

Murin-an:
Literary Descriptions and Interpretations of Experience in a Japanese Dwelling

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Abstract

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The villa of Murin-an was commissioned by the statesman Yamagata Aritomo in 1894. The garden is considered a collaborative product of Yamagata's vision and the skill of the garden's designer, Ogawa Jihei VII. Although the garden is described as modern and different, an essay written by Yamagata about the villa reveals a dwelling that draws extensively upon literary and historical precedents.

This thesis returns to Murin-an, focusing on dwelling as place-making that involves both material construction and transient behavior. A close reading of Yamagata's essay challenges essentialist expectations of natural harmony or meditative experience, bringing to light a garden entangled with the history of the site and the incomplete fabrics of culture. Dwelling is made available as the presence of a culturally defined place, and the literary and material references that give rise to the villa emerge in the full thickness of descriptive depth.

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Introduction

This is a close reading of the villa Murin-an in eastern Kyoto, one dwelling situated in the details of particular experiences and interpretations.

120 years after Josiah Conder published the first book-length study of gardens in Japan, titled quite simply *The Japanese Garden* (1893), Japanese gardens remain a subject of enduring and substantial interest in the United States and Europe.¹ Similar to Conder's interpretation, the overwhelming majority of the discourse over the past century is presented in the form of historical surveys and genre works that emphasize the Japanese garden as a spiritual, symbolic, and/or meditative expression of the Japanese culture. Is this narrative true for Murin-an, as one dwelling in Kyoto? Should Murin-an be explained as an expression of meditative or symbolic values, or are there other questions that are more appropriate to the particular history of Murin-an?

Scholarly research that might illuminate such questions remains scarce. While there are many books on Japanese gardens, they almost always consider a collection of sites as part of a coherent whole; a whole that can be explained and interpreted collectively. Such scholarship suggests an essentialist description of Japanese gardens throughout history and geography. There exist few site-specific studies that bring forth the presence of one Japanese garden in the detail of its historical and social context; culturally-grounded critical analysis of the terms used to describe Japanese gardens—especially analysis that attempts to define terms such as “garden” or “architecture” based on actual usage, rather than treating these as universally valid categories—is also rare. In the absence of particular details “The Japanese Garden” remains an abstraction, an essential concept still searching for particular expression in *one* garden in Japan.

This paper challenges such essentialist images through a focused study on Murin-an, deconstructing the terms and conventions that subtend descriptions of Japanese gardens and

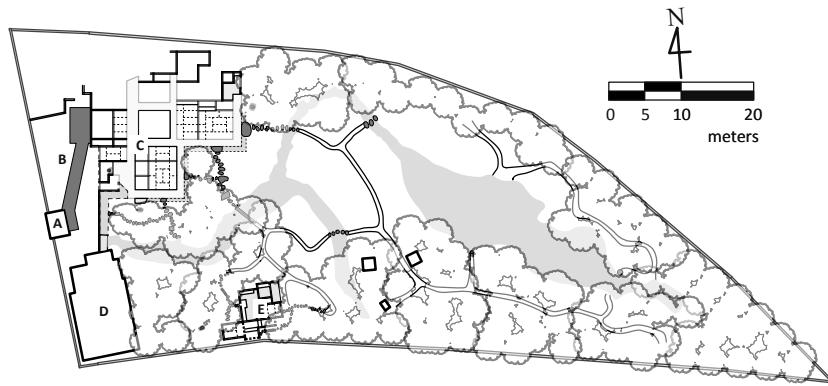
examining the role of accepted narratives in pre-determining interpretation of built environments. Murin-an is particularly suitable as a vehicle for this critique because the rich historical record of the villa dating to the period of its immediate completion provides an opportunity to examine the villa as it has been represented and described over and through time. This record also grounds analysis and interpretation in a specific case that facilitates testing proposed explanations and interpretations of Japanese gardens.

Murin-an

Murin-an (無鄰菴), the hermitage with no neighbors, is located at the eastern edge of Kyōto, near the gate of the Zen temple Nanzenji. The villa was built between 1894 and 1896 as a retreat from public life for Yamagata Aritomo (山縣有朋, 1838-1922), a senior statesman of the Meiji and Taishō periods (1868-1912, and 1912-1926 respectively). Located on a site slightly less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre and roughly triangular in shape, the villa is bordered by streets on all sides; a narrow lane forms the western border, and a quiet neighborhood street forms the southern border; to the north lies Niōmon Dōri, a street that is now moderately busy with commercial and city traffic.

The “base” of the triangle faces near due west, with the apex at the southeast; there are only three structures on the site, and these are all located in the western one-third of the site. The northern border of the site curves slightly so that the center of the main garden retains an expansive, open feeling, in spite of the small size and irregular shape of the property. Stucco walls roughly eight feet high enclose the entire site, and the perimeter of the garden is dense with many different large trees, providing an air of quiet repose that may be similar to the atmosphere of the villa in earlier times.

The three structures that comprise the villa are a *sukiya*-style residence, a Western-style reception hall, and a teahouse (See Figure 1). The *sukiya* is located in the northwest, and the Western-style hall is situated at the southwestern extremity of the site, its outer wall nearly contiguous with the south-western corner of the property. The teahouse is located near the southern perimeter,



- A. Entry gate
- B. Entry Garden
- C. Main Residence (*sukiya*)
- D. Western-style Reception Hall
- E. Teahouse

MURIN-AN
KUSAKAWA-CHO, KYOTO, JAPAN

Figure 1. Schematic site plan of Murin-an, showing structures and principle site features.

slightly separated from both of the other structures. The only formal entry to the site is a gate is on the western edge of the property, opening to an entry garden that is enclosed by the perimeter wall, the *sukiya*, and the white plaster wall of a corridor that connects the *sukiya* and the Western-style hall. East of the *sukiya* and the Western-style hall, the center of the principle garden is planted with a lawn bisected by two streams, with boulders set here and there and paths to lead the guest into the garden. Immediately adjacent to the structures, including the area around the teahouse, the garden is planted with one large camphor tree and many other trees, creating a shaded area with understory planting and moss. At the eastern end of the garden there is also dense planting, where a three-tiered waterfall descends into a pond and feeds a stream through the garden.

While commissioned by Yamagata, the gardens were constructed by Ogawa Jihei VII (小川治兵衛, 1860-1933), serving as one of his first major commissions. Although Ogawa would achieve considerable fame in the decades following his work at Murin-an, Yamagata had a deep personal interest in garden design and played an active role in the conception of the garden. Contemporaneous descriptions of Murin-an often credit Yamagata with designing the garden, possibly in response to Yamagata's statements to that effect.² At the same time, Murin-an has also been consistently recognized as part of Ogawa's corpus of work. This dual attribution has led to

a split regarding the issue of authorship in subsequent descriptions of the garden. The conclusion often reached is that the garden is the product of a collaborative synthesis of Yamagata's vision and Ogawa's ability to create a garden that expressed Yamagata's intent.³ This concern with authorship is related to a much broader set of issues about the relationship between craft, design, creativity and intentionality, and the division of thought and action, specifically in Japanese art and craft. This debate is beyond the scope of this study, but noted here to underscore that in the case of Murin-an, creation of the villa, its conceptual design and its construction as a physical place, cannot be claimed as the vision of an individual creative genius. Rather, the villa is the synthesis of design intent of both the client/patron and the artist/craftsman. In describing the creation of the garden of Murin-an in this paper, the terms design and construction are used in light of this collaborative process, so as to emphasize the synthetic nature of the garden as realized.

Does expectation change experience?

Although Murin-an is not a major attraction among the tourist sites and gardens of Kyōto, the garden is described in tour guides and noted on maps, implicitly labeling the villa as a “Japanese culture” destination for tourists, an impression that is reinforced by the ticket sales window at the entry to the garden (see photograph of entry garden, page 58). This labeling is complicit in the perpetuation of two mutually reinforcing cycles of expectation and description. Expectations about Japanese gardens and Japanese culture precede direct experience of the villa,⁴ predisposing visitors to attend to some views over others and recognize features of the site that validate anticipated interpretations. Simultaneously, the terms of description and analysis that establish these expectations are limited by our ability to recognize and convey the content of experience.

These narrative expectations are further reinforced by the presentation of the villa as a cultural artifact. Such a presentation organizes the opportunities for visitors to engage the site according to conventions common to other, similar sites, determining experience in ways that resemble the strategies of display employed in museums. At Murin-an, entry into buildings is limited to certain

rooms or sections of rooms, and rooms related to the actual processes of daily life, such as the kitchen and the study are concealed. This limited presentation is also true of the routes of entry into the site and passage through the site, which are organized to facilitate the flow of visitors, rather than reflect passage through the site and garden as it might have occurred. In addition to these physical strategies, explanations of the garden in English, in the garden pamphlet and in guidebooks, rely upon terms that are part of the essentialist discourse on Japanese gardens discussed above. Described as a stroll garden, or a garden with borrowed scenery, emphasizes certain experiences of place while marginalizing or excluding others. These two strategies, while intended to expand and enhance meaning, also obscure meanings and relationships lost in the translation of terms and ideas.

One means of addressing such a loss of meaning can be through careful questioning: What does it mean to name the garden, to be in a place that is recognized as a garden in relationship to and in distinction from other types of built and partially-built environments?⁵ To be in a garden, one can posit, is to be in a certain type of place that is construed in relation to other places, through comparison and distinction, and is created through durable and transient modes of material and social practice. This questioning recognizes the garden not only as a physical place, but as a cultural idea. While the idea of the garden appears to be cross-cultural, the relationships that embody an experience of a garden exist in specific manifestations that are culturally and historically distinct.

Naming a place or space as a garden appears to traverse linguistic, cultural, and historical discontinuities, and yet the experience of a garden cannot be resolved through naming types, periods, or techniques; nor can it be reduced to a simple translation of terms. Even an etymology of Japanese terms that are translated as “garden” does not address the challenge of capturing the density of the word in its living context, or bring to light connotations and allusions that might be in play through the decision to use one term over another. In place of the living richness of garden spaces and meanings, etymology defines the term through relationship to its historical

usage. Rather than examining the ideas and the practices that situate gardens as an experience of place in one time and location, in this usage etymology displaces the basic problem of capturing nuance into the distance of history, without addressing fundamental assumptions about the relationships that position specific people in specific places. Such simple naming obscures actual experiences of gardens and replaces these with an abstraction.

This thesis proposes that in order to capture the fullness of the garden-as-experience, the role of gardens in the cultural behavior of dwelling is critical. This use of the term proposed here deliberately places the experience of being-in-place at the root of the argument, bringing forth Martin Heidegger's phenomenology, and the recognition that we are "always already" in the world. It is important to note here that there are differences between Heidegger's sense of dwelling and the arguments that can be made about dwelling at Murin-an. These are explored in more detail below (see Section III, "Dwelling as Text"). The emphasis on dwelling, rather than house, building, architecture, garden, nature, or even the new terms "built environment" or "designed environment", foregrounds the culturally-bound subjectivity of these terms. What does it mean to dwell, and as part of dwelling, what the garden embrace? This question will guide a thick investigation of Murin-an as it can be situated in culture and "read" through literature.

Reading Murin-an

The proposed textual reading of Murin-an emphasizes the ways in which Yamagata's account of the villa draws upon and situates the villa in literary and historical traditions of seasonal imagery, while also narrating an experience of the garden that would elicit a literary response from the reader/visitor. This reading of the site recognizes that presentation (Yamagata's essay) and interpretation (visiting the garden with Yamagata's essay in mind) exist as a reinforcing dyad, describing intent through the production of established textual forms, that in turn encourage the visitor to interpret experience as textual and intertextual experience, in reference to Japanese literary tradition.

This analysis is both figurative and literal: figurative to the extent that “readings” of site and culture extend textual analysis into domains of experience that are not entirely addressed in linguistic expression. Second, this analysis is literally textual inasmuch as the primary sources and references for the villa are in fact written texts, and the analysis of these written records draws heavily upon the presentation of Murin-an as a literati hermitage, through intertextual reference, linguistic style, and narrative conventions.

These primary literary accounts, descriptions of the villa that are contemporaneous with the completion of the villa and its use as an active residence, include an essay about the garden written by Yamagata Aritomo, the statesman who commissioned the site, statements from Ogawa Jihei, who created the garden, reports from Kuroda Tengai, a contemporaneous art critic and newspaper reporter, and an essay by historian Yumoto Fumihiko. These first-hand accounts make it possible to examine the villa as it was presented in a variety of venues, considering the variations and consistency among the descriptions that are available.

The principle source examined here is *Keika Rinsenchō*, (京華林泉帖, *Scenes and Gardens from the Beautiful Capital*). Published in 1909, and written by Yumoto Fumihiko (湯本文彦, 1843-1921), the description of Murin-an in *Keika Rinsenchō* incorporates an essay written by Yamagata, entitled “Account of the Imperial Gift of Two Pine Saplings” (hereafter “Account of the Imperial Gift”) about the garden, two photographs, and also a brief description of Murin-an written by Yumoto. In total, *Keika Rinsenchō* includes descriptions and photographs of 58 sites in Kyōto, including three of the Imperial household properties, many temples and temple gardens; nearly one-third (18) of the sites described are private residences, thus the inclusion of Murin-an in this guide is not unusual.

There are two additional primary sources, both written by Kuroda Tengai (黒田天外). Kuroda was an art critic and newspaper reporter who wrote several guides for visitors to Kyōto, including his own guide to the gardens of Kyōto, *Kōko Kaishinroku* (江湖快心録, *Record of Pleasant Scenes in and around the Capital*). First published in 1901, and revised in 1907 and

1913 (with the prefix *zoku*, 続, “2nd edition” in 1907, and “*zokuzoku*”, “3rd edition”) the 1907 revised edition contains the most comprehensive description of Murin-an, and is the edition that is used here. In addition, *Ueji: The Genius of Water and Stone* (Shirahata, 2008) includes an interview with Ogawa Jihei conducted by Kuroda in 1910. These primary sources are complemented by subsequent representations of Murin-an, which are typically quite brief. In these descriptions Murin-an is characterized as an early example of a “modern” Japanese garden that blends Western influence and Japanese traditions. Although the emphasis on Murin-an as an original garden captures one character of Yamagata’s stated intent, these descriptions overlook Yamagata’s literary allusions that in turn alters any interpretation of presentation. This altered emphasis obscures the relationship of Murin-an to precedents in Japanese history. Re-introducing these allusions challenge the characterization of Murin-an as modern. In order to justify the modern treatment, the garden is juxtaposed with or placed in distinction to “traditional” Japanese garden practice, indicating parallels or underscoring differences between Murin-an and traditional practice by drawing upon terms and concepts from scholarship about Japanese gardens such as “borrowed scenery”, or placing emphasis upon other accepted conventions that define *the Japanese Garden*.

However, the history of Murin-an complicates this reading, inviting a deeper reading of the villa as an integrated dwelling that draws extensively upon specific precedents in the diverse practice of environmental design in Japan, while also incorporating ideas that emerged from Japan’s contact with Western culture in the 19th century. This alternate reading is reinforced by “Account of the Imperial Gift”, prompting a fundamental reconsideration of the relationship between modernity, Westernization, and Murin-an as one Japanese garden among many different Japanese gardens.

This paper is organized so as to deliberately invert the convention of first presenting the subject of study (Murin-an) in objective terms, a practice that assumes the universal validity of the material over and against experience and interpretation. This paper privileges instead

the experience, the personal narrative that is entirely subjective by beginning with my initial experience of the garden, and the questions raised at that time, and by concluding with Yamagata's subjective description of the garden as his dwelling. This deliberate reversal calls attention to the role of expectation in determining experience and to the culturally conditioned subjectivity of descriptive terms. By beginning with my initial, limited experience of Murin-an as the point of departure, this paper honors the subjective aperture that inaugurates interpretations and questions about the villa. That experience was uncertain, and the disjunction between my initial impressions and accepted (and expected) narratives about Japanese garden experience has engendered an arc of questions that moves through Japanese garden scholarship and the philosophical basis for interpretation, and then continues through an examination of dwelling as a culturally situated physical behavior, before returning to the site as an experiential location to examine Yamagata's narration of place.

The review of scholarship on Japanese gardens examines common modes of analyzing and interpreting gardens in Japan, addressing the impact of this body of work upon my experience, and subsequently locating the current analysis of Murin-an in relation to existing work. This examination also considers the phenomenological and hermeneutic approach that is being taken.

Finally this thesis establishes a vocabulary of description, experience, and interpretation. The term "dwelling" rather than "garden" or "architecture" is established as a starting point. Support for the proposal of dwelling as the focus of analysis is drawn from a synthesis of academic research from fields of landscape theory, anthropology, ethnography, and ethno-psychology and cultural geography, leading to an alternate perception of the relationship between buildings, site, environment, and social behavior, as these relate to Murin-an as a Japanese residence.

The historical moment of late 19th and early 20th century Japan is addressed, providing an overview of the historical environment that encompassed Yamagata Aritomo, Ogawa Jihei VII, and Kyoto when Murin-an was constructed, paying particular attention to the swirls and eddies in the currents of various influences and intentions. Finally, engaging the original literature

on Murin-an presents an alternate conception of the lens that mediates experience. Studying Yamagata's written record of the garden reveals a different garden, offering the possibility of reading the garden as a text.

The garden of pure conception or transcendental meaning cannot be seen in these texts, but a different garden, entangled with the life of the site and the incomplete fabrics of history emerges. Dwelling is made available as the presence of a culturally defined place, and the literary and material references that give rise to the villa emerge in the full thickness of descriptive depth. The garden of desire is lost, replaced by a garden with specific, real, possibilities for meaning.

Asking Questions: Ambiguous Moments and the Search for Meaning

The first time I visited Murin-an it was early summer. It was hot, the humidity of the ancient capital trapped in the still air. On the day of the visit, I remember growing anxiety as I became lost, concern and disorientation compounded by the oppressive weight of the atmosphere as I searched for the entrance. On that day I only had sufficient familiarity with Japanese language and culture to recognize myself as inept and awkward; summer heat meant little more than discomfort. Later, I would come to recognize this season: as summer heat builds after the end of the rainy season, people remark, “Kyōto is a basin. In summer the winds still, and the heat is trapped.” There are countless similar expressions that emerge in the flow of conversation and writing, markers that narrate seasonality, place, and experience, presenting a phenomenological map of what it is to be in Kyōto.

On that first visit, able to follow street signs partway to my destination, I became uncertain about the final turns, and could not find the marker for the entrance to the villa. After passing by the property on adjacent main streets, I finally chose to venture down a narrow alley. I was anxious as I approached what appeared to be the entrance to a private residence. I suspected this was the right place, and would have been at a loss to explain myself if it were not.

As is common when recalling distant encounters, many of the particular details of the visit have been obscured by the sedimentation of intervening experience and subsequent visits to the villa. However, some impressions from that visit remain clear. The first, a visual memory of a scene that is the iconic image of Murin-an: the open central area of the garden, mounded into grassy banks and hillocks divided by murmuring streams, with the forested hills of the Higashiyama range visible through a gap in the woods that edge the garden. Other memories are much less tidy: entering through the narrow gate into a small outdoor space dominated by a large lantern, and then passing through a narrow gate in a wall to enter a seemingly haphazard space, a large tree overhead, buildings on either side, and a large stream immediately ahead. Later, wandering

paths through wooded areas in the southern and western parts of the garden and happening upon a small teahouse and some unexplained, low granite enclosures reinforced a sense that these ambiguous experiences carried a gravity that remained just beyond reach, deepening the mystery of the scene and inviting speculation and interpretation.

In my recollection of that visit, the villa is separated into two separate experiences of place. I do not have a narrative flow of memory that leads me from the street to the veranda or from the veranda to the teahouse. I know that I moved through these spaces, from one place to another in the garden, but they did not leave an impression upon me. As a result of this discontinuity, it is as if I had two experiences of that garden.

I had decided to visit Murin-an expecting a Japanese garden experience. At that time I could not have articulated what I meant by such an experience or how I would measure its success. However, there are conventions that are an enduring and significant strand in the skein of narratives describing the Japanese garden: naturalistic composition, the expression profound meaning and deep harmony with the natural world distilled from elemental human wisdom and realized through master craftsmanship. Deeply preoccupied with the anticipation encouraged by these conventions, I felt that the garden of Murin-an had evaded me that day. I did not have an awakening of my inner self, nor did I experience the profound beauty of the nature. Compared to older and more strikingly exotic temple compounds, Murin-an seemed rather pedestrian. Searching for an abstraction in material form I had separated the world, the oppressive sky, from the garden, and it was inevitable that my expectations did not meet reality. That moment near the granite curbs did not fit into any narrative that I recognized.

Reflecting back on my initial visit to Murin-an—or, to continue the logic of bifurcation, reflecting on the two experiences—I have come to consider the expected and the ambiguous as equally subject to skepticism. This skepticism is not directed toward a judgment of truth or falsehood, intended to validate one experience and dismiss the other as an error of interpretation

or representation. Instead, this skepticism is a simultaneous interrogation of both experiences, in order to consider the conditions that produced them.

Dwelling as Text: Interpretations and Explanations

If we are dealing with a foreign language, the text will already be the object of a grammatical, linguistic interpretation, but that is only a preliminary condition. The real problem of understanding obviously arises when, in the endeavor to understand the content of what is said, the reflective question arises how such an opinion has been reached. For it is clear that this kind of question reveals an alienness of a quite different kind and is ultimately a waiver of shared meaning.

--Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*

Even if we visited the blossoms in spring, or looked at the colored leaves in autumn, if that which we call 'poetry' (uta) did not exist, there would be no one who could discern their fragrance or color

--Fujiwara no Shunzei, *Koraifuteisho*⁶

The two statements presented above, in complete isolation from each other, emerge as a dialogue stitching a bridge of mutual recognition across the “waiver of shared meaning” that Gadamer identifies. The first statement, written by the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer in the mid-20th century, states the problem; the second statement, written by Fujiwara no Shunzei, a noted 12th century Japanese poet, proposes an avenue to “discernment”, an opportunity to develop the shared meaning called for by Gadamer.

The arrangement of these statements is admittedly fanciful, but not entirely so: there is a growing body of scholarship challenging essentialist conceptions of “Japaneseness”, and Japanese area studies have paid careful attention to the issues that are similar to the “alienness” and the “endeavor to understand” identified by Gadamer. These concerns have been deliberately posed for some time, and with pointed concern, as demonstrated by Brian Moeran’s not-quite-rhetorical question “What, anyway, do we mean by *Japan*?”⁷ (*Unwrapping Japan*, 1990; italics in original) The response to this reflective question has been to replace the unitary vision of “Japan” with distinct and delimited research, where the tangled and opaque issues of heterogeneity, individuality, conflicting interests, and contested values can be addressed through

careful attention to the particular, local conditions of history and situation. This concern for detail and reflective questioning will define my approach to framing Murin-an as a text, examining scholarship on Japanese built environments as a whole, but retaining a focus on Murin-an and proposing conclusions only to the extent that they can be recognized in the villa itself, or in descriptions of the villa.

The model of dwelling being proposed places this research in an interstitial position, as current scholarship largely preserves the conceptual separation of buildings and gardens. This challenge of being in-between is amplified by the enduring legacy of dividing Japanese cultural practices between tradition and modernity, a perception that is more recently being bridged by architectural and historical studies.⁸ Studies of Japanese architecture have examined the creation of the architectural profession in Japan at the end of the 19th century, and the debate around how to name this newly emerged profession as it was distinguished from “traditional” building practices, eventually settling upon the neologism *kenchiku*.⁹ While a body of critical, monograph-length examinations of specific trends and individuals is developing in studies of Japanese architecture, especially as it has developed since the 19th century, studies of Japanese gardens continue to appear predominantly in the form of surveys of historical periods or craft techniques, with notable exceptions. Essays on Japanese gardens are regularly included in edited collections addressing gardens and landscape architecture or studies of Japanese culture, with variable results. In “Writing Moods”, James Elkins examines several recent essays about Japanese gardens, with a view that remains sensitive to the differing goals of creative interpretation and historical analysis.¹⁰ Elkins addresses Norris Brock Johnson’s exploration of Tenryūji,¹¹ noting that Johnson introduces “a wide range of sources, among them Gilgamesh, the golden section, Japanese geomancy, zazen meditation, and Matila Ghyka’s number mysticism,” adding that “there is no historical assessment of the compatibility of these sources . . . and on a more analytical level, there is no analysis of the reasons why the author assumes they fit together.” However, Elkins tempers this critique, stating “because the description works, the points [I] have been raising are not faults in his [Johnson’s] argument . . . Something about the garden calls—

“naturally”—for this treatment.” Elkins then turns to several interpretations and explanations of the dry stone garden at Ryōanji, raising similar concerns of historical relevance in analysis of that garden. Ultimately Elkins reaches the conclusion that “purity in our strategies of interpretation and representation is not only unattainable: strictly speaking, it is meaningless What is strange here is the degree to which historical writing on gardens allows that mingling [*of concepts and sources-ed.*] to proceed unchecked.”¹² It is certainly the case that misinterpretation, reinterpretation, and reconfiguration are great sources of creative inspiration, yet it is important that the imperatives of historical research differ, and that it is in the interest of both designers and historians to recognize this difference.

One notable exception to the predominance of survey studies of Japanese gardens is Shoji Yamada’s *Shots in the Dark* that presents a thorough historiography of the *cause célèbre* of Japanese gardens, the dry stone garden at the Zen temple Ryōanji. Yamada follows explanations of the garden, as these shifted from the descriptive phrase “tiger cubs crossing a river”¹³ used at the turn of the 19th century, to the expansive statement now posted on a sign at the temple entrance stating, “this garden directly expresses the *ne plus ultra* of Zen . . . every inch of this garden teaches us the essence of Zen.”¹⁴ Another book, *Themes in the History of Japanese Garden Art*, (Wybe Kuitert, 2002), approaches the history of Japanese gardens with careful attention to the details of historical context and original documents. Kuitert’s focus, however, is on Japanese garden history prior to the early 17th century; thus both Kuitert and Yamada, while they provide an example of the intention of this paper, do not provide direct support for the analysis of Murin-an.

When I reconsider my initial experience of Murin-an, I realize that I entered the garden in a state of anticipation. I did not come to the garden on that day as a blank slate, open to the moment as it is presented. From the standpoint of hermeneutics, this experience is fundamentally human, as Robert Mugerauer writes in *Interpreting Environments*: “to be human is to constantly attempt to understand . . . to interpret things, to project expectations, and to discover whether

and how those expectations are fulfilled.”¹⁵ Images of Japanese gardens are framed through narratives about Japanese gardens in guide-books, treatises on theories or methods of Japanese garden design, or historical records describing garden types and periods. These narratives often emphasize Japanese gardens as a space for expressing and experiencing symbolic, meditative, or representational meanings, predisposing viewers to an experience that calls for explanation.¹⁶

Moving more deeply into narratives of symbolism and meaning in Japanese gardens, one might search for an inner experience that transcends the cultural veil that hides the garden, or attempt to find a biological or scientific foundation for the phenomenological experience. There is a range of scholarship reflecting this view of Japanese gardens, proposing to explain Japanese garden perception through the application of a variety of frameworks. These studies often avoid or obscure questions of site-specific history, cultural context, or the fundamental challenge of translation, especially the problem of capturing the precise cultural meaning of the basic terms of analysis, such as man, garden, nature, and so forth. Appropriate to Yamada’s research on Ryōanji, “Zen” gardens are a frequent subject of scientific and philosophical analysis. The work of Gert van Tonder has applied models from visual cognitive models of perception and neurobiology to produce computer analyses of Japanese gardens, most notably in an analysis of the garden at Ryōanji. Phenomenological and hermeneutic studies have also been presented, as have semiotic analyses of Japanese gardens.¹⁷ While any direct experience is inarguably authentic, and thus an analysis that emerges from the immediate presence of the garden can yield valid and legitimate insights into various fields of scholarly research (as the reference from James Elkins above makes clear), the risk of such research is that experiences in the immediate moment should not be mistaken for the depth and fullness of historical and cultural context. This is particularly important in the case of many sites that have been converted from their original establishment as places for dwelling—whether as residences, palaces, or sites of religious practice—to spaces re-packaged as tourist destinations and/ or historically preserved sites. Unless special attention is paid to the discord between the modes of interaction and experience that informed the organization of the site when it was established and the representation of these sites as tourist

attractions, then the social conventions of dwelling-as-behavior that determined the material form of the dwelling-as-object will be overlooked.¹⁸

Camelia Nakagawara, in “The Japanese Garden for the Mind: The “Bliss” of Paradise Transcended”, draws attention to another significant challenge for scholars entering the field of Japanese garden studies, the absence of citations in works about Japanese gardens.¹⁹ Nakagawara also describes the emphasis upon the symbolic and esoteric quality of Japanese gardens, presenting it as an accepted truth, declaring, “As is usually the case with Japanese traditional arts, information concerning garden techniques and principles has long been inaccessible to the general public. Instead, such knowledge has only been available to the initiated, transmitted mainly through “secret teachings,” literally, and “oral transmission” or *kuden* . . . Beyond this mystification of the subject from within, there are additional hurdles to surpass for the outsider.”²⁰ (emphasis in original) Nakagawara’s essay underscores the very challenge that it seeks to overcome, in that the system of apprenticeship is treated as an initiation to a secret society, rather than a system of bodily study and training,²¹ while the distinction between the creative process of designing and constructing gardens (the subject of secret teachings), and the experiential and interpretive framework that shapes engagement with a garden (the subject being studied here) are conflated. Although creation and interpretation are inextricably linked, they remain two distinct processes that are neither logically reversible, nor immediately interchangeable.²²

My sensitivity to the distinction between creation and interpretation is the product of my interest in Japanese gardens. In the years since that visit, I studied Japanese gardens as an apprentice to a garden designer in Kyōto, training in the “classical” style of bodily work and direct observation. While the impact of that training on this research is imponderable, this examination of experience at Murin-an depends much more heavily upon a close reading of the historical, cultural and textual situation of Murin-an as a Japanese dwelling than I have drawn upon my training in the creative practice of Japanese garden design.²³

The tropes of secret teachings, symbolic meaning, and natural harmony were the foundation for my initial experience of Murin-an. Resolving the failure of understanding that is presented by that experience calls for a closer reading of the site as it was produced in the circumstances of its creation. I approach this reading as a hermeneutic exercise, drawing upon the ideas of the German philosophers Hans-Georg Gadamer and Martin Heidegger.

Returning to the ineffable nature of experience and considering how the horizon of dwelling might be expanded, in “...Poetically Man Dwells...” Heidegger poses the question of dwelling in through poetry: “if the sole form in which poetry exists is literary to start with, then how can human dwelling be understood as based on the poetic?” This question brings into focus the difference between the poetry, and solely linguistic, and the ontological materiality of human dwelling; although poetry brings the mysterious and the profound to our attention, human dwelling is of the world.²⁴ Rather than exploring this sense of dwelling poetically through Heidegger, I will turn to Gadamer and his treatment of art and architecture as it is developed in “The Ontological Foundation of the Occasional and the Decorative”.²⁵ This shift to Gadamer allows an entry for the referential and evocative nature of Japanese poetry that will become apparent in Yamagata’s description of Murin-an.

The point of entry provided by Gadamer differentiates building from art through the “purpose” of the building:

A building is never primarily a work of art. Its purpose, through which it belongs in the context of life, cannot be separated from itself without its losing some of its reality. If it has become merely an object of the aesthetic consciousness, then it has merely a shadowy reality and lives a distorted life only in the degenerate form of an object of interest to tourists, or a subject for photography. The work of art in itself proves to be a pure abstraction.²⁶

The principle that the building is more than a mere “object of aesthetics consciousness,”²⁷ hinges upon the sense of purpose for architecture in the context of life. Gadamer emphasizes the problematic of the occasional as exemplified by, “things such as portraits, poems dedicated to someone.” These “occasional” items are presented in order to critique of the limitation of

art to defined criteria: “If [we] proceed from the point of view that the work of art cannot be understood in terms of ‘aesthetic consciousness’, then many phenomena, which have a marginal importance for modern aesthetics, lose what is problematical about them and, indeed, even move into the centre of an ‘aesthetic’ questioning which is not artificially abbreviated.”²⁸ (quotations in original)

Addressing the portrait-as-picture, as both an occasional object that is directed toward a specific event, and a decorative object that is directed toward aesthetic appreciation, Gadamer proposes that the picture is equipoised: “The essence of the picture stands, as it were, midway between two extremes: these extremes of representation are pure indication (the essence of the sign), and pure representation (the essence of the symbol),” later reiterating that the representative function of a picture “is neither a pure pointing-to-something, nor a pure taking-the-place-of-something.”²⁹ Gadamer then turns to architecture as a “form of art which, from the point of view of the art of experience (Erlebniskunst), [is] peripheral,” arguing that forms of art “whose proper import points beyond them into the totality of a context determined by them and for them,” are central. The principle of dwelling-as-gathering that is presented by Heidegger seems everywhere to underlie the presentation of architecture that Gadamer makes. However, the development that is significant in this analysis of Murin-an is the connection that is made between the art of existence and architecture: “The comprehensive situation of architecture . . . involves a twofold mediation . . . namely, to draw the attention of the viewer to itself, to satisfy his taste, and then to redirect it away from itself to the greater whole of the context of life which it accompanies.”

Gadamer presents architecture “As the art which creates space it both shapes it [space] and leaves it [space] free.”³⁰ In this sense of architecture the similarity between Gadamer and Heidegger becomes apparent, especially in Heidegger’s connection of dwelling and building in “Building Dwelling Thinking”. Heidegger states, “We attain dwelling, so it seems, only by

means of building.”³¹ This relationship between building and dwelling is then turned back upon itself and expanded, however:

1. Building is really dwelling.
2. Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth.
3. Building as dwelling unfolds into the building that cultivates growing thing and the building that erects buildings.³²

There is a distinction between Murin-an, and the type of culturally embedded dwelling that is embodied in that environment, and the exposition of dwelling and building made by both Gadamer and Heidegger that must be emphasized. This distinction is more apparent in Heidegger, who develops the nature of dwelling as building that incorporates growing through an etymology of the Germanic word *bauen* (“building”). Thus, while it is intriguing to observe the similarity between Heidegger and the proposal of Japanese dwelling made here, the conditions that lead to this similarity are fundamentally different.

Another less pronounced, but still important, distinction in both Gadamer and Heidegger is that the building, as object, retains its differentiation from the environment, standing in a relationship that predicates the presence of place upon the existence of building. Turning again to Heidegger, and the role that building plays in the process of differentiating space from place, the example of the bridge is used: “The bridge . . . does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream,” later reiterating, “The locale is not already there before the bridge is. Before the bridge stands, there are of course many spots along the stream that can be occupied by something. One of them proves to be a locale, and does so *because of the bridge*. . . . A locale only comes into existence by virtue of the bridge.”³³ (italics in original) Gadamer also limits the presence of place to the existence of buildings, although his limitation is slightly less explicit. Gadamer states, “Architecture gives shape to space,” in clarifying the proposal that “architecture embraces all other forms of representation. Moreover, to the representational arts . . . it gives their place”³⁴ The primacy given to buildings in these arguments reveals a significant difference in the conception of dwelling as it is proposed in this

thesis, and dwelling as it has been developed by Heidegger and Gadamer. The intention of stating this difference is not to dismiss the phenomenology of dwelling, but rather to clarify the limits of the argument and call forth a significant “waiver of shared meaning” in order to avoid over-interpreting or mis-interpreting Murin-an.

Putting Dwelling in Place: The Physical Site and the Cultural Site

建築と庭園は遊離して考へられるものではなく、両者の相互関係の上に於いて初めて生動か
しうるものであり、而もその位置する周囲の環境も含めて考へなければいけないし、幸い語が
国の伝統は之を實に見事に示していてくれるのであります。

*Architecture and garden cannot be considered as unrelated objects, but as a place that lives and
breathes for the first time as a result of the mutual relationship between both parts; furthermore,
it is imperative to also think about the environment that surrounds the site, and fortunately the
tradition of our country provides a truly excellent example of this.*

--Nishizawa Fumitaka, 建築と庭/Architecture and Gardens³⁵

Being in the world always involves both the material presence of our bodies in the physical environment, and our presence as individuals in social relationships to other people and to society. Dwelling partakes of both the physical presence and the social relationships, establishing the physical place for life and also expressing the life that is lived. Fundamental to the reading of dwelling proposed here is an understanding of the built environment that integrates gardens and architecture into “a place that lives and breathes for the first time as a result of the mutual relationship between both parts,” as Nishizawa writes. Observing the continuity of interior and exterior, or the absence of boundaries between gardens and buildings, has become a trope in descriptions of Japanese architecture.

However Nishizawa’s observation invites a more serious consideration of this condition, suggesting that garden and architecture are not two discrete objects whose boundary has been blurred, but rather emphasizes that unity is a precondition for creating the site as a complete space. Reading Nishizawa’s quote in this context, the emphasis shifts from an achievement of synthesis, to the recognition of a vital necessity for integration. Masao Hayakawa, the author of *The Garden Art of Japan*, is more explicit in describing Japanese houses and gardens as a single unit, writing that a Japanese garden “inevitably comes into being only after a certain area has

been enclosed by a fence or a wall. The enclosed space must consist of both the building and the garden existing as a unity.”³⁶

As it proposed here, the expansion of dwelling from the binary terms of building/landscape, or interior/exterior, is developed in two steps: first, the cultural domain of dwelling is examined in order to model the cultural basis of dwelling. This socially-oriented interpretation of the built environment brings together research from multiple fields of study, including landscape theory, cultural geography, history, anthropology, and ethno-psychology. The examination of primary literature that frames this proposal is followed by an application of this model to a study of Murin-an as a physical site, examining practices of construction and spatial organization. The material form of buildings, gardens and enclosures as they are present at Murin-an are considered in their historical and cultural development.

Situating Site in Culture

Although there is strong material evidence to support the independent construction of covering and enclosure, this material evidence alone is not sufficient to demonstrate the proposal that site was perceived and experience as an integrated social realm; evidence for this social argument is necessarily based upon the study of culture and society. Support for this interpretation of site and dwelling is found in research from multiple fields of study, including anthropology, ethno-psychology, and cultural geography. In addition to evidence from ethnographic and sociological studies of Japanese people, recent work from landscape theorists also questions the duality of interior and exterior, posing figure and ground as terms that are flexible and relational, providing further grounds for an integrated dwelling that extends beyond the physical object of the dwelling.

Situating dualism in the context of feminism and Marxism, landscape theorist and writer Elizabeth K. Meyer calls attention to the positioning of the landscape as the “exotic other”, and identifies the ways in which terms used to describe the natural environment, such as “distorted”

and “awkward” lead to the reduction of the landscape to a “mute” backdrop; Meyer states that the description of landscape as a female other, relative to the male subject of architecture, is not “a natural given, but a conceptual category constructed by society.”³⁷ In addition to identifying the cultural foundation for interpretations of the environment, this critique draws out an important implication of dualism, that the opposing terms must not only be cast in opposition to each other, but must also be cast into the broader binary division of all experience: the other must be exotic, inferior, dark, and so forth, in order for the universalism of the categories to remain valid. Therefore, binary divisions do not only limit the relationship between different terms, they also limit the capacity to develop complex, even contradictory, meanings, once something has been cast into a certain role.

Stanislaus Fung, a landscape architect, theorist, and historian of Chinese gardens and garden texts, presents the Chinese garden as an opportunity to examine alternatives to dualism, proposing a bipolarity based in yin and yang, where “yin is becoming yang, and vice versa,” elaborating this process by stating that “dualism and polarism . . . refer to different ways in which the relationship of binaries may be conceived,”³⁸ Fung’s discussion of yin and yang as interdependent terms is similar to a discussion of “internal relationships” developed by Thomas P. Kasulis, a scholar of comparative philosophy who has published extensively on Japanese thought. Kasulis defines relationships as internal when “the two relatents are intrinsically and necessarily part of each other.”³⁹ In both Fung and Kasulis, the two terms maintain their independent identity, even while they are defined in relationship to one another. It may be useful to consider this relationship between garden and architecture in the negative case: in contrast to an internal relationship, an external relationship is one in which “If the combination dissolves . . . only the relationship is changed; the relatents continue in their independent existence.”⁴⁰ Hayakawa, as quoted earlier, explicitly forecloses the possibility of such independence, as does Nishizawa.

In addition to these discussions drawn from landscape architecture, social geographer and philosopher Augustin Berque presents a critique that is grounded in Japanese philosophy and architecture. As do Meyer and Fung, Berque positions architecture in the realm of culture. Based on a comparative reading of nearly one hundred papers presented during a cooperative research program between French and Japanese architects,⁴¹ Berque situates the challenge to the dichotomy of figure and ground, or architecture and garden, in the realm of architecture, philosophy, and cultural geography. Particularly relevant to the current analysis, Berque examines how Japanese architects “explicitly insist on the morphological continuity between city and country, and on the indecision of figure/ground in Japanese culture.”⁴² Berque also introduces the concept of *habitus* as it has been developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu.⁴³ Bourdieu defines *habitus* as “structured structures predisposed to act as structuring structures.” In the case of the dwelling, although the organization of the site is something that is structured (that is, determined by socio-cultural models), the site also acts as a form that structures social behavior. Note that Bourdieu is using the term structure in an anthropological sense, as *social* structures, rather than an architectural sense. Berque cites as an example the Japanese custom of removing one’s shoes upon entering a house: “the house is not a purely passive object, or formed form . . . it is also a matrix which, by compelling the individual actor to behave in a certain way, ‘actively’ partakes in the ritual process” of entering the house.⁴⁴

Studies of the Japanese sense of self provide a compelling context for examining the relationship between figure and ground, and may illuminate the indecision of figure and ground that Berque observes. The *uchi-soto* model, one of the major models explaining the Japanese sense of self, develops the individual in relationship to the group, relying upon terms which draw upon the physical environment: *uchi* means “interior, inside, home”, whereas *soto* means “exterior, outside, foreign”; in the context of the *uchi-soto* model of the Japanese self, these terms are used to describe the degree of intimacy, and are relationally defined: in the context of speaking to someone who is *soto*, or out-group, *uchi*, or in-group, expands. Two additional terms also used in this model, “*ura*” and “*omote*”, also draw upon the physical world in a similar way, meaning

“behind” and “in front” respectively. Jane Bachnik, an anthropologist who has studied Japanese social relationships, defines this construction of the self as “indexical”, describing the “dynamics of the interactional self” as a focus which “moves between poles, such as *omote/ura* and *uchi/soto* . . . organized on a basis of constant transformations.” The self is defined by “a series of points along a sliding scale for a self which is defined *by* shifting.”⁴⁵ Exploring the dynamics of *uchi/soto* as they are expressed in social practice, Bachnik describes and analyzes the social interactions during the funeral for the head of a family in Nagano, a largely rural prefecture in central Japan. The value of Bachnik’s essay is her attention to the expression of *uchi-soto* social relationships in the context of the dwelling, including diagrams that demonstrate consistent symmetry between social and structural interiority during formal greetings and conversations. This ethnographic data supports the symmetry between the physical and social meanings of *uchi* and *soto*,⁴⁶ and further supports the separations and placement of social barriers.

I will return briefly to the hermeneutic reading of dwelling here, as the problems present in the original development of dwelling can be clarified in light of this reading of Japanese culture. Although the conception of architecture presented in Heidegger and Gadamer challenges the figure-ground distinction as it is discussed above, the distinction is challenged through the expansion of the figure (architecture) to become the defining element, the complete dissolution of ground into figure. However, as argued by Berque above, the relationship between dwelling and environment in Japanese thought is of a different nature altogether: it is not the inverse, the dissolution of the figure into the ground, but instead it is the dissolution of the binary that is proposed by Fung, and also revealed in the model of an indexical self that is described by Bachnik, the self that is “defined by shifting.”

Murin-an: Assembling the Literary Dwelling

Yamagata’s reminiscence of Murin-an published in *Keika Rinsenchō* concludes with the phrase, “I write this as a commemoration of my hermitage.”⁴⁷ In this phrase the word Yamagata uses, 庵 (*iori*, pronounced “*an*” in the name of the villa), defines a certain attitude toward being-in-

the-world, rather than an architectural style. Although Yamagata refers to the villa occasionally in his essay, while reading the passage the residence and other structures recede to a position of near-invisibility, unless the reader recognizes that the buildings are present in the very fabric of the experience described: the views of the garden and the pastimes presented occur in the context of the buildings. The structures, just as the person, enter the description obliquely, as the lens that focuses the literary experience of place.

However, recognizing that *iori* does not define an architectural style, but rather describes the social intent of a dwelling-place, I propose a framework for analyzing Murin-an that emphasizes the history of the separate features of the site, rather than attempting to establish hermitage as a style of architecture.⁴⁸ Through a study of historical Japanese wooden architecture, this analysis develops a narrative that highlights the physical independence of pavilions providing shelter, free-standing walls that establish enclosure, and gates in these walls that simultaneously locate physical and social thresholds. The analysis here proposes that the material features of the site such as walls, gates, walkways, structures, and gardens are subordinated to the site as the basic unit of the dwelling. The immediate and significant impact of this proposal is that the relationship between buildings and gardens is no longer between figure and ground, or between a defining object and its immediate context, but is instead a relationship between two components of a larger whole.

For Murin-an, the implication of this integration is that multiple practices can be identified and localized within the site. This approach to the built environment suggests an alternate history of dwelling that assembles Murin-an from a combination of architectural and garden practices, each of which has its own history and meaning. This disaggregation of architectural practice is made possible by the architecture of the roof in historical wooden construction in Japan.

The Roof as the Foundation of Dwelling

One of the key characteristics of historical wooden architecture in Japan, dating to the introduction of complex architecture from the Asian continent, is the construction of the roof as a self-contained static load that rests upon supporting columns without exerting lateral stress. This construction contrasts with the use of load-bearing walls that provide structural integrity to the roof structure while also support the weight of the roof.⁴⁹ When the roof is dependent upon the walls for structural integrity, the creation of covered space is inextricably linked to the creation of an enclosing structure; in order to retain structural integrity, this supporting wall cannot allow large, or numerous openings and the activities of covering and enclosing become a linked pair in organization of built environments. This enclosed and covered box appears to lead to a conceptual symmetry between covering and the establishment of social thresholds. Conversely, supporting a structurally self-contained roof on columns above an otherwise unencumbered horizontal space preserves the distinction between creating a space that is protected from the sky, or creating a space that is isolated from the surroundings, as two potentially independent actions. As discussed below, by the 8th century C.E., the residences of the elite were enclosed at the perimeter with a wall, and within that bounded space the residence took the form of multiple freestanding structures, interconnected by raised hallways that were covered but not enclosed.

Enclosing Dwelling: Perimeter Walls and Gates

Enclosing walls appear as one of the most enduring features of elite Japanese dwellings, found in archaeological excavations of mansions and palaces dating back to the 5th century, and appearing in literature as early as the 9th century.⁵⁰ By the late Heian period (11-12th c. CE), there is also pictorial evidence to provide a sense for the role that these perimeter walls played during classical Japanese history; several picture scrolls present scenes from palace gardens of the late Heian period, notable among these the *Komakurabe Gyōko Emaki*, *Kitano Tenjin Engi*, and *Nenchū Gyōji Emaki*. These painted scrolls depict a wide variety of social and ceremonial events

being held at mansions and palaces. The depiction of people in the place of the site provides a sense for the role of the outer wall and gate as a principal boundary between the social ex

In addition to images from these scrolls, the literary descriptions of palace life found in the *Tale of Genji* offer a deeper view of the role of walls in architecture of the period. The Tale of Genji, written in the early 11th century by the noblewoman Murasaki Shikibu, describes the life and romances of a fictional prince, named Genji. The dwellings of the aristocracy are the key setting for many of the scenes in The Tale of Genji, and descriptions of these settings include details of room interiors, garden views, and also details of dwellings as they are seen from the exterior, through walls and gates. At one point, Genji happens upon the mansion of a woman he had known, whose fortunes had fallen. Shikibu, in describing the extent of her hardship, notes the “collapsed earthen wall” outside the property. The repair of this wall is noted as one of the signs of Genji’s renewed affection.⁵¹

By the 14th century, the key element of the historical record shifts toward folding-screen illustrations of Kyōto. As is the case with the scrolls from earlier periods, these screens provide a wealth of information about the urban environment, and the organization of individual sites in this urban context.⁵² Relevant to this study of Murin-an, during this period the side-gates of the Heian period developed into an enclosed entry courtyard, with one principle gate in the perimeter wall, and a *genkan* (玄関, entry foyer) in the main building. The combination of enclosed perimeter, an entry gate at the perimeter of the property leading to an entry garden, and the *genkan* at the entry to the structure remains a common feature in the residential architecture of larger Japanese houses, as described by Berque above in his discussion of the custom of removing one’s shoes at the entry (*genkan*) of the house

The Interior of Dwelling: Pavilions in a Garden Setting

Within the interior space of the enclosed site, it is possible to construct the places for habitation as independent pavilions comprised of one or several rooms or galleries, and connect these

pavilions with covered hallways; this organization is in fact apparent in the architecture of the Heian period. This arrangement of open pavilions and corridors produces a sense of intimate contact between structures and gardens. Over time, the separation between individual structures gradually diminished, to the extent that the main residence at Murin-an appears to be a single integrated structure. However, Shigemori's site survey includes details of the interior floor layout, and careful study of this layout reveals that the sukiya at Murin-an is organized as a group of adjoined rooms with tatami mat floors; each room is bounded at the perimeter by shoji screens, and hallways with wooden floors run between the rooms. In addition to this layout of the main structure, this custom of composing the site from a group of semi-independent structures provides a model for the placement of the Western-style structure at the southwest corner of the site as a separate pavilion that is linked to the main structure through the use of a covered corridor.

History: Murin-an in Time and Place

Historically, Murin-an is situated in the cusp of substantial changes, both in Kyōto and in Japan, changes that were characterized at that time as “Western learning” and “cultural enlightenment”, then named “modern” a couple of decades later. Contemporary scholarship recognizes, and continues to grapple with the problems of Westernization and modernity, both as concepts and in the manifestation of changes that are lumped together under these words. Harry Harootunian, a scholar of historical theory and early modern Japanese history, writes that “Among the development of modernities, few examples offer historians a spectacle of greater ambiguity and certainty than Japan’s experience in the twentieth century” in his study of modernity as it was expressed in the experience of “the everyday” in 20th century Japan.⁵³ Carol Gluck, a prolific scholar on modern Japanese history, has proposed that modernity is simultaneously singular and global, naming this global experience “modernity in common”. Gluck addresses the local and particular manifestations of global modernity through an analogy to grammar and language, observing that while the “grammar” of modernity is consistent and shared, the expression of modernity in any given place and time emerges from local and historical conditions particular to that moment.⁵⁴

Although Murin-an cannot be disentangled from literary and structural precedents that draw upon a continuous tradition reaching back to the classical culture of the Heian period (792-1185 C.E.), the historical events that set the immediate stage for Yamagata’s hermitage at Murin-an turn on the fulcrum of 1868. That year, a group of samurai from outlying regions of Japan, who had been fighting to return control of the national government to the Emperor marched into Kyōto and seized the Imperial Palace, with support from sympathetic courtiers. Within three months the Tokugawa shogunate, which had controlled Japan since 1603, ceded control to the insurgents with little resistance. Called the Meiji Ishin (明治維新, “Meiji Renewal”) in Japanese, in English this bloodless coup has been called the Meiji Restoration. The new

government named their capital Tokyo, taking over and renaming the city of Edo that had been the administrative capital of the Tokugawa government. Within one year, an Imperial Palace in the new capital of Tokyo had been established, and after more than one thousand years of nearly uninterrupted Imperial residency in Kyōto, the principle residence of the Emperor was moved to this new palace. In Kyōto, the Imperial transfer had a profound effect on the economy of the city, as demand for the silks, lacquerware, and other fine goods produced by the artisans of the old capital fell. The economy of Kyōto went into a recession through the 1870's and 1880's. The story of the Meiji Restoration addresses Kyōto directly in this way, but in order to situate Kyōto within the movement of Japanese history during the 19th century it will be necessary to take a step back and consider the broad outline of Japanese history during this period.

While 1868 is recognized as the pivotal year in the transformation of 19th century Japanese polity, recent scholarship has expanded the horizon of this transition, recognizing that social changes and pressure had already started building by the early 19th century. Signs that hereditary Tokugawa regime was unable to respond to changing national and global affairs started to appear as early as the 1840's, and during the last decades of the Edo period economic difficulties were exacerbated by the Tokugawa government's mismanagement of the economy, spurring civil unrest. Meanwhile, the political class was well aware of mounting external threats from Europe and America, underscored by the arrival of Commodore Perry's fleet in 1853 and the subsequent opening of trade with Western nations. The loss of public support, combined with organized, armed resistance eventually led to the events of 1868.⁵⁵

The samurai who had seized power were from the domains of Satsuma, at the southern tip of the island of Kyushu, and Chōshū, at the western tip of the island of Honshu [include map if available] Following the restoration, much of the real power remained with the leaders from Satsuma and Chōshū, an oligarchy that coordinated the rapid changes of the Meiji Period, retaining control of the Japanese government into the early 20th century.⁵⁶ Yamagata Aritomo, a member of the Chōshū faction, was among those who had marched into Kyōto in 1868; he would



Figure 2. Detail from Shinsen Doban Kyoto Ichiran no Zu, 1879
Map image courtesy of C.V. Starr East Asian Library, University of California, Berkeley



Figure 3. Detail from Kyotoshigai Zenzu, 1914

Map image courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin

Detail of the Okazaki district in eastern Kyoto, from maps made in 1879 (top) and 1914 (bottom). These are presented in their original orientation, with North to the left of the page. The Kamo River is at the bottom of both images. The “row of pines” that Yamagata refers to in “Account of the Imperial Gift” is visible in the 1879 map as an arc beginning at the center right and following the foot of the Higashiyama hills parallel to the Shirakawa River. In the 1914 image, the Lake Biwa Canal crosses from the upper right, joining the Kamo River after several turns. Murin-an is located at the 45 degree bend in the canal, in the upper right of the map. For full map images, see Appendix 5.

retain significant political influence throughout his life, holding the position of prime minister twice, leading the Japanese invasion of China in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895, and continuing to manipulate the affairs of the government after retiring from public political life at the turn of the 20th century.⁵⁷

Upon taking power, the Meiji government began a deliberate and systematic program of national development, leading to a period known as *bunmei kaika* (文明開化, “Civilization and Enlightenment”).⁵⁸ Western material culture, scholarship, arts, and most significantly, sciences and the physical technology of industrial production were introduced at a pace of modernization that produced a nation capable of facing and defeating the Russian navy only fifty years after Commodore Perry had opened the nation to the world with a handful of gunships. Edo, which had been the military and administrative capitol during the Tokugawa period was renamed Tokyo and remained the administrative and economic center of the new Japanese government. Trade, manufacturing, and the built environment changed first and most dramatically in Tokyo, driven in part by state-building projects of the new regime, and in part by the proximity of foreign merchants and trade centered upon the port of Yokohama.

Kyōto, isolated from the centers of trade, and bereft of economic activity that had been centered upon the Imperial court, went into a period of economic decline during the decades immediately following the Meiji restoration. Although rail lines were extended from Kobe through Osaka to Kyōto by the early 1870’s, the city’s growth was limited by poor trade routes and unreliable water supplies. Various plans to address this by constructing a navigable canal between Kyōto and Lake Biwa, only 12 miles distant but separated from Kyōto by rugged mountains had been proposed as early as 1800.⁵⁹ It was not until after the Meiji Restoration that surveying and technical capacity to build the canal were available. Plans to build the canal began to take shape in the 1870’s. Construction of the Lake Biwa Canal was completed in 1890, significantly informing the urban development of Kyōto. This impact was expressed most visibly on the north-eastern edge of the Kyōto basin, east of the Kamo River and north of Sanjō Street, where Yamagata would build Murin-an. Known as Okazaki, this area had been an autonomous farming village until it was annexed by the city of Kyōto in the 1881. As late as the 1880’s maps reveal that the Okazaki area was largely open, a stretch of rice fields and small country lanes. (see Figures 2 and 3, page 38) The Lake Biwa Canal emerged from the mountains just north of Sanjō Street, at the northern edge of urban development at that time.

The completion of the canal swayed the national government to locate the Fourth National Industrial Exposition in Kyōto. The site chosen was a large plot of farmland, nestled in a right-angle bend in the Lake Biwa Canal at the southern edge of the Okazaki district. Following the exposition, this area of land was developed with the Kyōto Imperial Museum, the Kyōto Prefectural Library, a zoo, and other public venues. Heian Jingū, a Shintō shrine built to commemorate the 1100th anniversary of the founding of Kyōto, was also dedicated in 1895.

In the area directly against the mountains where the canal emerged from its final tunnel and into the Kyōto basin, the Zen temple of Nanzenji had significant landholdings. At the same time that government projects were spurring public development in Okazaki, Nanzenji began to sell much of the land it held at the edge of the Okazaki district.⁶⁰ This included the property that would become Murin-an, as well as land that would be developed in a real-estate boom for elite villas in the Okazaki district, as the plentiful water supplied by the Lake Biwa canal made it possible to develop the Okazaki area during the early 20th century. The patrons who built these estates were the political, economic and industrial leaders of the Meiji period, including the Sumitomo clan, the Nomura family, and other prominent industrialists, who followed Yamagata's lead in hiring Ogawa to create the gardens for their estates, even in some cases entrusting him with oversight of the buildings and the gardens. At Murin-an, Yamagata had arranged to have water introduced from the canal to supply the streams and generous cascades. Ogawa also brought water from the canal into many of these other estate gardens, and the mastery of cascades, streams, and ponds is one of the hallmarks of Ogawa's garden style. The impacts of the Lake Biwa Canal thus extend beyond its importance as a major achievement in civil engineering and a pivotal moment in urban environmental history, and include influencing the emergence of a style of built environment that has expressed the character of the Meiji period.⁶¹

Yamagata Aritomo, Statesman and Literati

Yamagata Aritomo was born in the domain Hagi, in the Chōshū domain, in 1838. Born into a low-ranking samurai family,⁶² the details of Yamagata's early childhood are not clear, but it

is known that his father had a reputation as an able poet. As a samurai, Yamagata received an education in Confucian classics, poetry, and martial arts. In 1858, Yamagata was working as an attendant to the son of a higher-ranking family, and it is through this service that he came into contact with the group of Chōshū samurai who would go on to form the oligarchy of the Meiji era. Hackett characterizes Yamagata's role in the Meiji restoration as that of a supporter, rather than as a principal planner.⁶³ After the restoration, Yamagata traveled to Europe for a year, and upon his return was appointed to the post of assistant vice-minister of military affairs, in part because of his demonstrated competence at the time of the restoration, in part through clan-based political ties, and in part due to his military studies in Europe. Although he accepted this appointment with reservations, by late 1878, at the age of 40, Yamagata would establish a General Staff of the army, placing the army outside of direct government control and government politics, and take the post of chief of the General Staff.⁶⁴ From his position as the leader of the Japanese army, Yamagata developed a group of supporters that he would be able to rely upon for support to achieve his political goals for the remainder of his life.⁶⁵ Yamagata would eventually also rise through the government also, holding the post of prime minister twice, from 1889 to 1891, and from 1898-1900. In addition, as the field marshal of the Japanese army during the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-1895, Yamagata firmly established his capacity as a military commander. Although he retired from politics in 1901 Yamagata continued to exercise great influence from behind the scenes, including hosting a meeting at Murin-an in 1903, known as the "Murin-an Conference," that laid out the policy that eventually led to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905⁶⁶.

The demands of his political and military career were not Yamagata's sole interest, however; Yamagata maintained an interest in calligraphy and poetry throughout his life, and also took an interest in tea. Yet among these interests, it is said that garden design was his chief pleasure. During his career Yamagata had 8 primary residences or villas constructed; of these, in addition to the garden of the third Murin-an being studied here, Yamagata devoted particular attention to the construction of the garden at Chinzan-sō, (椿山莊; located in Mejiro, Tokyo, built 1878), and

Koki-an (古稀庵; located in Odawara, Kanagawa Prefecture, built 1907), demonstrating not only an enduring interest, but also his capacity to direct the successful execution of a garden design.

Among these villas, prior to building the Murin-an that is the subject of this study, Yamagata had built a similar hermitage in the mountains near his home town in 1867, and then purchased a property in the center of Kyoto in 1891 which he had also named Murin-an. Thus, the current Murin-an is also occasionally referred to as “the third Murin-an”. There is uncertainty about the precise date when Yamagata purchased the land in eastern Kyōto for the third Murin-an, but many sources agree that the villa was constructed between 1894 and 1896. Yamagata’s involvement in the construction was interrupted when he was called to serve as field marshal in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, but it is regarded that Yamagata’s influence is strongly expressed in the garden⁶⁷.

In public life, Yamagata was an advocate for creating a modern Japanese nation capable of standing on equal footing with European powers. This public image is reinforced by Yamagata’s choice of the architect Katayama Toshinori for the design of his official residence in Tokyo. Katayama, as one of the first graduates of the newly established academic program in architecture at Tokyo Imperial University, had studied Western architecture under Josiah Conder, and is better remembered for being the lead architect for the Akasaka Detached Palace, a major achievement of Western-style architecture of the Meiji period, and also a commission that Yamagata helped Katayama secure.⁶⁸

Murin-an is often described as a “modern” Japanese garden, but under scrutiny this description becomes increasingly difficult to qualify with any precision, and in the context of Yamagata’s essay the appeal to a new and original concept of the garden faces a profound challenge. This conclusion is further complicated by Yamagata’s own stated intention (in the very same essay) of breaking with past conventions of garden design and introducing a new and “bright” style at Murin-an. These two positions are juxtaposed so as to force the very question of late 19th and early 20th century modernity for the Japanese political and industrial elite. The nuance of

this interplay between different forces has been captured in Christine Guth's in-depth study of Masuda Takashi. Masuda was the head of the Mitsui business empire, and was also an avid student of the way tea and a collector of Japanese arts. While there does not appear to be a substantial direct relationship between Masuda and Yamagata, thus calling for reservation in drawing too close a comparison, they were certainly colleagues in the push toward creating the industrial and military infrastructure of early 20th century Japan. Guth writes, "Masuda and his peers' taste in art challenges the widespread assumption that the fall of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1867 irrevocably changed Japan's cultural values," continuing, "Meiji Japan, despite its aura of modernity, remained a deeply conservative society with values rooted in those that had prevailed during the 250 years of feudal rule. Meiji Japan's attitude toward its cultural heritage was very complex."⁶⁹ This complexity is revealed at Murin-an, where the expressed intention of creating a new type of garden, along with Yamagata's work in the political and military arenas can be contrasted with the references to classical literature and the Japanese tradition of the literati hermitage that are so strikingly apparent in "Account of the Imperial Gift" on Murin-an.

Ogawa Jihei VII: Master of the Meiji Period Garden

Ogawa Jihei VII (小川治兵衛, 1860-1933), was born in Nagaokakyō, at the southwestern edge of Kyōto, as the second son of Yamamoto Tōgorō (山本藤五郎). Ogawa's childhood name was Yamamoto Gen-no-suke (山本源之助), but as the second son he would not inherit the family estate. Thus, in 1877, at age 17, he married Mitsu, the fourth daughter of the gardener Ogawa Jihei VI, and was adopted into the Ogawa family through marriage. Two years later his adoptive father died, and at the age of 19 Gen-no-suke assumed the position of head of the Ogawa household, taking the name of Ogawa Jihei VII. Ogawa is also widely known through the trade name Ueji (植治) he took for himself by combining the character "ue" (植, "to plant"), with the first character of his personal name, "ji" (治). The Ogawa business had been established in 1751 by Ogawa Jihei I, and was firmly established when Ogawa Jihei VII assumed leadership.

However, in spite of the long record of establishment, it appears that Ogawa struggled through the economic recession in Kyōto during the 1870's and 1880's.

Although many of Ogawa's finished gardens remain, there is comparatively little record of Ogawa as an individual. One significant source is a 1910 interview with Kuroda Tengai, an art critic and author. In this interview Ogawa stated that his early studies of garden design had been the principles of *tenchijin* (天地人, "heaven-earth-man") and *gogyōseki* (五行石, "stones of the five elements"), also stating that, "Still, at thirty-four or thirty-five, I was climbing trees with scissors and pruning."⁷⁰ The principles of *tenchijin* and *gogyōseki* that Ogawa mentioned refer to conceptual schemes that have their origin in classical Chinese thought; *tenchijin* is the conceptual triad of heaven-earth-man believed to be the foundation for all things. It is not clear when the concept of *tenchijin* was integrated into garden practice, but principles of geomancy and Chinese concepts such as *tenchijin* were a common element in Heian period environmental design.

The history of *gogyōseki* as a principle in garden design is described by Isao Yoshikawa, in the dictionary of gardening terms, as something that was adapted from the older idea of *gogyō*, or five elements, by Akisatō Ritō in his early 19th century treatise *Ishigumi Sonoo Yaegaki Den* (石組園生八重垣伝, *Treatise on Stone Groups and Garden Fences*)⁷¹. *Gogyō* is another ancient Chinese cosmology, explaining all events as the interaction between the five elements of earth, metal, water, wood, and fire. Yoshikawa describes Akisatō's adaptation of this principle to the practice of setting stone as "not realistic", or "not practical" ("現実的ではない"), perhaps emphasizing in part a critique of Akisatō's abstraction, and in part suggesting that the principle of *gogyōseki* is only indirectly related to garden practice.

Ogawa's mention of these practices suggests that his early training was similar to the type of Japanese garden practice described by Josiah Conder in 1893. Josiah Conder was the first professor of architecture at the Imperial University of Tokyo, and the author of the first book on Japanese gardens to appear in English (*Japanese Gardens*, 1893). Conder relied entirely upon Edo period accounts for his description of Japanese gardens, including a translation and

presentation of Akisatō's concept of *gogyōseki*.⁷² Although Ogawa cited these as references, it is unlikely that Ogawa took the same limited view of garden rules as Conder; to wit, Loraine Kuck presents a disarmingly blunt critique of Conder, perhaps influenced by her conversations with Shigemori Mirei. Kuck writes, "Conder made his greatest mistake in giving a mandatory flavor to the rules and conventions which he set down . . . Japanese gardeners never took this [the rules-ed.] very seriously. Indeed, a statement in one of the Secret Books makes this amply clear. . . . 'They [the rules] are simply . . . general principles . . . these laws are not fixed and immutable.'" ⁷³ If this were the attitude that Ogawa took in his work, it seems likely that the garden at Murin-an is indeed a combination of Yamagata's vision and Ogawa's skill.

The challenges of qualifying the description of Ogawa's work as "modern" and determining authorial control in his work remain unresolved, as subsequent descriptions of the Ogawa's work demonstrate. Some scholars cite Ogawa's use of water, his skill at placing stones, and his free use of plants in gardens as hallmarks of his style. However, other scholars suggest that Ogawa played the role of a coordinator, or even translate descriptions of Ogawa as an *uekiya* (植木屋, a common word for a gardener, landscape company, or garden designer) in a sense that could be equated with the pejorative sense of "gardener" or "landscaper" in English (these form an reasonable parallel, as neither the Japanese nor the English are necessarily pejorative, but may be used in a pejorative sense).⁷⁴ In any case, characterizations of Ogawa in one way or another do not address the difficulty that is inherent in these terms, and further examination of the written record of Murin-an, shuttling between "Account of the Imperial Gift", contemporaneous descriptions, and subsequent analyses of Murin-an do not lead to certainty, but rather lead to a rich state of polyvalence for the villa.

Writing the Garden, Reading the Garden

In November of 1901 Marquis Yamagata stepped down from his position as prime minister, and went gracefully to Kyōto where he retired to the hermitage Murin-an. Thereafter, he kept literature as his companion and ceased searching for the scenery of different places. He passed the time with close friends, having refined dinners in the evenings. Reflecting the nature of his elegant manners, the marquis spends his free time caring for the grounds of his villa.

--Kuroda Tengai, *Zoku Kōkokaishinroku*, 1907⁷⁵

Genji directed the caretaker and some of his new retainers to look after what needed doing . . . He had the garden near the house put right . . . sauntering about gracefully in his gown, ordering improvements to the stream that emerged from beneath the eastern bridgeway.

--Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, early 11th century⁷⁶

Gardens are only partially disclosed in their objective presence: an experience of a garden as a particular place, with particular meanings, is brought to fullness when the viewer recognizes the garden as such through particular associations. This fullness is not something that can be determined in the absence of the cultural and social context. The anthropologist Clifford Geertz, when he presented thick description as an ethnographic method asserted that, “To be human here is not to be Everyman; it is to be a particular kind of man, and of course men differ,” continuing to state the imperative that, “[We] must, in short, descend into detail, past the misleading tags, past the metaphysical types, past the empty similarities to grasp firmly the essential character not only of the various cultures but the various sorts of individuals within each culture, if [we] wish to encounter humanity face-to-face.”⁷⁷ Taken in the context of garden studies, the “face-to-face” encounter with a garden that remains undisclosed is the life of the garden being studied as an individual—the memory, or the biography (depending upon how it is written) of *this* garden, as one, singular place- especially in the case of Japanese gardens: “The Japanese Garden” is everywhere, but only as an abstraction; Murin-an exists in the transience of time and place. Fortunately, in the case of Murin-an, there are extensive records, including maps of the Okazaki district as it was transformed during the progress of the Meiji period, garden photographs,

interviews with Ogawa, descriptions of the garden in two separate guides to the sights of Kyōto, and ultimately, an essay about the hermitage written by Yamagata. (see Appendices 1 and 2) Such an extensive collection of records is uncommon,⁷⁸ and facilitates an examination of Murin-an that can “descend into the details,” necessary to bring the garden to life.

As mentioned in the discussion of Yamagata, he had a particular interest in literature and gardens, fashioning himself as a literary man, and demonstrating his ability in garden design at his other villas in Mejiro and Odawara. Although there is no evidence to demonstrate conclusively that “Account of the Imperial Gift” is a deliberately posed presentation of Murin-an, the public context of the work makes a considerable case for Yamagata’s intentionality in selecting phrasing and allusion.⁷⁹ Yamagata’s decision to write in a literary style that was archaic even when it was published reinforces the case for the essay as a deliberately considered representation of the garden.⁸⁰ Taking these factors into account, the essay provides a special window into Yamagata’s intention and perception of the garden.

The “Account of the Imperial Gift”, draws upon two distinct precedents in from Japanese literature. The first line is a quotation from a poem written in *kanbun* (漢文, Chinese script as written by Japanese scholars), and the remainder of the essay, is written in *hiragana*, using the vocabulary and grammar of classical Japanese.⁸¹ The use of *kanbun* aligns Yamagata with formal public writing associated with the conventionally masculine domains of government and scholarship, while the use of *hiragana* and the allusive nature of the remainder of the text align Yamagata with “native” Japanese poetry literature of the Heian period, texts such as the *Tale of Genji*, and *Makura Sōshi*, both written by women during the 11th century. Both of these choices made by Yamagata introduce precedents with regard to dwelling, architecture, and gardens, and inform the possibilities for framing and interpreting experience at Murin-an.

The essay begins with two lines of Chinese verse written by the famous scholar Rai San’yō (頼山陽, 1780-1832), an Edo period *bunjin* (文人, “literary man” or “literati”) who built a hermitage in Kyōto in the early 19th century. There is a long tradition of hermitage in Japanese

history and literature, thus there are many examples of dwellings built for a poet-recluse that could be compared to Murin-an.⁸² Among these, there are two hermitages that warrant detailed consideration. First is the hermitage of Rai San'yō that Yamagata evokes as a precedent; the second is the Shisendō, in the mountains near Ginkakuji, to the northeast of Murin-an.

The poem by Rai San'yō that Yamagata quotes, entitled “Journey to Nanzenji”, is written in a Chinese style of poetry of four lines, each seven characters long; Yamagata includes the last two lines (for San'yō's entire verse, with translation, see Appendix 3). Yamagata's selection of this poem as a quotation brings multiple layers of reference to the essay. As an immediate reference, the location that Yamagata selected for Murin-an is at the corner of the road to Nanzenji that San'yō describes (see Figure 2, page 38); thus Yamagata utilizes a technique of evoking the character of a place through a reference to poetry common in Japanese literature. In addition, San'yō was part of a movement that favored adapting *kanbun* to the expression of “the emotions and thoughts of contemporary, everyday life.”⁸³ Read in its entirety, “Journey to Nanzenji” also underscores the extent to which the Okazaki district was still considered countryside during the early 19th century. Thus, in principle at least, Yamagata is underscoring that his hermitage is isolated, in keeping with the name “hermitage with no neighbors”.

Rai San'yō was a neo-Confucian scholar who wrote *kanbun*,⁸⁴ most famous for *The Unofficial History of Japan*, a record of the history of the military clans of Japan (日本外史, *Nihon Gaishi*, completed 1826 and published posthumously).⁸⁵ San'yō spent the last years of his life in a hermitage he had built on the bank of the Kamo River, just north of Marutamachi Street. Similar to Yamagata's work on his own garden, San'yō is also said to have built the garden for his retreat. This hermitage, named “The Retreat of Purple Mountains and Crystal Streams” (山紫水明処, *Sanshi Suimeisho*), still exists as a historical site, and in *100 Kyoto Gardens* Kuck remarks, “In keeping with his spirit . . . he designed this small garden himself, discarding all conventions which hemmed in garden art at the time. It is, therefore, an example of the free-style, or literary men's style of garden which had a certain vogue at this time and later.”⁸⁶ It is

interesting to note that Kuck parallels this description of Rai San'yō's garden in her subsequent description of Ogawa Jihei in *The Art of Japanese Gardens*, where she writes, “[Ogawa] threw off the conventions and rules that had hampered his craft for so long.”⁸⁷

In the lineage of scholarly retreats, there is another, earlier hermitage in the hills northeast of Kyōto, built by Ishikawa Jōzan (石川丈山, 1583-1672), also a scholar of Chinese letters. Although the proper name of this hermitage is Ōtotsuka (凹凸窠, Abode of Dips and Rises, built in 1636), it is more commonly known as Shisendō (詩仙堂, Hall of the Poetry Immortals), named for the portraits of 36 Chinese poets that were hung in the main hall. As with San'yō and Yamagata, Jōzan took an active interest in gardening, also creating the idiosyncratic gardens of his hermitage himself. San'yō and Jōzan are notable because the gardens they built still remain,⁸⁸ providing a context for the comparative case of difference that is presented as one of the most consistent themes in the description of Murin-an, beginning with *Keika Rinsenchō* and *Zoku Kōkokaishinroku*, and continuing to the present. In assessing the comparative concept of difference, the implicit connection that is drawn between San'yō and Ogawa is especially interesting, as it suggests that difference, as a comparative descriptor has historical precedent, especially in the literary hermitage that Yamagata was evoking.

Immediately following the introductory lines, Yamagata turns to a description of the garden layout.⁸⁹ Although exact locations are not provided, the character of the garden and the elements included are described. The extent to which Yamagata praises his own garden is notable; he draws attention to the sound of the waterfall as “even better than one might find in the depths of the pure mountains,” the choice of “novel” flowers, and the “interesting” arrangement of the boulders. In this description of the garden there is also an implicit assertion that the garden has been built to Yamagata's direction. As with Rai San'yō, and Ishikawa Jōzan, and the image of Genji in his fictional world of the early 11th century gracefully “ordering improvements to the stream”⁹⁰ quoted above, Yamagata is enacting a culturally established role of the sophisticated aristocrat engaging in garden design as an elegant and refined art.

The third paragraph of “account” is similar to the opening in making an allusion to Japanese literary tradition, in this case *The Pillow Book* (枕草子, Makura Sōshi), written by Sei Shōnagon in the late 10th century. Yamagata’s description of the seasonal views follows the opening passage of *The Pillow Book*, not only in content but also in style. (See Appendix 4 for a comparison of these two texts)

The seasonal imagery of Japanese poetry, arts, and literature emerged and were formalized during the late Heian period through a group of major literary works. In *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons*, Haruo Shirane references *The Tale of Genji*, stating that “a fundamental grasp of *The Tale of Genji* requires an understanding of the literary implications of a wide variety of plants, flowers, atmospheric conditions, and celestial bodies,”⁹¹ as these natural markers present the setting for each passage of the tale. Shirane coins the phrase “secondary nature” to describe this natural imagery, in order to underscore his argument that what is being presented is an image of nature that has been filtered through the cultural expectations of aristocratic women of the Heian period. As a concept, nature resists any stable definition, and in the case of the worldview of the Heian aristocracy, Shirane states that “nature” was “pervasive both psychologically and spatially, but it was carefully reconstructed in gardens, or visually and textually depicted in paintings.”⁹² This alternate reading of “nature” that is proposed by Shirane is crucially important in understanding “Account of the Imperial Gift”, and also in recognizing the importance of the classical Japanese tradition in the experience of the garden at Murin-an.

As a close reading of “Account of the Imperial Gift” reveals, the practice of giving shape to experience extends the idea of dwelling beyond the immediate form of the building, and returns to (and expands) the conception of dwelling developed by Heidegger and Gadamer. Although Heidegger incorporates cultivating the environment into dwelling, the cultivation present here is not a physical act of building or establishing an environment. The dwelling presented is an act of poetic construction, in the sense of a “carefully reconstructed” secondary nature presented by Shirane. In this sense, the poetic writing of Murin-an, more closely resembles the “equipoise”

that Gadamer develops for architecture, pointing at dwelling while also directing the viewer's attention to the larger world: "The nature of decoration consists in performing that two-sided mediation; namely to draw the attention of the viewer to itself, to satisfy [his] taste, and then to redirect it [the viewer's attention] away from itself to the greater whole of the context of life which it accompanies."⁹³

Finally, Yamagata concludes the essay by describing the gift of two pine saplings he received from the emperor, and recording the exchange of poetry on that occasion. This exchange returns the reader once again to *The Tale of Genji*, where the principal mode of communication on personal topics is the exchange of poetry suitable to the moment. This use of poetry once again links Yamagata and the garden at Murin-an with the classical Japanese tradition, as the means by which the writer is able to "express emotions and thoughts indirectly, elegantly, and politely."⁹⁴

Descriptions of Murin-an

"Account of the Imperial Gift" is a deeply personal description of Murin-an. Written by Yamagata Aritomo, the owner of the villa and the man who is credited with playing a key role in the design and layout of the garden, it is essential as a source for reading the garden. His essay might be thought of as the first description of the garden. In the case of the literature available for review, this is true temporally; however, even if a prior description of the garden is found, the garden itself does not pre-date Yamagata's influence in its creation, and early coverage of the garden would not have been published without Yamagata's permission for access and involvement in describing the scene and intention. There are two additional documents available from the immediate period when Murin-an was constructed, *Keika Rinsenchō* and *Zoku Kōko Kaishinroku*. Both of these books are guides to the sights and scenes of Kyōto, and as such they are part of a genre of travel-guide writing that was well-established in Japan by the end of the 17th century.⁹⁵

Keika Rinsencho, “A Guide to the Gardens of the Beautiful Capital”, incorporates descriptions of 58 palaces, temples, and residences, including the Sentō Palace, Shūgakuin Detached Palace, and Katsura Detached Palace; of these, roughly one-third were private residences, including several of Ogawa’s early clients. The book was compiled by Yumoto Fumihiko (1843-1921), a scholar at the Kyōto Imperial Museum who had written *The History of Heian*, a 60-volume history of Kyōto. Yumoto wrote a preface to “Account of the Imperial Gift” that provides a description of the buildings, the features of the garden, and the views from the site, in addition to a “critical” appraisal of the garden that largely echoes Yamagata’s own comments, to the extent that Yumoto states that “the key qualities of the garden are captured in the essay written by the marquis.” Yumoto makes the comparative statement that “The garden is made with great skill in harmony with nature, unlike other gardens of Kyōto, but it does this without a feeling of being odd.”⁹⁶

Zoku Kōkokaishinroku, as the title states, is a second edition of a guide written by Kuroda Tengai in 1901. As an art critic and newspaper reporter, Kuroda had written about Murin-an both during its construction and upon its completion, and had also interviewed both Yamagata and Ogawa. Kuroda thus had unusual access to the intent of the garden. However, although the language used is quite different, Kuroda’s comments are surprisingly similar to Yumoto’s comments: “In some way, there is a natural atmosphere that is different from other gardens, it is a garden that is in a class of its own.”

This comparative characterization of the garden at Murin-an as “different” and “fresh”, is problematic at the point of original use. The qualities that would give these terms specific meaning are not specified. Further, the degree to which both *Keika Rinsencho* and *Zoku Kōko Kaishinroku* mimic Yamagata’s statements about his garden give the appearance that the description is not a critical assessment, but is rather an assertion that is being accepted. Following these two guides, subsequent description and analysis of the garden at Murin-an often appears to be predicated on the basis that Yamagata’s statements express a truth that must be validated, rather than intention that might investigated. In a manner similar to the discussion of

Ryōanji detailed by Shoji Yamada in *Shots in the Dark*, it seems that analyses of Murin-an have started with the conclusion that the garden is innovative, and then found the necessary means to justify this conclusion.⁹⁷

This trend has continued throughout descriptions of Murin-an. Seiko Goto, whose essay about Murin-an is the only extensive essay about any of Ogawa Jihei's gardens, is challenged to reach a conclusion about Murin-an, writing, "Although Murin-an is considered a traditional Japanese garden by the people of the twenty-first century, we can see from the description above that its design was recognized as a new style from the time of its creation."⁹⁸ In this quote, "the description above" references the account of Murin-an in *Keika Rinsencho*.

The earliest accounts of Ogawa's work in English, written by Loraine Kuck and Samuel Newsom, do not describe Murin-an, but rather describe other gardens built by Ogawa and characterize his work as "modern", a shift from the descriptions of Murin-an that used terms like "fresh" and "different", but not modern. While it might be possible to derive this reading from the texts, it is equally possible that Ogawa Jihei's gardens came to be described as modern in a political context (in the early 1930's) when there was a significant vogue for Japan in America.

Turning to the early presentation of Ogawa's work to an overseas audience, the first description written in English, and then the third, were written by Loraine Kuck, first in *100 Kyoto Gardens* (1937), and then in a book that was published in 1941, but written prior to this, *The Art of Japanese Gardens*. Kuck had been engaged to describe Japanese gardens in preparation for a tour of Japan made by The Garden Club of America in 1935.⁹⁹ In the photographic record of this tour, there are images of American guests wearing formal dresses and suits, and Japanese hosts in kimono or suits at various banquets, parades, and garden parties, all presented with great fanfare. Several gardens built by Ogawa Jihei were among those visited during the tour.¹⁰⁰

In her 1937 guidebook Loraine Kuck lists three of Ogawa Jihei's private gardens that were accessible to the public (the Nomura, Inabata, and Ichida residences), and also describes the

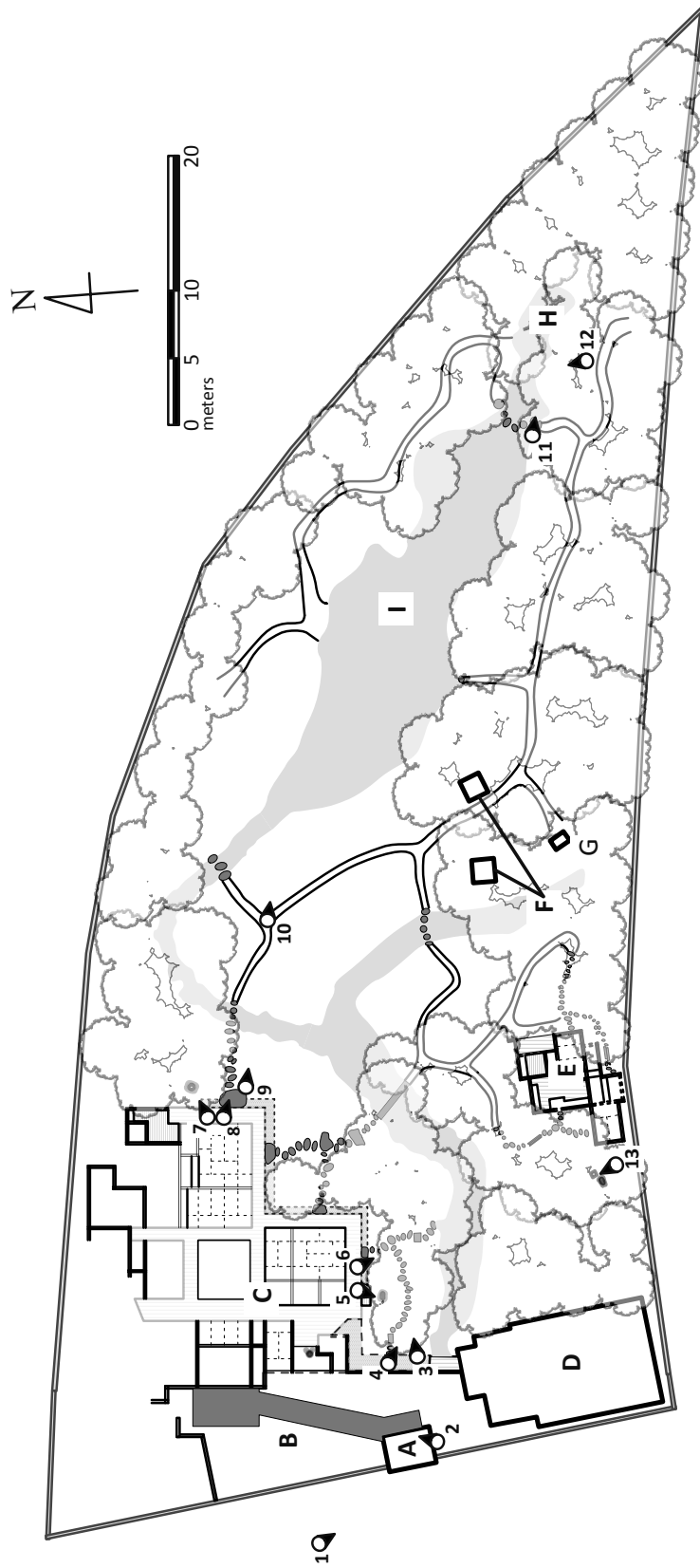
garden at the Miyako Hotel created by Ogawa. Kuck places these gardens in a section entitled “Modern Gardens and Nanzenji Temple.” The descriptions of these garden in *100 Kyoto Gardens* do not offer any insight into what this might mean in practical terms, but in *The Art of Japanese Gardens* (Kuck, 1941) goes into greater detail, writing that Ogawa “threw off the conventions and rules which had hampered his craft for so long, but being a true son of Kyoto, he never became deeply interested in the new “foreign style” gardens, never copied them, and was never directly influenced by them,” continuing that the “new estates usually have . . . a wide lawn, not simply to copy the Western lawn but as a place where large garden parties may be held.”¹⁰¹

Samuel Newsom’s 1939 description of the garden at the Ichida residence leads with the subtitle “An Example of a Modern Japanese Landscape.” The garden is included in a photographic supplement that presents many gardens throughout Japan, with a noted emphasis on daimyō gardens. Throughout the supplement the format of presentation is consistent, providing a prefatory overview followed by images and detailed descriptions of each image. Newsom provides several paragraphs meant to characterize how these gardens, “done in a new style,” differ from previous landscapes, commenting that lawn has been “introduced”, while noting the abundance of water used in the garden as a characteristic of “modern” gardens.¹⁰² Although Newsom’s prefatory remarks declare that for “this and other similar gardens . . . [their] spirit is entirely different from those previously studied” (note here the similarity to comments from Kuroda and Yumoto), in his description of the scenes photographed he does not vary substantially from his description of other Japanese gardens that he describes. Thus, his assertion that Ogawa is producing “modern” gardens goes largely unqualified in stylistic terms, instead relying upon examples such as the introduction of lawn or the unusual use of plants. With regard to lawns, which most often appear as evidence of Western influence on Ogawa’s work, it is remarkable to note that similar lawns—for example, those at Katsura Detached Palace—are overlooked in this comparison. While it is possible to cite precedents for many of the “innovations” found in Ogawa’s gardens, such a list does not resolve how Ogawa’s work came to be perceived as modern.

The Visual Site: Site Plan and Plates

This thesis emphasizes the textual dwelling, as it is mediated by and narrated through cultural, historical, and literary conventions. This focus brings non-visual experiences of place to the fore, especially focusing on the literary-aesthetic experience of place as it is brought into active dwelling through memory and association. The textual reading of site and the physical dwelling are coeval: although the literary presence of dwelling may not be recognized in an individual experience of place, the recognition of this literary presence is not predicated upon a specific organization of the site or the garden.

The plates presented here are intended to provide the reader with a sense of the physical site, as it is experienced in place. I present these without description, limiting my interpretation of the site to choices made in the process of shooting photographs of the site and selecting which images to present.



MURIN-AN
KUSAKAWA-CHO, KYOTO, JAPAN

ILLUSTRATION M. BOURNE

Photograph location
and direction of view,
numbered by plate

- A. Entry gate
- B. Entry Garden
- C. Main Residence (sukiya)
- D. Western-style Reception Hall
- E. Teahouse
- F. Enclosures for Imperial Pines
- G. Stela Bearing Inscription on Pines
- H. Waterfall
- I. Pond and Streams





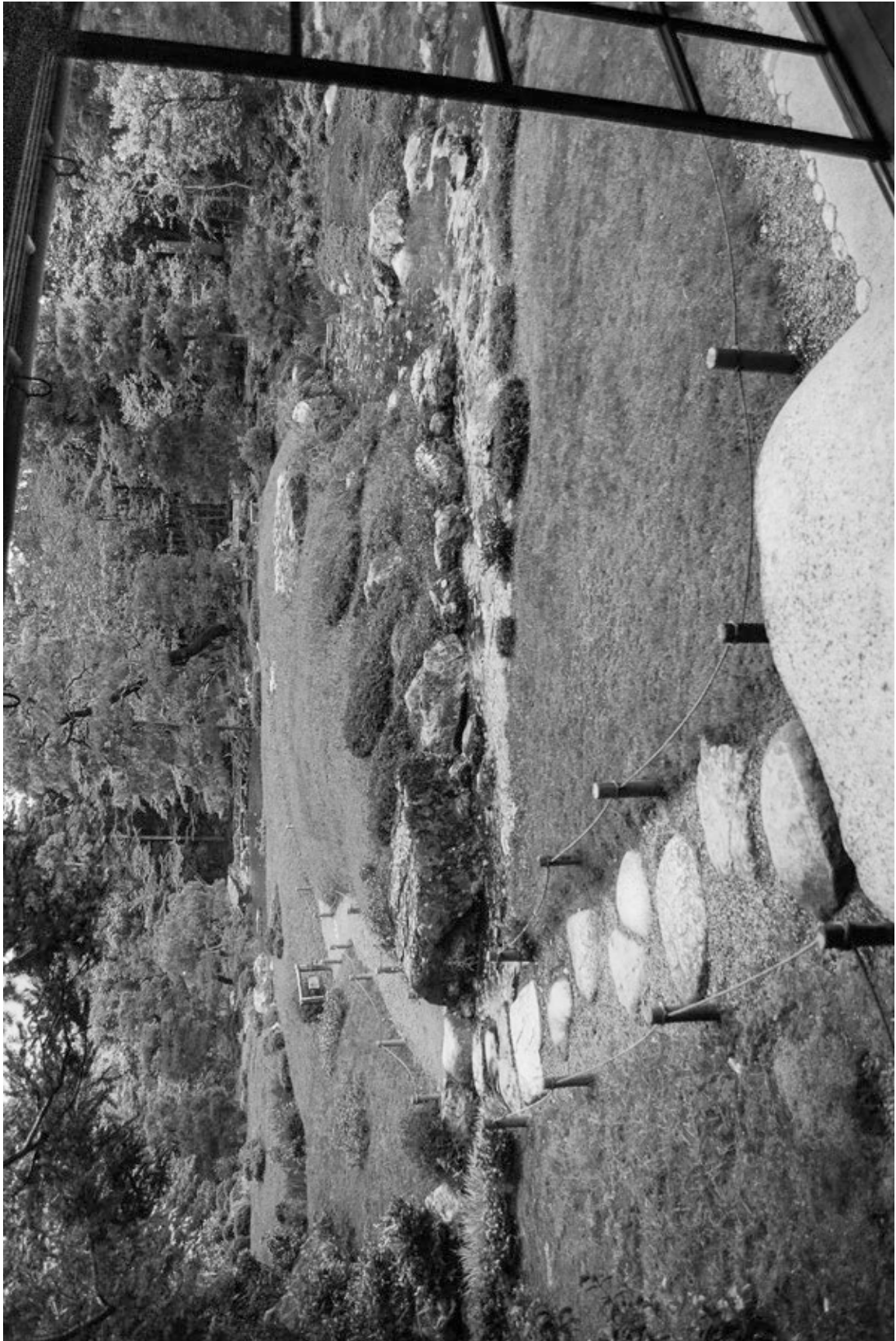






















It is unlikely that either Kuck or Newsom were unaware of the implications of the term modern, yet the precise intention of the term in their descriptions is unclear. Following Newsom and Kuck, subsequent interpretations of Ogawa's gardens seem to follow a similar line, attempting to capture the innovative quality of Ogawa's work while simultaneously positioning them firmly within the Japanese tradition. Part of the challenge in understanding the newness of Ogawa's work may stem from the absence of scholarship on his work. Although he appears as the subject of several paragraphs, or perhaps a page or two, in any number of the countless surveys of the Japanese garden, this limited treatment seems to have the effect of reinforcing earlier statements.

Conclusion: Re-reading Murin-an

As this study of Murin-an has developed, it has moved through a cyclical progression that was anticipated by the uncertainty of my initial experience at the villa, and the position of skepticism that I chose to take at that time, my decision to question the questions that I had expected to answer, rather than to question the garden.

The interrogation of assumptions that this skepticism engendered was directed at the narratives of dwelling and Japanese gardens that had formed my initial anticipation, and also directed toward the possibility of understanding itself. Thus, the intention has not been the production of an answer, as it has been the formulation of a question. The hermeneutic sense of this investigation is captured by Robert Mugerauer in *Interpreting Environments* (1995), while also introducing a vital flexibility into the work hermeneutic interpretation: “shared understanding is possible, both within and across traditions. Interpretation is neither a matter of finding the “one right interpretation,” nor of calling attention to the interpreter’s language and wit . . . but of finding the valid criteria for polysemy within the fluid variety of possibilities.” There are two points that are made here that express the cycle of this reading of Murin-an: first, the recognition and acceptance of the garden as hosting many meanings becomes apparent as an original condition of the garden, as the presentation of multiple meanings and significations appear between the descriptions of the villa and Yamagata’s “Account of the Imperial Gift of Pine Saplings”. Additionally, this embrace of multiple readings is tempered by a principle of self-critique that is revealed in the condition of “*finding the valid criteria*” that is placed as a limit upon the hermeneutic exercise. The exercise of self-critique is the critical step of returning to the place, or in the case of this study, the intention that drives the deliberate cycle through expectation, experience, explanation, and then returning to expectation.

The deconstruction of these narratives led to a progressively deeper investigation of the place of the garden in the environment, my experience of that place, and eventually, to an examination

of the nature of experience and understanding in and of themselves. This progression was intensified when I read Yamagata's essay in the original Japanese, because it was at that point that I recognized the striking depth of Yamagata's juxtaposition of classical Japanese literature, early modern *kanbun* scholarship, and the Meiji period spirit of innovation and renewal.

Yamagata's description of the garden is deeply evocative, presenting the garden not as an objective place, but rather as a text: Yamagata looks through the garden and out onto the subjective world of experience, presenting this experience within cultural literary conventions while adapting them to his own intention. However, no matter how profound this juxtaposition of precedent, adaptation, and innovation may be in my experience of reading the essay and recalling the villa, I cannot point to an object in the garden, or a technical quality of the construction, that would identify my experience.

Therefore, returning to the beginning once again and recognizing that the Japanese garden does not exist as such, this essay does not conclude with an answer about Murin-an, and certainly not an answer about any other Japanese garden. However, there is a method, the close reading and re-reading of dwelling in its historical and cultural complexity that might illuminate an experience of one garden.

Appendix 1: “Account of the Imperial Gift of Pine Saplings”

The poet Rai San'yō wrote, “There is no need to ask the way to Nanzenji, the path is only a single lane between the pine trees and you cannot get lost.” Near this grove of pines there is a tract of land no bigger than the palm of my hand. There is a small stream there also. This district, which has such a deep and clear atmosphere, is named Kusakawa¹⁰⁴. Could there be a better place to spend the autumn of my life than here, with the shade of the pines and the small stream as my companions? I built a hermitage in this place and named it Murin-an.¹⁰⁵

It is very rich in natural beauty, but the stream is rather too meager. I had water from the Lake Biwa Canal brought into the property, in the depth of the pines and the cedars,¹⁰⁶ and this made the sound of the cascading water even better than one might find in the depths of the pure mountains. Where the stream calms, the water is clear and the sandy streambed can be seen. In the clear water, the fishes can be seen gracefully twisting their fins to and fro. There are also boulders in the garden, some recumbent, some standing, and in some places two or three placed together so that they overlap in an interesting manner. It is also novel to see unknown flowers growing up from the deep green of the moss. Where the branches of the maple stretch over the water the kingfisher alights, watching the fish closely.

In the beginning of spring, the beauty of the mountain rim needs no description¹⁰⁷; in summer, the coolness of the moon shining brightly down on the meadow and stream; in autumn, the bright color of the foliage as it is illuminated by the setting sun; in winter, the high flanks of Mount Hiei blanketed in snow seem as if they might fall in through the window. Among all of these, the season that is most deeply moving¹⁰⁸ is the view of the garden in the rain. In this small garden I have brought together all of the beauty of nature, combining magnificence with profound depth, and placing liveliness amid elegance. This is a place to wash off the dust of the world; at dawn I read literature, and in the evenings I recite poetry, or perhaps prepare tea and play a game of *go*; then again, I might bring out some *sake* and discuss the affairs of past and present.

It so happened that after this hermitage was constructed I received a gift from the Emperor himself, of two young pine saplings taken from the Imperial Gardens. I planted these pines in my garden myself, and care for them morning and evening. They have grown quickly and become a vigorous deep green. These pines have grown so grand it is as if they will become dragons and soar above the clouds. Because they were growing so well I sent a photograph to the Emperor and received this letter in return:

Last year Yamagata Aritomo was sent two pines from the Imperial Garden in Kyōto, and now there is a picture showing how vigorously they have grown.

The young pines that were given have grown so strong
May you live together for one thousand years

Ah! As the deep green shade of the pines lengthens to shelter this garden, how wonderful it will be to pass the days listening to the voice of the wind in the pines. Unable to contain my joy, I composed these inferior poems in response.

In the depth of your grace and the deep green shade of the pines
I might forget my age and as one thousand generations pass

Pine trees, these young pines, grow abundant
In this hermitage where the dew of the Emperor's blessing lingers.

In commemoration of this hermitage, I have recorded here the roots and the branches of the fortune that I have received.

Meiji 34, November

The day before the Emperor's Birthday

Owner of Murin-an, Aritomo

Appendix 2: “Account of the Imperial Gift”, Japanese Text

御賜稚松の記

遇人体問南禅寺、一帶青松路不迷と頼山陽の歌ひたる竝木の松のかたほとりにたなそこはかりの土地ありそか中に細き流れあり草川といふ風趣の幽潔なるは此にまされる處やはある此松陰となかれとを友として老を送らはやと年ころ草廬を結び無鄰菴と名つけぬ自然の風致には富たれとなかれのほそきか物たらぬ心地すれは琵琶湖の疎水を松杉深きあたりに引入れしに落る瀑の音のはけしくみやまのおくもかくこそあらぬと思ふはかりなり又なかれのゆるやかなるは沙白く底すみて魚のひれふるさまなど見ゆ巖のふしたるも立てるもありまたふたつみつかさなりたるもおかし苔の青みたる中に名もしらぬ草のはなの咲出たるもめつらし水に横たはれる楓の枝にかはせみの來りて魚を窺ふさまなどいとみところ多し春はあけはなるる山の端のけひきはさらなり夏は川とのにすみみわたる月の涼しさ秋は夕日はなやかにさして紅葉のほひたる冬は雪をいたたける比叡の嶽の窓におちくる。こちして折折のなかめいはむかたなし中に一きは目たちてあはれふかきは雨のけしきなりけり此？き園に萬象をこめ幽邃の中に豪壯を含み風雅の間に快潤を帯ひたる趣あり晨には文をよみ夕には歌を詠しあるは茶を品し碁を圍み又は酒をくみ今古を談論するなどたたに世の塵を洗ふのみかはさるに此草廬の成りたることおもほゑすもかしこき御あたりにもきこしめさせてまひて禁苑の稚松二株を賜ひければつつしみてこれを園の中にもうゑ朝な夕な養ひたてたるにあまたの日數もへさるまに緑の色うるはしくおひしけりて雲を凌ぎ龍となりぬへき勢ひあれは之を寫して奉りけりに御製一首を賜ひぬ其大御歌は京都の宮庭の松をいぬるとし

山縣有朋におくりけるにかく生しけりかりとて寫眞を見せたるによめる

おくりにし若木のまつのしけりおひて

老の千とせの友とならなむ

おはれ今より鬱蒼たるみどりの蔭は長く此園をおほひ千年をよはふ松風のもとにおきふ
す身のたのしさはいかはかりそや限りなきよろこひのあまりよみてたてまつりたるえせ
うた。

みめくみのふかきみとりの松かけに。

老もわすれて千代やへなまし

おひしけれ松よ小まつよ大君の

めくみの露のかかるいほりに

この得かたきみめくみを蒙りたることのもとすゑいささかかいつけ

この庵の記念とはなしぬ

明治三十四年十一月

天長節前一日

無鄰菴主有朋

Appendix 3: “Journey to Nanzenji”, Poem by Rai San’yō

遊南禪寺

第二橋東雨後泥

村園門巷路東西

遇人休問南禪寺

一帶青松路不迷

Journey to Nanzenji

East of the second bridge there is mud after the rain

The lane runs east and west between the doors of the country village

If you meet a person in the lane do not ask, “Nanzenji?”

The green pines form one continuous row, the road cannot be mistaken.

Appendix 4: Comparing *The Pillow Book* and “Account of the Imperial Gift”

“Account of the Imperial Gift of Pine Trees” parallels the 10th century Heian literary work known as *The Pillow Book* (枕草子, *Makura Sōshi*) quite closely.

The lines from Yamagata Aritomo’s account (marked “YA”) are interleaved with the equivalent seasonal passages from Sei Shōnagon’s *Pillow Book* (marked “SS”), and English translations.¹⁰⁹ Notes are added to clarify the references found in “Account of the Imperial Gift.”

SPRING

(SS) Haru wa akebono. Yo yo shiroku nariyuku, yamagiwa sukoshi akarite, murasakidachitaru kumo no hosoku tanabikitaru.

(YA) Haru wa akeba naruru yama no ha no keshiki wa saranari

(SS) In spring, the dawn—when the slowly paling mountain rim is tinged with red, and wisps of faintly crimson-purple cloud float in the sky.

(YA) In the beginning of spring, the beauty of the mountain rim needs no description.

Notes

Yamagata’s Japanese phrase “yama no ha” and Shōnagon’s “yamagiwa” are synonymous, both meaning “mountain rim”. Also, note the close parallel of the idea of opening (*akebono*, *akeba*) in the initial phrases. In addition, Yamagata’s use of *saranari* (“needs no description”) here echoes Shōnagon’s use of *saranari* in the passage on summer (translated as “of course” in context)

SUMMER

(SS) Natsu wa yoru. Tsuki no koro wa sara nari, yami mo nao, hotaru no oku tobichigaitaru. Mata, tada hitotsu futatsu nado, honokani uchihikarite yuku mo okashi. Ame nado furu mo, okashi.

(YA) Natsu wa kawa to no ni sumiwataru tsuki no suzushisa.

(SS) In summer, the night—moonlit nights, of course, but also at the dark of the moon, it's beautiful when fireflies are dancing everywhere in a mazy flight. And it's delightful too to see just one or two fly through the darkness, glowing softly. Rain falling on a summer night is also lovely.

(YA) In summer, the coolness of the moon shining brightly down on the meadow and stream.

Notes

Shōnagon's view of summer here (especially the inclusion of fireflies, a seasonal marker for early summer), differs from Yamagata's description, which emphasizes late summer. However, in both cases, the view is of the moon at night. Shōnagon's mention of the rain is given special attention in "Account of the Imperial Gift", as the "season that is most deeply moving."

For reference to early autumn poetic images, poem 170 of the *Kokin Wakashū* opens, "How cool the wind feels / blowing across the river!" See also poem 191: "With what radiance / the moon shines on an autumn night!"¹¹⁰

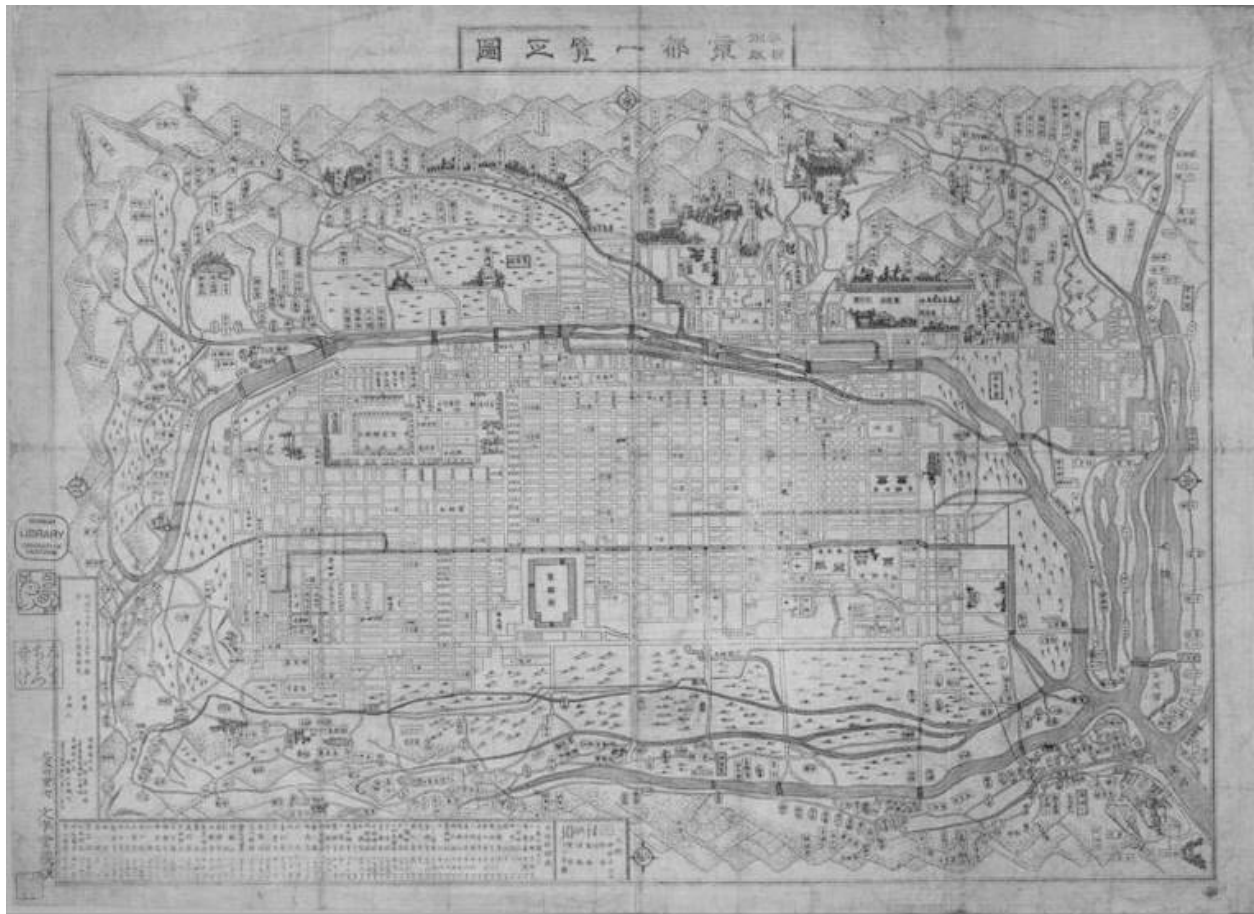
AUTUMN

(SS) Aki wa yugure. Yuhi no sashite yama no ha ito chikonaritaru ni, karasu no nedokoro e yuku tote, mitsu yotsu, futatsu mitsu nado, tobiisogu sae aware nari. Maite kari nado no tsuranetaru ga ito chiisaku miyuru wa, ito okashi. Hi iri hatete, kaze no oto, mushi no oto nado, hata iubeki ni arazu.

(YA) Aki wa yūhi hanayaka ni sashite kōyō no nioitaru.

(SS) In autumn, the evening—the blazing sun has sunk very close to the mountain rim, and now even the crows, in threes and fours or twos and threes, hurrying to their roost, are a moving sight. Still more enchanting is the sight of a string of wild geese in the distant sky, very tiny. And oh how inexpressible, when the sun has sunk, to hear in the growing darkness the wind, and the song of autumn insects.

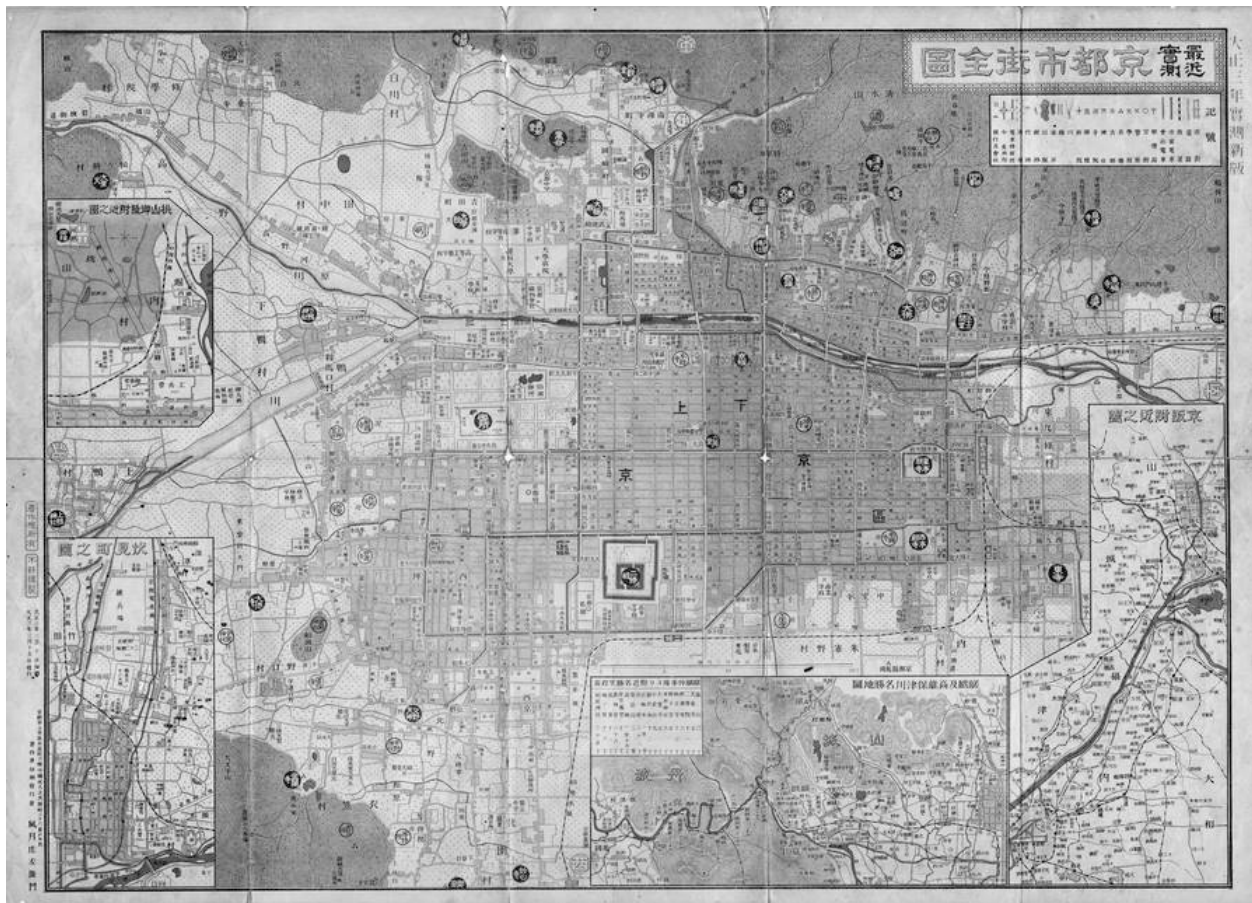
Appendix 5: Historical Maps of Kyoto



1879 Map of Kyoto, including distance chart in lower left

Monji, Tominosuke. *Shinsen Doban Kyoto Ichiran no Zu*. Kyoto:Watanabe Nizaemon. 1879.
Resource url: <http://luna.davidrumsey.com:8380/luna/servlet/s/v6x150>

Map image courtesy of C.V. Starr East Asian Library,
University of California, Berkeley



1914 Map of Kyoto, original in color

Fugetsu, Atsuzaeon. *Shinsen Doban Kyotoshigai Zenzu*. Kyoto. 1914.

Resource url: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/japan_kyoto_1914.jpg

Map image courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

(YA) In autumn, the bright color of the foliage as it is illuminated by the setting sun.

Notes

“Yūgure” (Shōnagon) and “yūhi” (Yamagata) in the opening phrases are synonymous. In these two passages there is a distinction; Yamgata’s use of *hanayaka* (bright, colorful), introduces an element of liveliness that is distinct from conventional depictions of autumn as a season of ending, and thus sorrow.

WINTER

(SS) Fuyu wa tsutomete. Yuki no furitaru wa iubeki ni arazu. Shimo no ito shiroki mo, mata sara de mo, ito samuki ni, hi nado isogi okoshite, sumi motewataru mo ito tsukizukishi. Hiru ni narite, nuruku yurubi moteikeba, hioke no hi mo shiroki haigachi ni narite, waroshi.

(YA) Fuyu wa yuku wo itadakeru Hiei no take no mado ni ocikuru kokochishite

(SS) In winter, the early morning—if snow is falling, of course, it’s unutterably delightful, but it’s perfect too if there’s a pure white frost, or even just when it’s very cold, and they hasten to build up the fires in the braziers and carry in fresh charcoal. But it’s unpleasant, as the day draws on and the air grows warmer, how the brazier fire dies down to white ash.

(YA) In winter, the high flanks of Mount Hiei blanketed in snow seem as if they might fall in through the window.

Notes

These two passages are the most distinct. Although both emphasize the view of the snow and the comfort of being protected from cold, Yamgata’s introduction of windows bears noting.

Notes

¹ Books about the Japanese garden are published with a remarkable consistency; a library database search limited to the exact term “Japanese garden” returns 103 books published in English between 1990 and 2013. When articles and other media are included, this total rises to 249 titles; a keyword search for “Japanese garden” returns 1543 books in English for the same time period.

² For example, see “Account of the Imperial Gift” in Appendix 1.

³ This concern with authorship, especially as it emphasizes the division of creative vision and constructive craft, is expressed with different emphasis in the context of Japanese gardens. Complete description of this is beyond the scope of this study.

⁴ As humans we are always trying to understand based upon expectation.

⁵ For example, urban infrastructure is fairly readily recognized as a built environment. Farm fields, on the other hand, are built to the extent that they have been cleared, leveled, irrigated, and are artificially maintained, but they are less readily recognizable as built, although they are no less partan component of the engineered human habitat.

⁶ Translation by Dr. Paul Atkins; used with permission. Fujiwara no Shunzei (1114-1204) was a famous poet. For more on Shunzei see Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of Four Seasons*, 7.

⁷ Ben-ari, *Unwrapping Japan*, 1. For a brief review of the ethnography of Japan, see also pp. 140-141.

⁸ For example, Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, in *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History*, states that “Japanese landscape designers today contribute to a pluralistic internationalism of garden art rather than to the continued development of a specifically indigenous style.” Rogers, 295.

⁹ See Jonathon Reynolds, Maekawa Kunio and the Emergence of Modernist Japanese Architecture, 1-37.

¹⁰ James Elkins, “Writing Moods”, in Ziady DeLue and James Elkins, ed., *Landscape Theory*.

¹¹ Norris Brock Johnson, Tenryuji: Life and Spirit of a Kyoto Garden.

¹² Elkins, in Delue and Elkins, *Landscape Theory*, 75-78.

¹³ This description first appeared in 1799, and remained common until the early 20th century; it is still occasionally used now. For a full discussion of this story, see Yamada, *Shots in the Dark*, 106-109

¹⁴ Shoji Yamada, *Shots in the Dark*, 107-109. For a discussion of subtemple gardens, see also Wybe Kuitert, *Themes in the History of Japanese Garden Art*, 90-94.

¹⁵ Robert Mugerauer, *Interpreting Environments*, xxvii.

¹⁶ A narrative thoroughly challenged by Yamada, but reinforced elsewhere.

¹⁷ For van Tonder’s research see van Tonder, *Recovery of Visual Structure in Illustrated Japanese Gardens*, and *Perception psychology: Visual Structure of a Japanese Zen garden*. Matthieu Casalis argues that a “network of signifying intentionalities will always be presupposed as the leading impulse that assigned a given garden its meaning This visual exercise was possible even for...a foreigner in Japan, with only partial spoken and written comprehension of the language. As these initial garden observations were done with no prior study of the design history of the garden and the temple, it would seem that this seeing could be “cleaner” and free of other meanings.” (Ronnen, in Benoit, *From the Things Themselves*, 61)

¹⁸ This interpretation of the interrelationship between environment and social behavior draws heavily upon Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, as it is developed in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*.

¹⁹ Camelia Nakagawara, “The Japanese Garden for the Mind”, 84.

²⁰ Nakagawara, 83.

²¹ This image of the Japanese garden craftsman might be traced to the construction of the garden in the Japanese Pavilion at the Vienna Exposition of 1873. For more on this exposition, see Wybe Kuitert, “Japonoiserie in London and the Hague”, 222. Descriptions of apprenticeship as validation appear in the introduction to David Slawson, *Secret Teachings in the Art of Japanese Gardens*, David Engel, *Japanese Gardens for Today*, and also in Julie Moir Messervy, “Learning in Japan: A Personal Account”.

²² This argument also engages the relationship between authorship, craft, and creative intention discussed in the introduction; while a complete exegesis of this relationship is beyond the scope of this study, what is intended here is that one could not, for example, produce a garden that has the same experiential quality of Ryōanji through an analysis of that garden; nor would understanding how to move and place large boulders necessarily equip a person with the poetic and cultural knowledge that informs the subtleties of experience being discussed here, in the case of Murin-an.

²³ However, If this were a study of Murin-an with regard to stone placement, spatial layout, or a comparison of Murin-an and another garden with the intention of noting material design details, my training would certainly play a more prominent role.

- ²⁴ Martin Heidegger, "...Poetically Man Dwells..." in Neil Leach ed., *Rethinking Architecture*, 110.
- ²⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 127-146
- ²⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 139.
- ²⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 138.
- ²⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 134.
- ²⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 137.
- ³⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 140.
- ³¹ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 347.
- ³² Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 350.
- ³³ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 354, 356.
- ³⁴ Gadamer states "a successful building . . . both fulfills its purpose and has added something new to the spatial dimension of a town or landscape" (Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 138). This treatment of the relationship between architecture and environment is also present in Heidegger, *Building Dwelling Thinking*: "The banks (of the stream) emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream . . . The bridge *gathers* the earth as landscape around the stream." (Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, 354; italics in original)
- ³⁵ otes
This quote is from the letter Nishizawa addressed to the Nijōjō Office, asking for permission to survey Nijōjō, in Toshio Nakanishi, *Architecture and Gardens*, 117.
- ³⁶ Masao Hayakawa, *The Garden Art of Japan*, 161
- ³⁷ Elizabeth K. Meyer, "The Expanded Field of Landscape Architecture," in *Ecological Design and Planning*, edited by George F. Thompson and Frederick R. Steiner, 50.
- ³⁸ Stanislaus Fung, "Mutuality and the Cultures of Landscape Architecture," in *Recovering Landscape*, edited by James Corner, 147.
- ³⁹ Thomas Kasulis, "The Body- Japanese Style," in *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice*, edited by Thomas P. Kasulis, 305.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 305.
- ⁴¹ Augustin Berque, "The Rituals of Urbanity" In *Ceremony and Ritual in Japan*, edited by Jan van Bremen and D.P. Martinez, 248.
- ⁴² Augustin Berque, "The Rituals of Urbanity" In *Ceremony and Ritual in Japan*, edited by Jan van Bremen and D.P. Martinez, 249.
- ⁴³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 72.
- ⁴⁴ Augustin Berque, "The Rituals of Urbanity" In *Ceremony and Ritual in Japan*, edited by Jan van Bremen and D.P. Martinez, 247.
- ⁴⁵ Jane Bachnik, "Kejime: Defining a Shifting Self in Multiple Organizational Modes," in *Japanese Sense of Self*, edited by Nancy Rosenberger, 155.
- ⁴⁶ Jane Bachnik, "Orchestrated Reciprocity: Belief Versus Practice in Japanese Funeral Ritual," in *Ceremony and Ritual in Japan: Religious Practices in an Industrialized Society*, edited by Jan Van Bremen and D.P. Martinez, 108-145.
- ⁴⁷ See appendix 1
- ⁴⁸ To name these typological units, they are Shinden style, Shoin style, Sukiya style;
- ⁴⁹ For example, while the flying buttresses of European cathedrals make it possible to elevate and support the roof above a glorious expanse of stained glass windows, at the ground level the stonework produces an impenetrable enclosure, forcing both interior and exterior view of the cathedral-as-object upward and away from the ground.
- ⁵⁰ Kazuo Nishi and Kazuo Hozumi, *What is Japanese Architecture?*, 60.
- ⁵¹ The romance, between Genji and a lady known as the Safflower Lady, is the primary subject of Chapter 6, "The Safflower", and Chapter 15, "A Waste of Weeds". (Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, 112-131 and 301-312).
- ⁵² Matthew McKelway presents a detailed study of the illustrated screens depicting city views of Kyoto produced during the 15th and 16th centuries, examining these screens as maps that present not only the city as it is, but the city as the audience wants it to be. See McKelway, *Capitalscapes*,
- ⁵³ Harootunian, *History's Disquiet*, 59.
- ⁵⁴ Carol Gluck, "Modernity in Common", public lecture at the University of Washington, April 14, 2014.
- ⁵⁵ For more detail on this period see James L. McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, and Paul Varley, *Japanese Culture*, 230-236.
- ⁵⁶ McClain, 163-171; see also Reischauer, *Japan: The Story of a Nation*, 118.

- ⁵⁷ To the extent that he manipulated the collapse of the Saionji cabinet in 1912; Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 254
- ⁵⁸ James McClain, *Japan: A Modern History*, 169-182; see also Paul Varley, *Japanese Culture*, 238-242.
- ⁵⁹ Biwako Sosui Kinenkan, *Biwako Sosui Kinenkan: Jōsetsu Tenji Zuroku*, 4-5
- ⁶⁰ For a history of Zen during the Meiji period see Christopher Ives, *Imperial-Way Zen*, 13-53.
- ⁶¹ See Goto for a thorough analysis of Biwako Sosui and Ogawa.
- ⁶² During the peace of the Tokugawa period, although samurai families retained societal rank and formal privilege, in reality the majority of samurai were employed in administrative roles. Yamagata's family was at the lowest of 23 ranks in a lower category, a position that afforded them work as minor clerks or even janitors (from Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 3).
- ⁶³ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 50.
- ⁶⁴ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 83.
- ⁶⁵ Hackett, *Yamagata Aritomo*, 144-147.
- ⁶⁶ The Murin-an Conference was attended by Itō Hirobumi, Yamagata's colleague and frequent rival, who was at that time the head of the party holding power in the Diet, Katsura Tarō, Yamagata's protégé, and prime minister at that time, and Komura Jutarō, the foreign minister.
- ⁶⁷ Hiromasa Amasaki, *Ueji no Niwa*, 53-58; Hiroyuki Suzuki, *Ogawa Jihei to Sono Jidai*, 55-58.
- ⁶⁸ William Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan*, 218. Coaldrake describes the Akasaka Detached Palace as a work that demonstrates Japanese mastery of European architecture and modern engineering and design in his discussion. See Coaldrake, 212-222.
- ⁶⁹ Christine Guth *Art, Tea and Industry*, 6.
- ⁷⁰ Yozaburo Shirahata, *Ueji: The Genius of Water and Stone*, 4; author's translation.
- ⁷¹ Akisato Rito re-published and adapted several earlier treatises on garden design, all dating from the early Edo period (17th and 18th centuries); in addition, he re-issued many of his own books, and other authors also continued to re-issue and adapt his work, making the dating and bibliography of Akisatō's work challenging.
- ⁷² Conder borrows heavily from Akisatō's work. Many of the plates in Conder are reproductions or adaptations of illustrations found in Akisatō's various books (see note 59). For illustrations of *gogyōseki*, see Conder, *Japanese Gardens*, Plate I and II.
- ⁷³ Loraine Kuck, *The Art of Japanese Gardens*, 256. Regarding her influences, Kuck thanks "Dr. Tatsui and Dr. Tamura" and notes "Mr. Shigemori" as primary sources. Tatsui Matsunosuke (龍居松之助, 1884-1961), Tamura Tsuyoshi (田村剛, 1890-1979), and Shigemori Mirei (重森三玲, 1896-1975) were scholars of Japanese garden history whose work continues to influence the field.
- ⁷⁴ The Encyclopedia Nipponica traces the term *uekiya* to the 14th century and equates with the more recent term *zōen* (造園, a word that has approximately usage as *uekiya*), making the usage of the term in and of itself indeterminate.
- ⁷⁵ Kuroda, *Zoku Kōko Kaishinroku*, 1
- ⁷⁶ Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, 338.
- ⁷⁷ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 53.
- ⁷⁸ For many Japanese gardens, these personal records have been lost, or can only be partially integrated with an actual site. For example, to return to Ryōanji, Yamada details the intense debate about the history of the site, a debate which is perpetuated by the absence of documentary evidence. This is also true for other gardens, such as the north garden at the Zen temple Entokuin, said to have been relocated to its present location when Entokuin was established in 1608. However, as is the case with Ryōanji, there are few details of this history. Further, in both of these cases there is insufficient record of personal perception to contemplate the type of analysis being pursued with Murin-an in this paper.
- ⁷⁹ Yamagata's recollection was written for publication soon after he had stepped down from the office of Prime Minister, and addresses in its title the receipt of a gift and subsequent poetry exchange with the Emperor.
- ⁸⁰ The Japanese used in print at the turn of the 20th century, known as *bungo*, is much closer to the Japanese of the Edo period. The Japanese used in "Account of the Imperial Gift", *kogo*, was in use during the late Heian period, the 10th through 12th centuries..
- ⁸¹ Written Japanese employs two syllabaries (similar to an alphabet), *hiragana* and *katakana*, and also uses Chinese characters, *kanji*. Both syllabaries were developed during the classical period; *hiragana* was associated with "feminine writing", including poetry and classical literature, while *katakana* associated with "masculine writing".
- ⁸² In *Shisendō* J. Thomas Rimer lists some of these; See Rimer, *Shisendō*, 7-9
- ⁸³ Haruo Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, 910

⁸⁴ During the Edo period, the conservative philosophy of neo-Confucianism that emphasized loyalty and “filial piety” was widely popular.

⁸⁵ Haruo Shirane, *Early Modern Japanese Literature*, 914-917

⁸⁶ Kuck, *100 Kyoto Gardens*, 58.

⁸⁷ Kuck, *The Art of Japanese Gardens*, 277

⁸⁸ These gardens remain, but both have changed: Hiroyuki Suzuki, notes that “The Shisendō as it survives today is quite different from what it was in Jōzan’s lifetime,” (in J. Thomas Rimer, ed. *Shisendo*, 98). The view from San’yō’s Sanshisuimeisho across the Kamo River has also changed profoundly, as can be expected.

⁸⁹ The second paragraph refers to the English translation. Yamagata’s original Japanese is completely void of punctuation and divisions of text.

⁹⁰ Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, 338.

⁹¹ Haruo Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of Four Seasons*, 1.

⁹² Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of Four Seasons*, 3-4.

⁹³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 140.

⁹⁴ Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of Four Seasons*, 25.

⁹⁵ For a discussion of maps and travel guides in Japan, see Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print*, 1-53.

⁹⁶ In Goto’s translation of this passage she renders the term *rinsen* as “traditional gardens”; however, as the term *rinsen* is used in multiple places in describing Murin-an, including as the captions of the photographs (The *rinsen* of Murin-an), I have decided to render the term in its classical, poetic reading, as “garden”.

⁹⁷ For Yamada’s treatment of this topic, see *Shots in the Dark*, 134-143

⁹⁸ Seiko Goto, “The Confrontation with Western Culture: A new style of garden in Kyoto—Murin-an”, 200.

⁹⁹ Kuck, *100 Kyoto Gardens*, 3. For photographs of the visit, see Garden Club of America, *A Photographic Diary of the visit of the Garden Club of America to Japan*.

¹⁰⁰ Murin-an was not open to the public, and was not donated to the city of Kyoto until 1951. The argument made here addresses features common to many of Ogawa’s gardens, which bear a reasonable consistency in style and use of materials, especially his use of lawns, streams, and his plant palette. As with any general or essential label, the idea of an “Ueji style” cannot be presented as a clear definition; however, at the time of Kuck’s and Newsom’s writings, and even in the view of some contemporary scholars, there is a marked style to Ogawa’s work, and so this treatment will be used here, with due reservation.

¹⁰¹ Kuck, *The Art of Japanese Gardens*, 277-278.

¹⁰² Samuel Newsom, *Japanese Garden Construction*, 261.

¹⁰³ I would like to acknowledge Dr. Paul Atkins for his gracious and extensive assistance in translating this passage.

¹⁰⁴ The property Yamagata purchased had been part of the landholdings of the Zen temple Nanzenji that were sold and developed beginning in the 1890’s. This district was given the name “Kusakawa”.

¹⁰⁵ Murin-an, Japanese 無鄰菴. *Murin* means “without neighbors”; “an” is often used to name Japanese residences or teahouses, and is best translated as “hermitage”. Soan (jp. 草案), literally “thatch hermitage” or “thatch hut”, or perhaps also “grass hut”, uses the same second character.

¹⁰⁶ The trees that Yamagata names are pines and *sugi*, *Cryptomeria japonica*, variously translated as cedar, cypress, or fir.

¹⁰⁷ See the opening lines of *The Pillow Book*, Appendix 4.

¹⁰⁸ Yamagata uses the word “aware” here, an aesthetic term common during the late Heian period. This term is subtle, expressing a sense of pathos, while also finding great beauty in the sorrow of inevitable loss.

¹⁰⁹ Romanized script of *The Pillow Book* from Valerie Henitiuk, *Worlding Sei Shonagon*, 258. English translation from Sei Shonagon, *The Pillow Book*, tr. Meredith McKinney, in Henitiuk, 243.

¹¹⁰ Helen Craig McCullough, *Kokin Wakashū*, 47, 51.

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