

## Shogun: The Winning Style

Talk by Jim Troxel, September 1976, Chicago Nexus Collegium

This file contains the transcript of a talk by Jim Troxel delivered September 1976 at the Chicago Nexus titled "Shogun: The Winning Style." The talk was based on the popular novel published in 1975 *Shogun* by James Clavell. Many folks at the Institute were reading this novel.

The book itself is set in feudal Japan some months before the critical Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, *Shōgun* gives an account of the rise of the daimyo "Toranaga" (based upon the actual Tokugawa Ieyasu). Toranaga's rise to the Shogunate is seen through the eyes of the English sailor John Blackthorne, called *Anjin* ("Pilot") by the Japanese, whose fictional heroics are loosely based on the historical exploits of William Adams.

Troxel's talk focuses on the Style of Winning personified by Toranaga (the Shogun) in the novel. The last page in this file is Troxel's notes from which he gave the talk.

*Troxel*  
Used the screen of the New Religious Mode  
to organize his comments.

SHOGUN: THE WINNING STYLE

This talk is about how to cultivate the style of winning. A couple of weeks ago someone gave a witness saying he had not read any books lately, and I was feeling guilty because I had read quite a number of books in the past year. Interestingly enough I happen to agree with the best-seller list. Three of the best books I have read are All the President's Men, Trinity which is about Northern Ireland, and Shogun. I have never seen a book like Shogun catch on as much as it has here. The New Religious Mode charts are a helpful screen for grasping the book. For me the book is about cultivating the style of winning, under which there are two points: one is "generalship" and the other is "the shadow."

Why has it captivated us--not that it ought to be our Order study this quarter or anything like that--but what is it going on? someone mentioned that Shogun gives the illustrative material for Sun Tzu. Shogun has grounded Sun Tzu in a fictional form, in the context of a historical situation. If you want to go back and read the introduction to Sun Tzu you will notice that his thoughts influenced Japanese military thinking quite extensively as well as the guerilla warfare of Mao Tse Tung.

The book is about indirect strategy. I do not know any more what the difference is between strategy and tactic, but I think the category of maneuver can be more properly related to strategy than tactics. In the book the hero was intensely thought-through in everything he did; for me this is his prayer. One of his quotations was "Be patient, consider facts only, sit down and think," and he thought a long time.

For those of you who have not read the book, it is set in 16th century Japan. The young prince is not yet old enough to be king, so for the time being a panchayat of 5 generals were running the country. Four of them decided that the 5th one, the hero of the novel by the name of Toranaga, was really their

enemy. The book is about the council of four against Toranaga, the other lord. The category "shogun" points to that dynamic whenever any one of the generals, or lords of the nation, is so much in control that a panchayat is not needed. He has gained power to run the whole thing, with or without the prince or the king. The book never tells you exactly what happened in the end except that Toranaga became Shogun, and it is clear as the book develops that Toranaga had planned everything that happens 100 pages back and you had missed it. At the very end you get the impression that the author was tired of writing and wanted to finish it quickly; he simply has Toranaga tell you exactly everything that is going to happen. You have no doubt in your mind by the time you have gotten to this point in the book that whatever he said was going to happen was exactly what was going to happen. He had carefully thought through every plan. I do not know much about indirect strategic thinking, but certainly that is one of its aspects.

His obedience was a radical kind of intentionality. I have begun to use the phrase "decisionality," radical "decisionality." He said that his battleplan was to wait. He was very clear that as long as he was making the decisions they were the best decisions. He had no question that everything he decided was right. The book talks about Karma as fate. It was Karma that such and such happened, and yet over against that was Toranaga's radical decisionality. You had an interplay between Karma and the general's decisionality. The council of 4 kept accusing Toranaga of wanting to become the Shogun, and Toranaga said he just wanted to be loyal to the young prince. At the end he said "I will be the Shogun." You begin to get clear that all during the book he had already decided that he was going to be the Shogun. He had decided to be the Shogun from page 1 and his wild decisionality was not opposed to Karma, but he perceived his fate and transformed that into a meaningful destiny. That is one of the qualities of the general, the capacity to be obedient not only to the word but also obedient to the deed, to what the historical situation demands and delivers. In a time of knowing, obedience to the word would be something like living your life. But we are in a time of doing when being obedient to the word is being obedient to the deed as well, and transforming the given situation. That is where you see the spirit becoming visible in a style of winning.

He also had a wild capacity of owning his own death and his own life. For him triumph and disaster were impossible, they just did not exist. His capacity to send his troops into their death

*Imposters*

was shocking. He was completely detached from his friends and colleagues, but his detachment from them was in order to use them to win the battle. It reminds me of the pedagogy days when we said that if you ever had to develop buddy-buddy relationships, you could never teach in a way that would get the Word transmitted to the people. People accused us of manipulation; Toranaga manipulated everybody that was under him. We talk about manipulating people to the point of their own freedom in a time of knowing; in a time of doing, Toranaga manipulated people to the point of their own victory. This is the style of the general. You can always spot a general because all of his people win; even if they lose their life, they win. There was no question that if any of the people under him chose obedience to him, they would win even if they lost their life. His power as a general came from his capacity to manipulate the people and the situation to victory.

Under the rubric of "meditation," he had a council. He dialogued with everybody. Every time he could have someone's ear he was talking. He was in perpetual dialogue, especially with his enemies. The other day somebody was saying we had a hard time making decisions because we kept waiting for a leader. I thought we had handled this in our early days when we sent out Religious Houses. When you were out there and you did not know what to do, you made an imaginary call and you had a conversation about what to do. You always knew exactly what was going to be said. Now it seems that the tables are switched and our leader is not here, he is out there and we at Centrum have to make a phone call to him, and have that kind of conversation. It is like we have called up the enemy; your first phone call might be to the liberal heretic. You say, "Liberal heretic, what would you say about this?" You can just hear the answer. I think from time to time you have to get certain people even in our own midst to personify the liberal heresy and have a conversation with them. You can hear what they say and you can tell what a more helpful response would be. It occurred to me that Toranaga not only had other people in his shadow, but he also forced himself to be in other people's shadows, those of his meditative council. For me the shadow principle is two ways, at least that is what Toranaga revealed to me. You always have to grasp that you are in someone else's shadow. You are always in training. I think you have to decide who are the three or four people whose shadow you are. But the converse is also true, especially for those of you who think that because you have an asterisk by your name you are always casting a shadow on the other. The shogun and the general know that not

only do they cast a shadow for everyone else, but they always decide to be everyone else's shadow. That is why the principle goes both ways. My mind goes to one colleague, who they say is a very good mechanic, in whose shadow you are very fortunate to be in learning how to do mechanical things. I want to suggest that being a shadow does not have anything to do with learning a skill; it is not like you go into data processing and be a shadow to learn how to key punch. You are learning something far more. Toranaga always had his conversations with his English sailor, and he was very interested in what the English sailor had to say. He never seemed to finish the conversations in all the practical how-to's. He always cut him off. The shadow is not only interested in the mechanical skill but in how that person be's what he does. That is why our colleague is a great person to have as a gun in those Social Demonstrations now. To be his shadow you could learn mechanical skills, but you would also learn something far more important, that kind of style of audacity which is almost arrogant, radical drive to get something done. That is as important, if not more so, than learning all those mechanical skills. What would it mean, you team priors, that what people were looking at and what you are looking for is not the mechanical skills, but how they be? I am very interested in watching people. Are they being generals as they walk by, composed in this kind of fashion?

I do not know what else you would want to say about the shogun and what we could learn from him. Certainly his doing was rather dramatic. I am beginning to see that there is a distinction between being catalytic and being indirect. Catalytic is when you add something and you can mix it up and a chemical reaction occurs. But indirect to me is like somebody said the other day-- in pool it is the bank shot, where you aim one way and what you really hit is somewhere else because it ricocheted. We have said this before, but now I think this is becoming clearer to us.

Toranaga, the Shogun, the general, was never doing what it looked like he was doing. He was doing something but that is not what he was doing. He was doing something far deeper than that and that was just the surface. Sometimes you could call it deception, the diversion, the unpredictability of the general. He played the role for a long time of being a beaten man and he convinced everybody that he was a beaten man in order to lure the enemy out. Then the book ends with him chopping the enemy off.

Playing a role to draw the enemy out is something we do in pedagogy a lot, playing like you do not know what the answer to the question is, and then luring out the spirit enemy. Then as a person hears himself talk, he discovers himself what he is saying. In the time of doing, the general, especially, has to cultivate the style of winning in others. What would it mean for the centrum posts to act like they do not know what we ought to do in order to get the wisdom of everybody who is working with them so that they can put themselves on their own victory with their own lucidity?

I do not know what that looks like, the the "gun" is there somewhere, doing the bank shot. In bowling the guy who throws the straight ball at the head pin is always going to get a split. But if you know how to throw a hook and come in on the one-three pocket, you are going to win every time. This principle of being indirect is the way life is, I am convinced.

In terms of knowing, the general has a depth knowing that came from the situation of being engaged. It seemed to me that the process was something like this: he prayed, he did and he reflected, and the reflection after his doing was the kind of profound knowing that we need to get on top of right now. How you cultivate this I have no idea.

Clearly, in terms of being, transparent being, he was always winning even if he did not know himself what was going on at every moment in the battle. Even if some of his troops were losing a temporary skirmish, Toranaga was winning because he had a whole game plan, a battle plan. He was thought through but something far deeper than this, he had decided with his own being that he had already won the situation and after having made that decision then he made his battle plan. I do not know how we do this. You decide your win, then you build your battle plan and you win. Some of us have felt like you had to build a battle plan and win, and then you could decide that you were winning. What would it mean to just reverse that? This is nothing new, but Toranaga exemplifies it vividly.

Chastity: I wrote down the word "perfection." Maybe we ought to read Teresa's Way of Perfection, in terms of seeing that every time Toranaga, the general, demanded that the situation in which he was in was perfect, it was--the floors were scrubbed and the plants were right and the tea was perfect and the manners of his people, and even the swords were in the right place. If you have not developed your space in such a fashion that it dramatizes that whoever is in this situation is the general, then whoever walks

in there is not the general even if he has four stars on his shoulder. This has been the struggle in trying to develop the centrum space around here. What does it mean to create generals by caring for their space in such a fashion that it behooves a group of generals walking within it? It looks like it is ready for generals and not guests.

In terms of contemplation, they were always talking about watching the rocks grow and drinking a cup of tea with no tea in the cup. Every time Toranaga got a little bit flustered he would go into a little zen-buddhist practice of inhaling and exhaling, redeveloping his composure, that you never thought this general was anxious. He was always in a calm resolve. Even when it looked like the whole universe was collapsing around him, he was always the calm resolved style of patience. This pace is what intrigued me again. Some people hurry by on the way to the xerox machine as if they had to get to that xerox in the next two seconds or the war would collapse. That is true, but what would it mean, with that task on your mind and that task to get done, to walk by as the general? I was trying to think of news clippings of generals I have seen. They were never in a hurry, but they were always in control of the whole situation. They were the composed, they were the victorious. The shogun, the general, Toranaga is kind of like that, cutting over against this propensity of ours from time to time to get frantic and hurry up and thereby lose our sense of thinking ourselves through.

# SHOGUN

IN A TIME OF DOING  
ROLE

not  
live on  
life  
Transcend this  
situation

ohed to command  
Obed to Dead  
what higher god  
demanded

## STYLE OF WINNING

Making the Spirit Visible

## GENERAL

### SHADOW

POV  
③  
around his death →  
triumph + disaster  
were imposters  
no hero

Send his troops to  
their death. In Ed.  
Detachment front troops  
used people  
unwilling people to be  
pt. of their own victory  
Nobody who needs to be obed to  
this god lost

His knowing  
was not  
absolut  
but from  
engagemt

T. KNOW  
⑤  
He would know  
depth knowing  
+ situation  
+ the people.

in a time of doing  
this doing revealed something  
else  
Pray/Do/Reflect

MEO ④  
Council  
w/ Enemies  
Perp. Dialogue  
call is no down  
\* Liberal Heretic  
calling up the

Shadow  
any one else's shadow  
he was the shadow  
of enemy else  
spin  
Name your shadow:  
ask abt. making by and  
from abt. the person

Be their Do  
how can this man's life be

Know  
Shadow

CHAST  
Perfection, way of  
- immaculate  
- approp to a  
winner

T. BE  
⑦  
He was  
always winning  
it he didn't know  
what was going on

COURT  
Rocks  
Tea  
Zen  
⑨  
"Pace"  
Calm  
Resolute  
Patience - sit on  
anxieties

generals  
never  
lower in a  
appreciated as if

Frantzeness  
Chasing  
Kozisack  
convodes

②  
His  
Karma  
Shogun

OBEY  
Radical  
Influently  
Determinately  
- to his BIP  
- wait -  
Best is what I demand  
Direct in his death  
Indirect in his impact

not catalyze  
T. DO  
⑥  
Gen  
stumble over  
this own garden

"Bank  
Shot"  
he was never  
doing what it  
looked like he  
was doing  
- diversion  
- bluff  
- unpredictable  
(Don Juan)  
playing act of the role  
of the boardman

Retiring Acad  
Image of Acad  
Pedag.  
Jep.

①  
Santzen  
Serena

PRAYER  
Indirect  
Tactics  
Strategic  
Thought through  
circuits;

Be patient, consider  
facts only. Sit down  
+ think  
End of book, tells you  
what's going to happen.  
G-S-T Act  
w/o thinking

Indirect