



*A secluded oasis
in the middle of the city
Unchanged for over a century*



A view of Sorakuen before the War (Shofukan)



Kobe City Sorakuen Garden

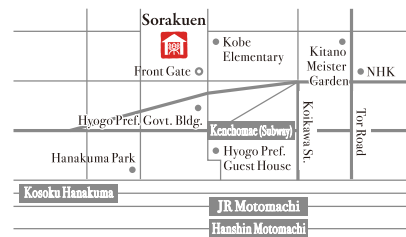
Hours:
09:00-17:00 (admission ends at 16:30)

Schedule:
January 4 – December 28: closed on Thursdays (or following day if national holiday falls on a Thursday)
*During the Chrysanthemum Exhibit (October 20–November 23), there will be no vacations.

Fees:
Adults (over 15 years old): ¥300
Children (elementary/middle school): ¥150

Group rates:
15-99 people:..... 10% off
100-299 people:..... 20% off
300 plus:..... 30% off

Transportation:
Sorakuen is a ten minute walk northwest of Motomachi Station (JR and Hanshin Railways) and a five minute walk north of Kencho-mae Station (Kobe Subway).
*We do not have parking. Please utilize the neighboring toll parking.



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Kobe Landscape Association and Kobe Parks and Greenery Association

Sorakuen



Sorakuen

Completed in the early 20th century, the Sorakuen garden was built on the residence of Taijiro Kodera, father of former Kobe City Mayor Kenkichi Kodera. After coming under the ownership of the city of Kobe, it was named “Sorakuen” and opened to the public. Stepping stones, stone bridges, streams, and a waterfall surround a central pond in the sprawling, 19,566 square-meter garden. The grounds are full of nature, with a cycad wood, large camphor trees said to be some 500 years old, azaleas, and maple trees in their beautiful autumn colors. A stately front gate, European-style stable, traditional pleasure barge, the Former Hassam House, and the Kanshintei tea house beautifully complement the garden.

The Front Gate (front cover)

The original front gate remains and is made completely of zelkova wood. The roof tiles bear the official crest of the Koder house: a stylized bird's nest or sliced melon inside a hut (iori-mokko).

The Sotetsu Garden

The trees in the cypress wood next to the information desk are some 300 years old and were imported from Kagoshima. The plants are dioecious, with the females producing a vermilion-colored fruit.

Large Camphor Trees

These trees, said to have been planted by Araki Murashige at Hanakuma Castle in 1567 to ward off calamity, are known for the camphor they contain and their exceptionally long life.

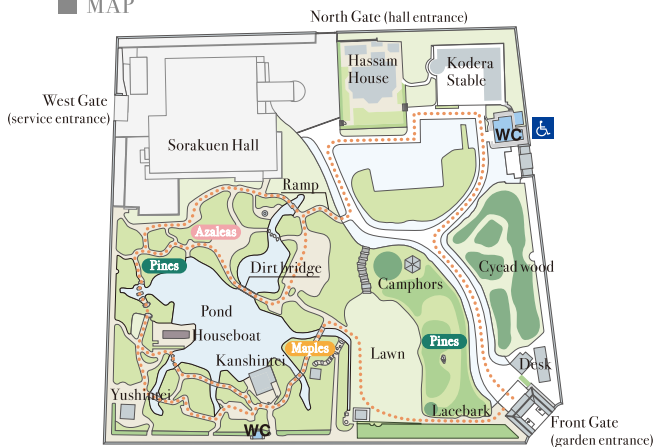
Pond and Stream

The gourd-shaped pond is a renovated reservoir and the stream represents on a small scale a river's path from its mountain source to the ocean.

Houseboat (Important Cultural Property)

This houseboat (Kawagozabune) was originally used for pleasure cruises by a feudal lord of Himeji, and is thought to have been constructed between 1682 and 1704. The boat was reconstructed at its present site in 1980. The structure consists of a two-story wooden building with a gabled roof thatched with layers of Japanese cypress bark. All of the wooden sections of the building have been treated with lacquer and the ends of the horizontal beams and rafters are decorated with gold leaf. The building is highly regarded for its delicately decorative styling. This is the last "Kawagozabune" in existence.

MAP



Kanshintei (tea house)

The main hall, Kanshintei, and the Yushintei tea house burned down during the war. After the war, Kanshintei was rebuilt and made into a tea house.

Lanterns, wash basin, and stone basin

There are 27 traditional stone lanterns of various styles on display, including a unique lantern that looks like the face of a die. Accompanying the tea house are a wash basin and stone basin, symbolizing purification.

Stone structures

Structures in the garden are made with a variety of beautiful stone, including Iyo blue stone and several types of granite. The stone bridges and stepping stones are made out of fieldstone and the cave is of composite rock.

Pine and maple trees

Pine trees have long been prized for their divine symbolism. The early-April greens and late-November reds of the maples lend vibrant color to the landscape.

Lacebark Pine

This white-barked pine is found in northwestern China and considered highly symbolic. Its needles are grouped in threes and measure 5-10cm long.

Azaleas and chrysanthemums

In spring, the azaleas come into full bloom. Additionally, the Chrysanthemum Exhibit is held annually from October 20-November 23.

Azalea season:

- Dodan azalea: Early to mid April
- Kirishima azalea: Mid to late April
- Hirado azalea: Late April to early May
- Satsuki azalea: Late May to early June

The Koder Stable (Important Cultural Property)

Kenichi Koder, the former Mayor of Kobe and former owner of Sorakuen, had this stable constructed around 1910. The building has many interesting features, including a circular cupola, a steep roof, dormer windows, and rich gable ornaments. The building, which was constructed in the shape of an L, includes a garage for carriages in the northern part of the first floor, and housing for stable hands on the second floor. A high-ceiling stairwell and the stables proper occupy the eastern side of the building.

The Hassam House (Important Cultural Property)

Built around 1902, this house served as the residence of Mr. K. Hassam, an Anglo-Indian trader, its architecture an example of East-West fusion. The house originally stood in the Kitano-cho area of Kobe, but was moved to its present location in 1963 after being donated to the city government. Its two gas lamps were some of the earliest seen in Japan, originally serving as street lamps in the Old Foreign Settlement district. A chimney that fell from the roof during the Great Hanshin Earthquake is displayed in the front yard.

A variety of new worlds await

