

## The Origins of Onzan-Soh

Born in Ehime Prefecture, Chojiro Nitta, who built this garden estate at the present site, was the founder of Nitta Leather Belting Co., Ltd. (now Nitta Corporation). In 1888, Nitta Corp. became the first Japanese company to succeed in manufacturing leather power transmission belts. The company went on to become one of the world's leading belt manufacturers.

At Nitta's request, Marshal Heihachiro Togo named this estate Onzan-Soh, after "Onzan," Nitta's nickname.

At first, Nitta used this retreat as a place to relax and recuperate. Later in his life, he opened it to the public. After his death, in accordance with his wishes, the Kotonoura Onzan-Soh-En Foundation was established and has managed the estate garden ever since.

In 2010, the Agency for Cultural Affairs designated the garden as a place of national scenic beauty and the buildings as important cultural properties. In July 2011, the prefectural government certified the foundation as a public interest incorporated foundation.

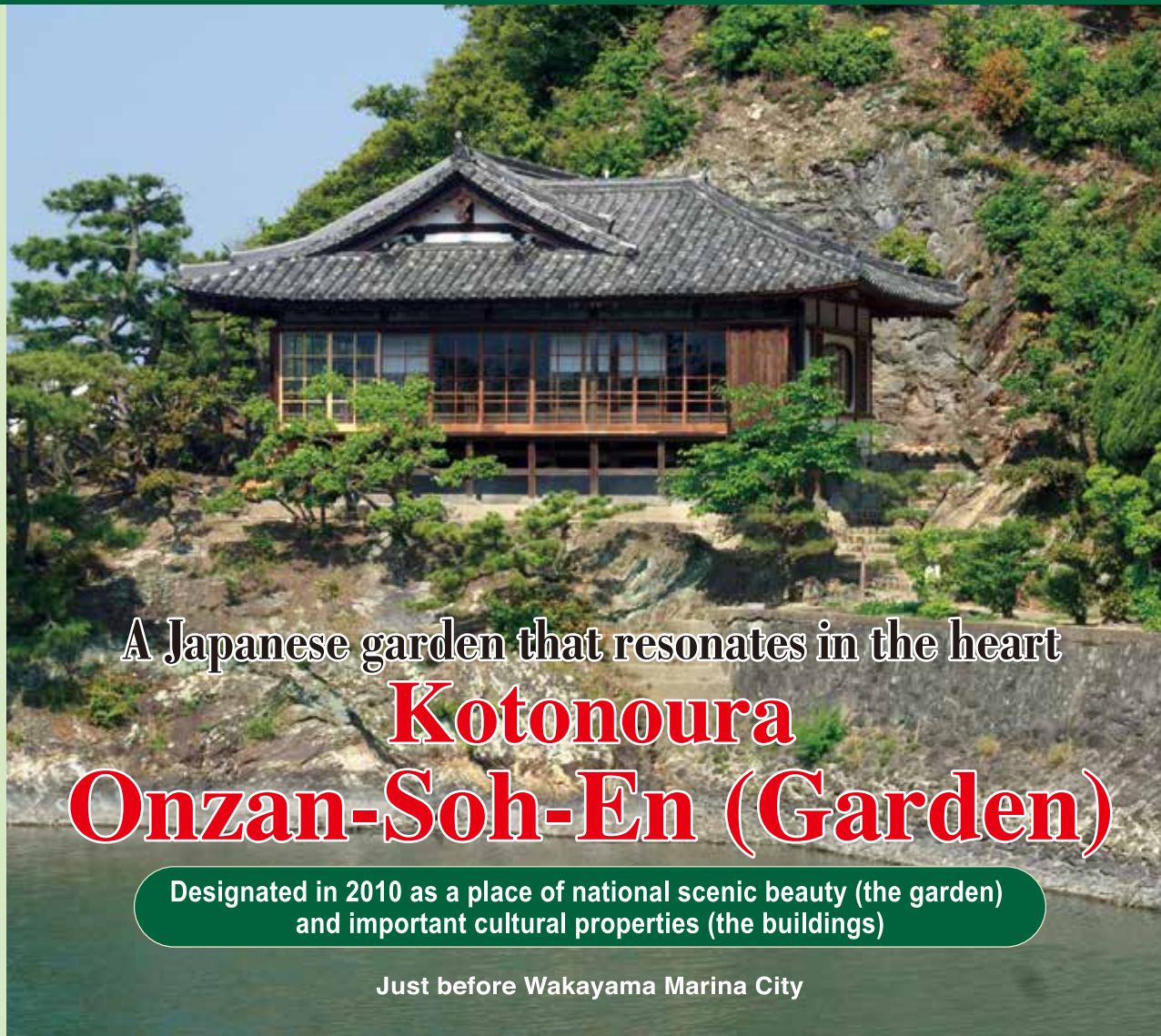
## Scenes of Soothing Beauty

Among the lovely pine trees of the garden, you can admire traditional Japanese-style buildings at your leisure, including the main building and the tea ceremony room.

Amid a tranquility highlighted by the occasional splash of a jumping fish, visitors can spend soothing hours sitting in a Japanese-style drawing room while enjoying a panoramic view of the garden. This Japanese-style resort is often used as a place for matchmaking meetings and engagement ceremonies.

## Tidal Strolling Pond Garden

Built during a timeframe starting in the early Taisho period (1912-1926) and through the early Showa period (1926-1989), the garden of Kotonoura Onzan-Soh-En is a rare example of a tidal strolling pond garden. Filled by the sea, the water in the pond rises and falls with the tides. Construction of the garden was completed under the guidance of Sosen Kizu III, who served as deputy to the head of the Mushakoujisenke School of tea ceremony. Since its opening, many celebrities, including members of the Imperial family, have visited this garden, the largest in Kishu (now Wakayama Prefecture). The garden currently covers some 5.95 hectares. On an adjoining site stands the Wakayama Prefectural Museum of Natural History, a museum and aquarium. The Onko Densho-kan Sake Brewery Museum is located nearby in Kuroe Town. With many other tourist destinations besides, this area is a wonderful place for a stroll.



# A Japanese garden that resonates in the heart Kotonoura Onzan-Soh-En (Garden)

Designated in 2010 as a place of national scenic beauty (the garden)  
and important cultural properties (the buildings)

Just before Wakayama Marina City



## Lanterns

The garden features many stone lanterns. Among them is the Maria Doro, a rare lantern bearing a carved image of the Virgin Mary. During the Edo period (1603-1867), when the Christian faith was banned, believers are said to have prayed in secret to this image. Another lantern bears a Chinese zodiac sign. Another lantern shows heart marks. One way to enjoy the garden is to go looking for these particular lanterns.



Ruppia Maritima



**West Pond** Stepping stones in this pond appear and disappear with the shifting tides. Also found in this pond is *Ruppia maritima*, an aquatic plant that grows only in clean brackish water and is very rare in the Kansai region. It flowers around mid-April.

**East Pond** This pond, where seawater and freshwater mix, is home to many fish, including grey mullet, striped mullet, and goby.