

The Creed of a Samurai

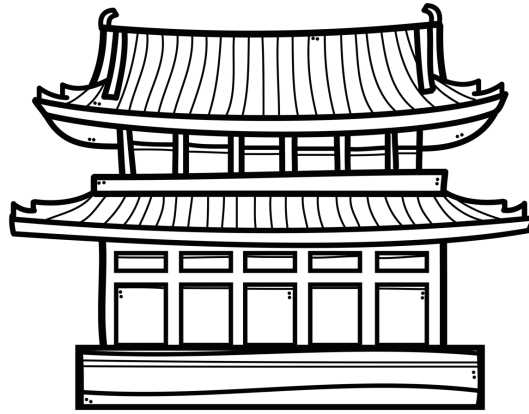
Written by an anonymous samurai in the 14th century



I have no parents - I make the heavens and earth my parents.
I have no home - I made awareness my home.
I have no life or death - I make the tides of breathing my life and death.
I have no divine power - I make honesty my divine power.
I have no means - I make understanding my means.
I have no magic secrets - I make character my magic secret.
I have no body - I make endurance my body.
I have no eyes - I make the flash of lightning my eyes.
I have no ears - I make sensibility my ears.
I have no limbs - I make promptness my limbs.
I have no strategy - I make "unshadowed by thought" my strategy.
I have no designs - I make "seizing the opportunity by the forelock" my design.
I have no miracles - I make right action my miracles.
I have no principles - I make adaptability to all circumstances my principles.
I have no tactics - I make emptiness and fullness my tactics.
I have no talents - I make ready wit my talent.
I have no friends - I make my mind my friend.
I have no enemy - I make carelessness my enemy.
I have no armor - I make benevolence and righteousness my armor.
I have no castle - I make immovable mind my castle.
I have no sword - I make absence of self my sword.

Glossary

In the Order They Appear



Word	Definition
Tides	Upward and downward motion
Divine	Relating to a god
Means	Wealth
Endurance	The ability of being able to tolerate something for a long time
Sensibility	Feelings
Promptness	Arriving on time
"Seizing the opportunity by the forelock"	Work hard and benefit from opportunities
Adaptability	The capability to change
Wit	Being clever and having sense
Benevolence	Kindness and generosity
Righteousness	Morally good
Immovable	Unlikely to change, fastened securely

Name:

Interpretation of "The Creed of a Samurai"

Directions: Read the poem and then answer the following questions.

1. What is a creed?
2. What is your interpretation of the following lines?

Quote	Your Interpretation
"I have no friends - I make my mind my friend."	
"I have no enemy - I make carelessness my enemy."	
"I have no armor - I make benevolence and righteousness my armor."	
"I have no sword - I make absence of self my sword."	

3. Why do you think the samurai mentally trained themselves to deny the possessions of parents, homes, eyes, ears, limbs, talents, friends, etc.?