

Kozan Park

Kozan Park presents a microcosm of Yamaguchi's history from the fourteenth century onwards, in its statues, monuments, and historical structures associated with past rulers and influential figures. The grounds are planted with plum, cherry, and maple trees, and azalea and hydrangea shrubs, offering scenic views throughout the year. Admission to the park is free of charge.

Statue of Sesshu

Near the entrance of the park there is a monument of Sesshu (1420–1506), a Zen Buddhist priest who was one of Japan's most prominent ink wash landscape painters. He resided intermittently for many years in Yamaguchi and had a studio in the town where he painted some of his most famous works. He is also believed to have designed the garden at nearby Joeiji Temple, which is renowned for its stone arrangements.

Rurikoji Temple Five-Storied Pagoda

Walking counterclockwise within the park brings visitors to Rurikoji Pagoda, one of the most eminent attractions in the park. The five-storied pagoda was commissioned by Ouchi Morimi (1377–1431), the head of the Ouchi clan, the rulers of modern-day Yamaguchi Prefecture between the mid-fourteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries. It was completed circa 1442 and has never toppled or been rebuilt. It is designated a National Treasure for its historical and cultural significance.

Rurikoji Temple and Ouchi Hiroyo on Horseback

The main hall of Rurikoji Temple is located behind the pagoda. The temple was founded in 1471 and is dedicated to Yakushi Nyorai, the Buddha of medicine and healing. Near the temple is a statue of Ouchi Hiroyo (1326–1380) on horseback. He is credited with developing the Yamaguchi basin and laying the foundations for the town that would become the modern-day city of Yamaguchi.

Chinryutei and Rosando

The path continues to two historical buildings from the Edo period (1603–1867): Chinryutei, the outbuilding of a merchant house, and Rosando, a tea house, built by the thirteenth daimyo of the Choshu domain (modern-day Yamaguchi Prefecture). The buildings were used by anti-shogunate activists instrumental in bringing about the Meiji Restoration of 1868. This historic event marked the end of the political authority of the

shogunate and the restoration of sovereign power to the emperor. Visitors can enter Chinryutei and climb the steep stairs to the second floor where clandestine meetings were held by important Choshu domain figures, such as Kido Takayoshi (1833–1877), who sought the restoration of rule under the emperor. Portraits of Kido and others are displayed inside the building.

Mori Family Burial Site

The Mori family replaced the Ouchi clan as the rulers of Yamaguchi from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Mori Takachika (1819–1871), the thirteenth daimyo of the Choshu domain, his son Motonori (1839–1896), the last daimyo of the domain, and his grandson Motoakira (1865–1938) are buried in a family cemetery behind the Rosando tea house. Mori Takachika was a key player in the Meiji Restoration, allying the Choshu domain with the Satsuma (present-day Kagoshima Prefecture) and Tosa (present-day Kochi Prefecture) domains in the fight against the forces of the shogunate.