



## Jenny's Impressions

Engaku-ji was one of the first temples I visited in Japan. My friend Emi took us on a trip to Kamakura and I was so excited (わくわく - waku-waku) to finally see a real Zen temple. On a Monday morning, we took the train from Tokyo and went to Kita-Kamakura. It is only a very short way from the station to the temple.

I was fascinated by Engaku-ji. One of my first impressions was going up a few stairs in the shade of tall trees. Then – wow, the San-mon (I somehow ignored the Sōmon entrance gate). It was very impressive – 'Why is it so big?', I asked myself. It wasn't the outer gate, so I was surprised that it was so showy – the size on the one hand and the intricate detail on the other hand... In retrospect, I have never imagined a Zen temple to be so grand and spectacular – I always figured these temples would be smaller, reduced, more austere, like the Daisen-in in Kyoto for instance.

However – I was excited to be here and took a lot of pictures – not so much from the temple buildings, I focused more on the little things that were new to me: How the trees were supported, details on the drainage cover, copper pipes on a newly built structure, ... The sentence I said most that day was: 'Sorry to keep you waiting! I just had to take that picture, we don't have that in Europe.'

I want to revisit the temple soon to take part in a Zazen meditation session. Public sessions are being held every morning for one hour from 5:30-6:30, (6:00-7:00 in winter). These morning sessions are called Gyōten Zazen-kai (暁天座禅会 - dawn zazen session). There are also Zazen sessions every Sunday (日曜説教座禅会 - nichiyō-sekkyō-zazen-kai) with a sermon from 9.00-10.00 and a zazen session from 10.00 to 11.00. They are both free of charge and reservation is not necessary.



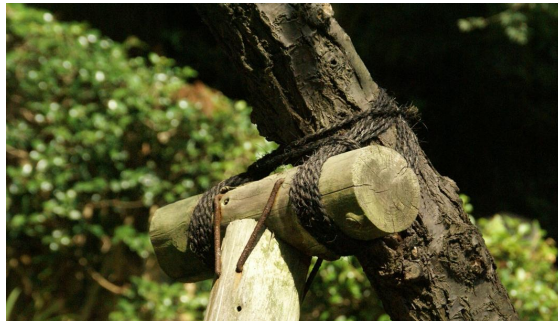
**Jenny**

Head writer of Real Japanese Gardens



**Brand new copper pipes on a newly built house on the temple grounds**

The carpenters took off their shoes before stepping inside the 'building'



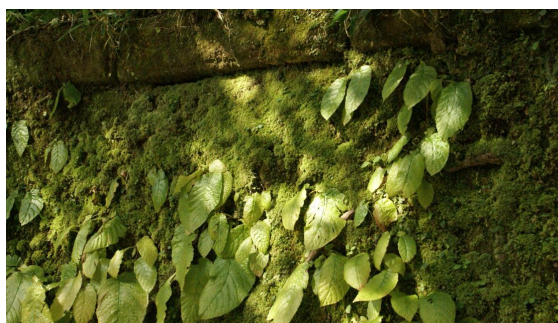
**Tree support**



**Decorated drainage cover**



**Bracket fungus on an old tree stem**



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