

## Garden Designer Kobori Enshu

Kobori Enshu (1579–1647) was a renowned artist and aristocrat active during the start of the Edo period in the early 1600s. Enshu is thought to have created the garden at Ryotanji on the request of Ii Naotaka (1590–1659), the 25th lord of the Ii family.

Enshu was the lord of a domain in Omi Province, located in present-day Shiga Prefecture. He is best known as a master of the tea ceremony, and the style he developed, known as Enshu-ryu, is still used by tea ceremony practitioners today. Enshu was even tasked with teaching the third Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–1651), the way of the tea ceremony. His other pursuits included architecture, flower arrangement, and pottery.

A number of gardens, temples, and castles throughout Japan were designed by Enshu. These include the gardens of Nijo Castle and the Katsura Imperial Villa in Kyoto, along with the keep of Nagoya Castle. Enshu established the *kirei sabi* design style which, in contrast with the more widely known and austere concept of *wabi sabi*, combined gracefulness with simplicity, and has roots in Heian period (794–1185) aesthetics. Enshu's gardens are known for their harmonic balance and the use of boldly colored flowers, both of which can be seen in the garden at Ryotanji.