

## Kameshima and Tsurushima

The crane (*tsuru*) and turtle (*kame*) are auspicious animals symbolizing longevity throughout East Asia. In the garden pond of Sanbō-in, they are combined in the names of the two islands, Tsurushima (Crane Island) and Kameshima (Turtle Island). Kameshima resembles a turtle, with one large stone on the right representing the neck and another on the opposite side serving as its tail. The five-needle Japanese white pine, said to be more than 500-years old, forms the turtle's shell. The island is said to represent serene stillness. In contrast, Tsurushima represents dynamic movement. The flat stones arranged around the base of the pine are likened to the wings of a crane about to take flight, and the elegant stone bridge to the crane's outstretched neck. The juxtaposition of calmness and movement in the design underlines the dynamism of the garden and evokes in the viewer the vigor of life's joys and sorrows. The patron and designer Toyotomi Hideyoshi may have shared such sentiments, particularly as he died in 1598, shortly after his opulent cherry viewing banquet. Until his passing, he employed 300 workers to work on the garden, which completion took further 27 years with the involvement of the most renowned garden stone designer of his generation, Kentei. He was subsequently bestowed the honorary title "Best under Heaven" (Tenka-ichi) for his work from Emperor Go-Yōzei.