

Document 3.3: The Kangxi Emperor's "The Sacred Edicts," 1670

Shortly after Kangxi took the throne as emperor, when he was still a teenager, he issued "Sacred Edicts." In 1724, the Yongzheng emperor built on and expanded Kangxi's original edicts.

1. Highly esteem filial piety and the proper relations among brothers in order to give due importance to social relations.
2. Give due weight to kinship in order to promote harmony and peace.
3. Maintain good relations within the neighborhood in order to prevent quarrels and lawsuits.
4. Give due importance to farming and the cultivation of mulberry trees in order to ensure sufficient clothing and food.
5. Be moderate and economical in order to avoid wasting away your livelihood.
6. Make the most of schools and academies in order to honor the ways of scholars.
7. Denounce strange beliefs in order to elevate the true doctrine.
8. Explain laws and regulations in order to warn the ignorant and obstinate.
9. Show propriety and courtesy to improve customs and manners.
10. Work hard in your professions in order to quiet your ambitions.
11. Instruct sons and younger brothers in order to prevent their committing any wrong.
12. Put a stop to false accusations in order to protect the good and honest.
13. Warn against giving shelter to deserters in order to avoid punishment with them.
14. Promptly and fully pay your taxes in order to avoid forced requisition.
15. Get together in groups of ten or a hundred in order to put an end to theft and robbery.
16. Free yourself from resentment and anger in order to show respect for your body and life.

Source: Kangxi, "The Sacred Edicts." Lydia Gerber, trans. *Reading About the World*, vol. 2. Paul Briens et al., eds. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Custom Books, 1999.