

This *somon*, or outer gate, is the entrance to Tōkoji Temple, an Ōbaku Zen Buddhist temple built in 1691 by the Mori clan. Ōbaku Zen was brought from China to Japan in the seventeenth century. The *somon*, like the rest of Tōkoji, is built using a unique mixture of Japanese and Chinese architectural styles. The roof of the gate and its metal ornamentation are Chinese; the decorative terminal roof tiles depict *makara*, a mythical fish of Indian origin. These appear in place of the more typical *shachihoko*, a mythical animal from Japanese folklore with the head of a tiger and the body of a carp. This water-related ornamentation is meant to protect the wooden gate from fire. The gate's red color is achieved using a mineral-based dye called *benigara*. To the right is a stele forbidding entry to visitors who have consumed alcohol or eaten vegetables like garlic, onions or leeks. This prohibition is common to all Zen Buddhist temples, as strong-smelling vegetables and addictive substances are believed to obstruct the way to enlightenment.