

An **AZ** of terms in  
Japanese  
Gardening

**Heian period (785-1184)**

The Heian period saw a famous flowering of the arts. The capital was moved from Nara and established permanently in Kyoto. The very enclosed society of the court was much in love with the exuberant use and deep appreciation of colour, with frequent and deliberate use of colour in gardens. No definitive gardens from this period have survived, but the form of the layout, with a large pond and island on the south side of the main buildings can still be seen at Joruri ji (restored 1976). We mainly rely on literary sources, such as the *Genji Monogatari*, and on paintings of the period, to understand the deep feeling for colour and for sinuous forms. Later, with the decline of the aristocracy's power, the rise of Buddhist influence, and the sterner outlook of the samurai, gardens were to change dramatically. The Heian period is seen through nostalgic eyes in the masterpiece of 17th century garden creation at *Katsura Rikyu*.

**Heitenseki**

One of the characteristics of garden design of the Kamakura period is the use of distinctively flat-topped stones known as Heitenseki. It is often thought to be due to the influence of the painter *Sesshu* owing to his manner of painting which used the horizontal line to connect passages of the picture space. It can be seen to great effect in the garden of *Jaeiji*, which is associated with *Sesshu* though there is no documentary evidence to confirm this.

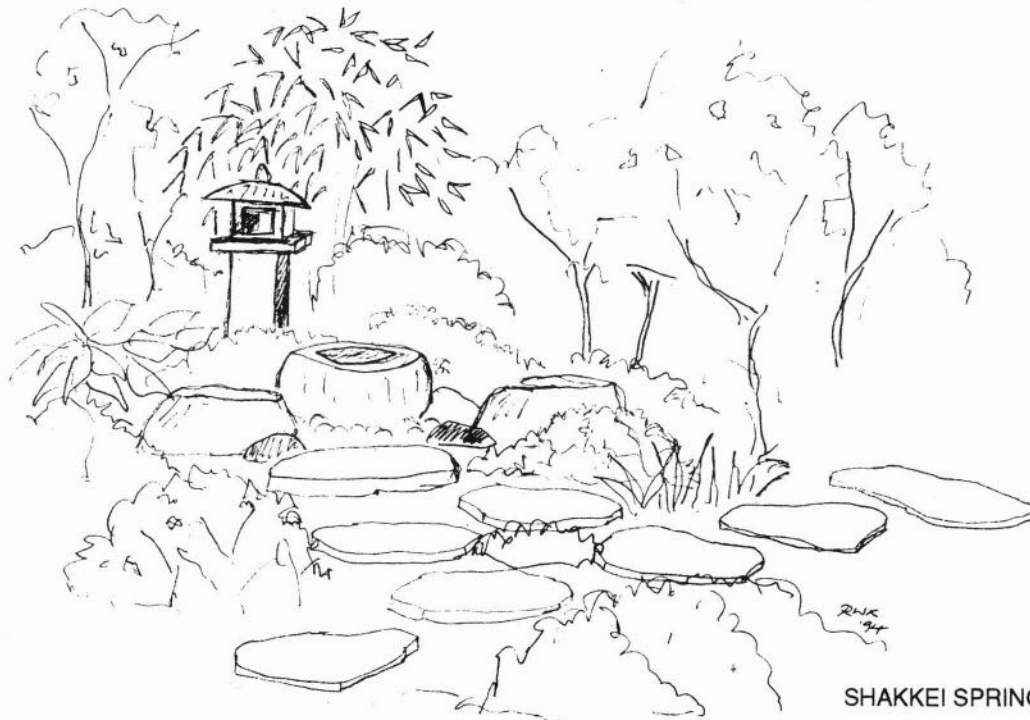
**'Hide and Reveal'**

A design concept that underpins many

gardens, influencing the manner in which the garden was perceived. By opening and closing selected and composed vistas, the viewer's attention is strongly rooted in the moment of vision. The garden of *Katsura Rikyu* is the greatest example of the use of 'hide and reveal'. It is a technique particularly associated with the 'stroll garden', and its antecedents go back into early Chinese garden design. A similar effect can be seen in the courtyard gardens of later periods, where the composition provides a succession of strong features that can be 'read' in sequence. *Daisen-in* is an example of this.

**Hiraniwa**

Literally, a 'flat garden', a term often used of courtyard gardens featuring extensive areas of level raked white gravel. The garden of *Ryoanji* is perhaps the most famous example but there are many others. The term was known in the Heian period (785-1184) where occasionally the flat space was broken up by a winding stream, often in a surprisingly colourful garden in association with buildings.



### Hojo

The main building in a Zen temple, which provides the main reception rooms. Courtyard gardens, particularly of the Zen *karesansui* style, are frequently attached to the Hojo. A notable example is the *Daitoku ji hojo*; *Ryoanji's* stone garden is also laid out in the front of the hojo. The size of the garden, usually located on the southern side of the building, varies enormously.

### Hokoku ji

A temple in Ehime province, with a fine *Muromachi*-style pond garden. The pond has both a *crane* arrangement and a *tortoise* isle. The rock arrangements are clearly by a master's eye; legend has it that *Soami* (1485-1525) composed the garden though this cannot be proved. It is said to be a re-creation of the *Kinzan-ji* garden, an important Zen monastery in China. There is a magnificent 'dry waterfall' arrangement and the influence of early landscape painting is prominent. The present *Hondo* dates from a rebuilding phase in 1752.



SHAKKEI SPRING 1995

### Hondo

The building containing the image of the founder of a Zen temple, the most sacred place. Courtyard gardens were developed here as for the *Hojo*.

### Horaito

Representations of Mount Horai, the sacred mountain, are ubiquitous in gardens of all periods. The imagery derives from Chinese Taoist sources mixed with Buddhist influences that can be traced back to very early Indian sources. Horai is one of the *Mystic Isles* (see *Shakkei* December 1994). It is often featured as a single large upright stone set in the garden composition, which in the later Edo period (1603-1867) was transformed into the *Shugo seki* or 'Master's Stone'.

### Hoshun in

A sub-temple in the *Daitoku-ji* complex in Kyoto, with a garden dating to ca 1608. The garden is quite small, featuring a pond and a steep composition of hills with good stonework. Elegant architecture complements the garden. On the south side is a magnificent *karesansui* garden laid out in the 1970s by Nakane Kinsaku, featuring very fine large stones, which was slightly altered in the 1980s.

### Ikebana

The art of flower arrangement, and also the way of appreciating flowers and plant forms. It probably originated from the canons of flower arrangement for Buddhist altars. The basis of *ikebana* is the arrangement of the three planes (vertical, horizontal, and diagonal) representing heaven, earth and man—a principle also underlying the arrangements of stones and indeed of other elements in gardens.



### Imperial Gardens

Emperors of Japan have long been the focus for cultural pursuits and many have been very active participants in garden design. The emperor *Gomizumō-o* left several gardens of the highest quality. Emperors commissioned gardens for their own palaces and also inspired gardens to be built at the palaces of lesser aristocratic families, a practice that goes back to the earliest developments in garden design. The Imperial gardens, though invariably in the finest taste, were and remain somewhat conservative in style, with perhaps a lingering nostalgia for Heian predominance.

### In & Yō seki

Yin and Yang stones, expressing the qualities of the Chinese philosophy of complementary opposites—yin/yang, male/female, light/dark, full/empty—each condition containing an element of the other within it. In the garden this may be expressed in stones e.g. with hollowed surfaces or tall strongly vertical stones.

### Iris

*Iris kaempferi*, 'shōbu', is a common water-side planting for ponds and lakes. The

appreciation of the iris goes back to the earliest times. As with the lotus, the iris flower has great beauty and poise, while it is rooted firmly in the mud. Heian Jingu in Kyoto has a famous display of massed iris, a worthy challenge to the flower-times of cherry and azalea.

### Ise shrine

In the Ise area on the eastern side of Japan is the most sacred Shinto site in all Japan. Here the ancient Sun Goddess Ameratsu founded the Shinto religion. The site is set in a forest of very ancient *Cryptomeria*. The main shrine, the Shoden, is a simple wooden building of prehistoric design, set in the middle of a precinct covered with small stones. Every thirty years, in an act that celebrates renewal, the building is rebuilt on an adjacent site, a practice that has been followed with few lapses for over 1500 years.

### Ishigumi

Literally, stone or rock arrangement, a key element of the Japanese garden. Ishigumi (or 'iwagumi') creates the skeleton of the garden composition, about which the vegetation folds a cloak. Ishigumi may be dramatic or subtle according to the interpretation in the designer's eye and to the needs of the space. An art form in itself, it is much influenced by the principles of landscape painting. In Japan great gardeners have always been famed for their mastery of stone arrangements.

### Ishisodate

A designation given to a class of priests, usually of Zen Buddhist sects, who were semi-professional garden builders. The term means 'rock-moving priests', which describes their vocation quite accurately. Priests such as Soami achieved great recognition in their day as artists of the highest order.

### Islands

The image of an island, *shima*, is very common in Japanese gardens, and its use goes back to the earliest copies of Chinese gardens built in the Nara period (645-784). In the Heian Shinzukur style of architecture, the pond with island was an essential element in the design of an estate. The island image is part of the desire to develop the essentially sacred aspect of the Japanese garden. The island, surrounded by water, indicates isolation, separateness and the opportunity of transcendence. The landscape of Japan itself is well endowed with island scenes, deeply embedded by the developing culture, steeped and guided as it was in a religion very concerned with communing directly with the gods in the landscape and its features.

### Isles of the Immortals

Another term used to indicate the Mystic Isles legend; see also *Crane*, *Turtle*, *Horai to*, *Mystic Isles*, and in *Shakkei* of December 1994.

