

The Eight Virtues of Bushido



VIII. Character and Self-Control

The first objective of samurai education was to build up Character. The subtler faculties of prudence, intelligence, and dialectics were less important. Intellectual superiority was esteemed, but a samurai was essentially a man of action. Science was outside the pale of his interests. He took advantage of it only to the degree that it related to his profession of arms. Religion and theology were relegated to the priests; the samurai concerned himself with them only to the degree that they helped nourish his Courage. Philosophy and literature comprised most of his intellectual training; but even in these pursuits, it was not objective truth he sought. Literature was pursued mainly as a pastime, and philosophy as a practical aid in the formation of Character.