Somon Gate

When the doors are open, the main gate to Shokoji Temple frames a view of the Drum Tower. The gate is almost 9 meters tall and over 5 meters wide. It has a tiled, gabled roof supported by four thick wooden pillars. Two smaller tiled roofs are set at right angles below it to protect the pillars and the gate doors (when open) from the weather. The ceramic finials on the main roof, in the shape of mythical sea creatures (*shachihoko*), are believed to protect against fire.

This type of gate, called a *koraimon*, is typically used in castle architecture. It is rare to find a large *koraimon* gate at a temple. The gate was built in 1840. During repair work that began in 1998, a tile was found with an inscription indicating the roof was tiled in 1864. The gate is designated an Important Cultural Property.