

A Memoir of Yamamoto Jocho Told at His Hamlet

About valor

Of all things it is the most important to seek for your teacher. Next comes good friends to choose.

Always make the Four Pledges as your guide. Make it the rock on which you stand.

Bear on your mind's shoulders courage, fidelity and compassion. Everything else can be forgotten.

Behave frantically at the battlefield. Clench your teeth for bravery.

A warrior's merit is chivalry. Even if eccentric and haughty, he should be relied upon.

Arresting a criminal and assisting a convict in committing *seppuku* by beheading him provide an opportunity to cultivate your character as a man.

A set of arms are the spirit of a warrior. Always be prepared with a rope as well as a sharpened sword.

A warrior should exhaust himself on the battlefield. Always be prepared for an emergency.

A word expressed in good time really works. Arrogance of a warrior can be permitted.

Delight in a great calamity. Do not hesitate to lose your life on the battlefield.

Your servants are your treasure in an emergency. Always take good care of them by sharing your rice with them.

Always resign yourself as a dead person. Remember that you can still work for your lord even if you have lost your head.

Intelligence crushes your courage. Hesitation makes you timid.

Faith in God will bring you fortune, while compassion will nurture it.

A merciless treatment of others will result in an extinction of your household.

Bear no wicked thinking, or it will upset your fortune.

Don't withdraw in a critical situation. Do not use mean tactics, either.

Cowardice is leprosy that spoils your body. Greediness is like a pestering beggar.

About fidelity to the lord

Dedicate your life to your lord and leave your ups and downs to Fate.

Never fail to take to heart what your lord preaches.

Obey even if your lord demands too much from you.

Accept your pinch as an opportunity. Always deny what is told against your lord.

An admonition to your lord is the essence of faithfulness. Make every effort to be

promoted to a retainer for him.

No talent to entertain is necessary for a retainer but faithfulness.

Think that any duty of yours will be over within a day. Never fail to preview it.

Consideration to the other party is most important as a servant. Keeping a diary every day is also desirable.

Do not be triumphant in good times. Do not be discouraged in bad.

If you are greedy you'll be looked down upon. If not, you'll be looked up to.

The lord's attendant should be selected from among his own servants. Never recommend a novice for one.

Always do your best as a retainer. Remember that faithfulness can sometimes break the barrier of common sense.

About filial duty and mercy

Obedience is the essence of loyalty. At home your parents are your lord.

Good brotherhood is a joy. Good relationship with your relatives is also crucial.

Bring up your son so that he will learn to keep good spirit. Your teaching will work on him slowly but steadily, like good medicine.

Give away your allotment to your fellow servants. In a case of losing or gaining, take losing without hesitation.

God's heart is filled with compassion and truthfulness. Help each other tenderly.

Work for others as long as you live. Be willing to accept hardships.

A great trait sometimes covers a minor defect. Petty compassion sometimes hinders great mercifulness from being attained.

A town dweller takes pride on his money. A warrior should take pride on his loyal servant and his horse.

About daily attitude

Abstain from loud talking, drinking, making love and eating too much. Being loyal to your parents is the base of your fidelity.

Counseling results in wisdom. Get familiar with men of wisdom.

Open your eyes to as many opinions as possible. Do not take up only one person's assertion.

Decide by yourself to accept an important job. Do not flinch from it.

Decide to do anything within a short time. Judge every problem in the light of the Four Pledges.

Round up your courage to handle a difficult problem. Other jobs could be dealt with

making some allowances.

Pride precedes the wrath of Heaven. Always be modest enough to be aware of your inexperience.

Be diligent with your family business. Otherwise you will see the fall of your household.

Your promotion should be balanced with your age as well as the time.

Do not be absorbed in your hobbies like hawking and horse riding. They will not only distract you from your main duty but also end your career.

Keep proper manners of wearing clothes. Also know when to advance and when to retreat in public.

Be aware of your appearance, way of speaking and calligraphy. These are so important for your daily living as a retainer.

Arts like painting, singing, and dancing are good as a hobby. However, it is needless for a retainer to become a master artist.

Just pursue studying our clan's history and its culture. Everything else can be forgotten.

Pay high respect of Buddhism priests and be compassionate toward children and women.

A moment of negligence may lead to your failure. Always be prepared, and you will be able to accomplish your duty.

Young men should behave bravely. Prudence belongs to old age.

Think of repaying a kindness offered to you. Also return presents of food or a greeting you have received.

Returning a favor should be made politely. So should a letter of thanks be.

Keen interest in new things might bring about a hindrance. Something attractive now might result in repenting later.

Never take a bribe nor show undue partiality to anybody.

Do not accept any piece of disposed items from your acquaintances. And do not keep company with townsfolk, either.

Engagement in accounting at the clan office may tempt you to a wicked design. A position to serve directly for the lord may make you self-conceited.

However politely you stoop down in greeting, you cannot make it too polite.

However politely you write the last greeting of a letter, your brush cannot be worn out.

Try to keep your virtue from being noticed. Sow the seeds of virtue and wait for the time for reaping to come.

Great talents mature gradually. Patience is the seed of success.

Do not talk ill of anybody behind his back. Never protest against a false charge aimed at you on the spot.

When you grow old, you are likely to poke your nose into everyone's affair only to disgrace yourself in public.

Things you do not like could lead you to a good result. Remember that your present hardship may turn into luck to smile on you later.

Always behave as if you were in public. Eat food with a straight face. Send gifts to your fellow in his misfortune. Always keep your promise.

Do not give up on anybody. Remember that even a horse and a cow could be of some help to us.

It is impossible to make no mistake in your life. Repent, and you will be permitted.

Man's heart cannot remain unchanged for ever. Forget that you have been treated ill in the past.

Unite with those around you and serve the lord wholeheartedly.

Women's talk is sometimes biased. Take care not to stand by them alone.

Nothing can be hidden from God's observation. He will reward you fairly for what you have done.

Praise your servant 60 or 70 % for his deed. Too much approval might make him a lazy person in the future.

Admonish your servant 30 to 40 % for his mistake. Too much disapproval might make him conceive a grudge against you.

A praise missed will not always bring about unfavorable results. On the other hand, no punishment would cause a terrible situation in the future.

Forget a case of breach against you and forgive him. Do not expect a return from your servant for your kindness.

Things cannot be solved simply by a formula. Do not blame others with too harsh words.

Faith will move mountains. Strive to achieve your goal with your blood and tears.

Worship Lord Buddha and pay your respects to your parents every morning.

Respect the teachings of Buddha. Live your daily life according to them.

Offer prayers for the repose of your ancestors, and your family will be fortunate.

An expert sometimes takes an approach beyond our expectation. You ought to know that he may come up with an unexpected idea.

A person of many talents will sometimes ruin himself for his gifts. An honest person is never to blame.

A clever man cannot always reach the state of enlightenment. On the other hand,

even a man of ordinary talents could work for the clan with his determination.

Offer a helping hand to a person not used to the business. Risk your life to save your friend in a crucial situation.

Arrive at your office an hour earlier and leave as late as you can.

An early comer will not always be patronized, though. A servant who sometimes arrives late may win his co-workers over to his side.

Deeply indebted to the lord, you will not mind being imprisoned or offering your life to him anytime.

Every morning prepare yourself that you may lose your life on that day. Wind up your debt and loan every month.

An inventory of property as well as your will must be prepared for use at any time.

Make a record of your business and draw up a contract in duplicate every time.

Consider every possible result and act prudently.

When the water rises high, the ship will also float high. When you encounter the high waves, you should not shrink but dare to overcome them.

If you think your advantage the most important, you will shake at the crucial moment.

Make it a rule to get up early every morning. Do not be talkative in the company of others. Sustain from going out without an urgent business.

Nothing could be complete. Continue to do virtuous deeds in order to raise your status.

Follow the lessons of your ancestors, and you will enjoy a fortunate life with your family.

Some other instructions

Bear in mind what the code of a warrior is.

When you face a situation in which your life is at stake, never hesitate to lose your life.

Always remember how you should behave as a servant.

To seek for fame and fortune is disgraceful. However, a warrior ought to strive to be promoted to a position in which you can remonstrate with your lord.

If you try to be everybody's friend, you will be judged as lacking sincerity. Pursuing hobbies could be placed out of righteousness.

Such diversions as chess and gossip making are of no use for a retainer.

Without a sense of rivalry among you, you could live in peace. However, it is strongly needed for a warrior to sustain a fighting spirit.