

Matsuo Basho Monument

Northeast of the Lecture Hall (Kodo) and on the left side of the stone steps leading up to the Kaizando lies a monument to the eminent seventeenth century poet Matsuo Basho (1644–1694), who was well known for his self-styled *karumi*, or “lighter” haiku works. During a visit to Toshodaiji in 1688, Basho prayed to the statue of Ganjin, and he crafted a verse that is etched into the memorial stone:

Fresh young leaves
wipe away the teardrops
from your eyes.

*wakaba shite
onme no shizuku
nuguwabaya)*

In later life, Basho became a devout Buddhist and urged other haiku exponents to avoid superficiality in their works in favor of the non-attachment that characterizes the lotus flower, which detaches itself from the mud from which it emerges.