

## **PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF A JAPANESE STYLE GARDEN**

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### **Abstract**

*Based on this theme, we have created a perspective of a private Japanese tea garden (Cha niwa), taking into account the characteristics of area of origin influences, as well as the area in which to be located (Snagov, Ilfov County).*

*The art of Japanese gardens is led by certain principles and rules, being practiced since ancient times by certain types of gardeners (Soseki Muso, Sen no Rikyu) and becoming an artistic profession.*

*The present paper is an attempt of precise and original integration of the vegetation in the landscape, by using species predominantly used in arranging such gardens.*

*Thus, there were introduced tree species and shrubs related to the Japanese religious cult, and species of flowering plants belonging to the traditional setting.*

*Into the spatial arrangement there were introduced shrubs shaped by the old tradition of „bonsai”, and rocks of certain colors and sizes, which bring some kind of symbolism by their forms and types of association.*

*Within the garden, we can also meet original elements, such as traditional Japanese lamps, a tea house that links the ground by a curved bridge, and a pond, always present in these arrangements.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Japanese gardens derive their beauty from a mixing and blending of different elements such as sand, rocks, water, ornaments (lanterns, water basins also named tsukubai and bamboo fences), natural plants and surroundings.

The main object of a Japanese garden is to copy the beauty of nature and to bring it home by adapting it through different techniques, most obvious in the art of Bonsai, and its design is based on three basic principles: reduced scale, symbolization, and borrowed view.

This garden's objectives are to bring a small part of the Japanese culture to the location by using the tea garden principles to embellish the surroundings and to create a place for relaxation and contemplation.

Traditional Japanese landscape gardens can be broadly categorized into three types:

Tsukiyama Gardens (hill gardens). Ponds, streams, hills, stones, trees, flowers, bridges and paths are used to create a miniature reproduction of natural scenery. The name Tsukiyama refers to the creation of artificial hills.

Karesansui gardens (dry gardens). Reproduce natural landscapes in a more abstract way by using stones, gravel, sand and sometimes a few patches of moss for representing mountains, islands, boats, seas and rivers.

Cha niwa gardens (tea gardens). Are built for the tea ceremony and they contain a tea house where the actual ceremony is held and are designed in aesthetic simplicity according to the concepts of sado (tea ceremony).

The actual garden was created according to the cha niwa principles.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The Japanese garden fundamentals that make the object of this work are guided by several conventional designs and symbols.

This garden has been modelled as miniature representations of a popular scene by strictly observing the arrangement of pathways and led by the rules of the appropriate proportions.

Flowers, lawns and hedges are of no significance in a Japanese garden and that is why they were potted and placed carefully in an appropriate position.

The farther-most mountains are generally higher, lightly drawn and represented by trees and distinct vegetation.

The distant line of the pond is set at a lower level with narrow lines broadening as they approach the center.

Coniferous trees were displayed on the slopes of hills in sideways, creating a background for the flowering shrubs used in the foreground making the landscape suggest greater depth and detail compared to the original.

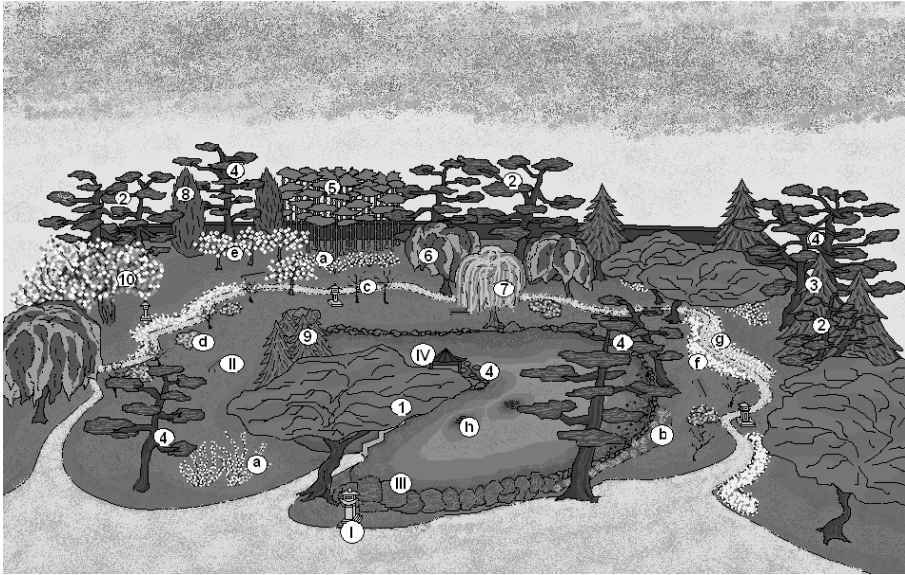
The garden design was made in such a way that the existing scenery becomes part of the total design.

Raked sand or gravel symbolizes rivers and groupings of stones and rock can represent islands. Shakkei or borrowed view is the use of existing scenery and plants to supplement the garden.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Taking into account all of the Japanese design criteria, have created a tea garden, representing a miniature perspective of a natural landscape and a relaxing garden for reflection and meditation, by introducing the most used and beautiful elements of the cha niwa garden type.

### **Displaying of certain plant species (Figure 1)**



**Fig. 1. Main view of the garden**

1. *Acer palmatum* (Japanese maple tree); 2. *Pinus sylvestris* (common pine);
3. *Abies concolor* (silver fir); 4. *Pinus nigra* (black pine);
5. *Bambusa vulgaris* (bamboo); 6. *Sophora japonica* var. pendula (Japanese acacia);
7. *Salix alba* (white willow); 8. *Tuja orientalis* (Emerald green);
9. *Picea pungens* var. glauca (biting spruce);
10. *Magnolia soulangiana* (saucer magnolia); a. *Forsythia intermedia* (forsythia);
- b. *Amaryllis* (belladonna lily); c. *Syringa vulgaris* (lilac);
- d. *Chaenomeles japonica* (Japanese quince); e. *Cerasus vulgaris* (cherry tree);
- f. *Hydragea schizophragma* (oak leaf hydrangeas);
- g. *Kerria japonica* (Japanese rose); h. *Nimphaea alba* (water lily).
- I. Stone lantern; II. Siting place; III. Rocks; IV. Tea house.

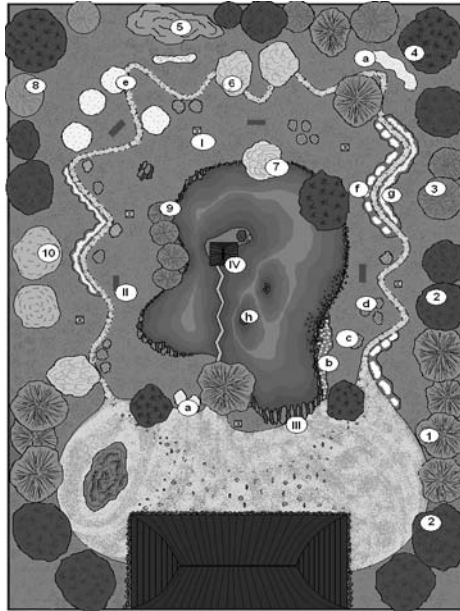
The plants introduced follow the Japanese tradition in which the color tones must be pale in a season passing to bright tones in the next one.

Plants were carefully selected for not only flowering beauty or attractive foliage but their architectural structure as well.

Many plants are indigenous to Japan, though some sacrifice has been made to account for the differentiating climates.

Each plant in the Japanese garden has a beauty on several levels. For example, the Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*) has beautiful foliage that is often slightly colorful in the growing season and vibrant in autumn, but the branch structure and silhouette is also highly ornamental and eye-catching.

### **Exhibition of unusual rocks (Figure 2)**



**Fig. 2. Exhibition of unusual rocks**

I. Stone lantern; II. Sitting place; III. Rocks; IV. Tea house.

In the background of the design and rock arrangements of the Japanese garden there is a respect for the nature and abstract representations of the utopian world of the time which were derived from the religion and philosophy.

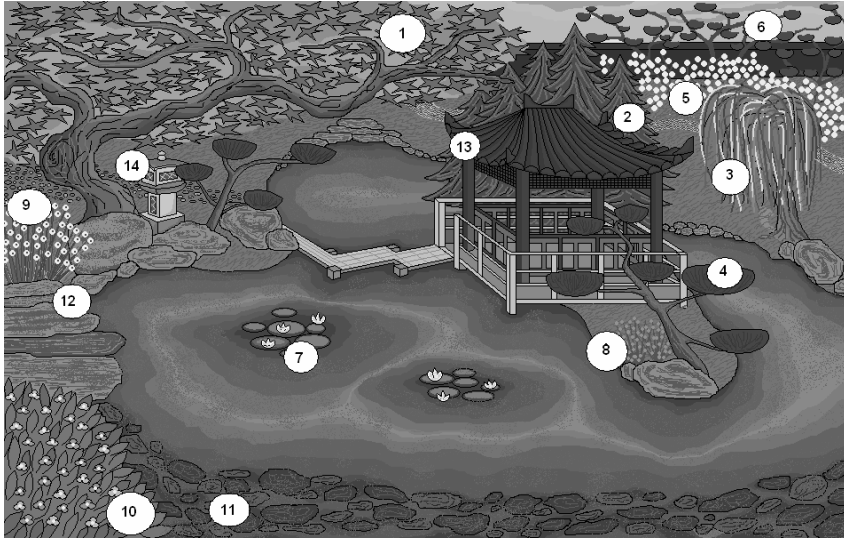
Therefore, there were used natural stones, only without any artificial processing and arranged on the pond edges and in other central locations, to show many expressions of sometimes dynamic forms and other times extremely subtle and sensitive forms.

Stones were also used to construct the garden paths and walkways.

Rocks, both large and small were used to symbolize land as well as permanence and can actually tell a story in the garden.

Each element has been carefully placed to draw the eye and add to the beauty (too much becomes garish and overdone).

### Design elements (Figure 3)



**Fig. 3. View over the pond**

1. *Acer palmatum* (Japanese maple tree);
2. *Picea pungens* var. *glauca* (biting spruce); 3. *Salix alba* (white willow);
4. *Pinus nigra* (black pine); 5. *Cerasus vulgaris* (cherry tree);
6. *Pinus sylvestris* (common pine); 7. *Nymphaea alba* (water lily);
8. *Iris germanica* (iris); 9. *Allium moly* (golden garlic);
10. *Amaryllis* (belladonna lily); 11. Water rocks; 12. Surface rocks;
13. Tea house; 14. Stone lantern.

The water source was created in such way that it appear to be part of the natural surroundings and includes the tea house (the sitting area where the visual and aural interest can be best enjoyed), placed on the island from the center of the pond, wich was designed so that complies with the cha niwa garden principles, as well as the lanterns located beside the main alley.

The Japanese garden will be beautiful in any season because it has a carefully constructed structure that never changes and because there are elements of the garden that are attractive at any given time.

Every feature of the Japanese garden has a special significance, place, status and title.

“The first place to seek God is in a garden” and this is very true with the basic spirit of the traditional Japanese design.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The Snagov's Japanese garden have simple, clean lines and reflect nature symbolically.
2. The main four planted species (*Acer palmatum*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Cerasus vulgaris*, *Bambusa vulgaris*) are very important and representative for the Japanese garden thanks to their shape, size, colour and symbolism.
3. The rocks are strictly related to the Japanese cult by their powerful symbolic signification, and are used to embellish and to bring more originality to the Japanese tea garden type.
4. The design elements (lanterns, tea house, bridge) and the pond are part of the cha niwa Japanese garden and are used for contemplation and relaxation.

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