

The Traveler's Eye: Eastern Kyoto DVD Guide Book

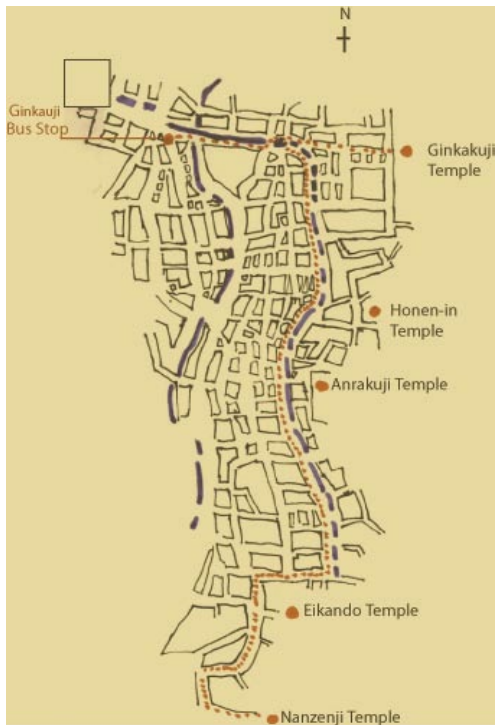


Music and Photographs by EP Allan

Welcome to the first Virtual Tour DVD. The main idea behind this series is to replicate the feeling of taking a walking tour with a portable music player and a camera. Therefore on the DVD there is no commentary and no guide. This is why there is this small PDF guide book, which you can print to take with you on your “tour”. I hope that this preserves the ambience of the temples and sites.

EP Allan

Eastern Kyoto Walking Route



Ginkaku-ji

This is one of the most famous and popular temples in Kyoto. It was originally built in 1482 by Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa as a villa to escape the horrors of civil war. The name means The Silver Pavilion. However, unlike its namesake, Kinkaku-ji (The Gold Pavilion) it never was covered in silver.

The main gate is surrounded by tall hedges. Once you enter, a large garden opens up. This garden is famous for its white sand cone symbolizing Mt. Fuji surrounded by a carefully raked ocean of sand. The path leads up into the mountain through trees and circles back around to the temple. The best time to visit is late afternoon, early morning or when it is raining (less visitors). Admission is 500 yen.





The Path of Philosophy

The Path of Philosophy (Tetsugaku no Michi) received its name because it was once a popular walk with university students. It runs beside a canal and is lined with cherry trees, shops and cafes. It is at its best in April when the cherries are in bloom. The path begins at Ginkaku-ji and runs down to Eikan-do Temple. The whole walk takes a little over 2 hours. This leaves plenty of time to look in the shops, have a cup of coffee and to visit Hounen-in Temple. There are a few benches along the way to sit and contemplate the scenery or just rest tired feet. Because there are no cars, this is one of the most pleasant strolls in Kyoto.

Hounen-in Temple



Hounen-in is a secluded temple along the Path of Philosophy. It was built in 1680 to commemorate a monk named Hounen, the founder of the Joudo sect of Buddhism. It has some lovely gardens and an unusual raked sand garden.

To reach it, turn east onto a side street from the Path of Philosophy, cross the canal and walk up through a grove of bamboo. The entrance will be on your right.

Admittance to the gardens is free.



Eikando Zenrin-ji Temple

Zenrin-ji temple is the headquarters of the Seizan Jodo sect and was founded in 855. It contains an unusual statue of Amida Buddha glancing backwards over its left shoulder because Eikan (the head priest who lived 1033-1111) had a

vision that the statue of Amida came down from the altar and told him not to dawdle. The temple contains several buildings and has a good city view. This is also the last temple on the Path of Philosophy.

Admission to the temple is 500 yen.

Nanzen-in Temple

Emperor Kameyama built a palace here in 1264 and converted it into a temple in 1291. A section of the original garden from the Kamakura era still remains. It has been designated one of three historical gardens of Kyoto. Unfortunately the original building burned down and the current one was constructed in 1703. The temple grounds also contain a roman aqueduct which looks to date from the Meiji period and which give it a very unique appearance. That said, the rock gardens within the temple proper are some of the most famous in Japan.



Nanzen-in is a short walk from Eikan-do and makes a good final temple for the day. There are 3 other temples within the same grounds. The admission fee is 500 yen.

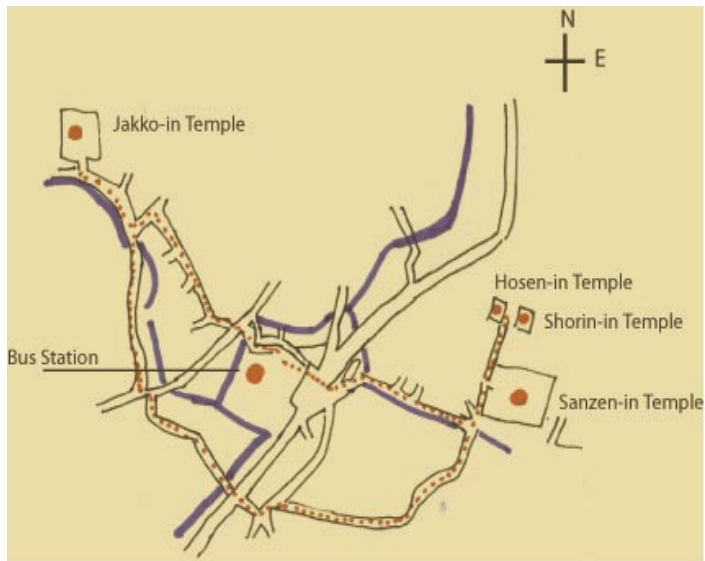


The Sanmon Gate

The Sanmon gate of Nanzen-ji Temple is one of the three biggest gates in Japan and is about 22 meters tall. The original structure burnt down and was rebuilt in 1628. While the entrance fee is a bit steep 1000 yen, it is very unusual to be able to climb up into a temple gate and the views of the surrounding temples, mountains and city are worth it. Also be a little careful going up and down the steps — the ceiling is quite low.

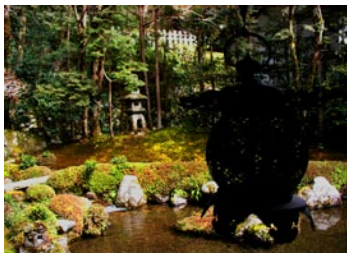
Ohara (Northern Kyoto)

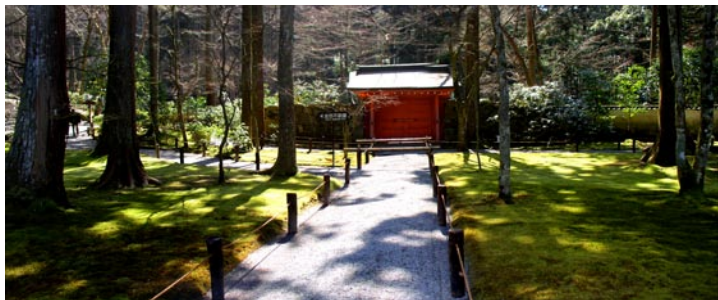
Ohara is a small village just north of Kyoto, and has some pleasant temples.



Jakko-in Temple

This temple was originally built in 594 by Prince Shōtoku as a nunnery and he sculpted the central figure of Jizo. For centuries different head abbesses were from the royal family. The current head priestess, Chiko Komatsu, protested the deforestation of the area during WWII. She also stopped an amusement and cablecar project which would have destroyed nearly 1,000 year old trees. The temple, and all of its ancient artwork, was destroyed by arson in 2003 and is currently being rebuilt. Entry to the garden costs 500 yen.





Sanzen-in Temple

This temple belongs to the Buddhist Tendai sect. The temple was founded by Saicho (Dengyo Daishi) who lived from 767-822. This temple too has had many head priests from the imperial family (32 and counting). It is open from 8:30 to 4:30 from December through February and is open the rest of the year from 8:30 to 5:00. Admission is 500 yen. It also has a web site: <http://www.sanzenin.or.jp> which is only in Japanese but has some nice pictures.

DVD Chapters.

Part One: Ginkakuji

Part Two: The Path of Philosophy

Part Three: Nanzenji

Part Four: Ohara

All songs except “The Sun’s Blue Eye” are taken from the CD **The Green Day**.

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Soon to be released

The Traveler's Eye: Kyoto - Higashiyama

Music and Photographs

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