

Inazo Nitobe. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2002. Pp. 154. Cloth, \$19.00; ISBN 4-7700-2731-1.

Japanese modernization, 1868-1919, sparked changes in all aspects of national life, from language to governmental structure to aesthetic techniques. Internally, a shift from a feudal past to a modern future prompted Japanese intellectuals to rethink the significance of Japan's past and interrogate the role of that past in the present and future. Externally, the rise of Japanese nationalism, especially during and after the first Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), destabilized the Pacific Rim. Western pressures on the Japanese to accept Western modes of culture led such philosophers as Kitaro Nishida to ask what the Western form of scientific and technological thinking is and how might it function in Japan without eroding spiritual and moral values traditional to East Asia. Inazo Nitobe's controversial study of samurai ethics, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, mirrors these tensions.

Kodansha's new edition of Nitobe's *Bushido* provides us with the opportunity to interpret the work's historical significance for both nineteenth-century Japan and its imperial adventures in 1894-1945. Indicative of ideas surfacing during the nineteenth century, Nitobe claims "*Bushido* was and still is the animating spirit, the motor force of our country." The "animating spirit," *Yamato Damashi*, is a "guiding principle" Nitobe equates with *bushido*. There seems to be little doubt that Nitobe's work influenced twentieth-century Japanese self-conceptions of the ideal type: "The Soul of Japan became not only an international bestseller, but served as the cornerstone for the construction of an edifice of ultra-nationalism that led Japan down the path to a war she could not win."

Since *Bushido* appeared in America in 1900, it has prompted charges that Nitobe romanticized *bushido* and ascribed a unity, both in doctrine and adherence, that many claim it never attained. As many contemporary philosophers of Japanese thought have pointed out, *bushido* was neither the "living code of ideals and manners" nor "the code of morals which the knights were required or instructed to observe" that Nitobe argued it was. Negotiations between Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism remained the social ethics operative in Japan since the sixth century. At best, some have argued, *bushido* seems to have been, prior to the seventeenth century, a loosely held set of presuppositions that any *bushi* or warrior, not just *samurai*, were likely to hold, and, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, an *ideal* fostered by such *samurai* as Yamaga Soko and Yamamoto Tsunetomo. But this criticism misses an important and neglected aspect of Nitobe's work, his building a bridge of understanding between Japan and the West. While some Europeans had been engaged in the task of comparative philosophy since the seventeenth century (e.g. Leibniz's writings on Chinese philosophy), Nitobe and others engaged in their own comparative analyses linking East and West from a Japanese perspective. Nitobe's study has crucial limitations, but it is worth considering in the light of recent interest and development in East-West studies.

Bushido would prove a useful supplement in both upper-division Japanese and East Asian history courses, especially those emphasizing the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The book would also be helpful in a specialized course on samurai history and the history of *bushido* as an example of revisionist history, illustrating challenges any culture faces recovering its own past as a guide to the present and/or future. Theoretical resemblances to Epicetus's *Enchiridion*, Hsun Tzu's *Art of War*, Mushai's *Book of Five Rings*, and Tsunetomo's *Hagakure* also make *Bushido* an appropriate text for a course in military ethics.

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Winthrop D. Jordan & Leon F. Litwack. *The United States: Conquering a Continent*. Redding, CA: Northwest Publishing, 2003. Volume I—to 1877. Pp. xiv, 397. Paper, \$19.99; ISBN 1-931910-15-4.

The choice of a textbook in an American history survey course is an important decision. Both instructors and students would benefit from this text. The book's clearly written narrative and interesting sidebars work well in a class that depends on dynamic lecturing supplemented with minimal textbook reading assignments and periodic discussion of primary sources.

Many professors have stopped assigning textbooks in American history surveys after hearing students report that they fail to keep up with assignments and find the books boring and too costly. Before following this course of action, professors might take a look at the benefits offered by this work.

Students will enjoy this easy-to-read history written by two noted figures in the profession. The authors do a fine job presenting the major characters as well as the lesser known personalities in American history. The maps and illustrations will enable students to situate history geographically and to visualize American life and culture. Each chapter contains shaded sections that provide pertinent primary sources and interesting descriptions of word and name origins. Finally, undergraduates burdened by the rising cost of textbooks will appreciate the affordable price of the volume—\$19.99.

Professors also will profit from this textbook in a number of different ways. After reading assigned chapters, students will come to class familiar with essential factual material. Energetic lecturers will be able to delve into greater detail during class because undergraduates will have a firm grasp of background information. Instructors who seek material for lectures from this book will find suggested readings at the end of every chapter. These bibliographies tend to note the essential historical monographs written before the 1980s; nonetheless, the instructor will find reference to the classics in American history. This latest edition promises to deliver more detailed analyses of women's history and the history of ethnic, racial, and religious minorities. While it