

Grave of Prince Koretaka

Prince Koretaka (844–897) was the first son of Emperor Montoku (827–858), the 55th emperor of Japan. Emperor Montoku had six imperial consorts and 29 children. Despite Prince Koretaka reportedly being his father's favorite, fierce rivalries within the imperial court prevented him being named crown prince and heir to his father's throne. Instead, the prince's younger half-brother Korehito (850–880) assumed the title of emperor at the age of eight in December 858. Prince Koretaka was subsequently given a number of largely ceremonial posts, such as provincial governorships, before becoming a priest in 872. Embittered by his failure to become emperor, Prince Koretaka spent his last years in Ohara before his death in 897.

Several towns in Japan have claimed to be the prince's last resting place, but the small tomb on a hillside overlooking Ohara is the location recognized by the Imperial Household Agency. Experts from the Agency excavated each of the gravesites, but only the Ohara tomb was found to contain human remains.

The grave can be found up a short flight of stone steps amid a forest of tall pine trees. The simple, moss-covered monument is ringed by a stone fence. According to local legend, Prince Koretaka wished to be buried at this spot because a nearby stream flows into the Takano River, which eventually reaches Kyoto. He believed that his spirit would be able to return to the ancient capital by following the stream.