



## The Spirit of a Kyoto Garden Craftsman

~Fostering Scenery Connecting Time and Space~

by Tomoki Kato, Ueyakato Landscape Co., Ltd.

伝統から学ぶ、仲間から学ぶ

*Learn from the tradition, learn from the team*

### SUMMARY

Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan, has developed its garden culture over 1,200 years. As Japan's leading garden city, it holds 50% of the gardens designated Special Places of Scenic Beauty by Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs. In this presentation, Dr. Tomoki Kato, the eighth-generation head of a garden landscape company in Kyoto, will discuss how Japanese gardens are nurtured and how his team of garden craftsmen not only build gardens, but foster them for over a century.

The moment when a garden is first built, there is a tremendous feeling of fascination. This moment, however, is not one of completion, but rather a birth and a starting point. Since ancient times, Kyoto gardeners have spoken of a "**40/60 Principle**" that holds that Japanese gardens are constituted by 40% building and 60% maintenance. However, Kato's philosophy rephrases this principle to read: **40% Building and 60% Fostering**. The term "maintenance" may give the impression that only the garden's form and appearance are being maintained. By contrast, fostering means looking after and raising the garden through generations and centuries of daily garden work in the same way that a parent raises a child. "Fostering" may also be interpreted as the act of adding value, new value that does not mean just adding new facilities, but investing love and care. It is the act of gradually raising the garden from newborn scenery to finely aged scenery. With care, passion, and time, gardeners learn together with the garden's owner about how to appreciate the garden. That is why Kato emphasizes that fostering the garden may be even more important work than that of building it. He cites three examples in studying the work of garden fostering: Kaiu-sō, Murin-an and Tairyu-Sansō. In addition, he also introduces two examples of dramatically reviving and renovating gardens with over a century of history. The Okazaki Villa Garden and Hoshinoya Kyoto Garden are two gardens that have been fully revived under new owners.

One of Kato's philosophies is the "**The 200 Year Garden Craftsman Theory**." This theory holds that the Japanese garden is too vast a subject to completely understand in a single human lifespan. It should come as no surprise, then, that at least 200 years of experience is required to become a true garden craftsman. But that is also why this goal is well worth pursuing in one's lifetime. What, then, is the key to becoming a true garden craftsman? Kato says the most important thing is to "**learn from tradition, and learn from the team**." He would love to meet the most prominent garden masters of the past, such as Musō Soseki of the fourteenth century and Kobori Enshū of the seventeenth century. What would they say about how we have fostered the gardens that they built? While this can never happen, we can learn from ancient records of traditional Japanese garden building such as the eleventh century garden creation manual "Sakuteiki" (Records of Garden Creation). And while we cannot consult our predecessors in garden creation, we can always discuss with our teammates. "The 200 Year Garden Craftsman Theory" explains that although a human lifespan may not be enough to acquire all the knowledge necessary to become a true gardener, we can at least obtain understanding and knowledge from our teammates. With everyone involved in the garden landscaping industry on our team, we learn from each other to share time and live life through a wide range of experience.

In conclusion, Kato quotes a saying from the third Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, Governor Kunimichi Kitagaki: "**Enjoy the Dream of One Hundred Years Beyond Today**." Knowing that most people cannot live a hundred years, Governor Kitagaki dreamed of leaving something for the world a hundred years later, and thus he constructed the Lake Biwa Canal. One hundred years later, today we are blessed with this canal's abundant water resources that run through the beautiful gardens of Kyoto. We must feel the same way about fostering gardens today. Each generation is granted a limited lifetime. Even if we dedicate our entire lives to fostering gardens, it may simply not be enough. Yet this is exactly why each moment of each generation is so valuable. With this presentation, Kato hopes to enjoy **the Kyoto garden craftsman spirit** together with all our friends in North America.

## OUTLINE

### I. Introduction

- Growing together with Kyoto gardens for over 160 years
- Joyful days with 70 fellow teammates

### II. My Philosophy

- Not a Completion, But a Birth
- Not Maintenance, But Fostering
- The 40/60 Principle: Building 40%, Fostering 60%

### III. Fostering Scenery

- Whether in nature or art, beauty creates tradition that is passed on from generation to generation-
  - The Beauty of Art (manmade creation) : The two sand piles known as "Ginshadan" and "Kōgetsudai" in Ginkaku-ji Temple (Silver Pavilion) were produced by the creative ideas of gardeners.
  - The Beauty of Nature (natural creation): The natural transition from dry landscape garden to moss garden can be seen in the "Moss Garden" at Saihō-ji Temple

### IV. Our Daily Work - Fostering Centennial Japanese Gardens-

- Grasping the feeling of the times at Murin-an Garden (Borrowed scenery of the Higashiyama mountains, lawn area)
- Fostering scenery in cooperation with Tairyu-Sansō Garden's owners and neighbors

### V. Revived Centennial Garden: Beloved Kyoto Gardens Across the World

- Kyoto Okazaki Villa Garden
- Hoshinoya Kyoto

### VI. The Spirit of the Garden Craftsman: Connecting Time and Space

- Learn From the Tradition, Learn From the Team
- Enjoy the Dreams that Last Over a Century



Building of Kohōjō Garden ("Nyoshin-tei")  
of Nanzen-ji Temple, 1966



Building of "Rokudō-tei" Garden  
of Nanzen-ji Temple, 1967

## I. Introduction

### **Growing together with Kyoto gardens for over 160 years / Joyful days with 70 fellow teammates**

Ueyakato Landscape has a diverse range of teammates with a great variety of talents, each of whom plays an important role at various sites. Our team includes not only traditional garden craftsmen and landscape architects, but also curators who manage and operate major parks in Japan. Just like family, all teammates work in support of one another.



## II. My Philosophy

### **Not a Completion, but a Birth / Not Maintenance, but Fostering**

“Completion” is not the appropriate word to use when a garden is done being built. It is a birth, the beginning of a new life. From the moment of its birth, gardeners invest a garden with their love and passion. They raise these gardens over centuries and generations. That is the true nature of how Japanese gardens are cared for.

### **The 40/60 Principle: Building 40%, Fostering 60%**

The 40/60 principle is one of the most important ways of thinking about Japanese gardens. This principle teaches us that garden fostering is more essential than garden building, a lesson well worth remembering by heart. There is no doubt that tremendous energy in the form of capital, manpower, and resources is invested to finish building a garden within a limited construction period. The sense of accomplishment is immeasurable and always inspiring. However, this moment of accomplishment is a celebration of the garden’s birth and thus only a starting point. The essence of the gardener’s work is to raise newborn scenery into finely aged scenery by fostering it daily over many years and passing it down for generations to come.

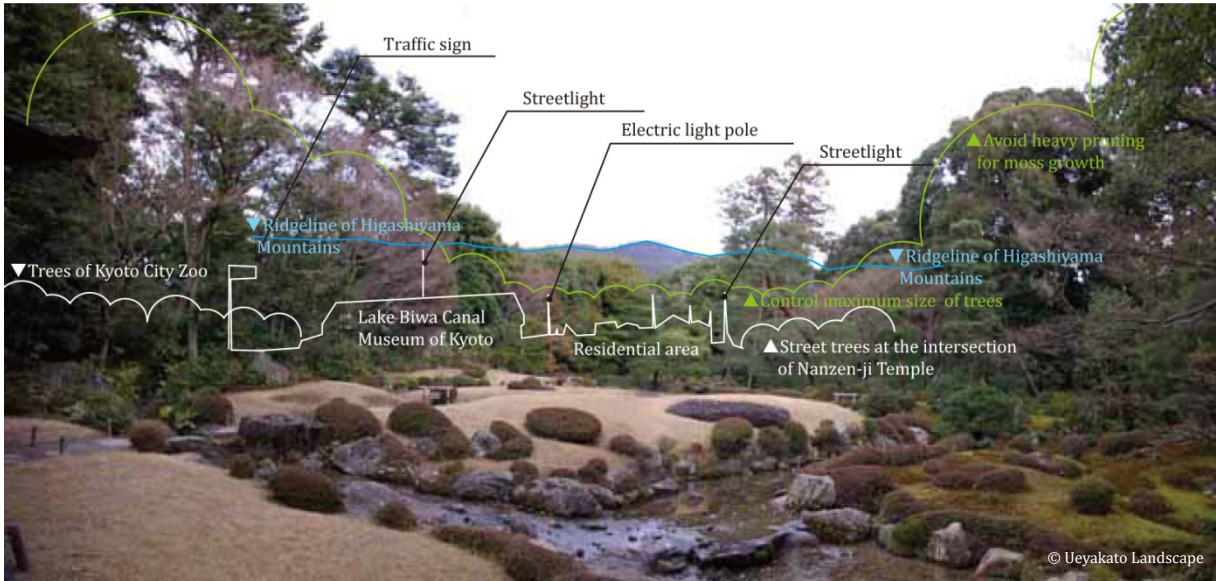
### **III. Fostering Scenery -Whether in Nature or Art, Beauty is Passed Down as Tradition-**

“Tradition must be innovative” is what we always keep in mind. To maintain a high regard for traditional ideas, methods and techniques, we must move forward and add new creative ideas to tradition. When the added creativity is acknowledged by many people in each period, then this creativity will naturally be passed on to the next generation. That is how tradition is created and it is the truly fun part of a garden craftsman’s work. Two well-known examples can be given here:

- The Beauty of Art (manmade creation)  
The two sand piles known as "Ginshadan" and "Kōgetsudai" in Ginkaku-ji Temple (Silver Pavilion) were produced by creative ideas of gardeners
- The Beauty of Nature (natural creation)  
The natural transition from dry landscape garden to moss garden can be seen in the “Moss Garden” at Saihō-ji Temple

**IV. Our Daily Work -Fostering Japanese Gardens with Over a Century of History-**

Just like human beings, gardens encounter many events in their lives. Sometimes the garden fostering approach changes when a garden passes from one owner to another. Sometimes gardens are influenced by external factors.



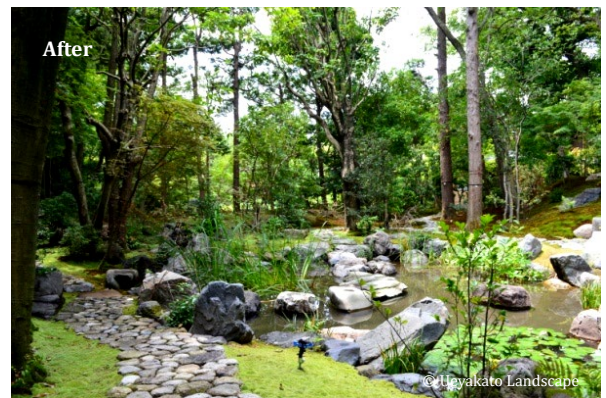
**Murin-an:** Reading for the sensitivity of the times (Borrowed scenery of Mt. Higashiyama, lawn area wildflowers )



**Tairyu-Sansō Villa Garden:** Fostering scenery by cooperating with owners and neighbors

**V. Reviving Gardens with Over a Century of History -Beloved Kyoto Gardens Across the World-**

As gardens grow older, they experience decay. Hence, a key aspect of “fostering” lies in how gardens can be revived by cooperating with their new owners.





## VI. The Spirit of the Garden Craftsman: Connecting Time and Space

Cutting-edge technology provides us with new methods and conveniences for everyday living. As we work more efficiently with ingenious tools and machines, we have entered a new age that is more distant from nature. Younger generations are on their way to losing their sensitivity toward nature. In this age, in which we must now consciously turn our attention to nature, garden craftsmen face a great turning point.

### Learn from Tradition, Learn from the Team

In today's world, what spirit of craftsmanship should we pass down to the next generation? First, we must **learn from tradition**. Respecting 1200 years of Kyoto's garden history, we must devote ourselves as garden craftsmen to understanding gardens within a larger time frame; one much longer than that of a human life. We must also be in the field to feel and reveal the consciousness behind the creations of the past. Secondly, we must **learn from our team**, from all members raising the garden together. At Ueyakato Landscape, everyone can be a teacher and student to one another, regardless of age or gender. We work at more than fifteen sites daily and it is vital to be aware of learning from one another to study what others have experienced on the same day. Our teammates are primarily our fellow co-workers. However, the team also includes academic professors, government officials and business partners; we are all in the garden landscape industry together. It is important to be humble and to learn constantly from each other.

Many people have asked me "How many years does it take to become a true garden craftsman?" My answer is, "At least 200 years." This is my "**200 Year Garden Craftsman Theory**." Garden life is so much longer than human life, and that is why there is so much fun in its depth and mystery. We may never understand it all, but it is well worth the time invested to enjoy its secrecy. So let us now appreciate together what gardens and nature tell us by "**learning from the tradition and learning from the team.**"

### Enjoy the Dream of One Hundred Years Beyond Today - 楽百年之夢 -

The construction of the Lake Biwa Canal started in 1885 (Meiji 18) in my neighborhood, the Nanzen-ji Temple area. The third Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, Governor Kunimichi Kitagaki was the leader of this project. He coined my favorite expression, "Enjoy the Dream of One Hundred Years Beyond Today." Since the completion of the Lake Biwa Canal, 124 years have passed, and we are still today receiving this grateful gift from the past. We are blessed with the rich water resources that travel to the garden villas of the Nanzen-ji Temple area. We face the present with respect for the past and enjoy the dream of one hundred years beyond today. I sincerely wish to enjoy the dream of one hundred years beyond today with all of you in North America and with that I give you my concluding message:

*"We are the team, let's learn together"*

