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Research Report from the National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan, No.190, 2005

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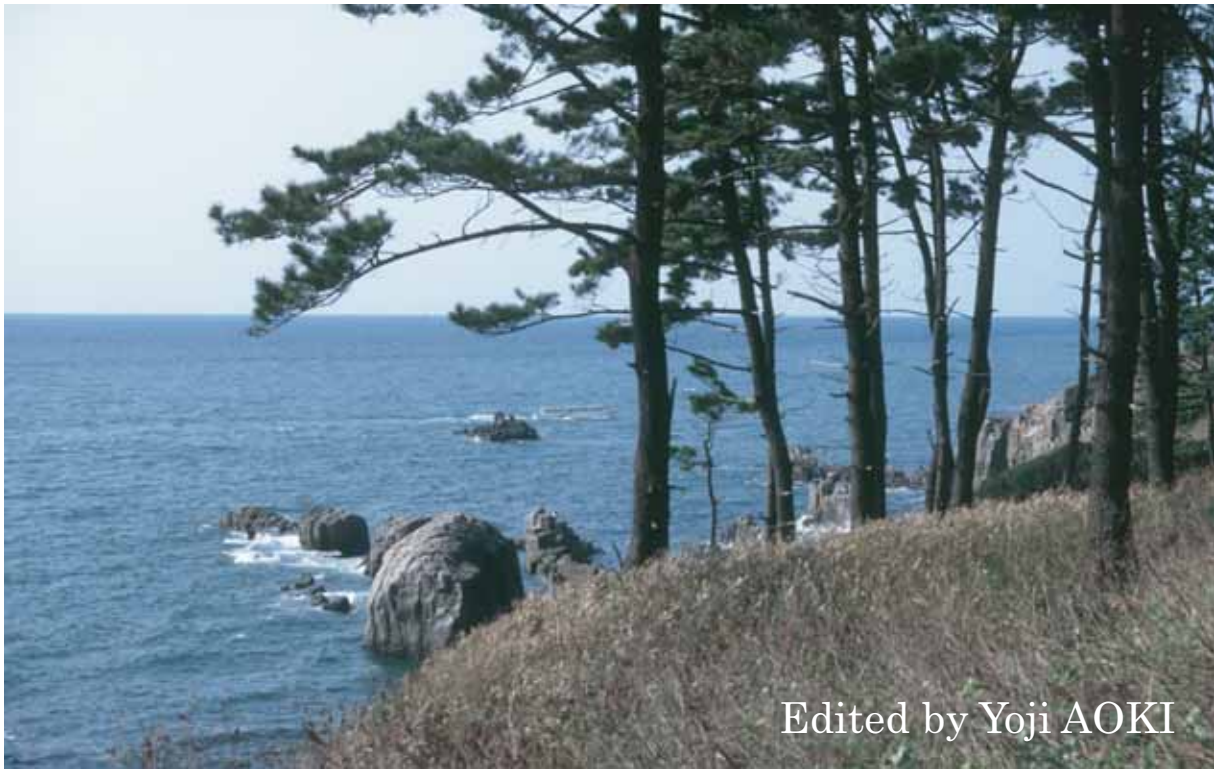
Experiences of Japanese Landscapes

A summary of the impressions of foreign researchers who stayed at NIES until 2004 regarding the landscape planning of Japan.



Tojinbo, Fukui

独立行政法人　国 立 環 境 研 究 所

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

国立環境研究所研究報告　第 190 号
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A summary of the impressions of foreign researchers who stayed at NIES until 2004 regarding the landscape planning of Japan.

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Foreword

This report summarizes the impressions of a group of foreign research fellows on various Japanese landscapes. Since 1999 the group has all worked temporarily at our institute where they prepared a report based on discussion with, and commentary by, Dr. Yoji Aoki. Despite their short stay in Japan and the unfamiliarity of the Japanese landscapes, the contributors observed interesting phenomena and revealed some useful perspectives. This research subject has been especially prominent in our country since December 2004 when the national law for landscape management was passed. With Dr. Aoki having already published the research report "Appreciation of Japanese landscape by Western visitors who arrived before 1900," so the two reports released en bloc have made it possible to thoroughly grasp external impressions of modern Japan.

I would like to congratulate Dr. Aoki for his painstaking efforts in publishing this research report in collaboration with many of his colleagues. It is my sincere hope that this report contributes to the development of this scientific realm. Also that it helps broaden and deepen the perspectives of those researchers, specialists of governmental administration and students who are concerned with environmental issues.

August 2005

Ryutaro OHTSUKA, D.Sc.
President, National Institute for Environmental Studies

Tokyo

Drawn by Prof. Robert SOMMER PhD., University of California, Davis.

FOREWORD

Jay Appleton

Following the opening up of Japan to Western influences from 1854 people in the West were able slowly to build up an increasingly accurate picture of the Japanese landscape based on the reports and descriptions which were arriving from visitors almost all of whom were interested amateurs with no claim to expertise in the technical understanding of landscape. Although this deficiency began to be made good during the twentieth century, it remained true until very recently that the westerner's image of the landscape continued to be based on the reports of non-professional observers. It is to the credit of the National Institute for Environmental Studies that it realised that the understanding of landscape in both East and West would be greatly enhanced if more academics and practitioners in fields related to the study of landscape were to visit the country and be given the opportunity to see for themselves its contrasting landscapes. The Institute was exceptionally fortunate in having the services of Dr Yoji Aoki, whose imagination, initiative and commitment led to a programme of planned visits of experts whose impressions are summarised in this collection of essays.

The resulting book is not like the report of a Committee formally charged with arriving at a consensus of opinion, much less a blueprint for the implementation of a detailed policy. Rather it is a repository of individual ideas contributed by a well-chosen group of experts. It will be of no less interest to the philosopher than to the landscape architect or planner.

Whenever we begin to draw distinctions between the landscapes of different areas we tend to be impressed by the differences between them, but it invariably becomes apparent that the similarities are no less important. If, as a species, our physical features evolved over a long period of time, so also did the instincts which prompt us how to use them to ensure our own survival. Not least among these was the imperative to acquire information about our environment, so that we could exploit its potentialities while avoiding its hazards. We are, in short, 'programmed to explore'. Over time, particular groups of our ancestors may have become attuned to the environments in which they took up residence and their attitudes to landscape may therefore have developed differently, but it is evident that, at a basic level such concepts as 'voids and masses', landscapes of exposure and seclusion, views looking up and views looking down, induce something like a common response. Cultural differences may then appear as idiomatic variations on the same common themes.

While the immediate focus of this book is on the landscapes of Japan, its relevance extends far more widely, and it will be found to touch on a whole range of questions which underlie our understanding of environmental aesthetics. So well done, NIES! Well done, Dr Aoki, and well done all who have contributed to this important undertaking!

Jay APPLETON,
The University of Hull, England.

To Prof. Jay APPLETON
In gratitude
For the past twenty years

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Jay APPLETON of Hull University for his kind explanation of the importance of “Experience of Landscape”, and Prof. Seigo ITO of Shinshu University for his kind help with this work. I thank Prof. Shoichiro ASAKAWA of Hokkaido University, Prof. Hitoshi FUJITA of Aomori University, Prof. Ikuo MITA of Tohoku Art and Design University, Prof. Michio UMINO of Tohoku University, Prof. Takekazu KOYANAGI of Ibaraki University, Prof. Makoto YOKOHARI and Prof. Reiji OBASE of Tsukuba University, Prof. Eijiro FUJII of Chiba University, Prof. Mamoru NAGAI of Utsunomiya University, Prof Akio SHIMOMURA of Tokyo University, Prof. Megumi ASO of Tokyo University of Agriculture, Prof. Ryuzo OHNO of Tokyokogyo University, Prof. Hiroyuki YASUJIMA of Rikkyo University, Prof. Shinichi KITAMURA of Yamanashi University, Prof. Tadahiko HIGUCHI of Kyoto University, Prof. Hisayuki MAENAKA of Osaka Prefecture University, Prof. Isao NAKASE of University of Hyogo, Prof. Hideji YOKOYAMA of Kyushu Sangyo University, Prof. Toshinori SHIGEMATSU of Kyushu University, Prof. Takakazu NIIZATO, Prof. Mitsutaka ARAMOTO and Prof. Kiyoshi UEMA of University of the Ryukyus for their kind help.
I also extend my thanks to the director Tatsuo SASAOKA of Chubu Nature Conservation Office, Dr. Hideyuki KOBAYASHI of National Institute for Land and Infrastructure Management, Dr. Fumihoro KONTA of National Science Museum, Dr. Akio MARUYAMA, Dr. Ken SUGIMURA and Dr. Takahide KAGAWA of Forestry Research Institute, Dr. Hideaki TANAKA of National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology, Dr. Masaaki KUREHA of Tsukuba University, Dr. Katsunori FURUYA of Chiba University, Dr. Akio BITO of Yamanashi University, and Dr. Nobuo MISHIMA of Saga University for their cooperation in this study. We visited many sites in the local areas and were welcomed by the peoples of national parks and local administrations. We would like to say thanks to the National Park Offices, Hokkaido prefecture government, Yamagata prefecture government, Tokyo metropolitan government, the town of Haruno, Shiga prefecture government, and many other local administration offices.
The editorial committee of National Institute for Environmental Studies checked the expression of this report. Mr. Tom JONES checked the English texts. The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science shared the cost of the visit for the foreign researchers. We thank their contributions.

November 2005
Yoji AOKI

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Introduction

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After the opening of the country at the end of the Edo era in 1854, many Western visitors stayed and traveled in Japan. They discovered the beauty of Japanese landscapes and reported back to their countries in the latter half of the 19th century. At the time however the Japanese themselves could not know those reports or travelogues, and did not pay attention to their descriptions even though some of them were translated into Japanese. Furthermore, the Japanese government destroyed the said objects of landscape beauty with the new development brought about by the Meiji revolution. Many traditional beauties were damaged despite the complaints of western residents in Japan.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the famous landscape researcher, Shigetaka Shiga, published a book "Nihon Fukeiron" describing the theories of Japanese landscape, and the book became very popular in Japan. He had taken western landscape descriptions into account and described the features of Japanese landscape in terms of four points; the diverse climate and ocean current, rich vapor in the air, many volcanic activities, and rapid erosion by the rivers. He admired the beauty of Japanese landscape compared to his travel experiences in the southern islands. But Kanzo Uchimura, a Christian priest, criticized his exaggerated admiration of Japanese landscapes, because he had traveled across the continents of North America, Europe and Asia. As a result of this discussion, scholars became interested in the subject of landscape evaluation. But they never finalized their conclusions because of the shortage of knowledge about foreign landscapes.

This movement also affected the general people and landscape evaluation became popular among the general public, to the extent that there was a vote in the newspaper. This popularity persuaded the Japanese government to establish the National Parks in 1931 as a result of the introduction of western ideas. This was the first movement of landscape preservation for natural beauty in Japan. But this idea focused on western scientific knowledge, so they never paid attention to the landscape beauty compared to the description by the natural sciences.

The recovery from the devastation of the Second World War forced people to commit to economic development and rapid urbanization. They destroyed natural beauty and sometimes caused pollution deeds, e.g. water pollution, air pollution, etc., in the worst cases. From time to time Western countries pointed out ugly phenomena among Japanese landscapes. But most Japanese could not understand their claims because – just as during the Meiji revolution – very few Japanese had the chance to travel abroad. Recently, more than 10 million Japanese travel abroad every year. Their experience of foreign travel has increased and some of them can now understand the westerners' claims. In particular the Japanese who visited Western countries can readily understand what they are talking about. And the Japanese government decided to establish the first law for the management of landscape in December of 2004. The government is now seeking planning methods for landscape beauty.

I have invited many environmental research specialists to NIES and taken care of their visits to remote parts of the Japanese archipelago. During such trips, they experienced diverse landscapes across Japan and I heard some comments on the Japanese landscapes from them. That is why I have chosen to compile their comments as a paper and publish it for the Japanese government. Their comments will be useful advice when planning the Japanese landscapes of the future. This report summarizes their experiences traveling in Japan up until 2004. As they are specialists of environmental research, their impressions will be good advice for the Japanese government in terms of landscape planning.

Research background

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The former research report of R-185 focused on the "Appreciation of Japanese landscapes by the Western visitors arrived until 1900". The author aimed to find the original attraction of Japan through this work, because many foreigners had described the beauty of Japanese landscapes until then. The report listed and summarized the descriptions of Western visitors about "Fukei" of Japan since the first arrival on Tanegashima Island in 1549 (Aoki, et al. 2004). We could define `Fukei' as similar to an impression of landscape or scenery. Japanese appreciation of scenery had been influenced by Chinese culture since ancient times. For example, the idea of "Eight Scenery", which evolved in the 10th century in ancient China, was introduced in the 14th century to Japan. It has therefore affected more than five centuries of the Japanese landscape appreciation (Aoki, et al. 2003). Because Japan was closed to western foreigners until the end of the Edo era, (i.e., the 19th century) the effect continued until the opening of the country. And cultivated Japanese used Chinese methods for the sophisticated way of landscape observation such as Chinese poetry. After the opening of the country, Japanese began to accept Western culture and its way of landscape appreciation. Cultivated Japanese understood natural phenomena by the development of natural science. Although the western countries had experienced the period of Landscape Painting from the 16th to the 19th centuries and sometimes described Japanese landscape as belonging to a similar kind of beauty, Japanese never understand their appreciation. Quite recently, by studying the descriptions of Western visitors to Japan, we have found how they understood and appreciated Japanese landscapes and what was the landscape beauty of Japan that existed in former times.

Summary of each period

The term of visit was divided into 6 parts. The focal objects appreciated were listed in the paper and the features of Japanese also summarized (Aoki et al. 2004).

(1) The first period began with the arrival of the first Portuguese pioneer, Mendes Pinto, to Tanegashima Island in 1549 and ended at the time of the opening of the country by negotiation with Perry in 1853. During the period, Portuguese and Spaniards visited and engaged mostly in missionary, work obtaining many believers in western Japan. Although domestic warfare sometimes threatened not only Japanese lives but also Westerners' lives, they established many churches as the result of their activities. But Japanese government excluded them from the 17th century, because the government feared for the country's stability. In that period, Westerners were not yet accustomed to plant taxonomy or landscape paintings. They never described the natural landscape or vegetation in Japan, the outstanding features of Japanese landscape. During the closed country period, (i.e. the Edo era) the Dutch including German or Swedish visitors traveled from Nagasaki to Edo. Some of them knew plant taxonomy and found the features of Japanese landscape to be endowed with a diversity of plants. In this period, Russia also investigated Japanese landscape from the coasts and found pleasant impressions. Unfortunately, the Japanese government sometimes met them and arrested some Russians as prisoners. They also reported the landscape beauty of Japan.

(2) U. S. A. and Russia visited to negotiate opening the country of Japan in 1853. Some members of the troop could understand Japanese and some knew plant taxonomy. They could describe the landscape and vegetation more precisely. Moreover the troops came accompanied with landscape painters, so they could report in detail the vegetation of Japan. Some enjoyed familiar vegetation at Hokkaido Island and some admired the beauty of the topographical features of Japanese landscapes.

(3) After the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan in 1859, Western diplomats explored the inland areas to learn about Japanese society. They frequently made sightseeing tours, and inspected the details of Japan. Some knew about landscape painting and others painted as a hobby, which made more precise observation of the landscapes. They found the clearness of air, dominant features of plants, and realized the landscape beauties of Japanese compared to Europe. In the same period, U. K. sent plant hunters all over the world (Shirahata 1994), and they found rich and diversified vegetation in Japan, along with a juxtaposition of boreal and tropical vegetation.
(4) The number of western visitors was increasing in spite of the political and social confusion in Japan. Because of the overthrow of the Shogunate government, some of them were injured by terrorist attacks in 1862. Earnest Satow traveled and investigated widely in Japan to make a travel guide for Westerners (Satow and Hawes 1881). This guidebook encouraged the visitors to the unbeaten areas of Japan. The guidebook also recorded many beautiful landscapes of Japan existing in those days.
(5) After the Meiji Revolution in 1868, many hired specialists visited Japan to pass on their knowledge evolved in the western cultures. The Japanese were devoted to understanding them and gave them not only monetary rewards but also cordial introductions to their famous sightseeing sites and interior. For example, Richard Henry Brunton (Griffis 1906) toured around the coast of the Japanese islands to make lighthouses near the ports. Dr. Ervin Baerz (1931) investigated hot springs and highlands to find suitable sites for health resorts. Edward Sylvester Morse (1917) made visits from Hokkaido in the north to Kyushu in the south for his inspection of biological curiosities. They made detailed descriptions of landscapes and found beautiful sites to their tastes.
(6) After the popularity of visits to Japan was thus established, many tourists and missionaries came and traveled across the islands. For example, the famous tourist Isabella Bird traveled unbeaten tracks in the Tohoku region from the south to the north and visited Ainu villages in Hokkaido in 1878. Some Westerners stayed longer and some lived even in the distant rural areas to find the beauty of old Japan. Japan quickly changed appearance not only the big cities but also along the main roads. This change made it difficult to distinguish their impressions from their hope or illusions. And the effects of the western cultures became grater and affected landscape observation of the Japanese. On the other hand, Westerners complained about the ugly changes in the Japanese landscape. For example, Japanese cut the magnificent rows of trees on the roads and constructed electric poles instead. But the Japanese only realized their advice more than 100 years later.

Research promotion

Many people assisted the first study. Prof. Jay APPLETON of Hull University showed the importance of the research on “Experience of Landscape” (Appleton 1995), and Prof. Takasuke WATANABE of Tokyokogyo University gave advice on the importance of description of western travelers. Mr. Motoh SHODA and many other translators gave me the detailed information of travelers. The former President of National Institute for Environmental Studies, Yohichi GOHSHI, promoted this study. The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science shared the cost of the visits for the foreign researchers.
Data was obtained from the library of Tsukuba University, Diet Library, Toyo Bunko, Yokohama Archives of History, and the library of Tourism and Culture of Japan Travel Bureau Foundation. Data of sites described was obtained from many local administrations, e.g. Hokkaido prefecture government, the city of Sapporo, the city of Hakodate, the city of Aomori, the town of Matsushima, the town of Nishiaizu, the city of Nikko, the Tokyo metropolitan government, the village of Ogasawara, the city of Yokohama, the city of Kamakura, the town of Hakone, the city of Joetsu, the town of Ikeda in Nagano prefecture, the city of Shiojiri, the town of Honkawane, the town of Haruno, the city of Shimoda, the city of Ohtsu, the city of Nagasaki, the Kagoshima prefecture government, the city of Naha and many other local administration

offices.

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Impressions of Japanese National Parks, forests, rural landscapes and recreational Development

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This short paper presents some of my impressions of the themes I looked at during my time as JSPS Fellow in September-October 2002. My background as a forester and landscape architect interested in natural and cultural landscapes led me to be interested in how national parks, forests, rural cultural landscapes and recreational developments are treated. In my fellowship I was able to travel widely, from Iriomote Island in the south to Hokkaido in the north.

National Parks and recreation design

I visited several national parks – Iriomote, Mt Hakkoda and Daisetsuzan – as well as other parks where I was able to look at the various facilities provided for visitors. What was noticeable was that, considering how the population of Japan is ageing, little concern for accessibility by people with various disabilities was displayed. Many areas were difficult for older or disabled people to visit because of steps, surfacing, gradients and other factors (Fig. 1, 2). This is an area where much needs to be done. Luckily, there is plenty of information available from other countries on inclusive design so it would be a relatively easy task to apply some of it in Japan. This lack of provision contrasts with the very good provision for disabled people – especially blind people – in urban areas (pavements, stations etc with textured pavement).

The use of materials in parks also showed some disturbing tendencies, especially the preference for concrete shaped to resemble wood. The most absurd example of this was a viewing platform in Iriomote which looked like something out of a Walt Disney cartoon and was quite out of place in a national park.

By contrast, there were also some excellent examples of sensitive design using the correct materials, such as a volcano viewing area in Hakkoda (although the access for disabled people was a problem) (Fig. 3, 4).

National Park management

The management of national parks in relation to the surrounding landscape seems to present challenges in Japan as it does elsewhere. Most countries have designated their most spectacular scenery, such as remote mountains, as national parks but these are often cut off from a natural connection with the sea, for example. Iriomote Island has substantial areas of park that extend to the sea meaning that rivers that rise in the hilly central portion flow for their entire length to the sea within the park. This is beneficial for the sea bed, where coral is important. On nearby Ishigaki island the forested hills, while not a park, protect the landscape but most of the lowlands are under intensive sugar cane cultivation and silt from the fields is being washed into the sea and smothering the corals (Fig. 5, 6). Were the rivers to be protected so that the entire hydrological system was controlled, this would also protect the coral.

Urban sprawl and the cultural landscape

In relation to land planning and the problems of urban sprawl it became clear from discussions that there are major issues to deal with yet the mechanisms familiar to people working in the UK are unavailable at present in Japan. For example, issues of sprawl in Japan are becoming notorious and well-known but in

some ways sprawl is traditionally Japanese, in the sense that cities have never been finished off or had their boundaries circumscribed in a tidy way but they gradually gave way into the countryside. However, the main issue now is the exponential rate of change and the fact that sprawls from one city meets that of another city midway between them. While in the UK there are green belts to prevent this, no such instruments are developed in Japan.

While planners tend to focus on sprawl as an issue of urban development, the other side of the coin is the serious loss and fragmentation of the traditional rural cultural landscape. This is exacerbated where the remoter rural areas have become abandoned and the land falls into dereliction, walls between paddy fields collapse and, in the snowy west of the country facing the Japan Sea the roofs of empty houses fall in and the houses are lost as part of the cultural heritage.

Government grants and subsidies have never been part of the system of land use planning or control in Japan, so the type of measures used in the UK over the years are lacking.

The development of grass roots organisations is only just starting to happen in Japan and there is still a strong hierarchical tradition of top-down organisation for everything.

By way of illustration of this point I visited an area called Shishizuka, not far from Tsukuba. Here there was clear evidence of sprawl, with various industrial and commercial buildings sited in the middle of paddy (Fig. 7, 8). Nearby was an area of mixed secondary woodland with paddies and a couple of ponds. The area was a haven for birds and the woods were managed to improve the habitat for spring flowers. This place had been taken over in part by a local citizen's group who had produced leaflets about the area and its wildlife. This shows that once the seeds of community awareness have been sown it is possible for special local places to be recognised and protected.

Forest management

Japan is a country well-known for the extent of forests – around 70% of the land area, mainly on the mountains. Many of the lower slopes of these mountains are covered in plantations of Japanese cedar and Japanese cypress, planted densely for timber production. These are no longer economic to harvest so that there are challenges about how to manage them in the future. One of the problems of such plantations is the fact that they are so densely planted and need to be thinned in order for understory to develop in them. I was able to see an interesting experiment at Ina, in the university forest. Here two different thinning regimes had been tested (Fig. 9, 10). One was a conventional thinning where the cypress trees were thinned to an even density across the compartment; the second involved a variable density – some places less and others denser than the average. This produced a much more naturalistic effect and, some 10 years later, a richer ground and shrub layer. This vegetation was broadleaved and was considered to be soil enriching. Such work demonstrates what could be achieved by a more imaginative approach to silviculture.

Conclusions and recommendations

Japan is an exciting and beautiful country and the people value the landscape. However, despite the recognition that Japan is an ageing society, the level of awareness of issues of accessibility to public spaces, especially parks, seems to be relatively low. It is clear that standards of accessibility need to be strengthened and those concerned with the design and management of open spaces, parks and other land need to be made aware of how to improve accessibility.

There should be more use of natural materials in the design and construction of facilities in national and other parks. The use of concrete, while maintenance free and functional, is not very sustainable, nor it is appropriate for the settings.

The issue of urban sprawl, the loss of cultural landscapes and the lack of protection given to them is of concern. A national programme of landscape character assessment and the inventory of important and typical cultural landscapes would be worth considering, along with a campaign of awareness raising and education about the value of these and the components, such as houses, groves of trees, field patterns and other traditional features.

The forests close to where people live have a potentially very important role to play in recreation provision. If they are unthinned and dense, with low levels of attractiveness and biodiversity value, consideration could be given to applying the techniques demonstrated at Ina.

Simon Bell
July 2005

Fig. 1 A picnic shelter in a park in Okinawa where the steep bank between the shelter and path makes it inaccessible for wheelchairs or older people with mobility problems

Fig. 2 A picnic shelter in the woods at Ina, where the path is very accessible and the shelter opens directly from it. This is a good example

Fig. 3 A very well designed viewing area for a volcano, looking across a wetland. The use of timber fits into the landscape well

Fig. 4 The entrance to the viewing are which has a flight of steps and no alternative access. This spoils an otherwise exemplary facility

Fig. 5 The landscape of Ishigaki Island showing sugar cane cultivation, which is causing silt damage to coral reefs

Fig. 6 Iriomote Island, showing the national park and tropical forest extending down to the sea

Fig. 7 An example of a traditional paddy landscape within a wooded area looked after in part by a citizen's group

Fig. 8 An example of sprawl located less than a kilometre from the paddy fields in the photograph

Fig. 9 In this picture the forest was thinned evenly across the stand. The understorey is sparse

Fig. 10 This view shows the variable density thinning and the better developed understory

Travelogue Japan 24 September – 15th October 2000

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I came to Japan as a tourist, together with my husband, himself a government official involved in landscape preservation and research. He had already visited Japan in 1987 and made acquaintance with several people at the NIES in Tsukuba and the Japan Environment Agency, among them were two park rangers. I will restrict myself to the most striking moments of my visit, that lasted three weeks. The trip took me from Kyoto and Nara to Hiroshima, Tokyo, the central highlands of Honshu and, after a fascinating train trip along the west coast, to Aomori and the spectacular scenery of the northeast coast (Rikuchu Kaigan) of Honshu, Hakodate on Hokkaido and, finally, Sapporo airport. My experience of the landscape includes not only natural and rural landscape, but also townscape. In retrospect, I can only say that all the Japanese people we met were interesting, cordial and humorous people. Japan's nature is overwhelmingly beautiful and temples and shrines are impressive. The serenity of Japanese gardens, the green of mosses often combined with water, makes a striking contrast to the bustling cities.

The Katsura myth and the erotic dimension of landscape evaluation

In the afternoon of the second day we visited the Katsura imperial villa on the outskirts of Kyoto. This seemed to be an exceptional thing especially for Japanese nationals, who have to queue for months in order to secure an entry ticket. One of our two guides had to stay outside. We visited the gardens with a group of about 20 people. Guards were everywhere and explanations were all in Japanese. A guardsman followed the group to prevent anyone from staying behind. Taking pictures was prohibited. The gardens were very beautiful, but afterwards we visited places that could compete with Katsura, e.g. the Shugaku-in imperial villa on the mountain slopes on the other side of the city (Fig. 1). Thanks to an article in the *Daily Yomiyuri* newspaper of the same day, I learned why Katsura is so much esteemed, especially in Europe. Its fame is mainly due to a book by a famous modernist German architect, Bruno Taut. He visited the gardens after fleeing from Germany in 1933, together with Erika, not his wife, as is commonly presumed (he was divorced at the time) but his mistress. Arriving in Japan after a tedious trip along the Trans-Siberian railway in passionate company, he enthusiatically described the first garden he visited: Katsura.

Landscape maintenance and (over)employment

The next day we went to Entsu-ji, a Buddhist temple with a stony landscape garden combined with a view of Mount Hiei - 'borrowscape' they call this. But Mount Hiei is disfigured by a mass of antennas. Our taxi driver was not allowed inside and taking photographs was prohibited. As in most temples and tea houses, we had to take off our shoes.

More impressive was the Shugaku-in imperial villa. This villa is the summer residence of the imperial family, up in the montains, spread over three levels. The middle level is leased by farmers. The highest part is very beautiful, a lake surrounded by a garden, with a tremendous view on Kyoto. Thanks to the exceptional clear weather we could make out Osaka in the distance. Shugaku-in is the coolest of the imperial residences. Again, the number of foreign visitors was restricted. In the gardens I saw many elderly women picking grass shoots from between the mosses. I wondered why they were doing this and if there was no pension system for the retired. "It's a kind of social occupation or volunteers' work," they explained to me, but I could hardly believe that. Afterwards someone told me that retirement pensions are not so high in Japan as in Belgium. This was perhaps nearer the truth. The average age of the numerous

taxi-drivers also appeared to me on the high side. All those (in my opinion) useless guards and footmen sometimes made me think of occupational therapy, but anyway it keeps the unemployment levels down.

Hiroshima

From the window of our hotel room I had observed a school; I was quite astonished as it appeared to be *Sadako*'s school, a Hiroshima version of Anne Frank. There was a memorial plate and a statue, commemorating the girl who died in 1955 from leukemia, ten years after the Bomb and as a consequence of the radiation to which she had been exposed as a two year old girl. The book containing Sadako's story has been translated into Dutch and I had been quite moved by it, together with my pupils at my school in Belgium.

A little way further we entered a nice Japanese garden, Shukei-in. We saw a king sago palm (*Cycas revoluta*) that survived the Bomb, shooting out from its calcinated remains (Fig. 2). Later on we saw more surviving trees, e.g. some willow species and eucalyptus, everyone of them marked with a tag 'survivor of the bomb', with its distance from the epicentre of the explosion.

Tokyo, a city of contrasts

Tokyo is a bustling conurbation with more than 14,000,000 inhabitants. The 45th floor of the Tokyo Metropolitan Office Building, (kind of 'Twin Towers') is also a tourist belvedere. With clear weather we could have seen the whole of Tokyo and Mount Fuji, but it was cloudy and drizzling (Fig. 3). It is unbelievable how many high rise building are concentrated in that part of the city. Impressive. Between all those skyscrapers you could see low private houses, but they are gradually bought up and joined to form a big plot for a new large building. Some of them seem nice, but first and foremost they are gigantic. You can also see the highway meandering through the cityscape, high up above the local circulation.

I also visited a new development area in Tokyo Bay, a brand-new city quarter built on landfills (i.e. waste dumps). We took the railway, a kind of overground metro, to the starting point of a new transport system, the *Yurikamome*, Tokyo Waterfront's new transport line - a train, gliding through a kind of channel or bed, without a pilot. It stops in every station in front of a glass door that glides open. It looks like a chute, making loops to intersect with viaducts and other railway lines. We felt like actors in a science-fiction movie.

We ended up on an artificial island with housing blocks, shopping and office buildings, lined up along an artificial beach. Kenzo Tange, now over 90, designed one of the buildings, in a quite different style from his early ones - lots of glass and metal-clad concrete. Futuristic; not really beautiful but confounding.

Another day we stayed with Japanese friends in their appartment at Matsudo, on the northern fringe of the Tokyo connurbation. We woke up to the sound of a crowing cock, the last thing you would expect from the 11th floor of an appartment block in one of the world's largest metropoles. Looking through the window I perceived some fields in the vicinity, mainly rice crops.

Autums colours and volcanoes

In the mountains of central Honshu, near Kusatsu, I saw a Japanese autumnal landscape for the first time: yellow birches, deeply red mountain ashes and maples - really splendid (Fig. 4). The slopes of the still active *Shirane* volcano were dotted with sulphurous hotsprings. We walked up to the crater, which saw its last outburst 18 years ago (Fig. 5). The crater-inside was yellow and grey at the margins, with cobalt-blue water, dark rayed at the spots where the sulphurous vapours ascended. What a strange feeling to watch a volcano crater in the company of so many people – a volcano which could erupt again at any moment, as was happening at that time on a small island in offshore Tokyo. The volcano slopes were dotted with concrete shelters in case of an eruption, though insufficient to harbour all the visitors at that time.

Coming back to the volcano the next day, we had to queue up; hundreds of people were doing the same as we had done yesterday, and the path to the crater looked like a place of pilgrimage.
We drove on through the Shiga highland at 2000m altitude. The atmospheric pressure was so low that vacuum bags of potato chips were soon bulging. We looked out upon milkwhite clouds in the valleys, driving above them in the sunlight, seeing the mountain tops sticking out of them. We perceived the Japanses Alps in the far distance. Such a landscape, barely 200km from Tokyo; unbelievable! We were surrounded by a varied mixture of colours: green, red, yellow and brown. I saw people ascending a mountain slope by an escalator ('skylator'). How bizarre, this mixture of nature and modern technology!

Pompeii

We visited Kambara, Japan's Pompeii, and the museum dedicated to the 1783 outburst of the Asama volcano, when a mud flow destroyed the village within 5 minutes after the eruption. 477 people met their death, and only 93 were saved. Afterwards they formed 30 new families. Mount *Asama* has erupted several times since, but with less disastrous consequences. A few kilometers from there we visited the basalt landscape of *Onioshidashi*. We walked among coagulated basalt rocks arranged chaotically alongside and on top of each other. There were small temples here and there and the rocks were sometimes decorated with small trees, natural bonsai…
We drove downhill and just before it got dark, we saw a waterfall, descending in thin threads from a forested upper part of the mountain slope in a kind of amphitheatre.We entered Karuizawa through an area of forest with luxurious villas and cottages. It reminded me of Tervuren and Keerbergen (expensive residential areas near Brussels). Wealthy people from Tokyo come here to make use of the cooler climate.

Townscapes and flaming fields

After visiting the slopes of Hakkoda mountain and the Oirase chasm near Aomori in the north of Honshu, we were driven around Aomori at night. If the surrounding nature had been ravishing, the shopping streets with their neon lights and Pachinko parlours were downright ugly. The next morning, we had the opportunity to see Aomori by daylight. The city made the same chaotic impression on me as most Japanese cities: lots of wire, and a mix of buildings of varying heights. The abundance of advertising hoardings above the shops and on top of the buildings didn't make for a pleasant townscape.
On our way to Hirosaki we saw many apple orchards and ricefields. The apples are more tasty than ours. The pears look like big yellow apple very juicy with a taste somewhere between our (European) pear and a melon. We drove back to Aomori in the evening twilight. They were burning off the stubble on the ricefields – a very strange sight.

Coastline protection vs. scenery

My most vivid memory was the northeast coast of Honshu. We drove via Towada to Misawa, site of an American air base. It's unbelievable the way the US still manifests its power all over the world. Until then the roads had been lined with houses – chaotic as usual. From Tameichi on we drove along the Pacific coast. The landscape became exceedingly beautiful, a rough rocky coast with fancifully moulded rocks, and the occasional small pine tree, like natural bonsai (Fig. 6). Every rock looks like a miniature landscape. The ocean was obviously very wild around here; inhabitations along the coastline -usually fishermen's villages- were protected from gales and tsunami by gigantic concrete blocks. In Fudai we walked towards the cliffs. Our host proposed taking a boat out to admire the rock formations from the sea – a splendid idea, and exactly what I had hoped for. From the boat we had a magnificent view of the dark, unpredictable rocks. Depending on your imagination, you could see a gnome or an elephant. On one of the rocky islets we made out a Torii -the gate of a shrine.

Hakodate

Hakodate is an nice old port, with many modern buildings as well. It was the last stop of my journey. It is situated on a hill, with fine views over two bays. Hakodate revealed many western characteristics; in fact it didn't much look like a Japanese city. Near our hotel there was a Russian Orthodox church and a Catholic one.

We visited a Trapist convent, founded in 1895 by French nuns. It appeared to be a tourist attraction, with a 'Lourdes Grotto' - all quite familiar to us. Most of the visitors were giggling young Japanese girls, trying to imitate the Lady Mary and Bernadette Soubirous (who's believed to have seen the Lady Mary in Lourdes, France, in 1858).

From there we went to Fort Goryokaku, a Vauban-type stronghold built between 1857 and 1864. Japan's first western-style fortress, it was the last stronghold of what was left of the Shogun's army in its resistance against the Imperial army in 1869. From the top of the tower (again crowded with people) we made out the star-like pattern of the fortifications, reminiscent of building techniques in Northwest Europe from the 17th until the late 19th century.

Fig. 1 The lake at Shugaku-in

Fig.2 Old Sago palm, survivor of the blast

Fig. 3 Shinjuku from the Tokyo Metropolitan Office Building

Fig. 4 Lake and autums colours near Tsumagoi

Fig. 6 The cliffs in Rikuchu Kaigan, near Fudai

Fig. 5 At the crater of Shirane san

Experience of Japanese Landscape – some selected observations considering the usage of various materials in the Japanese landscape

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First of all it should be mentioned that I only had the chance to experience a very small selection of Japanese landscapes and that there was little time to capture details. But I was in the pleasant situation of having my Japanese colleague Dr. Yoji Aoki to answer most questions. Therefore, I was able to understand why the landscape looks like it does. In this article I am trying to point out some aspects concerning the choice of materials used in the Japanese landscape.

In my opinion the fascination with Japanese landscapes lies at the extremes. Japanese Gardens reconstruct real natural and cultural landscapes with artistic miniaturisation. The selection and the shape of the materials present the positioning and arrangement of the landscape presented in four dimensions: the landscape itself with its three dimensions, as well the temporal dimension – the fourth dimension (Fig. 1). The architecture of the Japanese gardens allows a comprehensive sensual experience of various landscapes. The eyes of the observer are invited for a precise observation because there are many hidden messages contained in all the detail. The various flowers, the moist mosses, the wet stones, they all leave their scents, and feet and hands sense the different ground materials; variation in altitude within very small areas challenge the physical condition of the garden visitors.

In the present fast moving and hectic era the garden visitor is requested to sojourn in the garden, in order to notice and comprehend the manifold details. The accuracy and details of the garden art and the particular usage of the materials contribute to the fascination of the visitor enticing him or her to remain in the garden to forget the intruding environment (Fig. 2).

Maybe it is only the knowledge of landscape planners, who manage to evoke in the mind of the beholder the ever-changing conditions of light and shadow, as well as the long term changes to the vegetation, as well as the emissions of congested urban areas such as noise, smell, air pollution. Maybe when normal citizens visit the Japanese Garden out of cultural interest or to meditate, they never perceive all the mentioned details because of the overall absorbing effects of the details of the Japanese Gardens.

As previously mentioned several natural materials are used in Japanese Gardens; moss, bamboo, wood, various sorts and shapes of stone and of course plants. On the one hand the garden architecture itself fascinates the visitor, on the other hand the usage of the materials fascinates. The selection of the materials attests to a profound and professional knowledge of material aptitude, to a high level of artistic appreciation, and of course to the knowledge of the handicraft. Frugal constructions within the architecture are themselves pieces of art (Fig. 3, 4).

Enormous costs and of course the loss of trade skills are increasingly reflected in the Japanese landscape. Recently, weatherproofed and permanent materials are used, the handling is unproblematic and all together it is cheaper. But the contemplator is no longer invited to sojourn and to experience the garden, as the focus is turning only to the construction, such as the stairs in a park. The construction is made of synthetic

materials; the shape is an imitation of logs (Fig. 5). The patina of usage and the weathering will not occur quickly, using the plastic logs.

The changed usage of materials and the changed construction technique can be also being observed beyond the gardens of Japan. The entire cultural landscape is confronted with a modified choice of materials, with different dimensions, and a one-sided focus on functionality. Houses in environments endangered by natural hazards are safeguarded with massive concrete walls in a famous and economically important holiday area (Fig. 6). The landscape planner asks herself how it was possible to build a house in such an endangered area, with the consequence of disturbing the aesthetic of the landscape.

At some places, all concern for sustainability is missing in both design and construction. Sandbags with a plastic skin are used for securing street slopes (Fig. 7). The sun has started to affect the plastic material. The blue colour of the skin dominates the roadside, which borders a small-scale traditional cultural landscape, but at least it is the traditional finely structured landscape, which reconciles the hiker, the contemplator and the bon vivant (Fig. 8). Therefore, an unforgettable commemoration with all senses remains.

One last remark, the places have not been named because they are wild cards for somewhere in Japan.

Fig. 1 The fascination of Japanese Gardens

Fig. 2 Japanese Gardens environment

Fig. 3 Frugal constructions as work of art

Fig. 4 Frugal constructions as work of art

Fig.5 Steps made of synthetic materials

Fig.6 Concrete walls

Fig. 7 Roadside

Fig. 8 Multi structured cultural landscape

Impressions of Japanese Landscapes

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I visited Japan from 23rd of October to 13th of November in 2000. During that time, I experienced Tsukuba City, Tsuchiura City and Mito City in Ibaraki Prefecture as well as the Tokyo Metropolitan area, Fuji-Hakone National Park and Shimizu City in Shizuoka Prefecture, Kyoto City and Ohtsu City in Shiga prefecture.

Visit to the areas of *Hakkei* Eight Sceneries (Fig. 1-8)
I visited the Tsuchiura Eight Sceneries, Mito Eight Sceneries, Shizuoka Eight Sceneries and Ohmi Eight Sceneries and found that they were imitations of the famous XiaoXiang Eight Sceneries in the Dongting Hu Area of China. The Mito Eight Sceneries were the best maintained, but others were not so well preserved and had already changed into a modern style. I was impressed by the fund raising campaign at the Ohmi Eight Sceneries. I was greatly impressed by the picture cards of the Eight Sceneries. Japanese *hakkei* traced the name of the Chinese XiaoXiang style, e.g. Night Rain, Autumn Moon, Returning Sailboat, Drifting Wild Geese, Evening Bell, Glowing Sunset, Soft Wind in Fine Weather, and Snow at Dusk. But this phenomenon was not observed in China. I think that this was caused by the strong Japanese respect for Chinese culture.

Japanese gardens and temples (Fig. 9-17)
I visited Seizanso Villa, Kairakuen Garden in Ibaraki, Meiji Shrine, Rikugien Garden, Asakusa Temple and Ueno Park in Tokyo, Ginkakuji Temple, Nanzenji Temple, Murinan, Konchiin Temple, Myoshinnji Temple and the Heian Shrine Gardens in Kyoto, and Ohtsu Temple, Ishiyama Temple, Mangetsuji Temple and Karasaki Shrine in Shiga Prefecture. I found some landscape objects which have been introduced from Chinese philosophy. Rozan Mountain and the bank of Sotei came from West Lake in Hangzhou. The idea of Rikugien came from the Chinese philosophy of 6 moralities. Korakuen illustrates the ideal from Chinese philosophy of the enjoyment of the general public while Kairakuen is the realization of that ideal. Japanese gardeners have learned from China and also developed the new style of *karesansui* gardens in Zen temples.

Modern parks and the environment (Fig. 18-22)
I visited Doho Park, Ninomiya Park, Takezono Park, Oshimizu Park, Chuo Park, Matsumi Park, Umezono Park, Akatsuka Park, Science Expo Memorial Park in Tsukuba, Composite Park in Tsuchiura and some parks in Kyoto. Every park had some tall trees which form a forest landscape. I found that many wild grass fields were being maintained. People liked trees with fruits, bushes and grasses with flowers. I could find Camellia, pomegranate, persimmon, cherry, rose, Chinese rose, chrysanthemum, orchid, azalea, iris, and lotus. They have a club for these flowers in the local area. Ecological planning has created a different style of plantation to China whereby tall tress have bushes planted around their roots. There was little architecture and no artificial gates so there was no need to pay money and buy an entrance ticket. They have few shops and few park workers. I found that many beautiful tall pine trees were being maintained by a combination of pruning and straw matting.

National Parks (Fig. 23-25)
I visited Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park, Suigo-Tsukuba Quasi-national Park, Biwako Quasi-national Park and Mihonomatsubara scenic area. I found that the Japanese government has taken great pains to preserve

and develop many beautiful spots.

Areas of Eight Scenery

Fig. 1 Returning sail boat at Mito (Mito Eight Scenery)

Fig. 2 Drifting wild geese at Ohta (Mito Eight Scenery)

Fig. 3 Evening snowscape at Kairakuen (Mito Eight Scenery)

Fig. 4 Sunset glow at Iwafune (Mito Eight Scenery)

Fig. 5 Stone monument of Sunset glow at Iwafune (Mito Eight Scenery)

Fig. 6 Typical monument well preserved in Eight

Fig. 7 Evening bell of a temple in the mountains (Mito Eight Scenery)

Fig. 8 Night rain at Karasaki (Ohmi Eight Scenery)

Japanese Gardens and temples

Fig. 9 Heian shrine at Kyoto

Fig. 10 Imperial palace (Edo castle) in Tokyo

Fig. 11 Imperial garden at Kyoto

Fig. 12 Japanese garden in Kyoto

Fig. 13 Japanese tea house in Kyoto

Fig. 14 Maintenance of the garden

Fig. 15 Pruning at the park

Fig. 16 Pond in Japanese garden

Fig. 17 Stone bridge in the Japanese garden

Modern parks and environment

Fig. 18 Expo memorial park at Tsukuba

Fig. 19 Matsumi park at Tsukuba

Fig. 20 Pedestrian at Tsukuba

Fig. 21 Lotus park at Gyoda city

Fig. 22 Tsukuba University

National parks

Fig. 24 Ohwakudani hot springs in Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park

Fig. 23 Ohwakudani station in Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park

Fig. 25 Owakudani valley in Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park

Impressions of Japanese Landscape - Harmony of the Extremes

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Introduction

Thanks to our two Japanese friends, Dr. Yoji Aoki, Senior Researcher at the National Institute for Environmental Studies in Tsukuba, and Prof. Hitoshi Fujita of Aomori University, we were able to experience Japanese landscapes from the subtropical South to the border of the ice-drift region in the North, from Iriomote (in Okinawa) on the 24th degree of latitude (equal to that of Hawaii) via Kyoto, Tokyo, Nikko, Oze, as far north as Shiretoko (in Hokkaido) on the 45th degree.

As well as seeing and analyzing all these extraordinary sights, we gained a deep emotional insight into the importance of beauty and of respecting nature. We want to thank our friends very much for this.

(All photos are from the authors.)

Tokyo, Narita Airport, Saturday morning, 18th September 1994

We arrived in Japan for the first time, some 20 hours after starting out from our home in Munich. Our friend Dr. Yoji Aoki had come to meet us at Narita, Tokyo's international airport, and we had a happy welcome-drink at the airport restaurant.

"There must be something wrong with my blood circulation," said Barbara. "Everything seems to be swaying."

"It's the same with me! But we only had a very small drink. This must be the jet lag," said Winfrid. Yoji Aoki smiled gently: "Don't worry; you are both perfectly all-right. It is nothing but a small earthquake."

In an instant we suddenly realized that we were in the middle of a highly active geological "danger" zone. We also realized that the Japanese live with this natural "transitoriness," this ever-present danger, in the same way as Europeans live with the danger of being run over by a car. Earthquakes are a fact of life in Japan and the Japanese behave very reasonably to assess their impact and to reduce their potential harm. They have developed houses and even skyscrapers with slightly flexible constructions similar to certain biological structures. In Japan, nature seems to be widely accepted in some fields while in others it is subject to extensive human change; sometimes very sensitively, sometimes disturbingly.

Tokyo

That first day in Tokyo was only a transit-point for us. We were to continue our trip southwards to Okinawa. Yoji Aoki accompanied us from Narita to Haneda, the domestic airport, and we had our first impression of the Tokyo megatropolis. There was a multitude of railways in intercrossing curves, big blocks of flats with the mattresses hung out to air over the balconies, skyscrapers, advertisements, streets on several levels, shipping-canals, small concrete houses with tiny gardens, towers of elevator-car parks, industrial architecture, some Buddhist temples with their broad and curved roofs. All were mixed together in one whirling mosaique.

Flight South

After we took off for Osaka, we looked down with curiosity at the landscape below. Once we had left the broad belt of settlements and coastline cities behind, the contrast was a real surprise. Dark green hills formed the centre of the land, covered with woods which looked from above dense and rather natural. The view from the air showed no roads or other trace of human settlement – here, so close to the densely-

populated or agricultural coastal plains. In this part of Southern Japan the vast wooded hills seemed to be left untouched.

Mountain-creeks quickly converged to form broad rivers, many of them with wide natural banks enclosed within big dams. We were surprised again. In Europe, most rivers have been regulated during the last hundred years; fields, meadows and settlements spread out almost as far as the water-line and the river-banks are narrow (with the exception of the Netherlands). Only during the last decades have a few rivers been "re-naturalized" to allow for floods. In Japan, it seemed that huge and sudden floods after heavy rainfalls and typhoons were taken for granted, and making - or leaving - river-beds broad enough to cope with this fact seems to have always been the case. Dutch engineering has influenced Japanese river-management.

Later during our trip, we visited Kyoto and saw its deep concrete flood-canal. A deep, wide river-bed for flash floods is unavoidable in a city – but maybe its concrete shape has already been changed in recent years, or there are future plans to do so.

But back to the view from the plane. By the sides of the rivers, rice-fields in the yellow-green colour of the late summer days formed a rectangular agricultural pattern. The strangest impression of the landscape for us was the number of semi-organic bright-green shapes in the rural environment and on the outskirts of the cities; these were golf-courses that were dominating the scenery.

Later on we passed the coastline of Shikoku and headed down towards the Pacific Sea. Small wooded islands in different shades of green were surrounded by bright sandy beaches and turquoise coral banks. The main island in Okinawa showed rectangular patterns of yellow and green fields and huge blue plastic foils. These hinted at intensive agricultural use as well as abundant fertility. At Naha Airport - in the middle of technical renovations at the time - the sweet smell and bright colours of the orchids in the flower-beds, and the large aquaria with corals and the most colourful fish revealed that we had now reached the subtropical zone.

The rest of our flight drifted by somewhere between dream and reality: coral islands below us in the deep blue sea offset the white clouds like giant cotton balls towering in the intensely clear blue sky.

In the evening we reached Ishigaki, the main island of the subtropical Yaeyama archipelago at Japan's southern extreme.

Yaeyama, Okinawa

Our friend Hitoshi Fujita (professor at Aomori University in North Honshu) welcomed us to Ishigaki. He was spending about one year there as the Chief Manager of Iriomote National Park. The next day he and his family showed us Cabira beach and some other "picture postcard" bays. The beauty took our breath away. Some of the beaches in the Yaeyama islands have sand called "Star-Sand" (*hoshisuna*). It consists of a myriad of minute chalk-houses of foraminiphera-animals, each of which looks like a tiny star.

During the snorkelling we discovered an entirely new landscape. The coral reefs of one of the cleanest seas in the world were a brilliant wash of colours and the multitudinous fish, sea-flowers and corals combined to make a great feeling of peace. A swarm of friendly little fish, bright-blue with brilliantly orange tails, began gnawing our finger-tips out of curiosity. They were not at all afraid of us; they were beautiful and they were friendly. (We kept a respectful distance from the poisonous sea-snake though.) We were swept away with the pacific "feeling" (Fig. 1).

However, we were to learn that even this island of peace is no longer undisturbed. In Ishigaki, construction works to widen the road that circulates the island will bring (or has already brought) lots of sand to the coral banks which suffocate the tiny organisms that live there. In Japan, as nearly everywhere in the world, age-old natural wonders are in danger of being destroyed by such short-sighted economic ventures. We hope that at least in Iriomote - which is a National Park - there are no fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides

being used. These may increase agricultural production but they almost certainly destroy the ecosystems of Mangrove Rivers and coral banks.
There is another threat troubling conservationists in Europe that has obviously reached Japan as well. This is the phenomenon of different species of "neophytes," imported plants which disturb the natural eco-system and suppress indigenous plants. On the beaches and open fields for example, neophytical "Albizia" trees - imported by the US-army after the Second World War - were widespread.
In Iriomote's subtropical jungle we saw a very good example of the combination of protecting nature while at the same time showing it to tourists (Fig. 2). Wooden paths have been built through the primeval forest with its tree-ferns, orchids, and lush foliage. In this way the forest has been made accessible but tourists remain on the path and respect its boundaries. Environmental education certainly plays an important role as well. Mangrove-forests (endangered all around the world in recent years) do still exist in Iriomote, complete with jungle-rivers and hidden waterfalls. The endemic *yaeyama* wild cat is very shy, but we did see its footprints in a rice-field as well as photos of the cat which had been taken at night by automatic infrared cameras. We hope that Japan will take all efforts to conserve this subtropical paradise.
At another island, Hitoshi Fujita showed us a Shinto Shrine of the village people. Behind a simple wooden wall there was a huge old tree. Hitoshi told us to sit down in front of the entrance and listen to the chirping of the cicadas, to the falling of dry leaves, and to the sound of the wind playing with the leaves. Out of respect for the shrine we refrained from going inside.

Tsukuba, Honshu

From the southern tip we jumped to the north, taking the plane to Tokyo and then on to Tsukuba where our friend Dr. Yoji Aoki was waiting for us. Tsukuba is an impressively high-tech modern city (Fig. 5). Its architecture sees international elements matched with traditional Japanese styles. There are fountain-squares and quarters with small wooden houses – partly in the traditional style – that have been reconstructed as museums. One thing really stood out: Dr. Aoki's comfortable house had been built in only three weeks! Prefabricated poles of wood had been assembled according to a system of construction-by-numbers; ready-made walls, floors and *tatami* mats were laid and technical equipment installed. (In Germany, building a house is often a nerve-wrecking process that takes more than a year.)

Oze National Park, Honshu

From Tsukuba, Yoji Aoki took us for a long weekend excursion to Nikko Shrine and Oze National Park.
"Ozegahara" is the highest area of moor land in Japan. It is also one of the largest and most beautiful. Here, as in Iriomote and in Kushiro in the North (Fig. 4), there were long wooden paths leading through the delicate areas of nature (Fig. 6). They led through wide swamps of "Wool-Grass" in its light-brown autumn shade with little white puffs. When we arrived at around eight AM, hundreds of photographers were already on their way back from their morning's excursion to Lake Oze, walking in lines on the wooden trail in the silvery haze in the early-morning light. The natural forest was reflected in the silent water. It being early autumn, the first cold winds from Siberia had already turned some of the leaves red and golden (Fig. 3). Only the faintest outline of Mount Oze could be made out through the mist, but we could well understand why the Japanese regard it as a "holy" mountain.
At the Information Centre we learnt how schoolchildren and ramblers are educated to take all their waste home with them, to stick to the paths, and to respect nature as something peaceful and beautiful. A colour slide-show showed Oze in all four seasons; with meadows full of white pseudo-calla (lysichiton camtschatcensis) in springtime, or with ten thousands of yellow hemerocallis.

Kyoto

More than 1200 gardens, temples and shrines have survived in the modern city of Kyoto. We had around ten days to spend there; just enough time to get the feeling that - apart from München - Kyoto is the city where we would most like to live. During the ten days, we got by perfectly with a mixture of English and sign language, but language could well turn out to be a problem in a longer stay; especially outside the big cities. Winfrid began studying Japanese some years ago, but – alas – learning it properly would be a fulltime job.

Yoji Aoki had managed to obtain a permit for us to visit Katsura-Villa. The complete harmony of this traditional Japanese villa – with its garden, azaleas and pine-trees, its ponds and islands, murmuring streams and small waterfalls – is very well characterized by the famous German architect Bruno Taut (1880-1938), who emigrated from Germany and visited Katsura in May 1932:

"The beauty that unfolds at Katsura transcends understanding. It is the beauty belonging to great art. When one comes into contact with a great work of art, tears flow unsummoned. The beauty of art goes beyond mere form to make us aware of the boundless thought and spirit behind it." *(quote from: Teiji Ito, architectural historian, in: Katsura. A Quintessential Representative of the Sukiya Style of Architecture, edited by Shozo Baba, Shinkenchiku-Sha 1983)*

In Kyoto we learnt that Japanese gardens often symbolize nature (Fig. 6). Miniature landscapes complete with mountains, lakes, islands and bizarre trees – sometimes very abstract, sometimes more realistic – all these scenes can be contemplated from the terraces of the house, or from a path leading through the garden. More time would be needed to understand all the symbolic meanings, but in all the gardens that we visited, we felt a universal expression of nature and art being a unified entity of extreme beauty; harmony and peace.

For the work of a landscape architect, Kyoto is an experience of immense importance. Its origins in Buddhist traditions require some careful reflection.

Hokkaido, September 1998

Some years later, Winfrid went to Japan again to see Histohi Fujita, who had in the meantime moved from the southern extremities to the most northern of Japan's National Parks.

Hokkaido is situated in the temperate zone – like Bavaria and the Northern Alps. However, Hokkaido extends as far as the 45th degree of latitude – the same latitude as Venice in Italy. The warmer climate in Europe is a result of the Gulf Stream.

In the woods of the temperate zone in Hokkaido and Northern Honshu there are far more species of trees than in Central Europe, where the formerly rich flora of the tertiary age was dramatically reduced by the Ice Ages (that lasted until around 10,000 years ago). In Central Europe only ten species of indigenous trees have survived. In Hokkaido, beeches, oaks, and birches can be found in unusual varieties which we Europeans recognise only from botanical gardens. Other plants, like climbing hydrangea, are common in German gardens and it was very impressive to see huge hydrangea climbing the fir-trees in their natural environment; as for example in Akan National Park, Hokkaido.

Daisetsuzan National Park, Hokkaido

Hitoshi Fujita and Winfrid made a mountain excursion of several days into Daisetsuzan, the largest National Park in Hokkaido. As far up as the tree line, the land is mostly of economic significance.

Further up the mountain there is no use of the land and there is nothing like the "Alms" of the European Alps with their meadows, cows and huts (Fig. 7). The experience of "nature" and its flora at Daisetsuzan was very enjoyable for a European used to the pastures and intensive recreational use that occurs in most parts of the Alps. In the Alps, the "Alpine Associations" have constructed a dense network of restaurant-

lodges and walking paths over the course of at least a hundred years. In the last few decades nearly every "Alm" (the hut where the herdsmen live) has acquired a road for 4-wheel drive cars. This is certainly fine for a lot of hikers, but the large amount of cattle has led to plant erosion and many species of flowers are on the point of extinction.

In Daisetsuzan there are very few trails for hiking and those that there are run between unmanned emergency shelters which are about one day's walking-distance apart. Once off the beaten track it is very lonely, and it is advisable to ring a small bell to warn brown bears to stay away.

Some of the nicest experiences are the hot springs (Fig. 8). Some of these are incorporated into fine hotels, while others still belong to the village-people and are designed in a very natural style. Nearly all of them have beautiful views of the landscape.

Kushiro National Park, Hokkaido

Winfrid's most impressive experience in the enormous wetlands of Kushiro Shitsugen was seeing the Mandshu crane or *tanjo*. Only a few of these majestic birds are still breeding here. Some 400 years ago, there were immense numbers of them in the valleys and wetlands of Japan, so much so that the crane became a symbol of Japan. Today the *tanjo* is commemorated on bank notes, but in the interim the crane habitat has been steadily reduced by drainage and the laying out of rice-fields. The Mandshu crane is a most vivid symbol of all that was good about old Japan.

Shiretoko National Park, Hokkaido

The National Park of Shiretoko is a huge wilderness reserve area where people are not allowed to enter. This method of protecting nature is not common in Europe, but in some places it seems necessary to us.

What we experienced

Before we went to Japan we had expected noise, crowds, permanent rush-hour, dense cities and a country full of urban settlements with hardly any nature left apart from a few hidden gems in the shape of their urban gardens.

But we learnt that Japan has vast areas of nearly undisturbed nature (mainly in the mountains) and that settlements are mainly concentrated in the flat areas along the coast.

We also learnt that many Japanese feel a great respect for nature. Nature is a favourite subject for photography, but perhaps this respect is also rooted in tradition and the Shinto religion. Exceptionally beautiful places are regarded as "holy." Contemplating them brings the observer an extreme peace of mind.

What we hope

We hope that all the beauty which still exists in Japanese landscape can be preserved and that young people, too, will be brought up to appreciate the value of this beauty.

Fig. 1 Cabira Bay, Ishigaki, Okinawa

Fig. 2 Subtropical jungle, Iriomote National Park

Fig. 3 Oze National Park: A great diversity of indigenous trees make for a bright-coloured autumn aspect

Fig. 4 Wooden trail through the moor land which allows mass-tourism without damage to nature

Fig. 5 Tsukuba: A modern city of science

Fig. 6 Kyoto: Each of the multitudinous gardens is a special work of art, a symbolic mini landscape

Fig. 7 Daisetsuzan National Park: Above the tree-line there is no economic use of the landscape

Fig. 8 Hokkaido: Natural spas and waterfalls are a favourite sourece of entertainment

A new set of *Hakkei* Eight Sceneries at Tsukuba Science City

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I remember that my first visit to Japan was in 1992. I visited Japan with high hopes of seeing a developed country's landscape. Seeing the gardens of Katsura, Shugakuin and Kinkakuji in Kyoto, I realized that many Japanese types of scenery were well preserved.
After that, I was invited through the STA fellowship involving the Japan Science and Technology Agency to be a visiting researcher at the National Institute for Environmental Studies. There I met my host researcher, Yoji Aoki. I experienced various Japanese sceneries while staying at Tsukuba Science City from December 1995 to March of 1996.
At that time, we promoted research on the *hakkei* eight sceneries philosophy which has influenced the landscape in Korea, Japan and China. This gave us a good opportunity to travel all over the country to see the *hakkei* eight sceneries. We published the results in Korea and Japan. We found more *hakkei* than we had expected. And the research is still going on.

After we had finished researching the traditional Korean and Japanese *hakkei*, I discovered a new *hakkei* in the scenery at Tsukuba, where the National Institute for Environmental Studies is located. Although my Japanese was poor, this work holds special memories for me even now.

Those same eight sceneries, which were chosen as areas of outstanding natural beauty, were given names as following. As it was winter at the time, I regret that not many photos are left. In the future, if I get the chance to go back to Japan, I would like to investigate the changing seasons in Japanese landscape as well as making a comparison between sceneries past and present.

1. *Touzai-Namiki* The first scene was the row of trees along the East-West avenue in Tsukuba.
2. *Tsukuba-Yusi* The second scene was sunset at Tsukuba. In the dark there was a purple beauty to Mt. Tsukuba.
3. *Banpaku-Yusho* The third scene was named after a reflection in the lake. In the dark, the reflection in the surface of the lake in the Science Memorial Park from the 85' Expo is beautiful.
4. *Doho-Seiko* The fourth scene was a beautifully desolate lake in Doho Park...
5. *Yukarimori-Tosetsu* The fifth scene was a beautiful snowy forest in winter.
6. *Shuraku-Chinju* The sixth scene was an agricultural villages and a forest enclosing a shrine.
7. *Nohson-Heirin* The seventh scene was an agricultural forest on the plains. I felt sad that the beautiful agricultural scenery is gradually disappearing.
8. *Matsumi-Kohen* The eighth scene showed the beauty of gardening in Matsumi Park.

Ten years have passed now so I think that many changes have taken place there. And I wonder how the landscapes of Tsukuba have changed. Given the chance to go back to Tsukuba, I would like to go and see them once again.
While staying in Japan, I came to the conclusion that Japanese scenery had preserved many Japanese cultural colors. I can't separate my images of fading Japanese scenery from urbanizing and industrializing. The *Hakkei* eight sceneries which we researched have disappeared bit by bit. I think that *hakkei* is one of the most important Japanese sceneries.

Table 1 Showing the New Eight Sceneries at Tsukuba, compiled by Dompil Kim

Number	Focal objects	Name	Figure number
1	Trees of East-West avenue	Touzai Namiki	1, 2, 3
2	Purple haze over Mt. Tsukuba	Tsukuba Yushi	4
3	Lake of Science Expo Memorial Park	Banpaku Yusho	
4	Lake of Doho Park	Doho Seiko	
5	Yukari Forest	Yukarimori Tohsetsu	9
6	Agricultural villages & forest around village shrine	Shuraku Chinju	6, 7, 8, 10
7	Forest on the plain	Noson Heirin	11, 12
8	Matsumi Park	Matsumi Gashu	5, 13, 14

Fig.1 First scenery

Fig.2 First scenery

Fig.3 First scenery

Fig.4 Second scenery

Fig.5 Eight scenery

Fig.6 Sixth scenery

Fig.7 Sixth scenery

Fig.8 Sixth scenery

Fig.9 Fifth scenery

Fig.10 Sixth scenery

Fig.11 Seventh scenery

Fig.12 Seventh scenery

Fig.13 Eighth scenery

Fig14 Eighth scenery

Experiencing the landscape in Japan, a foreigner's perspective

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1. Introduction

The goal of my research stay in Japan was to study landscape planning and landscape design in conjunction with computer-aided methods for planning and design of the landscape and to compare approaches being taken in Switzerland with those in Japan.

In order to establish close contacts with researchers and research groups in Japan a series of lectures and visits to universities as well as governmental institutions and research agencies was undertaken at a range of institutions in Japan. Specific topics included evolution of landscape visualization techniques, scenario-visualization and public surveys for the assessment of green space qualities, participatory planning with 3D visualization, visual quality modeling and agent-based hiking simulation.

This functioned as an ideal platform for discussion and exchange of ideas and comparison of different approaches related to environmental and landscape issues in urban, rural as well as remote alpine areas and also covering at the same time cutting-edge GIS and visualization technology.

The following paragraphs are subjective (!) impressions of the landscape as I experienced it in Japan. These reflections are meant to be perceived as an expression of the view of a first time visitor to Japan from central Europe who suddenly becomes immersed in a very different culture.

2. A personal perspective on experiencing Japanese landscapes and planning in Japan

The visitor to Japan soon finds out, if he had not already known it before, that Japan is indeed a land of many contrasts. It is a country where the most advanced technology meets tradition (Fig. 1, 2).

Something that a visitor might recognize when looking at an Atlas but certainly will not fully comprehend is the size of the country. E.g. the whole of Switzerland is only about the size of Kyushu Island. Because Japan is stretching over ca 2500 kilometers mainly in north-south direction there is a considerable difference in latitude from the northern tip of Hokkaido (ca. 46 degrees north) to the southern-most islands of Japan of the Ryukyu Archipelago (ca. 24 degrees north). To provide a comparison with Europe or the USA this corresponds to a stretch in north south direction from Beirut to Malmö or Houston to Calgary respectively, with Tokyo located at the same latitude as Iraklion on Crete or Las Vegas in the USA. Because of this stretch in North-South direction, the length of the different seasons and their impact on the visual appearance of the landscape varies quite a bit. This was especially obvious in spring when we visited Japan. Like in the USA and Canada where the locations of the most spectacular autumn coloration are widely announced in Newspapers we got the impression that in Spring everybody in the whole of Japan knew exactly where and when to look for the most spectacular cherry blossoms, and not only for the

blossoms of course but also for the parties that go with the cherry blossoms all over the country starting in the south and then gradually moving up north within a time frame of several weeks (Fig. 3, 4). As this is a highly important time of the year with numerous festivals it was also noticed that the garden departments of Japanese cities purposefully plant cherry trees in large numbers at exposed locations and along boulevards. Unfortunately, our stay was too short to find out whether those cherries actually are also a source of cherry fruits or whether the purpose of the cherry trees is to provide pleasure only during their flowering period.

In addition, Japan is also a country with considerable variation in relief. It is of course well-known all over the world that Fujiyama at 3776m is the highest mountain in Japan (Fig. 5, 6). However, it is perhaps less well known abroad that Japan is a country that is mostly dominated by mountains and hills. In fact, my personal impression was that our base in Tsukuba Science City was the only part of Japan that was entirely flat (and therefore ideal for cycling). Most other parts of the country were dominated by rolling terrain or even steep mountain slopes. But even the flat alluvial landscape of Tsukuba lies in close range of the Tsukuba Mountain that rises abruptly out of the plains to an altitude of 870m. Certainly at Tsukuba mountain in the so-called quasi national park crop rotation patterns in forest management are not visually evident. The omnipresent species of mature Cryptomeria japonica perfectly reflects the exotic touch of the vegetation. Overall, the vegetation of Japan differs very much to the native vegetation of Europe (Fig. 7). An exception is e.g. Elyna myosuroides, a grass species that is characteristic for a specific plant association in the alpine zone and that can occasionally be found in the European Alps, as well as in the Japanese Alps.

Having not seen Japan's three most scenic landscapes (*Nihon Sankei*) of Amanohashidate, Matsushima and Miyajima, I can for sure say that even the vast majority of the ordinary landscapes that I have seen in Japan where diverse, unique and also beautiful – to use some of the criteria or in fact the key criteria that are used in Central Europe to describe and classify landscapes.
People not familiar with land use and conservation as it is practiced in Switzerland often perceive the Swiss landscape as a wilderness area. However, this is only true for very remote alpine areas, and even there most alpine meadows have been grazed for centuries. Large parts of Switzerland are hilly regions that are densely settled like in Japan. Similar to Switzerland, the landscape of Japan has undergone tremendous change in the past, especially in the last few decades. Villages have become small cities that eventually grew into large cities. Examples are cities like Kofu or as an extreme, Tokyo. In Switzerland this tendency is present in the whole 'Mittelland', the Swiss lowlands.

What was very interesting to note in Japan was the intersperse and mix of different land uses such as housing, agriculture and industry or commercial use (Fig.8). For a foreign visitor these land use patterns often appear to be arbitrary. On the other hand, this mix could also function as the basis for integrating the so-called life functions (e.g. living, working, recreation, transport, communication). The goal of the Swiss

planning policy is to make a clear distinction between built and non-built area and also to separate those land uses geographically.

On the other hand, it was very obvious that many areas in Japan remained as what looks like wilderness with many areas being hardly used at all, such as steeper mountain slopes that are typically covered by mostly secondary forests (Fig. 9, 10). Something that was also noticeable was different forest management practices in Switzerland compared to Japan. In Japan clear cutting is often the preferred method of logging. This technique is rarely used in Switzerland because of the impact on visual landscape quality.

In terms of planning, Switzerland is also structured in a comparable way to the Japanese prefecture system. The levels of planning are clearly defined in Switzerland. There are of course strengths and weaknesses of the Swiss planning system. Failure of plans in Switzerland is noticed due to insufficient communication and insufficient participation of the stakeholders. Especially, the aspect of public participation seems to be much more deeply rooted in the Swiss planning system than in Japan. Another interesting aspect that was raised several times was the issue of building regulations. In Switzerland in each community, zoning is accompanied by a local law where clear definitions are given on how buildings have to be built, such as the ratio of built vs. unbuilt land on a particular plot or even the orientation and angle of the roofs and the color of the tiles on the roofs. This seems to be a very different approach compared to Japan.

Another issue that was raised very frequently was the visual appearance of the integration of infrastructure in the landscape, especially transportation infrastructure, when cutting through steep terrain. It seems that these projects in Japan are dominated by pure approaches from civil engineering whereas in Switzerland the landscape issues are integrated through the involvement of landscape planners.

3. Conclusion

As an overall pattern it could be noticed that Japan like the Central European countries Switzerland, Germany and Austria also, (and in fact even more so) has highly populated areas as well as much less settled areas or remote or even wilderness areas that are used for recreation purposes on the weekends or during vacation season.

In the Central European countries planning tries to geographically concentrate certain land uses and separate e.g. housing from agriculture or commerce or of course industry. But it is obvious that in Japan this distinction is not made in such an explicit way. In fact, in Japanese cities agricultural land use such as rice paddies for example can be interspersed with top-of-the market residential housing. On the other hand one can find the contrast between what to a Central European visitor appears as a visually relatively intrusive way to deal with steep gradients vs. the marvelous and highly subtle way to deal with detailing in Japanese Gardens, such as the manual and highly labor-intensive removal of buds and new twigs at coniferous trees in traditional small scale gardens. This is what certainly contributes to a very memorable and remarkable experience of the Japanese landscape to the European visitor.

Fig. 1 Cultural history, Toshogu Shrine Nikko

Fig. 2 Hi-tech *Shinkansen* train, Kyoto, and woman with traditional dress

Fig. 3 Cherry blossoms at Kairaku-en, Mito. One of the “Three Celebrated Gardens of Japan”.

Fig. 4 Framing the cherry blossoms, Kodokan, Mito

Fig. 5 Lake Kawaguchiko Fuji-Five-Lakes region

Fig. 6 Mt. Fuji as represented in a 3D automobile navigation system

Fig. 7 Species-rich forest near Kofu (Yamanashi). A satoyama landscape

Fig. 8 Mix of different land uses such as housing (building styles), agriculture and commercial use. Tsukuba Science City (Ibaraki)

Fig. 9 Chuo Alps: View of the Ina valley. Settlements are concentrated in the valley bottom

Fig. 10 View towards Kawaguchi and Mt. Fuji. Settlements are concentrated in the valley bottom

Fig. 11 Low human impact on steep wooded mountain slopes, functioning as ideal wildlife corridors (Example of a rather natural riverbed, near Ina city of Minami Alps)

Fig. 12 Example of a rather artificial riverbed in Nikko

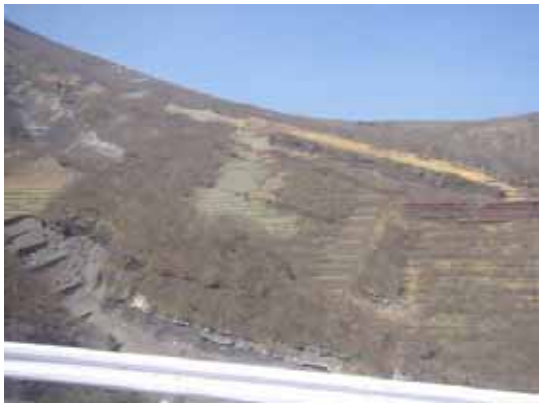

Fig. 13 Anti-erosion measures stabilizing a whole mountain slope, Ohnagi Hillside works near Nikko

Fig. 14 Slope stabilization through a concrete grid, near Atami

Power and weakness in Japanese landscape: A European point of view

Miloslav LAPKA and Eva CUDLINOVA, Institute of System Biology and Ecology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic

We had a great opportunity to view Japanese landscape during the period 2003-2004 via the framework of the Czech-Japan ME 050 Project "From landscape perception to landscape planning." We have been in contact with our Japanese partners since 2000. Prof. Yoji Aoki visited the international symposium organized by our team from the Institute of Landscape Ecology in Nove Hrady in 2001. We recognized that our respective fields of interest are very close. Both concern the evaluation of landscape – an appreciation of the landscape itself on the one hand and social and cultural aspects of landscape ecology on the other. We formulated the first standardized scientific investigation into community perception of landscape during the meetings that followed; most recently in Vienna in 2002.

Our first source of information regarding the Japanese landscape was a travelogue by Josef Kořenský, Cesta kolem světa 1893-94: 1. díl. Atlantický ocean. Amerika. Tichý ocean. Ostrovy havajské. Žaponsko. Praha: Otto, 1895. He found beauty in the landscape at Yokohama, Asakusa, Nikko, Shizuoka, Kyoto, Lake Biwa, Uji and the Seto Inland Sea. The book became popular and it was re-published under a similar title at the beginning of the 20th century and more recently in 1960. Crucially, this book was translated into Japanese.

With the help of Mr. Aoki we began our journey by following the route taken by Josef Korensky to Nikko. (Fig. 1) We were very surprised by the chaotic urban development which – apart from a few short sections – had taken place without any respect for the traditional sacral alley of Cryptomeria Japonica. Nikko itself was like a Japanese picture, allowing us a better understanding of the concept of landscape as *sansuiga* ("Water-mountain-picture") and *hakkei* ("Eight landscape sceneries") in Japanese culture. (Fig. 2, 3, 4)

But landscape change is taking place in Japan as well as in Europe and it is the rural landscape that suffers most. We were witness to the influence the West has had in shaping traditional rural landscape and its structure and function. (Fig. 5)

From an aesthetical point of view, there are still many areas that show the beauty and power of nature: coasts, mountains, forests, shrines. (Fig. 6)

The rural landscape is a little bit different compared to Europe. It seems that in Japan the rural landscape which surrounds the mega-cities is the only source of space. It lacks intrinsic values and history. (Fig. 7, 8)

In Japan, the garden plays a more important role than the natural landscape. Of course, this may have been influenced by western cultural concepts of landscape. Western concepts of landscape that derived from the ancient Hebrew expression "the view of the town Jerusalem" are such an alien concept that we Europeans cannot be sure what the traditional "meaning of landscape" in Japan actually is. Generally speaking, the Japanese population shows no intention of paying to preserve the landscape. The concept seems alien to them. But economic interest in visual aesthetical form could be a good tool for modern landscape management. Perhaps local government can use the *hakkei* tradition of "eight sceneries" and some economic incentives to protect the landscape.

It seems to us that by and large “open” space in Japan is not considered to have value as a landscape or as a place for beautiful, natural scenery. Very often there are economic constraints. One good example is the electricity pylons and cables found in cities; these may be chaotic and show little respect for the principles of architecture and open space, but they are economically more effective than expensive tunnels under the pavements etc.

According to our opinion based on research in Japan, a “new rurality” is emerging. This trend is also apparent in the rest of the industrial world. (Fig. 9, 10) For local government this should be a great occasion to support the restoration of family-based farms and encourage traditional land-use and culture life-styles that offer an alternative to the mega cities. In this way public awareness of “open” landscape can be improved.

What is especially hard for European visitors to understand is the relatively large fragmentation of the Japanese landscape; particularly rural and mountainous scenery. A skyline without visual pollution is very valuable for this generation as well as the next. The horizon view represents “democratic” space that is available to all people. In Japan (as well as in Europe) there is an ongoing process of “privatization” of that view. On many hills we can see transmitting towers for mobile phone operators and TV broadcasting dishes etc. (Fig. 11,12) Protecting the landscape against fragmentation of this sort should be the responsibility of local government operating under clear guidelines developed by national government. We believe that as Japanese culture is based on order and tradition, there is a good chance that such anti-fragmentation laws could function well.

Incidentally, the results obtained from Japanese students also reveal a high degree of preference for a free and “democratic” view of the horizon. This shows that there could be a good social backbone for laws that protect the visual landscape.

Fig. 1 The Road to Nikko, tradition and motorway

Fig. 2 Traditional Japanese landscape beauty (Nikko)

Fig. 3 Kegon fall: Nature has its power in Japanese culture

Fig. 4 Yumoto hot spring: Nature has its power in Japanese culture

Fig. 5 Central park in Tokyo

Fig. 6 A holy places in Nikko

Fig. 8 Copies of traditional culture for sale

Fig. 10 Does the “new rurality” have a chance to protect scenes like this?

Fig. 7 Shopping area, chaotic electric cables

Fig. 9 Rural landscape patterns – including golf course

Fig. 11 Top of Mt. Tsukuba

Fig. 12 Bird's eye view of Mt. Tsukuba

The meaning of Japanese Landscape

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Each person has a unique view when it comes to appreciating landscape. Moreover there is further variation depending on what culture or country he or she is from.

Many people think that Korea and Japan have the same culture because they are next to each other. Admittedly there has been much cultural interaction throughout the course of our history. However, the fact that geographical and culture circumstances are different in Korea and Japan ensures that we have different perceptions of landscape.

I'm a Korean who has been living in Japan for several years. In order to write this paper I visited many famous places in Japan with outstanding scenery and these experiences have helped me understand the typical way of appreciating nature in Japan as opposed to the West. I am briefly going to explain Japanese landscape.

Japan has numerous tourist attractions with wonderful scenery due to natural and geographical diversity. Most of all, a typically neat Japanese garden in which nature has been carefully reshaped is one good example of Japan's vision of perfect order. The various representations of symbolic space in a small area and the combination of natural and artificial components in a Japanese garden make up a craftsman's zenith (Fig. 1-5). We can sense that most Japanese gardens have a great harmony and at the same time work as a kind of symbol. Moreover the harmony of artificial scenery which has been made from rearranging nature into a fixed form can be considered an aesthetic factor in a Japanese garden (Fig. 6). The meaning and symbolic meaning of this form have had some influence on nature appreciation in Japan (Fig. 7). For example, there is aesthetic consciousness in the *Hakkei* or 'Eight sceneries' one traditional Japanese way of selecting and evaluating landscape.

We can say that "*Syou-Sou Hakkei*," one of the earliest methods of appraising natural scenery, arrived in Japan via Korea. However, in Korea we selected *Hakkei* based on our own appraisal and our own methods for evaluating the landscape, which are based on natural conditions and cultural background – not on the Chinese "*Syou-Sou Hakkei*." On the other hand, it seems as though the Japanese have tried to select their *Hakkei* based on the Chinese "*Syou-Sou Hakkei*" and appreciate nature according to those same imported guidelines. When I look at the *Hakkei* in Japan, it's interesting how all of them follow those same *Hakkei* guidelines. In the archetypal scenic places in Japan such as *'Ohmi Hakkei'* and *'Kanazawa Hakkei'*, we can see that the guidelines and the style of "*Syou-Sou Hakkei*" are well represented in Japanese *Hakkei*.

It's such a pity that scenic places all around the world are losing their natural beauty because of development and urbanization. Also, it is very hard to imagine how the scenery would have looked originally because the original *Hakkei* scenery is disappearing due to urbanization, and the only thing that remains in the *Hakkei* name plate. Not only places but also social conditions (including distant views) are factors that must be taken into consideration for the preservation of natural beauty.

Synthetic factors such as weather, time, vegetation, land, artificial architecture and so on affect landscape perception through the five senses. Besides which human beings have their own individuality. This

individuality, which is known as ‘cognitive scenery in original,’ underpins the cognitive process. It is defined during the formative years and has bearing on the cognitive process and selection of scenery.

For me, the beauty in Japanese scenery is the fresh green of the mountains. Something that is not artificial, but something natural. As these pictures show, artificial scenery is emphasized in famous gardens and scenic places, leading us to think that the scenery is constructed. The plants don't follow natural forms. Inanimate objects are intentionally arranged according to their surroundings and human measure. It is believed that easiness and symbolic representation are emphasized. In the case of natural landscape, most of them have been well preserved but it is such a shame that a few of them have been affected by the wave of urbanization. It bothered me to some extent when I saw the signs saying that there used to be beautiful attractions. It feels like the landscapes in Japan have a characteristic called 'secondary nature'. Perhaps this is an aesthetic sense which is unique to the Japanese, who strive to make their landscapes too beautiful or too refined.

<Fig. 1-5 Garden of Korakuen in Okayama

Fig. 1 by Yukio Nanba (1996), Korakuen, reproduced from Sanyo-Shinbunsha with permission, Okayama

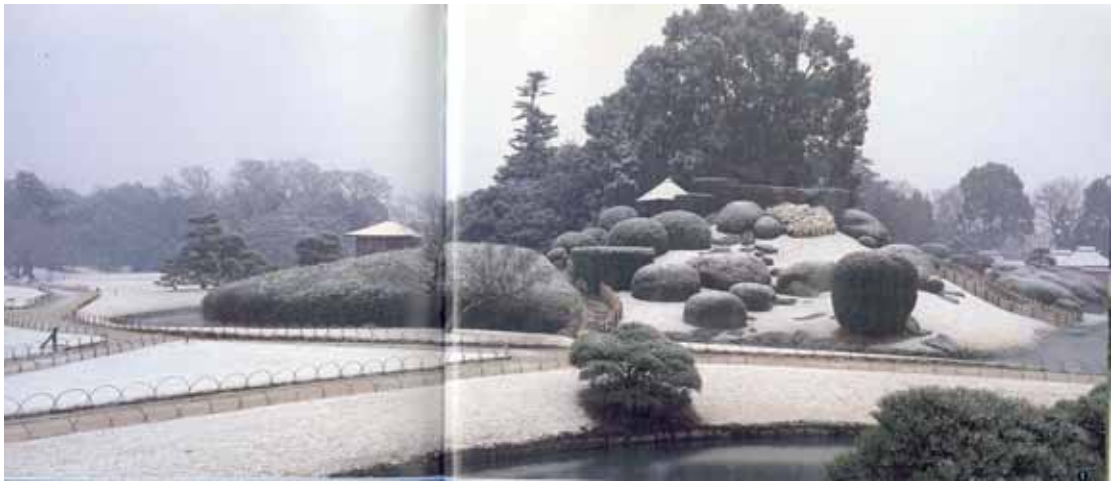

Fig. 2 by Yukio Nanba (1996), Korakuen, reproduced from Sanyo-Shinbunsha with permission, Okayama

Fig. 3 by Yukio Nanba (1996), Korakuen, reproduced from Sanyo-Shinbunsha with permission, Okayama

Fig. 4 Paddy fields of Korakuen

Fig. 5 Mt. Yuishin of Korakuen

Fig. 6 Maintained stream in a pavilion (Korakuen)

Fig. 7 Typical planting of Pine in Takayama

My impressions of Japanese streetscapes

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I lived in Japan as a student and later office employee from 1985 till 2002; over twelve years in total. This report will use photos to offer a snapshot of Japanese streetscapes. The adjectives that follow reflect my impressions of the Japanese streetscapes shown in the photos. It is said that Japanese streetscape has a kind of regularization[1] and that social conditions are reflected in the streetscape. This means business fluctuations should be the most influential factor on the streetscape. In the past decade, Japan has suffered from a serious economic recession, yet it still stands firm today.

1 Advertisement board

Sometimes we judge a city as boring or prosperous on the strength of its advertisement boards. As Fig.1 from in front of Shibuya Station shows, the image of advertisement boards are described as “crowded”, “orderly” and “colorless”. Advertisement boards of Aoyama are “colorless” (see Fig. 2). Fig. 3’s advertisement board seems “integral” and “warm”[2]. Japanese advertisement boards make me feel “orderly”, “colorless” and “integral”.

2 Sidewalk and Trees lining a street

The sidewalk of Asakusabashi appears to leave people “free” to walk without impediment. Along with the sidewalk, the trees of Asakusabashi make the streetscape here “comfortable” and “wide” (Fig. 4- Fig. 6).

3 Kiosk

I got adjectives like “shining” and “spotless” (Fig. 7) from the scene at Kiosk[3] in Shinjuku, Japan. From the Kiosk of Sensouji, “orderly” “lively” and “Monotony” were assembled (see Fig. 8). As Fig. 9 below shows, the kiosks of the Highway Service Area on Tomei are “orderly” “clean” and “dim.”

4 Others

Public holidays in Ginza see the main road cordoned off for pedestrians. But this is not the only place we can see a “spotless” and “orderly” road (see Fig. 11). Even in a crowded flea market the ground is still clean. (see Fig. 10) Around the drains and permeable brick on the sidewalk everything looks “clean” and makes people feel “comfortable” (see Fig. 12 and Fig. 13).

“Quality” vs. “Quantity”? It is common sense to know that “Quality” often matters more than “Quantity”. Although “developing countries” still need “Quantity” for their starving people, it is an important thing for a “developed country” to pay much attention to “Quality” for their people. When I walked the Shinjuku streets in the early 1990s, I remember crowds of people walking hastily against a shiny neon backdrop, the exquisite advertisements hung high above the clean and orderly streets. It was somehow too dreary. On the contrary, in Taiwan the higgledy-piggledy streets and cheap paving tiles are always brimming with unbelievable glamour. The vitality that permeates the streets in Taiwan presents a young country in high spirits. This might be the reason why the streetscape of Taiwan is known as “beauty of disorder”. Up until right now at the start of the 21st century, there has been a quite revolution in the Japanese social structure. For example, business suits are no longer required. Japanese streetscapes still shine, as befits a “developed country.” Only sometimes they seem too ripe to have fun.

note

1 From a Taiwanese viewpoint, Japanese streetscape is an absolute form of order.
2 The pairs of adjectives were written and judged by my assistant, a third grade geography student. Same as below, when appears again.
3 According to Merriam-Webster's 11th Collegiate dictionary, "Kiosk" mean a small structure with one or more open sides that is used to vend merchandise (such as newspapers) or services (such as developing film)

Fig. 1 Ad. board of Shibuya Station Area
Photo dated: 030721, JP

Fig. 2 Ad. board of Aoyama Photo dated: 020811, JP

Fig. 3 Ad. board of Tomei HighWay Service Area
Photo dated: 030822, JP

Fig. 4 Sidewalk of Asakusabashi
Photo dated: 030722, JP

Fig. 5 Sidewalk and trees of Asakusabashi
Photo dated: 030722, JP

Fig. 6 Sidewalk and trees of Asakusabashi
Photo dated: 030722, JP

Fig. 7 Kiosk of Shinjuku　Photo dated: 030822, JP

Fig. 8 Kiosk of Sensoji　Photo dated: 050717, JP

Fig. 9 Kiosk of Tomei Highway S. A.
Photo dated: 030822, JP

Fig. 10 streetscape of Setagaya
Photo dated: 001215, JP

Fig. 11 Streetscape of Ginza
Photo dated: 020812, JP

Fig. 12 Streetscape of Asakusabashi
Photo dated: 030722, JP

Fig. 13 Streetscape of Asakusabashi
Photo dated: 030722, JP

Japanese Landscapes – Impressions and Reflections

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I. Overview

Travelling in Japan, the most striking impressions I gained aesthetically were those caused by the contrast between magnificent natural landscapes, often to be found in (protected) mountainous areas, and the urbanized, technically shaped agglomeration landscapes such as the Kanto region (Tokyo, Yokohama), the Kansai region (Kyoto, Nara, Osaka, Kobe), and the Nagoya region. This urban Japan has all the attributes of modern life including large industrial areas, elevated and confusingly intertwined expressways, huge skyscrapers in dense residential areas, garishly colourful commercial quarters, channelized and concrete river beds, elegant inner city cores, distinguished public buildings (Fig. 1). But it also has cultural-historic remains like old temples, (historic) gardens and cemeteries, scattered almost accidentally in between (Fig. 2). This urban Japan conveys strong feelings of speechless astonishment to the aesthetic onlooker. Although the processes of urbanization, tertiarization, and commercialization in Japan are similar to those in urbanized and industrialized European centres, they appear much more uncontrollable and overwhelming here, probably due to the impossibility of grasping the order and the plan that underpins them.

Also, the deep and irregular intrusion of urban sprawl into the rural countryside, which for its own part is mostly dominated by intensive agriculture using often glass and plastic greenhouses, aesthetically stirs the onlooker. Here and even more in economically underdeveloped, peripheral rural areas, which are characterized by massive depopulation, the decay of old cultural landscape elements like paddy fields, rice terraces, ditch systems, and traditional village structures is most conspicuous. I have never seen so many golf courses as in the outer districts of Japanese agglomeration areas. They characterize the landscape scenery too, if for example, you approach Narita airport by plane. But they can also dominate the view if you look out from the top of the sacred dopple-twin Mt Tsukuba, north of Tokyo, from where – with fine weather conditions – you can see Mt Fuji some 160 km away.

This painful loss of cultural-historical heritage in Japan has been reprimanded since time immemorial (recently e.g. Kerr, 2001; Ebner, 2002). It has been suggested that in Japan modern technique is not considered a historic achievement of men so much, but as a “naturally” existing phenomenon in a magical sense (Heinze, 2004). An explanation of the widespread destruction of nature is given by an insider, Yuriko Saito (1992), who claims that the landscape depletion in Japan is, up to a certain degree, due to Zen Buddhism. In her opinion the Buddhist idea of transience and impermanence of everything brings about the belief that “strip-minded mountains and polluted rivers must be considered as manifesting Buddha nature as much as uncultivated mountains and unspoiled rivers” (Saito, 1992).

Visually the additive coincidence of motorways and railroads, rivers and channels, forests, orchards, rice fields, biotopes, villages, new residential districts, industrial areas and so on is often said to have a certain fascination, and its attraction consists in the motley collection of familiar and unfamiliar, designed and undesigned, well known and mysterious, bizarre and usual things. It places the ugly next to the beautiful, as if this were the most natural thing in the world. It is quite obvious that these sceneries evoke feelings of thrill, risk, and uncertainty and sometimes of limited catastrophe in the beholder (cf. Nohl, 2001). He

realizes that these new urban landscapes are based on the decay of great parts of the traditional cultural landscape, but he feels, too, that it contains a chance for the emergence of a new landscape type.

II. On-site experiences

Apart from that, those landscapes in Japan that have maintained a high degree of naturalness because of their remote location or effective protection (e.g. National Parks), move us aesthetically in a quite different way. In the following passage the National Parks Fuji-Hakone-Izu, Nikko, Aso-Kujo and Kushiro-Shitsugen serve as illustrations of the outstanding aesthetic value of such landscapes. In no other area did I experience the georelief aesthetically so clearly as the primary landscape attribute as at Fuji-Hakone. In this National Park the sacred majestic mountain Fuji is omnipresent, whether you look from the area of the 5 Fuji lakes southward, from the eastern and southern shores of Lake Ashi in a northwest direction, or if you "simply" look at Fuji's mirror image in Lake Ashi. It is hard to find anything comparable elsewhere. Lake Ashi, whose uniqueness is accentuated by a ring of framing mountains and deep, ravine-like valleys in between, offers a grandiose scene of volcanic landscape, especially if one looks down on it from the surrounding heights (Fig. 3). Hot springs and sulphurous steams and fumes, which the landscape exudes in the area of Owakudani ("valley of the great fumes"), work as exciting sensory-aesthetical clues to the volcanic origins of this landscape. The delicate relationship between religion and nature, which is of fundamental significance to the understanding of traditional Japanese landscape appreciation, is aesthetically demonstrated in the simple yet breathtaking Hakone shrine, embedded in the landscape of the southeast lakeshore built up of rocks and forest. The auburn red of the gates, the deep blue of the lake water, and the dark green of the slope forest create a "natural" scene of unforgettable beauty.

The landscape of Nikko National Park is situated in one of the most-visited mountainous regions in Japan. Especially fascinating natural elements in this Park are Lake Chuzenji at an altitude of 1270m, and the smaller Lake Yunoko. But not only do the huge mountains like Nantai near Lake Chuzenji and large old forests support the natural character of this outstanding area; expanded moor lands, e.g. between the two lakes, also lend a special natural expression to Nikko National Park. The visible dynamic includes many waterfalls, among which the 100m high Kegon Fall is the most impressive and contributes in an aesthetically fascinating way to the uniqueness and distinctiveness of this natural region (Fig. 4). It is a sublime landscape in the best sense of the word, and it builds a magnificent counterpoint to the world-famous temples and shrines to be found east of Nikko National Park. The artistic and historical richness of this holy area corresponds to the great diversity of natural elements in the park.

The volcanic landscape of Aso National Park, which lies in the centre of the island Kyushu, also left a lasting impression. The Aso crater basin, with a diameter of 16km in an east-west direction and 32 km from north to south, is one of the largest calderas in the world. Its unbelievable width is increased in its effect of spaciousness by the openness of huge parts of the basin (agrarian use of the volcanic soil). Five volcano cones within the crater basin intensify the experience of the elementary force of nature in this landscape. The volcanic activity of Mount Nakadake, whose dark plumes of smoke, sulphurous smells and underground rumbling make visitors shudder anxiously, is a unique nature experience. Overall, the wildly piled up volcano massifs, the smaller volcano cones with their many vertical erosion furrows as well as the colourful interplay between the brown-black lava fields, the green-yellow grazing areas (e.g. on the Kusasenri plateau) and the dark green forests all convey a picture of unusual natural grandeur. The sense of the sublime, which is so easily aroused in this wild landscape, is not broken despite the signs of human influence like smaller villages and larger settlements in the field of view.

In contrast to these mountainous areas, the marshlands of Kushiro-Shitsugen National Park in the southeast of the Hokkaido Island evoke different moods and feelings. In Kushiro-Shitsugen lie the biggest wetlands of Japan. This is the last surviving habitat of the once widespread white crane, a symbol of Japan. High mountains and extensive forests do not characterize the landscape scenery; rather there are huge flat marshlands containing large rides, muddy moors, alder bushes, and open water spots that offer a wide horizontal landscape to the eye. It is the "all things equal" magic of this scenery that creates a somewhat melancholic mood for the beholder. Even the sluggishly meandering Kushiro and its side rivers are not really able to set a distinctive counter accent to the overall impression of continuous repetition. Nevertheless it, too, exerts a strange aesthetical appeal on us. Kushiro-Shitsugen is not a breathtaking landscape, and yet, it attracts us with its unique rough and austere natural beauty and with its touch of melancholy.

It should not be forgotten that many of these outstanding and beautiful landscapes have not been left untouched by the technical-urban development and the consequences of population growth. (Nohl, 2002/2003). For example, the Fuji-Hakone Park is a popular recreational area today, especially for the people of the Kanto and the Nagoya regions. As a result, 'hard' tourism has breached many, aesthetically and ecologically often sensitive areas (e.g. the tourist villages at lake Ashi or around the city of Owakudami), as big hotel complexes, broad link roads, railroads, ropeways (e.g. from Togendai to Gora) and many other facilities prove. In the National Park of Nikko, too, high dues were paid to tourism in the form of the many hotels, ropeways, the lookout platform at the Kegan waterfall and the elevator construction that goes with it, the double winding road Iroha-zaka east of lake Chuzenji and many other tourist facilities. (However, it should also be mentioned, that from the southeast side of the lake – Akechi-daira plateau – a stunning view of the serpentine downward road can be experienced!)

Although Aso National Park lies on Kyushu Island far from the large agglomeration areas in Japan, the park is also highly frequented by visitors. That means the park is seriously affected by individual car traffic and by much infrastructure like visitor driveways, ropeways, vacation villages etc. Moreover, some 70.000 people live permanently in and around Aso Park, 50% of which is in fact privately-owned land. That means local people contribute significantly to traffic and other landscape problems. The situation in Kushiro-Shitsugen National Park is quite different. The fact that the park is located in the sparsely populated eastern part of Hokkaido keeps the number of visitors relatively small in comparison to many other National Parks in Japan. Another reason for the modest visitor numbers is the fact that the park is not so deeply anchored in the consciousness of the people, for it doesn't represent the classical and well-known landscape beauty of Nikko or Hakone. But the park is planned and organized in a very sophisticated way. For example the visitor centre (Onnenai) lies at the edge of the park, from where people can spread out by foot in different directions using a system of wooden footpaths to explore the sensitive natural areas of the park.

In summary, we can hardly expect that the heavy tourist impact on the aesthetically highly attractive landscapes will disappear in the near future. The regional economies in these rural areas look on the weekly visitor streams as an opportunity to reduce the economic weakness of their regions. For them the promotion of tourism means making use of the existence of National Parks to improve the regional net product. In fact, it is predicted that with growing leisure time in the next decades, recreation will become more important as an economic factor in these areas (Rural development planning commission, 1992:79).

It is true that in National Parks and their surroundings, the damage caused by tourism (e.g. traffic, sewage, settlement) reduces the aesthetical delight of landscape in a particularly forceful way, because people do not expect such negative effects at such places. On the other hand we have to recognize that, in general, these traditionally beautiful landscapes in the rural country of Japan are still exceptional to a high degree. They have retained their distinctiveness and uniqueness in spite of this development. Thus the onlooker can't help but enjoy their beauty with admiration and gratitude, even today.

III. Future Prospects

If we try to explain the present landscape aesthetic situation in Japan, the thought occurs that the process of modernization, as in other countries, results in new forms of perceiving and enjoying the landscape aesthetically. It seems to me that the old aesthetic paradigm gets broken down into various aesthetic "genres" now, depending on landscape types, developed by and/or important for modern life:

⇒ Obviously, rural cultural landscapes, as long as they are preserved, are still places which are enjoyed as "beautiful" in the traditional sense by locals as well as by tourists (Fig. 5).

⇒ In a similar way the grandiose extreme landscapes like high mountains or seascapes still convey the aesthetic feelings of the "sublime".

⇒ But are spontaneously developing landscapes like abandoned fields, succession areas, spontaneous woodlands, or overgrown urban derelict sites, which are often by-products of modernization processes, not aesthetically experienced as sublime, too? This "new sublime" is not evoked, however, by the magnificence and grandiosity of nature, but by its conspicuous self-dynamics, self-productivity and self-regulation forces.

⇒ In the vast urbanized agglomeration areas of today, where a great multiplicity of apparently confusing, incoherent, labyrinthine and chaotic technical things and events are in touch with (the remains of) nature, a further landscape aesthetic quality, namely the "interesting" seems to grow more and more important.

⇒ And couldn't it be that modern intensive agricultural landscapes in spite of large fields, unified and homogenized soils, levelled surfaces etc. are on their way to gain their own aesthetic quality, provided they are somewhat improved, ecologically and scenically, e.g. by a sufficiently dense net of natural elements and structures? The "plain", as we could tentatively label this new aesthetic quality, might form another basic aesthetic category of future landscape experience.

It is easy to understand why people still lament over the tremendous landscape aesthetic losses, caused by the processes of modernization, although their detrimental effects could already be seen in the early 20th century. But in the present situation of radical environmental change perhaps we might better understand the landscape aesthetic situation in Japan, if we look for hints of a new aesthetic paradigm coming into being right now (Fig.6).

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Fig.1 Urban Japan is characterized by many distinguished public buildings: the prefecture building in Fukuoka

Fig.2 In urban areas cultural-historic remains of outstanding beauty may be found hidden between modern traffic structures, residential and commercial areas: Suizenji Park in Kumamoto

Fig.3 Lake Ashi, a unique natural feature in the Fuji-Hakone-Izu National Park

Fig.4 Water in various forms plays an extraordinary role in the Nikko National Park: Ryuzu waterfall north of Lake Chuzenji

Fig.5 Rural cultural landscapes are still places of conspicuous beauty: orange culture at Yahatahama (Shikoku)

Fig.6 Is a new landscape awareness dawning in Japan?

My Impressions of the Japanese Landscape

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I stayed in Japan for a period of time in order to conduct joint research. Although I visited many cities, historic sites and national parks, it was only a fleeting visit. I could only snatch a brief glance of the landscape and it was difficult for me to get a real feeling for and have a deep understanding of the Japanese landscape. Fortunately, I began to learn Japanese in my teenage years and have a certain interest in Japanese culture. Later I taught a course of travel planning at the university, which brought me into contact with the Japanese landscape on a regular basis. Such experiences can be said have given me an insight and laid a psychological foundation for my observations of Japanese landscape. In addition, as I come from the inland grassland of Inner Mongolia. I should be more sensitive to the warm and wet landscape of Japan, an island nation (Fig. 1, 2).

The ocean wind reaches every corner of the long, narrow chain of Japanese islands. It brings Japan abundant rainfall, and green is in full view everywhere. Though Japan is a highly urbanized industrial and commercial society, it has rich historical remains and a deeply traditional cultural atmosphere envelops people's everyday life. No matter where you are; in a city street or lane, in the forest, by a lake or on an island in a National Park, at a shrine, a temple, a yard, or at a gathering site of a traditional festival; everywhere you can see the harmonious coexistence between nature and man. You can feel the blend of modern with traditional and you see that internationalisation has been combined with the oriental and Japanese individuality (Fig. 3). Such was my first impression of Japan.

In Tokyo, for example, skyscrapers stand in great numbers. The subway extends in all directions and automobiles inch forward in lines like beetles. You can see company clerks rushing around; commercial and entertainment streets filled with people and youngsters in bizarre attire. All this makes Tokyo look like an immense machine running day and night. However, in Tokyo, you can also see a lot of exquisite classical gardens, shrines and temples both simple and grand (Fig. 4). In this way you can see the long-lasting history of the city. Moreover, women in elegant Japanese *kimono* walk the street with short, quick steps. The lanterns, signboards and door curtains at pubs, Japanese-style rooms in hotels or residents with their exquisite Japanese-style tableware will likewise make you feel that the residents in Tokyo are still living at ease with their tradition of thousands of years. The luxuriant trees that line the streets, the trees surrounding the palaces and Meiji Shrine, parks both small and large, green everywhere and various kinds of flowers in pots by the door or on the windowsills of every family in the back-streets or in narrow lanes – all this gives a sense of nature and makes bustling Tokyo look quiet and comfortable in some ways.

There are a lot of temples in the ancient city of Kyoto and numerous ancient palaces and gardens (Fig. 5, 6, 7). When I went to this city, no matter if I was in the quiet and elegant streets and lanes, or walking at the foot of Mt Arasiyama or along the banks of the River Kamogawa, the atmosphere of ancient Chinese poetry as well as many specific verses often popped into my mind. Sometimes I felt as if I were in a dream and wondered if I had perhaps gone back in time a few thousands of years (Fig. 8, 9, 10). Kyoto at night gave me the deepest and also the most beautiful impressions. The entire city is very quiet; there are few pedestrians in the ancient streets and lanes at the foot of Mt Arasiyama. The light coming from the doors of residents is a gentle, dim yellow colour, which arouses a kind of lonely homesickness from the bottom of one's heart. If you visit Kyoto, remember to be sure to visit Gion, a busy street with the most distinctive

Japanese features. I used to start out from a hotel on the River Kamogawa and walk directly to Gion and still not feel at all tired. Gion is at its most lovely in the evening. The dim glow of the lanterns. *Geisha* in gorgeous *kimono* walk towards high-grade restaurants behind whose paper windows the lamplight glitters gently. The buildings and styles of streets are extremely well matched to a *kimono*'s elegant demeanour. There are many old shops where Japanese sandalwood, hair decorations, *kimono* and their matching decorations are sold. Chinese and Western restaurants can also be found there. Gion is different from commercial streets in other countries and is even different from those in Tokyo. The atmosphere of Gion shows an implied prosperity that only existed a thousand years ago.

The school where I teach focuses on cultivating the talents of garden-makers. Therefore, when I go to Japan the opportunity to visit Japanese-style gardens cannot be missed. In Japan, nearly every shrine or temple as well as the palace gardens and gardens of lords have a classical garden. Therefore, it is almost impossible not to see or go into any gardens. This is the case in Tokyo, never mind Kyoto and Nara. Japanese love nature deeply. They think that natural things show original beauty and reflect reality. Such a feeling is reflected in Japanese paintings, poems, the tea ceremony, architecture and everything tangible. And Japanese-style gardens embody the Japanese aesthetic outlook and their outlook on nature in a concentrated form. I have visited dozens of gardens in Japan. Even imperial gardens are buildings of wooden structure. Everything in a garden is arranged naturally and no meticulous display can be found. In buildings of wooden structures of Japanese-style gardens, grains of the original wood are retained; paint and colour painting are rarely used. There are roofs made of straw, green trees, moss, water banks made of natural rock that has not been processed, the simple style of the stone lanterns, paths made of casually arranged stepping stones, and simple and unadorned tea-houses in the gardens. Every garden looks like a potted landscape. It shows extreme exquisiteness on the one hand, and a natural, unadorned style on the other. The Nikko Toshogu Palace can be thought to have the brightest colours and the most magnificent buildings. However, its buildings still have a wooden structure and the basic tone of its colours is the elegant colour of wood. Designers of Japanese-style gardens are mostly monks. Such gardens are the material embodiment of the ideal picture of the relationship between nature and man as shown in *sansuiga* paintings and poems of mountain-and-water scenery. No wonder that Muroh Saisei, a Japanese writer, once said that "The highest realm of pure Japanese beauty is Japanese gardens". From such gardens you can see how Japanese treat nature and you can learn about their understanding of beauty.

The city where I worked temporally is Tsukuba near Tokyo, yet I spent more than a month on my journey from Tokyo to Kyoto and Nara in Kansai and from Tokyo to Sendai. Doctor Aoki of the Japanese National Environment Institute took great care in arranging my trip so that I would take different routes there and back. He even chose different means of transportation for me, hoping that I could observe more Japanese landscape in a short time. Compared with their exquisite and polished gardens, the natural environment of Japan still maintains and preserves the original state of "natural beauty". Forests cover 70% of Japan. Industrial activities are concentrated in the cities. The countryside is sparsely populated and rainfall is abundant, so Japan has a rich and fertile primordial natural environment and traditional countryside communities. Though Japan's landscape and biodiversity cannot compare with the size of continental China, the long, narrow shape of the Japanese archipelago that stretches from Hokkaido to Okinawa allows for numerous beautiful landscapes. Mountain areas, forests, rivers, lakes, seacoasts, islands, wetland and the countryside; all differ from season to season. You need not go to National Parks; you can simply look out from the fast-moving *shinkansen* bullet train and even while en route you can see, hear, smell and touch the beauty of nature. In fact, the beauty of the natural environment is not from "nature". If people's attitude toward nature is positive, why can nature not be beautiful everywhere? A Japanese scholar once

said: “For the Japanese, nature is God. If there were no nature, there would be no God and no life either. We can also say there would be no history of Japan.” Because the Japanese treat nature with respect, Japan’s environment is protected and preserved. For example, the colours of buildings in the countryside are always low-key. The style is fine and simple, such as only exists in Japan. Wood and imitation-wood are mostly used in buildings. Attempts are always made to camouflage necessary buildings in National Parks so that such buildings can become a part of nature, and not an eye-catching outsider. This is true of ancient Shinto shrines as well as modern tourist centres.

Hot springs are the most impressive thing for visitors to Japan. It is said that there are more than 2,600 hot springs and 75,000 hot spring hotels in Japan. This is one advantage of being located in an environment full of volcanoes and earthquakes. The Japanese like to soak in the hot springs. We can even say that soaking in the hot springs has become an essential habit, just like eating and sleeping. Though many hotels provide individual showers and bathtubs, there is also a public bathroom on every floor, and many guests prefer to soak in the public bathtubs for a while. These public bathrooms act as hot spring substitutes. We can see that the Japanese like and depend on the hot springs. There are many attractions at hot spring holiday resorts. Besides the hot spring itself, the green mountain forests, traditionally under-stated Japanese-style buildings, comfortable Japanese-style hotels, and delicate and delicious tea and meals; all these can give you treatment, rest and pleasure both mental and physical. The author once experienced a wonderful Japanese-style outdoor hot spring in Nikkou National Park. But it was a summer afternoon; the best time for a soak is said to be in spring at night when there is full moon and the stars are out, or on a snowy day. If I have the chance to go to Japan again, I’d like to give it a go. It is also worth mentioning that many small family hotels in hot spring sites have few differences from those in Beijing, Tokyo and New York. However, in small Japanese-style family hotels, you can experience Japanese family life as it actually is or even better experience than it is. It is the kind of mood that only can be found in journeys, the same atmosphere that is recorded in Yasunari Kawabata’s “The Dancing Girl of Izu.”

Now I am rearranging the memories of my trip to Japan. Many unforgettably beautiful pictures appear before my eyes. I know now what kind of landscape is given highest priority in Japan’s national appreciation of beauty: empty and quiet. What causes me to think this is that the tradition of “nature” and “aestheticism” is embodied in many aspects in Japanese life. Is this because of the ancient local religious tradition? Or is it due to Japan’s environmental education in schools and society? Or is it because many people like the *haiku* poems of Matsuo Basho?

Fig. 1 Lake Chuzenji at Nikko

Fig. 2 Goshikinuma, Bandaiasahi National park

Fig. 3 Tsukuba shrine

Fig. 4 Hamarikyu garden

Fig. 5 Kyoto Gyoen

Fig. 6 Entrance of Kyoto Gyoen

Fig. 8 Byodoin villa at Uji

Fig. 7 Stone lantern

Fig. 9 Deer at Nara Park

Fig. 10 Toshodaiji temple at Nara

Postscript

This collection of Japanese landscape appraisals features the work of over 15 authors from more than 6 different countries. The compilation offers the reader an informed, academic opinion of scenery that spans the length and breadth of the Japanese Isles. By assembling such a diverse range of reports, NIES has created a permanent record at the turn-of-the-millennium milestone in a country where change can be as fast as it is all consuming.

One of the key themes to emerge from the reports was the extreme range of landscape to be found across the Japanese archipelago. The contrast is perhaps most evident to the uninitiated Western viewer but, it nonetheless holds equal relevance to commentators from developing Asian countries such as China. The relationship between man and nature is especially turbulent in a country that has face-lifts on a gigantic scale in the last 150 years, whether scripted by natural disasters or human intervention. Putting the collection down in writing in this way therefore represents a valuable birds-eye-view of present-day Japan, which may offer insight and inspire reflection for future generations.

"Curiosity is the key to creativity," the Sony-founder Akio Morita was once reported to have said. And certainly, the fresh outlook offered by these reports can only offer inspiration. It is sincerely hoped that academic research and outside input such as this compilation can make an effective contribution to the long-term preservation of the diversity of Japanese landscape - both natural and man-made.

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We accepted many researchers from many countries. Some were familiar with Japanese culture but others were not. Some came with their family. Others came alone. They were interested not only in exchanging information about their research but also in experiencing a different culture. I had a lot of opportunities to hear their frank opinions about Japan, which was very interesting for me.

For example, one researcher from Western Europe had some strong stereotypes about Japanese women. She had read up on Japan before arriving, so she came full of images of how pitiable a Japanese woman's lot must be. But I talked with her a lot, invited her to my house to show her Japanese life and also invited her to the Tsukuba women's network meeting. This meeting is composed of foreigners who live in Japan and also Japanese who have experience of living abroad. In this way, she had a chance to understand Japanese life. She noticed that she held certain prejudices when it came to Japanese women. I was glad that she could see the reality. We can't understand different cultures just through conferences and sightseeing. The researchers who came to our Institute had time to get to know not only their research field but also the culture and people. It gave them a unique insight into Japan. This research can only have had a positive effect in promoting relations between Japan and their countries. I still keep in touch with them now. It was my pleasure to support their visit.

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We received many papers for the publication of this report. Some articles were more than 10 pages long, but we couldn't publish the entire text so the editor shortened some of the contributions. Moreover, some photographs had to be cut because of the shortage of funds. We are preparing a CD with the photographs in this report; if you need the original photographs, please contact us. The texts were checked by a native speaker, and rewritten into easier English for non-native readers. If you find topics of interest among the descriptions of the contributors, please contact them directly. Their contact addresses are shown in their papers.

The report was authorized by the NIES and distributed not only to governmental institutions but also universities. The embassies of foreign countries will also receive this report. I hope you find some interesting material in this publication.

7. November 2005

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The editing committee of NIES authorized this publication.