

JAPANESE SONIC GARDEN

Translating the experience of Japanese gardens through the realisation of sound installation

by

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ABSTRACT

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This master's dissertation accompanies my master's project. It deals with how I worked in translating the experience of Japanese gardens through sound installation. The original research question was to discover *how translating the traditional elements of Japanese gardens into sonic objects can create an artistic work while keeping the authentic experience.*

This dissertation begins with a description of why I initially chose to focus on the theme of Japanese gardens in the autumn of 2020, followed by research into their history and an explanation of the gardens' essential components.

Later I will describe the research trip I conducted in January 2022, supported by the Sibelius Academy Foundation. The objective here is to explain the discoveries of my visits to Japanese gardens through illustrated documentation. This research trip proved to be meaningful to the identity of the final work and to shape my artistic vision. In the following section, I review significant previous artworks concerning Japanese gardens.

The final piece is then introduced with video, pictures, and sound files, as well as an explanation of how I translated the experience into a sound installation and what method I utilised to do so. I also address the beneficial aspects of the project's development and what could be improved.

The concluding part outlines what I discovered about the subject I have spent around two and a half years researching, how I profited from completing this project, and how I could utilise this experience in future projects.

I believe this dissertation can serve as a reference for future work relating to Japanese gardens and translating the experience using musical means. This dissertation also provides insight into my creative work and possible approach to the subject.

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1. Introduction

I am Seiji Kokeguchi, a Japanese composer and sound artist. I started to study in 2017 at the University of the Arts Helsinki, Sibelius Academy, Music Technology Department in Finland and completed my bachelor's degree in May 2020. With this dissertation, I aim to complete my master's degree. I have seen a lot of sound artworks and participated in several projects during my studies, which encouraged me to deepen my understanding of media art.

In 2021, I produced a piece called Waterscape to create an immersive experience for the listener that would make them feel like they were underwater. To achieve this, I integrated recordings of underwater sounds with my music and established a 6.1 multi-channel sound system. In 2022, I produced The Flow, a 90m-long sound installation of six equally placed speakers along the banks of the Tammerkoski rapids in Tampere, exhibited at the Tampere Biennale 2022. The intention at the time was to encourage visitors to realise the flow of Tammerkoski.

These projects have in common that I am flexible regarding my intention when producing them, but I am committed to my compositional approach. My musical style has always been ambient music, and all the projects mentioned above were designed with the possibility of new ambient music playback formats in mind.

As my master's project, I decided to produce a sound installation culminating my studies at the Sibelius Academy. Moreover, as the title suggests, the subject I chose was a Japanese garden. Japanese gardens have a long history and have been used for various purposes in different periods, and they vary in shape and size according to their purpose and historical background. Since I lived in Japan, Japanese gardens have been a favourite of mine to visit. However, I had little knowledge of their history and the intentions behind their composition, and I was interested in the soundscapes that may be experienced exclusively in Japanese gardens.

“The soundscape is any acoustic field of study. We may speak of a musical composition as a soundscape or a radio program as a soundscape or an acoustic environment as a soundscape. We can isolate an acoustic environment as a field of study just as we can study the characteristics of a given landscape.”¹

1 R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Destiny Books, 1993), 7.

Thus, I decided to explore these topics and produce a sound installation that translates the experiences I gained through this research in my unique manner. Besides, by demonstrating the study process and the final work abroad, I hoped to arouse the curiosity of those who might be less familiar with Japanese gardens than Japanese people through my work. The project began in the autumn of 2020, the same time as the master's programme began.

The Sibelius Academy Foundation awarded me a grant to conduct research in Japan, and I completed it in January 2022. I carried out the research efficiently and with a clear objective due to having previously researched the background and expanded my knowledge. The research trip was undoubtedly the project's most important event, significantly impacting the creation process of the final work. The Research Trip chapter discusses how I prepared for the trip in advance, what I discovered and realised on the site, and how I summarised my travel experience after returning to Finland, utilising photographs and sounds as supporting materials. It links the knowledge gained in the earlier Background chapter to the starting point for developing the final work.

The dissertation begins with an introduction to the essential background of Japanese gardens, including their history and composition. In the Background chapter, I also present earlier artworks concerning Japanese gardens. In the History of Japanese Garden chapter, I also introduce a brief history of Japan, not limited to gardens, to explain the historical background and how Japanese gardens have developed regarding figure and purpose. The Materials chapter introduces the four essential components of a garden - water, planting, rock, and decoration - and explicit materials within each category. I hope that by comprehending the background presented here, readers can read this dissertation seamlessly.

The practical section then outlines how I translated my prior experience and knowledge into a sound installation. After visiting a Japanese garden and having such a pleasant experience, I realised how challenging it is to convey such an experience into a work of art. Therefore, by describing the detail of translating the work and how my intention shifted, I hope the work will be recognised as an adequate master's project.

The final work is presented in video and image formats. After that, I reflected upon the final work, what was successful and unsatisfactory, and how it could be improved.

In conclusion, I reflect not only on the overall project but also on how this project benefited me as an artist. Aside from the content of this dissertation and the final work, I hope the reader will find it beneficial as one approach to carrying out such projects as the Japanese Sonic Garden.

2. Background

Most Japanese people probably have some awareness of the design and significance of Japanese gardens since they are relatively prevalent in Japan. However, I had never studied its history, the types of objects they were mainly composed of, or the underlying significance they contained. I consequently chose to begin by learning about the background of the historical development of Japanese gardens and their fundamental components. I reasoned that I would start designing my installation only after acknowledging these fundamentals. Well informed approach to this subject felt mandatory to achieve my artistic goals.

2.1. HISTORY OF JAPANESE GARDENS

Japanese gardens are world-class representatives of Japanese culture. Even in small areas, they sublimate a region's nature, history, and culture into a single landscape. Since ancient times, each era has pursued its unique view of gardens and skilful landscaping techniques. I believe that the composition, origins, characteristics, and form of Japanese gardens are the reasons why they have attracted worldwide interest. This quote below by the Japanese philosopher Yuriko Saitō made me even more intrigued in researching the background and characteristics of Japanese gardens.

"Japanese gardens are frequently appreciated for embodying the attitude of harmony with and respect toward nature, reflected in their informal and "natural" look . . . No matter how "natural" Japanese gardens may appear, they are still products of human artifice, resulting from extensive modification and manipulation of nature."²

'Japanese garden' refers to gardens with 'stylistic features' unique to Japan. The Italian style refers to the terraced villa gardens that flourished during the Renaissance. The English style is the extensive natural landscape gardens associated with the rural castle buildings of the 17th to 18th centuries. Thus, the style established in a particular country or region during a period of concentrated wealth and artistic culture is considered that country's 'garden style'.

In Japan, however, a characteristic form known as the "Japanese-style garden" has been continuously created from ancient times to the present day. Of course, the structure and design of gardens are individualised according to the social aspects of each period and according to the natural climate, culture, materials and needs

² J. Baird Callicott and James McRae, *Japanese Environmental Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 145.

of the regions that produced the significant gardens and the bearers of each period. Nevertheless, I find features that give it a consistent sense of 'Japanese-style gardens'.

Shinto has been an important religion in Japan since ancient times. Shinto is a traditional religion centred on nature and natural phenomena, with no scripture or explicit beliefs. The exact date of its establishment is unknown. Still, it is believed to have originated in the Japanese archipelago when nature worship, based on rice cultivation introduced between the Jōmon and Kofun periods, saw nature as one with the gods. Therefore, the animistic idea of nature worship was firmly established among the Japanese. From ancient times natural stones were regarded as divine or Buddhist, and extensive natural rocks, for example, were considered sacred. The same applies to water, with Shimenawa (see Figure 1: Sacred Wedded Rocks with Shimenawa) tied around water sources and water deities worshipped. Water was essential for rice paddy agriculture, and the shrine of Suijin was enshrined. When a Shimenawa was stretched over a tall conical tree, it was called a Himorogi (see Figure 2: Divine Tree Surrounded with Shimenawa and Shide) and became a shrine for the deity. This animistic spirituality, which believes that gods dwell in stones, water, and trees, is something that even young people in modern society, who live in a digital world, may carry with them.



Figure 1: Sacred Wedded Rocks with Shimenawa³

³ “Shimenawa Sacred Ropes in Japan,” HIS USA, accessed April 1, 2023, https://top.his-usa.com/destination-japan/blog/shimenawa_sacred_ropes_in_japan.html.



Figure 2: Divine Tree Surrounded with Shimenawa and Shide⁴

2.1.1. Asuka Period (592 - 710)

The origin of Japanese gardens can be traced back to the ancient Japanese, who considered huge stones and dense forests to be the deities of the gods and built places close to them to imitate them. Subsequently, the Chinese dynasty brought various cultures, including Buddhism. During the reign of Emperor Suiko, visitors from Baekje arranged stones in the garden of the Oharidanomiya Palace to resemble Mount Meru, which represented the centre of the Buddhist world and built the Kure Bridge, thought to be an arched stone bridge, give it a garden-like form.

As for the Asuka period garden design, after the Suiko dynasty, it was influenced by the Baekje and consisted of a square pond. After the death of Emperor Tenji, the garden design was influenced by Silla, with a pond with a curved shoreline and a central island. Stone structures were also a decorative component of the gardens, and their remains can be seen in the Asuka Gyoen Ruins in Nara prefecture. (see Figure 3: Asukakyo Enchi Ruins)

⁴ “Shimenawa Sacred Ropes in Japan”



Figure 3: Asukakyo Enchi Ruins⁵

2.1.2. Nara Period (710 – 794)

In the Nara period, the influence of the Tang dynasty could be seen in many areas, including town planning. While incorporating elements of the Tang dynasty in garden design, they also established an extraordinary natural landscape style design, paving the way for creating gardens unique to Japan.

The differences from the Asuka period include the appearance of landscape stones and stone arrangements using natural stones instead of manufactured stone structures, the curved shoreline of ponds and fountains, and a beach that imitated a seaside beach with boulders and white sand on the seawall, which was unique to Nara period gardens. I realised that the elements I associate with Japanese gardens, such as winding waterways and masonry, already existed from this period and have a long history.

⁵ “Asukakyo Enchi Ruins,” Asuka Japan Heritage, accessed April 1, 2023, <https://asuka-japan-heritage.jp/saimci/spot/%E9%A3%9B%E9%B3%A5%E4%BA%AC%E8%B7%A1%E8%8B%91%E6%B1%A0/>.

2.1.3. Heian Period (794-1185)

In the Heian period (794-1185), the aristocrats of the time lived in mansions known as Shinden-Zukuri, where they enjoyed Kyokusui parties by creating a vast pond on the south face of the building, floating boats on it, and having a Kyokusui party in the gently curving waterworks that flowed into the pond. Those ponds were called Chisen, and the waterworks were called Yarimizu. Alternatively, connecting each building with a corridor and arranging Tsuboniwa between the buildings alleviated the summer heat of Kyoto. The site's undulating topography was used to build a mountain in the higher parts and a pond in the lower marshy areas. The banks of the pond will be landscaped with white sand. This rational gardening method used the natural terrain and was helpful in real life, including keeping the garden cool. As the upper classes became more sophisticated, the focus shifted towards ceremonies, banquets, and appreciation. The late Heian period spread to aristocratic pursuits such as 'tinkering with Buddha and tinkering with gardens'. In particular, the late Heian period saw the spread of Latter-Day Sabbatical Thought. In Buddhism, there was the idea that the Buddha entered a state of death around the 5th century BC and that 1,500 years (or 2,000 years) after his death, there would be a Latter Dharma World' a time when Buddhism would cease to be effective because it would be infested with evil thoughts, causing nothing but strife.

In Japan, the belief in the Latter-Day Law came to be widely held in the late Heian period (794-1185), just as the Latter-Day Law was arriving. With the spread of Pure Land beliefs, aristocrats intend to build Buddhist halls with Amida Nyorai (see Figure 4: Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light (Amitabha)) as their principal deity. This style was called Jōdoshiki garden and can be described as an activity to remake their living environment into an earthly paradise.



Figure 4: *Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light (Amitabha)*⁶

The Pure Land style garden was created to reproduce the Pure Land Mandala on earth exactly as it was depicted. Amida Hall is enshrined in the garden to cling to Amitabha and seek a life of paradise. In front of the main hall where the statue of Amida is enshrined, there is an oval-shaped pond called Aji-Ike, corresponding to the mandala's lotus flower-filled pond. The Byōdōin Phoenix Hall (see Figure 5: Byōdōin Phoenix Hall) in Kyoto is built using a construction method whereby the building floats on pillars. Reflections on the surface of the water make them appear to float. It is truly a reproduction of paradise on earth. At Itsukushima Shrine (see Figure 6:

Itsukushima Shrine, Hiroshima) in Hiroshima Prefecture, the clever conceptualisation of incorporating the majestic waters of the Seto Inland Sea as a pond, with Mount Miyama in the background, can be seen. This method of gardening in the Pure Land style continued into the Kamakura period.

⁶ “Amida, the Buddha of Infinite Light (Amitabha),” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed April 2, 2023, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/44890>.



Figure 5: Byōdōin Phoenix Hall, Kyoto⁷



Figure 6: Itsukushima Shrine, Hiroshima⁸

Research from this period has shown that people add ingenuity to the design of their gardens, giving them good landscaping and making sense of their functionality. Whether or not I incorporate the Buddha's ideas into my work, I have always resolved to keep these innovations in mind when creating my work.

⁷ “Byōdōin Phoenix Hall,” KYOTO SIDE, March 3, 2021, accessed April 2, 2023, <https://www.kyotoside.jp/entry/20210303/>.

⁸ “Itsukushima Shrine 厳島神社,” EBARA CORPORATION 荏原製作所, accessed April 2, 2023, <https://www.ebara.co.jp/waterhistory/vol008.html>.

2.1.4. Kamakura Period (1185-1333)

The Kamakura period was when Japan's first samurai government, the Kamakura Shogunate, was established by Minamoto no Yoritomo, and samurai were the first to run the world. For the next 600 years, the period centred on the samurai continued. The Kamakura Shogunate was located in present-day Kamakura City, Kanagawa Prefecture.

The lineage of the Jōdoshiki style gardens continued into the Kamakura period, and gardens were created one after another. One of the events related to gardens in the Kamakura period was the emergence of professional landscape gardeners. This is considered the period when gardening creation methods were clarified and the Japanese style, as it is known today, was established. Three significant events indicate this.

The first is the writing of the *Sakutei-Ki*, a book on the gardening philosophy and techniques of the time. *Sakutei-Ki* is Japan's oldest comprehensive garden manual, and it is commonly accepted that the author was Tachibana Toshitsuna. Its contents are genuinely detailed, ranging from the spirit of garden creation to specific techniques. It is considered the source of the traditional Japanese formulation techniques that have since been used.

'Setting stones' refers to the creation of a garden. The book gives instructions on how to carefully assess the characteristics of the place where the garden is to be created by first considering the overall picture and then the nature of the terrain, the site, and the atmosphere of the place, i.e., the natural landscape, and to give form to memories of natural scenery and areas of interest. The book asserts Japanese gardens' land-oriented nature. The latter part of the book refers to the details of the various elements that make up a garden, such as the built-up mountains, masonry, watering, and planting.

Second, a professional group specialising in landscape gardening, *Senzui-kawaramono*, was formed. *Senzui-kawaramono* were originally a group of *Kawaramono*, the lowest class of the medieval period. They lived on the riverbanks, were good observers of nature, and were active in the medieval and early modern periods as leaders of new creative activities. They were engaged in garden creation activities and were eventually recognised socially as a group of professional gardeners.

Thirdly, there appeared the *Ishidate* monks, who specialised in the skills of garden creation. A representative figure is the appearance of *Musō Soseki*. He was active from the end of the Kamakura period (1185-1333) to the *Nanbokuchō* period (1333-1392) with his 'spatial composition with ten views and ten boundaries'; The idea was to create a garden with ten different views of the subject matter and ten different atmospheric settings throughout, which could be admired as you walked around the garden. As will be mentioned in later chapters,

there were several gardens created by Musō Soseki among the gardens I visited for research this time. It can be said that Japanese gardens are based on Buddhist philosophy and that the stone monks directed the creation of the gardens, making maximum use of this gardening technique in forming the solemnity of Buddhist temples.

The book *Sakutei-Ki* was produced during this period, becoming the cornerstone of Japanese garden design. Unfortunately, as it is an ancient book, finding a modern translation is complex, and I have yet to read it myself. However, considering that this book influenced several gardeners, I now understand some of the factors that contribute to the consistent style that Japanese gardens have.

2.1.5. Muromachi Period (1336-1573)

The Rinzai School, founded by the Chinese Linji Yixuan, is a branch of Zen Buddhism that originated with Daruma. Brought to Japan, the Rinzai school reached the pinnacle of Buddhism through the efforts of Eisai, Musō Soseki, and others. It contributed to the creation of Japan's unique Zen culture, including Karesansui and Suiboku-Ga (Ink wash painting, see Figure 7: *Sesshū: View of Amanohashidate*), throughout the Kamakura and Muromachi periods.



Figure 7: *Sesshū: View of Amanohashidate*⁹

⁹ “Sesshū: View of Amanohashidate,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 20, 1998, accessed April 2, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/art/suiboku-ga>.

The Muromachi period (1336-1573) was when a society exhausted by prolonged warfare turned to Zen Buddhism, which pursued the essence of things through strict precepts. Zen thought then profoundly influenced the intellectuals of the time and was strongly reflected in the cultural aspects of the period.

The gardens created during this golden age of Zen became based on the Pure Land style garden, with Zen touches added. The basis of Zen Buddhism is to sit in Zazen and become enlightened and become a Buddha oneself. To this end, all activities and rituals related to daily life, including food, clothing, and shelter, are considered to be ascetic practices. The Zen temples of Nanzen-Ji, Tenryū-Ji, Shōkoku-Ji, Kennin-Ji, and Tōfuku-Ji, which were thus listed as the Five Mountains of Zen Buddhism, show the variety and high quality of the landscaping established in the Muromachi period. The most remarkable feature of this period was the stylised expression of Karesansui (Dry landscape gardens, see Figure 8: Karesansui garden at Ryōan-ji, Kyoto).



Figure 8: Karesansui garden at Ryōan-ji, Kyoto¹⁰

¹⁰ “Ryōan-ji,” Wikipedia, May 1, 2007, accessed April 2, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ry%C5%8Dan-ji#/media/File:Kyoto-Ryoan-ji_MG_4512.jpg.

It is an exquisite arrangement of famous stones known as the seven stones of Kyoto and Shirakawa sand. It is said to have originated because people felt that it might be tasteful. However, waterfalls and streams that usually had water running through them had their water sources ruined for some reason, and the water flow stopped. It was a very effective method in the Shoin-Zukuri style of the pagodas of Zen temples, where there were no water sources nearby due to their location. The idea of Zen practice is to be found in the extraordinary nature of deep mountains and valleys. Still, it was necessary to recreate nature's ideal when practising indoors or in the city. The development of Karesansui was also influenced by the Zen monks' culture, which included ink painting and Bonsai (see Figure 9: A bantigue tree created by the Filipino bonsai artist Bernabe Millares¹¹).



Figure 9: A bantigue tree created by the Filipino bonsai artist Bernabe Millares¹¹

The Shoin-Zukuri style, which was the architectural style of the Zen temple, required a precise pictorial composition for the garden, as the garden landscape was viewed from a single point in the Tatami room. In this sense, the Karesansui stone arrangement was convenient, like a Bonsai transferred to the garden. Karesansui gardens are said to have been created due to this multi-causal process.

¹¹ Michael Snyder, "The Ever-Evolving Art of Bonsai," The New York Times, November 9, 2021, accessed April 2, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/09/t-magazine/bonsai-plants-trees-craft.html>.

Within the Karesansui style, there are three main types of techniques. The Shajitsu method represents the natural landscape as it is seen. In the Shai method, elements are reduced, and the expression is somewhat abstract. The other is the Shōchō method, the highly abstract method in which there are almost no external shapes, such as ponds or streams. The Ryōan-Ji stone garden is a typical example of the abstract form.

Most people probably think of the sight of Karesansui when they imagine Zen culture. I felt that its abstract style is highly associated with the ambient music I create, and I wanted to translate these elements uniquely into the sound installation I will produce.

2.1.6. Azuchi-Momoyama Period (Approx. 1568-1603)

This period was also known as the Warring States period, a time of extreme hardship. For this reason, the warlords who survived the Warring States period preferred a powerful and dynamic style for their gardens, with large and vibrant masonry. They also had their gardeners create extensive, flowing water features and enjoyed entertaining themselves with them. The strength of the power that was aiming for domination of the country was also apparent in the gardens.

On the other hand, the spread of the idea of Chazen Ichimi, the world of the tea ceremony that aimed to deepen the spirituality of the human being, and the development of tea gardens and alleys as devices for this purpose were also characteristic of this period. Tea culture spread among the samurai class, partly due to Oda Nobunaga's Chanoyu Goseidō, which made the tea ceremony a part of the samurai rituals by requiring permission.

The space called Roji (see Figure 10: The Tea Garden) is the path that leads people to the world of the tearoom. The model for this is the landscape of a mountain village or mountain road. Sitting rooms, washbasins, lanterns, and stepping stones are placed in this space. Using evergreens instead of flowering and fruit trees and the moss and fern-oriented planting in the tearoom eliminate the spirit of splendour and frivolity. However, there is a dignified tension within and an atmosphere of the uncontrollable phenomenon, or what is known as Wabi Sabi.



Figure 10: The Tea Garden¹²

Kobori Enshu was one of the leading landscape gardeners of this period. He was involved in creating many castle and temple gardens and contributed to the popularisation of the tea ceremony house and Roji, making him a genuinely emblematic garden designer of the period.

2.1.7. Edo Period (1603-1868)

The period that followed was the Edo period. This is the era in which Shogun (General) Tokugawa Ieyasu ruled Japan and would continue to do so for the next 265 years. The Edo period saw the development of Daimyo Teien Garden. Daimyo garden is a general term, not a stylistic name, for gardens established in the residences and villas of the feudal lords of Edo (Present day Tokyo) and other clans in various regions. During the Edo period, feudal lords from all over the country had several residences in Edo to commute to and from the shogunate. In preparation for the Shogun's visits, all feudal lords competed to create luxurious gardens, so the most extravagant lord's gardens were created in every region of Japan.

Each clan built their gardens in the style of a pond garden, where visitors could walk around a pond with enough water for boating and enjoying the view and divided the vast grounds into several precincts. Teahouses and halls were built as resting places, and these buildings and the garden landscape were combined with the local area to allow visitors to make their rounds along a route. The landscape is characterised by many changes that unfold over time. Before entering the big pond, visitors always pass through a dense grove of trees, and

¹² "The Tea Garden," Japan House, December 21, 2018, accessed April 2, 2023, <https://japanhouse.illinois.edu/about/tea-garden>.

even when passing through the mountains, the various buildings and bridges ensure that they never feel bored. The area is luxurious, with plenty of wide-open spaces.

In terms of design, it can be said to synthesise the features of all periods of Japanese gardens, from the Asuka period's Kyokusui ponds to the Heian period's large pond fountains, Muromachi period stone arrangements and Karesansui and Azuchi-Momoyama period tea gardens. Kairakuen Garden in Ibaraki (see Figure 11: Kairakuen, Ibaraki), Korakuen Garden in Okayama (see Figure 12: Korakuen, Okayama), and Kenrokuen Garden in Ishikawa (see Figure 13: Kenrokuen, Ishikawa), known as Japan's three most famous gardens, are all Daimyo gardens created in the Edo period.



Figure 11: Kairakuen, Ibaraki¹³

¹³ “Kairakuen,” THE GATE, April 15, 2021, accessed April 2, 2023, <https://thegate12.com/jp/article/26>.



Figure 12: Korakuen, Okayama¹⁴



Figure 13: Kenrokuen, Ishikawa¹⁵

¹⁴ “Okayama Korakuen Garden,” Okayama Prefecture, accessed April 4, 2023, <https://www.okayama-japan.jp/en/spot/91>.

¹⁵ “Kenroku-En,” Kenroku-en, accessed April 4, 2023, https://www.pref.ishikawa.jp/siro-niwa/kenrokuen/e/season_winter.html.

The Daimyo gardens of this period utilised the components of earlier gardens while expanding their scale. In other words, I thought the scale could be controlled as much as possible if the core elements were firmly followed. In other words, I thought I could create works of various sizes, depending on the size of the space in which I wanted to exhibit them.

2.1.8. Meiji Period (1868-1912)

The Meiji period (1868-1912), which opened with the Meiji Restoration, saw a complete change in the structure of society and the influx of western civilisation like a dam. The trend towards culture and enlightenment swept over the garden world, and a new movement emerged in Japanese gardens, which followed tradition until then. A sparse forest of large, naturally shaped trees on a lawn with a slow, curved pathway, modelled on Central Park in New York, began to appear. Emphasis was placed on incorporating western culture and English landscape landscaping.

The traditional gardening methods and religious colours of the past faded away, and gardens from the Meiji era onwards based on modernism took on a completely different character. However, there was a strong desire for the traditional style, and Jihei Ogawa responded. He worked on villa gardens for the political and financial figures of the time and led the modernisation of Japanese gardens with a completely new sense of style, including the continuity between the borrowed nature behind the ponds and streams and the landscape within the garden, bright and open lawn areas, and tea houses tucked away in the woods. One of his best-known works is Murin-an in Kyoto (see Figure 14: Murin-an, Kyoto), built in 1896 as a villa for the politician Aritomo Yamagata.



*Figure 14: Murin-an, Kyoto*¹⁶

A new garden style was not bound by tradition or religious thought from this period. This could be seen as a sign of openness to adopting one's style without giving it too much historical or religious significance. It was encouraging for me as it lowered the barriers to sublimating the experience of Japanese gardens into a work of art.

¹⁶ "Murinan," KYOTO MAG, accessed April 3, 2023, <https://kyotomag.com/en/spots/murinan/>.

2.1.9. Shōwa Period (1926 - 1989) to the present day

One of the movements related to gardens in the Shōwa period was garden modernism, a garden remodelling movement among landscape architects that aimed to create a practical, clean, and cultured civic life based on an awareness of the poor socio-economic conditions of the post-war period. As a result, tiny houses built in this period were increasingly accompanied by small gardens, which manifested the landscape architects' idea that gardens should contribute to the living environment of ordinary citizens rather than being for the rich.

Since the beginning of the Heisei period (1989 – 2019), attempts have been made to convert external spaces of buildings and rooftop gardens in response to problems such as global warming and the heat island phenomenon in overcrowded cities. On the other hand, others, such as Mirei Shigemori, opened their world with innovative ideas while respecting the techniques of older times and created more than 200 modern gardens. Below you will find photos of some of the gardens Shigemori has worked on. (see Figure 15: Rinshō-Ji, Osaka, Figure 16: Ryōgin-an, Kyoto, and Figure 17: Kanyō-Ji, Yamaguchi)



Figure 15: Rinshō-Ji, Osaka¹⁷

¹⁷ “Rinshoji Garden ‘Horin Garden’ 林昌寺庭園 ‘法林の庭,’” Oniwasan おにわさん, May 31, 2021, accessed April 4, 2023, <https://oniwa.garden/rinsho-ji-temple-garden-%E6%9E%97%E6%98%8C%E5%AF%BA%E5%BA%AD%E5%9C%92/>.



Figure 16: Ryōgin-an, Kyoto¹⁸



Figure 17: Kanyō-ji, Yamaguchi¹⁹

¹⁸ “Ryugin-an Garden 龍吟庵庭園,” Oniwasan おにわさん, September 3, 2021, accessed April 4, 2023, <https://oniwa.garden/tofuku-ji-temple-ryoginan-garden-%E6%9D%B1%E7%A6%8F%E5%AF%BA%E9%BE%8D%E5%90%9F%E5%BA%B5%E5%BA%AD%E5%9C%92/>.

¹⁹ “Kanyō-ji 漢陽寺,” Teien Guide 庭園ガイド, September 9, 2019, accessed April 4, 2023, <https://garden-guide.jp/spot.php?i=shoushouhakkei>.

Thus, various gardens were created, focusing on practicality and visuals, art, and the environment. In addition, the display of vast Japanese gardens at the 1970 World Exposition in Japan raised worldwide awareness, and this is thought to have led to the appearance of Japanese-style gardens in major Western cities.

Having described the many different types of gardens in each period, how can we then talk about this diverse group of gardens as a single style of Japanese-style garden? The biggest reason is the consistent idea of respect for nature and nature as it is at the core. When creating gardens, the Japanese have always adhered to the nature-oriented approach and have used natural landscapes as their theme. Natural and local materials have been used as resources. I believe that in Japan, where 70% of the land is forested, the appreciation of mountains and rivers, natural stones, trees full of life and pure water has been passed down from generation to generation, creating many unique Japanese gardens.

2.2. EXISTING ARTWORKS

This chapter presents some existing musical works and sound installations with a Japanese garden theme and some sound artworks that are not related to Japanese gardens but seem to have a strong affinity with my project.

2.2.1. John Cage - Ryoanji (1983)

The first work is a musical piece called Ryoanji, composed by John Cage in 1985. Cage visited Ryōan-Ji (see Figure 8: Karesansui garden at Ryōan-ji, Kyoto) for the first time in 1961 and found interest in its simplicity of form and the austerity of materials. In the garden, there are 15 stones placed in 5 different sections. The stones are arranged in configurations of 3, 5, and 7, which is said to be because these odd numbers are considered lucky numbers in the Yin-Yang and Five Elements philosophy. “In Chinese numerology, the odd numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, ... are referred to as Yang (=male) numbers; the even numbers 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, ... are known as Yin (=female) numbers.”²⁰ Besides, at Ryōan-Ji, only a maximum of 14 stones can be seen at the same time from a single location, thus representing the state of incompleteness.

Cage made a drawing with pen and paper, then traced around their edges (see Figure 18: John Cage, Where R=Ryoanji, 1983) to generate a melodic slide between chance-derived pitches, and these were played as

²⁰ Andrew H.W. Tse, “To Be or Not to Be Superstitious—That’s the Question,” *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, November 20, 2015, 6, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.175>.

glissandi with solo instruments. There is also a percussion part; He made a percussion part having a single complex of unspecified sounds played in unison with wood and metal.

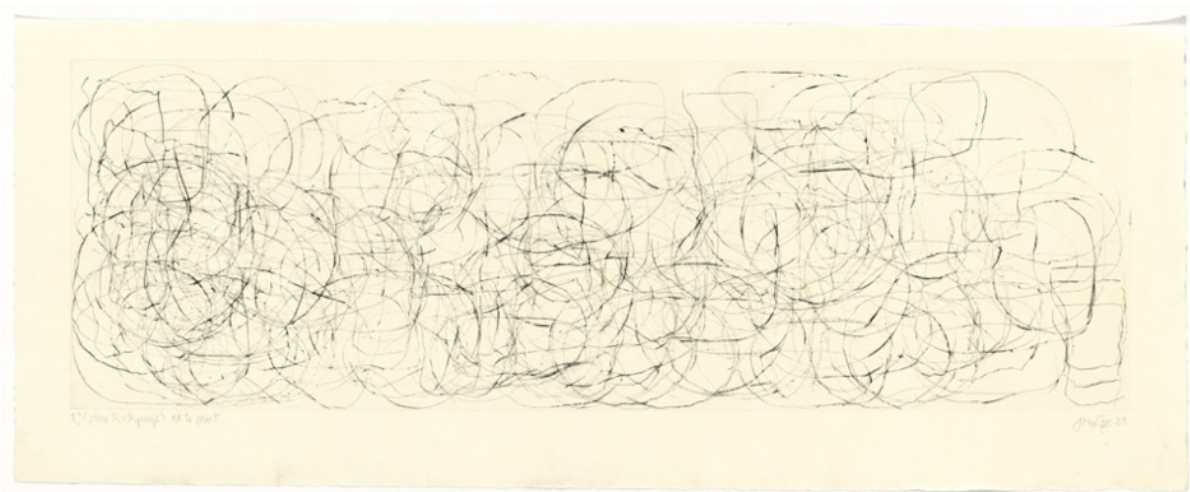


Figure 18: John Cage, *Where R=Ryoanji*, 1983²¹

This work was inspired by the garden's appearance and was created by adopting innovative compositional techniques. This significantly influenced my project to use my music in an abstract recreation of the figure of a Japanese garden.

2.2.2. Kaija Saariaho - Six Japanese Gardens (1994)

Another work related to Japanese gardens is *Six Japanese Gardens* by the Finnish composer Kaija Saariaho. “*Six Japanese Gardens* is a collection of impressions of the gardens I saw in Kyoto during my stay in Japan in the summer of 1993 and my reflection on rhythm at that time.”²²

They’re very intriguing pieces themselves, but comparing them to Cage’s work is also interesting since they both have composed music inspired by the same garden, Ryōan-Ji, yet have very different approaches. The gardens featured in this work were also reflected in the list of gardens to visit on my research trip to Japan, which will be discussed in later Chapter 4.1. Research Trip.

²¹ “John Cage, *Where R=Ryoanji*, 1983,” National Gallery of Art, accessed March 26, 2023, <https://www.nga.gov/features/yes-no-maybe/cage/ryo.html>.

²² “*Six Japanese Gardens*,” Kaija Saariaho, accessed March 25, 2023, <https://saariaho.org/works/six-japanese-gardens/>.

I felt an affinity with my project using music created based on the inspiration I got from Japanese gardens. In Cage's work, the actual appearance of the garden was incorporated directly into the work. In contrast, Saariaho's work was composed based on impressions. The fact that the instrumentation differed for each piece of music was also intriguing. It gave me a sense of freedom in instrumentation and made me want to reflect the inspiration directly into the composition of my work.

2.2.3. Akio Suzuki - Economical Garden (2019)

Akio Suzuki, a leading Japanese sound artist who pursues listening as a practice, has also created a piece on the theme of Japanese gardens called Economical Garden. He continues to present conceptual sound artworks that explore the act of 'listening' through unique thoughts and methods. One of his iconic works is Oto-Date, in which he searches for echo points in the urban environment and suggests to the listener the act of "listening" at these echo points by placing the marks (See Figure 19: Echo Point from Oto-Date project).



Figure 19: Echo Point from Oto-Date project²³

²³ "CHOSO-HAKKEI SOUND INSTALLATION," KAMADO, October 10, 2019, accessed March 25, 2023, <https://kamado-japan.com/column/04/>.

*“Oto-date is probably the most telling example of sound-walks without any electronic or technology . . . Pausing every now and again, the walk marks out sites interesting for their unusual acoustic or visual properties”.*²⁴

The Oto-Date project was first presented in Berlin in 1996 and has been running worldwide ever since. Suzuki also held an Oto-Date at a Japanese garden called Nakatsu Banshoen in 2019. Learning about the project made me realise the importance of ‘listening’ when I conducted the research trip referred to in Chapter 4.1. Research Trip.

The Economical Garden was installed at the same time as the project mentioned above, in the Marugame Museum of Art, adjacent to the Nakatsu Banshoen. The garden's outline is modelled with a wooden frame, and objects within the structure are arranged to resemble the islets. A robot hoover moves between ping-pong balls, imitating dry landscape sand as if priests sweep the sand (see Figure 20: Akio Suzuki, Economical Garden, 2019). Unfortunately, I could not uncover any details regarding the sound. However, from the simple idea of a robot Hoover going through ping-pong balls and hitting obstacles, it is relatively easy to imagine what the sound would be like.

The way Suzuki uses an abstract approach to recreate the scenery and activities of Japanese gardens has an affinity to the work I envisioned. The initial idea of my project is to utilise music that I produce myself, so I have paid little attention to the sound aspects of the economic garden. However, this unique work reminded me of my freedom in terms of visualisation.

²⁴ “Oto-Date,” Tuned City, June 27, 2013, accessed March 26, 2023, https://www.tunedcity.net/?page_id=3834#:~:text=Oto%2Ddate%20is%20a%20Japanese,%2C%20hence%20%E2%80%9Clistening%20point%E2%80%9D.



Figure 20: Akio Suzuki, *Economic Garden*, 2019²⁵

²⁵ "CHOSO-HAKKEI SOUND INSTALLATION."

2.2.4. Brian Eno - Memory Flowers (1999)

British musician, record producer, visual artist, and theorist Brian Eno is best recognised for his pioneering work in ambient music and his contributions to rock, pop, and electronica. I greatly respect him, especially as an ambient music artist, and he has been an essential influence on the Musical aspect of my work. Memory Flowers is a sound sculpture in the shape of flowers, designed by Brian Eno.

*“In 1978, Brian Eno released *Ambient 1: Music for Airports*, a landmark album in ambient and electronic music. Although it wasn’t the first ambient album, it was the first album to be explicitly labelled as ‘ambient music.’”²⁶*

His approach of producing devices that generate sound by exploring the system, rather than classical compositional methods, is an approach I also adopt in my music creation. One of the primary devices in my artistic work is the modular synthesizer, which facilitates the creation of impermanent music by playing sound sources and tweaking parameters. My approach to the Japanese Sonic Garden is no exception. A more detailed description is referred to in the Sound Material section of Chapter 5. Translating the Experiences.

Memory Flowers, presented here, is one such sound installation created by Eno. It is merely a speaker system in the form of a flower; it does not attempt to conceal its operation. “His flowers speak the language of ambient music: There is no beginning or end to their whispers.”²⁷ Generally speaking, the sound I hear from it is what I imagine Brian Eno's music to be. The piece has a "purpose" as a device for performing music and has an aspect of "scenery" due to its form (see Figure 21: Brian Eno, Memory Flowers). Thus, I find a strong affinity between this work and my project. When I came up with the concept of sound art focusing on the theme of Japanese gardens, my primary idea was to create a sound installation. However, I had only vague ideas about visualisation as I did not have an established style. Still, the idea of using the speakers as flowers were so striking that I felt I could take the same approach. As a result, I ended up using the idea of the speaker as an object myself, albeit in a different form.

²⁶ “How Brian Eno Created Ambient 1: Music For Airports,” Reverb Machine, July 11, 2019, accessed March 25, 2023, <https://reverbmachine.com/blog/deconstructing-brian-eno-music-for-airports/>.

²⁷ “Memory Flowers,” Finnish National Gallery, accessed March 25, 2023, <https://www.kansallisgalleria.fi/en/object/613552>.



Figure 21: Brian Eno, Memory Flowers²⁸

It was great to get to know some of the pieces composed on the theme of Japanese gardens and their experiences, which are undoubtedly excellent. However, I felt an overall oriental atmosphere from the use of percussion instruments and the melody, perhaps due to their respect for classical Japanese music. In my opinion, using them could not translate the experience but rather lead to a more stereotypical depiction of Japanese culture, so I did not have much reference to the musical aspects of these works.

²⁸ "Memory Flowers."

On the other hand, I found the sound installation work presented here very interesting in terms of its appearance, but I decided to take a more musical approach regarding sound. This is not to point out the monotonous nature of the sound elements of the works mentioned here, but only as a result of respecting the concept of incorporating one's artistic style.

“Whatever you now find weird, ugly, uncomfortable and nasty about a new medium will surely become its signature. CD distortion, the jitteriness of digital video, the crap sound of 8-bit - all of these will be cherished and emulated as soon as they can be avoided. It’s the sound of failure: so much modern art is the sound of things going out of control, of a medium pushing to its limits and breaking apart.”²⁹

²⁹ Brian Eno, *A Year with Swollen Appendices* (Faber and Faber, 1996), 283.

3. Materials

I have briefly mentioned the elements that make up a garden in Chapter 2.1. History of Japanese Gardens, but I would like to focus on these typical objects and concisely explain their roles and other aspects. The main elements that make up a garden can be divided into four categories: water, stone, planting, and objects. When these four major elements are examined in more detail, it becomes clear that a lot of ingenuity has gone into the design, and it becomes apparent how meticulously a good garden has been designed.

Creating a great garden requires working with a wide variety of materials. To reconstruct an organised landscape, it is necessary to consider the topography, use local materials and consider the design with respect for the properties of each material rather than conquering nature.

The ideal form of the landscape and the methods of caring for it are carefully passed down through the generations, passing through the seasons time and time again, and can still be seen today in its leisurely appearance. The more I study, the more I realise the significance of each material and the exquisite balance between them to structure such delicate sceneries.

This section presents a summary of the most common materials. However, those that I will actually incorporate into my work will be noted, and the specific means will be presented in Chapter 5. Translating the Experiences. All photographs used in the following chapters were taken by myself, and they were taken during a research trip which will be presented later in Chapter 4. Methods.

3.1. WATER

Water is one of the essential elements in the construction of Japanese gardens. In fact, the term Teien only came into use in the Meiji period (1868-1912), and until then, ancient Japanese people called them Rinsen (forest springs) or Senzui (mountain springs). As can be seen from this, water has been a very important element in Japanese gardens since ancient times. It should be clear by now that ponds, called Chisen (see Figure 22: Rokuon-Ji, Kyoto), were used for a variety of purposes in different periods and were symbolic elements. When water was not actually available, they even tried to recreate a pond fountain using the Karesansui technique.

The waterfall, due to its position in the garden, has the effect of giving the person at the observation point the impression that the space is larger than it actually is due to the way the sound is perceived by them. This

is an essential element in the composition of a soundscape within a garden and is in line with my research interests. Therefore, I decided to implement the waterfall in my work by other means with the aim of producing the same effect.

As for the pond, I sensed that the patterns on its surface and the concept of Karesansui, which reproduces them with mediums other than water, are the key visual features of a Japanese garden. Therefore, I decided to translate its appearance in my own way in terms of visualisation.



Figure 22: Rokuon-Ji, Kyoto

3.1.1. Waterfall

There are three types of waterfalls: Tsutai-ochi, where the water falls along the skin of the stone. Hanare-ochi, where the water does not touch the skin, and Nuno-ochi, where the water falls like a cloth being exposed. All of these can be said to have been imitations of natural waterfalls. During the Kamakura period, when Zen gardens flourished, the gardens took on a special significance. A typical example is the Ryūmonbaku waterfall, in which stones resembling carp are placed in a waterfall (see Figure 23: Rigyoishi in Rokuon-Ji, Kyoto). This is derived from the story Tōryūmon, in which a carp climbs a waterfall and becomes a dragon. Of course, a carp cannot climb a waterfall, but the stone arrangement represents the Zen philosophy of dedicated and

repeated ascetic practice. The stones used to represent the carp are called Rigyoishi, and the choice of which stones to use as Rigyoishi is a matter of the creator's abundant imagination. Waterfall in a Zen Garden that does not actually flow the water is called Kare-Taki (see Figure 24: Karetaki in Zuisen-Ji, Kamakura).

Gunnar Cerwén says, “Sound of a distant waterfall creates anticipation that encourages visitors to explore a distant ‘there’ in the far back of the garden.”³⁰ This is one of the phenomena I would expect the materials to create unique sound experiences in the gardens. Thus, this has become one of my objectives to experience.



Figure 23: Rigyoishi in Rokuon-Ji, Kyoto

³⁰ Gunnar Cerwén, “Listening to Japanese Gardens II: Expanding the Soundscape Action Design Tool,” *Journal of Urban Design*, July 20, 2020, 622, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2020.1782183>.



Figure 24: Karetaki in Zuisen-Ji, Kamakura

3.1.2. Winding Stream

The Winding Stream party was a popular event in the Asuka and Nara periods. In a garden with a stream of water, the participants would sit at the edge of the stream and read poems before the flowing sake cups passed in front of them, drink the sake from the cups, and then read the poems in a separate hall. The waterway built for the banquet is called Kyokusui. In the Heian period (794-1185), when Pure Land-style gardens became the norm, this function of Yarimizu also played the role of air-conditioning by flowing under the floor.

3.1.3. Flow

This Kyokusui tradition is carried on in modern gardens under the name Nagare. The ideological and religious connotations have almost disappeared, creating naturalistic landscapes that are straight out of a landscape painting. In the Meiji period, Jihei Ogawa created many gardens using the Nagare technique.

3.2. STONES AND ROCKS

Stones have been believed to be inhabited by spirits since ancient times. Perhaps for this reason, as a rule, natural stones that have not been processed or coloured are used. In *Sakutei-Ki*, the act of creating a garden is described as setting up stones, and it is clear that the act of selecting and combining stones, or masonry, is the most basic of the fundamentals of creating a great garden. This requires a high level of skill and sense, and it can be said that the competence of the gardener really comes into play.

Although the rocks themselves do not make a significant contribution to the sound experience, I decided to reproduce them in my own way in terms of visualisation, as they are a fundamental part of the scenery-creating process.

3.2.1. Dejima and Iwajima

Ponds, whether large or small, also represent vast oceans with their exquisite layout. And to express the ocean, it is necessary to express the coastline as well. In particular, some ingenuity is required to express the complex coastline of the Japanese coast, and various techniques were used.

For example, the design of sandy beaches is represented by paved boulders (see Figure 25: Dejima and Iwajima in Tenryū-Ji, Kyoto). The large, curved sandy beach represents the view of the mudflats that appear at low tide. To represent the peninsulas, Dejima was built. The islands in the ocean were reproduced by the method of Nakajima. In addition, small, majestic stones called Iwajima were made to peek out of the water, representing the countless islets as if they existed far out at sea. In this way, the garden as a whole is given infinite depth to the landscape with its various innovations.



Figure 25: Dejima and Iwajima in Tenryū-ji, Kyoto

3.2.2. Sanzon-Ishigumi

One of the primary stone arrangements is Sanzon Ishigumi (see Figure 26: Kennin-ji, Kyoto). This idea is derived from the Buddhist concept of Sanzon-Butsu, in which Shakyamuni Buddha or Yakushi-Nyorai are placed in the centre with flanking figures on the left and right. This is mainly found only in the gardens of Zen temples.



Figure 26: Kennin-Ji, Kyoto

3.2.3. Crane and Turtle Stones

There are many other influences of the Shinsen Hōrai ideology in the masonry of Japanese gardens. A typical example is a crane and tortoise stone arrangement (see Figure 27: Tortoise stones on the left and Crane stones on the right, Konchi-In, Kyoto). The Horai Shinsen ideology is the belief in immortality, and in this ideology, Mount Hōrai, where immortals live, is believed to be an ideal world. The crane and the tortoise, which are regarded as messengers of immortals, are symbols of longevity. The crane and the tortoise are a pair, so if you find a tortoise-like island in the garden, there must surely be a crane island. Each is represented by a masonry technique, with the tortoise in particular often realistically reproduced with its head, hands, tail and shell. Crane masonry, on the other hand, often consists of stones representing the crane's head and wings.



Figure 27: Tortoise stones on the left and Crane stones on the right, Konchi-In, Kyoto

3.2.4. Karesansui

Karesansui was built in large numbers, mainly in Zen temples from the Kamakura to Muromachi periods, and quickly became mainstream as a garden expression that does not use water at all, replacing gardens that had used water up to that time. In the narrow space of a garden, white sand alone is used to express a great sea, a great river or even a sea of clouds. It can be said to be the ultimate style of abstract expression of such natural scenery (see Figure 28: Datioku-Ji, Kyoto and Figure 29: Tenju-an Nanzen-Ji, Kyoto).



Figure 28: Daitoku-ji, Kyoto



Figure 29: Tenju-an Nanzan-ji, Kyoto

3.3. PLANTS

The plants and trees in a garden are collectively called Shokusai. Unlike painting or sculpture, gardens are influenced by nature. Planting has been designed to accept such changes caused by nature and to make use of them in a positive way. It is an essential element that can completely change the appearance of a garden depending on the seasons.

In Japanese gardens, planting is actively cared for. Plantings that have grown in a natural state are called ‘natural tree forms’, while those that have been modified are called Katamono or Danmono. A well-known example of Danmono is the trimming of Satsuki trees (see Figure 30: Trimmed Satsuki trees in Shōden-Ji, Kyoto). The curves drawn by the ball-like rounded and manicured azalea trees provide an exquisite contrast to the white sand patterns and rugged natural stones.

There were many possibilities in terms of how to translate the plant, especially in terms of visualisation, which I worried a lot about. Consequently, I decided to focus on the part of the practices where people maintain their forms and translate them into the form of practices that deal with sound. Yet, I hope that the reader can have a look through the different pictures in this paper to see what kind of plants there are and how they’re adorning the scenery.



Figure 30: Trimmed Satsuki trees in Shōden-Ji, Kyoto

3.3.1. Pine Trees

The pine tree, a representative evergreen tree still found in many gardens today, has been confirmed to have been planted in gardens during the Nara period (710-794) and has long been believed to be a symbol of longevity in Japan. Evergreen trees, which have blue leaves even in winter, were thought to be sacred relatives to which deities descended (see Figure 31: Pine trees in Rokuon-Ji, Kyoto, Figure 32: A Pine tree on the right side in Shōren-in Monzeki, Kyoto, and Figure 33: Pine trees covered by frames in Koishikawa Kōrakuen, Tokyo).



Figure 31: Pine trees in Rokuon-Ji, Kyoto



Figure 32: A Pine tree on the right side in Shōren-in Monzeki, Kyoto



Figure 33: Pine trees covered by frames in Koishikawa Kōrakuen, Tokyo

3.3.2. Cherry Blossom

Cherry trees (see Figure 34: Cherry blossoms in Roihuvuori Cherry Tree Park, Helsinki) have also been an integral part of Japanese life since ancient times. In ancient times, the blossoming of cherry trees was regarded as an indicator of the start of agriculture, and in the Heian period, they were an essential planting in the gardens of the villas of the nobility. In many gardens in Kyoto, a variety of cherry trees can be seen, including Someiyoshino, wild cherry trees and weeping cherry trees.



Figure 34: Cherry blossoms in Roihuvuori Cherry Tree Park, Helsinki

3.4. DECORATIONS

Keimono means things that add flavour and can be thought of as things that add colour to the landscape of a Japanese garden, such as stone lanterns, water bowls, works of art, steppingstones, paving stones and hedges, and so on. However, it does not mean that they are just decorations. Each object has its own role and contributes to both the landscape and its use.

As far as decoration is concerned, there is a wide variety, and I could add as much as I wanted to. However, when focusing on the theme of soundscape, I felt that the most significant element was the hedges, which create a boundary between the hustle and bustle of the city and the gardens. My work will be installed indoors. In such cases, the walls of the room will create a boundary with the surroundings, just like a hedge. Therefore, I thought of a way to reproduce the sound coming from outside the boundary in a real garden by using field recordings.

3.4.1. Stone Lanterns

Stone lanterns (see Figure 35: A stone lantern in Hōkoku-Ji, Kamakura) were originally used to light the grounds of shrines and temples, but during the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568-1600), when the culture of tea spread among the samurai and tea houses increased, stone lanterns were brought into the open spaces connected to them. They were used to illuminate the hand at night during tea ceremonies and were also used at the junctions of walkways in circular gardens as well as in open-air areas. Their shapes and heights vary and show individuality.



Figure 35: A stone lantern in Hōkoku-Ji, Kamakura

3.4.2. Hand-Watering Bowls

Since ancient times, it has been customary to cleanse the body and mind before visiting shrines and temples by washing the hands and rinsing the mouth using a Chōzu. The Chōzu-pod was placed for this ritual. Like stone lanterns, these Chōzu-pots were also placed in open spaces when tea houses increased in number. Once a Chōzu-pot had been placed, Yakuishi (Role stones) were placed around it, each with its own role to fulfil. These included the Mae-ishi (Stones in front of the hand basin), which was used to hold the water, the Yuokeishi (Stones for preparing warm water) and the Mizu-ukeishi (Stones to catch water spilling from the bowl). These components are collectively called Tsukubai (see Figure 36: Tsukubai in Daitoku-Ji, Kyoto). There are many more forms of hand basins than stone lanterns, including those that have been reused from other stone structures.



Figure 36: Tsukubai in Daitoku-Ji, Kyoto

3.4.3. Hedges

A hedge is a dividing wall used to demarcate the land. Among these, special hedges that separate the sacred area from the secular world are called Mizugaki. Typical examples are bamboo fences (see Figure 37: Bamboo fences in Hōkoku-Ji, Kamakura) and hedges with trimmed plantings (see Figure 38: Hedges with trimmed plants in Daitoku-Ji, Kyoto). The design also varied according to the purpose, with some built to completely block out the area by lining up bamboo and plants without gaps, while others had gaps so that the background could be seen through them.

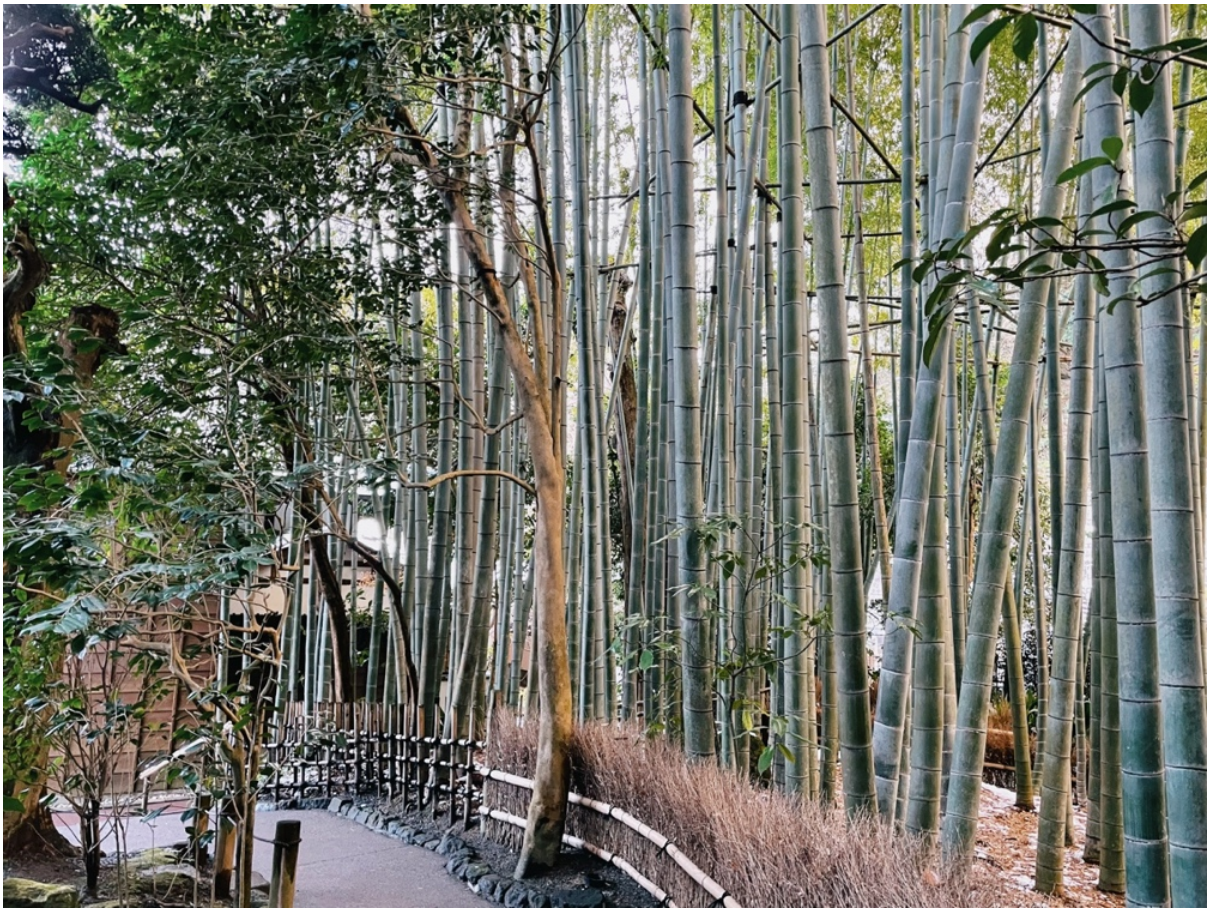


Figure 37: Bamboo fences in Hōkoku-Ji, Kamakura



Figure 38: Hedges with trimmed plants in Daijoku-ji, Kyoto

3.4.4. Shishiodoshi

Although not strictly included in the Keimono category due to the emphasis placed on practicality, Shishiodoshi is probably one of the things that many people think of as uniquely Japanese. When a bamboo tube is full of water, the head is lowered by the weight of the water, and when the water spills out and returns to its original position, it strikes a stone or other object, emitting a characteristic sound. The sound is said to have been used to intimidate birds and animals, but later the unique sound came to be enjoyed as a form of entertainment.

3.4.5. Bridges

Many Japanese gardens have bridges that are only decorative or bridges that people can cross (see Figure 39: Stone bridge (walkable) in Shōren-In Monzeki, Kyoto). There are also earthen bridges and wooden bridges (see Figure 40: Tsūtenkyō in Koishikawa Kōrakuen, Tokyo), but the most common type is the stone bridge. Basically, stone bridges are constructed with stones on both sides so that the bridge is sandwiched between the two stones. If there are at least two bridging stones in front of and behind the bridge, it is more stable

when crossed, and the scenery of the stone bridge is more colourful and different. In the Pure Land Garden, a bridge with a large, curved arch is built at the boundary between this world and the next. Similar to the waterfall, there are bridges that were used to set over the water path, although the water has dried up, and the bridge has become only a decorative object (see Figure 41: The stone bridge on dried-up ground. Shōren-In Monzeki, Kyoto).



Figure 39: Stone bridge (walkable) in Shōren-In Monzeki, Kyoto



Figure 40: Tsutenkyō in Koishikawa Korakuen, Tokyo



Figure 41: The stone bridge on dried-up ground. Shōren-In Monzeki, Kyoto

3.4.6. Stepping Stones and Paving Stones

As the name suggests, paving stones are laid on the ground in the open space leading to the tearoom. Walking on the moss-covered ground as it is, damages the moss and gets their feet wet too. Paving stones are a general term for natural stones or hewn stones that have been laid flat to stabilise walking. Furthermore, stepping stones, dotted with small stones, had the role of not only adding colour to the landscape but also implicitly indicating to the guests the order in which they were to be led to the tearoom. The designs varied from novel designs with stones of different colours and shapes to those arranged in a tight geometric pattern. Steppingstones arranged for the purpose of crossing a river or pond spring flowing through the garden are called Sawatari (see Figure 42: Sawatari in Tenju-an Nanzen-Ji, Kyoto).



Figure 42: Sawatari in Tenju-an Nanzen-Ji, Kyoto

4. *M e t h o d s*

Not long after I started this project, it became apparent that carrying out this project required visiting authentic Japanese gardens and immersing in the atmosphere myself. Fortunately, the Sibelius Academy Foundation awarded me a scholarship, enabling me to visit Japan at the end of 2021. However, I had to travel during the brief winter holiday, and there was a demand for two-week quarantine when entering Japan due to COVID-19. Therefore, I was aware that having thorough planning was crucial.

Which kind of gardens do I want to visit, what should I investigate at the location, and whether I should focus on field recording, video shooting, or only meditating? The selection of gardens was based on different historical backgrounds and garden types, taking into account practical issues such as proximity. The biggest benefit of this trip is that I get to experience the soundscape and scenery for myself, so I decided to spend a sufficient amount of time in each location. I then decided to take photographs, video and field recordings for documentation purposes, but the important thing for me was to use a system that was as convenient as possible to avoid distractions. Thus, I used point-and-shoot film cameras for photos, a Sony mirrorless DSLR for video, and a Shure MV88 condenser microphone connected to my iPhone for audio recording. As a result, I visited fifteen gardens and collected approximately 50 minutes of field recording, three and a half hours of video, and 400 photos.

In addition, I had contemplative experiences that I cannot describe in words. With the help of pictures and figures, this chapter will give readers a visual representation of the gardens I visited, as well as some hints for planning their trip for those interested in visiting Japanese gardens.

4.1. RESEARCH TRIP

There are numerous kinds of Japanese gardens with diverse personalities, as mentioned in Chapter 2. Background. They appear in a range of sizes, from little ones that are a few metres square to ones that are a few hectares broad. Although the precise total number of Japanese gardens in Japan is unknown, the Japanese Garden Map, a media source for garden information, currently lists around 1,700 gardens. Although I'm pleased to say that the fifteen gardens I visited this time were a decent selection.

My immediate thought was to visit the Meishō gardens. The term Meishō in Japanese refers to cultural properties covered by the Act on Protection of Cultural Properties in Japan. Of 408 properties, 36 are

classified as Tokubetsu Meishō (Superior Meishō), and 23 are Japanese gardens. I will state which gardens are one of these Meishō gardens in the introduction section to each garden.

I then decided to select which regions of Japan I would like to visit. This was a relatively easy choice to make. As you might have guessed by reading Chapter 2.1. History of Japanese Gardens, Kyoto is home to various historic temples and shrines. It was obvious that visiting Kyoto's gardens would play a significant role in this trip. I next considered the Kamakura region when considering places to visit outside of Kyoto. The name Kamakura also refers to Kamakura Period (1185-1333) when the imperial family made Kamakura its home base.

I chose a few locations in the Kamakura area since it is close to my home in Yokohama and has many historical shrines and temples, even though they are less numerous than those in Kyoto. I also visited a garden in the Tokyo Metropolitan area called Koishikawa Kōrakuen. When I investigated it, I found it to be rather intriguing and thought the garden located in the middle of skyscrapers would be a nice contrast to traditional gardens from Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples. I'll concentrate on detailing my journey to Kyoto in this chapter, as Kamakura and Tokyo are both easily accessible from my parent's home, where I stayed during this time.

4.1.1. Kyoto

As for the types of gardens to visit, I wanted to broadly divide them into the following types and visit them in a well-balanced manner.

- Garden featuring a pond
- Karesansui garden
- Garden featuring moss
- Garden that can be observed from the indoors
- Garden where the borrowed scenery is the key point
- Modern design garden

In addition to this, I would have loved to have visited Ryōan-Ji, featured in 2.2.1. John Cage - Ryoanji (1983), though unfortunately, it was undergoing repairs as of January 2022. I also wanted to visit the gardens featured in Saariaho's work, but unintentionally two of the gardens, Tenju-an Nanzen-Ji, and Kinkaku-Ji (Rokuon-Ji) I selected, were featured in her album, after all.

I had to consider how many places I could realistically visit, so I decided to make a detailed plan using maps and scheduling applications. Considering the resources, I could only stay in Kyoto for three days, and the opening hours of shrines and temples are, on average, from 9 am to 4 pm, which is not long at all. Considering the time spent researching in each garden and the time spent travelling between gardens, I found that an average of three places per day was realistic. Below is the list of gardens I have visited each day, as well as a map that shows the location of each garden (see Figure 43: Locations of each garden I visited).

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenryū-Ji 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nanzen-Ji, Tenju-an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shōden-Ji
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giō-Ji 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nanzen-Ji, Konchi-In 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rokuon-Ji
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renge-Ji 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shōren-In, Monzeki 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daitoku-Ji
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kennin-Ji 	

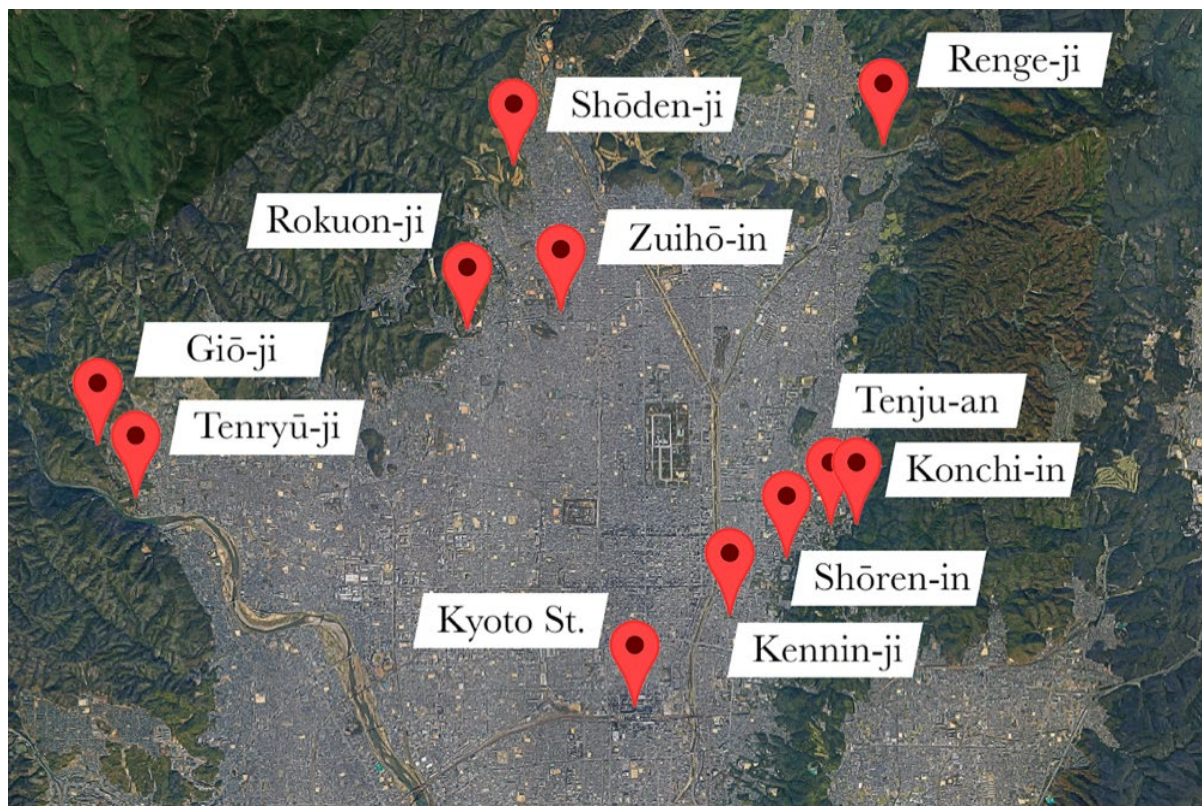


Figure 43: Locations of each garden I visited

Note that the final itinerary had to be revised at the last minute. The first day of the three-day stay was forecast to be rainy, so I wanted to make sure I visited Tenryū-Ji Temple, which has a vast pond. I also wanted to visit Shōden-Ji Temple on the third day, which was forecast to be sunny, as its borrowed scenery was a significant feature. As I had divided all the gardens into three groups beforehand so that I could visit them efficiently in terms of location, as well as able to swap each group depending on the weather. In the following, I would like to pick out a few gardens and give more detail on my findings.

Tenryū-Ji

A representative temple of Kyoto, Tenryū-Ji Temple was established in 1339, during the Muromachi Period, the golden age of Zen Buddhism. Sōgenchi Garden, designed by Musō Soseki, has been designated as a World Heritage, Special Scenic Spot, and Special Historic Site.

The five-minute walk to the garden from the Tenryū-Ji main entrance gradually distances me from the bustle of the city. When I enter the garden, the enormous pond draws the eye at first. Still, closer examination reveals an elaborate design that includes islets and boulders (see Figure 44: Islets and boulder), a dry waterfall and a stone bridge (see Figure 45: Dried waterfall on the right corner), a variety of different plants (see Figure 46: Variety of plants treated differently), as well as an outstanding borrowed scenery (see Figure 47: Borrowed Scenery).

When I focused on the sound, the dominant sound was the rainfall falling on the pond. However, if I sat on a bench and took more time to listen, I started to hear trees swaying and the birds chirping in the distance. And when people walk around, I hear gravel being stepped on, which creates an accent with its sharp sound. As the garden can only be viewed from the position shown in the photograph and from the side on the right, I thought that this depth-sensitive sound experience would be a unique feature of Sōgenchi Garden. The audio recording can be heard from the media player below.



A1. Recording at Tenryū-Ji, Kyoto

The audio recording is also accessible from the link below.
[Japanese Sonic Garden – Audio Files](#)



Figure 44: Islets and boulder



Figure 45: Dried waterfall on the right corner



Figure 46: Variety of plants treated differently



Figure 47: Borrowed Scenery

Kennin-Ji

Kennin-Ji Temple was founded in 1202, during the Kamakura period, and is considered the oldest Zen temple in Kyoto. However, two of the several gardens were created in the 2000s. Since the project is about translating historical and cultural objects with a modern approach, I was very interested to see these modern gardens. Given its proximity to the city centre, Kennin-Ji was one of the most crowded places I visited on this trip. Trees around the outside of the temple property establish a border with the nearby residential neighbourhood. The hustle and bustle of the city gradually subsided as I walked into the premises, and I imagined that the wooden walls function as sound absorbers.

Kennin-Ji features three primary gardens. The Daiō-en Garden was built in 1940, the Chō-ontei Garden in 2005, and the ○△□ Garden in 2006. All of them are relatively new. However, here I focus on Chō-ontei Garden.

Chō-ontei Garden can be viewed from all angles while encircled by corridors (see Figure 48: Overview of Chō-ontei). As people walk along the corridors, the wooden floor makes a noticeable creaking sound. The garden creates practically no sound since it is located within the building compound and is hardly affected by the wind. Nevertheless, it is called the Garden of Tidal Sounds. The ‘Tidal’ part comes from the stones arranged in a swirling pattern (see Figure 49: Stone arrangements represent Sanzonbutsu). Regarding the ‘Sound’ part, I surmised that the intention is for the audience to connect it to the whirlpool sound by themselves. The audio recording can be heard from the media player below.



A2. Recording at Kennin-Ji, Kyoto

The audio recording is also accessible from the link below.
[Japanese Sonic Garden – Audio Files](#)



Figure 48: Overview of Chō-ontei



Figure 49: Stone arrangements represent Sanzonbutsu

Shōden-Ji

Shōden-Ji Garden is a Zen temple that was constructed in 1282 during Kamakura Period. It has one of the most sophisticated of the 'Karesansui' style gardens that have appeared since the Kamakura period, and the borrowed scenery is a major feature of the garden, making it one of the gardens I would particularly like to visit.

Reaching this garden requires about 10 minutes of walking through the forest, even from the nearest bus stop (see Figure 50: Path to the garden from the nearest bus stop and Figure 51: Stairway to the temple). The garden can only be seen from one side and from a limited section. The garden itself consists of only trimmed plants placed in the Karesansui garden (see Figure 52: Trimmed plants on Karesansui), and it was one of the most minimalist designs of the gardens I visited this time. The plants are arranged in groups of seven, five, and three, which was the same layout as the stonework in Ryōan-Ji, and are a mixture of Gardenia, Japanese laurel, Sasanqua, Satsuki azalea, Nandina, Ardisia japonica, and Camellia sinensis. This garden features the borrowed scenery technique. Thus Mount Hiei, which is located about 8 km to the east, can be observed from the garden (see Figure 53: Mount Hiei).

I then shift my focus to the sound. The garden is distinctly shut off from the hustle and bustle of the city because of the location. The first thing I hear is the sound of water, presumably from the previous day's snow, falling from the main hall's roof and hitting the saucers on the floor. I begin to listen to a larger space as I become more accustomed to the sound of water. The aircraft's sound stands out since the garden doesn't make much noise on its own and because there aren't many other sounds coming from the front. Birds chirping can be heard in stereo, coming from the trees on each side. The audio recording can be heard from the media player below.



A3. Recording at Shōden-Ji, Kyoto

The audio recording is also accessible from the link below.
[Japanese Sonic Garden – Audio Files](#)



Figure 50: Path to the garden from the nearest bus stop



Figure 51: Stairway to the temple



Figure 52: Trimmed plants on Karesansui



Figure 53: Mount Hiei

4.1.2. Tokyo

Koishikawa Kōrakuen

Koishikawa Kōrakuen Garden (see Figure 54: Entrance of Koishikawa Kōrakuen) was created in the Edo period (1603-1868), one of the Daimyo Teien style gardens which I mentioned in Chapter 2. Background. It is impressive for its extensive grounds and luxurious composition, in contrast to the more compact Zen gardens. I was tempted to visit this garden with interest because of its location within a metropolitan area.

However, when walking around, one can enjoy the undulating, meticulously designed and varied landscape in each of the subdivided sections. The great pond represents the sea and the island of Hōrai floating. There is also the embankment of Chinese West Lake (see Figure 55: Pond with a stone bridge imitating Chinese West Lake), Tsūtenkyō bridge and Sawatari, which makes people slow down to walk (see Figure 56: Tsūtenkyō bridge and Sawatari). Shiraito waterfall has a significant presence because of its consistent sounds (see Figure 57: Shiraito waterfall). A scenic stretch of rice field that looks like a village; Even today, local schoolchildren help to grow the rice. The inner garden at the end of Nobedan and the Nezame waterfall encountered along the way.

There were also various findings regarding the sound experience. Firstly, being in a metropolitan area, urban noise is unavoidable, but even here, the wooden walls proved to have a certain degree of muffling effect. As I climbed up the slope towards Tokujin Hall in the west, I felt as if I were in the mountains. Conversely, when I reach the inner garden near the eastern doorway, I can hear rides and people from the adjacent amusement park, which I find to be one of the unique features of this garden in this regard.

I was particularly impressed by the Nezame waterfall, which was difficult to find by following the sound source, and when I did find it, I finally found it in a very secluded place (see Figure 58: Nezame waterfall). It was an experience that made me feel as if I was in a forest, and I was reminded of the presence of the sound of the waterfall. Michael D. Fowler says, “Koishikawa Kōrakuen operates through its water features to create areas of auditory interest that are spread throughout the garden’s large surface area.”³¹ Since I read this book beforehand the trip, I was able to pay attention to such auditory experience so that I could translate this experience in my own way, as well as understand the meaning behind such winding path (see Figure 59: Winding path).

³¹ Michael D. Fowler, *Sound Worlds of Japanese Gardens: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Spatial Thinking* (Transcript Publishing, 2014), 60.

Generally speaking, I was impressed by the fact that so many structures such as baseball domes, amusement parks and highways have increased in the neighbourhood because of modernisation, but such a vast garden has been well preserved. I felt people's appreciation for the Japanese garden, with people in suits taking a break, young people strolling with their friends, elderly people fishing and various other activities by people of different ages.

As mentioned in Chapter 2. Background, this is an Edo period garden that retains elements of previous gardens but expands their scale. I understood that although the scale is large, the detailed design is not different from what I have researched so far. Several audio recordings can be heard from the media players below.



A4. Sound of the Amusement
Park



A5. Sound of the Great Pond



A6. Sound of Nezame Waterfall

The audio recordings are also accessible from the link below.
[Japanese Sonic Garden – Audio Files](#)



Figure 54: Entrance of Koishikawa Kōraku-en



Figure 55: Pond with a stone bridge imitating Chinese West Lake



Figure 56: Tsutenkyo bridge and Sawatari



Figure 57: Shiraito waterfall



Figure 58: Nezame waterfall



Figure 59: Winding path

4.2. REVIEWING THE RESEARCH TRIP

I was able to visit a wide variety of gardens efficiently in the limited time available. In each garden, I was also able to spend enough time recording and shooting videos. The following step is to take these materials and experiences back to Finland and brainstorm how to turn them into a sound installation.

I reviewed and organised the notes I had taken during visiting gardens in Japan once I had arrived back in Finland. Most shrines and temples are situated in remote locations, allowing you to be distanced from the bustle of the city in each garden. However, it is impossible to avoid the sound of aircraft. Different animals add to the auditory experience; The sounds of birds chirping, herons fluttering their wings, and carp poking their heads above the water. Generally, the gardens are only viewable from the side and cannot be entered. Designated routes, winding paths, and stepping stones regulate the walk's pace and attitude. Additionally, I would sense the vast depth and space created by the numerous layers of materials if I listened to the sounds from a spot that has been naturally designated by benches and other arrangements. Along with these realisations, I made the decision to make a table which would make it easier to compare all the characteristics found in each garden.

The table includes the main feature, dominant sound, and additional notes, which I found very useful to review alongside the photographs and recordings to consider which elements I wanted to incorporate into my piece (see Figure 60: Table for revising the research trip).

Garden	Weather	Main feature	Observation	Shakkei	Dominant sound	Year / Gardener	Additional features
Tenryū-ji	Rain	Pond / Shakkei	One side	✓	Rain falling on the pond	1339 Musō Soseki - 夢窓疎石	
Giō-ji	Rain	Moss	Walk-around		Rain falling on the trees/grounds	Unknown Unknown	Suikinkutsu
Renge-ji	Rain	Pond	One-side / indoor		Rain falling on the pond	1668 Unknown	
Nanzen-ji Tenju-an	Cloudy	Kare-sansui / Pond	One-side / walk-around			The end of Kamakura period (Approx. 14th century) Unknown	
Nanzen-ji Konchi-in	Cloudy	Kare-sansui	One-side			Early Edo period (Approx. 17th century) Kobori Enshū - 小堀遠州	
Shōren-in Monzeki	Cloudy -> Sunny / Snow	Pond	Walk-around / indoor			End of Muromachi period (Approx. 16th century) Sōami - 相阿弥	
Kenrin-ji	Sunny	Kare-sansui	Daiōen: One-side Chōontei: Walk-around / indoor			Daiōen: 1940 Katō Kumakichi - 加藤熊吉 Chōontei: 2005 Kitayama Yasuo - 北山安夫	
Shōden-ji	Sunny	Kare-sansui / Shakkei	One-side	✓	Water dropping from the roof to pot	Early Edo period (Approx. 17th century) Kobori Enshū - 小堀遠州	
Rokuon-ji	Sunny / Windy	Pond	Semi walk-around			1397 Musō Soseki - 夢窓疎石	Rigyoseki
Zaihō-in Daitoku-ji	Sunny	Kare-sansui	One-side			1961 Shigemori Mirei - 重森三玲	
Enkaku-ji	Sunny	Pond	One side			Early Kamakura period (Approx. 13th century) Musō Soseki - 夢窓疎石	
Kenchō-ji	Sunny	Pond	Walk-around			1253 Lanxi Daolong - 蘭溪道隆	
Zuisen-ji	Sunny	Rock	One-side / indoor			1327 Musō Soseki - 夢窓疎石	
Hōkoku-ji	Sunny	Bamboo forest	Walk-around			1334 Unknown	
Koishikawa Kōrakuen	Sunny	Pond	Walk-around			1636 Tokudaijii Sahyoe - 徳大寺佐兵衛	Metropolis

Figure 60: Table for revising the research trip

While undertaking these organisational tasks, I realised that pursuing a gardening-style approach to the piece's development was far beyond my skill set and instead chose to concentrate solely on the concept of sound. I considered that the effects that can be produced with the help of the visuals could be metaphorically replicated in sound.

People who are unfamiliar with Japanese gardens might find it difficult to picture what they are seeing, if I merely put speakers together and claimed, for example, that the work tries to imitate the garden. Finding a means to include concepts about the aesthetic benefits of Japanese gardens in an abstract form has become the primary challenge.

These were finally resolved in how I translated both sound and visual by using different methods, Direct translation vs Metaphorical translation, which I will discuss more in detail in Chapter 5.1. Direct vs Metaphorical Translation.

4.3. VIHERPAJA

In Finland, the gardening store Viherpaja in the city of Vantaa has a section that recreates a Japanese garden and is open free of charge, which I visited for research (see Figure 61: Entrance of the Japanese garden in Viherpaja and Figure 62: An overview). Viherpaja is located about 20 km north of the centre of Helsinki and takes about 30 minutes by car. As there are few buildings around, I had the same feeling as when I spent some time in Japan heading to the temples, but I assume their Japanese garden is only part of the facility and has nothing to do with the fact that the shop is far from the city centre.

As well as a variety of plants, there is a large pond in the centre, with a waterfall stream a little further in (see Figure 63: Waterfall). There are rocks placed in various places and sand laid out to imitate a dry landscape (see Figure 64: Karesansui and rocks along the winding path and Figure 65: Karesansui). Furthermore, there are stone lanterns (see Figure 66: Stone lantern and a brook) and a wooden bridge (see Figure 67: Wooden bridge), which are also important components of a Japanese garden. Furthermore, there are even carp in the pond (see Figure 68: Carps), which shows that the garden is well cared for by the staff. The paths are winding, which naturally slows down the pace of the walk, making it easier to focus on the smallest of objects.

As it is indoors, no views of the outside are available, and I felt a bit enclosed. Also, with regard to sound, there is little sound from outside. Thus, the continuous sound of the waterfall dominates the sound experience. When I went behind the waterfall, the sound source became more distant, making the space feel larger. The facility had a stereo speaker near the entrance playing background music in the style of a shamisen melody over a synth pad backing track, which I found a little too assertive. A possible reason for this is that the sound volume was generally high. Furthermore, based on the experience of the research trip, I was aware that by listening to the sound of the waterfall from various positions, the space could be perceived as larger. However, having the loud sound playing near the entrance made my auditory sense move towards the loudspeakers, making the space feel smaller.

The most important discovery for me was that the main components of a Japanese garden and how they are handled could be used to recreate a Japanese garden aesthetic, which shows that the research I've been doing regarding the essentials of Japanese gardens is well-targeted. Especially after having seen a number of authentic gardens in Japan, I was impressed by what Viherpaja had achieved. I also felt a strong affinity with the fact that I would also be exhibiting my own work indoors. And although the music used there was a bit distracting, I felt it could work in the right direction if I had a well-structured way of arranging the sound sources.



Figure 61: Entrance of the Japanese garden in Viberpaja



Figure 62: An overview



Figure 63: Waterfall



Figure 64: Karesansui and rocks along the winding path



Figure 65: Karesansui



Figure 66: Stone lantern and a brook



Figure 67: Wooden bridge



Figure 68: Carps

5. *Translating the Experiences*

Based on my experience of visiting the actual gardens, I have started to consider the events that impressed me and the elements that I felt I wanted to incorporate into my work. Cérwen says, “If a large rock is placed in the foreground and a smaller one in the middle or background, the distance to the smaller one seems stretched. For sound, similar effects can be generated if the source is muffled to alter the frequency content and/or if the sound is less loud than expected.”³² This idea of translating the actual figure into a musical context intrigued me and made me start to think about what method I could use to translate all the experiences.

5.1. DIRECT VS METAPHORICAL TRANSLATION

Firstly, regarding the effect of being cut off from the hustle and bustle of the city by the boundary created by the trees, I thought that when exhibited indoors, the walls of the room would play the role of "sound insulation". In the actual garden, the trees themselves are the sound source. I, therefore, decided to recreate the experience of the actual garden by placing speakers around the perimeter of the room and playing field recordings. I categorised this method of recreating the actual function as it is as Direct translation. The sound of rain falling on ponds can be included in the field recording. Thus, I also list ‘pond’ in the direct translation category.

Rocks, on the other hand, do not produce sound themselves. However, I have already found through my research that they visually create the individuality of the Japanese garden by their shape and placement. Therefore, I decided to describe the appearance of rocks metaphorically in terms of their role and so on. Firstly, rocks are used in their original form without any processing. These are placed on a large rock and then lined with smaller stones to create depth in the space as accompaniment. I thought that these could be expressed by using the unprocessed sound as it is and accompanying it with an accompanying sound that has similar qualities. I termed such a Metaphorical method of translation.

The same applies to plants, such as shrubs located in gardens, which hardly make any sound themselves. However, their presence is very important. Plants differ from rocks in that human care is important. Shrubs

³² Cérwén, “Listening to Japanese Gardens II: Expanding the Soundscape Action Design Tool,” 619.

that spread horizontally should be pruned so that they are rounded and have an ideal shape. I thought I could translate this metaphorically by taking the sound as it is, sharpening it, rounding it, and experimenting with different ways of handling and applying effects to the sound.

Direct Translation	Metaphorical Translation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perimeter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rocks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hedges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waterfall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pond
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pond	

5.2. VISUALISATION

Firstly, I thought that the best way to give a visual idea of a Japanese garden to my work was to use images. It is not easy to prepare actual plants and ponds, and I thought it would be a good challenge to complete the work with limited resources. Another major factor was the ability to use footage taken for documentation purposes on the research trip. This was considered an application of the idea of borrowed landscapes, as it incorporates borrowed views of the actual landscapes that have been filmed. As this work was not inspired by a specific garden, I decided to use footage taken in several gardens in an unspecified way.

Regarding the frame of the garden, just as the gardens introduced so far were created on a given piece of land, I considered the room where the work was created as the land and the perimeter of the room as the shape of the frame. I thought that reproducing field recordings along the perimeter of the room, it could serve as both scenery and use.

As for the rock, I immediately thought of a speaker that could reproduce its rugged but firm presence. One large main loudspeaker, with smaller loudspeakers to accompany it. There are many possibilities for the placement of the speakers, but I decided not to give my work any religious connotations, so I decided on a trial basis to see how the overall balance would be achieved.

For the waterfall, I decided that the best way to express its symbolic flow and appearance was to use curtains. Again, I thought of using the help of images, so I prepared a transparent fabric for the projection. This allows the curtains themselves to mimic the appearance of the waterfall, but also to project the images, so they can be said to have a scenic and use role.

I then turned my attention to Karesansui. Karesansui is very important not only for its appearance but also for the routine of drawing the pattern. Therefore, I thought that organising the cables well could fulfil the role of scenery and use. I decided to try a hands-on, intuitive approach to this, similar to the speaker placement.

As I explained in Chapter 3. Materials, the categories of objects are as much about their functionality as their appearance. I decided to make equipment that would normally be hidden, such as media players, part of the work as objects, so that they could have a role as decorations and their original function.

5.3. SOUND MATERIALS

Since the premise of this work is to use music that is uniquely my own, the sound material, instrumentation and overall character of the music were freely based on my own experiences of visiting Japanese gardens. The reason is that it is not so much what sounds are used but how they are handled that is particularly important. Firstly, I chose a modular synthesizer (see Figure 69: Modular Synthesizer and Figure 70: A closer look at the Modular Synthesizer) as the main instrument, a singing bowl that seemed to have a high affinity with the work, and a handmade bird call which I bought at the Koizumi instrument store in Kyoto (see Figure 71: Singing bowl and a bird call).

“A modular synth is an electronic musical instrument comprised of several individual modules. The player connects patch cables between these individual modules, creating a signal path that allows the instrument to make a sound. Because of the ease with which patch cables can be re-arranged, a modular synth can produce a wide range of sounds and can be played in a vast number of ways—and in fact, even a single modular synthesizer can sound and behave entirely differently depending on how it is patched.”³³

³³ Ryan Gaston, “What Is a Modular Synthesizer?” Perfect Circuit, October 29, 2021, accessed March 25, 2023, <https://www.perfectcircuit.com/signal/what-is-a-modular-synthesizer>.

Unlike synthesizers with integrated keyboards, modular synthesizers keep sounds flowing unless you specify a sound gate, making it easy to create pad-like sounds and drones. I use modular synths as my main device for making music, as I benefit greatly from this feature.

Singing bowls are objects that can be tapped or rubbed on their edges with a stick to produce a unique sound. In particular, when the stick is turned to trace the rim of the bowl, the sound echoed inside the bowl collides with the sound and amplifies it, producing overtones, which are believed to have a healing effect and are used for meditation and other times when you want to deepen your concentration. Bird Calls are simply made by drilling a hole in a piece of wood and screwing a bolt into it and is so called as it makes a 'squeaking' sound like a bird's call when the piece of wood and the bolt are rubbed together.

Each instrument was sampled and prepared in advance so that the volume and panning could be adjusted once the studio was set up. The actual overall sound will be presented in Chapter 6. Final Work.



Figure 69: Modular Synthesizer



Figure 70: A closer look at the Modular Synthesizer



Figure 71: Singing bowl and a bird call

6. *Final Work*

“Japanese Sonic Garden” at Big Recording Room, Musiikkitalo, Helsinki. 23.9.2022



The video is accessible from the link below.
[Japanese Sonic Garden – Final Work](#)

The final work was created over two days in the Big Recording Room, a facility of the Sibelius Academy. In addition to the ideas mentioned in Chapter 4. Methods, many other ideas have emerged while working hands-on in the studio, and I will explain how I produced the Final work. This time, being a master's project, I did not spend a lot of budgets to form the work but worked with the idea of making the most of what I already had access to. I used the speakers and other equipment in the studio as it was, and for additional speakers, I used equipment owned by the faculty.

First, I prepared a 6.1-channel set-up and arranged them to look like stones. The 6.1-channel set-up was inspired by the stone arrangements at Ryōan-ji Temple and Shōden-ji Temple, where the stones are arranged in the odd-numbered 3, 5 and 7. Also, I used the figure of 6.1-channel in my previous work so that I had familiarity with it.

The sound of a singing bowl being struck is played from a big speaker, with a filtered delay sound coming from smaller speakers to accompany it. Eventually, the reverberations remain as a drone, gradually filling the space. The audio recordings can be heard from the media player below.



A7. Sound of a Singing Bowl



A8. Delayed Sound



A9. Drone Sound

The audio recordings are also accessible from the link below.
[Japanese Sonic Garden – Audio Files](#)

In addition to this, field recordings are played from four loudspeakers placed along the walls. This brought life to the piece whilst the drone synths imitated urban noises. For the field recordings, I used material recorded at Tenryū-Ji Temple and Koishikawa Kōrakuen Garden. The purpose of this was to avoid giving specific characters to the piece by using different sound sources recorded in different environments. Each speaker has an XLR audio cable and a power cable connected to it, and they are organised tightly to imitate Karesansui patterns. The idea was to create a contrast between straight lines and curves in a minimalist way, but the curves are also a daring use of some cables that were inevitably peculiar and could not be straightened. As for the object placed in the centre, it has no major significance, but the idea of placing a plant that symbolises the work while concealing the power source of the power cable came to mind, and here a coat-rack from the room, LATVA by Mikko Laakkonen, is placed as a proxy.

As for the images intended to complement the aesthetic of the Japanese garden, I decided to use two projectors, one to show the landscape and one to show an exploration of the garden. Both were shot by me during the research trip. I have done this since I intend to let people who are not familiar with Japanese gardens to be able to realise the ideas behind the various objects. At the same time, the direct translation of the waterfall is recognised by playing the sound of the waterfall from behind the curtains.

The ideal position of the observations in the work is the one recorded in the video above, and I did not envision turning to the other side of the room. This is because the number of objects in the room was too large to handle, so I decided that the work could only be observed from one side, as in many of the gardens I visited during the research trip.

Figures 72 to 78 below are the pictures of the work.



Figure 72: An overview

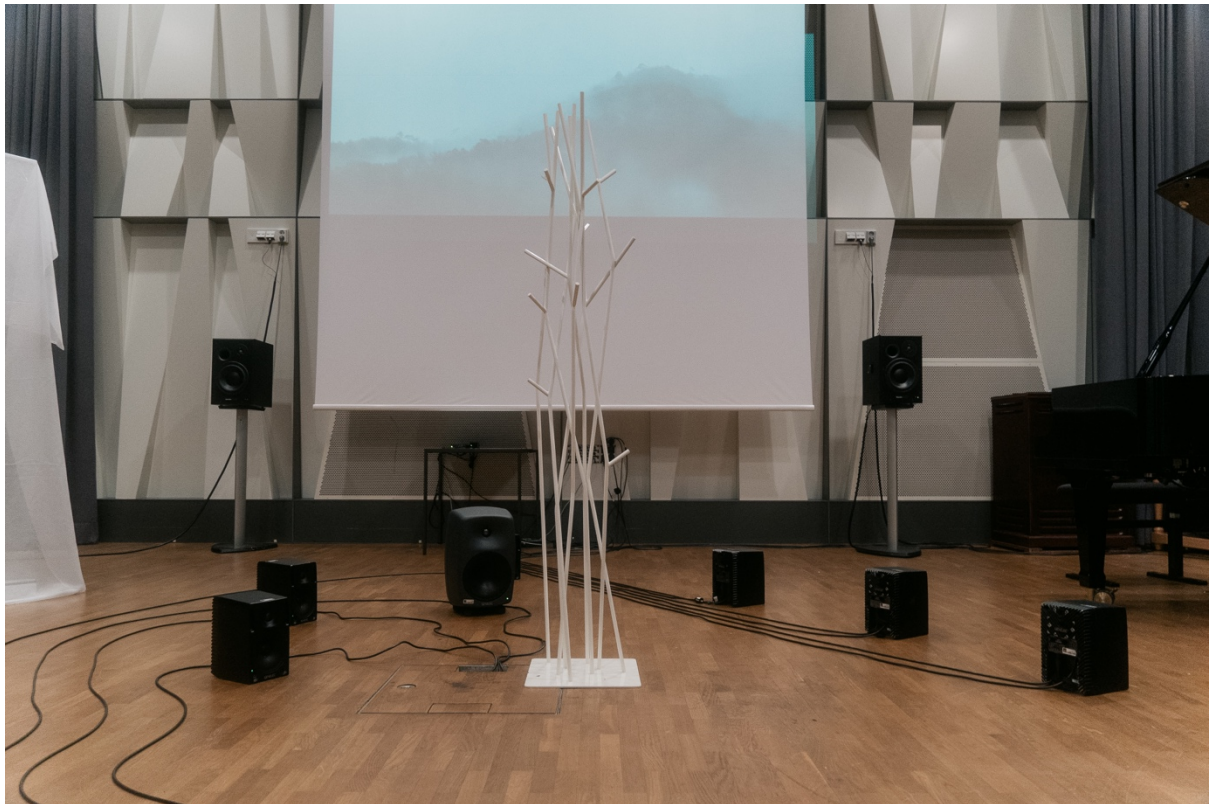


Figure 73: Front view

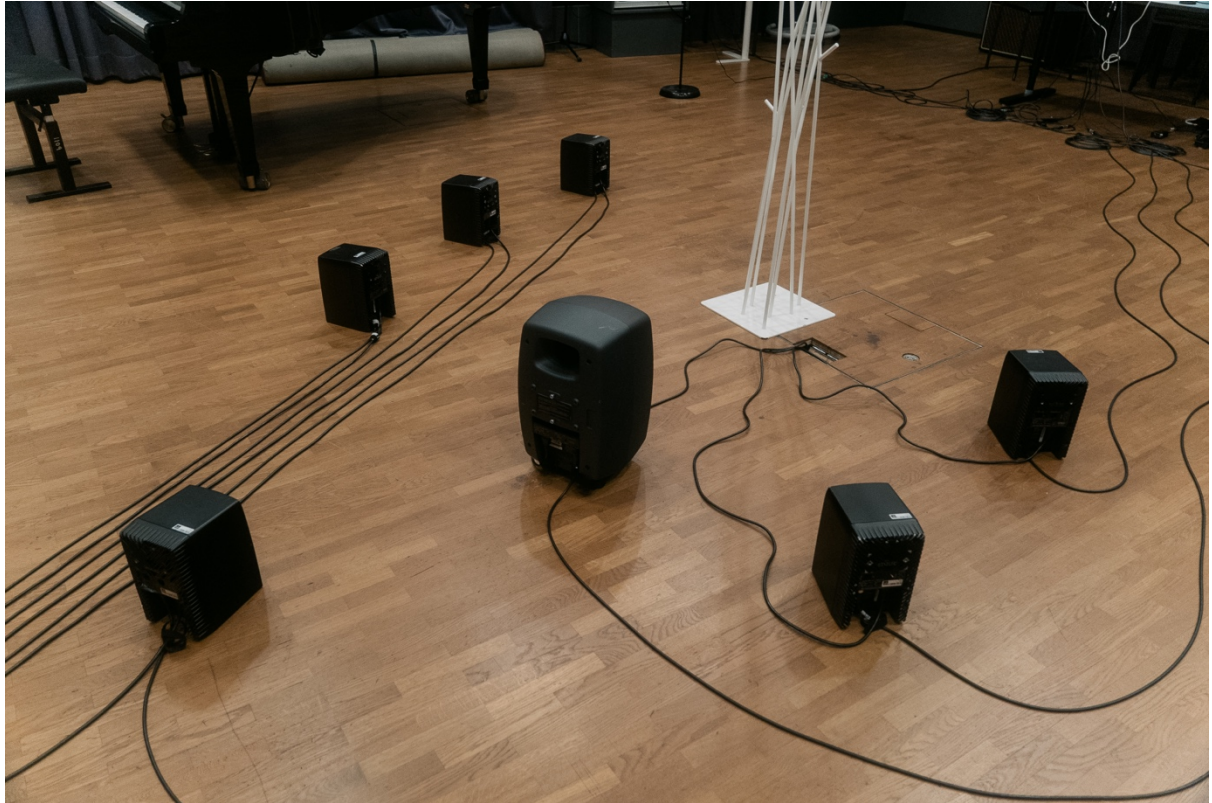


Figure 74: Speaker layout



Figure 75: Transparent fabric imitating the figure of a waterfall



Figure 76: View from the right side



Figure 77: View from the left side



Figure 78: Speaker layout without the cables

7. Reviewing the Final Work

After researching Japanese gardens for a long time and producing the final work, albeit a trial version, I had many ideas about what I liked and could improve. To begin, concerning the music, I used the speakers as rocks to create depth in both vision and sound, but I wonder if I could bring out the full potential of the sound part. I felt that the sound placement and shaping needed to be more carefully examined for that setting to improve this effect.

I was generally satisfied with the sound of the field recordings, but I thought it would be interesting to give some time-based modifications to make it sound more like a musical composition. This might be addressed in general, but I thought it would be ideal to have much music with distinctive characteristics to reproduce the changing appearance of the gardens depending on the weather and seasons. The waterfall was merely included as part of a field recording since I used the sound of an actual waterfall. Still, the next time I intended to use synthesisers or other instruments to express the sound of a waterfall metaphorically and musically.

I felt compelled to prepare more plantings and make the garden's appearance instantly recognised as a garden, even without the support of visual images. It was challenging to abstractly convey the effects of the plantings' colours and shapes. On the other hand, I was satisfied with the approach of expressing the Rocks using speakers. Concerning the waterfalls, I planned to project a video of an overview of the gardens onto the curtain, which imitates the waterfall. Still, I wanted to represent the visuals of the waterfalls more metaphorically if I could have enough materials to express the overview of the gardens without the support of movies.

This time, I designed the work to be viewed from one side, but if the work could be installed in a different space, I intended to make it available to view it from all angles. In that case, many sound sources, e.g., Laptops and media players, would be exposed, and I thought I needed to be much more cautious with how I treated them than I had been this time.

In general, I am pleased with the idea of a new platform for displaying my music. Although I only composed one piece this time, I would like to prepare multiple pieces, such as Kaija Saariaho's *Six Japanese Gardens*, so that the work can sit in the room for a more extended period and audiences can come and go at any moment, experiencing a different sound each time. Also, when I observed the piano in Big Recording Room next to my garden, I thought it would be interesting to have improvisational performances alongside my gardens. There could be countless improvements to this project.

8. *Conclusion*

This project was initiated with a curiosity about Japanese gardens and a desire to produce a sound installation that underlined its aesthetic and soundscape. When I started to investigate, I quickly discovered that it has a very long history and that while its form and use have gradually evolved with the times, there is a consistency in its composition and aesthetics from those that have existed for a long time to those created in modern times. This time, I learned more about its composition and attributes by researching its extensive history and conducting on-site research.

During the practical phase of the project, I focused on the essence of each object by learning about its significance and construction, such as arrangement, and then abstractly reproducing it using the methods of direct translation and metaphorical translation. Many aspects of the production process stimulated me and reminded me of the necessity of being hands-on. I was also intrigued by its potential as a new playback format for the music I compose.

I used the facilities at the University of the Arts Helsinki for this project, specifically Big Recording Room in Sibelius Academy. I was cautious of avoiding unnecessary adornment and using limited resources to focus on the substance of the concept, so the visuals were relatively simple. Still, I strongly sensed the possibility of development, such as collaboration with visual artists.

For example, having a sculptor or floral artist create various objects or having a video artist create more meaningful videos. I believe the work can be improved if people can help me in areas where I could not achieve it with my abilities. I wish the project could become a platform for collaboration with other artists. Ideally, I would like to exhibit my work in gallery spaces nationwide. In that case, I would like to create a 'garden' that suits the gallery space as a site-specific work.

The most important finding for me in this project was the willingness to pay attention to each choice I made, from the arrangement of the speakers to the organisation of the cables, the intention of the images featured, and the intention of the sound effects, all of which had a meaningful purpose in my mind. This was my first time working on a sound installation with this much care and attention to detail. In the future, when developing this project and producing new works, I would like to remember to have a meaningful purpose for each choice I make, as I did with the Japanese Sonic Garden.

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