, it must be accentuated that Bushido has become a vital aspect of the Japanese psyche since its origins in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium, accomplished through chronicling its morphologies and adaptations.<sup>3</sup> Evidence shall reveal that this code of honor is not merely an aspect of Japan’s past. Bushido has been persevered throughout the ages

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<sup>1</sup> John Logan. “The Last Samurai.” Accessed July 24, 2018. [http://www.dailyscript.com/scripts/The\\_Last\\_Samurai.pdf](http://www.dailyscript.com/scripts/The_Last_Samurai.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Department of Asian Art. “Kamakura and Nanbokuchō Periods (1185–1392).” In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–.

<sup>3</sup> “Kamakura and Nanbokuchō Periods (1185–1392).”

and still exists in new forms to benefit Japanese culture. Data suggests that Bushido shall continue to contribute to the society and culture of Japan, retaining a traditional position in Japanese ways of life. Before the historiographical interpretations that surround Bushido can be delved into, we must elucidate its origins in militarism amidst Kamakura Shogunism and the Samurai warrior class.

### **Rise of The Samurai Way**

Though the term 'Bushido' did not appear in Japanese texts until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the code was conceptualized over three centuries earlier during late-Kamakura period Japan.<sup>4</sup> This age saw the earliest rise of organized feudalism throughout the country. Military-dictatorial government structures of Shogunism were established as the primary system of political sovereignty.<sup>5</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> century period derives its name from Kamakura city, occupied by Shogun Minamoto Yoritomo and used as his seat of authority after seizing power in 1185 AD.<sup>6</sup> In association with this climactic shift towards a feudal government, Japanese society experienced a rapid expansion in militarization.

The Kamakura period was defined by the rapid growth of the Japanese warrior class and birth of Bushido ordinances as much as the political revolution from traditional monarchy. Utilizing substantial military forces and his status as a descendant of Emperor Seiwa (reign from 858–876), Yoritomo consolidated power throughout Japan.<sup>7</sup> In 1185, Yoritomo seized total control of major Japanese territories after defeating political adversaries of the Taira family at the battle of Dannoura.<sup>8</sup> The age of the Tokugawa Shogunate had begun.

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<sup>4</sup> Tasuke Kawakami, "Bushidō In Its Formative Period." *The Annals Of The Hitotsubashi Academy* no. 1: 65. 1952. JSTOR Journals, EBSCOhost (accessed August 31, 2018). 67.

<sup>5</sup> Tasuke, 69-70.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 75.

In addition to the Samurai class' military proliferation between 1192 and 1331, the Kamakura period saw the first manifestations of several socio-cultural Bushido practices and principles. Japanese warrior culture of the time was not only dominated by expectations of martial skill, but by ideals of honor, valor and loyalty to one's military cohort, family, social environment and rulers.<sup>9</sup> Military virtues lead to practices like ritual suicide known as 'seppuku' (切腹: translating to "cutting the belly").

Although rivalries which stemmed from families vying for power was a formidable contributor to the rapid expansion of the warrior class, external invasions of Japan and inter-factional struggles further galvanized this phenomenon. In 1274 and 1281, Japanese warriors successfully repelled Mongolian invasions of Japan.<sup>10</sup> However, the financial hardships brought about by military expenditures from these events lead to political instability throughout the Shogunate.<sup>11</sup> This rift culminated in Emperor Go-Daigo's revolution of 1331 and ushered in the Muromachi Period from 1333 to 1573; dominated by governmental power stemming from the city of Kyoto.<sup>12</sup>

By the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, several of Japan's most powerful warlords began to vie for supremacy over territories amidst the Kyoto government's waning power. With Kyoto's capture by the warlord Oda Nobunaga in 1573, the Muromachi period concluded.<sup>13</sup> Despite the war-torn culmination of this era and the birth of the Edo period, Samurai codes of conduct continued to extend beyond the realms of warfare. Forms of Bushido-related Zen Buddhism and Confucianism also emerged during this period.<sup>14</sup> A Samurai adhering to Bushido-like codes was

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<sup>9</sup> Tasuke, 73-74.

<sup>10</sup> Nakaba Yamamta, "Ghenko, the Mongol Invasion of Japan." London, 1916. 187, 194, 197.

<sup>11</sup> Yamata, 199.

<sup>12</sup> Tasuke, 82-83.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 82-83.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid,78

expected to live a just and ethical social life; honoring the practices of the gentry in the absence of military campaigns.<sup>15</sup>

### **Edo-Tokugawanate Japan: Manifestation of the Bushido Culture**

After centuries of warfare, texts referencing an exclusive warrior class code of conduct surfaced in Edo Japan. Documents like the *Kōyō Gunkan* (completed in 1616), were primarily written to record the military deeds of noble families. Yet, the manuscript also contains accounts of Confucian scholars and Samurai retainers that discuss Bushido ideals.<sup>16</sup> The *Kōyō Gunkan* provides evidence of postulations on the importance and significance of relationships between Samurai and the direct ethical connection they held with ruling Shoguns.<sup>17</sup> While the *Kōyō Gunkan* marks the first recorded reference to Bushido by name, it is not considered the most formidable historical document characterizing this code of conduct. As Bushido is a code of behavior, there is no single set of principles regarded as ‘true’ or ‘false’, but rather varying perceptions widely regarded as formidable throughout different centuries. Emphasized by Thomas Cleary, “Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shinto were each represented by a variety of schools, and elements of all three were commonly combined in Japanese culture and customs. As the embodiment of Samurai culture, Bushido is correspondingly diverse, drawing selectively on elements of all these traditions to articulate the ethos and discipline of the warrior.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Edo-Tokugawanate Bushido Perspectives**

One of the most debatably comprehensive sources that defines Edo period militaristic perceptions on the Bushido code is The *Hagakure*, composed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Tsuramoto

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 78

<sup>16</sup> Hiroaki Sato, *Legends of the Samurai*. Overlook Duckworth, 1995. 205.

<sup>17</sup> “Koyogunkan 甲陽軍鑑,” Genbukan Tokyo Shibu, Accessed August 30, 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Cleary, *Samurai Wisdom: Lessons from Japan’s Warrior Culture; Five Classic Texts on Bushido*. Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 2009. 28.

Tashiro (in representation of Tsunetomo Yamamoto). Emphasized by Minoru Tanaka in *Bushido The Way of The Samurai*, Yamamoto was a member of the Nabeshima Clan and personal attendant of Lord Mitsushige Nabeshima. Yamamoto devoted thirty years of his life to servicing his master until rising to become a well-respected Samurai.<sup>19</sup> After the death of Lord Nabeshima, Yamamoto retreated to a hermitage in the mountains.<sup>20</sup> During this time, Tsuramoto Tashiro became Yamamoto's disciple and secretly chronicled his master verbatim over seven years.

*The Hagakure* identifies major militaristic and socio-cultural aspects of Bushido during the Tokugawa Shogunate.<sup>21</sup> This collection of eleven books also illustrates Yamamoto's personal perceptions of Bushido teachings. Though this document covers hundreds of aspects of social and cultural behavior that Yamamoto considered characterizations of the ideal Samurai warrior, his work stipulates central war-like principles of conduct.<sup>22</sup> In his eyes, it is a Samurai's duty to fight with valor and scorn cowardice, die honorably, be respectful to one's Shogun, comrades and family, and aspire to the virtues of compassion, servitude and spiritualism. Though substantial detail is provided in every aspect of these affirmations, Yamamoto believed the 'Essence of Bushido' centers on militaristic doctrine; and emphasizes a willingness and preparedness to die honorably. Yamamoto states, "I have found the essence of Bushido: to die! In other words, when you have a choice between life and death, then always choose death: this is all that you must remember."<sup>23</sup> The *Hagakure* provides insight into many perspectives on the nature of Bushido in Edo Japan, yet some Confucians at the time held different socio-cultural conceptualizations on what it meant to be a Samurai and follower of Bushido.

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<sup>19</sup> Tsunetomo Yamamoto. *Bushido, The Way of the Samurai: Based on The Hagakure by Yamamoto*, Tsunetomo. Translated by Minoru Tanaka. New York: Square One Publishers, 2001. xiii.

<sup>20</sup> Yamamoto, xiv.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, xiv.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, xv.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century philosopher and strategist, Yamaga Sokō, influenced one of the first schools of Bushido.<sup>24</sup> In contrast to Yamamoto's beliefs, Sokō did not believe that martial skill and death should represent central Bushido principles. He suggested that it was the duty of a warrior to strive for personal excellence in society. Indicated by Cleary, "Yamaga Sokō wrestled with this peculiar problem of cultivating the capacities of war and peace in an integrated personality.... The Way of the Knight expands on this comprehensive concept of the Samurai way constituting a model of all-around personal development."<sup>25</sup> In opposition of Yamamoto's summarization on the "Essence of Bushido," Sokō states, "generally speaking, the role of [Samurai] knights is in being personally conscientious, completely loyal in public service for a ruler, faithful in association with friends, and individually circumspect, concentrating on duty."<sup>26</sup> Although Sokō and Yamamoto hold some ethical principles in high regard, Sokō stresses the optimal value of Samurai duties in social and cultural aspects of life over veneration through militarism and death.

### **The Seven Virtues**

Evaluating the dichotomy between Yamamoto and Sokō's perceptions of Bushido are advantageous to grasp the breadth of the warrior code. However, more recent interpretations of Bushido can be referred to for their acute categorizations of virtue. Published in the early 20th century by Inazō Nitobe, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* identifies the 'Seven Virtues' to which Samurai adhered. In sequence, the virtues are "rectitude (gi), courage (yu), benevolence (jin), politeness (rei), honesty (sei), honor (meiyo), and loyalty (chugi)."<sup>27</sup> Utilized by Samurai to

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas, Cleary, *Samurai Wisdom: Lessons from Japan's Warrior Culture; Five Classic Texts on Bushido*. Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 2009. 19.

<sup>25</sup> Cleary, 31.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas, Cleary, *Samurai Wisdom: Lessons from Japan's Warrior Culture; Five Classic Texts on Bushido*. Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 2009. 35.

<sup>27</sup> Inazō Nitobe, "Bushido: The Soul of Japan." [Auckland, N.Z.]: The Floating Press, 2008. eBook Collection (EBSCOhost), EBSCOhost (accessed August 30, 2018).

expedite mastery of self-control and discipline, the virtues lie at the heart of modern perceptions regarding Samurai practices. Further diverging from the earlier work of Yamamoto and Sokō, Nitobe proclaims Buddhism and Shintoism to be the progenitor religions of Bushido thought.<sup>28</sup> Nitobe contrastively expresses, “What Buddhism failed to give, Shintoism offered in abundance. Such loyalty to the sovereign, such reverence for ancestral memory, and such filial piety as are not taught by any other creed, were inculcated by the Shinto doctrines, imparting passivity to the otherwise arrogant character of the samurai.”<sup>29</sup> In comprehension of how these codices on warrior conduct have been recently interpreted and relate to socio-cultural practices, modern historiographical data on Bushido may be investigated.

### **Diverse Traditional Interpretations**

In correlation with discussion on the variance between Yamamoto’s *Hagakure* and the doctrines of Confucian Bushido, 20<sup>th</sup> century historians discuss the prevalence of these Bushido conceptualizations during the Tokugawa period. John Newman stipulates in the 1989 publication *Bushido The Way of The Warrior*, that Confucian and Buddhist-centered Bushido was far more dominant a practice among the Samurai warrior class as opposed to what he titles as Yamamoto’s militaristic “Fanatical Bushido”.<sup>30</sup> Despite Newman’s blunt terminology in reference to the *Hagakure*, he interprets Bushido as characterized by a diverse range of practices, not comprehended through one overarching set of principles. To supplement his explanation, Newman stresses the contributions of 14<sup>th</sup> century Zen Bushido to Tokugawanate cultural behavior. According to Newman, Zen Bushido’s chief components center on, “an experience of passing through death while in this very life, giving the inspiration to live life fully as there was

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<sup>28</sup> Nitobe, 20.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>30</sup> John Newman. *Bushido The Way of The Warrior*. Connecticut: Brompton Books Corp., 1989. 157.

no shrinking from death....and in the ordinary way a Samurai would free from fear of death and would be vigorous and live long.”<sup>31</sup> Congruent with Sokō’s Confucian doctrine, Zen Bushido paragoned the avoidance of militaristic sacrifice and death, thus contributing towards cultural adaptations of Bushido in society as opposed to militaristic centralization.

In opposition to Newman’s ethically-inclusive interpretation of Bushido, Roger Ames draws exclusive parallels between the Warrior Code and Yamamoto’s ‘Essence of Bushido’. Throughout his 1995 academic article *Bushido: Mode of Ethic?* Ames stresses the necessity of adherence to the *Hakagure* if one is to develop an understanding of Bushido; with a focus on ritualistic suicide, ‘seppuku’.<sup>32</sup> Without indicating the existence of conflicting social and cultural doctrines like Zen and Confucian Bushido, he states, “Bushido is not a willingness to die, not a once-off decision to die, but is rather a *resolution* to die,”<sup>33</sup> His analysis and neglect to acknowledge these latter forms of Bushido can be regarded as limited. All three schools of conduct center on comprehension of how to die honorably, despite their deviations in how death is achieved. Ames does not enunciate the importance of socio-cultural principles to stress how a Samurai might *live* honorably.

Contrary to Ames’ focus on *Hakagure* influenced Bushido, Roger Brown’s *New Discourse on Bushidō Philosophy* expounds on Confucian social and cultural warrior code perspectives.<sup>34</sup> Brown’s work also differs from Newman’s identifications of Bushido through the portrayal of Yasuoka Masahiro’s 19<sup>th</sup> century adaptive teachings.<sup>35</sup> Masahiro’s interest in

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<sup>31</sup> Newman, 157.

<sup>32</sup> Roger T. Ames, "Bushidō: Mode or Ethic?" In *Japanese Aesthetics and Culture: A Reader*, 279-94. Albany, NY: State U of New York P, 1995. MLA International Bibliography, EBSCOhost (accessed August 30, 2018). 282.

<sup>33</sup> Ames, 283.

<sup>34</sup> Roger H. Brown, "Yasuoka Masahiro’s ‘New Discourse on Bushidō Philosophy’: Cultivating Samurai Spirit and Men of Character for Imperial Japan." *Social Science Japan Journal* 16, no. 1 (January 2013): 107-129. SocINDEX with Full Text, EBSCOhost (accessed August 30, 2018). 108.

<sup>35</sup> Brown, 108.

education (centered on Bushido's lessons of personal cultivation and diligence), effectively bridges the gap between Tokugawanate socio-cultural concepts of excellence and modern applications. Specifically, Brown discusses at length on the foundation of Masahiro's learning academy in Tokyo.<sup>36</sup> He characterizes Masahiro's facility as, "a scholarly forum for creating cultivated gentlemen and committed to teaching moral self-cultivation rooted in 'mastering the teachings of the Sages of the Orient with an emphasis on Confucian learning' and to providing 'special focus on researching the Japanese ethnic spirit.'"<sup>37</sup> Brown has not only determined that Confucian Bushido evolved from its original teachings into the modern era, but should be applied to 19<sup>th</sup> century perceptions of sociocultural morals and behaviors in Japan.

Newman and Ames' works represent recent interpretations on Bushido. Though their exemplifications of the Way of The Warrior differ, both demonstrate modern alternative thought concerning the subject. Despite their insight into 20<sup>th</sup> century conceptualizations of Tokugawanate Bushido and 19<sup>th</sup> century applications of Confucian Bushido, they do not identify historiographical data discussing modern militaristic adaptations. To better exemplify how the Warrior Code has been exhibited in 20<sup>th</sup> century warfare, we may consult documents that examine Bushido's prevalence during World War II.

### **Modern Military Contributions**

*The Archaeology of World War II Japanese Stragglers on the Island of Guam and the Bushido Code* by Dixon, Gilda and Bulgrin conveys how military tactics and the behavior of Imperial Japanese soldiers reflect tenants of the Bushido code. During the Second World War, many Japanese infantry were trapped on the island of Guam, surrounded by the Allied forces and

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<sup>36</sup> Brown, 115.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 115.

low on supplies.<sup>38</sup> Despite being outnumbered and in horrific conditions, many soldiers refused to surrender. As indicated by Dixon and colleagues, “They continued to honor the Bushido code, believing that “to rush into the thick of battle and to be slain in it, is easy enough . . . but, it is true courage to live when it is right to live, and to die only when it is right to die.”<sup>39</sup>

Synonymously, their work states that surrender was considered ‘courting death,’ akin to cowardice and therefore in opposition of Bushido.<sup>40</sup> To circumvent this dishonorable behavior, they chose to wage guerilla warfare, using the island’s jungles and in caves.<sup>41</sup> This combat methodology transparently identifies the significance of Bushido in Japanese military strategy and behavior during World War II. Keep in mind surrender meant the family back home took the shame for it.

In association with this military analysis, Karl F. Friday expands on interpretations of 20<sup>th</sup> century Bushido contributions to Japanese warfare. Whereas Ames indicated Confucian Bushido was readapted in recent centuries to breathe moral vibrancy into modern behavior, Friday details that pivotal historical events lead to the resurgence of war-like Bushido principles in the 1900s. He affirms, “Modern bushido is closely bound up with the notion of a Japanese "national essence," and with those of the kokutai, or Japanese national structure, and the cult of the emperor. It was a propaganda tool, consciously shaped and manipulated as part of the effort to forge a unified, modern nation out of a fundamentally feudal society, and to build a modern national military made up of conscripts from all tiers.”<sup>42</sup> Eliminating traditional limitations

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<sup>38</sup> Boyd Dixon, Laura Gilda, and Lon Bulgrin. "The Archaeology of World War II Japanese Stragglers on the Island of Guam and the Bushido Code." *Asian Perspectives* no. 1: 110. 2012. JSTOR Journals, EBSCOhost (accessed August 30, 2018). 110.

<sup>39</sup> Dixon, Gilda and Bulgrin, 113.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, 113.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 113.

<sup>42</sup> Karl F., Friday. "Bushidō or Bull? A Medieval Historian's Perspective on the Imperial Army and the Japanese Warrior Tradition." *The History Teacher* no. 3: 339. 1994. JSTOR Journals, EBSCOhost (accessed August 30, 2018). 342.

which made Bushido principles applicable to only the warrior class, Japanese politicians cultivated an integrated militaristic society. Friday also indicates that the *Hakagure* was popular among Japanese imperial officers, revealing how soldiers in the Japanese Empire developed militaristic perceptions on Bushido.<sup>43</sup> Willingness to sacrifice one's self in the line of duty was an expectation if one was to serve their country, family and honor the way of the warrior spirit.<sup>44</sup>

In direct support of Friday's evaluation, Bushido's prevalence throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century Japanese culture may be exhibited by analyzing the *Hoshina Memorandum*. The document, dated August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1945 details the decisions of the Japanese Military Command while considering their surrender to the Allied forces.<sup>45</sup> Their conclusions were made while bearing in mind a sense of spiritual obligation to service the Emperor and his ancestors. Simultaneously, they considered their duty to honor Japan's history.

Provided by Hoshina Zenshiro, the document states:

[At the same time,] His Majesty has a responsibility to the Imperial ancestors. If this [foundation of our nation] should be shaken, His Majesty's responsibility would be grave. Those of us in the position of giving advice to him would also deserve a thousand deaths. Therefore, I suggest that we decide based on the development of the situation and the prospect for the future.<sup>46</sup>

Navy vice-admiral Hoshina and his comrades of the Supreme War Council made their deliberations surrounding the plausible outcomes of the war by not only recognizing Japan's casualties, but the metaphysical losses of failing their people. This behavior demonstrates comprehension of Bushido-aspects of military practice and Japanese culture.

### **Socio-Cultural & Military Connections, Pre-WWII Nationalism**

The Hoshina Memorandum provides evidence that Bushido principles affected Japanese

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<sup>43</sup> Friday, 341.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 341.

<sup>45</sup> Zenshiro Hoshina, "Hoshina Memorandum," The National Security Archive, The Nuclear Vault, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Hoshina, 3.

society and culture across social strata during the World War II era, yet the warrior code was intimately involved in the buildup of these values prior to the breakout of the war. William R. Patterson suggests that Bushido influenced martial arts and education corresponded with nationalistic ideals which were prevalent prior to 1941.<sup>47</sup> In *Bushido's Role In the Growth of Pre-World War II Japanese Nationalism*, Patterson describes how competency of tradition through Bushido-inspired martial skills enabled society to remain interconnected; harnessing society's reverence of ancestral practices for national strength.

Patterson states:

The martial arts were seen as a way not to maintain ancient martial techniques but instead to preserve a traditional value system, Bushido, that could be used to nurture national spirit. In the midst of modernization, the Japanese were struggling to hold onto some traditions that were uniquely Japanese and that could unify them as countrymen. Jigoro Kano, for example, argued that "because judo developed based on the martial arts of the past, if the martial arts practitioners of the past had things that are of value, those who practice judo should pass all those things on. Among these, the samurai spirit should be celebrated even in today's society" (Kano, 2005: 126).<sup>48</sup>

In support, Patterson discusses how Bushido's social influence on education altered Japan. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, conceptualizations of patriotism and loyalty became a paramount aspect of teachings in school curriculums.<sup>49</sup> Succinctly stated, "Devotion to the state and to the emperor were primary values in the ethical system transmitted by the Japanese public educational system."<sup>50</sup> Through these methodologies, the Japanese Government was able to unify Japan's separate provinces and social groups under a centralized system of loyalty.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> William R. Patterson, "BUSHIDO'S ROLE IN THE GROWTH OF PRE-WORLD WAR II JAPANESE NATIONALISM." *Journal Of Asian Martial Arts* 17, no. 3: 8. 2008. Supplemental Index, EBSCOhost (accessed September 8, 2018). 9.

<sup>48</sup> Patterson, 14.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

## Adaptations & Socio-Cultural Contributions

Traditional schools of Bushido have evolved into a plethora of modern conceptualizations. Stark codes of conduct, which once determined a Samurai warrior's behavior, have become less rigid and more expansive, applying to all social classes. A key example of this may be exhibited through the work of Jennifer Winter. In *Neo-Bushido: Neomedieval Animé and Japanese Essence*, she identifies how modern conceptualizations of traditional Bushido, known as 'Neo-Bushido', have become imbedded within Japanese media and the entertainment industry.<sup>52</sup> Concepts of the medieval Samurai have been used to reimagine the warrior spirit of ancient Japan in the 21st century. Based on historical reality and fictions centered on Samurai which date back centuries; television, comics, animation, games and cinema have galvanized stories of Bushido-related heroism.<sup>53</sup> Winter emphasizes, "When Japanese artists adapt their own historical periods into anime, the chosen periods tend toward...periods such as the early modern Tokugawa era (1603-1868)...."<sup>54</sup> In stories of fantasy, the heroic figure often portrayed by a Samurai adhering to the warrior code carries, "the burden of his life-long responsibility at the expense of his happiness."<sup>55</sup> Winter further indicates how popular films like Akira Kurasawa's *The Seven Samurai* (1954), cultivated a new expression of the honorable and esoteric cultural practices from the Warring States in the Tokugawa period.<sup>56</sup>

In correlation with Winter's analysis, Mathew Foust identifies how ancient Japanese stories of the Samurai have resurfaced in modern Japanese culture. A famous historical event which has been portrayed in fictional novels and recently in cinema, is 'The Forty-Seven

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<sup>52</sup> Jennifer de Winter, "Neo-Bushido: Neomedieval Animé and Japanese Essence." In *Neomedievalism in the Media: Essays on Film, Television, and Electronic Games*, 83-102. 2012. Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2012. MLA International Bibliography, EBSCOhost (accessed August 30, 2018). 83.

<sup>53</sup> Winter, 84.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 93-94.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 97.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 97.

Ronin'.<sup>57</sup> Foust's mention of the Forty-Seven ('Ronin' denoting Samurai who are without a master), relates to readapted conceptualizations of honor and loyalty of a modernized Bushido Code.

Foust discusses the historical events of the story in detail:

...A group of samurai are bereft of their lord, Asano Takumi no Kami, who is compelled to perform hara kiri (ritual suicide) for assaulting - after considerable provocation - a court official, Kotsuke no Suke. The forty-seven samurai avenge their master's honor by killing Kotsuke no Suke, but not before several months of waiting and planning and a failed attempt to persuade him to attempt hara kiri as recompense for the death he brought upon their lord. In turn, having committed murder, the forty-seven are sentenced to commit hara kiri, a fate which they accept nobly. The forty-seven see it as "the duty of faithful and loyal men" to avenge their master, exhibiting thoroughgoing devotion to their cause, believing it to have value over and against that of their own individual lives.<sup>58</sup>

Described by Foust and Winter, to emphasize the way modern entertainment industries draw from stories to recreate the image of Bushido and Samurai, this story has been projected through the 2013 film *47 Ronin*.<sup>59</sup> Although reimagined as historical fantasy, the film identifies the significance of 18<sup>th</sup> century historical events that surround the Ronin and their actions following the way of Bushido; exacting justice on behalf of their dishonored master and accepting death as their duty.<sup>60</sup>

### **Budo Martial Arts**

Winter and Foust illustrate that Bushido has been reformed and utilized in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for cultural entertainment in Japanese society. To ascertain how Bushido has become entrenched in a variety of other cultural aspects throughout Japan, we refer to Simon Dodd and

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<sup>57</sup> Mathew A. Foust, "Nitobe and Royce: Bushidō and the Philosophy of Loyalty." *Philosophy East And West: A Quarterly Of Comparative Philosophy* 65, no. 4: 1174-1193. 2015. MLA International Bibliography, EBSCOhost (accessed August 30, 2018). 1176.

<sup>58</sup> Foust, 1177.

<sup>59</sup> "The 47 Rōnin," Samurai Archives. Accessed August 30, 2018. <https://www.samurai-archives.com/ronin.html>.

<sup>60</sup> Daniel Krupa, "10 Things You Need to Know About 47 Ronin," IGN. November 4, 2018. Accessed August 30, 2018.

David Brown's article on martial arts. In *Kata - The true essence of Budo martial arts?* Dodd and Brown state that Bushido spiritualism lead the martial art 'Bujutsu' to evolve into modern 'Budo'.<sup>61</sup> For their analysis, they review the Kamakura period to reiterate the influence Bushido held in martial arts evolution.<sup>62</sup> They distinctly state, "For clarity any reference to bushido is in relation to bujutsu within the Kamakura to pre-Meiji restoration period (pre-1868), and any links to budo are referring to the modern form of the martial arts."<sup>63</sup> To supplement this affirmation, Dodd and Brown discuss the variance between the meaning behind Bujutsu and Budo. They suggest the latter martial art form's translation binds it to Confucian and Buddhist concepts of Bushido:

Respected karate-ka Kousaku Yokota explains how Bujutsu could be considered the "art of fighting or killing" and encompasses a 'win at all costs' mentality required for battlefield survival (Yokota, 2010, p. 185). Conversely, Budo could be considered the "art of living or life" and enables a practitioner to live "honestly and righteously or at least with principles". Expanding on both these points, Deshimaru (1982, p. 11; p. 46) reports that the ideogram for bu means to "the cease the struggle" and that "in Budo the point is... to find peace and mastery of the self".<sup>64</sup>

Todd and Brown indicate Budo to be a redevelopment of traditional Kamakura period martial arts principles; inferring that Budo defines the way of the warrior through roots in religious ethics and philosophy.

### **Prevalence in Modern Medicine**

In transition from cultural associations between Bushido and martial arts, Doctors Nishigori, Harrison, Busari and Dornan advocate that Bushido's virtues are prevalent in Japanese medical professionalism. The article, *Bushido and Medical Professionalism in Japan*, identifies

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<sup>61</sup> Dodd, Simon, and David Brown. "Kata - The true essence of Budo martial arts? / Kata - ¿ La verdadera esencia de las artes marciales Budo?" *Revista De Artes Marciales Asiaticas* 11, no. 1: 32-47. 2016. SPORTDiscus with Full Text, EBSCOhost (accessed August 30, 2018). 33-34.

<sup>62</sup> Dodd, Simon, and David Brown, 33-34.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 34.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

the seven principal virtues of Bushido as described by Inazo Nitobe within *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*.<sup>65</sup> Nishigori and his colleagues suggest each virtue bears similar principles to the expectations of staff in medicine. Clear comparisons are further drawn between Bushido virtues and their physician charter that list commitments and expectations to which doctors are held:

Comparisons of Bushido and the physician charter can provide fresh insights into the understanding of professionalism.... The charter calls for altruism from doctors, a concept that has a long tradition in Western thought.<sup>16</sup> The Japanese way of upholding the primacy of patient welfare is to practice a blend of rectitude, benevolence, and loyalty. Similarly, although the concept of social justice per se may not prevail in the Japanese health care system, the concepts of rectitude, honor, and loyalty together represent social justice.<sup>66</sup>

Despite these similarities, the article does identify examples of variance between Bushido virtues and medical professionalism. Contemporary practices of displaying positive emotions with patients are alien to cultural behavior associated with traditional Bushido.<sup>67</sup> In past centuries, it was inappropriate for one to display signs of emotion, but to maintain self-control. This Bushido belief has been reformed to allow for displays of emotion.<sup>68</sup> However, the article conclusively reaffirms Bushido's connection with medical practice, "its concepts are applicable to discussions of medical professionalism for those teaching and practicing in Japan."<sup>69</sup>

### **Socio-Cultural Communication Techniques**

In utilization of Bushido's seven virtues, the Samurai code has been renewed to contribute towards development of communication skills between adult Japanese couples. Composed in 2012, the empirical document *The Bushido Matrix for Couple Communication* identifies a methodology which can be employed by counseling agents to guide adults in self-

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<sup>65</sup> Nishigori, Hiroshi, Rebecca Harrison, Jamiu Busari, and Tim Dornan. "Bushido and medical professionalism in Japan." *Academic Medicine* 89, no. 4: 560-563. 2014. PsycINFO, EBSCOhost (accessed August 30, 2018). 561.

<sup>66</sup> Hiroshi, Harrison, Busari, and Dornan, 562.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 563.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 563.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 563.

reflection and share emotions with their partner. This activity centers on the ‘Bushido Matrix Worksheet’ (BMW).<sup>70</sup> The authors accentuate, “practicing Bushido virtues can ultimately enhance intra- and interpersonal relationship, beginning with personal awareness and extending to couple awareness.”<sup>71</sup> When utilizing the matrix, a couple is asked to identify one of the seven virtues and apply it to their past and current perceptions surrounding its prevalence in their lives.<sup>72</sup> If individuals identify their relationship to be absent that specific virtue, they may now ponder of its inclusion for their benevolence.<sup>73</sup> Actualization of counseling techniques through Bushido virtues has become a substantial aspect of social relationship counseling.

### **Manifestations of Egalitarianism**

Bushido affects a myriad of aspects in Japanese society and culture. In addition to impacts on military performance, media, entertainment, martial arts, medicine and social work, the Bushido code has catalyzed corporate behavior. Shinya Fujimura examines Samurai ethics in the academic article *The Samurai Ethics: A Paradigm for Corporate Behavior*. Bushido principles indicate that rapid economic growth does not have to be a goal of modern existence.<sup>74</sup> Relatedly, economic contentment is attainable regardless of hegemonic gross-domestic product statistics.<sup>75</sup> In Fujimura’s words, “The tradition permeates the country's corporate culture and has informed many of its social developments.”<sup>76</sup> Fujimura states egalitarian principles practiced by the Samurai have permeated through modern business society and culture. Principles like

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<sup>70</sup> Li, Chi-Sing, Yu-Fen Lin, Phil Ginsburg, and Daniel Eckstein, "The Bushido Matrix for Couple Communication." *Family Journal* 20, no. 3: 299-305. 2012. Criminal Justice Abstracts, EBSCOhost (accessed August 30, 2018). 299.

<sup>71</sup> Chi-Sing, Lin, Ginsburg and Eckstein, 301.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 301.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 302.

<sup>74</sup> Shinya Fujimura, "The Samurai Ethics: A Paradigm for Corporate Behavior." *Harvard Kennedy School Review* 11, 212-215. 2011. Academic Search Ultimate, EBSCOhost (accessed August 30, 2018). 212.

<sup>75</sup> Fujimura, 213.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 214.

Honorable Poverty, “Seihin,” encourage those with power and resources to share their wealth, directly influencing national success.<sup>77</sup> Bushido also provides enterprises with social meaning. Eloquenty described by Fujimura, “The moral purpose that bushido articulates transcends booms and busts....it is often said that a Japanese company is like a family, with executives caring about employees and employees showing respect to executives. Bushido, then, is part of the basis for a sense of national identity and belonging—an ideal that says the Japanese are one people, in it together.”<sup>78</sup> It is from this sense of unity that the Bushido principle of egalitarianism stems throughout Japanese corporate behavior.

## **Conclusions**

Bushido permeates Japanese society and culture, manifesting in various forms from military behavior and cinematic depictions to social welfare practices and corporate humility. Analysis of these varied socio-cultural aspects of Japan enhances modern understandings of history. Furthermore, Bushido-competency enables historians to better utilize information for future study; through bridging the gaps between Hakagure-influenced militarism and more beneficent Confucian and Buddhist ideals. Significantly, modern Japanese culture has (and may likely continue), to transform Bushido principles into numerous sources of empowerment needed within society. Created for the warrior class in service to rulers, Bushido exists to defend the citizens of Japan, that they might draw strength from the traditions and virtues of their ancestors. That is Bushido. The Way of The Samurai.

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<sup>77</sup> Fujimura, 214.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 215.

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