

Heian Garden (Heian no Sono)

This section of the South Garden (Minami Shin'en) is inspired by the literature of the Heian period (794–1185). Many of the plants and flowers here appear in classical poetry or literary works such as *The Tale of Genji*, which depicts life in the Heian court. This classic masterpiece was written by lady-in-waiting Murasaki Shikibu in the eleventh century.

The Heian period lasted nearly 400 years and was one of the great flowerings of art and culture in Japanese history. Buddhism, first brought to Japan in the fifth century, flourished. The arts of calligraphy, painting, sculpture, and poetry introduced along with Buddhism, became the basic social arts of the court. The native Japanese kana system of writing was devised during this period, and the verses now used as the Japanese national anthem, *Kimigayo*, were written at this time.

Plaques in front of the plants show quotations from one of the literary works in which they are mentioned. The flowers in this section of the garden include fringed pink (*nadeshiko*; *Dianthus superbus*), bush clover (*hagi*; *Lespedeza bicolor var. japonica*) and hydrangea (*ajisai*; *Hydrangea macrophylla*) among others.