

East and West Gatehouses

Tamaudun originally had a matching pair of gatehouses situated to the east and west of the main central gate of the mausoleum. The gatehouses exemplified the leading characteristics of Ryukyuan houses, some aspects of which were imported from the Japanese mainland: red tile roofs, a surrounding verandah (*engawa*) that could be completely closed to the elements by means of wooden shutters, a hierarchy of formal tatami-mat rooms, as well as a kitchen and other functional spaces. The gatehouses were raised above finely constructed Ryukyuan limestone platforms to allow the circulation of cooling air underneath.

Historical records say that the gatehouses were built in 1748, with two men appointed as guards. The guards were selected from distinguished families and served as superintendents of the grounds. One lived in the West Gatehouse until the beginning of World War II. According to records, the gatehouses served as anterooms for Buddhist priests and close relatives when the funeral of the last King of Ryukyu, Sho Tai, was held in 1901.

The current East Gatehouse is an accurate reconstruction built in 2003. It was based on a floor plan drafted by a former resident, as well as photographs and archaeological remains. No trace could be found of the foundations of the West Gatehouse during archaeological surveys in 2000 and 2001.