

## Nandaimon, Remains of the Great South Gate of Motsuji Temple

The Great South Gate (Nandaimon) originally served as the symbolic entrance to the sacred precincts of Motsuji Temple. It was also the first sight many visitors saw upon arrival in Hiraizumi. The thirteenth-century Japanese chronicle *Azumakagami*, a historical record of the Kamakura period (1185–1333), describes the Nandaimon as a “great, two-storied gate,” suggesting a large, imposing structure.

Excavation of the Motsuji Temple grounds has revealed not only the twelve foundation stones of the Great South Gate, still visible at their original locations, but also the remains of a wall and gutters that once belonged to this massive gate. These elements suggest that Motsuji may have been comparable in size to the palace in Heiankyo, the capital city of Japan during the Heian period (794–1185).