

1989 Inoya, Inasa-cho, kita-ku,
Hamamatsu-shi, Shizuoka
Telephone (053) 542-0480
Shopping store (053) 542-1293



RYOTANJI

is a famous temple in ENSHU



龍潭寺



HISTORY OF RYOTANJI

Ryotanji is a temple of the Rinzaï sect of Zen Buddhism, belonging to the Myoshinji school. *Kokuzo Dai Bosatsu* "Great Kokuzo Bodhisattva" is enshrined as the main Buddhist image of worship. It is a family temple of the Ii family. The grave of Prince Munenaga, a son of Emperor Go-Daigo who died about 630 years ago, is buried in the temple.



Otamaya (the mausoleum) for the Ii family

The wooden statues of Tomoyasu (the founder of the family), Naomori (the 22nd lord) and Naomasa (the 24th lord) are enshrined in the mausoleum.

History

Ryotanji was founded in 733 by the priest Gyoki. In 1010, a baby boy was found lying beside a well in front of the temple, and he was washed there for purification. He was raised at the temple until he was seven years old. He then spent some time away from the temple. Later he moved back here at *Ii-no-ya* (meaning the valley of Ii) and was named Ii Tomoyasu after the name of this area. He became the first lord of the Ii family. When he died in 1093, he was buried in this temple. The Ii family governed this region for approximately 600 years until Ii Naomasa (the 24th lord) moved to Hikone City in Shiga Prefecture around 1600. Ryotanji has served as their family ancestral temple for more than 1000 years.

Ii Naosuke, a feudal lord and statesman, who was responsible for Japan's signing the first treaty of commerce with the United States (1858), was descended from the Ii family. In 1572, this temple was burned down by the Takeda clan, but during the Edo period all the buildings were rebuilt by the Ii family.



Kuri (the living quarters of the priests)
Rebuilt in 1815

At the end of the steps along the stone wall reminiscent of a castle wall stands a beautiful building, measuring 16.2 meters × 25.2 meters. These are the living quarters for the priests. The roof of *Kuri*, at the entrance, has a grand stately "gable" unique to zen temples.



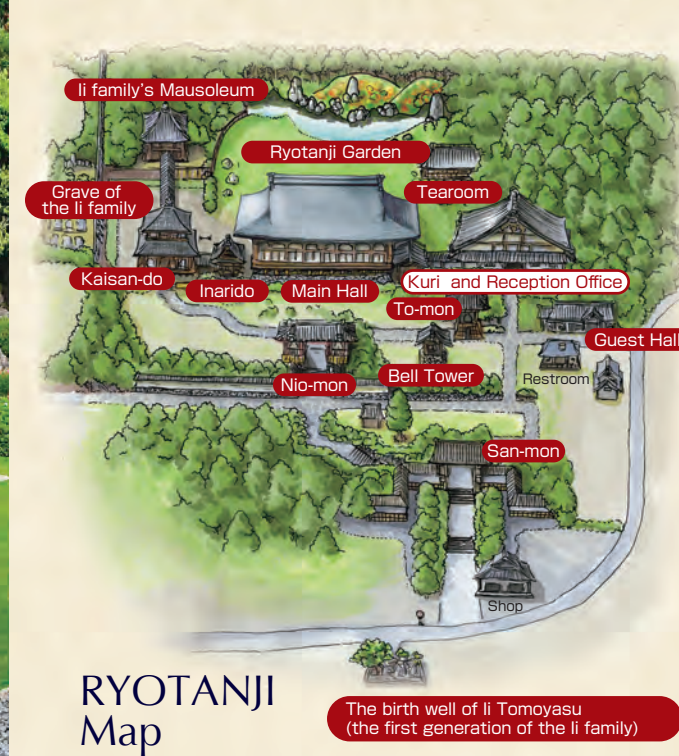
Kaisando
Built in 1702

Kaisan-do, a two-story building in vermillion stands to the west of the main building. It was constructed to enshrine the priest who opened this temple.



San-mon (the main gate)
Rebuilt in 1656

As you approach the temple, you see the main gate at the end of the white plaster wall.



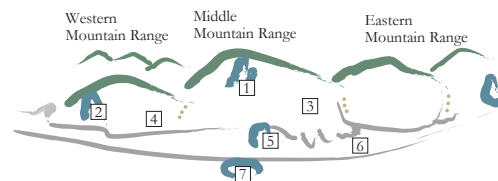
RYOTANJI GARDEN

BY ENSHU KOBORI

This temple is designated as national culture asset.



The garden is designated as a national cultural asset. It was designed and built by Enshu Kobori, a famous multi-talented artist of the early Edo period. He designed the garden in the *chisen kansho* style, in which the garden is best appreciated looking from the room in front of the garden. Local mountain rocks (red chert) are beautifully arranged. Having the rock formations and the pond, Ryotanji Garden fulfills characteristics of a typical zen temple garden. The garden intrigues visitors with beautiful colors depending on each season.



A ROUGH SKETCH OF THE GARDEN

1. *Shugo seki* (the symbol stone of the garden)
2. *Nioh seki* (the guard stone)
3. *Kame dejima* (the turtle shaped rock formation) A turtle symbolizes long life.
4. *Tsuru dejima* (the crane shaped rock formation) A crane represents happiness.
5. *Horai gan tob* (the Isle of the Immortals)
6. *Shinji ike* (The pond itself is in the shape of the Chinese character for heart.)
7. *Raibai seki* (the stone for worshipping)

- Dry waterfalls and a dry stream: methods unique to dry Japanese gardens (◡)
- Garden rocks: richly covered with moss (They complement the garden.)
- Garden plants: *satsuki azalea* (May), *dodan azalea* (during the time for autumn colors)



The floor in the Main Hall is the “Nightingale Floor” made from pine trees. It makes special sounds like a nightingale’s singing when walked on. It was constructed by Hidari Jingoro, a famous sculptor. The wooden carving of the dragon was also made by Hidari Jingoro.

POINTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The treasures are open to the public only during the special exhibition period.

Kanazawa Bunko

Kanazawa Bunko, designated as an important national cultural treasure, are the oldest printed books in the world. They belonged to Oda Nobunaga originally.



Ryotanji Byobu

Ryotanji Byobu (the folding screen) is entitled as “*Yuraku no Zu*” and is supposedly the work of Iwasa Matabei. This folding screen portrays the customs and recreations of the townspeople of the Edo period.



The wood carving of the dragon

Joroku-no-Daibutsu

(the great image of Buddha)
This is the largest of all the images of Buddha in the Enshu district. The hall for this great image of Buddha was destroyed in the early Meiji period when the anti-Buddhist movement took place. The image now resides in the main building of the temple.



The Main Hall with Nightingale floor
Rebuilt in 1676