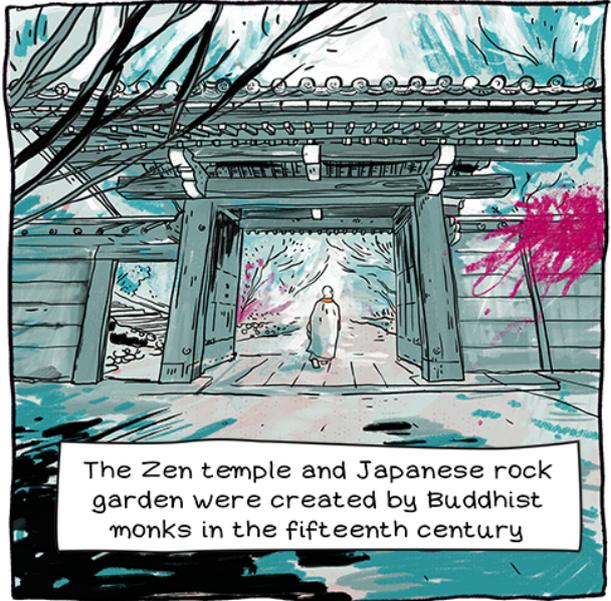


My favourite travel destination is Ryōan-ji Zen gardens found in northwest Kyoto, Japan.



The Zen temple and Japanese rock garden were created by Buddhist monks in the fifteenth century



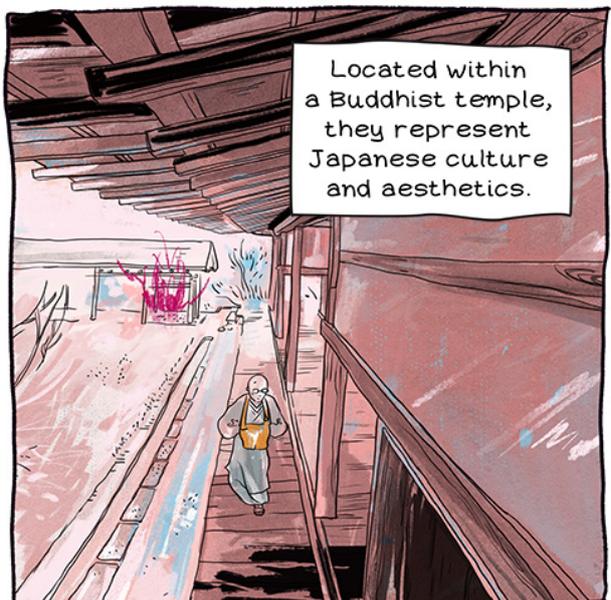
to help them meditate and find peace.



As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, it has special significance for humanity.



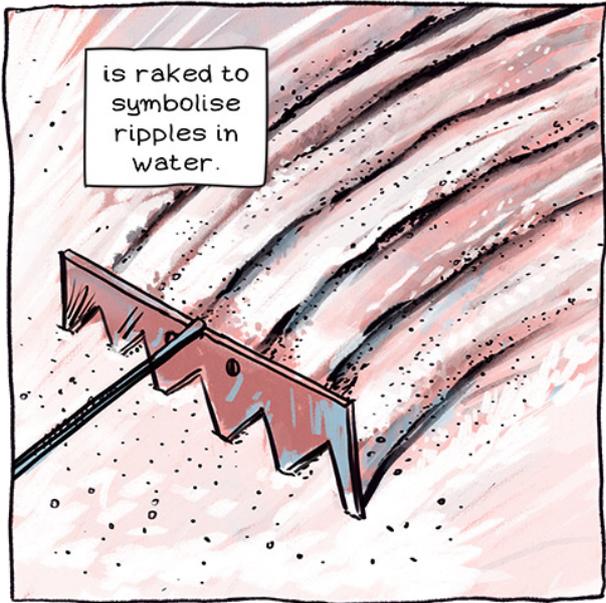
The Zen gardens are designed to be a place of natural beauty.



Located within a Buddhist temple, they represent Japanese culture and aesthetics.



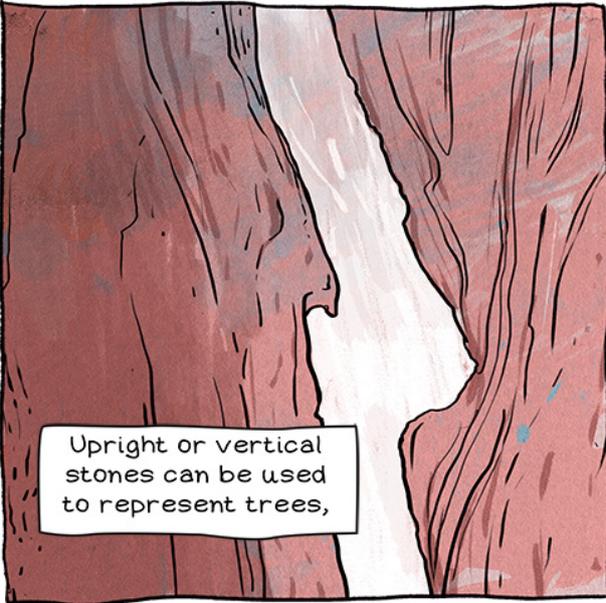
For example, sand or gravel



is raked to symbolise ripples in water.



Rocks are placed on top of the sand to make a soothing image.



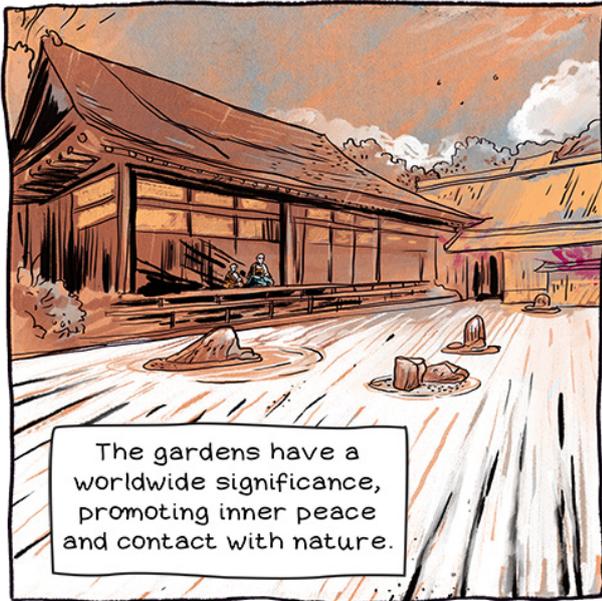
Upright or vertical stones can be used to represent trees,



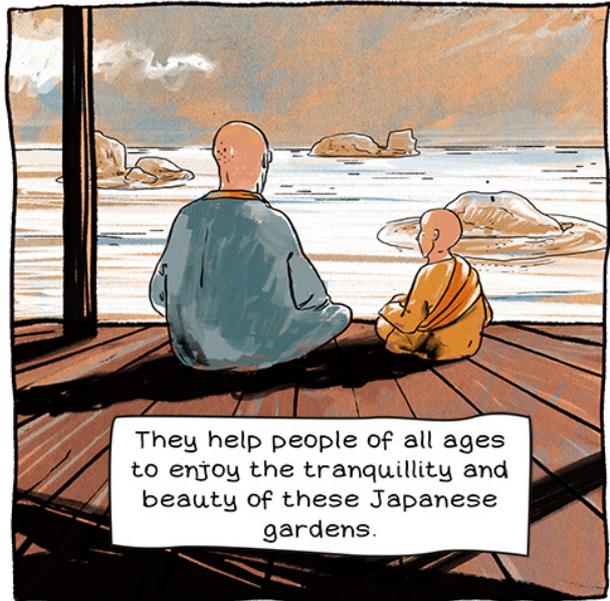
while flat, horizontal stones denote water and arching stones embody fire.



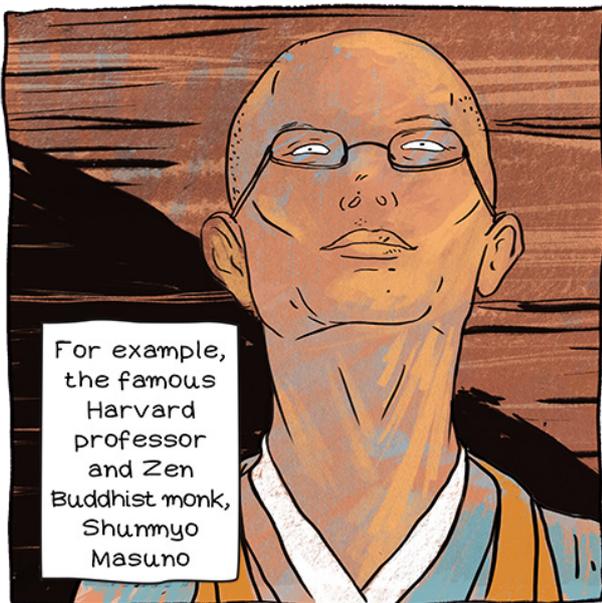
Walking in Kyoto gardens, visitors can gain a better understanding of the Japanese concept of harmony.



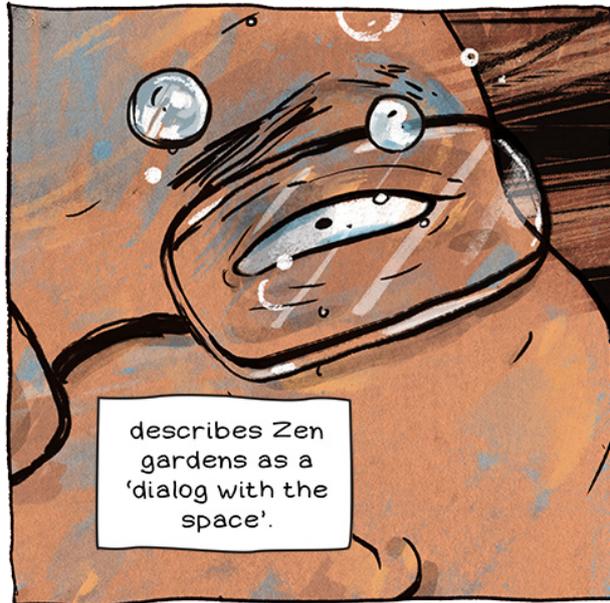
The gardens have a worldwide significance, promoting inner peace and contact with nature.



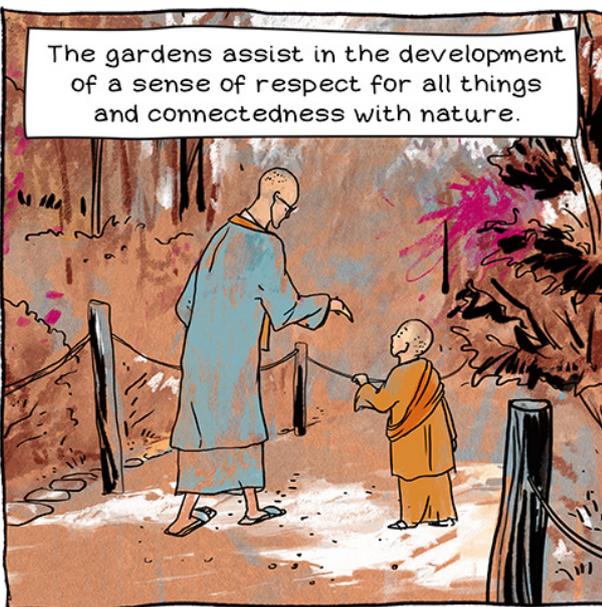
They help people of all ages to enjoy the tranquillity and beauty of these Japanese gardens.



For example, the famous Harvard professor and Zen Buddhist monk, Shunmyo Masuno



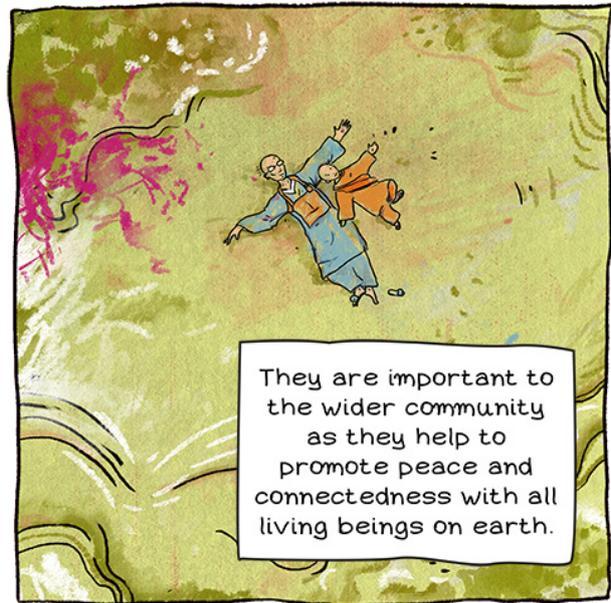
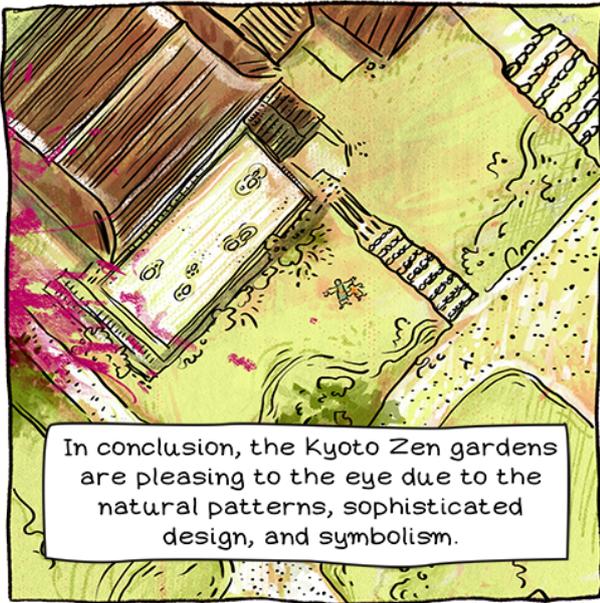
describes Zen gardens as a 'dialog with the space'.



The gardens assist in the development of a sense of respect for all things and connectedness with nature.



They can help people realise the importance of respect for other humans and the environment at large.





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Author: Chryssa Themelis • Illustrations: Eleni Tsampra

