

Hōkoku-jinja Shrine

This Shinto shrine honors the founder of Osaka Castle, Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1537–1598). Hideyoshi was a samurai who rose from humble beginnings during a long period of widespread military conflict to become Japan's most powerful samurai lord. By the time of his death, Hideyoshi controlled virtually the entire country, but the Toyotomi family never became a dynasty. Hideyoshi was succeeded by his former retainer Ieyasu Tokugawa (1543–1616), who held the position of shogun until Hideyoshi's son was old enough to receive it. Rather than relinquish his power, in 1615 Tokugawa attacked and destroyed Osaka Castle, wiping out the Toyotomi family. This shrine was originally called Toyokuni Sha, written with the characters *toyo*, from Toyotomi's name, and *kuni*, meaning "country." After ending the Toyotomi family line, Tokugawa had the shrine dismantled.

The shrine was rebuilt in 1879, two and a half centuries after Tokugawa's coup, by order of Emperor Meiji (1852–1912), in whose name the Tokugawa shogunate was overthrown. Initially, the shrine operated as a branch of the Toyokuni-jinja Shrine in Kyoto. In 1921, it became an independent shrine, and its name was changed to Hōkoku to avoid confusion. The shrine was originally located in the Nakanoshima area of the city and was relocated to the castle grounds in 1961.