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## Role of Culture In Pursuit of Nation's Progress: The Case of 'Bushido'

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By *Fauziah Fathil*

*Bushido* or samurai code of ethics, though dated back to feudal Japan, continues to survive until present day in the daily conduct of Japanese for not only it contributed to the solidarity of the people as one nation, but as the impetus for the country's advancement and progress.

Admirable attitudes of samurai such as discipline, strong

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vital role of culture and tradition.

Of course, there are those who argue that the case of Japan is unique, thus the capitalisation on culture and tradition for progress may not work in other societies. Unlike other societies, the Japanese are known to be obsessed with perfection exemplified in for instance, the rapid modernisation of Japan once the country opened itself to the world in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as well as the remarkable recovery that Japan underwent after they had greatly suffered in the World War II.

Even before the dismantling of the feudal system, Japan, as portrayed by foreign travellers and visitors, was very unique and stood apart from the rest, being described as a 'topsy-turvy' country where everything was the opposite of common norms practiced in other societies.

Nevertheless, for keen observers, other societies too could benefit from the continuation of their traditions though at a varying degree, depending on how societies appreciate and value their traditions on one hand, and the relevance of the traditions to the ever growing and changing society on the other. In the West, given the secular outlook embraced by the people, the traditions were deliberately side-lined although in reality, some Judeo-Christian traditions that characterised the Western civilisation are still relevant and if preserved, could remedy some of the problems facing the Western society today. The relevant traditions are such as those related to the sanctity of family and marriage.

As for the greater part of Muslim society, the role of culture and tradition has always been viewed as pertinent to the development of society and individuals either physically, spiritually or emotionally, since the religion Islam conditioned various conducts and practices of the Muslims. That said, as can

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certain ideologies that alienated religions such as socialism, liberalism, or secularism.

Consequently, many Muslim countries or nations today succumbed to anarchy, poverty, and various other socio-economic and political calamities. Given this situation of the Muslim Ummah, it is imperative that the role of culture and traditions to be persistently called upon, that Muslims should uphold and practice their religion for their own sake, not only for the life in the Hereafter, but also the life in this World.

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