
ANONYMOUS INFORMERS:

Strangle in Season

Any person who addresses and presents an information and complaint to an officer of government, containing direct criminal charges against a particular individual, without having inserted therein his (the informant's) proper name and family name, shall, although the charges should prove true, be punished with death, by being strangled at the usual period.

Whenever any such anonymous information or complaint is discovered, it shall be immediately burned or otherwise destroyed; and if the person who accidentally finds such a document, instead of so doing, presents it to a magistrate or some other officer of government, he shall be punished with 80 blows.

Any officer of government who, nevertheless, takes upon himself to act upon any such anonymous information and complaint, shall be punishable with 100 blows;

and no person, whether accused justly or not, shall be liable to be in any case convicted or punished on the ground of anonymous charges.

Every officer of government who has unlawfully acted as aforesaid, shall likewise be obliged to make a compensation of ten ounces of silver to each of the persons whom, on account of anonymous charges, he may have summoned to his tribunal.

Section CCCXXXIII of the 1740 edition of Manchu China's law code, the Ta-Tsing-Leu-Lee, the fundamental law from about 1644, the date the Manchu came to power, until 1912. The Manchu law was taken from the code of the Ming (1368-1644), which was based on the code of the Han (202 B.C.-220 A.D.). The Han had taken and expanded the Chin (225-210 B.C.) code. Contributed by John M. Seus, Washington, D.C.