

# THE STONE GARDEN

by

Toru Mori

Today, I'll tell you about Japanese garden, especially about the stone garden. It is because the stone garden is unique of Japanese garden, and because many excellent examples since the early stage of development have survived till today.

According to an old document Japanese garden could date back to the 7th century. The document tells that one of the ministers made in his courtyard a pond which had an islet in it. The garden was so splendid that people called him "Islet Minister."

Throughout the 11th and 12th century many excellent gardens were made in the mansions of the nobles and in the Buddhist temples. Though no gardens have survived, we can imagine them from the descriptions in the paintings and literary works of the time. People enjoyed the seasonal changes in these gardens, viewing cherry-blossoms in spring and scarlet leaves in autumn, from on a decorated boat on the pond.

In those days, on the other hand, the Buddhist teaching to long for the paradise of Amitabha came into a vogue. In Buddhism Amitabha is the Buddha who rules the Western Paradise. The nobles who longed for this paradise of Amitabha made a beautiful garden and enjoyed it as if they were in the paradise. This kind of garden which is generally known as an *Amida*-garden consists of a hall in which *Amida*-images are housed and a lotus pond in front of the hall. By the way, Amitabha is called

*Amida* in Japanese.

Unfortunately, no examples of these gardens, both the gardens in the mansions of nobles where people enjoyed the seasonal changes and the gardens which symbolize the Paradise of Amitabha, have survived. We can only imagine their original forms standing on their ruins.

Judging from the descriptions in the paintings and literary works of those days, the nobles intended to represent the natural sights of mountains and the sea in their gardens to enjoy their changes in every season. This bent for nature is common to every Japanese art. This tradition has been brought up by the people who live in the country where the seasonal changes are very delicate.

As I have mentioned before, the natural gardens of this period have been ruined. However, when we visit the gardens of the *Katsura* Detached Palace and the *Shūgakuin* Detached Palace, we will realize that the tradition of the natural garden survived throughout the history.

The stone garden which is less natural came to be made in the 14th century. In this century Zen Buddhism, a sect of Buddhism, was introduced with other things from the Sung China. The stone garden was one of the Sung culture.

Of course, stones had been used in Japanese traditional gardens since the early ages, but the stone gardens which were composed chiefly with stones owed to the technique of Chinese stone gardens which was introduced accompanied with Zen Buddhism in the 14th century.

Zen Buddhism is a religion which attaches more importance to the training of mind than any other sect of Buddhism. It teaches us to honor the Buddha in our own mind rather than Buddhist images and sutras. Accordingly the Sung arts which were introduced with Zen Buddhism appeared themselves in

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Japan as the arts which trained the human mind.

The *suiboku*-painting and the tea ceremony were the other Sung arts which were introduced with Zen Buddhism. The world of the *suiboku*-painting, which is the abstract world of only black and white is common to the world of Zen Buddhism. And we can easily realize a training of mind in the tea ceremony, that is, in the ceremony of drinking a single cup of tea.

The stone garden has the same characteristic. Zen priests would have regarded the garden as a training place of their mind. They arranged stones as they liked in order to represent a corner of the nature which changed in every season and in every weather, such as in the morning, in the evening, on a fine day, on a rainy day, on a snowy day and so on.

As you guess, arranging stones is not easy. First of all, it is very hard to find the proper stones that the artist maps out. Nevertheless, the prominent artists created freely with such unmanageable stones much strongly unified world than the natural world.

Zen priests meditated trying to find the profound meaning of life in these gardens. The fact almost all the fine stone gardens have survived in Zen temples proves that the stone gardens have developed in connection with Zen Buddhism.

The stone garden originated in China, but it made such a unique progress in Japan that the stone gardens which we see in Japan are quite different from those in China.

The process of the development in Japan is not clear. It is guessed that in the firsts tep Chinese gardeners came over to Japan together with Zen-priests and taught the technique to the Japanese Zen-priests. In the meantime some of them mastered it and began to make the stone gardens by their own hands.

Of all the stone gardens that have survived till today, two gardens are the oldest. They are the gardens of the *Tenryû-ji*

Temple and of the *Saihō-ji* Temple, both in *Kyōto*. They were made in the early 14th century by *Musō Soseki*, a prominent Zen-priest of the time. Neither of them have kept the original forms, but only a few parts are original. However, these gardens, as you see later through slides, have a few strong and realistic stone-arrangements. In these excellent stone-arrangements we find the starting point of Japanese stone garden.

These two gardens are large scale stone gardens. The large scale garden is generally divided into two parts, the pond part and the hill part. The visitor enjoys the sights, walking around the pond and on the hill-side.

The other surviving examples of these large scale gardens are in the *Kinkaku-ji* Temple which was founded in the early 15th century and in the *Ginkaku-ji* Temple founded in the later 15th century. Both are in *Kyōto*.

The former *Kinkaku-ji*, the Golden Pavilion Temple, was named after the gold-plated pavilion standing by the garden pond. The real name of this Zen temple is *Rokuon-ji*. It was constructed under the order of *Ashikaga Yoshimitsu*, who was the shogun of the time. The stone-islets in the pond, the green pine trees, and the reflections of them on the water produce a very beautiful sight.

The *Ginkaku-ji*, or the Silver Pavilion Temple, is also named after the pavilion by the pond, though it is not plated. The real name is *Jishō-ji*. *Ashikaga Yoshimasa*, the eighth shogun of the *Ashikaga* Shogunate, made the garden constructed. Before this garden was completed, *Yoshimasa* visited the *Saihō-ji* Garden several times. Thus, the *Ginkaku-ji* Garden was modelled on the *Saihō-ji* Garden.

There is another type of the stone garden, that is, the small scale garden. It is in this small scale garden that we are rather interested. It is usually made in front of the building or on a

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side of the building so that it may be seen from in the room.

The representative examples of this type are the garden of the *Daisen-in* Temple which was founded at the end of the 15th century and that of the *Ryōan-ji* Temple founded at the beginning of the 16th century. Both temples are in *Kyōto*.

These two gardens represent the view of a river and the sea without any water. Only stones, white sand and sometimes trees are used. This is the characteristic of the small scale garden. The garden of this type is called "*karesansui*" in Japanese.

The *Daisen-in* Garden represents the life of water. The water flows out from a fall at the back, and through a stream it becomes a wide river. The Zen-priests of the temple would have compared this to a human life.

Compared with the *Ryōan-ji* Garden, which I'll tell you next, the technique of this garden is realistic. It is remarkable that the similar technique can be found in the *Saihō-ji* Garden. I think this garden inherited the traditional technique of the large scale stone garden.

On the other hand, the *Ryōan-ji* Garden is quite abstract. It is composed with only 15 stones on the white sand. You are free to think what it represents, though this garden, probably, represents the islands in the ocean. But you may regard this as mountain-tops above the cloud. Once I visited this garden with Mr. Zadkine, the famous sculptor, when he compared this to ladies swimming in the sea. I wonder if it is proper.

The artist who composed this abstract garden would never complain whatever you may compare this garden to. The Zen-priests who sat before this garden must have seen the world of Zen Buddhism in this abstract world.

The small scale gardens have been chiefly in Zen temples until the Modern Period. Today, we can see many examples, some of which I'll show you later. Above all the examples of

the modern gardens those of the *Konchi-in* Temple, the *Daitoku-ji* Temple and the *Nanzen-ji* Temple are excellent.

To sum up, there are two types of the stone garden, the large scale one and the small scale one. The former is the stone garden which is enjoyed walking in it, and the latter is one which is seen from in the room. Further the small scale garden is divided into the realistic one and the abstract one.

Next I'll tell you the stone garden historically.

In the Middle Age, the period till the 16th century, the components of a garden were arranged all over the garden space. But in the Modern Age, after the 16th century, the components came to be arranged chiefly in the back part of the garden. So a large vacant space is left in the front part. This tendency naturally made the selection of stones change. In the gardens before the 16th century comparatively small but sombre stones are used, while in the gardens after the 16th century large and showy stones are used. And finally stone lanterns came to be used as a component of the garden. Today people use stone lanterns to create Japanese atmosphere.

In this way the stone garden underwent a great change in the 16th century. The stone garden originally began with arranging stones to represent a natural sight, just as the *suiboku*-painting represented the nature with black-and-white ink. The artist gave a form to the ideal nature in his mind by arranging stones. It was really a creative activity. But after the 16th century the artist began to make superficial and ostentatious gardens. Thus, as time went, the stone garden lost its spiritual quality.

Let me add one more thing about the trees in the garden. In the large scale gardens it does not matter whether some trees grow or die. And the garden-artist pays little attention to the form of trees. He plants any kind of trees whether they are evergreen or deciduous. On the contrary, in the small scale gar-

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dens he pays close attention to the trees. He plants only evergreen trees in his garden, because evergreen trees decrease the growing speed at a certain phase of growing. Besides the shape of the trees is fixed by trimming them constantly. The trimming is called "*karikomi*" in Japanese. *Karikomi* is a technique with which the original form is retained long.

Now, let's follow the development of the Japanese garden through slides.

### Slide 1.

This shows the garden the of *Tenryū-ji* Temple in *Kyōto*, which is the oldest example of the Japanese stone garden. The garden originally involved the mountain at the back. The part of the stone-bridge in the center is thought to have survived as it was originally.

The *Tenryū-ji* is a zen-temple which was founded by *Musō Soseki* in the early 14th century. The garden was also made at the same time. (Plate 1)

### Slide 2.

This shows the part of the stone-bridge and the waterfall.

This shows the oldest stone arrangement surviving till today. The way of arranging stones is rather Chinese.

### Slide 3.

This shows the waterfall.

It is composed with two stones. And it is generally thought that no water was used in this part originally.

### Slide 4.

This shows the stone-islet in front of the stone bridge.

The stone under the waterfall is called "*rigyoseki*", which represents a carp ascending the waterfall. According to an old tradition in China, there was waterfall called *Ryūmon*. And the carps which ascended it became dragons which had supernatural powers. In Zen Buddhism this tradition is compared to the training

of a zen priest. It says that if a zen priest trains himself hard, he will be able to attain higher perception.

Therefore, the *rigyoseki* and waterfall has been the essential theme in the stone gardens of zen-temples.

Slide 5.

This also shows the stones in front of the stone bridge.

They are very sombre. The sombre stones are the characteristic of the stone garden of its earliest stage.

Slide 6.

A more realistic representation of the *rigyoseki* and waterfall can be seen in the garden of the *Kinkaku-ji*. This picture shows it.

The waterfall is represented with big flat stones just as that of the *Tenryū-ji* Garden.

Slide 7.

This shows a part of the *Saihō-ji* Garden.

It was also made in the early 14th century by *Musō Soseki*. Originally it was still larger. The visitors would enjoy the sight floating on a boat or walking around the pond.

Today, it is famous for its beautiful moss which covers the whole garden. So the temple is called the Moss Temple. The temple is located at the most suitable place for the moss growing.

Slide 8.

This shows another part of the *Saihō-ji* Garden. The covering moss is very beautiful.

Slide 9.

This shows a stone arrangement in the mountain at the back of the *Saihō-ji*.

This part has retained the original form. The stone are arranged very strongly. It represents the water flowing from the waterfall at the back using nothing but stones. You may have seen the similar sight in Chinese *suiboku*-paintings. Such a stone



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arrangement as is constructed here is the original form of various stone arrangements in the later time. (Plate. 2)

Slide 10.

This shows the *Kinkaku-ji* Garden, which was made in the 15th century.

The *Kinkaku-ji*, or the Golden Pavilion Temple was named after that golden pavilion by the pond. The real name is *Rokuon-ji*. Originally it was the palace of a nobleman. *Ashikaga Yoshimitsu*, who was the shogunate of the time, changed it into his villa with the golden pavilion. And later he made it a zen-temple. The present golden pavilion was rebuilt in 1955, for the original had been burned down after this war. The golden pavilion was a building from which the visitors enjoyed seeing the sight.

Slide 11.

This shows the *Kinkaku-ji* Garden. (Plate. 3)

Slide 12.

This shows the pond.

The splendid stones in the pond are said to have been offered by many daimyos. The green pine-trees and the stones and their reflections on the pond create a very beautiful sight. The people of the time enjoyed seeing the sight on a boat.

Slide 14.

This shows the *Ginkaku-ji* Garden.

It is also a large scale garden. Though this pavilion by the pond is not covered with silver, the temple is generally called the Silver Pavilion Temple. It was originally painted with black lacquer. The real name is *Jishō-ji*.

This temples was established by *Ashikaga Yoshimasa*, the shogun of the time, in the later 15th century. As I told you before, the model of this garden was the *Saihō-ji* Garden. Accordingly this garden survives as a reminder of the original form of the *Saihō-ji* Garden.

Slide 15.

This shows a part of the *Ginkaku-ji* Garden. The green pine-trees and the sombre stone are well-harmonized.

Slide 16.

This shows the building called *Tôgudô* and its front garden.

The *Tôgudô* was also built in the late 15th century. It was used as a study of *Ashikaga Yoshimasa*.

Slide 17.

This shows the vestige of the *Daikaku-ji* Garden which was flourishing in the 10th and 11th century. It is in *Kyôto*. The garden was destroyed beyond recognition. In the flourishing time this pond was called *Hirosawa* Pond, and the nobles and poets enjoyed the spring and autumn sights around the pond. There was two islet in the pond and cherrytrees and other seasonal floweres were planted on it. We can imagine the original form only through the descriptions in the contemporary literary works.

Slide 18.

This shows the garden of the *Byôdô-in* Temple in *Uji*-city, *Kyôto*.

It has few vestiges of the original form except the building. In the 11th century when this garden was made, the whole pond was covered with lotus flowers. The nobles floated on decorated boats all day long as if they were in the Paradise of Amitabha.

The building behind is the *Amida*-Hall, which was built in the middle of the 11th century. In the hall a beautiful *Amida* image is housed. The hall is a Japanized building of the oriental palace buildings. The well-balanced building with slender pillars and the gentle slope of the roof is typically Japanese. The original garden must have been beautiful enough to fit this building.

Slide 19.

This shows the *Amida* image which is housed in the hall.

It was carved by *Jichô*, who was the most prominent sculptor

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in the 11th century. This image also makes a scene of the garden before our eyes.

Slide 20.

The tradition of the large-scale gardens in which man enjoys the seasonal views walking around the pond was succeeded to the gardens of the *Katsura* Detached Palace and the *Shūgakuin* Detached Palace. Both were established in the 17th century.

This shows the garden of the *Katsura* Detached Palace.

This garden is appreciated not only walking in it but also sitting in the room. Both traditions of the large scale garden and the small scale garden is united in this garden.

Slide 21.

This shows the garden in front of the *Shōkintei* Arbor, which is the most beautiful building in the Katsura Garden.

In this part alone stone arrangement which had developed since the 14th century is adopted. It is enjoyed from the room.

Slide 22.

This shows the garden of the *Sampō-in* Temple in *Kyōto*.

It was made in the end of the 16th century. Both techniques of the natural garden and the stone garden are well-harmonized. The arrangement of the various stones by the pond is rhythmic.

Slide 23.

This shows the garden of the *Shūgakuin* Detached Palace.

Emperor *Gomizuno-ō* had this garden made in the 17th century, about twenty years later than the Katsura Garden.

This garden is located in the north-west part of *Kyōto* at the foot of Mt. *Hiei*. The view of the distant mountains is borrowed in this garden. In many of Japanese garden, both in stone gardens and natural gardens a distant view is borrowed. Such gardens are called scenery-borrowed gardens. The *Shūgakuin* Garden is a magnificent example of them. This garden which

makes most of the natural scenery is the high water mark of Jadanese traditional gardens.

Slide 24.

This also shows the *Shūgakuin* Garden.

The seasonal changes in this garden, especially the sights of autumn leaves, are beautiful. The *Shūgakuin* Garden occupies a very vast site at the foot of a mountain. Such magnificent view as this picture is commanded from its upper part. It may be said that this garden is a garden for pleasures of the four seasons. So the buildings are, as it were, the rest-houses of the excursionists.

The *Katsura* Garden and the *Shūgakuin* Garden are the two greatest gardens in the Modern Age. But, if compared, the *Katsura* Garden which lies on the flat is artificial, and on the other hand the *Shūgakuin* Garden is natural.

Slide 25.

This shows the stone garden of the *Daisen-in* Temple, which was made in the end of the 15th century. As I have told you before, this garden and the stone garden of the *Ryōan-ji* are the most representative examples of the small scale gardens.

This garden represents the flowing water realistically. The water starts its life at the waterfall at the back of the garden, and it changes itself into the small stream, and finally it becomes a wide river. The artist compared the life of water to the human life.

The garden which is in front of the room is very small. And the trimmed camellia trees are used at the back of the garden.

There is a roofed passage across the garden, and there hangs a tablet on which Chinese letters "*Katei*" are written. '*Katei*' means "Listen to the water with a calm mind". The intention of the artist is well expressed in this word.

Slide 26.

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This shows the waterfall at the back.

It reminds us some old landscape painting of China. The white stone symbolizes the falling water.

Slide 27.

This shows the right part of the garden. The water has become rather wide. The central stone symbolizes a boat.

Slide 28.

This shows the stone garden of the *Ryōan-ji* Temple, which was made several years later than the *Daisen-in* Garden.

It consists of only fifteen stones and white sand. It is a quite abstract garden. You may regard the fifteen stones as the islands in the ocean, as the rocks in the stream, or as the mountain-tops above the cloud. But it is certain that the space of the white sand gives significance to this garden. You many describe this garden using such words as Oriental atmosphere, zen-spirit and so on.

Today it is not clear who composed this stone garden. Probably famous zen-priest who had mastered the technique of the stone garden directed the gardeners. I suppose that at first he used more stones, but gradually he reduced the number of stones until it became fifteen.

This is the most spiritual stone garden in Japan. (Plate. 4)

Slide 29.

This shows a part of the garden.

Each stone was selected scrupulously. The scrupulosity is also seen in the height of the back wall. If the wall were higher, the garden would be entirely cut off from the outside. If lower, on the contrary, the independence of this garden would be lost. The height of the wall is quite unchangeable.

Slide 30.

This shows another part of the garden.

Slide 31.

The stone garden came into vogue in the 16th century, and it has continued to be made till today.

This shows the stone garden of the *Konchi-in* Temple in *Kyôto*, which was made in the early 17th century.

The whole garden is compared to the sea. The artist intended to make an auspicious garden. So he arranged magnificently the crane-island on the right and the tortoise island on the left. A pair of crane and tortoise is a symbol of auspice for the Japanese. For both animals are thought to live long.

This garden was made by *Kobori Enshû*, the most famous garden artist in the 17th century. As I have mentioned, he intended to make an auspicious stone garden rather than to make a descriptive garden of an ideal landscape. *Kobori Enshû*, who himself was a daimyo of the *Tokugawa* Shogunate, dedicated this garden to the *Tokugawa* shogun of the time. As a matter of fact, the *Konchi-in* Temple was closely connected with the *Tokugawa* Shogunate.

The space composition of the garden is different from those of the *Daisen-in* Garden and the *Ryôan-ji* Garden. This type of gardens appeared in the 17th century.

Slide 32.

This shows the crane-island of the garden.

Slide 33.

This shows the tortoise-island.

Slide 34.

This shows the main stone garden of the *Daitoku-ji* Temple in *Kyôto*.

It was made in the early 17th century. This is the most magnificent garden in this period. The stone arrangement at the back represents the ideal island beyond the sea. The wide space in the front part is the peculiar to the stone gardens after the 16th century.

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Slide 35.

This shows the stone arrangement at the back. The large stones are rather mediocre, compared with the stones of the *Daisen-in* and the *Ryōan-ji* Gardens.

Slide 36.

This shows the other stone garden of the *Daitoku-ji* Temple.

This garden is composed of three groups of stones, the number of stones of each group is 7, 5, 3. This type of stone arrangement is found in such a narrow garden.

This garden was made in the early 17th century.

Slide 37.

This shows the stone garden of the *Nanzen-ji* Temple in *Kyōto*, which was made in the late 17th century.

This small garden is the same type as the previous *Daitoku-ji* Garden. The stone arrangement at the back might represent the ideal world beyond the sea.

Slide 38.

This shows the garden of the *Shōden-ji* Temple in *Kyoto*. It was also made in the late 17th century.

In this garden stones are not used, but azaleas are used. The azaleas are trimmed every year to retain the original form. It may be called "*Karesansui*". It seems as if it were the *Ryōan-ji* Garden composed with trimmed azaleas.

When I visited this garden to take this photo, the main hall was under repairs. So I could not take the photo contentedly.

Slide 39.

This shows a part of the garden.

Slide 40.

Now, I'll close my today's lecture. I am sorry that I could not tell you about the contemporary Japanese gardens. So I'll show you a few pictures of the most representative large scale garden, the garden of the *Heian Jingū* Shrine in *Kyōto*.

Toru Mori

The *Heian Jingu* Garden is famous for its cherry-blossoms, which most of foreign tourists visit.

The slides show the sights of the pond and bridge across the pond.

荻須先生の還暦お祝の記念号とお聞きしまして、何か更めて書きたいと考えましたが、外国から帰りまして早々のこととて間にあいませんでした。それで編輯委員の方々のお言葉に甘えて英文の、それも Victoria 美術館での講演要旨を発表させて戴くことにしました。専門的な研究発表でないことを荻須先生並に皆様方にお詫び致します。

(森 附記)

Plate 1. The Tenryuji Garden

Plate 2. The Saihoji Garden

Plate 3. Kinkaku-ji Garden

Plate 4. The Ryoan-ji Garden