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THE  
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of the NORTH AMERICAN JAPANESE GARDEN ASSOCIATION



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COVER PHOTO: Kōyasan, a village of mountain temples in Wakayama Prefecture, has been a Shingon Buddhist center for 1200 years. After studying in China, Kūkai first established it as the headquarters of his esoteric Buddhist sect. Today temple inns offer lodging for Buddhist practitioners as well as tourists. Buddhist vegetarian cuisine (*shojin-ryori*) is prepared with seasonal ingredients and remains popular. *Michael Sewell*

OPPOSITE: The Milton Toole, Jr. garden. (Mackinac Island, IL). *Mackinac State Historical Parks*

CONTRIBUTOR'S PAGES (next):  
Detail of Sugigoke. *Ellen Altfest*

Dear readers,

Having reached a numerical milestone in this, the 10th issue of the NAJGA Journal, I hope you will discover continuity in the strength of its content, welcome new precedents in its aesthetic layout and material design, and allow perhaps one transgression—the first non-North American garden to be featured on the cover. A recently introduced highlight is a photo essay, where a professional photographer's images grace both our cover and, new this year, the centerfold. Michael Sewell's images of Japanese gardens capture what so inspires us in their creation and cultivation in North America, so we thought it appropriate to feature one occasionally.

Delving within this issue you will find two rich, extended discussions: Devanney Haruta's first NAJGA contribution, a fascinating exploration of sound (and/or its absence) in gardens, and Andrew R. Deane's latest in his series of deeply researched analyses, here on the design principle of *mitate-mono*. Maryann Lewis offers us expert instruction on the art of pruning. And we also include two essays, each drawn from recent books, the first by Beth Cody and the other by Takeshi Moro, that highlight the contributions of Japanese Americans to North American gardens and bonsai respectively. Our final full-length piece is painter Ellen Altfest's meditation on the moss at Enri'an, executed on the page in prose and on the canvas as well. The issue concludes with a review of Cody's book by Christian Tagsold and a remembrance for our friend, Martin J. Mosko.

Two years ago, I accepted the daunting role as editor of the NAJGA Journal because it provided the opportunity to enhance its content, presentation, and production process. Given the visual nature of the medium, I wanted to emphasize images, printing edge-to-edge and across the gutter, soliciting a photo essay for every issue, and developing a representative design aesthetic for the layout. While we made some progress with the layout last year, the printing and binding of the 2022 Journal did not meet our standards. So we turned to Matt Miali and the staff at B+B Printing in Portland, OR. This year I was able to hand-select the weight and finish of our paper stock; invest in offset printing to ensure excellent print contrast and color separation; and institute a series of final proof and print checks before production and distribution. These checks have not yet occurred at the time of writing—I must submit this essay first! But I have every confidence that, thanks to Rachel Beckwith's design and B+B's integrity and expertise, this year's Journal will set the standard for years to come.

Looking ahead, we once again invite the submission of full-length articles, book reviews, and photo essays (collaborations, as between professional photographers and poets, are welcome). We hope you enjoy this issue.

DAN HIRSHBERG, Ph.D., Editor

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We welcome feedback from readers. You may e-mail [info@najga.org](mailto:info@najga.org).

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## BOOK REVIEW

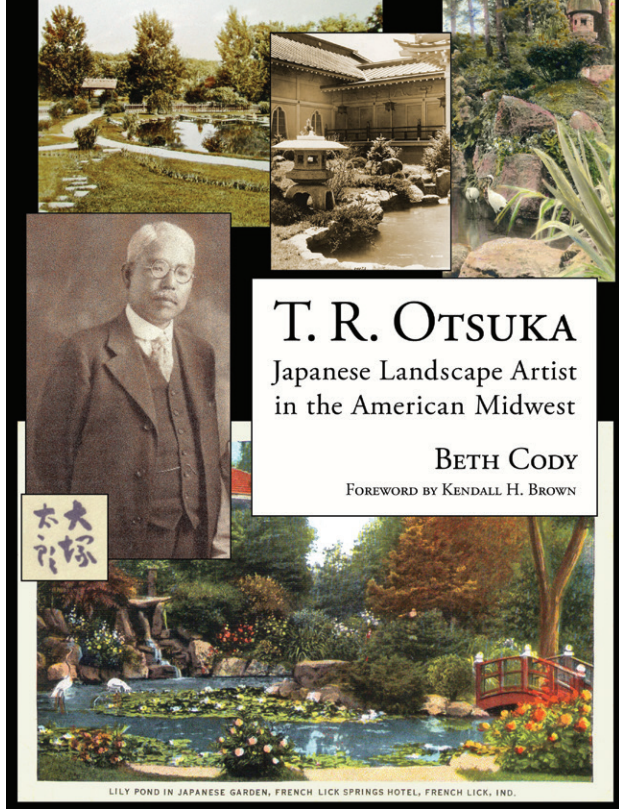
# T.R. OTSUKA: JAPANESE LANDSCAPE ARTIST IN THE AMERICAN MIDWEST

BY BETH CODY

*Reviewed by Christian Tagsold*

Researching historic Japanese gardens can be a frustrating task at times. Many sites lack documentation in archives or other sources that would help to reconstruct their history. Often enough, short hints in newspapers like ads or cursory remarks are the only way to learn more about these gardens. Fortunately, in the last decades, libraries have scanned many newspapers, even local ones from remote places, and made their data available online to be searched. Consequently, finding valuable jigsaw pieces and combining them into a broader picture has become more accessible.

Beth Cody's book on Tarō Otsuka capitalizes on these new options admirably. T.R.Otsuka was a Japanese gardener who was born and raised in a former samurai household in Shikoku in 1868, a pivotal year of Japanese history when young samurai and insubordinate fiefs forced the shogun to resign and restored the emperor's power after more than 250 years. In 1897, Otsuka changed his life course, emigrated to the United States, and applied for US citizenship five years later. First, Otsuka apparently worked for a trading company but turned to gardens after moving to Chicago in 1905. He advertised in newspapers to offer his service in constructing Japanese gardens and soon reached out to Florida and other parts of the US. While Cody traced Otsuka's family in Kōchi, how he learned gardening remains unclear. Most likely, he did not enjoy a formal education with a Japanese garden master at home and only started to engage in the art deeper in the US. Cody makes a strong case that Japanese gardens at world's fairs such as in St. Louis 1904 might have impressed and encouraged Otsuka. He probably even worked at some of these sites with gardeners from Japan.



While the book's first part introduces Otsuka's (and his wife's) biography, in the second part, Cody discusses his gardens, first those she could identify without doubt as his designs, then sites he most likely built. Otsuka often used porous rocks in his gardens, and Cody uses this trait as a hint for the latter category. Not surprisingly, Otsuka planned many gardens in Illinois. However, his activity reached much further, and Cody introduced further examples in the Midwest and New York, Florida, and Kentucky, thus claiming that he was active far beyond his initial home base.

Overall, Cody has written a fascinating biography of a first-generation Japanese gardener in the US. Admittedly, many of her theories and conclusions are hard to prove due to lacking further sources, the bane of Japanese garden history, but Cody indicates this throughout the text and does not mislead the reader into taking all of the information for granted. As a result, we get a good idea of how Japanese gardeners were able to thrive in the US. Since there are many more, even less well-documented cases around 1900, Cody's book is even more necessary: we finally have one well-researched biography of a Japanese gardener in the US to build on!