

Karamon Chinese Gate

In contrast to the three previous gates, the Karamon is smaller in scale, and its carvings are very different from the fierce guardians displayed on the other gates. Above the entryway are a pair of dragons and a pair of cranes. Iemitsu was born in the year of the dragon, and the cranes symbolize long life. One hundred pigeons are carved along the wainscoting of the gate. The pigeon is associated with the god of warriors, Hachiman, and is symbolic of the Tokugawa house's martial roots. These features combined together indicate that the visitor has passed from the dangers of the world below into the world above.

Chinese gates are defined by the *karahafu* Chinese gable over the entranceway, which has a rounded shape rather like the form of a recurve bow. The *karahafu* indicates high rank and was reserved for gates used by people of high rank, hence its utilization at the entrance to the main hall of Iemitsu's mausoleum. The gate is called the Chinese Gate because it is based on Chinese architectural styles. However, as in the case of the Gate of the Yasha, this is actually a Japanese interpretation of a Chinese style.