



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

Bushido: The Spirit of Japan

Tool to mold the ethical future of Iceland?

Ritgerð til B.A. - prófs

Hákon Óttar Hjörvarsson

September 2012

Háskóli Íslands
Hugvísindasvið
Japanskt mál og menning

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Abstract

Atheism has been gaining ground in the Western world since the turn of the millennium and according to national statistics more and more people are coming away from organized religion. Religious education in schools has been banned and this may be worrying to some since it might be difficult to impart moral education without religious influence. After Inazo Nitobe had a conversation with a friend sometime in the year 1894 concerning just that topic, he decided that he needed to explain how the Japanese managed to teach moral ethics and social values through the disciplines of Bushido and wrote the book *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. To find out whether or not Bushido is adequate, I will first look at the common rules of Christianity, then look at the seven major disciplines of Bushido. Then I will show how the institution of Christianity has been used as a tool for social behavioral modification and then go into comparison marking each of the seven major disciplines of Bushido in turn. The goal of this thesis is not to prove whether or not it is possible to impart moral education without religious influence, but whether or not Bushido can replace Christianity as a tool to teach moral ethics and social behavior in the growing atheism in Iceland.

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Introduction

In the year 1889, Émile Louis Victor de Laveleye asked Inazo Nitobe if the Japanese did not have any religious instruction in schools. Nitobe confirmed that there was none and de Laveleye replied "How do you impart moral education?" (Nitobe 2004). Nitobe decided that the moral code of Japan ought to be clarified. His theory was that the moral code imprinted into the Japanese psyche was founded on the base of feudalism and bushido and without understanding those concepts, Japan would remain a mystery to any outsider. Thus, he wrote his book, *Bushido, the Soul of Japan* and published his first edition in 1899 (2004).

In the opinion of de Laveleye, it would be difficult to impart moral education without religion, if not entirely impossible. Yet, in Japan it seems to have been done. According to the Agency of Cultural Affairs in Japan a vast majority of the population practices Buddhist and Shinto (2011). Yet the majority of the people behind these numbers, according to Reischauer (1988), do not consider themselves religious (p. 215). Nitobe claimed that the moral upbringing of Japan did not have religious roots. He believed that the customs of Bushido, the mostly unwritten code of conduct of the samurai, was what taught him the difference between right and wrong in his youth, "for the moral precepts I learned in my childhood days, were not given in schools." (2004).

The history and development of Bushido is long, taking centuries to form and did not come together in a collected printing till at the end of the 19th century. The code of Bushido may seem simple, counting only seven virtues to its name. But the important question to consider is whether or not Bushido is relevant to the modern age or even the future.

Ever since the year 1000, Iceland has had a national religion and the majority of Icelanders today are registered as being part of the Lutheran church. Recently however there have been changes in the public mind and more and more people are unregistering themselves from the national church of Iceland. Some register with a different sect but many declare themselves outside religion. Twenty years ago, it was perfectly acceptable to teach Christianity in class. Later, in that same class was changed into religious teachings, focusing more on introducing children and teenagers to the major religions around the globe. But in 2011, the city council of Reykjavík passed a motion to ban religious communities to spread their message inside pre-schools as well as schools for children up to the 10th grade (Mbl.is, 2011). In the eyes of the likes of de Laveleye that could very well spell the beginning of the end of civilization as we know it, with its moral structure thus under attack.

The Japanese example shows that civilization works and evolves without a religious dogma looming over them. This suggests that it does not have to be religion that teaches ethics and morality. Rather, there is a need for an organized body of rules and enthymemes. As Bushido is not a religion it is well suited to fill the religious gap that is forming in Iceland. Does Bushido contain all the principles that are needed to build the moral guidelines, teach the needed societal rules and reach the enthymemes for needed without the aid of a religion? This essay will either prove it to be adequate or that it is not.

Within the essay there will be a frequent reference to the teachers of the ethics and the students, by which the teacher could be anyone of seniority, such as a parent, an elder sibling, a teacher at school, an instructor in a work environment or play and the student is anyone of minority, such as a child, a younger sibling, a student at school and a subordinate in a work environment.

All of the Bible quotations used in this essay are from the New International Version (1984).

1. Christian commandments and testaments

Christianity has been a part of the Icelandic culture for over a thousand years. The conversion for Icelanders over to Christianity went fairly smoothly, since the church was lenient on the old customs of the old Nordic religions. Some of these customs Christianity simply assimilated into its own, such as Yule and Easter. Others customs, such as sacrifices were merely tolerated. But the main reason for the ease of conversion is probably linked to the fact that there are many examples in the Christian teachings that are logical and ethically sound. Because of this the religion as a whole has been so widely accepted. This is not singularly true for Christianity, since the same applies to Islam, Judaism, Hinduism etc.

Within the Christian teaching, the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament are the ones Christians most commonly remember and refer to for the basic moralistic behavior norms and they are mostly filled with rules designed to ensure peace and prosperity amongst people. Their structure and message is easy to read, and their purpose is logical. The Ten Commandments are as follows:

1. You shall not worship other gods; the meaning is to encourage people not to follow a different set of rules, to create harmony in the social group and ensure the people all follow the same rules.
2. You shall not use the lords name in vain; not to take these rules lightly nor for granted.
3. Keep the Sabbath; do not overwork yourselves, remember to rest to allow the body to recuperate and regain strength to do the weeks work.
4. Honor your mother and father; respect for those who came before, for they have lived longer and know how to instruct the young to do the same, as well as to ensure the obedience and minimize the chance of rebellion from the young.
5. You shall not commit murder; a straight forward message that anyone with a logical mind should understand, they do not wish to die thus they should not kill others because they do not wish to die either.
6. You shall not commit adultery; remain faithful to your spouse and your family or you risk losing them all, thus be excluded from the social group.
7. You shall not steal; same logic as with the fifth. If people do not wish to be robbed of their possessions, they should not commit the same sin.
8. You shall not lie; same logic as with the fifth and seventh.
9. You shall not covet your neighbors possessions; same logic as with stealing, with the added notion that it is best to be on good terms with the surrounding populous. Human beings survive and prosper the best in groups, thus being on good terms with the neighbor meant greater chances of survival.
10. You shall not covet your neighbors wife, servant, livestock or anything in his possession; again, emphasizing the importance of keeping the harmony in society.

Judeo-Christian doctrine uses repetition to emphasize and ground in lessons of importance as displayed in the Ten Commandments. The commandments are but a fraction of what the institution of Christianity uses to condition its followers. Judeo-Christian teachings have much and more to offer. This monotheistic religion has an over 6000 years of development and is firmly engraved into the Icelandic culture.

2. Bushido, disciplines and rules

The development of Bushido comes through many years of conflict. The word, Bushido, literally means: warrior way, or warrior path. To simplify it is: "The way of the Warrior". The warrior class in Japan were an upper class, men who served directly under a lord as their vassals for war. In order to make certain that samurai wouldn't simply dominate Japan with a grip of absolute tyranny, there had to be certain rules, or in the words of Nitobe "they soon felt the need of a common standard of behavior," as well as "If military interest had operated alone, without higher moral support, how far short of chivalry would the ideal of knighthood [samuraihood] have fallen!" (2004, Kindle Locations 149-150).

The seven major disciplines of Bushido can be compared and found to be similar to the Judeo-Christian Ten Commandments as well as some of the other means of passages in the Bible. These disciplines were created as mention before to make an even footing for relations, to ensure all performed with the utmost excellent chivalric mind. The disciplines are what make up the base for the ethical system.

1. Rectitude or justice. Nitobe quotes "A well-known bushi defines it as a power of resolution;—"Rectitude is the power of deciding upon a certain course of conduct in accordance with reason, without wavering;—to die when it is right to die, to strike when to strike is right."." (2004, Kindle Locations 245-247). The importance to act correctly at any given moment.
2. Courage. To Nitobe this discipline is synonymous with fortitude, bravery and valor. The ability to act when needed and not falter when the moment comes.
3. Benevolence. The discipline of benevolence is what covers all that is gentle. While rectitude is to do what is righteous and courage is the driving force of righteousness it is benevolence that stays the figurative blade of the samurai. To know the difference of when the time comes.
4. Politeness. The outward manifestation of benevolence. Politeness is not merely gestures but the whole demeanor of the warrior in all things. To achieve perfection in everything the warrior undertakes.
5. Honesty. Fairly self explanatory, though probably the least emphasized of all the disciplines. To be dishonest is to show weakness and thus degrade the warriors honor.
6. Honor. The immortal part of the warriors existence. What separated them from the bestial rest. Greatly used to keep the behavior of those lacking in benevolence and politeness in check. Shame was the greatest wound a samurai could be inflicted with, for it stained his immortality.
7. Loyalty. Unyielding loyalty to the one who is above one in the hierarchy. The discipline to exact complete and utter control over those who serve under the

rulers without hesitation. With it solidifying all the other disciplines in place. To show complete loyalty, the samurai needed to do all the above.

These seven disciplines give the ground for the societal system of Bushido, which according to Nitobe were the foundation of the ethical and social structure of Japan.

3. Findings and comparisons

3.1) Christian social construction

Christianity benefits from the ages of Judaism that it is based upon, as Linda C. Lasure and William L. Mikulas in their study in 1996 show, rules and traditions passed down from elder to child as, similarly to what they refer to as Premack's theory of reinforcement often called "Grandma's rule". According to their studies, even the word "testament" means "covenant" or an agreement of behavior between God and man. Firstly, between the Hebrews and God in the Old Testament, then between Christ and man in the New Testament. According to Lasure and Mikulas, these contracts of behavior each serve their purpose, as "a large number of reinforces and punishers dependent on following the Commandments and Jewish laws and customs (e.g. Deuteronomy 28 : 1-64)" (1996 p. 563).

They continue to elaborate how, especially, early Christian communities used numerous ways to strengthen their bonds and society. They use examples such as "Carry each other's burdens ... do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Galatians 6:2, 10); "Look after orphans and widows in their distress" (James 1:27); "Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality" (Romans 12: 13). They go on to talk about heaven and hell, the most powerful reinforcement agent and the most feared punishment of the religion. These concept are linked with the afterlife, reinforced greatly with the passage: "A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:7 8). Because of the delay from life to the afterlife, the community as a whole would encourage behavior and deeds to make the afterlife better, as well as punish acts that would tarnish the road to heaven. This was encouraged with numerous passages such as "I have set an example that you should do as I have done" (John 13: 15). "Therefore I urge you to imitate me" (I Corinthians 4: 16) and "Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:4-7). In a sense, the Christians and the Jews before them, had discovered Pavlov's "conditioned reflex" theory, using numerous stimuli to modify people's behavior psychologically. According to Lasure and Mikulas, Christians went as far as to attempt to control thought with words such as; "anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:21-22, 27 28) and "if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things" (II Corinthians 10 : 5; Philippians 4: 8). (1996).

Christians were aware of difficulties, even persecution that they might face, but even the hardest of tasks and times were accounted for in the conditioning, Matthew 5:2-11 clearly gives ample cause not to have their faith shaken, regardless if one is poor, hungry, grieving, or even persecuted by their adversaries, for "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." (Matthew 5:7-9).

The bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, are written in such a way that most of the doctrine is woven together and much emphasizes what came before it. Incorporating very old literature and values to indoctrinate anyone of a different background.

Christianity reached Japan and has left a greater mark on its society than the number of Christians in Japan would show. According to Reischauer (1988), Christian influence on Japanese is so great that he claims they have a "clearer concept of the history and basic beliefs of Christianity than they do of Buddhism." (p.213). He even goes so far to give, as he calls it, a superficial example of how Japanese people behave concerning Christmas season. "As the Japanese turned increasingly to universalistic values, they adopted many ethical attitudes that both historically in the West and in the Japanese mind today are associated with Christianity." He goes on to say that the influence of Christianity on Japanese ethical values are "at least more recognizable if not actually greater than the influence of either Buddhism or Shinto." Reischauer even goes so far as to say that "they often envy the apparent firmness of Christian beliefs, though they find themselves unable to accept the accompanying theology." (p.213).

3.2) Bushido social construction and comparisons

The history of Bushido according to Nitobe is deeply rooted in philosophy, Buddhism and Shintoism. The philosophy linked with Bushido comes mostly from Confucius and Mencius. Although Nitobe claims that the samurai already had the racial instinct of Confucius's wisdom on the five moral relations between the "master and servant (the governing and the governed), father and son, husband and wife, older and younger brother and between friend and friend," (2004, Kindle Location 197). Yet if looked upon in a different context, it is likely that the samurai had access to, and accepted this Confucian doctrine because of its logical and ethical wisdom similarly as the Germanic nations accepted Christianity in the Middle Ages. For

example, the biblical reference of Cain and Abel in *Beowulf* for the sin of kin slaying, since wergild within a family was impossible (Drout 2009, p. 65).

The distribution and development of Bushido has a probable parallel to Christianity in Europe, namely literature and oral composition, similarly, missionaries went through Europe spreading the word of Christ with the Bible and with parables. Likewise did the Buddhist monks spread the stories of valiant heroes, fighting honorably; dying in battle; showing proper mercy, or in short, following the way of the warrior. These were called gunki-monogatari or war tales, of which the most famous was the *Heike monogatari*. According to Butler, the *Heike monogatari* "provided a model for the attitudes and standards of conduct of the warrior class until the nineteenth century, and even into the twentieth centuries." (1969). The Japanese, through these stories, learned to appropriate their behavior to the behavior of the honorable samurai that were given credit for all the sacrifice and courageous deeds they performed.

Being so deeply rooted in the Japanese culture of Buddhism and Shintoism, it wasn't difficult for the Japanese to accept it. A similar concept is drawn in the Anglo-Saxon culture where Jesus Christ was depicted as a warrior knight in *The Dream of the Rood* "Then that young hero, who was God Almighty, stripped himself, strong and firm-minded. He mounted upon the loathsome gallows, mighty in the sight of many, when he chose to save mankind." (Drout, 2009 p. 55). Drout describes how this way the Anglo-Saxon is further indoctrinated towards Christianity by casting Christ not as a victim for the sins of humanity, but as the warrior "mounting up onto the cross and embracing his death." (2009, p. 55).

But as mentioned, Bushido draws its background from the philosophy that is the basis for the moral system in most of East Asia. What Nitobe claims in his text is that all of the wisdom of the great masters comes together in Bushido and from it stems the moral system that Japan was raised with to become the great nation it is today.

3.2.1) Justice

Justice/righteousness is the first of the seven major disciplines of Bushido. Nitobe quotes Mencius saying that, "Righteousness, according to Mencius, is a straight and narrow path which a man ought to take to regain the lost paradise." (2004, Kindle Locations 253-254). To even further the understanding of the concept of righteousness, Nitobe mentions "the epithet *Gishi* (a man of rectitude)" and makes the example of the Forty-seven rōnin being now known as the "Forty-seven *Gishi*" (2004, Kindle Location 257).

This discipline is at the same time the ground for which everything else is built and the highest ideal or as an unnamed samurai Nitobe quotes giving rectitude the simile of the bone structure within our bodies, "without bones the head cannot rest on the top of the spine, nor hands move nor feet stand," (2004, Kindle Location 248). Rectitude is the structure upon which everything else is built. It is the rule of right and wrong in the most basic context. In simple terms, to do right is to be righteous and thus to follow the discipline of rectitude as set by Bushido.

However, what is right for one can be wrong for another and thus a problem arises. The answer to that problem is found in the Golden Rule of Confucius, "Do not do unto other persons as you would not want them to do unto you.", which is nearly identical to Christ's Golden Rule "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." with the subtle difference of the negative. It is easier to sync Confucius's meaning as people can never account for what each individual wishes for themselves, but it is easy to assume what people as a whole do not wish for themselves. People do not wish to come under harm, famine, disease, cruelty or any other negative thing one person can inflict upon the other. If one person can imagine for themselves what they do not wish for themselves, they can imagine that others wish for similar things and by following that instinct they are indeed following the discipline of rectitude. With the example of the Forty-seven Gishi, they were clearly ready to die for their actions as they committed ritual suicide after completing the task of avenging their master's death, so they acted in accordance to Bushido.

Across cultures, races, religions there are certain human instincts that are shared; mainly the need to survive and procreate. Through these instincts we have learned how to feed, clothe, build, create languages etc. In the evolution of mankind, humans learned that the chances for both survival and procreation were greatly increased in groups, or tribes. Through much trial and error or simple natural selection those who progressed forward were those learned what they wished and wished not for themselves and realized that by not doing unto others what they did not wish for themselves made for the greatest chance of survival and procreation. Logic would then dictate that if everyone behaved such, there would be no wars or conflict, but when looked at the larger picture it is clear that humans are capable of risking much to gain more, furthering the chance of his tribe's survival.

To return to the Golden Rule of Confucius, it can easily persuade a student of ethics the basics of how to behave righteously. Through the human instincts of what each individual wishes and wishes not for themselves, they instinctively behave in accordance with the discipline of

rectitude and the only thing the teacher needs to is to emphasize the point of the Golden Rule to the student.

However, conflict is often necessary to get ahead in the world, be it in negotiations of deals between companies; getting a law passed in Congress; even the inner conflict of approaching a potential mate.

As important conflict may be, righteousness can also be woven the fifth commandment, "Do not murder." (Matthew 19:18). Just as well as the Matthew 5:7-9 passages fit clearly within the discipline of justice. In Deuteronomy 6:25 "And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness." and again in 16:20 " Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the Lord your God is giving you." This passage may as well as have come from Bushido, for it can easily be translated into "to do right is to be righteous".

3.2.2) Courage

It is clear the importance the samurai placed upon justice but as important was the second discipline of courage. As a moral principle it is difficult to teach courage without cruelty and thus lessen the difficulty of an obstacle. By having the student become accustomed to the hardship he or she may face, the student gains knowledge how to act and react in any situation. The way to prepare the student for such encounters is to have a solid communication line with the teacher so that the teacher is able to relay his or her own experience for given situations in modern society.

In modern society, the need for courage is not presently a matter of survival, although it is a matter of social status. For the student to get what he or she needs, and must display courage by being able to stand up and speak for what is required to progress in whatever task is undertaken. But when the situation calls for it, there needs to be a different kind of courage to stop and take instruction for what is needed, as none becomes a master without lessons, where pride must take a backseat to wisdom.

So as said, courage is not needed for survival in the present day, but it stands to be greatly beneficial for the quality of life. As the popular idiom goes, "nothing ventured, nothing gained." There are great many versions of the same proverb, all meaning that if a person has the courage to act is far more likely to succeed in life than the person who does not try. Why

anyone would not automatically choose to display courage whenever needed is not difficult to explain.

As mentioned before, survival and procreation are at the basic core of humanity, thus the fear of the unknown was much justified. Those who did not fear were quick to perish, be it at the claw or tooth of an animal. Another kind of fear, one that is much more relevant presently, is the fear of social rejection and the effect it has on the lives of those who experience it. Examples of such persons would be the young man who shies from opening a conversation with a young woman he is attracted to; a young woman fails her job interview because she was unable to present her qualifications due to nervousness from the fear of social rejection. This fear was helpful in a tribal society where if a man did not know how to present himself to attract a mate he would suffer social rejection and thus he would fail to procreate. Failure to procreate meant that the person failing to do so did not leave anything behind themselves by way of heirs.

This fear is arguably the largest social hindrance in modern society ever since cities and larger communities started forming and social structures larger than a single group at any given place came to be. Because there has been this growth in the social environment, social rejection is no longer a matter of survival since there are now countless social circles anyone can move in between. The recommended method to deal with the fear of social rejection, or any fear for that matter, is to have the courage to place oneself in the threat of such rejection numerous times. Essentially, the Japanese had the right idea when imbuing their young with courage and fortitude by placing them in very difficult situations having to fend for themselves, though in modern society there are more humane ways of doing the same, such as placing the student into group sports, having the student play a musical instrument or any other activity which involves social interaction with peers. Humans have the basic instinct to fear the unknown and the solution is to familiarize the student with the situation so that the student does not need to trouble themselves with trivial matters and can focus on the real task at hand. To enact courage in a way.

In David H. Hartley's study on Commanders Courage, he summarizes the various speculations as to what courage truly is; a combination of physical, spiritual and mental thing. Hartley gives examples how Lopez, Koetting, O'Byrne and Peterson in 2003 "assessed the physical aspects of courage by defining courage with respect to one's ability to, after assessing a situation as potentially harmful or fatal, overcome the fear and proceed with the task." (2011). Further on he shows the studies of Brymer and Oades in 2009 on how they interviewed extreme sports

participants and reached the conclusion that "by overcoming their fears, the extreme sport athletes were demonstrating courage." (2011). Hartley counters Brymer and Oades with a quote from a study Woodward and Pury performed in 2007 where they redefined the definition of courage as "Courage is the voluntary willingness to act, with or without varying levels of fear, in response to a threat to achieve an important, perhaps moral, outcome or goal" where they wished to take into consideration that fear was not always a factor. Yet even all of their studies, Hartley argues that "the 30 scenarios presented situations to be coded and may not have included the full range of possible categories for courage." That is to say, to define courage and measure what it is and under what circumstance it happens is a difficult feat to achieve. (2011).

And yet, Confucius words on perceiving what is right and not doing could very well be interpreted to be lack of courage, since knowing what is right and doing it, always, is logically improbably easy. Given the studies of aforementioned scholars, Woodward and Pury, Confucius is still correct to this day. Voluntary willingness to act is synonymous with perceiving what is right and doing it.

Nitobe quotes Confucius on the matter with "'Perceiving what is right," he says, "and doing it not, argues lack of courage.'" (2004, Kindle Locations 282-283). Courage does not have a parallel in the Christian ten commandments, but in Deuteronomy 31:6 there is "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." Christian teachings also teach a different kind of courage, in the form of martyrdom and self sacrifice. It becomes very apparent when Ælfric of Eynsham writes his version of the Maccabees. According to John Halbrooks, Ælfric needed to adjust the old stories to "redefine it according to Christian ethics." This was an especially difficult task for Ælfric since he had to contend with the Old English epics such as *Beowulf*. Ælfric's task was to put apart martial courage and raise the spiritual courage of saints. (2009).

This comes in sharp contrast with what samurai wanted and needed to learn from Bushido, where martial courage was very important. Yet, Bushido does not praise foolish courage, as Nitobe quoted a Prince of Mito saying "'To rush into the thick of battle and to be slain in it," says a Prince of Mito, "is easy enough, and the merest churl is equal to the task; but," he continues, "it is true courage to live when it is right to live, and to die only when it is right to die,'" (2004, Kindle Locations 286-288). To build courage in their young mothers would scold their children for complaining of pain, "What will you do when your arm is cut off in battle?" (2004, Kindle Locations 293-294). Parents would put their children through great hardships,

some of which are very lightly emulated even today. Parents make their child at the age of one carry a 1,8 kg rice cake on their back, whilst aggravating the child by making the walk intentionally more difficult. This is not done with malice, but hope that the child will not want for food in life.

Children in feudal Japan would have to suffer at young age to be able to endure the hardships of adulthood with a calm mind and retain their composure even in heat of battle. "A truly brave man is ever serene;" (2004, Kindle Location 310). An example Nitobe presents of the samurai bravery and valor is the tale of an encounter between Sadato, a defeated foe and Yoshiie the victor after the battle at Koromo River. After shouting a challenge to the fleeing enemy, Sadato, without hesitation, answered the challenge prompting Yoshiie to let Sadato go because "he could not bear to put to shame one who had kept his presence of mind while hotly pursued by his enemy." (2004, Kindle Locations 328-329).

In his book *The Crown of Wild Olive* John Ruskin describes how he discovered war to be "the foundation of all the high virtues and faculties of men." (2008, Kindle Location 1064). He did make a distinction between three types of wars: "War for exercise or play; war for dominion; and, war for defence." (2008, Kindle Locations 1081-1082). By that he meant that not every type of war was beneficial to mankind. Ruskin felt that the conflict of country leaders should not spread to their subjects, yet he felt that the best man, or the best in man, could not be found, felt or tested "unless there is a clear possibility of the struggle's ending in death." (2008, Kindle Location 1155).

In the picture Nitobe paints of the samurai, they agreed on Ruskin's ideology. Hardship and experience was, from the viewpoint of the samurai, the only way to learn courage and fortitude in order to withstand the horrors of war. According to Nitobe, by putting their young through hardships such as exposure to cold or deprivation of food, parents were attempting to build up tolerance in their children. It was not only challenges of a physical nature, but also of mental when children were given tasks that involved going into unknown social situations, such as delivering messages. (2004).

3.2.3) Benevolence

Given the harshness of justice and courage, the need to cushion the teachings of Bushido was clearly needed, especially if the warrior class did not wish to remain in a state of war at all times. Thus the discipline of benevolence is no less important in the social structure of Bushido.

Nitobe sought the wisdom of Confucius to explain benevolence: "Confucius would say, "Let but a prince cultivate virtue, people will flock to him; with people will come to him lands; lands will bring forth for him wealth; wealth will give him the benefit of right uses. Virtue is the root, and wealth an outcome.'" (2004, Kindle Locations 345-346). Confucius explains this way, how a ruler retains his rule and prospers by it. By being fair to the people, they will accept the leadership and pay homage to the one who claims it. Nitobe also quotes Frederick the Great writing, "Kings are the first servants of the State," (2004, Kindle Locations 354-355). Thus noting that the first duty of a ruler is to the subjects and without benevolence, this would not be possible. The Christian parallel would be John 10:2-5:

"The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

The point is emphasized with John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.". Frederick the Great, being a Christian man, no doubt took his lesson of benevolence from the Bible.

In a tribal setting, being the strongest alpha in the tribe would gain that person the highest station within the tribe, but without benevolence, that person would have to defend that position from constant challenges from those who do not agree with that persons ruling. However, being benevolent the person gains friends and allies to maintain said status with little cost. In a modern setting similar rules apply, albeit somewhat more civilized than open bloodshed.

For example, in a democracy, there is a system where the people of a nation elect the persons they wish to bear the responsibility of running the country's economy and welfare system. Each member of parliament needs to be elected to gain a seat and the persons who wish to become members need to gain the support of a sizeable portion of the nation. They do not do this each individually but rather persons with similar ideals form into parties and then within said parties they elect those who will serve as their spokespersons. To be able to gain this support they need to display that they are qualified to work in the environment they are seeking after.

To clarify, professor Morohoshi of J.F. Oberlin University mentioned in his class of Japan Seen in Real Time, the role of the members of parliament is to be the middle man in everything,

being able to move information between places so that those with the appropriate qualifications can do the work needed. Thus, when the persons seeking positions in parliament they do not need to present the qualification for some specific task as much as they need to be able to be diplomatic. For this role there is much courage needed not to mention rectitude, lest the politician in question becomes subject to much corruption. The feature discipline that a politician needs is benevolence, because it is from benevolence where diplomacy springs from more than any other discipline of Bushido.

The discipline of benevolence is what covers all that is gentle. While rectitude is to do what is righteous and courage is the driving force of righteousness it is benevolence that stays the figurative blade of the samurai. Mercy, love, gentleness, sympathy, compassion are all under the roof of benevolence in Bushido. Just as teaching courage is to make the student become hard to withstand the harshness of any situation, benevolence is to teach the peaceful side of the spectrum or as the popular idiom goes, "You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar". To prevent feudalism from becoming militarism, according to Nitobe, it was benevolence that prevented Japan from falling into despotism "of the worst kind." (2004, Kindle Location 351). In the Corinthians, benevolence was so important that in 1 Corinthians 13:2 it is said "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." noting that love was so important that without it, nothing else mattered.

3.2.4) Politeness

The warrior class brought such love into the discipline of politeness. Seeking perfection in everything, as well as creating a method of communication that would show benevolence on both sides.

The influence of politeness is seen strong even in modern Japan where politeness is held in high esteem, everywhere from ritual tea ceremonies to language. The Japanese language has, amongst others, a specific mode of extra polite language named *keego*, a mode of speech so evolved that it has developed a pentapartite system, *sonkeego*, *kenjôgo I*, *kenjôgo II*, *teeneego* and *bikago*. (Shibamoto-Smith, 2011, p. 3708).

The way Bushido takes on politeness is not merely a gesture. Politeness in Bushido is to take everything and anything to its highest potential of grace and etiquette. Nitobe makes mention of the *Cha-no-yu*, the tea ceremony. Its every detail tailored to a perfection of performance,

down to the hangings on the wall and fresh flower arrangements. All of it made to take the participant out of the surrounding world and into the peace that is the tea ceremony.

To be more specific on what Bushido considers synonymous with politeness, Nitobe explains that politeness entails courtesy, sympathy, etiquette, grace, perfectionism, ceremony, modesty, being humble, and harmony. Anything that regards any of these concepts are entailed within this discipline of Bushido.

Oddly enough, Christianity does not represent the meaning of politeness with courtesy. There are two passages in the Bible that are linked with that aspect of politeness; James 3:17 where being considerate is a part of the wisdom Heaven imparts and Peter 3:8 where it is best to be humble and compassionate in the face of evil. In Matthew 5:48 perfection is laid as the ultimate unobtainable goal, to be as God. Whereas in Bushido, perfection is merely a part of politeness.

Politeness is heavily woven into the language especially in regards to hierarchy. This is for example when, within a company, a subordinate is obligated to speak towards a higher ranking personnel member in a humble manner or suffer a plausible exclusion from said company. This mode of speech is near universal in Japanese society where all communication done cross hierarchical platforms is done in this manner. A great example is the idea senpai and kohai, roughly translated into senior and junior or elder and younger depending on the context. The Christian equivalent to the relationship between senpai and kohai would be "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you." (Exodus 20:12).

3.2.5) Honesty

Nitobe explains that without honesty, politeness is a farce and a show. To the samurai class it was considered a weakness to be dishonest and Nitobe draws the contrast between the high samurai class and the low merchant class. The order of respect went from samurai, farmer, the craftsman and then at the bottom, the merchant, since the merchant never produced anything but merely counted and collected wealth without production. In the New Testament, Christ had a similar disdain to money changers:

"Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, 'My house will be called a house of prayer but you are making it a den of robbers.' " (Matthew 21:12-13).

In the Proverbs being honest is described as to be so important that it saves lives "A truthful witness saves lives, but a false witness is deceitful." (Proverbs 14:25). But the discipline of veracity is, by Nitobe's description not as important as honor, "lying was not condemned as sin, but simply denounced as weakness, and, as such, highly dishonorable." (2004, Kindle Locations 596-597).

3.2.6) Honor

Honor, the discipline to keep the young in line and the old alive. A samurai without honor is not a samurai but a beast, lest he regain his honor through self-sacrifice, such as the Forty-Seven *Gishi*. The whole tale of the forty seven, was the act of regaining their honor and displaying great loyalty to their fallen lord.

Honor was not something easily gained, but it was not as easily lost as many would think. Nitobe quotes a samurai he says to be correct with "dishonor is like a scar on a tree, which time, instead of effacing, only helps to enlarge." (Kindle Location 615). Hot tempered warriors were ridiculed as being "short-tempered." (Kindle Location 630). Nitobe wanted to note that bearing honor also meant to bear patience, as he quotes Iy yasu "The life of man is like going a long distance with a heavy load upon the shoulders. Haste not. * * * Reproach none, but be forever watchful of thine own short-comings. * * * Forbearance is the basis of length of days." (Kindle Locations 631-632).

Similarly in Christianity, Jesus preached patience and forbearance in Matthew 5:38-42, though what most remember is the latter half of Matthew 5:39 "If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." and to do so was to be honorable.

Nitobe freely admits that too often true honor was forgotten by the youths in the heat of action. "It must be admitted that very few attained this sublime height of magnanimity, patience and forgiveness." (Kindle Locations 646-647). Even a young son of Iy yasu forgot the meaning of true honor when he spat at the comforts of an old councilor with: "How foolishly you talk! Can ever my fourteenth year come round again?" (Kindle Location 660). Thus meaning that he had lost his chance at honor, but clearly was merely the chance for fame.

3.2.7) Loyalty

Loyalty is then the final discipline of Bushido and as such it is the head which rests upon the discipline of rectitude. In Nitobe's words: "homage and fealty to a superior" (Kindle

Location 665). This fealty went from the bottom and climbed the hierarchical ladder all the way to the Emperor. A child owed fealty to its mother, the mother to her husband, the husband to his liege lord, and so and so till it reached the Emperor. Nitobe relates the story of a man and wife giving up their own child in fealty to his lord, and after killing the child himself he gives his wife the news with "Rejoice, my wife, our darling son has proved of service to his lord!" (Kindle Locations 699-700). Nitobe notes, that quite similarly in the Old Testament it is as when Abraham intended to sacrifice his own son to God in Hebrews 11:17-19, but through the intervention of God, Isaac survived.

Throughout the Bible there are parables of how those who show loyalty to God are rewarded their faith, such as the aforementioned Hebrews 11:17-19. This is clear as well in Hebrews 11:7 when Noah and his family are saved. The same message of the importance of loyalty is given with the first, second and fourth commandment. As well as the whole story of David and Goliath where David's loyalty to God left him victorious against the Philistine in 1 Samuel 17. Not to mention how Daniel was saved the wrath of lions through his faith for God in Daniel 6:22.

Christianity emphasizes loyalty no less than Bushido, though Christianity doesn't go so far as to go through the act of sacrificing one's own children, whereas Bushido fully takes that step.

4. Final thoughts

Confucius and Mencius, who was a great Confucian, brought much to Bushido with their wisdom, which will be apparent in the extrapolation of the Bushido virtues. Their philosophy endured the ages, just as the philosophy of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Bushido utilized the Confucian lessons alongside Buddhism and Shintoism to further strengthen the message and ethical understanding that Bushido wanted to bring to the samurai and through the samurai, to the people of Japan.

As Nitobe put it, "Shintoism, which fostered it in its infancy," (2004, Kindle Location 1402) Shintoism was at the very core of Bushido, supplying it with "two predominating features, [], Patriotism and Loyalty." (2004, Kindle Locations 186-187). However, as stated, the Japanese do not consider Shintoism to be a religion in the traditional sense or as Nitobe explains it, "Shintoism never pretends to a systematic philosophy or a rational theology." (2004, Kindle Locations 190-191). With Shinto came the respect for the one above you, with children looking to their mothers, with wives looking to their husbands, husbands looking to their liege lords and they to the heavens.

As it is in Japan where parents take their child to a Shinto shrine, a family takes their funeral preparations to a Buddhist temple. So is Shinto for Bushido in infancy, and Buddhism for death. Buddhism revealed the importance of karma and destiny. Nitobe attributed the samurai's fearlessness and willingness to die to Buddhism, for if it is clear that death is inevitable it is best to meet it with all the grace and honor a man can muster. This is explained by, and explains, the ritual of hara-kiri or the ritual suicide. To retain honor in shame, a samurai would often commit hara-kiri, because as Nitobe described it, "Death when honor was involved, was accepted in Bushido as a key to the solution of many complex problems," (2004, Kindle Location 896). But just as it takes many years to hone the skill to become a good warrior, so must the ethical system develop if it is to be valid.

Japan did not have Christianity to bind them together, but as the saying goes "Great minds think alike." and everywhere in the world there have been great minds. Through the words of Confucius, Mencius, Buddha and any philosopher who contributed, East-Asia built its behavior modification system on strong foundations. As Emerson said "There needs but one wise man in a company, and all are wise, so rapid is the contagion." (2004 Kindle Location 198).

Nitobe attempted to explain how the Japanese learn their moral values and what controls their social behavior. In his writing he linked it to Bushido, the way of the warrior knight, basing it on chivalry:

"The Japanese word which I have roughly rendered Chivalry, is, in the original, more expressive than Horsemanship. Bu-shi-do means literally Military-Knight-Ways—the ways which fighting nobles should observe in their daily life as well as in their vocation; in a word, the "Precepts of Knighthood," the noblesse oblige of the warrior class." (2004 Kindle Locations 109-111).

As such it may explain some of the influence that Bushido had on the Japanese people as a whole. However, Bushido, on its own, cannot encompass the whole of the social development of Japan, as Bushido does not contain everything needed for a complete social structure. As shown in the essay, every discipline of Bushido can be matched by lessons from the Bible. Beyond that, the Bible contains more ways to indoctrinate its message to the people as mentioned. Bushido, combined with Shinto, Buddhism and all the wisdom of the philosophers reaches Christianities influence as a social construct, but on its own, Bushido falls short.

Conclusion

It has become clear to me that Bushido, with its many qualities cannot replace Christianity. It is true that many and more are signing away from the National Church of Iceland, however, the act of rejecting the church, and being released from the churches influence is completely different. The teachings of Christianity are so ingrained into the psyche of the nation, even when people resign from Christianity, they are still adhering to lessons of the Bible to some extent. Bushido may indeed be a good warrior code, it may in many ways teach people important lessons of social behavior, but it does not contain within it the structure and methodology Christianity has developed for behavioral modification and used for the centuries it has been in effect. As a system to control behavior, Christianity bases itself on the Old Testament, which in itself based itself on old wisdom, and improved upon it with the New Testament. Since then Christianity has evolved and although granted that the New Testament is centuries old, its value system is largely still in place, since the values of humankind have not fundamentally changed since we first started gathering into groups larger than a single family. Survival and replication are still hardwired into our basic fundamental needs and much of the Christian philosophy is designed to accommodate just that. Through the history of Christianity, the values that have been preached are mostly the ones that fit the time period they were preached over. In modern Iceland, the National Church of Iceland does not preach discrimination, nor does it actively hamper people from forming their own ideas and thoughts. Christianity has adapted to the needs of the time period it exists in whereas Bushido was a child of its time and could not evolve past the end of the samurai era.

The Japanese example on how a civilization works and evolves without a religious dogma is clear. A dogma is not required for there to be belief in "God". There is a need for an organized body of rules and enthymemes, which Voltaire recognized as being "God". I agree with Voltaire when he says "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him. " (Knowles,1999,p.797) Voltaire clearly had the right idea when he said that a God figure was necessary, because he realized that "God" is not a man in the sky, or an all powerful entity that governs over all life. "God" in Voltaire's interpretation is the metaphor for humanities guidelines for appropriate social behavior and survival tactics. Thus it is very necessary for humanity to invent "God" to be able to glue together people of different backgrounds for the common ground of prosperity. Regardless of name, origin or dogma, with "God" as this metaphor, it exists everywhere and with everyone who consider themselves a part of humanity. As long as people adhere to accepted social norms and continue to teach their children those rules, they believe in "God".

My interpretation of his words are that "God" stands for the collective achievements of everything that humankind has done. Since believing in the shared enthymemes of doing what is right and ensuring that future generations keep it up, is thus believing in "God". Bushido is not a religion, it didn't have to be, but it is only a part of a whole. Bushido does not contain all the principles that are needed to build the moral guidelines. It cannot teach all of the needed societal rules nor reach the enthymemes needed without the aid of Shintoism, Buddhism and the philosophy of great minds, and if Reischauer is correct in his assumptions, it wouldn't stand without Christianity's influence in today's society. This essay thus argues that Bushido fails to replace Christianity as a tool to teach ethics in Iceland.

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