

Stone Lanterns of Iwashimizu Hachimangu Shrine

The grounds of Iwashimizu Hachimangu Shrine contain approximately 450 stone lanterns of varying designs. Donating lanterns to shrines and temples is a time-honored tradition when praying for a blessing or to express gratitude for an answered prayer. Lanterns are customarily inscribed with a date and sometimes bear the donor's name, business, or prayer.

The stone lanterns were donated between the late thirteenth century and early twentieth century, but their unusually heavy concentration along the main paths and the earthen walls of the shrine is more recent. Some of the lanterns were brought from other locations on Mt. Otokoyama starting in the late nineteenth century.

The oldest lantern at Iwashimizu Hachimangu is the Einin Stone Lantern, a nationally designated Important Cultural Property. It bears an inscription that reads, "Third year of Einin, year of the wood sheep, third month," meaning that it was donated in 1295, during the Einin era. The lantern is now part of the rock garden next to the shrine's administrative building. The traditional dry landscape garden was created in 1952 by the famous landscape architect Shigemori Mirei (1896–1975). The white sand represents the ocean, while the Einin Stone Lantern and the rocks placed throughout represent islands.