



## The Spirit of 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. This Japan's leading city of garden holds 50% of Special Scenic Beauty Spot Gardens designated by Agency of Cultural Affairs in Japan. In this presentation, Tomoki Kato, PhD, the 8<sup>th</sup> generation head of the succeeding garden craftsman company in Kyoto, will focus on the long-term Japanese garden maintenance and introduce how his team of craftsman not only build but foster the gardens over the century. **"The 200 years Theory of Garden Craftsman"** is one of his garden philosophies. The subject of Japanese garden is too great to completely understand in the limited human life span. It is not something to be surprised of, but he always says that at least 200 years of experience is required to become a true garden craftsman. That is also why it is well-worth pursuing it in one's lifetime.

The moment when a garden is first built, there is a tremendous fascination, however, it is not a completion, but is a birth and this is where we start from. From the old times, Kyoto gardeners say that there is the **"40/60 Principle"** that is, the Japanese garden is constituted 40% from building and 60% from maintenance. However, Kato's philosophy rephrases this principle to **40% Building and 60% Fostering**. The term "maintenance" may give an impression only to as maintaining its form in appearance. On the other hand, fostering is to look after and to raise the garden like raising a child through generations and centuries of daily garden work. "Fostering" may also be interpreted as giving value added. A new value that is not just adding new facilities but to pouring love and care; raising the garden from a newborn scenery to gradually, with time, to grow into a fine aged scenery. With care, passion, and time the gardeners learn together with the owner the true aesthetic sense that may be found in and from the garden. Therefore, Kato emphasizes that fostering may be more important work than building a garden. To study the work of fostering a garden there will be three examples: Kaiuso, Murin-an and Tairyu-sanso Villa Garden. In addition, two examples of restoring and renovating projects of a hundred year old garden will be introduced. The Okazaki Villa Garden and Hoshinoya Kyoto Garden have been dramatically revived with the caring of new owners.

What is the key to becoming a true garden craftsman? Kato says that the most important thing is to **"Learn from the tradition, learn from the team"**. It is his greatest wish to meet the most prominent senior garden masters of the past, such as Musou-kokushi of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and Kobori Enshu of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. What would they mention of our fostering since the garden was first built? But this can never happen. Instead, we may learn from remarkable old records of traditional Japanese garden building such as **"Sakuteiki"** of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Today, if we are not capable of consulting with the senior creators, we are always capable of discussing with our teammates. "The 200 years Theory of Garden Craftsman" tells us that human living years may not be enough to acquire all to become a true gardener but we can at least obtain understanding and knowledge from fellow teammates. Everyone involved in the garden landscaping industry is our teammate. Therefore, we learn from the team to share time and live in multiple experiences.

To conclude, Kato quotes the words of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, Mr. Kunimichi Kitagaki. **"Enjoy the Dream of Hundred Years Beyond"**. Knowing that most people cannot live a hundred years, Governor Kitagaki dreamed of leaving something behind for the world a hundred years beyond, and he constructed the Lake Biwa Canal. Thankfully, after a hundred years now, we are blessed with abundant water resources which happily runs through the beautiful gardens of Kyoto. We must feel the same today of fostering the gardens. Each generation is granted of a limited life time. Even if we dedicate our entire life to fostering the garden, it may simply not be enough. This is exactly the reason why each moment of each generation may be so valuable. With this presentation, Kato would like to enjoy together **the Spirit of Kyoto Garden Craftsman** with all friends of North America.

## OUTLINE

### I. Introduction

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

### II. My Philosophy

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

### III. Fostering Scenery

- Either nature or art, beauty creates tradition that is passed on from generation to generation-
  - The Beauty of Art (man's creation) : The two piles of sand known as "Ginsadan" and "Kogetsudai" in Ginkaku-ji Temple (Silver Pavilion) were produced by creative ideas of gardeners.
  - The Beauty of Nature (natural creation): Natural transition from dry landscape garden to moss garden can be seen in Saiho-ji Temple (Moss garden)

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

- Reading sensitivity of the times at Murin-an Garden (Borrowed scenery of Mt. Higashiyama and lawn area)
- Fostering scenery in cooperating with the inside and outside areas of Tairyu-sanso Garden

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

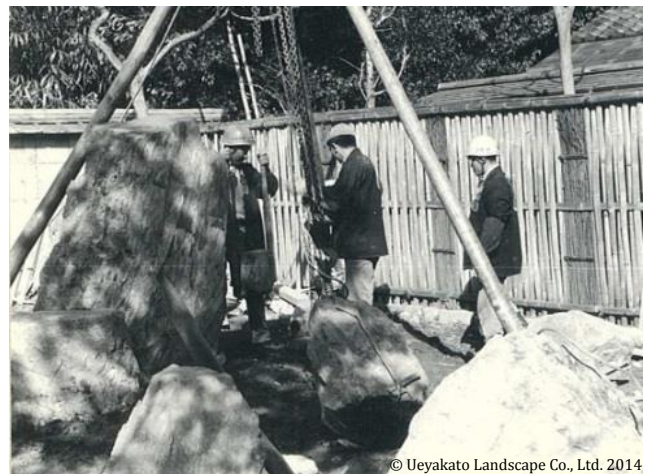
- Kyoto Okazaki Villa Garden
- Hoshinoya Kyoto

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

- Learn From the Tradition, Learn From the Team
- Enjoy Dream Over the Century



Building of Koho-jo Garden "Nyoshin-tei"  
of Nanzen-ji Temple, 1966



Building of "Rokudo" Garden  
of Nanzenji Temple, 1967

## I. Introduction

### **Growing together with Kyoto gardens over 160 years / Joyful days with 70 fellow team members**

Ueyakato Landscape Co., has diverse members with a great variety of talents and they each play an important role in various sites. There are not only traditional garden craftsman and landscape architects, but also associates called curators who manage and operate one of the major parks in Japan. Just like family, all team members work in support of one another.



## II. My Philosophy

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

“Completed” is not an appropriate word to be used upon the completion of garden building. It is a birth, the beginning of a new life. From the moment of birth, gardeners inform gardens with their love and passion. They raise the garden over centuries and generations. That is the essence and true nature of taking care of Japanese gardens.

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

The 40/60 principle is one of the most important ways of thinking about Japanese gardens. It is the lesson to remember by heart that garden fostering is more essential than garden building. There is no doubt that tremendous energy, such as capital, manpower and resources, are invested in order to build a garden within a limited construction period. This sense of accomplishment is immeasurable and always impressive. However, the moment of accomplishment is only to celebrate the birth of the garden and it is where we start from. The essence of gardener’s work is to raise their newborn scenery to fine aging scenery through daily fostering for many years and passing generations to come.

## III. Fostering Scenery

-Either nature or art, beauty creates tradition that is passed on from generation to generation-

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

- The Beauty of Art (man’s creation)

The two piles of sand known as "Ginsadan" and "Kogetsudai" in Ginkaku-ji Temple (Silver Pavilion) were produced by creative ideas of gardeners

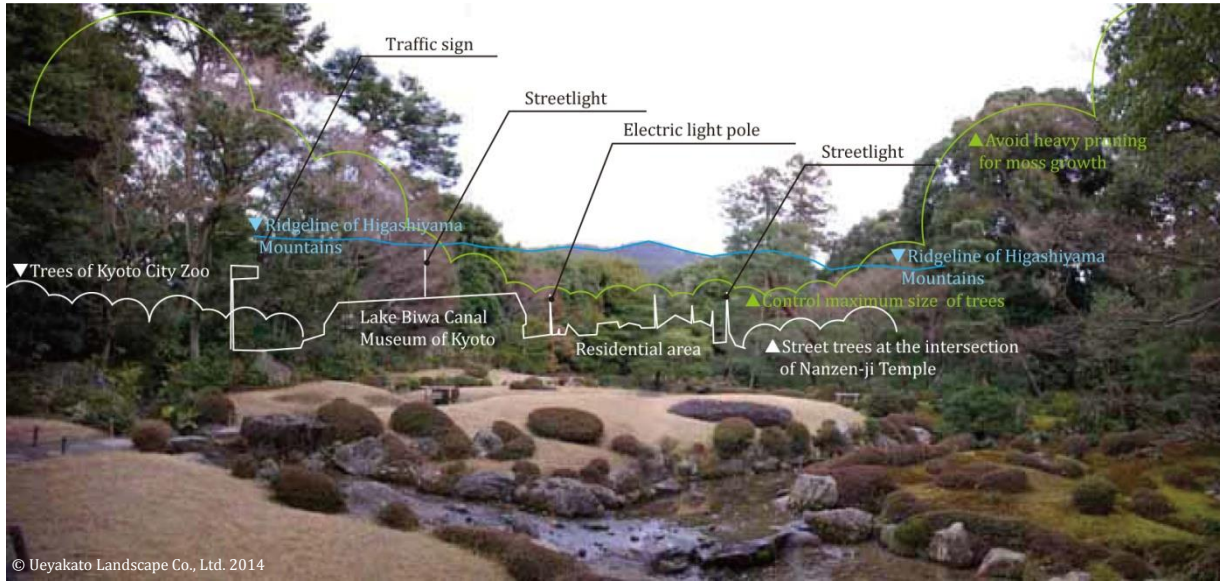
- The Beauty of Nature (natural creation)

Natural transition from dry landscape garden to moss garden can be seen in Saiho-ji Temple (Moss Garden)



**IV. Our Daily Work -Fostering of Centennial Japanese Garden-**

Just as humans do, gardens encounter many events in their lives. Sometimes the way of garden fostering changes according to the passing of a garden from owner to another. Sometimes gardens are influenced by external factors.



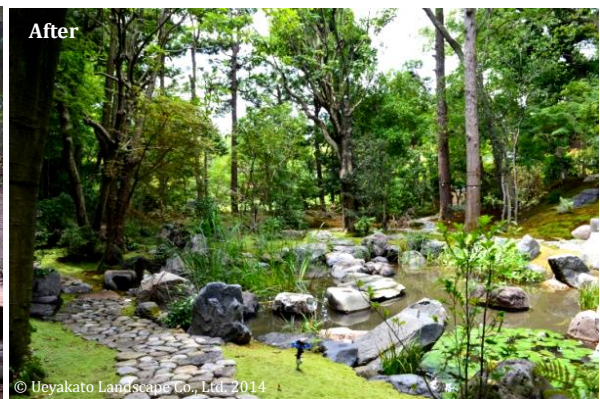
**Murin-an:** Reading sensitivity of the times (Borrowed scenery of Mt.Higashiyama and wild flower)



**Tairyu-Sanso Villa Garden:** Fostering scenery in cooperating with the inside and outside areas

**V. Revived Centennial Garden -Beloved Kyoto Gardens Across the World-**

With the garden experiencing construction and decay, some Japanese gardens are now owned by foreigners and they are beautifully revived.







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

The latest technology provides us with new methods and conveniences for everyday living. As we more efficiently work with clever tools and machines, we have entered the next stage of a generation more distant from nature. The new generation is on their way to losing the natural sensitivities and is now in a chaotic situation and a critical turning point of facing nature as human and true garden craftsman.

### Learn From the Tradition, Learn From the Team

In today's world, what is the craftsman's spirit that we should pass on to our next generation? First, we must **learn from the tradition**. Respecting 1200 years of Kyoto garden history, we as garden craftsman, must devote ourselves to understanding gardens in a larger time frame; one much longer than a human life. We must also be on the field to feel and reveal the consciousness behind the creations of the past. Secondly, we must **learn from the team**, from all members who are raising the garden together. In Ueyakato Landscape Co., Ltd., regardless of age and gender, everyone can be a teacher and student of one another. We operate more than 15 sites daily and it is vital to be conscious of learning from one another, in order to study from what others have experienced on the same day. Our teammates are primarily our fellow workers, however, the team also includes academic professors, government officials and our business partners; all in the garden landscape industry. It is important to be humble and to be constantly learning from each other.

Many have asked me "How many years would it take to be a true garden craftsman?" and my answer is "At least 200 years." This is my "**200 years Theory of Garden Craftsman.**" Garden life is so much longer than human life, so there is so much fun in its depth and mysticism. We may never understand it all, but it is well worth the time to enjoy its secrecy. So now let's together, appreciate what gardens and nature tell us through "**learning from the tradition, learning from the team.**"

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

The construction of The Lake Biwa Canal started in 1885 (Meiji 18) in my neighborhood, Nanzen-ji Temple area. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Governor of Kyoto Prefecture, Mr. Kunimichi Kitagaki was the leader of this project. He coined my favorite expression, "Enjoy the Dream of Hundred Years Beyond." Since the completion of the Lake Biwa Canal, 124 years has passed, and we are still today receiving this grateful gift from the past. We are blessed with rich water resources which travel to the garden villas of the Nanzen-ji Temple area. With respect to the past, we face the present and enjoy the dream of hundred years beyond. I sincerely would like to enjoy the dream of hundred years beyond with all of you in North America and here is my concluding message.



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