

# SETTING STONES AND THE FLOW OF WATER

Japanese garden design and traditions



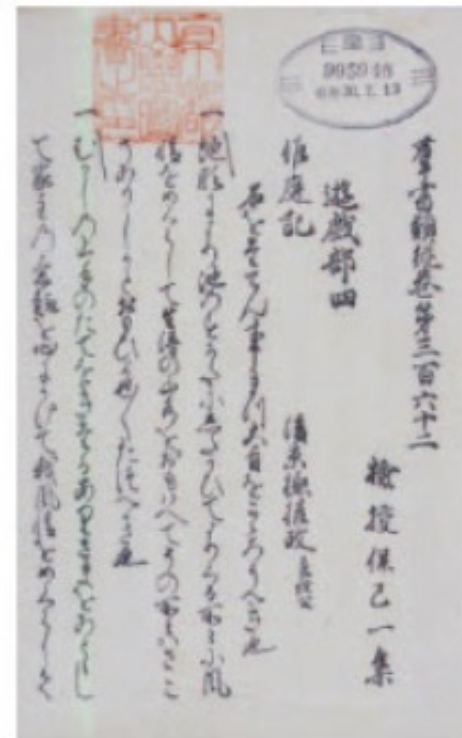
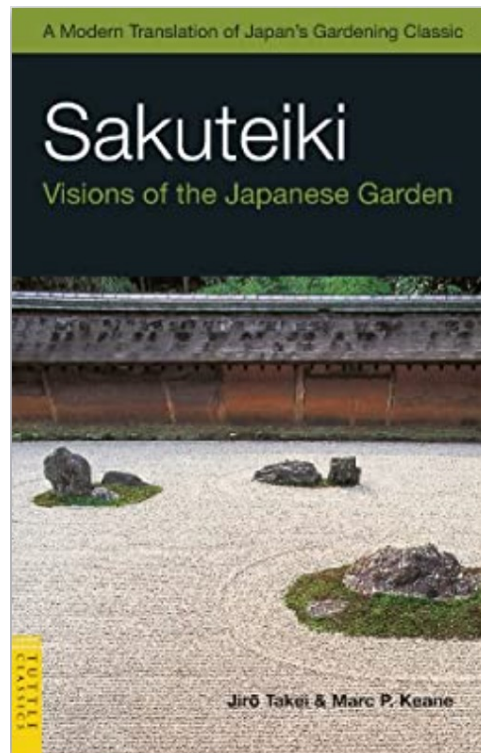
Susan Ralph

# THE ACT OF SETTING STONES

These are the first words in Sakuteiki, the first book about gardening in Japan, 1000 years ago.

石をたてん事

石をたてん事



石をたてん事

“The simple act of standing a stone upright was so spiritually and aesthetically powerful and so clearly central to the process of making a garden, that the act of setting stones became an appellation for gardening itself”

石をたてん事

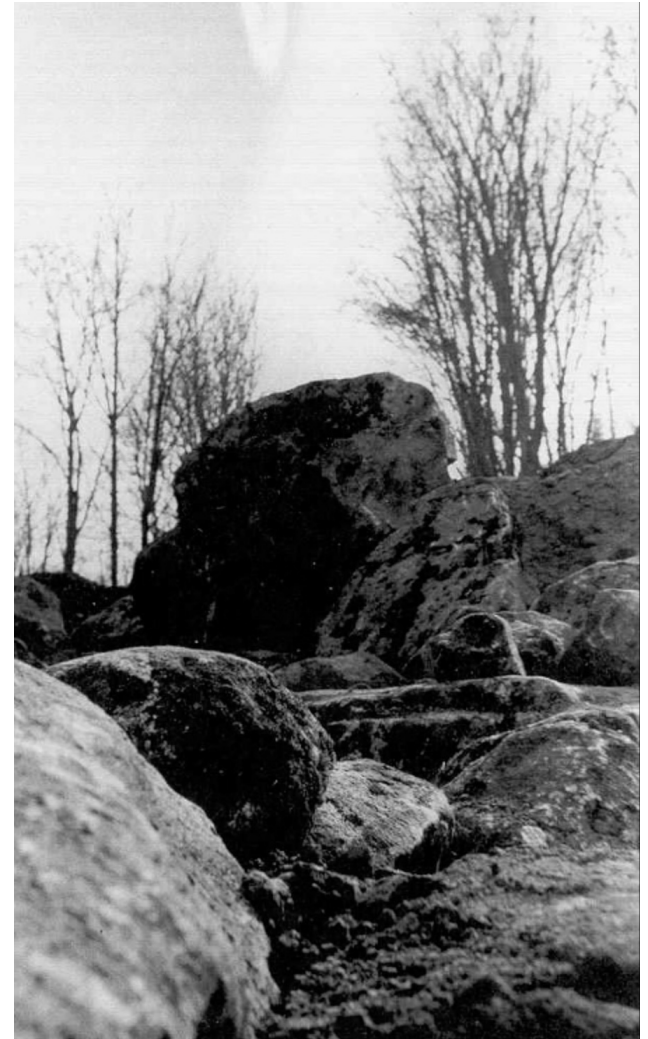
*Sakuteiki, Visions of the Japanese Garden*  
*Jiro Takei & Marc Keane*

“Select several places within the property according to the shape of the land and the ponds, and create a subtle atmosphere, reflecting again and again on one’s memories of wild nature.

Visualize the famous landscapes of our country and come to understand their most interesting points. Re-create the essence of those scenes in the garden, but do so interpretatively, not strictly”



“When setting stones, first bring a number of different stones, both large and small, to the garden site and temporarily set them out on the ground. . . Choose a particularly splendid stone and set it as the Main Stone. Then, following the request of the first stone, set others accordingly.”



“Stones taller than ninety centimeters should not be set near any buildings. He who ignores this rule will not be able to hold onto his household; it will fall into disorder.”

“Do not set a stone so that it falls directly in line with the columns of the buildings. Violate this taboo and even one’s descendants will suffer, evil occurrences will abound, and all one’s wealth and possessions will be lost.”

“The first place to set a stone in the garden stream is where the flow bends sharply. In nature, water bends because there is a stone in the way that the stream cannot destroy. Where the water flows out of a bend, it flows with great force. As it runs diagonally, consider where the water would strike an obstacle most powerfully and at the point set a Turning Stone”





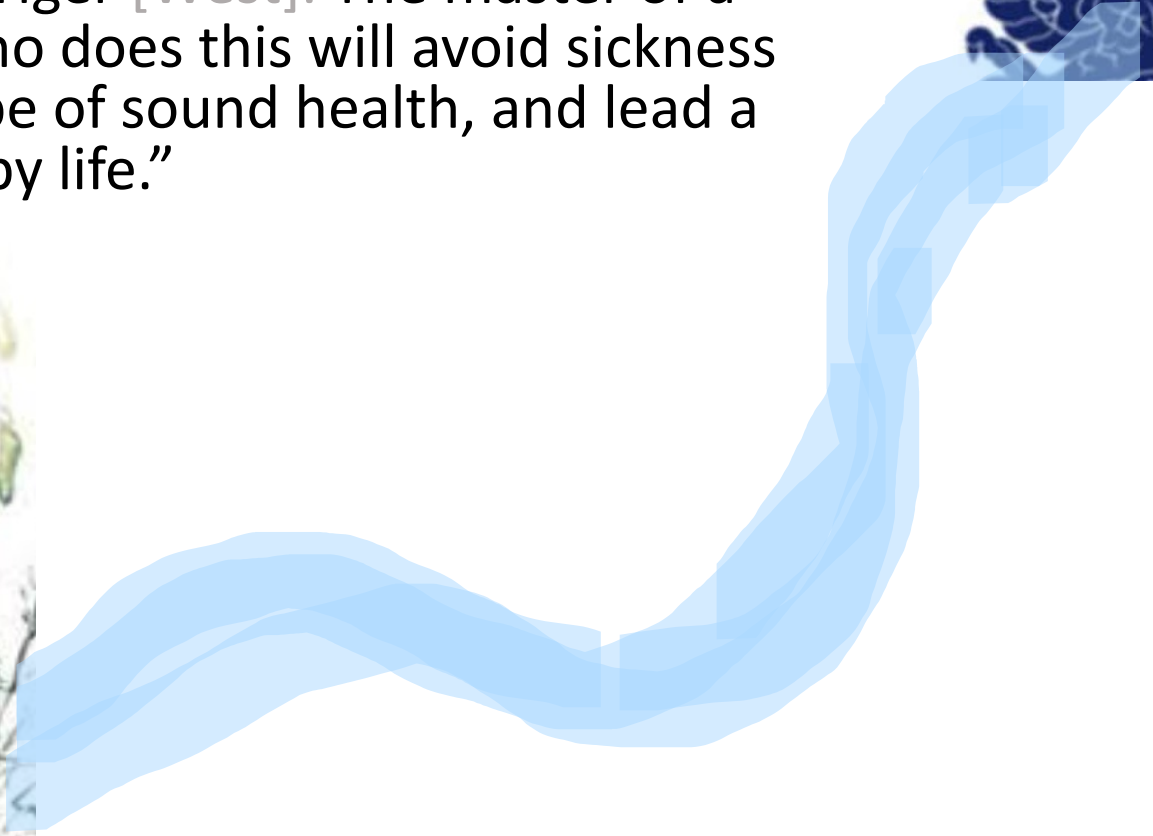


“First, one must choose the Waterfall Stone. A smooth stone that appears to have been cut is uninteresting. . . it should be made of mountain stones with rough surfaces.

Waterfalls appear graceful when they flow out unexpectedly from narrow crevices between stones half hidden in shadows. At the source of the waterfall, just above the waterfall Stone, some well-chosen stones should be placed so that, when seen from afar, the water will appear to be flowing out from the crevices of those boulders, creating a splendid effect”



“According to the scriptures the proper route for water to flow is from the east to south and then towards the west. . . This is because the waters from the Blue Dragon [East] will wash all manner of evil off to the Great Path of the White Tiger [West]. The master of a household who does this will avoid sickness and tumors, be of sound health, and lead a long and happy life.”



# DRAGON GATE



***rigyoseki***

**鯉魚石**

**carp stone**



“If the pond is continually inhabited by waterfowl then the master of the house will know peace and happiness”



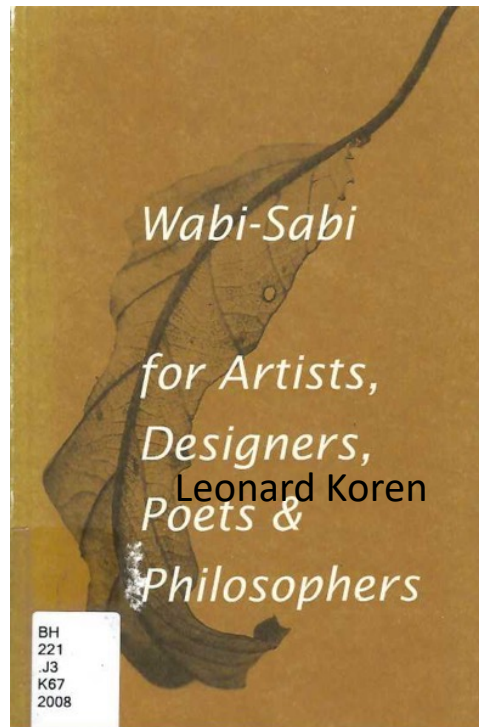
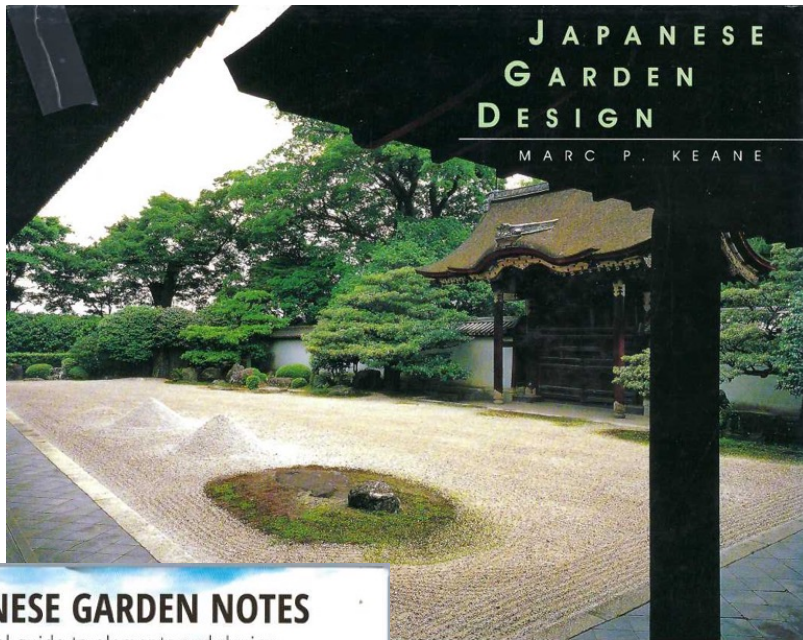


Aurora Santiago

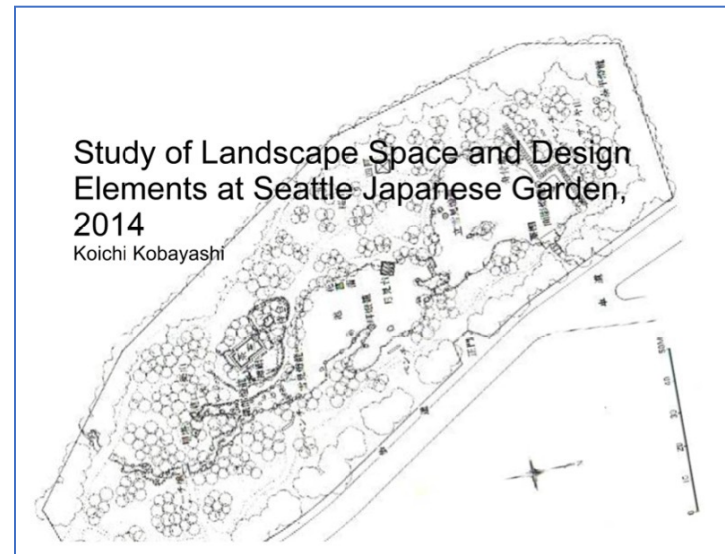
# 600 YEARS PASS . . .

- 1185: Aristocrats become effete, isolated. Samurai warrior class takes over, move capitol to Kamakura.
- 1337: Muromachi era of constant wars, capitol moves back to Kyoto. Tea ceremonies, wabi-sabi, Japanese aesthetics develop.
- 1573: Momoyama era: Hideyoshi Toyotomi was military shogun who united Japan and attacked Korea. During this time arts flourished.
- 1600: His successor, Tokugawa Ieyasu moved the capital to Edo, and demanded that the Daimyo (feudal lords) live alternate years in Edo, but their wives and firstborn sons had to remain in the capital, effectively as hostages to prevent uprisings.
- The Daimyo built stroll gardens to show off their provincial wares and to remind them of their distant lands.
- The Seattle garden was designed as a stroll garden in the late Momoyama/early Edo era.





Rock, Water, Plant  
Garden Masters' Record  
Japanese Writers on the Japanese Garden  
in Washington Park Arboretum, Seattle, 1959-2010  
石, 水, 樹木  
庭師の記録  
沙市ワシントン大学植物園内の日本庭園築造に携わった  
日本人造園家による手記, 1959-2010  
Collected and Translated by Shizue Prochaska and Julie E. Coryell  
プロハスカ静枝とコリエル・ジュリー, 資料の収集と翻訳  
1075 Lake Washington Boulevard East  
Seattle, Washington, 98112  
Arboretumfoundation.org  
Seattlejapanesegarden.org



# STROLL GARDENS

These gardens were meant to be experienced.

Visitors would use their imagination to see distant mountains, seashores, villages, farmlands, waterfalls and rivers.

The gardens contained tea houses with special garden-within-a garden (roji) which itself has an outer and inner garden.

Traditions about flowing streams and setting stones remained important.

Stone lanterns would guide the way.

# PRINCIPLES

- Key stone placement
- Symbolism
- Expression of longevity
- Aesthetic triangle
- Abstraction (Shin, Gyo, So)
- View (Borrowed)
- Hide and Seek
- Boundary
- Framing
- Curving lines



Koichi Kobayashi  
Essence of Japanese Garden

Sumi by Shizue Prochaska

# ELEMENTS

(the things used to convey the principles)

- Rocks
- Waterfall
- Stream
- Mountain
- Stepping stones
- Stone lanterns
- Enclosure, gate
- Bridge
- Buildings
- Plants



# WABI-SABI

Natural

Rustic, imperfect, unfinished

Simple

Asymmetric

Modest

"Wabi means misery (entymological meaning) ...reduced circumstances, but living with elegance and grace.

Sabi is homophonous with lust and connotes the patina of age, with links to loneliness and desolation. Haiku did not invent these terms but celebrated them and embraced them to find beauty in what seems to be unremarkable, to see the nobility of everyday life and ordinary people, to seek joy in small moments." (Prof. Paul Atkins)

# RUSTIC, RE-USE OLD THINGS



# EXPRESSION OF LONGEVITY

- Pine trees
- Cranes (live 1,000 years)
- Turtles (live 10,000 years)



# YOHAKU NO BI

The beauty of empty space



KANJI	PRONUNCIATION	LITERAL MEANING	DEFINITION
間	ma		space, time
間	aida		interval (of space or time)
間	ken		linear, one-dimensional space; the length of a tatami mat, and the standard module for architecture.
間	ma		planar, two-dimensional space; as in <i>hiro-ma</i> , a large room for events.
空間	kukan	empty + ma	three-dimensional space
時間	jikan	time + ma	time
人間	ningen	person + ma	people





# MIEGAKURE

Hide and reveal, surprise, mystery





# SHAKKEI

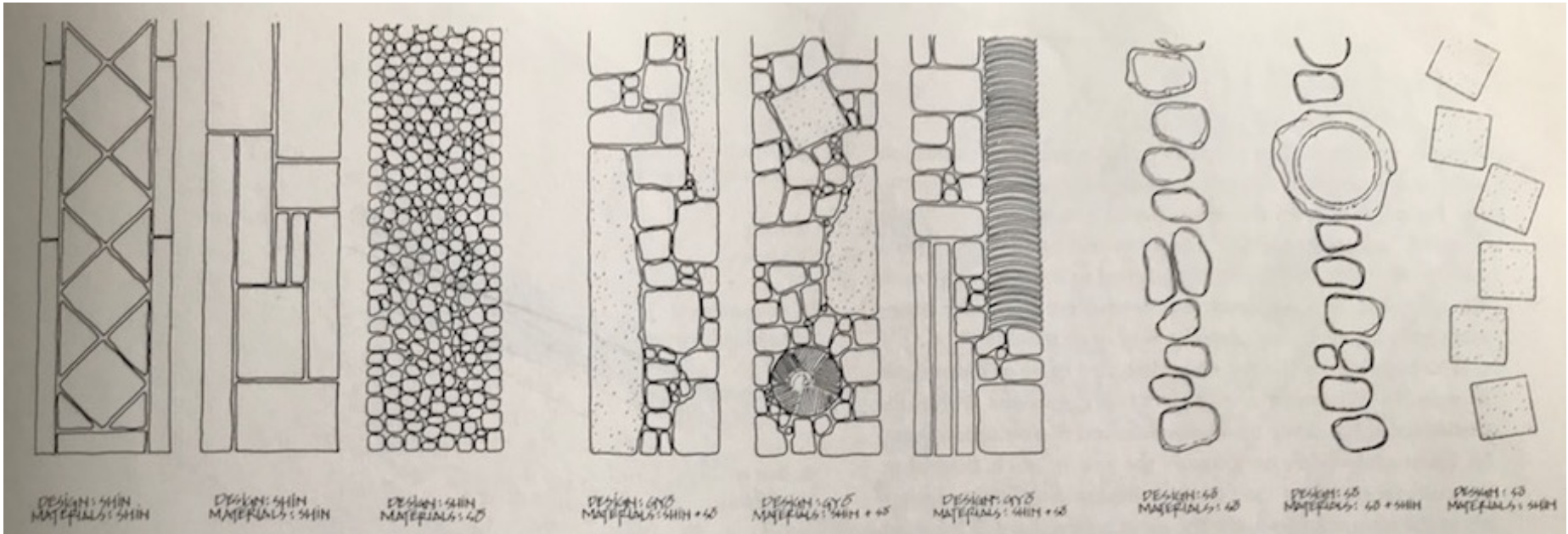
## Borrowed scenery





# SHIN – GYO – SO

Formal – semiformal – informal



# BRIDGES



yatsubashi



dobashi



# TOBI ISHI

## Stepping stones



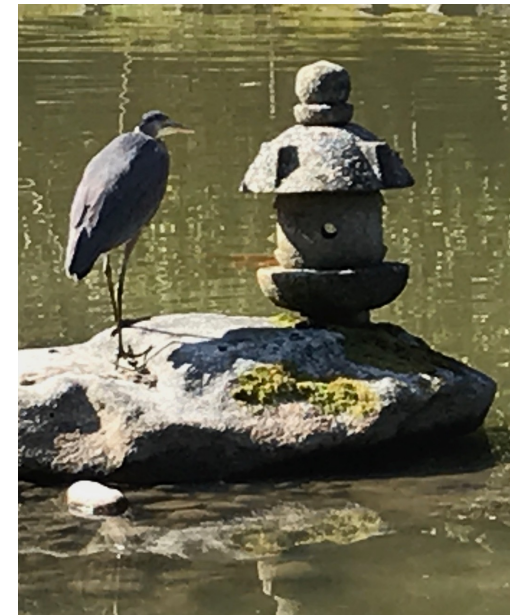
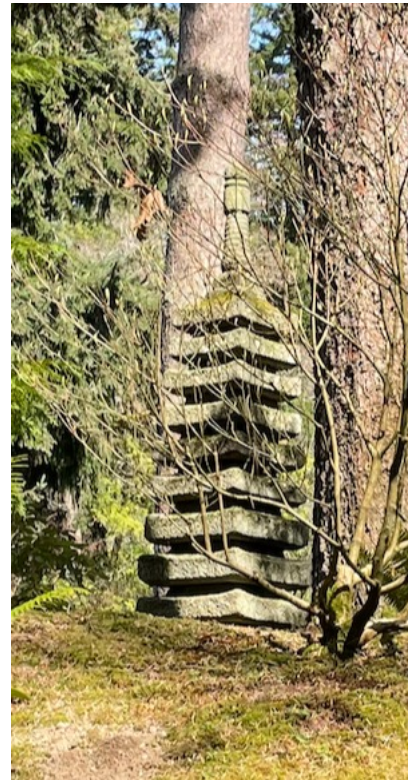


# SEKIMORI ISHI

Guard stone



# STONE STRUCTURES



# TRADITIONAL PLANTS

pine, maple, paulownia, cherry, cryptomeria, willow  
iris, azalea, lotus (water lily)



1959



Kiyoshi Inoshita 井下 清

The flow of water, which originated at the high mountain ranges,



transforms itself as it continues its way through the landscape



first it turns into a waterfall,



then into a stream,





# rinsing the foot of a teahouse



and finally becomes a lake.



At the lakeshore are a variety of features such as a rock promontory, an inlet, and steep slopes



through which water continues its way,  
until it presents the scene of a village



with a cherry grove,



an iris bed,



# a moon viewing platform



and an island connected to both shores by two different kinds of bridges.





At the end of the lake is a stone paved boat launch, suggesting a harbor town.



From there, the water disappears from one's sight,



leaving the expectation that it will join the greater ocean.

