

The Last Statement of Torii Mototada

1600

Recently, there has been the report of an uprising in the Kamigata area, and that a large number of rebel daimyo who have fallen into the evil scheming of Ishida Mitsunari will first lay siege to this castle and are now making such preparations with large forces.

For myself, I am resolved to make a stand within the castle and to die a quick death. It would not take much trouble to break through a part of their numbers and escape, no matter how many tens of thousands of horsemen approached for the attack or by how many columns we were surrounded.

But that is not the true meaning of being a warrior, and it would be difficult to account as loyalty. Rather, I will stand off the forces of the entire country here, and, without even one one-hundredth of the men necessary to do so, will throw up a defense and die a resplendent death. By doing so I will show that to abandon a castle that should be defended, or to value one's life so much as to avoid danger and to show the enemy one's weakness is not within the family traditions of my master Ieyasu.

Thus I will have taken the initiative in causing Lord Ieyasu's other retainers to be resolved, and in advancing righteousness to the warriors of the entire country. It is not the Way of the Warrior to be shamed and avoid death even under circumstances that are not particularly important. It goes without saying that to sacrifice one's life for the sake of his master is an unchanging principle. As this is a matter that I have thought over beforehand, I think that circumstances such that I am meeting now must be envied by people of understanding.

You, Tadamasa, should understand the following well. Our ancestors have been personal vassals of the Matsudaira for generations. My late father, the governor of Iga, served Lord Kiyoyasu, and later worked loyally for his son, Hirotada. My older brother, Genshichiro, manifested his absolute loyalty and was cut down in battle at Watari.

When the present Lord Ieyasu was a child and sent to Suruga, the Governor of Iga accompanied him as a guardian. later, at the age of 19, Ieyasu returned to Okazaki, and the Governor of Iga served him with unsurpassed loyalty, living more than 80 years with unswerving steadfastness. Lord Ieyasu, for his part, regarded the Governor as a matchless vassal. When I was 13 and Lord Ieyasu seven, I came before his presence for the first time, and the blessings I have received since must not be forgotten for all the generations to come.

Because Lord Ieyasu is well aware of my loyalty, he has left me here in charge of the important area of Kamigata as Deputy of Fushimi Castle while he advances toward the East, and for a warrior there is nothing that could surpass this good fortune. That I should be able to go ahead of all the other

warriors of this country and lay down my life for the sake of my master's benevolence is an honor to my family and has been my most fervent desire for many years.

After I am slain, you must lovingly care for all your younger brothers, beginning with Hisagoro, in my stead. Your younger brothers must earnestly look to you as they would to their father, and must never disobey you.

As they grow up, they should one by one present themselves to the Lord Ieyasu, make efforts with their own various talents, do whatever they are commanded, be on friendly terms with one another, and remain forever grateful to their ancestors, by whose blessings our clan was established and its descendants succeeded.

They must be determined to stand with Lord Ieyasu's clan in both its ascent and decline, in times of peace and in times of war; and either waking or sleeping they must never forget that they will serve his clan, and his clan alone. To be avaricious for land or to forget old debts because of some passing dissatisfaction, or to even temporarily entertain treacherous thoughts is not the Way of Man.

Even if all the other provinces of Japan were to unite against our lord, our descendants should not set foot inside another fief to the end of time. Simply, in no matter what circumstances, unify with the heart of one family - of elder and younger brothers - exert yourselves in the cause of loyalty, mutually help and be helped by one another, preserve your righteousness and strive in bravery, and be of a mind never to stain the reputation of a clan that has not remained hidden from the world, but has gained fame in military valor for generations, especially since the days of the Governor of Iga.

At any rate, if you will take it into your mind to be sincere in throwing away your life for your master, you will not have the slightest fear or trembling even with the advent of innumerable impending calamities.

I am now 62 years of age. Of the number of times that I have barely escaped death since the time I was in Mikawa I have no idea. Yet, not once have I acted in a cowardly way. Man's life and death, fortune and calamity are in the fate of the times, and thus one should not search out after what he likes. What is essential is to listen to the words of the older retainers, to put to use men of skill and understanding, to not commit acts of adolescent self-will, and to receive the remonstrance's of your retainers.

The entire country will soon be in the hands of your master, Lord Ieyasu. If this is so, the men who served him will no doubt hope to become daimyo by his appointment. You should know that if such feelings arise, they are inevitably the beginning of the end of one's fortunes in the Way of the Warrior.

Being affected by the avarice for office and rank, or wanting to become a daimyo and being eager for such things ... will not one then begin to value his life? And how can a man commit acts of martial valor if he values his life? A man who has been born into the house of a warrior and yet places no loyalty in his heart and thinks only of the fortune of his position will be flattering on the surface and construct schemes in his heart, will forsake righteousness and not reflect on his shame, and will stain the warrior's name of his household to later generations. This is truly regrettable. It is not necessary to say such a thing, but you should raise the name of your ancestors in this world yet

a second time. Moreover, as I have already spoken to you about the management of our clan's affairs, there is no need to speak of that again. You have already seen and heard of what has been regulated from years past.

Be first of all prudent in your conduct and have correct manners, develop harmony between master and retainers, and have compassion on those beneath you. Be correct in the degree of rewards and punishments, and let there be no partiality in your degree of intimacy with you retainers. the foundation of man's duty as a man is in "truth." Beyond this, there is nothing to be said.