

Site of the Konoe Residence

The Konoe family was one of the five houses whose family members served as regents or chancellors from the 12th century until the end of the Edo Period. On the west side of the pond stood a large house and garden, once the temporary residence of the emperor when the Imperial Palace was destroyed by fire. Itozakura cherry trees dot the grounds in this area, attracting many visitors in early spring when they blossom.

Emperor Komei (1831–1867) so admired the Itozakura cherry trees here that he composed the following *waka* poem when visiting the Konoe family:

I've always known your name,
but seeing you today
for the first time,
I cannot tear my eyes away,
Ah, Weeping Cherry!

(Mukashi yori / na niwa kike domo / kyo mireba / mube / me kare senu / ito zakura kana)

(From a *makimono*, *Ei itozakura waka kan* (1855) (poems about weeping cherry blossoms))