

Summer Special Exhibition

# Tokugawa Ieyasu: The Path to Supreme Rule

徳川家康

July 23 (Sun.) - September 18 (Mon.), 2023

The Hōsa Bunko Galleries & The Original Wing Galleries



## Part I: The Path to Supreme Rule [The Hōsa Bunko Galleries]

In 1603, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) was appointed supreme commander of the Japanese military and given the title of Shogun, in which capacity he laid the foundation for a period of peace and stability that would last for some 250 years. However, Ieyasu had lived the greater part of his life amidst the civil unrest that began under the rule of the Muromachi shogunate (1336–1573) and continued in the wake of its fall. He had lost his father at an early age and was raised in Sunpu, away from his birthplace, where he became embroiled in warfare and encountered much adversity.

Part I of this exhibition traces the long path Ieyasu took to becoming the ruler of Japan, focusing on the choices he made as seen mainly through historical documents.

<Upper photo: No.20 in the Original Wing galleries>  
Helmet and Armor, rising-sun design, light blue lacing.  
Momoyama-Edo period, 16th-17th c.  
Worn by Tokugawa Ieyasu.

\*All works in this handout are from the collection of the Tokugawa Art Museum.

# Tokugawa Ieyasu: Birth and Childhood

On the twenty-sixth day of the 12th Month of 1542, the ruler who would later be known as Tokugawa Ieyasu was born the son of Matsudaira Hirotada, the lord of Okazaki Castle in Mikawa Province (now Okazaki City, Aichi Prefecture). His given name was Takechiyo. His mother, O-dai, was the daughter of Mizuno Tadamasa, a governor of Owari Province. At the time, the Matsudaira were regional governors, boxed in between the Oda clan of Owari Province to the west and the Imagawa clan of Suruga to the east. After Mikawa was invaded by the Imagawa in 1546 and by Oda troops the following year, Hirotada surrendered to the Oda clan and is considered to have given Takechiyo as a hostage. Later, however, Hirotada moved closer to the Imagawa to challenge the Oda. When the Imagawa forces attacked the Oda territory of Anjō (now Anjō City, Aichi Prefecture) in the 11th Month of 1549 and captured Oda Nobuhiro (the half-brother of Oda Nobunaga), Takechiyo was then sent to Sunpu as hostage in exchange for Nobuhiro's return.

## Ieyasu: Hostage or Not?

Takechiyo (Ieyasu) is said to have been given the name Matsudaira Jirōsaburō Motonobu on the occasion of his coming-of-age ceremony at the Imagawa family mansion in the 3rd Month of 1555. The "Moto" in "Motonobu" was received from the name of Imagawa Yoshimoto (1519–60), the head of the Imagawa clan. Additionally, in the first month of 1556, Motonobu was married to Lady Tsukiyama, a daughter of Sekiguchi Ujizumi, who was a member of the Imagawa family. Yoshimoto raised Motonobu (Ieyasu) as a warrior and family member loyal to the Imagawa clan. Ieyasu is widely reputed to have had a difficult youth living as a hostage, but this image is likely to have been fabricated by later generations.

## Ieyasu's Rule

After the Battle of Sekigahara (1600), Ieyasu was still contented to serve as a vassal of Toyotomi Hideyori, but on the twelfth day of the 2nd Month of 1603, he was appointed Shogun and supreme commander of the land and ultimately established the Tokugawa shogunate. After just two years, Ieyasu passed the position of Shogun to his third son, Hidetada, making it known throughout the land that ruling power would be passed down within the Tokugawa family and not revert to the Toyotomi. Even after handing over the position of Shogun to Hidetada, Ieyasu maintained military and diplomatic control as the retired Shogun, or Ōgosho. In 1607, he built Sunpu Castle (in present-day Shizuoka City) and moved there to live but continued to exert great influence.



<No.56 in the Hōsa Bunko galleries>  
Broken Piece of a Gilt Tile.  
Excavated from the Osaka Castle.  
Momoyama period, 16th c.  
Donated by Osaka Arsenal of the  
Imperial Japanese Army.

## Part II: Tokugawa Ieyasu through his Personal Effects

[Original Wing Galleries]

Tokugawa Ieyasu installed his ninth son Yoshinao, tenth son Yorinobu, and eleventh son Yorifusa as the respective heads of the Owari, Kii and Mito Tokugawa branch families of the Tokugawa shogunate in order to ensure the preservation and support of the shogunal family bloodline. These were the so-called “Gosanke” (Three Cadet Families).

After Ieyasu’s death, the property of his estate, which was known as the Sunpu Owakemono, was divided among these three families. In addition to this inheritance, the Gosanke branch families also carefully preserved other objects related to Ieyasu, including items they had received as gifts from the shogun during his lifetime as well as other personal effects that they were able to acquire in later years. Today, the Tokugawa Art Museum houses approximately 300 items with ties to Ieyasu.

Part II of the exhibition examines these objects related to the first Shogun as a means of taking a closer look at the figure of Tokugawa Ieyasu from a variety of perspectives, including aspects of his personal character, his politics, his scholarship, his associations with the cultural and arts such as tasting tea and incense, and more.

### Ieyasu's Clothing

According to the *Sunpu owakemono odōguchō* (Record of Items Inherited from Sunpu Castle), the catalogue of Ieyasu’s bequest to the Owari Tokugawa, Ieyasu owned a total of 4,273 items of clothing, including *kosode* robes and *haori* jackets. Many of these items were lost over time, but 137 items survive today. These remaining pieces include eight *kosode* robes patterned in the important dyeing technique known as *tsujigahana-zome*. Ieyasu was particularly fond of this technique and is attributed with playing a major role in the creation of new fashion trends of the time.



<No.8 in the Original Wing galleries>

**Important Cultural Property**

*Haori* Jacket, scattered *aoi*-leaf design, stitch-resist tie-dyeing, plain-weave silk.

Momoyama-Edo period, 16th-17th c.  
Worn by Tokugawa Ieyasu and the 4th lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshimichi.



<No.12 in the Original Wing galleries>  
*Yukata* Bathrobe, crab design, pale blue hemp.  
Edo period, 17th c.  
Worn by Tokugawa Ieyasu.

## Ieyasu's Swords

In Ieyasu's time, swords made by ancient swordsmiths were appreciated as highly treasured assets. Warlords actively collected arms of value and displayed them publicly or exchanged them as gifts to affirm their status. Some of the famous swords owned by Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and other powerful warlords came into Ieyasu's hands when he unified the country. Ieyasu gifted many of these swords to his sons and retainers during his lifetime and others were redistributed through his estate after his death. These swords that had been owned by Ieyasu were then treasured as family heirlooms not only by the Shogunal family and the three Tokugawa branch families, but also by the various other daimyo and retainers who received them.



<No.34 in the Original Wing galleries> **Important Cultural Property**  
*Wakizashi* Short Sword, known as "Monoyoshi Sadamune."  
Traditionally attributed to Sadamune.  
Nanbokuchō period, 14th c.

Owned by Tokugawa Ieyasu and the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao.

## Ieyasu the Falconer

Ieyasu was an incomparable enthusiast of falconry, and the *Mikawa monogatari* (Tales of Mikawa) records that he had practiced this form of hunting since his youth as a ward of the Imagawa family. It is known from historical records that he made at least 1,000 falconry trips in his lifetime. There are also many records of Ieyasu giving and receiving gifts of prized birds, and it is thought that falconry had a strong political significance in his time. On the other hand, the *Tokugawa jikki* (True Record of the Tokugawa), an official history of the Edo shogunate, states that falconry not only offered an opportunity to observe the lifestyles of the people of the domain and their local customs, but it also provided physical training for body. This hobby of falconry may have contributed to Ieyasu's long 75-year life.

## Ieyasu and Learning

Ieyasu had a keen interest in the classics and he collected various books on Japanese and Chinese history, law, military law, Confucian studies, and other documents that were useful for governing the country. In particular, during the latter half of the Keichō era (1596–1615), he requested catalogues of all the old writings held by court nobles and temples and shrines in Kyoto and borrowed the ones he needed and had copies made. The hand-copied manuscripts produced at this time are known as the "Keichō copies" (*keichō shahon*). The written materials collected by Ieyasu were stored in the archival storehouses of Edo Castle and Sunpu Castle. The books in the Sunpu Castle archive were distributed, with some exceptions, among the Owari, Kii, and Mito Tokugawa branch families around the time of Ieyasu's death. These documents are known as the "Suruga book bequest" (*Suruga oyuzuri bon*). The Owari family received at least 2,825 volumes, of which 1,862 are still in the collection of the Hōsa Library of the City of Nagoya.

## Ieyasu and Medicine

As Shogun, Ieyasu engaged a number of prominent doctors as his personal physicians and himself conducted research on various herbs (especially medicinal herbs). The source of his knowledge was books published in China. From knowledge gained from such works as the *Honzō kōmoku* (Ch. *Bencao gangmu*, "Great Pharmacopoeia"), an encyclopedia of Chinese herbology, Ieyasu prepared his own medicines and recorded various recipes. In particular, two medicines prepared by Ieyasu called "Manbyō-en" and "Hachimi-gan" were noted in historical records of the time for their exceptional efficacy.

<No.58 in the Original Wing galleries>  
Druggist's Mortar,  
clematis flower scroll design, iron.  
Edo period, 17th c.  
Recently identified as possible having  
been owned by Tokugawa Ieyasu.

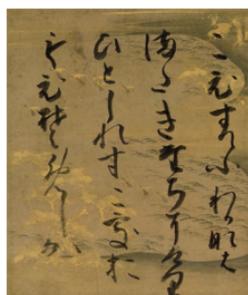


## Ieyasu's Tea Utensils

Tea ceremony utensils that had passed through the hands of powerful rulers such as the Ashikaga Shoguns, Oda Nobunaga, and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, or great tea masters such as Sen no Rikyū were highly sought after and collected by those in power. Ieyasu also collected famous tea utensils, which were distributed to the three branch families after his death as part of the *Sunpu owakemono* (items received from Sunpu). The tea utensils in the Sunpu collection were passed down and used by the successive heads of the Owari Tokugawa family and were classified as top-grade utensils. In addition to famed objects known as *meibutsu*, a vast number of everyday tea ceremony utensils were also distributed to the Owari family, but it is difficult to firmly identify these among the tea ceremony utensils and serving dishes currently in the Tokugawa Art Museum collection.

## Ieyasu and Calligraphy

Ieyasu also actively collected works of classical calligraphy from the Heian and Kamakura periods. He was particularly interested in the calligraphy of Fujiwara no Sadaie (1162–1241), and two works in Sadaie's hand that were owned by Ieyasu, the *Angen onga no ki* (Record of the Cloistered Emperor Goshirakawa's Fiftieth Birthday Celebration) and a *waka* poem written on *shikishi* paper known as the *Ogura shikishi*, have been passed down in the Owari family. In addition, there are several known examples of works



by Ieyasu in which he repeatedly copied Sadaie's calligraphy.

<No.69 in the Original Wing galleries>  
*Waka* Poem on *Shikishi* Paper written by  
Tokugawa Ieyasu, copy of "Ogura-shikishi" written  
by Fujiwara no Sadaie.  
Momoyama period, 16th–17th c.  
Owned by the Fujita family and Morikawa Kan'ichirō.

# Ieyasu and Diplomacy

Ieyasu's diplomatic activity began with the restoration of relations with Korea and Ming China, with whom diplomatic relations had been severed during Hideyoshi's time. He also sent diplomatic letters to the monarchs of various Southeast Asian countries and actively engaged in trade with Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and others. As for Europe, he was wary of Catholic missionaries and prioritized relations with Protestant countries such as the Netherlands and England.



<No.77 in the Original Wing galleries>

**Important Cultural Property**

A Set of *Ukufan* Dish used for Religious Ceremony, design of birds and flowers on connected *shippō* pattern, oil painting and gilt line-engraving on red lacquer. Ryūkyū (Okinawa), 16th-17th c.

# Deification of Ieyasu

Ieyasu died at Sunpu Castle on the seventeenth day of the 4th Month of 1616 and was buried at Kunōzan (in Shizuoka City) that evening in accordance with his last will and testament. On the fifteenth day of the 4th Month of the following year, he was transferred to Nikkō (Tochigi Prefecture) where he was enshrined as Tōshō Daigongen (Great Deity of the Eastern Light) and in 1636, the Nikkō Tōshōsha shrine underwent a major reconstruction by the third Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu, who respected Ieyasu deeply. In 1645, the shrine was renamed from Tōshōsha (shrine) to Tōshō-gū (Grand Shrine), signifying its reclassification to the same rank as the Grand Shrine at Ise and others that enshrine the ancestral deities of the Imperial family. As such, Tōshō Daigongen became the supreme unparalleled deity of the nation.



<No.83 in the Original Wing galleries>

Portrait of Tokugawa Ieyasu as a Shintō Deity Tōshō-daigongen.

Traditionally attributed to Kanō Tan'yū.

Edo period, 17th c.

Owned by the 7th lord of Owari, Tokugawa Muneharu.



© The Tokugawa Art Museum

1017 Tokugawa-cho, Higashi-ku,  
Nagoya, 461-0023

TEL: 052-935-6262 / FAX: 052-935-6261