

# Temple Gardens of Kyoto

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Notes for images with some details

## Slide #

**#1-2 Kyoto** has over 1600 Buddhist Temples and 400 Shinto Shrines, it was the capital of Japan for over 1,000 years, it is well preserved and a center for the arts.

**#3** The inspirations for Japanese gardens can be traced to several fundamental factors:

- the landscapes, geography, and climate of Japan
- the religious beliefs (Shinto and Buddhism)

**#4-7 Shinto** ("the way of the gods") is the indigenous faith in Japan. Today, the majority of Japanese are Shinto Buddhists.

One of the Japanese words for garden - *niwa* - came to mean a place that had been cleansed and purified in anticipation of the arrival of *kami*, the deified spirits of Shinto.

The Torii is a gateway that signals the transition from the profane to the sacred - it is often located at the entrance to Shinto shrines, oceans, or mountains

**#8** Gardening as an **art form** was introduced from China and Korea in the 6th & 7th century and then aspects of Japanese garden design began to incorporate their artful concepts.

Japan's long period of isolation from 1639 to 1853, kept it closed off from much of the world. During this time, many of their creative art forms were further refined and later became known as Japanese.

**#9 Buddhism** came to Japan via China and Korea in the 6<sup>th</sup> century – it offers a spiritual path for transcending the suffering of existence

Zen is a sect of Buddhism brought from India to China and to Japan in the 11<sup>th</sup> century – Zen teaches that enlightenment is achieved through the profound realization that one is already an enlightened being.

**#10 Wu style bridges:** Some of the initial gardens built in Japan were Korean & Chinese styles, built by craftsmen for Japanese nobles. In the year 612 a garden builder emigrated from Korea who took the name Michiko no Takumi. He built Chinese style Wu bridges.

**#11** The stretch of “sea” running along the veranda at a Buddhist Temple. Moss and other evergreens play a representational role, evoking the landscape rising out of the “seas” of sand.

Buddhism became part of Japan’s spiritual and aesthetic foundation  
Gardens were intended to bring the intimate essence of nature to serve as an aid to meditation about the true meaning of life.

**#12-13** triad stone setting, asymmetry, negative space, verticality

**#14-15 wabi-sabi**

The Japanese art of finding beauty in imperfection and depth in nature, of accepting the natural cycle of growth, decay, and death. It's simple, slow, and uncluttered - it reveres authenticity above all

-for example: the pattern of moss and lichen on wood and stone, that comes with weathering and age

-wabi-sabi gardens are places that comfort the soul and lift the spirit

**#16** viewing

**#17** water, stone, plants

**#18-19** Antiquity

**#20** Gardening aesthetic, wildness vs. control

**#21** Gateways

#22 Bridges

#23 Tranquility

#24 Valuing age

#25-26 Tea ceremony originated as a habit of Chinese Buddhist monks to aid their meditation. In Japan it developed as a cultural activity with Kyoto as the heart of the Japanese tea ceremony for over 1,000 years.

It is a spiritual process done to bring harmony and inner peace to guests

Ichi go ichi e – each moment only occurs once

Tea House in Kyoto temple garden

#27 Kyoto, Arts

#28-42 Tofukuji Temple and Garden

Mirei Shigemori

Temple ceremony

A monk's lunch

Wasabi

#43-49 Kiyomizu Temple and Gardens

3<sup>rd</sup> generation monk

The gardens

Hide and reveal

Jizo statues

Jishu shrine

#50-61 Ryoanji Temple and Gardens - affiliated with a branch of Zen Buddhism

Gateway

Details of stone work

Famous dry-stone garden

The Great bell

Tatami room

Tsukubai – for cleansing

Lake  
Arm of Japanese pine  
Pines on island

**Plants of Interest: #62-71**

Japanese cedar *Cryptomeria japonica*  
Japanese black pine *Pinus thunbergii*  
Dwarf Hinoki cypress *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana Gracilis'  
Japanese plum *Prunus mume*  
*Camellia* x *vernalis* 'Star above Star'  
Paperbush *Edgeworthia chrysantha*  
Satsuki azalea *Rhododendron indicum*  
Sacred lotus *Nelumbo nucifera*

**#72** Pathways are a technique the garden designer uses to control how the garden will be revealed.

**#73** Japanese gardens are designed up from the details rather than down from the master plan.

**#74** Views

**#75** Concluding thoughts

Shimizu Garden, Glen Echo, MD

Many of these garden ideas and concepts can be integrated into other types of design.

**Some excellent books:**

*The Art of the Japanese Garden*, by Tatsuo Ishimoto

*Japanese Gardening in Small Spaces*, by Isao Yoshikawa

*The Magic of Trees and Stones*, by Katsuo Saito

*Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers*, by Leonard Koren

**Portland Japanese Garden** is perhaps the finest Japanese Garden in North America. It has an International Japanese Garden Training Center for teaching the traditional skills and techniques for creating and fostering Japanese gardens.

<https://japanesegarden.org/japan-institute/thecenter/>