

ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND BUSHIDO AESTHETICS

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The next morning, around seven, he took the final positive action of his life. Like a samurai who felt dishonored by the word or deed of another, Ernest felt his own body had betrayed him. Rather than allow it to betray him further, he who had given what he once described as the gift of death to so many living creatures in his lifetime, loaded the weapon he held and then leaned forward as he placed the stock of his favorite shotgun on the floor of the foyer, and found a way to trip the cocked hammers of the gun.

—Leicester Hemingway, *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway*

Leicester's suggestion that Hemingway died like a samurai views his brother's brutal suicide in the best possible light. It connects it to the time-honored tradition of Japanese ritual suicide followed by the samurai warrior class while obscuring the immediate link to the history of suicide in the Hemingway family and Ernest's increasingly deteriorating mental condition in the last years of his life when depression and paranoia set in.¹ Beyond this, the samurai reference highlights a topic worth careful exploration: Hemingway and the samurai and particularly Hemingway and bushido, the "samurai code."

Until Commodore Matthew Perry's "Black Ships" appeared on the

¹ Hemingway's grandfather attempted suicide with his Civil War revolver, the same gun that was used by Hemingway's father to commit suicide in 1928 and that was later given to Hemingway by his mother. After Hemingway's suicide using a favorite shotgun (1961), his younger sister Ursula died by drug overdose (1966), his younger brother Leicester committed suicide with a pistol (1982), and his granddaughter Margaux died by drug overdose (1996).

eastern horizon in July 1853, Japan was, for all intents and purposes, closed to foreign contact. Herman Melville, in *Moby-Dick*, famously calls Japan “that double-bolted land” (110). Indeed, the Japanese *kanji* for this self-imposed isolation policy of *sakoku*, initiated by the Tokugawa government through various edicts in the 1630s, literally mean, “locked country”: 鎖国. Although during the period of *sakoku* trade took place on a limited basis between Japan and the outside world at several locations including a Dutch trading post on Dejima in Nagasaki Bay, no foreigner could enter Japan nor could any Japanese leave on penalty of death. So little was known about Japan in mid-nineteenth-century America that the word “samurai”—referring to the Japanese warrior class and now one of the world’s most pervasive cultural stereotypes—appears nowhere in Perry’s massive three-volume account of his journey, the *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan* (1856). Between Perry’s expedition and Hemingway’s death one hundred years later, however, samurai and bushido discourse exploded.

The Western fascination with samurai and bushido in the twentieth century can be traced, in part, to the Japanese educator and diplomat, Inazo Nitobe (1862–1933), whose book, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, written in English and published in 1900, has never been out of print and is arguably the most influential English-language book ever written on Japanese culture. Born to a samurai family in 1862, Nitobe grew up during the rush to modernize that characterized the Meiji Restoration. He became a Christian while studying at Sapporo Agricultural School (now Hokkaido University), attended the University of Tokyo and Johns Hopkins University where he joined the Quakers and where one of his classmates was the future President, Woodrow Wilson, and later became an Under-Secretary General of the League of Nations. Nitobe wrote *Bushido* in response to a question on the teaching of morality in Japan. He describes the scene in the Preface:

While spending a few days under the hospitable roof of the distinguished Belgian jurist, the lamented M. de Laveleye, our conversation turned during one of our rambles, to the subject of religion. “Do you

mean to say,” asked the venerable professor, “that you have no religious instruction in your schools?” On my replying in the negative, he suddenly halted in astonishment, and in a voice which I shall not easily forget, he repeated “No religion! How do you impart moral education?” The question stunned me at the time. I could give no ready answer, for the moral precepts I learned in my childhood days were not given in schools; and not until I began to analyze the different elements that formed my notions of right and wrong, did I find that it was Bushido that breathed them into my nostrils. (19)

The idea that moral education depends on religion is historically centered in the West, and while Nitobe’s book takes for its starting point the Christian knight and transplants Western ideas of chivalry to the samurai context of Japan, he concludes by claiming, “as yet Christian missions have effected but little visible in moulding the character of the New Japan. No, it was Bushido, pure and simple, that urges us on, for weal or woe” (142).

The source of the ideas expressed in *Bushido* are largely Zen Buddhist, Shinto, and Confucian that were articulated during the period of *sakoku* in the numerous independent domains controlled by daimyo supported by the samurai. According to Nitobe, Zen Buddhism “furnished a sense of calm trust in Fate, a quiet submission to the inevitable, that stoic composure in sight of danger or calamity, that disdain of life and friendliness with death” (39). Shintoism, promoting the innate goodness of the human soul, contributed loyalty, patriotism, and reverence for ancestral memory. The mirror at the center of the Shinto Shrine reflects the deity in each worshiper that, Nitobe explains, represents “the old Delphic injunction, ‘Know Thyself’” (40). The arrival of Confucianism from China coincided with the Tokugawa shogunate, the feudal military government that existed between 1603 and 1868. The Tokugawa shogunate encouraged the humanistic and rationalistic elements of Confucianism as a method of strengthening political rule of the country. Some of the Zen-inflected texts dealing with military comportment produced at the time were practical while others stressed moral philosophy. Two of the best known are the seventeenth-century *Go Rin no Sho* (*The Book of Five Rings*, 1645), superficially a treatise

on Japanese swordsmanship by the legendary samurai, Musashi Miyamoto, and the early eighteenth-century *Hagakure* (*Hidden Leaves*, 1710), a collection of samurai anecdotes and aphorisms by the more philosophical Tsunetomo Yamamoto. Neither book was read widely until the twentieth century; both became popular in the wake of Nitobe's *Bushido*, *The Soul of Japan*.

Nitobe was the first writer in any language to weave together the various threads of the samurai ethic and present them as a unified aesthetic whole to a Western audience. In doing so, he effectively stripped bushido of its pre-modern militaristic aspects and refashioned it as the refined essence of Japanese culture. In the seventeen chapters, he devotes a chapter to each of the seven virtues he identifies at the heart of bushido: rectitude, courage, benevolence, politeness, veracity, honor, and loyalty. Loyalty, in Nitobe's scheme, is "the keystone making feudal virtues a symmetrical arch" (84; Figure 1).

The remaining ten chapters address such topics as the education and training of a samurai, self-control, the institution of suicide, the sword, and the position of women. Translating bushido as "Japanese chivalry" Nitobe opens his text by linking this to the cherry blossom suggesting a vibrant, living tradition: "Chivalry is a flower no less indigenous to the soil of Japan than its emblem, the cherry blossom; nor is it a dried-up specimen of an antique virtue preserved in the herbarium of our history" (33).

Published just five years before Japan's decisive victory over Tsarist Russia in the Russo-Japanese War, *Bushido* contributed to and helped explain Japan's swift rise in international stature in the early twentieth century. Julian Hawthorne, Nathaniel Hawthorne's son, praised it in a brief review claiming Nitobe "gives us a better knowledge of the spirit of his nation than any foreign observers have done" (Kawakami 212). H. G. Wells drew inspiration from it for his 1906 novel, *A Modern Utopia*, where the ruling class, called the New Samurai, live by a single-minded code of discipline and loyalty. Wells conceived of his utopian novel as a modern version of Plato's *Republic* and later was convinced that such a "Samurai Order... is inevitable if the modern world-state is ever to be realized" (Ross 108).

Other readers of *Bushido* included Theodore Roosevelt who received a

copy from his friend the Boston Brahmin, John Sturgis Bigelow who had recently returned from Japan. When Roosevelt asked whether it represented “home Japanese philosophy” or “Japanese philosophy for export,” Bigelow responded enthusiastically, “Bushido is the real thing. There is no trace of manufacture for export about it” (Benfy 246). Basil Hall Chamberlain, one of the foremost British Japanologists of the time, disagreed asserting in high dudgeon, “THE VERY WORD APPEARS IN NO DICTIONARY, NATIVE OR FOREIGN, BEFORE THE YEAR 1900,” before quietly continuing, “Bushido, as an institution or code of rules, has never existed. The accounts given of it have been fabricated out of whole cloth, chiefly for foreign consumption” (536). In reality, the truth lies somewhere in between. Although Nitobe’s seven virtues were important concepts for many samurai, before he wrote his book there was no formal bushido code. Nitobe himself confesses, in the full flowering of his Victorian prose, “it is a code unuttered and unwritten, possessing all the more the powerful sanction of veritable deed, and of a law written on the fleshly tablets of the heart” (35).

As understood today, samurai and bushido are both hybrid creations. Their source is ultimately Japanese but since the closing years of the Meiji period, with the help of Nitobe’s book, they have gradually become globalized in the contemporary discourse on Japan. The cultural critic Hiroshi Yoshioka takes this one step further, claiming that “samurai as an archetype of Japanese spirit is nothing but an invention made as the result of the relation between Japan and the West for the last 120 years” (104).

During World War I samurai and the bushido were brought to the New York stage through the work of the Japanese modern dance pioneer Michio Ito who arrived from London in 1916 where he had introduced Japanese Noh drama to W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound and danced the role of the hawk in the first performances of Yeats’s symbolic drama, *At the Hawk’s Well*. In New York Ito co-directed *Bushido* for the Washington Square Players. A one-act drama, *Bushido* was based on the famous story of the forty-seven ronin (masterless samurai) who avenge the death of their master and are then ordered to commit ritual suicide. *The New York Times* declared melodramatically, “once in a blue moon, a playwright or a player

achieves a moment of dramatic suspense so intense that the theatre grows still as death and your heart stops beating. Such a moment is the climax of *Bushido*" (Caldwell 57). Ito followed this by directing Edna St. Vincent Millay as a samurai's daughter in *String of the Samisen*, a 1919 production by the Provincetown Players (Kennedy). Later that year, *The Faithful*, John Masefield's adaptation of the forty-seven ronin story, which had enjoyed brief success in England, was staged in New York by the Theatre Guild, the new troupe succeeding the Washington Square Players. Alexander Woolcott praised it in *The New York Times* for its "genuine poetic beauty," attesting to the continuing interest in samurai-related drama (John).

In part Ito was simply participating in the Western Orientalist fascination with all things Japanese resulting from Perry's successful gunboat diplomacy opening Japan. The irony was that Ito's desire to immerse himself in modern dance in the West coincided with Pound and Yeats's desire to study traditional Japanese Noh drama and with the legacy of late nineteenth-century Japonism. When Pound recruited Ito to assist with Yeats's Noh-inspired drama, Ito was at first reluctant to help claiming as a child he "thought Noh was the dullest thing in the world" (Ito xi). Under the influence of Pound and Yeats's enthusiasm, however, Ito, no expert in Noh drama, became a central figure introducing traditional Japan to Western audiences. Thus by the 1920s, the key years of Hemingway and the Lost Generation, samurai and bushido were well-established terms in the cultural centers of the West, used with increasing frequency to refer to a particular mode of conduct stressing courage, honor, and loyalty even at the sacrifice of life itself.

In May 1918 Hemingway, an eighteen-year-old volunteer ambulance driver with the American Red Cross, passed through New York on his way to the Great War in Europe where he was wounded two months later on the Italian front. The contrast between what was happening in the New York theater world and the grim life in the trenches couldn't have been greater. There was little of the exotic samurai spirit in the mud of Passchendaele; the casualties were rapidly mounting in what became one of the deadliest conflicts in human history. In the crucible of violence and despair, the traditional warrior virtues of courage and honor were being

transformed into the existential values of Hemingway's code heroes. *A Farewell to Arms*, drawn directly from his Italian experiences, shows the change. At the end of Chapter 26, after Frederic Henry's war wound has healed and he returns to the front, during a late night conversation the priest asks him, "What do you believe in?" Henry's response, "In sleep," suggests not only deep fatigue, but also death. As the priest gets up to leave, Henry tries to excuse his offhand answer: "I said that about sleeping, meaning nothing" (157). But here "nothing" continues Henry's veiled double-talk: "sleep" is death and "nothing" is the empty "nada" of the older waiter's stream-of-consciousness prayer in Hemingway's later paean to existentialism, "A Clean Well-Lighted Place." Chapter 27 of *A Farewell to Arms* follows on directly from this containing Henry's famous meditation on the hollow rhetoric of war:

I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stock-yards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of the places were all you could say and have them mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates. (161)

Here the transformation of Christian chivalry and Nitobe's seven bushido virtues into a modern nihilistic world view is complete. The words themselves exist but the Victorian moral certainty they express is dead.

Though there is no evidence that Hemingway read Nitobe's *Bushido*,

it would have been almost impossible for such a voracious reader to be unaware of this international bestseller, especially considering the book's contents. In *Across the River and Into the Trees*, Richard Cantwell's extended flashback includes a scene at dinner in the bar of the Gritti Palace Hotel where Renata encourages him to write about his wartime experiences:

'You ought to write,' the girl said. 'I mean it truly. So someone would know about such things.'

'No,' the Colonel disagreed. 'I have not the talent for it and I know too much. Almost any liar writes more convincingly than a man who was there.'

'But other soldiers wrote.'

'Yes. Maurice de Saxe. Frederick the Great. Mr. T'sun Su.'

'But soldiers of our time.'

'You use the word our with facility. I like it though.'

'But didn't many modern soldiers write?'

'Many. But did you ever read them?'

'No. I have read mostly the classics....'

Here, Cantwell reveals his—and Hemingway's—depth of knowledge of military literature by listing three key authors. Maurice de Saxe was one of the great generals of eighteenth-century Europe. His *Reveries on the Art of War* (1757), described by Thomas Carlyle as a "strange Military farrago, dictated, as I should think, under opium" (87), is, as Cantwell notes, a classic of military theory. Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, was considered a brilliant military tactician who was glorified by the Nazis as a precursor to Hitler. His *Instructions for his Generals* (1797) examines leadership qualities and the fundamentals of warfare. The Chinese general and military tactician, Sun Tzu, was Confucius's sixth century BC contemporary during the Spring and Autumn period of ancient China. His *The Art of War*, the oldest military text in existence, has influenced military strategy for 2,500 years. All three authors would have been known to Hemingway through inexpensive editions of their works, published by the Military Service Publishing Company, that were readily available to servicemen during World

War II. Sun Tzu's *Art of War* appeared in Japan in the eighth century. Its teachings inspired Tokugawa Ieyasu, founder of the Tokugawa shogunate, and were promoted by the samurai. Admiral Togo, hero of the Russo-Japanese War, and mentioned by Hemingway as "the old Japanese admiral" with the long moustache in Chapter 22 of *Across the River and into the Trees*, was a careful reader of Sun Tzu (McNeilly 6–7). While Hemingway's reference to Sun Tzu provides no direct link to Nitobe's *Bushido*, it attests to his familiarity with and admiration for Asian warrior traditions that underlie bushido culture. At the time of his 1941 trip to China and the unfolding horror of the Pacific War, bushido was being reclaimed from Nitobe and turned toward wartime propaganda by the Japanese militarists running the government. Notably, as Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney points out in *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms: The Militarization of Aesthetics in Japanese History*, the time-honored Japanese symbol of the cherry blossom appearing in the opening lines of Nitobe's book was carefully manipulated to inspire the *tokkotai* pilots who flew the kamikaze suicide missions attacking foreign warships (165).

Parallels between Nitobe's samurai and Hemingway's code heroes are easily established, but in the wake of Hemingway's wartime experience the bushido virtues are updated. The existential courage of Frederic Henry, Robert Jordan, Santiago, and others becomes Hemingway's modernist keystone. In Chapter IV of *Bushido*, Nitobe's definition of "tranquility" as "courage in repose" (52) seamlessly dovetails with Hemingway's definition of "courage" as "grace under pressure," a phrase that appears unattributed in numerous contemporary texts on Japanese martial arts. Nitobe's loyalty to the Emperor and to the state—drawn largely from Shinto—becomes Hemingway's loyalty to one's group and oneself. In Chapter 11 of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, as Robert Jordan approaches El Sordo's camp, he meditates on loyalty:

A Spaniard was only really loyal to his village in the end. First Spain of course, then his own tribe, then his province, then his village, his family and finally his trade. . . . He was serving in a war and he gave absolute loyalty and as complete a performance as he could give while he

was serving. But nobody owned his mind, nor his faculties for seeing and hearing, and if he were going to form judgments he would form them afterwards. (142).

Beyond these basic parallels, the larger than life feats of the samurai warriors find echoes in Hemingway's own twentieth-century exploits deep-sea fishing and on safari in Africa. What the samurai accomplished with swords, Hemingway did with rod and gun. Indeed, the sword culture of Japan finds an equivalent in the gun culture of Hemingway's America. For both the samurai and Hemingway, the purity, utility, and effectiveness of their preferred weapons were essential. And for both the primary purpose was death.

In what follows, rather than highlight overall similarities in the two codes—similarities that exist in many such male codes—I want to focus on one of the most famous aspects of bushido, the aesthetics of death and its relation to Hemingway's suicide. By aesthetics I mean identifiable attitudes and practices enacted in a stylistically sustained manner.

The opening of Yamamoto's *Hagakure* mentioned previously is probably the best-known line in bushido literature: "The way of the samurai is found in death" (3). This is the core of bushido aesthetics since it implies that a samurai shapes his life around an understanding of death. Because the most important death for a samurai is his own, the rituals of "seppuku," samurai suicide, are highly aestheticized. Though suicide is a phenomenon known throughout the world, Japan is the only country with an enduring—though increasingly rare—suicide ritual of cutting one's stomach.² Accounts of seppuku are a feature of thirteenth and fourteenth century Japanese war chronicles. Since the 1500s, seppuku has traditionally consisted of two parts: cutting one's stomach with a short sword followed by the compassionate beheading by a *kaishakunin*, an appointed second, wielding a long sword. Cutting the stomach alone does not necessarily result in death, thus decapitation was introduced. Seppuku is not simply a suicidal process. In Chapter XII of *Bushido*, "The Institutions of Suicide and Redress," Nitobe calls it "a refined ceremonial institution, a way for samurai to expiate their crimes, apologize for mistakes, escape from disgrace, or

prove their loyalty. It is a method of self-destruction, traditionally performed before an audience, requiring the utmost coolness of temper and composure of demeanor”(107).

In his chapter on seppuku, Nitobe quotes extensively from an appendix to A. B. Mitford’s *Tales of Old Japan* (1871) containing the author’s eyewitness description of the suicide of Taki Zenzaburo, a samurai who was ordered to commit seppuku after leading the Japanese troops that fired on French sailors during the Kobe Incident in 1868. Mitford and Ernest Satow, both young diplomats with the British legation, were invited to the ceremony and published accounts of the event that are among the most detailed descriptions in any language of seppuku. In addition to his seppuku-focused conclusion, Mitford opens his *Tales of Old Japan* with a chapter recounting the story of the legendary forty-seven ronin who, in an act of bushido selfless loyalty, wait patiently for eight months to avenge the death of their master and are then ordered to commit mass seppuku one after the other. When the sentence was handed down, Kuranosuke Oishi, leader of the group, announced, “We consider ourselves fortunate to have been sentenced to die by performing seppuku. For this we are most grateful” (Rankin 135). Mitford’s version of the forty-seven ronin is the first in English and had a popular readership in the West. After his return to England, Mitford praised seppuku as “the sublimation of all those ideas of honor which constitute the very essence of chivalry” (*Tragedy* 131; Figure 2).

Chapter 30 in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, provides an interesting perspective on Hemingway’s reaction to his father’s suicide that occurred in 1928, twelve years before *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was published. There Robert Jordan meditates on his fictional father’s suicide:

Any one has a right to do it, he thought. But it isn’t a good thing to do.

² Two notable twentieth-century examples reported around the globe are the highly-decorated General Maresuke Nogi who, in accordance with the samurai practice of following one’s master to death, committed seppuku on the day of Emperor Meiji’s funeral in 1912, and Yukio Mishima, the “Japanese Hemingway,” and arguably the most famous Japanese writer of the twentieth century, who committed seppuku after leading a failed military coup to restore power to the Emperor in 1970.

I understand it, but I do not approve of it. *Lache* was the word. But you *do* understand it? Sure, I understand it, but. Yes, but... I'll never forget how sick it made me the first time I knew he was a *cobarde*. Go on, say it in English. Coward. It's easier when you have it said and there is never any point in referring to a son of a bitch by a foreign term. (350–51)

Jordan's stalling, questioning, interior monologue peppered with "but," pausing at the two-word sentence, "Yes, but," gropes for a way to talk about the suicide until finally, rejecting the Spanish *cobarde*, it settles on the one-word sentence, "coward" followed by the "son of a bitch" expletive. Twenty-one years later, Leicester's samurai reference quoted from *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway* at the start of this essay turns Jordan's criticism of his father's suicide around. Where Jordan finally uses the English word, "coward," to reject his father, Leicester uses the foreign Japanese term, "samurai," coupled with the bushido code it summons up, to rescue Hemingway's suicide from the harsh glare of reality.

In *Hagakure* Tsunetomo tells us that "The end is important in all things" (57). During his last years in Cuba, Hemingway several times rehearsed his suicide with his Mannlicher rifle in front of guests at the Finca Vigia: "This is how I'm going to do it," he'd say, "this is the technique of harakiri with a gun." Then he'd press the trigger with his big toe (Lynn 583). Strictly speaking seppuku is a polite euphemism for harakiri, which is an older more vulgar word not used commonly in contemporary Japan. Both terms mean "stomach cutting" with the short sword that should be followed by the beheading by the *kaishakunin* with a long sword. At the Finca, however, with an audience looking on, Hemingway collapses and Americanizes the two-part seppuku by substituting his rifle for the two swords. Using the Japanese word harakiri aestheticizes his performance by placing it in the context of the Japanese ritual and also invites Leicester's samurai reference. Hemingway's seppuku ceremony thus becomes a multi-part interrupted narrative of American harakiri begun by the older brother's rehearsal in Cuba and finished by the younger brother acting as verbal *kaishakunin* describing the actual event as it took place in the early light of an

Idaho morning in 1961. Every samurai knew that the day might come when he must use his own sword to commit suicide. A samurai not only lived by his sword, but when necessary he died by the same sword by which he had lived (Rankin 17). Hemingway's use of a favorite shotgun for his suicide matches the samurai's reverence toward his sword. Leicester's samurai comparison honors and logically concludes his older brother's performance in Cuba by embracing not simply samurai suicide, but also the bushido aesthetic. Leicester romanticizes and mythologizes his brother's death as bushido courage with all the dramatic trimmings: "Like a samurai who felt dishonored by the word or deed of another, Ernest felt his own body had betrayed him" (283). Putting it in a traditional context of honor and loyalty betrayed directly links to Nitobe's samurai virtues as well as the modern morality of Hemingway's code heroes.

In 1962 when Leicester Hemingway's *My Brother, Ernest Hemingway* was first published, beyond the memories of the kamikaze attacks of the Pacific War, one of the immediate popular samurai references would have been to Akira Kurosawa's 1954 film, *Seven Samurai*, about seven ronin who defend a village of farmers against marauding bandits. *Seven Samurai* consistently ranks among the top Japanese films of all time. In 1960 John Sturges, recent translator of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (1958) from book into film, remade *Seven Samurai* into the classic American western, *The Magnificent Seven* whose characters and scenes mirror elements in Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*. Indeed, Kurosawa's subsequent samurai films *The Hidden Fortress* (1958) and *Yojimbo* (1961) sparked George Lucas's continuing *Star Wars* series as well as the earlier Sergio Leone/Clint Eastwood "Dollars Trilogy" spaghetti westerns. At the same time Kurosawa was himself drawing inspiration from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* for his *Throne of Blood* (1957) and *King Lear* for *Ran* (1985). With this seemingly inexhaustible East-West samurai interplay in mind, I'd like to close with a thought: Leicester's Hemingway/samurai comparison extends bushido discourse by placing the Lost Generation in a new transpacific context, as twentieth-century ronin cut loose from the dead and dying literary masters of the past, set adrift in the aftermath of the first world war to pursue their modernist art.

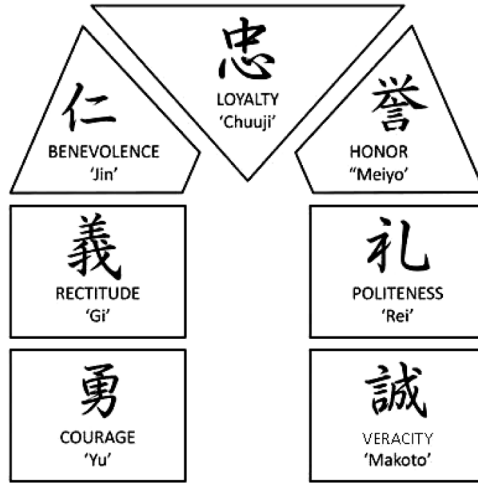


Figure 1: Nitobe’s seven bushido virtues with loyalty as the keystone.



Figure 2: Kuranosuke Oishi, leader of the forty-seven ronin, disembowels himself with a short sword while the *kaishakunin* raises the long sword for the final execution. Illustration from *The Story of Japan* by Robert Van Bergen.

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