

An **A-Z** of terms in Japanese Gardening

The 'Grass Cottage'

An enduring impression of the Japanese garden comes from its creation of an idyllic landscape setting. However mannered and sophisticated the design, it remains wedded to the sense of rusticity (*sabi*). The image of the idealised rustic retreat is deeply in the heart of the Japanese garden, where it becomes a place detached from the travails of the everyday world.

The idealised 'Grass Cottage' can be traced back to the work of Po Chui (772-864) one of China's greatest poets. Po Chui's description of his country residence, to which he retired during times when he was out of political favour, bears all the hallmarks of what was to become the Japanese tea-house. In addition, Buddhism encouraged transcendence of the everyday world, and this notion



was drawn deeply into the manner and purpose of the Japanese garden. Rather than being a negative form of escapism, retreat from the everyday world was seen as a necessary means of seeking the truth beyond the veil of illusion.

Ginkaku-ji (Jisho-ji)

The well-known 'Silver Pavilion' situated to the east of Kyoto is part of the well-trodden tourist circuit. Originally constructed 1482-1492, it was built by Ashikaga Yoshimasa, grandson of the builder of the 'Golden Pavilion', *Kinkaku-ji*. It is thought that the design of Ginkaku-ji was the work of Yoshimasa himself, working with *Zenami*.

Yoshimasa created his design on the basis of a deep appreciation of the garden at *Saiho-ji*; the site can be roughly divided into two parts, the lower garden containing the main buildings, pond and trees, and the upper garden containing the surrounding slopes, a spring source and extensive stonework. The memorable sand cone and raised sand bed of the lower garden were probably added during rebuilding in 1629.

The garden and its architecture are principally organised along an E-W axis, partly reflecting Jōdō Buddhist ideas and partly to provide for moon-viewing and moonlight appreciation.

Ginkaku-ji began to suffer the ravages of neglect within a few years of Yoshimasa's death. Reconstruction and renovation began in the 17th century, and altered the original layout of the pond (some stones are said to

Robert Ketchell (continued)

have been removed to create the garden at *Nijo Castle*). The sand cone and the 'silver sand sea' developed over many years to their present dominant size. Critics of the garden point out that these features have overgrown their original dimensions to become intrusive.

At Ginkaku-ji we have, somewhat modified, a garden that is on a cusp of change. From the formation of Heian gardens, overlaid with stonework in the Muromachi manner, the garden looks forward to the more developed stroll gardens that were to follow.

Gaki (fences)

Fences of several different kinds and with several different functions are intrinsic to Japanese garden design. There are literally hundreds of designs, which cover the full range from formal through to comparatively rustic. Garden manuals published in the Edo period are valuable source-books for the many styles. Fences were (and still are) mostly created of bamboo. Brushwood (sometimes combined with bamboo) is also popular. Fences are not treated as permanent features, but are to be rebuilt or replaced every few years. The cycle of renewal and decay is appreciated as a fitting expression of nature.

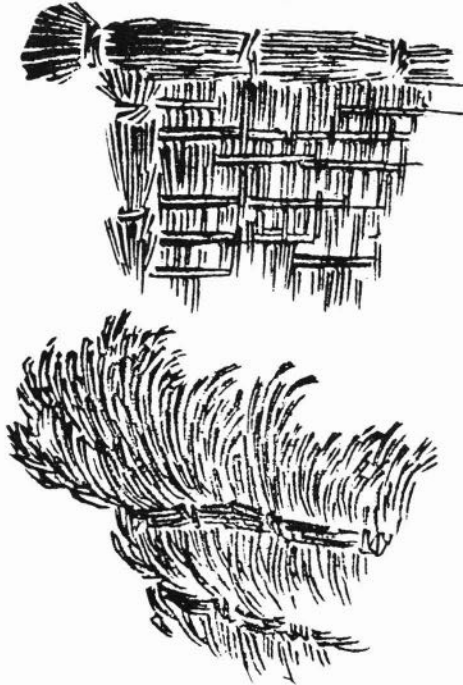
In their garden settings, fences are used less to define boundaries and more to divide space and to create a sense of transition from one area to another. In this way fences are often used as 'visual barriers' guiding the visiting eyes. 'Sode-gaki' or 'sleeve fences' are sections of fencing up to a metre wide placed alongside buildings, especially tea

houses, to create partial screening effects, They may be very elaborate in their design and construction.

Geomancy—see *feng shui*.

Hama Rikyu

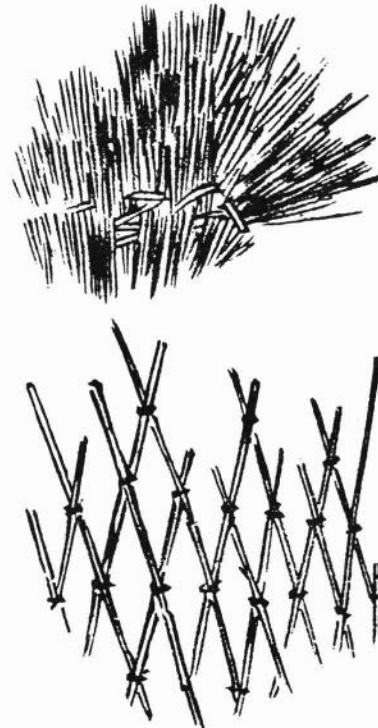
The 'Beach Palace' in Tokyo is one of the few surviving tidal lake gardens created in the Edo period (see the note on 'Edo gardens' in *Shakkei*, summer 1994). It is on a square island of 96 acres, one side facing the river, the other three sides being enclosed by a walled canal. The main lake covers about 6 acres and there are two others. The inlet to the main lake lets in fresh water, with a tidal gate holding back the brackish flood water. The garden was laid out in the mid-17th century for Matsudaira Tsunashige, a relative of the Tokugawa clan. In the late 19th century the property was used to entertain important foreign dignitaries, and it is nowadays one of Tokyo's public parks.



Heian Jingu

The large complex known as the Heian Jingu (Shrine) in Kyoto was built in 1894 as a memorial to the Emperor Kammu, who was responsible for transferring the capital from Nara to Kyoto eleven hundred years previously. It was designed by *Ogawa Jihei*. There is a large Chinese-style building with two large pavilions set out on wings connected by covered arcades; the form of architecture recalls the 'shinden' style prevalent in the Heian period. A large lake garden is reached by passing through three smaller gardens beside and beyond the main building.

Perhaps unusually, the gardens of Heian Jingu feature flowering plants in profusion, and the seasonal use of planting brings to mind the garden designs of the Heian period. Very popular with visitors for seasonal viewing, the gardens contain notable displays of irises and cherry trees among others.



Higashiyama

The Eastern Hills district of Kyoto is a renowned beauty spot and has long been favoured for the building of residences and gardens. It is well supplied with several streams and dense woodland, like its counterpart to the west of Kyoto. Many gardens have been lost over the years but there are still many important gardens to draw the visitor—*Ginkaku-ji*, *Shisen-do*, *Entfu-ji*, *Joju-in* and *Kyomizu-dera* among others.

