Kara-mon, the Imperial Messenger Gate (National Treasure)

The Imperial Messenger Gate (Kara-mon), designated a National Treasure, is the gate traditionally reserved for imperial envoys entering the residence of the abbot. It was built in 1599 and renovated in 2010.

The gate displays four shallow relief crests rendered in *maki-e* style gold leaf on black lacquer ground. The chrysanthemums are composed of sixteen-petals, a design exclusively reserved for the imperial family, and two paulownia flowers with leaves.

The paulownia crest was originally also used by the imperial family, and subsequently adopted by Toyotomi Hideyoshi as the crest of the House of Toyotomi.