

MODELAREA SPAȚIULUI ȘI SEMNIFICAȚIA LOCULUI ÎN GRĂDINA JAPONEZĂ VERSUS GRĂDINA OCCIDENTALĂ FORMALĂ

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The shaping of the space, the design principles, the different compositional arrangements, the organization and matching of the natural elements with the artificial ones in Japanese garden versus Western formal garden, point out several interesting contrasting aspects between the two types of the gardens. If in the West, the interaction between the man and the environment is considered to be abstract, a relation of the type I-Object, in the East, it is conceived as a concrete, immediate relation, based on the interaction I-You. While the Western man fights with the nature, trying to dominate it, the Eastern man adapts himself to nature and adjusts to it. These two fundamentally different attitudes towards nature and environment may explain the way in which the space of the garden has been shaped and organised over time in Japan and Western countries, respectively. By tradition, the Western designers have been concerned with the elements of space enclosing –as a form of construction. The Eastern designers, on the other hand, have focused their attention on the quality of the enclosed spaces and on the intellectual and emotional influences of these spaces upon those who have perceived them. The Eastern people understood long time ago that the existence of significant spaces was influenced by the presence of the surrounding landscape, whose dimensions, shape and characteristics might determine the quality of the space. Making a comparison between the European design system and the Oriental one, it is obvious that the mind of the Western people, by tradition, is concerned especially with the object or construction as it appears in the space, while the Eastern civilizations have considered the construction as a means of defining or making a space or a complex of significant places more distinctive. In the Western formal gardens the organization of the space was done depending strictly on the central building (the palace), with which it was organically connected, making a unique composition. On the other hand, the Japanese people have learned to design the space of their gardens – conferring it such a strong personal character –meaning to give satisfaction only through the presence of the person or the persons for which it was designed. In the Japanese art, the space has played a dominant role and has been considered a universal medium where life develops by permanent transformation, the place and time being just relative conditions.

Keywords: Japanese garden, Western formal garden, shaping and meaning of place.

The purpose of this paper is to present some aspects about Japanese gardens by comparing them to Western gardens, the comparison being made between the formal style of each. The formal style utilizes all of the important elements and principles that are representative of the gardens of each culture as a whole. The Western formal garden has the theme of man dominating his landscape with a perfect symmetry. Geometry, balance, proportion, and colour are all part of this style. Japanese formal gardens utilize principles that focus more on glorifying nature through the use of principles such as asymmetry, and the use of natural lines. We have set various aspects of Japanese and Western formal gardens side by side and looked directly at the similarities and differences. There are many similarities between the gardens and those are the aspects that seem the most obvious, so we have not spent much space pointing those out. Instead, we have pointed out what we feel are some of the most interesting contrasting aspects.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Before pointing out the most contrasting aspects between the Japanese and Western formal gardens it is important to focus our attention on some of the design principles common to each type of the garden. We shall start by presenting several of the design principles of Japanese garden followed by some of the most noticeable design principles of Western gardens. One principle common to all Japanese gardens is enclosure, though the extent of it varies. The small amount of space often available in Japan often makes enclosure inevitable, but even when a large area is available, enclosure is usually desirable. Usually, Japanese gardens are fairly enclosed and don't allow the surrounding scenery to intrude upon the garden. The exception to this is with the principle of „shakkei”, or borrowed scenery. In this case, the garden is designed to incorporate the scenery around it. If a Japanese garden is open to the surrounding terrain, the scenery is an integral part of the garden. Enclosure not only makes the garden into a private space with a potential for quiet and calm, but the enclosing element can also serve as a background for the compositions and other elements in the garden. The sky is also a crucial element which must be enclosed in a garden. The sky represents „yang” and the earth represents „yin”. If there is too much sky, there is an imbalance. Subtle internal barriers such as elevation changes can also be used within the garden to separate different areas. The purpose of these barriers would not be to create independent small sections. In a Japanese garden, each part of the garden is specifically designed to complement each other part so that the garden remains a unified unity. The way in which the garden will be viewed is another important aspect in Japanese gardens. The direction from which compositions in the garden are to be viewed is considered from the beginning in the planning of a garden. In this manner, visual effects can be created using multiple compositions. Often a particular grouping is designed to be seen from a few different points in the garden, each time creating a new effect due to the new elements it is seen with. This type of design is possible because Japanese gardens typically are viewed from specific locations, or along paths designed to offer a certain sequence of views. In some paradise gardens and in most of the dry gardens, the garden was designed to be viewed from a sitting position on the floor of the temple or pavilion. In other gardens, such as tea gardens and some landscape gardens, there are one or more paths along which the garden can be viewed. Though this is clearly a different situation, the garden is still designed with limited points from which the garden can be viewed, and the garden's design reflects

that, with compositions designed to be viewed from certain angles and distances. Another principle used in some Japanese gardens is that of „shakkei” or borrowed scenery. This involves the surrounding landscape as part of the garden. It is not simply placing the garden such that it has a view of beautiful nearby scenery, but actually incorporating the elements in the surrounding landscape into the garden. The object is not to bring the whole landscape into view, but only those elements necessary to suggest its spirit. Unnecessary or undesirable parts can be obstructed by barriers or other elements in the garden. As far as the Western gardens are concerned we should underline that, as a rule, they don't have the same kind of strong governing principles as Japanese gardens. Many Western gardens are designed to complement or harmonize with architecture. They often conform to or extend the lines of adjacent buildings. They can go as far as the purpose of the garden being primarily or solely to beautify the building. Also, gardens can be integrated as part of the architecture. Courtyards, dating back to Greek and Roman times, can be considered both gardens and functional rooms of a house. Renaissance villas had extensive gardens integrated into the estate and would be incomplete without them, with clear transitions and boundaries between them. This is simply an extreme example of the subdivision found in Western gardens, however. Though by no means universal, many Western gardens are subdivided into distinct sections, often separated by hedges or elevation changes. Hedges are the most common barrier used to separate sections of a Western garden. The themes or styles of these sections can be quite different. Another related difference is in the purpose for which Western gardens are designed. The Western garden may be a place for peaceful relaxation, but it may be also a place for dining and recreation. Western gardens often have furniture such as benches or tables and can be designed to accommodate not only passive observers but more active visitors. Also, some formal Western gardens were even designed partially for the purpose of producing food. One design principle that is very noticeable in many Western gardens is the use of very strict geometry. Gardens are designed with rectangles, circles and straight lines. Often this geometry is an extension of adjacent buildings, but not always. And there are certainly Western gardens with asymmetric, flowing lines. Still, this geometry is a very powerful and obvious influence in many gardens. It is especially notable in contrast to Japanese gardens. Though again there is much variety, Western gardens can be very open to the surrounding terrain. Sometimes sweeping areas of terrain can be incorporated into a garden, but often the garden is simply very open. This is especially true of French gardens, which tend to be flat in reflection of the native terrain. Not only are Western gardens often open to the surrounding terrain, but they can be very open internally, in terms of access to any part of the garden, rather than restricting the viewer to a limited set of viewpoints. Consequently, arrangements in Western gardens must often be designed to be viewed from any direction, and thus are not tailored for specific perspectives. In a Western garden, paths are designed to allow access to different parts of the garden, rather than to provide a certain experience of traveling through it. Finally, Western gardens are usually designed to show off beautiful plants. They contain beds of magnificent flowers, often grouped by species so that they will bloom together. Some gardens are even designed around a single type of plant (the rose garden is the most of this type). In general, Western gardens seek to gather beautiful elements from nature and manipulate them into pleasing display. Western gardens try to reproduce the best of nature through artificial arrangements, as opposed to the Japanese approach of trying to evoke the beauty of nature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Due to the different design principles applied in the two types of the garden, there result contrasting aspects as far as the use of ornamental elements in these gardens is concerned. The types of ornaments are different. In Western gardens, designers typically use lots of different garden furniture (both functional and sculptural), seats, varieties of plant containers, and the sculptures. In Japanese gardens the ornaments are used to a lesser extent. Also, the ornaments are not usually meant to be primary focal point as they are in Western gardens. Typical Japanese ornamental objects include water basins, stone lanterns, stone towers. Stones might also be considered along with this group of elements just as sculpture fits into Western ornaments. The Japanese create scenes with different orientations and masses of stones. Japanese gardens often use common evergreen plants, while Western gardens can have beds of the brightest and most spectacular flowers. One of the goals of many Western gardens is to have plants that are impressive all by themselves. While not all gardens incorporate brilliantly colored flowers, almost all try to have the healthiest and most beautiful members of each plant species used. Some Western gardens could almost be considered showcases for their magnificent plants, rather than designs that incorporate plants as elements. With Japanese gardens, though, the focus is more on the effect achieved by the garden. If a garden is skillfully designed and serves its purpose (providing a retreat for solitude and meditation, for example), it is not important for the plants to be colorful and beautiful. Usually, common plants -- including bamboo, mosses, evergreens and ferns are the main vegetation even in the most famous Japanese gardens. Actually, the use of plants which are brighter or showier than those typically found in nature can be detrimental to the garden. Japanese gardens seek to represent the beauty of nature, and magnificent plants, while perhaps beautiful, do not represent a natural beauty when used in such great concentrations. Perhaps one of the most fundamental differences between Japanese and Western gardens is in how they seek to express the beauty of the nature they incorporate. Western gardens take plants, water, stones, and other natural elements and create very unnatural patterns out of them. The goal is to create an object that contains the beauty of man and nature. Western gardens manipulate nature into forms based on the aesthetics of their creators. A major distinguishing feature of Western, and especially formal gardens is the use of plants to create an ordered structure. There are several ways this may be done. The use of structure with plants is far from the Japanese ideals of displaying nature. In Western gardens, we see the tendency for man to manipulate nature in order to create his own type of beauty. Japanese gardens seek instead to evoke the essence of nature, believing that the greatest beauty is that found in raw nature. Mounds of earth and ponds in a Japanese garden can be carefully designed to represent and evoke thoughts of mountains and oceans. The idea is that through careful design, man can concentrate the essence of the vast expanses of nature into something as small as a garden. The garden derives its beauty from what it

represents. In the Japanese garden, nature rules. The feeling that water conveys is similar in both cultures. However, the use is different in each. In Japanese gardens, water moves only in a way that is totally natural. It can be part of a pond, a stream, or a waterfall, but never can there be a fountain. Water in the garden is kept extremely pure, no muddy banks are allowed. Ponds should sit well in the landscape like they have always been there. Every pond has some sort of focal point. The shapes of the ponds are totally natural. There are often islands placed within the ponds. They are best placed closer to one side and not in the center. The design of the ponds and islands takes into account the viewpoint and perspective of the observer. Edging of the ponds is always natural and can give an illusion of depth or shallowness of the water, depending on the application. Waterfalls occur naturally at both the inlet and outlet of the pond or lake, and at intervals along streams where it needs to change levels. The waterfall is a vital element in the pond and serves as one of the primary focal points. The movement and the sound of streams are how the water is actually brought to life within the garden. In Western formal gardens, on the other hand, it is not generally acceptable to allow the pool to appear natural. The lines of the edge of the pool are part of what creates the scene. Formal pools are usually lined with stone or other edgings, not natural in appearance. In addition, within these pools, there are often numerous fountains and sculptures to accent certain focal points. Balance between and within compositions in the garden is something that must be considered. Most Japanese gardens favor asymmetry over symmetry. But that asymmetry is still balanced. Elements are always grouped in odd numbers, and within the groups the elements should be balanced with respect to size. Also important is that different groups and elements are not out of scale with each other. Finally, „ma” or the space between the elements or compositions, is crucial to balance. Western gardens are laid out in geometric shape and as one walks through Western gardens along a straight path the opposite end of the garden is usually in sight. Structures in the gardens are approached straight on, which, to the Japanese implies confrontation. Japanese gardens are perhaps even more carefully laid out because of the intent to improve on what nature has provided rather than to simply replace it. Paths are laid out diagonally and intersect structures diagonally. But paths wind and curve to permit the use of the concept of hide and reveal. When one rounds a curve, a significant view that was hidden is revealed. However, the underlying principle in garden design is that every element of a Japanese garden is significant. A casual observer misses much. The overall garden usually represents a larger landscape in miniature. Ponds may represent lakes or oceans, lanterns may represent a temple, stones may represent mountains or be used to form mountain streams, and distant mountains may be used as borrowed scenery to effectively increase the size of the garden.

CONCLUSIONS

While the Western gardens seek to make only an aesthetic impression, the Japanese garden is both aesthetic and reflective. The most basic element of any

Japanese garden design comes from the realization that every detail has a significant value. The Western formal garden has the theme of man dominating his landscape with a perfect symmetry: geometry, balance proportion and color are all part of this style. On the other hand, the Japanese have revered natural beauty, and their gardens seek to recreate this world in microcosm. Japanese formal gardens utilize principles that focus more on glorifying nature through the use of principles such as asymmetry and the use of natural lines. At the same time, Japanese aesthetic principles are interrelated, each reinforcing another, communicating through implication rather than direct statements.

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