



## Ponds in the Japanese Garden

Water is one of the three important elements in the Japanese garden. In this book, we want to explore how water is integrated into the gardens in the form of ponds, rivers, and waterfalls.

### History of ponds in Japanese gardens

We have a written record of a „garden“ in a work from the Asuka period (538 to 710 (or 592 to 645) ) where Emperor Keikō, the 12th Emperor of Japan has been credited to have released carp in a pond in 74 AD. Excavations of gardens, showing water elements, date back to the late 4th century. There is a discussion going on if it couldn't be possible that Emperor Keikō had lived in the 4th century rather than the 1st but there isn't enough evidence.

The most famous example in literature for a description of gardens with ponds, however, is maybe the Tale of Genji where Prince Genji is building gardens for his women.

This story takes place during the late Heian period (794 - 1185) when huge ponds for boating and festivals were integrated into the gardens. The novel too was written during this period.

In Genji's garden, a pond is connecting all the single gardens he had created for his women.

Over time, the focus shifted from large residence gardens to smaller, and temple gardens. Thus, the ponds also became smaller. This already happened during the following Kamakura Period.

**Kamakura period from 1185 to 1333.**

鎌倉時代