

A SEMINAR ON



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JAPANESE GARDENS

Overview

The Characteristics of Japanese Gardens

In addition to trees and shrubs, the Japanese garden makes artistic use of rocks, sand, artificial hills, ponds and flowing water. In contrast to the geometrically arranged trees and rocks of a Western-style garden, the Japanese garden traditionally creates a scenic composition that, as artlessly as possible, mimics nature.

Garden designers followed three basic principles when composing scenes. They are reduced scale, symbolization and "borrowed views." The first refers to the miniaturization of natural views of mountains and rivers so as to reunite them in a confined area. This could mean the creation of idealized scenes of a mountain village, even within a city. Symbolization involves abstraction, an example being the use of white sand to suggest the sea. Designers "borrowed views" when they used background views that were outside and beyond the garden, such as a mountain or the ocean, and had them become an integral part of the scenic composition.

The basic framework of the Japanese garden, according to one school of thought, is provided by rocks and the way they are grouped. Ancient Japanese, we know, believed that a place surrounded by rocks was inhabited by gods, thus naming it *amatsu iwasaka* (heavenly barrier) or *amatsu iwakura* (heavenly seat). Likewise, a dense cluster of trees was called *himorogi* (divine hedge); moats and streams, thought to enclose sacred ground, were referred to as *mizugaki* (water fences).

Japanese gardens can be classified into two general types: the *tsukiyama* (hill garden), which is composed of hills and ponds, and the *hiraniwa* (flat garden), a flat area without hills and ponds. At first, it was common to employ the hill style for the main garden of a mansion and the flat style for limited spaces. The latter type, however, became more popular with the introduction of the tea ceremony and the *chashitsu* (tea-ceremony room).



TUFTED MOSS

In Japanese gardens, tufted moss create a cascade of texture and visual enlightenment.



JAPANESE STONE PAGODA LANTERNS



Japanese stone lanterns adds mystique, tradition and spirituality.



JAPANESE ZEN GARDENS

The sand, rock and stone zen gardens provides a place for quiet reflection and contemplation.

Iris edged yatsubashi (eight fold japanese bridge) guarantee that time is taken to enjoy the small things in life that are so easily and quickly overlooked in our fast paced world.

"It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters in the end."



JAPANESE GARDEN PATH





JAPANESE STONE LANTERNS

The japanese stone lantern (tachi-gata - pedestal stone lanterns) accompanied with the crimson colors of the changing japanese maple tree provides a visual focal delight and creates awareness of the passage of time.

JAPANESE GARDEN FOUNTAIN



History of the Japanese Garden

Like everywhere else, history and politics influenced the Japanese garden.

The ancient period consisting of the Asuka period (552-644 A.D.) had gardens with Chinese symbolism. Prior to this, the people believed that the landscape was filled with spirits or 'kami' mountains, commonly represented in the garden, were the dwelling place of the kami. (sacred mountains are conical in shape; hence Mt. Fuji is most sacred). stones were also the home of the kami.

The Nara period (645-782 A.D.) was the period when Buddhism arrived in Japan. This brought about the depiction of human elements in the garden.

The Heian period (784-1183 A.D.) when Kyoto was the capital, gardens were revered as paradise and flowers were introduced into the garden. The kimono also started having flower prints. During this period, Saku teiki wrote a book on gardening, in which he describes how to use stone, water, trees, etc. He gives 138 ways to place stones in the garden. This Gardening Manual is supposed to be the oldest one in world history of landscape.

The Kamakura period (1183 to 1333 A.D.) Zen Buddhism emphasized contemplation and meditation. The golden pavilion at Kinkakuji and the Moss Garden at Saihoji, where more than 50 species of moss were grown, are two examples of gardens from this period.

The Muromachi period (1394-1572 A.D.) gave us the famous Ryoan-ji temple Garden and the emergence of abstraction is seen during this period.

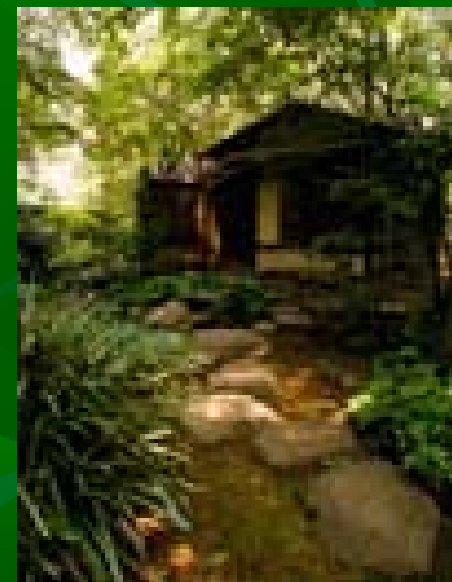
The religion of Japan, with the abundance of sky and seas, and less of land, had emphasized on the elements of the universe. The primitive Japanese worshipped the sun, the moon, the mountains, the stones, etc.

In Japan, the garden is always nature oriented, e.g. bonsai is a garden in miniature; bonseki is a landscape in miniature; ikebana, etc. The representation of nature was an aesthetic science. Elements were removed, not added, in the making of the garden.

The Momoyama period (1573-1602 A.D.) was when evergreens and their shaping were introduced into the garden and Azaleas was a common plant.

Stone lanterns was another element from this period.

The Edo period (1605-1867 A.D.) was when the Katsura Imperial Villa was built and is a good example of a water garden.



Origin:
Early Gardens

•*Early Japanese Gardens: The Asuka, Nara, and Heian Periods*



To-in. This eighth-century pond garden was discovered during archaeological excavations of the Imperial Palace grounds in Nara. The restored pavilion is based upon similar structures in Korea.



Kyuseki. This meandering stream garden of the eighth century came to light during excavations in the ancient capital of Nara in the 1970's. It may have been inspired by Chinese or Korean gardens.



- A- A conjectural recreation of a typical Heian villa, with the main building—the shinden
- B- A "fishing pavilion" (tsuri dono)
- C- A "spring pavilion"

庭 *Elements*



Bridges: hashi

Flowers: hana

Islands: shima

Sand: suna

Stones: ishi/iwakura

Trees: ki

Water: mizu

Waterfalls: taki





Basic Information

Garden design has been an important Japanese [art](#) for many centuries. Traditional Japanese landscape gardens can be broadly categorized into three types, Tsukiyama Gardens (hill gardens), Karesansui Gardens (dry gardens) and Chaniwa Gardens (tea gardens).



Tsukiyama ([Suizenji Koen](#), Kumamoto)



Karesansui ([Nanzenji](#), Kyoto)

Tsukiyama Gardens

Ponds, streams, hills, stones, trees, flowers, bridges and paths are used to create a miniature reproduction of a natural scenery which is often a famous landscape in China or Japan. The name Tsukiyama refers to the creation of artificial hills.

Tsukiyama gardens vary in size and in the way they are viewed. Smaller gardens are usually enjoyed from a single viewpoint, such as the veranda of a [temple](#), while many larger gardens are best experienced by following a circular scrolling path.

Karesansui Gardens

Karesansui gardens reproduce natural landscapes in a more abstract way by using stones, gravel, sand and sometimes a few patches of moss for representing mountains, islands, boats, seas and rivers. Karesansui gardens are strongly influenced by [Zen Buddhism](#) and used for meditation.



Tsukubai

Chaniwa Gardens

Chaniwa gardens are built for the [tea ceremony](#). They contain a tea house where the actual ceremony is held and are designed in aesthetic simplicity according to the concepts of sado (tea ceremony).

Chaniwa gardens typically feature stepping stones that lead towards the tea house, stone lanterns and a stone basin (tsukubai), where guests purify themselves before participating in the ceremony.

Tea Gardens



JAPAN

Ritsurin Koen, a Japanese Garden

Map of Ritsurin Koen

UNITED STATES

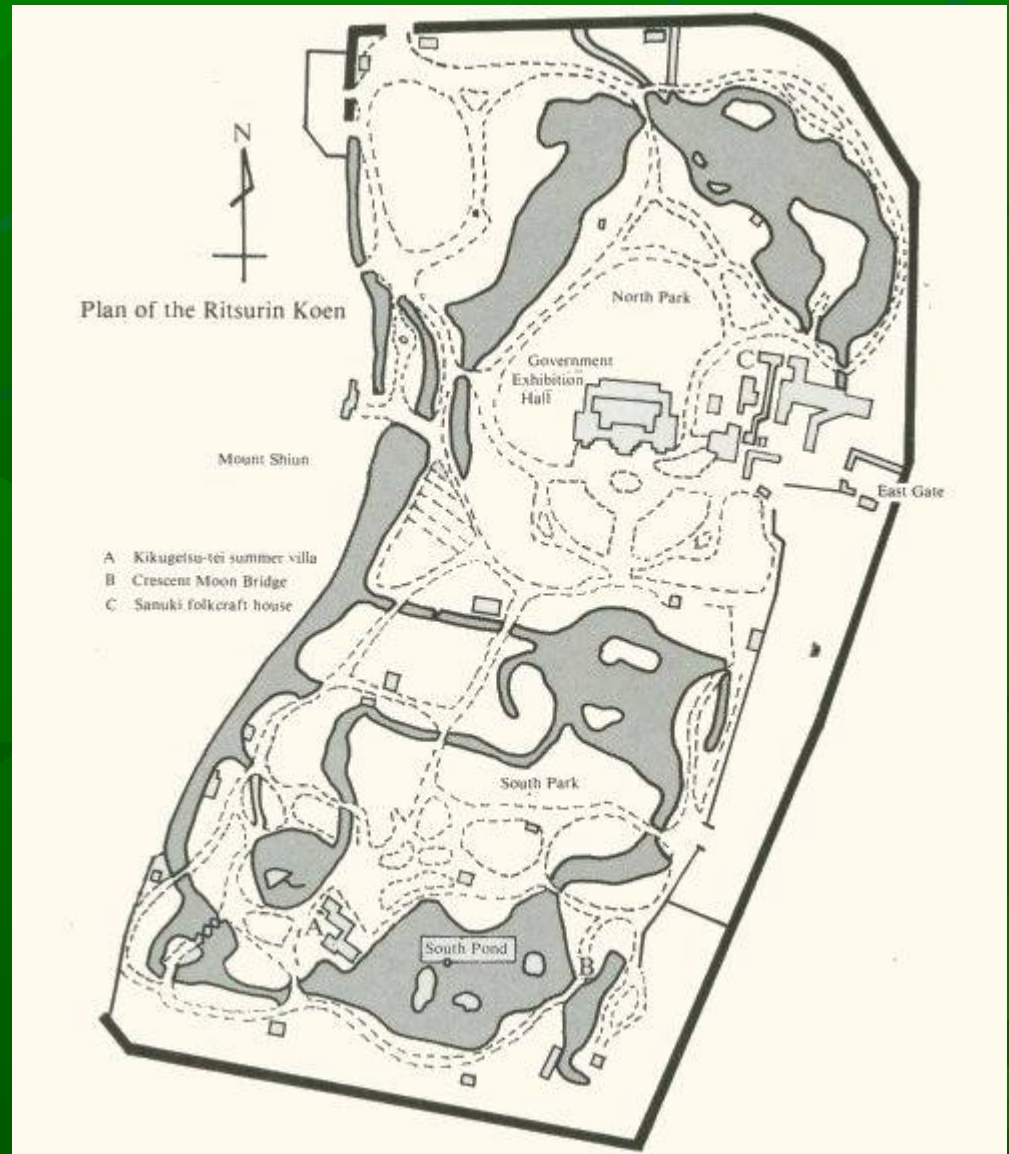
Map of Japanese Tea Garden,

San Francisco, CA

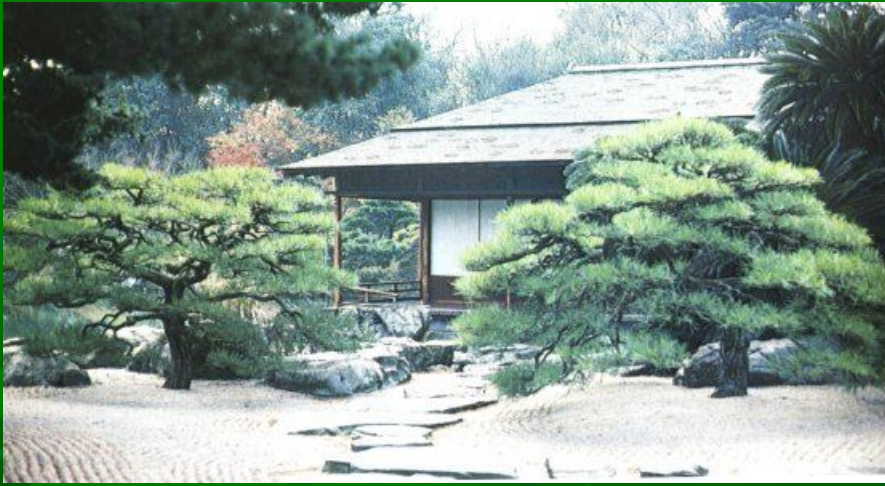
Ritsurin Koen

A Japanese Garden

- A -Kikugetsu-tei Summer Villa
- B -Crescent Moon Bridge
- C -Sanuki Mingei-kan (Folkcraft)
House



Site Map



SAND GARDEN WITH *BYOBU MATSU* PINES AND STEPPING STONES
AROUND THE KIKUGETSU-TEI.



THE SOUTH POND FROM A HILL NEAR THE EAST WALL. IN THE
FOREGROUND THE CRESCENT MOON BRIDGE
AND IN THE BACKGROUND THE KIKUGETSU-TEI SUMMER VILLA.



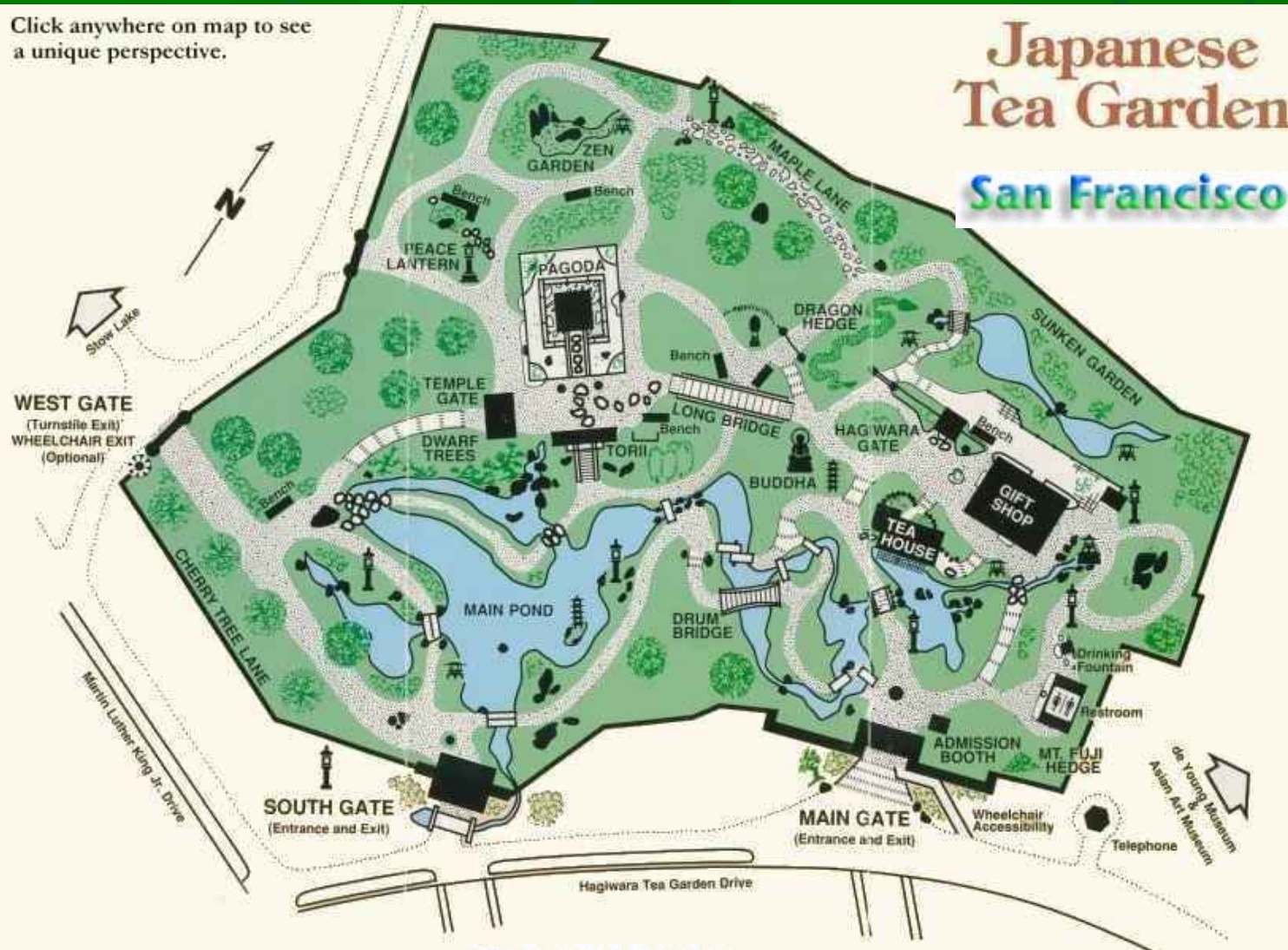
THE KIKUGETSU-TEI SUMMER VILLA SHORTLY AFTER RENOVATION
IN 1980. MOUNT SHIUN RISES BEHIND IT.



MAPLE LEAVES FRAME A BRIDGE BEHIND THE KIKUGETSU-TEI.

The Japanese Tea Garden in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park

Click anywhere on map to see
a unique perspective.



Site Map



TEMPLE MAIN GATE



BUDDHIST PAGODA



JAPANESE TEA GARDEN SOUTH GATE





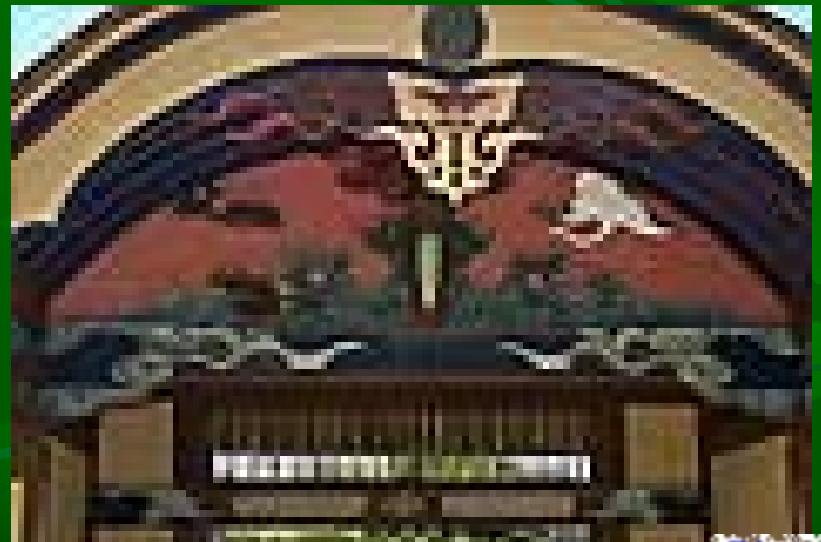
TEA HOUSE FORTUNE COOKIE



BUDDHA BRONZE



HAGIWARA GATE

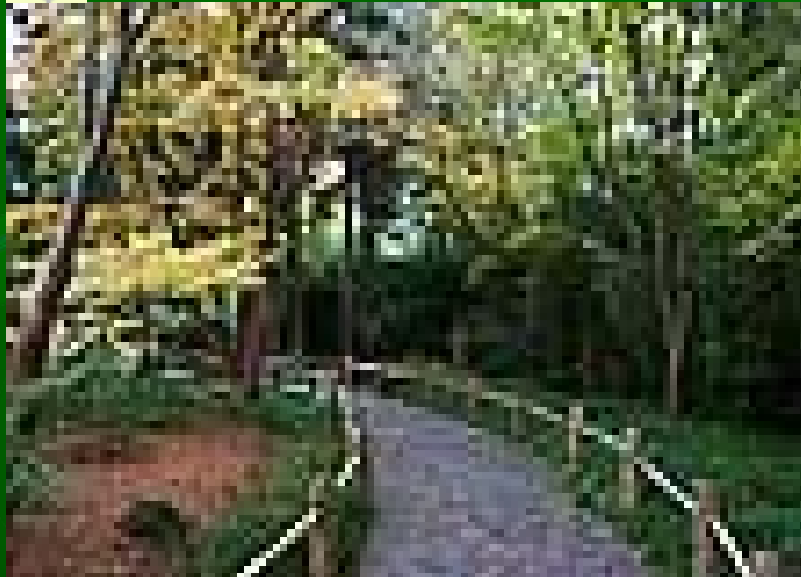




LONG BRIDGE



MAPLE LANE J. TEA GARDEN

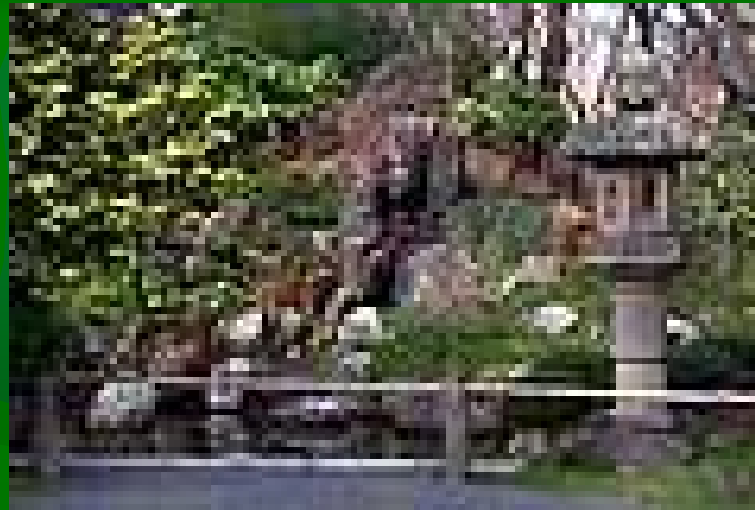


DRUM BRIDGE





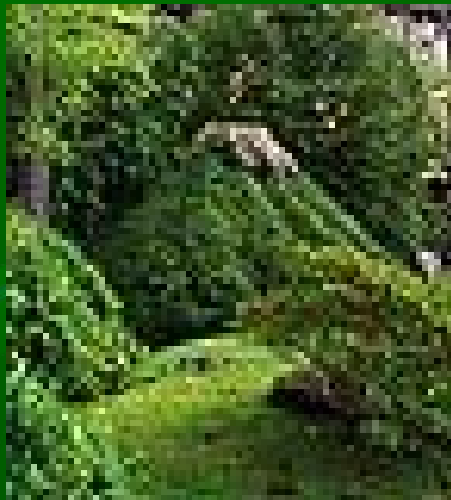
BRONZE LANTERN



STONE LANTERN, WATERFALL



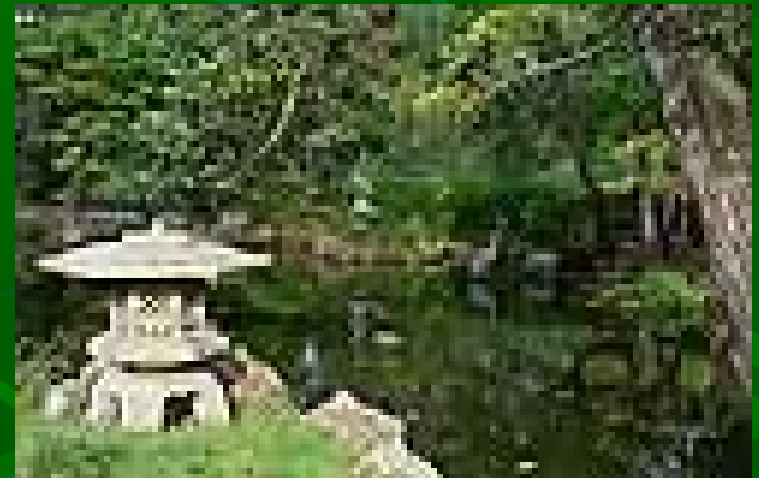
LANTERN OF PEACE



Mt. FUJI HEDGE



WATER BASIN,
STONE BOAT



STONE LANTERN, POND



JAPANESE TEA GARDEN MAIN GATE



REFLECTION OF DWARF TREES,
PAGODA



TEMPLE GATE SEEN FROM OUTSIDE



Japanese Zen Garden

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of several large, green leaves, likely from a Japanese maple, with prominent veins and serrated edges. The leaves are layered, creating a sense of depth. In the top left corner, there is a light beige rectangular box containing the title.

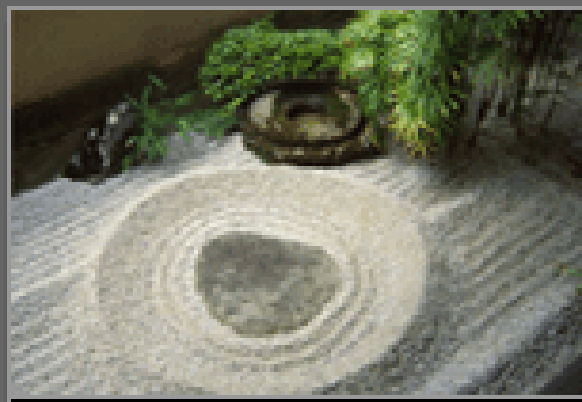
庭 *Overview*

Although many of these gardens are located within Zen monasteries, here we are not discussing the influence of Zen Buddhism on Japanese garden design, an influence that is often conjectural at best. Instead, the show is designed to provide the audience with an opportunity to visit each garden, to move through or around it, to experience it through the medium of high-quality color images, and to learn something of its history.



Ryogen-in

Ryogen-in, a subtemple of the Daitoku-ji complex, was constructed in 1502. Within or adjoining the abbot's residence are five gardens, the most famous of which is the Ryogintei, a rectangle of moss and stones viewed from the veranda of the abbot's house. The group of stones in the center of the garden is thought to represent Mt. Sumeru, the mountain axis of the universe according to Hindu belief, or Horai, the mythical home of Taoist immortals.



ROCK GARDEN IN RYOGEN



ROCK GARDEN IN RYOGEN-IN,
THE SMALLEST ONE IN JAPAN

ROCK GARDEN IN 
GINKAKU-JI (KYOTO)

KYOTO'S SILVER AND GOLD



KINKAKU-JI IN WINTER

Kaju-ji

Kaju-ji (also known as Kanshu-ji) was founded as early as 900, and is the main temple of the Yamashina School of Shingon Buddhism. However, its great pond—called Himuro no ike—is supposedly the remnant of the Heian estate of Miyamichi Iyamasu, whose daughter was the bride of a Fujiwara nobleman and whose granddaughter was a consort of the Emperor. In other words, it would have been the central element in a garden located to the south of a noble shinden-style villa, and is one of a number of such remnants of the secular gardens of the Heian (see also the [Shoseien](#)).



Japanese Garden - Rock Garden

Ref: The Helpful Gardener is written by Scott Reil of [Scott Reil Garden Design](#). He has taught an Advanced Master Gardeners course on Japanese Garden Design and is happy to share his knowledge of [Japanese Gardening](#).

- **STONE IN THE JAPANESE ROCK GARDEN**
- **THE BASIC RULES**
- **NARA ERA**
- **HEIAN ERA**

Classic Japanese stone grouping:

- Buddha stone (Mida buhtsu), the male stone
- Goddess stone (Kwannon), the female stone
- Child's stone (Seishi).

Five basic stone types

There are five basic stone types used in Japanese rock gardening. These are used in a thousand different combinations, but with the understanding of these basic types and some common usage, we can find the right ones for our garden.

•**One: Soul Stone**

The first we will look at is the Low Vertical stone, also known as the Soul Stone (Reishoseki). This is a vertically oriented stone with a wide base and a tapered top. This is a very prevalent stone in the landscape; the Guardian stone (Shu go seki) is usually a low vertical.

•**Two: Body Stone**

The next stone we'll discuss is the Tall Vertical, or Body stone (Taidoseki). This is another upright stone that often symbolic of a person or god. The base is only slightly larger than the top. This is a stone that must be most carefully placed; as it is the tallest stone in the group it is principal in determining the flow of the garden. Generally, this stone is placed to rear and NEVER in front.

•**Three: Heart Stone**

The Flat stone, or Heart stone (Shintaiseki), is a most useful stone. It is as the name implies a flat stone in the manner of a stepping stone. In a complex arrangement it is generally used as the central harmonizing element and in simpler arrangements serves a valuable purpose in harmonizing the vertical stones with the horizontal lines of the earth or water. The Worshiping stone or (Rei hai seki) is always a flat stone.

Four: Branching Stone

The Arching stone is often called the Branching Stone (Shigyoseki) and corresponds to the arms. This stone is the exception to the rule with a flat top wider than the base. This is a most difficult stone to select correctly; if the top is too large the rock looks unsteady and the arch imparts a sweeping energy that must be carefully balanced to work in the garden. That said this is an extremely useful stone as it is used to tie the two horizontal stones to the two vertical ones as well as drawing together the stone group with the branches of trees.

Five: Ox Stone

Our final stone is the Reclining stone or Ox stone (Kikyakuseki). In height, these vary between the flat stone and the arching stone but never as low as the former or tall as the latter. One end of the stone is higher than the other. This is a fine-tuning stone, placed in the foreground to unify the other stones and should be placed with great care.

We must avoid the Three Bad Stones. These are

- The Diseased stone (withered or misshapen top)
- The Dead stone (a stone that is obviously a vertical used as a horizontal, or vice versa, like propping up a dead body), and
- The Pauper Stone (one which has no relation to the other stones in the garden).

Stepping stones in a Japanese rock garden

When setting stepping stones they should be between one and three inches above the soil, yet solid underfoot, as if rooted into the ground. They can be set in straight lines, offset for left foot, right foot (known as chidori or plover, after the tracks the shore bird leaves), or set in groups of twos, threes, fours, or fives.

🌿 The most common combinations are the two-three arrangement, useful in smaller spaces and the three-four. Any combinations are possible; keep in mind the flow of the garden.

🌿 The pathway is symbolic of the journey through life, and even specific stones in the path may have meaning.

🌿 A much wider stone set across the path tells us to put two feet here, stopping to take in the view. Two foot stones are always found at entrances and junctures in pathways.

Formal mat stones are one of the exceptions to the rule on cut stone. Long sections of path can be set entirely in rectangular cut stone. I personally like two, offset side by side, comprising by themselves a section of path. These are called Poem Card stones as they resemble the folded poems hung in the cherry trees in spring. (Very effective near trees for that reason).

Gardens of The Morikami

**Shinden Garden (Shinden Teien)
Heian Period, c. 9th -12th centuries**



**Early Rock Garden (Zenki Sekitei)
early Muromachi Period, c. 14th century**



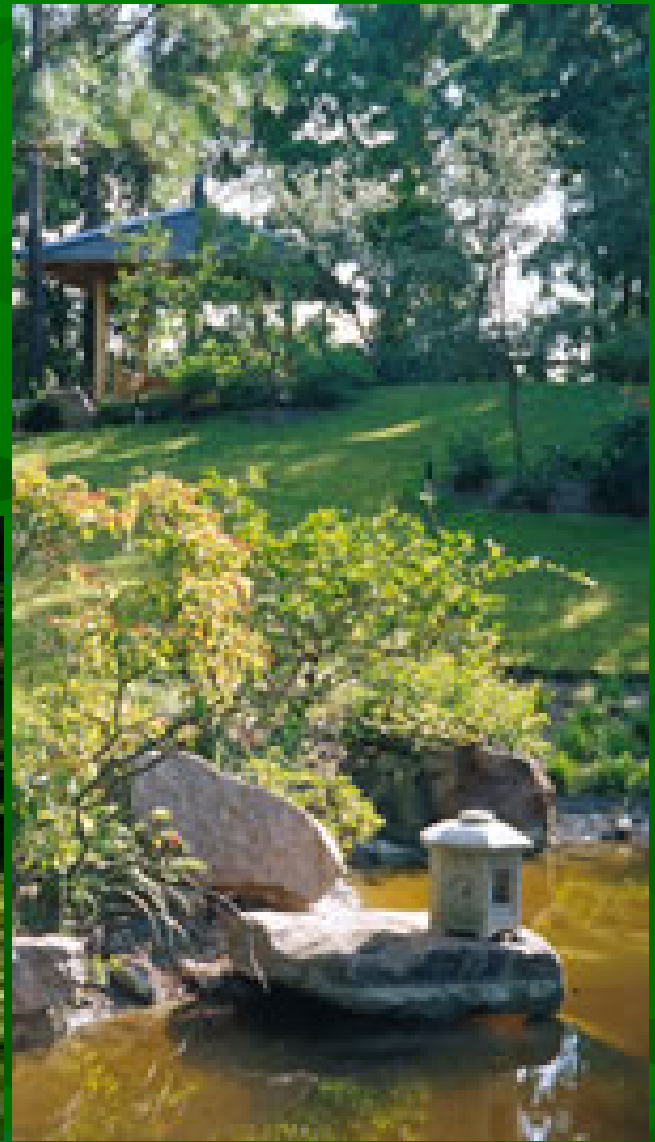
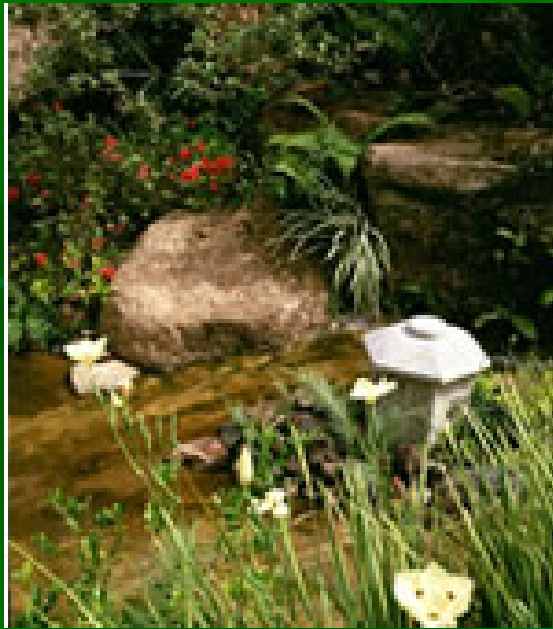
Late Rock Garden (Sekitei)
Muromachi Period, c. 15th century



Flat Garden (Hira Niwa)
Edo Period, c. 17th and 18th centuries



Modern Romantic Garden (Kindai Teien)
late 19th and early 20th centuries



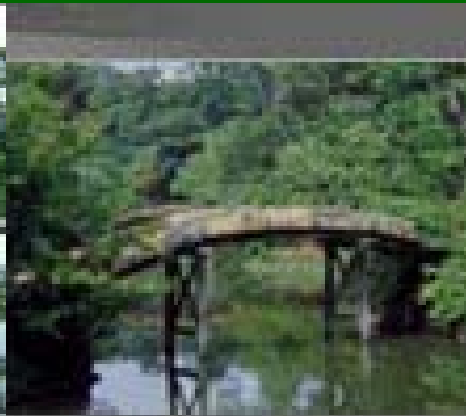
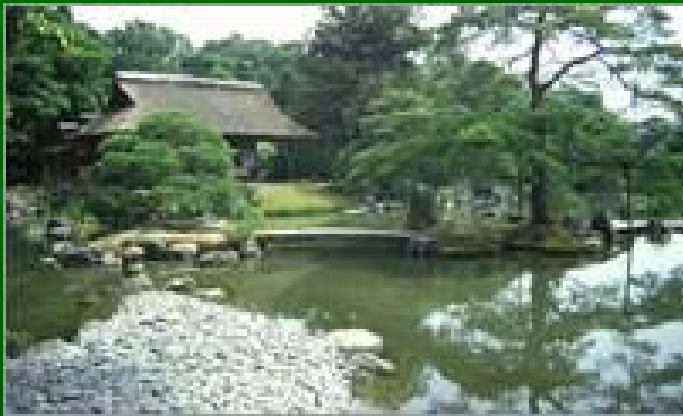
Water Gardens

Just as refined, Japanese gardens illustrate the constant struggle between yin and yang, by juxtaposing the fragile nature of a supple material such as reeds and the sturdiness of materials such as stone. The underlying concept of a Japanese garden is the *Roji*, or the "way". An intricate pathway is adeptly laid down in the garden to make the visitor lose sight of his usual landmarks so that he appreciates the "pathway to tea", which is the path to meditation. A pond is always included, but never constitutes the final destination of the "traveller". As a matter of fact, it was the Japanese who invented the notion of a "dry" pond, or *Kare-sansui*: pebbles carefully arranged around different-sized and shaped boulders which conjure up the image of a sea dotted with islands, reminiscent of their island nation.



Katsura

Katsura Imperial Villa was built in the early Edo Period as a residence for Prince Hachijo no Miya Toshihito (1579-1629). The garden to the south of the villa is a stroll garden and also a boating garden, its pond large enough to accommodate modest vessels. The entire complex recalls the world described in the *Tale of Genji*, and was undoubtedly intended to evoke the golden age of the Heian courts, when such a pond garden would have been viewed from the southern pavilions of the typical shinden villa.



Japanese Garden in Hermann Park

IMAGES:

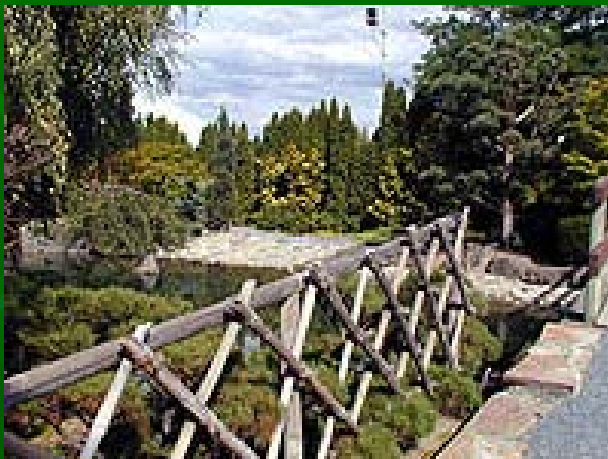






Kasugai Japanese Garden

IMAGES:









Project created by [Darold Davis](#) in December 1996 at the Japan Center for Michigan Universities in Hikone, Japan, as part of The Shiga Project, 1996 Edition.

The Japanese Garden