

Otenmon Gate

Heian Jingu is a 5:8 scale replica of the emperor's palace in Heiankyo, the capital of Heian Japan (794–1185), present-day Kyoto. This gate is a replica of the gate that would have served as the main entrance to the State Hall of the Imperial Palace, or Chodoin complex. This gate is 18.43 meters tall, which means the original would have been almost twice the size and would have been even more imposing.

The gate opens on a walled courtyard with several buildings. The Daigokuden (outer hall of worship), across from the Otenmon Gate on the far side of the courtyard, is the shrine's main hall of worship. The entrance to the shrine's landscape gardens is beside the Byakkoro Tower, to the left of the Daigokuden.

Heiankyo was modeled after Heijokyo, an earlier capital (710–794) located in Nara. Heijokyo was itself based on Chang'an (present-day Xi'an), the capital of Tang China (618–907). Each of these capitals was laid out in a grid on a north-south axis, with the entrance facing south. This followed the principles of the five elements (*wuxing*), the ancient conceptual scheme forming the basis of Chinese geomancy and feng shui.