

# Opportunities, Obstacles and Possibilities for Foreigners to Study Traditional Japanese Gardening

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**Abstract:** There are many Japanese garden enthusiasts outside Japan, and some of them are interested in working in the industry and look for schools to learn the skills. The industry depends on internationalization as well. Japanese gardening, however, is usually taught first handed in apprenticeship rather than by lectures or textbooks because it requires improvised design-build procedures. There are reasons why higher education institutions cannot provide practical education in this field. International applicants therefore cannot find an authentic training opportunity and give up, or some of them are misled by an easier way. They also encounter obstacles when they apply for a work permit because this field is not recognized by the government appropriately. The language may be a barrier for some international applicants. The author suggests that higher education institutions may become a bridge between those international enthusiasts to an authentic Japanese gardening practice as seen in some successful examples.

## 1. Background

Traditional Japanese gardens are still popular worldwide, and many non-Japanese students and enthusiasts are interested in coming to Japan to study the subject. Some even wish to acquire skills to actually create gardens for themselves or professionally. Japanese practitioners usually welcome these enthusiasts from overseas, partly because they are willing to share the culture that they are proud of, and partly because the industries and its culture is endangered domestically.

How to learn Japanese gardening is sometimes misunderstood, or become confused with modern landscape architecture practice even by Japanese locals. International enthusiasts who have determined to study the subject typically look for college-level higher education institutions or vocational schools. Few of those schools, however, teach those subjects practically. *Totei-seido*, or apprenticeship, has been the main stream of learning traditional gardens in Japan. Students also try to find textbooks and manuals for the practice, but it would be very difficult to apply what is written to an actual site with different climate and materials including soil, water and plants. Even if they understand how to in theory, acquiring skills to actually do it requires years of training on site.

The apprenticeship is much more involved than studying in a classroom or doing a formal internship in modern organization. Besides the language and common cultural gaps, an apprentice must be prepared for the strict seniority system and particular manners for each industry. On a practical side, obtaining a proper visa to live in Japan and work in such field of traditional arts is often more difficult than to obtain a student visa or permit to work for large corporations or organizations.

Domestically speaking, Japanese gardening is one of the most endangered industries, suffering shortage of both successors and job opportunities. There are more demands overseas, but there are not enough practitioners to be willing to take such jobs mainly because of the language barrier. Local practitioners of each country may acquire the necessary skills perform Japanese gardening, but the path for such foreigners to study the subject and receive a training is unclear. The author often receives inquiries from those foreigners who are lost in seeking for a career of Japanese gardening.

International mobility in higher education is now being promoted by the national and regional governments, and there are a plenty of official supports since 'A Plan for 300,000 Exchange Students' was announced by the Japanese national government in 2008. International competition to obtain international students is heating up not just against U.S.A. and European countries which have been accepting foreign students for decades but also against rapidly rising China and Korea. Business and technology are no longer enough to attract international students to Japan, and culture should be the next key. Traditional Japanese arts including Japanese gardens, however, have not received enough attention with this regard.

Internationalization seems to be more systematically developed in other industries such as *Chado*, or the Way of Tea. *Chado* is an integrated form of art and discipline closely related to Japanese gardening, and there are schools such as Urasenke, which has expanded all over the world and continued to educate international students to become authentic successors and missionaries. Their educational and administrative system may give suggestions for higher education institutions who are seeking for expansion and sustainable internationalization.

## 2. Methods

The author has conducted interviews with practitioners since 2000 to confirm her own observation and the discussions heard in professional conferences. Supportive data and updated information are also collected from publications by Japanese higher education institutions and the governmental agencies. Opinions from previously published academic papers are also reviewed and quoted. The readers should note, however, that all of these opinions are common understandings in the industry that have been discussed for years: none of them are a particular researcher's personal finding or judgment. The author also added her own findings from her previous experience of teaching subjects about traditional Japanese gardens to American college students. Everything mentioned in this article is what is happening in Japan, unless otherwise noted.

Most books and papers used as reference are written in Japanese only. The author thought it would be valuable to let out such domestic trade information and share it with the international community. For readers' easier understanding, the contents are often summarized instead of being directly translated word by word.

## 3. Teaching Japanese Gardens in Higher Education

### 3.1. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION

As of February 2015, 3 post-graduate level programs, 34 four-year undergraduate programs and graduate programs attached to them, 13 two-year undergraduate or vocational programs and 67 high school programs in landscape architecture, garden design, environmental design or horticulture in Japan are accredited toward certification exam by Registered Landscape Architects (RLA, 2015). This certification, however, is for planner or designer; therefore none of them emphasizes the training for actual construction or specialize in Japanese garden education. The national certificate for on-site implementation is called '*Zoen-ginou-shi*, or garden construction master' but the application for this certificate only requires certain years of work experience, not any education at school.

The followings are some of a few schools which offers extensive practical training for on-site implementation: Toyama International College of Crafts and Arts and Kanazawa Institute of Traditional Crafts are relatively new school established in 1996 in Hokuriku region, which emphasize training of implementation skills. Nishi Nippon Junior College in Fukuoka and Minami Kyushu University in Miyazaki, both of which are located in Kyushu Island, have been offering practical training in their landscape and garden design curriculum since 1967. Some other institutions may also provide skill training courses but assign more hours to theoretical lecture courses.

A few research institutions offer opportunities for studying history, aesthetics, philosophy and other aspects of Japanese gardens. Research Center for Japanese Garden Art and Historical Heritage (JGHH) at Kyoto University of Art & Design specialize in this subject. Tokyo National University of Fine Art and Music, has also provided opportunities to study historical heritage including Japanese gardens. International Research Center for Japanese Studies currently have a professor specializing in this subject and they may accept doctoral student studying in English. JGHH has provided an open enrollment intensive workshop in English since 1996. It may include some on-site gardening workshops, but the thirteen days spent mostly for excursions and lectures is apparently not meant for a practical or professional training.

### 3.2. MODERNIZATION OF EDUCATION

The modernization, or westernization, of Japanese higher education in general is one reason for this lack of Japanese garden education. It is similar to '*hogaku*' or traditional Japanese music is forgotten in most K-12 schools, which were established after the Meiji Restoration.

College level landscape architecture program in Japan usually teach American style planning and design, perhaps because the profession of Landscape architecture and its educational system was first established in the USA and many Japanese professors studied there: All 50 states less District of Columbia officially recognize landscape architect license, 47 of which by their practice act and three of which by their title act (ASLA, 2015). Most of the former 47 states require applicants college-level degree from accredited institutions and certain years of practical training before applying for the licensure exam. The accredited institutions need to pass the periodical reviews by American Society of Landscape Architects' national accreditation board (Suzuki, 2001).

The scale expansion of practice may be a reason for this modernization. Abe (2007) looks back the history of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Tokyo University of Agriculture, which was the first landscape architecture schools in Japan. He observes a change in their curriculum: In 1920's, there were courses such as 'Japanese Garden', 'History of Japanese Garden', 'Tea House and Tea Garden', 'History of The Way of Tea', 'Architecture', 'Architecture History' and 'Aesthetics'. In the 1945 curriculum, everything above disappeared except 'Architecture', and some large-scale planning oriented subjects such as 'Park Planning', 'National Land Planning' and 'Construction Machinery' appeared. In the 1988 program, which represents the current landscape architecture education trends in Japan, even 'architecture' is no longer a required subject. This may be indicating the trend toward specialization because of the scale expansion. Two garden related subjects, 'Garden History' and 'Garden Studies', seem to have come back, but they do not specialize in Japanese gardens.

Kyoto has the biggest concentration of historical gardens and architecture: There are 17 UNESCO cultural heritage sites, 48 national treasures architectural sites, and 292 important cultural assets sites in Kyoto Prefecture as of 2013. Kyoto University is in the middle of these historical assets, but few courses discuss such subjects at Kyoto University. An elective course called "History of Japanese Landscape Architecture" disappeared in 1996 from courses offered by Environmental Design Laboratory, and then no Japanese garden related course was available as a specialized subject until a Japanese garden historian joined the Faculty of Integrated Human Studies in 2009. The author has been offering a general education course discussing Japanese gardens since 2008 and found that some students of a variety of majors are interested in the subject for self-cultivation or internationalization purposes.

These changes in the curriculum and in students' interests reflect the trend of what the Japanese society needed in each era. It was right after the Great Earthquake in Tokyo metropolitan area in 1923 when Dr. Keiji Uehara decided to establish a Landscape Architecture School in Tokyo, the first landscape architecture school and predecessor of Department of Landscape Architecture at Tokyo University of Agriculture. He remembered that he saw the urgent need of effective land planning for a quick recovery of the city (Uehara, 1983). Another researcher suspects that the craftsmanship in traditional Japanese gardening was not easy to use for the new city and regional planning after Meiji restoration in 1868 (Minomo, 2007).

### 3.3. SHORTAGE OF PRACTICAL TRAINING

Implementation and on-going maintenance are the most essential part of Japanese gardening; therefore it is impossible to design Japanese gardens properly without knowing how to construct and take care of one. It is just like there is no composer, arranger or conductor who does not know how to play musical instruments. The difficulty for academic professors to teach such on-site skills may be another reason why traditional Japanese garden has been ignored, perhaps intentionally, in higher education. Therefore, most college-level landscape architecture program in Japan only teach history and some scientific subjects such as botany, ecology, water management and so on, and some field survey practice at best. Design studios may be offered, but they are allotted much less hours compared to how long they spent in architecture programs.

Four year colleges and graduate schools in Japan have been emphasizing classroom lectures and research, and practical or hands-on training has been left mainly up to vocational schools, with a few exceptions of six-year medical, dental, veterinary and pharmaceutical professional schools. Some new graduate level professional schools have started in Japan only for the last ten years in fields such as law, business and clinical psychology. Architecture programs are usually housed in engineering or art schools, and Landscape architecture programs are usually housed in forestry or horticulture department in agriculture schools. They have not really developed into professional schools yet. Minomo (2007) analyzed that it is difficult to make professional schools in Japanese higher education institutions because; 1) a concept of 'curriculum' is not yet established, 2) faculty members are research-oriented, 3) educational goals are not guaranteed, 4) what to teach for each professional fields is unclear. In recent years, however, the ministry of education culture sports science and technology (MEXT) has been promoting to establish the syllabus and course numbering system in Japanese higher education to follow the international standard, and so this circumstance may change soon.

Uchida et al (2003) surveyed on how landscape architecture programs in Japanese higher education institutions offer practical hands-on training on gardening. They distributed the survey to 25 four-year colleges, 7 junior colleges and 15 vocational schools. And they received answers from 11 four-year colleges, 5 junior colleges and 6 vocational schools. Among those who answered, 6 four-year colleges, 4 junior colleges and all 6 vocational schools had some kind of practical training class in their program. Among the 6 four-year colleges that had a practical training, 3 offered a training to make a supervisor or instructor, 2 offered to make a designer, but just 1 offered a training in actual construction skills to make a good craftsman. The ratio turns around with junior colleges and vocational schools: 2 junior colleges offered training to make a designer and the other 2 offered to make a good craftsman. Just 1 vocational school offered training to make a supervisor or instructor whereas 5 other schools were training students to make a good craftsman. This difference in educational emphasize can be seen in the hours they spent on practical training as well. Vocational schools in average spend 420 hours and junior colleges do 174 hours on practical training, whereas four year colleges spend the total of 70 hours on practical training (Uchida et al., 2003).

Uchida's survey also shows reasons why some higher education institutions cannot offer practical training (the parenthesis shows the number of same or similar answers): lack of site or its location problem (8), shortage of teaching staff and the human resource problems (4), students' safety concerns (3), shortage of time (2), lack of motivation (2), weather issues (2), cost (1), lack of tools (1) and lack of materials (1). On the other

hand, 40 percent of respondents think that handing down the landscaping skills is important. And 40 percents of respondents wishes to do that with a help of skilled practitioners, not just by themselves. About 35 percent of those educators, however, think it is very difficult to offer enough practical training under the current educational system (Uchida et al., 2003).

One school stated that they did not offer a practical training because it was too difficult to provide similar plant materials for all students to practice in a fair condition (Uchida, 2004). It is natural, however, that each individual plant is different; therefore they need to teach students how to make case-by-case judgments. I suspect that those professors may not really know the subject. The career path to be an academic and to be a garden artisan is so different from the beginning that few academics have enough practical experience in this field. A survey on practical experience of college educators who teach professional subjects may be wanted.

### 3.4. STUDYING JAPANESE GARDENS

Those who can read, write and speak Japanese may enter one of those junior colleges or vocational schools to acquire general landscape design and construction skills. As seen in the previous survey (Uchida et al., 2003), most of two-year institutions offer a combination of classroom teaching and practical training. None of them, however, focus on Japanese gardens.

Several educational institutions and professional organizations offer a variety of workshops specifically for traditional Japanese-style landscaping and gardening skills (Amasaki, 2007). All of them, however, are either short-term for a few days to two weeks, or only offered weekly or monthly. These short-term or occasional programs are geared toward those who are already working every day and wish to brush up their skills. There are also other classes designed for those who just wish to expand their knowledge, not to work professionally.

All these workshops are held in Japanese language only, with two exceptions: The annual two-week intensive seminar at JGHH is taught in English, and the one-day on-site workshop following the biennial International Japanese Garden Symposium offered by The Garden Society of Japan provides interpreters. To seek for a professional training from a beginning level, however, one needs to learn Japanese language first and look for a full-time training opportunity for much longer term, either in school or employment. It also requires a proper visa and financial support to live in Japan.

### 3.5. PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATES

There is a public certification program for skilled garden construction workers, which is called '*Zoen-Ginou-Kentei*, or Landscape Construction Skill Test', the first grade to be the highest to the third grade to be the entry level. The first grade is certified by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, and the second and third grades are certified by prefectures under the ministry's supervision. For all levels, the test is for an individual examinee to construct a small Japanese-style garden with provided materials on a given site within a limited time. Such skills of actual construction, especially in Japanese-styles, are rarely taught in higher education institutions. Only 1 four-year college, 4 junior colleges and 5 vocational schools offer optional courses to prepare for this exam (Uchida et al. 2003).

Other landscape architecture related registrations include: (a) Registered Landscape Architects - certified by professional organization, started in 2003, 349 registrants as of May 2007, 611 registrants as of April 2014 (CLA, 2008, 2015); (b) *Gijutsu-shi*, or Registered Engineer (RE) in the area of construction or



environment – a national license to practice as a landscape consultant, governed by MEXT, over 30,000 registrants as of March 2008, (c) *Zoen-seko-kanri-shi*, or Landscape Construction Supervisor - a national license necessary to bid in public projects, governed by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, and some other privately accredited certifications. However, none of these registration systems directly concerns Japanese garden practice, except the *Zoen Ginou-Kentei* tests skills to construct some Japanese garden elements.

#### 4. The Nature of Japanese Gardening Practice

##### 4.1. DIFFERENCE FROM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Japanese gardens practice is design-build. The critical parts of the process are the material selection (Inoue, 2003). Educated improvisation in installation and maintenance are often necessary. These skills are only acquired by experience, and current college education in landscape architecture has little to offer.

In U.S.A., it works differently: Licensed professionals called ‘Landscape architect’ design a site, draw a plan and hand it to contractors who do the actual construction. With detailed drawings and specifications, installation may not be too difficult even for inexperienced workers. The industrialized materials and geometric design also makes a project more efficient to draw, install and maintain (Shimomura, 2006). With such conditions, American consumers regard ‘gardeners’ to be unskilled workers.

In Japan, ‘*Niwa-shi*’ means ‘garden artisan’ although it is often mistranslated as ‘gardener’. ‘*Ueki-ya*’ literary means ‘garden plant merchant’, but it also means garden artisan. When Japanese people hear these terms, they assume craftsmen who went through an intensive vocational training for years to decades. They are scientifically knowledgeable and often educated with traditional arts such as the Way of Tea and flower arrangement. Less experienced ones are called ‘*minarai*’, which means an apprentice or a trainee, typically refers to those who are experienced less than five years. ‘*Naka-narai*, or ‘journeyman’ refers to those who worked for less than ten years as a rule of thumb. They start with simple labor-intensive tasks while watching what their master and senior workers are doing. They are supposed to steal skills from them, not to be taught step-by-step. It is often said that it takes years to learn how to clean a garden properly. It is because Japanese garden sites are so complex in shape and delicate in materials.

##### 4.2. PHYSICAL TRAINING FOR JAPANESE GARDENING

In the interview about how to train new people in Japanese gardening business, Mr. Fujii, an experienced garden artisan directing over 100 staff, mentioned that his new employee would spend at least three months to learn manners starting from how to greet their colleagues and customers. Next, they would spend months learning how to clean the site and tools, how to carry heavy things effectively. And then, they learn how to choose right tools and materials, and how to use them appropriately (Yamaguchi and Fujii, 1982). Mr. Fujii also mentioned an episode of another famous garden artisan in Kyoto: He always had his new apprentice keep on crashing rocks into soil all day for three to six months. He also made young people carry water-filled buckets on a shoulder pole and irrigate his nursery, instead of letting them use a sprinkler or even a hose.

Japanese garden design looks so delicate that people often imagine that the job must be also gentle and delicate. It is in fact labor intensive. Most gardening works still has to be done by

human power because the site is usually too small complex to use cattle or a motored vehicle. Simple pruning may require a gardener to climb up the tree because ground is often too irregular to set up a stepladder. Power tools and machines are not helpful because each material has its individual shape and quality and each site has a particular condition. This is why the physical training becomes imperative.

The author interviewed an American apprentice who was working for Ueto the sixteenth, one of the most famous garden artisans in Kyoto. The apprentice was doing labor intensive works for ten hours every day or more, six days a week. He had been through such a training period for six years before he became skilled enough to work for himself in the US as a Japanese garden artisan. That apprentice already spoke Japanese fluently when he joined the company. He seemed to be a quick learner as well as an industrial trainee because six years was shorter than a usual training period in the industry. When he asked around his senior garden artisans about their experience in related arts, one of them answered that he had studied flower arrangement ‘only’ for seventeen years. (Brown, 2001. Personal communication).

##### 4.3. EXPERIENCE-BASED IMPROVISATION

It is important for a garden artisan to be knowledgeable and comfortable in related arts such as architecture, the Way of Tea and flower arrangement. In the older times in Japan, some educated people such as priests, tea masters, highly ranked samurais and imperial family members played the role of the designer or master planner. They provided a grand design to the garden artisan, and the artisan selected right materials, brought them in, and determined construction details on site.

These garden artisans often came from lower social rankings, even from the lowest discriminated classes called ‘*kawara-mono*’, which literary meant ‘riverbank residents’. They made their way up to become recognized garden artisans solely by their talent and familiarity with natural features such as rocks and water around their habitat (Shinji, 1970). Some garden artisans were so trusted that they were often allowed to plan the entire project themselves. There were also Zen priests called ‘*ishidate*’ literary meaning ‘stone setters’ who specialized in garden construction.

Japanese garden creation requires on-site judgments and improvisation. Japanese gardens deal with natural materials as they are; therefore the garden professionals often have to decide the design after they see the available material and make the best out of it. They have to make millions of case-by-case judgments on the spot and treat materials differently (Inoue, 2003). They also have to take every surrounding environment into consideration, natural or human-made, tangible or intangible. Only educated and experienced artisans are able to perform such complex tasks like conducting orchestra.

Such complex tasks cannot be explained in drawings or in a written manual. It makes no sense to teach in a classroom, either. It is just like the way a musical scores alone cannot reproduce a great piece of music. Mr. Dangi, the educational chief of Kyoto Prefecture Gardening Businesses’ Association said that “Some technique is just way too complex to explain verbally. It is typical for garden artisans to tell their apprentice just to watch, learn and practice themselves.” (Personal communication, 2008)

For example, Japanese garden artisans often carry a huge boulder that weighs several tons just by one piece of rope. They have to find the center of gravity of a boulder, but it is too complex to calculate or point out by theory. “They just need to acquire an intuition by experience” (Fujii, 1982).

## 5. Issues for International Students and Interns

### 5.1. VISA AND WORK PERMITS

The succession of such sophisticated skills in Japanese gardening is in danger. Most Japanese young people nowadays do not have enough patience for such time-consuming and hard trainings, and they would rather choose modernized college education and jobs in the office. The salary and working conditions such as work hours are not generous enough for the skill, knowledge and experience that the job requires.

The job market for the Japanese garden industry is not promising, either. Clients decreased because of the change of lifestyle and shortage of land: People tend to demolish private gardens and convert them to the site for apartments or office buildings. It is understandable because having a garden would not produce any income, but it just raises the owner's property tax. In this situation, Japan may not provide enough job opportunities. Traditional garden artisans therefore started to look for 'Japanese garden' projects outside Japan. Some of them are interested in educating foreign enthusiasts. They all know that the everyday maintenance is imperative in Japanese gardens, and it would be much more efficient if local people can do that job instead of hiring artisans all the way from Japan.

Despite the willingness of those leaders to accept and teach international apprentices, they often have to give up hiring them just because they could not obtain a proper work-permit from the Immigration. Many participants in the fifth International Japanese garden symposium mentioned in the discussion that Immigration Authorities would not admit *Hitori-oyakata*, or sole-proprietary artisans or small private companies as a qualified sponsor to accept international interns" (Toyoda et al. 2007). The author interviewed an official of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare of Japan, who is currently developing a foreign workers' training program, and he said that landscaping is not considered an area to accept international interns. According to the law at that time, we should only accept foreign workers in the areas such as information technology and health care, where the job is universal (personal communication, 2008).

### 5.2. CULTURAL GAPS

In the interview with Mr. Touemon Sano the sixteenth, known as Ueto, he said that "Japanese and westerners are fundamentally different. Japanese live in a rice-making cycle, which is spring to fall, and westerners live in a wheat-making cycle, which is fall to spring" (Sano, 2004, personal communication). He also emphasized the importance of knowing the natural climate, and to know the language to really understand the culture. He has created many Japanese gardens overseas and have accepted many interns from western countries; therefore his words conveyed the difficulty he has experienced to share the idea with his colleagues from different cultures. He repeated all over his book that it was impossible to write 'methods' in textbooks and manuals (Sano, 1999).

Mr. Dangi has taught several westerners in his vocational training programs at the Kyoto Prefecture Gardening Businesses' Association. He suggested that we should provide different teaching method for different people. He said that "Westerners prefer to know theories first. If that's the case, it may be more efficient for them to study in a classroom for a couple of years at a college or some school, and find a job to receive a hands-on training. This path would allow them a time to learn the language as well. The training would be so difficult if they don't understand Japanese" (Dangi, 2008, personal communication).

The author completely agrees to Mr. Dangi's opinion, from

her own experience of teaching American students Japanese garden design. The 80 first-timer American students successfully learned the concept of Japanese design: They survived tea ceremony lessons with unfamiliar manners, a strict overnight meditation session at a Zen Temple, and many other cultural mysteries and physical hardships. They became able tolerate those 'strange' forms and rules after they understood the reasons and philosophy behind them (Suzuki, 2004).

### 5.3. A CASE IN THE WAY OF TEA

A good example of internationalization of a traditional art is found in Chado, or the Way of Tea. One of the leading schools for this art called Ura-Sen-ke has developed their school into the one and only higher education institution in Japan for this art since 1962. The program is a combination of classroom study for a half day and practical training for another half. All students live in a dormitory and eat three meals together, which somehow inherit the old tradition of apprenticeship. The international students receive the same comprehensive education as domestic students do, including the dormitory life, except they have a special classes taught in English.

In a traditional teaching of the Way of Tea, new students have to become an apprentice of a tea master of each area. As the students' skill develops, the master gives so called Menjo, or a license signed by the grand tea master. Apprentices climb up many steps, and eventually they will be allowed to teach their own apprentices when they reach to a certain level. In such traditional system, the education only relies on hands-on practice. Students have to repeat a certain forms again and again until they feel comfortable. Some teachers never explain anything, but just show them how to do. Such 'watch and learn' system may have worked for older generations, but it could be too difficult for young people who are used to knowledge and method based learning in a classroom. Needless to say, it should be confusing for non-Japanese students who prefer to learn by logics.

Ura-sen-ke family has been innovative in its history: The 11th grand tea master invented *Ryu-rei*, or a style of tea ceremony using a table and chairs, as early as in 19th century to welcome new foreign visitors at Meiji Restoration. The 13th master opened the Way of Tea for women, and the 14th master started to teach the Way of Tea to foreigners. The 15th and the previous grand tea master, Genshitsu Sen, is known for his international activities to spread their philosophy to the world. (Ura Senke, 2008). The 16th or present grand tea master, Soshitsu Sen is known for his versatile activities and creativity such as using utensils from overseas.

Midori-kai, or the special course exclusively for international students at the Ura-Senke Chado School seems to provide solutions for all three obstacles typically hinder international students from learning traditional gardens in Japan - visa, language and money: 1) The course is officially accredited full-time curriculum under the regulation by the government and they can issue an official certificate of 'authorization of resident eligibility' for international applicants to apply for a student visa; 2) Although it would be helpful for students to know conversational-level Japanese, the language would not be crucial because the classes and lessons are taught in English; 3) All international students are offered full-scholarship by the institution. The tuition and dormitory fee including three meals are waived and the 100,000 yen stipend is paid each month.

Such a privilege is only given to five people each semester; therefore the admission is competitive. Applicants have to be already active in one of overseas branches of Ura-senke school, and they have to be recommended by their branch to apply for Midori-kai. After completion of one year course, they have to go

back home and be active at the branch in order to receive another recommendation for the second year of study: They can renew up to three years. The graduates from Midori-kai have to become overseas instructors to spread the Ura-Sen-ke style tea ceremony, and they are expected to contribute as a cultural ambassador for the Way of Tea. If they fail to do so, the future applicant from the same branch may not be admitted. Since all students have such serious professional commitment, nobody ever dropped out from Midori-kai (Ura-senke International Division, 2008, personal communication).

## 6. Conclusion

Ura-Sen-ke Midori-kai shows the good example of system of teaching traditional gardens to international students most effectively and efficiently in given situations. Such system promotes internationalization without legal, verbal or financial obstacles, and provides exceptional opportunities only to those who are really committed. Japanese garden industry may want to learn from this model and go further to enable practical training under current framework.

It is difficult to learn Japanese gardening in school only, but higher education institutions may provide practical training opportunity with the following scheme: Full-time students with a student visa can work as much as 28 hours per week during the school period, and they can work full time during vacations under the current immigration law. They can work for any employer as long as they are not illegal operation or in a sex-trade. (Immigration Agency of Japan, 2015). To maintain a student visa, the immigration agency requires students to enroll at least six courses per week, which is usually an equivalent of 12 units. Higher education institutions can offer six lecture or lab courses to teach theory and/or language and allow students to spend the remaining hours to receive training under an artisan and get paid. Although the payment for 28 hours a week may not be enough to make a living and pay tuition, it would certainly help students financially besides giving them a chance for a practical training.

Optional Practical Training after graduation, as permitted in the U.S. for one year, could be valuable in terms of acquiring certain skills. Unfortunately, however, the current policy by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and the Ministry of Justice in Japan to accept foreign trainees are only for ODA, or Official Development Assistance, purpose: They only approve the technical area that may helpful for the economy and welfare of developing countries. The government eventually should, however, consider the importance of cultural exchange and preservation of our own tradition as well. In the case of Japanese gardening overseas, the culture that Japanese people have been proud to the world for such a long time is quickly decaying: They are also misdirected because of the lack of properly trained artisans on site. Concerned experts have been working on it on volunteer basis, but such individual efforts have a limit.

Financial concern is a big issue when one considers studying abroad. Even though it could not be as good as the Ura-Sen-ke's scholarship, some financial aid should be offered to acquire good students in this world competition. The government and the industries should provide more scholarship on condition that the recipient will contribute to the society in one way or other. In case of traditional gardens, the condition may be that the recipient will continue to contribute to maintain the tradition of their trade and spread the Japanese culture to the world, just like the Midori-kai's model. It is urgent to invite well-motivated apprentices for industries suffering the shortage of successors.

The same suggestion may be given to higher education institutions: Currently MEXT provides scholarship by the ODA

budget for selected international students, but the amount of the scholarship is reduced almost every year because the decreasing need of ODA. It is giving a big anxiety to the scholarship recipients. Universities in Japan also concerns their good students would be taken by other institutions such as the top American universities that offers a sufficient scholarship. Since universities in Japan do not have not yet established the self-supportive financial system like some private universities in the US, the government should keep providing good financial aid for international students for a while. The government recently spend some budget for selected university for internationalization, first as 'Global 30 Universities' from 2009 and then 'Super Global Universities' starting in 2015, but the items to spend those funds for is so limited that the money could be wasted for one-time symposium and so on. The government should consider allowing the fund to be used for scholarship or some other means to continuously attract good students to Japan. It is no longer for ODA purpose but for our own sake for academic advancement and for internationalization. It is also important for higher education institutions provide thorough supervision and follow-up for those scholarship students to make sure the citizens' tax are not just given away for no good.

Good, well-motivated and diligent international students are and giving a lot of good influence to domestic students in some Japanese universities. It is also happening in traditional arts and crafts industries. Traditional arts and crafts including Japanese gardening may be utilized as a promotional material to attract international students to Japan. Higher education institution may provide a bridge for the Japanese garden apprenticeship applicants to obtain the legal status to live and work in Japan, and the apprenticeship may support the students financially. It will help all three parties; students, higher education institutions and the Japanese garden industry.

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