

Bloodstained Ceiling from Fushimi Castle

The ceiling above the corridor in the Main Hall is unusual. It was built with floorboards from Fushimi Castle which were stained with the blood of hundreds of samurai who killed themselves during a decisive siege in the sixteenth century.

In 1600, the samurai Torii Mototada (1539–1600) and some 2,000 other warriors attempted to hold Fushimi Castle against overwhelming besieging forces under the command of Ishida Mitsunari (1559–1600). When Torii's position became hopeless, he and his men committed ritual disembowelment (*seppuku*) to save themselves from the disgrace of being captured and decapitated by the enemy.

Torii's stand gave his master, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), leader of the forces based in eastern Japan, time to regroup. Later in the year, Ieyasu won the decisive Battle of Sekigahara, changing the course of Japanese history. Ieyasu went on to complete the unification of Japan and to found the Tokugawa dynasty, which held power for more than 250 years throughout the Edo period (1603–1867).

The floorboards from Fushimi Castle were incorporated into the ceiling of the temple as a memorial to the heroism of Torii and his men. Based on the bloody imprints that can still be identified, scholars believe some 380 men died on these floorboards. If you look at the bloodstained ceiling, it is said that you can see the body and face of Torii himself.