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GROWING IDEAS:

NATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND THE CREATION OF GREENSPACES IN JAPAN, 1830-
1910

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It has become cliché at this point to say something along the lines of “a project of this scope could not have been completed without the help of many.” While this is true, especially in my case, it unfortunately comes into direct collision with a pearl of wisdom I heard once in a seminar during my master’s program at San Francisco State: do not thank too many people; they do not want to be dragged into your mess. Nevertheless, on the off chance that I have produced something that contributes to any discipline or field, there are those individuals who must receive the lion’s share of the credit (yet still be insulated from my faults).

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To my parents

Introduction

An 1865 visitor to the Satsuma Domaniel Lord's spectacular garden in Kagoshima, Sengan-en, would have been greeted by a cacophony of industrial sounds. The roar of a blast furnace, the pounding of metal upon metal at the machine shop, the yells of workers, and if unlucky, the occasional explosion ripping through the air at what had previously been one of the most renowned and tranquil gardens in Japan. Is this another example of industrialization tearing up landscapes, the prioritization of modern mechanization at the expense of the natural world? Shimazu Nariaki (1809-1858), the 28th Lord of the Satsuma Domain, the man who put this plan in motion (though he did not live to see it through), would not have thought so. He simply conceived of natural spaces and "nature" in a very different way. The effects were seen at Sengan-en, the Satsuma domain, and eventually throughout Japan itself.

Let us begin with the most obvious changes, the construction of the building itself. Nariakira, like many other elites of his age, was growing increasingly concerned of Western encroachment. For Nariakira, the solution was heavy industry. A nexus of ideas concerning how best to industrialize were made manifest, first in 1856 with the *kiriko* glass factory and steel foundry, then again in 1865 with the machine shop. From there, cut glass, steel cast cannons, and eventually machine parts were constructed. These developments in and of themselves are hardly surprising, and, outside of the fact that they were the first examples in Japan, unremarkable. But

how could such buildings, sounds, products, and work, so seemingly incongruous with everything a garden should be, be incorporated into the space? Why not build closer to the source of labor and materials, or should Sengan-en be the most attractive site, why leave the garden intact at all? Though the machine shop and foundry were constructed on the outskirts, the glass factory was much more centrally located. Why not simply repurpose the entire area? The answer lies in Nariakira's philosophical understanding of the use of space, specifically garden space.¹



Figure 1: Left: One of the few examples of a nineteenth century cannon in a Japanese garden. Right: A view of Sakurajima from Sengan-en. photographs by author.

What Nariakira articulated through his policies was something akin to a Dewey-style pragmatic philosophical position: the proper use with which to put thought and energy are those

¹ The factual material for this paragraph as well as a thorough treatment of the life of Nariakira can be found in Kanbashi Norimasa, *Shimazu Nariakira. Dai 1-han*, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1993).

which will produce practical results.² To Nariakira, the natural world as well as space more generally were part and parcel to his pragmatic worldview. Sengan-en, as a representation of a natural space, was subsumed in this ideology as well. Ergo, whereas the original usage of Sengan-en was limited to parties and a means to display one's own sophistication and high status, Nariakira's pragmatism that held as its goal defense of the domain became integrated into that space as well. This new philosophical underpinning was expressed materially as factories within the space and the subsequent products produced therein. "Nature," just as everything else to Nariakira, was a means to an end. In essence, the idea of a garden as representation of "nature" hadn't changed, the meaning and content of "nature" had changed through the reconceptualization of its use. Nariakira's pragmatic leanings gave way to a conception of "nature" that existed in service of the defense of the state (or at least the Satsuma domain). The eventual form of Sengan-en, therefore, was not some sort of chimeric amalgamation of industry, Westernization, and artistically arranged plants and stones. Rather, it represented a new conception of what "nature" was, and, critically, what it was *for*.

Some twenty years earlier, far to the northeast of Kagoshima, Tokugawa Nariaki, the domanical lord of the Mito branch of the Tokugawa family, also felt threatened by a series of crises including possible foreign invaders. His response, however, was to *build a new garden*.

* * * * *

Ideas begin life as mental constructs, drawn from personal experiences, insights, discursive elements, and the physical and cultural world. From there, ideas, if they are to spread,

² This is not to say that Nariakira was, in fact, a precursor to the pragmatic movement, or that this type of thinking was novel in Japan. What it was, however, was a marked shift from the ideas that had gone into the governance of the Shimazu domain.

are most often expressed linguistically. Ideas, however, may also be expressed extra-linguistically, as, in the case of this project, via constructed greenspaces. While a more thorough definition will follow, the basic idea of a constructed greenspace is any space where human intervention has resulted in the introduction of elements of the natural world. The study of greenspaces, I contend, affords access to insights that exclusively linguistic interpretations overlook. In effect, constructed greenspaces act as interpretations of philosophical ideas that allow for the designer to provide tangible expressions of their ideas, what a manifestation of such ideas would look like, and allow for visitors to experience ideas through pre-discursive subjectivity. Additionally, my project will show that constructed greenspaces are uniquely adept at expressing the meanings of nature and public space by virtue of the immediacy the medium provides.

It is therefore my contention that developments in thought were consciously reflected in the construction and adaptation of urban greenspaces. By grounding the study of the history of ideas in the physical soil of greenspaces, I hope to offer new insights into the intellectual history of Japan and present a new way to conceptualize how the history of ideas can be studied. In order to accomplish these goals, I will study four separate spaces, examine a series of questions with which they all engaged, as well as probe the specific philosophical questions that were being worked out by their creators.

The notion that spaces convey meanings is, of course, hardly novel. Even discounting earlier authors who have addressed the importance of space, theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja, Dolores Hayden, Barney Warf, and Santa Arias have all written extensively on the subject, and many more scholars have been informed by them.³ Taking spaces as akin to textual

³ A more thorough discussion concerning spatial theorists can be found in later in this introduction.

arguments, however, has received little to no attention in the study of the history of ideas., and is, I maintain, a rich cache of sources that have not been conceptualized as such.

In its most paired down form, this dissertation makes two claims. Put explicitly, using these spaces in order to draw out hitherto unexplored meanings, I argue that 1) Japanese intellectuals and government officials used constructed greenspaces to make structured arguments that were meant to impart a mindset to the people, and that, 2) whether intentional or otherwise, there were also implicit claims about the meaning and content of “nature” and the natural world. Relatedly, we can form a fuller understanding of the conceptualization of “nature” by different individuals by looking at the constructed greenspaces that they helped produce. I will use this “natural” through-line to argue that claims made about the supposed “harmony of nature” of the Japanese, both by its promoters and detractors, overlook various nuances, and are incomplete.

Historical Problem

With the risk of overloading the reader with too many examples at the outset, at the Tetsugakudō kōen (The Temple Garden of Philosophy), opened in Tokyo 1904, Buddhist philosopher Inoue Enryō (1858-1919) sought explicitly to bring the Japanese public at large into the world of philosophy by creating a park devoted to both Western and Japanese philosophical questions and ideals. Visitors first entered through the Garden of Idealism, proceeded along the path through the Ravine of Dogmatism to the Garden of Materialism, then took one of the multiple paths ascending the Slope of Experience with names like the Path of Intuition and the Region of Logic. At the summit, a visitor was greeted by the Hall of the Four Sages, a shrine dedicated to Confucius, the Buddha, Socrates, and Kant. The hall itself was not meant to be the

end of one's journey, but rather the foundation upon which new philosophical endeavors were to be pursued at the neighboring Hall of the Universe, built for the study of the "truth of the universe as philosophy."

A logical extension of my first contention, the veracity of which I believe will be self-evident in the chapters that follow, is to investigate how philosophical ideas were made manifest into constructed greenspaces during the mid-eighteenth to early twentieth centuries in Japan. How did Inoue and other designers represent their philosophical vision in an avowedly natural space? What is unique about constructed greenspaces and how can their study contribute to the study of intellectual history that other approaches focused exclusively on linguistic representation might overlook? How were these spaces used and understood by the public? Finally, what can the study of constructed greenspaces reveal about Japanese responses to pertinent philosophical questions of the day?

As for my second argument, another way of phrasing it would be in posing a most difficult question to answer: "what is 'nature?'" A corollary to this question is necessitated by our modern understanding of the term, namely: how does it differ from artifice and humanity more generally? At the outset I want to make clear that there is no one answer to these questions. Through the exploration of case study sites, I will show that the understanding of "nature," "Japanese nature," and "the natural world" differed wildly from individual to individual. This is more than simple sleight of hand made possible by the plethora of definitions and uses of the term "nature," "natur," or "*shizen*" in modern and early modern language. As Federico Marcon, drawing on Raymond Williams, puts it, "nature" is the most confounding word in modern language.⁴ What I hope to get at is less of an exercise concerned with definitions *per se*, but

⁴ Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 16.

rather with how a network of mental constructs that is generally referred as “nature” was conceived of in different ways by different people at different times.

It is necessary, at this point, to give a working definition of what a constructed greenspace is and to justify my use of the term as a category for analysis. As for the first half of this problem, I would define the term thusly: a space in which humans have altered the physical landscape to include “natural” elements which will then be, at least sporadically, maintained by human work. I am currently unwilling to add an area or scale-based restriction to my general definition; the question, for example, of a composed bonsai scene counting as a constructed green space is tricky. I am not studying, say, individual plants in a flowerpot sitting on a windowsill, though I maintain such an object could be considered a constructed greenspace. It is not so much a question of area as it is of conceptions; the intentionality of the historical actors is the deciding factor. Additionally, though my project will be focusing on urban constructed greenspaces, the definition would also include rural spaces as well, such as tightly controlled “natural parks” (*shizen kōen*) and could even plausibly be extended to include purely agricultural spaces as well, which, while possessing different commercial functions, nevertheless imply underlying ideas about the relationship between humans and “nature.”

There are two main reasons why I believe constructed greenspaces, instead of the more familiar terms of public parks or gardens, as a category, are useful units of analysis. The first of these is bound up with this dissertation’s second claim, the fundamental philosophical question that transcends all my sites as well as the category as a whole: what is “nature?”⁵ As such, any space that addresses these questions seems to be relevant to my inquiry. This is related to my

⁵ Although constructed greenspaces are not, by definition “natural” in the modern sense of the word, I contend that the conception of what a “natural” space was very much in flux during this period. Furthermore, even by a modern definition of nature, constructed greenspaces in Japan aim to either reproduce nature or reimagine it, and thus the nature of nature, as it were, is crucial to either endeavor.

second reason, and that is in an effort to overcome the Balkanization of avowedly “natural” looking spaces in the literature. As will become apparent, people who have written about such spaces, especially in Japanese language scholarship, separate *teien* (gardens) from *kōen* (public parks). I believe this approach is deficient in that firstly it prevents the question about the meaning of “nature” from being analyzed in a way that takes up many different kinds of spaces which, nevertheless, share a similar ontological foundation, into account. Secondly, it excludes any space that does not conform to either of those categories. Sites like Meiji Jingū, the Tokyo shrine dedicated to the Meiji emperor, for example, does not neatly fit into either of the above types, nor do college campuses, urban agricultural spaces, or experimental horticultural sites.

This dissertation takes as the focus of its inquiry four distinct constructed greenspaces, each conveying a distinct mode of philosophical (broadly construed) thought, presented in a distinct style, in distinct parts of Japan, with distinctly different messages. I have selected these sites spread throughout Japan both geographically and (relatively) temporally to study not as a way to cherry-pick sites that fit my thesis, but to demonstrate the breadth of types of thinking, places within Japan, and the continuation of this type of representation. Specifically, I will investigate the Tetsugakudō kōen in Tokyo, Kairaku-en in Mito, Murin-an and Heian Jingū in Kyoto, and the campus of Hokkaido University in Sapporo. Each one of these greenspaces will serve as a representation of a different yet related series of philosophical questions and approaches. Through the Tetsugakudō kōen, described above, Inoue Enryō explicitly sought to both illustrate the philosophical problem of the opposition between Materialism and Idealism, as well as to provide Inoue’s own perspective as to how the two positions could be reconciled through a combination of Buddhist and Western thought. Kairaku-en was designed by Tokugawa Nariaki (1800-1860), the domanical lord of Mito, as an expression of his understanding of

Confucian principles. Completed in 1842, Kairaku-en represented an attempt at solving the domain's myriad crises by exposing the subjects of Mito the virtue of both Nariaki and the messages his garden was designed to convey. Murin-an was the Kyoto estate and retreat of Yamagata Aritomo (1838-1922), one of the most noteworthy statesmen and military leaders of the Meiji era. While his garden was built by Ogawa Jihei VII (1860-1933), the landscape designer who would go on to be the most celebrated (and emulated) of the age, the design was drawn up by Yamagata who was himself an accomplished amateur gardener.⁶ While none of the people involved with this garden were philosophers in the strictest sense of the word, Yamagata's ideas concerning statecraft, the use of force, political participation, and the imperial system had a lasting impact on what can be considered the political philosophy of Japan. Yamagata's political views were combined with the new aesthetic vision concerning the meaning of nature of Ogawa to produce a garden that makes a number of ideological claims, including the aforementioned depiction of a new sense of the meaning of nature and Yamagata's distrust of democratic institutions and his own understanding of the Japanese state as nature itself.⁷ These ideas would then migrate to Heian Jingū, the shrine dedicated to Emperor Kanmu (735-806). The campus of Hokkaido University, formerly Sapporo Agricultural College, offers a radically different interpretation of the meaning and role of nature. Originally constructed by Japanese horticulturalists with the input of the American chemist and botanist William S. Clark (1826-1886), the design included horticultural experimental greenhouses and gardens spread throughout the college. This site represents both the emergence of a new, western-science driven understanding and portrayal of nature, one of the directions that the philosophy of science took in

⁶ For the influence of Ogawa Jihei, see Amasaki Hiromasa, *Nanadaime Ogawa Jihei: sanshi suimei no miyako ni kaesane ba (Ogawa Jihei VII)* (Kyoto-shi: Mineruva Shobō, 2012).

⁷ See Julia Adeney Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of nature in Japanese political ideology* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2001).

the late nineteenth and early-twentieth century in Japan, as well as an imperialist project embarked upon by the Meiji state to colonize the northern island of Hokkaido.

These sites were not selected to be representative of all constructed greenspaces built in Japan during this period. The Tetsugakudō Kōen, and Kairaku-en in particular, the former devoted to Inoue Enryō's philosophy and the latter an expression of individuals associated with late Mito School thought, while not the only examples of an explicit connection between philosophy and greenspace, were not common types of constructed greenspaces during the period in question. I would point out, however, that my project is not meant to describe the contours of garden culture in Japan. Rather, I am aiming to describe ways in which intellectuals made their thought manifest in these constructed, natural spaces. In this regard, I believe that my choice of sites is fairly representative of the major intellectual trends during the periods in question. At the Tetsugakudō Kōen, Inoue Enryō envisioned a public space where "nature" would act as a medium through which he would use of an amalgamation of Buddhist and Western philosophy to both engage the public in philosophical thinking and attempt to demonstrate the fundamental error of looking at materialism and idealism as locked in binary opposition. More than sixty years early in Mito, Tokugawa Nariaki attempted in a sense the opposite endeavor. He used the natural world to create what we would now call a public space. What is more, in keeping with the ideology of members of the later Mito school, Nariaki envisioned this space as a place where perceived social ills could be addressed. In 1898 the collaboration of Yamagata Aritomo and Ogawa Jihei VII produced, in Murin-an, a new vision of "nature" where the formalism that had been central to Japanese gardens for a millennium was replaced with a combination of the notion "imitate nature as nature is" (*shizen no mama, shizen o utsusu*) and a recognition that after that process was complete, the designer would then use

“nature” to create art. Finally, up in Hokkaido, William S. Clark and others were constructing a greenspace where nature was not a raw material for art, but both the subject and product of scientific study and experimentation.⁸

Historiography

I have chosen to group the authors concerned with constructed greenspaces (though none would use this term) and the category of “nature” together in this section, whereas other disciplines germane to theoretical approaches have been relegated to “methodology.” Strikingly, the study of Japanese public greenspaces has itself received very little scholarly attention in the Anglophone world. This is all the more surprising given that the world’s oldest manual on garden, the *Sakuteiki* (Record of Garden Making), was composed (or possibly compiled) in the late 11th century in Japan. While it is true that most of the work is devoted to practical considerations, such as the proper height of bridges to prevent water damage, the *Sakuteiki* also includes several statements that lay out many of the fundamental ideas upon which Japanese garden construction is based. A designer, we are told, should first and foremost consider the topography and surrounding scenery when creating a garden, with this consideration even

⁸ Notably absent from my four sites are many of the most well-known constructed greenspaces in Tokyo, such as Shinjuku Gyoen, Hibiya Kōen, and Ueno Kōen, all these sites are critical for discussions of public space. Two of these greenspaces, Shinjuku Gyoen and Ueno Kōen, were formed in Tokyo by imperial edict in 1873. Thomas Havens has already authored a book describing the political rationale for the initial designation of public parks in Japan, and while his focus is not on the underlying ideology, his narrative of the decision making involved holds up; see Thomas R. Havens, *Parkscapes: Green Spaces in Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011). Secondly, these spaces are founded on very similar principles, namely imitation of the West and an attempt to break the power of the samurai class. While it resulted in one of the first steps at creating a modern Japanese citizenry, this was an unexpected consequence. In short, these spaces were not explicitly intended to deal with philosophical questions per se. Their place in the history of greenspaces is indeed crucial, but I would argue that their role in the history of ideas is more limited. As for Hibiya, generally held to be the first Western-style park built in Japan (by the Japanese), it was not the result of a single unified vision meant to address a philosophical question, but the product of many minds; see Shinji, Isoya, *Hibiya Kōen: Hyakunen No Kyōji Ni Manabu = Pride of the Park* (Tōkyō: Kajima Shuppankai, 2011). Furthermore, given its connection to the Japanese empire, as well as its use by political demonstrators, Hibiya is best seen as a precursor to the 1910’s, 20’s, and 30’s, pushing it beyond the scope of my project.

preempting the wishes of the client.⁹ Designers are told, furthermore, to spend time exploring the forests and mountains of the archipelago in order to draw inspiration for their own designs. The goal, however, is not the mere imitation of “nature,” but rather to combine one’s own taste, intuition, and geographical features of the space with inspirations drawn from the world.¹⁰ I submit that the foundational text of the Japanese art of garden making is itself a mediation on the relationship of thought and space, and therefore any investigation of such a connection must include the *Sakuteiki*. Though it was written more than 900 years ago, the *Sakuteiki* has been in circulation, either through hand-written copies or reprintings, since the late Heian period (794-1185), and, as such, has been tremendously influential down to the present day.

The first Westerner to write about Japanese gardens systematically was the British architect and advisor to the Japanese government Josiah Conder (1852-1920), with his *Landscape Gardening in Japan* (1893).¹¹ Conder’s work, augmented with numerous sketches and photographs, is more descriptive than analytical, though he begins with an introduction in which he states that the Japanese garden aesthetic is “a more or less conventional imitation of favorite types of growth observed in nature.”¹² This unproblematic and ahistorical use of the term and concept of “nature,” as well as its Japanese counterpart, *shizen*, runs throughout all of

⁹ See Tamura Tsuyoshi, Toshitsuna Fujiwara, and Yoshitsune Fujiwara. *Sakuteiki*, (Tōkyō: Sagami Shobō, 1968).

¹⁰ Note that *Sakuteiki* itself does not use the modern Japanese word for nature, *shizen*, nor does it use any word that could reasonably be taken as an equivalent to the modern meaning of “nature” in either language. This has not, however, prevented commentators in both languages from using either word (*shizen* or nature) to describe both the text of the *Sakuteiki* as well as the essential character of Japanese greenspaces. With very few exceptions, notably Yanabu Akira, *Hon’yaku to Shisō ‘Shizen’ to Nature*, (Tokyō: Heibonsha, 1977), and, drawing upon Yanabu, Federico Marcon, 2015. My use of the word here is primarily to illustrate both the way in which Japanese greenspaces are commonly described, as being in “harmony with nature,” or some derivation thereof, as well as my attempt to problematize the word and concept of nature with my own work.

¹¹ There are, of course, earlier travel accounts that reference Japanese gardens, dating back to Englebert Kaempfer, *The history of Japan: giving an account of the ancient and present state and government of that empire ... of the chronology and succession of the emperors ... together with a description of the kingdom of Siam*, 1727.

¹² Josiah Conder, *Landscape Gardening in Japan* (Tokio: Kelly and Walsh, 1893).

the literature concerning constructed greenspaces in Japan, and the interrogation of the meaning and use of this term is one of the central interventions of my work.¹³

Moving forward chronologically, the next crucial work in the field is Shigemori Mirei's (1896-1975) 26 volume *Nihon Teienshi Zukan* (Encyclopedia of Japanese Garden History), published between 1936 and 1939. Shigemori was himself a landscape designer of note, often referred to as the most renowned Japanese garden designer of the 20th century.¹⁴ Shigemori's work became tone setting in many ways for future authors, both in terms of their personal backgrounds (landscape designers turned academics dominate the field), as well as the content of their works: Shigemori's is largely an appraisal of the trends in gardening that unfolded throughout the centuries. For my purposes, it is important to note that Shigemori, as well as the majority of those who came after him, had a very negative opinion about the quality of the work being done in the period I study. In addition to the criteria Shigemori employed in his denigration of constructed greenspaces of the last two hundred years or so, the implicit argument that the purpose of a researcher should be to pass judgement on the quality of the aesthetic trends of the age looms large in this historiography.¹⁵

This trend would continue with Mori Osama, the author of the two seminal texts in Japanese garden studies, *Nihon no Teien* (1964), and *Teien* (1984). Mori, who unlike Shigemori was himself an academic researcher and not a landscape designer, again advanced a thesis of a decline in the quality of Japanese gardens, though he and Shigemori held differing opinions as to

¹³ For just a smattering of examples, see the works of Wybe Kuitert, Shigemori Mirei, Mori Osama, and Tanaka Seidai.

¹⁴ Christian Tsuchumi. *Mirei Shigemori - Rebel in the Garden: Modern Japanese Landscape Architecture*. (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2007). Also of note, although Shigemori's active period is outside the scope of my study, he named his children after notable European intellectuals, Kant, Hugo, Goethe, and Byron.

¹⁵ It should also be noted that Shigemori was quite dismissive of the large Daimyo gardens of the Edo period as well. See Shigemori Mire and Shigemori Kanto, *Nihon Teienshi Taikei*, Vol. 15 "Edo Jidai Shoki no Niwa," 1972, 5.

the high-water mark of the medium.¹⁶ Mori was of the belief that popularization, made possible through the widespread use of the printing press in the middle of the Edo period, led to an inevitable decline in the aesthetics of the age, arguing that the popularity of treatises on plants and landscaping turned these artforms into recreational hobbies (*yūgiteki shumi*).¹⁷

One other Japanese luminary in the field of constructed greenspaces from the mid twentieth century that needs to be mentioned here is Tanaka Seidai. Tanaka's texts, unlike the previous works, concern both *kōen* and *teien*, though not in the same volume. He also attempted to break away from the appreciative mode of thinking present in Mori and Shigemori by to focus instead on the goals of the designers. Specifically, Tanaka, in *Nihon no Teien* argued that there are two differing approaches taken by Japanese designers, that of following of nature, as laid out in the *Sakuteiki*, and that of its recreation, as expressed by the Zen gardens begun in the 14th century.¹⁸ Although I would criticize Tanaka for also taking an essentialized, ahistorical view of “nature,” and his work devotes basically no attention to anything constructed after the Meiji Restoration (1868), his focus on the designers and the spaces as objects to be analyzed on their own terms rather than on the basis of his own aesthetic tastes is an intervention which I wholeheartedly endorse.

In recent years, researchers of Japanese constructed greenspaces have been shifting more towards Tanaka's approach. Aya Sakai, for example, rather than an aesthetically driven critique of space, has written about the links between the first public park built by Westerners in Japan (Yamate Kōen built in the foreign quarter of Yokohama) and the introduction of the neologism

¹⁶ Mori believed that the gardens of the late Heian, being faithful to the precepts found in the *Sakuteiki*, were the finest examples in Japan, whereas Shigemori upheld the beauty and simplicity of the *kare sansui* (dry landscape or rock garden) forms of the Kamakura and Muromachi periods.

¹⁷ Mori Osama, *Nihon no Teien*, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1964), 48.

¹⁸ Tanaka Seidai, *Nihon No Teien* (Tokyo: Kajima Kenkyūjo Shuppankai, 1967), 11-12.

kōen into the Japanese vernacular.¹⁹ Suzuki Makoto, has written about the influence Fukuba Hayato, the creator of many experimental horticultural sites in the late Meiji, on later Japanese landscape gardening.²⁰ Finally, the prolific Shirahata Yōzaburō has attempted to add reception and use as additional categories for analysis.²¹

To sum up, the shadow of Shigemori's aesthetic-critique methodology looms large over the field. Recent authors, Sakai and Suzuki, for example, still provide justifications for their eschewing of judgement regarding the quality of their spaces, and Shirahata, for all the new analytical frameworks he has provided, part of his project is still avowedly to rehabilitate the image of Edo period Daimyo gardens.²² Furthermore, even those authors who have dealt with both *kōen* and *teien* have kept them cordoned off by presenting them in different works. Finally, while there is a growing body of literature concerning the consequences of new trends in Meiji era gardens,²³ there has not been any concerted effort to link these new forms of space to the underlying philosophical developments which influenced them or the expressions of various philosophical ideas that were being intentionally represented therein.

One last theoretician that bears mentioning before proceeding is David Cooper. Cooper argued that gardens acquire meaning as “epiphany” between two themes: that of “dependence of human creative activity upon the co-operation of the natural world” and “the garden’s

¹⁹ Sakai, Aya, “The hybridization of ideas on public parks: introduction of Western thought and practice into nineteenth-century Japan,” *Planning Perspectives* Vol. 26 no 3 (2011).

²⁰ See Wakaizumi Haraka and Suzuki Makoto, “A Study on Fukuba Hayato's Influences for Modern Horticulture and Landscape Gardening in Japan,” *Journal of The Japanese Institute of Landscape Architecture*, 71, (2008), 469-474.

²¹ See Shirahata Yōzaburō, *Daimyō Teien: Edo no Kyōen*, (Chikumashobo 1997), and Shirahata Yōzaburō, *Kindai Toshi Kōenshi No Kenkyū: Ōka No Keifu*, (Kyoto, Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1995). It should be noted, however, that there has also been a trend since the nineties to rehabilitate the image and aesthetic appreciation of Meiji greenspaces, led primarily by the researcher/landscape designers at the Kyoto University for Art and Design. See Amasaki Hiromasa, *Ueji no Niwa: Ogawa Jihei no sekai*, (Kyoto-shi: Mineruva Shobō, 1990), and Wybe Kuitert, the only major figure in the West to publish (academically) in this field, in his *Japanese gardens and landscapes, 1650-1950* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

²² See Shirahata, *Daimyō Teien: Edo no Kyōen*, particularly his introductory chapter.

²³ See especially Suzuki Makoto here.

exemplifying the degree to which [...] experience of the natural environment depends upon human creative activity.”²⁴ This interplay is ultimately expressed as the “co-dependence” between humans and nature.²⁵ A further point that Cooper makes is that gardens, and, I would posit, any constructed greenspace, cannot be understood as a collection of natural world elements, but as spaces that are constantly being acted upon by a variety of factors such as weather, human intervention, etc.²⁶ In essence, though he doesn’t use the term himself, Cooper is describing gardens as gestalts, on that combines the material world and our sensory experiences of it with the mental co-dependence between humans and “nature” Cooper described. But what is “nature?”

The Natural Naturalization of Nature, Naturally

Defining the word “nature,” let alone trying to delineate the word’s uses in just English, is daunting. Raymond Williams referred to it as “perhaps the most complicated word in the language.”²⁷ While that exact dubious honor is debatable, the term carries millennia of ideas and understandings in the Western world. To select the lowest-hanging example, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary divides the definition into nine definitions, with a couple of subheadings thrown in. It’s first entry, “the external world in its entirety,” is a representative definition of the term as it is usually applied to the natural world.²⁸ Frédéric Ducarme and Denis Couvet have

²⁴ David E. Cooper, *A Philosophy of Gardens* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 135-136.

²⁵ *Ibid.* Cooper stresses that this is not the same as “oneness” with nature or “denies the distinctiveness of human beings from ‘merely’ natural beings,” but rather one that emphasizes the dependence of human achievement on nature and the simultaneous “dependence of our experience of nature on what we achieve.”

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 137.

²⁷ Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 219, in Federico Marcon, *The knowledge of nature and the nature of knowledge in early modern Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 16.

²⁸ Although I would note that neither this, nor any of the definitions proffered there specifically divides humans from nature, which is an important aspect of the word’s use in everyday parlance.

developed a more sophisticated set of four uses of the term, complete with their philosophical origin and “opposed concept” in a useful chart which I have broken up into digestible portions.²⁹

First Definition: “The whole of material reality, considered as independent of human activity and history,” set in opposition to “culture, artifice, rational intention,” as formulated by “post-romantic philosophy (Rousseau, Romanticism, Marx, transcendentalism, Muir...), often attributed to Christian tradition, and formulated by [John Stuart] Mill. This definition is at the root of the “great divide” in Western academics.”³⁰ This, to me, is a fuller version of what most people mean when they talk about greenspaces as “natural space.” It is here also, as the authors note, that a clear distinction is made between the natural and unnatural (i.e., human). This causes issues for the adoption of this kind of definition for any analysis of history, at least in the modern, early modern, and possibly before that as well. Essentially, if we are looking at “nature” as a concept in history, then virtually by definition humans are in some way interactive with “it,” and if one takes the notion of the Anthropocene seriously, as one should, then there is no place left on Earth that can be said to be “independent of human activity.” What is crucial for our purposes at this stage, however, is not the creation of a fully-fleshed-out definition of “nature,” but rather how different ideologies and individuals have conceptualized the *idea* of nature. Seen this way, the “man vs. nature” narrative cannot be dismissed.

A second definition given by Ducarme and Couvet is similar to the first, with some key differences. It also draws on considerably older thought. Per Ducarme and Couvet, “the whole universe, as it is the place, the source and the result of material phenomena (including man or at least man’s body)” forms the second definition, set in opposition to the “supernatural [and]

²⁹ Frédéric Ducarme and Denis Couvet, “What does ‘nature’ mean?” *Palgrave Communications* 6, 14 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0390-y>. Ducarme and Couvet are concerned with the political implications of the different understandings of the word “nature” as they relate to ecological policy.

³⁰ *Ibid.* The “great divide” is that between humanity/artifice, and nature.

unreal.” The roots of this tradition stretch back to antiquity, stemming from “stoicism, Atomism, Epicurism, Taoism, Descartes, Bacon, [and] Spinoza. Formulated by Aristotle and Mill.”³¹

Three points are worth noting here. Firstly, this version explicitly includes humanity, and could be summarized in religious terms as “all creation.” This has interesting implications for use in studying greenspaces, as under this schema a well-tended garden, a remote mountain pine forest, and a concrete parking structure are all equally “natural.” Ducarme and Couvet stress that it is this use of the term that is often used to derail modern conversations concerning “protecting nature,” as this version of “nature” is not in need of protection; humans are not (currently) capable of destroying the universe or fabric of reality, ergo why should we bother on a local scale?³² Secondly as will become germane very soon, note the inclusion of Taoism in the list of schools of thought that have given rise to this understanding, especially coupled with the association of Christianity with the first definition. This links nicely to the longstanding view that there is an “East/West” divide when it comes to “nature.” Thirdly, what I would like to highlight is slippage that is very easy to introduce in any study or conversation concerning greenspaces. While these first two definitions are distinct when carefully analyzed, especially when the inclusion or exclusion of humans is made explicit, the two are remarkably similar without that qualification. “The whole of reality” and “the whole universe” are not particularly distinct from each other semantically. The real differentiation comes from a negative definition (no humans) and the opposing notions.

The final two definitions, while critical for a complete understanding of the term, are not closely linked to discussion of this sort in English. Briefly, therefore, “the specific force at the

³¹ Frédéric Ducarme and Denis Couvet, "What does 'nature' mean?". Palgrave Communications 6, 14 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0390-y>.

³² *Ibid.*

core of life and change” comprises the third definition, and is associated with “Heraclitus, Hegel, Nietzsche, Darwin, [and] vitalism.”³³ The fourth and final sense of the word in modern English, as the authors see it, is “the essence, inner quality and character, the whole of specific physical properties of an object, live or inert,” which they see as less philosophical (though they do reference Mill), and more of a homonym with a “distinct grammatical use (‘nature of...’).”³⁴ While the third meaning occasionally appears in very specific theoretically backed instances, especially, for instance, in Heidegger’s thought, both are usually linguistically distinct enough as to be obvious when invoked.³⁵ What I would argue, is that the meaning of the term “nature” is not really particularly complicated in English with regards to the first, third, and fourth usages. Although we may struggle to construct an all-inclusive definition for the term that covers every corner-case use, we are nonetheless able to easily distinguish between uses, provided there is enough context.³⁶ Where the problem arises is between the first and second definitions: wither humanity?

Anthropologist Tim Ingold has been tackling this question with, by his own admission, uneven results since the publication of his 1986 *Evolution and Social Life*, with the clearest expression of his thought appearing in *The Perception of the Environment* (2000). Ingold holds that the division between humanity and nature has divided human thought, and especially our system of higher education.³⁷ As he explains it, Western academics (and consequently virtually everyone the world over) has divided the natural sciences, STEM, essentially, and the

³³ Frédéric Ducarme and Denis Couvet, "What does 'nature' mean?". Palgrave Communications 6, 14 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0390-y>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Note that this exclusively applies to Western languages, and not Japanese or Chinese.

³⁶ To pull from a famous post-structuralist example, it would be impossible to glean what the word “nature,” scrawled on a blackboard meant. Thankfully, this scenario almost never comes up.

³⁷ Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in livelihood, dwelling and skill* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 1.

Humanities and Social Sciences.³⁸ Ingold's goal was to find a way to connect the cultural and physical anthropology into one cohesive discipline that could overcome the "fault line," as he put it.³⁹ A cursory reading of the above, however, shows that there has existed a Western theoretical framework that has no such difficulty with separation. I bring this up not to take a cheap shot at an anthropologist, but rather to demonstrate that while both the human-inclusive and human-exclusive view of "nature" has existed for centuries, the latter has achieved dominion in the ordinary discourse of our times. One result of this has been the outsourcing of the Aristotelian (et. al) view to "the East."

In 1967 Lynn White published his influential "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," where he argued that the root of our impending ecological disaster was a Christian worldview. "Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen," White asserted, "Man shares, in great measure, God's transcendence of nature. Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia's religions (except, perhaps, Zoroastrianism), not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends."⁴⁰ Ironically, while attacking a dualistic understanding of humanity and nature, White set one up between Western and non-Western (and pagan) conceptualizations thereto; Christians seek domination, others seek harmony. This diametric opposition took hold, especially in the popular consciousness of East Asia, and the

³⁸ *Ibid*, 1-2.

³⁹ *Ibid*. He eventually settled on the idea that humans should be considered as indistinct from their organism.

⁴⁰ Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155, (1967), 1205. It is often stated that White advocated for a turn towards an "Eastern" or Zen Buddhist view of nature, but in fact White was "dubious of its viability among us," due to its historical roots. Instead, White proposed adapting what he believed to be the view of Saint Francis of Assisi, would postulate an equality between all creatures, going so far as to conclude by writing "I propose Francis as a patron saint for ecologists."

view of Japan, China, and Korea as historically living in accord with the natural world remains popular to this day.⁴¹

This view increasingly came under fire among different groups along different axes, but for our purposes the most salient came from East Asianist academics. Some, such as Conrad Totman, pointed to the uneven record of ecological management on the archipelago. Pushing back against those who pointed to Edo Period reforestation efforts as evidence for Japanese “love of nature,” Totman notes that “to argue so, however, invites the tart query: did they love nature so much less during the ancient and early modern predations?”⁴² Echoing Totman, Arne Kalland argued that the common argument for a unique Japanese love of nature “has little explanatory value, as it presupposes the existence of an objective—and thus not culturally acquired—standard of beauty.”⁴³ Kalland proposed a different version of the Japanese connection, aesthetically, with the natural world, using the metaphor of “nature in the raw” and an idealized form of nature, marked primarily by human intervention. This line of reasoning is, anecdotally, held by many practicing Japanese gardeners, who frequently invoke the ideal of “nature, brushed up.”⁴⁴ More broadly, the rejection of a Japanese love of nature has been furthered since the 1980s

⁴¹ The most important of all of the Japanese authors who helped propagate the “love of nature” view actually predates White by thirty years. The famous (or infamous, depending on one’s point of view) popularizer of Zen in the West, D.T. Suzuki, articulated the “Japanese love of nature” in *Zen and Japanese Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1959). For an in-depth view of various Japanese and Shinto nationalist arguments of this kind, see Aike P. Rots, *Shinto, Nature, and Ideology in Contemporary Japan: Making Sacred Forests*, (London: New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 51-63.

⁴² Conrad Totman, *The Green Archipelago: Forestry in preindustrial Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 179.

⁴³ Arne Kalland, “Culture in Japanese Nature,” in Ole Bruun and Arne Kalland eds. *Asian Perceptions of Nature* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1995), 244.

⁴⁴ It should be noted that this position is not necessarily wedded to Kalland’s (et al) position vis-à-vis the love of nature. Many of those same gardeners would agree with the idea that there is a “Japanese love of nature;” one can of course, love something but believe that it can be improved.

by several other scholars, and it is not a stretch to refer to this as the mainstream position in Western scholarship on the issue.⁴⁵



Figure 2: Though not strictly speaking a before and after shot, this is the same garden stream, as photographed from a bifurcating bridge, gives a good visual representation of what Kalland is arguing for. The garden had been left to its own devices for decades; the left is a shot of the stream after it was worked on (idealized), the right before it was touched (raw). Photographs by author.

The modern Japanese term that is translated as “nature” is *shizen* (自然). Yanabu Akira, the father of Japanese translation studies, argues that by the late 1880s, there were two competing versions of the compound “自然”: the traditional usage, referring to spontaneity, and a usage that originated from scholars trying to translate the German “*natur*” that is roughly analogous to the present day’s usage, where the meaning came to include the natural world.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ See, for example, , Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction : An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), Peter Wynn Kirby, *Troubled Natures: Waste, Environment, Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2011), Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Concepts of Nature and Technology in Pre-Industrial Japan,” *East Asian History* 1, (1991), and Marcon Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2015). As mentioned previously, while the rejection of the Japanese harmony with nature argument may prevail within the academy, it remains strong in popular consciousness.

⁴⁶ Yanabu Akira. *Hon’yaku No Shisō: "Shizen" to NATURE* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1977). Yanabu specifically argues here that this change was not (ironically) natural at all, but rather the intentional manipulation of scholars trying to interpret and promote social Darwinism.

This leads to the pairing of *shizen* and *ningen* (“humankind,” 人間) as a hallmark of modern usage. While they are not always conceived of as oppositional or indeed as entirely distinct, to speak of them as related necessitates a *shizen* situated within a discourse where “nature” can be thought of as outside “human,” a feature which the traditional usage lacked.⁴⁷

Moving to the domain of the (attempted) codification of language, 1881 version of the *Tetsugaku Jii (Dictionary of Philosophy)*, co-authored by Inoue Tetsujirō and other University of Tokyo faculty, does not list “自然” under “Nature,” despite the fact that seven translations are given, yet does list “自然” under “natural.” While this may, at first glance, seem conclusive evidence that a University of Tokyo graduate would use *shizen* in the “spontaneous” sense of the word, subsequent editions of the dictionary provide a different picture. In the only very slightly revised 1884 edition, for example, the only new term is included in the nature/natural cluster, specifically the “uniformity of nature,” is given as “自然契合 (*shizen keigō*),” while the rest of the translations appear unmodified (as is the case for virtually the entirety of that edition). Furthermore, the 1912 spiritual successor to the *Tetsugaku Jii*, the *Dictionary of English, German, and French philosophical terms with Japanese equivalents*, again authored by Tetsujirō, saw the addition “自然” to every entry that included the word “nature” (as well as “*natura*,” a necessary set of additions given that the dictionary now included Latin phrases as well), and uses it exclusively in most cases where a compound term is given, such as “Philosophy of Nature,” and “Nature Worship.” Thus, as early as 1884 it would seem that the

⁴⁷ See, for example, in Inoue Enryō *The Pedagogical View of Life: or, about the educator’s mental peace* (教育の世界観及人生観：一名教育家安心論), where the two words are placed in opposition throughout.

scholarly community was moving in the “*natur*” usage of *shizen*, a process that was virtually complete by the end of the Meiji. While not entirely incorrect, such an account ignores a great deal of the texture and diversity of use. Other scholars have instead approached the topic of “nature” from an abstract, ideological perspective, in some cases explicitly eschewing the natural world.

The greatly influential political thinker Maruyama Masao (1914-1996), for example, in his 1944 “Kindai Nihon seiji shisō ni okeru ‘shizen’ to ‘sakui,’” (*Nature’ and ‘Invention’ in Modern Japanese Political Thought*), had no interest in what we would term the “natural world,” and instead locates at least part of the blame for Japanese ultranationalism in a refusal to let go of “nature” (*shizen*).⁴⁸ “Nature,” Maruyama insists, is a conservative force that closes off the possibility for political and social change. Maruyama goes back to the Edo Period to argue that both “nature” and “invention” were competing ideas within the Tokugawa *Bakufu*, and it was to Japan’s great detriment that the “nature” camp won out. Nature is also cast in opposition to modernity, which is, of course, by no means unique to Maruyama.⁴⁹ What is interesting about Maruyama’s take, from a twenty first century Western perspective, is that nature is posited as the enemy. What I would highlight from Maruyama’s thoughts on this matter is, firstly, the type of nature he is talking about is in no way exclusive of humanity. In this regard it is more akin to the Aristotelian usage and that of “*tenri*.” Secondly and strikingly, however, is that Maruyama has not rejected a binary understanding of “nature” vis-à-vis *something*, it is just that in this case the oppositional ideas are “invention” and “modernity.”

⁴⁸ Maruyama Masao, “Kindai Nihon seiji shisō ni okeru ‘shizen’ to ‘sakui,’” (*Nature’ and ‘Invention’ in Modern Japanese Political Thought*) in *Nihon seiji shi shisō kenkyū* (Researching Japanese Political Thought) (Tokyo: Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 1952).

⁴⁹ Julia Thomas, to whom we will shortly turn, points to Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno as two exemplars here.

Julia Adeney Thomas, pushing back against Maruyama, argues that rather than “nature” being anti-modern, it was in fact integral to the Japanese notion of modernity.⁵⁰ “Nature,” Thomas stresses, was constantly being defined and redefined for political purposes by Japanese elites from the Tokugawa to the Taisho eras (and beyond). In her final estimation, “nature” went from a spatial part of the physical world to the Japanese state itself. Various Japanese intellectuals and political leaders and theorists sought to rebrand the state *as natural*.⁵¹ Additionally, Thomas highlights the constructed nature of the Japanese “love of nature,” not by demonstrating incongruities between that ideal and deeds, but by tracing its constructed intellectual foundations.⁵²

To sum up, the state of virtually all scholars who take the concept of “nature” seriously point to the multiplicity of meaning, both within the anglophone and Japanese contexts. Within the historiography of Japan, the older school of thought, influenced by people like Lynn White, posited a “harmony with nature” for the Japanese people and nature. This idea still prevails in popular culture, as well as within some Japanese nationalist circles.

What then of this study? While I will return to the question of “nature” after looking at the case study sites, it is incumbent on me to address a question of terminology before proceeding. Throughout this dissertation, I will use scare quotes around the word “nature” whenever I am using it in the ambiguous, what-do-we-mean-by-this-word sense.⁵³ To contrast, I will use the phrase “natural world” (without quotation marks) to denote the type of ecological,

⁵⁰ Julia Adeney Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 2001), 3.

⁵¹ It should also be noted that Thomas understands “nature” to be a term with a vast array of meanings, not as monolithic as this summary would suggest.

⁵² Julia Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity*, 178.

⁵³ Any other appearance of the term should be understood as one of the more obvious semantic uses outlined above, such as in “the nature of humanity.” While I concede that there is indeed a discussion to be had about the precise meaning here as well, I maintain that it is, at least semantically, considerably less fraught.

physical reality. I do not mean to suggest that the natural world is not itself an historically constructed category or contingent category with which the world, both physical and mental, has been organized.⁵⁴ Rather, I am attempting to mark out a specific constellation of meanings from the umbrella of “nature” to indicate the aforementioned. The use of plum trees, therefore, could be conceived along two axes under this schema: “what does it tell us about the concept of ‘nature’ being used by the creators,” and “the creators used the natural world in this way to express the following philosophical ideas.” The former use takes “nature” as a philosophical concept as the question, the latter is more interested in what philosophical concept(s) are being presented. Or, put differently, the natural world is, for the purpose of this study, the medium by which authors asserted their ideas about both “nature” and other philosophical issues.

Philosophy

The second term that will be used extensively throughout this study is, of course, “philosophy.” Philosophers are prone to self-rumination. What is philosophy? How does it differ from religion? Who is a philosopher? Is philosophy a European mode of thinking by definition? Does anyone even care about these questions? Issues of this sort are inherent to a branch of human endeavor that explicitly includes epistemology and ontology as core components. Should one be concerned exclusively with European and American societies, these questions are implicitly referring to a set of authors and works that share, at least on some level, a related genealogy, starting with the ancient Greeks who coined the term. This relationship almost guarantees a certain level of connection to, often even a familiarity with, and occasionally a dialogue involving the thinkers in question. When, however, these questions are applied to

⁵⁴ See Federico Marcon, *Knowledge of Nature*, 17-18 for just a small slice of the complexities here.

intellectual traditions that originated outside of Europe, the answers, like the terms themselves, become more slippery. An intellectual writing in eighteenth century Germany, for example, was familiar with the word “*philosophie*” and could declare themselves to be a “*philosoph*” in their own words. Were we to apply the above questions to our given German thinker, we would have an ample amount of evidence that is already framed in the terms of our inquiry by the author. A Zhu Xi-school Confucian of the Edo period in Japan, by contrast, lacks a vocabulary that we can reasonably translate into the language of modern-day philosophy.

These conversations are not limited to exclusively European writers today, nor were they in the past. But these discussions, again, should not be considered to have been restricted to different nation-exclusive groups. Certain scholars sought to convince not only their countrymen but to influence an international audience. Japanese intellectual Inoue Tetsujirō (1855-1944), for example, authored essays in Japanese, English, French, and German in an effort to address the question “is there Japanese philosophy?”⁵⁵ In so doing, he provided an excellent example of how non-Western intellectuals interacted with the larger world of what is best described as an international community of philosophers during the late nineteenth, early twentieth century.

One of the fundamental questions concerning the nature of knowledge that Inoue focused on centered on what should be regarded as *tetsugaku*, the newly devised word used to denote the Western field of philosophy, and what should be deemed *shisō*, usually glossed as thought. While on the surface this may appear to be somewhat of a semantic argument, there were tangible stakes involved in this discussion. Philosophy, for example, was considered by most Japanese intellectuals to be a systematic, rationality-based approach to understanding the nature

⁵⁵ See Inoue Tetsujiro, “Die Japanische Philosophie,” in *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie. 2. Kultur Der Gegenwart. Mathematik, Naturwissenschaften, Medizin. Anorganische Naturwissenschaften* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1913) and Inoue Tetsujiro, “Jukyō” in Okuma Shigenobu, *Kaikoku Gojunenshi* 31-32, [*Fifty Years of New Japan*], 42.

of things, meaning that ideas and systems that fell within the category were held to be more legitimate forms of knowledge on a practical level in both the West and Western-minded circles within Japan.⁵⁶

Unlike some of the American, British, and German philosophers with whom we will engage momentarily, Inoue never gives us a definition of philosophy in plain language in any of his European language works or, for that matter, his pieces in Japanese. Though there is no time to devote to a comprehensive study of the various definitions of “philosophy” that were swirling in the West during the period under investigation, a few examples should serve to illustrate the lack of a unified definition.

In his sweeping *Geschichte der Philosophie* (History of Philosophy, 1892), the German philosopher Wilhelm Windelband begins by defining the “present usage” of the word philosophy as a “scientific treatment of the general questions of knowledge of the world and of life [welterkenntniss und lebensansicht].”⁵⁷ Windelband then adds that “Individual philosophers [...] have tried to change this indefinite idea common to everyone into more precise definitions, which in part diverge so widely that the common element in the conception of the science [philosophy] is lost.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Such an analysis, as we will see, was not agreed upon by many participants of the debate. Writers who came from a more religious background often objected to either the notion that religious knowledge was subordinate to philosophical knowledge, or that the two were even disparate groups. In Japan, authors with otherwise acrimonious relationships with one another like Katō Hiroyuki and Inoue Enryō agreed on the superiority of philosophy, though they vehemently disagreed as to what category Buddhism and Confucianism fell into. Nakae Chōmin, after asserting that philosophy was non-existent in Japan goes on to argue that “Philosophy may not always be necessary, but the fact is that without it, a people will lack profound insight onto what they are doing.” Nishimura Shigeki admitted that as philosophy utilized an “analytic method,” it “far exceeds that of the East in terms of precision. See James Heisig, Thomas Kasulis, and John C. Maraldo ed. *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2011) 553-582.

⁵⁷ Wilhelm Windelband, *Geschichte der Philosophie* (Frieberg: Akademische Verlagsbuchhandlung von J.C.B. Mohr, 1892), 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Friedrich Paulsen, a German philosopher and educationalist, also took up the question of religion and philosophy, but argued that the former was actually in opposition with science, and that philosophy occupied a sort of middle ground between the two.⁵⁹ To Paulsen, philosophy was under attack from both sides, with the religiously minded condemning it as “Godless”, and the scientifically inclined viewing philosophers as merely “priests of the second order.”⁶⁰ This assault, Paulsen continues, will persist “until science is reconciled with faith.”⁶¹ Paulsen’s position, therefore, rejects the view of Windelband in that philosophy is *not* scientific, arguing instead that the true poles are science and religion, with philosophy fitting in somewhere along the continuum between them.

Finally, Nicholas Murray Butler, the professor of philosophy who served as the president of Columbia University from 1901 to 1945, believed that in the first 2000 years after Plato and Aristotle, “what we call science, what we call philosophy, and what we call theology were for a long time inextricably linked.”⁶² Butler further states that “to disentangle them is the first step toward comprehending what philosophy is and what part it has to play in intellectual life.”⁶³ While this reasoning seems to be in accord with Paulsen, Butler doesn’t see these three categories as being part of a spectrum of how humans think, but places two of these categories, science and philosophy into a specific hierarchy of ideas.

My goal here is not to use one of these definitions as my own, or even to draw from parts of them, but rather to demonstrate that philosophy was not a stable category in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Moreover, debates concerning the content of this category persist to the present,

⁵⁹ Friedrich Paulsen, *Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: H. Holt, 1907), xvi.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, xvii. Just what this would look like, Paulsen leaves to the imagination of his readership.

⁶² Nicholas Murray Butler, “Philosophy: A lecture delivered at Columbia University in the series on science, philosophy, and art, March 4, 1908” (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), 9.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

though the content of the arguments have changed (often now revolving around non-Western traditions of thought). Thus, I feel an obligation to provide an explanation of the way in which I will use the term philosophy throughout this work (though I make no claim to be crafting my own definition of the term). Though the title of this dissertation as well as parts of this introduction makes use of the term “philosophy” in the broadest possible sense, I have refrained from using it to describe the political thought of Yamagata Aritomo and William S. Clark in their respective chapters, excepting only the phrase “educational philosophy,” which I feel has passed into common usage to the point where the meaning is unambiguous. That is not to say that I personally reject the notion that Yamagata, or even Ogawa Jihei, could be considered to be engaged in a philosophical enterprise, but only that I have chosen not to burden this work with yet another argument seeking to justify the expansion of a category.

Methodology

This project’s novel approach to sources for the history of ideas requires a radically new methodology. While I am arguing for the legitimacy of reading constructed greenspaces as texts, what I want to make clear is that I am categorically *not* arguing for the exclusive use of spatial texts. In the same way that it would be highly problematic and professionally dubious to hold up a single document in a vacuum to explain an event or historical phenomenon, so too is it impossible to craft an argument about the meaning of a spatial text shorn of any relating documentary evidence. To this end, the spaces-as-texts will be interwoven with other, more traditional sources. Indeed, in some cases, particularly those of the Tetsugakudō Kōen and Kairaku-en, linguistic sources were built into the space itself. It is my position that spaces should

be considered as a *part* of an author's oeuvre, so to speak, not as the entirety of their work. On that note, let us turn to methodology.

While I agree with other intellectual historians of Japan that we must recognize the role that translation played in the development of Meiji era thought, I believe that the way that this problem is currently approached underestimates the ability of the nineteenth century Japanese scholar's ability to grasp and pass on Western ideas.⁶⁴ As such, I have turned to the analytic philosophy of language, a body of theory that is largely absent in this historiography. Although I draw from a variety of theoreticians, disciplines, and historiographical traditions, most of my methodology can be traced back to the philosophers Ludwig Wittgenstein and Thomas Kuhn.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ One of the most representative examples of this turn towards translation is Douglas Howland's *Translating the West: Language and political reason in nineteenth century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002). Other works that take up similar themes include Naoki Sakai and Meaghan Morris, *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), Naoki Sakai, *Voices of the Past: The Status of Language in Eighteenth-century Japanese Discourse* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), and Harry Harootunian, *Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988). Looking even further back, Martin Heidegger, in his "Dialogue on Language Between a Japanese and an Inquirer," in *On the Way to Language* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959) is implicitly rejecting semiotic transparency by arguing against the Japanese use of European categories for the field of aesthetics, as they are unable to capture the essence of how Japanese aesthetics operated. One of the key concerns that Howland and others raise in relation to the intellectual history of Meiji Japan is the problem of the assumption of "semantic transparency," the notion that Western terms could be translated into Japanese with the meanings unaltered. While I agree that all too often, scholars of the past have ignored problems with linguistic differences, I believe that current approaches can be expanded upon to provide texture to the study of Japanese intellectual history. Howland, for example, is committed to searching for one-to-one linguistic symbols, which, he argues, do not exist, in order to advance his argument of the power wielded by Meiji translators. Setting aside whether the lack of such signs is accurate, ideas can be expressed in other linguistic expressions: there is no English word for "when snow turns to rain," but I was able to communicate the concept to very effectively in this very sentence. More crucially, Howland et al. seem wedded to a kind of linguistic determinism, a contention that a lack of a word (or phrase) necessitates the absence of the concept. This is usually termed the Hard Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis in the field of linguistics (there is some debate in the field whether this label is accurate, and Sapir and Whorf appear to have developed their own theories independently, and there is no evidence that they ever met or corresponded), and Howland is not the only historian of Japan who works with it. See also, Jason Ananda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012) and Trent Maxey, *The Greatest Problem*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014), both of whom make a similar argument with regards for the modern Japanese word for religion, "*shūkyō*." I hold that by looking at interpretation of ideas, as seen in constructed greenspaces, rather than translation of words, we can acknowledge the problems raised by Howland, such as the myth of semantic transparency, while simultaneously providing a way in which incommensurable paradigms can successfully communicate with each other.

⁶⁵ For examples of the latter, see J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), John Searle, "Indirect Speech Acts," in *Syntax and Semantics, Vol. 3: Speech Acts* (1975), Wilfred Sellars, "Some Reflections on Language Games," in *Science, Perception, and Reality* (1963), and Donald Davidson, "Semantics for Natural Language" in Davidson and Harman, *The Logic of Grammar* (1975).

Wittgenstein, in his *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), argued that meaning of a word is not part of some sort of intrinsic sense of the term nor is it inherent in the physical or mental concept being described, but instead emerges from the way in which it was used by the speaker or writer.⁶⁶

Eventually termed “language-use theory,” this branch of the analytic philosophy of language has had a profound impact on how I envision language to work.⁶⁷ Under this theory, not only are static definitions of words are either irrelevant or impossible, but also how a given term is defined either within a particular discourse or even definitions given by writers themselves are not how we should judge their meaning. Rather, it is the way in which words are used which carries the content of a language-act. It is not, of course, particularly simple to deduce the way in which words were used, and Derrida seems to argue it cannot be done (see, for example his analysis of Nietzsche’s phrase “I have forgotten my umbrella”), but one of the central points for Wittgenstein is that we do this activity daily and, crucially, are rarely mistaken.⁶⁸ Further, Wittgenstein introduced the idea of a “language game,” a social construct into which words are uttered and written. Without this context, words and sentences are meaningless. Wittgenstein gives the example of the sentence “Moses did not exist,” which could variously mean that no historical figure akin to Moses ever existed, that one individual could not possibly have written the first five books of the Bible, or that the leader of the Israelites out of Egypt *did* exist, but that his name wasn’t Moses (one could also add a more Buddhist

⁶⁶ See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Eds. P.M.S. Hacker, and Joachim Schulte, (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

⁶⁷ Quentin Skinner’s approach, while different than mine, can also be traced to Wittgenstein’s influence.

⁶⁸ Wittgenstein often acknowledged that one cannot be “sure” of any given premise, but the fact that they “usually pay” was good enough in his estimation. For a detailed discussion of this point, see Wootton, David. *The Invention of Science: A New History of the Scientific Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 2016).

interpretation that there is no single entity of Moses that can be said to exist apart from all of creation).⁶⁹

Thomas Kuhn took the above insight of Wittgenstein, along with his concept of a “language game,” in order to revolutionize the field of the history and philosophy of science. In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), Kuhn argued that different paradigms, a term which he frustratingly left rather nebulous, are incommensurate with one another, raising the question of how cross-paradigm communication could be possible.⁷⁰ For me, the idea of incommensurate paradigms works remarkably well in the case of 19th century Japan. In addition to the gulf between native and Western systems of thought that many intellectual historians have remarked upon, as referenced above, I would also argue that individuals encountering ideas, even those which unfolded within the same cultural and geographic setting, which are separated from themselves temporally are working within radically different paradigms. Even within the scope of my own project, a resident of Mito in the 1840’s would be living with a completely different set of background assumptions than a denizen of the same city in 1900. There is also another dimension to paradigms that can be read into the work of Yanabu Akira, the father of “translation studies” in Japan. Yanabu pointed out that with the explosion of neologisms in the Meiji period, most Japanese people would encounter a new word in print, recognize the characters that made up that word, but have no idea what was actually meant. Additionally, this lack of understanding would give the subject a sense that whatever the word *did* mean, it was most likely intellectually deep and important.⁷¹ In essence, there could be different paradigms for

⁶⁹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Examinations*, §79.

⁷⁰ Kuhn did not address this question in *Structure*, but much of his later writings were geared towards answering this question. See specifically Thomas Kuhn, “Commensurability, Comparability, Communicability,” *PSA 198: Proceedings of the 1982 Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association*, edited by P. Asquith. and T. Nickles (East Lansing MI: Philosophy of Science Association, 1983).

⁷¹ See Yanabu Akira, *Hon'yakugo Seiritsu Jijō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1982).

the educated, new intellectual in Japan, and the average Japanese person.⁷² How then could intellectuals transmit their ideas to anyone who was not part of 1) their own culture, 2) their contemporary, and 3) a member of their social and educational circle?

I take Kuhn's distinction between translation and interpretation as my starting point. To Kuhn, different paradigms of thought, such as those separated by cultural or linguistic divides, are incommensurable; any attempt to translate from one to the other was doomed to fail. However, people who should be incommensurate have the ability to communicate with one another with a remarkable level of understanding. Kuhn explains this by arguing that whereas *translation* will never succeed, *interpretation* is both possible and essential.⁷³ To explain via example, it would be impossible to translate the word "hippopotamus" into a word for a society that had never encountered hippopotami. Obviously, they would not have an equivalent word in their language, and to merely introduce the word itself would convey no meaning. Nevertheless, it would be possible to interpret the meaning of the word in many ways: one could use the target language to describe a hippopotamus, a picture of a hippopotamus could be shown, and so on. Similarly, I take constructed greenspaces as a form of interpretation of philosophical ideas, ideas that in many cases would have been untranslatable for most of the Japanese of that period. Whereas a member of Japan's general population would not understand the neologisms designated to mean "liberty" or "democracy," the opening of domanical gardens to the public by imperial decree served as a comprehensible interpretation for a part of the meaning of these new concepts.

⁷² It is worth pointing out here that Kuhn would not go along with such a use of paradigms, as to Kuhn paradigms, by definition, could not overlap.

⁷³ Thomas Kuhn, "Commensurability, Compatibility, Communicability," 1982.

I combine the notion of language as use with that of interpretation to “read” parks and gardens as philosophical treatises themselves. Treatises, moreover, that allow us to get at how people actually used their underlying intellectual ideologies to construct “natural” spaces. This helps uncover not just what they argued in their writings, but how they put these ideas into practice.

As a concrete example of one type of argument my methodology makes possible, I would gesture to a linguistic point concerning Kairaku-en. As noted above, this garden was completed a few decades before the influx of neologisms and Western thought that came into Japan during the Meiji era. Among the new terminology that began to sprout up was the modern word for a public park, *kōen*, expressed in Japanese characters as 公園. While the right-hand character has long been used in relationship to the demarcation of space, the left-hand character’s modern day meaning as “public,” complete with all the social connotations the English word suggests, (freedom, liberty, political agency, etc.) came into being in this period. It is no wonder, therefore that Kairaku-en was not called a “public park” back when it was constructed. Does this mean, however, that what we would call a “public park” could not have existed at that time? By looking beyond the translated nature of the word and considering the way in which the space was *used*, I argue that such a label fits the site. According to the stone monument that dedicated the opening of the garden, Kairaku-en, as we will see in Chapter 2, was built for the enjoyment of the commoners of the domain, a place where they were able to enjoy the scenery of the surrounding landscape and relax under the shade of the plum trees. It is difficult to argue, in my view, that such a place does not conform to the modern meaning of a public park. In short, while the word may have come in during the late nineteenth century, that does not mean that the concept did not exist, in some form, in the preceding years.

Reading Spaces as Texts

Given the centrality of the use of constructed greenspaces as a source for textual analysis to my project, a theoretical framework for doing so must, I believe, be provided. At the outset, it is worth noting that the use of space as a unit of historical, sociological, or geographical analysis has a lengthy history. Decades before Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) would go on to publish *La Production de l'espace* (1974), Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) and others of the Annales School were incorporating geographical features and limitations into their works, and even longer before that, histories centered around a specific town were commonplace.⁷⁴

It was with Lefebvre, however, that the notion of spatial analysis became increasingly in vogue. In his seminal *The Production of Space* (*La production de l'espace*, 1974), Lefebvre insisted that, among other things, space is actively produced, and cannot be understood without taking that production into account.⁷⁵ Moreover, Lefebvre sought to integrate the study of space, which he contended had been divided into three types: physical, mental, and social.⁷⁶ To analyze these types of spaces separately, Lefebvre argue, is to misconstrue the totality of the meaning of a space, an act that will likely conceal relationships of power and capital.

Later, Edward Soja (1940-2015), himself heavily influenced by Lefebvre, expanded many of the latter's ideas into a postmodern framework. Specifically, Soja argued that there were

⁷⁴ For the Annales School, see particularly Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée Et Le Monde Méditerranéen à L'époque De Philippe II* (Paris: Colin, 1949). For an in-depth summary of the historiography of the study of space, see Beat Kümin and Cornelia Osborne, "At home and in the Workplace: A Historical Introduction to the 'Spatial Turn,'" *History and Theory* 52, no. 3 (2013): 305–18. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24542988>.

⁷⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), 34. Given Lefebvre's Marxist proclivities, it should come as no surprise that he further argues that with each change in the mode of production, a new space is born as well. For an in-depth treatment of Lefebvre's views on space, see Andrew Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction* (Florence: Taylor & Francis Group, 2006), especially chapter 6.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 404.

three types of space in a modern urban setting. Firstspace corresponds roughly to the physical world, or put in other words, can be quantifiably analyzed. While this firstspace is the result of the confluence of social conditions, the space itself is observable. Secondspace is the abstract twin of firstspace; it exists as mental constructs of the residents. While the first two were not novel, thirdspace combined the first and second spaces into one of lived experience. This space was defined by an almost dialectical relationship between physical and conceptual constructs, where the subject's secondspace conditions their interaction with the firstspace.⁷⁷

While not having directly informed my methodology, Lefebvre and Soja's theoretical understandings demand consideration. Obviously, the notion that constructed greenspaces can be thought of as physical, mental, and social is a precondition for engaging with these sources at all. I consider (at least some form) of thirdspace as well to be critical to both my project and the projects my subjects were engaged with. In order for the construction of a greenspace to have any effect on a person, the mental and physical aspects of said space *must* work in concert to produce a philosophical position or argument. What neither author provides, however, is a way in which a scholar can reasonably engage with spaces as textual works. For such a theory, we need to turn to landscape geographers.

Lewis Peirce, in his seminal 1979. "Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene," developed seven axioms for reading landscapes. His proposed maxims, however, are designed for a different set of landscapes, specifically modern, quotidian spaces that would be overlooked by virtually anyone. Additionally, Pierce was advocating for the reading of landscapes *in lieu of* other materials; to Pierce, there was nothing outside the space, as

⁷⁷ See Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace* (Malden Mass: Blackwell, 1996), 55-57.

it were, a point where he would later be taken to task. Below are his axioms, along with condensed, relevant explanatory quotations:

Axioms:

1. “Axiom of landscape as clue to culture”: *The man-made landscape—the ordinary run of the mill things that humans have created and put upon the earth—provides strong evidence of the kind of people we are, and were, and are in the process of becoming.*
2. “The axiom of cultural unity and landscape equality”: *Nearly all items in human landscapes reflect culture in some way. There are almost no exceptions. Furthermore, most items in human landscapes are no more or less important than other items—in terms of their role as clues to culture.*
3. “The axiom of common things”: *Common Landscapes—however important they may be—are by their nature hard to study by conventional academic means.*
4. “The historic axiom”: *In trying to unravel the meaning of contemporary landscapes and what they have to “say” about us Americans, history matters.*
5. “The Geographic (or ecologic) axiom”: *Elements of a cultural landscape make little sense if they are studied outside of their geographic (i.e., locational) context.*
6. “The axiom of environmental control”: *Most cultural landscapes are intimately related to physical environment. Thus, the reading of cultural landscape also presupposes some basic knowledge of physical landscape.*
7. “The axiom of landscape obscurity”: *Most objects in the landscape—although they convey all kinds of “messages”—do not convey those messages in any obvious way.*⁷⁸

As one might expect, later generations of geographers had serious misgivings concerning Pierce’s axioms. Heavily influenced by the “linguistic turn,” Pierce’s critics, rightly, pointed out that his proposed methodology worked to conceal relationships of power, capital, and labor. Some, such as Richard Schein, attacked Pierce’s understanding of physical space as a way to read culture, as opposed to a cultural space itself.⁷⁹ Don Mitchell, on the other hand,

⁷⁸Lewis Peirce, “Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Some Guides to the American Scene,” in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Don Meinig, 11–32 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979) 15–27.

⁷⁹Richard Schein, “The Place of Landscape: A Conceptual Framework for Interpreting an American Scene.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87 (4), 1997: 660–80.

systematically took issue with Pierce's axioms as regressive. In his 2008 "New Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Paying Attention to Political Economy and Social Justice," Mitchell proposed a new set of Axioms, similar in form to Pierce, but with a much more nuanced and critical eye. Mitchell was effectively accusing Pierce of both overreading specific elements as well as underreading their significance. Using the example of a port-a-potty in a California field, Mitchell claimed that you need to understand a host of conventional historical sources to understand why it's there, while also arguing that the meaning of this portable bathroom, its connection to organized labor, a system of global capital that exploits the workers, California race relations, etc., would be obscured by attempting to analyze the self-evident culture he accused Pierce of advocating. As with Pierce, I have reproduced his axioms below:

"Axiom 1: The landscape is produced; it is actively made: it is a physical intervention into the world and thus is not so much our "unwitting autobiography" (as Lewis put it) as an act of will."

"Axiom 2: Any landscape is (or was) functional."

"Axiom 3: No landscape is local"

"Axiom 4: History does matter."

"Axiom 5: Landscape is power. To read a landscape, in other words, requires fluency in the symbols and languages of social power. It requires close attention to how the landscape is an expression of power and in what ways that power is expressed. It also requires always keeping in mind that the preeminent power that landscape might express is the power to erase history, signs of opposition, alternative readings, and so forth."

"Axiom 6: Landscape is the spatial form that social justice takes." ⁸⁰

While Mitchell does a lot of productive and provocative work here, I also find that his account is too wedded to Marxist and Post-Marxist theories of production. For his first axiom, for example, Mitchell asserts that the "production of the landscape" is not merely the act of

⁸⁰ Don Mitchell, 2008. "New Axioms for Reading the Landscape: Paying Attention to Political Economy and Social Justice," In *Political Economies of Landscape Change*, eds. James L. Westcoat, Jr., and Douglas M. Johnston (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2008), 29–50.

physically creating it, but also inextricably bound to production under global capitalism.⁸¹ My objection to this is that while everything relates to production in some way, this can be immaterial to how a space is used. Spaces, in my view, are endowed with meaning not only by those who create them, but by those that use them.

Mitchell also has what I see as a bad habit of analyzing the function of a landscape exclusively in relation to their monetary value (either productive or exchange).⁸² While there is doubtless a value component to any modern space, it surely cannot be the *only* function the space serves. The occupation of a campus building by students protesting lack of access to clean drinking water, for example, *could* be linked to the monetary value of the space, but there are also other concerns at play (unless one wishes to reduce health and wellbeing to a value-driven calculus, which while possible, seems rather teleological).

Other issues with all the theoretical arguments advanced by geographers for the purpose of this study are easily identifiable. Firstly, they are all based on American landscapes and, more crucially, twenty-first century society. Furthermore, the theories above are concerned with analyzing the space in question, be it physical or cultural, *as a space*, whereas I am interested in looking at how intellectuals *used* space to convey ideas, not to write a history of the place itself. Finally, for all the talk of axioms, there is scarcely any proposal for how spaces should be read on a practical level. While Pierce and Mitchell provide plenty of either cautions or ideas to bear in mind, virtually all their theory is negative: we are told what *not* to do rather than what *to* do.

In recent years, an experimental pedagogical approach has been developed and put into practice with university undergraduate and graduate students. Known as the “City as Text”

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 34.

⁸² Mitchell.

program, students are sent out into randomly chosen sections of whatever city the program directors have chosen as that year's urban landscape. As Bernice Braid puts it:

Underlying the entire activity is a desire to convey not only how much is normally missed in an ordinary day of one's life but also how much might be seen and heard. That is, the announced intent to "hone observational skills," to become aware of "how one's own lens works," is predicated on an understanding of how mutable even buildings can seem, depending on the angle of vision, angle of inquiry, kinds of questions, and context created by one's own presence in the scene.⁸³

Although developed for different purposes, I agree with one fundamental aspect of the program's curriculum: in order to read a space, you must first visit it. In the case of historical spaces, you must also attempt to mentally recreate it, however imperfectly.

A Way Forward

Crucial to the understanding of any space, and the elements that make it up, is the context(s) into which it was produced. While many of the above authors have ably argued for the entrance into discourses based on networks of power, production, resistance, and consumption, none have taken what I would hold to be the first step in placing a space into its proper framework: a material comparison with other like spaces. While it is true that we can examine, to take Don Mitchell's work as an example, a given agricultural field and place it into a host of superstructures, it is my contention that most of this information is meaningless without analyzing other agricultural sites from the same era, preferably taking as wide a look as reasonable. To continue the farmland example, what is the materiality of other sites that produce the same crop in the California Central Valley? Do their physical elements differ? Their scale?

⁸³ Bernice Braid, and Ada Long, eds, *Place as Text: Approaches to Active Learning* (Lincoln, NE: National Collegiate Honors Council, 2000).

How does the proximity to water affect the landscape? Given that, as previously stated, this is not meant to be a treatise on how to read spaces *qua* spaces, but rather how space was used by Japanese intellectuals to advocate for philosophical positions, these questions become increasingly pertinent. To invoke an example from an earlier period of Japanese history, the existence of a garden in which stones have been placed in order to represent Mount Hōrai (one of the mythical peaks of East Asia) will have a vastly different meaning if a plurality of contemporary gardens also have such imagery or if it is the only example known.

To return to Wittgenstein, I propose to use a formulation akin to his use of a language-game in order to analyze greenspace. Similar to how the meaning of a word can only be understood through its use in a specific language-game, an element or *gestalt*'s meaning must be defined by its own use *within* a language-of-spaces-game. It is, therefore, necessary to have a strong familiarity of other similar spaces, and the scope of these spaces is difficult to measure exactly. For the Kyoto villa of Yamagata Aritomo, for example, I argue that one must be familiar with other private gardens being built in Kyoto at the time (and in his case especially immediately preceding). For Heian Jingū, conversely, there needs to be an understanding of not only other public spaces with natural elements, but also the greenspaces that are attached to other Shinto shrines, spaces for imperial commemoration, and arguably Buddhist temples as well. In essence, in much the same way a text cannot be understood when divorced from the surrounding discourses, a greenspace cannot be understood shorn of any reference to other spaces with either similar aesthetics or uses.

Thus, I propose, and have employed, the following practical methodology:

- 1) Before visiting the space, which is indeed necessary, the historical positionality of the era in which it was produced, concerns of those who built it, and the way in which it

- was interacted with should be thoroughly researched. While there may be value in forming one's own pre-discursive understanding of a constructed greenspace, any gain is offset by being fundamentally adrift with regards to the context.
- 2) Visit not only the space itself, but also the surrounding area. While the surroundings of a public park will almost certainly have changed dramatically in the intervening years, the topography, generally speaking, has not. Where applicable, distances should also be experienced firsthand. In the case of Kairaku-en, for instance, it was helpful to have a firsthand understanding of how far the garden was from the Kōdōkan, the place of education to which it was linked.
 - 3) Reconstruct a mental (or physical/digital) map of what the space looked like during the period in question. For this, it is necessary to consult as many other sources as are available, including written accounts, paintings, drawings, maps, and other paraphernalia.
 - 4) Relatedly, while maps are fantastic tools for quickly communicating the shape and design of a greenspace, they can also erase the texture of the site. Visitors strolling down a path in a public park for the first time have no idea what lies beyond the next bend in the road. Spaces are sensorially experienced, the sounds of birds and the surrounding city, the smell of flowers and of dust kicked up by others, the feel of rain or the warmth of the sun: all of these contribute to the lived experience of visiting.
 - 5) Consider other similar sites. As discussed above, greenspaces do not exist in vacuums, and their elements are always related to other like spaces through the language-of-spaces-game.

This above approach is by no means exhaustive, and each individual greenspace will have unique challenges and factors that must be considered. How a space has changed over time, for instance, could be very relevant to its meaning, as could who controlled and operated the site. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that this is a guide meant as a roadmap for reading a space as a text, not for narrating its history. Most importantly, as already noted, the use of a space as a text cannot take the place of other historical records and writings. This brings us to some possible objections that could be levied against my approach.

Responses to Possible Issues with Reading Spaces

There are a number of possible lines of criticism that this approach is open to, which I will here address. The first three I have lumped together, as I feel that the response to them is largely the same. Specifically, one could argue that the possibility of overreading an element in a constructed greenspace or a gestalt is simply too high. In a conversation with the head monk at Tenryūji, a Buddhist temple complex in Kyoto with extensive gardens, he remarked that the object that garners the most comment from visitors is an azalea bush located next to the gate leading to the rock garden (*kare sansui*, 枯れ山水). This deeply troubled him, as different guests, as well as monks, developed various theories about the meaning behind the azalea's inclusion, especially given that it stood out as being an unusual addition. The placement of that flowering bush, however, was decided entirely on a whim and held no special significance in his view. Another related point of possible contention would be that too often the original meaning of a given element has been lost, leading to anachronistic readings. A final issue that I feel warrants the same reply is that we often have very little information concerning the designer, builders, or caretakers of the space. While I agree that all of these concerns are indeed valid, I

would argue that these *specific* issues are no more present in greenspace text than in traditional written works. Overreading, anachronism, and gaps in authorhood are all issues that confront any historian with regularity. The first two are also often addressed by placing them within a discursive space, which, though using different terminology stemming from my Wittgensteinian approach, is exactly what I am aiming for with the admonition to place a spatial text into dialogue with contemporaneous spatial and written texts. A similar response could be made for the issue of unknown authorhood; the meaning that a work holds within an historical context, while obviously shaped in large part by its author, is not determined by that individual.

The next series of objections are stronger. One major limitation to reading these spaces as texts is that, unlike written works, it is nearly impossible to reconstruct the space *as it was constructed or experienced* by people centuries ago. While this is occasionally true for written sources as well, the earliest surviving version of the Sakuteiki, for example, dates to 200 years after its original publication, it is true for essentially every greenspace. Trees die, stream beds are eroded, flowers are added or removed according to prevailing tastes, earthquakes and fires can completely rearrange the landscape, and modern humans can pave over the space to put up a parking lot. With very few exceptions, there is simply not enough documentary evidence to go on in order to recreate even a close approximation.⁸⁴ There are, fortunately however, ways to combat this issue. To begin with, other disciplines, most notably archeology, have had to deal with these issues since their inception. One of the arguments proffered by archeologists as well as many in fields where direct evidence is impossible is that inference can reasonably be applied to an incomplete data set.⁸⁵ With regards to our purposes here, indirect evidence is often

⁸⁴ The most notable exception to this being the garden of Kōraku-en in Okayama, where the keepers of the *daimyo* garden recorded the addition and removal of nearly every plant and rock for approximately 200 years.

⁸⁵ For an older version of this argument, see Alan P. Sullivan, "Inference and Evidence in Archaeology: A Discussion of the Conceptual Problem," *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 1 (1978): 183–222.

abundant. For the case of the Tetsugakudō Kōen, for example, Inoue Enryō left behind not only maps, but also a guidebook detailing what one encounters on a journey through the park. Evidence ranging from diagrams to illustrations, photographs to written accounts, and even archeological excavations can all help us interact with a space that has undergone years of change and growth. It is true that there will be cases where some sites simply lack enough material evidence to fruitfully use, but once again this is true of written documentary evidence as well.

To sum up, I posit that though there are limitations to the reading of spaces as texts, the majority of them are equally true of other forms of texts. Furthermore, by firmly committing to analyzing constructed greenspaces within the language-of-spaces-game framework, I contend that most of these deficiencies can be, if not wholly overcome, at least addressed to the point where informed use of the text of the space can be made. Let us now see if this approach can bear fruit.

Chapter One

From Predicaments Grew Plums

By the 4th year of the Tenpō Era (1833), Tokugawa Nariaki (1800-1860), ninth lord of the Mito Domain, had grown increasingly concerned. Due to an unusually frigid planting season, the yearly harvests were abysmal, and fears of an underfed populace were rife throughout the domains.¹ By Tenpō 7, Nariaki's concern had intensified to alarm. What had begun as a bad harvest had grown to outright famine. Throughout Japan, peasant unrest erupted into popular revolts. The specter of foreign encroachment was on the minds of many. In response, Nariaki proposed a series of reforms intended to alleviate the suffering of the people and prepare them for the coming invasion he saw on the horizon. The whole of the Mito domain was to be surveyed. Officials were to be removed from Edo and stationed in strategic locations to prepare coastal defenses. School construction was ordered in both the city itself as well as in surrounding agricultural communities. And, as part of the reform package, a new garden was planned, one where commoners, the elite, and Nariaki himself would come together. In 1842, the 13th year of the Tenpō Era, the garden, Kairaku-en, was opened.

¹ Jannetta, Ann Bowman. "Famine Mortality in Nineteenth-Century Japan: The Evidence from a Temple Death Register." *Population Studies* 46, no. 3 (1992): 427-43.

A visitor to Kairaku-en in the 1840s would have first stepped through one of two front gates (*omotemon*, 表門) or front gates, proceeded down a fairly broad path flanked on the left by pine trees and on the right by plums. Should they choose to continue down the path without tarrying into either forest, the visitor would encounter a much larger grove of *sugi*, the Japanese cedar or cryptomeria, which encircled two structures, the Kōbun-tei and the Ichiyū-tei.² Standing before the former building was a stele, the Kairaku-en ki, which laid out the purpose and meaning of the space. From there, our visitor could take one of the myriad paths down to the lake shore or into the fields in the valley below. More likely, however, they would proceed into the plum grove, wherein Nariaki had ordered the planting of one thousand plum trees so as to be, in the words of the Kairaku-en Ki, “a place that heralds the beginning of spring.”³ From late January through March, Kairaku-en the canopy of the plum grove is engulfed in pink, white, and yellow, blossoms drift along on the breeze, while the carpet is a sea of color, slowly changing from the pastels of the plum flowers to a muddied brown of decomposition.

Was this a case of samisen-playing as Mito burned? One could easily view the creation of one of the largest gardens on the Japanese archipelago during a time of famine and fiscal ruination as needless decadence, a symptom of government excess and corruption that so many identified as the root of the era’s hardships. Such a space being built for the enjoyment of the common people is all well and good, one might say, but it hardly seems to contribute to coastal defense or helps feed the people. Perhaps, to extend the Roman allusion, Kairaku-en is a case of “bread and circuses?” In my view, such a reading would be a mistake.

² 好文亭 and 一遊亭 respectively. The Ichiyū-tei is no longer extant.

³ “以表魁春之地.”

In this chapter, I will show that Kairaku-en was indeed no mere daimyo garden, vanity project of Nariaki, or spectacle designed to mollify the angry masses, but rather a reasoned response to the series of crises facing both the Mito domain and the Bakufu. Moreover, the garden served as both a physical manifestation of what we may call the philosophical ideals of Nariaki, and his scholar-advisors, as well as a realization and fulfillment of what Nariaki saw as his duty to the people of the domain. Kairaku-en was meant to serve as an example, a call to the people of Mito to do better, to cultivate their virtue. It was both political campaign and an outgrowth of Confucian political ideology. Kairaku-en was one link in a much larger chain of philosophically informed educational reform. It was conceived of as a necessary counterpoint to the great domanical learning center in Mito, the Kōdōkan, which itself was part of a domanical project of educational reform. In short, Kairaku-en represented one facet of a Confucian solution to all of the troubles facing the domain. It can be, I contend, read itself as a philosophical text, one that very clearly lays out Nariaki's views on a host of subjects.

Put succinctly, I believe that through Kairaku-en, Nariaki advanced philosophical positions that can be divided into five rough clusters: 1) Confucian morality, 2) Frugality, 3) “Nature,” 4), tension and relaxation (*Ichchō-Isshi*, 一張一弛), and 5) Aesthetics. Though the inclusion of some of these clusters as “philosophy” may strike the reader as odd, I argue that, taken as a gestalt, they are all interrelated in the totality of Nariaki's philosophical stance. Through a close reading of the Kairaku-en ki and Kairaku-en, an image of both Nariaki's stances vis-à-vis these subjects comes into relief, and a new dimension to Nariaki that has hitherto been underappreciated arises.⁴

⁴ For the Mito School and Tokugawa Nariaki, the most thorough treatment of Mito thought in English is found in Victor Koschmann's *The Mito Ideology: Discourse, Reform, and Insurrection in Late Tokugawa Japan, 1790-1864*

Tokugawa Nariaki, the Mito Domain, and Early Reforms

Geographically speaking, the castle town at Mito was very close to the capital in Edo, separated by a mere 110 km (68 miles, or about a three-day journey on foot). Additionally, as one of the *gosankei* houses, or branch families of the Tokugawa clan, Mito was generally held in high regard and exercised a fair amount of influence within the *Bakufu*, though members of the Mito line were officially barred from becoming Shogun.⁵ Additionally, from the time of Tokugawa Mitsukuni, the Mito domain was known for both its scholarly output, specifically the *Dai Nihon-shi (Great History of Japan)* as well as the notoriety of many of its scholars. Of note here is that the Mito domain was fostering a cadre of not only scholar-elites, but *rural* scholar elites.⁶ For all its proximity to the metropole, Mito was still separated from the center of shogunal power.

Nariaki was born in the 12th year of *Kansei* (1800), in the estate (*hantei*) maintained by the Mito branch of the Tokugawa clan in Koishikawa in Edo. From a very young age, Nariaki

(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). Koschmann's main argument, that the Mito domain would have been important players in the Meiji Restoration had it not been for infighting, is not particularly relevant to my study, but his description of the contours and multiple strands within what was supposedly a unified school of thought is valuable for my work. While Koschmann's monograph is devoted exclusively to the Mito school, plenty of other scholars have included it in general works. See Gluck (1985), Heisig et al (2011), and Michael C. Brownstein, "From Kokugaku to Kokubungaku: Canon-Formation in The Meiji Period." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47, no. 2 (1987). For an older work that deals with the earlier history of Mitogaku, see Herschel Webb, *The Thought and Work of the Early Mito School* (Thesis, Columbia University, 1958). On the Japanese side, Nagoya Tokimasa wrote two major works on the subject, *Mitogaku no Kenkyū* (Mitogaku Research, 1975) and *Mitogaku no Tassei to Tenkai* (The Achievements and development of Mitogaku), which remain the standard. Tokugawa Nariaki, the impetus behind the construction of Kairaku-en, is almost always associated with the anti-foreign movement of the 1850s.⁴ In William Beasley's 1955 volume of translated Japanese documents, Beasley, W. G. *Select Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy, 1853-1868*. (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), Nariaki appears with a piece exhorting the Bakufu to strengthen the coastal defenses in the face of the threat of growing foreign encroachment. Koschmann, to his credit, attempts to connect Nariaki as being both part of the legacy and a member of the Mito school.

⁵ It should be noted, however, that Tokugawa Yoshinobu, son of Nariaki, did become the last Shogun, a feat that was accomplished, legally speaking, via his adoption into the *Kii* branch of the family.

⁶ This point is made by Victor Koschmann in *The Mito Ideology*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

received a first-rate Confucian education overseen by some of the foremost scholars of the so-called Mito School; Aizawa Seishisai (1782-1863), author of the *Shinron* (New Theses), Fujita Yūkoku (1774-1826), and later his son, Fujita Tōko (1806-1855).⁷ In what would later set up Nariaki's personal and professional philosophical and political leanings, it should be mentioned that all three of these figures were noted advocates for reform, both on a domainial and Bakufu-wide level. Additionally, each of them had a tendency to break with conventional wisdom and advocate policies that, at the time, seemed counter intuitive to others in government. For example, the 1790s saw a precipitous spike in infanticide rates in Mito. In response, government officials, seeing this as a serious breach of ethical Confucian behavior resulting from evil customs of farming families, promulgated edict after edict banning the practice with harsher and harsher punishments introduced. Yūkoku, however, as would Nariaki later, strongly believed in the importance and moral uprightness of farming communities and argued that the true problem was famine resulting grain shortages that persisted from the previous decade's Great Tenmei Famine. He therefore argued that any reform aimed at reducing infanticide should begin with reforms to grain distribution and pricing.⁸ The twin pillars of reform and unconventional approaches thereto greatly influenced Nariaki, while simultaneously making him the figure behind whom reform-minded intellectuals from Mito came to see as their best hope for affecting real change.⁹

The decision of whether or not to include Nariaki as a member of the "Mito School" is a much thornier issue than might be thought of at first blush.¹⁰ Even by the end of the 18th century,

⁷ Mito Shishi Hensan Iinkai, *Mito Shishi*. (Mito: Mito Shiyakusho, 1963), 25.

⁸ *Rekkō no kaikaku to bakumatsu to Mitohan: Mito no risō to higeiki (Tokugawa Nariaki's Reforms and the Mito Domain at the end of the Edo Period: Mito's ideals and tragedy)* (Mito: Mitogaku kōza, 1994).

⁹ *Mitoshishi*, 25.

¹⁰ In "An Engagement with the Scholarship on Mitogaku, from the 1930s to the Present," Rieko Kamei-Dyche highlights that in fact almost all modern Japanese scholarship begins with the question "what is *Mitogaku* (Mito-

there was no unity of thought amongst the scholars of the Mito domain, and factions had already begun to form, usually along family lines, prominent ones including Aizawa, Fujita, Aoyama, and Suiken.¹¹ More recently, some scholars, such as Yoshida Masahiko, have in fact argued that to refer to Mito-gaku as a discrete unit or school of thought by the *bakumatsu* is a mistake.¹² I agree with this conceptualization and will henceforth use the term “Mitogaku” less as a collection of similar philosophical precepts and rather as a way to usefully describe thinkers who

learning)?” From the Taisho Era through the Pacific War, the de facto position was that there were two strains of Mito gaku, an earlier version, focusing on an interpretation of the history of “Japan” as told from an imperial perspective, eventually manifesting the completion of the Dai Nihon-shi, and a later version, which turned its attention to social problems. Kikuchi Kenjirō, writing in 1943 gave a definition that was to prove influential: “The term “Mitogaku” can be understood as having two different meanings. One refers to the complete studies which had been transmitted in the Mito domain since the first lord. The other refers to the doctrines and principles which were described in the Kōdōkan-ki (Record of Kōdōkan [by Tōko Fujita]). From what I understand, the first definition should not be taken; there is no question that “Mitogaku” should mean the latter definition.” See Rieko Kamei-Dyche, “An Engagement with the Scholarship on Mitogaku, from the 1930s to the Present,” *Hitotsubashi Review of Arts and Sciences*, 2016 and Kikuchi Kenjirō, *Mitogaku Ronsō*, (Tokyo: Seibundō Shinkōsha, 1943), 1.

¹¹ The marginalization of the diversity of factions in Mito is itself based upon historical contingency. Among early postwar scholars, Maruyama Masao, as he did for so many facets of the history of ideas in the Edo period, set the tone of the discussion for decades. To Maruyama, Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728) represented the best chance for the creation of a progressive, modern state by advocating political and philosophical invention instead of relying on arguments for natural order. While Sorai might not have managed to get to where Maruyama wanted him to go, Mitogaku, with its insistence on the legitimacy granted to the *Bakufu* as part of the “natural order” actively worked to inhibit any truly revolutionary developments. Though Maruyama stopped short of labeling the Mito-school one of “national learning” (*kokugaku*), an accusation that would be difficult considering their reliance on Chinese thought (i.e., Confucianism), their credo, as best represented by Aizawa’s *Shinron*, functioned similarly, and led to the same eventual result. Of note here is the shift in the canonical text of the Mito School affected by Maruyama. While he, and virtually all that came after him, especially American scholars such as Harry Harootunian and Bob Wakabayashi, consider *Shinron* to be the text most emblematic of the school, earlier prewar writers such as Matsuoka Ryōtaō believed that the *Kōdōkan-ki* and subsequent *Kōdōkan-ki jitsugo*, written by Tōko in lieu of Nariaki were the two most important texts in the Mito School. See Matsuoka Ryōtaō, *Mitogaku no Shidō Genri* (Tokyo: Keibunsha Shoten, 1934).

¹² In his view, there have been three understandings of Mitogaku: -1) “The view that the philosophy of Mitogaku was essentially an ideology of supporting the Tokugawa Bakuhan system, and did not play any positive role in the Meiji Restoration (this view is represented by Toyama Shigeki and Yamaguchi Muneyuki),” -2) “The view that Mitogaku’s function of unifying the minds of the people in Kokutai thought is effective not only during the time of the Bakuhan system, but also in the modern *Tennō*-system state (this view is represented by Ofuji Masahide),” -3) “A position between the first and second view. The view that the philosophy concerning reverence for the *Tennō*, and the reformation of the military system of late Mitogaku was succeeded, and further developed, by non-Mitogaku scholars, and became the intellectual foundation of the Meiji Restoration.” Yoshida himself rejects the notion that Mitogaku, a philosophy crafted during the Pax Tokugawa, could apply to the chaos of the *bakumatsu* and Meiji more generally. He asserts that later Mitogaku splits into pro-*Bakufu* and anti-*Bakufu* camps, camps which can be further subdivided into the ideas of various thinkers, or at best cliques. See Yoshida Masahiko, “Kōki Mitogaku no Ronri: Bakufu no Sōtaika to Tokugawa Nariaki,” *Kikan Nihon Shisōshi* 13 (April 1980), 21-22.

hailed from a specific domain (Mito) and shared intellectual genealogy and spatial proximity to one another.¹³

As a final point about my understanding of Nariaki as a philosopher, his tutor Fujita Yūkoku stressed that government (*matsurigoto*) and scholarship (*gakumon*) were intimately bound together.¹⁴ Nariaki's version of Confucian philosophy, simply put, cannot be disentangled from his policies and acts as daimyo. By framing the history of ideas in this way, completely new sources for research into the history of philosophy emerge. political treatises, often seen as something of a grey area between theory and practice become both. Reforms become not merely expressions of prevailing ideologies, but examples of thought. More crucially, the line between theory and practice begins to blur. If political acts, such as in the case we are discussing here, the construction of Kairaku-en, become philosophical treatises, musings on governments become political acts carrying perlocutionary force.

Ascension and Early Reforms

Returning now to Nariaki's early years, after his older brother, Tokugawa Narinobu (1797-1829), ascended to the leadership of the Mito domain in 1816 (*Bunka* 13), Nariaki remained in Edo, taking up the mantle of the eldest son in the family still living at the estate (*heyazumi*). As such, he was bound by tradition to stay politically neutral, meaning that his designs for sweeping changes were, for the moment, stifled.¹⁵ With Narinobu's death in 1829 (*Bunsei* 12), however, reformist scholars and lower-ranking samurai in Mito saw an opening to

¹³ That is not to say, of course, that there was no overlap or even a common set of core concepts that can be said to have unified certain members. Certainly, it is undeniable that they were all steeped in Neo-Confucian discourse and values, and as such accepted certain principles as givens.

¹⁴ Fujita Yūkoku, *Teishi Fūji*, in Imai, Seya and Bitō, eds, *Mitogaku Nihon shisō taikai* 53, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 27.

¹⁵ *Ibid*

install a more reform-minded leader. Narinobu died without an obvious heir, and after an Agatha Christie murder-mystery-esque discovered will, Tokugawa Nariaki was installed as the 11th lord of the Mito Daimyo.¹⁶

Almost immediately after his ascension to daimyo, Nariaki's devotion to domanial reform was readily apparent. On what was, canonically, his first day as Daimyo, Nariaki sent a letter to his officials telling them to end the “policy of austerity” (*Ōren no sei*, 横歛の政) inherited from the previous government and begin a “policy of loving the people” (*Aimin no sei*, 愛民の政).¹⁷ Within the first year of his rule, Nariaki enacted a number of reforms, chief among them being an administrative order entitled “Edict Concerning Saving and the Rectification of Manners” (*Setsuyaku to fūzoku kyōsei no rei*, 節約と風俗矯正の令), often referred to as the “Thrift Edict.”¹⁸ He then opened an office and marketplace for the promotion of Mito-made goods both agricultural, such as mulberry, flax and cotton, as well as industrial, paper and lacquer.¹⁹ Later, in a move that was to pay dividends after the famines during the mid-Tenpō, Nariaki commissioned the construction of a series of granaries and ordered grain surplus to be held in case of emergency.

Though at first glance policies calling for an abrogation of austerity, coupled with a call for thrift and public expenditures may seem incongruous, if not downright paradoxical, what

¹⁶ Most of the non-scholar elites preferred Kōnosuke, one of Shogun Tokugawa Ienari's many sons. Members of the reformist faction went to Edo to protest this move, whereupon a new will drawn up by Narinobu was discovered. For more information see *ibid*, and Nagai Hiroshi, *Tokugawa Nariaki: Fukakujitsu na jidai ni ikite* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2019).

¹⁷ *Mitoshishi*, 26.

¹⁸ The text of the edict can be found in Seki Koen, *Kōdōkan to kairaku-en*, (Mito: Ibaraki-ken Kankō Kōkai, 1962).

¹⁹ Kobayashi Kenji, *Tokugawa Nariaki to hansharo (Tokugawa Nariaki and the Reverberatory Furnace)* (Sendai: Soei Shuppan, 1998). The effectiveness of this endeavor, however, has been called into question, see Koschmann, 82 and Seya Toyosaki, *Ibaraki-ken no rekishi*, 158.

Nariaki meant by “thrift and saving” cannot be understood without noting the use of the term in the edict itself. Nariaki is clear from the beginning that this frugality “begins with himself” (*setsuyaku wa mazu mizukara*, 節約はまず自ら), proceeds to his vassals (*kinshin*, 近臣), then to the samurai (*shoshi*, 諸士), before extending to the masses (*shomin*, 庶民). Furthermore, far from restricting domanial spending with regards to welfare, the edict prohibits the wearing of non-cotton clothing as an act of needless extravagance.²⁰ Nariaki himself eschewed the normal ostentatious garb of an Edo era daimyo and wore simple cotton robes.²¹ There are two relevant points to be drawn here. Firstly, Nariaki seems to have been sincere in his desire to affect change. Secondly, we can see from his earliest attempts at reform reference to the Confucian notion that the behavior of those below is influenced by that of those above.

Whatever their intentions, by 1834 (Tenpō 4), it had become clear to all concerned that the reforms were not having their intended effects. There are several factors that contributed to their failure, most notably economic ones.²² The three major reform goals targeted by Nariaki, a rich country (*fukoku*, 富国), a strong military (*kyōhei*, 強兵), and education (*kyōiku*, 教育) had so far failed to materialize. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, poor planting conditions had led to a poor harvest, and poor harvests generally led to social unrest. The worsening of the famine well into 1837 (Tenpō 7) meant that further measures had to be put on hold in favor of feeding the people.²³

²⁰ Seki Koen, *Kōdōkan to kairaku-en*.

²¹ Koschmann, 83.

²² Seya and Toyosaki, in the *Ibaraki-ken no rikishi*, 158, make the point, later echoed by Victor Koschmann, that there were no economic experts involved with the Fujita faction reform plans. The *Mitoshishi*, however, lays the blame more on poor economic positions in general. Regardless, it is clear that the fortunes of the people of the domain had not improved.

²³ See *Mitoshishi*, 773.

It should be noted here that Nariaki's construction of a granary system brought him a good deal of goodwill during this period. By diverting funds originally earmarked for other reform policies, such as school construction and, as we shall see, the construction of Kairaku-en, to emergency famine relief, Nariaki was able to garner trust with both the magistrates and the masses in the Mito Domain. Koschmann has argued for reading this as part of the process by which later reforms, to which we will soon turn, were able to in fact materialize.²⁴ While I certainly do not disagree with the notion that Nariaki's prestige in the eyes of the people certainly rose during this period, I would add that Nariaki's actions stemmed from a sincere belief in his obligation to help the people he ruled, and this was especially true in the case of domainial farmers. Following his tutor Fujita Yūkoku, Nariaki viewed the farmers as the foundation upon which the domain was built, and that benevolent rule, as inherited from heaven, was also based upon good governance of the farmers. In essence, I would argue that all of the economic reforms attempted by Nariaki in the early Tenpō were not aimed at economic gain as an end unto itself that he was thinking of, but rather they should be read as a reflection of Nariaki's Confucian beliefs. While other Edo daimyo may have tacitly believed this as well, Nariaki was one of the most ardent believers. This comes through both in the aggressive reform policy he pursued as well as the language he employed. In 1830, Nariaki put out an administrative order (*futatsu*, 布達) emphasizing the need to the rulers to convey their wishes to the people and vice versa.²⁵ Nariaki consistently refers to the people of the domain in a typically

²⁴ Koschmann, 93.

²⁵ “遠慮なく何れよりなりとも、封書佐出すべきこと。”

Confucian paternalistic manner.²⁶ Furthermore, Nariaki also routinely stated that “the people are the source of the country.”²⁷

Whatever his intentions, as noted it was clear as early as 1834 that little progress had been made. In 1837 (Tenpō 7), Nariaki returned to Mito to refocus and refine his agenda into concrete, achievable goals.

Reformed Reforms

From the outset we should note that while 1837 was the year in which the new reform agenda was established, many of the concrete policy proposals that made up this agenda, including the construction of the Kōdōkan and Kairaku-en, were conceived of previously but, for either political or economic reasons, were put on hold. With the state of affairs rapidly deteriorating, coupled with the goodwill Nariaki had amassed during the ongoing famine, Nariaki was by now convinced that more drastic measures had to be adopted. To that end, Nariaki communicated to his retainers that from now on there were four major goals: a cadastral land survey of the domain (*keikai no gi*, 経界之義); a long term settlement edict (*dochaku no gi*, 土着之義); an edict concerning schools (*gakkō no gi*, 学校之義); and an end to the practice of alternating residence between Edo and Mito for retainers (*sōkōtai no gi*, 惣交代之義).²⁸ While the land survey and subsequent taxation reforms are by far the most studied of the four reforms, for our purposes we will be focusing on the major reform effort aimed at education.²⁹

²⁶ “主君は人民の父母、人民は主君の赤子,” (“the lord is the father of the people, the people are the children of the lord,” *Mitoshishi* 571.

²⁷ “人は国の本,” *ibid*, 573. The use of “country,” in this case, is meant in the general sense of one’s land.

²⁸ *Mitoshishi*, 60.

²⁹ See Koschmann.

Though this edict is usually associated exclusively with the building of the domanial, samurai-class aimed Kōdōkan, agricultural village schools were also included. Plans for these begin immediately (1835, Tempo 7), but due to financial problems, interference from opposition cliques within the domain, as well as the famine, implementation was delayed, frustrating Nariaki.³⁰ What is more crucial for our purposes here, however, is that the plans for Kairaku-en were also drawn up at this time.³¹ Indeed, the Kairaku-en-ki was drawn up during Nariaki's trip back to Mito in 1835 (Tenpō 7).

Before (finally) moving to the Kairaku-en, it is crucial to understand the true scope of Nariaki's vision for educational reform in the domain by focusing briefly on the rural schools that were built (or in one case planned) at the same time. The process of the establishment of *han* schools, as did so many other of Nariaki's ideas, starts when Nariaki returned in May of Tempo four. As a preliminary measure, Nariaki ordered the distribution of Confucian texts to village leaders, and, in Tempo five (1833), a series of memoranda emphasizing the unity of both Confucianism and Kami worship (*kanju icchi*, 神儒一致), and of the pen and the sword (*bunbu gappei*, 文武合併).³² As with seemingly every other effort, nothing really comes of it though, due to that year's famine and financial problems in general, especially in the rural areas of the domain. Additionally, and again emphasizing Nariaki's willingness to follow his own path, most of the reform faction was opposed to commoner education at that time.³³ As a demonstration of the forcefulness with which Nariaki pursued his own vision, in Tenpō six (1834), under Nariaki's

³⁰ Mitoshishi, 60.

³¹ There were earlier ideas that Nariaki began to circulate as early as Tenpō 4, but the beginning up what became a famine worked to put those ideas on hold. See *Mitoshishi*, 62.

³² *Mito-han shiryō, bekkige, maki jū shichi shoshū*, (Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1970).

³³ Mitoshishi 163-64.

influence, a school in Minatomura (湊村) was constructed. Later, following the above-mentioned land survey, the domain was divided into four regions: north, south, east, and west. To this end, schools were planned for the 3 quadrants which still lacked them. Tenpō eight saw a school in Ōtamura (太田村), and in Tenpō ten in a village school was built in Ōkubomura (大久保村). In terms of area, these schools were located to the south, north, and east of the domain. There were also plans for one in the west in Noguchimura (野口村), but for reasons that are unclear those plans fell through.³⁴

There are two striking points about these efforts. Firstly, the breadth of coverage that was intended, both in terms of pupils to be instructed and their social status. Though education was not unheard of by any stretch of the imagination, and indeed there were schools designated for the children of the samurai class in the castle town of Mito as well as religious instruction available for those from meagre backgrounds, state sponsored schools bereft of religious ties were nonexistent in Mito, renowned for scholarship as they were. Nariaki's efforts here were helped by local elites, local administrators, and wealthy farmers, who provided books, materials, labor, etc., creating a sort of half state/half private set up.³⁵ Secondly, the subject of the education was fairly diverse. The goal was to correct the lifestyles and customs of the lower classes, long a priority of the now late Yūkoku primarily through medical schooling, though not exclusively.³⁶

We have now briefly sketched out the reforms Nariaki undertook in the early years of his stewardship of the Mito domain. So far, we have seen three main reform vectors: frugality,

³⁴ *Ibid*, 199.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 200.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 204. As mentioned, Confucian texts were collected from local elites and distributed to the students as a means to instill upright behavior.

education, and preparedness against disaster; and one main impetus: financial and agricultural hardship that prevailed throughout the era. What, then was the over-arching goal? As stated, one aspect where I believe Nariaki's thought is often misunderstood is mistaking his means for his ends. Nariaki did not advocate for frugality for its own sake, nor did he believe in an intrinsic good of education. For each of Nariaki's reforms, both those discussed so far and those that will land outside of our investigation, specifically the xenophobia that begins to dominate his thought, the point was the benefit of the people of the Mito domain. It is my contention that Nariaki was sincerely committed to the Confucian notion that he was vested with rulership by Heaven (through the intermediary steps of the Emperor and the Shogun), and that, as a ruler, he had a sacred duty to shelter and enrich the lives of those he ruled. As I have mentioned, Nariaki's letters and administrative orders are replete with language to this effect. Words, however, can only tell us part of the story for any intellectual. Talk, as the old saw goes, is cheap. It is conceivable that Nariaki's image of frugality was carefully crafted as something akin to what we would now describe as optics. This is where I believe the study of constructed spaces, specifically constructed greenspaces, can be illuminating. At Kairaku-en, thought and practice were made manifest into spaces that served simultaneously as examples of Nariaki's philosophical position, and treatises thereof.

Kairaku-en-ki

Unusually, the Kairaku-en-ki represents both the intellectual underpinning as well as a rough plan for the garden that was written before construction began (the *ishibumi* was created in 1837). Unlike the Kōdōkan-ki, the stele installed at the Kōdōkan, the great center of Mito

learning, the text of the stele at Kairaku-en seems to have been written by Nariaki himself.³⁷ The text of the Kairaku-en-ki, while certainly not written in the easiest to read script, is linguistically very straightforward, or at least so it would seem. 天日月有地山川有, (“in the heavens are the sun and the moon, on Earth are rivers and mountains”) for example, is, grammatically, extremely simple. It also, however, is an allusion to one of the ten commentaries of the *Book of Changes* (*I'Ching*), which would have been obvious to anyone educated in the Confucian classics, especially when paired with the next line 曲成萬物而不遺 (“there is nothing outside of all creation”). Moreover, this allusion is not an isolated case. Virtually every line up until the specifics regarding the selection of the space is a reference to a Confucian work. *Ichō-isshi*, for example, appears in this line: 弓に一張一弛ありて恒に勁く、馬に一馳一息ありて恒に健やかなり, which is almost directly lifted from the Book of Rites. Indeed, the name Kairaku-en itself comes from a passage from the Mencius: 古之人與民偕樂、故能樂也. Let us now examine these, and the other lines, in more detail.

As a brief explanation of the format I will be proceeding in, I have opted to provide readers with the original text with *kana* (Japanese phonetic syllabary) added for simplicity's sake. The full text in the original *hakubun* (Chinese characters without punctuation) has been added as an appendix (see Appendix A). Though this has the unfortunate effect of making this section of analysis stilted, I believe that, given the complexities of the translation, the original text is necessary. Furthermore, the choice to break the piece apart in this manner allows me to

³⁷ The writing style of Fujita Tōko, the only other strong possibility, is markedly different than that of Nariaki, even when he was hypothetically writing in Nariaki's name, as was the case in the Kōdōkan-ki.

highlight the richness of the meaning of the text. As a final note, I have largely taken the demarcation of Azumi Takao, who has translated the text into modern Japanese.³⁸



Figure 3: A mid-Meiji sketch of the Kairaku-en-ki. Note the abundant inclusion of greenery.

1) 天に日月有り、地に山川有り、万物を曲成して遺さず

Rough translation: In the heavens are the sun and the moon, on Earth the rivers and mountains, there is nothing outside of all creation.

As noted, this basically comes from the commentaries to the *I'Ching*, especially the second half of the line, which runs verbatim. Something that will repeatedly come up throughout our examination of the stone is that basically anyone with any sort of Confucian education would

³⁸ See Azumi Takao, *Mito Nariaki no "Kairaku-en ki" Hibun*, (Mito: Mitoshi Gakkai, 2006). All translations, interpretations, and analyses, however, are my own.

have recognized this. Additionally, constant allusion to Confucian classics was par for the course among Confucian scholars in Mito and Nariaki's efforts at Kairaku-en.

Though brief, even in the beginning to the inscription we can see a relationship between the natural world and Kairaku-en. 万物, *banbutsu*, though occasionally glossed as “nature” was broadly construed to the point of including everything in (physical) existence, inclusive of humanity, though not processes. The reference to the sun and moon, to rivers and mountains provides an indication of the use of nature-based metaphors that form the foundation for Nariaki's thought, a point that will become clearer as we continue.

2) 禽獸草木、各々其の生命を保つものは、一陰一陽成其の道を成し、一寒一暑其の宜きを得るを以てなり

Rough translation: The heavenly endowed characteristics of birds, beast, plants, and trees; yin and/or yang as established by the way of [those characteristics], sometimes hot, sometimes cold, are acquired thusly [i.e., from heaven].³⁹

Though not a word for word transcription, this passage, marked by the usage of yin and yang, also echoes ideas present in the *I'Ching*. Furthermore, we again see natural imagery being used as a precursor to ideas that will follow; birds, animals, grass, and trees, are set up as receptacles for cosmic forces, forces which have been endowed from heaven.⁴⁰

The first two lines are essentially abstract declarations highlighting the nature of the universe as being driven by rules, rules which are, moreover, understood, at least to some degree, by humans. While this “natural force” is not concurrent with what we would now use the word “nature” to describe, Nariaki has already made it clear that these rules *do* govern things that

³⁹ 生命 here is best read as “heavenly endowed characteristics” as opposed to life more generally

⁴⁰ There are several much later works (mostly travel literature) that claim that the design of the park is itself based on the principles of yin and yang. However, aside from this passage in the Kairaku-en ki, I can find no other reference to the notion.

would fall into this category: trees, plants, birds, animals, and landscapes such as mountains and rivers (not to mention celestial bodies).⁴¹

- 3) 諸れを弓馬に譬ふ。弓に一張一弛ありて恒に勁く、馬に一馳一息ありて恒に健やかなり。弓に一張なければ、則ち必ず撓み、馬に一息なければ、則ち必ず殪る。是れ自然の勢なり。

Rough translation: Take, for example horses and bows. A bow with a slackened string will quickly strengthen, a galloping horse that takes a breath will strengthen. If you do not slacken a bow it will soon bend [out of shape], if a horse does not breathe it will soon die. This is the power of nature.⁴²

Here we see the first appearance of one of the central philosophical concepts the Nariaki espoused: *icchō-issshi* (一張一弛, tension and relaxation). Note that here, again, Nariaki was not crafting this phrase himself, as *icchō-issshi* appears in the Book of Rites. In terms of Nariaki's thought, however, *icchō-issshi* is crucial. In some respects echoing the very same debates occurring throughout America and Europe concerning the role of “natural spaces” as a means of release from the mounting pressure of urban living, Nariaki here acknowledges the need for study, labor, and martial training to be tempered with time away from these activities, and given the “nature” of Kairaku-en, this relaxation was to take place in a(n artificial) natural setting.

This part is also clearly a shift from general statements to the rationale behind Kairaku-en; Kairaku-en is the loosening and the breath; the strengthening of the horse and the bow represent the Kōdōkan, where serious issues were taught and considered. While this interpretation is common, Azumi invokes it for example, and indeed a part of the function of the

⁴¹ Also of note here is the explicit demarcation of trees from plants and birds from animals.

⁴² Nariaki's use of 自然 in this section rather puzzling. Generally, that word applied as an adverb indicating processes which occur spontaneously (see Yanabu Akira, *Shizen to Natur*). Here, however, it seems possible to read it as a noun in this passage, possibly explicitly describing something that is akin to what 自然 would refer to now.

garden, it crucially misses salient points.⁴³ Specifically, as we will discuss later, Kairaku-en was intended for all the people of the domain, not exclusively for those studying at the domanical academy. Given the network of agricultural village schools that Nariaki ordered, it seems clear that students at such schools also needed to slacken their bowstrings. Furthermore, as, again, Kairaku-en was not limited to students, laborers of all kinds required rest.

While this may seem to suggest something that we would regard as common sense, that one cannot simply work without rest, given the above lines concerning the nature of reality, there appears to be more going on here. All things, humans included as evidenced by the usage of *banbutsu*, are endowed with active and passive energies (yin and yang), and each much be attended to.

- 4) 夫れ人は万物の靈にして、其の或いは君子となり、或いは小人となる所以のものは何ぞや。其の心の存すると存せざるとにあるのみ。

Rough translation: As for humans, the apex of all creation, what is the reason that some are superior and others inferior? It is nothing more than the existence or nonexistence of heart (心).

Yet again, we see more Confucian imagery, but here we have moved back to general statements. 万物の靈 (*banbutsu no rei*, literally the soul of “myriad things,” though this specific usage is a term used to denote humans) comes from the Book of History and speaks to the fact that humans have been set apart from the rest of creation in important ways, placing them at the top.⁴⁴ The second line is reminiscent of a line in the Mencius, where the seeming imbalance between humans in terms of quality of character is discussed. This statement is further elaborated with:

⁴³ Azumi, 30.

⁴⁴ In the Japanese text of the Book of History the line runs: これ人は万物の靈なり (These humans are the soul of the myriad things).

- 5) 語に曰く性相近く習ひ相遠しと。善に習ふときは、則ち君子となり、不善に習ふときは則ち小人となる。⁴⁵

-Rough translation: According to The Analects, “human natures are alike, but habits are different.” When habits are good, people become superior, when they are not good, they become inferior.

The first part is literally a quote from the Analects, the second is in the same vein, though it appears in the Doctrine of the Mean. Both this passage and the preceding one are presented not as arguments, but rather as abstract premises meant to set up the necessity, value, and purpose of Kairaku-en.

- 6) 今、善を以てこれを言へば、四端を拡充して以て其の徳を修め、六芸に優游して以てその業を勤む。是れ其の習ひは、則ち相遠きものなり。然れどもその氣稟、或いは齊しきこと能はず。是を以て屈伸緩急相待ちて、其の性命を全うするものは、夫の万物と何を以てか異ならんや。⁴⁶

Rough translation: Now, speaking about good habits, broaden the Four Beginnings, learn their virtues, practice the six arts with taste and joy, and carry out one’s tasks. These habits differentiate [between superior and inferior]. However, it is not possible that these innate characteristics are the same [for everyone]. These characteristics grow or shrink, and what fulfills these characteristics is not different among all things.

At this passage, we move back from the generic to specific actions one should take to help become “superior.” The proper habits were key for Nariaki (and Neo-Confucians more generally) for cultivating the goodness that is, per Mencius, inherent in all of us. While Nariaki has yet to bring up Kairaku-en as a place for this to cultivation to take place, it is reasonable to

⁴⁵ 語 here is short for 論語, The Analects.

⁴⁶ 四端 are The Four Beginnings, as set forth in The Mencius: benevolence, righteousness, rites, and propriety, and wisdom. 六芸 are the six arts rites, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, and mathematics.

assume that a reader would make this logical step, given both the title of the inscription and the fact that it sat in the middle of the garden.

As a final note to this section, the four beginnings are one of the cornerstones upon which all Confucian morality is based, and how to foster them in the people is one of the classic questions taken up in Confucian literature throughout East Asia. The latter half of the passage, where it speaks about the differences between humans, though not what helps them grow, neatly sets up what follows.

7) 故に心を存して徳を修め、其の万物と異なる者を養ふは、その性に率ひて、形を安んじ神を怡ばしむる所以、其の万物と同じき者を養ふは、其の命を保つ所以なり。二者皆其の節に中らば、善く養ふと謂ふべし。⁴⁷

Rough Translation: Therefore, relaxing one's body and spirit cultivates virtue and nurtures that which sets humans apart from creation, and preserving life nurtures human life. We should say that if these two things are in harmony, goodness will be nurtured.

In this passage, while clearly setting up the rationale behind the creation of Kairaku-en, Nariaki begins to connect the various elements he has so far interwoven into the text. *Ichchō-issshi* is the mechanism by which one's body and spirit are cultivated. Moreover, Although the four beginnings, Confucian morality, is unique to humanity, it is only through balancing one's own goodness with the necessities for life, common to all living things, that goodness can be achieved.

8) 故に曰く、苟も其の養ひを得れば、物として長ぜざるは無く、苟も其の養ひを失えば、物として消せざるは無しと。是も亦自然の勢なり。然らば則ち人も亦弛息無るべか

⁴⁷ 心を存して徳 is a reference to the four beginnings. 万物と異なる者 and 万物と同じき者 are a bit more complicated. The former are the characteristics that set us apart from other creations (especially the four beginnings) while the latter is what we have in common (i.e., physical life).

らずや固よりなり。嗚呼、孔子の曾点に与せる、孟軻の夏諺を称する、良に以あるなり。

Rough Translation: Therefore it is said: if this cultivation is in anyway acquired, [both of the above] things will not fail to grow; if this cultivation is lost, [both of these] things will not fail to disappear. This too is the power of nature. If this is the case, humans must also relax and breathe. Ah! It is like Confucius agreeing with Soten (Zengzi), and Mencius praising the proverb from the Kingdom of Ka (Xia)!

Very similar in meaning to the above; essentially relaxation is necessary if goodness is to be cultivated, not just for Nariaki but for the people as well. The last bit is a literal reference to two of the Four Books, but realistically serves little purpose than to demonstrate the literary aptitude of Nariaki as a writer.

Now that we are nearing the end of the passages devoted to abstract justifications for the necessity of the construction of Kairaku-en, there is perhaps a pressing question that has yet to be addressed: why did Nariaki bother to explain himself to this extent? Other *daimyo* gardens occasionally include stele detailing the reason they were constructed on a given spot or why the scenery looks the way it does (usually to evoke a specific landscape that exists somewhere else).⁴⁸ My answer to this goes back to the unity of *matsurigoto* and *gakumon*, government and scholarship. As I have previously argued, Kairaku-en is not merely a *daimyo* garden, nor is it even a *daimyo* garden informed by its maker's ideology. It is a thesis; a public piece of philosophy designed to influence the people of the Mito domain.⁴⁹ While the foregoing Confucian allusions and musings on the stele were, of course, limited to the literate (or at least

⁴⁸ For the most obvious example of this sort of thing in Tokyo, see Rikugien, which is devoted to 88 scenes drawn mostly from the Wakayama area.

⁴⁹ "Public" here is being used in the sense that it was accessible to everyone and not just the elites. It should not be interpreted as an attempt to read a political consciousness, much less agency, into the commoners of Mito.

those visiting with literate friends), as we shall soon see, the space itself was designed and built with a similar purpose in mind.

9) 果たして此道に繇らば、則ち其の弛息して、形を安んじ神の時にして可ならんや。必ず其の華農に吟詠し、月夕に飲[宴]するは、文を学ぶの余なり。鷹を田野に放ち、獸を山谷に駆るは、武を講ずるの暇なり。

Rough Translation: If the way is really based on this, then when should this this relaxation and breathing, this taking it easy, be? There will without fail be spare time after studying literature for reading poetry in the countryside and for drinking and feasting under the moon. There will without fail be spare time after practicing martial arts for falconry in the fields and chasing down beasts in the mountains and valleys.

Clearly moving to the specifics of his own domain, Nariaki here is reminding his readers that while *isshi* is crucial, it should not come until after the day's *icchō* has been completed. Note also that the activities listed here are related to the things being studied. Literature followed by poetry; martial arts followed by hunting. Though not an exhaustive list of the activities Nariaki envisioned, we can see that relaxation is still structured. Furthermore, here we also finally see explicit reference to the use of natural settings as a place for relaxation. The countryside, fields, mountains, and valleys are all invoked as places where the necessary “relaxation and breathing” can take place.

10) 余、嘗て吾が藩に就き、山川を跋涉し、原野を周視す。城西に直りて豁の地有り。西は筑峰を望み、南は僊湖に臨む。凡そ城南の勝景、皆一瞬の間に集まる。

Rough Translation: Before ascending to the [leadership of the] domain, I wandered around the mountains and rivers and surveyed the surrounding wilderness. Due West of the castle there is a wide, empty space. To the West it commands a view of Mt. Tsukuba, the South overlooks Lake Semba. The gorgeous view to the south of the castle can be seen in an instant.

As a callback to the importance of the rural nature of the Mito domain, here we see Nariaki stating that even before his ascension to power, Nariaki toured the wilderness of the Mito

Domain, paying particular attention to the mountains and rivers. Two other important points stick out from this passage. The first is the relative isolation of the site that became Kairaku-en. Nariaki was only able to find it after wandering through the Mito wilderness, Secondly, we can see some stirrings of aesthetic thought in the inscription. The beauty of the scenery, a beauty that is deemed so due to the natural features it possesses, was at the very least a consideration for the location. What specifically in nature did Nariaki find beautiful?

11) 遠巒遙峰, 尺寸千里、攢翠疊白、四瞻一の如し。而して山は以て動植を発育し、川は以て飛潜を馴擾す。洵に知仁一趣の楽郊というべきなり。

Rough Translation: Distant peak and hills, trees and clouds making everything from near to far green and white, it is as though the four directions meld into a single scene. Additionally, the mountains are full of plants and animals, the rivers teem with fish and water insects. Indeed, [it is the sort of place] where people who enjoy mountains or rivers can enjoy themselves.

Far away hills, distant peaks, where trees have made it very green, where clouds have made it very white, and, most crucially when the scenery in all “four directions melds into a single scene;” this is clear language showing that, when combined with the previous line, shows what part of the natural world Nariaki valued as beautiful. The melding of scenery into one whole represents a kind of gestalt thinking on the part of Nariaki; the natural world, and, presumably, recreations thereof, are more than a sum of their individual components. It is not a single cherry blossom that is to be valued, but rather the totality of all that the eye can take in from a given vantage point. And it was only in a setting such as this that *isshi* can be achieved in a meaningful way.

As a final note, that last odd bit is an allusion to the Analects, where Confucius talks about one type of people liking the rivers and another liking mountains. Though not, perhaps, in keeping with the gestalt ideal just expressed, it is also an acknowledgment on the part of Nariaki

that different individuals require different types of stimuli in order to cultivate their own virtues (though it should be noted that both are still natural spaces).

12) 是に於て梅樹数千株を芸ゑ、以て魁春の地を表す。又二亭を作り、好文と曰ひ、一遊と曰ふ。畜に以て他日茂憩の所に供するのみに非ず。蓋し亦国中の人をして、優游存養する所あらしめんと欲するなり。

Rough translation: In that place I have planted one thousand plum trees, it will be a place that heralds the beginning of spring. I have also built two structures, one called the Kōbun-tei, the other the Ichiyū-tei. However, I have not built these places for my future dwelling or relaxation. Rather, I hope that people from throughout the country [though he means domain] can relax here and improve the health of their mind and body [this is not exactly spelled out, but implied].

Finally, we see the truly distinguishing feature of Kairaku-en and the payoff for all of the buildup concerning spiritual and mental cultivation. Kairaku-en was designed to be a place where “people” (people who will shortly explicitly include “the masses”) could gather, relax, and improve their moral virtues.

In terms of nature and aesthetics, Nariaki highlights the role of plum trees as the harbingers of spring (though by the modern western calendar they bloom in winter). Unlike cherry blossoms or maple leaves, plum blossoms usher a new season in rather than stand for the height of one.

13) 国中の人、苟くも吾が心を体し、夙夜懈らず、既に能くその徳を修め、また能くその業を勤め、

Rough translation: If my spirit is complied with in any way, the people of the domain, from early morning till late night will not be slothful, but will quickly cultivate their virtue, and will quickly fulfill their duties.

Here again we see a reminder both of the purpose of the garden, the cultivation of virtue, and an admonition to avoid prioritizing relaxation over work.

14) 是れ余が衆と樂を同じくするの意なり。因てこれに命じて偕樂園と曰ふ。

Rough Translation: With the intention of the masses and myself both enjoying this place together, I hereby name this Kairaku-en.

This last line is perhaps the most informative for many of the philosophical ideas with which we began. As stated in the Four Books, the virtue of the ruler has a profound effect on the virtues of the ruled. By opening a part of what would have been, under normal circumstances, his own garden to the “masses” (*shū*, 衆), Nariaki was demonstrating his virtue, both with benevolence and simultaneously giving the people of the domain a place to interact with their ruler; to see his virtue for themselves. Now that we have seen the text of the intellectual blueprint, what can we say about the text of the space itself?

Kairaku-en’s construction and physical features

Today, when one speaks of Kairaku-en, they are usually referring to what is known as the *hon'en* (main garden), which, since the Taisho era, has been limited to the plum orchard and the *Kōbun-tei*. This is not, on its face, an unreasonable view; the plum grove and the *Kōbun-tei* were the first sections of Kairaku-en to be built. Furthermore, the picturesque views offered by these two features in the present day make for a logical choice, from a marketing perspective, to stand for the garden as a whole.



Figure 4: Two early Meiji sketches of the Garden including the *Kōbun-tei*, one from the adjoining shrine, the other from the agricultural fields below. These images offer a glimpse of the degree of foliage that was present, as well as the garden's integration into the local farming areas.

Nagai Hiroshi, however, has made a persuasive argument that Nariaki's original vision of Kairaku-en was much broader in scope, encompassing much of what would now be considered the surrounding area, such as the pine forest (which now includes a bamboo grove), the lake shore, the rice fields below the hill, Sakurayama, and even the tea fields on the hill adjoining Sakurayama. As we mentioned during the analysis of the Kairaku-en-ki, the view from the *Kōbun-tei* was exalted as it provided a view where everything can "meld into a single scene." It is important to note, then, the agricultural community at the base of the hill, especially given Nariaki's view of the worth of the farmers.



Figure 5: This representation of the garden was commissioned by Nariaki after its completion, and thus can give us a good indication of what he considered Kairaku-en to be comprised of.

There is no space here to completely explicate Nagai’s argument, but mostly it rests on two maps drawn at the end of the Tempo: the Kairaku-en-no-zu and the Kōbun-tei-shiki-moyou-no-zu, both of which *do* include distinct borders for parts of the space, specifically the border with Tokiwa-jinja (shrine) and the northern extent, while also explicitly including other areas. Additionally, there are references to activities that Nariaki hoped to see at Kairaku-en that necessitate areas outside of the *hon’en*. While this may seem trivial, the scope of the garden tells us quite a lot about Nariaki’s understanding of what we would term “nature.” Take, for example, the inclusion of constructed greenspaces (the plum trees, cultivated fields, etc.), each requiring the intervention of humans for their upkeep, and parts of the natural world that, while influenced by humans were not directly controlled by them (Lake Semba and Sakurayama).⁵⁰

⁵⁰ This is a far more complicated issue than I wish to discuss in the body of the text. What Nariaki describes in the Kairaku-en-ki when he speaks of the surrounding landscape looks like a description of “borrowed scenery” (*shakkei*, 借景). As such, it is not so much that these areas, Sakurayama and the other areas on the depiction, are part of the garden proper. There was, for instance, no fence or gate that separated them off from the rest of the

Plum Grove + Open Space + Kōbun-tei (Hon'en)

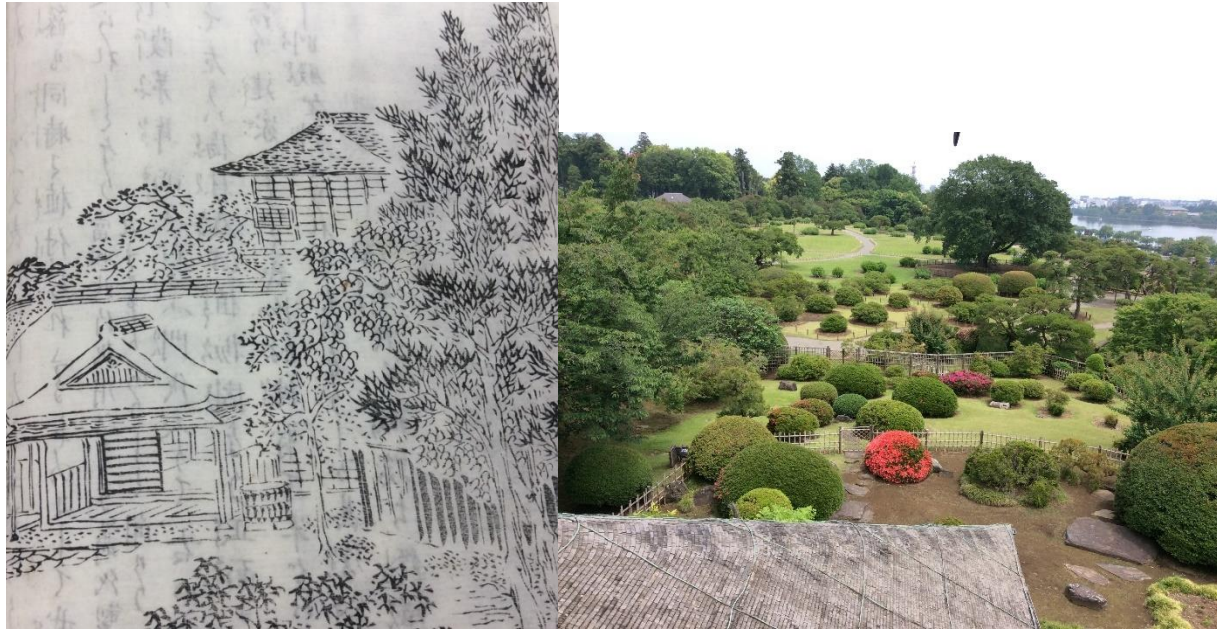


Figure 6: Left: a sketch of the Kōbun-tei, dating from the mid Meiji. Right: the modern-day view from the second floor of the building (photograph by author). Note the extended open area that appears in the modern form coupled with a lack of such an explicit view in the other sketches.

The centerpiece of the space, especially in its modern context, is the plum orchard, which also incorporates what was eventually termed the *hiroba*, though this name was acquired much later, and the Kōbun-tei. It is not clear, in fact, whether or not there was an open space of this kind at Kairaku-en when it was completed, and there is conflicting documentary evidence. It is clear from the Kairaku-en ki, however, that it was both in the orchard, as well as the Kōbun-tei,

world as there was around the *hon-en* (main garden). It still seems obvious, however, that Nariaki envisioned these areas as part of Kairaku-en. How can we then justify this contradiction? I believe the way forward lies in thinking of these areas, as well as the un-depicted distant hills, as part of the *mental* space of the garden. Thinking of these areas, the *hon'en*, the pictured surrounding areas, and the mist shrouded hills, as concentric circles. While inside the gates, you are in the garden shared with Nariaki. While in the farmland or neighboring hills, you are in the conceptual garden; not where the righteousness of Nariaki will rub off on you, but still where relaxation can be enjoyed (falconry and reading poetry in the fields, for example, cannot be accomplished within the *hon-en*). Finally, if one were to be on the distant peaks, then while you are within the bounds of the backdrop that makes up the scenery for Kairaku-en, you are not yourself inside the mental and social space that combine to constitute the thirdspace of the garden.

that Nariaki envisioned a place where the people of the domain would enjoy the space with the lord himself. Returning to the name “Kairaku-en,” as has been previously mentioned, the phrase comes from the Mencius, specifically 1A:2. It is clear from the context of the *Ki* that what Nariaki was saying here was that he hoped Kairaku-en would be a place where “the people” and he could be together. Specifically returning to the Kairaku-en *ki*:

In that place I have planted one thousand plum trees, it will be a place that heralds the beginning of spring. I have also built two structures, one called the Kōbun-tei, the other the Ichiyū-tei. However, I have not built these places for my future dwelling or relaxation. Rather, I hope that people from throughout the country [though he means domain] can relax here and improve the health of their mind and body [this is not exactly spelled out, but implied].

And:

“With the intention of the masses and myself both enjoying this place together, I hereby name this Kairaku-en.”

There are a couple of qualifications that must be added to the meaning of “the people” as well as their ability to access the space. To begin with, Kairaku-en was only open to non-elites during days of the month that ended in 3 or 8. Furthermore, In the only surviving *futatsu* (administrative orders) related to the opening of Kairaku-en it is clear that only certain members of the public, specifically those related to either domain temples or shrines. This restriction, however, was phased out almost immediately, and, moreover, it was a restriction imposed after the writing of the Kairaku-en *ki*, which makes no mention of limitations on who is allowed in. Finally, as is noted on the reverse of the Kairaku-en-*ki*, where various stipulations are inscribed, women and men were forbidden to cavort together, and this was accomplished by alternating the days on which men and women were allowed to enter.

There are three points I would like to again emphasize here. Firstly, the inclusion of the *shūmin* helps demonstrate Nariaki’s sincere adherence to his Confucian values. Unlike other Daimyo gardens that also drew their names from Confucian works, including the Mito Tokugawa’s Koishikawa Kōraku-en in Edo, Kairaku-en was chosen as the name because it

represented both the ideal and reality of what the space was about. Secondly, while there is no time to delve into the emphasis Mito scholars placed on the rectification of names, suffice it to say that this commitment to names and reality being in accord was manifested at Kairaku-en. Thirdly, it is my contention that by creating a space where the people and their social superiors could mingle, Nariaki was effectively providing an avenue for the dissemination of his own virtue to his subjects. A recurring theme in the memoranda sent by Nariaki to Fujita Tōko is the need to properly convey the will of the governing to the governed (上意下達), and this site of physical contact provided just such an opportunity.



Figure 7: A Meiji and modern view of a small portion of the plum grove. Right photograph by author.

Finally, in addition to their aesthetic qualities, which, according to the plum stele at the Kōdōkan, Nariaki did appreciate, they also served two other purposes, first as harbingers of spring (many of the varieties Nariaki cultivated begin to flower as early as late January) and

secondly as an emergency food and drink (plum wine) source to be utilized in a possible military conflict with the Western powers.⁵¹

Pine forest and Fields



Figure 8: Another juxtaposition between the mid Meiji and modern views of the pine forest. Note the much less defined trail in the former, as well as the much less strict demarcation between walking area and forest. Right photograph by author.

As previously mentioned, one of Nariaki's first edicts after becoming ruler of the *han* was related to thrift. Additionally, also as previously mentioned, Nariaki stressed that he was not exempt from his calls for frugality. Kairaku-en, despite its massive size, was a product of this thought, and due to the Confucian tenant of leading by virtuous example, also an inducement thereof. A simple comparison between the pine forests and fields, as well as even the plum grove itself to other Edo era Daimyo gardens aptly demonstrates the frugality advocated by the lord. In the place of manicured shrubs, upkeep-intensive water features, and landscape alteration,

⁵¹ This point is made at the "plum stele" at the Kōdōkan.

Kairaku-en uses what could even be called an ecologically sustainable mixture of pre-existing trees, farmland, and *ume* (plums), which are one of the most hassle-free trees native to Japan (especially compared to say the red or black pines that are very common in modern Japanese gardens).

Another aspect of Nariaki's thought that can be read from the pine forest relates to his understanding of beauty and the natural world. This forest was extant when build for Kairaku-en began, yet was still included in the main, gated area of the garden.⁵² As Nariaki described on the stele, Kairaku-en was a place for restoration. Note also that he did not ascribe that virtue to the plum trees in particular, but rather the whole of the space is the implication. The use of a relatively untamed (there are, for example, no references to the forest being maintained) forest contrasts sharply with other *daimyo* gardens, which, almost without exception, with meticulously cultivated. This suggests that "nature," both of the "cooked" and "raw" variety were equally usable as instruments of Confucian philosophically informed theories of human cultivation, even in the pre-Meiji period.⁵³

As a part of the Kōdōkan

It has been said that Kairaku-en is best understood as part of the Kōdōkan, the aforementioned *icchō-issshi* thesis. I have skirted around the Kōdōkan to avoid adding an additional complicated space, so let it suffice that the domanical school was an educational institution that was dedicated to the training of domanical samurai in a variety of skills and ideals. To be sure, I believe that viewing Kairaku-en exclusively as either an outgrowth or consequence

⁵² In fact, one of the main gates led through the pine grove.

⁵³ Given that the restorative power of unadulterated nature (so called) is almost always seen as a responsive to industrialization and urban decay, this use seems strikingly out of place.

of the Mito domanial school is to miss much of what made the space unique, especially its almost egalitarian commitment to commoner/elite co-use. Nevertheless, it is doubtless that Kairaku-en *was* part of Nariaki's educational reform during the Tempo era, though here again, I would consider it as a combination of the two distinct targets of his efforts in this regard, the elites and the commoners.

Turning specifically to Kairaku-en's function as a place for spiritual and intellectual cultivation, the Kairaku-en-ki says the following:

Therefore, relaxing one's body and spirit cultivates virtue and nurtures that which sets humans apart from creation (the Four Beginnings), and preserving life nurtures human life. We should say that if these two things are in harmony, goodness will be nurtured."

Nariaki then continues:

Therefore it is said: if this cultivation is in anyway acquired, [both of the above] things will not fail to grow; if this cultivation is lost, [both of these] things will not fail to disappear. This too is the power of nature. If this is the case, humans must also relax and breathe.

What should be clear, is that with the Kairaku-en-ki we can tell that Kairaku-en is more than merely a garden built for the Daimyo's personal enjoyment, nor was it simply what we might call a public garden. Rather, it held a philosophical significance and was, moreover, both born out of Confucian thought and was also designed to help foster Confucian values. Its connection to the great center of domanial learning, the Kōdōkan shows its function within Nariaki's larger plans for educational reform. The fact that Kairaku-en was not merely an aesthetically pleasing place that happened to be opened to the public is crucial to the understanding of both the space as well as Nariaki's thought. Kairaku-en was a link in a much longer chain of reform efforts, all aimed at both improving the material conditions of the domain

as well as preparing the inhabitants for the oncoming Western invasion that Nariaki believed imminent.

Nariaki's Positions

To sum up, I will make some concluding remarks on what a study of Kairaku-en can add to our understanding of his thought in the five areas we previously identified.

1) Confucian morality: It is true, broadly speaking, that all of Nariaki's positions can be said to be derived from Confucianism (or at any rate he would have said so himself), but I am here speaking specifically of the Confucian belief that the righteousness of the ruler would foster righteousness of the ruled. Whereas this was, of course, a basic tenant of Confucian doctrine, it seems clear that Nariaki was an ardent believer. As we have discussed, Nariaki routinely spoke of farmers as the foundation of the domain, usually in paternalistic terms. Furthermore, Nariaki's correspondence and missives to his retainers show that, unlike many of his contemporaries, agricultural community reform was not initiated as a way to reap economic benefit, but rather that since the farmers were the foundation upon which the domain was built, benevolent rule, as inherited from heaven, was necessarily based upon good governance of the farmers. Moreover, this thought process was not exclusive to farming families; as Nariaki succinctly put it in one of his memorandums: "the people are the foundation of the country."

Kairaku-en helps add to this picture. Morality for Nariaki flowed from himself down through his retainers, then through his magistrates down to the people. The sheer amount of labor, money, and time that went into the construction of Kairaku-en, a garden made explicitly for the cultivation of the virtues of the people of Mito, demonstrates both Nariaki's sincere belief in this type of Confucian morality while also providing a space for the people and the lord to interact directly.

2) Frugality: One of Nariaki's first administrative orders was to address what he saw as excessive consumption and general wastefulness within the domain, wastefulness of both the people but more importantly government officials. To this end he issued a number of reforms, but, as with the above, it is important to understand that, unlike the Tempo reforms, Nariaki imposed this frugality in his own household.

Kairaku-en here too proves extremely instructive. The composition of the garden, being comprised largely of plum trees, naturally growing evergreens, and fields required considerably less upkeep than the average *daimyō* garden despite the former being much larger. What is more, coupled with the notion of the example set by the ruler for the ruled, Kairaku-en's frugality and economy of design served as an argument that beauty, specifically natural beauty, could still be maintained even during lean times.

3) Nature: Unlike the first three groups, Nariaki's thoughts about what we would call "nature" are not explicitly spelled out in his various reform memorandum. Therefore, we are left almost exclusively with Kairaku-en to provide us with how Nariaki saw the natural world. There are five points made either explicitly or implicitly at the garden.

Firstly, "nature" conceived of as all creation, is governed by laws, laws that we, as humans can come to understand. Furthermore, humans, as part of "all creation" are also governed by laws, and these must be adhered to if we are to flourish and find our virtue. Plants too share in these predictable natural laws; plum trees were chosen as they represent the changing of the season from winter to spring.

Secondly, natural spaces (as distinct from *banbutsu*) allow humans the ability to nurture their spiritual wellbeing and virtues. Though the angle at which this point is approach is wildly

different, the end result is not dissimilar to American and European Romantics who saw nature as a restorative space.

Thirdly and relatedly, natural spaces can be instrumentalist. Rural fields are well suited for the appreciation of poetry, mountains and valleys for hunting. While it would be a mistake to claim that Nariaki's views on nature were of a transcendentalist persuasion, he does not, for example, espouse anything like a notion of humans possessing an original state of "nature" to which they need periodically to return, it is equally not clear that "nature" has intrinsic value apart from humans. All of Nariaki's reference to the natural world include humans in some way, either as participants in activities that can only be performed in natural spaces or for their aesthetic qualities. Returning to plums, Nariaki was concerned about the need to keep both the people and soldiers fed during times of war, resulting not only in Nariaki's impressive grain storage system, but his choice to cultivate plums, the fruit of which could be preserved for times of famine or fermented into plum wine (*umeshū*).

Fourthly, the true nature of "nature" can only be apprehended in its totality. Using the language of the four directions melding into one scene, Nariaki succinctly lays out his view that the natural world should not be seen as more than the sum of its parts, but rather how those parts combine to form areas of pure green or white.

Finally, though Nariaki did not use this vocabulary, we can reasonably infer that he did indeed see a border, both conceptual, and, in the case of Kairaku-en physical, between the natural world and the world of civilization. As can be seen on the drawings he commissioned, Kairaku-en had fixed borders; the adjoining Tokiwa-jinja was excluded, as were the farming villages that surrounded the area in general (though not the fields!). On the conceptual side, it is again worth noting that Kairaku-en was located away from the din of the castle town (it takes

approximately an hour and a half on foot to reach Kairaku-en from the Kōdōkan in modern Mito). While there certainly were views of manmade structures that Nariaki could have described from the hill upon which Kairaku-en's *hon'en* was located, such as the hot springs and establishments at its foot or the castle itself to the east, Nariaki instead described mountain ranges, forests, rivers, and lakes.

4) *Ichō-Isshi* (一張一弛): Many have asserted that this is THE foundational principle upon which Kairaku-en is based, and while I find that to be a bit overblown, it was certainly ONE of the philosophical underpinnings to the enterprise. In brief, Kairaku-en was not built-in isolation but rather, at least in part, in conjunction with the construction of the Kōdōkan, the great educational center Nariaki had built concurrently. The idea is that the Kōdōkan represented tension, while Kairaku-en was a space for relaxation.

Kairaku-en was the cornerstone in Nariaki's *isshi* plan. As we have seen from the Kairaku-en *ki*, an enormous amount of attention was given to spaces for both relaxation and recreation. Furthermore, as in other places, the fact that he went as far as to have the place constructed, even in the face of opposition from some of his advisors, shows a high level of commitment to this ideal.

5) Aesthetics: answer to questions such as “what is beauty” are addressed both explicitly on various stele, as well as implicitly in the aesthetic decisions made during the construction of Kairaku-en. Nariaki valued the changing of the seasons and placed a great deal of emphasis on the transitions themselves rather than the seasons themselves, as was classic in most Japanese garden design.

It is clear that Nariaki valued both “untouched” and natural-looking spaces as objects and sites of beauty. Though it has not come up in this chapter, it should also be noted that Kairaku-en

contained few components that were of a symbolic nature. There were not, for example, scenes meant to depict the Pure Land or Chinese scenes, nor were there miniature scenes of Mt. Fuji or other famous landscapes. There were plenty of allusions present within Kairaku-en, but they were of an intellectual persuasion.

Conclusion: Nature as Instrument

Why did Nariaki, at a time of financial and social uncertainty, choose to build what remains to this day one of the largest gardens in Japan? As hopefully has been made clear, the answer is in the question. It was precisely *because* Nariaki believed things to be so bleak that he undertook the endeavor. As a committed Confucian, Nariaki saw all social and economic ills as being related, at least in part, to a lack of virtue and morality, or of corruption. Furthermore, this was not due to the inherent immorality of the peasants, but rather stated at the top. In order to reform his domain, Nariaki had to reform his household. In order to foster morality in his people, he had to begin with his government. He also needed a place where virtue could be cultivated. So, he chose to build a garden, open to all, where his thoughts on subjects from aesthetics to morality, *icchō isshi* to frugality could be transmitted. Nariaki believed in the necessity of a natural-seeming environment to cultivate virtue, and to that end he constructed one. Once the virtues of the people were rectified, all other problems would follow suit. Kairaku-en was not built to distract the people from Nariaki's lack of a solution, Kairaku-en *was* the solution.

We have also seen that Nariaki had a very sophisticated and complex view of “nature.” To him, it functioned as the guiding principle of the universe (*tenri*), the whole of creation, humans included, (*banbutsu*), something that occurs on its own (*shizen*), and as a place that was also separated from humanity (“birds, beasts, and plants” *kinjū kusaki*, 禽獸草木). There is

nothing contradictory in any of this; as we have discussed, there were a plethora of words that were in use during the Edo Period that held parts of the modern meaning of the word. Moreover, Kairaku-en served as an interpretation of Nariaki's Confucian inspired philosophy, and the meaning of this interpretation, as with any linguistic act, is in its use. For Nariaki, the proper use to put the natural world was instrumentalist.

Chapter 2: Imparting the Scientific Nature of Nature: William S. Clark, Kuroda Kiyotaka, and the campus of Sapporo Agricultural College

“I would not give a cent for the opinion of a man whose judgement is based solely on books.[...] We have books and lecturers, and these students are being taught, eloquently, in theory; but they must come down to things. It is impossible to teach a man natural science without specimens”¹

-William S. Clark

“If a man could succeed, not in striking out some particular invention, however useful, but in kindling a light in nature – a light which should in its very rising touch and illuminate all the border-regions that confine upon the circle of our present knowledge; and so spreading further and further should presently disclose and bring into sight all that is most hidden and secret in the world, – that man (I thought) would be the benefactor indeed of the human race, – the propagator of man’s empire over the universe, the champion of liberty, the conqueror and subduer of necessities.”

-Francis Bacon

In August of 1876, around forty years after the construction of Kairaku-en, William S. Clark (1826-1886) arrived in Sapporo in Hokkaidō. He had been tasked by the *Kaitakushi* (Hokkaidō Development/Colonization Office) with the construction, organization, and running the daily business of a new type of educational institution in Japan: an agricultural school. During the year that followed, Clark, along with his Japanese and American associates, put together a campus and curriculum for Sapporo Agricultural College (札幌農学校, SAC) and its

¹ William S. Clark, “The Work and the Wants of the College” 1868

twenty-four freshmen. For Clark, however, the curriculum and the campus space itself were bound together; a proper understanding of the natural world had to be rooted in the world itself. Experimental crop fields, pastures for livestock, a modern American-style barn, and even the landscaping of the campus were not merely meant to be spaces where the student would learn, nor were they simply designed to help facilitate instruction. Rather, the design, construction, and maintenance of these features was a necessary component of Clark's educational philosophy.

Tokugawa Nariaki used the natural world as a means to disseminate Confucian philosophy and governance while simultaneously advancing an educational goal. Clark, and by extension the *Kaitakushi*, also used the natural world of the campus and surrounding environs of the SAC in a utilitarian fashion for the sake of education. This chapter contends that what was different about the meaning of the SAC, as a space, was the philosophical understanding of what "nature" was. In short, the campus was a manifestation of a new way of seeing the natural world: something to be scientifically studied.

This is not to say that such an understanding had replaced that of Nariaki; the history of ideas is not a continuous line where new ideas replace older ones which then disappear. Nor was this view entirely novel in Japan. Federico Marcon has shown the use of what were in essence botanical gardens as spaces for the investigation of the medical usages of flora in the Tokugawa era.² Ergo, the SAC's innovations will not be framed as yet another instance of new ideas in the Meiji displacing the old, but as expanding earlier ideas about the use of constructed greenspaces. As we have seen, constructed greenspaces were used to spread ideas long before even the *bakumatsu*. There were, however, new qualities to the ideas that were expressed as well as new ways in which such spaces were designed both aesthetically and technologically. I will argue that

² Federico Marcon, *Knowledge of Nature*.

the campus of the SAC is less an example of new ideas and more of a continuation of an older story, namely the use of constructed greenspaces by Japanese governmental figures to further a political end. In the case of the *Kaitakushi*, that end was control over Hokkaidō by means of its remaking, both its physical landscape and its conceptual mindscape. The SAC was a cornerstone of this project.

New Territory, Familiar Problems

Although there were attempts by the *Bakufu* to establish a larger presence on what was then known as Ezo (often given as Yezu or Yesu during the mid-nineteenth century) during the *bakumatsu*, full control over the island was not seriously pursued until it was deemed a necessary check on Russian encroachment.³ In order to achieve this latter goal, the Meiji government, like the *Bakufu* before it, believed that reclamation and direct military colonization were the most effective means at their disposal. Where the *Kaitakushi* differed, however, was in their approach. Though often described in different terms, such as agriculture and economics, it seems clear that the *Kaitakushi* sought to control the island, and by extension the Aynu, by remaking the landscape under a new understanding of the natural world: one of 19th century natural science. In the years right before the establishment of the SAC, they had taken steps in that direction.

In 1872, only three years after its founding, the *Kaitakushi* (Hokkaidō Development/Colonization Office) had already become frustrated by the lack of progress towards their mission to “develop,” i.e., colonize, Hokkaidō for the fledgling Meiji government.⁴

³ See John A. Harrison, *Japan's northern frontier: a preliminary study in colonization and expansion with special reference to the relations of Japan and Russia*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press 1953), 67-68.

⁴ The degree to which the construction of the SAC was intensely influenced by the new age of Japanese government cannot be understated. Though a full history of the *bakumatsu* and subsequent Meiji Restoration are well beyond the scope of this study, one of the hallmarks of the age was both an openness to importing foreign

Governor General Kuroda Kiyotaka (1840-1900) believed that the key problem was a lack of agricultural progress.⁵ Given the shipping limitations of the era, any sort of even moderately large colonial project required at least some level of self-sufficiency on the part of the colonists. Furthermore, the climate of Hokkaidō was significantly removed from standard Japanese agricultural practices as to require techniques from abroad. To this end, foreign advisors were brought in to contribute not only their expertise, but to bring with them a conception of the natural world as something to be conquered with the aid of Western science.

One of the best examples of this is the eradication of the Ezo wolf. Beginning as early as 1870, the *Kaitakushi*, following the suggestions of the American advisor hired to assist with the colonial project in Sapporo, Horace Capron, (1804-1885), had begun experimenting with livestock agriculture in Hokkaido. Their efforts, however, were frustrated by the predations of wolves, bears, and other predators taking so serious a toll on the population of cows, horses, and sheep that the number of livestock remained stagnant until 1873.⁶ To combat this perceived threat for nature for their plans, the *Kaitakushi*, again under the urging of Capron, brought in Edward Dunn (1848-1931) to deal with the predator problem with all of the tools available through Western technology.⁷ Dunn instituted a number of programs and ranching best practices designed to alleviate the taking of cattle and horses by wolves and feral dogs, most notably by arguing for a prohibition on the keeping of hunting dogs by Aynu at nearby villages. When these efforts were frustrated by the *Kaitakushi* and the Aynu themselves, Dunn shifted gears by both

advisors as well as foreign ways of thinking (at least in certain fields) and, moreover, a drive to investigate the workability of a host of new policies and projects.

⁵ John Harrison, *Japan's New Frontier*, 67-68.

⁶ "Mōjū ryōsatsusha e teatekin kyūiyo no ken," 1878.2.15, in *Shūsairoku* (A4-54-49) from Brett L. Walker, "Meiji Modernization, Scientific Agriculture, and the Destruction of Japan's Hokkaido Wolf," *Environmental History* 9, no. 2 (2004): 250.

⁷ *Ibid*, 253-254.

attempting to eradicate the deer population (so as to decrease the wolves' food supply) as well as employing the use of strychnine to target the wolves themselves.⁸

Although Dunn's methods were dubious at best in terms of efficacy, they are, as well as the use of foreign advisors like Capron, representative of the attempts by the *Kaitakushi* and its agents to exert control over Hokkaidō by remaking the biological landscape utilizing Western science. Moreover, the very conception of the problem of the natural world was shifting. Such problems were understandable through the lens of scientific investigation, and, as such, the answers could be found with the same method. Unlike Nariaki's plan with Kairaku-en, the "nature" in this configuration was less a canvass for presenting ideas, but a black box, so to speak, that, through study, could be understood and tamed to suit the needs of the Japanese people, or at any rate the Japanese Empire.

Whereas Dunn's mission was focused on the removal of certain elements from the natural world that proved themselves roadblocks for human development, plans were already in the works for a university that would transform the physical landscape as well as the *weltanschauung* of those who would go on to manage this frontier.

A University on the Prairie

From a very early stage, the Japanese government believed that an educational institution of some sort would be required to help with the settlement of the northern island. By 1872, the *Kaitakushi* had founded a school in Tokyo that would serve as a feeder for the first class of students at the SAC.⁹ In the following year, a women's school was attached to it. What is more,

⁸ For a fuller version of Dunn's anti-wolf crusade, see Brett L. Walker, "Meiji Modernization, Scientific Agriculture, and the Destruction of Japan's Hokkaido Wolf," *Environmental History* 9, no. 2 (2004): 248-274.

⁹ John Maki, William S. Clark: *A Yankee in Hokkaido*. Sapporo: Hokkaidō University Press, 1996. 144.

the envisioned university's projected purpose was not to be confined to researching new crops, livestock, and farming methods that were suitable to Hokkaidō's climate or even as a means to subjugate the landscape. At the drawing board stage of the plan, it was already decided that the future *Kaitakushi* would be staffed by graduates of the new college, and, therefore, men who were versed in Western scientific methods, as well as a worldview that saw the natural world as something to be understood in scientific terms.

The question remained, however, whom should the *Kaitakushi* select to help establish this school? As with the earlier wolf problem, Kuroda and Capron were in agreement that an American was a logical fit, and it just so happened that an American versed in agricultural universities had already come to the attention of both the Japanese government as well as the Ministry of Education.

Clark the Man

So, who was this man that Kuroda wanted to head the agricultural college? Before turning to the most important quality that endeared him to the head of the *Kaitakushi*, his educational ideology, a brief sketch of the man's biography is illustrative of his qualifications for the position. As a final point before we begin, although this chapter will argue that Clark was not the single or even the single greatest architect for the spaces at the SAC, a good deal of the literature concerning this topic centers on him.¹⁰ This is not entirely baseless. It was Clark whose

¹⁰ For English language works, the single most comprehensive treatment of the SAC is John M. Maki, *William S. Clark: A Yankee in Hokkaido* (Sapporo: Hokkaidō University Press, 1996), as well as *Foreign Pioneers* (Sapporo: Hokkaidō Prefectural Government, 1868). In Japanese, see 蝦名堅造『札幌農学校』(Sapporo: Hokkaidō University Press, 1980, Toyama Toshio, *Sapporo Nōgakkō to eigokyōiku: eigakushi kenkyū shiten* (Sapporo Agricultural College and English Language Education, From the point of view of the history of English instruction) (Kyoto-shi: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1992), and Koeda Hirokazu. *William Smith Clark No Kyōiku Shisō No Kenkyū: Sapporo Nōgakkō No Jiyū Kyōiku No Keifu*, (Kyoto-shi: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2010).

vision was put into place, and his legacy amongst his students, including those that never actually met him, grew into near-mythological status. To this day, Clark's famous final words, "Boys, be ambitious" are well known beyond Hokkaidō in Japan.¹¹ The university's museum, a building of substantial size, devotes nearly a football field length of Clark related paraphernalia and inspirational quotations. Accordingly, we will now turn to a brief biographical sketch of Clark, while mostly highlighting events and writings that are relevant to the larger picture.

Clark attended Amherst College between 1844 and 1848, before traveling to Göttingen, Germany to pursue a Ph.D. in Chemistry, which he completed in 1852 with a dissertation concerning metallic meteorites.¹² After returning to the States, Clark took up a position at his alma mater, Amherst College, as professor of chemistry. Clark would hold this position until 1867, with a brief interlude during which he served as a major, then lieutenant colonel in the 21st Massachusetts Infantry Regiment during the United States Civil War.¹³

Upon Clark's returned to Amherst, he busied himself with efforts to build a new type of university. Now a respected figure in central Massachusetts, especially among the academic community, Clark was instrumental in the selection of Amherst as the future site for the state's first agricultural college.¹⁴ In 1867, after the first two presidents of the future university had very little progress to show, Clark was selected to take over to ensure the college's prompt completion. In what would predict his future successes in Sapporo, Clark completed the hiring of

¹¹ The exact provenance of the quotation is practically non-existent, first appearing many years after his death, and none of the correspondences to Clark from former SAC students mention it. Though I have no conclusive evidence, and it is almost impossible to prove a negative, it seems doubtful he ever actually said it. Frankly, it sounds more like something that Nitobe Inazō would have come up with, possibly attributed to Clark by later students.

¹² See Clark, "On Metallic Meteorites," 1952.

¹³ Clark was incorrectly reported killed in action in, with an obituary appearing in local Amherst papers.

¹⁴ This was achieved primarily through his role as state legislator, a position he took up in 1864. See Patrick T.J. Browne, "Cultivation of the Higher Self: William Smith Clark and Agricultural Education." *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*. (Westfield State College, 36), Winter, 2008.

faculty, the construction of buildings, and setting of a curriculum quickly enough to see the university opened to a class of 49 students in the Fall of the same year.¹⁵

Clark's Educational Principles

As a scholar, Clark left little to no impact in any of the various fields he pursued over the course of his life. In a 1907 address at the MAC honoring Clarke's achievements, Penhallow remarked "President Clark's claim to scientific recognition rests not so much upon his actual achievements in research as upon his administrative capacity and the intelligent manner in which he stimulated and encouraged investigation on the part of others." Certainly, Clarke had few scholarly publications, with the two best examples including "Nature's Mode of Distributing Plants" in 1870, and his dissertation, which was little more than a description of various meteorites. Nevertheless, we can glean something of his view of the relationship between the natural and the human world from the former publication. Specifically, Clark asserts that "there are two principal methods observed in nature, and imitated by man, for the distribution of plants," specifically budding and grafting, and seeds and spores.¹⁶ Beyond the obvious (and typical) separation of the two worlds, Clark is linking them in almost a teacher-student relationship. Later, Clark implies that nature produces fruits and vegetables to "provide men and animals more various, delicious and especially more nutritious objects of vegetable food."¹⁷ In addition to a somewhat stereotypical 19th century Christian view that the natural world exists to assist humans, there is an implication, when considered with the earlier line, that humans not

¹⁵ Frank Prentice Rand, *Yesterdays at Massachusetts State College* (Amherst: Associate Alumni of the Massachusetts State College), 1933

¹⁶ William S. Clark, *Nature's Mode of Distributing Plants*, (18th annual report of the secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture) 1870.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

only modify (improve) on nature's methodology, this occurs with the explicit goal of improving human life via better nutrition. Put more succinctly, humans use scientific examination to learn from nature, then apply that knowledge to improve upon nature's design, all for the benefit of humankind. This line of thought, already present by 1870, underscores one of the key educational beliefs of Clark: the study of the physical sciences, biology, chemistry, geology, etc., is the handmaiden of agriculture. It is this argument that drove the impact on the field that Clark *did* influence: education and educational institutions.

Clark's ideas on this subject were not, of course, static, but seem to have grown organically over time as he moved from the MAC to the SAC, and finally into his later years. With each new type of institution, his ideas shifted in response to the new challenges before him.

1) At the Massachusetts Agricultural College

When it comes to Clark's endeavors at the MAC, the best sources we have concerning Clark's thought are "The Work and the Wants of the College," 1868, "Professional Education the Present Want of Agriculture," 1870, and "The Relation of Botany to Agriculture," 1873. These documents/address transcripts shed light not only on Clark's views regarding the purpose of education and its relationship to science and the community, as well as lends insight into how Clarke used space in furtherance of these ideals.

"The Work and the Wants of the College" was an address given during the first year of the MAC's life, detailing, as one would expect, a list of materials and policies he felt the college needed in order to thrive. Chiefly focused on the physical side of things, Clarke wanted a room where students would gather for assemblies and general college business and stipulated that such a hall should be devoted to chemistry. If there can be said to be a cornerstone pedagogical theory from Clarke at the time in his life, it would be that lectures and books alone are insufficient for

knowledge. Returning to his address concerning the “Works and Wants,” Clarke opined “I would not give a cent for the opinion of a man whose judgement is based solely on books.”¹⁸ Although this remark was made specifically concerning animal husbandry, Clark quickly pivots into a broader direction: “we have books and lecturers, and these students are being taught, eloquently, in theory; but [education] must come down to things. It is impossible to teach a man natural science without specimens.”¹⁹

Even at this stage, in a university on the other side of the world we can see the beginnings of Clarke’s influence in Hokkaido; a latent distrust for “theory” and a belief that education needed to be driven by student interactions with the physical world. Slightly less obvious is a seed of Clarke’s thought that would slowly germinate; adequate space is should not be designed purely in terms of square feet per student. Rather, the nature of the space itself also should be given proper attention. Chemistry, as the foundation of the physical sciences (in Clarke’s view), provided an excellent environment in which to have students congregate. Though admittedly rather crude at this stage, Clarke is plausibly referencing merely learning via osmosis, a fixation with space would later come to play an even larger role.

Two years after the “Works and Wants of the College,” Clarke penned an essay to the “Professional Education the Present Want of Agriculture” for the *18th Annual Report of the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture*. More so than his previous lecture, this essay was designed not to detail areas of the college that he believed required additional funds, but rather to argue for the usefulness and indeed necessity of the college itself.

Thus, Clarke begins with an argument for the need for a college devoted to agriculture, which, it should be said, was by no means a popular position in Post-Civil War New England. In

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 30.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

his letters to his family, Clarke routinely remarks on the “slanderous “accusations from the “free press,” and often blamed newspaper editorials for the opposition to his educational endeavors he suffered from the public.²⁰ Hostility from the newspapers of the day certainly seemed to have an effect on Clarke’s endeavors, likely turning public sentiment against his efforts. It seems likely that a lasting push to frame both the Massachusetts Agricultural College and the Sapporo Agricultural College was born from Clarke’s distrust of the newspapers and general wariness with regard to the general population.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Clark opens his essay arguing, essentially, that necessity is the mother of agriculture. According to US Census record, Massachusetts experienced an average population growth of just over 25% every ten years during the latter half of the 19th century. Moreover, most of this growth came from urban centers, especially, Boston, with the city’s population growing from 136,881 in 1850 to 560,829 in 1900.²¹ With the increase demands placed on Massachusetts agriculture to sustain the population, Clarke laid out his argument that the necessity was self-evident, and that the solution was new agricultural techniques, based upon the latest scientific principles, which would be studied, adapted, and taught at the MAC.

The key to selling his vision to taxpayers, and therefore policymakers, was to bridge the gap between education and farmers. While other endeavors with this goal were undertaken in the latter 19th and early century, perhaps most notably the Southern Pacific Railroad’s “farm demo trains” in California, Clarke’s goal was not the retraining of farmers *per se*, but the training of a new group of farmers, farmers with knowledge of geology, biochemistry, and versed in the latest

²⁰ See especially Clark’s letter to his sister, August 5th, 1876.

²¹ See U.S. Census Bureau. Population, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, and 1900.

agricultural advances.²² To this end, we again see Clarke making, this time more explicitly, the need for practical application for education; it was not just that education must be based on the study of material things, but it must also help to produce them.

While this paper is worded very diplomatically, especially given the disdain Clarke held for the current crop of “ignorant farmers” in many of his letters, Clark still felt compelled to add in a reminder that mental work is, indeed, still work, an allusion to the resistance he expected to encounter for his call for funding. Also, though not prominently featured or even argued for, we again can see evidence of Clarke giving thought to space. The college, Clarke mentions in passing, should be removed from urban center, and dedicated mainly to agriculture. We will revisit this idea, here tucked away in a plea for financial support, later.

Although pleading for money is the time-honored role of all university administrators, Clarke continued to, rarely it must be said, publish scholarly articles. Also appearing in the *18th Annual Report of the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture*, Clarke’s “Nature’s Mode of Distributing Plants” (1870) provides insight into Clarke’s understanding of nature in relation to humans. Clark begins by claiming “there are two principal methods observed in nature, and imitated by man, for the distribution of plants,” one of which being budding and grafting, the other being seeds and spores.²³ Though the technical details, or indeed the truth of this statement, are not relevant here, there are several inferences that can be drawn. Firstly, Clark, as did most of his generation, saw a bright line demarcating “man” and “nature.” Further, while there may be an echo of the romanticist view of a nurturing natural world, put most

²² For a full account of the Southern Pacific’s push in this area, see Don L Hofsommer, *The Southern Pacific, 1901-1985*. (Texas: College Station, 1986), 68.

²³ Clark, “Nature’s Mode of Distributing Plants,” *The 18th Annual Report of the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture, (1870)*. Clark’s inclusion of grafting here is puzzling, as unless he is talking about instances when new plants grow from other flora (usually deceased), this does not seem like a natural phenomenon.

explicitly where Clark argues nature produces fruits and vegetables to “provide men and animals more various, delicious and especially more nutritious objects of vegetable food,” the thrust of Clarke’s article is how humans can (and should) improve upon “nature’s” methods.²⁴

The final source of note from Clarke’s tenure at the MAC before leaving for Japan is “The Relation of Botany to Agriculture,” a lecture delivered to the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture in 1873. From the tone of the transcript, it seems that by 1873 he no longer believed he needed to prove that science and education helps agriculture, or at least not to this audience. Instead, Clarke begins to make a systematic case for the necessity of blending education and space, an argument that he would carry with him to Hokkaidō. As Clark puts it colleges need botanical gardens “systematically arranged and adapted to convey any adequate idea of the wonders of the vegetable kingdom.”²⁵ Note that these gardens should, in Clarke’s estimation, be set in universities; it might be beneficial for laymen to also experience the “wonders of the vegetable kingdom,” but they were directed to students. What is more, these buildings were not meant to be static repositories of flora for the benefit of student study (nor, in fact, could a garden truly be static to begin with), they were to be planned, constructed, and maintained by the students themselves. Once again, we see Clarke’s theme of the necessity of things, and in this case space for education, but this time he has taken it a step further. It is not sufficient that such spaces exist and were used as teaching materials, their construction was part and parcel to education. In effect, and at this stage in a somewhat limited form, students’ learning required the alteration of the landscape. In time, this modification would change to outright subjugation of the natural world. To Clark, education in agriculture, and indeed any of the physical sciences, could not be achieved in a classroom setting alone.

²⁴ *William S. Clark*, “Nature’s Mode of Distributing Plants.”

²⁵ Clark, “The Relation of Botany to Agriculture,” address before the Massachusetts board of Agriculture, 1873.

Clark's continual clashes with Massachusetts newspaper columnists led to a lifelong enmity towards the press in general. In a letter home from Tokyo, Clark noted with approval the lack of a "free press" in Japan and applauded the ability of the government to imprison journalists. As he put it, Clark was happy to "be free of the foul slanders of the free press of the U.S."²⁶

Clark, it must be said, never explicitly endorsed any kind of conquest-via-agriculture approach per se, and in fact this would have been an exceedingly odd position for him to take. Late 19th century Massachusetts was by no means in need of the displacement of any indigenous groups, and as such it seems doubtful that Clark would have pursued this line of thinking. Many of his ideas, however, were certainly of value to any group of people who *had* hit upon this notion as a policy for settlement and displacement. Clark's above-mentioned emphasis on alteration of a landscape for both educational and then societal progress, through agriculture, was a modern, Western science-based method to affect change in Hokkaido at large. Furthermore, as Clark was committed to disseminating both his vision and the practical know-how for this project via education, a potential army (so to speak) was ready to be trained.

Finally, as seen in his "Nature's Mode of Distributing Plants," Clark was also a proponent of agriculture to meet societal demands. While his immediate concern when he wrote that article was an ever-expanding population in urban Boston, there was always an underlying argument that better agriculture improved society and human life in a general way. And this agriculture was to be founded on the latest scientific developments.

²⁶ This is one example of Clark's controversial positions that Maki omits in his biography.

A Massachusetts Yankee in Kuruda's Department

In 1871, future Minister of Education Mori Arinori, then serving as Japanese ambassador to the United States, was tasked with finding a university willing to take on a Japanese student, Naitō Seitarō (during his time abroad he was adopted into the Hori family and changed his name accordingly).²⁷

Mori sought advice from then Commissioner of United States Agriculture Horace Capron, who suggested that the MAC would make an ideal home for Naitō. Writing to Clark, Capron explained the situation and assured the school's president that the Japanese youth was proficient in English and had received "a fair Japanese education." Capron admitted that there might not be the requisite preparatory courses to get Naitō up to speed, but asked Clark, as a personal favor, to relax the standards for admission in this case.

A year into his studies, Mori decided to visit Naitō to check up on him and made the relatively short journey up to Massachusetts Agricultural College. Mori was impressed. During a tour given to him by the president of the college, William S. Clark (1826-1886), Mori witnessed a group of students performing their daily military drills in close proximity to an experimental field of crops, reportedly exclaiming "that is the kind of institution Japan must have, that is what we need, an institution that shall teach young men to feed themselves and to defend themselves."

Mori Arinori wrote a letter in 1872 asking for Clark's opinion concerning the effects of education "1rst upon the material prosperity of a country 2nd Upon its commerce 3rd Upon its agricultural and industrial interests 4th Upon the social, moral and physical conditions of the people, and 5th, Its influences upon the laws and government."²⁸ While Clark's reply seems to have been lost, the connection between Clark and Mori is clear.

²⁷ Maki, 122.

²⁸ Found Clark's letters, stored at UMass Amherst.

I contend that the selection of Clark by the Japanese government was not merely predicated on his preexisting relationship with government figures from the United States and Japan alike. Recalling the earlier point about the overarching goal of the government in Tokyo being making the island a defensible bulwark against the Russians, as well as Kuroda's drive for agricultural progress, Clark becomes a natural fit. This point is crucial in order to apprehend the nature of the relationship between Clark, Kuroda, the *Kaitakushi*, and the Japanese government more generally: Clark's views on education were known to Kuroda (through Capron), and as such describing his activities as solely the product of his own character and intellectual predictions eschews the fact that it was these views the Japanese government was in the market for.

To Hokkaidō

On May 15th, 1876, Clark, along with two of his former students (now colleagues), William Wheeler (1851–1932) and David Penhallow (1854–1910), left Amherst on the long trek to Sapporo, by way of Pennsylvania, Chicago, San Francisco, and Tokyo. Before leaving, Clark had approximately 500 books sent on to Sapporo and the Japanese exchange student.²⁹ Clark's ship arrived in Yokohama on June 29th, and before that evening had arrived in Tokyo. While there, they made the rounds with various Japanese officials, meeting with Kuroda and even celebrating the centennial of the 4th of July with Mori at his luxurious Western-style home in Tokyo.

Before embarking for Hokkaidō, Clark and his Massachusetts associates visited experimental farms within and around Tokyo, as well as the botanical gardens that were attached

²⁹ Maki, 132.

to the Kaisei Gakkō (soon to be reorganized as Tokyo University). In a letter home, Clark had nothing but praise for what he saw as the innate talent the Japanese had for the “art” of farming. He also noted with approval the practice of the administration to sell the fruits, so to speak, of their endeavors as a way to partially self-fund the operation.

After Clark’s arrival and assumption of his duties at SAC, Clark and Kuroda were in constant communication. Clark sent and received on average more than one letter per day from Kuroda, with the latter rarely pushing back on Clark’s ideas or plans for the campus and curriculum. The correspondences between the two men, housed at Hokkaidō University, provide an important look into the priorities of Clark and Kuroda. Clark, for example, repeatedly referred to the respectability of the school amongst the general population, likely an attempt to forestall the type of bad press and animosity his calls for the adoption of modern scientific agricultural practices to the farmers of Massachusetts. A result of this persistent need for public validation, one that seemingly met little resistance, Clark and by extension the college and the *Kaitakushi* were able to begin shaping the attitudes of the Japanese who had settled the land around Sapporo. Consequently, even at this early stage the influence of SAC began to spread to the public.

The only major matter of disagreement appears in letter between October and December of 1876. lay in the use of proceeds from the sale of the college’s agricultural yields. Clark, referencing his visit to the Kaisei Gakkō, vigorously argued that such revenue should be reinvested into the college, while Kuroda, citing Japanese statute, held that any money made by a university in such a capacity fell under the purview of the governing agency, in this case the *Kaitakushi*. After a bit of back and forth on this issue, Kuroda eventually mollified Clark by

assuring him that these funds allowed the *Kaitakushi* to increase the operating budget of the college, though not on a one-to-one basis.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of Clark's time in Hokkaidō was the incredible degree of control he wielded over the creation and management of the college, as well as his influence in general with Kuroda. Three examples here should prove illustrative not only of Clark's clout, but also tie in with the two major arguments advanced in this chapter: the meaning of nature in relationship to the SAC and the *Kaitakushi*. As well as the latter's use of the former in order to cement their grasp on the island.

Firstly, on the journey by ship to Hokkaidō, many of the future students at the SAC were caught carousing with the women onboard. This incident so enraged Kuroda (who, along with Clark was also onboard) that, much like a parent, he literally threatened to turn the ship around and return everyone to Tokyo. According to Clark's correspondence to his son back in Amherst, Kuroda highlighted the need to teach the students morality to Clark. Clark replied that the only way he knew how to do that was with biblical instruction, a suggestion that, understandably, did not go over well with Kuroda. By the end of the journey, however, Kuroda actually assented to the use of Christian texts to instruct the students how to properly conduct themselves. Given the distrust that the Japanese government held towards missionary work of any kind, Kuroda's acquiescence here is surprising.

Secondly, again according to correspondence with his wife, Kuroda floated the idea of bringing over thirty or so Americans to act as settler colonists to help tame the land. Given the lack of corroboration and the audaciousness of such a proposal, the veracity of Clark's claim may be rightly cast into question. Further, this idea, even if Kuroda did bring it up, would never have gone anywhere. The Meiji government would never have acceded to foreign colonists on

Japanese soil, especially given the constant struggle to be seen as a major player on the international stage. The claim itself, however, demonstrates the closeness of the relationship between Clark and Kuroda from the former's point of view.

Finally, Kuroda wrote to Clark asking for his opinion regarding the feasibility of canning Hokkaidō salmon as a possible commodity to help develop industry on the island (and by extension the economy). Clark though noting that he had no idea what he was talking about, proceeded to write a six-page response giving his suggestions, ending his missive with a promise to look into the matter more seriously when he returned to America.³⁰

SAC as a University

Regrettably, the history of Sapporo Agricultural School as a university has been largely overlooked by historians of Meiji education. While it is undeniable that Tokyo University (or alternatively The Imperial University or Tokyo Imperial University depending on the year) had more of an impact, primarily by serving as a direct pipeline to the national government, it should be noted that SAC was founded a year before Tokyo University officially incorporated from various medical and profession schools. Clark himself had a very high opinion of the students that accompanied him to Hokkaido, writing “the students are as good and enthusiastic as possible and so polite and grateful for instruction as to make American students seem like savages.” Further, Clark went on to note that many of the Japanese students can “write and read English better than the average of our M.A.C. candidates for admission.”

³⁰ This was not an empty promise. After returning to San Francisco, Clark met up with his eldest son and traveled overland to the Pacific Northwest to research the salmon industry. After taking copious notes and returning to Amherst, Clark proceeded to send an incredibly detailed letter to Kuroda concerning the proper canning of fish, complete with sketches of the types of machinery he encountered on his fact-finding mission.

The single most important set of documents relating to the official narrative of the SAC comes from the annual reports, published in both English and Japanese by the *Kaitakushi*.³¹ Not only do these reports provide us with an understanding of the educational priorities of the college, they also speak to the construction and layout of the space itself, as well as how these changed rather quickly over time. It bears remembering that the first year of a newly formed university houses and instructs only a quarter of its eventual capacity, and that while plans may be (and in fact were) drawn up for the education of second, third-, and fourth-year students, these guidelines were malleable given the exigencies of necessity.

Much of what can be said to be Clark's educational philosophy, as well as the plan for the construction and use of the campus is contained in "The First Annual Report of Sapporo Agricultural College, 1877", written for Kuroda Kiyotaka and the *Kaitakushi* more generally. After beginning with the usual sort of flattery worthy of one bureaucrat to another, Clark gives a succinct account of what he sees as the goal for the university:

Your Excellency has funded the Sapporo Agricultural College at the capital of your vast province of Hokkaido in order that the young men who are educated for officers may become familiar with its climate, soil and resources, and be qualified to aid efficiently in the development of its various productive industries. Though it contains exhaustive supplies of valuable timber and excellent coal, marble and other minerals, and though the salmon, herring, cod and other fisheries are of immense value, if properly conducted, yet the greatest wealth of the province is to be derived from its fertile soil. Agriculture is the surest foundation of national prosperity. It feeds the people, converts the elements into property, and furnishes most of the material for manufacturers, transportation and trade. The business of a country can most profitably be done by resident citizens who are intelligently and earnestly devoted to its welfare, *and they alone can be relied on for its defense in time of foreign invasion. As soon as practicable, therefore, the migratory*

³¹ The vast majority of the substantive information contained is essentially identical across versions, though there are one or two inconsistencies that bear touching upon. Clark, for example, though listed as the president of the college in English was relegated to "assistant director" (教頭, sometime glossed as "head teacher") status. This ambiguity also appears on the formal contract between Clark and the Japanese government, where the title of president was inserted into the English version alone, see Maki, 131, who concludes that in practice this difference never came up, and Clark certainly had wide latitude with regards to his control of the university's finances and day to day operation.

*fishermen of Hokkaido should be converted into permanent settlers.*³² [emphasis mine]

Agriculture, as Clark sees it, is the key to everything, including the national defense. Equally noteworthy is his emphasis on the need for more settlers. Though he singles out “migratory fishermen,” it seems clear in the context of that paragraph that the point is to attract new people to come to Hokkaido and begin farming the land, and the sooner the better. Furthermore, it is the goal, or perhaps duty, of the graduates of the college to serve as officers of the government and “aid efficiently in the development of its various productive industries.” The purpose of the college, as Clark saw it, was not to merely produce a crop of twenty-five or so colonial settlers a year, but rather to oversee the colonization of the island, a colonization based on agriculture.

The training that was deemed necessary to fulfill this need can be seen in the “course of study and instruction” also given in the report. As an example, during the first term of the first year of the program, the “cadets,” as they were known, had the following curriculum: “Algebra, including logarithms, 6 hours each week; Chemical Physics and Inorganic Chemistry, 6 hours; English, 6 hours; Japanese, 4 hours; Military Drill 2 hours; Manual Labor, 6 hours.”³³ During the second and subsequent terms different courses of study were both added and subtracted, physical and inorganic chemistry, for example, switched over to “Organic and Practical Chemistry, 8 hours” during the second term. There are two important things to note concerning the curriculum as laid out in the report. Firstly, “manual labor” remained as an explicit required component until the second term of the junior year, and even then it was replaced by things like “Stock and Dairy Farming” and “Veterinary Science and Practice.”³⁴ Essentially, this shows the commitment of

³² Hokkaidō Teikoku Daigaku. Nōgakubu. *First Annual Report of the Sapporo Agricultural College*. (Sapporo: Hokkaidō Chō [etc.], 1877), 2.

³³ *First Annual Report*, 45.

³⁴ *First Annual Report*, 46-47.

Clark and the other American professors to the principles of work-as-instruction. The manual labor alluded to here was almost exclusively devoted to the construction, planting, and tilling of the college farm. In addition to the physical task of constructing the 250-acre farm, the students were also required to work specifically on agricultural science (introduced during the second term of the first year, 4 hours a week). Clark made it clear, however, that while experimental crops were a part of the plan, the farm was meant to serve not only as an instructional vehicle for the students but also as an example to local farmers. To that end, Clark ordered that “unnecessary and unremunerative should be avoided, and in general only those enterprises should be undertaken that promise a speedy return.”³⁵ To Clark and the *Kaitakushi* (who signed off on all these provisions), the plan was to train men of talent to create models for the common settler-farmers to emulate. The college was not merely a place of learning, but a center from which agriculture would spread throughout the island. But while farming was *one* of the goals, it was far from the *only* objective.

The second point concerning the curriculum that needs to be addressed is that two hours of military drilling was never removed. Even in the later versions of the report, where much of the curriculum was adapted and altered for practical or political reasons, every student, regardless of year or term was required to perform military drills. As may be recalled when Mori originally came across the MAC, self-reliance and military readiness were what attracted him to the college in the first place. This linkage of swords and plowshares was thus central to the purpose of the college. In the report, Clark requests the construction of both an armory as well as a gymnasium which could be used for military instruction during inclement weather.³⁶ Moreover, in addition to military drill and tactics, Clark strongly advocated for the cadets to “be trained in

³⁵ *Ibid* 26.

³⁶ *First Annual Report*, 35.

the laws of health.”³⁷ This focus on natural laws brings us to another important aspect of the *First Report*, its thoroughgoing use of Western science as the basis for interacting with and understanding the world.



Figure 9: A recreation of the original model barn and other farming buildings. Given the exhaustive descriptions left by Clark and Wheeler, the structures are virtually an exact replica, though they are now slightly southeast of the original location. Photograph by author.

A considerable amount of the text, for instance, is devoted to a scientifically calculated precise measurements of the college buildings, grounds, and surrounding area more generally. The depth and width of the “Isheari River” [Ishikari] at its apogee are recorded, its distance to the city center, and the distance from the Kaitakushi headquarters to the university are all put

³⁷ *Ibid.*

down as the result of survey work undertaken by Wheeler, as are the dimensions of all the campus buildings down to the foot.³⁸ Furthermore, an astonishing amount of the report is dedicated to a description of the campus barn, including how all of its elements were designed to produce a given effect that was necessary to the proper raising of livestock in the conditions of Sapporo, which, oddly enough, Clark likened to the winters of Virginia. Finally, the “object of the college,” as Clark put it, was to train the students in both the theory and practice of the sciences, of which chemistry, zoology, and horticulture are especially emphasized.

The original organization and first year of the Sapporo Agricultural can be said to be marked by four main ideas. Firstly, the university was founded on the belief that the natural world was something to be studied in order to enrich the lives of humans. There were discoverable scientific Truths that, properly adapted, could help overcome any difficulty, which in the case of Hokkaido was how to colonize and settle the island. Secondly was Clark’s insistence that discovering these laws of nature could not be achieved without getting out into the natural world and gaining an understanding through doing and interacting on a physical level. Thirdly, agriculture, directed by the discovered scientific Truths, was the key to unlocking the potential value of Hokkaido as well as successfully colonizing the territory. By taming the land, exploiting its naturally fertile soil, introducing livestock and pastoral agriculture at the expense of the indigenous Aynu and their unscientific and therefore unacceptable land use traditions, Hokkaido could be turned from a territory only useful as a source of raw materials to self-sustainable farmland. Finally, this new territory would be defended through the training of the

³⁸ *Ibid*, 5-9.

cadets in the arts of military tactics for their eventual role as officers and leaders of the province.³⁹

SAC As a Space



Figure 10: Left: Central Lawn of Hokkaidō University, 2019, photograph by author. Right: SAC library, 1903

Any visitor to the present campus of Hokkaidō University is immediately struck by the lush greenery and scenic beauty of the campus.⁴⁰ From the winding stream along the southern end to the tree lined avenues that shade the main thoroughfare, the successor to SAC is a verdant three-kilometer patch situated just slightly north of the JR station. These images, however, would have looked entirely out of place in the days of the SAC. Strolling the grounds of the campus presents visitors with a narrative of natural harmony as constructed and curated as the campus grounds themselves. Far from being nestled into a forest setting, the SAC was founded in order to help do away with just such a setting, in a location that had been cleared of most foliage for the venture.

³⁹ Students were required to stay in Hokkaido for 5 years after graduation unless they were privately sponsored and not supported by the government. See *First Annual*, 41.

⁴⁰ Although, it should be noted, these spaces are completely devoid of biodiversity.

Before the founding of Sapporo, the area in which it lies, the Ishikari Plain, covered approximately 3,800 km², and was almost entirely covered in old growth forest.⁴¹ The earliest settlements built by the Japanese on Hokkaidō, Otaru and Hakodate, for example, were located along the coast, both for easier access to the mainland and because the interior of the island was unsuitable for agriculture in its forested state. The Ishikari River was an excellent source of fresh water and food, and the Aynu people inhabited there region long before Japanese settler-colonizers arrived.⁴² This all changed with the specter of Russia.

As previously mentioned, in an effort to thwart any possible Russian encroachment from Vladivostok, the Meiji government, like the Tokugawa before them, sought to bring the island more firmly under their control. The area surrounding modern Sapporo, being advantageously positioned with both flat land, verdant forests rich with game, and close to a large source of freshwater, was inhabited by native people dating back to at least the 4th century CE.⁴³ Unfortunately for the inhabitants at the time of the *Kaitakushi*, however, the site was quickly determined to be the most logical site for the colonial capital. During the final years of the Bakufu, the construction of an irrigation canal was begun and completed in 1866 under the supervision of Otomo Kametaro.⁴⁴ With the beginning of an infrastructure in place, Japanese settlers began to trickle in, and the project of the clearing of the land commenced. By the time the SAC was established (1876), the area around modern Sapporo Station had been built up, and

⁴¹ See Conrad Totman, *Japan an Environmental History*, 228. Examples of some of this forest can still be seen in very limited locations on *Moiwa-san* and *Maruyama*, the mountains to the west of Sapporo proper. Additionally, sections of Hokkaidō University's Botanical Garden are meant to be illustrative of what the region would have looked like based on the indigenous flora.

⁴² A complete list of the various historical injustices committed against the Aynu people by various regimes from the main island would be far too long to include here. For an overview of Aynu studies in English, see Hudson, Mark, Ann-Elise Lewallen, and Mark K. Watson. *Beyond Aynu Studies: Changing Academic and Public Perspectives* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014). Whether or not these people were Aynu remains a matter of some dispute.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ See 『ひがしく再発見 まちの歴史講座 東区の原風景』, 98-100

the surrounding areas were beginning to be cleared for agriculture. This is not to say, of course, that literally every tree was felled during this period; as figures 10 and especially 15 show, there were still individual trees or wooded areas beyond the city (see figure 15).⁴⁵ It should be clear, however, that nothing approaching the greenery of the current campus was around in the beginning.



Figure 11: Students and Faculty posing in front of the Drill House, 1901

That is not to say that the campus was merely a collection of buildings erected haphazardly upon the bare earth. In addition to the obvious examples of the barn and college farm, the majority of the campus as a greenspace was built by the students as part of their education. In the second year of the college, after the departure of Clark, the Sapporo

⁴⁵ Sapporo is not particularly exceptional on this count, as even the land around Tokyo as late as the early 20th century was still home to many pockets of woodland area.

Experimental Plant House had been incorporated into the campus, providing a new space for students to engage with zoological experiments.⁴⁶ Additionally, the SAC made some changes to the curriculum for the soon to be juniors. Specifically, Professor Wheeler, now in charge, felt the students needed to gain skills in landscaping. As Wheeler sets out in the *Second Annual Report of the College*, “Professor Penhallow [recently hired and arrived from Massachusetts] will manage the plant house and garden, and will superintend the laying out and planting of College Square, in so far as it may be applied to instruction and illustration in arboriculture and landscape gardening.”⁴⁷ This is the clearest example we have of the students of the SAC utilizing what were taught to them as “scientific principles” to remake a part of the campus that was not clearly designed for such a purpose (as was the college farm for example). The results were apparently quite satisfactory, as the next year “landscape gardening” was replaced by “practical horticulture.”⁴⁸ In the span of three years, the campus of the SAC had gone from nothing more than rudimentary bunkhouses coupled with small classrooms to a functional constructed greenspace, complete with an operational farm. The students had effectively colonized the topography.

In addition to the work of altering the landscape, the cadets were also learning to map it using the latest Western scientific surveying methods. By the third year of the college, surveying was taught to sophomores as theory, then carried out in practice by juniors who were responsible for the mapping not of not only the campus but of other *Kaitakushi* projects as well. Students were organized into teams of seven, and each were given a task, one of the largest being the

⁴⁶ Hokkaidō Teikoku Daigaku. Nōgakubu. *Second Annual Report of the Sapporo Agricultural College*. (Sapporo: Hokkaidō Chō [etc.], 1878), 4.

⁴⁷ *Second Annual Report*, 4.

⁴⁸ *Third Annual Report*, 35.

planning and leveling of the extension to college farm (though this was not completed due to excessive snow that winter).⁴⁹



Figure 12: Map of the land ceded to the SAC in relationship to the rest of Sapporo in the 1870's. The campus lies at the northern end, beyond the city streets.

On the architectural front, by the end of the second year, Wheeler wanted to see a complete reconstruction of the college buildings, suggesting that any future building be constructed two feet off the ground, to avoid the problem of frost, be equipped with cellars and brick chimneys, and should have glass, not paper, windows. Other structural improvements were suggested as well, one of the most notable being the relocation of the college library to resituate

⁴⁹ *Third Annual Report*, 8.

to be more accessible to the students (the current location being somewhat removed from the student dwellings and classrooms).⁵⁰



Figure 13: Design schematic for a new era of campus building.

More ambitious still were the plans to expand the campus. As written in the *Third Annual Report* by Penhallow, there was a plan to turn the campus into an arboretum:

The grounds immediately surrounding the college buildings, have been reserved for use as an arboretum. A large number of native trees and shrubs have been collected and will be properly arranged in the grounds the coming season. There will be also introduced, such species of American trees as will prove of value in Hokkaido for timber and other purposes.⁵¹

By 1886, a botanical garden, still extant, was built to the south of the campus, behind the old Kaitakushi offices. This project was spearheaded by Kingo Miyabe, a member of the second class admitted to the SAC. After its completion he journeyed to America where

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Third Annual Report*, 4.

he studied botany at Harvard until 1899, when he returned to manage the botanic garden once again.



Figure 14: Present day scene from the Sapporo Botanic Garden, one of the few places in city to still house any of the old growth forest that once dominated the region, photograph by author.

It was also in the 1880s that special attention was given to “the various methods of propagating small fruits, grafting, bedding plants, setting and trimming hedges, and the proper manner of and care to be observed in transplanting trees.”⁵²

What, then, can we say about the text of the SAC campus? From the plethora of sites dedicated to experimental horticulture, the college farm, the botanical garden, the Plant House, etc., the physical space of the SAC was part of a project of scientific research, a project that defined the relationship of humans to nature as one of material usefulness. As Professor Wheeler put it in the *Third Annual Report*, the point of field work is that “the students will go into the field and study plants in their relation to each other and the value to man.”⁵³ Another point being

⁵² *Fourth Annual Report*, 6.

⁵³ *Third Annual Report*, 15.

asserted by the space is the importance of agriculture, and an agriculture that is informed by science. The students themselves had rewritten, so to speak, the terrain of that part of Sapporo into a microcosm of what the Japanese state hoped would become the model for future colonial efforts. The site, far from expressing some sort of harmony with nature was explicitly arguing for the need to drastically alter it. It was a space where a new form of knowledge was being embodied and encoded into orchards, pastures, furrows, and pleasant flora-lined paths. Sapporo Agricultural College was an argument for a new vision of Japanese nature.



Figure 15: A wide angle view of the campus circa 1879. The improvements made to the buildings as well as to the grounds can be seen, note especially the young trees planted near the rear as well as the integrated nature of the farm to the campus itself.

Legacy

The impact that the SAC had on the eventual colonization is difficult to judge. As frustrating as it is for public policy students, government policies and incentives almost never exist in a vacuum, and the SAC was no exception. The Japanese government in Tokyo was

involved in other inducements, including the granting of plots of lands to interested parties. As such, the population of Hokkaido grew precipitously. Between 1873 and 1903, the population of the island jumped from 120,000 to over 1,000,000 Japanese settlers.⁵⁴ Further complicating the picture is that even in the area of agricultural development, the SAC was not alone. Dozens of experimental horticultural sites were founded from the end of the Meiji through the Taisho (and to the present day, for that matter), making the exact influence the SAC exerted difficult to gauge.

The SAC did, however, definitely contribute to the colonization of Hokkaido, both in terms of providing a new way to think about the relationship between humanity and the land, not to mention agriculture, but also by providing the colonial government with well-trained officials. Beyond that, the rigorous Western-science approach used at the college was to have an impact on how Hokkaido was conceived of as a mental space. Quoting from the *Third Annual Report*, “the practical exercises have been made to cover as wide a field as possible; and have include planting, cultivation, and harvesting of many farm and garden crops, the care of stock, driving teams, and the cutting of wood and clearing of land.”⁵⁵ Virtually every way in which the colonial government needed to interact with the land was taught from a Western perspective. Not only that, but, per Wheeler, there were “frequent solicitations of the Colonial Department, for engineering services.”⁵⁶ The hands-on approach that became the bedrock of SAC instruction found a willing partner at the *Kaitakushi*. Roads were surveyed and improved with graveling, modern drainage techniques were instituted around the city, and agricultural exhibitions were

⁵⁴ "Statistics Bureau of Japan," Archived from the original on 2020-11-08.

⁵⁵ *Third Annual Report*,

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 2.

held in Sapporo proper, giving the students (and faculty) the chance to prove the value of their agricultural endeavors.⁵⁷

Most importantly, as this chapter has argued repeatedly, science was portrayed as the handmaiden of progress, and “nature” became an object of study for the advancement of that cause. In the words of Wheeler:

It is the aim of the college to qualify its students for intelligent and effective work in the administration of business, and in those departments of industry and technical science pertaining to agriculture and the development of natural resources, manufactures, and the maintenance of an advanced civilization; also to promote conceptions of their relations to the state and to society, and of self-culture befitting their prospective stations.⁵⁸

The last point Wheeler makes here is instructive as well. As Clark argued before the founding of college in Sapporo, scientific progress leads to technological innovation, which in turn leads to increased agricultural productivity. Of course, as we all have learned from Clark, “agriculture is the surest foundation of national prosperity.”

Conclusion: Nature as Science

Throughout this chapter, we have been making the case that the natural world was being radically reconceptualized in Hokkaidō in general and at Sapporo Agricultural School in particular. The “natural world” was being conceived of as an object of study that would lead to understanding of “nature” as a means of the organizing principle of the universe. This is not to say, of course, that such an approach was only taking place in a colonial/peripheral space within Japan during the early Meiji, nor was it the even the only one being partly driven by Western advisors; examples of this are replete. Further, as we noted at the outset, the idea of the study

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 56-58.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 70.

natural phenomenon was not an idea without precursors in the Tokugawa Era. The uniqueness of the SAC, hinged upon two elements. Firstly, this was an attempt to subjugate a territory by means of transforming the landscape using all the tools of modern science. Secondly is the collapsing of learning and doing, especially in terms of environmental restructuring, that dominated Clark's educational philosophy and subsequently the teaching and experiences of students at the SAC.

As discussed, Clark was not selected at random, but even more fundamental was that it was no coincidence that an American was chosen in the first place. The American experience with manifest destiny seemed very similar to the Meiji government's own mission in Hokkaidō: a territory that they claimed sovereignty over yet was settled by indigenous groups. The similarity of the "frontier" aspect of the two situations was, however, not replicated within the eventual decisions made by the Japanese with respect to the Aynu.⁵⁹

The grounds SAC represented a new type of knowledge being embodied in a physical space. Moreover, this knowledge was meant to both improve the material conditions of the settlers in Hokkaidō (and Japan more generally) as well as "tame" the natural environment in order to expand the government's control thereof. Also, in contrast to, say, the garden at *Kairaku-en*, the human capital involved with the space, the students, were tasked with the creation and dissemination of this knowledge, both scholastically and with the site of the embodiment. Further, their creation of knowledge in the form of a space was part and parcel to their acquisition of the knowledge they were meant to be building. A way of learning and the object of the lesson were both encoded simultaneously.

⁵⁹ It should be noted, however, that by the year of the 1899 law that stripped the Aynu of their indigenous status, the *Kaitakushi* itself, not to mention the American advisors, had long since disbanded and departed.

This vision of nature, one that was simultaneously the source of knowledge and the use to which such knowledge would be put was, of course not the only way “nature” as a concept was being redefined during the Meiji period. Eighteen years after the founding of the Sapporo Agricultural College, a new aesthetic of “Japanese nature,” conceived of as art, was being tended to. Yet it too was not removed from state power.

Chapter Three: The Lawmaker and the Landscaper: The reinvention of Japanese nature at Murin-an and Heian Jingū

“Art for art’s sake is an empty phrase. Art for the sake of the true, art for the sake of the good and the beautiful, that is the faith I am searching for.”

-George Sand

“If voting made any difference they wouldn't let us do it.”

-Mark Twain

Twenty years later and approximately 630 miles to the southwest, a similarly political reimagination of the natural world was taking place within Yamagata Aritomo’s (1838-1922) newly acquired villa in Kyoto, Murin-an. The political nature of the space, however, is where the similarities end. Whereas the campus at the Sapporo Agricultural College was meant to relate human activity to “nature” through the lens of late 19th century science, the garden at Murin-an was an understanding of the natural world as art.

Moreover, this artistic usage was a watershed moment in the creation of a new aesthetic of Japanese “nature,” one less defined by allusions to other well-known settings or images, but as scenes designed to capture the essence of “untouched” Japanese wilderness. Gone as the use of

standing stones arranged just so in order to evoke the legendary Mount Hōrai (*Penglai* in Mandarin, residence of various Daoist immortals) and in its place were the usage of natural elements meant to convey a sense of nature as it existed within the deep mountains of Japan. This new emphasis on naturalistic garden design, however, was not merely a new artistic fad. This chapter will argue that Yamagata's understanding of nature, immediately spread to the people through the connection of his gardener Ogawa Jihei VII, also known as Ueji, via his design of the gardens at Heian Jingū, was an extension of Yamagata's distrust of popular sovereignty and a manifestation of a political system that consciously placed the people in a subservient role to the state and the emperor in particular. Yamagata and Ueji, in a sense were crafting a new anti-democratic understanding of nature and constructed greenspaces that argued, implicitly it is true, for a non-democratic Japan.

Specifically, this chapter will first examine Yamagata's relationship with state power and his distrust of the people before moving to an in-depth analysis of Murin-an, both the space itself and the uses to which Yamagata put it. From there, we will move to the construction of Heian Jingū's and its gardens, itself located almost a literal stone's throw from Murin-an, by Ogawa Jihei who oversaw much of the construction at Murin-an and who adopted many of his employer's garden design philosophies. We will then briefly touch upon the broad appeal of this new aesthetic by the elites who were flocking to the area around the new shrine, Higashiyama, before finally looking at Okazaki Kōen, the public park that links Heian Jingū to the new center of Kyoto culture that was built up around it.

As alluded to, there will be two arguments that will run concurrently throughout this chapter; firstly, that Yamagata and Ogawa created a new aesthetic of Japanese nature meant to highlight and glorify the nation's rural and undeveloped areas, and, secondly, that they were

simultaneously involved in a political project, by means of constructed greenspaces, to reject democracy and popular sovereignty while supporting the preexisting Meiji oligarchical power structure. These seemingly disparate threads will be joined together by a close examination of the elements both men used in their remaking of space, contrasted with similar built landscapes constructed or repurposed in Kyoto in and around the same time period. Before moving on to these matters, however, we need to say something concerning the understanding of nature as art as opposed to a canvas to spread virtue to the people or a subject to be examined via Western science.

Nature as Art

The notion of nature as serving as the inspiration for art is, of course, not novel to Japan, East Asia, or the world during the late Meiji. Subjects as varied as vast scenic vistas and a single flower have been depicted by painters, described by authors, and remarked on by poets for millennia. The idea that nature can be interpreted in different ways, or perhaps put to different uses, is likewise not groundbreaking. What was taking place in Japan among certain individuals, of whom Yamagata and Ogawa are counted, was the emergence (or re-emergence) of the natural world itself being a work of art. In an exchange with Mori Ōgai, Iwamoto Yoshiharu opined that the truest expression of “art” (*bijutsu*, 美術) was the “reproduction of nature *as it is*.”¹ In this sense, *Murin-an* can be seen as an interpretation of that ideal as we will later discuss.

¹ “自然のままに自然を写す (*shizen no mama ni shizen o utsutsu*).” The actual context of this debate was not that of gardening, nor was it even of the natural world in the sense that we would use the term. Rather, the two disagreed over the expression of emotions of stage actors; allowing the spontaneously arising emotions to show on their face during a performance, Iwamoto’s argument, versus the intentionality of human intervention in the evaluation of Mori. This argument, however, has been identified by linguist Yanabu Akira as the shift between two different definitions of “*shizen*.” Furthermore, Iwamoto’s phrase lived on in other contexts, including discussions about the proper way to reproduce nature: as it is or with (obvious) human intervention. See Yanabu Akira, *Hon'yaku No Shisō: "Shizen" to NATURE* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1977). 4-5. for an in-depth discussion of the history of the meaning of *shizen*.

Speaking more generally however, the underlying understanding of nature as art as opposed to medium or object of study is crucial to the apprehension of the purpose of the spaces in question. In the case of Kairaku-en, we saw nature being understood in almost utilitarian terms; the composition of the different elements was meant to convey a political message directly to the denizens of the domain. In the case of Sapporo Agricultural College, it was the investigation of the natural world that was meant to help promote both the Japanese Imperial project as well as the scientific progress of the Japanese. Murin-an and Heian Jingū, conceived of as works of art, had a very different relationship with the population of Japan.

Murry Edelman, in his 1995 *From Art to Politics*, argues that “there is evidence to suggest that works of art themselves are more effective influences on political beliefs when they are indirect and implicit rather than direct or explicit.”² Under this assumption, it is the very use of natural elements as art at Meiji Jingū that made it so effective at, as Julia Thomas has argued concerning the politics of the Meiji period, the imperial system and the state was naturalized to the public. Naturalization through “nature,” as it were. By obscuring the political messaging through multiple levels of mediation—natural element to art to the unbroken line of emperors to legitimization of the imperial system as the natural outgrowth of Japanese culture and history—there is a subtlety at play enhancing the basic message: isn’t it great to have an emperor? An emperor that, ironically enough, left the city behind less than thirty years ago.

Changing Kyoto, Changing Spaces

As has been expansively covered in nearly all accounts of the history of the early Meiji, the shift of power from the Bakufu to the Emperor and the Meiji Oligarchs came with a shift in the geographic locus of the emperor’s symbolic power as well. After nearly a millennium of the

² Murry Edelman, *From Art to Politics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 24.

emperor living in Kyoto, his residence was moved, with great pomp and circumstance, to Edo, renamed Tokyo (Eastern Capital). Though the above account is not necessarily incorrect, it tends to elide the fact that while the emperor was acquiring new digs, the spatial seat of actual power in Japan was not substantively changed on a physical level. Certainly, there were new buildings in new spaces within what was once Edo, and there were new faces running the various, and often new, departments of the government, but the city was still the center of political power within Japan.

Kyoto, on the other hand, was now seemingly a city that had lost its purpose. With the departure of the Meiji Emperor in 1868 for Tokyo, notwithstanding his brief return the following year for ceremonial purposes, Kyoto faced an identity crisis. A city that was, to borrow from Henri Lefebvre, physically, mentally, and socially centered around the existence of the emperor was now bereft of its *raison d'être*. Despite his physical absence and what could have been the resultant unmoored city, Alice Tseng has argued that Kyoto, as a physical and imaginary space, was necessary to symbolically build the past for the emperor.³ Thus, the purpose behind the construction of the dozens of modern monuments and historical reconstructions was to stress the notion of a long imperial history, which, in turn, would serve to stress the legitimacy of the current system.

Here, as in the cases of Mito and Hokkaido, we see a reconfiguration of the physical landscape to reconfigure the mental landscape, not only of the people of Kyoto but of the nation as well. As Tseng argues:

Kyoto, from the time of the emperor's departure up to the height of the Asia-Pacific War [...], in fact remained very relevant to the emperor-centered national agenda. Politicians, planners, historians, and architects within and outside Kyoto mobilized the city's long historical connection to the imperial house to facilitate

³ Alice Yu-Ting Tseng, *Modern Kyoto: Building for Ceremony and Commemoration, 1868-1940*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press), 2018, 13-18.

large-scale development of architecture and urban spaces. Specifically, major imperial events such as births, weddings, enthronements, and funerals throughout the period served as direct catalysts to build large, for the immediate purpose of paying homage to the modern monarchy, and for implementing a longer view toward fashioning a unique model of urban modernization.⁴

Setting aside the effect these developments had on Meiji “urban modernization,” the goal of honoring the “modern monarchy” was, in my view, to naturalize not only the Meiji government, but a specific vision for that government, one crafted by the Meiji oligarchs. And this vision was not based upon popular sovereignty.

Yamagata Aritomo

Yamagata Aritomo is one of the more interesting and influential figures whose impact was felt from the dawn of the Meiji to the middle of the Taishō, when some ill-considered remarks led to his ouster from the circles of power before his death in 1922. From soldier to general, general to oligarch, oligarch to prime minister, prime minister to member of the *germo*,⁵ Aritomo maintained a connection to the Imperial Government. While the exact nature and extent of political power remains a matter of scholarly debate, and in the past his influence was largely overstated, there is little doubt that Aritomo was a major player in the political landscape of his age.⁶ In this chapter, I will argue that Aritomo was not merely one of the Meiji oligarchs, but a staunch believer in oligarchy as a system of government.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵ A group of unofficial advisors to the emperor, made primarily of Meiji oligarchs.

⁶ Given the length of his life and influence on modern Japanese politics, surprisingly little has been written about Yamagata Aritomo specifically in the Anglophone world. He was featured in *Eminent Asians; six great personalities of the new East* (New York, London, D. Appleton and company, 1929) written by Upton Close, then only appears again in monograph form with Roger Hackett’s *Yamagata Aritomo in the rise of modern Japan, 1838-1922* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1971). Things are much richer on the Japanese side, as one would expect, with *Yamagata Aritomo to Meiji kokka* (Inoue Toshikazu, Tōkyō : NHK Shuppan, 2010) being the most recent example.

Coupled with his political career, Aritomo was, perhaps curiously, an avid gardener. Suzuki Hiroyuki speculated that this came from a desire to remake the environment, and indeed the world insofar as one could achieve such ends in such a small space.⁷ The result of these two facets of Aritomo's character, a distrust of the Japanese populace and a love of garden design, led to the first of the two gardens to be taken up in this chapter, Murin-an. It is my contention that Aritomo built his now famous garden villa to make manifest his commitment to an oligarchical form of true political power, while simultaneously redefining the very essence of "Japanese nature." In so doing, Aritomo drastically altered not only garden styles, but helped give rise to a new physical manifestation of the natural, one that sought to keep the people walled off from political power. Put simply, Yamagata Aritomo created a nature that was antithetical to democratic thought.

Yamagata Aritomo was born in the shadow of Hagi Castle in Abu, or what is now Yamaguchi Prefecture in 1838. As a member of a samurai family, he enrolled in the Shōka Sonjuku school in Hagi, where he became Pupil of Yoshida Shōin (Yoshida haven taken over the school after his incarceration ended in 1856).⁸ It was during his time with Yoshida that Yamagata met and radicalized with a number of future Meiji oligarchs from the Chōshū faction, most notably his eventual rival, Itō Hirobumi. After Yoshida's execution, an event that both

⁷ Suzuki, 70.

⁸ Inoue Toshikazu, *Yamagata Aritomo to Meiji kokka*, Tokyo: NHK Books, 2010. Yoshida Shōin was one of the earliest and most influential leaders of what would eventually morph into the movement to "restore the emperor." He was arrested by the Tokugawa *Bakufu* after attempting (unsuccessfully) to board Admiral Perry's ship before it left harbor. After his release, in addition to taking over his uncle's school and teaching many future political movers and shakers, Yoshida took and a handful of his supporters took up arms in response to an unsuccessful attempt to force the emperor to sign a treaty with the Western powers in 1858. His small revolt was easily put down and he was executed the following year. For a full account, see Kirihara Kenshin. *Yoshida Shōin No Shisō to Kōdō: Bakumatsu Nihon Ni Okeru Jita Ninshiki No Tenkai*, Sendai-shi: Tōhoku Daigaku Shuppankai, 2009. For a much earlier account in English, see Tokutomi Iichiro, and Horace E. Coleman, *The Life of Shōin Yoshida*, Yokohama: Kelly & Walsh, 1917.

Yamagata and Itō attended, Yamagata whole-heartedly threw himself into the life of a *shishi*, one of the partisans committed to bringing down the *Bakufu* and restoring the emperor to power.⁹

After the formal transfer of power in 1868, Yamagata was a part of the military force that prosecuted the Boshin War in the eastern domains and territories.¹⁰ Roger Hacket (writing from a thoroughly Modernization theory point of reference) argues that Yamagata learned of the importance for Western arms during his anti-Bakufu years, a point which is underscored by Yamagata's immediate call for a Western conscription-based army.¹¹ Further, after a 1869 petition to travel overseas (with others) "in order for them to become intimately acquainted with world conditions and to acquire practical knowledge about warships, artillery, military systems and administration," Yamagata was sent to Prussia and France for that purpose, returning in the Fall of 1870.¹² While his involvement in the study of military systems and strategies is ancillary to this project at best, it was during his time in Europe that Yamagata was to develop his fear of the spread of a truly representative democracy. In a letter to Kido Takayoshi from Dec. 19, 1869, Yamagata reported with unease the progressive weakening of monarchical power throughout Europe, and a fear that the supreme power wielded by the emperor might also one day come under attack.¹³ It is this suspicion of the influence of even limited popular sovereignty that guided much of Yamagata's political positions for years to come.

Hacket calls Yamagata's "three major achievements" of the first ten years of the Meiji Era 1) adoption of conscription, 2) the defeat of Saigō Takamori in 1877, and 3) the reorganization of military along German lines.¹⁴ Though again this might seem ancillary, in

⁹ Inoue Toshikazu, 24-30.

¹⁰ Roger Hacket, *Yamagata Aritomo in the Rise of Modern Japan, 1838-1922*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, 47-48.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 49-50.

¹² Tokutomi Ichirō, *Kōshaku Yamagata Aritomo den*, I, Tokyo, 1933, 687 quoted in Hacket, 51.

¹³ Tokutomi Ichirō, *Kōshaku Yamagata Aritomo den*, II, Tokyo, 1935, 29.

¹⁴ Hacket, 50.

addition to the precipitous rise in political power after the defeat of Saigō Takamori (128-1877), the creation of Japan's modern army was more than merely a matter of national security.

Yamagata's chief aim was national unity and felt that unity through conscripted militarization was the most expedient means of bringing this about. Additionally, by virtue of being both the architect and on again off again leader of this army, Yamagata created for himself a powerful tool to wield at his opponents. As Hacket aptly states, "Yamagata's control of the army was always the heart of his political strength."¹⁵ His close connection to the army would soon pay dividends.

Growing popular dissidence and unrest spurred Yamagata's organization of the military police in 1881 and the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors of 1882. The latter took great lengths to emphasize loyalty to the state (and therefore the emperor), and went further by attempting to insulate members of the Japanese military from popular politics, stating:

Remember that, as the protection of the state and the maintenance of its power depend upon the strength of its arms, the growth or decline of this strength must affect the nation's destiny for good or for evil; therefore neither be led astray by current opinions nor meddle in politics, but with single heart fulfill your essential duty of loyalty, and bear in mind that duty is weightier than a mountain, while death is lighter than a feather.

In a memorial to the government in 1879, Yamagata diagnosed the cause of the growing tide of civil unrest as based upon four factors. Firstly, Restoration happened too fast, leaving many people unable to cope with the transitions. Secondly, results of reform not yet discernable to the public eye. Thirdly, Saigō's rebellion being still fresh in his memory, Yamagata felt that many were disaffected by reforms. Finally, Yamagata maintained that by the government's continued

¹⁵ Hacket, 89. For an extended discussion of the development of the Japanese army under Yamagata, see Chapter 2 of Hacket, and Oka Yoshitake, *Yamagata Aritomo: Meiji Nihon No Shōchō*, Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1961.

focus on laws, the people's morality had decayed into a paradigm of legal and illegal as opposed to right and wrong.¹⁶

In order to counteract these societal ills, Yamagata Created a new and somewhat sinister police force that became more and more harsh as time progressed. All of this was intensified in 1886, when Yamagata restricted the petitioning of officials and forced demonstrators to submit the names of their leaders and place of meeting three days in advance. All of this finally culminated with the Peace Preservation Ordinance of 1887, a draconian bill which forbade all secret societies and assemblies, gave the police the authority to disband any demonstration, and gave the home minister (Yamagata) the authority to expel anyone within a seven and a half mile radius of the imperial palace who was “judged to be inciting disturbances or disrupting public tranquility.”¹⁷

Following these political forays, Yamagata would be tagged to serve as Prime Minister twice (though he resisted the appointment both time): 1889-1891 and 1898-1900. If there can be said to be a single most important political ideal to Yamagata, it would be the need to safeguard the power of the government as executor of the imperial prerogative. Yamagata firmly believed that the government was master of the people, not their servant, and that bureaucracy should be seen as a servant of the state, not as a representative of the people. Perhaps none of Yamagata's proposals is more emblematic of his view of his politics than his (rejected) plan to rig the outcome of the election of 1892 in order to preserve the power of the oligarchy.¹⁸

¹⁶ Tokutomi Ichirō, *Kōshaku Yamagata Aritomo den*, II, 842-843.

¹⁷ Hackett, 105. The law was so draconian even Mishima Michitsune, the Tokyo chief of police who was nicknamed the “Chief of the Devils” opposed it until Yamagata threatened to take over the police force with the military.

¹⁸ See George Akita, and American Council of Learned Societies, *Foundations of Constitutional Government in Modern Japan, 1868-1900*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 1967, 98-99.

From both the trajectory of his life, as well as the events and positions outlined above, Yamagata's bonafides as a man of influence who sought to keep the upper levels of power as insulated as possible from the common people are clear. What then does this have to do with his construction of greenspaces? Can a man, however antidemocratic, not have a piece of garden to garden to call his own? To address this issue, it is important to show just how innovative and skilled Yamagata was as a gardener in his own right. Takahashi Yoshio (1861-1973, writing under the penname Takahashi Sōan), one of the most influential cultural critics in Kyoto during the Taisho Era, as well as a great denigrator of Meiji and Taisho gardens, wrote that:

A man of wisdom enjoys water, it is said; in every place where Yamagata lives, without exception, the scenery of the garden is embellished with water. People perceiving before their own eyes a scenery of *spontaneous rusticity*¹⁹ [emphasis mine] are at a point completely overtaken by it and do not realize that it is the creative power of these gardens. This is an extremely clever point which resembles as it were the beauty of an accomplished *waka* poetry verse. For a person of high position it is very hard to imagine that exactly this would be his hidden talent. If he would have been a poor fellow without any rank or status, he would, without a doubt, have left many interesting gardens to posterity as a simple gardener.²⁰

This praise continued through the present day, especially within garden scholar circles, with figures such as Kuitert, Amasaki, and Suzuki Hiroyuki all praising (or in Amasaki's case acknowledging) the skill that Yamagata seemed to possess.²¹

The point that I am trying to make here is not that Yamagata was a genius gardener, but rather that he took his landscape design seriously. *Murin-an* was not merely a space where a neophyte managed to accidentally accomplish something that became trendsetting, nor was there any ambiguity in Yamagata's deliberate use of this medium. *Murin-an* was consciously created

¹⁹ 野趣, (yashu).

²⁰ From Takashi Sōan, *Garaku tango*, 1914, quoted in Wybe Kuitert, *Japanese Gardens and Landscapes 1650-1950*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 202.

²¹ See Kuitert, 2016, Amasaki Hiromasa, *Nanadaike Ogawa Jihei: Sanshi suimei no miyako ni kaesaneba*, Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 2012, Suzuki Hiroyuki, *Niwashi Ogawa Jihei to Sono Jidai*. Shohan, Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 2013.

to serve its purposes, both political and aesthetic. While Yamagata was simultaneously forging a new vision of what Japanese “nature” was through his aesthetic sensibilities, the intention behind the selection of the space, the elements contained therein, and the gestalt of the garden was intimately bound up with his political beliefs: oligarchs should guide the emperor as the real power in Japan.

Murin-an

While many of the exact dates surrounding Murin-an have been a subject of much scholarly debate,²² there is no doubt that construction on the garden began in 1894 and continued through at least 1896, when everything excluding the southeastern waterfall area was completed. As has been mentioned, it is my contention that two parallel, yet nevertheless connected strains of thought were being interpreted through the garden medium. Firstly, a new aesthetic form of “Japanese nature” was being forged by plant, stone, and water, while secondly Yamagata was creating a space where politics could proceed apace while being physically and conceptually separated from popular pressures.

When it comes to direct information for the thought underlying the garden at Murin-an, both implicit and explicit, there are three major sources. Firstly, we have two interviews, one of Yamagata himself and the other of Ogawa Jihei. These were conducted by Kuroda Tengai, a journalist working on *Zoku kōku kaishin roku*²³ (A Further Record of the Pleasant Scenes [of Kyoto]), a work that was the late Meiji equivalent of the “50 places you MUST see in Kyoto”

²² See Suzuki, 65-93, Kuitert 206-208, and Amasaki, 50-54. It is known that Yamagata sold the previous incarnation of Murin-an, which abutted the Kamo river near Nijō, in 1891. Exactly how and when Yamagata originally came into possession of the new site in Higashiyama is unclear, as is the date he began residing there on a temporary basis, and even when the garden was complete (Amasaki opts for 1903, Kuitert for 1896).

²³ 続江湖快心録. The Ogawa interview appears in the follow up to the follow up volume published in 1902.

type web articles. A second source comes, once again, from a stele erected by Yamagata in November of 1901. Finally, as in all our sites, we must consider the text of the garden as a constructed greenspace. In the case of Murin-an, interestingly, the reading of the space is considerably more informative than the textual and recorded oral documents. Another important source of information regarding the political nature of Murin-an comes from indirect sources.

One of the most overlooked aspects of Yamagata's construction is the name itself: Murin-an, 無鄰菴.²⁴ The characters of the name literally translate to “no neighbors villa,” and when the land was first loaned to Yamagata, that was essentially what it was; a residence removed from the residents of the city.²⁵ Suzuki notes that “Murin-an was a place for politics, and the garden of Ogawa Jihei was a political garden,” yet provides no elaboration on what he's getting at.²⁶ I posit, however, that the seclusion of Murin-an was part and parcel to its use: a place where he could invite other Meiji politicians, particularly the Meiji oligarchs, to hash out important political issues away from both the prying of the Japanese populace but also from the established political machinery in Tokyo.

During his stays in Kyoto, Yamagata hosted several local politicians and men of industry and culture at his garden, most notably Kyoto's governor Nakai Hiroshi (1839-1894) to whom Yamagata would introduce his young gardener, Ogawa Jihei. Other, more influential meetings would begin after Yamagata's theoretical retirement from politics when he resigned as prime minister again in 1901. Many letters between Yamagata and influential conservative magazine editor and journalist Tokutomi Sohō, starting in 1903, reference the two meeting at Yamagata's

²⁴ It also should be mentioned that this was not the first residence built by Yamagata to bear this moniker, nor was it even the only one in Kyoto. For a full account of the different locations to be so designated, see Amasaki, 1988, 4.

²⁵ It was located near to *Nanzen-ji* and within shouting distance of the famed cloisonne designer Namikawa Yasuyuki (1845–1927), yet the home and garden enjoyed a strong sense of privacy.

²⁶ Suzuki, 85.

place in Kyoto. The purpose of these visits was to allow Yamagata to use Sohō’s position to get a handle on the pulse of the average citizen, as it were, while Sohō used his access to power to further his own ambitions as a public intellectual.²⁷ By far the most dramatic use of Murin-an as a space to conduct oligarchical politics, however, also occurred in 1903: the so-called Murin-an Conference.



Figure 16: The room at Murin-an where Yamagata, Ito, Prime Minister Katsura Taro, and foreign affairs minister Komura Jutarō planned the course of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905)

What has been termed in Japanese the *Murin-an kaigi* (Murin-an conference or meeting) was a clandestine meeting held in the Western-style building at Murin-an attended by Yamagata Aritomo, Itō Hirobumi, Prime Minister Katsura Tarō, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs Komura Jutarō. The meeting was arranged to take place during the imperial visit to the Fifth

²⁷ See Itō Takashi, and George Akita, “The Yamagata-Tokutomi Correspondence. Press and Politics in Meiji-Taishō Japan,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 36, no. 4 (1981): 391–423.

National Industrial Exhibition in Osaka, which provided a reason for the attendees to be in the neighborhood. To further obfuscate the meeting, each of the visitors arrived separately and at different times, providing at least some measure of added secrecy.²⁸ While the exact nature of the plans drawn up is beyond the scope of this study, what should be obvious is that design of Murin-an, as well as its geographical placement, was conducive to the practice of this style of politics; the true power is wielded by a select group of men, with no consideration given whatsoever to the national Diet assembly, let alone the people.²⁹ It also demonstrates that despite being out of office, Yamagata used his still considerable influence through his clique and friends to advance his agenda nationally and internationally.

The first two great departure from the prevailing Kyoto gardening trends were more related than has been previously appreciated. During his interview with Kuroda, Yamagata remarks on the limited scale of Kyoto-style personal gardens. As Yamagata puts it, “the gardens in Kyoto emphasize seclusion (*yūsui*, 幽邃), yet there is a dearth of grandeur (*gōsō*, 豪壮) magnificence (*yūdai*, 雄大).”³⁰ This line requires a fair bit of context to properly analyze. At the outset, it is important to note that the personal gardens of that era in Kyoto were indeed built on a much smaller scale than the one Yamagata envisioned.³¹ One of the chief reasons for this was the confined spaces in which many of the residences were built, but there was always a sense in Kyoto, which persists to this day, that smaller gardens represent a kind of refined sensibility that is lacking in the extravagant daimyo gardens of the previous era, or the western style expansive

²⁸ Suzuki, 84.

²⁹ For a complete account of the plans drawn up during the conference, as well as Yamagata’s views regarding Russia more generally, see Tokutomi Soho ed., *Duke Yamagata Aritomo*, Hara Shobo, 1969. 538-544.

³⁰ Kuroda Yuzuru (Tengai), *Zoku kōku kaishin roku*, Yamada Geishodo, 1900, 6.

³¹ See Kuitert, in particular chapter 6.

lawns that became fashionable in Tokyo.³²



Figure 17: A Kyoto machiya (townhouse) garden, an example of late Edo, early Meiji personal greenspaces, photograph by author.

While he certainly expressed his dissatisfaction of the scope of Kyoto gardens, Yamagata is *not* criticizing the secluded nature of Kyoto gardens, but rather, in my reading, bemoaning the idea that the two concepts could not be combined; one could build a grand yet secluded garden. This is supported by the second of the earliest departures from other Meiji era Kyoto gardens; Yamagata wanted fir trees, and lots of them. In Ogawa's interview, he mentions that Yamagata wanted to plant fifty firs in the garden, an order that required Ogawa to scramble to collect the

³² Kuitert, chapter 6. It should be pointed out that here are and were indeed a plethora of much larger constructed greenspaces in Kyoto, though only a handful of them would have been considered gardens. The grounds of Nijō-jō and those of the former imperial palace stand out in that respect, as do spaces that would have fallen without that label, such as various Buddhist temple complex grounds.

trees as, given that they were not used in garden construction at all, sourcing them was no easy task.³³ Yamagata also makes plain that one of the purposes of these trees, outside of his appreciation of Japanese woodlands, was that they would block the view into his garden from without.³⁴ For Yamagata, the use of such an unorthodox garden tree (*niwaki*, 庭木) signaled a deviation from traditional “natural” aesthetics while simultaneously provided the “*murin*” effect he was searching for. Thus, the same trees that prevented prying eyes from intruding into Yamagata’s high level governmental meetings simultaneously spoke to his idealized vision of Japanese “nature:” the rustic (*yashu*, 野趣).

The term *yashu*, while not appearing in any of Yamagata’s writings, became intimately associated with his garden through the aforementioned work of Takahashi Yoshio, and with good reason.³⁵ On the stele Yamagata erected in honor of the gift of two pines (and a poem) from the emperor, Yamagata recounts what initially drew him to this site, as well as the elements he wished to incorporate. While visiting the forested mountainous area around Nanzen-ji, Yamagata happened upon a stream that he described as “grass-grown” (*kusakawa*, 草川), “elegant” (*fūshu*, 風趣), and possessing “profound purity” (*yūgetsu*, 幽潔.). Yamagata was struck by the “natural scenic beauty” (*shizen no fūchi*, 自然の風致,) to the point where he decided to recreate the scene as a place for him to live out his twilight years (Murin-an). After referencing the waterfall that was constructed, Yamagata likens the scene, or perhaps better yet the gestalt, as he also references the sounds of the water, to the deep mountains. He repeats this sort of

³³ Kuroda, *Zoku zoku kōku kaishin roku*, Yamada Geishodo, 1902, 199. In his own interview, Yamagata puts the count at thirty, not fifty.

³⁴ Kuroda, *Zoku*, 6. It also bears mentioning that in comparison to maples, plums, and cherries, these trees provide significantly more privacy.

³⁵ From Takashi Sōan, *Garaku tago*, 1914, quoted in Wybe Kuitert, *Japanese Gardens and Landscapes 1650-1950*, (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 202.

terminology to Kuroda as well, stating that the sort of stream at Murin-an is exactly the kind you would see “if you travel to many mountain villages and the like.”³⁶ He follows that statement up with a claim that such streams are more “pleasant/interesting” (*omoshiroi*, 面白い).

This imagery again requires comparisons in order to put it into the language of Kyoto gardens. Virtually all gardens of a size large enough to house a significant sized body of water in Kyoto were either clearly designed as lakes or ponds (figure 18, left), or else meant to evoke a sense of the sea. The garden within the grounds of the Kyoto Imperial Palace (figure 18, right), for example, while in physical terms conforms to a stream is consciously designed to be impossible to view in totality from any given vantage point; just as the sea is infinite, so too are the water courses of the traditional Kyoto garden.³⁷



Figure 18: Left: one of many ponds at Nijo-jo meant to evoke a coastline. Right, A bridge crossing a watercourse at the gardens at the Koto Imperial palace. Both water features are designed to conceal their true shape from any given vantage point, photographs by author.

³⁶ Kuitert, 202.

³⁷ Suzuki, 88-89.

Murin-an's watercourse, on the other hand, is pocked with various tufts of water friendly grasses and shallow enough that the flow of the water can be easily heard as it moves over the small rocks in the stream. While there are stones that rest upon the bank of the river, there is no sense of these rocks being used as a continuous border. Rather, the stones act as another feature that the water can play off, creating an everchanging water, land, and soundscape.



Figure 19: Left: Murin-an c. 1900, Right: Murin-an 2019, photograph by author. One can see a marked difference in the rusticity (yahsu) that characterized the Garden during Yamagata's time, with various species of what we would term weeds interspersed among the less manicured lawn.

Comparing figure 19 to 18, we can easily see a marked difference in the use of water. The older examples are, in a sense, symbolic representations of an imagined ideal: the ever present, infinite majesty of the ocean. Murin-an is too a representation, and in some ways also of an imagined ideal: the mountain streams that can be found outside of urban centers. What is critical to my analysis of the space is that the gestalt created by the waterway's interaction with the grasses and stones of the garden *seem* more "natural" than rock bordered ocean motifs. This

is not entirely unreasonable; although both are symbols of imagined spaces, Yamagata's has the benefit of more closely resembling his target. Yet both are equally artificial, and, more importantly, both encode a vision of what "Japanese nature" is. While other gardens in Kyoto represent grandiose, dramatic images replete with Buddhist and Kami-worship inspired meanings and interpretations, Yamagata argues through his greenspace construction, that true and "pure" Japanese nature is that which can be found in its timeless landscape of mountain village scenes. Counterintuitively, Yamagata has used the "magnificence" and "grandeur" of his enlarged space to reproduce a scene it far quieter and modest in its allusions.

Other elements in Murin-an reinforce this new wilderness-centered aesthetic of nature include the trees, shrubs, stones, and wildflowers used in the garden. The above rejection, at least on a surface level, of symbolism continues through all these features as well. The most obvious example is Yamagata's use of stones. The use of stones as a means to symbolize conceptual or imaginary landscapes was a common trope amongst gardens in Japan from at least the Heian Era (794-1185).³⁸ During the preceding Edo period, this most often took the form of so called "key stones" (*yakuishi*, 役石), stones for which the location and orientation mattered far more than the shape or aesthetic value of the stone *qua* stone. At Murin-an, by contrast, there are no such stones, with Yamagata opting for the use of horizontally arranged stones as a way to replicate how they would be found in the wilds of Japan. Both modern and Meiji and Taisho commentators have praised Yamagata's departure from past symbolism to a "naturalistic" style of garden construction.³⁹ Yamagata, and later Ogawa Jihei are often said to have been recreating nature "as

³⁸ A very large percentage of the *Sakuteiki* is devoted to discussions of stone setting, and the Nara era term for garden construction can literally be translated as "erecting stones." See Tamura Tsuyoshi, Toshitsuna Fujiwara, and Yoshitsune Fujiwara, *Sakuteiki*, (Tōkyō: Sagami Shobō), 1968.

³⁹ Kuitert, 196-233, Suzuki 70-101.

it is (*sono mama*).” Wildflowers were used at Murin-an in the place of ornamental flowers, trees were allowed to grow (roughly) unimpeded, ferns were free to take root upon stone and stump. In my reading of the text of Murin-an, however, this is not so much a new naturalism, but a different vocabulary developed to fit with a new paradigm of “Japanese nature.” Yamagata had prioritized a nature that encoded traditional Japanese village landscapes as the new natural.

Furthermore, note how this “nature” was not set in opposition to human activity but in some ways depended on it. Yamagata’s continued usage of the mountain village metaphor was by no means coincidental. The vantage point from which the optimal view of the garden at Murin-an was to be achieved, either from the main entrance from the Japanese-style house or the sitting room directly above it, cannot be thought of as distinct from the garden proper. Rather, these two elements should be considered as contributing to the gestalt of the experience. While this particular garden eschewed the use of manufactured objects (a trend that Ogawa Jihei did not continue), humans are still bound up in the natural setting conceptually.



Figure 20: The view from the main back exit from the Japanese building at Murin-an to the garden; nature mediated through human ingenuity and experience, photograph by author.

One final element of Yamagata's garden that needs to be addressed is the function and meaning of the above referenced stele. While much of it is dedicated to presenting us with a sense of Yamagata's inspiration and understanding of nature, the final line of the inscription is a strong tie back to the political ideology with which we began. The latter portion of the writing refers to the gift of two pine trees from the Meiji Emperor to Yamagata. After planting the trees with due reverence, Yamagata sent a photograph of his gift to the emperor, who sent back a short poem:

おくりにし 若木の松葉 しけりあひて 老の千とせの 友とならなむ

The young pine trees I sent / have grown mighty/ for a thousand years/ they will be friends⁴⁰

What is important about this is not the close relationship between Yamagata and the emperor that this exchange suggests, but rather that Yamagata constructed a stele to commemorate the exchange. For one thing, the almost performative act of placing the inscription in the garden speaks to the fact that this was not meant to be seen and read only by Yamagata. More crucially, however, it connects the text of the garden, both literally and figuratively, explicitly to the imperial system. The symbolism was therefore complete: Yamagata had built a greenspace where he and his fellow powerbrokers could continue an oligarchical system of governance that was ultimately tied to the imperial institution itself. In essence, the emperor himself had a place in the garden of Yamagata's political world. The connection between a bucolic "nature" and the emperor would be made both more overt and more public through the efforts of Ogawa Jihei at his next project, Heian Jingū.

⁴⁰ The trees were unable to live up to the Meiji Emperor's thousand-year aspiration, dying in the Showa era to be then replaced some years later.

Ogawa

Ogawa Jihei was born in one of the villages surrounding Kyoto (now Nagaoka-kyō) in 1860. Ogawa (birth name Gennosuke) was the third son of Yamamoto Yahei before marrying into the Ogawa family at age 17, partly as a way to avoid further studies in the rapidly changing modern Japanese educational system. As Ogawa confesses in his interview with Kuroda, “I was never interested in study (*gakumon* 学問),” though after joining the Ogawa family he was forced to study the concepts of “heaven, earth and man (*tenchijin*, 天地人) and the five elements (*gogyō*, 五行).”⁴¹ The Ogawa family line had long been involved with landscape design in the Kyoto area, and Ogawa Jihei took over as head of the family in 1879, becoming Ogawa Jihei VII.⁴² Ogawa’s earliest ventures into the family business seem to have been more on the maintenance side of garden upkeep and that of a “purveyor of garden plants and stones.”⁴³

In 1894, however, all of this would change dramatically with his collaboration with Yamagata. The exact nature of the professional relationship between the two men remains a matter of debate, with Amasaki arguing that Murin-an was almost entirely created by Ogawa, and others, such as Suzuki and Kuitert placing Yamagata as the designer and brains behind the operation. One piece of evidence that supports Amasaki’s contention is that Yamagata was called away to prosecute the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, and thus would not have been there to direct Ogawa’s work, necessitating much innovation on the latter’s part.⁴⁴ In my view however, as well as that of the other two above named scholars, this interpretation ignores both some

⁴¹ Kuroda, *Zoku zoku*, 199.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Kyoto annai miyako hyakushu zen*, quoted in Suzuki, 90.

⁴⁴ Amasaki, 50.

salient facts concerning Yamagata, as well as the client-artisan relationship. Murin-an was by no means the only garden designed by Yamagata. Koyurugi-an in Ōsio (1887), Sarasara-tei in Koishikawa (1892), and, most importantly, Chinzan-sō, Yamagata's Tokyo residence beginning in 1878, each predate his work with Ogawa, and each show Yamagata's "naturalistic" approach.⁴⁵ Further, as is well known to any modern landscaper or artisan of any kind, the main function of the gardener is to realize your client's vision.⁴⁶ Ogawa was the one who had to source and physically plant the fir trees, but it was Yamagata who saw them as integral to his new vision. Finally, Ogawa himself notes that he "would not be the person he is [today] without Yamagata Aritomo."⁴⁷ For the beginning of Ogawa's own vision, we must turn now to Heian Jingū, where the new "naturalism" of Yamagata would combine with the history of the imperial system to be spread to the public, and in so doing nature became a naturalizer of imperial power.

Heian Jingū

The use of imperial shrines erected in the Meiji period have long been singled out as a method used by the new government to bolster the notion of the unbroken line of imperial legitimacy.⁴⁸ While Kashihara Jingū, dedicated to the legendary founder of the Japanese Imperial line, Jimmu, is perhaps the most obvious attempt to connect the (distant) past to the present, Heian Jingū, dedicated to the historical Emperor Kanmu five years later in 1895, boasted a much

⁴⁵ Suzuki, 92-93. While these gardens share much in common with the "nature" employed at Murin-an, their influence never spread beyond their walls.

⁴⁶ This is also stated as the primary thing to bear in mind in the *Sakuteiki*.

⁴⁷ Kuroda, 200-201.

⁴⁸ See Takehiro Kobayashi, *Ryōbo to bunkazai no kindai*, (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppansha, 2010), Helen Harcare, *Shintō and the State*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), and Alice Tseng, *Modern Kyoto: Building for ceremony and commemoration, 1868-1940*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018).

larger immediate impact and visitor numbers.⁴⁹ Though attendance numbers do not survive, the massive popularity of the shrine as a tourist location can be easily gleaned from the impressive number of guidebooks and pamphlets created to help patrons enjoy and “understand” their visit.⁵⁰ Their understanding was to be the integrity of the imperial line and the historical legitimacy of the imperial system.

Given the amount of work that has been done on Murin-an, it is in some ways curious that considerably less attention has been paid to Meiji Jingū, a site where Ogawa’s new vision of nature, inherited and adapted from Yamagata, was introduced to the public. Instead, Japanese garden scholars lump Ogawa’s work here in with his other post-Yamagata projects, seemingly ignoring the fact that the garden’s planning phase began while Ogawa was still working at Murin-an, giving it a closer link to Yamagata’s own vision than his later projects, as well as the fact that it was by much more publicly visible.⁵¹ On the other hand, Ogawa’s work at Heian Jingū cannot be considered in a vacuum, even to the extent any work of art or text can be said to stand alone. The shrine itself contributes just as much to the mental space as the garden, perhaps even more so. To make a perhaps tortured metaphor, the text of this greenspace is merely a chapter in the edited volume that is Heian Jingū. Thus, before explicitly turning to the garden, we need to discuss the other chapters first.

⁴⁹ While Tseng credits this to a new “striking composite of sacred and ceremonial form,” and the opening of the shrine to take place during the 1100th anniversary of Kyoto’s founding as Heian-Kyō, her third explanation, the fact that it was located in a major city as opposed to the relative backwater of Kashihara-shi, seems to be the overriding factor in my view. Tseng, 48.

⁵⁰ Tseng, 64.

⁵¹ Suzuki and Kuitert, for example, devote at most two paragraphs to Heian Jingū.

A New Shrine for an Ancient Lineage

In the *Meishō Heian Jingū shinnen kinenbutsu*⁵² (*A Memorial of the Shrine Garden at the Place of Scenic Beauty, Heian Jingū*, hereafter referred to as the *Meishō*), a commemorative book published for the 100th anniversary of the shrine and drawing on records held by the shrine itself, one of the features that makes Heian Jingū unique is that the garden and the shrine were both built with the characteristic Kyoto elegance (*miyabi*, 雅), and is the only remaining example of Heian architecture.⁵³ While Kyoto elegance is arguably visible, the structure and garden are in no way characteristic of Heian architecture, and they were never intended to be so.

As far back as 1883, Iwakura Tomomi proposed the construction of a commemorative shrine to the Kanmu Emperor, as well as thirteen other commemorative sites, to help Kyoto recapture its ceremonial significance.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, Iwakura died shortly after making this proposal, and the plan essentially died with its creator.⁵⁵ Ten years later, however, a new version of the project was taken up as a way to commemorate the 1,100th anniversary of Kanmu's transfer of the capital. Interestingly, the original plan called for the shrine to be built on the historical site of Emperor Kanmu's original hall, the Daigokuden, which was located near Nijō castle. With the city of Kyoto having also won the right to hold the fourth National Industrial Exhibition, which was going to be located in the then farmland area of Okazaki (just a short stroll from Murin-an), the event planning committee decided that the two events should be joined

⁵² For completeness's sake, the full title is 名勝平安神宮神苑記念物尚美館(貴賓館)泰平閣(橋殿)保存修理工事報告書.

⁵³ *Meishō Heian Jingū shinnen kinenbutsu*, 1.

⁵⁴ See Tseng, 49.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Tseng argues that while the plan itself did not end up going anywhere, and, further, that there is not a direct link between Iwakura's proposal and the eventual construction, Iwakura's idea demonstrates that as early as 1883 Kyoto elites were cognizant of the problem of the declining role and purpose of Kyoto.

together, and that the new shrine should occupy its current location on the north side of what is now Okazaki Park.⁵⁶

Historian Yumoto Fumihiko and carpenter Minaguchi Jirō were selected to begin the initial planning phase of the project, and it was they who proposed what they saw as the logical step of using the historical site for the new shrine. Shortly thereafter, two more accomplished Japanese architects were brought onboard, Kigo Kiyoyoshi (1845-1907) and Itō Chūta (1867-1954).⁵⁷ As is often the case with such endeavors, however, the planning committee repeatedly changed the nature of the task these men were given, from enlarging the size of the Daigokuden to moving the site, to then changing the orientation of the complex. Initially, when the plan was to build on the older site, it was decided to preserve the original southward facing orientation of the shrine. After it was decided to move across the Kamo to the Okazaki area of Higashiyama, the architectural team had planned to have the entire complex, the Chōdōin, to have its main gates situated in the west, so as to incorporate the backdrop of Higashiyama as part of the space. They were eventually overruled by the committee, and it was decided that the original southward facing orientation would be preserved. This decision annoyed Kigo and Itō, stating flatly in the periodical *Kenchiku Zasshi* that they had nothing to do with this decision.⁵⁸ In their view, since the option of using the historical site had already been discarded, they saw no reason to slavishly keep to a geographic positioning that ignored the very basic premises of architectural and landscape aesthetics.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ The pairing of the two projects also resulted in the fact that the 1,100th anniversary actually took place in the 1,101st year since the move, and that the shrine itself was not completed and opened until the next year, in 1895.

⁵⁷ Tseng, 53.

⁵⁸ See Kigo Kiyoyoshi and Itō Chūta, “Kinenden Kenchiku Setsu,” *Kenchiku Zasshi* 86 (1894), 83-89.

⁵⁹ For a fuller account of the controversy, see Tseng, 59-60.

Eventually, however, the design for the building for finalized and construction began. As mentioned above, however, the claim that this was to be an example of Heian architecture was a stretch from the beginning. Ignoring, for the moment, that Heian garden design was in no way meant to simply fill in empty spaces around the back end of a building,⁶⁰ the architecture of the buildings themselves were based upon some artistic renderings and a lot of supposition. As noted by Kigo and Itō:

In the case of [the Daigokuden's] form, to determine what to use today to serve as the basis of antiquity from one thousand one hundred years ago is like trying to capture clouds. Fortunately, from the *Daidairi zu kōshō* compiled by Mr. Uramatsu the majority of the [palace's] organization can be sufficiently surmised, from the *Nenjū gyōji* and various other picture scrolls the majority of its forms can be reasonably deduced. However [Uramatsu's] written account and those painting on the whole possess rather meagre architectural content, and we had a difficult time extracting any real substance from them. For example, no matter which picture we scrutinize, the Daigokuden's roof is always obscured by a golden cloud. Because of this, whether the roof is gabled or pyramidal remains in doubt.⁶¹

Again, the point of this exercise is not to discredit the architectural fidelity of Heian Jingū, nor to bemoan the meddling of bureaucrats in artistic projects, but rather to demonstrate that the construction of Heian Jingū's buildings was more consistent with modern approaches, materials, and techniques being used to simulate the Japanese past. This action both obscured the modernity of the architecture, and thus the modernity of the Meiji Era form of the Japanese Imperial System. It is also a curious point that the southern-facing orientation was chosen at the expense of the more "naturalistic" choice of a Westward facing shrine. To me, this suggests a willingness to not only prioritize a feigned historical accuracy over the use of Kyoto's "nature"

⁶⁰ The *Sakuteiki* makes clear that gardens were to be built in concert with the buildings, a style later known as *shinden-zukuri*. Furthermore, Heian era gardens were designed for private residences, not shrines, and with a few exceptions that we shall soon talk about, there was little to no unified theory of what sites for Kami-worship should have in terms of natural spaces.

⁶¹ Kigo and Itō, "Kyoto Kinenden Kenchiku dan," *Kenchiku Zasshi*, 86 (1984): 47-54, 48, translated by Alice Tseng, in Tseng, 56.

in the presentation of the legitimacy of the emperor, but also a belief that ‘nature’ and “naturalistic” art can be whatever the state needs it to be in order to serve its needs. This is shown even more so with Ogawa’s adjoining garden.

Ogawa’s Gardens of Heian Jingū

Ogawa recounts his own recruitment as the garden designer for Heian Jingū in his interview with Kuroda thusly: “When it was time to build the gardens at Heian Jingū, a call went out for Mr. Yamagata’s gardener, and I was asked to take over the project.”⁶² Whether Ogawa was selected on the basis of his connection with the influential Yamagata or due to an appreciation of the style Ogawa was working with is, sadly, impossible to parse at this stage. Ogawa’s surviving thoughts on his time at Heian Jingū are limited to a couple of lines in the same interview, and the majority of that is devoted to Ogawa lamenting the lack of funds for the size of the project he was undertaking: a mere 1,000-1,500 yen for a garden measuring 3,000 tsubo (a little over 100,000 square feet).⁶³ This does corroborate, however, the official account of the timeline of the construction of the shrine and garden.

One thing important to note is that the gardens of Heian Jingū, while designed by Ogawa (or at least the ones constructed prior to his death in 1933), were constructed years and in some cases decades apart. As recorded in the official history:

-Timetable of the shrine garden (*shin-en*, 神苑)

-Meiji 26, March

-At an exhibition for the commemoration of the movement of the capital (*Heian sento senhyaku nen kin’nen kaisai kai*, 平安遷都千百年記念祭開催), the building (architecture) for Council Hall in the Imperial Palace (*daidokuden*, 大極殿) is selected

⁶² Kuroda, *Zoku zoku*, 44-45.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

- September
 - Ceremony for purifying the building site (地鎮祭) begins
- October
 - Construction begins on the Council Hall (Daigokuden)
- Meiji 27, February
 - Construction begins on the garden (West and central gardens)
- Meiji 28, March
 - Construction of the Council Hall and main shrine completed, enshrinement ceremony
- April
 - Garden construction complete
- Meiji 40, October
 - The old stone pillar from the bridge on 5th street [over the Kamo river] is sold by the Kyoto government and installed as the stones that form the “bridge” to the island in the middle garden
- Meiji 45
 - The Eastern Garden construction begins, which results in the move of the buildings that were there
- Taisho 2, February
 - Eastern Garden construction complete⁶⁴

There are several things to note from this timetable. Firstly, as mentioned above, is the length of time that stretched from the groundbreaking for the first building, Meiji 26 (1893), and the completion of the Eastern Garden in Taisho 2 (1913). Furthermore, the accuracy of these dates has been challenged, with Suzuki placing the date for the Middle and West garden’s completion in 1913, while the Eastern Garden was not finished, in his estimation, until 1926.⁶⁵ I take the source of this disagreement to be in some ways semantic, as when can one truly describe a garden as “complete?” The 1913 crowd points to this being the date when Ogawa officially no longer had anything to do with that area, but in my view this is rather arbitrary. For one thing, the gardens in question were open to the public from the outset in 1895, meaning that visitors were interacting with them long before Ogawa was finished tweaking his design. Secondly, I would argue that the date at which Ogawa ceased active control over the space is just as arbitrary for the

⁶⁴ *Meishō Heian Jingū shinnen kinenbutsu*, 13-18.

⁶⁵ Suzuki, 95.

site's "completeness." As we have discussed previously, a constructed green space is always in a state of growth and change. Plants may be added or removed, trees may snap due to parasitic infections or from the weather, even climate change has an impact on how we experience such spaces, though often in less obvious ways. In sum, while I acknowledge that Ogawa's own design was being continually altered during the period until he leaves the project, I am still inclined to go with the self-published dates from the shrine as much of what concerns us here is public engagement rather than slight changes in one man's sense of aesthetics.

We do know that the two ponds flanking the northernmost buildings were excavated at the start, and that many of the trees which still surround were planted at that time as well.⁶⁶ They were connected by a forested area that Wybe Kuitert has referred to as a "the most sacred of sacreds," which is "usually understood as a holy forest of the gods, not open to the public."⁶⁷ Ogawa, by contrast, built a passageway for foot traffic that ran alongside a stream in through this grove, which to Kuitert indicates cultural and political significance; the people were now allowed to enter sacred spaces that were previously devoted entirely to the kami.⁶⁸ In a sense, though not explicitly, Kuitert is describing a move by Ogawa to open the sacred to the common people, an act that would signal a very different sort of garden than the one I have postulated.

Unsurprisingly, I find several problems with Kuitert's position. For one, Kuitert is essentially referring to the grove as a *Chinju no mori* (鎮守の森), usually glossed as "sacred grove," without using the term.⁶⁹ Yet a *Chinju no mori* is not, in fact, a place where mortals fear to tread, or at least when on a path. The bulk of these groves serve as entryways to shrines,

⁶⁶ *Meishō Heian Jingū shinnen kinenbutsu*, 13.

⁶⁷ Kuitert, 212.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁶⁹ Given the accessibility of Kuitert's book, this lack of technical terminology seems wholly appropriate.

meaning that people must obviously pass through them on their way to the place of worship.⁷⁰ It is true that one ought to stick to the path in these settings, but this is equally true at Heian Jingū. While the position of the grove behind the shrine rather than in front is not particularly uncommon among these types of groves, its design, a narrow strip of land between the rear of the Daigokuden's outer wall and the rear wall of the shrine spotted with trees is far more suggestive of a space where not much else could be done in terms of landscape design.⁷¹ Finally, I have found no record that refers to that section of the grounds as a *chinju no mori*, nor indeed as anything other than “garden” (*teien*, 庭園), or “shrine garden” (*shin-en*, 神苑).⁷² I argue that far from being indicative of a newfound quasi-democratic connection with the kami, which, in the case of Heian Jingū was the Kanmu Emperor himself, the surrounding of the shrine with flora that could be passed through emphasized the naturalness of the setting, as well as the supposed connection shared by the people of Japan with the natural world.

Let us now turn our attention to the elements of the space as part of our textual analysis. The ponds which flanked both sides show a great deal of influence from the naturalism of Yamagata. On the western side of the forested area was the iris pond, which was studded quite heavily with rabbit's ear irises (*kakitsubata*, 杜若) for an attempted recreation of Yamagata's mountain village, nature-as-it-is approach. Heian Jingū records make this clear themselves, claiming that the “true” Japanese garden begins with “copying the natural landscape” (*shizenbūkei wo mōsha*, 自然風景を模写), then letting it be influenced by intellectual and

⁷⁰ Even *Chinju no mori* constructed in roughly the same period, such as the large one surrounding Meiji Jingū in Tokyo, are designed to be traversable.

⁷¹ For a full series of definitions and uses of the term see Aike Rotts, *Shinto Nature and Ideology in Contemporary Japan: Making sacred forests*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017) 85-96.

⁷² In fact, the delineation between central, eastern, and western garden does not appear until postwar literature.

[Japanese] religious constructs.⁷³ As can be seen in Figure 21, though it is a recent photograph, the iris bed continues directly into the pond, and on particularly rainy days parts of the iris bases are submerged by water. We can also see the use of horizontally aligned stones in the pond, and there is a rough quality to the design that still comes through to this day. While looking more artificial (though one must remember that a path for people will do so inherently), the back forest also serves to reinforce the naturalness of the shrine.



Figure 21: Left: A modern photograph of the Western Pond, though only one iris is in bloom. Right: Another modern photograph of the pathway running through the back forest, connecting the two halves of the garden, photographs by author. While these photographs antedate the construction of the garden by around 120 years, records indicate the types of plants used in these spaces, and for the most part they have remained the same throughout the years.

One final point to note about the initial phase of the design is referenced above in the timeline of event, specifically the importation and use of the stone pillars that served to hold up the fifth street (*gojō*) bridge over the Kamo River for use as steppingstones, as can be seen on the right of figure 22.

⁷³ *Meishō Heian Jingū shinnen kinenbutsu*, 20-21. They include in the list of Japanese ideas 神仙思想, or “mountain-wizard thought,” 極楽浄土, the Pure Land, Sukhavati, and 陰陽, yin-yang. By combining these elements, Japanese gardens are given a sense of 幽玄, “mysterious profoundness.” This explanation of Japanese garden thought certainly matches the traditional art as practiced by virtually everyone in the early and mid Meiji periods, but, ironically enough, does not hold true to Yamagata or Ogawa, as we will see with this garden.



Figure 22: Left: The Eastern Lake as seen in 2017. Right: One of the places where the stone pillars were used as steppingstones, photographs by author.

A couple of notes are relevant here. Firstly, as can be seen on the left, we once again have a water feature indicative of the new “Japanese nature” already discussed. Few stones used as borders between water and earth, an almost haphazard use of plants not arranged in any obvious pattern or with any obvious symbol (though, as noted above I would argue that there is indeed symbolism at work here, it is just standing in for a bucolic Japanese past). The use of the stones, however, is one of Ogawa’s main innovations from Yamagata. The former prime minister famously rejected the use of any milled stone in his garden, believing that they would symbolize whatever source they came from, and obvious symbolism was an anathema to Yamagata.⁷⁴ Ogawa’s use of this type of stone for walking purposes would become a trademark of his. Pillars, stone railroad ties, foundation stones from derelict buildings, all of these found their way into different Ogawa designed gardens. Yet, as we have noted above, Ogawa is constantly noted as *the* “naturalistic” garden designer by both his contemporaries and future scholars. How can we square this image with a man whose signature technique involves the repurposing of

⁷⁴ Suzuki, 82.

manufactured objects? I propose a simple solution: there was no contradiction between the two forms.

The “nature” that Ogawa was crafting, passed down from Yamagata, was not about the use of trees, flowers, grasses, or even water features. All these elements can be seen in virtually every garden in Kyoto and indeed Japan. Ogawa’s “naturalism” was the way in which he eschewed traditional Japanese symbols. This is not to say, of course, that Ogawa (and Yamagata) did not also have a flare for creating spaces that evoked a sense of the natural world in visitors, for they clearly did. But the crux of Ogawa’s new “nature” was in using the signs of the language of gardens in ways that seemed as though they were signifying something unplanned. Thus, the use of former bridge posts does not abrogate the “naturalness” of the garden, in a sense it enhances it. There is a sense that these posts had served some purpose in the past but had fallen prey to the deprivations of time and could now be used to cross over water, much in the same way a fallen tree could be used as a bridge.

It is this blending of what we would call artifice and nature into a scene that purports to have spontaneously generated itself that I contend served to naturalize the imperial system. The shrine to the Kanmu Emperor, purported ancestor of the Meiji emperor, was situated in the middle of what was the most “natural” looking green space ever constructed in Japan for the usage of common people. From the “nature” of the garden comes the “history” of the imperial line, a system of government that arises as organically as the irises of the ponds.

Conclusion: Nature as Art

Alice Tseng has noted that Heian Jingū became a critical site for the emperor centric vision of Kyoto that was being both physically and mentally constructed at the turn of the 20th

century, with the shrine in particular becoming a “site of memory-making for imperial culture.”⁷⁵ To this I would add that the choice to go with Ogawa Jihei for the design of the garden also aided in a more national project. By using a new form of nature that was developed from his time with Yamagata Aritomo, the idea of the imperial system being natural to Japan was bolstered. Nature helped to naturalize the existing state and the systems of power that were in place. It was true that people could now enter the and enjoy this historical commemoration to Emperor Kanmu, just as a small fraction of men had the right to vote enshrined in the new constitution. But the sacrality of the emperor was in no way minimized. For virtually every man, and literally every woman, they were afforded a *view* of the exercising of power. True power was wielded out of their view behind the fir trees of Murin-an, both metaphorically and occasionally literally. The people could not be trusted to know the true reasons behind government policy, let alone have any say in the matter.

⁷⁵ Tseng, 64.

Chapter Four: Expressing the Inexpressible: Inoue Enryō and Tetsugaku-dō Kōen

So far, we have seen a garden/public park created by a domanial lord, a campus built by an employee of the *Kaitakushi*, and a private garden for state functions built by one of the most powerful politicians of his age which then bled into a state-building project. These foregoing constructed greenspaces have one salient feature in common: all were conceived of and constructed by some arm of the state. The Tetsugakudō Kōen, though not entirely divorced from a state-related enterprise, was not the work of a public official or meant to advance a governmental agenda *per se*. Inoue Enryō (1858-1919) conceived of and built the park with money he raised personally for a cause he believed in, the transmission of philosophical ideas to the people so as to create a more educated citizenry.

This chapter argues that the Tetsugakudō Kōen was built explicitly as a philosophical argument. Moreso than any of the other constructed greenspaces we have hitherto examined, Inoue was not trying to obscure his meaning through the mediation of natural elements, nor was he implying that a given position was the correct one. Inoue built the park as a text, one that, crucially and somewhat paradoxically, could not be expressed purely linguistically. The use of the natural world was part and parcel to both his argument and served as an exemplary space in which philosophical contemplation could be carried out. In essence, the park should be viewed as

a philosophical text, one that could only be understood by the “interlacing of words and things” to borrow a phrase from Stephen Bann.¹

Whereas we have so far limited our range of the meanings of public greenspaces to those constructed either by or under the direction of the state, the Tetsugakudō Kōen serves as both foil and extension, rupture and continuation of many of the themes we have so far been discussing. Placing Inoue outside of the government proper should not be taken to imply that the Tetsugakudō Kōen was a political space; on the contrary Inoue, as we shall see, hoped to use this space to create politically active subjects. But more than that, the park was meant to create a certain *kind* of political agent, one who was literate in (Inoue’s version of) Western philosophy, as well as educated in the fundamental Truth of the Absolute, the source from which all aspects of the world emerge.

Inoue’s impetus to educate the country stemmed directly from his interpretation of The Imperial Rescript on Education (*kyōiku chokugo*), one of the most studied, and indeed one of the most controversial texts from the era. Often thought of as one of the beginnings of ultranationalist thought in Japan², the text of the Rescript does indeed contain language that seems to set up an “emperor-centered nationalism.” Frequently read aloud at various school functions, it is asserted that the Rescript served as a tool of mass indoctrination through nation’s

¹ Stephen Bann, *Interlacing Words and Things*, (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2012).

² Though a comprehensive list here would be exceedingly overlong, notable highlights include Ienaga Saburo, 1978, Kenneth Pyle, 1996, and J.E. Thomas, 1996.

schools.³ The Imperial Rescript, however, was just one segment of Inoue's long intellectual journey. Before turning to its spatial result, let us briefly turn to Inoue's journey to this point.⁴

³ . Even those who challenge the above narrative, such as Mark Lincicome as well as older generations such as E.H. Norman have generally tried to counter this account by highlighting those who either expressly resisted it, such as Uchimura Kanzō, or worked around it, such as the international educationalist movement. See Sharon H. Nolte, and Ōnishi Hajime, "National Morality and Universal Ethics. Ōnishi Hajime and the Imperial Rescript on Education," *Monumenta Nipponica* 38, no. 3 (1983): 283-94.

⁴ There has been a growing interest in Inoue Enryō in recent years, first in Japan, followed by the West. Beginning in 1981, the Inoue Kenkyū-kai (research society), based in the Tokyo-based university that Inoue founded, Tōyō University, began annual publications of a journal reflecting the latest in Inoue based research, see Tōyō Daigaku, Inoue Enryō Kenkyūkai, Daisan Bukai, *Inoue Enryō Kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tōyō Daigaku Inoue Enryō Kenkyūkai Daisan Bukai, 1981-1986). While this journal did, however, become moribund after only 5 years, a reformed research society, now under the title of *Inoue Enryō Kokusai Kenkyū-kai* (International Inoue Enryō Research Society), began in 2013, and has taken up the mantle of yearly publications. In 1993, Miwa Seiichi undertook one of the full-length biographies of Inoue, as did Rainer Schulzer in 2019, see Miwa Seiichi, *Inoue Enryō Sensei: Denki Inoue Enryō* (Tōkyō: Ōzorasha, 1993), and Rainer Schulzer, *Inoue Enryō: A philosophical portrait* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2019). Given the wide range of views espoused by the various authors of these publications, it would be difficult to say that there is a consensus point of view for Inoue's work, apart from a new conviction that his thought is worthy of serious study, and a move away from simple republications of his texts (though this has of course, continued).

In the West, there has been more of an apparent shift in attitude. Much of the earlier work that referenced Inoue, such as Gino K. Piovesana, *Contemporary Japanese Philosophical Thought* (New York, St. John's University Press, 1969), relegated Inoue to a religious figure, who's philosophical proclivities, if they were mentioned at all, were dismissed as eclectic, see, for example Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 134, where she devotes a single sentence to Inoue, describing his thought as eclectic. Recent work, however, has sought to show Inoue in a different light, such as Gerard Clinton Godart's "Philosophy or Religion? The Confrontation with Foreign Categories in Late Nineteenth Century Japan" and his "Tracing the Circle of Truth: Inoue Enryō on the History of Philosophy and Buddhism," both of which try to engage with Inoue's thought as philosophical. See Gerard Clinton Godart, "Tracing the Circle of Truth: Inoue Enryō on the History of Philosophy and Buddhism," *The Eastern Buddhist, NEW SERIES*, 36, no. 1/2 (2004): 106-33 and Godart, "Philosophy" or "Religion"? The Confrontation with Foreign Categories in Late Nineteenth Century Japan, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 69, 2008: 71-91. Part of Godart's argument, one with which I am in complete agreement, is that a total rethinking of what constituted "philosophy" in Japan is in order. See also Jason Ānanda Josephson, "When Buddhism Became a "Religion": Religion and Superstition in the Writings of Inoue Enryō." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33, no. 1 (2006): 143-68, and Masahiko, Okada. "Revitalization versus Unification: A Comparison of the Ideas of Inoue Enryō and Murakami Senshō." *The Eastern Buddhist, NEW SERIES*, 37, no. 1/2 (2005): 28-38 for more on the question of Inoue as philosopher or religious figure. Additionally, the above is not to say that Inoue should be forced into any particular box, to claim he had no positions on what would now be termed religious matters, is itself untenable; see Michael Foster, *Pandemonium and Parade: Japanese Monsters and the Culture of Yokai*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

In a monograph devoted to the Japanese Buddhist participation at the World's Parliament of Religions at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, Judith Snodgrass also highlights Inoue's involvement and fascination with Western philosophy. Snodgrass describes, in detail, Inoue's contention that many of the philosophical ideas coming from the West, and particularly German Idealism, are notions that were already imbedded in Buddhist thought. See Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003). Whether or not such a position makes the thought of Inoue eclectic is, in Snodgrass's analysis, irrelevant to the quality of his thought; an approach that frankly has been a long time coming.

The Education of Inoue Enryō

While an extensive biography of Inoue would here be excessive, there are a few details of his background that are salient for our discussion here.⁵ Inoue was born into a rapidly changing Japan in present day Niigata Prefecture in 1858. With the Tokugawa government crumbling under both foreign and domestic pressures, Inoue's generation, dubbed the "second generation" by Kenneth Pyle, was among the first Japanese pupils to have Western materials included in their secondary education, which for Inoue began in 1874.⁶ Beyond readings related to Western history and science, Inoue was also raised in his family's Buddhist Temple, glossed by Rainer Schulzer as the Light Temple of Compassion, and it was Inoue's father, Engo, who served as its leader.⁷ Schulzer here stresses that what was crucial to the formation of Inoue's thought on this point was not that he received a Buddhist education as a small child; in reality his boyhood education was as Confucian as that of the previous generation. What *was* important, however, was that this education took place within the temple itself, under the contemplative gaze of the Buddha.⁸ Whereas for Schulzer, this point foreshadows the connection between Buddhism and education for Inoue, I would highlight that it served a different function; Inoue connected education to contemplative spaces early in his life, a linkage that would manifest time and time again during his later life through the importance of selecting or creating the proper space for teaching.

⁵ For a more comprehensive understanding of Inoue's life, the best treatment appears in Miura Setsuo, *Inoue Enryō: Nihon kindai no senkusha no shōgai to shisō*, (Tokyo: Kyōiku Hyōronsha 2016). For an appraisal of Inoue's philosophical thought, see Rainer Schulzer, *Inoue Enryō: A Philosophical Portrait* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2019).

⁶ With the differentiation between the first generation of Meiji intellectuals, such as Fukuzawa Yukiichi and others who formed the Meiroku Society, and the second generation, those influenced by them, Pyle was attempting to highlight the difference between the former, who were mainly samurai educated in the Confucian Classics, and the latter, who's relationship with the earlier "feudal" system was secondhand. See Kenneth Pyle, *New Generation of Meiji Japan*, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press), 1969.

⁷ Schulzer, *Inoue Enryō*, 2019, 1.

⁸ Schulzer, *Inoue Enryō*, 2019, 3.

Returning to our narrative summary of his education, Inoue, despite his lack of formal Buddhist training, was ordained within the Ōtani Branch of the True Pure Land School.⁹ In 1877 he traveled to Kyoto to receive religious instruction at the behest of his order, and was subsequently sponsored, again by the Ōtani Branch, to enter into an English language preparatory school for the University of Tokyo, the Daigaku Yobimon (大学予備門).¹⁰

Subsequently, Inoue enrolled in newly founded philosophy department at Tokyo University in 1881, graduating in 1885. As a student, Inoue studied under Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), Katō Hiroyuki (1836-1916), Inoue Tetsujirō (1856-1944), and many other figures that would go on to be influential members of the Japanese higher education system of the Meiji era. While in Tokyo, Inoue founded the Philosophy Society, with such luminaries in the field as Inoue Tetsujirō, Kiyozawa Manshi, and Ariga Nagao, Shige Shigataka, Miyake Setsurei, and Tanahashi Ichirō.¹¹ By 1886 the society began publishing the *Journal of Philosophy* (*tetsugaku zasshi*, 哲学雑誌), where in the inaugural issue Inoue Enryō published an explanation for the need for philosophical study in Japan.

After graduation, Inoue was offered a government position by Mori Arinori in the Ministry of Education, but rebuffed the offer, an event which reoccurred several times.¹² Inoue was also offered a teaching position at one of the secondary schools of his order, but his desire for independence in pursuing the moral cultivation of the nation led him to not only reject this offer, but officially sever his ties to the True Pure Land School.¹³

⁹ Schulzer, 413.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Staggs, 259.

¹² Staggs, 260.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Between 1888 and 1889, Inoue undertook the first of three world tours, with this one consisting of a route similar to that of the Iwakura Mission of 1871-1873.¹⁴ While he was also engaged in philosophical study, the main purpose of Inoue's visit was the inspection of religious societies and institutions. The information he gathered helped Inoue's own attempts at reforming Buddhism in Japan.¹⁵

Inoue and Education

The trouble with philosophy as it is practiced in the West, mused Inoue Enryō in his final work *My Mission in Philosophy* (*Tetsugaku-jō ni okeru yo no shimei*, 哲學上に於ける余の使命, 1919), was that it had “eyes, but not legs;” that it was devoted to reason exclusively while neglecting the practical side of its application. To Inoue, philosophy was many things, a search for the Truth, the basis of knowledge, a cudgel against Christianity, and a necessary component for a politically informed citizenry. Crucially, Inoue understood the first and last components of this list to be inextricably linked. This would eventually take shape in his phrase *gokoku airi* (“defense of the nation and love of truth,” 護国愛理), in which the Truth and the national interests, which usually also happened to overlap with the interests of institutionalized Buddhism, were joined together. It was this Truth that needed to be imparted to the masses in Inoue's estimation. Before we move to that phase of Inoue's thought, however, let us begin with Inoue's love of truth, one of his thought's most universally quoted features.¹⁶

¹⁴ Schulzer, 2401

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Gokoku Airi*, in fact, persists to this day as the motto for Tōyō University.

In one of Inoue's earliest published works, *The Revitalization of Buddhism: Introduction* (*Bukkyō ketsuron joron*, 仏教結論序論, 1887, hereafter referred to as *BKJ*), Inoue claims that the "truest truth" (*shinri no ri*, 真理の理) permeates everything in the cosmos.¹⁷ In the same year's *Prolegomena to a living Discourse on Buddhism* (真宗哲学序論, 1887), Inoue goes on to describe his life as a search for Truth, first within Buddhism, then Confucianism, the Christianity, before moving to Western Philosophy. It was the study of the latter at Tokyo University that Inoue gravitated towards as the Truth. But in an interesting turn, Inoue claimed that once he understood the Truth of philosophy, he finally discovered that the Truth had been in front of him in his youth with the teachings of Buddhism.¹⁸ What sets Inoue apart from other Buddhists of this era, however, is that he proclaimed Buddhism's claim to the Truth could not stem from holy scriptures or figures, as these could not be used to convince non-Buddhists any more than Christians could convince others that their God was the Truth.¹⁹ The truth of Buddhism could be empirically and theoretically verified using philosophical constructs from Europe. In short, a neutral third party was necessary to prove the Truth of Buddhism. Fortunately for Inoue, he had renounced his priesthood and entered the laity.²⁰

From the outset, Inoue advanced the notion of *gokoku airi*. The phrase is, in a way, seemingly paradoxical: given Inoue's view of the universality of the Truth, why should it be wedded to the particular, in this case the Japanese state? Inoue's answer was Buddhism.²¹ During

¹⁷ *BKJ*, 382.

¹⁸ *Schulzer* 1694.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 1717.

²⁰ Judith Snodgrass has argued that Inoue's renouncement of his faith was nothing more than a ploy to convince others he was not a shill for Buddhism. Other scholars, such as Kathleen Staggs and Rainer Schulzer agree that Inoue's lack of affiliation was convenient for his arguments, but not that it was done cynically in the moment.

²¹ Staggs, 253-254.

much of the Meiji, intellectuals of various stripes searched for a Japanese essence with which Japan could hold onto and still modernize economically (and to an extent socially). For Inoue, Buddhism, which had recently been confirmed by the greatest minds of Europe as possessing the Truth (is his estimation), could fill this roll. Moreover, though Buddhism was not native to Japan, it had taken root there perfectly and developed into its purest form.²² This was the bridge between the particular and the universal. Japan had developed the universal Truth centuries before it had been discovered in Europe. The Truth was not inherently Japanese, but as Buddhism contained the Truth, and Buddhism was the center of “Japaneseness,” Japan and the Truth had a special relationship.

What, then, did this love of truth and protection of the country, genuine or calculated, have to do with Inoue’s future as an educator? In 1890, the Imperial Rescript on Education was promulgated. For Inoue, the most important section of the short document was as follows:

Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth.²³

This document, as stated previously, had a seismic impact on all Japanese thought until the end of the Pacific War in 1945. For Inoue in particular, he viewed the call to “cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perf moral powers” as well as the need to “advance public good and promote public interest” as *the* purpose of his life.

²² Staggs, 271.

²³ William T.M. De Barry, Carol Gluck, and Arthur Tidemann, eds. *Sources of Japanese Tradition: Volume II, 1600-2000* (New York: Columbia University Press), 2005, 780.

Inoue's first significant move along these lines was the founding of the *Tetsugakkan* (Philosophy Hall, today's Tōyō University) in 1897. As Kathleen Staggs put it:

In founding *Tetsugakkan*, Inoue combined his dedication to the nation and to the truth. By teaching philosophy, he would advance the cause of truth as he had discovered it; simultaneously, by improving people's intellects through the study of philosophy, the most advanced academic discipline, he would make them citizens better equipped to serve the nation.²⁴

Furthermore, the *Tetsugakukan* was meant to be an alternative to the elites-only education offered at Tokyo University, it would be a place for people without means to study philosophy. While this sounds like a noble pursuit, it should also be remembered that ten years earlier in the *Revitalization of Buddhism*, Inoue had expressed concern that the people were growing increasingly ignorant (*gumin*, 愚民).²⁵

Eventually, Inoue grew increasingly frustrated with his role in managing the school, especially after an incident in which one of his students had argued in an exam that regicide could be justified under certain situations. Though Inoue had been away at the time of the incident (1902-1903) on one of his lecture tours, his relationship with both the school's administration and the Ministry of Culture had been strained. In 1906, he officially resigned from his position.²⁶

Even before his resignation, Inoue had grown increasingly discontent with the extent of his reach, so to speak, with the public. By 1901 he began a lengthy series of lecture tours throughout Japan. Between 1906 and 1918, it is estimated by his son, Gen'ichi, that Inoue lectured to 1.3 million people in Japan in 53 cities and 2261 (!) smaller towns and villages.²⁷ In

²⁴ Staggs, 274-275.

²⁵ *BKJ*, 395.

²⁶ See Miura, 2012, 108-148.

²⁷ *Annai*, Introduction.

his tours to the leadup to 1904, Inoue, in addition to spreading the Truths of philosophy to the people, was gathering money for a new project: he was going to build a public park in Tokyo dedicated to the study of philosophy. His choice to use a constructed greenspace to communicate his message was not, in my estimation, a coincidence.

The Nature of Education

In *The Pedagogical View of Life and the World: or, About the Educator's Mental Peace* (*Kyōiku-teki sekai-kan oyobi jinseikan: Ichi meikyō ikuie anshin-ron*, 教育の世界観及人生観：一名教育家安心論, 1898), Inoue sharply contrasts the “dead” learning which is the result of an education that takes place entirely within books, and the “living” that comes from nature (*shizen*, 自然) itself.²⁸ From the surrounding text, Inoue's use of *shizen* for nature here evokes not merely nature metaphorically, but as the natural world.

This use of nature, I argue, is part and parcel to Inoue's understanding of both education as well as human knowledge in general. While it is possible to read the characters 自然 as *jinen* and gloss it as “naturally” or “spontaneous,” I find this take to be unlikely, preferring *shizen* and a gloss as “nature” in roughly the modern usage of the term.²⁹ While seemingly a rather minor semantic point, the meaning of 自然 was hotly contested throughout the early to mid Meiji.

²⁸ Inoue (1989), 36.

²⁹ The pronunciation of *Jinen* is only brought up here as it is with that reading that Shinran used to describe the recitation of Amida's name, *the nembutsu*, emphasizing the speech act as an act of spontaneity stemming from one's faith in Amida's grace and the promise of Western Paradise. It is equally reasonable to read the compound as *shizen* and keep the traditional meaning.

As discussed in the introduction, the compound 自然 had two usages during the Meiji, the older meaning of spontaneity, and the translation of the German “*natur*.” To gloss the characters as “nature” here, I argue, is implied by Inoue’s repeated use of the word in a variety of contexts where another reading is implausible, such as in the title (and content) of the following chapter (15) of *The Pedagogical View of Life*, “自然的と人間的との關係” (*shizen teki to ningen teki to no kankei*, “The Relationship between Natural and Human”). The pairing of 自然 and 人間 is a hallmark of the modern usage, and while they are not always conceived of as oppositional or indeed as entirely distinct, to speak of them as related necessitates a 自然 situated within a discourse where “nature” can be thought of as outside “human,” a feature which the traditional usage lacked.³⁰

Further, as also described in the introduction, by the 1880s the shift in the meaning was moving decisively towards the “*natur*” usage. This, coupled with the usage of 自然 and 人間 as related terms strongly suggests that when Inoue is speaking of “natural education” (*shizen kyōiku*, 自然教育) he is not simply using “nature” as symbolism, and when he states that “the book of nature is a living book” (*shizen noshoseki wa katsujo*, 自然の書籍は活書), this is no mere metaphysical musing; understanding of the natural world was a path to knowledge of all things, not only the physical world.

³⁰ *Ibid.* It should be noted here that the *jinen* pronunciation clearly has no such connection with humans or humanity, as it is precisely a human act, the recitation of the *nembustu*, that is one of its most common usages.

It was precisely his understanding of the place of the natural world that led Inoue to construct what he considered to be his legacy to the people of Japan: a public park that served as both an ideal space for philosophical inquiry as well as a philosophical statement itself: the *Tetsugakudō Kōen*.

The *Tetsugakudō Kōen*

I. As a space

Today, the *Tetsugakudō Kōen* sits in a relatively quiet corner of Nakano-ku. There is no direct train that comes particularly close to the park, and the most common way of accessing it is to take the Chūō Line from Shinjuku to Nakano-ku Station, then take a bus to the north for about seven minutes. The park itself is situated on both the top of a hill, with the park extending down the western slope to a canal, which acts as a divider between the original park as envisioned by Inoue, and the extension added in the 1960s, built as a sculpture garden that had a more inclusive range of “philosophers.”³¹ At present, the park is a little under 13 acres, though that does include the annexed section, as well as a series of ponds on the southern side that were not original. Relatively expensive monthly mansions surround the park, and a children’s playground, baseball field, tennis courts, and a general recreation court were all added during the postwar period.

³¹ Examples include Gandhi and Jesus.

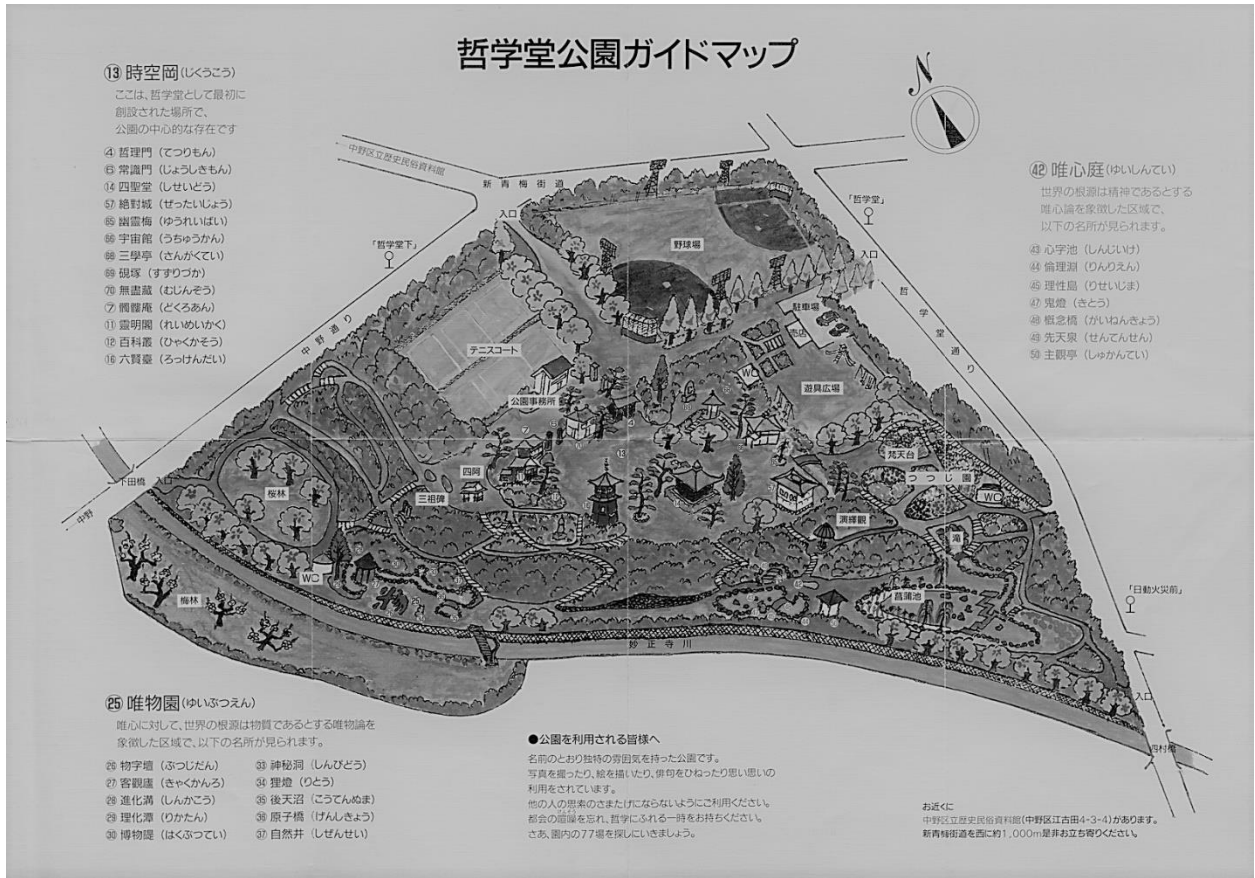


Figure 23: Map of present day Tetsugakudō Kōen.

When Inoue began construction on the park in the Meiji, however, the surrounding environment was much different. In the place of high-rise condominiums, the view from the top of the hill was little more than agricultural fields dotted with small groves of trees. Inoue originally purchased the land as a backup site for the *Tetsugakkan* in case it should be destroyed by fire or earthquake (as had already happened).³² By 1904, however, he had decided to use the money he had been raising to build the Hall of Philosophy (Tetsugakudō, 哲学堂) as a place where anyone could come to explore the world of philosophy. Over the next 14 years, Inoue expanded upon the original design by adding more buildings and then the rest of the park (*kōen*,

³²棟海林、『哲学堂公園に関する造園学的考察』観光学研究 第13号 2014年3月、67.

公園). The park itself was far from the populated areas of metropolitan Tokyo, a setting that Inoue had explicitly chosen to help further his goal of educating the people of Japan.

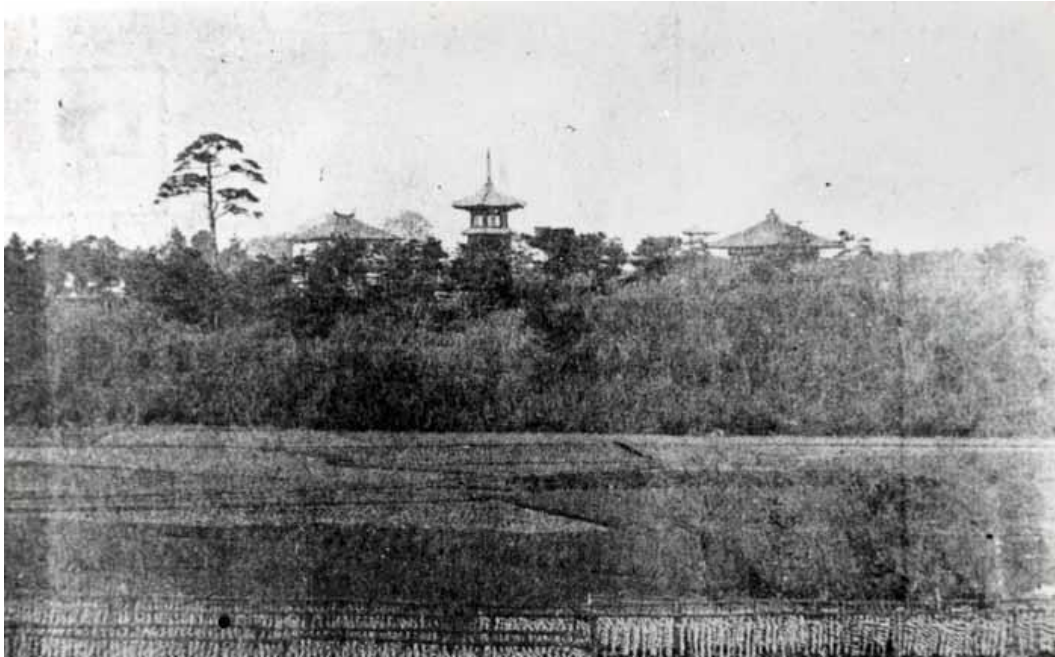


Figure 24: A view of the park from the surrounding farmland, dating to Taisho 10, 1921.

II. As an educational endeavor

The main source for Inoue's vision for the *Tetsugakudō Kōen* is the posthumously published *Tetsugakudō annai* (1919). It was compiled and edited by his son Inoue Genichi, who also, much later in life, wrote a preface to the piece in English. One quick note regarding my translations must here be made. Reiner Schulzer completed an English translation of the piece in 2017, with the intent that it could serve as a guide for visitors to the park. Though his translation is in no way flawed, I have opted for my own translations (unless otherwise noted) as Schulzer's was written primarily for a public audience, and there are points at which I feel a more literal translation better captures some of the nuance that Inoue injected into his descriptions.

Additionally, Schulzer, understandably given his audience, omitted parts of the text that were overly technical.

These points now made, Inoue had expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that, while there were now hundreds of places for the cultivation of the body, there was no public greenspace designed for the betterment of the mind. In his preface to the *Annai*, Inoue states that he was looking for a pure (*kegyō*, 気清) place where “spiritual cultivation could occur naturally” (*shizen ni seishinsoōyō ni tekisuru*, 自然に精神修養に適する).³³ It was for this reason that he chose to build away from the city itself, and by 1906, Inoue started holding Sunday lectures and summer session short courses for any who wanted to take them. While the actual number of attendees for these early sessions have been lost or destroyed, the fact that they continued year after year despite the park’s remoteness is a testament to their popularity.

Inoue’s commitment to *gokoku airi* cannot, however be overlooked or dismissed in relationship the park. Again, from his introduction, Inoue makes it clear that he sees the park as his legacy to the nation (*kokka*, 国家). The park, as we shall see, was another step in his lifelong journey to fulfill the debt he owed to his nation as set forth in the Rescript.

III. As a philosophical argument

At the close of the introduction to the *Tetsugakudō Annai*, Inoue states that in what follows he will “explain the names of the 77 locations of the garden of the Temple of Philosophy while guiding [visitors] on a route [through the park].”³⁴ It is my contention that the routing that Inoue details is not mere happenstance. As noted, the park is littered with crisscrossing trails, and one

³³ Inoue Enryo, *Tetsugakudō Annai*, 1.

³⁴ *Annai*, 2.

could, even during the Taisho era, have taken any number of different paths when exploring the space. This has led some to conclude that the locations within the park were given names “in honor of the philosophical concepts he had studied.”³⁵ On the contrary, the text of the *Annai* implies, and in some cases explicitly makes, an argument concerning the nature of reality, which Inoue (and other philosophers) refer to as either the “mind/matter” or “subject/object” problem.³⁶

While a complete translation would be superfluous, we will here undertake a (penned) tour of the park, incorporating Inoue’s own commentary along with my analysis of how each stop along the route functions as part of Inoue’s larger argument. It is crucial to note that in this greenspace, as in the others we have looked at, visitors, and indeed space designers, were not looking at a top-down, map-like view. On the contrary, the space cannot be understood without the embodied experience of traversing the winding paths and experiencing the park as a multi-sensory experience; the sights of the plants, the feel of the wind, sound of the cicadas, the smells of the flowers: returning to my extension of David Cooper’s “epiphany” as the “gestalt” meaning of a garden. Methodologically, then, this raises serious problems with attempting to describe a four-dimensional experience, which was, crucially, in places part of Inoue’s argument. With these shortcomings in mind, let us begin.

1) Entrance Area

In contrast to the current day plethora of options for entry (see figure 23), visitors to the park in the Meiji and Taisho eras would have approached from the northeast corner where they would have been greeted by two stone pillars flanking the path, one reading “Gateway to

³⁵ Staggs, 279.

³⁶ The centrality with which Inoue regarded this problem can be readily seen from the beginnings of his career in the *Essentials of Philosophy* (哲学要領, 1886), where he refers to this issue as “pure philosophy” (*junsui tetsugaku*, 純粹哲学). See *Essentials of Philosophy*, 117.

Philosophy," (*tetsugaku-kan* 哲學關) the other "World of Truth" (*shinrikai*, 眞理界).³⁷ Inoue here is quite specific in the *Annai* here that philosophy was the "Truth of the cosmos" (*uchū no shinri* 宇宙の眞理), and that the park was a place where that truth can be experienced. Even from the outset, we can see Inoue connecting philosophy, and by extent Truth, to a physical space, one that had distinct bounds, and even a delineated entry point.

About twenty paces or so ahead and on the left stands the "Gate of Philosophy" (*tetsugaku-mon*, 哲理門).³⁸ On the reverse of the gate, where one would, in a Buddhist temple expect to find *Niō*, twin statues of the fearsome guardians of the Buddha, Inoue has instead placed statues of a *tengu* (often translated as goblins, though of course, they are quite different from a European example of one) and a *yūrei* (ghost). Although an extensive discussion of Inoue's work on the supernatural or "mystery studies" would be outside the scope of this project, Inoue's usage of these figures has philosophical significance as well.³⁹ As Inoue explains in the *Annai*, though people dismiss such things as superstitions, beneath both the physical and mental worlds lies a world of irrationality (*rigai no ri*, 理外の理), or that which is incomprehensible (*fukashigi*, 不可思議), inexpressible. *Tengu*, being physical, are brought about when a person encounters something incomprehensible, whereas when the mind encounters such a concept, it summons the image of a ghost.⁴⁰

³⁷ Here again, unless otherwise noted, I have favored my own translations over those put out by Schulzer, see appendix.

³⁸ Of all of the translations, this specific one is open to varying interpretations, and has been glossed in various ways, such as the "portal of metaphysics" and the "gate of philosophical reason." While I understand the desire to avoid translating both 哲学 and 哲理 with the same term, philosophy, both compounds were in use at the time. Further, I feel that the other glosses, especially "metaphysics," distorts the meaning too far.

³⁹ There are numerous studies concerning Inoue's mystery studies. For examples, see as Ananda Josephson,

⁴⁰ *Annai*, 3. Inoue also mentions that this gate is occasionally called the Gate of *Yōkai* (monsters) due to its otherworldly guardians.

From the main gate to the park proper, we can already see Inoue setting up boundaries, both physical, the gate and connecting hedge (to which we will shortly turn), and conceptual, the relationship of mind (*kokoro*, 心) and matter (*mono*, 物). There is, however, a deeper move being made here: not only are we now passing under a gateway that lays out what are clearly two of the most important concepts to Inoue (else why would they be in the Gate of Philosophy?), we should note that both are housed within a single structure. The implication that we are to draw, either with the aid of Inoue's guide or without, is that while mind and matter may manifest in different forms, they are connected, via philosophical reason, into something else, something "incomprehensible."

Flowing out in an easterly direction from the gate is a hedge, the Hedge of Monism (*ichigen kaki*, 一元牆), which serves as another physical and mental boundary. According to Inoue, the outside world of the corner folk is one of pluralism; all things and facts are distinct from one another. Within these grounds, however, monism, the understanding that there is but one fundamental substance from which reality springs, holds sway. This will be an oft repeated theme, as will divisions between philosophical viewpoints represented spatially.

Despite the prominence of the Gate of Philosophy, the ordinary entrance, known as the Gate of Common Sense (*Jōshiki-mon*, 常識門) is located another thirty paces or so from the Gate of Philosophy. Although Inoue does not directly explain his rationale for this choice of name, what follows provides us with strong evidence.

2) The Skull Hermitage, The Grotto of Spirits and Demons, and the Tengu Pine

Upon entering either gate, there is a small building located between the two gates, with a skull hanging from the rafters. Per Inoue, the skull, and by extension the skull hermitage, is not meant to indicate the death of the body, but rather the death of our spirit (*seishin-jō no shi*, 精神上の死), which has been defiled by the secular world. Here, Inoue explicitly invokes Zen Buddhist thought by linking this spiritual death with the necessity for the mind to die before it can be reborn.⁴¹ In addition to its metaphorical purpose, Inoue encouraged visitors to sign the guestbook, have a short rest, and request tea from the staff member inside.

From the Hermitage, visitors then proceeded down the Corridor of Rebirth (*Fukkatsu-rō*, 復活廊), which passes through the Grotto of Spirits and Demons. Though it is obvious from the title, the idea behind this short journey is that our spiritual self has been reborn, and now our philosophical mind's eye is open. Here, much like the boundaries of gates and hedge, we can clearly see the notion of the sacredness of this space, and that we must leave the secular world in order to perceive the Truth. Another subtler move is implied by the death of our old mind; our preconceptions that have accrued from the outside world will render us unable to apprehend the deeper mysteries of the park.

This, coupled with the previous section on the physical boundaries and entryways of the park speaks to one of main arguments, both in this chapter and the dissertation more generally: The ideas that these places were meant to convey *could only* be conveyed within what are essentially sacred spaces. In Inoue's case, it was the impurity of the outside world that one had to

⁴¹ *Annai*, 4-5.

be cleansed of (recall as well that when it was built the park was located far from urban Tokyo and was surrounded by fields and woods). Coupled with Inoue's imagery of books of the human world as "dead" learning in *The Pedagogical View of Life*, the emphasis placed upon the space itself, as well as the "natural" features of the park, gives rise to a point that Inoue seems to be nonexplicitly driving at: the truths that we can access at the *Tetsugakudō Kōen* cannot be expressed in words spoken or written outside. I would argue that this is the natural extension of the more literal interpretation of the "book of nature" discussed earlier.

3) The Shrine of the Four Sages

Once we have passed through the Grotto and wound our way past a grove of pine trees, we come to an open space surrounded by several buildings. Almost directly in front of a visitor lies the Shrine of the Four Sages (*shiseidō*, 四聖堂) that serves as the focal point of the hilltop in an aesthetic and spatial geometrical sense, and of the park in general. Inoue also stresses here that this is not a religious building but is there to represent the "philosophical ideal" (*tetsugakuteki risō*, 哲学的理想).⁴² Although now shuttered and not generally open to the public, Inoue's description is that the space was open, both physically and figuratively. Within the sanctum, a visitor would encounter four tablets hanging from the ceiling, each representing one of the enshrined four philosophers: The Buddha, Confucius, Socrates, and Kant. This grouping of thinkers, in addition to some of his writings, has led many to brand Inoue as an "eclectic" at best, or occasionally as a propagandistic opportunist who sought worldwide validation and recognition for his own viewpoints and Buddhism as a whole.⁴³ Inoue himself, however, clearly

⁴² *Annai*, 6.

⁴³ See Kathleen Staggs, "Defend the Nation and Love of Truth," for a sympathetic take, where in her estimation Inoue, while a "skilled propagandist," was nevertheless sincere in his beliefs. Judith Snodgrass, on the other hand, in paints Inoue as an ideologue with virtually no understanding of the philosophical idea that he attempted to

lays out his reasons for the selections of these philosophers, and his selection criteria tells us a good deal about some of his positions.



Figure 25: A view of the Hall of the Four Sages, The Hall of the Universe, and the Pagoda of the Six Wise Men

Inoue begins by separating philosophy into Eastern and Western, a move which aligns him with Inoue Tetsujirō and sets him against Nakae Chōmin and Nishi Amane in the debate over whether pre-modern non-Western thought could be classified as “philosophy.” Inoue then chooses to divide Western thought into ancient (*kodai tetsugaku*, 古代哲学) and modern *kindai tetsugaku*, (近世哲学), while dividing Eastern into Indian (*indo tetsugaku*, 印度哲学) and Chinese (*shina tetsugaku*, 支那哲学). Though the motivation for choice of the Buddha is self-evident, Inoue relates that he considered including Laotze over Confucius, but chose the latter as “most select Confucius.”⁴⁴ For ancient Western philosophers, Inoue considered Plato and

popularize. For more recent portrayals, both Clinton Godart and Reiner Schulzer in present more nuanced approaches and seek to engage with his work on its own terms.

⁴⁴ *Annai*, 10.

Aristotle before settling on Socrates, as it was Socrates that was also regarded as the greatest teacher, speaking again to Inoue's emphasis on education. Kant's selection was frankly made with questionable assertions, as Inoue states that Kant was the only European in the modern age to influence all of Europe philosophically during his life.⁴⁵

What I would like to draw attention to here, however, is not those he selected, but rather where their shrine fit into the garden both spatially and along the suggested route. A current visitor to the park, especially one who enters from below the hill, would likely encounter this building and assume that, as it is the focal point, it must also be, therefore, the end of the journey. After all, since they have traversed through so many philosophically named features to arrive there, it makes a certain amount of sense to consider the four sages, as Inoue himself referred to them, as the endpoint of philosophical discovery. After contemplating the park, we are now ready to understand the teachings of these great men. By placing their shrine at the beginning of the inner park, however, Inoue seems to be making a rhetorical move, as it were, spatially. The four sages are the *beginning* of our path towards the Truth, not the destination. This point will become clearer after we have returned up the hill and encounter some of the other buildings.

Speaking of the Shrine itself, during the design process, Inoue struggled with how to symbolically present the twin notions of mind (*kokoro*, 心) and matter (*mono*, 物) (again, showing the Inoue's preoccupation with this question), eventually deciding to represent the mind with a spherical lantern, while matter is embodied in a censer sitting beneath the lamp. Metaphorically, we are told, this represents the way in which the mind's light is obscured by the smoke from the incense of the impure material world.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The same could be said of many others, Hegel being one obvious example as well as Descartes or even Hume, depending on how one chooses to define "modern." Furthermore, although Inoue does not mention it here, he had selected the same group of philosophers for a philosophical festival (祭り) 30 years prior.

⁴⁶ *Annai*, 6-7.

The ceiling of the Shrine was designed to be a representation of the universe before the separation of mind and matter. Much like he does in the *Essentials of Philosophy*, which will be discussed more thoroughly after we have completed our garden stroll, Inoue argues that our ability to question the origin of mind and matter *necessitates* that there exists something before them both. Inoue calls this substance the Absolute (*zettai*, 絕對), Infinity (*mugen*, 無限), or the Unknowable (*fukachiteki*, 不可知的).⁴⁷ Critically, Inoue maintains that as it is both formless and colorless, it cannot be represented. Nevertheless, drawing on the metaphor of a primordial egg from Chinese, Japanese and Indian thought to illustrate a time when mind (the yolk) and matter (the white) had not yet separated, Inoue believed that the best he could do was have an image of egg painted on the ceiling.⁴⁸ Given that all of this is presented as part of the search for the Truth, Inoue is asserting that there are truths that are unknowable, formless, and colorless; they cannot be expressed. At the same time, however, they *can* be apprehended, even if only incompletely, and Inoue's methodology for expressing the inexpressible, in this instance, was extra-linguistically.

The final item of note within the Shrine is the Mantra Pillar (*shōnen-tō*, 唱念塔), which Inoue added years after construction was complete, seems to strive for another way to help people get to where knowledge of the inexpressible Truth can take them without actually explaining what the Truth is or how one arrives at it philosophically. As he describes it, the inscription on the stele was meant to be a practical piece of guidance to visitors. To give it in full, I will present Schulzer's translation here:

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 7.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*. [Inoue actually did do some other stuff with rays representing the Truth, the Good, and the Beautiful, but ultimately that is a bit deeper into his theory of the Absolute than I feel is needed at this point of the section.].

It is my belief that the ultimate object of philosophy is to investigate and to expand the theory of universal truth, and then to link this truth to the human mind, thus opening a path of optimism in real life. The ultimate object of invocation I have called *Zettai-mugen-son*. The Japanese word *zettai* signifies endless, universal space, and *mugen* means infinity of time, while *son* signifies transcendence over time and space; as well as immeasurable great virtue and dignity. The quickest way to link our minds with the Absolute Infinite Supreme is to recite repeatedly the sacred formula, "Hail, Absolute Infinite Supreme!" If this sacred formula be uttered but once, it will banish all melancholy, kill agony, remove discontent, lessen physical pain, and calm the raging sea of evil thoughts. It will disperse the clouds of doubt and illusory fancies; it will bring Heaven to the spirit, and bless one with divinely happy days; it will thus, even on this small spot, bring onto us the mystic light of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. At the very instant of giving utterance to this sacred formula, the all-powerful universal Spirit gushes forth by mighty emanations and rouses to life within one. The effect of this mantra brings to us inscrutable marvels. There are three different ways of practicing the mantra:

The vocal mantra: with audible voice, we utter the sacred words, *Namu Zettai-mugen-son*.

The silent mantra: with closed lips, we silently utter the sacred words, *Namu Zettai-mugen-son*.

The concentration mantra: with closed eyes, we meditate in silence on the sacred words, *Namu Zettai-mugenson*.

Through the force of the mantra, we can build up perfect bliss and tranquility within our minds, and we shall be aided in sacrificially and zealously exerting ourselves in the interests of our country, as well as of our fellowmen. This is the unorthodox philosophy transmitted in the Philosophy Temple on Mount Morality.⁴⁹

Within this inscription lies a treasure trove of much of Inoue's thought and the purpose behind the park. Firstly, the practicality that Inoue ascribes to this mantra demonstrates once again the educational aspect of the park. It further reinforces his dedication to the Truth, though it could be argued that the Truth of the Absolute was not so much being searched for and discovered as related to us from Buddhist thought.

The point I am trying to make here is not that Inoue's cosmology or choice of artistic representation thereof has itself philosophical merit. Nor is this understanding of reality novel to

⁴⁹ *Annai*, 11-12, translation by Rainer Schulzer.

Inoue scholarship. What I would like to stress, however, is the care and thought he put into the design of the Shrine. These were not choices driven by mimicry of other Shrines (which would be difficult to begin with since this is the only such shrine in existence), or aesthetic considerations. Inoue very carefully designed the space to represent his philosophical theories concerning the nature of reality. What I hope to show, now that we are leaving the Shrine for the greenery of the park, is that the entire park was also designed with the same goal in mind.

4) Route to the Garden of Materialism

Upon exiting the Shrine of the Four Sages, visitors were instructed to turn west, and walk about 20 paces whereupon they would encounter the Pagoda of the Six Wise Men (六賢臺). This section is one of two major sites within the garden where Inoue was not really furthering his philosophical argument, but rather cultivating a space where philosophy could be taught, and philosophical work undertaken. The Pagoda is nothing more than a monument to Six Wise Men of the East, two from Japan, Shōtoku Taishi and Sugawara no Michizane, two from China, Zhuangzi and Zhu Xi, and two from India, Nāgārjuna from the Buddhist tradition and Kapila from the Brahman.⁵⁰

Moving past the monument, a visitor descends a slight slope which turns to the right. After this turn, there is a sculpture of an inkbrush, meant to represent and honor those who donated money to Inoue during his lengthy tours throughout Japan.⁵¹ Walking briskly by, we then encounter a fork in the road: a turn to the left will lead us to the Garden of Idealism (*yuishin-tei*, 唯心庭), whereas a right turn will eventually lead us down to the Garden of

⁵⁰ *Annai*, 13. It is possible to argue that here, as in all other aspects of his thought and writing, Inoue was trying to include non-Western thinkers within the ranks of philosophers, but given the ubiquity of this in his thought, I believe the Pagoda to be a result of that line of thinking, not a representation or argument for it.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 14-15.

Materialism (*yuibutsu-en*, 唯物園). Inoue aptly named this crossroads the Fork of Doubt (*kaigi chimata*, 懷疑巷), and the reason for our doubt, we are informed by the *Annai*, is that our philosophical enquiry must begin with either materialism or idealism.

This divergence of two paths marks the first spot where the use of the natural world comes into sharp relief. Though the *Annai* informs us which path goes to which garden, there was not, during Inoue's day, any signpost to this effect. Further, the trees of the garden are such that our view is almost fully obscured; we would, without the guide, be making a blind choice. While the guide has us turn our feet to the right, it is arguable that this is not necessarily because Inoue intends for us to make that choice, and, moreover, the text of the *Annai* doesn't provide us with any reason to choose Materialism.⁵² Is our route then simply due to the fact that Inoue has to select an order to proceed, and right is just as good as left? Though there is no explicit messaging in the *Annai*, I find this unlikely. In the *Essence of Philosophy*, which, once again, will be further elaborated on later, Inoue has a very clear argument about the order in which philosophical thinking on the mind/matter debate proceeds. Initially, much as we were on the other side of the Hedge of Monism, humans believed in dualism: that matter and mind (or spirit) were two separate and distinct phenomena.⁵³ As we progress with our understanding of the world, we naturally move towards materialism, the notion that the mind is simply a machine of flesh, blood, and neurons; matter is the only thing that exists.⁵⁴ This stepping-stone approach suggests that Inoue's choice of a right turn is not happenstance; we have left the pre-philosophical stage of dualism when we passed through the Hedge of Monism, and the next

⁵² *Ibid*, 15.

⁵³ Inoue also attributes this belief to the general public of Japan. See Clinton Godart, "Tracing the Circle of Truth: Inoue Enryō on the History of Philosophy and Buddhism." *The Eastern Buddhist*, NEW SERIES, 36, no. 1/2 (2004): 106-33.

⁵⁴ Inoue Enryō, *Tetsugaku yōryō*, (reprint 1987), 150.

stepping stone is materialism. It therefore follows that our journey through the manifestation of philosophy would follow the same course.



Figure 26: The view from the Fork of Doubt. Though this photo dates from 2019, earlier archival photos show a similar level of forestation and shrouded vision, photograph by author.

Whatever the case may be, Inoue does have us proceeding towards the Garden of Materialism, so that is our next destination. Immediately after making our choice of paths, we pass by a pillar informing us that we are entering the Slope of Experience (*keiken-saka* 經驗坂).

This is because, Inoue tells us, is because belief in materialism is the result of our experiences with the physical, empirical sciences.⁵⁵ About halfway down the slope, we come to the Hilltop of Sensation (*kankaku-kan*, 感覺巒). Inoue gives us precious little in the *Annai* concerning this feature, but its significance to my understanding of the park and Inoue's understanding of nature and its relation to philosophy.

⁵⁵ *Annai*,

Firstly, the very name itself, which is all the average visitor would have had access to, encourages us to stop and consider our surroundings. This includes what we can see, more on this shortly, as well as what we can feel, smell, and hear. As always, we must consider the pastoral nature that surrounded the park in the Meiji and Taisho eras, even today when standing on this spot, one can feel the wind, the heat from the sun; hear the buzz of the cicadas, droplets of falling rain; smell the dust kicked up from the path, the grassy scent from the bamboo. Moreover, one here has a relatively unobstructed view of the Garden of Materialism and would have had seen the rice fields and groves of pines that stretched on to the hazy horizon to the south.

Although Inoue does not spell it out, it is from this point that we can observe the material world. This will not be the last time we are encouraged to do so, which I would argue is relevant to the line of argumentation Inoue is setting up for us here. Our “philosophical mind’s eye” has been opened, and we are now seeing the world, in this case the material world, through in a new light; even though we are looking at the “impure” world of matter, our accrued impurities are gone. Seeing the world in this way, we come to the conclusion that, indeed, materialism is the correct viewpoint: our sensations have confirmed there is only matter. And so, we come to the Garden of Materialism.⁵⁶

5) Garden of Materialism

The first feature that that we encounter is perhaps a bit on the nose but is an artistic representation of the Chinese character for matter (or “thing,” more generally, *mono* 物), labeled

⁵⁶ It should be noted that here we can take a slight detour to the “Grove of Endless Beings,” (萬有林), where the founders of philosophical thought in Greece (Thales), India (Akṣapāda Gotama), and China (The Yellow Emperor) are revered “Monument of the Three Fathers” (三祖碑 these translation are taken from Schulzer). This is the second of the two places in the garden that I would argue are for setting the “tone” of the park, as well as acting as references to historical figures, which I would count as education.

as the “Mound of the Character for Matter” (*mono ji dan*, 物字壇) which stands as the “symbol for the garden.”⁵⁷



Figure 27: The symbol of the Garden of Materialism, the character 物, photograph by author..

To the left of the character, stands a thatched roof Hermitage of Objectivity (*kyakkan-ro*, 客觀廬), which, according to Inoue, was built as a place for visitors to rest.⁵⁸ Aesthetically speaking, much of the Garden of Materialism is rather haphazardly put together, and many of the named features, while all related to the materialist point of view (the Pool of Physics and Chemistry (*rik-tan*, 理化潭), the River of Mathematics (*sūri-kō*, 數理江), which was crossed by the Telescopic Footbridge (*bōenbashi*, 望遠橋) and the Beam of Observation (*kanshō-ryō*, 觀象梁) before their eventual collapse), are not, in my view, spatially arranged for any particular rhetorical reason other than emphasizing features of the thought process that leads to

⁵⁷ Annai, 16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

materialism. The path that adjoins the very end of the slope, on the other hand, is rich in significance.

At the foot of the slope of experience babbles (depending on the season) a small flow of water, termed by Inoue as “The Trench of Evolution” (*shinka-kō*, 進化溝). Its source is the “Cave of Mystery” (*shinbi-dō*, 神祕洞), which lies further down the garden on the way to the Garden of Idealism. Though in the *Annai* Inoue only says that “evolution leads back to mysticism,” there is also a great deal of symbolism here. In the *Tetsugaku Yōryō*, Inoue argues that one of the key features of materialism that leads to its eventual undoing is that evolution, as a process, cannot be explained without a force emanating from beyond mere physics (again, virtually everyone familiar with the concept now would dispute this point, but that is neither here nor there).⁵⁹ If we trace the theory of evolution back to its headwaters, we find mystery shrouded in darkness; a black box so to speak. I argue that, with the interlacing of words and space, in simply the form of the names and the garden components, Inoue is trying to express his argument in an extra-textural way. If the waters of evolution come from a mysterious source, how can we accept that all is matter?

This Cave of Mystery can also be seen as the third step in Inoue’s hierarchy of ideals/matter positions: not mind nor matter. Per Inoue in the *Tetsugaku Yōryō*, this is not nihilism, but rather that all things come from something that is neither of the two. He likens it to Herbert Spencer’s “original power,” and the Neo-Confucian “Great Ultimate.”⁶⁰ Represented spatially, we have the depth of the cave, a gaping darkness that we cannot penetrate, yet we perceive that something is inside, and indeed there *must* be something inside as the flow of

⁵⁹ See Godart, “Tracing the Circle,” 118, and Inoue, *Tetsugaku Yōryō*, 154.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

evolution issues forth from it. We cannot, however, observe it, and as we cannot either conceive of it as a mental projection, as it is unknowable to us. But it is this unknowability that leads Inoue to ultimately reject this position. If we cannot know what is inside the cave, then we cannot arrive at the Truth, an anathema to Inoue.



Figure 28: The Cave of Mysteries, photograph by author (the plaque is a modern addition). Note the uncertainty of what lies within.

Is the answer, then, that there is simply nothing but our own senses? This sidesteps the problem of the unknowable, as there *is* a truth, it is just that essentially nothing exists outside of our own senses. Perhaps there really is nothing inside the cave. The source of all creation is illusory; we cannot see, measure, or conceive of it, so maybe it does not exist at all. Our

understanding of matter is limited by our sensation of it, and even our thoughts could be nothing more than our sensation of thinking. Clinton Godart has termed this fourth step “Nihilism,” as it rejects the existence of anything.⁶¹ But to Inoue, this rejection is also its undoing. In order for this theory to be true, then the other theories *cannot* be true: if A then not -A. But this requires the logical proposition of non-contradiction, and as such, it must presuppose that logical boundaries exist. Logic, however, cannot be something we sense (in Inoue’s estimation). Additionally, our senses require both space and time; space must exist in order for us to sense anything, and the passage of time is not a sense at all (though there are now many neurologists who would take issue with this claim).⁶² Therefore, while the Cave of Mysteries may be aptly named, it ultimately has led us to a dead end philosophically, as presumably the cave itself eventually does as well.

This line of argument is furthered by what was (it is no longer extant) the final feature of the Garden of Materialism, the “Marsh of *A Posteriori*” (*kōten-shō*, 後天沼). Truths which are *a posteriori* are truths that can only be apprehended after observation: we know that humans have the organs we do because we have examined cadavers. In order for the label *a posteriori* to make any sense, however, then there must also be truths which are *a priori*, we can deduce or know them without empirical evidence. Given that, as Inoue stated during the previous section on the slope of experience, materialism is derived from scientific observations of the world, it would seem that Truths which can be found without such observation must lie outside of materialism, which, by definition, implies that a materialist understanding of the universe falls flat.⁶³ Further, both *a posteriori* and *a priori* Truths are Truths that we can arrive at, signaling again the

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 118-119.

⁶² [Need footnote.]

⁶³ Here, as always, numerous objections could be made to Inoue’s line of thought.

rejection of the unknowable. It is also founded on logical principles; if *a posteriori* truths exist, then so must *a priori*. This acts as another rebuttal of the nihilist position.

Note how the “not mind or matter” position or the “nihilist” position can be found within Inoue’s body of text, but that they are completely absent from the *Annai*. Furthermore, it is arguable that Inoue’s explanation of these two positions is not comprehensible to us in written form. After all, given that Inoue ultimately rejects both views, how can we really understand them from his explanations? But the black abyss of the cave gives us a visceral unease; it is, by definition, the unknown. Staring into the darkness can also lead one to question if our reality is merely our perception. It may be the case, for example, that there is *no* interior to the cave at all, our inability to sense it can lead to a doubt that it exists. If this interpretation holds, as I argue it does, then what Inoue has attempted to do with this space is quite remarkable, and a rather brilliant answer to the question of how to discuss that which cannot be expressed: symbolism within natural space. His rebuttals, on the other hand, *do* work textually, and indeed it is doubtful that anyone would naturally come to these conclusions on their own. It is in that sense that Inoue’s explanation of the Marsh of the *a posteriori* logically asserting the existence of *a priori* Truth in the *Annai* can be read; the arguments against these cosmologies *can* be explained.

6) The Garden of Idealism

As we leave the Garden of Materialism for the Garden of Idealism, we first come to the “Crossroads of Duality” (*nigen-ku*, 二元衢). In the *Annai*, Inoue explains that this dualism stands for the philosophical notion that both mind and matter can coexist without being reduced to a single source. What is interesting about this area is that it does not have a view of either garden. In effect, Inoue here is hinting at what his ultimate conclusion will be, that you cannot apprehend

reality if you are stuck in either materialist or idealist frame of mind. After we pass the crossroads, we next travel along the Gorge of One's Own Judgement (*dokudan-kyō*, 獨斷峽).⁶⁴

The Garden of Idealism is itself, without getting bogged down in the history of Japanese garden design, a more standard example of what a garden looks like than the Garden of Materialism. The space is dominated by a pond which Inoue claims is shaped like the character for mind (*kokoro*, 心), though whether this is true is open for debate. It is also the Pond of the Mind (*kokoro ji ike*, 心字池) where Inoue most explicitly connects the form of the space to the ideas it represents. The central island of the pond is the Island of Reason (*risei-jima*, 理性島), which can be reached by stepping on the Bridge of Concepts (*gainen-bashi*, 概念橋). Reason, we are told, exists in the central depths of the mind, and reason is connected to the exterior world by means of concepts.⁶⁵ The pond itself lies between the Deeps of Ethics (*rinri-en*, 倫理淵) and the Cliffs of Psychology (*shinri-gai*, 心理崖). This positioning is meant to express that the mind rules, while psychology and ethics advise.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ While I have normally let my own glosses stand without explanation, this one I believe requires one. Everyone else refers to this place as the Gorge (or Ravine or Chasm) of Dogmatism, but I find that misleading. When Inoue defines the word himself in the *Annai*, he states that “[獨斷峽] is a philosophical term for theories that start with assumed and asserted principles. [獨斷峽] therefore contrasts with empiricism. The school of empiricism is based on observational and experimental science, whereas [獨斷峽] is an idealistic conception. Empiricism is connected with the material side of life, while [獨斷峽] is related to the intuitive and idealistic” (see *Annai*, 19; I have used Schulzer's translation of this section to highlight why I do not believe it fits even with his own translation of the passage). In this context, the invoking of intuition I believe necessitates a more archaic reading of this word, as dogmatism implies blind obedience, and that's not what Inoue is talking about here.

⁶⁵ *Annai*, 20.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*



Figure 29: The Pond of Spirit. Designed (loosely) to resemble the character for "spirit" or "heart, 心), the marked areas are deliberately positioned in order to spatially demonstrate their philosophical relationship to one another in Inoue's understanding, photograph by author.

Feeding into pond is the “Spring of the A Priori,” the companion the Marsh we left mere minutes ago. Slightly elevated and past the pond is the twin to the Hermitage of Objectivity: The Hermitage of Subjectivity. Inoue recommends this spot as a good place to rest or meditate before we begin our ascent back up the hill.

How, then, does this Garden fit into Inoue’s overarching argument? Does this mean that we have arrived at our conclusion? Is idealism the true nature of reality? The form of the Garden ultimately suggests that it cannot be so. As Inoue has stated, reason, or thought more generally, while being at the center of the Garden, is still connected to the rest of the world via concepts. As Inoue has also argued, concepts are crucial for idealism to hold. Their connection with the outside world, however, suggests what Inoue described as the sixth stage in the mind/matter

problem: mind and matter both exist. Our rejection of the Nihilism we arrived at in the Cave of Mysteries was based on the necessity of space, time, and logic for sensation to exist in the first place. This issue can be resolved, however, if instead of sensation governing reality our mind does. This overcomes the trouble with Materialism; mind, or perhaps spirit or *geist* in a Hegelian sense, can act as the source of all things. Furthermore, since we are thinking beings, we can grasp the Truth, which solves the problem of “not mind nor matter.” Also, space, time, and logic are concepts, which obviously can be thought of. Is idealism the answer then? This is where the use of the natural world comes into play most strongly. So far, every stage of the problem has been represented in a physical space comprised of natural features. Though sensation cannot be the only thing that exists, our “experience” of the natural world at the “Hilltop of Sensation” cannot be discounted. We perceived physical forces, such as wind, rain, smells, etc. But, as we have also learned, materialism alone is insufficient. To Inoue, this necessitated the existence of both mind and matter in a dependent relationship. Further, we must also accept that there must have been something that pre-dated both, which for Inoue was the Absolute (*zettai*, 絶対). We have not yet, however, come to the end of our journey.

7) The Region of Logic

We have been given a choice at this point with how to proceed, and unlike at the Fork of Doubt, either path can be reasonably taken. On the left-hand side of the Garden, facing the hill, we have the Shortcut of Intuition (*chokkaku-kei*, 直覺徑), on the right we have the Path of Cognition (*ninshiki-ro*, 認識路) which travels as a winding path through the Region of Logic (*rinri-iki*, 論理域). Although Inoue spends essentially no words on the Shortcut, the implication is that one can reach our philosophical destination either by applying logic and thinking the

problem through, or we can intuit our way there as well. We will return to the significance of this later.

Meanwhile, let us take the longer, more arduous way up, the Path of Cognition. Along the path, we will arrive at two crucial stops, the Observatory of Deduction (*eneki-kan*, 演繹觀) and the Spot of Induction (*kinō-jō*, 歸納場). Using Schulzer's translation again, here is Inoue in his own words concerning the two:

Induction draws from particular facts a general law, whereas deduction leads from general laws to particular facts. To express this idea in popular language, I might say that example before proof is induction, and proof before example is deduction. Consequently, my reason for placing the Observatory of Deduction in seclusion on the slope of the hill is to show that deduction begins with the general truth within us. The Spot of Induction with wide outlook is on the crest of the hill, because induction embraces wide views of the outside world.⁶⁷

What is crucial for our purposes is the way in which Inoue is purposefully using natural features to create two distinct spots, each with its own purpose. In order to show deductive logic as coming from within us, Inoue has surrounded the area with thickly clustered trees.⁶⁸ In other words, we are alone here with our thoughts, and cannot rely on the outside world to help us make sense of things. For Induction, however, we survey the scenery from the top of the hill. In the Meiji and Taisho, this would have been crops and copses, the natural and the natural fashioned for human consumption. More so than anywhere else, this is where Inoue is having us read from the “book of nature.” Though not perhaps as necessary as for other concepts, for Inoue, “nature” is the ideal way to impart the difference between the two.

⁶⁷ *Annai*, 22. Translated by Rainer Schulzer.

⁶⁸ These trees, sadly, are no longer extant in anything resembling dense foliage.

8) The Citadel of the Absolute

The last stop before we return to the top is the Station of Consciousness (*ishiki-eki*, 意識驛). It is here that Inoue instructs us to sit and contemplate all that we have seen. Up to this point, we have recognized the existence of mind, matter, and the absolute. It is at this final resting place that the connection between the three is made clear and the Truth revealed. Consider the Observatory of Deduction and the Spot of Induction. While they appear, on the outset to be oppositional, in the most binary of senses, they are, in actuality, composed of the same thing: the park. Inoue does not explicitly make this point in the *Annai*, but he does assert that once we can see that opposites are illusory, we arrive at the ultimate philosophy, the Absolute (*zettai*, 絶對).⁶⁹ At this point in the *Annai*, Inoue gets rather esoteric, and begins a discussion that he hasn't yet set up concerning the Relative and the Absolute. His rather cryptic writing here hearkens back to the *Tetsugaku yōryō*, where Inoue describes the seventh and final stage of philosophical understanding in which we come to understand that mind and matter are both composed of the Absolute.⁷⁰ As Clinton Godart points out, Inoue has two different types of argument for his position, one epistemological and one logical, both of which can be found in the *Tetsugakudō Kōen* if one follows Inoue's instruction to reflect on all that we have seen.

Epistemologically, if the absolute exists outside of the physical and the mental, then we could not know it. As we learned before we even ventured into the garden section of the park, in order for us to be able to question the existence of the mental and the physical, there must be

⁶⁹ *Annai*, 22-23.

⁷⁰ This is also the conclusion reached by Hegel, although using different terminology. For a comparison, see Takemura Makio, "On the Philosophy of Inoue Enryō," *International Inoue Enryō Research* 『国際井上円了研究』 1 (2013): 3-24.

something that sits above them. But as we have experienced at the Cave of Mystery, the Truth cannot be unknowable, it must be in the cave somewhere (unless it does not exist at all, but that we have also dismissed). Ergo, we *do* have knowledge of the absolute, we are, after all, talking about it. Since it is knowable, it *must* be part of the physical and the mental. But since we cannot directly observe it or completely understand it, it can only be the fundamental building block of all things.⁷¹

For the Logical argument, we only know about the absolute in reference to the relative, ergo the absolute is not absolute but in fact relative. But, if there is only relative, then the relative is the absolute, and we repeat ad nauseum. This paradox can be solved if we assume that the absolute and the relative share the same substance.⁷² For this insight, we need to have completed the entirety of our journey. Without the steppingstones that brought us here, as set forth in the natural world of the park, we cannot know that matter and mind must both exist. Since they, like everything else, are comprised of the features of the park, there cannot be in opposition to each other, as they share the fundamental makeup.

9) Loose Ends

The persuasiveness of Inoue's argument is not really the point, which is good since it rests on shaky ground. He has made an argument, however imperfect it may be, out of a park. As we noted earlier, however, this is only one of two purposes that Inoue had in mind when constructing the park. Recall when we began our journey that we began with the great sages of history and did not end with them. The *Annai* itself does not end at the Citadel of the Absolute. From the citadel, we can then proceed onto the library and reading hall, which at one time

⁷¹ Godart, "Tracing the Circle," 119.

⁷² *Ibid.*

housed “countless books,” collected by Inoue as far back as 1886.⁷³ The point I wish to make is that for Inoue, we have not just made our journey through philosophy and arrived at the revealed truth. It is now up to us to pursue philosophical knowledge as he argued in *My Mission in Philosophy*. We have started with the four sages, we have heard Inoue’s argument concerning the nature of the cosmos, now it is our task to pursue our own philosophical work.

After we have visited the library, we are encouraged to proceed to the Hall of the Universe (*uchū-kan*, 宇宙館), at which regular lectures were held.⁷⁴ Again, these lectures were meant to help in our universal search for the Truth. In an adjoining room, however, we find the influence of *gokoku airi* and a physical representation of the importance of the Imperial Rescript on Education. On either side of the door, we find these inscriptions:

Among all countries in the world this Empire is the most beautiful (世界萬邦中
皇國爲最美)

Among all species in the cosmos mankind is the most venerable (宇宙萬類中人
類爲最尊).⁷⁵

Once inside, we find, sitting atop a podium, a copy of the Rescript. As Inoue himself puts it, “Philosophy also examines the society and the state.”

Conclusion: Nature as Philosophy, Nature as the Unknowable

Inoue Enryō constructed his Tetsugakudō Kōen for a plethora of reasons. In one sense, he was trying to live up to what he saw as his duty to the Japanese Empire as set forth in the Imperial Rescript on Education. In another sense, Inoue was trying to forge a new religion based on the Truths of philosophy and reason, albeit one that also happened to look an awful lot like a

⁷³ *Annai*, 24.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 26-27.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 27, translation by Rainer Schulzer.

version of Buddhism. Inoue could also be said to have been seeking to express the inexpressible using the only way he thought his ideas could get across. But more than any other reason, I contend that Inoue was simply making a metaphysical argument in physical form. His text consisted of both the world, human perception and intuition, as well as linguistic explanations to set visitors on the right path, metaphorically and literally. Though it is certainly the most obvious example of the use of a constructed greenspace to make a philosophical point, it is not, as we have seen, the only.

We can also get a glimpse of Inoue's understanding of "nature" here as well. Put most simply, the natural world is used to convey truths that can in fact only be apprehended in this way. Inoue cannot exactly describe the content of the cave of mysteries. It is by definition unknowable. But we *can* sense it through our encounter with the cave. A similar line is taken with the interpretation of deductive and inductive reasoning. In some senses Inoue's use of the natural world here is similar to that of Nariaki; both use the natural world as an instrument to express truths. Where Inoue differs, however, is that the Truth, as he conceives of it, *cannot be expressed with words*.

Conclusion

This inquiry began with two objectives. Firstly, the aim was to show that Japanese intellectuals, over a period of around eighty years, communicated philosophical ideals through the medium of constructed greenspaces. On this point, at the risk of immodesty, I believe there can be little doubt. The Confucian values at Kairaku-en, the Scientific approach taken up in the construction and space at the Sapporo Agricultural College, the new aesthetic and naturalization of the imperial system at Murin-an and Heian Jingū, and perhaps most of all the philosophical treatise that is the Tetsugakudō Kōen, all of these sites clearly both represented different philosophical ideals while simultaneously advocating for them. It does not take much theoretical justification to show that Inoue Enryō was trying to say *something* at the garden/public park he created.

Furthermore, these ideas were not being drawn from any one tradition; Buddhists, Confucians, Western academics, nationalists, as well as outsiders to any major school of thought each expressed themselves in these spaces. As a statement about the intellectual history of the age, this is not remarkable. It has long been argued that there was a plurality of ideologies that continued through this period.¹ It is also abundantly clear that the philosophical positions that

¹ See Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) for an overview of Japanese intellectual history during the Meiji era. In the case of garden history, however, the argument for the Japanese case

were manifesting in these Japanese constructed greenspaces were not unified by the questions they posed nor by the answers they proffered except in one respect: they were all designed to benefit the people of either the domain, the Japanese empire, or the mental and spiritual life of the Japanese people more generally. Even in the case of Yamagata Aritomo, as Machiavellian as his policies were (to put in generously), the point was not power for power's sake, he merely distrusted the Japanese people (or their elected representatives) to have any idea how to govern effectively.

The point I am making here is not an attempt at rehabilitating the characters presented herein. While I believe that Nariaki has been unduly dismissed as a simple xenophobe, I make no claim that his idea to build a park was sound or effective, and indeed I believe it would be almost impossible to make a judgment one way or the other on that question. Similarly, the reverse of this coin is true as well. While I have argued Ogawa Jihei was the architect of an anti-democratic garden designed to perpetrate the exaltation of the emperor, this should not be seen as an assault on his character or even as evidence of his political proclivities. Landscape gardeners, especially ones at the beginning of the careers, are not in a position to turn down high profile contracts, lucrative or otherwise.²

has been that a kind of naturalism in design was replaced by an empty, modern consumerist style that was unmoored from any deeper meaning. This is the argument of Wybe Kuitert, the leading anglophone academic researcher of Japanese gardens, in Wybe Kuitert, *Japanese Gardens and Landscapes, 1650-1950* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

² This issue has political repercussions that apply to today as well. In a sense, this situation could be described as a “can you separate the art from the artist” question that has become pertinent to many, though in Ogawa's case it isn't so much the classic “bad guy” who created something unrelated, but rather someone who has been seen as unproblematic who created something arguably sinister. Rather than a master landscape gardener, a true auteur whose naturalistic garden designs revolutionized the art in Japan, should we consider him a sort of proto fascist? It is worth noting that these two understandings are, of course, in no way contradictory; artists can be just as fascistic as anyone else. Yet I would push back on that characterization for a number of reasons. Firstly, as we have noted previously, gardeners are employees. As such, they are tasked with fulfilling the vision of their client, making it problematic, in my view, to place the decisions and final product squarely at their feet. Yamagata Aritomo was plainly no fan of the democratic process (at least if he could not rig the outcome), and the Imperial Household Ministry had and continues to have a vested interest in keeping the imperial line a sacred and natural institution.

What then of “nature?” Throughout this study we have seen “nature” and the natural world *used* in different ways, by people who had different conceptualizations of what it meant, as well as in textual sources and through extra-textual constructed greenspaces. We have seen the term, *in its modern form*, used to refer to the whole of existence, as a place for restoring one’s spirit, as an instrument of political expression and change, as inclusive of humans and exclusive of artifice *all in the same place* (Kairaku-en).

In my final analysis, I hold that neither “nature” nor “*shizen*” are all that difficult to parse in their modern usage. Virtually all the literature that we mentioned describing “nature” in the introduction focuses on the difficulty or impossibility of defining the term in a way that satisfies the full range of meaning. I argue that such a definition is unnecessary. Considering the constructed greenspaces under investigation in this study, I maintain that the meaning of the terms, used either by we moderns or those in the past, are close to self-evident given a modicum of context. In Sapporo, even a cursory understanding of what was going on at the Agricultural College makes the meaning of the word obvious. Where I to speak of “the nature that was being constructed on the campus of the SAC...” I would clearly be referring to a nature that is something to be scientifically studied and catalogued, though not necessarily set apart from humans conceptually (human anatomy and biology are clearly subject to scientific research). The meaning of the word nature at Murin-an and Heian Jingū quite clearly refers to elements of the natural world. Yamagata and Ogawa were working in the medium of plants, rocks, and water to

There is no evidence, aside from these two gardens, that Ogawa had any of these leanings. If anything, his characterization of his time working with Yamagata and especially at Heian Jingū paint a picture of a man merely working at a difficult job, hoping to transition to something easier. Furthermore, as discussed in the introduction, a constructed greenspace is never solely the product of one person. Designs, original landscaping, upkeep, etc., are rarely, if ever, carried out by the same individual. The gestalt of the garden at Heian Jingū was formed by the garden, the shrine, and the patrons (not to mention the plethora of other factors such as smells, sounds, weather, and time), and of these things Ogawa had influence over only the former. In the end, I hold it is more accurate to consider the works to be anti-popular sovereignty texts rather than paint Ogawa himself with such a brush.

create a new aesthetic that supported an imperial system where power was wielded from behind closed doors and shrouding trees. At the Tetsugakudō Kōen, the word, again obviously in my estimation, refers to the world in most usages. I do not mean to suggest that it is impossible to forge a sentence using the word “nature” that would refer to a different quality, but I would still argue that these meanings would be reasonably self-evident through their use. The only particularly tricky site for the usage of the word that we have covered, Kairaku-en, is difficult because we are trying to map one word over a series of words that were in use. I would argue, thus, that in terms of pure terminology, the only truly confusing cases that arise from our modern usage can be solved by looking at the terms used in Japanese (this would also presumably hold true for any language).

Where there is a great deal of difference, however, lies not in the linguistic term and the category to which it indicates, but the *contents of that category*. This is where I hold that “nature” is indeed as slippery as most scholars make it out to be. Though I have used the term “natural world” freely throughout this work, it may reasonably be asked what falls into this category? We have seen, for example, that birds, other animals, plants, and humans are not necessarily a part of the category “nature.” Also, as with Nariaki, there is a hierarchy to the members of any given category. Humans are a part of *banbutsu* but are placed at the apex. Stones taken from railroad ties and bridge posts are considered “naturalistic” to the commenters of Ogawa’s gardens. The moral content of “nature” is also used differently. Maruyama casts nature as a repressive, conservative force; Max Weber saw it as a force for good.

There does seem to be a commonality between all these formulations, however. If there can be said to be a nucleus of the meaning of nature, one that all uses and derivations include, I would posit that it is a sense of “the way things were meant to go if nothing interfered.” In

addition to the general sense in which I maintain this nucleus (I will refrain from calling it a definition) captures the essence of the term, I also hold that it gestures towards the politically, culturally, and historically constructed tension at the heart of what David Arnold, and others, have called “the problem of nature.” Who defines how things were meant to go? What counts as interference? Nariaki believed that tension and relaxation were a part of the power of nature (*shizen no ikioi*), but what constituted its interference? If the horse does not breath, it will die, we are told. Does that mean that taking a breath violates the natural order? Or, conversely, does *not* stopping to breath interfere with how things would have unfolded? Does “nature” possess a consciousness or will? Even with what I believe is a stable nucleus of meaning for the idea of nature, questions seem to proliferate.

Is there any hope then? Is the only way to apprehend what the ontology of someone’s “nature” to exhaustively study both text and constructs? In a way, I believe the answer to this is, unfortunately, yes. To fully grasp what exactly a thinker is getting at, we need to understand their use of language. Wittgenstein seems to me to be absolutely correct in this regard; if we knew how a speaker or author was using their words, we would have a very good sense of what they mean. But how can we get to this understanding of usage? Though this is one of the oldest problems that historians face, how can we possibly translate across paradigms as wide as 1830s Mito and the 2020s in the Anglophone world? Simply put, we cannot. But we *can* interpret. This, I believe, is the importance of using spaces as texts.

In a sense, this dissertation has hidden a third argument that is never expressly spelled out or made. That is that built spaces can be used to study the history of philosophy in a way that helps us move past some of the methodological challenges inherent in studying intellectual developments that took place under the backdrop of transnational, transcultural, and trans-

linguistic exchanges. Existing studies of the influx of Western ideas into Japan in this era have focused on focused on these difficulties themselves, such as how hitherto unheard-of concepts, such as “liberty” were translated, linguistically, into Japanese.³ By dwelling on how the Japanese and Westerners were working with essentially different paradigms, the result has been scholarship that tends to see Japanese scholarship in philosophical fields as something of a hollow or misguided imitation of Western thought. While I agree that translation is a critical component of any transnational study, my project has sought to expand upon the scope of this literature by interrogating the relationship between philosophical ideas and constructed greenspaces, whether parks, gardens, or campus to better understand how ideas were interpreted extra-linguistically and presented to the public at large. The phenomenological experience of engaging with a constructed greenspace allows for an apprehension of ideas in a more immediate, visceral form.

This leads into one of the avenues for future research that could hopefully come of this study. Though there have been various allusions throughout the text concerning the influence of other sensory experiences, the prime focus has been on the visual, both in the form of the physical space and the written word. It seems, however, that the totality of a subject’s experiential interaction with a space, green or otherwise, would allow for an even more radical re-envisioning of the way the history of ideas could be approached. By constructing this history from the lived, sensorial experiences of the people who interacted with these forms of knowledge embodied within the physical elements of a space, a bottom-up intellectual history would emerge. This could be used, in turn, to link ideology to the political and social in a very different

³ This is the content of the bulk of Douglas Howland, *Translating the West: Language and political reason in nineteenth-century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002).

way, one in which networks of thought, power, and reception are traced out physically, spatially, and sensorially. It would also afford the historian an opportunity to ask previously unconsidered questions, such as “what does interaction with the idea of the Absolute *feel* like?”

There would be, of course, a host of methodological problems that would have to be taken up for this approach. Sources would also be a vexed issue; trying to get at the reception of ideas in their written form is difficult enough. Further, interlocutors could rightly ask if the answers to the sort of question just posed actually reveals much of anything of value. Does insight of how a considerably non-representative group of the populace experienced the Imperial System in Japan through Heian Jingū really deepen our understanding of that institution? My tentative answer to that question would be that it *could*, but room for disagreement abounds.

Although not as revolutionary as the more all-senses incorporating version of history-making described above, this study still functions as a way to do a different kind of history. Ideas, in this telling, have been converted into ideology through their interaction with the population at constructed greenspaces. Thus, though ostensibly a work of intellectual history, this dissertation could also be described as a very different modern political history of Japan. Rather than locating the site of contact between political ideology and the people, I have, perhaps subversively, argued that the ideology is instead a mutual construction of both the disseminator of the idea and the recipient thereof. By severing the direct line of ideology being passed from the state downwards, state power is problematized and the role of intermediaries, be they hedges or ideologues, is centered.

The role played by space, and in the case of this project that of constructed greenspaces, in the complex web of ideas, intellectuals, politics, and the people is a valuable source for new historical investigation. Yet using such sites as primary sources for the history of ideas is

important not only because of its novelty. As has been demonstrated time and again in these pages, intellectuals in Japan themselves saw gardens and other spaces as vehicles for their thought.

Inoue Enryō was on to something important. Not that the Truth of the Absolute can be uncovered necessarily, or that materialism and idealism are both insufficient to explain the workings of the cosmos. But that the natural world, through the mediation of humans, can be used to express concepts in ways that words would struggle. We may not be able to gain access to a philosopher's ideas in full through this pre-discursive subjectivity; there are more to differing paradigms than mere linguistic issues. But spaces can be used as one of many tools in our arsenal of analysis, one that in some cases is more suited to the task at hand. And when it comes to revealing the philosophical musings of thinkers who made such greenspaces for the purpose of interpreting them to others, it may be the best one available.

Appendix A

偕樂園記

天有日月地有山川曲成萬物而不遺禽獸艸木各保其性命者以一陰壹陽成其道弑寒弑暑得其宜也譬諸弓馬焉弓有弑張弑弛而恒勁馬有弑馳壹息而恒健弓無弑弛則必撓馬无壹息則必殪是自然之勢也夫人者萬物之靈而其所以或爲君子或爲小人者何也在其心之存與不存焉耳語曰性相近習相遠習於善則爲君子習於不善則爲小人今以善者言之擴充四端以脩其德優游六藝以勤其業是其習則相遠者也然而其氣稟或不能齊是以屈伸緩急相待而全其性命者與夫萬物何以異哉故存心脩德養其與萬物異者所以率其性而安形怡神養其與萬物同者所以保其命也弑者皆中其口可謂善養故曰苟得其養無物不長苟失其養无物不消是亦自然之勢也然則人亦不可無弛息也固矣嗚呼孔子之與曾點孟軻之稱夏諺良有以也果繇此道則其弛熄而安形怡神將何時而可邪必其吟咏華晨飲醺月夕者學文之餘也放鷹田埜驅獸山谷者講武之暇也余嘗就吾藩跋涉山川周視原野直城西有闔谿之壑西望筑峯南臨僊湖凡城南之勝景皆集弑瞬之間遠巒遙峰尺寸千里攢翠疊白四瞻如弑而山以發育動植水以馴擾飛潛洵可謂知仁弑趣之樂郊也於是藝梅樹數千株以表魁春之壑又作弑亭曰好文曰一遊非啻以供他日芟惕之所蓋亦欲使國中之人有所優游存養焉國中之人苟體吾心夙夜匪懈既能脩其德又能勤其業時有餘暇也乃親戚相携朋友相伴悠然逍遙于弑亭之間或倡酬詩歌或弄撫管弦或展紙揮毫或坐石點茶或傾瓢尊於華前或投竹竿於湖上唯从意之所適而弛張乃得其宜矣是余與衆同樂之意也因命之曰偕樂園

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