

Koichi Kobayashi
Affiliate Professor, University of Washington
Kobayashi & Associates, Inc.

LEGACY OF THE JAPANESE GARDEN OF SEATTLE: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

A highly regarded, peaceful sanctuary tucked into University of Washington's Arboretum, the Seattle Japanese Garden is one of the finest Japanese gardens to be constructed outside Japan.

Rated among the top ten most favorite Japanese Gardens in the United States by a garden journal, the Seattle Japanese Garden is an extremely popular destination for locals and visitors alike in the Puget Sound area, and rivals the famous Japanese Gardens of Portland and San Francisco.

The three and a half-acre garden contains the features of stroll-through gardens of the formal (shin-style) type, built during the Momoyama Period (late 16th century) and early Edo period (early 17th century). The stroll garden style aims to create the illusion of several landscapes within a garden, which reveal, suggest and disappear along a path. At the southern end of the garden is an open woodland and mixed forest, which is planted with a variety of coniferous and deciduous trees and shrubs traditionally used in Japanese gardens, such as Pines, Maples, Gingko, and Bamboo. Native plants of the Northwest are also employed, including Cedars and Firs, Rhododendrons and Azaleas.

One can then climb the mountain and hillside area, which has a tea garden with a Korean-style pagoda, and from which streams and waterfalls flow. Water feeds down into a lake, which is lined with lakeshore pines, willow trees, birches, deciduous shrubs. The lake itself supports irises and juncus, as well as a large population of koi, amphibians and a green blue heron. It is lined on one side by a pebble beached peninsula, and in the middle is a "tortoise island" planted with

pinces and connected by two bridges. To the north, the Fishing Village and Boat Landing portion of the garden are more geometric, using cut stone and right angles. From this vantage, one can view the lake islands, mountain scenery and waterfall to the south, as well as cherry blossoms and a grassy hill to the west. This area leads to a viewing arbor and a moon-viewing stand on the shoreline. Traditional species of maple, pine, bamboo, cherry and plum trees, along with moss ground covers, irises and water lilies predominate. Finally, in the northwestern portion of the garden is an orchard planted primarily with flowering cherry trees. As one moves through the garden, Kasuga-style lanterns mark divergences in the path. These types of lanterns often mark the entrances of many important Shinto shrines.

Kiyoshi Inoshita, one of the garden's initial designers, describes his design intent: *The flow of water, which originated at the high mountain ranges, transforms itself as it continues its way through the landscape; first it turns into a waterfall, then into a stream, washing the bank by a tea hut, and finally becomes a lake. At the lakeshore are a variety of features such as a rock promontory, an inlet, and steep slopes, through which water continues its way, until it reaches a village (an image of the village symbolically represented by a cherry grove, iris paddies, and a moon viewing hill). At the village, there appears an island connected to the shore by two different bridges. At the end of the lake is a stone paved boat launch, which symbolically represent a fishing village. There, the water disappears from one's sight, leaving the expectation that it will be joining the greater ocean.*

In historical documents written by the initial designers, no references are made to other gardens that could have influenced the design of the Seattle Japanese Garden. However Professor Makoto Suzuki of Tokyo Agricultural University has started researching the possible influence of the Horai En Garden, which existed at the site of the Matsuura Clan Family residence in Tokyo, and was built in the Edo period, as well as the Katsura Imperial Village in Kyoto.

History

The initial movement to create a Japanese Garden in Seattle began in 1909, when the Alaska Yukon Exhibition was held. A Japanese Pavilion with an accompanying garden was built for the fair, which ignited regional interest in and excitement about Japanese gardens. In 1924, the Olmstead Brothers designed the University of Washington Arboretum, and by 1937, officials agreed that the Arboretum needed a Japanese Garden. The realization of the garden, however, had to wait till the end of the World War II, when racial and political tensions eased.

It wasn't until 1957 that The Arboretum Foundation began raising funds for the creation of the Japanese Garden. The Foundation asked Tatsuo Moriwaki of Tokyo Metro Parks to help guide the process. He selected Kiyoshi Inoshita and Juki Iida to design the project.

The design was completed in 1959. Under the supervision of Juki Iida and Nobumasa Kitamura, construction began in March 1960 and was completed on an accelerated schedule within four months. Juki Iida personally scouted and selected 580 large granite rocks (some of them boulders) from the nearby Snoqualmi Pass to insert in the garden. Since the construction of the garden was originally envisioned to require three years, the execution required a number of revisions and changes in design throughout the garden. The construction was done mostly by local Japanese-American gardeners. This was the first time, however, that heavy construction equipment was employed in building a Japanese garden by Juki Iida and his staff.

Built in 1959, the Seattle Japanese Garden was the earliest postwar public construction of a Japanese-style garden on the Pacific Coast, and thus has had a strong influence on the design on Japanese gardens throughout the region.

A number of local landscape designers have been deeply influenced by the garden and Juki Iida. One of whom is Robert Shields, an architect and member of the Seattle Japanese Garden Society for over 25 years, who designed and constructed a Japanese-style garden at his former residence on Whidbey Island, Washington. His design featured a powerful and poetic rock garden, which echoes the waterfall and cascade area of the Japanese Garden of Seattle.

Current Issues

The Japanese Garden of Seattle celebrated the completion of a major renovation and improvement for the first time in 2001. This work, which was badly needed after forty years, included an installation of landscape rocks and shoreline protection rockery and water re-circulation system for water conservation.

The Seattle Park Department contracted with Koichi Kobayashi of Kobayashi & Associates to undertake the renovation project in 2001, which was completed in 2002. Following the renovation, the Seattle Japanese Garden Society hired Kobayashi to explore an updating of the master plan for the garden with the goal of completing the original design intent and vision. The work resulted in a study identifying a number of future improvements including the Pond Viewing Pavilion, the Harbor area expansion, as well as implementation of the South Entrance Area with a Gate House and Wall along Lake Washington Boulevard.

The University of Washington Arboretum Foundation is about to initiate a major effort to raise funds for implementation and future maintenance of the garden.

「世界の中の日本庭園」 ワシントン大学特別教授 小林 敏一



東京農業大学特命教授博見啓一による日本庭園美術館建設計画 © Kenichi Kobayashi

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