



Old stone path inside the Daitoku-ji temple complex
大徳寺

Cut natural stone and natural stones are mixed in this old temple path. Moss grows in the spaces between the stones.

Shin-Gyō-Sō system

There are three levels of formality in Japanese aesthetics. The system is called Shin-Gyō-Sō (真行草) and the categories are Formal (Shin), Semiformal (Gyō) and Informal (Sō). It is also used for calligraphy, ceramics, flower arrangement and in the Japanese tea tradition.

Shin - formal

真

The Chinese character carries the meaning of "truth".

Shin-style paths are often made of dressed natural stone cut to square or rectangular shapes. They are mostly laid out in straight lines and can be found as approach to a gate or the main hall of a temple.



Gyō - semiformal

行

This Chinese character stands for "going".

Paths in the semiformal Gyō-style are a combination of dressed stone and naturally shaped stone - as in the example below: An informal pattern is framed by stone planks, giving it an overall clean look.

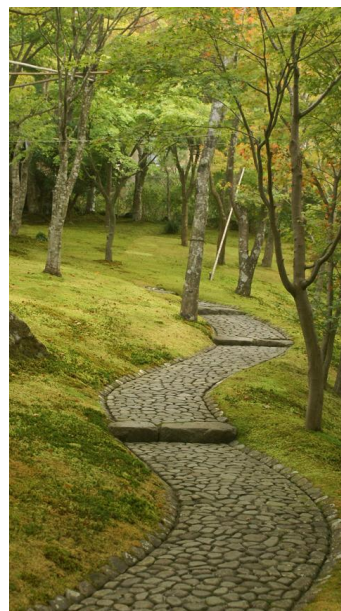


Sō - informal

草

This character means grass and represents nature in the Shin-Gyō-Sō system.

The Sō-style garden paths are designed to look as natural as possible. Unfinished stones in different sizes and styles are combined to create paths that wind around shrubs and trees.



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