

The Stone and the Moon, Jôju-in

Wybe Kuitert

Jôju-in belongs to the monastery Kiyomizudera, where it is the main subtemple that functions as the residence of the abbot. The garden was apparently made after a fire in 1629, and is known for a peculiar stone that stands in frontal view, the *Eboshi-iwa*, or Abbot's Cap stone. Its swelling shapes have the floppy feeling of a textile hat, typical of the nobility and clergy in old Japan. Some other *Eboshi-iwa* are found in Japan as well, the name is given to natural rocks of similar shape with a bent tip. In the garden the stone is illustrated for example in *Tsukiyama teizôden* (Kitamura Enkin, 1735) [Figure 1] and in *Miyako rinsen meisô zue* (Akiyama Ritô, 1799) [Figure 2]. Probably the oldest photograph of the garden was taken by Kusakabe Kinbei. Kusakabe (1841-

1932) was an artist who worked with other pioneering photographers of Japan, like Felice Beato and Baron von Stillfried. This photo is an albumen print which typically were the kind of pictures that were sold as souvenirs to foreigners. I guess it can be dated somewhere in the 1890s. The photograph shows the Abbot's Cap stone in its full glory [Figure 3].

Quite surprisingly, not long after this photograph was taken, the stone must have been moved to a place at the back of the garden, with evidence registered in about 1911 when Kinkichirô Honda came to the site to paint the garden and survey the site. His quite successful panorama painting and his plan were published in *Nihon*

Figure 3 : Albumen print of garden at Jôju-in by Kusakabe Kinbei. From the author's collection

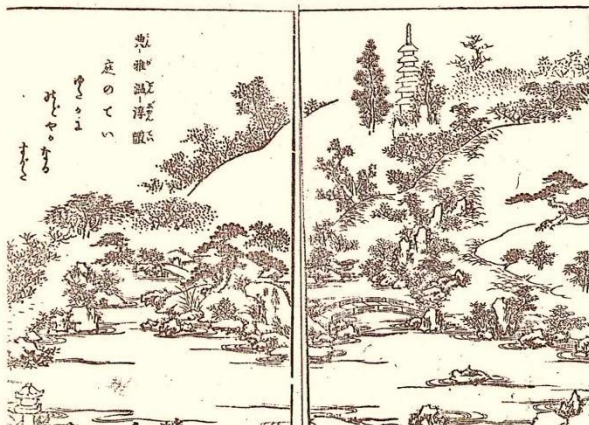
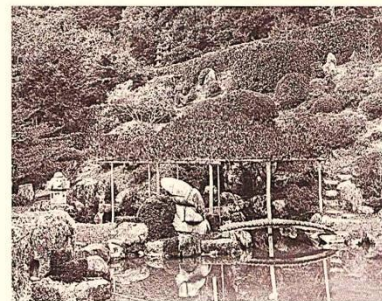


Figure 1 : Earliest known print of the garden at Jôju-in. Eboshi-iwa is seen at the right hand edge of the left hand page. From Kitamura (1735)

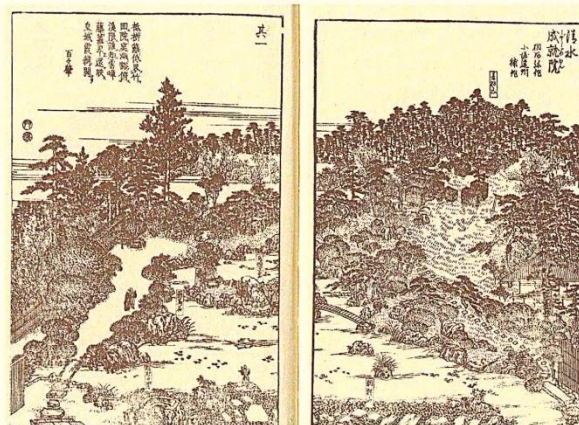


Figure 2 : Early print of the garden at Jôju-in. Eboshi-iwa is seen at the right hand edge of the left hand page. From Akiyama 1799



園庭院就成(水清)

45

園七翠石方北可よ縁噴尖方

Figure 4: Painting of the garden at Jōju-in by Honda. From Honda (1911)

The Stone and the Moon, Jôju-in continued...

meien zûfu of 1911 [Figures 4 and 5]. These show the Abbot's Cap stone at the back of the garden, largely hidden from sight. The *Gardens of Japan* by Jirô Harada, published in 1928, has a photograph of the Jôju-in garden [Figure 6]. The Abbot's Cap stone is not seen as it was taken from an angle that probably wouldn't show the stone. We can presume that it still was at its position at the back of the garden as any photographer would have pictured it, if it had been in its prominent place in the middle, in full view.

Around 1935, when members of The Garden Club of America visited Japan, they were presented with "Art of the Landscape Garden in Japan" (Tamura, 1935). The image of Jôju-in garden (p124) again shows the *Eboshi-iwa* as missing from the island. Mirei Shigemori in his *Nihon teien shi zukan* (26 Vols. 1936-1939) indeed confirms that the stone is still at the back, giving a nice, close-up photograph of the stone [Figure 7], a map [Figure 8], and, trying to emulate the gorgeous panorama of Honda, even an effort towards a water colour impression [Figure 9]. Confronted with the pictorial evidence of earlier centuries, Shigemori thinks it should be returned to its original position.

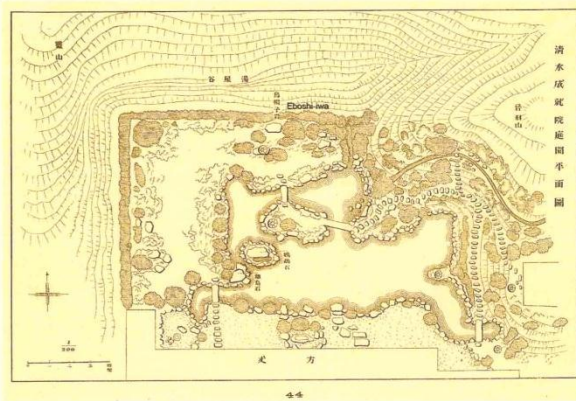


Figure 5: Plan of the garden at Jôju-in drawn by Honda. The Eboshi-iwa is at the rear centre of the garden. From Honda (1911) with added highlight.



Figure 6: Garden at Jôju-in in the 1920s. The Eboshi-iwa would be at the extreme right of the photograph had it not been removed to the rear of the garden. From Harada (1928)

However, in the early 1950s, the stone is still at the back of the garden, as seen in Harada's book "Japanese Gardens" (1956) [Figure 10]. The caption for this photograph includes "In the centre of the tortoise isle there was placed as the principal rock a big stone called Eboshi-iwa, being so named on account of its resemblance to the eboshi or court head-dress. For some reason this rock has been removed to the rear."

In the 1964 re-edition of Honda's *Nihon meien zûfu*, editor Satô Shô says that the stone was moved back to its original position, "in recent years", so that would be, let's say the late 1950s. The intriguing question remains: why should it have been hidden at the back in the first place?

A more interesting question though might be: Aren't many stones, and other things in gardens, Japanese gardens not excepted, moved and changed all the time? Is it not, on the contrary, that fuzzy uncertainty that only adds up to the intricate beauties of the most fragile of arts, the garden? Why so much fuss about just one garden stone? Well, it's all about the moon.

China, Korea, and Japan are perhaps the only places in the world that have not only a conscious and highly developed perception of the moon, but have developed it also to such a high standard that it is taken as a theme in garden design as well. This is always a great surprise and an exciting delight for Western visitors discovering the gardens of East Asia. Of course, in Japan, it starts in the Heian period, and the harvest-moon-viewing parties on the ponds in western Kyoto in September are a remnant of this garden appreciation. The Hirotsawa and Osawa ponds are in fact remains of Heian period gardens, and looking east one could see the moon rise over the Higashiyama-mountains, reflecting in the pond as well - at least if the weather was fine. An autumn with conditions of atmosphere and weather so perfect that the moon appears as a giant orange disk over the mountain range in evening dusk is rare and absolutely spectacular. This rarity adds psychologically to the aesthetic effect of the arrangement, and anyone who has had a chance to attend a successful moon viewing party will have had an experience he will never forget.

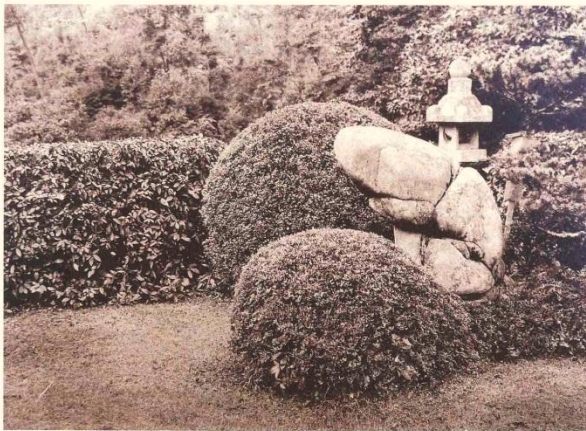
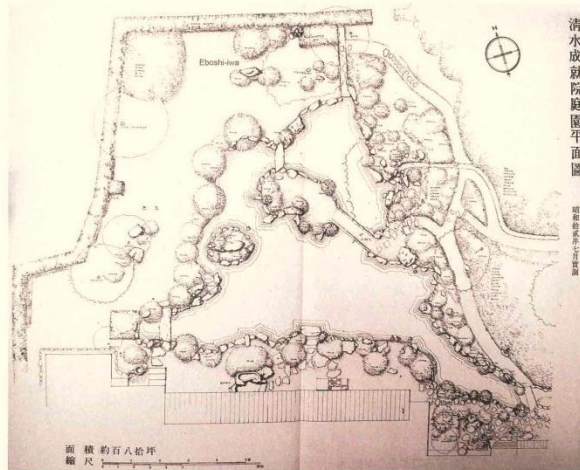


Figure 7: Eboshi-iwa at the rear of the garden at Jōju-in. From Shigemori (1936-1939)

Figure 8 : Plan of garden at Jōju-in drawn by Shigemori. The Eboshi-iwa is at the rear centre of the garden . From Shigemori (1936-1939)



The story of Jōju-in and the moon is a little more complex. Actually in the Edo period there were three temples called Jōju-in in Kyoto, all three with a garden: one belonging to the Kitano Shrine, now gone; Myōman-ji's Jōju-in, that still can be visited; and our Jōju-in. The three were known as the Flower-Snow-Moon Jōju-ins and, as the two others were good for viewing snow and flowers, this seems to suggest that Jōju-in of Kiyomizudera was good for viewing the moon. And, indeed, it has a moon-inspired design, sophisticated and quite well contrived. To understand how it works while reading these lines, you have to imagine yourself sitting in the temple, looking north to the garden that faces you. You see the small pond with stones and plants, as it is in front of the temple halls. This arrangement is bounded with a low hedge at the back. Over the hedge you see the hill, sloping down to a deep valley just behind the hedge. The hill, perhaps about fifty metres away from the temple's veranda has a small lantern,

The Stone and the Moon, Jôju-in continued...

called *Kodaijijama no tôrô*, that enforces a simple borrowing of the scenery of the hill. When lit, at night, it draws with its faint shimmer the attention towards the depth of the darkness – and to the idea of light. The hedge bordering the garden has in fact grown a little too high, but the reflection of the lantern on the pond would fall exactly between the two islands in the pond, when you enter the garden from the stepping stones in front of the *kutsunugi-ishî*. The fat arrow in the plan indicates this subtle, visual axis at night; the lantern though is outside the boundary of this map [Figure 11]. The lantern light reflects on the pond in front of the temple hall, and on a moonlit night you come to notice a similar, faint reflection on the Abbot's Cap stone that also lights up, because of the moon. It is a fantastic design trick, because the moon itself is at the back of the temple, over the head of the viewer, in the east and behind the steep hills on the right, in a position where it can not be seen. It is only perceived in the indirect lighting-up of the garden with its remarkable *Eboshi-iwa*. Of course Shigemori, not known as a particularly sensitive designer, missed the point, he does not explain this function of the stone in *Nihon teien shi zukan*. And in case you've missed the autumn

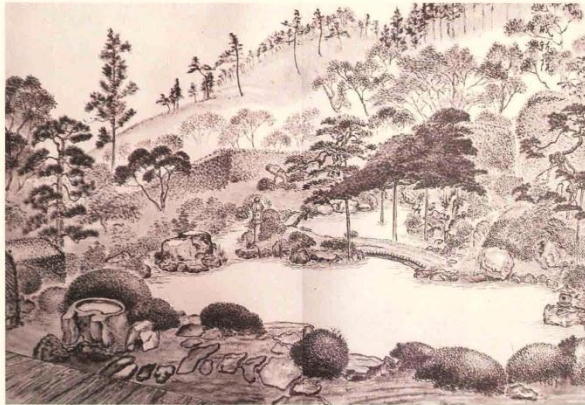


Figure 9 : Watercolour of the garden at Jôju-in painted by Shigemori, Mirei. From Shigemori (1936-1939)

6

Figure 10 - Garden at Jôju-in during the early 1950s showing the *Eboshi-iwa* at the rear of the garden. From Harada (1956)

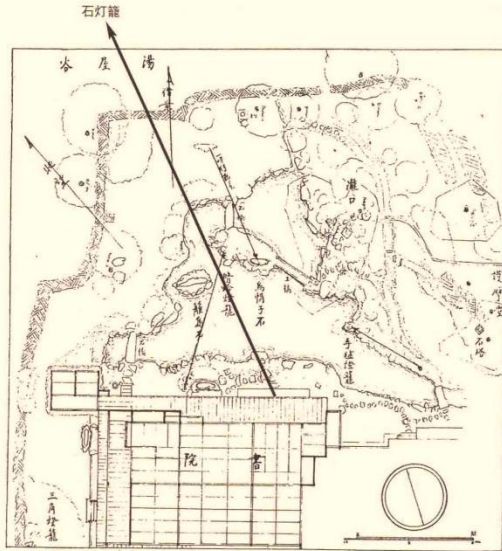


moon, there is a postcard that shows the garden in "electric" illumination, which gives some idea [Figure 12]. In passing, it is interesting to note that various abbots have experimented with different types of lanterns placing them in a variety of positions, throughout the centuries.

Our present civilization makes everything clearly visible with electric light, and we think that light should be everywhere. The beauty of a moon-lit garden is not only blurred by false reflections of urban light in the sky, but also not perceived by our modern eyes that are no longer trained in perceiving the subtle shades of moonlight. A pity for us, but perhaps something to rediscover, now that we are winding down our fossil-fuel economy.

Wybe Kuitert

Figure 11 : Plan of the garden at Jōju-in showing the axis to the distant lantern. From Hisatsune (1967)



清水成就院庭園平面圖

図38
成就院平面図。灯笼の方向を矢印で示している
久恒秀治「京都名園記（上巻）」（誠文堂新光社 1967）

Bibliography

- Akisato, Ritō (1799) *Miyako rinsen meisho zue*
 Harada, Jirō (1928) *The Gardens of Japan*. The Studio Limited, London
 Harada, Jirō (1956) *Japanese Gardens* (successor to *The Gardens of Japan*) The Studio Limited, London

- Hisatsune, Shūji (1967). *Kyoto Meienki Jōkan*, Seibundō-shinkosha Tokyo
 Honda, Kinkichirō (1911). *Nihon meien zufu*
 Honda, Kinkichirō (1964). *Nihon meien zufu*, reprint with comments by Satō Shō, Heibonsha
 Kitamura, Enkin (1735). *Tsukiyama teizōden*
 Kuitert, Wybe (1999) "Nihon no fūdo to niwazukuri" in *Niwazukuri no kokoro to jissen*, Kadokawa Shoten Tokyo: 26-47
 Shigemori, Mirei (1936-1939) *Nihon teien shi zukan* Yukosha, Tokyo
 Tamura, Tsuyoshi (1935) *Art of the Landscape Garden in Japan*. Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai, Tokyo.

Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge Mr Akira Hirano, librarian at the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures.

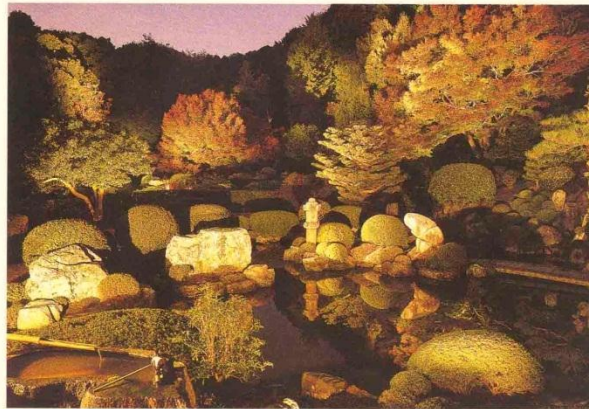


Figure 12 : Jōju-in garden at night. Postcard purchased in 2006 from Kiyomizudera. Reproduced with permission of the Temple authorities