

TITLE: Tokugawa Mausoleum

Since its founding by Kobo Daishi (774–835) during the ninth century, Koyasan has drawn people from all social standings, including many members of Japan's medieval warrior ruling class. The Tokugawa mausoleums were constructed in 1643 by Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–1651), the third Tokugawa shogun, who ruled Japan from 1623 to 1651. Iemitsu arranged for the construction of mausoleums to enshrine the spirits of his grandfather Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), who unified Japan and founded the Tokugawa Shogunate, along with his father, Shogun Tokugawa Hidetada (1579–1632).

When facing the mausoleums, the building on the right is dedicated to Ieyasu, while the one on the left is for Hidetada. Although neither of the former Tokugawa shoguns is actually buried in these mausoleums, the buildings are officially designated Important Cultural Properties by the government of Japan and also remain an important memorial to two of Japan's greatest and best-known historical figures. A mortuary chapel for later generations of Tokugawas was once located just to the east of these mausoleums, but it was destroyed by fire in 1888 and was not rebuilt.

Both buildings are excellent examples of Edo period (1603–1867) mausoleum architecture which featured numerous, elaborate carvings and beautiful metalwork on every surface. The decorations were designed to accentuate, rather than draw attention from, the graceful lines of the architecture, which include the surrounding verandas and railings, undulating bargeboards over the entry, and a box-like *roban* base over the peaked roof to prevent leaking where the sections of the roof meet at the center.

Although not open to the public, every inch of the interior of each mausoleum was skillfully and painstakingly decorated. The adornments include golden overlays, elaborate metalwork, and colorful paintings, all designed to pay homage to shoguns Ieyasu and Hidetada.