

Kuromon, Black Gate

Built in the early seventeenth century, the Kuromon was originally the main gate of the private quarters of Rinnoji Temple's *monzeki*, who was a member of the imperial family, with authority over the highly important Kan'eiji Temple in Tokyo and Enryakuji Temple near Kyoto. His being resident in Nikko is testament to the historical and religious significance of Rinnoji Temple. The carvings of chrysanthemums on the gate are the imperial chrysanthemum crest reserved for use by the imperial family.

The Kuromon has served as the main gate to Rinnoji Temple since 1877, when the Hall of the Three Buddhas was relocated here. The Hall previously stood near Nikko Futarasan Shrine and was moved here after the 1871 fire in which the *monzeki*'s private quarters burnt down. The Kuromon and the nearby Gohotendo Hall are all that remain of the *monzeki*'s estate.