

## **Kisomon Gate**

The large and intricately decorated Kisomon Gate is the main entrance to Menua Shodenzan Temple. It was constructed in 1851 and is the first of three gates that visitors pass through. The wooden gate is over 13 meters tall and supported by eight pillars. The two-tiered roof unusually has three overlapping gables, which protect the carvings beneath from wind and rain.

The eaves and lintels are decorated with dynamic carvings of dragons twisting through waves and lions frolicking amongst blooming peonies. These scenes are contrasted with delicate renderings of birds perched amongst blossoms and depictions of classical Chinese arts. The Kisomon Gate was built with donations from the local community. The names of the donors are inscribed on small wooden tablets placed among the carvings.

On either side of the gate, there is a statue of one of the Four Heavenly Kings, guardians of the cardinal directions. On the left is Jikokuten, lord of the east and protector of the nation. On the right is Bishamonten, lord of the north and protector of Buddhist law. The Kisomon Gate is designated an Important Cultural Property.