

# **Three Modes of Landscaping: Old Wisdoms into New Ideas beyond the Edge of Landscapes\*\***

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## **I. Abstractive Prologue**

Landscape architecture, in spite of its definitional ambiguity, is a professional work to make (or improve, convert, conserve) the existing environment more functional, more beautiful and more healthful. Ever since its rebirth in the 19th century, landscape architecture acquired quite noticeable recognition from outside and sufficient pride from inside. However contemporary landscape architects are eager for new solutions or improvements to deal with 'landscapes on the edge,' which are in the process of unprecedented changes.

This paper aims at proposing alternative approaches of landscape architecture by re-interpreting three modes of landscaping, which especially have been studied and implemented all the time in the East Asia. Cultural meanings in terms of traditional wisdoms and axioms in landscape art are reinterpreted into modern ones related to landscape architecture, as cutting ideas (or hopefully as a new paradigm) toward the theme of this Congress.

Here landscape architecture is viewed not only by the professional who make landscape in business,

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but also by the ordinary people who enjoy landscape in daily life, and by inference three representative modes are identified: The first one is *landscape drawing* to draw natural, outer landscapes into one's artificial, inner living realm, which is the landscape architecture in general sense, and additionally subdivided into 'landscaping with selected elements', 'landscaping by copying the nature', and 'landscaping in miniature'. The second one is *landscape strolling* to enter the natural, outer landscapes in person so as to live in or to stroll around at one's pleasure, which is simple walking, hiking, sightseeing, excursion or similar activities. The third one is landscape imaging to conceive landscapes in the form of images, writings, paintings, inscribing, naming, symbolizing, cybernation, virtual reality or something similar else. In this mode, landscapes are treated as vehicles of meaning. Especially so called *landscape borrowing*, usually considered as a cunning mode to take advantage of outer scenery, is reviewed as new mode of enjoying eco-imaginative significance in landscapes. It is lying on the edge of landscape drawing and landscape imaging.

## II. The Limit of Modern Landscape Architecture

Roughly sketching, major features of modern landscape architecture are as follows.

1) It is a new profession which was professed by precedent leaders.

\* As we landscape architects know, modern landscape architecture was born as a new, competent profession in the 19th century modernization process and developed up to the present situation.

\* However, the concept of professional [landscape architect] appeared in advance of profession [landscape architecture]. This indicates two implications.

- It seems quite architectonic, since the term 'landscape architect' was proposed to mean 'architect who is good at dealing with landscape,' compared to [building] architect or naval architect (Olmsted was reluctant to adopt this word).

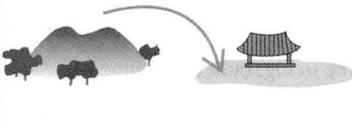
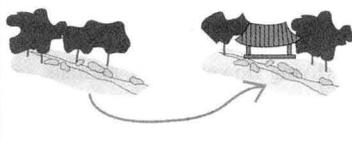
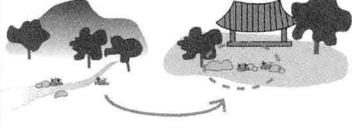
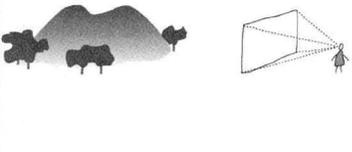
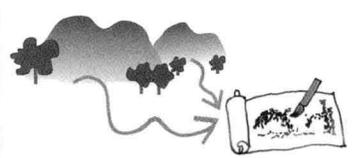
- Though the definition of landscape architecture is ambiguous, the strong definition might be 'what the landscape architects (can) do well.' This is because landscape architecture as a profession is very responsible to social/environmental demands.

2) It is related to the 'making.'

\* The western tradition seems to be related with 'making.' Joseph Addison talked about 'making a landscape', Capability Brown called himself 'place-maker,' and early landscape works also had been to make natural or barren land more useful, more beautiful, and more healthful.

\* In East Asian countries, landscape architecture is called as 'making of landscape' or 'making of garden'.

<Table 1> Modes of landscaping

MODES	CONCEPTS	EXAMPLES
<p>1. Landscape Drawing 取景</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To draw natural, outer landscapes into one's artificial, inner living realm</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Landscape architecture in general sense</li> </ul>
<p>1-1. Landscaping by copying the nature 寫景</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To make artificial, full-scale landscapes inside by copying the genuine natural landscapes outside</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Natural Park</li> <li>· Large scale garden</li> <li>· Royal Garden</li> </ul>
<p>1-2. Landscaping w/ selected elements 選景</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To introduce outer landscape elements selected purposefully</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Ordinary garden</li> <li>· Indoor landscaping</li> </ul>
<p>1-3. Landscaping in miniature 縮景</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To reduce scale of landscapes</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Artificial mount</li> <li>· Bonsai or Penjing</li> <li>· Odd-shaped stones</li> </ul>
<p>* Landscape Borrowing 借景</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To enjoy outer scenery as it is from inside</li> <li>· To take advantage of existing scenery beyond its boundary</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Vista</li> <li>· Vertical elements w/ opening</li> <li>· Picture window</li> <li>· Outlook pavilion &amp; tower</li> <li>· Land Art</li> </ul>
<p>2. Landscape Strolling 遊景</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To enter the natural, outer landscapes in person to stroll at one's pleasure</li> <li>· Essence is in the spiritual freedom</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Simple walking</li> <li>· Hiking &amp; Picnicking</li> <li>· Sightseeing</li> <li>· Excursion</li> <li>· Strolling in Bed</li> </ul>
<p>3. Landscape Imaging 意景</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· To achieve the 'stage of meaning' which is the uppermost or ultimate stage of creative art</li> <li>· Landscaping by endowed intangible meaning and its appreciation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Meaningful writing</li> <li>· Painting, inscribing</li> <li>· Naming, symbolizing</li> <li>· Cybernation, VR</li> <li>· Land Art</li> </ul>

- \* Making covers, new making, re-making, improvement, conversion, re-use, conservation or similar actions.
- 3) Representative mode is 'landscape drawing.'
  - \* It is a mode of landscaping by drawing natural things from the natural environments (outdoor, rural areas, wilderness) into the living, built environments.
  - \* Design is done by 'selection' from the sources and resources in the natural environments. Selection, however, is done mainly by the cultural filters. In every case, those selected are to be good (desirable, pleasant, congenial, friendly, lovable, agreeable, etc.). Sometimes, selection goes with relocating natural things (living flowers, trees, animals, or rocks, etc.) from the natural and/or rural environment to one's living environment.
- 4) Contemporary landscape architecture began to take an ecological approach. However, in some cases, it is regarded as a practice of 'landscaping by copying the nature' on the artificial or barren sites.

With these characteristics, some limits are identified as follows.

- 1) The mode of landscape architecture to help people to enjoy the nature mainly depends on the 'making landscapes.' On the contrary, mode of enjoying the nature by entering and experiencing the nature itself was underestimated. This inclination may be due to the overall change in life style and living environment.
- 2) As for landscape drawing, it takes too much from the nature. Though it is very effective for improving the living environment, and very helpful to landscape architects' business, it often casts serious environmental burden and results in destruction of nature and community.
- 3) As for ecological landscaping, nobody can deny the fact that it is very good for conservation and sustainable development in principle. It is, however, not easy in the field to 'make' new ecosystems or biotopes in an authentic form, with contemporary science and experience of ecology that is insufficient for application. Also it depends on copying the nature too much; ending in reckless copying that does not meet ecological principles, and a mere waste of natural resources. More or less, copying is another type of making after all.

### III. New Possibilities

"Taking a lesson from the past," I would like to seek new possibilities of future landscape architecture in the ideas and practices in the East Asian cultural tradition. Three meaningful modes of landscaping (landscape borrowing, landscape strolling and landscape imaging), shown in the above <Table 1> will

be presented here for your understanding and sympathy.

### 1. Landscape Borrowing

'Landscape [View] borrowing' in general sense is a mode of borrowing sceneries without paying any rents or fees. It is a mode of landscaping which exploits visual features of interest beyond its boundaries. Though it is rather cunning, it works very well especially in a poor, dense and noisy situation.

\* To make a [framed] vista of good sceneries (hills and mountains, fields and forests, rivers and alleys, villages and monasteries, by putting vertical elements (fence, wall, trees, etc.) with opening, or picture windows, which are purposefully designed to conceal poor views or ugly objects in the field of vision, while taking advantage of views of interest.

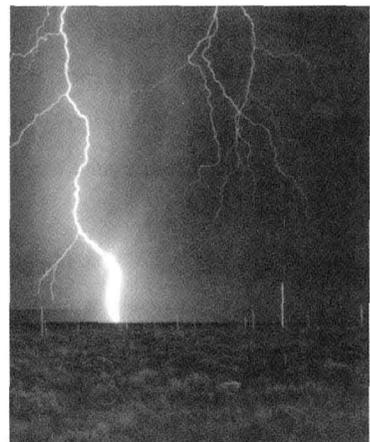
\* To make an outlook deck or pavilion at the top of hills or towers.

\* Moon-shaped or fan-shaped opening placed in front of trees, bamboos or rocks make a sort of live picture. Opening frame itself works as picture frame simultaneously.

Contrary to this popular concept, however, borrowing in this sense does not grasp the real idea of borrowing. The best and utmost borrowing is 'borrowing in response to season' (應時而借), which was declared by Ji Cheng (1582-?) in his 'Yuan Ye' [*The Craft of Gardens*], the oldest book on gardening. This is to appreciate landscapes that regularly and continuously appear and disappear with the seasonal change, landscapes that suddenly show somewhat mysterious beauty with the climatic or temporal change. Embroidered flowerscapes in spring, ever-changing cloudscape in summer, glowing forestscapes in fall, and shining snowscapes in winter are typical examples of such sources of seasonal borrowing. This kind of borrowing not only stimulates the vision, but also other sensations: landscapes with flavors, fragrances, sounds, touch, etc. are also very nice resources for this borrowing.

This is a landscaping without making or putting something concrete and tangible, is a landscaping with ecological as well as aesthetic principles, and is a sort of 'eco-imaginative' landscaping. It has been a very essence of gardening: "Landscaping consists in the [landscape] borrowing" was an axiom for traditional landscape architects of East Asia.

We do not yet lose this kind of enjoyable landscaping. Especially land artists are better than us in this landscaping. <Fig. 1> is one of best examples.



<Fig. 1> The Lightening Field(1974-77) by Walter De Maria(John Beardsley, *Earthworks and Beyond*, 1989)

## 2. Landscape Strolling

'Landscape strolling' or strolling in landscape is one specific mode of landscaping without making real landscapes. It is one's entering the landscapes outside his/her dwelling base (home, garden, office, etc.) and strolling in person at one's pleasure. It is originally the outdoor activity of simple walking, hiking, picnicking, sightseeing, excursion or similar activities, but is also performed in the gardens: circular strolling has been the main theme of traditional gardening.

It is said that one of major origins of the East Asian landscape painting is the mode of 'lying-strolling' or 'strolling in bed.' This concept was originated by Zong Bing (375-443), a Chinese painter who made good use of landscape paintings which are hung on the wall of his bedroom so as to appreciate and recollect landscapes once he experienced through sketch traveling when young and healthy. Ever since appreciation of landscape painting has been regarded as a mode of cyber-strolling in landscape. We also can find Western examples in the landscape paintings in the 18th century and thereafter.

However, it is not mere going and moving around out of doors, but is strolling with seeing, enjoying, and communicating with the natural as well as cultural landscapes. So, it just asks for a humble trail and pavilion for idle and peaceful strolling. So, the essence of strolling is in the freedom which was proposed by Zhunagzi and following Taoists. It is not only the physical but also spiritual freedom. Therefore, this mode of landscaping needs not only mind of contemplation, sensation of pleasure, curiosity and courage toward unknown world, but also knowledge of field, action of expedition, etc., and advanced design and fine construction, if needed for actual landscaping.

## 3. Landscape Imaging

In the East Asian art theory, the uppermost or ultimate stage of creative art is so called 'stage of meaning,' where the subjective emotion of an artist meets the objective things. As the landscape painting and landscape architecture have same root in the art field, this theory is applicable to landscape architecture.

Landscape architecture based upon this concept of stage of meaning is regarded as landscaping by endowed intangible meaning and its appreciation. It is landscaping by image or landscape imaging. It is landscaping by contemplation or landscape contemplating. Therefore, it is quite abstract, but is not beyond implementation.

Aforementioned strolling can be developed to this stage. You do not have to take physical movement to achieve this stage. A piece of odd-shaped rocks, a properly planted tree and a nicely maintained pond can work as a media full of condensed meaning and implication. More often than not, meaningful

writings or paintings that are written, inscribed or hung on the rocks, walls, fences, or pillars work very well for communicating meanings.

It is a hypothesis worthy of further study that landscape imaging is the original mode of contemporary cyber-landscaping, in which not a few landscape architects and landscape artists are interested.

#### IV. Conclusive Epilogue

As a conclusion, I would say that these three modes are basically revitalized old wisdoms into new ideas, and are worthy of being alternative approach to ordinary landscape architecture in the era of paradigm shift, and are eligible to be performed within the edge of landscapes.

In particular, landscape imaging can be the highest noble mode but the hardest performance to achieve. Landscape strolling is relatively high, transcendental but ecological mode of living with nature, and landscape borrowing as an ephemeral as well as sustainable mode of living in nature, and an efficient, aesthetic way to revitalize ordinary, dull landscapes, as in Chinese landscape painting.



*saeng [longevity] KIM*>

*I built a small cottage over the past ten years.*

*Half is clean breeze, half is bright moon.*

*As there is no room for mountains and rivers in it,*

*I will enjoy them as they are.*

*<16th century Korean poem by Zang-*

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