

***Hoshoan*: Green Tea in a Green Garden**

The *Hoshoan* (“Fragrant Pine Hermitage”) teahouse dates from 1991 and was built on the old site of the monks’ living quarters. In the ninth century, Sugawara no Michizane (845–903) revived the practice of drinking tea at the imperial court (though the tea itself had a rather more medicinal taste than today’s drink), and this teahouse pays homage to that legacy. The *Hoshoan* itself is a small traditional teahouse at the eastern end of the garden, but there is a much larger two-storied building in front. Both buildings overlook a beautiful garden intersected by a stream full of carp. The admission fee to the teahouse includes a cup of *matcha* green tea and some seasonal Japanese sweets. If you wish to follow proper etiquette when drinking your tea, pick up the bowl with your right hand, place it on the open palm of your left hand and then rotate it twice to the right, so that you do not drink from the front of the cup.

***Gyotenro*: A Secret Meeting Place for Revolutionaries**

Immediately on the left as you enter the *Hoshoan* garden stands an old wooden building known as *Gyotenro*. This was once an outbuilding belonging to a local inn, where it was used for pickle-making. As the original staircase leading up to the second floor was retractable, it was the ideal place for having secret meetings. Many local samurai who played key roles in overthrowing the shogunate and restoring the emperor to power in the Meiji Restoration met here at *Gyotenro*.

Among the *shishi*, or “men of high purpose,” who had meetings here were Ito Hirobumi (1841–1909), who drafted Japan’s original constitution and became the country’s first prime minister in 1885, and Takasugi Shinsaku (1839–1867), who first proposed using non-samurai in the armed forces. They were all inspired by the example of Sugawara no Michizane (845–903), who had been a government official in life before becoming a god after death.