



The Gardens of Japan

Teiji Itoh

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This eye-catching book presents Japan's finest gardens as interpreted by leading photographers and Teiji Itoh, preeminent spokesman for Japan's magnificent garden tradition. Beginning with early agricultural and religious practices, Professor Itoh describes how the major garden types—from microcosmic stone-and-gravel compositions and tea-ceremony settings to spacious landscapes for strolling—evolved from a rich mingling of native and foreign influences. While never totally rejecting outside influence, the Japanese nevertheless willfully misinterpreted rigid Chinese models to suit their own tastes and infused Zen gardens with a sensitivity to material born of their native Shinto animist faith. Even today, garden designers responding to new building styles and ways of living still preserve the impeccable sense of design and intimacy with nature that are the hallmark of the Japanese tradition.

Each page is packed with information, anecdote, and every kind of illustration—maps, plans, sketches, reproductions from ancient books, and photographs of great gardens and historical figures. One chapter is wholly devoted to Kyoto's famous Moss Temple, while another visits modern-day temple, tea, and country gardens to offer a rare look beyond the private gates and into the hearts of people who actually enjoy these gardens in their daily lives. There is an examination of the important elements—stones, lanterns, pathways, basins, plantings, fences—and at the end a special appendix gives Teiji Itoh's personal choice of gardens to visit in Japan, including addresses, descriptions, and hints on when to go and what to look for.

The Gardens of Japan is by far the most delightful and informative volume in the field. With 96 pages of superb color, it is in every detail a fitting celebration of nature's beauty, joy, and meaning.

The present format is a slightly reduced version of the original published in 1984 under the same title, but in almost every other detail it is an exact replica.

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