

Amida Hall Gate

The Amida Hall Gate is one of the two most prominent gates at Higashi Honganji that open onto Karasuma Street. This gate is smaller than the Founder's Hall Gate, the main entrance to the temple, but more ornate. It is distinguished by its curved gables and undulating bargeboards, which connote elegance and nobility. The decorative bronze details underneath the bargeboards depict auspicious plants and animals. The roof is covered with shingles of hinoki cypress bark, a style of roofing used in Japan since ancient times.

The gate does not have the usual wooden-bar threshold, symbolizing that the teachings of Jodo Shinshu (True Pure Land), the school of Buddhism to which Higashi Honganji belongs, are open to everyone. The gate's current version was completed in 1911 to replace a structure that burned down in 1864, and is slightly off-center in relation to the Amida Hall beyond it. This is because the gate was built to align with the street in front of it. That road led directly to the gate in previous centuries, but the two are now separated by the heavily trafficked Karasuma Street.