

12.3 Edo Japan :: Isolation from the World // Integration with Nature

- 1) **Japan's unification** by 1600 (1550-1630 approximately)
 - **Edo** culturally is broadly thought of as the period of Japan from 1600-1850 when Japan was peaceful, culturally thriving, and completely isolated from the rest of the world.
 - **Edo** - geographically speaking - is the old-fashioned word for Tokyo. Look for this word on the old maps.
 - Three powerful **shoguns** (military generals who ran the country) achieved unity during this time period, ending centuries of civil wars
 - **Oda Nobunaga** (1534-1582)
 - **Toyotomi Hideyoshi** (1536-1598)
 - **Tokugawa Ieyasu** (1542-1616)
 - The **shogun** was the leader of an administration called a **shogunate**
 - The **daimyo** were the feudal lords (daimyo meaning "great names")
 - The **daimyo** controlled the **samurai**, a distinctive class of swordsman (military noble) devoted to the **shogun**. It was like having an elite private army working for you.
 - The Emperor was a largely symbolic role (although hereditary), yet conducted affairs of state in a theatrical symbolic fashion, not unlike Louis XIV of France

- 2) Permanent architecture, about 1550-1630
 - The shoguns built permanent castles called **tenshu**, similar in form and type to the castle keep or the donjon
 - **Tenshu** were tall structures as high as seven stories of pagoda-like stories with deep shaped concavely eaves. A-framed gables, hipped roofs, high, battered, dry laid base foundation walls. Very intimidating on high ground.
 - High ground is the universal best defense

- 3) **Nobunaga** built the first **tenshu** at **Azuchi** (a strategic high point overlooking Kyoto, which was the capital at the time) (c **1576**)

- 4) **Hideyoshi** succeeded Nobunaga from **1585-1598**
 - Hideyoshi built a luxurious palace in Kyoto called Jurakudai
 - **He blurred the separation between art and life**
 - His shogunate sponsored **Noh Theater** - a classical, Japanese musical theater since 1400. Very scripted, traditional stories of history, morality, etc
 - **chanoyu** tea ceremony (Zen Buddhist tea ceremony conducted by a Tea Master)
 - **wabi-sabi** is a rustic simplicity of design that celebrated heightened consciousness. The aesthetic of the wabi-sabi is:
 - > **imperfect**
 - > **impermanent**
 - > **incomplete**
 - tea ceremony (**chanoyu**) conducted in a **tea house** reflected that simplicity: **planar, minimal, rustic, self-effacing**
 - Zen - Buddhist meditation:
 - ~ "The river flows on without cease yet its waters are never the same"
 - ~ *wabi-sabi aesthetic*
 - ~ *contemplation of nature or miniaturized nature*

- 5) **Ieyasu** succeeded Hideyoshi from **1598-1616**
 - Third of the three shoguns to complete unification
 - **Ieyasu's tenshu** west of Kobe: **Himeji tenshu (1610)** nicknamed the **White Heron**
 - **Ieyasu's tenshu** in **Edo** no longer exists but is depicted on the painted screen in a museum called the **Edo-za byobu**
 - **Ieyasu's palace in Kyoto: Ninomaru (1610)** was of the **shoin palace type**, and followed the plan of a "**flock of wild geese**" on an oblique axis
 - Ohiroma Hall interior. Typical screens that opened to landscape, raised platforms (shogun sat on tatami mat on the upper level). Behind is the niche for a painting - in this case a gnarled solitary pine - a symbol for enduring authority
 - **tokonoma** - the formal alcove with the painted scene
 - **shoji screen** - translucent screen of rice paper
 - **tatami mat** - established modular system based on a sleeping person
 - one tatami = double square
 - Sleeping person is oriented to the vertical axis (the axis of time), oddly the western modular system, Vitruvian Man, is oriented to the horizontal axes (the axes of space) RC
 - Ieyasu's shrine: Toshogu in Nikko
 - Designed by Kora Munehiro, Master Builder

- Kora Munehiro developed for the shogun an architectural treatise called:
Shomei, indicating proportions, joinery, and so forth, similar to Yingzao Fashi

6) Japanese Gardens

- **Dry Garden (Zen Garden)**
- **Stroll Garden** (similar to Scholars' Gardens of Suzhou)
- **Ideas** behind the gardens:
 - > frequently changing points of view
 - > symbolic, miniaturized
 - > poetic, metaphorical artifact of nature
 - > enlightenment through meditation
 - > time's unstoppable advance
- **Forms** that are manifest in the gardens:
 - > avoided formality such as axis, symmetry
 - > raked white gravel symbolic of water
 - > **shakkei** – *borrowed landscapes* in distant background or framed views
 - > **wabi-sabi** aesthetic and rustication
 - > **bonsai** trees and worn materials
 - > **moon-viewing platform**