

Bussokuseki

Direct representations of Shakyamuni Buddha, the historical Buddha and founder of Buddhism, were taboo until around the first century CE. His image was considered too sacred to be portrayed in art. Instead, a sense of his presence was often conveyed in the form of *bussokuseki*—stone slabs bearing his footprints. *Bussokuseki* were among the earliest ways to represent the Buddha and can be found throughout Asia.

Kosanji Temple's *bussokuseki* was carved in the Edo period (1603–1867). The footprints are engraved with various Buddhist symbols. These include a lucky double-fish mark, an indestructible mallet of power, and also a thousand-spoked wheel, which represents the historical Buddha, his teachings, and the path to enlightenment.