

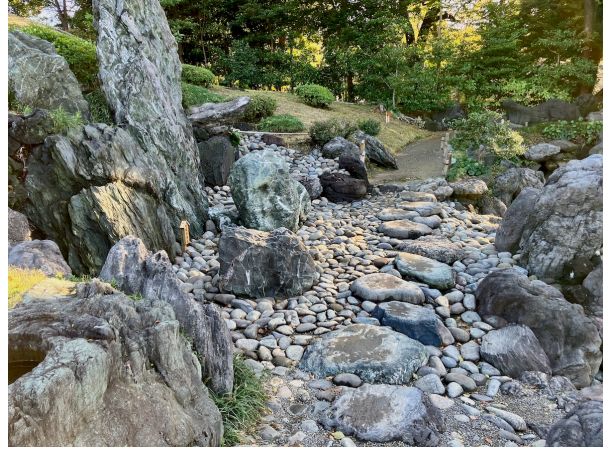
The **Kiyosumi Garden** is spectacular, easily one of the best we've seen. It's known for having "good rocks" and it does. Among its interesting features is the pond is tidal, and below 'full pool' when we visited. To handle a close-to-the-pond path with a variable height shoreline, the designers used stepping stones in several places, set high enough for high tide and highlighting the great rocks. There are three islands, bridges to two of them. We saw painted turtles, a snapping turtle, herons, ducks and koi.



Now, more technically, the *Sakuteiki* [garden-building bible] has a principle: Remind visitors of wild nature by building garden features recalling famous landscapes of your country. The builders in 1880, presented with a flat tidal basin, built up an earthen-perimeter wall around the garden, presumably for privacy and quiet. More importantly, they introduced topography by forming a "Mt. Fuji" at the south end of the garden. Features of Fuji that the designers evidently recognized were (1) trees concentrate in the lowlands, (2) the mountain's slopes are mostly smooth (azalea clusters provide relief in the context of a garden), and (3) the summit is volcanic rock. If there were any question that this is supposed to be a mountain, the dry stream bed makes it plain, the snow melt from Fuji's summit is accounted for. Most Japanese garden features seem to have been designed more subtly, but it hardly matters. The beauty is there!

Notice that the garden builders don't care whether you recognize this as Mt. Fuji; you could think of it as Mt. Hood in the US state of Oregon or any other volcano. The point is they have a focal point for the garden and you see their art is representing the "wild" properties of volcanic mountains.





Dry mountain stream “pouring” into an alpine lake that repeats the stepping stones for effect.

Other Points of Interest:

- An elegant feature of the garden: The many Japanese Black Pines [*P. thunbergii*] planted at water’s edge and leaning towards the water. Pruning is aggressive, minimizing the number of needles that remain.
- A beautiful “offset” slab bridge crosses to an island.
- The Ryo-tei, that is, the “Party House”, was built to entertain visiting dignitaries during the Edo period.

