

Charnel House in Chikurin-ji

Located on the inner grounds of a 1,300-year-old temple in Kochi Prefecture, this charnel house is designed to contain the cremains of about a thousand people. The animal trail-like path to the cemetery is paved with stones for use as an approach to the charnel building. At the foot of tall chinquapin trees are long and low eaves, under which you walk and crawl into the building. As your eyes adjust to the dark, the quiet sound of water comes from the inner water garden. This architecture concept serves as a “path” that links life and death as well as the past and the future while quietly responding to human minds and moves.

The charnel room is built with reinforced concrete, and it is covered with a wooden roof. With square timbers laid down or laminated, the woodwork creates high-density space. The aim is to express eternity, purity, straightness and quietness, which are required for a place for prayer, by using solid-quality materials in an orderly and repetitive manner.