

# Temple Architecture as Construction of Consciousness: A Japanese Temple and Garden

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## Summary

This paper presents a theory of temple architecture suggested by the intricate interrelationship of buildings, meditation garden, the natural environment, and priests in meditation at the Zen Buddhist Temple of Tenryu-ji (Temple of the Heavenly Dragon), Kyoto, Japan. The theory of influence and participation through correspondence of form and image is illustrated through discussion of the equation body:temple = temple:body. The Tenryu-ji case is considered with respect to corresponding cases from central Africa, India, and Dynastic Egypt. Body:temple = temple:body is presented as a model for the analysis and interpretation of temple architecture as the construction of consciousness.

## Résumé

Cet article présente une théorie de l'architecture sacrée inspirée par les interrelations complexes liant les bâtiments, le jardin de méditation, l'environnement naturel et les prêtres méditant au temple zen-bouddhique de Tenryu-ji (Temple du dragon céleste) à Kyoto, Japon. Une théorie à la base de laquelle se situe la notion d'une participation et d'une influence émergeant de la correspondance entre la forme et l'image est illustrée par la discussion de l'équation corps:temple = temple:corps. Le cas de Tenryu-ji est examiné par rapport à celui d'autres temples situés en Afrique centrale, aux Indes et en ancienne Egypte. Nous considérons que l'équation corps:temple = temple:corps peut servir de modèle à l'analyse et à l'interprétation de l'architecture des édifices sacrés en tant que construction du conscient.

## 1. Introduction

There is a compelling antiquity to the socioculturally widespread claim that a temple is a body and that, *ipso facto*, a body is a temple. The body:temple correspondence is a characteristic of sacred architecture.

The association of the body with the temple is in part accounted for by interpreting the temple as a house - the house of the Transcendent.

"Having a body and taking up residence in a house are equivalent to assuming an existential situation in the cosmos" (Eliade, 1959, 175).

The evolutionary separation of house and temple corresponds with the sociocultural separation of rituals of transcendence from domestic residence. Transcendent experiences, for most people, are confined to the temple. Yet, we participate in the temple with existentially situated physical bodies. The body:temple correspondence is both widespread and of great antiquity because it is rooted in the necessity of existentially experiencing the Transcendent.

The independent invention of the body:temple correspondence is, in part, accounted for by C.G. Jung's concept of archetypes in the collective unconscious. Jung assumes a collective unconscious, common to every human being at any time and in any place, the structure of which cannot be directly apprehended by consciousness. The collective unconscious, instead, is apprehended by consciousness through *images* clothing the psyche and best expressing its structure and content. Body:temple is archetypal to the extent that it is concretized as a cross-culturally consistent form-image. It is the image which unites the Transcendent and the existential situation of being human. Body:temple, as image, is at once the Transcendent and the existential. This is the primal *mysterium*, as the historian of religion Rudolph Otto terms it. How is it that our bodies are a temple and a body at the same time? How is it that the temple is a God and a building at the same time? How is it that, during temple ritual, I am me and God are the same? This is the *mysterium*, the primal consciousness, activated for most of us and intensified for a few (priests, in the following cases) during ritual participation in the house of the Transcendent. Sacred architecture often images the temple as a physical body to stimulate consciousness of the body as temple and of self as Transcendent. Sacred architecture, further, images the temple as a physical body to stimulate consciousness that existential participation in the temple is at once participation in the Transcendent. The temple, for Mircea Eliade (1959,59), is a sacred image precisely because the temple, and those within the temple, participate in the Transcendent. The theory is that the image of the Transcendent, manifest in the form of sacred architecture, is not just a pictograph but is mysteriously something more than the sum of composite points, lines and planes. The temple is the Transcendent. Correspondence of form with respect to the body of a temple and the body of, say, a priest is not simply metaphoric. Correspondence of form, with respect to the body:temple image means that forms resembling each other *participate* in each other. The equation, then, is not simply body:temple but body:temple = temple:body.

This paper illustrates the correspondence theory of body:temple = temple:body (1) through discussion of three cross-culturally consistent cases of body:temple = temple:body, and (2) through discussion of body:temple = temple:body as I interpret it at Tenryu-ji temple <sup>1</sup>. In each case I emphasize the manner in which spatial interrelationship, architecture, ritual participation, and environmental design are the components of body:temple = temple:body forms and images.

<sup>1</sup> The research presented in this paper was carried out during 1985-1986 while on a Fulbright to Japan. Portions of the descriptive material on Tenryu-ji temple and garden presented here were earlier presented at the following conferences: (1) "Body Relationship and Temple Relationship: the Structure of Meaning at Tenryu-ji Temple, Kyoto, Japan". A paper presented at a session on Spaces and Places: Explorations in Cultural Form and Meaning at the 86th annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Chicago, Illinois; (2) "Chinese Feng Shui and the Meditation Garden at Tenryu-ji Temple, Kyoto, Japan". A paper presented at the Second International Conference on Built Form and Culture Research: Purposes in Understanding Sociocultural Aspects of Built Environments, University of Kansas, Lawrence. I thank Richard B. Pilgrim and David A. Slawson for their apt suggestions for revision of the manuscript version of this article.

## 2. Body:temple = Temple:body: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

### 2.1 *The Fang of Central Africa*

The Fang are Yaounde speaking people primarily living in the central areas of Gabon. The Fang are village horticulturalists and Fang architecture, architectural space, and the natural environment are subtly homomorphic. Domestic house construction, for example, is the same verb, *along nda*, as basket making. Houses, like baskets, are woven. The Fang consider the products of this activity, a basket and a house, to be homomorphic with the natural environment. Houses and baskets hold, enclose, and protect. The Fang, literally, interweave the *warp* of their sociocultural environment with the *woof* of their natural environment.

Fang non-domestic architecture and architectural space are exemplified by the *aba eboka* council houses, temples, of high-rank *Bwiti* society priests. *Bwiti* priests are responsible for maintaining contact with spirits, and *aba eboka* temples are sacred spaces in which priests and spirits dwell and comingle. *Aba eboka* temples are compass sited to the natural environment and to other buildings comprising a village. *Aba eboka* temples and architectural spaces are organized lineally. Priests ritually enter the compound through a *njimba* gate, the space of creation, then proceed through *ku* spaces recapitulating the movement of creation, and pause at the *akon aba* entrance gate to the inner recesses of the temple. The *akon aba* is the arena of macrocosmic birth and death. Here, priests begin a spiraling ritual movement of further entry. The movement is a clockwise elliptical circling around *bunume* this-world space, surrounding the *akon aba*, and around *mbwol* other-world space surrounding the *mang ese ayat* altar located toward the inner-most recesses of the *aba eboka*. The elliptical weaving movement of ritual entry corresponds with the elliptical weaving movement of the primal interrelationship between the microcosmic physical realm and the macrocosmic metaphysical realm. The primal, spiraling movement of the priests dialectically mediates the two realms. Horizontal movements are organized around and balanced by vertical posts marking the *abon aba* entry space and the *mang esi ayat* altar space. The posts supporting the lintels of the *aba eboka* are *axis mundi* (Eliade, 1959, 33-37), the archetypal pole connecting the sacred and the profane, and *bwiti* priests say these posts connect the human and metaphysical realms. It is along these channels, often depicting spirits iconically, that spirits comingle - the spirits of the metaphysical realm and physical realms. I emphasize here, in anticipation of the forthcoming case from Japan, that Fang priests experience the *akon aba* temple vertically as well as horizontally.

The *bwiti aba eboka* is not a symbol or a representation, but is considered by Fang priests as a manifestation of the primal domain of which human beings and the natural environment are but manifestations. Fang priests, further, find the body an appropriate image of the correspondence existing between people, architecture and architectural space, and the natural environment.

*Aba eboka* temples are imaged, by *bwiti* priests, as a bisexual body.

"On the right hand the men's chamber, on the left the women's chamber. He lies on his back. Behind him is his life and death the earth. Before him the future of his spirit. On the right the sun, on the left the moon. The head is the *sugu*, the area of mystery. In the centre of the chapel is the fire

which is the heart. The *akon aba* is sex organ. It is of the man and the woman" (Fernandez, 1977, 35).

The *aba eboka* is an association, corresponding with the following Hindu case, between the spatial placement and differential function of parts of the body and the spatial placement and differential functions of the temple. The social body, a priest's body, and the body of the *aba eboka* temple are at once macrocosmic and microcosmic. Critical here, though, is structural relationship rather than content. The structure of the body is, for Fang priests, an image of the primal pre-content structure of the universe. Ritual movement through an *aba eboka*

"reestablishes the content of structure... until finally these are reduced to that unity called one-heartedness (*nlem mvore*)" (Fernandez, 1977, 37).

*Bwiti* priest participation in *aba eboka* temple is like two images momentarily ceasing to separately exist. *Nlem mvore*, one-heartedness, is what Japanese Zen Buddhist priests term *satori*. Fang priests, as do Zen Buddhist priests, argue that *nlem mvore* unity is a structural condition as well as a state of consciousness. *Aba eboka* temples, from this vantage, encourage consciousness of distinction as well as offer a means for lack of distinction. Temples and architectural space are a content of structure, along with the bodies of priests, that come into a particular relationship during ritual - a structural relationship believed to be an image of the sacred nature of macrocosmic reality outside the microcosmic content of time and space. Body:temple = temple:body, for Fang priests, is not a reductionistic symbol or representation of the Transcendent, but an image of the Transcendent participating in that of which it is an image.

## 2.2 The Tamil of India

The Tamil Nadu people traditionally live in the Coimbatore District of southern India. Brenda E.F. Beck (1976) finds compelling instances of body:temple = temple:body in southern India and, like James Fernandez and Schwaller de Lubicz, presents her ethnographic case within the framework of correspondence theory.

The primary consideration is orientation. The Tamil note that what we mean by body is not a totality, but the relationship between parts comprising a whole. For the Tamil, placement is significant and placement establishes a part-to-whole relationship. Temple images of Siva often depict five faces - one oriented toward each compass direction and a fifth 'inward looking' face axially placed face downward in the middle of the others. The Tamil have a complex philosophy of the body and

"body and cosmos are viewed as related topological spaces that exhibit similarities at the level of visible structure" (Beck, 1976, 240).

The ideal (androgynous) human body among the Hindu, corresponding with Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, is imaged as superimposed on concentric rectangles comprised of geometrically proportional squares. Each distinctive part of the body exists in proportional relationship to every other distinctive part of the body. The proportional relationships comprising a microcosmic Tamil body correspond with the proportional relationships comprising the macrocosmic body of, in particular, Mahapurusa. Tamil people speak of the body as a temple, and body:temple = temple:body is structurally and functionally integrated with intricate philosophies about food.

The primary structure common to Tamil domestic or temple architecture and architectural space is a squared ground plan with each corner oriented to a compass direction.

"Slowly each point becomes 'trapped' or contained by a series of lines drawn around it" (Beck, 1976, 220).

One does not, then, so much make space sacred as reveal and demarcate space as sacred. In domestic architectural space the centre, the fifth orientation, is inhabited by people. In the construction of temples, four faces of Siva (Tatpurusa = east; Akora = south; Vamateva = north; Catyojata = west) are ritually placed at each corner of the squared space while the *Siva lingam*, the phallic *axis mundi* pole connecting microcosmic earth and macrocosmic heaven, is the fifth face of Siva (*Isana*) placed on centre ground facing upward.

In the case of the Tamil, analogous to the Fang case, there is correspondence between distinctive parts of the body and compass directions. East/Tatpurusa = the head; south/Akora = the heart; north/Vamateva = the trunk of the body; west/Catyojata = the feet. This correspondence is with reference to Mahapurusa's sacrifice and ritual dismemberment. The construction of Tamil temples, Beck (1976, 223-28) notes, is imaged in consideration of the placement of the body of Mahapurusa, corresponding with the above-mentioned spatial orientations. This is a microcosmic:macrocosmic correspondence, permitting priest participation with the macrocosmic body through contact with its microcosmic image. The Tamil, and the Fang, hold that an image is not a symbol of representation but a form-structure participating in that of which it is a subject.

Tamil temples, and Fang temples, demand precise ritual movements. Participation in temple space is a gradual, qualitative movement from the less sacred to the more sacred. Tamil temples are demarcated by a concentric series of walls pierced by axially aligned entrances. Beck (1976, 237) depicts movement through the architectural space of the temple as movement from the light, open, and profane to the dark, enclosed and sacred. The centre shrine area is termed *garbhagrha*, meaning womb room. Only priests, as spiritual mediators, are permitted in these inner recesses. The movement, in particular, of *yogi* priests through the temple corresponds with the movement of energy along the seven *chakra* nodes, and corresponding stages of consciousness, on the human spine. *Yogi* exercises move energy along the spine axially, from the loins and solar plexus to the head. The pineal gland corresponds with the *Isana* shrine and image of Siva at the top/head inner most *garbhagrha* recesses of the Tamil temple. Movement along the spine of the temple toward the *garbhagrha* is perfection of consciousness through the corresponding movement of *yogi* energy along the spine of a priest. The significance of body:temple = temple:body for the Tamil is that it permits participation, through sympathetic imagery, in the purified re-creation of the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic.

### 2.3 *Dynastic Egypt: The Temple at Luxor*

Construction of the temple of Amon-Mut-Khonsu, Luxor, Egypt, was begun during the Middle Kingdom Dynasties (2050-1650 BC), with additions during Dynasty XVIII, c. 1375 BC. Interpretation of the Luxor temple is associated with R.A. Schwaller de Lubicz, the late Egyptologist who based his influential studies on the al-

chemic philosophical tradition of Hermes Trismegistus. The Hermetic tradition posits a discernible structural pattern to the correspondences existing both within and between apparently differing forms and materials. De Lubicz illustrates the form and proportional structure of the Luxor temple as an image of the body. Body:temple = temple:body, further, corresponds with a geomantic pattern of growth and transformation of forms in the natural environment.

The temple at Luxor comprises (1) an entry through the Court of Ramses, movement through (2) the Colonnade of Amun (3) to the Peristyle Court, and termination in (4) the Covered Temple. As in the following Japanese case, specific architectural spaces are coterminous with the status of participants in the body of the temple. Pharaohs and priests entered the inner recesses of the Covered Temple, while members of the royal family and others were permitted as far as the hypostate hall. Commoners were only permitted as far as the Peristyle Court. The path through the Luxor temple is as predestined as is the state of one's *ka* (soul, in particular the soul of the Pharaoh). The temple at Luxor is sited on the East bank of the Nile. Dynastic Egyptian theology is framed spatially, and the predestined progression of *ka* was coterminous with the Pharaoh's periodic ritual movement from north to south along the Nile from, say, the temple of Amon at Karnak, then along the Avenue of the Sphinxes, down to and through the temple at Luxor.

The construction of Luxor through successive Dynasties accounts for the fact that the temple, unlike the Fang and Hindu cases, is sited on three distinct compass axes. Along with the Giza pyramids, the buildings comprising the Luxor temple are asymmetrically organized with respect to each other and with respect to a north/south axis. The (1) Court of Ramses is  $43^{\circ} 27'$  of a north/south axis, the (3 and 4) Colonnade of Amen and the Peristyle Court are placed at  $35^{\circ} 41'$ , and the (5) Temple Platform, Hypostyle Court, and Covered Temple incrementally range from  $34^{\circ} 27'$  to  $33^{\circ} 0'$ . De Lubicz interprets this asymmetrical geometry, through analysis of barque plaques in the Temple of Edfu, as correspondence with the movement of the sun (Ra). There are no straight lines in nature - including the movement of the sun. The offset siting and spatial orientation of buildings comprising the Luxor temple theologically accommodate variations in the duration and vitality of Ra's barge moving across the heavens.

Body:temple = temple:body at Luxor is both the structure of the temple and an image applied by de Lubicz. De Lubicz first notes that the pavement stone and foundation structure of Luxor are iconic.

"The contain several shapes that attract the attention; for instance, the curve of an eye outlined by large blocks; the shape of an ear, as well as the channel of the trachea, outlined by a series of juxtaposed slabs. We find in room 20 a bas-relief representing the same face as that formed by the elements of the paving" (de Lubicz, 1977, 21).

De Lubicz then discusses the correspondence of an outline of a skeletal body superimposed on a topographic drawing of the temple.

"The head... is located exactly in the sanctuaries of the covered temple; the sanctuary of the barque of Amun is in the oral cavity; the clavicles are marked by walls; the chest is located in the first hypostyle of the covered temple and end with the temple's platform. The abdomen is represented by the peristyle court, and the pubis is located exactly at the door separating this peristyle from the colonnade of Amun.

This marvelous colonnade is, in fact, dedicated to the femurs, the thighs, the knees are at the site of the gate in front of which sit the two colossi, marking the entrance to this colonnade. The tibias are in the court of Ramses, framed by the colossi, whose legs (tibias) are particularly pronounced. The little toe of our skeleton falls exactly at the northwest angle of the pylon" (de Lubicz, 1977, 24).

Working from Egyptian texts, especially the Canon of Neters, de Lubicz concludes that this anthropomorphism has as its referent macrocosmic Man rather than, say, microcosmic Pharaonic Man. The perfection of *ka* is prefigured as Pharaonic and priestly participation in the temple as didactic instruction about the perfect shape of *ka*. The structural element here is proportion; right relationship, as it were. Proportion, for Greeks like Plato and Protagoras as well as in the Hermetic tradition, is the harmonic form of the universe. Proportion links the cosmic, the environmental, and the human. The *image* of the body:temple = temple:body is a didactic device both manifesting and reinforcing proportion as perfect relationship and, for Pharaohs and priests, participation in Luxor is participation in perfection.

De Lubicz geomantically analyzes the Luxor temple by reference to the Golden Mean. The Golden Mean of is the intrinsic ability of certain geometric forms, such as the squares structuring Tamil temples and the rectangles structuring the temple at Luxor, to generate proportional ratios of form infinitely. The Golden Mean of a proportional rectangle, of any size, is a consistent  $AB:BC::BC:CD$ . That is, the shorter sides of the rectangle are proportional to the longer sides at the same ratio of  $1:\sqrt{3}$  or  $\phi$ . At Luxor, then, the proportional relationship that is the smallest rectangular unit of measurement is qualitatively congruent with the largest rectangular unit of measurement. This relationship is found in the human body, as illustrated by da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*. The didactic lesson of body:temple = temple:body at Luxor is that humans, Pharaohs and initiated priests in particular, are structured congruent with the cosmos. Attention to the physiology and theology of the body, then, (with respect to complex philosophies concerning mummification) is instruction concerning the structure of the cosmos.

### 3. Body:temple = Temple:body: Medieval Japan

Cases from Egypt, central Africa, and India argue the cross-culturally consistent nature of body:temple = temple:body. The following case from medieval Japan is yet another instance of the consistent nature of this primal image and form. The Tenryu-ji temple case, though, is singular in several revealing respects. My interpretation of the Japanese case expands body:temple = temple:body to include not only the temple proper, but the meditation garden appended to the temple. Secondly, the Japanese case does not conceptualize body:temple = temple:body as a specifically microcosmic:macrocosmic issue; rather, body:temple = temple:body is an image of a state of consciousness as well as an existential state of being. Unlike the aforementioned cases, priests reside at Tenryu-ji temple. I will, then, emphasize the manner in which priests do not participate *in* a completed architectural space, as in the aforementioned case, but as *complete* body:temple = temple:body through sympathetic participation.

### 3.1 Tenryu-ji Temple and Meditation Garden

The present Tenryu-ji complex was constructed from 1339-1345 at the order of the Ashikaga shogun Takauji (1305-1358)<sup>2</sup>. The grounds and several subtemples were redesigned into a place for training priests (cf. Sato, 1972; Nishimura, 1973; Suzuki, 1959, 62-70) by Muso Kokushi (1275-1357), a Zen Buddhist priest, when Takauji invited him to be the first abbot of the Tenryu-ji temple. The Tenryu-ji complex at this time covered ten square kilometres and comprised 150 subtemples. Tenryu-ji is presently headquarters of the Tenryu school of the Rinzaï sect of Japanese Zen Buddhism.

Kyoto is sited in correspondence with the spatial geometry of the Chinese T'ang dynasty's (AD 618-907) capital city of Ch'ang-an (cf. Bring and Wayembergh, 1981, 2-5), and Chinese spatial symbolism influenced the siting of Kyoto and of Tenryu-ji to the west of Kyoto. South is an auspicious geomantic direction associated with (male) *yang*, light, and the moral quality of goodness. North is the least favoured direction and is associated with (female) *yin*, cold, and death. East and west exhibit equal parts of *yin* and *yang*. East is associated with the dragon, water, and spring while the west is associated with the tiger, mountains, and autumn (Higuchi, 1983, 146-162). Kyoto, open to the south, is sited on a flat plain between mountains to the north, east and west. Attention to these geomantic principles locate Kyoto between dragon and tiger mountains - a position of generativity and energy. The Kyoto siting of Tenryu-ji, then, interlocks the loins of the white tiger and the blue dragon to powerfully merge and balance *yin* and *yang*<sup>3</sup>.

### 3.2 Tenryu-ji: *Body:temple = Temple:body*

There is a Chinese origin to the ground plan (*sashizu*) of medieval Japanese Zen Buddhist temples. The Tenryu-ji compound is sited and spatially organized in correspondence with the Chinese Song Dynasty (AD 960-1279) *Ch'an* (Zen) temples of ching-shan, T'ien-t'ung-shan, Pei-shan and A-yu-wang-shan (see Figure 3)<sup>4</sup>.

The core group of buildings comprising a Chinese *Ch'an* temple complex are termed *chichido garan* in Japanese, a spatial layout comprising seven buildings (Collcutt, 1981, 184; Dumoulin, 1963, 142-158). The prototypic Chinese Song dynasty *chichido garan*, applied to Japanese Zen Buddhist temples, are discussed in the

<sup>2</sup> Ashikaga shoguns brought religion under secular control through the *gozan* (five mountain) ranked organization of about 300 official monasteries (Collcutt, 1981, 92-119). The *gozan* organization was dominated by Muso Kokushi and Rinzaï Zen. In 1386 Ashikaga Yoshimitsu placed Tenryu-ji, which had been in the third tier, into the first tier of the five-tier *gozan* system. Tenryu-ji has since enjoyed considerable prestige in Rinzaï Zen Buddhism.

<sup>3</sup> Discussions of Asian landscape geometry are provided by Feuchtwang (1974), Rossbach (1983), and Skinner (1982). The point here is not just the functional integration of architecture and environment, but the fact that landscape geometry is a *praxis* dependent on a particular state of consciousness and reinforcing a particular state of consciousness.

<sup>4</sup> On the geometric and geomantic influence of Chinese Buddhist temples on Japanese Buddhist temples, see Collcutt (1981, 172-182), Paine and Soper (1981, 377-405), and Wheatley (1971, 411-476). Bring and Wayembergh (1981, 152-161) and Higuchi (1983, 146-147) elaborate on the correspondence of animals with spatial orientation. Chinese theory on these matters holds that iconic correspondence is sympathetic influence. William A. Lessa (1968, 17) says that "correspondence has great significance... for the Chinese it replaces the idea of causality". The spatial correspondence of Tenryu-ji and Chinese *Ch'an* temples is an "ordered harmony of wills without an ordainer".

writing of the monk Ichijo Kanera (1402-1481). Ichijo Kanera (Collcutt, 1981, 184) defines the following:

<i>Sammon</i>	(three-storied gate, entrance to the core temple area)
<i>Butsuden</i>	(comparatively large building for the storage and veneration of images of Buddha)
<i>Hatto</i>	(mid-size building used by senior enlightened priests ( <i>roshi</i> ) to deliver lectures on Zen Buddhism to priests in training { <i>unsui</i> }. A lecture room)
<i>Kuin</i>	(comparatively small building for the preparation of meals. A combination kitchen and dining area)
<i>Sodo</i>	(living area for priests, in some temples associated with a <i>zendo</i> meditation and study area)
<i>Yokushitsu</i>	(bath house)
<i>Tosu</i>	(latrine)

*Shichido garan* buildings, it is noticed, function either in association with the bodies of priests or in association with images of Buddha. As such, several centuries later, there are pictorial associations between *shichido garan* buildings and the body congruent with associations found in Fang and Tamil temples<sup>5</sup>. The monk Mujaku Dochu (1653-1745) wrote a history of Japanese Zen Buddhism, and Figure 1 presents his iconographic and spatial association of specific *shichido garan* buildings with specific parts comprising the body.

The *Hatto* is the head of the body, the *Butsuden* is the trunk, the *Sammon* is the loins, the *Sodo* is the left hand, the *Kuin* is the right hand, the *Tosu* is the left foot, and the *Yokushitsu* is the right foot.

The *shichido garan* principle of classification and spatial organization reveals, from my perspective, two bodies: (1) the body of Buddha; (2) the body of *unsui* priests. The *Hatto* Dharma hall, *Butsuden* Buddha hall, and *Sammon* gate are buildings associated with Buddha and are spatially aligned on an east/west axis (see Figure 3). Chinese *Ch'an* temples, unlike the Luxor temple, are aligned on a north/south axis and the *shichido garan* east/west alignment at Tenryu-ji is a Japanese innovation. The body is an *axis mundi* around which compass and spatial orientations are socioculturally reckoned. The number three in Rinzaï Zen Buddhism is associated with asymmetry and the potential for progression, a potential not associated with the symmetrical opposition and stasis of even numbers (Davidson, 1982, 25; Slawson, 1987, 87-103; Schaarschmidt-Richter, 1979, 41). There is an asymmetrical balance to the three *axis mundi* buildings associated with Buddha in opposition to the symmetrical balance of the four flanking buildings. The four flanking *shichido garan* buildings not associated with Buddha function in body-association with acolyte *unsui* priests training at the temple - *kuin* dining hall, *yokushitsu* bathhouse, *tosu* latrine and *sodo* living quarters.

<sup>5</sup> Asian case examples of body:temple = temple:body are provided by Beck (1976), Hay (1983), Paul (1976) and Weatley (1971, 423-436). A general discussion is provided by Eliade (1959, 162-213) and Marc (1977, 85-120).

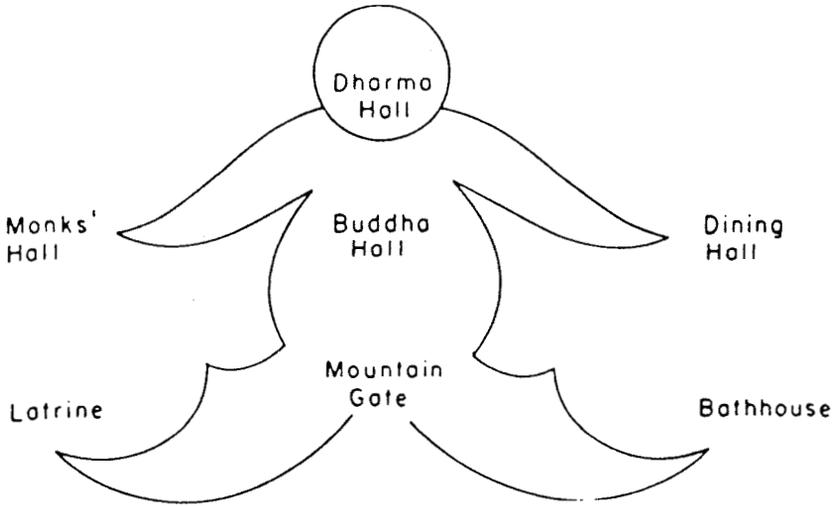


Fig. 1 Mujaku Dochu's (1653-1745) association of specific *shichido garan* buildings with specific parts comprising the body (Drawing by H. Dumoulin).

Les rapports perçus par le moine bouddhiste Ch'an Mujaku Dochu (1653-1745) entre certains bâtiments du *shichido garan* (Salle Dharma, Salle des moines, Salle du Bouddha, salle à manger, latrines, Porte de la montagne, bains) et le corps (Dessin de H. Dumoulin).

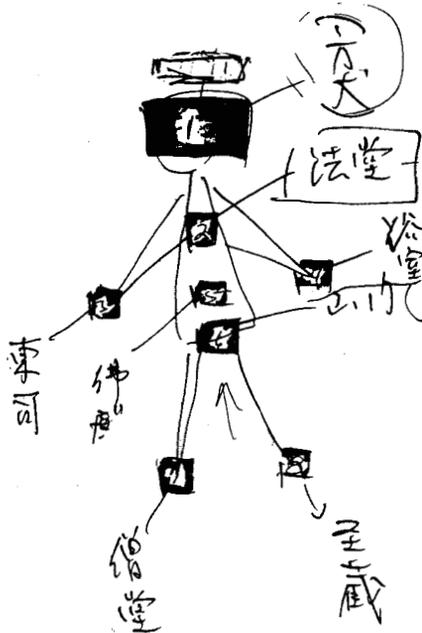


Fig. 2 Priest Takayama's sketch placing the image of body.temple = temple:body on an east/west axis.

Le prêtre Takayama a fait un croquis plaçant l'image corps.temple = temple:corps sur un axe est/ouest.

Priests at Tenryu-ji are aware of the Chinese *shichido garan* structure of their temple, but offer an interpretation of *shichido garan* different from the Chinese prototype and different from earlier Japanese Zen Buddhist interpretations by Ichijo Kanera and Mujaku Dochu.

Priest Takayama, my tutor at Tenryu-ji who provided me with the sketch in Figure 2, places the image of body:temple = temple:body on an east/west axis, with the north to the right and the east to the bottom of the anthropomorphic image <sup>6</sup>. Movement through the temple is from east to west, as represented in Figure 3, a movement recapitulating the movement of the sun, as in the Luxor temple, as well as a movement forcing priests approaching the meditation garden to orient themselves toward the western direction of *sodo* Buddha's paradise.

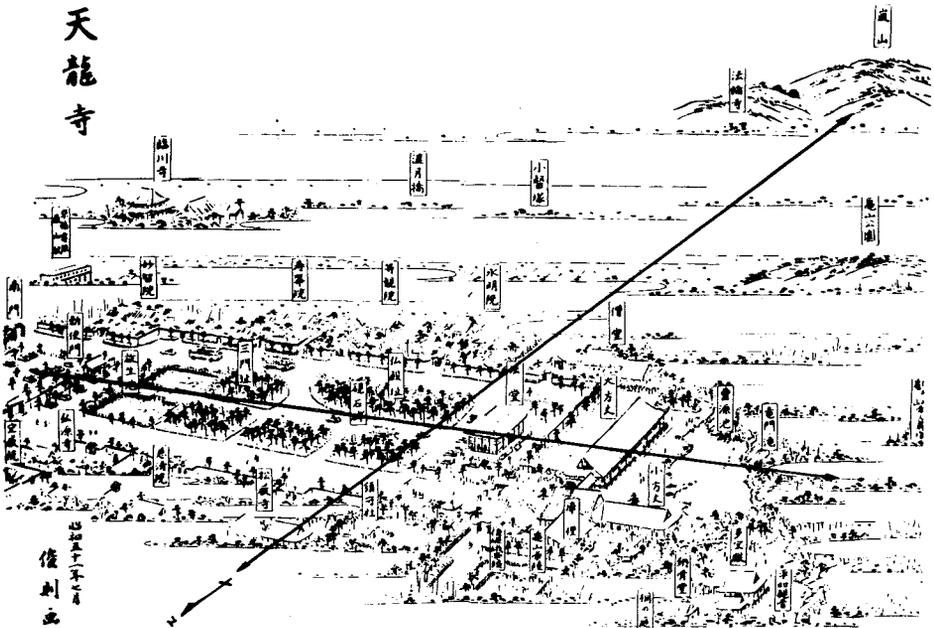


Fig. 3 The Tenryu-ji complex - core buildings and compass orientation (Source: Roji Junrei, Kyoto).  
 Le temple Tenryu-ji - les constructions au centre et leur orientation (Source: Roji Junrei, Kyoto).

"The traditional gardens of Japan", says Davidson (1982, 18), "were laid out on an east/west arrangement, facing south, so that artificial lakes and streams, when viewed from the north, would run left to right. The garden thus became a rough representation of the sun's course, following the direction and flow of the life-giving source".

<sup>6</sup> Takayama is a pseudonym.

Architectural space directs movement through the temple from the north toward the south, from the least favoured geomantic direction associated with cold and death to a favoured direction associated with warmth and life.

The *shichido garan* buildings in the Tenryu-ji complex are eight in number rather than the Chinese seven illustrating Muso Kokushi's inclusion of the *Dai Hojo*, the quarters of the abbots of Tenryu-ji, in his Zen environment. The Tenryu-ji complex is open to the south and east yet comparatively closed to the north by subtemples, planted stands of maple trees, and the *Dai Hojo* (see Figure 3). The *Dai Hojo* is the largest of the *shichido garan* buildings, and occupies a favoured Zen Buddhist western spatial position. The *Dai Hojo* commands a privileged view of the meditation garden and pond (see Figure 5). The Japanese addition of the *Dai Hojo* to the Chinese *shichido garan* layout further emphasizes the *axis mundi* group of buildings, now four in number rather than three. Priest Takayama's sketch in Figure 2 includes the meditation garden, reminiscent of a halo, within the image of body:temple = temple:body, thereby placing five structures on the central east/west axis. The *axis mundi* of the Tenryu-ji complex includes additional gates: an initial *Nanmoto* (gate of difficult entry) gate and subsequent *Chokushimon* (gate of the straight path) gate (see Figure 3). The *Nanmoto* and *Chokushimon* gates are preliminary to the *Sammon* gate and to the *Butsuden*. These gates, as in the aforementioned cases, successively distinguish the profane outer world from the sacred precincts of the temple (Collcutt, 1981, 188-190; Eliade, 1959, 179-184). Standing in front of the *Sammon* gate, preparing to enter the temple, one presents *yin* (back) to the outside while presenting *yang* (front) to the temple.

Priest Takayama's sketch in Figure 2 does not mimic the *shichido garan* Chinese prototype. Priest Takayama moves the *yokushitsu* bathhouse from the right foot to the right hand, the *tosu* latrine moves from the left foot to the left hand, the *sodo unui* priest quarters and the study hall become the left foot, and the *keizo* temple library becomes the right foot. Tenryu-ji continues as an important Rinzai Zen Buddhist temple, and Rinzai Zen Buddhism emphasizes the *koan* method of training priests (Mountain, 1982, 202-208; Phillips, 1962, 169-180; Sekida, 1985, 98-107). Tenryu-ji's interpretation of *shichido garan* Chinese emphasizes a written and oral tradition of training priests. Tenryu-ji, as body, is literally supported by a library and study hall.

*Shichido garan* is conventionally interpreted from a topographic perspective; that is, the image of body:temple = temple:body is viewed looking down on the buildings and their anthropomorphic pattern of spatial arrangement. The body, though, is uniquely bipedal and is meant to be considered vertically. The prototypic *shichido garan* pattern can be viewed bipedally such that the *tosu* latrine and *yokushitsu* bathhouse, the left and right feet of the temple body, are on the ground level. Bipedally, Figure 2 has its back to the viewer. Both the earth and the back of the body are *yin* and female. The sky and the front of the body are *yang* and male. The *tosu* latrine and *yokushitsu* bathhouse are more *yin*, closer to the earth, than are the *sodo* monks' hall and *kuin* dining hall. The buildings associated with senior *roshi* priests, and the meditation garden in front of the *Dai Hojo*, are the most removed from the earth and are the most *yang*.

Movement through the Tenryu-ji compound is movement from *yin* to *yang* and, with respect to Mircea Eliade (1959), from the profane to the sacred. The five buildings associated with Buddha, and the abbot's meditation garden, are the spine of the bipedal body. From this vertical vantage the five buildings are a more apparent

*axis mundi*. The *Butsuden*, *Hatto* Dharma Hall, and abbot's *Dai Hojo* are limited access buildings toward the top of the *axis mundi*. This vertical perspective on *shichido garan*, congruent with the Fang and Hindu cases, reveals a correspondence between architectural space and sociopolitical hierarchy. Initiated *roshi* priests are associated with the spatially higher areas and buildings in the temple complex, while uninitiated *unsui* priests are associated with the lower library, study areas, and flanking buildings. Lower status and ranked *unsui* priests in training move from their flanking spaces to periodically meet with *roshi* in the center Buddha-associated spaces. Body:temple = temple:body at Tenryu-ji prefigures a ranked community as does body:temple = temple:body among the Fang (Fernandez, 1977, 33-33), Dogon (Griaule and Dieterlen, 1960), Tamil (O'Flaherty, 1981, 25-40), and in Dynastic Egypt (de Lubicz, 1977). The meditation garden and pond are at the top of the *axis mundi* and the pond and garden are an aesthetic and spatial concretization of Buddha consciousness.

Body:temple = temple:body corresponds with Tenryu-ji as an arena enhancing the *satori* experience of Buddha consciousness; a place for participation in the sacred revealed as sacred by its spatial character and orientation. *Shichido garan* is

"an architectural art form... expressing the Buddha path itself!"  
(Pilgrim, 1981, 34).

Muso Kokushi appears to have adapted features in the pond and garden to aid *zazen* meditation and, from my perspective, to have integrated at Tenryu-ji the garden and garden pond with temple buildings such as the *Dai Hojo*.

### 3.3 *The Pond at Tenryu-ji: The Correspondence of Garden, Temple, and Priests*

The present garden and garden pond could have been designed in the early 13th century by Rankei Doryu (1213-1278), a Chinese priest (Lan Chi) who resided at Tenryu-ji from 1261-1264, although there is controversy concerning this matter (Itoh, 1984, 101-110; Matsunoke, 1939, 15-31; 1942, 8-20; Shigemori, 1936-39, volume 26, 50-55). The 45 by 30 meter pond in the garden at Tenryu-ji is recognized as an unprecedented example of a *chitei* (pond garden) garden design adapted to Zen Buddhism (cf. Davidson, 1982, 13-30; Schaarschmidt-Richter, 1979, 20-28).

The form of the pond at Tenryu-ji (see Figure 4) corresponds with a Chinese geomantic principle that the presence of water favours the accumulation of *ch'i* - vital energy and the Breath of Life. Straight lines encourage the flowing away of *ch'i*, while curves and irregular shapes are esteemed as they encourage the pooling of *ch'i*. The pond in the Tenryu-ji garden is a convoluted form enhancing the accumulation of *ch'i*. The absence of straight lines corresponds, for similar reasons, with the asymmetry of Luxor temple.

Priests at Tenryu-ji say the shape of the pond is significant with respect to Rin-zai Zen Buddhism. The form of the pond corresponds with the form of the Chinese character for heart, termed *kokoro* in Japanese (Davidson, 1982, 33; Dumoulin, 1963, 190). The Chinese character for heart is synonymous with mind, as Japanese Zen Buddhists seek to experience the unity behind apparent dual oppositions such as heart (body) and mind (cf. Phillips, 1962, 3-28; Sekida, 1975, 160-206; Suzuki, 1985, 25-49). Priests at Tenryu-ji say the shape of the pond is the heartmind of Muso Kokushi, who experienced the enlightenment of *satori*. Muso Kokushi, I am told, shaped the pond in this irregular fashion to teach about the heartmind of Buddha consciousness.

The heartmind of people who are not aware of their Buddha consciousness is like a cube of ice - rigid and inflexible. Rigid and inflexible consciousness, as I interpret Priest Takayama, is homologous with rigid and inflexible environments. The heartmind of Buddha consciousness, though, is flexible and flowing like the contours of the pond.

Meditative attention to seeing and hearing what is there to be seen and heard, the 'suchness' of *shinnyo*, is the design intent of the shape of the pond in the Tenryu-ji garden. Heart and mind are not reductionistic symbols, but are structured as the architecture of the meditative environment.

Japanese Zen Buddhism seeks to negate the illusion of duality as the nature of reality (Kapleau, 1980, 60-67; Phillips, 1982, 153-216; Suzuki, 1985, 41-43). Zen Buddhism does not embrace Cartesian dualisms of subject/object, thinking/being, things/ideas, or Self/God. Zen Buddhism seeks consciousness of a non-reducible Absolute Ground of Being, as it is termed (Merton, 1968, 33-58; Phillips, 1962, 394-400; Suzuki, 1959, 108-115), that is "not consciousness *of* but pure consciousness..." (Merton, 1968, 24) as an attribute of primary experience.

Consciousness of a Zen Buddhist meditation environment as the interrelationship of temple, garden, and priests negates, in particular, the Cartesian distinction between and opposition of body and mind. Shaner (1985) emphasizes Zen Buddhist attention to consideration of the experiential interrelationship of body and mind. Shaner argues,

"one can never experience an independent mind or body... This relationship may be described as being 'polar' rather than 'dual' because mind and body require each other as a necessary condition for being what they are. The relationship is symbiotic" (1985, 42-43).

Body and mind exist as concepts *only* when abstracted from primary experience. Experientially, body and mind are a unitary bodymind.

"It is important to remember that mind, in Zen Buddhism, is not separate from, or dependent upon, the body..." (Mountain, 1982, 24).

Japanese Zen Buddhism is practice in experiencing the phenomenological consciousness of bodymind. Japanese Zen Buddhist meditation environments are the unity of body/mind and, therefore, are arenas for experiencing the unity of bodymind.

Primary experience is a central tenet in Japanese Zen Buddhism, and Japanese Zen Buddhists do not embrace reductionary experience in the form of symbolic or semiotic meaning. *Shinnyo*, the 'thusness' of reality, is meaning experienced in awareness of things exactly as they are. Experience is physical as well as metaphysical. Shaner concludes,

"Bodymind as the ground of experience is the condition for the spatial character of experience" (1985, 58).

The Japanese Zen Buddhist Absolute Ground of Being is homologous with temples and temple meditation gardens. Participation by priests structures a Zen Buddhist meditation environment and, *ipso facto*, is participation in the Absolute Ground of (body/mind) Being.

The pond in the garden at Tenryu-ji temple is designed, I conclude, to be experienced from a central location on the veranda of the *Dai Hojo*. This location places in

alignment, on primarily east/west viewing planes, fifteen prominent stones in the pond. These stones are placed in the pond in a slightly off-shore position, spatially and aesthetically functioning to balance the water (*yin*) in the pond and surrounding land (*yang*) masses. These stones appear to be the primary stones around which the pond is organized with respect to the intentional architectural interrelationship of the garden and the *Dai Hojo*.

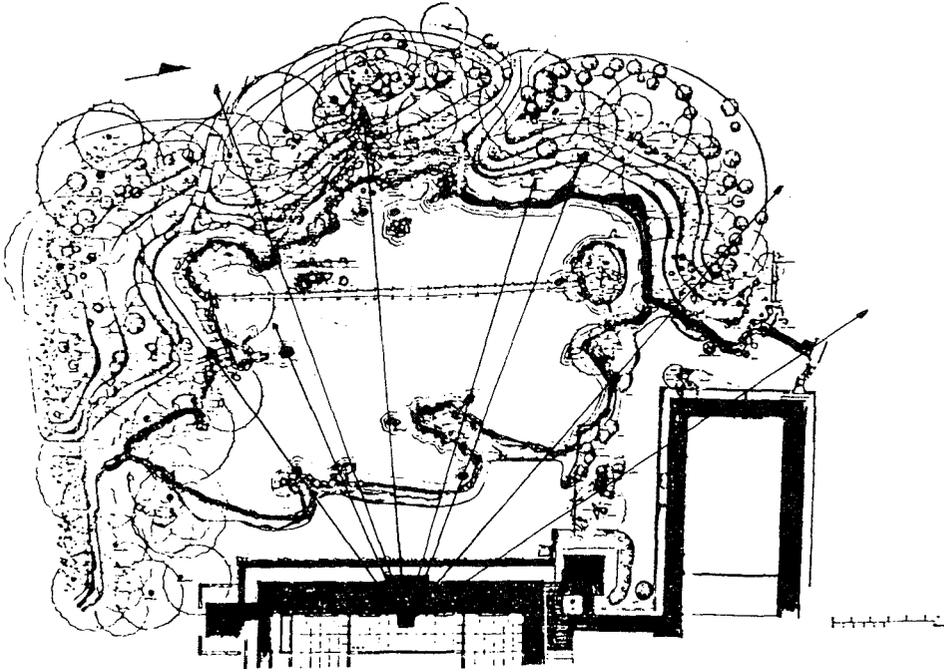


Fig. 4 This location on the veranda places in alignment, on a primarily east/west viewing plane, fifteen prominent stones in the pond (Source: Author's analysis of a map from the *Roji Junrei*, Kyoto).

De cette position sur la véranda on voit quinze blocs de rocher alignés sur un axe est/ouest (Source: analyse par l'auteur d'un plan du *Roji Junrei*, Kyoto).

In the Taoist Chinese tradition of which the designer of the pond was certainly familiar, fifteen is the number of turtles said to support on their backs the five Islands of the Immortals (Schaarschmidt-Richter, 1979, 24; Slawson, 1987, 126-130; Yetts, 1919). The fifteen prominently-sized stones highlighted in Figure 4, similarly, are the body-backbone of the garden pond.

Priest Takayama conceptualizes the meditation garden at Tenryu-ji as composed of three interrelated domains: (1) the sky and open area above the Arashiyama (mountains of storms) mountains primarily to the west; (2) the surrounding hills and trees of cherry and maple at descending eye level, designated as 'nature'; (3) the *chitae* pond within the garden, associated with the intention, work, and realm of human beings in general and with Muso Kokushi in particular (Johnson, 1986a). A garden, like a Fang temple, is not simply a horizontal phenomenon (Johnson, 1986b). The vertical domain of the Tenryu-ji garden, in Figure 5, is viewed in architectural unity from the veranda of the *Dai Hojo* by priests sitting in *zazen*.



Fig. 5 View to the southwest from the veranda of the *Dai Hojo* toward the Arashiyama mountain range (Source: Author's photograph).

Vue vers le sud-ouest, prise sur la véranda du *Dai Hojo*, avec les montagnes du Arashiyama (Source: Photographie de l'auteur).

Rinzai Zen Buddhists emphasize seated meditation, *zazen*, as primary practice for the experience of Buddha consciousness (cf. Sekida, 1975; Phillips, 1962, 153-324; Sato, 1972, 143-150). *Zazen* is both a posture and the attitude associated with that posture. Zen Buddhism is considered the attitude and posture of *zazen* (Suzuki, 1985, 25-30). Zen Buddhist gardens aid the practice of *zazen* meditation. Meditation gardens are an arena for the spiritual development of Zen Buddhist priests, and *zazen* practice in turn encourages the experience of *satori*. Priests construct gardens and, reflexively, gardens construct priests (Johnson, 1988).

Priests at Tenryu-ji use the *Dai Hojo* veranda as a place for *zazen*. In *zazen* one sits cross-legged in silence, with the eyes slightly open. The right foot is placed on the left thigh, and the left foot is placed on the right thigh. The back and neck must be kept straight. Hands are folded on top of the legs, with the right hand under the left hand and the palms facing upward, cupped into each other with the thumbs just touching to form a circle in front of the lower abdomen.

"When we cross our legs like this, says the Zen priest Shunryu Suzuki (1985, 25), "even though we have a right leg and a left leg, they have become one. The position expresses the oneness of duality".

Geometrically the position of *zazen* forms triangles, both right triangles and isosceles triangles.



Fig. 6 Isomorphism of an isosceles triangle and the *zazen* position (Source: Drawing by Bernard Maquet).  
 Isomorphisme entre un triangle isocèle et la position du *zazen* (Dessin de Bernard Maquet).

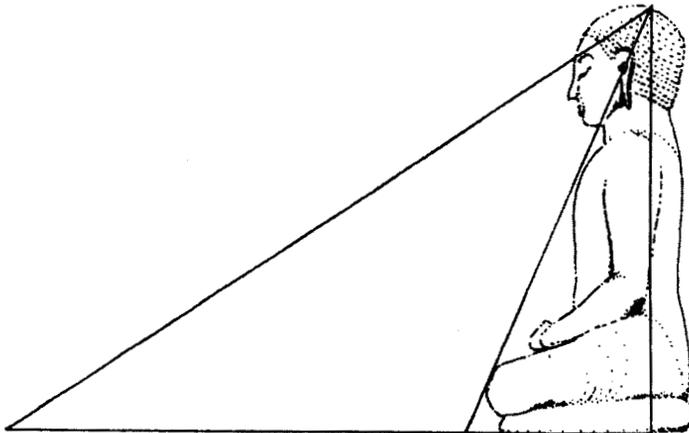


Fig. 7 Isomorphism of a right triangle and the *zazen* position (Source: Drawing by Bernard Maquet).  
 Isomorphisme entre un triangle à angle droit et la position du *zazen* (Dessin de Bernard Maquet).

The triangle is a significant form in Zen Buddhism, as it is in many sociocultural traditions (cf. Churchward, 1913, 14-22; Marc, 1977, 29-66). Priest Takayama says asymmetrical triangles, in particular, are stable and disciplined. The comparatively long base of an asymmetrical triangle is stability and, *ipso facto*, the straight back of a person in *zazen* is discipline. A person in the mental attitude and physical posture of *zazen*, as in figures 6 and 7, focus on the spiritual force assumed inherent in the triangle as a form (Davidson, 1982, 13-30; Maquet, 1986, 103-117; Slawson, 1987, 89-100). Priest Takayama says that, for him, several of the pond stones previously mentioned conceptually form three asymmetrical triangles aiding *zazen* meditation, as diagrammed in Figure 8.

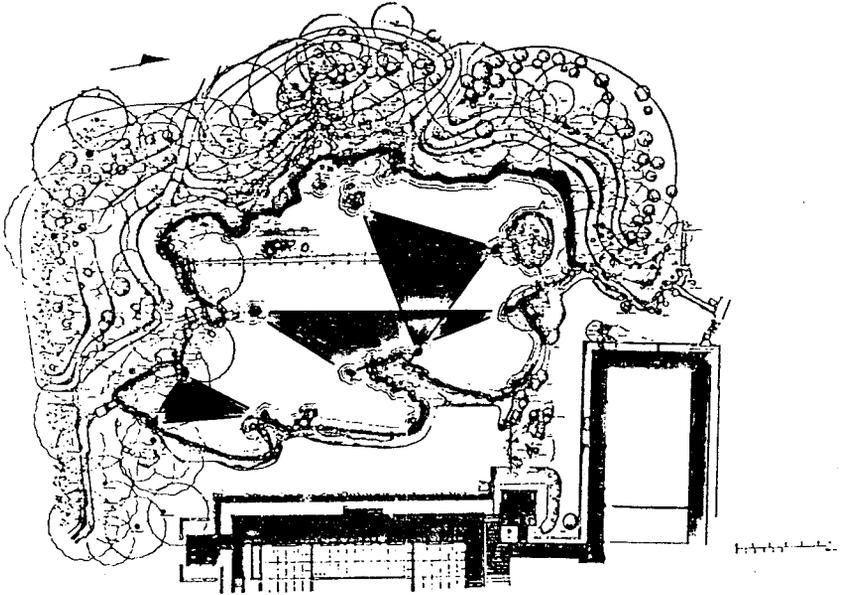


Fig. 8 Topographic view of the Tenryu-ji pond, showing priest Takayama's meditation triangles (Source: Map from the Roji Junrei, Kyoto).

Vue topographique de l'étang de Tenryu-ji, avec les triangles de méditation perçus par le prêtre Takayama (Carte du Roji Junrei, Kyoto).

The Tenryu-ji pond and garden exist as an interrelationship of apparently dissimilar phenomena. Meditation in the temple garden is an exercise in consciousness of what is already there - interrelationship, in this instance. Existential participation in the garden, with a proper attitude and position, is superimposed synchronization. The subject of meditation, the priest meditating, and the place of meditation are the same phenomena and the same experience.

Priest Takayama's conceptual triangles in the pond are most apparent when viewed from a *zazen* position on the veranda of the *Dai Hojo*. *Zazen* align priests with foreground, midground, and background horizontal spatial domains of the pond garden as diagrammed in Figure 9.

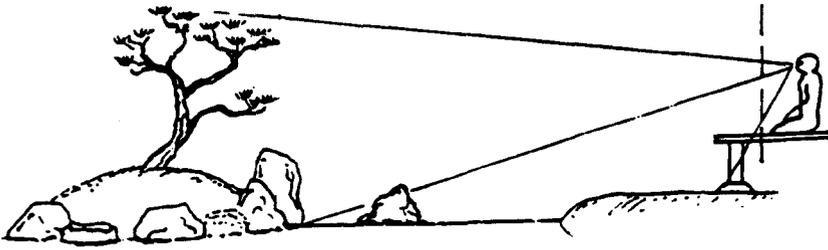


Fig. 9 Interrelationship of the Tenryu-ji Garden, *Dai Hojo*, and priest in *zazen* (Source: Drawing by David A. Slawson).

Rapports entre le jardin du Tenryu-ji, le *Dai Hojo* et le prêtre dans la position *zazen* (Dessin de David A. Slawson).

In profile, the garden pond is the long base of a right triangle defined by a priest in *zazen* on the veranda of the *Dai Hojo*. As in *zazen*, seeing what actually is there, lurking in unexpected perspective, negates the illusion of a dual opposition between person and garden. The Tenryu-ji garden is the structure of the *Dai Hojo*, the pond, and a priest in the sitting position and attitude of *zazen* meditation. Body:temple = temple:body is achieved by priests completing the equation, not merely participating in it.

#### 4. The Body as Temple of Spiritual Consciousness

Sacred architecture is not the structure of buildings but the structure of the interrelationship of priests, buildings, and the natural environment. The Japanese word for temple architecture is *kenchiku-suru*. The transitive verb *kenchiku-suru*, corresponding with the Fang *along nda*, literally means 'to construct'. Temple architecture is a transitive verb, not a collective noun. *Kenchiku-suru* applied to the Tenryu-ji case suggests the interrelated construction of temple architecture, mediation garden, and temple priests.

Cross-cultural cases of body:temple = temple:body argue that temple architecture is a process of constructing consciousness of interrelationship and non-duality as an image of the universe. Body:temple = temple:body situates spiritual consciousness in a dialectic requiring mediation of apparent opposites such as the physical and meta-physical, the natural environment and sociocultural traditions, and the existential and the transcendent. Body:temple = temple:body is a primal characteristic of sacred architecture.

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