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Dojocho

A General Bibliography and the Issue of Translation

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Provided First Quarter 2004

Many people would like a general foundation in the history of Budo to get a grasp on the following three questions: What was Bushido/Budo as the samurai knew it? How did this code and/or practice change over time? How can Budo apply to our modern lives?

There is great debate concerning the answers to these questions. The bibliography provided below will allow one to participate in that debate as a somewhat more informed person – at least concerning the history involved. These books are suggested here because they can provide the reader with a general grounding on the topics in question. The following is a list of titles that are readily available and written in English. The list is not exhaustive. Original texts and works written in Japanese can be readily located in the bibliographies of these works. The books are separated into categories according to one of the questions listed above. However, please note, there is a great deal of overlap concerning the topics covered in each book, so each work can offer multiple avenues for insight.

Note: These books will not provide one with any sort of succinct conclusion. On the contrary, the reading of these books is meant only to raise more questions – but they would be the right questions. My assumption is that they would be read in the following way: Read them straightforward; read the sources given in the bibliography of each of these books; and hit a citation index to obtain books in which these books themselves are used as sources.

1. What was Bushido/Budo as the Samurai knew it?

See the following:

by Neil McMullin: “Oda Nobunaga and the Buddhist Institutions,” and “Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth-Century Japan.”

by Karl Friday: “Hired Swords – The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan,” and “Legacies of the Sword.”

by Jeffrey Mass: “The Bakufu in Japanese History,” and “Antiquity and Anachronism in Japanese History.”

by Eiko Ikegami: “The Taming of the Samurai – Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan.”

by Allen Grapard: “The Protocol of the Gods.”

by Herman Ooms: “Tokugawa Ideology.”

by George Sansom: any of his cultural histories – particularly the one in three volumes - “A History of Japan.”

2. How did this code and practice change over time?

See the following:

by James Ketelaar: "Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan."

by Helen Hardacre: "Shinto and the State: 1868-1988."

by Donald Keene: "The Japanese Discovery of Europe, 1720-1830."

by Stefan Tanaka: "Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History."

by Naoki Sakai: "Voice of the Past: The Status of Language in Eighteenth-Century Japanese Discourse."

by Allan Grapard: "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution: The Separation of Shinto and Buddhist Divinities in Meiji."

By John Brownlee: "Japanese Historians and the National Myths, 1600-1945."

By Kenji Tokitsu: "Miyamoto Musashi: His Life and His Writings."

3. What is the application of Budo to our modern lives?

see the following:

by Takuan Soho: "The Unfettered Mind."

by Musashi Miyamoto: "The Book of Five Rings."

by Yamamoto Tsunetomo: "The Hagakure."

by Inazo Nitobe: "Bushido."

by Yagyu Munenori: "The Sword and Mind."

by Confucius (Kung Tzu): "The Analects."

by Daigan Matsunaga: "Foundation of Japanese Buddhism: Vol. 1 and 2."

by Thomas Merton: "Zen and the Birds of Appetite," and "Thoughts and the East," and "The Way of Chuang Tzu."

Also read any original texts by renowned Zen masters (as opposed to folks writing about said masters). Some key thinkers in Japanese Zen are Ikkyu, Dogen, and Ryokan. Some modern masters to look into are Sawaki and Suzuki. China is filled with great Cha'n masters that one should read as well. by Morihei Ueshiba (Osensei): Read everything you can get your hands on while remaining cautious about the translations.

A word concerning translations of Morihei Ueshiba:

Every translation should be open to the kind of scrutiny and skepticism that would take one to citation indexes and larger bibliographies. However, special attention should be given to the works of Morihei Ueshiba. One is more likely to face poor translations concerning Osensei than say Kung Tzu or Ikkyu, etc. This is because Osensei's writings, more than the others, are plagued by the following: Osensei is definitely at the center of a personality cult; Osensei's translations usually come with no historical context of any kind; Osensei's translations usually come with no bibliography of any kind; Osensei's translations usually come with no summary footnotes of any kind; Osensei's translations usually come with no commentary by the translator of any kind; Osensei's translations are usually vital to the current political struggles still raging in the Aikido world proper; Osensei's translations are driven by a consumer market that for the most part falls totally outside of the Academy and other forms of scholastic checks and balances.

In short, the writing of Osensei's is loaded with political and cultural capital, hence the relevant translations are loaded with subjective interests as each author tries to accumulate and/or spend some of that capital. All of this takes place, for the most part, in front of an audience that is ignorant to both the economic practices contained therein as well as the underlying historical context from which the text is

derived. This makes the regular guarantees that the other translations most often face a rarity when it comes to the writings of Osensei. Hence, chance favors the poor translation when it comes to Osensei. Is there a way to know if you are working with a good or decent translation? Certain elements lend themselves to good translations. Here is a list of those elements you would like to see in all translations:

- a. The text in its original language is printed on the facing page of each translated page.
- b. The translator offers translation notes in which he/she addresses questions or problems concerning direct translations of key terms, differences from other translations, and reasons for why one translation was chosen over another (or even reasons why a word was kept in its native tongue).
- c. The translator demonstrates that he/she has fully grasped the historical context of the text in question.
- d. The translation is used by other scholars, and/or translators, who also demonstrate “a” through “c” in their own work.