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## ＜Review of the 126th International ARC Seminar (Prof. Timon SCREECH)＞

### New Light on Nikkō: Thoughts on the Dutch Lanterns at the Shrine-Mausoleum of Tokugawa Ieyasu

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On November 29, 2023, the Art Research Center welcomed Prof. Timon Screech (Nichibunken) as our speaker for the 126<sup>th</sup> International ARC Seminar. Screech shared findings from his research on the shrine-mausoleum of Tokugawa Ieyasu at Nikkō, the subject of a new book he plans to publish in the near future.

#### 1. The deification of Tokugawa Ieyasu

As Screech explained, after Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu died in 1616, he was then deified, as Toyotomi Hideyoshi had been before him. Selecting from possible *kami* titles proposed by the imperial court, the shogunate at first opted to establish a shrine at Kunōzan near Sunpu where the spirit of Ieyasu would be worshipped as the *kami* *Tōshō daimyōjin*, following the precedent of Hideyoshi's spirit being worshipped as *Toyokuni daimyōjin*.

However, the monk Tenkai, a prominent advisor to Ieyasu and his successor Tokugawa Hidetada, soon convinced Hidetada and the shogunate that this *daimyōjin* designation was less than ideal. While the *Tōshōgū* shrine at Kunōzan remains a significant location today, Ieyasu's body was relocated in 1617 – just one year after his death – to a new shrine-mausoleum at Nikkō, in the mountains north of Edo, where Tenkai served as abbot of Mangan-ji. *Tōshō daimyōjin* was renamed, or replaced by, *Tōshō daigongen*, an avatar or manifestation of the Buddha Yakushi in

the form of a *kami*. The imperial court offering *Tōshō* (“radiance of the east”) as an acceptable option for the name of this *kami* is interesting. On the one hand, the association between “the radiance of the east” and the sun seems obvious, making this a rather illustrious name for the *kami* Ieyasu. However, as Screech explained, decision-makers at the imperial court at the time may have seen this, to the contrary, as keeping this *kami* somewhat constrained in its eminence, limiting it to the east (Edo, the center of Tokugawa power, being far to the east from the capital), and to an identity lesser than *Tenshō* (“radiance of the heavens”), an alternate reading of the name of Amaterasu, with whom the emperors were associated.

#### 2. Gifts of lanterns

Sunlight and radiance are preeminent themes in the symbolic schema of the *Tōshōgū* at Nikkō (lit. “sunlight”), which was significantly expanded and made more elaborate under Ieyasu's grandson, Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu, in the 1630s.

One of the most obvious places this manifests is in the famous Yōmeimon (lit. “gate of the sun's brightness”) gate, known today for its extensive gilding and white paint, shining in the sunlight from the tip of the roof to where the gate meets the ground. However, as Screech informed us, the Yōmeimon originally had significant dark sections, painted in dark colors near the

bottom and with a simpler thatched roof, leaving only a middle section appearing to hang suspended in the air as it gleamed like the sun.

The shrine grounds are also illuminated by a multitude of lanterns, several of the most distinctive of which were the focus of the remainder of Screech's talk.

The main path up to the Yōmeimon and to the central structures of the shrine complex is lined with numerous stone lanterns, many donated to the shrine by *daimyō* or other prominent figures of the time. Approaching the steps to the gate, or passing through it, however, one comes upon a number of rather distinctive lanterns, to which Screech directed attention.

First, a pair of lanterns made of Portuguese iron and donated by Date Masamune, lord of Sendai. Masamune was closely associated with having foreign – and in particular, European – connections, and funded the Keichō embassy to Rome in 1613-1620. While iron itself was surely not rare in early modern Japan, it is said these lanterns may have been made from cannon from Portuguese ships, an item to which few in Japan indeed would have had access. These lanterns thus stand as a symbol of Masamune's distinctive prestige and position; Screech also suggested the symbolic significance of turning items of war into symbols of the lasting peace created by the Tokugawa unification and pacification of the realm.

Screech next touched upon a singular lantern donated by Tokugawa Masako (Tōfukumon-in), which stands inside the Yōmeimon gate, closer to the center of the shrine than any donated by *daimyō* or by foreign entities. Masako was a sister of Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu, and wife (empress consort) to Emperor Go-Mizunoo. A large hexagonal bronze lantern, it was made to reference or evoke one of the oldest and most famous lanterns in Japan: one

erected in 752 outside the Great Buddha Hall at Tōdai-ji in Nara. As the Great Buddha Hall was left in a severely damaged state after battles in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, this 8<sup>th</sup> century lantern would have been an especially prominent symbol at the time of Tōfukumon-in's donation of her lantern to Nikkō.

## 2-1. Lanterns from Foreign Lands

In addition to these notable lanterns showing the power and prestige of the Tokugawa house through gifts from powerful *daimyō* and connections to both the imperial house and the Minamoto lineage, Nikkō Tōshōgū also boasts a number of lanterns that were gifts from overseas.

These were long represented by the shogunate and the shrine as having been gifts from the kingdoms of Joseon (Korea) and Lūchū (Ryūkyū), symbols that Tokugawa power, prestige, and virtue were recognized all across the region. These were one part of a larger complex of ritual acts of display contributing to such discourses of Tokugawa legitimacy and prestige. Formal embassies from Joseon and Lūchū, some of which traveled to Nikkō in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, were perhaps the cornerstone of such discursive efforts,<sup>1</sup> alongside visits to Edo by "Chinese" monks from Manpuku-ji temple in Uji and certain other notable figures,<sup>2</sup> and the shoguns' conspicuous use of luxury items from overseas.

Interestingly, however, while one king of Joseon did gift a bronze bell to the shrine, all the lanterns described in Edo period documents as Korean or Ryukyuan were, in fact, gifts from the Dutch East India Company.

The first of these, gifted in 1636, was rather similar in form to one made around the same time to be hung before the tomb of William of Orange in the New Church at Delft, Screech explained, noting the parallels in

both being displayed before the tomb or mausoleum of someone revered as a founding figure. This gift apparently pleased Shogun Iemitsu so greatly that he was moved to restore Dutch trading privileges, and to release Pieter Nuyts, head of the Dutch East India Company's base on Taiwan; Nuyts had been imprisoned by the shogunate for some three and a half years after Dutch ships harassed a number of Japanese trading vessels.<sup>3</sup>

Pleased with the shogun's reaction to this first gift, the Dutch then gifted another lantern to the shrine. Though the Company originally commissioned a pair of lanterns at this time, only one was ultimately brought to Japan, as the Governor-General of Batavia reportedly believed this would help this one (and the one gifted previously) appear more rare, more precious. He later gifted the second of the pair to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb; it sadly no longer survives. The first lantern gifted by the Dutch to the shrine was designed to hang indoors, from a ceiling, as such items did in European churches; knowing that the Tōshōgū displayed this outdoors, with a pavilion constructed over it to protect it from the elements and to give it something to hang from, the Dutch had this second candelabra made to be free-standing.

The shrine placed this second candelabra next to the Korean bell, pairing them. Hayashi Razan, a preeminent Confucian advisor to the shogun, put this pairing into words, writing in 1648 that "from the luminescent seas of Lūchū they have handed us this dragon lantern ... the frosty peaks of Korea respond in lionlike roars" (龍燈伝自琉球海...從韓嶺霜). Though several embassies from Lūchū did travel to Nikkō in

the 17<sup>th</sup> century, I am unaware of any Luchuan gift as prominent as a bell or lantern that survives; this Dutch one was said to have been a Luchuan one in order to support discourses of Tokugawa prestige.

The Dutch then sent a third lantern, which the shogunate and the shrine then re-attributed as well, asserting that this was a gift from the king of Joseon, so that (in addition to the Korean bell) the shrine would appear to have a balanced distribution of lanterns gifted by the Netherlands, Korea, and the Ryukyus.

This idea of the three lanterns (or candelabras) being from three different polities seems to have remained the standard narrative, consistently asserted, and widely believed, through to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, if not later. It is explicitly described to readers as truth in Ueda Mōshin's *Nikkō-zan shi* 日光山志, the first guide to Nikkō to be widely commercially available in Japan (pub. 1837).

Screech offers one final point regarding these lanterns. Placed before a shrine to a figure identified as an avatar of the Medicine Buddha, Yakushi nyorai, these lanterns can be seen as referring to the "life extending lanterns" (*zokumeitō* 續命燈 or *enmeitō* 延命燈) often traditionally associated with that Buddha, and thus perhaps seen as extending the lives not only of individuals but of the shogunate – the Tokugawa regime – as well.

Prof. Screech's book on the deification of Tokugawa Ieyasu and the worship of his spirit at Nikkō Tōshōgū is forthcoming.

<sup>1</sup> Ronald Toby, *State and Diplomacy in Early Modern East Asia*. Stanford University Press, 1991.; Travis Seifman, "Performing 'Lūchū': Identity Performance and Foreign Relations in Early Modern Japan," PhD diss., Univ. of

California, Santa Barbara, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Jiang Wu, *Leaving for the Rising Sun*, Oxford University Press, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Clulow, *The Company and the Shogun*, Columbia University Press (2014), 246-249.