



*International Japanese Garden Training Center*



*Waza to Kokoro: Hands and Heart -- the Use of Stone in the Japanese Tea Garden*

Intermediate-level seminar, Portland Japanese Garden

August 25 to September 5, 2017

Reflections on the seminar by Kristin Faurest, Ph.D.,

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Images by Jonathan Ley & Kristin Faurest

## Reflecting on the seminar's meaning

*In the end we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we have been taught. – Baba Dioum, Senegalese conservationist*

*Waza to Kokoro* (Hands and Heart) is the International Japanese Garden Training Center's flagship program. It is a certificate program consisting of three intensive training seminars, combining hands-on technical learning with cultural instruction and theoretical knowledge. *Waza to Kokoro* is designed to help Japanese gardens serving communities across the country to find authentic, locally-appropriate solutions in design, construction, maintenance, and preservation. Admission is also open to landscape design and construction professionals, and students of landscape-related disciplines.

Over the course of the 12-day seminar, we sought to foster and nurture our participants' love for the art form of the Japanese garden. A recurring motif was the idea of **connection**. For example:

The **connection** across many Japanese art forms in ideals and concepts: the levels of formality represented in *shin-gyo-so*, the significance of empty space, the ideal of austere beauty, the ephemerality of the seasons, the patina of time, the balance inherent to the asymmetrical.

The **connection** of skills and wisdom passed through generations and kept alive through modern technology and innovation. We saw this, for example, in the principles of a 1000-year-old garden treatise being kept alive by a passionate and morally committed young generation capable of authentically restoring an eighth-century garden using 21<sup>st</sup>-century methods. Truly, tradition is not the tending of ashes but the preservation of fire.

The **connection** between designing, building, and stewarding a garden --- three aspects that are holistically considered the work of a garden craftsman in Japan, but are divided into areas of design, construction, and maintenance in Western education and professional practice.

The ideal of making do with what is there, and our **connection** to that as practitioners of Japanese gardens outside of Japan. We learned to have tea where we are, in the environment that is there, having authenticity in using what is available. As Junichiro Tanizaki memorably put it in his "In Praise of Shadows:" *If light is scarce then light is scarce; we will immerse ourselves in darkness and there discover its own particular beauty*. Or, as the inscription notes on one of the stone basins used in one of the gardens constructed at Smith Rock during the seminar: I only know what is enough. In expressing the ideal of the Japanese garden outside of Japan, we must be able to artfully make do with what is there, and through our connected hands and heart make something true and beautiful that reflects this art form's ideals.

And finally, just as tranquility is not the fourth principle of tea, but the culmination of the other three principles of harmony, respect and purity, there is a **connection** that is the culmination of all that I have stated until now: that which gardens make between humans and nature. We wanted the participants to use what they learned here to create and care for spaces that give people the experience of joy, groundedness, contentedness, and wholeness of mind and spirit that can only come from living as a part of nature – not apart from nature. If we have made these connections and inspired our participants to do that, we will have accomplished that which we set out to do.

## Scenes from the seminar

*This has been a discovery of Japan for me. I did not realize how complex, how intricate it all was. I felt very proud that I'm Japanese again. How generous these teachers were with their time and knowledge. I now understand how significant this program is. — Hiroshi Furusawa, former Consul General of Japan in Portland, and special advisor to the Portland Japanese Garden*

**Pre-seminar individual study:** In July, students received logins to the online platform Moodle, where they could access videos showing last year's seminar as well as foundational readings in Japanese aesthetics, the culture of tea, landscape drawing and sketching techniques, and the history of tea garden design. Additional resources, such as the Center's own original *Glossary of Japanese Gardening Terms*, were provided.

*It was an honor to be in the presence of so much knowledge and experience. – Steven Pitsenbarger, gardener captain, San Francisco Japanese Tea Garden*



**Keynote speaker:** Marc P. Keane gave a talk at the Portland Art Museum based on his new book, *Japanese Garden Notes*. Keane framed Japanese garden design in the themes of Intent and Time, Space and Passage, and Function and Art.



*It was the perfect connection between my tea practice and my landscape architecture practice. I'm grateful to have learned more about history to get the context, and it was also great to be immersed in design. I was already familiar with the garden concepts, but now I have the words to describe them. I also appreciated the spirit of Japanese materials. I think that will now come through in my work. — Jamie Morf, landscape architect/tea practitioner*



**History module:** Garden history and Japanese aesthetics were presented in this module in a way that gives participants, as garden practitioners, the concepts they need to make authentic and appropriate decisions in their gardens, with the Garden itself used as the main learning tool. Center Director Kristin Faurest lectured on the fundamental techniques of Japanese garden design and the social, spiritual and political factors that shaped it from the Heian era to the present. Culture, Art, and Education Curator Diane Durston lectured on Japanese aesthetics based on scholar Donald Keene's four characteristics of suggestion, irregularity, simplicity, and perishability. With each topic, the Garden was used as a learning tool to support and further explore the lecture material.

*Having access to the Japanese masters just gave me goosebumps. I felt like a door has been opened for me. -- Fred Swisher, landscape contractor*



**Preparatory lectures for the hands-on stone workshop and pruning master class:** Visiting Japanese instructors Kazuo Mitsuhashi of the Garden Society of Japan and Mitsuru Yamaguchi and Tomohiko Muto of Ueyakato Landscape Ltd. of Kyoto led this module. Mitsuhashi's lecture focused on types of *nobedan* and *tsukubai* composition. Yamaguchi discussed the *Sakuteiki* garden treatise and its relevance to the modern garden practitioner, while Muto focused on philosophical and technical aspects of pruning of garden trees. Assistant to the Garden Curator Desirae Wood lectured on the art of *chabana*, framing it in the larger context of the meaning of flowers in cultures over time and including a tour of the Garden's *chabana* garden.



*I was intimidated by the idea of drawing. Focusing on sketching was a huge help for me. It was very informative and educational, and I gained a more in-depth perspective of Japanese culture. – Iain Devine, gardener, Anderson Japanese Gardens, Rockford, Illinois*



**Design module:** Sadafumi Uchiyama led the students through tracing and sketching exercises in the classroom and in the Garden, with the focus on developing an eye for pattern and composition in stonework to prepare for the hands-on work at Smith Rock.

*It reaffirmed my belief that you need to respect the labor and not just jump into design or management, but spend some time in the field. – April Chastain, Department Chair, Horticulture Faculty, Clackamas Community College*



**Tool clinic:** Participants rotated in groups among instructors who were demonstrating tool sharpening using a whetstone, knot-tying for bamboo fences, and bamboo selection, cutting and splitting techniques. After viewing the demonstration, they could try out the tools and practice the manual skills themselves.



*This is one of the greatest learning experiences I've ever had. I never understood before why Japanese gardens were more powerful than others. Now, I'm just eager to continue learning.*  
– Sean Peterson, gardener, Bloedel Reserve, Bainbridge, Washington



**Garden clinic:** Working in three teams, participants analyzed and devised solutions for design problems that had been previously submitted and selected. The exercise focused not only on finding a design solution for the problem at hand, but for developing criteria, standards, and methods for approaching design issues in Japanese gardens.



*Being in design at the university, I learned just how much the hands-on element is essential for design. Now I really want to work more on those details. I feel really grateful for this experience. – Rebecca Cruze, landscape architecture student, University of Oregon*



**Hands-on stone workshop:** Over four days at Smith Rock stone yard, the team of instructors including PJG gardeners led the participants in design, materials selection, and construction. Four sites and four teams were established, each with a *nobedan*, *tsukubai* arrangement, bamboo fence and, for some of the sites, maple or pine trees. The work was completed in three days, with the fourth day devoted to review of the finished projects, followed by a boulder-moving demonstration.

*We learned about the interconnectedness and how every aspect of Japanese art and culture is in the garden. --Rebecca Smith, landscape designer*



**Culture:** Tea instructor Jan Waldmann began each morning preparing and serving tea and each day focusing on one of the four principles of tea of harmony, respect, purity and tranquility (*wa, kei, sei, jaku*). She framed each principle in its context in the culture of tea and then expanded the discussion to connect them all to the work of the gardener. During each of the four lunch sessions at Smith Rock, she focused on a different topic: etiquette, the culture and landscape of rice, seasonality, and aesthetics -- placing food culture in the larger context of Japanese arts.



*The tools, workshop facilities, stone yard and nursery were top-notch. Being able to pull inspiration from the Portland Japanese Garden was truly great. Also, sketching opened up my eyes to appreciate the work of a designer. — Michelle Rawlins, horticulturalist, Duke Gardens, Durham, North Carolina*



**Pruning:** Over the course of a day at Patterson Nursery in Boring, participants learned traditional techniques for pruning various species of maple, pine, and other garden trees.

*The Garden spaces and the newly-created Cultural Village were far beyond my expectation, and I was able to feel the huge potential the Portland Japanese Garden exudes as a mecca of cultural exchange between Japan, the Pacific Northwest and beyond. The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership is especially grateful for your initiative in fostering the professionals of Japanese gardens through the International Japanese Garden Training Center.*

*—Kenji Matsumoto, deputy director general of the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, the seminar's main funder*

