



Zangetsuken and the garden

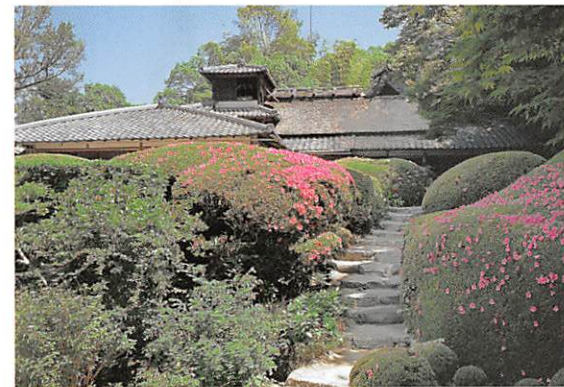
### *The Hermitage Shisen-dô*

The Shisen-dô (officially called "Outotsu-ka") is located in the Ichijô-ji district at the foot of the northern mountain range of Higashiyama. Although the district is a part of the city now, its atmosphere is still very like the old village.

The Shisen-dô was established by Jôzan Ishikawa (1583-1672), who was known not only as a scholar of Chinese classics but also as a landscape architect in 1641, and he spent his late years here in quiet retirement.

Born of a Samurai family at Mikawa Province, Jôzan became a personal attendant of Ieyasu Tokugawa at the age of sixteen. In the meantime, Ieyasu became a sho-

gun, and in 1615, at the age of thirty-three, Jôzan accompanied him for the battle against the Toyotomis, who then held the Osaka Castle. Soon after the battle, Jôzan withdrew from the samurai service, and devoted himself to studies. After he had served the feudal lord in Hiroshima as a tutor about fifteen-years, his sick old mother whom he had lived with passed away. Thereupon, he left Hiroshima and settled down alone in Kyoto. It was the year 1641 when he was fifty-nine years old that he built the Shisen-dô, his hermitage. It was named in association with the portraits of thirty-six classical Chinese poets he had selected and displayed in his main room. He remained unmarried all his life, and became a mas-



Azaleas and Shôgetsurô



Scenery in Autumn (from Shisen-no-ma)

ter of Chinese poems and Reisho, a style of calligraphy. Moreover, he became an originator of Sencha (Bunjicha) in Japan. He died at the age of ninety in May 1672, under the nursing by his pupils and attendants.

Since 1716, when a Buddhist priest of Shingon sect was assigned to hold the ownership of Shisen-dô for the first time, Buddhist priests thereafter succeeded to the ownership for a while. Later in 1743, a Zen-nun was assigned under the support of Imperial Prince Kan-in-no-Miya, and it became a custom that a Zen-nun or a Zen-priest keeps the Shisen-dô since then.

Through a simple rustic outside-gate (1. Shôyûdô), a slightly ascending stone path, shaded with bamboog-



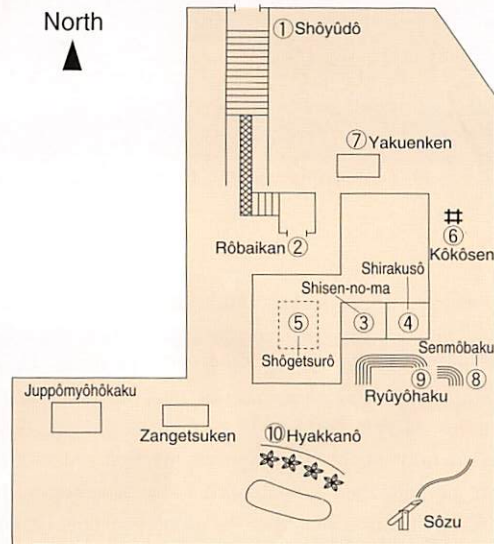
roves on both sides, leads to an inside-gate (2. Rôbaikan). This gate is open to the front garden of white sands as can usually be seen in Zen temples. The white sands spread over the garden are touched up with a broom, leaving beautiful broom-marks in stripes. The building includes the main room (3. Shisen-no-ma) and a study (4. Shirakusô), and a small moon-viewing room (5. Shôgetsurô) juts out from the roof. A well (6. Kôkôsen) is located besides the study and children's room (7. Yakuenken; Jidô-no-ma) is placed at the northern part of Shisen-dô.

The main interior garden is also covered with white sands as the front garden. Viewing from the main room, the garden is bordered by clipped azalea bushes, which are to bloom in early summer. It is said that the garden beneath the bushes is arranged with a hundred kinds of flowers (10. Hyakkanô), and it commands a partial view of the city far in the distance. Wisterias and maples are mingled with the trees of various kinds to embellish the hill. A small waterfall (8. Senmôbaku) flows into a shallow pond (9. Ryûyôhaku), and the murmuring of the waterfall, accompanied with the intermittent, yet punctual sound of clacking which comes from a "sôzu" - a sort of water-work scarecrow, deepens the silence. The sôzu, also called "Shishiodoshi", is made of bamboo, devised so as to make a piece of bamboo stalk strike a rock automatically with the gravitational power of the running water that slowly fills the stalk. In the days of Jôzan, it was popular among the neighboring farmers as an agricultural appliance to frighten wild deer and boars away from their fields. The sôzu in the Shisen-dô garden is the only functioning one that remains up to today. Altogether, the above ten features are called Outotsuka Jukkyô.

Nowadays, the Shisen-dô is listed under Eihei-ji, the head temple of Sôtô Zen sect. Although the scenery of Shisen-dô is equally impressive all year round, the blooming azaleas in late May, and the scarlet-tinged maple leaves in late November deserve a special mention.



Jôzan Juzô by Tan'yû Kanô



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# SHISEN-DÔ

