

## **Honda Family Graves**

These structures mark the graves of members of the Honda, a family of samurai bureaucrats whose leaders patronized the temple during the Edo period (1603–1867). The lord of Himeji Castle, Honda Tadamasa (1575–1631), was shocked to learn that the temple had become badly dilapidated through two years of occupation by the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598). Tadamasa began a fundraising campaign to restore the temple to its former glory, and it is thanks to him that so many of Engyōji's core structures remain today. Tadamasa's father, Tadakatsu, and three of their successors are memorialized at this site. Tadakatsu was one of the most trusted advisors of Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616), the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate.

Each of the five Honda heirs is memorialized by a stone memorial tower (gorintō) set within identical square pagodas. The heavily tiled pyramidal roofs have gently upturned eaves and are capped with spherical finials. All five buildings are the Cultural Properties Designated by Hyogo Prefecture.

Two additional stone stupas at the site honor Tadamasa's son, Honda Tadatoki, and grandson, Kōchiyo. Behind the stupa memorializing Tadatoki are three smaller graves belonging to samurai who took their own lives as an act of ultimate loyalty and sacrifice following Tadatoki's death.