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# Gardens Of Gravel And Sand



## Synopsis

**Book Description** A simple and provocative book offering a revisionist photo-essay on the ever-popular Japanese "dry landscape" or "rock" gardens. Not Zen, possibly art, more like "meta-gardens," gravel and sand compositions reject nature, yet are made of omnipresent natural dust. Quick to crumble, they are defiantly maintained by priest/rakers. Credited with philosophical profundity, their origins are murky, their meanings uncertain but immediate. Koren deliberately ignores "celebrity" rocks, moss, and foliage to demystify and explore a most peculiar human enterprise. Beautifully illustrated with duotone photographs of gravel and sand gardens in Kyoto.

**About the Author** Leonard Koren, who was trained as an artist and architect, writes books about design and aesthetics. Among his most popular books are *WABI SABI: For Artists, Design, Poets & Philosophers* and *Arranging Things: A Rhetoric of Object Placement*. "Featuring over 30 photos of gravel and sand gardens taken in Kyoto, Japan, this thin paperback underscores the importance of 'experienceing the garden as garden.'" -- The Tri-County News

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Everything I thought I knew about Japanese gardens, especially so-called "Zen Gardens," was turned on its head by this enlightening gem. I will never look at, or think about, Japanese rock gardens in the same way. Highly recommended for a completely fresh approach to an old subject.

A collection of photographs of nothing more than raked gravel and sand, Leonard Koren challenges the many myths surrounding the 'Zen gardens' of Japan in short essays interspersed throughout

this book. He shows that their special context as part of temple precincts does not necessarily imply that these gardens were meant as 'spiritual' installations, but only that they grew in the context of a specific aesthetic and function that developed in Japanese ritual and society. While Koren's book is bound to ruffle the feathers of traditionalists that would like to idealize these gardens as an expression of Zen philosophy, I believe he contributes to the demystification that is going on in contemporary writing about Japanese gardens. In that regard this book is an important contribution to the ongoing dialogue and discussion about the origins and history of the dry landscape garden in Japan.

Nice book...Not what I expected, but even though it was a quick read, I liked the photography in the way it focuses on the gravel and raked sands.

Today I've read an article on the web referring to this book. If I got it correct the book goes straight to discuss particular kinds of stone used in JGs. Must be very interesting! Going to buy it soon

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