

Niōmon Gate (Important Cultural Property)

A small stone bridge marks the boundary of the sacred grounds of the Taiyūin Mausoleum, the final resting place of the third Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–1651). The mausoleum was built to his specifications and completed in 1653.

Just beyond the bridge is the Niōmon Gate, the first of three protective gates that guard the mausoleum. This gate houses the Niō (Benevolent Kings), who are protectors of the historical Buddha. One of the kings has an open mouth, forming the first syllable of the Japanese syllabary, *ah*, while the other has a closed mouth, forming the last syllable, *un*. Together they signify the beginning and end of all things.

Omizuya Pavilion (Important Cultural Property)

Worshippers stopping at this pavilion to purify themselves might see a dragon reflected on the water from the ceiling above. The dragon was painted by Kanō Yasunobu (1614–1685), a renowned master of the Kanō school of painting. Although the painting has greatly deteriorated over time, the powerful lines of the dragon's body are still discernible. The pavilion is also noted for its detailed metalwork, colorful carvings, and fretwork.