

Monument to Minamoto no Toru

The nine-storied stone pagoda standing on an islet in Ingetsuchi Pond is thought to date back to the Kamakura period (1185–1333), making it significantly older than Shoseien itself. It memorializes Minamoto no Toru (822–895), a statesman and poet who was the son of an emperor and is sometimes cited as the inspiration for Hikaru Genji, the protagonist of *The Tale of Genji*, the world's first novel.

How and why the monument ended up in its present location is not clear, but when Shoseien was constructed in the seventeenth century, some speculated that its site had once been occupied by Minamoto no Toru's estate. This theory, though historically incorrect, inspired the original garden's architects to incorporate elements of an imaginary ninth-century landscape into their design.