

The architecture, archaeological and written records together demonstrate that Nara was a seething vortex of instability despite the pretensions to stability and order of its public buildings. The factionalism of the court and tensions between church and state were directly reflected in the built environment even as political will sought unequivocal expression in monumental architecture and city plans.

Heian Palaces and Kamakura Temples

The Changing Countenances of Aristocratic and Warrior Power

The 700 years from the establishment of a new capital city of Heian in 794 to the outbreak of the Ōnin War in 1467, which destroyed much of the city, was an epoch of profound change in both authority and architecture. It covers the three historical periods of Heian (794–1185), Kamakura (1185–1333) and Muromachi (1333–1467). The general historical framework of these periods is well known and need be mentioned only briefly here. The Heian period saw the flourishing of indigenous forms of government and culture under the civil aristocracy in the Heian capital, now generally referred to by its modern name of Kyoto. The centralised authority of aristocratic government based in Kyoto was eroded by the growth of private land holdings in the provinces, and by the creation of warrior bands to protect and promote these landed interests. Political and military turbulence reached its culmination with the defeat of the Taira forces by those of the Minamoto in 1185 and the establishment of a warrior government at Kamakura. Minamoto Yoritomo assumed the court title of shogun, setting the precedent of using this imperially conferred office to sanction *de facto* warrior power as *de jure* government. The succeeding period witnessed an uneasy balance between the civil power of the court in Kyoto and the military power of the warrior class at Kamakura.¹ By the end of the fourteenth century the balance had shifted decisively towards the military. The overthrow of the Kamakura shogunate by a coalition of disaffected warrior and aristocratic interests under the leadership of the Ashikaga family saw the destruction of the city of Kamakura, and the establishment of warrior government in Kyoto itself. The warrior class was gradually absorbed into the cultural milieu of the old capital. The confluence of warrior and aristocratic culture transformed the high culture to create many of the characteristic features for which Japanese civilization was henceforth known in architecture, theatre, religion, literature and painting. The authority of the Ashikaga shogunate, however, was still vested in the formal authority of the imperial institution. The Ashikaga presided over a loosely controlled system of national and regional government in which the regional was once again to triumph over the central. The eventual breakdown of Ashikaga control over regional lords at the time of the outbreak of the Ōnin War in 1467 precipitated nearly a century and a half of civil wars which devastated the cities, ruined the economy but, paradoxically, stimulated religious and artistic expression.

These seven centuries were characterised by religious movements of lasting importance to Japanese civilization. The relocation of the capital to Kyoto broke the dominance of the Nara Buddhist sects over court government. The esoteric sects of Shingon and Tendai became a powerful religious and cultural force, while popular forms of Buddhism, particularly of the worship of the Buddha Amida, offered an easier form of personal salvation and gained a strong following with the Heian aristocracy. The establishment of warrior government at Kamakura in 1185 broadly coincided with the arrival of new forms of Buddhism from China, particularly that of Chan or Zen Buddhism as it became known in Japan. Zen flourished amongst the warrior leadership under the charismatic guidance of Chinese emigré monks and Japanese who had studied in China, of whom the monks Eisai (1141–1215) and Dōgen (1200–1253) had the most enduring influence. At the same time Shinto took on a more militant form in association with the cult of Hachiman, which we have seen had flourished under the sponsorship of the Nara court.

This was unmistakably an epoch of profound consequence for political and religious authority and the exercise of power at all levels. It was equally an epoch in which there was constant architectural activity directed at housing new institutions of government and religion, and expressing changing nuances of power, belief and daily life. The Heian period saw the creation of a new form of palace and mansion architecture now known as *shinden-zukuri*. By the Kamakura period there was a fresh wave of architectural influence from Song China, coinciding with the arrival of Zen Buddhism. There were also important innovations in design methods, particularly in the use of square roots to describe the pronounced curves of roofs and framing, one of the direct and distinctive results of Song architectural influence.²

Despite the obvious importance of developments in both architecture and authority in the period lasting from the ninth to the fifteenth century, it is difficult to probe the intricacies of this interaction in detail. Documentation of authority, particularly in the Heian period, is diffuse and sometimes obscure in meaning. Some of the written records, from the Kamakura period and beyond, comprise *ex post facto* justification of the meritorious actions of the victorious, and condemnation of the dastardly deeds of the defeated. With all the ingredients for fine romantic ballads including love, war, hate, jealousy, treachery and valour, it is no wonder that these accounts are a rich contribution to the world of literature but unreliable for use as historical sources. The position is even more difficult in the case of architecture. Few buildings survive from these 700 years. Those that do remain date mostly from the very beginning or the very end of this epoch, the notable exceptions being the Byōdōin at Uji to the south of Kyoto, and the Chūsonji at Hiraizumi in north-eastern Honshu.³

Because of these difficulties there is, of necessity, more generalised description and greater speculation in this section of this study. The focus will be on the palaces and villas of the Heian capital in the first half of the eleventh century and the Zen temples of the late thirteenth century associated with the sphere of Kamakura influence: the former saw the apogee of Fujiwara power at the Heian court and the latter the flourishing of architectural patronage by the Hōjō. Each has sufficient primary evidence of architectural and political

activity to allow general characterisation and tentative conclusions to be drawn concerning the relationship between the two.

***Shinden-zukuri* and the Power of the Fujiwara**

Shinden-zukuri is the name now given to the form of residential and palatial architecture which evolved for the comfort and pleasure of the aristocracy in the city of Heian. As we saw in the preceding chapter, Nara was abandoned in order to remove government from the influence of the Buddhist sects. After an abortive attempt to establish a new capital at Nagaoka, another larger and more suitable site further to the north was selected for the new city. This new city was 5.2 kilometres north-south and 4.5 kilometres east-west, considerably larger in dimensions than Nara had been but it was laid out on a similar grid plan with the imperial palace at the centre-north, and observed the same principles of symmetry, axiality, and hierarchy.

Shinden-zukuri reached its maturity in the eleventh century under the patronage of the Fujiwara family. It evolved in the rarefied atmosphere of the court during centuries of indigenous cultural flowering following the decision to break all communication with China in 898 AD as the Tang Dynasty slid into self-destruction. *Shinden-zukuri* was the architectural style of a small elite, estimated to number no more than a few thousand persons, whose influence in terms of political power was to decline dramatically after the eleventh century with the rise to power of the samurai. Its architectural and cultural importance, however, was to transcend the limitations of time and space of this numerically small group. It was to become no less than the well-spring of the Japanese residential architectural tradition.

The single term *shinden-zukuri*⁴ in reality encompasses three different types of building complexes in the Heian capital. The first type consisted of imperial palaces, including the Imperial Palace or official centre of the court and emperor, the palaces of retired emperors, as well as imperial villas situated in the pleasant countryside around the capital. The second category was that of 'detached palaces' (*rikyū*) which were used as centres of clan and familial government by powerful members of the court aristocratic families. The third type of *shinden-zukuri* refers to the private residential mansions of aristocrats in Heian-kyō.

All three *shinden* types shared a common style, although with variations occasioned by differing needs for ritual space. As an aristocratic architecture, *shinden-zukuri* continued distinctively Japanese building traditions which had been eclipsed by Chinese building styles in the Nara period. It translated vernacular practices into an aristocratic milieu and gave formal expression to native preferences in materials, design and decoration. Features of Chinese monumental architecture used at Nara for official buildings, particularly tiled roofs, bracket sets, stone foundations, and polychrome decoration, made way in the official architecture of the Heian capital for the unpainted timbers, raised-wood floors and shingle roofs which had been retained at Nara only for private residences. *Shinden-zukuri*, therefore, represents the re-emergence of a self-assured, native building tradition in the high culture which, while benefiting



Fig. 4.1
Heiji monogatari emaki,
handscroll,
second half of
thirteenth
century. Night
attack on the
Sanjō Palace.
Detail
(Courtesy of
Museum of
Fine Arts,
Boston.
Fenollosa-Weld
Collection)

from the stimulus of international contacts, had reached a stage of confidence in its own identity. In this way *shinden-zukuri* was a product of two dynamic processes: the indigenous response to the architectural traditions of the Asian mainland on the one hand, and the establishment of status distinctions between the architectural styles of different classes on the other. The former was a tacit rejection of the authority of foreign architectural models, while the latter gave rise to expression of ruling authority through a new hierarchical language of built form.

The depiction of the Sanjō Palace in the *Heiji monogatari emaki* is one of the most vivid records of *shinden* architecture (Figures 4.1 and 4.2).⁵ This scene from the illustrated hand scrolls showing the struggle between the Taira and their mortal military adversaries, the Minamoto, affords a tantalising glimpse of a palace complex at the moment of its destruction by fire. Even as the buildings are enveloped in flame the painting allows us to examine the two processes of indigenous response to Chinese influence and social stratification in more detail. The *Heiji monogatari emaki* was originally a large set of handscrolls of which only three now survive intact together with a small number of fragments of the remainder.⁶ Painted in the second half of the thirteenth century, they depict the civil disorder in the Heian capital at the

end of the year 1159, one of the incidents from which the Taira, under their leader Kiyomori, were to emerge as the dominant military force in capital politics.

The section of the scroll in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, depicting a night attack on the Sanjō Palace by the Minamoto, is one of the most dramatic scenes in all Japanese art. It vividly illustrates the fate of both architecture and authority in the Heian period. The Sanjō Palace was the residence of the emperor Go Shirakawa, who resorted to using the Taira for military support against the Minamoto. In this scene the attacking Minamoto warriors are shown rampaging through the *shinden-zukuri* buildings of the palace. The blood of the supporters of the retired emperor flows freely as sword and spear do their worst. The palace itself is completely enveloped in smoke and flame and it is easy to imagine the savagery and confusion of the actual incident.

These scenes were painted some 100 years after the events they depict, the artist relying on imagination and contemporary buildings as a source of reference to recreate the appearance of the destroyed Sanjō Palace. Despite the dating problem, we can see clearly the features of *shinden-zukuri* which distinguish it from the official architecture of the Nara period. The buildings are linked by long corridors which open on to wooden verandas. The roofs are

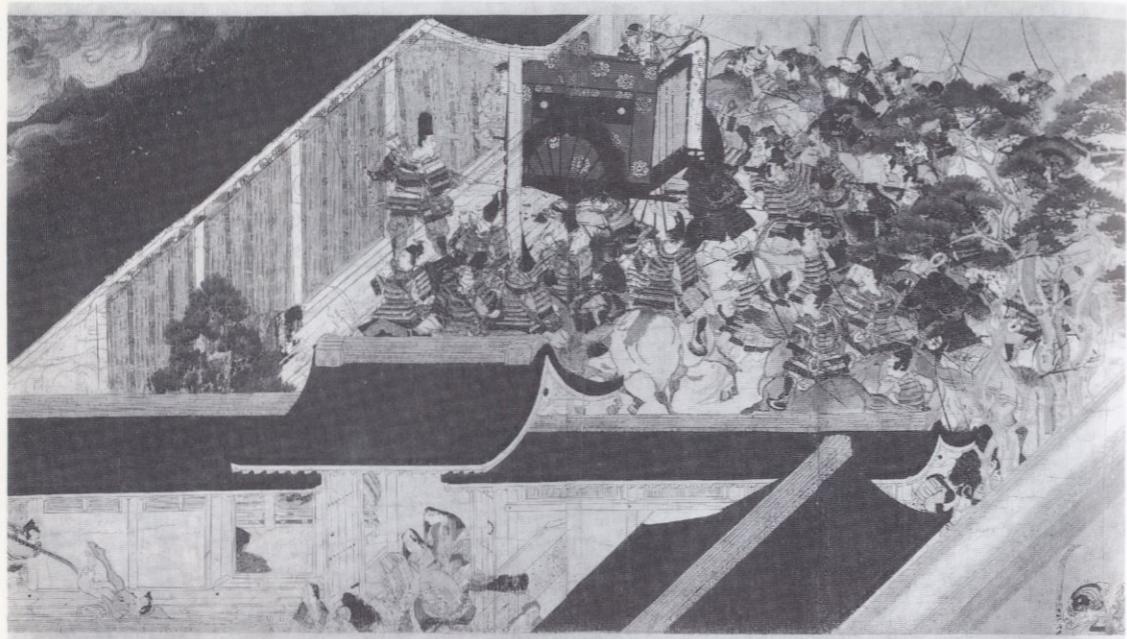


Fig 4.2
Heiji monogatari emaki,
handscroll,
second half of
thirteenth
century. Night
attack on the
Sanjō Palace.
Detail
(Courtesy of
Museum of
Fine Arts,
Boston.
Fenollosa-Weld
Collection)

dark brown in colour, indicating a covering with thin layers of cypress bark – a type of roofing known as *hiwada-buki* (see Figures 4.2–4.3). The ridges of the roof are crowned with layers of terracotta tiles. All the timbers of the structural framing, floors and doors are unpainted, very different in effect from the brightly painted and lacquered Chinese style adopted at Nara. The floors of the buildings are elevated above the ground, continuing the practice established in pre-Buddhist times. There is a notable absence of bracket sets supporting the eaves; the lighter cypress-bark shingles required less elaborate support under the eaves, and by the middle of the Heian period the Japanese had developed a sophisticated method of inserting cantilevers inside the roof to carry the weight of its framing hidden from view. Details of the walls are also discernible. Those in the foreground of the composition have sections which have been filled in with lath or plaster, with barred windows set high up under the eaves. Other parts of the walls have been left open, covered with black-lacquered reticulated shutters known as *shitomido*. The lower shutters are set like removable half walls while the upper shutters hinge outwards under the eaves. The distinctive bamboo blinds with green brocade fringes, now known as *sudare*, screen the interior of the building from outside view.

This scene highlights the use of cypress-shingle roofs and exterior gateways as status symbols in the Heian palaces. They became features of authority in the same way that forked finials and ridge billets had become symbols of authority in Shinto architecture, that is, by a process of cooption from vernacular architecture. The state had insisted on the use of terracotta tiling for government buildings in the city of Nara, a policy we have seen officially articulated in the court memorandum of the year 724. We also noted how

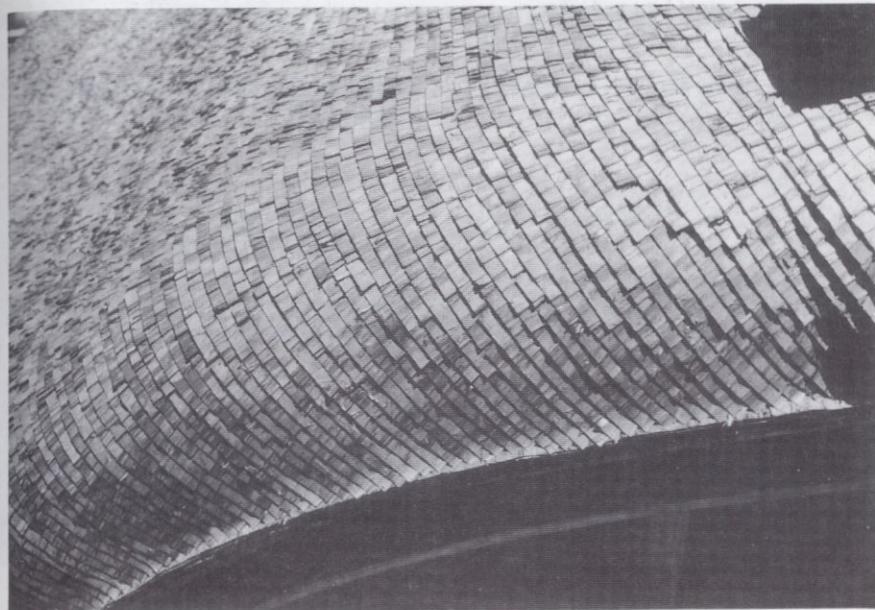


Fig 4.3
Cypress-bark
shingle roofing
(*hiwada-buki*).
Detail of roof
restoration at
Enryakuji,
1981

shingles of cypress bark remained an important part of Japanese architectural practice despite government policy. In the Heian period there was to be a reversal of this policy of state insistence on terracotta over shingles for buildings of the aristocracy. In the year 1030 the court issued an edict stating explicitly that cypress-bark shingles were not to be used by aristocrats of and below the sixth court rank in status.⁸ This marks a fascinating *volte face* from the memorandum of 724. The law in effect completed the process of elevating cypress shingles to the level of conscious aristocratic privilege. Simultaneously with this elevation within indigenous practice, there was also confluence with the adopted Chinese building tradition. The Sanjō Palace scene discloses that, while shingles are used for the main covering of the roof, terracotta tiles were used to cover the ridge courses. Japanese experience had established that tiling, rather than lighter bamboo and thatch binding, was better able to resist the force of wind and rain at the vulnerable apex of a roof. The Japanese showed no xenophobic compunctions about employing the Chinese system if it meant a more efficient way of keeping out the rain.

Status considerations affected more than roof covering methods only. During the Heian period status distinctions were carefully established and regulated by means of sumptuary laws. The most important target for this legislation was gateway architecture, which as a result became the key exterior indicator of high court rank to the outside world (Figure 4.4). For example, an edict dating to the Kōnin era (810–824) declared that ‘those of the Third Court Rank and above, and also *sangi* [senior Dajōkan officials of the Fourth Court Rank], must have permission to build gateways on the main avenues. All others of the Fourth Rank and persons of a Fifth Rank should not build them’.⁹ The gateway thereby became a badge of rank, built with pride along



Fig 4.4
Heiji monogatari emaki,
handscroll,
second half
thirteenth
century. Night
attack on the
Sanjō Palace.
Detail showing
gateway to the
Sanjō Palace
(Courtesy of
Museum of
Fine Arts,
Boston.
Fenollosa-Weld
Collection)

the main avenues by those entitled by customary court practice to do so, and probably regarded jealously by those excluded from the practice.

Status and its prerogatives was also intrinsic to the rationale for the siting of palaces in the Heian capital. The blocks in the city in closest proximity to the emperor's palace were reserved by the city planners for persons of highest court rank, as had been the practice in Nara. Courtiers of high rank were allocated larger blocks while those lower in the aristocratic hierarchy were given smaller sub-divisions within main blocks. There were also differences in design between the *shinden-zukuri* of persons of different rank.¹⁰ Symmetry in the arrangement of wings was reserved for the palaces and mansions of members of the imperial household and of the most important aristocrats. In contrast, palaces used by lower levels of the aristocracy, together with the country retreats of the elite, had a less formal arrangement of buildings. The lower the status, the further distanced from Chinese practice.

As so often in Japanese history, study of Heian city architecture is made more difficult by the frequent occurrence of fires which obliterated all trace of many buildings from the visual record. Tragically, not a single Heian period *shinden* palace survives as direct testimony of the style of architecture of the age. The Imperial Palace in Kyoto, or Kyōto Gosho, as it is known today, has been rebuilt on innumerable occasions and now occupies an entirely different site from that of the original Heian-period palace. The Gosho as it stands today is a 1950s reconstruction of a mid-nineteenth century reconstruction, itself based on problematic pictorial sources. In lieu of actual buildings, the most useful procedure is to study paintings and the records of archaeological research to re-establish the architectural practices of the Heian period capital. However, paintings themselves must be used with caution despite their apparent wealth of beguiling detail. Many works, including the

Heiji monogatari emaki, were painted well after the events depicted and corroboration from other sources is essential for scholarly analysis. Those Heian-period *emakimono* which do survive, including the famed *Genji monogatari emaki*, were painted by artists whose interests appear to have been focused more on the courtiers and their romances than with architectural realism. Fortunately, some attention was paid to architectural details, such as the framing and the organisation of interior space, and these scenes are generally helpful in recreating the internal appearance of the lost buildings. Other paintings such as the *Nenjū gyōji emaki*, which purport to depict Heian-period customs and rituals, are available only in Edo-period copies and also require care in use as historical resources.

It is only since 1979 that significant progress has been made in comparing detailed descriptions of *shinden* architecture in contemporary accounts with the results of new archaeological discoveries.¹¹ As a result the Tsuchimikadono of Fujiwara Michinaga emerges as the most important example of a *shinden-zukuri* palace for purposes of examining the relationship between architecture and authority in this era. Here we have the most powerful court figure of the late tenth and the first decades of the eleventh century, together with the most magnificent palace of the age. Through intermarriage with the imperial family and the skilful manipulation of the office of regent,¹² the Fujiwara family had become the most powerful force in the government and politics of the Heian court. So strong was Fujiwara Michinaga's position between 995–1027 that the anonymous writer of the *Ōkagami*, the tales of Michinaga's life and times compiled at the turn of the twelfth century, wrote: 'The regency has never left his house, and we may assume that it never will.'¹³ Michinaga himself became father-in-law to three emperors. Three more emperors were to be his grandsons and he became uncle to two more. His power reached a zenith in 1016 when he assumed the office of regent in order to rule on behalf of his nephew, the Emperor Go Ichijō. The following year Michinaga became Grand Minister of State, the highest government office.

Tsuchimikado-dono was Michinaga's principal palace and residence during these years of unrivalled power. The palace occupied two entire blocks in the north-east section of the city, each some 90 metres by 100 metres. It faced onto Tsuchimikado Ōji, one of the principal east-west avenues of the capital from which it took its name, and Higashi no Tōin Ōji, an avenue running north-south. Michinaga inherited this prime site from his father-in-law, Minamoto Masanobu, who had been Minister of the Left (Sadaijin), the senior minister in the court government.¹⁴

The main buildings of the palace were placed to the direct north of an extensive garden boasting an artificial lake and island. This was a special feature of *shinden-zukuri* and required a significant modification of the Chinese planning canon of a southerly approach to buildings of importance. The lake was now in the way of an approach from the south, and as a consequence the main gateways to this palace, as well as to most *shinden* palaces, were moved to the east and west compound walls. This entirely changed the flow of ritual space as well as practical usage of Heian palaces and mansions.

To the north of the main buildings of the Tsuchimikado-dono, numerous service buildings such as kitchens, storehouses and accommodation for servants were located. Their precise placement and size is not known. A riding ground 200 metres in length, running north-south to the east of the palace buildings, was set up as Michinaga was a particularly keen horseman and enjoyed both riding and watching races.¹⁵

The years from 991 to 1027, when Tsuchimikado-dono served as Michinaga's palace and government headquarters, were decades of extraordinary cultural vitality. Murasaki Shikibu's *Tale of Genji* belongs to this era and it is not inconceivable that Michinaga himself was the model for Prince Genji. Whatever the historical truth in this epic tale, we are given tantalising glimpses of how the *shinden-zukuri* palaces such as Tsuchimikado-dono were used for daily life and court ritual – a sliding door here, a half-rolled blind there. The narrative scrolls illustrating the *Tale of Genji*, dating from about a century later, also show scenes of the daily life of the courtiers. We can see the early use of *tatami* mats for seating purposes on wooden floors, bamboo screens (*sudare*) hanging from the eaves for shade and privacy, and sliding screens (*fusuma*) acting as flexible interior-space dividers. The aristocratic world of the Heian *shinden* residence was one in which the building was an organic part of a garden landscape. There were few fixed walls between exterior and interior, allowing the garden and the sense of nature to flow inside to the world of the private preoccupations of the aristocrats. The paintings on the *fusuma* depicted themes from nature and showed the same concerns with the passage of human life mirroring the passing of the seasons as are to be found in the *Tale of Genji*.

The creation of the spacious and sumptuous palace of Tsuchimikado-dono was a direct response to a significant shift in the nature of political power in the middle of the Heian period, the ceding of actual power from reigning emperors to the Fujiwara. The first century of Heian government had been dominated by politically active emperors, starting with Emperor Kammu who had taken the decision to abandon Nara in order to break the nexus on power of the Buddhist sects. After the death of the third emperor to reign from Kyoto, the Emperor Saga (r. 809–823), the Fujiwara exerted greater influence at the court, a process which reached its culmination with Michinaga. This shift in power from direct imperial rule to rule by the Fujiwara as regents was reflected in the pattern of palace-construction activity. In the initial era of imperial power the palaces and mansions of the imperial family were, predictably, the most magnificent buildings in the capital. The most important was the Daidairi, or main imperial palace and the ceremonial and administrative focus of government. With the ascendancy of the Fujiwara by the turn of the eleventh century, palace construction by the imperial household ceased completely. Instead, the Fujiwara became the patrons for virtually all new palace and mansion construction of consequence. There was precise correspondence between actual power and building activity. In the era of their dominance in the eleventh century, the Fujiwara were to be responsible for the building of some twenty new palaces and mansions. During the same years the imperial family built none. Michinaga himself had eight palaces and mansions in addition to the grand Tsuchimikado-dono. These included Higashi Sanjō-dono, Biwa-dono, Ichijō-dono and Nijō-dono.¹⁶

The private palaces of the Fujiwara became the *de facto* centres of government as power moved away from the formally constituted institutions of imperial authority founded in the Nara period to a more familial form of authority based upon the power of the Fujiwara. Their dominance reached a point where, after the accession to the throne of Michinaga's nephew Go Ichijō in 1016, the new emperor resided at Tsuchimikado-dono for a period of six months.¹⁷ Go Ichijō had been driven away from the Imperial Palace in 1016 after fire had destroyed it, and his uncle Michinaga was best placed to offer appropriate alternative arrangement for housing the emperor. Go Ichijō was not the only emperor by any means to use a Fujiwara mansion as his palace.¹⁸ This practice reached a climax with Tsuchimikado-dono, for it was here that actual government was conducted. Tsuchimikado-dono became the *de facto* Imperial Palace, in the same way that Michinaga was *de facto* emperor. Three emperors were to be born at Tsuchimikado-dono and it was within its precincts that Fujiwara daughters were betrothed to emperors. The gossamer curtains and blinds which surrounded its chambers delineated the real corridors of power. The official Imperial Palace, some 500 metres away to the west, was little more than an empty shell. Fire and typhoon winds ruthlessly claimed its buildings in relentless succession in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The loss of authority sapped the will to rebuild the palace and gradually the Imperial Palace site became an open field populated not by the tall poppies of the court but by more modest wild flowers. It was finally abandoned as the Imperial Palace in the early thirteenth century and the Tsuchimikado-dono site was designated for future use as the Imperial Palace. This serves today as the site of the much rebuilt Kyoto Gosho.¹⁹

Towards the end of the eleventh century the locus of political power again shifted, with the reassertion of the political power of the emperors by the expedient of early retirement from office.²⁰ This enabled them to exercise power over young emperors and to conduct government from the position of their ostensible retirement, unencumbered by official duties, protracted court rituals or by the limelight of reigning emperor status. The practice of government by retired emperor (*insei*) was instituted by Emperor Shirakawa in 1086. He was to be followed in this practice by the Emperors Toba and Go Shirakawa.

The change in power structure once more had a concomitant effect on architecture, in the same way that the earlier pattern of palace construction and usage had reflected the Fujiwara political ascendancy. It now became necessary to build mansions and palaces from which to pursue the new forms of government by retired emperors. These 'retirement palaces' became the centres of power in the late Heian period but, in keeping with their more private role, their buildings were less formally organised and used for fewer ceremonial occasions than had been the *shinden-zukuri* of the early and middle Heian period. Formal court ritual depended upon formal symmetry in building design in order to facilitate ceremonies for hierarchically stratified participants, in which rank was equated with position in ceremonies on the official left or right. This was reflected in court titles such as 'Minister of the Left' and 'Minister of the Right'. Typical of the new generation of palaces were Shirakawa-in and Toba-dono,²¹ which abandoned the symmetrical wings and

connecting corridors common to the earlier Heian *shinden* because the rituals themselves were no longer conducted at these 'retirement' palaces.²² This represented a profoundly important shift away from the Chinese-inspired symmetry in palace and other public buildings in the later Heian period, and a significant step towards general use of asymmetrical plans in the evolution of Japanese residential architecture.

The shift of power to the retired or cloistered emperors effectively ended Fujiwara domination of the court. The effect on architecture was also marked. The ossification of Fujiwara power led to the fossilisation of their palaces. Tsuchimikado-dono and Kōyō-in, beloved by Michinaga and Yorimichi respectively, continued to be ravaged by fires and to be rebuilt in progressively less and less ostentatious and inspiring form. By the end of the Heian period, the Fujiwara had shifted the venue for their ceremonial and ritual activities to the Higashi Sanjō-dono simply because, by the twelfth century, it remained the only example of a symmetrically designed *shinden-zukuri* mansion in existence in the capital, and this formal organisation was essential for the conduct of the formal rites of the seasons demanded by court ceremony.²³ By this stage the Fujiwara rituals were also removed from the realities of power.

Reference has been made to the frequency of fire in the Heian capital. Fire was unquestionably nothing less than a catalyst for the enactment of change in architecture and authority in the Heian period. Fire systematically and periodically swept clean the palace sites of the capital, compelling rebuilding but also offering the opportunity to reassess architectural design according to changing political imperatives. Change was not, however, always the result of conscious political decisions. As we have seen, the impact of fire was at times incremental: the decision to abandon a site as important as that of the Imperial Palace itself was reached as a result of a sequence of natural disasters coinciding with the cumulative effect of a drift of power away from the emperor.

Our attention is once again directed to the Sanjō Palace fire and the searing destruction of the flames depicted in that immortal scene. The inherent flammability of the materials employed in the building of the *shinden* mansions meant that they were in constant danger of destruction by fire. The indigenous preference for roofs of cypress-bark shingle, and for interiors illuminated by oil lamps and divided by papered screens and flowing silk curtains, was a sure formula for disaster. In the twelfth century the tendency towards conflagration of *shinden-zukuri* palaces and mansions was exacerbated by civil disorder in the capital. The Heiji scroll scene showing the burning of the Sanjō Palace may be spectacular but it was by no means an isolated incident. Tsuchimikado-dono itself was consumed by fire three times. After its initial construction in 991 it was destroyed by fire in 1016, the same year as the Imperial Palace was also destroyed by fire, to be rebuilt by Michinaga over the next two years. In 1031, four years after Michinaga's death, it was again destroyed by fire, to be rebuilt by his son, Yorimichi. History repeated itself with another fire in 1040 after which Yorimichi steadfastly rebuilt the palace. When fire destroyed the palace again in 1064 the passion to rebuild could not be rekindled. Instead Yorimichi chose to live in his own detached villa at Uji, the Kōyō-in, well clear of the capital and its conflagrations.²⁴

Fire and its inescapable association with the architecture of authority in the Heian period profoundly influenced Japanese attitudes towards permanence. It poignantly reinforced Shinto notions of inevitable decline and decay as exemplified in nature, as well as Buddhist precepts of the cycle of birth and rebirth and the transitory nature of existence. The immortal and haunting words at the beginning of *The Tale of the Heike* echo this heightened awareness:

The Bell of the Gion Temple tolls into every man's heart to warn him that all is vanity and evanescence. The fading flowers of the sāla trees by the Buddha's death-bed bear witness to the truth that all who flourish are destined to decay. Yes, pride must have its fall, for it is as unsubstantial as a dream on a spring night.²⁵

These sombre words seem to apply equally to the buildings which represented authority in the Heian capital. The Sanjō Palace and Michinaga's Tsuchimikado-dono were a case of pride having its inevitable fall, for they proved to be as 'unsubstantial as a dream on a spring night'. Those who are born to rule also have an affinity, it would seem, with buildings which are made to be destroyed.

Architecture and the Contemplative Counterpoise to Warrior Authority

In the Kamakura period (1185–1333), authority takes on a more aggressive countenance with the usurpation of the power of the court aristocracy by regional warrior bands. The process culminated with the victory of the Minamoto over the Taira in 1185 and the establishment of a military headquarters or shogunate at Kamakura, the local power base of the Minamoto. The complex nature of authority in the Kamakura period is frequently described by the term 'diarchy' or dual authority, for in reality there were two governments, the old civilian government of the Heian court and the new 'tent government' or *bakufu* of the Kamakura warriors.²⁶ After the demise of the founding Kamakura shogun Minamoto Yoritomo, the family of Hōjō Masako, his formidable wife, was to govern as regents to a series of titular shogun until its overthrow in 1333. Thus we have a situation in which the Hōjō were exercising power in the name of a figurehead shogun, who himself derived title and claim to legitimacy from the authority of the emperor. The governmental structure of Kamakura operated on the basis of a fine interweaving of feudal-type loyalties in a multi-layered hierarchy of lords and vassals. Kamakura control extended into the regions through a system of *jito* and *shugo*, or estate stewards and provincial governors.

Central to the conventional interpretation of authority in Japanese medieval history has been our understanding that the title *sei-i-tai shōgun* or 'barbarian subduing generalissimo' was conferred upon Minamoto Yoritomo by the imperial throne as legitimising his position as military hegemon. It is equally well known that this title was assumed only in 1192, some seven years after the defeat of the Taira forces at Dan no Ura in 1185. It is far more significant

for our present discussion to recognise that this title was of little contemporary significance during the early stages of Yoritomo's eminence, and that the emphasis upon the shogunal title comes from interpretations of later history. In the fluid political situation following the Minamoto victory of 1185, several titles were in fact used for Yoritomo, only one of which was *shōgun*. For example, Jeffrey Mass notes that *shōgun* was used as a title for some documents emanating from the new administration in Kamakura but that 'the office of shogun was neither retained by Yoritomo until his death [in 1199], nor bequeathed to his son and successor Yoriie'.²⁷ Yoritomo instead made personal use of his earlier court title of *utaisho*, a position of commander in the inner palace guards, while being referred to commonly by his own vassals as *tono*.²⁸ The lack of standardisation of titular reference reveals uncertainty about the appropriate way of signifying new authority and the coexistence of different functional roles, but the point of reference is frequently architectural. *Tono* meant both 'palace' and 'lord'. The character occurs as a suffix to palace names in the Heian period, as in Michinaga's Tsuchimikado-dono. It had been used in the *Man'yōshū* to designate the buildings of the aristocracy, which it distinguished from *ya* or plebeian housing. As lords lived in palaces, the association was inevitable.

Another title used by Yoritomo was *buke no tōryō*, which means literally 'the ridge-pole of the warrior house'. An example of this usage is to be found in the *Heiji monogatari*, which notes that Yoritomo was already *buke no tōryō* when he received the title of *sei-i-tai shōgun* from the retired emperor.²⁹ *Tōryō* is a supreme example of architectural metonymy. The ridge-pole is the apex of the roof of any building and its insertion at the intersection of the roof planes is marked by religious ceremony and celebration. For any person at the top of a hierarchical structure, such as a warrior house or a household of craftsmen, it was an obvious and immediately comprehensible role description. The title was used in the Nara court to refer to the head of an aristocratic clan but came into common parlance from the late tenth century to designate the leaders of the bands of warriors which were becoming an increasingly significant element in local and national affairs.³⁰ Later its usage contracted to refer only to the chief master builder at a traditional construction site but at Kamakura it constitutes an architectonic definition of warrior authority.

The warrior government was based at Kamakura but, as was the case with the city of Heian before it, virtually nothing remains of the thirteenth-century city and its architecture. It was consumed in the jealous fires ignited by the Ashikaga warriors as they violently overthrew the Kamakura *bakufu* in 1333. Although the lack of extant buildings makes interpretation difficult, the dearth of thirteenth-century buildings today is not simply a result of fire and other misfortune. The Kamakura shogunate did not regard the creation of an impressive built environment for its governmental headquarters as an important priority in the consolidation of its power. Although observing the urban convention of a grid plan with a central avenue, which still bisects the city today, Kamakura as a city was basically a regional warrior camp over which was laid the functional architectural matrix for governmental administration. The lack of an extensive building programme in Kamakura is not surprising. After all, for whose benefit would great monuments have been built? The

authority of Kamakura rule was at best equivocal, shared with that of imperial Kyoto. As a result, its architecture was also equivocal. The Hōjō exercised power under the authority of a shogun, himself deriving legitimacy from the authority of the imperial institution in Kyoto and often, in the later stages of the government, himself also a member of the court. The nature of authority was further complicated by an ever-shifting balance of power within the aristocratic factions of the Heian imperial court and tensions between the Kamakura shogunate and local warrior power throughout the land. There was a constantly changing pattern of local allegiance, and frequent need for arbitrated settlement of disputes over land between warriors, and between warriors and courtiers.

Kamakura rule was equally unemphatic architecturally when it came to patronage of religious institutions. For much of the thirteenth century, the temples and shrines sponsored by the warriors were of the nature of private institutions. The cult of Hachiman occupied a strong place in the official beliefs and religious practices of the new government. The Minamoto adopted this protector of the state in the Shinto pantheon as their family tutelary deity and Yoritomo moved a shrine to Hachiman to a site beside his residence in Kamakura, as early as 1180. The Tsurugaoka Hachimangū became, in effect, the establishment shrine of the Kamakura government, with the vassals of the Minamoto obliged to participate in its upkeep and rituals. However its size and style was subdued, far removed from the trumpeting official presence of Tōdaiji at Nara.³¹

From its inception, the commitment of Kamakura government to both a rule of written law and a rule of religious propriety is impressive, as is the absence of bombast from its own architecture during its first half century. The civil code of 1232, formulated by Hōjō Yasutoki, starts with injunctions to keep the shrines of the gods, along with temples and pagodas, in good repair and for services to be 'diligently celebrated', but this should not be interpreted as a statement of architectural ambition.³² Perhaps the violent experience of their rise to power had also given warriors different architectural priorities from those who preceded them. Of all those who exercised power in medieval Japan, none knew better than the warriors of Kamakura how little effort was needed to destroy buildings constructed with such enormous effort and expense.

An architecture of authority in the sense that we have been exploring is in evidence only at the beginning and towards the end of Kamakura rule. The first architectural projects of Kamakura grew naturally out of the Minamoto military victory over the Taira. Sponsorship of the rebuilding of Tōdaiji and Kōfukuji in Nara by the Minamoto was a timely and effective statement of their desire for legitimacy. Both temples had been largely destroyed by fire started by their Taira adversaries in 1180, so Minamoto sponsorship of their rebuilding gave a parallel architectural dimension to their military victory. More importantly, patronage of Nara temples long associated with the imperial court was nothing less than a statement of *lèse-majesté* by the newly established warrior regime. Such a resort to architectural projects as a method of buttressing the authority of a new regime is a common strategy and, in employing this well-tried strategy, the Kamakura warriors did much to stake

their claim to moral authority in the heartland of traditional authority at the expense of the Taira.

After the brief excursion into architectural endeavours in Nara, there was to be a hiatus of a generation before the Kamakura shogunate again embarked upon monumental construction. The serious commitment of warrior government to building projects in the city of Kamakura itself was belated, dating from the 1250s. For the first half-century of Kamakura rule there was a deep preoccupation with the mechanisms of government, formulation of legal codes and judicial settlement of disputes over land and succession. The exception to this rule was the building of a Great Buddha of Kamakura and the surrounding hall in emulation of the Daibutsuden of Tōdaiji. Planned first in 1238, the statue was completed in 1252. It was a formidable 11.36 metres in height and 29 metres in circumference around its base, making it larger than the Tōdaiji Great Buddha which had been rebuilt under Kamakura patronage some 60 years earlier. Although much repaired it still stands today, now exposed to the elements since the Great Hall which housed it was destroyed in 1495.³³ Despite its impressive size, the Kamakura Daibutsu had a religious purpose very different from that of its Nara counterpart. This was no Vairocana, representing the centralising force in the universe and the controlling power of government. Instead, the central deity was the Amida Buddha, dedicated to a personal form of salvation of greater meaning to a warrior class living on the sword's edge between life and death in the service of their lords. The Amida cult had grown rapidly in popularity amongst the Kamakura warriors caught up in the movement led by the charismatic Buddhist saint, Hōnen. Piety, more than propaganda, was the motive behind this monumental creation: in Nara the reverse was the case.

The shift to a more deliberate architecture of authority was occasioned by three significant developments: a decisive shift in the balance of power between court and warriors in favour of Kamakura following the abortive attempt to restore imperial power by the retired Emperor Go Toba (1219–21), the Hōjō success in checking the power of military rivals, and the defeat of the Mongols.

The military threat posed by the grandiose territorial ambitions of the Mongols, dating from the year 1266 until the failure of the second invasion in 1281, completely absorbed the energies and resources of the warrior class. It was only after the destruction of Kublai Khan's second fleet that the Hōjō, under Tokimune as regent, turned their attention and resources to creating civic and religious monuments which would be comparable in scale and sophistication with the architecture of Nara and Kyoto.³⁴

This era saw the establishment of the great Rinzai Zen sect monasteries in Kamakura, including Kenchōji and Engakuji. The founding of the warrior government at Kamakura had coincided with the penetration of new influences from China, particularly from the architectural and cultural attainments of the Song Dynasty, and the discovery of Chan Buddhism by the Japanese. This form of meditative Buddhism, which became known as Zen in Japan, was eventually adopted with enthusiasm by leading members of the warrior class. In Zen the warriors found a form of introspective discipline and self-discovery which was the perfect spiritual complement to the loyalty and self-sacrifice demanded of them in their service to their lords. It was to be

in the more contemplative authority of Zen monastic institutions that the Kamakura rulers found a contemplative counterpoise to their military power. However this personal appeal of Zen to individual warriors was, historically, secondary to its institutional importance to the Kamakura shogunate. With its strong association with Song power and culture, Zen initially satisfied the yearning for political and cultural legitimacy of the warrior elite. It was only later that it addressed the spiritual yearnings of the ordinary warrior.³⁵ Zen monasteries were established around the city of Kamakura under the patronage of the government in a system of five official monasteries (*Gozan*). The most important Zen sect was Rinzai, founded by the monk Eisai together with a number of Chinese monks who had been exiled to Japan after the collapse of the Song Dynasty in 1279, towards the end of Kamakura rule.

Of the Zen temples founded at Kamakura itself, Engakuji is one of the most important to survive. Unfortunately, the buildings now standing at the temple site are not the original structures and cannot be used for the purposes of this study to investigate the relationship between Kamakura-period architecture and authority. Over the centuries fire ravaged the temple several times, most particularly in 1563 when the Shariden was burnt to the ground.³⁶ The present Shariden is a Kamakura-period building, but not originally from Engakuji itself. It was constructed as the Buddha Hall (*Butsuden*) of Taiheiji, one of the Kamakura nunneries, and was moved to its present location after a fire in the 1560s as a substitute for the earlier building.³⁷ It may be of Kamakura vintage and style but it is a lesser architectural work than its predecessors, equipped with a crude reed thatch roof added at a later date which destroys the harmony of its proportions.

Hōjō Tokiyori and the Jizōdō of Shōfukuji

To find a building which provides an accurate picture of the official architecture of Kamakura, it is necessary to travel to the hinterland of the Kantō Plain along the Kamakura Kaidō, that major artery of travel, communication and commerce which linked Kamakura, through the provinces of the Japan Alps, to the capital of Kyoto in the east. The highway also acted as a vehicle for the diffusion of culture and building technology from Kamakura into the inland provinces. A branch temple of the Rinzai Zen sect, Shōfukuji, was founded *circa* 1270 at a post-town in the vicinity of modern Higashi Murayama. A small Jizōdō, or Hall of Jizō, the guardian deity of children, stands to the left of the main temple buildings. Although physically removed from the centre of Kamakura authority and repaired extensively in 1407,³⁸ this modestly scaled building, the size of a two-storey house, is nevertheless the most direct evidence of architecture associated with Kamakura authority to survive to the present day (Figure 4.5).

According to the temple records the hall was built as the result of the patronage of Hōjō Tokiyori, who fell ill during a hunting expedition in these remoter regions of the Musashi Plain in the year 1278.³⁹ Cared for and cured by a priest of the recently founded Shōfukuji, Tokiyori, according to temple tradition, commissioned master builders from Kamakura to build a hall dedicated to the bodhisattva Jizō. It was this Jizō that Tokiyori believed had been

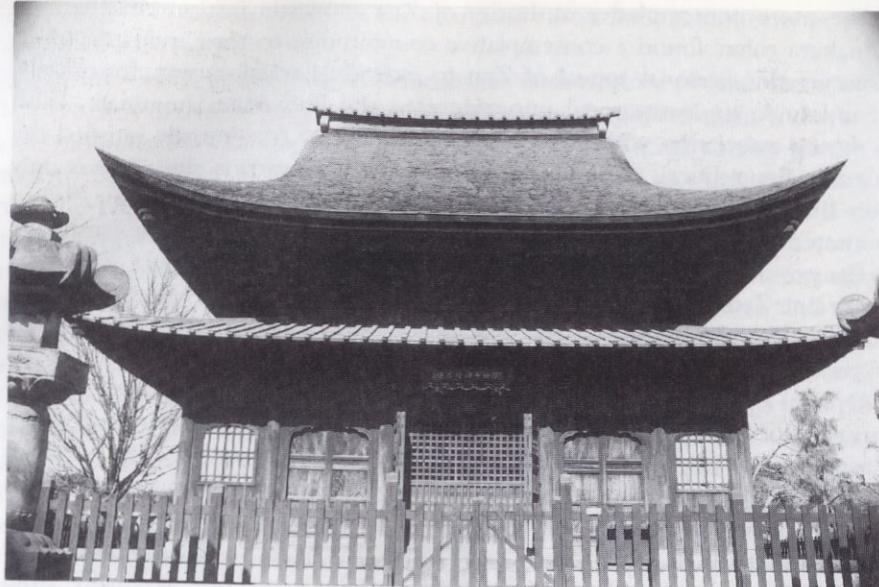


Fig 4.5
Jizōdō,
Shōfukuji,
Higashi
Murayama,
Tokyo. Front
view

responsible – through the person of an aged monk of the temple – for his recovery. Like many temple records, this document should not be taken at face value, particularly as Tokiyori died in 1263, 15 years before the incident is reported to have taken place. However there is no reason to reject the probability of a relationship between the Jizōdō and the master builders of Kamakura: Tokiyori is known as the first of the Hōjō regents to have become a serious disciple of Zen and to sponsor construction of Zen temples.⁴⁰

Fig 4.6
Jizōdō,
Shōfukuji.
Front elevation
(Source:
Bunka-chō,
*Kokubō jūyō
bunkazai
[kenzōbutsu]
jissoku zushū*)

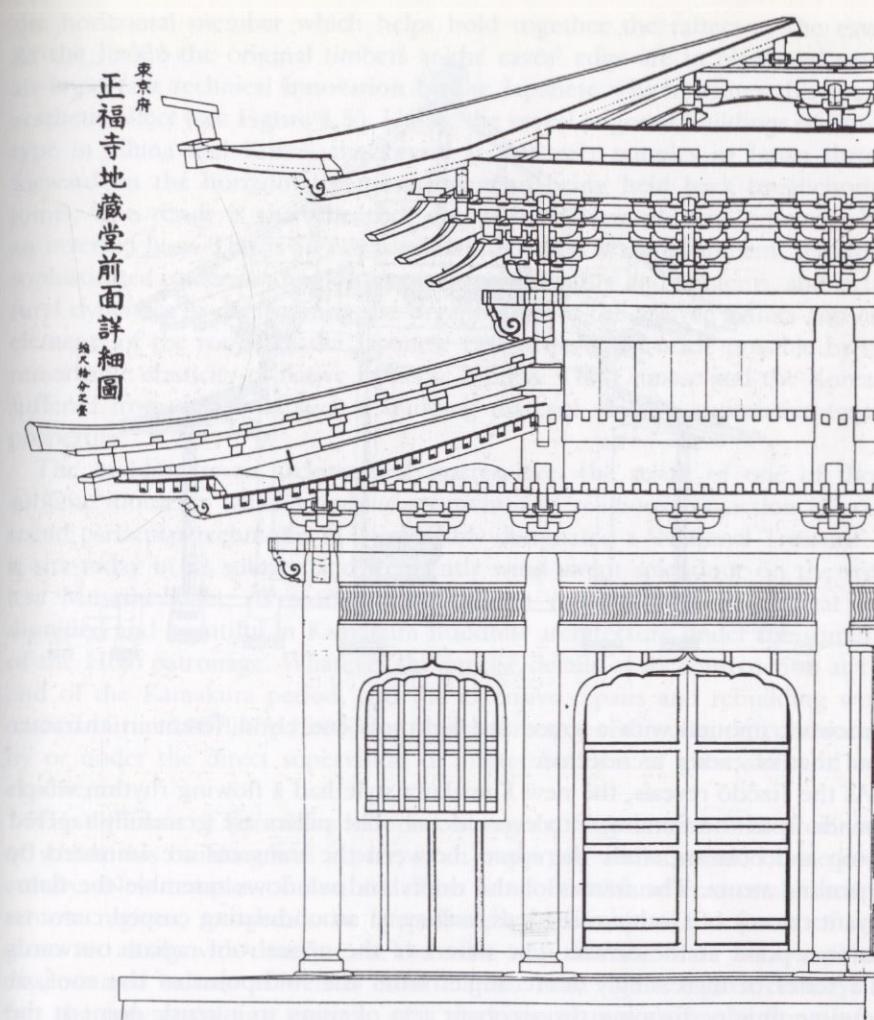
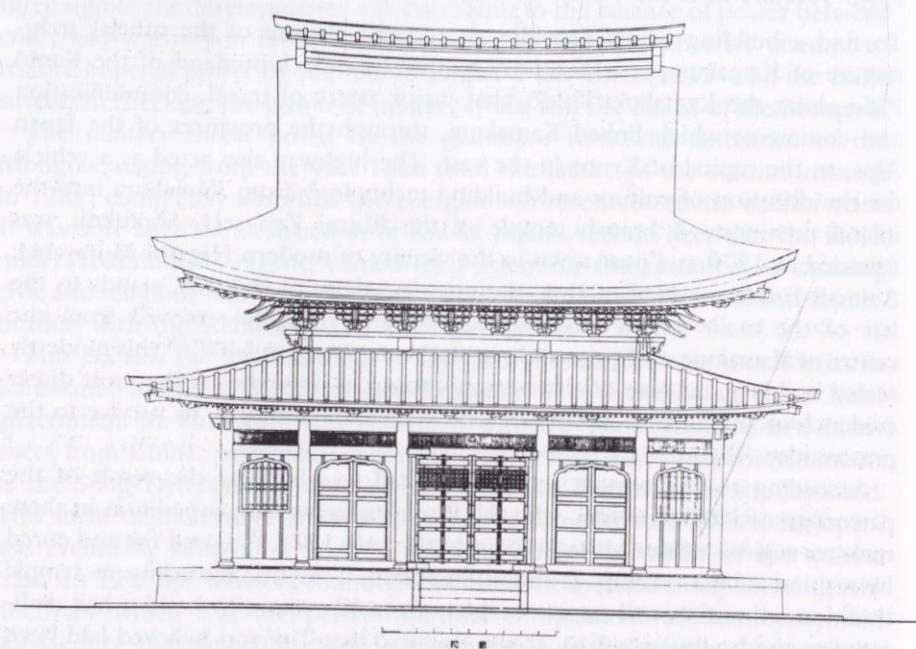
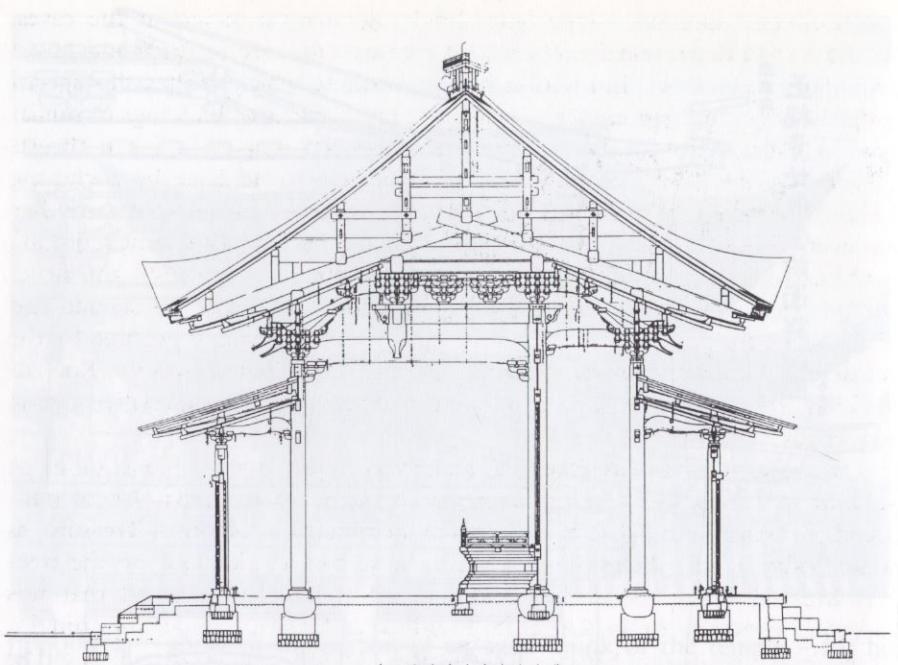


Fig 4.7
Jizōdō,
Shōfukuji.
Detail of front
elevation and
longitudinal
section
(Source:
Bunka-chō,
*Kokubō jūyō
bunkazai
[kenzōbutsu]
jissoku zushū*)

The Jizōdō is a small structure with an upper hip-gabled roof of cypress-wood shingles (*kokera-buki*), and a lower pent roof covered with copper sheet tiles (Figure 4.6).⁴¹ From the exterior it appears to be a two-storey building, but the interior is open, rising through a series of corbelled bracket arms and cantilevers to the plain flat ceiling (Figure 4.7). Together with the gracefully attenuated timber-frame structure and the curved doors and window frames, it is a faithful expression of the Song-influenced style of building which became the architectural orthodoxy of Kamakura. The building is structurally far more sophisticated than temple halls of earlier times in Japan, employing horizontal tie beams which penetrate the pillars (Figure 4.7). This technique, utilising the sharper-edged, laminated, steel chisels developed in the Kamakura period, gave structural strength and resistance to the torsion experienced during earthquakes without resorting to the heavy, external ‘wrap-around’ bracing which had been the standard structural system of both religious and secular monumental architecture from the Nara period. The stylistic result was a building

Fig 4.8
Jizōdō,
Shōfukuji.
Transverse
section
(Source:
Bunka-chō,
*Kokuhō jūyō
bunkazai
[kenzōbutsu]
jissoku zushū*)



framework imbued with a grace and lightness entirely different in character from that of earlier architecture.

As the Jizōdō reveals, the new Kamakura style had a flowing rhythm which extends from the framing into every detail. The pillars are gracefully tapered at top and bottom, while the spaces between the transoms are animated by serpentine struts. The frames of the doors and windows resemble the flamboyant tracery of Gothic cathedrals, rolling in an undulating cusped curve to rise to a point at the centre. The rafters of the upper roof radiate outwards in a series of increasingly acute angles from the mid-point of the roof, at the same time performing the acrobatic feat of rising to a gentle point at the gable intersections. The profusion of bracketing detail on the upper storey, an assemblage of bracket block and bearing arm, cantilever and other crafted detail, all flow in curvilinear patterns to delight the eye and inspire the spirit. The hip roof is the most remarkable feature of the entire building, curving upwards and outwards with a grace that seems to defy the force of gravity (see Figure 4.5). Herein lies the greatest achievement of the master builders of this age for, in shaping Zen temple roofs, the Kamakura builders devised a way of going beyond Chinese architectural conventions. The upper rafters, mostly hidden from view by the lower level of decorative rafters, operate as cantilevers to carry the eaves, while the bracket sets in the upper level, intricate in detail, are almost entirely decorative in function. They are designed to attract attention and to proclaim the supreme skills of their builders, whatever the more pious intentions of the patron. The real work is done by large, self-effacing cantilevers hidden within the shell of the roof (Figure 4.8).

The curvature of the roof of the Jizōdō is remarkably strong in expressive power, an aesthetic effect achieved technically by clever use of the *kayaoi*,

the horizontal member which helps hold together the rafters at the eaves. At the Jizōdō the original timbers at the eaves' edge are in place and reveal an important technical innovation by the Japanese which creates this special aesthetic effect (see Figure 4.5). Unlike the eaves' edges of buildings of similar type in China and Korea, the *kayaoi* at Zen sect temples in Japan thrusts forward on the horizontal plane rather than being held back by anchoring joints. The result is that the roof curves both upwards and outwards like an inverted bow. This is an extraordinary technical accomplishment, requiring sophisticated understanding of proportions, curvature and tangents, and structural dynamics in determining the organisation of the splayed rafters and end elements of the roofs. In the Japanese case it has been made possible by the remarkable elasticity of native Japanese cypress. The Chinese and the Koreans suffered from a lack of such a building material with its superlative tensile properties.

The building is an architectural masterpiece, the result of one of those sublime moments which combine creativity and religious conviction to transcend particular technique. It is justifiably designated a 'National Treasure' as it sits today in its solitary and frequently wind-swept splendour on the treeless Musashi Plain, its soaring roof-lines an encapsulation of all that was dignified and beautiful in Kamakura Buddhist architecture under the stimulus of the Hōjō patronage. Whatever the precise details of its construction at the end of the Kamakura period, and the extensive repairs and rebuilding work carried out in 1407, the Jizōdō is a work of metropolitan culture, constructed by or under the direct supervision of master builders of great skill and vast experience.

The diffusion of Kamakura influence along the highways into the provinces, of which this building was a part, is an important characteristic of medieval culture. New temples of Zen and Pure Land Buddhism were established in remote regions, to spread the latest building techniques and forms of religious art along with doctrine, in the same way that the Nara *kokubunji* had disseminated culture as well as control from Nara in the eighth century. In fact the only remaining example of a three-storey pagoda in the Song-influenced style of Kamakura is to be found in the Japan Alps province of Shinano further along the same Kamakura highway from Shōfukuji. The octagonal three-storey pagoda of Anrakuji, tucked away at the edge of the Shiodaira Plain near Ueda, is the result of metropolitan master carpenters working under Hōjō patronage, the same combination of talent and resources which created the Jizōdō of Shōfukuji. In the Kamakura period, lineal descendants of the Hōjō family had occupied the stronghold of Shiodaira and sponsored temple construction at nearby Shiodaira. The Zen monk Shōkoku Isen was invited to open Anrakuji as a Zen temple to coincide with a visit of Hōjō Yoshimasa to Shiodaira in 1277, the year before the problematic posthumous visit to the Shōfukuji by his father. The pagoda built for the new temple conformed to the most sophisticated stylistic precepts of Zen architecture also evident at the Jizōdō, including the more extraordinary design and technical virtuosity demonstrated in the octagonal curved roofs and radial raftering beneath (Figure 4.9).⁴² The Jizōdō at Shōfukuji is, therefore, not alone as an example of the diffusion of Kamakura building style and techniques along

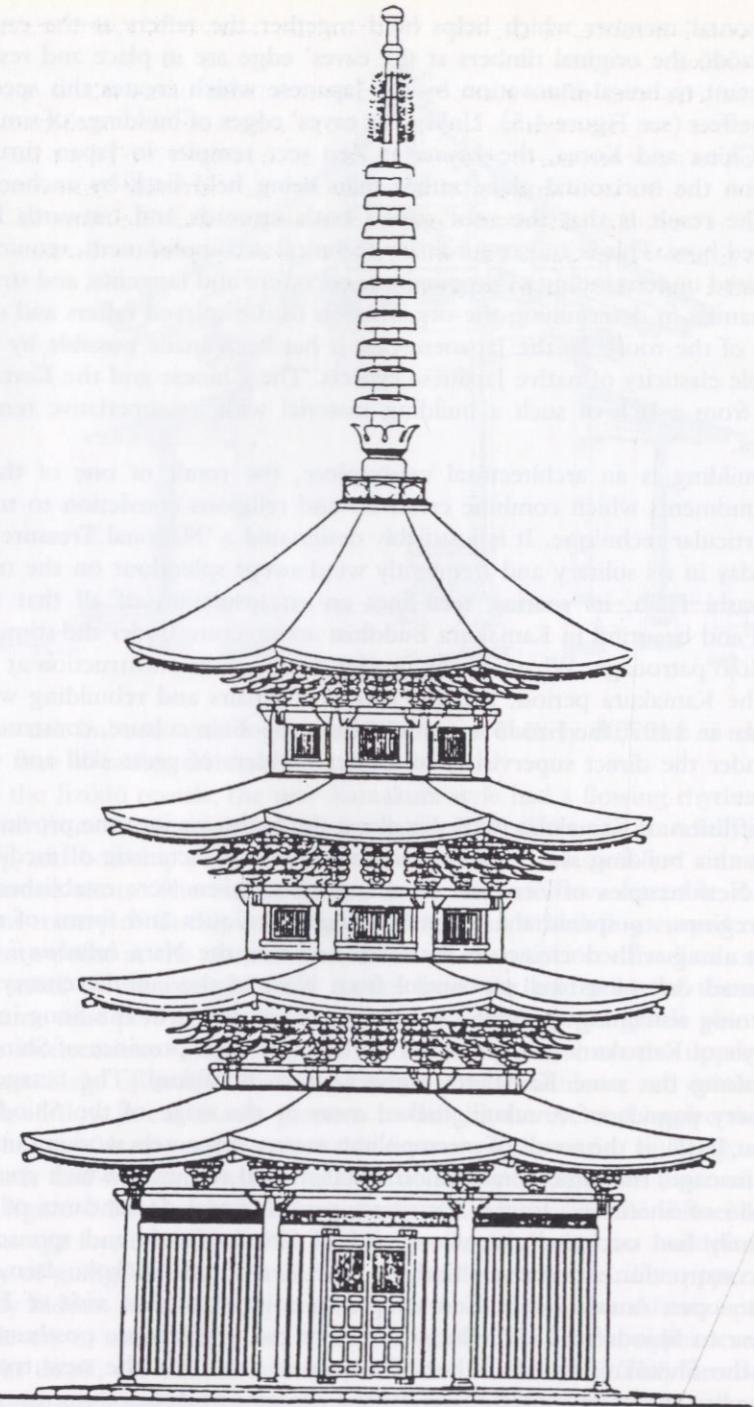


Fig 4.9
Pagoda of
Anrakuji,
Nagano prefec-
ture. Elevation
(Source:
Nagano-ken
kyōiku iinkai
(ed.), *Kokubō
Anrakuji
sanjūnotō shūri
kōji hōkokusho*)

the transportation routes of the day as part of the osmosis of central culture into the regions.

Given the character of its authority and the violence of its fall, it is not surprising that the Kamakura shogunate bequeathed so few architectural monuments to posterity, particularly in the city of Kamakura itself. The Jizōdō at Shōfukuji, despite its isolation and scale, reveals this with clarity and conviction. It is to buildings dispersed along the hinterland and highways of the Kamakura sphere of influence that we need to travel in order to discover the contemplative counterpoise to warrior power.

The Symbol and Substance of Momoyama and Early Edo Authority

The age of castles (1576–1639) was a period strictly circumscribed by the circumstances of power. It was also a period indelibly stamped with the authority of the three great national unifiers: Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616). During the civil wars of the sixteenth century, these daimyo rose by diverse means to become the heads of regional power blocs. Then, as the scale of conflict spread and power coalesced, they launched their bid for national hegemony.

Nobunaga, Hideyoshi and Ieyasu were by no means the only remarkable regional leaders in this century of divisive civil war but, in historical hindsight, they stand out as having made the most visible political and architectural contributions. Nobunaga, the lord of Owari, succeeded by brutal means to break the power of the great Buddhist sects, and then to extend his military rule over most of central Japan. Hideyoshi, one of his vassals and a great organisational genius, achieved the national unification to which Nobunaga had aspired but not reached, and added an increasingly imperial dimension to his authority. Ieyasu, a minor domainal lord and vassal under Hideyoshi, founded by military means and political strategies an enduring shogunal dynasty which ruled Japan until 1868. The authority and power of the three unifiers summoned forth the great castles of this era. Nobunaga was responsible for Azuchi, Hideyoshi for castles at Osaka, Fushimi and Jurakudai (amongst others), and Ieyasu for the greatest castle of all, at Edo.

Fortifications in Japan have a long history but the castle had only a brief period of full technical and stylistic maturity. This was the period of 62 years beginning in 1576 with the construction of Azuchi, which inaugurated the age, and ending with the reconstruction of the keep of Edo Castle in 1638. Before 1576 castles were simple fortifications. After 1638 castle construction virtually ceased following the effective imposition of sanctions by the Tokugawa *bakufu* as part of the institutionalisation of its nationwide authority.

In the later sixteenth century and first half of the seventeenth century, the character of castle construction corresponds closely with the evolution of the power of ruling authority. This process may be divided into three clearly identifiable phases, each closely related to a particular stage in castle construction. The first dates from 1576 and the establishment of Azuchi, and lasts until 1600, the period now referred to by historians as the Momoyama period. This was the period of most intense national struggle towards unification, first under Nobunaga, and after his death in 1582, under Hideyoshi.

The second period lasts from 1600 to 1615, a period confusingly referred to by historians as either the late Momoyama or the early Edo period. As this ambivalence of nomenclature suggests, it was a transitional era following the military victory of the Tokugawa forces over the Toyotomi and their allies at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600. It was an uneasy time, an era of false peace in which both the Tokugawa and the Toyotomi, in anticipation of a final showdown, buttressed their authority with massive building programmes. As inevitably as night follows day the final confrontation between these two great powers came with two sieges by Tokugawa forces against the Toyotomi headquarters at Osaka Castle, the first during the winter of 1614–1615, and the second in the summer of 1615. The sieges ended with the annihilation of the Toyotomi and the destruction of their castle with an enthusiasm recalling that of the Roman destruction of Carthage, lacking only the salt.

The third phase of castle construction was of similar duration, lasting from 1615 to 1638. Immediately upon the defeat of the Toyotomi in 1615, the Tokugawa moved to consolidate their power by the implementation of various sanctions, of which two were important measures directly affecting castles. The first of these, imposed in the seventh month of 1615, was a law restricting all daimyo to ‘one castle per province’. Implementation of this law in effect required the systematic demolition of all but the actual castle residence of each domainal lord. It was followed a few days later by the inclusion of a ban on new castle construction explicitly set out in the *Buke shohatto*, the basic code for the warrior class:

Whenever it is intended to make repairs on a castle of one of the feudal domains, the [shogunate] authorities should be notified. The construction of any new castles is to be halted and stringently prohibited. ‘Big castles are a danger to the state’. Walls and moats are the cause of great disorders.¹

Castle prohibition, complete with invocation of Confucian precedent, was thereby built into the fundamental code of Tokugawa rule. The ban meant that in this third phase of castle history, that of Tokugawa consolidation, new castle construction was in practice confined strictly to Tokugawa projects designed to assist in the institutionalisation of *bakufu* authority. By the 1650s, however, with the completion of this process, castle keeps, walls and moats were to become a dispensable tool of authority, empty of military meaning and lacking political purpose.

The castle of this period of 62 years, a mere two generations, was as much the child of politics as it was the progeny of warfare, and as much the product of human ambition as it was the creation of material technology and military engineering. The castle as an institution became the focal point of the age as the symbol and substance of authority. As the symbol of authority it was the most visible statement of the accomplishments and power of the warrior class, particularly the *tenshu*, the soaring keep which commanded attention as the nucleus of the physical and political order of its patron. The castle was also the palatial residence of regional and national rulers, and the centre for court observances and patronage of the arts, its glittering array of buildings and endless entertainment activities a constant reminder of the power and authority of its patrons.

As the substance of authority, the castle was by definition a bastion of military might, but its substantive role was far more varied. Castle construction was the major activity of the age, requiring massive mobilisation of labour and building materials. As the struggle for national unification reached a climax, castle-building reached its architectural apogee: architecture and authority beat with the same accelerated pulse of power. Between 1596 and 1615 alone, almost 100 major castles were built, many of them on an unprecedented scale. These included the castles at Himeji, Nagoya, Osaka and Fushimi which equalled or exceeded in size the largest castles built in medieval Europe, including the great Crusader fortresses of the Middle East.

Castles also provided substance to authority by serving as the physical seat of government, the centre of civil administration for domains which in a period of national integration were increasing in size and complexity. Around these seats of government developed towns or *jōkamachi*, a further substantive dimension to authority as hierarchically ordered representations of status within the political order as well as centres of commerce, culture, communications and, of course, of population. Many of Japan's modern cities were founded as castle towns in this era, including Kanazawa, Nagoya, Sendai, Shizuoka, Hiroshima, Okayama, Kōchi, and the largest of them all, Edo – which was to become today's capital, Tokyo.

This chapter concentrates attention on three examples of the castles constructed in this era, one drawn from each of the three phases of authority: Azuchi, which marks the beginning of the first phase; Himeji, which belongs to the second phase following the Tokugawa victory of 1600; and Edo, which dominated the third phase, that of Tokugawa consolidation. The discussion establishes the circumstances of power which spawned each castle, the way each acted as the symbol and the substance of the authority of its sponsors, and the ways in which castle design and construction responded to the demands of authority.

Azuchi Castle and the Establishment of Nobunaga's Authority

The first castle of the new age was Nobunaga's Azuchi. Built between 1576 and 1579, it established the architectural form and governmental role for all later castles. It was built as the embodiment of Nobunaga's personal power, and became his visible countenance, his public face, as well as the revelation of the inner workings of his ambition.

Nobunaga's national ambitions are first revealed in his plans for his earlier headquarters at Gifu, which served as his power-base during the years before he wrested power from the shogunal house of Ashikaga. In 1575, the year before work began at Azuchi, the intrepid Jesuit priest Luis Frois (1532–1597) remarked ecstatically of Nobunaga's Gifu palace, set at the foot of his mountain fastness:

I wish I were a skilled architect or had the gifts of describing places well, because I sincerely assure you that of all the palaces and houses I have seen in Portugal, India

and Japan, there has been nothing to compare with this as regards luxury, wealth and cleanliness . . . in order to display his magnificence and enjoy his pleasures to the full, he [Nobunaga] decided to build for himself at enormous cost this his earthly paradise (for the Mino people call it *Gokuraku*, the Paradise of Nobunaga).²

Nobunaga may have built an impregnable stronghold on the summit of a local mountain, but the magnificent palace he created at its foot is a sure indication of his desire to assert a courtly as well as military authority.

After driving what was to prove the last Ashikaga shogun from Kyoto by military force in 1573, and assuming prestigious court titles and vestigial imperial authority,³ Nobunaga set about creating a new castle centre to serve as the symbol and the substance of his authority. For his grand purpose Nobunaga chose a site on a low hill on the eastern shore of Lake Biwa. This in itself marked a bold departure from the accepted practices of castle-building. Prior to this, for over a millennium, castles had been simple fortifications set atop steep hills and mountains. Many consisted of little more than boulders piled up to form defensive parapets, with palisades of sturdy timber erected on top for protection and watch-towers for observing enemy movements in the valley floors way below. This was the standard pattern of fortifications from the time of the rise of the warrior class in the later Heian period until well into the period of civil wars in the sixteenth century. Even Gifu Castle, built by Nobunaga in the early 1570s, conformed to this pattern. Such fortifications were intended for military service during times of conflict but, because of the very inaccessibility which afforded them protection against attack, they were entirely unsuitable for prolonged habitation or purposes of civil administration. Instead, the residence of the local warrior leader was located at the foot of the mountain or hill upon which the fort was built, and it was from here that the civil affairs of the domain were conducted. These residences were usually protected by moats and walls but they were far removed in character from the later castles.

During the civil wars of the sixteenth century, mountain-top fortifications became more sophisticated, with terracotta tiled roofs, sturdy timber frames and plastered walls, and more carefully constructed stone walls. However it was Azuchi Castle that marked the watershed between medieval fortifications and the mature castle. The scale and sophistication of its stone walls, barbican gatehouses, corner towers and central keep was unprecedented. At the same time the siting of the castle on a small hill commanding a plain, not on a remote mountain-top far above it, was a radical departure from previous building practice. This hill commanded a view of the three highways from eastern Japan as they converged upon the imperial capital of Kyoto: the main highway running down from the regions bordering the Sea of Japan, the Tōkaidō or Pacific coast highway from the eastern provinces, and the Nakasendō, the inland route from the Kantō Plain traversing the Japan Alps to Kyoto.

At the foot of the hill Nobunaga laid out a new urban centre, one of the first consciously created castle-towns of the era, with an orderly street system, including a central north-south avenue, and zoning organised according to status.⁴ Artisans and merchants were encouraged by financial incentives to move to Azuchi and settle in the sectors of the town reserved for their respective

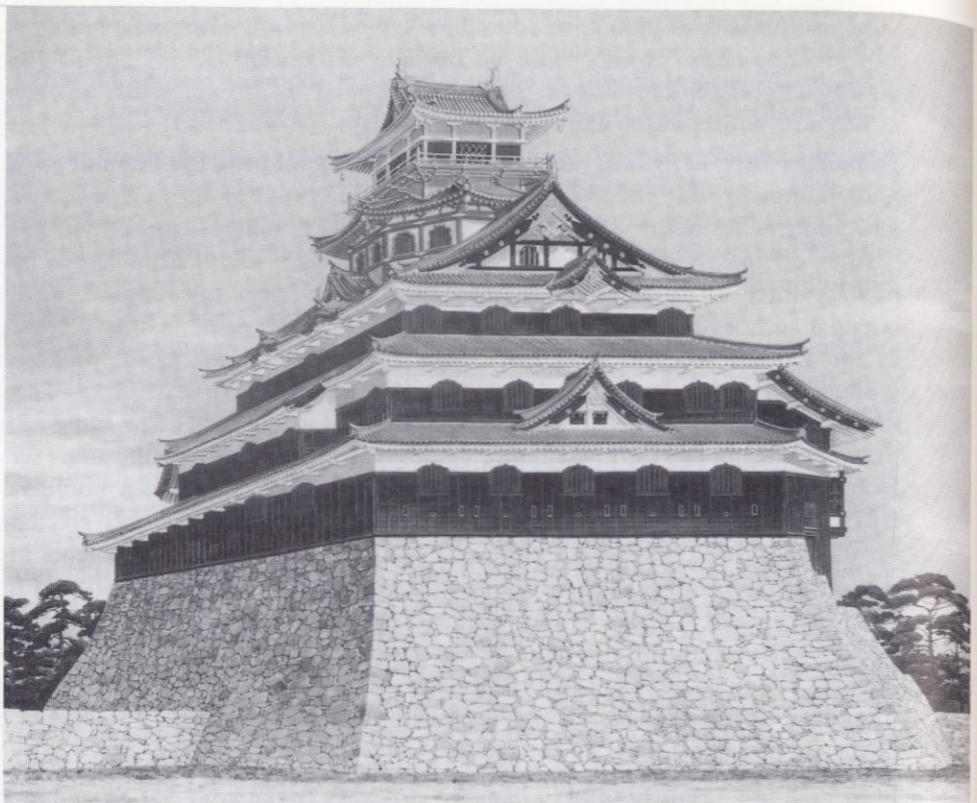


Fig. 5.1
Tenshu of
Azuchi Castle.
Reconstruction
drawing by
Naitō Akira
© Naitō Akira

trades. The Jesuits founded a church and theological seminary within the town boundaries.

The Architectural Form of Azuchi Castle

Today only massive stone walls remain at this site, for Azuchi was sacked and burned within days of the assassination of Nobunaga in 1582. However it is clear from contemporary records that the architecture of its gold-decked keep was a dramatic departure from that of earlier castles. Despite its sad destruction there is a considerable body of evidence available from which to reconstruct its physical form and symbolic meaning. The most comprehensive written source is a section describing the appearance of the *tenshu* included in the *Shinchō kōki*, the biography of Nobunaga compiled and edited from earlier sources by Ōta Gyūichi early in the Edo period. There are several versions of the biography, but research has established that the descriptions of the *tenshu* are based upon a record of a visit to the castle in 1579. The information contained in the different versions is generally consistent, although there are discrepancies in some of the details of the decoration of the upper two levels of the building.⁵ According to this source the stone wall at the base of the *tenshu* was over 12 *ken* (approx. 22 metres) in height. The building itself rose from the basement set deep within the stone walls through seven interior levels. The area on top of these walls was 20 *ken* wide (approx.

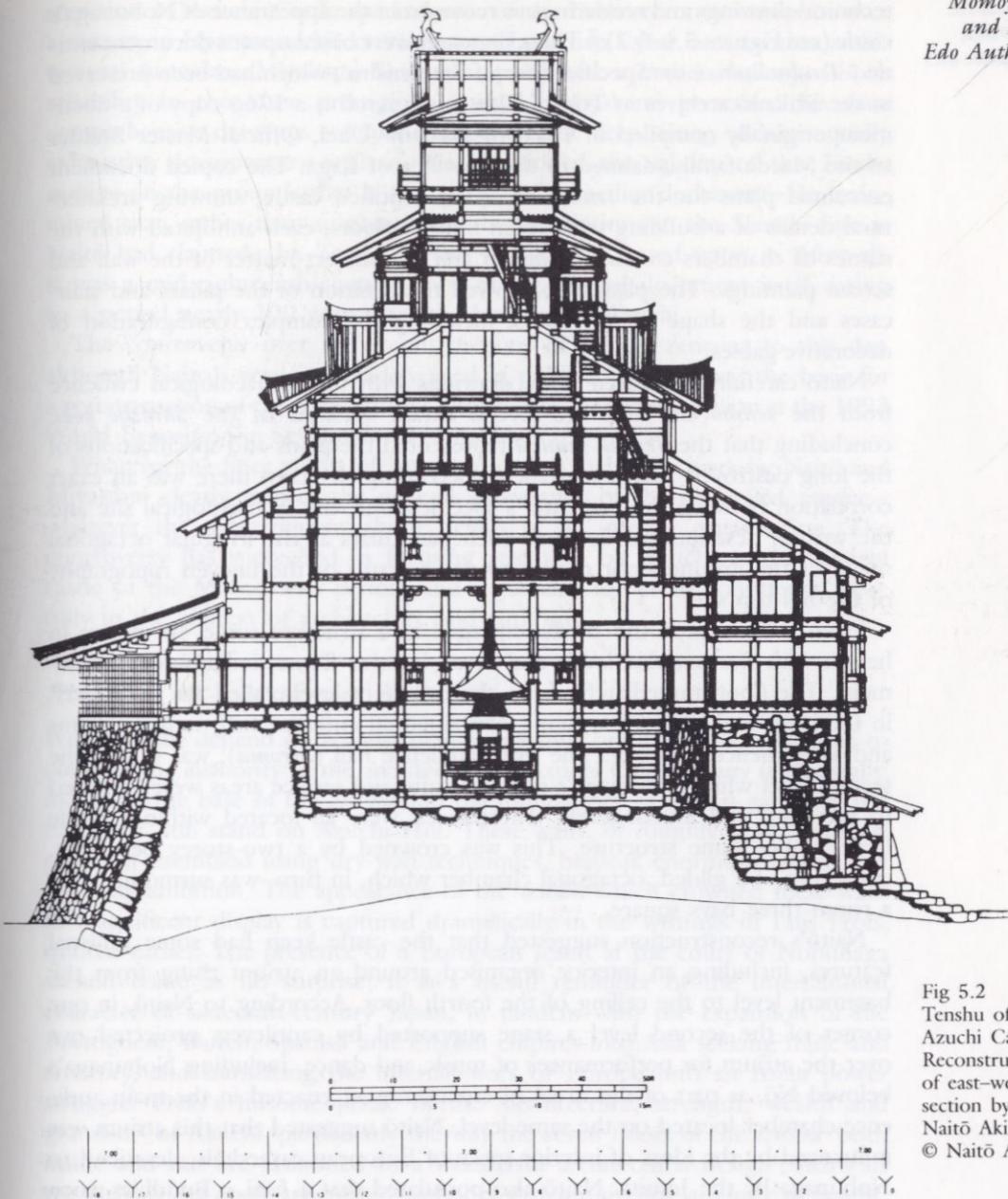


Fig 5.2
Tenshu of
Azuchi Castle.
Reconstruction
of east-west
section by
Naitō Akira
© Naitō Akira

36 metres) north-south and 17 *ken* (approx. 31 metres) east-west.⁶ This gave the *tenshu* dimensions similar to those of Hideyoshi's Osaka Castle, one of the largest *tenshu* ever built, and height equal to that monumental expression of state authority in the Nara period, the Daibutsuden of Tōdaiji.

The most significant developments in this process of reconstruction have taken place since 1976 when Naitō Akira, then Professor of Architecture at

Nagoya Institute of Technology, published a comprehensive set of scaled technical drawings and renderings to reconstruct the appearance of Nobunaga's castle (see Figures 5.1–5.2).⁷ These drawings were based upon a document entitled *Tenshu sashizu* or 'Specifications of the Tenshu', which had been preserved in the Seikadō archives in Tokyo. This single scroll is a 1766 copy of a document originally compiled in 1670 by Ikegami Uhei, Official Master Builder to the Maeda family, daimyo of the Province of Kaga. The copied document contained plans for the *tenshu* of an unidentified castle, showing architectural details of a building with seven interior floors, each annotated with the names of chambers contained therein and the subject-matter of the wall and screen paintings. The plans also showed the position of the pillars and staircases and the shape of the roofs, including the complex configuration of decorative gables.

Naitō carefully compared these drawings with the archaeological evidence from the *tenshu* site and the several extant versions of the *Shinchō kōki*, concluding that the *Tenshu sashizu* represented the plans and specifications of the long destroyed *tenshu* of Azuchi. According to Naitō there was an exact correlation between the carpenter's specifications, the archaeological site and the written descriptions, down to such particulars as the irregular octagonal shape of the ground floor of the *tenshu*, a result of the uneven topography of the hill-top site.

From this research the *tenshu* emerged as a structure some 46 metres in height with five exterior levels and seven interior floors, including the basement. The floor immediately above the basement level, called the 'first level' in the plans and in Ōta's account, contained an entrance hall, waiting rooms and an audience chamber. The main audience hall (*hiroma*), was set on the second level while Nobunaga's personal suite and service areas were allocated to the third and fourth levels. These levels were all located within a single large timber-frame structure. This was crowned by a two-storey belvedere, consisting of a gilded, octagonal chamber which, in turn, was surmounted by a room three bays square.

Naitō's reconstruction suggested that the castle keep had some unusual features, including an interior organised around an atrium rising from the basement level to the ceiling of the fourth floor. According to Naitō, in one corner of the second level a stage supported by cantilevers projected out over the atrium for performances of music and dance, including Nobunaga's beloved *Nō*, as part of the ritual of entertainment enacted in the main audience chamber located on the same level. Naitō suggested that this atrium was influenced by the ideas of interior space of European cathedrals, described to Nobunaga by the Jesuits. Naitō also postulated that a *hōtō*, a Buddhist stupa or reliquary pagoda dedicated to Tahō Nyōrai (Sanskrit: *Prabhutaratna*), was given pride of place at the centre of the basement where it could be overlooked from each of the three floors opening onto the atrium (see Figure 5.2). Naitō speculated that, as the Tahō Nyōrai shared theological preeminence with Sakyamuni according to the Lotus Sutra, it symbolised the nucleus of creation in Buddhist cosmology, and suggests that Nobunaga's authority included pretensions to the divine.

Naitō's interpretation of the stupa caused some debate,⁸ while his reconstruction of Azuchi Castle sparked one of the liveliest controversies in over a century in Japanese architectural history. Less than a year later another architectural historian, Miyakami Shigetaka, published a broad challenge to its reliability in the same prestigious journal.⁹ Miyakami presented his own comprehensive drawings reconstructing the castle keep, along with an equally exhaustive documentary analysis. He questioned the validity of the *Tenshu sashizu* on the grounds that it was a copy of an earlier document. He maintained that, rather than substantiating the descriptions in the *Shinchō kōki* as Naitō had claimed, the *Tenshu sashizu* was actually based upon it. After all, it was a mid-eighteenth-century copy of an original document itself dating to a period nearly 100 years after the building of Azuchi.

The controversy over the reconstructions of Azuchi remains to this day, although Naitō's version is widely used in publications and was the basis for a reconstruction of the upper stories displayed at the Japan Pavilion at the 1992 World Exposition in Seville.¹⁰

Whatever the finer points of argument over Azuchi, the work by Naitō and Miyakami clearly project the general appearance of the destroyed *tenshu* – whatever the disagreement about details of its interior organisation. The controversy has succeeded in focusing attention on Azuchi as the seminal castle of the Momoyama period, and it remains for us to consider it more fully in the context of architecture and authority.

Azuchi as an Expression of Authority

We need not depend on reconstruction drawings or written records alone to consider the authority of the architecture of Azuchi Castle. Many of the walls, including the base of the *tenshu* and the foundations of several gateways and barbicans, still stand on Azuchi Hill. These walls, of roughly hewn boulders carefully assembled using dry-wall techniques, bespeak enormous labour and vaunting ambition. The appearance of the *tenshu* which crowned these walls in magnificent display is captured dramatically in the writings of Luis Frois, quoted earlier. The presence of a European Jesuit at the court of Nobunaga should come as no surprise; it is a useful reminder of the international character of sixteenth-century Japan, in tandem with the expansion of the Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish and English empires into Asia seeking trade and territory, and translating the internal wars of Europe into an Asian power struggle. Frois's fulsome praise of the 'architecture, strength, wealth and grandeur' of Azuchi, particularly the way the seven floors of the *tenshu* 'both inside and out are fashioned to a wonderful architectural design', helps us see the way the castle articulated authority with a universal language of height, technical sophistication, strength and beauty. Frois's description makes clear those architectural features which readily cross the boundaries of culture: height, for Azuchi was an edifice which 'looks as if it reaches to the clouds'; the method of construction, in the 'strong and well constructed walls'; and the hypnotic beauty of the *tenshu*, with its 'noble and splendid appearance', sumptuous materials, bright colours and strong contrasts between white plaster and black lacquer.

While these features have successfully communicated authority across cultural boundaries, Frois's judgement is also informed by comparison with the architecture of his own cultural milieu. His comment, for example, that the tower or *tenshu* at the centre of the castle complex was 'far more splendid and noble in appearance than our towers', indicates that height, while perhaps the most universal of all the attributes of architectural authority, is also relative to individual experience. The language actually used to describe such phenomena is also culturally conditioned: Frois's comment that Azuchi looked 'as if it reaches to the clouds' recalls Shakespeare's 'towers which buss the clouds'. To the European mind of the sixteenth century, the measure of impressive height was fixed by the height of the clouds. The notion is still encompassed in the term 'skyscraper'.

Despite these cultural influences in points of comparison and linguistic nuance, there is a universal equation between high buildings and high authority evident in Frois's reaction to Azuchi. A tall building expresses superordination and infers subordination, whether it be European or Japanese. High buildings exemplify the role of architecture as metaphor interpreted by Rudolph Arnheim's in the following terms:

all genuine metaphors derive from expressive shapes and actions in the physical world. We speak of 'high hopes' and 'deep thoughts' and it is only by analogy to such elemental qualities of the perceivable world that we can understand and describe nonphysical properties.¹¹

This principle permeates the tightly structured world of protocol, offering formal expression to authority by providing strictly segregated spatial relationships, especially those based on height. It has obvious application in Japan. Basil Hall Chamberlain, doubtless having in mind the fate of the unfortunate Mr Richardson cut down by the bodyguards of the daimyo of Satsuma in 1862, noted that:

a point of etiquette which foreigners should bear in mind, is that neither the Emperor himself, nor any member of the Imperial Family must ever be looked down on. Should an Imperial procession pass by, do not stand at an upper window or on any commanding height. The occasional infraction of this rule has given great offence, and produced disagreeable results.¹²

Until recently there was genteel observance of the same principle for the height of buildings surrounding the Imperial Palace and environs in Tokyo.

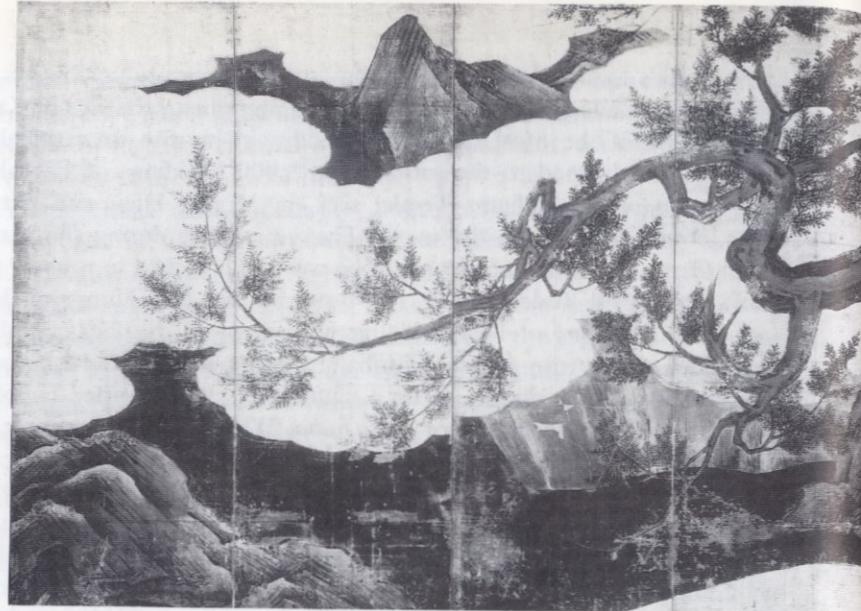
The idea of 'commanding height' is central to any interpretation of the architecture of Azuchi. The term *tenshu* is itself rich with the authority of height. When referring to his creation in letters, Nobunaga uses the characters for 'Protector of Heaven' and 'Lord of Heaven', both of which are read *tenshu*¹³ and, though we may be unsure about the precise characters to be used, his political intent is unequivocal: for Nobunaga and for all who viewed it, this building was the residence of the ruler of the world below and the heavens above. The use of the term *tenshu* itself probably echoes the Christian concept of the 'Lord of Heaven' to which Nobunaga was introduced by the Jesuits. It more than hints at a desire to lift secular power to a sacred plane, to legitimise the temporal by means of the religious.

Nobunaga's appropriation of religious terminology at Azuchi was part of his concerted strategy to break the power of Buddhist sects in the Kansai. In 1571, in one of the most infamous episodes in his rise to national power, Nobunaga had burned to the ground the 3,000 buildings of Enryakuji, the headquarters of the militant Tendai sect on Mount Hiei, and put all the monks, young and old, to the sword. Five years later, during the years when Azuchi Castle was being constructed, he was again locked in a bitter struggle against a powerful Buddhist sect, this time the Ishiyama Honganji Ikkō sect. Terms such as 'Lord of Heaven' directly challenged the fanatical allegiance of the Ikkō sect to the Amida Buddha. It would seem that Nobunaga took his pretensions to a divine status a significant stage further by placing a Buddhist stupa in the centre of the *tenshu*. Whatever the theological interpretation of Nobunaga's use of the *hōtō*, it was unmistakably part of a campaign to forge deliberate religious associations with a secular ruler, following that familiar pattern of authority displayed in Japanese society from the historically shrouded times of the institutionalisation of the shrines at Ise and Izumo.

The impressive beauty of Azuchi conveyed by Frois's account is corroborated by a screen painting showing Hideyoshi's Jurakudai, which was completed in 1587. Although Jurakudai was later dismantled, this contemporary painting (now in the collection of the Mitsui family) encapsulates its character and reveals its magnificence as if we were viewing the castle as it was first created. The debt of Jurakudai to Azuchi is unmistakable, so much so that Frois's description of Azuchi could well be mistaken for a description of Jurakudai. Here again is a castle 'fashioned to a wonderful architectural design' with soaring *tenshu* and gilded ridge and eaves' end tiles. Sitting astride the ridge are large sculptures of mythological aquatic creatures known as *shachi*, with the heads of tigers and bodies of dolphins. They are fashioned in terracotta and covered in gold to sparkle in the sunshine and magnify the gentler illumination of moonlight. Like Azuchi, Hideyoshi's castle had both a civil and a military character as symbol and substance of authority. The sturdiness of the stone walls and the formidable defensive power of the gatehouses guarding the castle are unmistakable, while windows lower in the castle keep are open to provide good fire positions for defence against enemy attack.

To return again to a contemplation of the glories of Azuchi, the spatial arrangement and decoration of the interior of its *tenshu* were carefully calculated for maximum rhetorical effect. It served as the palace and court for Nobunaga and was decorated accordingly with powerful paintings as monumental in style and symbolism as the exterior of the building in which they were housed. The Azuchi *tenshu* was a vast, multilevel palace with audience chambers and private suites. The biography of Nobunaga, *Shinchō koki*, although unreliable in some of its details, nevertheless furnishes a clear impression of the magnificent nature of these interiors. We learn, for example, that:

the chambers on the fourth floor included an eight mat room on the west side of the building which was decorated with a battle of dragons and tigers . . . the seventh and upper level is three bays square. Both the interior and exterior of this chamber are entirely gold . . . dragons ascend and descend on the four corner pillars and on the walls are the Three Emperors, the Five Rulers, the Ten Disciples of Confucius, the Four Wise Men of Shang Shan and the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove.¹⁴



Here again a universal vocabulary of authority is evident – gold indicating power, supernatural beasts implying a realm of mystical associations for Nobunaga, and legendary sages invoking the sanction of the wise and benevolent governing rulers of ancient China. In much the same way had the Romans appropriated Greek iconography for their own political ends. Meanwhile Nobunaga was keeping his iconographic options open. The walls of the octagonal floor immediately below the veritable Confucian chapel on the top of the *tenshu* were reminiscent of a Buddhist hall, lavishly decorated as they were with a scene of the historical Buddha Sakyamuni preaching to his disciples, reinforcing the religious associations established by the stupa at the basement level.

It is also apparent from the *Shinchō kōki* and the various reconstruction drawings that in the *tenshu* there was strict segregation of interior spaces according to function. The ceremonial chambers where audience was held were decorated with paintings in the Kano style, with bold, two-dimensional trees, graceful birds and flowers, set on gold leaf with only the occasional hint of other background detail. The semi-private areas for administration and special council were decorated with more intimate, didactic images of Chinese sages, no doubt as a reminder of the importance of wise government. The walls of the private residential rooms were embellished with animated scenes of everyday life, with less gold leaf, creating a more relaxed atmosphere.¹⁵

The paintings ornamenting the entire interior of the *tenshu* were supervised by Kano Eitoku (1543–1590).¹⁶ The Kano maintained an hereditary family workshop and Eitoku was to become the quintessential court artist for both Nobunaga and Hideyoshi – in effect to the national unifiers of Japan what Raphael became to the Roman papacy. None of the paintings survived the destruction of Azuchi but later Kano paintings witness to their powerful presence. For example, the screen painting of a huge cypress tree, now in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum, bears the unmistakable influ-



Fig 5.3
Hinoki byōbu.
Eight-fold
screen. Kano
school. ca 1590
(Courtesy of
Tokyo National
Museum)

ence of the heroic style perfected by Eitoku in response to the dictates of Nobunaga's vision of authority and the spatial character of the castle interior of Azuchi (Figure 5.3). The gold represented authority and power, but also served the practical purpose of magnifying the light sources in the dim castle interior. As the paintings were used to decorate the spaces between the pillars and beams, their composition was invariably rectilinear with strong horizontal emphasis. For the larger audience chambers the trees and rocks had bold, two-dimensional forms set close to the picture plane with little background, giving them an immediacy and powerful presence well suited to the reinforcing of Nobunaga's authority. In fact the special lighting conditions of castle interiors, and the circumstances of formal audience, spawned an entirely new decorative painting mode, combining the strong ink-line of the Chinese-inspired black-ink painting tradition as practiced by the Kano atelier, with the strong colour and flatter decorative quality of the Yamato-e tradition of painting as it had developed in the Heian court. In other words, the painting style of the castle interiors was a fusion of existing styles, ultimately greater than the sum of the parts, called into the service of the new authority of the castle overlords. This underlines the way in which arbitrary authority has a pronounced centripetal effect on all the arts.

The Organisation of the Azuchi Building Project

The power to mobilise resources is one of the universal attributes of authority. It is important to understand the process by which Azuchi was created, because the power which Nobunaga had at his command to shift mountains of rock and earth, and to create on them structures of breathtaking beauty and overwhelming strength, is a direct index of his authority.

The construction of Azuchi was a project conducted on a scale not witnessed in Japan since the building work at Nara and Kyoto in the eighth and ninth centuries. Nobunaga coopted the labour and building materials of the entire

region of central Japan, from the provinces of the Kansai including the Kyoto and Nara areas, the provinces surrounding Lake Biwa, and as far away as Echizen on the Sea of Japan, to Owari, Mino and Mikawa in the east.¹⁷ Overall supervision of the construction project was placed under the direct control of the lord of nearby Sawayama Castle, Tanba Nagahide, and work was to proceed day and night for a period of nearly three years. The task was divided into the engineering construction, involving the enormous challenge of erecting the great stone walls and digging the 100 metre wide moat between the castle and the town, and the architectural construction, especially the building of the *tenshu*. These tasks were carried out more or less simultaneously, with the framing for the buildings being prefabricated in carpenters' workshops even as the mountains of rock were dragged up the steep Azuchi slope to their eventual resting places. Each aspect provides further insight into the workings of authority under Nobunaga, particularly the way in which arbitrary authority deals with technological problems.

i. Stone wall construction The building of the stone walls was the most difficult challenge from an engineering viewpoint, and reveals much about Nobunaga's approach to managing building projects. The task of assembling the veritable mountain of rock required for the fortifications alone was herculean. There were only limited quantities of suitable stone available in the immediate vicinity: 350 specially dressed stones had to be brought from as far away as a quarry at Mabechi in northern Honshu. According to Frois, a number of the stones used for the inner defensive walls were so immense that 4–5,000 labourers were needed to haul each one up the Azuchi slope. One rock alone required an army of 6–7,000 labourers.¹⁸

Frois, as we have noted, was particularly impressed by these 'strong and well constructed walls'. Their painstakingly interlocked shapes and the complete absence of mortar bonding them together are still readily visible today towards the top of the ruined Azuchi hill site (Figure 5.4). Such skill at assembling rocks of different sizes into a cohesive structural whole, such expertise at bedding them securely into an earthen retaining wall with small rounded locking stones, is not produced overnight in response to the command of a ruler, no matter how powerful. Nobunaga simply appropriated into the service of warrior power the techniques of masonry construction refined in the testing ground of religious architecture. The technology of stone walls was adopted from the traditions of the master stone-masons of the village of Anō at the foot of Mount Hiei, a comfortable day's journey from Azuchi.¹⁹

Even today if you visit the village of Anō you will see that the stone walls flanking the narrow lanes of the village, nestling in the undulating paddy fields to the south of the township of Sakamoto, are of impressive size and strength (Figure 5.5). The Anō masons were hereditary workers in stone (*ishiku*), engaged in constructing the stone foundations and retaining walls of the numerous worship halls, pagodas and other monastic buildings of the Enryakuji, the Tendai Sect establishment which sprawled over the slopes and into the valleys of Mount Hiei. Here they had practised their exacting craft, honing their skills over many generations into a fine art as they mastered the

Fig 5.4 Azuchi Castle, Shiga prefecture.
Walls in vicinity of Honmaru



techniques of creating stable stone foundations for timber-frame buildings erected on the uneven mountain terrain.

By the sixteenth century the Anō were without peer in the region in their profession and Nobunaga simply appropriated all members of this tradition to create the massive foundation walls and fortifications of his castle. He may have burned Enryakuji in all its monastic majesty to the ground in order to break the power of its Tendai Sect, but he had no compunction about employing its hereditary master masons to build his own castle when it suited his political purposes.

Inspection of the extant walls of Azuchi reveals that they were made with the special technique, perfected by the Anō, of fitting together large unhewn boulders with smaller split rocks. These were all held securely in place against the outward pressure of earth and water, and the occasional violence of earthquake, with locking stones carefully placed between the outer rocks and the earthen embankment. In later castle walls the stones may have been more carefully dressed but it was in constructing the earlier walls at Azuchi that the stone-mason was put to the greatest test; it required enormous skill and infinite patience to decide how to fit together the irregular, jigsaw-like shapes of natural rocks, and the most sophisticated understanding of engineering dynamics and a subtle awareness of aesthetics to align the interlocking corner-stones in their sweeping parabolic curves.

After their experience at Azuchi the Anō masons assumed national significance in castle construction. Members of the family were to provide the technical expertise for the stone walls of many of the most important castles built in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, including Fushimi, Nagoya, Himeji, Osaka and Kumamoto castles.

Fig 5.5
Sakamoto,
Shiga
prefecture.
Walls by Anō
stonemasons

ii. Architectural construction The task of designing and supervising the construction of the timber-framed buildings which stood on top of the walls, including the *tenshu*, corner towers and gatehouses, was directed by the chief master builder (*daikugashira*), identified in the *Shinchō koki* as Okabe Mataemon. According to the official family history of the Okabe, a certain Okabe Mataemon was head master builder to the Ashikaga *bakufu* at the time of the eighth shogun, Yoshimasa.²⁰ These same records also establish that a second Okabe Mataemon, presumably carrying on the name of his illustrious ancestor, entered the service of Nobunaga on the day he won his first decisive battle at Okehazama in 1560. The record further notes that Okabe was subsequently active in temple construction in the Atsuta area and built a large gatehouse at the Atsuta Shrine itself. Although this was destroyed by fire at the end of World War II, prewar documents confirm that this building was eclectic in style. It combined the older Wayō mode of more rectilinear framing inspired by Nara-period temple architecture, with the gracefully curvilinear Song-influenced Zenshūyō, a fact which has important implications for the understanding of the style of Azuchi Castle architecture.

From the *Shinchō koki* we learn that Okabe Mataemon achieved a position of considerable notoriety within Nobunaga's entourage for his building of a magnificent ship in 1573, with which Nobunaga intended eventually to control the waters of Lake Biwa. This large vessel, 59 metres long by 13 metres wide according to the records, was graced with a *tenshu*-like tower. It was completed in a mere two months using master carpenters, smiths and timber cutters from the regions of central Japan where the Okabe had their home base.

The progression from this aquatic foible, to the floating, dreamlike quality of the Azuchi *tenshu* would have been smooth and easy. Mataemon's role as its chief master builder makes comprehensible the type of building which emerges from the documentary and site record.²¹ The technical details of structural framing and interior fittings would have drawn heavily upon the dual traditions of temple architecture, the Wayō and the Zenshūyō, of which Okabe and his family were traditional exponents. In fact the *tenshu* would have had something of the character of an elaborate Zen monastic residence. Its distinctive octagonal belvedere was little removed in concept from the rooms placed high in the roof of monasteries for simultaneous meditative viewing of the outer world of nature and the inner world of the spirit.

iii. Roof tiling The gilded and glazed roof tiles, which Frois described as 'stronger and lovelier than those we use in Europe', were the crowning glory of the castle and its *tenshu*. These tiles, glistening in the sunshine and glowing in the dark, would have been the ultimate statement of a worldly ruler's ability to command resources and strike awe into the hearts of those who viewed his creations. There was indeed something special about the tiling of Azuchi, for the *Shinchō koki* states that 'the Chinese tilemaker Ikkān was commanded [to make roof tiles] and these were baked by the Nara [guild of] tilers'.²²

Tile fragments excavated from the Azuchi site reveal the use of new technology from Ming China, confirming the existence of a Chinese master

tile-maker at the Azuchi building project. Mica was used instead of hemp to prevent the wet clay adhering to the wooden mould used to shape the tiles, a practice developed in China during the Ming dynasty. The eave-end tiles were emblazoned by gold leaf pressed into the clay, a difficult technical process also new to Japan. A further innovation identifiable in the Azuchi tiling was the use of multiple glazes of deep red, vermillion and yellow to highlight the overall blue glazing noted by Frois. The use of this technique was common for the tiles on important buildings in Ming China, but had not been employed in Japan since the Nara period.²³ In other words there was a considerable advance in tiling techniques in use at Azuchi, with the master tilers of Nara making the tiles under the direction of the Ming master. These same techniques were to be employed again to great effect for the roofs of Jurakudai, Fushimi and Osaka Castles.

There was thus at Azuchi a direct equation between political, military and economic power and the ability to command the materials and labour of entire regions and to marshal the services of the most skilled artisans of the age. Many of the builders, artists and craftsmen who worked on Azuchi came from traditions long associated with Buddhist temple architecture, namely the stone-masons of Anō, the Okabe master builders, the tile-makers of Nara, and the Kano atelier, which had evolved its painting style as wall and screen artists through commissions at Zen-sect temples like Daitokuji. Such happy architectural eclecticism may have been the inevitable result of patronage by a ruler untroubled by convention and more than a little self-indulgent in the way of the *nouveau riche*, but it was in equal measure a result of the compelling technological logic of the architectural expression of authority. New building technology can rarely be created on demand in a traditional society with its complex and highly evolved infrastructure of hereditary building professions. Architecture as the art of the possible responds to its own dictates of mechanical possibility and structural viability. Castle architecture of the late sixteenth century, starting with Azuchi, was created by cooption, that is, by the expedient of adding tried and tested building blocks one on another, propelled by the urgent demands of patrons. To this was added a yearning for the exotic and foreign, and the seeking of sanctions from venerated Chinese traditions in decorative iconography and in new fashions in roof tiling.

In 1582 Nobunaga was assassinated by Akechi Mitsuhide at Honnōji in Kyoto, the master builder Okabe Mataemon reputedly dying at his side. Three days later the Akechi forces sacked Azuchi Castle, Mitsuhide dividing up its gilded treasures as rewards for his vassals. Shortly afterwards Mitsuhide also met his end in a battle with Nobunaga's forces and, in the confusion following this defeat, the castle caught fire and burnt to the ground in a fire lasting for days. The 1940 excavations uncovered the extent of the terrible devastation which left little remaining above the stone walls except ash – in which were mixed fragments of tile and ceramic ware.

It is not clear whether Azuchi was deliberately set on fire by the retreating Akechi forces, or simply caught fire accidentally in the chaos following battle. Whichever the case, it is clear that the castle died with its creator, testimony to the inseparability of man and monument.

Himeji Castle and the Consolidation of Tokugawa Authority

Himeji Castle is today the largest and best-preserved castle in Japan, with the most extensive set of outer fortifications and the most impressive of all surviving *tenshu* (Figure 5.6). The castle as it now stands belongs to the period of consolidation of political power after the Tokugawa victory at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, and was built under the direction of Ikeda Terumasa. The major part of the construction of the castle took place between 1601 and 1613, a period lasting four times as long as that required for the building of Azuchi Castle and indicative of the increasing sophistication and complexity of the castle-building process.

Himeji is a castle closely associated with the major political and military events of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, designed to buttress the western perimeter of the sphere of immediate Tokugawa control with a massive fortification held by a close and trusted ally. It was strategically situated on the border between the regions of Tokugawa domination in central Japan, and the domains of the daimyo vanquished at Sekigahara, particularly the Mōri.

The Himeji site dominated the Harima Plain on the inland sea coastline. This made it a natural centre for fortified residence and local administration

Fig 5.6
Himeji Castle,
Hyōgo prefecture.
View of
Tenshu
complex
(Courtesy of
Ministry of
Foreign
Affairs)



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The fragments excavated from the castle walls confirm the use of Chinese technology from Ming China, confirming the existence of a Chinese master

from the fourteenth century. Major transportation routes moved westward across the Harima Plain from the direction of Kyoto some 150 kilometres to the east, and it was situated a mere 6 kilometres from the busy shipping channels of the Inland Sea. Hideyoshi, transferred by Nobunaga to this castle site in 1577, duly completed a three-storey *tenshu* there in 1581. It was from Himeji that he subsequently launched his counter-attack on the assassins of Nobunaga in 1582, a move which eventually led to his own national hegemony. Little is known of the structure of Hideyoshi's original castle, as it was completely subsumed by the later Ikeda castle construction, commenced after the military victory of 1600.

Ikeda Terumasa was transferred to the Himeji fief immediately after the Battle of Sekigahara and began a major rebuilding project there the following year. The *tenshu* complex was built during 1608 and 1609. It comprised the Great Tenshu and three subsidiary *tenshu* grouped on a square plan and linked by connecting parapets (Figure 5.7). This was one of the most elaborate plans for any castle keep built in Japan, thereby greatly extending its symbolic and functional capabilities. Work continued on the outer walls and other structures of the castle until Ikeda's death in 1613. His ambitious plans had

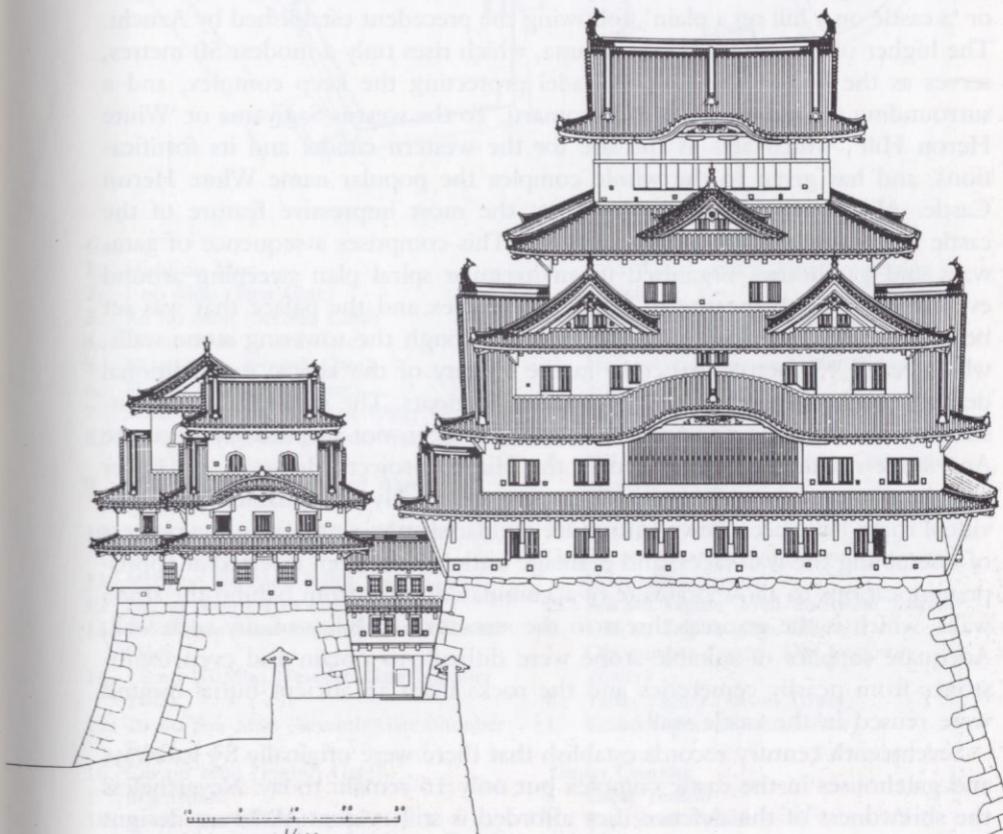


Fig 5.7
Himeji Castle.
Elevation of
Great Tenshu
and subsidiary
tenshu
(Source:
Bunka-chō,
Kokuhō jūyō
bunkazai
(kenzōbutsu)
jissoku zushū)

included the excavation of a canal to link Himeji Castle with the Inland Sea but this project was abandoned upon his death.²⁴

The scale and character of Himeji Castle at the time of its completion under the Ikeda may be deduced from contemporary records.²⁵ The inner citadel or *Honmaru* was approximately 91 metres (50 *ken*) in length on each of its four sides. The outer perimeter of the fortifications was nearly 6 kilometres long, and enclosed an area 1,850 metres north-south by 1420 metres east-west.

Many of the peripheral structures and towers have since been destroyed but the greater part of the castle survives today as it stood at the time of its completion nearly 400 years ago. It occupies a total area of some 200,000 square metres. It may be the largest extant castle in Japan today, but it was to be only the fourth largest castle built in Japan, conceding greater size to the castles at Edo, Osaka and Nagoya. The Great *Tenshu* is 46.34 metres from the base of its stone wall to the top of the ridge capping tiles, which made it in its time approximately the same height as the *tenshu* of Azuchi. Moreover, the castle planners cleverly exploited the topography of the site (Figure 5.8). The fortifications are set on two gently sloping hills on the Harima Plain, making Himeji Castle the type of fortification known as a *hirayamajiro* or 'a castle on a hill on a plain', following the precedent established by Azuchi. The higher of the two hills, Himeyama, which rises only a modest 50 metres, serves as the site of the Inner Citadel protecting the keep complex, and a surrounding second citadel, the *Ninomaru*. To the west is Sagiya or 'White Heron Hill', which acts as the site for the western citadel and its fortifications, and has given to the whole complex the popular name White Heron Castle. Along with the multiple keeps, the most impressive feature of the castle is its labyrinthine defensive system. This comprises a sequence of gateways and gatehouses organised in an irregular spiral plan sweeping around eventually to reach the site of the keep complex and the palace that was set beneath it. These gateways provide access through the towering stone walls, which reach 15 metres in height in the vicinity of the keeps. An additional defence mechanism is supplied by a series of moats. The stone walls are constructed on the same principles as those of Azuchi, not surprisingly since the Anō stone-masons were involved in the Himeji project. However, on closer examination certain technical refinements are readily identifiable. The individual rocks have been hewn into more regular shapes, simplifying the process of assembling the wall faces, and drainage outlets have been inserted at appropriate locations to allow drainage of accumulated water from behind the stone walls, which is the greatest threat to the structural viability of any such wall. Adequate supplies of suitable stone were difficult to obtain and even tombstones from nearby cemeteries and the rocks from an ancient burial mound were reused in the castle wall.

Seventeenth-century records establish that there were originally 84 gateways and gatehouses in the castle complex but only 16 remain today. Nevertheless the shrewdness of the defence they afforded is still evident: different designs are used for each gateway and gatehouse, and sudden, unexpected changes of direction are made in the approach paths and gradients in order to surprise attacking forces, guiding them inexorably into exposed positions where

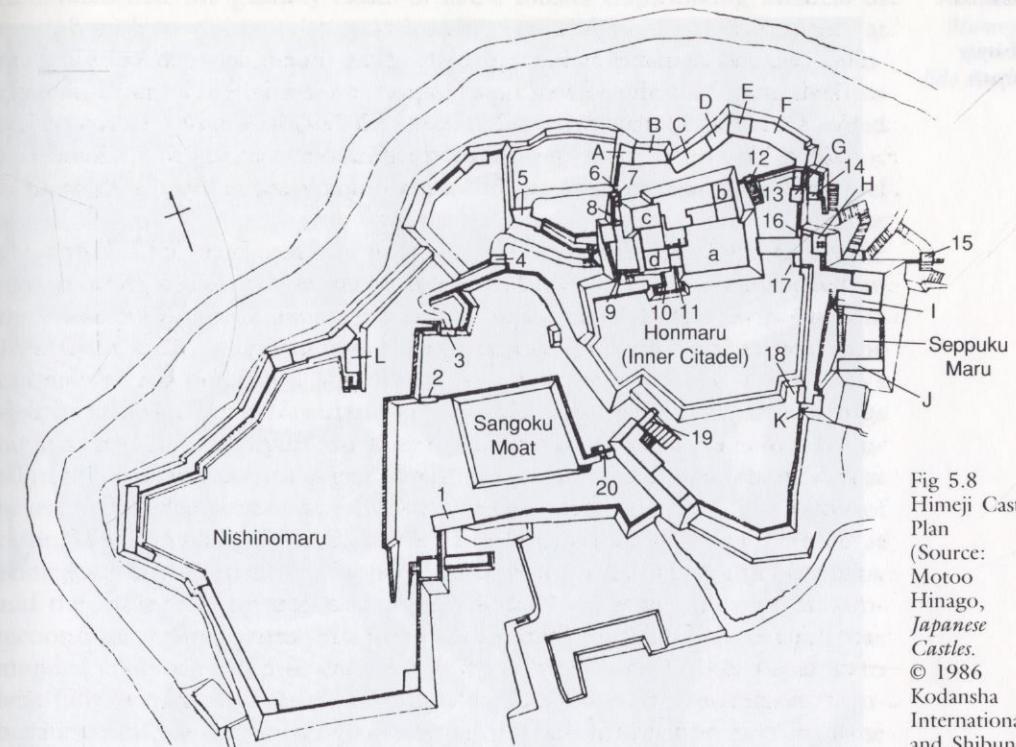


Fig. 5.8
Himeji Castle.
Plan
(Source:
Motoo
Hinago,
Japanese
Castles.
© 1986
Kodansha
International
and Shibundo)

Gates

1. Hishi no Mon
2. I no Mon (First Gate)
3. Ro no Mon (Second Gate)
4. Ha no Mon (Third Gate)
5. Ni no Mon (Fourth Gate)
6. Ho no Mon (Fifth Gate)
7. Mizu no Ichi Mon (First Water Gate)
8. Mizu no Ni Mon (Second Water Gate)
9. Mizu no San Mon (Third Water Gate)
10. Mizu no Yon Mon (Fourth Water Gate)
11. Mizu no Go Mon (Fifth Water Gate)
12. He no Mon (Sixth Gate)
13. To no Ichi Mon (Seventh Gate Number One)
14. To no Ni Mon (Seventh Gate Number Two)
15. To no Yon Mon (Seventh Gate Number Four)
16. Chi no Mon (Eighth Gate)
17. Bizen Mon
18. Ri no Mon (Ninth Gate)
19. Nu no Mon (Tenth Gate)
20. Ru no Mon (Eleventh Gate)

Corner and Connecting Towers

- A. I no Watari-yagura (First Connecting Tower)
- B. Ro no Watari-yagura (Second Connecting Tower)
- C. Ha no Watari-yagura (Third Connecting Tower)
- D. Ni no Watari-yagura (Fourth Connecting Tower)
- E. Ho no Watari-yagura (Fifth Connecting Tower)
- F. He no Watari-yagura (Sixth Connecting Tower)
- G. To no Watari-yagura (Seventh Connecting Tower)
- H. Seikaku Yagura (Well Enclosure Tower)
- I. Obi no Yagura (Obi Tower)
- J. Obi-guruwa Yagura (Obi Enclosure Tower)
- K. Taiko Yagura (Drum Tower)
- L. Keshō Yagura (Keshō Tower)

Tenshu Complex

- a. Great Tenshu
- b. East Small Tenshu
- c. North-west Small Tenshu
- d. West Small Tenshu



Fig 5.9
Himeji Castle.
Ni no Mon
viewed from
Great Tenshu

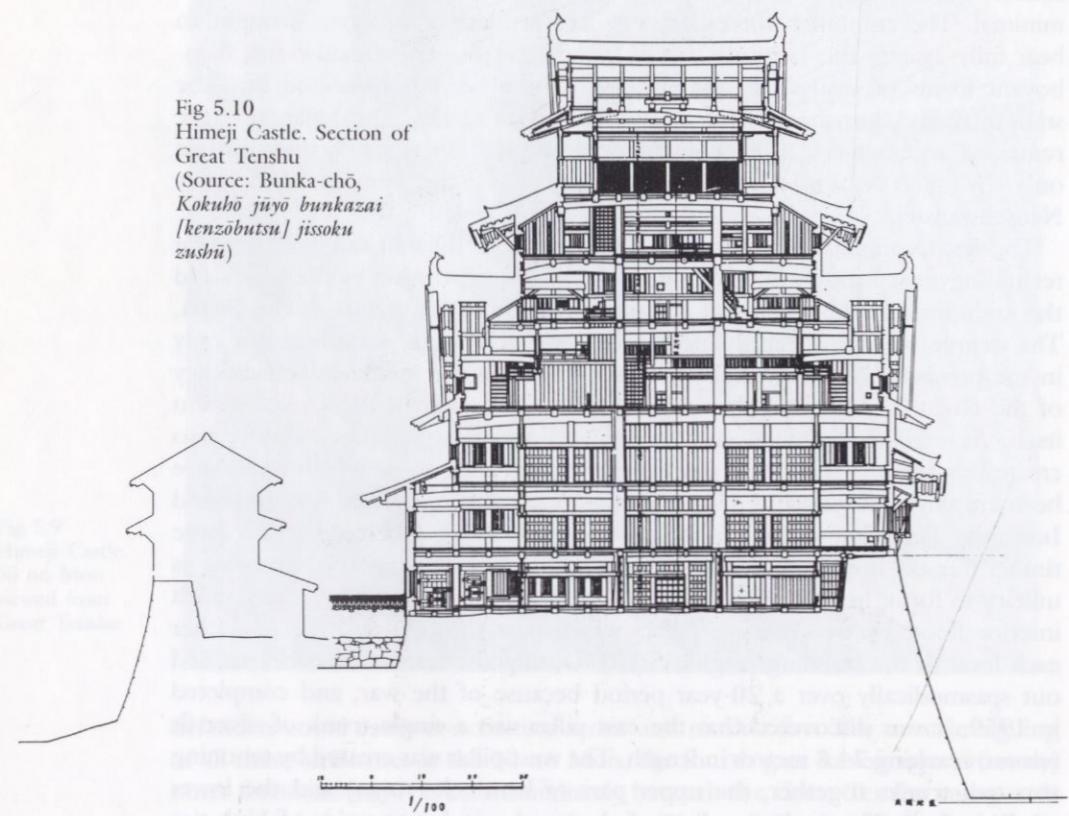
defenders could easily concentrate arrow and musket fire. The most intriguing of all these structures is the Ni no Mon, the fourth gate in sequence from the outer fortifications. It is set immediately beneath the Great Tenshu and guards a right-angled turn in the approach path (Figure 5.9). Attackers would have been enticed into a welcoming large entrance area, but would have swiftly

discovered that the gateway closes in like a lobster trap, forcing invaders to turn abruptly at right angles and virtually crawl out of the small aperture at the exit. The complex design of the gateway demanded great skill and versatility on the part of the builders who created it. The entrance section is two storeys in height but the exit area which abuts it is located on higher ground and rises to a height of three storeys.

The defensive plan required all who entered the castle grounds to travel almost three times further than the direct distance between the outer entrance gateway and the keep complex. In part this was designed as a counter to the menace of firearms, introduced to Japan by the Portuguese in the middle of the sixteenth century. The matchlock musket (arquebus) arrived in Japan in 1543 with the first Portuguese sailors, shipwrecked on Tanegashima. The cannon followed in 1576. The musket played a decisive role in Nobunaga's victory at the Battle of Nagashino in 1575 but posed no real threat to castles built high on sturdy stone foundations. The cannon, which was instrumental in transforming the European castle into a tightly constructed bastion, was never employed effectively against the Japanese castle due to low levels of casting and gunnery skill available in Japan at the time. As may be seen at Himeji, there was some strengthening of walls, extension of the outworks, and the addition of iron plating to the wooden doors of gateways for protection against musket fire, but the overall effect on castle design itself was minimal. The combined forces of siege and artillery were never brought to bear fully against the Japanese castle. If they had been, the exuberant, flamboyant forms of castles like Himeji would have been transformed into the smooth-walled, hunched shapes of later European castles. The Japanese castle remained an extravert, a seeming flight of physical fancy matched in Europe only by such whimsical castellated palaces as the nineteenth-century Neuschwanstein.

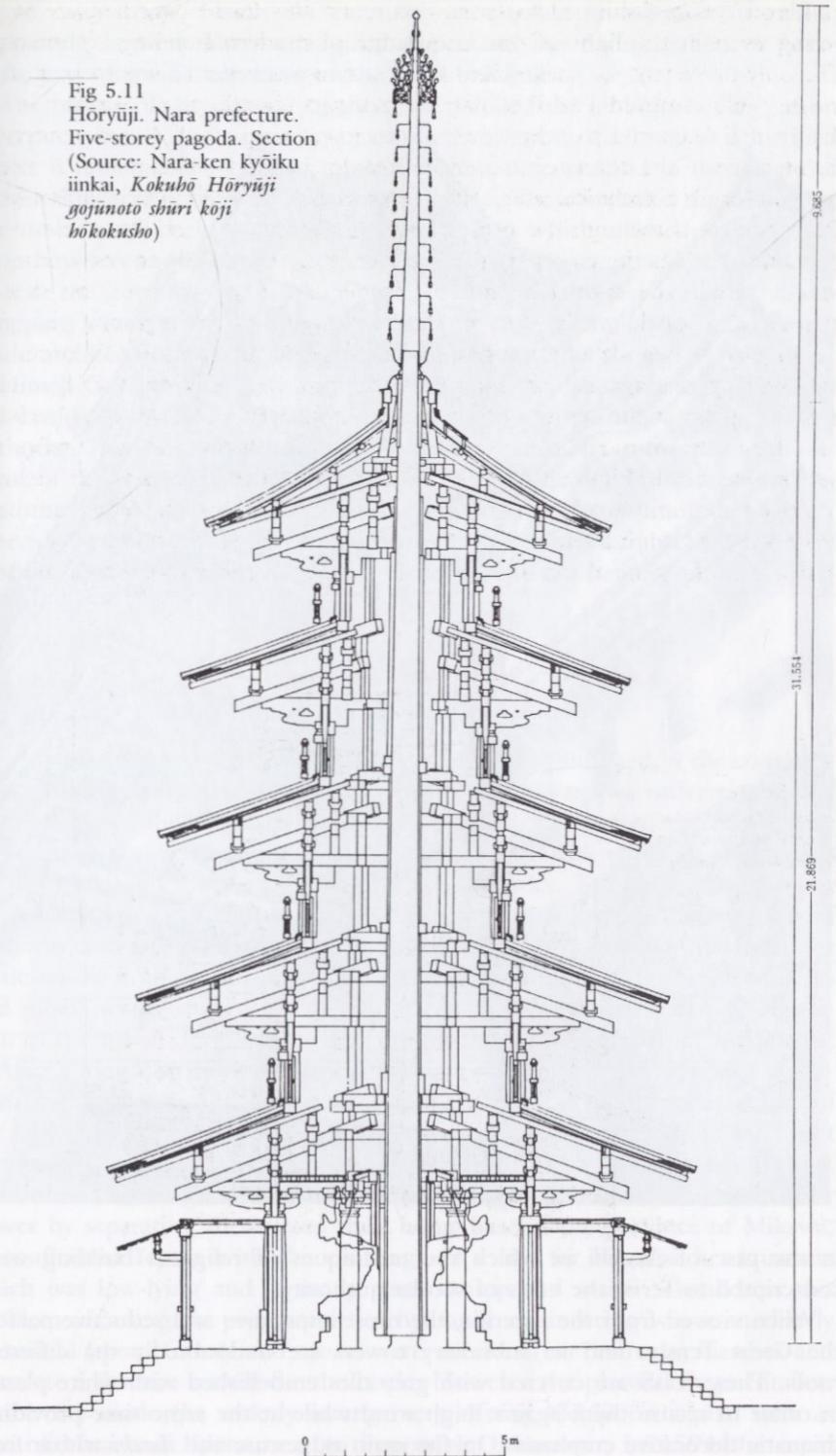
The keep complex of Himeji Castle shows how the full range of existing technology was brought together to give physical expression to the needs and the ambitions of the Tokugawa channelled through the hands of the Ikeda. The degree of sophistication of the building techniques is evident not only in the provision of three smaller keeps to increase the spectacle and efficacy of the Great Tenshu, but also in the internal structure of the Great Tenshu itself. As with the stone walls, the timber-framing techniques employed to create this soaring edifice are more sophisticated than those which must have been employed at Azuchi Castle and other early castles such as Okayama and Inuyama. This structure was not contrived by adding a belvedere to a large timber-framed building, as had been the practice. The entire structure is unitary in form, held together from basement to the upper storey, the seventh interior floor, by two massive pillars which pass through and lock together each level of the building (Figure 5.10). During the restoration work carried out spasmodically over a 20-year period because of the war, and completed in 1959, it was discovered that the east pillar was a single trunk of silver fir (*momi*) reaching 24.8 metres in length. The west pillar was created by tenoning two tree trunks together, the upper part of hemlock (*tsuga*) and the lower of silver fir.²⁶ The understanding of the mechanical properties of high-rise structures demonstrated at Himeji, and the sureness and strength of the

numerous joints fashioned to splice and tenon this frame together, are staggering even in the light of our knowledge of modern building technology. The only precedent for such skills in the Japanese experience was to be found in the multi-storeyed Buddhist pagoda tradition. Buildings of similar size to the Himeji keep complex had been constructed as part of the monumental architecture of the Nara period. Himeji Castle, and its predecessor at Azuchi, are comfortable technical and stylistic companions of the Daigokuden and Daibutsuden of the eighth century. They are also technologically indebted to structures such as the twin pagodas, each reaching over 100 metres in height, which flanked the approach path to Tōdaiji. As in the case of the stone-masons and castle walls, the master carpenters of Himeji adapted the techniques of pagoda construction to their particular needs.²⁷ In order to stabilise pagodas against earthquake shock they were equipped with a tall, mast-like pillar at the centre known as the *shinbashira*, or 'heart pillar', which runs from the foundation podium through each storey and culminates in the bronze finial (Figure 5.11). The designers of the Himeji Great Tenshu equipped the framework with two such pillars to stabilise the structure and brace it against both lateral and vertical earthquake movement. Here is further evidence of the general trend in castle technology of the age observed initially



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Fig 5.11
Hōryūji. Nara prefecture.
Five-storey pagoda. Section
(Source: Nara-ken kyōiku iinkai, *Kokuhō Hōryūji gojūnotō shuri kōji hōkokusho*)



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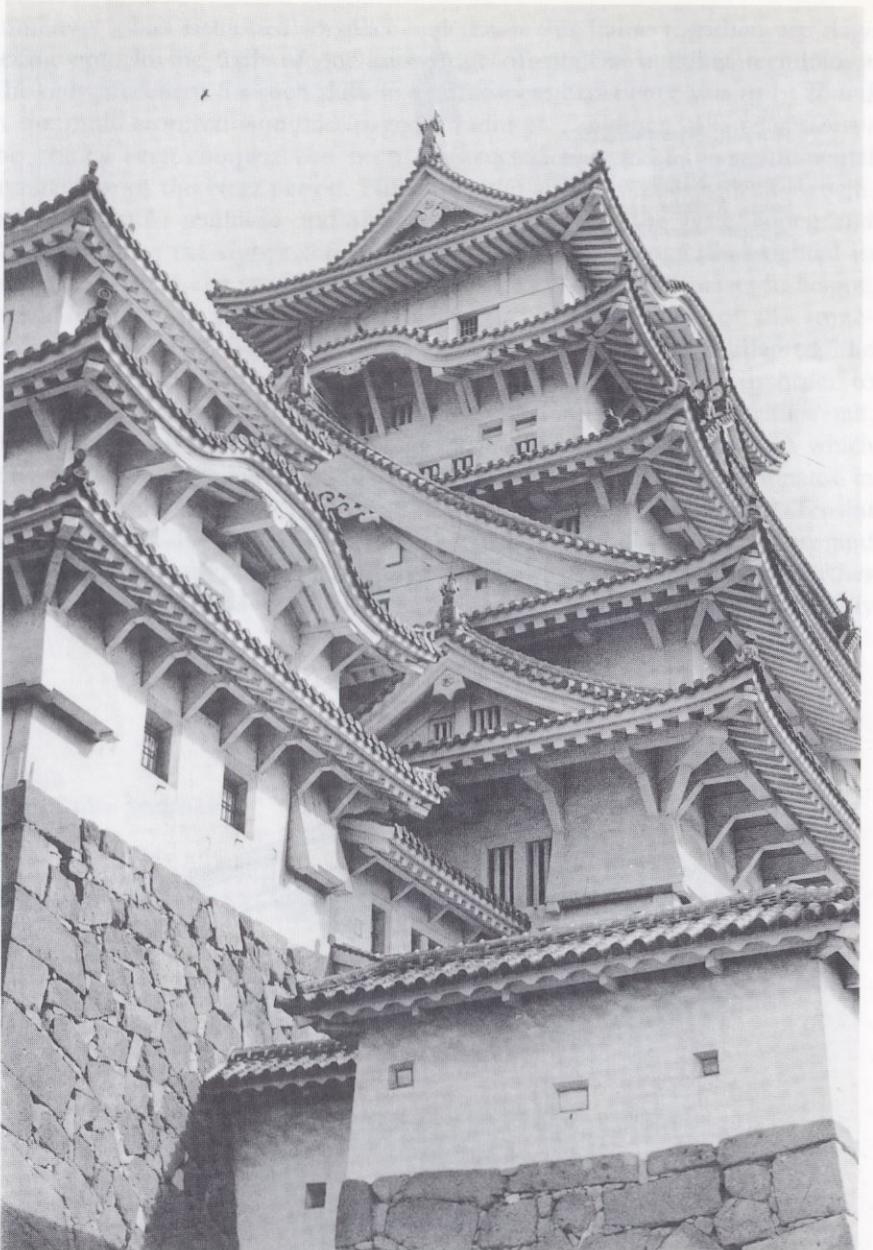


Fig. 5.12
Himeji Castle.
View of Great
Tenshu

in the case of Azuchi in which the techniques of religious building were conscripted to serve the ends of secular authority.

When viewed from the exterior, the most impressive and seductive part of the Great Tenshu and its subsidiary towers are undoubtedly the different roofs. These roofs are covered with grey tiles embellished with white plaster in order to secure them against high wind while at the same time providing dramatic decorative emphasis. On the main ridges are the *shachi* whose frolicking forms from the time of Azuchi Castle became a ubiquitous presence

on all castle roofs. Finally the carefully orchestrated syncopation of gables, alternating between sharp triangular shapes and the flaring gables or *kara-hafu*, gave dramatic emphasis to the keep buildings.

The beauty of the exterior of the castle fulfilled the ambition of its patron to create a symbol of authority, but the effectiveness of Himeji as a fortified centre is undeniable – both in the labyrinthine defences and in the variety of technical devices utilised for the superstructures. These included the projecting apertures at the corners of the keeps and towers which allowed defenders to drop boulders and even more unpleasant items upon any attackers attempting to scale the stone walls beneath (Figure 5.12). These *ishiotoshimado*, or ‘stone-dropping windows’, have their equivalent in devices employed in European castle architecture as defence against attackers.

Himeji Castle accordingly continued the tradition established at Azuchi of the castle which served both as a military installation and as a centre of civil authority. Himeji makes manifest on the one hand the enormous commitment of the warrior class to the castle as the nucleus of its authority, and on the other the centripetal effect of castle construction on building technology, especially in drawing together the expertise of the venerable traditions of monumental temple construction to serve the ends of newly established warrior authority.

Edo Castle and the Tokugawa Order

The genius and achievements of the age of castles culminated in the construction of Edo Castle, the supreme bastion of the Tokugawa order established at the heart of the shogunal metropolis. This edifice marked the third phase in the evolution of the castle from the time of Azuchi, while its completion to all intents and purposes ended the age of castles. The growth of the city of Edo with the castle as its focus is closely related to the circumstances of authority and played a key role in defining the new Tokugawa order. The castle *tenshu* dominated the city as its highest structure, while the stone walls and moats which snaked out from the centre defined the spatial configuration of the urban development and the hierarchical zoning of its inhabitants.

After a long history of sporadic settlement Edo experienced its most significant development as a Tokugawa centre. In 1590, following the defeat of the Hōjō family, Hideyoshi transferred his vassal Tokugawa Ieyasu to the Eight Provinces of the Kantō, which included the territory of the defeated Hōjō. The move was designed to disadvantage the Tokugawa in any further bid for power by separating them from their home-base in the province of Mikawa. It confronted Ieyasu with the challenge of a site for his new headquarters which was low-lying and in many parts swamp and marsh. To address this problem an energetic programme of hydraulic engineering was immediately embarked upon. Canals and moats were excavated to drain the marshes and to create a defence system for the castle. However the physical fragmentation of the site made the orderly arrangement of city blocks on a plan such as that of Nara and Kyoto next to impossible. Moreover, in 1594 the rapid expansion of the new city was slowed when Hideyoshi, keen to restrain the

eager plans of aggrandisement of the Tokugawa, ordered Ieyasu to participate in the rebuilding of Fushimi Castle, his own headquarters to the south of Kyoto. The consequence was that, until after 1600, Edo remained a castle town without a castle keep.

The Tokugawa military victory at Sekigahara of 1600 cleared the way for the construction of the central part of the castle at Edo. In fact the Tokugawa victory and the subsequent formal establishment of the Tokugawa *bakufu* in 1603 marked a watershed in the evolution of authority with palpable implications for official architecture and the city of Edo itself. The city entered a period of explosive growth, at a rate rarely exceeded in world history. By the 1720s it had a population of at least 1.2 million, making it one of the most populous cities of the contemporary world. The policies of the Tokugawa were the prime impetus behind this remarkable growth, and they gave the city its distinctive architectural character (see Figure 5.13). Some 60 per cent of urban land was occupied by the palaces and mansions of the daimyo, who were required to create permanent establishments in the Tokugawa headquarters under the system of obligatory part-time residence known as the *sankin kōtai* system. Their principal palaces, constructed on land allocated by the *bakufu* in the immediate vicinity of the castle, were built on a lavish scale with extensive facilities for formal audiences and ritual entertainment, especially for Nō drama. We shall return to these begilded corridors of power later. Here it is pertinent to note their placement proximate to the castle. The three Tokugawa collateral houses of Owari, Mito and Kii were positioned on the high ground to the immediate north of the castle grounds. Other *fudai* or vassal daimyo had similar favourable locations to the north and east. The *tozama daimyō*, whose loyalty to the Tokugawa had been enforced through military sanctions, were situated to the west and south of the castle, in a belt of land sweeping down the hill from what is now Kasumigaseki, through Hibiya into present-day Marunouchi. The lower lying and reclaimed land beside Edo Bay became the crowded site for the homes and shops of the merchant and artisan classes, offering a striking contrast to the space and luxury of the daimyo zones of the city centre. Excavation of moats and the reinforcing of their walls with massive quantities of rock proceeded alongside the work on daimyo palaces and the Edo *tenshu*. The moat extended outwards to create a spiral through the heart of Edo.²⁸ The spiral itself was irregular in shape; there were many parts of the city, such as the environs of the Akasaka barbican, where the marshes demanded a pragmatic rather than doctrinaire response to siting conditions.

The actual process of constructing the moats and stone walls of the castle was used by the Tokugawa as a mechanism to eviscerate daimyo resources. The Tokugawa required the daimyo to undertake the most onerous engineering and architectural tasks necessary for the urban development. The excavation of the moats was a deliberately herculean burden designed to drain their energies and preclude their political ambitions. The outer moat of the castle, completed in 1636, was 15.7 kilometres long, over 50 metres wide and almost as deep. This compared with the 6 kilometres of moats excavated for Himeji Castle, itself a remarkable achievement. The moat may have made the inner city and the castle virtually impregnable, but it conveniently and deliberately depleted the resources of the daimyo responsible for its construction.²⁹

*interesting
use of
moat*

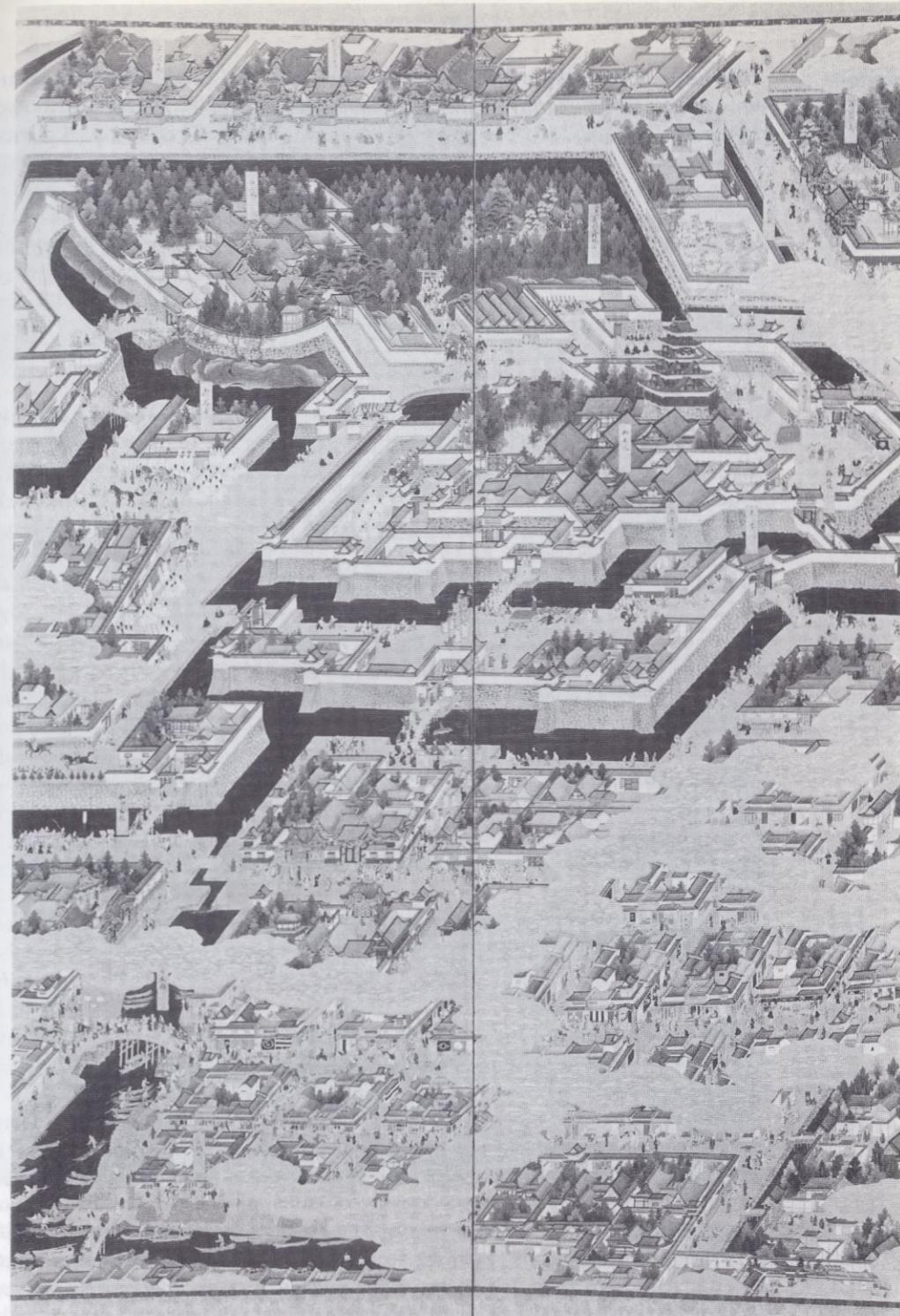


Fig 5.13 *Edozu byōbu*. Pair of six-fold screens. Detail of right screen showing Edo Castle at right with palaces of daimyo in immediate vicinity
(Courtesy of National Museum of Japanese History, Sakura)

The provision of stone for the castle walls was also a task carefully calculated for maximum effect in asserting Tokugawa authority. It was distributed among the daimyo according to the size of their officially assessed rice tax, a crippling burden for some due to the lack of any good stone deposits on the alluvial Kantō Plain. The boulders had to be quarried from the distant Izu mountains and transported by ship across Sagami Bay to the construction site at Edo. The city and its castle walls were therefore built on the backs of the daimyo through the cunning conscription of regional resources both of manpower and materials to serve the ends of the new central authority.

Building and Rebuilding the Tenshu of Edo Castle

The *tenshu* of Edo Castle was the ultimate focus of architecture and authority in the first half of the seventeenth century. The construction of, and as it transpired, the frequent rebuilding of this *tenshu*, serve as an architectural index of the state of authority under the first three Tokugawa shogun. The *tenshu* of Edo Castle was an eloquent, even verbose, architectural proclamation of temporal mastery. Like that of Azuchi before it, the keep of Edo Castle did not long outlive those who created it, falling victim to the changed political circumstances of the middle of the seventeenth century. Although destroyed by fire in 1657, and never rebuilt for reasons to be discussed later, the details of this grand edifice can be recreated by paintings, carpenters' drawings and references in literature. The *tenshu* was the largest ever constructed in Japan in terms of height, standing 58.4 metres from the base of the stone wall to the ridge-capping tiles – some 30 percent higher than the Great Tenshu of Himeji Castle. Unlike Himeji, however, Edo Castle had only a single keep as a result of changing political circumstances. At Azuchi we saw that castle and palace were combined in the same towering structure. At Himeji it was necessary to increase the interior space in response to the expanding spatial needs of civil administration and government by creating a system of multiple keeps. Although this approach was tried in several other castles of the period, when it came to building Edojō there was a parting of the ways between the *tenshu* and the palace. The centre of ritual and administration shifted from the castle keep to the palaces erected within the castle walls at the base of the *tenshu*, a new form of palace architecture discussed in the next chapter. At this point in our discussion the focus is upon the lingering power of that high-rise structure, the castle keep.³⁰

The most vivid record available for recreating the appearance of the Edo *tenshu* is a pair of six-fold screens in the collection of the National Museum of Japanese History at Sakura (Figure 5.13). Known as the *Edozu byōbu*, these screens contain an incomparable wealth of detail about the architecture of Edo prior to the Great Meireki Fire of 1657 which destroyed as much as 80 per cent of the city. Caution must be exercised in relying on these screens however. Although they depict Edo prior to the 1657 fire, they were painted as much as a generation later, and the architectural content is itself internally inconsistent.³⁰ It is essential to cross-check the information it contains with other sources, such as written descriptions. The sumptuous nature of the materials and excellent condition of the screens suggest a date of origin not

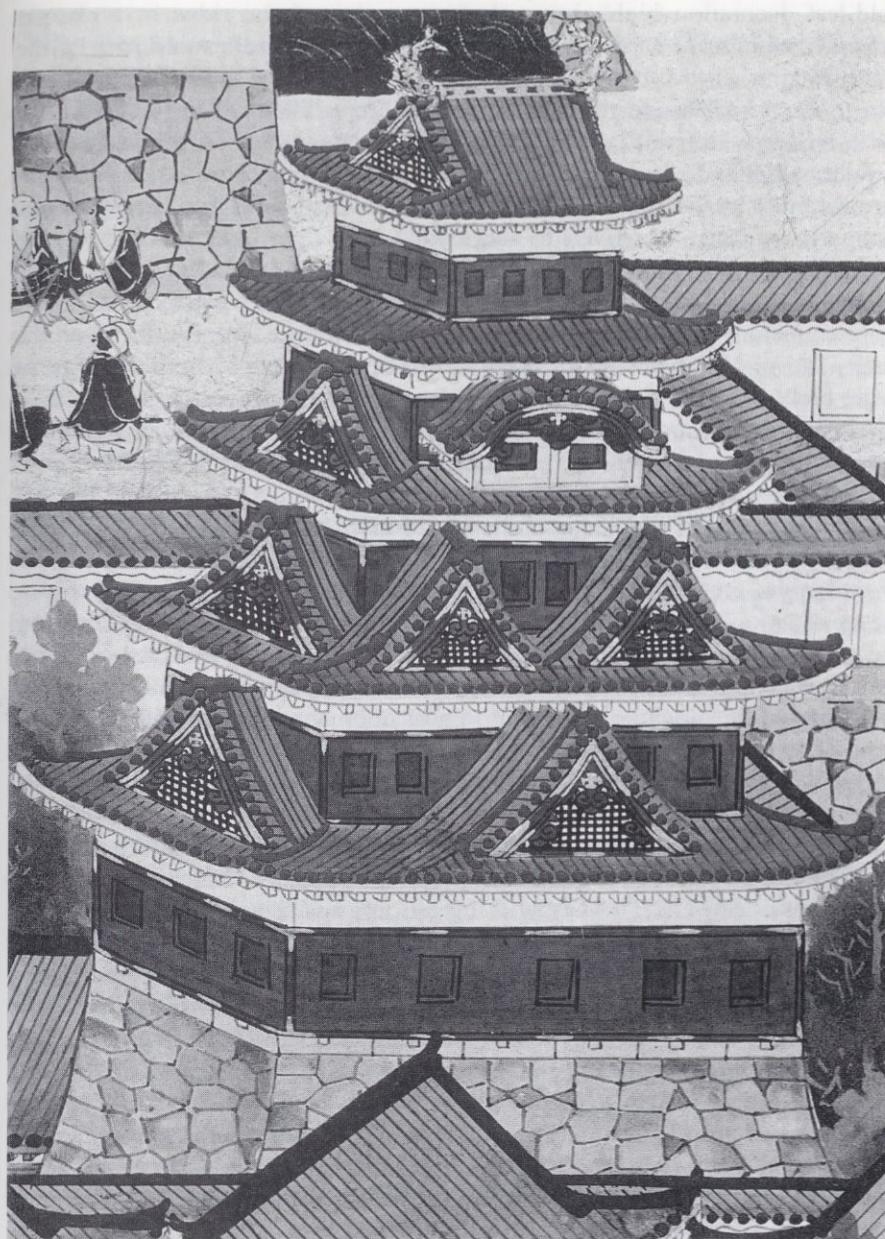


Fig 5.14
Edozu byōbu.
Detail showing
tenshu of Edo
Castle
(Courtesy of
National
Museum of
Japanese
History,
Sakura)

later than the turn of the eighteenth century. The artist, assisted to some degree by imagination, recreated the pre-1657 city as an architectural collage based on earlier drawings, paintings and maps.

The castle is featured on the right-hand panels of the left screen, at the heart of the city and at the centre of the composition of the painting (Figure 5.14). We look down upon the great castle and are struck, in the same way as the inhabitants of Edo would have been, with its grandeur and dignity.

It was delicately sculpturesque in appearance, with multiple gables and rich gold-leaf decoration highlighting the eave ends and the ridge in a manner strongly reminiscent of Azuchi Castle. The stone base, the only part of the castle keep to survive today, is made from finely finished granite. The principles of construction are the same as for the Azuchi walls but the quality of finish is entirely different, each massive block of granite being neatly squared off at right angles and aligned with its neighbours. The timber-framed superstructure rose five levels above the base and was crowned by gilded *shachigawara*. Dramatic emphasis was given to the second level by a large triangular gable (*chidorihafu*). The third level had a pair of similar but smaller gables while above these on the fourth level we see the elegantly curved gable which was such a gracious characteristic feature of Himeji Castle. To the front of the castle, set within the inner citadel, are clearly revealed a complex array of large, blue-tiled roofs, the palace buildings which were increasingly the focus of administration and ritual. Here again the roofs are bedecked in sculptural ornament covered in gold and lacquer, leaving little doubt as to the importance of the activities carried out within.

The *tenshu* may be depicted with a certain strength of conviction, and it does convey the spectacular nature of the building. Unfortunately, the details of the gables are not accurate, confirming that the painting dates from after the destruction of the keep in 1657. The actual technical drawings, used by the chief master builder to build this *tenshu*, have happily survived.³¹ These are drawings by Kōra Munehiro, the master builder who was in charge of the project. They include an isometric projection similar to modern architectural drawings, with cut-away sections illustrating details of the roof truss and gables, and written inscriptions identifying the building as the Edo castle keep, the author as Kōra Munehiro and the date of the document as 1638.

The Kōra drawings differ significantly from the *Edozu byōbu* in the arrangement of the all-important triangular and curved gables, the *chidorihafu* and *karahafu* respectively. They show a logical progression of gables up the east side with a pair of triangular gables on the first-storey roof. These are crowned by a larger gable of similar style on the second storey immediately above. On the fourth level a large, flattened *karahafu*, typical of 1630s architecture, flows into the eave line. In the painting the artist has incorrectly reversed the position of the triangular gables and the *karahafu* is shown as a separate roof, spoiling the graceful effect of the whole.

If the artist strayed from reality in showing the gables on the east face of the *tenshu*, his efforts are even less satisfactory when it comes to the south side. Here he simply creates a single triangular gable on each of the first, second and third storey roofs. The Kōra drawings establish that the design was more sophisticated, complementing that of the east face with a single triangular gable on the first storey and a pair of smaller matching gables above. On this side of the *tenshu* a *karahafu* is again used to accentuate the eave line of the fourth-storey roof, a feature omitted from the screen painting.

The *tenshu* pictured in the *Edozu byōbu* and the Kōra drawing is no less than the third keep to be built at Edo Castle. The first three shogun each built a new *tenshu* to express his own authority, even, perhaps, as an atavistic

gesture to the ancient ritualistic practice of building a new palace for a new emperor.

The first *tenshu* was built between 1604 and 1607, immediately after the formal establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate. The only surviving evidence of the design of this building is contained in a large plan of Edo Castle dated 1605. It consists of a Great Tenshu with a single smaller tower connected to it. The details are not clear but it would appear to have been similar in principle to the multiple connected keep design which was to be employed at Himeji Castle shortly afterwards.³² Whatever the actual details of this first Edo *tenshu* may have been, Ieyasu's architectural and political preoccupations shifted almost immediately upon completion. This was a reflection of changing circumstances of power in Edo. In 1605 Ieyasu had officially retired as shogun in order to gain room to manoeuvre behind the scenes, and indeed behind the walls of another castle. With much pomp and ceremony he had returned to Sumpu, now the city of Shizuoka, and thrown his energies into repairing and restoring the castle there.³³ From Sumpu Ieyasu was to exercise long-distance control over national affairs for over a decade, while his son Hidetada supervised the growing shogunal bureaucracy in Edo.³⁴ Thus in the critical period of the new shogunate, while the era of stand-off with the Toyotomi continued, much of the decision-making process was physically separated from Edo itself. Until the death of Ieyasu in 1616, the city of Edo was the locus of state symbolism and governmental control but not the focus of real policy-making. There is an interesting analogy in terms of political behaviour between Tokugawa Edo and the separation of institutional and personal power in *insei*, or cloistered government, of the Heian period, when retired emperors exercised real authority from the separate palaces to which they removed themselves upon abdication.

Ieyasu was also preoccupied with establishing a powerful architectural presence in and around the imperial capital of Kyoto rather than with building a grandiose keep for Edo on the distant Kantō plain. By 1606 he had built a new headquarters for Tokugawa affairs in Kyoto at Nijō. Fushimi Castle, to the immediate south of Kyoto, was completely rebuilt by the Tokugawa in the same year. These two castles became the focus and the definition of shogunate authority *vis à vis* imperial authority, while Edo Castle became the power base for the Kantō. It was only after the demise of Toyotomi power in 1615 and Ieyasu's death in 1616 that Edo became the unequivocal centre of Tokugawa authority.

The circumstances of authority changed dramatically with the military victory over the Toyotomi in 1615, and on the death of Ieyasu the following year, real power passed to Hidetada. In the years 1622–1623 Hidetada had Ieyasu's *tenshu* demolished and replaced by a new building. Unlike its multiple-keep predecessor, the new structure was a single tower. This rebuilding was part of a process for greatly enlarging the inner citadel (*bonmaru*) of the castle to provide more space for palace and administrative buildings. A multiple-towered keep was no longer needed to accommodate administrative offices and audience chambers, and the floor area of the keep was substantially reduced. However the *tenshu* continued to be an important landmark signalling Tokugawa authority to the surrounding city, and particularly to the many

daimyo fulfilling their duty of forced residence in the castle environs. The design of the tower was therefore made more elaborate than that of its predecessor by the addition of numerous triangular and cusped gables. It was built under the direction of the Nakai, a family of hereditary master builders from the celebrated temple of Hōryūji, who had worked upon Hideyoshi Osaka Castle in 1583 before entering Tokugawa service in 1588. Their family records and a painting of Edo (*Edo meishozu byōbu*), dating to this era and now preserved in the Idemitsu Art Museum, show that the keep had assumed new authority as the symbolic centre of the governing order.³⁵

This *tenshu* was to last only 15 years. It was replaced at the behest of the third shogun, Iemitsu, in 1637–1638, by an even more resplendent building – the *tenshu* depicted, albeit inaccurately, in the *Edozu byōbu* and built under the hand of the Kōra master builders. The speed with which this rebuilding was accomplished and the splendour of its final form indicate the importance of this architectural structure as a symbol of authority for Iemitsu, who was at that time engaged in a process of far-reaching institutionalisation of his own power within the overall framework of *bakufu* authority. Iemitsu had emerged from the shadow of his grandfather, Ieyasu, and his immediate predecessor and father Hidetada, on the latter's death in 1632. For the next five years he enacted a series of measures designed to consolidate his personal authority, including a reformulation of the laws governing the military households in 1615; tightened control over daimyo; persecution of Christianity, and eventual prohibition of foreign contacts. The rebuilt *tenshu* was in effect Iemitsu's grand punctuation mark to signify the completion of this process of consolidation.

When most of Edo Castle, and much of the surrounding city, was destroyed in the great conflagration of 1657, the *bakufu* immediately put into action plans to rebuild the castle keep. Work proceeded apace on the rebuilding of the stone walls and palaces of the castle, with the Maeda, the most powerful of the all daimyo, given responsibility for rebuilding the wall at the base of the keep.³⁶ Even as this work was being completed under the direction of the assiduous Anō masons, consultations were taking place between Hoshina Masayuki, Sakai Tadakatsu and Ii Naotaka, the daimyo in whose hands shogunal government now rested. They reached the decision that 'work on the *tenshu* would be suspended because of damage throughout the city [because of the fire] which had placed a major strain upon the financial resources of the state'.³⁷ The circumstances of authority were dramatically different in 1657–1659 from those at the time of the creation of the third *tenshu* 20 years earlier. Iemitsu himself had died in 1651, and his son, Ietsuna, became shogun by hereditary succession. Real power, however, was now in the hands of *fudai daimyō*, over whom Iemitsu had been vigorously asserting his control in 1637–1638: it is not surprising then that the daimyo should not wish to finance the rebuilding of the *tenshu*, symbol of that control, in the new post-Iemitsu era. There was a new pragmatism in *bakufu* policies towards the built environment, partly as a result of the practical problems of rebuilding which confronted the shogunate after the fire, and partly as a result of the increased stability of the *bakufu* in institutional terms after 1651.³⁸ Counting the monetary cost of political monuments was a radical departure

from the circumstances of authority prior to 1651 and indeed throughout most of Japanese history.

The shogunate flirted briefly, once more, with the idea of rebuilding the *tenshu* in the reign of Ienobu (1709–1713). Once the projected cost had been ascertained the idea progressed as far as the drawing-up of detailed plans but the construction process was soon abandoned. The *tenshu* had become a political anachronism.

Presence and Power: Azuchi, Himeji and Edo Castles

The three castles examined in this chapter, each representing a separate era in the creation and consolidation of authority in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had an extraordinary political presence. Each castle was an expression of a particular moment within a period of rule by control of the built as well as the political environment. Each castle, too, was a direct index to the political circumstances of its time, and in two of the three cases, was destroyed once those circumstances had changed.

As has been established, castle architecture drew heavily upon long-established traditions of religious architecture in Japan. This was no accident, for in any traditional society it is a technological imperative to build upon existing technology. However the castle was far more than the result of technological determinism: it stood on the boundary of the secular and the sacred, expressing the aspirations towards the eternal and the divine of those who were so bold as to reach towards the heavens with their earthly abodes. Such was the ambition of their military sponsors and the skill of their builders that this period of castle-building was one of the great ages of construction in world history. The frenetic fortifying of the state with castles parallels the building programmes of Imperial Rome under Augustus, the era of church and castle construction by the Normans after the Conquest of Britain in 1066, and the cathedral and church building in the Paris region around the year 1200, during which, as John James has written, 'a frantic and insatiable urge to construct consumed the riches of France'.³⁹ Japan was beset by a similar frantic and insatiable urge to build castles for a mere two generations around the turn of the seventeenth century. It was equally a frantic but fleeting moment when the concentrated energy, inspiration, technology, artistic talents and materials of the nation were brought to bear on the physical realisation of authority in the architecture of the castle. It was an era in which the master builders and other master craftsmen, at the head of vast armies of labourers mobilised in the cause of castle-building, became the professional peers of the architects and artists who served imperial Rome, Norman conquerors and medieval bishops. The majesty of the Japanese castle, its formidable strength, the grandeur of its spectacle, the infinite subtlety of its crafted decoration, created monuments as ageless as ambition itself.

6

Nijō Castle and the Psychology of Architectural Intimidation

Nijō Castle was the alpha and omega of formally constituted Tokugawa rule. At this sumptuous, fortified palace in Kyoto, Tokugawa Ieyasu first presided over the daimyo as newly appointed shogun in 1603. It was within the same stone walls in the Ninomaru Goten (Palace of the Second Compound) that the last Tokugawa shogun, Yoshinobu, officially returned ruling power to the imperial institution in 1867. Between 1603 and 1867 Nijō Castle was to serve as the headquarters of the Tokugawa shogunate in the imperial capital, as the location for its administration of the Kansai region, the base for a military garrison, and as the place where the shogun resided while conducting business with the imperial court and local daimyo.

Nijō Castle was a large and elaborate complex, in keeping with its important and diverse role. It is conventionally known as a ‘castle’ – as in its official title ‘Nijōjō’. In reality it was more a fortified palace than a palatial castle. It consisted of several palaces and administrative buildings set within two compounds, each protected by walls and moats in the manner of castles of this period (Figure 6.1). Within its Second Compound today stands the best

Fig 6.1
Nijō Castle,
Kyoto. Aerial view from south showing Palace of the Second Compound (Courtesy of Nijōjō)



Fig 6.2
Nijō Castle.
Palace of the
Second
Compound.
Front view

preserved example of a Tokugawa palace. This ‘Palace of the Second Compound’ survives to offer an incomparable opportunity for understanding the equation between artistic form and political order in the high culture of seventeenth-century Japan (Figure 6.2).¹ Here we can still examine *in situ* the buildings in which Tokugawa officials worked and where some of the most important ritual audiences of the shogunal state were conducted, including its official termination. Artistic media ranging from architecture to landscaping, painting to filigree ornament, sculpture to lacquer work, are brilliantly orchestrated in a concert of effects, greater than the simple sum of the parts, to achieve a finely tuned expression of authority. When viewed today, some of the distinctions in design and material, painting style and iconography, may seem self-indulgent or even unimportant, but it is essential to remember that these palace chambers were designed to accommodate highly informed observers, well schooled in interpreting the visual vocabulary of architectural form and applied ornament. It was the shogun, if not God, who was present in the detail, and we too should look for political significance in small details because these chambers were to play a vital role in defining the status and standing of those who used them. The Palace of the Second Compound at Nijō Castle allows us a rare opportunity to examine a Tokugawa palace in the light of findings by the behavioural sciences concerning the influence of buildings on human behaviour. In particular we shall seek evidence that buildings may perform what Wells termed ‘autocratic functions’.² When applied to Tokugawa official architecture this raises some obvious questions which must be addressed: how, for instance, did the Tokugawa use architecture to define and enforce their authority? What artistic devices were used to achieve homology between the autocracy of authority and the autocracy of the buildings? How did the physical spaces created between individuals, and between groups, establish or reinforce the perception of relative status in the Tokugawa order?

Built Environment and Tokugawa Authority

We have seen how the bountiful resources of the shogunal state of the Tokugawa were mobilised to build a new physical establishment at Edo to house and manifest a new political order. In the first half of the seventeenth century there was a fundamental congruence between the process of state formation and the process of creating the built environment of a planned city. The Tokugawa set out to solidify a fluid political situation by pouring society into a new physical mould. This is a perfect illustration of the theory of container and contained. Inevitably at Edo the contained, that is Tokugawa government and its officially sanctioned socio-political order, acquired much of the character and many of the formal configurations of the container, the city of Edo and its officially sponsored or imposed building projects. The state became a work of art and art became a work of state, to borrow Jacob Burckhardt's classic characterisation of the Italian Renaissance. The first three Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu (1542–1616), Hidetada (1579–1632) and Iemitsu (1604–1651) proved remarkably adept at translating their political ambitions into physical forms, sharing that universal ambition of rulers throughout the ages to create palpable manifestations of authority.

This raises one further question of great significance – how was authority defined during this period of consolidation? Here the limitations of relying on written sources alone become apparent. The official ideology of Tokugawa government is generally held to have been Neo-Confucianism, based on the synthesis and commentary on the Confucian classics undertaken by the Song-dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi (1130–1200), and reinterpreted in Japan by the Hayashi school of philosophers beginning with Fujiwara Seika (1561–1619) and Hayashi Razan (1583–1657).³ Zhu Xi's philosophical reordering was sweeping in scope and it is not hard to find some textual justification for the Tokugawa emphasis on the physical forms of authority amongst the texts he emphasised and his own commentaries. In *Principle and Material Force*, for example, we find the pronouncement that:

in the universe there has never been any material-force [*ch'i*] without principle [*Li*] or principle without material-force Throughout the universe there are both principle and material force. Principle refers to the Way [Tao], which is above the realm of corporeality and is the source from which all things are produced. Material-force refers to material objects, which are within the realm of corporeality; it is the instrument by which things are produced. . . . There is principle before there can be material-force. But it is only when there is material-force that principle finds a place to settle. This is the process by which all things are produced, whether large as Heaven and earth or small as ants.⁴

'Material-force', as here defined, may be construed to have been given effect by the Tokugawa in the city of Edo and its architectural splendours, but it would be misleading to attribute a Neo-Confucian interpretation to the built environment of Edo during the first generations of Tokugawa shogunal rule. In fact, the first official Zhu Xi academy was not founded by the *bakufu* until 1630, and systematic propagation of Neo-Confucian tenets in education was initiated only in the later seventeenth century.⁵ There was no special imperative, either explicit or implicit, towards building great monuments in Zhu Xi's

writings, and certainly no recognition of the role the built environment may perform in actively shaping conduct. Zhu Xi simply affirms the basic Sino-Confucian principle that the material world, including the socio-political order, is part of the order of the cosmos, a principle which had been applied in the Tang capitals and found its way into the planning of the cities of Nara and Kyoto in the eighth and ninth centuries respectively. It is significant that Zhu Xi relies on the Daoist notion of the Way as well as the Confucian concept of harmony between things seen and unseen.

When in 1600 the House of Tokugawa achieved national military supremacy at the Battle of Sekigahara, it turned increasingly to buildings, as 'things seen', to establish a working definition of authority unseen. The Tokugawa order was created in a protracted process of accommodation with, and eventually assertion over, the authority of the imperial institution above and the power of the daimyo below.⁶ Much of this accommodation was architecturally achieved. The authority of the Tokugawa shogunate was structured by its specially created architectural setting; the Tokugawa built environment defined spatially the crucial relationships between the shogunate, the imperial court and the regional lords. It achieved this in terms of spatial juxtaposition to establish hierarchy, physical access to equate with political importance, and the use of architecture as the officially sanctioned image of authority both to influence and intimidate.

Architecturally, the consolidation of Tokugawa rule was effected through the transition from an age of castles to an age of palaces. This was marked in building design by a shift from an age of vertical emphasis to an age of horizontal emphasis, from a period of preoccupation with the symbolism of towering castle *tenshu* and massive masonry walls, to an age of single-storey palaces. Their rhetorical effect was accomplished through gilded gateways and intimidating interiors carefully organised for maximum polemic impact during the ceremonies of obeisance by the daimyo to the shogun. The initial shift to horizontally organised palaces may have been motivated by the inconvenience, not to mention the potential danger, of having to ascend and descend the steep, ladder-like stairs of *tenshu* in full court regalia, complete with wide silken trousers up to a metre longer than the legs they clothed. However, the political potential of a horizontal sequence of spaces was soon realised. These palaces were built in a style now referred to as *shoin-zukuri*, the style of the Japanese residence characterised by a loose grouping of buildings in a landscaped setting with interiors organised spatially on the module of the *tatami* mat.

Shoin architecture had its origins in *shinden-zukuri*, the mansions and palaces of aristocratic authority we encountered in the Heian period. Following the warrior usurpation of civil authority in the twelfth century, features of the *shinden* style – such as their special garden settings, open-plan interiors, sliding screens and *tatami* mats – were adopted by the warrior class as well as the ecclesiastical hierarchy for their residences. The use of *tatami* was extended to become the module for interior space, and equipment and furnishings were suitably adapted from the residences and studies of Zen monks. This included the *tsuke-shoin*, or bay window with writing shelf, from which the style takes its name, the *tokonoma* or alcove for the display of *objets d'art*, and *chigaidana*, or split-level ornamental shelving. These and other features from the same

context found a natural second home in the buildings of the warrior establishment of Muromachi Kyoto in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as the Ashikaga *bakufu* and its vassals consciously acquired the appurtenances of scholarly accomplishment and religious discipline. The newly appropriated features immeasurably enhanced the overall effect created by the chambers designed for receiving subordinates and entertaining distinguished guests, in much the same way as many politicians today resort to impressively book-lined offices to create the verisimilitude of wisdom. The *shoin* style was to reach its rhetorical culmination in the first part of the seventeenth century. Today it is the awe-inspiring palace at Nijō Castle which bears most eloquent testimony to the success of architecture in defining the Tokugawa order in relation to the authority of the imperial institution and the power of the daimyo.

The Construction of Nijō Castle

Nijō Castle was built in the city of Kyoto in a rectangular compound some 400 metres north-south and 500 metres east-west, flanked by Horikawa Avenue on the eastern side and Nijō Avenue on the north. Unlike the palatial castles constructed at the height of the struggles for unification under Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, its palatial character reveals the transition to an age of more subtle civil sanctions by ruler over the ruled. The first Tokugawa building work at the Nijō site was carried out from 1602 to 1603, the period following the victory over the Toyotomi-led forces at the Battle of Sekigahara. The new complex was built on the site of Nobunaga's earlier Kyoto palace. It was created by the same process as was to prove so effective in the building of the city of Edo, namely 'obliging' the daimyo of the Kansai region to build the new moats and stone walls.⁷ The original ditch and earthen embankments surrounding the palace compound were widened to a distance of 4 metres, above which imposing walls of finely hewn granite were assembled. A towering two-storey gatehouse today demonstrates to the assembled phalanxes of tourist coaches and their passengers the greatness which was once Tokugawa power. The gatehouse was erected at the main entrance on the east side. Its massive beams and sturdy wooden doors, plated with iron for protection against assault by sword or musket, are evidence of the military character of Nijō Castle during those uncertain years between the Battle of Sekigahara and the annihilation of the Toyotomi in 1615.

However, the Tokugawa were quick to incorporate the more courtly refinements of a palace into these impressive fortifications for the ritual enforcement of their authority. Here, on the twenty-fifth day of the third month of 1603, Ieyasu required the daimyo to present themselves in order to congratulate him formally on the imperial conferral of the title of *sei-i-tai-shōgun*.⁸ He may have already received the sword of shogunal office the preceding month in a ceremony at the Imperial Palace in Kyoto, followed by reception of the official imperial envoy in audience at his castle headquarters at Fushimi,⁹ but it was at the newly rebuilt Nijō Castle that Ieyasu was to receive congratulations and enforce daimyo subservience through ceremony.

Only scanty written records remain of these events and the buildings which housed them. It is to the structures, rebuilt some 20 years later, that we must turn for extant buildings and more comprehensive documentary records. This Nijō Castle, which survives essentially intact, was built for a formal visit of state upon the shogun by the Emperor Go Mizunoo in 1626. Its architectural character is an unmistakable statement of the subtler psychological sanctions brought to bear on emperor and daimyo alike as the Tokugawa asserted their authority as national rulers.

The construction of extensive new palace buildings in the Second Compound of the precincts of Nijō Castle was not an isolated architectural event. Rather it was part of a concerted *bakufu* strategy to place its indelible architectural stamp on the imperial capital, which included the rebuilding of important temples such as Kiyomizudera, Nanzenji and Chion'in. This strategy conveniently eclipsed the glory of the vanquished Toyotomi still persisting in the many buildings they had sponsored in the preceding generation.¹⁰ The architectural policies of the Tokugawa in Kyoto, however, were most pointedly directed towards redefining relations with the imperial court. This policy, part of the process of establishing a working definition of the Tokugawa order in relation to the authority of the imperial institution, purposely included *bakufu* financing and rebuilding of the Kyoto Gosho, the Imperial Palace and residence. It is difficult to imagine a more explicit way of showing who had the ascendancy in the relationship than did the rebuilding of the emperor's inner sanctum. It may seem presumptuous for an imperially appointed shogun to rebuild the emperor's own house, but in the context of political realities of the first half of the seventeenth century it could be construed favourably – as constituting an example of their responsibilities as emergent national rulers, *noblesse oblige* rather than *lèse majesté*.¹¹ In terms of *realpolitik*, the Gosho rebuilding was an unambiguous measure which put the emperor in his place, in exactly the same way as each class in the socio-political order was set in its place in the city plan of Edo.

Nijō Castle furthered the same ends by legitimising the *bakufu* through the creation of a visible presence near the Gosho. It dominated the north-western sector of the city, acting as a counterpoise to the courtly dignity of the Imperial Palace, while its five-storey *tenshu*, gracing the east corner of the Inner Compound until destroyed by lightning in 1750, rivalled the soaring five-storey pagoda of Tōji on the sky-line of the city.

Nijō Castle was more than simply a visual spectacle in the cause of asserting Tokugawa authority over the court, because here the Tokugawa were to employ the same architectural strategies in relation to the emperor as were proving so effective in Edo against the daimyo, the practice of official visitation. In this case, however, the practice was cunningly reversed, for the Tokugawa rebuilt much of Nijō Castle, particularly the Second Compound, to receive the 'favour' of visitation by the emperor in 1626. The practice of receiving the emperor in an official visit, known as *miyuki* or *gokyō*, had been used to good effect by Hideyoshi to help invest his authority in Kyoto with the trappings of imperial legitimacy. In theory, the favour of imperial visitation was bestowed by the emperor on a subject, but in Momoyama and subsequent Tokugawa practice, the ultimate purpose was to enhance the

authority of the theoretical subordinate: the emperor was seen publicly to respond to, and acquiesce in, the invitation of a subject, and to be received in courtly manner within the host's own built environment especially prepared for the occasion.¹²

The facilities provided for the imperial visit were extensive, comprising a palace building set to each side of a garden, and an ornamental lake in the Second Compound of the redesigned fortifications. The records of the Nakai, master builders for the project, show that work on the castle moats and walls and the collection of building materials began in the seventh month of 1624. Architectural construction was carried out from the beginning of 1625 and continued until the sixth month of 1626, when Hidetada arrived from Edo to supervise final preparations.¹³ The palace for receiving and accommodating the emperor during the five days of festivities, the Gokyō Goten, was situated to the southwest of the lake. Only plans of the buildings survive, held in the archives of the Nakai family. These show that the palace was small in scale and private in character. It consisted of a single *shoin* building for accommodation and audience facing north, flanked by kitchen and service facilities on the west, and on the east side, by a covered gallery projecting northwards to provide seating for viewing Nō drama at a stage erected especially for the occasion. It was approached via a ceremonial gateway with sweeping *kara-hafu* set into the fore and rear eaves.

The significance of this imperial visitation takes on somewhat of another dimension when it is noted that Go Mizunoo, through cunning use of intermarriage by the Tokugawa, had become the son-in-law of the retired shogun Hidetada and the brother-in-law of the third shogun Iemitsu. The reception of Go Mizunoo in his temporary palace within the Nijōjō palace, from the sixth to the tenth day of the ninth month of 1626, was anything but a public occasion, with just the three intermarried protagonists present at the drinking of the ceremonial cups of sake. The form of ceremony and architecture was based directly on the precedents established by the Ashikaga *bakufu* in the Muromachi period (1333–1467).¹⁴

The Palace of the Second Compound: Organisation and Function

The Palace of the Second Compound was built at the same time as the Gokyō Goten on the other side of the ornamental lake. The siting of these two palace complexes in relation to each other is itself indicative of Tokugawa political motives. Not only did the emperor's palace face north, which was undesirable in solar terms and undignified geomantically, but the shogunal palace was set to the northeast of the lake and the imperial palace to the southwest, the most hostile and most benevolent directions respectively. The Tokugawa thereby protected the emperor from the flow of evil forces in the universe, employing a strategy similar to that in force in Edo where the Kan'eiji was placed to the northeast of Edo Castle for geomantic insurance purposes.

The role of the Gokyō Goten was circumscribed ceremonially and limited to that one occasion. The buildings were eventually dismantled and dispersed.

The shogunal palace, by contrast, was more varied in function and its role continued until the end of the Tokugawa *bakufu* itself. As the focus for the conduct of *bakufu* administrative affairs in Kyoto it housed offices for shogunal officials, and a residence at the rear was provided for the shogun when he was in Kyoto. However, the most visible parts of the palace, a series of chambers which admitted the daimyo to formal shogunal presence according to their status, were designed specifically to enact shogunal mastery over the daimyo.

The extant palace complex, built as part of the 1624–1626 project sponsored by Iemitsu, replaced an earlier palace built on the same site at the time of Ieyasu. Although it retained the basic *shoin* pattern, it was built on a much larger and more lavish scale. As may be seen today, it consists of five *shoin*-style buildings, each with *tatami* rooms connected by highly polished wooden corridors (Figure 6.3). These buildings are stepped back in sequence along a receding axis. The service buildings, including bathhouse and large kitchen, are located at the rear.

A visit to the palace begins at the main gateway, a magnificent structure dominated visually by the sweeping *karahafu* set over the eaves at front and rear. The eaves and transoms are bedecked with a dazzling array of sculpture, including an enormous dragon romping in rough seas, phoenixes and cranes in flight, and shining lacquered pillars and filigree Tokugawa crests.¹⁵ This gateway leads through the wall surrounding the Second Compound to the palace buildings 30 metres to the north. The first building has a large sweeping roof covered in heavy tiles embossed with Tokugawa crests (see Figure 6.2). The entry has a *karahafu* set above the main entrance, complementing the style of the roof of the nearby gateway. The large transom set over the main entrance is, like the gateway, richly decorated with polychrome sculptures of birds and flowers, while delicate openwork friezes enliven the transoms above the two side bays (Figure 6.4). Thus the points of entry to the Second Compound and the palace buildings are given dramatic emphasis by the provision of a concert of visual effects with carefully orchestrated sculptural and architectural designs.

Behind this are the sliding screens leading to Tōzamurai, the anterooms for receiving visitors (Figure 6.5). The three main interconnected *tatami* rooms on the forward-facing side of the building are decorated with screen paintings of crouching tigers and panthers, as large as life, lurking menacingly in bamboo groves (Figure 6.6). To sit and wait in such a chamber would have been an uncomfortable experience at best. It is not difficult to imagine the consequences if such an approach were employed for the waiting rooms of dental surgeries today instead of the more customary subdued tonal values and comforting landscape paintings.

Set at right angles to, and immediately abutting, the Tōzamurai, is the Shikidai, which was used for the exchange of formal greetings between visiting daimyo and *rōjū*, the daimyo who were senior councillors in the shogunal government. The main chamber is long and narrow, and of considerable size – some 45 *tatami* mats in total floor space or 73 square metres. The contrast in size with the small six- to ten-mat rooms of the Tōzamurai is deliberate, contrived for maximum psychological impact. The rear wall of the chamber

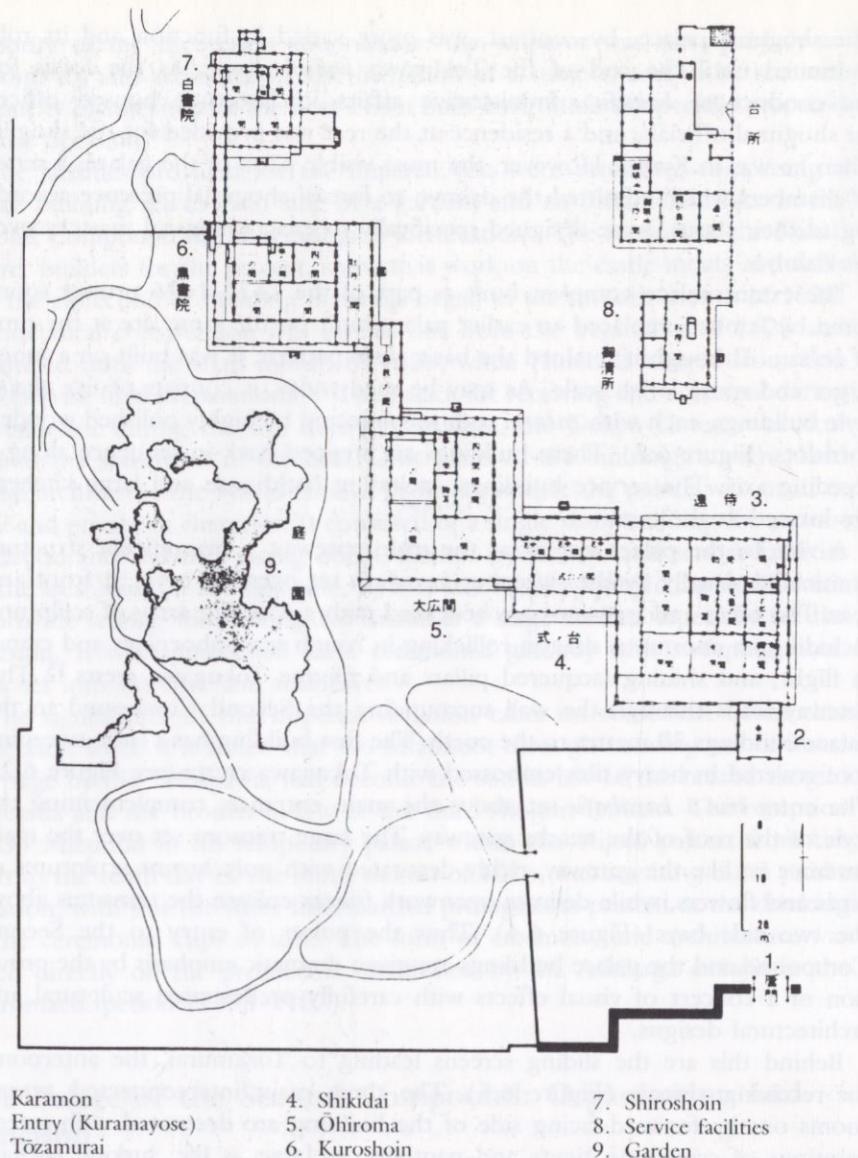


Fig. 6.3
Nijo Castle.
Palace of the
Second
Compound.
Plan
(Source:
Fujioka
Michio, *Shiro
to shoin*)

- 1. Karamon
- 2. Entry (Kurumayose)
- 3. Tōzamurai
- 4. Shikidai
- 5. Ōhiroma
- 6. Kuroshoin
- 7. Shiroshoin
- 8. Service facilities
- 9. Garden

is dominated by a painting of two large pine trees, strong, evergreen and enduring, the pervasive pictorial symbol of perennial power in the warrior artistic vocabulary of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These two pine trees seem to defy even the structural framework of the wall itself, with their branches reaching out aggressively across pillars and beams.

Behind this chamber are three small rooms which were used as offices by the *rōjū*. Intimate in scale and detail, they are decorated with friendly scenes of wild geese feeding in river marshes, and of herons standing bravely against the blowing snow of winter, a reminder of the self-discipline and fortitude in adversity required of the warrior.



Fig. 6.4
Nijo Castle.
Entry
(Kurumayose)
transom sculp-
ture of the
Palace of
the Second
Compound

The visual drama reaches a climax with the *Ōhiroma*, the great audience hall. By the time of Hideyoshi this type of audience chamber had become a standard feature of palatial castles. *Shōmei*, the official records of Hideyoshi's master builders, notes that 'during the Tenshō era [1573–1592], when Kanpaku Hideyoshi built the castle of Juraku, the *shuden* [the main hall] was made extremely wide, the reason why it is now called the *hiroma* [lit. 'wide room'].'¹⁶ *Hiroma* became the standard term for the principal audience chamber in a palace and, by extension, the building which housed it. By the

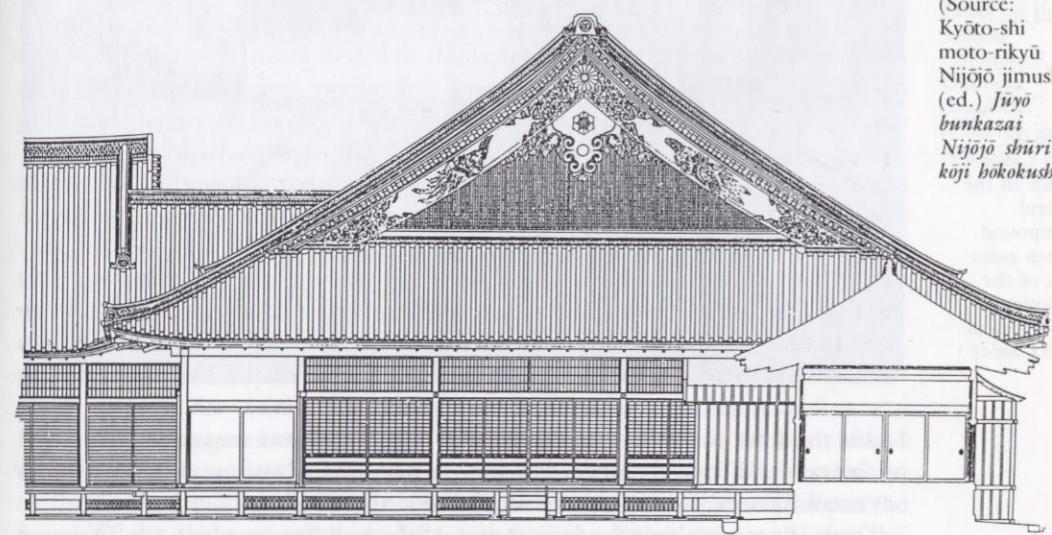


Fig. 6.5
Nijo Castle.
Palace of the
Second
Compound.
Transverse
section of
Kurumayose
and front
elevation of
Tōzamurai
(Source:
Kyōto-shi
moto-rikyū
Nijo-jō jinusho
(ed.) Jūyō
bunkazai
Nijo-jō shuri
kōji hōkokusho)

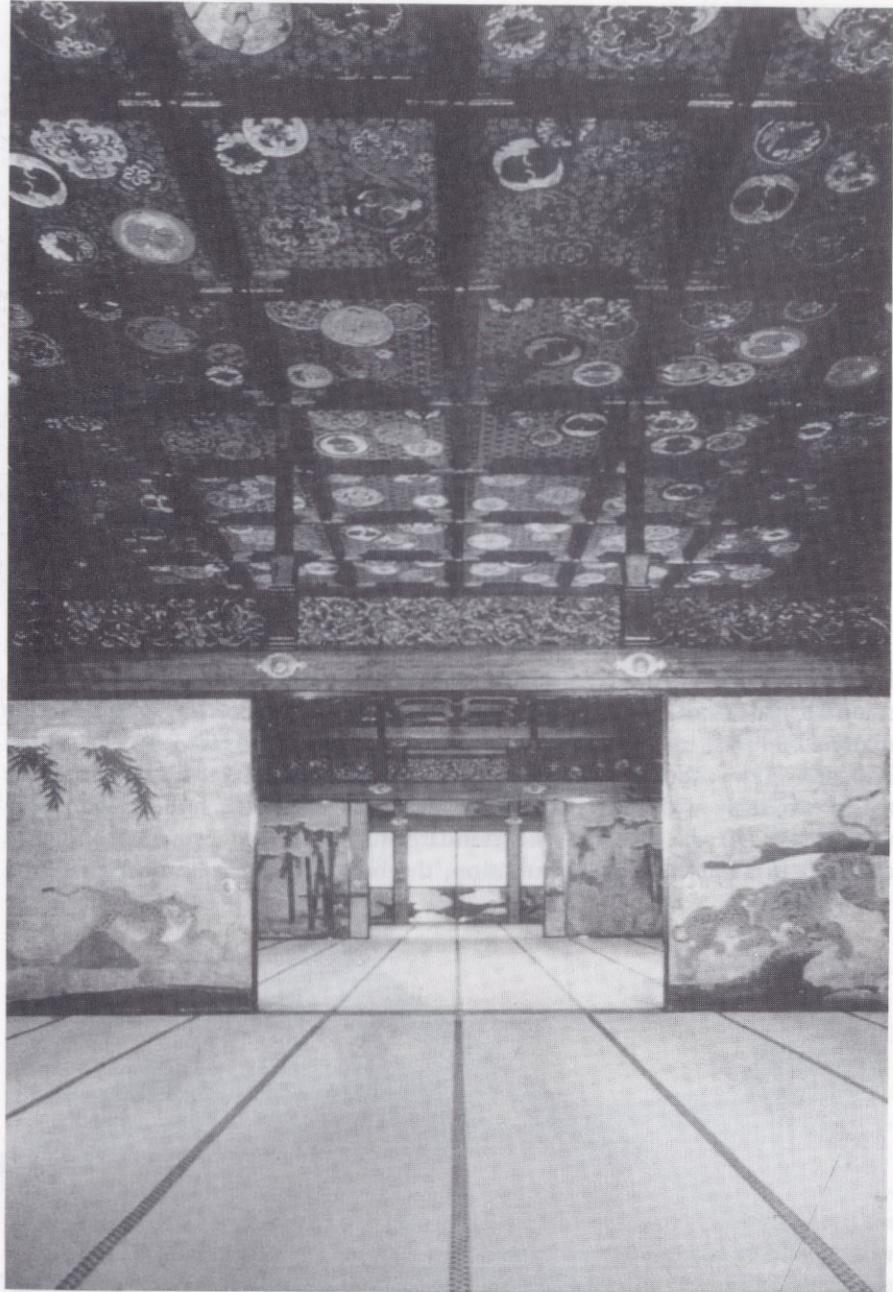


Fig 6.6
Nijō Castle.
Palace of the
Second
Compound.
Screen paint-
ings of the
Tōzamurai
(Courtesy of
Nijō Castle)

1620s the term *ōhiroma* or 'large *hiroma*' was in common usage for the larger of the two audience chambers in major palaces and mansions, while *kohiroma* or 'small *hiroma*' was the term adopted for the smaller chamber.¹⁷

There is no mistaking the importance of the building in which the *Ōhiroma* is housed. It has the highest roof, with gables ornamented with filigree metal-work and gilded sculpture. The *Ōhiroma* within was reserved for audience

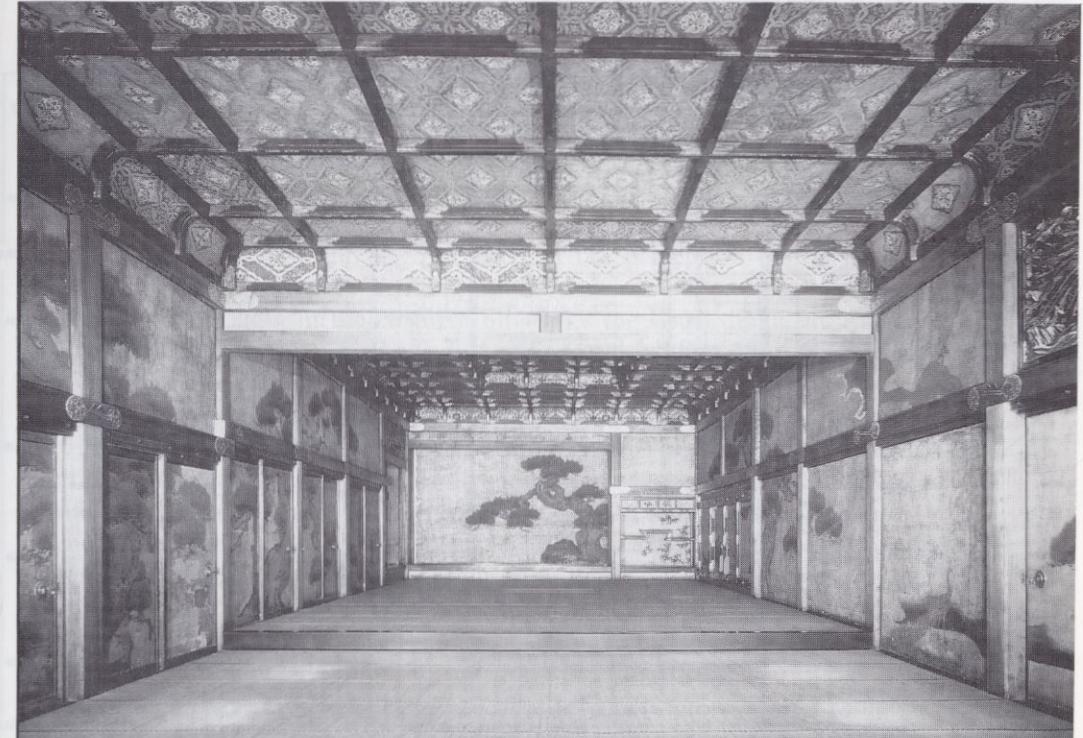
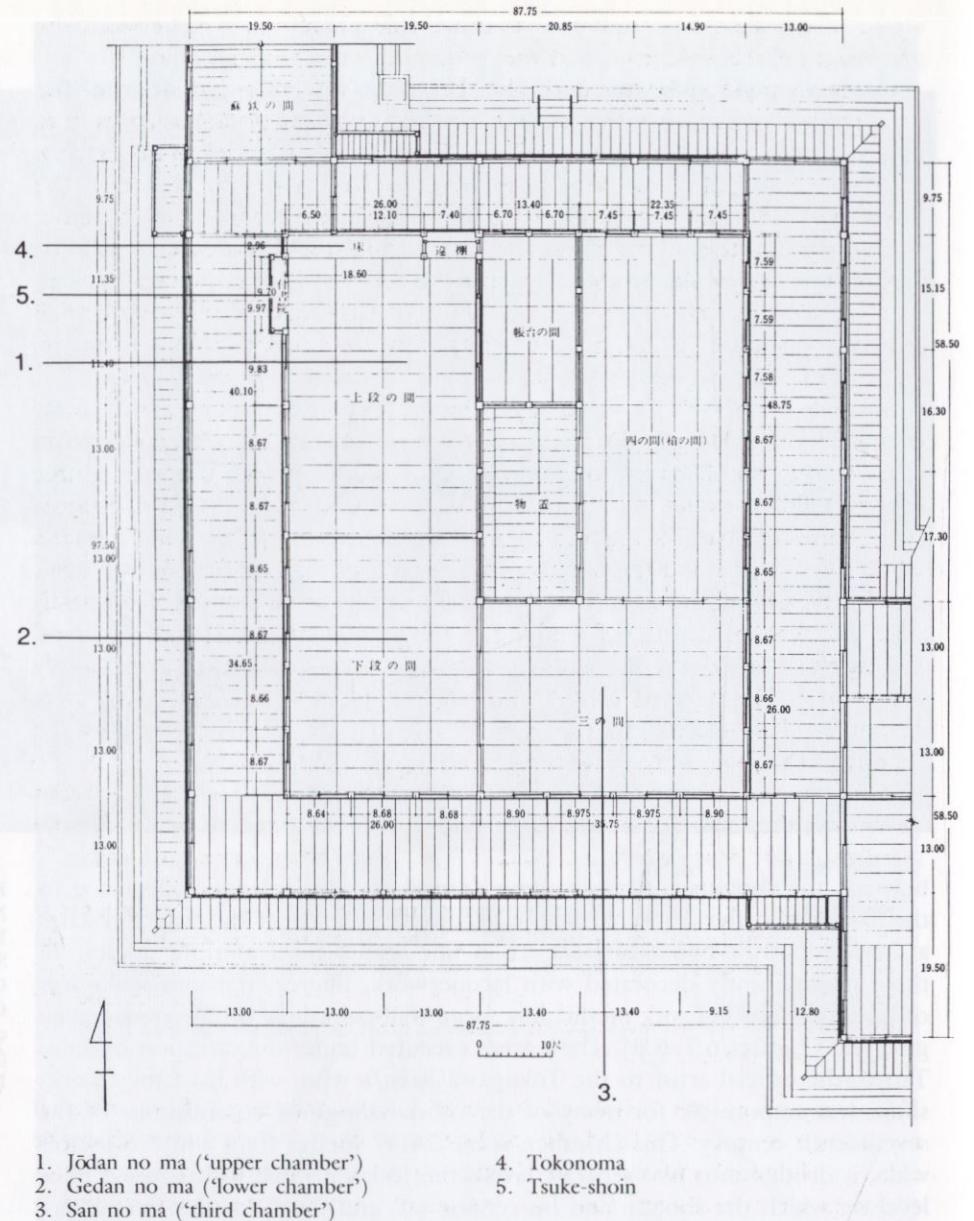


Fig 6.7
Nijō Castle.
Palace of the
Second
Compound.
Ōhiroma
chambers
(Courtesy of
Nijōjō)

between the shogun and the *tozama daimyō* who had pledged allegiance to the Tokugawa after 1600. Here the decorative scheme of the palace reaches a crescendo with two chambers set in line and a third at right angles, all three magnificently decorated with lacquerwork, filigree, transom sculptures of birds and flowers and, predictably, large wall-paintings of pine trees set on gold leaf (Figures 6.7–6.8). These were executed under the direction of Kano Tanyū, the official artist to the Tokugawa *bakufu* who, with his family workshop, was responsible for many of the official shogunal commissions of the seventeenth century. This chamber, some 24.69 metres long and 8.6 metres wide, is divided into two separate levels, the *Jōdan no ma*, with a raised floor level on which the shogun and his retinue sat, and the *Gedan no ma*, where the *tozama daimyō* assembled for obeisance. Although the difference in elevation of the two rooms is seemingly inconsequential, a mere 67 centimetres, the psychological impact of the difference in levels would have been considerably greater for daimyo, kneeling and prostrating themselves before the figure of the shogun in the distance. The shogun would also have been seated on a single *tatami* mat raising him a further 15 centimetres. With eyes close to the floor, the distant daimyo would scarcely have been able to glimpse the figure of the shogun seated at the far end of the *Jōdan no ma*. Today this effect is entirely lost on the modern visitor to Nijō Castle, standing, as is the practice, amongst the visiting crowds outside these chambers and merely



looking in: this is an architecture of direct participation and its meaning is largely lost on the casual observer.

At Nijō Castle the sense of the majesty of the shogun was further heightened by a panoply of special effects concentrated in the Jōdan no ma. The shogun sat before a *tokonoma*, the rear wall of which is covered with the heroic form of a pine tree, sharply delineated against a background of gold leaf, its needles richly green with crushed malachite mixed in an oil paste. Seen from the lower level of the Gedan no ma it would have subsumed the

figure of the shogun, creating an unmistakable visual equation between the personage of the Tokugawa and the everlasting power of the pine.

Other features of the audience chamber also show an appreciation of the psychological affects of architecture which modern behavioural sciences have only recently rediscovered. The ceiling of the chamber is a virtuoso exercise in lacquer and gold ornament, much of it variations on the theme of the Tokugawa crest, the gold cleverly used to emphasise the length of the chamber by highlighting the main ceiling battens. A small, double-coved and coffered ceiling is set immediately above the place where the shogun would customarily sit. With its delicate filigree metalwork of arabesques reminiscent of fine Venetian lacework, it would have heightened the perception of the importance of the person who sat beneath.

A clever use of light in the chamber intensifies the visual drama and political impact of the shogun. During formal audience the sliding doors permitting entry to the chamber from the corridor were tightly closed. The only source of natural light was through the *tsuke-shoin*, the bay to the side of the tokonoma (see Figure 6.8, No. 5). Light filters into the Jōdan no ma through its opaque white *shōji* screens and the open work transom above, a device which throws unidirectional lighting across the front wall of the raised section of the audience chamber, reflecting off the gold leaf on the walls of the tokonoma and leaving the figure of the shogun seated in front dimly lit and even mysteriously silhouetted. The intrepid Westphalian scholar and visitor to Japan, Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716), noticed a similar strategy employed to magnify the dignity of the shogun by minimising and concentrating the light source at Edo Castle, which he visited in 1691 and 1692. In his written account Kaempfer notes that the main audience hall of Edo Castle was open on one side to a small courtyard from which it received light. 'The Jōdan no ma', he writes,

is narrower, deeper and one step higher than the common hall. The shogun sits at the end of this room on a floor raised by a few mats, with his legs folded under him. And it is difficult to discern his shape there, because the full light does not reach this part of the room. Also the ceremony takes place too quickly, and the visitor has to appear with lowered head and must leave again without lifting his face to look at his majesty.¹⁸

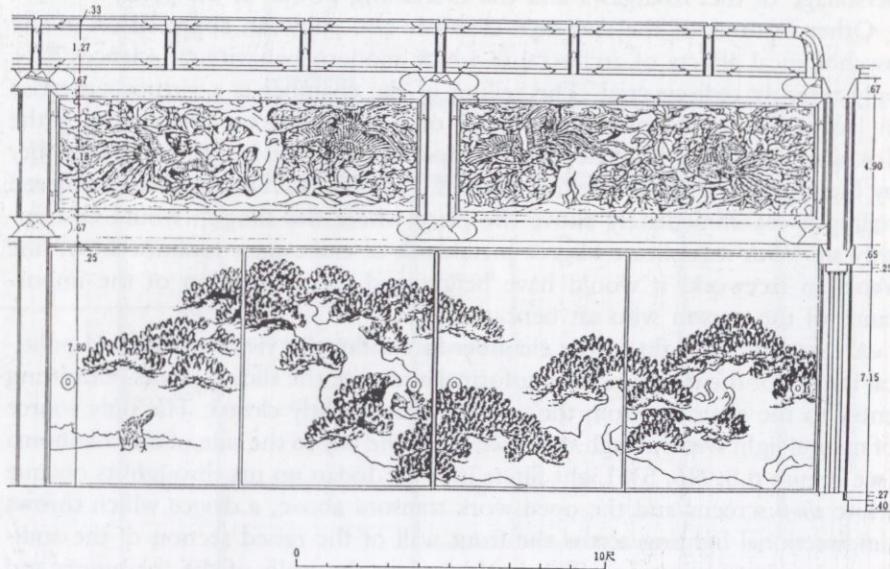
The shogunate thus displayed a shrewd understanding of behavioural psychology in the calculated use of light and dark for maximum dramatic effect in shogunal audience. This Tokugawa palace anticipates by many years advice given to architects today as a result of modern behavioural studies:

the places which make effective settings are defined by light. . . . People are by nature phototropic – they move toward light, and, when stationary, they orient themselves toward the light. . . . Create alternating areas of light and dark throughout the building, in such a way that people naturally walk toward the light, whenever they are going to important places . . .¹⁹

The effect of the use of this lighting technique to dramatise the persona of the shogun at Nijō Castle is potent.

More special effects are utilised in the Gedan no ma to impress the daimyo at the lower end of the audience hall. The pine trees painted on the sliding

Fig 6.9
Nijo Castle.
Palace of the
Second
Compound.
Ohiroma.
Elevation of
the east wall
of the Gedan
no ma (lower
chamber)
(Source: Ōta
Hirotarō et al.,
*Nihon
kenchikushi kiso
shiryō shūsei*)



screens of the inner wall are surmounted in the transom area by two of the most remarkable openwork friezes ever conceived in the whole of Japanese artistic history (Figure 6.9). They show two pairs of frolicking peacocks, tails spread in full glory, beneath the aggressively curving trunks of large pines and amidst a veritable garden of peonies. Every detail is highlighted by rich colour and gilding. These sculptural masterworks turn the upper levels of the wall into a three-dimensional paradise. Whatever the rhetorical advantage of associating the shogun with paradise, no-one present in that lower chamber could have failed to be impressed by the sheer artistic genius at the command of the *bakufu*.

The third chamber, set at right angles and off-axis to the two main rooms, allowed the shogun to view Nō drama on the stage which had been originally situated in the garden in front of the Ōhiroma building. On these occasions of more private entertainment no doubt the Ōhiroma took on a more relaxed atmosphere.²⁰

The fourth building in the palace complex is the Kuroshoin. It was originally known as the Kohiroma, or ‘small hiroma’ to distinguish it from Ōhiroma (Figure 6.10). It was used for audiences between the shogun and the *fudai daimyō*. These daimyo were the related or hereditary vassals of the Tokugawa. In the 1620s, when the palace buildings were constructed, they were being accorded a degree of collegial courtesy which contrasted sharply with the policies towards the *tozama daimyō* and the more peremptory treatment they were to receive a decade later with the tightening of Tokugawa controls. The Kuroshoin and the Ōhiroma audience chambers are a study in contrasts. The Kuroshoin building is separated from the Ōhiroma by an enclosed cloister which emphasises in physical separation the difference in status between the trusted and the doubted. The architectural vocabulary is identical to that



of the Ōhiroma, but the artistic nuance is dramatically different, less intimidating in scale and decoration with much of the gold replaced by more restrained black lacquer surfaces. The audience chamber is 16.10 metres in length, just two-thirds the length of the Ōhiroma, but the width is approximately the same (the Jōdan no ma is 7.49 metres wide and the second chamber or Ni no ma is 9.63 metres) (Figure 6.11). The spatial dynamics of the chambers are, therefore, entirely different in character, with the *fudai daimyō* audience considerably closer to the shogun, both physically and psychologically. This effect was enhanced by the simple expedient of placing the *tatami* mats lengthways down the axis of the chamber in the Jōdan no ma, leading the eye towards the shogun and further shortening with the strong orthogonal lines of their satin edge-bindings the sense of distance between the shogun and the daimyo. In the Ōhiroma the *tatami* mats are placed sideways, each of the woven edge-bindings accentuating in linear progression the sense of separation between ruler and ruled. Moreover there is no separate coved and coffered ceiling above the normal seating position for the shogun. The Kuroshoin has no transom sculpture in the second chamber and the paintings on the gold-leaved walls are entirely different in symbolic content and emotional tenor. The end wall of the tokonoma retains a painting of the powerful pine tree, but it is less menacing in scale. It is accompanied on the flanking walls of the second

Fig 6.10
Nijo Castle.
Palace of the
Second
Compound.
Kuroshoin
chambers
(Courtesy of
Nijōjō)

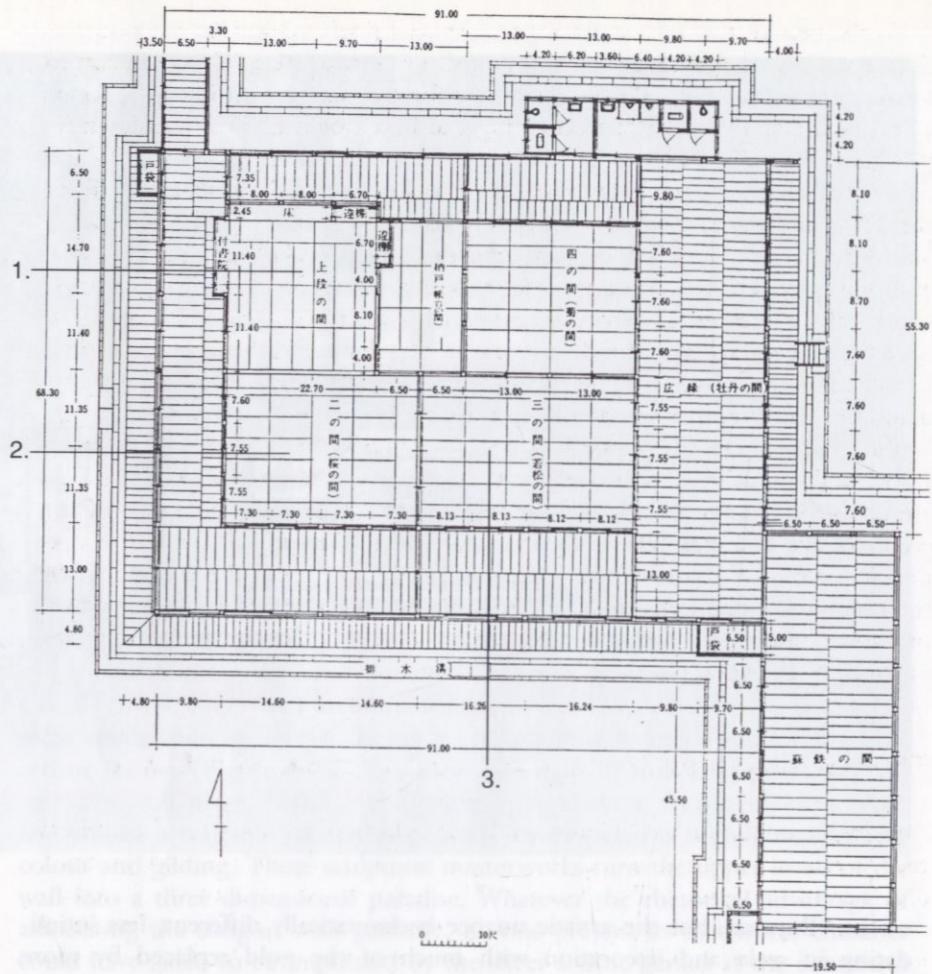


Fig 6.11
Nijo Castle.
Palace of the
Second
Compound.
Plan of
Kuroshoin
(Source: Ōta
Hirotarō et al.,
*Nihon
kenchikushi kiso
shiryō shūsei*)

1. Jōdan no ma ('upper chamber')
2. Ni no ma ('second chamber'). Also known as Sakura no ma ('Cherry Tree chamber')
3. San no ma ('third chamber'). Also known as Wakamatsu no ma ('Young Pine Tree chamber')

chamber, not by the starkly strong form of more pines in uncompromising stances, but by the softly optimistic double-flowered cherry trees in the magic moment of their full flowering.²¹ Small swallows flit amongst the petals while pheasants sit contentedly beneath the spreading pink canopy above. All is quiet, untroubled, in this the spring-time of Tokugawa rule. The air is full of the promise of a glorious summer to come. Even the term Gedan no ma, or 'lower chamber', implying subservient status, has been studiously avoided; it is referred to merely as the 'Cherry Tree chamber' or simply 'the second chamber'. It is ironic that it was in this suite of chambers that the last Tokugawa shogun, Yoshinobu, formally announced to the emperor his return of the title of *shōgun* in 1867.²²

To the rear of the Kuroshoin is the fifth and final building in the progression from formal audience chambers to private retreat. The Shiroshoin served as the private suite and sleeping quarters for the shogun during his periods of residence in Kyoto. While observing the basic form of *shoin* architecture, it is fundamentally different in aesthetic character from the remainder of the palace buildings. Comprising four small *tatami* rooms it is separated from the Kuroshoin by a covered corridor, in the same manner as the Kuroshoin and the Ōhiroma are also set apart physically and psychologically. The walls and sliding screens are decorated with subdued monochromatic ink paintings. Gold leaf, ubiquitous throughout rest of the palace complex, is not used, in keeping with the quieter mood. It is easy to imagine the difficulties of sleeping in a chamber with highly light-reflective, gilded walls. The scenes are predominantly of landscapes such as bamboo in the snow with swallows sleeping, feathers fluffed, on the naked branches of winter trees. Chinese-style landscapes in the Southern Song mode, with rocky outcrops and distant mountains, are peopled solely by diminutive figures of sages. This is the only part of the entire palace complex where sages appear, their didactic call for virtue and benevolence on the part of rulers kept discreetly away from the daimyo. Even the ubiquitous pine trees in these landscapes are a contented and passive part of nature, not aggressively reaching out into the domain of human relations as they do elsewhere in the palace buildings.

The Architectural Strategy of the Palace at Nijo Castle

The Palace of the Second Compound was conceived as a series of chambers each carefully designed to achieve a specific political purpose and grouped together to maximise political effect. The grouping of structurally independent buildings along a stepped receding axis is a standard design feature of *shoin* architecture. It allowed a view of the garden from at least two sides of each building. In terms of behavioural psychology it had the advantage over a symmetrical plan, favoured for the Chinese-influenced buildings of the Nara and Heian periods, of permitting a high degree of visual isolation for each building. This heightened the importance of each separate building and provided opportunity for effective use of a sequence of partial revelations for intensifying the dramatic effect of progressing through the building. It was a device which delighted in the unexpected – the corridors flanking the audience chambers turn sharply, denying any indication of what might lie in store around the next corner. This design technique afforded considerable potential for segregating different groups of visitors according to status, and created a hierarchical progression of spaces throughout the building.

This progression was dramatically emphasised by a comprehensive programme of decoration, which as we have seen, drew on all the visual arts from painting and sculpture to filigree metalwork and polished lacquer. The rhetorical use of spatial escalation, from chambers of less importance to chambers of greater significance, was in common use in palace architecture of the early Edo period. Rodrigo de Vivero y Velasco, in a detailed record of his audience with Hidetada at Edo Castle in 1609, reveals:

Next we came to the first apartment of the palace. . . . On the floor they have what is called *tatami*, a sort of beautiful matting trimmed with cloth of gold, satin and velvet, embroidered with many gold flowers. . . . The walls and ceilings are covered with wooden panelling and decorated with various paintings of hunting scenes, done in gold, silver and other colours, so that the wood itself is not visible. . . . Although in our opinion this first compartment left nothing to be desired, the second chamber was finer, while the third was even more splendid; and the further we proceeded, the greater the wealth and novelty that met our eyes.²³

We have seen this rhetorical device used to full effect at Nijō Castle. It is not, however, a uniquely Japanese approach to the architecture of authority. Although the building design and the iconographic nuances of the paintings and sculpture are culturally specific to Japan, the way architecture and its allied arts are articulated at Nijō Castle is similar to the strategy employed in European palaces such as the Doge's Palace in Venice and Frederick the Great's beloved palace of Sans Souci near Potsdam. Like Nijō Castle, these palaces employ a hierarchical sequence of chambers, starting with a vestibule and anteroom and continuing with a series of state apartments and private apartments. The growing importance of the chambers is signalled by increasing size and by a carefully planned escalation in the level of gilded ornament. Louis XIV may have found the overall size of the palace chambers at Nijō Castle small, and perhaps been upset by the absence of mirrors, but he would surely have appreciated the gilded walls and the uncompromising bombast of the Ōhiroma. And the use of different levels of floor and seating for persons of different status is a universal feature of the rarefied world of protocol and ritual authority. At the Enthronement Ceremony for the Heisei Emperor, held on 12 November 1990, the Prime Minister stood below the level of the Emperor, although on top of the enthronement dais itself as the representative of a more democratic nation, not at the base of the steps as was the case in the Meiji ceremony. The Tokugawa and their artists would doubtless have derived satisfaction from the fact that this ceremony took place in the Pine Room of the Imperial Palace.

The palace of Nijō Castle was architecture as theatre, from the drama of the progression through the chambers to the climax in the Ōhiroma where special lighting effects emphasise the authority of the principal player, the shogun. The pine trees in the tokonoma form a backdrop painted with the boldness and power of projection of a stage set. In fact the figure of the shogun would have been set amidst a veritable forest of pine trees, raising the interesting possibility that there was a direct input from contemporary Nō drama in the staging and iconography of Nijō Castle.

The relationship of Tokugawa ritual audience to drama is as yet an unexplored field of research but the evidence for a connection is considerable. The warrior class had been enthusiastic patrons of Nō from the time of the Ashikaga shogunate. We ourselves have seen that Nobunaga made special provision for a stage in the *tenshu* of Azuchi Castle. We know that this was an age in which it was *de rigueur* for a warrior of any standing to be able to recite whole scenes from the masterpieces of Zeami.²⁴ Moreover, Tokugawa documents reveal that Nō provided the framework for the official *onari* visits by Iemitsu upon the daimyo from the time he became shogun in 1623, with ceremonies

of fealty and obeisance organised between acts of Nō plays.²⁵ Plans of daimyo and shogunal palaces, including the palace at Nijō Castle at the time of its completion in 1626, show that they were invariably equipped with a Nō stage facing the ōhiroma. Looked at from the stand-point of drama it is recognised that the design of the Nō stage was formalised and largely standardised as a result of the strong patronage of the warrior establishment in the first decades of Tokugawa rule.²⁶ A large pine-tree painting on plain wooden panels became standard on the rear wall of the stage, symbolising the association of Nō performance with outdoor settings amongst pine trees, particularly in its early form as practiced in shrines such as Kasuga Shrine at Nara.²⁷ It is likely that the design of the formal entertainment chambers of palaces such as those at Nijō Castle was influenced by its association with Nō. The exterior Nō stage was as much a feature of ōhiroma design as the tokonoma was in the interior (Figure 6.12). *Shōmei*, the design treatise completed in 1609 by the Heinouchi master builders, includes the stage as part of audience hall design and even stipulates that its proportions should be the same as those of the main chamber.²⁸ It seems probable that the design of both stage and ōhiroma evolved together under a warrior patronage which placed highest importance on the architectural setting for formal entertainment. Under these circumstances Iemitsu would have naturally translated his aspirations to manifest authority in tangible terms at the palace at Nijō Castle into the same iconography of built form as used for the Nō stage, including the use of the pine tree with its deep religious connotation.

The effect of these chambers on the perception and exercise of authority is apparent in the way in which the place of audience became synonymous with status in the Tokugawa order. In official documents the daimyo were referred to by the name of the chamber in which they were received into shogunal audience at Edo Castle, such as the *Teikan no ma*, used for most *fudai daimyō*, and *Yanagi no ma*, used for *tozama daimyō* below 50,000 *koku* in rank.²⁹ The Tokugawa had succeeded in setting each daimyo in his appropriate place, and place therefore became the definition of person.

The Palaces at Nijō and Edo Castles: Monumental Matrix for Authority

Although physically situated in Kyoto, the Palace of the Second Compound of Nijō Castle belongs architecturally and politically alongside the palaces of Edo Castle and the *onari* palaces built by the daimyo to receive the shogun in the manner to which he was accustomed. None of the shogunal and daimyo palaces of Edo survives but they are depicted in the *Edozu byōbu* as sumptuous establishments in landscaped gardens, immediately calling to mind the palace of Nijō Castle (Figure 6.13). The main palace of Edo Castle is shown in the inner compound of the castle immediately adjacent to the *tenshu*. The buildings are depicted as having the blue-tiled roofs familiar from Azuchi Castle, and soaring rooflines are accentuated by filigree ornament and gilded sculpture. They are interconnected and are surrounded by the high stone walls of the castle. The palaces of the daimyo are also shown, aligned in

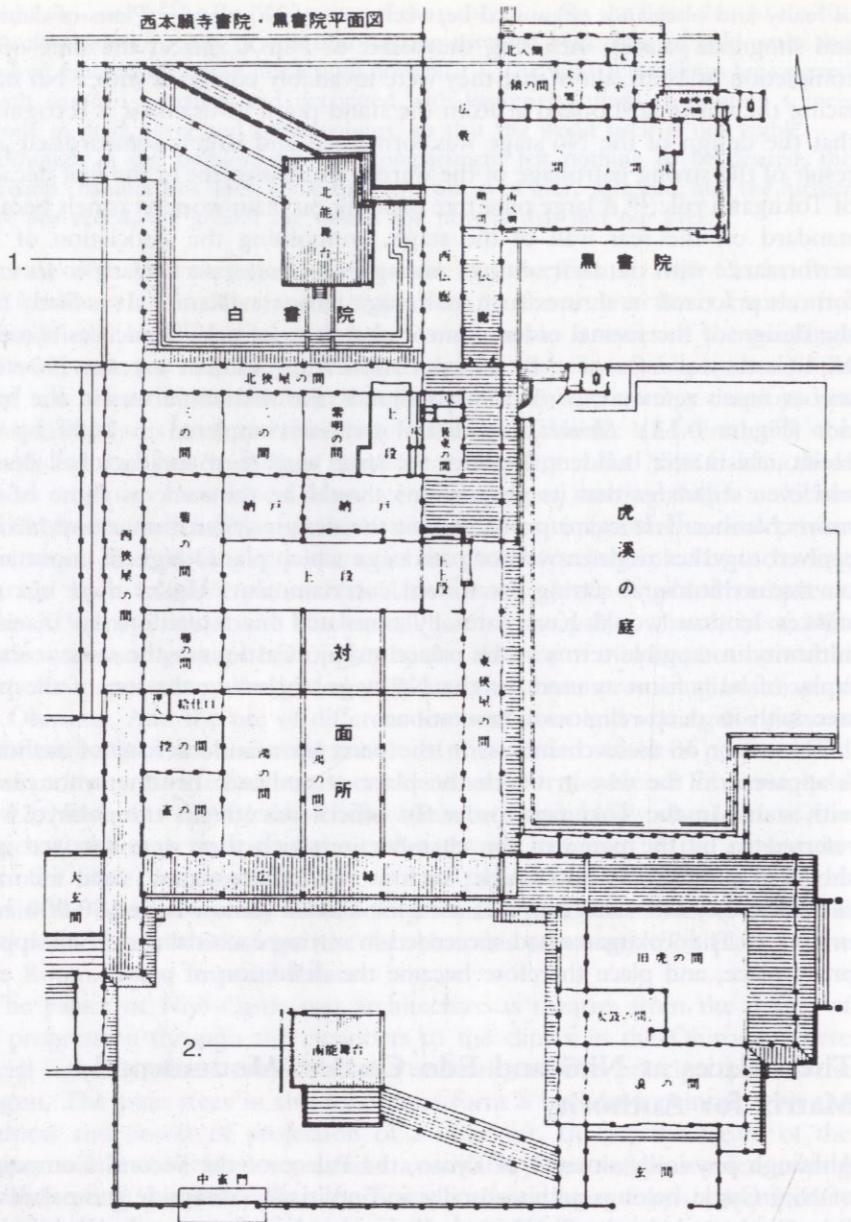


Fig. 6.12
Nishi
Honganji.
Shiroshoin and
Kuroshoin.
Plan showing
location of Nō
stages
(Source:
Fujioka
Michio, *Shiro*
to Shoin)

1. Shiroshoin stage (1581. Moved to present location in 1897)
2. Kuroshoin stage (ca. 1632)

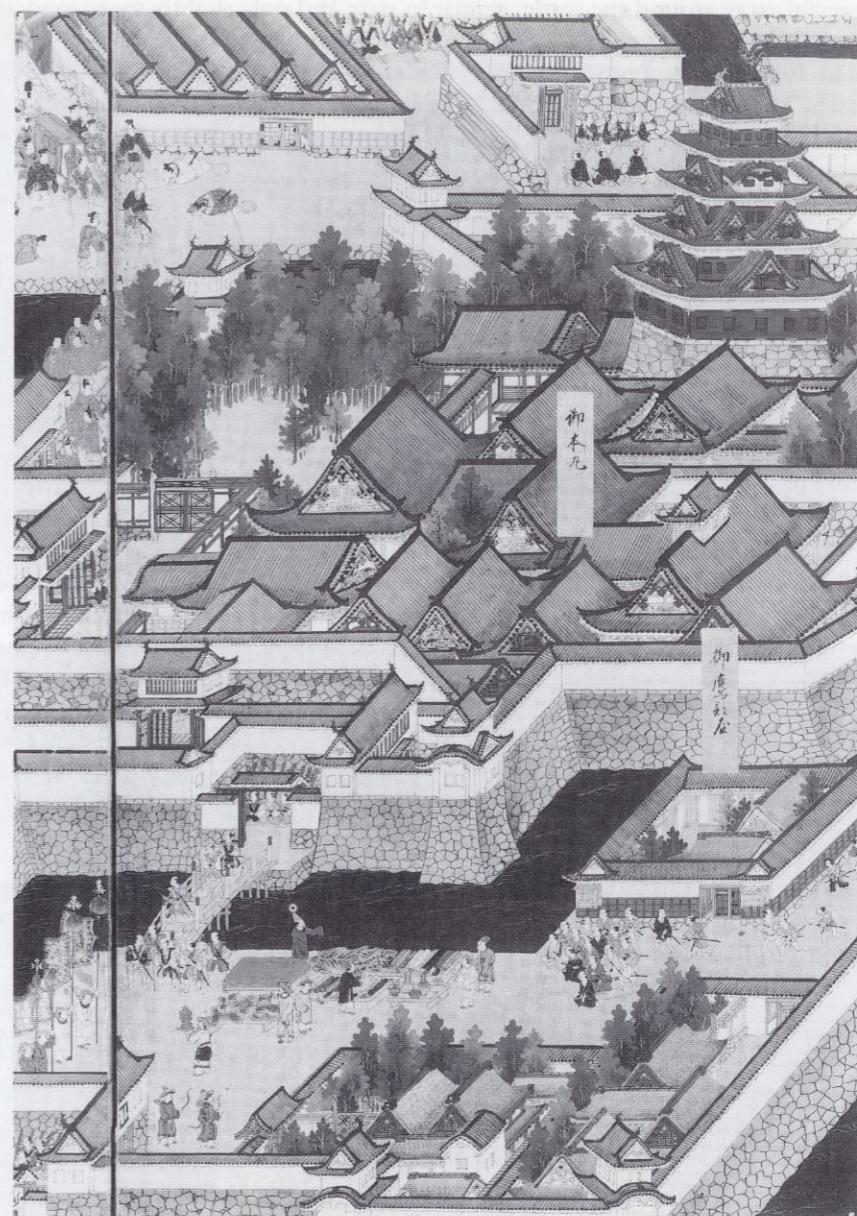


Fig. 6.13
Edozu byōbu.
Pair of six-fold
screens. Detail
of right screen
showing *tenshu*
and palace
buildings of
Edo Castle
(Courtesy of
National
Museum of
Japanese
History,
Sakura)

powerful array around the castle, similar in style and only slightly more modest in appearance than the palace buildings of the shogunate itself.

The Edo palaces appear to be largely identical in style to the palace of Nijō Castle. This similarity is confirmed by comparison with an important Edo-period architectural source, the *Kōra Memorandum*, the family record of the Kōra, official master builders to the *bakufu*. It was compiled by the hereditary head of the household, Kōra Munetoshi, after his retirement from active building practice in 1703. As we have seen, the Kōra became the most important family of master builders in the service of the shogunate, responsible for the rebuilding of the *tenshu* of Edo Castle in 1638.³⁰ The descriptions of buildings in their family records are accordingly terse, technical and detailed, clearly based on earlier written records and oral traditions.

The *Kōra Memorandum* commences with a description of the Ōhiroma of the Honmaru Palace within Edo Castle. It is described in terms which leave no doubt about its similarity to the Ōhiroma of the palace at Nijō Castle. The difference is simply one of scale, with the Ōhiroma of Edo Castle divided into three levels (*jōdan*, *chūdan* and *gedan*) rather than into the two used at the Kyoto palace.

Other details described in the Kōra document also match those of the Kyoto palace. The gateway set at the entrance of the Nijō palace compound is in the *onarimon* style, the form reserved for reception of the shogun by the daimyo in Edo. The *Kōra Memorandum* describes the typical *onarimon* as 'a large *yotsuashi* (*mon*) [gateway with two principal and four supporting 'leg' pillars] with a *karahafu* set in the front and rear eaves'.³¹ The entry to the palace itself, the *kurumayose*, matches exactly the Kōra description of the entrance to the typical daimyo palace in Edo (Figure 6.14):

The *genkan*, [which was reserved] for the daimyo and his family, was in the same style as [palaces] within [Edo] castle, with the *karahafu* in the eaves set below the front gable. The bays to the left and right [of the entrance] had *kushigata* [oval windows with cusped frames and open-work comb-pattern friezes] and the centre bay had a *karado* [panelled door mounted to swing not slide].³²

The sequence of chambers within the palace is also identical. The entry led to the 'Tōzamurai, Shikidai, and the Ōhiroma . . . [which had a] Jōdan with *nagaoshi-ita* [the tokonoma], *tana* [*chigaidana* shelving], flanked by *chōdai* [decorated doors leading to the Jōdan] . . .'.³³ This description in fact establishes the existence of a high degree of standardisation of building organisation and interior decoration in the early Edo-period palaces as a result of the needs of formalised ritual.

The *Edozu byōbu* and the *Kōra Memorandum* therefore link Nijō Castle to the broad genre of palace architecture in Edo city, the palaces built by the shogunate within the walls of Edo Castle, and to the palaces built by the daimyo in the vicinity of the castle for the purpose of receiving the shogun on state visits or *onari*. Further evidence of this relationship is furnished by a set of preliminary paintings prepared by Kano Seisen'in (1796–1846) for the 1845 rebuilding of the Honmaru Palace. They are scaled drawings highlighted with light colour washes which show the decoration proposed for each chamber. These paintings are very similar to those of Nijō Castle, with the

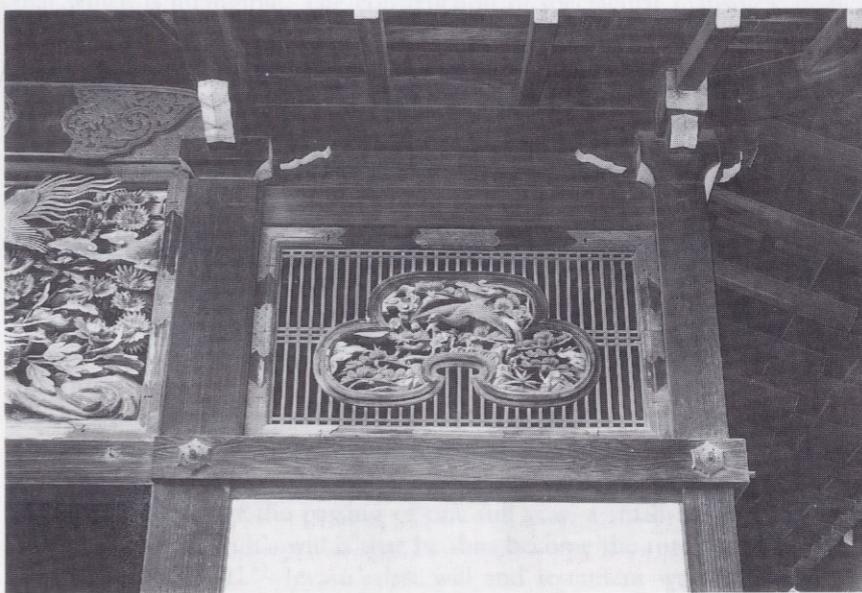


Fig 6.14
Nijō Castle.
Palace of the
Second
Compound.
Entrance and
side transom
with *kushigata*
(comb-pattern)
frieze

proposed Ōhiroma decorated with pine trees, their massive trunks sprawling defiantly across the framing of the chambers in exactly the same manner as do the pine trees of the Ōhiroma at Nijō Castle.³⁴ These similarities should not surprise us as the official Kano artists played a powerful role in standardising the iconography and style of official *bakufu* painting.

As a result of the destruction of the Edo palaces by fire, the Palace of the Second Compound of Nijō Castle is the best-preserved example of the rhetorical style of *shoin* architecture as perfected in the political climate of

seventeenth-century Edo. The Tokugawa palace at Kyoto not only represents those Edo palaces destroyed by fire; it anticipated and undoubtedly influenced the style in which the palace of Edo Castle was to be rebuilt a decade later. In 1637 Iemitsu commissioned the complete rebuilding of the Honmaru Palace, a rather simple building dating to 1604–1607, at the same time as he ordered the Kōra to rebuild the *tenshu* built for Hidetada. None of these buildings survives except in memory, but today at Nijō Castle we may still see, indeed experience, the effects of the full panoply of Tokugawa architectural devices designed to convince and coerce as well as to amaze and inspire.

At Nijō Castle, as eloquent as it seems effortless, we can find demonstrated the quintessential Tokugawa art of psychological intimidation using architecture as the tool. Simultaneously the Tokugawa were adept at avoiding any implications that might be unfortunate for their own government. While the transoms of gateway and entrance are full of didactic images of sages exercising good government, there is not a single sage visible within the formal audience chambers of the palace to invoke any awkward reminders of the responsibility of government to the governed.

Tokugawa Mausolea

7

Intimations of Immortality and the Architecture of Posthumous Authority

At the same time as the Tokugawa were establishing a working definition of their authority in relation to the power of the daimyo below and the prerogatives of the imperial institution above, they sought to elevate the temporal powers at their command to the plane of spiritual authority. This is a strategy now familiar to us from study of Emperor Shōmu with Tōdaiji and Nobunaga with Azuchi Castle. The key to this theocratic strategy was architectural, even more manifest than it was in relation to the daimyo and the court, for it is in dealing with the divine that architecture most convincingly makes tangible that which is intangible. The construction of spectacular mausolea, dedicated to their predecessors in shogunal office, offered the Tokugawa family a religious means to the secular end of enhancing the political legitimacy of its government.

Funerary monuments ranging from the Egyptian pyramids to Michelangelo's Tomb of Julius II, and from the Ming tombs to the Tokugawa mausolea, have served both spiritual and secular ends. This is further evidence of the inappropriateness of making modern distinctions between the secular and the sacred when analysing authority. The Tokugawa were able to exploit fully the political advantage of paying pious homage to the deceased in order to sanctify the power of the living by an unprecedented programme of mausoleum construction. The Tokugawa mausolea, or *reibyō*, created an aura of divine authority around the Tokugawa shogunate, in particular the founding shogun Ieyasu who was now elevated to the status of a Shinto deity and worshipped at a special shrine dedicated to his spirit. Ieyasu's deathbed wish was that 'his remains were to be interred at Mt Kunō, the funeral rites to be offered at Zōjōji . . . and, after the passing of one full year, a small hall was to be built at Nikkō. The shogun's will is that he thus become the tutelary deity of Japan (*Yashima no chinju*).'¹ Ieyasu's last will and testament was drafted with the advice of those present at his last audience, particularly his religious advisers, Sūden, abbot of Konchiin at Nanzenji, and Tenkai, abbot of Rinnōji, the Tendai sect temple at Nikkō. However, it was not until the reign of the third shogun Iemitsu that mausoleum construction was to assume its special character and significance to the shogunate.

Two mausolea were of preeminent political importance to the apotheosis of Tokugawa authority, namely, the Taitokuin Reibyō, which inaugurated Iemitsu's personal rule, and the Nikkō Tōshōgū, with which it culminated. The Taitokuin mausoleum was dedicated to the second Tokugawa shogun