

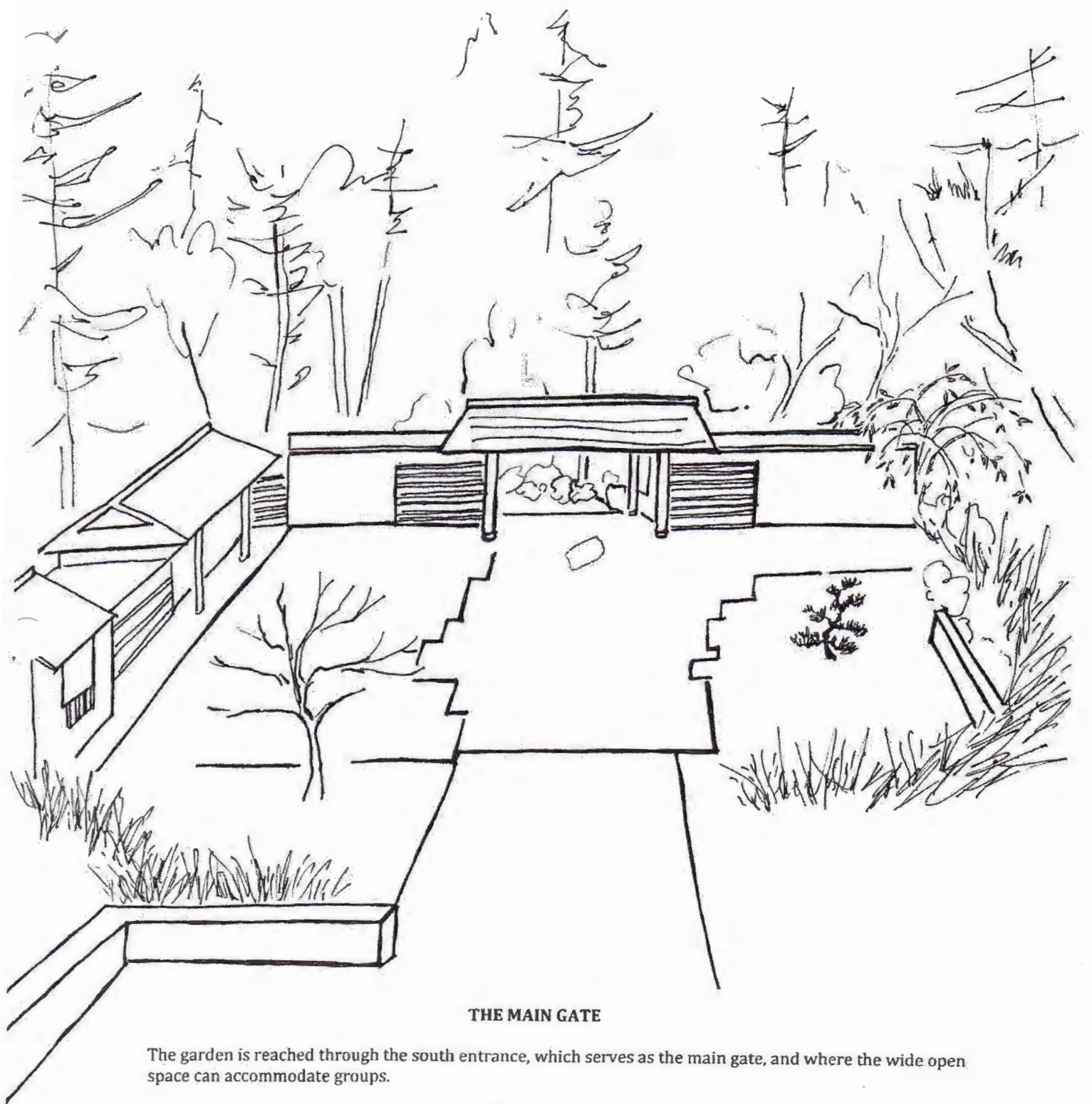
THE GARDEN TOUR

Both public and private groups are greeted and prepared for their tour at the south entry, which was designed and built under the direction of Richard Yamasaki, who was responsible for rock and stone placement during the construction of the Seattle Japanese Garden in 1960.

Of interest in the pre-entrance area is the empress tree (*paulownia tomentosa*). It grows at a rapid rate and its wood is prized for furniture-building.

Under the paulownia tree is a plaque commemorating James Fukuda who worked for the Japanese Consulate and aided in the creation of the Seattle Japanese Garden.

Near the ticket booth, ground cover, carefully pruned pines and broad-leaf evergreens prepare visitors for entrance into the garden enclosure.



THE MAIN GATE

The garden is reached through the south entrance, which serves as the main gate, and where the wide open space can accommodate groups.

The new gate complex was completed in 2009.

The complex includes the ticket office, a meeting room called the Tateuchi Room, restrooms, and maintenance facilities.

Bob Hoshide, the architect, said that his intent was to harmonize the structure to the existing setting.

The patinated iron gate was created by Gerard Tsutakawa.

FROM THE ENTRANCE TO THE WPA BRIDGE

The flat rock under the gate roof marks the boundary between the outside world and that of the Japanese Garden, which is to be appreciated through the senses.

The essential elements, characteristic of a Japanese garden, are found in this area and include:

-**bamboo** whose segments suggest generations, whose canes are flexible and hollow, characteristics to be emulated if one seeks harmony and longevity

-**pin**s which attract ancestral spirits and teach patience. The pine located in the trio of maple, stones and pine is pruned to suggest a crane, a bird of long life which transports spirits to the sky

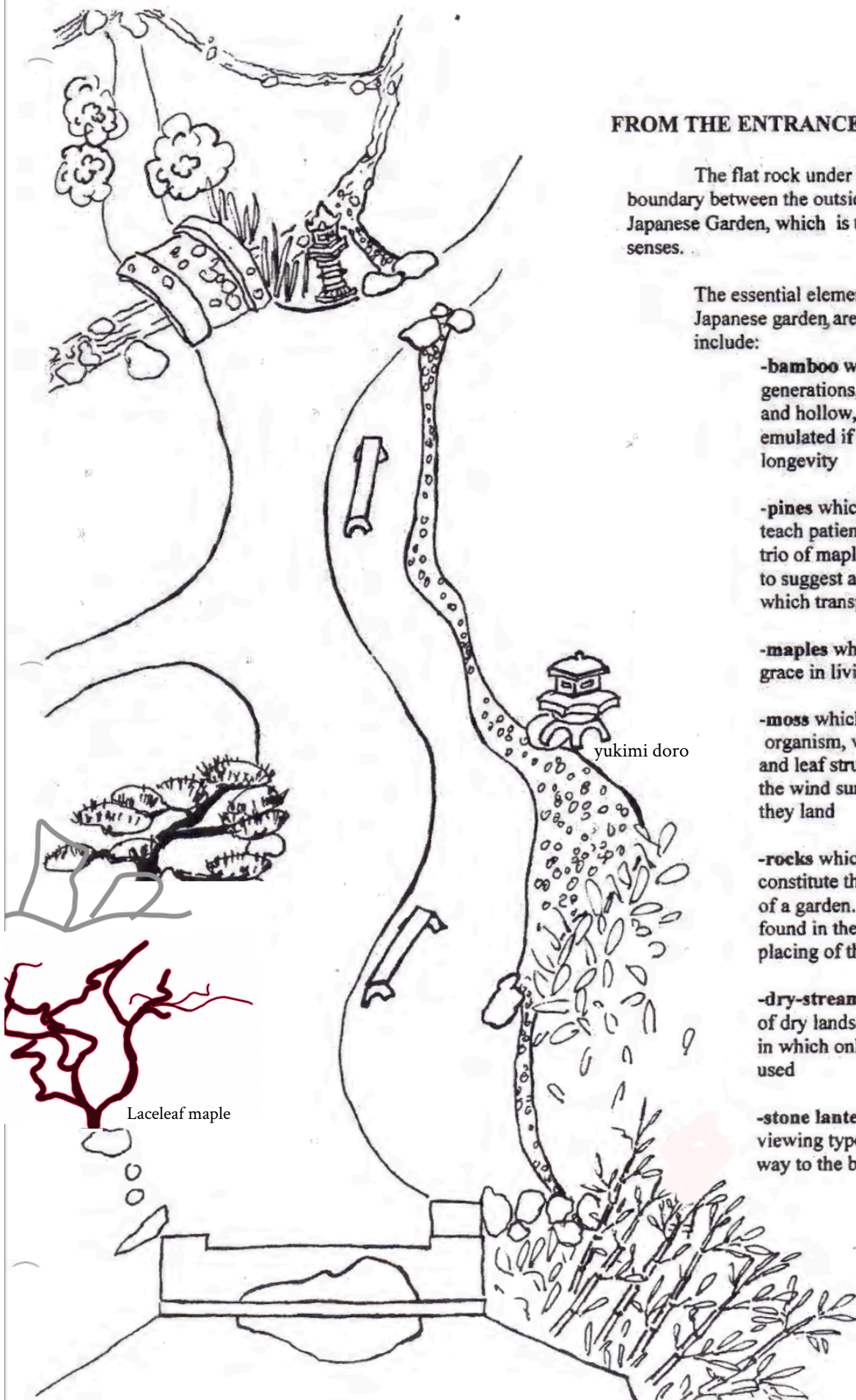
-**map**les whose limbs and leaves suggest grace in living

-**mo**ss which is a simple, long-surviving organism, with little in the way of root and leaf structure. Its spores carried by the wind survive and grow wherever they land

-**ro**cks which teach persistence and constitute the backbone and energy flow of a garden. The yin/yang principle is found in the vertical and horizontal placing of the rocks

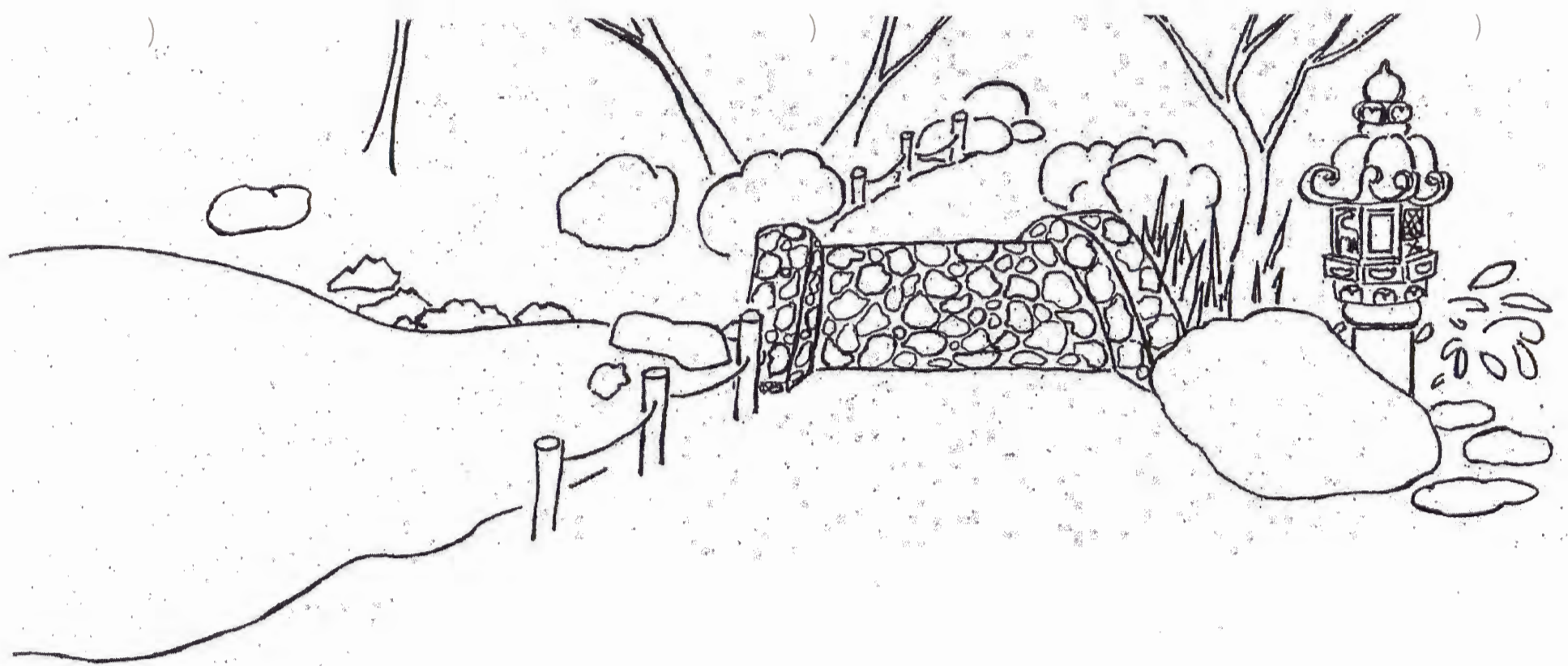
-**dry-stream bed** which is an example of dry landscape gardening (kare sansui) in which only sand, gravel and rock are used

-**sto**ne lanterns, one of which is a snow-viewing type (yukimi doro), light the way to the bridge



yukimi doro

Laceleaf maple



BRIDGES AND LANTERNS

The WPA bridge and the Kasuga stone lantern are examples of human-made objects found in a Japanese garden. Since the garden is a space where people encounter nature, the number of human-made objects should be minimal.

This bridge was built in 1934 and is a WPA project from the Franklin Delano Roosevelt era. It has been kept for historical reasons. An arched bridge is generally placed over a large flow of water so that, with its reflection, the bridge forms a complete circle.

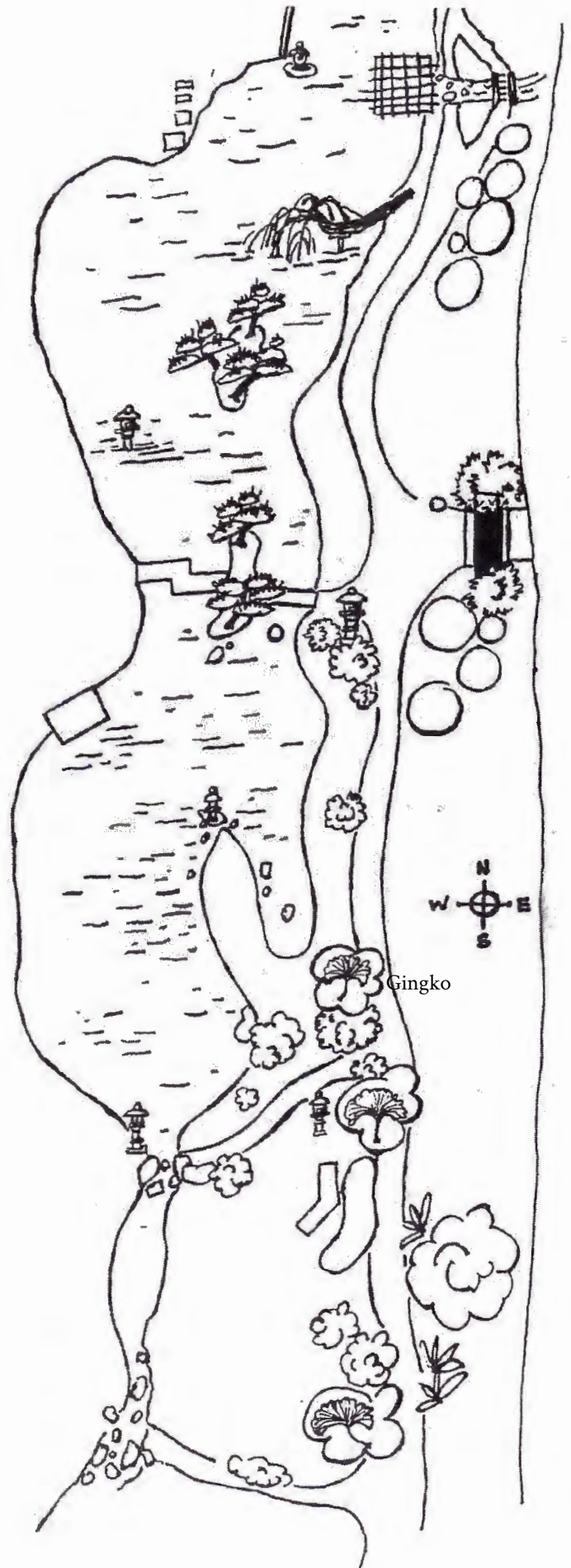
The Kasuga lantern with the deer motif is the most popular type of lantern.

THE EAST SIDE

Important here is the original gate, the East Gate, through which the visitor had a first view of the garden. Increasing traffic made it necessary to move the entrance to the South Gate.

In the other direction, the southeast side of the pond, one finds three ginkgo trees. The ginkgo may be the world's oldest living seed plant. Fossil records place it in the Mesozoic era, two hundred million years ago. Its longevity makes it suitable for an instructional garden. The leathery, fan-shaped leaves turn golden in autumn, and the female tree produces a nut which is a seasonal delicacy in Asia. Generally, the male tree is used in landscape gardening because the nut has a disagreeable odor.

Jūki Iida had to plant some trees at a slant in order to create a wind-swept effect. As for the willow on the east side, which was planted at a slant, it has now fallen to be almost horizontal.



THE POND

Among the many features to be pointed out are:

The rock-covered spit of land (suhama) with a lantern at its tip recalls the suhama at Katsura Villa in Kyoto. It is said that ancestral spirits (kami) came up from the water, or descended from the sky, and practiced ablution rites on such rock-covered promontories.

The tall black rock arising from the water on the middle right near the pine and lantern refers to Mt. Sumeru, the center of the universe in Chinese cosmography and is a feature of Japanese gardens.

The water lilies can be likened to the lotus, which rises from the mud and sends forth flowers, suggesting the transformation to purity.

Two different types of bridges join the east and west banks of the pond: on the west bank is wooden plank bridge (yatsuhashi type), while on the east bank one finds a dirt bridge (dobashi).

North of the bridges is the Island of the Immortals, whose inhabitants stay young forever, fly on the back of cranes and ride on the backs of giant turtles. These islands can be specified as 'crane islands' (tsuru shima) or 'turtle islands' (kame shima).

The moon-viewing platform is located on the autumn (west) side of the pond since it is the harvest moon (late September) that will be greeted there.

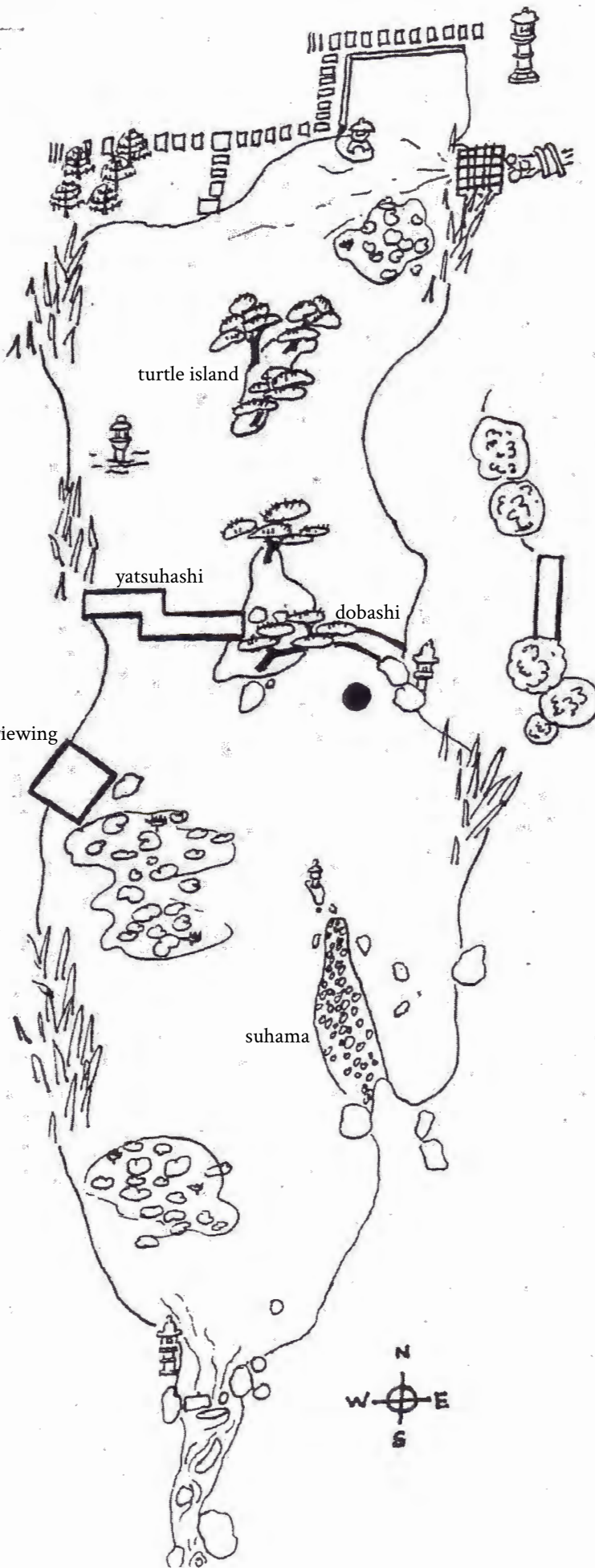
moon-viewing

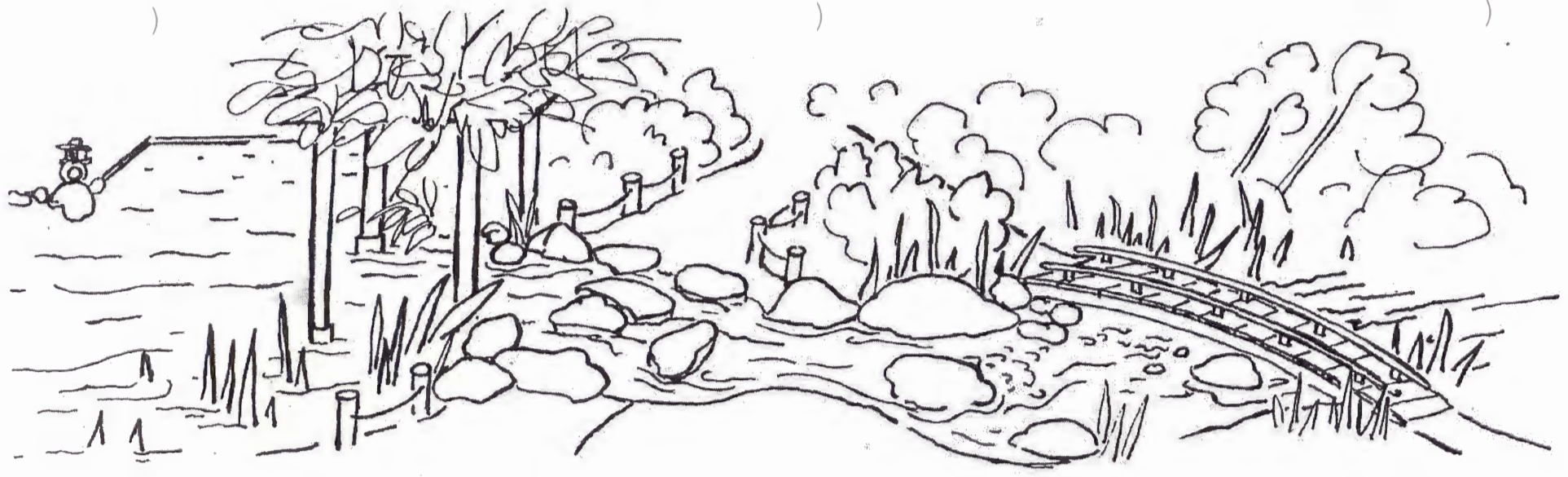
turtle island

yatsuhashi

dobashi

suhama





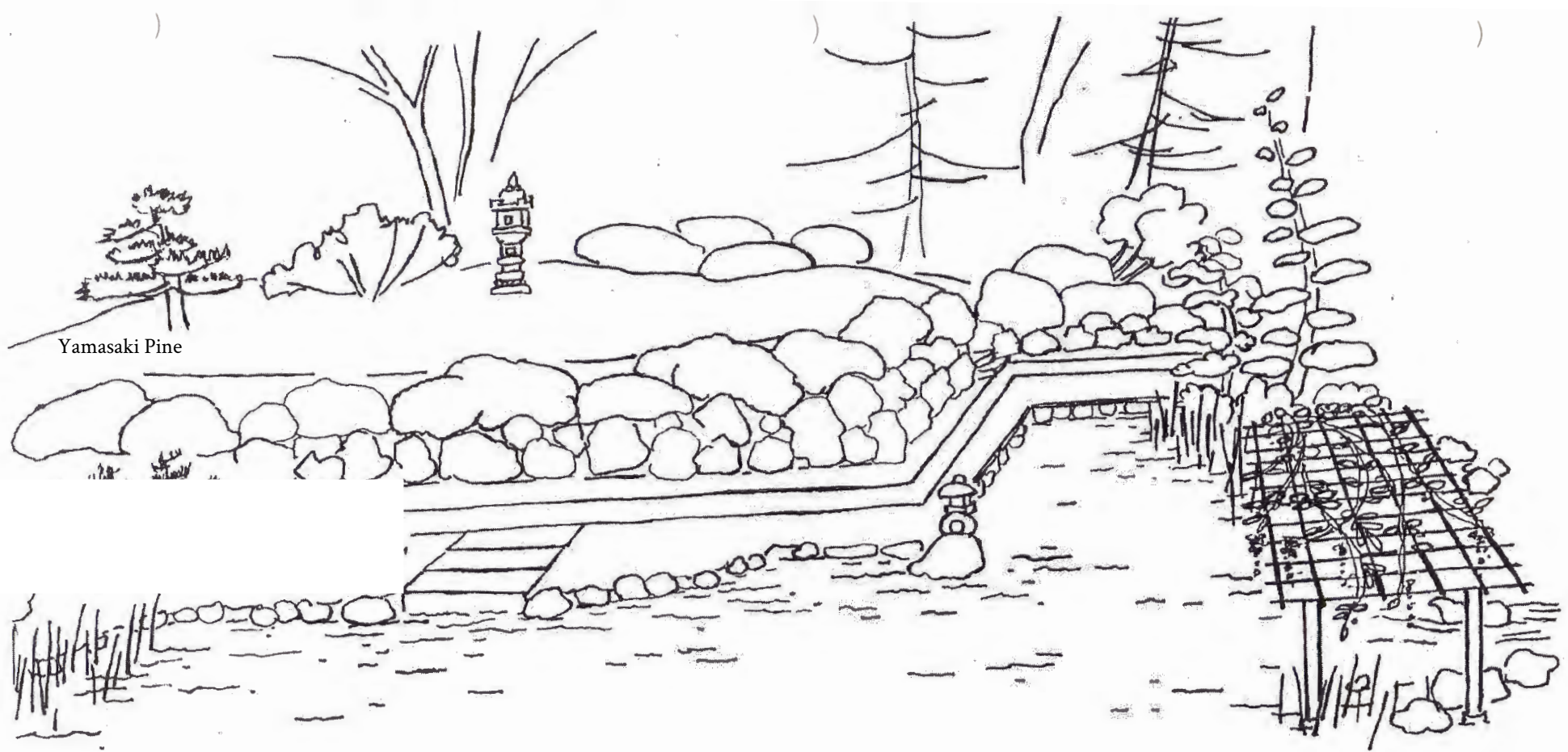
THE WISTERIA ARBOR, TOBI ISHI, AND THE WATER FLOWING TO THE SEA

The wisteria is planted near the port town because its canes and blossoms seem to beckon or summon the visitor in a sign of welcome. In the Tale of Genji the wisteria raceme is likened to a woman's kimono sleeve moving in the wind and welcoming. The wisteria is also a contrast to the cherry blossom which emphasizes the brevity of life. The wisteria blooms later and stays for a longer period. Also to be noted is the intertwining of the limbs, and the reaching out for support by the vines. The wisteria, like the pine, bamboo, and moss, is another example of longevity and strength.

Historically, the wisteria (fuji) recalls the powerful Fujiwara family which ruled Japan through most of the Heian Period. It also recalls The Tale of Genji written in the 11th century by Lady Murasaki, because of the personage of Fujitsubo, literally, the "Wisteria Lady".

The stepping stones (tobi ishi) which are placed in the stream near the wisteria arbor must accommodate the gait of both a man and a woman so that steps need not be awkward.

It is here that the water leaves the pond and flows out to sea, marking the last of four phases which began with the waterfall in the mountain.



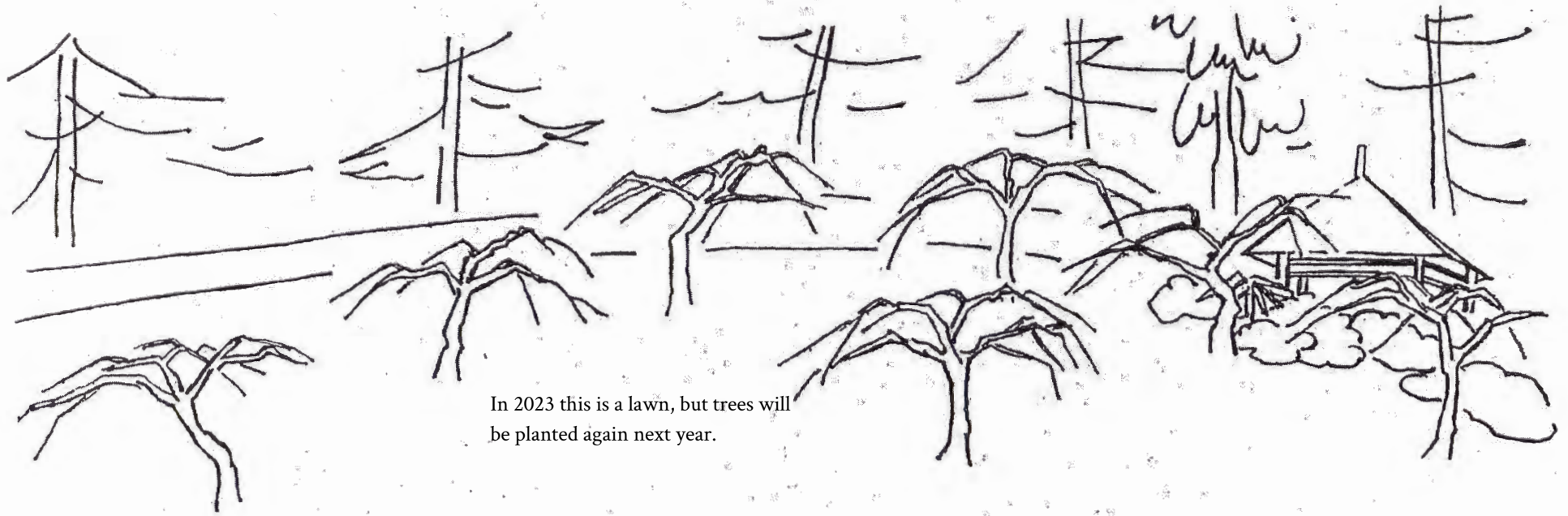
Yamasaki Pine

THE PORT TOWN

That this is a port town is revealed by use of 90 degree angles that are man-made and are not found in nature. The pond itself becomes rectangular, and the paving stones have been placed in a straight line. The stone wall and the azaleas pruned above suggest the presence of habitation and commerce. A pavilion was to be constructed here. One can imagine boats berthing and letting passengers embark and disembark.

The black pine was donated by Dick Yamasaki and is 110 years old

From the area above the port town, one can catch a large view of the garden.



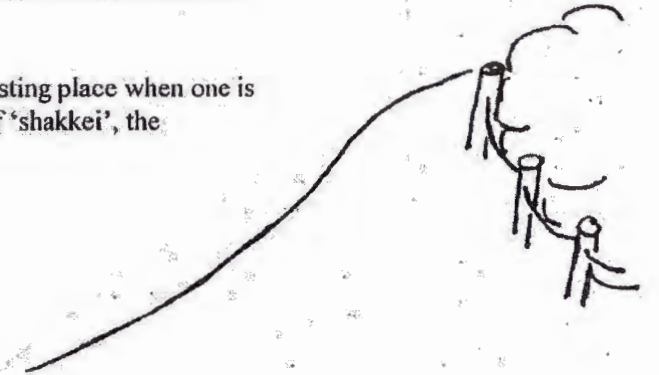
In 2023 this is a lawn, but trees will be planted again next year.

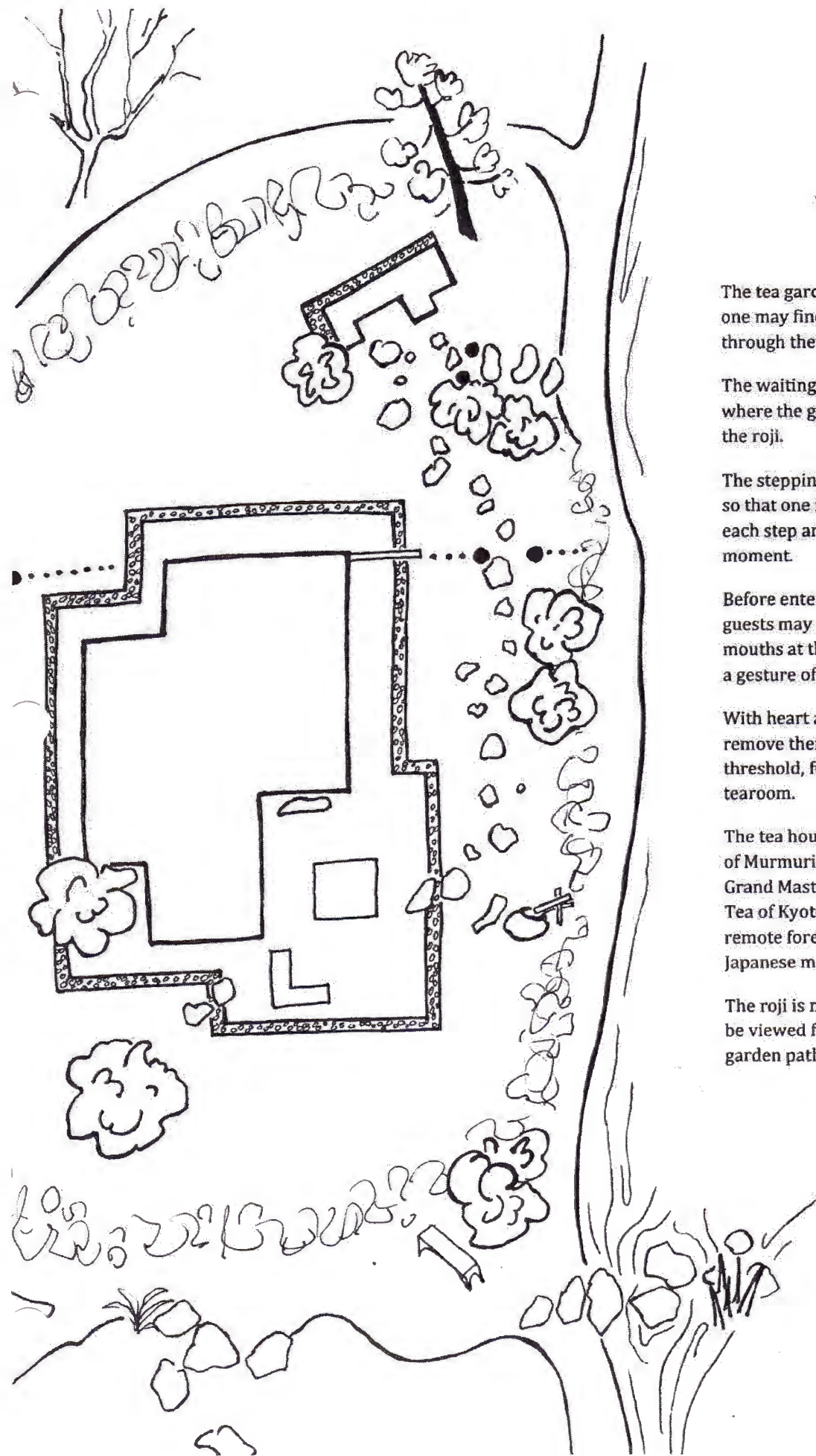
THE PLAIN OR THE ORCHARD AREA

Jūki Iida planted seven cherry trees in the area between the teahouse and the azumaya. He called it "Cherry Hill" (sakurayama). He expected to have trees growing here to a height of 15 to 18 feet. In Japanese-style gardens in the United States, cherry trees are planted inside the garden, whereas in Japan, cherry trees are generally planted outside the garden since cherry blossoms tell us of the brevity of life, as contrasted with pine, gingko, bamboo and wisteria which suggest longevity in a world of constant change.

The plain is located on the west side, the autumn side of the garden, and asks us to see farmers in the field and the harvest of the land. An orchard would have been appropriate.

The azumaya on the right is a temporary shelter, a place for cover in a storm, or a resting place when one is tired. It is a viewing point for the garden. From the azumaya one can notice the use of 'shakkei', the borrowing of the Arboretum's trees beyond the garden as part of the view.





THE TEA GARDEN

The tea garden, or roji, is a space where one may find tranquility in oneself through the simple act of drinking tea.

The waiting area, koshikake machiai, is where the guests gather before entering the roji.

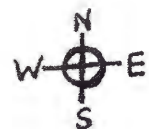
The stepping stones are irregularly placed so that one is forced to pay attention to each step and thereby to the present moment.

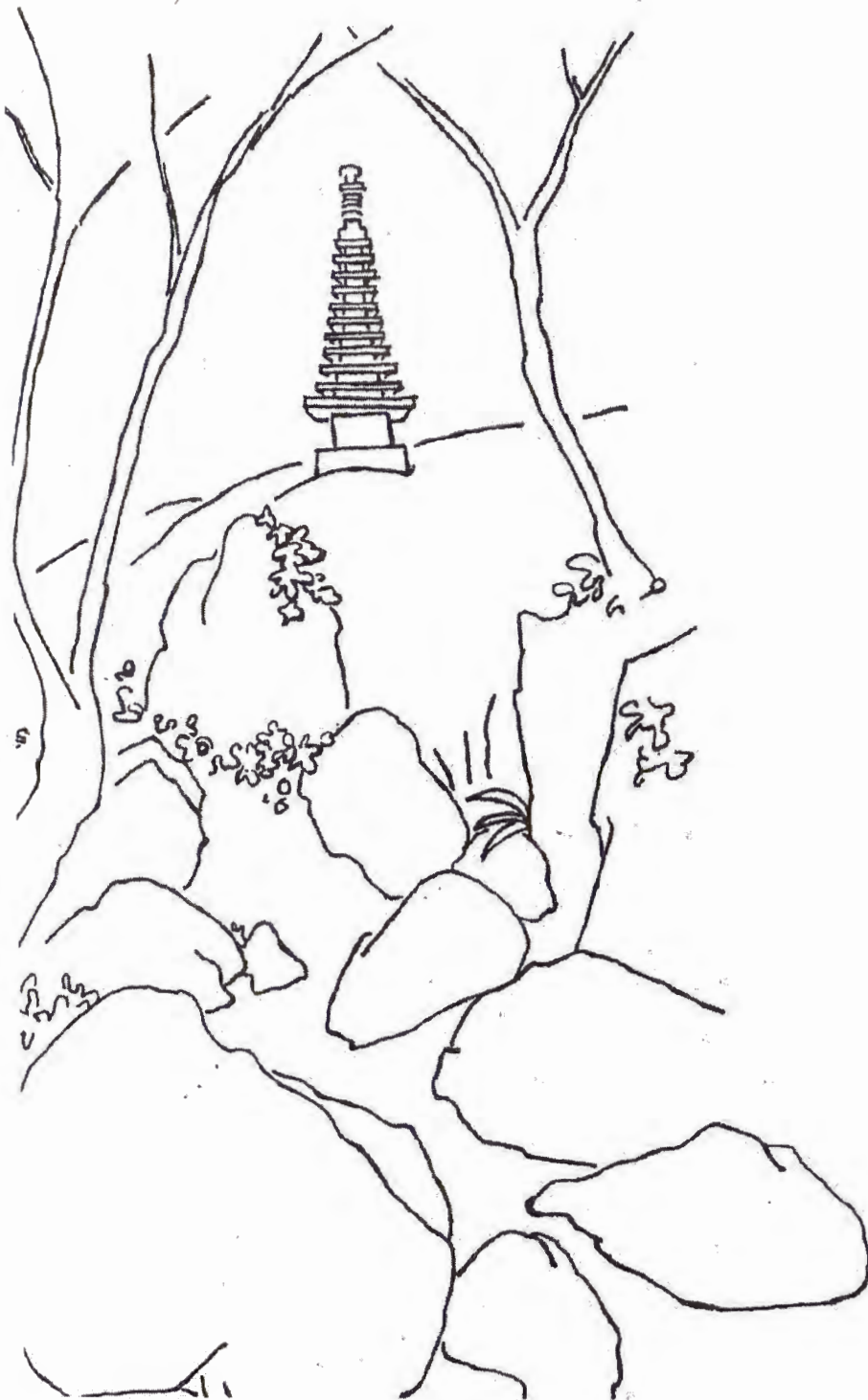
Before entering the tea pavilion, the guests may cleanse their hands and mouths at the stone basin, tsukubai. It is a gesture of purification.

With heart and mind calmed, the guests remove their shoes, cross the stone threshold, fumi ishi, and enter the tearoom.

The tea house was named Shoseian, Arbor of Murmuring Pines, by the Fifteenth Grand Master of the Urasenke School of Tea of Kyoto. The name alludes to a remote forest retreat, where cedars, Japanese maples and moss grow.

The roji is not open to the public, but may be viewed from various points along the garden paths.





THE MOUNTAIN AND WATER FALL

The mountain and waterfall on the west side are crucial to the garden. While they are traditionally located in the north, the flow of the land required that they be placed on the west side of this garden. Here is the beginning of life, and the sound of the falling water suggests birth. It is said that ancestral spirits (kami) were attracted to waterfalls.

The placement of rocks and stones is most important here since the water must fall into different levels and flow toward the pond. The stream suggests youth, the pond, maturity, and at the wisteria arbor, the water flows out to sea.

The multi-storied tower, or stupa, is a reminder of the passing of life and a reference to peace and enlightenment.

There are Japanese maples to mark the ascent to the mountain.

The text was written by Jesse Hiraoka. Aside from the illustration of the stone lantern, all other images were drawn by Louise Kikuchi.

Minor updates made in 2023 by Susan Ralph