

Afterwords by Kamohara Koh-haku and On-da Ikkin

All 11 volumes were compiled by Tashiro Tsuramoto, who visited his teacher Yamamoto Jocho at his hamlet and recorded his conversations with him. Some episodes of failure or misconduct serve as warnings to us, while those of good conduct provide good examples.

I have copied the 11 volumes but am afraid I have made some mistakes in setting them down. They have also been copied by some others, so I would like any errors of mine to be corrected by those who read them. It will be good if they are checked and refined by those interested.

Kamohara Ko-haku

* Kamohara Ko-haku was one of those who copied the HAGAKURE. He died aged 80 in 1763.

All the *samurai* in our clan are required to read this book intently. I was lucky enough to borrow it from Mr. Fujisaki who copied the 11 volumes. However, I am afraid that I have made some mistakes in copying them, because I did it rather hastily. But everyone interested in our clan's history and culture should copy them and peruse them every day morning and evening. I wonder why this book has been given the title HAGAKURE. I must make inquiries about the origin of the title.

Studying is a duty of every man born into a *samurai* home. It means to learn, and to broaden your knowledge. It is impossible for us ordinary men to know everything. Even Confucius is said to have made up his mind to study at the age of 15. We are quite ignorant, unless we rely on the teachings of men of wisdom. How in the world can we come to know the right path without the help of their teachings?

Many people think that learning means reading many books and becoming well-informed. Those who are fond of reading devote themselves to books and learn difficult words. As a result they become very proud of their learning and look down at those around them who are ignorant. But they in turn come to be disliked. Such arrogant men ought to be regarded as much inferior to those who are ignorant but honest at heart. Ordinary men of little learning will say, "Look at those conceited men! See what has become of such intelligent men. To hell with learning!" As a result, they lose interest in learning, because naturally they do not like it. How regrettable!

Nearly 200 years have passed since the Warring States Period ended, and everyone can enjoy the advantages of peace. We are in paradise, are we not? It is said that

there existed such a peaceful period in the middle of the 10th century, but I wonder how much they could enjoy their life in those days. On the other hand, our descendants may envy this period of ours, wishing that they should have been born in it.

Since we are living in such an ideal period, is it not very regrettable if we lead our life selfishly and immorally? Have we not forgotten how to live as a faithful neighbor or to repay the good deeds of others? We ought to repay the favors we receive from Nature, our lords, and our parents. Is it not shameful to die without repaying them? I regret to say that those who fail to do so are like beasts, though they walk on two legs and talk. How shameful!

So we should visit men of wisdom and learn from them. We mediocre men should learn from others, repair our defects, and do our best to improve ourselves day by day. This is totally different from learning by books alone, for which there is no need at all.

Some people say that few men will instruct others through teaching and helping them get ahead in the world. Most adults these days just adopt a neutral attitude in dealing with young men. For their part, young men are too conceited to accept lessons from others' preaching because they think they know better themselves. They not only reject their elders' advice in anger, but become hostile towards them, as if they had been insulted. So elders give up instructing young men, while the youth have no ears to listen. Is it not inevitable that the right path will be lost in the end?

To be praised is pleasing to our ears, but to have our defects pointed out is not. We do not welcome admonishment from others, because it is humiliating. However, if you are told of your defect, you ought to repent of it and make a fresh start. Not to do so is a shameful rejection of others' advice.

Let me suggest a special remedy which is not humiliating, and will not make you get angry or flush with shame. Neither will your inquiry be known to others. My advice is this. You have only to follow what our forebears wrote. This is quite different from reading as many books as you can. I recommend you to read what was written by our predecessors, with the intention of discovering your own defects and improving yourself.

I can introduce the HAGAKURE to you with confidence. By reading it, you will accumulate knowledge of our clan's history and traditions, and our *samurai* way of living. As you read it, reflect on your behavior and return to the central concept of a *samurai*. I started by saying that studying is a duty of every man born into a *samurai* home. Let me conclude by repeating it. Remember this and go on with your training.

Onda Ikkin

* Onda Ikkin died in 1789.