

FOLLOWING THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW IN TOKUGAWA JAPAN

Like the Qing dynasty in China, the Tokugawa shoguns attempted to keep their subjects in line with decrees that carefully prescribed all kinds of behavior. As this decree, which was circulated in all Japanese villages, shows, the bakufu sought to be the moral instructor as well as the guardian and protector of the Japanese people. Compare and contrast this decree with Emperor Kangxi's Sacred Edict in the box earlier in this chapter.

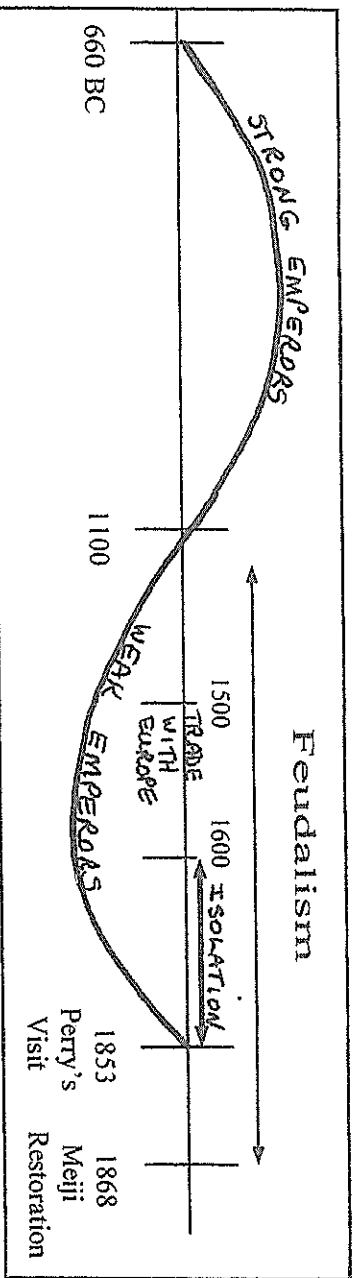
MAXIMS FOR PEASANT BEHAVIOR

1. Young people are forbidden to congregate in great numbers.
2. Entertainments unsuited to peasants, such as playing the samisen or reciting ballad dramas, are forbidden.
3. Staging sumo matches is forbidden for the next five years.
4. The edict on frugality issued by the *han* at the end of last year must be observed.
5. Social relations in the village must be conducted harmoniously.
6. If a person has to leave the village for business or pleasure, that person must return by ten at night.
7. Father and son are forbidden to stay overnight at another person's house. An exception is to be made if it is to nurse a sick person.
8. Corvée [obligatory labor] assigned by the *han* must be performed faithfully.
9. Children who practice filial piety must be rewarded.
10. One must never get drunk and cause trouble for others.
11. Peasants who farm especially diligently must be rewarded.
12. Peasants who neglect farm work and cultivate their paddies and upland fields in a slovenly and careless fashion must be punished.
13. The boundary lines of paddy and upland fields must not be changed arbitrarily. 14- Recognition must be accorded to peasants who contribute greatly to village political affairs.
15. Fights and quarrels are forbidden in the village.
16. The deteriorating customs and morals of the village must be rectified.
17. Peasants who are suffering from poverty must be identified and helped.
18. This village has a proud history compared to other villages, but in recent years bad times have come upon us. Everyone must rise at six in the morning, cut grass, and work hard to revitalize the village.
19. The punishments to be meted out to violators of the village code and gifts to be awarded the deserving are to be decided during the last assembly meeting of the year.

1. According to these decrees, what were the Tokugawa rulers trying to achieve in Japan?

2. What values were the Tokugawa rulers trying to instill in the people?

AIM:



In the 16th century, war was brought to an end and order was established in Japan. At this time, the first of the Tokugawa rulers took over. The Tokugawa family was to rule Japan for the next 268 years. This period of the Tokugawa Shogunate led to the establishment of a policy that was to greatly affect Japan's future.

The following was an act passed in Japan in the year 1634...

... The act of the 13th year of the Kan'ei runs as follows:

1. Japanese ships shall by no means be sent abroad.
2. No Japanese shall be sent abroad. Anyone violating this prohibition shall suffer the penalty of death, and the shipowner and crew shall be held up together with the ship.
3. All Japanese living abroad shall be put to death when they return home.
4. The construction of ships large enough for overseas trade is banned.
5. The samurai shall not purchase goods on board foreign ships directly from foreigners. (only one port town, Nagasaki, was left open to trade with the Chinese and Dutch)
6. Spaniards or Portuguese and any other people with evil titles trying to spread Christianity shall be jailed in the Omura's prison.
7. Informers against Christians shall be rewarded. Everything shall be done to see that no Christian is survived by descendants, and anyone disregarding this injunction shall be put to death.
8. Children born of Spaniards or Portuguese in Nagasaki and people adopting these children into their family shall be put to death.

1. According to the timeline and reading, what type of government did Japan have at this time and who was the ruler?

Read 1-8 above.

2. What methods were used to enforce isolation?
3. Which of these methods seem very cruel?
4. List some reasons why the Japanese leaders would want to isolate their country?
5. What negative effects might the policy of isolation have on Japan at a later time?