

## A Masterpiece of the Taisho Era

A stroll garden centered around a pond, the garden of the Mohri Principal Residence is the masterpiece of garden designer Sakuma Kintaro and a perfect expression of Meiji- (1868–1912) and Taisho-period (1912–26) aesthetics. As is often the case in Japan, the idea is to combine the artificial garden harmoniously with Mt. Tatara behind and with the “borrowed scenery” (*shakkei*) of Mitajiri Port and the Inland Sea in front. Mixing flat spaces (*hiraniwa*) with trees and water features (*rinsen*), the garden is designed to look attractive whatever the season.

The garden contains some two hundred fifty varieties of trees. Numerous pine trees—some elaborately shaped, some simply tall—are dotted throughout the garden. The flat space immediately beside the house is covered with sand to evoke the nearby seaside.

The pond is shaped like a gourd (a symbol of wealth and fecundity) with a small body of water surrounded by boulders and fed by a waterfall opening out into a larger expanse of water past the *taikobashi* semicircular bridge. The smaller part of the pond is designed to evoke a ravine landscape while also delighting the ear with the sound of water flowing down the surface of the biggest single rock in the garden.

The garden contains nineteen stone *toro* lanterns. The very large one just to the right as you approach the bridge has a base made of cement, a novel material at the time the house was built. The drainage culverts that run beneath the whole garden are another invisible piece of what was then the latest technology.

After making a circuit of the garden, visitors are welcome to have a rest in MAI, the café located in the atmospheric old building that was once home to the family offices.