

Mount Hiei World Religion Summit

Pope John Paul II, who was deeply committed to interfaith dialogue and cooperation, invited representatives of world religions to gather in Assisi on October 27th, 1986 for a World Day of Prayer for Peace. Prayer services for world peace were conducted by each of the different faiths.

Yamada Etai (1900–1999), the 253rd Tendai Abbot of Enryakuji, participated, and he later announced that he would also convene a prayer gathering for world peace in Japan. Representatives of various religions in Japan were already involved in an array of activities promoting world peace, and at Abbot Etai's request, they became co-sponsors of the event. The first "Mount Hiei World Religion Summit" took place at the top of Mount Hiei in August 1987. Leaders of faiths gathered from many countries and prayed together for world peace. Prayers for peace are offered every year, and a commemorative assembly is held on every tenth anniversary.

However, in contrast to these ideals, an increase in inequality and the concentration of wealth globally have led to discrimination and terrorism, and the democratic values of freedom and equality are under threat. Dictators and exclusionary movements that seek to assert their superiority by oppressing the weak, minorities, and refugees, are gaining social acceptance and expanding their power. Despite all obstacles and dangers, it is the duty of religious people to work for the realization of world peace through dialogue and prayer.

The earth is a "shared boat" on which we all ride, and we must transcend selfish desires and face the world's problems with wisdom. The Mount Hiei World Religion Summit seeks to define what world peace means, and to confirm the duty and responsibility of all religions to work to achieve it.