The Statute on Military Defense [Gunbōryō 軍防令]¹

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Regulation Concerning Regimental Colonels [Gundan daiki no jō 軍団大毅條]

The regiment (gundan) colonel (daiki) shall be in charge of 1000 men. In this, the lieutenant colonels (shōgi) shall aid him.² The warrant officer first class (kyōi) shall lead 200 men, the warrant officer second class (rosochi) 100 men, and the warrant officer third class (taishō) 50 men.

Regulation Concerning Companies & Squads [Taigo no jō 隊伍條]

Soldiers (heishi) shall all be assigned to companies (tai) and squads (go).³ Those skilled with bow and horse shall be placed in cavalry companies (kiheitai); the remainder shall be placed in infantry companies. They shall be led separately by warrant officers and not mixed.⁴

¹ This translation is based primarily on the text as it appears in Ryō no gige, in Shintei zōho kokushi taikei (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1985), pp. 182-202. Ryō no gige is an official commentary on the ritsuryō compiled by a committee of legal scholars and promulgated, with the force of law, in 833. A more elaborate commentary called Ryō no shūge, compiled by the legal scholar Koremune Naomoto, appeared around 868. Sadly, only 36 of the original 50 volumes survive. The commentaries on the gunbōryō were found among the missing volumes.

² Ryō no gige elaborates, “When the regiment consists of 1000 men, there is one colonel and two lieutenant colonels; when there are more than 600 but less than 1000 men, there is one colonel and one lieutenant colonel; when there are less than 500 men, there is only one officer, who is designated the gungi.”

³ Ryō no gige explains that companies were comprised of fifty men, and squads of five men each.

⁴ Ryō no gige clarifies, “Warrant officers” here refers to officers between ranks of warrant officer first class (kyōi) and warrant officer third class (taishō), inclusive. ‘Led separately’ means that they are divided into cavalry and infantry units. ‘Not mixed’ means that cavalrmen and infantrymen are not to be combined within a single company.”
Regulation Concerning Troop Selection [Heishi kanten no jō 兵士簡点條]

After soldiers have been selected they shall be assigned to the regiments nearest to them. They shall not be separated. When selecting soldiers, from each household (ko) one adult male (chō) shall be taken for every three.5

Regulation Concerning Personal Equipment Inspection [Ken’etsu nyūgu no jō 簡閲戦具條]

Provincial officials (kokushi) shall inspect personal equipment in the tenth month of each year.6

Regulation Concerning Soldiers & Formation of Campfires [Heishi ika no jō 兵士為火條]

Ten soldiers shall constitute one campfire (ka). Six packhorses shall be assigned to each campfire.7 These shall be cared for and brought along on days of mobilization. Animals who have died shall be replaced.8

Regulation Concerning Soldiers’ Provisions [Heishi bibi no jō 兵士備糒]

Each soldier shall bring with him six to of dried rice and two shō of salt, altogether with the items necessary to each campfire.9 All these shall be stored in the storehouse.10 Should,  

5 Ryō no gige contends that the guiding principle here was that “one third of all adult males in a province are drafted,” and that households with multiple adult male could expect to contribute one soldier for every three of them. It also notes that, “those who attend signal fires were to be excluded,” but that warrant officers could be selected from among those so excluded, as well as from among ordinary draftees.

6 Ryō no gige explains, “‘personal equipment’ refers to the bows, arrows, swords, etc. that each taxable subject (hyakushō) brings with him.”

7 Ryō no gige explains, “Government animals shall be used for packhorses. The Statute on Pastures (Kyōmaku ryō) provides that horses raised on government pastures deemed suitable for riding be attached to the regiment, and placed in the care of troops of that province from wealthy families capable of caring for them.”

8 Ryō no gige elaborates, “that is, if there is just cause to explain the animal’s death, it may be replaced with a government horse; if not, the house responsible for its death must replace it with one from their own stock.”

9 One to (斗) was equal to approximately 180 liters. One shō (升) equaled one tenth of a to. Ryō no gige explains that both ordinary soldiers and warrant officers were required to bring each of these items for themselves, and that when a soldier died, or was rotated out of duty, his provisions were returned to his family, and new items requisitioned.
owing to long storage, some of these items break or become unfit for use, they shall be replaced with items of good quality. This shall be done between the first days of the eleventh month and the thirtieth day of the twelfth month. From each watch (*ban*) two men shall be designated to guard the storehouse. They shall not lose anything. On days of mobilization, supplies shall be issued proportionally to campfires.

**Regulation Concerning Personal Equipment [Binyūgu no jō 備役具條]**

The soldiers of each campfire shall have one tent of navy blue cloth, two copper trays and two small pots, one hoe, one grass scythe, one axe, one small axe, one chisel, two sickles, and one pair of metal tongs. Each group of fifty men shall provide one flint stone, one bundle of tinder grass, and one hand saw. Each man shall provide one bow, one bow case, one bowstring, fifty arrows, one quiver, one great sword, one small sword, one whetstone, one rain hat, one bag for carrying rice, one canteen, one salt bag, one pair of leggings, and one pair of straw sandals. They shall each provide these items themselves. They shall not be lacking in this. On days of mobilization, they shall bring all these items with them. During the years when they are on watch duty, they shall bring only the individual items; they need not bring the other items.

**Regulation Concerning Soldiers on Watch Duty [Heishi jōban no jō 兵士上番條]**

Soldiers on watch duty shall serve one year in the capital or three years on the border. Travel time shall not be counted toward this limit.

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10 *Ryō no gige* explains that, “‘items necessary to each campfire’ refers to the cloth, pots and other items listed in the next regulation. ‘The storehouse’ refers to the regimental warehouse.”

11 *Ryō no gige* clarifies this to mean that individual soldiers were expected to replace damaged items out of their own pockets.

12 According to *Ryō no gige*, “‘years when they are on watch duty’ refers to years spent on duty as guards in the capital or on the frontier. ‘The individual items’ means the items on the list between the bow and sandals, inclusive. ‘The other items’ refers to the items on the list between the tent and the handsaw, inclusive. During years on watch duty, soldiers need not bring these other items.”
Regulation Concerning Training [Fukyōshū no jō 赴教習條]

During training or on campaign, those who man ōyumi need not provide bows and arrows.¹³

Regulation Concerning Regiments [Gundan no jō 軍団條]

From each company, two strong men shall be chosen and made ōyumi operators. They shall be divided equally between each watch.

Regulation Concerning Capital Guards Hours of Duty [Eji jōge no jō 衛士上下條]

Capital Guards (eji) shall be divided into two groups, each serving one day on an one day off duty.¹⁴ On each day off, they shall remain with their units and train with bow and horse, sword, and spear, and/or to practice shooting ōyumi and slinging stones. At the hour of the horse,¹⁵ they shall be dismissed to their quarters, where their training progress shall be noted. They shall not be used for non-military errands without special imperial orders.

Regulation Concerning Capital Guards & Border Guards [Eji sakimori no jō 衛士防人條]

Soldiers on watch duty in the capital are called Capital Guards (eji). Each is to be assigned to a campfire of five soldiers, to be supervised by the campfire commander (kazu). Soldiers who defend the borders shall be called Border Guards (sakimori).¹⁶

¹³ Ryō no gige elaborates, “that is, they need not bring with them the bow and arrow stipulated by the Regulation Concerning Personal Equipment, but they must provide all the other items called for on the list.”

Ōyumi were the artillery pieces of the ritsuryō armies. Their actual form is not known, as no clear drawings or descriptions survive, but most historians believe them to have been some form of platform-mounted, multiple-arrow-launching crossbow. For more on ōyumi and crossbows in ancient Japan, see Karl Friday, Hired Swords: the Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 41-43; or Friday, Samurai, Warfare & the State in Early Medieval Japan (New York: Routledge, 2004), 72-77. For an alternative view, see Wm. Wayne Farris, Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan’s Military, 500-1300 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 113-19.

¹⁴ Ryō no gige clarifies, “that is, on days in which nothing happens.”

¹⁵ 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.

¹⁶ Eji are examined in depth in Friday, Hired Swords, 27-31. For more on sakimori (literally, “defenders of the
Regulation Concerning Regimental Colonels [Gundan daiki no jō 軍団大毅條]

Regimental colonels (daiki) and lieutenant colonels (shōgi) shall be appointed from among men of the area\(^{17}\) who hold ranks but no posts,\(^{18}\) men who hold merit rank,\(^{19}\) or commoners of martial skill. Warrant officers shall be selected from among commoners skilled with the bow and horse. Clerks (shuchō) shall be selected from among men skilled in writing and arithmetic.\(^{20}\)

Regulations Concerning Soldiers & Officers [Heishi ijō no jō 兵士以上條]

Two parallel rosters of soldiers and superiors shall be compiled, making special note of criminals, men on watch duty, and men serving on campaigns.\(^{21}\) Soldiers on the rosters shall also be grouped into upper, middle and lower classes according to wealth. One copy of this roster shall remain in the province; the other shall be forwarded to the Ministry of Military Affairs (Hyōbushō) each year by the Court messenger.

When troops need to be mobilized for emergencies or for watch duty in the province, the provincial governor shall select them from this roster. Capital guards and border guards who have returned to their villages shall be excused from duty within the province. Capital guards shall be exempted for one year; border guards for three.\(^ {22}\)

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\(^{17}\) The term used here is bunai, literally “within the jurisdiction.” It is unclear whether this means the district in which the regiment was headquartered or just the province.

\(^{18}\) Ryō no gige qualifies this as having applied only to men of inner or outer sixth rank and under.

\(^{19}\) Kun‘i; see the “Regulations Concerning Conferral of Decorations,” “Regulations Concerning Accumulation & Application of Merit Points,” and “Regulations Concerning Acquisition of Merit Rank,” below.

\(^{20}\) Ryō no gige adds, “regiments of at least 1000 troops have two clerks; smaller regiments have one clerk.”

\(^{21}\) Ryō no gige clarifies that this included warrant officers and clerks, while “colonels and lieutenant colonels were considered to be military officers and listed on a separate roster, in accord with the Statute on Personnel” (shokuin ryō).

\(^{22}\) Ryō no gige clarifies that, “this was meant to exclude soldiers and warrant officers from service within their home provinces. Men returning from campaigns were exempted from service for a period proportional to their period of service. For example, a man who served two years on campaign was excused from all corvée taxes
Regulations Concerning Court Guards Returning from Duty as Emissaries [Hyōe shikan no jō 兵衛使還條]

Court Guards (hyōe) returning from duty as emissaries and who have been away for a duration of three or more watches shall be excused from one watch. If, however, they wish to return immediately to service, they shall be permitted to do so.23

Regulations Concerning Selection for Border Guard Duty [Jūebō no jō 宛衛防條]

When soldiers are selected for duty as capital or border guards, father and son, or brother and brother shall not be selected together.24 Men whose parents or grandparents are aged or infirm and would not otherwise have anyone to care for them, and men from households in which there are no other adult males likewise shall not be selected as capital or border guards.25

Regulation Concerning the Mobilization of Troops [Sahei no jō 差兵條]

When twenty or more troops need to be mobilized, an imperial writ shall first be obtained.

Regulation Concerning the Scepter Sword [Settō no jō 節刀條]

When a Field Marshal (taishō) is sent forth on campaign, he shall be given a scepter sword (settō).26 [Having received this commission,] he shall not return to or pass the night at his

[yōeki] for one year; a man who served two years was excused for two years.”

23 Ryō no gige explains that this referred to “court guards sent to accompany emissaries to foreign lands, those who had served on campaigns, and those who had served as escorts (bucyōshi) for border guards. The phrase ‘three or more watches’ means that this regulation applied even when the period of service had been two or three years.”

Hyōe, or Court Guards, the troops who manned the Left and Right Hyōefu palace guard units, were scions of the provincial and lower central nobility, not peasant conscripts. See Friday, Hired Swords, 29-31.

24 Ryō no gige explains that “grandfather and grandson were not to be selected together. There is, however, no provision against selecting brothers who reside in different provinces.”

25 According to Ryō no gige, “this means that they shall be removed from the regimental (gundan) roster and assigned as servants to these parents or grandparents.”

26 Ryō no gige explains that, “scepters, fashioned from ox tails, symbolize an emissary’s authority. Nowadays, swords are presented in their place and are for this reason called scepter swords (settō). The name and form
home [but shall proceed at once on his mission]. If his house is in the capital, once each month an equerry (udoneri) from the Ministry of Central Affairs (Nakatsukasa no shō) shall be dispatched to inquire as to conditions there. Should there be illness, medicine shall be provided. On the day of victory songs, an imperial emissary shall be dispatched to the outskirts of the capital to welcome the General’s return.

**Regulation Concerning Expeditionary Forces [Yūshō seitō no jō 有所征討條]**

When an expeditionary force numbering over 3000 men is formed, the officer in charge shall be assigned servants and aides to advise and assist him, on the day the soldiers and horses are mobilized. When border guard contingents of 1000 men or more set out, an equerry (udoneri) shall be sent along.

**Regulation Concerning Provincial Officials Escorting Capital & Border Guards [Kokushi buryō eji bōnin no jō 国司部領衛士防人條]**

Provincial officials shall personally escort capital guards to the capital and border guards to the port [of Naniwa]. Upon arrival in the capital, the Ministry of Military Affairs shall first inspect capital guards’ personal equipment, and then divide them among the three guard units. Should shortages be discovered, inquiries shall be made and blame assigned. Upon departure from Naniwa, border guards shall be escorted to the Dazaifu by a specialist officer.

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27 Ryō no gige clarifies this to mean, “should the Field Marshal’s father, mother, wife or children be ill or infirm.”

28 That is, the Left and Right Eijifu and the Emonfu. The Left and Right Eijifu, Left and Right Hyōefu, and the Emonfu were collectively known as the Five Guards (goefu). For more on the structure and evolution of the ritsuryō central military institutions, see Friday, *Hired Swords*, 27-31, 56-64.

29 Ryō no gige notes that, “the Ministry of Military Affairs shall first inspect the border guards’ personal equipment, and then consign them to a specialist officer, whereupon the provincial official shall return to his province aboard the return ship.”

The Dazaifu was a supraprovincial government office with jurisdiction of Kyushu, Iki and Tsushima. For more on this institution, see Bruce L. Batten, *To the Ends of Japan: Premodern Frontiers, Boundaries and Interactions*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2003); or *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500-1300*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006).
When returning [to their provinces, following their tours of duty, border guards] shall not tarry in route and cause trouble for Our subjects, nor shall they damage paddy or dry fields or cut mulberry or sumac trees. Should this clause be violated, the conditions of the aggrieved province and district shall be reported to the Ministry of State and the transport officer in charge shall be punished under the law. The same provisions shall hold in the case of expeditionary forces in route to theatres of war.

**Regulation Concerning Personal Grudges [Yūshukken no jō 有宿嫌條]**

Senior officers departing on campaign shall not be assigned as orderlies persons who bear grudges against them.30

**Regulation Concerning Military Camps [Guneimon no jō 軍営門條]**

The entrances to military camps shall be tightly guarded and all entries and departures shall be announced loudly. Messengers arriving from the Court shall first see the general, so as to uphold the dignity of the service. He shall then receive the orders they carry.

**Regulations Concerning Capital Guards Off-Duty Days [Eji gejitsu no jō 衛士下日條]**

Even when off duty, capital guards shall not venture more than thirty leagues (ri) from their quarters on private errands.31 Should the need for such travel arise, they shall obtain permission from their unit before going. During his year of service in the capital, a capital guard shall not be dismissed from his tour of duty, even for mourning his parents. Rather, he shall begin his mourning after his tour of duty has ended.32

**Regulations Concerning Officers for Expeditionary Forces [Shōsochi]**

30 Ryō no gige explains that “senior officers” referred to lieutenant generals (fukushōgun) and higher-ranked officers,” that is, to fukushōgun, shōgun and taishōgun, and that reason for this regulation is that, “because it is feared that such persons might kill the officer out of private malice, on pretext of war.”

31 One league, or ri, equals approximately four kilometers. Thirty ri is therefore equal to distance of about 120 kilometers.

32 Ryō no gige notes that these same regulations applied to sakimori, as well.

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When officers depart for campaigns at the head of 10,000 or more troops there shall be assigned one General (shōgun), two Lieutenant Generals (fukushōgun), two Major Generals (gunken), four Brigadier Generals (gunsō) and four Majors (rokuji). Forces numbering less than 9000 but more than 5000 men shall be assigned one fewer lieutenant general, one fewer major general, and two fewer majors. Forces of 3000 to 4000 men shall have one fewer brigadier general.

Each such force shall constitute one Army (gun). When three armies are assembled for a campaign, a Field Marshal (taishōgun) shall be appointed.

Regulations Concerning Field Marshals Departing on Campaign [Taishō shussei no jō 大将出征條]

When a field marshal departs on campaign, he shall monitor his troops. Should anyone of the rank of colonel or below fail to follow campaign orders or prove in any way lacking in military matters, the field marshal shall be empowered to apply any penalty, up to and including death, on his own authority. Upon returning from the campaign, the field marshal shall then make a full report of any incidents to the Council of State. This regulation shall not apply prior to contact with the enemy.

Regulations Concerning Campaign Commanders [Gunshōsei no jō 軍将征條]

When, in the course of a campaign, it becomes necessary to change commanders, the original general shall not leave his post to meet his replacement, but shall remain and sternly protect his troops. When his replacement arrives, he shall produce his imperial commission papers and the original commander shall verify his orders, and then follow the instructions of the new commission.
Regulations Concerning Dependents of Soldiers on Campaign
[Seigyōsha fuzui fujō no jō 征行者不隨婦女條]

Personnel on campaigns shall not bring with them wives or daughters.33

Regulations Concerning Family Deaths During Campaigns [Seigyō sōfubōi no jō 征行遭父母喪條]

Should the father or mother of any soldier, up to and including a field marshal, die while he is on campaign, the Court shall wait to inform him until he returns at the close of the campaign.

Regulations Concerning Sick & Wounded Soldiers [Shisotsu byōgen no jō 士卒病患條]

Soldiers who become sick or incur wounds shall be given medical treatment. Officers of brigadier general rank and below should see to this matter personally.

Regulations Concerning Determination of Merit [Teikunkō no jō 定勲功條]

Following the end of a victorious campaign, and prior to dismissing the troops, a field marshal shall make detailed calculations concerning decorations for merit. He shall, moreover, record all expenses; the numbers of troops, horses, weapons and armor at the outset of the campaign; and all losses thereof. All officers below the rank of field marshal shall counter-sign this document. When the army returns, officers between the ranks of major general and major shall each report to the appropriate officials (in the Arsenal Bureaus (Hyōgoryō), Stables (Maryō), and other offices) to return all animals and equipment.

Regulations Concerning Compilation of the Record of Battle Merit [Shin kunfu no jō 申勲薄條]

When compiling the Record of Battle Merit (kunfu), the name and rank of each man who earned merit shall be recorded in detail by battalion (jin), along with his platoon and the name

33 Ryō no gige notes that this prohibition applied to slaves and servants as well. The rationale behind this regulation may be that soldiers on border guard duty were allowed to bring family with them; (see the “Regulation Concerning Border Guards in Route”(Bōnin kōbō no jō) below.
of his platoon commander; the weapons used by each man; his regiment and its commander; his home province and district; the numbers of government and enemy forces; the number of government and enemy troops killed or wounded; numbers of prisoners taken; and the number of provisions, weapons, and armor captured; the date and location of all battles; and maps indicating the positions of each battalion, along with the names of all officers above the rank of lieutenant general. This document shall then be forwarded to the Council of State. Merit awards and grades thereof shall then be announced by imperial writ.

Regulations Concerning Conferral of Decorations [Jokun no jō 叙勲條]

In preparing the Record of Battle Merit and conferring decorations after a campaign, within each company those in the front echelon shall be listed first, followed by those in the second echelon. If there are any who were not in the front echelon yet displayed greater merit than the rest of the second echelon—that is, if distinctions should be made among men within the same echelon—all soldiers shall be listed in order of their merit. Should awards allotted be insufficient for all, the list shall be truncated from the bottom.

Regulations Concerning Accumulation & Application of Merit Points [Ôka ten no jō 応加点條]

When military merit is assessed and points awarded, merit rank (kun'i) shall be raised accordingly. Those previously without merit rank shall be raised to the twelfth grade (tō) for

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34 Ryō no gige explains, “according to the statutorily-prescribed order of battle, each company consists of ten shield teams, five of which stand in the front echelon and five in the second. Five men are assigned to each shield. Thus there are 25 men in the first echelon and 25 in the second. This order is determined before the fighting begins, and therefore must be reported.”

35 Ryō no gige clarifies and elaborates: “Let us suppose, for example, that the field marshal has declared that the taking of five or more enemy heads be honored with high merit while the taking of four or fewer heads be met with secondary merit; and that Soldier A of the first echelon captures five heads and Soldier B takes four, while Soldier C of the second echelon takes five heads and Soldier D captures four. Soldier C was not in the first echelon, yet his performance exceeds that of others in the second echelon. Therefore the Record of Battle Merit should list the men in the order of A-C-B-D. . . . Supposing further that within the same echelon Soldier A captures five enemy heads while Soldier B captures three and Soldier C captures four. In this case, the record should list their names in the order of A-C-B.”

36 Ryō no gige explains that this is intended to apply to situations in which the Council of State has limited the number of merit awards to be passed out.

37 Ryō no gige explains that points had no fixed meaning, “for example, in one year’s campaign the taking of ten
Persons holding the fifth court rank or higher who earn points in excess of what can be applied toward promotion may pass on these points to their father or son. Should they have no living parent or child, they shall be awarded two chō of paddy land for each extra point earned. Those who hold the sixth rank or lower, or who hold only merit rank, may pass excess points on to their fathers or sons, but shall not be awarded lands.

**Regulations Concerning Acquisition of Merit Rank [Tokkun no jō 得勲條]**

The provisions of the previous clause shall apply to those who earn merit rank but die before receiving it. Should, however, there be no one left alive in the soldier’s household to receive his merit points, they shall be discarded.

**Regulations Concerning Expulsions [Hanjomyō no jō 犯除名條]**

Reductions in merit rank as punishment for crimes shall be conducted such that a holder of the first grade be reduced to the ninth grade, a holder of the second grade be reduced to the tenth grade, a holder of the third grade be reduced to the eleventh grade, and a holder of the fourth grade five heads may constitute one point, while in the next year's campaign five heads may constitute one point."

This lack of a fixed standard, it adds somewhat whimsically, such that they only point toward rewards, “is why they are called ‘points,’” using a character (轉) that literally means to turn or to roll.

38 The *ritsuryō* structure classified both the central and the provincial nobility according to a complex system of court ranks similar in purpose to modern civil service rank systems. A man’s rank determined his status, his eligibility for government posts, and his place in the complex protocols for official and social events. There were nine main ranks, beginning with the Initial rank and continuing upward form the eighth to the first. The first, second and third ranks were subdivided into senior and junior grades; the senior forth through junior eighth ranks were further divided into upper and lower categories. There were also four Initial ranks: Greater Initial Rank-Upper Grade, Greater Initial Rank-Lower Grade, Lesser Initial Rank-Upper Grade, and Lesser Initial Rank-Lower Grade.

The *kun’i*, or merit rank, system provided for promotion in court rank as a reward for meritorious performance in battle. The *kun’i* comprised twelve grades (called *tō*) that paralleled the senior third through the junior eighth ranks of the normal civil hierarchy.
grade be reduced to the twelfth grade. This statute shall also apply to cases of punitive forfeiture of court rank or office in which the prescribed penalty exceeds current grade.\(^{39}\)

**Regulations Concerning Conscription Procedures [Kantenji no jō 簡點次條]**

Except as in accord with regular conscription procedures, no person shall be forced into or excused from military service. Freemen entering service under an assumed name, slaves pretending to be freemen in order to enter service, and men of shadow rank shall all be reported to the Ministry of Military Affairs and then dismissed from the army.\(^{40}\) Soldiers who have reached the age of 60 shall be excused from further service. Persons not yet 60 but who are weak, suffering from long-term illness, or are otherwise unfit for military duty shall likewise be excused from service.

**Regulations Concerning Court Guard Promotions [Hyōe kōman no jō 兵衛考満條]**

Court Guards (hyōe) eligible for promotion shall be examined by the Ministry of Military Affairs. Appropriate promotions shall be determined on the basis of literary and military ability and this information reported to the Council of State. Those capable of handling the affairs of the time shall be assigned accordingly.\(^{41}\) Those over the age of 60 shall be dismissed as guardsman. If there are any who, although under the age of 60, are weak or

\(^{39}\) Ryō no gige explains this to mean that in cases in which the legally prescribed reduction of rank would cause a person to fall below the twelfth grade, he would be reduced only to the twelfth grade.

\(^{40}\) Ryō no gige explains that “shadow rank” (on’i) refers to “the progeny of holders of the fifth rank or higher, or the heirs of holders of the eighth rank” or higher.

The shadow rank, or on’i, system, adopted from the Tang Chinese model, represented a compromise between Confucian meritocratic ideals and the aristocratic reality of seventh-century Japanese (and Chinese) society. It provided that children and grandchildren of rank-holding aristocrats would enter the system at the middle, rather than the bottom, of the rank hierarchy. Thus, for example, the son of a man who had worked his way up to the first rank would begin at the fifth rank, while his grandson would begin at the sixth rank. A detailed discussion of the on’i system, and a table outlining the levels at which the progeny of persons of the various ranks entered the system, appears in Aoki Kazuo, *Nara no miyako*, vol. 3 of *Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1965), p. 142.

\(^{41}\) Ryō no gige adds that each guardsman was assessed in terms of talents and skills and “thereby appointed to civil or military posts. Those who were not up to handling administrative affairs were not appointed, even if they had military talent.”
suffer from long illness or are otherwise unfit for duty, or who have been appointed as district magistrates (gunji), their assigned unit\(^{42}\) shall record these particulars and send them to the Ministry of Military Affairs for examination. If this information is found to be accurate, they shall be dismissed from service.

**Regulations Concerning Court Guards [Hyōe no jō 兵衛條]**

Court guards shall be selected by the provincial governor from among the sons and younger brothers of district magistrates who are strong and skilled with bow and horse. One man is to be selected from each district (gun),\(^{43}\) excepting that districts that have provided palace handmaids (uneme) shall not send also a court guard.\(^{44}\) From each province, two thirds of the districts shall provide court guards, while one third shall provide handmaids.

**Regulations Concerning Regiments & Drums [Gundan chiko no jō 置鼓條]**

Each regiment shall be provided with two drums, two great horns and four lesser horns.\(^{45}\) Soldiers from each watch shall train in their use. Should any of the items in the regimental storehouse or arsenal be damaged, let soldiers make repairs after the tenth month.

**Regulations Concerning Soldiers on Campaign [Gyōgun heishi no jō 行軍兵士條]**

Should any soldier on campaign take sick and die, a detailed record shall be made of his personal belongings and these shall be given to a person of his home area to be returned. His body shall be cremated and buried on the spot. The bodies of officers of lieutenant general and higher rank shall, however, be returned to their homes.

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\(^{42}\) That is, the Left or Right Hyōefu.

\(^{43}\) Ryō no gige states that “sons and younger brothers” included nephews and grandsons.

\(^{44}\) Uneme were young women chosen from among the daughters of provincial nobles selected for service in the imperial palace. For details, see G.B. Sansom, “Early Japanese Law and Administration,” in *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, second series vol. IX (1932), 96.

\(^{45}\) Great horns (naradai fue) and lesser horns (kutano fue) were wind instruments used for military signaling.
Regulations Concerning Issuing of Ordnance [Shukkyū kijō no jō 出給器仗條]

When weapons are issued, clear records shall be made. When an army returns from a campaign, returned ordnance shall be checked against this list. Should any be missing or damaged without good cause, this shall be reported to the Council of State and instructions requested.

Regulations Concerning Ordnance in the Field [Jūgun kōjō no jō 從軍甲仗條]

Restitution shall be waived for weapons or armors lost or destroyed in battle. The government shall have all damage repaired. Restitution shall be made for weapons or armors lost or damaged while on campaign but not in battle, at the rate of two thirds of the item cost. Equipment lost or damaged under extra-military circumstances⁴⁶ shall all be paid for at current prices and shall be repaired by the government. Restitution shall, however, be waived for equipment lost to causes beyond human control, such as fire or flood.

The weapons of each province and district shall be inventoried and recorded each year. This list shall be forwarded by envoy to the Ministry of Military Affairs, which shall examine the lists and report to the Council of State prior to the thirtieth day of the second month.

Regulations Concerning Storage of Ordnance [Gunki zaiko no jō 軍器在庫條]

Weapons kept in the storehouse shall be placed on shelves and grouped according to type. All equipment shall be removed and aired out periodically.

⁴⁶ Ryō no gige gives the examples of ceremonies, parties and processions.
Regulations Concerning Private Possession of Drums [Shike kishō no jō 私家鼓鉦條]

Private possession of drums, gongs, ōyumi, twelve or twenty foot spears, horse armor, great or lesser horns, or military banners is forbidden. Musical instruments shall, however, be exempted from this prohibition.

Regulations Concerning Ordnance in Storage [Zaikō kijō no jō 在庫仗條 RGG 195]

Weapons in storage that become unfit for use shall be investigated by the chief official of the jurisdiction, who shall then report to the Council of State, which shall issue instructions for disposal or destruction. Spear tips, sword blades, haquetons,⁴⁷ banners and ramie shall be repaired on site. Equipment in storage in the capital shall be sent to the Ministry of Military Affairs for appropriate handling. Statutes pertaining to lost or damaged equipment shall be followed in the case of equipment deemed unfit for use.

Regulations Concerning Progeny of Holders of the Fifth Rank [Goi shison no jō 五位子孫條]

Sons and grandsons of holders of the fifth rank and above who are over twenty years of age and currently hold no posts shall be examined each year by officials in the capital or provinces, who shall send the candidates to the Ministry of Ceremonials (Shikibushō) and report the results to the Council of State by the first day of the twelfth month. Those judged to be intelligent and capable of bearing weapons, as well as all progeny of holders of the third rank and above, shall be assigned as equerry (udoneri) to the Ministry of Central Affairs. The rest the Ministry of Ceremonial shall assign to the Bureau of Imperial Attendants (ōtoneri-ryō) or as equerry (tōgu tonerī) to the Crown Prince.

⁴⁷ A garment worn under armor.
Regulations Concerning Holders of the Sixth Rank [Nairokui no jō 内六位條]

Legitimate heirs (chakushi) of those holding the inner sixth to eighth court ranks who are over twenty years of age and who have no current posts shall be examined each year by officials of the provinces and capital, who shall divide them into three groups, according to the results of this examination. Those knowledgeable in etiquette or skilled in math and writing shall constitute the top group. Those strong of body or skilled with bow and horse shall constitute the middle group. Those weak of body or ignorant of writing or numbers shall constitute the low group. Those of the top and low groups shall be sent to the Ministry of Ceremonials for appointment, no later than the thirtieth day of the twelfth month. Candidates of the top group shall be appointed imperial attendants (ōdoneri), while those of the low group shall be appointed ministerial attendants (tsuikai kabe). Candidates of the middle group shall be sent to the Ministry of Military Affairs, examined, and made court guards (hyōe). Should the number of suitable candidates be insufficient, other sons shall be selected.48

Regulations Concerning Attendants to Princes & Princesses of the Blood [Chōnai no jō 帳内條]

Attendants to princes and princesses of the blood shall be selected from among the legitimate heirs and other sons of holders of the sixth rank and below. Sons of holders of the eighth court rank or above shall not be assigned as personal servants (shijin), excepting that this shall be allowed when servants are assigned owing to post.49 Ordinarily persons from the barrier provinces, the Dazaifu region, or the provinces of Mutsu, Iwaki, Iwase, Etchū or Echigo shall not be chosen for this service.50

48 That is, second and additional sons of holders of the sixth to eighth court ranks. Ryō no gige contends this clause applied only to hyōe.

49 Shijin were personal attendants assigned to middle and high ranking court nobles. All holders of the fifth court rank or above received shijin; and additional shijin were assigned to Ministers of the Left, Ministers of the Right, and Major Counselors (dainagon). This clause draws a distinction between shijin assigned on the basis of court rank and those assigned on the basis of post.

50 The ritsuryō state maintained three permanent barriers that served as checkpoints on the main routes to the capital. Suzuka no seki in Isei province, Fuwa no seki in Mino, and Arachi no seki in Echizen (cf. Regulations Concerning the Establishment of Barriers [Chikan no jō 置關條], below). These were military inspection points
Regulations Concerning Assignment of Attendants to Princes & Princesses of the Blood [Kyūchōnai no jō 給帳内條]

Attendants (chōnai) to princes and princesses of the blood shall be assigned as follows: Princes and princesses of the first rank (ichihin) shall receive 160 attendants; princes and princesses of the of the second rank, 150 attendants; princes and princesses of the third rank, 120 attendants; and princes and princesses of the fourth rank, 100 attendants. Other personal servants (shijin) shall be assigned as follows: to holders of the first rank, 100 attendants; holders of the second rank, 80 attendants; holders of the third rank, 60 attendants; holders of the senior fourth rank, 50 attendants; holders of the junior fourth rank, 35 attendants; holders of the senior fifth rank, 25 attendants; holders of the junior fifth rank, 20 attendants. These numbers shall be decreased by half for women, with the resulting numbers rounded upward. In addition, the Prime Minister (daijō daijin) shall be assigned 300 attendants, the Minister of the Left (sadaijin) and Minister of the Right (udaijin) shall be assigned 200 attendants each, and each Major Counselor (dainagon) 100 attendants.51

Regulations Concerning Infirm Attendants [Ryūshichi no jō 瘟疾條]

Attendants (chōnai or shijin) who become ill and need to be relieved of their posts, they shall be reported to the Ministry of Ceremonial Affairs, which shall examine the case and authorize replacements.

stocked with troops and weapons, under the authority of the provincial governors. Their principal function seems to have been to prevent rebels and criminals in or near the capital from escaping to the east. These barriers are the source for the appellations “Kantō” (“east of the barriers”) and “Kansai” (“west of the barriers”) for eastern and western Japan.

51 Ryō no gige adds that the numbers for attendants assigned by office were reduced by half when the individual retired from his post.

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Regulations Concerning Assignment of Field Laborer [Kyūjiriki no jō 給 力條]

Daizaifu\(^{52}\) and provincial officials shall be assigned laborers as follows:\(^{53}\) To the Governor General (sotsu) twenty men; to the Senior Assistant Governor-General (daini) fourteen men; to the Junior Assistant Governor-General (shōni) ten men; to the Senior Secretary (daiken), Junior Secretary (shōken) and Senior Judge (daihanji) six men each; to the Senior Engineer (daiku), Junior Judge (shōhanji), Senior Recorder (daiten), Commander of Border Guards (sakimori no kami), Head of Religious Affairs (kanzu), and Professor (hakushi) five men each; to the Governor (kami) of a great province eight men; to the Governor of a superior province or the Assistant Governor (suke) of a great province seven men;\(^{54}\) to the Governor of a middle province or the Assistant Governor of a superior province six men; to the Governor of a lesser province or the Secretary (jō) of great or superior province five men; to the Secretary of a middle province or the Inspector (sakan) of a great or superior province four men; to the Inspector of a middle or lesser province three men; Clerks (shishō) shall be handled as in the past.\(^{55}\) Laborers shall be rotated annually. All shall be selected from among the tax eligible subjects of large households, and shall be exempted from labor commutation (yō) taxes.

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\(^{52}\) The Dazaifu, or Kyushu Government General, located near the shore of Hakata Bay, was a supra-provincial government with jurisdiction over Kyushu, Iki and Tsushima.

\(^{53}\) As a compensation for having to work in the country, away from the comforts of the capital, provincial officials were assigned office lands, and laborers to work them, in their provinces of appointment.

\(^{54}\) The ritsuryō organizational structure classified all provinces into four categories, according to land area, population and strategic importance: great provinces (daikoku 大国), superior provinces (jōkoku 上国), middle provinces (chūkoku 中国) and lesser provinces (kakoku 下国).

\(^{55}\) The meaning of this phrase is unclear.
Regulations Concerning Frontier Stockade Gates [Henjōmon no jō 邊城門條]

The gates to stockades in the frontier regions shall be opened late and closed early. Should there be an incident requiring the gates to be opened at night, due preparations and precautions shall first be taken. When the castellan is required to leave the stockade to conduct government business, his staff shall not depart with him, and he shall personally maintain possession of the keys. Men from dutiful and important houses shall be chosen and charged with opening and closing the locks.

Regulations Concerning Stockade Dry Moats [Jōō no jō 城隍條]

Should the dry moat surrounding a stockade become damaged, soldiers on duty shall effect repairs. Should the number of available soldiers be insufficient for the job, labor conscripts (ninpu) from nearby shall be commandeered, and repairs conducted during the agricultural off season. Should damage be excessive, compromising the security of the stockade, repairs shall be made immediately. Following completion of all repairs, a detailed report of the matter shall be made to the Council of State. Civilian laborers shall not be pressed into service for a period exceeding ten days.

Regulations Concerning the Establishment of Barriers [Chikan no jō 置關條]

Barriers shall be established to control access to the capital. These shall be manned by soldiers serving in two watches. The three barriers shall be stocked with weapons, horns,

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56 Ryō no gige explains that “late” means after sunrise, while “early” means prior to sunset.


58 Ryō no gige explains that this responsibility was entrusted to the governor of the province in which the stockade was located.

59 Ryō no gige explains that this includes both the three permanent barriers (Suzuka in Ise, Fuwa in Minō, and Arachi in Echizen) and temporary fortifications raised for special contingencies.
and drums, and shall be overseen by provincial officials serving in rotation. The number of troops to be posted shall be determined by separate statute.

Regulations Concerning Border Guards in Transit [Bōnin kōbō no jō 防人向防條]

Border guards (sakimori) shall be permitted to bring with them their families, slaves, or livestock.

Regulations Concerning Personal Provisions [Seishiryō no jō 費私糧條]

Border guards in transit shall bring with them their own provisions. Upon departing from the port, they shall be given government provisions. 60

Regulations Concerning Travel [Jōdō no jō 上道條]

Border guards in transit who perish or desert after leaving their home province shall not be replaced.

Regulations Concerning Departures [Shōhatsu no jō 将発條]

Border guards who, at the time of their scheduled departure for service are awaiting trial for crimes, or involved in public or private lawsuits shall, in the event that the crime does not merit imprisonment, be judged, administered punishment forthwith, and then dispatched to the border region. 61 Those judged guilty of crimes meriting imprisonment or more severe sentences shall be replaced. 62

60 That is, sakimori were expected to provide their own food and other supplies for the journey from their home districts to the port at Naniwa, but the state provided them with food and other necessities for the remainder of the trip.

61 The ritsuryō system classified crimes according to five levels of punishment: light caning (chi 笞; ten to fifty strikes on the buttocks administered with a light bamboo rod); public, or heavy, caning (jō 杖; sixty to one hundred lashes on the buttocks administered in public, with a heavy bamboo rod); imprisonment (zu 徒; usually from one to three years, depending on the crime); exile (ryū 流; banishment from the capital for a prescribed period, with varying distances specified for crimes of varying severity); and death (shi 死; usually administered by strangulation or beheading).

Ryō no gige explains that the intent of this statute is that sakimori accused of crimes meriting light or public canings be judged and, if found guilty, flogged on the spot, and then sent on to their assigned places of duty on
Regulations Concerning Arrivals [Yokushi no jō 欲至條]

Prior to the arrival of new border guards, the officer in charge shall determine where each man shall be stationed. On their day of arrival, the new troops shall be issued weapons and tools exchanged with the men they relieve, and shall then be rotated to duty stations. In the interest of fairness, fields to be farmed by each border guard shall be changed each season.

Regulations Concerning Discharged Border Guards [Kyūbōnin no jō 舊防人條]

Border guards who have been relieved of duty shall be given provisions and sent home. Should the number of replacements be insufficient, former border guards shall not be retained to fill deficiencies, even if this results in a shortage of troops.

Regulations Concerning Rotating Border Guards [Bōjin bankan no jō 防人番還條]

Border guards who become sick and unable to travel while in transit to or from their stations of duty shall be placed in the care of the nearest provincial or district government office, given provisions and medicine, cared for until such time as they are again fit to travel, and then once more sent on their way home or to their duty station. Those who perish shall be provided with a coffin, cremated, and buried. If they have personal possessions, these shall be sent to the Ministry of Military Affairs.

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62 Ryō no gige adds that, in accord with regulations governing expiation of crimes by proxy, felonious sakimori were to be replaced by other members of their own household.

63 Identified by Ryō no gige as the sakimori no tsukasa.

64 Ryō no gige qualifies that this procedure was to apply only to those who expired west of Settsu province. When sakimori in transit died in Yamashiro province or points further east, officials of his home district were to be contacted to come to retrieve the body. In the event that no one came to claim the body, it was to be cremated and buried on the spot.

65 Similarly, Ryō no gige says that this clause too applied only to deaths occurring in Settsu or further west, while the belongings of sakimori who died in Yamashiro or further east were to be sent to the soldier’s home.

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Regulations Concerning Tours of Duty [Zaibō no jō 在防條]

In addition to garrisoning the frontier, border guards shall each be assigned a vacant plot of land nearby their duty stations and set to cultivate this land as paddy or dry fields. The produce of these fields shall be allotted to the border guard as his rations. The government shall also supply oxen needed to work these fields. Each year’s harvest shall be documented and reported to the Council of State by messenger.

Regulations Concerning Leave [Kyūke no jō 休暇條]

Border guards standing watch shall be allowed one day of rest every ten days. Those who become ill shall be given medicine, and one man from their campfire shall be assigned to care for them.

Regulations Concerning Arrival & Departure of Envoys [Banshi shutsunyū no jō 番使出入條]

When envoys escorting prisoners or transporting military materials arrive, and require additional troops to guard them, local soldiers shall be dispatched.

Regulations Concerning Residents of Districts in the Frontier [Enhen shogun jin’i no jō 縁辺諸郡人居條]

Residents of districts in the eastern, northern or western frontier regions shall all be offered protection within stockades. Huts for storing tools and for sleeping in shall be built near the fields. During the agricultural season, those capable of tending these fields shall go out to them and shall return to the stockades following the harvest. Should the stockade’s fortifications become damaged, local residents shall be set to repair them during their free time.

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66 Ryō no gige adds that land separated from the soldier’s duty station by a mountain or river was not considered to have been “nearby,” however close it might have been geographically. The intent here was no doubt to ensure that soldiers could not be trapped in their fields, away from their duty stations, in emergencies.
Regulations Concerning Placement of Signal Fires [Chihō no jō 置烽條]

In principle, signal fires shall be established every fifty leagues,\(^{67}\) except when the terrain does not provide a secure place for the fire. In such places, signal fires shall be placed so as to be readily visible to one another, regardless of the distance between.

Regulations Concerning Signal Fires in Daylight & Darkness [Hō chūya no jō 烽晝夜條]

Signal fires shall be visible in daylight and in darkness. Should it be necessary to light the signal fires, in daylight they shall give off smoke and at night they shall give off flame. Should a signal fire be lit for a full half hour, the duration of one fuel bundle, without response from the next fire,\(^{68}\) a runner shall be dispatched to inquire the reasons for this failure, and these shall be communicated to the officials in charge immediately.

Regulations Concerning Enemies Entering the Realm [Yūzoku nyūkyō no jō 有賊入境條]

When enemies are abroad and cross Our borders, and signals fires should therefore be lit, the number of fires to be used in order to signal enemy numbers shall be regulated by separate legislation.

Regulations Concerning Fire Chiefs [Hōchō no jō 烽長條]

Two Fire Chiefs (hōchō or noroshi no osa) shall be assigned to each signal fire. Each shall oversee up to three fires,\(^{69}\) except that they shall not exercise this responsibility across provincial borders. Provincial officials shall carefully assess the households within their

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\(^{67}\) Fifty ri is equal to distance of about 200 kilometers.

\(^{68}\) The signal fire system was designed to transfer warnings in relay fashion. Those who attended the fires were charged with watching the locations on either side of them in the chain of outposts, and were supposed to light their own fires as soon as they spotted flames or smoke at an adjacent site. With signal fires established every 200 kilometers, notice of approaching danger could be transferred thousands of kilometers in a very short time. The statute here directs that watchmen were expected to light their own fires within a half hour of one another.

\(^{69}\) Presumably this meant that the watchmen had overlapping responsibility for the signal fires to either side, in the chain, of the one to which they were posted.
jurisdictions, and shall select two subjects suitable to overseeing the signal fires, and appoint these as fire chiefs. Should numbers of suitable subjects be insufficient, persons with court rank but otherwise without office, or holders of merit rank shall be used. Fire chiefs shall be divided into two alternating watches, and shall serve in three year rotations. On the day of rotation, the new chiefs shall be instructed by the old, and the latter then discharged. Maintenance of signal fires shall be conducted by all watchmen. Watchmen shall not leave the vicinity of their duty stations, except under orders.

**Regulations Concerning Signal Fire Watchmen [Haichōshi no jō 配烽子條]**

Four watchmen (chōshi) shall be assigned to each signal fire. Should full subjects not be available, secondary subjects shall be utilized. Watchmen shall be assigned to signal fires equidistant from the homes of each, and shall be divided into two watches.

**Regulations Concerning Placement of Beacon Fires [Chichōsho no jō 置烽處條]**

Fuel for beacon fires shall be stacked in piles 25 ho apart. Where mountains, narrow terrain or other obstacles render this spacing impossible, it need not be followed exactly, but fires shall be positioned and spaced such that they are readily visible, and their number can be discerned.

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70 That is, when possible only ordinary subjects—peasants—were to be selected for service as watchmen, but when necessary, low-ranking holders of court or merit rank could also be so designated. Ryō no gige adds that such use of rank holders was limited to people holding the outer sixth rank or the tenth merit rank grade or below.

71 “Secondary subjects,” or jichō or jitei (次丁) were elderly or infirm individuals liable for only half the normal tax burden (cf. Koryō, rōzan no jō 戸令老残條). Ryō no gige adds that adjunct subjects selected for signal fire service were to be treated as regular subjects, and assigned in the same numbers. That is, their numbers were not doubled (or their duty hours halved) in deference to their otherwise lower tax liability.

72 Ryō no gige elaborates that two men were to be assigned to each watch. That is, the four men assigned to each signal fire were to serve in rotating two-man teams.

73 25 ho (歩) is equal to about 45 meters. Ryō no gige explains that the intent behind this regulation was so that the number of signal fires lit at each location could be clearly distinguished by the watchmen at the next station in the chain.
Regulations Concerning Flame-Producing Fuel [Kako no jō 火炬條]

Fuel for producing flames shall be constructed with a core of dried reed wrapped with dried grass and bound together with thick pine torches. Both types of fuel\(^\text{74}\) shall be stored in bundles of ten or more pieces on shelves within huts, in order to protect them from rain.

Regulations Concerning Preparation & Storage of Smoke Signal Fuel [Hōen chobi no jō 放煙貯備條]

Smoke signals shall be produced by burning mugwort, straw and fresh grass together. Caution shall be taken in storing these materials, so that they are not accidently ignited and spread into wildfires.

Regulations Concerning Response Fires [Ôkatō no jō 応火筒條]

Signal fires from the east shall be answered by directing the mouth of the firebox toward the west. Signal fires from the west shall be answered by directing the mouth of the firebox to the east. Signals to the north or south shall be handled in this same manner.

Regulations Concerning Smoke Signals in Daylight [Hiru hōen no jō 白日放煙條]

Whether releasing smoke signals in daylight or lighting beacon fires at night, watchmen shall first look to the rear of the firebox, to ensure there is no confusion, prior to responding.\(^\text{75}\) Should there be clouds or fog during daylight that make it difficult to see the smoke well, a runner shall be dispatched to the adjacent signal fire\(^\text{76}\) to clarify and report the signal. When the fog has broken, smoke signals shall be released in accord with the statutes. No other fires shall be lit within two leagues of the location of a signal fire.\(^\text{77}\)

\(^{74}\) That is, fuel for both fires and smoke signals.

\(^{75}\) That is, signal fire attendants should first look carefully at the incoming signals, to be sure that they are seeing and reading them correctly.

\(^{76}\) That is, the next fire station in the chain leading back toward the capital.

\(^{77}\) That is, area residents were forbidden to build fires for cooking or other ordinary purposes within an eight-kilometer radius of a signal fire location, in order to avoid the possibility of a campfire being mistaken for
Regulations Concerning Lighting of Signal Fires [Hōchō no jō 放烽條]

Should signal fires be lit by mistake, the station from which the erroneous signal originates shall lose no time in reporting the incident to the appropriate provincial officials. Once the true situation becomes known, a rapid messenger shall be dispatched to report this to the Council of State.

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78 Ryō no gige clarifies this to include both the lighting of too many or too few fires in response to an incoming signal, and the lighting of fires in response to ordinary “fires set by people or wildfires.”

79 Ryō no gige explains that the provisions of this regulation differ from those of the preceding regulation because, “when a signal fire has been lit and the adjacent station fails to answer within a half hour, no great harm has as yet been done; thus the situation may be discussed with the adjacent station, and no rapid messenger need be dispatched.” But when a station sends the wrong responding signal, lighting too few fires, or “when it lights its beacons erroneously in response to campfires or wildfires . . . the damage is already profound,” calling for a rapid messenger to be posted to the capital immediately.