

## **Founder's Hall Gate**

The Founder's Hall Gate is the main entrance to Higashi Honganji. Passing through it symbolizes entry into the world of Jodo Shinshu (True Pure Land) doctrine, and absence of the usual wooden threshold across the gate represents the message that these teachings are open to everyone.

Enshrined within the gate, though not visible to the public, are statues of Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha; his disciple Ananda; and the bodhisattva Maitreya (Miroku in Japanese), the future Buddha. This combination of deities represents the preaching of the Sutra of Immeasurable Life, one of the key texts in Jodo Shinshu, which describes the Pure Land and how sentient beings may reach it through faith in Amida Buddha.

The two-story gate is approximately 27 meters tall and has the same style of hip-and-gable roof as the Founder's Hall beyond it. The current gate was completed in 1911, replacing an almost identical structure that burned down in 1864 when armed forces opposing the ruling Tokugawa shogunate set fire to Kyoto. The blaze consumed large parts of the city, including Higashi Honganji.