

## **Toyokuni Jinja Shrine**

The deity worshipped at Toyokuni Shrine is Toyokuni Daimyōjin, the posthumous name of the deified Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), who unified Japan and controlled the country during the last decades of the sixteenth century. The name Toyokuni, a shortened form of an ancient name for Japan, was awarded to Hideyoshi by the imperial court in 1599, several months after his death, marking his elevation to the status of a major deity.

Although the shrine is now located just north of the Kyoto National Museum, the original site of the main sanctuary was at Taiko Daira, a level stretch of land on the hillside where the entrance to Hideyoshi's Mausoleum (Hokoku byō) can now be found. The shrine buildings were particularly ornate and served as models for the Toshogu Shrine in Nikko (a World Heritage site), dedicated to the first Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu (1543–1616).

Hideyoshi remained popular with the people of Kyoto even in death, and crowds of people thronged to celebrate festivals. This alarmed Ieyasu, and when open warfare later broke out with Hideyoshi's heir, Ieyasu cut off all support for the shrine and revoked Hideyoshi's divine title. By the 1770s, there was no longer any trace of the building's once-grand presence. The shrine was revived by the Meiji government and was established at its present location when a portion of the grounds of Hōkōji Temple was awarded to it in 1880.