



Visit us on:

www.japanesegardens.jp



Rikugien 六義園

This garden is a pond-strolling garden of the Edo period, dedicated to Waka poetry.

Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu received the former land of Maeda Tsunanori near Komagome in 1695 from Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, the 5th Shogun, and built his garden at this place, which was completed in 1702.

In the Meiji period, Iwasaki Yataro, the founder of Mitsubishi, purchased the garden and remodeled it.

Today's Rikugien reflects the garden of the Meiji period, with elements of Edo period still preserved.

In 1938, the Iwasaki family donated this garden to the City of Tokyo, as well as other famous gardens they owned.

The name "Rikugien" (六義園) refers to Waka poetry itself.

"Riku" is the Chinese pronunciation of the Kanji for six (六 - roku).

Six is an important number in Chinese poetry. It divides poems into six categories. These categories influenced the Japanese Waka poetry. "義" - "Gi" means justice, morality, honor, loyalty. "園" - "En" means garden or park.

An old pronunciation of 六義園 is "Mukusanosono".

Rikugien once hosted 88 Sekichi, stone markers, which marked 88 places of special interest in the garden.

Today only 32 of these markers remain. Once, they inspired visitors of Rikugien to write Waka poems dedicated to these spots, while these spots themselves were often dedicated to famous Waka poems.

88 is a lucky number in Japan. It often refers to the Shikoku pilgrimage.

Strolling gardens in the Edo period were designed as a route for visiting fabulous sights throughout the garden.

But every sight was equal to the other, just like the temples on a pilgrimage route. Where one should see completing the whole route as a goal, not to reach an imaginary Finish Line.

Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu

柳沢 吉保

1658 - 1714

A favorite of the 5th Shogun Tsunayoshi.

Daimyo of the Kawagoe han.

Maeda Tsunanori

前田 綱紀

1643 - 1724

Daimyo of the Kaga domain.

Tokugawa Tsunayoshi

徳川 綱吉

1646 - 1709

5th Tokugawa shogun.

Great-grandson of Tokugawa Iyasu.

Waka poetry

和歌

A classical Japanese form of poetry.

Today we know Waka as short poems in a metre of 5-7-5-7-7.

A famous compilation is the Man'yōshū (万葉集).