Zen Buddhism, which stresses a connection to the spiritual rather than the physical, was very influential in the art of Kamakura Japan.

Zen Calligraphy of the Kamakura Period

- Calligraphy by Musō Soseki (1275–1351, Japanese zen master, poet, and calligrapher. The characters "別無工夫" ("no spiritual meaning") are written in a flowing, connected soshō style.
- A deepening pessimism resulting from the civil wars of 12th century Japan increased the appeal of the search for salvation. As a result Buddhism, including its Zen school, grew in popularity.
- Zen was not introduced as a separate school of Buddhism in Japan until the 12th century.
- The Kamakura period is widely regarded as a renaissance era in Japanese sculpture, spearheaded by the sculptors of the Buddhist Kei school.
- The Kamakura period witnessed the production of e-maki or painted hand scrolls, usually encompassing religious, historical, or illustrated novels, accomplished in the style of the earlier Heian period.

- Japanese calligraphy was influenced by, and influenced, Zen thought.

Ji

Branch of Pure Land Buddhism stressing the importance of reciting the name of Amida, nembutsu (念仏).

Rinzai

A school of Zen buddhism in Japan, based on sudden enlightenment though koans and for that reason also known as the "sudden school".

Nichiren Sect

Based on the Lotus Sutra, which teaches that all people have an innate Buddha nature and are therefore inherently capable of attaining enlightenment in their current form and present lifetime.
Agyō, one of the two Buddhist Niō guardians at the Nandai-mon in front of the Todai ji in Nara. These are some of the finest wooden sculptures in Japan from the 13th century carved by the Kamakura-era sculptor Unkei in 1203.