



Special Scenic Spot

## OKAYAMA KORAKUEN GARDEN



### Yearly Events

WINTER

January 1: New Year Koto Concert  
Early February: Grass Burning Ceremony  
Late February: The straw covers which protect the pine trees in winter are removed and burnt.

SPRING

March 2: Memorial day commemorating the opening of the garden  
1st or 2nd Sunday of April: Goshinko Festival  
Late April: Eisai Tea Ceremony  
3rd Sunday of May: Tea Picking Festival

SUMMER

1st Sunday in July: Rice Planting Festival  
3rd Sunday of July: Lotus Flower Viewing

AUTUMN

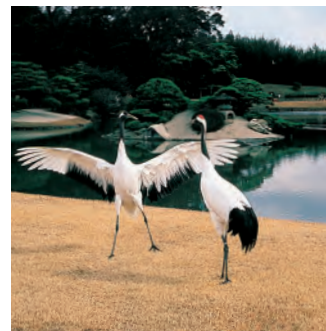
August 15th (according to old lunar calendar): Moon Viewing Ceremony  
October: Noh Theater Performance  
Late October: Pine Trees are fitted with protective straw coverings. (covering of straw mats over pine trees)  
Late October~Mid November: Chrysanthemum Exhibition  
November 3: Koraku Noh Performance



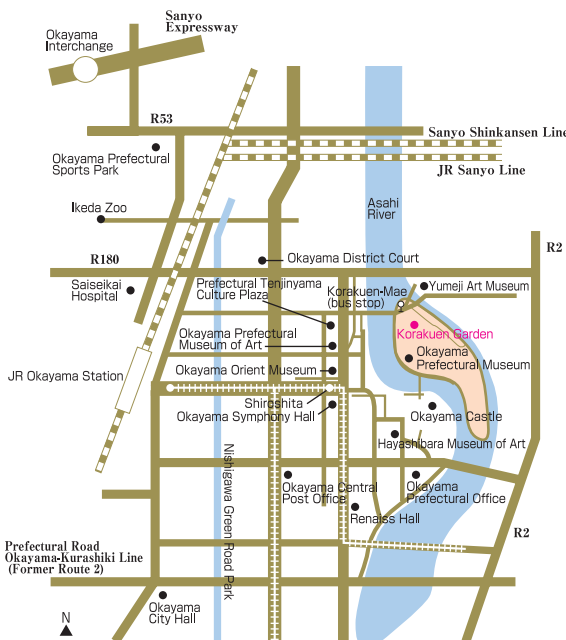
Photographer: Yukio Nanba

*Korakuen, one of the three most beautiful gardens in Japan, is a cultural heritage site for the world to treasure*

In 1687, Ikeda Tsunamasa, daimyo (Japanese feudal lord), ordered Tsuda Nagatada to begin construction of Korakuen. It was completed in 1700, and has retained its original appearance down to the present day, except for a few changes by various daimyo. Korakuen is one of the few Daimyo gardens in the provinces where historical change can be observed, thanks to the many Edo Period paintings and Ikeda Family records and documents left behind. The garden was used as a place for entertaining important guests and also as a spa of sorts for daimyo, although regular folk could also visit on certain days. In 1884, ownership was transferred to Okayama Prefecture and the garden was opened to the public. The garden suffered severe damage during the floods of 1934 and during WWII bombing in 1945, but has been restored based on Edo Period paintings and diagrams. In 1952, Korakuen Garden was designated as a Special Scenic Location under the Cultural Properties Protection Law, and is managed as a historical cultural asset to be passed to future generations.



The garden was originally called Koen ("back garden") because it was built behind Okayama Castle. However, since the garden was built in the spirit of "sen-yu-koraku" (lit. "grieve earlier than others, enjoy later than others"), the name was changed to Korakuen in 1871.



### Hours

April 1 ~ September 30 : 7:30am ~ 6:00pm  
October 1 ~ March 31 : 8:00am ~ 5:00pm

### Admission

Adults (15~64) ¥350, Children (5~14) ¥140  
Groups (min. 30 people) 20% discount  
(Admission of people age 65 and over is free, provided that evidence of their ages is presented.e.g. passport,ID card)

### Combined Admission

Korakuen - Okayama Prefectural Museum  
Adults ¥440  
Korakuen - Okayama Castle, Adults ¥520, Children ¥260  
Korakuen - Okayama Castle - Hayashibara Museum of Art  
Adults ¥670  
(Combined tickets are not available on days when the museum(s) is closed or during special exhibits, including installation periods)

### Year-Long Passport

Adults ¥2000, Children ¥800

- 15 min by car from Okayama IC
- 25 min by foot from JR Okayama Station.
- 10 min by foot from the Shiroshita stop on the city train line headed for Higashiyama
- Next to Korakuen-mae stop on the city bus

Okayama Prefecture Provincial Culture Foundation

## OKAYAMA KORAKUEN GARDEN

1-5 Korakuen, Okayama City 703-8257

Phone: 086-272-1148 Fax: 086-272-1147

<http://www.okayama-korakuen.jp/>







Ryuten and the Japanese Iris Garden

## Summer

### The heart of the Japanese garden passed down to the new millennium.

#### 9 Ryuten Pavilion

Pebbles of beautiful colors are scattered throughout the stream which passes through the center of the building - a rare design in Japan. It has a simple appearance and was used as a resting place for daimyo (Japanese feudal lord) on his strolls through the garden.

#### 10 Yatsuhashi Bridge

Irises are planted all along the bridge, after the azuma-kudari chapter in the Tale of Ise.

#### 11 Kako-no-ike Pond

Originally designed with mountain cherry and other blossoming trees incorporated into the view around the pond, tanka (traditional Japanese poetry) has been passed down though time portraying how the waterfall reflects the beauty of the flowers. The stream wandering through the park passes through this pond and flows back into the Asahi River.



#### 12 Chaso-do Hall

This building was originally the Rikyu-do, one part of a villa belonging to a high-ranking vassal towards the end of the Edo Period, and was taken apart and rebuilt here around Meiji 20 (1887). Restored after the war, it is also dedicated to Eizai Zenshi, the Okayama-born priest said to have brought tea to Japan from China, from which the building gets the name Chaso-do: house of the father of tea.

## Autumn



Maple trees in the Yuishinzan Hill

#### 7 Renchi-ken Teahouse

It is said that this was Ikeda Tsunamasa's favorite of all the teahouses in the garden. It has a magnificent view of the pond.

#### 8 Yuishinzan Hill

This manmade hill affords a panoramic view of the entire garden, spectacular when the azaleas are in bloom.

#### 13 Plum Grove

In early spring, ahead of the other flowers, around 100 red, white, single and double-petal plum trees bloom and fill the garden with an elegant fragrance.

#### 14 Chishio-no-mori Grove

The nearly 100 maple trees are beautiful in spring, when they bud, and in autumn, when their vivid tapestry of auburn hues is like a Japanese brocade. This is one of the most famous scenic spots in the garden.



#### A garden carpeted with grass

Korakuen is a bright and open garden, originally incorporating native Japanese lawns only in the space visible from Enryo-tei on the west bank of Sawa-no-ike Pond, with the rest of the garden used as arable land. Grass was extended to the rest of the garden starting in the Meiji Period.

Statistics Total area: approx. 133,000m<sup>2</sup> Yuishinzan Hill: 6m high  
Grassy area: approx. 18,500m<sup>2</sup> Length of stream: 640m

#### 15 Seiden (Rice Fields) - The Lotuses of Seiden

These rice fields are here to remind us of older times when rice fields were spread throughout the garden. They were made at the end of the Edo Period and modeled after the Zhou Dynasty system for taxing rice fields. The Oga Lotuses, which are said to have returned to life after 2000 years, are best viewed in June and July.

#### 16 Tea Fields

Beautifully trimmed tea trees stand in rows. This is an ancient variety of tea which has a slightly bitter flavor.

#### 17 Jigen-do Hall

This building was constructed by Ikeda Tsunamasa with the goal of bringing peace to the clan and stability to the Ikeda Family. Two "guardian of the temple" statues, which were restored in 2000, are currently housed at the gate.

#### 18 Sawa-no-ike Pond

The largest pond in the garden, Sawa-no-ike contains a naka-no-shima, Mino-shima with the beautiful fishing palace, and Jarijima, with its beautiful white sand and green pine trees.



A view overlooking the garden from the south gate

#### 4 Kayo-no-ike Pond

To the east is Kayo-no-taki Falls and on the southwest bank is found Odateishi, said to have been broken into over 90 pieces, brought to Korakuen, and rebuilt in the Genroku Era. Daimyo lotuses can be seen in their full glory between June and August here.

#### 5 Jizo-do Shrine

One of six in the garden, this tutelary shrine is quietly dedicated in the middle of Nishiki-ga-oka.

#### 6 Ofuna-iri-ato Dock Remains

Formerly the landing dock for boats bringing daimyo (Japanese feudal lord) from the castle, it is now surrounded by a bamboo thicket.

#### 1 Enryo-tei House

Used as a place to receive daimyo (Japanese feudal lord) when he visited Korakuen, this house is a central structure in the garden, commanding a broad vista of Sawa-no-ike, Yuishinzan Hill, and Mt. Misao in the background.

#### 2 Noh Stage

Tsunamasa Ikeda was not only an enthusiastic devotee of Noh but himself also an accomplished performer, and is known for the extensive collection of priceless Noh costumes he left behind. Townspeople were sometimes allowed to visit this stage. The present structure is a post-WWII restoration.

#### 3 Nishiki-ga-oka Hill

Although the original design was for a thicket of cherry trees that would bloom in spring and maple trees whose leaves would turn in autumn, Japanese cypress trees took their place after the war. Wild birds visit in large numbers - rare for a metropolitan location.

## The Glory of the Four Seasons

#### Kyokusui (Meandering Stream)

In the past, water was siphoned into Korakuen from 5 km up the Asahi River and skillfully manipulated into ponds and waterfalls for a beautiful effect.

#### 19 Crane Aviary

Cranes were kept in the garden since its inception, but there were none left after WWII. Guo Moruo, Chairman of the China Science Institute, had as a young man attended Okayama's Dairoku Senior High School, and presented the garden with two cranes. Later, in collaboration with Kushiro City in Hokkaido, the garden succeeded in hatching and raising many cranes, bringing back their once lost beauty to the garden.

#### 20 Paddock - Archery Range

Korakuen was built not only as a place for daimyo (Japanese feudal lord) to enjoy the scenery, but also as a training ground for practicing both the literary and military arts. Kanki-tei and Kansha-tei were places where daimyo would observe displays of horsemanship and archery by vassals.

Sawa-no-ike in snow



## Winter