

THE OGAWA’S NATURE

by JUAN PASTOR IVARS

(ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE)

This PhD dissertation explores from a spatial point of view, the life work of Ogawa family lineage with- in the Japanese art of landscaping gardening. In concrete the thesis focuses on the interval time comprising the Meiji era, Taisho and early Showa. Therefore it covers the period of maximum production of the seventh generation of the lineage, Ogawa Jihei VII¹. Together with him, his son Hakuyo, Ogawa VIII and his grandson, Jiro, Ogawa XIX and the employees of the landscape company called Ueji, will rush the work of shaping a renovation project for the city of Kyoto through the construction of gardens for the second residences of the most important political figures and the new bourgeoisie of this time.

The city of Kyoto, due to the capital transfer to Tokyo, is going to face a period of economic and political decline. Seen from nowadays, the impact of the life work of Ogawa will exceed their own expectations. As a result nature will go back to the city. These gardens will become a cultural, professional and social stimulus to knit and cohesive a new type of tea ceremony, reflecting the spirit of the epoch. This party will be more open to the whole sectors of the society. Its ideal will be the crystallization of a pure and luminous relationship with the beautiful landscape where these gardens are located, Higashiyama, the eastern moun- tains of Kyoto.

During the course of his work, while Ogawa is achieving fame, he expands its philosophy to other Japanese cities such as Tokyo, Osaka, Kanazawa etc. The gardens built in different physical and social con- texts far away from Kyoto, offers a chance to compare the particular distance that he took from the rest of his contemporaries, more concerned in reflecting the new coming influences in their designs. The nature of Ogawa does not allow himself to adopt literally western styles, either to keep the symbolisms of the tradi- tional Japanese Garden. For him the tradition in which is deeply rooted needs a renewal, for that renovation Ogawa rely in the place.

Therefore, this thesis examines how visual, spatial and functionally, the anchoring of the gardens to the place is achieved by Ogawa. This new approach to Ogawa gardens has been decided in order to complete previously researches done about his works by Japanese. They have not investigated in depth about these aspects. Neither the West, where the life work of Ogawa is almost unknown, partly because generally West fixed his interest toward a more conceptual garden such as dry gardens done by stone and gravel. To address this spatial point of view chosen for this thesis, two concepts MA² and OKU³ are selected. MA concept, reflects the distance and the relation that Ogawa takes with each one of the objects that are placed in the garden, also with the tradition and the landscape. OKU is chosen because the spatial and thematic depth of his work. Both MA and OKU once combined are the motto to walk physically and mentally his works.

These two spatial concepts will be materialized in the gardens by using various Japanese design tech- niques. These are *shakkei*⁴, *miegakure*⁵ and *jikoshoji*⁶, they organize the areas of the garden. These areas are

classified in the dissertation as archetypes such as the clearing, the veil and the flow, which are defined by their essential substances, light, shade and murmur, respectively. These archetypes create various types as thresholds, mounds, confinements, trees, groves, forests, ponds, streams, waterfalls etc. Ultimately these elements are the legacy that any landscape designer inherits from Ogawa gardens. Legacy for the practice of those who choose to define its position about nature. In this, Ogawa teaches his ideal of nature.

Regarding to the structure of the thesis, firstly it holds on the traditional Japanese garden in order to introduce to a less accustomed western reader to the Japanese aesthetics, secondly it studies how Ogawa develops a new approaches from tradition. Finally the thesis analyses how the traces garden spaces merge with the landscape of the place. In doing that the dissertation will show how Ogawa creates a real continuity with the landscape. To understand this continuity it has to be explained a very important detail, he built over more than thirty gardens under the same mountains within a very reduced space domain, so for him each new development is a new opportunity to refine previous approaches and to experience new solutions, getting closer to the nature, rather than to the symbolism of the Japanese Garden.

The thesis is divided into five chapters, the first one is a prologue; the second, a walk to nine of his gardens. These nine gardens are included in this chapter because in my opinion they are the best ones that shown the standpoint selected for the dissertation to reflect the impact of the life work of Ogawa in the city in nowadays. The third chapter reflects on the paradigm shift that occurs in the Japanese landscape gardening of the Meiji period. The fourth is the core of the thesis, it will be discussed in depth the MA and OKU of its gardens. Finally the fifth one observes the gardens as a whole and its impact for the city and the landscape.

Therefore this thesis a spatial matrix constructed from the existent gardens, it explores the roots of a tree. The gardens are the tree. These roots have different primary and secondary leading lines. The table of contents reflects these collection of varied items that the dissertation will be accumulating one after another with the reading. Some of these paths will get ended or will derive in other successive branches, others ones are left suspended at one certain point willing to be continued and completed in the future of this thesis with a better understanding of Ogawa life work. Therefore this dissertation is never the Ogawa’s own vision of his own work, something unfathomable, but the influence that his work has had on my own thinking contrasted with what other researchers have equally done on in their researches. So in my opinion, once a work has been constructed, its importance lies in the inspirational role and its influence to lead towards a new future.

Juan Pastor Ivars, Kyoto December of 2014

1. (1860-1933) The dissertation refers to him simply as Ogawa. Ueji refers to professional name Ogawa who he put to himself and his company.

2. *Ma* 間 distance, interval. Ma in the thesis is written as MA

3. *Oku* 奥 in a given space, represents its innermost posi- tion. Oku in the thesis is written as OKU.

4. *Shakkei* 借景 Japanese garden technique based on in- cluding external natural elements or artificial by framing them in different ways, such with the architectural struc- ture, trunks etc. So what distinguishes the *shakkei* is an active action that changes the way of borrowing the land- scape and not a mere sight that happens passively.

5. *Miegakure* 見え隠れ Reveal and conceal. Japanese gar- den technique that is based on visual and spatial elements obtained by overlapping each other without these contours seen in its entirety from the position at which effects are observed. Gradually these objects and the space between them are revealed during the tour.

6. *Jikoshoji* 自己相似 The self-similarity is a property of fractals in mathematics is the property of an object (called self-similar object) in which the whole is exactly or ap- proximately similar to a part of himself. For example when the whole has the same shape as one or more of its parts. Many real-world objects such as coastlines, are statistically self-similar: parts of it show the same statistical properties at different scales. (1982, p. 44).