

# The influence of religious and worldview factors on the landscape design in Japan and China

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**Abstract.** The role of religious beliefs and philosophical teachings in the development of traditional landscape design principles and techniques is analyzed in the article. Examples for the analysis of this development were the traditional cultures of two countries of the Far East – Japan and China. In these cultures, animistic beliefs in the supernatural nature of the elements (sun, wind, thunder, rain, lightning), nature as such (worship of sacred trees, water, etc.) were organically combined with later Buddhist canons, which eventually led to the syncretism of religious and philosophical teachings – Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism in China, Buddhism and Shinto – in Japan.

The analysis was carried out on the material of traditional gardens most visited by tourists, which are positioned as typical examples of traditional landscape design in both countries.

It is proved that the landscape design both in Japan and China developed according to principles similar to the development principles of other types of arts in these countries. In particular, Chinese landscape design was based on the harmonization and improvement of nature, aimed at creating a certain hedonistic space, on the other hand, Japanese landscape design had religious origins from the beginning and was aimed at self-improvement through the observation of nature.

**Keywords:** Religious factors, natural landscape, imagery, architecture, China, Japan

## Introduction

The turn of the 20th and 21st centuries was marked by the emergence of a sustainable development concept prioritizing the long-term interests of human survival over quick profit. There has been a change in the attitude towards the natural environment: it is no longer considered only as a source of inexhaustible resources subject to "subjugation" and transformation. The awareness that man is an integral part of the natural environment in the form it was formed and exists forced to consider the preservation of the environment not from the point of view of abstract world harmony, but as a guarantee of the survival of human as a biological species.

Examples of two cultures, Chinese and Japanese, show the role played by attitudes towards nature in the traditional philosophical and religious teachings of different peoples and how this directly affected the landscape design and imagery of traditional Chinese and Japanese architecture.

It is well known that traditional Chinese gardens (a traditional example of which are the gardens of Suzhou) are a kind of "landscape collage" made up of a set of miniaturized "iconic" landscapes collected from different regions of China [34, 35, 36]. Characteristic features of a traditional Chinese garden are a set of various landscape paintings that are revealed to the visitor when moving through the garden, and the physical dimensions of the landscape elements depended primarily on the garden owner's social status.

Despite the fact that at various stages of the development of the art of landscape design in Japan, various types of gardens were successively borrowed from Chinese culture, they quickly acquired a unique Japanese flavor. So, for example, in contrast to the diversity of the Chinese garden, in Japan, when arranging landscape design objects, the techniques of dominance of one of the elements (water garden, rock garden) became widespread, and specific types of gardens intended for meditation (rock garden, tea garden) [12].

Thus, to generalize, in traditional Chinese landscape design, the aesthetics of diversity and small details prevails, and in Japanese – the aesthetics of minimalism, emptiness and the absence of small details. Such a cardinal difference cannot be logically explained, being limited only to the difference in natural and climatic conditions or socio-economic factors. This makes it possible to assume that such a significant difference in aesthetic approaches has its roots in the religious and worldview differences of the two national cultures.

The main goal of this article was to find out, analyzing the most famous landscape tourist objects, how traditional religions and philosophical teachings influenced the aesthetic criteria, principles and techniques of traditional Japanese and Chinese landscape design. The tasks of the research were as follows:

- to analyze the development of religious beliefs, philosophical, religious and philosophical teachings in China and Japan and reveal their influence on the formation of national culture, national mentality, and aesthetic criteria;
- to select typical examples of historical gardens in China and Japan and determine the list of landscape techniques used in them, which are associated with the concept of traditional landscape design in these countries;
- to investigate the existence of a connection between these techniques and the main provisions of traditional Chinese and Japanese religious beliefs, philosophical-religious and philosophical teachings.

### Methods and Sources

The study's goal determined the set of scientific research methods used. The method of historical analysis and the method of philosophical and religious analysis allowed to determine the specifics of philosophical and religious teachings and their manifestations in landscape architecture, to highlight the role of the natural surrounding in shaping the imagery of traditional architectural objects by different peoples. By applying the two aforementioned methods, the spread of religious beliefs and philosophical teachings in China and Japan was considered in the context of countries' general historical development.

The comparative analysis method allowed to compare the factors shaping the imagery of the landscape architecture of the two countries on the basis of comparing beliefs, religious and philosophical teachings, to identify commonalities and differences between them.

The research procedure was as follows. Initially, a set of historical gardens, which are positioned in China and Japan as carriers and expressions of national culture, were selected for analysis (among them – Lingering Garden and Master of Nets Garden in Suzhou, Bamboo forest Arashiyama, Kyoto, Tenryu Shiseizen-ji). Then the list of landscape techniques used in these gardens was determined.

The set purpose determined the list of processed scientific sources on the research topic. The works of researchers of Ukraine and Poland such as D. Chernyshev, M. Dyomin, A. Dmytrenko, Y. Ivashko, D. Kuśnierz-Krupa T. Kuzmenko and M. Orlenko [7, 8, 9, 21] were analyzed.

The block of publications devoted to China is represented by the works of L. Fang [2], Z. Fang [3], W. Huang [6], Z. Jiang [11], C. Li [15], D. Liu [16], Q. Lou [18], J. Pan [22], Y. Pei [23], Y.Z. Tong [27], G.Wang, H. Zhang [30], Y. Wang [31], Y. Xing [32, 33], G. Zhao, M. Qiu [35], W. Zhou [36], G.Y. Zhu [37], J. Zhu [38],.

The block of publications devoted to Japan is represented by the works of H. Shevtsova [25], N. Anarina and Ye. Dyakova [1], W. Kuitert [12], G.

Nitschke [20], N. Vinogradova [29], M. Shigemori [26], D. Young and M. Young [35]. Basic philosophical sources were involved separately [5, 13, 14, 19, 28].

Elaboration of the sources proved the need to generalize the characteristics of the famous gardens of China and Japan in terms of their philosophical and religious analysis and a comparative analysis between these gardens in order to determine commonalities and differences between them.

### Religious and philosophical principles of landscape design in China

Chinese culture, with all its variety of forms and meanings, has (according to various sources) 25–30 centuries of its existence. And, characteristically, during all this historical period of time the attitude to religion, the nature (both live and not live), traditions, rites and holidays remained almost invariable.

The cornerstone of Chinese culture, in our opinion, is religious syncretism – the long-term coexistence of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism and their slow convergence, with Confucianism prevailing in the field of ethics, Taoism appealed to human sensuality, and Buddhism, in turn, gave birth maintained illusions about a bright future.

In fact, the system of gods in Chinese spiritual culture was complex and multi-tiered. On the highest tier, according to Leonid Vasiliev, were the national cults of Heaven and Earth, and only the Emperor had the right to performance of acts of worship to them in special, metropolitan temples [28, p. 314].

At the same time, one cannot fail to note that, despite the large number of temples, religions and rituals, the focus of the spiritual life of the average Chinese for thousands of years remained focused on the earthly world, and not on the idea of the afterlife. Confucius himself probably expressed this idea best when he answered the question of one of the dignitaries of the Lu principality about what wisdom consists in: "Wisdom consists in taking seriously the duties that concern people and, respecting the spirits, refraining from them aside" [14].

This is why attempts to import foreign religions such as Buddhism into China, even when the rulers actively planted the new religion, invariably ended in failure after several centuries. The number of followers of new religions remained relatively small.

It is possible to trace a certain influence of Taoism on the internal structure of a traditional Chinese garden, where artificially mounded hills often symbolize three mountains – Penglai, Fāngzhàng, and Yíngzhōu, located on islands in the Bohai Sea, where, according to Taoist legend, the Eight Immortals live – outstanding personalities born by humans, but later became immortal [5, 13].

At the same time, the owner of the garden, arranging the likeness of the mountain where Immortals live, did not set himself the task of achieving internal moral perfection and acquiring

other virtues characteristic of Immortals. He simply wanted to create a corner of perfect nature, like heaven on earth (to use European concepts).

It should be noted that the functional purpose of Chinese gardens with their special arrangement (unlike the Japanese style, where the stay in the park/garden should set the visitor to relax, meditate, immerse yourself, etc.) has another purpose – to impress visitors with the diversity of the landscape, aimed at contemplation/reading. The ethical and philosophical content of landscape art in China was so great that it is quite right to put it on a par with such traditionally important Chinese arts as calligraphy and painting. It is no coincidence that Chinese researchers have emphasized the features of the art of painting in ancient Chinese gardens, compared art genres and the same genres embodied in landscape paintings.

China's gardens are very diverse and, at the same time, similar to each other. There are samples of large parks and at the same time miniature, but the arrangement is identical. They are conditionally divided according to their functional purpose. A classic example of a Chinese garden is the famous gardens of Suzhou (Fig. 1).

A traditional Chinese garden (Fig. 2) is the embodiment of the basic principles of Chinese landscape design gradually formed during many centuries, which provided:

- subordination to the existing natural environment (water, terrain), which was called "act according to the circumstances";
- borrowing of the landscape, i.e. the maximum inclusion of landscapes outside the garden in the landscape sceneries;
- separation of primary and secondary, hierarchy of elements-components of landscape sceneries);
- contrast as a means of imagery and the creation of emotional impression (light-shadow, high-low, near-far, etc.);
- the embodiment of the great in miniature (for example, miniature copies of real mountain landscapes);
- consistent change of landscape sceneries as a personification of the variability of the universe;
- harmonious combination of scales of landscape sceneries and small architectural forms in a natural environment;
- seasonality of landscape sceneries.

A characteristic feature of China traditional landscape design is the symbolism of its elements – basic materials (water, stone) as well as individual species of plants.

It is noteworthy that water must move (whether a stream, or a small stream, or a river), because it represents a symbol of eternity, represented in the system of Chinese space as a continuous stream of being.



*Fig. 1. Linger Garden in Suzhou  
[photo by Maria Żychowska]*



*Fig. 2. The Master of Nets Garden (Wángshī yuán) in Suzhou  
[photo by Maria Żychowska]*

As for the stones, the landscaping of the garden was carried out with the least possible impact on the natural environment, as Chinese masters of the ideal landscape sought to preserve the natural terrain, adding only elements that were missing (according to the master, such as milling). According to Chinese ideas, the stone symbolizes the active principle of yang, and water – the receptive principle of yin. Connoisseurs especially valued such properties in stones as "permeability", "catch" of space and "openness". "Permeability" allowed to feel the created bizarre forms with voids inside that at once increased their aesthetic value. Another criterion for the aesthetic evaluation of the stone is the "caught" space of the cavity, because it was not the stone itself that was interested, but the emptiness inside it. These cavities, which are impregnated with even a stone block, even a small stone, leave an impression of lightness and elegance. The next sign is "openness", i.e. the beauty of cavities and holes in the stone, which would open it to meet the surrounding space.

The most common tree in the traditional Chinese landscape garden is the mountain pine – a symbol of longevity. Bamboo, which bends but does not break, is a symbol of tenacity. The wild meihua plum means hope in difficult times, as it blooms while it is still cold. Plum blossoms symbolize beauty and

splendor. It also means longevity, purity, renewal. The beginning of "yin" in the flower kingdom was represented by the chrysanthemum – an autumn flower, a symbol of peace and longevity. These four plants were considered the "perfect four".

In almost every Chinese garden you can find a peach – a "tree of happiness", which averts harmful forces. As for flowers, the most respected among florists is the peony, which earned the title of "king of flowers" in China. Among aquatic plants, preference was given to the lotus, which has a sacred meaning in Buddhism.

A specific phenomenon unique to Chinese culture is geomancy, referred to in China as "feng shui." In the most general form of feng shui could be described as the doctrine of the influence of energy (qi), emitted by various landscape forms of the earth's surface, on human life. The starting point in feng shui is the idea of a great triad: Heaven – Earth – Human, which is in perpetual motion, interconnectedness and interdependence.

#### **Religious and philosophical principles of landscape design in Japan**

Religious beliefs and philosophical teachings in Japan, as well as in China, had a strong influence on the formation and development of traditional landscape architecture and design. Although in the early stages of Chinese culture, philosophy and religion had a significant impact on Japanese culture, but over time, Japanese culture, including philosophy, religion, traditional landscape design began to show more regional features. Although Japanese landscape design shows some commonality with ancient Chinese landscape design, it has regional and national features.

The history of the development of landscape art in Japan has been formed since ancient times (the beginning of the formation of this state and its corresponding culture in literary sources dates back to about 3rd – 4th centuries) has a close, direct connection to this day with the spiritual culture of its own people. This connection, in our opinion, needs a separate more detailed consideration. Of special importance in the formation of the spirituality of the Japanese people as a separate, conservative, closed to the world for centuries until the end of the 19th century (or rather, until 1868), a separate community, is its religion – Shinto. There is no supreme god in this national religion, but the Japanese worship the forces of nature, animals, and, last but not least, the famous people who are included in the Kami pantheon. Unlike the religion of China, for example, the sky is not a deity, but a refuge, a place of permanent residence of Kami. Although Kami are kind, respectful by nature, the Japanese still find it necessary to keep their distance from them.

According to various sources, today there are about 100 million Shinto believers. In the pantheon of Shintoism, which, although it has no idols, there are,

according to various sources, about 800 million Kami. That is why there is such a diverse and bright palette of traditions, rituals and holidays, which, incidentally, varies from area to area where the Japanese live. This is why the representatives of this country have such a respectful and reverent attitude to nature, to every animal, to every tree, stone, stream or flower, including famous people.

The formation of Shinto as a national religion was completed around the 8th century (by this time there was a unification and fixation of ancient traditions, formed a single mythology, introduced a corps of ministers with a "set" of necessary rituals, significantly increased the number of temples, etc.). But, no less important point for consideration of our topic – the history of landscape design – is that almost simultaneously with the formation of the national spiritual culture of Japan was "penetration" into its territory (somewhere in the 5th – 4th century) Chinese spiritual culture (which coexists with Japanese to this day).

Given that Shintoism was basically based on primitive beliefs such as totemism, animism, magic, etc. and, in terms of philosophical understanding of the world, theoretical abstract constructions were insufficient for a rapidly developing society, the penetration of Buddhism into Japan and, the so-called inclusion in the then Japanese spiritual culture made it possible to very quickly play a leading role and take a leading position in the spiritual progress of the country.

According to the famous scholar-theologian Michele Malherbe, "the whole history of the religion of Japan since then – these are trends that have changed each other in the direction of Buddhism, then in the direction of Shinto" [15, p. 238].

In different historical periods one or another cultural tradition prevailed. This state persists to this day. Modern Japanese believe very little in Kami (as evidenced by the number of believers), but do not seek any rational explanation for the existing rituals. For the Japanese, Shintoism testifies to their national unity, expresses their desire to maintain the harmony of life of the nation. Today, the "synonym" of Shinto is the "matsuri" – a holiday, that is, any public action, whether it is a celebration of sakura blossoms or a holiday of lilac blooms, when the Japanese rejoice in their existence.

It should be noted that the Japanese treated the new religion – Buddhism – much more seriously than their Chinese neighbors. Belief in spirits, in the afterlife, was widespread even earlier, which was reflected, in particular, in Japanese folklore. Therefore, in the Edo era (1603–1868), when Japan was in a state of self-isolation, national characteristics of landscape design were finally formed and rock gardens intended for Buddhist meditation became so widespread [12].



Fig. 3. Deers on the background of the torii gate  
[photo by Ivan Chornomordenko]



Fig. 4. Bamboo forest Arashiyama, Kyoto  
[photo by Maria Żychowska]

That is why in the history of landscape design in Japan we can observe the interpenetration of heterogeneous elements, various details, which indicate the interaction of both traditional and non-traditional sources of their formation. This is a kind of search and embodiment of the balance and equilibrium of different spiritual cultures, which are reflected, in particular, in landscape architecture.

The national Japanese religion – Shintoism – had a strong influence on the formation of traditional Japanese gardens, in the structure of which the legendary eight perfect islands and the lake of the gods – *shinchi* – were symbolically reflected. Shinto

shrines dedicated to gods and spirits – *Kami* – could be found on the sea coasts and in the forests of the Japanese islands since prehistoric times. As a rule, natural elements were used as such shrines – large stones of an unusual shape or trees that stood out among the surroundings. *Shimenawa* (cords made of rice fiber) were tied on them, and the ground around them was paved with white pebbles or stones, which symbolized ritual purity. [20, p. 14 – 15]. A place that was cleaned and ritually cleansed in anticipation of *Kami*'s appearance there was called a *niwa*. This word, among other synonyms, was later used to denote a garden. Thus, not only the main elements of the Japanese garden – hills, ponds and trees of unusual shape – but also the very name of the traditional garden is inextricably linked with Shintoism [34].

Thus, together it proves that the development of landscape art (landscape architecture, landscape design) was directly influenced by the traditional worldview based on Shintoism, although the division of Buddhism and Shintoism can be divided only theoretically. We think it is worth starting with the fact that Shinto sacred buildings/temples should be considered as ensembles, because they have a separate territory – the territory of the park/garden in which they are located. If you mentally virtually imagine a territory that has a conditional boundary and is not a territory that is separated by a high, strong fence or wall and the entrance to which is free, then such a space without material walls – this is what was said above from the philosophical religious point of view. On all four sides of the world – north, south, west, east – there are symbolic gates made of solid wood of the cryptomeria tree, which are called torii (Fig. 3). Such torii are painted red and symbolize the entrance to the territory of the *Kami*. If one of the sides of the park is girthed by a pond (lake, sea, river, etc.), the torii are installed directly in the water to warn a person who swims through that he enters the temple area runned by *kanussi* – "the master of *kami*".

The cult building, located in the depths of the park, built in the Japanese style, necessarily made of fresh wood (cryptomeria) and serves for about twenty years (until fresh resin is released from the resin, which fills the temple with its aroma), then the temple is dismantled, and hundreds masters again build the temple in a few days from new, fresh wood. The friezes of the pediments are decorated with artistic carvings; animal figures carved from wood.

A path paved with fine gravel leads to the temple, which is usually located deep in the park (this is intentionally arranged so that a person going to the temple could not move as fast as on the pavement, but walked slowly, understanding the purpose/ request/gratitude with which he wants to turn to *Kami*). On either side of the path leading to

the temple, every eight to ten meters, there are, like a watchtower, one and a half to three meters high, stone lanterns carved out of marble, which have through square or round openings from which light shines in the dark. from candles illuminating the path to the temple. Very much attention, as elements of a decor, deserve various finishing elements – live and inanimate trees (a tree-like azalea which blossoms with big flowers of different color, from red to pale pink, depending on a grade), spherical bushes, up to three meters in diameter a bushy azalea, which, thanks to mixed when planting different seedlings, blooms with colorful flowers, all kinds of flowering plants, which are located along a kind of stone boulder stream with numerous waterfalls and wooden bridges that connect the transitions from one bank to another, bamboo forests (Fig. 4).

The location of various plants, moss-covered stones, trees in the park is selected in such a way that there is something to admire in all seasons – it is also evergreen plants and shrubs, periwinkle and so on.

Compared to traditional Chinese gardens, the Japanese garden looks simpler and ascetic (Fig. 5).

It is also necessary to define the peculiarities of medieval Japanese landscape design, which were provided by the researcher of Japanese architecture Halyna Shevtsova in her monographic study. Among her main theses on the genesis and origins of Japanese landscape design, we will focus on the following [25, p. 128–130]. To the early stage of gardens formation in Japan, she attributes the following features:

- origin of the traditional Japanese garden from the flat, pebble-covered Siki grounds, which in Shinto personified the sacred territory of the deity's presence (as one of versions);
- arrangement of special ponds for boating in the privat and monastery gardens during Heian period (794–1185);
- symbolical meaning of the main garden elements in Buddhism (cult of Buddha Amida): the pond as the personification of the infinity of the universe, the island in the middle of the pond as the human world, sanctuaries on the west and east shores as symbols of "Western" and "Eastern" paradise.

During the Middle Ages, the structure of a traditional Japanese garden changed and became more complicated. Among the features of the medieval garden H. Shevtsova also names the following:

- diversification of garden types and their functions (similar happened with Chinese gardens);
- borrowing Chinese Zen Buddhist landscape traditions and their rapid transformation on local soil;



Fig. 5. A fragment of the temple garden of Tenryu Shiseizen-ji  
[photo by Maria Zychowska]

- change in the function of the reservoir: lakes are reduced and are not intended for water walks, but only for admiring the landscape;
- a new type are gardens on the hills, "tea gardens", picture gardens not for walks, but only for admiration (they were located along the veranda) and were fenced off on the opposite side by a fence;
- formation of "dry" or "rock" gardens on the basis of small sandy or pebble areas with geometrically placed natural stones, moss spots, several trees or shrubs in Zen Buddhist monasteries, which served for meditation and inner concentration);
- borrowing Chinese traditions of communication of Buddhist ink painting and landscape design of the temple garden in Zen monastic "dry" gardens, designed to awaken the imagination and connection with painting, but greater than China, laconicism of elements, modesty and emphasized monochromism, corresponding to the philosophical;
- special role of stones in Zen gardens: stone as a personification of the staticity of the universe and the variability of the human world (Fig. 5).

Among the most famous gardens of Japan H. Shevtsova names the gardens of the temple Byodo-in and Dzyoruri-ji from Kyoto Prefecture, the gardens of the temples Ginkaku-ji and Kinkaku-ji, the garden of the temple Ryoan-ji, the gardens of the temples Daisen-yin, Obai-yin, Ryogen-yin Daitoku-ji monastery.

## Results

Despite the religious syncretism characteristic of both China and Japan, which was formed as a result of the addition of traditional religions (Shintoism in Japan), religious and philosophical teachings (Taoism in China), and philosophical teachings (the teachings of Confucius in China) with various branches of Buddhism, it should be noted that the difference in the religious and worldview sphere in China and Japan (at least during the

TABLE 1  
Traditional gardens in China and Japan: differences and commonalities

Country	Differences	Commonalities
China	From the very beginning, a garden was interpreted as an ideal embodiment of a place of pleasure, so it is rich in many components that form clearly defined landscape sceneries.	The religious syncretism of Buddhism and local animistic beliefs, where the deification of nature plays a prominent role, had a decisive influence on the concept of a traditional garden.
Japan	A garden is based on examples of asceticism, cavity aesthetics and is designed for meditation, so it uses a much smaller list of elements, and the garden itself has a more monochrome character.	Landscape sceneries of gardens have not only aesthetic, but above all hidden sacred significance.

formation of the canons of traditional landscape design).

If the Chinese diligently performed numerous external rituals and paid little attention to spiritual practices based on meditation, such practices became much more widespread in Japan. Such a difference in the national worldview is the reason that the traditions of landscape design, which were successively borrowed by Japan in China in different eras of development, changed quite quickly on local soil.

Functionally, this manifested itself, in particular, in the appearance in Japan the garden types created primarily for meditation – rock gardens and tea gardens.

Thus, the teachings of Confucius in China – on the one hand, and the traditional religion of Shintoism in Japan – on the other, formed a significant difference in the worldviews of the nations. If an average Chinese was mainly focused on earthly existence and had little interest in both spirits and options of the afterlife offered by the main religions, then the Japanese, on the contrary, showed the ability to be much more interested in the afterlife and, therefore, in internal self-improvement and meditative practices.

Ultimately, the specific features of national Japanese landscape design were formed in the Edo period (1603 – 1868), when the country was in self-isolation, which allows us to conclude that there is a direct connection between the limitation of external contacts and the concentration of regional features and features of national identity.

A comparative analysis of the gardens of China and Japan allows us to identify commonalities and differences between them (Table 1).

Despite the similarities in certain techniques of traditional landscape design in China and Japan,



Fig. 6. Linger Garden (Liu Yuan) in Suzhou  
[photo by Maria Zychowska]

there are noticeable differences between them, in addition to those already mentioned. For example, a garden pond and an island have another symbolic meaning: in China they symbolize the cult of the immortals living in the mountains, in Japan the pond represents the infinity of the universe. In Japan, the island in the middle of the pond symbolizes the human world, and the symbols of "Western" and "Eastern" paradise are sanctuaries on the west and east banks.

In China, too, the "dry" stone gardens inherent in Japanese Zen traditions have not become widespread, and their gardens create a festive uplifting mood (Fig. 6).

This allows us to conclude that in traditional landscape design, as well as in folklore, traditional painting, music, etc., the peculiarities of the national mentality are quite vividly reflected.

## Conclusion

As a result, the authors departed from a detailed description of specific gardens and generalized and concentrated those features that are associated with traditional Chinese and Japanese gardens and are similarly positioned by the population of these countries. Accordingly, the study was complemented by the analysis of those examples of gardens that are positioned as part of traditional culture – national landscape design (Linger Garden ((Liu Yuan) in Suzhou, The Master of Nets Garden (Wǎngshī yuán), Bamboo forest Arashiyama, Kyoto, Tenryu Shiseizen-ji). Therefore, the main task of the research was to move from the level of specificity (description of landscape techniques of a particular garden) to the level of generalization (a list of the main features-expressives of national culture) with a further comparison of these generalized features. It was argued that the gradual departure in the gardens of Japan from hedonism of Chinese gardens towards minimalism and asceticism, which was determined not only by the religious school of Zen Buddhism, but also by cultural, natural-climatic and economic features.

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