

**Chokushimon**

The Chokushimon—the gate used specifically for the passage of the emperor or his official messengers—leads into the South Gardens. While rarely opened, this is a gate for the entrance and departure of the emperor's retinue or his messengers. The original gate burned down in 1887, and the present gate was erected in 1913 according to a design done by renowned Kyoto architect Kameoka Suekichi (1865–1922).

Both Japanese- and Chinese-style elements are in evidence, such as cypress-bark roofing and gables in the Tang-dynasty style that form part of the lower structure of the four-pillared gate. The gables are adorned with highly decorative openwork and relief carvings incorporating the design motif of phoenix tail feathers—the symbol of resurrection and renewal—and a peony vining motif. Though the gate is intended only for use during imperial visits, it is also opened each October during a ritual procession from nearby Fukuoji Shrine.