

## Stele with Poem by Yosano Akiko

Here in Kamakura  
though you are the Buddha—  
Shakyamuni,  
what a handsome man you are  
standing in this summer grove.

与謝野晶子歌碑

「かまくらや御ほとけなれど釈迦牟尼は 美男におはす夏木立かな」

This famous poem by Yosano Akiko (1878–1942) is carved on the stone monument in her own calligraphy. On the left side of the stele the inscription reads that the stone was erected in April 1952 to commemorate the seven hundredth anniversary of the completion of the Great Buddha. The right side of the stele bears the text of the poem in romanized Japanese, an English translation, and details in English concerning the erection of the monument.

In this poem, the Buddha is identified as Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, rather than Amida Buddha. This reflects early textual evidence that the statue was originally erected as a representation of Shakyamuni and only came to be identified with Amida over time. The poem is taken from a collection of her *tanka* poetry entitled *Koigoromo* (“Robe of Love”), which gathered work by Yosano Akiko and two other female poets.