

Japanese Landscapes

Geo/JPN 491G

T 3.30 – 5.45 pm CB 305

P. P. Karan
ppkaran@uky.edu
Spring 2005

Syllabus

Aim

The built environment in Japan does not resemble its American or European counterparts. Visitors often characterize it as visually chaotic, while recent observers praise the lively traditional neighborhoods and countryside. This course will explore characteristics of Japanese urban and rural landscapes, their history and presence, and examine the particular cultural, political, economic and social context of landscapes in Japan. The course is aimed at better understanding of non-Western values in the formation and organization of landscapes in Japan. The course will try to identify the forces that were and are at work to create human landscapes, and to identify some of the new directions that Japanese culture is taking.

Apart from giving an introduction to Japanese landscapes, the course is also designed to help students develop their analytical skills, their ability to read and write.

Definition of landscape in this course

Landscape is everything outside the building. It is the moment you walk out of the house and view a portion of the land. When you are in your car, you are traveling in public space. Cars are parked on asphalt. The asphalt is our landscape. The street and buildings are our landscape. The landscape is everything out there. In this course, we look at the Japanese landscape as a visual scroll that has recorded (1) physical forces, (2) the impact of culture, and (3) the element of time in the country. The course will examine the landscape as vivid portrayal of ideas for organizing space in Japan. The study of the organization of space or landscape will provide insights into the nature of the Japanese people and the blend of land and culture in the nation. (more in handout)

Requirements

This course requires active class participation and reading (30% of final grades). An oral presentation and a research paper on an individually chosen topic related to the Japanese landscapes are required (40%). The paper will be due on April 19. A take home final (30%) will be assigned during the last week of class which is April 26th. The final exam

will comprise essay-type questions and will cover all course topics and materials discussed in the class. The exam will be due on or before May 3rd.

Textbook

Japanese Landscape: Where Land and Culture Merge by Cotton Mather, P. P. Karan and Shigeru Iijima. The University Press of Kentucky, 1998.

DS 812 .M58 1998

There will be other required reading assignments on reserve.

Class Schedule and Assignments

Week 1

Introduction (Explanation of syllabus and readings)

Japanese Landscapes Today

Definition of landscape, how landscapes are made

Weeks 2 and 3

Influence of Japan's environment, history and culture on formation of landscapes.

Read and discuss:

Mather, *Japanese Landscape*, Chapter 1.

Gavin, Masako. 2000. *Nihon fukeiron* (Japanese Landscape): nationalistic or imperialistic?

Japan Forum 12(2) 2000:219-231. (available on line, Young Library)

Pitts, Forrest. "A Mirror to Japan," *Landscape* 9 (1960): 24-25. G1. L2

Inoue, Masahito; Nakagoshi, Nobukazu. 2000. The effects of human impact on spatial Structure of the riparian vegetation along the Ashida river, Japan. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 53(1): 111 (12 pages). HT 166.L38

Nitschke, G. 1966. Ma: The Japanese sense of place. *Architectural Design* (May 1966)

Weeks 4 and 5

Principal attributes of Japanese landscapes

Primary attributes

Secondary attributes

Read and discuss:

Mather, *Japanese Landscape*, Chapters 2 and 3

Week 6

Japanese Attitudes towards Nature

Read and discuss:

- Nitschke, Gunter. 2003. *Japanese Gardens: Right Angle and Natural Form*. Koln: Taschen. pp. 10-13. SB458 .N58 1999SB458
- Imanishi, Kinji. 2002. *A Japanese view of nature: the world of living thing* Translated by Pamela J. Asquith. New York: RoutledgeCurzon. QH 331. 1537 2002

Week 7

Japanese garden: landscape and history

Read and discuss:

- Nitschke. 2003. *Japanese Gardens*.
- Purkayastha, B. 1995. Italian Renaissance and Japanese Zen gardens: an approach for introducing cultural landscapes. *Journal of Geography* 94(3): 420-426.

Week 8 and 9

Sacred landscapes

- Shinto shrines: Grand shrines of Ise and Izumo
- Buddhist temple: Nara

Read and discuss:

- Waley, P. 1996. On the far bank of the river: places of recreation on the periphery of the pre-modern Japanese city. *Ecumene* 3(4): 384-407.
- Tanaka, Hiroshi. 1984. Landscape expression of the evolution of Buddhism in Japan. *Canadian Geographer* 28: 240-257.
- Coaldrake, William H. 1996. *Architecture and Authority in Japan*. New York: Routledge. Chapters 2, 3, and 4. pp.16-103.
NA9050.5.063 1996

Week 10 and 11

Rural and agricultural landscapes

- Village and folk houses
- Grid patterns in landscape-making
- National Forests
- Cemetery landscape

Read and discuss:

- Takeuchi, Kazuhiko. 2002. *Satoyama: The Traditional Rural Landscape of Japan* Springer-Verlag ISBN 4431000070
- Kobori, H. 2003. Participatory conservation approaches for *satoyama*, the Traditional forest and agricultural landscape of Japan. *Ambio* 32(4): 307-11
- Hall, Robert H. 1931. Some Rural Settlement Forms in Japan. *Geographical Review* 21(1): 93-123 G1. G35.
- Kinda, Akihito. 1986. The Jori Plan in Ancient and Medieval Japan, *Geographical Review of Japan* 59(1):1-20,
- Kato, Y; Yokohari, M; Brown, R. D. 1997. Integration and visualization of the Ecological value of rural landscapes in maintaining the physical environment of Japan. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 39(1): 69
- Kamada, M; Nakagoshi, N. 1996. Influence of cultural factors on landscapes of mountain villages in western Japan. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 37(1-2): 85 (6 pages).
- Fukamachi, K. et al. 2000. Changes in landscape planning and land Management in Arashiyama National Forest in Kyoto. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 52(2-3): 73-87.
- Nakagawa, T. 1990. Cemetery landscape evolution of a Japanese rural community. *Annual Report – University of Tsukuba, Institute of Geoscience* 16: 8-12.

Week 12

Castles: symbols of authority in feudal Japan

Read and discuss:

- Coaldrake. 1996. *Architecture and Authority in Japan*. Chapter 5 and 6, pp. 104-162.
- Coaldrake. 1986 *Japanese Castles*. Kodansha, Tokyo. DS806.3 H4913. 1986
- Smith, Henry. 1986. *One Hundred Famous views of Edo*.
- Ladefoged, T.N. 2000. Fortified castles on Okinawa island during the Gusuku Period, AD 1200-1600. *Antiquity* 74 (284): 404-412.

Weeks 13 and 14

Urban landscape

- Meiji urban landscapes: urbanization of Japan and western style architecture and landscapes.
- Role of transportation in the evolution of the urban landscapes of Japanese Megalopolis. Landscapes of *eki-mae* (area in front of the railway station)
- Peculiar nature of Japanese cities
- Rural-Urban fringe residential landscapes
- New symbols of 21st century in the urban landscapes.

Read and discuss:

- Treib, M. 1979. Reading the City: Maps, Signs and Space in the Japanese city, *Idea* (Japan, November 1979)
- Treib, M. 1986. Dichotomies of Dwelling: Edo/Tokyo, in *Tokyo: Form and Spirit*. Ed. M. Friedman (New York, 1986) 116-117.
- Waley, P. 2002. Moving the margins of Tokyo. *Urban Studies* 39(9): 1533-1550
- Karan, P. P. "The City in Japan," in *The Japanese City*, The University Press of Kentucky, 1998. pp.12-39. HT147 .J39 1997
- Kobo, Dai'ichi. 1996. Office landscape-Office, Tama, Japan. *Architectural Review* 199 (1190): 60 (4 pages). NA1.A69
- Hiroshi, Watanabe. 1995. Osaka: The altered landscape. *Japan Quarterly* 42 (3): 317-31 (15 pages). DS 801 J274
- Cybriwsky, Roman. 1991. *Tokyo*.
- Morse, Edward. 1961. *Japanese Homes and their surroundings*.
- Jinnai. 1995. *Tokyo: a spatial anthropology*.
- Waldichuk, T. 1998. A comparison of Japanese and North American attitudes towards residential landscapes in the rural-urban fringe. *Great lakes Geographer* 5
- Hohn, U. 1997. Townscape preservation in Japanese urban planning. *Town Planning Review* 68(2):213-255.
- Treib, Marc. 1994. Underground in Umeda. Osaka. In *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space*. Edited by Zeynep Celik, Diane Favro and Richard Ingersoll. (University of California Press, Berkeley).

Weekly Assignments:

1. Form groups (2 students)
2. Read and discuss (papers listed above for each week)
3. Discuss meaning of words such as village, metropolis, neighborhood, community, suburb, plaza, street in the Japanese and Western context.
4. Each student prepare 2 page summary, present and discuss.

In your approach to landscape study focus on three questions about the Japanese landscape. They help to organize one's thinking about the way the Japanese landscape was, and is being, created.

- (1) **What does it look like?** Requires careful description of form, aspect, locational and historical contexts. Best way to study the landscape is to observe it. The next best way is to observe the images of the landscape (photographs and maps) and try to understand what we are looking at.
- (2) **Why does it look like that?** This involves exploration of ideas and motives behind the creation of human landscapes. These may be pragmatic, social, political, purely aesthetic, economic, and others.

- (3) **What does it mean?** The symbolic meaning the landscape held and/or holds; geographic processes that created it, the social, economic, and political influences that act upon it.

Potential Term Paper Topics

Category 1: A person whose ideas about land and society has significantly influenced the Japanese landscape.

Frank Lloyd Wright 1867-1959 Old Imperial Hotel in Tokyo 1922, Odawara Hotel 1917, Ginza movie theater 1918.

Tange Kenzo 1913 - (tried to link traditional Japanese elements with modern forms in a number of dramatic buildings in the 1950s and 1960s)

Tatsuno Kingo 1854-1919 (Tokyo Station and other Western style buildings)

Thomas James Waters 1830-? (plan for Ginza) and Francois Verny 1837-1908 (responsible for introducing modern architectural techniques after Meiji Restoration 1868).

Ando Tadao 1941 - (combines Japanese sensibility and Western architectural techniques)

Category 2: Landscape that has become a prototype for a large number of similar or derivative places.

Tokyo Disneyland

Northern Horse Park, Tomakomai

Urban theme parks

Tama Town

Hibya Park

Roppongi Hills, Minato Ward, Tokyo

Tokyo Bay City

Category 3: Movement, ideas and laws that have significantly influenced the way we think about landscape.

Geomancy or *kaso* (design of cities, buildings, and rooms in accordance with cosmological forces, based to a large degree on the Chinese *feng shui*)

Jori land survey system

Japan's telecommunications system which has produced the snarl of communication cables that have added visual blight to landscape

Highways and Expressways

Lighting and landscapes of the night

Land Improvement Law 1949 (to create farmland by reclamation)

Architectural Standards Law 1950

Category 4: A common element in the ordinary Japanese landscape.

Underground development
Airport terminals
Billboards and other roadside advertising
Cemeteries
Convenience stores
Neighborhood shrines or temples
Gardens
Regional Malls
Planned shopping centers
Sport stadiums

Category 5: Man vs. Nature in the landscape

Japan's Coastlines – the oceans vs. concrete-artificial harbors/wave breaks/tsunami walls
Japan's Mountains – slope & concrete-weirs on mountainsides and concreted mountainsides.
Japan's Rivers – rampant dam building
Japan's National Parks – natural preservation or commercial opportunity?
Japanese Hot Springs – natural, artificial, resort or public bath?

Category 6: A topic of your choosing which focuses on the relationship between the tangible landscape and intangible ideas that have come together to create an artifact or set of artifacts in the ordinary landscape