**HAA 18j: Japanese Architecture**

Lecture 11: The Ryōanji Rock Garden

**Rock Gardens**

Mōtsūji Garden, Hiraizumi, c. 12th century

Saihōji Rock Garden, Kyoto, 1339

Tenryūji Rock Garden, Kyoto, 1345

Daisen’in Rock Garden, Kyoto, 1513

**Ryōanji Rock Garden, 1450**

Ryōanji is a Zen temple built in Kyoto by **Hosokawa Katsumoto** (1430-1473) in **1450**. Its rock garden faces the southern façade of the **Abbot’s Quarters** (Hōjō). The garden consists of 15 rocks distributed in 5 clusters across a white gravel courtyard measuring 25 by 10 meters. It is based upon the use of rocks in Heian-period gardens, as described in the garden manual *Sakuteiki*, a practice that evolves into a more abstract symbolism in 14th-century Zen temples such as Tenryūji and Saihōji, both designed by **Musō Soseki** (1275-1351).

**Zen Buddhism**

Purports to represent an intuitive, non-textual, “mind to mind” transmission of the dharma. In contrast to other sects, Zen Buddhists claim not to emphasize ritual or the study of sutras, but instead focus on individual training sessions with masters, meditation, daily labor, and the study of *koan* or Zen riddles. Zen (Chan) Buddhism was brought to China from India by the semi-legendary monk **Bodhidharma** sometime during the 5th or 6th century CE and became popular during China’s Song period (960-1279). It spread to Japan during the 13th century primarily in the cities of Kamakura, Kyoto, and Hakata (Kyushu).

**Further Reading**

Shoji Yamada, *Shots in the Dark: Japan, Zen, and the West* (U Chicago Press, 2009)