

Source: Hongwu Emperor, "An Imperial Edict Restraining Officials from Evil," 1368

To my civil and military officials,

How many of you really follow my instructions? Those in charge of money and grain have stolen it themselves, and those in charge of criminal laws and punishments have neglected the regulations. As a result, grievances go unredressed, and false charges are ignored...When I discover the truth, I capture and punish the corrupt, villainous, and oppressive officials involved. They may face the death penalty, forced labor, or flogging with bamboo sticks to show the consequences of good and evil actions. When a criminal commits a crime—or when a good person mistakenly violates the law—they will be punished.

During the final years of the Yuan Dynasty, many ambitious men competed for power and valued nothing but luxuries and pleasure...How did I avoid such snares? I valued my reputation and wanted to preserve my life. Therefore, I avoided these evil behaviors. To protect my reputation and life, I gave up music, beautiful women, and valuable objects. Those who love such things are often "a success in the morning, a failure in the evening." It is not difficult to give up these temptations.

Tokugawa Ieyasu on Military Government and the Social Order,

Once, Lord Tōshō [Ieyasu] conversed with Honda, Governor Sado, on the subject of the emperor, the shogun, and the farmer. "Order or chaos in the nation depends on the virtues and vices of these three. The emperor must act with compassion and perform his duties faithfully. The shogun must maintain discipline and be ready for war even in peacetime, ensuring order and security. The true way of the warrior maintains his martial [military] discipline even in times of peace... The farmer's toil is immense — from selecting seeds to harvesting rice — and provides sustenance for the multitudes. A wise man appreciates these acts of labor. Similarly, artisans make necessary goods, and merchants facilitate trade so people can meet their basic needs. All these roles are essential to the well-being of the nation.