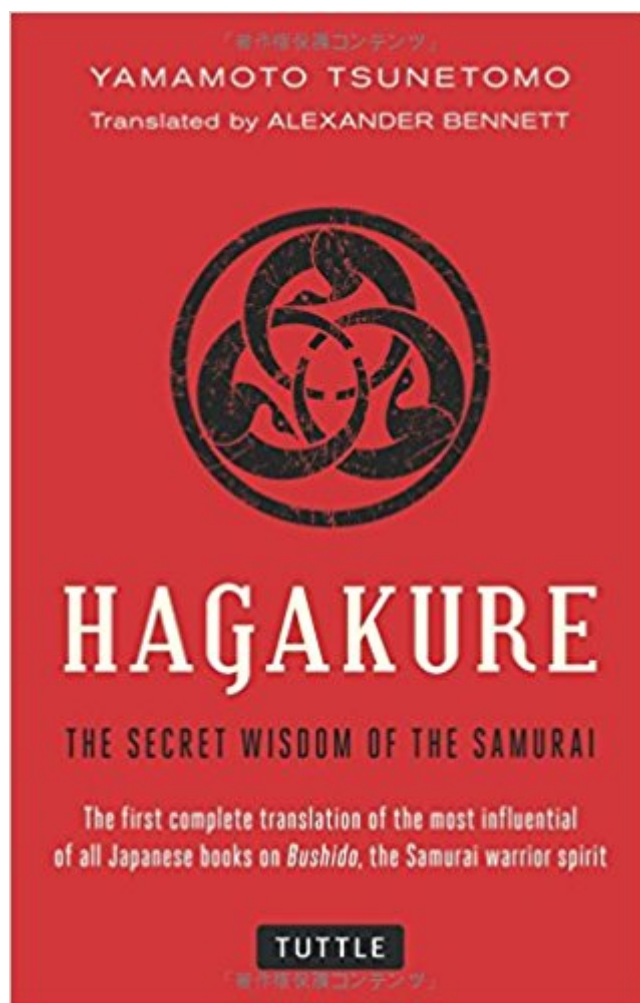


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Hagakure: The Secret Wisdom Of The Samurai



Synopsis

The comprehensive and accurate edition of the Hagakure is a must-have for serious martial artists or fans of samurai and the bushido code. The Hagakure is one of the most influential of all Japanese textsâ" written nearly 300 years ago by Yamamoto Tsunetomo to summarize the very essence of the Japanese Samurai bushido ("warrior") spirit. Its influence has been felt throughout the world and yet its existence is scarcely known to many Westerners. This is the first translation to include the complete first two books of the Hagakure and the most reliable and authentic passages contained within the third book; all other English translations published previously have been extremely fragmentary and incomplete. Alex Bennett's completely new and highly readable translation of this essential work includes extensive footnotes that serve to fill in many cultural and historical gaps in the previous translations. This unique combination of readability and scholarship gives Hagakure: The Secret Wisdom of the Samurai a distinct advantage over all previous English editions.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Hagakure is required reading for anyone seeking to understand the samurai mind, which still influences Japanese culture deeply, even today. Although the book "Bushido" is more famous, it was written long after the samurai had ceased to exist, and distorts the facts to suit a Christian / Western viewpoint. Hagakure, however, is the real deal; it was dictated by a samurai serving a lord during the mid-Edo period, and provides invaluable insight into the values of the Japanese warrior class. This is the most complete translation of Hagakure yet produced in English; other translations are selected excerpts from the original. Dr Bennett's knowledge of Japanese language and history,

and particularly the history of the samurai, helps the reader make sense of the subject matter. If you are going to get one version of the Hagakure, this is the one to get!

I come back to this book daily, again and again for inspiration. Gems like this are easy to find the way the book is laid out numerically. "Nothing is impossible. With single-minded resolve (ichinen), heaven and earth can be moved as one pleases. The feeble hearts of men hinder their determination. A man's fecklessness prevents him making up his mind. 'Moving heaven and earth without using any strength' can be achieved with single minded determination."

Dr. Alex Bennett's translation of Hagakure is the first version I've come across which manages to both capture the historical context of Yamamoto Tsunetomo's writings and view it through modern perspective. The world described by Tsunetomo can often seem very alien and the underlying meaning of many passages is not obvious to the modern reader. Dr. Bennetts extensive knowledge of Japanese culture and Budo history provides the necessary historical and cultural context required to understand the mindset of a 18th century samurai. This version have made several passages which previously were incomprehensible to me as clear as day and made me re-evaluate my opinions of Hagakure. A must read for anyone who has an interest in the samurai culture and the Tokugawa-era.

I preordered the book as soon as I become aware of it. I have read & studied other texts produced by Dr. Bennett and they have always been easy to read and understand. I also subscribed to Kendo World even though I do not practice Kendo because the articles provide insight to life in general. Look forward to reading his latest endeavor. Yay, the book arrived. And it is not only a wonderful translation for all budoka as noted by all the other reviews, but the Hagakure in Context provides a very rich background for the book. The translations of the writings of Yamamoto Tsunetomo within provide insight of the samurai and Japanese culture. I believe this is a tremendous read for martial artists and non-martial artists interested in the culture of Japan.

This book is POWERFUL. So much wisdom packed in such a small package. I can tell the author whom has translated this book has a real grasp on Bushido and the Way of the Warrior due to the fact that the words seem to be as finely crafted as the sharp and timeless Katana. I owe a majority of my life as it is now to this book. After reading it really helped me decide how I should handle all aspects of my life specifically with decision making. I only wish I bought this book sooner. I have

been studying Japanese as well as Martial arts for years so I can find great value in Yamamoto's word's translated with passion by Bennett. Every one of my Japanese friends say this is the best book they've read in English thus far.

You need deep understandings of cultural and historical backgrounds when translating Japanese old books like Hagakure. Not only he practices kendo (7-dan, kyoshi) and koryu (classical style) but also he is an academic expert in this area. He has knowledge and experiences as a scholar and martial artist. Also he gives extra information so even if you are not familiar with Japanese culture and history, you can enjoy the book. If you are pursuing martial arts, especially Japanese martial arts, you should get his books. You cannot go wrong. Easy to understand and takes you to another level by reading and studying his books. Good luck!

When reading the classics the question always comes up: which translation is best? This version sets a new benchmark. The introduction does a tremendous job in setting the context and demonstrates the writer's deep understanding of the context of bushido. It breaks out of the myth of the samurai and actually delivers an informed perspective that sets you up to understand where Tsunetomo was coming from. The full translation of all three volumes is a great contribution making these sections accessible to those who can't read Japanese.

Over the years I have read many of Dr .Bennett's books/ translations and articles re Budo. He is extremely knowledgeable, not only as far as the physical aspects of many types of ancient and modern martial arts are concerned but also in the history and philosophy of Budo generally. DR. Bennett has immersed himself in the Japanese culture for several decades and is acknowledged throughout the education system in Japan as a Budo scholar of some renown. He has the ability to take very complicated explanations from commentators from several hundred years ago as well as recent authors and distil them into easily understood concepts. This book is no exception! I would heartily recommend this book to any serious martial artist or anyone interested in Japanese history and culture; the insights you will find will make it a very worthwhile investment of your time.

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