

Kokamon Gate

Iemitsu's mausoleum, in which his physical remains are interred, lies beyond this gate. The name Kokamon was conferred on this gate by the emperor and is also the name of one of the twelve gates of the Imperial Palace in Kyoto. This honor is an indication of the close ties between the Imperial House and the Tokugawa shogunate. The gate is constructed in the *ryugu*, or Dragon Shrine style. Thus, it is also known as the Ryugumon, or Gate of the Dragon Shrine. The ryugu style draws its inspiration from the architecture of China's Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and was thus considered exotic by Japanese people of the time. This style is believed to have been chosen because Iemitsu was born in the year of the dragon. A *tennyo*, heavenly female spirit similar to an angel, which is painted on the ceiling of the gate, indicates that the visitor is entering sacred ground. Although the Taiyuin is generally understated when compared with the Toshogu, the Kokamon Gate is one of the most distinctive of all the gates of the Nikkosan complex.