

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue t-shirt and blue pants, is sitting on a large, moss-covered rock in a Japanese garden. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. Her right hand is resting on the rock near a small waterfall. The garden features a series of cascading waterfalls over dark, mossy rocks. There are various green plants, including ferns and small trees, and some purple flowers in the foreground. The background is filled with more rocks and lush greenery.

NORTH AMERICA JAPANESE GARDEN ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
PORTLAND. 2018

DEFINING JAPANESE GARDENS

EUROPE - SURVEY RESULTS

CONDUCTED BY CARLA AMORIM



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Conducted by

Carla Amorim

Blogger, author and speaker
Japanese gardener and designer

info@carla-amorim.com

+34 637 392 382

<https://www.carla-amorim.com>

INTRODUCTION

A traditional Japanese garden scene. In the foreground, a stone lantern with a tiered top sits on a mossy rock. A pond reflects the surrounding trees and the lantern. In the background, a thatched pavilion is visible among trees, some with autumn foliage. The scene is captured in a soft, natural light.

Japanese gardens have been a admired in western countries since long time and in Europe there are some remarkable historical gardens, mainly built by wealthy traders and aristocratic families that could visit Japanese in the early days after Sakoku.

These were amazed by its beauty and exotism and brought back to Europe elements such as stone lanterns, pavilions and bridges and their particular view of what a is Japanese garden was exposed on new born gardens.



The history of foreign relations between Japan and western countries was greatly influenced by the first contacts from Europeans arriving Japan and equally from the first official Japanese expeditions to arrive in Portugal (1584) Spain and Rome (1613 through 1620), diplomatic relations were early established and strong as for what concerns economics and trade relations.

Although culture and non-economic relations were probably the first postcard of Japan to the world as the interest and amazement increased after the first Japanese participation on the Vienna's International Exposition of 1873 - where the west could enjoy the first Japanese garden built outside of Japan - the relation with Europe focused on the previously mentioned areas - economy and trade.

This private individual interest and enchantment was accompanied hand by hand by the notion of Japanese Garden as an art form, a painting itself, representing ancient Chinese scrolls or to be painted and framed as many of these western visitors went to Japan to paint the natural sceneries and the gardens themselves were referred to on the early books written by Europeans - Josiah Conder (1852 –1920) and also Florence DuCane - as *“Landscape gardens”*

“... a garden representing a portion of the natural scenery of Japan - which is the aim of every good Japanese landscape garden”

Florence Du Cane, *The Flowers and Gardens of Japan*, ill. Ella Du Cane. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908.





Clingendael Japanese Tui NL

19th century

By Marguérite M. Baronesvan Brienen (1871-1939), also called Lady Daisy.

Lady Daisy sailed off a number of times by ship to Japan and brought back to the Netherlands a great number of lanterns, water basins, sculptures, the pavilion, the little bridges and several plants.

The original design with the serene pond, meandering brook and the winding pathways has remained intact all these years.

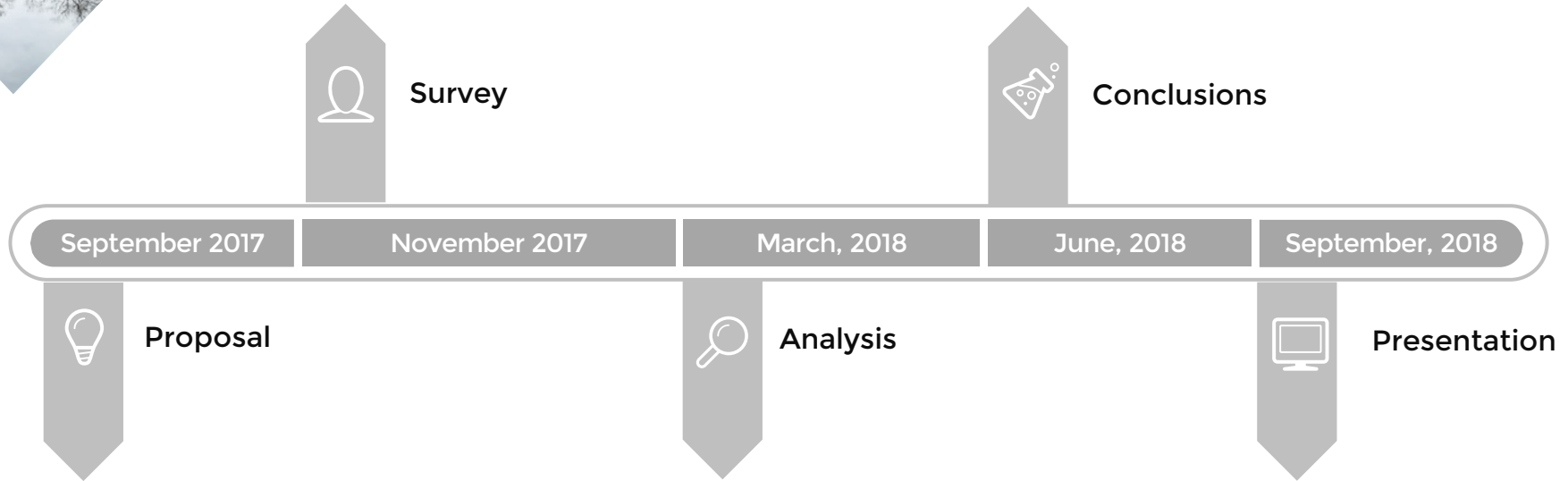


DEFINING JAPANESE GARDENS

1. THE SURVEY

METHODOLOGY

01





SURVEY TEAM

01

PROJECT LEADER IN EUROPE

Carla Amorim

Japanese gardener and designer

Blogger, author and speaker

Promoting a Japanese garden for pilgrims in Santiago (Spain) for Saint James Way & Kumano Kodo

PROJECT TEAM

Koichi Kobayasi

Edzard Teubert

Fumiaki Tagano

Noriko Kawai

Seiko Goto

UNIVERSE

01

COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING



35%



5%



15%



5%



5%



10%



5%



20%

CATEGORIES

Authors / Researchers

25%

Professional gardeners and designers (Japanese gardens)

50%

Professional gardeners and designers (non-Japanese gardens)

10%

Japanese garden enthusiasts

15%

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

01

Invitation via Facebook Group



My Japanese Garden – European Association

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/myjapanesegarden.2012/>

Private group with **about 6000 members**
Out of them, **2398 Europeans**





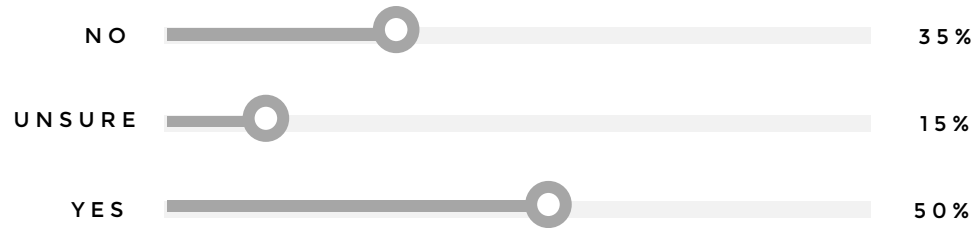
DEFINING JAPANESE GARDENS

2. MAIN RESULTS



IS THERE A NEED FOR A DEFINITION?

02



IS THERE A NEED FOR A DEFINITION?

02

LANDSCAPE QUALITY
GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATION
INTERPRETATION OF "WHAT IS"
+ NEEDED THAN IN OTHER GARDENS
QUALITY GUIDLINES FOR DESIGN
COMPREENTION OF ITS PHYLOSOPHY
NECESSARY FRAMEWORK
CLASSIFICATION - TYPES OF GARDENS
NOT EXCLUSIVE JAPANESE DESIGNERS
QUALITY GUIDLINES FOR MAINTENANCE
NOT EXCLUSIVE JAPANESE GARDENERS

POSITIVE

GUIDELINES FOR VISITORS
DEFINITIONS NEED TO EVOLVE AND BE
REVIEWED
SEPARATE "WHAT IS" FROM FEATURES
AND DECORATIVE ELEMENTS
DEFINE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL
DEFINE RELATION WITH ARCHITECTURE
EXPLORE RELATION BETWEEN
EXPECTATOR AND GARDEN
LAYOUT CONCEPTS, TECHNIQUES
STYLES AND SYMBOLISM
REDUCE COMPLEXITY
DEFINE PURPOSE

EMPTY WORDS
EMOTIONS
EMOTIONAL/
RACIONAL

UNSURE

TIED TO BASIC
HUMAN NATURE
NATURE
CONECTNESS

TOO COMPLEX
FUTIL
FALL INTO EXISTENCIALISM
SUBJECTIVITY
ART FORM
ALREADY EXISTS
SAKUTEIKI IS GUIDE
RISK OF SUPERFICIAL DEFINITION
AUTHENTICITY DEPENDS ON
INDIVIDUAL INTERPRETATION

NEGATIVE

DEFINED BY FEATURES AND
ELEMENTS
NON JAPANESE FAIL TO
UNDERSTANG PRINCIPLES AND
PHYLOSOPHY
HISTORIC/ CULTURAL
DEPENDENCE
TIMELESS TRUTH

SAMPLE TESTIMONIALS

IS THERE A NEED FOR A DEFINITION OF JAPANESE GARDEN?

02



HEIKO VOB

KOKENIWA GARDENS (GE)

“*No. I think the most impressive and beautiful Japanese gardens have been created or are created using Japanese garden art. This highly demanding garden design is an art form and art should be subject to no constraints or regulations.*”



PACO DONATO

ROME JAPANESE GARDEN

“*Yes. The Japanese garden is always the result of human intervention on nature, but, unlike other types of gardens, its artificiality is seen as an artistic-spiritual reproduction, which re-introduces an intimate dialogue between man and the surrounding world.*”



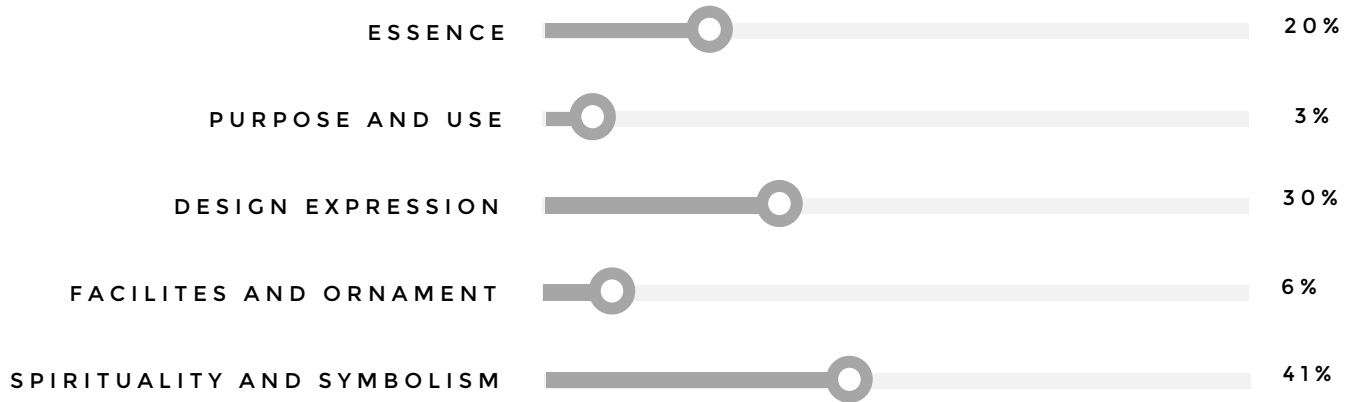
ARIEN TUIN

CLINGENDAEL JAPANESE TUI (NL)

“*I'm not sure if there is a need to work on a definition. It's more about how you feel about the garden. Of course there must be elements of Japanese style in it.*”



WHAT IS THE DEFINITION?



WEIGHT OF COMPONENTS IN WHAT IS THE DEFINITION

02

FOUNTAINS
CHUZUBACHI
ISHI - DORO

FACILITIES ORNAMENTS

LANTERN
FENCES
WALLS

CEREMONY
EMOTIONS
NATURE CONECTNESS
AWARENESS PHYLOSOPHY
CULTURE & HISTORY
SACRET PLACE
LANDSCAPE & NATURE
DEPICTED
WELLBEING

SPIRITUALITY & SYMBOLISM

SHINTO & BUDDHISM
RELIGION
IDEOLOGY
INSPIRATION
SYMBOLISM
MEDITATION
PARADISE
SOUL

MULTISENSORIAL
NATURAL
BEAUTY
SEASONAL
CICLES

ESSENCE

INMATERIAL
NATURAL
MATERIALS
NATURE LAWS
WABI-SABI

AESTHETIC
ASSYMETRY
SHAKEI
HUMAN SCALE
ORAL TRANSMITION

DESIGN EXPRESSION

STONE ARRANGEMENT
TECHNIQUES
PRINCIPLES
KARESANSUI
STROLLING
MAN-MADE

PURPOSE & USE

CHA-NIWA
TEA GARDEN

SAMPLE TESTIMONIALS

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION?

02



OLIVIER GESLIN

AIKIDO PROFESSOR , LANDSCAPER AND
TEACHER AT NIWASHI.FR (FR)

“ *A japanese garden need to express japanese aesthetic values : asymmetric organization, sobriety, simplicity using natural raw materials with specific japanese gardeners techniques.*



NADIA VASILEVA NICHEVA

ARCHITECT PHD | DESIGNER
RESEARCHER (RU/ES)

“ *Despite the conception of "Japanese gardens" conjuring a seemingly clear image, it also leaves open many questions surrounding the effectiveness of such a definition when it comes to related concepts, such as "Japanese aesthetics", "Japanese philosophy" etc., whose meaning has also continued to evolve and be enriched over the centuries.*



TON MAGIELSEN

CEO AT YOKOSO JAPANESE GARDENS (NL)

“ *I think the definition is in the old manuals and especially in the oral transmissions, the teachings from master to student. Remember, designing and building a Japanese garden is all about emotions and feelings - feel with the body and soul and be an honest person while creating.*

ANY HISTORICAL PRECEDENT?

BASED HISTORY & TRADITIONS

SYNTHESIS OF ART AND NATURE

SEARCH FOR PARADISE & IMMORTALITY

SUBJECTIVE PERCEPTION

JAPANESE AESTHETIC

RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM

COMPLEX MULTIPLE VIEWS

GARDEN AS ART

IS THERE A DEFINITION TODAY?

GARDEN AS ARTISTIC EXPRESSION, BASED ON ANCIENT AESTHETIC AND PHILOSOPHIC PRINCIPLES

NATURAL LAWS IN NATURE

MICROCOSMOS

WRAPING CULTURE

SAKUTEIKI

TOO REDUCED TO RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATION

TOO DEPENDENT ON DECORATIVE ELEMENTS

SYMBOLISM IS MEANINGLESS FOR NON-JAPANESE

MISINTERPRETATION OF WHAT DUE TO MEDIA AND BOOKS

FOCUS ON THE "HOW" NOT THE "WHAT"

TYPES OF GARDEN FAIL TO MEET EXPECTATION DUE TO MISINTERPRETATION OF PRINCIPLES

SACRET PLACE NOTION IS A PROBLEM FOR GARDEN MAINTENANCE

COMMERCIALY ATTRACTIVE TO NON-TRAINED DESIGNERS/GARDENERS

GARDEN AS ART SUBJECTIVE & ONLY FOR ARTISTS

ANY CONCERNS?

SAMPLE TESTIMONIALS

IS THERE A DEFINITION TODAY? ANY HISTORICAL PRECEDENT? ANY CONCERNS?

02



JAVIER VIVES RIEGO

RESEARCHER ON ASIAN CULTURE/PHYLOSOPHY
JAPANESE GARDEN AUTHOR (ES)

“ I haven't seen a "scientific" definition in the texts I have read and consulted. I don't know if it exists in Japanese. What does exist is the distinction between the classical garden typologies. One thing is to define the styles of Japanese gardens and the other is to define what a Japanese garden is.



PILAR CABAÑAS

HISTORY OF ART, RESEARCH EXPERT ON
ASIAN ART & CULTURE (ES)

“ People tend to identify Japanese gardens exclusively with the Karesansui, at least in Spain.”



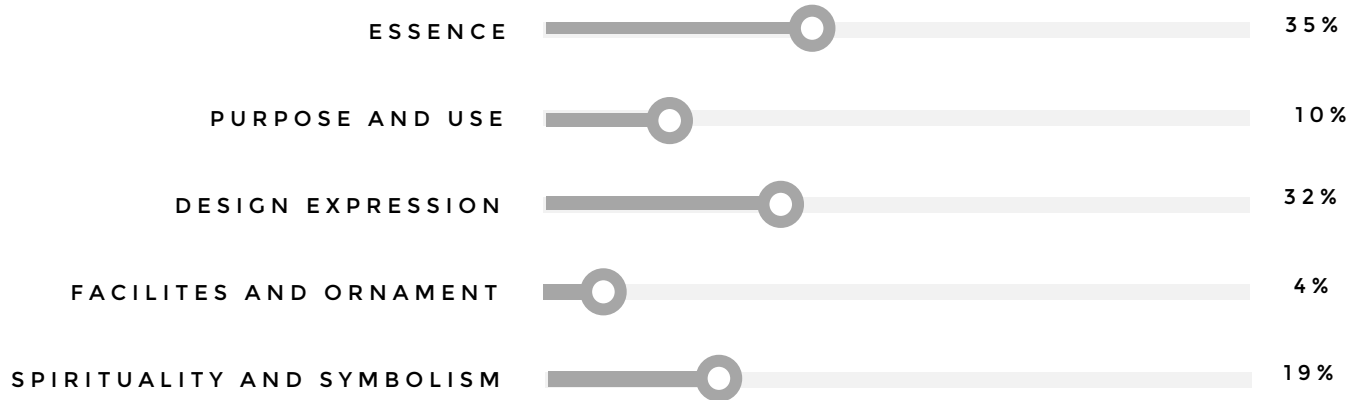
WOLFGAN HESS

CURATOR AT LIEBENAU ZEN GARDEN &
MONATERY (GE)

“ Yugen and Miegakure perhaps are the two most important elements for design. These two elements illustrate the most important concept for designing a Japanese garden: in the combination of stones, water and plants always lies more than can be perceived just by your eye.

AGREEMENT ON DEFINITION

02



FACILITIES
ORNAMENTS

DESIGN
EXPRESSION

SPIRITUALITY &
SYMBOLISM

FACILITIES
ORNAMENTS

ESSENCE

DESIGN
EXPRESSION

SPIRITUALITY
& SYMBOLISM

ESSENCE

PURPOSE
& USE

PURPOSE
& USE

WHAT IS DEFINITION
[BASED ON PAGE 17]

WHAT IS AGREED
[BASED ON PAGE 21]

SAMPLE TESTIMONIALS

DEFINITION TODAY

02



MARIO CARDAÑO MARTINEZ

LANDSCAPE ENG. & GARDENER (ES)

“*For me, a Japanese garden could be defined as the re-creation of landscapes on a small scale, from a traditional oriental point of view, and whilst creating an aesthetic where even the tiniest of details are taken care of, in order for it to look like the original landscape hasn't been interfered with.*”



ALLAN BREWSTER

SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST JAPAN CULTURE
AND GARDENS ENTHUSIAST (UK)

“*A Japanese garden is a defined space, separated from the everyday by some form of real or virtual fence or wall, with some analogue of a gateway or entrance, which may reasonably be considered sacred,*”



ALBERTO CARBALLO BONINI

DECO ZEN DESIGN (CR/ES)

“*The Japanese garden style encompasses many different artistic expressions in gardening as well as a reserved, elegant and refined concept. It feeds from Chinese tradition, culture and gardening, which has been adapted and refined by the Japanese and their culture. Landscapes are made to scale, which assimilate natural landscapes, where each and every detail is man-made, but done in a way so that it's not noticeable that they have done so.*”

SAMPLE TESTIMONIALS

DEFINITION TODAY

02



ALICIA BOMCHIL

LANDSCAPE & GARDENER, ZEN MONK (AR/ES)

“*The Japanese garden, in the best Japanese tradition, is a synthesis of art and nature. It’s closely linked to religiosity, to belief and to myths & legends. It’s a search for paradise and immortality. The spirit of a Japanese garden is closely linked to meditation, and perhaps this would help those people who honestly do wish to immerse themselves in the spirit of Japanese gardens, so that humanity can find the true path to liberation*



PILAR CABAÑAS

HISTORY OF ART, RESEARCH EXPERT ON
ASIAN ART & CULTURE (ES)


“*For me personally, regardless of what type it is, it’s about the abstraction that is experimented with in order to create the space using nature’s elements.*



CARLA AMORIM

JAPANESE GARDENER AND DESIGNER
BLOGGER, AUTHOR AND SPEAKER (PT)

“*Japanese garden is a garden which its design and construction reflects a natural scenario that, when brought to a human scale, seems to connect with us humans through its natural elements (stones, water, plants, etc.), and can induce a state of wellbeing that is easily perceived, no matter where the garden is built.*



DEFINING JAPANESE GARDENS

3. CONCLUSIONS



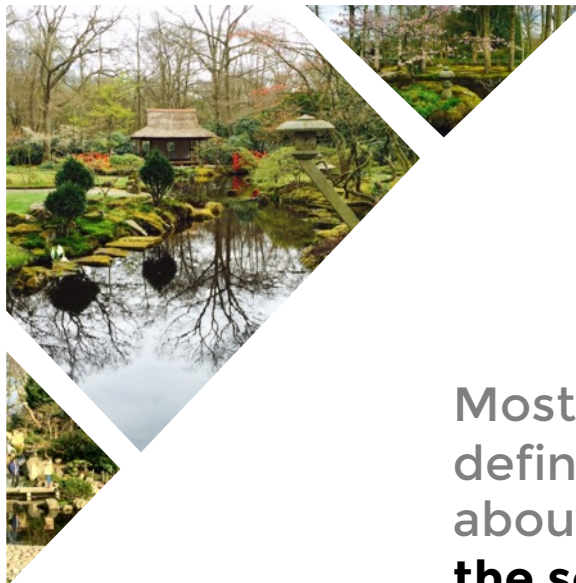
CONCLUSIONS

03

European **perception** of Japanese Gardens among **common people is distorted** and full of stereotypes

Identification of Japanese Gardens **with exotic artifacts** (lanterns, bridges, etc.) **brought back by rich travelers** [Ragget,2017]. Still believed to be of more value than the garden design itself.

Identification of Japanese Gardens **with Zen gardens (Karesansui)** for its **mediatic and public recognition**



CONCLUSIONS

03

Most inquired people mentioned complexity of definition due to the **multiple and numerous views** about Japanese gardens **depending on the author, or the source** (books, media, etc.).

More than a definition, **consensus on the key principles and components** of a Japanese garden should be reached.



CONCLUSIONS

03

A design framework should be defined to maintain its essence and principles.

Such a framework should be **supported by official institutions and associations** both in Japan and outside of Japan.

Construction techniques and maintenance skills should also be included to guarantee quality



CONCLUSIONS

03

Misconceptions and confusion also on **non-professionals and amateurs** lead to conclude that **divulging and education on the matter** should also include them

Reduced mysticism and religious references could **enhance the non-Japanese/western acceptance and promote it's universality** of use and purpose

Japanese cultural events and existing gardens increase the interest and general public acceptance



FURTHER DISCUSSION

03

Less presence of Japanese Gardens in Europe than in America.

92% of US/Canada States have at least 1 Japanese Garden

Only 42% of EU countries have at least 1 Japanese Garden



FURTHER DISCUSSION

03

Out of the Japanese Gardens in Europe, **75% are in just three countries**



UK	31%
France	23%
Germany	21%

Rest of EU 25%



SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

03

Creation of **more Japanese Gardens in Europe and other foreign countries** should be encouraged by official institutions.

Creation of a **Japanese Garden European Association and European Japanese Garden Institute**

This way, **education and promotion** in Europe of **Japanese garden design** and its foundations would be clearer and easier.

DEFINING JAPANESE GARDENS

EUROPE - SURVEY RESULTS

Thank you very much

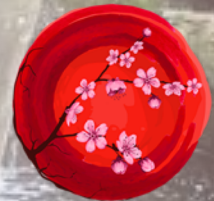
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