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THE JAPANESE LANDSCAPE

日本之山水

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From a drawing in India ink by Takeo Shiota. His signature is on the cliff at the left. The Japanese characters say "Japanese Landscape." The Japanese characters on the front cover, also by Mr. Shiota, are the same as those in this cut. The cut on the back cover, also by Mr. Shiota, is called by him, as he has written in the Japanese characters, "Idealized atmosphere of Japan."

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The Newark Museum Association
Newark, N. J.

The Miniature Japanese Landscape

A Short Description by T. Shiota
of New York, Who designed the Landscape and assembled it

This landscape stands in the entrance hall of the Public Library Building. It is 4' x 6', and is covered with a glass case.

First I drew a ground plan of the landscape to be made, after consulting with the Museum authorities, and also sketches of elevations of the buildings I proposed to put in it. These were approved and the landscape was ordered.

The Making of the Objects

How shall I obtain the needed materials? This was the first question. The little houses and trees and all the other objects I needed are not anywhere on the market.

I asked the Yamanaka Company, New York branch, the greatest store for Oriental art objects, to make them. They accepted the order and sent my drawings, sketches and specifications to their factories in Japan.

In the factories all the objects were executed by specialists in different departments. At a glance one can see that the Yamanaka artisans took great pains to work them out to the last degree of perfection. Even smallest details are shown in the houses and the trees. The temple and the pagoda especially are so cleverly executed that we get from them the very aroma of old Japanese classical masterpieces, in spite of the very small scale of 1/75 of an inch to the foot.

The furniture, utensils and all decorations are made in proper proportions to the buildings. The figures in the fields and in the garden and about the buildings were made and painted by special artists.

All the things needed having been made, the landscape was set up by an artist in Japan, almost in the very form and almost in its completeness as you see it here. Then it was photographed, then the material was all packed in cases and sent to the Museum. There I received it and again set it up in accordance with my original sketches

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and plans. That the rocks and cliffs making the mountain and lining the streams and making stepping stones in the garden and elsewhere might have the right quality and color for the landscape and make the whole truly Japanese, all were sent from Japan as I had directed. The frame or border which surrounds the whole scene is also from Japan, being of weathered cedar, a wood which takes on in the lapse of years, if it is properly exposed to the weather, a very beautiful color and a very delightful texture, just suited, as I thought, to frame my picture.

The General Design

In designing this landscape my first thought was, "What sort of scenery shall I plan and how produce it in miniature so that, when set in an art museum, it will properly illustrate Japanese landscape to the American public?"

After I had studied carefully the conditions of size, lighting and all other circumstances, I decided to compose it of three main features: general scenery, country architecture, and a garden. Then I added all I thought best to harmonize with and make more interesting these general features.

In my imagination I saw the whole scheme as follows, and what I imagined I did my best to set forth in the completed scene:

The Landscape Described

On one side of a stream towers a rocky mountain. Midway up the mountain is a famous ancient temple, so set that from it one can look out upon farming lands below and far away.

In the distance a country road winds along the stream, sometimes passing through woods, where cherry, plum and maple trees are all in flower. (I did not mind bringing these blooms together at one view, even though they are never so in fact.) This road sometimes passes by pine and cedar trees, sometimes comes to refreshing rice fields flooded with water for the planting, and now and again crosses a bridge. By the road, in the far distance, is the country residence of a man of wealth and refinement, with a large formal garden facing the rice field.

In the rice field a gang of farmers and girls are setting out rice plants and singing merry songs as they work. On the road a few pack-horsemen are going to town. All is wrapped in a peaceful country atmosphere.

Why the Landscape of Japan Is so Universally Admired

The chief reason why Japan is praised for the beauty and for the dramatic quality of her landscape by the whole world is that Japan is a volcanic, mountainous island, with trees of many and beautiful kinds. There is much beautiful scenery along her coast. Inland are many picturesque lakes, sometimes nestled among lofty mountains. Clear and rapid streams dash along the slopes of the mountains, sometimes making cascades, and again they run gently through the plains. The rugged and broken road passes constantly changing views as we go along. Indeed, as an European writer has said, "Japan is the world's perfect park."

For generations the people have lived among these striking beauties of nature, and have become lovers of it. This love of nature shows itself in their art and literature, where landscapes, flowers and birds are exquisitely pictured and described.

Then the Japanese began long ago to build their houses and temples where these best fitted their needs and often where they looked out upon beautiful scenes; and they made paths and roads and set out trees and plants where these would be most useful, and then, behold! these temples, shrines, pagodas, lanterns, trees and plants and paths and roads all seemed to take their proper places in the landscape and to make it more beautiful still!

The principal trees that adorn the landscape in Japan are pines and cedars. These are abundant throughout the islands. They remain green all the year round and as they grow old they become more artistic in shape, especially those that cling to the cliffs and battle with rough winds and weather. You may have seen some of these in Japanese prints.

In Japan are hundreds of temples. The sites usually chosen for them are high up on a mountain side, where the mountain scenery as a background for the stately buildings helps to make a deep impression upon the visitor.

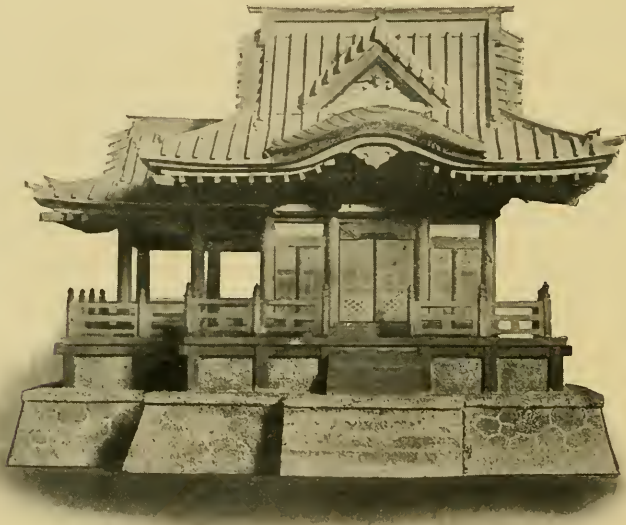
Certain Details of the Miniature Landscape

I pass on now to a description of some of the objects in the miniature landscape I have made.

As we go into the temple grounds we first pass through a gate

“San mon,” a typical gate for the front of a temple of this kind. On each side of San mon¹ we find the Karashishi, an idealized lion and lioness, which, religious traditions say, are the servants of God watching over the visitors who come and go.

On the right of the gate is a little rest house for visitors. The semi-circular bridge in front of San mon, is called “Taiko Bashi,” meaning a drum bridge. If we take a side view of it we can see why it is so named, for as the shadow of the bridge falls on the water it makes, with the bridge itself, a whole circle, the shape of the drum used in Japan. Of course this bridge is built in the temple grounds to please the eye.



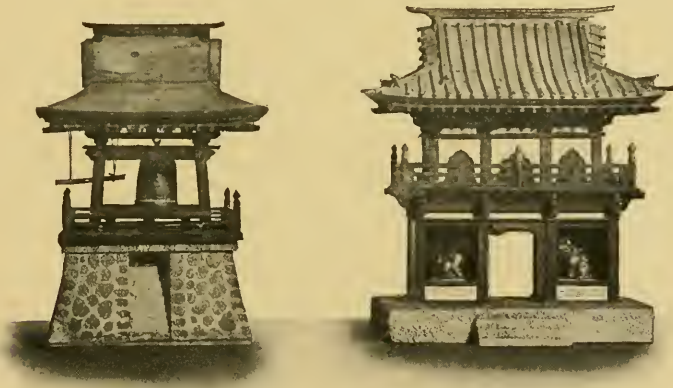
Buddhist temple, 9 inches high. The foundation is of plaster, representing stones and mortar. All roofs of Buddhist temples in Japan are of tiles. Shinto temples have thatched roofs.

¹San Mon means temple gate. In olden times a temple was called a San, which means “mountain.” Although we write “mountain gate,” we mean “temple gate.”

The Temple and the Tower

The main temple¹ faces the top landing of the stone steps. The design of this temple has a history. About 600 A. D. it was brought from the continent, together with the religion of Buddha. As the years passed its architecture took on certain Japanese features. The temple I have designed is in the style of the most flourishing period in Japanese architecture.

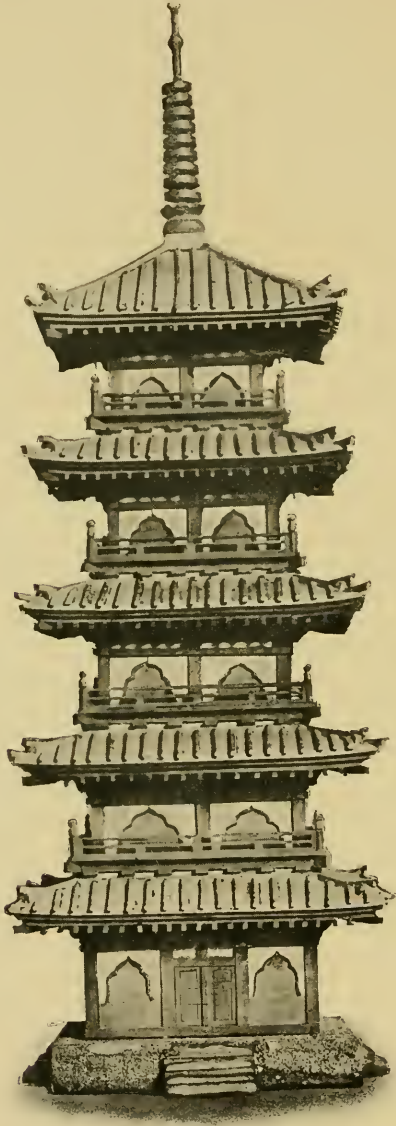
The tower at the right is "Gojunoto," a five-story tower.² Its beauty is in its outlines. Its construction is interesting. Its timbers are put together with mortise and tenon, and with no spikes or nails, yet towers thus made have stood firmly for many hundred years against storms, in spite of their slender construction. It is one of the ornaments of the temple yard.



Bell house and gateway, each about 5 inches high. These are necessary parts of all Japanese Buddhist temples. The clapper of the bell is suspended from the roof by cords. The karashishi are gilded.

¹Early Shinto temples or shrines before 600 A. D. were modeled after the primitive houses of the Japanese and have thatched roofs. Buddhist temples are more elaborate.

²Buddhism was introduced into Japan from China about 600 A. D., and with it came the pagoda, which is to a Buddhist temple what the spire is to the Christian church. In East India the pagoda was originally erected to house sacred relics. Its architecture has been changed by the Japanese. It always has an odd number of stories.



Gojunoto, or pagoda, 15 inches high. It is made of wood painted red and has a gray roof representing tiles. The balustrade around each story is delicately carved.

In the rear of the main temple there is a bell tower, on an elevation so that the bell may be heard far away. Note that the bell is rung by being struck with the end of a beam which is hung on ropes for the purpose.

The Country House

Now pass on to the country house. Its gate is in the style called "Kabuki mon," a lintel gate. The little structure at the left is a "Kura," a fire-proof store house,¹ built with a wooden frame, plastered with mud, very thick, and finished with two or three coats of stucco. The kura is a fire-proof place provided by wealthy Japanese as a store room for their treasures, for most Japanese houses are built of wood and are not safe from fire.

The little house to the right of the gate is the store house in which are kept wood, charcoal and garden tools.

The main house is in the style of the country house of a man of wealth. Two sides are closed and two sides are open to the weather. It is provided with paper sliding doors called "Shoji." They slide on rails which are placed just a little above the floor. These doors look like French windows, with rice paper pasted in the sash instead of glass. At night other sliding doors of wood are taken from their storage place and fastened to the rails outside the shoji, as a protection from storm or invaders. In the morning these are put back.

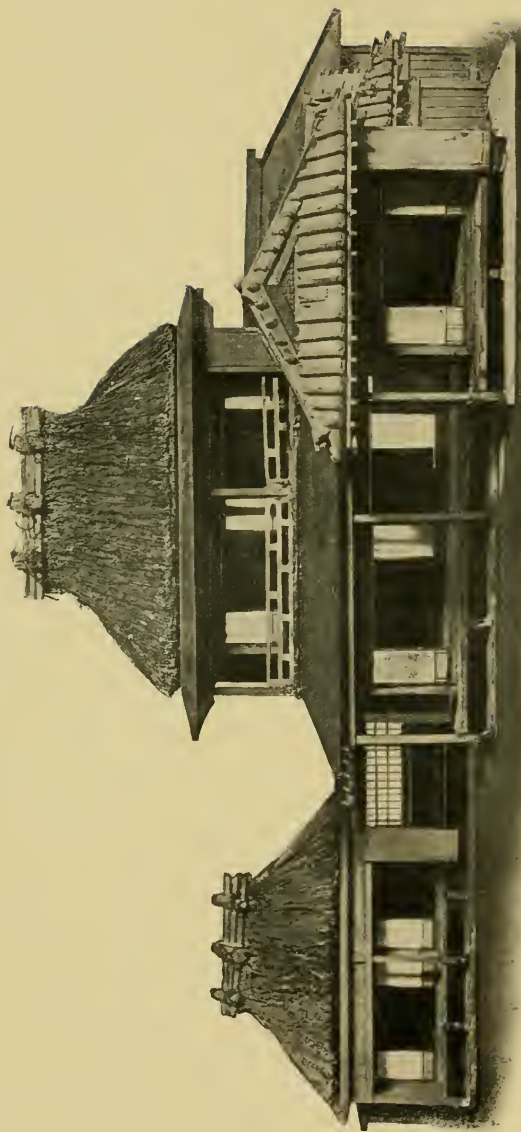
In the country the farmer thatches his roof with reeds. In the city shingles and tiles are used. Many temples have roofs of copper.

The Country Gentleman's Garden

The garden in Japan is arranged to be looked at from the house, the best view of it being from the most important room.

In a Japanese house there is no furniture to sit upon or sleep upon, no chairs or bedsteads. The floor answers all purposes. The entire floor is covered by a straw mattress about two inches thick, woven very

¹Kura, a fire-proof store house made of coats of mud plastered on a heavy frame-work. Each coat must dry out thoroughly, so it sometimes takes two years to complete. The final coat of plaster is white or black. The white is of lime and blackened by mixing with lamp black and highly polished by rubbing with cloth and the hand, until it looks like black lacquer.



Farm house, 6 inches high with thatched and tiled roof. It is made up of several buildings of various sizes, connected by passageways.

closely, and covered by a fresh green matting¹ which is changed twice a year. At night the bedding—pillow and quilts and so on—is pulled out from a closet and spread on the floor at any convenient place and in the morning is folded up and put back in the closet.

There is no fear that sleeping on the floor will be unsanitary, because in Japan no one dares to come in the house wearing outside footwear. All take off their slippers or shoes in the vestibule and make sure that their feet are clean before coming into the house. And the maids keep the floors very clean, so that no mark is made on the clothing when one sits down.

The Japanese Garden or Landscape

I want to say a word about the Japanese garden or landscape as a work of art. At first our ancestors were satisfied to copy natural scenery in their gardens. By and by, as they made progress, they strove to display idealized nature. The Japanese garden-landscape shows the same artistic taste as the painted landscape. Both are by artists and in both the artists try to bring out the beauties of nature, one working on the actual ground, the other on canvas.

Gardening is one of the arts which Japan has studied for centuries and in which it excels all other countries. It is rapidly gaining in popularity wherever it is introduced.

One distinction of the Japanese garden-landscape as compared with other kinds is that its beauty and interest vary as the seasons change. It is delightful in the day time. It becomes quiet and poetic at night. Even in midwinter its beauty never departs. Every bit of nature herself is here so modified by the artists that it has each season the peculiar charm that season lends to it. And the older a Japanese garden, the more natural it looks, and added years serve only to increase its glories.

This miniature garden is a representation of a perfect, classical, "Tsukiyama-style" landscape-garden.²

¹So many straw mats of uniform size are used that a room is measured by the number of mats it will hold, "Three mats long and two mats wide," etc. Each mat is about six feet long and three feet wide.

²There are three distinct styles of gardens in Japan:

1. Tsukiyama, or hilly garden, containing lakes, waterfalls, the typical scenery of Japan.
2. Hira niwa, or flat garden.
3. Cha niwa, or tea garden. Cha means tea.

A Few of the Books in the Library on Japan

Japanese Homes and their Surroundings. Edward S. Morse, N. Y. 1895.

Japanese Life in Town and Country. George William Knox, N. Y. 1905.

Impressions of Japanese Architecture and the Allied Arts. Ralph Adams Cram, N. Y. 1905.

Landscape Gardening in Japan. Josiah Conder, Tokio. 1893.

Japan, Past and Present. O. Buhicrosan, London. 1884.

Japanese Interior. A. M. Bacon, Boston. 1893.

Things Japanese. B. H. Chamberlain, London. 1890.

Highways and Houses of Japan. Lady Kate Lawson, London. 1910.

Life of Japan. Masuji Miyakawa. 1907.

Japan; Aspects and Destinies. W. P. Watson. 1904.

Takeo Shiota

His Life, Told by Himself

I was born in 1881 of an old family in a village about forty miles east of Tokio. The village is near the coast and surrounded by mountains. My father was a well-to-do farmer.

In my school days I was known as a rough mischief-maker; but when, as I grew older, I decided to take up the profession of landscape gardener, my character changed and I became quiet and thoughtful.

Near my home are many beautiful streams, and wild scenery with old historical castles, tranquil shrines and large temples.

Being an active boy, I was very fond of exploring the country round about, of following streams and of climbing steep mountains. My daily contact with these beautiful natural surroundings unconsciously fascinated me and gradually awakened in me a love of nature.

As my interest and taste for these things grew, it became my greatest pleasure to go on these explorations. I went whenever I could.

After I was graduated from High School, I decided to see all the famous scenery, architecture and gardens in Japan. I traveled on foot through half of Japan. During this tour, I came to two conclusions: the one, a garden reflects the work of a mediocre or skilful landscape gardener, and second, gardening is like the art of painting, infinite.

I then decided to become a landscape gardener and architect and went to Tokio to receive instruction. But I was disappointed at the little I could learn from my master. I could acquire technique, but the spirit and first elements of gardening I had to learn from nature herself. I changed teachers, but it was the same.

Then I came to the conclusion that if I wished to learn gardening I must see the things of nature and learn from them. So I started once more to travel. Thus the scenery of Japan is my true teacher.

I spent five years in study in this way. Then one day the thought came to me that there was not enough opportunity in Japan to fulfill my ambitions. I crossed the Pacific in 1907 and came to the United States.

The gardens I have made in this country are the following:

Mr. Salisbury, Plainfield, N. J.

Miss Scofield, Tuxedo Park, N. Y.

Mr. Brown, Staten Island, N. Y.

Miss Hoyt, Oyster Bay, L. I.

Mr. Gould, Lakewood, N. J.

Exhibition for Japan Society, N. Y.

Brooklyn Botanical Garden, N. Y.

My greatest ambition is to design a garden more beautiful than all others in the world, and thus to prove the truth of the saying, "Japanese landscape gardening is the Queen of all the Arts."

My greatest enjoyment is in nature and the contemplation of natural things, landscape and the actions of animals or fishes. For that reason I go hunting. I go to the deep woods of North Carolina and Virginia to hunt deer, to shoot ducks and quail, for at least three months of the year.

To go far from the noise of civilization, to live the simple country life and breathe deeply of pure air—that is the cleanser of life.

T. SHIOTA.

New York City, August 1, 1915.

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日本之理想境



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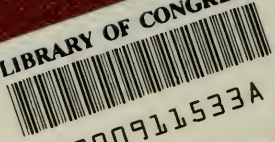
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