

#### **IV. Nature Appreciation Thoughts in Japanese Tradition**

When we consider about the core difference between the primary conception of aesthetics in the East and the West, it can be found that the concept of aesthetics in Eastern traditions are intimately related with their 'nature appreciation thought' whereas that of Western traditions mostly emphasized on the fine art or philosophical analyzing of creative art.

Especially, the nature appreciation spirit of Japanese tradition is mostly reflected in their culture such as painting, poem, music, architecture, and so forth. One of the important reasons is associated with their religious beliefs such as Shinto, the indigenous religion, and Buddhism, the exotic religion.

Shinto is considered to be at the origin of Japanese culture. It emphasizes on the wholeness of nature and firmly accepts that moral virtue is interconnected with the awareness of nature. Thus, Japanese ordinarily celebrates the landscape and it sets the tone for Japanese aesthetics.

On the other hand, most Japanese aesthetic ideals are influenced by Buddhism to a great extent. According to Buddhist thought, all things are considered as either evolving from or dissolving into 'nothingness'. This "nothingness" does not mean 'empty space'. It is rather a space of potentiality. For Instance, There are no permanent waves of the sea. There are only a wave arising from it and returning to it. No point can be

represented as completeness of a wave, even at its peak. It means that nature is a dynamic whole that is to be admired and appreciated. Hence, the concept of 'impermanence', everlasting process of nature, is also the important one in considering Japanese arts and aesthetics. This appreciation of nature has been deep-seated in the philosophical foundation of Japanese aesthetics, arts, and other cultural elements.

For example, the aesthetic awareness of four seasons such as *Haru* (Spring), *Natsu* (Summer), *Aki* (Autumn), and *Fuyu* (Winter) are found in Japanese culture not only as aesthetic objects but also as a part of their everyday life. Especially, the two festivals of Spring and Winter such as *Hanami* (The flower-viewing) and *Momijigari* (Viewing autumn tinted leaves) are most favourite seasonal events of which reflects their nature appreciation spirit as the aesthetic concept of 'impermanence'. Obviously, the practice of indigenous Shintō and Buddhist philosophical concepts are syncretized in these intangible cultural heritages of Japan.

The Japanese spirit of the appreciation of nature can be found the several facets of Japanese culture such as '*Nihon Teien*' (日本庭園), '*Cha no Yu*' (茶の湯), '*Haiku*' (俳句), '*Bonsai*' (盆栽), '*sansuiga*' (山水画), '*ikebana*' (生け花) and so forth. In this research, '*Nihon Teien*', '*Cha no Yu*', '*Haiku*', and '*Bonsai*' are selected as illustrative examples of discussing main theme of the research.

(i) **Japanese Gardens or 'Nihon Teien'** (日本庭園)

'Nihon Teien' is traditional Japanese garden that create miniature idealized landscapes, often in a highly abstract and stylized way. It is general to landscape the garden which enables you to appreciate all four seasons in Japan by harnessing a centered pond, undulating land, garden rock and vegetation. It was traditionally made in temples, famous large compounds, but nowadays it is also made in Japanese modern big house of wealthy persons, company workplaces and hotels.

Japanese gardens are unique in their techniques of design and control. Using plants, rocks, wood and water in unique ways, Japan has gradually defined its own method of landscaping and is renowned around the world for it. What is unique about the Japanese gardens are the control of nature and miniaturization of landscapes.

Nevertheless, it can be undeniable fact that the Japanese gardens have their roots in the influences of the Chinese gardens<sup>25</sup> since ancient times. But it has been gradually transformed by the Japanese garden designers and they began to develop their own aesthetics, based on Japanese materials and Japanese culture under the influence of indigenous Shintō practice and Buddhist thoughts. By the Edo period, the Japanese garden had its

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<sup>25</sup>Garrett Eckbo & Derek Plint Clifford. (last updated: 11-11-2011). "Garden and landscape design". *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://global.britannica.com/art/garden-and-landscape-design>

own distinct appearance with the great impact of Zen Buddhist thoughts.

In actual fact, the idea of these unique eastern style gardens began during the Asuka period (飛鳥時代 Asuka jidai, 538–710). Japanese merchants witnessed the gardens that were being built in China, and brought many of the Chinese gardening techniques and styles back to Japan.

### **Legendary Impact of Chinese Thoughts**

Japanese gardens were also strongly influenced by the Chinese philosophy of Daoism and Amida Buddhism, imported from China in or around 552 AD. As the mythical root, Daoist legends spoke of five mountainous islands inhabited by the Eight Immortals, who lived in perfect harmony with nature. Each Immortal flew from his mountain home on the back of a crane. The islands themselves were located on the back of an enormous sea turtle. In Japan, the five islands of the Chinese legend became one island, called Horai-zen, or Mount Horai. Replicas of this legendary mountain, the symbol of a perfect world, are a common feature of Japanese gardens, as are rocks representing turtles and cranes<sup>26</sup>.

Japanese gardening developed as an art and aesthetic object during the Heian Period (平安時代). With the flourishing of Buddhism, Buddhist Temples would do much of the gardening, designing scenes from mythology

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<sup>26</sup><http://www.slideshare.net/ShreyaSingh19/japanese-gardens-for-ppt/1>

or recreating places of religious significance in their own yards. The art later moved to the gardens of land-owners and eventually public parks.

Traditionally, there are two purposes of creating Japanese garden such as for recreation of Emperors and nobles and for religious practice of Buddhist monks. The former were designed for recreation and aesthetic pleasure, while the latter of Buddhist temples were designed for contemplation and meditation.

### **Shintō Practice and Japanese Gardens**

Japanese gardens have their roots in the Japanese religion of Shintō, with its story of the creation of eight perfect islands, and of the *shinchi*, the lakes of the gods. Prehistoric Shintō shrines to the *kami*, the gods and spirits, are found on beaches and in forests all over the island. Prehistoric shrines often took the form of unusual rocks or trees marked with cords of rice fiber (*shimenawa*) and surrounded with white stones or pebbles, a symbol of purity.

Thus, one of the earliest garden forms in Japan was sacred places in the midst of nature, which humans marked by pebbles. Predating the introduction of Chinese culture from the mainland, this early garden form can be recognized at some ancient Shinto shrines, for example at the Ise Shrines, whose buildings are surrounded by wide pebbled areas<sup>27</sup>.(see illustration-1)

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<sup>27</sup>“Types of Garden”. [http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2099\\_types.html](http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2099_types.html)

Most of the Japanese gardens associated with Imperial Palaces, Buddhist temples, and Zen monastery, there can be seen specific form of Japanese gardens in Shintō shrine too. (see illustration-2) In fact, Shintō is a kind of animism which is the belief that all natural things, such as natural objects (e.g. plants, animals, rocks), and natural phenomena (e.g. thunder, storm, wind) have spirits and they can influence human events. Hence, it can be said that this nature appreciation spirit of Shintō reflect in their unique style gardens. For instance, the white gravel courtyard became a distinctive feature of Shintō shrines, and it was also introduced in the Japanese gardens of Imperial Palaces, Buddhist temples, and Zen monastery.

### **Buddhist Conceptions and Japanese Gardens**

In the late Heian Period (794-1185) Pure Land Buddhism gained popularity, promising its devotees a spot in the Western Paradise of the Amida Buddha or Pure Land. Consequently, gardens were built to resemble that Buddhist paradise. This style called 'paradise gardens' derived from the idea of legendary paradise of the West, the place which was believed that Amida Buddha was ruling. (see Illustration -3)

At the beginning of the Kamakura Period and up to the end of Muromachi period (1192-1573), the newly garden design was introduced with the practice of Zen Buddhism. These Gardens were often built attached to temple buildings to be used the purpose of meditation

and religious advancement of the monks rather than for recreational purposes of members of the aristocracy or royal family.

Consequently, the size of gardens became smaller, and the figure also became simpler and more modest, while retaining most elements of traditional Japanese gardens as before, such as ponds, islands, bridges and waterfalls. However, the most significant style at that time is *Karesansui* (枯山), the most extreme development towards minimalism. Unlike the previous landscape gardens, it primarily uses rocks, gravel and sand to represent all the elements of the garden landscape. Such gardens can be built in places where there are no ponds or streams. These classical Zen gardens were created at Zen temples in Kyoto during the Muromachi period. (see **Illustration-4&5**)

It also known s 'the Japanese rock garden' or 'dry landscape garden', often called a Zen garden, creates a miniature stylized landscape through carefully composed arrangements of 'rocks', 'water features', 'moss', 'pruned trees' and 'bushes', and uses 'gravel' or 'sand' that is raked to represent ripples in water. When someone builds a *karesansui* garden, he should first model the whole site to look like the base of a mountain or hillside field, then arrange the stones so that they fit in with his overall design. Because

It is relatively small as usual, surrounded by a wall, and is commonly meant to be seen while seated from a

single viewpoint outside the garden, such as the porch of the *hōjo*, the residence of the chief monk of the temple or monastery. They were intended *to imitate the intimate essence of nature*, not its actual appearance, and to serve as an aid to meditation about the *true meaning of life*. Furthermore, there can be seen the symbolization or using metaphor of the power of nature (ocean, earth, and heaven) from Chinese tradition such as the west garden, Ryumon-no-niwa (dragon gate garden) is intended to represent a dragon ascending from the sea to heaven through a storm. A curving line of independent stones represent the dragon's body, twisting through cloud shapes delineated in white and gray sand, with a larger cluster of stones as its head<sup>28</sup>. (see **Illustration-6&7**)

During the Azuchi-Momoyama Period (1573-1603), Tea gardens (*Chaniwa*) of Zen practice reached the height of their development. The design of tea gardens is simple and utilitarian. The spirit of *wabi* or rustic simplicity was introduced at that time and still appreciated as a significant feature of Japanese tea gardens up to recent time. A stepping stone (*tobi-ishi*) path leads from the entrance to a tea house. Stone lanterns provide lighting and a decorative element, while a wash basin (*tsukubai*) is used for ritual cleansing. Many tea gardens can be found in Japan today, although many of them are incorporated into larger garden designs.(see **Illustrations-8&9**)

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<sup>28</sup> Thomas Daniell & Seki Akihiko. (2010). *Houses and Garden of Kyoto*. Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing. p.76.



During the Edo Period (1603-1867), garden design departed from the minimalism of the Muromachi Period (1333-1573) as the ruling class rediscovered its likings for extravagance and recreation like Heian period. The products were large 'strolling gardens' with ponds, islands and artificial hills that could be enjoyed from a variety of viewpoints along a circular trail. Many strolling gardens also included elements of tea gardens. In this respect, the gardens at that time were made with the creative ideas of syncretizing the traditional landscape garden style adopted from Chinese culture and the philosophical practice of Zen Buddhism. Among the most celebrated strolling gardens are Kanazawa's Kenrokuen, Okayama's Korakuen, Takamatsu's RitsurinKoen, Kyoto's Katsura Imperial Villa and Tokyo's Rikugien and Koishikawa Korakuen. (see Illustrations-10, 11, 12, 13)

In contrast to the strolling gardens, *Tsubo-niwa* (a name that indicates their size, because *niwa* means "garden" and *tsubo* is a surface equal to 2 *tatami* mats, 3.3 square meters), the small gardens became popular among the urban population in the same period. These mini gardens filled in the small courtyard spaces within or between townhouses and provided a touch of nature as well as light and fresh air. Due to their size, they usually featured just a small amount of decorative elements and were not meant to be entered. This kind of gardens can be seen in some of the historic merchant residences that are open to the public in today such as Kurashiki of Ohashi family's courtyard garden is well-known. They also

remain a popular type of garden today among people who wish to incorporate a small green space into their homes, but lack the luxury of abundant space.(see **Illustrations-14&15**)

In the Modern period (1868 to present) Japan entered an age of rapid modernization and Westernization was started in the Meiji Period. Thus, western style city parks were built, and many of the formerly private strolling gardens were opened to the public. Politicians and industrialists were the force behind the construction of new private strolling gardens which often contained western gardening elements such as flower beds and open lawns. Many of these gardens were built in the new capital of Tokyo, for example the Kiyosumi Teien. (see **Illustrations-16**)

Some modern garden designers also tried their hand at creating more traditional types of Japanese gardens, although they often included some new ideas into them. Good examples are the Zen gardens of the Tofuku-ji Temple in Kyoto and the stone garden in the back of Kongobu-ji Temple on Koyasan which date from the 1930s or the even more recent gardens of the Adachi Art Museum near Matsue.(see **Illustrations-17, 18**)

From mentioned above, it is clear that the development of the ideas and practice of Japanese gardens gradually changed into more nature appreciation tendency so that it also transform into more familiar to the everyday lives of Japanese society from age to age. The core reason can be considered that the appreciation

of nature and deep awareness of maintaining harmonious co-existence between human and nature have been rooted as the common denominator not only in their indigenous Shintō, but also in exotic cultural traditions such as Daoism and Buddhism.

Nevertheless, in the later periods, along with the flourishing of Zen Buddhism, the unique or particular style of gardening thoughts gradually developed and it has being brought the new trend of Japanese gardens which is a part of today's Japanese culture as a significant characteristic of 'everyday aesthetics'.

As we have already known that the popularity of Japanese gardens is significant in today's life style of urbanization in worldwide scale. Furthermore, it is undeniable that it possesses the power of evoking people's emotion and contemplation for natural environment aesthetically. In addition, one crucial contribution of it is that aesthetic appreciation of it enables to awaken our moral responsibility to conserve and sustain the natural environment as an important task of human beings in respective societies of today's world.

When we are sitting and gazing even these artificial landscape with nature appreciation mind and breathing the fresh airs and good scent come from these green trees, stones or rocks covered with moss, seasonal flowers, and ponds, we can obtain the sensational perceptions which is remind us of real natural phenomenon. Hence, it can awaken our instinct of nature appreciation spirit and the sense of climate or natural

environment in some extent. By gazing and feeling the seasonal changes of these 'mini-natured' gardens with our five senses can be considered as a kind of living in nature though it is close at hand or unfolded before our eyes.

Hence, if we consider it from the standpoint of Watsuji, we can find the conception of *fūdo* in these sceneries because of its power to make overcome the boundary between nature and human during the moment of feeling the sense of nature or contemplating the truth or law of nature in it.

#### **(ii) Japanese Tea Ceremony or 'Cha no Yu' (茶の湯)**

The Japanese ordinarily refer to it as "Cha-no-yu" which can be translated literally as "hot water for tea", Chado or Sado (茶道) translates to "the way of tea" as in devoting one's time totally to the study and practice of the Japanese tea ceremony.

It is an integral part of Japanese history. Dating to the 16th century, it has remained an important part of the culture. Tea came to Japan through a Zen monk, Eisai Zenji, who studied in China and brought tea seeds back to his native country in 1191. The tea ceremony itself took on multiple forms and was adopted by many groups in Japan. In order to understand fully the tea ceremony, it is essential to know about its history and the Buddhist traditions behind it.

Nevertheless, the significant notions of Japanese tea ceremony have been developed by a famous tea

master, Sen no Rikyū (1522-91) who helped to direct the tea ceremony back toward its original purpose based on the spirit of Zen. In his tea practice Rikyū focused on the aesthetic of modesty, refinement, and rusticity. A small group of people entered a modestly sized rustic room, drank tea delicately prepared in front of them, and quietly discussed the tea utensils or a piece of Zen artwork in the room. The tea room was small and provided a retreat from the outside world. Rikyū brought the ceremony back to its Zen roots. Participants were able to contemplate the deeper meaning of the tea ceremony, instead of being part of a large spectacle. **(see illustration-19)**

Generally, it includes the intimate connections with architecture, landscape gardening, unique tea utensils, paintings, flower arrangement, ceramics, calligraphy, Zen Buddhism, and all the other elements that coexist in harmonious relationship with the ceremony. Its ultimate aim is the attainment of deep spiritual satisfaction through the drinking of tea and through silent contemplation. As deeply rooted in Zen philosophy, it is a way to remove oneself from the mundane affairs of day-to-day living and to achieve, if only for a time, serenity and inner peace.

On a different level, the Japanese tea ceremony is simply an entertainment where the guests are invited to drink tea in a pleasant and relaxing room. The bonds of friendship between the host and guests are strengthened during the ceremony when the host himself

makes and serves the tea. And rather than religious it could be better explained that the host will do the best he can by studying all related aspects such as calligraphy, flower arrangement, cooking, the wearing of a kimono, ceramics and much more. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to call it “The Way of Tea” since this would refer to a way of life, or a life style in devotion of preparing the best possible bowl of powdered green tea for the guests. The Way of Tea is a subtly variable way to commune with nature and with friends.

There are four conceptions or philosophy of Tea such as ‘harmony’ (*Wa-和*), ‘respect’ (*Kei-敬*), ‘purity’ (*Sei-清*), and ‘tranquility’ (*Jaku-寂*).

‘*Wa-和*’ stands for ‘harmony’. As there is harmony in nature, the *Teishu* (Te Master) will try to bring this quality into the tea room and the garden around the tea house. The utensils used during the tea ceremony are in harmony with each other, so the theme is the same as well as the colors. The *Chaniwa* (tea garden) should be an extension of the natural flora surrounding it. (see **Illustration-20, 21, 24**)

‘*Kei-敬*’ stands for ‘respect’. The guests must respect all things, all matters without involving their status or position in life. They must crawl through a small entrance called ‘*Nijiriguchi*’ to get into the room. (see **Illustration-21**) In the room they will all kneel down and bow to the hanging scroll, they will sit next to each other in *Seiza* position (sit on one’s heels up straight) on the *Tatami* (Japanese mat). Respect is also shown by carefully

handling and observing the tea bowl and other objects during *Haiken* (in polite form of ‘viewing of objects in the ceremony’). (see **Illustration- 22**)

‘*Sei-清*’ stands for ‘purity’. Crawling into the tea room, one is to leave behind all thoughts and worries of daily life. The *Chashitsu* (tea room) is a different world where one can revitalize, slow down, and enjoy the presence of friends. (see **Illustration-19&22**) The gesture of purity is enhanced by the ritual cleaning of the *Chawan*, *Natsume*, *Chashaku*, and *Kensui* lit by the host. The real grandmaster of tea does not perform the Japanese tea ceremony from memory but from a pure heart.

‘*Jaku-寂*’ stands for ‘tranquility’. Only after the first three concepts (harmony, respect, and purity) are discovered, experienced and embraced, can people finally embody tranquility. This was one of the teachings of the famous tea master Rikyū. (see **Illustration- 22**)

The Rikyū’s philosophy of Tea ceremony emphasizes natural beauty, and thus it can be found in flower arrangement style such as ‘*Chabana*’ (literally tea flower). It is the simple style of flower arrangement used in tea ceremony. *Chabana* has its roots in *ikebana*, an older style of Japanese flower arranging, which itself has roots in Shintō and Buddhism. *Chabana* evolved from the ‘freeform’ style of *Ikebana* called *nageire* (投げ入れ, ‘throw (it) in’), which was used by early tea masters. *Chabana* is said, depending upon the source, to have been either developed or championed by Rikyū. He is said to have taught that *chabana* should give the viewer the

same impression that those flowers naturally would give if they were still growing outdoors, in nature. For that reason, unnatural or out-of-season materials are never used. In the summer, when many flowering grasses are in season in Japan, however, it is seasonally appropriate to arrange a number of such flowering grasses in an airy basket-type container. Unlike *ikebana* (which often uses shallow, wide dishes), tall, narrow *hanaire* are frequently used in *chabana*. The containers for the flowers used in tea rooms are typically made from natural materials such as bamboo, as well as metal or ceramic, but rarely glass. *Chabana* arrangements are so simple that frequently no more than a single blossom is used. (see illustrations- 23a & 23b)

As mentioned above, Japanese way of Tea is closely related with the sense of nature appreciation spirit of indigenous and exotic religious or cultural traditions such as that of Shinto, Daoism, and Buddhism. The nature appreciation philosophies of these three traditions are reflecting in the practice, materials, and philosophy of 'Cha no Yu'. It can be found the beauty of nature itself; sometimes its form or shape looks like 'ugliness' rather than 'beautifulness'.

Here, we can think out three main philosophical concepts in 'Cha no Yu' as its aesthetic notions of *Wabi-Sabi*.

They are *Imperfection*, *Incompleteness*, and *Impermanence*. First two concepts derived from the philosophy of Shintō and Buddhism, which assume that



modest and humble or poverty and austerity are best. Thus, it should be reduced any unnecessary things. Hence, in order to show the *wabi* aesthetics, the artist create the art object into irregular, rustic, and simple form or compact size as their unique artistic style. For example, the architectural style of teahouse is illustrative to show these concepts, especially *nijiriguchi*, a sliding door only 90 centimetres tall, obliges guests to bow their heads and crouch is good example (**See Illustration-21**). The guests have to crawl into the teahouse through the *nijiriguchi*. The *nijiriguchi* serves to underscore the fact that worldly status or social position means nothing within these walls, where all participants are treated alike. Another example showing the beauty of *imperfectness* and *incompleteness* is the rough, flawed and artless shape of tea bowl (*chawan*) and stepping stone (*tobiishi*), the mark a path through the garden to tea house. Its stones were arranged in the incomplete form intentionally (**See Illustrations-24& 25**).

Third concept of *impermanence* also derived from the syncretization of Shintō and Buddhist philosophy, namely awareness of temporal and spatial transition of things or changeable nature of things. Hence, the artists of *wabi* appreciate the well-used or aging things as their aesthetic ideal. For example, *hanaire*, the bamboo vase and *Kama*, the kettle of water which was well-used and became muddy colour or smoky hue, and rough tactile sensation because tea master never remove the rust

from kettle to maintain *wabi* aesthetics (See Illustration-26).

In these unique concepts of *wabi* also represents the nature appreciation spirit that is instinctively rooted in human nature. Hence, the aesthetic objects which can give us aesthetic experience or emotional attachment are not only beautiful or harmonious or symmetrical things, sometimes ugly or irregular or asymmetrical things are able to evoke our sense of aesthetic appreciation in the best way. For that reason, sometimes we become to be strong emotion or fresh sense of aesthetics from the unscenic landscape or wild nature. Furthermore, this tendency can also be alive in our everyday life. For example, we naturally become to be a kind of aesthetic pleasure when we see a withered branches or leaves of a tree which stands in autumn night fall. In fact, such kind of aesthetic pleasure leads us not only to be aesthetic emotion, but also to be moral consciousness come from the awareness of co-existence between human being and nature.

### (iii) Haiku (俳句)

*Haiku* (俳句) is one of the most well-known unique cultural traditions of the Japanese to the world. Nowadays, its impact can be found not only on Japanese culture but on other countries in worldwide scale. The competitions of composing *haiku* poem are globally popular for the past century. Of all poetic forms, haiku

stands as one of the most elegant and immediate – a rare combination that creates an aura of mystery and artistry.

Haiku is a major type of Japanese poetry. Haiku was previously called *hokku* (発句), but given its current name by Masaoka Shiki at the end of the 19th century. The name was suggested as an abbreviation of the phrase "*haikai no ku*" (俳諧の句) meaning a verse of *haikai* (俳諧).

As the origin of it can be traced back in the earliest times of Japanese culture. *Hokku* is the opening stanza of an orthodox collaborative linked poem, or *renga* (連歌), and of its later derivative, *renku* (連句) or *haikaino renga*. By the time of Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694), the *hokku* had begun to appear as an independent poem, and was also incorporated in *haibun* (a combination of prose and *hokku*), and *haiga* (a combination of painting with *hokku*).

With the challenge of precisely conveying a natural movement as a universal moment in three lines and 17 (5-7-5) syllables, its unique style of 'form' and 'content' is the sound reason why it enables to be popular globally. Its formative rule such as the principle of 5-7-5 (17 syllables) seems to be a reason why it is intimately associated with natural phenomenon as its content or subject matter.

In composing *haiku*, a *kireji* (切れ字) or cutting word is used at the end of one of the three lines. In Japanese there are actual *kireji* words which act as punctuation, e.g. 'ya' in Bashō's '*furuikeya*' poem. Since there is no English equivalent to the *kireji*, other forms of

punctuation are used, e.g. comma, colon, ellipses, etc. These punctuations are generally used at the end of the first or second line and very rarely found in the middle of the second line. The purpose is to create a relationship between the two parts.

A traditional haiku contains a *kigo* (季語) (season reference) that symbolizes the season in which the poem is set. Most Japanese *haiku* writers see *kireji* and *kigo* as nonnegotiable requirements. Although many believe *kigo* are considered essential to traditional *haiku*, new forms are being implemented without their use. These are called "freeform" haiku.

A similar form of Japanese poetry is the *Senryū* (川柳). *Senryū* (also called human *haiku*) is an unrhymed Japanese verse consisting of three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables (5-7-5) or 17 syllables in all. It is usually written in the present tense and only references to some aspect of human nature or emotions. The poems contain three lines with 17 or fewer *onji* and tend to be about human foibles. They are often cynical or contain dark humor. Unlike most traditional subject matter of *haiku*, *senryū* do not need to include *kigo*. The name, *Senryū*, derived from the name of *haikai* poet Senryū Karai ( 柄井川柳, 1718-1790), whose collection *Haifūyanagidaru* ( 俳風柳多留 ) launched the genre into the public consciousness.

Hence, there are two kinds of *haiku* by means of its subject matter such as *kigo* (seasonal word) and *senryū* (cynical or human foibles). The former is

associated with the tendency of nature appreciation and the latter is concerned with the matter of human relationship in everyday life.

Most famous haiku master are Matsuo Bashō, Yosa Buson, Fukuda Chiyoni, Kobayashi Issa, and Masaoka Shiki. Nevertheless, it cannot be deniable that we should not forget the crucial role of Matsuo Bashō in the development of today's *haiku* style, form as well as content. He is considered to be pioneer who established the concept of 'nature appreciation' and 'everyday aesthetics' in the nowadays' *haiku* poems.

Here, an example of classic *hokku* by Bashō is noteworthy to consider the thoughts of nature or more philosophical contemplation about the law of nature:

|       |                       |                    |
|-------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 古池や   | <i>Furuikeya</i>      | An old pond        |
| 蛙飛び込む | <i>Kawazutobikomu</i> | A frog jumps in    |
| 水の音   | <i>mizu no oto</i>    | The sound of water |

The speaker of this *haiku* is a person sitting by an old pond listening to the sound the water makes as a frog jumps in. An old pond is usually a quiet place where one can relax without the worry of much sound. By saying it is an "old pond" in line one, Bashō suggests that the water is completely still to begin with, and that the frog leaping in causes the speaker to focus on the sudden splash. In line two, Bashō states that "a frog jumps in". A frog in Japan is a symbol of the spring, so by this he indicates the approximate time of year. Line three, 'the sound of water', indirectly implies a surrounding silence simply

because the speaker is able to hear the sound clearly. This obviously indicates that there is hardly any noise in the background.

This *haiku* of Bashō is "said to portray the dynamic intersection between the still surface of the pond and the action of the frog's leap". In other words, the poem displays the contrast between the quietness of water and the noisiness of a frog jumping into it. William J. Higginson says that "restores the frog to its simple creaturehood and wryly comments on the tradition of its singing as an important sign of spring". ....In most poems, 'the frog is used as a symbol of spring', but in this particular poem, the frog is simply a part of nature and does not depict the season of spring".<sup>29</sup>This statement is not true. The frog in this poem does represent the season because of the serene tone that makes it seem like spring.

Here, it should be noticed the another style of *haiku*, known as *senryū* is also important to discuss about the role of *haiku* and similar genre of it in discussing 'everyday aesthetics' of traditional Japanese poems. The two are mostly similar in the principle of 'form' though the 'subject matter' are quite different as mentioned above. In contrast to the nature appreciation tendency of *haiku* as in its subject matter, *senryū* is mostly focuses on the 'human affairs of daily life' ironically.

A typical example of *senryū* composed by Senryū Karai can be raised as follow;

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<sup>29</sup>Higginson, William J. (1985).*The Haiku Handbook*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.p.9.

|        |                       |               |
|--------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 泥棒を    | <i>dorobō o</i>       | When I catch, |
| 捕えてみれば | <i>toraete mireba</i> | The robber,   |
| 我が子なり  | <i>wagako nari</i>    | My own son    |

In this poem, the subject matter is the incidental human affair of a family though it is unexpected episode that one's own son pretended as a robber and tried to break and enter into his parents' house. But, after read it, one might be more consideration beyond this ironical incident. The family in this poem might be taken as a metaphor which represent the weakness of common character of human beings that is most people necessarily trust to their closed friends, family members, and followers and forget that someone maybe change by the situations. It gives the lesson to everyone that nothing is undeviating.

In addition, the following *senryū* by Shūji Terayama copies the haiku structure faithfully, down to a blatantly obvious *kigo*, but on closer inspection is absurd in its content;

|       |                      |                |
|-------|----------------------|----------------|
| かくれんぼ | <i>Kakurenbo</i>     | Hide and seek  |
| 三つ数え  | <i>mittsukazoete</i> | Count to three |
| 冬になる  | <i>fyuninaru</i>     | Winter comes   |

Terayama, who wrote about playing hide-and-seek in the graveyard as a child, thought of himself as the odd one out, the one who was always "it" in hide-and-seek. Indeed, the original haiku included the theme *oni*(a demon). To him, seeing a game of hide-and-seek, or

recalling it as it grew cold would be a chilling experience. He might also have recalled opening his eyes and finding himself all alone, feeling the cold more intensely than he did a minute before among other children. Either way, any genuinely personal experience would be *haiku* and not *senryū* in the classic sense. If one think this poem uses a child's game to express in hyperbolic metaphor how, in retrospect, life is short, and nothing more, then this would indeed work as a *senryū*. Otherwise, it is a authentic haiku. There is also the possibility that it is a joke about playing hide and seek, only to realize (winter having arrived during the months spent hiding) that no one wants to find you. In addition, the awareness or consciousness of seasonal changes between four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter) seemed to be intimately related with the feeling or emotional expression of the poet.

Nevertheless, Japanese *haiku* or *senryū* poems are reflecting their deep awareness or sensational familiarity towards nature and natural phenomenon. Furthermore, nature appreciation spirit of Japanese people are highlighted in these poems as immediate or mediate references such as circular changes of four seasons as its unique features of 'time' and 'space' such as flowers, day and night, and ecological world view of living being (mostly a small or tiny creatures such as frog, cicada). Hence, it possess the efficient power to evoke the emotion of people though it will be whether pleasant or unpleasant, whether beautifulness or ugliness. For that



reason, we have to acknowledge the crucial role of such kinds of poems because of its function for awakening human instinct of nature appreciation tendency and awareness of moral responsibilities towards nature which is the treasure land of human being.

**(iv) *Bonsai* (盆栽) or *Saikei* (栽景)**

*Bonsai* (盆栽—tray planting or miniature trees in containers) is one of the unique art forms of Japanese culture by using trees grown in containers. Its root of Japanese tradition dates back over a thousand years.

The purposes of bonsai are primarily contemplation (for the viewer) and the pleasant exercise of effort and ingenuity (for the grower). By contrast with other plant cultivation practices, bonsai is not intended for production of food or for medicine. Instead, bonsai practice focuses on long-term cultivation and shaping of one or more small trees growing in a container.

The practice of bonsai is sometimes confused with dwarfing, but dwarfing generally refers to research, discovery, or creation of plant cultivars that are permanent, genetic miniatures of existing species. Bonsai does not require genetically dwarfed trees, but rather depends on growing small trees from regular stock and seeds. Bonsai uses cultivation techniques like pruning, root reduction, potting, defoliation, and grafting to produce small trees that mimic the shape and style of mature, full size trees.

The Japanese art of bonsai originated from the Chinese practice of *penjing* (tray scenery).(see **Illustrations-27 &28**) From the 6th century onward, Imperial embassy personnel and Buddhist students from Japan visited and returned from mainland China. Over time, these container plantings began to appear in Japanese writings and representative art.

A close relationship between Japan's Zen Buddhism and the potted trees began to shape bonsai reputation and aesthetics. One of the monks' activities at that time was to introduce political leaders to various arts represents miniature landscapes as admirable accomplishments for men of taste and learning. Japanese artists came to consider the original items in Chinese *penjin* unnecessary, simplifying their creations in the spirit of Zen Buddhism. (see **Illustrations-31,32,33**)

Bonsai aesthetics are the aesthetic goals characterizing the Japanese tradition of growing an artistically shaped miniature tree in a container. Many Japanese cultural characteristics, in particular the influence of Zen Buddhism and the expression of *Wabi-Sabi*<sup>30</sup>, inform the bonsai tradition in Japan. Established art forms that share some aesthetic principles with bonsai include *penjing* and *saikei* (plant landscape). (see **Illustrations-27,28,29,30**) A number of other cultures around the globe have adopted the Japanese aesthetic

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<sup>30</sup> Peter Chan. (1987). *Bonsai Masterclass*. New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc.pp.12-14.

approach to bonsai, and, while some variations have begun to appear, most hew closely to the rules and design philosophies of the Japanese tradition.

Over centuries of practice, the Japanese bonsai aesthetic has encoded some important techniques and design guidelines. Like the aesthetic rules that govern, for example, Western common practice period music, bonsai's guidelines help practitioners work within an established tradition with some assurance of success. Simply following the guidelines alone will not guarantee a successful result. Nevertheless, these design rules can rarely be broken without reducing the impact of the bonsai specimen. Some key principles in bonsai aesthetics include 'miniaturization', 'proportion among elements', 'asymmetry', 'no trace of the artist', and 'poignancy'.

By its definition derived from etymological root, a bonsai is a tree kept small enough to be container-grown while otherwise fostered to have a mature appearance. The most prized proportions mimic those of a full-grown tree as closely as possible. Small trees with large leaves or needles are out of proportion and are avoided, as is a thin trunk with thick branches. Bonsai aesthetics discourage strict radial or bilateral symmetry in branch and root placement. The designer's touch must not be apparent to the viewer. If a branch is removed in shaping the tree, the scar will be concealed. Likewise, wiring should be removed or at least concealed when the bonsai is shown, and must leave no permanent marks on the branch or

bark<sup>31</sup>. Many of the formal rules of bonsai help the grower create a tree that expresses 'Wabi-Sabi', or portrays an aspect of 'mono no aware'.

From mentioned above, it can be said that *bonsai* (especially *saikei*) represents the microcosm of nature by means of soil, moss, rock, tree, and the tray or utensil is used as the image of 'planet earth'. When we looking at or gazing toward these *bonsai* (*saikei*) in its tray, we enable to feel or imagine the macrocosm of nature at hand in this microcosm even though we, human being are nothing but a part of macrocosm of nature. We can see a forest or age-old trees nearby us whenever we want to look at. It truly enables to convince the emotion instinct of nature appreciation spirit.

In other words, we can induce the natural environment in our daily life style through the *bonsai* or *saikei* which is the representation of macrocosm in its miniature form of microcosm. For that reason, its aesthetic functions are closely connected with the Watsuji's concept of *fūdo* and the concept of 'everyday aesthetics' in Saito's environmental aesthetics.

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<sup>31</sup>Peter Chan. (1987). *Bonsai Masterclass*. p.14.