

# THE GARDENS OF JAPAN



The garden of the Japanese hotel at Nikko looking out from the hotel entrance. The garden is a tiny one but it contains all the essentials of a good garden, even to the mountains that show in the distance.

*The beauty of the shades and tones of green . . . is another of the characteristic charms of a Japanese garden. One remembers them always as places of shadow and sunlight and reflections, green and rippling water, grey-green rocks and soft ferns, beauty and peace everywhere.*

ELIZABETH K. ROYS, 1926

Captivated by the exquisite calm of the gardens in Japan, Elizabeth Roys writes her most poetic descriptions. Her account emerges as gently, beautifully, and carefully as the gardens she studied. While garden design in Japan had its origins in China, Roys notes that it "developed into an art peculiar to itself," influenced by climate, geography, and culture. Unlike highly walled Chinese gardens, Japanese gardens invite the surrounding landscape to approach the house, often featuring distant hills in the garden's ensemble.



. . . the temple at Miyajima, showing one of the curved bridges that connect it with the mainland. This also gives one an excellent idea of the construction and plan of a typical Japanese temple, with single-roomed buildings surrounding a court.

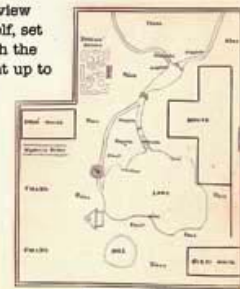


[Mde. Yamamoto's garden] Looking back along the path that leads from the front entrance to the front of the house. Note the carefully placed flat rocks for stepping stones, and the little stone lantern.

The ideal of *sansui* (hill and water) is essential, and Roys finds these elements in almost every garden. Foremost, the aim is to encourage contemplation and contentment. Flowers are few as they would detract from the ambiance of reflection. Pines, plums, cherries, willows, and maples provide restful green with delicate variety throughout the seasons. Rockwork is also a key component. Roys admires the striking use of stone, particularly natural specimens and those carved into bridges and lanterns. Especially impressive was the "dry" garden at the Daitoku-ji temple in Kyoto, designed by the great landscape artist Soami. Observing how stones and clipped shrubs are used to evoke a feeling of water, she likens his work to the Post-Impressionists of her era.



[Mde. Ichida's garden] Here one has a view of the house itself, set among trees with the lake coming right up to the corner.



OUTLINE SKETCH  
MDE. ICHIDA'S GARDEN  
KYOTO - JAPAN

Acknowledging the artistry of Japanese temple gardens, private estate gardens, and even a hotel garden, regarding each as a three-dimensional painting. She analyzes composition, plantings, and sensual appeal, unveiling the elements that make each garden enchanting.