Structural Analysis of the Naturalistic Landscaping of 'Sakuteiki'

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(Received October 29, 1996)

Our visual actions take both the sensory and reversible views in the relationship of the mutual coordination between them. And the visual actions, as a whole, realize the sensory scene when having the marked tendency to sensory views, and the reversible scene to reversible views.

The author of Sakuteiki classified natural scenery into the landscape types called yo. The landscape types were transformed into the places where humans and nature happened to meet harmoniously. It was the main theme of the author of Sakuteiki to discuss how we should compose rocks in the place. We can find, in Sakuteiki, two manners of looking at nature, such as 'changing the taste' corresponding to the sensory view, and 'in compliance with the requesting mood of ' to the reversible view. They were, in the paper, studied to analyze the naturalistic landscaping of Sakuteiki.

Keywords: visual actions, sensory view, reversible view, setting rocks, landscapes types

1. Introduction

It is said that Sakuteiki, or Notes on Garden Making is Tachibana no Toshituna’s eleventh-century manuscript. He compiled it on the basis of his experience of making the shinden style garden. Sakuteiki is highly evaluated as an old book by Japanese people who are interested in the garden. In fact it has a superiority on both theoretical and technical matters over the other old garden manuals.

Sakuteiki has been studied mainly on the meaning and interpretation of the words or clauses written in it. The paper is to study on the naturalistic landscaping of Sakuteiki from the view point of our visual actions. The principle of setting rocks is fully explained in the garden-making of Sakuteiki. It is because the author intended to emphasis the traditional and religious aspects of garden-making. The early Japanese recognized more than beauty in setting rocks. They propitiated natural forces beyond human control through the elaborate work of setting rocks one by one. And in Japan the manner of looking at nature has traditionally been sanctified. Accordingly, it is the essential theme for the morphogenesis of culture. We can learn ‘the way of modelling after nature’ on the basis of ‘the manner of looking at nature’, and then we can proceed to realize ‘the way of making nature’. In composing rocks we will transpose nature from

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one aspect to the other without damaging it as much as possible: it means the concrete expression of `the way of making nature'. Setting rocks is the conducts by which, on the one hand, we are associated with the God of nature or natural scenery, and, on the other hand, we recreate nature. These conducts must be well performed so that the landscape of the garden may be realized as the spatial objects to view and come to be taken in the culture.

2. The method of analysis

It is important to see how we grasp nature on the subject of landscape design. We must study our visual actions in order to discuss how we view nature. We simply look at something in a given situation. When we are looking at the objects of the externals, the visual actions are divided into two manners of looking, depending on our personal stress. When looking at the objects, we will cut off sense-data from the externals. The property of sense-data is different according to whether we quietly cut off sense-data or not. In the static situation, our visual actions take, as the visual function, the sensory views which lend the externals special sensory qualities such as colors or textures, while in the moving situation they keep, as the space-formative function, the reversible views which show the externals in measuring structures. If our eyes were motionless, the externals would be simplified in terms of sensory views. However, our visual actions are in the dynamic situation as well as the static. After we took several sensory views, we come to take reversible views, separating one sensory view from the other, connecting and comparing one with the other. When we are aware of the reversible view, a landscape becomes meaningful in our visual actions. In other words, we actually coordinate our actions, receive the impression of objects in the externals, grasp its meaning and find the spatial relation between our visions and the objects. Then we keep the visual fields in the relation between our visions and the externals. In the landscape design, it is important to study how our visual actions should be performed in the place where a person comes to terms with nature. The visual actions have sensory and reversible views, which are mutually coordinated in a natural way. In the case that the sensory view becomes dominant in the place, the mutual coordination between two views is realized in more sensory and continuous ways, so that the visual actions come to be made into the sensory scene. On the other hand, when the reversible view becomes dominant, the mutual coordination is realized in a more thoughtful way, so that the visual actions come to be integrated into the moving scene. As the reversible view develops from the sensory view, one sensory scene is separated from the other, connected with the other, and proceed to be integrated into the moving scene. The practical landscape will be discussed on the basis of the behavior of the sensory and moving scenes.

3. Structural analysis of *Sakuteiki*

3.1 Two manners of looking at nature

The three general guidelines given at the beginning of *Sakuteiki* seem to have all of the most fundamental matters throughout the manuscript. The general guidelines are as follows:
(1) Depending on the character of the terrain and the shape of the pond, you should design each part of the garden tastefully, recalling your memories of how nature presented itself for each feature (This is stated as the first guideline).

(2) Study the examples of works left by the past masters, and, considering the desires of the owner of the garden, you should create a work of your own by exercising your tasteful sense (as the second guideline).

(3) Think over the famous places of scenic beauty throughout the land, and by making it your own that which appeals to you most, design your garden with the mood of harmony, modelling after the general air of such places (as the third guideline).

In the first guideline, there is a phrase that ‘Depending on the character of the terrain and the shape of the pond, you should design each part of the garden tastefully. The author of Sakuteiki took a strong interest in ‘the character of the terrain’ and ‘the shape of the pond’ at the beginning of the manuscript. It suggests that the total landscapes such as ‘the terrain’ and ‘the pond’ should be in harmony with the local landscapes. He, throughout the manuscript, gave thought to the spatial relationship between the whole and parts, since it was important to understand it in the landscaping of the garden. The idea of the whole and parts works also in the other items of the three general guidelines, such as ‘recalling your memories of how nature presented itself for each feature’ or ‘Think over the famous places of scenic beauty throughout the land, and by making it your own that which appeals to you most.’ In the items other than the general guidelines, there is also such a clause as ‘In the place where a pond is planned to be dug and the rocks to be set, the shape of the pond and islands should be designed, first depending on the character of the terrain.’ Here we recognize that the author conceptually reduced the objects from the total size to the part in such a order as (terrain)¢(pond)¢(island). We can find, in the other contexts, the same examples such as, (terrain, pond)¢(mound, field), (pond)¢(the aspect of the place)¢(island), (garden stream)¢(place), (south garden)¢(field landscape).

The shinden style garden has, as its main theme, the pond which imitates an ocean, and so the pond commands the large parts of the garden landscape. We should note that the author of Sakuteiki grasped the terrain and pond as the total landscape. In the case that the spatial images are reduced in scale from the total to the part, they almost get to such the extents as hill, field, coast and so forth. They are the places which form the components of the shinden style garden. And the places are designed with the placing of stones. In general a viewer may be interested in the subject whether the garden is beautiful or not, but if he is a gardener, he will argue what sorts of places it consists of. However large the total site of the garden may be, we must begin landscaping by setting rocks one by one and then making the place, keeping our eyes upon the parts close to ourselves. Therefore, the author of Sakuteiki naturally suggested that it meant the garden-making to set a rock at the beginning of the document. He designed the local landscapes in the system of the total, but it does not simply mean his thinking that the total nature such as the topography and land features should take precedence over all other things. Throughout the document, he gave the best interest in the places as the components of the garden, where persons were on friendly terms with nature. Whereas the total conditions of topography and land features have influences upon the partial places, the partial places conversely become the components to construct the new total events of the garden. They have the perceptual contents of the place as well as the spatial relationship between the whole and parts. In fact, this dual property of the place originates in two views of our visual actions. In the three general guidelines, two manners of looking are considered: in the first guideline, the phrase ‘each part of the garden’ indicates the place as the component of the garden, where the reversible view is considered. In the phrase ‘each part of the garden tastefully’, the sensory view is moreover added on the place. And two manners of looking can be analyzed, such as in the second, ‘your tasteful sense’ (sensory view), ‘by exercising ......’(reversible view). In the third,
‘modelling after the general air of such places’ (reversible view), ‘with the mood of harmony’ (sensory view). In the second guideline, the aspect (Arisama in Japanese) is considered as the imaginative object of our visual actions. As for the ‘aspect’ in the other items, there are the examples of phrases, such as the aspect of the place, of rough beach, of land and so on. The aspect is here used as the meaning of the word similar to ‘scene’. In the third guideline, the phrase ‘the general air (of such places)’ is meaningful as the object of reversible views. This phrase is used in the clause referring to the island as follows: ‘If the aspect of the island, when constructing it, is given an outline from the beginning, (it is not a correct method, because the coast becomes sodden... You should gradually make the shape of island after you set rocks in accordance with the general air of it.’ Here the words such as ‘figure’ (Sugata), ‘the general air’ (Ohsugata), ‘shape’ (Katachi) are used with a delicate nuance in meanings. The general air is not so strictly in detail as the figure, but puts only the general shape in question. The author says, in the items of ‘Oral transmission on setting rocks’, as follows: ‘You should not be anxious about the inclination of the general air of the rock with a distorted head, in order to display apparently its beautiful side’. The general air can keep a stable property in a small difference, because it is not caught by details, This is the property by which the shape of the object can be universal: one can model the object after another, referring to this universal shape. The general air in the third of the general guidelines is used as a effective expression when a person copies one landscape after another. We, in the words, find reversible views because our visual actions, on recognition, move from one object to another, seeking for the universal shape.

In making a garden, it is fundamental to consider how our visual actions should be performed in the place, and how the landscape be organized. And we should dissolve our visual actions into two manners of looking, examining the principle of the mutual coordination between them. The author of Sakuteiki must, as a garden designer, distinguish the visual actions between two manner of looking, whether he was conscious or not. In the first and second of the general guidelines, the phrase of ‘tastefully or (excising) your tasteful sense’ indicates the attitude that the author tried to observe the place from the standpoint of a viewer. In the Heian literature, the scenes were often described with the phrase of ‘an interestingtaste’. It suggests that the scenes were viewed with emotion rather than beauty in those days, and then that the visual actions strengthened the tendency of the sensory view, with the emotional sense. The word of ‘tastefully’ is more strongly related to the existing visual actions, and more intimately to the place than the phrases ‘recalling your memories of’ in the first guideline and ‘think over’ in the third. Consequently, the actual matters of gardening are more strongly implied in the word of ‘tastefully’. We can find the word of ‘taste’ (fuzei) in two parts other than two general guidelines. One of these is in the clause ‘you should set stones, gradually changing the taste with this essence toward the end of stream’ in the item of ‘the River Style’. Another is in the clause ‘Thus I intend to make efforts to understand the essence in gardening, but I cannot be enough skillful to satisfy the taste’. When we minutely investigate the contexts before and after the above four parts where the word of ‘taste’ is expressed, the words, through they all are abstract and epistemological, such as ‘each part caused’ ‘aspect’ ‘intention’ ‘essence’ and ‘principle’, are always placed just before describing ‘taste’. This is because the author intended to put the reversible (epistemological aspect) and sensory views (tasteful aspect) side by side in the sentence. Especially, in the general guidelines, the author seems to cherish the desire to emphasize these views as fundamental principle in making garden.

In the clause of ‘the River Style’ that ‘gradually changing the taste with this essence’ we examined reversible and sensory views arranging in a line. And we will discuss the meaning of the essence. There is the following sentence a little before the clause mentioned above: ‘In setting the rocks you should first complete the placing of the principal rock having a distinct character at the place where the water curves, and then proceed to set each succeeding rock in compliance
with the requesting mood of the principal rock. The epistemological meaning of the ‘essence’ is explained as ‘in compliance with the requesting mood of the principal rock’. The ‘essence’ is considered on the logic of nature. On the one hand, the author expressed the sensory view of visual actions as ‘changing the taste’, and, on the other, the reversible view as ‘in compliance with the requesting mood of the principal rock’. We feel the strong will of the author as a garden designer in handling rocks as if they have the will. While the matter of ‘in compliance with the requesting mood of the principal rock’ is the principle and request of rock’s side or nature’s side, that of ‘changing the taste’ is the request of human’s side. However, we should understand that it is the very person to see the matters even if nature has brought them into existence. Accordingly, both requests of nature’s and human’s sides result in the subject of human behavior. The phrase of ‘in compliance with the requesting mood of ’ found in the other five contexts, characterizes the natural relationship between succeeding rocks and the principal rock. Especially, in the items of ‘Oral transmission on setting rocks’, it is most explicitly described that ‘In setting the rocks you should first complete the placing of the principal rock having a distinct character and then proceed to set each succeeding rock in compliance with the requesting mood of the principal rock. Certainly the matters of a rock’s request belong to the relations of the cause and effect in nature which we must logically grasp. In other words we must coordinate our behaviors to the changes of nature in order to comprehend the relationship between humans and nature. The words of ‘the principal rock’ are always placed just after the word of ‘requesting’ such as in the phrase ‘in compliance with the requesting mood of the principal rock’. The principal rock means the rock centrally placed at the actual situations, which seems to suggest the spatial relationship between the whole and parts. Accordingly, even if the matter of a rock’s request is that from nature’s side, it results only in person’s logical and spatial views. This is the reason why the request of nature’s side is received as a natural logic, and simultaneously as a human logic.

3.2 Landscape types, and the art of landscaping

Setting rocks, which indicates the conduct to position rocks, gives a divisible outline to the place. In Sakuteiki, natural scenery is first taken up, and they are once transformed into the place where the succeeding rocks are arranged ‘in compliance with the requesting mood of the principal rock.’ In the item of ‘There should be various landscape types on setting rocks, there are five landscapes types such as the Ocean Style (Taikai no yo), the River Style (Taiga no yo), the Mountain Rapids Style (Sanga no yo), the Marsh-land Style (Numachi no yo) and Rush-land Style (Ashide no yo). The author intended to organize these naturalistic landscapes by setting rocks. For example, in the case of ‘the Ocean Style’, he transformed natural scenery into the place of a wind-swept and wave-beaten shore which most strongly symbolized it, and discussed as to how to set rocks there. Similarly, in the River Style, the total scenery is symbolized in the place where the stream curves, and the landscape is organized by setting rocks there. He continued the same sort of explanation in the item of the Mountain Rapids Style. In the item of ‘Explaining landscape types on the figure of the island’, there is the sentence ‘you should make a field landscape alternately in the field island, and, so you should plant some sorts of autumnal weeds, depending on rocks composed showing only their back here and there’. Whereas the phrase of ‘in compliance with the requesting mood of the principal rock’ indicates the relationship between succeeding rocks and the principal rock, the phrase of ‘depending on’ explains the relations between autumnal grasses and the principal rock. It also indicates the other relationships between natural scenery and land, the field landscape and stones, and so on. The phrase of ‘clinging to’ in the same use indicates the relations between stones and the field
landscape, plants, the root of tree, the tip of mountain or the edge of pillar. The phrases of ‘depending on’ and ‘clinging to’, show various sorts of relationships between the place and stone, the grass or tree and stone, and the like. On the contrary, the phrase of a rock's request is, in every case, restricted to the relationship between succeeding rocks and the principal rock, which gives us the unified description as to the rock.

A waterfall is the important place to set rocks. In the item of ‘The order to make the waterfall’, the waterfall design is considered under the mutual relations among a water-falling rock, side rocks and inside rocks: the relations between a water-falling rock and the side rocks of left and right should be in harmony, and ‘draw up the middle-low rock before the side rocks of left and right, and you should proceed to set each succeeding rock in compliance with the requesting mood of the principal rock’. Thus the author of Sakuteiki especially stressed the matters of nature where the principal rock attracted succeeding rocks to be grouped together. We needs landscaping a waterfall in the extent of the site, as we look at it over a pond from inside the house. And the waterfall, of course, must have the landscape which we can look at from its proximity.

As for a garden stream, the landscape of site-level is explained, referring to ‘the land suitable for four Gods celebrations’ (Shishinsoo no chi) and ‘the principles of Yin and Yang’. ‘The orthodox stream should be flowed toward the west of the compound through the south, from the east of the shinden (main hall). The placing of rocks for the garden stream is described in the following clause: ‘set the principal rock in each place where the stream runs off from under the open corridor or goes round the tip of a mountain, and arrange a few or many rocks in compliance with the requesting mood of the principal rock. The meaning of the phrase of a rock's request is explained just after this phrase. It may be summed up in four phrases as follows:

1. The placing of stones for the garden stream should start at a place where it makes a turn and flows along.
2. Set rocks in the place where the stream seems to hit hard against the object it encounters.
3. Set rocks, as if forgotten, in the remaining place caused.
4. If you set many rocks in the place where the water flows, as it is difficult to see them at the close range, you should set them effectively when viewing from a backward point.

As the original character of the stream is to run out with hesitating, you should set the principal rock in the place where it is symbolized. And induce the stream from this place, and form the connections between succeeding rocks and the principal rock. This should be first done for a rock's request. Namely, in the clause (1), the positioning of the principal rock is indicated. In the clause (2) the succeeding rocks are arranged in relations to the principal rock. Here our gazes or visual fields are supposed to move, In the clause (3), the phrase of ‘the places caused’ indicates that the rocks should be arranged with the spatial harmony of the whole and parts, once apart from the features of the perceptual place. In the clause (4), the spatial or reversible view of seeing from the backward point is emphasized. In the above clauses from (1) to (4), we can see that, with the meaning of a rock's request, the changing aspect of our visual actions is explained well along the water course.

As we are sensitive to nature in the place, our visual actions may keep sensory views there. In the case that the sensory view becomes dominant in the place, the mutual shift between two views is coordinated in more sensory and continuous ways, and then the whole visual action comes to realize the sensory scene. The landscape of Sakuteiki is especially organized by the sensory scene of the place because a person can come to terms with nature there. On the other hand, our visual actions of the site cannot work well only with the visual fields. In such a extent as the site, the spatial image of the invisible parts should be supplemented to our visual actions, which may position and unify the visual
fields. Then, the reversible view becomes more dominant than the sensory, so that we do not feel nature sensitively, but come to comprehend the relations between objects. And the visual actions, as a whole, realize the moving scene, coordinating the mutual shift in a more thoughtful way.

While the author of *Sakuteiki* was especially interested in the moving scene of the site in the item of ‘Making a garden stream’, in the item of ‘There should be many landscape types on setting rocks’, he mainly discussed the landscape for the sensory scene of each place. After that, when considering the total landscaping of the garden, he was confronted with the subject how these sensory scenes should be unified. In *Sakuteiki* the topography and the aspect of the pond in the site is once reduced in scale to the place. This is the necessary procedure to divide the natural features of the site into the sensory scenes of the place. One sensory scene is separated from the other, connected with the other, and then integrated into the moving scene. The author of *Sakuteiki* says, concerning the unification of sensory scenes, as follows: ‘You should not wholeheartedly set many rocks. You may compose rocks, introducing various landscape types to one pond depending on the shape of the pond and the aspect of the land. You had better only accept what the atmosphere demands, following the Ocean Style at the spacious part of the pond and by the island, and expressing the Rush-Land Style on the field landscape. In this sentence he gave shape to the fundamental thought discussed in the first of the general guidelines: that is, the abstract thought of ‘You should design each part of the garden tastefully, recalling you memories of how nature presented itself for each feature’, in the first general guideline was translated into the clause of ‘following the Ocean Style at the spacious part of the pond and by the island.’ The clause of ‘You had better only accept what the atmosphere demands’ indicates briefly the idea that you should organize the landscape of the partial place considering the whole garden. We find the phrase ‘the places caused’ in the first general guideline, and the clause ‘You should set rocks at the places caused in the remaining places, as if forgotten’ in the item of ‘Making a garden stream’. These places indicate the partial places keeping the relationship between the whole and parts, in the system of the site. Namely, in these places, our visual actions work to realize the moving scene, operationally adjusting the reciprocal shift between sensory and reversible views. The author of *Sakuteiki* suggests that the place forms the relations well-matched to our perception as well as the spatial relationship between the whole and parts, presenting the principle of gardening that ‘You had better only accept what the atmosphere demands’. It also means the place where two views of the phrases ‘changing the taste’ and ‘in compliance with the requesting mood’ meet.

### 3.3 The concept of nature

In the first general guideline that ‘You should design..., recalling your memories of how nature presented itself for each feature’ the author says that you should set rocks, imaging natural scenery. This, of course, does not mean his assertion that you should make a garden with nature for nature’s sake. Certainly, in the various parts of the document, it is described that the designer should make the garden, modelling after nature scenery: ‘Set rocks in a pond, imitating an ocean’ or ‘tall waterfalls are not necessarily wide nor low falls always narrow in breadth,’ and also ‘Placing sideways a rock which originally stood upright, or setting upright the rock which originally lay sideways is taboo’. Like this, he often cited the image of nature. He referred to that ‘One says that the rock composition cannot be superior to natural scenery’, but he said so with the proviso that ‘in the case of a man-made landscape garden, since only the attractive and best parts of the place are studied and modelled after, meaningless stones and features are seldom provided along with man’s work’. And he criticized the level of knowledge among the garden makers of his day by saying, ‘In recent years,
However, there is no one who has knowledge about this matter. One simply observes nature and then dares to make the garden without even knowing about the matters of taboo. As stated above, the author of *Sakuteiki* is not only an admirer to nature. He used to ask what nature is, and try to recreate nature.

He described the matters concerning taboos in many pages, though they were at times nothing but a superstition. These taboos might belong to the cultural and social demands in those days. The spatial relationships between rocks and the place were explained in the methodological matters concerning the direction, distance and arrangement.

The designer must become definitely aware of the fact that 'though nature is a model, you should not imitate it as it is. The designer’s attitude of following nature is not enough to make a Japanese garden. The designer can only consult with nature. *Sakuteiki* was not written with the spirit of nature for nature’s sake, but with that of cultural and technical investigations on nature.

4. Conclusions

The author of *Sakuteiki* did not discuss the landscape design under the consideration of our visual actions. In other word, he did not say 'Make a garden in such a way, as persons use it.' He only said 'Set rocks in such a style, as natural scenery is so'. However, I (the author of the paper) found that he had the strong concerns with the visual actions, as stated in the three main conclusions:

1. I found, in *Sakuteiki*, two manners of looking at nature, such as 'changing the taste' corresponding to the sensory view, and 'in compliance with the requesting mood of ' to the reversible view.
2. The author of *Sakuteiki* transformed natural scenery into the landscape types called yo, then into the place so that he might complete the naturalistic landscaping of the place, under the considerations of two views.
3. The author, in the landscape types, discussed various methods of making several sensory scenes into moving scenes.

References