

ASSOCIATION WITH ALL THE MAJOR STONES"

The Art of Creating A Japanese Garden

By Kaneji Domoto

Stepping stones are purposely placed irregularly and chosen slightly rough to slow the progress of people in the garden. The psychology of the Zen masters is — Slow a man down so that he can collect his thoughts. This done, he will be more receptive to the esthetic composition present. When I am laying out the stepping-stone path, I know only two things at the beginning — where the path starts and where the path ends. The path is never a straight line between the two points. Usually an emphatic start is made with a larger stone. The shape of the next stone decides its position in relation to the stone already placed. And so it goes on, with a variation of a larger stone here and there for interest which breaks the monotony of one-sized stones following another and another. At the end of the path, I usually place another large stone for emphasis. Actually the beginning is the same as the ending. The difference is which way one goes. The path should be pleasing one way or the reverse way; so should the whole garden.

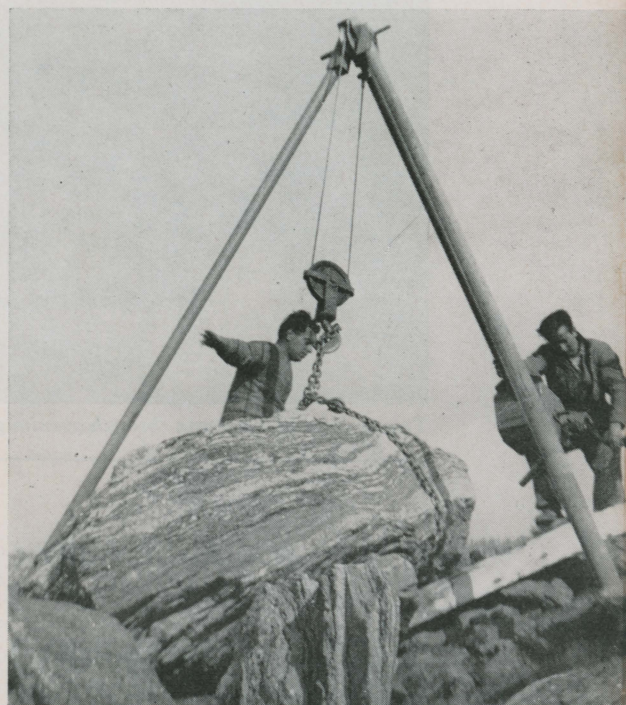
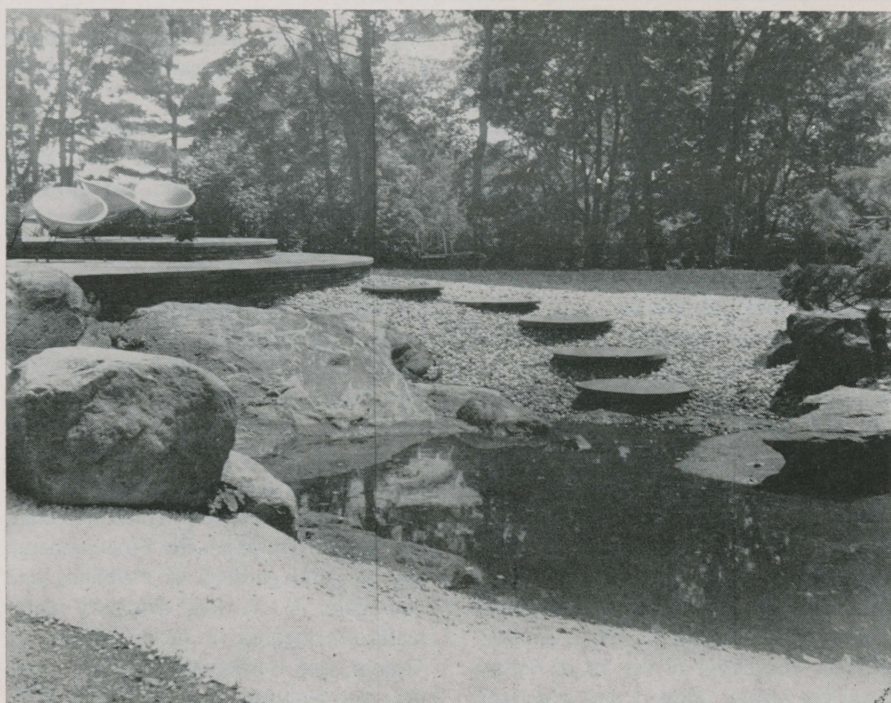
Many times I have broken one of the rules of stone gardens and placed three important stones in a straight

row. It is what you do with the secondary stones that are in association with these three important stones that makes the composition successful. The other detail is that although the three important stones are in a straight line, the distances between them are not equal. In the beginning, when I accidentally arrived at this stone combination by letting the stones speak for themselves, I had a moment or two of realizing that I had committed an error. When you put so much effort in placing these heavy stones carefully into position, you don't hurriedly change the relation of the stones. You have time for a second thought. With a few secondary stones and planting, this arrangement is quite pleasing.

I like to work with stones that weigh two or three tons. This means the use of mechanical power — bulldozers, front-end loaders, derricks, winches, chain blocks. This makes a stone garden expensive. To keep the machinery hours low, I spend a great deal of time studying the stones beforehand in order to decide which ones are to be used in a composition and their relative positions. When the machinery arrives, these

stones are placed one after another in harmonious relation to one another, quickly as though no thought had been given to their placement. The smooth flow of stones into harmonious position is a result of a perfected technique. This technique itself is contrary to a rule of Japanese stone garden construction, which is that a stone must be handled carefully so that its surface is not scratched. Any stone so soft that its surface is easily marred is not worth using. I use chain and wrap it around the stone once. When the equipment

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



Left: Slate stepping stones and marble chips enhance natural granite out-cropping in Purchase, N. Y. garden.

Above: Stone is carefully lifted in vertical position by chain around it.

SANDSTONE BLUESTONE GREENSTONE LIMESTONE MARBLE GRANITE FLAGSTONE

Vickery Stone Company

ESTABLISHED 1932

"VICKSTONE"
TRADE MARK

A Complete Cut Stone Organization

BRANCH OFFICE — 2326 N. CHARLES STREET
BALTIMORE 18, MARYLAND
PHONE 467-3322

P. O. BOX NO. 94
6328 MARKET STREET
UPPER DARBY, PA.
PHONE GRANITE 6-0750



Two streams of water run through granite garden in Scarsdale, N. Y.

"An Intimate Association With All Major Stones"

CONTINUED

lifts the stone, it is already in a vertical position. Precise judgment of the center of gravity comes when one has studied a stone sufficiently.

Although there is sweat in stones, the greater the stone, the more secure you are in the knowledge that the stone will remain. A man must have more than determination in order to remove these stones. Although I am an architect who designs buildings, I feel that the building is not entirely my work of art. The stone garden is a result of close supervision. I have an intimate association with all the major stones. I place them. I feel that this is truly my work of art. ■

About the Author



Kaneji Domoto, registered architect and landscape architect, has his office and residence in New Rochelle, N. Y. He studied at Stanford University, the University of California, and was an apprentice with Frank Lloyd Wright. He was among the first architects to design residences at Usonia Homes, the Wright Project in Pleasantville, N. Y. He has designed and constructed residences, office buildings, stores in Westchester as well as Connecticut. Presently, he is designing homes to be constructed in Long Island, N. Y.; Orienta Point, Mamaroneck, N. Y.; and Martha's Vineyard, Mass.

His background of working with his father, a well-known pioneer nurseryman of California, has been one of great help in understanding and appreciating trees and plants. This, coupled with his knowledge of the art of Bonsai (dwarfing trees), learned and practiced

since his youth, and an innate feeling for stones give his gardens a special distinguishing quality.

He assisted in the construction of the Japanese gardens at the 1939 World's Fairs in San Francisco and New York, and designed and constructed the Japanese rock garden at the University of California in Berkeley. He has designed and supervised the construction of gardens for residences, office buildings, penthouses as well as for shopping-center malls. Among his residential gardens, two have been on the House and Garden Tours for the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation of the New York University Medical Center. These are the Kirschenbaum and Beskind gardens of Purchase and Scarsdale, N. Y. His shopping-center malls are located in Jacksonville, Fla.; Atlanta, Ga.; Harrisburg, Pa.; Baltimore, Md.; and Huntington, Long Island, N. Y.