

Karakane Torii, Chinese Bronze Gate

This *torii* gate was made of bronze in 1799. In Shinto belief and architecture, *torii* gates mark the boundary between worldly and sacred spaces, acting as a gateway to the sacred realm of deities. The center-upper frame of the *torii* reads “Nikko Futarasan,” and the circular-shaped engravings display the shrine’s crest.

There are lotus flower patterns on the lower sections of the pillars. The Buddhist deity Kannon, the goddess of mercy, is often portrayed riding on a lotus. The lotus motif is rarely seen at Shinto shrines. Its presence here is a reminder of the historical fusion of Buddhism with Japan’s indigenous Shinto faith which lasted until the Meiji period (1868–1912).