

Bushido 武士道: *The Way of the Warrior*

The Code of the Samurai

The Samurai Virtues

- Justice (義 *gi*)
- Courage (勇氣 *yūki*)
- Mercy (仁 *jin*)
- Courtesy (禮 *rei*)
- Honest (誠 *makoto*)
- Honor (名譽 *meiyo*)
- Loyalty (忠義 *chūgi*)
- Related virtues of
 - Respect for parents and ancestors (孝 *kō*)
 - Care for the old (悌 *tei*)
 - Wisdom (智 *chi*)



Justice (義 *gi*) – *Rectitude or Integrity*

Right judgment when judgment is called for. To strike when it is right to strike. To do the right thing at the right time. The use of authority only to uphold what is right is the warriors way.

The Bushido Code means personal integrity as well as professional integrity. Integrity is the strongest principle of Bushido.

The power to decide upon a course of action using reason, without wavering.

This is a trait that we should expect in men, in particular those involved in politics or public service. This sense of justice is often superseded by the idea of doing what's best for the greater good.

Courage (勇氣 *yūki*) – *Self-Sacrifice or Bravery*

To admit your mistakes. To sacrifice yourself to save someone. To stand up for your decisions. The ability to face danger or hardship and keep your self esteem is the warriors way.

The Bushido Code sees courage only as part of action when doing the right thing. Courage only exists in integrity.

Courage is doing what is right. Bravery is common amongst many men, but how many show courage? The ability to admit mistakes is an essential quality for men, who often prefer, instead, to cover their tracks and hope they don't get found out.

Mercy (仁 *jin*) – *Kindness or Compassion*

Love, affection for others, sympathy and a strength of mind and character towards other people. To do good, show compassion and be charitable is the warriors way.

The Bushido Code invests a man with the power to command only while showing compassion and mercy. The highest requirement of a ruler of men is compassion.

Today's society sets great store by compassion and examples of it abound. Many men see this as weakness and not appropriate to masculinity, on the contrary it shows enormous power.

Courtesy (禮 *rei*) – Politeness or Respect

Courtesy and excellent manners. A sympathy for the feelings of others. To show respect and treat with equality is the warriors way. The Bushido Code sees that for a man courtesy and good manners are rooted in compassion. It must not be motivated by a fear of offending good taste. In its highest form Politeness approaches love. This form of politeness is not common in western society. It is seen as old fashioned and rather quaint. Men would benefit from a greater understanding of it.



Honesty (誠 *makoto*) – Truthfulness or Sincerity

Lying is cowardly and dishonorable. Your word should be taken as a sign of truthfulness. Honesty, accuracy and precision is the warriors way. The Bushido Code says that honesty involves abstinence and simplicity. Riches get in the way of understanding so thrift was encouraged to encourage trust and sincerity. Severe simplicity was required of the warrior class. How rare is true honesty such as this. We all seem to think it's OK to lie if it is for a greater good. We shouldn't tell the truth if it will hurt someone, we are led to believe. What a shift in society there would if we all adhered to this concept of honesty.

Honor (名誉 *meiyo*) – Dignity or Nobility

An honorable person is a humble person. Without honor you have no respect and without respect no honor is the warriors way. The Bushido Code deals with the profession of fighting but it is equally concerned with normal behavior. A sense of honor, personal dignity and worth characterized the Samurai. True patience means bearing the unbearable. I'm not sure we truly understand what honor is today. Honor is supposed to be the most important code for soldiers and yet in today's world of terrorism anything is thought to be OK. Surely this is wrong and betrays others and ourselves.

Loyalty (忠義 *chūgi*) – Faithfulness or Devotion

To be loyal to your family, your masters, your peers and Bushido. Faithful to your family, friends, country, and ideals is the warriors way. The Bushido Code requires men to remain loyal to those to whom they are indebted. Loyalty to a superior was the most distinctive virtue of the code. Personal fidelity should exist among all men. Only in the code of Honor does Loyalty assume importance. Nowadays we feel we can be loyal if there is something in it for us. Loyalty can be bought at a price. Gone are the days when we were loyal to others no matter what. Gone are the days of adherence to a code such as the Bushido Code.



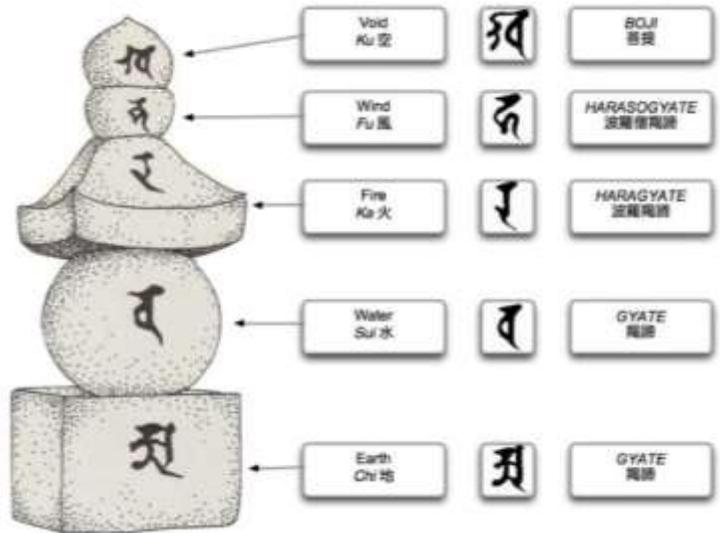
The Book of Five Rings 五輪書

A manual of samurai sword fighting by Miyamoto Musashi

"Two Swords, One Spirit"

Musashi is widely believed to have been the best swordsman in all of ancient Japan. He was a samurai master of the "two sword style," using a short sword and a long sword.

These books are from the teachings which Musashi preached to his students in his dōjō (school). The five "books" refer to the idea that there are different elements of battle, just as there are different physical elements in life, as described by Buddhism, Shinto, and other Eastern religions. The five books below are Musashi's descriptions of the exact methods or techniques which are described by such elements.



The Book of Earth

This book serves as an introduction, and discusses martial arts, leadership, and training.

- *Know the smallest things and the biggest things, the shallowest things and the deepest things. As if it were a straight road mapped out on the ground ... These things cannot be explained in detail. From one thing, know ten thousand things. When you attain the Way of strategy there will not be one thing you cannot see. You must study hard.*
- *Timing is important in dancing and pipe or string music, for they are in rhythm only if timing is good. Timing and rhythm are also involved in the military arts, shooting bows and guns, and riding horses. In all skills and abilities there is timing.... There is timing in the whole life of the warrior, in his thriving and declining, in his harmony and discord. Similarly, there is timing in the Way of the merchant, in the rise and fall of capital. All things entail rising and falling timing. You must be able to discern this. In strategy there are various timing considerations. From the outset you must know the applicable timing and the inapplicable timing, and from among the large and small things and the fast and slow timings find the relevant timing, first seeing the distance timing and the background timing. This is the main thing in strategy. It is especially important to know the background timing, otherwise your strategy will become uncertain.*

The Book of Water

This book describes Musashi's style, Ni-ten ichi-ryu, or "Two Heavens (swords), One Style (spirit)". It describes some basic technique and fundamental principles.

- *In strategy your spiritual bearing must not be any different from normal. Both in fighting and in everyday life you should be determined though calm.*
- *Your attitude should be large or small according to the situation. Upper, Lower and Middle attitudes are decisive. Left Side and Right Side attitudes are fluid. Left and Right attitudes should be used if there is an obstruction overhead or to one side. The decision to use Left or Right depends on the place.*
- *This is the most important method of hitting. It is often used. You must train hard to understand it.*

The Book of Fire

This book refers to the heat of battle, and discusses matters such as different types of timing.

- *As one man can defeat ten men, so can one thousand men defeat ten thousand. However, you can become a master of strategy by training alone with a sword, so that you can understand the enemy's stratagems, his strength and resources, and come to appreciate how to apply strategy to beat ten thousand enemies.*
- *You must look down on the enemy, and take up your attitude on slightly higher places.*
- *These things cannot be clearly explained in words. You must research what is written here. In these three ways of forestalling, you must judge the situation. This does not mean that you always attack first; but if the enemy attacks first you can lead him around. In strategy, you have effectively won when you forestall the enemy, so you must train well to attain this.*



The Book of Wind

The Japanese character for wind can mean both "wind" and "style" (that is, type of martial art). This book discusses what Musashi considers to be the failings of other schools of sword fighting.

- *If you rely on strength, when you hit the enemy's sword you will inevitably hit too hard. If you do this, your own sword will be carried along as a result. Thus the saying, "The strongest hand wins", has no meaning.*
In large-scale strategy, if you have a strong army and are relying on strength to win, but the enemy also has a strong army, the battle will be fierce. This is the same for both sides.
Without the correct principle the fight cannot be won.
The spirit of my school is to win through the wisdom of strategy, paying no attention to trifles. Study this well.
- *Speed is not part of the true Way of strategy. Speed implies that things seem fast or slow, according to whether or not they are in rhythm. Whatever the Way, the master of strategy does not appear fast.*

The Book of Nothingness (the Void)

This book describes Musashi's probably Zen-influenced thoughts on consciousness and the correct mindset.

- *By knowing things that exist, you can know that which does not exist.*
- *In the void is virtue, and no evil. Wisdom has existence, principle has existence, the Way has existence, spirit is nothingness.*

