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Translated by Imoto, Takafumi (井本隆文)

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## Central Japanese Spirit, Wakon (和魂) = "Bushido (武士道)"

In 1900 Nitobe (新渡戸) Sensei wrote a book called "Bushido." This book, written in English, introduced the world the concept of Bushido, the way of life, the way of death as a central Japanese spirit. Japan, at that time since the Meiji Restoration, was only one country in Asia undergoing an industrial revolution put up with the Japanese spirit called "Wakon (和魂)" and was developing at full speed. Everyone in Western European countries was interested in finding out the secret, what it is, of such a big development in Japan. Nitobe Sensei, then, introduced Japan's Bushido to the world, saying that the secret is the Bushido, central Japanese spirit. This book created a sensational echo among people all over the world as soon as published the first edition. Among them, was that the United States President Theodore Roosevelt read this book overnight despite his busy schedule. And it impressed him so much that next day he bought 30 books and distributed them to dignitaries around the world recommending to read through. Then after a while, there was a Russo-Japanese War, the war between Japan and Russia. Theodore Roosevelt played at that time an important role of the mediation for the peace treaty between Russia and Japan. The War ended with his mediation finally because he understood Japanese Bushido and deeply resonated with the concept.



Nitobe, Inazō (新渡戸稲造)  
Author of a book "Bushido"

## "Bushido (武士道)" by Nitobe Sensei (新渡戸先生)

I, also, read this book during my college days before receiving my baptism to become a Christian and remember receiving a great impression. And when I was baptized and witnessed in front of everyone in the church, I remember, I mentioned about the Japanese Bushido. Nitobe Sensei, the author of the book "Bushido," is a Christian. Why did Christians write the book, "Bushido"? Here is an important point to speak today about Bushido. It was Christians that the Japanese spirit of Bushido was apprehended and highly valued for its global significance. Most of Christian nowadays thinks that Bushido is merely a dead soul during the feudal age in Japan. Also, many people may think that Bushido is not necessary during peaceful era like now though it needs on the battlefield during the war. However, it is necessary. Bushido led Japan creating a Japanese history and tradition. And it is necessary now in our modern society. Here is a key to understanding true Japanese. Bushido is and was not simply for just samurai. It led the entire Japanese way of life and the way of death. If you study great men such as Takamori Saigō, Toshimichi Ōkubo, Hirobumi Itō, Shigenobu Ōkuma, Taisuke Itagaki and know what they said, wrote and accomplished at the time of the Meiji Restoration, you will comprehend that Bushido penetrated into their behavior and the way of life. Also, Bushido not simply led the man's way of life and death, but also led the woman's way of life and death known as **YamatoNadeshiko** (大和撫子). Japanese women were not only gentle and graceful but also strong at the core. The spirit of YamatoNadeshiko was naturally acquired living in the society based on the spirit of Bushido. It was Christians that the spirit of Bushido was most apprehended and highly valued. Kanzo Uchimura Sensei, who was a Christian and also a samurai, said the following famous word "What's with the Christianity in the rootstock of Bushido? It's the best product in the world. The product saves not only Japan but also has the power to save the whole world." Uchimura Sensei, too, knew that Bushido is superb and highly valued. He dedicated underlining strong Christian evangelism without fear of persecution, but with Bushido spirit. He grafted Christianity to Bushido and was alive unbrokenly with the spirit of Christ's Bushido, Bushido within Christ. Here is the secret why the Christian in the Meiji era was so strong. On the other hand, here is the reason why today's churches in Japan are so feeble and womanish. How can we become strong Christian again? When I learned Bushido, this thought hits my mind that is to say "The true Bushido was accomplished by Jesus Christ himself really on the cross." In Him, we saw the best example of true Bushido at the highest level. Here is, also, Japanese spirit and the original form at the highest level. Understanding these thoughts, then, we conclude that how great and wonderful Jesus Christ is and that Christians must evaluate more the central Japanese spirit, Bushido.



Uchimura, Kanzo (内村鑑三)

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## "Bushido" from Bibliography of Teng-hui Lee (李登輝)

In 2003 the former Taiwan's President Teng-hui Lee published a bibliographical book called "Bushido." The book is what Mr. Lee added his commentary to the book "Bushido" written by Nitobe Sensei in 1900. Teng-hui Lee was a great politician who brought up a strong Taiwan nation during 12 years when he was President of Taiwan. He is as one of the greatest politicians of the 20 century. Takanori Nakajō, the honorary advisor of Asahi Breweries, agreed with people saying about Mr. Lee that "He is a person we would like to have as a Prime Minister of Japan." Teng-hui Lee was indeed a devout Christian. The Christian is why now "Bushido." He says clearly "What supported me, during the 12 years of the stormy and stressful time when I was President, was the faith in Christ and Bushido." Despite the China's intimidation and the threat of opponent parties, various reforms such as economic, political and educational reforms were one after another materialized with perpetual belief cultivated by Bushido spirit. Teng-hui Lee was Japanese until 22 years old. Even now in his head, he always thinks in Japanese. He learned the Bushido once in the past by reading the book. My Bushido is always in the back of my mind. And, later I began to believe in Jesus. When believed in Jesus, the Bushido became alive in me. When Bushido is alive in me with Jesus, I become invincible. It becomes a great spiritual form. It is the Bushido kept alive by Jesus. Bushido led by Jesus has the power to live a life. In the famous book of Bushido called "Hagakure (葉隠)," it says "**Bushido is to find out to die.**" What does this mean? It means "you can do anything if you are willing to die for it" in a simple and easily understandable word. Death will be the most fearful for a human being. There are so many scary things; what do they think about me, am I failing again, and so forth, there may be all kinds of worries, but the most fearful things would be still a death. However, a very meaningful life comes into the world when you face it and pursue. While you are running away from the death, you can't live productively and meaningfully. Think the meaning of the death thoroughly, pursue it without running away from it, and then, for the first time, a meaningful life begins. "Will to die for this thing." When you have this, your life will change significantly, energized with hope, joy, and peace. "Will to die for this thing." One who possessed this was Bushi (武士) or Samurai (侍). Not only them, but anyone, who possesses this will have a meaningful life. If you have something to die for, clearly, there is no fear anymore in your life. And there is nothing you can't do when you are willing to die for it.



Lee, Teng-hui (李登輝)  
"Father of Taiwan's democracy"

## Will to Die for This Thing

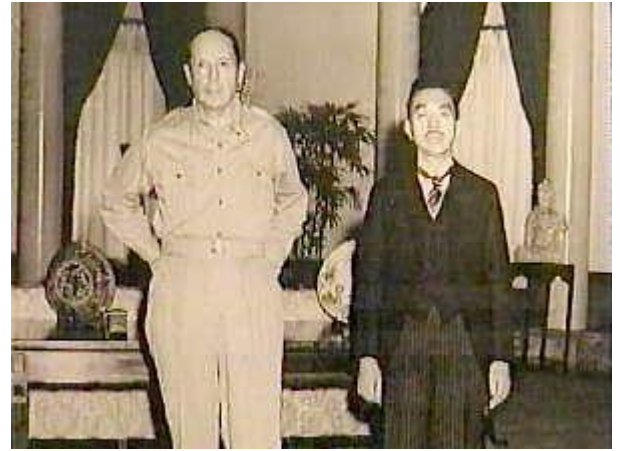
When I learned of Jesus, I thought about this word. It is this for me "Willing to die for Christ, for the Gospel." I decided to dedicate my life for the evangelism no matter what anybody says. I am grateful to anyone for using my life that is for the evangelism. When you pursue true meaning of death thoroughly, a meaningful life begins. For Teng-hui Lee, it was this "Willing to die for Taiwan, for the people of Taiwan." He decided to revive Taiwan and saved the people there. So, Taiwan became a good nation. Do you have such a thing as "I can die if it is for this thing"? Please have one that is worth dying for it. There is nothing that you cannot do if you will die for it. From ancient times in Europe, there is a word "**Memento Mori**," which means "Remember you must die." Real life begins when you pursue the death at the end. Life is one-time only, and you cannot redo. Another side of death is heaven. Death is only a passing point. We live day after day with all our strength to reach the end. We need to know our position for what we have to die. In Bushido, it was called "Inujini" (Dog's death) to die worthlessly without good purpose. On the other hand, It was called "honor" to die for something worth dying for the sake of someone. Mito Komon (水戸黄門) said, "Those who die at battlefield is natural and anybody can do, but one who lives when he should and dies when he should, has a true courage." It is important in our daily lives, always, to have a purpose for what we die. After the war, Emperor Shōwa went to talk to General MacArthur at the U.S. occupation forces. At that time, MacArthur thought the emperor came to plead for his life. Heads of State, when lost in the war used to either, live in exile or plead for their lives. But Emperor Showa stood in front of MacArthur and said something like this "All the responsibilities are mine. I will pay for it. Please help to save our people, because whether you kill me or keep me alive is all in your hand." This attitude moved General MacArthur deeply at that time. Later, He noted this in his reminiscences.

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Emperor Hirohito stood in front of the Allied Commander-in-Chief, General MacArthur, and said so with the determination that I am willing to die for this thing. General MacArthur said, "I have never seen such a respectable person, head of state." The behavior of Emperor Showa was the Bushido spirit. For him, it was worth not sparing his life to save Japan and the people. **"Bushido is to find out to die."** A great example of this Bushido behavior is Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross to pave the way to salvation for us. He came to this earth to die for this. He thoroughly pursued the meaning of the death and did not escape from it. He knew his death is the ransom for our sins and victory over Satan to save us from our sins and destruction. He walked toward this one point, his death, and spread God's word to people for his lifetime entirely. The purpose of his death was the salvation of people in the world. For that, he died. His frame of mind must have been "My life is to find out to die." Jesus embodied the best Bushido spirit **"Bushido is to find out to die."**



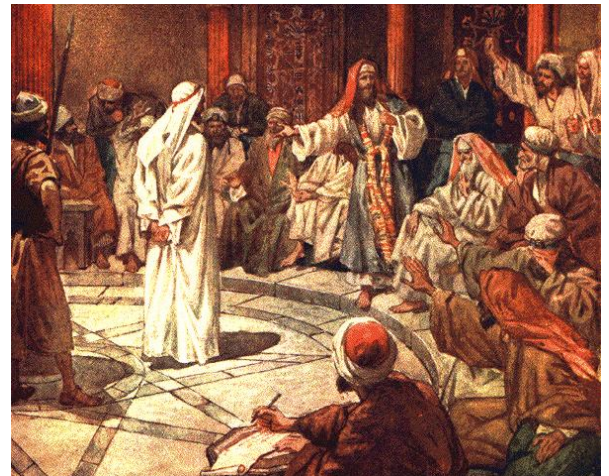
General MacArthur and Emperor Hirohito

## To Abandon Self-Interest

Next, let's take a look at the second meaning of "Bushido is to find out to die." The fact to die also means to kill your life, what you want to do; namely, to abandon self-interest. An unselfish person well remembered is Saigo Takamori (西郷隆盛). His mind was nothing but the country of Japan. Mr. Saigo did not spare his life for achieving the feat of the Meiji Restoration. His way of life of no self-interest, of a person with guts, impressed all the people around him. He said, "Because Heaven loves me as well as other people equally, love people from the heart as if you love yourself. Take notice of Heaven rather than of people. Keep company with Heaven, do not blame self-interested people, but ask shy of your sincerity." This concept is essentially the same as the teachings of Jesus. When you pursue the Bushido or Japanese spirit, it will take you the high level of the teachings of Jesus Christ. Perhaps, Mr. Saigo heard about the teachings of Christianity. The important thing is the fact the concept of Bushido reconciles with the teachings of Christianity. Uchimura Kanzo (内村鑑三) Sensei said, "I live in the country of Japan, Japanese live for the world, and the world lives for Christ, and the all live for God." In this way eventually, God will bless you all.

## The Real Meaning of Messhi Bōkō (滅私奉公)

The root of Bushido is also at the spirit of Messhi Bōkō in Japanese. This word was used for an apprenticeship, employment of public service or work requiring a strong spirit and self-discipline allowing no self-interest but self-destroying for someone else. Considering the life of Jesus, I think, how he lived was exactly this life of Messhi Bōkō. Christ, being in very nature of God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! (**Philippians 2: 6-8**) Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name (**Philippians 2: 9**). I believe, Jesus Christ accomplished perfect good example of Japanese Bushido spirit, the real meaning of Messhi Bōkō, and likewise, the person who has this spirit can readily approach the teachings of Christ. If we think this way the word Messhi Bōkō is not merely a morality of the feudal age, but a wonderful way of living. True oneself comes into being when one throws oneself away. The real way of life begins when you cast away yourself and serve the public. He who lives for self-interest alone will lose everything eventually, but he who cast away his self-interest and live for God will gain everything.



Jesus Christ stood at the seat of illegal trial  
He was rejected by the elders, chief priests and scribes  
He stood and spoke with dignity without flinching  
Complete Japanese Bushido spirit is seen in Jesus

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I, too, look up to the Lord Jesus who showed us the true Messhi Bōkō spirit and, I think, I will follow the way of life even though my way will never reach the high level as Lord Jesus did. Nitobe Sensei (新渡戸先生) in his book of Bushido (武士道) said, “the Bushido believed there are great jobs, that have nothing to do with money and that cannot set price yet must do in this world.” Uchimura Sensei (内村先生) said, “I am going to be a bridge of the Pacific Ocean.” Old Japanese Bushi (武士) or Samurai (侍) believed that they did work for this principle. Your life will change if you find such a great job and pursue it. Saigō Takamori (西郷隆盛) in his famous word said, “It is difficult to deal with people who do not want money, pride, and life, but we cannot leave governmental jobs to those who are not these people.”

## Knowing What Will Happen If You Do That

Yoshida Shōin (吉田松陰) who cultivated Meiji Restoration said, “I know what will happen to me if I do that, but I cannot stop doing it because of my Yamato Damashii (大和魂).” I lose, go bankrupt, become an outcast, or even die if I do it, but despite knowing all these, I cannot stop doing it because of the Japanese spirit called Yamato Damashii (大和魂). He believed it is worth dying for youths for future of Japan. He opened a school and began to educate them, built their characters, found their talents and died at 29 years of age. Later, one after another, his students followed his principles and contributed to carrying out the Meiji Restoration. There is a Word in French or in English saying “**noblesse oblige.**” Webster dictionary defines this as “The inferred obligation of people of high rank to behave nobly toward others.” It is the idea that people who have high social rank or wealth should be helpful and generous to people of lower rank or to people who are poor. We, too, have this obligation although we are not so noble, we as a Christian have God’s blessing too good for our needs. When we begin the way of life casting away ourselves and serving others, public, and God, then this becomes the real life that you gain. The apostle Paul said, “I have been crucified with Christ and no longer alive, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (**Galatians 2: 20**). I see in the apostle Paul the same spirit as Bushido. The apostle Paul endured many sufferings and persecution and still able to continue engaging in mission work. In his missionary work, I think, he had Bushido based on Christianity, the secret of his strong Christian life. When self-interest is gone, one finds himself the real living self that is to realize you exist in Christ. Then, hope, joy, and peace will fill one’s life.

## Man’s Life is Short and Transitory

Next, the third meaning of the Word “**Bushido is to find out to die**” is to have loving kindness and mercy, because man’s life is short and transitory. In the song of Norinaga (宣長), there is 「敷島の大和心を人問わば 朝日に匂ふ山桜花」 in Japanese. This phrase (a 31-syllable Japanese poem) translated as “If someone asks what Yamato-Gokoro or Yamato-Damashii (大和心、大和魂), a Japanese spirit is, I would say it is like the flower of wild Cherry Blossoms glowing in the morning sun.” The cherry blossoms do not hide any blades nor poisons under the flower of beauty, the petals open and release a good smell to surrounding when the sun hit in the morning, and let people enjoy the beauty. The color is not gorgeous, the smell is not strong, and people do not get tired of viewing. The cherry blossoms bloom and glow when time comes, and bravely fall when nature calls. The Japanese spirit of Yamato-Gokoro (大和心) is this! Man’s life is short and transitory. However, believing that there is a way to live beautifully in the short period, is Bushido or Japanese spirit.

## Live Beautifully Despite the Short-Lived Life

The more pursue the Japanese Spirit, Bushido, the more we understand the wonderful meaning of how Christ lived. His life, God the Father planned, is so strikingly similar to the Bushido that we may say the Bushido is an example of what Christ did except who you served is different. Bushi (武士) or Samurai (侍) idealized the way of life to be beautiful though short considering that death is part of the living process not to fear. What does the beautiful, short-lived life possess? Again, it possesses loving kindness and mercy. Give mercy to those who are short-lived, because your life is short, too. In China, there is a Word Phrase, 「窮鳥、懐に入る時は、獵夫もこれを殺さず」, translated as, “When a bird in distress enters in your bosom asking for help, a hunter is indeed not going to kill the bird.” During the Age of Samurai War in Japan, there was Samurai Mercy in a story that the general commander Uesugi Kenshin (上杉謙信) helped his enemy Takeda Shingen (武田信玄) by sending him precious salt when he and his people were suffering. In New Testament, the apostle Paul said, “If your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Namely, by doing so, he will become aware of a shame.

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This phrase is also the teaching of Bushido. He who pursues the meaning of death knows mercy. In the Book of **John 11:35**, it says, “Jesus wept.” This verse is the shortest verse in the Bible but has Christ’s deep truth of mercy he felt when he saw people cried over the death of Lazarus four days ago. He wept not for Lazarus, but for Mary, Martha, and people there because he saw the death of human being brings such a sad feeling. Immediately after Christ see this, he resurrected Lazarus.

## Heart of Sokuin (惻隱)

One day in 1938, Japanese Army Lieutenant Higuchi Kiichiro (樋口季一郎) heard about Jewish refugees from Siberia, who have escaped from Nazi’s persecution and are brought to a standstill in Manchuria in an intense cold season. The number of the Jewish refugees was approximately 20,000. He made every effort to save them by placing them under his care. Among them, today there are many Jewish people in Israel, who are active in the area of politics, education, and economy. After the war, he was deeply appreciated and respected among Jewish people. His name is

listed in the Israel’s Golden Book with another person’s name, Sugihara Chiune (杉原千畝) who is known as “Oriental Schindler” or “Japan Schindler.” Schindler is the name of a German, Oscar Schindler, who helped save the lives of Jews from a Nazi camp. They helped save lives of Jews because it is Samurai Mercy (武士の情け) and the heart of Sokuin (惻隱). Sokuin means, in the simplest term, thoughtful mind.



樋口季一郎(1885~1970)  
Japanese Army Lieutenant  
Higuchi, Ichirō (樋口季一郎)  
Saved many Jewish people

## Bushido and Christian

In Bushido there are many distinctive characteristics to value such as Gimu (義務), Yūki (勇氣), Nintai (忍耐), Meiyo (名誉), Kokki (克己), Chūgi (忠義), Jin (仁), Gi (義), Rei (礼), Chi (知), Shin (信), Chū (忠), Kō (孝), etc. translated as Duty, Courage, Endurance or Perseverance, Honor, Self-Control, Loyalty, Benevolence, Righteousness or Justice, Courtesy or Etiquette, Wisdom, Trust or Integrity, Loyalty, Filial Piety, etc. The pleats on Kendo Hakama represent the last seven characteristics counting the location from left to right as Jin (仁), Gi (義), Rei (礼), Chi (知), Shin (信), and facing back side Chū (忠), Kō (孝). The person who wears Hakama should be aware of these virtues. Bushido is to find out to die. It is a philosophy that a meaningful life begins when you pursue true meaning of death thoroughly. There, you can find true way of life that enriches you with these virtues. Here is the central role of Japanese spirit. And we see that Christ accomplished these virtues. Many Christians like Kanzō Uchimura, Inazō Nitobe, Teng-hui Lee appealed to the world the importance of Bushido, because they felt very closely that the Bushido is strikingly similar to the life principle of Christianity. Today’s Christians in Japan do not feel the same way, and they are not interested in this Japanese spirit based on Bushido. The fact is sad, and I can point out this to be a shortcoming of today’s churches in Japan. It is better to look at this situation because the Bushido is a gift given by God. I believe that Christians will look over and recover the wonderful meaning of Japanese spirit based on Bushido and spread the word. Yes, they must do it. Masahiro Miyazaki read Mr. Lee’s bibliographical essay on Bushido and wrote, “It is amazing that the Bushido spirit spread so globally all over the world when we understand it through the life principle of Christianity.” Yes, only Christians who know the teaching of Christ can extract the good things in the Japanese spirit Bushido and spread the word. Please, I strongly recommend you to acquiring the Japanese Spirit through the teaching of Christ. It becomes the highest level of power to those people who want to use their lives for great things. And these words will indeed become resources to change Japan and then this world.

## The Greatest Relics to Future Generations: by Uchimura, Kanzō (内村 鑑三)

We must believe that this world is not controlled by Satan, not in despair, and not in grief, but ruled by God, in hope, and in joy. We must practice these beliefs or the ideas in our lives, and I think anyone can leave the relics as evidence that you practiced to our future generation. If we proclaim that righteousness always wins and immorality always loses, then we must practice the justice to prove it as a serious believer will do. Even though we find no relics that we want to leave for our next generation, we would like to leave at least the fact people say that you lived seriously, faithfully, honestly, diligently and steadily while you were alive.