

Confucianism in Japan



Confucianism Reaches Japan

Confucian texts and teachings into Japan by way of the Korean kingdom of Paekche in the mid-6th century



Prince Shotoku: Considered the Founder of the Japanese Nation

After Empress Suiko ascended the throne in 593, Prince Shotoku, her nephew, took over politically. He created Japan's first constitution that included Confucian values. He was a devote Buddhist as well.



Prince Shotoku's Constitution 604 C.E. Includes Confucian Principles:

Article #3: Do not fail to obey the commands of your Sovereign. He is like Heaven, which is above the Earth, and the vassal is like the Earth, which bears up Heaven.

Article #4: The Ministers and officials of the state should make proper behavior their first principle, for if the superiors do not behave properly, the inferiors are disorderly; if inferiors behave improperly, offenses will naturally result.



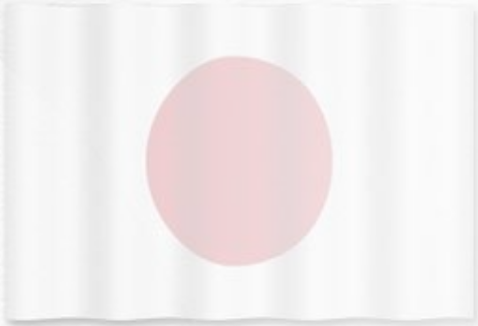
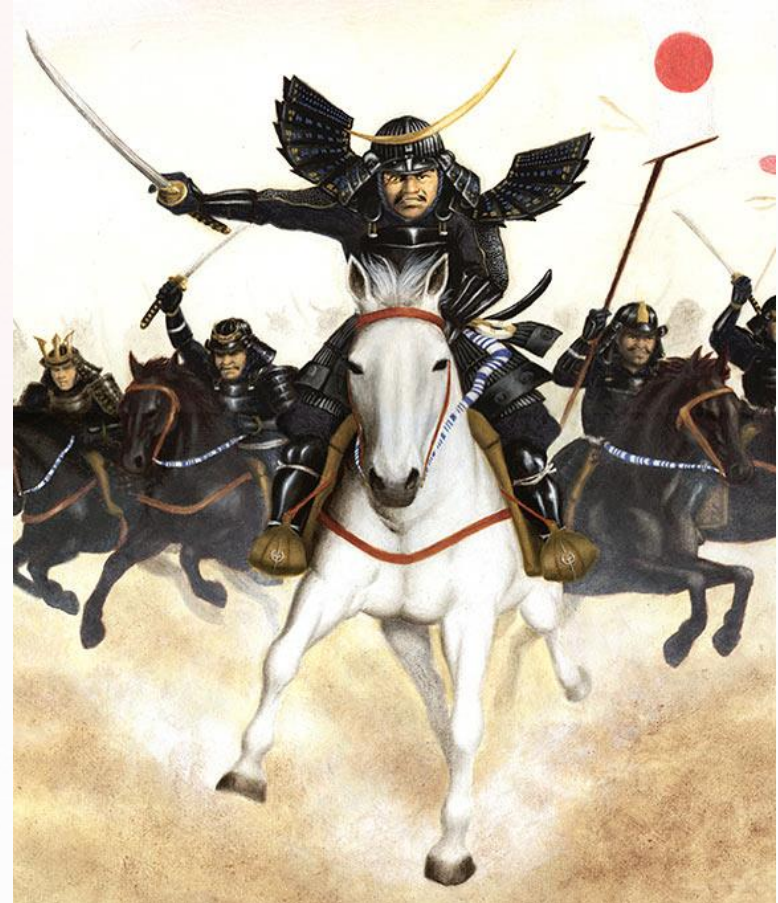
Tokagawa or Edo Period (1603 – 1867 C.E.)



Bushido “The Way of the Warrior”

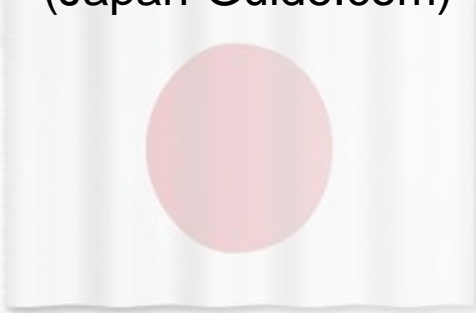
Confucianizing the Samurai under Tokugawa:

“It is not enough to understand moral behavior, one must put it into action for to be truly moral. The samurai would serve as a model of cultural, moral, and intellectual development; in particular, the samurai would exemplify a devotion to duties (*giri*) and unswerving loyalty.” (WSU)



Tokugawa Neo-Confucianism

The most important philosophy of Tokugawa Japan was **Neo-Confucianism**, stressing the importance of morals, education and hierarchical order in the government and society: A strict four class system existed during the Edo period: at the top of the social hierarchy stood the samurai, followed by the peasants, artisans and merchants. The members of the four classes were not allowed to change their social status. Outcasts (eta), people with professions that were considered impure, formed a fifth class. (Japan-Guide.com)



Kanegasaki Samurai Village



Kanegasaki is located in northern Japan (Honshu Island) and contains families that trace their lineage to the Samurai. This is a restored house of a Samurai.





金鑑香爐山
輕風陣：寒榮

風楼寒雲暮雪晴江烟



This shelf might contain an ancestor shrine as many houses do in Japan even today. Honoring their ancestors is a part of their culture as it is in Korea and China. While this practice predates Confucius in China, Confucianism has certainly been incorporated into these beliefs.



Loyalty over Filial Piety – China v. Japan

- Loyalty is our duty to our ruler, and filial piety is our duty to our parents.
- In China, when there is a conflict between the two, our duty to our parents usually overweighs that to the ruler
- In Japan, the Japanese do not acknowledge this tension or contradiction: one is a filial child only if one gives loyal service to one's superior. Therefore, loyalty is expressed in unquestioning slave-like obedience and implies total selfless devotion to one's lord. In other words, loyalty in the Japanese culture usually take precedence over filial piety.

Chinese v. Japanese Ranking of Confucian Virtues:



China:

Love 仁

Ritual 禮

Justice 義

Wisdom 智

Sincerity 信

Japan:

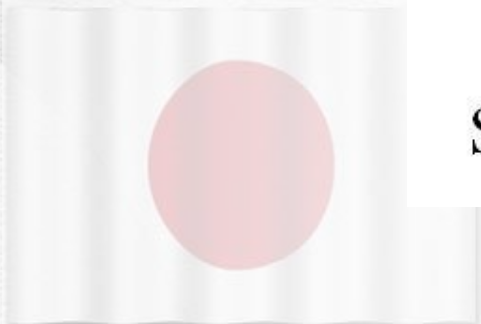
Loyalty 忠

Ritual 禮

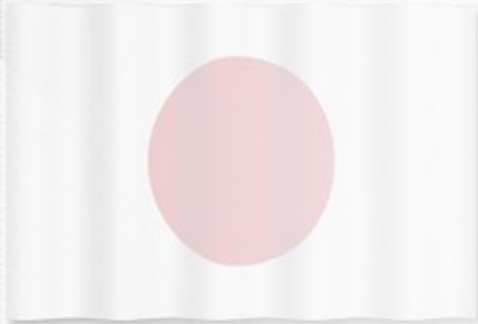
Courage 勇

Sincerity 信

Wisdom 智



Koshi-byo Confucian Shrine – Built 1893



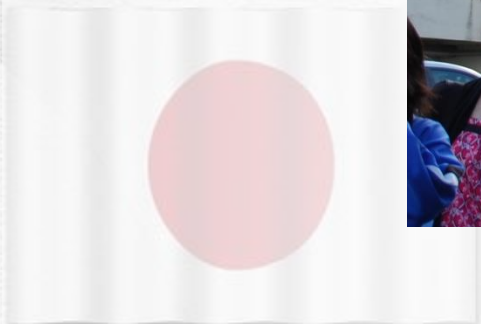


大野公直

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Kanegasaki Junior High School





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生活学習部

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