MAP 1 Japan. Map by William Ash, The Imaging Center, Bates College.
Introduction

Emperor Hirohito of Japan lay on his deathbed in September 1988. Although the palace announced only that he was “gravely ill,” the public knew that the end was near. The emperor was eighty-four years old and had pancreatic cancer. As he lingered through autumn, unusual and perplexing incidents began to occur throughout the nation. Every day the mass media reported his condition in exhaustive detail under the watchword “self-restraint.” They volunteered to treat all matters with the utmost gravity, in particular toning down the pleasure-seeking indulgence of an electronic age. Radio and television stations muted hilarity in their programs and commercials, theaters dimmed their lights, bright neon signs in the streets of Tokyo dwindled to mere shadows, horse and bike races came to a screeching halt. The traditional joyfulness of harvest festivals dissipated before it had a chance to spread to the everyday world.¹

When the emperor finally died in the new year, steady streams of mourners flowed into the palace grounds to register their condolences. These were not important state personages who would in any event be invited to the royal funeral. Instead they were ordinary folk who learned through television and word of mouth that they too could express sympathy at officially designated registration sites near the residences of the imperial family. Most were regular company employees, housewives, young female office workers, students, and anyone else who found the time to visit.

Significantly, although they came to offer condolences to the royal family, the mourners went away having learned something momentous about themselves (if they did not already know it): they had become aware that they were Japanese after all. The simple act of writing their names in visitors’ books embossed with the chrysanthemum crest of the

¹. In English, a detailed description of the silent storm of “self-restraint” is given in Field’s In the Realm of a Dying Emperor.
imperial family made them realize how Japanese this act was and how Japanese they were in participating in it. The epiphany made a deep impression, especially among young people who had no wartime experiences, knew of the emperor only as “a nice old man like (their own) grandfathers,” and “dropped by” to see “the event” as casually as if they were “going on a sightseeing stint.”

This silent pandemonium of “self-restraint,” to which the entire population acquiesced, made a strong impression on Japanese scholars as well as foreign observers. True, Japanese historians like Kuroda Hideo were already publishing works on the possible practice of death-related nari-mono chōji (鳴物停止, suspension of playing of musical instruments) in medieval Japan. But the rituals surrounding Hirohito’s death spurred many younger historians and graduate students to venture further into the forgotten territory of the more recent past, namely, the Tokugawa shogunate’s injunctions against music and other disquieting sounds. One author, Yamada Hiroo, remembered “the strange atmosphere that enveloped Japan in 1989, even resulting in the suspension of athletic events at schools.” Later, while studying Japanese history at the university, he heard “for the first time in his life” about Tokugawa ordinances on sounds and turned them into the topic of his first major publication. His and other historians’ endeavors have resulted in a large number of scholarly articles on the nature and significance of kindred ordinances.

In the arena of such historical publishing, Yamada was in fact a latecomer. He was preceded most prominently by Nakagawa Manabu who, in 1992, penned the earliest noteworthy work on Tokugawa ordinances on the sounds of music, which is still regarded as a classic in the field. Through the 1990s, a spate of articles followed, including Takano Nobuharu’s painstaking study of suspension of sounds in the feudal domain of Saga, Kyushu, featured in Rekishigaku kenkyū. Murata Michihiito’s microscopic examination of four villages near Osaka,
published in 2000, indicated the continued interest in sounds suspension among younger scholars. Tellingly, ordinances on playing musical instruments will receive an entry in a forthcoming Japanese history encyclopedia, demonstrating that the subject has at long last gained recognition in Japanese scholarship.

The questions surrounding *narimono chōjirei* (鳴物停止令, ordinances on the suspension of playing musical instruments) are multiple and important, ranging from basic factual data to more complex points of interpretation. Who issued these ordinances? What were their contents? On what occasions, or upon whose death, were they issued? What were they intended to signify and accomplish? Who was expected to obey these ordinances? How did society at large respond to them? Were they unique to the Tokugawa period, did they have precedents in Japanese history, and were they carried over to Meiji Japan? What do they tell us about Tokugawa society, politics, and possibly even religion? And about Meiji Japan?

On these questions, the research of the past twenty-plus years has uncovered much valuable information. The ordinances were issued when important political figures, state personages, or their family members passed away. The issuing agency differed depending on who had died: it could be the shogunate, the domainal government of the shogun’s vassal in the person of a daimyo, or the office of the daimyo’s own vested vassals. In other words, there were multiple agencies issuing the ordinances, and each basically affected only its own geographical sphere of power. The number of suspension days varied according to the rank of the deceased person within the Tokugawa system, with the

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8. According to Nakagawa Manabu, who will be a contributor, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan’s fifteen-volume *Kokushi daijiten*, the most comprehensive encyclopedia of Japanese history to date, does not include ordinances on musical instruments.

9. In addition to the articles mentioned above, the following essays have been consulted for this work (in chronological order of publication): Yabuki, “Kinsei ni okeru ten’inō to shōgun to nōmin”; Nagano, “Bakuhan taisei kokka no seiji kōzō to josei”; Fujita, “Kokusei ni taisuru chōtei no sonzai,” 2:358; Ōhira, “Kaei rokunen”; Kobayashi, “Nanbuhan”; Imano, “Bakuhan taisei”; Nakagawa, “‘Narimono chōjirei’ to hansei”; Nakagawa, “Kinsei Kyōto ni okeru ‘narimono chōjirei’” ; Urai, “‘Narimono chōjirei’”; Koide, “‘Narimono chōjirei.’” I am indebted to Mr. Nakagawa, who kindly provided many of these references.
highest allocated to the shogun.\textsuperscript{10} Like Emperor Hirohito, moreover, the emperors of the Tokugawa period were also memorialized through suspension of the sounds of music.

Rich as they are in basic information, the research reports summarized above offer only a limited explanation for why these ordinances existed and persisted, or what the hierarchy of suspension days represented. The researchers clearly recognize that, without an understanding of these issues, they cannot conceptualize “an overall structure”\textsuperscript{11} for the suspension orders in which to place their localized subjects, such as villages, townships, and daimyo domains. In his seminal article published in 1992, Nakagawa suggested that suspension of music was originally a means “to maintain political and social order when it was threatened by the death of a ruler”\textsuperscript{12} but that it later became “an apparatus of rule that bestowed authority on the [deceased] persons in whose honor the ordinances were adopted.”\textsuperscript{13} Ultimately he concluded that the ranking order for deceased persons “revolved around the reason [for the existence] of \textit{ie} 家 (house/lineage) . . . applied to the House of the Shogun.”\textsuperscript{14}

These views of Nakagawa’s have exerted a dominant influence on the subsequent historiography. With one modification or another, scholars in the field have continued to use them as blocks on which to build arguments. Kobayashi Fumio, for example, thought ordinances on music “guard[ed] the legitimacy of the authority and power of the ruling class by reenacting ‘the honorable authority’ of the deceased.”\textsuperscript{15} Urai Kazuko called the ordinances “a flaunting of the power and authority of men charged with the affairs of state,”\textsuperscript{16} whereas Imano Makoto saw them as having “awakened the populace to [awareness of] men of power and authority as well as to the hierarchy of power in the Tokugawa system of

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\textsuperscript{10} Historians are not in agreement on this point, but I will not dwell on it here.
\textsuperscript{11} For example, Murata, “Hiryōgoku,” p. 2.
\textsuperscript{12} Nakagawa, “Edo bakufu,” p. 63.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 65. In a later publication, Nakagawa refined the idea of “the person,” specifying that he or she was deceased. I introduce the editorial change for the sake of clarity in light of his redefinition.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 50.
\textsuperscript{15} Kobayashi, “Nanbuhan,” p. 26. The phrase “the honorable authority” was first used by Nakagawa.
\textsuperscript{16} Urai, “‘Narimono chōjirei,’” passim.
\end{flushright}
rule.”17 Finally, Yamada Hiroo wrote that these ordinances were issued “to provide evidence of right of government . . . upon the death of major political figures.”18

Clearly at stake is the legitimacy of political power or, more technically, the “right of government.” The problem that requires further clarification is whether legitimacy could be obtained in the Tokugawa period by prohibiting musical and other sounds—even if what was prohibited was only “sounds for entertainment,” as Urai avers—and whether the esteemed authority of the deceased was enhanced through such means. A large crowd listening to a musical performance may have threatened to disrupt social order, like “a bud of danger,”19 but would the absence of such a bud have generated legitimacy for those in power? The truth is, in the Tokugawa period, legitimacy was a sophisticated concept that could not be reduced to the absence of musical entertainment.

It is the relationship between legitimacy, on the one hand, and the ordinances on music making, on the other, that defines the essence of this problem. The historians cited above have relied too much on numbers in their quest for the secret of sound-related ordinances, thereby failing to focus on the central issue. They made meticulous and labor-intensive tallies of music-free days over nearly two centuries, producing many immaculate tables of names and dates. They failed because numbers cannot tell everything; numbers speak of history only when they are placed in appropriate or larger historical contexts.

Granted, efforts have been made to explain the historical contexts for moratoria on music and other sounds over time. Nakagawa, who led the way, examined the effects of the injunctions on Edo’s township and the township’s responses to them. He concluded that the shogunate relaxed control of sounds in the eighteenth century in response to the rising commercial economy and mass entertainment, both of which inevitably generated much sound and noise.20 Admirable as it was, this line of inquiry too fell short of settling the problem of legitimacy. It missed the mark because the impact and evolution of the ordinances could not establish their “original” intent, which lay hidden in their earlier history.

Introduction

The present work attempts to uncover this important relationship between political legitimacy and ordinances on music and other sounds in Tokugawa Japan by delving deep into their history, especially in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The foundational tools, however, are not those of the ordinances themselves but the shogunate’s *bukkiryō*服忌令 (edicts on mourning and abstention), which received the most comprehensive formulation in Jōkyō 1 (1684) under Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, the fifth shogun. Tsunayoshi’s edict underwent many amendments, including recodification at the hands of Tokugawa Yoshimune, the eighth shogun, but it remained the pillar of the Tokugawa mourning and abstention laws until the shogunate’s end in 1868 and subsequently survived long into the Meiji period.21 The mourning edicts and ordinances on sounds were the twin foundations supporting the Tokugawa regime’s policy of government by mourning.

This work is not the first to consider the relationship between the two. Nakagawa has argued that mourning edicts and sound ordinances “are better treated separately since their purposes differed from each other.”22 Takano countered, however, by pointing out the importance of “addressing the structural relationship” between the two.23 This scholarly exchange did not escape Urai’s attention, although she seems merely puzzled by it, noting that “edicts on mourning and abstention say nothing about ordinances on musical entertainment.”24 Though Nakagawa’s and Takano’s positions were debatable, Urai’s literal reading of Tokugawa statutes did little to lift the veil that continues to conceal the shogunate’s arts of legislation and its enforcement of laws from a large reading public.

The difficulty that encumbered these historians arose in part from the paucity of past scholarship on the Tokugawa edicts on mourning and abstention. Before World War II, legal historian Takayanagi Shinzō examined one such edict as a point of departure for his study of family

21. Herman Ooms’s *Tokugawa Ideology*, a fascinating study of how the military hegemonists of the period from 1570 to 1680, including the Tokugawa shoguns before Tsunayoshi, legitimized their political power. The book deconstructed conventional Japanese scholarship on the subject.
24. Urai, “‘Narimono chōjirei,’” p. 64.
in the Tokugawa period. More recently, Hayashi Yukiko investigated early modern mourning edicts almost single-handedly in a Herculean effort that culminated in a book of incomparable value. On a more modest scale, on two occasions I examined mourning edicts in select Tokugawa and Meiji settings. With the exception of these works and the entries in major Japanese encyclopedias of history, one is fortunate to come across scholarly information on the subject in Japanese or any other language.

Nevertheless, the edicts on mourning and abstention hold many keys to greater knowledge of early modern and modern Japan when studied along with ordinances on sounds and taken beyond the narrow confines of legal history into the broader landscape of political and social history. Besides clarifying the issues surrounding political legitimacy, these edicts and ordinances facilitate measurement of the Tokugawa shogun’s power over the daimyo (his vassals) and their domains scattered throughout Japan. They offer evidence of the extent of centralization of the Tokugawa system of rule and reveal the relationship between the rulers of Tokugawa Japan—especially the shogun, the daimyo, and their functionaries—and the populace at large. Careful study of exactly how these statutes were implemented uncovers the people’s attitudes toward their rulers. The laws also illuminate religious and death-related beliefs and customs preserved in Japan through the ages.

Moreover, the mourning edicts were in essence the shogunate’s laws on family, which retained their legal force until the promulgation of the Meiji Civil Code in 1898. For this reason, they need to be examined in reference to the continuity-discontinuity debate over the Tokugawa period and the subsequent Meiji era. The same holds true with the relationship between the mourning edicts and the ordinances on sounds, on the one hand, and the role of the emperor in the Tokugawa and Meiji systems of rule, on the other. By shedding light on the sovereign’s

25. Takayanagi Shinzō, “Tokugawa jidai.”
27. Hirai, “The Legitimacy of Tokugawa Rule” and “Law and Morality in Early Meiji Legislation.”
28. See, for example, Murai Masuo, “Bukkiryō” (Edicts on mourning and abstention), in Kokushi daijiten, 12:284–85. Murai provides no references on the topic.
29. For example, Okada, “Bukkikō.”
place both in government and the lives of the Japanese in general, these edicts and ordinances simultaneously emphasize the issues that characterize the continuity-discontinuity debate. In short, study of these statutes necessitates interdisciplinary consideration of this multidimensional topic.

The following chapters are intended to meet this challenge. They point to salient features of the Tokugawa period that may well contradict conventional scholarly wisdom. First, Tokugawa Japan was less divided “vertically” along the lines of feudal domains than is widely believed today. The explosive divisiveness that culminated in the shogunate’s downfall in 1868 was a one-time exception to the overall unified rule maintained throughout the two-and-a-half centuries of Tokugawa supremacy. Until its fall became incontestable, even the domains that ultimately spearheaded opposition to the shogunate obeyed its commands in the all-pervasive matters of mourning with consummate care. To argue this point is to revisit the colossal corpus of scholarly works outside Japan that started with John Hall and continued on a grand scale with studies by Mary Elizabeth Berry, Conrad Totman, Philip Brown, Mark Ravina, and their followers. Their ideas of the Tokugawa state-federation, compound state, and host-client states assign controlling importance to the daimyo’s autonomy and power in relation to the Tokugawa shogun. Even though I recognize the virtues of their views in the times and places encapsulated in their respective studies, I propose to revive George Sansom’s once-influential interpretation of Tokugawa Japan as embodying, in its entirety, “centralized feudalism.”

Second, the idea of the legitimacy of the Tokugawa shogun embedded in the letters of Tsunayoshi’s Mourning Edict was not predicated on the metaphysics of Neo-Confucianism. The following pages confirm the view that the early Tokugawa shoguns never established Neo-Confucianism as the official ideology of the state they created.30 Admittedly, Shogun Tsunayoshi was deeply interested in Confucianism, but his preoccupation relevant to the Mourning Edict grew out of childhood indoctrination in the Kōkyō (“Classic” of filial piety) of classical Confucianism and the specific circumstances of his adult life and time. Furthermore, the importance of the edict did not wane even after

30. See, for example, Ooms, Tokugawa Ideology, esp. pp. 72–80.
Matsudaira Sadanobu (1758–1829), Shogun Ienari’s senior councilor, famously pronounced in 1790 that Neo-Confucianism was “the correct teaching” of the state.

Ultimately this book confronts the question of whether an abstract philosophical system entertained by an educated minority during the Tokugawa era of perpetual peace sufficed to maintain power won by naked force in the preceding centuries of incessant warfare. If not, what was an alternative, or subsumptive, instrument of rule? Could it have been institutionalized funeral rituals repeated both publicly and privately at the death of government as well as private personalities so long as even a peaceful death was a part of life?

The following pages also validate the view, delineated succinctly by Kate Nakai, that many important Confucian scholars of the Tokugawa period struck a careful balance between China’s family-related rituals and Japan’s “native identity” as exemplified in its indifference to generational distinctions. Moving beyond Nakai’s study of the realm of philosophical discourse, however, the present work attempts to show how native Japanese practices overruled Chinese familial principles at the level of the country’s laws and their implementation. This new perspective leads to the conclusion that in the modern historiography of Japan, although the term orthodoxy has long been associated with Neo-Confucianism, it is in fact the various shogunal mourning edicts that deserve to be called Tokugawa orthodoxy.

Third, Tokugawa Japan was equipped with a well-developed system for disseminating official communications throughout the country and from the uppermost to the lowest level of its hierarchical society. Both in shogunal demesnes and in daimyo domains, samurai officials as well as town elders and village headsmen rendered exemplary service in keeping governmental directives flowing downward. Given their diligence, it was difficult for the populace, even in isolated domainal enclaves, to remain ignorant of important notices emanating from the shogunate. Death notices and bans on merrymaking took full advantage of the information network.

Fourth, as an essential component of the Tokugawa system of rule, mourning and suspension of music not only demonstrated the shogun’s

power but eventually undermined his government at a critical moment in its history. Tokugawa Ieyoshi, the twelfth shogun, died in the summer of 1853, three weeks after the United States naval fleet completed its first visit to Japan, leaving behind the promise that they would return “next year” to press further for the termination of the shogunate’s two-century-long closed-country policy. Amid a national crisis of historic proportions and at the risk of its own survival, the shogunate doggedly administered elaborate mourning rituals to honor its deceased master. In the next decade and a half, during which two more shoguns died, state mourning became not a symbol of the shogunate’s power but an omen of its precipitous decline.

Fifth, as intimated above, through notices of the passing of the emperor and members of the imperial family, the shogunate was instrumental in disseminating information about them among the entire populace. In death, the emperor and the imperial family were mourned by the country at large in a manner similar to that reserved for the members of the Tokugawa house, albeit not at the same level. For this reason, I am extremely skeptical of the notion, widespread both inside and outside Japan, that the general population did not know the emperor’s identity or his position in the wake of the Meiji Imperial Restoration.\(^{32}\) In the English-language sources, I tend to agree with the views of Robert Bellah and Helen Hardacre. As they have pointed out, the cult of Ise that sent the masses on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, kept her presumed imperial descendants alive in popular consciousness.\(^ {33}\) The following pages provide new evidence to support their conclusions from a totally different perspective.

My purpose, however, is not to argue that Tokugawa-period Japan was unified under a hegemonic emperor and that the Japanese people had strong nationalistic aspirations. Such a clearly defined sense of nationhood undoubtedly appeared only in the Meiji period, as pointed out by Fukuzawa Yukichi and faithfully expounded by his followers. Rather, my goal is to point out how Tsunayoshi’s, and by extension Yoshimune’s, edicts on mourning and ordinances on musical enter-

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tainment helped to lay the foundation for a unified Japan under the Meiji regime.

In other words, when the new government used old shogunal laws like the Mourning Edict for its own purposes, people throughout the land had already been primed to recognize the intent of those decrees and respond accordingly. The common experiences and shared images of Japan, disseminated by the shogun for more than two centuries, prepared the Japanese people to accept the communality of their country’s political destiny readily in the new era—an attitude that was a prerequisite to modern nationalism. If the Tokugawa shogunate did not pass on a unified nation to Meiji Japan, as Fukuzawa would have liked, it at least left behind what might be called a proto-nation.

In a sense, the following pages are guided by the same spirit that inspired James White in writing “State Growth and Popular Protest in Tokugawa Japan.” It was his belief that the new Meiji state was created with “an extraordinary combination of speed and absence of bloodshed” thanks to the precedents set “in ideology and politics, in farmhouse and castle” in the Tokugawa period. The present work differs from White’s, however, because it is about accommodation and compliance, not protest, and this writer remains skeptical about his idea that “the Tokugawa state” was “absolutist” when compared to those found in early modern Europe. It nevertheless affirms the view that the Tokugawa regime prepared Japan, albeit unwittingly, for a relatively peaceful transition to a modern era.

Although I emphasize unity rather than division in Japan’s Tokugawa polity, I would not argue that the mourning laws and their application alone generated that unity. Instead I examine their implications for various aspects of Japanese society, such as politics, religion, and culture. I am aware that ideally I should have concentrated on each in greater depth. This is especially true in the case of the Tokugawa economy; absent here is a discussion of how the mourning laws and public mourning interacted with the economies of the daimyo domains as well as the economy of Japan as a whole. This aspect of the history will be the topic of future research. It is my considered belief that careful and systematic study of the overarching components of the superstructure sheds as

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much light on a civilization as do more restricted, piecemeal, and cumulative surveys of its substructure.

The multidisciplinary approach that I have brought to this study raises questions about the conventional wisdom of dividing scholarly labor between premodern and modern specialists. This division by nature establishes a clear-cut break between Meiji Japan and its Tokugawa precursor. But was this break real? Was it indeed real enough to necessitate the division of historical research into discrete “periods,” and is there any justification for it beyond didactic convenience? The following study offers another view, namely that Meiji Japan, especially in its early years, did not have time to make a new bottle for whatever wine it found necessary to carry for survival’s sake, rendering a shared historiography of the Tokugawa and Meiji periods essential to a correct understanding of modern Japan.

Hopefully it is now clear that what follows is neither a history of legal systems nor a work of jurisprudence. It is instead a historical study of a set of related laws, by a historian who is interested in their relationship to various other components of a civilization, such as politics, economy, society, religion, and culture. It approaches the Tokugawa mourning laws, their predecessors, and their successors as aspects of Japanese civilization. Set in that general framework, it is guided more specifically by the question of the influence of laws on society as a tool for social integration as well as social control. This approach affords a much wider perspective on Japan than does a narrowly focused history of laws or jurisprudence or even sociology of law, all of which, incidentally, command my deepest respect for their important scholarly contributions.

The English-language bibliography on these subjects is limited, and recent publications do not address the topics that are the specific focus of the present work. Gary Ebersole’s *Ritual Poetry and the Politics of Death in Early Japan* (1989), for example, examines how individuals in the mythical and ancient Japanese royal courts jockeyed for a share of political power as it was being restructured on the death of the sovereign or other important personages, circumventing inquiry into the institutional framework that is the topic of my research. Since mourning has much to do with religious beliefs and practices, I address the issues raised by Kuroda Toshio in the *Journal of Japanese Studies* in 1981, which subsequently exercised the scholarly imaginations of many historians of religion in the United States.
The questions that encumbered these scholars were whether the native religions on the Japanese archipelago should be called Shinto or Jindo and if the different names indicated conceptual differences between the two. The exercise consisted of a highly academic debate that nevertheless has significant bearing on this book, justifying the presentation of my view at some length in one of the chapters.

More recently, Harold Bolitho published *Bereavement and Consolation: Testimonies from Tokugawa Japan* (2003). It depicts the losses that three Tokugawa-period men suffered from the deaths of their loved ones by interweaving their own memoirs with the author’s commentaries. The number of grieving persons is slim, the deaths they bemoan are private, and the tone of writing is elegiac. These features of the book result in the gentlest and tenderest portrayals of personal loss that have ever come from a historian’s pen. As such, Bolitho’s undertaking and mine make the best match for a study in contrast, but our works do intersect with each other, albeit tantalizingly briefly, where one of the three grieving men observes the mourning rites required by Tsunayoshi’s law.

Three years after Bolitho came Andrew Bernstein’s *Modern Passings: Death Rites, Politics, and Social Change in Imperial Japan* (2006). As the author puts it succinctly, the book is about man’s eternal question, “What are we to do with the dead body?” With varying degrees of seriousness, it recounts the Japanese responses to the question reflected in the changing funerary rites in the last two centuries. The familial, religious, and even commercial competitions to claim dead bodies, and souls, show how much influence the politics of different times exerted on the idea of the proper disposal of the dead. Bernstein’s discussion of the relationship between politics and funerals in the early Meiji period offers food for thought in my book. Below I shall have more opportunities to refer to this book than to the other two mentioned above.

Finally, Nam-lin Hur published a massive tome entitled *Death and Social Order in Tokugawa Japan: Buddhism, Anti-Christianity, and the Danka System* (2007). Filled with fascinating details about the political utilization of Buddhism in the Tokugawa period, Hur’s book comes tantalizingly close to the territory I canvas in my work. But both to my relief and grief, the author’s gaze is neither on the Tokugawa mourning edicts, which he dismisses in one out of 466 pages of text, nor on the ordinances on musical entertainment, which he ignores completely.
Besides these volumes on death in Japan, there is one more English-language publication that demands attention, although not because death itself is the subject. That publication is Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey’s *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi* (2006). It demands attention because, despite the prodigious research and grand design that went into its making, the author has chosen not even to mention Tsunayoshi’s mourning edict. Bodart-Bailey’s choice is disappointing, and my disappointment is warranted for many reasons. Among them are, for one thing, my own scholarly curiosity about Tsunayoshi’s role in Japanese history; and, for another, the finding of Takigawa Masajirō, the leading legal historian of Japan, who has held that “of all the laws the fifth shogun Tsunayoshi legislated, the Edict on Mourning and Abstention had the longest lasting influence on the generations of the Japanese to come.” Nevertheless, the book affords me a priceless opportunity to cogitate on Tsunayoshi’s personality and policies.

My reliance on Japanese-language sources results from the wealth of material found in both the relevant primary sources and the preeminent secondary sources. The topic has proved to be a rich one, yielding much new material for fruitful scholarly discourse. To close the Introduction, it is appropriate to outline the organization of this book, which is divided into three parts. Part I, which consists of Chapters 1 through 6, addresses private and personal mourning, albeit usually with public implications; these chapters examine the mourning laws both of the state and religious institutions and their application to the lives of bereaved individuals. This section opens with a systematic overview of laws on mourning and abstention from ancient times through the Tokugawa period (Chapter 1). Since the mourning edicts preceded ordinances on musical entertainment and other sounds, both chronologically and logically, they were in fact the foundational laws from which those ordinances originated and from which they served as an administrative tool for implementing the edicts themselves. The centerpiece of this segment of the book, however, is Shogun Tsunayoshi’s Edict on Mourning and Abstention, which includes background information on its making and an analysis.

of its intent (Chapter 2). The chapter that follows examines the question of the legitimacy of the Tokugawa shogunate (Chapter 3) in relation to the mourning edicts.

A study of the implementation of the edict in Edo, the capital of the shogun’s desmesne, and several other areas of Japan, including Kyoto and the feudal domains of Akita, Chōshū, and Satsuma, yields reliable evidence for the existence of patterns defining how the law was carried out (Chapters 4–6). Focusing on select geopolitical areas reflects the feudal aspect of the Tokugawa system of rule, as well as the limitations it imposes on historical research. To measure the overall state of affairs in the country, it is neither practical nor necessary to study all two-hundred-plus daimyō domains of vastly different sizes. Instead I chose to focus on Akita, Chōshū, and Satsuma because they were assigned to the powerful military houses of “outside” daimyō that fought against the Tokugawa house both in the battle that practically created “the house of the shogun” in 1600 and at the time of its downfall in 1868. The narrative of these great domains is interwoven with supplemental accounts from other parts of the country, such as Kaga and Morioka. Still other sources find their way into the picture where they fit best. The main body of the book closes with a discussion of the Meiji period in light of Tsunayoshi’s Mourning Edict and the ad hoc ordinances on sounds issued subsequently.

Part II, comprising Chapters 7 through 10, is about public mourning of state personages during the Tokugawa period; the practices described here serve as a model for the national mourning of Emperor Hirohito with which this book begins. These personages were mostly of the Tokugawa house and the imperial family. Public mourning based on the prohibition against musical entertainment was a deliberate public policy outcome of the mourning laws.

Part III contains the final chapter of the book, which discusses the modern transformation of the Tokugawa mourning laws and the national mourning of members of the imperial family, culminating in the national mourning of the Meiji emperor.

Throughout the book, I pay special attention to the workings of the Mourning Edict and sound-related ordinances in the everyday life of the populace at the grassroots level, both in Edo and beyond it. The purpose again is to demonstrate the commonality of experience that resulted in
the fostering of a sense of nationwide Japanese community. This exercise also demonstrates that the law played an integral role in society thanks not only to the shogunate’s power of implementation but also to the long-standing religious beliefs and customs current among the common people. At this level of my research, I depend extensively on personal diaries and popular literature, including senryū and kyōka verse. I provide translations of these verses—translations the aim of which is simply to convey the literal meaning of each verse in as spare a form as expressed in the original text.

The years in the title, 1603 and 1912, are a matter both of convenience and necessity. The former was the year in which the Tokugawa shogunate was created: shortly thereafter Ieyasu, the first Tokugawa shogun, began to voice his wish that mourning rituals be legislated. Although the book begins with an examination of earlier rules on, and the practice of, mourning and abstention, the choice of 1603 coincides with the work’s focus on the Tokugawa period. The latter year, 1912, witnessed the death of Emperor Meiji, the first emperor of modern Japan. To memorialize the historic occasion, his firmly established government then mobilized all mourning rituals available and generated an unprecedented outburst of patriotic sentiment throughout the country. The book therefore ends with a discussion of this event, permitting the title to correspond to its content.

Finally, it may help to define the term narimono at this point. Narimono literally means “musical instrument(s),” hence the English translation of narimono chōji as “suspension of the playing of musical instruments.” But it will become clear as the book progresses that the Tokugawa ordinances to “stop playing music” actually encompassed far wider sound-generating activities than just making music. For this reason, I have used the complete translation only in direct quotations. Otherwise, as has already been done above, I have resorted to the less restrictive terms of “sound” and its plural form whenever the situation under consideration called for a word that indicated more than musical sounds. From time to time, I have used the same device on stylistic grounds as well, hoping that the context will clarify any ambiguities that might arise.

I have opened this book with an account of the state funeral and public mourning for Japan’s Emperor Hirohito in the late twentieth century. But the commotions and impressions generated by the rituals
that surrounded his departure are not unique to a modern Japanese public figure. Not only can we hark back to the public funerals of the war dead in ancient Athens that gave rise to Pericles’ immortal oration; notable examples, such as the unforgettable funeral of President John F. Kennedy of the United States, mesmerized the entire nation. The funeral mass said for Pope John Paul II sent powerful messages both to the adult followers of the faith he had led and to the children who attended parochial schools at the time. A Hungarian friend who grew up during the country’s Communist era still vividly recalls the funeral of the Soviet Union’s Secretary, Leonid Brezhnev: students at her school watched it on television in an auditorium instead of taking lessons in regular classrooms. All of these instances immeasurably deepened awareness of communal belonging among their respective witnesses.

In short, what follows is about the universality of the experience of mourning important public figures.