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History of Japanese Gardens Part 1 - Heian period (平安時代)

The Tale of Gama-ike

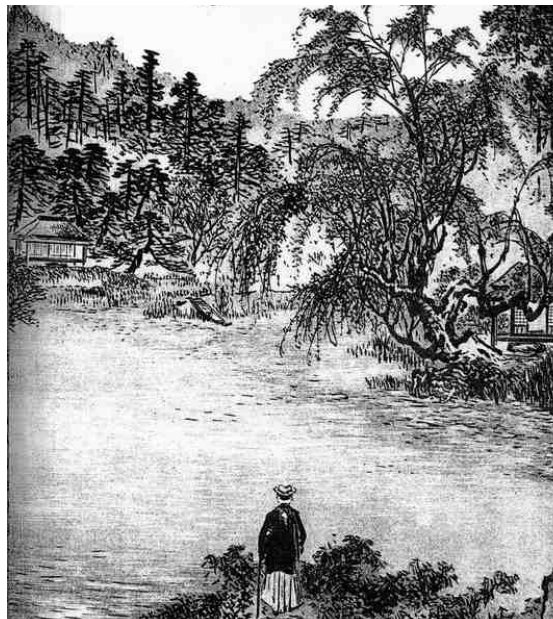
There was a time, when all the great lords built their beautiful residences with gardens in the surroundings of Edo castle.

It was the time, when Tokugawa family ruled Japan for over 250 years and forced peace upon the country.

One of those Lords was Yamazaki from Okayama prefecture.

It happened, that two of his vassals crossed the bridge over the pond in Yamazaki's garden in Edo during the night and were eaten by a giant toad.

Yamasaki got very angry with the toad in his garden and it chose to appear in Yamazaki's dream to apologize. It promised to protect Yamazaki from now on.



In the year 1821, when a fire destroyed the whole area, only Yamazaki's house remained.

The giant toad had inhaled the water of the pond and used it, to protect the residence.

The residence of Yamazaki covered an area of about 3,75 ha.

The pond alone was said to be 1650 m².

Today there only remains a pond around half the size as the garden of a modern mansion.

The Heian period lasted
from 794 to 1185.

平安時代

Picture of Gama ike around
1810.