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Architecture and Authority in Japan

William H. Coaldrake

London and New York

2 The Grand Shrines of Ise and Izumo

The Appropriation of Vernacular Architecture by Early Ruling Authority

The Grand Shrine of Ise (Ise Jingū) and the Great Shrine of Izumo (Izumo Taisha) are the two most venerable shrines of Shinto in Japan. Located in remote, awe-inspiring natural settings, the architecture of both Ise and Izumo is an expression of Shinto, the animistically based indigenous belief of Japan, and the symbiotic relationship enjoyed with ruling authority since time immemorial.

The Ise shrine complex is located on the eastern side of the Kii peninsula to the southeast of the ancient centres of government in the Yamato basin. It basks on a coastal plain warmed by the Pacific ocean currents and bathed in bright sunshine even in mid-winter. It is an ideal setting for the worship of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess and legendary ancestress of the imperial family, and Toyouke, a local agricultural deity of grains and the harvest. The Izumo shrine complex, by contrast, is situated in Shimane prefecture, an inhospitable region of frequent storms and fierce elemental forces on the rugged Sea of Japan coast facing towards the mainland of Asia. Appropriately the name 'Izumo' means the place 'from whence the clouds come'. It was originally known as 'Yakumo tatsu' ('where the eight clouds rise').[1] The shrine is dedicated to Okuninushi, the deity of fishing, sericulture, good fortune and fertility. In Japan's creation myths Okuninushi is the son of the tempestuous Storm God Susano-o, the elder brother of Amaterasu. Thus from the time of the age of myths, Ise and Izumo have been locked in the uneasy embrace of supernatural familial rivalry. This reflects their portentous role in the consummation of governing authority in Japanese history, for whatever the religious significance of the shrines as the expression of Shinto belief, their meaning is ultimately as much political as sacred. Historically they served as the centres of worship for two powerful clans which were engaged in a fierce political and ideological struggle for national hegemony in the late bronze and early iron ages, a process which culminated in the supremacy of the Yamato clan associated with Ise.

From the sixth century the shrines at Ise were to play a critical role in transforming local power into national governmental authority based on the institution of the imperial family. Their architecture, appropriated from the form of vernacular storehouses and granaries long the focus of village festivals and animistic worship in praise of the gods of creation and the harvest, was to become an enduring tradition in Japanese civilization, as pervasive in physical form and deep in cultural meaning as Classical architecture in the

Mediterranean world.[2] Like the columns and architraves of the temples of ancient Greek temples, the raised-floor timbered structure with thatched roof and rafters crossing over the ridge-pole became synonymous with both worship and authority in Japanese tradition.

Izumo Shrine as an institution shared the same political, religious and architectural strategies as Ise, employing an architectural idiom based on early elite residences and differing from the granary prototype of Ise in detail only. However the defeat of its patrons in the struggle for national hegemony relegated its architecture to a less illustrious fate as a regional shrine, its myths and legends to a place of derision in the official mythology of the nation, and its clan leaders to disgruntled provincial obscurity. This fate was sealed, as we shall see, by a series of spectacular structural failures of the main shrine building in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The architectural forms of Ise and Izumo thus manifested and, in turn, influenced the respective success and failure of their local patrons in the struggle for national hegemony. They attest to the power of authority in politicising architectural form, particularly by the appropriation of vernacular building types into the high culture, and their consequent evolution from the functional into the abstract and the secular into the religious. At the same time these shrines bear testimony to the indispensable role of architecture in the definition and enforcement of ruling authority, fundamental to its power and prestige, dignity and legitimacy, its status and hierarchy, and its tradition and continuity. One of the most ancient and jealously guarded prerogatives of ruling authority was sponsorship of the periodic rebuilding of these shrines, a process at first required by the ephemeral nature of the materials used, but as time passed, dictated more by power and prestige.

The two shrine complexes thereby reveal the way in which certain buildings do more than act as mere symbols: how they become part of the very fabric of authority and its institutional processes, in turn exerting their own powerful influence on the way that authority is defined, enacted and enforced. In so doing they facilitate exploration of one of the most pervasive and poignant of all themes in the study of Japanese authority, namely the struggle between the impermanence of materials used in creating buildings on the one hand, and the ambition to establish an enduring expression of authority on the other. Monumentality, or the power of buildings 'to impress and endure',[3] is customarily expressed in large and visually imposing structures of solid and seemingly immutable character. Such is the timeless quality of the great cathedrals of Europe, their massive masonry forms an affirmation of belief in the immortality of God. Ise and Izumo, we shall establish, shed light on the meaning of monumentality to Japanese authority and its relationship to the pervasive counter-concept of the impermanence of all things.

Ruling Authority and Religious Practice at Ise and Izumo

In common with the architecture of authority in the ancient and medieval Mediterranean world, in which the pillar and capital, arch and vault were held in common by the sacred and secular dominions,[4] the architecture of Ise and

Izumo transcended the realms of religious conviction and political certitude. Their buildings represented an authority which drew no necessary distinction between the rites of worship and the right to rule. Along with the other provincial centres of early Japan, the leadership of Ise and Izumo sought to broaden the basis of their respective ruling authority by architectonic methods. Authority stemmed from ritual, in which the ruler served as intermediary between the world of gods and the world of human beings. Effective power derived from association with the supernatural, control over craft industries and the organisation of wet-rice agriculture, and from some military force. The contemporary term used for 'government', ***matsurigoto***, meant performing rites in honour of the gods, but was used interchangeably to describe procedural matters of religion and everyday administration.[5] The elite of each clan built a hierarchy of status and title, and wove from fact and fiction elaborate mythologies establishing their own divine ancestries. They also used shrines as a setting for demonstrating their power prerogatives. It was the direct patronage of an elite preoccupied by such ambitions which elevated the vernacular forms of the secular storehouse and raised-floor residence to the level of sacred architecture, creating buildings which became the most pervasive icons of Shinto and the most compelling demonstration of their right to rule. For them, as for the kings of ancient Mesopotamia, to rule was to build and to build was to rule.

Ise and Izumo in History

As a result of their profound importance to the process of consolidation of national governing authority, an enormous body of written documents and interpretation has accumulated over the centuries pertaining to every aspect of religious practice, political role and architectural forms of Ise and Izumo. This in itself indicates the importance which has been placed on the elevation of the authority of Ise and the relegation of Izumo to inferior status throughout recorded history. Inevitably the written record has been decisively shaped by the victors in any confrontation so that much that claims to be historical record is intrinsically polemical and can be used only within the limitations so imposed.

Study of Ise Shrine in particular is further complicated by the transitory nature of the architecture of the building complex itself. The Ise shrine buildings have been completely rebuilt at intervals of 20 years since the late seventh century, with one major interruption only, lasting 123 years, caused by the protracted civil war of the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The last rebuilding process of the twentieth century was completed in 1993, replacing the structures which had been finished in 1973. At Izumo reconstruction has been carried out far less systematically, but the main buildings are still comparative newcomers in historical terms, dating only to the mid-eighteenth century.

It is conventional to begin the study of Japanese architecture with the Ise and Izumo shrines because of their close association with the formation of early elite architecture in Japan. Strictly speaking, the buildings which occupy the sacred sites at Ise and Izumo today are of far less consequence as historical artefacts than the architectural and religious traditions they represent,

dating as they do to rebuildings completed in 1993 and 1744 respectively. Many of their technical and stylistic characteristics are a fascinating indication of building and ritual practices under constant refinement since antiquity, and reflect the changing circumstances of authority over the entire span of Japanese history, not simply those of the early state. However, it is valid to begin this study with these two institutions because they form enduring traditions of architecture and authority, and we need to identify the nexus between early rule and early shrine buildings as the point of origin for their associated traditions. Immediately we begin this exercise we discover that the Ise shrine buildings were originally far less impressive architecturally and less important politically than were those of Izumo. The Ise shrine buildings were modest in scale and unassuming in architectural form until at least the ninth century.[6] The architectural priority for the chieftains of the early clans had been the construction of monumental, stone-faced key-hole-shaped tombs or ***kofun*** in which they themselves were to be buried. The largest tomb, that of the fourth-century emperor Nintoku, has the same base dimensions as the largest of the Egyptian pyramids and was surrounded by two water-filled moats crossed by a great causeway. These tombs were the most dramatic statements of authority in the period from about 190 AD, when the semi-legendary priestess and ruler Himiko is said to have held sway over much of western Japan, until well into the sixth century when the arrival of new architectural forms and the practice of cremation from the kingdoms of the Korean peninsula and China ended tomb construction.

In the seventh and eighth centuries the consolidation of institutions of a centralised, bureaucratic and imperial state on the Chinese model prompted the formal redefinition of the rituals of the Ise shrines in terms of the imperial institution, as well as stimulating efforts to give it a more substantial architectural presence. Chinese concepts of monumental construction and planning, order and hierarchy, were superimposed on the Ise and Izumo sites and formally differentiated compounds were adopted to signify the inner sanctuaries instead of simple straw ropes and white pebbles. The orientation of the Ise sites was shifted from east–west, the trajectory of the sun and an axis appropriate in direction to worship of the Sun-Goddess, to a north–south orientation, in conformity with Chinese practice.[7] The official histories compiled at the Nara imperial court, the *Kojiki* completed in 712, and the *Nihon shoki* in 720, consolidated into written form the imperial mythology concerning the origins of the imperial family with Amaterasu as Sun-Goddess. At the same time, in a sustained campaign to discredit mythologically based claims to authority emanating from Izumo, they poured scorn on Susano-o, father of Okuninushi enshrined at Izumo.

Izumo was able to stake a counter-claim for greater political and religious prominence through energetic rebuilding of the Grand Shrine in the later Heian period and again in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, periods characterised by weakened central authority. Ise, for its part, was to enjoy renewed importance at the expense of Izumo during the Edo period with the growth of a popular cult associated with the Outer Shrine dedicated to Toyouke, while the revival of 'National Learning' later in the period, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, laid the intellectual basis for a

dramatic increase in the role of the Inner Shrine as part of the philosophy of the Imperial Restoration movement. The scholar and physician Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801) wrote exhaustive commentaries on the *Kojiki* which profoundly influenced the interpretation of Shinto as 'the Way of the Gods'[8] as part of this revival of nationalist sentiment. Motoori, in stressing the status of the successive generations of the imperial family as *kami* or gods, conferred additional authority on Ise as their ancestral shrine. With the re-establishment of imperial government in 1868 and the creation of State Shinto came enthusiastic state sponsorship for rebuilding and enlargement of the imperial shrine.

During the Pacific War Japan's military expansion was justified as a holy cause centred on the emperor. His association with the Shinto gods became the basis of militarist ideology to sustain the war effort and justify death as noble sacrifice.[9] After the Allied victory over Japan in 1945 this manipulation of the authority of Ise as a means of justifying military expansion drew upon it the wrath of the conquering powers. The Occupation-imposed constitution officially separated church and state based on the American model, relegating Ise, at least in Occupation thinking, to the status of a private religious foundation with no state support. The separation of the religious from the secular has been encouraged by the general political and intellectual climate of postwar Japan although it is still a source of considerable controversy. However, at the funeral of the Emperor Shōwa in 1989, a carefully drawn official distinction was made between the private Shinto rites of the imperial family, for which a *torii* gateway was erected, and the public ceremonies conducted by the constitutionally separate state, for which the *torii* was removed. The separation of church and state has swept away the official support for Ise as an institution and for the funding of the essential periodic rebuilding. This disestablishment is, in effect, the same fate which Izumo suffered early in its history. Ise Shrine must now function in the same manner as any private religious institution and the funding for its regular renewal is raised by public subscription. Ise does not have access even to the national and local government subsidies allocated for the repair of important cultural properties and national treasures, with which, ironically, periodic maintenance of Izumo is undertaken.

It is important to bear this complex historical background in mind when analysing the architecture of the two shrines. The fact that they have been so consistently a source of inspiration as well as controversy in Japanese history is evidence of their special importance. In this study, however, the emphasis is directed to an examination of extant buildings, their stylistic origins and siting, style, materials and meaning, rather than to a detailed discussion of each historical phase.

Ise Jingū

Character of the Site and Buildings

The generic term 'Ise' or 'Ise Shrine' refers to a large institution consisting of numerous shrines and lesser sanctuaries distributed around a narrow,

verdant, coastal plain on the east coast of the Kii peninsula in Mie prefecture. The area is blessed by warm sunshine even in mid-winter, and crossed by the fast-flowing Isuzu River. A visitor gazing over the landscape shrouded in the mists of early morning could well be persuaded to believe in the presence of benign deities. The shrine dedicated to Amaterasu is known officially as the *Kō daijingū* or 'Imperial Shrine' but from the Heian period has been referred to generally as the Naikū ('Inner Shrine'). The other principal shrine, dedicated to Toyouke, is officially called the *Toyouke daijingū* or the Gekū ('Outer Shrine'). The Inner Shrine is situated well inland from the coast, while the Outer Shrine is some five kilometres to the northwest and closer to the sea. Originally the two shrines were unrelated, the Toyouke shrine being of more ancient foundation than that dedicated to Amaterasu, but, together with a number of other local shrines, they were incorporated into a unified institution in the ninth century.[10] In addition to the two main shrine complexes, Ise now encompasses close to 120 separate shrines including a number of tiny sanctuaries dedicated to the spirit of a single rock or the deity of some clear bubbling spring.

Only after a reasonable acquaintance with the buildings and the layout of the shrine sites is it possible to appreciate the role of the Inner Shrine at Ise in the history of authority. It is especially important to understand the way in which the Inner Shrine communicates with the visitor and worshipper as an integrated built and natural environment. It is laid out on a site which slopes gently upwards from the rapidly running water of the Isuzu River towards the low hills which in turn ascend abruptly out of the edge of the coastal plain (Figure 2.1). It is approached across a great bridge constructed from fragrantly scented cypress wood (*hinoki*). At each end of the bridge is a large *torii*, the open gateway which is the universal symbol of a Shinto sanctuary in Japan, with principal pillars measuring almost one metre in diameter. The visitor proceeds from the bridge to the right or southwards along a broad avenue strewn with gravel and flanked by carefully tended gardens. Some 200 metres further on another great *torii* is encountered, and beyond it there is the large stone basin for ritual purification of mouth and hands, a feature common to all Shinto shrines. From this point cedars (*sugi*) some 80 metres in height, and an occasional zelkova elm (*keyaki*), close in around the visitor, creating a sense of primal force and majesty. The approach path, now surfaced with small grey pebbles, swings around in an easterly direction through another *torii*. Thick moss covers the aged rocks beside the path. In these rocks and trees the native *kami* or spirits are traditionally thought to dwell. This is a living sanctuary of animistic belief.

One hundred metres from the last *torii* the path snakes around to the south and then back to the north, bringing the visitor to an enclosed compound 100 metres north–south and 60 metres east–west. This is the inner sanctuary itself. The most immediately notable feature of the compound is the way in which it is elevated some 4 to 5 metres above the level of the approach path. This is accomplished by assembling two layers of large rocks into a retaining wall, much in the manner of medieval castle foundations, so that the final approach is made by mounting 21 stone steps to an outer fence of horizontal boards (Figure 2.2). Beyond lies another small fence guarded by a

timber-frame gatehouse with a thatched roof of moss-encrusted river reed (*kaya*). A fine silk curtain hangs across the entrance to the gate, marking the point of intersection between the profane and the sacred, beyond which traditionally only members of the imperial family and priests of the shrine may proceed. Here the visitor may make obeisances and offer prayers, and glimpse something of the sacred precinct beyond as it rises gently away to disappear from sight behind a second gateway which affords access to the inner sanctum. Grey pebbles cover the surface of the compound, with white rocks forming the path leading the way to the sanctuary buildings. The ridge of the main sanctuary building, or Shōden, may be glimpsed from this vantage point, rising above the protecting gateway and surmounted by towering forked finials known as *chigi*. Some 4 to 5 metres in length and sheathed in gilded bronze, these *chigi* gleam in the sunlight like a portent of the presence of the Sun Goddess herself.

The inner sanctum, which is hidden from view, contains three separate structures organised axially north–south (Figure 2.3). At the centre is the

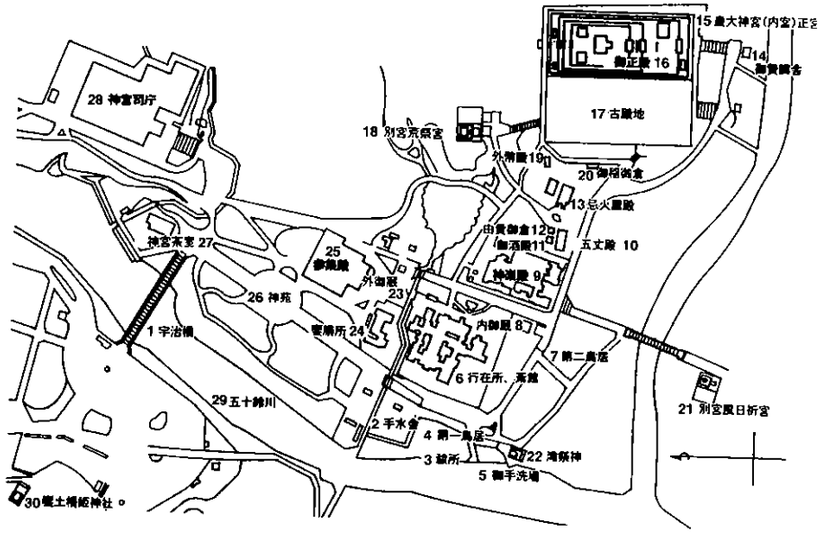

Fig 2.1
Map of Inner Shrine of Ise (1985–93 rebuilding) (Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

1. Uji Bridge (Main Entry into Naikū)
2. Font for Ablutions prior to Worship
3. Haraedo (Place for Purification)
4. Daiichi Torii (First Sacred Gateway)
5. Site for Ablutions by the Isuzu River
6. Saikan (Purification Hall)
7. Daini Torii (Second Sacred Gateway)
8. Inner Stall for Sacred Horse
9. Kaguraden (Hall of Sacred Music and Dance)
10. Gojōden
11. Misakadono
12. Yukinomikura
13. Imibiyaden (Hall of Pure Fire)
14. Minie Chōsha (Sacred Foods Ceremonial Preparation Hall)
15. Kōdaijingū Shōgū (Main Sanctuary)
16. (Go)shōden (Main Sanctuary Building)
17. Kodenchi (Alternate Site of Sanctuary)
18. Auxiliary Sanctuary Aramatsurinomiya
19. Geheiden (Outer Treasury)
20. Mishinenomikura (Rice Storehouse)
21. Auxiliary Sanctuary Kazahinominomiya
22. Lesser Sanctuary of Takimatsurinokami
23. Outer Stall for Sacred Horse
24. Kyōzensho
25. Sanshūden (Rest Area for Worshippers)
26. Sacred Garden
27. Jingū Chashitsu (Jingū Teahouse)
28. Jingū Shichō (Jingū Administration)
29. Isuzu River
30. Lesser Sanctuary Aedohashihime Jinja

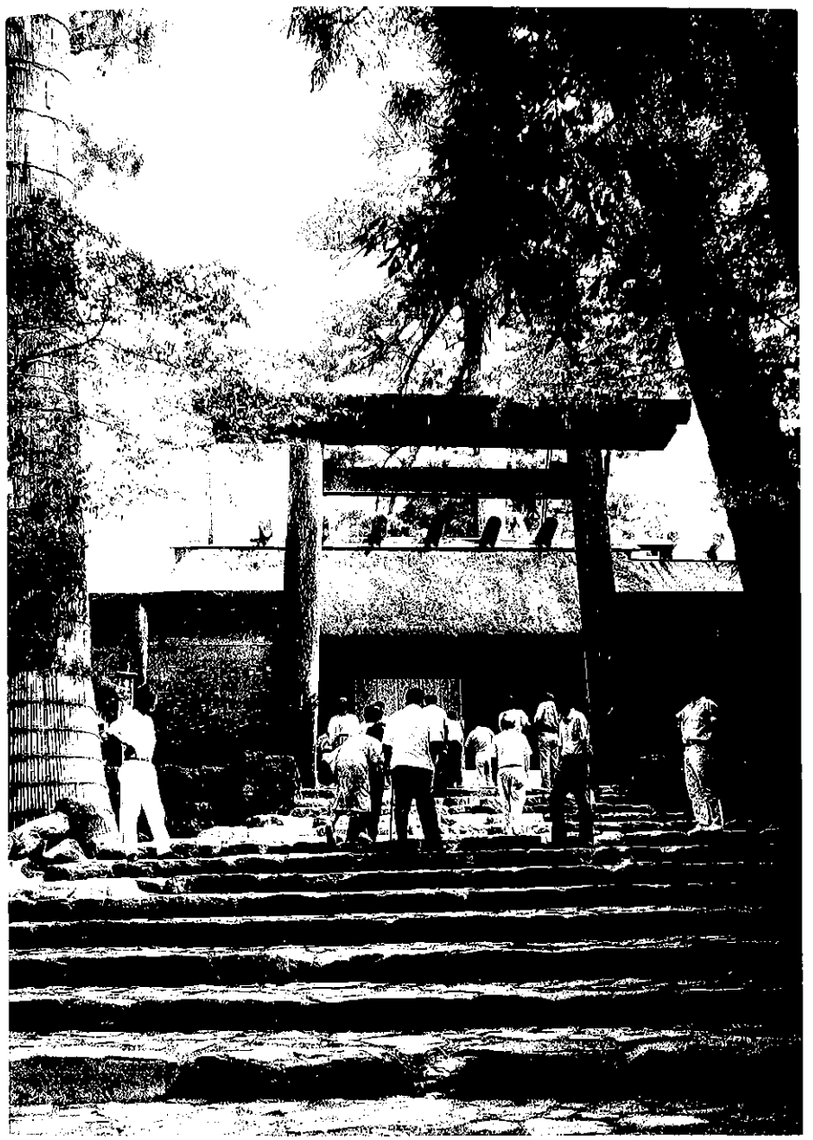

Fig 2.2
Approach to the sanctuary, Inner Shrine, Ise (1965–73 rebuilding)

Shōden, and behind it, to either side of the axis, are two smaller sanctuary buildings. The pillars and walls are made of Japanese cypress and the straight gable roofs are thatched with *kaya*. The ridge-poles are lined with cylindrical wooden billets known as *katsuogi* ('bonito fish timbers'), a name which refers to their distinctive bonito-like shape, and are surmounted by the projecting finials. At each end of the buildings are external pillars which rise from the ground to support the ridge-poles. All of the pillars are sunk deeply into the

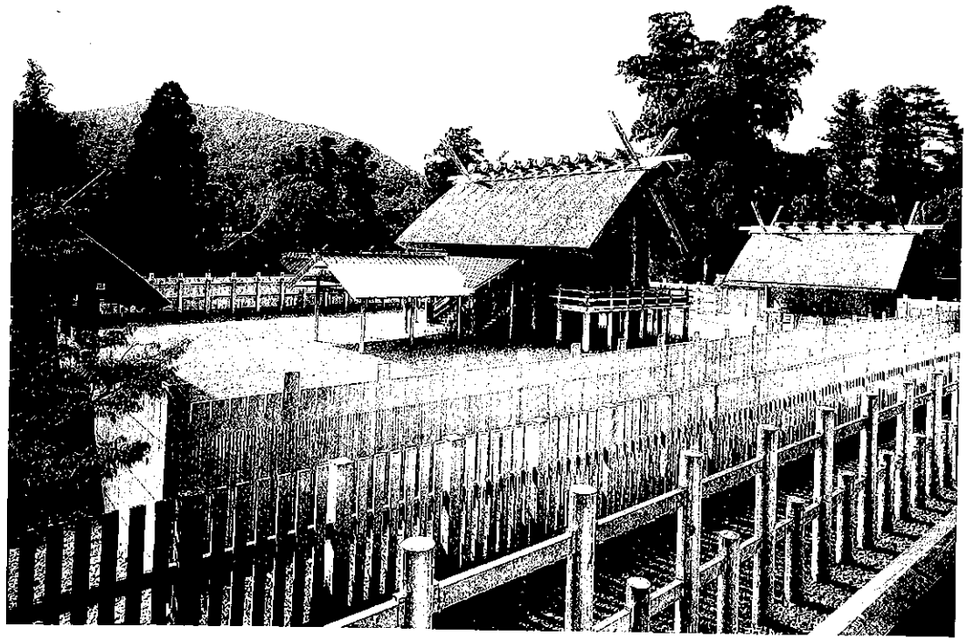

Fig 2.3 Sanctuary of Inner Shrine, Ise, showing sacred fences, Shōden and smaller sanctuary building (1985–93 rebuilding) (Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

earth. The Shōden is 15 metres long, 10 metres wide and 9.7 metres in height measured to the top of the ridge course (Figure 2.4). A wooden staircase at the front is covered by a simple gabled roof in the same style as the main roof itself.

Set beside the inner compound and covered with white pebbles is the Alternate Site where the main buildings will be erected during the next periodic renewal of the shrine (Figure 2.5). At the centre is a small wooden hut erected to protect the heart pillar (*shin no mihashira*) over which the Shōden of the new shrine will be raised in the next rebuilding.

The rebuilding process, known as *shikinen sengū* ('the transfer of the god-body to a new shrine in a special festival year'), spans eight years and consumes approximately 13,600 cypress trees yielding some 10,000 cubic metres of timber. Originally these trees were available in plentiful supply in the surrounding region but since the thirteenth century forests have become seriously depleted and the requisite supplies of timber have had to been procured from the more distant mountains of the Japan Alps in the province of Kiso. The Kiso River, flowing into Ise Bay, provided a ready means of transport for the logs which skilled loggers floated down the river through its hazardous gorges and rapids.

The rebuilding of Ise involves a protracted succession of 32 major ceremonies. It commences with the *Yamaguchi-sai*, or expiatory prayers offered

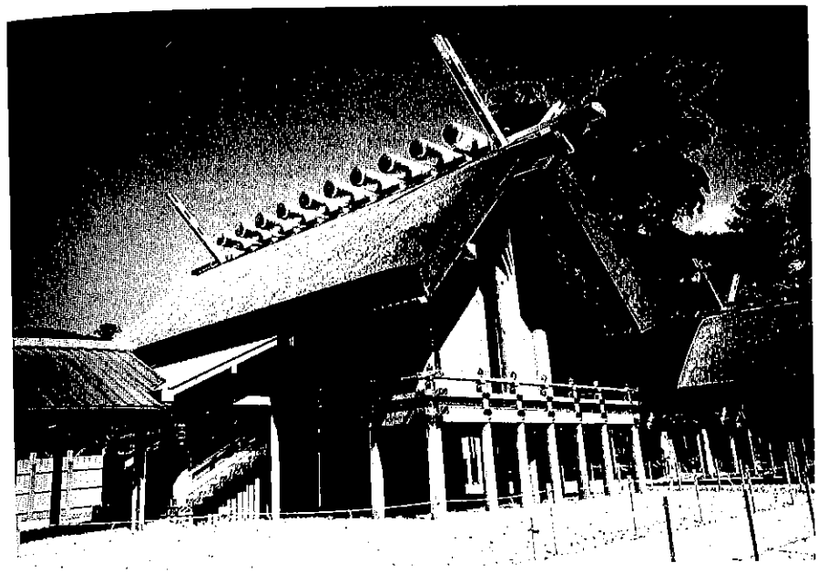

Fig 2.4 Shōden of Inner Shrine, Ise (1985–93 rebuilding) (Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

to the *kami* of the mountain where the sacred trees selected for the reconstruction are to be felled, and culminates with the ritual transferral of the sacred mirror from the old to the new precinct, after which the superseded buildings are dismantled.

The Outer Shrine is located five kilometres to the northwest of the Inner Shrine. The layout of the site and architecture of the buildings are similar in

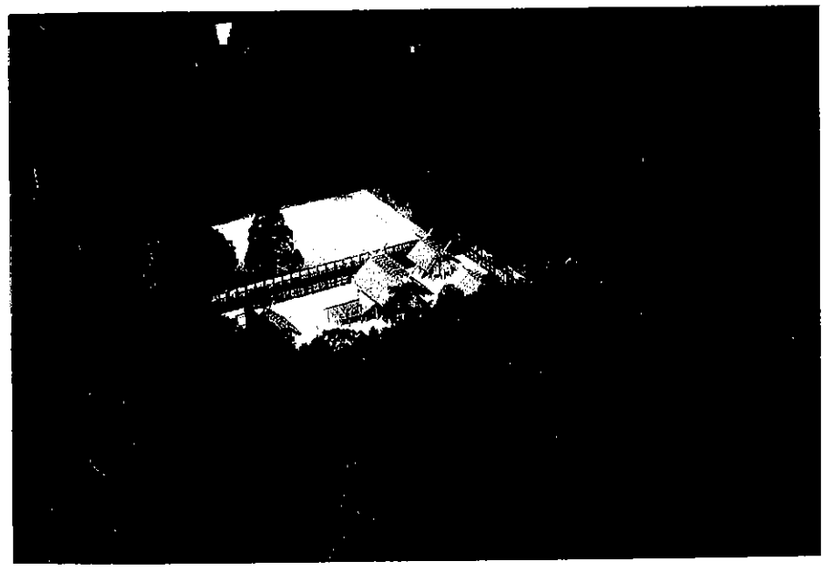

Fig 2.5 Aerial view of main sanctuary, Inner Shrine, Ise (1985–93 rebuilding) (Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

Fig 2.6
Shōden of Outer Shrine, Ise (1985–93 rebuilding) (Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

most respects to those of the Inner Shrine, as is the importance of the inner compound and the provision of an Alternate Site for periodic rebuilding (Figure 2.6). There are, however, certain subtle variations in the siting and characteristics of the buildings arising from deliberate distinctions in authority

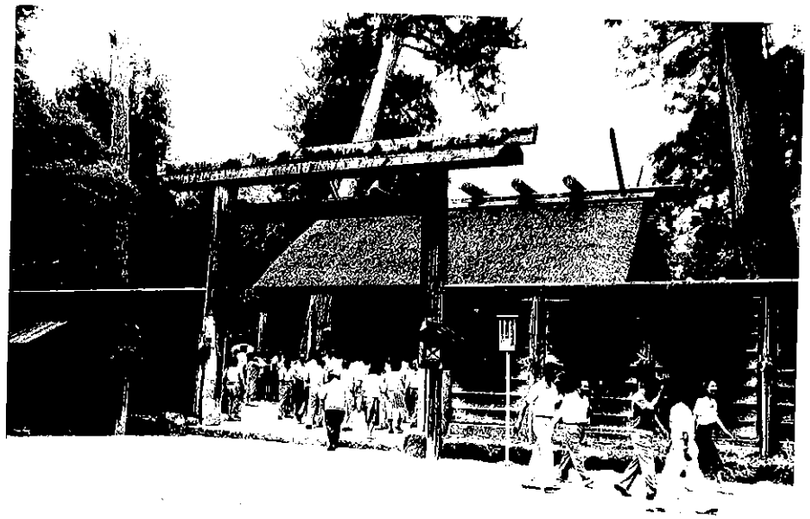

Fig 2.7
Approach to sanctuary of Outer Shrine, Ise (1965–73 rebuilding)

drawn architecturally between the Inner and Outer Shrines. For example, the Outer Shrine is approached across a sacred bridge but the sentinel *torii* are little more than half the height of those marking the entry to the Inner Shrine. *Torii* are also set at strategic points along the approaches to the main compound, but the approach itself is different in character to that of the Inner Shrine: the way is flat and more direct, the trees less imposing and physically encroaching, the atmosphere not so awe-inspiring as at the Inner Shrine. The compound itself is approximately the same size as the Inner Shrine and also aligned axially north–south. However, it is set on the same level as the approach path, not elevated by stone-faced embankments (Figure 2.7). The buildings contained therein are thus more readily visible to the casual observer.

Architectonics of Imperial Authority at Ise

How, then, is authority expressed and defined in this complicated shrine precinct with its distinctive buildings and elaborate process of periodic renewal?

The impression created by the Inner Shrine is powerful and elemental, the unpainted timbers and the thatched roofs affirming close affinity with the natural world. There is no apparent distinction between authority imperial and authority spiritual, between the powers of the natural world and the powers of imperial governance. All are organically interrelated, each aspect reinforcing the other in a relationship which has been refined to a high degree of visual expression and stylistic abstraction over the centuries.

The *Nihon shoki* records that it was at this place that Amaterasu first came to earth, having proclaimed that 'the province of Ise, of the divine wind, is the land whither repair the waves from the eternal world, the successive waves. It is a secluded and pleasant land. In this land I wish to dwell.' The account then continues by stating explicitly that 'in compliance with the instruction of the Great Goddess, a shrine was erected to her in the province of Ise. . . . It was here that Amaterasu first descended from Heaven'.[11]

It is a deeply seated Japanese belief that the *kami* select certain places where they will descend to earth, thereby rendering them holy. People come to these sacred sites, generation after generation, to commune with the gods, to make offerings of the harvest of mountain and sea to them, and to give thanks. In early Shinto practice the places where the particular gods had their abode were not necessarily marked by buildings or special structures; the *kami* could establish their dwelling places in trees, rocks or waterfalls. Sometimes a simple building was constructed as the gods' temporary home as a sign of gratitude for their presence. At Ise the role of the Inner Shrine buildings has been to house Amaterasu in the form of the sacred bronze mirror, which, together with the curved jewel and sacred sword, comprise the three imperial regalia. Throughout the countries of ancient Asia the mirror was regarded as one of the most important symbols of authority, closely associated with the worship of the sun whose light its burnished bronze surface reflected so brightly. At Ise we find the persistence of this association, with the enshrined mirror serving as the physical manifestation of Amaterasu.[12] Accordingly, the Inner Shrine has served as the locus for the multitude of ceremonies of oblation,

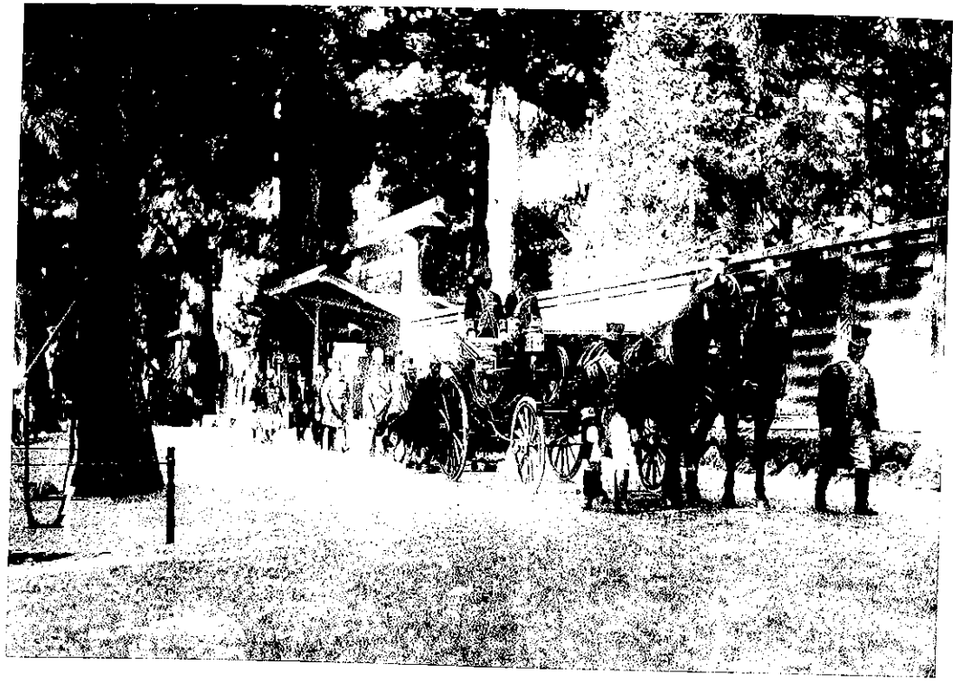

Fig 2.8 Emperor Shōwa arrives for formal visit to Ise Shrine following the completion of his Enthronement Ceremonies in Kyoto (November 10–15, 1928)
(Source: Official publication, *Shōwa tairei shashinchō*, Tokyo, Ōtsuka kōgeisha, 1930)

thanksgiving, purification and offering necessary for her propitiation. It was not until the late seventh century that the association of the Ise site with Amaterasu and the imperial family was formalised. Thereafter it was to serve as the focus for the religious rites of the imperial institution. To the present day, important events, such as coming of age and weddings of members of the imperial family, and above all the death of an emperor and the enthronement of his successor, are reported to the ancestral spirit at the shrine with due solemnity and ceremony (Figure 2.8).

Pragmatic methods have been employed to achieve inspired effects to express the religious and ruling authority of Ise. Once explained they lose something of that mystery essential to their purpose. Authority is established by recourse to a dual strategy of spatial segregation and partial revelation. The inner compound is separated from the plane of mortal beings in a hierarchy of spatial transitions. The first of these is accomplished by means of the elevation of the compound high above the level of the approach path. It is no accident that the final approach is up a series of steeply rising steps. Here the mortal plane is permitted to rise to meet the gods, in studied contra-distinction to the use of a completely flat site for the inner compound of the Outer Shrine.

A series of wooden fences and gateways removes the inner sanctum, in which Amaterasu resides, into the unapproachable distance, with the Shōden hidden from view apart from the merest glimpse of the top of its finials. The

singular significance of what lies within is emphasised by the arbitrary denial of entry; the partial revelation of the roofs of the buildings grants the beholder a glimpse of the world beyond while making clear that the ultimate truths are reserved for those privileged to enter the inner sanctum. The privilege to enter this sanctum and act as intermediary between this world and the world of the gods of creation and nature was traditionally confined to the members of the imperial institution. Access to the inner sanctum has thereby become one of the most important rights and acts of authority in Japanese civilization.

Hierarchy in authority is enacted through a finely calibrated hierarchy of access through gateways of obeisance. At first the series of open *torii* along the approach path signify the accessibility of that which lies immediately beyond to all who proceed along the way, while making it clear that a place of great authority is drawing closer. Folk-belief also confers on these gateways the role of perches for the large sacred fowls who arrive as messengers of the gods at daybreak.

At the inner sanctuary there are four separate ritual spaces reserved for obeisances (*sampai*) performed by worshippers. These spaces are ranked hierarchically by status and defined physically by the four fences and gateways surrounding the main sanctuary building (Figure 2.9). An imposing *torii* allows all visitors to pass through the outer fence or Itagaki to make obeisances at the eaves of the roofed gateway which guards entry through the second fence or Outer Tamagaki (see Figure 2.2, p. 23). Passage through this gateway is reserved for members of the imperial family and, in modern practice, for the Prime Minister and elected representatives of the people at national, prefectural and local level. Local mayors and members of assemblies worship at the inner eaves of the Outer Tamagaki, while the representatives of prefectural government, as well as 'living national treasures' stand at the *torii* half-way towards the Inner Tamagaki. The Prime Minister worships directly in front of this gateway while the imperial family progresses further up the gentle slope of the compound to make obeisances under the outer eaves of the gateway through the Inner Tamagaki. The crown prince and crown princess, as heirs to the throne, customarily proceed through the Inner Tamagaki to pray at the eaves of the Mizugakimon, the gateway set into the innermost fence surrounding the Shōden. A special dispensation to proceed through the innermost gateway in order to worship directly in front of the steps of the Shōden is given on the occasion of the marriage of the crown prince and crown princess. Under normal circumstances, however, the privilege of entering the innermost space of the shrines is reserved for the reigning emperor and empress and the Chief Priestess (*Saishu*) of the shrine. The emperor and empress make their obeisances separately and successively at the foot of the steps of the Shōden. Immediately after the enthronement ceremonies, however, they are each permitted to climb the steps to worship on the verandah of the Shōden in front of the main door. In this way passage through a hierarchically ordered sequence of gateways becomes a carefully calibrated enactment of ritual order within the hierarchy of authority.[13]

The use of a series of fences to protect the inner compound reflects the early Japanese practice of constructing a succession of fences around centres of local power. A typical example is the use of multiple palisades around the

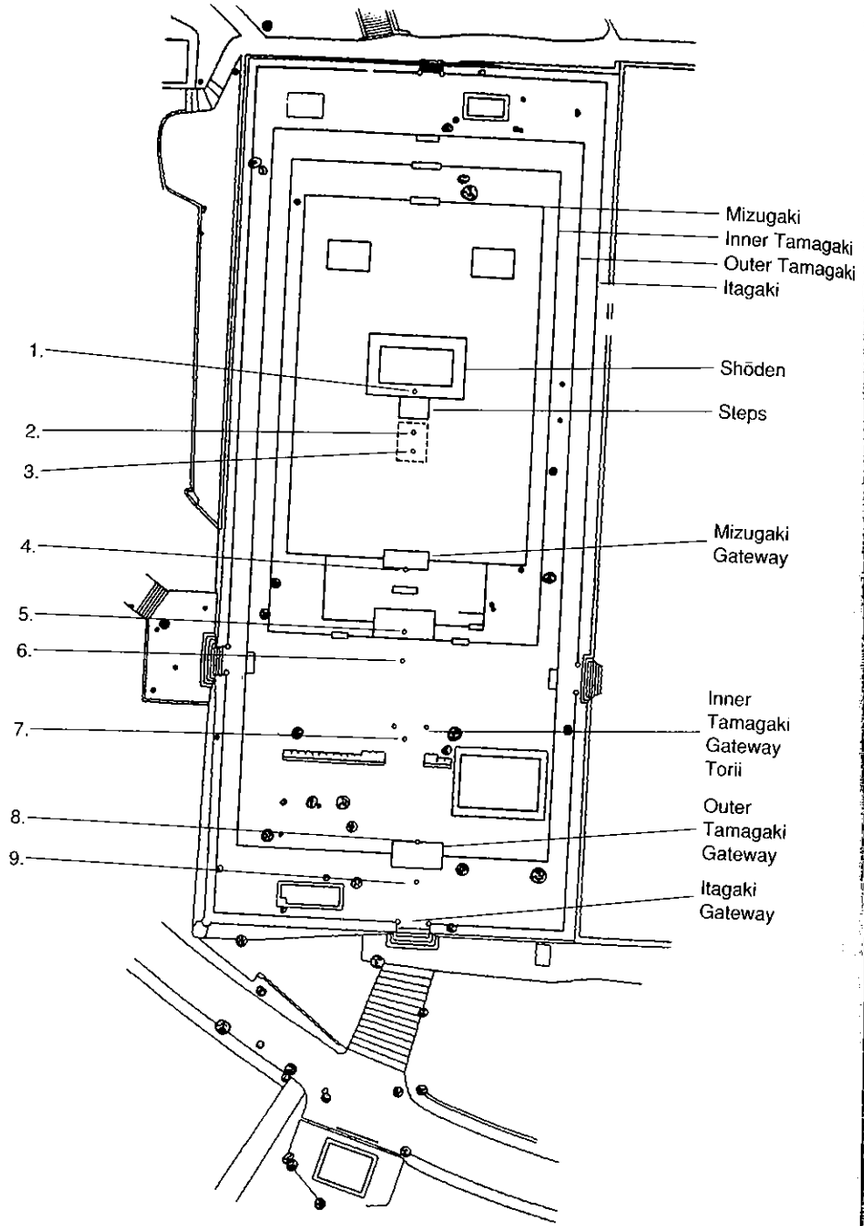

Fig 2.9
Positions for worship at Inner Shrine, Ise, as observed today (Courtesy: Ise Jingū Shichō)

eighth-century fortification of Tagajō, located to the immediate northeast of the modern city of Sendai. The Inner Shrine of Ise today employs a total of four fences but historically the number of fences changed in response to the circumstances of authority. According to the *Kō daijingū gishiki-chō* of 804 AD, which records details of the rebuilding of the shrines following arson which destroyed much of the complex in 791, there was a total of five fences around the compound in the ninth century. In the fourteenth century, during the imperial succession struggles known as the Nambokuchō (1318–92), the three outer fences were lost, and despite subsequent attempts to reinstate the missing fences, there were only two fences around the compound for much of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Obeisances were made standing under the eaves of the gateway of what is now known as the Inner Tamagaki. In the periodic rebuilding completed in 1869, a year after the restoration of imperial government, the Itagaki and Outer Tamagaki, the two outer fences, were rebuilt to restore the site to its pre-1318 configuration. This had the effect of enhancing the dignity of the emperor by further distancing the inner sanctum of Ise from the outside world, at the same time as creating a special place for obeisances by the Prime Minister as official representative of the new government at the Inner Tamagaki. This can only be described as an interesting exercise in political fence-mending.[14]

Gateway architecture at Ise may owe much to Chinese precedent, with the gatehouses guarding the inner sanctum being structurally identical to those protecting temple and palace compounds in Nara, but the Shōden, with its two flanking treasuries and the smaller halls used for daily offerings of food and drink, developed directly from Japanese vernacular architecture of the pre-Buddhist age. The special character of these buildings is explicable only in terms of the origins of this architectural style in vernacular building forms, and by the process by which these were transformed under the patronage of state authority over many generations of renewal at the same site.

The form of the principal Ise buildings is derived from the unadorned raised-floor structures in use from proto-historical times for storing rice throughout the wet-rice agricultural regions of Asia (Figure 2.10).[15] Archaeological excavations in Japan, along with unsophisticated depictions of buildings incised into cast bronze bells, prove that buildings of this type, with sunken pillars, raised floors, plank walls interlocked in the manner of a log cabin, and thatched roofs with rafters projecting at each end and lashed together for strength, were accorded special significance. The main buildings of both shrines

1. Reigning Emperor and Empress following the Enthronement Ceremonies
2. Reigning Emperor and Empress on all other occasions
3. Crown Prince and Crown Princess on the occasion of their marriage
4. Crown Prince and Crown Princess on all other occasions
5. Other members of the Imperial Family
6. Prime Minister, members of both Houses of the Diet and other senior elected officials such as prefectural governors
7. Elected members of prefectural governments and mayors of cities, Living National Treasures and Officials of Ise Shrine
8. Elected officials of local governments, including mayors of towns and villages
9. General public

Fig 2.10
Reconstruction of raised-floor granary, Toro archaeological site, Shizuoka prefecture

are based on this vernacular form, with their raised floors protecting their important spiritual contents in the way that village granaries protected the harvested rice from moisture and rodents. The covered wooden steps at the centre front of the Shōden were originally necessary as a way of carrying the harvested rice into and out of the granary (see Figures 2.4 and 2.12).

In early agrarian Japanese society it was inevitable that the importance of the granary should be deeply embedded in community consciousness. It was

the focal point for festivals, particularly the autumn harvest celebrations. It was then only a short step to transferring belief in the beneficence of the gods to the specific buildings which housed the grain of life. Grain represented the product of the forces of nature – rain and water, and above all the miracle of growth and regeneration. Moreover, in any traditional village community the raised-floor storehouse was the sturdiest, most impressive and carefully constructed building.

For all these reasons it was natural and logical that the Yamato court should make the raised-floor storehouse the abode for Amaterasu. It is not surprising, therefore, that recent archaeological excavations have established that the use of the raised-floor building type at Ise for religious purposes was the rule rather than the exception in early Japan. Such buildings were geographically widespread throughout the populated regions and an intrinsic part of the festivals of local ruling authority. They were typically erected inside ceremonial enclosures within the palisaded headquarters of the most powerful chieftains. There are other significant indications of widespread observance in proto-historical times of ritual practices similar to those followed at Ise. For example, stone pebbles like those employed at Ise to signify a sacred area were used to cover the ceremonial enclosure containing a raised-floor building at the fifth-century Mitsudera I site, near Takasaki, Gumma prefecture, on the western periphery of the Kantō Plain.[16] Similarly, the Makimuku II and III phase sites, at the foot of Mount Miwa in Nara prefecture, near present-day Sakurai city, included a raised-floor building 4.4 by 5.3 metres in plan with pillars approximately 20 centimetres in diameter. It was orientated east–west, in keeping with the theory that this was the principal axis employed in the site planning of early Shinto sanctuaries, and not north–south. Moreover it included the same structurally fossilised ridge-pole pillar and central pillar as are used at Ise. The building was enclosed by a fence and was almost certainly flanked by two smaller raised-floor structures.[17] With the single exception of orientation it is difficult to envisage a more precise correlation in structure, style and site layout with the inner compounds of the Ise Shrine.

One of the most intriguing features of the Shōden of both the Inner and Outer Shrines is their ridge decoration (Figure 2.11). Much of the visual impact of the buildings is derived from the forked finials and cylindrical billets set on the ridges because of their visibility from beyond the compound fences. The finials are abstracted representations of the projecting tips of the gable-end rafters used in early thatched roofs. The ridge billets are a similar reference to pre-Buddhist architecture. The clay *haniwa* model houses, which were placed on the outer surfaces of the burial mounds of clan chieftains of the Tumulus period, show how heavy wooden cylinders were placed along the ridges of larger buildings to weigh down the peak of the gable and seal it against rain or prevent strong winds blowing the roof apart. By the sixth century, written records establish that these billets had become symbols of status, and government regulations restricted their use to homes of high-ranking members of the ruling class.[18]

The ten billets on the ridge of the Shōden of the Inner Shrine and the nine used on the same structure of the Outer Shrine were thus indications of high status, with the former clearly ranked more highly than the latter

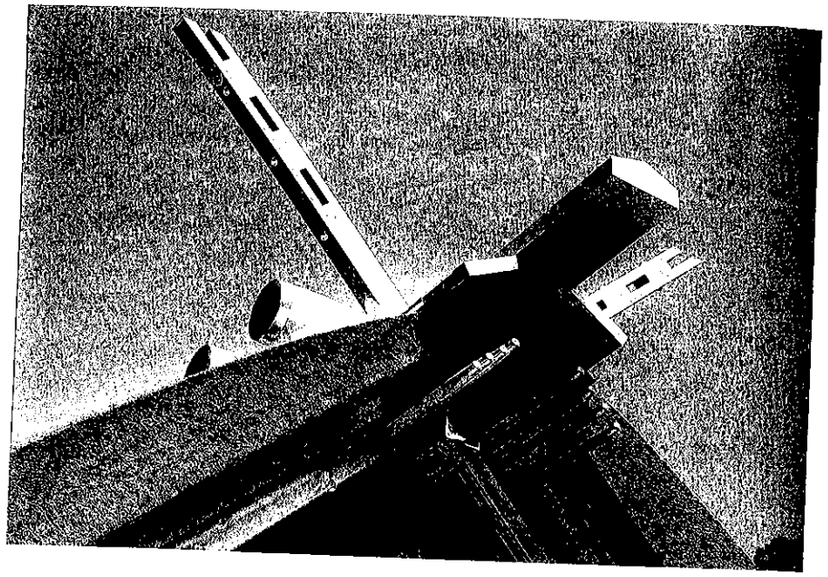

Fig 2.11
Ridge decoration of Shōden of Inner Shrine, Ise: Forked finials (*chigi*) (top) and cylindrical billets (*katsuogi*) (bottom) (1985–93 rebuilding) (Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

(Figures 2.12 and 2.13). They may also represent elemental folk belief concerning gender, so important in early Shinto and reinforced by Chinese *yin-yang* principles introduced at a later date. There could be some correlation between even numbers and female gender and odd numbers and male gender. In the final analysis Ise does consist of two main shrines, one dedicated to a female god and the other to a male deity. In the amalgamation of the two institutions mythological gender may have played a more important role in their symbolism than has heretofore been acknowledged.

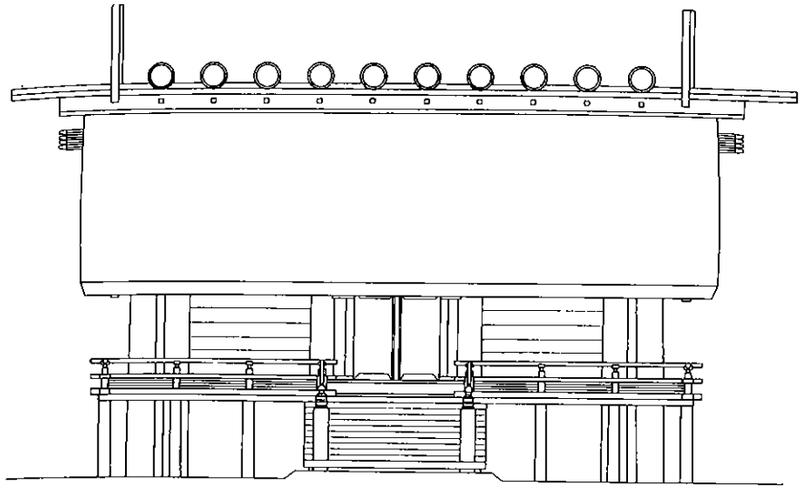

Fig 2.12
Shōden, Inner Shrine, Ise. Front elevation (1985–93 rebuilding) (Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

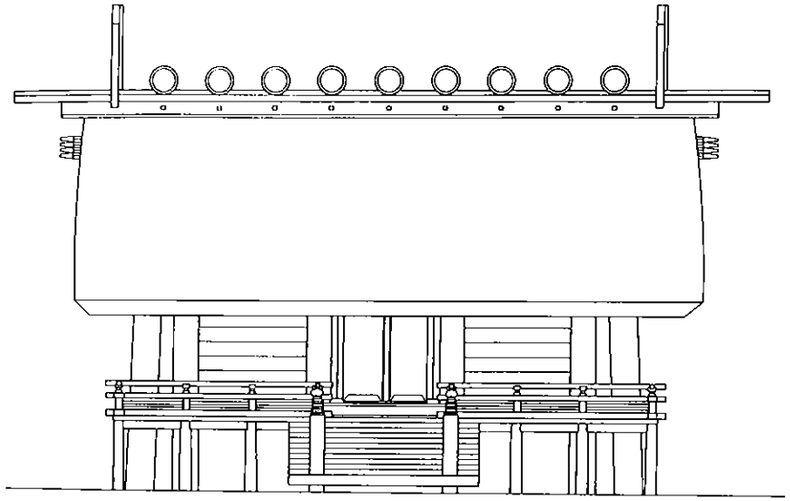

Fig 2.13
Shōden, Outer Shrine, Ise. Front elevation (1985–93 rebuilding) (Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

Despite every effort to maintain the physical form of the Ise Shrine through each rebuilding process, there was a slow mutation of the architectural style from the functional to the abstract. Nishina Shimmeigū, in Omachi, Nagano prefecture, the oldest extant shrine built in this style, reflects the simpler functional logic of the earlier Ise building style. It was last rebuilt in 1636, as part of the nationwide observance of the cult of Amaterasu, under the patronage of the local daimyo of Matsumoto. With its single, large ridge-pole, finials made up of the projecting ends of the principal rafters and absence of gilded bronze ornament, this exquisite small shrine hints at the elemental quality of earlier Ise.[19]

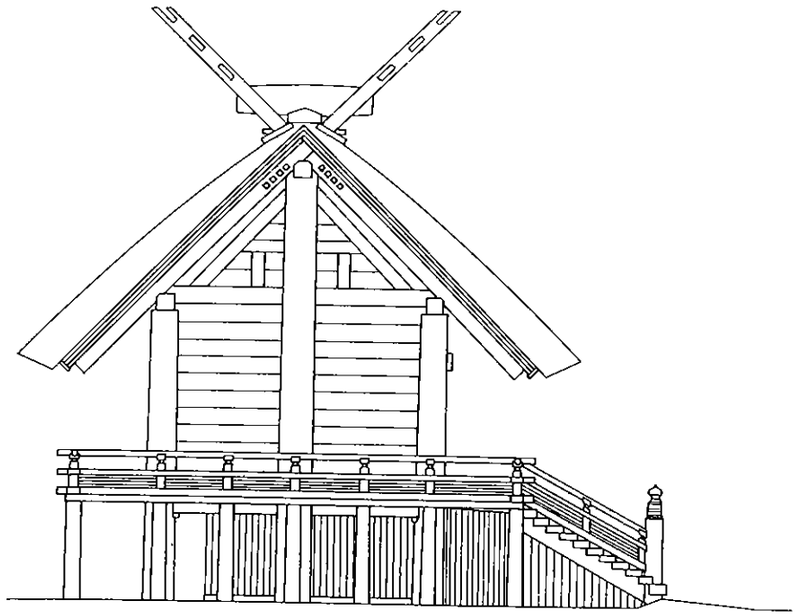

Fig 2.14
Shōden, Inner Shrine, Ise. Side elevation (1985–93 rebuilding) (Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

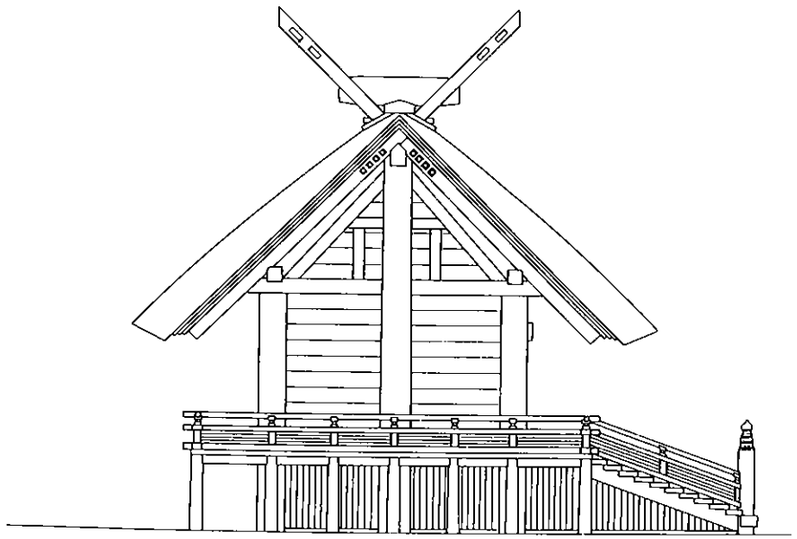

Fig 2.15
Shōden, Outer Shrine, Ise. Side elevation (1985–93 rebuilding) (Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

Another example of the increasing abstraction of architectural form at Ise is to be found in the small Halls of Daily Offering (*Mikeiden*). The joinery which links the timbers of the walls in these two buildings consists of interlocking tenons which recall the robust 'log-cabin' construction (*azekura-zukuri*) used for the walls of early Japanese storehouses and the buildings of Ise probably until medieval times.[20] These tenons are now no longer structural but

are retained in fossilised form as part of the official iconography of the Ise style.

The architectural form of the Outer Shrine, being less important politically, has consequently been subject to less attention and less rigorous renewal practices. Its Shōden has a more elementary arrangement of pillars and beams supporting the rafters of the roof than has the Inner Shrine, and longitudinal head-ties are placed directly on top of the principal cross beams (Figures 2.14 and 2.15). This is a simpler method of construction than that employed for the Inner Shrine, where the longitudinal tie-beams are set beneath the cross beams, requiring complex joinery and calculation of dimensions. The intention may have been to make the slope of the roof of the Inner Shrine steeper and more impressive.

Periodic Renewal and Authority

Whatever the status symbolism of different parts of the Ise buildings and the role of the integrated architectural strategy in representing authority through hierarchical distinctions, periodic rebuilding of the entire shrine complex has added a special dimension to the relationship between architecture and authority at Ise (Figure 2.16). Periodic renewal sustained through most of recorded history has not only ensured the survival of its physical form but does much to explain its religious and political significance.

There are three reasons for this seemingly extraordinary commitment of energy and resources to the periodic rebuilding of a religious edifice. The first is architectural, the second religious and the third political. In the eighth century, during the period of consolidation of state authority, the original architectural and religious reasons were to be overwhelmed by a powerful political imperative.

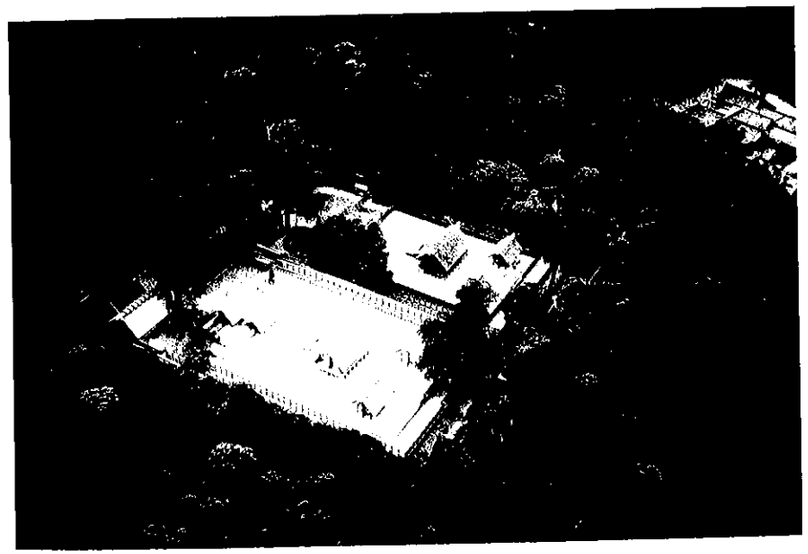

Fig 2.16
Aerial view of Inner Shrine, Ise, showing old and new shrines side by side in 1992 prior to the dismantling of the structures built in 1965–73 (Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

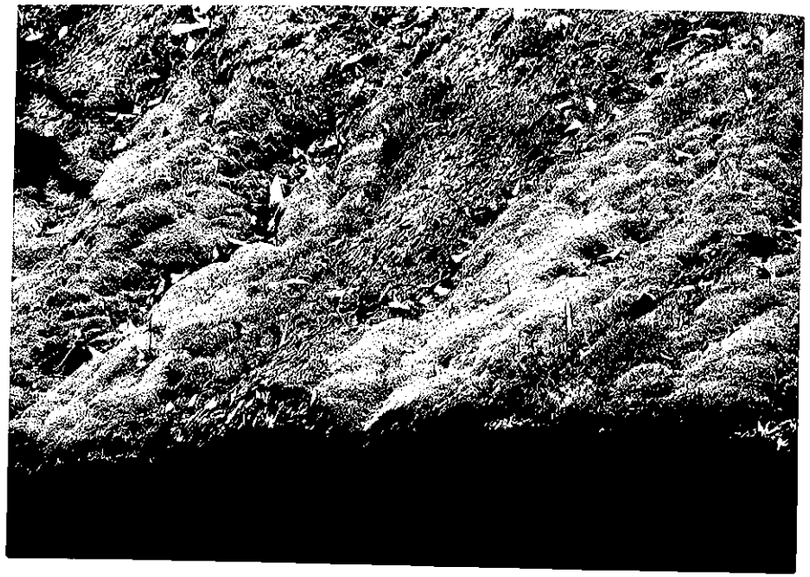

Fig 2.17
Decaying thatched reed on the roof of the Outer Tamagaki Gateway, Inner Shrine, Ise (1991 photograph of 1965–73 building)

The first, architectural reason is, quite simply, the ephemeral nature of many of the materials used for the construction of the shrine buildings. These buildings have been subject to the same inexorable process of deterioration as is experienced by any farmhouse made from similar exposed timbers and thatch. The reed thatch of the roofs, although carefully shaped and manicured to the dictates of its elite patrons, still rots in the same manner as any ordinary roof composed of reed, straw, or wooden shingles (Figure 2.17). Similarly, the practice of inserting the pillars directly into the ground renders them ready victims to rotting and white ants. In the tightly-knit communities of the Bronze and early-Iron Age where these construction practices originated, cooperative rebuilding of individual structures including community storehouses took place in the course of each generation.

The second reason for the periodic renewal of Ise flows logically from the first: the process of decay and renewal inherent in its architectural forms was seen as an affirmation of the cycles of nature which are central to Shinto belief. The rebuilding process became a metaphor for the cycle of growth, decay, death and rebirth to be found in every aspect of the physical universe, ranging from agriculture to life itself. The rebuilding of Ise, together with early Shinto buildings generally, became a form of existential affirmation. It also constituted ritual purification: cleanliness was indeed next to godliness in Shinto, for uncleanliness and decay represented defilement. This belief was reflected in the early Japanese practice of abandoning the palace headquarters upon the death of the ruler in order to avoid defilement, and the subsequent creation of a new, specially purified palace as the seat of authority. Likewise, the pure, clean image of the buildings in Shinto architecture is essential to the preservation of the sanctity of the site for the gods. Purity was to be achieved through ritual, and it transformed the practical need to

replace decaying building materials into a high spiritual obligation to renew shrine architecture as a place suitable for the habitation of the gods.

The periodic rebuilding of the Grand Shrine of Ise is the supreme example of architectural process transformed into religious ritual, the sanctification of an architectural rationale of replacement. Correct ritual ensures the protection of the *kami*. This character is evident in each of the 32 principal rituals and ceremonies which are performed during the eight years of the rebuilding operation. These ceremonies are faithfully re-enacted at each rebuilding in the form standardised by the early tenth century. Many are described in detail in the *Engi-shiki*, one of the earliest extant written records of imperial court etiquette compiled in the Engi era (901–922) and itself based on the earlier *Kō daijingū gishiki-chō* ('record of ceremonial procedures for exchanging shrines') of AD 804.[21]

However the religious meaning of renewal goes far beyond the formal ceremonies and rituals. At Ise the actual practices of rebuilding take on the essence of sacred ritual. The pragmatic acts of the reconstruction process become an offering or oblation to the gods. Each stroke of an adze and every cut of a saw is presided over by master carpenters who have been specially purified for their sacred task, while many of the rituals of renewal are ceremonial enactments of carpentry practices (Figure 2.18). In other words, building practice at Ise is more than a mere extended metaphor for religious belief; it has become a religious act in its own right. The cutting of the wood and the planing of its surfaces are performed with something of the sacramental nature of the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine in Christian practice. The practical and the common in each instance is elevated by commitment and faith to the level of the highest spiritual ritual. The building process is seen as a perfect oblation for the imperfection and impurities of the physical world – virtually a 'rite by which supernatural grace is imparted' – the definition of a 'sacrament' in Christian belief. The power of any building made by such transcendental means to influence the conduct and actions of others, central to the definition of authority, is all the mightier as a consequence. Indeed, it is absolute in the religious sense.

This brings us to the third or political reason for periodic renewal of Ise. It is here at Ise that we find the point of departure from other sites sacred to Shinto belief and practice. The association of the state with the periodic renewal of Ise, a process initially necessitated by the impermanence of the building materials and sanctioned by Shinto theology, was indispensable to the consolidation and ultimately the character of imperial authority. It was this political imperative which was to subsume the architectural and religious rationale.

That familiar mixture of politics and piety is apparent even in the circumstances of the official recognition of Ise as the shrine to Amaterasu. An imperial succession struggle broke out in 672, and the eventual victor in the armed conflict, who subsequently became the Emperor Temmu in the next year, is reported to have worshipped and made obeisance in the direction of the Ise site as he rode out to the decisive battle.[22] Regular rebuilding of Ise was formalised as a state responsibility during Temmu's reign (673–686). From 685 onwards this emperor began the systematic centralisation of state

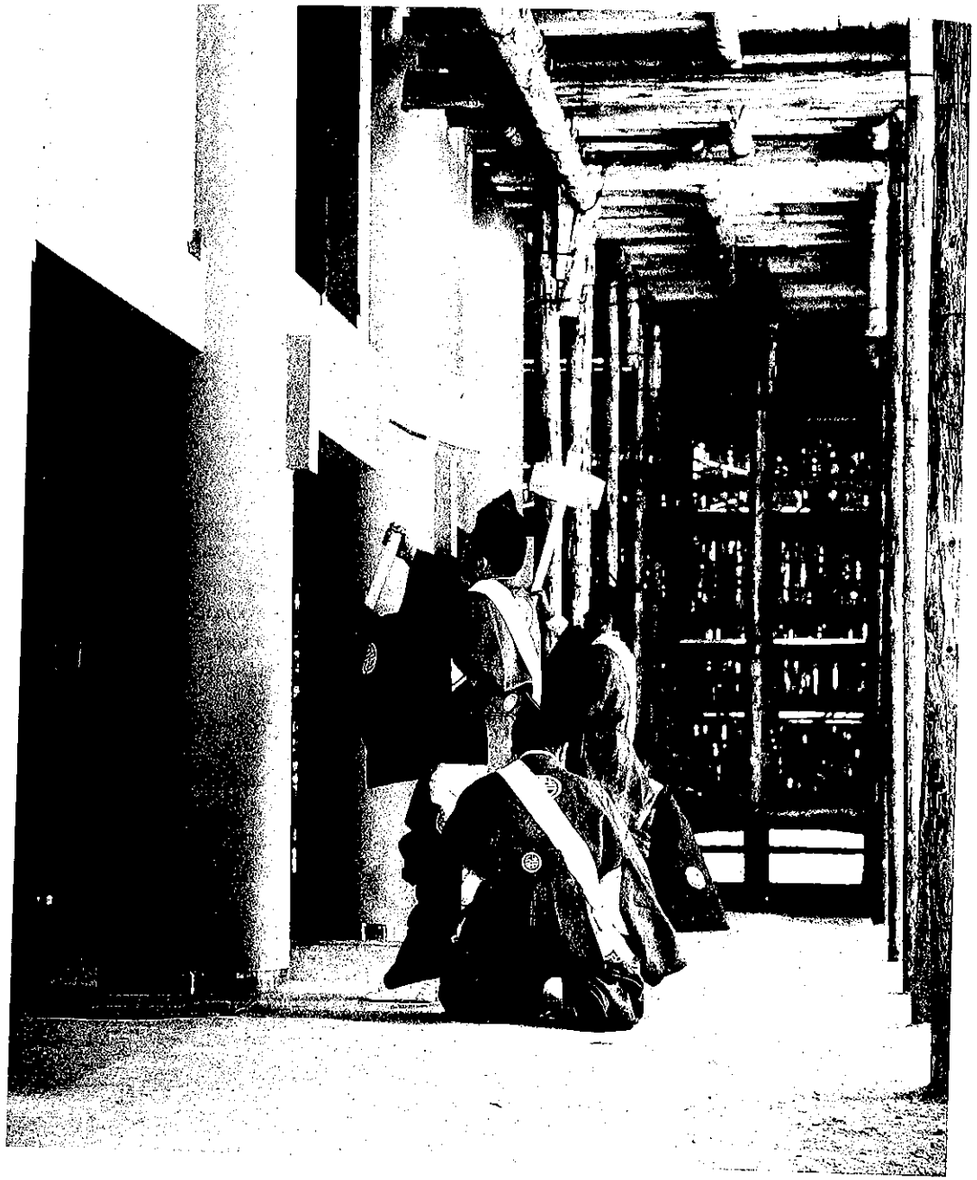

Fig 2.18 Ceremonial enactment of carpentry practice. The 'Pillar Erection Ceremony' (*Ritchū-sai*) for the Shōden of the Inner Shrine, March 31, 1992
(Courtesy of Ise Jingū)

authority, a process in which architecture played an important role. Under Temmu the government took over responsibility for sponsoring and supervising the periodic rebuilding of Ise, the first state-sponsored rebuilding being

completed in 690, four years after his death. A century later it was to be the authority of the Emperor Kammu (r. 781–806) which completed the first comprehensive formalisation of Shinto rites, including the rites of renewal of Ise, as part of state administration. It was also Kammu's vision of a systematically ordered ruling authority, with officially prescribed ceremonies and close associations with both Buddhism and Shinto, which was responsible for the bureaucratic consolidation of Ise and its rites within the practices of the imperial state. In 792, a fire caused, it is thought, by robbers, destroyed much of the Inner Shrine and offered a convenient opportunity for the government to regulate its rebuilding practices. The *Kō daijingū gishiki-chō* was the result, to be followed a century later by further formulation as part of the *Engi-shiki*.[23] In every detail of construction and consecration recorded in these official manuals a sense of order is apparent. The attention to detail, down to the last beam and metal stud, was more than the familiar manifestation of religious zeal for strict compliance with intricate liturgy. It is evidence of a powerful political determination to reinstate the Shinto *kami* alongside Buddhist deities by the provision of copious ritual. With these formal codifications the practice of Shinto rites, including the ritual renewal of the Ise buildings, became part of the official practices of government. Moreover, as a result of the ritual rebuilding, Ise became part of the definition and revelation of imperial authority, and by its Shinto character, evidence of a determination to confer a stronger indigenous character on government after a period of powerful Chinese influence.

It was from this carefully formulated and officially imposed position at the heart of eighth- and ninth-century government that the architectural forms and building practices of Ise were to be transformed into a representation of the sacerdotal authority which sanctioned the imperial order and to become the intermediaries between this order and the natural and supernatural world. By reason of this insistent pressure maintained by ruling authority, the periodic rebuilding of Ise was performed more frequently and comprehensively than architectural necessity alone dictated. Only the rethatching of roofs is essential every 20 to 25 years in this region of Japan. The timbers are quite another matter. The cypress wood used for all the structures is one of the most durable of all building materials. The surfaces are polished to a dull gleam by the action of the planing knives used in traditional carpentry so that water actually beads on the surface of the wood instead of being absorbed by the timber. A structure made of such superlative material and with such dedicated technique would easily last twice the officially designated span of 20 years. Moreover, in the eleventh century the principal pillars of the Shōden were 80 centimetres in diameter and a contemporary account boasts that these would normally be expected to last 'one hundred years without rotting'.[24]

The sustained and regular re-creation of Ise over the course of many generations attests to the authority of two particular traditions: the multiple-stranded craft tradition, which has effected the physical task of rebuilding, and the patronage of the imperial institution. Physically the periodic renewal has been made possible by the hereditary infrastructure of carpenters, thatchers, metalworkers, weavers and dyers, ceremonial saddle-makers, sculptors, lacquer experts and tool smiths. The continuity of the many and varied craft traditions

necessary to maintain and renew the myriad buildings of Ise has been vital to the survival of the shrine as an architectural entity. However the key reason for this architectural survival has been the special financial, political and ideological support of the imperial institution. The 20-year renewal observed at Ise was certainly not the exception in Shinto institutions. As already noted, physical decay of materials and the need for religious purity were universal facts. Regular 20-year rebuilding programmes were observed in a large number of institutions. Sumiyoshi Taisha in Osaka carried out systematic rebuilding over a period of more than 500 years from 928 until 1434, and subsequently at less regular intervals until 1810. At Kasuga Taisha in Nara, rebuilding at intervals of from 5 to 33 years has occurred 46 times between 1099 and the present day. The Kamo shrines in Kyoto also observed periodic renewal until 1864, although the intervals were more irregular, a variation of a mere 3 years to 144 years being recorded by local documents.[25]

It is not the observance of the rebuilding process *per se*, but the authority of the imperial institution, which has maintained the tradition of periodic rebuilding far more consistently than that of any other shrine complex in Japan, which sets Ise apart from other shrines. There was a switch from completing the rebuilding in the 20th year, as laid down in the *Engi-shiki*, to completing the rebuilding after 20 years from 1343 onwards, but the only protracted break in that long continuity occurred as a result of the complete breakdown of authority during the period of civil war following the outbreak of the Ōnin Rebellion in 1467. The buildings completed in 1462 were to stand, slowly rotting to point of collapse for 123 years. The rebuilding cycle was revived to suit the political ends of Toyotomi Hideyoshi and then the Tokugawa, reaffirming the indispensability of Ise to ruling authority in Japan.[26]

Izumo Taisha

Turning our attention to a study of Izumo Taisha may seem something of an anti-climax after the high drama of architecture and authority at Ise, but that is precisely what the Nara court and its heirs and successors would have had us believe. While Emperor Kammu and his officials were working assiduously to incorporate the rituals of Ise into the very fabric of the centralised bureaucratic state, Kammu was attacking the residual regional authority of Izumo by attempting to isolate the members of the local aristocracy of Izumo from their Great Shrine. They were chastised for performing their religious functions at the shrine to the neglect of their administrative duties, and prohibited from holding the civil office of provincial governor as a consequence.[27] This was nothing short of an attempt to separate church from state at Izumo, the same tactic which was more recently employed by the Allied Occupation authorities in post-Second World War Japan. For Kammu it was the natural corollary to increasing the status and authority of Ise in national government. It mattered not at all that the same accusations of neglecting administration for the sake of religion could have been laid against Kammu and his court had the positions been reversed. Such is the arbitrary nature of authority, and in this case it was decidedly at the expense of the Izumo establishment.

Despite the Nara court's obfuscation of the written record, historical evidence makes it abundantly clear that the Great Shrine of Izumo was as venerable a centre of Shinto worship as was Ise, and probably at times equally important as a centre of power.[28] It is accorded respect in legend as the oldest shrine in Japan and was long thought to be the place where not one god came to earth, as in the case of Ise, but where the eight million gods of the entire universe assembled on one special occasion each year, a belief still celebrated in the grand festival at Izumo every October. Despite the appeal of the legends of Amaterasu, the presiding deity of Izumo, Okuninushi, has enjoyed abiding prestige as the *kami* in Shinto belief responsible for fishing, sericulture and good fortune. He has wider appeal in folk belief in which he is enshrined and revered as Daikoku, the god of wealth, fortune and the five cereals. In folk custom the *Daikoku-bashira* is the central pillar upon which the structure of a traditional building rests, affording the occupants protection against collapse or other calamity. There is, accordingly, a large and imposing pillar representing this deity placed at the centre of the Honden of Izumo Taisha. Ironically, such a pillar also rests beneath the Shōden of Ise. Given more favourable historical circumstances it is conceivable that the chieftains of Izumo would have exploited the political potential of architectural metonymy to interpret their role as the central pillar of the state.

Izumo was the religious centre of a major regional power-base facing Korea across the Sea of Japan. This proximity to the Korean peninsula made it a long-established point of cultural and technological intercourse with the Asian mainland. This contact enhanced its prestige and power. At the turn of the fourth century the consolidation of power by the Yamato around their home province in the centre of the Kii peninsula was a result of a combination of cunning political manoeuvring and expedient alliance-forming, especially through intermarriage and some degree of military power. The claim to national hegemony by both regional powers was also promoted through ideology, in which the divine associations of the clan leaders and sponsorship of the local shrines played an important part. As we have seen, Izumo's political status was greatly diminished by the successful strategies of the leadership of the Yamato region which culminated in the consolidation of their authority at the imperial court at Nara in the eighth century. As part of this process the myths and legends of Izumo were relegated to secondary status within the official histories of the Nara court. Susano-o, father of Okuninushi, is reviled in the *Nihon shoki*:

> Amaterasu [the Heaven-Shining Deity] had made august rice fields of Heavenly narrow rice fields and Heavenly long rice fields. Then Susano-o, when the seed was sown in spring, broke down the divisions between the plots of rice and in autumn let loose the Heavenly piebald colts, and made them lie down in the midst of the rice fields. Again, when he saw that Amaterasu was about to celebrate the feast of first-fruits, he secretly voided excrement in the New Palace. Moreover, when he saw that Amaterasu was in her sacred weaving hall, engaged in weaving garments of the Gods, he flayed a piebald colt of Heaven, and breaking a hole in the roof-tiles of the hall, flung it in.[29]

Such activities as breaking down the dykes in paddy fields and defiling the palace where an important Shinto ritual was to be performed were a heinous attack on the very fabric of good social order and a desecration of sacred and political authority. This is a case of myth and legend coming together using all the principal characters of Izumo legends but with changed emphasis and interpretation to suit the ends of the Nara court. According to the *Kojiki*, Susano-o was expelled from heaven for his misbehaviour and thereupon descended to earth to settle in the land of Izumo.[30]

As in the case of Ise, there is a close correlation at Izumo between the vicissitudes of political and religious fortune and changes in the architecture and organisation of the shrine site. A visit to the Izumo shrine site is like entering a world of architectural authority complementary and alternate to that of Ise, a world in which there is an underlying tension between great ambitions and muted achievements. The declining national authority of Izumo is clearly reflected in the diminished splendour of its architecture, and in the absence today of ritual renewal, the dynamic of which was central to the continuity of authority at Ise.

Izumo Taisha occupies an area of approximately 80,000 square metres, on a flat site to the southwest of a low hill just inland from the coast of the stormy Sea of Japan – a locality very different in ambience from the benign physical environment of Ise. The heart of the complex is a rectangular compound 80 metres north–south and 70 metres east–west, only slightly smaller than the compounds of the Ise Inner and Outer Shrines (Figure 2.19). Set within this compound is the inner precinct, containing the main building or Honden dedicated to Okuninushi (Figure 2.20). The enclosure is guarded by a two-storey gatehouse and a simple paling fence covered by a bark shingle roof. The outer compound, its perimeter defined by another paling fence and a single-storey gateway, is the setting for three smaller shrine buildings dedicated to Okuninushi's mythological consort and two princesses.

The compound rests at the same modest level as the approach path, in the subdued manner of the Outer Shrine at Ise and, like the Outer Shrine, very different in dramatic effect from the Inner Shrine with its elevated sanctum. Most significantly there are only two fences surrounding the Izumo compound, the buildings within being readily visible from outside through the spaces between the fence palings. The deity of Izumo is therefore more proximate to the mortal plane and access, while restricted historically to the clan leadership, is not imbued with the spatial and symbolic intensity as is found at Ise.

It is curious to note, given the inordinate emphasis upon layers of separation used at Ise, that so important a shrine as Izumo has two fences only. The great political and religious authority of Izumo before the Yamato ascendancy suggests that there were more fences surrounding the inner sanctum than are found today. No archaeological excavations have been carried out at the site to test this hypothesis, but an important clue is provided in the *Kojiki*. In the description of the role of Susano-o in killing a serpent which had devoured all but one of the eight daughters of the Earth Deity, particular emphasis is placed on the number eight. Quite apart from the fact of eight daughters, Susano-o kills the serpent with 'eight-fold refined sake

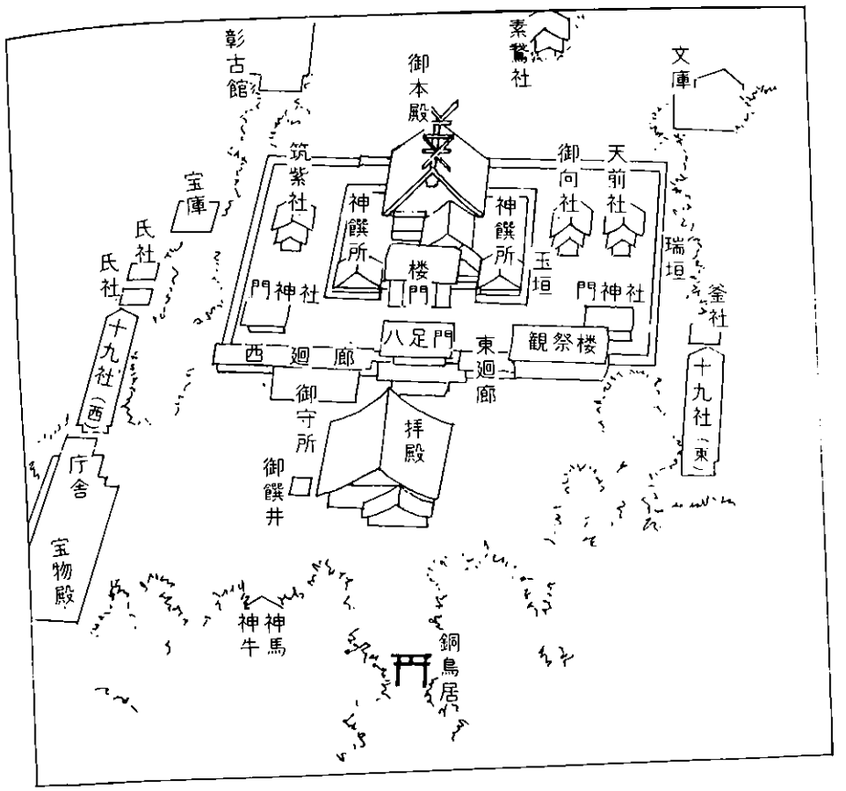

Fig 2.19
Map of Main Sanctuary Compound, Izumo Shrine (Courtesy of Izumo Taisha)

placed in eight vats upon eight platforms built at eight gates.'[31] The *Kojiki* records that Susano-o then 'sought in the land of Izumo for a place where he might build a palace', and eventually found an appropriate site at Suga, in the vicinity of the present shrine. When he first built the palace of Suga, clouds rose up thence, and then he made an august song. That song said:

> Eight Clouds arise. The eight-fold fence of Izumo makes an eight-fold fence for the spouses to retire [within] Oh! that eight-fold fence.[32]

Complete with eight fences and eight gateways, Susano-o's palace must have been spectacular indeed. We can but speculate about the actual number of fences and gateways around the shrine at Izumo dedicated to his son, but the two fences which enclose it today appear a little too modest by any standards for the symbolism for which they are required.

The Honden of Izumo Taisha is similar in general form to the main sanctuaries of the Ise shrines – with the same distinctive raised-floor structure, and a roof covered in the same cypress-bark shingles (*hiwada-buki*) as were used for the roofs of Ise until medieval times.[33] However there is no dearth of architectural detail which sets Izumo apart from Ise. Both feature a covered entrance with ample wooden steps leading up to the main structure, but at

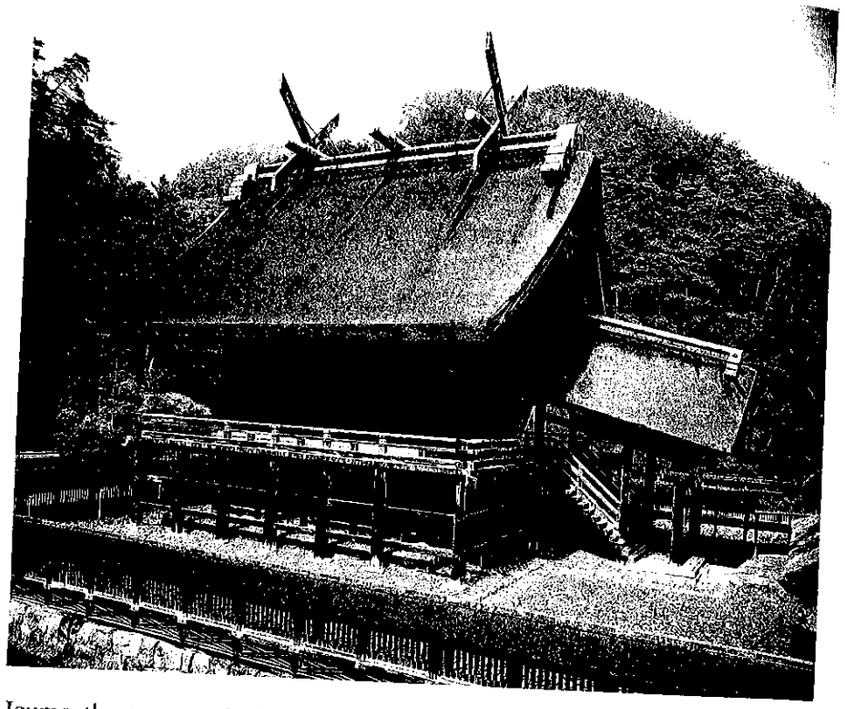

Fig 2.20
Honden of Izumo Shrine. Rebuilding completed in 1744 (Courtesy of Kodansha)

Izumo the entrance leads to the narrow end of the building in the style of the early residences of the elite as depicted in *haniwa* models (see Figure 2.20). Such side entrances were designed to ensure greater privacy and protection against the elements than was possible with entrances situated at the centre of the main wall. As has been noted in the case of Ise, central doors were the preferred arrangement for granaries because they allowed easier access to the interior for the purposes of storage and removal of rice. The reason why a residence rather than a granary was chosen as the vernacular prototype for Izumo Taisha is shrouded in the mists of antiquity, but undoubtedly it was related to a commendable desire to honour the gods worthily with an august temporal abode. After all, this structure was nothing less than a palace intended to accommodate the coming to earth of Okuninushi himself, so a building similar to the palaces of the local elite was highly appropriate.

There are other, more subtle differences between the architecture of the two great shrines which may readily be explained by referring once more to the differing circumstances of authority. The ornamentation of the ridge of the Izumo Honden is striking evidence of the shrine's reduced status in religious and political terms: unlike the ten-ridge billets of the Inner Shrine at Ise and the nine billets of the Outer Shrine, the Izumo building has three billets only. Even more illuminating is the absence of any Alternate Site beside the main compound, though periodic renewal was carried out at Izumo until the middle of the Edo period. It was last performed in 1744 during the reign

of the eighth Tokugawa shogun Yoshimune (1648–1751) when the present Honden was completed. It is interesting to note that a rebuilding was carried out as early as 659 AD, some decades before the earliest state-sponsored rebuilding at Ise.[34]

Although the interval between the periodic renewals varies considerably, the existence of a systematic rebuilding process at Izumo is unquestionable. Examination of the reasons for the differences in timing opens up another fascinating chapter in the dynamics of architecture and authority. The rebuildings were least frequent during the Nara period, with no rebuilding recorded for the period between 659 and 822. Even allowing for some deficiency in records this clearly indicates that some disruption to ritual authority, as enacted through periodic shrine renewal, occurred as a result of the waning of the political fortunes of Izumo during the Nara centralisation of state power.

In contrast to the situation during the Nara period, there were systematic attempts at periodical renewal from the late tenth century until 1744. Rebuilding at Izumo was maintained even throughout the period of civil wars in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, a record that not even Ise could match. There were some six rebuildings between 1467 and 1609, at intervals ranging from 19 to 33 years. A strong political imperative may be identified behind these rebuildings, namely an exercise in the promotion of local authority by the Mōri, the daimyo family controlling much of western Honshu at the end of the sixteenth century. Mōri Terumoto, who succeeded his grandfather as domainal lord in 1571, and whose estimated wealth of 1,205,000 *koku*[35] was second only to that of the Tokugawa, was responsible for a major reconstruction completed about 1580.[36]

After vanquishing the Mōri at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 the Tokugawa commissioned an extensive rebuilding of the Izumo Shrine. This was carried out between 1605 and 1609, with Tokugawa Ieyasu, now officially designated shogun, himself donating some of the timbers used in the rebuilding.[37] The Mōri rebuildings had been an active assertion of one of the ancient prerogatives of rule, the tradition of patronage by regional lords of their local tutelary shrine. The Tokugawa rebuilding appropriated that prerogative as part of its national strategy of using architecture to extend central authority. For this reason it comes as no surprise to learn that the Tokugawa shogunal government sponsored the rebuilding of Ise at the same time as it was supporting the renewal at Izumo.[38] By the later seventeenth century, however, the Tokugawa no longer felt compelled to sponsor the periodic rebuilding of either shrine complex because their own ideology was by then firmly focused on the Tōshōgū at Nikkō. There was to be one final rebuilding of Izumo under Tokugawa patronage, namely the eighteenth-century construction of the Honden which still graces the site. It was part of a mid-Edo period programme which also included the rebuilding of the main halls of Tōdaiji in Nara and Zenkōji in Nagano.

The Heian-period rebuilding projects, five centuries before these events occurred, are equally fascinating for what they disclose about the preoccupation of local authority with monumental building. The later Heian period was an era marked by gradual decline in the central power of the court, and

the rise of regional warrior power. At Izumo from 1067 until 1115 the Honden was to be rebuilt with ever-increasing frequency and on a progressively larger scale, coinciding with the beginning of the decline of central authority. Research by Fukuyama Toshio has established that, during the 200 years from the middle of the Heian period until the beginning of the Kamakura period, the Honden was rebuilt no fewer than six times. By the time of the rebuilding which was completed in 1115, it was a massive structure, 48 metres (16 *jō*) in height (Figure 2.21). It was approached by a giant staircase 109 metres long, rising to the level of the floor of the Honden in a latter-day Japanese version of Jacob's Ladder.[39] This ramp provided the means of raising the timbers for the walls and roof. This Honden, therefore, was some two and a half times the height of the extant, mid-Edo period building. In fact it was comparable in that respect to the Great Buddha Hall of Tōdaiji, one of the tallest buildings in preindustrial Japan. Shrine tradition maintains that, during the Heian period, an even taller structure may have been erected, rising to a height of nearly 100 metres (32 *jō*). There is evidence to confirm the construction of a 48-metre Honden but a building twice that height seems unlikely.[40] Archaeological excavations confirm that as early as the fourth century, in the Tottori region close to Izumo, a number of raised-floor buildings of considerable height were constructed. One such building had what appears to be a staircase at the front and post holes as large as 2 to 3 metres in diameter, suggesting a building of considerable height.[41] This archaeological evidence is corroborated by an account of early large-scale construction

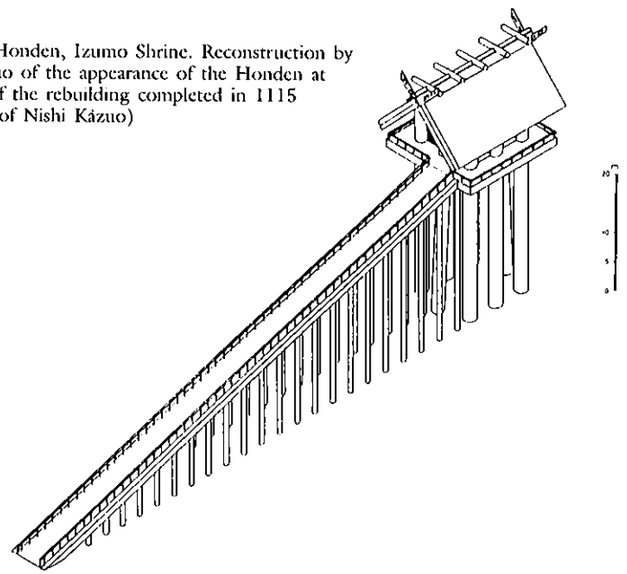

Fig 2.21 Honden, Izumo Shrine. Reconstruction by Nishi Kazuo of the appearance of the Honden at the time of the rebuilding completed in 1115 (Courtesy of Nishi Kazuo)

in the vicinity of Izumo contained in the eighth-century *Izumo fudoki*. The entry for the Community of Takagishi states that:

> Ajisuki Takahiko, a son of the Lord of the Great Land, cried loudly day and night. His father constructed a high building for Ajisuki to live in. The Lord of the Great Land attached a long ladder to the building so that his son could climb up and down as he wished. Thus he reared and consoled Ajisuki. (This building was likened to a high cliff.) This is how the community came to be known as Takagishi, meaning 'high cliff'.[42]

Further evidence of the grand scale of the Heian-period Izumo Honden is furnished by a plan preserved in the collection of the hereditary chief priests of the shrine. The *Kanawa no zōeizu*, an Edo-period copy of an earlier Heian-period document, suggests that the principal pillars of the Honden were bound together with large iron hoops in clusters of three in order to form massive piers with a diameter of approximately 3.6 metres. Another Edo-period document states that no fewer than 100 great trunks of cypress trees were brought to Izumo by sea for use in the 1115 Honden reconstruction.[43] It is claimed that the largest of these had been brought from Tottori and was supposedly 45 metres in length and over 4.5 metres in diameter. We can see from the *Kanawa no zōeizu* how such mighty timbers might have been strapped together to support the Honden. A similar technique was to be used in the eighteenth-century Tokugawa-sponsored rebuilding of the Great Buddha Hall of Tōdaiji.

Although the Edo-period sources purporting to represent earlier records must be treated with caution, a fascinating picture of large-scale construction at Izumo emerges from them which is consistent with the archaeological and early written records. Such construction demanded considerable resources. The modern construction company, Ōbayashi-gumi, using advanced computer-aided design technology which it employs as part of its building practice, has estimated that the 1115 reconstruction of Izumo would have required 8,533 cubic metres, of timber and 50 tonnes of iron for the metal hoops holding together the pillar clusters, and a total budget expressed in 1989 terms would have been 12.1 billion *yen* or approximately the same cost as the construction of a high-rise office building in Tokyo.[44]

In the search for architectural form appropriate to the authority of Izumo the master carpenters of the great shrine were pushing at the very frontiers of building technology. In the course of this quest they created a structure which was unstable, with disastrous consequences. The *Nihon kiryaku* states that in 1031 the Honden 'collapsed without reason'.[45] Neither earthquake, typhoon wind nor other natural disaster was responsible. The shrine was quickly rebuilt, a project completed in 1036, only to collapse again 25 years later in 1061. Once again the contemporary records establish that the reason for the collapse was a great mystery. The pattern repeated itself yet again in 1108 when the rebuilt shrine collapsed the third time, to be reconstructed using the giant pillars from Tottori that we have discussed above. Such disasters were to occur again in 1141, 1172 and 63 years later in 1235, making a total of six occasions when the main building was reduced to a pile of jumbled timbers by inexplicable forces. Given that each rebuilding took between four

and six years to complete, Izumo was under reconstruction almost as long as it was standing during the later Heian period, particularly as periodic renewal was also carried out on two occasions (completed in 1096 and 1190 respectively) in the brief respite between structural failures. Recent research by structural engineers indicates that the reason for the recurrent collapses was a lack of understanding of elementary structural dynamics: the great pillars were not bedded into the earth sufficiently deeply to support the superstructure. It is also possible that the region's high snowfall may have contributed a 'live load' which further destabilised the building.[46]

The 1744 Honden now standing on the site, although half the size of the Heian-period building, is still the largest shrine building in Japan. It rises an impressive 19.7 metres from ground level to the ridge-pole, and nearly 24 metres to the tip of the forked finials. Even at this reduced height it is twice that of the main buildings at Ise.

There is scope for further research into the motivation for this prodigious building effort at Heian-period Izumo, but unquestionably the construction work was driven by a combination of religious piety and political pragmatism. Rebuilding took place during a period of declining influence of the central government, thereby providing an excellent opportunity for renewed expression of local identity and authority which had been eclipsed by Ise in the Nara period. It was perhaps inevitable that, with a building perceived as the expression of their very polity, local ambition should have exceeded the limits of material technology.

Monumentality and the Meaning of Ise and Izumo

The shrines at Ise and Izumo, as they stand today and as revealed in the historical and archaeological record, provide dramatic evidence of the special role of architecture in the projection of religious and ruling authority in Japan. They both appropriated vernacular building forms for higher religious and political purposes, and subsequently used these building types to project, define and reinforce the authority of their respective sponsors. At Ise architectonic strategies were more fully elaborated than at Izumo, particularly in the inner compound of the Inner Shrine, by virtue of the sustained patronage of state and the imperial institution. However, the most telling difference between Ise and Izumo is to be found not in details of siting and architectural form, nor even in the different fortunes of their patrons. What sets them apart is a different approach to monumentality. At Izumo the quest for monumentality was pursued in terms of the monolithic, that is, imposing size and permanence, a quest which reached its most ambitious expression in the Heian period. The massive pillars, bound together in clusters to create a structure as large as any built in the course of Japanese civilization, tell of an ageless ambition to reach for the heavens and defy the forces of gravity, even time itself. Although at Izumo the roofing materials required periodic maintenance, given the remarkable durability of Japanese cypress the structural timbers could certainly have lasted a millennium had other structural problems been resolved. At Izumo, therefore, the role of renewal was subordinated

to an inordinate ambition to create an architectural testimonial to eternity, which inevitably brought about its own destruction. This search for monumentality through physical size and permanence parallels the ambitions of the cathedral builders of medieval Europe, who pursued a similar quest for architectural form transcending temporal constraints and whose buildings on occasion met a similar fate.

Ise represents a very different approach to monumentality from that of Izumo. Its buildings were ultimately to prove more enduring by virtue of a fundamental paradox: despite the rustic, self-effacing nature of the buildings, Ise has achieved permanence as an abiding presence in the national ethos of Japan. This has been accomplished by virtue of the continuing patronage of the imperial institution and by the hereditary infrastructure of craft and belief associated with the shrine. Buildings which have self-consciously glorified in the transience of the material have found in this sublimation of physical frailty a tradition which has both impressed and endured. Izumo, by virtue of its faltering political sponsorship and its structurally unsustainable architectural ambitions, concedes greater power to the monumentality of Ise, and the ultimate efficacy of the principle of dynamic renewal over the monolithic.

2 The Grand Shrines of Ise and Izumo: The Appropriation of Vernacular Architecture by Early Ruling Authority

1 *Izumo fudoki*, (trans. Michiko Yomaguchi), Tokyo: Monumenta Nipponica Monograph, 1971, p. 80.
2 The most detailed analysis available in English of the technical features of the Ise and Izumo shrines is Watanabe Yasutada, *Shinto Art: Ise and Izumo Shrines*, (trans. Robert Ricketts), Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1974. *The Heibonsha Survey of Japanese Art.* (Katsuichirō Kamei *et al.*, eds) Originally published by Heibonsha under the title *Ise to Izumo* in 1964. The first major study of Ise to appear in English was Kenzō Tange and Noboru Kawazoe, *Ise: Prototype of Japanese Architecture*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965, a translation of a book published in 1961 by Asahi Shinbun. Tange was one of Japan's leading modernist architects of the postwar period, and this study reflects his concern with relating Japanese modernism to traditional architecture.
3 J. J. Coulton, *Ancient Greek Architects at Work. Problems of Structure and Design*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977, p. 30.
4 Cf. 'Christianity was only following a precedent in adapting the symbolic forms and glory of palace concepts to the service of God, for these had always been in the [near] East a close correlation in men's minds between palaces and temples, kings and gods'. Baldwin Smith, *Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages*, New York: Hacker Art Books, 1978, p.12. (Originally published by Princeton University Press in 1956.)
5 Nihon daijiten kankōkai, *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1975, s.v. 'matsurigoto'. G. B. Sansom first drew this to the attention of Western scholarship in 1931. See G. B. Sansom, *Japan. A Short Cultural History*, (rev. edn), Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1973, p. 50. (First published in 1931.)
6 Fukuyama Toshio, 'Jingū no kenchiku to sono kenchiku', in Gomazuru Junshi (ed.) *Jingū. Dai rokujūkai jingū shikinen nengū*, Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1975, p. 118. Fukuyama reaches this conclusion from analysis of the *Kō daijingū gishiki-chō* of 804.
7 See Edwina Palmer, 'Land of the Rising Sun: The Predominant East–West Axis among the Early Japanese', *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 46, no. 1, Spring 1991, pp. 69–90.
8 See Sey Nishimura, 'The Way of the Gods: Motoori Norinaga's Naobi no Mitama', *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 46, no. 1, Spring 1991, pp. 21–41.
9 This association is clearly articulated in *Imperial Precepts to Soldiers and Sailors* formally accepted by Yamagata Aritomo from the emperor in 1882 and reflecting Yamagata's views in the ethos for a modern military force: '. . . with single heart fulfil your essential duty of loyalty, and bear in mind that duty is weightier than a mountain, while death is lighter than a feather'. Quoted in Ryusaku Tsunoda, W. T. de Bary and Donald Keene (comp.) *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (2 vols), New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1964, vol. 2., p. 199.
10 The two shrines were treated as separate entities in the earliest known written record of the ceremonies carried out at Ise, the *Kō daijingū gishiki-chō* and *Toyouke-no-miya gishiki-chō* of 804 AD. In the *Engi-shiki* of 927 AD these records are integrated into a single section (Book IV), and the 'Shrine of the Great Deity' (*Ōmikami-no-miya*) and the Toyouke Shrine are treated as part of the same institutional entity, together with 40 other minor shrines. See Felicia Gressit Bock (trans. and ed.) *Engi-shiki. Procedures of the Engi Era*, Book I-V, Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970, pp. 44–56, 123–150.
11 Adapted from W.G. Aston, *Nihongi. Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Time to A.D. 697*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956, p. 176. (First published as a *Supplement to the Transactions of the Proceedings of the Japan Society*, London, by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1896.)
12 Tange and Kawazoe draw attention to the early practice of suspending bronze mirrors from sacred *sakaki* trees to welcome the emperor as an example of the direct association of these mirrors with imperial authority. See Tange and Kawazoe, (op. cit. note 2), p. 175.
13 Information supplied by Ise Jingū Shichō.
14 See further E. Satow, 'The Shintō Temples of Isé', *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, First Series, 1874, pp. 113–119. For analysis of the documentary sources for architectural change at Ise see Fukuyama Toshio, 'Jingū no kenchiku to sono rekishi' (op. cit. note 6), pp. 118–132.
15 The thesis that the form of the Ise sanctuary buildings was based on the vernacular storehouse was first advanced by Fukuyama Toshio who, with his mentor Sekino Masaru, conducted the excavation of the Toro site in the immediate postwar era. Fukuyama drew attention to the close similarity between the Mikeiden of the Outer Shrine of Ise and the reconstruction of a typical rice storehouse at Toro by Sekino. There is no question of the similarity between the two building styles but some caution is necessary regarding the architectural detail because Ise itself was under periodic reconstruction at the same time as the Toro excavations. As a result there may have been some over-enthusiasm for the parallels.
16 Tatsumi Hirokazu, *Taka-dono no kodaigaku. Gōzoku no kyokan to ōken no saigi*, Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1990, pp.10–32.
17 See further Ishino Hironobu, 'Rites and Rituals of the Kofun Period,' *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 1992, vol. 19, nos. 2–3, pp. 193–194.
18 Jingū shichō (ed.) *Koji ruien*, Tokyo: Jingū shichō, (reprint) 1936, vol. 52, p. 1005.
19 Nishina Shinmeigū is registered as a National Treasure by the Japanese government. See further Ōta Hirotarō (ed.) *Nagano-ken no kokuhō jūyō bunkazai: kenchikubutsu hen*, Matsumoto: Kyōdo shuppansha, 1987, pp. 77–79, 244–245.

20 Tange and Kawazoe, (op. cit. note 2), pp. 168–169.
21 See Felicia G. Bock, (op. cit. note 10), especially Book IV and note 95.
22 Aston, *Nihongi*, (op. cit. note 11), pp. 301–381. Note especially p. 307. This struggle is also recounted in Tange and Kawazoe, (op. cit. note 2), pp. 198–200.
23 Book IV, 'The Shrine of the Great Deity in Ise'.
24 *Shunki*, 10th day, 8th month, 1040. Quoted in Ōta Hirotarō, 'Shikinen zōteisei shikō,' *Kenchikushigaku*, no. 19, September, 1992, pp. 94, 107.
25 Ōta Hirotarō, 'Shikinen zōteisei no chōsa hōkoku', *Kenchikushigaku*, no. 18, March 1992, pp. 33–45.
26 Ibid., p. 3. The other disruptions to the regularity of the rebuilding interval occurred after fire (792 – after seven years); the change of capitals from Nara to Kyoto (810 – after 18 years); in the middle of the Heian period for reasons which are unclear (1057 – after 17 years), in the fourteenth century during the period of disputed imperial succession (1364 – after 21 years, and 1391 – after 27 years); at the turn of the seventeenth century with the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate (1609 – after 24 years), and as a result of World War II (1953 – after 24 years). See ibid., pp. 33–45.
27 Recounted in Sansom (op, cit. note 5), p. 49.
28 Joan R. Piggott, 'Sacral Kingship and Confederacy in Early Izumo', *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 44, no. 1, Spring 1989, pp. 45–74.
29 Adapted from Aston, *Nihongi*, in De Bary *et al.* (op. cit. note 11).
30 De Bary, ibid., p. 29.
31 Ibid., p. 30.
32 Ibid.
33 According to the *gishiki-chō* and other early records. See Fukuyama Toshio (op. cit. note 6), pp. 123–124.
34 The rebuildings of Izumo as documented by Fukuyama Toshio are: 659, 822, 987, 1036, 1067, 1096, 1115, 1145, 1175, 1190, 1227, 1248, 1278, 1282, 1325, 1386, 1412, 1442, 1467, 1486, 1519, 1550, 1580, 1609, 1667 and the present buildings in 1744. All dates are completion dates. See Fukuyama Toshio and Ōbayashi-gumi (eds) *Kodai Izumo Taisha no fukugen,* Tokyo: Gakuseisha, 1989, pp. 144–145.
35 Wealth measured in terms of estimated rice yield for taxation purposes of 1 *koku* = 180 litres or 5.96 bushels.
36 Ōta Hirotarō and Itō Yōtarō (eds) *Shōmei* (2 vols), Tokyo: Kajima shuppankai, 1971, vol. 2, p. 308.
37 An annotated plan is included in *Shōmei*, the secret family records of the Heinouchi, the master builders in charge of many of the most important projects of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These records were compiled in 1610. See *Shōmei*, ibid., vol. 1, p.123; vol. 2, p. 309.
38 Ōta Hirotarō, *Kenchikushigaku* (op. cit. note 25), pp. 33–45.
39 Fukuyama Toshio and Ōbayashi-gumi, (op. cit. note 34), pp. 89–191. Evidence used by Fukuyama includes the *Izumo kuni nikki*, and a painting dated to *ca* 1250 depicting the Izumo shrine (*Izumo Taisha kingō ezu*).
40 See for example Tange and Kawazoe, (op. cit. note 2), p. 195.
41 Ishino Hironobu, (op. cit. note 17), p. 194.

42 *Izumo fudoki* (op.cit. note 1), p. 123.
43 Fukuyama and Ōbayashi-gumi (op. cit. note 34), pp. 72–73.
44 Ibid., p. 234.
45 Ibid., p. 140.
46 Ibid., pp. 176–206.

3 Great Halls of Religion and State: Architecture and the Creation of the Nara Imperial Order

1 Historic Nara is now generally referred to as *Heijō-kyō* and the palace precinct as *Heijō-kyū*. It is considered likely that the characters for these names were read *Nara no miyako* and *Nara no miya* in the eighth century. See Tsuboi Kiyotari and Tanaka Migaku, *The Historic City of Nara. An Archaeological Approach*, (trans. David W. Hughes and Gina L. Barnes), Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1991, pp. 5–6.
2 The first-known archaeological survey of the palace site was carried out in 1852 by Kitaura Sadamasa, the official of the Tokugawa *bakufu* in charge of the Yamato district. After the Meiji Restoration, in 1897 Sekino Tadashi surveyed the site and established the location of the perimeter of the palace compound. In 1922 the palace site was designated as an 'historic site' by the Ministry of Education and protected from further urban encroachment. Initial excavations took place in 1924 and the archaeological potential of the site was confirmed. Since 1955 systematic archaeological work has been carried out by the government agency now known as the *Nara kokuritsu bunkazai kenkyujo* (Nara National Cultural Properties Research Institute). Approximately 300,000 square metres, amounting to some 30 percent of the palace site, has now been excavated and details of many of the buildings reconstructed. The results of the surveys are published regularly as *Heijō-kyū hakkutsu chōsa hōkoku*. A summary of the findings is available in Tsuboi and Tanaka, ibid.
3 *Shoku Nihongi*, in Kuroita Katsumi (ed.) *Shoku Nihongi, Kokushi taikei*, Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, (rev. edn), 1935, vol. 2 (henceforth cited as *Shoku Nihongi*). I have been assisted by the earlier translations and commentaries of G. B. Sansom ('The Imperial Edicts in the Shoku-Nihongi [700–790 AD]. Translated with Introduction and Notes', *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 1924, Second Series, vol. 1, pp. 5–39); B. Snellen ('Shoku Nihongi. Chronicles of Japan, continued, from 697–791 AD', *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, 1934, Second Series, vol. XI, pp. 151–239; 1937, vol. XIV, pp. 209–278. Snellen's work covers the first six *kan* of forty) and Richard A. Ponsonby-Fane, (*Imperial Cities: the Capitals of Japan from the Oldest Time Until 1229*, originally written *ca* 1930; reprint edn Washington DC: University Publications of America, 1979). See also Sakamoto Tarō, *The Six National Histories* (trans. John S. Brownlee), Vancouver and Tokyo: University of British Columbia Press and the