

Impact Objectives

- Study the mutual relationships between gardening influences across Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan
- Develop learning components that can be applied practically to preservation and restoration projects within residential gardens in Taiwan

Digging deep into history

Japanese-style gardens had an impact on the gardening influences of Taiwan as a result of Japanese occupation. Associate Professor Takashi Awano, from the Graduate School of Tokyo University of Agriculture Landscape Architecture, explains his work in this area



Firstly, can you talk a little about your own research background?

I graduated from the Tokyo University of Agriculture and went on to complete a doctoral programme at the same institution. In 2004, I joined the Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties. My job there was to preserve and restore historic gardens designated cultural properties, and this involved the excavation, preservation and maintenance of archaeological sites. I have been working in the Department of Landscaping Science at the Tokyo University of Agriculture since 2010, and I continue to preserve and restore historic gardens with my students. I specialise in landscaping history and cultural property preservation and have been looking into gardens in Taiwan for several years now. I have been trying to do such research in Taiwan since several years ago.

You have been studying the preservation situation and spatial characteristics of Japanese-style garden built in Taiwan during the Japanese rule. What are some of the knowledge gaps that you are hoping your research will fill?

The study of modern gardens has been becoming more and more popular in recent years within the field of Japanese landscape architectural history. However, because the targets of this research tend to have been focused only on gardens in Japan or on the

works of landscape architects, this has really restricted the scope of the research. My research into this therefore intends to grasp the mutual relationships between gardening influences across Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan. I intend for my work to reveal the influence of Japanese gardens on those in Taiwan, and the first step of this is to delve into the 'modern garden history of eastern Asia'.

Can you talk about some of your findings so far?

Honestly speaking, I feel that we have a way to go on this project before we get significant results. So far, I have highlighted basic things concerning residential gardens in Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period. They include general information relating to the size, composition and the landscape architectural technicians involved in these gardens. I have yet to uncover details about the materials used and the designs and scope of the gardens.

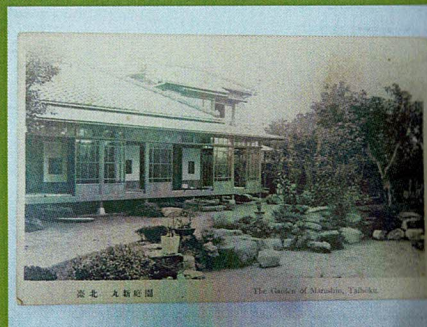
How do you envisage your learnings can be applied to the real world?

Many homes and buildings from the Japanese colonial period have recently been restored in Taiwan. There are lots of examples of these across Taiwan, particularly in the capital Taipei. I believe that the restoration of the gardens should work hand-in-hand with the restoration of the buildings themselves. I think that it is important for historic residences to include both a house and gardens. I am developing learning

components as part of this project and I hope that these can be applied practically to preservation and restoration projects within residential gardens in Taiwan in the near future.

Speaking more generally, what type of research is underway within the Department of Landscaping Science, Faculty of Regional Environmental Science, Tokyo University of Agriculture?

My department covers quite a wide range of research on projects as diverse as urban landscape planning to investigations on factors that influence seed germination. Some of my colleagues in the Department are from allied fields, so there are also projects with a more civil and traffic engineering bent, so it's very varied and incredibly interesting research coming out of our institution. There are a lot of very talented researchers here. ●



Marushin Garden (Japanese-style restaurant) which was popular in Taipei during the Japanese colonial period

Japanese influence on garden design

Japanese garden design had a great impact on the creation of gardens in Taiwan during the Japanese colonisation between 1895 and 1945. New research underway at the Department of Landscape Architecture Science is exploring these influences

Well-developed Japanese cultural and aesthetic styles have influenced architecture, décor and landscaping around the world. Japanese influence has been particularly marked in eastern Asian countries such as Taiwan, where the nation's colonisation efforts between 1895 and 1945 led to a trend for garden design and landscaping at the time to demonstrate strong characteristics of Japanese style. The gardens created during this time showed a unique blend of Japanese and Taiwanese influences not otherwise found in landscape architectural history.

Associate Professor Takashi Awano, from the Department of Landscape Architecture Science at Tokyo University of Agriculture, leads a study that looks into the preservation status, the construction and design processes and the characteristics of land allocation and design of Japanese gardens in palaces, official residences and other key locations during the Japanese occupation of Taiwan. 'While many of these historically important buildings are legally protected as historic sites, the status of the attached gardens has been unclear, and any attempt to preserve these with the buildings must begin with a careful investigation and recording of the layout and status of these gardens in their present condition in order to gain a starting point for preservation efforts,' clarifies Awano.

Awano is working with colleagues from the Research Center for Conservation of Cultural Relics of National Taiwan Normal University to further the cultural understanding of the gardens. 'Collaboration is absolutely critical to this work, and as a result of one collaboration we are now able to survey designated cultural properties of residential gardens,' he says. This academic partnership with a Taiwanese academic institution has ensured that he has a restoration architect as a central member of the team.

INFORMATION GATHERING

This three-year project represents the first phase in Awano's mission to elucidate the influence of Japanese garden design on the garden architectural history of East Asia. He hopes to analyse a variety of gardens in different settings, from private residential properties to public parks and government buildings, and they have taken a comprehensive approach to gathering data for this project. A document analysis of magazines and books published in Japan during the colonial period was undertaken to gain a first-hand perspective of the trends in the country at the time.

These sources of information were used to compile a list of Japanese-style gardens developed during the colonial period and

details about these gardens have been uncovered and used to draw up an overview of the spatial characteristics of these gardens as well details of their conservation status. 'Details of the gardens and their buildings and plot layouts as well as physical components, design and arrangements were recorded and photographed, together with a detailed list of the names of the trees and other significant plantings,' explains Awano. A thorough review of these modern architecture and garden-related content sources resulted in 36 examples of Japanese-style gardens created during the colonial period.

The group also carried out a field survey of Japanese residential gardens created in Taiwan. This enabled the team to determine the spatial characteristics of Japanese-influenced gardens, including the site layout, gardens, components incorporated into the garden and the layout of the building. Details such as the arrangements of stones and ponds were photographed and recorded.

Awano was also keen to interview the descendants of the landscape architectural technicians who created gardens during the Japanese colonial period. In this way, Awano and his colleagues were able to cross-link data to get a picture of the structural layout and influences on these gardens. ►