Cognitive Feeling and Sensory Feeling in Japanese *Daimyō* Gardens of the Edo Period

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Entering the twenty-first century, the field of Japanese studies has experienced a heightened interest in examining the role of the senses across aesthetic, cultural, and anthropological disciplines. The translation of seminal works by leading figures in the "sensory turn," such as Constance Classen and David Howes, into Japanese during the 2010s has been a defining moment. This period also witnessed a proliferation of symposia and scholarly works in Japan exploring the sensory dimensions of a wide array of practices, from culinary and martial arts to tea ceremonies and dance. This evolving discourse has brought to light the intricate ways in which sensory experiences—be they visual, auditory, gustatory, tactile, or even visceral—are dynamically constructed and woven into both the fabric of everyday life and ritual events. The expanded focus challenges the traditional emphasis in art history, which often prioritizes symbols, doctrines, and visual information to the exclusion of other sensory dimensions.[1]

Japanese sensory perception is articulated through two distinct yet interconnected concepts: *chikaku* 知覚 or "cognitive feeling" and *kankaku* (感覚) or "sensory feeling."[2] *Chikaku* refers to the learned aspect of perception, while *kankaku* is more instinctual or biological. This highlights the dual pathway through which the senses operate: senses can be learned, but we also learn from the senses. Taking into consideration these two factors is useful for analyzing the *daimyō* gardens of the Edo period (also known as the Tokugawa period, 1603–1867). Owned by feudal lords across Japan, these gardens present a multifaceted experience that combines thought and emotion.

Gardens are a unique art form in their nonfinality, irreplicability, vulnerability, and most of all, their multi-sensoriality. In fact, gardens may be the only art form that engages all five senses:

[1] On the "sensory turn" in Japanese studies, see Hannah Gould, et. al., "An Interrogation of Sensory Anthropology of and in Japan," *Anthropological Quarterly* 92, no. 1 (Winter 2019), 231–258.
[2] Hannah Gould, et. al., "An Interrogation of Sensory Anthropology of and in Japan," 234.

"Hearing is reflected in the sounds of water, birds, and animals. Sight…[relates to] a visual sense of beauty, color, and fascination with surroundings. Sense of smell helps humans become aware of fresh air and flowers in bloom. Touch is articulated in feeling plants…and breeze upon the skin. Taste…is at times implied through the horticultural activities of harvesting fruits and vegetables…..".[3] In a Japanese garden where stepping stones are carefully selected and laid, the sense of touch also includes the varying pressure experienced by the foot (Fig. 1). As political and cultural spaces, *daimyō* gardens give us a distinct perspective into the ruling ideology of the time as well, which was Neo-Confucianism. In the Edo period, this imported Chinese philosophy based on social responsibilities and humanistic moral thinking prevailed over Buddhism and Shinto in shaping the foundation of the ruling class.

Neo-Confucianism in Japan developed into several schools of thought, but all emphasized the cultivation of self and society, and reciprocal responsibilities between the ruler and the ruled. A superior was expected to be benevolent, while a subordinate must be dutiful. Such values were expressedly incorporated into *daimyō* gardens, contributing to the intellectual side of sense perception, *chikaku*. These gardens are often overshadowed by the more renowned Buddhist temple gardens or those belonging to the aristocracy. In contrast to the meticulously arranged "Zen gardens" characterized by their raked gravel and rectangular layouts, *daimyō* gardens might initially appear more casual and less profound. This impression is amplified by the transformation of some of these expansive green areas into public parks since the Meiji Period (1868–1912), though many former prestige gardens underwent similar conversions as part of urban redesign.[4]

Another reason for the marginalization of *daimyō* gardens is their locations. Some of the famous ones are outside of Kyoto and off the typical tourist tracks. I use as my examples Japan's Big Three Gardens or *Nihon san mei'en* 日本三名園: Kenroku-en 兼六園 in Kanazawa 金沢, Kōraku-en 後楽園 in Okayama 岡山, and Kairaku-en 偕楽園 in Mito 水戸. Each of the three gardens spans several acres, a scale more commonly associated with Edo-period gardens than those of earlier times. The question of whether these three gardens represent the pinnacle of their kind is

[3] Andrew Pleasant, et. al., "Literature Review: Environmental Design and Research on the Human Health Effects of Open Spaces in Urban Areas," *Human Ecology Review* 20, no. 1 (Summer 2013), 36–49.

[4] The phenomenon of turning prestige gardens into urban spaces was directly inspired by Western gardens observed by Meiji travelers, notably the Iwakura Mission of 1871–1873, and driven by the need to revivify areas vacated by the nobility and feudal leaders. See Alice Y. Tseng, "Urban Parks and Imperial Memory: The Formation of Kyoto Imperial Garden and Okazaki Park as Sites of Cultural Revival," in *Kyoto Visual Culture in the Early Edo and Meiji Periods: The Arts of Reinvention* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 91–116.

open to discussion. Their elevation to "Big Three" status was influenced by tourism marketing efforts at the turn of the twentieth century, notably in a 1904 photographic collection that targeted foreign visitors.[5]

Daimyō gardens represented the historical practice of domain lords opening their properties to the public for enjoyment during special events. They are prone to mannerist ornamentality, from their choice of plants to architecture to decorative elements. As I shall contend, instead of lacking in great significance, *daimyo* gardens demonstrated a skillful integration of intellectual and sensory elements in innovative ways.

Historical Background

During China's Tang Dynasty (618-907) and Japan's Nara Period (645-794), the introduction of Chinese garden styles featuring ponds marked the inception of courtyard gardens in Japanese palaces and Buddhist temples. This development coincided with Japan's formal interactions with the continent. Despite the closed-door policy enforced by the shogunate during the Edo period, which severed official relations with China, Japanese ruling elites and scholars remained deeply engrossed in Chinese philosophy, literature, and culture. This enduring fascination led to a distinct vernacular inspired by these Chinese models.

Several Chinese books on gardens were brought to Japan, reprinted and disseminated. Among the most famous was Chen Haozi's 陳淏子 (dates unknown) *Michuan huajing* (J. 秘傳花鏡) or *Secret Transmission of the Mirror of Flowers* (1688), which was known to Japan through the editorial effort of Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内 (1773–1779).[6] This book contains detailed instructions on cultivating flowers. The second chapter titled "Eighteen Flower Lessons," the essence of the book, discusses all the techniques of flower cultivation, such as planting, dividing, transplanting, sowing, cutting, grafting, harvesting, watering, pest control, potting, bonsai, pruning, cultivating, and interios furnishings, and so forth.[7] Another canonical text that entered Japan in the Edo period was Ji Cheng's 計成 (1582–ca. 1642), *Yuanyi* 園怡 or *The Craft of Gardens* (preface

[5] 『日本三名園とは』https://www.touken-world.jp/3great-gardens-japan/ (2024 年 4 月 10 日閲覧).

[6] See Nicolas Fiévé, "Les Jardins Paysagers des Seigneurs Domaniaux de l'époque d'Edo et les Manuels Relatifs à la Composition des Jardins" (Landscape gardens of the domain lords in the Edo period and handbooks concerning gardens' composition), *Revue Scientifique sur la Conception et L'ménagaement de L'espace* 8 (2012), 1–24.

[7] See "*Michuan huajing*," (accessed March 3, 2024). https://old.shuge.org/ebook/mi-chuan-hua-jing/. The complete text can be found here: https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=444104

1631, published ca. 1634), the first monograph dedicated to landscape architecture in China and arguably in the world. Ji emphasizes that although gardens are created by the human hand, they should appear as if they were the work of nature.[8] *Yuanyi* was imported into Japan in the 18th century and inventoried in the shogunal library, *Momiji-yama bunko* 紅葉山文庫, which contained many ancient manuscripts and books including Chinese publications purchased by magistrates in the open port at Nagasaki.[9] However, this text was classified as "banned" and therefore not generally available to the public, likely due to the sumptuary laws designed to maintain social order by limiting expressions of wealth by the lower classes. According to Nicolas Fiévé, there were still some twenty major instructional books on garden design produced by Japanese authors during the Edo period, often with illustrations. They described the different methods of setting artificial landscapes, rocks, plants, among other things. *Tsukiyama teizō-den* 築山庭造傳 (Transmission of Garden Styles with Artificial Hills), for example, was edited in 1735 by Kitamura Enkinsai 北村援琴斎 (dates unknown).[10]

The Edo period marked a significant era in Japan's history, with Edo, now known as Tokyo, serving as the political center under the shogunate's rule. While the Emperor, the symbolic leader, resided in Kyoto, the shogun held de facto power in Edo. The shogun oversaw approximately 250 *daimyō*, or feudal lords, who governed territories granted to them by the shogunate and pledged their allegiance to him. The term "daimyo" literally translates to "great name" or "great name-land," signifying ownership of private estates. These *daimyō* domains, both large and small, laid the groundwork for many of today's cities. Each *daimyō* maintained their own administrative apparatus and military force, comprised of samurai warriors. However, they were also obliged to serve the shogunate when called upon. Gardens were integral to the *daimyō* lifestyle, situated right next to their castles, serving as symbols of regional prestige and venues for hosting fellow *daimyō* and esteemed guests (Fig. 2). These meticulously crafted landscapes provided social spaces where hosts and guests could engage in discussions, negotiate agreements, and partake in cultural

[8] Donia Zhang, "Classical Chinese Gardens: Landscapes for Self-Cultivation," *Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs* 2, no. 1 (2018), 33–44.
[9] Nicolas Fiévé, "Les Jardins Paysagers des Seigneurs Domaniaux de l'époque d'Edo et les Manuels Relatifs à la Composition des Jardins."
[10] Nicolas Fiévé, "Les Jardins Paysagers des Seigneurs Domaniaux de l'époque d'Edo et les Manuels Relatifs à la Composition des Jardins."

activities such as eating, drinking, and appreciating literature.[11] *Daimyō* often used these endowed properties from the shogun to impress their peers and superiors.

The Pax Tokugawa, the great peace maintained under the shogunate was remarkable given the fractious nature of the political system, each *daimyō* had his own castle and army.[12] The shogunate did not mind the *daimyō* displaying regional power using their castles and gardens, for the more resources the *daimyō* invested in their gardens, the less money they had to put towards any uprising. Depleting the *daimyō*'s coffers was in fact a strategy that the shogunate employed to keep their feudal subordinates in their place. This was institutionalized in the "alternate residence" or *sankin kōtai* 参勤交代 system, which required the *daimyō* from all over the archipelago to leave their domains and spend several months to about a year, at regular intervals to wait on the shogun. Not just the *daimyō*, but hundreds and sometimes over a thousand of their retainers as well, would march for days or weeks until they reached Edo, where actually their wives and non-inheriting sons were forced to reside effectively as the shogun's hostages. The round trip, which required food and lodging at restaurants and inns along the way, was very costly.[13] The hardship from *sankin kōtai* as well as other mandatory controls eventually led to several *daimyō* joining the revolt that toppled the shogunate in the 1860s, but for much of the Edo period, this system helped keep the feudal lords in check. When the *daimyō* finally relaxed back in their provincial castle towns (*jōkamachi* 城下町), their gardens provided added pleasure and much needed relaxation. Some *daimyō* also set up gardens in their residences in Edo. In a fierce competition of who could build the finest gardens, the *daimyō* of the Edo period experimented with new aesthetics that ended the centuries-long hegemony of Kyoto gardening.

Constructed between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, the Big Three gardens have each seen extensive renovations and incremental changes over time. Yet, they all share characteristics with a specific type known as the "stroll garden with pond" (*chisen kaiyū shiki* 池泉回遊式), a close cousin to the famous Chinese promenade gardens found in the city of Suzhou

[11] For a general introduction to *daimyō* gardens of the Edo period, see 白幡洋三郎「江戸の大名庭園：饗宴のための装置」 東京 INEX 出版、1994 年; 白幡洋三郎, 「大名庭園 : 江戸の饗宴」東京筑摩学芸文庫、2020 年; Shirahata Yōzaburo, *Daimyō Gardens*, trans. Imoto Chikako (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2016).
[12] See Haga Tōru, *Pax Tokugawana: The Cultural Flowering of Japan, 1603–1853*, trans, Juliet Winters Carpenter (Tokyo: Japan Publishing Industry Foundation for Culture, 2021).
[13] Constantine Nomikos Vaporis, *Tour of Duty: Samurai Military Service in Edo, and the Culture of Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).

蘇州. As visitors meander along the winding pathways of these gardens, they are greeted by a dynamic landscape that unveils itself through a meticulously crafted arrangement of pavilions, footbridges, rockeries, and horticultural compositions. However, the sequence of these elements is determined by the route chosen by the visitor. The stroll garden with pond merges the picturesque with auditory and olfactory delights, promoting leisurely wanderings within a coherent design.[14] The sensory journey is enriched by seasonal flora, the gentle touch of a breeze, the patter of rainfall, the shimmer of water surfaces, and the embrace of different climates, all contributing to the *kankaku*—a fusion of physical sensations and emotional experiences.

The Edo period bequeathed to us elite residential gardens built to the highest technical and cultural standards. Through studying *daimyō* gardens, insights can be gained into the deliberate Sinitic references at the height of Neo-Confucianism in Japan and how the Japanese altered or expanded upon Chinese notions. Large stroll gardens of the Edo period, as Günther Nitschke adds, were essentially "secularized" spaces.[15] While some of these gardens may incorporate teahouses, *torii* 鳥居 and other elements influenced by Buddhist and Shinto traditions, their primary purpose is to flaunt the owner's sophistication and delight the senses. Both Chinese and Japanese cultures hold strong beliefs in the symbolic moral significance of plants, water, and mountains. As a result, the garden environment naturally fosters a cultured and ethically inclined way of life.

Chikaku: Philosophical and Literary References

The oldest of the Big Three Gardens is Kenroku-en. Construction began in 1676 as part of the Kanazawa Castle, occupied by Maeda Tsunanori 前田綱紀 (1643–1724), the fourth lord of the Kaga domain and the fifth hereditary chieftain of the Kanazawa Maeda clan. This feudal domain was the second most powerful in terms of size and wealth after the Tokugawa family. As a sign of his political prowess, Lord Tsunanori was able to obtain the premier classics on garden making from the court nobles in Kyoto, the *Sakutei-ki* 作庭記 (Records of Garden Making, 11th century)

[14] Literature on Chinese gardens is vast. See Stanislaus Fung, "Guide to Secondary Sources on Chinese Gardens," *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes* 18, no. 3 (Autumn 1998), 269–286; "History of Gardens in East Asia: Bibliography (China)," compiled by Bard College, https://faculty.bard.edu/~louis/gardens/bibliochina.html (accessed March 2, 2024); Greg Missingham, "Annotated Bibliography of Classical Chinese Gardens," https://www.academia.edu/33546661/ANNOTATED_BIBLIOGRAPHY_ON_CLASSICAL_CHINESE_GARDENS (accessed March 2, 2024).

[15] Günther Nitschke, *Japanese Gardens,* 182.

and the *Senzui narabi ni yagyō no zu* 山水並びに野行の図 (Illustrations for Designing Mountain, Water, and Hillside Field, 1466), the latter remaining in the Maeda collection today.[16] The castle's *Ishikawa-mon* (gate) 石川門 faces the garden. Maeda Tsunanori was renowned as a patron of the arts, including Noh theater, and was also a passionate collector of Japanese and Chinese literary classics. However, his most enduring cultural legacy was arguably the Lotus Garden, initially named so. Sadly, a significant portion of the garden was destroyed by a fire in the eighteenth century, prompting extensive reconstruction and additions. In 1822, the garden was renamed Kenroku-en, meaning the "Garden of Six Inclusive." That year, a moon-viewing platform was demolished to accommodate an expanded lotus pond in the middle and some more winding streams.[17] This is a representative stroll garden with a pond, and with buildings located in the periphery.

Kenroku-en derives its name from the six criteria outlined by the Chinese scholar-official Li Gefei 李格非 during the Song dynasty. Li, known for his strong Confucian principles, was a disciple of the renowned literatus Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037−1101) and the father of the poetess Li Qingzhao 李清照 (1084−1155). His book, *Luoyang mingyuan ji* 洛陽名園記 (A Record of the Celebrated Gardens of Luoyang, circa 1095), provided the first comprehensive list of gardens in a metropolitan area in China, detailing their key features. Luoyang held particular significance as the capital of several dynasties since ancient times. Li Gefei documented a total of nineteen gardens, encompassing both public and private spaces of diverse styles. Regrettably, many of these tranquil retreats or displays of opulence were destroyed during conflicts with the Jurchen invaders. According to Li's assessment, while some gardens exhibited "naturalness" or boasted an "extraordinary quantity or quality of flora," only one, named Huyuan 湖園 (Lake Garden), achieved all six criteria of excellence (jian ci liu zhe wei Huyuan er yi 兼此六者，惟湖園而已), which are:

1. Grandeur 宏大
2. With Secluded feeling [具]幽邃
3. Skillfully constructed 人力勝
4. With antique feeling 蒼古

[16] Nicolas Fiévé, "Les Jardins Paysagers des Seigneurs Domaniaux de l'époque d'Edo et les Manuels Relatifs à la Composition des Jardins."
[17] Kenroku-en brochure (obtained by the author in May 2019).

5. With waters and springs [具]水泉

6. Open to distant views [不]艱眺望[18]

In celebrating the beauty of gardens in myriad forms, Li Gefei was promoting the idea that those with fame and fortune should not forget about leisure. He bemoaned the fact that people of authority often showed a reluctance to enjoy the pleasures of a garden.[19] For him, valuing leisure time signified a rejection of greed, an essential trait for an exemplary government official. Li Gefei's six criteria, however, did not seem "to have exerted any tangible influence on later Chinese writings on gardens," due to the high costs of satisfying all six criteria that would be "far beyond the reach of the average garden masters."[20] Li's postscript is nevertheless among the most anthologized Chinese texts due to its fine prose and prophetic message that moved centuries of readers to tears.[21] It says: "Signs of order and disorder of the whole world can be seen in the rise and decline of Luoyang, and signs of the rise and decline of the Luoyang can be gauged in the flourish and decay of its gardens."[22] A ruler's neglect of his garden is a tell-tale sign of the imminent demise of his state.

Kenroku-en stands out as the singular garden that deliberately aimed to embody Li Gefei's principles. Why is this so rare? The most straightforward answer lies in the reliance of garden design on the inherent features of its site, including topography, soil quality, local scenery, and available water sources. Adapting a location to fulfill all six of Li's criteria is often impractical. Kenroku-en benefits from a unique combination of natural advantages. Positioned atop a hill, it is accessible via multiple pathways leading upward, standing on a sprawling expanse of ten hectares, isolated from the hustle and bustle at ground level, which enhances its majestic and private atmosphere. Presently, the garden boasts 160 species of trees, totaling around 8200 individual

[18] The whole text has been digitalized and available here: https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=230835 (accessed March 2, 2024).
[19] Yang Xiaoshan, "Li Gefei's 'Luoyang mingyuan ji' (A record of the celebrated gardens of Luoyang) Text and Context," *Monumenta Serica* 52 (2004), 221–255.
[20] Yang Xiaoshan, "Li Geifei's 'Luoyang mingyuan ji' (A record of the celebrated gardens of Luoyang) Text and Context."
[21] These anthologies include the 17th-century *Guwen guanzhi* 古文觀止 (Ultimate spectacles of prose in ancient style). See Yang, "Luoyang mingyuan ji."
[22] This translation is in Yang Xiaoshan, "Li Gefei's "Luoyang mingyuan ji" (A record of the celebrated gardens of Luoyang) Text and Context," *Monumenta Serica* 52 (2004), 223. The original passage reads: 天下之亂候於洛陽之盛衰。洛陽之盛衰候於園圃之興廢 (Tianxia zhi luan hou yu Luoyang zhi shengshuai. Luoyang zhi shengshuai hou yu yuanpu zhi xingfei.)

specimens. Its beauty, while to a large extent dependent on the whims of nature, is unmistakably a matter of human orchestration.

The design of Edo period *daimyō* gardens favored exploration over following a fixed route, crafted to intrigue visitors with a network of interweaving pathways leading to a succession of captivating sights. At Kenroku-en, one dazzling attraction are the *Karasaki no matsu* 唐崎の松, several stately pines planted in the nineteenth century by the thirteenth Maeda clan leader, Maeda Nariyasu (前田斉泰, 1822−1866) (Fig. 3). These trees, which trace their lineage back centuries, were grown from the seedlings of the ancient Karasaki black pines from the distant shores of Lake Biwa some 138km away. The Karasaki pines in Kenroku-en serve not only as a grand botanical spectacle but also as a cultural bridge to the celebrated site of "Night Rain at Karasaki," one of the revered "Eight Views of Lake Biwa." This site has been immortalized in Japanese poetry, paintings, and *ukiyo-e* prints, notably by the renowned artist Utagawa Hiroshige 歌川広重 (1797−1858) (Fig. 4). His evocative rendition has not only popularized this picturesque locale but also deepened Kenroku-en's literary and cultural resonance, linking it to a tradition of scenic beauty and poetic inspiration.

Aged pines with gnarled branches, strong and textured trunks, and glorious canapes symbolize strength and resilience, and accord very well with Li Gefei's fourth criterion. Moreover, Shinto, Japan's native religion, believes that the spirits known as *Kodama* 木霊 reside in trees that have reached 100 years of age.[23] The presence of descendant pines from Lake Biwa at Kenroku-en infuses the garden with an ancient and spiritual ambiance. The admiration for robust trees finds similar resonance in Chinese literati traditions. Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101), the renowned scholar-official of the Song dynasty, once "expressed regret at being unable to stop and pay tribute to [two cypress trees planted by the morally courageous statesman Kou Zhun 寇準 (ca. 961–1023) in the garden of the magistrate's complex in Badong 巴東 (in Sichuan)] on his way to the capital for the examinations."[24] In Japan, garden trees treated with tender love and care, termed *niwaki* 庭木, are regularly pruned, reinforced and trained to bring out their essence. Although the sourcing of trees with personality can be traced to China, the meticulous maintenance of *niwaki* has become a

[23] Glenn Moore and Cassandra Atherton, "Eternal Forests: The Veneration of Old Trees in Japan." *Arnoldia* 77, no. 4 (2020), 24–31.
[24] Cong Ellen Zhang, *Transformative Journeys: Travel and Culture in Song China* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 157.

defining feature of Japanese gardening.[25] In the winter time, some 800 ropes called *yukizuri* 雪釣り (snow hanging) are fixed to the branches of the Karasaki Pines at Kenroku-en to prevent them from breaking under heavy snow, a special sight of Kanazawa that people still flock to see today.

The distant view afforded by the garden's high elevation is called "borrowed scenery" or *shakkei* 借境, making aspects lying beyond the edges of the garden parts of the design—in this case, the broad sky and the landscape beyond, reinforcing the garden's grandeur. The idea again came from China with the identical *kanji* in its Chinese cognate. On the eastern side of Kenroku-en is a panoramic lookout which affords a breathtaking view of several mountains and the central Kanazawa below. Spreading beyond the town are the Kaga Plain, the Kahoku Lagoon 河北潟, the Uchinada 内灘 Dune, the Japan Sea and the Noto Peninsula 能登半島.[26]

Edo period stroll gardens typically contain numerous named sites—be it a tree, a building, or a larger scene—amounting to "a cultural digest of famous Japanese and Chinese sights, as well as the imagined landscapes of literature and mythology,…serving as an early model for theme attraction parks."[27] Famous garden designers of the Edo period, such as Kobori Enshū 小堀遠州 (1579–1647) and Ueda Sōko 上田宗箇 (1563–1650), possessed broad knowledge about the great Sino-Japanese traditions of painting, literature, and spiritual practices including the tea ceremony.[28] They acted like theater directors who arranged visual elements in a scene, encompassing set design, lighting, atmosphere, movement, and overall a way of storytelling. Their designers' mise-en-scène had to anticipate everything the audience would see, hear, and feel within each imagined framed view, akin to storytelling.

In contrast to the pond or viewing gardens of the previous eras, Edo gardens, *daimyō* gardens in particular, were laid out intentionally for traveling through. These compositions reward the visitor with numerous points of interest, urging them along to discover new details. The Karasaki Pines at Kenroku-en described in the previous section is one such detail. As a prop in a garden setting, it also represents a *shukkei* 縮景 (shrunken scenery) that recalls a "famous scenic

[25] On the history and art of Japanese garden trees, see Jake Hobson, *Niwaki: Pruning, Training and Shaping Trees the Japanese Way* (Oregon, Timber Press, 2018).
[26] "Kenroku-en Cultural Specification Garden Special Scenic Spot," (accessed March 20, 2024). https://www.pref.ishikawa.jp/siro-niwa/kenrokuen/e/point.html
[27] Stephen Mansfield, "Shifting Landscapes: Examining the State of Traditional Japanese Gardens," *The Japan Times* (May 19, 2019), 10 and 12.
[28] See Nicolas Fiévé, "Les Jardins Paysagers des Seigneurs Domaniaux de l'époque d'Edo et les Manuels Relatifs à la Composition des Jardins," 2–8.

spot" or *meisho* 名所. The practice of *shukkei* has a long history, appearing in Japanese gardens as early as the Nara period. But it was in the ambitious *daimyō* gardens of the Edo period that *shukkei* reached its peak as the feudal lords sought to outdo one another in erudition and imagination. As a result, the sequential ordering of the scenes as well as their sensory clustering grew more complex and freewheeling.

Gardens that recalled well-known landscapes in Japan and China grew to considerable sizes in the Edo period. References to famous places, as Kuwakino Kōji 桑木野幸司 asserts, "created a kind of collective memory among the culture elites. In addition, guests were able to recall quotes associated to the scenes of the garden, which applied not only to poetry but also to various cultural aspects such as history, arts, and religion."[29] Epitomizing this complexity is Kōraku-en 後楽園 in Okayama. Like Kenroku-en, Kōraku-en referenced Neo-Confucian values. Kōraku, literally meaning "last to enjoy," comes from the expression *senyū kōraku* 先憂後樂, relating to the altruistic principle of "worry earlier than others, enjoy later than others." A good government official prioritizes the welfare of the people over his own peace of mind. The longer version of the phrase in Chinese is "Be the first to bear the hardships of all under Heaven, and the last to enjoy its joys" or *xian tianxia zhi you er you, you tianxia zhi le wei le* 先天下之憂而憂，後天下之樂為樂. It was a saying of Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052), a Prime Minister and prominent philosopher of the Song dynasty. The importance of literary naming cannot be overemphasized.

As it was often the case, the Sinitic elements in Edo *daimyō* gardens consisted in classical references of the literary more than the architectural kind. It was not about artificially adding a generic Chinese-style pagoda or pavilion. These gardens exude refinement precisely because they were not simple copycats and did not resort to exotic weirdness. To a large extent, refinement was achieved through naming, not simply by calling their motifs by some high-sounding Chinese terms, but by laying claim to a cultural and intellectual landscape with Japanese agency. Naming is an old device for site-marking, with roots in China. In the Song dynasty, "Confucian gentlemen, reputable scholars, and the cultural leaders" traveled to famous sites and checked them off from their bucket lists like collecting "antiques and books."[30] Site-naming was a critical part of this

[29] Koji Kuwasaki, "Gardens of Pre-Modern Japan," in *Encyclopedia of East Asian Design* (Haruhiko Fujita and Christine Guth, eds., London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 259–262.
[30] Cong Ellen Zhang, *Transformative Journeys: Travel and Culture in Song China*, 154.

practice, conferring importance to places that combined geographic knowledge with cultural memory.

On the intellectual level, it was not enough to remember the beauty of a scenery with a mundane identifier, hence the practice of relentless marking of mountains with calligraphic traces. Heir to this tradition, Japanese since centuries before the Edo period had also started to place great emphasis on site-naming that carried varied literary, religious and historical significance. At Kōraku-en, its largest pond is called the Sawa-no-ike 沢の池, which contains within it three islets called Mino-shima 御野島, Naka-no-shima 中之島 (Center Island), and Jarijima 砂利島 (Gravel Island), each with its own geographic and architectural distinction. Gravel, for example, has been widely used in Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples grounds to mark purity and sacredness. Site-naming like this shapes memory. A *daimyō* garden offers in its sprawl a condensed touristic experience of famous places.

Kōraku-en in Okayama began construction in 1687 under the order of the domain lord Ikeda Tsunamasa 池田綱政 (1638–1714), whose mother was of Tokugawa blood and whose adopted daughter married a court noble. Spreading over thirteen hectares, it took just as many years to complete, finishing in 1700. Looming over this garden is the Okayama castle, which generations of the *daimyō* family enjoyed as its own backyard for private pleasure, entertaining guests, on certain days for the townspeople to visit as well. In fact, the original name was simply Kō-en 後園 (The Garden Behind). The name got changed to Kōraku-en in 1871, evoking the famous "worry earlier and enjoy later [than the people]" ethos. For the regular folk, the occasional chance to step into this privileged space, even visiting the Noh stage which represented high culture, helped inspire awe and build loyalty towards the ruling class. In 1884, after the Meiji period when the *daimyō* class became defunct and the feudal lords lost their land and title, ownership of the garden was transferred to the Okayama Prefecture and it was turned into a public park. Severe floods in 1934 and Allies bombing in 1945 caused serious damage to the site, but thanks to the considerable number of Edo period paintings and Ikeda Family records, the original appearance of Kōraku-en has largely been restored. It survives as one of the few examples of *daimyō* gardens that can be reliably analyzed as a period work. Under the Cultural Properties Protection Law of 1952, this garden has been managed and protected as a Special Scenic Location.[31]

[31] Kōraku-en brochure (obtained by author in May 2019).

As one of the most powerful *daimyõ* of the late seventeenth century, Lord Ikeda desired a garden for entertaining guests, a pleasurescape for his own enjoyment and on certain days for the regular folk to visit. The idea once again of an elite garden serving the high and low classes alike spoke to the Confucian value of mutual dependency. However, that did not mean people could just walk in whenever they wanted. Permission or special invitation was required. As it was the case with these castle sites, the gardens were essentially buffer zones in the event of invasions. These gardens were related to the expressions of authority in other ways. For instance, the open spaces were used as training ground for practicing both literary and military arts such as archery. The lord would observe from the top of the adjacent pavilions.[32]

Charged to oversee the project was Lord Ikeda's vassal Tsuda Nagatada 津田永忠 (1640–1707), a legendary vassal with expertise in flood control and public works acting in the role of what we call a "civil engineer" today. An Edo period icon, his life has even been rendered into *manga*.[33] Tsuda was needed particularly because the most prominent interests at Kōraku-en were aquatic, namely ponds and the surrounding waterway. In yesteryear, water from the Asahi River was siphoned into the gardens, but nowadays ground water is pumped to the surface to keep the flow into the ponds and waterfalls to maintain its attractiveness (Fig. 5).[34] The site is shaped like a curved calligraphic stroke, stretching laterally from west to east. Circulating the main garden is the Asahi River and a ring of arable land for crops, notably rice and tea, trees and flowers including plums, cherry blossoms, maples, irises, wisterias, and lotuses. Loaded with symbolism, the flowering flora also add seasonal hues to the ever-changing brocade of the gardenscape.

At Kōraku-en, originally only the plot covered with native green grass was to the west of the Sawa-no-ike pond visible from the Enyō-tei 延養亭 (Promoting Longevity Pavilion), while the rest of today's lawn areas were mostly rice fields (Fig. 6). The six squares of wet-rice farmland to the north make up the "seiden" 井田 (lit. well-field), named after the ancient well-field system first mentioned in sources of China's Zhou dynasty (ca. 1046–256 BCE) (Fig. 7). It pertains to the division of land into nine units, eight of which farmed by individual families for their own profit, while the center plot is worked jointly for their lord. The lines that demarcated the plots except for

[32] Kōraku-en brochure (obtained by author in May 2019).
[33] 柴田一・タケバヤシ 哲郎『岡山藩郡代津田永忠物語：池田光政と綱政の時代：劇画・郷土の歴史：後楽園築庭 300 年記念編.』、岡山放送、1998 年.
[34] Brochure from Kōraku-en (obtained by author in May 2019).

the borders resemble the Chinese character for "well." The Confucian philosopher Mencius 孟子 (ca. 371–289 BCE) hailed this arrangement as ideal, although it is unclear how well this system actually worked.[35] The *daimyō* in Okayama borrowed this motif to give credence to their commitment to good government based on fair distribution of resources. Lord Ikeda imagined his garden like a microcosm of his domain, a miniaturized rural countryside at full view. Today, lotuses bloom in the *seiden* in June and July. Abutting it is a field that continues to grow an ancient variety of tea.

The youngest of the Big Three Garden is Kairaku-en (est. 1842) in Mito, located 7.5 km northwest of Edo. "Kairaku" is derived from the *Book of Mencius* which states, "The ancients would share the pleasure with the people so their pleasures would be hearty and deep."[36] Hence, "Kairaku-en" meaning "Garden of Universal Enjoyment [with the People]" was once again an echo of the Confucian concept of benevolence. The *daimyō* line of the Mito clan was founded by a son of Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康, classified as a *shimpan* 親藩 or "related" domain because of their link to the main ruling house.[37] At Kairaku-en, an enormous plum orchard occupies half of the garden which has a total footprint of 12.7 hectares (Fig. 8). When the flowers are in bloom from January to February, the garden is an awesome sight. Besides the beautiful blossoms that herald the arrival of spring, the ninth lord of the Mito domain who started the garden, Tokugawa Nariaki 徳川斉昭 (1800–1860), saw the plum fruits as a reliable source of income every year. Pickled plums could be sold or used as survival food during military operations or famines.[38] Nariaki is remembered as a reformer who focused on shoring up the economy and the military. He founded the Kōdōkan 弘道館 clan school, next to Kairaku-en, to train samurai and their children in Confucian learning, history, astronomy, mathematics, music, martial arts, equestrianism, and war strategy. In 1853 when the armed American Commodore Perry sailed into Tokyo Bay, the patriotic and anti-foreign Nariaki stepped up to become a coastal defense counselor for the central

[35] "Well-field System," *Encyclopedia Britannica,* (accessed March 20, 2024). https://www.britannica.com/topic/well-field-system

[36] "Guren yu min jie le wei le, gu neng jin qi le" (古人與民偕樂為樂，故能盡其樂) , Chapter on Liang Hui Wang zhang ju shang fan qi zhang 梁惠王章句上凡七章, *Book of Mencius* 孟子 (Mengzi), (accessed March 3, 2024). https://mengzi.5000yan.com/lhw/shang/

[37] Matthew V. Lamberti, "Tokugawa Nariaki and The Japanese Imperial Institution: 1853–1858," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 32 (1972), 97–123.

[38] Kairaku-en brochure (obtained by author in May 2019).

government. However, his extravagance, outspokenness, and above all, loyalism to the Kyoto nobles, led to his suspension several times by the Tokugawa shogunate.[39]

Tokugawa Nariaki intended Kairaku-en not only for his own enjoyment, but opened it up to commoners, a precursor to the idea of a public park. The regular folk came to have a picnic, relax, and fish in the adjacent Lake Senba (*Senbako* 千波湖), a natural body of water "borrowed" into the garden as its pond.[40] An idea emphasized in *Kairaku-en ki* 偕楽園記 (Records of Kairaku-en) is the concept of *Itchō isshi* 一張一弛 (tension and relaxation), originating from the ancient Chinese text *Li Ji* 禮記 (Book of Rites). This concept serves as a reminder for individuals to consistently allocate time for repose amidst their hectic schedules. A recurrent Confucian ethos is the desire to take social responsibility at a remove from the vulgarity of career advancement. This remove may be mental, physical, or both. When it is not possible to retreat, gardens provide a symbolic and temporary respite. On the conceptual level of *chikaku*, the relationship between a garden's sensory aspects and naming practices is predicated on a legible correspondence between the physical and the moral world. Establishing such a relationship was a quintessential Confucian preoccupation rooted in the discussion of *zheng ming* 正名 (rectification of names) in the *Analects of Confucius* (3rd century BCE). Not only in setting political hierarchy, naming permeated Chinese leisure literature, such as landscape essays and travelogues.[41]

To tap into the realm of sensory emotions, that is *kankaku*, garden design transcends mere visual stimuli to engage more elusive and corporeal senses. *Daimyō* gardens, sometimes criticized for their playful nature, provide excellent examples of such affective complexity. However, the significance of the non-visual senses has received relatively little treatment in the study of Japanese gardens. This oversight can be attributed in part to the strong influence of painting, particularly traditions inherited from the Song dynasty, on Japanese garden design since the Muromachi period (1336–1392), when gardens framed by architecture for contemplation became desirable.

Large-scale gardens had long existed in Japan. The aristocratic gardens of the Heian nobles (794–1185) were famous for their large ponds, big enough for boating parties. In Kyoto, the

[39] On Tokugawa Nariaki's political career at the end of the Tokugawa bakufu, see Matthew V. Lamberti, "Tokugawa Nariaki and The Japanese Imperial Institution: 1853–1858."
[40] "Kairaku-en," Japan Atlas: Historical Sites, (accessed March 3, 2024).
https://web-japan.org/atlas/historical/his05.html
[41] Xiaoshan Yang, et. al., "Naming and Meaning in the Landscape Essays of Yuan Jie and Liu Zongyuan," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120, no. 1 (January–March 2000), 82–96.

Shūgaku-in Imperial Villa or *Shūgaku-in Rikyū* 修学院離宮 built by the retired Emperor Go-Mizunoo 後水尾天皇 between 1655 and 1659 transformed the whole mountain side into a private paradise of 55 hectares. It contains many of the elements observed in the *daimyō* gardens, water features, a smattering of buildings, a rich assortment of shrubbery and trees, borrowed scenery, meandering paths, and so forth. This reinforces the understanding of space "not as a continuum in which objects are contained but as a sequence of places."[42] Their layouts accommodated numerous paths that gives the visitor more choice in the directions they want to move. Compared to Shūgaku-in, which is organized around several central features such as the enormous Yokuryūchi 浴龍池 (Pond of the Bathing Dragon) encircled by a pathway, the three *daimyō* gardens are punctuated by many individual points of interest linked by criss-crossing pathways. The sensory experiences are thus multiplied.

***Kankaku* as a Multi-sensory Experience**

Deliberate designs aimed at stimulating multiple senses facilitate the transition from *chikaku* to *kankaku*, enabling a deeper emotional understanding of the gardens. Traditionally, discussions surrounding art and architecture in gardens have predominantly emphasized visual aspects, concentrating on ground plans and architectural features. However, ground plans often struggle to depict changing elevations or anticipate the visitor's route, especially in *daimyō* gardens with their multiple walkways. In particular, even when supplemented with site photographs, ground plans particularly fall short in conveying the sonic aesthetics present within the garden environment. In traditional Japanese gardens, the auditory landscape is enriched by a diverse range of water sounds, including heavy or light rain on ponds, the soft murmuring of stone basins, and the melodious cascade of waterfalls. These elements not only enhance the visual aesthetics but also contribute to a captivating auditory experience.

Kenroku-en, Kōraku-en, and Kairaku-en boast unusual water features for their time: the nation's oldest spring fountains (*funsui* 噴水) and a pavilion traversed by a flowing stream. Kenroku-en's fountain, which shoots water up to 3.5m high, was an unprecedented engineering marvel in Japan (Fig. 9). It served as an experimental endeavor utilizing natural water pressure and hydraulic flow from the Kasumiga- ike 霞ケ池 Pond above. Constructed during the era of Lord

[42] Günther Nitschke, *Japanese Gardens*,185.

Maeda Tsunanori, it was at least partly functional, intended to channel water to the castle's secondary enclosure.[43] A white marble fountain in Kairaku-en, called Togyokusen 吐玉泉 (Fountain of Spurting Jade), was installed by Tokugawa Nariaki to take advantage of the elevated landscape to catch the large amount of spring water flowing into this area since ancient times (Fig. 10). About 100 tons of water pours from this fountain every day, and this water is said to be a good remedy for vision problems.[44] In 1902, an ancient stone fountain from the Asuka period (538–710) was archaeologically recovered (the *Shumisenseki* 須弥山石),[45] but Kenroku-en's fountain bears little resemblance to the pagoda form of the *Shumisenseki* which has water holes in the middle section. It was not until the subsequent Meiji period, with the infusion of Western aesthetics and advancements in hydraulic technology, that spring fountains gained widespread popularity.[46] Of the six attributes articulated by Li Gefei, having water and spring is the only one that engages both the visual and the auditory senses.

How sound-producing water affects visitor's behavior can be measured. A study of a similar stroll garden—Sōraku-en 相楽園 in Kobe—by Ryuzo Ohno, Tomohiro Hata and Miki Kondo, monitored how a specimen group moved through the space, the way they reacted to various environmental conditions such as "sudden change in the state of the surrounding scenes or the visibility of prominent objects." They found that at one observation point, "where the path approaches a small waterfall, their attention was attracted by the sound."[47] Encountering something as remarkable as spring fountains during the Edo period would undoubtedly have

[43] Brochure from Kenroku-en (obtained by author in May 2019).
[44] On-site description at Kairaku-en.
[45] 「須弥山石」 http://www.21water.jp/k1/toire1/asuka2/asuka5-2.html (2024 年 3 月 20 日閲覧).
[46] In China, water fountains probably have a history going back over a thousand years, but it was not until the 18th century such as at the Old Summer Palace Yuanmingyuan Garden in Beijing that this garden accessory in the form of a shooting spring saw significant expressions. These fountains were novelties ordered by Emperor Qianlong 乾隆, designed by the French Jesuit mathematician and astronomer Michel Benoist (1715–1774), and built by Chinese craftsmen. Herman Schlimme's paper, "Western Style Spring Fountains, Plays of Water and Hydraulic Construction in the Yuanmingyuan in Beijing and their European Models," paper given at the 5th International Congress on Construction History, Construction History Society of America, Chicago, 2015 (accessed March 20, 2024). https://bautechnikgeschichte.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/schlimme.pdf. On the relationship between hydraulic technology and Edo gardens, see 内藤啓太「江戸大名庭園における上水の影響：庭園経営と水源に関する研究」『日本建築学計画系論文集』87、第 802 号、日本建築学会、2022 年、2654–2665 頁.
[47] Ryuzo Ohno, Tomohiro Hata, and Miki Kondo, "Experiencing Japanese Gardens: Sensory Information and Behavior," in *Handbook of Japan-United States Environment-Behavior Research: Toward a Transactional Approach* (Seymour Wapner, Jack Demick, Takiji Yamamoto, and Takashi Takahashi, eds., New York and London: Plenum Press, 1997), 163–182.

captivated visitors, momentarily stopping them in their tracks. However, lacking an apparent seating area, visitors would likely move on after just a few moments.

For longer viewing in repose, *daimyō* stroll gardens under Chinese influence installed pavilions offering an airy shelter. This form of architecture typically consists of a roofed seating area with a wooden frame open on all sides that affords different views but away from strong sun or pouring rain. A Chinese pavilion "always has a ceramic tile roof with broadly sloping eaves."[48] The pavilion called Ryūten 流店 at Kōraku-en shares these features, except it sits above a singing stream (Figs. 11a–11b). According to ancient geomancy, strategically placing moving water can bring good luck. Additionally, the literati envisioned flowing water as a means to cleanse the spirit of dust and grime. This purification process cannot, however, be attained through "a fleeting encounter or even a moment of aesthetic bliss."[49] It takes time for the mind to quieten as sound gradually surpasses and even supersedes sight. The Ryūten pavilion, aptly named the "Flowing Station," uniquely enhances the effect of sound concentration while also offering protection from the elements. Pebbles of beautiful colors are also scattered along the bottom of the stream to heighten the sensory satisfaction.

Japan is famous for its fascination with the cherry blossoms or *sakura* 桜, which is the star of the annual *hanami* 花見 (flower viewing) events. When first introduced from China and adopted by the aristocrats of the Nara Period, *hanami* was actually dedicated to plum blossoms. In the Heian period (1794–1185) the focus shifted to cherry blossoms, a change attributed to a *sakura* viewing party hosted by Emperor Saga 嵯峨天皇 in 812. Gradually, the Japanese people forgot about its predecessor, the plum trees or *ume* 梅, in the annual flower viewing.

Blooming typically from mid-February onwards, plum blossoms precede cherry blossoms by a full month and endure much longer. Historically, they have symbolized renewal, prosperity, and the arrival of spring. Plums, along with pines and bamboos, are revered as the "Three Friends of Winter" in Chinese tradition, as all three can survive the cold season. In Japan, the sour fruit of plum trees is highly prized for making *umeboshi*, pickled plums, and *umeshu* 梅酒, sweet plum

[48] Pavilions have special significance in China, a feature mentioned as early as the 4th century BCE in *Shanhaijing* (Classic of Mountains and Waterways) set amidst the Isles of the Immortals. Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 298.

[49] See Stanislaus Fung, "Movement and Stillness in Ming Writings on Gardens, "*Landscape design and the Experience of Motion,"* in *Landscape Design and the Experience of Motion* (Michel Conan, ed., Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2002), 250–251.

wine. What distinguishes *daimyō* stroll gardens from their Chinese counterparts since the later Ming dynasty (early 16th century) is their incorporation of crop-bearing trees. Craig Clunas, in his study of Ming gardens in *Fruitful Sites*, explains how the prevalence of fruit tree groves gradually declined within Chinese garden landscapes, making way for the cultivation of rare flowering shrubs with no apparent economic value. This transition reflects a prioritization of visually appealing elements such as plants and rocks over productive vegetation.[50] Like many other periods in Japanese history, garden makers of the Edo period were unafraid to diverge from continental practices, and adjusted the models to their own needs.

A three-story building at Kairaku-en comprising a main house and an annex, called Kōbuntei 好文亭, provided the *daimyō* and his guests with an elevated space to admire the scenery. Tokugawa Nariaki played a key role in the architectural layout. Ten rooms for different purposes were installed, from chambers for the lord's wife and waiting maids, to a large room for poetry gathering, to another large room reserved for meeting the elders of the clan (vassals eighty years or older, common people ninety years or older). The third or top floor is open on three sides (east, south, and west), overlooking Lake Senba and the plum orchard. The view from that room is particularly breathtaking (Fig. 12).[51] This was where Nariaki spent much of his time. *Kōbu*n, literally meaning "loving the literary arts," is also a synonym of a species of plum from China alluding to an anecdote where Emperor Wu 武帝 (239–290) of the Jin Dynasty 晉朝 said: "Plum trees will blossom if one takes to learning and will not blossom if one abandons it."[52]

During the Song dynasty, the tangy flavor of plum fruits became intricately linked with the spleen (C: *pi* 脾), which in Chinese medicine is associated with poetic creativity and emotions. Gastropoetics holds significant promise as an emerging area of research.[53] While the connection between the taste of plums and literati inspiration seemed to wane in China after the Song period, it found full expression in Kairaku-en during the Edo period. The Kōbuntei was conceived to evoke a multisensory experience. While crafting poetry and contemplating profound ideas, one could

[50] Craig Cluans, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), ch. 2.
[51] The different functions and references of Kōbuntei are provided by a brochure from Kairaku-en (obtained by the author in May 2019).
[52] 「日本三名園－偕楽園」https://ibaraki-kairakuen.jp/en/language/ (2024 年 3 月 3 日閲覧).
[53] A host of references to the relationship between literati creativity and the spleen in China can be found here: https://sou-yun.cn/CharInClause.aspx?c=%E8%84%BE&p=6 (accessed April 8, 2024). Wandi Wang presented her research on this topic at the annual meeting at the Association of Asian Studies, titled "Savoring Beauty: The Plum Blossom as a Delicacy in Southern Song China," Seattle (March 15, 2024).

simultaneously immerse themselves in the surrounding landscape, feel the gentle caress of the wind on their skin, and savor the flavors of pickled plums and other delicacies transported from the kitchen below via a pulley lift. Tragically, Kairaku-en fell victim to American aerial bombings on August 2, 1945, and it took three years, from 1955 onwards, to reconstruct it. Today, the orchard has been meticulously restored, boasting approximately 100 species and 3000 individual plum trees.

Conclusion

Daimyō gardens of the Edo period epitomize a fully-fledged multi-sensory art form. Embedded in the tenets of Neo-Confucianism, which prioritize the cultivation of self and society, these gardens embody a profound philosophy valuing the refinement and benevolence of rulers. However, rather than rigid austerity, *daimyō* gardens often contain an eclectic mix of plants, architectural features, and decorative elements that captivate the senses and spark the imagination. Exemplary gardens like Kenroku-en, Kōraku-en, and Kairaku-en emerged as masterpieces of Edo originality, blending intellectual depth with sensory richness. Each element is thoughtfully chosen to explore the interplay of Japanese culture, philosophy, and aesthetics. Beyond serving as sanctuaries from the demands of feudal life, these enchanting landscapes illustrate deep-seated connections between the environment and artistic expression. Even in their modern incarnations as converted parks, these *daimyō* gardens continue to exhibit an aesthetic that is both distinctly Japanese and universally appealing, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in the sensory delights and cultural significance of these historical treasures.

Figures:

Fig. 1. Stepping stones at Kōraku-en, Okayama. Photograph taken by the author in June 2019.

Fig. 2. View of Kōraku-en below the Okayama Castle. Photograph taken by the author in May 2019.

Fig. 3. Karasaki Pines *at Kenroku-en,* Kanazawa. Photograph taken by the author in June 2019.

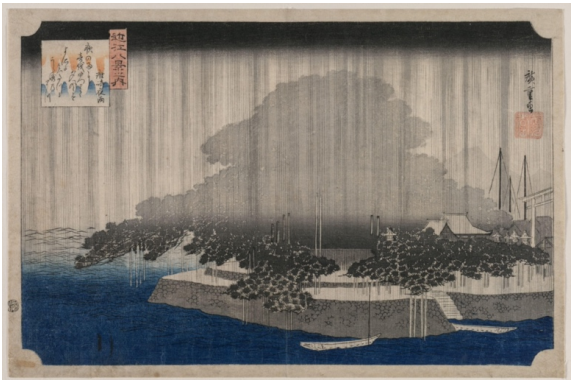

Fig. 4. Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858), *Night Rain at Karasaki,* from the series "Eight View of Ōmi, ca. 1835. Woodblock print. Ink and color on paper. 8 3/4 × 13 5/8 in. (22.2 × 34.6 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Rogers Fund, 1914.

Fig. 5. Pond view at Kōraku-en, Okayama. Photograph taken by the author in June 2019.

Fig. 6. Green lawns at Kōraku-en, Okayama. Photograph taken by the author in June 2019.

Fig. 7. Rice fields at Kōraku-en, Okayama. Photograph taken by the author in June 2019.

Fig. 8. Plum orchard occupying half of Kairaku-en, Mito. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kairaku-en,_Ibaraki_27.jpg

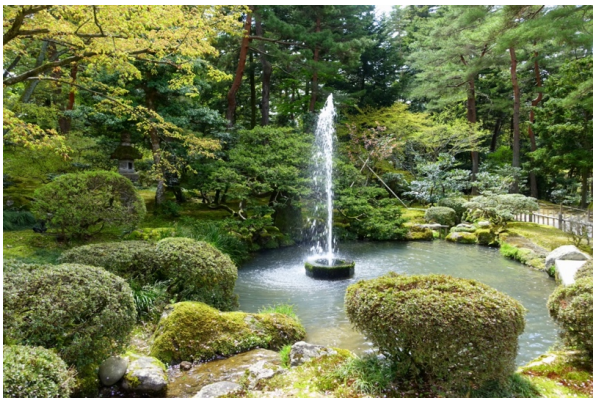

Fig. 9: Fountain at Kenroku-en, Kanazawa. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fountain_-_Kenroku-en_-_Kanazawa,_Japan_-_DSC09677.jpg

Fig. 10. Togyokusen (Fountain of Spurting Jade) at Kairaku-en, Mito. Photograph taken by the author in May 2019.

Fig. 11a. Exterior of the pavilion called Ryūten at Kōraku-en showing the flow of water through the building, Okayama. Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Okayama_Korakuen_(51820121208).jpg

Fig. 11b. Interior of the pavilion called Ryūten at Kōraku-en showing the flow of water through the building, Okayama. Photograph taken by the author in June 2019.

Fig. 12. Panoramic view from the top floor of Kōbuntei, Kairaku-en, Mito. Photograph taken by the author in May 2019.