

## Memorial Stupa for the Martyrs of the Genki Rebellion of 1571

The Peace Tower (Heiwa no To) and the Mound for Pacifying the Spirits of Martyrs of the Buddha Dharma commemorate the attack on Mount Hiei by the warlord Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) on November 12th, 1571. Oda Nobunaga's forces attacked Sakamoto at the eastern foot of Mount Hiei, burning down the city and all twenty-one shrine buildings of the Hiyoshi Taisha shrine, which protects Enryakuji. Nobunaga's troops then climbed Mount Hiei and for three days and nights destroyed the Konpon Chudo (Central Hall) and more than five hundred temples in the three main areas and sixteen valleys of Mount Hiei. Over a thousand people who had fled to Mount Hiei from the fires in Sakamoto, and more than a thousand monks, were massacred. Oda Nobunaga was trying to reunify the country after more than a century of civil war, and Enryakuji was allied with feudal clans such as the Asakura of Echizen and the Azai of Omi, which were opposed to Nobunaga.

Mount Hiei was rebuilt under the patronage of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), who completed the reunification of Japan, and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), who established the Tokugawa shogunate, which ruled Japan from 1603 until 1867. However, the terrible events of 1571 continued to cast a lingering shadow, and over four hundred years later, it was decided to build a commemorative mound for the martyrs of the Buddha Dharma. Relics were buried and a stupa erected to pacify the spirits of those killed by Nobunaga. Transcending feelings of love and hatred, familiarity and resentment, commemorative services are also held for the spirit of Nobunaga who himself was assassinated in 1582, dying in the flames of Honnoji in Kyoto. The characters for “world peace” carved on the stupa are in the hand of Yamada Etai (1900–1999), the 253rd Abbot of Hieizan.