MIREI SHIGEMORI 1896-1975. MODERNIZING THE JAPANESE GARDEN

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2004
To my parents,
in Switzerland and in America
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Part 1: Text

Summary

This monograph on Mirei Shigemori introduces the work of a Japanese landscape architect and scholar who was very active in the years right before and after WWII. His unique approach and outstanding productivity left behind a body of work that is impressive in part because of its sheer volume as well as its radicalism. It can be understood as a built critique of the inclination towards uninspired repetition as well as the creative stagnation that many of the Japanese gardeners of the 19th and the early 20th century had fallen victim to. Despite the great interest in the Japanese garden abroad, hardly any of this work is known in the west. My main hypothesis is that Mirei Shigemori modernized the Japanese garden, so consequently chapters three to six of this work are concerned with investigating this thesis.

Born in the countryside near Okayama in 1896, Mirei Shigemori had already started to study the tea ceremony and ikebana when he was a teenager. At the age of 21 he moved to Tôkyô to study painting, art history and philosophy. In 1929 Mirei Shigemori moved to Kyôto and started to be very active in the field of ikebana. In 1930 he published a nine-volume work on Japanese flower arrangement, the first of a total of 81 books that he wrote over the next 45 years. From 1936 to 1939 Mirei Shigemori visited about 250 gardens all over Japan, surveyed them, took pictures, made sketches and checked their documentary records. This was the first time in the history of Japan that somebody went out and surveyed the gardens all over the country. The results were published in the 26-volume Illustrated Book on the History of the Japanese Garden (Nihon Teienshi Zukai). For Mirei Shigemori himself it was the best way to learn about gardens, and it became the most important basis for his future work. But the survey also made it clear to him how innovation in the Japanese garden had ceded a long time ago and he decided to go out and try to renew the Japanese garden once more. As a consequence he developed an approach to the modernization of this old garden culture, which was very much informed by his background as a painter. And this is what makes his works interesting and unique at the same time. Chapter 2 describes his life in detail and elaborates on the influences on him and his work.

The key works in chapter 3 consist of two exemplary garden projects by Mirei Shigemori, a temple and a residence garden. Both are described and analyzed in great detail, and are evaluated with regard to concept, design idea, style, technique and material. Chapter 4 goes
on to extract the key design elements from the body of Mirei Shigemori’s collected garden works. It organizes these innovations along the categories of points of stone, lines of concrete and planes of colored gravel. Then, by using examples from among Mirei Shigemori’s garden creations, the key design elements are one by one. This chapter will then describe how he went about modernizing the Japanese garden, based on his background as a painter, and inspired by what he had learned doing the survey. Chapter 5 then further clarifies the relationship between the key design elements and the influences on Mirei Shigemori’s work by giving some direct examples. And chapter 6 puts his contributions into perspective by adding a few more aspects to the overall picture and looking at his body of work from a more international perspective.

The rather substantial appendix provides the basis that this work is built on. To begin with, the first comprehensive catalogue of his works in English and Japanese, for both his books and gardens. Next an extensive bibliography is supplied to facilitate the access to the often-dispersed sources for this topic. And finally several texts written by Mirei Shigemori and others, including excerpts from his personal diary, that have greatly informed this thesis are provided at the end for reference.

Kurzfassung


Geboren im Jahre 1896 auf dem Lande in der Nähe der Stadt Okayama, erlernte Mirei Shigemori schon früh die Teezeremonie und Ikebana. Im Alter von 21 Jahren zog es ihn nach Tōkyō wo er Malerei, Kunstgeschichte und Philosophie studierte. 1929 übersiedelte er dann nach Kyōto und wurde dort sehr aktiv in der Bewegung zur Erneuerung von Ikebana. Er
publizierte 1930 ein neunbändiges Werk zu zeitgenössischer Ikebana, das erste bedeutende Buch unter insgesamt 81 Veröffentlichungen über die nächsten 45 Jahre.

Von 1936 bis 1939 besuchte Mirei Shigemori dann etwa 250 Gärten in ganz Japan, vermass sie, machte Skizzen, photographierte sie und sichtete die schriftlichen Quellen. Das war das erste Mal in der Geschichte Japans, dass jemand systematisch alle Gärten detailliert dokumentierte. Das Resultat wurde in Form einer 26-bändigen Enzyklopädie zur Geschichte des Japanischen Gartens veröffentlicht (Nihon Teienshi Zukan). Für Mirei Shigemori selbst war das natürlich die beste Einführung in die Kunst des japanischen Gartens, und es sollte dann auch die ideale Basis für sein künftiges Schaffen darstellen. Doch die umfangreichen Erhebungen hatten ihm auch deutlich vor Augen geführt, dass die Innovation im japanischen Garten schon vor langer Zeit zum Stillstand gekommen war. Er entschied, selber Hand an die Erneuerung der alten Gartenkultur zu legen und entwickelte eine Strategie zur Modernisierung des japanischen Gartens die stark von seiner Ausbildung als Maler geprägt ist. Das ist dann auch das, was sein Werk auszeichnet und äußerst interessant macht. Kapitel 2 liefert eine genaue Beschreibung seines Lebens und geht im Detail auf die Einflüsse auf ihn und seine Arbeit ein.


Chapter 1: Introduction

The Topic

The Japanese garden is an old if not ancient discipline. And in this lies part of its attraction as well as its danger, especially for the people trying to create new ones. For many garden makers in Japan the history of this art is so pervasive that they can never free themselves from it. And this is not necessarily a bad thing, for in order to keep these skills alive and maintain the essence of the traditional garden in a current setting, the preservation of a cultural product like the Japanese garden is of critical importance. But clearly there is the danger of getting stuck in this overwhelming heritage and ending up just re-producing what has already been done before.

Mirei Shigemori noticed this early on (Image 101). According to Lorraine Kuck, “His historical studies had made clear how vitality had drained from the Japanese garden art after the middle of the Edo period when the professional garden men took over.” This realization motivated him to go out and try what nobody else had tried for more than two centuries: to modernize the Japanese garden. “So he decided to follow the earlier artist-masters and go into the creating of gardens as a serious art expression.” As a consequence he developed an approach to the modernization of the Japanese garden, which was very much informed by his background as a painter. This is what makes his approach interesting and unique at the same time. But people who make a contribution towards the renewal of their own culture are often controversial. After all they are proposing changes to something that the culture has grown accustomed to. This was especially true in Mirei Shigemori’s case, and many people didn’t (and still don’t) like his approach to the modernization of the Japanese garden. But then on the other hand these are often the people who also have no problem in continuing to copy the past. Mirei Shigemori did find a circle of strong supporters during his lifetime, many of them

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1 In Japan there are several different terms regularly used to refer to this profession. The most common one being niwashi (庭師), literally translated as garden master or just gardener. Then there is the term zoenka (造園家), which is usually understood to mean landscape gardener or garden designer. And finally the word sakuteika (作庭家), that accurately translates into garden maker. As the later is the one that Mirei Shigemori used most often in his writings, I will make frequent use this term when the sentence directly relates to him.

becoming his followers for a number of years or joining the Kyôto Rinsen Kyokai. And he also had some amazingly open minded clients, giving him the space and opportunity to come true on his push for the "eternally modern garden", as he liked to say.

Masatarô Kawagatsu, a long time friend and 10 years younger than Mirei Shigemori, gives the following assessment: “Taking the results of the study of Japanese garden history as a basis, he made big footprints in Japanese garden history with his many garden creations, after a time of stagnation in the way of garden making right after the Edo period. [...] In this situation I am impressed with Mr. Shigemori’s garden works, which have a special personality and artistic character. Although other people also made good gardens, Mr. Shigemori’s gardens are somehow different. I am thinking what that possibly could be. The reason might be that Mr. Shigemori was neither just simply a gardener nor was he only a scholar of garden history.”

**Objective and Significance**

There is currently a strong influx of imported (western) designs in all of landscape architecture in Japan, and even in the field of the garden. This is at first sight a quite surprising fact, considering how old that discipline is in this part of the world and how much it is valued, at least abroad. But then there have always been such influences from outside, and the Japanese garden as we know it is, after all, a product of them. What seems to happen now though is, that the new tendencies simply replace the existing, versus being integrated as was done in earlier times. This is one major tendency.

The other equally disturbing one is the continual re-copying of the old as Mirei Shigemori had already pointed out. This tendency can be found all over Japan. We have only to travel around the country and visit some recent or current projects. More often than not, we will find a rather contemporary looking piece of architecture surrounded by an outdoor space inspired by the taste and forms of the Edo period (1603-1868). An obvious time gap for anybody interested in styles. It seems like the current design of outdoor spaces is still a hundred or more years behind, even now heavily borrowing from traditional gardens and still trying to find a contemporary method of formal expression.

3 The Kyôto Garden Association, founded by Mirei Shigemori and others in 1932 to study and protect the heritage of the Japanese garden, was initially an interdisciplinary and rather progressive study group with many likeminded people.

4 In Kintaifu 29, Shigemori Mirei’s Personality and Achievement, page 7.
So Mirei Shigemori’s main message is as up to date now as ever before.

Even though he passed away in 1975, his manifesto for the renewal of Japanese garden art remains alive in many of his books and is evident in his built garden works. It is an interesting fact that many innovative minds are not appreciated in their own country, at least while they are alive. The Japanese especially seem to depend on foreign observers to point out such noteworthy things or people to them. Who would know about the Katsura Villa today if Bruno Taut had not promoted it with great enthusiasm among his Japanese hosts?5

28 years after his death Mirei Shigemori is largely forgotten. Part of the intention of this work is to reevaluate what he has done for the Japanese garden and look at this contribution in the context of his life. Little academic research has been done so far on Mirei Shigemori. The list of scholarly papers is surprisingly short and they are not very easy to find in the first place (see appendix 1: Works on Mirei Shigemori by Others). Also only three or four out of those eight papers listed go into any depth to really qualify as academic contributions. And so far these texts have all been written in Japanese and have therefore excluded almost anybody outside Japan. Few western scholars have gone to the trouble of learning Japanese to be able to read the original texts. So this is the first time that this material has is accessible to a western audience in a language other than Japanese.

So I am setting out to analyze and interpret Mirei Shigemori’s work because of my own personal interest in it and hope that the fruits of my research might serve as a basis for others to built on in the future, especially scholars outside Japan.

And last but not least it is also my hope that Japanese gardeners and landscape architects might become a little more aware of the potential for renewal that lies within their own culture, and as a result depend a little less on the current idolized designers such as Peter Walker and others for this kind of inspiration.

Content and Structure

Originally conceived as a monograph on a person who devoted his life to modernizing the Japanese garden, my dissertation developed and changed in the course of conducting the research. An essentially sad incident turned out to be a truly lucky moment for me. Due to the financial circumstances of one of the family members, Mirei Shigemori’s heirs had to sell part of the property of their residence in Kyōto. As the storage house with all the books, plans and

5 Bruno Taut, Houses and People of Japan, Tōkyo 1936.
other inheritance was on that part of the property, it needed to be evacuated. All this happened relatively fast, and suddenly I found myself carrying Mirei Shigemori’s belongings from one house into another. It took more than ten days to clear the entire storage house and I went there to help every day. It was quite an overwhelming situation, to all of a sudden be confronted with thousands of books and hundreds of plans, which had become accessible to me so fast and a rather unexpectedly.

So this event opened up new possibilities for my research and eventually somewhat altered the course of my dissertation. I was then allowed to take almost two hundred of Mirei Shigemori’s original design drawings to my house for further study. In the six weeks that I had this amazing collection at my house I catalogued everything and built up an image database of more than two and a half thousand images. This became the most important basis for my research. It was material that not even Mirei Shigemori’s grandsons were given access to before!

My main hypothesis is that Mirei Shigemori modernized the Japanese garden. So generally speaking this work verifies this hypothesis by exploring Mirei Shigemori’s methods and analyzing his tools, as he went about modernizing the Japanese garden. It describes the influences on him as an artist and looks at him and his works in the context of 20th century Japan.

The first part of this thesis, up to and including chapter 2, is the monography and creates the basis for the understanding of Mirei Shigemori’s work. Chapter 3 then introduces two of his key works, selected by a combination of factors such as their point of occurrence in Mirei Shigemori’s career, type or category of work and availability of information. Following this is an analysis of his design vocabulary, based on the image database of his original drawings. This is what chapter 4 mainly consists of, and its structure is inspired by Kandinsky’s *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche*, a book that Mirei Shigemori owned and that seems to best summarize his main roots. The design vocabulary is exemplified by selected images from the original database of Mirei Shigemori’s design drawings, as well as my own photographs, provided in part 2 of this thesis.

Chapter 5 then explores the relationship between that which I have previously written. It looks at the relationship between the key design elements found in Mirei Shigemori’s works and the influences described in chapter 2. This is where things come together. Here the essence of what he accomplished as an artist is contrasted and combined with the insights

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made by analyzing the influences on him. Chapter 6 then goes on to evaluate the contributions he made in the field of the Japanese garden, in Japan as well as abroad. As his chief area of activity was Japan, and in fact mainly the Kansai area\(^7\), that is where he had the biggest impact. But especially with his numerous books he was also able to have some influence outside of Japan’s boundaries.

The appendix has two parts and contains most of the things that were a direct basis for this thesis. In the first part I have collected in a glossary some of the most important Japanese words that the reader needs to know for the understanding of this subject. Here everything is explained that is not covered by a footnote or right in the text. I also thought it to be valuable for future studies of Mirei Shigemori, to pass on the very small collection of articles that I found on him. There is a list of eight contributions by other writers for some another opinions.

A list of Mirei Shigemori’s garden projects and book publications have been assembled from various sources and were constantly updated over the past four years of research. I am proud to say that this is now the most comprehensive list of his garden works in existence, and for the very first time in a language other that Japanese. The same is true for the list of his books.

As this is the first work in English on Mirei Shigemori, a lot of base material had to be gathered and translated from Japanese. Some of the key texts and articles are provided here for reference. Due to the large amount of text though not everything could be included.

Some of the “Kintaifu” texts, mainly written by Mirei Shigemori himself and published together with his 35-volume Japanese Garden History Survey (Nihon Teienshi Taikei), have been essential for this dissertation and are therefore included. One of the jewels among Mirei Shigemori’s writings is certainly his essay titled “Gardens and Me”. This text has greatly influenced my understanding of Mirei Shigemori’s work and informed me much about his values and way of thinking.

And finally there are the excerpts from Mirei Shigemori’s diary, which are a special insight into the everyday life of this great and very dynamic person. I was given permission to use eleven years of his most personal writing to further my understanding of his life in connection with specific projects. A small highlight that I discovered on the way was Mirei Shigemori’s encounter with the celebrated Isamu Noguchi and his resulting support for the UNESCO garden in Paris, a to this moment hardly-recognized fact. The passages that relate to their

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\(^7\) Refers to the larger Osaka area and includes other big cities like Kyōto and Köbe
meetings and complete the picture of Mirei Shigemori’s involvement in the Paris garden are included in the appendix 2, among other parts of the diary relevant to this work.

Following a few remarks on how I treated some spelling and other issues that come up when using Japanese names, addresses, further specific words and sources:

- **Original Japanese words (exp. kameshima):**
  Japanese words of general importance or with a connection the subject, are throughout the text shown in italics, as well as explained in the following glossary (Appendix 1)

- **Suffixes to people’s names (exp. Hatashita-kun):**
  People’s names in Japanese are often given endings indicating the relationship of the persons involved. For some the English language provides a good equivalent, for others not. In my translations from the Japanese language I have used the following scheme: Maeda-san became Mr. Maeda, and also Maegaki-shi turned into Mr. Maegaki, but then Murakami-sensei became Prof. Murakami. As there is no decent translation for the more casual “-kun” ending, I have kept it with the name in order not to lose the information regarding the relationship.

- **Suffixes to place names (exp. Saijô-chô, Kamo-gun, Hiroshima-ku):**
  “-ji” is usually added to a temples name, like Ryôan-ji and becomes part of the name when used in English; “-an” signifies a small house or a hut, like in Tenrai-an which is a name for a teahouse, also this becomes part of the name in English; “-tei” simply means garden and can therefore simply been translated as such. “-chô” means town or city; and “-gun” translates into county, “-ku” becomes ward; “-ken” and “-fu” both stand for prefecture, but the second one is only used for Kyôto-fu and Ôsaka-fu, otherwise it is Okayama-ken; “-to” indicates a metropolitan area and is only used for Tôkyo, the capital.

- **The long “oh” sound (exp. Kôno):**
  many words in Japanese contain a long “oh” sound, which in a text written in roman characters is usually indicated by “ou” or “ö”. For words regularly used in the English language, such as ikebana, sushi or Tôkyo, I have used the regular English spelling.
Chapter 2: Life, Work, Influences

The Early Years

Growing up in Okayama’s Countryside

When Mirei Shigemori was born on August 20th 1896 in Kayo-chô, Okayama Prefecture, this was still very much Japanese countryside (Image 201). His father Ganjirô Shigemori was a real estate dealer and traded in mountains and fields.8 His mother Tsuruno was busy entertaining the visitors from the city and doing the farm work. The family was relatively wealthy and had a fairly large house just outside the center of Yoshikawa. There three generations of Shigemoris lived together: Mirei with his parents, his four sisters, and the grandparents. The house had been planned by Mirei Shigemori’s father and was built in 1894, two years before he was born.

The person closest to him was his grandfather. Mirei says that, “he loved me very much throughout my childhood.” And it was that relationship with the grandfather that kept Mirei Shigemori in his hometown. Only when the grandfather died he was ready to leave and go to school in Tôkyo.

But even though his father was the respected head of the family and the one that often disciplined him, Mirei Shigemori valued his more practical skills: “My father also liked working as an architect, did carpentry work, and became good at carving and sculpting. As an amateur at around age thirty, he made Buddhist altars and household Shinto altars.”9 And eventually they even built a teahouse together. At that time Mirei Shigemori was about 18 years old and he remembers that, “My father was glad to choose and cut some good wood from his own mountains. I carried the fresh wood on my shoulder, all the six kilometers from the mountain to our house, and I remember that is was exasperatingly heavy.”10 (For more Details on this teahouse also refer to chapter 2, “Chado – The Way of Tea”)

8 In Kintaifu 22, “My Hometown”, page 1; translation by C.Tschumi in appendix 2.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
His First Garden

The garden at the house was also kind of a collaboration of father and son. Ganjirō Shigemori had left an area near the house open for a garden to be built. After the completion of the house, he started to collect stones from the nearby mountain. As the stones are usually seen as the most important part of a garden, this was a logical first step. At that time though Mirei Shigemori must have been too young to be of much help. And then the project of the garden was put on hold, until in 1907 a stone and earthen wall was built. This, at least in Japan, is usually the first step to really construct a garden. But still nobody was in a real hurry. Mirei Shigemori remarks on the process: “He [Ganjirō Shigemori] hired gardeners when he felt like working on his project, but that depended on his time schedule and mood. It took a long time.”\(^1\) So it wasn’t until 1913 or 1914 that Mirei and his father worked together on the waterfall stone setting (Image 202) and the steppingstones. He notes: “I was impressed how enthusiastically my father studied about the garden. Anyway, my father worked out the design [made a plan] and sometimes asked me for my opinion.”\(^2\) But even though he apparently had been asked for his opinion, he didn’t fully agree with the outcome. He comments on the waterfall stone setting: “I thought it could be changed a little and then look quite similar to the Daisen-in one.”\(^3\) So a little more than a year after his father passed away, he decided to renovate it and change that part of the garden. The work on the garden was officially completed in honor of Dr. Tadashi Sekino’s visit to Yoshikawa on January 2\(^{nd}\) 1925 (Image 203). Mirei Shigemori notes: “While he was enjoying my garden he said that it reminded him of Daisen-in in Kyōto.”\(^4\) The garden was named Shôrai-en.

Education

The National Art Academy in Tōkyō

As the oldest child and only son, Mirei Shigemori received the privilege to go to Tōkyō and study there. That was a rather expensive undertaking for his family at that time. Tōkyō was still very far away, time wise as well as in people’s minds. But Mirei Shigemori was

\(^1\) From Nihon Teienshi Zukan, Volume 21, page 43.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ibid., page 42; Daisen-in is a famous karesansui garden in Kyōto.
\(^4\) Ibid.

16
ready to leave his hometown. His grandfather, who had been his strongest emotional link to the place, had just passed away. And apparently his family had refused to give him permission to marry his sweetheart. So in 1917, at the age of 21 Mirei Shigemori moved to Tōkyō. We can easily imagine that it must have been quite a culture shock for a young man who had grown up in the remote countryside.

He enrolled in the Tōkyō Fine Arts School, where he studied nihonga. But even though he worked very hard to learn nihonga, he is not at all happy with his own works. He notes: “I realized that my paintings are very bad.” He had come to Tōkyō with a lot of self-confidence, thinking his painting skills were actually quite good. But as he was in a school surrounded by many similarly talented students, he started to get discouraged. Also many of the other students had been to a cram school prior to entering the university, so in his eyes they were more advanced. When he decided to approach his teacher with his worries, he was scolded for it but also received some good advice. His painting teacher, Professor Kii, responded: “Even though you say you are the worst painter, your paintings are the purest and they are even better than those of the others. The other student's paintings look good, because they all went to cram school. But these beautiful paintings [of the other students] are conventional and therefore not very interesting, they just look good in your eyes. For them it will take time to free themselves from those conventional stereotypes [of painting], but you came directly form being a farmer to study painting, so your work is pure and that is the best.”15 That response might have comforted him in the short-term, but it certainly didn’t eliminate his worries. He had realized that maybe his real talent was somewhere else, and so he started to become more interested in the history of art, aesthetics and philosophy. In 1919 he graduated from the undergraduate program at the Tōkyō Fine Arts School and continued into the graduate program at the same university. In the kenkyushitsu16 he was the only student though and did his research more or less independently.

**Studying Art History, Aesthetics and Philosophy**

Mirei Shigemori’s interests had definitely shifted away from nihonga. And as Tóyō University was offering classes in Indian philosophy, he decided to enter their program as

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16 Lit. a laboratory or study room, this is the core unit in the Japanese university system; in function comparable to the concept of a „Lehrstuhl“ at the European schools.
well. So for a while he was attending the lectures there in the morning and kept going to his kenkyushitsu at the Tōkyō Fine Arts School in the afternoon. “But then” he says, “classes started to be unsatisfying and I went to the library a lot.” And, “While I was doing that, I realized that to understand what art history and Japanese aesthetics are all about, I have to study the tea ceremony, the Japanese garden and ikebana. This is how I ended up devoting myself to these topics. So I often went to libraries and visited many scholars to talk with them [about these topics].”\(^{17}\) In 1920 he graduated from the Research department of the Tōkyō Fine Arts School.

This must have been an epiphany, a life-changing moment for Mirei Shigemori. Realizing that art history in general, and Japanese aesthetics specifically, where strongly related to some of the things he had been doing all along. At this point in his life he must have been practicing ikebana and tea for close to ten years. In fact, since coming to Tōkyō, he had even been teaching ikebana to other students. So many subjects he already knew started to make more sense, and come together because of his studies in art history. I have no doubt that this time of studying and talking to other scholars was a very fruitful moment in Mirei Shigemori’s life, and laid the basis for much of his later thinking. He himself notes that, “This is how I started to study gardens and how it became the most important thing in my life. But when I studied the art of the garden, investigating its beauty, it was very useful that before I had learned about painting, aesthetics, art history and philosophy. That turned out to be very important for me. What I had been doing before was not at all a waste of time.”\(^{18}\) And in the end it was this broad spectrum, this wide understanding of Japanese culture that allowed him to approach the modernization of the Japanese garden from a totally new point of view.

He also argues for a different way of studying gardens. To understand the inherent beauty of each garden, he says it is necessary for everybody to survey and research them thoroughly on site. It is important to understand why a garden is beautiful, where in the garden the beauty is to be found and what time period it was created in. And according to Mirei Shigemori this really can’t be taught, but only experienced. Of course this comment stems from his later experience of the work on the big garden survey. And if all this was not enough, he recommends to go and see the same garden several times, saying that a garden is not something one would understand in two or three visits. Of course he is right, as something as complex as a garden, changing over the course of a day as well as over the seasons, is never the same. His conclusion then is that even after experiencing all this, the only way to really

\(^{17}\) In Kintaifu 3, “Study Time”, page 1.

\(^{18}\) Ibid.
know gardens is to actually make them. Creating gardens is the best way of learning about them. Everybody who ever made a garden knows how true this is.

The ‘University of Culture’- Project

Mirei Shigemori’s view of art within the larger culture was a very integrative one. His studies had shown him that there were many common inter-related roots within the arts. But in his own education the subjects of his study had all been segregated. So he felt that these subjects should be taught together in one single place. Building on this experience he wanted to found his own university. The ideal image he had of his school was not that of an ordinary university, but a place to study all aspects of culture in an integrated way.

The name of the University was supposed to be Bunka Daigakuin (University of Culture). But because he didn’t have enough money, he contacted the Yasuda zaibatsu to ask for support. Somebody must have introduced him there, as it would be difficult to just go to such a powerful family and knock on the door. Also he was just 26 years old at the time. Apparently Mr. Yasuda hesitated to approve his request immediately and wanted to see how the project would further take shape. As a trial Mirei Shigemori then started a long distance education program with the name Bunka Daigakuin. He knew how to organize long distance education, as he himself had taken such classes. Also he edited a booklet called Gendai Bunka Shichô (Trends in Modern Culture) as a textbook for the program. It was mailed out to all the subscribing students on a monthly basis. This was how his long distance education program started. Apparently every topic’s title contained the word gendai (modern). For example Trends in Modern Society and Trends in Modern Economics and so on. The topics were as diverse as education, romance, literature, art, aesthetics and drama. And the teachers were among the best, many of them from the prestigious Tōkyo University. Mirei Shigemori himself was in charge of all the art courses. He did that for one year and then brought the 12 lecture course book to Mr. Yasuda, who recognized the effort and decided to support the project. Then an advertisement in the newspaper was to officially announce the establishment of Bunka Daigakuin. Everything was ready to get started, and Mirei Shigemori was on the way to Mr. Yasuda to show his gratitude, when the big Kantō earthquake hit. As he could neither go to Mr. Yasuda’s house nor return his own home, he decided to take a Chūō-line train and return via Nagano to his hometown in Okayama prefecture, still wearing the hakama.
If the earthquake wouldn’t have occurred, Mirei Shigemori would have established the Bunka Daigakuin and become its principal.

Return to His Hometown

So Mirei Shigemori’s time in Tokyo came to a sudden and unexpected end on that September 1st in 1923, the day the great Kantō earthquake struck. And given that his wife and his first son had already gone to his hometown earlier to escape Tokyo’s summer heat, he naturally followed them there. At that time he probably didn't imagine that he would end up staying in Yoshikawa for the next six years.

According to Tanaka Hisao, thereafter Mirei Shigemori absorbed himself in his studies while enjoying farming in the countryside. He continued to read philosophical books and even locally taught a class on this topic. It is a time that neither Mirei Shigemori nor anybody close to him wrote much about. So we have few records for this period of his life. But there are a few things we know.

This was the time when Mirei Shigemori started his efforts to protect the local shrine at Yoshikawa. Coming back from Tokyo, his studies in art history must have made it clear to him what an extraordinary structure the local shrine was. He decided to ask the village mayor to make efforts for a formal protection of the shrine as a national monument. But when the mayor returned empty handed from a meeting with the prefecture government, Mirei Shigemori realized he needed to try other ways to reach his goal.

The efforts eventually lead to the visit of Dr. Tadashi Sekino. For this important visit Mirei Shigemori finally finished his own garden, which he had started together with his father more than ten years ago. And his efforts did pay off: the Yoshikawa Hachimangu shrine was officially registered as a national treasure, much to Mirei Shigemori’s credit.

Soon after he had finished his own garden, he made another one at his friend Iga’s house. And then Mr. Nishitani, the village mayor, asked Mirei Shigemori to make a garden at his house. In hindsight we can see these months, late in 1924 as the start of Mirei Shigemori’s career as a garden maker, a career that would occupy him for much of the next 50 years.

But eventually Mirei Shigemori became tired of the easygoing life of a part-time farmer and his desire to move back to Tokyo grew strong again.

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Changing his Name

Around the time when Mirei Shigemori was working on his first gardens, he must have decided that his old name did not suit a soon-to-be artist. When he was born his parents had actually named him Kazuo (計夫), a very common name in the rural towns of Japan at the time. But it seems to have been too common and ordinary for somebody like Kazuo Shigemori, so eventually at the age of 29 he decided to have it changed. On May 6th, 1925 he went to the town hall in Yoshikawa and applied for a change of name from Kazuo to Mirei (三玲). The mayor approved his request within a week by May 13th. 20

The inspiration for his new name came from the French painter Jean-Francois Millet (1814-1875), who’s work he must have learned about in school. The naturalism of Jean-Francois Millet is to this day very popular in Japan. But then Millet’s work never really matched Mirei Shigemori’s preference for abstract art, such as Kandinsky’s or Monet’s.

It is also an interesting detail that he took Millet’s family name, not first name, and turned it into his new first name. And the correct pronunciation of the two characters is “mi-re”, so the sound is close but not exactly the same.

Since a kanji character often has several possible pronunciations, the first one is sometimes mistakenly read as “san”, since the first kanji is the same as the one for the number three. So here and there we find a reference to Sanrei Shigemori instead of Mirei Shigemori.

Moving to Kyôto

In 1929 Mirei Shigemori decided that country life was not for him. He wanted to move back to Tôkyo, together with his wife and two sons of age three and seven. The story goes that they actually boarded a train in Okayama city that was bound for Tôkyo. And apparently while in the train Mirei decided that he would like to spend a little more time in Kyôto at first. So they got off the train there, not yet knowing that this is where they would spend the rest of their lives. The family eventually settled into a house at 45 Shimo Oji-chô in the Sakyô-ku ward, in the northeastern part of Kyôto city. During this time Mirei Shigemori had no real job. He started his career as a scholar and was studying and writing a lot. His wife was responsible for supporting the family.

20 From the “Mirei Shigemori Family Register (Koseki)”, see appendix 2 for complete version.
The Scholar and Writer

Mirei Shigemori was as dedicated to writing about gardens as he was to actually building them. His body of written works is so extensive that compiling a complete list is a substantial effort. The appendix 1 of this work contains a detailed catalogue of all his books. Many of the original manuscripts were found in the family kura (Image 240).

The following is an overview of the many books he wrote, organized by subject:

Table 1: The 81 books written by Mirei Shigemori shown by areas of interest.

His first written work was not about the garden though, but rather about ikebana. In 1919 Mirei Shigemori had met Ryōsaku Hiramoto who at that time was the publisher of the ikebana magazine Kadô. Hiramoto was eager to publish Shigemori’s innovative ideas and asked him for a contribution. The first essay was published in the April issue of Kadô in 1919, and after that Mirei Shigemori became a regular contributor to the magazine. At this point he was only 22 years old.

His first contributions to a book were his essays for the Gendai Bunka Shichô (Trends in Modern Culture), which served as a textbook for the trial run for the long distance education program of the Bunka Daigakuin (University of Culture). The titles of his texts were “Lecture on the Trend of Thought on Art”, “Lecture on the Trend of Thought on Philosophy” and “Outline of the Aesthetics of Flower Arrangement”, giving us a good idea about the range of his interests and area of competence at the time.
The great Kantō earthquake and his consequent move back to Yoshikawa, caused a break of several years in his writing. Only after he moved to Kyōto did he resume it.

Mirei Shigemori began his impressive body of written work with a very unusual piece. In 1930, one year after he moved to Kyōto, he published the *Japanese History of the Unification of Opposites* with Tōshinkaku Shobō Company in Kyōto. There is absolutely no connection with the garden, as it is basically a book about his understanding of sex. In the foreword he states his intention: “The new word ‘Bo-in’ (lit. unification of opposites) that I created, not like motherhood simply a thing that only woman deal with, but means the mother as the god that creates our universe. After all it is in the mother’s body were we human beings are created. Needless to say that it is done with the organs of both man and woman, like in nature, simple and precise, as something holy, the act of true sexual intercourse brings creation to the mother’s body.”21 Reading this it reminds one a lot of the Tôban Matsuri and the offerings made to the gods in the hakke (Image 282; for more information see also the chapter “The Yoshikawa Hachimangu Tôban Matsuri”). These impressions from his recent six-year stay in his hometown Yoshikawa must still have been fresh in his mind. It resembles a pure take on creation as the origin of life. It seems that this small volume is a product of his readings in philosophy and his study of Shinto. At that time he was very interested in the origin of things and the origin of creation. The book was a commercial success and sold so well that a year later a second edition was released.

Then the next big writing project was the *Complete Works of Japanese Flower Arrangement Art*, a nine-volume book that he started in 1930 and that keeps him busy for more than two years. It was basically a book on the history of flower arrangement, written by using old *ikebana* books as empirical proof. He published it all by himself under the name Kadô Bijutsu Kenseikai. It was produced in two cloth-lined boxes: a first set of six and second of three volumes. In volume six of the first set, work number 149 is by the author himself. It is titled “Exploration” and appears in the section labeled “contemporary”, together with a rather critical essay. The artwork is credited to Mirei Shigemori and it says its creator is from the Bunka Daigakuin (University of Culture). So even nine years after the earthquake had ruined his plan of founding that university, he was still using the name.

It would fill the entire thesis to discuss all 81 books in detail, but his first book on gardens is certainly another key work and deserves some attention. It is interesting that it had not been

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21 Citation from: *Japanese History of the Unification of Opposites*, Kyōto: Tōshinkaku Shobō, 1930.
his idea to write a book on this topic. It was in fact Mr. Nakano who asked him to write it. Masataro Kawagatsu writes about the circumstances: “While Mr. Nakano planned the publishing of the 12 volume *Overview of Art in Kyôto*, he chose Tôkyo’s Tôhô Shoin as the publisher. The first volume was Mr. Shigemori’s *Teien* book, published in April of 1933. It is the first book to collect several dozen of Kyôto’s old gardens. [...] Mr. Nakano was busy taking pictures for this *Overview of Art*, while Mr. Shigemori was in charge of editorial matters. It was thanks to Shigemori that Nakano’s book could be completed.” While working on this project Mirei Shigemori went to visit over 100 gardens in and around Kyôto. It was the start of what later would become an even bigger project, the 26-volume *Illustrated Book on the History of the Japanese Garden (Nihon Teienshi Zukan)*.

For his research Mirei Shigemori also collected a lot of books and data. So much that his studio of four and a half tatami, about nine square meters in size, was completely full. He notes: “When I enter my studio, there is no place to put my feet and there also is no space for a guest to sit down.” And the walls of the room were covered with shelves full of reference books, so no light could enter the room through the shôji behind them. Even though it would have otherwise been quite a bright room, he says “I can’t write on my manuscript unless I use a lamp, even at noon.” In the same paragraph he suggests that part of the reason for this situation was that he didn’t employ a secretary or assistant that would tidy the space up. But then it seems he in fact liked the chaos around him and that in his eyes it might have been more a creative mess. “The strange thing is, that in this big messy mountain of books, there is enough order for me to find anything. I generally know where in that spread out mess the necessary things are to be found, and where in a specific book a reference is located. The mess is an ordered mess.” And he goes on and compares it to a painter’s studio, where a bigger mess of brushes, pots and canvases would suggest a more creative artist. But then he admits that a nicely cleaned shoin and guestroom were also something he much appreciated.

Writing was something that Mirei Shigemori enjoyed a lot, and when he was working on a certain manuscript he wanted to spend every minute of his time on it. Many people say that he was a fast writer, but according to him, “… it is not so much the [writing] speed I think, as it

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22 Mr. Sokei Nakano was the owner of the Nakano Art Studio, a little west of the intersection of Marutamachi and Karasuma Street in Kyôto, and a pioneer in photography as well as the first president of Kyôto Rinsen Kyokai.


24 From his last essay, in *Kintaifu* 32, page 1; translation by C. Tschumi in appendix 2.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

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24
is working hard every moment.” He would spend entire days from sunrise to sunset in his studio, only leaving to have his meals in the kitchen. Mirei Shigemori took his writing indeed very seriously and made every effort to meet a deadline for a manuscript. And he made it a habit not to snack in between meals either. To relieve the stress he instead took to cigarettes and defends it as follows: “However instead I have the bad habit of smoking a lot of cigarettes. Sometimes I tried to stop smoking but couldn’t do so. I can’t drink sake or anything else that contains alcohol, and sweets or the like I usually don’t eat either. But tobacco is my only fancy, and since I think that is okay, I continue it to this very day. Everybody tends to live with his good and bad sides. I don’t think I can become a saint anyway.” Mirei Shigemori was a chain-smoker and eventually died from cancer. But who would want to take his only fancy away?

Mirei Shigemori did plan some escapes from his writing, probably on the search for new thoughts and inspiration. His friend Masatarō Kawakatsu notes to this regard: “While I was writing Mr. Shigemori often came to my house with the excuse that he needed to remind me about a manuscript. As I had expected his coming, I stopped writing and we talked for about half a day. We couldn’t stop talking about art, history and many other topics. Mr. Shigemori returned home saying he didn’t know if he came to remind me of the manuscript or to keep me from writing. But we had a good time.” Masatarō Kawakatsu was 10 years younger than Mirei Shigemori, but they considered each other friends and were also connected through Kyōto Rinsen Kyokai where Kawakatsu was in charge of issues related to stone art in the garden.

The Big Survey of All Gardens in Japan

The Illustrated Book on the History of the Japanese Garden (in Japanese: Nihon Teienshi Zukan) is certainly one of Mirei Shigemori’s biggest contributions. It was the first time in the history of Japan that somebody went out and surveyed the gardens all over the country. The resulting work captures the state of the Japanese garden in a unique moment in time, it is a time capsule of sorts, and a great resource for the study of gardens.

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27 Ibid., page 2.
28 Ibid.
It all started when on September 21st in 1934, the Muroto typhoon hit Kyōto and severely damaged many historical gardens. This left a big impression on Mirei Shigemori and got him thinking. How could these gardens be restored with hardly any records available for consultation regarding their previous state? Again he approached the government, this time the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture and suggested to have a survey of all historic gardens made. But again he was unsuccessful in getting the government to do something he deemed important. So as nothing had happened by early 1935, he decided that if nobody else was going to do this survey, he would go ahead and do it. After all, another typhoon could hit Japan anytime. This must have also been the time when he became increasingly opposed to bureaucratic red tape and his desire for independence from the governmental system started to grow stronger.

As Masatarô Kawagatsu writes further along in the previously mentioned essay: “After that Mr. Shigemori began his biggest writing project, the *Nihon Teienshi Zukan*. For some years he continued to travel all over the country on his research trips. On these excursions he brought several assistants for surveying and taking pictures and so on, while his wife was at home in charge of making a living, which made the trip very difficult for him.” He visited almost 250 gardens all over Japan, surveyed them, took pictures, made sketches and checked their documentary records. Parts of the diary from the time when he did this survey are provided under appendix 2, Excerpts from the Diary: “The Big Survey: 1936”.

The core survey team consisted of Mr. Hayajiri, Mr. Nabeshima, Mr. Shimizu and Mirei Shigemori. Mr. Hayajiri did most of the sketches, but was in busy times supported by Mr. Shimokawa and Mr. Asano. Then Mr. Nabeshima worked hard to draw many of the plans, but he often became too busy to draw all of them by himself, in which case Mr. Fukui and Mr. Kawasaki joined in and he helped. Mr. Shimizu and Mirei Shigemori did a lot of the surveying and the photography. Two infrequent helpers were Mr. Kobayashi and Mr. Sasamoto who helped, for example, with the survey of the Urasenke tea garden in Kyōto. Mirei Shigemori documented their surveying method in a small sketch (Image 243).

On May 15th 1937, when he went to take photos of Entoku-in in Kyōto’s Higashiyama ward, Mirei Shigemori even got help from Mr. Shigeru Kobayashi from Okasa and the employees of the Kataoka Photo Shop. Or then on May 23rd he went to the western part of Kyōto and took photos of Matsuo Taisha, together with Mr. Shimizu, Mr. Kobayashi and Mr.

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30 Ibid.
31 From Excerpts from the Diary: “The Big Survey”: 1936, May 15th; see also appendix 2.

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Sasamoto. So even though everybody had his specialty, the teams were somewhat flexible, depending on who was available and how fast something needed to be accomplished.

The kura at the Shigemori residence actually contained the camera used on this survey project, still nicely wrapped in a velvet cloth (Image 241). Mirei Shigemori had bought it on March 21st in 1934 for ¥38 in downtown Kyōto, that is about ¥21’690 in today’s currency. It is a wooden travel camera from the F24 series made by Tessar in 1903, which means he must have bought it used considering the cheap price and the year it was made in. Unfortunately the wide-angle lens that he had bought with it was missing, but the wooden plate holder for the glass-plates was there. It accomodated two 16.5 x 12.5 centimeter glass-plates, one on each side. Along with the camera several hundred glass negatives were stored in the kura, all in boxes of ten and many of them made by Agfa or Fuji (Image 242). The fact that the negatives needed to be carried around in wooden holders, means that this was all rather heavy equipment to travel with. The developing was then done in a photo shop and it was usually Mr. Shimizu who dropped the negatives off and picked the photos up when they were ready. The publisher requested nakaban or yatsugiri size prints for the books.33

Another remarkable thing stored in the kura was the actual survey plans (Image 244). The paper itself is glued together from many small and often irregularly shaped pieces of different kinds of paper. I am not certain why it is like this, but considering the financial situation of this undertaking, it was probably just more economical to do it this way than to buy big sheets of paper in a store. The plan-information is then drawn in pencil and looks actually quite sharp and precise. Most of the drawings have at some point been folded, it seems. Back in Kyōto the drawings were always redrawn, respectively traced through onto tracing paper. For this step black ink was used. So in the end every single plan required dozens if not hundreds of hours of work. His friend Masatarō Kawagatsu confirms that: “When he moved to Shimoōji-chō, which is near by Yoshida Kagurasaka, I often visited his house and I could hear and see the hard work it took to progress with the Zukan.”34

According to his grandson, Mirei Shigemori could also read original Chinese texts and copied much information from temple records in shorthand writing. These he then filed in his study and used them for quotes in his books. Obviously the copy machine had not made its way into every temple’s office yet. All in all it became quite a substantial project. In his last

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32 Ibid., May 23rd.
33 Size of the prints: nakaban: 10.5 x 15 centimeter, yatsugiri: 15.2 x 20 centimeter; see also appendix 2, Excerpts from the Diary: “The Big Survey: 1936”, May 13th.
34 In Kintaifu 29, “Shigemori Mirei’s Personality and Achievement”, page 7.
Mirei Shigemori states in regard to the *Nihon Teienshi Zukan*: "I prepared a manuscript of more than 8000 pages for the chronological table and the text on the gardens. Also I collected a lot of books and other data, and even to this day I have not been able to look through all of it, and so there is still a lot I have to read through." No wonder it took him close to four years to publish all those 26 volumes with Yûkô-sha, a publisher based in Tôkyo. Following is a table that shows all the books in the order they were published:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publishing order</th>
<th>Time period that the volume covers</th>
<th>No. of Gardens</th>
<th>Date of publication</th>
<th>Vol. No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Momoyama period (2)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6/22/1936</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Early Edo period (1)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8/18/1936</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Meiji, Taishô and Shôwa period (3)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10/3/1936</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mid Edo period (1)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/18/1936</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Early Edo period (4)</td>
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<td>12/25/1936</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Late Edo period (1)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2/23/1937</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Meiji, Taishô and Shôwa period (1)</td>
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<td>4/10/1937</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Muromachi period (1)</td>
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<td>7/23/1937</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Muromachi period (2)</td>
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<td>8/23/1937</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Early Edo period (2)</td>
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<td>9/20/1937</td>
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<td>Meiji, Taishô and Shôwa period (2)</td>
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<td>Mid Edo period (3)</td>
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<td>Early Edo period (5)</td>
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<td>12/25/1937</td>
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<td>1/30/1938</td>
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<td>Mid Edo period (4)</td>
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<td>Kamakura, Yoshino period (2)</td>
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<td>5/25/1938</td>
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<td>Kamakura, Yoshino period (1)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7/20/1938</td>
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<td>Early Edo period (supplement 1)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8/20/1938</td>
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35 From his last essay, in *Kintaifu 32*, page 1.
The survey was the most comprehensive that had been done so far in Japan on this subject. A total of 26 books containing 242 gardens. Each book covers between 4 and 13 gardens. Then each garden is described in its own chapter, containing information regarding history, style, technique and appreciation. Furthermore sketches, plans and photographs were provided for illustration. It was very systematic, chronologically organized and all referenced in the index volume.

The books were published at an average pace of almost one per month, a quite impressive speed. When he began the survey in 1936, Mirei Shigemori was able to finish five volumes until the end of that year. Then in 1937 he completed a total of eleven volumes, the most productive year in his work on the *Nihon Teienshi Zukan*. But by the end of 1937 Mirei Shigemori had completely exhausted his funds and was at the point that he would have to stop the work on the survey, when Mr. Usaburō Yomo from Kyoto sponsored the project with ¥1'000 (about ¥570'000 in today's money), and by doing so made it possible for the *Nihon Teienshi Zukan* to be finished.36 So in 1938 nine more books could be published and then there was only the index book with the chronological table left, which came out early the next year. And when the books finally were all published, Mirei Shigemori was understandably very proud and presented them together with a stone setting (see Image 245).

There is no comparable publication in the field of garden history in Japan, as other books usually cover a few dozens gardens at best. And the wealth of illustrations, especially the plans, make the *Nihon Teienshi Zukan* immensly valuable. It has become the reference book for the Japanese garden and made its way into all the universities and many private libraries. So far nobody has produced anything nearly as extensive and it was only Mirei Shigemori himself who could outdo his own work. Thirty-three years later, just three years before his

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36 Mr. Usaburō Yomo was a client and Mirei Shigemori's had just worked on the garden at his second house in Nagaokakyō, Kyōto Prefecture, from 1934 to 1936.
death, he decided to update and republish the historical survey. This time Mirei Shigemori produced 35 volumes together with his son Kanto and called them the *Nihon Teienshi Taikei*.

Much like the earthquake, the typhoon had changed Mirei Shigemori’s life again quite dramatically. And also this time the effect of the natural disaster was in the end not a bad one, at least from an outsider’s point of view. It influenced his further career dramatically in that it created a very unique basis for his further creative work. Nishizawa Fumitaka puts in the right words when he says: “This experience comes to life in his technique of arranging rocks. To painstakingly survey actual gardens is equivalent to being taught by his predecessors.”

Looked at it that way, Mirei Shigemori was lucky to have a lot of good teachers.

And it is needless to say that this all would hardly have been possible without the amazing support of his wife, Reiko-san. While he was all over the country surveying gardens, she ran a boarding house and a store to make some money to cover their daily needs. It was a time of serious economical hardship for everybody in the family.

But there is also some criticism to be heard here and there, mainly behind the scenes. Some people point out that the survey plans are not always one hundred percent correct and others say that Mirei Shigemori misinterpreted some of the documentary records that he used as a base. And most likely for both points some evidence can be found. But in the end everybody is impressed and acknowledges the sheer amount of data that Mirei Shigemori and his helpers collected. With that in mind, and considering the relatively short amount of time it took to complete this big project, a few shortcomings are inevitable.

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**Ikebana**

**A Lifelong Passion**

Ikebana is probably the thing that Mirei Shigemori cared most about in his life, besides making gardens of course. Every morning he went to get some branches and flowers to decorate the various *tokonomas* in the house with them. And he started quite early with it: “Since the time I was 15 or 16 years old I learned Fumai-style tea and Ikenobo-style flower arrangement.”

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Mirei Shigemori’s father and his uncle did ikebana in the Yôshin-style and his mother’s older brother did ikebana in the Senkei-style. This all left a strong impression on him in his childhood. So he came to think that he himself should try to learn it. Accidentally, a widow who had just moved back from Kure city, was teaching flower arrangement and tea ceremony in a neighboring village. So with five or six friends from elementary school he went to learn flower arrangement there. She belonged to the Ikenobo school.

After moving to Tôkyo he started to teach ikebana right away. But while doing that he himself continued to study under Mr. Kawabata from the Ryûsei school. So he had students and he was a student at the same time. Later though he was more involved with the Ikenobo school, which to this day is the most progressive, diverse and internationally minded one.

Not surprisingly Mirei Shigemori had his own particular take on doing ikebana. He hated the hobbyist approach often symbolized by the ‘waterfall-coming-out-of-the-mountain-gorge’ -style, and disliked the idea of ikebana as a pastime for the masses. He said, “First, we have to dismantle the old methods in a positive way, and put the emphasis on taking a genuinely new position in kadô. Secondly,” he insists, “that while respecting the individual style of every artist, we should dismantle all the kadô styles. The reform of Japanese kadô should then come from the artists themselves.” Mirei Shigemori was an intellectual, claimed the establishment of the individual within the context of the rapidly changing art scene as well as all of society, and was opposed to traditional ikebana.

The so-called iemoto system was for Mirei Shigemori at the center of the problem. He claimed that, “Once people learn a style, that is when they go to hell [that is what kills art]!” Mirei Shigemori strongly resisted these traditional styles. He founded his own school and even eventually become a master himself. He believed that it was necessary to break out of the iemoto system because it was the enemy of art.

But then what was Mirei Shigemori’s own style? With the start of the Shôwa period (from 1925) nageirebana and moribana began to develop, two new and distinct styles that carried the taste of the new times. But for Mirei Shigemori they were still too much rooted in naturalism. He called for a surrealist development in ikebana. “By destroying nature, and not just physically, we must establish art. The lines and colors of art must be guided by pure

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39 In Hôjô Akinao, History of Ikebana People, page 152.
40 Hierarchical school system with many patterns that is dominated by a family and its head for many generations and is know for a certain style or way of doing things
41 In Hôjô Akinao, History of Ikebana People, page 153.
creativity." Here his education as a painter, his deep interest in art history and even his extensive philosophical readings are clearly evident. This broad background gave him quite a different view of ikebana and allowed him to break out of the established styles. In the previously cited essay, Mirei Shigemori sums-up his basic approach to ikebana as follows: “It is true that in the art of flower arrangement the most important thing is to bring nature to life. But this doesn't necessarily mean to bring it alive in a realistic way. Bringing nature to life means to translate it inside myself. And in order to make it a thing of myself, all or part of nature has to be transformed: Transformed from the field of nature to the field of art, emphasizing the distinction between nature and art. To bring nature to life, the lines and colors of nature are made into the lines and colors of art.”

Eventually Mirei Shigemori completely turned away from the 19th century naturalism of the European art world to the modernism of the 20th century. He then devoted himself deeply to surrealism. Hôjô Akinao points out another reason that might have fostered this development: “Usually Shigemori hated to be called sensei, as he had a deep-rooted defiant attitude towards authority. So we can easily imagine that Dadaism, and Surrealism [...] were fascinating and fresh for him as they carried a certain anarchistic character. Dadaism, introduced to Japan from Europe after WWI, denied existing authority and discipline, and had reached acceptance in the world of literature and art at the time.”

In whatever Mirei Shigemori did he was trying to be at the forefront of the development, always looking for the new and exciting, and that was no different in ikebana.

The New Ikebana Declaration

Knowing Mirei Shigemori’s position in the field of ikebana, it is no surprise that he was instrumental in the development and writing of the famous New Ikebana Declaration. Already in 1930 Mirei Shigemori established contact with Teshigahara Sôfû and Nakayama Bunpo, and they eventually founded a group called the New Ikebana Association. Mirei Shigemori, the main promoter, argued that just as the Futurists and the Cubists had done in their respective field, they should start a new movement in Japanese ikebana. Teshigahara Sôfû,

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43 Ibid.
44 In Hôjô Akinao, History of Ikebana People, page 156.
who later became a famous artist in his own right, was four years younger than Mirei Shigemori. Apparently during that time he often visited Kyōto, studied some of the ikebana classics under Mirei Shigemori and together they discussed how this art should develop.

According to Mirei Shigemori’s diary the New Ikebana Declaration was then drafted in 1933. As it is a unique text that almost perfectly reflects Mirei Shigemori’s attitude towards art, it is here quoted in full length:

“Declaration

New ikebana rejects nostalgic feelings.
We can't find a vivid world in anything nostalgic [anything that looks back on the past].
There is nothing but calmly sleeping beauty in the nostalgic world.
New ikebana rejects formal fixation [a fixed idea of form]. Creation always brings forth a fresh form. Fixed form is like a gravestone.
New ikebana rejects the concept of moral principles. Ikebana is neither a religious lecture, nor a created moral story. If anything it is art.
New ikebana rejects botanic limits. Ikebana as an art is absolutely not about a plant sample or botanical teaching materials. Plants are the only and most important materials.
New ikebana uses the flower vase freely. We accept no limits regarding the flower vase and use it unrestricted. Either we can make it minutely by our own hands, or we must cooperate with a good vase maker [to make the vase]. The vase also has to follow our new spirit; we must give a new life to old things and make them alive. New ikebana is under constant development; it doesn’t have a standard form. It is changing towards the lifestyle of our time, but always tied to an artistic conscience. It is neither a traditional old pastime, nor is it a metaphysical existence departing from life. If we take the biased viewpoint and blind obedience of conventional ikebana, our work would indeed be a different one. The new spirit will be expressed by a completely new appearance. “

A lot of this thinking we will find later in Mirei Shigemori’s approach to the garden. It is rooted in the Modernism of the Taishō period, advocating an art that was adjusting to a new way of life.

Chado – The Way of Tea

The word tea in this context refers to a green and very foamy drink that the Japanese call *macha*. It is made from the pulverized leaves of the tea plant and hot water. But more important than these rather simple ingredients, is the entire procedure surrounding the making of this beverage. And this is probably the reason why in the west it is often referred to as tea ceremony.

Although the tea culture had originally been imported from China, the Japanese heavily altered it over time, and it is Murata Shuko (1422-1502) who is usually credited with founding the simple style of preparing and drinking green tea as we know it today. Famous to this day are the tea masters Sen Rikyū (1522-1591), Furuta Oribe (1543-1615) and Kobori Enshū (1579-1647), all of whom Mirei Shigemori greatly admired. It was in the person of Kobori Enshū though, who was also well regarded as a garden maker in his time, that Mirei Shigemori saw the highest creative qualities united and therefore praised him highly.

Regarding his own career in tea Mirei Shigemori writes: “Since the time I was 15 or 16 years old I learned Fumai-style tea and Ikenobo-style flower arrangement.” His teacher, Mrs. Aizawa who lived in the next village just down the road, taught him the basic techniques of the tea ceremony. And on the side he did a lot of tea related reading by himself. “Doing tea I really wanted my own tearoom, so at the age of 18 years I designed one. Still being so young it was almost reckless of me to design my own tearoom. I went to Okayama and bought two or three used books and, referring to those, I designed the tearoom. Thinking about this now, the meaning of my recklessness was related to creation.” He built this teahouse at the age of 18 years with the help of his talented father. “I named this teahouse Tenrai-an. My family’s house was old, set within a thick growth of pine trees (Pinus sp.), Japanese cypresses (Cryptomeria japonica), chinquapin trees (Castanopsis cuspidata), camphor trees (Cinnamomum camphora) and others. It reminded me of the woods around a Shinto shrine. Usually the sound of the wind was very strong, and that is where the name Tenrai came from. Tenrai is the sound the wind makes when in blows through the trees. I

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46 The botanical name for this plant is *Camellia sinensis* (formerly also *Thea sinensis*, *Camellia thea*); it is native to China and the Himalayas, is evergreen and grows to a height of about 1m. In Japan it is mainly cultivated in the Uji area south of Kyōto as well as in the Shizuoka prefecture.

47 All are mentioned in *Kintaifu* 5, “On Tea Ceremony and the Garden”, page 1; translation by C. Tschumi in appendix 2.


49 Ibid.
gave it this poetic name, thinking that this would be inspiring. The tearoom is 4 and a half tatamis in size, has three tokonomas in shin, gyô and sô style, and a specially designed shelf. Doing that, I had been stimulated by an old plan of a tearoom by Kamiya Sôtan. When the tearoom was completed, my father gave me some inexpensive tools to practice tea. For the first tea in the new tearoom, my father prepared the tools and we invited my tea teacher, my uncle and my tea friends (tea group). In Shôwa 44 (1969) I donated Tenrai-an to my hometown Kayo-chô.”

Tea as a Way of Life

For Mirei Shigemori tea and the culture around it was more than just a hobby. He devoted such a tremendous amount of time and money to it, that we could rightfully call it a passion.

His children remember that Mirei Shigemori made a bowl of tea for each of them in the morning. Followers and clients alike often mention how he made tea for everybody on a construction site, always carrying his chabako set with him.

Mirei Shigemori’s hatsugama parties, remain legendary in Kyôto. He invited the entire local elite, sometimes 200 to 300 people to his house! Even the head priests of Kyôto’s biggest temples would give him the honor of their presence. Elaborate food was served and only the best tea available. He chose the utensils according to the year’s theme and went to great trouble to borrow famous scrolls from local temples for decoration. And of course there were some twists and surprises. After all it was not only an opportunity to show-off his great collection of valuable utensils, but also an important moment to assert social relationships and promote his image as a true innovator based on tradition and art.

Needless to say this was all very expensive! And much to the discontent of his wife, Mirei Shigemori would often go shopping for expensive tea utensils on the way home, sometimes spending all the money he had just received from a client for his work. By the end of his life he had amassed a great collection of very valuable items. In the previously cited article titled “My Hometown”, Mirei Shigemori gives a good account of the situation and the utensils used: “Recently I returned home for the festival and I brought with me a bag with some tea

50 In Kintaifu 22, “My Hometown”, page 2.
51 A portable set of tea utensils in a special box, used for travel and other outings.
52 The first tea event of a new year, usually held in the second half of January.
tools in it. Then in Tenrai-an we had an enjoyable tea gathering. The tea tools I had brought were:

- For the tokonoma: Nenjioki Sunawachi Busso, Daitoku-ji's priest Seigan's calligraphy
- Incense container: Kôrin-style maple and dear design, round shaped
- Vase: by Kanashige Tôyu, Hidasuki-style (fired while wrapped with a cord), small mouth
- Flower: small yellow and red Chrysanthemum (Hôshinka)
- Kettle: Tenrai-an Shôshi Koshiki-mouth kettle (donation from the town)
- Container for tea: Sôtatsu-style makie, heaven maple, wide bottom
- Tea scoop: made by Furuta Oribe and container signed by Gensô
- Tea: Kinrin (golden wheel), packed by Uji Koyama
- Main tea bowl: made by Kensan, black cylinder-shape crane written drop design
- Second tea bowl: painted by Mirei Shigemori, fall maple design, fired at Kiyomizu
- Third tea bowl: painted by Mirei Shigemori (inspired by the Hachimangu crest)
- Sweet plate: painted by Mirei Shigemori, scattered Tomoe design

It is interesting to note that Mirei Shigemori owned an approximately 350 years old bamboo tea scoop by Furuta Oribe. Definitely something out of the ordinary and worth a fortune in Japan. The calligraphy from Daitoku-ji's priest Seigan proves the great connections he had to that powerful Kyôto temple. And he was not too shy to mix all this with some of his own pottery work and added two tea bowls of his own making.

And after all this it is no surprise that Reiko, Mirei Shigemori's wife, was also a licensed tea teacher. She taught Urasenke style, and that is incidentally how followers like Iwamoto Toshio found their way to Mirei Shigemori.

Now why is all this so important for the garden? In Mirei Shigemori's world it all connects via aesthetics; or simply the sense of beauty: “I would say that people who try to do research on the garden have to very seriously study the way of tea. From the mizusashi (water pot) to chawan (tea bowl) and chashaku (teaspoon), the best things they have should be displayed in their tearoom. The tearoom is a sanctuary of beauty. So to drink tea is to drink this beauty that is represented in the completely dissolved drink. In an exaggerated way, I could say that to drink a bowl of tea is to drink the universe. Tea is the best way to cultivate one's mind.”

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54 From an interview titled „Gardens and Me”, see page 4; full transcript in appendix 2.
Calligraphy

Mirei Shigemori practiced Calligraphy all throughout his life. His grandfather was apparently good at Samurai-style calligraphy55, and this must have been his first contact with this art during his childhood in Yoshikawa.

His love for the kanji characters, the Japanese writing taken over from the Chinese, was such that he studied them to the extent of being able to read original Chinese texts. That was especially useful when he needed to read a temple’s ancient records and manuscripts written in old Chinese.

Calligraphy was for him an integral part of Japanese culture and was connected to tea as well as the garden. The use of characters or kanjis on garden-fences seems to be an extension of this fondness for calligraphy. And also the use of a kanji’s shape for the layout of a karesansui garden56 could be connected to this affection.

On my various visits to Mirei Shigemori’s clients I learned that he would often give scrolls with calligraphic writings as presents to them. And when they now find a chance to show them to an interested visitor, they display those treasures with great pride! The museum at Yoshikawa also has a good selection of Mirei Shigemori’s scrolls from different periods.

Following are a few samples of his calligraphic works:

林泉, (Image 271) is pronounced rinsen, and is an old word for garden. The first kanji character stands for a grove or a small wood, where the second signifies a spring or fountain. So the image of a spring in a grove of trees is maybe one of the old etymological roots of the word for garden in Japan. When Mirei Shigemori and his friend Sokei Nakano decided in 1932 to found an association for the study and promotion of the Japanese garden, they called in Kyoto Rinsen Kyokai, which translates simply as Kyoto garden association. Having studied the roots of the garden in Japan thoroughly, Mirei Shigemori was aware of that old word and brought it back into modern times by using it in his calligraphy and as a name for his organization.

庭, (Image 272) is pronounced niwa, and is also a word for garden, but certainly more widely used than the previous one. Mirei Shigemori, being an artist, felt free to change the kanji character a bit and come up with his own version. He moved the lower part, which

55 In Kintaifu 22, “My Hometown”, page 1: „He was very good at Samurai-style calligraphy, did waka and haiku poems, and although he was a farmer he generally had good taste.”
56 The Kôsei-ji garden in Kyôto’s Kamigyô-ku is a case in point where he used the kanji character for heart (kokoro) to layout the islands in the sea of gravel. And the design for the garden of Sakyô-ku Ward Fire Department in Kyôto features appropriately the kanji for water in the form of a dry pond.
carries the meaning of ‘big step’ out to the left, outside of the part that means ‘house’. It almost seems as if he suggests a big step outside of the house. When the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) in 1999 produced a documentary on Mirei Shigemori, this calligraphy was the first thing they showed on the screen. Then moderator Ishizawa says: "This letter [niwa] is a little different in Mirei Shigemori’s handwriting." Moderator Ogawa adds to that: “The details are a little different but its power convinces us that it is right. “And Ishizawa responds: “In Mirei Shigemori’s sense, breaking out of the usual norm, this letter is the kanji for niwa.” This gives us a good insight in how that change feels to the Japanese.

無, (Image 273) is pronounced mu, and is usually translated as nothingness, void or emptiness. It has conceptually a strong connection to the karesansui garden where this part plays a vital role. The kanji as it appears in Mirei Shigemori’s calligraphy is again a radical simplification of the original, replicating his approach in the other arts. He has used the mu character several times in calligraphies and even in the name of his favorite tearoom at his house in Kyōto called Muji-an.

独坐, (Image 274) is pronounced dokuza, and means to sit alone. The Mirei Shigemori Kinenkan in Yoshikawa now owns this calligraphy. It refers to an activity that Mirei Shigemori was doing a lot: he sat alone in his studio and wrote his manuscripts. It also is the thing one would do mostly visiting his gardens. Sitting there, alone or in a small group, is an inherent part of the concept of the karesansui garden that Mirei Shigemori liked so much. So it is no surprise that the garden at Zuihō-in temple in Daitoku-ji complex, designed by Mirei Shigemori in 1961, received the name Dokuza-tei. It is the perfect place to sit alone and be impressed by amazing scenery.

今, (Image 275) is pronounced ima, and stands for now, the present or the moment. This was one of Mirei Shigemori’s favorite kanjis as he was a true person of the moment. In the book Gardens - Approach to Gods we can see how he enjoys a moment smoking a cigarette on the engawa of his house in Kyōto. And his lifelong motto was that “every moment is a good moment”, taken from the Japanese proverb “every day is a good day”. In 1974 he

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57 The documentary was part of a series called The New Sunday Museum and was titled “Rinsen no Hito – Shigemori Mirei”. It was aired on July 18th 1999.
58 This short conversation is the introduction to the aforementioned television documentary “Rinsen no Hito – Shigemori Mirei”; for details see appendix 1: “Works on Mirei Shigemori by Others”.
59 In Shigemori Mirei’s Collection of Works, Gardens - Approach to Gods, page 4; the black and white picture shows Mirei Shigemori in April 1972 at the age of 76.
60 Kokukoku kore kōkoku means “every moment is a good moment”; the original is: Hibi kore kōjitsu and translates into “every day is a good day”.
published a book titled Every Moment is Special, containing many of the essays he had written for the Rinsen journal.

萬華, (Image 276) can be read in two ways banka or mange. This calligraphy is read in the old way from right to left. The first character means ten thousand and the second stands for flower. So the combined meaning is many flowers or a variety of flowers. Ikebana was Mirei Shigemori’s true and lasting passion and therefore it is no surprise that he would express this also in his calligraphic work. On the other hand he hardly ever used a flowering plant in a garden. The Mirei Shigemori Kinenkan in Yoshikawa now owns this calligraphy.

青龍白虎逢年門, (Image 277) is read as: seiryû byakko hô nenmon. This calligraphy was among Mirei Shigemori’s scroll collection in the kura. It is not usually read, but any Japanese person understands the meaning of the individual characters. That the scroll is written only in kanji characters, indicates it might originally be a Chinese phrase. In English it could be interpreted as: The blue dragon and the white lion meet at the gate. It possibly refers to the old geomantic concept of the four gods that protect the four heavenly directions, an idea that Mirei Shigemori also used for his garden designs at the Sekizô-ji temple in Hyôgo prefecture.

即妙, (Image 278) is pronounced sokumyô. This calligraphy is also read from right to left. It means to respond quickly in a sophisticated way, a characteristic that Mirei Shigemori certainly had. This calligraphy was also donated to the Mirei Shigemori Kinenkan in Yoshikawa where it now is on display.

The above samples are all but a small selection of Mirei Shigemori’s calligraphic works. There is one thing that they have in common though: all are in one way or the other connected to Mirei Shigemori’s core interests or characteristics. He used calligraphy as one more way of expressing what he was all about. And he did them the same way he did most things in life: unconventional, abstract and modern.

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61 The monthly pamphlet of the Kyôto Rinsen Kyokai (Kyôto Garden Association).
Religion

The Shigemori family had traditionally followed Tendai Buddhism, a movement introduced in the early 9th century by Saichô (767-822) directly from China. As an outgrowth of the Mahâyâna teachings it was egalitarian in theory and stressed that all men had the potentialities for Buddha-hood. One of its remarkable characteristics being the readiness to find a place for all religious teachings and all forms of religious life in a comprehensive view of truth.\(^{62}\) A quality that is still very noticeable in today’s Japanese society. It is not uncommon for people to visit a Shinto shrine on new years day, go to a catholic school or university and have a Buddhist funeral ceremony. Few cultures have integrated so many different religions in people’s everyday life.

But Mirei Shigemori eventually returned to the original Japanese religious roots, to Shinto. In his essay titled “Shinsakuteiki” he confesses: “The only thing we can trust is nature and there is no other way than to leave everything in nature’s hands.”\(^{63}\) Primitive Shinto had embraced cults of very diverse origins, including animism, shamanism, fertility cults and the worship of nature, ancestors and heroes. In the course of time the distinctions between these various cults disappeared and the Sun Goddess became the chief deity for all of them, enshrined at the famous Shrine in Ise.

Mirei Shigemori went on the 27th day of each month to the Iwashimizu Hachimangu Shrine in Yawata-shi to pay his respects to the gods. This Shrine is located in the south of Kyôto city and belongs to the Hachiman Shinkô (Hachiman belief). This faith is called a Shinbutsugo, a marriage of Shinto and Buddhism. It is known for its tolerance and an the integrative approach to all things in life, and in that it is very close to the way Japanese people feel. In Mirei Shigemori’s case, it seems that the better integration of the ancient Shinto believes suited him well, and that Hachiman Shinkô was closer to what he felt were the roots of his culture. The cult’s main temple, Usa Hachimangu, is on Kyushu’s Kunisaki Hanto (Kunisaki Peninsula). The Yoshikawa Hachimangu branch in Mirei Shigemori’s hometown, was built much later than the previously mentioned ones and was the one that he helped to preserve as a national monument after his return from Tôkyô.

\(^{62}\) From Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume 1, page 110.
\(^{63}\) In Shigemori Mirei’s Collection of Works, Gardens - Approach to Gods, page 313.
When visiting the shrine Mirei Shigemori would first stop at the main hall, pay his respects and continue along the encircling wall with all its little shrines. Here he would stop and pray for good health, rain, his studies, the right personal connections, his male and female family members and finally for personal and business success. At each minor shrine he would do the following procedure:

1) throw a coin into the box to attract the attention of the kami (god)
2) bow two times to greet the kami
3) say his name and where he was from
4) thank the kami for past help and good fortune
5) maybe place a wish (but rarely!)
6) bow again to say good bye
7) continue on to the next or leave the temple precincts

For certain important occasions he would arrange a special session with the priest of the temple. In that case Mirei Shigemori would enter the central precinct and pray together with the priest. Of course there was an extra charge to get this special service. This custom of regular monthly visits on a fixed day is kept alive by Mirei Shigemori’s grandson Mitsuaki.

It is also worth noting that Mirei Shigemori was able to do two projects at the Iwashimizu Hachimangu Shrine site. One being the small, enclosed karesansui garden nearby the shrine’s office, right off the main axis of the temple (in 1952), and the other is the Tori-no-niwa garden near the temple’s gate (in 1966). This being just a small but not unimportant byproduct of his religious life.

The Yoshikawa Hachimangu Tôban Matsuri

According to Mircea Eliade, “[...] sacred time is actualized in festivals.” And the Japanese calendar is rather full of festivals, or matsuri as the Japanese say, and a great many of them connect to rituals and stories of times long past. Eliade points out that, “To reintegrate the sacred time of origin is equivalent with becoming contemporary with the gods.”

And they not only are an important part of people’s life, but they also structure the time of their everyday existence as it passes by. Also Mirei Shigemori attended numerous festivals in his life, as there are many of them in Kyôto. But the most important one for him was the

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65 Ibid., page 91.
Yoshikawa Hachimangu Tôban Matsuri in his hometown Yoshikawa. He notes in one of his essays: “As I have a special adoration for the local deity of the Hachimangu shrine, even though I am currently very busy and hardly have an hour of spare time, I return home every year on October 25th and 26th and visit the shrine.” And the reason for his return is indeed quite spectacular, as I had a chance to witness personally in 2002.

The festival officially starts on October 1st with the selection of the Tôban (son of the god), one for the north part and one for the south part of the village. The dividing line is the watershed on which the Hachimangu shrine is located. To find a Tôban, the names of eligible young men are written on a piece of paper, which is then wrapped once more. With a branch those pieces of paper are then beaten until one actually sticks. The boy selected this way becomes the Tôban for the entire next year. This is quite an event for the young child and a great honor for the entire family.

Between the 19th and the 22nd of October a hakke (temporary hut for the kami: Images 281 and 282) is built in front of the house of the new Tôban. About 30 men in each part of the town work together to create the hakke in their respective location. Then on the 22nd of October the kami comes to visit for five days. From this moment on the hakke is inhabited and the priest will come to welcome the kami. The body of the god by the way is symbolized by a bundle of grass with roots.

On October 27th a loud double noise wakes everybody up at 6:00 A.M. A pre-selected group of 10 to 12 people from each side of the village assembles at the respective house of the two new Tôbans. Then they parade into town with the young Tôban riding high up on a horse. Once they arrive at the local shrine, the participants are seated in two separate areas marked by an oval fence, immediately east of the shrine building. There they are given mochi and hot sake, at 9:30 in the morning! (Of course the young Tôban doesn't get any alcohol.) With the sake cups in their hand they yell, "tôban, tachimochi, mori, kaezoe...", and then the cup is emptied in one go. While this is going on, villagers come and give presents to the Tôban, most of which are given the next day to the local schools. The money contributions will help pay the large sake bill. I learned that day, that sake in large quantities is a very important part of such a festival. It certainly loosens everybody up and makes people communicate more easily with each other, which is probably one of the major objectives of this kind of event in a small town like Yoshikawa.

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66 In Kintaifu 22, “My Hometown”, page 2.
At about 10:30 A.M. the two groups move to the west side of the shrine building for a purification ceremony. The space is demarcated with bamboo, ropes and an altar. This procedure takes about 15 minutes after which the group moves inside the building. There foods from the sea and the mountains are offered to the gods. Four Shinto officials bring the beautifully arranged foods in and place the elevated plates on the steps of the altar. While this takes place a few people play koto, drum and shakuhachi (a flute), which gives the moment a very special atmosphere.

Then at noon the two groups moved back to their previous locations in the oval areas for lunch. Udon interspersed with boiled potatoes, konyaku, egg, white radish, chikuwa is served and followed by even more sake.

At about 2:00 P.M. two groups of eight people each carry two mikoshi (portable shrines) to a place called Otabisho (travel-place) roughly 500 meters from the main shrine. There the mikoshi are purified and the porters take a break and drink some more sake. A dragon dance (okagura) is performed in front of the Otabisho before they return to the main shrine. But they don’t go straight back, but rather weave back and forth part of the way, and even go beyond their destination. Then they finally reach the Hachimangu shrine, hurry up the stairs and through the temple’s gate. The mikoshi weigh about 240 kg, but with all the alcohol in their blood, the porters show no difficulty with the weight. The race back to the shrine is the finale, and everybody runs as fast as they can. Then with two drumbeats the matsuri is over.

As the village of Yoshikawa has approximately 800 inhabitants, most people get to participate about every fourth year. The festival, soon after the harvest is over, creates a tremendous sense of community.

Mirei Shigemori notes on his favorite matsuri: "[…] the festival at the Yoshikawa Hachimangu lasts for one month and is a classic. The himorogi-za of time immemorial was passed on to the next generation in a festival, which recently was recognized by the prefecture government as a 'cultural treasure without physical shape'. It seems they want to preserve it forever. […], and as it is in the country side, this kind of classical festival continues to be alive." It looks as if so far he is right with that. Let us hope that it remains this way.

This festival was a very memorable event for me, fundamentally changing my view of Japanese culture and made it clear to me how important these religious roots actually are, especially with regard to the Japanese garden.

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67 A place were the gods descend.
68 In Kintaifu 22, “My Hometown”, page 2.
Shinto and the Roots of the Japanese Garden

The art of the Japanese garden almost certainly has several roots, one of the main ones being the initial influences that came from China via Korea, often in the form of gardeners hired to do work for local rulers. But another very important basis, and maybe overall more influential, is the local religion of ancient Japan called Shinto. Since time immemorial people have worshipped the gods that surrounded them, thought to be visible in the various forms of nature.

It must have been this aspect of nature worship that attracted Mirei Shigemori the most with regard to the Shinto religion. And it did deeply impress him, which we can see in the fact that he later often refers to this point in his essay titled "Shinsakuteiki"⁶⁹. And eventually he goes as far as recognizing this aspect of nature worship as the origin of the Japanese garden. So let us look at his arguments for this a little closer. (All of the following quotations in this paragraph are from the "Shinsakuteiki" essay.)

He begins by citing the very early roots of Shinto worship. "The himorogi¹⁰ used at the Shrine festivals often was simply the deification of a large ancient tree." (Image 283) And this has not changed much. All over Japan we can still find these old trees marked by thick ropes made from rice-straw, easily recognizable as a special or holy place. He continues, “After a while these holy sites moved to the foot of the mountain and people started to treat these as the object of their belief, having dance performances with music in front of these holy trees.” As initially old trees were the main focus of worship, later the places of worship changed and also other elements like prominent rocks were included as objects of worship (Image 284). Also the way of worshipping developed and seasonal festivals appeared. These holy rocks or stones, usually natural features in the landscape, were called iwakura¹¹ and are maybe the oldest root of the Japanese garden (Image 285). We read, “Nature is a world made by the gods. For example the Amatsu iwakura, which is only a big natural stone, was recognized by the people as a holy place. “It is interesting to note here, that many temples in Japan are in fact built nearby or below such a natural dominant rock or stone outcropping. This suggests that for the human beings these were always holy places in the landscape. And as Shinto

⁶⁹ The "Shinsakuteiki" text was first published as a series of eleven essays in the Kintaifu pamphlets number 16 to 27 (with no essay in no. 19); and when after Mirei Shigemori’s death his son Geite compiled the book Shigemori Mirei's Collection of Works, Gardens - Approach to Gods, he republished the essay in one piece, pages 281-315.
¹⁰ A place where the kami descends, usually marked by a rice-straw rope and folded paper strips.
¹¹ Iwakura: a stage for the gods; often used for prominent stone settings or natural stone outcroppings.
developed, and eventually had to compete against Buddhism, temples were built nearby these sites that had been used for centuries already. A case in point here is Sekizô-ji\textsuperscript{72} temple in Hyôgo prefecture, which is built directly below an impressive natural rock formation (Image 488; for more information see also the chapter 4, "Sekizô-ji, 1972").

Then the next step is an interesting one. Mirei Shigemori says that, “As time passed people started to bring other big stones and added them to an existing iwakura.” If this was true, that would indeed be the start of garden making. And it is this act that continues to be at the essence of garden making in Japan to this very day. The placing of rocks, assembling them in large groups of stones in a garden, creating places for the gods to visit.

When I read this the first time I was quite skeptical. Why would people many centuries ago relocate huge rocks to a certain place in the landscape and add them to an existing rock? But there was an important step in between: the separation of the gods from nature. In Mirei Shigemori words: “The desire to reproduce nature and create a garden like place, means to first separate the god’s existence from nature.” And in the next sentence he gives us the reason why: “As long as gods exist in nature, people are not permitted to put their hands on it. As people worship nature as god, people subordinate themselves to the gods existence.” So yes, people had started to put their hands on nature and change it around. By this act, the role of the gods became limited and people assumed a new role. “As a result of the birth of the idea that people could be on the same level as the gods, people recognized that nature, which was thought to be created only by the gods, could actually be made by them.” This is the start of the Japanese garden as we know it today.

Mirei Shigemori knew these roots very well. He had surveyed several hundred gardens all over the country and was aware of the different forms they had taken. One of the gardens that left a special mark in his memory is certainly Kokubun-ji in Takamatsu on the island of Shikoku. In his very last work, the stone setting at Matsuo Taisha in Kyôto, we can see how he is striving to come close to the power of these ancient stone settings (Images 517 and 518). And I must admit that at first sight I was not so impressed. I didn’t know how to evaluate this, as in my original culture we do not set stones in a way like this or even any similar way. But now, after four years of seeing many stone settings, from Mirei Shigemori and others, and studying the ideas behind them, I do agree that this stone setting at Matsuo Taisha is probably one of his best ones.

\textsuperscript{72} Great image of the ancient iwakura nearby the temple building at the Sekizô-ji Shrine, in Shigemori Mirei's Collection of Works, Gardens - Approach to Gods, page 137.
The Mature Years

In 1923 on February 28th Mirei Shigemori got married to Matsue Ochi. He was 26 years old at the time and his wife, born on May 5th, 1903, was only 19 years of age. They had met in Tōkyō where Matsue Ochi was studying at the Tōkyō Music College to become a pianist. Not even three months after they had gotten married, and only shortly after Matsue’s 20th birthday, their first son Kanto (完途) was born on May 19th.73 A little more than three years later, when they were already living in Yoshikawa, they had their second son Kōen (弘淹) on July 27th, 1926.74 Then in 1930, a year after Mirei Shigemori and his wife had moved to Kyōto, their first and only daughter Yūgo (由郷) was born on April 15th.75 Next, a long five and a half years later, and only shortly before Mirei Shigemori embarked on his legendary survey project, their third son, named Geite (ゲーテ) was born on October 19th, 1935.76 Then within two and a half years, their fourth and last son Bairon (貝壌) followed on February 6th, 1938, still in the midst of the work on the Nihon Teienshi Taikei.77

All five children were given foreign names. The first son, Kanto, was named after Immanuel Kant, the famous philosopher. Yūgo, the only daughter, apparently got her name from Victor Hugo, the author of Les Misérables. Then the name of the third son, Geite, was derived from the German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. And the fourth son Bairon was named after George Byron, the famous British poet. It is interesting that all of them are famous European intellectuals and that Mirei Shigemori, who himself had adopted the name of a French painter, always used the family names of those individuals and turned them into Japanese Firstnames. Of course none of the children had an easy time with their unusual

73 Kanto, Mirei Shigemori’s oldest son, followed his father’s footsteps and became a dedicated landscape architect and writer. He spent most of his life in Tōkyō where he died at the age of 69 years in December 1992.
74 Kōen, Mirei Shigemori’s second son, became a professor of photography at the Tōkyō College of Photography, and followed his father as an ikebana artist and critic; he also wrote poetry. And he was the first one of Mirei Shigemori’s children to pass away in fall 1992.
75 Yūgo, greatly supported by her father, was educated in traditional Japanese dance and eventually became a master with her own school in Kyōto. At the same time she was teaching at the famous Takarazuka Music School near Osaka. She was the only child that remained living in Kyōto.
76 Geite, Mirei Shigemori’s third son, went into the field of publishing and produced the only existing retrospective of his father’s work: Shigemori Mirei’s Collection of Works, Gardens - Approach to Gods, Tōkyō: Seibundō Shinkō Sha, 1976. He still lives in Tōkyō and was a great supporter of this research on his father.
77 Bairon, Mirei Shigemori’s fourth son, was educated as a filmmaker and ultimately had his own business in Tōkyō named Iwanami Audio-Visual Media Inc.; his graduation work titled “Ishibashi’s garden” was a great resource for this research project as it documents a garden construction in process and relates much of his father’s way of thinking.
names and all of them had to explain countless times to others why they carried such a unique first name.

Another milestone in Mirei Shigemori’s more mature life was certainly the founding of the Kyōto Garden Association (Kyōto Rinsen Kyokai) in 1932, for the purpose of studying old gardens. An activity which, according to Kawakatsu Masatarō was not very popular yet: “At that time the study and admiration of the Japanese garden had almost been abandoned by the people, so this organization’s main aim was quite new.” And, according to the same source, “Mr. Nakano and Mr. Shigemori decided to found an association for the study and promotion of the Japanese Garden, and to confer with Dr. Amanuma Shunichi, a specialist of architectural history at Kyōto University who had been Mr. Nakano’s teacher. Also invited were Kanshûji Tsuneo, a horticultural researcher interested in the garden as well as Prof. Sekiguchi, a garden specialist at Kyōto University. This is how Kyōto Rinsen Kyokai was established in 1932.” At first Mr. Nakano was the president of the board and Mirei Shigemori was something like the vice-president, even though this position didn’t exist officially, until eventually he became the association’s leader. The above-quoted Kawakatsu Masatarō, himself a member of Kyōto Rinsen Kyokai, was in charge of stone art related to the garden. Similarly every board member had his special area of expertise. In the monthly excursions up to 30 people took part. These excursions consisted of site visits and lectures by the board members, often followed by lively discussions. And visiting gardens in Kyōto clearly was not as popular as it is these days; Kawakatsu Masatarō recalls: “Enjoying the excursions to our hearts content, we could spend entire days at Ryōan-ji, Kinkaku-ji, Ginkaku-ji and the other temples. There were no tourists at these temples, only once in a while an admirer visited. At that time we never experienced a situation where tourist buses lined up in front and a hundred to hundred-fifty people crowded a garden.”

In 1935 Mirei Shigemori and some members of Kyōto Rinsen Kyokai restored the now famous Shōden-ji garden in the north of Kyōto city. They removed various items from the karesansui garden and only left a 7-5-3 karikomi, which contrasts beautifully with the borrowed scenery of Mt. Hiei in the background. In 1961 Mirei Shigemori then designed the garden at Zuihō-in, one of the temples in the Daitoku-ji complex, a present for the 30-year anniversary of Kyōto Rinsen Kyokai. But the group not only built or restored gardens, they also continued to meet for the monthly excursions and published a newsletter in the same

79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
interval. In fact, the association is still active these days, having just celebrated its 70th birthday in September 2002. Still many members recall Mirei Shigemori and readily answer questions about the old days. In the later years they apparently would often go and visit Mirei Shigemori’s newest projects, and it happened more than once that some of his clients became new members. At its peak in the fifties and sixties the association had a total of about 300 members. Mirei Shigemori is said to often have encouraged his younger followers in the Kyōto Garden Association to study tea.

In the last year of working on the survey, Mirei Shigemori made another big step in his professional life. In March 1938 Mirei Shigemori founded a company called Japanese Garden Research Institute (Nihon Teien Kenkyūsho). The company consisted of two departments, which were subdivided in a total of 8 sections. One department was devoted to research, the other to design and construction. The research department consisted of the following three sections:

- Documentation section: managing the information gathered during the survey, which consisted of documents such as plans, sketches, transcripts of temple records and photos. This section was also in charge of publishing.
- Survey section: did two kinds of surveys, either contracted by a client or initiated by the research department itself.
- Education section: classes, free and invited lectures, practical training.

The second department, concerned with design and construction, had five sections:

- Old gardens: restoration, renovation, design and construction related to old gardens.
- Construction of new gardens: design, construction and construction supervision.
- General garden projects: other activities related to garden making.
- Design of teahouses and other Japanese traditional architecture.
- Consulting: inquiries related to any kind of gardens or teahouses.

The members of the board of directors were: Mirei Shigemori (president), Takuo Shimizu, Hiroo Nabeshima, Nori Fukui. Clearly the purpose of this company was to provide services ranging from survey all the way to construction. The business address was Mirei Shigemori’s home at the time.81

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In 1943, right in the middle of WWII and much to the surprise of his friends, Mirei Shigemori decided to buy the former house of the well-known Suzuka family that was being auctioned off (Images 290 to 295). An Edo period structure built in 1789, the building used to be part of the Yoshida shrine complex and thus the house of a priest. It was here that Mirei Shigemori would live for the rest of his life.\(^82\) In 1953 he built the Muji-an tea room, thereby for the first time seriously changing and extending the house he had bought just ten years ago. And in April of the same year he made a tea garden to go with it, shown in the center of the plan (Image 290), just to the north of the shoin. In 1955 he redesigned the entry area to the south of the main building and added the straight and the curving path. The garden to the south of the shoin was built in two stages, a first phase in 1952 and completed in 1956 (Images 292 to 294). It features four stone settings symbolizing the Elysian islands Hôjô, Eijû, Hôrai and Koryô, set in a sea of Shirakawa suna. As for stones he used his favorite aoishi from Shikoku. Most of his writing on book manuscripts was done in the studio located between the main building and the shoin (Image 295). This residence remains to date, but is in danger of being sold due to financial problems of Mirei Shigemori’s heirs.

In 1948, only three years after the war was over, Mirei Shigemori became the first winner of the Kyôto Bunka-in prize, which was awarded by the Kyôto Cultural Academy. This represents an important recognition of his cultural contributions in the fields of tea, ikebana as well as the Japanese garden.

In 1949 Mirei Shigemori founded at his house in Kyôto, an ikebana research group called Byakutosha. And in 1950 he started publishing the ikebana art magazine called *Ikebana Geijutsu*. Both facts are testimony to how important ikebana remained all through his life. The Byakutosha group also met once a month, mostly at Mirei Shigemori’s residence. Being a true study group, during those meetings they would actually do ikebana, critique each other’s works and discuss the future of ikebana as an art. Some of the core members were Nakagawa Yukio, Sudô Masao and Kusakabe Yûsaku. Mirei Shigemori was the leader of the group and organized the monthly meetings.\(^83\)

Even though WWII had practically put a stop to much of his garden making, he didn’t rest during that time. In fact in those years he wrote more than ever before and in 1949 published a record number of nine books in one single year. Then in the early fifties his garden making

\(^{82}\) Address of the second Shigemori residence: 34 Kamiôji-chô, Yoshida Sakyô-ku, Kyôto 606-8312; for appointments contact Tel +81 (0)90 8467 8988, Fax +81 (0)75 761 8776.

\(^{83}\) A study group meeting on Jan 7th 1955, also lists the following people as attendants: Ono, Kusuhare, Imanishi, Shimizu, Handa, Saga, Yanagida, Tanaka and others; and Mirei Shigemori notes though that the interest in the group seems to already be fading.
quickly picked back up and by 1953 he had already created 14 outdoor spaces for clients, more than in any year before the war. So when in 1955 Mirei Shigemori built the garden at the Maegaki residence (the second key work introduced in the next chapter), he was already much further along in his career as a landscape architect.

In 1956 Yukio Okamoto joined the company, the gardener with whom he is going to build more than 130 projects over the next 19 years. Mr. Okamoto eventually became Mirei Shigemori’s right hand, taking over much of the on-site responsibilities in building the gardens. An interesting and quite comprehensive conversation with him is provided in appendix 2 under Transcrips and Translations of Interviews, “Mr. Okamoto: Gardener”.

One of the more important events of his adult life was certainly his meeting with Isamu Noguchi and their resulting cooperation for the UNESCO garden in Paris. On April 18th, 1957 Mirei Shigemori and Isamu Noguchi met for the first time in Himi on the island of Shikoku. At that time Mirei Shigemori was working on the garden of Eiichi Ochi and Isamu Noguchi came to see him there. They spent the day together looking at some gardens, most of which were Mirei Shigemori’s projects, and were chauffeured around in the car of the governor of Kagawa prefecture. And in the evening they even had dinner at the governor’s residence. Isamu Noguchi was already quite famous at the time, and Mirei Shigemori was much impressed with the pomp and publicity that he suddenly was a part of. On April 20th they then went to Ueyama together trying to find stones for the Paris garden. According to Mirei Shigemori they marked a total of about 80 stones in the quarry. On April 27th, back in Kyôto, Mirei Shigemori took Isamu Noguchi to a tea ceremony in Kômyô-in and afterwards showed him his garden design at Tôfuku-ji. Then from May 7th to the 11th they worked together on a mock-up of the stone settings for the UNESCO garden. On a site in the city of Tokushima on Shikoku they built a trial garden for that project, setting up all the stones needed. This is where Mirei Shigemori’s advice must have been most valuable to Isamu Noguchi, as he had asked him for help with the garden project. But for Mirei Shigemori the collaboration was not an easy one, as he could not work in a way that was to his liking. He notes in his diary: “I felt quite tired after working on it since early morning together with Mr. Noguchi. As I was paying close attention to his ideas, I couldn’t quite execute it the way I would have liked. That was a bit annoying.”

From this point on Isamu Noguchi was a frequent visitor to the Shigemori residence in Kyôto, a fact that is well documented in the family album (Images 296 and 297). The two of

\[85\] Ibid., May 9th.
them frequently met socially and visited gardens together. Also Mirei Shigemori continued to
make contacts for Isamu Noguchi and introduced him to people like the stone mason Kinzô
Nishimura and others. Then there was even talk of Mirei Shigemori going to Paris, but he
decided as he was afraid of flying. In the evening of August 8th 1958, Isamu Noguchi then
came to Mirei Shigemori’s house to show pictures of the completed UNESCO garden. And
later Mirei Shigemori received various presents for his help with this project, among them a
lamp desigend by Isamu Noguchi (Image 602). This oval shaped paper lamp can still be
admired in the Shigemori residence shoin. Although there were no collaborative projects after
the UNESCO garden, the meeting with Isamu Noguchi left deep impression on Mirei
Shigemori. (For more information see also appendix 2, Excerpts from the diary “Isamu
Noguchi: 1957-1958”)

The 1950s are an uneventful period though in terms of publishing garden related books.
Between 1949 and 1956 Mirei Shigemori published not a single book on this topic. This is
only remarkable because of the uninterrupted stream of such publications since 1933. One
reason for this was that he was simply too busy with building gardens. But with regard to
writing, there are two ikebana related publications in the early 1950s and also Mirei
Shigemori was working hard on publishing an issue of Ikebana Geijutsu every month. In
1956 he then resumed his garden book writing and published Japanese Gardens with
Kadokawa Shoten in Tōkyō. Two years later, in 1958, Mirei Shigemori wrote the book
Gardens together with his son Kanto, gradually getting back to publishing books on this
subject.

1964 is the year in which he started to work with the photographer Haruzo Ohashi, a
collaboration that was to last for the next 11 years. The first book they worked on together
was Mirei Shigemori’s Collected Works — Garden, published in 1964 by Heibonsha in Tōkyō.
This is actually the only book Mirei Shigemori made that is entirely about his own work. The
previously mentioned book Mirei Shigemori’s Collection of Works, Gardens - Approach to
Gods was published after his death by his son Geite and Saito Tadakazu.

In 1969 Mirei Shigemori built the Kōkoku-an teahouse at his residence in Kyōto (Images
298 and 299). A structure that Mirei Shigemori’s heirs still proudly present to anybody who
visits the residence these days. The paintings on the shōji are of particular interest (Image
299), as they very much reflect Mirei Shigemori’s approach to Japanese art. The teahouse also
contains many nice architectural details all the way to custom made door pulls.

Throughout these years he remained connected to his hometown and tried to go there for
the yearly Tōban Matsuri, as described in the previous chapter. Also in 1969 he donated
Tenrai-an, the teahouse he had made together with his father in 1914, to the town of Yoshikawa. A passage in the *Kintaifu* 22, published in January 1974, shows how much he still liked the place he had grown up in: “There is nothing better than having a hometown. [...] My hometown was especially blessed as the village has absolutely no pollution; whenever I looked at the sky it was clear and blue. It makes me very happy that a great place like this remains until this day.”* These *Kintaifu* pamphlets were published together with the updated survey, and contain several unique essays about Mirei Shigemori’s life.

Thirty years after the publication of the monumental *Nihon Teienshi Zukan*, Mirei Shigemori decided it was time to revise the text, redraw the plans and issue a new and extended version of his survey, now called *Nihon Teienshi Taikei (Japanese Garden History Survey)*. The updated survey consisted of 35 volumes in part with color pictures by Haruzo Ohashi and large drawings in the back of the books. Mirei Shigemori’s followers reworked many of the plans to show the current state of the gardens. The updated survey was published with Shakai Shisôsha in Tokyo between May 5th 1971 and June 1st 1976 and can be found in many libraries throughout Japan. Mirei Shigemori’s son Kanto was co-author of the work and finished the last five volumes on his own after his father died on March 12th, 1975 at the age of 79 years.

Looking back on Mirei Shigemori’s achievements, his friend Masatarô Kawagatsu notes regarding his character: “Everything Mr. Shigemori did, he did big; nobody can mimic him in that. Then the Zukan was successfully completed. Soon after Mr. Shigemori bought his current house in Yoshida Kamiôji-chô and moved there, taking over the former house of the great Suzuka family in the Yoshida neighborhood. There are people who mistake the magnificent estate to be a temple. We all were amazed. [...] Most things he did in this manner.”*87

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Chapter 3: Key Works

At first I did the obvious: I selected the key works mainly by their formal appearance. So I ended up with Tôfuku-ji (1939), Ryôgin-an (1964), Sumiyoshi Jinja (1966), Sekizô-ji (1972) and Matsuo Taisha (1975). And the sequence was almost perfect as it went from his first major big project (Tôfuku-ji) all the way to his possibly best stone setting (Matsuo Taisha), along the way covering the most important examples for his use of the line (Sumiyoshi Jinja) and plane of color (Sekizô-ji). But then I realized that I would be discussing those very same gardens again in the key design elements chapter, probably as the best examples for a certain element. And I also started to understand that if at the same time I were to take the major developments of his life into account, the selection would be a different one. So I decided to extend the criteria for what a key work is and re-evaluated them according to the following aspects:

- The point in Mirei Shigemori’s life: overlaying his curriculum vitae with the list of projects and trying to understand when a new phase started or a new category of projects appeared
- Trying to represent the major categories of works: religious and residential (versus just temples as in the previous selection)
- Taking into account the availability and quality of information on hand for supporting my argument, including his diary and original design drawings

So the resulting two projects mirror these criteria. They are at the same time about a specific point in his life, represent a wide spectrum of his work and are quite thoroughly discussed in his diary. Furthermore they are well documented by his design drawings and are both built works.

Kasuga Jinja, 1934

Significance of the Garden

The garden at Kasuga Jinja represents Mirei Shigemori’s first design for a Shrine as a client. Before that he had only done a small number of residential gardens, including his own. After moving to Kyôto in 1929 it took him some time to get established and make the
necessary connections to attract new clients. It wasn’t until 1933 that he had his first client in Osaka and was able to design a garden for Mr. Andō. Then in February 1934 Mirei Shigemori started work on the design for the garden at the shrine office at Kasuga Jinja. In the same year he was to do five more residential gardens plus another small shrine project, creating a total of seven outdoor spaces; more than in any previous year.

Also, the Kasuga Jinja project was designed before Mirei Shigemori did his large survey (1936-1939), and therefore conceived without the benefits of such a broad study of gardens. For that reason Kasuga Jinja is more a product of his early education and lets us understand how his approach to garden making was shaped by these basic influences. It is a true early work, representing his struggle to get established as a professional and to find his own formal design language. Furthermore this project represents a real landmark in Mirei Shigemori’s life, as it is his first public space and it was built in the year that marks the start of his career as a landscape architect.

It is my hypothesis that Mirei Shigemori created at Kasuga Jinja, a modern shrine garden based on old Shinto roots. This is significant, as so far the shrine garden as a distinct style had not existed.

The History of the Temple and the Garden

As is the case with many shrines in Japan, there are several theories regarding the founding of Kasuga Jinja. The most widely supported theory says that Fujiwara Fuhito dedicated a shrine in the east of Mt. Abe to a god called Kashima and this structure is now thought to be Kasuga Jinja’s first building. And also like most other shrines, what we know today as Kasuga Jinja moved several times since its founding, until it ended up at its current location at Kasuga-yama in Nara prefecture.

The garden that Mirei Shigemori designed at Kasuga Jinja was named Shamu-sho, which literally means ‘shrine office place’, and that is also where the garden is situated. Initially the shrine office had been together with the main hall, but was detached from it in 1919 and moved to a different location. It was later enlarged in 1922. The current shrine office was completed in May 1926 and covers an area of about 660 square meters. The architectural style is a combination of styles from the Momoyama and Kamakura period; it is slightly modern but still traditionally Japanese.
At the time the shrine office was built, no garden was made. But in 1933 priest Emi decided to approach Mirei Shigemori for a garden design. On November 4th of the same year Mirei Shigemori came to have a look at the site and accepted the commission for the garden the same day. The following year on February 3rd he started to work on the project. In his diary he notes: “In the morning I started to work on the design of Kasuga Jinja Teien, at the shrine’s office. I put a lot of effort into making a good design.” And then the next day he remarks in the diary that he finished it already, at least for the most part. Because it is his first garden for a shrine, he emphasizes that he “[...] will try to make it a very unique garden.” On March 11th Mirei Shigemori had a meeting with Priest Emi to explain the garden’s design and they agreed to start construction soon. Together with Junichirō Kawasaki he prepared the project specifications on April 2nd and mails them to the shrine the same day. Construction started on April 12th, 1934 and the east part of the garden was completed by the 23rd of the same month. There is a second part to the garden on the northern side of the shrine office, but because of lack of funds the construction of this part had to be postponed. On September 21st, 1934 the notorious Muroto Typhoon hit Japan, which further delayed the project, as it felled more than 600 trees on Kasuga Jinja’s grounds alone.

It was the anticipated visit of the empress Dowager that got the project moving again in 1937. As the empress was planning to stop at Kasuga Jinja on her trip to the Kansai area, and use the shrine’s office for a short rest, priest Emi felt the need to complete the garden quickly. So the priest unexpectedly called Mirei Shigemori, who then came together with Junichirō Kawasaki on May 4th, 1937. The plans had already been prepared before and so construction of the northern part of the garden could start immediately. But Mirei Shigemori didn’t stay long, for he was busy surveying gardens in the Gōshū area. So this part of the garden was built by Junichirō Kawasaki alone, but of course according to the plan designed by Mirei Shigemori. By May 10th the construction was practically completed. Mirei Shigemori came on May 12th, changed a few details and for the first time let water flow through the stream.

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88 This is unusually fast and means that he really wanted the commission. In later years he would let people ask him up to three times until he would finally agree to make a garden for them; for example with the Suntory Tamagawa Kōjō. The custom of trying three times is an old Japanese idea called sanko no rei (三顧の礼) and means to show ones full courtesy to somebody. New monks, for example, often have to wait three days in front of a temple’s gate until they are allowed in.
89 Excerpt from his diary: Kasuga Jinja, 1934, February 3rd; complete transcript in appendix 2. Also it is interesting to note that he actually worked at the shrine’s office. For one he could be closer to the garden that way, but more importantly his living situation in Kyōto was spatially quite restricted, so there was hardly any excess space to do design work. By this time Mirei Shigemori, his wife and three small children were living in a rather small house together.
90 Ibid., February 4th.
91 Gōshū is the area around lake Biwa, located in Shige prefecture, immediately east of Kyōto.
The budget for those two garden parts was rather small. Mirei Shigemori notes that he was limited to ¥600 for the east garden and ¥400 for the north garden. In today’s currency that would be about ¥342,480 and ¥228,320 respectively. This of course had to pay for all the materials as well as Junichirō Kawasaki’s wages. Mirei Shigemori himself received an extra ¥80 for the design of the garden, and for directing its construction. This fee is the equivalent of approximately ¥45,664 in today’s currency.

The Construction Process as Recorded in the Diary

As mentioned above the construction of the east garden started on April 12th, 1934 and is accomplished within ten working days. Mirei Shigemori carefully noted in his diary most of the construction process taking place at Kasuga Jinja Shamu-sho Teien, his first garden design for a shrine. This is a great source of information to understand his way of working. All of the quotations in this chapter are taken from the diary, respectively its translation. For the full version, see the appendix 2 under Excerpts from the Diary, “Kasuga Jinja: 1933-1934”.

The stones are the backbone of every Japanese garden, and therefore the first thing that is put in place. We can assume that the shrine had the site cleared by one of its own people or maybe a local gardener from Nara. Then, after the client had approved the design, Mirei Shigemori would usually go to the stone dealer and select the rocks necessary to accomplish his design. That company would then deliver the stones to the site.

“April 12th: Today I went to Kasuga Jinja in Nara with Mr. Kawasaki. There we started to set stones right away. We set five stones in the center and seven stones to the right. I arranged the stones very carefully, considering the following points that I care for very much: the line between the stones, the elevation of each stone and the direction of the stone’s face. The priest stayed all day at the garden with us and enjoyed looking at how we worked. [...] I directed the garden work until it got dark, so now I am really tired, and it seems the same is true for the gardener. We are staying overnight at the Miyama Ryokan.”

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92 From Nihon Teienshi Zukan, volume 22, page 49.
93 For comparison: as of August 28, 2003 ¥100 are Euro 0.78, or Euro 1.00 is ¥128.00.
94 As April 12th in 1934 is a Thursday, the working days are: 12th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st and 23rd of April; Saturday is a regular workday for gardeners in Japan but Sunday is usually off.
It is interesting to note that Mirei Shigemori describes himself as part of the construction team, where as in the *Nihon Teienshi Zukan*⁹⁵, he portrays himself as the designer only and says that the garden had been built by Junichirô Kawasaki.⁹⁶ A possible explanation could be that in 1934, during the construction of the east part of the garden, Mirei Shigemori was actually helping, whereas in the second phase in 1937 he was in fact mainly absent. In that case the remark in the *Nihon Teienshi Zukan* would refer to the northern part of the garden only.

“April 16th: I intended to go to Kasuga Jinja, but didn’t because of the rain.

April 17th: I took a 9:30 A.M. train for Nara to go to Kasuga Jinja and went there with Mr. Kawasaki’s father. I finished the garden part in front of the guest room and stayed again for the night at the Miyama Ryokan.” From this we can learn that he worked both, Mr. Kawasaki Senior and his son. Many Kyôto gardening companies are family enterprises that have been around for several generations. Once Mirei Shigemori hired the Kawasakis for the construction of the garden at Kasuga Jinja, it was clear that he would get the help of both of them. And as he was not educated as a gardener he needed to bring that know-how to his projects.

“April 18th: Also today I worked at the Kasuga Jinja garden until dusk. I have finished all the stone settings and most of the shrubbery. I am very tired and am staying at Miyama Ryokan again.” The fact that Mirei Shigemori is so tired, means that he really must have been physically helping and not just standing there and pointing to where things needed to go. That dramatically changed in later years. Once he became famous, he would hardly get his hands dirty anymore. Also this is the second time that he mentions that they were working until it got dark. That does sound quite late, but in fact it is not. In Japan sunrise and sunset are at least an hour earlier from what we are used to in Central Europe at the same time of the year. In Japan, even at the peak of summer, it is dark by 7:30 P.M.

“April 20th: I had a conversation with the priest in the morning. The sand and the trees were delivered by car in the afternoon. Then we started to plant the trees right away. Now there is a perfect 7-5-3 style garden with three faces. It is really an elaborate work. [...] From all three sides one can see perfect stone groupings of 7-5-3. It seemed to me that the priest was very impressed and happy to have this garden. He was with us in the garden until it got

⁹⁵ The 26-volume *Nihon Teienshi Zukan (Illustrated Book on the History of the Japanese Garden)*, by Mirei Shigemori 1936-1939; for more information see also chapter 2, “The Big Survey of All Gardens in Japan”.

⁹⁶ *Nihon Teienshi Zukan*, volume 22, page 49.
dark. Mr. Kawasaki’s father said there is nothing more beautiful than this garden. Perfect!
That made my day. I am very, very happy. [...] We are going to put the moss down tomorrow
and the day after tomorrow we will distribute the white sand. Then this garden will be
finished. It started to rain in the late evening.”

It is somewhat surprising to read that in 1934 sand and trees were already delivered by car,
considering that until very recently gardeners still used a three legged hoist to set their stones.
In a film made in 1971, showing the installation of a Mirei Shigemori garden, the gardeners
still transport stones in a hand-pulled cart from the nearest station to the construction site, and
roll stones into the garden on round wood logs. Gardening has remained fairly low-tech in
Japan, especially in and around conservative Kyōto.

After the stones are in place first the big trees are planted, then the shrubs. Next the ground
cover is placed, which in Mirei Shigemori’s gardens is usually moss. And last will be the sand
or gravel. Also we can easily grasp that Mirei Shigemori was rather pleased with the result of
his own efforts so far. (The significance of the 7-5-3 stone arrangement will be explained in
the following chapter).

“April 21st: It rained hard from the morning on. No progress in the garden.”

This is the second day that the rain was in the way of further progress in the garden. Since
two out of ten workdays were cancelled by rain, it is fair to conclude that the garden was
actually built in eight days!

“April 23rd: I took the 8:38 A.M. train for Nara. Finally we were able to finish the garden,
so at 3:00 P.M. we reported to Kasuga Jinja that the construction was officially completed.
After that I received ¥600 and a tip from the priest. I am glad that they like my garden. There
was a meeting of supporters of the shrine and about 45 people gathered. They enjoyed the
garden and I gave a short lecture on it. It was good luck to have a chance to introduce my
work to so many people right after its completion. As the design of this garden is not easy to
understand for everyone, it is better to give some explanation.”

Finishing a garden in Mirei Shigemori’s case usually means raking the sand and watering
plants and stones. The watering is done so that the stones and the plant material appear fresh
and show more intensive color the first time the client sees his finished garden. The priest had

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97 Seven, five and three are very important numbers in Asian culture that appear in many places,
among them Japan. The number 7 refers to the five elements plus sun and moon, number 5 to the five
elements fire, earth, metal, water, wood, and the number 3 to the universe consisting of heaven, earth
and the human beings; for a Japanese adaptation see the explanation for shime-nawa.
98 “Ishibashi’s Garden”, portraying the construction of a garden by Mirei Shigemori, the film is the
graduation work of his son Bairon for Filmschool (Tōkyō Sōgō Shashin Senmongaku), 1971.
already invited his main supporters, and sponsors of the garden, to attend the Hōkoku-sai\(^99\) ceremony. And Mirei Shigemori then took the chance to explain his design to the crowd. He obviously realized that the complexity of the concept required some clarification to the average garden admirer. And he was a good salesperson and a charismatic speaker. Mirei Shigemori, when asked to do so, never missed a chance to elaborate on his ideas.

### A Description of the Garden: Style, Technique and Material

First a few notes on the plans and photographs available regarding this garden, all of which are found in part 2, images 301 to 316. For both parts of the garden at Kasuga Jinja there are two plan versions in existence, one used for construction and another one, drawn after the garden was already finished, for publication.

The very first plan (Image 302), was drawn by Mirei Shigemori on February 4\(^{th}\), 1934, for the construction of the east garden. The second version of the plan for the same part of the garden (Images 301 and 303), and the sketch that goes with it (Image 304), were then prepared in August 1938 for the publication of the *Nihon Teienshi Zukan*.

The first plan for the north part of the garden (Image 311), was drawn by Mirei Shigemori on September 17\(^{th}\), 1934 just four days before the Muroto typhoon hit Japan. It was used to build the north garden when construction activities resumed on May 4\(^{th}\), 1937. The second version of the plan (Image 301 and 312) is on the same piece of paper as the one for the east garden, so the production dates are identical to the above mentioned. This is also true for the sketch (Image 313), which is really one large image depicting the entire garden.

The photographs, of both the east and north gardens, are the ones published in the *Nihon Teienshi Zukan* together with the plan and sketches prepared in 1938. They are also provided for reference in part 2, helping to visualize this rather complex garden design.

**Style:** The east garden is surrounded on three sides by buildings (Image 301 and 304), and can therefore be seen from three different vantage points. There is a guest room to its north, the shrine office with the waiting room to the west and some additional rooms to the south. Naturally Mirei Shigemori’s design takes good advantage of this spatial arrangement. The five stones in the center can be seen from all three sides, but the rest of the stones are only visible from certain viewpoints.

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\(^99\) Event to report the conclusion of the garden’s construction to the gods.
Regarding his design intention he writes in his diary: “As it is a shrine garden, the key numbers for the design are 3-5-7. My idea is to set twenty-five stones here in a way that they can always be seen in groups of 7-5-3 from each of the three viewpoints. So that requires rather complex stone compositions.” But why are the key numbers 3-5-7? Mirei Shigemori here takes inspiration from the shime-nawa, a holy rope that marks stones and trees as deified places in Japan (see also Images 283, 285 and 286). He feels that this connection to very early Shinto symbolism is the key to creating a garden that is appropriate to a shrine. And there are more symbolic references, but they are even less apparent. The contiguous four stones, out of the five in the very center of the garden, refer to the four initial gods at Kasuga Jinja. And the entire group of five stones then includes a god that was added later. In this way Mirei Shigemori dedicates the central stone setting to the shrine, respectively the top tiers of its gods. Then the total number of trees and stones in the east garden is 52, which refers to the 52 shrines that are under the patronage of Kasuga Jinja. And all the stones are set in an upright fashion just like the ones at an amatsu iwakura. But in its essence the east part is a karesansui style garden, featuring the typical elements of stone, gravel and some vegetation.

The main element of the north garden is a winding stream called a yarimizu (Images 312 and 313), a popular garden element in the Heian period’s shinden style gardens. Mirei Shigemori took the inspiration from existing architectural features as well as the shrine’s history. First of all, the building facing the northern part of the garden has the railing typical of shinden style architecture. And secondly, Kasuga Jinja was the family shrine of the Fujiwara clan who prospered during the Heian period. Making reference to these historical circumstances, he used the yarimizu as typical element for that specific time period, thus displaying and reinforcing those roots.

100 From Feb. 3rd 1934 in Excerpts from the Diary: “Kasuga Jinja: 1933-1934”; note that Japanese traditionally start counting from right to left.
101 Some interesting research regarding shime-nawa has been done by Günter Nitschke, in Architectural Digest, volume 12/1974, page 760. According to him a shime-nawa fences off and sanctifies a sacred area or object. He looks at it as a way to occupy space and mark it.
102 Nihon Teienshi Zukan, volume 22, page 49.
103 Ibid.
104 A spiritual or holy place where the gods descend; the ancient Japanese believed that a place surrounded by rocks was inhabited by gods, thus naming it amatsu iwakura (heavenly barrier) or amatsu iwakura (heavenly seat).
105 As the noble family of Fujiwara consolidated its grip on power during the Heian period, an aristocratic, natively inspired art and culture developed. The yarimizu fits that image as it refers to the heart of Japan, referring to the rivers coming from the many mountains the country has, the source for its abundance of water.
As the east garden already is in the karesansui style, Mirei Shigemori clearly wanted to provide some contrast and diversity in shapes and materials. So he decided to design a lightening-shaped stream for the northern garden and use real water instead of sand. In this way the two parts of the garden ended up being quite different.

**Technique:** As mentioned before, the east garden can be seen from three different vantage points, and therefore it is designed to have three faces. Mirei Shigemori used twenty-five stones in this garden, but only stone groups of 3-5-7 can be seen from each one of the viewpoints. The other ten stones are always hidden by vegetation. The five stones in the center are visible from all three sides. Their heights are 124cm, 69cm, 54cm, 57cm and 60cm. The 60cm tall stone is a little bit away from the other four stones.

To the southwest of the five central stones, there is a group of seven stones, and in the northeast there is a group of three stones. If the garden is looked at from the side of the shrine office, one can see a 7-5-3 stone arrangement, that is from right to left. The seven stones in the southwest compose another 7-5-3 arrangement together with the five stones in the center and three stones in southeast if looked at from the south side; this time from left to right. Finally, if one looks at the stone settings from the north, the three stones in the northwest, the five in the center and the seven to the northeast make another 3-5-7 stone arrangement, again from right to left. The seven stones in the southwest are in size (from southwest) 54cm, 57cm, 27cm, 51cm, 36cm, 78cm and 66cm. The height of the three stones in the southeast is 51cm, 75cm and 66cm. And the three stones to the northwest are 33cm, 69cm and 42cm tall. The two groups of three stones are set in the Sanjin-style. The seven stones in the northeast are in size (from northeast) 54cm, 93cm, 42cm, 69cm, 84cm, 54cm and 45cm. The two lines intersect and continue toward the respective corners of the garden. The 7-5-7 stone arrangements create one line, whereas the groups of 3-5-3 stones describe the other line. That technique is called Sanpō Shōmen Ishigumi Shuhō, or stone arrangement with three faces.

The entire garden was planted with moss, except the western part, which was covered with white sand to better reflect the heat. In order to display perfect 3-5-7 groups of stone arrangements, vegetation was used to hide certain stones in certain directions. Obviously it is

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106 The heights indicated in the plans (Image 301 and 303) are in shaku, an old Japanese unit that exists in several versions depending on the thing it measures; 1 shaku in this case is about 30 centimeter.

107 Literally means 'three gods'-style and is the Shinto version of the Buddhist sanzonseki (三尊石) stone setting or sometimes also called triad stones, composed of a large stone in the center and two smaller ones to its right and left. In Buddhism the central one represents the main figure of a Buddhist trinity, and the side ones the attendants. In Shinto it would be a main and two subordinate gods.
important to maintain the height of the vegetation, to keep the composed views visible to their respective sides.

In contrast to the east garden, real water is used in the north garden’s stream. The water enters the garden from the east and flows along the lightening-shaped stream as shown on the plan. The yarimizu’s bed is cast in concrete. The depths are 12 centimeter in the upper part of the stream, 15 centimeter in the middle and 21 centimeter in the lower part. There are several small stones set in the stream to provide for a more natural landscape. In front of the north gate of the garden two bridges are placed, both made from natural stone. As gardens with this kind of a yarimizu no longer exist, a scroll depicting one inspired this design and was the only thing that Mirei Shigemori could use for a reference. In the same paragraph he also admits some technical faults this garden has, and attributes them to a lack of construction supervision from his side. Mirei Shigemori notes that the concrete channel is too deep and its banks made a little too steep.

**Material:** The following plants were used in the east garden: Camellia sasanqua, Ilex crenata, Pittosporum tobira, Camelia species, Pieris japonica, Gardenia jasminoides, Castanea crenata, Rhododendron species, Rhododendron pulchrum, Astragalus sinicus, Aphananthe aspera, Pinus thunbergii and Cryptomeria japonica. Four of the plants were selected because their name also appears in one of the subordinate Shrine’s names. These are: *kuri* (Castanea crenata) is part of Kurikara Jinja, *sugi* (Cryptomeria japonica) is part of Sugimoto Jinja, *tsubaki* (Camelia species) is part of Tsubakimoto Jinja and *sakaki* (Cleyera japonica) is part of AÔsakaki Jinja. The stones used in the east garden are all from the mountain areas of Kurama, Kibune and Tamba.

The vegetation in the north garden is selected with regard to an old poem related to a place called Mt. Takamado. So accordingly there is Acer japonica, Pieris japonica, Cryptomeria japonica, Lespedeza bicolor, Platycodon grandiflorum, Sasa veitchii, Shibataea kumasaca, Prunus mume and Equisetum hyemale. Those are all plants that grow well in the shady environment of a valley or the north side of a house in Nara.

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108 **Nihon Teienshi Zukan,** volume 22, page 51.
109 A mountain near what we know today as the city of Nara. As it was conveniently located to the southeast of the old capital called Heijókyô (710-794), roughly congruent with today’s Nara, people went to Mt. Takamado to enjoy cherry blossoms and fall color amidst the rolling hills that surrounded the ancient city. It must have been about the same time that the respective poem had been written.
As stated earlier it is my hypothesis that Mirei Shigemori created at Kasuga Jinja a modern shrine garden based on old Shinto roots, something not many people had tried before him. In the following paragraphs I will analyze his approach and evaluate it in the context of his own works. As there are two parts to the garden, I will always talk about the east part first and then consider the north garden.

Concept and design idea: The problem that Mirei Shigemori had to address was that there were hardly any gardens at shrines and even more difficult, there was no established style of garden that one could call a shrine garden. His line of argument here is: "Some gardens could be considered shrine gardens, such as: Kitabatake Jinja (Muromachi period, 1333-1568), Taga Jinja (Momoyama period, 1568-1868), Matsuo Jinja (Momoyama period), Kokyû Jinja (Edo period, 1600-1868), Shirahige Jinja (Edo period), Heikan Jingû (Meiji period, 1868-1912), Kiji Jinja (Meiji period), Suwa Jinja (Meiji period), Meiji Jingû (Taishô period, 1912-1926) and Yasukuni Jinja (Shôwa period, 1926-1989). But in fact there is hardly any true shrine garden among these, as some of the above are attached to temples that are located next to the shrine. And besides, the gardens at shrines built after the Meiji period are more like Buddhist gardens. It was hard for shrine gardens to exist independent from Buddhism." Even one of his favorite ancient gardens, the powerful stone setting at Matsuo Jinja in Yôkaichi (Shiga prefecture), is full of Buddhist influences, such as the reference to Mt. Hôrai and the kameshima and tsurushima.

So there were no original and pure examples, probably because shrines originally simply did not have gardens. People worshipped places in nature, mainly unique rocks or old trees, marked by a shime-nawa, thinking that it was at those places where the gods came to visit. Later, as a result of the competitive situation that the import of Buddhism to Japan had created, nearby these natural places actual shrine buildings were built. But still no garden was needed. The natural setting with the ancient holy rocks and trees was enough. But then as all the Buddhist temples built beautiful gardens around their buildings, the difference became...
apparent. Shinto, although a religion based on nature, had not yet progressed to the point of creating a more cultured version of nature, a garden, to surround itself with. So therefore the shrines were without gardens.

So hired to design a garden for a shrine, Mirei Shigemori had to think about what a shrine garden really was, or more important how it could look in the twentieth century. The big idea that he then had when designing the garden for Kasuga Jinja was to take the shime-nawa as his main object of inspiration. The rope made from rice straw is the one quintessential mark of Shinto. When in ancient times those special rocks in the landscape where the gods were thought to descend were marked, the shime-nawa represented the cultural layer (Image 283, 284 and 285). It was the thing man added to that place. As the garden is nothing else but a product of nature overlaid by culture, it seems understandable that in the case of a Shinto shrine one could go back to that very first manifestation of man’s religious behavior, and take inspiration from the shape it took at that time. That is exactly what Mirei Shigemori did and he found two ideas that he used to create shape and meaning for his garden design. One is the concept of 7-5-3 and the other is the gohei symbol. Both concepts may be found hanging from the rice straw rope, one in the form of rice stalks numbering 7-5-3 and the other as paper streamers, and both are inherit parts of the shime-nawa and therefore Shinto (Image 286).

The numbers of 7-5-3 are of special significance in Japanese culture. There is for example a children's festival known as Shichi-Go-San, literally Seven-Five-Three, which is celebrated annually on the 15th of November for children who happen to be three, five or seven. Arite of passage in which the five-year-old boys and the three- and seven-year-old girls visit the shrine of their tutelary deity to pray for special protection. In the garden we know the shichigosan ishigumi, literally the seven-five-three stone arrangement, where 15 stones are placed in groups of seven, five and three stones each, arranged in overall harmony. That is exactly what Mirei Shigemori used in the garden at Kasuga Jinga, not only once but three times. How he did that will be discussed below when we get to the technical aspects.

The gohei is an even more common symbol and can be found all over Japan at any day of the year. The white zigzag paper streamers are everywhere hanging from cords made of rice straw, marking deified and purified spaces or objects. As a talisman against evil they are found at shrine entrances or sometimes on their main buildings, and always around trees or rocks. Whether the purpose is the groundbreaking ceremony for a new building or simply the performance of a special ceremony, the space thus surrounded by the shime-nawa becomes purified. The kami consequently also becomes a yashiki-gami or household kami, the guardian of the household. At New Year, a shime-nawa is put up at every house for the end of the year
purification. The gohei recall the brilliance of the sun and the glare of its light. And that light is what inspired the shape of the river in the north garden. But it is not merely light the river represents, but lightning, the much stronger version that in Shinto became the symbol of the cosmic power of enlightenment. A rather appropriate reference to make for the garden in front of the shrine office!

So in summary we can say that conceptually Mirei Shigemori makes reference to ancient cultural roots and derives his design idea from those very meaningful symbols and shapes.

Style: The two garden parts are from the start designed in a different style. For the east garden Mirei Shigemori choose the karesansui style. This choice seems inspired by the fact that he valued the garden at Ryôan-ji so highly, which at that time was not yet such a famous garden. In his diary he notes to that regard: "I want to make this garden better than the one at Ryôan-ji. As this is my first shrine garden, I will do my very best." And he doesn’t seem to care that Ryôan-ji is the garden of a Zen Buddhist temple and not of a Shinto shrine. Considering the strong connection that Shinto has to the iwakura and iwasaka stones of ancient times, for Mirei Shigemori the choice of the dry landscape garden seems natural and not necessarily connected to a certain religion per se. Furthermore, the Japanese are very open-minded when it comes to religion and their culture has a long tradition of integrating different influences. Shinto and Buddhism have long borrowed and learned from each other, and now coexist in a rather harmonious way. Thinking about it from that point of view, the karesansui garden, in western books often referred to as Zen garden, is embodied with a strong sense of Shinto. An ancient iwakura consisting of several rocks, often with gravel in between is in the end not that different from a karesansui garden. It might be a slightly different scale and proportion, but the materials are actually quite similar.

A karesansui garden also often contains elements incorporating moss, and among Mirei Shigemori’s gardens that is almost always the case. As point eight he notes in his diary that it is his intention to: "Cover the front part of the garden with moss to prevent excessive heat and cover the backside with white sand to create a sense of space." It is true that in the hot Kansai summers a zone with white Shirakawa suna will reflect the heat, and is therefore to be

In The Litany of Wind and Lightning it says: “The wind and the lightning speak to us of the visible and invisible forces that touch the physical life of the environment, sometimes to bless and sometimes to bring chaos. Lightning can make rice grow. Lightning can set a forest on fire,” from Stuart D.P. Picken, Shinto meditations for Revering the Earth, page 76.

Feb. 3rd 1934 in Excerpts from Mirei Shigemori’s Diary: Kasuga Jinja.

Feb. 4th.

Ibid, Feb. 4th.
avoided too close to the house. That is why in his design of the garden, as shown in the design plan (Image 304), the parts of the garden close to the guest room and the shrine office are planted with moss. For variation and interest he then creates a more open space towards the back of the garden, giving the entire space a sense of depth. The shape he chose for the sand at first didn’t seem to make much sense in the context of this garden, until I realized that it was almost exactly the same approach as in his very first garden, at his home in Yoshikawa (Image 203). It symbolizes the river flowing from north to south towards the sea, as they often do in this part of the country, widening as it gets closer to its destination. And just like in his first garden, the river disappears under the building to the south. Even the way he connects land and water with stones feel much the same in the two gardens, though there are no stepping-stones in the Kasuga Jinja version, and the waterfall is missing as well. And with regard to topography there is no tsukiyama, an element that marks many of his later projects.

A remarkable comment he makes in his writing concerning the references, is regarding the overall layout of the stone settings. Under point seven from the above already cited list in the diary, he notes: “Design the lines of the stone arrangements and the space in consideration of contemporary art.” Here he is referring to the two straight lines that are intersecting. Straight lines are hardly ever used in a Japanese garden and for many they feel unnatural and too strong, even though it is not entirely obvious looking at the garden from the viewpoint of shrine’s rooms. But educated observers presumably do make such connections. For Mirei Shigemori straight lines are quintessentially modern and throughout his work he attempts to integrate them harmoniously into his garden designs. An inspiration here was his education as a painter in the 1920s, a time when modern painters such as Kandinsky, Modrian and many others pushed the limits of what a painting was.

According to Mirei Shigemori the north garden, built in 1937, is designed in shinden style. And as one reason for doing so, he cites that Kasuga Jinja was the family shrine of the Fujiwara clan, who was the most powerful family during the Heian period when the shinden style was created. And the yarimizu simply was a popular element in the garden at that time. So he used the yarimizu in the new design for Kasuga Jinja to make that reference.

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116 Ibid.
117 In the Nihon Teienshi Taikei, volume 27, page 124 he refers to a painting by Modrian from 1919 as an inspiration for his garden at Tōfuku-ji’s Hōjō in Kyōto, built in 1939.
118 Noted as point one of the five points under references for the north garden, on Feb. 4th 1934, in Excerpts for Mirei Shigemori’s Diary: “Kasuga Jinja: 1934-1934”.

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It is true that the Fujiwaras were great sponsors of the arts and during their rule a creatively inspired garden style developed. The shinden style architecture with the large open garden to the south called nantei, became something of a Japanese prototype. The main buildings set in and oriented to the garden, connected with long roofed corridors to fishing pavilions at the pond, was quite a cultural achievement with regard to the artistic and spatial integration of house and garden. And the yarimizu that Mirei Shigemori then borrowed was of course part of that whole ensemble at the time and often used for poetry readings. But taking the yarimizu now out of that historical context and recreating it in the north garden at Kasuga Jinja seems quite a far stretch.

Further supporting his choice of style, Mirei Shigemori cites that the building facing the north garden had the railings of shinden style architecture. That is also true, but the question then becomes if this is a good enough reason to design the garden also in shinden style so it would harmonize with the railing. Are the railings that crucial an element in the overall picture?

Neither the name of the Fujiwara family nor the type of railing already in place seems that convincing an argument for a shinden style garden to the north of the shrine office at Kasuga Jinja. I think Mirei Shigemori was in need of an explanation for something that he had other reasons for doing. The type of space that he encountered at the north garden is in fact more suitable for a mossy tea garden than a shinden style garden with a river, being a long and narrow stretch to the north of the building and not a wide-open space to the south. But Mirei was set on doing something with water, mainly as a contrast to the east garden. So he decided to create a river, knowing well about the cooling and refreshing effect it has on people during the hot Japanese summers. And no doubt a wonderful thing to have in a garden so close to a building.

So in the end the design that Mirei Shigemori developed seems to be less about honoring the Fujiwara family, by using a garden element from the time they prospered, or making a garden that harmonizes well with the architecture. Rather it appears that he came up with some historical background that sounded good after the fact, and worked with what he wanted to do anyway. Having studied art and history in school made that easy for him.

Even though I do not necessarily agree with how he arrived at the conclusion that the shinden style was the right choice, I do like the form he chose very much for other reasons: It is a shape inspired by the Rimpa school of painting; an early Japanese version of modern

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119 Nihon Teienshi Zukan, volume 22, page 51.
painting as will be explained under “Yamato-e and Rimpa” in chapter 5. In particular there is one painting by Ogata Korin called Chrysanthemum by the Stream, which depicts a very similar yarimizu stream (Image 317 and 318) from a slightly different angle.¹²⁰ The only difference being that Korin’s river is lined with many overwhelming blooming chrysanthemum plants, which Mirei Shigemori could not use as they would not grow well on the north side of a building. It is that very shape what Mirei Shigemori was so fond of, as many of his later gardens will show. That was at the root of his artistic inspiration, but of course the justification we heard above is what the client would prefer to hear. And Mirei Shigemori knew quite well how to best sell his design ideas to a specific client.

**Technique: Hide** and reveal is not an unusual concept in the Japanese garden, as it is quite often used in connection with screening elements and views. In the east garden Mirei Shigemori makes skillful use of this technique to constantly hide ten out of twenty-five stones from any of the three main vantage points. Only the five central stones are visible at all times. In the plan and the sketch (Images 303 and 304) we can see how he locates the planting in a way to achieve this goal. So from the south, west and north the view is a perfect 7-5-3 stone arrangement. This could even be true for the view from the east, but as this garden is not entered and only viewed from the building, there is no way to get a look at it from that side. A change in the elevation of the terrain and some higher trees further enclose the garden to the east and in fact create a courtyard situation.

![Spatial orientation of the stone arrangement](image)

Figure 1: Spatial orientation of the stone arrangement. The central square describes the area of the garden, the outer line indicates the proximity of the building as the garden is

¹²⁰ The painting Chrysanthemum by the Stream (Images 317 and 318) is painted on two pairs of six-fold screens, using a limited color range of lime and emerald green, deep azurite blue and gold for the water; the flowers are modeled in paste in actual relief.
surrounded by it on three sides. The two crossing lines of the stone setting are 7-5-7 and 3-5-3.

That technique is called *Sanpô Shômen Ishigumi Shuhô*, or stone arrangement with three faces. It is a rather unusual way to set stones, as most stone settings are designed to be seen from one or maybe two sides only. It is rare to see this level of complexity.

While setting the stones Mirei Shigemori decided which side of the stone its face was. It would then be set in a way to show its face to the main vantage point for that group. Its backside would then have to be considered from the other two viewpoints or hidden with vegetation. Also the total height the stone displayed above ground was an important factor. If one stone stands taller above the others, it becomes the dominant one. In a group of three, like in the *sanjin* style, that is usually the middle stone. So in a 7-5-3 stone composition it is crucial to keep a good balance of tall and low stones, otherwise the harmony is lost.

Another small detail to look out for is the proximity of stones. To make reference, in the same stone setting, to the four main gods at Kasuga Jinja and the five subordinate ones, is quite a trick. Mirei Shigemori accomplished this by setting four of the stones in a way that they slightly touch each other, and the fifth stone a little bit apart from the group of four. There are various things this organizational device could be symbolizing, like integration of hierarchy, group consciousness, collaboration or just a statement of overall harmony, not only in spiritual life but also in the real world. It is not uncommon that a little gesture, like a gap between two stones, can carry a lot of meaning. That is a typical aspect of the Japanese garden and the level to which it is mastered comments on the sophistication of the garden designer.

Similarly there is an additional layer of hide and reveal within the 7-5-3 stone groupings. Mirei Shigemori notes to that respect in his diary: “In this garden there are always two stones [out of fifteen] that cannot be seen from a certain viewpoint. That is similar to what happens in the garden at Ryōan-ji. As people walk along the garden there, they notice that there is always one hidden stone. Only if we arrange the stones perfectly, do we get this magical result.”

By adding this level of complexity to the stone setting, the effect is that it is in fact constantly changing as one walks along the *engawa* of the building. New stones are appearing as previously visible ones disappear behind other stones or then vegetation. This proves that...
he has learned from other good examples in the field, like Ryōan-ji, and tried to create something even better.

Stones in the Japanese garden have always been set both, upright and flat. There are people, however, who feel that setting a stone too vertical looks unnatural and should therefore be avoided. Then on the other end of the spectrum there is those who say that the stones should be set in a more artistic and powerful way. For both attitudes there are a great number of examples to be found, and as these basic attitudes haven’t changed much, the discussion will go on.

Mirei Shigemori, for his part, clearly belongs to the second group and most of his stone settings are artistic and powerful, some even provocative. He saw himself as an artist and didn’t hesitate to also make extreme statements, not only when setting stones. With regard to the east garden at Kasuga Jinja it is interesting that he provides the name of a specific style that inspired him. As already mentioned above, he is referring to the ancient amatsu iwazaka as a prototype, and says that in the same manner he was setting his stones in an upright fashion. To draw this reference to an old Shinto style stone setting, rather than following a temporary fashion, naturally gives his work more credibility. And it is a message to potential critics, saying that he is in line with a long tradition by arranging the stones this way.

Comparing the first plan (Image 302) that Mirei Shigemori drew on February 4th 1934 for the construction of the east garden, with the second plan (Image 303) drawn later in August 1938 for the publication of the Nihon Teienshi Zukan, we can notice a few remarkable changes. One is of course the introduction of the sand river flowing towards the south, as this plan is documenting the actual built design. Although the executed stone settings follow the big scheme of the two diagonal lines very well, there is some shifted emphasis in size, orientation and grouping of the stones. For example, in the first plan the orientation of all the stones in the northern half of the garden strictly follows the diagonal line. The actual built version is much freer. Also the northern group of seven stones is in the initial plan divided in subgroups of three and four stones, where in the actual garden a two and five combination was placed. Furthermore, the southern group of seven stones has changed in weight as well as distribution. The early version was more concentrated as the eastern five stones were almost touching each other, where the executed stone setting is much more scattered. Then in the southern group of three stones the weight as shifted, from three stones that were quite different in size, to some that are actually rather similar. In the northern group of three, the middle stone is turned ninety degrees and emphasizes the u-shape more in the built version. And finally, the central stone arrangement changed quite a bit. It lost some of its heaviness
and changed from a diagonal to a more north-south orientation. All in all, the center became clearly less pointed.

The main reason for these differences is that the stones had not yet been bought when the first plan was drawn up. The stones were purchased later, with the help of the plan. The act of placing the stones was when the main decisions were made and the garden took shape. After looking at a certain stone, in the context of the already place ones, Mirei Shigemori would adjust its use and placing accordingly.

Technically the north part of the garden was actually much less demanding. Mirei Shigemori outlined the lightning-shaped yarimizu in his plan, and Mr. Kawasaki constructed it accordingly on the site. Even though he built the concrete channel a bit deep and too steep on the sides, it actually might make a stronger artistic statement that way. And if these details were important to Mirei Shigemori, he would have made sure to be there. Then there was really just the grading and planting left to do, and since Mr. Kawasaki was an experienced gardener that turned out well. Mirei Shigemori did come back to review everything two days after the garden’s completion and changed a few details around, among them almost certainly some of the stones. Still some of the stones to the east part of the garden, at the start of the yarimizu, do not carry Mirei Shigemori’s handwriting, as they are lingering a bit undecidedly along the side of the stream. Too naturalistic for what he was interested in. But then on the other hand the stones set into the water clearly reflect his hand. The 1-2-3 stone arrangement comes across in the same way the shape of the river does, unique and fresh.

Comparing the first plan that Mirei Shigemori drew on September 17th, 1934 for the construction of the north garden (Image 311), with the second plan drawn for the publication of the Nihon Teienshi Zukan, we can detect a few minor changes. The well stone that was supposed to mark the start of the stream was not put in place, possible for a lack of funding. Also where in the first plan the river flows right into the next property, in the actual built version it is stopping about one meter before the wall. Furthermore the shape of the river has, with the actual execution, become more rigid and geometric, where in the first plan it is a bit less strict and formal. The bends were longer and the width was not always exactly the same. The built version has become more of a perfect flash shape. Unfortunately the bridge stone closest to the building was shifted a little too far west (Image 315), having been better balanced in the initial plan of the north garden.
Material: It is interesting to note that all the stones used in the east garden are from Kurama, Kibune and Tamba, all of which are to the north or west of the of Kyôto city. Later in his career he almost completely switched to the so-called aoishi, or blue stones, from the island of Shikoku. In the case of Kasuga Jinja he must have gone to one or two local stone dealers in the area, maybe even in Kyôto. There he could select what he liked and the company then would deliver them to the construction site. Unfortunately there is no exact address in his records to indicate where he actually bought them. The fact that the stones are from the three aforementioned areas also means that they were not from the shrine’s grounds. It was actually quite common for clients with large properties, and shrines were usually among those, to require the landscape architect to use stones from their site. This usually meant a lot of walking around in hilly territory, trying to find suitable stones for the garden. But apparently this was still more economical than buying expensive stone from a dealer.

Then there is this number 52. Why would anybody go and count all the trees and stones used in a certain garden? Mirei Shigemori comments: “The total number of trees and stones [in the garden] is 52, which refers to the 52 shrines that follow this one.”122 A nice idea but a little far fetched. Of course it is nice to give all the temples that Kasuga Jinja leads a placeholder in the garden. But for a regular admirer of the garden that is simply not visible. One has to be told such information to make the connection, otherwise it is hard or impossible to grasp. Nobody would guess that there was significance to the total number of plants and trees in the garden. But then having said that, maybe for the people living with this garden every day, it really does evoke these other shrines once in a while. That would be a good enough reason if it works for them. And trying to establish connections and layers of meaning is not necessarily a bad thing.

Regarding the plants though, I really quite like the idea of designing the planting scheme of the north garden according to a poem. The river, densely planted with Acer japonica, Platycodon grandiflorum and Cryptomeria japonica and the others, perfectly recalls the atmosphere of a mountainous valley, even if one is not familiar with the poem. Then if one learns about Mt. Takamado, hearing the poem from the priest, a whole other layer of meaning opens up. This serves as a great example of how complexity was created traditionally in the Japanese garden. And Mirei Shigemori used it well in his contemporary interpretation. But the best part is how the idea of the poem connects back to the yarimizu. In the Heian period (794-1185) poetry competitions were actually held on the banks of those small winding

122 Nihon Teienshi Zukan, volume 22, page 49.
streams. One had to compose a haiku before the sake cup arrived that came floating down the river, otherwise it had to be emptied. So by using poetry to inspire the planting, the whole concept of the yarimizu at the temple actually becomes a bit more reasonable and complete.

This garden, small as it is, offers some good insights into the Japanese garden in general and Mirei Shigemori’s approach in particular. Because of its complexity and detail it takes a while to analyze and understand it. The following note from Mirei Shigemori’s diary shows that the design of the garden indeed required explanation and was not obvious to everybody, not even a Shinto priest: “I went to Kasuga Jinja at 5:00 P.M. As I had already said that I would come around that time, the priest was there and waited for me. I explained the design of the garden to him. It was good to have a chance to talk about my plan directly with him. Now priest Emi understands it well and we agreed to start the construction on the 20th or so.” This means that only after some convincing explanations by Mirei Shigemori did the priest approve the design and agree to build it! But his courage paid off, he liked the outcome and even decided to continue and also work on the north garden. Both parts of the garden still remain and can be visited by appointment only.

My initial hypothesis is hereby verified. Mirei Shigemori in fact created a modern version of a Shrine garden at Kasuga Jinja. With his elaborate stone settings he builds upon the old Shinto tradition of the iwakura and iwasaka, renews the overall composition by using ‘modern’ straight lines and creates a stone arrangement of amazing complexity.

Taking the symbolism of the shime-nawa as inspiration was the key idea. Analyzing it and translating the different parts into new shapes and relations was the most important step. Mirei Shigemori created a garden that departed from the simplicity of the ancient iwakura, or shrine-rock, to become a modern Shinto garden based on Shinto’s ancient roots.

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123 March 11th 1934 in Excerpts from Mirei Shigemori’s Diary: “Kasuga Jinja: 1934-1934”.
Maegaki Residence, 1955

Significance of the Garden

By 1955 Mirei Shigemori had completed about 80 projects and published 56 books. He was by any standard an established professional and scholar. And he was beginning to be well known.

Also, as he got closer to the peak of his career, he started to experiment more. Actually in Mirei Shigemori’s case, the majority of his really unique and creative works were built in the last 12 years of his life. Although still relatively early in his career, the Maegaki garden represents one of his first true inventions that later became his trademark: the undulating line (Images 337 and 338) symbolizing the coast, the beach or simply waves. It was here where he used it for the first time, creating, on his first try, one of the most flamboyant lines he was ever to design. Furthermore, the Maegaki garden also represents a typical residential garden design by Mirei Shigemori, a type of which he did many, and a style that made him very successful among his clients, people who wanted something contemporary and out of the ordinary.

It is my hypothesis that the garden for the Maegaki family represents the quintessence of a residential project designed by Mirei Shigemori. In addition, it represents a great leap forward in his formal design vocabulary, as it marks the creation of what later was to become his trademark, the undulating line built in stone.

Background and Start of the Project

Mr. Toshizô Maegaki owned a sake brewery named Kamoizumi in Saijô-chô, part of the Kamo-gun area in Hiroshima prefecture. The town is situated in the Chûgoku highlands, an area famous for the beauty of its natural scenery. There is a lot of red pine in the upland forests. The good quality of the local spring water and the rice grown here, provide for a prospering brewing industry. In the Nara period (710-794), this area was selected to build one

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124 The Japanese Red Pine (Pinus densiflora) is also one of the main plants cultivated in the Japanese garden. In nature a tree up to 35 meters tall, it is always pruned meticulously when used in a garden setting. It has a distinguished red trunk with irregular plates of bark, needles in groups of two, male flowers in dense clusters at the base of the new wood in April and oval cones to 6 centimeter in size.
of many Kokubun-ji temples all over Japan, which means it was seen as a place blessed by nature.

Brewery owners in Japan are commonly quite wealthy and often have a broad range of interests. Therefore local brewers, just like the doctors, are usually among the better-educated people in town and well aware of culture. This way they supposedly are able to have interesting conversations with their clients and eventually sell more sake. Mr. Maegaki apparently was such a person, and due to his wide range of interests, he collected and owned many excellent artifacts.125

Mr. Kuwata from Fukuyama introduced Mirei Shigemori to Mr. Maegaki. He was a close friend of Mirei Shigemori and a relative of Mr. Maegaki. This is a very common pattern in Japan, where most things happen through social connections. Somebody almost always introduced Mirei Shigemori, be it a friend, a colleague or a former client. The middleman, or woman, actually carries quite a bit of responsibility for the success of the proposed endeavor. He or she functions as a kind of guarantor and is one of the important safety layers for the way this kind of business is conducted.

The Maegaki's teahouse had just been finished at the time and it needed a garden to go with it. So on November 4th 1955, Mirei Shigemori visited Mr. Maegaki together with Mr. Kuwata with whom he met on the way. At 1:00 P.M. they arrived at the Saijô station and headed straight to Mr. Maegaki's residence. Because in Japan hardly any serious business is done without first having had a cup of tea or even a meal together, they were first invited to lunch with the owner and his family. Afterwards they went to the mountain that the Maegakis owned about eight kilometer away, to look around for possible stones for the new garden. But they did not find anything suitable there. On the way back, the group dropped by the local temple called Aki Kokubun-ji. Mirei Shigemori notes in his diary that the temple had not been maintained for a long time and it was in very bad shape. He and Mr. Kuwata then were invited to stay at the Maegaki's house for the night, something that happened to him quite often. They all had dinner together and apparently a very interesting conversation. Mirei Shigemori decided to return to Kyoto the next day.126

125 In the afternoon of November 15th 2001 the writer was able to visit the brewery and the garden. Similar to the winemaking industry, the sake brewers try to present themselves and their beverage as a cultural product. By surrounding themselves with the necessary objects, and this is also where the garden plays a role, they are creating an atmosphere of distinction. The old Mr. Toshizô Maegaki has passed away, but his wife and the younger generation still keep the place up.

126 Last paragraph based on Excerpts from the Diary: “Mr. Maegaki: 1955”, November 4th; for complete transcript see appendix 2.
The Construction Process as Recorded in the Diary

A little more than a month after he had been introduced, Mirei Shigemori returned to the Maegaki’s residence on December 7th to start the project. The owner’s son picked him up at the train station late in the afternoon. Again they had dinner together and Mirei Shigemori stayed at the client’s house. The official start was then on December 8th in the morning.

This garden was constructed in a total of 20 working days, of which Mirei Shigemori was present for an entire 16 days! This is due partly to an accident he had on December 17th but, as the following paragraphs will show, can also be credited to the close relationship he developed with his client over the time he stayed and worked there. In fact they remained close friends and Mrs. Maegaki was from that point on an honored guest at the famous hatsugama parties at the Shigemori residence in Kyōto.

From the start of the construction on December 8th, the work on the garden continued without interruption until December 27th! There are two apparent reasons for this. First of all, everybody involved wanted the project to be finished by the end of the year. The workers, including Mirei Shigemori, wanted to be home with their families for the New Year, the most important holiday of the year in Japan. And the Maegaki’s on the other hand wanted to present the new garden to their relatives and guests on the New Year.127 The second reason is subtler but probably almost as important. The hospitality of the Maegakis was so overwhelming, that the pressure to work very hard, and to not take advantage of it a day longer than necessary, was probably quite high.

In the case of the Maegaki’s garden, the diary is a good source to understand not only the actual construction process of the garden, but also to get a sense of how Mirei Shigemori involved the client, and how, then as a result important relationships were developed. The Maegakis are in fact part of a whole group of clients who know each other. The following quotations are again taken from translations of the diary, which in its full version is included in appendix 2 under Excerpts from the Diary: “Maegaki: 1955”.

“December 8th: From the morning on, Kōno-kun, Noguchi-kun and Yoshii-kun worked on the preparations for starting the construction. I heard that there were stones 10 to 15 kilometer away from Saijō-cho, so Mr. Maegaki and I decided to go and see them by car, together with a person who knew where they were. And there were many stones, but they were all black.

127 January 1st to January 3rd is the most important holiday period in Japan. Almost everybody has the time off and visits the local shrine, family and friends to deliver the best wishes for the New Year and greetings in person. The house is decorated and special dishes are prepared.
stones similar to the *Ikoma ishi*. So the color was bad and the proportions were also not very good. All that I got today was fatigue. Digging up the vegetation of the former garden was also underway today. We talked a lot at dinner.” This was the second attempt at trying to find stones nearby, which means that the client must really have pushed for the use of local material. Mirei Shigemori was usually quick in going to a dealer to purchase the stones, if he was given the budget to do so. Also, as was the case many times in his career, there had been a garden in place before that needed to be cleared. Often clients asked to have plants or stones reused in a new design, as they had become dear to them or maybe just been really expensive when they first bought them. Mirei Shigemori usually responded rather negatively to such requests, but often could not help but try to integrate some of the old material in the new garden. So it happened also in this case. The Maegakis had a lot of plants and stones in the previous garden that needed to be dug up. Some of it was prepared for transplanting, moved to the side or given away. This kind of work seems to have occupied a large part of the first three days.

“December 9*: It seems that it will take time to clean up the terrain and prepare it for the construction. I ordered the moss, the white sand and the paving stones. All the Maegaki family is very nice to us. Sometimes I feel bad for them taking care of all our meals. The big pine tree (*Pinus thunbergii*) was transplanted and we dug up the fragrant olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*), boxwood (*Ilex crenata*) and maple trees (*Acer palmatum*).” The fact that Mirei Shigemori already ordered the moss, white sand and the paving stones means that he must have made a rough sketch and calculation to get a sense of the amounts necessary. And here is a first statement regarding the extensive hospitality they received. They were at the site all day long and had all their meals served there, and of course being Japanese they could not say no, that would have been impolite.

“December 10*: In the morning, we started transplanting fragrant olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*), boxwood (*Ilex crenata*), maple trees (*Acer palmatum*) and were able to finish that work by the evening. I drew the design of the Maegaki’s garden and also did calligraphy on some pieces of square paper during the day. Later, I gave them to the Maegaki family. As usual, they served us dinner. At 11:00 P.M. I went to bed. In the afternoon, I had received a telegraph saying that Yoshii-kun’s mother was sick so he took an 11:00 P.M. train to return to Kyōto.” On this day Mirei Shigemori drew up the plan by which the garden would be built, and he did that on site, meaning at the Maegaki’s house. The calligraphy (Image 354) he made for the Maegakis was a present for their great hospitality. In Chinese characters it says
that there is no other law than the heart. The piece is still in the family's possession and proudly presented to any visitor who asks to see it.

"December 11th: In the morning, I explained to the gardeners what to do for the construction during my absence. Mr. Suehiro brought two gardeners to help and they went to the mountain to look for stones for the garden. Mrs. Maegaki saw me off at the Saijô station and gave me some souvenirs. [...]" It was a Sunday, but as Mirei Shigemori was planning to leave for about four days, he had prepared a plan for the gardeners to work after and instructed them accordingly. Also to speed up the stone search two local gardeners reinforced the team; the idea being that upon his return some good stones would be ready to be placed. And as there now was a plan of the garden available, they probably also had a better idea of what kind of stones they were trying to find.

From the fact that he was brought to the station and even given presents to bring home to Kyôto, we can see that the Maegakis really did everything possible to be not only good clients, but even better hosts. Mirei Shigemori returned to Kyôto for a meeting of the Byakutôsha study group. He took a 9:50 A.M. train and arrived in Okayama at 12:40 A.M. where he then visited some acquaintances. At 5:50 P.M. he boarded a train bound for Kyôto and finally arrived there by 9:20 P.M. At home his colleagues were already waiting for him.

As he had not been around at home much lately, Mirei Shigemori stayed in Kyôto for December 12th, 13th and 14th; but then he had to return to his current construction site.

"December 15th: I left home at 7:00 A.M. to catch a train at 8:30 A.M. On the train I met Mr. Higashi-no and talked with him all the way to Okayama. Then I changed trains to go to Saijô. It was around 4:00 P.M. by the time I got to the Maegaki's residence. Since Kôno-kun, Noguchi-kun and the other gardeners from Hiroshima had worked hard, the stones were already here and ready to be arranged. I decided to start setting the stones tomorrow. Everybody in the Maegaki family is so nice to us that I sometimes feel hesitant to accept all their kindness such as everyday dinner, lunch and so forth." Mirei knew a lot of people, so often when he traveled he would meet somebody he knew. It is also worth noting that it was

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128 The Chinese characters as they are on the calligraphy: 心外無別法 (Image 354). There is no Japanese way of pronunciation for this as this is directly taken from a Buddhist sutra; it means "There is no other law than the heart". But a Japanese version it could be read as: Shinge ni heppô nashi (心外別法無), in which case the middle character is moved to the end of the expression; it then comes to mean "All of a person's nature comes from the heart" or "A person is a mirror of his or her heart".

129 The city of Okayama is the economic center of the prefecture with the same name. It is close to where Mirei Shigemori grew up and he often came here to buy books in his younger years.
almost a day-long trip to get from Kyōto to Saijō, as there were no high speed trains yet. In the meantime the gardeners had found stones in the mountains, dug them up and brought them to the site. Everything was ready for the most important step in making a Japanese garden: the setting of the stones.

"December 16th*: From the morning on, I directed the arrangement of the stones and most of the available stones were placed by the evening. So far so good, but some more stones are needed for the stone settings, so I will send somebody to the mountain to fetch some more tomorrow." Mirei Shigemori liked stones and used a lot of them, and this garden was no exception. From his survey activities he knew that it was the stone settings that would survive everything else. So he put a lot of effort and creative power into his stonework.

"December 17th*: Today I worked on the layout of the land, such as the fog-shaped central peninsulas, and then the garden started to become quite beautiful. [The significance of the fog-shaped peninsulas will be explained in the following chapter.] In the afternoon, the new stones were delivered and I climbed up the truck to see them. As the bed of the truck was covered with straw, and I wore geta shoes, I slipped from the edge and was seriously injured. I twisted my right ankle very hard, which hurt tremendously. When I asked for a doctor, one came right away to treat my ankle. Even during the night, it still hurts." That was an unlucky event, which spoiled Mirei Shigemori’s next few days and limited his range of activities. But at the end it became almost something of a bonding experience for him and his clients, in part for all the care he received as a result of his injury.

"December 18th*: In the morning I found that my ankle was swollen and was becoming bigger and bigger. It seemed that there might be internal bleeding. I tried to direct the stone settings even though my ankle hurt very much. But after I had done one stone setting, I couldn’t stand the pain any longer and spent the rest of the day in bed. In any case, the stone settings were set very well and quite beautiful actually!" Over time, his crew grew more experienced and knew Mirei Shigemori’s taste quite well. They would often even do the stone settings just from the plan, without him actually being there. At the end Mirei Shigemori would then come to approve the work and might have them change a few details. The working process for the Maegaki garden was a first step in this direction.

"December 19th*: As my ankle still hurt, I took an x-ray. The doctor then said there was nothing broken or cracked in my ankle, which made me feel relieved. Today I directed the

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130 Japan inaugurated its first bullet train line only in 1964, in time for the opening of the Olympic Games in Tōkyō. This line, running from Tōkyō to Ōsaka, was named Tokaido Shinkansen, and was a remarkable feat for a country still recovering from the severe devastation of WW II.
stone settings in the front part of the property.” After a day in bed and good news from the doctor he was back in the garden directing the work. That is the true Japanese work ethic, complete devotion to what you do.

“December 20*: I oversaw the transplanting of a big maple and some other trees in the garden. The garden is becoming very beautiful! […]” That must have been the maple tree now located at the neck of the left peninsula, as it was the only big one of its kind in the garden.

“December 21st: Today I directed the stone settings at the entrance area. As my ankle hurt so much, I had to hold a pillow while working. The layout of the land was almost done so we began to plant the moss.” On the fourth day after the accident there was still not much improvement regarding his pain. The term ‘layout of the land’ also includes the shaping of the three-dimensional terrain features, for example the preparation of mounds. In general getting the terrain ready to be planted.

“December 22nd: The moss has been planted since yesterday afternoon and it was finished today. So the peninsulas in the front garden are now covered with the moss and it looks very beautiful. Everybody here enjoys watching the progress of the garden as it becomes more and more scenic. In the evening, I did a few pieces of calligraphy. Several neighbors were invited and I gave a lecture on interior design for about two hours. My ankle is getting better and less painful but still hurts.” Placing the moss is always a big step towards finishing a garden, at least visually. The fact that a large part of the surface of the garden is covered in its final material makes the client think that completion of the work is near. But that phase was actually still six days away. The way in which a social life developed around the project is worth pointing out. Mirei Shigemori was doing more calligraphy for his hosts (Image 355), and was now giving lectures to the neighbors and friends of his clients. And it was a welcome situation for both sides. The Maegakis could show their famous garden designer off and he could seek potential new clients.

“December 23*: Today we did the vegetation and planted the moss around the gate. As the paving stones for the area under the eaves were delivered during the day, we will start working on that tomorrow.” In a normal construction sequence this kind of work requiring a concrete base, would usually be done early in the project and not towards its end. But Mirei

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131 The calligraphy depicts on three different square plates pine, bamboo and plum; in Japanese shô, chiku, bai, which is a classic botanical trio that is found in many gardens as well as paintings. It also includes a ranking, representing the three good things in descending order, something like best, great and good.
Shigemori had only ordered the stones on December 9th, after starting the work on the site, and apparently it took the paving stones two weeks to get to Saijô. As in this garden’s design the paved area is largely separate from anything else and located along the building, it was actually quite feasible to save this work for the end.

“December 24*: In the morning, I first drew the line on the ground and then Kôno-kun and Noguchi-kun worked on the placing of the paving stones. People from the stone shop came to help us with that. The design under the eaves was inspired by the suhama-style and this is the first use of it among my designs. Some parts of the stone paving were done today. It will take about three more days to finish, I suppose. The filling of the concrete in the garden started today.” Mirei Shigemori first drew the outline or edge of the paving with a stick onto the ground. Then the gardeners followed the line and drove numerous stakes into the earth, spacing them closer together where the radius of the curve was smaller. Next a rope made from rice straw was used to connect all those poles in the ground, circling each of them once before continuing to the next. In this way the outline (Images 337 and 338) was fixed and the paving could be laid. Due to the winding curves of the line a lot of shaping of the stones was necessary, which naturally took some time as it was all done by hand. As this suhama-style line is of great significance in Mirei Shigemori’s work, it will be elaborated on further in the analysis chapter.

A thin layer of concrete was poured in the areas where the white sand was to come. By this method the sand wouldn’t mix with the soil underneath and at the same time it helps to limit the growth of weeds. Christmas is not celebrated in Japan, so December 24th was just a regular Saturday, and therefore a workday for the gardeners.

“December 25*: The construction site is becoming very busy, placing the paving stones in the front garden and planting the moss at the entrance area. The gardeners worked very hard and the garden is becoming more and more beautiful. The stones in the courtyard garden were all set.” As the end of the year drew near, everybody tried to finish their part as fast as possible. The stone setting in the courtyard garden must have been carried out in a rather short amount of time, considering all the other things that were completed on that day. The stones used had to pass through the little door at the northeast corner of the space. That is part of the reason why they are relatively small. And as usual, Mirei Shigemori likes his own design and was already proud of the outcome.

“December 26th: Most of the paving stones were placed and the garden will be finished after we distribute the white sand tomorrow. The concrete was all put in place at the entrance area, so we can bring the white sand into this part of the garden, too. As it will be all finished
tomorrow, I called Mr. Kuwata in Fukuyama and asked him to come and see the garden. Because he introduced me to Mr. Maegaki, I am looking forward to see him and to show him the garden. Tonight, I gave the third lecture on interior design for about two hours.” As large parts of the entrance area were also designed to have gravel, they needed to be covered with the same thin layer of concrete as in the south garden. His lectures on interior design must have been quite a success, considering that he was asked again to give a lecture (the second lecture is not mentioned in the diary). For later clients like Mr. Kogawa (1958) and Mr. Murakami (1959) he actually did a considerable amount of interior design as well.

“December 27th: We distributed the white sand in the garden and finished everything by noon. The Maegaki family was very pleased with the garden. After the white sand was brought in, the garden became very lively and beautiful. Mr. Maegaki was taking a lot of pictures. Around 2:00 P.M. Mr. Kuwata came and said it looked gorgeous! We had dinner together at the Maegaki’s residence. He left to catch the 11:00 P.M. train; I myself will leave tomorrow morning. Mrs. Maegaki had tears in her eyes, when I said that I would leave the next day. I am glad we had a chance to get so close to each other, thinking about how much she cries.” Distributing the white sand is usually the last act, and Mirei Shigemori would then perform the first raking of the sand. On the last day of construction everything was finished by noon and after that it was time to admire the garden take pictures and socialize some more. According to Japanese custom it is very important to invite the person responsible for the introduction to come and see the outcome. So Mr. Kuwata came and praised the work. An elaborate dinner concluded the project, and needless to say Mirei Shigemori was paid for his efforts.

“December 28th: I had breakfast with the Maegaki family. After that, Mrs. Maegaki dropped me off at the station, but it was a little too late for the train I was going to take at 9:57 A.M. So we had a cup of coffee at a café near the station, before I took the 10:40 A.M. train to return to Kyōto. As I have stayed there for such a long time, they will miss me and I will certainly miss them, too. The train took a long time to get back to Kyōto. It was 7:30 P.M. by the time I got to Kyōto station and I finally was home by about 8:00 P.M. […]” It was rather unusual for a client to cry when Mirei Shigemori left, especially as the Japanese are usually rather reserved and correct in their behavior. But the Maegakis were a special case and the whole experience of living together, and probably also the accident, created a closeness that certainly contributed to the creation of one of his key projects. Perhaps feeling a bit sentimental, Mirei Shigemori returned home to Kyōto after a very busy fall, still having to write hundreds of new year cards in the last three days of the year.
On a later visit he presented the Maegakis with a tea bowl (Image 356 and 357). Designed by Mirei Shigemori himself, it features a chestnut design and is therefore a bowl to be used in fall. The front of the bowl is where the one leaf folds over the edge. After the tea has been enjoyed, a chestnut appears on the bottom of the bowl. The outside carries Mirei Shigemori’s signature. This is real treasure and of course a clear sign of his appreciation of their great hospitality.

A Description of the Garden: Style, Technique and Material

For this key work among Mirei Shigemori’s projects, the plans, sketches and photographs are also provided in the image section in part 2 of this thesis. Images 330 to 359 are related to this garden. But unlike the previous project there are unfortunately no initial sketches or drawings existing anymore. A fact that is actually true for most of his projects. The drawing that Mirei Shigemori did on December 10th, 1955 has almost certainly been lost. But one beautifully drawn plan is available for this garden. It was made in November 1960, almost five years after the project’s completion (Images 330, 331, 349 and 351). A sketch also exists from the same year, drawn by Mr. Kokeji in the month of July. Both plan and sketch were most likely produced for the book that Mirei Shigemori was planning to publish on his work, and both are very accurate and illustrative representations of this garden.

The plan and sketch are supplemented with a number of my own photos taken in the afternoon of November 15th, 2001, when the writer was able to visit the garden in person. As the images show, all three parts are in perfect condition. 46 years after the garden’s completion it looked still as if it had just been finished a few days ago. Well-kept Japanese gardens don’t age much.

Style: This is a residential garden designed in the karesansui style. It consists of the three following main parts: the south garden, the courtyard garden and the front garden (Image 330). The entrance from the street is located to the north of the property and the access to the door is through the front garden.

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Footnotes:

132 It was not among the drawings, plans and sketches evacuated from the storage house in mid February 2003, and really there is no prospect of finding it anywhere else.
133 Mirei Shigemori published his only book about his own works four years after the plans for the Maegaki residence were produced; the title of the book is: Shigemori Mirei’s Collected Works (Gardens), Tōkyō: Heibonsha 1964.
The south garden is the largest part and is contained by a kura located to the south of it, and visible in the background (Image 335). It extends along a corridor of the shoin rooms, creating a u-shaped space that extends into the center of the building. According to Mirei Shigemori the garden is designed in Hôrai-style, inspired by the ancient Chinese cult of immortality. So the stone composition in the center represents the mythical Mt. Hôrai as well as a dry waterfall. The stone settings to both sides of the Mt. Hôrai stone arrangement are based on an imaginary island landscape from the East China Sea and are supposedly inspired by the rolling hills that surround Mt. Hôrai. This is also where some of the stones of the previous garden were used.

In front of the Mt. Hôrai stone arrangement, Mirei Shigemori created two peninsulas that intrude into the space from the east and west, while their tips overlap in the center of the garden. The inspiration for this came from the ancient sakuteiki. He explains: “Working on this design, I remembered that there were examples of mist-shaped center islands in the Kamakura period’s sakuteiki. Originally that referred to islands, but I used the idea for the peninsulas.” Creating a landscape resembling the Inland Sea, the image of islands and mist is actually quite compelling. And this layout of the land, depending on the viewpoint, creates quite a bit of depth in the garden.

In front of these two peninsulas, there is an area covered with white sand, which together with the u-shaped zone creates an open space right in front of the house. The stones within are arranged in a parallel fashion and a boat-shaped stone is placed amidst the white sand. The ship has already departed from the mainland and is on its way to the islands of the immortals. This reinforces the image of the landscapes of the Inland Sea. In this context, the paving stones of red kurama-ishi under the eaves are an abstraction of the coastline and are therefore in suhama style.

The courtyard garden, which is only 10 square meters in area, is also designed karesansui-style, but has no vegetation at all. It is a very dynamic and simple garden with only three stones placed.

In the front garden, the stepping-stones are arranged in a straight line towards the entrance with low tsukiyama mounds to both sides. As the entrance is also part of the overall theme of the Inland Sea landscape, the mounds are also in the suhama-shape, are covered with moss and consequently include a Hôrai-style stone setting. All of the entrance area, with the exception of the tsukiyama and the stepping-stones, is covered in white sand with raked lines.

134 In the Nihon Teienshi Taikei, volume 28, page 77.
135 Ibid.
The front garden is screened from the street by a three-meter high wall, and is therefore a completely private space.

**Technique:** As the stone selection was limited to local granite, Mirei Shigemori had to work with what he could get. But as the outcome shows, if the garden maker knows what to look out for, it is still possible to make a good garden with local material. He chose well-shaped and powerful stones, many of them with sharp edges. The ones that he had to reuse from the previous garden were set in unobtrusive places.

While describing the technical aspects of the stone setting it is helpful to refer, among others, to Image 332, the sketch of the south garden. The stone arrangements depicted in the image are marked with letters (A to H) and the same numbers are used for reference in the following text.

As I have already mentioned above, the most dominant stone setting (A) was inspired by Mt. Hôrai and at the same time it also represents a dry waterfall. Therefore the main stone, a tall and wide rock in the center of the arrangement, depicts Mt. Hôrai and is at the same time the Mizuochi-ishi, an often leaning stone that the water runs down on. Mirei Shigemori slightly inclined it towards the right so it looks a bit more dramatic. Another similarly inclined upright stone is placed to the right of the previous one. Then there is a smaller mountain-shaped stone to the left in front of the main stone, and an even lesser rock with a sharp top sits to the far left. Right in front of the Mizuochi-ishi, just about in the center of the group, Mirei Shigemori placed the lying Daiza-seki, a base or foundation stone of a usually horizontal appearance. Then to the far right of the stone composition are two small rocks for balance. This is a complete Mt. Hôrai-style stone arrangement with seven rocks, and it is the main formation of this garden.

On the back peninsula, further to the right of Mt. Hôrai, are nine stones arranged in a group (B). In front of the tallest stone, a sharp-pointed rock is placed leaning forward in the center of the group. Then an upright and a low mountain-shaped stone are set further to the left. To the right of the group a larger slightly pointing but more horizontal stone is placed, with a small vertical one to the front of its left corner. These are the stones to the front of the group, but there is a second line of rocks behind them. And then further back towards the far right corner of the garden another small group of five stones is placed. The latter are most likely stones from the former garden.

On the far left, next to the two round-shaped karikomi, a group of four rather upright stones and one horizontal rock, all of different sizes, are placed erratically as a backdrop (C).
Then again on the opposite side, in the northwest corner of the garden, is another group of stones. Designed to be the point from which the peninsula extends out, this is a rather diverse formation consisting of six rocks (D).

In front of those stone settings (A, B and C), there are the two long peninsulas that intrude into the space from east and west. They are modeled after a mountain ridge, with curved lines inspired by the coastline. Like the tsukiyama in the back and the front garden, they are covered with moss. As there are hardly any rocks on them, the moss really is the main characteristic of the two peninsulas; there is only one upright stone in the center of the right peninsula. The space in between where the two peninsulas overlap is covered with white sand. There are a few rock island-style type stones placed in an upright fashion (E). The Risseki technique is used for those stones.136

In front of the two peninsulas, within the area of the white sand, are upright stones in the center of the garden, their heart being a Sanzon-style stone arrangement (F).137 A larger horizontal stone is placed among the upright ones, and two small upright stones are close to its left corner. Further to the right, two tall stones are set upright (G) and another small horizontal stone is placed between them and the Sanzon-style group. This is a very unique composition by Mirei Shigemori and was most likely invented by him. If we look at the entire garden, it becomes clear how this stone arrangement really is the centerpiece and that the entire scenery benefits from it greatly. The boat-shaped stone (H) is then placed a little closer to the building, but is directed towards the previously described group. This stone signifies a ship on its way to the islands of the immortals, and therefore turns the whole composition into a Hôrai-style garden.

The main characteristic of a shoin garden is of course the stone settings. The tsukiyama mounds, the peninsulas and the vegetation are supporting features. With regard to the stone arrangement, Mt. Hôrai (A) is the main character and the stone settings to both sides are supporting characters (B and C). Also the central stone setting (F to G), despite its uniqueness, is one of the supporting characters here. Furthermore there is always a main stone and several supporting stones within each of the stone arrangements.

The courtyard garden consists of three rocks and white sand only. A rather difficult situation as there is neither vegetation nor any earth form that could balance or back up the

136 Lit. translates as ‘standing-stone-technique’: name for the method of setting stones in an upright or standing manner.
137 The Buddhist trinity, a form of stone settings containing three Buddhas, a main figure in the center flanked by two attendants; also called triad stones.
stones. Here a picture is worth more than a thousand words, as it is better to see and appreciate the stone setting than to read an explanation about it (Image 350).

The front garden is technically very similar to the south garden, consisting of *tsukiyama* mounds and a rather substantial Mt. Hôrai type stone arrangement. Only two out of the three mounds feature stone settings though, the one to the west a group of three and the other to the east a group of five rocks (Image 353). A straight line of stepping-stones approaches the entrance to the house directly, with a small path branching off to the entrance of the courtyard garden (Image 352).

**Material:** As previously mentioned, the stones were all granite from the local mountains and all dug up by the gardeners between December 11th and 15th 1955, the time that Mirei Shigemori was absent. They had been instructed by him what kind of stone to look for and ended up finding quite a bit of useful material. About a third of the stones used were from the previous garden, and Mirei Shigemori clearly states how much he did not like them: “They were less powerful and absolutely not to my taste. It was difficult to integrate those stones, so I used them in rather inconspicuous places.”

All the vegetation from the former garden was salvaged. Over the course of three days, essentially December 8th, 9th and 10th 1955, the gardener dug up Pinus thunbergii, Quercus dentate, Podocarpus macrophyllus, Aucuba japonica, Acer palmatum, Ternstroemia gymnanthera, Osmanthus fragrans, Rhododendron indicum, Rhododendron japonicum, Ilex crenata and transplanted them. Through careful maintenance, their shapes were adapted over the next few years to better fit the new garden.

The moss was ordered from a nursery in the Gôshû area in Shiga prefecture, and the white sand, as always, is of the famous *Shirakawa suna* from Kyôto. The red stones for the paving are *Kurama ishi* from the Tamba area, just north of Kyôto city. The mortar used in between the paving stones was red in color, a detail that Mirei Shigemori was particularly fond of.

**An Analysis and Evaluation of the Garden**

As mentioned above, it is my hypothesis that the garden for the Maegaki family represents the quintessence of a residential project designed by Mirei Shigemori. In addition it represents

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138 In the *Nihon Teienshi Taikei*, volume 28, page 78.
a great leap forward in his formal design vocabulary, the creation of the undulating line built in stone.

The following paragraphs will analyze the different components of the garden design and evaluate them in the context of this work. As this garden consists of three parts, I will always consider the South Garden first, then the Courtyard Garden and last the Front Garden at the entrance.

**Concept and design idea:** To better understand Mirei Shigemori’s point of departure it is helpful to take into account some of what he has to say about the character and design of today’s residential gardens and his own approach to such a situation. On pages 80 and 81 in volume 28 of the *Nihon Teienshi Taikei* he presents the following thoughts: “Gardens are made in various kinds of places: shrines, temples, residences, restaurants or hotels, government offices, schools, museums, banks, companies etc. However, quite a lot of them are actually residential gardens, and most of them are neither old nor artistic. In contrast, the gardens at shrines or temples are usually relatively old and they have been rather well preserved. And often they are even considered to be art. In comparison, the new gardens at restaurants or hotels are seldom at that level. Many gardens have been built in the recent boom, but I have trouble finding any outstanding ones among them.” So far this is his analysis of the current state of affairs, then he goes on to give us the reasons for why he thinks the situation is that way: “People tend to think that anybody can make a garden, without any education or original ideas. A lack of insight on the part of the owner, and knowledge on the side of the garden maker, provides for many tasteless gardens. The garden makers think a few stone arrangements and some trees are the only things needed to make a garden. This doesn’t do much for the cultivation of garden art.” This constitutes a rather direct critique of the work of many of his fellow garden makers as well as their clients. It is a remarkable statement in the context of a society like Japan, where such criticism is usually only made behind closed doors. And then he continues to explain why he thinks residential gardens are of special importance here: “At a residential house, the people living with the garden look at it every morning and evening, so it should be a sophisticated and inspiring sight. If this is the case they can absorb civilizing information every day. Residential gardens should be top quality cultural products, but what is being built at the moment is unfortunately the opposite.” These thoughts set the frame for the design he made at the Maegaki’s house.

The spatial concept of the garden is rather simple and basically determined by the location of the house. A Front Garden is situated between the street side entrance and the main door.
Then a little Courtyard Garden occupies the space between the storage house and the rest of the residence. And finally there is the South Garden laid-out in front of the most important rooms of the house, letting in the winter sun and providing some shade in the summer. And this is also the sequence that a visitor to the house experiences. One first enters a relatively calm space, then walks by the very simple and reduced courtyard, and finally arrives at a rather dramatic and vivid landscape scene. We could say that in terms of level of intensity, it starts somewhere around medium, goes down to low and then ends with high.

But then there is a whole range of conceptual ideas that give form to the garden. Since the garden is located not far from Japan’s Inland Sea, Mirei Shigemori takes this commanding landscape as the major inspiration for the design of this garden. He essentially creates a miniaturized version of it, complete with references to its individual elements, such as the sea, its islands and the varied coastline. And in addition there is a layer of symbolism from other places and landscapes. This is, for example, where Mt. Hōrai, the island of the immortals, comes into the concept; also the Buddhist trinity stone setting or the so-called rock islands. Then with the long and narrow shape of his peninsulas, he makes reference to one of the most famous landscapes in Japan called Amanohashidate, learning from famous examples such as the garden at Katsura Rikyū in Kyōto.139

So basically we are looking at an imaginary landscape of a house situated at the coast, connected to other mythical and real places by way of symbols or garden elements. In its built form this concept then translates into earth mounds and rock formations, supported by vegetation and a sea of white gravel.

And in addition this garden possesses a design feature that Mirei Shigemori carried around with him for a while, at least there are some small hints in a number of his earlier works. But it is here in the Maegaki’s garden where one of his key design elements was born: the undulating line carved in rock. In his diary he notes regarding this design element: “The design under the eaves was inspired by the tidal beach, and this is the first use of it among my designs.”140 It is not the very first curving line used in one of his gardens, but it is the first time he built it from stone and furthermore in a very lively, even flamboyant form. And as in many karesansui gardens, this one also works on different scales. Depending on the point of

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139 Amanohashidate is considered to be one of the three most scenic places in Japan. It is located on the Tango Peninsula in the north of Kyōto Prefecture at the Japan Sea; the peninsula is 3.6 kilometer long, less than 189 meter wide and covered with about 8000 twisted pine trees. The Japanese name translates into Bridge to Heaven. The garden at Katsura Rikyū features a miniature version, including a stone lantern that has become quite famous.

140 See December 24th 1955 in Excerpts from Mirei Shigemori’s Diary: “Mr. Maegaki: 1955”. 

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view we choose, the undulating edge is the coastline seen from high up in the sky, or then close up it becomes the waves washing up onto the beach.

In Japan most gardens are given names, and in Mirei Shigemori’s case there is also a concept behind the name of his garden. He called this one Jusen-tei, taking the first kanji character of the owner’s given name, which can also be pronounced as ju, adding sen signifying well or spring. Together it comes to mean ‘the garden of the lucky well’, a quite appropriate name for a brewer’s garden, I suppose.141

Style: The garden at the Maegaki residence, like most of Mirei Shigemori’s works, is designed in karesansui style. This being a dry landscape garden, the water is substituted with white sand, raked to show the whirls of the ocean. And even the waterfall is just imaginary and only recognizable by those who know how to read the stone arrangements. Then the mounds, called tsukiyama, are the islands of the Japan Inland Sea. On the whole we are looking at a highly abstracted type of garden.

Due to the structure of the stone settings, and the importance of its main group (A), Mirei Shigemori even calls the south part a Mt. Hôrai style karesansui garden.142 Hereby underlining the garden’s main idea, the boat on its way to the island of the immortals, and turning this Buddhist believe into the central attraction. This scene though is being transferred from its origin in the East China Sea into a new setting, namely the Japan Inland Sea. The Japanese have a long history of cultural influence from their dominant neighbor China, and are used to receiving ideas and adapting them to fit their place and mindset. And here Mirei Shigemori is no different, always trying to make reference to these old cultural roots, yet adapting them to the time and the place he is using them in.

Also the Amanohashidate-shape peninsulas have been altered to fit this garden’s scenery. First of all they are not shallow and low like the one at Katsura Rikyû, but in tsukiyama fashion actually rather hilly, adapting an aspect of the islands in the Japan Inland Sea (Image 362) Furthermore they are not covered with pine trees, as in the famous original and as many of its copies are, but they are actually void of any trees and just overgrown with a layer of

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141 Jusen-tei (寿泉庭), literally happy-spring-garden. The first kanji character can also be pronounced toshi and was taken from the owners name: Toshizô Maekgaki. The second kanji character sen, is now used to denote well or spring, but in old times also meant garden: for example rinsen (林泉), literally forest-spring, is an old word for garden. The last kanji character, pronounced as tei, translates simply as garden.

142 In the Nihon Teienshi Taikei, volume 28, page 77.
moss. And there are two of them, again contrary to Katsura Rikyū’s peninsula. So even though the reference stays the same, the style has been heavily altered in this project.

This is not the first time Mirei Shigemori uses Amanohashidate-style peninsulas in one of his garden designs. In fact there are two projects that he explicitly refers to, pointing out how he has changed the design of the peninsulas in the Maegaki’s garden: “I have previously designed similar peninsulas in the karesansui gardens of Mr. Onohara in Nishinomiya and Mr. Akira in Wakayama. So this time, to distinguish them from the previous peninsulas, I designed them in a longer and more narrow shape.” And in doing so they in fact became again closer in shape to the original. Already in 1940 he had designed two Amanohashidate-style peninsulas for the garden of Toshio Onohara (Image 358). At that time one of them was the classic version lined with black pine trees (Pinus thunbergii) and the other was just covered in moss. Then in 1952, just three years before the Maegaki’s garden, Mirei Shigemori designed a garden for Saichirō Akira (Image 359). Here he decided on only one relatively short peninsula, but still planted it with the traditional black pines. Then with the Maegaki’s garden he in effect returned to the more dramatic double peninsula version, realizing that it creates more depth in the garden. This was an exploration that took place over the course of 15 years.

Afterwards, in the same paragraph where he mentioned the earlier examples, he also explains how he came across that shape: “Working on this design, I remembered that there were examples of mist-shaped center islands in the Kamakura period’s Sakuteiki. Originally it referred to islands, but I used the idea for the peninsulas.” So Mirei Shigemori took inspiration from the legendary ‘Book of Gardening’, allegedly the oldest textbook on the secrets of gardening in Japan. By openly quoting the Sakuteiki as the source, he wants to give credibility to his work, root it in history and tell everybody that he has read and understands those famed rules. At the same time by adapting it to the peninsula, he shows us that as an artist he is free to use and change these old conventions as he pleases. An interesting move indeed.

In Japanese culture, and in Mirei Shigemori’s work in particular, mist is actually quite an interesting geometric form, as it is often abstracted. We can commonly find it in paintings and maps all over Japan, from the Edo period all the way to today (Image 360). The long narrow

143 Ibid.
144 In the Sakuteiki translated by Shigemaru Shimoyama in 1976, it says on page 10: “The Mist Shape: The shape of this island should look like the mist stretching over the lake under a clear morning sky, in double and triple folds, with narrow breaks here and there.”
shapes with the rounded ends, intruding from the side, became a symbol that every Japanese 
person recognizes as mist. And there are several among Mirei Shigemori’s projects that allude 
to that as well, most clearly the Nishimura Tarôemon (1942) Memorial garden in 
Oumihachiman in Shiga Prefecture from 1942 (Image 361).

Equally abstract is the coastline under the eaves, which Mirei Shigemori refers to as being in *suhama* style. Pebble beaches sloping gently into a pond have a long tradition in the Japanese garden. But in the Maegaki’s case neither were real pebbles were used, nor is it really a sloping beach. In fact rather the opposite is true. The beach shows a real edge and the stones are more angular than round. Moreover it is not a long slightly bending curve, but a flamboyantly undulating line. So Mirei Shigemori’s coastline is not just any beach, it is an artistic statement. And when he admits that it is the first among his creations, we know that it is an experiment. The use of red concrete in the joints between the stones makes this even more evident. Mirei Shigemori was not interested in a traditional *suhama* beach, but instead he wanted to set an artistic counterpoint to the otherwise relatively naturalistic garden. And this contrast in style and level of abstraction is what makes this garden interesting and even unique. (The undulating line will also be discussed in the chapter 4, as it eventually became one of his key design elements.)

**Technique:** As I pointed out before, the Mt. hôrai stone arrangement (A) also resembles an imaginary waterfall, this being an interesting parallel to the famous Daisen-in garden in Kyôto. And so it is no coincidence that Mt. hôrai is located to the back of the garden. As a waterfall it suggests the mountains to the back, as the origin of the water, and if we look at the sketch (Image 332), it becomes clear how the stream then winds its way towards the ocean. From this viewpoint, when the river flows by the rock islands (E and G), it enters the ocean that spreads out in front of the house.

We have already seen this composition of waterfall and river flowing to the ocean, in Mirei Shigemori’s very first work, the garden that he made together with his father at his parent’s house in Yoshikawa (Images 202 and 203). The waterfall stone setting is in fact almost an exact mirror image of the former one. The only thing that is missing is the stone bridge and the stepping-stones through the water. Of course the depiction of the waterfall, river and ocean a traditional set-piece in the Japanese garden and has been used often, but nonetheless it is remarkable to find such similarities in Mirei Shigemori’s very first garden as well as in a key work he designed more than forty years later.
The Mt. Hôrai stone setting (A) consists of seven stones, six of them being set clearly upright and only one low horizontal stone. The latter, being placed right in front of the Mizuochi-ishi, is the one where the imaginary water splashes down on. This being the Daizaseki, the base or foundation stone, it visually provides a basis for the waterfall and a welcome contrast to all the vertical lines within the composition. The small stones to the edges of the group are placed for accent to the left and balance-out the right side. And at the right corner it is where the water from the waterfall meets the main stream, this is what the two small stones indicate.

Technically very interesting, and at the same time the most innovative stone arrangement in the South Garden, is the group of stones set in the middle of the sand area right in front of the house (F, G, E). To the left Mirei Shigemori starts with a Sanzon-style stone setting (F), placing a long base stone among them. This creates already a very strong contrast of four upward pointing stones and one horizontal one. Then he extends the group towards the right peninsula with another flat stone that is in the same orientation as the previous one, leading to a gate arrangement (G). The gate is made from two upright stones very similar in size and height, and this is also where the boat will have to pass through on its way to the mythical Mt. Hôrai in the back of the garden. The two gate stones (G) then become part of the rock islands, which are all set in the Risseteki technique, creating the optimal contrast to the low mound of the peninsula. The rhythm and strong contrast of this sequence (F, G, E) are very similar to Mirei Shigemori’s stone setting at the Tôfuku-ji main hall, built in 1939. In both cases he goes to the extreme with the contrast of the horizontal to the vertical stones, thereby creating very powerful compositions.

Then further out to the edges it becomes less exciting. Mirei Shigemori states, regarding the stone arrangement in the right corner (D): “I don’t like that some of the stones are from the former garden. It is difficult to find a characteristic that is common to all the different types of stones. A stone setting is not perfect unless the stones are arranged following a certain system."145 This is why a relatively diverse but powerless stone setting was the result.

Mirei Shigemori provides a nice parallel with the Japanese art of Noh, a specific type of play in a traditional theater, to explain who is playing on his stage. Just like in Noh, there are the same rolls to be played in a garden and therefore the same characters to be identified in a stone arrangement like the Maegaki’s. Those are the shite, the main character, then the waki, the main supporting character and finally the tsure, which simply stands for other supporting

145 In the Nihon Teienshi Taikei, volume 28, page 79.
characters. In such a play Mt. Hôrai (A) would then be the shite character and the stone setting to the left (C) and right (B) are its supporting characters. The stone arrangement in the right corner (D) would, in such a case, certainly find itself labeled as tsure, playing just a minor role. But the central composition (F, G, E) it seems would almost be another shite character, but as there can only be one main character in a Noh play, it would have to be downgraded to a waki. At best it could qualify as a shitetsure, an associate to the main character so to say, depending on the play being staged. As the story of the play being performed in the South Garden of the Maegaki residence is about the boat (H) on its way to Mt. Hôrai (A), it seems that Mirei Shigemori actually did envision the central stone composition (F, G, E) as a waki character, despite its uniqueness. In that case the boat stone (H) could then take the role of the shitetsure.

In any case, the stones are arranged very carefully, and Mirei Shigemori has taken into consideration how to best present what he obtained from the mountains and clearly implemented his ideas with the appropriate techniques. A garden with some exceptional stone arrangements is the result.

Where there is an abundance of stones in the South Garden, the Courtyard Garden is an exercise in minimalism. This stone setting looks at first sight rather simple, but it is in fact quite sophisticated. It consists of a total of three rocks only: a standing, a lying and a diagonal stone. Looking north towards the entrance of the courtyard space (Image 350), we can see the standing and lying stone in front and the diagonal one further back, towards the door. In the plan for the Courtyard Garden (Image 349 and 351), we can actually understand that the whole stone arrangement is oriented diagonally in this small space. It almost seems as if it was moving from the southeastern corner to the northwest, while slightly opening up. Therefore it gives the space a dynamic and clear direction. And as there is nothing else besides sand and rocks, the viewer's attention completely focuses on the stones and their relationship. It is actually quite difficult to create a stone arrangement for such a situation, especially when there are no plants to fill in the gaps or balance the setting. So sequentially seen, the Courtyard Garden is in a way an intermezzo on one's way to the South Garden, a quiet and timeless space. No plants are needed. And in the Noh play of the entire garden, it would without doubt take the role of the tsure, a supporting character.

The Front Garden features three suhama-shaped mounds, sitting in an ocean of white sand (Image 351). The two islands that frame the entrance to the house include Hôrai-style stone

146 Ibid.
arrangements numbering three and five respectively. When walking towards the entrance, it is the stone setting to the left that is the more impressive one (Image 353). All of the stones, without exception, are placed in a strictly upright fashion, creating a strong contrast to the horizontal line of the island’s edge and the plane of gravel surrounding it. The vertical lines seem to point to the sky, while the whole arrangement evokes the image of an eroding volcano. This is a rather massive stone composition, visually occupying the island and in fact dominating this part of the garden.

In contrast to the South Garden and the Courtyard Garden, this space is physically entered and walked through, providing for a different view of the stones as one passes by them. And as expected, when walking towards the entrance, along the naturally spaced stepping-stones, one’s view is repeatedly caught by Mt. Hôrai. The pine tree planted on the island to the right of the path then, by leaning in the direction of Mt. Hôrai, reinforces this trend. Also the space becomes narrower as one gets closer to the door, while opening up on the way out.

All the vegetation is planted on the tsukiyama mounds, adding force to the concept of islands in the sea. The pine tree leaning over the entrance way is a lucky symbol and is supposed to bring happiness the house (Image 352). This is a feature found in many versions at numerous entrances throughout Japan.\textsuperscript{147}

The Front Garden is a completely private garden as it is fully protected from views by a three-meter high wall along the street. And this is the space where the visitors first arrive. Mirei Shigemori argues that it should therefore be a simple garden with a relaxing atmosphere.\textsuperscript{148} Nobody wants to give everything away right at the beginning, or even overwhelm a guest the moment he or she arrives in the Front Garden. So necessarily the three garden parts need a different emphasis and intensity, taking into account the sequence the visitor experiences them in. This interaction of all three parts of the garden can also be understood as a Noh play, composed of shite, waki and tsure characters. The South Garden, powerful and heavy, is the shite, where the Front Garden, rather calm and light in comparison, is a waki.

\textbf{Material:} Sometimes limitations can be a good thing and have a positive influence on a project. In the case of the garden at the Maegaki residence, being limited to the use of local

\textsuperscript{147} In old times people liked the matsu (Pinus species) because it was a symbol of loyalty, faithfulness, pureness and long life. And by planting a matsu people acknowledge these values and brought them to the house, and if they already are happy a long life comes naturally.

\textsuperscript{148} In the \textit{Nihon Teienshi Taikei}, volume 28, page 78.
stone in the end turned out to have a good effect. It clearly inspired Mirei Shigemori and he was able to produce a garden with its own distinct identity and a certain amount of local character.

When Mr. Maegaki asked to use stone from his own mountain, Mirei Shigemori was most likely not very excited, because he usually liked to buy his favorite aoiishi from a stone dealer, or directly from the quarry and have the stone shipped to the site. To go out looking for stone meant more effort and time for the same pay, as he charged his clients by the tsubo, meaning the area of the finished garden. On top of that the outcome was more difficult to predict, as nobody knew what they would find while excavating stone in the mountains. Buying the stone, he could choose what he liked from a rather large selection of stones on display. Having to dig up his own stone meant, that he would have to make the stone arrangements with what they could find, and therefore from a much more limited assortment of stones.

The characteristic that gives a distinct local tone to the stone arrangements is that many of the stones they brought from the Maegaki’s mountain have fairly sharp edges. While the aoiishi, which Mirei Shigemori used in so many gardens, in contrast often has well-rounded corners especially the ones taken from the rivers. In particular, the front most stone setting (F, G, E) is very distinctive because of its sharpness. Furthermore, the red-brown-grey colors and texture of the local stone match well with their surroundings and the stones that needed to be integrated from the previous garden. The blue-green colors of the aoiishi would have been much more of a contrast here.

So in the end this restriction to local stone, even though it made Mirei Shigemori’s work there more difficult, certainly did not impact the quality of the overall garden. And for the client it meant firstly that he could obtain the stones for free and secondly that he had to pay for only very low transportation costs. Also in the old times, it had been difficult to transport heavy stones very far, so for centuries the gardens had been using local material. A fact that Mirei Shigemori also knew very well and appreciated in many of the famous gardens he surveyed.

As already mentioned above, most of the former garden’s vegetation was reused. This too is something that Mirei Shigemori initially must have been rather irritated about. He would normally come and remove all the existing shrubs and trees. Other clients also reported how
difficult it was to get Mirei Shigemori to safe even just one big tree. And in fact we rarely see such a diverse planting as here in the Maegaki’s garden. His ideal was the pure karesansui garden, but apparently he was able to compromise and incorporate a good number of large plants into a garden of his. A good reason for him to do this here was the kura to the south, being right in the backdrop of his water and mountain landscape. And in hindsight it was actually a rather important thing to do, as it provided the necessary shade for the moss that he brought in from much cooler Shiga prefecture. In other gardens that he designed in warmer coastal lowlands, the moss did not survive in the long run and often had to be replaced by the clients with a substitute ground cover.

The famous Shirakawa suna from Kyōto together with the red-brown Kurama ishi from Tamba eventually became a set-piece in Mirei Shigemori’s gardens. The sand with the raked whirls, playing with the undulating line of the stone paving developed into his signature and many later works feature these two materials. Of course it was expensive to transport large amounts of sand and stones to gardens he built far away, but that was the price to pay if one wanted to have a true Mirei Shigemori garden.

And there is one more characteristic with regard to material that needs to be noted: the red mortar he used in the joints between the paving stones. Mirei Shigemori, educated as a painter, was the first Japanese garden maker to experiment with color and concrete. The gaps between the Kurama ishi were the initial experiment for what was later to become a unique sculptural element in the garden, the colored concrete form. It can be eventually classified as one of his key design elements. Much of this will be discussed in chapter 4. Worth pointing out here is that the color used at the Maegaki’s garden was Bengal Indian Red, an iron oxide color pigment for concrete supplied by the German Bayer Corporation.

Mirei Shigemori designed a lot of residential gardens in his career. Not all of them were big, large-scale gardens. Many, in fact, were rather small and the owner had only a small budget. But the Maegakis wanted a special garden, something more modern, and that is why they asked him to do it. He notes in the Nihon Teienshi Taikei to that regard: “If people who want to have a garden can not afford a big one, I can make a small garden for them. It is not

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149 See appendix 2, Transcripts and Translations of Interviews: “Mr. Ashida: Client”.
150 Moss needs a lot of humidity to grow well. This is the case in Kyōto and other more protected or mountainous and cool places in Japan. The large plains of Ōsaka and other coastal areas are often too hot and dry for moss to grow well. The above-mentioned garden of Mr. Ashida and also the garden of Chiba Keiichi (Mizusawa, Iwate Prefecture) are typical examples of cases where the moss eventually had to be replaced and the character of the garden consequently was changed.
always necessary to spend a lot of money for a garden, and also expensive gardens are not necessarily good ones. It is actually possible to make a good residential garden with a small budget. In contrast large gardens are often rather boring and lack a sense of art." So Mirei Shigemori didn’t mind making small or medium sized gardens, and liked them as much as his big temple projects. He in fact often enjoyed the close personal ties he could establish with the owners. Here the Maegaki’s garden is a great example. But there is something else he appreciated with regard to private clients: “A residential garden always has an owner, and it is the owner and his family that maintains it everyday and who talks to the garden. Only the gardens that people can communicate with are true gardens. In addition even well done gardens still need the owner’s care to remain that way. Mr. and Mrs. Maegaki love their garden very much and therefore keep it well. They clean the moss and rake the white sand every day. I am glad to have them as clients.” Naturally, a garden maker likes owners who take good care of the work he created for them. And maybe in contrast to the temples, Mirei Shigemori felt that his private clients were more enthusiastic in keeping their gardens up. Maybe they really were just closer to them.

To think about a Japanese garden as a play or a stage, with main and supporting characters, actually helps to better understand the stone settings. It is a very dynamic way to look at their roles and the way they interact, almost contrary to the immobile image of a scene or painting that often is referred to when describing such gardens. The house is now the audience and the garden becomes a stage! Furthermore the house is at the coast looking out to the sea, and the stage is the seascape - or a Japanese garden.

Now why is this a quintessential Mirei Shigemori garden? Many of his works are about water, or water dominated landscapes. Most of them are actually about the dry version, the so called karesansui, or dry landscape garden. Mirei Shigemori liked this level of abstraction very much. He felt very comfortable to work in such a setting and to create gardens that fit this image. He could add to or change the concept as he liked, weaving stories into it, or creating a scene that depicted this imaginary world. It was an artistic expression in a language that he was most familiar with. Almost like a three-dimensional painting. The undulating line carved in stone conceived in this project, is a point in case. It represents the coastline, or maybe a wave, that becomes a beautiful and abstract visual element in the scene.

151 In the Nihon Teienshi Taikei, volume 28, page 81.
152 Ibid.
Mirei Shigemori cherished the Maegakis not only for their incredible hospitality, but also for giving him the opportunity and the freedom to create something special, to allow him to experiment. And he rewarded them with lectures, calligraphies and a very unique garden. Taking into account the progressive stone setting in the front of the South Garden, the double Amanohasidate-style peninsulas, the undulating coastline and even the red concrete between the stones, we could rightfully call this a contemporary karesansui style garden. So it was as much the social setting as it was the physical environment that allowed Mirei Shigemori to create one of his key works in December 1955.

Mirei Shigemori went on to create many more residential and other gardens, with the undulating line made from stone eventually becoming his signature. But the Maegaki's garden represents the beginning of those, and it represents the ideal social and physical environment that Mirei Shigemori could be most creative in. It provided the fertile ground for a great leap forward in his formal design vocabulary. Therefore my hypothesis regarding the Maegaki garden is verified.
Chapter 4: Key Design Elements

This chapter now looks more specifically at the key elements that Mirei Shigemori used to modernize the Japanese garden. At first they are described in the context of the garden they appear in, organized by point, line and plane. Then they are evaluated with regard to their importance in Mirei Shigemori's work, their innovativeness and also their general relevance for the renewal of the Japanese garden.

Key design elements usually appear in several projects and can be recognized visually or by analyzing the concept of the work. Only the two or three most important examples will be discussed for each element. The order is inspired by the basic elements of painting as Mirei Shigemori extended them into his garden works. This reference becomes evident when one looks at his background and education as a painter as well his built gardens.

None of the project contains all the design elements but some have several in them. Therefore one or the other garden project might appear in the discussion of more than one of the design elements. And naturally the examples chosen reflect the most significant work in each category under consideration.

The type of garden most often built by Mirei Shigemori is what the Japanese call a karesansui, or dry landscape garden. In the west it is sometimes referred to as Zen garden, but not all Zen temples have a dry landscape garden as well as not all such gardens necessarily belong to this respective Buddhist sect. Mirei Shigemori in fact made several karesansui gardens at Shinto Shrines! So in my writing I will refrain from using this somewhat misleading term Zen garden, and will instead denote it with the original Japanese word as a karesansui garden.

Now a karesansui garden is per definition dry, as it uses no real water. Instead water is implied in the form of larger or smaller areas of sand or gravel. Rocks standing within the sand, or in a nearby area, usually signify mountains or just islands in the sea. This is the basic and necessary palette of materials. Plants are not a must but are still sometimes found in this garden type. Even the most minimal or abstract karesansui garden might have a little moss around its stones and a plum or cherry tree near the fringe. And some of the most unique

153 The most commonly used sand is from the Shirakawa river in the eastern part of Kyōto. Originally it was mined right from the riverbed, but as the demand is higher than the quantity permitted for removal, it is now also produced by crushing the rock from the nearby hills. The machine made gravel tends to have visibly sharper edges though than the natural version.
examples of this garden type, like Raikyû-ji in Takahashi or Daichi-ji in Kôga, are even combined with a karikomi.

As stated before, my hypothesis is that Mirei Shigemori modernized the Japanese garden. This chapter presents more evidence by analyzing and evaluating the key design elements he used to accomplish this. To verify my point, and to make it clear and comprehensible, I will divide my argument into a few sub-hypothesis organized along the categories of point, line and plane.

**Points of Stone**

Sub-hypothesis 1: Mirei Shigemori modernized the Japanese garden by introducing the point as a geometric element.

Points, or maybe rather conglomerates of points, have always inhabited the Japanese garden in the form of stone settings. Famous karesansui gardens, such as Kyôto’s well-known Ryôan-ji, essentially consist of a sea of gravel with a few scattered rocks symbolizing islands. These in a way seem like dots on a large canvas. And even in gardens different from the dry landscape style, the stone arrangement often has a point-like character, marking a specific spot in the scene, or really a moment in the garden’s landscape.

Mirei Shigemori now builds on the role of the point in the Japanese garden, but changes the physical manifestation of it as he uses differently shaped material. The following examples, all part of the garden at Tôfuku-ji’s Hôjô, will help to illustrate how he made use of the point in modernizing the Japanese garden.

**Tôfuku-ji, 1939**

**Full name:** Tôfuku-ji Hôjô Teien, Hassô no Niwa (The Garden of Eight Views)

**Location:** Higashiyama-ku in Kyôto city; 1.5 kilometer southwest of Kyôto Station.

**Category:** a temple garden in karesansui style

**History:** Tôfuku-ji is the head temple of the Tôfuku-ji sect, a Zen sect which is itself part of Rinzai Buddhism. Kujô Michie, the grandson of the chief adviser to the Emperor named Kujô Kanezane, built the temple on July 21st 1239. The Kujô clan had sold their entire house and property to be able to built this temple. The temple’s name, by the way, was derived from
the names of two existing temples, Tô is from Tôdai-ji and fuku is taken from Kôfuku-ji; both are temples in Nara prefecture. Over the next seven hundred years the temple went through a fairly eventful history. Then on August 23rd 1938 the head priest Sonoisan Saidô contacted Mirei Shigemori and asked him to prepare a master plan for the improvement of the scenery at Tôfuku-ji over the next one hundred years.154 Prof. Shinichi Amanuma, a specialist at Kyôto University for old Japanese Architecture, and a member of Kyôto Rinsen Kyôkai recommended Mirei Shigemori for this work. So Mirei Shigemori started surveying the entire Tôfuku-ji complex, while he was still busy working on the 26 volumes of the Nihon Teienshi Zukan. But he surveyed this temple just as he had surveyed all the other gardens in Japan. It was a just a nice coincidence that it happened at this time.

The front garden of the hôjô, the temples main hall, was so unsightly that the priest also desired a new garden there. But as Tôfuku-ji at the time had a large amount of debt, the he asked Mirei Shigemori if he would make a garden there for free. In return the priest offered regular prayers for his soul, at no charge and in perpetuity.155 As Mirei Shigemori was not yet famous the priest knew that he would be cheap. Mirei Shigemori notes regarding his motivation to do the this project: “Needless to say that I was as poor as the temple was, but I thought it would be a great opportunity for me to make my garden at such a noted place. And doing volunteer work would at least allow me to design freely, so I accepted the offer to make a garden here.”156

The survey of this garden was done on March 28th, 1939, and the garden’s construction was started on June 27th, 1939. All of the construction was finished by November 11th.

**Project description:** This garden is composed of four more or less individual parts around the hôjô, which are named in reference to their orientation around the building as the South Garden, the North Garden, the West Garden and the East Garden (Image 401). All parts are in karesansui style, but with very diverse and different stone material being used between them. For the topic of the point, the North and the East Garden are of special interest, but in fact all parts of the garden have some of this point-like quality to them (Images 402 and 403). And as

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154 This had been initiated by a Project for the enhancement of the natural landscape of the Higashiyama area, the hills east of Kyôto that Tôfuku-ji is part of. Initiated in 1936 by the Forestry Agency of the national government, the project covered the entire nationally owned thirty-six mountains of the Higashiyama area, from Mt. Hiei in the north all the way to Mt. Inari in Fushimi-ku, south of Kyôto city.

155 Even though temples in Japan usually charge a rather large amount of money to provide this kind of service, this was a quite unusual offer.

156 From the Nihon Teien Rekiran Jiten, page 418.
this is a garden of great significance among Mirei Shigemori’s works, all of the parts shall briefly be discussed. The images in the appendix usually show the initial plan first, then a sketch or visualization if available and afterwards the respective section of the garden in a plan done after the construction was finished. For illustration purposes a number of photographs have been added for each part of the garden.

The North Garden, a semi-circular garden space (Image 404), about 53 tsubo (175 square meters) in size and without an enclosing wall, already had many beautiful maple trees (Acer palmatum) to the back of it. By including those maple trees in his design, Mirei Shigemori took full advantage of this great backdrop. When he worked on the South garden, they had to remove the stone paving that led from the gate straight to the hôjô. In consideration of the priest’s request to not waste anything, as is the Zen cult’s policy, Mirei Shigemori now reused those stones for the grid pattern in the moss (Images 405 to 410).

The grid pattern fades away towards the east side along the building, and the white sand used to come in from the east. They then met in the center of the garden with a spectacularly curving line (Image 411). Unfortunately this has since completely disappeared, as it has now all been overgrown by moss (Image 408). The azaleas to the back were donated by Funda-in and Mirei Shigemori incorporated them to make the transition to the natural surrounding.

The East garden is located immediately east of the corridor between the temple’s living quarters and the hôjô, and spreads over 56 tsubo (185 square meters). It features a Big Dipper stone arrangement, reusing the foundation stones of the former toilet building (Images 414, 415 and 416). The constellation is appropriately set in a cloud-shaped area of white sand. The shape of the sand area shows a slight change from the first plan to the survey plan (Image 412 and 413). Every visitor comes down this corridor from the entrance and sees this part of the garden first. The South Garden is then immediately to one’s left and the Big Dipper appears at about the same time to the right.

The South Garden is 150 tsubo (495 square meters) in size and rectangular in shape. An interesting perspective drawing shows the initial idea for this area (Images 417 and 418). There are four stone settings referring to the Hôrai islands and five moss-covered mounds towards the west side of the garden, symbolizing the five Zen sects in Kyôto (Image 419). The four stone settings represent the islands of the immortals. The three east of the gate stand for Hôrai, Hôjô and Eijû and the group west of it represents the Koryô islands (Images 420 to 425). A straight line from the northwest corner of the garden to the gate divides the areas of moss and white sand. It makes for a quite original accent in the garden’s layout (Images 426 to 428).
There also were originally two pine trees (Pinus densiflora) in the garden, which Mirei Shigemori included in his concept, but now only one of them remains (Images 418 and 428). It is currently rather small as it was replanted after the original old one had died.

The West Garden covers 36 tsubo (119 square meters) and its design is inspired by the look of rice fields in the landscape (Image 429 and 430). It is a simple design with recycled stone curbs describing a grid pattern, which is then filled in with white sand and pruned azalea for contrast in color (Images 431 to 433). As for vegetation only moss and azaleas (Rhododendron species) are used. These days the moss covers most of the southern part of this garden.

Mirei Shigemori named the entire garden Hassô no Niwa, meaning Garden of Eight Scenes, referring to the eight views he had created around the hôjô. The stone settings (Hôrai, Hôjô, Eijû and Koryô) count for a view each, then the five mounds (Gozan) count as one, the grid in the North Garden (Ichimatsu), the rice fields (Seiden) and the Big Dipper (Hokuto Shichisei). Most people walk around in clockwise fashion, which means they will see the North Garden last.

**An Evaluation of Tôfuku-ji with a Special Look at Points:** The North Garden’s grid pattern of paving stones, recycled from the former entrance path, is an abstract design with square stones, moss and sand. Mirei Shigemori says looking at his own creation: “This design is very powerful and goes beyond any conventional concepts.” Indeed nobody before him had in a Japanese garden covered an area with geometrically shaped stones and arranged them artistically. For one thing, aside from maybe a few geometric stepping-stones, natural lines were desired in a garden setting. Therefore shaped stones were mainly used for paving, walls or foundations. It was Mirei Shigemori’s ingenuity that let him imagine this grid starting to be over-grown by moss. The points of the grid, fading to the east, are a modern artistic expression and have no parallel in the ancient Japanese garden. Mirei Shigemori notes: “The technique I used made it a contemporary garden and my main goal was timeless modernity.” No doubt, for Mirei Shigemori, as for many others, the points of the grid have something essentially modern to them.

Considering the setting at Tôfuku-ji, the North Garden is the perfect counterpoint to the South Garden. Where the first one is a flat plane characterized by geometric points and the

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157 Ibid., page 419.
158 From the *Nihon Teienshi Taikei*, volume 27, page 121.
softness of the moss, the latter is a vast three-dimensional landscape of natural mounds and powerful rocks. The idea was to balance it through contrast.

The most ideal example of points is provided by the Big Dipper stone setting, made from recycled stone pillars, in the East Garden: small and round. Even though they are set at different heights, when viewed from above everybody understands the idea of the points on the plane or rather the stars in the sky. This is the clearest example of points to be found in this garden. And by the standards of the Japanese garden we are looking at a rather unusual theme transferred into a very abstract design. The fact that Mirei Shigemori uses round shaped stones rather than natural ones effectively heightens this impression.

The South Garden: As the hôjō is a sizeable building and the garden is also enclosed by a 3-meter tall wall, the stones needed to be rather large and the arrangement powerful in order to stand up to their surroundings. So Mirei Shigemori chose three massive long stones and placed them horizontal, a new technique never used before in any of the classic gardens. This gives the garden quite a bit of distinctiveness.

The one long Hôrai stone in a rolling-hills-shape he placed further to the back, and another long one, the Hôjō, stone is then placed at a sharp angle against the previous one. The long stone closest to the gate, and part of the Eijû group, is deeply buried in the sand, referring to the legendary floating islands in the ocean. To both sides of the long laying stones are upright stones pointing at sharp angles. Mirei Shigemori aligned both of the long Hôrai and the Eijû stone settings in a way that their imaginary extension meets at the Hôjô islands, in line with the southeast corner of the building. This could then be seen as the start of the scene that develops towards the earth mounds. Like few other stone arrangement this one has an apparent direction and flow to it. The upward pointing stones follow the lines of the big low stones. The large stone to the northwest of the gate then marks the center of the Koryô islands and the end of the stone sequence.

Then there are the five mounds originating in the southwest corner of the garden. They too have a clear direction and are oriented towards the northeast. Two of them are located along the line that marks the border of water and land, and one small one is completely surrounded by the imaginary ocean. This element, called tsukiyama, has a long tradition in the Japanese garden and here, as elsewhere, no connection to the point. Mirei notes though that the mountain shapes in the Yamato-e paintings inspired these five mounds in the southwest corner of the garden, a testimony that shall be discussed in the last section of this chapter.\textsuperscript{159}

\textsuperscript{159} In the Nihon Teienshi Taikei, volume 27, page 120.
Even the West Garden with its squares signifying rice fields has a pointed character. Here it might be the way the rice fields are marking the plane by dotting the imaginary landscape, or the one square spot occupying the southeast corner of the garden, that creates this impression. Again the points originate in one corner and spread out over part of the field or garden. And naturally the strong contrast between the white sand and azaleas then reinforces the grid pattern and thereby the dots. But evidently, in the West Garden the points are getting close to a size, where the ‘pixels’ of the image are starting to become an area.

Regarding his reasons for choosing to make this garden in the dry landscape style Mirei Shigemori notes: “I designed this garden in karesansui style because it is easy to maintain and hardly ever gets in bad shape. Which priest is in charge of this temple is decided by a rotation system, and this means that there is no specific person who is responsible for the garden [in the long run].” Even though maintenance is a valid issue, it seems necessary to add that there is hardly any other style that allows for the level of abstraction that was desired here.

Tôfuku-ji is still one of Mirei Shigemori’s very early works. He is using simple and clear elements, which are kept well apart. This way they create garden elements with their own individual identity, but on the other hand they hardly interact. Everything is nicely separated. It is as if one is viewing four different paintings, or looking out from four different windows. The usual complexity and proximity of elements that characterize many Japanese gardens is missing.

The isolation of the specific elements, reinforced by their individual shapes, gives them a point-like character. Those elements seem to be dotting the landscape in an abstract sense, while some of them look more like actual spots of ink on a canvas than a real garden element.

The Point at Tôfuku-ji and in Comparison to other Gardens

In his first major contemporary garden, the Hassô no Niwa at Tôfuku-ji, Mirei Shigemori goes to the extreme with the element of the point. He plays with it in various situations and uses points for many different purposes; he scales them and simplifies their form. In few, if any, of his later works is the point as obvious and diverse in appearance as here.

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160 Ibid., page 119.
161 On April 7th 1936 Mirei Shigemori wrote an article for the Japan Times titled "Rittaiteki Kaiga Toshite no Nihon Teien", which translates as The Japanese Garden as a Three-dimensional Painting; note from the diary of the respective year.
Besides the above-mentioned isolation of the point as a design element, it is its reduction to the simplest possible form that characterizes its use at the Tôfuku-ji gardens. A look at one of Kandinsky’s diagrams illustrates this fact quite well (Image 435). Where usually the external form of the point is more like the ones on the lower row, at the Hassô no Niwa we find the shapes shown in the upper one, more precisely the first two from the left. So reducing the complexity and using the point in its clearest form is what Mirei Shigemori is interested in here, especially in the North and East gardens (Images 409 and 416). Abstraction is what he perceives as modern, and a contemporary garden is what he had set out to create. So the round pillar stones and the square paving stones are the ideal material for this.

The South Garden then seems to follow a slightly different rule. Here the points are organized around three laying stones that give the entire scene an overall direction. The stone arrangement now has a flow, just like a piece of music (Image 436). And together they seem to play the theme. If music produces points, maybe those points can inspire a stone setting. And if not, we can still learn from this example, that stones can be arranged as dramatically as a movement of a symphony.

There is one other aspect of Kandinsky’s discussion of the point that stands out with regard to Mirei Shigemori’s use of stones in the South garden. He writes: “In sculpture and architecture, the point results from a cross-section of several planes – it is the termination of an angle in space and, on the other hand, the originating nucleus of these planes which can be guided back to it or can be developed out of it.” Mirei Shigemori uses the stones as sculptures pointing up towards the sky, their tips as the highest points above the plane. A characteristic we can often observe in the details of Asian architecture (Image 437). The termination of an angle in space might or might not be what Mire Shigemori had in mind at the time he placed those stones, but it is certainly a good description of how a painter’s eye perceives these forms.

In later works the point then becomes more complex again and usually appears in the form of stone settings with natural rocks. It seems as if at the Hassô no Niwa Mirei Shigemori wanted to explore its most abstract and basic form. And maybe, if Word War II had not brought a halt to much of his garden making for the next ten years, we would have seen more of these experiments with different points. But when he returned to designing gardens in the early fifties, his techniques had developed and he then became more interested in the line. But

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it is this radical use of the point as its own geometric element that characterizes his primary approach at Tôfuku-ji, built in 1939.

So here it is demonstrated how Mirei Shigemori modernized the Japanese garden by introducing the point as a geometric element and Sub-hypothesis 1 is therefore verified.

**Lines of Concrete**

Sub-hypothesis 2: Mirei Shigemori modernized the Japanese garden by introducing geometric elements such as hard lines made from stone or concrete.

This is of significance because the naturalistic pond gardens, as well as the gardens built around teahouses, avoided at all cost anything unnatural or too man-made looking, for example a simple geometric shape. The karesansui garden on the other hand is full of lines, curves and circles raked into the sand. But they are impermanent and soft, and only the continuous work of man keeps them visible. This is Mirei Shigemori’s point of departure. He was looking for a way to introduce the element of the line in a stronger and possibly permanent fashion. This is one of the main reasons why he created hard lines made from stone and concrete.

Following are now three projects that illustrate Mirei Shigemori’s use of the line element. Since we can find straight lines as well as curved lines in his work, both types will be discussed using suitable examples.

**Kishiwada Castle, 1953**

**Location:** Kishiki-chô, Kishiwada-shi, Ōsaka Prefecture, 15 kilometer south of Ōsaka city.

**Category:** a castle garden in karesansui style

**History:** The Kishiwada Castle at its current location was built in 1615 when the Koide Harima-no-kami Hidemasa started living in the area and ruling it. Soon after Okabe Minô-no-kami Nobukatsu started his reign on September 11th in 1640, he built a moat and a stonewall around the castle. From that point on, Kishiwada Castle has developed together with the castle town. But unfortunately in 1827 the castle tower burned down due to lightning, and it was not rebuilt until 1954. After the Meiji Restoration in 1867, the government had decided to abolish
the feudal domains and reorganized Japan in new units called prefectures. Later in the Shôwa period, Mr. Okabe, the last private owner, donated the Kishiwada Castle grounds to the city.

In the early spring of 1953, the then mayor Fukumoto Tarô proposed the construction of a garden at Kishiwada-jô. On June 30th he asked Mirei Shigemori to come up with a possible design for the garden. The plans were finished by July 27th (Image 445) and construction started on October 13th. During the time of construction, Prince Takamatsu visited the site once on November 16th. The garden was completed by December 20th of the same year. The castle tower was then built the following year, in 1954.

**Project description:** This garden, enclosed by an impressive stonewall, built in the Momoyama period, is 500 tsubo (1650 square meters) in size. There is only one access to this man-made island from the northwest via a bridge. The castle tower is then located to the southeast, on the opposite side of the garden (Image 441).

Regarding the design, Mirei Shigemori notes: "As castles are supposed to last forever, the garden attached to such a castle should be designed in the same spirit. This is what I was most concerned about, and therefore I made the garden from stone. I also reflected on the fact that this is the garden of a fortress, as it is located in the heart of the castle grounds. So I took reference to the layout of the castle before the Muromachi period, and then on the ground plane designed a garden inspired by the layout of that old fortification system." It seems that with this project durability and the potential for abstraction were the reasons for Mirei Shigemori to choose the karesansui style. Among the many plans available for this project was also Mirei Shigemori’s first drawing for the site (Image 443). The crisscrossing lines of walls he built in the sand depict the old layout of the moats at a much smaller scale. Then he continues and starts to explain the idea behind the stone arrangements in the garden: “I designed the arrangement of the stone settings with respect to the eight-fold battle camp formation of Zhuge Liang. This formation has a main camp in the center with eight sub-camps surrounding it. Those were called Heaven, Earth, Wind, Cloud, Dragon, Tiger, Phoenix and Snake.” The names of these historical camps, originally related to Chinese mythology, is what Mirei Shigemori used as his chief inspiration for his stone settings at the Kishiwada Castle garden (Images 445 and 446). In addition to the eight peripheral camps,

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163 In the Nihon Teien Rekiran Jiten, page 108.
164 Ibid., pages 108 and 110; Zhuge Liang, in Japanese know as Shokatsuryô Kômei, is a famous Chinese tactician of the 2nd century A.D. and his famous eight battle camps formation is a defensive formation, not an offensive one.
there was the captain’s Central Camp, depicted by the main stone setting in this garden. It is composed of large upright stones and can be viewed from all sides, the main idea being that the captain is giving directions to the other eight camps (Images 447 and 448). The peripheral stone settings are as follows (see also Images 444 and 445):

- Camp of Heaven: a stone setting composed of four upright stones in the northeast, representing the force rising up to the sky.
- Camp of Earth: a stone setting composed of three laying stones in the northwest, representing the force going into the ground.
- Camp of the Wind: a stone setting composed of six stones in the southwest, representing a current of the air (Image 446).
- Camp of the Cloud: a stone setting composed of three laying stones in the southeast, representing approaching clouds.
- Camp of the Dragon: a stone setting composed of nine stones in the south, representing a dragon rising up to the heaven through black clouds (Image 446).
- Camp of the Tiger: a stone setting composed of nine stones in the north, representing a fierce tiger running more than a thousands kilometers.
- Camp of the Phoenix: a stone setting composed of eight stones in the northeast, representing a phoenix flying in the sky.
- Camp of the Snake: a stone setting composed of two stones in the east representing a long snake (Image 449 and 450).

In terms of elevation, the stone setting of the Central Camp is on the top level in the center of the garden. Then the Camp of the Tiger and the Camp of the Wind are located on the middle level and the rest are on the bottom level. The crisscrossing lines marking the edges of the three different levels meet in various angles and create a variety of shapes between themselves. Sometimes they are almost parallel and sometimes at an angle, forming triangle or even diamond shaped spaces. Each level rises about 30 centimeters, as it gets higher and closer to the center. The stones in this garden are once more Mirei Shigemori’s favorite aoishi, but this time from Okinoshima, a small island near Shikoku.

Unlike many other karesansui gardens, this one can be appreciated from any viewpoint and the scene naturally changes as one walks around the garden. And it can also be enjoyed from the top of the castle’s tower, from where there is a great view, to the garden and further towards the city (Images 443 and 444). And regarding other uses for this space, Mirei Shigemori actually thought that people should be able to walk on those wall lines and hereby be able to get closer to the center without stepping onto the sand. He notes: “If you walk on
the outer line, you can jump to the next inner line when those two get close. And then finally you can step onto the inner line and get close to the center.” And furthermore, he even thought of the garden as an event space: “I planned for the possibility of using this garden as an exhibition space and even as a theater. And as the city was planning a library in the castle tower I thought the garden might be used as an outdoor reading space as well. So even though the design of this garden seems very simple, it in fact allows for many different uses.” This is how the garden at Kishiwada Castle became the first karesansui garden in Japan to be used as an exhibition and performance space. Two years after the garden’s opening a number of metal sculptures were displayed during an outdoor exhibition (Image 450). And during that event even a traditional Japanese dance performance by Yûgo Shigemori, Mirei Shigemori’s only daughter, was put on stage. Mirei Shigemori produced the performance and the theme of the dance was the straight and the curved line!

The Line at Kishiwada Castle: No doubt, the stone settings are an important part of this garden as well, but the crisscrossing lines are really its main feature. A revolutionary addition to the traditional vocabulary of the karesansui style garden, which for centuries was made from just sand and stone. As mentioned above, the reason to make the garden at Kishiwada Castle all from stone was first and foremost to make it last. And here this is especially true for the lines built in stone and shaped as actual linear walls. Lines raked in sand tend to fade away rather fast with wind and weather, but these lines will remain as long as the concrete holds the stones in place.

But when designing this garden, Mirei Shigemori had not only longevity in mind, he was at the same time striving to create a contemporary Japanese garden. In his words: “As you can see on the plan, the garden is composed of three stone lines, which are crisscrossing back and forth. I took reference to the old layout of the fortress and transferred it into a modern artistic expression. [...] My main idea was to create a fortress layout referring to the original Kishiwada Castle from an aerial viewpoint, something that has never been done so far.” So just being a contemporary garden was not quite enough, it actually had to be new. And looking at the result we have to admit that a karesansui garden like this was actually new to Japan.

165 From the Nihon Teienshi Taikei, volume 29, page 35.
166 From October 22nd to 24th 1955 an outdoor exhibition of modern art of the Byakutosha group was held at Kishiwada Castle.
167 Ibid.
And yet there is still another reason for the line in the garden of Kishiwada Castle. Mirei Shigemori had a vision of the future, in which people were seeing gardens and landscapes more often from the air (Image 442). He explains: “But there is another reason for this pattern on the land: People in the future will probably appreciate the garden in ways different from how people presently do. As this garden is supposed to last for more than a thousand or years, it is not good enough to think about how people currently appreciate such a garden. Technology will develop and people will be using planes and helicopters more frequently, in which case the garden will often be seen from above, high up in the sky.”168 A rather rare aspect to be taken into account for the design of a Japanese garden, but in this case a clear argument for the line. Just planes of gravel and points of stone would not have been very easily detectable from up in the air.

Kôzen-ji, 1963

**Full name:** Manshôzan Kôzen-ji, Kanun-tei  
**Location:** Kiso-Fukushima, Nagano Prefecture; a mountainous region near Mt. Ontake.  
**Category:** a temple garden in karesansui style

**History:** This temple is part of the Rinzai Zen Sect and is the biggest temple in that area. In 1434 the Kisoshikibu Nobumichi, the 12th generation head of the Kiso Family Clan of this area, built the temple in memory of Kiso Yoshinaka, who was a famous warrior of the Kamakura period. Kisoshikibu Nobumichi then asked priest Daika to become the head of the temple. There is still a pagoda in the precincts of the temple, which is a memorial to Kiso Yoshinaka. Later Sakyô Daifu Yoshimoto devoted himself to this temple. As his younger brother Yoshimasa became the priest in charge he built the imperial envoy gate.

On April 20th, 1641 a fire destroyed the original building built by Kisoshikibu Nobumichi. In 1645 the efforts of the priests Kegaku and Shuya led to the rebuilding of the Buddhist sanctum, and the Kannon hall was completed with the help of Yamamura Yoshitoyo, a famous local magistrate. Later, in 1654 they also built the mountain gate. Then in 1656 a bell was made and placed on the property. However on December 24th in 1906 a fire again destroyed all the buildings on the grounds. In 1912 the main hall was once more rebuilt and this time lasted until May 12th, 1927 when the third fire occurred. Again everything was

168 In the *Nihon Teien Rekiran Jiten*, page 108.
destroyed. Little by little the temple was again rebuilt and in 1962 the living quarters were the last building to be completed.

It was in 1963 that the current priest Matsuyama Hôzan asked Mirei Shigemori to work on the front garden, and he produced a design for it (Image 451). In September 1963 the construction of the new garden was completed.

**Project description:** The front garden is about 300 tsubo (990 square meters) in size and has a perfectly rectangular shape. It is in front of a rather modern temple building, with a black and white checkerboard patterned patio located in between (Image 452). On the south, east and north side it is surrounded by an earthen wall (Image 453 and 455). The surrounding land is part of the Kiso-Yamanaka plateau.

Since Kôzen-ji is a Zen temple of the Rinzai Sect, a karesansui garden here seems very appropriate. Mirei Shigemori designed it as a 7-5-3 style dry landscape garden, using only stones without any vegetation, a true karesansui garden just like Kyôto's Ryôan-ji.

Regarding his design approach he notes: “From the beginning I had the following theme in mind: a garden depicting a sea of clouds. Naturally I didn't want to just copy the garden at the Ryôan-ji temple, this would not have been very artistic of me. So consequently I did my best to develop my own concept of a sea of clouds in this garden.” Mirei Shigemori decided to depict this concept by using white concrete lines in the sand representing the clouds (Images 454 and 455). He says: “I used a two dimensional technique [like drawing] for a garden which has three dimensions. Something I have never before seen done in a Japanese Garden. But to bring something pictorial into the garden is part of the appeal of this composition.”

This garden is Mirei Shigemori’s very first design of a karesansui garden featuring a sea of clouds and not water, contrasting it with 15 stones set in a 7-5-3 style stone composition (Image 456). The reason why the theme of the garden is a sea of clouds is that this temple is located at the upper Kiso River, at an elevation of 1200 meters. Therefore when one looks out from the garden into the landscape the sky is very clear and noticeable. This duality of the enclosed space mirroring the sky and the backdrop becomes the main attraction of the garden. The stones then represent the peaks of mountains in a sea of clouds. And more generally, being a Zen temple of the Rinzai Sect, the garden expresses the ideas of existence and nothingness, coexisting in the same space.

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169 Ibid., page 159.
170 Ibid.
At the opening ceremony Mirei Shigemori apparently presented several possible names for the garden to priest Daikôrô, who then chose to name it Kanun no Niwa, garden for the appreciating of clouds. In the meantime the white concrete lines have fallen into disrepair in certain parts of the garden, most likely due to frost damage. Naturally they need to be repaired to preserve the image and content of the garden. Branches of pine trees along the outside of the earth walls are being guided into the garden on wooden posts. This breaks the harshness of the garden a little, but is most likely not what Mirei Shigemori had in mind for this composition. Also the view to the surrounding hills has been impacted by the growth of the town. Many houses are to be seen now, a problem that many gardens now face which are borrowing parts of the scenery around them.

The Line at Kôzen-ji: As the above citation illustrates, Mirei Shigemori’s model when designing this garden was the famous Ryôan-ji temple in Kyôto itself. But at the same time he was trying very hard to create something unique and different from that well known Kyôto example.

For the very first time in his career, and for that matter in the history of the Japanese garden, he added the line as its own independent element to a karesansui garden. He formed it, at first rather thin and from white concrete, eight to ten centimeters wide and five to six centimeters above ground.

So finally a line had been added to the points of stone and the plane of gravel. A perfect contrast - the set seemed now complete in the painter’s eyes. Furthermore the issue of impermanence of the raked lines was also partly solved. There was now a guiding line in place, supposed to remain for eternity. Of course the gravel area still needs to be raked periodically, but the main theme is given.

Sumiyoshi Jinja, 1966

Location: Fukuzumi, Taki-chô, Taki-gun, Hyôgo Prefecture, 32 kilometer west of Kyôto.

Category: a shrine garden in karesansui style

History: This shrine was built in 1081 and it was then that they received the spirit brought in from the main shrine of Sumiyoshi Taisha in Ôsaka. It has since been restored once in 1467 and Matsudaira Yasunobu, who governed this area at that time, dedicated a bell to the shrine-temple. The bell tower still exists but the bell itself is no longer present. From the fact that a
bell tower was built on the property of the shrine, we can see that Buddhism and Shinto were already peacefully coexisting at the time. Though later, during the Meiji Restoration, they were then separated. The shrine building, dating from before the Meiji Restoration, and its main hall, the shoi, remain to this day. The latter, a well-done piece of architecture from the Edo period, was originally the guesthouse of this shrine and is currently used as the shrine office.

Mr. Nonoguchi Masao, who headed the shrine’s supporters at the time that Mirei Shigemori became involved, put a lot of effort into sustaining the shrine and keeping it flourishing. Mr. Kawakatsu Masatarô, a mutual friend of the two, had several years before dedicated a stone lantern to the shrine. It was the connection to these two people that in, March 1967, lead to the offer to Mirei Shigemori to make a garden there. He also directed the construction and the garden was finished in July of the same year, more than ten years after the lantern had been given to the shrine.

A friendly and very helpful elderly couple currently keeps the shrine and garden up. The sand is weeded and the raked pattern is redrawn every year for the Minazuki Matsuri at the end of July.

**Project description:** The garden is located to the back of the shrine’s office, on its northern side, and is almost completely enclosed by trees. The shape is a perfect rectangle, with walls to the east and the north side (Image 460). There is a little window to the surrounding landscape in the northwest corner of the garden (Image 459).

The god of Sumiyoshi Jinja being the kami of the sea, was a good enough reason for Mirei Shigemori to create a garden that depicts a seaside landscape here at Suminoe, a mountainous village, in an abstract way. For this, he decided, the karesansui style with no vegetation was the appropriate form. He placed a total of fifteen aoishi and contrasted them with three abstract lines of white concrete, depicting strong waves at an ocean’s beach. And the closer the waves get to the building, or rather the shore, the more undulation they have (Image 458). Mirei Shigemori also created small islands of moss (Image 463), often adjacent to a line, and surrounded them with white sand from Kyôto, representing the ocean in the garden. The rocks he used in a 7-5-3 stone setting are his favorite aoishi from the Awa area on the island of Shikoku, but which are rarely used in the gardens of this area (Image 464). Then to the west side, where there is no soil wall, Mirei Shigemori designed a bamboo fence. On it, in reasonably direct reference to the beach side scene, he depicts a fisher’s net that is hung up for
drying (Image 458 and 465). So considering the beautiful mountainous area the shrine is located in, this design is quite a thematic and aesthetic contrast to the surrounding landscape.

The shrine as an institution has developed out of the ancient ideas of purity and purification, and therefore those are still at the center of what a shrine garden is all about. Taking the original Shinto concept of the iwakura and iwasaka, also purified and godly places, Mirei Shigemori then arranges the stones as islands in Hōrai-style, thus making the connection to the god and the sea. And at the same time he incorporates the Buddhist idea of the islands of the immortals, and hereby continues the coexistence of both religions still within his own garden design.

It was rather brave to think that Sumiyoshi Jinja and the god of the sea would attract any followers in a mountainous area like Tamba Sasayama. And in the same way it is quite an experiment to create at this very place a garden representing an abstract seaside landscape.

The Line at Sumiyoshi Jinja: This garden contains the boldest line design among all of Mirei Shigemori’s works (Image 461 to 463). In no other garden design did he create an independent line with such vigor and vividness. Three waves made from white concrete, getting stronger and more coiled as they wash up to the shore. What a flamboyant garden scene, especially in a Japanese shrine garden!

This idea of the undulating line is already noted in his diary on July 25th, 1966 (Image 457). And there he clearly shows the idea of a wave developing in three stages. But unfortunately there is no other plans or drawings available for this garden.

Regarding the sequential order of his projects containing a line Mirei Shigemori notes: “The first time that I designed this kind of line was at Kōzen-ji in Kiso-Fukushima, and I used the same technique at Ryōgin-an in Tōfuku-ji. Now I made another attempt here at Sumiyoshi Jinja.” So the line at Sumiyoshi Jinja is trial number three. Now Kōzen-ji and Ryōgin-an are both temples belonging to the Rinzai Zen Sect, but Sumiyoshi Jinja is a real Shinto shrine. For Mirei Shigemori that was never a conflict, as he saw the tradition of the karesansui garden, which the Zen cult later adopted, deeply rooted in ancient Shinto. He had manifested this already in his design for Kasuga Jinja, deriving the 7-5-3 stone settings from the ancient iwakura and its organization from the shimenawa.

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171 The bamboo fence is in aboshi-style, a from ami, which means net; and boshi signifies to hang something up for drying.
Subsequently Mirei Shigemori notes on his motivation to make a garden at Sumiyoshi Jinja: “The Shoin [...] was well worth a notable garden, I thought. Another reason that moved me was that there were still few shrine gardens around.”173 Even more than thirty years after he had done his first shrine garden at Kasuga Jinja (see previous chapter), there were still not too many shrines that had a real garden. So Mirei Shigemori was quite interested in designing another one. But this shrine garden is in one respect rather different than his very first one: it has no vegetation besides a little bit of moss. Mirei Shigemori had become aware of the fact that shrine gardens often last very long. As vegetation was prone to constantly change over time, the designer’s initial intention was most likely eventually lost. Therefore he decided to create gardens from sand and stone only and eventually started to introduce concrete for additional variety.

Without a doubt, 900 years after the Sumiyoshi Jinja was originally established, Mirei Shigemori tried to create a garden with a distinctly modern sense. And the result is a very unique shrine garden, which at the same time is a creative and contemporary garden.

The Line in Mirei Shigemori’s Gardens

The introduction of the line as its own independent design element is one of Mirei Shigemori’s key contributions to the modernization of the Japanese garden. In the scheme of point, line and plane it is the line that he pushed the furthest. So in his work the line became an object in its own right, and one that would sometimes even take the center of the stage.

Even though there are many more curved lines than straight lines among his work, both are equally important. In fact it is probably the straight line that is more of a novelty in the traditionally rather naturalistic scene of the Japanese garden. But straight line might actually not be the right term here. According to Kandinsky we are, at least in the case of Kishiwada Castle and similar projects, looking at what he calls a complex angular line. More specifically, he describes an example called a many-angled line, which is made up of a combination of acute, right, obtuse and free angles and consists of segments with various lengths.174 An almost perfect description of the line we can see at Kishiwada Castle today (Image 441).

173 Ibid., page 104.
With regard to the wave-like line Kandinsky describes them as consisting of (one) geometric parts of a circle, or (two) free parts, or (three) various combinations of these. From this he then derives two categories, geometric wave-like curves and free wave-like curves. Most of Mirei Shigemori’s curves are to be placed under the latter category, the free wave-like curves.

Comparing the two types with respect to his garden works, we can understand an important difference in their use. The straight line usually signifies the manmade element in the landscape, a grid of the city or of rice fields, in Kishiwada Castle’s case a moat or often also simply a path or wall. The curved line on the other hand stands for the natural phenomena around us, most frequently clouds or waves, a pond’s edge or the course of a river, sometimes the coastline or the rim of a hill. So the difference between straight and curved lines comes to symbolize the contrast between the manmade and the natural parts of our environment. But both versions are very much abstracted. Mirei Shigemori notes, for example regarding his cloud-lines at Kôzen-ji: “In addition I wanted the design to be more abstract, so expressing the clouds, I drew the curved lines rather freely. It is the contrast of these freely curving lines with the straight lines of the surrounding wall that creates a certain dynamic in the garden space.” It might be for that reason that Mirei Shigemori’s lines always seem to interact with and react to their surrounding.

Formal abstraction is, for Mirei Shigemori, the most important aspect of both modern art and the garden. Regarding his design for the Kishiwada Castle he notes: “I made reference to the old layout of the fortress and transferred it into a modern artistic expression.” A straight line or a grid is abstract and modern, where a naturalistic scene on the other hand is too literal and conventional for him.

But besides abstraction there is another characteristic that is typical for our time and that Mirei Shigemori wanted to incorporate into his lines. He explains it as follows: “So, for example, in my own garden creations I often use the pebble beach (suhama) as a feature to organize a site. The pebble beach itself is a classic form and has a long tradition, but this does not presume its edge line. I try to capture a sense of the modern times in the movement of the line. It is the very same pebble beach, but I incorporate the spirit of our times with brightness, speedy movement and a lively moving curved line. Then the slowness of the old times is gone. It does make expressing the noble dignity of the old times difficult, but instead you can

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175 Ibid., page 85 and 86.
177 In Nihon Teienshi Taikei, volume 29, page 35.
incorporate the spirit of our times." So from this we can understand that there is an aspect of speed that Mirei Shigemori expresses with his lines, and he feels that this speed is what makes his lines contemporary. From our present point in time it is easy to agree with his assessment, and it seems that people have felt like this for some time, at least Mirei Shigemori did forty years ago.

So taking this a step further we could say that Mirei Shigemori modernized the Japanese garden by including the modern aspect of speed or faster movement in his design, and choosing the element of the line to express this notion in the garden. Speed being a characteristic that is even more prevalent in our present day lives.

From this point of view, it is not without a certain irony that the speedy free wave-like curve eventually became Mirei Shigemori’s trademark. He was very much a person of the modern times; Mirei Shigemori moved fast in his work and created many lively gardens. The undulating line, that became so dear to him, was therefore a perfect illustration of his character as well as his approach to the contemporary garden.

The three above examples of Kishiwada Castle, Kôzen-ji and Sumiyoshi Jinja show proof of how Mirei Shigemori introduced certain types of straight or curved lines as independent and hard geometric elements, made from stone or concrete. By doing so he was able modernize the traditional Japanese garden in form and content. Sub-hypothesis 2 is thereby verified.

Planes of Colored Gravel

Sub-hypothesis 3: Mirei Shigemori modernized the Japanese garden by introducing areas of differently colored gravel.

If gravel is used in a traditional dry landscape garden, it is almost always of a light grey color, with the most commonly used type being the famous Shirakawa suna from Kyôto. This had been the custom since the beginnings of the karesansui garden and thus so far nobody really questioned it. But for the modernization of this garden style, the idea to use more than just one color was groundbreaking, as it opened up numerous new possibilities for the renewal of the garden form through experimentation.

The following paragraphs will provide the necessary evidence by illustrating this with two unambiguous examples. It is also worth pointing out that Mirei Shigemori was already 68

\(^{78}\) From Shigemori Mirei's Collection of Works, Gardens - Approach to Gods, page 308.
years old when he used differently colored planes of gravel for the first time in the Japanese garden.

**Ryōgin-an, 1964**

**Full name:** Ryōgin-an Hōjō Teien  
**Location:** Higashiyama-ku in Kyōto city; 1.5 kilometer southwest of Kyōto Station.  
**Category:** a temple garden in karesansui style

**History and legend:** Ryōgin-an is part of Tōfuki-ji temple complex. Originally it was the home of Museki Fumon Daimyō Kokushi who had been born in Shinshu Hoshina and later started the Nanzen-ji Temple. The following legend about his upbringing is related here as it inspired the design of the East Garden: The Daimyō Kokushi’s mother had dreamt that one morning she drank the morning sun as it rose to the east of the top of Mt. Fuji and became pregnant. No wonder the Daimyō Kokushi was such an abnormal child. His eyes were triangular-shaped and his pupils were abnormally close to each other. His ears described a twofold loop. He was a very a badly behaved boy, and at the age of seven his mother decided to give him to his uncle to take care of. The uncle at that time was the priest at Shoen-ji Temple in Echigo Urahara-gun, part of Kanmyōsō (today Niigata Prefecture), and his name was Jakuen. But he also was not able to control the child and sent it on to Shinshu Aida (today Nagano Prefecture). It was there that the child then caught a contagious disease and therefore was discarded in the mountains. But soon Jakuen was worried and wanted to go and check on the child. As he got to the mountains he saw a black and a white dog sitting next to the child and it looked as if they were keeping guard over the child. Suddenly a group of wolfs appeared and tried to attack the child. But immediately the two dogs defended the Daimyō Kokushi and wounded or killed several of the wolfs. The next day an even bigger group of wolfs came, but again the two dogs killed most of them. So as Jakuen found the child he realized it must be a very special human being to have survived all this. He brought the child to priest Shakuen in Serada who then raised the Daimyō Kokushi, who later became one of his disciples. After that Tōfuku-ji’s priest Hirakijama Seiichi trained him to become the sansei, the third generation priest, at that famous Kyōto temple. This is then where Kameyama Jōkō became one of Daimyō Kokushi’s followers and later financed the

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179 A Jōkō is a retired emperor and therefore of very high social status; Kameyama was emperor from 1288 to 1292.
construction of the famous Nanzen-ji temple. The Kameyama Jôkô eventually built Ryôgin-an as a home for the Daimyô Kokushi, who unfortunately soon after moving there became seriously ill. Kameyama Jôkô himself took care of the priest at Ryôgin-an, where the Daimyô Kokushi finally died on December 12th, 1291 at the age of 80 years. And that is how the legend goes.

The main hall at Ryôgin-an is now the oldest remaining such structure in Japan and also an outstanding piece of hôjô-architecture. However the building was in rather bad condition, when finally in 1960 it was restored and declared a national treasure. The extensive work took two years to complete, but the splendor of the old structure could be kept as most of it was fortunately preserved. However, the space around the temple buildings was still in disorder and desperately needed work, as the original garden had been built around 1287. So Priest Furuta Yoshihiro decided to ask Mirei Shigemori to restore the gardens to their original magnificence. But Ryôgin-an was a poor temple and couldn't afford to build the proposed designs. On priest Furuta Yoshihiro's request Mirei Shigemori then offered his services as an intermediary and tried to find a sponsor for the project. He must have been worried that it was too difficult for the temple to collect the money, and so the project would not get built. He decided to visit a close friend named Ono Hara Toshio in Nishinomia City.180 On November 7th, 1964 Mr. Ono Hara agreed to donate the generous amount of ¥1 million towards the cost of the project, about ¥1'705'000 in today's money. Needless to say that Mirei Shigemori must have been very grateful for that contribution. He immediately contacted priest Furuta and delivered the check on November 28th. The priest then went to Mr. Ono Hara's house to express his gratitude in person. Right after these events Mirei Shigemori started to produce the drawings for the garden.

On December 2nd the construction of the garden could finally begin and was completed by the 27th of the same month. Mirei Shigemori did the design as well as the construction supervision personally. The contractor was Mr. Yukio Okamoto from Yamashina with a crew of seven people. According to Mirei Shigemori they worked very hard, and he actually mentioned in his book how much respect he had for them.181 Calculating with a regular Japanese six-day working week, they built the garden in only 23 days! That certainly seems rather fast for a garden this size. So we can assume that Mirei Shigemori pressed ahead rather

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180 Mirei Shigemori had designed Mr. Ono Hara Toshio's garden in 1940.
181 In Nihon Teienshi Taikei, volume 29, page 107; the names of the team members are: Kawano Yutaka, Kawasaki Ryô, Tsujino Osamu, Saitô Tadakazu, Yoshida Kiyoshi, Yasuhiko Keizo and Koyama Masahisa. Appendix 2 also contains an interview with Mr. Okamoto.
decidedly, as the budget was limited and any extra cost he would have had to cover by himself.

**Project description:** Among the plans uncovered in Mirei Shigemori's storage house was a great drawing of the design for Ryōgin-an (Image 466), produced on November 22nd, just ten days before the start of construction. It is not completely accurate to the actual built version, but nevertheless gives a good account of the initial design idea as well as the spatial arrangement.

As one enters the temple and then turns left to go to the hôjō, the first part of the garden that appears to the right is the East Garden (Image 467). Here in between the priest’s living quarters and the hôjō is a small-enclosed garden with nine stones set on a plane of red sand (Image 468). The design is based on the abovementioned legend of the Daimyō Kokushi being discarded in the forest and guarded by two dogs as he was attacked by the wolves. The 16 tsubo (52.8 square meters) of the rectangular space are covered with red sand from Kurama, just north of Kyōto. A longish stone is placed in the center of the space, reflecting the feverish child lying on the ground (Images 467 and 469). Near the child's head and its feet, a white and a black stone were placed to symbolize the protecting dogs of the same color. To the north and the south is a group of three stones each representing the attacking wolves (Image 470). One of them seems to be just about to jump at a dog (Wolf 1), while as the middle one is obviously fleeing from the dog's assault (Wolf 2). This special stone arrangement is quite vibrant and shows the scene in full motion. It is a free, yet extravagant and even playful composition. The bamboo fence at the north end of this garden then refers to the place in the mountains where the Daimyō Kokushi was abandoned as a child (Image 468). It is like an abstract painting and expresses a *karekisan*, a treeless mountain, hereby emphasizing the sad circumstances of the legend.¹⁸²

Then as one continues along the southern side of the building a vast open and entirely empty space lies to the left (Images 471). The main gate, used only for ceremonial purposes, is located there in the center of the south-facing wall. This garden was kept in its original form with just the white sand (Image 472). Towards its west side a bamboo fence was built showing lightning marks to the approaching visitor. This is a rather compelling announcement of the action that is about to happen as one continues on to the west side of the hôjō (Images 473 and 474).

¹⁸² *karekisan* (枯木山) here refers to a mountain with withered or dead trees.
Next, as we pass the fence and enter the West Garden, the great finale: a first view of the rising dragon (Image 478). This part of the garden elaborates on the meaning of the temple’s name, Ryōgin, which can be translated as the reciting or chanting dragon. A soil wall was built enclosing 70 tsubo (231 square meters) of newly leveled ground immediately to the west of the hôjō. The southwest and the northwest corners were cut off in a triangle shape, resulting in a garden that is similar in shape to a flat hakama (Image 475). There is a small mountain ridge to the north side and the new soil wall runs north to south and then around the corner to the east. Bamboo fences close the garden off towards the east as well as to the north.

The central feature of the garden is a dragon creating black clouds, while rising from the sea towards the sky (Image 475 and 476). And even the bamboo fences are designed to echo that theme. The fence towards the South Garden shows the already mentioned abstract design of lightning (Image 474), whereas the one to the north side carries an abstract thunder mark design (Image 485). The amazing rectangular thunder marks suggest that the rising dragon not only causes those black clouds but also a thundering sound. Here Mirei Shigemori was obviously trying to create a supporting effect. Just about everything in and around this part of the garden is an abstraction of the theme of the dragon rising from the sea, creating black clouds, lightning and thunder.

Here, as in many of his projects, Mirei Shigemori used blue stone from Awa for the stone settings. He placed the dragon’s head just to the southeast of the garden’s center and started the body from there to the south, in a spiral winding counter-clockwise around the center, placed in a sea of sand (Image 482). The dragon eventually extends his tail all the way to the southeast corner of the garden. The aligned stones are an abstraction of the dragon’s back, marking the parts of its body that would be seen above the water, versus the invisible parts below the water line (Image 483). Striving to depict an impressive dragon, Mirei Shigemori decided to emphasize the head using particularly big stones for his horns (Image 477 and 479). He writes: “Great effort was placed on the arrangement of the stones for the dragon’s head, especially the horns.” And then he points out an interesting effect achieved by this stone setting: “When the visitors look at this dragon’s head, standing at the southwest corner of the hôjō, and then walk to the north, never taking their eyes off the dragon’s head, the creature seems to actually be moving in the sea.” It is rather remarkable that an effect like

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183 Ryōgin-an (竜吟庵) literally means the chanting dragon’s hermitage.
184 The spiral carries in Japan the notion of a lucky shape.
185 From *Nihon Teienshi Taikei*, volume 29, page 108.
186 Ibid.
this can be planned for, even thought it seems natural that things move in relation to each other while one walks into a certain direction (Images 479, 480 and 481).

The entire ground plain of the West Garden is covered with a pattern of waves overlaid with dark clouds, all made with just two colors of sand. And Mirei Shigemori obviously needed a device so the white and black sand would not mix, so in between the two he used the device of the concrete line again, marking the border between the two colors of gravel (Image 484). According to Mirei Shigemori it was not easy to find the black sand, but it could eventually be located in Wakasa, Fukui prefecture, right near the northern border of Kyōto prefecture. The white sand is the usual Shirakawa suna from Kyōto.

The West Garden completes the set of 3 garden parts around the hôjō at Ryōgin-an.

**An Evaluation of Ryōgin-an with a Special Look at Planes:** At the gardens of Ryōgin-an Mirei Shigemori used for the first time different colors of gravel in a karesansui temple garden, hereby creating three distinctly different planes: a red, a white and a black and white one.

Using the legend of the priest’s childhood as the theme for the East Garden he is telling the history of the Daimyō Kokushi and the origin of this temple through the stone settings of the garden. That is a compelling concept and once one knows the story, the design becomes clear and the legend adds an interesting dimension to the space of the garden. Looking then at the space again, it really seems like the dogs and wolfs were actually there fighting. With its aggressiveness the red color of the plane then accentuates this impression as it suggests violence and motion. This part of the garden would certainly feel much calmer on a light grey colored plane made with the ordinary Shirakawa suna. But with the red sand, the result is a rather dynamic karesansui garden featuring an interesting play on the legend of the priest's childhood. Further more it in effect is a contemporary garden, not only so for the red sand Mirei Shigemori decided to use, but also because he managed to infuse the stones with real life and drama.

The South Garden then allows the viewer to quiet down and rest. One can enter the hôjō's main room from here and worship. The vast empty plane of white sand in front suggests nothing but water and throws the visitor back on his own thoughts, mirrored in his mind and reflected by the sea. But in fact this is only a void in between two spaces full of action. There

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\[^{187}\text{Ibid., page 109.}\]
is the fence at the western end of the South Garden that will eventually attract the viewer’s attention. And this is where the next encounter starts.

The visitor first encounters the bamboo fence presenting lightning. Then as the visitor enters the West Garden the dragon’s head becomes visible and the lightning suddenly starts to make sense. A dragon in a sea of sand, producing dark clouds as he rises, is naturally associated with lightning and thunder. And the later then appears as big square marks on the fence to the north of the garden.

Forms and materials also reflect that notion of the rising dragon. The stones representing the animal’s body are hard and full of edges. The lines of the clouds then are soft and round, while the thunder and lightning marks again are sharp and loud. These are construction details quite different from most other karesansui gardens.

The line made of concrete is the same kind that Mirei Shigemori had used for the first time a year before at the Kôzen-ji garden in Kiso-Fukushima. He notes regarding his new approach: “But because Ryôgin-an and Kôzen-ji are quite different in terms of content, I should be expected to use for this situation a characteristic and specific design”,188 So he did and outlined the clouds with a dark concrete line, and then filled them in with a similarly colored gravel, creating two separate planes of color. The result is a monochrome image with black and white sand, or really a lighter and a darker grey tone. A composition that is very pictorial, a large painting made of sand, with the dragon sticking out as a three-dimensional stone sculpture. Moreover it is a painting depicting an abstract scene rather than a natural landscape, as is so often the case.

But not only did Mirei Shigemori use the ground plain to paint on, he also utilizes the fences as a canvas. What a unique idea to use those areas for the depiction of lightning and thunder in conjunction with the garden’s central theme. It probably requires the eyes of a painter to see these opportunities. The outcome is a kind of animated karesansui scene, and certainly the first one in the history of the traditional Japanese garden.

Sekizô-ji, 1972

Full name: Masshô Honzan Sekizô-ji, Sôou no Niwa
Location: Ichijima-chô, Hikami-gun, Hyôgo Prefecture, just south of Fukuchiyama

188 Ibid.
Category: a temple garden in the karesansui style

History: The fact that the old name of the temple is Iwakura-ji, together with the large stone outcropping visible up behind the temple (Image 488), suggest that this location has been a place of worship for a very long time. The recorded history says that Sekizô-ji had originally been built in the forest behind the current building, but as so often is the case, the former building had burned down, and so priest Tôseki built a new one at the current location in 1644.

The iwakura here, as the name implies, is a rock that the ancient Japanese people admired just like a god. It was believed that on this stone outcropping the kami descended at certain times of the year. So therefore this place was connected to the world of the gods. But in recent years, people had forgotten about that iwakura behind the temple’s building, so trees grew up around it and started to hide the stone outcropping.

In 1971 the followers of the temple started to discuss the possibility of making a garden in front of the main hall. This is when Mr. Nonoguchi Masao, who owns a brewery in the nearby town of Tamba Taki, introduced Mirei Shigemori’s garden work to the priest. Also at that time, the trees around the iwakura were cut down and the entire stone outcropping was suddenly visible again. On July 6th, 1971 Mirei Shigemori was officially commissioned to design a new garden for Sekizô-ji. He drew up a project plan on September 25th of the same year (Image 486), but the construction didn’t start until March the following year. The usual fundraising took some time as well. On March 22nd and 23rd Mirei Shigemori was on-site for the placement of the four stone arrangements. The construction work was completed on May 14th, 1972, producing the first garden based on the concept of Shishin Sôou in Japan.

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189 The currently used name Sekizô-ji is written 石像寺, but had been changed from the earlier version which was 石蔵寺, read as Iwakura-ji and named after the iwakura up on the hill. The first character 石, means stone or rock and is usually read as seki and as iwa. The middle character of the old name 蔵, signifies storage and can be pronounced as zô or as kura; it is also used in the word iwakura. So already the Chinese characters used for the old name Iwakura-ji could also be read as Sekizô-ji, but then at one point the middle character was changed to 像, meaning statue and read as zô, which now excluded the old reading; from this point on it was called Sekizô-ji. The temple’s name as a result translates now literally as Rock Statue Temple.

190 Mr. Nonoguchi Masao was also the head of the followers of Sumiyoshi Jinja where Mirei Shigemori got to build a garden in 1966.


192 Shishin Sôou (四神相応) is the name of a concept for a certain layout of the land, based on the ancient daoist idea where an area is protected by the following four gods: seiryû (青竜) the blue dragon, byakko (白虎) the white tiger, suzaku (朱雀) the red phoenix and gembu (玄武) the black tortoise; a geomantic concept, already seen on paintings in ancient tombs, that eventually became part of Feng Shui.
Project description: Inspired by the newly visible iwakura, Mirei Shigemori decided to make a garden for the gods, founding it on the ancient Chinese concept of Shishin Sōou, or the four gods that are protecting the four heavenly directions.

The project plan surprisingly shows the four gods in the wrong location (Image 486), being off one field in clockwise direction. The same plan is published five years later in the Nihon Teienshi Taikei, without being revised. The alleged mistake might be somewhat intentional, suggesting the movement of the never-ending circle of life, in which the four gods are apparently engaged. They are chasing each other in a counter clockwise direction around in a circle in front of the main hall (Image 487).

The following is a brief look at each stone setting, locating its position in Chinese geomancy and thereby also explaining the colors of the stone and the plane (Image 489):
- East is symbolized by the dragon and is associated with the color blue. The dragon also represents the element of wood and is seen as the earth guardian. In the east square of this garden long stones were placed suggesting the Blue Dragon and also blue sand was put down around it (Images 492 and 493). The four blue stones are green-schist quartz from the Awa area and also the blue sand is from that area.
- South is symbolized by the phoenix and is associated with the color red. The phoenix represents the fire element and is at the same time a guardian against it. In the south square a Red Phoenix stone setting is spreading its wings in a plane of red sand (Images 494 and 495). The red sand and the five red stones used for the phoenix are from the Kurama area north of Kyōto.
- West is symbolized by the tiger and is connected to the color white. The tiger also represents the element of metal and is seen as the wind guardian. In the west section the stone setting imitates a White Tiger and consequently white sand was used around it (Images 496 and 497). The two white stones used for the tiger stone setting are a quartzoschist from the Awa area and the white sand is as always the Shirakawa suna from Kyōto.
- North is symbolized by the tortoise and is associated with the color black. The tortoise represents the water element and is seen as its guardian as well. So in the northern square a Black Tortoise stone setting was placed amidst a plane of black sand (Images 498 and 499). The seven black stones for the tortoise were from the area around the temple and the black sand was from Echizen in Fukui prefecture.

So considering all four quarters together we are looking at a 4-2-5-7 stone arrangement. And not surprisingly, its overall concept ties in with ancient Asian astrology: “Chinese astrologers identified twenty-eight constellations which, when divided into groups of seven,
became the Blue Dragon, White Tiger, Black Tortoise and Red Phoenix. Collectively known as the twenty-eight Lunar Mansions and used in conjunction with the 365.25 divisions of the compass, they enabled ancient astronomers to predict eclipses and locate the exact position of the sun in relation to the moon. The basic idea of this garden is that the kami would descend at first from the iwakura to the Black Tortoise, as it is the geographically closest. Then continue to the White Tiger and on to the Red Phoenix. Next they jump from the Phoenix to the Blue Dragon, and at the end the four gods perform a dance while chasing each other.

The path system then cuts the plane in front of the main hall into four sectors, of which the northern and the eastern one are the two smallest. One path leads straight from the gate towards the main hall. About half way, and slightly off center, two more paths branch away in the direction of the two smaller buildings to each side of the main hall. In terms of material the path system is also tied in with the overall color scheme, so the paths take on the color of the segment they are leading to, if we think of it all moving in a counter clockwise direction (Image 490). So a blue paving stone is used in between the Black Tortoise and the Blue Dragon, and a black paving stone to the side of the White Tiger. The other half of the path leading to the main hall is paved with red stones from the Tamba area, and finally white granite is used in between the White Tiger and the Red Phoenix. The joints between the black paving stones are filled with a distinctly white a mortar, whereas for the other paving regular mortar seems to have been used.

As one faces the garden standing in front of the main hall, the Chinese characters read as shishin (四神) are visible on the bamboo fence to the right, just behind the Red Phoenix (Image 491). Carrying the meaning ‘four gods’, the graphic directly refers to the garden’s main theme. To the left side of the gate, and continuing on around the corner from the little bell tower, the bamboo fence then features a different Chinese character. Mirei Shigemori here used seki (石), the first character of the Temple’s name Sekizô-ji (石像寺). As this Chinese character meaning stone or rock can also be pronounced iwa, it is a reference to the Temple’s origin and a reminder of the iwakura that still exists in the forest up behind the building.

Being a dry landscape garden, there is little vegetation to be found in this design. The Blue Dragon, the Red Phoenix and the Black Tortoise are each set in a mounded patch of moss, which complements the shape of the stone setting. To the back of the section, where the

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White Tiger is located, an old maple tree (Acer palmatum) was left from the previous garden; a nice accent in fall.

**The Planes and the gods at Sekizô-ji:** The garden at Sekizô-ji consists essentially of a single large plane defined by the buildings surrounding it on three sides and the fence that marks its southeastern border. It is then further divided into four sub-planes, as the concept of *Shishin Sôou* suggests. As always, Mirei Shigemori uses a line to separate the different planes, only this time it is wide enough to also be used as a path. Each sub-plane is then dominated by a stone setting that sits like a point in the center of each of the four sections.

This garden is remarkable in that the four gods not only are designed with regard to their assigned direction, but also their designated color which is then applied to all related materials, including gravel and paving stones. Consequently, the stone settings are placed in a plane of gravel of the color required by the concept of *Shishin Sôou*. By choosing this idea as the basis for this garden, Mirei Shigemori made the decision to create four different planes of color in a *karesansui* garden that are then even raked differently. These are all significant factors because it is the first time in the history of the Japanese garden that a garden maker uses four different colors of gravel in a dry landscape garden.

And as with the previously discussed garden at Ryôgin-an, here Mirei Shigemori also uses the bamboo fence as an additional plane to draw on. This time no sound or light effect is displayed, but rather a reference to the garden’s main theme as well as a link to its origin. Both are obvious additions for the ones who know the meaning of the garden, but for everybody else they serve as an aid to understand the garden better. This is also a first in the Japanese garden, writing being used as an ornament on fences, adding layers of meaning to a garden space.

The plane of the *karesansui* garden therefore offers the ideal platform for this idea of *Shishin Sôou*. The plane of gravel is almost like a tablet used in presenting the four gods to us. In no other style of Japanese garden would a design with this theme have come out so clearly. But Mirei Shigemori had another good reason to make a *karesansui* garden here, his quest for a new style in temple gardens, part of his endless commitment to the contemporary garden: “This garden is not a *karesansui* garden just because there is no water. It depicts the ancient faith in god in a contemporary design appropriate for the modern times. As such it departs from the concept of the conventional *karesansui* garden, which usually imitates natural landscapes and therefore Sôou no Niwa should really be seen as a new type of
Once more the karesansui garden’s great potential for abstraction has led Mirei Shigemori to experiment with stone and gravel, resulting in a distinct use of geometry and color in the garden of a temple in the Japanese countryside.

And in this last garden example, the Sōou no Niwa at Sekizō-ji, all the elements unexpectedly comes together: the points of stone settings, the lines of the paths and the planes of colored gravel, all in one contemporary karesansui style garden.

The Plane in Mirei Shigemori’s Gardens

The plane is the clearest and most simple topography there is. And it is this abstract simplicity, enhanced by color, which suited Mirei Shigemori well in his garden making. There are two different planes, or rather two hierarchies of planes that need to be mentioned here. One is the large rectangle that so many Japanese gardens consist of and which has become a classic mark of the karesanui garden: a plane often bordered by walls, usually on three of the four sides. Seen with the eyes of a painter, Kandinsky describes it with the following words: “The schematic basic plane is bounded by two horizontal and two vertical lines, and is thereby set off as an individual thing in the realm of its surrounding.” And subsequently the material used emphasizes this notion: gravel. The second kind of plane then is a subset of the previous one, delineated by lines or other elements that cut them away from the larger plane. These partial planes are usually the product of a distinct edge, often a straight or curved line, and an inner area that is of a different color than the surroundings. We can find both of these types among Mirei Shigemori’s garden works, but in general, the plane as its own distinct design element appears only relatively late.

Mirei Shigemori had used colored cement in the cracks between paving stones at the Maegaki residence as early as 1955, and he had already defined clearly separated planes when he built the garden at Kishiwada Castle in 1953, but the combination of the two had to wait until 1964 when the garden at Ryōgin-an was to be built. So both the plane as well as the attribute of color had been around in the early to mid-fifties. In the garden at Kōzen-ji different planes of clouds started to be outlined with a line (Image 454), but without changing the color of any of the two planes yet. One year after he had built the Kōzen-ji garden, Mirei Shigemori then did the next logical step. He changed the color of one of the different areas of

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194 From Nihon Teienshi Taikei, volume 33, pages 45 and 48.
gravel at Ryôgin-an (Image 482). Again it was clouds, but this time they were supposed to be black - a good reason to finally change the color of the gravel.

Looking back it seems a fairly natural sequence. Mirei Shigemori had introduced the white concrete line amidst a plane of gravel with the effect that it produced different sides of the line, which then belonged to different fields or planes. At this point it was also technically possible to have several colors of gravel in a garden, as the hard line prevented them from mixing with each other. Without the initial concrete barrier this option would not have become available.

Doing all this Mirei Shigemori didn’t restrict himself to the ground plane alone. He also recognized the vertical plane of the fence as an area for creative interventions, adding a layer of meaning to the garden by drawing Chinese characters on it (Sekizô-ji), depicting a fisher’s net (Sumiyoshi Jinja) or a mountainous landscape (Ryôgin-an).

Where the elements of point and plane often signify natural elements in Mirei Shigemori’s work, the plane on the other hand seems to represent more supra-natural things like beliefs or stories, at least in its more artistic form. The reason being that the plane is mostly used as a stage or canvas. What Mirei Shigemori designed at Sekizô-ji is really a stage for the gods, where they come to visit and play. This is in contrast to the garden at Ryôgin-an, which is not so much a platform in a theater, but rather a canvas. But again, the plane as its own independent design element arrived relatively late, and if Mirei Shigemori had lived to build more gardens, we would have probably seen more planes of color.

For centuries tones of grey had been the standard in the Japanese garden, at least when it came to planes of gravel, always symbolizing lakes or oceans. Why not use black and red sand and add a layer of meaning and complexity to the garden? And thereby replace the plainness of the old times with a little bit of colorfulness of our time. Maybe it really needed the eyes of a painter to see this possibility for the contemporary Japanese garden.

With this the third and last sub-hypothesis, stating that Mirei Shigemori modernized the Japanese garden by introducing areas of differently colored gravel, is also verified.
Chapter 5: Relationship Between Key Design Elements and Influences

Every person is a product of his or her upbringing, education and experiences. This is no different in Mirei Shigemori’s case and therefore his work can be related back to these kind of earlier influences. The following paragraphs are going to explore the relationship between the above discussed key design elements and the influences on him.

My firm belief is that the two strongest influences on Mirei Shigemori were the big survey and his education as a painter. Where both are of similar importance, it was the big survey that taught him the fundamentals about the garden and its history, and that is why it will be covered first. But it was his education as a painter that had given him the tools to look at the garden as an art that could be modernized, and in addition it then provided inspiration and approaches for that very undertaking. Samples of his gardens and art works, as well as citations from his writings will help to prove the relationship between the things he created and the things he learned.

The Big Survey

Mirei Shigemori had no formal education as a gardener, but growing up in the countryside he naturally learned to work with the land. His family owned a large property that needed to be tended to and they also planted their own rice. The first contact with garden making was when in 1913 or 1914 he and his father worked together on the waterfall stone setting (Image 202) and the steppingstones in the garden at their house.

After moving to Kyōto in 1929 Mirei Shigemori eventually started to work as a garden designer. Between 1933 and the time he started the survey in 1936, he worked on a total of eleven garden projects, eight residences and three temples. Among those just two of the temples and one residence are mentioned in any later writing.196 The others appear only in his diary remarks. This indicates that, looking back, Mirei Shigemori was not so fond of these gardens, and therefore did not mention them anymore. These early works were where he learned the craft of gardening. As in the case of Kasuga Jinja, he would often produce a

196 These are the temple gardens at Shôden-ji and Kasuga Jinja as well as the garden at Mr. Yomo Usaburo’s second house.
design, but then for the construction work team up with gardeners who actually knew what they were doing. In this way he eventually became more knowledgeable and learned to create better gardens.

But then what really taught Mirei Shigemori the trade of garden making was the big survey. Visiting 242 gardens in three years, measuring and sketching them, researching their documents and taking photos, is a good education for anybody who wants to learn about gardens. But not only that, it also is a unique look into the cross-section of the history of this art in Japan as well as a great source of inspiration for future garden creations. And this is what the big survey initially was for Mirei Shigemori, a great source for ideas for his own garden projects. Following are a few examples of gardens that will illustrate this point. The ones he designed soon after finishing the big survey are, as one would expect, the most obviously inspired by what he had seen, and therefore closest to the original.

- Tōfuku-ji Hōjō Teien, Hassō no Niwa, North Garden, 1939 (Images 404-411): This garden has already been discussed in great detail under the key design element of point in chapter 4 and therefore needs no further description here. But with regard to influences from the big survey, two gardens or rather their buildings are worth pointing to: Katsura Rikyū, built in 1653 (Image 501) and Shugakuin Rikyū completed six years later in 1659 (Image 502). Both estates of nobleman of the time prominently feature the grid that is so modern in the eyes of westerners. Although in both cases the pattern is used indoors on shōji, it is an artistic expression of its time, and one that Mirei Shigemori well observed. It is important to keep in mind that neither of those gardens had been all that famous at the time. In fact, it was due to Bruno Taut that Katsura Rikyū was known at all. He had pointed it out as ‘modern’ to his Japanese hosts less than three years before Mirei Shigemori started his survey.197

- Mr. Ôwatari’s garden, probably 1939 or 1940 (Image 503): The plan is unfortunately without year and address, but shows the typical straight lines of stepping stones that are evident in several of Mirei Shigemori’s garden projects of that time. These also include the gardens of Mr. Yoshida, Mr. Koga and Mr. Nakata, all from 1940. And what is remarkable now is, that these very same lines of stepping-stones can be found in the lawn right outside Katsura Rikyū’s main building, where they have been since 1653 (Images 504 and 505). As Mirei Shigemori covered the garden at Katsura Rikyū in 1937 for the Nihon Teienshi Zukan, it seems quite likely that this is where he learned about this feature.

- Mr. Onohara’s garden, 1940 (Image 506): A garden for a private residence in Nishinomia, Hyogo prefecture, including a river that winds around two Amanohashidate-style peninsulas, four staggered hedges and a mound with stone settings in the back; the garden was later restored by Mirei Shigemori in 1958. As already explained in chapter 3 under the key work of the Maegaki residence, Mirei Shigemori here makes reference to one of the three most famous landscapes in Japan, Amanohashidate, at the northern edge of Kyôto prefecture. And once more he seems to have been inspired by the garden at Katsura Rikyû, where the Amanohashidate idea was executed already in 1653 (Image 507).

- Mr. Nishiyama’s garden, 1940 (Image 508): A garden for a private residence in Toyonaka, Ōsaka prefecture, its main feature being a winding stream flowing by a sand mound representing Mt. Fuji. This as well is one of Japan’s famous views, which has been rebuilt in many gardens throughout the country. The most famous version around is probably Kyôto’s Ginkaku-ji, where this concept was used as early as 1480 (Image 509). Mirei Shigemori surveyed the garden at Ginkaku-ji in May 1938; from then on he knew about that famous sand cone and he even had its exact measurements.

- Mr. Kumagai’s garden, 1941 (Image 510): The garden of a very large private estate in Nishinomia, Hyogo prefecture, with a big pond including a suhama beach, several islands and peninsulas as well as an extensive path system around the water. Furthermore, this garden features a linear stone setting in the pond that is a reference to the boats on their way to the mythical Mt. Hôrai island, a feature already discussed under the Maegaki residence garden. This same stone setting we can also find at Saihô-ji were a double row of stones in the water carries the same meaning: the ships that have departed from the main land, on their way to the islands of the immortals, anchoring for the night (Image 511). Saihô-ji was built around 1339 and Mirei Shigemori surveyed it in February 1938. Other projects where he used that same type of stone stetting are the gardens of Mr. Nagasaki, Mr. Nakata, Mr. Koga, all from 1940.

- Ôchi-in Temple garden, 1952 (Image 512): A garden for a Zen-temple in Koya-san, Wakayama prefecture. A rectangular karesansui garden with a 7-5-3 style stone setting, just like Ryôan-ji in Kyôto (Images 513 and 514). One major formal difference being that Mirei Shigemori designed a curved shoreline to the gardens back, departing from the perfect rectangle shape; but other than that remarkably similar in concept and layout. Ryôan-ji was built in 1680 and Mirei Shigemori surveyed it in May, 1938, but as we know from the diary, he had already known about this famous Zen garden when he worked at 134
Kasuga Jinja.\textsuperscript{108} And it always remained an important model and point of reference in his creative work.

- Ryōgin-an temple garden, East Garden, 1964 (Image 515): As this garden is covered extensively in chapter 4 under planes of color, there is no further description needed here. But worth noting is that in spatial concept and layout it is almost identical to a courtyard garden at Kyōto’s Tōkai-an built in 1484 (Image 516). A look at the two images shows the surprising similarities immediately. The stones at Ryōgin-an are a bit more spread out, but also on an axis and organized around a clear center. One major difference is that the garden at Tōkai-an is missing the two rocks that Mirei Shigemori in his version associated with the center stone, and of course there is no red gravel there either. Tōkai-an was built in 1484 and Mirei Shigemori surveyed it in December 1936.

- Matsuo Taisha shrine garden, 1975 (Images 517 and 518): A garden with a very impressive stone setting, probably one of Mirei Shigemori’s very best ones. This garden was his very last work before he passed away. It is located to the northern side of the shrine building, right at the edge of the forest. The shrine itself is situated at the foot of the hills that mark Kyōto city’s western edge. Nishizawa Fumitaka describes the stone setting at Matsuo Taisha with the following words: “There, on the back right hand side stand large rocks on a mound as if loudly praising each other. At the top of the garden are two rocks symbolizing two gods; below are erected stones on both sides of the slope as if calling to the gods who are on the mountaintop. From there, this formation of large rocks erected on the incline is a masterful work that could not have been created by an ordinary person.” Then he goes on and suggests where the inspiration for this stone setting might have come from: “This garden reminded me strongly of the garden at Kokubun-ji Temple in Shikoku. Perhaps the passion in surveying the many gardens throughout all of Japan was reawakened in Mirei Shigemori’s heart as he designed this garden. [...] I wonder if, in the future, when the low, striped bamboo completely covers this slope and wraps the foot of these rocks, this garden will come to hold the elegant simplicity that the Kokubun-ji garden has?”\textsuperscript{109} Kokubun-ji was built in 1582 and Mirei Shigemori surveyed it in November 1966 (Images 519 and 520).

\textsuperscript{108} Feb. 3\textsuperscript{rd} 1934 in Excerpts from Mirei Shigemori’s Diary: “Kasuga Jinja: 1933-1934”.

The gardens discussed here show a rather direct repetition of an element or conceptual idea Mirei Shigemori had seen in a garden he surveyed, and therefore their origin is relatively clearly recognizable. But there are without doubt more subtle influences, which are not so obviously visible and maybe appear in a more altered form in his work. And it is likely that as time passed the things he drew from the big survey have changed. But without doubt the great experience of surveying 242 gardens remained an influence and source of inspiration throughout his life.

**Education as a Painter**

In 1917 Mirei Shigemori had moved to Tōkyo to study painting. The details of this were already related in chapter 2 in the paragraphs on education. Also an essay on his study time is provided under appendix 2, Translations of Texts by Mirei Shigemori: “Kintaifu 3”. Therefore the following discussion will only look at what the influences of all this on his later creative work have been.

From his education in painting there seems to be two rather different influences on Mirei Shigemori’s work: one could be summarized under old Japanese painting styles and the other as the modern European ones. Both of those need to be explained in some more detail.

**Yamato-e and Rimpa**

Among the old Japanese painting styles Mirei Shigemori was most fond of the yamato-e approach and what is now called the Rimpa School. Yamato-e is a classical Japanese painting style developed in the Nara and Heian periods in response to influences from China. With a typical Japanese sense of beauty it often depicts flowers and birds of the four seasons, court scenes and landscapes. Yamato-e first started in ancient times in the social elite, was in the Edo period popular among the warrior class and then spread to the merchant class and the ordinary people. It then served as a basis for the later developments around the Rimpa School.

It must have been around the time when Mirei Shigemori was in the graduate program of the Tōkyo Fine Arts School that he learned about the Rimpa School. The School of Kōrin, as it was also called, is the name given retrospectively to a style of painting, calligraphy, textiles, ceramic and lacquer work first established in Kyōto at the beginning of the seventeenth
The Rimpa was an artistically versatile group of artists, producing concurrently in several creative disciplines, who were associated because they shared the same aesthetic vision. The artists carried the spirit of the brilliant decorative achievements of the Momoyama period (1568-1868), emphasizing simple silhouettes, and a wide variety of colors. The artist most closely associated with the revival of yamato-e themes in the late 16th and 17th centuries was Sôtatsu (active 1600-1640). Episodes from Japanese classical literature, derived from medieval painted hand scrolls, and plant and flower subjects were the main themes of this art, treated in a remarkably bold, asymmetric and decorative manner, most spectacularly on folding screens with gold and silver-leaf backgrounds. The Rimpa artists infused their works with new and dramatic flavor. Ogata Kôrin (1658-1716), after whom the school was later named, was especially renowned for his bold designs with striking color contrasts and his masterful compositional use of empty space, creating his own nearly abstract style (Images 317 and 318). Periodically revived in Kyôto and later Tôkyô in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Rimpacame to be regarded as quintessentially native Japanese in contrast to Chinese-influenced schools and regularly enjoyed imperial and aristocratic patronage. These deep roots in Japanese culture must have also appealed much to Mirei Shigemori, as he himself was drawing on it often in his own creative work.

Mitsuaki Shigemori, the son of Mirei Shigemori’s only daughter, has mentioned in several conversations his firm belief that his grandfather was a great admirer of the Rimpa school and its roots. Searching Mirei Shigemori’s writings then for concrete support of that thesis, some of the following remarks to that regard were found.

In his text on the construction of the gardens at Tôfuku-ji, Mirei Shigemori notes regarding the idea to design the mounds in the South Garden: “The mountain shapes in the yamato-e paintings inspired the five mounds in the west corner of the garden.” And looking for a raking pattern for the gravel he notes in the same text: “I had tried several patterns for raking the white sand until I found an impressive one. While I was looking through some scroll paintings, I found a wavy pattern like from a fish net hung up for drying, which seemed to me the most suitable and impressive pattern. I drew this pattern on my plan, but since I can’t always go and rake the white sand myself, what we see in the garden these days is a

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200 As a countermove to the shogun's desire to make Edo a major cultural center, Kyôto artists turned to a revival of Heian period (794-1185) arts in order to maintain Kyôto as the cultural center. Refusing to move to Tôkyô when asked, Hon'ami Koetsu (1558-1637) was really a political activist, but because of his ties to the imperial court, he was instead given a plot of land outside of Kyôto. There he established the Takagamine art colony in 1615, where many of the members of the Rimpa tradition were to be found.
completely different pattern done by the priest." This citations are proof that Mirei Shigemori actively searched scroll paintings for inspiration concerning his garden making. Similar remarks were already mentioned earlier regarding the yarimizu design at Kasuga Jinja as well as the fence pattern at Sumiyoshi Jinja. Also the peninsulas in the Maegaki’s garden had been inspired by the shape of mist stretching over a lake under the clear morning sky (Images 331 and 360), a feature often found on Japanese landscape paintings. Mirei Shigemori confirms: “The term ‘pictorial island’ signifies, not the island that has a pictorial value, but that which simulates the form of the mist or cloud appearing in ancient pictures. The islands of this type were popular during the Heian and Kamakura periods, but later they were forgotten.”

Another very clear statement regarding the influence of a paintings on a shôji onto his work we can find in a text on the Kôzen-ji garden: “Maybe the clouds could just be raked into the sand, but that doesn’t necessarily depict just clouds. It could mean whirls or waves among other things. I wanted to solve that problem and at the same time make a garden using fifteen stones, similar to the one a Ryôan-ji. So I used eight to ten centimeter wide cloud-shaped lines on the ground. Similarly shaped lines had been already used as an abstraction of clouds in the paintings on the sliding doors of the Muromachi and Momoyama periods (1333-1868). Now I borrowed this painting technique for the garden.” It almost seems as if Mirei Shigemori is looking to justify his new use of a cloud-shaped line by giving it an ancient point of reference. In any case, he admits having seen the shape before and he tells us that he is aware of all these old paintings on scrolls and shôji.

Interesting now is that with all this Mirei Shigemori sees himself as part of a long tradition of garden markers being influenced by paintings. In his book, Mirei Shigemori explains where he first locates the influence of painting in the history of the Japanese garden: “The pictorial pond garden shows the influence of paintings and is aimed at presenting a picture-like effect. There are two major types of this garden: one influenced by the yamato-e, a kind of Japanese painting method, and the other copying the style of the Suiboku-ga, a type of Chinese painting done in the Muromachi period (1333-1568). These gardens simulate paintings with the curved shorelines of the pond, and the picturesque islands and rock

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201 Both citations are from *Nihon Teienshi Taikei*, Vol. 27, page 120.
islets.” Mirei Shigemori didn’t make too many pictorial pond gardens, but he certainly made a large number of karesansui gardens, several of them inspired by ancient paintings, as shown above. And then he too used a curved line to simulate the edge of the coast, as already explained under the Maegaki residence key work. Later on in his life this same line eventually developed into its own key design element as accounted for in chapter 4.

These are the direct references Mirei Shigemori gives in his writings regarding the inspiration he took from historical Japanese painting styles.

Kandinsky as Idol

Now a few remarks on his other major influence during his education as a painter: the more modern styles from Europe. When Mirei Shigemori studied art and art history at the Tokyo Fine Arts School from 1917 to 1920, he of course also learned about modern painting. In his book collection we found works on Monet, Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Miro and many others. And some others he mentions in a later essay: “When Picasso, Matisse, Mondrian or Kandinsky first appeared, everybody copied their style and soon there was a flood of abstract paintings, so at present, we can see a lot of abstract art.” He even owned a book titled *Jahrbuch der Jungen Kunst 1922*, written in German and published by Prof. Dr. Georg Biermann in Leipzig (Image 521). That shows how widely such information was already available. So by the time he graduated from art school he definitely knew what was happening in painting worldwide.

The one European painter that particularly impressed him was Wassily Kandinsky. An intellectual who was painting in a quite abstract style, that was very much along Mirei Shigemori’s lines of taste. And Kandinsky too was an organizer, started several movements and wrote numerous books. These facts as well as the energy of his paintings appealed to Mirei Shigemori. Tanaka Hisao, in an essay, quotes one of Mirei Shigemori’s followers as saying: “When sensei was young, he aspired to be a painter and studied Japanese painting. A few works from that time still remain in the family storehouse. However, they are rather strange paintings like those of Kandinsky.” Whether those paintings are strange or not shall be left to each individual viewer to decide, but they certainly look a lot like some of

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206 Ibid., page 316.
Kandinsky’s paintings (Images 523 to 526). Mirei Shigemori’s third son Geite also advocates this theory. When in February 2003 he presented those two scrolls to the author, he confirmed that Kandinsky had been at least an important influence if not an idol for his father.

The titles of the two paintings are Struggle of Reason and Sense (Image 523 and 524) and A World Beyond Experience (Image 525 and 526). Both are undated, but were most likely done in the early 1920s, either towards the end of his art education or right thereafter. They are already signed with Mirei, the name that he officially takes on in 1925. Also the two paintings were only mounted thirty years later, when Mirei Shigemori had them made into scrolls for a special tea ceremony in 1955 and 1956 respectively. At that time he designed the cloth of the scroll as well as he located the paintings on them, one of them off center (Image 523).

One of Kandinsky’s paintings from 1920 with the title On White may here serve to illustrate how close the two styles in fact were (Image 522). An interesting detail is the fading black grid, also one of Mirei Shigemori’s favorite design elements that he prominently used in the North Garden at Kyôto’s Tôfuku-ji temple garden (Image 409). Kandinsky’s abstract approach for Mirei Shigemori symbolized much of what contemporary art was about, and he eventually transferred that thinking to the garden: “The influence of nature is particularly strong in the garden, because, as was mentioned before, it is made up of the component parts of nature such as land, water, rocks, trees, etc. This, however, does not mean that the garden is a photographic copy of nature, for there are many in which the interpretation is symbolic, idealistic or even fantastic. The ideal of the garden experts is to rise above realism or naturalism, and present the manifold beauty of nature from a diverse and free point of view.”

So Mirei Shigemori’s basic premise was that the garden is an interpretation of nature by an artist, just like Kandinsky’s paintings are an interpretation of his own world in the form of a painting. Quite a far leap from the traditional Japanese Garden!

When Mirei Shigemori designed the garden at Közen-ji he remained true to his conviction: “Consequently I did my best to express the idea of a sea of clouds in this garden. I decided to depict this concept by using white concrete lines in the sand to represent the clouds. So I used a two dimensional technique [like drawing] for a garden which has three dimensions. Something I have never before seen done in a Japanese Garden.” Depending on the medium an artist was initially trained in, the approach to the garden varies, but as Mirei Shigemori’s

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208 From the *Nihon Teien Rekiran Jiten,* page 158.
background was in painting, he certainly tends to interpret the beauty of nature in a rather painterly way.

And his education in painting also taught Mirei Shigemori how to deal with emptiness and void, at least in regard to the plane of the garden. This is now where the painterly approach is inevitably linked to the style of the dry landscape garden. He notes to this regard: “Another significant fact concerning the karesansui is that its charm is largely dependent upon what may be called the power of abstraction, or the power of vacant space. The gardens that show a strong influence of monochromatic painting, have a good many areas that are left austere, except perhaps for a white layer of sand or some green moss.”209 Any of the gardens described under the key design elements could serve as a sample here to illustrate this power of abstraction, at least the way Mirei Shigemori understands it.

A great visual explanation of the relationship between the key design elements and the influences Mirei Shigemori produced himself is in the form of the many shôji that he designed. They provide a first hand look at what influences he took up and how he then transformed them (Images 527 to 534). And they seem to prove that the grid and the undulating line are signifying the ultimate contrast in Mirei Shigemori’s design vocabulary.

He started with the quintessential Japanese element of the sliding door and used the grid as he had already seen it at the teahouses in Katsura Rikyû. Then he changed it in his own way, overlaid elements and contrasted it with other forms, trimmed it or created mountainous landscapes with it, and again and again superimposed the curve on it. Two particularly great works in this regard are the shoin he built at the residence of Murakami Sadatsuku in 1959 (Images 528, 529, 530 and 532) and right afterwards the one at the residence of Kogawa Matsukichi in 1960 (Images 527 and 531). Mirei Shigemori had well learned his lesson from Kandinsky (Image 533).

And also when nine years later, in 1969, he built the Kôkoku-an teahouse at his residence in Kyôto, things had not changed much (Image 534). The points of the doorknobs, also designed by Mirei Shigemori, and the lines of the waves are still playing with the great plane of the sliding door.

Chapter 6: Mirei Shigemori’s Contribution to Landscape Architecture

A person’s contribution to a profession or field will, in most cases, be congruent with the body of work that he or she leaves behind. The things one would label contributions then seem to be the more outstanding parts of this body of work, the ideas and projects that had an impact on the field and left a mark in the world. In Mirei Shigemori’s case this are his most influential books and his most creative contemporary gardens. As the majority of these have been covered extensively in the previous chapters, the following paragraphs are intended to give a summary and to place the work in a larger context.

Travel and Work Abroad

Mirei Shigemori never traveled outside Japan. He lived in a time when overseas travel was still something rather unusual and expensive. But the real reason was that he was afraid of flying. That is the reason why he declined when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wanted to send him to Paris to help with the UNESCO garden. Then Isamu Noguchi and a local gardener with the name Suzue went instead. So Mirei Shigemori never built anything abroad, even though he had the chance to do so.

But nevertheless his support of Noguchi’s efforts was considerable. From introducing Noguchi to various people in Japan and writing letters of recommendation for him, all the way to working with him on a full scale mock-up of the stone settings for the UNESCO garden, Mirei Shigemori was instrumental in the success of that project. And Noguchi thanked him with various presents, several of which are still valued highly by the Shigemori family (Images 601, 602 and 603).

But regarding Mirei Shigemori’s own travel, I asked myself why he never took a boat to make a trip to China or Korea. Both places seem very much worth a visit for somebody that was so interested in culture and especially in the history of gardens. The answer is probably twofold. For one thing the generation Mirei Shigemori belonged to had a completely different work ethic. They hardly ever took a vacation and were absolutely dedicated to their jobs. The spirit prevailing in the time after WWII was that everybody had to give his best to rebuild the country to make it prosper. The second reason is the resentment the Japanese felt and to some degree still feel from their neighbors. Having been an occupation power in China and Korea,
many Japanese knew that they were not very welcome as tourists there, so they just stayed home.

**Books and Exhibitions**

Unfortunately all but three of his many books are written in Japanese and therefore remain inaccessible to a western audience. But I would not be surprised if one day the comprehensive 35-volume *Japanese Garden History Survey* would be translated into English, especially as there has already been interest from foreign scholars and also a Japanese CD-Rom version has recently been made.

Of the three books in English two are about *ikebana*. In 1933 Mirei Shigemori published a *The Art of Flower Arrangement in Japan*, which is basically an extract of the larger nine-volume work of a year earlier in Japanese. It was translated by Mitsuharu Hashizume and sold as a small booklet by Yamanaka & Co. in the United States. That was at a time when *ikebana* was still new and exotic in the west, and certainly not the mainstream hobby it has become in the meantime. In the last paragraph the reader is informed that, “Mr. M. Shigemori who is a qualified teacher of the Ikenobo School of Flower Arrangement, will gladly give lessons in the methods used.” Followed by his Kyōto address.

The second book titled *Selected Arrangements of Moribana and Heikwa* is actually bilingual, Japanese and English, and was published also in 1933. It contains a wealth of color plates that feature the respective flower arrangements by Teshigahara Sōfū and Koshu Tsujii. Also this book was translated by Mitsuharu Hashizume and distributed by Yamanaka & Co. of New York. Mirei Shigemori, who wrote the preface, is listed as ‘compiler’ of the book. Both *ikebana* books feature beautifully painted color illustrations by Seikin Wasajiri.

Also worth noting here is the *New Ikebana Declaration* in which Mirei Shigemori was a key person. Although it was not initially published in English, it has been translated several times since and serves an important document of its time.

Mirei Shigemori published only one single garden book in English. It is called *Gardens of Japan* and came out in July 1949. The translator of the substantial 164-page book was Francis Bacon. It gives a broad overview of the history and life of the Japanese garden and features many of them with one or several images and a short description. It is interesting to note that he divides his descriptions into “The Horizontal Pattern of the Japanese Garden” and “The Vertical Pattern of the Japanese Garden”. And there is also a chapter entitled “Sections of the
Japanese Garden”. Besides my own translations this is the only one garden related text by Mirei Shigemori available in a foreign language.

In May 1935 about one hundred members of the Garden Club of America came to visit Kyōto and Mirei Shigemori guided them around for one day. This must have been when he started to be known abroad, and was most likely the initial inspiration to later publish the aforementioned book *Gardens of Japan* in English.

In 1956 he was asked by Professor Wallace S. Baldinger from the University of Oregon to help with an exhibition on the Japanese garden. Mirei Shigemori had models made by Shyuji Suezawa, a Kyōto model maker, and provided some of his own survey plans for the exhibition. A booklet was made that explained the exhibition’s concept and credits Mirei Shigemori with preparing photographs, models and notations. It provides a detailed explanation for every piece shown and even includes a summary of the history of the Japanese garden by Loraine E. Kuck.

I myself hope to make his essay entitled “Shinsakuteiki” available to a larger audience in the near future, which I see as one of his best texts and a quite remarkable piece of writing regarding the renewal of the Japanese garden. This would be the first time that one of his critical texts on gardens would be accessible to an English speaking audience.

**Gardens**

His biggest contribution to Japan and the outside world is probably the moss garden at the main hall in Kyōto’s Tōfuku-ji temple (Image 409), certainly judging by the publicity it receives. At the time when it was built, the garden was a remarkable statement for the modernization of the Japanese garden. It was an initial masterpiece that then opened the doors for Mirei Shigemori, and he ended up working on this vision for the rest of his life. With the North Garden at the Tōfuku-ji temple he liberated the Japanese garden, which was being held hostage by its own long tradition. The image of the square stones, scattered over the dark green plane of moss, has literally gone around the world, and can be found in every book on the Japanese garden these days. While many were shocked at the time it was made, the garden has now become a synonym for the contemporary Japanese garden and an icon for its modernization. Mirei Shigemori should feel some satisfaction after the local gardeners criticized him so harshly for this design.
It is interesting to note though that one hardly ever sees any of Mirei Shigemori’s other garden designs published in western books on the Japanese garden. It is hard to believe, but it really seems that nobody has found those gardens until now. So with regard to most of his rather extraordinary built work, we can say that it has not yet reached the world outside Japan. That certainly was a constant surprise while working on this research project.

Being a garden maker with a painter’s eyes, Mirei Shigemori realized what enormous potential the karesansui garden had for the future of the Japanese garden. Throughout his career he persistently explored options for its renewal through adaptations in form and material. But while doing this he always remained close to the original prototype, knowing that, “[…] the artistic value of the garden is proportionate to the degree of simplification carried out.”\textsuperscript{210} And looking at his work we have to admit, his most artistic gardens are usually rather simple and surprise the viewer with a new element being added to an otherwise largely unchanged context. But at the same time he knew about the value of empty spaces: “These places, because of the very fact that they are vacant, stimulate one’s imagination. In this respect, these areas can be called the ones left open for the observers to create their own scenery.”\textsuperscript{211} A lesson he might have already learned while studying painting.

After working on this subject for almost four years, as well as living in Japan for the entire time, the author now sees Mirei Shigemori’s body of work as a great manifest for continuous cultural renewal. He was a person who believed that once an artform became stuck in the past and stopped developing, it was dead. His studies in art history and the survey of hundreds of gardens all over Japan made it clear to him that the garden as an artistic achievement was caught under its own heavy load of history and needed to be freed. So he set out to continue what he had started earlier with the discipline of ikebana, to renew the cultural heritage and transfer it into the present times. Therefore his chief contribution was to identify possibilities for the modernization of the Japanese garden.

\textsuperscript{210} Gardens of Japan, Kyôto: Nihon Shashin Insatsu, 1949, page 36.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid.
Appendix 1

Annotations

Following a few useful lists that want to serve as a reference for questions relating to the Japanese time periods, units of measurement and currency values.

- Japanese Historical Time Periods:
  - Jomon (10000 B.C.-300 B.C.)
  - Yayoi (300 B.C.-A.D. 300)
  - Kofun (300-552)
  - Asuka (593-710)
  - Nara (710-794)
  - Heian (794-1185)
  - Kamakura (1185-1333)
  - Muromachi (1333-1568)
  - Momoyama (1568-1868)
  - Edo (1600-1868)
  - Meiji (1868-1912)
  - Taishō (1912-1926)
  - Shōwa (1926-1989)
  - Heisei (1989-present)

- Japanese Units for Length and Area Measurements:
  1 間 (ken) = 6 尺 (shaku)
  1 尺 = 10 寸 (sun)
  1 間 = 180.18 cm; 1 尺 = 30.3 cm; 1 寸 = 3.03 cm
  1 坪 (tsubo) = 3.3 square meters
Yen Value Change during Mirei Shigemori’s Lifetime (Source: Bank of Japan):
\[
\begin{align*}
¥1 \text{ (1930)} &= ¥744.1 \text{ (2003)} \\
¥1 \text{ (1940)} &= ¥397.5 \text{ (2003)} \\
¥1 \text{ (1950)} &= ¥2.51 \text{ (2003)} \\
¥1 \text{ (1960)} &= ¥1.82 \text{ (2003)} \\
¥1 \text{ (1970)} &= ¥1.59 \text{ (2003)}
\end{align*}
\]

- Clarifications added by the author, for examples in quoted texts, are marked with “[ ]”.
- In appendix 2, where some the interviews are provided for reference, the letter “Q” always denotes a question.

**Glossary**

*aosishi* (青石): a general term for blue-green colored stones that are usually used in the garden. In most cases they are green schist. According to their area of production they are called Kishū aosishi, Awa aosishi, Iyo aosishi etc. It is a metamorphic rock and naturally occurs in a vain from Tōkyō to Wakayama, Shikoku and on to Kyushu. So for variety it can be found in the valleys, as well as near the ocean.

*engawa* (縁側): an elevated veranda space that often surrounds a traditional Japanese house; usually built from wood.

*geta* (下駄): a pair of wooden clogs, Japanese sandals with two bars on the sole.

*gohei* (御幣): white zigzag paper streamers, usually hanging from a shime-nawa which is tied around trees or rocks, representing the brilliance of the sun and the glare of its light; a talisman against evil, demarking a purified place (Images 284 to 286).

*haiku* (俳句): A Japanese poem of seventeen syllables in 5-7-5 form.

*hakama* (袴): a Japanese skirt for formal wear; traditional attire for men.

*hakke* (八卦): tent-like structure made from bamboo and rice straw, used at the Yoshikawa Tōban Matsuri for the reception of the gods.

*himorogi* (神籬): a temporary altar, used in Shinto for the celebration of a particular deity. When worshippers wished to summon a kami to earth they prepared a holy place, called himorogi, by setting four posts in the earth to mark the corners of a rectangle. At the center of
the space stood a column where the kami dwelled, yorishiro, and a rope shime-nawa was tied around the four posts that enclosed the space.

*hôjô* (方丈): the main hall or building at a temple complex.

*Ikoma ishi* (生駒石): a granite found at the border of Osaka and Nara prefecture. It is similar to the stones found at Tsukuba. Contains some iron and therefore oxidizes naturally over time, but is a popular stone for use in the garden.

*iwakura* (磐座): a shrine rock; often a large natural stone outcropping where a god is held to descend in primitive beliefs. Used since ancient times at prayer sites, as the iwakura is thought to contain a kami at certain times of the year, or being a link to the world of the gods. This is thought to be the origin of stone arranging in Japanese gardens.

*iwasaka* (磐境): a sacred place with a boundary of rocks, in use similar to the iwakura; twin rocks evoke the image of the female sex; one theory sees the iwakura as a place to pray to ancestral gods and iwasaka for prayers for progeny. Both are spiritual or holy areas where the gods descend.

*karesansui* (干山水): dry landscape (garden), dry garden; a garden style that probably appeared first in the Muromachi period and that is unique to Japan. Using neither ponds nor streams, it makes symbolic representations of natural landscapes using stone arrangements, white sand, moss and pruned trees. The term is mentioned already in the ancient sakuteiki, where it indicates a stone arrangement in part of the garden without water.

*Kameshima* (亀島): lit. tortoise island, a representative form of island in pond gardens or dry landscape gardens. Under the influence of the Chinese cult of immortality, it came to be made together with the crane island in hope for long life and happiness, and was frequently built from the Muromachi to the Edo periods. It is composed of a tortoise head stone, foreleg stones, hind leg stones and a tail stone.

*kami* (神): god(s), of which there is about eight million in Shinto.

*karikomi*: (刈込み): trees and shrubs shaped by trimming; often to be found in dry landscape gardens of the mid-Muromachi period. Sometimes similar to the western topiary, but generally used for more abstract forms.

*konnyaku* (蒟蒻): jelly-like food made from the starch of devil’s tongue.

*Kurama ishi* (鞍馬石): A granodiorite from the vicinity around Kurama in Kyôto, characterized by rust-colored bands that look like layers of onion skin. It is appreciated as a
garden stone and often used as shoe-removing stone, ornamental stone or stepping stone etc. The same stone is to be found in Tamba and Kōshū, but of lesser quality as it sometimes peels off in thick layers.

*matsuri* (祭り): a festival or celebration.

*mikoshi* (神輿): a portable shrine.

*nihonga* (日本画): Japanese-style painting where only colors based on natural pigments are used, so the aspect of the paintings is very subdued and the color palette somewhat limited.

*sakuteiki* (作庭記): 'The Book of Gardening' is the oldest textbook on the secrets of gardening in Japan. There is no established theory on the authorship or time of compilation. It is generally said that Tachibana No Toshitsuna (1028-1094), third son of Fujiware no Yorimichi, compiled it from his rich experience in seeing and hearing many things about Shinden style gardening from childhood, and from his keen observations of nature.

*sensei* (先生): a teacher, master or professor.

*shinden* (寝殿): the main hall of the residences of the Heian period aristocracy, from which derives the term *shinden-zukuri* denoting that style of architecture. In front of that main hall was usually a garden with a rather large pond, including an island connected to the land by a bridge.

*shin-gyō-sō* (真行草): Formal, semi-formal, informal; a ranking system first applied to design styles by the tea masters of the medieval period.

*shime-nawa* (七五三縄): lit. the 7-5-3 rope; *shime* means to occupy or bundle, *nawa* comes from *nau*, which is to twist or bind a rope; so the word *shime-nawa* stands for a rope made from rice straw that usually signifies the place where a kami descends (Image 283). The numbers 7-5-3 indicate the actual count of rice straw, often hanging from around the middle of the rope in three individual bundles (Images 284, 285 and 286).

*Shirakawa suna* (白川砂): lit. Whiteriver sand; small pebbles of weathered granite taken from the Kitashirakawa area in Kyōto. Has been used in gardens at least since the early thirteenth century, and has become an essential element in the karesansui style. As the original material is becoming increasingly rare, machine-crushed sand is used instead.

*shite* (仕手): the main character in a Noh drama.
**shoin (書院):** lit. the writing room or writing alcove, a ceremonial room for meeting guests; an architectural feature found first in the Zen temples and warrior residences of the Muromachi period; part of an architectural style called *shoin-zukuri* which developed from the *shinden* style.

**shôji (障子):** a paper sliding door, a shôji; a shôji screen.

**suhama (州浜):** denotes a beach consisting of a sand bar jutting out into the sea; in Japanese gardens it indicates a pebbled beach sloping gently into a pond, serving both to protect the shore and enhance the view.

**sukushima (徳島):** lit. crane island, a representative island style in the Japanese garden, symbolizing a crane. Wing stones are often stood on both sides, or at the center of the island. It has auspicious meaning, like the tortoise island.

**tatami (畳):** a mat made from rice straw; used as flooring in traditional Japanese architecture since medieval times; one mat is approximately 1.8 x 0.9m in size.

**tokonoma (床の間):** an alcove in some rooms of the house where usually a scroll and an *ikebana* piece are on display. The *tokonoma* is a place of honor, so the highest guest always gets to sits closest to it.

**tsukiyama (築山):** an artificial earthen hill made in the garden, in actual size anything from a one-meter mound to a small hill; created with soil and for larger hills, with rock infill.

**tsure (連れ):** the second supporting character in a Noh drama.

**tsurushima (鶴島):** lit. crane island, a representative island style in the Japanese garden, symbolizing a crane. Wing stones are often stood on both sides, or at the center of the island. It has auspicious meaning, like the tortoise island.

**waka (和歌):** A 31-syllable Japanese poem in the order 5-7-5-7-7.

**waki (脇):** the main supporting character in a Noh drama.

**yarimizu (遮水):** a comparatively narrow and shallow winding stream made in the garden. First used in the *shinden* style gardens of the Heian period; the technique of using a small natural stream for its model is described in the *sakuteiki* in detail.

**zaibatsu (財閥):** a giant financial combine or group owned by one family; for example Mitsui.
Catalogue of Works

Gardens Designed by Mirei Shigemori

This chronological list contains 238 gardens all designed or altered by Mirei Shigemori. It
was initially based on the list that Tadakazu Saito and Geite Shigemori published in their
book (Mirei Shigemori's Collection of Works) in 1976. Many gardens were added though as I
found new evidence among his original design drawings and in his diary.

(Format: Owner or garden name/ name in kanji characters/ location/ year)

Mr. Shigemori, Shôrai-en, 重森邸松庭園, Kayo-chô, Okayama Prefecture, 1915/1924

Mr. Iga, 伊賀庭園, Kayo-chô, Okayama Prefecture, ~1925

Mr. Nishitani, 西谷庭園, Kayo-chô, Okayama Prefecture, ~1925

Mr. Ando, 安藤氏, Ōsaka, 1933

Mr. Yomo Usaburô's Second House, 四方氏海印山荘, Nagaokakyô, Kyôto Prefecture, 1934

Mr. Horino, 堀野氏, Sakyô-ku, Kyôto, 1934

Mr. Yamauchi, 山内氏, Ukyô-ku, Kyôto, 1934

Mr. Sakano, 坂野氏, Sakyô-ku, Kyôto, 1934

Mr. Kajino, 梶野氏, Kôbe, Hyôgo Prefecture, 1934

Oiso Jinja, 老蘇神社, Fushimi-ku, Kyôto, 1934

Kasuga Jinja, Shamusho Garden, 春日神社社務所庭園, Nara, 1934/1937
Shoden-ji, 正伝寺, Kita-ku, Kyōto, 1935

Mr. Itō Kisaburō, 伊藤喜三郎氏, Kameoka, Kyōto Prefecture, 1935

Mr. Kōbe Masao, 神戸正雄氏, Kyōto, 1935

Mr. Suzuki Keitaro, 鈴木慶太郎氏庭園, 1936

Tōfuku-ji Temple Grounds, 東福寺境内整理計画図, Higashiyama-ku, Kyōto, 1939

Tōfuku-ji Hōjō, 'Hassou no Niwa', 東福寺方丈, Higashiyama-ku, Kyōto, 1939

Funda-in (Sesshu-in), Tōfuku-ji, 芳陀院庭園, Higashiyama-ku, Kyōto, 1939

Mr. Kitagawa, 北川氏庭園, Nishinomia, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1939

Kōmyō-in, Tōfuku-ji, 光明院（雲亜庭・波心庭・蘿月庵露地）, Higashiyama-ku, Kyōto, 1939/1963

Mr. Saibara, 献原氏邸庭園, 1939

Mr. Nishiyama Ushinosuke, 西山丑之助氏庭園（青竜庭）, Toyonaka, Ōsaka Prefecture, 1940

Mr. Onohara Toshio, 斧原敏夫氏庭園（曲水庭）, Nishinomia, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1940/1958

Mr. Nakada (formerly), 旧中田氏庭園, Nishinomia, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1940

Mr. Inoue Seiichi, 井上成一庭園（巨石壇庭）, Ōsaka, 1940

Mr. Nishida, 西田氏庭園, 1940

Mr. Nakata (Kurakuen), 中田氏苦楽園庭園, 1940

Mr. Koga, 古賀氏庭園, 1940
Mr. Inui Koyo-sanso, 乾氏甲陽山荘庭園, Nishinomia, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1940

Mr. Nagasaki, 長崎氏庭園, 1940

Mr. Yoshida Kaichi, 吉田嘉一氏庭園, 1940

Kenjin-ji Hōjō, Sand Pattern Design, 建仁寺方丈庭園砂紋, Higashiyama-ku, Kyōto, 1940

Memorial Stone in Sakamoto village, 坂本村忠魂碑, Sakamoto, Shiga Prefecture, 1940

Kisshōin Tenmangu, ruin restoration, 吉祥院天満宮菅公観ノ井遺跡復元図, 1940

Tominaka Clinic, 富中医院庭園, 1940

Sakurai Girls Highschool, 桜井女子高等学校庭園, Sakurai, Nara Prefecture, 1941

Mr. Akira Saichiro, 明楽佐一郎氏庭園（又楽庭）, Wakayama, Wakayama Prefecture, 1941

Mr. Miaji, 宮地氏庭園, Kōbe, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1943

Mr. Minami, 南氏雲雀別墅庭園, 1941

Mr. Kumagai Koyo-sanso, 熊谷氏甲陽山荘庭園, Nishinomia, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1941

Mr. Shinza, 新佐氏邸庭園, 1942

Nishimura Tarōemon Memorial Garden, 西村太郎右衛門供養塔庭園, Oumihachiman, Shiga Prefecture, 1942

Mr. Ōta, 太田氏露地庭園, 1942

Mr. Nomura, 野村家庭園, 1946

Mr. Murakami Masatsune, 村上允常氏庭園（曲泉山荘）, Nishiwaki, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1949
Mr. Ikegaki Iwataro, 池垣岩太郎氏邸庭園, Nakagyō-ku, Kyōto, 1950

Mr. Yamamoto, 山本氏邸庭園, 1950

Mr. Ogura Yutaka, 小倉豊氏邸庭園, Kayo-chō, Okayama Prefecture, 1951

Mr. Uchida Ichirō, 内田一郎氏邸庭園, Nishinari-ku, Ōsaka, 1951

Edokko Ryokan, 江戸ッ子旅館庭園, Kita-ku, Ōsaka, 1951

Mr. Kaji Orinosuke, 鎌治之助氏邸庭園, Sennan, Ōsaka Prefecture, 1951

Mr. Nakamura Ken, 中村邸御船入屋敷庭園, Okayama, 1951

Shōchi-in, 正智院庭園, Koya-san, Wakayama Prefecture, 1952

Sainan-in, 西南院, Koya-san, Wakayama Prefecture, 1952

Ouchi-in, 櫻池院, Koya-san, Wakayama Prefecture, 1952

Mr. Akira Saichirō, 明楽佐一郎氏庭園（有楽庭）, Wakayama, Wakayama Prefecture, 1952

Mr. Ysuda Shintarō, 安田信太郎氏邸庭園, Nara, 1952

Mr. Kanbayashi Hisao, 上林久雄氏邸庭園, Sennan, Ōsaka Prefecture, 1952

Iwashimizu Hachimangū Teien, 石清水八幡宮庭園（鳥居の庭）, Yawata, Kyōto Prefecture, 1952/1966

Matsuo Clinic, 松尾医院, 1953

Tsukushi-ya, つくし家庭園, 1953

Jochi University, 上智大学図書館, Tōkyo, 1953

Shiratori Shrine, 白鳥神社, 1953
Mr. Shimizu, 清水氏邸庭園, 1953

Mr. Ōsawa, 大澤氏邸庭園, 1953

Kishiwada Castle, Hachijin no Niwa, 岸和田城（八陣の庭）, Kishiwada, Ōsaka Prefecture, 1953

Honkaku-in, 本覚院庭園, Koya-san, Wakayama Prefecture, 1953

Saizen-in, 西禅院庭園, Koya-san, Wakayama Prefecture, 1953

Ryusen-in, 竜泉院, Koya-san, Wakayama Prefecture, 1953

Kōdai-in, 光台院新書院庭園, Koya-san, Wakayama Prefecture, 1953

Mr. Nakamura Ken, 中村健氏邸庭園, Okayama, 1953

Ryokan Uehara, 上原旅館庭園, Minami-ku, Ōsaka, 1953


Shōrin-ji, 少林寺庭園, Minami-ku, Ōsaka, 1954

Sakyō Ward Fire Department, 左京区消防署庭園, Sakyō-ku, Kyōto, 1954

Mr. Kinoto Hideyoshi, 木野戸秀吉氏邸庭園, Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture, 1954

Mrs. Sasai Kimiyo, 笹井君代氏邸庭園, Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture, 1954

Ryokan Goshûkaku, 五洲閣（旅館）庭園, Higashi-Ōsaka, Ōsaka Prefecture, 1954

Mr. Handa, 半田邸庭園, 1954

Mr. Kawaguchi, 河口氏庭園, Higashiyama-ku, Kyōto, 1955

Fudō-in, 不動院庭園, Koya-san, Wakayama Prefecture, 1955
Mr. Kazuichi Maegaki, 前垣寿一氏庭園, Higashi-Hiroshima, Hiroshima Prefecture, 1955

Mr. Kawata Genshichi, 河田源七氏邸庭園, Amino-chô, Kyôto Prefecture, 1955

Mrs. Higashi Tamiko, 東民子氏邸庭園（鰲庵）, Takahashi, Okayama Prefecture, 1955

Ryokan Eirakuan, 永楽庵（旅館）庭園（三楽庭）, Misasa Onsen, Tottori Prefecture, 1955/1966

Mr. Iwasawa Tetsuya, 岩澤徹誠氏邸庭園, Ukyo-ku, Kyôto, 1955/1966

Zuinô-in, 瑞応院庭園（楽紫の庭・如々庭）, Sakamoto, Ôtsu-City, Shiga Prefecture, 1956

Mr. Fujii Takuzô, 藤井琢三氏邸庭園, Hyôgo Prefecture, 1956

Mr. Tomita Shô, 富田精氏邸庭園, Kita-ku, Kyôto, 1956

Ryokan Nohara, 野原旅館庭園, Yamaguchi Town, Yamaguchi Prefecture, 1956

Mr. Miyashina Kyusaburo, 宮階久三郎氏邸庭園, Kamigyô-ku, Kyôto, 1956

Ryuzo-ji, 犬蔵寺庭園, Yamaguchi Town, Yamaguchi Prefecture, 1956

Mr. Nagao Yoshimitsu, 長岡光氏邸庭園, Tokushima, 1956

Mr. Masui Tsutomu, 増井勲氏邸庭園（雲門庵）, Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture, 1956

Mr. Usuki Sakae, 臼杵栄氏邸庭園（露結庵）, Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture, 1956/1960

Kômyôzen-ji, 光明禅寺庭園, Dazaifu, Fukuoka Prefecture, 1957

Bodai-ji, 菩提寺庭園, Tennoji-ku, Ôsaka, 1957

Mr. Tomiya, 富屋庭園, Ôsaka, 1957

Shôgo-in Goten-sô, 聖護院御殿荘, Sakyô-ku, 1957
Mr. Okamoto Hajime (Senkai-tei), 岡本一氏邸庭園（仙海庭）, Saijo, Ehime Prefecture, 1957

Mr. Ochi Yôta (Kyokusui-tei), 越智太氏邸庭園（旭水庭）, Saijô, Ehime Prefecture, 1957

Mr. Ochi Eiichi, 越智栄一氏邸庭園（牡丹庵）, Saijô, Ehime Prefecture, 1957

Mr. Orita Akitaro (Tosen-tei), 織田秋太郎氏邸庭園（島仙庭）, Mibugawa-chô, Ehime Prefecture, 1957

Hotel Takaraso, 宝荘ホテル庭園, Matsuyama, Ehime Prefecture, 1957

Mr. Katayama Kaoru, 片山薰氏邸庭園, Kishiwada, Ôsaka Prefecture, 1957

Mr. Shimazu, 島津氏邸庭園, Kyôto, 1958

Mr. Wakasa Hisakichi (formerly), 旧若狭久吉氏邸庭園, Amino-chô, Kyôto Prefecture, 1958

Suntory Tamagawa Koujou, サントリー多摩川工場, Kawasaki, 1958

Ikô-ji, 医光寺庭園, Masuda, Shimane Prefecture, 1958

Manpuku-ji, 万福寺庭園, Masuda City, Shimane Prefecture, 1958

Mr. Ebi Kurio, 衣斐栗雄氏邸庭園, Nishinomia, Hyôgo Prefecture, 1958/ 1963

Mr. Kogawa Matsukichi, 小河松吉氏庭園, Masuda, Shimane Prefecture, 1958 - 1965

Mr. Sadatsugu Murakami, 村上定次氏庭園（青山庭）, Muikaichi, Shimane Prefecture, 1959

Mr. Kuroda Yasaburo, 黒田弥三郎氏邸庭園, Kamigyô-ku, Kyôto, 1959

Mr. Kurisu Shoku, 栗須殖氏邸庭園, Tennô-ji-ku, Ôsaka, 1959
Mr. Kuwata Masasumi, 桑田真三氏邸庭園（宗玄庵）, Fukuyama, Hiroshima Prefecture, 1959

Mr. Matsumoto Saburô, 松本三郎氏邸庭園, Okayama, 1959

Mr. Tanaka Sensaku, 田中篤策氏邸庭園, Kita-ku, Kyôto, 1959

Mr. Matsumoto Tadahira, 松本忠平氏邸庭園, Sennan, Ôsaka Prefecture, 1959

Mr. Tamoi Yûji, 田茂井勇治氏邸庭園, Amino-chô, Kyôto Prefecture, 1959/1970

Eikô-ji, 栄光寺庭園と露地, Utsumi-chô, Kagawa Prefecture, 1960

Yonehara Shoten, 米原商店庭園, Shimogyô-ku, Kyôto, 1960

Mr. Fukuda Tomokazu, 福田智一氏邸庭園（鴨月庭）, Sakyô-ku, Kyôto, 1960

Mrs. Miyatake Fusa, 都竹ふさ氏邸庭園, Ikuno-ku, Ôsaka, 1960

Mr. Kitaoka, 北岡山荘庭園, 1960

Mr. Amino, 綱野氏庭園, 1960

Mr. Daimaru's Second Houses, 大丸別荘茶席・水遺, 1960

Zuihô-in at Daitoku-ji, 瑞峯院庭園（独座庭・閉眠庭）, North Kyôto, 1961

Shinryo-in, 真如院, Shimogyô-ku, Kyôto, 1961

Mr. Matsubayashi Toyohiko, 松林豊彦氏庭園, Uji, Kyôto Prefecture, 1961

Kôri-danchi, 香里団地庭園（以楽苑）, Hirakata, Ôsaka, 1961

Rinshô-ji, 林昌寺庭園, Sennan, Ôsaka Prefecture, 1961

Mr. Yamaguchi Iwao, 山口巌氏邸庭園, Nishiwaki, Hyôgo Prefecture, 1961
Mr. Hosoda Shigeru, 細田繁氏邸庭園, Abeno-ku, Osaka, 1961

Mr. Tateoka Kouichi's second house, 立岡孝一氏別邸庭園, 1961

Shido-ji, 志度寺（曲水庭・無染庭）, Shido-chô, Kagawa Prefecture (on Shikoku), 1962

Mr. Mitani Shinzô, 三谷進三氏邸庭園, Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, 1962

Mr. Kuwamura Toshirô, 桑村敏郎氏邸庭園, Naka-chô, Hyogo Prefecture, 1962

Mr. Matsushita Kônosuke, 松下幸之助氏邸庭園, Nishinomia, Hyogo Prefecture, 1962

Shitennô-ji Gakuen, 四天王寺学園, Tennôji-ku, Osaka, 1963

Kôzen-ji, 興禅寺庭園（看雲庭）, KiSôfûkushima-chô, Nagano Prefecture, 1963

Hotel Shôwa-en, 昭和園（ホテル）庭園, Beppu, Oita Prefecture, 1963

Kyôhô-in, 教法院庭園, Kamigyô-ku, Kyoto, 1963

Mr. Iwamoto Tosio, 岩本年生氏邸庭園, Fukuyama, Hiroshima Prefecture, 1963

Mr. Hirai Yasuo, 平井道雄氏邸庭園, HigashiÔsaka, Osaka Prefecture, 1963

Mr. Ozawa, 小澤氏庭, 1963

Niihama Cultural Center Courtyard, 新居浜文化センター中庭, 1963

Ryôgin-an, (part of Tôfuku-ji), 龍吟庵, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto, 1964

Mr. Ariyoshi Yoshikazu, 有吉義一氏邸庭園（有心庭・吉泉庭）, Abeno-ku, Osaka, 1964

Mr. Aono Kazuyuki, 青野一幸氏邸庭園, Kashiwara, Osaka Prefecture, 1964

Mr. Iwasawa Shigeo, 岩沢重夫氏邸庭園, Kita-ku, Kyoto, 1964

Mrs. Kobayashi Hideko, 小林秀子氏邸庭園, Okayama, 1964
Mr. Yamada Teruo, 山田輝郎邸庭園, Ashiya, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1964

Mrs. Tokuya Kijo, 徳矢きよ氏邸庭園, Ashiya, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1964

Mr. Hiratsuka, 平塚家庭園, 1964

Kongōbu-ji Lotus pond, 金剛峰寺蓮池, Koya-san, Wakayama Prefecture, 1964

Ôtori Taisha Teien, 大鳥大社庭園, 1964

Kibune Jinja, 貴船神社, Kibune, Kita-ku Kyoto, 1965

Fukusen-ji ('Garden of 48 Wishes'), 福泉寺（四十八願の庭）, Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku, Tōkyo, 1965

Kitano Bijutsukan and Mr. Kitano Yoshito Residence, 北野美術館庭園/北野吉登氏邸庭園, Nagano, 1965/1971

Mr. Mori Kôtarô (formerly), 旧森康太郎邸庭園, Shimogyō-ku, Kyōto, 1965

Mr. Narita Noboru, 成田昇氏邸庭園（望州楼）, Handa, Aichi Prefecture, 1965

Mr. Kiyohara Seinosuke, 清原清之助氏邸庭園, Ashiya, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1965

Ankoku-ji, 安国寺庭園, Fukuyama, Hiroshima Prefecture, 1965

Mr. Iwata Yukio, 岩田幸雄氏邸庭園, Hiroshima, 1965

Mr. Nishikawa, 西川氏邸庭園, Yao, Ōsaka Prefecture, 1965

Mr. Koromogawa Yasunobu, 衣川安信氏邸庭園, Kaizuka, Ōsaka Prefecture, 1965

Mr. Hirano Norihito, 平野徳人氏邸庭園, Sennan, Ōsaka Prefecture, 1965

Mitaki-dera, 三瀧寺, 1965

Mr Takizawa, 滝澤氏邸庭園, 1965

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Mr. Kaneshige, 金重邸庭園, 1965

Sumiyoshi Jinja (Suminoc no Niwa), 住吉神社（住之江の庭）, Sasayama-chô, Hyôgo Prefecture, 1966

Mr. Okamoto Rui, 岡本類氏邸庭園, Fukuyama, Hiroshima Prefecture, 1966

Mr. Nishikawa Sotoyoshi, 西川外吉氏邸庭園, Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, 1966

Kôso no Ie, 酒素の家, Kamigyô-ku, Kyôto, 1966

Second House Takagamine Sanso, 鷹ヶ峰山荘庭園, Sakyô-ku, Kyôto, 1966

Kôsei-ji, 光清寺（心字庭）, Kamigyô-ku, Kyôto, 1967

Mr. Asano Yoshikazu, 浅野義一氏邸庭園, Kita-ku, Kyôto, 1967

Mr. Katsukawa, 勝川氏邸庭園, Suita, Ōsaka Prefecture, 1967

Mr. Ishii Umekazu, 石井梅一氏邸庭園, Nara, 1967

Mr. Matsumura Jirô, 松村次郎氏邸庭園, Suita, Ōsaka Prefecture, 1967

Mr. Asano, 浅野邸庭園, 1967

Tôkô-an, 東行庵前池庭, 1967

Mr. Akitani Iori, 秋谷伊織氏邸庭園, Takarazuka, Hyôgo Prefecture, 1967

Ōishi Jinja Teien, 大石神社庭園, Akô, Hyôgo Prefecture, 1967

Jôei-ji (Nanmei-tei), 常栄寺庭園（南湲庭）, Yamaguchi, Yamaguchi Prefecture, 1968

Shôgen-ji, 正眼寺, (Mino-Ôta) Minôkamo, Gifu Prefecture, 1968

Mr. Yokoyama Hideyoshi, 横山秀吉氏邸庭園, Komono-chô, Mie Prefecture, 1968
Mr. Shimada Hisashi, 島田久氏邸庭園, Sennan, Ōsaka Prefecture, 1968

Sōrin-ji, 宗鶴寺庭園, Ube, Yamaguchi Prefecture, 1968

Yūrin Kaikan (rebuilt in 2002!), 友琳会館, Ukyō-ku, Kyōto, 1969

Mr. Izuhara Yōzō (Hakuha-tei), 出原陽三氏邸庭園, Shinichi-chō, Hiroshima Prefecture, 1969

Mr. Sasai Genei, 笹井源衛氏邸庭園, Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture, 1969

Mr. Nakata Mitsuo, 中田三雄氏邸庭園, Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture, 1969

Mr. Hatake Sōshi (Hōshun-tei), 畳宗志氏邸庭園（奨春庭）, Sasayama-chō, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1969

Mr. Akagi Norihei, 赤木憲平氏邸庭園, Okayama, 1969

Mr. Hanafusa Masao (Shirasagi-an Senraku-tei), 英政夫氏邸庭園（白鷺庵仙楽庭）, Himeji, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1969

Tenrai-an, 天縛庵露地, Kayo-chō, Okayama Prefecture, 1969


Mr. Imanishi, 今西邸庭園, 1969

Shōkaku-ji, (Ryōju no Niwa), 正覚寺, Tamba-Sasayama, 1970

Yashima-ji, (Zabōtei), 屋島寺庭園（座忘庭）, Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture, 1970

Mr. Kubo Takehisa, 久保武久氏庭園, Itami, Hyōgo Prefecture, 1970

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Mr. Yamamoto Kiichiro (Taisan-tei, Seiran-tei),
山本紀市郎氏邸庭園（泰山庭・晴嵐庭）, Imabari, Ehime Prefecture, 1970

Mr. Fukamori Toshio, 深森俊夫氏邸庭園, Toyonaka, Osaka Prefecture, 1970

Mr. Takenaka Masao, 竹中正夫氏邸庭園, Kita-ku, Kyoto, 1970

Reiun-in (Kusanhakkai no Niwa, Gaun no Niwa), Tôfuku-ji,
霊雲院（九山八海の庭・臥雲の庭）, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto, 1970/1971

Ôita Junkyo Kôen, 大分殉教公園, Oita Prefecture, 1970

Mr. Uchigaki Yasuhiro, 内垣健祐氏邸庭園, 1970

Mr. Ashida Suejirô, 芦田末次郎氏邸庭園, Amagasaki, Hyôgo Prefecture, 1971

Mr. Kobayashi Hyakutarô, 小林百太郎氏, Sakai, Osaka Prefecture, 1971

Hiroshima Yuenchi (Juka-en), 広島遊園地（聚花園）, Hiroshima, 1971

Mr. Shinoda Tôji, 信田藤治氏邸庭園, Sakai, Osaka Prefecture, 1971

Hôkoku Jinja Shûsekitei Teien, 豊国神社秀石庭庭園, Osaka Castle, 1972

Sekizô-ji (Shishin Souô no Niwa, Kuhi no Niwa), 石像寺（四神相應の庭・句碑の庭）, Ichishima-chô, Hyôgo Prefecture, 1972

Zennô-ji (Yûsen-en), 善能寺（遊仙苑）, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto, 1972

Seiraku-ji (Botsujimi no Niwa, Hofu no Niwa, Seiryû no Niwa, Sanrakushitsu Roji, Shichiken no Niwa), 清楽寺庭園（没新味の庭・帆風の庭・青竜の庭・三楽室露地・七賢の庭）, Fukuoka, 1972

Mrs. Ishibashi Satoko, 石橋里子氏邸庭園, Hamada, Shimane Prefecture, 1972

Taishô-ji, 大正寺, Yawata-ku, Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture, 1972
Mr. Shikata Yonekichi, Kôbe, Hyôgo Prefecture, 1972

Mr. Kishimoto Shigeo, 1972

Sennyû-ji, Renseidôjo (trainings center), Higashiyama-ku, Kyôto, 1973

Shizuoka Royal Hotel Rooftop Garden, Shizuoka, 1973

Fukuchi-in (Aizen-tei), Kôya-san, Wakayama Prefecture, 1973-1975

Mr. Konishi, 1973

Mr. Sato Nobuhiro, Tokuyama, Yamaguchi Prefecture, 1973/1975

Mr. Nakanishi, 1973

Honkyû-ji, Hyôgo Prefecture, 1974

Mr. Yagi Gentaro, Higashiyama-ku, Kyôto, 1974

Mr. Higashiguchi Tsuruji, Sakai, Ôsaka Prefecture, 1974

Mr. Matsuyama Sôzu/Tea School (Sangetsu-tei Roji), Koriyama, Fukushima Prefecture, 1974

Mr. Chiba Keiichi (Senpa-tei), Mizusawa, Iwate Prefecture, 1974

Mr. Ishii, 1974

Matsuo Taisha Shrine (Shofû-en), Ukyô-ku, Kyôto, 1975
Projects Without Year Information:

Mr. Tani Shiro, 谷四郎氏庭園

Inari Jinja, 稻荷神社

Mr. Ówatari, 大渡氏本邸庭園

Mr. Yoshimoto, 吉本邸庭園
Books Published by Mirei Shigemori

This chronological list contains 81 published books all written by Mirei Shigemori. It is largely based on a list Mirei Shigemori provided in the very last book of his Japanese Garden History Survey in 1975, which was finished after his death by his son Kanto. Several books were added though as I found missing works, partially with the help of Mitsuaki Shigemori.

(Format: Book title translated into English/ original title in kanji/ location/ publisher/ year)

Lecture on the Trend of Thought on Art, 美術思潮講座, Tôkyô, Bunka Daigakuin, 1922

Lecture on the Trend of Thought on Philosophy, 哲学思潮講座, Tôkyô, Bunka Daigakuin, 1922

Outline of the Aesthetics of Flower Arrangement, 美学大系‘花道美学’, Kyôto, Kokufusha, 1927

Japanese History of the Unification of Opposites, 日本母陰史, Kyôto, Tôshinkaku Shobô, 1930

Complete Works of Japanese Flower Arrangement Art (in 9 Vol.), 日本花道美術全集、(全9巻), Kyôto, Kadô Bijutsu Kenseikai, 1930 to 1932

Lectures on Modern Decorative Flower Arrangement, 近代花弁装飾講座, 1932

Art in Kyôto (Garden Version), 京都美術大観（庭園編）, Tôkyô, Tohô Shoin, 1933

The Art Flower Arrangement in Japan, The Art Flower Arrangement in Japan, Kyôto, Nigyokudô, 1933

A Short History on Japanese Gardens, 寺院の庭園（日本宗教講座）, Tôkyô, Tohô Shoin, 1933
Selected Arrangements of Moribana and Heikwa (Vol. II), 盛花瓶華図集, New York, Yamanaka & Co., 1933

The Magnificence of Temples and placing Flowers before the Memorial Tablet (Lecture on Japanese Religions), 寺院の荘厳と供華（日本宗教講座）, Tōkyō, Tohō Shoin, 1934

Tea Ceremony Rooms and their gardens, 茶室 茶庭, Kyōto, Kawahara Shoten, 1934

History of Japanese Tea Ceremony, 日本茶道史, Kyōto, Kawahara Shoten, 1934

The Appreciation of Japanese Gardens, 日本庭園の観賞, Kyōto, Suzukake Shuppan Sha, 1935

Tea Ceremony by Rikyū (Complete Works of the Tea Ceremony), 利休の茶会 他数編（茶道全集）, Ōsaka, Sōgensha, 1935

The Appreciation of Ikebana, 揮花の観賞, Kyōto, Daiichi Geibun Sha, 1936

Illustrated Book on the History of the Japanese Garden (26 Vol.), 日本庭園史図鑑（全２６巻）, Tōkyō, Yûkôsha, 1936 to 1939

The Garden of Jikō-in, 慈光院庭園, Nara, Jikō-in, 1936

Drawings of Hedges (5 Vol.), 塚根之図（全5冊）, Kyōto, Kyōto Rinsen Kyokai, 1938

Tea Gardens (Tea Ceremony Edition), 茶庭（茶道文庫）, Kyōto, Kawahara Shoten, 1939

A Short History on Japanese Gardens, 日本庭園小史, Kyōto, Kawahara Shoten, 1939

The Aesthetics of Ikebana, いけばな美学, Tōkyō, Dai Nihon Kadôkai, 1940

The Study of Ikebana, 揮花の研究, Kyōto, Daiichi Geibunsha, 1940

Gardens of Temples, 社寺の庭園, Kyōto, Kawahara Shoten, 1940

The Beauty of the Garden, 庭の美, Kyōto, Daiichi Geibunsha, 1942
100 Gardens in the Old Capital (=Kyôto), 古都百庭, Ôsaka, Keihan Denki, 1942

The Development of Japanese Gardens, 日本庭園の発達, Kyôto, Köbunsha, 1942

The Gardens of the Imperial Palace in Kyôto, 京都皇居の御庭園, Kyôto, Köbunsha, 1942

Thoughts on the Tea Ceremony Rooms and their Gardens, 茶席茶庭考, Kyôto, Köbunsha, 1943

Japanese Gardens, 日本庭園, Kyôto, Ichijô Shobô, 1943

The History of Japanese Gardens, 日本庭園歴観, Kyôto, Köbunsha, 1943

Gardens in the Yamato Area, 大和の庭園, Tenri, Tenri Jihôsha, 1943

A Reader for Flower Arrangement, いけばな読本, Tôkyo, Dainihon Kadôkai, 1944

On the Appreciation of the Gardens in the Kinki Area, 近畿名園の観賞, Kyôto, Kyoto Inshoin, 1946

An Introduction to Tea Gardens, 茶庭入門, Kyôto, Kyoto Inshoin, 1946

The Architecture of Tea Ceremony Buildings in Japan, 日本の茶席建築, Kyôto, Tomi Shoten, 1946

Gardens in Kyôto, 京の庭, Kyôto, Takagiri Shoin, 1946

Japanese Garden Art, 日本の庭園芸術, Kyôto, Tomi Shoten, 1946

Karesansui (Old Cultural Collection Publication), 枯山水（古文化叢刊）, Kyôto, Ooyasu Shuppan, 1946

A Study on the Gardens in Kyôto, 京都庭園の研究, Kyôto, Kawahara Shoten, 1947

Famous Gardens of Kyôto, 古都の名園, Tôkyo, Takara Shobô, 1947
Flowers in the Tea Ceremony Room, 茶室花, Kyôto, Kôbunsha, 1947

The Lifes of Tea Ceremony Masters, 茶人伝, Kyôto, Kawahara Shoten, 1947

Japanese Gardens, 日本の庭園, Kyôto, Tomi Shoten, 1948

Tales of Gardens, 庭園の話, Tôkyo, Hôbunkan, 1948

New Tendencies in Flower Arrangements (7 Vol.), 新しい投入と盛花（7巻）, Kyôto, Kôbunsha, 1948

Introduction to Creative Flower Arrangement, 創作投入盛花入門, Kyôto, Kôbunsha, 1949

Kobori Enshû, 小堀遠州, Kyôto, Kawahara Shoten, 1949

A Study on Flower Arrangement (A complete work on Flower Arrangement), 立花の研究（花道全集）, Kyôto, Kawahara Shoten, 1949

Japanese Tea Garden Art, 日本の茶庭芸術, Kyôto, Usui Shobô, 1949

How to Arrange and Appreciate Flowers, 花の生方と見方, Kyôto, Kôbunsha, 1949

New Flower Arrangement, 新しい生け花, Tôkyo, Isobe Shoten, 1949

On the Skill and the Appreciation of Flower Arrangement, 揚花の技法と鑑賞, Kyôto, Kôbunsha, 1949

Gardens of Japan (in English!), Kyôto, Nihon Shashin Insatsu, 1949

A Selection of the Best Modern Flower Arrangement, 現代挿花名作集, Kyôto, Tôkasha, 1950

Ikebana Bunko (5 Vol.), いけばな文庫（5集）, Kyôto, Ikebana Geijutsu Henshûbu, 1953

Japanese Gardens, 日本の庭園, Tôkyo, Kadokawa Shoten, 1956
Gardens (written by Mirei and Kanto Shigemori), 庭（重森完途共著）, Tôkyo, David's Company, 1958

Tea Garden and Tea Ceremony Today (A Compendium of the Tea Ceremony), 茶庭  今日の茶の湯、他（茶の湯全書）, Tôkyo, Shufunotomosha, 1959

Tea Ceremony Rooms and their gardens (Education Series), 茶室と庭 (教養文庫), Tôkyo, Shakai Shisôsha, 1962

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Works on Mirei Shigemori by Others

Surprisingly little has been written by others on Mirei Shigemori, at least when it comes to serious papers or book contributions. It seems the scholars of garden art and history have not discovered the subject yet. And as there is no academic paper or book on Mirei Shigemori in a foreign language, westerners have been largely excluded from the discussion so far. Following is a short list of the articles from magazines or books that I was able to find, most of which I have translated into English.

Tamura Tsuyoshi, “Karesansui and Mr. Shigemori’s First Work”, Teien, June 1925, pages 6-7.


There are also a number of film and video productions that provide useful information:

Bairon Shigemori, *Ishibashi’s garden*, a film produced as the author’s graduation work from film school (Tôkyô: Tôkyô Sôgô Shashin Senmongakô, 1971)

*Kama – Tea Ceremony in Muji-an and Kôkoku-an [Hatsugama 1974]*, originally a 16 mm film, now on video (Kyôto: Uozumi Production, 1974)

*Rinsen no Hito – Mirei Shigemori*, a television documentary produced for the series ‘New Sunday Museum’; Moderators: Norio Ishizawa, Tamaki Ogawa; Guests: Akio Hayasaka, author; Tadashi Yokoyama, Professor Tôkyô University (Tôkyô: NHK July 1999)

*Enjoying famous Gardens - Ueji and Mirei*, a video portraying Ogawa Jihei (Ueji) and Mirei Shigemori, the two most outstanding garden makers of the 20th century in Japan; about 12 min. on Mirei Shigemori’s work; edited by Professor Makoto Nakamura and sponsored by the Kajima Corporation (Tôkyô: Kajima Vision Productions Co., Ltd.: 1998)
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Note: The works by Mirei Shigemori are not listed again as they already appear in the above catalogue of his works.


Appendix 2

Translations of Texts by Mirei Shigemori

During the four years working on this dissertation I translated a number of articles and essays from Japanese into English, most of them written by Mirei Shigemori and some by others about him. Several of them have been cited in this work. I also made transcripts from a number of videos that were available to me and later translated those into English. So over time a lot of base material for the writing of this dissertation has accumulated. The most interesting articles, with a direct link to the content of this thesis, shall be provided here.

Information provided in [ ] is added by the author for clarification of the content.

Exploration – The Art of Flower Arrangement

This essay is a translation from an early text that Mirei Shigemori published in his nine-volume work Complete Works of Japanese Flower Arrangement Art. He printed it together with a photo of one of his contemporary flower arrangement works. The writing is significant because it show the early roots of thoughts that later would characterize his approach to the modernization of the Japanese garden. The text is to be found in the ninth volume of Complete Works of Japanese Flower Arrangement Art and is labeled as “Work No. 149”. The books appeared under the label Bunka Daigakuin and were published by Kadô Bijutsu Kenseikai in Kyôto between January 1st 1930 and May 1st 1932. Following is the essay’s English translation:

It is true that in the art of flower arrangement the most important thing is to bring nature to life. But this doesn't necessarily mean to bring it alive in a realistic way. Bringing nature to life means to translate it inside myself. And in order to make it a thing of myself, all or parts of nature have to be transformed.

Transformed from the field of nature to the field of art. Emphasizing the distinction between nature and art. To bring nature to life, the lines and colors of nature are made into the lines and colors of art.
We must be conscious that nature's existence as nature is not directly nature's existence as art. And there is no need to borrow the power of other arts or even religion. A spirit conscious about this directly decides the form. By destroying nature, and not just physically, we must establish art. The lines and colors of art must be guided by pure creativity. These are not the lines and colors of nature, they must be the lines and colors that decide beauty. In Sôka-style ikebana the grass and tree material is used as it is, but we always need a vase. The vase being the forerunner decides the beauty of the form of a Sôka-style flower arrangement. Therefore one has to be cautious of the beauty of the vase, as the object that decides the beauty of the form of the flower. The value of the flower arrangement will be determined by how independent the two materials [vase and flower] are from nature. So to what degree we can create a nature that is more independent from nature becomes the standard value. These thoughts are just an exploration of this point of view. And I am not saying that my work accomplishes my view of art, it is just a search to find an expression for the previously said. As a flower decoration, I am placing five or six flowers and grasses in a vase by Morita Takeami, which I have altered according to my ideas.

Kintaifu 3, 5, 6, 22, 32

The following texts are a collection of Mirei Shigemori’s writings that he published in a separate newsletter titled Kintaifu, which was included as a supplement together with the thirty-five volumes of the Nihon Teienshi Taikei. Each of the newsletters came with one of the volumes, even though the numbers don’t really relate as the survey was not published in the order that the books are numbered in.

The Kintaifu essays are of great significance because they often cover aspects not to be found in Mirei Shigemori’s other writings or books, as for example some of them are about more personal experiences and thoughts about his life. Besides his diaries these are the only such writings that remain. Following are the English translations of the five essays most relevant for this thesis:

Kintaifu 3 - Study Time
When I was a student in art school, I was aiming to do nihonga, which is Japanese style painting, so therefore I didn't even dream of studying about the garden. At that time, although I worked very hard to learn nihonga, I realized that my paintings were very bad. Worrying about my insufficiency in painting, one day I asked Professor Kii for advice. However Professor Kii scolded me very much: "Even though you say you are the worst painter, your paintings are the purest and they are actually better then those of the others. The other student's paintings just look good, because they all went to cram school before they came to the art school. But these allegedly beautiful paintings of the other students are conventional and therefore not very interesting, they just look good in your eyes. For them it takes time to free themselves from these conventional stereotypes in painting. But you came directly form being a farmer, without knowing anything about painting, to study nihonga, so your work is pure and that is the best and the most interesting.

I didn't understand enough of what I was being told. Once I realized that I am really not good at painting, I started to become interested in the history of art, aesthetics and philosophy, so I naturally devoted myself more to these topics. I graduated from the undergraduate program at the university and went on to graduate school, where I was the only member in the study course. And at that moment Tôyô University also offered good classes in Indian philosophy, aesthetics and art history. Therefore I also entered Tôyô University and attended classes there in the mornings; in the afternoon I then went to my study room at the previous art school; in any case I tried to do my best. But then classes started to be unproductive and I went to the library a lot. While I was doing that, I realized that to understand what Japanese art history and aesthetics is all about, I have to study tea ceremony, the Japanese garden and ikebana. This is how I ended up devoting myself to these topics. After that I often went to the libraries and visited many scholars to talk with them about these things. This is how I started to study gardens and how it became the most important thing in my life. But when I studied this art called garden, investigating its beauty, it was actually very useful that before I had learned about painting, aesthetics, art history and also philosophy. That in the end turned out to be very important for me. What I had been doing before was not at all a waste of time. These days I am making many gardens and I am very thankful to Prof. Kii for his advice.

Since the garden is an important art, I really think that the discipline of landscape gardening should in the University belong to the Japanese aesthetics department. From the viewpoint of the study of the Japanese Garden, it is necessary to thoroughly survey and research the gardens of each time period. When we are doing such research, we must try to understand the inherent beauty of each garden, otherwise it is not a valid result. The reason
why these gardens are beautiful, where the beauty is to be found, and what specific period the beauty stems from, all of this we have to come to realize by ourselves; it can hardly be taught. There is no other way to learn to understand that beauty. However often you can you should see one and the same garden again. It is necessary to go and see it as many times as you can, ten times, one hundred times. A garden is not something that you understand after only two or three visits. And it is necessary to go and experience many different gardens all over the country.

Also it is important to have experience in trying to make as many gardens as possible. Of course the garden that you make should not be just an average one. But at the end, the creation of gardens is the only way to study them.

Kintaifu 5 - On Tea Ceremony and the Garden

I think it is true to say that Kobori Enshū well represents the garden makers of the early Edo period. I am thinking the reason that Enshū was so good at making gardens is, that he was a great student of Furuta Oribe’s tea ceremony practices, and by becoming his leading disciple he obviously had mastered Oribe’s art.

Enshū, together with Matsudaira Fuami, was the owner of many tea utensils and moreover they were all well-known pieces. Inevitably Enshū had a good judgment to buy high quality things. In judging utensils he must have been the best person at the time. He deeply understood tea ceremony, while at the same time being a connoisseur of tea utensils, proving that he understands this art.

From the Momoyama (1568-1868) to early the Edo period (1600-1868) all of the prominent tea masters learned Zen from distinguished priests of the time and reached spiritual enlightenment at a certain level. They searched for the original aspects of tea in Zen, because it is said that tea ceremony and Zen are one taste. In addition to devoting themselves to Zen-style spiritual enlightenment, they were handling many tea utensils.

Chanoyu, or the way of tea, is about is making only one cup of tea and drinking it, but in fact that single cup is drinking a palace of beauty, drinking the universe. Therefore the tokonoma of the tea space displays the best calligraphy of a Zen priest, the best kinds of porcelain ware and lacquer are used for the incense container, and the best incense is put inside. The vase too is a high quality celadon or a bamboo vase made by Rikyū or Oribe, inside a flower that enhances the theme of the tea session. Very elegant and high quality
utensils are used, including the teakettle and freshwater container, the tea container and bamboo tea scoop, all the way to the tea bowl and the lid rest; and moreover all are supposed to be objects that bring to life the theme of the tea gathering or the seasons. There is not a single thing that the host neglects; he puts his whole heart into every detail. And of course it has to be water from a famous source, drawn before sunrise.

The kettle should be of an early Ashiya or Tenmyô-style; the raw iron of these kettles is the best, so the hot water tastes great. Prepare the coal that boils the best hot water; use the hot water at the right temperature. The tea master himself carefully selects the tea as well as the sweets and the dishes. This shows what the host's mind concentrates on how to best demonstrate his best hospitality, realized by cherishing the guest and arranging the tearoom as a palace of beauty. By being able to prepare all this, the tea person himself lives in a world of absolute beauty. A distinguished tea master like Enshû, being a true connoisseur, was able to pay great attention to all these details, down to every single stone and tree, inevitably made high quality gardens.

Sadly, among the gardeners of the Meiji period (1868-1912) and thereafter, as well as among the landowners of that time, there was hardly anybody who had an eye for true beauty. If one takes a look at the buildings of the Meiji period and later, as well as the gardens, everywhere all but fragments to be found. This is a tendency that continues until this very day. I myself have been asked to do many gardens and in most cases the building already had been finished. Even though often a lot of money has been used for the building, there are in fact a lot of structures that I feel sorry for. Usually the building is left in the hands of the ordinary carpenter, and since such a person does not have an eye for true beauty, the buildings as a result show almost no architectural beauty. I can't stand the pain, having been asked to do a garden in such a place, with a building done this way. Ideally building and garden should be designed and directed by the same person, if not that, then from the beginning they are to be designed simultaneously. With the current situation, where these things are not paid attention to, buildings and gardens are not harmonized, and ultimately outstanding things cannot happen.

In case of the tea ceremony all utensils, and the tea gatherings theme, have to match the season, otherwise they cannot be accepted. In addition, all the utensils are to be appropriately arranged. And the host's movements, with proper etiquette as the central part, should harmonize in organic motion. Because the spirit of tea exists where these main things are understood, those who have mastered the tea ceremony share an understanding of culture and
the eyes to judge beauty. That is the reason that Enshû's garden works are naturally outstanding.

Beauty has the truth in common with everything else. The garden maker who only studied gardens can hardly make an outstanding one. From the act of art all the way to the tools, only people who can deeply appreciate this will then be able to create an exceptional garden.

When an artist creates something, the understanding of beauty comes first. The comprehension of the beauty of ink-art and a tea bowl is equal to having an advanced understanding of the garden's stones and trees.

The action of making a garden starts already with selecting materials like stones and trees. So consequently, if somebody does not have the educated eyes, a high-quality garden is not possible. The ability to judge the quality of beauty, while making such a selection, decides at the end the quality of the work. A person that understands the beauty of a single bowl of tea, will also understand the beauty of a garden stone, and moreover use that stone properly to make a great stone setting. Natural things like trees and stones are the raw materials of a garden, but to make a garden shouldn't mean to reproduce or imitate nature. The garden starts with killing those materials as nature. By first denying nature, a different nature can be created through a gardener. To make a garden is to compose a different nature, and only the garden designer is permitted to do that. By first killing nature, only the garden designer is then permitted to create nature again because he knows how to do that. In tea ceremony we use a flower as it is in nature, the extremely abstracted flower however is a masterpiece in its own right.

By making the water hot we are looking for different tastes in the water. We are searching for natural spring water and then kill its natural taste by making it hot. While we desire natural spring water, we are looking for another taste of the same water by first killing the natural taste and making it hot. Green tea powder is made from carefully chosen natural tea leaves. The taste has changed into another completely unique thing. And created nature is being represented when in the tea ceremony even the seasons are important. It is a secret of all art that deals with nature, that by first killing nature we then bring art to life. Treated as a living thing it is not art.

The garden exists when nature is overcome, and a different nature is created.
Kintaifu 6 - Levels of Understanding

If one studies a subject like the garden, ikebana and so on for a little bit, anybody can pursue them and even create a presentable outcome. It seems easy to get started and people tend to think that everyone can do it.

From the Meiji to the start of Taishô period (1912-1926), overnight millionaires spent a lot of money for gardens. Sometimes even military officers made gardens designed by themselves, instructing the gardeners how to do them. And then they prided themselves with those gardens as their work.

But a garden like these was hardly ever a masterpiece. And the worst thing really is, that those people thought they could do it all by themselves. The basic problem here is that one thinks to understand because one likes something. These kind of people like the garden and they understand it, but what they don't understand is that there are many different levels of understanding and liking. If you understand one out of ten, you understand at least something. Also three, five or ten means nothing all that different. Often there are people who say, "I love gardens". But liking and truly understanding is quite a different thing. A person who likes gardens is not necessarily somebody who truly understands them. Generally people tend to think that someone who likes gardens is also a garden specialist. But liking, even loving gardens, comes from pride in one's hobby and the taste it supposedly demonstrates.

One reason such misunderstandings can happen in the field of garden or in ikebana is, that the materials used in both come from nature. A Camellia or one Peony flower is already beautiful in itself. Even a child in kindergarten can put them into a vase and it is just beautiful to look at. And of course even more so when an adult person places a flower in a vase, it should be a pleasure for the eye. But in fact they are not beautiful as ikebana but just as the material, or the flower itself.

This is true for the garden as well. Garden stones and garden plants are themselves nature and that is why they are beautiful. So whoever makes a garden, it will possibly be beautiful to look at. However there is a big trap here, then just because the material itself is beautiful to look at, it is not art. Gardens as well as ikebana only come to life when educated or outstanding people treat them. Everybody can fall into that scary trap, without realizing it. That is true not only for amateurs, but also for professionals. Only a person, that with natural material can create a shape that carries meaning, can make a real garden.
This thing called 'hometown' can curiously enough make you homesick.

From early childhood on, all the way to about elementary school, you get familiar with many people that live in your hometown. Now if you're a person that then went to live in a large city, the memory of your hometown can sometimes make you homesick. There is the grave of your ancestors, their spirits and all the friends from your youth. Also the small roads leading to the mountain paths and the rice fields, reminding you of the time of your childhood. Happy moments and scolding, working in the heat and the cold, the first love, the delightful festivals for the local Shinto deity, including the making of the small huts and the performing a rural play. Every single moment, from the miserable instants all the way to the great events, all those memories becoming more beautiful and enjoyable in the realm of your dreams.

People who were born and raised in a city, as well as people born and raised in a rural town who never moved away, both of them have no hometown in a way. There is nothing more miserable and pitiful than not having a hometown. And thus people who have no love for a hometown are somehow dreamless and empty. My grandfather loved me very much throughout my childhood. He was good at Samurai-style calligraphy, did waka and haiku, and although he was a farmer he generally had a good taste. My grandfather loved me dearly, just as I cared much for him too. Because of this relationship my grandfather didn't let me leave, and also I felt that I couldn't go away.

My father was different from my grandfather in that he always scolded me when I was a child. To make a living he bought and sold mountains and fields, but he did hardly any farm work. As many visitors came from the city, I felt sorry for my mother who had a busy life entertaining the guests and doing the farm work. And my father also liked working as an architect, did carpentry work, and eventually became good at carving and sculpting. As an amateur at the age around thirty, he had already made Buddhist altars and household Shinto shrines. Some of these in fact still remain.

Since the time I was 15 or 16 years old I learned Fumai-style tea and Ikenobo-style flower arrangement. Doing tea I really wanted my own tearoom, so at the age of 18 years I designed one. Still being so young it was quite bold of me to design my own tearoom. But I went to Okayama, bought 2 or 3 used books and referring to those I designed the tearoom. Thinking about this now, I think the urge of my recklessness was related to the desire for creation. My father was glad to choose and cut some good wood from his own forests. I carried the fresh
wood on my shoulder, all the six or so kilometers from the mountain to our house, and I remember that is was exasperatingly heavy. And by coincidence a nearby big sugi tree (Cryptomeria japonica) was being felled, measuring a little more than 4 meters around the base. From that tree we got some genuinely reddish material and used it for the ceiling of the tearoom, which we made in weaved wood style. That is in fact the one distinctive feature of this tearoom.

I then named this teahouse Tenrai-an. My family’s house was old, set within a thick growth of pine trees (Pinus sp.), Japanese cypresses (Cryptomeria japonica), chinquapin trees (Castanopsis cuspidata), camphor trees (Cinnamomum camphora) and others. It reminded me of the woods around a Shinto shrine. Usually the sound of the wind was very strong, and that is where the name Tenrai came from. Tenrai is the sound the wind makes when in blows through the trees. I gave it this poetic name, thinking that this would be inspiring. The tearoom is 4 and a half tatamis in size, has three tokonomas in shin, gyô and sô style, and a specially designed shelf. Doing that I had been stimulated from an old plan of a tearoom by Kamiya Sôtan. When the tearoom was completed, my father gave me some inexpensive tools to practice tea. For the first tea in the new tearoom, my father prepared the tools and we invited my tea teacher, my uncle and my tea friends (tea group).

In Shôwa 44 (1969) I donated Tenrai-an to my hometown Kayo-chô. It was then transplanted to a place right in the back of the Ujigami Yoshikawa Hachimangu Shrine, near the town hall. In the tea garden we set up a waiting area and I used a precious octagonal base stone from a Kamakura period stone lantern as a chosubachi, a place to wash one’s hands. The design of this tea garden was an experiment. I used a lot of cement and not a single grass or tree for this rather bold creation. The place lies within the precincts of the Hachimangu Shrine. Hachimangu, also being the god yawata, is originally a god of the sea. So I designed a tea garden as an abstraction of land and sea with the intention to preserve this fact forever. But anyway, Tenrai-an was completed, and on October 29th and 30th of that year we invited my tea friends from west of Kyôto to the sekibiraki, the first tea gathering in a new tea room. The next day I held a tea party and 300 of the town’s people came to have tea.

As I have a special adoration for the local deity of the Hachimangu shrine, even though I am currently very busy and hardly ever have an hour of spare time, I usually return home every year on October 25th and 26th to visit the local shrine. And so recently I returned home for the festival and I brought with me a bag with some tea tools in it. Then in Tenrai-an we had an enjoyable tea gathering. The tea tools and decorations that I had brought were:
**Tokonoma**: Nenjioki Sunawachi Busso with Daitoku-ji's priest Seigan's calligraphy

**Incense Container**: Korin-style makie [lacquer and gold leaf], maple and dear design, round shaped

**Vase**: made by Kanashige Tôyu, Hidasuki-style [burned while wrapped with a cord] small mouth vase

**Flower**: small yellow and red Chrysanthemum (Hôshinka)

**Kettle**: Tenrai-an Shôshi Koshiki-mouth kettle (donation from town)

**Usuki** [container for Usucha]: Sôtatsu-style makie, go to heaven maple, wide shaped bottom, named go to heaven

**Chashaku** [tea scoop]: made by Furuta Oribe, container signed by Gensô

**Cha** [tea]: 'Kinrin' [golden wheel], packed by Uji Koyama

**Main Chawan** [tea bowl]: made by Kensan, featuring a black cylinder-shape crane with drop design

**Second chawan**: painted by Mirei Shigemori, fall maple design, named by Ryûden, burned at Kiyomizu

**Third chawan**: painted by Mirei Shigemori, three Tomoe [3 turning circles] design (inspired by the Hachimangu crest)

**Sweet plate**: painted by Mirei Shigemori, scattered Tomoe design

And of course also some others too. I decorated the shin-tokonoma with an ink stone, the gyô-tokonoma with an incense plate and the sô-tokonoma with a flower. And Mrs. Jinyû performed the tea ceremony for us. Mr. Takeda Kenji, who now lives in Hokkaido, was a graduate from the same elementary school as me, but hadn’t returned to Yoshikawa for more than 50 years. Also Sasaki Ken, who now resides in Tôkyô and who I had not seen for 30 years, was with us. Together we enjoyed a bowl of tea in this tearoom. There really is nothing better than having a hometown.

By the way, the festival at the Yoshikawa Hachimangu lasts for one month and is a classic. The himorogi-za of times immemorial was passed on to the next generation in a festival, which recently was recognized by the prefecture government as a ‘cultural treasure without physical shape’. I seems they want to preserve it forever. On the land of Okayama prefecture many ancient things remain locally, and as it is countryside, this kind of classical festival continues to be alive. I consider myself fortunate to have been born in this part of the infamous Japanese countryside were such heritage still remains. My hometown is especially
blessed as the village has absolutely no pollution; whenever I looked at the sky it was clear and blue. It makes me very happy that a great place like this remains until this day.

Kintaifu 32 - Mirei Shigemori's Last Writing

After this I have to finish one more of the contemporary volumes (No. 33!) and the big 35-volume survey will be completed. Then the last two volumes will consist of the chronological table and the index. Actually the chronological table of garden history's manuscript is quite difficult to write, but I want to do the most perfect work that I can.

When I published the Nihon Teienshi Zukan, I had prepared a manuscript of more than 8000 pages for the chronological table and the text on the gardens. Also I collected a lot of books and other data, and even until today I was not able to look through all of it, and so there is still a lot I have to read through.

We were given the chance to make the chronological table of garden history, and to the best of our ability we want to make a perfect one; that is what the writer and the publisher hope very much. A great deal of effort went into this project. All the way until today I have never employed an assistant, a secretary or the like. So when I enter my studio, there is no place to put my feet and there also is no space for a guest to sit down. The studio is four and a half tatami in size, has paper-sliding windows on three sides and is generally a very bright room. On three sides, up to the edge of the shôji, shelves full of reference books surround me, so I can't write on my manuscript unless I use a lamp, even at noon. And as I don't employ a secretary or assistant, I can't all tidy it up or put the books in order. But the strange thing is, that in this big messy mountain of books, there is enough order for me to find anything; and therefore I generally know where in that spread out mess the necessary things are to be found, and where in a specific book a reference is located. The mess is an ordered mess.

In the past I have visited some famous western painters, was admitted to their ateliers and I could see a scene of spread out painting tools, canvases and brushes. It impressed me always that the more famous a painter was, the messier his atelier was. So not only me, but many people who work as hard as they can, have no free time to put their things in order. Generally guestrooms, shoin and the like, which are put in good order look more beautiful and I actually like that myself. On the other hand I like my personal living room and studio quite messy. In the case of the shoin, because it has to look beautiful for the reception of guests, it is cleaned thoroughly and all unnecessary things were removed. This is actually how I like the shoin
most. But on the other hand the messier my studio is, the more affection I have for it, and I don't feel it is dirty. Really, human beings are a very selfish kind, aren't they? Other than I think it is a wonderful fact that from this one messy room a vast collection of works was born.

Everyday I write on manuscripts in my study, which is one of the things I enjoy very much. From sunrise to sunset I can concentrate there on my manuscripts. I used to be smoking in the kitchen after the meal, but lately it has become a habit to go to the studio, take the pen into my hands and light a cigarette; giving every spare moment to my manuscripts. As I am writing comparatively big manuscripts, I made it a habit to work rather hard. Many people think that my writing speed is quite fast, I suppose. But it is not so much the speed I think, as it is working hard every moment.

More than others I am an easygoing and optimistic person. But with regard to work, I don't like a slow pace. If anything I am impatient. When having received a request for a manuscript, I make every effort to complete it by the deadline, which in my mind is absolutely contradictory to being an easygoing person.

When I am writing on my manuscripts, I don't eat any snack in between the meals. I made this a good habit. And thanks to that I have a comparatively healthy digestion. However instead I have the bad habit of smoking a lot of cigarettes. Once in a while I tried to stop smoking but couldn't do so. I can't drink sake or anything else that contains alcohol and sweets or the like I usually don't eat either. So tobacco is my only fancy, and since I think that is okay, I continue to indulge in it to this very day. Everybody tends to live with his good and bad sides, and I don't think I have to become a saint anyway.

Right after the big Kanto earthquake I moved from Tōkyo back to my hometown, and lived there for the next 5 to 6 years. Everywhere around my house the big old trees like the Japanese cypress (Cryptomeria japonica), the pine (Pinus sp.) and the chinquapin tree (Castanopsis cuspidata) had grown fairly thick. People doing the pilgrimage of the great saint Kōbo Daishi often by mistake came to my house. Also at that time there was an eccentric prefecture mountain and forest engineer called Yamamoto Tokusaburo. He was a very interesting person and a great source of information. We had a good relationship and eventually became friends. He often came to visit my house, also treating me like an eccentric, who was plowing the fields on fine days and reading books on wet days; at that time he wrote about me in Sanjo Shinbun. In that article he use the nicknames 'saint of the forest' for me and 'queen of the forest' for my wife. That is how we became 'saint of the forest' and 'queen of the forest' for many of our friends. But it is really too good a nickname for me.
Friends even used it on their letters they sent us. At last even I started to use 'saint of the forest' and so it eventually became a habit.

That was the time when I made my first garden, in Daisen-in style. That was about in the year of Taishô 13 (1924). It made me very happy when Dr. Tsuyoshi Tamura and Dr. Tadashi Sekino came and praised my work. Soon after that I made two more gardens, one at my friend Iga's house and the other at our village mayor Nishitani's house. That was 50 years ago and was the time when my career as a garden designer started.

As I had the easygoing life of a part-time farmer, my friends came to visit me almost every day. But by now most of those friends have past away. Nanba Kôfuku, the mayor of the neighboring village, was about eighty years old and a really great man. He was good at calligraphy and often wrote poems. Also with Mukudo Inukai, who was an elegant and tasteful man of very eccentric behavior, I was on friendly terms. Amazingly he treated me like a grandchild with great affection and often came to my house. Mukudo Inukai was a very knowledgeable person, a long time mayor and lived into his nineties. He once said to me, "It is a good thing that I have made and maintained mountains and you are making gardens. Gods inhabit mountains as well as gardens, and since one can't lie to the gods, you will become a great person. So make many of them." I still value these words highly.

[November 29th 1974, Mirei Shigemori’s last writing]

**Gardens and Me**

The below text on Mirei Shigemori, is an edited and published version of a conversation in a documentary titled *Ishibashi’s garden*, featuring a construction site of an actual garden project. The film was produced by Mirei Shigemori’s son Bairon as his graduation work in film school (Tôkyô: Tôkyô Sôgô Shashin Senmongakô, 1971). The text was then published in the series *Tampô no Niwa*, as Supplement 2 called *Gendai no Niwa* by Shôgakkan in Tôkyô in 1979. This conversation is of significance because it is a concise but well-rounded summary of covering most of Mirei Shigemori’s thoughts with regard to the garden.

Following is the English translation of this conversation:
The Period Called ‘Present’

Q: At first I would like you to talk about the Japanese garden’s characteristics from a historical point of view.

Well, that is a rather difficult subject, isn't it? For one in the Japanese garden since ancient times ponds have been dug and stones been set. Natural stones called iwakura and iwasaka became objects of religious believe. In the ponds islands were arranged as a distinct place for the gods. Therefore the original Japanese garden is not made for admiration, it was made as a holly place and a refuge for the gods.

After the Nara period (710-794) Buddhism came to Japan, but the garden at first received little influence form it; ancient thought pretty much continued uninterrupted. That was very different in other fields of art.

Certainly later in the Heian period (794-1185), the stones were no longer seen as goods and the gods placed in the pond were basically forgotten, so then there was a tendency to simply admire the garden as it was. On the other hand I think deep inside people's hearts, and in their feelings, they are unconsciously aware of their ancient tradition and keep it in mind.

If we look at works of art influenced by Buddhism, we find that most significant works are made before the end of the Kamakura period (1185-1333), where as from later in the Muromachi period (1333-1568) only trivial things remain. But the garden has, up to the present, continued to live for a very long time as a work of art.

In short, we can communicate with the people of 50 years ago, 500 years ago and even a thousand years ago by looking at their gardens. I think that this is a distinctive characteristic of the garden. At the same time, I myself have made a pass at other fields of art, but would now rather concentrate on the garden because I think it is the most pleasurable one.

Q: So you started to make them yourself...

Well, I started out as a garden researcher. You have to realize that garden history is not a subject we understand very well. Some people, for example say, that the garden at Ryôan-ji was made in the Muromachi period, where others say it was made in the Momoyama period (1568-1868). Also around the middle of the Edo period (1600-1868) or even closer to the present are mentioned as opinions. Because this only depends on the temple's tradition, nothing is decided. So to do garden research, we can't rely on these opinions. It occurred to me that the only way to find out was to survey the gardens all over the country.
The result was that if we think about gardens thoroughly, we can say that the gardens after the Genroku period (1688-1703) and especially the ones after the Meiji period (1868-1912) are not traditional gardens, to say the least. In short they are not art. They are simple gardener’s handiworks. The gardeners were doing only stereotype work to the extent of what they were being taught by their master or their seniors. In a sightseeing boom, not only Japanese but also a great number of foreigners came to admire these places, but can we say that they are really so good? The good gardens were probably the old ones. Among the newer gardens there is not a single good one.

Historically speaking, Japan’s past was a very good period, but Japan’s present society is equal to empty. In 100 years, in 1000 years what on earth will people then think about our current times like the Meiji period, the Taisho period (1912-1926) or in the Showa period (1926-1989); they will say that we were living in a boring world. Therefore I thought that at least I should leave something good behind, so I turned to making things. Weather I was able to do good gardens or not will be judged by the future I guess.

The Corruption of Gardens

Q: So during the Edo period and there after, what do you think is the cause of the corruption of the garden?

In the Heian period often the emperor or court nobles made gardens. In the Kamakura period warriors started to make gardens. In addition as we enter the time after the beginning Edo period, all of the country’s daimyo get into making gardens. But after around the Kanei period (1624-1643), as the power of the daimyo starts to fade, prosperous city folks start to built shoin and gardens. We tend to think that because not only nobles and warriors, but also by city people nice gardens were made, that this had to be an interesting time, but that is not the case. Even as their power weakened daimyos and warriors were still bluffing. Plus city folks and farmers in many cases grew timid. I think this is corruption because this perverse spirit appears in the garden. A great number of gardens were made. But the number of gardeners did not suddenly increase and there was a lack of qualified craftsmen. Therefore I don’t think a lot of good gardens were being built during that time.

During the Kyôhô period (1716-1735) the first part of the Tsukiyama Teizôden, the Earth Mound Garden Manual was written, and around Enkyô period (1744-1747) the second part was added. This book became a sort of a textbook for city folks who wanted to make a garden. The plans and commentary written in there were treated like a golden rule. So then
everywhere the same shaped gardens were made, there was no creativity what so ever. Even garden admirers said, "If you do such a boring thing, don't know what a garden is". When made following the Tsukiyama Teizôden, "Oh, as might be expected, if we agree with the rules a good garden is the result". So all new gardens followed that stereotype. This is the second cause for the aforementioned corruption.

One more thing is that compared with the economic strength of the powerful people, the economic power of city folks was weak, so they could only afford small-scale gardens. They didn't have the means to pay for the transport of big stones, so these gardens have a lot of stone settings using small stones. For this reason they turned out to be more weak and female in character. This is another cause for the fierce corruption of the garden after the middle of the Edo period.

Q: So why is it then, that in retrospective from the Momoyama period to the Muromachi period, the Kamakura period and the Heian period the gardens become better?

It all goes back to the problem of human nature. If we look at any kind of art, it is usually made by people, and basically depends on the people's ability. Even if someone established a lofty theory about these gardens, there is no meaning to them. Naturally, if people become depraved, art also becomes corrupted. I have surveyed gardens all over Japan and found, that great achievements of humanity was hiding in old gardens. For example, when I investigated the pond gardens of the Heian period, I found that on the bottom of the ponds there was a 40 centimeter thick layer of clay spread out. On top of this an about 40 centimeter thick layer of chestnut-size pebbles was laid out. The clay would prevent the pond from leaking, where the pebbles protect the mud from being stern up into the water, when using the boat's pole to navigate around. But in the Kamakura period, clay and pebbles each became about 20 centimeter thick. And after the Muromachi period the layer of clay became thinner, where the pebbles almost entirely disappeared. As time passed, the original attitude towards construction quality was lost step by step and increasingly halfhearted work was being done. People in earlier periods had in contrast done very serious and honest work.

Q: I cannot help thinking that the present times are quite a hopeless period then. In spite of that, gardens have to be made, so what shape should they have?

To say the least, I would not like to make a garden a certain way because a master taught me so or because of a strong family tradition. The effect of this distortion is that all gardens
have become stereotypical. It always was a principle of my work to not make one garden the same.

**Nature's Abstraction**

**Q:** Let's change the topic. The most important thing with regard to architecture is that people actually live in it. In case of the garden we have two major uses, one being a more practical one, the other being the admiration of nature. What do you think about this?

Actually, architecture creates the necessary conditions for life by protecting us from rain and dew. But we can do everything without the garden. I don't think this way myself, but people today see the garden is a luxury that can easily be enjoyed and admired. I myself don't think we can say that people have a real life, if they are not living in nature, or in other words, living in a garden. It has always been true that the garden is necessary for people's health, since for example in houses where gardeners come and go, we hardly need doctors. The garden is essential for our life and not something we can do without.

**Q:** Well, in which points then are contemporary gardens most different from other fields of art like painting, sculpture, movies...

Obviously gardens are made outside the house, the materials being trees, bamboo, grasses and moss. Mainly natural things and living materials are used. And with regard to stones, I think they are living too. These are the biggest differences to the other arts. In addition there is also the problem of the garden's maintenance. Paintings and sculptures can be stored away, but the garden cannot be neglected.

**Q:** The Japanese garden is rooted in nature, isn't it?

Yes, yes. While in other countries this idea cannot occur when they are making a pool. In the Japanese garden nature itself is cited all the way. Japan like no other country although is blessed with nature. When we go to other countries we often cannot drink the water. But wherever we go in Japan there is clean running water and nature is flourishing. We have four definite seasons as nature changes distinctly over the year and deeply influences the life of the Japanese people.
Q: Does 'the way of tea' represent the idea of adhering to nature?

Yes, I would say that people who try to do research on the garden have to very seriously study the way of tea. From the water pot to the tea bowl and the teaspoon, the best things they have should be displayed in their tearoom. The tearoom is a sanctuary of beauty. So to drink tea is to drink this beauty that is represented in the completely dissolved drink. Exaggerating I could say that to drink a bowl of tea is to drink the universe. Tea is the best way to cultivate one's mind.

Q: Well, in your case, when you create something, how do you prepare yourself and how do you cultivate your mind?

Rikyû said until you become 30, you have to study the way the master orders you. Then when you become 30, east is west and mountain is valley. So if the master teaches you to go east, you have to go west, if he says mountain you have to study valley. Until you are 30 you have to absorb the master's teachings, after that you have to use your own mind to create your own work. If you follow the master's word the entire life you cannot do creative work.

And Rikyû also said to arrange a flower in a vase like a flower exists in the field. To understand the meaning of this quote, we have to arrange the flower perfectly contrary to its appearance in nature. Needless to say that the cherry blossom is a synonym for flower, and the mountain cherry is the one that best represents this species. Rikyû said to arrange a mountain cherry like it exists in the field. That means we should create something totally new with it. [Note: The phrase “like a mountain cherry exists in the field” should not be understood to mean that a flower has to be arranged in a naturalistic way, but rather the opposite, as the mountain cherry has been transferred in space and time.]

The same is true for the garden. After having understood the nature outside, an all-new nature should be created, obviously with thorough respect for it. For example, in the Nara period the word suhama was often used. Suhama is an abstracted curved coastal line, which we couldn’t use if we were to create a very naturalistic garden. If we had several hundred thousand tsubo or even several million tsubo we could have real nature in the garden, but with only 50 tsubo or 100 tsubo we have to abstract real nature to bring it to the garden.

It is a big illusion that the Japanese garden is a version of nature; older gardens abstract nature even more than current ones.
Q: To abstract things is the action of getting to their essence. When you see a 'Noh' play, there is a posture for crying: the palm of the hands covering the eyes. This perfectly abstracts to movement of crying in a play, doesn't it?

That is right. When the karesansui garden style started, that was an interesting problem. Often people say, when looking at Ginkaku-ji's silver-sand plane and the moon-facing stage, "We could have such nice nature here, why is with great effort such a strange thing being made?" But I can admire how at that time such a creation was possible. For example Ryōan-ji does not use any water and is made with 15 stones, where before many gardens had been made with a real ponds. This work is the result of perfect respect of nature. I often say that, if nature is made by the gods, the garden is the part that the gods forgot to make. So there we should take the place of the gods and make the gardens. We ourselves should become gods.

Eternally Modern

Q: Whenever we see gardens like Ryōan-ji and Daisen-in, our eyes are fascinated by the unconventional design. Please talk about the secret of being able to admire gardens, and the gardener's situation.

When we look at the sakuteiki, the word kohan sometimes appears. That in fact means request. When placing stones, they sometimes seem to request: "please put me here". It appears that garden maker and stones communicate like that. Now you could say that stones can't speak, but they are not speaking with words anyway. Looking firmly at the stone from all angles, it will appeal to us to be placed a certain way. And often the garden maker then has insights like, "Oh, next time I have a stone like this one, I know how to use it well".

One more thing about the garden: there is a problem regarding eternity. Completed gardens, unless the hand of man destroys them, can relatively easy be kept from deteriorating, compared with other works of art. A building can burn down, but the garden remains. In the case of Ryōan-ji, which burned down about 8 times, the stone garden shows no scar. And at the same time the garden has a momentary quality. Many upright stones look different with every step one takes, depending on the angle we see them at. The stones change from moment to moment. If we don't understand the momentary and the eternal qualities of a garden well, we don't know where it is good to place the standing stones. An excellent garden is not something that has only physical qualities. Even though the way people think changes over time, there is also a kind of permanence in beauty.
During the Heian period banquets, boats afloat on the lakes, and the aristocrats performed poems and songs, flute and bowstring. I call it the enjoy-the-pond-by-boat style. In the Kamakura period it became very popular to enjoy the pond by walking around on its perimeter path. From around the middle of the Kamakura period into the Muromachi period, shoin architecture became more developed, and people started to admire the gardens from inside the building while sitting on the tatami mats. So as time passed the way of admiring gardens changed, but the respect for beauty remained the same. A great garden can be admired from anywhere. It looks good from the middle of the pond; the circumventing path or the room floored with tatami mats. We have to keep in mind, that since the Japanese garden reproduces nature, it is always nature made by human beings. At that time the stone garden was already very modern and even today it remains much that way. Like that the garden should have a timeless modernity, the modern-ness of our time alone is without value. In a way, a garden that could be admired by anybody during any time period is eternally modern.

The Admirer's Eyes

Q: I can appreciate your attitude towards creation, but when you draw a plan for a garden, what do you pay most attention to?

Before making a plan for a garden, there is a much bigger problem to be solved. Only when I have a request for a garden, I can start to make one. So first I need a client. And then in my own atelier I can paint as I like, regardless if the picture would sell or not. But the client will give instructions where to make the garden, and in addition we have to build it in front of his eyes, which can be a very delicate problem. In Japan the client is often like a patron. So at first we have to design the client's mind. Compared with that task, drawing a plan is very easy. I might make a design and the client says, "I don't like this", or then demands, "Please change this", in which case the original design doesn't become reality. I just stopped by a construction site where the architect was in tears after the client ordered, "Let's destroy this wall and change this room!" Once that was the case even with a reinforce concrete wall, and I got into an argument with the client.

Before we start construction various problems have to be seriously discussed with the client and conclusion has to be reached, but once I start to build the garden, I would never ever follow new requests. If this was not so, good work could not be made. Today's gardeners encounter hard times as they are being told "take this one lantern there, please place it here", or "move the stone basin over there!" As a result a lot of halfhearted gardens have been built.
Q: When we make a garden, what should we keep in mind when combining the materials?

Often the layperson will say, "I found a nice stone", or sometimes I am told, "I ordered a pine tree with gracefully-shaped branches". Or there are people that bring by a grotesque stone from a river, maybe with a whole or even twisted, and proudly say, "isn't that a nice stone?" Usually I don't comply with such requests and use the materials according to the plan.

When making a garden the most important thing is the setting of the stones. A funny shaped stone, solitarily placed, is basically thrown away. To assemble stones is to place them close together in one place. And very voluminous stones should be avoided, as they are difficult to include in the arrangement.

As slim stones can be placed close together, I usually start with placing those first. Also for best effect the trees should be placed in relation to the stones. We cannot use nice and gracefully branched pine trees, because the branches might hang over the stone and weaken its effect. We should start looking for materials based on the plan. That way we can choose the materials best suitable for the garden. However busy we are, we have to walk around and look for them by ourselves. It is too easy to just go to the stone dealer and buy whatever he has. That is bad.

Q: I feel that your stone settings show the personality of Shigemori...

After the Meiji period stones were often used laying flat down, but that looks weak. There is no vitality to such kind of placement. It is much better to go back to the original upright positioning, although for some people this is overwhelming and they therefore don't like it. But I thing the people who see it that way are weak themselves. They don't have the power to look at something strong. This is not only a time where the gardener’s eyes are weak, but so are the ones of the garden owners. In a place without requirements, we cannot make a good garden. Gardeners should be provoked to do something better when a client or viewer says, "I don't like this garden".

Q: Other important materials are?

Well there are several ones, but the stones definitely are the most important. Extremely put, we could make a garden just with soil. There are abstract gardens without a single stone or tree in them. I have made gardens using only stones, moss and sand. A garden that is used in tea ceremony on the other hand, should have the atmosphere of a place deep in the
mountains and therefore a lot of trees should be planted. But to say, we can only create this the deep-in-the-mountains feel by planting many trees, sounds like a kids joke to me. We can actually get that feel in a tea garden that doesn't use a single tree or grass.

**Q: What do you feel when you have completed a garden?**

Of course, having done my best, I feel satisfied, and even more so if the client is also pleased. While I make a garden, there is nothing else on my mind, but trying to do the best possible work, so often I have financial deficits. The happiness of the client is my best income. On the other side I feel sad, if the client is not pleased, or I myself am not satisfied with my work. But because I always do my best, most of my clients have been pleased so far.

**Transcripts and Translations of Interviews by Author**

For this research project I also conducted a series of interviews in Japanese, and produced transcripts of those in English. Doing the interviews was one of the most amazing learning experiences. In a relatively short time I got to know a lot about my subject and met many very interesting people. We often had vivid conversations where memories came up and memorable stories were told.

Naturally those interviews never went in a very linear fashion, but rather my questions brought things up that needed to be further explored in the conversation. So I ended up with a wealth of unique information about Mirei Shigemori that I would like to provide here as a reference. Some irrelevant information has been edited out, but the overall structure of the conversation remains intact.

**Interview with Mr. Okamoto: Gardener**

On January 11th 2002, I had a chance to meet Mr. Yukio Okamoto for a two-hour interview at his private house near Daigo-ji in Kyōto-Yamashina. His health condition was not very good and unfortunately he passed away a few months thereafter. This interview is of great significance as Mr. Okamoto is the gardener with whom Mirei Shigemori made the most gardens. They were close business partners and worked together for a total of 19 years! After
Mirei Shigemori passed away, Mr. Okamoto also continued to maintain many of the gardens and is now training his son to soon take over the business.

The following is a transcript of an audiotape made during the interview.

**Q: Mr. Okamoto, when did you meet Mirei Shigemori for the first time?**

Well I must have been about 20 years old at that time, which was just about 46 years ago, so probably around 1956.

**Q: In what kind of circumstances did you meet him?**

I was in Shimane prefecture and worked at one of the Sake breweries. Mirei came to make a garden at the Murakami's brewery in Muikaichi, which is where I was working as a sake brewer. Mr. Murakami also owned some mountains in the area, so in the summer time we would often work there and clear out the undergrowth. When the garden there was completed, Mirei asked me if I wanted to come and work on the park for the Shimane Prefecture Office Building, one of Kanto Shigemori's projects. From January to March we farmers usually didn't have enough work anyway because of the snow. And there were only a few jobs available at that time, such as bus driver, employee of the agricultural cooperative, banker and gangster. Other than that there wasn't much to do in the winter, as we could neither work in the forest nor in the river because of the snow.

**Q: So you met Mirei Shigemori while helping with the Murakami's garden?**

Yes, but at that time I didn't talk to Mirei in person, but rather his head person on the site asked me to join the next project in Shimane. So I went there and stayed and worked until the end of February. Then the number two person asked me if I wanted to come to Kyōto, hang out and work on a project in Kyōto-Yamashina starting the end of March. Since the rice fields were still covered with snow, I decided to come to Kyōto for the first time in my life. But I didn't start to work with the idea of doing it full time, but more like an assistant, in order to also have some time for sightseeing and experiencing Kyōto.

After working for Mirei for about a month in Kyōto, I went to meet him at his house and was finally able to talk to him in person. Two previous visits had been unsuccessful, and that despite of a letter of introduction.

[This happens as Mr. Okamoto is trying to get directly and officially hired by Mirei Shigemori. And finally Mirei says: "I understand that you are really eager to work for me, so}
you may join us". This is an old Chinese custom termed san ko no rei, meaning that one has to try at least 3 times to be successful, like the priest trying to get into a temple.]

**Q:** Did you ever work as a gardener before the project in Shimane?
No. I was young and able to carry trees and stones. That is why I was hired.

**Q:** So when did you start your own company that you have now?
After working with Mirei for 16 years I started my own company. During that time several young people joined, straight from the university. I had to teach them how to use a shovel and work with their hands. Mirei only came to the site for placing the stones or other similarly important steps during the construction process. And as I had been there quite a while, I eventually even became in charge of the finances.

After working for Mirei for 12 years I wanted to quit and go off on my own. I asked him to let me go, but he said it would be difficult for his company if I left since there was nobody to replace me, and asked me to stay on. Then I stayed there until he died.

**Q:** So the company 'Okamoto Zoen' did not exist before Mirei Shigemori died?
It kind of existed but not really. When Mirei's son Kanto made the surrounding of the Shimane Prefecture Office, the name Okamoto Zoen was on the list. Kanto had asked me to put it on the records. But when I worked with Mirei I didn't work under the name Okamoto Zoen; the company then existed really as name only.

**Q:** Did you usually work with Mirei Shigemori or with his son Kanto?
I mainly worked with Mirei, but sometimes Kanto asked me to help out.

**Q:** Did Mirei Shigemori at that time have his own company or did he function independent as the landscape architect?
Mirei drew the initial plans and then gave them to me, or others, to be redrawn. After that we took the plans to the customer. Later Mirei visited the site only for the stone setting or other major steps. And the rest of the time he usually spent writing his books.

**Q:** That means he didn't own or manage his company?
Well, it was not really an organized company.
Q: So Mirei Shigemori really was all by himself?
Yes, that is right. In a way he was a lone wolf. He had been asked to teach at Kyōto University, but he never said yes. That is the kind of person he was. But he worked very hard. I picked him up at home to go to the construction site. During the day we worked on the stone settings or the layout of the land. We returned to his home at 8pm and he would then offered tea that he especially made for me. After I had left he would eat a light meal like ocha suke, which is basically rice soup. Then he often wrote on his books. That was his usual day. He really worked many hours.

Q: Did he usually get his jobs by word of mouth?
Yes, that is right.

Q: And after he got a job he would do the draft? Is that how it worked?
Yes. And some of the followers that worked for him were graduates from Tōkyō University of Art. By the way, when I asked him for a few days off, he would say, "Okay, but, draw this plan while you are on holiday".

Q: Please talk about the time after you came to Yamashina.
After one month had gone by I considered returning to my hometown. My mother and sisters still lived there, and my father had died early. During the winter we couldn't work on the rice fields, but spring had come and I was contemplating to go back... But even if I had gone back, it wouldn't have been a very interesting life. So therefore I decided to stay in Kyōto.

Q: All this happened in that same winter?
Yes, Japan was in a depression. And even in Kyōto jobs were not so readily available. So I decided to go and talk to Mirei about working for him. And he did let me have quite a bit of playtime. I never knew when the next job would come along, so in the meantime I could do what I wanted. But that might not be so good a lifestyle I started to think. That is when I first considered starting my own company. I eventually worked with Mirei as a team leader, so I was the number two right after him. He had asked me to take care of the other workers. But again, I only worked with Mirei when he asked me to.

These days Japan is in depression again, so there are few jobs available this winter and spring. And because of the depression, people don't want to pay for the maintenance of their
gardens. The garden is a luxury, and it is not absolutely necessary to do something for it. Life goes on even if it is neglected. But if there is a whole in the roof they have to get it fixed.

Q: Did Mirei select the people that would work on a certain garden? How did the company work? Who was in charge of what? How were things organized?
   The carpenter, plasterer and the gardener, all very skilled people, were a given. It was always about the same people. When Mirei was asked to do a teahouse or other structures, he asked an architect to draw the plans. But Mirei drew a rough draft of how he wanted the structure to look, and the architect had to work with that. To then build the structure, he chose the person who was available at that given point in time.

Q: Who did you get paid from, Mirei Shigemori or the client?
   From Mirei, and I got ¥500 per day!

Q: So everybody on the site was paid on a daily basis?
   Yes, yes. That is how it was. And if it rained and we didn't work there was no income!

Q: What year was that?
   That was about 36 years ago (1965)

Q: Did you bring your own tools?
   Yes, that is right. Small tools to cut stones and work with plaster were owned by the workers and they brought them to the construction site. I think the workers should own the small tools, otherwise they wouldn't take good care and then the tools would break much faster.

Q: Did Mirei Shigemori encourage everybody to bring his own tools?
   No, no. To us it didn't matter who owned which tool. The important point was that we were chosen by Mirei to work for him. That was a great honor! Things are totally different now! But we worked as hard as possible and tried to learn as much as we could, also very small things. It didn't matter if we needed to bring our own tools or not. We would bring by the tools even if we didn't have anything to eat for the next day.
Q: And what about a crane for example? Who brought such kind of machinery?
We didn't use cranes, we only had a manual three-legged wooden hoists.

Q: So the stone delivery firm owned the three-legged wooden hoists?
No, that was Mirei's, and he also owned the shovels, materials like cement and sand, the stones. All that was his.

[Looking through some plans:]
Q: Were these plans drawn by Mirei himself or by one of his followers?
No Mirei didn't draw these. Saito Tadakazu, who now lives also in Yamashina, made them. But he is usually not around very often.

At first Mirei would draw a draft on a graph paper. So we would know the length by the number of cells and could calculate the actual size. Mirei always just drew his idea, his initial thought on a piece of graph paper, and we would then take that sketch, enlarge it and draw up a real plan.

Here it says Shigemori Teien Kenkyusho (Shigemori Garden Research Institute), which was his company’s name.

Q: Please describe Mirei Shigemori's personality to me.
Well, he liked tea. Every year he invited about 400 people for his hatsugama party.
Already in December he prepared the tea tools in relation to the zodiac signs, for example the year of the monkey, horse, rabbit and so forth. And those tools are not only for the hatsugama, but would then also to be used for other tea ceremonies, all the way through spring. And everybody was helping with that.

Q: Was he a cheerful person, or more a sincere type?
He liked to talk. When we talked about the garden or work, time was always flying. He worked very hard. Mirei had graduated from an Art University in Tōkyō and went back to Okayama after the Tōkyō earthquake to calm down. He was about to return to Tōkyō, but while already on the train realized that Kyōto might offer more opportunities for what he was interested in and had been studying in Tōkyō. So he got off the train in Kyōto. Mirei told us that story many times.
Then he got married and his wife ran a dormitory near Kyōto University. That was in a
different house though from were the residence is now; it was a rented house and the students
lived on the second floor. That is how his wife earned the money for the food.

Q: Were those students that studied with Mirei Shigemori?
No, no. They studied at Kyōto University. Mirei didn't earn enough money, so his wife
rented out those rooms to support the family.

Q: So what was Mirei Shigemori doing at that time?
He was not famous yet; his books didn't sell much...

Q: How did he make money?
His wife earned most of the money needed to support the family at that time. She was an
energetic woman and supporting him gave her also a lot of power...

Q: What kind of person was she?
Every time I met her she seemed to shout. So I would bow and pass by her fast. She was a
brave and strong-minded person. She had a very powerful presence, was reliable and
trustworthy. Then Mirei got more and more requests to make gardens. At that time there were
a lot of gardeners in Kyōto that he knew personally, and Mirei and asked several of them
work with him.

Q: Mirei Shigemori asked the garden masters directly?
Yes he did. I have heard that until 3 or 4 years before I joined [~1952/ 1953], Mirei was
hiring other garden companies to build his gardens. It was right before I started to work for
Mirei that he started to hire certain individual gardeners to more permanently work with him.
Before that he asked this garden company to do that garden and then another company to do
another garden; depending on who was available at that time.

Q: Did he keep his tools at his home?
Yes, in his storage. Behind his current house there was a smaller house that he took down
to build a storage place. The big house, where he lived from 1943, he had bought quite
cheaply from a bank. The former owner had used the land as a security and was not able to
repay his mortgage, so the land was auctioned off. That included several smaller residential houses around the main building. It was all very cheap when he bought it.

**Q: How many gardens did you do build together with Mirei Shigemori?**

About 140, maybe even 150 to 160 gardens. In his later years we were very busy. He was well known and the economy was doing great. So he got a lot of requests to make gardens.

**Q: Which one is your favorite among those 160 gardens?**

Well they are all somehow similar. That is hard to say. The customers of course were always different but Mirei is Mirei. He could make the same garden in another place, since the customer was different. For the client it was the only one garden like that. Of course the designs should be related to the location, and that is the reason why they do show quite some variety I guess.

**Q: He often used red concrete in his gardens...**

Well, we added Bengal Indian red, a red-ochre dye to the concrete, but only the top layer. Below is regular concrete. The pigments came from Bayer, a big German company. Bleeding that comes to the surface over time reduces the harshness of the colored concrete. This can be removed with water and than the red color comes back. But when it dries the white comes back though.

**Q: Did you always mix the concrete with the color on the site?**

Yes, of course. The construction sites were all over Japan and often far from big cities, so we prepared the concrete ourselves. But the rocks for the stone settings we always got from Shikoku, as we used *aoishi*. In the old days they were transported by train. And if we couldn't find the plants we wanted nearby the construction site, they also were brought in from Kyōto by cargo train.

**Q: How many people usually worked on one construction site?**

Average probably about eight or nine people.

**Q: And how often did Mirei visit the site?**

Not everyday of course. To make one garden, we would visit the place together at first. Then he would start to look for stones, go to Shikoku and collect one by one. He marked them
on the spot and the stone company would deliver the stones by cargo train to the station nearest the construction site. After the stones were delivered we brought them by cart, log-rollers and lever into the garden. Then we started to place them. Usually Mirei wasn't there at this point; we just guessed by checking the plan where about they would be going. When we saw the stones we could for the most part assign them a place in the design. That way we saved time when Mirei visited. He usually came to the construction site after we placed the stones and would either approve of the initial placement of correct some of it. So in total he might have visited a specific construction site three or maximal four times.

Q: Did he have a number two person that was in charge?

The number two had died right after I had joined. Later I became the number two. Many members returned home after working with Mirei for two or three years. The maximum was 4 years I think.

Q: Was it so stressful to work for Mirei Shigemori?

No, it was not. But most members thought that after working there for two or three years they had learned what they needed to. I told them that we had appreciated their work and on they went. While working there we would neither abuse them nor would we compliment them much, since otherwise they'd think they had succeeded to become a good gardener and would leave. It was a difficult balance to keep. The more they were working with Mirei, the better they understood his main points. The same was true for me. The longer I worked with him the better I knew how to deal with Mirei.

Q: Did you receive detailed construction drawings from Mirei Shigemori?

Oh no!

Q: So how did the people on the construction site know this information?

If I was on the construction site, I would specify the details myself. I told them how deep to dig for a foundation and I decided the thickness of the concrete and so forth. Of course it depended on the place. If we were in an area with frost, like in Nagano or Koya-san, we would dig 30 centimeter deeper than in an area without strong winters. So for a pavement for example we would dig 30 centimeter deep, then put 15 centimeter of crushed rock as a base layer and the concrete on top of that; last came the paving stone of course. It was a lot of work. But for gardens in warmer places the foundation could be a little thinner.
Q: Was Mirei Shigemori familiar with such issues?

Well, at the very beginning we put the sand right on the soil, just as it had been done in the Japanese garden for centuries, but the sand always became dirty quite fast. So we started to put a layer of mortar under the Shirakawa suna. It was sloped and led to a point drainage. We were actually the first ones to do that. That is also what we did that at Kôzen-ji in Kiso-Fukushima, but in the evening the priest told us it would probably not last because of the frost. So I asked him what we could do. He said that the gardens around the area would have an additional 30 centimeter foundation, made from 15 centimeter crushed rock and 15 centimeter concrete. That is how I learned how to build in such a climate. It was the first garden in a cold place since I had started to work for Mirei. In warmer places just mortar or concrete is fine. There is no need for a massive foundation.

When I learned about these requirements in Kiso-Fukushima, I called Mirei and told him about it. He then renegotiated the prize for the garden. So Mirei didn't know this before. After that we always used that technique if appropriate.

Q: What technique did you use to make the ponds watertight?

Clay, but never plastic; and mortar would only crack. Clay also lasts much longer. So on top of the clay we put a layer of mortar for protection. Mirei couldn't make shabby gardens, otherwise his reputation would have suffered.

Q: Mirei Shigemori didn't use stone lanterns much in his garden creations. Was that because they were expensive or because he didn't like them?

We couldn't buy stone lanterns because the real ones were very expensive and usually the budget didn't allow for that. And of course Mirei would never use a fake. That would damage his reputation. The lantern these days are different, from the ones that Mirei would be inclined to use. You know the stone lantern is for lighting, so the hibukoro [lit. fire-bag; in English: lamp housing] was made a little bit bigger than today. The size of the hibukoro is a distinct feature of the lanterns of the Kamakura period, and those are very expensive.

Q: So Mirei Shigemori would only use really old stone lanterns?

Yes, that is right. We once told him, why not ask somebody to make new stone lanterns for your gardens, but he died before he could ask somebody to make one.
Q: That is really unfortunate! Is the style in Kogawa's garden representative for what Mirei Shigemori liked to use?

Maybe in this case the lantern's roof was previously part of a stone tower. The old lanterns were always made of several parts. Sometimes we didn't have all parts of a stone lantern. So we would by piece by piece in the stone shop, drill a hole in the middle, and configure our own lantern. If like in this case we only had the roof, we would get the other parts from different stone shops.

Q: A question about plants: did Mirei Shigemori keep plants at his storage?

In the early days he bought the plants from a nursery in Shikoku. The pine trees he would usually buy in Kinashi, an area that is famous for them. Later, when that Nursery closed, he often bought from several places in Kyōto. Where in the countryside nurseries and the construction companies are often together in the same firm, in the Kyōto area they tend to be different entities. Eventually we often worked with the same nursery in Kyōto, so if we needed something we asked them and they would find it for us.

Q: Do you remember the name of that nursery?

Yes, it is Komai-manyō-en in Kita-ku, probably Yakushiyama-cho. In his later days he mainly bought the plants there. And they are still in business these days.

Q: If, for example, he had ordered too many camellias, would Mirei Shigemori take them to his storage?

That never happened. We always ordered exactly what we needed. When we prepared the plans, we figured out how many and what kinds of plants we needed. Then we bought them.

Q: Sato Kaichiro was the specialist that Mirei Shigemori usually called to do the walls. You were in charge the stonework, plants and all the things related to concrete. Who made the fences then?

I did the bamboo fences too, just like simple cement work, earthworks and anything with natural stone. I did all that so we could make some money.
Q: Did Mirei Shigemori give you a design for the fences?
Yes, that is how we worked. The design at Sumiyoshi Jinja for example comes from the image of a net hanging at the beach to dry. That is what had inspired Mirei for his design of this bamboo fence.

Q: Are these fences different from his earlier ones?
Yes, quite different. You can see straight and diagonal lines in various combinations. We cut and shaped the bamboo to fit the design.

Q: I myself like Ryôgin-an's fence very much...
Oh Ryôgin-an yes, I know that one and like it too. I haven't been there for a long time. Wonder how it looks now. We had already renovated the fence once because it was rotten. Usually after about 10 years they have to be replaced. If a little roof is used to protect the fences they last a little longer, but that doesn't always go well with the design.

Q: The sands that were used at Ryôgin-an, where are they from?
The black sand is from a quarry somewhere between Kyôto and Ôsaka. It is a leftover product from glass production and was available for free; we just paid for transportation. The red sand is from Kurama and the white sand, as always, from Shirakawa.

The idea for the stone setting in Ryôgin-an is a dragon. We worked hard to transport the stones safely over the old wooden bridge. We cut the trees on the hillside behind the garden and used them to help support the bridge's pillars. Otherwise it would probably have collapsed. Since this is a historically important object that would have been a disaster! And there was no other way to get to the garden then crossing that bridge.

Q: The outline of the cloud shapes is made from concrete, isn't it?
Yes, it is araidashi, a washed concrete surface. Under the surface there is more concrete. The top was shaped with one half of a 100mm diameter vinyl pipe. Then we washed the surface with a fine spray of water.

Q: So the total height of this structure is also about 10 centimeter?
Probably even less then that. The layer of sand itself is about five centimeter thick. Of course there is some variation, especially after drawing the lines, but in general that is about it. At the most there might be 10 centimeter of sand in certain areas.
Q: How thick is the concrete layer below the sand?
In an area like this, where there is no frost, it might only be 3 centimeter. And below is well-compacted gravel. There is no traffic over this area really, so it doesn't have to carry any weight. There is no real danger for damage because it is covered with sand usually not accessible.

Q: Did Mirei Shigemori come to draw the outline of the clouds first?
No, he didn't. I drew the line myself with chalk according to the plan right on top of the mortar base. As the curves were similar, I used a piece of plywood as a template, which was cut to that shape. I placed it, drew the line, move the wood, drew the next part of the line and so on.

Q: Did Mirei Shigemori always like your curves?
Well, he didn't say yes or no; he really didn't say anything. And he shouldn't say anything because he wasn't there to do it himself.

Q: I do like your curves a lot...
Yes, there are quite a variety of them (laughing).

Q: How did you transfer Mirei Shigemori's designs onto a garden surface?
First the plan was divided up into equal squares. Basically I needed to split the large areas into small ones. Then we could transfer points to the garden. The curves had to go through these points. That is how that design was transferred to the site.

Q: Why did Mirei Shigemori like this line so much?
Just look at the nature, the mountains. The Japanese garden is nature at a smaller scale. In some cases it is more abstracted than in others, but it is usually naturalistic.

Q: But Mirei Shigemori also studied painting. So that line could be...
Well you can find many similar lines in Japanese paintings from the Kanô School for example. He just took brought them into the garden. Maybe then I should say that he transcended nature. For example in Kyōto’s Kōsei-ji Mirei uses the Chinese character for
heart, which is pronounced *kokoro*. You can find that same word in Zen doctrine, where it is of great significance.

Q: Did Ogata Kōrin, the painter of the Rinpa School, inspire him too?
   Yes, maybe. Mirei studied a lot of art, and probably he liked Ogata Kōrin's work too.

Q: So do you see influences from these people on Mirei Shigemori's work?
   Yes certainly, quite a bit.

Q: Please talk about the significance of the stones in his gardens.
   The reason why we use stones in the Japanese garden is, that in ancient times people believed the gods would descend on those stones called *iwakura*. So the subject of people's belief was a big rock. As time passed people made *iwasaka*, which is a string of stones around a sacred area. That continued while new influences and religions came to Japan. For example Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism were introduced from China. The ideologies and ideas of these cults were mixed in with the local ones. All this naturally also influenced the Japanese garden and it was eventually born from that mix.

Q: How did Mirei Shigemori come across those ideas?
   Mirei studied the old gardens of Japan. That is where he learned the basic ideas of the Japanese garden. Then he built gardens according to his own ideas. He had the foundation and the creative ideas to do his own original work.

Q: Where did his originality come from?
   It came from his experience and feelings.

Q: So he understood the basics and then overlaid them with his own style, didn't he?
   For example this line...
   The quality of the Japanese garden had declined after the middle of the Edo period. This could only happen because the gardeners themselves and the owners didn’t understand the Japanese garden anymore. The gardener’s interest was only the business side, the money. They just planted big, expensive trees; they didn’t know what the Japanese garden really was all about. But the gardens made between the Kamakura and the early Edo period, are of good quality. And the best gardens were built in the Muromachi period when the arts had become...
very sophisticated. During that period a lot of good things were produced in art. Also stone lanterns by the way. Until the early Edo period that quality level could be retained, but later it dropped dramatically. Especially in architecture, after better tools had been invented, things became excessively decorated.

**Q: Mirei sometimes made three-dimensional sketches of his garden ideas.**

He not only drew three-dimensional sketches, but also normal plans that we had to show to the client. We didn’t give exact measurements for everything like you would have to for a building, but they certainly were to scale and the big picture was well represented. And even thought Mirei sketched the stones, he didn’t know if he could find exactly what he was drawing at that moment. So if he couldn’t find the right stones he had to revise the plan.

**Q: Did Mirei Shigemori direct the placing of the stones from inside the house?**

No no, not inside. He stepped down into the garden and he said, “dig here”, “a little bit more”, or “that is the head [front] of the stone” and eventually he said, “that is okay!”

**Q: Did he ever pick up a shovel himself?**

I heard he had done that in his younger years. When I worked for him he only gave instructions. But when we worked on the stone settings he directed the work really very precisely. You know, in the old days it was hard work to place those stones. Even if we just wanted to move a stone for 10 centimeter, we had to lift it up and bring it back down again. Now we would be using a crane of course. That is so much easier! We can even lift stones over buildings that way!

**Q: When you worked on a garden for a private client, where did you stay?**

It depended on the project. We usually stayed at a traditional Japanese hotel, but sometimes the clients would also offer us to stay at their house.

**Q: Did everybody in the team eat lunch together?**

Yes, we all ate together, and if Mirei was there he would also eat with us.

**Q: So he was quite a casual and enjoyed the contact with his workers?**

Yes, he was very casual and liked to talk with us. He usually brought his tea set with him, consisting of a tea caddy, tea powder, a whisk and the tea bowl. Then he made tea and
announced: “it’s ready!” Sometimes he hired day laborers for a construction site, and even they were served tea. Mirei gathered all members on a construction site, and even the owner was included. Everybody had tea together.

Q: Did Mirei Shigemori also bring sweets with him?
No, he didn’t. The tea was not bitter, so we didn’t need the sweets. Only cheap tea is bitter. Mirei used good tea; he had a lot of money.

I myself usually have tea in the morning. At first I learned about tea working with Mirei, later I learned at the Urasenke School how to prepare it. Only after Mirei died though I realized I should join a tea school to really learn it.

Q: What was a usual daily schedule like?
We normally worked 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 A.M. in the morning with a thirty-minute break at around 10:00 A.M. Lunch was 12:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. At 3:00 P.M. we had another break and continued work until 5:00 P.M. But you know, even though Mirei officially said 5:00 P.M., we usually were at the construction site until 6:00 P.M., sometimes even until after sunset, if we had a deadline to meet. Then we used spotlights of course, or the moonlight.

Q: Do you know Yagi Gentaro’s garden?
Yes, I have worked there, and also at Kôsei-ji.

Q: What about Matsuo Taisha?
No, I didn’t work there.

Q: And Zuihô-in?
No. They hired their own gardener after the garden was finished. I only worked in the gardens who’s owner really really wanted me to come. In Matsuo Taisha’s case, the current chief priest is already the fourth after the completion of the garden. He doesn’t quite understand the garden. And he doesn’t get what I want him to do for the garden. I still know the original shape and idea, but the current head priest doesn’t. He cannot understand the garden and what it is about. He also never met Mirei, so the personal connection is completely missing.

We maintained some of the same gardens for a long time. Then suddenly the owner changes or the new generation takes over and things change. The first generation, which made
the garden often with hard earned money, had a different appreciation for it. For the second
generation the garden was just there, so they usually care for it less. That makes it impossible
to keep the original design in shape. The stones usually are fine, but the plants keep growing
and change the garden quite a bit. So to keep the gardens in their original state, they need to
be maintained. That means for these people that they have to spend their money to keep the
gardens up.

Q: Mirei Shigemoris’s work is rather neglected at the moment. People don’t value his
contributions much and many even don’t know his name anymore...

As I mentioned before, since the middle of the Edo period, the quality of the gardeners has
dropped. So Mirei realized that he actually had to go out and make gardens if he wanted to
change anything. But today people’s appreciation of the garden is not very high. And also if
there is a distinguished character, there always are other people who try to bring them down.
Mirei was an exceptional person but had a lot of critics too.

Q: What was the reason his critics didn’t like him? Was it because of his personality
or his work?

Maybe it is island mentality, the narrow view of islanders and of course envy. People do
care about small things here. Especially Kyōto is a very closed community. There was no
destruction in Kyōto during WWII and a lot of the old gardens remained. Many things
therefore continued from the old days without interruption really. Maybe it would have been
good if Kyōto had suffered some damage.

Also Mirei’s gardens were not the latest trend, he just reproduced nature in his way. He
made gardens based on the old Japanese traditions and added a little of his own ideas. His
gardens were not really something new. But the other gardeners didn’t know how to make a
good garden that was based on the old examples. They simply had not studied the great old
gardens.

Mirei gathered everybody that worked on a certain construction site and served them tea.
He even served tea to a debt collector that came to his house. They enjoyed talking together
so much that it happened that the debt collector left without collecting the money. And Mirei
never wanted to be part of a system, or of a specific organization, having to work for a
company or university for example. He was a lone wolf, very independent. If he had been a
part of a system, he would have to adjust his style and ideas to the policy of the company or
public service department. He couldn’t have done his own thing, so he never ever accepted to be a part of such an entity.

Q: Did Mirei Shigemori ever work for a private company?
No, he never did.

Q: He was a lone wolf and didn’t even accept the offer of Kyôto University?
Yes, that is exactly right. Even if he gave a lecture there, nobody would understand his point. But the painters of the time would understand better, of course. Gardeners didn’t approve of Mirei’s work, but many painters who had a similar sensibility as Mirei, they did appreciate it a lot.

Q: Do you think Mirei Shigemori’s gardens are radical or even avant-garde?
Avant-garde? I would say that some of Mirei’s gardens are transcended, meaning they have risen above nature. They are bigger than nature.

In terms of stone settings, there are two main styles: one is Hôrai-style and the other is Shumisen-style. Hôrai stands for long life and Shumisen represents the ideal world, higher than the sky, deeper than the ocean. Mirei tried to create such a world in a garden.

Kyôto is the center in terms of gardens in Japan, but in fact there are few gardeners who can set a stone properly. These days some gardeners say, “I made a garden”, but in fact there is no idea, no concept, just a single plant and a single stone. And they say that is the garden. But that is not a garden as it means nothing.

Q: Do you think that people understand Mirei Shigemori’s gardens?
Only few people do. Now I am training my son so we can keep those gardens alive.

Q: Do you think Mirei Shigemori would have been able to create these gardens if he had not studied painting?
No, I think they would probably look quite different if he had not studied painting.

Q: Did ikebana have an influence on how he made a garden?
Yes, that is the same thing. The garden is scaled down nature and ikebana is a scaled down plant. In both cases we enjoy the overall shape. It is the same kind of aesthetics and both are
about the beauty of nature. Also we cannot make a good tea garden if we don’t know anything about tea.

**Q: What is your best memory of Mirei Shigemori?**

At a *hatsugama* party a Kendan plate was missing. Kendan is somebody who created a new style of pottery that is very famous. Mirei didn’t get angry, but his wife did. She was angry for an entire year. There were 30 or 40 people helping at that *hatsugama* party, but nobody knew what had happened to the plate. But we did know who was in charge of which task, like reception, luggage, kitchen and so on. A lot of people came and went.

**Q: Was that Mirei Shigemori’s favorite plate?**

Yes, that was one of his favorites. He collected a lot of tea tools. After WWII when Japan was devastated these things were sold very cheaply. Mirei had the ability to tell the good and the bad stuff apart and bought some great items. I wonder what has happened to all those tea utensils now. I heard Mirei has a daughter, so maybe she is taking care of all that now, but I don’t know. I do know though that when he died, this large collection was in the storage behind his house.

**Interview with Mr. Ashida: Client**

The interview took place at Mr. Ashida’s residence in Sonoda, Amagasaki City, on September 28th 2001. Following is a transcript of an audiotape made from the interview.

**Q: Mr. Ashida, do you know Mr. Higashiguchi?**

Yes, I know him very well. The Higashiguchi’s and the Kobayashi’s garden were built after mine. While the construction crew was working there, I visited often and brought some food and sake for them. We had become friends while they were working for more than a year at my house.

While the crew worked on my garden some of them had to go and help at the Sekisō-ji temple in Ichichima once in a while. So I got to see that site as well. In fact I visited many of the garden's Mirei had designed around this time and in this particular style.

While looking through the 'Niwa' book he says: "Here, this is my garden!"
Q: Do you know Mr. Okamoto?
Yes, Mr. Okamoto, and now also his son, are maintaining my garden and many others that Mirei built. Also Mr. Saito is still active in Kyōto. Sometimes they call me and ask how the garden is doing! Also I have to replace the fence every 10 years, it is currently already the third one. But this way we keep in touch. Not only from the time of construction, but also through maintenance quite a lot of contact remains.

Q: What did you originally ask Mirei Shigemori to do?
I had a lot of requests for Mirei, many of which he refused. He clearly wanted to do his own thing. Mirei said: "Please let me make a garden as my work."

Q: What requests for example did you have?
There were 2 or 3 big stones in the garden that meant a lot to me and so I wanted to keep them. But Mirei refused to include them in the new garden. Also there was an old stone lantern that he didn't want to include and therefore had to go. Only one big tree I was able to keep, all others were taken away.

Q: Yes, in Mirei Shigemori's garden we hardly find any stone lanterns...
Before he did my garden, Mirei worked at the Matsushita Konosuke [the CEO of Panasonic!] residence in Nishinomiya City. Mr. Matsushita ordered Mirei around so they were fighting a lot and Mirei finally stopped working there. Mirei wanted his gardens to be his work and didn't accept any interference by the owners. Mirei's idea was that only ordinary gardeners would take orders to produce something, an artist like himself did not. There was no need to hire him if the owner only wanted to have his ideas executed. Mirei said: "If the owner has the ideas and knows everything, there is nothing left for me to do." And so he would stop the work. That would of course also puzzle the employees.

Mirei came often to my house and of course I always had a lot of requests, but he said: "If you want a garden from me, you have to let me do it myself. Only so it will be one of my works." So knowing Mirei's attitude and how he had reacted before in similar situations, I decided to accept it and leave it all in his hands. Therefore could remove everything besides the one big tree.
Q: What is the main idea for this garden?

Originally it was covered with a lot of moss, so everything felt very soft. Now it is quite different. For me the most beautiful aspect of the garden was the lighting of the moss at night. It was like a fantasy, an illusion. This garden is to be enjoyed by looking at it, just as can see the whole garden from here. Mirei planned it that way. Also when Mirei worked here he sat at this spot and ordered the employees around.

Q: Did Mirei mention a theme for this garden?

No, he didn't. But there is red and white sand that represents the beach at the seaside. It is the sand that is moved by the tide, the different water levels of the sea. The island's beach is the main theme.

Q: So it is a coastal landscape, islands and the sea...

If there were no sand, white or red, we wouldn't recognize it as a contemporary garden. It would look just like a regular old garden. It was Mirei's way to give it a modern sense. And the garden is more interesting if the colors are different, therefore Mirei used white and red sand. The red sand is from Izumo in Shimane Prefecture. It contains a lot of iron. Sometimes my guests ask me what that sand is. I always explain it this way.

Q: Why did you decide to change from the moss to grass?

The moss didn't agree with the local climate. After 5 years it had all died; it is too dry here in this area. But with the grass the image of the garden changed a lot. I feel that I only have 60% of the original image. The moss had a lot of power and I loved it very much. I watch the garden from the lavatory everyday. It looked very beautiful from there.

Q: Also the stone edge around the mounds seems to have been added later...

Yes, that was done chiefly for maintenance reasons, at the same time as the change from moss to grass. I didn't want to do that, but I had to because the sandy hills eroded.

Q: How did Mirei Shigemori present the garden design to you, Mr. Ashida?

After I had asked Mirei for a garden design, Mr. Saito visited to measure the size of the site. The price for a garden by Mirei Shigemori was determined by the tsubo. So I paid a lot of money for a garden 150 tsubo in size (laughing!). I thought that was a quite interesting practice, and it was the first time I had heard about it.
So at that time Mirei asked for ¥70'000 to ¥80'000 per tsubo. Four years later, just before he died, he was at ¥14'000 for the tsubo, almost twice of what I paid! A little before me my friend had paid only ¥4'000 per tsubo.

At first Mirei and his wife had asked for ¥80’000 to ¥90’000 per tsubo, but after some negotiating I had them at around ¥70’000 for the tsubo [about ¥111’300 in today’s currency]. His wife was a tough businesswomen and in charge of the finances. She understood the client’s situation and knew well what to ask for. So as I am the president of a company they thought that I must be a very rich man and therefore asked for a high price. A friend of mine told me that, if I told them I had a lot of money and that cost didn’t matter, Mirei's wife would double or even triple the price. I negotiated with her two times, initially for the first year and then once more for the following year. My friend also had advised me to pay separate, year by year.

Q: So how was the presentation? Did Mirei bring a plan and explained it to you?

At first, Mirei came to look at the house together with Mr. Saito. While I was talking with him and his wife, Mr. Saito surveyed the size of my property to determine the tsubo in order to fix the price. Later Mirei came and presented his plan, but I never saw his sketchbook or initial drawings. And he just showed me the plan, there was no discussion or a question to weather this is what I wanted.

Q: Mirei Shigemori didn't involve you at all in the design process?

No, Mirei wanted it to be entirely his work!

Q: So he only excepted a program at the start and then did his thing...

Yes, Mirei said that he wanted to work freely, without interference.

Q: How did you know what you would get? Did you know the character of Mirei Shigemori's gardens?

Yes, of course. I am a horticulturist, so I had many chances to see Mirei's work, and I liked it very much. I actually joined the gatherings of Kyôto Rinsen Kyokai every first Sunday in the month; that is also were I met Mirei.
Q: How was your experience at Kyōto Rinsen Kyokai? How did you participate?
Mirei organized everything. At that time the organization had about 300 members. When they visited my garden, about 150 people came. There was no parking for a big bus. The neighbors were surprised and thought a funeral was taking place.

Q: So those 300 members met regularly?
Only once a month, on the first Sunday. Usually about 150 people joined, but we were always at least 80 people I would say. We received an invitation card with the program ahead of time. On visits to garden projects, the number of people was always higher.

The really big events with 300 people happened once a year. We usually then went to see Mirei's new projects of that specific year. And when we went to Ōsaka for example, we also wanted to enjoy the local food and made reservations ahead of time.

Some members of Kyōto Rinsen Kyokai were architects or painters. So when we visited for example Nijō castle, those people could talk to us about that object and answer the more difficult questions. And we not only visited gardens but also temples. We were interested in the history of temples, the history of gardens as well as other things. On the invitation card often many topics were listed. This enabled me to study many aspects of art. Some of the members for example even formed a group of people interested in old Korean art and even went to Korea to study it. Everybody was very enthusiastic. When we met once a month we had very lively discussions, and it was a give and take. Plus we always talked about were to go next. There was a man with name Mr. Sasaki and he was the director of a natural history museum as well as the Vice-president of Kyōto Rinsen Kyokai. He really knew a lot about various subjects and taught us much. And other lecturers were often part of a University.

Q: Is Mr. Sasaki still alive?
I don't know.

Q: But Mr. Saito still is...
Yes, in the magazine 'Sarai' I recently read an article by Mr. Saito about gardens.

Q: How was Mirei Shigemori as a person? How would you describe him?
Mirei was a very friendly human being. He often told me about his hometown.
Q: Was he a rather direct person?
No, he didn't talk very direct and was not a quick man, normal in that sense, not aggressive at all. Even though he was famous, he was not a brisk person. He spoke quite slowly actually, always rather slow.

Q: Did he talk about his opinion?
Yes, he did. He was calm and sometimes slow, but he said his opinion.

Q: Is there anything else that you think I should know about his gardens?
Mirei's work consists of many temples and shrines, several of them in Koya-san. So before my garden was build, I went to Koya-san to see some of those and decided that I wanted a garden like that. Only then I asked Mirei. So already before I met him for the first time, I was interested in his work. It was quite different from the local landscape gardeners work around here. I studied Mirei's gardens in great depth and had a very good impression from his work. This garden should have a long life; it will be given to my children. I am very happy with the outcome and want to preserve it for the future.

Q: It is maybe one of Mirei Shigemori's best private gardens....
And one of the most divers ones for sure, as he used concrete in different colors. He didn't do that in too many other places. But this year it was too hot, so my garden is not in great shape. The grass didn't grow well and in extreme heat it becomes sometimes brown.

Q: What is the maintenance cost for this garden per year?
I do everything myself. My job after all is growing plants. And it is expensive to hire professional gardeners; especially pruning the pines costs a lot of money. In May I usually have to weed the pine sprouts. The pruning and picking of those takes around 40-50 days. I think it would probably cost about ¥1 million per year if had a professional gardener do it. But as I have the time, I do it myself and it is free. And I made a plan for when I should do the pruning, cleaning and weeding. I also changed the sand a while ago.

Q: There is currently no pattern, do you sometimes rake the sand?
Yes, but there is currently no sand pattern as you said. Some time ago a German visited me here, because Amagasaki has a sister city in that country. This person wanted to re-rake the
pattern in the sand that I had made earlier and ended up with a very dramatic geometry. Then we took a picture and laughed.

An American foreign student with name Paul Novograd was visiting often during the construction of the garden. He didn’t help with the garden work, but was mainly looking and studying the stone arrangement. He also had a scholarship and visited Mirei’s house often. But unfortunately I lost touch with him.

Q: Did Mirei propose a certain pattern to you?
No, he told me to rake the sand freely, just as you I liked. So I came up with my own three or four patterns.

Q: Did you have any damage during the latest earthquake?
The reason that the walls didn’t get destroyed in the Kansai earthquake lies in the way they are constructed: there is actually two walls, slightly leaning towards each other; so the center is hollow and allows for some movement.

Over there you can see a big stone lantern whose top part fell down during the earthquake! But we put it right back up.

Mirei Shigemori Family Register (Translation of the ‘Koseki’)

Every Japanese is registered on the card of the family head, and in Japan that is usually a man. This card is called koseki and contains a lot of information regarding the family and its changes. And in Mirei Shigemori’s case it also records the time he changed his name!

On May 9th 1922 father Ganjirō died and Mirei Shigemori’s became the new head of the family. This is when the card below was started. In 1960 it was eventually replaced by a new type of card. As the card is usually in a horizontal format in approximately A4 size, it had to be split in a right and left side in order to be reproduced here. The sequence and proportion of the fields are fairly accurate to the original card. The English translation appears always below the Japanese text:
The right side of the card:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>前戸主</th>
<th>重森元治郎</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former family head</td>
<td>Shigemori Ganjirō</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>戸主</th>
<th>亡重森元治郎長男</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>父</td>
<td>亡重森元治郎</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Former Shigemori Ganjirō</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>母</td>
<td>つるの</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Tsuruno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>長男</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

重森計夫/三玲

| Shigemori Kazuo/ Mirei |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>出生</th>
<th>明治二十八年八月廿日</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birthday</td>
<td>Meiji 29, August 20th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The left side of the card:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>本籍</th>
<th>岡山県倉敷郡吉川村大字吉川4千九百八拾番地</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Domicile: Okayama-ken, Kamibô-gun, Yoshikawa mura (now: Kayo-cho), Ōaza Yosikawa 4983

大正拾壹年五月九日前戸主元治郎死亡二因り家督相続届
出今年六月壹日受付

Taishô 11 (1922) inherits the family because the former family head Ganjirô dies;
accepted in Taishô 11 (1922) on June 1st

越智マツエト婚姻届出大正拾壹年弐月弐拾拾日受付

Marriage Ochi Matsue registered, accepted in Taishô 11 (1922) February 28th

大正拾四年五月拾叁日許可二依り其名計夫ヲ三玲卜変更届出同日受付

Taishô 14 (1925) May 13th change of name from Kazuo to Mirei, accepted on the same day

大正拾四年五月六日許可二依り其名計夫ヲ三玲卜変更届出大正拾

四年五月拾參日受付

Taishô 14 (1925) May 6th permitted to change the name from Kazuo to Mirei,
accepted on Taishô 14 (1925) May 13th

昭和参拾年弐月一日行政区画変更の上町となった為.... (stamp only partly readable)

Shôwa 30 (1955) Feb. 1st, administrative section adjustment: Yoshikawa village becomes a town

昭和参拾弐年法務省令第二十七号により昭和参拾参年七月拾八日本戸籍改製「菅野町長」

Due to Ministry of Justice’s instruction number 27 in Shôwa 32 (1957), on Shôwa 33 (1958)
July 18th this family registration is revised [village mayor: Sugano]

昭和参拾弐年法務省令第二十七号により昭和参拾五年壹月参拾日あらなな戸籍...

したため本戸籍措消「菅野町長」

Due to Ministry of Justice’s instruction number 27 in Shôwa 32 (1957), on Shôwa 35 (1960)
January 30th new family register is created so this registration is void [village mayor: Sugano]
Excerpts from the Diary

The excerpts from the diary are organized by topic. So for example all days that contained an entry regarding the Kasuga Jinja garden are pulled together under that respective topic. Information that does not directly relate to the project, but furthers the general understanding, is provided in parenthesis.

Images 701 to 703 give an impression of how the diaries presented themselves to me when I first came across them in the storage house. The text is written in shorthand and even for Japanese people hard to read, especially the younger ones. Fortunately Geite Shigemori, the oldest still living son of Mirei Shigemori, is able to read the text rather well and was kind enough to provide me with digital transcripts that he had made of several of the most important years. It is from those files that the below excerpts are taken.

It is important to note that I was given permission to use this information for academic research only, and that the Shigemori family maintains the right to restrict further publishing without their approval.

The Big Survey: 1936

February 8th: Mr. Nakano Sokei came to see me after a long time without a meeting. He asked me to publish the Nihon Teien-shi Zuroku with his company and I told him that I would talk about it with Kawahara Shoten, which is so far planning to publish the Nihon Teien-shi Zuroku together with me. Later I told Mr. Kawahara, from Kawahara Shoten, that Mr. Nakano had offered me to publishing the series with his company, and he was very surprised on the phone. He showed up at my house soon after we hung up. At last I agreed to publish the Nihon Teien-shi Zuroku with Kawahara Shoten. Then he was relieved and left in the evening. This series will be a really great publication if it is realized. I would be very busy to do all this work, but I think this project is worth it.

February 9th: I discussed the first publication of the Kawahara Shoten series with Mr. Shimizu. [Mr. Shimizu was one of Mirei Shigemori’s main assistants in his work and he also was a core member of the survey team.]
Honkoku-ji Kanji-in was the first site to actually be surveyed; the measurements there started on Feb. 16th.

February 16th: Today we finally started the actual survey of the gardens in order to make produce measured drawings of Japanese gardens. Nabeshima-kun and I went to Honkoku-ji Kanji-in at 11:00 A.M. and finished measuring about half of the garden by the evening. Komiyama-kun also came and helped us from the late afternoon.

Honkoku-ji was originally located next to the Hongan-ji but was moved to Yamashina in 1974.

February 17th: I went to Honkoku-ji Kanji-in at 1:00 P.M. but soon it started to rain, so we cancelled the surveying and returned home. On the way back home, I dropped by Hongan-ji (Shimogyô-ku, Kyôto) and asked permission to survey the Taimen-sho Teien and Hiunkaku Teien there.

February 18th: Nabeshima-kun and I went to Honkoku-ji Kanji-in at 10:00 A.M. and we finished most of the measuring by 3:00 P.M. Then I visited Shinshô-in (one of the temples in the Honkaku-ji complex) and took pictures of the garden there. Afterwards I returned to Honkaku-ji and copied some documental records there.

February 20th: I went to Shinshô-in to make a plan of that garden. From today on, Hayashi-kun helps us making sketches of the gardens. I visited Shinnyo-in (one of the tempes in the Honkoku-ji complex) to ask permission to survey their garden.

February 22nd: I was busy helping to survey Shinnyo-in, taking photos, drawing plans, researching the documents and records in their archives and so on. I also went to Iwakura Jissô-in (in North Kyôto) and asked permission to survey the garden there. I was tired ...

February 28th: Today I went to survey Iwakura Jissô-in with Nabeshima-kun, Shimizu-kun and Hayajiri-kun. [Mirei Shigemori mentions these people as the regular members of his survey team] We finished all the survey work, such as making plans, drawing sketches and taking photos. It takes a lot of energy to work on such a cold day.
February 29th: Nabeshima-kun, Hayajiri-kun and I met at Shimizu-kun’s house at 8:30 A.M. Then we took a train at 9:15 A.M. to go to Sakai, a city in the south of Osaka. After we dropped by Mr. Sue, we visited Nansô-ji to survey the garden there. While we measured the site, the sun was hidden behind clouds and the wind blew hard... It was too cold really to work outside. We continued until the evening though and then stayed at Yachiyo Ryokan for the night.

[On March 1st, there was a Rinsen excursion to Nansô-ji where Mirei Shigemori was working. At the excursion, Shimizu-kun gave a lecture on the history of Nansô-ji and Mirei Shigemori did one on the garden and teahouse. About 30 people came and they also stayed at the Yachiyo Ryokan that night.]

March 2nd: I sent Nabeshima-kun, Shimizu-kun and Hayajiri-kun ahead to Shôun-ji to start with the survey. Mr. Niwa took me to Rikyû’s former house, now owned by Mr. Tsujimoto. I also visited Mr. Furuya and looked at the archives and finally got to Shôun-ji by around 3:00 P.M. There I asked the priest some questions about the temple. The survey was all finished by the evening. We stayed again at the Yachiyo Ryokan.

March 3rd: Because of an introduction by Mr. Niwa, we got the chance to survey the Rikyû’s former house. I sent Nabeshima-kun and Hayajiri-kun to measure the garden of Daikoku-an on the property of the house. Shimizu-kun had returned to Kyôto last night. While they were working at the house, I finished a survey at Kaikô Jinja. Then I headed for Yôju-ji in the evening. The garden there was better than I expected and had kept the original shape from when the temple was built. The drawings on the sliding door were good. I only copied some things from the archives. After I had returned to Yachiyo Ryokan, Mr. Sue came to see me and we talked for a while.

March 4th: Today we visited Mr. Furukawa Tarobei. Shimizu-kun came a little later and then also Mr. Sue. All of us worked on the survey of the garden together, and finished drawing the plans and so on by about 4:00 P.M. We left and called on Mr. Niwa at the Inoue clinic and then visited Mr. Hirano’s house. We saw the garden just like in the middle of the Edo period and were served tea. It was served in the very formal manner of the Omote School and we all were impressed. Later we returned to he Yachiyo-Ryokan and I edited a text until 3:00 A.M. [he does not mentioned which one].
March 5th: Shimizu-kun and I spent the whole day surveying the garden at Yōju-ji. We left there in the evening and then went to see a teahouse [does not mentioned where it was]. That was very interesting. Hayajiri-kun and Nabeshima-kun worked at Kaikō Jinja today. We finally left the Yachiyo Ryokan in Sakai, in the south of Ōsaka at 7:00 P.M. and had dinner at a Chinese restaurant downtown Osaka on the way back to Kyōto.

[From March 6th to the 9th Mirei Shigemori edited the text for the book of Sōka no Kanshō (Appreciation of Flower Arrangement). Shimizu-kun and Hayajiri-kun came to help with the editing on the 6th.]

March 10th: I finished the editing in the morning and then called at Mr. Okamoto’s house in Kamigamo, Kyōto. Mr. Tanaka Taizō and Mr. Hajima also came to his house. The four of us discussed establishing a firm called Zōen Kenkyū-sho (Landscaping Institute) together, but I am not sure if it will happen or not. I returned home in the evening. Then Shimizu-kun came to see me and we worked out the time periods as they will be in the Nihon Teienshi Zuroku until 4:00 A.M.

March 11th: Shimizu-kun and I will select the gardens to be in the Nihon Teienshi Zuroku tonight after 10:00 P.M. Very busy…

March 12th: Mr. Kawahara the publisher and owner of the Kawahara Shoten, came to see me and I showed him a table of content with about 280 gardens all over Japan. He was happy with it.

March 15th: At the Imperial Household Agency I requested of permission to take photographs of the garden at Nijō-jō. Those photos will be used to illustrate the Nihon Teienshi Zuroku.

March 19th: I went to Ōtsu with Nabeshima-kun, Hayajiri-kun and Shimizu-kun by car in the morning and we surveyed the garden of Miidera Kōjō-in and finished measuring the garden by 5:00 P.M. On the way home I gave a two-hour lecture on the appreciation of Japanese gardens in Kyōto, but had the three of them stay at Hakkeikan Ryokan in Ōtsu.
March 20th: I met Nabeshima-kun, Hayajiri-kun and Shimizu-kun at 9:00 A.M. and we went to Raigô-ji together. Most of the survey was done by the evening. After that, we saw Juryô-ji in Sakamoto and the garden at Jitsunen-bô, which is right next to Juryô-ji. The latter garden was interesting so we decided to survey it tomorrow. We all stay at Hakkeikan tonight.

March 21st: It was raining in the morning, but the rain stopped around 2:00 P.M. Then I asked Hayajiri-kun and Nabeshima-kun to go and measure the garden at Jitsunen-bô. Shimizu-kun and I went to see a garden at Jôzen-ji in Kusatsu. [20-30 minutes from Ôtsu] When we arrived there, we found that the garden was completely overgrown. After that, I went all the way to Saikô-ji in Oumi Hachiman [20-30 minutes from Kusatsu]. The garden was built in the late Edo period and was in rather bad shape. We stayed at Saikô-ji tonight.

March 22nd: Mr. Kawazoe came to pick us up and we went to Yôkaichi for a site inspection. The village mayor of Yôkaichi has asked me to design the Enmei Park there. So the mayor, deputy mayor and some people from the park committee joined me and we hiked up the hill where the park will be built. After the inspection, I visited Matsuo Jinja and found unexpectedly a magnificent garden. It is a garden from the Momoyama period and is similar to the ruins of the Mr. Asakura Shigekage’s house. We were very happy to find such a beautiful garden by accident.

March 23rd: We visited Matsuo Jinja again in this morning and took several pictures. News writers from Asahi Shinbun and Mainichi Shinbun came and wrote an article about this garden. [An article on Mirei Shigemori’s garden discovery was in the Mainichi Shinbun the next day.]

March 25th: From the morning on, I have worked on some sample pages for the meeting with the publisher. In the afternoon, Shimizu-kun, Hayajiri-kun and Nabeshima-kun came to my house and we all went to the Tsu no Tsuru restaurant with Mr. Kawahara. He introduced us to Mr. Murata Toshikichi from Yûkô-sha and also an owner of Heiraku-ji Shoten and some other people. It was the first time we met each other. [Yûkô-sha is a publisher in Tôkyo and is the company that later published the Nihon Teienshi Zuroku.]
March 27th: The four usual members (Nabeshima-kun, Hayajiri-kun, Shimizu-kun and me) went to Yamazaki Myôki-an for a survey of the garden. In the evening, Mr. Murata from Yûkô-sha came to see me.

March 28th: We went to Kennin-ji Ryôsoku-in for a survey and spend the whole day there.

March 31st: We went to Kennin-ji Ryôsoku-in for another whole day of surveying. I gave ¥60 to Nabeshima-kun and ¥10 to Hayajiri-kun.

April 2nd: Nabeshima-kun, Hayajiri-kun and I went to Matsuo Jinja in Yôkaichi to make a plan of the garden. Mr. Kawazoe and Mr. Horikawa came and helped us.

April 4th: Nabeshima-kun, Hayajiri-kun. Shimizu-kun and I went to Myôshin-ji Gyokuhô-in for a survey. We took about fifteen pictures there and finished surveying the garden by the evening.

April 6th: At last, Sampô-in allowed us to survey their garden so the usual members went there by car. We started measuring at 11:00 A.M. and could finish about a quarter of it by the evening. As might be the only chance to survey there, we drew a plan at 1:50 scale. So the size of entire the plan is larger than 4.5 tatami mats. In the evening, Mr. Murata brought samples of the book and we discussed some points. We agreed on me going to Tôkyo and to decide the details then.

April 7th: At first I wrote the introduction to the Nihon Teienshi Zuroku. Then in the evening, I wrote an article for a special issue on Japan, which the Japan Times has asked me to do. The title was “Japanese Garden as Three-dimensional Paintings”. It will be translated into English some time soon.

April 9th: After it had rained for two days, we finally returned to Sampô-in and continued the survey there. We still haven’t completed even half of it.

April 10th: We worked at Sampô-in again. The measuring of the pond was mostly finished. Five people were working at the site today and six people yesterday.

It costs me …
April 18th: I have been very busy writing the text for the Nihon Teienshi Zuroku. I worked from the morning until 4:00 A.M. the next morning. Hayajiri-kun came and said that he had not finished drawing the plans yet, so I asked Mr. Shimokawa and Mr. Kawasaki to help.

April 19th: I have been working on the text all day and couldn’t do anything else.

April 20th: I have been very busy preparing the things to be presented to the publisher in Tōkyō. Shimizu-kun, Hayajiri-kun and Nabeshima-kun came to my house in the evening and helped me to get the documents for tomorrow’s meeting ready; then I took a train bound for Tōkyō, leaving from Kyōtō station at 9:45 P.M.

April 21st: I arrived in Tōkyō station at 8:30 A.M. and headed straight for Marunouchi where Yûkô-sha is located. President Murata had not come in yet, so I decided to have breakfast first, and then checked his office again. It was my first time to see Mr. Murata Tetsusaburō and he seemed to be a nice person. We discussed my publication project and he was very interested and willing to support it. Mr. Setomura, the chief editor, joined us and said he would support me as much as he could. We discussed some details, such as page layout, pictures, style of bookbinding and so on. Now I am really certain that it will be a great series of garden history books. I went out for lunch with Mr. Murata and Kôzô-san, the husband of Mirei Shigemori’s sister Keiko in Tōkyō.

April 22nd: I went to see Mr. Teshigahara and then I dropped by Nihon Bijutsu Gakkô (Tōkyo Fine Arts School) to see Mrs. Kii, she is now a widow. After that, I went to Yûkô-sha to discuss details like layout, ink and color of the cover. I left the publishing company with Mr. Murata and Mr. Setomura and had dinner with them at the Marunouchi building. After dinner, I attended the reunion of my class at the Tōkyō Fine Arts School. I haven’t seen my friends form school for fifteen years and really enjoyed talking with them.

I took a train leaving Tōkyō at 10:00 P.M. and Hiromitsu-kun and Keiko saw me off at the Station.

April 23rd: I arrived at Kyōtō station at 8:30 A.M. and headed for Yomo’s residence to direct the construction there. As most parts of the garden were done, I started to advise them even on the decoration of some of the interior rooms.
My sons and the daughter were waiting for me at home. Nabeshima-kun came to see me in the evening and we discussed the plan of Sampô-in.

**April 24th**: It was another busy day. In the evening, Mr. Murata Yoshikichi came to see me and I told him about the meeting at Ōkô-sha in Tôkyo. He was very happy to hear it. Later also Hayajiri-kun and Mr. Kawasaki joined us.

[After Mirei Shigemori returned from Tôkyo, he started to write the text for each garden that he had finished surveying.]

**April 30th**: Professor Tamura agreed to write a recommendation letter for the *Nihon Teienshi Zuroku*.

[On May 12th, Mirei Shigemori went to Mr. Suzuki Takatarô’s residence to direct the garden’s construction. He started working at 10:00 A.M. and finished setting several stones, including Sanzon-seki, by the end of the day.]

**May 13th**: Mr. Murata came to my house in the evening and we discussed the size of the photos. The publisher needs photos that are nakaban or yatsugiri size, so a specialist will help us the next time. [nakaban: 10.5 x 15 centimeter, yatsugiri: 15.2 x 20 centimeter]

**May 15th**: With Mr. Kobayashi Shigeru from Ôsaka and the employees of the Kataoka Photo Shop, I went to take photos of Entoku-in.

**May 20th**: I spent the whole day writing the Geppô [news letter that came with each book] for *Nihon Teienshi Zuroku*.

**May 23rd**: Today I went to Matsuo Taisha to take photos with Shimizu-kun, Kobayashi-kun and Sasamoto-kun.

**May 24th**: I went to Urasenke with five people: Kobayashi-kun, Sasamoto-kun, Shimizu-kun, Nabeshima-kun and Hayajiri-kun. We had covered the site by noon.
May 27th: I visited Shimizu-kun and saw his prints. Mr. Setomura [the chief editor] came to my house, all the way from Tōkyō, and we talked until about 10:00 P.M. We talked through some points and decided a number of the details. We will change the title to *Nihon Teienshi Zukan*. There will be one picture of *yatsugiri* size on one page, and two pictures per page if they are *nakahan* size. After he left, I organized my pictures until 4:00 A.M.

[Note: Before May 27th, Mirei Shigemori mentions the book’s title as *'Nihon Teienshi Zuroku'*, but then he and Mr. Setomura decide to change it to *'Nihon Teienshi Zukan'*, as that name better indicates a reference book; *Zuroku* could be understood as just being an illustrated book.]

May 29th: Mr. Setomura came to see me in the afternoon and we went to Hyôtèi, the restaurant next to Murin-an, for lunch. He enjoyed the atmosphere of Kyôto, handed me all the negatives and plans of Sampô-in and Matsuo Jinja, and returned to Tôkyō in the evening.

[Between May 30th and June 10th, Mirei Shigemori wrote the acknowledgement and the text for Matsuo Jinja. He also surveyed at Ninna-ji, Nanzen-ji Hôjô, Jikô-in and Chikurin-in.]

June 11th: The day before yesterday I received a telegraph from the publishing company in Tôkyō asking me to stop by, so I came last night by train from Kyôto. This time I took Nabeshima-kun here with me, and we went to Yûkô-sha together to do some editing. I really appreciate all the hard work that Mr. Murata, Mr. Setomura, Mr. Ôki and all the other staff have done on my books. Afterwards we went to Katô Bunmei-sha, the printing company, and started the work there at around 4:00 P.M. We finished the proofreading of 48 pages by 10:00 P.M.

June 12th: I went to the Katô Bunmei-sha’s office at 10:00 A.M. By the evening the proof reading of the references was almost done. I was very happy to see the printed text and the pictures were beautiful in print too.

June 13th: [Mirei Shigemori was busy with editing the text and the plans at the office]

June 14th: I went to the office at 8:40 A.M. and then we left for Denpô-in to take photos there. In the evening, the Murata brothers (Tetsusaburô and Toshikichi) took Nabeshima-kun
and me to a restaurant for dinner. Hiromitsu-san was also invited. I stamped 2,400 pages at
the dinner. [The stamp that is visible on the last page of each issue.]

June 24th: When I returned home, I found that the first issue of the *Nihon Teienshi Zukan*
had been delivered, that is Momoyama period (2). Nabeshima-kun and Hayajiri-kun came to
my house to have a look at it. They were very very happy with the result. They couldn’t be
any happier! I browsed through and it was gorgeous and beautifully done!!

Around noon, Mr. Murata Toshikichi, Mr. Heirakuji and Mr. Kawahara came to look at it
and had I had good time talking to them.

June 28th: There was an advertisement for the *Nihon Teienshi Zukan* in the Mainichi
newspaper and it occupied a third of a whole page. This is the largest add for books that I
have ever written.

June 29th: There was also an advertisement in the Asahi Shinbun today. The *Nihon
Teienshi Zukan* is really announced in a big way. In the afternoon, fifty copies were delivered
so I gave one copy each to Mr. Kawasaki, Mr. Nakano and Mr. Kawakatsu.

[After the add had been in the newspaper, Mirei Shigemori got a very good reputation with
this first issue. In July he started working on the second edition, the same way he had done the
first edition. Surveying, writing and so on.]

August 2nd: Shimizu-kun left for Tôkyo to bring all the materials for the second issue to
the publisher.

August 8th to 10th: Mirei Shigemori stayed in Tôkyo and worked on the editing of the
second issue in the office at Yûkô-sha.

August 17th: Fukui-kun joined the survey team. He had graduated from the same
gardening school as Nabeshima-kun, and they had been even in the same year.

August 18th: The second issue was published today.
Kasuga Jinja: 1933-1934

November 4th (1933): Priest Emi had contacted me for a garden design, so I went to Kasuga Jinja and looked at the site for the garden. Then I accepted to make a garden for the shrine office.

February 3rd (1934): In the morning I started to work on the design of Kasuga Jinja Teien, at the shrine’s office. I put a lot of effort into making a good design. As it is a shrine garden, the key numbers for the design are 3-5-7. My idea is to set twenty-five stones here in a way that they can always be seen in groups of 7-5-3 stones from each of three viewpoints. So that requires rather complex stone compositions. But at the same time it is an attractive challenge for me. I want to make this garden better than the one at Ryōan-ji. As this is my first shrine garden, I will do my very best.

February 4th: I worked on the design of Kasuga Jinja garden and finished it for the most part. As this garden will be my first shrine garden, I will try to make it a very unique garden. The gardens in front of the guest room and office will be in the karesansui style. Here are some notes on my references:

1) Work with the 7-5-3 concept as this is a shrine garden.
2) From any of three viewpoints, the stones are always seen in groups of 7-5-3.
3) Arrange four stones out of five continuously. Four stones refer to four gods at the main building and five refer to five gods at this shrine.
4) Use 52 kinds of trees referring to 52 shrines that follow this one [in the hierarchy of Shinto shrines]
5) Create a unique shrine garden by setting all stones upright.
6) Select trees connected to the deity to which the shrine is dedicated.
7) Design the lines of the stone arrangements and the space in consideration of contemporary art.
8) Cover the front part of the garden with moss to prevent excessive heat and cover the backside with white sand to create a sense of space.

The north garden will be in the shinden style and include some bridges.

1) Use the shinden style for this garden.
2) Design a lightning-shaped winding stream and use for it the water from the well in the garden.
3) Adapt the lightning-shape of the Heian Period to a line of contemporary art.
4) Use natural stones for the bridges and to arrange stones in the stream in a unique way such as 1-2-3.
5) Plant trees in a way to help appreciate the four seasons.

February 7th: In the morning, Mr. Kawasaki came and we talked about the Kasuga Jinja project. I asked him to make blueprints.

February 8th: Mr. Kawasaki had developed the blueprints, which I had asked him for yesterday, and so I sent them with a letter to priest Emi at Kasuga Jinja and also to Mr. Seki. They will like my design, I think.

March 11th: I went to Kasuga Jinja at 5:00 P.M. As I had already said that I would come around that time, the priest was there and waited for me.

I explained the design of the garden to him. It was good to have a chance to talk about my plan directly with him. Now priest Emi understands it well and we agreed to start the construction on the 20th or so.

March 12th: Mr. Kawasaki came to see me in the morning and we talked about the garden project at Kasuga Jinja.

April 2nd: Mr. Kawasaki came to see me in the morning. We worked on the specifications, made a detailed statement and then mailed it all out.

April 12th: Today I went to Kasuga Jinja in Nara with Mr. Kawasaki. There we started to set stones right away. We set five stones in the center and seven stones to the right. I arranged the stones very carefully, considering the following points, which I care for very much: the line between the stones, the elevation of each stone and the direction of the stone’s face. The priest stayed all day at the garden with us and enjoyed looking at how we worked. I am tempted to say that this is probably the only garden that is made so carefully, with the exception of Ryōan-ji of course. I am pretty sure that this garden will last for a long time. I
directed the garden work until it got dark, so now I am really tired, and it seems the same is true for the gardener. We are staying overnight at the Miyama Ryokan.

April 16th: I intended to go to Kasuga Jinja, but didn’t because of the rain.

April 17th: I took a 9:30 A.M. train for Nara to go to Kasuga Jinja and went there with Mr. Kawasaki’s father. I finished the garden part in front of the guest room and stayed again for the night at the Miyama Ryokan.

April 18th: Also today I worked at the Kasuga Jinja garden until dusk. I have finished all the stone settings and most of the shrubbery. I am very tired and am staying at Miyama Ryokan again.

April 20th: I had a conversation with the priest in the morning. The sand and the trees were delivered by car in the afternoon. Then we started to plant the trees right away. Now there is a perfect 7-5-3-style garden with three faces. It is really an elaborate work. I feel that I did make a great garden, which I can be proud of, and which, after a lot of effort, is much better than the gardens by Zeami or Enshû. From all three sides one can see perfect stone groupings of 7-5-3. It seemed to me that the priest was very impressed and happy to have this garden. He was with us in the garden until it got dark. Mr. Kawasaki’s father said there is nothing more beautiful than this garden. Perfect! That made my day. I am very, very happy. In this garden there are always two stones that cannot be seen from a certain viewpoint. That is similar to what happens in the garden at Ryôan-ji. As people walk along the garden there, they notice that there is always one hidden stone. Only if we arrange the stones so perfectly, do we get this magical result. So I guess Ryôan-ji’s arrangement, hiding just one single stone at a time, might have been an accident. The stones just were in the right place.

Anyway, I am glad to have my garden in Nara now. We are going to put the moss down tomorrow and the day after tomorrow we will distribute the white sand. Then this garden will be finished. It started to rain in the late evening.

April 21st: It rained hard from the morning on. No progress in the garden.
April 23rd: I took the 8:38 A.M. train for Nara. Finally we were able to finish the garden, so at 3:00 P.M. we reported to Kasuga Jinja that the construction was officially completed. After that I received ¥600 and a tip from the priest. I am glad that they like my garden.

There was a meeting of supporters of the shrine and about 45 people gathered. They enjoyed the garden and I gave a short lecture on it. It was good luck to have a chance to introduce my work to so many people right after its completion. As the design of this garden is not easy to understand for everyone, it is better to give some explanation.

April 24th: I received ¥80 from Kasuga Jinja as a reward for the design and for directing the garden’s construction.

[The construction of the garden in front of the guest room and office at Kasuga Jinja was finished on April 24th. The next project, the north garden and the official residence, will start on September 17th.]

September 17th: I had been working on plans for the north garden and the officials’ residence garden of Kasuga Jinja until the evening, when I finished drawing the plans. I made the north garden in the winding stream style called yarimizu. This is because the shrine was the family shrine of the Fujiwara clan and the yarimizu style garden was a typical one during the time when they were prosperous. In the officials’ residence garden, I decided to plant pine trees, cherry trees, maple trees, dianthus and so on, according to an old poem related to a place called Mt. Takamado (where people went to enjoy cherry blossoms and tall color).

September 18th: As I was waiting for priest Emi from Kasuga Jinja to come and see me, he sent a telegram saying that he would come on the 20th instead because he was sick. Around 10:00 A.M., Mr. Kawasaki brought blue prints of the north garden and the officials’ residence at Kasuga Jinja, which I had asked him to make yesterday.

September 20th: While I was at the Nakano Geijutsu-in (a publishing company in Kyōto), Reiko called me and said that priest Emi from Kasuga Jinja had come to visit. So I returned home quickly to explain the next project to him in detail. He stayed here for a long time and we even had dinner together at my house. Then he left in the evening.
On the 21st of September the Muroto typhoon hit the west part of Japan. It was so strong that many gardens were damaged. Kasuga Jinja was one of them. Here is the diary entry of September 21st, just for reference. Kasuga Jinja is not mentioned:

**September 21st**: The typhoon had been getting stronger and stronger during the morning. Especially between 9:00 A.M. and 10 A.M., it was terribly strong. This is only the third typhoon in my lifetime. When I was 17 or 18 years old and was in my hometown, the first one came. The second was on November 1st, 1917. At that time, I was studying in Tôkyô. This is my third experience of a typhoon. I heard that there hasn’t been such a strong typhoon in Kyôto for a very long time. The five-storied pagoda at Shitenno-ji in Osaka collapsed and the main building at Kennin-ji was also destroyed. The newspaper said that many people were injured or died from this typhoon. Seventy percent of the trees at Heian Shrine had fallen down and walls and gates were also blown off. The glass of many store’s display windows had been broken to pieces. The damage to our house was less than to others in the neighborhood. The wall was damaged a little and only one tree had fallen down. My family members are all fine.

**September 26th**: The priest wrote to me that more than six hundred trees had been fallen down so the garden project would be postponed for a while. We are not happy but there is nothing that we can do …

[The north garden and the officials’ residence garden were finished in 1937.]
Maegaki: 1955

[One day before Mirei Shigemori visited Mr. Maegaki, he attended a big tea ceremony called Momoyama Dai Chakai in Okayama. There were some folding screens and tea utensils from the Momoyama period. Some of them were from Mirei Shigemori’s own collection.]

November 4th: I got up at 7:00 A.M. at Mr. Matsumoto’s house and was served tea. (Mr. Matsumoto was one of the Mirei Shigemori’s clients in Okayama. He was to make a garden for him in 1959.) I took a 9:00 A.M. train to Saijo in Hiroshima Prefecture. On the way there, I got Mr. Kuwata to go with me from Fukuyama.

At 1:00 P.M. we arrived at Saijo and headed to Mr. Maegaki’s residence. He owns a brewery named Kamoizumi. After lunch with the owner and his family, we went to their mountain about eight kilometer from there. I did see some stones but they were not very good. On the way back, we dropped by the Aki Kokubun-ji. I found that it hasn’t been maintained for a long time. It was in very bad shape. I went to bed at 11:00 P.M. after a dinner with a lot of interesting conversation.

November 5th: I got up at 7:00 A.M. and talked with the family. At 2:00 P.M. Mr. Kuwata and I took a train. He got off the train at Fukuyama and I did at Okayama right around 4:00 P.M. Before I took the next train back to Kyōto, I dropped by Mr. Aichi’s and talked with him. Mr. Yata visited us there later. I took a 6:29 P.M. train and was home by around 11:00 P.M. Then I prepared the next day’s Rinsen Kyokai excursion and went to bed at about 1:00 A.M.

[Mirei Shigemori didn’t return to the Maegaki’s garden until December 7th. The construction of the garden of the Eiraku-an Hotel in Misasa Onsen, Tottori prefecture started on November 11th and was finished on December 2nd. During that period, he was in Kyōto for only six days between November 24th and 29th. Beginning December 3rd, he undertook the construction of the garden of Mrs. Higashi in Takahashi and stayed there until December 7th when the first phase of the garden was basically finished.]

December 7th: [Mirei Shigemori was working on the Higashi’s garden in the morning.] The garden was almost done by noon. Left are the fences, the moss and the white sand. I will
do the remaining work early next year. We all were served a big lunch and then Mr. Higashi gave me a gratuity. After that, I took the 3:30 P.M. train from Takahashi. Both Mr. and Mrs. Higashi saw me off at the station.

I changed trains at the Kurashiki station and arrived at the Maegaki’s residence in Saijō around 5:30 P.M. The son of the owner picked me up at the station. After dinner with the family, we talked a lot until about 11:00 P.M.

**December 8th**: From the morning on, Kôno-kun, Noguchi-kun and Yoshii-kun worked on the preparations for starting the construction. I heard that there were stones 10 to 15 kilometer away from Saijō-cho, so Mr. Maegaki and I decided to go and see them by car, together with a person who knew where they were. And there were many stones, but they were all black stones similar to the *Ikoma ishi*. So the color was bad and the proportions were also not very good. All that I got today was fatigue. Digging up the vegetation of the former garden was also underway today. We talked a lot at dinner.

**December 9th**: It seems that it will take time to clean up the terrain and prepare it for the construction. I ordered the moss, the white sand and the paving stones.

All the Maegaki family is very nice to us. Sometimes I feel bad for them taking care of all our meals. The big pine tree was transplanted and we dug up the fragrant olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*), boxwood (*Ilex crenata*) and maple trees (*Acer palmatum*).

**December 10th**: In the morning, we started transplanting fragrant olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*), boxwood (*Ilex crenata*), maple trees (*Acer palmatum*) and were able to finish that work by the evening. I drew the design of the Maegaki’s garden and also did calligraphy on some pieces of square paper during the day. Later, I gave them to the Maegaki family. As usual, they served us dinner. At 11:00 P.M. I went to bed.

In the afternoon, I had received a telegraph saying that Yoshii-kun’s mother is sick so he took an 11:00 P.M. train to return to Kyōto.

**December 11th**: In the morning, I explained to the gardeners what to do for the construction during my absence. Mr. Suehiro brought two gardeners to help and they went to the mountain to look for stones for the garden. Mrs. Maegaki saw me off at the Saijō station and gave me some souvenirs. Then I took a 9:50 A.M. train and arrived in Okayama by 12:40 A.M. I visited Mr. Matsumoto and Mr. Akagi, but as neither of them was at home, I then
walked to Mr. Aichi’s residence. While we were talking at his house, some people came to see me: Mr. Yata, Mr. Akagi, Mr. Okita and Mrs. Matsumoto. Later, I took a 5:50 P.M. train called Tsukushi-gou and arrived at the Kyōto station at 9:20 P.M. It was almost 11:00 P.M. when I finally got home. Mr. Nakagawa and Mr. Yamamoto have come to Kyōto for the meeting of the Byakutōsha study group, so I talked with them until 2:00 A.M. Very, very tired.

[On December 12th, there was a study meeting of the Byakutōsha at Mirei Shigemori house. He was complaining about less people attending than he had thought, even though he had come all the way from Hiroshima just for the meeting. Somewhere between three and five people attended. He wrote that it seemed to him that the Byakutōsha was becoming less active in those days. So he decided to have the meeting once every three months, starting the following year. In the evening, Mirei Shigemori and the people who attended the meeting had a year-end-party with the Sukiyaki dinner.]

**December 13th:** Yoshii-kun came to see me and said that it would be difficult for him to return to Hiroshima for the construction of the Maegaki’s garden.

[On December 14th, Mirei Shigemori and his wife Reiko went to see a large painting exhibition at the Okazaki Museum in Kyōto called Nitten. They spent about three hours looking at all the works and he commented afterwards as follows: ‘Even though there are still some issues regarding the advancement towards a new style of Japanese paintings, I can now see that it is going in a new direction.’]

**December 15th:** I left home at 7:00 A.M. to catch a train at 8:30 A.M. On the train I met Mr. Higashi-no and talked with him all the way to Okayama. Then I changed trains to go to Saijō. It was around 4:00 P.M. by the time I got to the Maegaki’s residence. Since Kōno-kun, Noguchi-kun and the other gardeners from Hiroshima had worked hard, the stones were already here and ready to be arranged. I decided to start setting the stones tomorrow. Everybody in the Maegaki family is so nice to us that I sometimes feel hesitant to accept all their kindness such as everyday dinner, lunch and so forth.

**December 16th:** From the morning on, I directed the arrangement of the stones and most of the available stones were placed by the evening. So far so good, but some more stones are
needed for the stone settings, so I will send somebody to the mountain to fetch some more tomorrow.

**December 17th**: Today I worked on the layout of the land, such as the fog-shaped central peninsulas, and then the garden started to become quite beautiful. In the afternoon, the new stones were delivered and I climbed up the truck to see them. As the bed of the truck was covered with straw, and I wore the geta shoes, I slipped from the edge and got seriously injured. I twisted my right ankle very hard, which hurt tremendously. When I asked for a doctor, one came right away to treat my ankle. Even during the night, it still hurts.

**December 18th**: In the morning I found that my ankle was swollen and was becoming bigger and bigger. It seemed that there might be internal bleeding. I tried to direct the stone settings even though my ankle hurt very much. But after I had done one stone setting, I couldn’t stand the pain any longer and spent the rest of the day in bed. In any case, the stone settings were set very well and quite beautiful actually!

**December 19th**: As my ankle still hurt, I took an x-ray. The doctor then said there was nothing broken or cracked in my ankle, which made me feel relieved. Today I directed the stone settings in the front part of the property.

**December 20th**: I oversaw the transplanting of a big maple (Acer palmatum) and some other trees in the garden. The garden is becoming very beautiful! Mr. Tsuboshima came to see me at the site.

**December 21st**: I directed the stone settings at the entrance area. As my ankle hurt so much, I had to hold a pillow while working. The layout of the land was almost done so we began to plant the moss.

**December 22nd**: The moss has been planted since yesterday afternoon and it was finished today. So the peninsulas in the front garden are now covered with the moss and it looks very beautiful. Everybody here enjoys watching the progress of the garden as it becomes more and more scenic. In the evening, I did a few pieces of calligraphy. Several neighbors were invited and I gave a lecture on interior design for about two hours. My ankle is getting better and less painful but still hurts.
December 23rd: Today we did the vegetation and planted the moss around the gate. As the paving stones for the area under the eaves were delivered during the day, we will start working on that tomorrow.

December 24th: In the morning, I first drew the line on the ground and then Kôno-kun and Noguchi-kun worked on the placing of the paving stones. People from the stone shop came to help us with that. The design under the eaves was inspired by the suhama-style and this is the first use of it among my designs. Some parts of the stone paving were done today. It will take about three more days to finish, I suppose. The filling of the concrete in the garden started today [in the areas where there will be white gravel].

December 25th: The construction site is becoming very busy, placing the paving stones in the front garden and planting the moss at the entrance area. The gardeners worked very hard and the garden is becoming more and more beautiful. The stones in the courtyard garden were all set.

December 26th: Most of the paving stones were placed and the garden will be finished after we distribute the white sand tomorrow. The concrete was all put in place at the entrance area, so we can bring the white sand into this part of the garden, too. As it will be all finished tomorrow, I called Mr. Kuwata in Fukuyama and asked him to come and see the garden. Because he introduced me to Mr. Maegaki, I am looking forward to see him and to show him the garden. Tonight, I gave the third lecture on interior design for about two hours.

December 27th: We distributed the white sand in the garden and finished everything by noon. The Maegaki family was very pleased with the garden. After the white sand was brought in, the garden became very lively and beautiful. Mr. Maegaki was taking a lot of pictures. Around 2:00 P.M. Mr. Kuwata came and said it looked gorgeous! We had dinner together at the Maegaki’s residence. He left to catch the 11:00 P.M. train; I myself will leave tomorrow morning. Mrs. Maegaki had tears in her eyes, when I said that I would leave the next day. I am glad we had a chance to get so close to each other, thinking about how much she cries.
December 28th: I had breakfast with the Maegaki family. After that, Mrs. Maegaki dropped me off at the station, but it was a little too late for the train I was going to take at 9:57 A.M. So we had a cup of coffee at a café near the station, before I took the 10:40 A.M. train to return to Kyōto. As I have stayed there for such a long time, they will miss me and I will certainly miss them, too. The train took a long time to get back to Kyōto. It was 7:30 P.M. by the time I got to Kyōto station and I finally was home by about 8:00 P.M. Then I talked a lot with Reiko. After that I wrote New Year’s cards until 3:00 A.M. and finished about two hundred of them.

December 29th: Today I got up at 10:00 A.M. and tried to write as many New Year’s cards as I could. In spite that I wanted to get the cards done, there were many guests coming. One of them was Mr. Katsuyama from Tamba and I made all the payments for the stones to him. At night, I continued to write more cards and by 3:00 A.M. another two hundred were done.

December 30th: Also today I had many guests and about six hundred New Year’s cards remained. I also paid Mr. Koyama for the white sand. Mr. Tsuyama came and I bought a lacquered Jubako (a set of boxes) with a monkey design from him. A lot of money is running out of my hands at the end of the year. Well, I have received money from Mr. Maegaki, which helps. Also tonight I wrote more New Year’s cards, until 3:00 A.M.!

I am very busy.
Isamu Noguchi: 1957-1958

[Mirei Shigemori was in the Ehime Prefecture in Shikoku for the construction of Mr. Eiichi Ochi’s garden at this time. Mr. Orita’s garden was underway at the same time.]

**April 16th (1957):** Today I directed the construction of the teahouse, including the thatching of it. After we were almost finished, we started to work on the engawa. It will be changing every day. Mr. Isamu Noguchi wanted to come and see me. Mr. and Mrs. Ochi had prepared something special for dinner for his visit but he didn’t show up in the end. So we invited Mr. Okamoto and a brother-in-law from Nishi-Machi for dinner.

**April 17th:** There was a festival for the 1100th anniversary at Yoshida Shrine today, but I couldn’t return to Kyoto to attend it. Kôno-kun, Maeda-kun and Noguchi-kun who work at Mr. Orita’s garden came to talk with me. Since it has been raining all day long, I decided to stay inside and write some calligraphy, probably about 30 pieces. They were quite good, I think. The thatching of the outdoor toilet (decorative only, not for practical use) was completed today. I heard that Mr. Isamu Noguchi will finally come to Himi tomorrow.

**April 18th:** Mr. Isamu Noguchi arrived at Himi and Mr. Masui went to pick him up. It was around noon when they arrived here in the car of the Governor of Kagawa Prefecture. From early morning on, many journalists had been waiting for his arrival.

We had lunch together at Mr. Ochi’s house and took a lot of pictures of each other. After lunch, I took him to Mr. Okamoto’s garden and then to another Mr. Ochi, who is actually my brother-in-law. After that, we also visited Hokoku-ji and Mr. Kumon’s garden. Many people joined us on our garden visits today.

Late afternoon we had dinner together at Mr. Ishikawa’s house and then left for Takamatsu at 9:30 P.M. We arrived in Takamatsu at 10:30 P.M. and went to see Mr. Kaneko, the Governor of Kagawa Prefecture at his residence. Mr. Ochi and I later left and stayed for the night at Mr. Matsui’s residence. [Isamu Noguchi stayed at the Governor’s house.]

**April 19th:** It has been raining since the morning.
The Governor and Mr. Noguchi came to Mr. Masui’s residence where I stayed and had a look at the garden. Then Mr. Noguchi, Mr. Ochi and I left for Tokushima. About 30 people, including Mr. Suzue, were waiting for us at the station in the rain and we were asked to come into the stationmaster’s office. There were journalists from all the news companies waiting for an interview. Then we visited Kokubun-ji and after that Senshû-kaku, which is now under restoration. We all stayed at a hotel tonight.

April 20th: Even though it was still raining this morning, we left for Ueyama in Kamiyama-chô to look for stones. Mr. Sugiyama and Mr. Suzue took us (Mr. Ochi, Mr. Noguchi and me) there by car. We walked down the mountain to the river and searched for stones. Isamu-san was glad to find an unlimited supply of stones all around and most of them were actually good stones. We marked a total of about 80 stones and returned to hotel in the late evening. Mr. Ochi went home today.

April 21st: In the morning, I worked on an estimate for stones and other materials, together with Mr. Suzue and Mr. Sugiyama. Afterward I wrote a letter [that certified the origin of the stones] and I gave it to Mr. Noguchi. Then in the afternoon, I went to Takamatsu to see him off and then returned to Mr. Eiichi Ochi’s residence in Saijô where I stayed for the night.

April 22nd: From the morning, I directed the construction of the teahouse and other things at Mr. Ochi’s garden. It was a very busy day. Later I heard that Mr. Isamu Noguchi called on me when I was out. That was quite some news for the neighbors here.

[Mirei Shigemori is back to Kyôto on the 26th.]

April 27th: I spent all day preparing the tea utensils for the tea ceremony at Kômyô-in tomorrow. Mr. Isamu Noguchi came to see me, and also Mr. Katô joined us later. Mama (Mirei Shigemori’s wife) went to Iwashimizu Hachimangû (Shinto Shrine) instead of me.

April 28th: We left home in the early morning and went to Kômyô-in in the Tôfuku-ji complex. Mr. Isamu Noguchi joined the tea ceremony and was served tea. After that I took him to Tôfuku-ji to show him the gardens. I returned home in the late evening.
April 30th: At 8:30 A.M. I boarded an express train named Kamome (a seagull), bound for Okayama, together with Mr. Isamu Noguchi and Kinzō Nishimura, who is a stone mason living in Kyōto. At the Okayama station many reporters were already waiting for us. Also Mr. Saburō Matsumoto was there. We were all asked to come into the stationmaster’s office where Mr. Noguchi was interviewed. Afterwards Matsumoto Kisaku-kun guided us to Kokusei-ji, where we were served tea and lunch outside in the back garden. Mr. Masui from Takamatsu joined us there and then we all went together to Mr. Matsumoto’s residence. In the evening, I went all the way up to Takamatsu and stayed at Mr. Masui’s house.

[It is not written when Mirei Shigemori parted from Isamu Noguchi that day, but obviously for the next 6 days they were not together.]

May 7th: This morning, Mr. Isamu Noguchi and Governor Kaneko came to see me at the Masui’s residence. Then Mr. Noguchi and I left for Tokushima at 9:00 A.M. When we arrived there around 11:00 A.M., Mr. Suzue was already waiting for us. He took us to the Awa Kankō Hotel where we are staying tonight. Then we inspected the construction site for the trial garden. In the evening, Mr. Miki came to see me at the hotel and we had an interesting conversation. He said that he met Koen recently. Mr. Miki is a famous photographer and he had come to my house in Kyōto to take photos for Life magazine.

May 8th: We left the hotel at 9:00 A.M. and went to the construction site. The project I will help him with is a trial garden of a Japanese garden for the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. He said he was not sure if he could complete this garden project by himself, so he came and asked me to help him to make a garden by means of stone arrangements and other materials. That is the reason why he approached me at this moment. We spent all day setting gigantic stones, and some smaller ones too. We finished it today, faster than we had initially thought. Mr. Suzue built a small office for us, and a temporary bridge was also constructed here. After finishing the stone settings, we went to Mizuno Ryokan in Naruto City for dinner.

May 9th: Today we spent all day working on the trial garden. I felt quite tired after working on it since early morning together with Mr. Noguchi. As I was paying close attention to his ideas, I couldn’t quite execute it the way I would have liked. That was a bit annoying. During the day, Mr. Okamoto and Mr. Fujita came to see the construction. Tonight we decided to stay at the Mizuno Ryokan as we liked it better than the Awa Kankō Hotel.
May 10th: Today again we spent all day working on the trial garden. The stone settings were almost done. In the evening, I did a few pieces of calligraphy for Mr. Noguchi as a gift, and he also did one for me and gave it to me. Today Mr. Masui, Mr. Nakagawa and some other people from Takamatsu came to see our trial garden.

May 11th: We left Mizuno Ryokan in the morning and went to the site of the trial garden to finish the rest of the stone settings. We worked there in the morning and then Mr. Isamu Noguchi, Mr. Sadao and Mr. Miki left for Shôdo Island. It started to rain in the afternoon. Mr. Masui, Mr. Usuki and Mr. Sogô, who is a priest at Shido-ji, visited our trial garden. Also about 20 people from a garden study group from Tokushima came to see the site in the rain. I gave a short lecture about the project. After that, we rented a neighbor's house and discussed the project. I left there at 5:00 P.M. with Mr. Masui, Mr. Usuki and Mr. Sogô from Shido-ji and arrived in Takamatsu at 7:00 P.M. Then we had tea at Mr. Masui's residence. Mr. Nakagawa and Mr. Kinoto joined later. Now I am very tired. I haven't been so tired for a long time.

July 12th: I have been very busy today, but my stomach is not well.

Today Mr. Isamu Noguchi came to see me. Then he went to the Takagamine area (the northern part of Kyôto City) to look at a piece of land together with my wife and Hatashita-kun. They also visited Igyô-in and Mr. Isamu Noguchi liked the architecture and view from there very much. After that they went to see the garden at Daisen-in and also at Shôden-ji in Nishikamo. After they came back home later in the afternoon and I talked with Mr. Isamu for a while.

I cleaned up my garden and arranged some flowers at Tokonoma while they were out. Mr. Sadao came to see me and I had a talk with him and Hatashita-kun. While we were having a conversation, somebody from America visited me. He was so impressed by my book of Gardens of Japan that on the way to India he had stopped in Japan to actually look at those gardens. He had learned my address at Hongan-ji and asked some very interesting questions regarding the garden at Ryôan-ji. I was impressed with by his viewpoint. Quite interesting.

[It seems that July 12th is the last day that Mirei Shigemori and Isamu Noguchi actually met in person in 1957.]
July 20th: It has been raining a lot. Today I am alone at home for the first time in a while. I decided to prepare some samples for the carving (in stone) of a kanji character for the Japanese Garden in Paris. There is a stone setting of a 12-inches tall waterfall in the garden. Although it is called a waterfall, he just put some naturally cracked stones there. That is what Mr. Isamu Noguchi thought a stone setting meant. Well anyway, he wants to have my writing of ‘Wa’ (和), which is the second letter of Heiwa (平和), [which means peace]. So I wrote several versions of it. It was not so easy though. At the end, some of them looked fine. After that I also wrote some of the kanji ‘Mu’ (無), [which means nothing or void].

At 5:00 P.M. I went to Minami-za [a theater in Kyōto] to see a women’s sword-fighting play with my wife. It was absolutely boring and a waste of my time. I will never go to see that play again.

[Between the 20th and 29th, he wrote some articles and visited Mr. Katayama’s garden in Kishiwada, Osaka.]

July 29th: Today I sent my calligraphy of ‘Wa’ (和) with a letter to Mr. Isamu Noguchi.

We got a new washing machine today. Nice and new. In the late afternoon, Mr. Zuihō Igarashi came to see me with Mr. Kôzô Inomata all the way from Niigata. He is a student at a University there and his major is the history of Kadô (ikebana). So I showed them some of my collection. We had dinner together and they left before 9:00 P.M. I went to bed at 2:00 A.M. tonight.

January 23rd (1958): It was a nice day today. I practiced tea with Reiko [Mirei Shigemori’s wife]. Mr. Katayama from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs came by and gave me ¥100'000 as a payment for the project of the trial garden for the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Then Mr. Sudō came to see me and I made a design for his teahouse. After that Mr. Ohmachi also visited me.

I went to see Mr. Shimazu with Reiko and decided to buy a byōbu (folding screen). It is a great work and also in Kokka magazine. [Kokka, literally meaning the ‘National Flower’, was one of the most expensive magazines around and one that Mirei Shigemori had subscribed to and wrote many articles for.] We had dinner there.

February 25th: It has been getting warm yesterday already and today is another nice day. I spent time in the morning organizing my mail and ran some errands. Afterwards I visited Mr.
Shimazu with Noguchi-kun to talk about making a garden [for them]. We stayed there for about 4 hours and returned home at 5:00 P.M.

When I was back home, I got a phone call from Mr. Katayama who works at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He asked me about vegetation and asked that I send somebody, or maybe two people, to work at the UNESCO garden in Paris. I recommended Mr. Suzue’s son in Tottori prefecture to him. The first person will probably leave Japan in the middle of March and the second will then leave sometime in April. So Mr. Suzue’s son will be the first and I am still thinking who will be the second. It could be Noguchi-kun ...

In the evening, a friend of Bairon, who studies at Keio University, visited us and stayed here for the night.

[Reiko, Mirei Shigemori’s wife, will be opening her shop at Hanshin department store in Osaka. Mirei has been organizing everything for the opening and they have been very busy since the beginning of February.]

March 10th: I have been very busy preparing the items to sell [in the store]. They should be neither too expensive nor too cheap. I pondered over what to choose and picked about forty articles out of my own collection. And of course, I selected the tea utensils for the opening tea ceremony on 13th. There will be a tearoom named Mittan (三庵) next to the shop. A total possible sale would be ¥1’932’000. Well, I wonder how many items will be sold. Until 1:00 A.M. I was wrapping them all up for the transport to the shop in Osaka.

I arranged my brother-in-law’s garden visit to the villa. Mr. Sato, Mr. Miyauchi and Noguchi-kun came to see me. I also wrote a signboard for the Mittan tearoom.

Around 2:00 A.M., I wrote a recommendation letter for Noguchi-kun to support his going to Paris. And I wrote some more letters until 3:00 A.M. Very busy...

March 16th: I was very busy in the morning, getting many things done, such as writing letters and articles for Rinsen. As I had finished, Mr. Suzue dropped by on his way to Paris. Noguchi-kun and Oota-kun also came as he was here. I gave a happi (a livery coat) that I had designed, to Suzue-kun and Noguchi-kun. They can wear them when they work in Paris. I took a train called Suisei-gō (a comet) with Mr. Yamazaki and Mr. Ueki [Mr. Yamasaki was the president of Santory. Mirei was going to Tōkyo for a project at the Suntory factory in Kawasaki.]. The tickets we bought were for the second-class sleeping car. Mr. Ōta dropped us at the station.
March 30th: It was a cold day today. Mr. Fujita came to see me in the evening. As I haven’t seen him for a long time, I got the tearoom ready to serve him tea. I myself prepared the koicha (thick tea). We talked a lot until 4:00 o’clock in the morning.

I received a letter from Suzue-kun in Paris. It said that he arrived there on the 23rd, which means it actually took him two days to get there.

March 31st: I got up at 9:00 A.M. and had a talk with Mr. Fujita. Then Mr. Adachi visited me and Mr. Fujita left around 11:00 A.M. After that Mr. Tatsuyoshi Iwata came to see me, after that Mr. Miyauchi who is a carpenter; later Mr. Sato and a priest also came by. In the evening, Mr. Inada and Mr. Hagiya visited me. Today I couldn’t get anything done after all. Mama (Mirei Shigemori’s wife) goes to Osaka every day.

I wrote letters to Mr. Isamu Noguchi and Suzue-kun.

April 3rd: I talked to Hatashita-kun in the morning and he went to Mama’s shop in Osaka. I stayed at home and wrote some articles. Not so productive. I sent money (¥24'600) to Mr. Kondō in Dōgo as payment for a Mizusashi (a jar for water).

Noguchi-kun came to see me. I received a call from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It looks like Noguchi-kun’s trip to Paris hasn’t been fixed yet.

I sent plans and an estimate to Mr. Yamazaki of Suntory.

April 15th: I got up at 6:00 A.M. and wrote several letters. Then Noguchi-kun came back from Tōkyo and reported what happened while he was at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was told that I would fly to Paris on the 19th!

In the evening, I finished an article about gardens in the Heian period for the Rinsen newsletter. I went to bed at midnight. But I argued with Mama until 5:00 A.M., so I didn’t get much sleep till the morning.

June 22nd: I attended the Rinsen excursion today. We went to some temples in Ibaraki city and Katsuo-ji. There was a beautiful landscape with primeval forest. There are quite a number of different architectural styles to be found in that temple complex, but after all I was not very impressed. Also there was no garden there. I returned home at 8:00 P.M. Then Suzue-kun and Noguchi-kun came back from Paris and visited me. We talked a lot. They gave me a bowl made in Persia as a souvenir.
August 7th: Mr. Isamu Noguchi called me from Tōkyō and said he would come by tomorrow. Other than that, I read books all day long.

August 8th: I cleaned up my garden and the house while I was waiting for Mr. Noguchi’s visit. He finally showed up in the late evening. I also invited Nishimura-kun [the Stone mason] and Hatashita-kun and we talked a lot with him. He showed us some color photos of the UNESCO garden. It is mostly well done but the vegetation is not that good, I thought. Noguchi-kun pruned my garden in the morning.

August 9th: I met Mr. Isamu Noguchi at Mr. Kishimura’s house at Kiyamachi Street and Oike Street and then we went to Kishiwada together. We arrived there at 12:30 noon and visited the Hachijin no Niwa. Mr. Isamu Noguchi took a lot of color photos. Mr. Mita welcomed us and invited us for lunch. After that we visited Mr. Katayama’s residence and looked at the garden there. I was working on this garden around the same time last year. The moss was in good condition. We spent about two hours there and returned to Sakurabashi in Ōsaka. I took Mr. Isamu Noguchi to Mama’s shop called Mitsumoti Bijutsu Ten (Mitsumori Art Shop). At 7:00 P.M. Mr. Yoshihara joined us and we had dinner together. After that we went to a bar called Shion (aster). It was nothing interesting even though there were more than twenty beautiful ladies there. I left Mr. Isamu Noguchi there returned home with Reiko at 11:00 P.M. When I was back home, Mr. and Mrs. Aichi were waiting for me and we talked until 2:30 A.M.

August 10th: Noguchi-kun and Sakashita-kun were pruning the pine tree in the garden. It looks like the big pine tree is almost done and the other trees and shrubs are also pruned. I talked to Mr. and Mrs. Aichi in the morning and then they left for Mt. Hiei around 11:00 A.M. In the evening Mr. Isamu Noguchi came to see me with a lady.

August 19th: In the morning, we cleaned the whole house together with the Noguchi brothers and Hatashita-kun. We haven’t done this for a long time. I am very glad that we finally did, but am quite tired now. Mr. Isamu Noguchi came to see me just after we finished up the cleaning.
Mirei had been working on a restoration at Ikô-ji for about a week. He returned to Kyôto on September 6th.

**September 6th**: I arrived at Kyôto station just before 1:00 P.M. and headed home right away. As soon as I was back home, I started to clean up my garden. I watered the moss a lot and weeded the grass. Mr. Isamu Noguchi came to show us his slides of Hachijin no Niwa and Mr. Katayama’s garden.

**September 7th**: The 310th monthly excursion of Rinsen Kyôkai was today. About 90 people gathered for that. I went to Nanzen-ji together with Reiko. In the beginning, I talked about the history of Nanzen-ji and the garden there. Then we visited and enjoyed the garden and the paintings on the sliding doors. After that we had lunch there. Mr. Isamu Noguchi came while we were having lunch and he showed us his slides of the UNESCO garden, which is still under construction. He also showed the slides of Hachijin no Niwa and Mr. Katayama’s garden. We continued our excursion after lunch and headed for Mr. Oomiya’s garden, which is formally called Waraku-en.

**Looking back at the end of 1958**

[...] Around the end of this year, Mr. Isamu Noguchi designed a kama (a pot to make hot water, used during tea ceremony) and gave it to me as a present. It looks very different from the general idea of a kama, but it is several times heavier than the ordinary ones. It seems to me that it lays claim to be something new. But I find that even though it looks like something new, it actually it is not. A really new thing comes only out of a deep understanding of what the original thing is and means. Mr. Isamu Noguchi knows about contemporary art, but he doesn’t understand what new means in tea. His lack of understanding made him create this kind of kama. A new idea is still subject to necessity, which is what creates reality.

**Curriculum Vitae Christian Andre Tschumi**

I was born on October 17th, 1968 in the city of Brussels in Belgium, but grew up in Zürich’s suburbs. So it was in Switzerland that I became a landscape gardener while attending the Berufsmittelschule. Then I followed the call to serve in the Swiss army, where I was
educated as a driver of construction machines. After this I went to California for one year, studying English and learning about landscape design at a local college near San Francisco. I returned to Switzerland in November 1989 and started to study landscape architecture at the Hochschule Rapperswil. Soon I felt the need for some practical experience in my chosen field and deferred my studies for one year. The internships at Atelier Stern and Partners in Zürich and Araki Landscape Architecture in Osaka then gave me the necessary inspiration to finish my degree by November 1993.

My first job as a landscape architect was at Vetsch Landschaftsarchitekten in Zürich. At the same time I was working as an assistant in charge of the postgraduate studies at the Hochschule Rapperswil. In July 1995 I started my own design office in Zürich, focusing on different scales of landscape design and emphasizing digital techniques for the communication of design ideas. In November 1995 I was invited as a visiting lecturer to the Department of Landscape Architecture at the Fachhochschule Anhalt in Bernburg, Germany. At the end of 1996 I decided to take a break from my private practice and teaching engagements and go to study at the Harvard Design School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to pursue a masters degree in landscape architecture. The design studio with Professor Martha Schwartz and the two history classes with Professor Eduard Sekler and Professor Mirka Benes, were the most influential for my further professional development.

After graduating from Harvard in May 1998, I moved to California and started to work for Peter Walker and Partners in Berkeley. In August 1999 I was hired as project manager at Suzman Design Associates in San Francisco. By March 2000 another great opportunity appeared on the horizon as I was awarded the Monbusho Scholarship. So in April 2000 I moved to Japan and started to research the modernization of the Japanese garden. While living in Kyōto, I have since been working under the guidance of Prof. Lampugnani and Prof. Girot on this topic.
Part 2: Images

Part 2 contains all images of the dissertation. The first digit of the image number indicates the chapter the image belongs to. The second and third digits are the running numbers within each one of the chapters.

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Mirei Shigemori, Nihon Teienshi Zukan, Tōkyō 1936-1939.

Mirei Shigemori’s plan archive.

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Mirei Shigemori, reprint by Geite Shigemori.

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Mirei Shigemori, currently on display at the Mirei Shigemori Kinenkan (Museum) in Yoshikawa.
Mirei Shigemori, calligraphy owned by author.

Model of Shigemori residence in Kyōto, made by author.

Mirei Shigemori, art currently owned by the Maegaki family.

Photoalbum owned by the Shigemori family.

Sign board in Hamamatsu, Shizuoka prefecture.

Images taken by author on site.


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