

The Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo Garden

Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo is alive with the beauty of Japan's four seasons year-round: witness cherry blossoms in the spring; deep, rich hues of green in the summer; the fiery colors of the changing leaves in the fall; and bright red and pink camellia flowers dusted in crisp white snow in the winter.

This area, known as Tsubaki-yama (Camellia Hill) since the Nambokucho Period (1300s), has been celebrated since ancient times for its spectacular views of wild camellia. The scene is even featured in woodblock print master Utagawa Hiroshige's "100 Famous Views of Edo." The print shows us a bustling scene of this area in times past.

At the dawn of the Meiji Restoration, statesman and prince Aritomo Yamagata, known for paving the way for the new government from the Choshu Domain, purchased this land with his own funds in 1878. Skillfully drawing on the beauty of some 66,000 sq. meters of undulating hills, it was Prince Aritomo who created the naturalistic gardens that we see today. The name "Chinzanso" means literally "guest house on Camellia Hill" after the area's original name. It was at this time that the Chinzanso was established as a garden restaurant, as leading figures from government, financial, and bureaucratic circles, including the Meiji and Taisho Emperors, began to frequent this spot. The Chinzanso came to occupy a prominent place in history as center stage for critical meetings that literally shaped Japanese national politics.

Later, Baron Heitaro Fujita, second head of the Fujita Gumi and a leading head in Kansai region financial circles, took over these famed gardens from Prince Yamagata. He proceeded to place numerous cultural monuments, including the Three-Story Pagoda, all around the grounds, imbuing them with a historic atmosphere and a distinct refinement. The spirit of Prince Yamagata, a nature lover who truly enjoyed the scenic beauty of the gardens, and of Baron Fujita, who dedicated himself to maintaining these gardens in a continuation of Yamagata's work, lives on to this day. Our wish is to share this spirit—and this magnificent garden.



The Scenic Spots

Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo, featuring approximately 17 acres of garden space, is dotted with a myriad of cultural treasures of both historic and artistic value. These sites form part of the scenic landscape, perfectly complementing the glorious natural setting. In a borrowing of the tradition of selecting ten scenic spots on the grounds from Prince Yamagata, ten new sites, described as follows, have been selected for this honor in recent years. Take in these historic cultural assets and picturesque places, along with the flowers and trees of Japan's four seasons.



1 Three-Story Pagoda

This pagoda, the symbol of Chinzanso, is believed to have been built some 500-600 years ago. Not a single nail was used in the building of this edifice. It originally stood in the compounds of Chikurin-ji temple deep in the mountains of Hiroshima Prefecture. It was Baron Fujita who transferred the pagoda to Chinzanso Garden in 1925.

2 Hannyaji Temple Stone Lantern

This is shaped like the stone lantern standing at Hannya-ji temple in Nara Prefecture. It is believed that the stone lantern is the work of late Kamakura Period (1192-1333). There are some 30 other stone lanterns standing in the Chinzanso garden.

3 Stone Statues of Rakan

Work of the 16th century. The Stone statues are carved in the images of Buddha's priest. They were moved here from temples in Kyoto and Toba.



4 Choushou-Tei

Originally designed in 1954 by Yasuzaemon Matsunaga, a utility industry mogul, the Choushou-Tei tea room has since been further refurbished.

and can be visited as a room of Ryotei Kinsui. Its thatched roof design gives off an air of traditional Japan.

5 Zangetsu

Omotesenke (one of two traditional styles of tea ceremony) is practiced at this tea house, which was originally

built in Mr. Fujita's cottage in Hakone and brought to Chinzan-so in 1947. On February 17, 2004, it was registered as a tangible cultural asset of Japan.



6 Camellia Hill (Tsubaki-yama)

Long known as "Camellia Hill" because of the wild camellia flowers found here, this place still retains its historic atmosphere as one of the premier recreational destinations of the Edo Period. The area is planted with many famous varieties of camellia, including some from Hagi City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, which was the ancestral home of Prince Yamagata.



7 Goshinboku (Sacred tree)

The tree is preserved as the oldest tree at Hotel Chinzanso Tokyo. Estimated at 500 years old, the trunk of the tree is 4.5 meters around at the base and 20 meters tall.

8 Yusuichi Pond

This pond, featuring a distinct gourd shape, has graced the gardens since they were first built. It has been refurbished numerous times in order to maintain its original look.

9 Unkinchi Pond

This pond's name, which means "cloud brocade," was inspired by the beauty of the cherry blossoms and maple leaves on the opposite shore, which created a breathtaking reflection in the pond's surface all spring and fall. Unkinchi Pond has also been on the grounds since the gardens were first built.

10 Choshubaku Waterfall

This small waterfall flows from the Yusuichi Pond between moss-covered rocks. It was a large waterfall at the time the gardens were first built.

II Kokosei Well

This well has been in existence since ancient times.

The clear mineral water from the well is fit for drinking.

12 Hotaru-sawa (Firefly spot)

This spot, originally known as "Chikurikei," once had rushing waters, and still boasts fresh streams today. It is known as a place to see fireflies in the early summer.

13 Monument of Chinzanso

This is a monument engraved with the feelings of Prince Yamagata at the time he chose the name "Chinzanso".

Other Historic Sites

The grounds are also home to many other traditional cultural sites in addition to the Ten Scenic Spots. A selection of these is summarized as follows.

14 Mizu-bachi Water Basin

This water basin originally stood on a mountain pass in the outskirts of Kyoto. During the Edo Period (1603-1867), travellers used to bathe and quench their thirst with the water in the basin.

15 Thirteen-Tier Monument

This stone monument was made in the latter part of the 16th century. Various images of Buddha are carved on the monument.

16 Koshin Stone Monument

Erected in 1669, this stone monument has its origins in the Koshin folk tradition of Taoism. It features a sculpture of the Blue-Faced Vajra deity of the Koshin tradition. The vestiges of an Edo Period path cutting from the Waseda area to the Sekiguchi-dai area can still be seen here today.

17 Shiratama Inari Shrine

This shrine and sanctuary was relocated from the grounds of Shimogamo Shrine in Kyoto, to Chinzanso in 1924. The shrine was moved here from the previous location when a new hotel project started in the premises in April 1989.