



THE APPEARANCE OF FAR EASTERN GARDEN CULTURE IN EUROPE

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INTRODUCTION

For Europeans, the Far East primarily means China and its neighborhood. The civilization, beauty and gardens of China, as well as the philosophy of Confucius, became known through travel reports in the 17-18th centuries in Europe.

The first exciting encounter of the Western man with the culture of the Far East is connected with the "chinoiserie" art style, which meant the use of motifs, objects and techniques related to China in Western art, architecture and garden culture. XIV. Louis had the Trianon de Porcelaine erected in Versailles in 1670. It was a small building - a pleasure place built for the king's mistress - covered in blue and white Chinese-style faience tiles, the first significant example of 'chinoiserie'. From then on, the features of the Eastern style spread through different buildings, pavilions, interiors, wallpapers, furniture, wall paintings and other decorations, starting the conquest of the Far Eastern design on the European continent.

Regarding horticulture, individual garden structures (especially Chinese garden pavilions) began to spread from the beginning of the 18th century, as the spatial concept of the Chinese garden (e.g. the irregularity of roads, evoking an atmosphere close to nature) was also given in the English landscape garden that was just being created.

After 200 years of seclusion, Japan was forced to open its doors in the middle of the 19th century. The value of Japan's exports, which started as a result of the system change due to opening up, increased a hundredfold by the beginning of the 20th century. In 1872, the French were already talking about "Japonism". Compared to the term "japoniserie", it is a more active form, which is not limited to the interest in Japanese-style works, but focuses on the creation of new works and perspectives, drawing inspiration from Japanese art.

Walking through the European Japanese gardens built at the beginning of the 20th century, we may wonder to what extent the garden image that unfolds before us

reflects the cultural aspect in which they were originally created and developed, and to what extent they are formal imitations of a world that can't be understood only by the knowledge and use of form. Due to the achievements of the modern era (IT development, Internet) and the consequences of globalism, the available knowledge about the gardens of the Far East, including the most popular Japanese gardens, is contradictory. Since the 1920s, more than 20 Japanese gardens have been established in our country, and this number is also outstanding in European terms. But what could be the reason for this popularity? Is it purely the aesthetic experience that makes these gardens attractive, or is it also the vision behind it?

With the appearance of gardens of Far East, mainly Japanese, a world of forms appeared for the 20th century European, which is still considered unusual in the given geographical area. This special feature is also attractive in a certain sense, as it also provides an aesthetic experience. Its clean, attractive design reflects an approach that has not yet appeared in this form and aesthetic quality in Western environmental culture.

OBJECTIVES

The main goal of the research is to examine whether the forms of appearance of the Far Eastern garden culture emerging in Europe can be considered authentic, and if so, to what extent? At the same time, I also examine how, due to the separation of the formal appearance and the ideological content behind it, the European designer can relate to the issue of culture and authenticity when designing a Far Eastern garden, if not only those that carry the Far Eastern style features in a recognizable way, but by striving for authenticity, he also wants to faithfully convey its message in addition to design.

My research questions:

- Where and in what number does the English garden contain Chinese garden structures?
- Where and in what number did Japanese gardens appear in Europe?
- Is there a connection between the publications presenting and promoting garden culture and the increase in the number of gardens?
- What aspects apply when using the elements of a traditional Japanese garden?
- Can these aspects apply in the European space?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to answer my research questions, in addition to literature research, it was also necessary to create a comprehensive garden database. In addition to processing the various databases, I carried out targeted additional research, identified Japanese garden locations in Europe, and processed historical, cartographic, image and video sources related to the locations. I used the Zotero application to create the bibliographic database. To create the graphs, I used the chart maker of the Excel spreadsheet program. To create the garden database, I created a password-protected English web database page (<http://fege.tkbh.hu>) using a content management system (Drupal 7) that I know well. On the website, I display the contents according to individual views (database filtering results). In addition to the list views, there is a timeline-based display mode and a Google Map-based display mode. To create individual maps in the Geographical Information System, I used QGIS 3.32. software.

During the examination of the "Chinese appearance", I looked for landscape gardens (or former gardens) in which Chinese motifs (pavilions, houses, buildings) appeared. Based on the markings on contemporary maps, I identified the location of the Chinese building in relation to the main building, its role in the garden

composition and garden picture, and what function the building could have performed. The subject of my investigation was the image, decoration, function of the pavilions and their changes in time and space.

In examining the "Japanese appearance", the research consisted of several stages. From the time of the World Exhibition in Vienna, I collected the European Japanese gardens that can still be found today. I examined the number of Japanese gardens in each European region and country, and I also performed the same examination by year. I looked for correlations between the year of publication and the parallel book publications. I have categorized the Japanese gardens according to the area in which they are located, i.e. they are part of a larger unit, or they were created independently, and based on this, the function of the garden can be determined to some extent. In the second stage, based on Conder's list of elements, I examined the objects in the garden and their occurrence by analyzing pictures, descriptions and video materials. In the third stage, during the investigation of world exhibitions, I studied contemporary descriptions, photos, and newspaper articles, and based on these, I looked for connections between the image of the garden and the way the garden was used. Finally, through the stories of four Japanese gardens, I showed the characteristics of the garden space created by different motivations.

NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

THESIS 1.

I found that there is a close correlation and regularity between the publication of specialist books and informative books dealing with Chinese and Japanese gardens, as well as scientific publications (mainly magazine articles).

During my research, I summarized the Chinese and Japanese garden literature published in English and processed it according to year, which pointed to previously unknown trends.

Special interest in books about Chinese gardens started in the mid-1970s, followed by scientific interest with a five-year lag, for nearly thirty years. The books were published in extraordinary numbers from the beginning of the 1990s.

Special interest in books about Japanese gardens began in the 1950s and was steady until the 1990s, but since then it has exploded in growth. The rate of publication of scientific publications does not follow the rate of publication of books between the 1950s and the 1990s. Scientific interest in Japanese gardens appeared in the early 2000s with a delay of almost 10 years, to the same extent as the previous ordinary interest.

THESIS 2

I searched for those English landscape gardens that contained Chinese garden elements (houses, pavilions) and examined their appearance in space and time. In addition to the facts known so far, I highlighted that the appearance of garden pavilions with Far Eastern influence in the Central European region (with the exception of Germany) can be traced back to the decades (1780-1790) following the French fashion wave (1770-1780) after their spread in England (1730-1770). **It follows from this that the fashion for the Far Eastern buildings appearing in English landscape gardens reached Hungary and its immediate surroundings 40-50 years late. At the same time, it also became visible that this fashion was prominently present in our region in the middle and second half of the 19th century.**

THESIS 3

By examining the plans and the spatial structure determined by the relief elements and vegetation in the gardens involved in the research, I pointed out that **the placement of the Chinese garden pavilions in the majority of the gardens can be linked to the scenery presented and narrated in the European literature about China.** This visual effect reinforced the image of the water surface in the garden, which was also included in the textual reports, and because of this, the Chinese pavilions almost merged with the image of the water surface associated with them. Similarly, in the case of pavilions placed on mountain and hilltops, the visual connection between the pavilion and the character of the landscape is clear.

THESIS 4

I found that while initially the **source materials for the appearance of Chinese pavilions in Europe were textual and pictorial accounts of China,** later the pavilions already built in individual locations and their surroundings served as a model for elements or parts of gardens with Far Eastern influence in European gardens. Over time, **the form and function of the garden pavilions in the Far East were inevitably distorted, so they became merely interpretations of an interpretation, devoid of the original ideology and symbolism.** At the same time, I investigated the appearance of Chinese landscape depiction in Europe and its impact, highlighting the fact that during the European use of Chinese garden pavilions, the allusive nature of the form became more pronounced over time compared to authenticity.

THESIS 5

On the basis of the database created during the Japanese garden research, I found that an **outstanding number of Japanese gardens were created in the Western**

European region, including in the United Kingdom and France. I found that **there is a clear correlation between the publication of books about Japanese gardens in the 1990s and the number of Japanese gardens built, which points to the fact that "popularizing" publications acted as a catalyst for the spread of the garden type.**

Based on the display by decade, I determined that permanent Japanese gardens appeared only in Western Europe until 1910, after which nearly the same number of gardens were built in Western and Central Europe. There was a big decline in the spread of Japanese gardens in Europe after the Second World War, which stemmed from the negative perception of Japan joining the Axis Powers. For this reason, almost no Japanese gardens were built in Europe until the 1960s. A slow process began in the 1960s, which accelerated in the 1970s and from then on resulted in a one-and-a-half-fold increase in the number of Japanese gardens in Europe every ten years. This process peaked in the 1990s and continued into the early 2000s. After the 2000s, however, a decrease can be seen in the appearance of European Japanese gardens.

THESIS 6

I examined the locations of Japanese gardens and identified **17 categories of green space on which Japanese gardens were established**. I have found that out of these 17 categories of green space, the most popular are "independent" Japanese gardens and Japanese gardens created in public parks. These are followed by Japanese gardens established in botanical gardens, institutional gardens, castle parks and country (primarily English) mansion gardens. I detailed what functions are associated with each category (type) of green space, and how the independent Japanese garden takes over the recreational function of parks. In the case of **several types of green space, the primary function arises from the activities carried out in the area**: the botanical garden (collection garden)

creates a worthy space for the plants of the Far East, the institutional garden has an artistic value connected to some cultural institution, museum, library or international organization, in addition to the presentation of space, the goal is stillness or cultural representation.

Among the school gardens, the **Márton Varga Horticultural and Surveying Technical College can be highlighted as the first school garden in Europe that made the garden a part of the training in addition to the presentation.** Vocational training activities can also be connected to other locations (park, garden), regardless of whether the location is not located on school grounds.

It became apparent that the Japanese garden did not spread in large numbers in the case of the following types of green space: zoo, garden collection, hospital, vegetable garden (where the use of plants is emphasized).

Towards the end of the 20th century, several new types of green spaces appeared where there were no Japanese gardens: **company (this is an institutional garden), hotel, cathedral, amusement park.** The decorative function is strongly emphasized in these cases. In the case of the **cemetery**, the appearance of **calmness and stillness** associated with the sight is important.

THESIS 7

I researched and processed the European Japanese gardens based on the functional and decorative elements that appear in them. Based on this, I determined that the garden elements can be divided into four categories according to the number of their appearance: **prominent, moderately prominent, less prominent, or gardens without garden elements; I also prioritized the compositional role of the garden elements.**

Through the historical aspects of the Japanese garden, I examined the changes in the traditional use of elements over time in the Japanese literature dealing with

garden construction of the time. As a result, conceptual aspects became visible that are closely related to the given culture and cannot be abstracted from them. I examined the history of some European Japanese gardens and analyzed and classified them according to the garden elements found in the garden.

I found that in European Japanese gardens, lying and standing stones, stone lanterns, ponds and stepping stones are **prominent elements**. The wooden bridge, the waterfall, the river (stream), the stone bridge, the pavilion, the stone pot filled with water and the bamboo fence are present as **moderately prominent elements**. The open form of the fences, the island, the stone pagoda, the garden passage, the teahouse, the Shinto gate, the wall, the wooden gate, the Buddha statue, the wooden fence, the crane and the Japanese-style house are present as **less prominent elements**. The pagoda building, the decorated space border, the earth bridge, the hedge, the Shinto shrine, the Shinto building and the rustic bridge are **not prominent elements**. I also listed the turtle motif here, but it is difficult to recognize, so it is not relevant. In the gardens, the pavilion is the most popular building form, followed by the tea house, the house and the pagoda. Examining their occurrence in gardens, it can be stated that Japanese gardens are found in 52%, i.e. the building itself is not a condition for the image of a Japanese garden.

Prominent items in the ranking reflect the table of contents of Conder's book. Based on this, it can be stated that the elements that Conder presents at the beginning of his book were mostly used in the majority of European Japanese gardens. This highlights that the structure of the books also plays a significant role in terms of the prominent elements used in the gardens of the initial period. The lake is an exception, but at the same time it is an essential element of the garden image, regardless of the fact that Conder only discusses it at the end of his book. These prominent elements have been **continuously present in gardens** since the 1900s.

THESIS 8

I searched for Japanese gardens appearing in Europe and analyzed the elements found in the gardens according to appearance. I found that the specific use of elements found in European Japanese gardens can be interpreted as a problem regarding the authenticity of Japanese gardens. **There is mostly no well thought out (traditional) concept behind the use of elements in Europe. This is partly due to the fact that Japanese designers have started to use certain elements regardless of their function due to their stylistic value in places where these elements had not appeared before.**

THESIS 9

The examined gardens and their elements point out that the Far Eastern garden images **presented without essential context** and used in Europe continuously convey the kind of arbitrary and mystical determination that Márton Varga warned us against already in 1930. The problem is multifaceted, when we examine classic Japanese garden literature, we see countless principles that we as Europeans **cannot fully relate to.**

In the international academic discourse, Japanese gardens outside of Japan are called Japanese-style gardens. Thinking about this name further, I propose **how to classify and name** European Japanese gardens from the point of view of authenticity:

The Japanese gardens appearing in Europe

- **they can be considered authentic** if they are the work of a qualified Japanese specialist (from design to execution).
- **they can be considered authentic in terms of design** if they were designed by a qualified Japanese specialist, but if the construction was supervised or

carried out by a non-Japanese specialist, then the garden can be called a **Japanese-style garden**

- **they cannot be considered a Japanese garden**, if no Japanese specialist was involved in the work, since in this case only the shape of the elements indicates the style.

COLCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS

Conclusions

As can be seen, the Chinese pavilions that appeared in the English landscape gardens involved in the research can be separated spatially, temporally and functionally. In the majority of the examined locations, a water surface is connected to the pavilion in the form of a lake or a river, which is in line with the view of the Chinese landscapes presented and narrated in the relevant literature. This pictorial effect reinforced the garden compositional role of the garden water surfaces also included in the text reports, and contributed to the fact that the garden use of the Chinese pavilions almost merged with the image of the water surface associated with them. The garden use of Chinese pavilions and structures that spread from England became more and more fashionable in the 18th and 19th centuries, which, in addition to their formal appearance, stems from their spatial position in the garden composition and their functions. In the beginning, these spaces defined by the buildings were created in places far away from the main building, far from everyday activities, where the proximity to nature meant a completely different quality compared to the hustle and bustle of urban life. The impressions of China and the period's fascination with exotic things also contributed to this feeling. Over time, the closeness to nature was surpassed by the exaggerated representation, which was limited to the extent to which the Chinese building appearing as a decorative element of the garden reflected the

owner's wealth and social position, or how faithfully it could reproduce the specific locations in the reports.

After the opening of the country, in the second half of the 19th century, Europe got to know Japan's special art and the relationship of ordinary Japanese people to nature. Following the descriptions, the Japanese garden unfolds as a landscape forced into a small space, and the differences between the Far Eastern and European landscape and garden art are revealed.

Compared to contemporary 19th-century European landscape gardens, the garden form in Japanese horticulture does not strive for naturalness, but rather the **artistic representation of naturalness**. In the first period of the European literature presenting Japanese environmental culture, it concentrates on buildings, and then, starting from the narrower environment of the buildings, it describes the formal solutions of external spatial design and, in rare cases, its ideology. Morse, Conder and the Du Cane played a prominent role in making Japanese horticulture visible in Europe. However, as a result of the very different Japanese cultural environment from the European one, it is mainly **the forms of Japanese garden art that arrived** in Europe at the end of the 19th century, while the garden design ideologies, compositional principles, intentions and goals behind the forms remained invisible for a long time. Conder points out that the ideal Japanese garden is not a space for communal experiences, but creates the possibility of **solitary retreat and quietness**. He sees that the realized form has a philosophical background, but he cannot decipher its mystery and sanctity. The aim of his book is only to cover the artistic appearance and application of exotic shapes.

The natural image by which Japanese gardens were created is found in Japan.

We Europeans don't know its characteristics, we don't live there. We do not have a direct relationship with the Japanese masters of garden construction, through whom we can learn how to build a Japanese garden, primarily in Japan. Subtle hints from the Japanese language - in the absence of sufficient knowledge of the

language and culture - are lost without explanation. Although Eastern religions are popular in the West, we are not traditionally embraced by this view, so it is only due to our reading that we have knowledge of the Shinto or Buddhist religions. I will not even mention the religious practice beyond knowledge (meditation). Quietening the mind is a universal thing and perhaps the one we can most easily relate to. The image of the garden does not provide an aesthetic experience, but calms the disturbed consciousness emerging from the noise of everyday life. The creation of a rich ecosystem is not tied to the image of a Japanese garden per se, because it can be applied to all gardens.

If we stick to the mere act of **reducing (miniaturizing) the landscape into the garden space using artistic methods**, the question may arise: should we display a Japanese landscape or use the landscape we know as a model? From the visitor's point of view, the latter makes more sense, since it is the only way to recognize a landscape that it conveys. In order to faithfully reproduce the scenery in the mountains, it is **necessary to record it** for the designer. The arrangement of stones and plants that refer to the image of a mountain also builds on existing knowledge, but this can be created in a unique, artistic way by iterating the following activities: **observation, design, evaluation.**

If a Western designer wants to create Japanese gardens, he will face the above problems. Even if the demand, the cultural connection and the intention are given, the garden created in this way will not be able to enforce several aspects. In my opinion, western Japanese gardens should be continuously improved with the involvement of Japanese specialists in order to make the image more authentic.

If we leave the formal world of the Japanese garden, but want to use the basic principles necessary for their design, we can create a garden that carries the natural, cultural and social characteristics of the given place. We can no longer call these gardens Japanese gardens, even though we **use Japanese gardening principles** during their creation. Naming such gardens is not an easy task and we will have to find the answer over time.

Research proposal

The bibliographic and garden database I created is suitable for examining the literature and gardens included in it according to additional aspects that were not covered in this research.

Through the comprehensive content processing and classification of the literature, it would be possible to rank the published publications according to the depth with which the given topic is presented. It would be necessary to designate which publications are suitable for use in higher education

The **complete translation of the original Japanese garden architecture manuals** and their publication in Hungarian would greatly help the more thorough knowledge, research and education of Japanese garden art. In order to research the design concept of Japanese garden art, it would be necessary to acquire, translate and publish publications that have so far been published exclusively in Japanese (e.g. SHIGEMORI's 24-volume publication published in 1938).

During a deeper processing of the Japanese gardens included in the database - the spatial arrangement of the elements, the functional use of the garden, the historical analysis of its creation - such connections and conceptual problems would be revealed, **with the help of which the authenticity of the garden view could be improved.**

Research on Japanese gardens outside of Japan has been carried out by the Tokyo University of Agricultural Sciences since 1990, and since 2012 the **International Center for Japanese Garden Studies** has been performing this task within the university. In 2022, a professional organization, the **European Japanese Garden Association** (EUROJGA 2022), was established in Maulévrier, France, with the cooperation of the university's emeritus professor, Makoto Suzuki, with the aim of popularizing Japanese garden art. By establishing cooperation with

professional organizations, the process and results of further research activities would become visible at the international level as well.

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