

Samurai as Loyal Warriors

Name: _____

Date: _____

STUDENT WORKSHEET: THE CODE OF THE SAMURAI IN ART AND LITERATURE

Samurai were expected to follow a code of behavior, *bushido*, or the “Way of the Warrior.” The samurai prized virtues such as honesty, courage, generosity, respect, self-sacrifice, self-control, compliance with duty, and loyalty. The code of the samurai was thought to bring balance and stability to society. Find examples of these virtues in art and literature.

Art Work	Samurai Behavior	Examples in Art and Literature
Battles at Ichi-no-tani and Yashima, from <i>The Tales of the Heike</i>		
Battle at Awazuhara and The First Man Across the Uji River, from <i>The Tales of the Heike</i>		
Scene from <i>The Storehouse of Loyalty</i>		

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THE CODE OF THE SAMURAI IN ART AND LITERATURE: *THE TALES OF THE HEIKE*



Battle at Awazuhara, from *The Tales of the Heike*, 1650–1700 (detail). Japan; Edo period (1615–1868). Pair of six-panel screens, ink, colors, and gold on paper. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60D60+.

Tomoe was especially beautiful, with white skin, long hair, and charming features. She was also a remarkably strong archer, and as a swordswoman she was a warrior worth a thousand, ready to confront a demon or a god, mounted or on foot. She handled unbroken horses with superb skill; she rode unscathed down perilous descents. Whenever a battle was imminent, Yoshinaka sent her out as his first captain, equipped with strong armor, an oversized sword, and a mighty bow; and she preformed more deeds of valor than any of his other warriors. (291)

–Helen McCullough, *The Tale of the Heike*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988, 291.

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THE CODE OF THE SAMURAI IN ART AND LITERATURE: *THE TALE OF THE FORTY-SEVEN RONIN (CHUSHINGURA)*



Scene from *The Storehouse of Loyalty (Chushingura)*, 1806, by Hokusai (1760–1849). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Woodblock print, ink and colors on paper. Gift of Japanese Prints from the Collection of Emmeline Johnson, Donated by Oliver and Elizabeth Johnson, 1994.45.

The attacking parties at front and back gates make final arrangements at the same time, and two fearless men, Yazama and Senzaki, creep up to the front gate to observe conditions inside. They hear a distant sound of clappers, no doubt the night watchman's, and, judging this to be the opportune moment, they lean against the high wall and join ladders they have kept in readiness. Nimble as spiders, they race up the wall, as though headed for the clouds, and soon reach the roof. The sound of the clappers is now near at hand as they lightly leap down on the other side. The watchman, catching sight of them, runs up with a shout of "Who's there?" They grab the man and force him down to the ground, then bind him at wrists and elbows....(p. 173)

—Donald Keene, *Chushingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers*,
New York: Columbia University Press, 1971, 173.