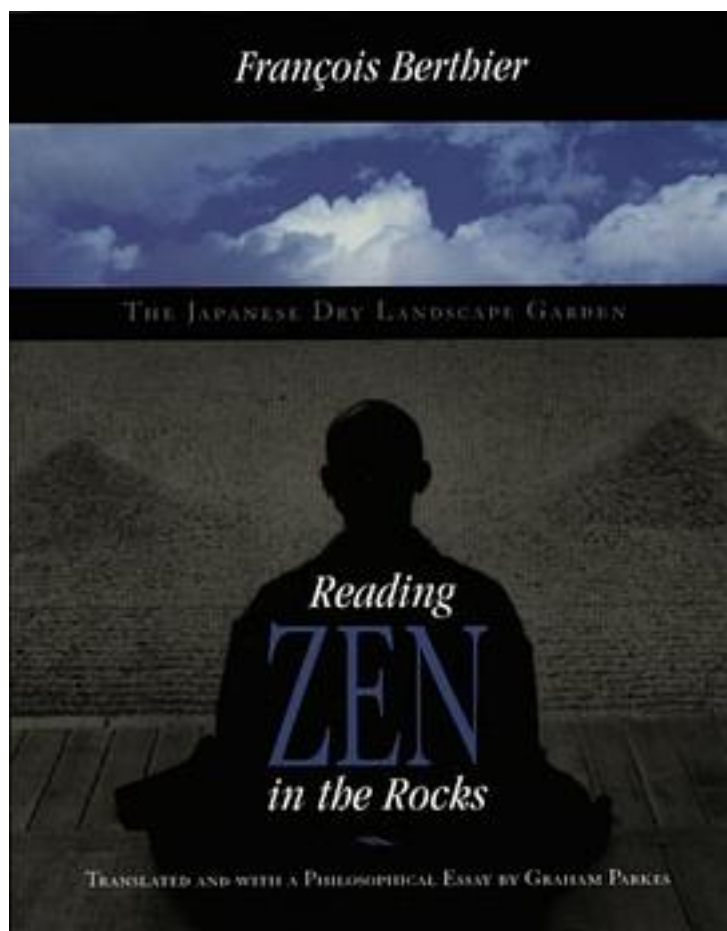


Reading Zen in the Rocks



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While museums across North America are replicating "Zen rock gardens" in their courtyards and miniature versions now decorate offices, these Zen gardens remain enigmatic, their philosophical and aesthetic significance obscured. French historian

Francois Berthier traces the history of the karesansui garden in *Reading Zen in the Rocks*, here translated by Graham Parkes and beautifully illustrated with photographs of all the major gardens discussed. Berthier traces the roles of Shinto and Zen Buddhism in the evolution of the garden and also considers how manual laborers from the lowest classes in Japan had a hand in creating some of its highest examples. Parkes contributes an equally original and substantive essay, which delves into the philosophical importance of rocks and their "language of stone," delineating the difference between Chinese and Japanese rock gardens and their relationship to Buddhism. Together, the two essays compose one of the most comprehensive and elegantly written studies of this haunting garden form. *Reading Zen in the Rocks* is a handsome addition to the library of anyone interested in gardening, Eastern philosophy, and the combination of the two that the karesansui so superbly represents.

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