

## **Rofutei Reception Hall**

The Rofutei is the largest reception hall in Shoseien. It looks out onto Ingetsuchi Pond with the hills of eastern Kyoto's Higashiyama district in the background. The view of the pond and its twin islands in the shadow of Mt. Amida from Rofutei or from the lawn in front of it was traditionally considered one of the most iconic vistas at Shoseien. The building itself is also named after a mountain: *rofu* is the Japanese reading of the Chinese characters for Langfeng, a peak in the legendary Kunlun Mountains that play a central role in Chinese mythology as the abode of deities and mythical creatures. The view from the reception hall remains popular today, though the forested peak of Mt. Amida is now largely hidden behind an apartment building.

The simple architecture of the hall belies some interesting features. The floor of the main reception room is usually covered with tatami mats, but can be converted into a noh stage by removing the mats. That room has several entrances, including one that connects to the adjacent Ogenkan veranda via a corridor. The corridor was added in 1884 after Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) donated the Ogenkan following his visit to Shoseien in 1880. The emperor rested at Rofutei on that occasion, taking a break in a small chamber located next to the main reception room.