

Karamon Gate

The Karamon Gate was built in 1628 for Zojoji Temple in Edo (now Tokyo). Like the Butsuden (Buddha Hall), the gate was donated to Kenchoji Temple in 1647 by the powerful Tokugawa shoguns (1603–1867) as part of the reconstruction of the temple. The gate is designated an Important Cultural Property and was restored in 2011.

The Karamon is the main entrance to the Hojo, the residence of the abbot. This gate is strictly reserved for use by the emperor and imperial envoys. All other visitors, and even the monks themselves, use the side entrance to the Hojo.

The grand scale of the Karamon Gate and its combination of black lacquer and elaborate gilding are typical of such buildings built by the Tokugawa. The undulating roof is in an architectural style known as *karahafu* that is reserved for important buildings in Japan.