

Memorial to the Naval Battle of the Sea of Japan

This memorial at the summit of Mt. Omine (114.5 m) commemorates Japan's naval victory during the Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905). The war started over rival imperial ambitions in Asia, as both sides sought to control strategic territories in China. The Naval Battle of the Sea of Japan took place on May 27, 1905, in the Tsushima Strait, off the coast of Fukutsu. The Japanese fleet was commanded by Admiral Togo Heihachiro (1848–1934). During the decisive battle, two-thirds of the Russian fleet was destroyed, effectively ending the war.

The memorial is located at the highest point of the Watari Peninsula, and was erected in 1934, the year of Togo's death. It loosely resembles the forward deck and cannon of the Japanese battleship *Mikasa*, the flagship of the Japanese fleet. There are two bronze plaques on the memorial: one depicts Admiral Togo Heihachiro, and the other commemorates the maritime signal flag that Togo ordered hoisted on the *Mikasa* to rally the fleet as it sailed into battle. The flag conveyed the message, "Let each man do his utmost." The memorial was originally intended to be named "Victory in the Russo-Japanese War," but according to local accounts, Togo objected to the word "victory" as he mourned the casualties on both sides.

Admiral Togo was sometimes referred to as the "Japanese Lord Nelson" for his strategic abilities. As a naval cadet at the Royal Naval College in London, he developed an admiration for Lord Nelson. His decision to raise the signal flag in battle may have been inspired by those raised on Nelson's flagship HMS *Victory* at the Battle of Trafalgar a century earlier.

Behind the memorial is a small observation area overlooking the Tsushima Strait, where the battle took place. A cast-iron map indicates the key engagements in the battle.