

## Site of the Kaya no Miya Residence

The expanse of land that stretches from here to Karasuma Street once held the residence of Prince Asahiko (1824–1891), the fourth son of Fushimi no Miya Kuniie. For many years, the prince served as a Buddhist priest, rising to become head of the Tendai-sect Shoren-in Temple in Kyoto. However, due to the increasing reliance placed on him by Emperor Komei (1831–1867), the prince eventually left the priesthood so he could provide his full support to the Emperor. On his return to secular life, he became formally known as Nakagawa no Miya.

A large Japanese *torreya* (*kaya*) tree grew on these grounds, giving the prince the nickname, Kaya no Miya. During the political ferment that led to the Meiji Restoration, Prince Asahiko supported a policy of reconciliation between the Imperial Court and the shogunate. This made him enemies in the faction of imperialist loyalists who sought to expel foreigners and restore the imperial primacy. As a result, Prince Asahiko was exiled to Hiroshima in 1868, although he was later pardoned. A large stone monument (*ihara-hi*) praises his achievements and his service to the Emperor. Among the names carved into the stone is that of Prince Nashimoto no Miya (1874–1951), his fourth son.