

Are European & American cultures, which have been based on Christianity, and Japanese culture, especially *Bushido*, in harmony with each other?

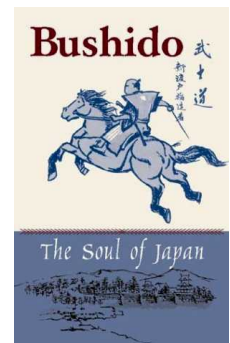
Dr. *Inazo Nitobe* said in his masterpiece '*Bushido*' :

“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. It is still a living object of power and beauty among us; and if it assumes no tangible shape or form, it not the less scents the moral atmosphere, and makes us aware that we are still under its potent spell. The conditions of society which brought it forth and nourished it have long disappeared; but as those far-off stars which once were and are not, still continue to shed their rays upon us, so the light of chivalry which was a child of feudalism, still illuminates our moral path, surviving its mother institution.”

Over a century has passed since he wrote this thesis, but in Japan, it is now more and more thought of as a textbook to restore our original identity, since we seem to be too Europeanized or Americanized. Many foreigners who are eagerly practicing *Budo* are earnestly reading it as a 'bible' of martial arts, making their spiritual backbone. Both are very advantageous usages.



Dr. Inazo Nitobe



Bushi, warriors, who were born and brought up under feudalism, faced the *Meiji* Restoration, and they suddenly lost their master, who was then their spiritual backbone and the object to show their loyalty and patriotism. They, however, came to know the missionaries from Europe and America. They were deeply

impressed by their dedicated missionary works not only to evangelize the Japanese, but to support the people socially, and many *Bushi* accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and were baptized. Jesus became their new and right spiritual backbone. Later many warrior class people became ministers, which was not a coincidence.

As Dr. *Nitobe* also mentioned:



“I have said that etiquette was elaborated into the finest niceties, so much so that different schools, advocating different systems, came into existence. But they all united in the ultimate essential, and this was put by a great exponent of the best known school of etiquette, the *Ogasawara*, in the following terms: ‘The end of all etiquette is to so cultivate your mind that even when you are quietly seated, not the roughest ruffian can dare make onset on your person.’ It means, in other words, that by constant exercise in correct manners, one brings all the parts and faculties of his body into perfect order and into such harmony with itself and its environment as to express the mastery of spirit over the flesh. What a new and deep significance the French word **bienséance* comes to contain. (**etymologically, well-seatedness*)”

One of the Japanese leading *Kenjutsu* Schools is ‘*Onoha-Ittoryu*’, or *Ono* one sword school: its innermost secret is ‘peace and harmony’ and the only way to create the ‘peace and harmony’ is to have ‘a sympathetic mind.’ As you know, the Bible says: ‘But I say to you; love your enemies, bless those who curse you.’ These two teachings are completely the same. Now the 17th headmaster of *Onoha-Ittoryu* is a minister and Doctor of Divinity.

When practicing *Budo*, European and American cultures and Japanese culture fundamentally resonate with each other without contradiction. It is both an astonishing and delightful phenomenon. It also keeps encouraging us and bringing about peace of mind.



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