

TŌSHŌ DAIGONGEN SHŪ: A RELIGIOUS SOURCE OF SHOGUNAL
LEGITIMACY IN EARLY MODERN JAPAN

by

IAN BLAISE CIPPERLY

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Student: Ian Blaise Cipperly

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This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in the Department of History by:

Jeff Hanes	Chairperson
Ina Asim	Member
Mark Unno	Member

and

Scott L. Pratt	Dean of the Graduate School
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Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Ian Blaise Cipperly

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Japan's early modern period (1568-1868) achieved a break from the violent political and social upheaval of the preceding Warring States period (1467-1568). The return to a stable and more centralized rule was made possible by the development and implementation of an emerging politico-religious trend, in which powerful leaders were posthumously apotheosized and worshiped as tutelary deities. Ieyasu, the first of the Tokugawa shoguns, was deified and venerated at the Tōshōgū Shrine in Nikkō, and the politico-religious movement that was propagated by Ieyasu's descendants became a central tool for the government's legitimacy. Because Ieyasu's cult was the only source of ideological legitimacy that was exclusive to the Tokugawa, the sources of Tokugawa success can be found by examining the development of the Nikkō shrine and its accompanying religious movement.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Ian Blaise Cipperly

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene
University of California, Berkeley
Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan

DEGREES AWARDED:

Bachelor of Arts, 2011, University of California, Berkeley

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Early modern Japan
Japanese Religions
Political and intellectual history

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Teaching Fellow, University of Oregon, 2014-2016

History Guild Co-President, University of Oregon, 2015-2016

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (summer) 2015

University of Oregon Graduate Teaching Fellowship 2014-2016

U.C. Berkeley Departmental Honors, High Honors 2011

U.C. Berkeley College of Letters and Science, Dean's List 2011

Benjamin A. Gillman International Scholarship Award 2009

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Prologue

The Approach to Nikkō Tōshōgū

The rain had finally stopped. It was my last day in Nikkō, and while the showers had not kept me from venturing out to visit the Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines, museums, and books shops each day for the previous week, I was excited to enjoy at least one day without an umbrella. I arose at six to bathe with the other guests at the inn and then had breakfast served in my room, as is the custom. As I sat on the woven reed *tatami* mats eating small grilled fish, slippery fermented beans, and various pickled mountain vegetables, I looked out the window at the wooded hillside that was finally soaking in the sun and wondered how different my experience would have been as a pilgrim visiting Nikkō in the seventeenth century. I left in a hurry after eating, apprehensive about the rain returning, but daring to decline the umbrella offered by the kimono-clad matron on my way through the exit curtain. I was off to spend one more day at the main Tōshōgū shrine and to walk the same tree-lined avenue tread by daimyo lords, foreign embassies, shogunal processions, and tourists for the past four centuries.

Nikkō is home to the Tōshōgū Shrine complex, the spiritual and geographic center of the first Tokugawa Shogun's cult, and home to his deified spirit. This syncretic cult, a mix of Buddhist and Shinto beliefs and rituals, had been used to bolster the ideological legitimacy and longevity of the Tokugawa clan. The effect had been remarkable as it aided the Tokugawa in implementing a system of rule that witnessed the

end of the Warring States period and that ushered in two and a half centuries of peace. Foreign dignitaries and regional barons alike had come to worship the Daigongen and praise his legacy of peace and prosperity.

Nikkō is located one hundred and twenty-five kilometers due north of Tokyo. The Tōshōgū complex is nestled in a series of forested mountains, making for a comfortable climate in the often-oppressive heat of eastern Japan's summers. Rivers and waterfalls adorn the wooded slopes like glistening jewels, ornamenting the forest that shelters numerous temples and shrines, some of which date back to the Nara period (710-794). The constant sound of running water, coupled with the soft ringing of glass wind chimes, imbues the shaded slopes with an otherworldly feeling.

Leaving my inn, I take the same path that pilgrims had been walking for four hundred years. Starting at the bottom of the valley, I pass the famed Shinkyō bridge, its lacquered vermilion wood arching elegantly over the turbulent Daiya river. The blood hued bridge is restricted from public use, just as it was in the Edo period (1603-1868). After crossing the river on an adjacent bridge, the ascent to the shrine complex becomes steep, requiring a series of staircases to guide visitors to the lower precincts of the Shrine. These stairs, like the rest of the shrine, are bordered by colossal cryptomeria trees, known here as *sugi*, and exalted as the national tree and religious symbol. In fact, Nikkō is home to the world's longest tree lined boulevard: the *sugi* avenue. The *sugi* seem to stand watch, sentinels of the spirits housed in and around Tōshōgū.

Eventually, the stairs give way to a straight, pitched path. The sudden appearance of this direct lane leading up the mountain to the temple gate is jarring, and forces the visitor's attention ahead to the subject of veneration, the deified shogun. The combination

of climbing from the river, the sounds of rushing water and chimes, and the two-hundred-foot-tall *sugi* trees all serve to remind visitors how small and insignificant they are. I think of the lords, bannermen, and pilgrims who visited this shrine in the formative years of the *bakufu*. Given the religiosity of the time, traversing the path to the Shrine would have been a sacred experience in its own right. Then, my thoughts shift to the foreign dignitaries from the Korean peninsula and the Okinawan islands who trod the same path over three and a half centuries ago. We know from their diaries that they were coerced to travel from Edo to Nikkō in order to be seen publicly venerating the deified shogun. Their experiences would have been very different in nature from those worshipping the shogun, but the splendid architecture and unusually vibrant colors of Tōshōgū surely impressed even the most recalcitrant of visitors.

The winding stairs leading from the Shinkyō bridge give way to the straight and cobbled slope directly under a massive granite *torii* gate. Visitors ascending the now straight path next come to the impressive Niomon gate. This gate, painted in the same bright red as the Shinkyō bridge and heavily gilded in gold leaf, demarcates the boundary between the secular world and the sacred outer shrine grounds. Visitors passing through the Niomon gate then proceed west, and subsequently north, through the elaborately decorated stables and storehouses. The path is lined by tens of large, free-standing stone lanterns dedicated to the shogun's spirit by various domainal lords. After winding through these intricately decorated structures, visitors come to the most ornate and impressive structure in Nikkō: The Yomeimon gate.

The Yomeimon gate was as far as commoners were allowed to proceed during the early years of the *bakufu*. Perhaps this explains why such effort was put into creating this

impressive structure: to awe the masses who congregated here during festivals and pilgrimages. This massive gate is not only elaborately carved, but is also painted and gilded in bright reds, blues, greens, and gold. Images of dragons, lions, and the legendary sage kings of China are sculpted in relief and painted with incredible detail. Commoners viewing the gate were meant to think of the shogun and his descendants as the contemporary embodiment of the sage kings referenced by Confucius—wise and benevolent rulers. The bright colors and intricate carvings, quite unusual at the time, served to separate the Tokugawa shoguns from the mundane world of common men with splendor and spectacle.

Introduction

The Nikkō Tōshōgū Shrine was constructed in preparation for the posthumous deification of the first Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu (1543-1616). The initial complex was completed just before the first anniversary of his death, in 1617.¹ The shrine, and the religious movement that was founded there, would become a central tool used to foster the ideological legitimacy of the early shogunate. For, although Tokugawa dominance was achieved largely through threat or perpetration of violence, the early Tokugawa shoguns sought alternative sources of authority. The violence of the preceding Warring States period (1467-1600), which acted as the principal arbiter of political power at the time, was also the primary source of political and military instability. During this time of decentralized rule, military might superseded traditional sources of authority based on

1. Naohiro Asao, *Sakoku* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1975), 171.

titles, lineage, or religious tradition. The Tokugawa sought to reverse the politico-military trend of the Warring States period, which historian Andrew E. Goble describes as “a transition from a reliance on the force of authority to a reliance on the authority of force.”² Accordingly, the early Tokugawa leaders sought the stabilization of their regime and the permanent establishment of the Tokugawa clan as the rulers of the Japanese Archipelago by eliminating alternate arbiters of violence. It was natural for the Tokugawa to seek ways to strengthen their claim to power that minimized the political instability that often accompany violence. One of the ways that the Tokugawa sought to curtail violence was by reestablishing a politico-religious ideology that would provide a non-violent source of legitimacy. In other words, the cult centered on Ieyasu became a source of religious and ideological legitimacy so that the Tokugawa could bring an end to the political instability of the Warring States period.

Last of the three great unifiers of Japan, Ieyasu sought to establish a new political and social order. His government, known as the Tokugawa *bakufu*, presided over a federation of some two hundred and fifty semi-autonomous domains known as *han*. The system of government, known as *bakuhan taisei*, has been referred to alternately as either “centralized feudalism³”—for its similarities to the system of governance of medieval Europe in which land was bestowed by lord to vassal in exchange for service—or, “federalist”—a term used by historians Mary Berry and Conrad Totman to describe

2. Andrew Edmund Goble, “War and Injury: The Emergence of Wound Medicine in Medieval Japan,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 60, no. 3 (2005): 297–338, doi:10.1353/mni.2005.0035, 297.

3. Peter Duus author, *Feudalism in Japan.*, Studies in World Civilization (New York, Knopf, 1969), 85.

both Toyotomi Hideyoshi's unification government and Ieyasu's bakufu, respectively.⁴ These terms are useful in a generic sense, as the Tokugawa *bakufu*, while acting as the highest military and political authority in the land, left the governing and judicial enforcement within the various *han* to the regional lords known as daimyo.

The *bakuhan* system, which would come to political and institutional maturity under the third Tokugawa shogun and grandson of Ieyasu, Iemitsu (1604-1651), was largely the continuation of institutional innovations and politico-religious ideology implemented by the first two great unifiers, Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1582). Under the first three Tokugawa shoguns, the most important institutional policies used to exercise dominance over the daimyo were the seizing of lands, or attainder; the implementation of the *buke shohatto*, or codes of conduct for the recently differentiated warrior class; and *sankin kōtai*, known as the alternate attendance system. Of course, there were other instruments of control, including a hierarchical restructuring of baronial lords, dominance of early domestic economic policy, and, nominally exclusive control of international trade. However, even these institutional systems shared a similar goal with the earlier mentioned political and social measures: the *bakufu* sought to contain and dominate the social elites of early modern Japan—first and foremost, the daimyo and their *bushi* warriors, and then, to a lesser extent, the imperial court and religious orders. Because of the top down nature of *bakuhan taisei*, the early *bakufu* was primarily concerned with governing the daimyo while allowing the daimyo, in turn, to govern their retainers and the commoners of non-Tokugawa *han*.

4. Mary E. Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982), chap. 6. Conrad Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1967), 242.

Although the *bakufu* used a variety of institutional policies to dominate the daimyo, the early shoguns also sought other sources of political and social legitimacy. Among these other sources were various ideologies that came from Shinto and Buddhist traditions. In particular, the *bakufu* would utilize the religious movement founded at Nikkō Tōshōgū to raise the status of the Tokugawa house above the daimyo and imperial court.

The use of religion to legitimize rule in Japan was not new to the Edo period. Religion has been used for political legitimacy on the Japanese archipelago since the earliest recorded times. Predating Japanese records, the *History of Wei* (ca. 297) reported the first named ruler of the Japanese archipelago to be a shaman called Pimiko. The Chinese chronicler went as far as to state that Pimiko had bewitched the people, clearly indicating a religious or otherworldly source of her political power and authority.⁵ The earliest indigenous record from Japan, the *Kojiki* (712), claimed divine descent for the imperial family.⁶ This claim was again forwarded and sophisticatedly enhanced by courtier Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293-1354) in his chronicle, the *Jinnō Shōtōki* (1339).⁷ As will be illustrated in the following chapter, although the authority of power superseded the power of authority during the Sengoku period, there were various religious

5. William Theodore De Bary et al., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, Introduction to Asian Civilizations (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 6.

6. David John Lu compiler, *Sources of Japanese History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), 1-19.

7. Chikafusa Kitabatake, *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns: Jinnō Shōtōki of Kitabatake Chikafusa*, Translations from the Oriental Classics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

developments during this time that laid fertile ground for the reemergence of religion as a source of transcendent authority not necessarily reliant on violence. Tōshōgū was the pinnacle of these developments, and served as a source of Tokugawa legitimacy until the demise of the *bakufu*.

While there has been some discussion of Tōshōgū as a source of ideological legitimacy, this religious movement has been largely understudied when one considers the importance placed on it by the leaders of the early *bakufu*. This oversight can be attributed to one fact: the emphasis placed on Neo-Confucianism in the discussions of public ideology in Tokugawa Japan.

Before exploring the reasons for this focus on Neo-Confucianism, it is necessary first to explore the meaning of ideology as it is used in this study. Conrad Totman defines ideology as “a coherent rationale for the established order.”⁸ However, such a definition precludes competing ideologies as well as ideologies seeking to form new sources of political and social legitimacy. In his chapter, “What is Ideology?” cultural theorist Terry Eagleton points out that there are many definitions for ideology, and that, because ideologies grow out of different circumstances and can have varying goals, the myriad definitions of ideology are not always compatible. Still, from Eagleton’s list of sixteen commonly used definitions of ideology, several serve to clarify the type of ideology that was propagated as Tōshōgū developed:

- (1) A body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class;
- (2) Ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power;

8. Conrad D. Totman, *Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

- (3) False ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power;
- (4) That which offers a position for a subject;
- (5) Forms of thought motivated by social interests;
- (6) Socially necessary illusion;
- (7) The medium in which conscious social actors make sense of their world;
- (8) The indispensable medium in which individuals live out their relations to the social structure.⁹

All of these definitions accurately describe the roles that Tōshōgū would come to play as a source of political, military, and social legitimacy. To be clear, Tōshōgū was not the only ideological tool used by the *bakufu*, although it was one of the most important and longest lasting.

Ideology can be viewed as one side of a metaphorical coin that is required for the creation and maintenance of a government. The other side of this coin is comprised of institutional controls, such as the previously mentioned regulations and edicts issued by the *bakufu*. Philosopher Louis Althusser calls these two sides of this coin “Ideological” and “Repressive.” A government will always have some aspect of both sides of this coin, but the “Ideological” and “Repressive”—that is to say, the ideological and institutional—characteristics are not often equally utilized to maintain the government. A government is either more reliant on institutions or on ideology, although both will always be present to some degree. As Althusser states, “Every State Apparatus, whether Repressive or Ideological, ‘functions’ both by violence and by ideology...the (Repressive) State Apparatus functions massively and predominantly *by repression* (including physical

9. Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London ; New York: Verso, 1991).

repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology...In the same way, but inversely, it is essential to say that for their part the Ideological State Apparatuses function massively and predominantly *by ideology*, but they also function secondarily by repression.”¹⁰ Furthermore, I contend that the “repressive” and “ideological” are not fixed in proportion relative to one another. The Tokugawa *bakufu* began as a “Repressive” government with its focus on institutional controls. But, as these controls became established, the *bakufu* began to focus more on ideology as a source of legitimacy and maintenance of authority. The first two Tokugawa shoguns personally fought in battles in order to maintain *bakufu* dominance. The third shogun, Iemitsu, never fought in battle himself, although he did have to suppress the Shimabara Rebellion in 1638. Still, as the third chapter of this study will show, Iemitsu was even more concerned with ideology than his father or grandfather, even as he also formally established the institutions introduced by his predecessors. Therefore, it might be said that from the inception of the *bakufu* in 1603 until the middle of the century, the *bakufu* shifted from a primarily “Repressive” government to a more “Ideological” governing apparatus.

To date, ideology has been largely explored within the context of Tokugawa Japan by intellectual historians. And, since Neo-Confucianism was admittedly the most dominant expression of intellectual currents in Tokugawa Japan, it was only natural that there be a focus by intellectual historians on Neo-Confucianism to the exclusion of other earlier sources of ideological legitimacy.

This fixation on Neo-Confucianism began with the earliest intellectual historians: the modernists. Historian Samuel Hideo Yamashita defines the modernists as those

10. Louis Althusser, *Essays on Ideology* (London: Verso, 1984), 19.

historians focusing on the history of popular thought and influential thinkers through the lens of structuralism, and who often imposed a western perspective on Japanese history. This necessarily led to a focus on Japanese westernization or modernization. Because these scholars viewed the Meiji Restoration as the watershed moment in Japanese history, they necessarily focused on the latter half of the Tokugawa period and onward. According to Yamashita, “the first scholars to work on early modern thinkers were interested mainly in those whose ideas fed into the Meiji Restoration and in what happened afterward—as the works of Robert Bellah, Richard Chang, Albert Craig, Ronald Dore, David Earl, Harry Harootunian, E. H Norman, and Herschel Webb reveal.¹¹” Of course, the intellectual historians Masao Maruyama and Tetsuo Najita can be included in this modernity-focused group as well.

There has been continuing exploration of Tokugawa Japan’s intellectual history in more recent years and much of it has dealt with ideology promoted in defense of *bakufu* authority. Perhaps influenced by the increasing popularity of social histories with a more local focus, as opposed to theory based histories attempting to fit the square peg of European models into the round hole of the Japanese experience, more recent scholars have examined Edo period ideologues as men contextualized within their own time and place. This trend was also bolstered by the emergence of postmodernism, which cautions us to accept the entirely subjective nature of writing history. Kate Nakai’s *Shogunal Politics: Arai Hakuseki and the Premises of Tokugawa Rule*, Samuel Yamashita’s *Master Sorai’s Responsals: an Annotated Translation of Sorai Sensei Tōmonsho*, and Peter

11. Samuel Yamashita, “Reading the New Tokugawa Intellectual Histories,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 22, no. 1 (1996): 2.

Nosco's *Edo Shakai to Kokugaku* are examples of works that have done an admirable job of examining their subjects without forcing contrived theoretical frameworks onto them. Still, if we look at when their protagonists contributed to the intellectual currents of Tokugawa Japan, it becomes clear that all of these figures came to prominence after the *bakufu* had been established and was in many ways already in its decline. Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725), Ōgyū Sorai (1666-1728), as well as the Nativist school popularized in part by Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), all wrote their works after the *Genroku* period (1688-1704).

In some ways, the *bakufu* reached its zenith under the third shogun, Iemitsu. The first three Tokugawa shoguns, Ieyasu, Hidetada, and Iemitsu, all exercised supreme authority over the shogunate. It was from the fourth shogun forward that the singular authority of the shogun began to suffer the effects of entropy as power began to gradually be shared by others. Conrad Totman's chronological division of the Tokugawa *bakufu* into three phases highlights this gradual dissipation of authority from center to periphery: "1603-1666, shogunal rule; 1666-1787, grand chamberlain rule; 1787-1843, perfection of the chief councillor [sic] rule."¹² Furthermore, while the *Genroku* period is often called the golden age of the Edo period, by this time the *bakufu*'s authority was waning in other ways. Direct shogunal control of domestic economies had been continually weakened and possession of wealth had begun to shift from the *bushi* to the *chōnin*, or city folk.¹³ All of this trouble is what drove the Neo-Confucians to break from orthodoxy in order to make

12. Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu*, 230.

13. Conrad Totman, *Early Modern Japan* (London: University of California Press, 1993), 101-103.

sense of the inability of the *bakufu* to maintain social and political norms. And, while this may correctly imply that the early years of the *bakufu* did not give birth to a torrent of intellectual currents, that in no way means that there were no other forms of legitimizing ideology being brought to bear by the early shoguns, including Tōshōgū.

Doubtless, there will be those who point to the orthodox school of Neo-Confucianism of the Hayashi family as proof that the *bakufu* was invested in and actively utilizing Neo-Confucianism from the onset of the Tokugawa period. But the facts do not bear this out. According to historian Herman Ooms, “the early Tokugawa bakufu under the first four shoguns did not “respond” to Neo-Confucianism: there existed neither privileged institutional support for it, nor any directives from above for the imposition of a well formulated ideology.¹⁴” A brief comparison of shogunal treatment of the early scions of Neo-Confucianism with that of Buddhist practitioners and institutions highlights early *bakufu* attitudes towards Neo-Confucianism on the one hand, and, Buddhism on the other. Suffice it to say that the early shoguns’ actions displayed great support of, and interest in, Buddhist and Shinto platforms of legitimacy but little or no interest in Neo-Confucianism.

In 1614 Ieyasu refused the request of Neo-Confucian scholar, Hayashi Razan, to open a school to be run by his teacher, Fujiwara Seika. In fact, only in 1630, and after twenty-five years as service as a clerk of the shogunate, was Razan given 200 ryō to open a small school for some thirty students.¹⁵ Compare this to Iemitsu’s gift of 500,000 ryō to

14. Peter Nosco, *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 35.

15. *Ibid*, 33.

Tenkai, founder of the Nikkō Tōshōgū—a full seventh of the *bakufu*'s treasury.¹⁶ Tenkai was also earlier granted 50,000 ryō and construction materials for the establishment of Kan'eiji temple north of Edo.¹⁷ Clearly, the early Tokugawa shoguns placed a great deal of importance on the ideas being presented by the priest, Tenkai. Indeed, as Ooms points out regarding Tenkai and Nikkō Tōshōgū, “From the beginning, he was far more influential than Razan, who had been hired three years earlier, and contributed more than Razan ever did to “legitimize” Tokugawa rule. If anyone deserves to be called a bakufu ideologue, it is he.¹⁸” Here, Ooms is pointing to Tenkai's creation of the Tōshōgū shrine and its accompanying politico-religious movement as the height of early *bakufu* ideological legitimacy.

The above discussion speaks implicitly to the importance of Tōshōgū. First, while Neo-Confucianism would come to dominate popular and intellectual thought of the later Edo period, it was not particularly influential in the formative years of the *bakufu*. Second, the later prominence of Neo-Confucianism does not imply that there were not other sources of authority being sought out by the early rulers of the Edo period. Rather, the early shoguns sought nonviolent sources of political legitimacy in religion, a point that will be expanded upon in the next chapter. Finally, as the *bakufu* had in some ways come to maturity under the third shogun, Iemitsu, and in other ways by the *Genroku* period, it is unfortunate that there has been a dearth of investigatory studies into the non-

16. Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu*, 77, 82.

17. Nosco, *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, 32.

18. Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology Early Constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 173.

institutional sources of early *bakufu* authority. This study explores Tōshōgū in this light and tackles the following questions: How and why was Tōshōgū embraced as a means of politico-religious legitimacy? In what ways did Tōshōgū evolve under the first three shoguns? And, how was Tōshōgū specifically used as a tool of political legitimization?

The thesis of each of the following chapters is in answer to these questions. In chapter two, the reasoning and agency behind the foundation of Tōshōgū will be explored. It will be made clear that the initial agency providing impetus for the creation of the Nikkō shrine lay in the machinations of the Tendai priest, Tenkai. Tenkai, who served as advisor to the first four Tokugawa shoguns, embraced Ieyasu's desire to be deified with gusto. Chapter three explores the architectural aggrandizement, proliferation of satellite shrines, and subsequent pilgrimages to the main shrine in Nikkō that took place under the third shogun, Iemitsu. Iemitsu had various reasons to further embrace alternate sources of *bakufu* legitimacy, and his focus on Tōshōgū marked a shift in the driving force behind the shrine from Tenkai to the office of the shogun. This shift in agency enabled the completion of the costliest and most elaborate construction project of the first half of the Seventeenth Century. Finally, the fourth chapter explores just how the Nikkō shrine was utilized as a tool for political legitimacy. Specifically, Iemitsu used the shrine to build up *bakufu* prestige by coercing the imperial court to recognize the shrine as being equal to the imperial shrines at Ise. Furthermore, Iemitsu and Tenkai pressured the court to create the *Tōshōsha Engi*, a document that forwarded a fabricated history of the Tokugawa and further strengthened the legitimacy of the *bakufu*. Finally, Iemitsu also compelled the Korean imperial court to send embassies bearing gifts to Nikkō. These

public processions were meant to elevate the perceived international standing of the *bakufu* in the eyes of the Daimyo, imperial court, and commoners of early modern Japan.

CHAPTER II
THE GENESIS OF TŌSHŌGŪ

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten;
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die:
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read,
And tongues to be your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead;
You still shall live (such virtue hath my pen)
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

—William Shakespeare, Sonnet eighty-one

*Genna 2/4/17*¹⁹

*It was a gloomy spring morning in Suruga province, and the mood at Sunpu castle was dark.*²⁰ *Ieyasu, first of the Tokugawa shoguns and last of the great unifiers, was dead. He passed in the presence of his successor and son, Hidetada, who had journeyed from Edo to be with his father during his long illness. Just as three concentric walls protected Sunpu castle, three types of free standing folding screens shielded Ieyasu within his sickroom. The outermost screens of hardwood latticework enclosed the next ring of lightweight bamboo screens. The third and innermost partition displayed black*

19. June 1st, 1616.

20. Conrad Totman, *Tokugawa Ieyasu: Shogun* (Tokyo: Heian International, 1988), 188.

ink sumi-e style painting on paper, reflecting the subdued taste of its late owner. Ladies in waiting now reverently lowered these screens, which had been placed to keep drafts from the ailing lord.²¹ The room would have been quiet, save the muted sounds of the servants moving about, feet sliding along the tatami mat floor. Hidetada sat quietly on the tatami, breathing in the heavy incense wafting from the brazier next to his father's body, and likely thought of how best to honor the varied commands Ieyasu had issued during his final weeks. Perhaps Hidetada found it peculiar how this somber scene belied the constant bustle that had accompanied Ieyasu's protracted illness.



*Fig. 1. A depiction of Ieyasu's death at Sunpu from the 1640 Engi scroll. Shigemi Komatsu and Mitsuharu Kanzaki, *Tōshōsha Engi* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1994), 73.*

The sick chamber had been the locus of frantic activity these past three months. Ieyasu had been hawking in the wooded hills surrounding the castle town of Sunpu near the end of the first month when he first fell ill.²² The symptoms—a tight chest, fatigue—

21. Shigemi Komatsu and Mitsuharu Kanzaki, *Tōshōsha Engi* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1994), 73.

22. First month of the second year of Genna (March 8, 1616), according to the lunar calendar.

suggested he likely suffered a mild heart attack.²³ Ieyasu, who had taken the title of *ōgoshō*, or retired shogun, upon his official abdication was still the de facto ruler, and news of his illness spread quickly. The castle town surrounding Sunpu filled, and Ieyasu, whose illness wavered in severity, held countless meetings, signed documents, and sought counsel from political and religious leaders.²⁴ The imperial court had even sent a delegation to award Ieyasu the title of imperial prime minister.²⁵

At the time of his death, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) was the preeminent warlord of the Japanese archipelago, and for two and a half centuries his heirs would go on to hold the highest post afforded a warrior, shogun. There is disagreement among scholars over how much credit Ieyasu deserves for bringing peace and a semblance of unity to the archipelago. The notion that Ieyasu's successes were the result of the labors of the two preceding hegemon, Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, is reflected in the often repeated saying: Nobunaga pounded the *mochi* for the rice cake, Hideyoshi baked it in fire, and Ieyasu sat back and ate it. Although it is true that Nobunaga and Hideyoshi did much to remove or suppress rival sources of authority as well as establish institutional innovations that moved the archipelago towards stability and a more centralized rule, neither hegemon was able to perpetuate their rule beyond a generation. Ieyasu, on the other hand, was able to build upon evolving political and religious institutions to ensure the longevity of his lineage.

23. Totman, *Tokugawa Ieyasu, Shogun*, 187.

24. Tetsuo Owada, *Shousaizusetsu Ieyasu-Ki* (Tokyo: Shinjin Butsuoraisha, 2010), 82.

25. Totman, *Tokugawa Ieyasu, Shogun*, 187.

Ieyasu was acutely aware of the transient nature of authority. Born during the Warring States period, which was epitomized by the phenomenon of *gekokujojō*, or the low overthrowing their superiors, Ieyasu had been helpless to stop his lord Nobunaga's assassination by the treacherous general, Akechi Mitsuhide, at Honnoji in 1582. Sixteen years later, Ieyasu himself would betray both his oath and Hideyoshi's son by laying siege to Osaka Castle in order to eliminate the challenge posed to Tokugawa authority by the young Toyotomi. This episode was likely disheartening for Ieyasu as he seemed to have had affection for Toyotomi Hideyori and showed reticence in taking action against the inheritor of the Toyotomi name. Nevertheless, the ambitious machinations of Hideyori's mother, coupled with the growing support of rival daimyo, large numbers of dissatisfied *rōnin*, and the imperial court, forced Ieyasu's hand. After witnessing and participating in these key events so representative of the period, Ieyasu became fixated on the importance of succession.

Ieyasu also had more personal reasons that forced his attention to matters of Tokugawa legacy. Ieyasu's first chosen heir had met with a tragic end. In 1570, after becoming a vassal of Oda Nobunaga, Ieyasu had moved from Okazaki to Hamamatsu. He left his first born son and successor, Nobuyasu, to manage the area and care for Ieyasu's wife of over two decades. Tragically for the immediate future of the Tokugawa line, Nobuyasu was implicated in a seditious plot against Nobunaga, who ordered Ieyasu to deal with the upstart. Ieyasu placed Nobuyasu under house arrest, no doubt trying to find a way out of the predicament. Alas, no escape was found, and a month and a half later, Ieyasu ordered his first son to disembowel himself.²⁶ This incident was not the last time

26. Ibid., 41.

one of Ieyasu's children would die young. Ieyasu's fifth son, Nobuyoshi, died at twenty in 1603. In 1607, two more of Ieyasu's sons, both of whom were promising lords, died. Tadayoshi was the daimyo of Kiyosu and Hideyasu, who was daimyo of Fukui.²⁷ These last two deaths would have made Ieyasu hyperaware of the importance of securing a lasting lineage.

Concerned over the perpetuation of his clan's position, Ieyasu took a number of novel measures. In addition to codifying many of the institutional innovations utilized by the first two unifiers such as the elimination of the landed warrior class, the right to impose attainder, and the issuing of highly restrictive codes of conduct for the warrior class, court, and clergy, Ieyasu also paid special attention to matters of lineage. First, although he maintained all actual authority, Ieyasu abdicated in favor of his son, Hidetada (1579-1632) in 1605, passing the title of shogun to the next Tokugawa after holding the position for only two years. This would ensure that Hidetada would have the guidance of the wizened Ieyasu as well as the loyalty of his supporters. With Ieyasu maintaining de facto political control under the auspices of *ōgoshō*, or retired shogun, the council of elders would be eased into their positions as subordinates to Hidetada. This shrewd maneuver by the first Tokugawa minimized possible resentments from men who had more experience than Hidetada. Ieyasu also proclaimed that Hidetada's son, Iemitsu (1604-1651), would inherit the title of shogun—a decision that ran counter to Hidetada's preference.²⁸ Ieyasu had done what he could to avoid the common occurrence of bloody succession disputes by ensuring the next two generations of Tokugawa rule.

27. Ibid., 141.

28. Owada, *Shousaizusetsu Ieyasu-Ki*, 186.

Next, Ieyasu arranged the regional lords, or *daimyo*, into three categories. Those loyal to Ieyasu at the battle of Sekigahara (1600) were honored as *fudai daimyo*, or hereditary lords. Those who had stood against the victorious Ieyasu and survived—albeit with reduced lands and titles—were known as *tozama daimyo*, or outside lords. Finally, and of particular relevance here, the branch families of the Tokugawa were granted the special status of *shinpan daimyo*, or collateral daimyo. Ieyasu designated these branch families as *shinpan* to serve as a source of heirs to the position of shogun should Ieyasu's main line fail to produce. Ieyasu prudently kept the *shinpan* daimyo and their men far removed from the politics and inner workings of the Tokugawa government, or *bakufu*. This meant that the collateral houses would survive in high standing and be ready to provide an heir if needed, but would be less able to manipulate the circumstances of succession because they were kept separate from the highest levels of government. These three measures, the early passing of the title shogun to Hidetada, the assignment of Iemitsu to the position of third shogun, and the establishment of the *shinpan* daimyo, highlight Ieyasu's preoccupation with ensuring the continuation of his line. But, perhaps recognizing that institutions alone were insufficient to ensure Tokugawa rule, Ieyasu again looked to his predecessors to find novel forms of authority.

Ieyasu sought a source of legitimacy that would transcend the limitations of man-made law and found what he was looking for in the recently emerging politico-religious practice of deification. The Tokugawa patriarch had worriedly observed the deification of his predecessor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and the subsequent proliferation of his cult. The popular movement, centered on the deified Hideyoshi, had spread like wildfire and was only successfully pushed underground after the Tokugawa victory against the late

Hideyoshi's son and his supporters at Osaka in 1615. Ieyasu, and all of the shoguns who followed him, would utilize a religious movement similar to Hideyoshi's to strengthen *bakufu* legitimacy both domestically and abroad. This buttressing of legitimacy would be achieved through a combination of spectacular architecture at Tōshōgū, pageantry surrounding shogunal processions to the Nikkō shrine, the cajoling of foreign embassies into worshiping Ieyasu's deified spirit, and the strong-arming of the imperial court into aggrandizing the formal prestige of Ieyasu's shrine. Ieyasu's cult would be centered on the deified shogun and would be utilized to raise the bakufu's political and social standing above the daimyo, foreign embassies, and even the imperial court.

The story of the rise of the cult of Ieyasu is as complex as the myriad personalities that helped to create it. Indeed, throughout the genesis and evolution of this movement, the top advisers to the shogun would fight over protocol, precedent, and control of this powerful new political tool. Among these top advisers, the rival Buddhist priests Tenkai and Sūden would fight over all aspects of the fledgling cult. From the posthumous name of their deified lord to the geographic and spiritual center of the main shrine, no detail went uncontested as these two clerics maneuvered for power and influence.

Genna 2/4/2

Two weeks prior to Ieyasu's death, Tenkai, Sūden, and the daimyo, Honda Masazumi, attended to the ailing lord in his sickroom at Sunpu Castle. Tenkai had never liked the Zen monk Sūden and was sitting uncomfortably close to him. The two priests not only vied for the attention of their lord, but also competed over the political and religious

territory of the Islands. Sūden, the Rinzaï Zen abbot of Nanzenji in Kyoto, sought to expand his influence eastward into the new military capital of Edo and its surrounds. But this area was Tenkai's. He had been at Kita'in Temple, northwest of Edo, since 1588 and had eventually become abbot there.²⁹ In Tenkai's mind, Kita'in would be the Enryakuji of the east, the religious bastion legitimizing Edo as a center of power just as the Tendai temple complex of Mount Hiei had done for Kyoto before being razed by Nobunaga in 1573.³⁰

Tenkai had settled neatly on the reed mat floor, the golden robes of his Tendai order set off by his dark shawl. He was slender and his face was gaunt, and he sat erectly, the product of his many decades of monastic training. He was also old, much older than his lord, Ieyasu, who lay dying before him. This was Tenkai's eightieth summer, and he would see many more. According to the *Chronicle of Tenshō*, Tenkai had first met Ieyasu in 1590. Hideyoshi had just installed Ieyasu at Edo after crushing the Hōjō Clan at Odawara Castle.³¹ From that point on Tenkai had continued to gain influence in Ieyasu's court and had been given official control of Kita'in as well as Rinnōji by the bakufu in 1613.³² But now, his lord's life was fading, and Tenkai sensed

29. Fumio Tamamuro, *Tenkai-Sūden : Seikai no Dōsha, Nihon no Meisō*, vol. 15 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004), 82.

30. Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton NJ: Princeton Press, 1985), 174.

31. Satoshi Sonehara, *Shinkun Ieyasu no Tanjō to Gongensama*, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2008), 39.

32. Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology*, 174.

both opportunity and danger. There was much to accomplish, and Sūden surely thought the same.



Fig. 2, A depiction of Tenkai giving instruction to Ieyasu from the 1640 *engi* scroll. Shigemi Komatsu and Mitsuharu Kanzaki, *Tōshōsha Engi* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1994), 47.

By the beginning of the fourth month of the lunar calendar one of Ieyasu's retainers recorded that the ōgosho was "very ill; he can no longer eat, is sick and fevered, and it may be said that his passing is imminent."³³ For the next two weeks, the flagging shogun issued a number of instructions to his followers and councilors. Concerning his interment and deification, none was as important, nor the source of more controversy, than his testament recorded by Sūden and witnessed by Tenkai and the daimyo Honda Masazumi. In this pronouncement, Ieyasu revealed his continuing commitment to his family's Pure Land Buddhist roots while also clearly showing his desire to embrace the emerging trend of hegemonic deification for the preservation of legacy. Sūden's diary, the *Honkō Kokushi Nikki*, reads,

33. Soejima Tanetsune, *Honkō Kokushi Nikki*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho-suiju, 1966), 382.

自分が死んだら死体は久能山におさめ、葬礼は増上寺で行ない、位牌を三河の大樹寺に立て、一周忌を過ぎてのち、日光に小さな堂を建てて勸請せよ、そうすれば八州の鎮守となろう、といった。³⁴

When I die, inter my corpse on Mount Kunō, perform the funeral at Zōjō Temple, and erect my funeral placard at Daiju Temple in Mikawa. On the first anniversary, build a small temple hall at Nikkō and invite my spirit to reside there. If you do these things, I will protect the Eight Provinces in perpetuity.

Ieyasu's complex set of instructions was not unusual considering his position as hegemon. This status, coupled with his desire to buttress his family's legacy as rulers, necessitated the spending of ideological capital and the shoring up of traditionally important lineages while also incorporating newer sources of legitimacy found in the emerging trend of deification. Nor was it unusual for Ieyasu to partake in myriad rituals from various Buddhist and Shinto schools.

Ieyasu's more conservative side found expression in the middle section of his testament. Here, the dying shogun admonished his followers to hold his funeral at Zōjōji, the Tokugawa family's Pure Land temple in Edo. He next requested that his *ihai*, or funeral placard, be placed at Daijuji, a Pure Land temple in his Matsudaira clan's homeland, Mikawa. In this way his spirit could be worshiped alongside his other ancestors whose placards were also housed in Daiju temple. While holding the funeral at Zōjōji made sense traditionally and logistically—the Matsudaira clan had long ties with Pure Land Buddhism and a funeral held in Edo would be a grander affair than one

34. Naohiro Asao, *Sakoku* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1975), 271-272.

performed in the backwater of Mikawa—Ieyasu had another reason to honor the traditions of the Matsudaira clan. During his rise to power, Ieyasu had taken the name Tokugawa in favor of his previous surname, Matsudaira. From this point on, Ieyasu claimed imperial descent from the Minamoto clan for the Tokugawa and by extension the Matsudaira, a move designed to legitimize his rule. The Minamoto were not only descendants of the imperial line, but also the only family who had held the title of shogun. The imperial court was happy enough to indulge Ieyasu's pretensions, and had awarded Ieyasu the title of *Genji no Chōja*, or head of the Genji clan, together with the title of shogun.³⁵ By honoring his ancestors who were ostensibly imperial and shogunal decedents, Ieyasu emphasized his story of connection to past military rulers and courtiers.

Ieyasu's more innovative side becomes clear at the beginning and conclusion of his testament. In asking to be interred on Mount Kunō, a coastal site just three miles to the east of Sunpu castle, Ieyasu embraced the trend of Shinto deification, which had emerged from the late medieval Shinto theology of the Yoshida school. The Tokugawa bakufu had seen how powerful this use of religion could be when the followers of his predecessor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, deified their late liege lord. The Toyotomi cult spread quickly among both the warriors and common folk, alarming Ieyasu and prompting him to seize the lands and most of the buildings of the central shrine of Hideyoshi's Toyokuni Cult after the battle of Osaka.³⁶

35. John Whitney Hall, *The Cambridge History of Japan* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 145.

36. Luke Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace: Political Space and Open Secrets in Tokugawa Japan* (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 148.

Ieyasu concludes his testament by commanding that a hall be built north of Edo at Nikkō and that his spirit be invited there, where it should be worshiped. This notion of inviting a spirit, or *kanjō*, follows the trend of the earlier Toyokuni followers, who had similarly invited partitioned portions of Hideyoshi's Hōkoku Daimyōjin *kami* to reside at various shrines. Finally, Ieyasu promises that if his testament is fulfilled he will become a tutelary deity, or *chinja*, and protect the eight provinces. The term used for the eight provinces, *hasshū*, literally denoted the provinces of the Kanto region, but colloquially referred to all of Japan.³⁷

After issuing his last will and testament on the second day of the fourth month Ieyasu had recovered partially and resumed eating and meeting with his advisers. But, from the eleventh day onward, the retired shogun's health began a rapid decline. On the fifteenth of the same month, Hidetada, concerned for his father, summoned the top religious consultants of the *bakufu* to consult on the proper rites of deification.³⁸ Ieyasu had already established a practice of surrounding himself with "men of talent." That is to say, Ieyasu had made a habit of finding the most capable men in their respective fields and elevating them in status while relying on their support and counsel. The two priests who Ieyasu promoted most aggressively were the rivals, Tenkai and Sūden. It was these two men who Hidetada summoned to advise on Ieyasu's instructions. However, Sūden also brought with him Bonshun, who along with his half-brother, Kanemi, was a leading

37. The eight provinces are Sagami, Musashi, Awa, Kazusa, Shimōsa, Hitachi, Kōzuke, and Shimotsuke.

38. John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*, (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press), 149.

figure in Yoshida Shinto and had carried out the ritual deification of Hideyoshi.³⁹ Yoshida Shinto, founded by Yoshida—or Urabe—Kanetomo (1435-1511) sought to create a system of Shinto completely divorced from Buddhism. Of course, Shinto and Buddhism had, by the time of Kanetomo, become so theologically entwined that a true separation was impossible. Still, Kanetomo did make some unique theological changes in his new school of Shinto. Most importantly, Kanetomo inverted the traditional theological arrangement that placed the Bodhisattva in a superior position to the native *kami*. Kanetomo contended that Buddhas were temporary manifestations of the *kami*, and that the native *kami* were original and fundamental.⁴⁰ This inversion of the established relationship between the *kami* and the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, known as *honji suijaku*, was a major theological development and would later influence the Nativist school. Scion of the Yoshida school, Bonshun was already close to Sūden, who had likely already introduced Bonshun to Hidetada. Two days after the meeting between Hidetada and Bonshun, Ieyasu died. The same night, Ieyasu's corpse was taken to the nearby Mount Kunō and prepared for the coming ritual.

The diaries of Bonshun, Sūden, and Tenkai plainly state that Bonshun deified Ieyasu in accordance with Yoshida Shinto ritual.⁴¹ As Tenkai would later record in his chronicle, the *Jigen Daishi Engi*, “A certain Sūden had cajoled Honda Masazumi and had come to an arrangement with a bastard of the Yoshida. Tenkai had not been admitted to

39. Hideo Kuroda, *Hōkoku Saireizu o Yomu*, Kadokawa Sensho, 533 (Tokyo: Kabushiki Kaisha Kadokawa, 2013), 57.

40. Genchi Katō, *The Theological System of Urabe No. Kanetomo*, vol. 28 (The transactions of the Japan Society of London), 147.

41. For a description of the rites see Breen and Teeuwen, *Shinto in History*, 149-50.

the ceremony and hence had not been able to prevent Ieyasu being deified according to Shinto rites.”⁴² The bastard Tenkai referred to was Bonshun, who was, indeed, a bastard and could therefore not carry the Yoshida name nor hold court rank as his father and half-brother did. And, when Tenkai complained that his lord was deified according to Shinto rites, he specifically meant Yoshida Shinto rites, for soon after Bonshun’s ritual on Kunōzan Tenkai would have other ideas about how Ieyasu should have become a tutelary god. Specifically, Tenkai would later insist that Ieyasu had requested to be deified according to Tenkai’s own brand of Shinto, *Sannō Ichijitsu* Shinto. Still, it should not have been surprising to Tenkai that Ieyasu was interred according to Yoshida Shinto rites, as this followed the precedence of Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s earlier deification as Hokoku Daimyōjin by Bonshun and his half-brother, Yoshida Kanemi.⁴³ Still, Tenkai’s dissatisfaction with the situation was made clear in his chronicle, and Sūden and Bonshun’s victory would not be long lived.

Tenkai complained bitterly to Hidetada about the Yoshida rites being used as well as the location of the interment. According to Tenkai, Ieyasu had actually wanted to be buried according to Tenkai’s *Sannō Ichijitsu* rites, to which Ieyasu had been secretly initiated. While there is no evidence to support the former shogun’s initiation to Tenkai’s rites, there is a letter from daimyo Date Masamune stating that, “Ieyasu had decreed...his body should be placed on Kunōzan and that a temple should be built in Nikkō; as soon as this temple would be ready his body should be brought there.”⁴⁴ This letter, found in the

42. Breen and Teeuwen, *Shinto in History*, 153.

43. Adriana Boscaro et al., *Rethinking Japan* (Kent: Japan Library, 1990), 334.

44. Breen and Teeuwen, *Shinto in History*, 147.

history, the *Dai Nihon Shiryō*, is dated Genna 2/4/2, the same day as Ieyasu's testament in Sūden's diary. It is unclear whether it was Masamune's letter or by some other means, but Tenkai did find the ear of Hidetada and succeeded in convincing the second shogun of the superiority of the Tendai Sannō Ichijitsu Shinto rites over those of the Yoshida clan. Among other theological differences with the Yoshida, Tenkai had reverted the *honji suijaku* relationship between *kami* and Buddha, returning supremacy to the Buddhist deities. Perhaps this helped to persuade Hidetada, who would have recognized his father as a devout Buddhist and pupil of Tenkai. This still seems odd, as Tenkai's plan seems to contradict Ieyasu's last will and testament, which only mentions building a small hall at Nikkō and inviting a portion of Ieyasu's spirit to reside there. Still, if Sūden had been favored by Ieyasu, Tenkai was Ieyasu's favorite.

Tenkai had been born a member of the Ashina clan in Aizu. He left home at eleven to travel the Kanto and Kamigata regions seeking knowledge. In addition to studying the Tendai school, Tenkai, then known as Zuifu, also studied the Nara school, Zen, Confucianism, and the Nihongi. Tenkai first met Ieyasu in 1590, although their formal relationship would not begin until 1607. In that year, Ieyasu sent Tenkai on a pilgrimage before formally receiving the priest. From that point onward, Tenkai was showered with titles, lands, and wealth. The Tendai priest would go on to rebuild Enryakuji at Hieizan, and become the head of the entire order. Ieyasu saw Tenkai as more than an adviser. Tenkai became Ieyasu's teacher, and so it is not surprising that Hidetada would be swayed by the Tendai priest.⁴⁵ Tenkai would also go on to advise the first four

45. Sonehara, *Shinkun Ieyasu no tanjō to gongensama*, 39-40.

Tokugawa shoguns, illustrating a longevity to his influence outstripping even that of Sūden.

After Tenkai's theological victory over Sūden and one year after Ieyasu's death, Tenkai had the shogun's corpse exhumed and moved north to Nikkō.⁴⁶ Here Tenkai performed the new set of rituals partially adopted from the *Sannō* Shinto of Mount Hiei. This time Ieyasu was re-deified as Tōshō Daigongen, making him more a Buddhist avatar than a Shinto *kami*, and immediately new shrines devoted to the Daigongen began appearing in rapid succession.

It should be noted that the official stance of Tōshōgū Shrine officials at Nikkō is that the testament recorded by Sūden showed that Ieyasu desired that his corpse be moved from Kunōzan to Nikkō on the anniversary of his death. However, the term *kanjō* had already been used in a similar situation when Hideyoshi's spirit was invited to come to other shrines. Hideyoshi's body was not exhumed; rather, his spirit was partitioned and thought to reside in multiple places at once. Therefore, the moving of Ieyasu's body to Nikkō had less to do with Ieyasu's wishes than it did with Tenkai's ambition. Furthermore, there is no evidence that there was any such sect of Shinto or Buddhism called *Sannō Ichijitsu Shinto* prior to Tenkai's remonstrations—although there was a *Sannō Gongen* worshiped as an avatar on Mount Hiei, the historic and spiritual center of Tenkai's Tendai sect. It seems as though Tenkai invented an amalgamation of Yoshida Shinto and the Tendai sect's version of *ryōbu* Shinto, the syncretic practice of indigenous Shinto alongside Buddhism.

46. Asao, *Sakoku*, 172.

In 1617 the new shrine at Nikkō, named after Ieyasu's Sannō Shinto posthumous name, Tōshō Daigongen, had just been completed.⁴⁷ Here we may have another clue as to why Hidetada decided to side with Tenkai and his possibly fabricated Sannō Ichijitsu Shinto. Under the Yoshida rites which operated with the inverted *honji suijaku*, Ieyasu's tutelary deity's name would have been Daimyōjin, not Daigongen. Daimyōjin was the same Yoshida Shinto name given to Hideyoshi, whose authority had been a threat to the Tokugawa, even in death. Therefore, by taking the Tendai Sannō Shinto name of Tōshō Daigongen rather than the Shinto name of Daimyōjin, Hidetada differentiated himself and his house from the previous hegemon by honoring the traditional arrangement of Buddhist supremacy over Shinto. That the Toyotomi were still viewed as a threat well after Hideyoshi's death was made apparent in Ieyasu's confiscation of most of Hideyoshi's Hokoku shrine in 1615. Following his father's lead, Hidetada confiscated the rest of the buildings in 1620.⁴⁸

There is another interpretation of Hidetada's decision as well. If we accept that all involved in these maneuverings were religious, we must think about how the Tokugawa and their followers would have viewed the protective power of Hideyoshi's tutelary deity, Hokoku Daimyōjin. In 1615 Ieyasu eliminated Hideyoshi's heir and routed the Toyotomi followers at the battle of Osaka. Here, Tenkai would have had another powerful argument against the use of the Yoshida Shinto name, Daimyōjin. The godhead of the Yoshida had failed to protect the Toyotomi clan and was therefore an unfit model to serve the relatively young Tokugawa clan. In this way, Tenkai was able to argue for

47. Ibid, 171.

48. Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace*, 142.

the superiority of his Sannō Shinto over the Yoshida school—a natural inclination to have for a Tendai priest.

A Matter of Precedent

To better understand why Ieyasu sought to emulate Hideyoshi's deification it is helpful to examine the historical context and similar goals held by preceding men-turned-tutelary deities. Despite the fact that the deification of dead men, and even some living men for that matter, had become common by the mid-Tokugawa period (1603-1868), it was still a novel practice in the early seventeenth century. According to historian Wim Boot, in preceding centuries, there had been “only a handful of cases” of the deification of men, and that includes instances that are most likely folk tales—the emperor Ōjin becoming Hachiman—as well as examples where a man was deified simply to keep his angry spirit placated, as in the case of Sugawara Michizane.⁴⁹ Boot goes even further to posit that the worship of deified ancestors at a tomb was a later trend, which only came about in the medieval era.⁵⁰

The earliest historical case of tutelary deification is that of Nakatomi no Kamatari (614-669), who would become the first of the Fujiwara line. Kamatari was born into a sub-branch of the Nakatomi clan, which maintained the Kashira shrine.⁵¹ The members of the main branch of the Nakatomi clan had traditionally served as intermediaries between

49. Breen and Teeuwen, *Shinto in History*, 144.

50. Boscaro, Gatti, and Raveri, *Rethinking Japan*, 337.

51. Encho Tamura, *Fujiwara no Kamatari* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobo, 1966), 26.

the native deities known as *kami* and the court. Kamatari, who had come to court in his youth, went on to spearhead a *coup d'état* against the ruling Soga clan.⁵² From this point on, Kamatari served as the unofficial regent and was the architect of the Taika Reform. This reform pushed to increase central bureaucratic control over the numerous semi-autonomous clans.⁵³ Nakatomi Kamatari was awarded First Rank and given the clan name of Fujiwara on his deathbed by emperor Tenji in 669.⁵⁴ According to the Tonomine Shrine chronicle, the *Tonomine Engi* by Ichiji Kaneyoshi (1402-1481), Katamari's dying words were, "If you place my grave on this spot, my children and grandchildren will rise to high rank."⁵⁵ However, it was not until long after his death that Kamatari was deified. The centuries-dead Fujiwara was turned into a godhead by ex-emperor Go-Hanazono (1428-1464) and given the posthumous Shinto name Tōnomine Daimyōjin. Here we see the same name later used by the Yoshida to deify Toyotomi Hideyoshi as Hōkoku Daimyōjin.

There were two reasons that Ieyasu might have wished to emulate Kamatari. First, seeking to create a more centralized and authoritarian government, Kamatari initiated the Taika Reform. Similarly, Ieyasu had completed the task of unifying the Japanese archipelago creating the most powerful government in Japanese history. That the Taika

52. John Whitney Hall, *Japan from Prehistory to Modern Times* (Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1987), 43.

53. Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton University Press, 1987), 109.

54. Paul Varley, *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns*, First American Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 132, 135.

55. Boscaro, Gatti, and Raveri, *Rethinking Japan*, 336.

Reform failed to exert strong influence during Kamatari's time is of little significance, for it did lay the groundwork for the centralizing Taihō and Yōrō Codes that were soon to follow. Ieyasu had sought to consolidate authority just as Kamatari had. Furthermore, Kamatari's title as well as his status as a tutelary deity were both bestowed by emperors just as the title of shogun was granted to Ieyasu by emperor Go-Yōzei in 1603. Second, Kamatari was the progenitor of a long illustrious lineage. Kamatari's son, Fujiwara Fubito (659-720) was arguably as powerful as his father and was himself father-in-law to two emperors and grandfather to a third.⁵⁶ Fubito would sire four sons, each of whom would create a distinct and long lasting line of the Fujiwara clan: the Nankke Fujiwara, the Hokke Fujiwara, the Shikike Fujiwara, and the Kyōke Fujiwara.⁵⁷ In fact, the Fujiwara would continue to hold stations at the very apex of government until the end of the Second World War. Konoye Fumimaro (1891-1945) of the Fujiwara family served as Prime Minister of Japan, demonstrating longevity of sustained authority that surely would have impressed Ieyasu.⁵⁸

Fujiwara Kamatari had sought to unify Japan and was also the progenitor of an enduring family dynasty. Furthermore, after being deified as Tonomine Daimyōjin, Kamatari was worshiped by his descendants and viewed as the power safeguarding his family's fortunes. Therefore, it was natural for emerging hegemony to utilize the model of Kamatari's deification for their own benefit. Like Kamatari, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and

56. Joseph M. Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 29.

57. Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History*, 48.

58. Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 116.

Tokugawa Ieyasu sought both to establish centralized control over the islands and to lay the foundation of a lasting lineage.

After Kamatari, the next person to be deified as a Shinto tutelary deity was Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Perhaps the reason that there was such a long period without the deification of a hegemon points to the gradual decentralization of power that began during the classical period (794-1185) and that characterized the medieval period (1185-1568). Regardless of the reason, the next tutelary deity would be Ieyasu's predecessor, Hideyoshi. As pointed out by Mary E. Berry, Hideyoshi was encouraged to widen his base of legitimacy as he had no strong heir and had been in power only for a relatively short period of time.⁵⁹ According to the *Miyudono no Ue no Nikki*, by Maeda Gen'i who was present at Hideyoshi's end, on his deathbed, Hideyoshi made a request to be enshrined next to his impressive temple, Hōkōji in Kyoto. Like Kamatari, Hideyoshi was granted title and deification, this time by emperor Go-Yōzei in 1598.⁶⁰ The Yoshida Shinto rites were carried out by Bonshun and his brother, granting Hideyoshi the status of a tutelary deity and the name Hōkoku Daimyōjin. It should be noted that Hōkoku shrine, along with the adjacent Hōkoji and its giant bronze Buddha, were considered to be the grandest structures in Japan at the time.⁶¹

It was only after the deification of Hideyoshi that the potential popular influence of such religious movements became apparent. Although it is unclear how many people

59. Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press), 169.

60. Boscaro, Gatti, and Raveri, *Rethinking Japan*, 336.

61. Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace*. 142. For a contemporary description of the temple and shrine, see Cooper, *They Came to Japan*, 339.

were worshipping at the Tōnomine shrine of Katamari, we do know that “many crowds” visited the Hōkoku shrine.⁶² Additionally, within months of the establishment of Hideyoshi’s shrine, branch shrines began to spring up in various provinces. One example of a branch shrine being erected is the Hōkoku shrine of Higo built by Katō Kiyomasa.⁶³ Kiyomasa was a general and veteran of Hideyoshi’s Korean campaigns. Furthermore, unlike the later cult of Tōshō Daigongen, the popularity of the cult surrounding Hōkoku Daimyōjin was not limited to Hideyoshi’s family or samurai elites. This popular movement was immortalized by a member of the preeminent artisan family of the day, Kanō Naizen (1570-1616) on the painted screen depicting the festivities surrounding the seventh anniversary of Hideyoshi’s death.



Fig. 3, A depiction of the Toyokuni Festival. Hideo Kuroda, *Hōkoku Saireizu o Yomu*, Kadokawa Sensho, 533 (Tokyo: Kabushiki Kaisha Kadokawa, 2013). 8.

Naizen’s screen is revealing in that it depicts both warrior elites and commoners celebrating Hōkoku Daimyōjin. This stands in contrast to the later Tōshōgū cult’s elitist model that barred visit or worship by commoners.

62. Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology*, 50.

63. *Ibid*, 58.

There are distinct parallels between Katamari's, Hideyoshi's, and Ieyasu's deifications. Each of them made a request to be enshrined and worshiped. Katamari's offer of high rank to his descendants may seem less grandiose than Ieyasu's offer to protect the eight provinces, but the general implication is the same: worship me and I will protect you. We do not have such details from Hideyoshi's death, but, since he requested the title of a tutelary deity, we can assume that he sought a similar station. Through these three men, we can also see a shift from worship and protection of those who were strictly family to the inclusion of followers and vassals. Eventually, the worship of Ieyasu would move from veneration by family and followers to worship as a god by an entire state. The long span of time that passed between the deification of Katamari and that of Hideyoshi points to the rarity of such practices and the novel steps that the newly emerging hegemonic military rulers were willing to take in order to strengthen the legitimacy of their rule. Tōshōgū would go on to succeed where the Toyokuni movement had failed. The Tokugawa would continue to rule as shoguns for fifteen generations. Furthermore, by looking forward to 1721, we can see that the practice of venerating Tōshō Daigongen in the name of Tokugawa authority, protection, and peace was still being actively utilized by the *bakufu*:

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Yoshimune, the eighth Tokugawa shogun, had gathered the fudai daimyo. These hereditary lords, whose ancestors had stood with Ieyasu at the battle of Sekigahara, commanded the strategically vital domains that shielded Tokugawa lands from potential

attack from foreign invaders and tozama daimyo alike. Yoshimune was concerned that the fudai were becoming lax in their duties and showing weakness to the tozama lords, who were still bitter over their defeat at Sekigahara. The shogun needed to inspire the vassals assembled here before him. To do this he turned to the strongest source of bakufu ideology, his own ancestor, Tōshō Daigongen. He greeted the gathering by stating, “That I myself and all of you have met with a period of peace, in which the empire is well-ordered, and that we live in ease, is solely due to the divine virtue of the Tshogu (sic). Is it not something to be grateful for?”⁶⁴

Ieyasu’s dream of becoming a tutelary deity had come true. Eight generations after his passing, his descendants were looking to him for strength and legitimacy. By looking to the past models of Fujiwara Kamatari and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, Ieyasu and his followers successfully built a cult of personality around the first Tokugawa shogun. Still, it should be clear that the agency behind the founding of Tōshōgū at Nikkō was propelled less by Ieyasu than it was by Tenkai. By critically examining the last will and testament recorded by Sūden, we can infer that Ieyasu likely did not intend to be reburied at Nikkō. Rather, it was Tenkai who sought to capitalize on Ieyasu’s death by taking control of the deified shogun’s cult. As the following chapter will show, Tenkai sought to solidify and strengthen his power base in the Kanto region. The Tendai priest had found a receptive patron in Hidetada. However, Tenkai could have had no inkling that it would be the next shogun, Iemitsu, who would become the most ardent benefactor to Tōshōgū.

64. Boscaro, Gatti, and Raveri, *Rethinking Japan*, 331.

CHAPTER III
THE AGGRANDIZEMENT OF TŌSHŌGU

Architecture is an expression of values.
– Norman Foster

The Tōshōgū shrine is situated in the Nikkō Mountains eighty miles due north of Tokyo. In 1999, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized the shrines and temples of Nikkō as a World Heritage Site.⁶⁵ Drawing both domestic and international crowds, Tōshōgū is the crown jewel of this sacred locale. The shrine has been lauded for its ingenious architecture and elaborate decor. Somewhat strangely, it has also occasionally been praised as being emblematic of Japanese artistry. While it is true that the brightly colored and intricately carved buildings of Tōshōgū are uniquely Japanese, and that this architectural style spread to other satellite Tōshōgū shrines, the elaborate and polychrome motifs, which border on the ostentatious, are hardly in keeping with the Zen inspired rustic simplicity which most people imagine to be representative of the Japanese aesthetic. However, this innovative style was in no way accidental. Rather, it was meant to inspire a sense of awe and otherworldliness. Additionally, the shrine's unique features only came about two decades after its initial foundation. Although Tōshōgū was largely completed in 1617, it did not take on its

65. Morgan Pitelka, *Spectacular Accumulation : Material Culture, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and Samurai Sociability* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016), 143.

contemporary form until 1636.⁶⁶ Iemitsu (1604-1651), the third Tokugawa shogun, inaugurated the reconstruction project in 1634. This chapter will explore both why and how Iemitsu raised the profile of Tōshōgū shrine to rival even that of the imperial shrines in Ise. Although Tōshōgū had already become a symbol of the Tokugawa house and an additional source of legitimacy for the *bakufu*, it was under Iemitsu's patronage that Tōshōgū would become a central tool of both domestic and international legitimacy for the *bakufu*.

Seeking to strengthen shogunal rule, Iemitsu undertook projects to aggrandize Tōshōgū architecturally, geographically, and ideologically. Architecturally, the third shogun embraced a bold new style of ornamentation wildly different from other religious structures of the day. Top artisans were called upon to work on the shrine in Nikkō, and no expense was spared. In terms of geographic aggrandizement, this religious movement that was centered on Tōshō Daigongen proliferated, and satellite shrines were established throughout the land, although most commonly in the domains either under direct bakufu control or in the *han* of the *shinpan* daimyo. The number of annual pilgrimages to Tōshōgū also increased under Iemitsu, and many daimyo and *hatamoto* bannermen accompanied the shogun on lavish processions of religious spectacle. Ideologically, Iemitsu sought to use the impressive architecture of Tōshōgū as a tool for political and social legitimacy. Iemitsu worked to restore the imperial household shrine of Ise while at the same time pressuring the imperial court to elevate the rank of Tōshōgū to an equal status.

66. Naohiro Asao, *Sakoku*, Nihon no rekishi (Tokyo, 1973-); 17 (Tōkyō-to: Shōgakkan, 1975), 271.

Iemitsu had both practical and personal motives to develop these varied aspects of Tōshōgū. Pragmatically, Iemitsu was faced with the reality that he was the first Tokugawa shogun who had not served in battle. This meant that he was forced to rely on hereditary right rather than martial might for legitimacy. Furthermore, the size of the *bakufu's* standing army was greatly reduced compared to the armies of the Sekigahara or Osaka Castle campaigns led by Ieyasu. These issues heightened necessity for the creation of an alternate form of legitimacy that did not rely on the force of arms. In this respect, Tenkai's work at Nikkō had already laid the groundwork for what Iemitsu saw as the ultimate source of legitimacy: Tōshō Daigongen.

Iemitsu also had a familial and religious devotion to his grandfather that drove Iemitsu's focus on Tōshō Daigongen as a source of legitimacy. The third shogun owed his very title to Ieyasu, as the second shogun, Hidetada, had planned on passing the position of shogun to his older son, Tadanaga. However, Ieyasu had declared that Iemitsu would be the heir, securing Iemitsu's place as the third Tokugawa shogun. Furthermore, Iemitsu had numerous dreams of his grandfather, which were recorded in written prayer offerings and paintings. In these dreams Iemitsu claimed to receive advice, be healed of maladies, and be forewarned of impending threats by the spirit of Ieyasu. Iemitsu even took to calling himself the second generation Gongen.

After Tenkai emerged victorious from his theological struggle against the Zen priest Sūden and the Yoshida Shinto scion Bonshun, the Tendai priest presided over the ground breaking of the Tōshōgu project on the twenty-sixth day of the tenth month of 1616. On the fifteenth of the third month of 1617, Ieyasu's remains were exhumed from Kunōzan in Suruga and brought to Nikkō. Then, on the seventeenth of the fourth month,

precisely one year after Ieyasu's death, Tenkai re-deified Ieyasu as Tōshō Daigongen, "The Great Avatar Illuminating the East."⁶⁷

When Ieyasu's remains were moved from Kunōzan to Nikkō, the construction of the shrine and temple complex was nearly complete. There was simultaneous construction underway on the older, neighboring religious institutions such as Rinnōji and Futarasan Shrine. Founded in 766, Rinnōji is a Tendai temple that was under Tenkai's control and would become arguably the most powerful Tendai temple in the Kanto during this period. Futarasan is a Shinto shrine founded in 767 and dedicated to the three Kami, Ōkuninushi, Tagorihime, and Ajisukitakahikone. Managers, laborers, and artisans undertook this revitalization effort in order to make the area a more suitable location for the deified Ieyasu's remains to rest and was completed in 1619.⁶⁸

The original Tōshōgū, which was actually called Tōshōsha as the court had yet to bestow the title of *miya* to Ieyasu's resting place, was a large complex, consisting of a main sanctuary, the Hall of the Primordial Deity, numerous corridors, an offering hall, a stable, multi-story gate houses, treasuries, wash basins, and, of course, a tori gate. The construction of the main shrine utilized the rare style of *ishi no ma zukuri*, which has come to be called, *gongen zukuri*, after Ieyasu's posthumous name. Translated as, "stone room building," this style dates back to the medieval period and was first used in the construction of Sugawara Michizane's (845-903) mausoleum. *Gongen zukuri* is primarily characterized by the linking of the main hall and worship hall by a stone floored hallway.

67. W. J. Boot, "The Death of a Shogun: Deification in Early Modern Japan" (Honolulu, HI: U of Hawaii P, 2000), 155.

68. Naomi Ōkawa, *Edo Architecture, Katsura, and Nikko*, 1st English ed., Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art ; v. 20 (New York: Weatherhill, 1975), 28.

Not coincidentally, Michizane is sometimes cited as one of the first men to be apotheosized in Japanese history, although he was not treated as a tutelary deity, but rather as a vengeful spirit (*onryō*) who needed to be placated by means of religious ceremony. Nevertheless, this was the origin of the *ishi no ma zukuri* style of construction. This same style was used in the construction of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's Toyokuni Shrine mausoleum in Kyoto. In fact, not only was the same style of architecture used for Hideyoshi's and Ieyasu's shrines, but many of the same builders and artisans worked on both sites.⁶⁹ Still, despite the records describing the splendor of Hideyoshi's Toyokuni Jinja and neighboring Hōkōji, all indications point to the fact that these structures, as well as the original Tōshōsha were nowhere nearly as ostentatious as the current Tōshōgū complex, which would take its current form in 1636 under Iemitsu.⁷⁰

Even before Iemitsu came of age, Tenkai was spreading his influence throughout the Kanto region both under the auspices of his Tendai temples as well as the Tōshō shrines, which operated under Tenkai's jurisdiction. Sannō Ichijitsu Shinto, which had been invented by Tenkai in his bid against Sūden and Bonshun, had become the religious sect in charge of the deified Tōshō Daigongen, thereby cementing both Tenkai's and the Tendai sect's already strong connection to the *bakufu*.⁷¹ Seemingly never content with his political ambitions, Tenkai moved quickly after the founding of the Nikkō Tōshōgū and established a shrine in Edo castle. At the same time, Tenkai began the building project for

69. Ibid. 28-29.

70. Karen M. Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power : Art and Early Tokugawa Authority* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 80.

71. John Breen, *A New History of Shinto*, Wiley Blackwell Brief Histories of Religion (Hoboken: Wiley, 2011), 93.

Kaneiji northeast of the castle in Ueno. Kaneiji was meant to be the Enryakuji of the east, and Tenkai's project made clear his goal of shifting the traditional Tendai power base from Mount Hiei near Kyoto to the Kanto. As leader of the Tendai sect, Tenkai placed an imperial prince as the principal *monzeki* at Rinnōji in Nikkō. This placed all Tendai temples as well as their subordinate shrines under the auspices of the Nikkō temple and Tenkai.⁷²

Tenkai did not stop in his efforts to spread the nascent religious movement. Within fifteen years of the establishment of Nikkō Tōshōsha, satellite shrines began to appear throughout central and eastern Japan. It should be noted that, while the Tōshōgu shrine at Kunōzan today claims to be the first Tōshō shrine, this is highly unlikely. Clearly, since the first deification of Ieyasu was conducted by the Yoshida according to Yuiitsu Shinto, whose religious underpinnings were completely different from those of Tōshōgū and subsequent satellite shrines, the original shrine at Kunōzan would have been a Yoshida Shinto shrine. Furthermore, at the time of Ieyasu's first deification ritual, Tenkai had not yet petitioned the court for the posthumous name of Tōshō Daigongen. Therefore, despite the claims of the current Kunōzan priests, the Tōshō Shrine in Nikkō was the first to bear that name.

Although the Nikkō shrine was the first to bear the name of Tōshō Daigongen, it was far from the last. It is unclear when, but the Kunōzan shrine was likely the first satellite shrine. Because the syncretic Buddhist and Shinto practice had been well established by the early modern period, the notion of dividing a spirit (*bunrei*) and inviting those portioned spirits (*kanjō*) to reside at various satellite temples and shrines

72. Ibid., 93-94.

was already accepted and widely practiced.⁷³ This meant that Tenkai, or those who had their own reasons for establishing Tōshōsha on their own lands, needed only to gain permission from the *bakufu* to do so. This was in contrast to the initial establishment of the Nikkō shrine, which required the consultation of the imperial court as well as the *bakufu*. This relaxation of requirements enabled the subsequent proliferation of shrines.

Along with Nikkō and Kunōzan, new Tōshō Shrines were founded in 1617 at Tenkai's new Tendai center of Kita'in in Kawagoe as well as in the Hirosaki domain. The daimyo of Hirosaki, Tsugaru Nobuhira (1586-1631), had been a favored follower of Ieyasu, and had been excused from participating in the siege of Osaka. Ieyasu's generosity may have been related to the fact that Tsugaru was married to Ieyasu's adopted daughter. Either way, the debt of gratitude he felt to Ieyasu was made clear by this early establishment of a Tōshōsha in Hirosaki. In the following year the Tōshōsha inside Edo Castle was built. 1619 saw the first establishment of a shrine dedicated to Ieyasu in a domain of one of the *shinpan* daimyo. Specifically, one of the three main branch families of the Tokugawa, or *gosanke*, built a Tōshōsha in their Owari residence. The other two *gosanke*, Mito and Wakayama, built their own residence shrines in 1621.⁷⁴ In 1625, the *bakufu* approved the construction of the Kan'ei Tōshōsha in Ueno.⁷⁵ In 1628, Tōdō Takatora, another of Ieyasu's former vassals, built a shrine in the province of Iga. The same year also saw the erection of shrines in other religious institutions. This

73. Karen M. Gerhart, "Visions of the Dead: Kano Tan'yū's Paintings of Tokugawa Iemitsu's Dreams," *Monumenta Nipponica* 59, no. 1 (2004): 1–34, 7.

74. Boot, "The Death of a Shogun," 160.

75. Mark Teeuwen, *Shinto, a Short History* (London ; New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 117.

surprising development included a small Tōshōsha in Nanzenji, indicating that Sūden had apparently given up his recalcitrant stance toward Tenkai's movement. Also in 1628, the Kongōbunji of Koyasan erected a shrine honoring Ieyasu, with Enryakuji of Mount Hiei following suit in 1634.⁷⁶ The new shrine at Enryakuji was built adjacent to the venerable Hie shrine, where the deified Ieyasu replaced Ōmiya as the protector deity of the birthplace of the Tendai order.⁷⁷

By examining a recently compiled catalog of Tōshōgū Shrines, a continued pattern of proliferation of the shrines becomes even more apparent. The All Japan Tōshōgū Shrine Association (*Zenkoku Tōshōgū Rengōai*) compiled a history of Tōshōgū Shrines in 1965. This work, entitled *The Public Tokugawa Ieyasu (Tokugawa Ieyasu-Kō)*, contains over thirty pages of tables that catalogues all known Tōshōgū Shrines, including smaller altars contained within larger temple and shrine complexes. The current edition lists 516 shrines and subordinate shrines. This catalog is ordered geographically, with the tables giving the name of the shrine, its location according to current political demarcation, points of interest, and, when known, the date of enshrinement. Although most shrines claim a date of enshrinement, the Shrine Association has done a commendable job of listing only the dates that were verifiable. This brings the number of shrines with dates listed to 246. As the focus of this study is confined to the Genna (1615-

76. Boot, "The Death of a Shogun," 160.

77. Breen, *A New History of Shinto*, 94.

1624) and Kan'ei (1624-1644) eras, attention will be given to the eighty-four entries containing both date of establishment and locale that fall between 1615 and 1644.⁷⁸

That eighty-four shrines were established in the early Edo period is not surprising, given the popularity of Hideyoshi's earlier Toyokuni cult. Yet, from the onset, the cult of Ieyasu differed from the Toyokuni movement by catering to the warrior elite. This was in stark contrast to the Toyokuni cult, which was just as popular among commoners as it was among Hideyoshi's samurai followers. Plotting the Shrine Association's cataloged locations in chronological order on a map makes it evident that the majority of the early Tōshōgū shrines were established around the Tokugawa capital of Edo in the Kanto region, either in lands of the Tokugawa Bakufu, or the domains of their collateral houses, the *shinpan* daimyo. It is clear that the spread and propagation of the Tōshōgū shrines was extremely popular among the *shinpan* and a limited number of *fudai* daimyo. Unsurprisingly, the *tozama* daimyo seem to have been less interested in enshrining the shogun, who had defeated them at Sekigahara at the turn of the century.

Iemitsu's Impetus

While it is true that it was the second Tokugawa shogun, Hidetada, who finally sided with Tenkai and allowed Ieyasu to be exhumed, moved to Nikkō, and re-deified, it was under Hidetada's son and third shogun, Iemitsu, that Tōshōgū would receive its highest level of patronage. By the end of the Kan'ei era (1644) there were eighty-four

78. Editor, Zenkoku Tōshōgū Rengōai, *Tokugawa Ieyasu-Kō*, 5th ed. (Utsunomiya: Shimotsuke Insatsu Kabushiki Kaisha, 2008).

Tōshōgū shrines, and by the time of Iemitsu's death, this number had increased to over one hundred.⁷⁹ Furthermore, by this time, festivals were being held on the anniversary of Ieyasu's death at the shrines of the *gosanke* and at Nikkō. The differing relationships between Hidetada and the shrines, on the one hand, and between Iemitsu and Nikkō on the other, highlight not only Iemitsu's heightened need for alternate sources of legitimacy, but also the two shoguns' styles of rule. Hidetada had enjoyed a close relationship with his father, Ieyasu. The first two Tokugawa shoguns often enjoyed various extra-political activities together such as hawking, tea ceremonies, and *nō* plays.⁸⁰ Perhaps this relationship is one of the reasons that Hidetada never developed a reputation for innovation. What his father had put in place worked, and it was in no way clear to early Edo period contemporaries that the stability enjoyed after the battles of Sekigahara and Osaka Castle was going to last. To innovate was to risk a return to the turmoil of the Warring States. Hidetada had seen battle not only with his father, but also with his advisers and the other daimyo. This experience lent a certain amount of legitimacy to Hidetada in the eyes of the warrior class. To be clear, Hidetada's lack of innovation is not brought to light here as a slight, but rather to highlight his differences to the innovative Iemitsu. All indications point to Hidetada being an agreeable, honest, and upstanding ruler. Ieyasu even admonished Hidetada not to be so upright, to which Hidetada reputedly replied, "When a man such as father tells a lie, people will believe him. But when

79. Gerhart, "Visions of the Dead," 7. And, Teeuwen, *Shinto, a Short History*, 93.

80. Conrad Totman, *Tokugawa Ieyasu: Shogun*, 1st edition (Heian International, 1988).

someone like myself, with no particular attainments, tries to lie, there are no takers.⁸¹”

Nevertheless, although Hidetada could not match the personal charisma and influence of his father, Iemitsu initially commanded even less respect.

Furthermore, Iemitsu did not enjoy the same fatherly bond with Hidetada that had existed between the first two shoguns. Iemitsu had been sickly as a child, and Hidetada had initially decided to appoint Iemitsu’s younger brother, Tadanaga as third shogun.⁸² Fortunately for Iemitsu, Ieyasu intervened. Ieyasu seemed to have a fondness for the frail Iemitsu, and declared from his position as *ōgoshō* that Iemitsu would succeed Hidetada as shogun.⁸³ It was rumored that it was Iemitsu’s wet nurse, Lady Kasuga no Tsubome, who had found the ear of Ieyasu and convinced him of Iemitsu’s merit.⁸⁴ Still, despite the machinations of Lady Kasuga and beneficence of Ieyasu, the precedent that his grandfather had set by ruling as *ōgoshō* after abdicating the office of shogun inconvenienced Iemitsu. Hidetada, like his father before him, established himself as *ōgoshō* and was the de facto ruler of the *bakufu* until his death. In fact, while Ieyasu had gone to great pains to slowly shift power to Hidetada in order to ensure a smooth transition of rule, Hidetada made no such effort, leaving Iemitsu with an uncooperative and unimpressed group of senior advisers. Therefore, despite assuming the title of shogun in 1623, Iemitsu would have to wait for his father’s death in 1632 before taking the reins

81. Totman, *Tokugawa Ieyasu*.

82. Satoshi Sonehara, *Shinkun Ieyasu no tanjō to gongensama* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2008), 64-65.

83. Totman, *Tokugawa Ieyasu*, 143.

84. Conrad D. Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843*, Harvard East Asian Series ; 30 (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1967), 208.

of government. It was from this time forward that Iemitsu began to implement his innovative approaches to governance.⁸⁵

Even after Hidetada's death, Iemitsu was forced to find a way to weaken the roles of his father's former councilors, who Iemitsu had inherited. He did this by creating a new *bakufu* office titled the *rokuninshū*, or the council of six. These men were hand selected by Iemitsu and slowly elevated in rank until they displaced Hidetada's old guard. Iemitsu forced the last of Hidetada's remaining advisors, Doi Toshikatsu and Sakai Tadakatsu, into unofficial retirement in 1638.⁸⁶

These changes to the composition of the upper echelons of the *bakufu* were carried out simultaneously with more direct policy adjustments such as the implementation of maritime restrictions (*kaikin*) and a more cooperative relationship with the imperial court in Kyoto.⁸⁷ Iemitsu also codified the alternate attendance system (*sankin kōtai*) by amending the codes for warrior houses (*buke shohatto*) in 1635. Iemitsu's reign also saw the introduction of the *bakufu* inspectors who would monitor both the remaining councilors loyal to Hidetada (*ōmetsuke*) and the daimyo (*junkenshi*).⁸⁸ Iemitsu also used less conventional means to secure his position and authority. Iemitsu accused his younger brother of treason and pressured him to commit suicide.⁸⁹ All of

85. Sonehara, *Shinkun Ieyasu no tanjō to gongensama*, 68.

86. Conrad D. Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843*, 207-208.

87. Sonehara, *Shinkun Ieyasu no tanjō to gongensama*, 64-68.

88. Conrad D. Totman, *Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 107-108.

89. Sonehara, *Shinkun Ieyasu no tanjō to gongensama*, 64-68.

these measures illustrate the innovative nature of Iemitsu's rule. But, it was not simply the remnants of his father's staff that drove Iemitsu's novel policies.

In addition to an early cadre of advisers who were recalcitrant to innovation, Iemitsu had to contend with a dearth of military reputation. Unlike his grandfather and father, the third shogun had never been tested in battle. In an age when many of the daimyo and bannermen of the *bakufu* had fought at Osaka, if not also at Sekigahara, Iemitsu was a warrior in name only. This lack of reputation was one of the factors that encouraged Iemitsu to aggrandize his grandfather's religious movement in order to strengthen the Tokugawa name.

Iemitsu did not need to fear his lack of martial reputation with the *tozama*, as he could still utilize the might of coalition just as his grandfather had to defeat the Toyotomi loyalists. Iemitsu did, however, worry about impressing the collateral houses and other nominally subordinate military houses of the *fudai* daimyo upon whom Iemitsu relied to muster troops should the need arise. This was because the *bakufu*'s own forces were in reality a glorified police force, and not comprised of numbers adequate to carry out large-scale campaigns.⁹⁰ Still, Iemitsu cleverly addressed both of these issues at the same time. Upon hearing that the collateral branch of Owari was considering revolt, Iemitsu utilized the ascendance of his niece as empress as an opportunity to assemble an army 309,000 strong and march to Kyoto. On the way, Iemitsu and his coalition army stopped in Owari as a way of showing Iemitsu's uncle that the office of the shogun was as strong as ever.⁹¹

90. Conrad D. Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843*, 48.

91. Conrad D. Totman, *Early Modern Japan*, 110. And, Conrad D. Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843*, 209.

Still, even as Iemitsu was demonstrating his skill as a policy maker, his ability to form coalitions, and his desire to improve relations at court, he still sought to strengthen his rule with a form of legitimacy unavailable to the daimyo. As demonstrated, Iemitsu was an innovator. Therefore, it is not surprising that he also sought to expand upon the *bakufu's* religious source of ideological authority: Tōshōgū. This was made easy thanks to the groundwork laid by Tenkai and other supporters of the religious movement. Having shrines already established throughout the land meant that Tōshō Daigongen was the perfect tool to strengthen Iemitsu's standing among those he depended on for coalition. But Iemitsu had more than practical reasons to build up the Nikkō movement.

Of all the Tokugawa shoguns, Iemitsu's adoration of Ieyasu was unmatched. It is clear that he owed his rule to Ieyasu, and this was likely the primary source of his veneration. This reverence was further fueled by a number of dreams concerning his deified grandfather in the last decade of Iemitsu's life. Although these divine dreams, or *reimu*, occurred after most of Iemitsu's Tōshōgū related projects were completed, they still present a clear indication of the reverence that he had for Ieyasu.⁹²

There is a long tradition in East Asia of interpreting dreams as communication with the gods and the spirits of the deceased. While there are countless examples in religious and historical texts, the two following examples are of particular relevance. The first prominent case is Confucius' complaints over no longer seeing the spirit of the Duke of Zhou. Interestingly, this was a lamentation of the state of government, indicating that divine dreams not only had a long history in East Asia, but that these divine dreams could

92. For an in depth analysis of these dreams, see: Karen M. Gerhart, "Visions of the Dead: Kano Tan'yū's Paintings of Tokugawa Iemitsu's Dreams," *Monumenta Nipponica* 59, no. 1 (2004): 1–34.

also often contain political rhetoric. As Gerhart points out, divine dreams in Japan date as far back as the earliest indigenous written records. “In [the] *Kojiki* 古事記 (712) and [the] *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (720), for example, dreams provide instructions from the gods to the early emperors, forewarning them of danger, explaining mysterious events, encouraging the building of worship halls and the performance of rites, and offering advice on keeping peace and waging war.⁹³” Ieyasu’s deified persona, Tōshō Daigongen, appeared to Iemitsu in at least thirteen dreams between 1629 and 1647. These dreams were considered to be divine intervention in response to Iemitsu’s bouts of illness, to ritual events concerning Nikkō Tōshōgu, and to the illness and death of important figures in Iemitsu’s life, such as Tenkai.⁹⁴ Iemitsu had these dreams recorded as holy paintings by the famed artist, Kano Tan’yu. These paintings are still extant, although they are rarely displayed.⁹⁵

Not all of these dreams were documented in paintings. Additional *reimu* were recorded on Shinto prayer slips known as *norito*. These prayers were written and recited by Iemitsu’s wet nurse, Katsuga no Tsubone (1579-1643).⁹⁶ This additional evidence of Iemitsu’s veneration of his grandfather was uncovered in 1922 at Tenkai’s Rinnōji in Nikkō. Staff found seven protection amulet pouches, or *mamori bukuro*, which contained slips of paper thought to have been penned by Iemitsu himself. Among the inscriptions

93. Gerhart, “Visions of the Dead,” 2.

94. *Ibid.*, 4.

95. Sonehara, *Shinkun Ieyasu no tanjō to gongensama*, 64-68.

96. Gerhart, “Visions of the Dead,” 5.

were the phrases, “second generation avatar,” and, “second generation shogun.”⁹⁷ Not only does this support the notion of Iemitsu’s close personal and spiritual connection with Ieyasu, but it also highlights the tensions he experienced with his own father, who had sought to pass the title of shogun to Iemitsu’s brother. Not only did Iemitsu have his father, Hidetada, entombed in Edo instead of Nikkō, but from the prayer slips in which Iemitsu refers to himself as the “second generation shogun,” we can infer that Iemitsu was writing his own father out of the Tokugawa lineage. These *norito* also raise some interesting questions about Iemitsu’s beliefs in reincarnation. For example, historian Sonehara Satoshi posits that the slips indicate that Iemitsu believed in the second coming of Ieyasu, which in turn suggests that Iemitsu believed that he was the reincarnation of his grandfather.⁹⁸ This assertion seems odd given the fact that Iemitsu was born well before his grandfather’s death. Still, as demonstrated in the first chapter, this was a time of great theological fluidity.

A New Nikkō

In 1636 Iemitsu held a massive festival at the Nikkō Tōshōsha on the twentieth anniversary of his grandfather’s apotheosis. This marked the near completion of the most expensive construction project undertaken in the first half of the Seventeenth Century.⁹⁹ The project was the culmination of efforts by both Tenkai and Iemitsu, although Iemitsu

97. Ibid., 9-11.

98. Sonehara, *Shinkun Ieyasu no tanjō to gongensama*, 64-68.

99. Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power*, 74.

deserves the lion's share of recognition. For Tenkai, Iemitsu's physical aggrandizement of Nikkō Tōshōsha was the culmination of the plan set in motion under Hidetada surrounding Ieyasu's death that would establish Tenkai's supremacy as religious head Eastern Japan. For Iemitsu, however, the material improvements to the shrine were part of an even larger campaign. Driven by both insecurities regarding the Tokugawa branch families and other daimyo, as well as a personal devotion to his deified grandfather, Iemitsu likely saw the newly rebuilt shrine as a tool that would further strengthen his reign and the Tokugawa mainline legacy.

Iemitsu had first experimented with architecture as a tool for legitimacy with his completion of Nijō Castle in Kyoto, a project Ieyasu had inaugurated with the intent that it be the base of operations for the Tokugawa in the imperial capital. The architectural enhancement of this castle under Iemitsu not only employed grand style, but also towered over the imperial palace, which made clear Iemitsu's position as chief military authority of the land and was an obvious display of intimidation.¹⁰⁰ Historian Morgan Pitelka convincingly argues that this early success of "architecture-as-politics"¹⁰¹ likely encouraged Iemitsu's 1632 project, Hidetada's mausoleum. The Taitokuin, located in Edo near Zōjōji and which housed the remains of the second shogun, further established the precedent for the opulent style of Tōshōgū in Nikkō. Of particular relevance is the

100. Morgan Pitelka, *Spectacular Accumulation*, 148.

101. This term is borrowed from Thomas Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol: An Age of Ritual Determinism in Fourteenth Century Japan* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

ornate gate leading to the primary worship hall. Nikkō, too, is arguably most famous for its elaborately decorated Yōmeimon gate.¹⁰²

The reconstruction of the originally more subdued Nikkō Tōshōsha, perhaps lacking the grandeur Iemitsu required for his ideological plans, began in the eleventh month of 1634.¹⁰³ The project was completed in a year and a half, although minor construction and finishing work continued until 1643.¹⁰⁴ In order to accommodate the scope of the project, Iemitsu granted Tenkai increased landholdings for the Nikkō shrine.¹⁰⁵ Iemitsu must have been pleased with his earlier building projects, as he laid out an impressive amount of resources to complete the project. All told, the third shogun spent 568,000 *ryō* gold coins, 100 *kanme* silver pieces, and 1,000 *koku* of rice.¹⁰⁶ This lavish expenditure amounted to one seventh of the entire *bakufu* treasury, which had been left well-endowed by Ieyasu, the spendthrift Hidetada, and the still producing gold and silver mines under Tokugawa control.¹⁰⁷ In terms of manpower, the project required 1.69 million man-days by carpenters, 2.83 million man-days by porters, and 23,000 man-days by applicers of gold leaf.¹⁰⁸ The Governor of Tajima, Akimoto Yasutomo, supervised this

102. Morgan Pitelka, *Spectacular Accumulation*, 148.

103. Herman. Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology : Early Constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 57. And, Naohiro Asao, *Sakoku, Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo, 1973-) ; 17 (Tōkyō-to: Shōgakkan, 1975), 271.

104. Naomi Ōkawa, *Edo Architecture, Katsura, and Nikko*, 31.

105. Boot, “The Death of a Shogun,” 161.

106. Morgan Pitelka, *Spectacular Accumulation*, 149.

107. Herman. Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology*, 57.

108. Naomi Ōkawa, *Edo Architecture, Katsura, and Nikko*, 32.

massive project. The master builder and artisan supervisor was Kora Munehiro, Governor of Bungo. In charge of all interior and exterior painting was Kanō Tan'yu.¹⁰⁹

Kanō Tan'yu was the preeminent artist of his day. The fact that Iemitsu would hire him not only reflected the prestige of both Tan'yu and his family, but also illustrated the importance that Iemitsu placed in the reconstruction project at Nikkō. The Kanō family came to fame as the leading artists under the rule of Oda Nobunaga. Kanō Eitoku (1543-1590) crafted a pair of gold leaf screens in 1574, which were purchased by Nobunaga and given to Uesugi Kenshin (1530-1578).¹¹⁰ Then, in 1576, Nobunaga appointed Eitoku to paint the entire interior of the soaring Azuchi Castle. From this point onward, the Kanō name was associated with the hegemon of Japan, and Eitoku became the most renowned painter in the country.¹¹¹ After Nobunaga's assassination and Hideyoshi's rise to power, Eitoku was invited again to decorate the hegemon's two palaces: Jurakudai in Kyoto and Osaka Castle. Eitoku painted the interiors of both. Another of the Kanō family, Nanzen, would go on to paint the double gold leaf screens depicting the Toyokuni matsuri which was presented in the previous chapter. Eitoku's son, Mitsunobu (1561-1608) also served Hideyoshi, but began to branch out, working on commission for a number of daimyo, including Tokugawa Ieyasu. It was Mitsunobu's son, Takanobu (1571-1618) who brought his own son, the nine-year-old Tan'yu, to an audience with Ieyasu in 1611. At this meeting, Tan'yu painted a picture of a cat with a chokeberry plant. Tan'yu apparently performed so skillfully that he was acclaimed to be

109. Ibid., 31-32.

110. Sasaki Jōhei, "The Era of the Kanō School," *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 4 (1984), 647.

111. Ibid., 648.

the reincarnation of his grandfather, Eitoku.¹¹² One is impelled to wonder if this grandfatherly connection made Tan'yū an especially enticing choice for Iemitsu, who himself seemed to have notions of being somehow a reincarnation of his grandfather.

Regarding the opulent style of the reconstructed shrine, Professor of Architecture, Okawa Naomi, posits that the “the decision to refurbish the shrine may also have been motivated by the amazing progress and innovation in architectural design and construction techniques that occurred between 1619 and 1634... Without these developments, there would have been no apparent reason to alter so drastically the overall design of the shrine such a short time after the original construction was completed.”¹¹³ However, this statement ignores the fact that Iemitsu had first implemented this decorative style with his father's mausoleum at Taitokuin. As the following will show, the grandeur of the new Nikkō represented the culmination of Iemitsu's use of architecture and art as political power. It is also important to note that other architectural projects not under the purview of Iemitsu did not share Nikkō's flamboyant stylistic elements. For example, the Shoin complex of Katsura, which was built more or less contemporaneously with Nikkō, shows none of the flamboyance or daring of Tōshōgū's design. Rather, the Katsura complex is comprised of muted browns and white plastered walls, presented simply with exclusively straight line construction.¹¹⁴

112. Ibid., 647–56.

113. Naomi Ōkawa, *Edo Architecture, Katsura, and Nikko*, 30.

114. Ibid., 14-15.

Indeed, the post 1636 shrine is a sight to behold. The inner and outer walls, eaves, and rooflines of Tōshōgū were decorated with brightly painted images carved in relief. There are more than five thousand Buddhist, Shinto, Confucian, and Daoist symbols, as well as animals and plants, adorning the shrine. Chinese lions, dragons, phoenixes, hawks, peonies, and chrysanthemums are just some of the more common figures carved, painted, and adorning the shrine complex. No part of the Tōshō shrine is as impressively detailed as the Yōmeimon Gate. As Karen Gerhart states, “As the public face of Tōshōgū’s sacred worship area, the Yōmeimon is singularly important as a focal point of Tokugawa efforts to create divine authority and as a rare display of such efforts for the edification of the general public.¹¹⁵” One of the reasons that Iemitsu put such attention and effort into the Yōmeimon gate was because only the Tokugawa, loyal daimyo, and the *bakufu*’s bannermen were allowed to enter the shrine precincts. This meant that commoners were unable to witness most of the shrine’s splendor. Still, the Yōmeimon gate is such a spectacle to behold, it certainly would have projected divinity, power, and authority to commoners who came to attend festivals or observe shogunal pilgrimages.

The scheduling of the rebuilding of Ieyasu’s shrine was also carefully calculated. Iemitsu timed the rebuilding of Tōshōgū to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of Ieyasu’s apotheosis. This date was punctuated by a massive celebration in honor and praise of the deified first Tokugawa shogun. By not only remodeling, but actually dismantling the previous structures and largely building anew, Iemitsu was creating a purposeful corollary to Ise shrine, which is customarily dismantled, burned, and rebuilt every two decades. This ritualized renewal did not become tradition for Tōshōgū, as there

115. Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power*, 74.

were some significant logistical and theological differences. First of all, while Ise shrine was seen as the family shrine of the emperor, there were no actual remains or mausoleum in the shrine precinct. Secondly, the sheer cost of the reconstruction at Nikkō made future dismantling and destruction untenable.

Still, Iemitsu was keen to aggrandize the status of Tōshōgū to become equal, if not superior, to the emperor's Ise shrine.¹¹⁶ This desire to make Tōshōgū the *bakufu*'s equivalent to the imperial court's Ise Shrine is not only evidenced by the timing of the rebuilding of the Nikkō shrine, but, as will be explained in the following, also by Iemitsu's insistence that his grandfather's shrine be elevated to an equal status as Ise.

Shogunal Pilgrimage

Just as the utilization of religious systems for political legitimacy had a long tradition on the Japanese archipelago, so too, did religious pilgrimage by the social elite. In the Heian period, imperial pilgrimages to the Ise shrines were common, although this practice—as well as any active connection between the imperial court and Ise—had died out by the early Edo period. Prior to the weakening of the court that had occurred during the Ashikaga (1336-1467) and Sengoku (1467-1600) periods, the imperial family had utilized the shrines at Ise to reinforce the emperor's legitimacy. By claiming direct descent from the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, the imperial family retained the exclusive right to succession. One of the ways that those outside of the court were reminded of this

116. Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power*, 80.

source of legitimacy was through imperial processions and the sending of imperial emissaries to the Ise shrines.

Drawing from this abandoned tradition of pilgrimage, Hidetada led a procession from Edo to Nikkō to worship his deified father, Ieyasu. This established a custom of shogunal pilgrimage to Tōshōgū that would endure throughout the Tokugawa period. Hidetada's early pilgrimages took place on the first and seventh death anniversaries of the first Tokugawa shogun. According to the *Tokugawa Jikki*, Hidetada also pilgrimaged between these two anniversaries in 1619, although there is no other source verifying this visit. Predictably, Iemitsu took the shogunal pilgrimages to Nikkō, called *Nikkō no shogun shasan*, to new heights. Not only did the shogunal processions become larger, and thus another of Iemitsu's projections of authority similar to his architectural projects, but the costly trips to Nikkō also became more common. If the pilgrimages mentioned in the *Tokugawa Jikki* are included, Hidetada led three processions, while Iemitsu led nine.¹¹⁷ Even the daimyo were on occasion required to visit Tōshōgū from time to time in a display of submission to the *bakuhan* hierarchy.¹¹⁸

Visit	Lunar Year	Year	Shogun	Death Anniversary	Remarks
1	<i>Genna 3</i>	1617	Hidetada	Ieyasu's 1 st	-
-	<i>Genna 5</i>	1619	Hidetada	-	Recorded in the <i>Tokugawa Jikki</i> but unverified.

117. Teeuwen, *Shinto, a Short History*, 117.

118. Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace*, 142-3.

2	<i>Genna</i> 8	1622	Hidetada	Ieyasu's 7 th	-
-	<i>Genna</i> 9	1623	Iemitsu	-	Recorded in the <i>Tokugawa Jikki</i> but unverified.
3	<i>Kan'ei</i> 2	1625	Iemitsu	-	Four month delay due to eye disease.
4	<i>Kan'ei</i> 5	1628	Iemitsu	Ieyasu's 13 th	<i>Ōgoshō</i> also pilgrimages (separately).
5	<i>Kan'ei</i> 6	1629	Iemitsu	-	Prayers to heal Iemitsu's smallpox.
6	<i>Kan'ei</i> 9	1632	Iemitsu	Ieyasu's 17 th	As Iemitsu was mourning Hidetada's death, daimyo Ii Naotaka pilgrimages.
7	<i>Kan'ei</i> 11	1634	Iemitsu	-	-
8	<i>Kan'ei</i> 13	1636	Iemitsu	Ieyasu's 21 st	Tōshōsha's Grand Rebuilding.
9	<i>Kan'ei</i> 17	1640	Iemitsu	Ieyasu's 25 th	-
10	<i>Kan'ei</i> 19	1642	Iemitsu	-	Construction of pagoda.
11	<i>Keian</i> 1	1648	Iemitsu	Ieyasu's 33 rd	-

Shogunal pilgrimages not only drew on imperial traditions, they also coopted imperial legitimacy and raised the prestige of the Tokugawa vis-à-vis the court. In 1645, with Tenkai acting as envoy between the imperial court and the *bakufu*, Iemitsu pressured the court to elevate the official status of Tōshōgū to that of *miya*, a rank held by only eleven other shrines, including the Ise shrines. The same year, the court also sent imperial offerings, or *hōhei*, to Tōshōgū.¹¹⁹ Prior to this, the Nikkō shrine had actually been

119. Teeuwen, *Shinto, a Short History*, 117.

referred to as Tōshōsha, but henceforth would be called Tōshōgū, with “gū” being the Chinese reading of the character, “miya.”

The following year, with the aid of Iemitsu’s patronage, the imperial court resumed the tradition of sending imperial emissaries, or *reiheishi*, to Ise.¹²⁰ There was one condition: the imperial court would also begin sending gift bearing *reiheishi* to Tōshōgū.¹²¹ In requiring this, Iemitsu was compelling the court to reinforce the public recognition of Tōshōgū as being equal to the Ise shrines. Furthermore, in order to freeze this new hierarchy that placed the *bakufu* on equal footing with the imperial court, Iemitsu decreed that *bakufu* permission must be granted before imperial deification titles such as Daimyōjin or Tōshō Daigongen could be granted by the court.¹²²

By drawing on imperial tradition, Hidetada and Iemitsu used Tōshōgū to elevate the politico-religious legitimacy of the Tokugawa. In fact, since tutelary titles could only be granted with *bakufu* permission, and the court depended on the *bakufu* to fund imperial emissaries, the *bakufu* was not only drawing on imperial tradition, it was usurping it.

Under Iemitsu, Tōshōgū was aggrandized architecturally, geographically, and ideologically. The grand rebuilding of the central Nikkō shrine was the largest and most expensive construction project of the first half of the Seventeenth Century, indicating the importance placed on the shrine by Iemitsu. The geographic proliferation of satellite shrines illustrates the successful spread of Tōshōgū as a source of ideological legitimacy

120. Ibid.

121. Sonehara, *Shinkun Ieyasu no tanjō to gongensama*, 65.

122. Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace*, 142-43.

for the *bakufu*, at least among the Tokugawa, *fudai* daimyo, and *shinpan* daimyo domains. Finally, the elevation of Tōshōgū to *miya*, as well as the establishment of regular *reiheishi* visits to Nikkō, highlights Iemitsu's ingenuity in seeking to strengthen Tokugawa legitimacy through Tōshōgū.

CHAPTER IV
THE DYNAMIC UTILIZATION OF TŌSHŌGŪ

Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics
do not know what religion is.
—Mahatma Gandhi

After the passing of Hidetada in 1632, Iemitsu came to power and embraced religious ideology with exuberance bordering on the fanatical. The Nikkō shrine, originally founded and propelled as a movement through the agency of Tenkai, had become Iemitsu's central project, costing more than any other single expenditure during his reign. Still, Nikkō was far north of Edo, and even farther from Kyoto. For people to be awed by its splendor, they would first have to visit the shrine. In this way, Tōshōgū can be viewed as a *latent vehicle* for the propagation of politico-religious ideology—people were required to take action in order for Tōshōgū to serve its ideological function. For, if no one visited the shrine, it could not project Ieyasu's divinity or Tokugawa prestige. Perhaps realizing that such a massive expenditure by the *bakufu* should be utilized more dynamically, Iemitsu found additional ways to strengthen Tokugawa legitimacy with the shrine.

The following will explore two ways in which Iemitsu utilized Tōshōgū as an *active vehicle* for the dynamic propagation of politico-religious ideology. That is to say, Iemitsu found ways to use his deified grandfather and the shrine at Nikkō to elevate the prestige of the Tokugawa in the eyes of the imperial court, other warriors, commoners,

and foreign dignitaries in a proactive, rather than passive, manner. First, Iemitsu pressured the Korean imperial court to pilgrimage to Nikkō in grand processions along the most well-traveled roadways in Japan. The shogun also coerced the Korean court to create and deliver politico-religious artifacts to Nikkō in order to venerate the deified Ieyasu and raise the status of the Tokugawa in the eyes of both the elites and commoners of Japan. The second way in which Iemitsu used Nikkō as an *active vehicle* to strengthen legitimacy involved the imperial court in Kyoto. Iemitsu would use gifts and threats to strong-arm the court into participating in the production of the *Tōshō Daigongen Engi*, a series of documents that became the official history of the early Tokugawa. The religious and political history presented in the scroll rewrote the Tokugawa history and gave imperial sanction to the claims that the Tokugawa alone were the protectors of the court and the rulers of Japan.

The Korean Embassies

Well before 1634, when Iemitsu ordered the rebuilding of the Nikkō shrine, the cult of Hideyoshi had been suppressed. Why then, did Iemitsu continue to pour resources into Tenkai's shrine? Clearly, the shrine was a sight to behold for any who made the trek north from Edo, but this was an out of the way locale that most would never see. And, while there were many satellite shrines, they were not so numerous that they ever became part of daily life for ordinary Japanese. In fact, Iemitsu and Tenkai had other plans for Tōshōgū. In addition to domestic legitimacy, Iemitsu sought international legitimacy, or, to borrow a term from historian Ronald Toby, at

least strengthened domestic legitimacy found through an international lens. Richard Cocks, an English trader provided this surprisingly accurate premonition in 1617:

“Yt is said the Coreans sent a pr’esnt to themperour (Hidetada) . . . , and made their case knowne wherefore they were sent from the King of Corea to hym; w’ch was, first to vizet the sepulcure, or doe funeral rights to the deceased Emperour Ōgoshō Samma (Tokugawa Ieyasu), and next toe reioyce w’ his Matie that now is in that he had soe quietly succeded his father w’thout wars or bloodshed, and lastely to desire his Matie to haue the Coreans vunder his protection as his father had before hym, & to defend them against forraine envations, yf any other nation did seeke to disturbe their quiet, &c.”¹²³

In other words, the Koreans were already sending out overtures seeking to restore relations after the destruction wrought by Hideyoshi’s invasions of Korea. While it is true that Ieyasu and Hidetada worked diligently to repair the relationship with Korea that had been so horribly damaged by Hideyoshi’s multiple invasions, it was not until 1636 that Iemitsu was finally able to utilize Nikkō for his international diplomatic maneuverings. The idea of marching Korean ambassadors along the Tōkaidō highway, from Kyoto to Edo, and then up to Nikkō to pay respect to the founder of the Tokugawa bakufu was surely something long on Iemitsu’s mind. By parading the foreign elites before the Kyoto court, warriors, and commoners, the *bakufu* would appear to be powerful not only domestically, but abroad as well. Furthermore, although Tenkai claimed that the 1636 embassy was “moved by the

123. Toby, *State and Diplomacy*. 67.

power of their own faith,”¹²⁴ Ronald Toby paints a surely more accurate picture when he states that, “The Korean embassy of 1636-1637 was bullied into a pilgrimage to Ieyasu’s tomb at Nikko...making the trek in the midst of a heavy blizzard.”¹²⁵ Still, Iemitsu was successful in pressuring a two-hundred and fourteen man delegation into traveling to Nikkō to lend legitimacy to Tokugawa rule. This must have delighted the third shogun, as he had Korean embassies endure the same journey again in 1643 and 1655, and also had a Ryukyuan delegation pay their respects to the Daigongen at Nikkō in 1644.¹²⁶

Not merely content to have delegations visit Nikkō, Iemitsu enjoined the king of Korea to inscribe a placard for the Yōmei gate of Tōshōgū which states, “The Hall of Religious Practices in Nikko Calms the World and Illumines Filial Piety.”¹²⁷ In the same year, Iemitsu provided bronze and threats through the Sō clan of Tsushima, the traditional intermediaries between Korea and Japan, in order to convince the Korean court to cast a massive bronze Dharma Bell that would be inscribed by the second minister of the board of rites. The Koreans acquiesced, and a Korean embassy of four-hundred and twenty-six delegates traveled from Korea to Nikkō to dedicate the bell at the Yōmei gate. The purpose of these embassies becomes even clearer with the reading of the Naidaijin, Kūjo Michifusa’s record of the event: “Has

124. Boscaro, Gatti, and Raveri. *Rethinking Japan*. 336.

125. Toby, *State and Diplomacy*. 97.

126. Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology*. 182.

127. Toby, *State and Diplomacy*. 100.

the shogun's military might already reached to foreign countries!?"¹²⁸ Iemitsu's desired effect had even reached the imperial court in Kyoto. By coercing the Koreans to travel along the heavily populated roads of Edo Japan, Iemitsu elevated the perceived international prestige of the *bakufu* in the eyes of the warriors, the court, and even the common people, who were able to observe the Korean procession on its way to worship at Nikkō.



Fig. 4. A depiction of the Korean embassy delivering the Dharma Bell from the 1640 *engi* scroll. Shigemi Komatsu and Mitsuharu Kanzaki, *Tōshōsha Engi* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1994), 114.

The Dharma Bell was delivered and installed, and the Koreans made to pay homage to the Daigongen yet again. Now, in addition to the sign inscribed by the king of Korea himself, all of the daimyo required by *bakufu* decree to visit Tōshōgū would now pass the main Yōmei gate and see the inscription on this bell which reads:

128. Ibid. 102.

The hall of religious practice at Nikko was constructed for the Great Avatar Tōshō [Ieyasu]. The Great Avatar was possessed of infinite merit and virtue; he receives infinite reverence. ... The filial piety inherent in succeeding to his work and expanding thereupon increasingly glorifies the illustrious deeds of this ancestor. Our King has heard of this and, overjoyed, has caused this Dharma Bell to be cast in order to offer it as a supplement to the Three Treasures at his sepulcher...¹²⁹

Iemitsu's coercion of foreign embassies, as well as his requests for politico-religious artifacts, indicated an evolution to a far more dynamic utilization of Tōshōgū than previously witnessed. Rather than pilgrimaging to the sacred site himself, the shogun had begun to coerce others to visit and worship Ieyasu. This more dynamic utilization of Tōshōgū highlights Iemitsu's propensity for innovation. As seen in the words of the Dainaijin, the Kyoto aristocracy was also impressed, for perceived Tokugawa supremacy over a foreign court surely elevated the imperial court in Kyoto. Be that as it may, Iemitsu had designs on the Kyoto nobles as well.

Tōshōgū and the Imperial Court

The imperial court in Kyoto and the warrior class enjoyed a long and complicated relationship. The court had suffered alongside the rest of Japan during the warring states period and had lost political power, lands, and wealth. Under the period of unification

129. Ibid. 101.

(1568-1615), the hegemony, Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, had improved life for the courtiers significantly—especially Hideoyoshi, who embraced court culture with zeal as a way to erase his humble origins. Nobunaga and Hideyoshi returned lands to the court, rebuilt palaces, and granted stipends. But nothing is free. In return for their favors, the warriors expected titles and subservience. In other words, the hegemony bribed the court to provide non-violent sources of legitimacy.

The courtiers did additionally provide perceived practical aid to the warriors. Divination and other forms of magic were practiced to aid warriors in battle, and some of the most famous diviners were courtiers who had trained at the Ashikaga Gakkō in the Kanto region. This school was well known for producing battlefield mages, and the unifiers utilized the courtier diviners often.

Just as the Tokugawa continued many of the traditions of the preceding unifiers, the *bakufu* continued to act as the sole benefactors to the court in exchange for ranks, titles, and legitimacy. Additionally, the early Tokugawa shoguns continued to utilize the courtiers as diviners. For example, the Tsuchimikado family, experts in the art of divination called *migatame*, performed magical rites for the Tokugawa heretofore reserved for the emperor.¹³⁰ *Migatame* was an annual rite meant to provide health and strength to important men. Tsuchimikado Hisanaga also served Hidetada by using divination to

130. Lee Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467-1680 : Resilience and Renewal*, Harvard East Asian Monographs ; 209 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 141-42.

select the best days to move Ieyasu's *shintai*, or divine body, during the move from Kunōzan to Nikkō in 1617.¹³¹

Despite the continuation of patronage to the court, however, the Tokugawa also moved in various ways to restrain the court and assert dominance in political and religious spheres. Indeed, the Tokugawa worked to invert the classical relationship between warriors and the court. Traditionally, warriors would call on the emperor at court, which was seen to be a sacred and private space. Continuing the tradition that Hideyoshi had begun with events such as his Juraku-tei tea party, the Tokugawa forced the court to come to them. By having the emperor visit the shogun at places such as Nijō castle, the *bakufu* was publicly displaying superiority over the court.¹³² There were also a number of specific incidences in the early years of the Tokugawa *bakufu* that set the tenor for the rest of the Edo period. Before examining Iemitsu's utilization of the emperor and courtiers with the Tōshōgū *engi* project, it is necessary to examine the deterioration of *bakufu*-court relations prior to Iemitsu's tenure.

The beginnings of troubled relations between the imperial court and the *bakufu* can be traced back to 1609. The ambitious emperor, Go-Yōzei, who felt that there had been progress made towards a more potent court during the unification years, discovered that his consort was having an affair. With minimal investigation, Go-Yōzei discovered that it was actually a series of affairs that included multiple consorts who had been carrying on trysts with popular, but low level, courtiers. This enraged Go-Yōzei, who demanded that Ieyasu sanction the execution of all involved. Ieyasu refused, preferring

131. Ibid., 144.

132. Ibid., 158.

that only two of the perpetrators be executed and that the rest be exiled. Ieyasu's refusal to comply with Go-Yōzei's request soured their relationship and apparently emboldened the emperor.

The court lady scandal provided the impetus Go-Yōzei needed to hatch his plan for a strengthening of the imperial court by means of resuscitating the retired emperor system. This system, which had been in place during the Classical period and at the height of imperial power, had actually be the inspiration for Ieyasu's position of *ōgoshō*. In essence, by retiring, the sitting emperor would cloister himself while controlling the court—and presumably more. According to historian Lee Butler, this was exactly what Go-Yōzei had in mind when he requested abdication in 1610.¹³³

But abdication was no simple matter. By the Edo period, the court was entirely reliant on the *bakufu* for monetary support. Abdication itself did not require a major investment, but the investiture of a new emperor did. Therefore, Go-Yōzei was at the mercy of Ieyasu's discretion. Initially, Ieyasu seems to have been willing to support Go-Yōzei's retirement, but the sudden death of the *ōgoshō*'s four-year-old daughter put him in a foul mood. As Ieyasu delayed, Go-Yōzei pressed. This irritated Ieyasu, who maneuvered to allow Go-Yōzei's abdication, but without the building of a palace, which Go-Yōzei saw as a requirement if he were to have any chance of a return to the cloistered emperor system. These events further raised tensions between the court and *bakufu*, although again, the *bakufu* came out on top.

133. Ibid., 190.

Ieyasu, clearly unconcerned by the potential of upsetting the court, issued unprecedented regulations for the court in 1613 and again in 1615. The most telling clauses from the 1613 regulations are:

[1] Courtiers are to pursue their family studies day and night without negligence.

[4] Whether night or day, it is prohibited to loiter about back alleys and other places where one has no business.

[5] Those who...associate with vulgar attendants [*aosamurai*] and the like will be punished.¹³⁴

Ieyasu and Hidetada were taking steps to remove the court from politics and replace it with the warrior class. By insisting that courtiers focus on their cultural pursuits, avoid skulking about where one might be tempted to participate in intrigue or insurrection, and by forbidding association with warriors, the *bakufu* was further strengthening control over the court by preventing subversive machinations. The 1615 regulations, known as the *Kinchū Narabi ni Kuge Shohatto*, echoed the 1613 regulations, but expanded them and even more drastically separated warriors from court society:

[7] Appointments of warriors (*buke*) in functions and ranks of the imperial bureaucracy must be considered separate from those of the court aristocrats who are actually fulfilling such positions.¹³⁵

134. Ibid., 199.

While there were certainly contentious relations between the court and the *bakufu* under Ieyasu, the *ōgoshō* was generally level headed and magnanimous. The agency behind the most heated exchanges lay with the emperor, and Ieyasu worked to keep all sides happy. This cannot be said for Ieyasu's successor, Hidetada. The second shogun had a number of reasons to be less gentle with the court. Unlike Ieyasu, who had spent the majority of his time as shogun in Kyoto rather than Edo, Hidetada was firmly based in the Kanto region. While Ieyasu had taken annual trips to Kyoto from his retirement home in Sunpu, Hidetada never made similar efforts, preferring to stay in the warrior capital of Edo. *Bakufu* and court relations reached a new low when Hidetada, through threats and bribes, forced the new emperor, Go-Mizunoo, to marry Hidetada's daughter. This was unheard of. Of course, Hidetada had waited until Ieyasu's death to pursue this bold course, but by 1620, Hidetada succeeded and his daughter, Masako, was wed to the emperor.¹³⁶

There is one final detrimental episode which must be mentioned: the so-called purple robe incident. During the medieval period and until the Tokugawa had asserted control over the court, it was entirely an imperial prerogative to bestow imperial titles and purple vestments to select abbots of Buddhist temples. These robes signified the highest levels of the clergy, and these positions often came with great reward. The 1615 *Kuge*

135. William Theodore De Bary et al., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, 2nd ed., vol. 2, Introduction to Asian Civilizations (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 16.

136. Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467-1680*, 228.

Shohatto restricted the court's exclusive freedom to present these robes. The court made the mistake of ignoring this directive. The *bakufu* responded in 1627 by stripping titles, and the right to don the purple vestments, from over one hundred and fifty Buddhist clerics. This public humiliation of the court by the *bakufu* prompted the abdication of Go-Mizunoo in 1629.¹³⁷ This was a clear demonstration of *bakufu* dominance over the court, and can be viewed as the apex of a culmination of actions, including the forced imperial visits to Nijō, that were designed to restructure the social order in favor of the warrior class.

Because Hidetada had followed Ieyasu's example and acted as the de facto ruler of Japan through the office of *ōgoshō*, the court viewed Iemitsu's early career as shogun as a continuation of offenses perpetrated by the *bakufu* to undermine traditional imperial authority. Therefore, when Hidetada died in 1632, the court had little reason to think that *bokufu*-court relations would change. How wrong they were.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Iemitsu seemed to have had a strained relationship with his father. Perhaps this is why Iemitsu reversed Hidetada's rulings surrounding the purple robe incident. This not only returned honor to the imperial court, but did so specifically for the retired and deeply embittered emperor, Go-Mizunoo. Iemitsu next began making overtures to Go-Mizunoo by inviting imperial consorts to act as go-betweens. All of this was a prelude to Iemitsu's grand procession to Kyoto in 1634. That year, Iemitsu traveled to the imperial capital with a force of 300,000 samurai. But, this was not simply a show of force. Iemitsu came bearing gifts: 5000 *kan* of silver for the

137. Duncan Williams, "The Purple Robe Incident and the Formation of the Early Modern Sōtō Zen Institution," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 36, no. 1 (2009): 27–43, 34.

townsfolk, tax exemptions for Sakai, Osaka, and Nara, and priceless literature for Go-Mizunoo. These overtures seem to have been successful, as Go-Mizunoo hosted Iemitsu at his palace on the same visit. To further improve relations, Iemitsu even went so far as to return the sole power to appoint ranks and titles to the court. This return of imperial prerogative was no threat to *bakufu* supremacy, as the court was already politically defanged, but it delighted Go-Mizunoo and the court.¹³⁸ Why would Iemitsu act with such magnanimity towards the court? As will be shown in the following, Iemitsu was preparing to invoke the time honored warrior tradition of using the court for legitimacy.

The *Tōshō Daigongen Engi*

One of the most important projects relating to Tokugawa legitimacy was the *Tōshō Daigongen Engi*. This was an illustrated scroll, rewritten in 1640 from a 1636 history of the founding of Nikkō Tōshōgū in order to focus more closely on the history of Tōshō Daigongen. That Iemitsu used art for political and ideological purposes has been well established in the previous chapter. And, of all Iemitsu's projects, Nikkō stands out as the grandest achievement. Furthermore, just as Iemitsu's architectural projects at Nijō Castle, Taitoku-in, and Nikkō represent an evolution of architecture as a projection of power, the creation of the *Tōshō Daigongen Engi* was emblematic of the evolution of a more dynamic use of Tōshōgū that was first seen in the coercion of the Korean court.

As historian Lee Bruschke-Johnson points out, the Japanese warrior class had a long tradition of seeking court sanction and legitimization through formal imperial

138. Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467-1680*, 234.

documents.¹³⁹ Not only were these types of documents seen as the ultimate display of filial piety for one's departed ancestors, but the documents could also be used to commemorate shrines and temples. This latter form of documents came to be known as *engi* scrolls. *Engi* scrolls with accompanying illustrations were known as *engi e-maki*.¹⁴⁰ *Engi* scrolls generally told the mythical foundation stories of religious complexes, and generally centered on the founding religious figures and theology particular to the shrine or temple being described.

After Hidetada's death, Iemitsu commissioned Tenkai to create an *engi* for the Nikkō shrine. Tenkai's text, which was written in Chinese characters (*managana*) and contained no illustrations, was completed just in time for the grand celebrations punctuating the rebuilding of Tōshōgū in 1636. This first incarnation of the Nikkō *engi* was called the *Tōshōsha Engi*, and focused heavily on Tenkai's form of Sannō Shinto as well as the history of the founding of the Nikkō shrine. These attributes, although in perfect accord with *engi* tradition, were insufficient in Iemitsu's eyes. Iemitsu likely did not appreciate the focus that Tenkai placed on himself in the passages. Furthermore, as we have seen, Iemitsu was not above breaking with convention in the pursuit of ideological legitimacy.

Therefore, Iemitsu commissioned a new edition of the *engi*, which would be titled, *Tōshō Daigongen Engi*. This title points to Iemitsu's preference to establish a tradition promoting the divinity of Ieyasu, rather than a simple theological history of the

139. Anna Beerens, Mark Teeuwen, and W. J. Boot, *Uncharted Waters: Intellectual Life in the Edo Period: Essays in Honour of W.J. Boot*, Brill's Japanese Studies Library ; v. 38 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2012), 160.

140. *Ibid.*, 161.

early Nikkō shrine. Additionally, Iemitsu was not only concerned with the content of the *engi*, but also with who would be producing the content. Iemitsu established a committee of talented men to undertake the project. Tenkai was the head of the group of three. Itakura Shigemune (1586-1656), shogunal deputy in Kyoto, was brought in to keep the court in line, and, Shōren-in Sonjun, an imperial prince, was also recruited, not only to help coerce members of the court to participate in the project, but also to help Tenkai write the first draft in mixed syllabary (*kana majiribun*).¹⁴¹

Unlike the 1636 version, the 1640 *engi* was to have illustrations. Because this new pet project of the shogun was to utilize the most prominent men of talent in the land, Iemitsu decided that Kanō Tan'yu would paint all of the illustrations.¹⁴² The most important person to be tasked with writing a section in the new history of the Tokugawa was the retired emperor, Go-Mizunoo. By having the new and official history of the Tokugawa penned by the emperor himself, Iemitsu was utilizing the highest personage of the court to legitimate the veracity of the account. There could be no doubting a history penned by the retired emperor. However, Go-Mizunoo must have realized this, and was reluctant to participate. The retired emperor attempted to demur, claiming illness and muscle pains. Iemitsu overruled these excuses, and the emperor finally proceeded.¹⁴³

In addition to the retired emperor, Iemitsu carefully selected some fascinating calligraphers to work on the revised *engi*. For example, although of low court rank, two grandsons of the last Ashikaga shogun, Yoshiaki, were tasked with writing sections of the

141. Ibid., 164.

142. Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power*, 108.

143. Beerens, Teeuwen, and W. J. Boot, *Uncharted Waters*, 164.

scroll. This is seen by Lee Brusckke-Johnson as a way to tie the Tokugawa *bakufu* to the Ashikaga *bakufu*. Furthermore, the head of the Hachijō family, prince Toshitada, was chosen to write the sections on Ieyasu's victories at Osaka. This is particularly interesting, as Toshitada's father had served Hideyoshi who had eventually adopted the Hachijō into the Toyotomi clan. By coercing Toshitada to write Ieyasu's story, Iemitsu was leaving no doubt of the veracity of the account, as it was being penned by one of the strongest Tokugawa decenters still living.¹⁴⁴

While the coercion of members of the court lent legitimacy to the document, and the utilization of Tan'yu added magnificence, the content of the *engi* itself was of paramount importance. The 1640 scroll added significant historical episodes, some more dubious than others. The *engi* also claimed divinity at birth for Ieyasu, a bold and new claim which might explain Go-Mizunoo's reluctance to participate. Another less original, but equally bold assertion made in the scroll was that Japan was the center of civilization in Asia, and that India and China were tangential entities. The scroll also addressed specific historical events in a light meant to legitimize the Tokugawa. For example, there is a telling of the political and military events between the battles of Sekigahara and Osaka which matter-of-factly states, among other things, that Hideyori should have committed ritual suicide after Sekigahara.¹⁴⁵ Still, even as Iemitsu was rewriting history—as victors are wont to do—he recognized the ritual importance of the court. The opening section of the *Tōshō Daigongen Engi* reads:

144. Ibid., 166.

145. Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power*, 112.

From the distant age of the world of the gods, throughout ten thousand worlds, the emperor provides one continuous thread through enthronement and succession; this has not changed even once. Imperial descendants inherit this transmission, and it is the same. In this human world, it is known that there is nothing above it; is there any country that governs over it? Japan, therefore, acts as the tree root, with India and China as branches and leaves; this is certainly true.¹⁴⁶

It is easy to understand Iemitsu's desire to legitimize the court, even as he sought legitimacy for himself and his family. The court had bestowed the title of shogun on each of the Tokugawa rulers, and Iemitsu wanted them to continue to do so. After the implementation of the *Kuge Shohatto* and the case of the purple robe incident—proof that the Tokugawa would enforce the new code—Iemitsu saw the court as an ideal supplementary source of legitimacy to Tōshōgū. The court no longer presented a threat to *bakufu* power, yet through tradition, the emperor and courtiers could provide added legitimacy that elevated the Tokugawa above other daimyo. Likewise, as the *bakufu* had become the sole patrons of the imperial court, the writers of the 1640 *engi* sought to highlight and exaggerate the role of the Tokugawa as protectors of the court, and therefore Japan:

Certainly, the descendants of the emperor of our country have more than one last name, but among them the Minamoto [Genji], descendants of the fifty-sixth Seiwa Tennō, were brave and protected the emperor; on the point of governing the country, they were superior. Above all, the fame of the highly revered Tōshō Daigongen, who is the ancestral god [*soshin*] of the present-day Tokugawa, cannot be quantified in words of in writing. When we try to explain his fame, it is

146. Ibid., 113.

like comparing one drop of water to a great sea, or a single hair to the hairs on nine cows—it cannot be done.¹⁴⁷

The above passage makes clear that, while the emperor is what makes Japan unique and superior, it is the Tokugawa, supposedly descended from the Minamoto, who are meant to rule. By implying that the Tokugawa are also the protectors of the emperor, Iemitsu cleverly makes the Tokugawa the indispensable guardians of Japan.

Iemitsu also seems to have had some insecurities regarding his father's and grandfather's breaking of the multiple oaths they had sworn to Toyotomi Hideyoshi regarding Hideyori's investiture as hegemon.¹⁴⁸ The following is a select section on the fate of the Toyotomi, written under duress by the former follower and clansman of the Toyotomi:

When the Battle of Sekigahara in Mino was won, [Toyotomi] Hideyori should have committed suicide, but he was sent to his own castle [Ōsaka], with some loss of land, through benevolence. However, soon Lord Minamoto's kindness was forgotten. In the autumn of the previous year [Keichō 19 (1614)], many ronin had joined [Hideyori] at Ōsaka Castle and were planning a rebellion. This was soon detected, and [Ieyasu and Hidetada] left their palaces at Sunpu and Bushū [Musashi/Edo], amassing over 500,000 horsemen and surrounding the castle [Ōsaka]. They raised the battle cry and attacked. The soldiers fought valiantly to protect the castle, but in the end they were subdued. Because peace was requested from within, the moat was filled in and the mud walls torn down, and everyone

147. Ibid., 113-14.

148. Ieyasu and Hidetada both took multiple oaths of loyalty to Hideyoshi's son, Hideyori. See Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 234-35.

was able to flee safely... However, in the spring of this year [1615], another insurrection occurred, and it was rumored that they would burn Kyoto. Everyone in the city gathered together like ants and then scattered like flies...It was said that the Ōsaka forces numbered between 150,000 and 160,000...Arrows flew and swords slashed as they fought. Inside the castle, because a fire had started, Hideyori and his mother [Yodogimi] fled to the Yamazato[maru] and committed suicide on the eight day. Their close male and female attendants also committed suicide, and the entire castle went up in flames, making the destruction complete...From this time forth, the four seas and the eight borders were administered by Lord Minamoto, and it was a time when wind and rain were in harmony [the country was peaceful].¹⁴⁹

In the opening line of this passage, the *Tōshō Daigongen Engi* states that “Hideyori should have committed suicide” after Sekigahara. Of course, this would have been quite convenient for the Tokugawa, but there is no indication that such an action was expected from Hideyori. Instead, Ieyasu’s actions toward his former ally’s son show a man still acting in accordance with the multiple oaths he swore to Hideyoshi prior to his death in 1598. Ieyasu had to wait for the pretext mentioned in the *engi*—the gathering of ronin and the threat to Kyoto—before attacking Osaka Castle. Furthermore, the claim that “from this time forth...the country was peaceful” is also rather spurious. The Shimabara rebellion took place in 1638. Still, this passage illustrates how Iemitsu was able to use the politico-religious movement founded at Nikkō in conjunction with the imperial court to rewrite history and claim supreme legitimacy over political power in Japan.

The *Tōshō Daigongen Engi* was not simply stored away to be kept by scribes and only taken out for festivals, although it was displayed at these times. Rather, the 1640

149. Gerhart, *The Eyes of Power*, 131-33.

engi was circulated among the three most important Tokugawa branch families, the *gosanke*. This was an obvious way to make clear to the *Shinpan* daimyo exactly what the official history of the Tokugawa would be, and that Iemitsu was in an unassailable position of power as the grandson of their divine lord.¹⁵⁰

Iemitsu's use of the Nikkō shrine as a conduit through which to manipulate both the imperial courts of Kyoto and Korea clearly shows a more active utilization of Tōshō Daigongen than the early projects. Be that as it may, without the rebuilding of the shrine in 1636 and the establishment of shogunal pilgrimages as a lavish spectacle, neither of Iemitsu's court related projects would have been likely to succeed. Some historians, such as Lee Brunschke-Johnson, have argued that all of these projects were planned from the beginning. Unfortunately, the evidence to support this either does not exist, or has not been found. What is clear, however, is that Iemitsu succeeded in assuming the agency behind the Nikkō shrine without undermining Tenkai, and then used Tōshōgū to elevate the status of the Tokugawa *bakufu* above both the daimyo and the imperial court.

150. Ibid., 111.

CHAPTER V

CODA

The Tōshōgū Shrine in Nikkō was a project that received constant attention and support from various high level *bakufu* officials, including the second and third shoguns. The preeminent cultural, religious, and political advisers, Tenkai and Sūden, as well as top level daimyo such as Honda Masazumi, all weighed in on the creation and perpetuation of Tōshōgū. Why then, has this central tool for political legitimacy been given such scant treatment by western historians of Japan? As discussed in the introduction, a combination of factors has led historians away from the religious sources of ideological legitimacy during the Tokugawa *bakufu*'s early period. First, the focus of historians of the early Edo period on institutional history led to detailed studies on the edicts, legal codes, and other logistical controls enacted by the *bakufu*, but ignored the vast resources spent to shore up ideological legitimacy. Second, the focus by theoretically-oriented historians on what they saw as the watershed moment in Japanese history—the Meiji Restoration—brought the focus of historians of Japan to the *bakumatsu* period, and further away from the aspects that engendered the Tokugawa peace in the first place. Finally, the focus by intellectual historians on Neo-Confucianism, which was only popularized and institutionalized in the Eighteenth Century, also worked to keep historians occupied with research on later times. That said, it is absolutely time to reexamine the early Edo period and its sources of success.

The early Tokugawa period witnessed the completion of a shift from the authority of power to the power of authority. This shift can also be explained as an evolution from

a primarily repressive state to one that maintained legitimacy mainly through ideology. Under the first three shoguns, two-hundred and thirty-one domains were seized or significantly diminished while another two-hundred and eighty-one daimyo were transferred to solidify Tokugawa control. After the death of Iemitsu in 1651, the practice of attainder came to a near stop.¹⁵¹ Of course this was partially due to the successful implementation of institutional controls that had developed during the unification period under Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu, but rules and regulations alone do not explain the Tokugawa success.

The unique source of Tokugawa success can be found in the development of emerging forms of politico-religious sources of ideology. Nobunaga toyed with the idea of being deified, but his assassination at Honnōji in 1582 prevented him from actualizing his plans for independence from the court. Hideyoshi took these developments one step further and was deified as a tutelary deity. Unfortunately for the Toyotomi clan, the inability of Hideyoshi to produce a ready-and-able heir allowed Ieyasu to seize power. Ieyasu had shrewdly observed the first two unifiers and was able to reproduce and combine all of the essential elements of success: a stable political system, a capable heir as well as an arrangement to continue the Tokugawa lineage, and a source of transcendental authority in the form of a politico-religious movement centered on his own deified persona: Tōshō Daigongen.

Clearly, much is also owed to other agents in this endeavor. Tenkai, who seems to have wildly exaggerated Ieyasu's posthumous wishes by inventing a new theology to

151. Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 237-38.

legitimize the Tokugawa, provided early impetus behind the propagation of Tōshōgū. Hidetada, too, deserves credit for supporting Tenkai's grandiose plans. But, it was Iemitsu who truly took the Nikkō shrine and its accompanying religious movement to amazing heights. It was no coincidence that the *bakufu* reached its zenith under Iemitsu, both in terms of political and ideological power, both of which the third shogun pursued through Tōshōgū.

Capitalizing on Tenkai's religious creation, Iemitsu laid the groundwork for his dynamic utilization of the Nikkō shrine by rebuilding the shrine in a magnificent style reminiscent of his earlier architectural projects. This undertaking was followed by a number of projects, each designed to further enhance Tokugawa prestige. First, Iemitsu increased the frequency of pilgrimages to Nikkō. These spectacles highlighted the divine investiture granted to the *bakufu* by Ieyasu. Next, Iemitsu coerced the Korean court to send their own pilgrimages, often bearing gifts with politico-religious significance. These pilgrimages were public affairs, meant to show *bakufu* legitimacy on an international scale. Finally, Iemitsu and Tenkai's *Tōshō Daigongen Engi* was a way for Iemitsu to enshrine a favorable history of the Tokugawa that was directly legitimized by the imperial court in Kyoto.

This is the first study on Tōshōgū that has examined the shrine from its inception through its aggrandizement. Furthermore, by examining the personal and political aims of the central figures involved with Tōshōgū within their historical context, this study has explained why Tōshōgū was founded, elevated, and utilized as an ideological tool. Unlike any other source of legitimacy, Tōshōgū was exclusive to the Tokugawa. This exclusivity

offers the answer to the question: How were the Tokugawa able to stabilize Japan and prepare it for the rapid modernization that would come in the following Meiji period?

At the outset of this project, I sought to answer a number of questions relating to the establishment and propagation of the Tōshōgū Shrine in Nikkō. Primarily concerned with how and why Tōshōgū was founded as well as how the shrine was utilized as a source for legitimacy, I focused on contextualizing primary documents within the political environment of early modern Japan. Despite this initial focus on political ideology, it is obvious that the separation of political ideology and religious ideology is an impossibility.

As is often the case, and although I have answered some of the initial queries that inspired this study, I am left with more questions than answers regarding the significance of Tōshōgū. In particular, Iemitsu's pretensions toward elevating the sacred nature of the Tokugawa to rival the imperial court present an intriguing avenue of further investigation. Clearly, the rebuilding of the Nikkō shrine on its twentieth anniversary coupled with the elevation of Ieyasu's shrine to *miya* and the mandated visits by imperial *reihishi* were meant by Iemitsu to elevate the status of the Tokugawa in relation to the imperial court. Still, Iemitsu's machinations beg one other question: In what other ways did the third shogun, or the later Tokugawa shoguns for that matter, seek to propagate the notion of a sacred realm? This question of the creation of a sacred Tokugawa authority will require a deeper investigation of other sources of public ideology. In particular, a thorough examination of documents such as the *Tokugwa Jikki* may help to shed light on these issues. While this chronicle of the Tokugawa is often utilized by scholars as an accurate catalogue of the events and aims of the *bakufu*, it is my distinct impression that the

Tokugawa Jikki would be better used as an indicator of Tokugawa ideology. That is to say, just as the *Tōshō Daigongen Engi* projects a particular and favorable narrative of the Tokugawa, the *Tokugawa Jikki* presents an idealized version of the clan's history. Perhaps it is in the conceptual space between the history projected by the Tokugawa and a divergent and more objective past that both the successes and shortcomings of the Tokugawa should be explored.

Ultimately, the genesis and aggrandizement of Tōshōgū highlighted the willingness of the Tokugawa to build on emerging politico-religious movements in an effort to create a sacred authority traceable solely to the Tokugawa. Daimyo, the imperial court, and foreign envoys were all manipulated by the vehicle of Tōshōgū in ways that raised the status of the *bakufu* and helped to secure a lasting legitimacy.

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