

YOKO KAWAGUCHI



JAPANESE
ZEN
GARDENS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX RAMSAY

Frances Lincoln Limited
A subsidiary of Quarto Publishing Group UK
74–77 White Lion Street
London N1 9PF

Japanese Zen Gardens
Copyright © Frances Lincoln Limited 2014
Text copyright © Yoko Kamaguchi 2014
Photographs copyright © Alex Ramsay 2014,
except those listed on page 208
Garden plans copyright © Kathryn Pinker 2014

First Frances Lincoln edition 2014

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without either prior permission in writing from the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying. In the United Kingdom such licences are issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Barnard's Inn, 86 Fetter Lane, London EC4A 1EN.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-7112-3871-8

Printed in China

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

In accordance with conventional Japanese usage, in this book personal names are given surname first. In subsequent references, historical figures are called by their forenames, contemporary people by their surnames.



Quarto is the authority on a wide range of topics.

Quarto educates, entertains and enriches the lives of our readers – enthusiasts and lovers of hands-on living.

www.QuartoKnows.com



COVER A glimpse of Japanese maples in autumn colour is framed by the pillars of Nanzen-ji's *sanmon* (main inner gateway).

RIGHT The effect of an ink-brush painting is produced when autumn mists hang over the distant hills behind Tenryū-ji's pond garden, which features a spectacular, dry-waterfall arrangement.

HALF-TITLE PAGE Ancient garden stones impart a sense of permanence which accentuates the fleeting beauty of cherry blossoms in the dry-landscape garden at Ryōan-ji, Kyōto.

OPPOSITE TITLE PAGE Old paving stones have been reused by the twentieth-century garden architect Shigemori Mirei to create a chequerboard pattern in the north garden of Tōfuku-ji's *hōjō* (abbot's hall).



CONTENTS

- 6 Foreword
- 8 Introduction

12 PART ONE JAPANESE ZEN TEMPLES AND THEIR GARDENS: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

- 14 Nanzen-in
- 20 The Tradition of the Landscape Garden in Japan
- 26 Saihō-ji
- 30 Tenryū-ji
- 36 Former Villas of the Ashikaga Shōgun: Rokuon-ji and Jishō-ji
- 44 The Artist-monk Sesshū and the Jōei-ji Garden
- 47 The Sub-temples of Kyōto and their Gardens
- 52 The South *Hōjō* Garden
- 58 Ryōan-ji
- 62 Kobori Enshū and Konchi-in
- 70 Kobori Enshū and Kohō-an
- 74 The Tea Garden at Jikō-in
- 78 Some Examples of Early Nineteenth-Century Zen Temple Gardens
- 82 The Twentieth Century: Shigemori Mirei and Nakane Kinsaku

94 PART TWO SYMBOLS AND MOTIFS IN JAPANESE ZEN GARDENS

- 98 The Pond and Bridge
- 102 The *Ryūmon-baku*, the Dragon-Gate Waterfall and the Carp-Stone
- 106 Shumisen
- 108 The *Sanzon-seki*: Three Sacred Stones
- 114 The Kannon and Fudō Stones
- 118 Daoist Imagery: the Crane, the Turtle and the Islands of the Immortals
- 130 The Dragon
- 136 *Tora-no-ko-watashi*: Tiger Cubs Crossing a River
- 142 Seven-Five-Three Gardens
- 146 The Sixteen *Rakan*
- 152 The Ox
- 153 Zuhō-in and the Image of the Cross
- 156 The Borrowed Landscape
- 162 Zen Temple Gardens and the Tea Garden
- 184 Plants

- 192 Visiting Temples
- 197 Glossary of Terms
- 200 Index
- 207 Further Reading
- 208 Acknowledgments

FOREWORD

Zen Buddhist temples have played an important role in the development of garden styles in Japan. They provided a cultural milieu in which Japanese garden traditions came in contact with new influences from China. Japanese Zen monks cultivated a great interest in Chinese art, particularly calligraphy and ink-brush painting, and the aesthetics of Chinese landscape painting – its use of space and perspective – had a profound effect on the design of Japanese landscape gardens.

It is from this cultural melting pot that the Japanese *kare-sansui* (dry-landscape) garden developed – the great example of which is the famous stone garden at Ryōan-ji. The major stylistic innovation of using raked gravel to represent a body of water made it possible to create the illusion of space and distance in the smallest of gardens, such as those that were constructed around the *hōjō* (abbot's hall), the spiritual hub of the Zen Buddhist temple. By the eighteenth century, the flat gravelled garden was a recognised garden style in Japan and was being adopted outside the specific context of Buddhist temples. A revival of interest in this type of garden during the twentieth century has influenced modern Japanese garden design: for example, the development of very small, enclosed courtyard gardens, known as *tsubo-niwa*.

The *kare-sansui* garden is known outside Japan as the 'Zen garden', but in Japan the style is no longer narrowly defined by its Zen associations. Meanwhile, at Zen Buddhist temples, other styles of garden have emerged. For example, the ceremony of tea drinking, originally introduced from China, developed a distinctly Japanese ethos under the influence of Zen Buddhism, and Zen temple gardens, in turn, absorbed elements of the tea garden. Zen temple gardens have always been open to, and have assimilated, cultural influences in a very creative way.

Yoko Kawaguchi



INTRODUCTION

One of the most enigmatic gardens in the world must be the stone-and-gravel, dry garden that faces the south front of the *hōjō* (abbot's hall) at Ryōan-ji, a Zen Buddhist temple located among the foothills to the north of the ancient Japanese capital Kyōto. It is a walled garden laid with evenly raked, fine white gravel, on which five groups of rocks, totalling fifteen in number, have been arranged, each on its own small, carefully defined island of moss. It seems the very antithesis of what a garden ought to be. Indeed, it appears to lack the one thing that most people would most associate with gardens – plants – unless one includes the moss, which in many cultures is considered a weed.

Visitors to Ryōan-ji have, for centuries, sought to find a meaning in the fifteen stones. The fact that the garden is located within the precincts of a Zen Buddhist temple has, without doubt, contributed to its mystique. This has encouraged speculation that the abstract design of the garden might in some way reflect a religious revelation – perhaps even the very

essence of *satori*, that spiritual enlightenment that all Buddhists seek. So close an association has been formed between this abstract style and the supposedly esoteric truths embedded in Buddhism that the term 'Zen garden', outside Japan, has become all but synonymous with this type of stone-and-gravel, dry garden.

In fact, however, the style constitutes a stage in the evolution of the Japanese Zen temple garden. The tradition of having gardens within the grounds of Zen Buddhist temples has a long and rich history in Japan. It owes a great deal to various Chinese cultural influences – Buddhist and otherwise. It also draws heavily on long-standing, native Japanese customs and preferences. It was affected by the fortunes of the temples themselves, which were often intimately connected with the rise and fall of the political prestige of their powerful patrons.

The Ryōan-ji garden is not a 'typical' Zen garden, because many different styles of gardens are found at Japanese Zen temples. Nor is the *kare-sansui*

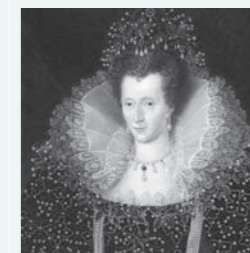
RIGHT A waterfall, the raised head of a dragon and Shumisen (the mountain at the centre of the Buddhist universe) are some of the interpretations that have been inspired by the leaning stone in the north garden of the *hōjō* (abbot's hall) at Ryōgen-in.

PRECEDING PAGES The white gravel in the west *hōjō* garden at Taizō-in symbolises a lake flowing past an island and on into the distant horizon. Beyond the island, on the left, there is an upright stone representing the outstretched wing of a crane. A remote mountain range is indicated by the boulders arrayed along the far left edge of the garden.



600 AD	900	1100	1200	1250	1300	1350	1400	1450	1500	1550
--------	-----	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

<p>JAPAN 794: A new imperial capital is established at Heian-kyō (modern-day Kyōto)</p> <p>CHINA 618: Fall of the Sui dynasty; birth of the Tang dynasty</p> <p>EUROPE 800: Charlemagne is crowned 'Emperor of the Romans' by Pope Leo III</p>	<p>JAPAN 1050–c.1090: The oldest surviving gardening manual in Japan, the <i>Sakutei-ki</i>, is compiled</p> <p>CHINA 907: Fall of the Tang dynasty 960: Birth of the Song dynasty</p> <p>EUROPE 962: Otto I is crowned Holy Roman Emperor 1066: Norman Conquest of England (BELOW)</p>	<p>JAPAN 1185: The Minamoto clan seizes power in Japan 1191: Myōan Yōsai returns from China and spreads Rinzaï Zen Buddhism</p> <p>CHINA 1127: Song dynasty loses control of northern China, and re-establishes itself south of the Yangtze river (Southern Song dynasty) (BELOW)</p>	<p>JAPAN 1202: Myōan Yōsai founds Kennin-ji in Kyōto 1243: Enni Bennen becomes the first abbot of Tōfuku-ji in Kyōto 1246: The Chinese Chán monk Lan-ch'i Tao-lung (Rankai Dōryū) arrives in Japan</p> <p>CHINA 1206: The Mongol Empire established under Genghis Khan</p> <p>EUROPE 1215: Magna Carta is sealed by King John, of England, at Runnymede</p>	<p>JAPAN 1274: The emperor Kameyama abdicates 1291: Mukan Fumon, third abbot of Tōfuku-ji, builds Ryōgin-an; he is also appointed abbot of the new temple (later renamed Nanzen-ji), which the former emperor Kameyama founds on the site of his villa Zenrinji-dono; Mukan Fumon dies at Ryōgin-an at the end of the year</p> <p>CHINA 1271: Kublai Khan establishes the Yuan dynasty and becomes emperor of China 1271–1295: Marco Polo travels to China 1279: Fall of Southern Song dynasty and the unification of China under Kublai Khan</p> <p>EUROPE 1299: Birth of the Ottoman Empire</p>	<p>JAPAN 1315: The Rinzaï Zen monk Shūhō Myōchō founds a temple in north Kyōto, which later becomes Daitoku-ji 1333: Fall of the Kamakura shogunate; the emperor Go-Daigo assumes power 1336: Go-Daigo flees Kyōto and Ashikaga Taka'uji assumes power (beginnings of the Ashikaga shogunate, otherwise known as the Muromachi shogunate) 1337: An imperial villa in Kyōto belonging to the former emperor Hanazono is designated to become the Rinzaï Zen temple, Myōshin-ji 1338: Ashikaga Taka'uji becomes shogun 1339: Musō Soseki refounds Saihō-ji as a Rinzaï Zen temple; death of Go-Daigo; Ashikaga Taka'uji and his brother Tadayoshi found Tenryū-ji</p> <p>EUROPE c.1304–1321: Dante writes <i>The Divine Comedy</i> 1333–1391: Creation of the gardens at Alhambra Palace, Granada (LEFT) 1337–1453: Hundred Years War between England and France</p>	<p>JAPAN 1368: Ashikaga Yoshimitsu becomes shogun 1394: Yoshimitsu abdicates 1397: Yoshimitsu begins building his new villa, Kitayama-dono</p> <p>CHINA 1368: Fall of the Yuan dynasty; birth of the Ming dynasty (BELOW)</p> <p>EUROPE 1378-1417: The Great Schism splits the Roman Catholic Church</p>	<p>JAPAN 1408: Death of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 1420: Yoshimitsu's Kitayama-dono becomes the Rokuon-ji (Temple of the Golden Pavilion) (BELOW) 1449: Ashikaga Yoshimasa becomes shōgun</p>	<p>JAPAN 1467–1477: Ōnin War 1467–1469: The artist-monk Sesshū visits China 1473: Ashikaga Yoshimasa abdicates 1474: Ikkyū Sōjun is appointed abbot of Daitoku-ji and begins its reconstruction 1482: Ashikaga Yoshimasa begins building his new villa, Higashiyama-dono 1490: Yoshimasa dies, and his villa becomes Jishō-in, soon renamed Jishō-ji</p> <p>EUROPE c.1450: Johannes Gutenberg sets up his printing press at Mainz 1453: Fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks 1492: Christopher Columbus reaches the Americas</p>	<p>JAPAN 1509: Kogaku Sōkō becomes abbot of Daitoku-ji and founds the sub-temple Daisen-in 1543: Two shipwrecked Portuguese traders become the first Europeans to reach Japan 1549: The Catholic missionary Francis Xavier arrives in Japan</p> <p>EUROPE 1517: Martin Luther presents his Ninety-Five Theses, triggering the start of the Protestant Reformation (BELOW)</p>	<p>JAPAN 1573: Oda Nobunaga forces the last Ashikaga shogun from Kyōto 1582: Death of Oda Nobunaga 1586–1587: Toyotomi Hideyoshi builds his Jurakudai Palace at Kyōto 1590: Hideyoshi unifies Japan 1591: The celebrated tea master Sen no Rikyū is ordered by Hideyoshi to take his own life 1595: The Jurakudai Palace is demolished 1596: Reconstruction of Hideyoshi's Fushimi Castle begins after its destruction in an earthquake 1598: Death of Hideyoshi at Fushimi Castle</p> <p>EUROPE 1558: Elizabeth I becomes Queen of England (BELOW) 1559: Architect Pirro Ligorio begins work on the Villa d'Este gardens, Tivoli</p>
---	--	---	--	--	--	---	---	---	---	---





PART ONE

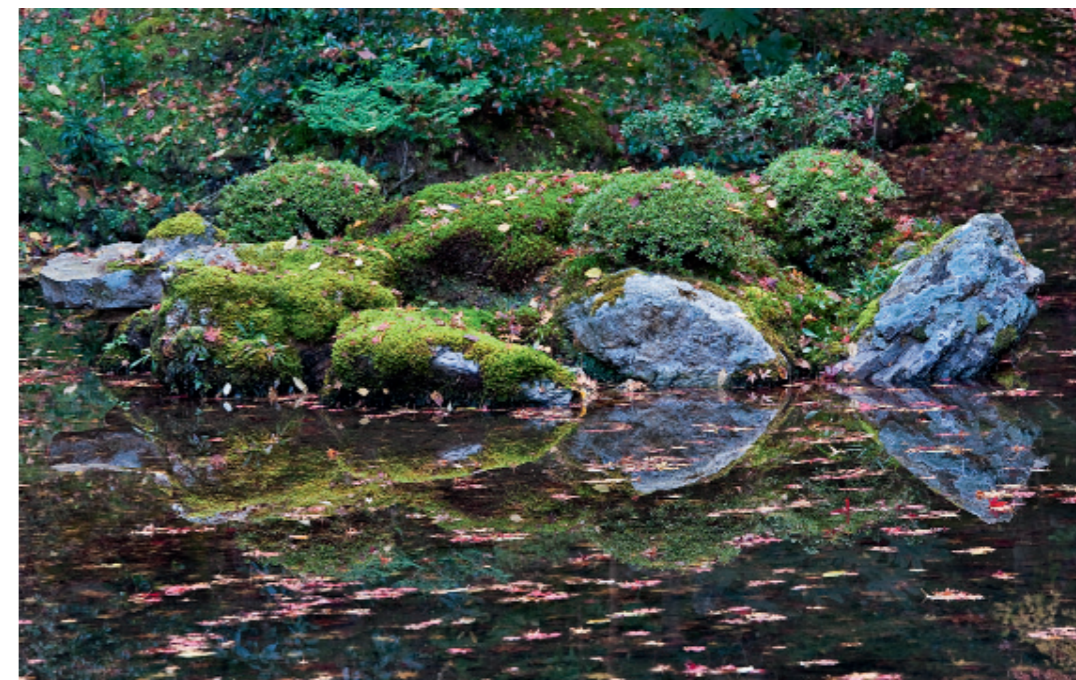
JAPANESE ZEN TEMPLES
AND THEIR GARDENS:
AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW



LEFT Two wooden pillars of Nanzen-in's *hōjō* (abbot's hall) frame a view of the stone representing a crane's outstretched wing in the temple's south garden.

PREVIOUS PAGE Nanzen-in's south *hōjō* garden is dominated by a symbolic turtle island (right) and a crane island, behind which, to the left, there is an ancient man-made waterfall designed to resemble a mountain cascade.

The turtle island in Nanzen-in's south garden is realistically represented by a semi-upright stone, which suggests a turtle's raised head, while clipped azaleas form its carapace.



leading Zen Buddhist temple in Japan, but none of its original buildings – or gardens – have survived.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, Zen Buddhism was finally able to count a former emperor among its adherents. Kameyama had abdicated in 1274 at the young age of twenty-four, but as a former emperor who retains political power he had assumed the title of *Jōkō*, and he continued to govern over the imperial court. His influence, however, was whittled away through the machinations of the Kamakura shogunate. Faced with ever-increasing disappointments, Kameyama became a Buddhist monk in 1289. He was a devoted follower of Mukan Fumon, the third abbot of Tōfuku-ji, another major Zen Buddhist temple in Kyōto. When, in 1291, he decided to turn one of his two favourite residences into a Zen Buddhist temple, he invited Mukan Fumon to serve as the new temple's first abbot.

This temple became Nanzen-ji. It is situated near the Higashiyama mountain range, which forms the east flank of the city of Kyōto. Kameyama's original imperial villa was built on two levels, and the

principal buildings of the new temple were constructed on the site where the main palace complex had stood. Kameyama, however, had his own private quarters on the hillside overlooking the rest of the palace grounds, and this became Nanzen-in, a smaller temple within the main temple. Nanzen-in retained the pond garden which had been part of Kameyama's original private residence.

This beautiful garden had been planted with cherry trees from Yoshino and maples from Tatsuta, both regions in modern Nara prefecture, which had been the location of the imperial court before it moved to Kyōto. Pine trees had been brought from Sumiyoshi and reeds from Namba, both of which were sea ports on Ōsaka Bay. The pond was stocked with special small river frogs from Ide, which were particularly famous for their melancholy night-calls. All of these were well-established subject matter for poetry, and reflect how important literary associations were when designing aristocratic gardens of the period.

Kameyama continued to live at Nanzen-in until his death, in 1305.

Afterwards, it was used as the private residence of the abbots of Nanzen-ji, but it burnt down in 1467, with the outbreak of the devastating civil war known as the Ōnin War. Most of Nanzen-ji itself was destroyed in that conflict, and work on reviving the great temple commenced in earnest only at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Nanzen-in's restoration did not start until the end of that century. As the site was being prepared for the construction of a new *hōjō* (abbot's hall), workers uncovered the ruins of Nanzen-in's former garden, and it was reconstructed as the south *hōjō* garden.

Buddhist symbolism came to be superimposed on various aspects of this garden. The pond, for example, was said to be in the shape of a coiled dragon – dragons being considered guardians of Buddhist teaching. The pond also acquired the name *Sōgen-chi*, which referred to the Chinese Zen master Dàjiàn Huìnéng (Daikan Enō in Japanese), who died in 713. It is from Dàjiàn Huìnéng that all existent schools of Chinese and Japanese Zen Buddhism claim descent. *Sōgen* means the 'well-spring of *Sōkei*' – *Sōkei*

being the Japanese pronunciation of Cáo xī, the location of Huìnéng's last temple: therefore, the image of this spring symbolises the idea that true Zen Buddhism is derived from one source, that is to say, Huìnéng. The south garden was, moreover, complemented by the creation of a new main garden for the *hōjō* on its west side, featuring a broadly 'U'-shaped pond representing the Chinese ideogram for 'heart'.

Kameyama's palace garden was thus transformed into a Zen temple garden, but more in terms of perception rather than through structural alterations. His original garden had been a landscape one with a pond and a waterfall, and this did not change. Since gardens were first built in Japan, their design has concentrated on creating a landscape, with hillocks representing mountains, and a body of water representing a stream, river, pond, lake or the sea itself. Even when stone and gravel became predominant features in gardens, the landscape remained the central concept behind the garden design. The idea of landscape is crucial to the understanding of Japanese gardens of all periods and all styles.

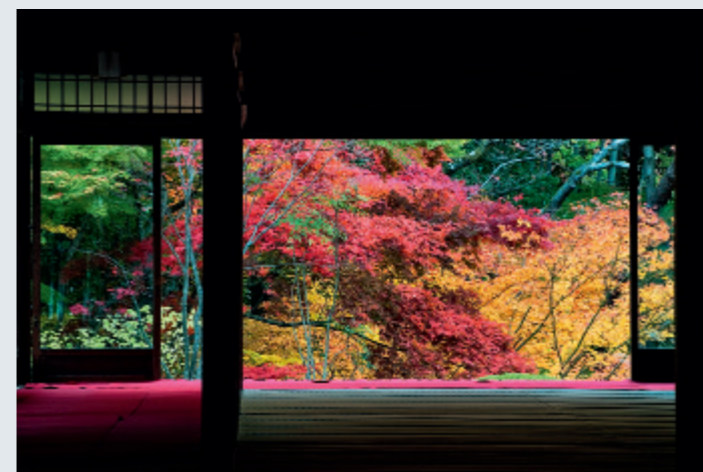


LEFT A superb aerial view of Tenju-an's east *hōjō* garden can be enjoyed from the balcony surrounding the top floor of Nanzen-ji's *sanmon* (main inner gateway).

RIGHT Paving stones from Tenju-an's main gate to its *hōjō* (top left); the *hōjō*'s east garden (centre left); Tenju-an's *shoin* (reception hall) opens on to the south garden (bottom left); the south-garden pond (bottom right); a bridge in the style of *tanzaku* (strips of paper used for inscribing poems) (top right).

TENJU-AN SUB-TEMPLE, NANZEN-JI

Tenju-an was founded as a *tacchū* (sub-temple) of Nanzen-ji during the 1330s in honour of Mukan Fumon, Nanzen-ji's first abbot. It burnt down in the Ōnin War during the second half of the fifteenth century, and remained neglected until 1602, when work began on a new *hōjō* (abbot's hall). Tenju-an possesses a garden with a double pond occupying the southern half of its grounds, as well as a dry garden in front of the *hōjō*. The former retains vestiges of a pond garden in the style of the late-fourteenth/early-fifteenth-century. The dry garden features geometrically laid stepping stones, leading from Tenju-an's main gate up to its *hōjō*. Although these stepping stones are sometimes described as dating from the fourteenth century, the pattern in which they are set is much more characteristic of garden styles of the seventeenth century. Another set of stepping stones leads from the *hōjō* to a cemetery among a grove of trees. The rest of this dry garden was created by the garden architect Nakane Kinsaku in 1963.





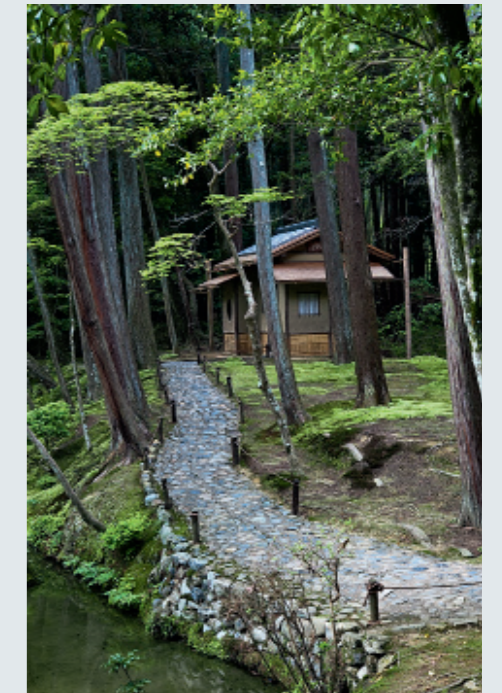
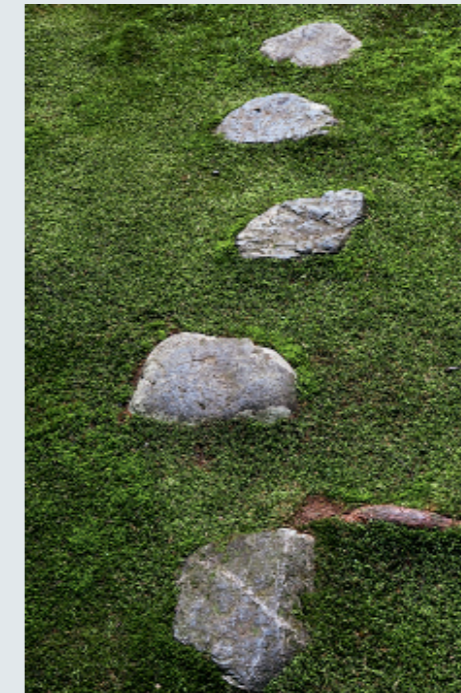
SAIHŌ-JI (KOKE-DERA, THE MOSS TEMPLE)

The Zen Buddhist temple Saihō-ji is so famous for its moss that it is generally known as the Moss Temple. Located among the foothills of the mountains to the west of Kyōto, its garden is a pond garden with three islands linked with turf bridges. The entire area is given over to mixed woodland, with Japanese maples growing alongside stately conifers such as Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica*; *sugi* in Japanese) and Hinoki cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*). The garden is kept meticulously free of undergrowth. The conifers have had their lower branches removed (as is the way in Japan), and the illusion of spaciousness created by the tall columns they form, and the gracious shade they cast on the moss below, helps to give the garden an aura of other-worldly tranquility. Among these surroundings, it seems possible to regain one's serenity of mind and spirit. This seems the perfect place to seek the enlightenment that Zen Buddhism speaks of.

LEFT Over many centuries, moss has taken over the grounds of Saihō-ji, but this is not how this garden was originally designed to look. Like Rokuon-ji (Kinkaku-ji), Saihō-ji was intended to be in the image of the Amida Buddha's Jōdo paradise, and it featured a bright spacious elegant garden ornamented with standing stones and clipped trees.

RIGHT The southernmost island of the pond at Saihō-ji is called Kasumi-jima (Misty Island) or simply Naga-jima (Long Island). In Musō Soseki's day, it was covered with sparkling white gravel.

BELOW A temple gardener at Saihō-ji shoulders a bamboo pannier (left); a row of stepping stones in the moss (centre); a garden path winds along the east shore of the pond, past a teahouse built in 1928 to provide refreshment for visitors to the garden and named the Tanhoku-tei, after one of Musō's original buildings.



SAIHŌ-JI

There are said to be more than a hundred species of moss at Saihō-ji, but when its garden was first laid out, in the fourteenth century, the islands in the middle of the garden pond were spread with sparkling white gravel and planted with pine trees. The temple was renowned for its seasonal pageantry of cherry blossoms in the springtime, followed by lotus flowers in the summer and the colour of its maples in the autumn. There was a boathouse, and outings on to the pond took place. The garden was very much designed to be appreciated from the water as well as from land.

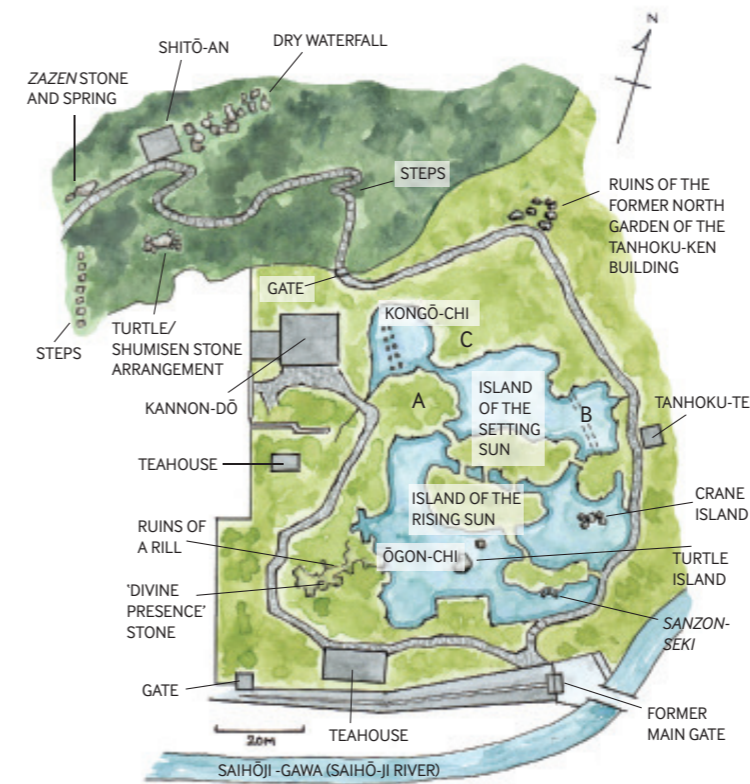
The present-day appearance of this garden at Saihō-ji is due more to chance than deliberate design. In 1339, the Japanese monk Musō Soseki founded Saihō-ji as a Rinzai Zen temple on the site of two late-twelfth-century Buddhist temples that had belonged to the Jōdo sect. One of these temples already had a pond garden in the Jōdo (paradise) style. Musō appears to have retained (or restored) many of the features of this garden, while adding a set of elegant new buildings. In contrast to the way the garden looks today, Musō's garden is said to have been full of brilliant sunlight. A section of the pond was spanned by a broad arched bridge from which it was possible to gaze down on a beautiful, two-storey pavilion, the upper storey of which was dedicated to a crystal reliquary containing Gautama Buddha's ashes. Musō named the pond Ōgon-chi (Golden Pond), after a description of paradise found in the *Hekigan-roku* (*The Blue Cliff Record*, or *Biyán Lù* in Chinese), a twelfth-century Chinese collection of a hundred *kōan* (short anecdotes and sayings aimed at stimulating meditation). A smaller pond was called the Kongō-chi (Diamond Pond) after the Diamond Sutra.

But Saihō-ji suffered a steady decline of its fortunes over the subsequent centuries. It was badly damaged in the second half of the fifteenth century



SAIHŌ-JI GARDEN

KEY
 A = Probable site of Musō Soseki's pavilion
 B = Probable site of Musō Soseki's bridge
 C = Probable site of the Sairai-dō, which had been the Amida hall before Musō Soseki refounded the temple



OPPOSITE TOP A rill formerly fed Saihō-ji's temple pond from the south-west. The temple's *yōgō-seki* (sacred stone) is in the foreground; it is festooned with rope, symbolising its divine associations.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM Clusters of stones in Saihō-ji's pond symbolise the auspicious crane and its companion, the turtle. Here, the boulders representing the crane can be seen beyond a bridge linking the southernmost of the pond's three main islands to the shore.

BELOW Plan of the gardens at Saihō-ji in their current form.

during the Ōnin War. The site was prone to flooding, having not only the garden's ponds but also three wellsprings and a small river in its immediate vicinity. The oldest of the present temple buildings – a teahouse called the *Shōnan-tei* – dates only from the beginning of the seventeenth century. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the temple had become neglected, and moss had taken over the garden. It was then that the moss itself became the object of admiration.

This, however, is not the entire story. Musō built himself a hermitage for *zazen* (sitting meditation) on the slope overlooking the main temple garden. The site he chose is believed to have been the location of the second of the two twelfth-century temples which had once stood there. While the original lower temple had been conceived in the image of the Amida Buddha's paradise, the temple on the slope was called *Edo-ji* – Edo, in this context, meaning the 'Defiled Land' and hence signifying the present world.

There was a cultural precedent for choosing a secluded spot in the wilderness for practising *zazen*. Bodhidharma, the Indian monk who is supposed to have introduced Chán Buddhism to China, was said to have meditated in a cave for nine consecutive years, his face turned to the wall. Also, the persecution of Buddhist temples in ninth-century China forced many Chán monks to abandon the cities and find refuge in remoter areas of the Chinese empire.

Musō named his own hermitage *Shitō-an* (Hermitage which Points to the East) after a legend associated with Ryō-zasu, a Chinese Chán Buddhist monk of the eighth century. Ryō-zasu is said to have realised the futility of seeking scholarly knowledge after he had an encounter with the Chán master Baso Dō'itsu (Mǎzǔ Dào'yī in Chinese). He gave up the school in which he had been teaching his many disciples and disappeared up a



The south garden of Konchi-in's *hōjō* (abbot's hall) was designed to be viewed from the chief reception room. When all the sliding doors are removed, the transom and the floor frame the garden so that it resembles a long scroll painting. In the centre, there is a miniature landscape, representing islands rising out of the sea. This is flanked by a turtle island on the left and a crane island (of which the stone representing the crane's neck is visible) on the right.

KOBORI ENSHŪ AND KONCHI-IN

The Ōnin War, which caused so much damage to the city of Kyōto, was a prelude to a century of political turmoil. The Ashikaga dynasty clung on as nominal governors of Japan until the 1580s, but, in actuality, the country was carved up into numerous small territories, which were ruled by *daimyō* (local feudal lords), who were constantly at war with each other. In 1573, the *daimyō* Oda Nobunaga drove the last Ashikaga shogun out of Kyōto. In 1590, one of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, finally succeeded in crushing the power of the regional *daimyō* and unifying the country under his rule. Hideyoshi had made Ōsaka his stronghold and under his influence, aided by the great wealth of the merchant community in the nearby port of Sakai, there was a great blossoming of the arts in the Ōsaka and Kyōto area. The opulence and verve of the late sixteenth-century artistic style is reflected in the turtle-and-crane garden at Entoku-in, a sub-temple of the Zen Buddhist temple Kōdai-ji, located in the eastern part of Kyōto close to the Gion quarter. Hideyoshi's passion for the tea ceremony, which was shared by many of his generals, advisers and retainers, also had a great influence on the development of painting, ceramics and architecture, as well as garden design.

After Toyotomi Hideyoshi's death in 1598, political power shifted to his former rival Tokugawa Ieyasu, who assumed the title of shogun in 1603. Ieyasu moved the centre of government to his stronghold Edo (modern-day Tōkyō), and the dynasty he founded ruled Japan until 1867.

The patronage of Tokugawa Ieyasu and his immediate successors, his son Hidetada and grandson Iemitsu, inspired the work of one of Japan's most famous garden designers – Kobori Masakazu, known as Kobori Enshū. Enshū was a *daimyō* (feudal lord), a high-ranking government official and, above all, a celebrated tea master. His family originally came from the

Konchi-in's turtle island is surmounted by a magnificent Chinese juniper (*Juniperus chinensis*), believed to be the original planted when the garden was first constructed in the early 1630s.

the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. The turtle has a head-shaped stone and the juniper tree, which the turtle carries on its back, is believed to be the original, which had been planted on this spot so many centuries ago. The crane has an enormous rectangular stone, which represents its outstretched neck, while other stones suggest the bird's powerful wings lifted in flight. The crane faces eastwards, as though it were flying off in the direction of Edo, the capital of the Tokugawa shogunate.

The two creatures face each other across a large flat rectangular stone of a purplish hue, which serves as a *reihai-seki* (worship stone). This *reihai-seki* is set in front of a miniature landscape representing islands rising out of the sea. There is a *sanzon-seki* (three sacred stones) grouping, with the stones arranged to look like a series of mountain peaks. Their juxtaposition with the images of the turtle and crane suggests that they stand for the Islands of the Immortals. At the same time, the presence of the *reihai-seki* implies that the stones in the *sanzon-seki* are meant to represent Buddha and his attendants. But the *reihai-seki* has another purpose. It pays homage to a large shrine, which stands beyond the trees in the background. This shrine, which was designed by Enshū, is dedicated to the deified spirit of Tokugawa Ieyasu.

The enormous turtle and crane arrangements in the foreground nearly dwarf the central stone landscape, over which they appear to stand sentinel. The extreme contrast is, however, intentional and was meant to give depth to the overall composition. The garden was designed to be viewed primarily from the inner chamber of a resplendent set of reception





THE POND AND BRIDGE

At large Rinzai Zen Buddhist temples, there is often a formal rectangular pond located in front of the *sanmon* (main inner gateway), which faces the temple's *hon-dō* (sanctuary), otherwise known as the *butsu-den*. The pond will have a bridge leading across it to this gate. The archetypal *sanmon* has three entrances (symbolising deliverance from the Three Poisons – desire, anger, and ignorance) and two storeys – the top floor housing a statue of either the Gautama Buddha or the bodhisattva Kannon Bosatsu, accompanied by the Sixteen *Rakan* (a group of legendary holy men particularly venerated in Japanese Zen Buddhism). Examples of this type of pond can be seen in Kyōto at Myōshin-ji, Kennin-ji and Tenryū-ji. At all of these temples, the pond is named the Hōjō-chi (Pond of Freed Life).

A *hōjō-chi* was a pond in which fish rescued from fishermen were

released as a symbolic gesture of mercy. At Tōfuku-ji, however, the pond in front of its imposing *sanmon* has a different name: Shion-chi (Pond of Far Thought). The pond and the *sanmon* symbolise the idea of crossing over from our present existence to nirvana, a state where all destructive mental states that arise from desire (greed), anger and ignorance (confusion) have been extinguished and all suffering is at an end.

A similar idea is reflected in the image of the *Niga-byakudō* (Two Rivers, White Road) of the Jōdo sect of Buddhism. The *Niga-byakudō* is represented by a river that is crossed by a narrow white path. On the right-hand side of the path, there are raging torrents; on the left side, the river is of flames. The torrents symbolise human greed and passion; the flames, anger. Gautama Buddha, the historical Buddha, stands on the near shore, which represents this present existence; the Amida Buddha presides over the farther shore, which symbolises Jōdo, Amida's abode.

OPPOSITE Live fish were formerly bought from fishermen and released into temple ponds in a special ceremony to mark the sanctity of all life.

BELOW The pond in front of Tōfuku-ji's imposing *sanmon* (main inner gateway) symbolises the human soul's passage from a state of ignorance and suffering to one of spiritual enlightenment. The gate, which took twenty years to build, was completed in 1405.





A view of the garden from the Tsūsen-in (far left); the Tei'gyoku-ken tea room seen from the service entrance – with seating for the host on the left (left); the tea room has a tiny vestibule (with its own stone basin), which takes the place of an inner tea garden (below left).

The garden facing the Tsūsen-in at Shinju-an has a double purpose. It serves as an approach to the Tei'gyoku-ken tea room, but was also designed to be viewed and appreciated from the main *shoin* (reception hall) of the Tsūsen-in itself. The main features of the garden – a tall stone lantern, a superb *sute-ishi* (standing stone) and several specimen trees, including *Ternstroemia gymnanthera* and *Vaccinium bracteatum* – are presented crisply against the bareness of the garden wall, which forms its backdrop. This is an elegant and refined garden, which is extremely intimate at the same time as it preserves an air of a dignified formality.

The Tei'gyoku-ken possesses a very distinctive feature: a tiny vestibule with its own stone water basin. The vestibule serves as the inner *roji* (tea garden) (although it is covered by a roof) and provides an area where guests can tidy themselves before entering the tea room. The addition of a vestibule was Sōwa's nod to the land of his birth – he came from the mountainous Hida-takayama region of modern-day Gifu prefecture, where it snows heavily in winter.

The south garden of Keishun-in's *hōjō* is called the Shinnyo-no-niwa (Garden of *Tathatā*). *Tathatā* is a Buddhist concept signifying 'the state of things as they are'. The positioning of the modestly sized stones follows the style seen in the east garden of the *hōjō* at Shinju-an, only here the stones are set among camellias, maples, a Kirishima azalea (*Rhododendron obtusum*) and an ancient *Pieris japonica*.

KEISHUN-IN

The tea ceremony was immensely popular at Daitoku-ji, but Myōshin-ji was different. It was strict about spiritual discipline and frowned on activities that might distract their monks from their meditation exercises. This meant that any tea rooms created at Myōshin-ji were discreetly tucked away. At Taizō-in, for example, the only indications that it possesses a tea room are a stone basin and a narrow row of stepping stones running along the west front of the *hōjō* (abbot's hall) and past the *kare-sansui* (dry-landscape) garden traditionally attributed to Kanō Motonobu. This path then turns a corner and leads to the entrance of the tea room, which is hidden around the north side of the *hōjō* building.

Keishun-in was one of the very few *tacchū* (sub-temples) at Myōshin-ji that was allowed to have a tea room, and, even so, the tea room in question is situated tactfully behind shrubbery around the side of the *shoin* (reception hall). The shrubbery, however, provided an excuse for landscaping the area surrounding both the *hōjō* and the *shoin* in a unified woodland style, and Keishun-in's gardens are, in fact, a sophisticated interpretation of Sen no Rikyū's style of *roji* (tea garden).

This sub-temple was originally founded in 1598 as Kenshō-in by Oda Hidenori, a grandson of the warlord Oda Nobunaga. In 1632, the military commander Ishikawa Sadamasa took it over, renamed it Keishun-in, in memory of his parents, and built the present *hōjō* and *kuri* (domestic quarters). It is believed that Keishun-in was given special dispensation to have a tea room because of Sadamasa, and that the Kihaku-an tea room was brought here either from Sadamasa's Nagahama Castle together with the *shoin* building, or separately from another residence in his possession. In 1615, the Tokugawa shogunate decided to reduce the overall number



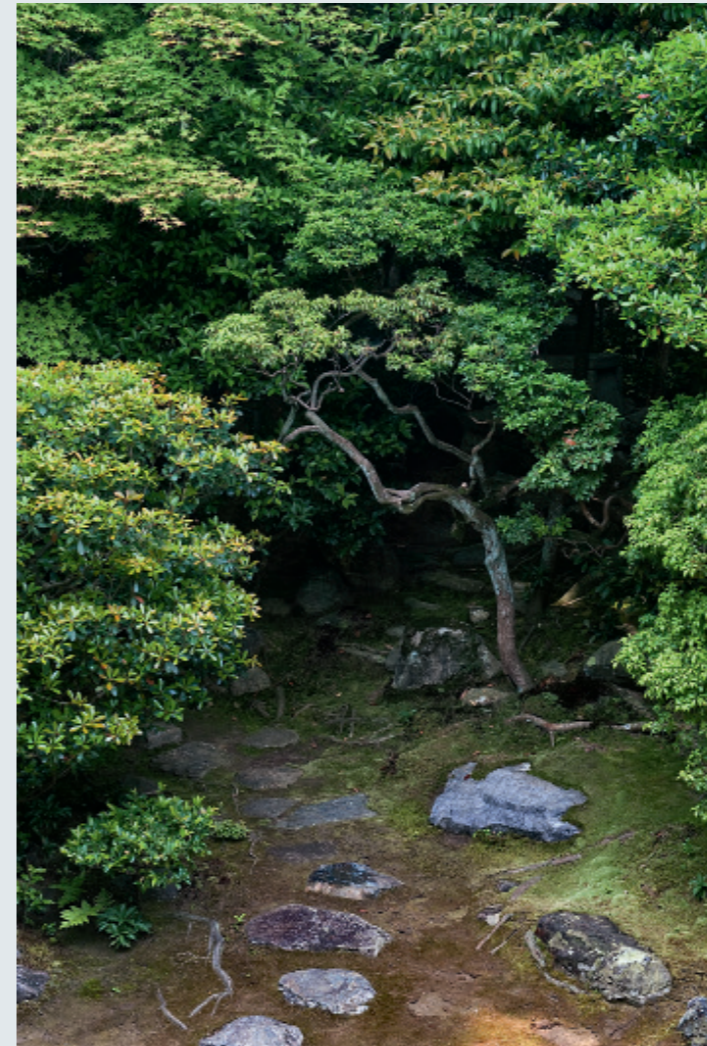


of castles in Japan, and Nagahama Castle, on the shores of Lake Biwa, was one of many that were torn down at that time.

Keishun-in is situated on the north-east edge of Myōshin-ji's temple complex, and its buildings are perched on a slight elevation – the ground sloping away to the east and south of the *hōjō* (abbot's hall). The south garden of the *hōjō* is a narrow rectangular moss garden with relatively modest-sized stones, set among fine specimen trees including Japanese maples, a Kirishima azalea (*Rhododendron obtusum*) and *asebi* (*Pieris japonica*). It backs on to a tall clipped evergreen hedge. This garden is



meant to be viewed from the *hōjō*, but there is a path leading from the *genkan* around the back of the hedge and through a moss-carpeted grove with handsome, well-grown trees. By a *koi* pond, the path turns northwards. To its right, there is an exceedingly plain, wooden gate – another entrance into the grounds of the sub-temple. Near this gate stands a well in the middle of a small clearing among the trees. From here, stepping stones proceed through a thicket of trees and shrubs towards the *hōjō*'s east garden. The terrain here has been varied with hillocks. The path continues up a slope to the veranda of the *hōjō*, while another set of



stepping stones veers off to the right by a *zazen* (sitting meditation) stone and a stone lantern, and leads up a different slope to a roofed wooden gateway.

The garden to this gateway serves as the Kihaku-an tea room's outer *roji* (tea garden). Beyond the gate is the middle *roji*. This is a very simple garden featuring beautiful stepping stones set among the moss, leading to a low, diagonal-lattice gate constructed of bamboo canes. The lattice gate opens on to the inner *roji* (tea garden), the tiny forecourt of the Kihaku-an tea room. This forecourt, which has a beautiful small stone



OPPOSITE A path lies through a grove of mature trees behind the south *hōjō* garden (left); this well in a clearing near the east entrance into the garden has adjacent stepping stones leading leftwards towards the east garden of the *hōjō* (right).

ABOVE Stepping stones cross the east *hōjō* garden, which serves as the outer *roji* for the Kihaku-an tea room (left); this rustic gate, located at the north end of the east garden, is the entrance to the middle *roji* (right).

BELOW A view from Tōfuku-ji's famous bridge, the Tsūten-kyō, over the ravine which cuts through the grounds of the temple.

OPPOSITE The steep banks of the ravine at Tōfuku-ji are thickly planted with many varieties of Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*), as well as with the trident maple (*A. buergerianum*), which is native to China and Taiwan but has been long cultivated in Japan.



PLANTS

The custom of planting cherry trees in the garden for their early spring blossoms became established in Japan around the ninth century. The gardens of early Zen Buddhist temples such as Saihō-ji, which still retained an element of the pleasure garden about them, possessed ornamental trees of this kind. At the ancient Kyōto temple Tōfuku-ji, however, all the cherry trees were chopped down sometime towards the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century. This was done on the orders of Yoshida Minchō, who is now principally remembered as an artist, but he was also a Zen Buddhist monk and an official at Tōfuku-ji with responsibilities for the administration of its buildings. Nearly five centuries later, in 1869, the 288th abbot of Tōfuku-ji followed Minchō's example by having, this time, all the temple's maples cut down. The reason was the same on both occasions – the trees were proving too much of a distraction.

Despite this clearance, Tōfuku-ji was – and still is – famous for its maple trees. A deep ravine runs through the extensive grounds of the temple, and hundreds of Japanese maples were planted along its banks, along with a variety of trident maple, *Acer buergerianum*, known in Japanese as *tō-kaede*. This was in honour of Tōfuku-ji's founding abbot Enni Bennen, who had spent six years studying in China. Since the seventeenth century, the ravine has been one of the most popular spots for the denizens of Kyōto to come and enjoy the autumn leaves. Very few cherry trees, however, have ever been planted to replace those cut down in the days of Yoshida Minchō.

Surviving seventeenth-century gardens in the *kare-sansui* (dry-landscape) style are mainly planted with evergreens,

