

## **Three-Storied Pagoda at Seiganto-ji Temple**

One of the most eye-catching buildings depicted in the Nachi Pilgrimage Mandala is a three-storied pagoda. Like many other structures shown in the 500-year-old mandala, the pagoda burned down in 1581 amid the civil unrest of the Warring States period (1467–1603). Unlike the rest of the complex, however, it was not rebuilt immediately afterward. Finally, in 1972, a new three-storied pagoda was built on the grounds of Seiganto-ji Temple, and is now one of the area's best-known attractions.

The upper floors of the pagoda offer unobstructed views of Nachi Waterfall to the north. However, many photographers also shoot from south of the pagoda, to include its striking vermilion form in the frame alongside the cascade.

### *Sculpture and Painting*

Each story of the pagoda above the ground floor (by custom, not included in the three-story count) contains a statue of a different deity. The first story has a statue of Fudo Myo-o, who was once worshiped at Nachi Waterfall and appears in many legends about the falls. The second floor has a statue of Amida Buddha, who presides over the Pure Land paradise in the west. The third and top story, with views of Nachi waterfall, has a statue of Thousand-Armed Kannon, bodhisattva of compassion. In Buddhist belief, the waterfall's deity, Hiro Gongen, is a manifestation of Kannon.

Contemporary Buddhist murals also line the walls within the pagoda's three stories:

**1st Story:** *Kumano Nachi Paradise Mandala*, by Mera Michihiro

**2nd Story:** *Buddha and Retinue Arriving to Welcome Worshipers to Paradise*, by Hayashiya Tan'yo

**3rd Story:** *Diamond Realm Mandala*, by Hayashiya Takuo