

## **South Garden**

The garden on the south side of the Shinden Hall is deliberately simple and is intended to evoke a sense of solemnity. Cedars and pines provide a backdrop to a rock garden of impeccably raked white gravel. These stones are from the Shirakawa district in Kyoto and must be washed regularly to maintain the garden's intended appearance, as replacement stones are no longer available. The trees directly in front of the Shinden are a cherry (left) and a mandarin-orange (right). This combination is considered auspicious and has been associated with the court since the tenth century, when a cherry tree and a mandarin-orange tree were first planted in front of the main ceremonial hall at the Kyoto Imperial Palace. The Shinden is surrounded by a veranda that offers views of both the South Garden and the more elaborate North Garden.