

III The Japanese Garden Outside of Japan - The Significance and Role -

2. The Partnership between Cities and Japanese Garden

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Preface

Since the end of World War II, forming sister city relationships with cities outside of Japan, became a nationwide movement. The main purpose of such affiliations is to promote and maintain friendship in the form of cultural exchanges. The first example of such a relationship was that of Nagasaki and Saint Paul. The Sister-city affiliation is usually characterized by the exchange of commemorative gifts, such as paintings and photos made by citizens and children. The gift of a Japanese garden is an extension of such cultural exchanges. But why Japanese gardens are selected for the token of friendship? They are in fact found every corner of European cities. This indicates the popularity of Japanese gardens and the use of public money to maintain them. There are numerous such Japanese gardens overseas constructed as a commemoration of sister city relationship, of which this paper focuses on those in German provincial cities and gives an overview of the present situation.

1. The Beginning of Sister-City Affiliations

This paper focuses on 2 examples: The Hanover-Hiroshima and Freiburg-Matsuyama sister city ties. The common reason why both Japanese cities chose German cities as was a strong impression of Germany's miraculous postwar recovery after World War II. Initially the relationships started with youth overseas activity and it eventually developed into intercity relationships.

In Hiroshima's case:

- 1968 2 university students from Hiroshima visited Hanover as a part of a Japan-German Youth Exchange. This led to continuous youth exchanges between both cities.
- 1972 The mayor of Hiroshima visited Hanover. Therefore, not only private but public exchange ensued. This further enhanced the inclination between cities toward a sister-city affiliation.
- 1983 The mayor of Hiroshima and the representatives of the city council visited Hanover to sign the agreement of sister-city affiliation. Hiroshima received a donation of the replica of the sundial at the top of the European Baroque garden Herrenhäuser Gärten.



Photo-1: Hanover Garden in Hiroshima



Photo-2: Freiburg Garden in Matsuyama

Matsuyama's exchange started much earlier:

- 1961 The mayor at that time, who visited Europe as a part of the Japan Association of City Mayors, implemented a system for sending youth overseas, as the city's own program—for which Freiburg was selected as a destination. 8 youth were sent there in the following 4 years.
- 1963 3 youth from Freiburg visited Matsuyama.
- 1988 (in Freiburg)
- 1989 (in Matsuyama) Deputations from both cities visited each other to sign the agreement of sister-city affiliation.

As to the exchange directly related to gardens in Hiroshima's case:

- 1981 Hanover made a donation of "Hanover Garden" as a commemoration of friendship 2 years before the sister-city agreement. It was a small sunken garden taking its motif from a Baroque "knot garden" in Hanover. It is today located near Hiroshima Children's Museum and Hiroshima City Ballpark.
- 1988 To commemorate the fifth anniversary of sister-city friendship, the executive committee of the Hanover Consumer Commodities Fair (Hiroshima City and the Hiroshima Chamber of Commerce and Industry) donated a tea house to Hanover.
- 1993 When Hiroshima's deputation visited Hanover, they were requested to construct a Japanese garden around the teahouse already positioned in the city's public park.
- 1996 A Japanese garden was completed and opened to the public.

In Matsuyama's case:

- 1986 (The twenty fifth anniversary of Matsuyama-Freiburg ties)
Matsuyama's deputation headed by the mayor, 13 representatives and 16 citizens, visited Freiburg to participate in the Landesgartenschau (a garden show conducted by the state) in which a miniature Japanese garden was exhibited.
- 1988 A joint public-private deputation (73 members) headed by the mayor, visited Freiburg to sign the agreement of sister-city affiliation. They also attended the groundbreaking ceremony of other Japanese garden in Seepark.
- 1989 Freiburg's deputation (81 members) headed by the mayor, visited Matsuyama to sign the sister-city agreement to commemorate the city's 100th anniversary.
- 1990 The Japanese garden in Freiburg was completed and opened to the public. A deputation from Matsuyama (24 members) attended its opening ceremony.
- 1993 In return, Freiburg donated "Freiburg Garden" to Matsuyama, which is today a part of an urban park within the city.

2. The Garden Construction Process

In the year following Hanover's request to create a Japanese garden around the previously mentioned tea house (1993), the City's superintendent of education and the local grand tea master of the Ueda Souko Ryu School, visited Hanover and obtained the city's approval to send staff from Hiroshima to conduct a survey and preliminary consultation. LAT Kankyo Keikaku (LAT Environmental Design Office Co., Ltd) was commissioned to design the garden compatible with the style of the Ueda Souko Ryu School. In addition, the chief of Hiroshima's Parks and Green's Division visited Hanover to confirm the following points.

- Design of the garden: Final plan was chosen from two presented
- Garden material: survey to check availability of local materials.
- Construction period: Winter 1995 - Spring 1996
- Construction cost: appropriate level of financial support is considered

Requests from Hanover

- Provision of specific garden items such as a Roji-mon (tea garden gate) and Koshikake Machiai

(waiting shelter with seating)

- Dispatch of garden experts during the construction work of the garden

1 year later, the city of Hiroshima and Hiroshima Landscape Contractors Association signed the contract for the construction of a Roji-mon and other garden features in the Japanese garden in Hanover. Specific items such as a gate, shelter and door were fabricated in Japan and sent to Germany. The garden experts were dispatched after those garden items arrived. The site is 450m² in a rectangular shape, with the tea house in the center. According to the record, the site visit was conducted as follows.

Site visit 1: Stone and plant selection. 3 experts dispatched for 5 days (November 6-11, 1995)

Site visit 2: Installation of gates and other garden features. 3 experts dispatched for 6 days (December 4-9, 1995)

Site visit 3: Supervision of Japanese garden construction. 1 expert dispatched for 6 days (March 28 - April 2, 1996)

Site visit 4: Opening ceremony of the Japanese garden. 5 experts dispatched for 4 days (April 19-22, 1996)

In fact, it took more time than allotted for material selection and the installation of garden items. Searching and examining garden materials required as many as 10 days between October and November. In March and April the following year, 3 experts gave technical instruction to 5 or 6 German trainees. Basically, stones and plants were all quarried or produced locally. Although plant materials included Japanese varieties e.g. *Pieris japonica*, *Acer* spp, *Pinus* spp and *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*, they were available in German nurseries as usual stock. Common European plants were also successfully incorporated into the planting scheme e.g. *Buxus sempervirens* and *Carpinus betulus*. *Carpinus betulus* was used for hedges to surround the garden and separate inner and outer parts of the garden. Moss, which was barely used for gardening in Germany, was found during material search and incorporated into the garden. Such ingenuity is an important part of garden construction that relies on local natural assets. For future maintenance, a manual in English was given to the city of Hanover—the so called, “Hannover Japanese Garden Guide to Tree Pruning, Care and Maintenance etc.”

Stimulated by Matsuyama’s participation in the Landesgartenschau garden show, (with a miniature Japanese garden), a survey for the construction of a full-scale Japanese garden was begun in 1988. The Japanese garden in Freiburg was opened in 1990, just after the start of sister city affiliations. A stream containing many large stones, characterizes the garden with an area of 3,600m². Ehime Teien Co., Ltd designed the garden. Construction and technical instruction was conducted by the Matsuyama Landscape Contractors Association. 4 experts were dispatched to Freiburg for 2



Photo-3: Tea House in Japanese Garden in Hanover



Photo-4: The Frontal View of Japanese Garden in Hanover



Photo-5: Japanese Garden in Freiburg



Photo-6: The Waterfall in Japanese Garden in Freiburg

months (September to November in 1989). Most of the plants used were available in Germany. *Camellia* spp and *Pinus parviflora* were transported from Japan. The wooden bridge near the entrance was built locally based on drawings sent from Japan. Stone lanterns and bamboo fences were fabricated in Japan in advance. All the stones were quarried in the mountains of Schauinsland in the suburb of Freiburg. Although there was a claim from local nature conservation groups, the situation where the quarry was owned by the city helped to speed the work process. For quarry work, ladder trucks and crane vehicles of the city's fire department were assembled in the quarry. Even where the size and quantity of stones was specified in advance, stone selection was usually conducted by examining each stone in the quarry. For safety reasons, however, a massive quantity of stones were transported together and stored in the playground of the neighboring elementary school. This highlighted the difference of approach between the two countries. Freiburg's total expense in this project was 750,000 DM - 60 million yen (equivalent to 120 million yen today). Matsuyama's expense was 14 million yen. Since the opening of the garden, trainees from Freiburg have come to Matsuyama to have training in garden maintenance.

3. Exchange through Japanese Garden

Hanover has a cultural exchange through the tea ceremony project. There is a branch of the Japanese Tea Ceremony Association. Also, tea ceremony classes and lectures are introduced on the Net. Therefore public involvement in the tea ceremony in Hanover is enthusiastic. In 2003, 58 years after the Hiroshima atomic bomb attack, the bell of Hannover city's church rang at 8:15am as a part of the 20th anniversary ceremony of sister-city affiliations with Hiroshima. According to the press, the mayor of Hanover said "we hope the sound of our peace bell echoes that of Hiroshima's rung at the same time." After the peace bell, a tea ceremony was conducted by a female tea master from Hiroshima. This reminds us that tea ceremony was the prologue of the cities' relationship and the Japanese garden project. The maintenance of the garden is conducted by trained German staff. According to the experts who built the garden and trained the German staff, who have monitored the condition of the garden through video, the level of maintenance is still acceptably fine. Thanks to the relationship built up through drinking tea, the city of Hiroshima has as been remembered by the citizens in Hanover. In the meantime, what about the garden given from Hanover to Hiroshima? In the "knot garden," which is characteristic of the Baroque style, *Buxus sempervirens* (3,000 out of 10,000 were donated from Hanover according to the description on the stone monument) are dying today. This is because the colored gravel, used to keep visitors from intruding on and messing up the gravel pattern surrounding the trees, was bound with a toxic resin. The city seems to be making efforts so as to overcome the disadvantage of the garden's urban location, where intensive usage is expected. However a clear solution is necessary as soon



Photo-7: The Sundial Donated from Hanover



Photo-8: The Bächle in Freiburg Garden

as possible, especially considering the garden is a token of friendship.

One remarkable thing aspect of the relationship between Matsuyama and Freiburg is that Freiburg dispatched staff from the city to Matsuyama for training in maintenance of Japanese gardens. Furthermore, Freiburg dispatched 5 landscape professionals for 1 month for the construction of Freiburg Garden. This ensured the direct exchange of landscape skills.

Freiburg Garden symbolizes the well known Münster, with its stretch of water channel—the so-called Bächle—running through the old town of Freiburg. Located in the center of the city, this garden will attract a lot of people who wish to soak themselves in the ambiance of Freiburg.

Postscript

Why are Japanese gardens constructed abroad? Is it just a question of their exotic nature? Perhaps not. Chinois in Chinese gardens constructed in Britain, was the materialization of Briton's image of China and was not designed for Chinese people. It is easy to define that gardens are imaginary spaces. These two sister-city gardens are the creation of Japanese people who directly worked in the host country. Yet, a team composed solely of Japanese staff would probably not have been able to do as well as one composed of people from both nations. This is because garden construction is closely connected with local materials and the need for local skills, especially as the garden develops. The word "exchange" includes conflict and compromise over materials, skills, etc. The garden is completed in spite of incomprehension and misunderstanding: a conflict and fusion between different cultures. Such experience must be remembered as precious. Some people may try to gain some understanding of Japan by visiting a Japanese garden in their city. It is of great benefit to have Japanese authentic facilities where people can experience Japanese culture through the tea ceremony. Thus, Japanese gardens play a role as a window on Japanese culture. Many people in Matsuyama have been to Freiburg. Some of them may visit Freiburg garden to remind themselves of their trips, while still others may talk about and hand down memories of experience in a different country.

The primary purpose of sister-city affiliations is to maintain and develop friendship. Such cities exchange tokens of friendship both small and large. Gardens would be the finest example of the latter. Since they are composed of water, stone and, above all, living plants, gardens require continuous maintenance. In other words, gardens can be perfect gifts to keep the ties between cities growing.