

## Tokugenji Karamon and Kayamon Gates

### Tokugenji Karamon Gate

This gate was once part of Tokugenji Temple, a Zen temple near Nara. The temple was built in 1632 by Oda Takanaga (1590–1674), Uraku's grandnephew, for private use by the Oda family. Eventually, Tokugenji fell into disrepair, and by the start of the Meiji era (1868–1912), only this gate remained. It was purchased by the Mitsui family in 1941.

The ceiling of the gate has carvings of peonies, and the door panels are ornamented with an unusual ribbed pattern. The gate is thought to be made of zelkova wood, a material which—along with the *karamon* shape itself—was generally associated with refinement and nobility.

Like the Iwasumon Gate, this imposing wooden entrance is a *karamon*. Specifically, it is a *mukai karamon*, meaning that the roof has broad, bell-shaped gables, and its central ridgeline runs parallel to the direction in which someone would pass through the gate.

### Kayamon Gate

This rustic gate differs markedly from the other gates at Urakuen. Its pillars are roughly worked tree trunks, and its roof is covered with thatch instead of cypress bark. The lintel is low, requiring visitors to lower their heads modestly as they enter.

Both the gate's simple construction and low entryway express the *wabi* aesthetic established by Sen no Rikyū (1522–1591). As it happens, the Kayamon Gate is a replica of a gate owned by the Sen family. The replica was commissioned by Mitsui Takamine (1857–1948), who practiced the Rikyū-derived Omotesenke style of tea.

The gate has an additional feature that is not readily apparent when the large wooden door stands open: a second, much smaller door called a *kugurido*. When the main door is shut, this smaller door can be opened, compelling guests to stoop even lower to enter. The *kugurido* would have been used during tea gatherings to remind guests that they were entering a different, humbler world.