

Ryoanji Temple

Ryoanji Temple belongs to the Rinzai school of Zen Buddhism. It was founded in 1450, after Hosokawa Katsumoto, a Shogunate government officer, inherited the former villa from one of the Imperial Court nobles, families the the Tokudaiji family.



Its biggest attraction is the world famous dry landscape garden. It measures about 25 meters from east to west and 10 meters from north to south. The garden is an austere collection of 15 rocks in various sizes, arranged in five groups adrift in a rectangular sea of white sand.

This rock garden, surrounded by low earthen walls, may be thought of as the quintessence of Zen art, and it is acknowledged to be one of the masterpieces of Japanese culture. The garden's simple beauty inspires philosophical meditation.

Queen Elizabeth II, a monarch of the United Kingdom, and Jean Paul Sartre, a French philosopher, have both greatly admired this dry landscape garden. It is one of the historic monuments of ancient Kyoto, and is designated as a UNESCO Cultural Heritage site.