

OPENING A PRIVATE GARDEN TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH AN INTERMEDIARY

The Case of Rikugien Garden in Tokyo in the 18th Century

Sawako Ono

ABSTRACT

This paper deals with Rikugien garden in terms of opening private space to the public. Rikugien was the garden of the lower residence of the Yanagisawa clan, a daimyo family, in the city of Edo (now Tokyo). When Nobutoki Yanagisawa lived at the lower residence in the 18th century, he accepted visitors to the garden regardless of their status, occupation, age, gender or place of residence. Visitors without any connection to Nobutoki asked for permission to visit the garden through an intermediary. Those who worked for him in the lower residence acted as intermediaries. It is meaningful that various people visited the garden of a daimyo residence at a time when social classes were strictly separated in many aspects of life and daimyo residences usually shut their doors to outsiders. In this case, the garden provided an opportunity to open the daimyo residence to outsiders and introduce them inside. Also, the intermediary made anonymous outsiders identifiable individuals who in turn gained a sense of connection with the place.

INTRODUCTION

The feudal lords, or *daimyo*, in the Edo period (1600-1868) were given three residences, upper, middle and lower, as their living quarters during their attendance in the city of Edo every two years by government request.

The upper residence was located in the center of the city, near Edo castle, while the middle and lower residences were usually on the outskirts of the city. The clan head lived at the upper residence, which also served as a center of the clan administration. The retired clan head and their heirs used the middle residence as their living quarters, which also acted as a place of refuge in case the upper residence was destroyed by fire. The lower residence was used, depending on its location, as storage warehouses for supplies from the home province, hunting lodges or villas for the clan head.

Rikugien was the garden of the lower residence of the Yanagisawa clan that governed the fief of Kohriyama near Kyoto. The garden was founded when Yoshiyasu Yanagisawa (1658-1714), Shogun Tsunayoshi's grand chamberlain, was granted the site in Komagome for his lower residence. He spent seven years building a garden for the lower residence, from 1695 to 1702. The garden was a typical *daimyo* garden and known as one of the finest gardens in the city. Many scenes were arranged around a central pond to suggest noted scenic spots. In this garden, visitors enjoyed various vistas as they proceeded along garden paths by the waterside, in the woods and on the grass-covered knolls. The garden was so splendid that the Shogun himself visited it several times.

Nobutoki Yanagisawa (1724-1792), Yoshiyasu's grandson, lived in this lower residence after his retirement in 1773. He recorded his daily life there in his journal, "*Enyu-nikki*" or "Journal of Feast and Pleasure" (Yanagisawa, 1773-92). According to this journal, the garden gave him many pleasures. He strolled in the garden almost every day with his attendants and sometimes with his

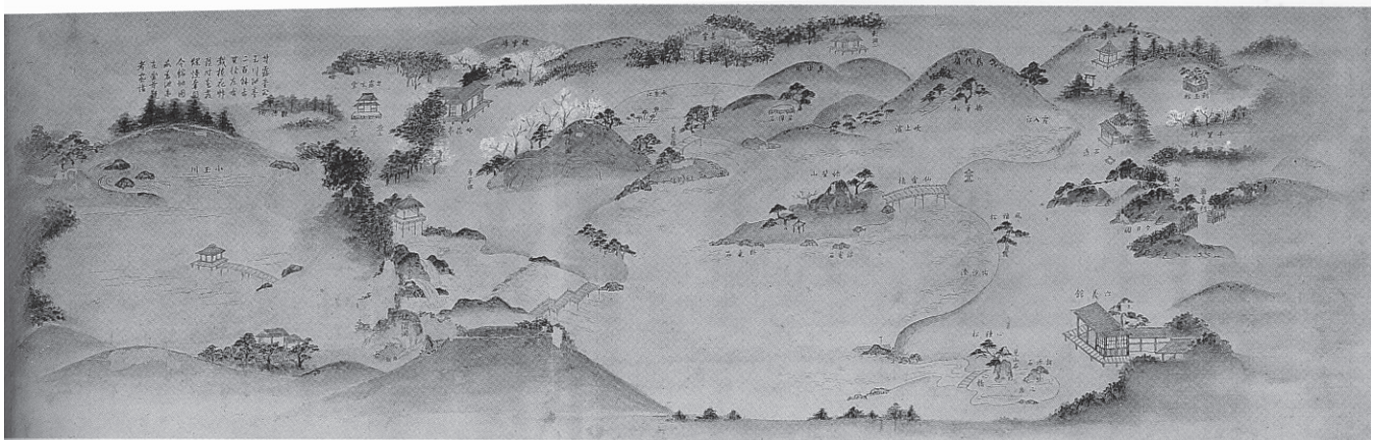


Figure 1. Garden of the Yamato Koriyama clan's lower residence (plan of the Rikugien garden). (Edotokyo Museum Collection)

wife. He often spent many hours taking care of the plants. Gathering garden products, such as edible greens, chestnuts, and mushrooms, was another of his pleasures. Nobutoki was a man of wide interests and his garden served as a place where he could enjoy them. He composed haiku and was one of the leading members of the haiku party at that time. He often invited his companions for a haiku gathering in his garden. He also loved kabuki so much that he directed performances with a script written by himself to be performed on a stage built in the garden.

He also showed his garden to many people. For him, the garden was “a place to show,” as well as a place to enjoy natural features. Various people, for example, samurai, townsfolk, farmers, priests, women, and children, visited the garden. Some had a connection with Nobutoki, such as his retainers and their family, relatives of his servants, and his acquaintances, while others did not. Those who had no connection with the Yanagisawa clan asked for Nobutoki’s permission to visit the garden through an intermediary. Nobutoki accepted visitors to the garden almost all year round (Table 1).² The number of visitors who did not have any connection with him began to increase as the area around the lower residence gained popularity as a suburban recreational spot.

We will see how *daimyo* gardens came to be opened to the public by examining the descriptions in Nobutoki’s journal.

VISITORS

According to Table 2, most of the garden visitors in 1779 had some kind of connection with Nobutoki. He showed his garden occasionally to clansmen who visited the lower

residence on business. He also showed them the garden as they accompanied the clan head on his way to and from their province. It was also a custom of the Wakayama clan to give permission to their clansmen to visit the garden of their upper residence as they accompanied the lord from their province. The upper-residence garden of the Wakayama clan was well known for its magnificence. Therefore, clans that had a garden worthy of a visit showed their garden to fellow clansmen from the province. This served as a reward for their service in Edo, and also demonstrated the power of their clan. When his married daughter and sons or his acquaintances visited him, Nobutoki sometimes showed the garden to their attendants. This also was a reward for them, and to his children’s attendants, a demonstration of his power. These examples indicate that a garden was attractive even for the lower classes, such that looking at it was regarded as a reward.

In addition to Nobutoki’s clansmen, the families and relatives of his retainers or servants who worked at the lower residence, his haiku and kabuki companions and his acquaintances also visited the garden. Among such visitors were his retainers’ wives, his aunt, mother-in-law and distant relatives, the family doctor’s sister-in-law, the gardener’s niece, haiku companions and their friends, and a kabuki actor and his household. Those who occasionally visited the lower residence on business also saw the garden. For example, a man from a tofu restaurant in Asakusa, which Nobutoki patronized, visited the garden when he came to pay the season’s greetings. His companions also came to look at the garden and often brought their families or acquaintances. Nobutoki sometimes met them and gave tours himself, or treated them to sweets in the garden.

	Jan.	*	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	*	Jun.	Jul.	*	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	*	Total
1773						4		3			3	1	4				15
1774	2			4	2			1			1	1	2				13
1775			2	4	7	4		1	1		2	9	3	4	2	1	39
1776	1		6	6	3	1		2	1			3	3	1	1		27
1777	1		4	12	5	2		1	10			3	3	2	1		44
1778				4	8	3			1	1	5	6	5	2	2		37
1779	3		5	12	4	3		2	5		3	2	8	1	1		49
1780	1		5	25	13	7		3	12		6	10	47+	3	1		134
1781	2		7	8	18	12	7	3	6		3	11	20	1			98
1782	1		5	29	20	7		8	4		8	9	32	1			124
1783	3		5	16	41	19		12	3		6	6	29	5	2		147
1784	1	7	3	47	10	3		9	9		7	10	13	2	1		122
	* : leap year																
	47+ : 47 and many others																

Table 1. Number of visiting parties.

After 1780, the number of visitors to the garden increased. In particular, the increase in the number of outsiders was considerable. They varied in social status, occupation, gender and age: a high official of the Bakufu and his wife, members of other clans, merchants and their families, doctors, farmers, priests, and nuns, for example. Most of them lived in the city, however, some came from outside of Edo.

Some examples of such visitors in 1783 are as follows. First, there are many samurai. In March, Nobutoki accepted two clansmen from the Tsu clan and five from the Doi clan. In April, besides members of other clans, a police sergeant, two foot soldiers of the Bakufu, a female family member of one of the Shogun's vassals accompanied by retainers, and a doctor visited the garden. Two clansmen from the Todo clan accompanied by a nun, six women, four children and a servant came to see the garden in May, and a firewatcher in June. The wife of the former lord of the Matsue clan appeared with attendants in October.

Townsfolk visit the garden too. Most of them came from downtown where many wealthy merchants and wholesale dealers lived, and from the lower residence neighborhood where small shopkeepers, samurai and farmers lived. Among those who came from downtown were a party of four women, merchant parties, clerks and one of their customers, and a merchant family. Three girls accompanied with their mothers and attendants came to an

	those directly related to Nobutoki				outsider				
	Vassals &	Servant's	Friends	Unspecified	Samurai	Towns-	Farmers	Mixed	Others
	their families	families				folk			
1779									
Jan.	●	●	●						
Feb.	●●	●●	●						
Mar.	●●●	●●	●●●●	●●					●
Apr.	●	●	●					●	
May			●●						
Jun.		●●							
Jul.	●●	●●	●						
Aug.	●●●								
Sep.			●	●					
Oct.	●	●●●	●●●●						
Nov.			●						
Dec.			●						
1780									
Jan.									●
Feb.	●●●	●	●						
Mar.	●●●●	●●●	●●●●	●	●●●●	●●●●		●	
Apr.	●●●●		●●●			●		●	
May	●●	●●	●●						●
Jun.	●●		●						
Jul.	●●	●	●●●●	●●●	●		●		
Aug.	●●	●●	●						●
Sep.	●●	●	●●●	●●					●●
Oct.	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●	●●●●	●●●●			●●●
Nov.			●		●			●	
Dec.			●						
1783									
Jan.	●		●	●					
Feb.		●	●●		●	●			
Mar.	●●●●	●●●	●	●	●●●	●●		●	●
Apr.	●●●●	●	●●	●	●●●●	●●●●		●	●
May	●●●●	●	●●	●	●●●●	●●	●		●●
Jun.	●●●●	●	●		●	●●●	●		●
Jul.	●●				●				
Aug.	●		●●●	●					●
Sep.	●●				●●●	●			
Oct.	●●●●	●●●	●●●●		●●●	●●●●			●●
Nov.	●●		●		●	●			
Dec.	●	●							

Table 2. List of visitors.

御長屋

■ 御長屋
■ 定府武士の御長屋

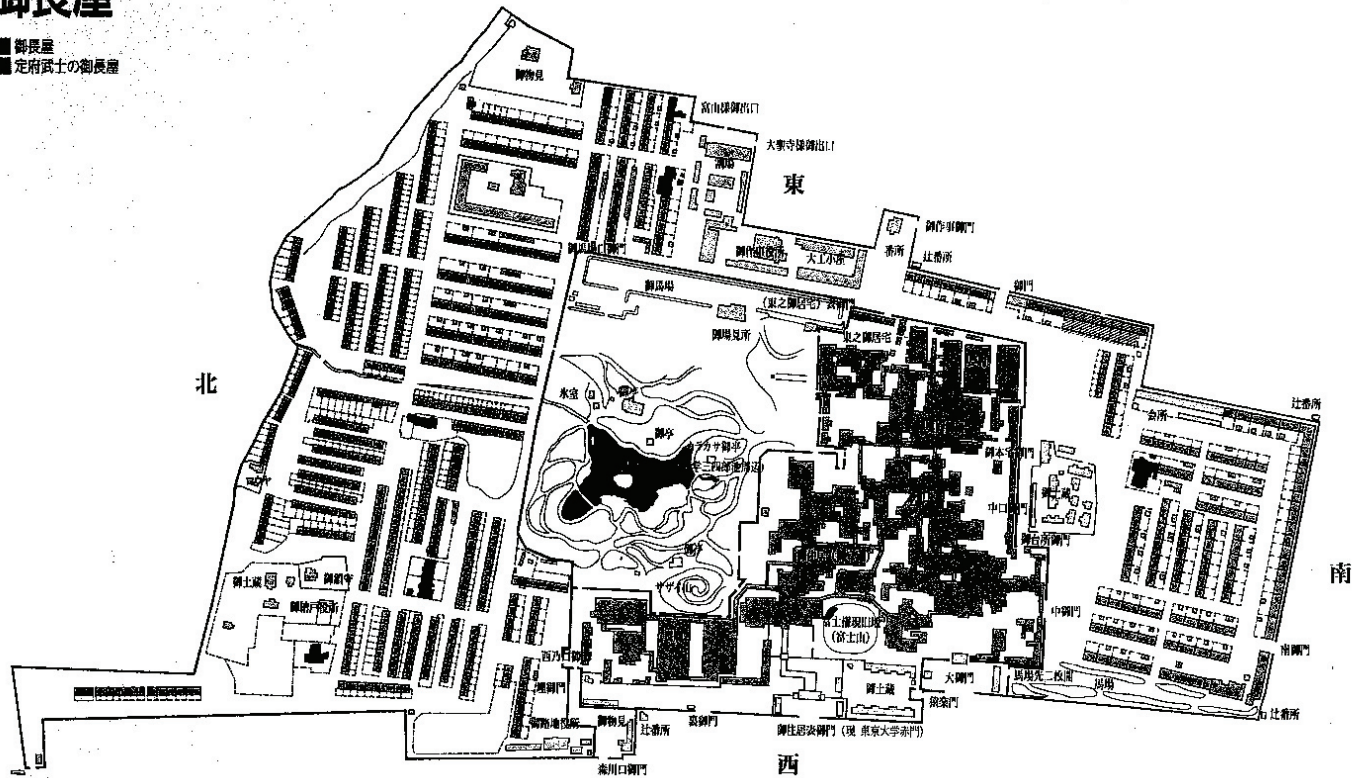


Figure 2. Upper residence of the Kaga Clan.

interview for jobs in June. The daughters of wealthy merchants worked at daimyo residences at that time. After the interview, they asked to visit the garden. They took advantage of this opportunity to view it. This indicates two things: the garden was attractive to many people and they could ask to visit the garden without reserve.

Among those from the neighborhood, there was a merchant's household, a party of three women who visited Nobutoki's servant, and two parties of neighborhood residents. The neighborhood residents visited the garden every year on the same day, the 8th of April. We will discuss this matter later. Besides samurai and townsfolk, there were priests, doctors and a few wealthy farmers among the visitors in this year.

Many visitors came in groups, such as business companions, a household or community people. The number of people in a group often exceeded ten people, including children and servants. A wholesale ornamental hairpin dealer's household from Nihonbashi included six women, four or five men and three children accompanied by their family physician. There were also visitors who come alone. Once, a tailor from the neighborhood came by himself.

Nobutoki recorded each visitor's name in his journal. Therefore, he knew who had come to see his garden. He sometimes watched visitors enjoying his garden from his room or from

behind a garden hedge, and delivered sweets or wine and snacks as a compliment to particular visitors.

It seems that the number of the visitors increased as the district near the lower residence became increasingly popular as a suburban recreational spot. There were many attractions such as shrines and temples, a noted flower-viewing spot, and other scenic locations along the small river at the spot. Many fashionable restaurants sprang up along the river during this time. Furthermore, many gardeners lived near the lower residence and their own gardens attracted people, especially in the chrysanthemum season. Some visitors to the garden stopped by when they came for a pleasure walk in this district. Rikugien must have been one of the attractions in the district.

INTERMEDIARIES

Outsiders asked for Nobutoki's permission to visit the garden through an intermediary. Those who worked for him in the lower residence, for example, retainers, maids, manservants, and gardeners, acted as intermediaries. Nobutoki's entries in his journal, "by request of," "accompanied by" or "guided by" indicate the presence of an intermediary.

Examples of retainers and servants acting as intermediaries in 1780, as written in Nobutoki's journal, are as follows.

- By request of Matsumoto, court ladies of the Tatebe clan visited the garden (Mar. 12).
- Accompanied by Mizoguchi and Gensuke, a constable who is their drum instructor (Mar. 17).
- By request of Wasuke, two women and a girl (May 20).
- Accompanied by Shoetsu, three vassals of the Shogun (Oct. 20).
- Guided by Beigyo, a doctor of the Doi clan (Nov. 3).
- Guided by Shimoyama, two priests and a samurai (Nov. 5).

Matsumoto, Mizoguchi and Shimoyama are retainers who worked at the lower residence. Beigyo is a retainer who managed Nobutoki's haiku affairs. Wasuke is a manservant and Shoetsu is the personal physician. In these examples, we can see that regardless of their status or post, they brought various visitors. Mizoguchi and Gensuke invited their drum instructor. Beigyo seems to bring his haiku companion. Samurai and townsfolk at that time kept company with others beyond their status through mutual interests. Such connections worked well for the intermediary. On the other hand, Matsumoto made his request to Nobutoki because his sister-in-law had a position as a lady's maid of the Tatebe clan. Kinship was a very effective connection for requesting permission for a visit. Nobutoki recorded many examples in his journal, such as "Two vassals of the Echigo clan, distant relations of Kuramochi, came and were shown the garden (July, 7)" and "showed the garden to two women, distant relatives of Yamamoto (Aug. 20)."

Townsfolk acted as intermediaries as well. In March of 1780, Sei Suzukiya accompanied eight women from her neighborhood. We do not know who she is, other than that she regularly came to the lower residence on some engagement. Like her, townsfolk who regularly came to the lower residence on business or for other reasons often acted as intermediaries. For example, Fushimiya accompanied several groups. On October 9th, 1782, he accompanied a small party consisting of two merchants, a doctor (probably), and a woman, and again on the 25th of the same month, a party of their families. Two more families joined in this party. They were twenty-three in number, including children. We can conjecture that having heard of the splendid sights of Rikugien, the first visitors' family members, and the additional two families, wanted to visit the garden and asked Fushimiya again to gain permission for a visit. Fushimiya also accompanied three parties to the garden in 1783: eight merchants in March, six women in April and five rice dealers in June. His connection to the lower residence must have been well known among his acquaintances and they often asked him to act as an intermediary.

Saburobee Nagai and his attendants visited the garden on the 6th of March in 1784. In this case, a former maid of a court lady

of Nobutoki's household requested to visit the garden. Two weeks after his visit, Nagai's wife wrote a letter to the court lady requesting permission for his acquaintances. They visited the garden led by Saburobee the very afternoon that Nobutoki accepted her request. This suggests that Saburobee's wife had a connection with the former maid, by way of whom she was introduced to the court lady. Some connections were formed between them upon her husband's visit to the garden. She subsequently used this new connection for later requests. Thus a range of visitors spread among various people.

Seibee, the gardener, also brought many people to the garden. He lived in the lower residence neighborhood. He came to work in the garden of the lower residence when he was requested to do so. We already saw that his niece visited the garden. She had come to visit him from a village near the lower residence. Seibee also brought neighborhood residents to the garden several times in spring. Furthermore, in October 1780, he took his wife and her companions, and again his neighborhood residents to the garden to see newly planted chrysanthemum beds. In October of the next year, a party of a townsman and five women from his neighborhood visited the garden through Seibee's intermediation. He also accompanied several parties from downtown, a household of a guard of Edo castle and vassals of other clans. One of them was a party of a young lord of the Dhotsu clan. Seibee's other clients were probably vassals of the Shogun, other *daimyo*, and wealthy merchants downtown, who asked him to act as an intermediary to visit Rikugien.

It seems that most requests were made beforehand. However, as we saw in the case of Saburobee Nagai, permission could be given on short notice. There is other evidence indicating that the garden could be visited relatively freely. Once, as Nobutoki strolled in the garden with his wife, a retainer came to inform him that two of his clansmen were asking to see the garden. He immediately allowed them entry. Another time, a townsperson came to see the garden. Upon seeing Nobutoki, he hid himself, but Nobutoki made his retainer give him a tour of the garden.

Not everyone's request was accepted. He refused a request made through his son on the excuse that he refused many other requests. However, judging by the description in his journal, anyone who wanted to see the garden probably was able to visit it if he/she found someone who worked for Nobutoki in the lower residence. Visitors made the most of even the remotest connection to the intermediary to visit the garden.

Daimyo residences were usually closed to outsiders. The lower residence in Komagome was enclosed within walls with gates, a moat and bamboo bushes in the same way as other *daimyo* residences were. That they accepted garden visitors regardless of status, occupation, age, gender or place of residence



- 凡例
- 大名屋敷地
 - 旗本御家人屋敷地
 - 寺社地
 - 幕府用地
 - 町地
 - 田畑・土手

Figure 3. Zoning by status.

indicates that the garden provided an opportunity to open up the *daimyo* residence to outsiders through intermediaries.

BACKGROUND TO OPENING THE GARDEN

Evidence of a Good Lord

During the Edo period, it was considered that a good feudal lord should share pleasures with his people. Showing his garden was regarded as remarkable evidence of a good lord. In “*Seizan Iji*” or “The Deeds of Nishiyama,” a record of Mitsukuni Tokugawa, the clan head of Mito, it is written that Mitsukuni showed his garden to anyone who asked to look at it even if his social status was low (Yoshinaga, 1938). Hence there were visitors picnicking with food and drink in the garden all year. Mitsukuni was known as a good lord, and this episode is recorded as one piece of evidence that he was a benevolent lord.

It was desirable for a good lord to show his garden to his people. This notion probably affected the case of Rikugien, too. However, we can assume that there were other factors in the case of Rikugien. They are to be discussed in the following.

Appreciating Elegance and Tastefulness in a Garden

Visiting a private garden through an intermediary seemed to be common at the time. Nobutoki himself tried to visit gardens that were noted for chrysanthemum beds. In October 1783, he sent his retainer to the retainer’s haiku companion living in the lower residence of the Fukuyama clan to ask to visit chrysanthemum beds there, but his request was not granted. Again in October 1784, as he took a stroll near his residence, he sent his attendant to a *daimyo* residence to request a viewing of the chrysanthemum beds in their garden but was again refused. However, he had visited these chrysanthemum beds several years previously. These incidents indicate that people freely asked to visit a garden although compliance depended on the convenience of the owner.

An Edo guidebook listed a peony garden as a favorable outing spot. It says, “Because it is a private garden, it cannot be entered without permission. Ask to view the garden at the back door” (Kusakihanagoyomi, et al.). On the basis of this description, we can assume that there was a widespread understanding that if anyone asked to visit someone’s garden, the request would usually be granted.

In the cases described above, people asked to visit a garden because of the beauty of the flowers in the garden. Appreciating the beauty of a garden was regarded to be elegant and tasteful. Moreover, this was considered outside the standard constraints of ordinary life. People who had a sense of the elegant and tasteful were well thought of and they associated with each other regardless of social status or position. Therefore, ordinary rules of society, such as the distinction between a privately

owned garden and public space, may not have been applicable when elegance and taste were the issue. It was considered that gardens should be open to all who appreciated its beauty.

Nobutoki’s status as a retired lord might have made it easier for him to accept various visitors in his garden. Being free from the ordinary rules of living, he was free to enjoy the life of the elegant and tasteful. The name of his journal, “Journal of Feast and Pleasure,” expresses his stance on his life in the lower residence.

To Lend/Borrow a Garden

Nobutoki often lent his garden to his companions. On March 5, 1779, he wrote in his journal, “At about three o’clock in the afternoon, Kikudo, Nunozawa and others with children came. I lent the garden. They enjoyed themselves at the teahouse and left in the evening.” Kikudo is a haiku instructor and Nobutoki’s haiku companion. On April 16 of the same year, he wrote, “Shoetsu, his brother-in-law, several samurai and two or three townfolk came to see the garden. I lent the teahouse there.” Shoetsu is his personal physician, as we saw earlier. Besides these episodes, in 1781, one of his sons borrowed the garden, and in 1782 he lent it to his retainers to enjoy it freely.

The following example shows that the “lending/borrowing of gardens” was frequent among those familiar with each other. In March 1840, a widow of one of the Shogun’s vassals recorded in her journal that her household, including children, visited a garden of the lower residence of another vassal of the Shogun (Nikki, 1978). He was her distant relative and often invited them to visit the garden. They spent all day there kite flying, herb gathering, and eating and drinking while the owner remained at the upper residence.

The incidents described above suggest that there was a generally accepted idea that gardens were, to some extent, common property, even if they were shared only among those who were closely related.

Event of Buddha’s Birthday

On the 8th of April, people in Edo celebrated Buddha’s birthday. In the lower residence, Buddha’s birthday festival was held at a monastery in the garden. On this occasion, Nobutoki opened his garden to his clansmen’s families. Nobutoki wrote in his journal in 1775, “because of Buddha’s birthday festival, showed the garden to clansmen’s families.” On the same day, he also wrote, “This is the day when Dentsu-in, Goji-in and so on open their gardens on the event of Buddha’s birthday.” Therefore, he himself visited, with his sons, the gardens of temples near his residence that were open for the day. Several guidebooks on Edo mention this event as “opening mountain” (Saito). Therefore, at that time, in Edo, it was customary for temples to open their gardens to the public on Buddha’s birthday.

We do not know the origin of this event. However, in some rural areas in Japan, there is a custom that women climb a mountain near their village to gather wild azalea branches. The date of this event is usually the 8th of April. This custom is considered to be an agricultural ritual announcing the start of farmwork.

From 1782, on the request of Seibee, the gardener, neighborhood residents also came to see the garden. People in Edo might have visited gardens instead of climbing a mountain. The agricultural ritual must be changed to a Buddhist festival. However, to prove this hypothesis, we must examine the connection between the garden and the mountain in Japanese culture.

CONCLUSION

Rikugien, a garden of the lower residence of the Yanagisawa clan, accepted visitors without distinction of status or position when Nobutoki Yanagisawa lived there after his retirement. Outsiders who had no connection with Nobutoki asked for his permission through an intermediary. Those who worked at the lower residence acted as intermediaries.

This was a way to open privately owned gardens to the public when social classes were strictly separated in many aspects of life, and *daimyo* residences shut their doors to outsiders. The garden provided an opportunity to open the *daimyo* residence to outsiders. This made it possible to provide a place where various people were able to gather without distinction of rank. Opening the garden to outsiders through intermediaries made anonymous outsiders identifiable individuals who appreciated the beauty of the garden and gained a sense of connection with the place.

REFERENCES

- Edotokyo Museum. Sankin kotai. Tokyo.
Iseki, T., Nikki or Journal. 1. 1978. Tokyo: Benseisha, 102-106.
Kusakihanagoyomi Koto Junran Shiji Yukanroku. In Mitamura, E. (ed.), Edo Nenjugyoji, Tokyo: Chukobunko.
Ono, S. 2000. "Garden Visit" at the Anei-Tenmei Era in Rikugien, Journal of The Japanese Institute of Landscape Architecture, 63(5): 361-366.
Saito, G. Toto Saigiki 2, Tokyo: Heibonsha.
Yanagisawa, N. 1773-1792. Enyu-nikki or Journal of Feast and Pleasure, In Geinoshi kenkyukai (ed.), 1977, Nihon Shominbunka Shiryo Shusei, 13, Tokyo: Sanichi shobo.
Yoshinaga, Y. 1938. Korakuen Zakko, Zoen Kenkyu, 25, 11-12.

BUILDING A MULTICULTURAL LEARNING COMMUNITY THROUGH THE NATURE OF PLACE

Julie Johnson

ABSTRACT

Children's experiences of place, and their participation in shaping it, may serve as inspiring references for more ecologically designed future communities. This paper addresses the context of school as a significant, yet often neglected, social and ecological community in the lives of children, and explores the potentials of nature and participatory design to foster the development of a multicultural learning community. A review of research and theory on children's learning potentials in nature and in school landscapes, and on participatory design with children, is provided and used to reflect on a Seattle, Washington, elementary school as a case study for such a community.

INTRODUCTION

As planners and designers, we envision how communities may change, and advocate certain values, processes or outcomes. To achieve a more sustainable future, I believe we need to examine children's experiences of community, and explore how their experiences may provide awareness, understanding, and motivation to work together as-and in-community. Kevin Lynch noted, "In childhood we form deep attachments to the location in which we grew up and carry the image of this place with us for the remainder of our lives" (Lynch, 1984:825). Children's experiences of their place, and their participation in shaping it, may serve as inspiring references for creating more ecologically designed communities.

In the United States, public schools exemplify the increasing cultural diversity that holds new challenges and opportunities for community design and planning. What better place to begin participatory design processes, than where diverse groups share a common purpose and place? At school, children, families, teachers, and others form a learning community. Children spend much of their waking hours in this context, developing meaningful relationships and critical understandings that inform their cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development. Multicultural understandings can be fostered through informal individual interactions, as well as through