

Taiyūin Mausoleum

The Taiyūin is the final resting place of Iemitsu (1604–1651), the third Tokugawa shogun. Iemitsu became shogun in 1623, although his father, the second shogun Hidetada, continued to rule as the retired shogun until his death in 1632. This pattern followed that established by the first shogun Ieyasu, who became shogun in 1603 but retired in 1605, ruling as retired shogun until 1616. After Iemitsu assumed real power in 1633, he consolidated the power base of the shogunate, implementing a political structure that would remain in force until the end of the shogunate in 1867.

Iemitsu's greatest achievement was the implementation of policies to reign in the power of the feudal lords. Prior to the reunification of Japan by Ieyasu following the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, the great military houses had considerable political autonomy. The strongest feudal lords were unaccustomed to submission. In one famous episode, Iemitsu summoned these powerful men, many of whom were much older than him, and declared: "I am the Shogun by birth. Henceforth, I shall treat you as my vassals. If you object, go back to your lands and prepare for war."

Early in his regime, Iemitsu instituted the *sankin kotai* or alternative attendance system, in which the regional lords were required to move their household to Edo (Tokyo) for one year, returning home for the following year. When a lord remained in his own territory, his wife and heir stayed in Edo as hostages. As well as forcing the lords to spend large amounts of money that might otherwise have been used to raise armies, this system also allowed the shogunate to monitor the feudal lords more closely. Iemitsu implemented the isolationist *sakoku* policy in 1635, which severely restricted entrance to Japan by foreigners, as well as preventing common Japanese people from leaving the country. After the suppression of the Shimabara Rebellion (1637–1638), there was peace in Japan for more than 200 years.

The Taiyūin is not only important as the mausoleum of the third shogun. The buildings, ornamentation, and other elements of the Taiyūin were also designed to express the power and authority of the Tokugawa shogunate. For example, there are three gates on the approach to the mausoleum each with two or more celestial warriors that ward off evil. Typically, shrines and temples are protected by a single gate flanked by two guardians. Additionally, the approach is lined with lanterns of stone or bronze. They were donated by the most powerful feudal lords, as expressions of their subservience to the shogun. There are also lanterns donated by the imperial family. Their presence is a physical expression of the close ties between the imperial court and the shogunate as well as the legitimacy of the rule of the Tokugawa.

The mausoleum is beautiful, but its design also expresses the great respect that the third shogun had for his grandfather. The shogun selected a site close to the grave of the first Tokugawa shogun but

was careful that his mausoleum never rivaled the magnificence of the Toshogu. For example, the gold-and-black color scheme of the Taiyuin is more understated than the gold-and-white of the Toshogu. The beautiful decorations are also comparatively subdued.