

Enyotei House

In the Edo period (1603–1867), the Enyotei House was the main building the daimyo lord would visit when at Korakuen. The current building is a reconstruction completed in 1960 based on historical documents and drawings preserved from the Edo period after the original was destroyed in an air raid in 1945, at the end of World War II.

The wood and other materials used in the current structure were brought in from other locations around Japan, including Nara Prefecture. The floors are covered with tatami mats, and the sliding shoji panels open up on two sides of the house, framing the landscape of the garden. The daimyo would often sit before the tokonoma alcove, which afforded the best position for viewing the garden. Corridors attach the Enyotei House to the Kakumeikan Hall and the Eisho-no-ma Room, which adjoins the Korakuen Noh Stage. Located close to the garden's main gate, the building is only open to the public at selected times of the year.

The Enyotei House offers a view of the garden landscape framed by the open shoji. The house was built to align with this specific viewpoint and serve as a place of peace and calm. The view from the house is itself protected by building regulations established by the prefecture that restrict construction of buildings outside the park. The regulations to protect the landscape were pioneering and inspired similar efforts in other parts of Japan. In 1940, Okayama Prefecture declared the view an official Scenic Zone, a designation that protects the vistas enjoyed by daimyo lords of centuries past for future generations of garden visitors.

The view from Enyotei House encompasses the garden's large lawn, Sawanoike Pond, and Yuishinzan Hill with Mt. Misao in the background. This view is considered shakkei, or "borrowed scenery," incorporating the landscape beyond the garden grounds into its composition and deepening the sense of depth of the garden. When the harvest moon (the first full moon of autumn) rises between late September and October, it can be observed over the mountains from the Enyotei. Kayonoike Pond and the Nishikigaoka woods can be seen to the right from both inside and outside the house. A triangular rock partially hidden behind a bush is located outside the east side of the building and indicates the spot at which the same view as within the house can be observed.

Attached to the Enyotei House is a four-and-a-half tatami-sized tea room known as Riniken. The original building was destroyed along with the Enyotei House in the 1945 air raids and later restored. For the restored tea room, the painting of a

dragon on the ceiling of the original structure was redone by Nihonga (Japanese-style) painter Ikeda Yoson (1895–1988), a leading artist of the Taisho (1912–1926) and Showa (1926–1989) eras. Yoson also painted the backdrop of the Korakuen Noh Stage. The dragon painting can only be seen when the Enyotei House is open to the public.