

WAZA TO KOKORO – HANDS & HEART:
THE CULTURE OF TEA AND THE USE OF STONE IN THE
TEA GARDEN



It was my great honor to be part of the seminar.

--Instructor Kazuo Mitsuhashi, Garden Society of Japan



All of you represent the future of this art form moving forward. I'm in the presence of 1000 years of experience – that's not something to take lightly. I see far too little of two things in this world: tranquility and beauty. There's not much in our culture that brings us to that space. The gardens that you are all stewards of provide that opportunity for people and when you execute gardens at the highest level there's no need for education or translation to make the magic a garden creates impact people's lives. I've watched the miracles of healing that happen in these garden spaces. You have the opportunity to impact the lives of people daily in a very profound way. This test run of the institute for me represents a bridging of our two cultures and a fast-tracking of the education process.

--Michael Ellena, Portland Japanese Garden board member



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ABOUT WAZA TO KOKORO

It was an honor to be part of this model seminar and I look forward to the official launch of the Institute in 2017. It was wonderful to see how much team work and passion went into the planning and programming of this seminar. I hope for the continued success, prosperity, and team fostering of the Portland Japanese Garden. I have high hopes that the Institute will become a model educational facility.

--Instructor Tomoki Kato, Ph.D, Eighth-generation garden craftsman, Ueyakato Landscape Co., Kyoto



Waza to Kokoro was a model seminar and workshop blending the traditional hands-on learning approach that characterizes the training of a Japanese garden artisan with lectures, discussions, readings, and a design clinic. It was designed as a trial run for the three-tier seminar program that is to be the cornerstone of the Portland Japanese Garden Institute for Japanese Garden Arts and Culture. Tea ritual and presentations on food etiquette and culture provided additional cultural framework for understanding the art form of the Japanese garden. The Institute represents a bold new concept for providing training in Japanese garden arts by blending the hands-on traditional learning method for garden artisans with cultural instruction and more analytical learning tools such as lectures, readings and discussions. The Institute developed over the last few years under the guidance of senior Garden staff, including Garden Curator Sadafumi Uchiyama and Arlene Schnitzer Curator of Culture, Art and Education Diane Durston, and its first director, Kristin Faurest, was hired in spring of 2016. The Institute is slated for launch in 2017.



In the course of the seminar, eleven participants invited from Japanese gardens across North America worked collaboratively in three pre-selected teams, each paired with an instructor, to construct the *nobedan* (stone path) and *tsukubai* (composition of stone around a stone basin) elements of a tea garden at three different sites at Smith Rock Inc., a stone yard in Southeast Portland. The seminar began with a walking tour of the Portland Japanese Garden followed by a *chanoyu* (tea ceremony) demonstration and discussion at Kashin-tei at the Garden, then an afternoon of lectures by instructors at the Center for Architecture on *chabana*, *tsukubai* arrangement and the medieval garden treatise *Sakuteiki* -- the last topic focusing on the concept of *anmokuichi* (tacit knowledge). Supervised by the instructors, teams selected stones from the wide selection available at Smith Rock and used various design techniques to determine the layout and design of their own *nobedan* and *tsukubai*.



Each team received a different style of *chozubachi* (stone basin) for the construction of the stone arrangement of the *tsukubai* with a wide variety of material available from the stone yard. Throughout the week they honed technical skills in stone selection and placement in the tea garden through the hands-on technique that is the centuries-old tradition for learning Japanese garden arts in Japan. While most of the seminar was focused on the hands-on aspect, participants also attended lectures and discussions to learn about the history and practice of the use of stone in a Japanese tea garden. Short morning tea sessions and discussions helped give participants a more profound understanding of the essence of the tea garden and help them gain greater insights into the ritual, tools, sensory perceptions, spiritual dimension and social meaning of the tea ceremony. Presented by Prof. Emeritus Kimiko Gunji, the morning sessions focused on different aspects of the concept of *kokoro*, a term encompassing multiple meanings including "mind," "heart," and "spirit," and its relationship to *wa-kei-sei-jaku* – harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility -- the four principles of tea.



In the course of the week, through a combination of drawing, discussing, and doing physical work with stone, participants gained new insights into materials selection, composition of elements, and interpretation of tradition and authenticity. They also collaboratively worked to find design solutions for challenges in each other's gardens, and cultivated a sense of community and common purpose in caring for the legacy of Japanese garden arts. The week concluded with a detailed critique of the three constructed projects, and a short design clinic in which participants presented design, construction or maintenance problems in their gardens for consultation from the instructors and other participants.

It was my privilege and honor to meet all of you, and to have a chance to share the art of tea. I am touched by your shoshin attitude, and admire your passion and dedication to the garden art.

--Instructor Kimiko Gunji, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS



Participants felt the seminar went far beyond their expectations and that the hybrid approach of combining lectures, cultural experiences and hands-on garden instruction resulted in a whole much greater than the sum of its parts. The quality of the tours and lectures and instruction, the facilities and materials offered at Smith Rock, the morning *kokoro* sessions over tea and the lunchtime food culture sessions entwined to make for an extremely rich and invigorating learning experience as well as the formation of a vibrant community. Some individual reflections:

“I love that this profession has this underlying spirituality and concept of humanitarianism and that aspect. Typically in other professions it’s all tools, building blocks, how to get from here to here strategically. I think most of the people that we have learned under in this field have said, I can teach you the skill but I can’t teach you the heart. Spending time cultivating that for this profession is essential to how we then convey that in what we do, so that our end users can have that.”

“One of the things I appreciated the most was the incorporation of other elements to contextualize the garden. It’s one thing to do very technical discussions of gardening techniques but to bring in and incorporate the cultural context for those techniques really helps to make it make more sense.”

“There was a comment made how people in Japan who are learning to become a garden craftsman already have the cultural context. For people in this country, we need that to know why things are done in a certain way, to be able to understand the aesthetics a little bit more.”

“The tea topics and discussions were an unexpected nugget of gold.”



“I liked the repetition of the tea ceremony on the daily basis. Doing it day by day made it more comfortable towards the end.”

“It’s really important not to lose that, to keep the cultural education.”

“We did the tea in the place that we were, at smith. One of the things that you preached is that you can do tea anywhere, in everyday life. I loved that setting, the rustic nature of it. Take the tea on the road.”

“A lot of potters make tea bowls for Japanese tea ceremony, but don’t do tea. You need to know the context and how to use the garden to make it a more pleasurable experience. For me, it’s like somebody needs to take an introductory class in tea to know what that bowl is for.”



“It’s important to go out into the stoneyard and to actually see all the materials in a pile, or on a pallet.”

“The group size was a good number especially given the physical site of the stoneyard. I don’t know that we could have managed any more than what we had. I appreciated the level of experience that each of the individuals have and that everyone came to work as a unit -- not just in their individual groups but everyone as a whole.”

“What was really helpful was when Sada was giving us tour of the Japanese garden and how the garden is maturing and you need to think longterm. That was something I had never thought about and that was great. And also, how they deal with challenges in Japan. That’s also very helpful. There are so many different ways of approaching it that they might not have here.”

“Thank you ever so much for letting me be a part of the *Waza to Kokoro* seminar; it was a beyond fantastic experience, and I learnt a massive amount, that I’m using a lot in Japan already!”



“I thought the progression of information that was presented seemed very natural, it fit very well into the next segment. Sada’s talk on stone, Desi’s talk on *chabana*, Mitsuhashi-sensei’s talk on *tsukubai* and *nobedan*, all of that really set the table nicely for going to Smith Rock. Then the progression of things there, starting with the tea ceremony in the morning and followed by a short informational talk and out into the garden, it seemed like just the right flow. Lunch, information from Gunji-sensei, everything flowed very well from the students’ point of view. I think maybe *chabana* could be expanded on a little bit more with a workshop on placing flowers. One of the things Mitsuhashi-sensei told me was: you can never build a garden better than you are. For us to really get it and really be able to create spaces that express the best *kokoro*, we need to learn more. He mentioned *chanoyu* and *ikebana* specifically. I think developing these things is important – they’re not periphery, they’re integrated into the *roji*.

“Sada touched just a time or two in some of his evaluations comparing and contrasting what you’re doing in the Japanese style with some other styles. Maybe some materials could be worked into the handbook that teaches the differences.”



“I appreciated all the masters that were teaching us, giving us an extended leash to learn and make mistakes before guiding us in the correct way, still looking over our shoulder but giving us free rein.”

“Mitsuhashi was fantastic. He allowed us to plan and execute the garden while keeping use all on the same page and working in an orderly fashion. Just enough instruction, just enough room to learn from mistakes. I learned a new style of boulder placement. I generally place stones in a very ‘stable’ manner. Mitsuhashi sensei demonstrated a more ‘fluid’ style. I learned a great deal about tea ceremony, *chabana*, and my own ability to absorb information.”



We've given our first group of students a taste of what we're going to create with the Institute – and they want more. The seminar was unanimously declared an outstanding success. Participants and instructors as well as observers agreed that at all levels it surpassed all goals and expectations. We feel that we have made a strong beginning towards realizing our mission of becoming the premier center of skills training, knowledge exchange and new thought for Japanese garden arts in North America, offering our students the strongest available credential for Japanese garden arts available outside Japan.



SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS AND INSTRUCTORS

Students:

Ayse Pogue, Chicago Botanic Garden

Jacob Kellner, Hakone Foundation

Paul Jones, Duke University

Heather Grzybek, Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens

Peter Putnicki, Seattle Japanese Garden, Seattle Parks

Tim Gruner, Anderson Japanese Gardens

Francheska Snyder, Shofuso Japanese House and Garden

Ben Chu, Missouri Botanical Garden

Cody Fong, Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden, City of Lethbridge

Sarah Lowe, Cheekwood Garden, Nashville

Colette Barnes, English National Trust/Japanese Garden Society

Instructors/PJG staff:

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Diane Durston, Portland Japanese Garden

Kristin Faurest, Portland Japanese Garden

Desirae Wood, Portland Japanese Garden

Kanako Yanagi, Portland Japanese Garden

PJG gardeners: Michael Kondo, Adam Hart, Frank Tree, Justin Blackwell, Heike Edossa, Caleb Hendrickson

Observers:

Michael Ellena, PJG Board of Directors

MaryAnn Celis, Japan Foundation