

This main gate, called the *sanmon* (lit. “three gates”) was built 121 years after Tokoji Temple’s establishment in 1691. The name relates to a Buddhist teaching about the three gates to enlightenment—emptiness, formlessness, inaction—and is an essential component of all Zen temples.

In the center is a slightly raised line of stone. This is the boundary that marks the entrance to the temple’s holy precinct. To the right and left of the central gate are dedications to the temple and gate that were inscribed after their construction. Stuck to the gate itself are votive slips called *senjafuda* (lit. “thousand shrine tags”) which bear the names of visitors to the temple. On the sides of the main gate are stairs leading to the structure’s second floor, which contains eighteen statues of *rakan*, trainees on the way to enlightenment. On the gate’s opposite side is a sign whose text references an Indian legend about donating land to a temple as a show of devotion to the Buddha. This alludes to the Mori clan’s generosity in providing the land on which the temple was built.