

TOKUGAWA IEYASU SHOGUN: “THE OLD BADGER”

1543	Born
1560	Restored to his family lands
1567	Assumed the family name of Tokugawa
1590	Succeeded to Edo (Tokyo)
1600	Won battle of Sekigahara
1603	Appointed shogun
1605	Abdicated in favor of his son Hidetada
1616	Died

The Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu was a mass of contradictions. Short, squat, and ugly, he was given the enshrinement name, after his death, of “The Light of the East, the Ultimate Made Manifest.” A devoted family man, intent upon founding a dynasty, he ordered the suicide of his eldest son and heir on suspicion of sedition, and thus put his dynasty at risk. An unlettered man, he became the great patron of Confucian scholarship in Japan. He relentlessly pursued his last rival, the pretender Hideyori, the son of his old friend and lord, and forced him to commit suicide; yet his self-proclaimed motto was “Requite malice with kindness.” A samurai warrior who had devoted his life to battle, he was a devout Buddhist and founded a reign of peace in Japan that would last for more than 250 years.

Ieyasu was born in 1543, the son of a samurai and minor daimyo (feudal landholder) in eastern Japan. Such men had dominated the political life of Japan since the end of the cultivated Heian age in the twelfth century. From time to time a measure of order had been imposed by the appointment of a shogun by the emperor, who was himself strictly a ceremonial and religious figure. The shogun was the military ruler of the nation, the head of the *bakufu*, the military or “tent” government. But there were long periods when no one held

the shogunate and when military chaos prevailed. It was in such a period that Ieyasu grew up.

By his warrior skills Ieyasu gained advancement in the service of superior feudal lords, becoming such a lord himself. By the age of forty he had not only been able to secure great military power but had persuaded the emperor to grant him the family name of Tokugawa, thus linking him to the ancient and illustrious warrior family of Minamoto, the family of past shoguns. In 1582 he offered his services to the leading feudal lord of Japan, Hideyoshi. He quickly became Hideyoshi's most dependable vassal and was rewarded with enormous land holdings centered upon the village of Edo—the future Tokyo. He fortified the site and consolidated his position as master of eastern Japan. In the power struggle following the death of Hideyoshi, Tokugawa defeated all his rivals in a great pitched battle at Sekigahara, northeast of Kyoto, to become the undisputed master of Japan.

By 1603 he was able to demand that the imperial court appoint him shogun. On February 12, a delegation from the Emperor Gayozei called upon Tokugawa with his appointment as shogun and a host of other supporting titles, each contained in a lacquered box. As each box was opened and the appointment letter removed, the box was filled with gold dust and returned. Within a month Tokugawa had taken up residence in a new castle he had ordered built for himself at Kyoto—Nijo Castle. A new shogunal dynasty had begun. Two years later he abdicated in favor of his son Hidetada, thus assuring the succession of the Tokugawa family.

Both as shogun and as retired shogun, Tokugawa retained control of foreign affairs. He was mainly concerned with trade. This came to involve him in a complex set of relations not only with Japan's traditional trading partner, China, but with agents of the European maritime states, intent upon trade with Japan but intent also upon extending their religious beliefs—whether Catholic or Protestant. Tokugawa welcomed the trade and the new technology that came with it, but he grew increasingly suspicious of western religious motives and the meddling of missionaries in what he regarded as the internal affairs of Japan. By 1614 he had prohibited all western missionary activity—the beginning of the process of closing Japan to the West that would last until the nineteenth century.

By the time of his death in 1616 Tokugawa had fathered sixteen children by an assortment of consorts and concubines—five daughters, who were well and strategically married, and eleven sons, six of them still living when Tokugawa died. The dynasty was secure.

The Legacy

TOKUGAWA IEYASU

Tokugawa was undeniably one of the greatest military figures in his nation's history. But increasingly, especially after becoming shogun, he tried to avoid military engagements and military solutions to political problems. He had concluded that they were not only costly but disruptive; he much preferred conciliation. And he spent the last dozen years of his life creating a system of government that would make peace and order the rule of Japanese life. To a remarkable degree he succeeded. The government he perfected lasted almost totally unchanged for two centuries, the longest period of such peace and order in Japan's history.

In the course of his reign Tokugawa issued many orders, edicts, and codes of conduct to regulate all levels of society, including the imperial court and the court aristocrats, the daimyo, even the religious shrines and temples. One of the most important and interesting of these edicts is the *Buke Hyaku Kajo*, the "Legacy of Ieyasu." It was written near the end of Tokugawa's life and is a set of instructions to his successors in the shogunate, embodying his views on how the government should be carried on by them. It exists in a number of editions, including a complete critical edition in the *Transactions of the Japan Society of London*, which takes account of the later revisions of the work. The edition excerpted below is the one edited and translated by A. L. Sadler in his *The Maker of Modern Japan: The Life of Tokugawa Ieyasu*, which is the standard English biography of the great shogun. It consists of those parts of the text that can be incontestably attributed to Tokugawa.

The instructions take the form, typical of the age of Tokugawa, of a series of maxims in the Chinese manner, presented in a random, seemingly casual order. Despite the apparent lack of order, the document contains recurring themes. There are continual references to the standard Chinese works on governance, especially the Confucian works; the document itself was written in Chinese. It places strong emphasis on benevolence and compassion as principles of governance as well as of personal conduct. There are reminders of the structure of vassalage Tokugawa had created—with House Retainers, Family Vassals, and Outside Lords—and of how he manipulated that structure. There are cautions against the overt use of military power, and the sort of exhortations to craft and patience that caused Tokugawa to be known

as "the Old Badger" to his contemporaries. It is filled with specific advice to future shoguns based on Tokugawa's own experience, and often contains personal reminiscences.

The duty of the lord of a province is to give peace and security to the people, and does not consist in shedding lustre on his ancestors, and working for the prosperity of his descendants. The supreme excellence of T'ang of the Yin dynasty and Wu of the Chou dynasty lay in making this their first principle.¹ There must be no slighting of the Imperial Dignity or confusing the order of Heaven and Earth, Lord and Subject.

The civil and military principles both proceed from Benevolence. However many books and plans there may be the principle is the same. Know therefore that herein lies the way of ruling and administering the Empire. . . .

If the lord is not filled with compassion for his people and the people are not mindful of the care of their lord, even though the government is not a bad one, yet rebellions will naturally follow. But if the lords love Benevolence, then there will be no enemies in the Empire.

If Benevolence abides in the Empire there is no distinction between domestic and foreign or noble and commoner, for the sun and moon shine on the clean and unclean alike. The Sage established the law on this principle, and according to it there are fixed and immutable rules applying to the degree of intimacy, rank, the three allegiances, and the eight rules. If one man is supreme in the Empire then all warriors are his retainers, but he does not make retainers of the whole people. There is the distinction of Outside Families and our own Family, Outside Lords (Tozama) and House Retainers (Hatamoto). Outside houses are those that are temporarily powerful. Family vassals or Fudai are those bound to us by lineage and history, whose ancestors did loyal service to our house as is clear to all by their records. Since their fidelity and affection exceeds that of the Outside houses, these others must not be displeased at this preference, resting as it does on such a basis.

In employing men and recognizing ability, if the Fudai are overlooked and the Tozama elevated there will be inward rage and outward regret, and loyal retainers will naturally be lost. One thing is

¹T'ang of Yin and Wu of Chou were the founders of these two Chinese dynasties.—ED.

quite certain, men are not all saints and sages. This fact it is well to bear very much in mind.

All feudatories, whether Fudai or Tozama, are to have their fiefs changed after a certain number of years, for if they stay long in one place and get used to their positions these lords will lose their fidelity and become covetous and self-willed, and eventually oppress their subjects. This changing of fiefs shall be according to the conduct of these lords.

If there be no direct heir to the Shogunate, then the question of succession must be settled by a conference of the veteran houses of Ii, Honda, Sakai, Sakakibara, and others, after careful consideration.

Should anyone break the laws I have laid down, even if he be a son or heir, he shall not succeed. The Chief Senator (Tairo) and Senators (Roshin) shall then hold a consultation and shall choose a suitable person from among the branch families of our house (Kamon) and make him head of the family.

The right use of a sword is that it should subdue the barbarians while lying gleaming in its scabbard. If it leaves its sheath it cannot be said to be used rightly. Similarly the right use of military power is that it should conquer the enemy while concealed in the breast. To take the field with an army is to be found wanting in the real knowledge of it. Those who hold the office of Shogun are to be particularly clear on this point. . . .

If your defences are according to my instructions traitors will not be able to spy them out. But even so, if another family plans to overthrow this Empire the attempt will only be made when those who uphold it are given up to drink and dissipation. It is inevitable that those who are incapacitated by these things should be deprived of office and commit suicide.

In ordinary matters, if one does not disobey these instructions of mine, even if he is far from being a sage, he will commit no great fault.

From my youth I have not valued silver or gold or treasures. Virtue only I have treasured. And now I have thus attained this office. If we always consider without ceasing the golden words that declare that it is by learning that emolument comes, we can always attain our purpose. . . .

When the Empire is at peace do not forget the possibility of war, and take counsel with the Fudai vassals that the military arts be not allowed to deteriorate. And be temperate in your habits.

The sword is the soul of the warrior. If any forget or lose it he will not be excused. . . .

The descendants of those retainers who were loyal to our ancestors,

except they become traitors to our house, must never have their fiefs confiscated, even if their conduct is not good.

Authority to subdue the whole Empire was granted by Imperial Edict to the Shogun, and he was appointed Lord High Constable (Sotsui-Hoshi). The orders that the Shogun issues to the country are its law. Nevertheless every province and district has its particular customs, and it is difficult, for example, to enforce the customs of the Eastern Provinces in the Western, or those of the North in the South, so that these customs must be left as of old and not interfered with. . . .

In accordance with ancient precedent, a Court of Judgment is to be established, and there, in the light of these articles I have drawn up and without regarding the high or repressing the low, justice is to be done openly to all.

Now the officials who administer justice in this court are the pillars of the government of the country. Their character shall be carefully considered, and they shall be chosen and appointed after consultation with the veteran councillors. This will be no easy task. . . .

Nagasaki in Hizen is the port at which foreign shipping arrives. It shall be administered by one of the most trusted retainers chosen from the fudai vassals. The great lords of the neighbouring territories shall also be instructed to furnish guards, that our military might may be demonstrated to all countries. It is strictly forbidden that any of these ships shall enter any other port but Nagasaki.

The entertainment tendered to foreigners who come to pay their respects shall be as heretofore. It shall not be rough or scanty. It shall brilliantly reveal the Imperial Benevolence and Divine Might. . . .

Confucianism and Shinto and Buddhism are different systems, but are no more than direction in the way of virtue and punishment of evil. According to this view, their sects may be adopted and their principles followed. They must not be hindered, but disputes among them must be strictly prohibited. It is evident from past history that such have been a misfortune to the Empire. . . .

Since one person differs from another in disposition, when men are appointed to offices this should be tested, and their tendencies observed and their ability estimated, so that the office may be well filled. A saw cannot do the work of a gimlet, and a hammer cannot take the place of a knife, and men are just like this. There is a use for both sharp and blunt at the right time, and if this is not well apprehended the relation of lord and vassal will become disturbed. This article is to be considered carefully.

Lords of provinces both great and small and lords of fiefs and officials both in and outside Edo shall hold official stipend, and rank only if they conduct themselves properly. If he offend, the greatest

feudatory or official, even if he be a relation of our house (Kamon), shall be punished. So in their persons shall they the better guard the Shogun's office. . . .

I was born of the family of Matsudaira of the province of Mikawa, of the lineage of Seiwa Genji, but on account of the enmity of a neighbouring province I had for long to suffer hardships among the common people. But now, I am happy to say, encompassed by the grace of Providence I have restored the ancestral lines of Serata, Nitta, and Tokugawa, and from henceforth the successive generations of my family are to use these four names. This is in accordance with the saying (of Confucius): Pay all respect to your parents, and follow the customs of your ancestors. . . .

The distinction between wife and concubine is on the principle of lord and vassal. The Emperor has twelve consorts, the great lords may have eight, high officials five, and ordinary samurai two. Below these are the common people. Thus have the ancient sages specified in the *Li Chi*,² and it has always been the rule. But fools ignorant of this treat their wife with less respect than a favourite concubine, and so confuse the great principle. This has always been the cause of the fall of castles and the ruin of countries. Is it not well to be warned? And know too that those who give way to these inclinations are no loyal samurai.

The business of a husband is to protect the family outside, while that of the wife is to look after it at home. That is the order of the world. Should the wife, on the contrary, be the one to guard the house the husband loses his function, and it is a sure sign that the house will be destroyed. It is the disorder of the crowing hen. All samurai should beware of it. Its existence will assist you to judge people.

When I was young I desired nothing but to subdue hostile provinces and take vengeance on the enemies of my father's house. But since I discovered the teaching of Yuyo³ that helping the people and thus tranquillizing the country is the Law of Nature, I have undeviatingly followed it until now. Let my descendants continue my policy. If they reject it they are no posterity of mine. For be very certain that the people are the foundation of the country.

The Supreme Sovereign of the Empire looks on the people as children under his protecting care, and my family to which the administration of his realm is committed should exhibit this attitude even more. This is what is called Benevolence. Benevolence includes the

²The *Li Chi* was the Book of Ceremonies.—ED.

³Yuyo: this reference is obscure.—ED.

Five Relationships, and the distinction of superior and inferior. In accordance with it I make a difference in intimacy between the Fudai and the Tozama Daimyos. That is government according to the natural way of the world. It is not favouritism or prejudice or self-interest. It must not be polluted either by tongue or pen. And as to the degree of this intimacy with retainers, whether deep or the reverse, you must know how to maintain a deep reserve.

Since I have held this office of Shogun I have drawn up these many statutes, both amplifying and curtailing the ancient regulations of the Minamoto house. But with a view to transmitting and not to creating, for they are no new laws decreed at my will. Thus I have drawn them up in this form as an exemplar. They may not always hit the mark exactly, but they will not be far out. In all things administration is not so much a matter of detail as of understanding past history. I have no time to add more.

Tokugawa's Practical Revolution

GEORGE SANSOM

The earlier Western histories of Japan tended to take the view that the closing of the country to Western influences that took place early in the Tokugawa period resulted in a deadening stagnation from which Japan was rescued only by forceful European intervention in the mid-nineteenth century. Contemporary interpretation has, however, largely revised this Eurocentric judgment. The age of Tokugawa is now seen as one of significant growth in Japan's institutional structures. The dynamic of this period was provided by the conversion of the daimyo into regional rulers and by the creation of a new national hegemony under the Tokugawa shogunate.

One of the leading figures in this contemporary view of the Tokugawa period is the British scholar George Sansom, who has produced "by far the outstanding writing on pre-twentieth-century Japan."⁴ His earlier works dealt essentially with cultural history; but then he turned to the long-delayed task of providing an up-to-date

⁴John Whitney Hall, *Japanese History: New Dimensions of Approach and Understanding* (Washington, D.C.: Service Center for Teachers of History, The American Historical Association, 1961), pp. 10-11.

political history of Japan. The second volume of this work is *A History of Japan, 1334-1615*, which is excerpted below.

Sansom stresses the practical, revolutionary nature of the reforms instituted by Tokugawa that were essentially responsible for the ensuing long period of peace and order.

Ieyasu died on the first of June, 1616, in his seventy-fifth year. Although he had devoted much of his time since the death of Hideyoshi to urgent military problems and had fought two vital campaigns to ensure his supremacy, he had by no means neglected questions of civil government during the last fifteen years of his life. Indeed, in 1605, only two years after his appointment as Shōgun, he resigned the office in favour of his son Hidetada in order to be free to pay full attention to the political structure which was to sustain the power of the house of Tokugawa. His resignation and the succession of Hidetada were also intended to give public notice that the office was to be hereditary in the Tokugawa family. Himself a triumphant warrior, Ieyasu was determined that his family should hold what he had won, and that there should be an end to civil war. It was his purpose to devise a system which would hold in check the ambitions of the most powerful barons, who, though they had submitted to him after Sekigahara, were of uncertain loyalty. . . .

The basis of Ieyasu's civil policy was to distribute fiefs in such a way that his most trusted vassals occupied domains from which they could keep watch and ward upon barons whose allegiance was doubtful. The dependable vassals were known as Fudai, or hereditary lieges of the house of Tokugawa, in contrast to the Tozama, the "Outside Lords," with whom Ieyasu had no hereditary tie. Most of the Fudai daimyos held fiefs of about 50,000 koku⁵ or less, with the exception of Matsudaira Tadayoshi (Ieyasu's fifth son) at Kiyosu, who had 500,000 koku, and Ii Naomasa at Hikone with 100,000. They were all placed at strategic points from Kyoto eastward along the Tōkaidō and the Nakasendō to Yedo.

In the Tozama, powerful lords who had been neutral or had adhered to Ieyasu after Sekigahara, he had little trust. He treated them with formal respect, but they were carefully watched and given little opportunity to plan combinations against the Bakufu. They were frequently called upon to perform tasks that put them to great expense, as for example when they were given the unwelcome privilege

⁵The *koku* was a measure of rice, about five bushels.—Ed.

of building or repairing citadels, supposedly in the interest of the nation. . . .

Ieyasu took all possible steps to thwart alliances and agreements among the Tozama, imposing limits on the size of their castles and on the capacity of the transport craft used by the barons in coastal provinces. Where possible he reduced their freedom of movement by appointing Fudai vassals to neighbouring fiefs. . . .

Although Ieyasu paid unremitting attention to civil affairs, he made no attempt to organize a coherent system of government. He dealt with problems as they arose, and his methods had a military flavour. He was determined to secure obedience, and it was his method to give direct orders rather than to govern by legislation. He did, it is true, issue a code to guide the behaviour of the military class, but not until the end of his career. It was a collection of rules known as Buke Sho-Hatto, or Ordinances for the Military Houses. . . .

The issuing of this document was little more than a formality or a matter of record, since Ieyasu had already achieved his purpose of subjecting the Tozama by the methods just described, and by increasingly harsh treatment as his earlier forms of pressure succeeded. But even more effective than direct coercion was the great addition to his own strength that resulted from his economic enterprises. He was immensely wealthy, as the Christian missionaries frequently reported in their letters home. After Sekigahara he had vastly enlarged the scope of Tokugawa property rights by taking into his direct jurisdiction the cities of Yedo, Kyoto, Ōsaka, Nagasaki, Yamada, and Nara. . . .

After the establishment of a mint at Fushimi in 1601 he profited by the minting of gold and silver coinage for circulation throughout the country. But perhaps his greatest interest was in foreign trade, which he desired to promote not only as a source of revenue for himself but also on grounds of national policy. The foreign trade of Japan had for too long been in the hands of the Portuguese.

After the invasion of Korea official relations between Japan and China had come to an end, but imports from China were still essential to the Japanese economy or, to put it more correctly, to the economy of the ruling class, who could not dispense with the silks and other luxuries to which they had become accustomed during the period of licensed trade. Fortunately for them the Portuguese, who were allowed to trade with China, could meet Japanese needs by the regular supply of Chinese goods carried in their trading vessels from Macao to Japan. . . .

This favourable treatment of foreigners lasted through the year 1611, when suddenly the Tokugawa government reversed its policy and began to prohibit the preaching and practice of the Christian faith. The reasons for this change are still the subject of controversy,

but they were clearly political rather than religious. Ieyasu was determined to get rid of all missionaries, and on January 27, 1614, he issued an edict suppressing Christianity in Japan. The churches in Kyoto were destroyed and the missionaries taken into custody. Some Japanese Christians of high rank were arrested and sent into exile, among them being the "Christian daimyo" Takayama Ukon, who died in Manila a year later. A few poor Japanese believers were punished for refusing to abjure their faith, and some were imprisoned; but the edict was really directed not against the common people but against members of the military class, because their Christian beliefs were thought to be inconsistent with loyalty to their overlords. During Ieyasu's lifetime no foreign missionary was put to death, though many flouted his decree. . . .

The business of national government was conducted by Ieyasu on the same general lines as the regulation of a fief by a powerful daimyo. He gave orders to his subordinates, who carried them out to the best of their ability. It was characteristic of the early stage of the Tokugawa Bakufu that there was no clear division of functions, for although Ieyasu depended upon his trusted vassals, the Fudai, to carry out his plans, he also depended upon various people of lower standing who happened to come to his notice. He made use of monks and Confucian scholars to draft the Buke Sho-Hatto, and he was in close touch with prominent merchants and other men who had special knowledge or experience. They were usually gifted persons, and they took the place of regular functionaries. . . . From 1615 for two hundred and fifty years Japan was at peace under the rule of the Tokugawa Shōguns.

A More Cautious View

EDWIN O. REISCHAUER

A scholar of Japanese history of equal standing with Sansom is Edwin O. Reischauer. Born in Japan of American missionary parents, Reischauer studied both in the West and in Japan and is a long-time Harvard professor. In the course of World War II he served as a Senior Research Analyst for the War Department and in the Department of State, and from 1961 to 1966 he was ambassador to Japan. For more than forty years he has been the leading interpreter of

Japan for American readers, and his many books represent "the most up-to-date interpretations of the causative forces in Japanese history, and provide the best balanced view of the interaction of political, social, and economic factors."⁶

Reischauer's narrative and analysis of the founding of the Tokugawa shogunate does not differ radically from Sansom's. But in interpretive terms he does return to a cautiously modified form of the earlier "stagnation" interpretation. He views the extremely conservative nature of the Tokugawa shogunate as responsible for holding back normal social and economic progress and keeping Japan frozen in an antiquated political and social order.

The political vacuum created by the death of Hideyoshi was soon filled by his foremost vassal, Tokugawa Ieyasu, who had been Hideyoshi's deputy in eastern Japan, where he had built himself a castle headquarters at the small village of Edo, the future Tokyo. In 1600, Ieyasu decisively defeated a coalition of rivals, and fifteen years later he destroyed the remnants of Hideyoshi's family when he captured the great Osaka castle, as much by trickery as by the huge forces he had mustered for the siege. Ieyasu, warned by the fate of the heirs of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, was obsessed with the idea of building a political system strong enough to survive his death. Political stability became his primary goal, and it was equally sought by his successors. In this they were eminently successful. During the first half of the seventeenth century they created a political system which was to endure almost unchanged for two and a half centuries. In fact, they established a state of absolute peace, internal and external, that has never been matched over a comparable period of time by any other nation. Unfortunately, they secured peace and stability by a series of rigid controls over society, by ruthless suppression of many of the most creative tendencies in the Japan of that day, by isolating Japan from the rest of the world, and by preserving in unchanging form many feudal institutions and attitudes of the late sixteenth century, which became increasingly anachronistic during the next two centuries. In short, the Tokugawa system was extremely conservative even by the standards of early seventeenth-century Japanese society and became increasingly more so as time passed. . . .

The Tokugawa, in their search for stability, froze the political system as it had evolved by the late sixteenth century. They left the bulk of the country divided among a large number of autonomous daimyo, and sought merely to control these daimyo through preponderant military

⁶Hall, *Japanese History*, p. 11.

power and a system of careful supervision. . . . The shoguns reserved for themselves a personal domain of about 7 million *koku* (out of a total estimated national yield of 26 million), and also controlled directly all major cities, ports, and mines.

The country was in a sense divided into two halves: the Tokugawa group and the outsiders. On the one side was the shogun, the "related" (*shimpan*) daimyo, who were branches of the Tokugawa family, and the "hereditary" (*fudai*) daimyo, who had been vassals of Ieyasu even before his victory in 1600. These together provided both the military defense and the administration of the Tokugawa shogunate. On the other side were the "outer" (*tozama*) daimyo. These were the survivors of the allies, neutrals, and enemies of Ieyasu in the great battle of 1600 who had recognized him as their overlord only after his victory. . . .

The holdings of the shogun and daimyo were not scattered haphazardly about Japan. Almost all the central part of the country, including the Kanto Plain in the east and the old capital district in the west, was held by the Tokugawa group. This central area was not only the strategic heart of the country, but contained most of the larger plains, the bulk of the urban population, and was the economically most advanced region. . . .

The outer daimyo, some of whom nursed old hostilities toward the Tokugawa, were relegated largely to the northern and western peripheries of the nation, in north and west Honshu and the islands of Shikoku and Kyushu, where they were sometimes interlarded with related or hereditary daimyo assigned to keep watch over them.

While the daimyo were all in theory autonomous, the Tokugawa actually worked out a careful system of checks and controls to prevent any of them or any combination of them from becoming a military challenge to the shogunate. The bulk of Japan's fighting men remained divided among the daimyo, but the size of their respective forces and the extent of their fortifications were strictly controlled by Edo. Intermarriage and other contracts between the daimyo families were carefully supervised. Though the daimyo domains paid no taxes to the central government, the Tokugawa called on them freely for construction work at Edo or other national services, and so kept them from amassing excessive wealth. The Edo government also developed a category of officials known as *metsuke*, who acted on the one hand as censors in ferreting out cases of maladministration by Tokugawa officials, and on the other hand as secret police spying on all men or groups who could be a menace to Tokugawa rule. The Edo shogunate thus has the dubious distinction of being one of the first governments in the world to develop an extensive and efficient secret police system and to make of it a major organ of state.

The most important measure taken by Edo to ensure its control over the daimyo was the development of a system of hostages and service at the shogunal court. Under the name of *sankin kotai* ("alternating in attendance"), most daimyo spent every other year in Edo, but kept their wives and children permanently there as hostages. A close watch was kept at important barriers on the highways leading into Edo for women leaving and firearms entering the city, since the departure of hostages or the smuggling in of weapons might have foreshadowed a revolt. Naturally, each daimyo had to maintain a large establishment in Edo, and sometimes several in the case of the bigger domains. These were serious economic drains on daimyo resources and an enrichment of the shogun's capital city. The annual comings and goings of the daimyo to Edo, accompanied by long trains of retainers, also constituted a great expense, but at the same time these daimyo processions, particularly on the Tokaido road from Kyoto to Edo, provided one of the more spectacular aspects of life during the Tokugawa period.

To perpetuate their rule, the Tokugawa needed not only to control the daimyo but to guarantee their own solidarity and ensure that the stupidity or ineptness of some future shogun would not destroy the regime. While they left the age-old fiction of imperial rule undisturbed, contenting themselves with the status of shogun, that is, the "generalissimo" of the emperor's military forces, they in fact established close surveillance and strict control over the imperial court, while giving it fairly generous economic treatment as the ultimate source of their own legitimacy. Aware that the deaths of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi had led almost at once to the downfall of their families, Ieyasu passed on the title of shogun to one of his less gifted but more stable sons in 1605, with the result that his own death in 1616 produced no political repercussions. He and his early successors also developed a complicated but strong central administration, quite capable of ruling the land with or without the shoguns, most of whom proved to be little more than figureheads. . . .

Two things should be noted about this governmental system. It was highly bureaucratic, despite its feudal social background. Eligibility for positions was determined primarily by hereditary status, but within this limitation, actual appointments, particularly to the higher posts, depended largely on talent. When Japan had in theory adopted the Chinese bureaucratic form of government in the seventh and eighth centuries, no true bureaucracy had developed. Now, even though the outward forms of government remained feudal, a true bureaucracy started to emerge, and with the passing of the years developed the typical strengths and weaknesses of that form of government. The other point worth mentioning is the strong ten-

gency toward collective responsibility rather than personalized leadership. The figureheads remained individuals, but actual leadership was assumed by councils or officials working in pairs. Japan's genius for anonymous, bureaucratic, group leadership had already become well established. . . .

As early as 1608 Ieyasu appointed a prominent Confucian philosopher to be "attendant scholar" at his court. From this small beginning grew a strong school of Confucianism at Edo that taught the orthodox interpretation as it had been formulated in China in the twelfth century by Chu Hsi (Shushi in Japanese). Soon groups of thinkers, representing various other schools of Confucianism, grew up in opposition to the orthodox school. One of the results of this scholarly interest in Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan was the development within the samurai class of a body of trained scholars and thinkers who, as statesmen, contributed to the efficient administration of the government and, as philosophers and teachers, helped keep Japan intellectually alive despite the oppressive limitations of the political and social system.

The long period of interest in Confucianism also served to imbue the people as a whole with many of the high ethical and moral standards of the Chinese, particularly their ideal of selfless and just public service and their passion for education. Buddhism remained the dominant religion of the masses and enjoyed official patronage, but Confucianism became the strongest intellectual and ethical force in Japan. . . .

Perhaps the most drastic measures taken by the Edo government to ensure political stability were in the field of foreign relations, which, with the coming of Europeans to East Asian waters, assumed a new significance for the Japanese. The first Europeans to reach Japan were Portuguese mariners who landed on an island off the southern tip of Kyushu around 1543. Trade relations sprang up between the Portuguese and the feudal lords of western Kyushu. The Japanese showed immediate interest in the firearms of the Europeans and their use spread rapidly throughout Japan, greatly changing the nature of warfare.

Contacts with the Portuguese took on a new aspect when St. Francis Xavier, the famous Jesuit missionary, introduced Christianity to Japan during a two-year stay from 1549 to 1551. He and the Jesuits who followed him met with considerable success in their proselytizing. . . .

Hideyoshi and the Tokugawa who followed him had no particular objections to Christianity on religious grounds, but they looked upon it with deep suspicion as a political menace to their rule. The Christians, as a sizable group of Japanese owing some sort of allegiance to a remote European "ruler," the pope, were in their eyes a group which

could not be trusted and might prove a threat to the reestablished unity of Japan. . . . In 1609 the Dutch established a trading post at Hirado, an island off the northwest coast of Kyushu, and the English, too, set up a trading post there in 1613. At about the same time Ieyasu reverted to Hideyoshi's policy of persecution, and his successor in 1617 reinstated the extreme measure of executing missionaries and native believers. In the next few years all the missionaries were either killed or forced to leave Japan, and thousands of Japanese Christians either apostatized or suffered the death of martyrs. A common practice of the time was to order people suspected of being Christians to tread upon a cross or some other sacred symbol, and to kill those who refused to comply. . . .

Despite this policy of extreme national isolation, the Tokugawa were wise enough not to cut off all contact with other nations. They preserved Nagasaki as a window looking out on the rest of the world. Chinese merchants were allowed to visit and trade there under careful supervision, and the Dutch trading post at Hirado was moved to a small island in Nagasaki harbor, where the Dutch merchants were kept in virtual year-round imprisonment. The measures the early Tokugawa took to ensure the continuance of their regime were indeed drastic. They stifled the normal social and economic development of the country and so isolated Japan from the rest of the world that she began to drop far behind Europe in scientific and industrial achievements. Even Japan's population stopped growing after about 1700 and remained relatively static at about 30 million people during the remaining century and a half of Tokugawa rule.

It must be admitted, however, that the Tokugawa were supremely successful in establishing the political stability they sought. Between the middle of the seventeenth century and the middle of the nineteenth, no revolution, disturbance, or incident in any way threatened their rule. . . .

The long peace of the Tokugawa era was, of course, in many ways a blessing. At the same time, the Tokugawa held back the wheels of normal social and economic progress and fixed on the nation an antiquated political and social order. They preserved in Japan a feudal structure and mentality far longer than these could have lasted in a freer society or one more open to pressures from abroad. What had been essentially a conservative political and social system when founded in the early seventeenth century was preserved almost intact until the middle of the nineteenth century. Then a Japan still intellectually and socially bound by this antiquated system was suddenly confronted again by the Europeans, who during the intervening two centuries had made tremendous strides forward in almost all fields of human endeavor.

Review and Study Questions

1. What are the leading principles of government you can derive from the "Legacy of Ieyasu"?
2. What is your assessment of Tokugawa as a ruler?
3. What were the relations of Tokugawa's Japan with the European nations? How did these relations affect Japan?
4. How does Reischauer's interpretation of Tokugawa differ from Sansom's?

Suggestions for Further Reading

An extremely useful annotated bibliographic guide is John Whitney Hall, *Japanese History: New Dimensions of Approach and Understanding* (Washington, D.C.: Service Center for Teachers of History, The American Historical Association, 1961). The sources for the Tokugawa period—as for all the earlier periods of Japanese history—are a problem. The period is very well documented but the documents are all in Japan and untranslated. A few exist in selections, like *Sources of the Japanese Tradition*, ed. Ryusaka Tsunoda, Wm. T. de Bary, and Donald Keene (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), or *Sources of Japanese History*, ed. David John Lu, vol. I (New York et al.: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1974); fewer still exist as insertions or appendices in narrative works, like "The Legacy of Tokugawa Ieyasu," in A. L. Sadler, *The Maker of Modern Japan: The Life of Tokugawa Ieyasu* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1977 [1937]), excerpted for this chapter.

The standard biography of Tokugawa is A. L. Sadler, *The Maker of Modern Japan*, just cited. But there is a recent, excellent biography by Conrad Totman, *Tokugawa Ieyasu: Shogun* (San Francisco: Heian International, Inc., 1983). Totman is one of a very few current western authorities on the Tokugawa period, and students are also referred to his excellent survey, *Japan before Perry: A Short History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), which stresses the Tokugawa period. A similar work is George Sansom, *A History of Japan, 1334–1615* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), excerpted for this chapter. An older standard work is still useful—the massive James Murdoch and Isoh Yamagata, *A History of Japan*, vol. II, *During the Century of Early Foreign Intercourse (1542–1651)* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1925); as is the topically organized Jonathan Norton Leonard, *Early Japan* in the "Great Ages of Man" series (New York: Time-Life, 1968).

There are a number of very good books on specialized topics in the

Tokugawa period: Conrad D. Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu 1600–1843* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); Harold Bolitho, *Treasures among Men: The Fudai Daimyo in Tokugawa Japan* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974); Herschel Webb, *The Japanese Imperial Institution in the Tokugawa Period* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968); *Studies in the Institutional History of Early Modern Japan*, ed. John W. Hall and Marius B. Jansen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); and Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570–1680* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

Among the best general works in which Tokugawa and the Tokugawa period are treated is Edwin O. Reischauer, *Japan: The Story of a Nation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Knopf, 1974), excerpted for this chapter. There is a third edition (1981) of this book in which the treatment of this period is somewhat abbreviated. Also recommended is another of Reischauer's books, co-authored with Albert M. Craig, *Japan: Tradition and Transformation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978) and G. B. Sansom, *Japan: A Short Cultural History*, rev. ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1962); John Whitney Hall, *Japan from Prehistory to Modern Times* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1970); and Mikiso Hane, *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1986).