

The “Capture” of Exotic Natures: Cross-cultural Knowledge and Japanese Gardening in Early 20th Century Britain

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Abstract

This paper explores the influence of cross-cultural knowledge derived from travel and specialist horticultural education on the gardening work of three women in the early 20th century. Ethel Webb and Ella Christie were both wealthy, independent women who travelled to Japan. On their return home they created Japanese gardens on their private estates. The creation of Japanese gardens was particularly fashionable in early 20th century Britain. The third woman is the Japanese horticulturalist Taki Nakanome (nee Handa) who studied at Studley College in Britain and directed the construction of a Japanese garden at Ella Christie’s estate, Cowden Castle. The pioneering Japanese horticulturalist, Taki Nakanome (nee Handa), after returning to Japan taught botany, horticulture and English at Doshisha Women’s College in Kyoto, Japan. Later in her life, Taki ran an orchard at the Nakanome family estate at Mizusawa, Iwate prefecture during the 1920s. Ella Christie’s employment of a female garden designer, Taki Nakanome (nee Handa) in 1908, was obscured by the fact that she was a foreigner. Her exoticness was perhaps more important than her gender to create authenticity.

Key words: travel and life history, gender and female horticultural education, Japanese gardens in Britain, Ethel Webb (1862–1915), Ella Christie (1861–1949), Taki Nakanome (nee Handa) (1871–1956)

I Introduction

Gardens and gardening have been researched as the places and ways of displaying ideas of nature in everyday life practices. Stephen Constantine emphasizes that amateur gardening was a major form of popular recreation in the 19th and 20th century (Constantine 1981). For example, Lisa Taylor’s research focusing on 20th century ordinary people’s everyday life gardening, looking through various popular media, discussed how the gardening process produced ‘a taste’ and is influenced by both class and gender (Taylor 2008). Gardening helped to produce scientific knowledge of nature and was one way in which women and amateurs could experience directly the production of knowledge. In terms of discussion of late 19th century amateur science and women; travel, botanical education, horticulture and gardening are recognized as of key importance. David Livingstone argues that ‘Middle-class women who did infringe the conventions of gender relations’ by attending botanical field excursions and visits ‘did so -

emphatically - as amateur "botanophiles," not as professional botanists.' He notes that the distinction between 'amateur' and 'professional' was a way in which women could be excluded 'from serious scientific visibility' and emphasized that 'for women, natural history was nothing more than a genteel hobby' (Livingstone 2003: 44). Rather to the contrary Tina Gianquitto's research focused on American women and the scientific study of the natural world suggests that women were "good observers of nature" (Gianquitto 2007) while Gates (1998) and Shteir (1996) document the important contribution that women made to knowledge and understanding of botany. By the end of the 19th century there was increasing interest in providing educational facilities for women who wished to study horticulture, gardening and landscape design in Britain and America and various horticultural colleges for women were established (Meredith 2003; Way 2009; Mozingo and Jewell 2012; Opitz 2013).

The established style of landscape gardening in the 18th and 19th century Britain provided ways of looking at countryside as well as the garden and park (Daniels 1993; 1999). The idea of the 'picturesque' provided ways of framing landscapes to make pictures. The picturesque landscape was socially and historically constructed as a particular 'irregular' aesthetic, which was derived from the paintings of Claude Lorrain, and the more dramatic visions of Salvator Rosa. The picturesque was popularized and theorized by authors such as William Gilpin and Uvedale Price (Daniels and Watkins 1994; Watkins and Cowell 2012). The picturesque vision was greatly influenced by the Grand Tour, especially to Italy, among wealthy aristocratic families in 18th century Britain (Wilton and Bignamini 1996). The picturesque landscape was concerned with ideas of portable landscapes and with framing particular natural and wild landscapes.

Looking at the 'picturesque' from a Japanese viewpoint, it can be argued that there is a similar practice of framing landscape in Japan. The *utamakura*¹ is a tradition of Japanese poetry that uses a particular angle of view and vision connected to a particular place. In *utamakura* the name of the place itself provided the aesthetic, poetic and emotional vision. From a cross-cultural perspective, picturesque places such as Tintern Abbey are using ideas similar to *utamakura*². And, most importantly, visions of places of *utamakura* were re-created as replicas in Japanese gardens. The picturesque encompasses both the framing of views within an enclosure, creating a hidden secret world, and the framing of views towards outside landscapes. Joy Hendry examines Japanese gardens as an example of 'the wrapping of space' from nature which is 'tamed' as an aesthetic embodiment (Hendry 1993; 1997a; 1997b). She stresses the distinct enclosure between inside and outside, and introduces particular Japanese layers of space such as *oku* and *shakkei*. The notion of *oku* is that of sacred places existing in the most inner and central parts of spaces such as gardens, buildings and especially woodlands³. The *shakkei*, which means "borrowed landscape", is concerned with associated and carefully planned views, such as gazing at distant mountains from within gardens. The Japanese term *shakkei* was especially used after the Edo period, but the incorporation of distant views into gardens was practised much earlier. This appropriation of outside landscapes is linked to the idea of *ikedori* which means "to capture alive"⁴.

One aspect of the well known enthusiasm for Japonisme in late 19th Britain was the desire by wealthy British 'to capture' Japanese gardens and transplant them to Britain. Japanese gardens and plants from Japan were highly fashionable in Britain from the 1880s to the 1920s (Conway 1988; Tachibana 2000; Hennis, 2001; Tachibana et al, 2004; Tachibana, 2008; 2010; Tachibana and Watkins, 2010). This fashion was driven both by the excitement over the introduction of many new garden plants from Japan and the enormous interest in Japanese design, arts and crafts known as

Japonisme (Sato and Watanabe 1991; Watanabe 1991; Ono, 2008). Knowledge of Japan was gained directly through travelling and indirectly through various media such as exhibitions, travel writings and art, design, and horticultural expertise. Since the International Exhibition (London 1862) Japan had been a frequent participant in exhibitions⁵. The idea of capturing Japanese gardens was boosted by the publication in 1893 of Josiah Conder's book, *Landscape Gardening in Japan*.

Conder's book was based on Kinkichiro Honda's book *Zukai Niwa Zukuri-ho* (*Illustrated Guide to How to Create Gardens*) published in 1890 in Japanese. Kinkichiro Honda (1851-1921) published a second Japanese edition of *Zukai Niwa Zukuri-ho* in 1907, in which Conder wrote a preface. It could be argued that Kinkichiro Honda renewed the idea of the Japanese garden by encountering the west. It seems that garden design was a hobby for Honda who was professional painter, who tried to develop and relate Japanese style paintings in a western manner (Suzuki 2007). The Japanese gardens which Josiah Conder described were from the later Edo period (17th to the 19th century) which were popularized in readily available printed books. His encounter with gardens was based on living in Tokyo and his thorough knowledge of the Imperial gardens and those owned by daimyos and wealthy merchants.

This paper explores the influence of cross-cultural knowledge derived from travel and horticultural education on the gardening work of three women in the early 20th century. This paper examines life histories of three women, two British, Ethel Webb and Ella Christie, and one Japanese, Taki Nakanome (nee Handa), who are all keen gardeners and are cross-cultural travel experienced both Britain and Japan. After returning from travelling or studying abroad, their cross cultural experiences of gardens and the creation of gardens at home and abroad helped to crystalize contemporary ideas about the interrelationship between 'natural,' 'exotic' and 'domesticated' landscape gardens. Webb and Christie were both from wealthy mine-owning families. They did not know each other but they both travelled to Japan, Webb in the last years of the 19th century and Christie in 1906, and soon created Japanese gardens on their private estates. The third woman is the Japanese horticulturalist Taki Nakanome (nee Handa) who studied in Britain at Studley College, Warwickshire, in 1906-1908 and designed and directed the construction of a Japanese garden at Ella Christie's estate, Cowden Castle.

II Ethel Webb at Newstead Abbey

The creation of Japanese gardens was particularly fashionable in early 20th century Britain. This section looks at the life history of Ethel Webb focused on creating the Japanese garden at Newstead Abbey as one example of a wealthy Edwardian woman who practised and promoted advanced garden design and horticultural knowledge. The Japanese garden at Newstead Abbey was created around 1899-1914, for Ethel Webb (1862-1915), one of daughters⁶ of the owner of the estate, William Frederick Webb (1829-1899). Although Newstead Abbey is one of the most famous country houses in Britain through its connection with the poet Lord Byron⁷, the documentation of the period of Webb family, especially concerning the gardens, is not extensive⁸. After William Frederick Webb bought Newstead Abbey in 1860, he spent much time in Africa, hunting big game. The rooms of Newstead Abbey were filled with lots of trophies, such as lion skins and heads, and many stuffed animals. Since childhood Ethel Webb was used to the surrounding environment of Newstead Abbey which was full of the taste of 'Africana'. Moreover the famous missionary explorer David Livingstone stayed at Newstead Abbey as a

guest of the Webb family for seven months 1864–5 and became a great friend of Ethel who was 'a very handsome child, black eyed and dark haired, with beautifully rosy cheeks ... she was, undoubtedly, from the first his special pet and playmate' (Fraser 1913: 97).

After William Frederick Webb's death at Luxor in 1899, the estate of Newstead Abbey was taken over by Lady Chermside, one of his daughters. It seems that Lady Chermside and Miss Ethel Webb's taste was far from their father's taste of 'Africana'. Moreover their attraction to Japanese decoration and garden design might have been, in part, a reaction against their father's taste for wild 'Africana'. From the sisters' view, the taste of 'Japonisme' might be their fascination with 'tamed' nature. It could be that Lady Chermside and Ethel Webb's interests in Japonisme began with their journey to the Far East where they purchased 'artistic Japanese screens' (Lloyd 1916, 75). They decorated 'Henry the Seventh's Lodgings' in Japanese style and their interest in Japonisme is not only focused on the creation of the Japanese garden, but also broadly situated in the creation of Japanese interiors.

Ethel Webb was the heir to Newstead Abbey after the death of her sister Lady Chermside in 1910. She owned the Newstead Abbey until she died in 1915. Here I look in more detail at her horticultural interests. Although her obituary in the *Mansfield Advertiser* on 19th Feb. 1915 does not particularly mention her creation of the Japanese garden at Newstead Abbey, she is described as 'one of the best amateur gardeners in England' and 'her horticultural collection including specimens from all parts of the world' (*Mansfield Advertiser*, 19 Feb. 1915). One significant role of Ethel Webb was that she opened her private gardens and park to the public on several occasions. In addition Ethel Webb entertained many guests in the gardens, including visits of the King Edward VII (Lloyd 1916, 44–45).

The site of Japanese garden at Newstead Abbey was located at the end of the main gardens, in the furthest place from the house of Newstead Abbey. In terms of the relationship with the house, it was not possible to view the Japanese garden from the windows of the house. The Japanese garden is below the lake, enclosed by woodland. It is a hidden place composed of a stream of a small pond and island, stepping stones, and some ornamental features such as stone lanterns and a pagoda. It seems like a sanctuary. When one examines the Japanese garden in relation to the other types of garden on the plan, the spatial relationship to rock garden is most important. The footpath was arranged in sequence from the rock garden to the Japanese garden. Another view point of the Japanese garden was from the inside of the Tea House.

The first guidebook to Newstead Abbey after the creation of the Japanese garden (1907), describes the Japanese garden as 'One of the last, though by no means the least, of the attractions of the demesne is the Japanese garden' (Lloyd 1916, 107). It stresses British 'fascination' with such gardens:

By the majority of the visitors it is the most popular feature of the grounds, and even the least imaginative cannot altogether resist the spell of its fascination. This garden is considered to be one of the most interesting of its kind in the country. To English eyes it looks like a scene from the Land of Make-believe ... Here are quaint stone ornaments, tall Japanese lanterns, and bamboo fences enclosing strange trees and shrubs (Lloyd 1916, 107–108).

The landscape created from the combination of all these garden ornaments and vegetation was crucial to the Japanese garden.

In 1996 the museum of Newstead Abbey acquired the manuscript notes believed to be made



Figure 1. Ethel Webb's manuscript notes on Japanese garden (Source: City of Nottingham Museums, Newstead Abbey)

by Ethel Webb⁹. Broadly speaking these manuscript notes focus on the arrangement of stones, including Japanese garden ornaments such as stone lanterns, and plants. They show how Miss Webb took ideas of the Japanese garden mainly from Josiah Conder's book *Landscape Gardening in Japan* (1893). Conder's book focused on the practical aspects, such as the various garden ornaments, which constituted Japanese gardens.

Ethel Webb uses Conder's book as a design guidebook which indicated how to use various garden ornaments such as garden stones, lanterns and pagodas. The manuscript concerns the design of two

islands which Miss Webb chooses from Conder's book: "Master's Isle" and "Guests' Isle". Conder's book describes precisely rules by which stones could be chosen for making certain designs. The manuscript shows how Miss Webb selected certain kinds of stone from the long list of stones. She also renamed some stones, jokingly replacing "sea gull resting stone" with "duck" (Figure 1). According to Miss Webb's drawing of manuscript (Figure 1), she also chose the "Snow Scene" lantern for 'Master's Islands' from the list of various types of Garden lanterns of Plate VI of Conder's book. This brief analysis of Japanese garden design shows Ethel Webb's attempt to 'copy' the 'authentic' Japanese garden through the instruction of Conder's book.

It could be argued that the most significant sign of an authentic Japanese garden was the employment of Japanese garden designers. But at Newstead the only such evidence is an article in *Country Life* (24th Nov. 1917) which states that was 'laid out by a skilled Japanese horticulturist brought over for the purpose' and that it 'drew from the Japanese Ambassador the magnificent compliment that it was the only thing he had seen since he left Japan which made him feel homesick' (Firth 1917, 497). It could be argued that this narrative in the media helped to create a myth of the 'authenticity' of Japanese garden at Newstead Abbey.

III Ella Christie at Cowden Castle

I have yet to find any primary archive evidence of the works of Japanese garden designers or 'a skilled Japanese horticulturist' at Newstead Abbey. However the newly discovered notes by Miss Ethel Webb confirm the great importance of Conder's book in transmitting and popularising the idea of the Japanese garden. They confirm that a lot of the detail of the garden at Newstead Abbey was directly copied from Conder's text.

This section examines life history of Ella Christie and her creation process of Japanese garden at her estate, Cowden Castle, Scotland. The motivation of making Ella Christie's Japanese garden was the result of her encounter with Japanese gardens while on her journey to the Far East and surviving archives provide a clear vision of her fascination with the creation of a Japanese garden in the early twentieth century.¹⁰ Ella Christie was from a wealthy Scottish mine owning family,¹¹ who lived at Cowden Castle, Dollar, Scotland. She was a rich female traveller

looking for freedom, adventures and exoticism in the other parts of the world (Birkett 1989). Ella Christie had a close relationship with her sister Alice Stewart, they sometimes travelled together, and if not Ella kept frequent correspondence with Alice. Ella published *Through Kiva to Golden Samarkand* (Christie 1925). Ella and Alice published a joint autobiography *A Long Look at Life: by two Victorians* (Christie and Stewart 1940).

The Japanese garden at Cowden was greatly related with Ella Christie's journey to the Far East including Japan in 1907 not too long after the end of the Russo-Japanese War. Ella's friend, Colonel (later Sir Aylmer) Haldane, at the War Office, Whitehall, helped provide advice 'Baroness D'Arethan to whom I have written will help you with shopping' and the use of 'a good rickshaw man who knows a little English' was recommended (Stewart 1955, 188-189). Ella arrived in Japan in April 1907. In Japan, Ella 'fell in love with its gardens' (Stewart 1955, 202). She stayed in Kyoto (April 1907) and Tokyo (May 1907), and visited various Japanese gardens in the cherry blossom season. Ella also encountered the painter Miss Ella Du Cane. Ella Christie observed that:

I think the great secret of the Japanese talent for gardens lies in their superlative powers of imitation. The gardens were first copied from the Chinese, and then improved upon the lines of nature till one can scarcely see where the artificial and natural join. I have seen one in the making and it is most curious, one of a villa strip to find in a month that the whole thing is laid out with all the marks of positive antiquity. Not a plant looks as if it had ever been moved and the mossy stones go on mossing, whereas with us if one disturbs such you know the effect is a withered look within a few days (Letter from Ella Christie (24th April 1907, Yaami Hotel, Kyoto.) to Alice Stewart. quotation from Stewart 1955: 203¹³).

Ella's numerous visits to Japanese gardens and her enthusiasm led her to dream of the creation of a Japanese garden at home in Scotland. In order to make Ella's dream made come true, it was necessary to do some serious 'shopping'.

After Ella's return from the Far East, she started to plan the Japanese garden. During Ella's journey in Japan, Ella wrote a letter to Alice: 'Miss Du Cane has heard of a possible Japanese gardener in England who could lay out a garden for me. I am getting orders to see some of the private gardens here¹⁴'. In the early stage of creating the garden, Taki Handa was an executor of the plan in Ella's mind. Moreover the creation of the garden was always in process, since even after the completion of the first plan, it was necessary to modify and maintain it by expert gardeners' everyday work. The garden at Cowden Castle was named 'Shah-rak-uen' which means "a place of pleasure and delight." This garden is an "Elysium" for Ella.

The first stage of making the Japanese garden in the park of Cowden Castle was described by Ella: 'Something less than twenty years ago I made a lake at Cowden out of a piece of marshy ground then thickly overgrown with rushes' (Christie and Stewart 1940, 234). In terms of scale, this Japanese garden is situated on the north edge of the estate boundary in the parkland, and is over seven and a half acres, as shown in 'plan of the Japanese Garden at Cowden' (Stewart 1955). The Japanese garden is situated in the lowest place, allowing the artificial lake to be made. It was isolated from other gardens, so it seems an independent garden in the parkland. One crucial element of any serious Japanese garden, the lake or pond, was designed with the particular aim of making a Japanese garden:

... originally a large expanse of waste, swampy ground, through which there flowed a burn;

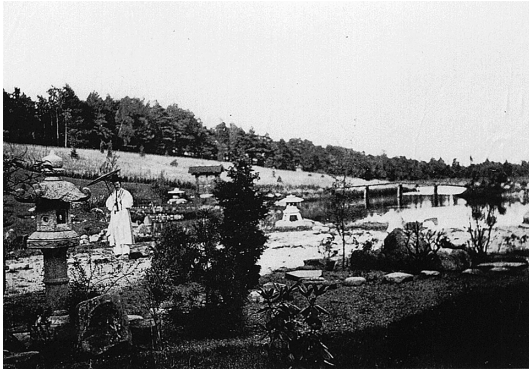


Figure 2. Ella Christie's Japanese garden at Cowden Castle in 1920s (Source: Private collection of Sir Robert Stewart)

this burn was supplied by a good, natural spring of water, and in 1906 an embankment was made, and this burn and swamp was transformed into the pond that exists to-day. Around this water there was still a considerable extent of waste land and the natural slopes of this ground together with the fact that it was already well sheltered from the north by belts of trees was soon appreciated by Miss Christie as an ideal spot for a typical Japanese Garden (Stewart 1955, 2).

The first process of creating a Japanese garden from this lake, which was converted from 'marshy field', by Taki Handa, was described by Ella:

Realizing the possibilities of the somewhat uninteresting stretch of ground about the lake, and how, if the breath of life were breathed into it, it would become a living soul, I found a Japanese woman who could undertake the task and wave the magic wand. For six weeks she toiled and planned, while to the untrained eye apparently shapeless mounds arose, and stone were sought for and found and placed in the natural orthodox grouping (Christie and Stewart 1940, 234-235).

The main structure of the garden was designed with the help of Taki Handa. During Ella's stay in Tokyo in the spring of 1907, Ella made contact with the most useful and key British person in Japan, Josiah Conder, through an enquiry about the creation of Japanese garden at home. He recommended that she approach the Yokohama Nursery Company Ltd. at No 21-35 Nakamura Yokohama- otherwise called the Gardeners Association who could 'supply you with suitable Japanese designs for gardens as well as advising you upon selections of trees shrubs, stones, lanterns etc.'¹⁵

In addition to the main lay out of the garden, garden ornaments such as stone lanterns were crucial elements and she ordered three antique stone lanterns in 1908 from Japanese antique dealers named *DAIKOKUYA* (T. Imai) addressed in Nijo Sagaru, Kawaramachi¹⁶. This example of the Japanese antique dealer *DAIKOKUYA* shows that selling Japanese curio to Europe was an established business by this period. The export of Japanese garden ornaments was part of the business of dealing in antiques for the market of European "Japonisme" taste lovers. The three types of stone lanterns which Ella bought were treated as antique arts. The Japanese technique of conservation of 'moss' on the surface of the stone lanterns was not effective in Scotland.¹⁷

The main entrance was at the East end of garden. A pathway led alongside the pond. There is an island "Outlying Isle" in the centre of pond, and another set of islands "Masters Isle" and "Guest Isle" in the eastern part of the pond. It seems that part of this layout of garden was by Taki Handa and part 'copied' from Conder's design book, which increased the authenticity of the Japanese garden. The garden was not completed at once, there were many discussions between the owner and the designers. The plants were not only Japanese plants, but also those

collected from around the world, including indigenous Scottish plants. Ella planted some Korean pine seeds which she had collected from Korea.

After the first world war in the 1920s the garden was modified by Ella Christie with the help of Professor J Suzuki based at 8 New Oxford St. London and a resident gardener called Matsuo.¹⁸ Matsuo started working at Cowden from 1925. The vision of Matsuo working at the garden was described: 'He soon grew to be as much a part of the garden as its trees and shrubs---and an even greater attraction to visitors' (Stewart 1955, 216). Matsuo's life history was described as: 'Alone in the world, having lost his entire family in one of earthquakes, he adopted this little corner of Scotland' (Stewart 1955, 216). Suzuki had enough language to communicate with Ella, and persuade her to alter the garden design. Suzuki had acquired a power of language to communicate, but Matsuo had not. Matsuo could not speak English.

The taciturnity was probably due to his lack of English, and it was a marvel how he and his mistress understood one another, as they undoubtedly did. By a process of what someone well called 'signs and wonders' they planned the work, and one watcher at least has a lasting memory of the two standing together by a bed of irises, deep in a kind of hybrid conversation; he smiling and small, with his hat in his hand (he always snatched it off when he saw her coming) ... (Stewart 1955, 216).

This communication between Ella and Matsuo without language, 'a kind of hybrid conversation,' suggests the garden itself was a medium of communication.¹⁹

IV Cross-cultural Horticultural Experiences of Taki Nakanome (nee Handa)

This section draws Japanese perspective in the context of the fashion of Japanese gardens in Britain in early 20th century. The document of life history of Taki Nakanome (nee Handa) was recently revealed and shed light on her contribution to cross-cultural and authentic ideas on Japanese gardens in Britain (Hoshi and Tachibana 2011; Raggett et al. 2013). Taki Nakanome (nee Handa) who was born in Kurume, Fukuoka Prefecture, was a weak child, often sick and absent from school, however her elder brother who later become a medical doctor, understood her will to learn and encouraged and supported her to become a teacher. Taki's family was warrior class (*samurai*) in Edo Period, it became poor in Meiji Period, and Taki had to help their family to learn spinning to earn money although she was a good at primary school. Eventually her brother become a medical doctor and supported the family. This brother insisted that Taki go back to secondary school while all her fellow students were younger than her. At the same time the brother advised Taki to learn English from the wife of an Anglican priest, so Taki went to church to learn English, and she become a Christian at the age of 16 with her father.

Her brother recommended her to proceed the private Doshisha Women's College in Kyoto where she started to study botany, horticulture and English in 1895 at the age of 22. Taki encountered a charismatic teacher Miss Mary Florence Denton (1857-1947), an American missionary with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission, who worked at the College from 1888 at the age of 31, until her death in Japan in 1947 (Ono 1988; Clapp 2007). Miss Denton was an important fund raiser for the College and often entertained wealthy foreign visitors at her house in the college grounds. She was a strong influence on Taki and helped her when she decided to learn abroad. Taki was an excellent student at Doshisha Women's College,



Figure3. Taki Handa at Studley College (Source: Private Collection of Tamae Hoshi and Nakanome family)

and after graduation, she was invited to teach at Koran Women's School, which was run by Anglican Church Missionary, in Tokyo for 3 years.

During her teaching at Tokyo, Taki often visited Koishikawa Botanical Garden to study the plants in the collection, and attended, as she was only female audience, several lectures by eminent Japanese botanist such as Dr Makino. Then Taki was invited to return and teach at Doshisha Women's College where Miss Denton introduced Taki to the American millionaire, Mr Robert Le Boutillier and his family. Taki

acted as an interpreter and assistant for their plant-hunting trip to Hakone and Nikko, 6 June till 2 July 1902. Taki's task was to make dried specimens and identify the Japanese and academic Linnean names of the plants for Le Boutillier; she was also allowed to collect her own specimens and some for the college.

The Le Boutillier family got on well with Taki and gave her money to study abroad. She attended Studley College, Warwickshire, in 1906–1908. She travelled in the summer of 1906 with her brother who was also travelling to Europe to study at Berlin. She spent several days at Oxford with a friend of Miss Denton before arriving at Studley College. This independent and private college was one of several established in Britain the late nineteenth century for women (Opitz 2013). It was first established by Lady Warwick at Reading in 1898, moved to Studley Castle in 1903 and offered 'a high standard of horticultural education' for women (Meredith 2003: 71). It was specifically designed to promote women's horticultural education and was chosen for Taki by Miss Denton, although Taki in her autobiography later said that at the time she would have preferred to go to America. The college had around 40 resident students at this time.

On her arrival Taki was fascinated by the 'towering Studley Castle used as a College building' and the 400 acres of parkland, fields and gardens which surrounded it. The Castle had been completed in 1836 and designed by Samuel Beazley in the gothic revival style. She was fascinated by the sight of 'sheep grazing in the field' which to her was a remarkable novelty and was amused that her 'new English friends' laughed to see her watch what to them appeared an everyday sight 'so intensely and closely'. She noted that there were many trees and shrubs planted in the park and that 'some areas were like woodland, some parts of the garden had lawns and the grass was cut smoothly as a carpet' and there were also areas designed as flower gardens. She particularly admired the '*Cedar of Lebanon*' which was 'a beautiful garden tree'. Originally the park was owned by a wealthy family and Taki noted that 'it had collections of various and diverse species of garden plants. I heard that out of the 13 conservatories (greenhouses) currently used for educational purposes, 11 are original features from the Castle building'. She was most impressed by 'the steam engine used to make electricity for lighting and powering a saw mill for cutting timber' (Handa 1909, 56–57).

Miss Denton advised Taki to wear the Japanese traditional kimono all the time during her study abroad and indeed this was noted in the College Journal: 'The latest arrival, Miss Handa, came straight from Japan in picturesque dress in her country' (Studley College 1906). However the

Warden and Secretary of Studley College took Taki to Birmingham to buy some practical clothes such as aprons although she wore the Japanese kimono on social occasions such as formal dinners. When Taki was invited to a tea party by the Founder of the college, Lady Warwick and her 10 year old son were keen to discuss the Japanese kimono with Taki (Nakanome 1954: 83). Taki joined in with the wide range of social activities at the College and at one evening show it was reported that 'Miss Handa and Miss Zabielski made a dear little pair of pussies, and pathetically lamented the shoes and ashes purporting to be all that remained of Miss Vriesendorp as Harriette' (Studley College 1907, 36). Taki entered the Royal Horticultural Society Exams and gained a second class pass in the summer of 1908 (Studley College 1908, 101).

I now consider the process of creation of the Japanese garden at Cowden Castle from Taki's perspective. While Taki was studying abroad at Studley College, Miss Denton asked Taki to help Ella Christie design her Japanese garden at Cowden Castle. It is likely that when Ella Christie was staying in Kyoto in April 1907, she got to know Miss Denton. Taki also received a letter directly from Ella asking her for help. Taki visited Cowden Castle three times in January, April and August in 1908 and was paid one pound per week for her work (Nakanome 1954). She got permission from the Warden of the College for her first visit and travelled by train via Edinburgh and Dollar. From Dollar Station, it took 15 minutes by car to reach Cowden Castle where she met Ella Christie for the first time. Taki and Ella discussed about her plan of a creation of Japanese garden and Taki observed the site which consisted of two acres of marsh with a lake. Taki stayed for a few days, and then returned to Studley College to prepare for her second year examination for the certificate of Royal Horticultural Society. In February and March while at Studley she made a rough sketch plan of the proposed garden. She described the garden in her autobiography:

It is divided into two styles of garden: hill garden (*tsuki-yama*) and flat garden (*hira-niwa*). The central figure was a duck lake (*kamo-yose no niwa*) which had a boat-house as well. On the East side of the lake there is a natural slope made from soil produced from digging out a lake. On the border of the slope and the flat land there is a small valley leading to the lake. There is a natural waterfall. I tried to make effective use of these natural features in my plan of a Japanese garden (Nakanome 1954, 93).

Taki's second visit was taken in April 1908 during the spring holiday and travelled on the night train. She was met at Edinburgh by the sister of the secretary of Studley College, Miss Bennet, who showed her around Edinburgh where she saw the Castle and University. For the first three days she checked the site with her plan and instructed three workers in how to construct the Japanese garden. She noted that Miss Christie was keen to have a bridge so she told the workers to 'dig a ditch along the lake and use the soil to create an island hill (*tsuki-yama*) in the lake.' She 'identified some medium sized stones to build up a stone wall from which the bridge could span the water.' Miss Christie would bring guests to show them Taki working in the garden. Taki thought that 'Miss Christie was very pleased with the effect.' She lawned most of the ground on the island and 'placed a few medium sized stones and planted azaeleas, box bushes and rhododendrons between them. This made an interesting landscape.' She discussed the relationship with the workers in some detail:

At the slope, I made both a big and a small mountain (*tsuki-yama*) and placed garden-stones,

and planted the same mixture as in the island plantation. I used stones from an old mill to make the shape of stone lantern. The Scottish workers worked very hard for me and showed great interest in what I did and admired the way I changed the landscape (Nakanome 1954, 93).

However, she found instructing the workers in the 'correct' way to establish the shape of islands and slopes very difficult. She found that she had to re-form the edges of the embankments herself as the workers had cut them 'like pillars with square corners' and she had to make them smooth and curved in the Japanese style. She felt that this was 'understandable as they had never seen a Japanese garden in Japan before.' The idea of a Japanese Garden in Britain was 'limited to having Japanese *torii* gate and stone lanterns' (Nakanome 1954, 93).

When she returned to Studley after Easter she continued to work for her examinations and learned about the technical details of chicken farming. She returned to Cowden in early August 1908 and worked there until the garden was 'almost 80 percent finished', however Taki's family asked her back to Japan where she returned in October 1908. One aspect of the garden which Taki could not complete was the placement of Japanese stone lanterns. She could not find good Japanese stone lantern in London, so she ordered lanterns from Japan. These did not arrive before she left, so she marked her plan to show where they should be placed. Many years later Taki was pleased to receive a letter from a professional 'garden designer of Nagoya' which complimented her on her design at Cowden. The 'only thing he changed was the position of the snow viewing lantern' which he moved from the ground next to the lake to a position actually within the lake.' Otherwise the designer said that nothing had to be changed and 'it was a perfect design for a Japanese Garden.' She was delighted 'to hear this positive critique from a professional Japanese garden designer because she had made the design through her own feeling and instinct and making use of garden design books' so she had been 'uncertain what a professional designer would have thought' (Nakanome 1954). Taki did not mention about Josiah Conder's *Landscape gardening in Japan* in her autobiography, however Ella actually contacted Conder while she was at Tokyo in May 1907, and had this book herself. So Taki must have used this as a reference of ideas and visions of the Japanese garden.

Taki returned to Japan in November 1908, and carried on teaching botany, horticulture and English at Doshisha Women's College in 1909. In 1910 she married her brother's friend, Seiichi Nakanome, a medical doctor who already had six children, and continued teaching at Doshisha Women's College in Kyoto, Japan. The following year, Taki gave a birth a daughter, and had another daughter two years later. Taki described her life as 'Within two years getting married, I become a wife, a mother and a grand mother, which are all interesting experiences for me' (Nakanome 1912). Taki retired from Doshisha Women's College in 1919, then moved to Sendai for the sake of their children's education, and eventually moved to Nakanome's family hometown Mizusawa, Iwate Prefecture where she ran an orchard.

Her husband retired after a slight stroke so Taki had to support her family. The Nakanome family were landowners at Mizusawa, so Taki started running an orchard during the 1920s which she ran until 1932. In making this decision she was probably influenced by her training at Studley and her knowledge of other students who had set up their own businesses. Taki gained advice about the best fruits to grow in the area from Iwate Prefectural Agricultural Experiment Station. A specialist adviser named Mr Yoshida was most important in helping her develop the plantation, digging, putting fertilisers made from horse droppings, and planting nursery trees. She planted various species of nursery trees presented by the Experiment Station:

Japanese pears, western pears, grapevines, apples, cherry, peach and so on. The Nakanome orchard's land was 1260-*tsubo* (4158 square meter) and she employed 9 workers and 3 assistants to run it.

In 1925 the whole of Taki's family moved to Mizusawa from Sendai-city. As it was quite a distance from their main house at Omote-Koji to the orchard at Fukuhara, Taki built a second house costing 3,950 yen near to the orchard to make her work at the orchard easier. She started to run the orchard 'by employing Mr and Mrs Tarimatsu Goto as fulltime managing workers.' While the trees were up to about 5 years old she 'planted wheat, potatoes, other types of vegetable and crops' to produce an income while waiting for the orchard trees to grow enough to produce fruit. This work was done by Mr Tarimatsu Goto, but she was able to begin harvesting and making profit from grapes and strawberries (Nakanome 1954, 111). Taki ran the orchard at the Nakanome family estate at Mizusawa during the 1920s. In 1932, Taki retired and gave up her orchard for her stepson, Seigo, to run. Taki returned to Kyoto with her husband, Seiichi where he died in 1938. In 1941, Taki's family at Mizusawa called her back to Mizusawa to spend her later life with them. Taki wrote her autobiography from 1947 till 1949, and this was privately printed and published in May 1954. She died in 1956 at the age of 86.

The production of food was especially important during World War II and her granddaughter, Tamae Hoshi, told me that there was always a long queue to buy food from Nakanome Orchard. The family and friends had to keep close look out at night for potential thieves. Taki told the family about English traditions such as 'eating fruits in the morning is gold, in the noon is silver, and in the night is bronze.' Tamae Hoshi suggested Taki's attachment to orchard was reflected in the choice of their grand daughters' names which are 'Tamae' meaning 'branches of apples', and 'Fusae' meaning 'branches of grapevines'.²⁰

V Conclusions

This paper has looked at how three women tried "to capture alive" exotic natures by showing their life histories. The three women captured different natures and placed them in the domestic sphere of the garden and orchard. The form and mode of capture was influenced by their lifelong activities concerned with travelling, gardening and horticulture in education and practices at home. Ethel Webb and Ella Christie, through travelling to Japan, encountered the landscape of Japanese gardens in Japan at first hand. They experienced the attraction of Japanese gardens in Japan, then tried to capture the essence of Japanese gardens and move it to their home in Britain. They made use of local contacts, such as Mary Denton, and authors such as Josiah Conder. They made visits to gardens, nurseries and made notes and read books on garden design. Conder's book *Landscape Gardening in Japan* published in 1893 was crucially important in creating Japanese gardens in Britain. It was used by British and Japanese garden makers and designers. Taki Nakanome (nee Handa) had never designed a Japanese garden before, yet understood the vision of Japanese garden through consulting this book. The Japanese garden at Cowden, through the employment of Japanese such as Taki Nakanome (nee Handa), J. Suzuki and Matsuo became even more authentic: the garden designers and gardener were one of the attractions of the garden and had themselves been captured alive.

For Japanese view in Meiji Period (1868-1912), Britain was a strong imperial power. The relationship between Japan and Britain was not equal. So the essence of experience between Taki Nakanome (nee Handa)'s experiences in Britain and Ethel Webb's and Ella Christie's

experiences in Japan must be very different. Both Webb and Christie are examples of wealthy Edwardian women who practised and promoted advanced garden design and horticultural knowledge. They were an important display of female independence in this period; no less so than global travel. On the other hand, Taki was a student learning horticulture in Britain, and employed as a garden designer by Ella Christie. After back to Japan, Taki taught at Doshisha Women's College, and got married, became a wife, a mother and a grandmother, at the same time running orchard at rural home. Female horticultural education took several forms, such as personal travel, length periods of stay and study, deep reading and immersion in relevant texts, and practical engagement and enthusiasm with horticulture. Concerned with gender and cross-cultural issues in gardening, several British women, such as Gertude Jeykll, became well known for gardening in early 20th century. But most of the staff employed by landowners as gardeners and designers were men. Ella Christie's employment of a female garden designer, Taki Nakanome (nee Handa) in 1908, was obscured by the fact that she was a foreigner. Her exoticness was perhaps more important than her gender.

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Notes

1. The translation is 'poem pillow'. A good example of *utamakura* in Japan is at Matsushima.
2. Kawasaki argues that the landscape of William Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey was a type of 18th century *utamakura* (Kawasaki 1988).
3. For an explanation of the spatial structure of the place of shrine in the natural woodlands *oku-miya* (Maki, 1979).
4. This English translation is made by Nitschke (1993: 180). The notion of *shakkei* is fully explained in Ito (1972).
5. The Japanese government did not contribute to the exhibition, but Rutherford Alcock displayed his own collection, especially Japanese industrial arts and crafts. Alcock edited a catalogue (1862).
6. William Frederick Webb had seven children: Lady Chermiside (1859-1910), Miss Ethel Mary Webb (1862-1915), Roderick Beauclerk Webb (1867-1916), Mrs. Augusta Zelia Fraser (1858-1925), Wilfred (1861-1861), Mabel Cecilia Webb (1864-1891), Algernon Frederick Webb (1865-1884).
7. The Byrons bought Newstead Abbey in 1540, and owned it until 1817.
8. Wheeler mentions: 'There is no extended account of the park and gardens at Newstead, which must partly be attributed to the paucity of surviving records' (Wheeler 1989).
9. Letter from Pamela Gatty (Pepper Arden, Northallerton, North Yorkshire) to the curator of Newstead Abbey (Nottinghamshire) 11 July 1996, held at Newstead Abbey.
10. The Stewart-Christie Papers (Acc. 5058) are in sixteen boxes. Some of these documents were used for the biography of Ella Christie and Alice Stewart, entitled *Alicella* (1955) written by Averil Stewart, Ella Christie's niece, published by John Murray.
11. John Christie retired to Cowden Castle. When Ella was born as their second child her mother was forty-four years old. Their first child John was born in 1860, and lived until twelve years old.
12. Florence Du Cane wrote a book *The Flowers and Gardens of Japan* (1908). Ella Du Cane draw the illustrations for this book. This book mainly took information from Conder's *Landscape Gardening in Japan* (1893) and Siebold's *Flora japonica*.
13. This part of Ella's observation of Japanese gardens, which Averil Stewart quoted in *Alicella* (1955) is missing in the original letter in the archive which is letter from Ella Christie (Yaami Hotel, Maruyama Park, Kyoto, Japan.) to Alice Stewart on April 24th, 1907. Stewart-Christie Papers (Acc. 5058), The National Library of Scotland (NLS).
14. Letter from Ella Christie (Imperial Hotel & Villa, Tokio) to Alice Stewart on May 3rd 07 held in the Stewart-Christie Papers (Acc. 5058) (NLS) 'If feasible I shall bring a Jap home to lay out my pond. It could be made a dream of beauty ...' (Letter from Ella (3rd May 1907. Imperial Hotel and Villa, Kyoto) to Alice (Stewart 1955, 210).
15. Letter from Josiah Conder to Ella Christie (Imperial Hotel and Villa, Tokio) on 9th May 1907, held in the Stew-

- art-Christie Papers (NLS).
16. Invoice letter from Daikokuya (T. Imai.) (Nijo Sagaru Kawaramachi, Kyoto, Japan) to Ella Christie on 13th Oct. 1908. held in the Stewart-Christie Papers (NLS). Headed letter paper noted 'dealer in pictures, stationers, -hand painted and water marked- also miscellaneous Japanese articles.
 17. 'The Japanese set great store by moss on all their stone-work to give the appearance of antiquity; but Ella met defeat at the beaks of the active Scottish wrens which allowed no moss that might contain an insect to survive for a day!' (A. Stewart 1955, 212).
 18. Letter from Suzuki (8 New Oxford Street. London) on 6-10-1925. Stewart-Christie Papers (NLS). For recent research on Suzuki, see Raggett (2008).
 19. In 2014 Sara Stewart established an appeal to raise money to restore the garden at Cowden (Stewart, 2014).
 20. Interviewed with Taki's granddaughter, Tamae Hoshi. Also see Hoshi and Tachibana (2011).

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