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Hannah Carter
Japanese
Garden

Traditional Japanese Gardens

KOICHI KAWANA

Until this century, traditional gardens in Japan were closed to the public. Built by the ruling elite and by monasteries as places for peaceful contemplation and worship, they provided refuge from the maddening strife that marked much of Japan's history. In their origins, the gardens may have represented a utopia of ancient Chinese gods in a mythology brought to Japan in the 6th century. Later they came to represent a paradise of Buddha. Zen Buddhism, much modified by indigenous ideas, has shaped the character of Japanese gardens since the 15th century. In garden design, the visible patterns in the Western sense of form, texture, and color are less important than the invisible philosophical, religious and symbolic elements.

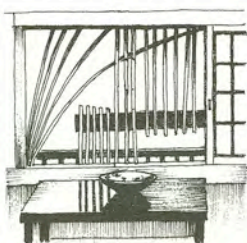
SYMBOLISM: The key elements are water, stones, and plants. From ancient times, the Japanese as an island people had an affinity for the sea. Water is crucial in garden design, not as a substance but as a symbol of the sea. In a *chisen* style garden, a pond or lake occupies the most significant portion. The presence of water is not even required. In the dry *karasanui* gardens patterns raked in gravel or sand express the state of the sea.

A sea without islands is unthinkable and in designing islands in the garden, the Japanese developed various concepts. One of the earliest was that of a sacred place remote from ordinary human society; in the form of an island of immortal happiness, this was called *boraisan*. Crane and tortoise islands are especially favorable because in Chinese mythology the crane lives a thousand years and the tortoise ten thousand. Such islands are inaccessible to human beings and no bridges are constructed to them.

Groups of stones representing a rocky seashore may be arranged by the edge of a pool. Among the most orthodox styles of stone arrangement is *sanzon*. It consists of three upright stones, the largest in the center representing the Buddha, the other two Bodhisattvas.

Plants are closely interwoven with the physical and spiritual life of the Japanese people. Pines are major structural elements in their gardens. Being evergreen, pines express both long life and happiness. Japanese red and black pines symbolize *in* and *yo*; the soft, tranquil female forces and the firm, active male forces in the universe.

8. The garden house is located away from the center of the Garden, shielded by black bamboos and pines. Deliberately inconspicuous, its purity is intended as a sanctuary from the complex world. The garden house may also be used for the tea ceremony or *cha-no-yu*. A tea ceremony is limited to five people, hence the size of the house. The stone water basins, or *toukubai*, are for ritual washing before entering. A dry streambed of white stones runs beneath the house. At its source behind the house is a symbolic arrangement of 16 carefully chosen large stones in an area especially conducive to intense meditation.



9. Behind the garden house is the Hawaiian garden. It contains five species of tree ferns and 25 other fern varieties, as well as seven classes of palms. Various tropical vines and epiphytes, including aroids, orchids, and bromeliads are also present. The pool is used as a nursery for baby *koi*.



10. Like the main gate, the *hokora* or family shrine is made of Cryptomeria wood and the roof is Cryptomeria bark. The materials are deliberately left unpainted to mellow with age. The antique hand-carved Buddha inside the shrine is decorated with gold leaf. The two stone lions were carved in China during the 18th century.



11. The outdoor sunken bath might be found at a Japanese mountain resort. Being a volcanic country, Japan has many hot springs. Here appropriate volcanic rocks placed above the bath and the pebbled walk below suggests a spring-fed stream. The camellias near the bathhouse bloom in winter and spring.

12. The moon-viewing deck is authentic except for the modern furniture. The part of the Garden near the main entrance is more exuberant than the relatively controlled areas to the right. The general plan of the Garden is supposed to embody the cycle from wild youth to sedate maturity in a sequence arranged in a counterclockwise order.



13. Fine *bonsai* are displayed in the former barbeque area, an amusing cultural hybrid showing Japanese craftsmen's adaptability to California ideas. Here a modern serving counter is decorated with old chrysanthemum and camellia patterns. The pavement is pebbled in a pattern representing the legend of the leaf, the butterfly, and the family.



1. The main gate is in the style of the famous Ichida estate in Kyoto. The wood is Cryptomeria, a Japanese relative of the redwood, the proper material for sacred structures. The black slate was quarried in the mountains near Nara. The bamboo fence is a classic type first used in the 17th century.



2. The first bridge inside the gate is a natural stone from Kyoto. On the right side of the first flight of steps is a stone carved more than 1,000 years ago showing the Buddha seated in 16 different positions of worship; 16 signifies immortality.

3. A focal point of the garden is the pool with colorful *koi* swimming among water-lilies. Some of these *koi* are as old as the garden itself. *Koi* can live for more than 200 years. Near the pool are Japanese maples with red and purple foliage.



4. Each of the pines by the pool has a special name and role. The view-perfecting pine overhangs the smooth pebble beach. By the round stepping stones is the stretching pine. Below and to the right of the waterfall is the cascade-screening tree. Above and to the left of the waterfall is the principal tree or upright spirit.



5. At the base of the view-perfecting pine is the rugged dedication stone or *raibai seki*, the spiritual center of the garden. The big flat stone by the smooth pebble beach is the thinking stone. In the pool are the crane and tortoise islands.

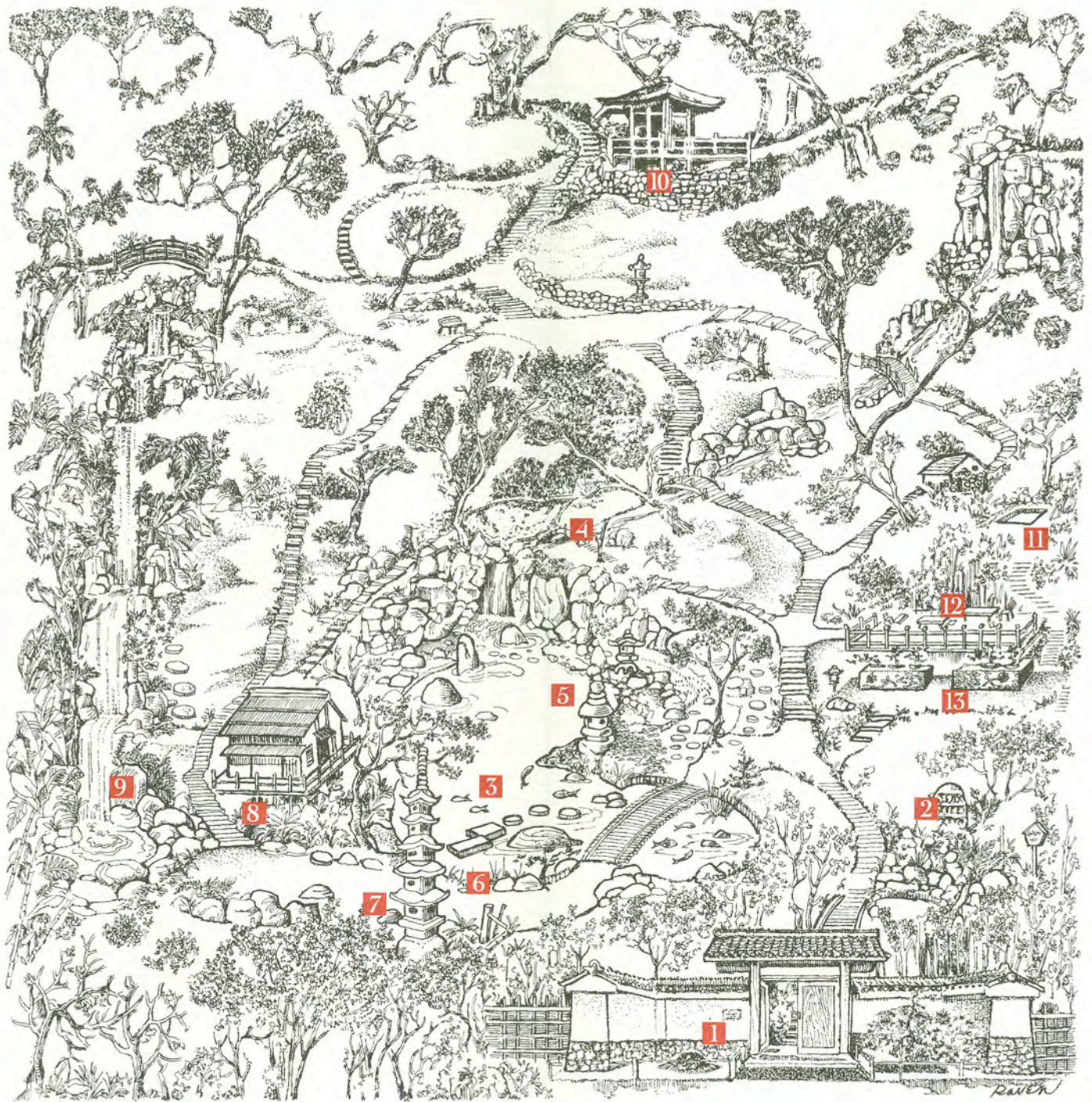
6. The two large rectangular stepping stones, like those at the Heian Shrine in Kyoto, are called devil-casting stones. If you take this zig-zag path across the pool, a pursuing devil may fall into the water and drown. The round stepping stones are old millstones. The noisy bamboo device, perpetually filling with water and spilling over, is a wild boar chaser.



7. The *stupa*, a five-tiered pagoda, stands above white stones representing Buddha's bones. There are five elements—sky, wind, fire, water, and earth; and five cardinal virtues—humanity, justice, politeness, wisdom, and fidelity. Above the *stupa* stands a deciduous spring-flowering Chinese magnolia.



UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden



AESTHETICS: The complex aesthetic values of traditional Japanese gardens stem mainly from Zen Buddhism. Among Zen concepts expressed in garden design are: asymmetry and a preference for the imperfect and for odd numbers; naturalness and an avoidance of the forced and artificial; hiding part of the whole to achieve profundity with mystery; a quality of maturity and mellowness that comes with age and time; tranquility, simplicity, and austerity.

The teahouse became a major element in Japanese gardens in the 16th century, when the tea ceremony became another way of Zen. The path to the teahouse was designed to be traversed slowly, giving participants a mood of tranquil otherworldliness.

UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden

In 1959 Gordon G. Guiberson decided to create a Japanese garden on his Bel-Air estate. He and his wife hired famed landscape architect Nagao Sakurai of Tokyo and garden designer Kazuo Nakamura of Kyoto. Construction took over a year and a half and was completed in 1961. Guiberson dedicated the Japanese garden to his mother, Ethel L. Guiberson.

Chair of The Regents of the University of California Edward W. Carter and his wife Hannah purchased the estate in 1965. That same year, they donated the garden to UCLA. In 1969 heavy rains damaged the garden. UCLA professor of art and campus architect Koichi Kawana designed the needed reconstruction. In 1982 the garden was officially renamed the UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden.

The UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden was inspired by the gardens of Kyoto. Many structures in the garden—main gate, garden house, bridges, and family shrine—were built in Japan and reassembled here. Antique stone carvings, water basins, and lanterns, as well as the five-tiered pagoda, and key symbolic rocks are also from Japan. In addition, several hundred tons of local stones came from quarries in Ventura County and the foot of Mt. Baldy, northeast of Los Angeles. All the trees and plants in the Garden belong to species that grow in Japan, with the exception of the California live oaks that predate the Garden.

Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 10:00a.m.–3:00p.m. by reservation only. Please call (310)825-4574.

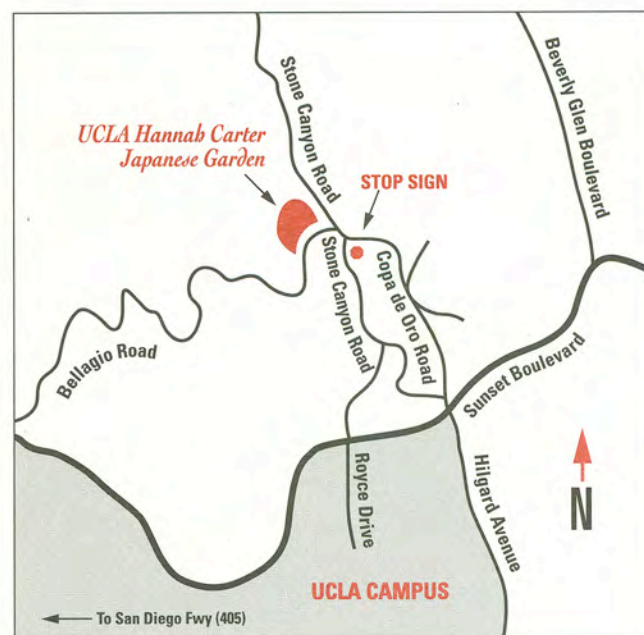
Weather: The Garden may close, without notice, due to inclement weather or hazardous conditions.

Admission: Free

Attire: The Garden is traversed by steep stone pathways. Athletic shoes are recommended.

Parking: Reservation includes free parking. Park in designated spaces only.

Location: The UCLA Hannah Carter Japanese Garden is located on 10619 Bellagio Road in Bel-Air. From Sunset Boulevard turn north onto Stone Canyon Road. Proceed to the stop sign. Pass the stop sign and turn left onto Bellagio Road. Proceed slowly. The Garden is the third property on the right.



Donations: If you would like to make a donation, please make check payable to *The UCLA Foundation* and mail to:

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