



Photo credit: Nikkō gosankei jitori zukan(日光御参詣地取図巻) (Nikkō gosankei jitori zukan) , 1843.
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The Malleable Nature of Early Modern Japanese Rituals: the Case of the Shogunal Pilgrimage to Nikko (Nikkō shasan)

Synopsis



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This talk examines the political uses and significance of rituals of the Tokugawa shogunate, the military regime that ruled Japan from 1603 to 1867. Far from being empty performances detached from the real business of governing, rituals were malleable tools through which Tokugawa rulers constructed, displayed, and legitimized their authority and the social order. To illustrate this argument, my talk focuses on the Tokugawa shoguns' pilgrimages to Nikkō, a mountainous locale some ninety miles north of Edo, where the founder of the Tokugawa regime was buried and worshiped in a majestic mausoleum. As a large-scale event that required the collaboration of virtually all sectors of society, the Nikkō pilgrimage benefitted not only its main performers, the Tokugawa shoguns, but also other individuals who were involved in its implementation with secondary roles. By drawing on a diverse array of sources including shogunal and temple records, travelogs, visual materials, and artifacts, this talk discusses the malleable nature and diverse meanings of the Nikko pilgrimage and shows that rituals played an essential role in Tokugawa politics and society.

Lunch will be provided for in-person attendees. RSVP before Feb 13th.



Register Online



RSVP for Lunch

FRI, FEBRUARY 17, 2023
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (AZT)
DURHAM 240 & ZOOM

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