

In this year many persons from Silla came to settle in Japan. [p. 139]

22nd year [614], 6th month, 13th day. Mitasuki, Lord of Inugami, and Yatabe no Miyakko were sent to the Land of Great T'ang. [p. 145]

30th year [622], Autumn, 7th month. . . . At this time the Buddhist priests E-sai and E-kō, with the physicians E-jitsu and Fuku-in, students of the learning of the Great T'ang, arrived in company with . . . others. Now E-jitsu and the rest together made representation to the Empress, saying: "Those who have resided in T'ang to study have all completed their courses and ought to be sent for. Moreover, the Land of Great T'ang is an admirable country, whose laws are complete and fixed. Constant communication should be kept up with it." [p. 150]

28th year [620]. This year, the Prince Imperial, in concert with the Great Imperial Chieftain Soga, drew up a history of the emperors, a history of the country, and the original record of the Imperial Chieftains, Deity Chieftains, Court Chieftains, Local Chieftains, the 180 hereditary Corporations and the common people.<sup>20</sup> [p. 148]

29th year [621], Spring, 2nd month, 5th day. In the middle of the night the Imperial Prince Mumayado no Toyotomimi no Mikoto died in the Palace of Ikaruga. At this time all the Princes and Imperial Chieftains, as well as the people of the empire, the old, as if they had lost a dear child, had no taste for salt and vinegar<sup>21</sup> in their mouths; the young, as if they had lost a beloved parent, filled the ways with the sound of their lamenting. The farmer ceased from his plough, and the pounding woman laid down her pestle. They all said: "The sun and moon have lost their brightness; heaven and earth have crumbled to ruin: henceforward, in whom shall we put our trust?"

In this month the Prince Imperial Kamitsumiya<sup>22</sup> was buried in the Shinaga Misasagi.

At this time Hye-cha, the Buddhist priest of Koryo, heard of the death of the Prince Imperial Kamitsumiya, and was greatly grieved thereat. He

<sup>20</sup> Almost all of this work was burned during disturbances in 645 and the remainder is no longer extant. [Ed.]

<sup>21</sup> To be understood generally of well-flavored food.

<sup>22</sup> Prince Shōtoku.

invited the priests, and in honor of the Prince Imperial gave them a meal, and explained the sacred books in person. On this day he prayed, saying: "In the Land of Nippon there is a sage, by name the Imperial Prince Kamitsumiya Toyotomimi. Certainly Heaven has freely endowed him with the virtues of a sage.<sup>23</sup> Born in the Land of Nippon, he thoroughly possessed the three fundamental principles,<sup>24</sup> he continued the great plans of the former sages. He revered the Three Treasures,<sup>25</sup> and assisted the people in their distress. He was truly a great sage. And now the Prince Imperial is dead. I, although a foreigner, was in heart closely united to him. Now what avails it that I alone should survive? I have determined to die on the 5th day of the 2nd month of next year.<sup>26</sup> So shall I meet the Prince Imperial Kamitsumiya in the Pure Land, and together with him pass through the metempsychosis of all living creatures." Now when the appointed day came, Hye-cha died, and all the people of that day said one to another: "Prince Kamitsumiya is not the only sage, Hye-cha is also a sage." [pp. 148-49]

### *The Seventeen-Article Constitution of Prince Shōtoku*

The influence of Confucian ethical and political doctrines is almost everywhere apparent in this set of basic principles of government. In Article II, however, Buddhism is specifically subscribed to as contributing to the ideal of social harmony. The fact that most of these principles are stated in very general terms reflects the characteristic outlook of Confucianism: the ruler should offer his people moral guidance and instruction, not burden them with detailed laws which involve compulsion rather than elicit cooperation. Therefore this Constitution exhorts the people to lay aside partisan differences and accept imperial rule in order to achieve social harmony. Ministers and officials are urged to be diligent and considerate, prompt and just in the settlement of complaints or charges, careful in the selection of assistants and wary of flatterers, conscientious in the performance of their duties while not overreaching their authority, and ever mindful of the desires of the people so that public good is put above private interest. Articles XII and XV alone refer to specific functions or prerogatives of the imperial government: the power to raise taxes, which is essential to any government, and the seasons in which forced labor is to be exacted, likewise an aspect of the power to tax. Both of these represent practical measures indispensable to establishment of the imperial

<sup>23</sup> According to the Confucian conception. [Ed.]

<sup>24</sup> Viz. Heaven, Earth, and Man. The meaning is that he was a philosopher.

<sup>25</sup> Of Buddhism. <sup>26</sup> The anniversary of the Prince's death.

authority over a hitherto uncentralized society, no doubt with a view to achieving the uniformity and centralization which the Chinese empire exemplified.  
[Adapted from Aston, *Nihongi*, II, 128-33]

12th year [604], Summer, 4th month, 3rd day. The Prince Imperial in person prepared for the first time laws. There were seventeen clauses, as follows:

I. Harmony is to be valued,<sup>27</sup> and an avoidance of wanton opposition to be honored. All men are influenced by partisanship, and there are few who are intelligent. Hence there are some who disobey their lords and fathers, or who maintain feuds with the neighboring villages. But when those above are harmonious and those below are friendly, and there is concord in the discussion of business, right views of things spontaneously gain acceptance. Then what is there which cannot be accomplished?

II. Sincerely reverence the three treasures. The three treasures, viz. Buddha, the Law, and the Monastic orders, are the final refuge of the four generated beings,<sup>28</sup> and are the supreme objects of faith in all countries. Few men are utterly bad. They may be taught to follow it. But if they do not betake them to the three treasures, wherewithal shall their crookedness be made straight?

III. When you receive the imperial commands, fail not scrupulously to obey them. The lord is Heaven, the vassal is Earth. Heaven over-spreads, and Earth upbears. When this is so, the four seasons follow their due course, and the powers of Nature obtain their efficacy. If the Earth attempted to overspread, Heaven would simply fall in ruin. Therefore is it that when the lord speaks, the vassal listens; when the superior acts, the inferior yields compliance. Consequently when you receive the imperial commands, fail not to carry them out scrupulously. Let there be a want of care in this matter, and ruin is the natural consequence.

IV. The ministers and functionaries should make decorous behavior their leading principle, for the leading principle of the government of the people consists in decorous behavior.<sup>29</sup> If the superiors do not behave with decorum, the inferiors are disorderly: if inferiors are wanting in proper behavior, there must necessarily be offenses. Therefore it is that when

<sup>27</sup> From the *Analekts* of Confucius, I, 12.

<sup>28</sup> That is, the beings produced in transmigration by the four processes of being born from eggs, from a womb, moisture-bred, or formed by metamorphosis (as butterflies from caterpillars).

<sup>29</sup> The Chinese *li*, decorum or ceremony (rites).

lord and vassal behave with decorum, the distinctions of rank are not confused: when the people behave with decorum, the government of the commonwealth proceeds of itself.

V. Ceasing from gluttony and abandoning covetous desires, deal impartially with the suits which are submitted to you. Of complaints brought by the people there are a thousand in one day. If in one day there are so many, how many will there be in a series of years? If the man who is to decide suits at law makes gain his ordinary motive, and hears cases with a view to receiving bribes, then will the suits of the rich man be like a stone flung into water,<sup>30</sup> while the plaints of the poor will resemble water cast upon a stone. Under these circumstances the poor man will not know whither to betake himself. Here too there is a deficiency in the duty of the minister.

VI. Chastise that which is evil and encourage that which is good. This was the excellent rule of antiquity. Conceal not, therefore, the good qualities of others, and fail not to correct that which is wrong when you see it. Flatterers and deceivers are a sharp weapon for the overthrow of the State, and a pointed sword for the destruction of the people. Sycophants are also fond, when they meet, of dilating to their superiors on the errors of their inferiors; to their inferiors, they censure the faults of their superiors. Men of this kind are all wanting in fidelity to their lord, and in benevolence towards the people. From such an origin great civil disturbances arise.

VII. Let every man have his own charge, and let not the spheres of duty be confused. When wise men are entrusted with office, the sound of praise arises. If unprincipled men hold office, disasters and tumults are multiplied. In this world, few are born with knowledge: wisdom is the product of earnest meditation. In all things, whether great or small, find the right man, and they will surely be well managed: on all occasions, be they urgent or the reverse, meet but with a wise man, and they will of themselves be amenable. In this way will the State be lasting and the Temples of the Earth and of Grain will be free from danger. Therefore did the wise sovereigns of antiquity seek the man to fill the office, and not the office for the sake of the man.

VIII. Let the ministers and functionaries attend the court early in the morning, and retire late. The business of the State does not admit of

<sup>30</sup> That is, they meet with no resistance.

remissness, and the whole day is hardly enough for its accomplishment. If, therefore, the attendance at court is late, emergencies cannot be met: if officials retire soon, the work cannot be completed.

IX. Good faith is the foundation of right. In everything let there be good faith, for in it there surely consists the good and the bad, success and failure. If the lord and the vassal observe good faith one with another, what is there which cannot be accomplished? If the lord and the vassal do not observe good faith towards one another, everything without exception ends in failure.

X. Let us cease from wrath, and refrain from angry looks. Nor let us be resentful when others differ from us. For all men have hearts, and each heart has its own leanings. Their right is our wrong, and our right is their wrong. We are not unquestionably sages, nor are they unquestionably fools. Both of us are simply ordinary men. How can any one lay down a rule by which to distinguish right from wrong? For we are all, one with another, wise and foolish, like a ring which has no end. Therefore, although others give way to anger, let us on the contrary dread our own faults, and though we alone may be in the right, let us follow the multitude and act like them.

XI. Give clear appreciation to merit and demerit, and deal out to each its sure reward or punishment. In these days, reward does not attend upon merit, nor punishment upon crime. Ye high functionaries who have charge of public affairs, let it be your task to make clear rewards and punishments.

XII. Let not the provincial authorities or the Kuni no Miyakko<sup>31</sup> levy exaction on the people. In a country there are not two lords; the people have not two masters. The sovereign is the master of the people of the whole country. The officials to whom he gives charge are all his vassals. How can they, as well as the Government, presume to levy taxes on the people?

XIII. Let all persons entrusted with office attend equally to their functions. Owing to their illness or to their being sent on missions, their work may sometimes be neglected. But whenever they become able to attend to business, let them be as accommodating as if they had had cognizance

<sup>31</sup> The Kuni no Miyakko were the old local nobles, whose power was at this time giving way to that of the central government, represented in the provinces by the *kokushi*, or local governors.

of it from before, and not hinder public affairs on the score of their not having had to do with them.

XIV. Ye ministers and functionaries! Be not envious. For if we envy others, they in turn will envy us. The evils of envy know no limit. If others excel us in intelligence, it gives us no pleasure; if they surpass us in ability, we are envious. Therefore it is not until after a lapse of five hundred years that we at last meet with a wise man, and even in a thousand years we hardly obtain one sage. But if we do not find wise men and sages, wherewithal shall the country be governed?

XV. To turn away from that which is private, and to set our faces towards that which is public—this is the path of a minister. Now if a man is influenced by private motives, he will assuredly feel resentments, and if he is influenced by resentful feelings, he will assuredly fail to act harmoniously with others. If he fails to act harmoniously with others, he will assuredly sacrifice the public interests to his private feelings. When resentment arises, it interferes with order, and is subversive of law. Therefore in the first clause it was said, that superiors and inferiors should agree together. The purport is the same as this.

XVI. Let the people be employed [in forced labor] at seasonable times. This is an ancient and excellent rule. Let them be employed, therefore, in the winter months, when they are at leisure. But from Spring to Autumn, when they are engaged in agriculture or with the mulberry trees, the people should not be so employed. For if they do not attend to agriculture, what will they have to eat? if they do not attend to the mulberry trees, what will they do for clothing?

XVII. Decisions on important matters should not be made by one person alone. They should be discussed with many. But small matters are of less consequence. It is unnecessary to consult a number of people. It is only in the case of the discussion of weighty affairs, when there is a suspicion that they may miscarry, that one should arrange matters in concert with others, so as to arrive at the right conclusion.