

Tokoji is a temple of the Obaku School of Japanese Zen Buddhism, which came to Japan in the seventeenth century with the arrival of a Buddhist monk and philosopher named Ingen. Tokoji was built in 1691 by the Mori clan, who ruled the Choshu Domain (modern day Yamaguchi Prefecture) from 1603 to 1867. The large cemetery behind the temple contains the graves of odd-numbered generations of the Mori lords, beginning with the third generation. The graves are surrounded by hundreds of stone lanterns which each represent one of the lord's retainers. The temple grounds also contain several buildings nationally recognized as Important Cultural Properties. The spirituality that these buildings express through a unique blend of Chinese-influenced architecture and craftsmanship has made Tokoji among the most highly regarded Buddhist temples in the region.