

# JAPANESE GARDENS



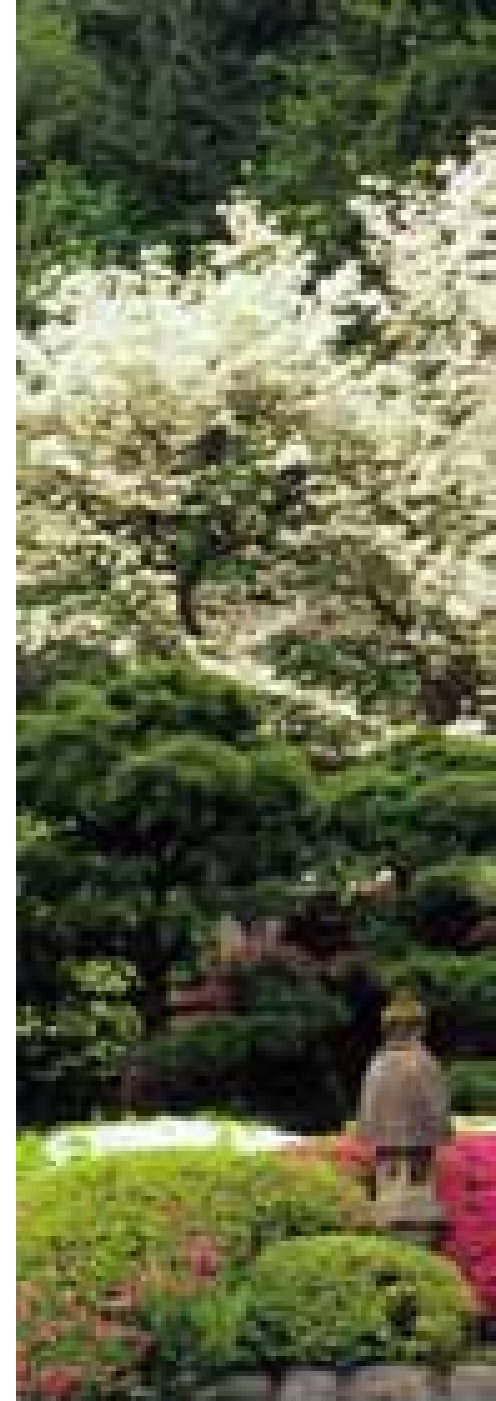
# JAPANESE GARDENS

Much of the landscape of Japan, an island nation, consists of mountains and oceans. These ever-present mountains and oceans are reduced to two of the primary and enduring components of the Japanese Garden — rocks and water.

In traditional Japanese gardens these elements has been **created in miniature forms**, often in a highly abstract and stylized way. Spirit of Japanese Garden -**Nature** is the ideal in Japanese gardens. They idealize it, even symbolize it, but never create something that nature itself cannot.

From ancient times to the present, living in **harmony with nature** has reflected the in Japanese gardens as per seasons.

A traditional garden will usually have an irregular-shaped pond, or, in larger gardens, two or more ponds connected by a channel or stream, and a cascade, a miniature version of Japan's famous mountain waterfalls.



# HISTORY

Around 552 A.D. Buddhism was officially installed from China, via Korea, into Japan.

Japanese gardens were influenced by the Chinese philosophy of Daoism, and Amida Buddhism, imported from China in or around 552 A.D. Daoist legends spoke of five mountainous islands inhabited by the Eight Immortals, who lived in perfect harmony with nature. Each Immortal flew from his mountain home on the back of a crane. The islands themselves were located on the back of an enormous sea turtle.

**In Japan, the five islands of the Chinese legend became one island, called Horai-zen, or Mount Horai. Replicas of this legendary mountain, the symbol of a perfect world, are a common feature of Japanese gardens, as are rocks representing turtles and cranes of the Chinese gardens, but gradually Japanese garden designers began to develop their own aesthetics, based on Japanese materials and Japanese culture. By the Edo period, the Japanese garden had its own distinct appearance. Since the end of the 19th century, Japanese gardens have also been adapted to Western settings. Japanese gardens also were strongly influenced**

# ELEMENTS OF JAPANESE GARDENS

## WATER –

- Japanese gardens always have water, either a pond or stream, or, in the dry rock garden, represented by white sand.
- In [Buddhist](#) symbolism, water and stone are the [ying-yang](#), two opposites which complement and complete each other
- In traditional gardens, The ponds and streams are carefully placed according to Buddhist [geomancy](#), the art and science of putting things in the place most likely to attract good fortune.



An island in [Koraku-en](#) gardens, Tokyo

# ROCKS AND SAND

- Rock, sand and gravel are an essential feature of the Japanese garden
- Rocks are traditionally classified as tall vertical, low vertical, arching, reclining, or flat.
- Rocks and water also symbolize [yin and yang](#), (*in* and *yōin* Japanese) in Buddhist philosophy; the hard rock and soft water complement each other, and water, though soft, can wear away rock.
- Rough volcanic rocks are usually used to represent mountains or as stepping stones .
- Smooth and round [sedimentary](#) rocks (*suisai-gan*) are used around lakes or as stepping stones.
- Hard [metamorphic](#) rocks are usually placed by waterfalls or streams.



Rock composition at  
[Tōfuku-ji](#)



Shitenno-ji garden. Note  
the three-rock  
composition in the  
center.

- Rocks should vary in size and color but from each other, but not have bright colors, which would lack subtlety.

- Rocks are arranged in careful compositions of two, three, five or seven rocks, with three being the most common.

- In a three-arrangement, a tallest rock usually represents heaven, the shortest rock is the earth, and the medium-sized rock is humanity, the bridge between heaven and earth

- In ancient Japan, sand (*sun*a) and gravel (*jari*) were used around Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples.

- Later it was used in the Japanese rock garden or Zen Buddhist gardens to represent water or clouds.

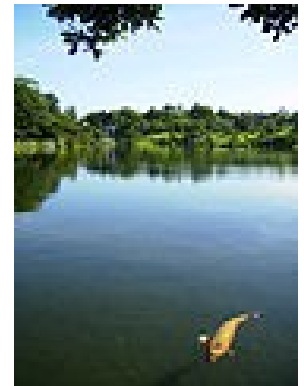
## FISH

- The idea of using fish in landscape garden is borrowed from Chinese garden.

- Goldfish were introduced to Japan in the 16th century.



or brocaded  
(colored) carp, a  
decorative fish bred  
for gardens



A large carp  
in the garden  
of Suizen-ji

# GARDEN BRIDGES

Bridges first appeared in the Japanese garden during the Heian period.

Bridges could be made of stone (*ishibashi*), or of wood, or made of logs with earth on top, covered with moss (*dobashi*); they could be either arched (*soribashi*) or flat (*hirabashi*).

Bridges can be painted red if it is used for temple garden, as per Chinese tradition.

During the Edo period, when large promenade gardens became popular, streams and winding paths were constructed, with a series of bridges, to take visitors on a tour of the scenic views of the garden.



The Flying Geese Bridge in [Kenroku-en](#) garden (Between 1822 and 1874).



Stone bridge in [Koishikawa Kōrakuen](#)



Rustic bridge at [Tensha-en](#) garden in Uwajima (1866)



# STONE LANTERNS AND WATER BASINS

**Stone lanterns** In its complete and original form, a dai-doro, like the **pagoda**, represents the **five elements of Buddhist cosmology**. The **piece touching the ground** represents *chi*, the **earth**; the **next section** represents *sui*, or **water**; *ka* or **fire**, is represented by the **section encasing the lantern's light or flame**, while *fū* (air) and *kū* (void or spirit) are represented by the **last two sections, top-most and pointing towards the sky**.

The segments express the idea that after death our physical bodies will go back to their original, elemental form.

**Stone water basins**, (*tsukubai*) were originally placed in gardens for visitors to wash their hands and mouth before the **tea ceremony**.

The water is provided to the **basin** by a **bamboo pipe** and they usually have a **wooden ladle for drinking the water**.

In tea gardens, the basin was placed low to the ground, so the drinker had to bend over to get his water



Lantern in [Koraku-en](#) garden



Water basin at [Ryoan-ji](#), Kyoto



# GARDEN FENCES, GATES, AND DEVICES

The exterior wall of [Katsura Imperial Villa](#), designed, like all the garden, for purity and simplicity



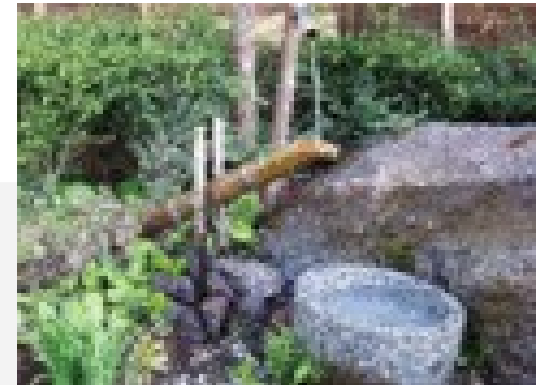
**Garden fences**

The traditional garden gate of the Adachi Museum of Art



**Garden Gate**

A [shishiodoshi](#) is garden device, made of bamboo and wood, designed to scare away birds. As the bamboo tube fills with water, it clacks against a stone, empties, then fills with water again.



**Garden Devices**

# TREES AND FLOWERS

- Plants are chosen according to aesthetic principles,
- Plants are used either to hide undesirable sights or to serve as a backdrop to certain garden features, or to create a picturesque scene, like a landscape painting or postcard.
- Trees are carefully chosen and arranged for their autumn colors.
- Mosses often used to suggest that the garden is ancient.
- Flowers are also carefully chosen by their season of flowering.
- . Some plants are chosen for their religious symbolism, such as the lotus, sacred in Buddhist teachings, or the [pine](#), which represents longevity.
- The trees are carefully trimmed to provide attractive scenes, and to prevent them from blocking other views of the garden



sculpted trees and bushes at a Residence.



# AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES

Japanese gardens largely followed the Chinese model, but gradually developed their own principles and aesthetics.

Some basic principles are:

**Miniaturization** - The Japanese garden is a miniature and idealized view of nature. Rocks can represent mountains, and ponds can represent seas.

**Concealment** - ('hiding and revealing.') The Zen Buddhist garden is meant to be seen at all once, but the promenade garden is meant to be seen one landscape at a time, like a scroll of painted landscapes unrolling. Features are hidden behind hills, trees groves or bamboo, walls or structures, to be discovered when the visitor follows the winding path.

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**BORROWED" SCENERY** (*SHAKKEI*)- Smaller gardens are often designed to incorporate the view of features outside the garden, such as hills, trees or temples, as part of the view. This makes the garden seem larger than it really is.

**ASYMMETRY** - Japanese gardens are not laid on straight axes, or with a single feature dominating the view. Buildings and garden features are usually placed to be seen from a diagonal, and are carefully composed into scenes that contrast right angles, such as buildings with natural features, and vertical features, such as rocks, bamboo or trees, with horizontal features, such as water.

According to garden historians David and Michigo Young, at the heart of the Japanese garden is the principle that a garden is a work of art. "Though inspired by nature, it is an interpretation rather than a copy; it should appear to be natural, but it is not wild."

# PURPOSE & STYLES

Earlier the gardens were designed for recreation and aesthetic pleasure of emperors and nobles, while the gardens of Buddhist temples were designed for contemplation and mediation.

Today there are several styles in Japanese gardens as per function –

1.POND GARDEN

2.PARADISE GARDEN

3.HERMITAGE GARDEN

4.DRY ROCK GARDEN OR ZEN GARDENS

5. TEA GARDENS - simple, rustic gardens with teahouses where the Japanese tea ceremony is conducted.

6. PROMENADE OR STROLL GARDENS - where the visitor follows a path around the garden to see carefully-composed landscapes.

7.COURTYARD GARDENS

# GARDEN STYLES

## POND GARDEN

**known as** "lake-spring-boat excursion garden". It was imported from China during the [Heian Period](#)

### **Elements of pond garden –**

- Lake
- Islands

### **Features –**

It featured a large, ornate residence with two long wings reaching south to a large lake and garden.

**These gardens had large lakes with small islands, where musicians played during festivals and ceremonies.**

Eg - [Heian-jingū](#) and [Daikaku-ji](#) Temple in Kyoto.



❖ Strolling Pond Garden Zig Zag Bridge (yatsushashi)



[Heian-jingū](#) is a recreation of the old imperial pond garden of Kyoto

# THE PARADISE GARDEN

The Paradise Garden appeared in the late **Heian Period**. They were meant to symbolize **Paradise** or the **Pure Land** (*Jōdo*), where the **Buddha** sat on a platform contemplating a lotus pond.

## Elements of paradise garden –

- A lake island known as Nakajima
- a Buddha hall
- Arching bridge

## Features –

These gardens featured a lake island called Nakajima, where the Buddha hall was located, connected to the shore by an arching bridge.

Eg - The most famous surviving example is the garden of the Phoenix Hall of **Byōdō-in** Temple, built in 1053, in Uji, near Kyoto.



Temple in Uji, near Kyoto.



a paradise garden in Kyoto.



# HERMITAGE GARDEN

A hermitage garden is a small garden usually built by a samurai or government official who wanted to retire from public life and devote himself to study or meditation.

## Elements of these gardens –

- Garden – traditional garden features
- Rustic house
- Winding path

## Features –

The garden is attached to a rustic house, and approached by a winding path, which suggests it is deep in a forest. It may have a small pond, a Japanese rock garden, and the other features of traditional gardens, in miniature, designed to create tranquility and inspiration.

**Eg.** - An example is the [Shisen-dō](#) garden in Kyoto, built by a bureaucrat and scholar exiled by the shogun in the 17th century. It is now a Buddhist temple.



[Shisen-dō](#), built in Kyoto, in the 17th century, one of the best examples of a hermitage garden

# DRY ROCK GARDENS/ ZEN GARDENS –

These are meant for meditation and in these gardens.

## Elements of rock/ zen gardens –

- White sand
- Raked gravel

## Features –

These gardens have white sand or raked gravel in place of water, carefully-arranged rocks, and sometimes rocks and sand covered with moss.

Eg - The most famous example is [Ryōan-ji](#) Temple in Kyoto.



Zuihō-in garden, Kyoto



Rosan-ji garden, Kyoto

# TEA GARDENS

The style of garden takes its name from the path to the teahouse, which is supposed to inspire the visitor to meditation to prepare him for the ceremony.

## ELEMENTS OF TEA GARDEN –

- Outer garden
- Gate
- Covered arbor
- Inner garden
- Moist and green pathway

## Features –

- There is an outer garden, with a gate and covered arbor where guests wait for the invitation to enter.
- They then pass through a gate to the inner garden, where they wash their hands and rinse their mouth, as they would before entering a Shinto shrine, before going into the teahouse itself.
- The path is always kept moist and green, so it will look like a remote mountain path, and there are no bright flowers that might distract the visitor from his meditation.



A teahouse and roji, or tea garden, at [Ise Jingu](#).

# PROMENADE GARDENS

These gardens were meant to be seen by following a path clockwise around the lake from one carefully-composed scene to another.

## Elements of promenade gardens –

- Scenery – mountains ,temples
- Pathway , fences, bamboo ,buildings

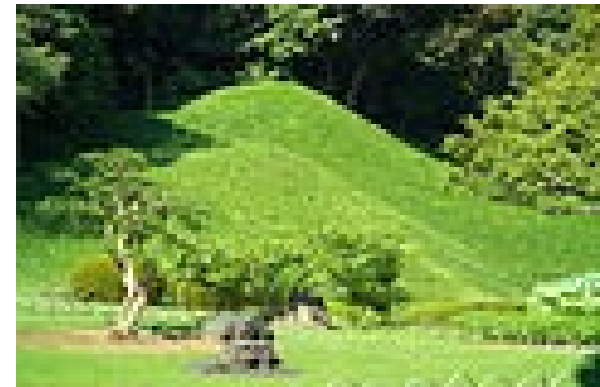
## Features –

These gardens used two techniques to provide interest; "**borrowed scenery**", which took advantage of views of scenery outside the garden, such as mountains or temples, incorporating them into the view so the garden looked larger than it really was; and "**hide-and-reveal**," which used winding paths, fences, bamboo and buildings to hide the scenery so the visitor would not see it until he was at the best view point.

Eg - Edo Period gardens also often feature recreations of famous scenery or scenes inspired by literature; [Suizen-ji Jōju-en](#) Garden in [Kumamoto](#) has a miniature version of [Mount Fuji](#), and [Katsura Villa](#) in Kyoto has a miniature version of the [Ama-no- hashidate](#) sandbar in Miyazu Bay, near Kyoto.



[Katsura Imperial Villa](#), the prototype for the promenade garden



Two hills covered with trimmed bamboo grass which represent [Mount Lu](#) in China. This feature is in [Kōraku-en](#) Garden in Tokyo

# COURTYARD GARDEN

These small gardens were originally found in the interior courtyards of [Heian Period](#) and palaces.

## Elements of courtyard garden –

- Stone Lantern
- A Water Basin
- Stepping Stones
- Plants

## Features –

These tiny gardens were meant to be seen, not entered. These were designed to give a glimpse of nature and some privacy to the residents of the rear side of the building.

Eg. - A good example from the [Meiji Period](#) is found in the villa of [Murin-an](#) in Kyoto.

# Differences between Japanese and Chinese gardens

## JAPANESE GARDENS

### **Architecture –**

- The architecture in a Japanese garden is largely or partly concealed.
- The buildings are well apart from the body of water.
- the buildings are simple, with very little ornament.

### **Viewpoint –**

Later Japanese gardens are designed to be seen from the outside.

### **Symmetry –**

The structures in a Japanese garden from the Edo period onward are organized asymmetrically.

### **Use of Rocks –**

Rocks were smaller and placed in more natural arrangements. Integrated into the garden

## CHINESE GARDENS

### **Architecture –**

- Emphasis is being given to buildings
- These are in the center of the garden, occupying a large part of the garden space.
- They are very elaborate, with much architectural decoration.

### **Viewpoint –**

These are designed to be seen from the inside, from the buildings in the center of the garden.

### **Symmetry –**

These are usually symmetrically designed along straight axes.

### **Use of Rocks –**

Rocks were selected for their extraordinary shapes or resemblance to animals or mountains, and used for dramatic effect. They were often the stars and centerpieces of the garden.



# FAMOUS JAPANESE GARDENS



Tenryū-ji Garden in [Kyoto](#).  
(*Kaiyū-shiki Garden*, completed in 14th century)



Kōraku-en in [Okayama](#).  
(*Kaiyū-shiki Garden*, completed in 17th century)



Adachi Museum of Art Garden, [Yasugi](#).  
(*Kanshō-shiki Garden*, completed in 20th century)



A spacious Japanese garden, [Suizen-ji Jōju-en](#), near [Kumamoto Castle](#)