



## Painting the town red: The Akamon of the Kaga mansion and *daimyō* gateway architecture in Edo<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** Built in 1827 to commemorate the marriage of the *daimyō* Maeda Nariyasu to a daughter of the shogun Tokugawa Ienari, the Akamon or ‘Red Gateway’ of the University of Tokyo, is generally claimed to be a unique gateway because of its distinctive colour and architectural style. This article uses an interdisciplinary methodology, drawing on architectural history, law and art history, to refute this view of the Akamon. It analyses and accounts for the architectural form of the gateway and its ancillary guard houses (*bansho*) by examining Tokugawa *bakufu* architectural regulations (*oboegaki*) and the depiction of *daimyō* gateways in *doro-e* and *ukiyo-e*. It concludes that there were close similarities between the Akamon and the gateways of high ranking *daimyō* in Edo. This similarity includes the red paint, which, it turns out, was not limited to shogunal bridal gateways but was in more general use by *daimyō* for their own gateways by the end of the Edo period. Indeed, the Akamon was called the ‘red gateway’ only from the 1880s after the many other red gateways had disappeared following the fall of the Tokugawa shogunate. The expression ‘to paint the town red’ refers not only to the way the Akamon celebrated the marriage of Yōhime, but also more broadly to characterize the way many of the other gateways at *daimyō* mansions in the central sectors of Edo had entrances that were decorated with bright red paint.

**Keywords:** Akamon; *daimyō* gateways; *yakuimon*; *mon bansho*; Tokugawa regulations.

## [es] Pintando la ciudad de rojo: La Akamon de la mansión Kaga y la arquitectura de puertas de las mansiones de los *daimyō*

**Resumen:** Construida en 1827 para conmemorar el matrimonio del *daimyō* Maeda Nariyasu con la hija del sogun Tokugawa Ienari, la Akamon o “Puerta Roja” de la Universidad de Tokio, se dice que es un ejemplo único de puerta por su característico color y su estilo arquitectónico. Este artículo se vale de una metodología interdisciplinar, entrelazando la historia arquitectónica, una lectura de las leyes y de la historia del arte, para refutar esta idea sobre Akamon. En él se analiza y se tienen en cuenta la forma arquitectónica de la puerta y las construcciones auxiliares de los guardianes (*bansho*), examinándose las regulaciones arquitectónicas del *bakufu* Tokugawa (*oboegaki*) y las representaciones de las puertas de los *daimyō* en *doro-e* y *ukiyo-e*. La conclusión es que había muchas similitudes entre la Akamon y las puertas de entrada a las mansiones de los *daimyō* de alto rango en Edo. Entre ellas está el uso de la pintura roja, que no se limitaba a las puertas de celebración de matrimonios, sino que eran del uso general por parte de los *daimyō* en sus propiedades a finales del periodo Edo. De hecho, la Akamon fue denominada así, “Puerta roja” justo después de que en los años ochenta del siglo XIX muchas otras puertas rojas hubieran desaparecido tras la caída del sogunato Tokugawa. La expresión “pintar la ciudad de rojo” se refiere, no únicamente al modo en que se celebró el matrimonio de Yōhime con la Akamon, sino de un modo más general, a la manera en la que muchas otras puertas de las mansiones de los *daimyō* de los barrios del centro de Edo decoraron sus entradas con una pintura de rojo brillante.

**Palabras claves:** Akamon; mansión *daimyō*; *yakuimon*; *mon bansho*; regulaciones Tokugawa.

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**Sumario.** The architectural characteristics of the Akamon. 1. The red colour. 2. The *yakuimon*. 3. The *bansho*. Gateways and *Onari* visits by the shogun in early Tokugawa Edo. Gateway regulations from 1657 to the 1840s. 1. The ban on two-storey gateways. 2. The ban on free-standing gateways of 1772 and the promotion of the *nagayamon* to main gateway. 3. *Bansho* as status symbols after 1772. The Akamon and ‘painting the town red’.

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The gateway now known as the Akamon or ‘Red Gateway’ is today the universally recognized symbol of the University of Tokyo [fig. 1] but it was originally built for a very different purpose. It was constructed in 1827 to mark the marriage between the Maeda Nariyasu [前田齊泰] (1811-1884), *daimyō* of the million *koku* Kaga domain, and Yōhime [溶姫] (1813-1868), the twenty-first daughter of the eleventh Tokugawa shogun, Ienari [徳川家斎]. This was a marriage of political convenience within the Tokugawa *bakuhun* order. It conferred shogunal favour on a *tozama daimyō* whose family had opposed the Tokugawa in the wars of national unification at the end of the sixteenth century but who had become an indispensable part of the delicate balance between ruler and ruled in the *bakuhun* system by the nineteenth century.



Fig. 1. Akamon, the University of Tokyo. View from Hongō-dōri. Today the gateway is partially obscured by trees. (Source: author’s photograph)

In the Edo period, it was customary for a *daimyō* receiving the honour of marriage to a shogun’s daughter to build a separate mansion within his principal Edo mansion (*kami yashiki*) for the bride, and to erect a special ceremonial gateway that was painted red as its entrance. The new bride would pass through this gateway accompanied by her retinue when she first took up residence. Thereafter the gateway was reserved for her exclusive use on ceremonial occasions and was normally demolished after her death. Her husband, the *daimyō*, was not allowed to use this gateway, even though it was located at his Edo mansion, instead obliged to use a less grandiloquent gateway set elsewhere in the mansion compound walls.

It has been widely accepted that the Akamon was architecturally distinct from its peers, the gateways of other *daimyō* mansions. This article uses an inter-disciplinary methodology, drawing on architectural history, law, and art history, to argue that, contrary to this generally held view, the Akamon was by no means unique, that there were in fact close similarities between the Akamon and the gateways of high ranking *daimyō* in Edo. This included the use of red paint.

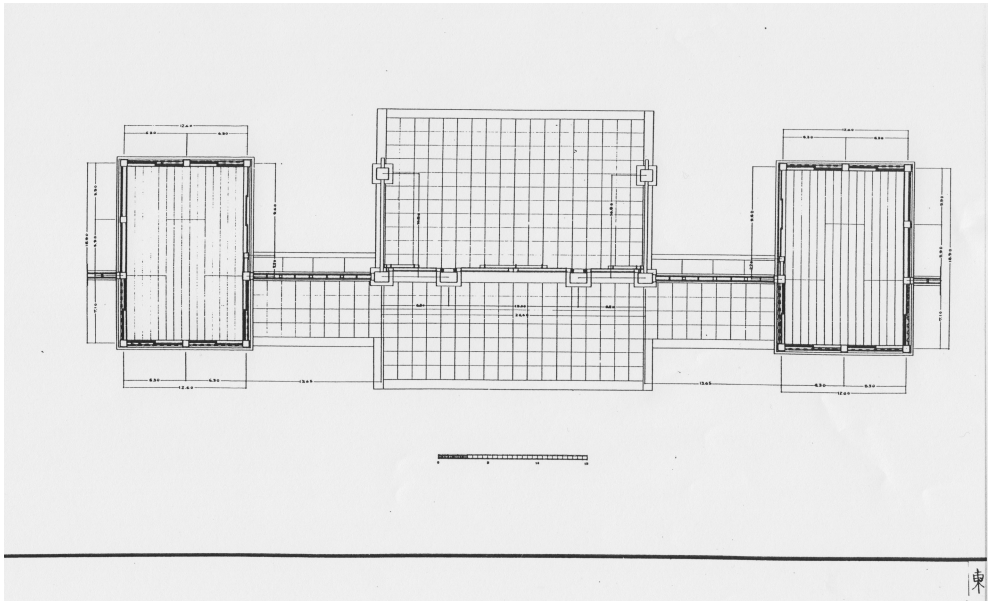


Fig. 2. Akamon. Plan (Source: Bunka-chō, *Kokuhō Jūyō Bunkazai [kenzōbutsu] Jissoku Zushū*, III, 1967)

Analysis will focus on explaining the architectural significance of the three most important characteristics of the Akamon: the red colour, the free-standing gateway standing at the centre, a type known as a *yakuimon* [薬医門], and the pair of identical *bansho* [番所] or guard houses that flank it. After introducing their technical characteristics, Tokugawa regulations directed at gateway architecture will be examined, together with *daimyō* gateways depicted in the popular art of *doro-e* [泥絵] and *ukiyo-e* prints, to establish when and how these features evolved and what they symbolised.

The name ‘Akamon’ will be used throughout this article for convenience. It should be noted at the outset that the name is not historically correct. In 1827, at the time of the Yōhime’s marriage to Maeda Nariyasu, the gateway was called the Osumai gommon [御住居御門]<sup>3</sup>. ‘Osumai’ was the name used for the residence of a Tokugawa daughter married to a *daimyō* of the fourth court rank and below. It translates as ‘honourable residence’, not a particularly grand title in the overall order of things. Nearly thirty years after the wedding, in 1855, Maeda Nariyasu was promoted to the rank of Ken-Chūnagon, a position of the third court rank. Accordingly, the bride’s precinct was thereafter referred to by the more dignified title Goshuden [御守殿]. The gateway became known as the Goshuden gommon [御守殿御門], the name still used for official documents (with the second honorific omitted)<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> See the label on the plan of the Kaga domain mansion dating to 1840-45 (*Edo onkamiyashiki sōon'ezu*) held in the collection of the Tamagawa Library, Kanazawa City.

<sup>4</sup> This is the name used in Bunka-chō records. See: <http://www.bunka.go.jp/bsys/> [Consulted: 23/07/2017]. On the change of title following Maeda Nariyasu’s promotion see: Murai Masao: “Goshuden”, *Kokushi daijiten henshū iinkai* (ed.) (1985): *Kokushi daijiten* (国史大事典), Tokyo, Yoshikawa kōbunkan, vol. 5, p. 780.

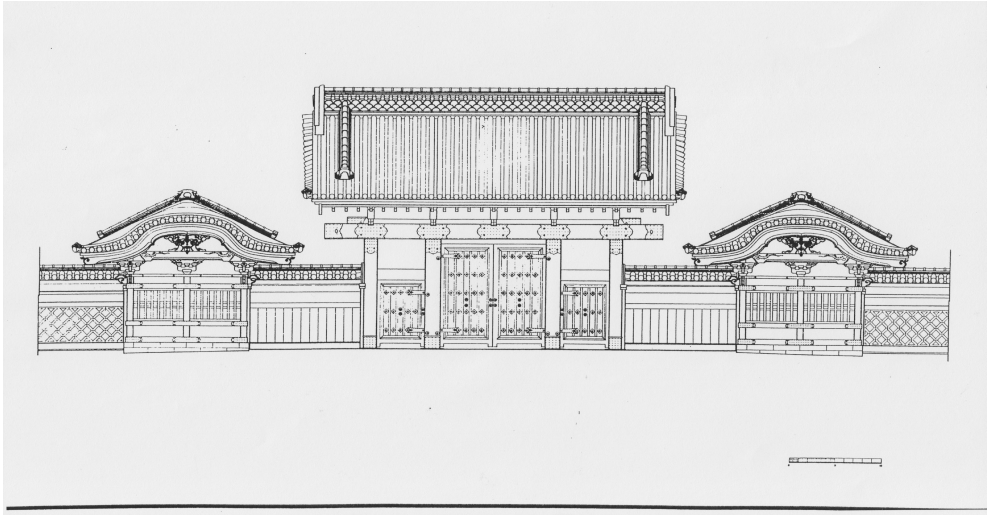


Fig. 3. Akamon. Front elevation (Source: Bunka-chō, *Kokuhō Jūyō Bunkazai [kenzōbutsu] Jissoku Zushū*, III, 1967)

## The architectural characteristics of the Akamon

As noted above, the Akamon consists of a *yakuimon* with two *bansho* or guardhouses flanking the entrance, all painted red [figs. 2-3]. The *yakuimon* is approximately 8.06 metres wide and 3.27 metres deep, and stands 8.88 metres high to the top of the ridge capping tiles [fig. 4.]. The *bansho* are each 5.4 metres wide, 3.8 metres deep and 5.43 metres high [fig. 5]. These are set 4.14 metres to each the side of the *yakuimon*, separated from it by a low, tiled-roofed wall 2.88 metres high. These three key characteristics, the red colour, the *yakuimon* and the *bansho*, will now be explained in turn.

### 1. The red colour

Use of red for the Akamon was a felicitous way of commemorating the marriage of a Tokugawa daughter, of ‘painting the town red’, or at least a gateway that colour. As Edmund Leach argues, ‘it is very common to find that *red* is treated as a sign of *danger*, which may be derived from red = blood. But *red* is also quite often associated with *joy*, which might come from red = blood = life’<sup>5</sup>. In this context, it was also construed to symbolize not only joy but blood ties through marriage, to adapt Leach’s argument: red = blood = life = marriage = red gateway.

What type of red pigment is used for the Akamon? It is common to claim that the red used is *shunuri* [朱塗り], as is the case with the Japanese language explanation posted by the University of Tokyo beside the Akamon. *Shunuri* is a rich red colour made from

<sup>5</sup> LEACH, Edmund, “Color Symbolism”, in *Culture and Communication*, Cambridge University Press, 1976. Cited in WRESCHNER, Ernst E. (1980): “Red Ochre and Human Evolution: A Case for Discussion”. In: *Current Anthropology*, vol. 21, No. 5, p. 631.

finely ground mineral cinnabar (mercury sulphate) mixed with clear natural lacquer. It found its natural home on small works of decorative art or ceremonial utensils, and that magnificent example of Itō Chūta's misinformed antiquarianism of the late nineteenth century, Heian Jingū in Kyoto but it is rarely used on buildings in Japan because of its high cost and rapid deterioration when exposed to ultraviolet light in sunshine.



Fig. 4. The *yakuimon* of the Akamon. Front view (Source: author's photograph)

Recent scientific testing of samples taken from Edo-period timbers of the Akamon concluded that the Edo-period red used for the Akamon was 'high quality *tettan bengara* [鉄丹弁柄] manufactured in the city of Edo or the city of Osaka'<sup>6</sup>. *Bengara* is a mineral pigment composed of the brownish-red oxide of iron (ferric oxide). It occurs naturally in haematite-rich earth or rock. Known as red ochre, its use as a pigment is found throughout the pre-industrial world, from the palaces of Knossos in Crete and the Ming tombs in China to the brick walls surrounding Red Square at the Kremlin. Ernst Wreschner has gone as far as saying that 'prehistory has produced evidence of two meaningful regularities in human evolution tool making and collection, and use of ochre'<sup>7</sup>. In Japan, where it is referred to as *aka-tsuchi* or *nitsuchi* [丹土], naturally occurring red ochre was used widely on temple and shrine buildings. Quite apart from the issue of cost and availability, it is better suited to architectural use because it is chemically stable and hence more resistant to colour change and fading. From the sixteenth century red ochre was imported from Bengal in India, which explains the name *bengara*. Red ochre was used on important Tokugawa projects

<sup>6</sup> KITANO, Nobuhiko (2017): "Akamon no kyūtosō zairyō ni kansuru kiso chōsa", in HORIUCHI, Hideki / NISHIAKI, Yoshihiro (堀内秀樹・西秋良宏) (eds.), *Akamon: Yōhime goten kara Tōkyō daigaku e* (赤門—溶姫御殿から東京大学へ). Tokyo: The University Museum, The University of Tokyo, p. 203.

<sup>7</sup> WRESCHNER, Ernst E. (1980): "Red Ochre...", *op. cit.*, p. 631.

such as the Tōshōgū at Nikkō and for parts of the Taitokuin Mausoleum and the Niten-mon of Yūshōin Mausoleum at Zōjōji at Shiba<sup>8</sup>.



Fig. 5. Left *bansho* of the Akamon. Side view (Source: author's photograph)

As noted above, scientific analysis has found that the red used for the Akamon was produced synthetically. The technique for making this synthetic substitute for naturally occurring red ochre was in wide use in Japan by the end of the Edo period which meant that it was readily available for decorating buildings by the time the Akamon was constructed. The technique involved artificially accelerating the formation of rust on iron, by heating it in a narrow necked ceramic container resembling a large *sake* bottle. An example of this type of container, with the synthetic red ochre still plainly visible, has been excavated at the former Kaga mansion site<sup>9</sup>.

## 2. The *yakuimon*

The central gateway of the Akamon is a *yakuimon*, a gateway type comprising two main pillars at the front and two supporting pillars at the rear. This structure is straddled by a simple gable roof [fig. 6]. *Yakuimon*<sup>10</sup> were used for the residences of the

<sup>8</sup> KITANO, Nobuhiko (2017): “Akamon...”, *op. cit.*, p. 201. The report does not say what part of the Taitokuin Mausoleum was tested, probably samples from one of the extant gateways.

<sup>9</sup> KITANO, Nobuhiko (2017): “Akamon...”, *op. cit.*, p. 207, Photograph 19-1.

<sup>10</sup> The meaning of the characters used for the name is not clear. It may be translated literally as meaning “official doctor” or court physician but this may be a phonetic substitute for a name meaning 役位, implying that it was a gateway of someone in official position.

warrior class in medieval Kyoto<sup>11</sup> although the earliest surviving example is later in date, at Kōdaiji in Kyoto, dating to 1604.

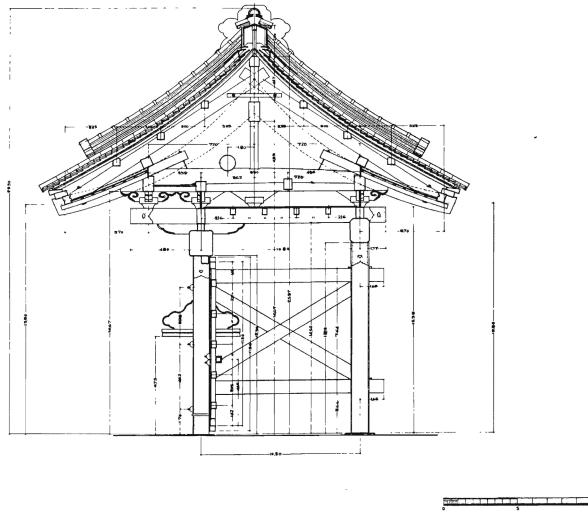


Fig. 6. The *yakuimon* of the Akamon. Transverse section (Source: Bunka-chō, *Kokuhō Jūyō Bunkazai [kenzōbutsu] Jissoku Zushū*, III, 1967)

The *yakuimon* is a type of gateway that evolved from the *yotsuashimon* [四足門] (also called *shikyakumon* [四脚門]) or ‘four-legged gate’, used for the mansions of the aristocracy and residences of Buddhist clergy from the Nara period onwards (710-794) [fig. 7]. In this type of gateway, the two main pillars are braced at the front and rear by subsidiary pillars, making four ‘legs’, hence the name. *Yotsuashimon* were typically set into the walls surrounding the mansions of the aristocracy and high-ranking Buddhist clergy but structurally free-standing from the flanking walls by virtue of the support pillars at the front and rear. The *yakuimon* is also free-standing but dispenses with the front support pillars. To compensate structurally for this loss, the centre of the roof is moved back from the front approximately one third of the distance towards the rear pillars. This resulted in a more robust and impressive gateway with no pillars at the front to clutter its appearance or impede traffic. This meant it was ideal as an expression of warrior authority.

### 3. The *bansho*

Two guard houses or *bansho* (literally, ‘place where a guard is on duty’) flank the *yakuimon*. Unlike the sentry boxes used in Europe, which are tall and narrow to accommodate standing sentries, the Akamon guard houses are relatively low and wide, providing accommodation for seated guards inside. Each *bansho* is roofed with a *ka-*

<sup>11</sup> See: KISHI, Kumakichi, (岸熊吉) (1946): *Nihon monshō shiwa*, (日本門牆史話). Tokyo: Ōyashima shuppan, pp. 118-120.

*rahafu* [唐破風] or cusped gable [fig. 8]. The elegantly flowing curves of this type of gable was an important symbol of authority, especially from the Momoyama period (1576-1600) when it was used as an accent on the roofs of the soaring castle keeps<sup>12</sup>.

The Akamon is, therefore, a composite design. When and why was this distinctive, indeed idiosyncratic, architectural form devised? To answer this question, it is necessary to establish what was the form of the ceremonial gateways used by the shogun and *daimyō* in Edo after the inception of the Tokugawa *bakufu*.



Fig. 7. The Kuromon of Zōjōji, formerly located at the entrance to the Abbot's residence. Second half of seventeenth century. Rear oblique view (Source: author's photograph)

### Gateways and *onari* visits by the shogun in early Tokugawa Edo

During the first half of the seventeenth century, during the rule of the first three Tokugawa shogun, *daimyō* gateways became a physical manifestation of latent power relations in the newly established Tokugawa order. They were scintillating architectural masterpieces, epitomizing the style and taste of the period, and free of *bansho* and other awkward appurtenances. None survived the 1657 Meireki and subsequent fires but their ephemeral glory is documented in Edo literature and screen paintings. *Ochiboshū* describes the mansions of the *kunimochi*, or highest-ranking *daimyō*, as 'mostly having two-storey gateways with many kinds of sculpture and

<sup>12</sup> This term is frequently translated as 'Chinese-style gable' but there is little connection to Chinese architecture. Either the persons responsible for inventing the term were mistaken at some point in historical antiquity, or had intended the term *kara* to mean 'exotic', not as a reference to China.



other embellishment.’ Ii Naotaka, *daimyō* of Hikone, for example, had a front gateway exceeding 18 metres (10 *ken*) in length and decorated with five gilded sculptures of rhinoceroses<sup>13</sup>. Gateguards lived in the upper storeys, or the flanking rowhouses or *nagaya* [長屋], making extra guard houses unnecessary.



Fig. 8. Left *bansho* of the Akamon. Front view (Source: author’s photograph)

The Tokugawa obliged the *daimyō* to build sumptuous gateways in Edo by paying official visits to their mansions, a custom known as *onari* [御成]<sup>14</sup>. One example, built in 1632 for Matsudaira Tadamasu (1597-1645), the *daimyō* of Fukui with a rank of 525,000 *koku*, was described by the Kōra, the official architects to the Tokugawa, as follows<sup>15</sup>:

The *onarigomon* [御成御門] used for official visits by the shogun is a large *yot-suashi* [mon] with *karahafu* set into the eaves. Carvings of dragons are wrapped

<sup>13</sup> DAIDŌJI, Kōzan (大道寺友山) (1967): *Ochiboshū* (落穂集), *Edo shiryō sōsho*. Tokyo: Shin Jimbutsu Ōraisha, p. 89.

<sup>14</sup> The custom of visitation by a warrior leader to the residences of a vassal began in the Kamakura shogunate and became more formalized under the Ashikaga shogunate in Kyoto. Hideyoshi carried out the practice extensively from 1592 to 1596. In Edo, there are only six known instances of *onari* by the founding shogun Ieyasu but his son Hidetada re-instituted it with vigour, with no fewer than 82 *onari* visits occurring while he was shogun. He was to be upstaged by his son, the third shogun Iemitsu, with some 441 *onari* visits noted in records. See: TOKUGAWA Bijutsukan (徳川美術館) (ed.) (2012): *Tokugawa shōgun no onari* (徳川将軍御成り). Nagoya: Tokugawa Bijutsukan, p. 70; pp. 114-143.

<sup>15</sup> *Kōnen oboegaki*, quoted in NAITŌ, Akira (内藤昌) (1972): *Edo no toshi no kenchiku* (江戸の都市の建築), pp. 81-82. (Supplementary volume to AKIRA Naitō / SUWA, Haruo (諏訪春雄), (eds.) (1972): *Edo no byōbu* (江戸図屏風). Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha.

around the pillars. The pillars and all the beam-ends, together with the end of the main architrave above the entrance and the fittings above, have sculptures of Chinese lions. The tie-beams, cornice and architrave have various low-relief geometric designs while carvings of the Eight Sages of the Bamboo Grove are used on the door panels and above the waist ties at the sides of the gate, all glittering with gold leaf<sup>16</sup>.

A similar gateway was built at Nishi Honganji in Kyoto [fig. 9], also in 1632 for a visit by the shogun, with elaborate polychromed sculpture and gilding, and a standard *yotsuashimon* structure like the gateway described by the Kōra.



Fig. 9. Karamon, Nishi Honganji, Kyoto, 1632 (Source: author's photograph)

According to the same Kōra account, the gateway of the Matsudaira mansion reserved for the *daimyō*, was also decorated with gilded sculptures of Chinese lions and dragons but it had a simpler gabled roof without a *karahafu*. From this and other records, it is clear that there was a distinct hierarchy between two gateways on the outer wall of *daimyō* mansions, the *onarimon* with cusped roof and four subsidiary pillars reserved for the use of the shogun, and another gateway used by the *daimyō* which was either a two storey structure or a simpler version of the *onarimon* with a plain roof without *karahafu*.

There is no surviving written evidence but logic suggests that the practice of building an *onarimon* to receive the shogun was the precedent for the custom of building a special gateway to mark the marriage of a shogun's daughter to a *daimyō*. The *yakuimon* gradually replaced the *yotsuashimon* for the shogunal visitation gateways, and the *karahafu* that was earlier demanded by protocol was abandoned be-

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

cause of the technical difficulty of inserting such a heavy and elaborate gable into eaves so perilously unsupported at the front.

Evidence for this important change is provided by an architectural drawing of a gateway made by the Kōra architects that is preserved in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum [fig. 10]. Clearly labelled as an *onarimon*, this gateway was built for a visit in 1698 by the fifth shogun, Tsunayoshi, to a subsidiary mansion of the Owari *daimyō* at Kōjimachi in Edo<sup>17</sup>. The gateway is three bays wide with the two main and two subsidiary pillars and set-back roof characteristic of a *yakuimon*. In fact, it has a similar design to the later Akamon and it seems to have been about the same size (approximately 8 metres wide and 3.6 metres deep). Perhaps here we have the architectural prototype for the Akamon.

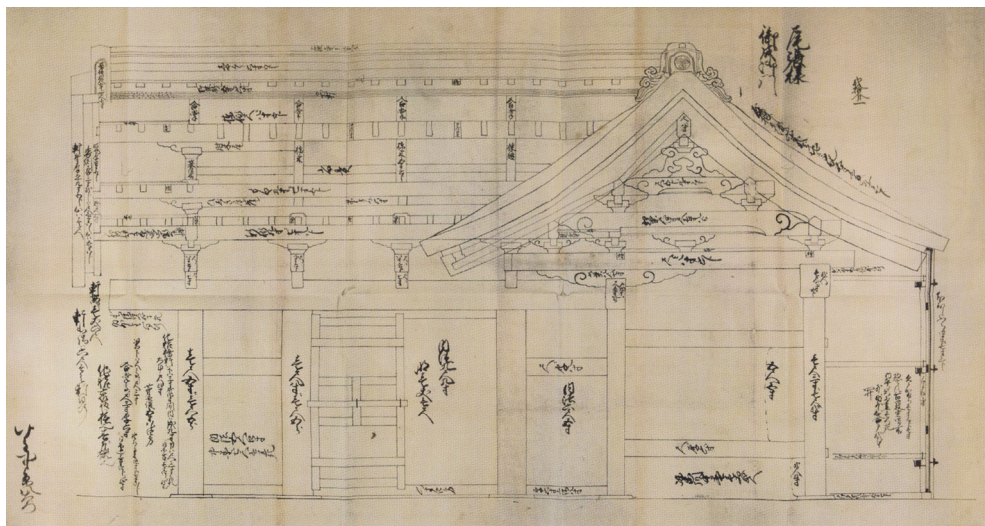


Fig. 10. Transverse elevation and front section for *onarimon*, Owari mansion, Kōjimachi, 1698 (Source: Tokyo National Museum)

This is the first known example of a *yakuimon* being used for *onari*. Tsunayoshi (shogun: 1680-1709) is noted for issuing sumptuary laws inspired by Neo-Confucian philosophy, trying to maintain control over the *daimyō* and to regulate the booming prosperity of the townspeople in what became known as Genroku popular culture. Certainly a *yakuimon* would have been less expensive to build than the *yotsuashimon* type used for earlier *onari* visits and the drawing also shows none of the elaborate sculpture which was a feature of the *onari* gateways of the 1630s.

This gateway signals changes in *onari* gateway architecture at the turn of the eighteenth century, with a growing ceremonial role for the *yakuimon*, but *bansho* are not used as part of this design. For evidence of the incorporation of *bansho* into gateway design, a development that led to the Akamon, it is necessary to turn to Tokugawa architectural regulations recorded in official memoranda or *oboegaki* [覚え書き].

<sup>17</sup> TOKUGAWA BIJUTSUKAN (ed.) (2012): *Tokugawa shogun...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162.

## Gateway regulations from 1657 to the 1840s

### 1. The ban on two-storey gateways

Gateway regulations were triggered by the Meireki Fire, in the first month of 1657, which destroyed much of Edo and signalled the beginning of the end of the age of architectural grandeur symbolised by the *onari* gateways. Within a week of the fire, a *bakufu* edict was issued prohibiting the construction of two-storey gateways<sup>18</sup>. *Ochiboshū*, it should be recalled, had said that most *kunimochi daimyō* used this type of richly embellished gateway at their primary mansions.

The ban was prompted by practical concern with the difficulty in rebuilding a large part of the city of Edo after the fire, especially in the face of the acute shortage of wood and labour. The two-storey gateway ban was issued as part of a general edict ordering restraint in the reconstruction of *daimyō* mansions that reveals the changed locus of power within the *bakufu* after the death of the third shogun, Iemitsu, in 1651. It was intended to help the highest ranking *daimyō* by removing the obligation of building in the grand style befitting their rank. It is therefore not surprising that the two-storey ‘restriction’ was effective<sup>19</sup>, unlike many of the later regulations that were issued to preserve status distinctions in building style. Whether the intent of specific regulations was to restrict sumptuousness to help *daimyō* rebuilding after the fires that plagued Edo, or to restrict them from extravagance for reasons of Neo-Confucian ideology, as was the case under Tsunayoshi, behind all these edicts lay a fundamental urge to impose order on building styles, especially the highly visible gateways, to create a consistent expression of status as calibrated in *koku* assessed rice income or the precedence of the audience chambers in the Honmaru Palace of Edo Castle to which *daimyō* were assigned as a symbol of standing in relation to the shogun and to each other.

### 2. The ban on free-standing gateways of 1772 and the promotion of the *nagayamon* to main gateway

A century or so after the prohibition of two-storey gateways, the *bakufu* attempted to regulate the construction of free-standing gateways, that is, the type of gateways like the *yakuimon* that were structurally independent from flanking walls or buildings. To that end, less than a month after a fire in Edo in 1772, the *daimyō* were instructed that:

Concerning rebuilding in the areas recently destroyed by fire: this should be done in accordance with social status and should not be gaudy throughout. ... Concerning also the front gateways of *daimyō* mansions: a *nagaya* should be built, even in the case of a *kunimochi daimyō*. Their width and all the rest of the rebuilding should not be turned into a major undertaking...<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> ZAISEI KEIZAI SHIRYŌ GAKKAI (財政経済史料学会) (ed.) (1922-1925): *Nihon zaisei keizai shiryō* (日本財政経済史料). Tokyo: Zaisei Keizai Gakkai. 1657/1/25: vol. III, pp. 829-30. All translations in this article are by the author.

<sup>19</sup> No two-storey gateways appear in later paintings or prints depicting *daimyō* mansions in Edo but they continued to be used at temples and shrines.

<sup>20</sup> 1772/3/27 edict in ZAISEI KEIZAI SHIRYŌ GAKKAI (ed.) (1922-1925): *Nihon zaisei...*, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 748.

The first provision about rebuilding in accordance with social status was a standard sumptuary clause repeated with almost monotonous regularity in Tokugawa edicts<sup>21</sup> but the second part, requiring building of *nagaya*, was a radical departure from past building practice. Free-standing gateways were synonymous with the identity and authority of the warrior class in the Edo period, with a veritable flood of printed books from the mid-seventeenth century showing their design. The *Buke hinagata* ('Pattern Book of Warrior Architecture') of 1655, and numerous later reprints, included the *yakuimon*, *yotsuashimon*, with and without *karahafu* as occasion demanded. Significantly, it made no mention of *nagaya* and their entrances<sup>22</sup>. As of the middle of the seventeenth century, there was no template for this type of gateway in the standard building manual for architecture of the warrior class.

*Nagaya* had served as barracks for low ranking warrior retainers in the outer walls of the *daimyō* compounds from the inception of Tokugawa rule, especially after the ban on two-storey gateways that had accommodated the gate guards on the upper level. *Nagaya* were already replacing free-standing gateways at *daimyō* mansions by the time of the 1772 regulation because of the burden of having to rebuild after frequent fires. Views of Edo of the 1840s and 1850s captured in *ukiyo-e* prints, *doro-e* or paintings that mixed plaster with pigment to reduce their cost for popular sale, and photographs dating to the 1860s, reveal these rowhouses extending great distances around the mansion compounds [fig. 11].



Fig. 11. Felice Beato, View from Atago-yama of Edo, Albumen print, 1864

<sup>21</sup> SHIVELY, Donald H. (1964-1965): "Sumptuary Regulations and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan", in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, xxv, pp. 123-65.

<sup>22</sup> On the *Buke hinagata* see further: COALDRAKE, William (2017): "Yōhime goten no seimon: sono kenchikuteki tokuchō to kunimochi *daimyō* kami yashiki no omotemon yōshiki ni kansuru kōsatsu", in HORIUCHI, Hideki / NISHIAKI, Yoshihiro (堀内秀樹・西秋良宏) (eds.), *Akamon: Yōhime goten kara Tōkyō daigaku e* (赤門一溶姫御殿から東京大学へ). Tokyo: The University Museum, The University of Tokyo, pp. 62-63.

### 3. *Bansho* as status symbols after 1772

*Bansho* had served as an integral part of the Tokugawa system of national control, situated at strategic points to regulate the flow of people and goods on national highways and at important crossroads within the cities. They were simple buildings, frequently built in tandem with roofless gateways, two posts with a large crossbar.

The edict restricting free-standing gateways had the unintended consequence of prompting the addition of *bansho* to the entrances area of *nagaya* to adapt them to their new role of main gateways. In this new location, *bansho* highlighted the location of the point of entry in *nagaya*, often 100 metres or more in length, and allowed more effective supervision of increased traffic resulting from their more important role. And the *bansho* also provided a means of symbolizing status, most dramatically by the addition of a *karahafu*, and other variations in style. It was as if some atavistic urge to crown a rectilinear structure with a gracefully flowing gable was re-asserting itself after the demise of the *onarimon* in all its cusped exuberance.

Not to be outdone by the owners of *nagaya* with their *bansho*, *kunimochi daimyō* added *bansho* to their own free-standing gateways. This gave birth to the architectural form represented by the Akamon, a free-standing gateway flanked by *bansho* with cusped gables, less an evolution of gateway design as a devolution, architecture tempered by reality. This reality was the imposition of order by the Tokugawa officials; as the resources of both *bakufu* and *daimyō* were eroded by fire and the growth of the money economy of the townspeople, the bureaucratic attention lavished on this modest structure grew disproportionately to their architectural significance. Every detail of their stonework, grill windows, and especially their roof gables, were subject to regulations from 1809 onwards.

These regulations are summarized in *Aobyōshi* [青標紙], a compendium of customs, etiquette, and regulations published for convenient reference of the warrior class in 1840-1841. It was not an official government publication but a printed guide to earlier regulations. The author, Ōno Hiroki, was placed under house arrest after its publication for what was seen as ‘leaking’ confidential information. Despite, or perhaps because of, its unofficial status, *Aobyōshi* shows clearly the styles of gateway architecture used by *daimyō* at the time of the Akamon. The relevant section translates as follows:

#### *Mon bansho* [門番所]

Concerning the method of building *mon bansho*, in the sixth month of 1809 a memorandum was given to the *ōmetsuke* [大目付]<sup>23</sup> by Doi Ōi no kami [土井大炊頭] in response to an inquiry by Oda Sakon Shōkan [織田左近將監].

*Kunimochi daimyō* [in charge of entire provinces] and those [*daimyō*] of 100,000 *koku* and above, and also those below 100,000 *koku* who are chamberlains [*jijū* [侍従]]<sup>24</sup> or have other official positions, are permitted to have two side doors [*kuguri* [潜]] and two *bansho* for their gateways. However, *karahafu* [on the *bansho*] are forbidden.

<sup>23</sup> Officials charged with supervision of *daimyō* affairs.

<sup>24</sup> Advisors to senior *bakufu* officials.

All others below 100,000 *koku* and above 50,000 *koku* may build two side doors and two *bansho* with projecting grill windows [*degōshi* [出格子]] and pent roofs [*kata-bisashi* [片庇], literally ‘single eaves’]. It is permissible to have ornamental stepped-out foundations [*mochi-dashi dodai* [持出し土臺]] for the *bansho*. But building new ones where none existed previously or altering existing ones to this style is unnecessary.

Concerning all those [*daimyō*] below 50,000 *koku*: when undertaking new construction or repairing existing buildings, it is forbidden to build two *bansho* for gateways. Parts that have continued in existence for a long time and parts which already exist when transferring [to a new] mansion are excepted.

In the above, *kunimochi daimyō* are to have *nagaya* no wider than three bays wide. All other *daimyō* are to have two and a half bays. Those below 10,000 *koku* [below *daimyō* rank] are to have two bays.

Note: concerning fixing the heraldic crest of one’s family to the front gateway, this is to be limited to those *daimyō* of the *Kokka* [国家], *Teikan no ma* [帝鑑間] and *Yanagi no ma* [柳間] audience chambers<sup>25</sup>.

*Nagaya* may be built by those [*daimyō*] of and above 10,000 *koku*, but two *bansho* are not to be built with the front gateway. Those of the *kōkeshū* [高家衆]<sup>26</sup> are to build *nagaya* two bays wide and their front gateway may have two *bansho*.

The purport of the above was promulgated during the Jōkyō era [1684-1688]<sup>27</sup>.

This edict is based on a promulgation of 1809,<sup>28</sup> as stated in the preamble. It concludes with a comment by the editor of *Aobyōshi* that the purport of these regulations was first promulgated in the 1680s that is, under shogun Tsunayoshi. There is no evidence to support this claim<sup>29</sup>. The regulation of free-standing gateways from 1772 was the catalyst for the emergence of the *bansho*, a century later than suggested.

The written text in *Aobyōshi* is accompanied by eight diagrams illustrating gateway styles with captions adding more details [fig. 12]. The diagrams and their captions differ from the written regulations in two key respects: first, the highest ranking *kunimochi daimyō* (top right diagram) are shown with free standing gateways; second, the two highest levels of *daimyō*, the *kunimochi*, and those above 100,000 *koku* (second column from left, top), are shown with *karahafu* on their *bansho* despite the written prohibition of 1809 reiterated in the text of *Aobyōshi*.

<sup>25</sup> The *kokka* were the *gosanke* (the three collateral Tokugawa houses) and the *kunimochi daimyō*. The *teikan no ma* included most *fudai daimyō*, while the *yanagi no ma* was for *tozama daimyō* below 50,000 *koku*. In effect this provision restricts *tozama daimyō* above 50,000 *koku*.

<sup>26</sup> Generally speaking, these were *hatamoto*, that is, below *daimyō* rank but with special ceremonial roles such as emissary to Ise Shrine.

<sup>27</sup> *Edo sōsho*, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 22-24.

<sup>28</sup> 1809/6<sup>th</sup> month edict: ZAISEI KEIZAI SHIRYŌ GAKKAI (ed.) (1922-1925): *Nihon zaisei...*, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 750.

<sup>29</sup> The edict banning two storey gateways issued after the Meireiki Fire in 1657 did include the first known instance of a provision restricting the width of *nagaya* to no more than three bays.

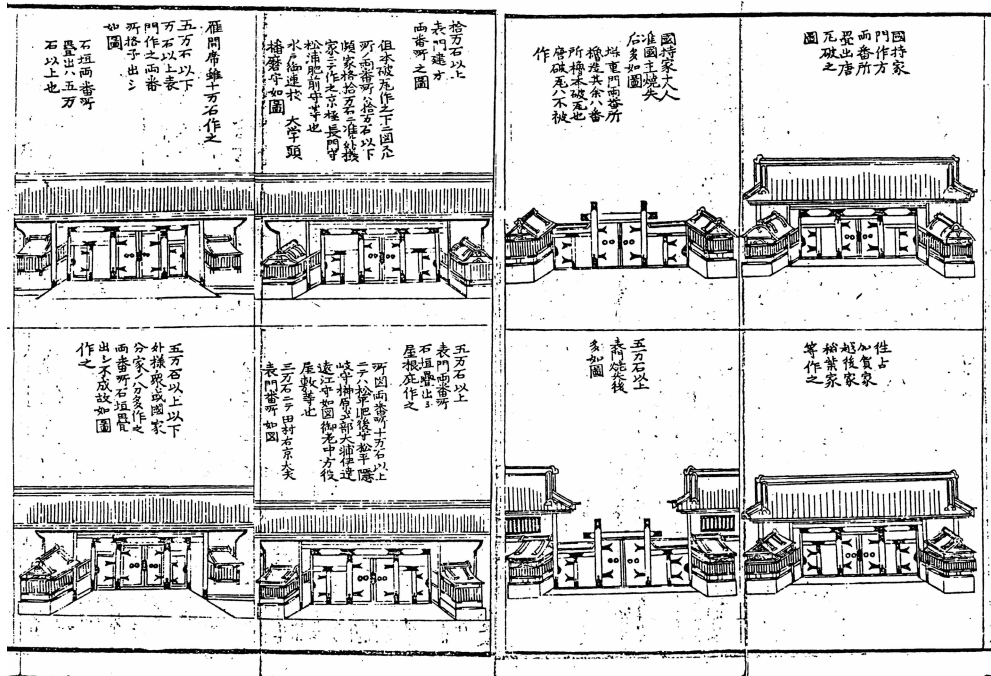


Fig. 12. Gateway styles for *daimyō*, as set out in *Aobyōshi*  
(Source: *Edo sōsho*, vol. II, pp. 22-24)

The diagrams in the second column from the right of the diagram show roofless gates. This reflects a provision issued a decade after the main *bansho* regulation which decreed that these should be built after fires. The intent was to ease the financial burden on the *daimyō* and several examples of such gateways are known to have been constructed<sup>30</sup>.

The left half of the diagram shows details of the style of gateways of lower ranking *daimyō*. These are all *nagaya* with differences in the *bansho* used to distinguish status. In the column second from the left, *daimyō* above 100, 000 *koku* are shown with two *bansho* with *karahafu*, as already noted, in contravention of the 1809 regulation. Below them, *daimyō* above 50,000 *koku* are shown with two *bansho* but these have only simple pent roofs.

On the left side of the diagram are the details of *nagaya* for *daimyō* of lowest standing in the Tokugawa order: at the top, *daimyō* between 50,000 and 10,000 *koku* do not use any *bansho*, restricted instead to two projecting grill windows. Beneath them, *daimyō* below 50,000 *koku* and *tozama daimyō* have a single *bansho* with gable roof and projecting grill window on the opposite side.

<sup>30</sup> The two illustrations in the second column from the right show gateways with no roof, and the main architrave, or *kabuki* 冠木, exposed as the principal feature. The text inserted with the upper drawing states that sixteen *kunimochi daimyō* and many of the *jun-kokushu* 准国主 used the gateway style illustrated after fire destroyed their mansions. This is a roofless gateway with two *bansho* and no *karahafu* used for the roofs. The lower diagram shows the style employed by *daimyō* below 50,000 *koku* after the fire: a roofless gateway and two *bansho* with a simple pent roof set into the walls of the flanking *nagaya*. For the 1819/10<sup>th</sup> month edict see: ZAISEI KEIZAI SHIRYŌ GAKKAI (ed.) (1922-1925): *Nihon zaisei*..., *op cit.*, vol. VIII, p. 1227. The only surviving example is the main gateway from the Edo mansion of the Sanada. This was moved back to their domain of Matsushima in 1864 together with the rest of the mansion after the abolition of the *sankin kōtai* system.



These diagrams together attempt to represent an architectural order that corresponds with the Tokugawa order. It is an unofficial formulation in which specific instances of gateway architecture are cited, suggesting that the diagrams reflect actual examples, while the written regulations of 1809 reveal government intentions that were not necessarily being followed over twenty years later when the *Aobyōshi* was compiled.

Evidence of actual gateways supports the illustrations rather than the regulations. The only extant *kunimochi daimyō* gateway is that of the Ikeda of Tottori, today located outside the Tokyo National Museum at Ueno but originally found in the sector of the city in front of Edo Castle [fig. 13]. Its architectural form matches the diagram for *kunimochi daimyō*, especially the use of *karahafu*. A large model called the *buke hinagata*, or ‘typical warrior architecture’, made for the Meiji government and displayed at the Vienna Exhibition in 1873, is also similar to the Ikeda gateway and *Aobyōshi* diagram for *kunimochi daimyo*. It has a free-standing gateway with two *bansho*, each with *karahafu* on the roofs, [fig. 14]<sup>31</sup>. Photographs of two other gateways destroyed during the war-time bombing of Tokyo, from the principal mansion of the Ikeda of Okayama (Bizen), and a secondary mansion of the Shimazu of Satsuma, also have two *bansho* with *karahafu* roofs, agreeing with the information provided by the diagram in *Aobyōshi*<sup>32</sup>.



Fig. 13. Main gateway of the Ikeda, *daimyō* of Tottori. Late Edo period.  
Tokyo National Museum (Source: author's photograph)

<sup>31</sup> This was the first international exhibition at which the new Meiji government participated but the objects displayed still reflected the Tokugawa polity. The author identified this model in June, 2003 during an investigation at the then *Museum für Völkerkunde* (now Weltmuseum Wien). The official label from the 1874 exhibition, including the division in which it was entered (registration number 19-1), is visible on the wooden base of the front section of the model (on the left of fig. 14). This was compared to the official list of objects displayed (published in: TŌKYŌ KOKURITSU BUNKAZAI KENKYŪJO (ed.) (1997): *Meijiki bankoku hakurankai bijutsuhin shuppin mokuroku*. Tokyo: *Chūō kōron bijutsu shuppan*, p. 177. The author announced the discovery in: COALDRAKE, William (2003): “Japan at Vienna: The Discovery of Meiji Architectural Models from the 1873 Vienna Exhibition”. In: *Archiv für Völkerkunde*, no. 53, pp. 27-43.

<sup>32</sup> See pre-war photographs and other records published in: BUNKA-CHŌ (ed.) (2003): *Sensaitō ni yoru shōshitsu bunkazai*. Tokyo: Ebisu Kosyo Publication, pp. 322-323, 455-456.



Fig. 14. Gateway of *Buke hinagata* (*daimyō* mansion model), displayed in 1874 at Vienna International Exhibition (Weltausstellung 1873 Wien). World Museum, Vienna (prior to restoration) (Source: author's photograph)

*Aobyōshi* also furnishes evidence about the gateway used by the Maeda *daimyō* at his Hongō residence. The diagram at the lower right shows a free-standing gateway with two *bansho* with simple gabled roofs, not the *karahafu* of other *kunimochi*. The caption states that the gateway style shown was from 'a long time ago' (*ōko* [往古]), that is, well before the early 1840s when *Aobyōshi* was published. *Yogyō benshi*, an earlier compendium of information about *daimyō* gateways compiled c. 1812, states that the Maeda gateway had been rebuilt in a simpler style following a fire in 1730<sup>33</sup>. By 1840s, the gateway had no *bansho* on the left side, as revealed by a Hiroshige *ukiyo-e* print of Hongō featuring the Maeda mansion as a backdrop [fig. 15]. Unfortunately, the print cuts off the right side of the gateway so it is not known whether there was a *bansho* on the right. A *doro-e* offers similar evidence [fig. 16]. *Doro-e* were paintings depicting the *daimyō* mansions of Edo. They mostly date to the 1830s-40s and were intended as souvenirs, with plaster mixed with the paint (hence the name, which means literally 'mud pictures) to make them cheaper<sup>34</sup>. Like the Hiroshige print, this view of the Maeda mansion shows only the left half of the gateway, with no *bansho* on the visible side, only a simple window with horizontal slats. Perhaps if there had been a *bansho* on the right side, both artists would have made an effort to include it.

<sup>33</sup> NISHIAKI, Yoshihiro (西秋良宏) (ed.) (2000): *Kagaden saihō. Tōkyō daigaku hongō kyanpusu no iseki* (加賀殿再訪—東京大学本郷キャンパスの遺跡). Tokyo: *Tōkyō Daigaku Sōgō Kenkyū Hakubutsukan*, p. 67.

<sup>34</sup> OKUMA, Yoshikuni (大熊嘉邦) (1937): "Doro-e to *daimyō* yashiki" (泥絵と大名屋敷). In: *Tōyō kenchiku* 1, pp. 2-9, 54-62, 107-114.



Fig. 15. Utagawa Hiroshige, 'View of Hongō', from the series *Famous Places of Edo*, 1854 (Source: Bunkyō Furusato Rekishikan)



Fig. 16. Artist unknown, 'Hongō Kaga Mansion', *doro-e*, 1840s (Source: Bunkyō Furusato Rekishikan)

## The Akamon and ‘Painting the Town Red’

Where is the Akamon positioned in this reconstruction of the changing fortunes of *daimyō* gateway architecture? In terms of ritual, the Akamon was the successor to the *onarimon*, built specially to receive and commemorate a particular person. Typologically, it was architecturally identical to the gateways of the *kunimochi daimyō*, with a freestanding structure at the centre, flanked by *bansho*, each with a *karahafu* roof. In this article it has been argued that this composite gateway form evolved, one could argue devolved, from the elaborate *yotsuashimon* type with its *karahafu* of early Edo, governed by Tokugawa regulations tempered by reality.

There is one feature of the Akamon that is not covered by any regulations, the red colour. As discussed at the beginning of this article, the red symbolized the marriage of a shogun’s daughter to a *daimyō* and all that entailed in terms of connections within the Tokugawa order. There were no fewer than fifteen other marriages between Tokugawa shogun and *daimyō*<sup>35</sup>. A red gateway was built on at least one other occasion of a shogunal daughter’s marriage. A picture scroll shows part of a red gateway built at Akasaka at the second mansion (*naka yashiki*) of the Tokugawa branch family of Kii<sup>36</sup>. This gateway was occasioned by the marriage of Tanehime, the adopted daughter of the tenth shogun Ieharu, to the Kii *daimyō* Tokugawa Harutomi, in 1787. Although only the lower part of the entrance and flanking walls is visible, this appears to have been a *nagayamon* with *namako-gawara*, or ‘sea-slug’ wall tiles similar to those used for the Akamon.

Pictorial sources reveal an extraordinary fact that has not been taken into account in Akamon research. By the last decades of Tokugawa rule, red gateways were not restricted to those built for the weddings of shogunal daughters. The expression ‘to paint the town red’, used at the beginning of this article to describe the celebratory meaning of Yōhime’s gateway, should be used at the end of this study to characterise the way many of the gateways at *daimyō* mansions in the central sectors of Edo city were also decorated with red. An exhaustive review of evidence of red gateways lies outside the scope of this article but, by way of illustration, two gateways with their entrance areas painted bright red are shown in Utagawa Hiroshige’s *ukiyo-e* series *Famous Places: A Hundred Scenes of Edo*: at Hibiya for the Nabeshima, *daimyō* of Saga domain, and at Kasumigaseki for the Asano of Hiroshima domain (Aki province). The Nabeshima gateway is shown as a *nagayamon* with the entrance area and two *bansho* painted a vivid red [fig. 17]. Hiroshige depicts their roofs as gently curved, improbably halfway between a *karahafu* and a standard gable. *Doro-e* confirm the accuracy of the red colouring shown by Hiroshige for the Nabeshima and Asano gateways, and that the *bansho* of the Nabeshima had *karahafu* despite Hiroshige’s equivocation. Other *doro-e* show red gateways: that of the Ii of Hikone

<sup>35</sup> KAWAJIRI, Sadamu (2017): “Tōkyō fushigi tankentai: Akasaka, Ōtemachi...Tōdai igai ni mo akamon ga atta”, *Nikkei Style*, <http://style.nikkei.com/article/2017/1/27> [Date accessed 4/6/2017]. On the marriage of Tokugawa daughters, see: KŌEKI ZAIDAN HŌJIN TOKUGAWA KINEN ZAIDAN, TŌKYŌTO EDO TŌKYŌ HAKUBUTSUKAN (公益財団法人徳川記念財団・東京都江戸東京博物館) (ed.) (2017): *Tokugawa shōgunke no konrei* (徳川将軍家の婚礼). Nagoya: Tokugawa kinen zaidan.

<sup>36</sup> *Gonyūyo ongyōretsuzu* “Scroll Illustrating the Wedding Procession of Princess Tanehime”, 18th century, Tokugawa Memorial Foundation. TŌKYŌTO EDO TŌKYŌ HAKUBUTSUKAN (東京都江戸東京博物館) (ed.) (2007): *Ōedo zukan (bukehen)* (大江戸図鑑(武家編)). Tokyo: Asakura shoten, pp. 118-119.

(which is shown as unpainted wood by Hiroshige), the Mito Tokugawa at Koishikawa, and the Asano of Hiroshima, also shown as red by Hiroshige<sup>37</sup>.



Fig. 17. Utagawa Hiroshige, 'Hibiya and Soto-Sakurada from Yamashita-cho', from the series *A Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, 1850s (Source: Brooklyn Museum)

In terms of the Maeda mansion at Hongō, this is shown with not one but three 'aka' *mon* in the 1840s and 1850s in the Hiroshige print and *doro-e* painting discussed earlier in connection with the style of the *daimyō*'s own gateway [figs. 15-16]. Both depictions show Yōhime's gateway, what is now called the Akamon, at the centre, with the rear entrance to Yōhime's residence to the left, and the *daimyō*'s gateway to the right. Both the print and the painting agree that all three gateways are red. Another *doro-e* showing the same scene, in the Ishikawa Prefectural History Museum, renders the *daimyō*'s gateway as unpainted but such inconsistencies as this, seen also with Hiroshige's Nabeshima *bansho* roofs, are common to popular art and do not change the general thrust of this argument. In fact, Hosoya Keiko points out that Yōhime's gateway was not called the Akamon until after the Maeda mansion

<sup>37</sup> Tōkyōto Edo-Tōkyō Hakubutsukan (ed.) (2007): *Ōedo zukan [bukehen]*. Tokyo: Asakura shoten, pp. 116-119.

site became part of the new imperial university in the Meiji period precisely because there were two other red gateways in its immediate vicinity. In a document of 1885, recording the relocation of the university's administrative headquarters to a building of the Faculty of Law and Arts, the name of the gateway, which had been referred to as the 'Nishimon' or West Gateway, was corrected in red ink (coincidentally one presumes) to 'Aka'mon'<sup>38</sup>. It would have invited confusion to single out one of these as the 'Red Gateway' while the other two stood, let alone all the others that had proliferated in late Tokugawa Edo city<sup>39</sup>.

Ōkuma Yoshikuni, writing from his vantage point in pre-war Tokyo when more gateways survived, states that the *daimyō* gateways were routinely painted either red or black or left plain, with no apparent reason for the choice<sup>40</sup>. The Ikeda gateway at Tokyo National Museum is an example of the black gateway (now known as the Kuromon). There is no reference to colour in any of the known regulations, strangely at odds with the *bakufu*'s pre-occupation with every other detail of gateway architecture. Synthetically manufactured red, which, as it has been shown, the latest scientific analysis has found on the oldest surviving parts of the Akamon, was readily available. With its use *daimyō* had found a cost-effective way of accentuating their presence in the streetscapes of Edo. Maybe the more general use of red on gateways dated to after the construction of the Akamon in 1827; certainly from the 1840s Hiroshige's prints and the *doro-e* record their brilliance. By then Tokugawa officials had other things on their minds with pressure from overseas and revolutionary movements from the provinces. Such things as *karahafu* on *bansho* and red gateways were the least of their problems. The growth of the *sonnō joi* movement to 'respect the emperor and expel the barbarians presented a problem of a different colour, the arrival on Japanese shores of the *kurofune* or 'Black Ships'.

<sup>38</sup> HOSOYA, Keiko, (2017): "Akamon to *Tōkyō daigaku*". In: HORIUCHI, Hideki / NISHIAKI, Yoshihiro (eds.) (2017): *Akamon...*, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

<sup>39</sup> The red was even used by well-off farmers to decorate the lattice work on the windows of their homes (*bengara kōshi*), KITANO, Nobuhiko (2017): "Akamon...", *op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>40</sup> ŌKUMA YOSHIKUNI (1937): "Doro-e to..." , *op. cit.*, p.129. He repeats the misconception about this red by stating it was *shunuri* (p. 107).