

Stone Umbrella Stupa

This stone stupa is adorned with a relief carving of Amida Buddha, known also as the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life. Amida is a central figure of Pure Land Buddhism, one of the largest Buddhist traditions in Japan. According to Pure Land beliefs, Amida vowed to rescue all living beings from the endless cycle of rebirth. The carving depicts Amida seated upon a lotus blossom, a symbol of the capacity of sentient beings to transcend their existence through spiritual practice, just like a lotus that rises from a muddy, stagnant pond.

The stupa is significant as a record of the stylistic trends of the time in which it was made. The outer boundary of the recessed relief is carved in the shape of a flowerhead, a design feature of Chinese origin that became popular in Japan after Zen architecture was introduced from the mainland in the thirteenth century. The column's gently upturned "umbrella" is another aesthetic detail characteristic of the Kamakura period (1185–1333). The teardrop stone at the top represents a wish-fulfilling jewel (*hōju*) like the one held by Nyoirin Kannon.