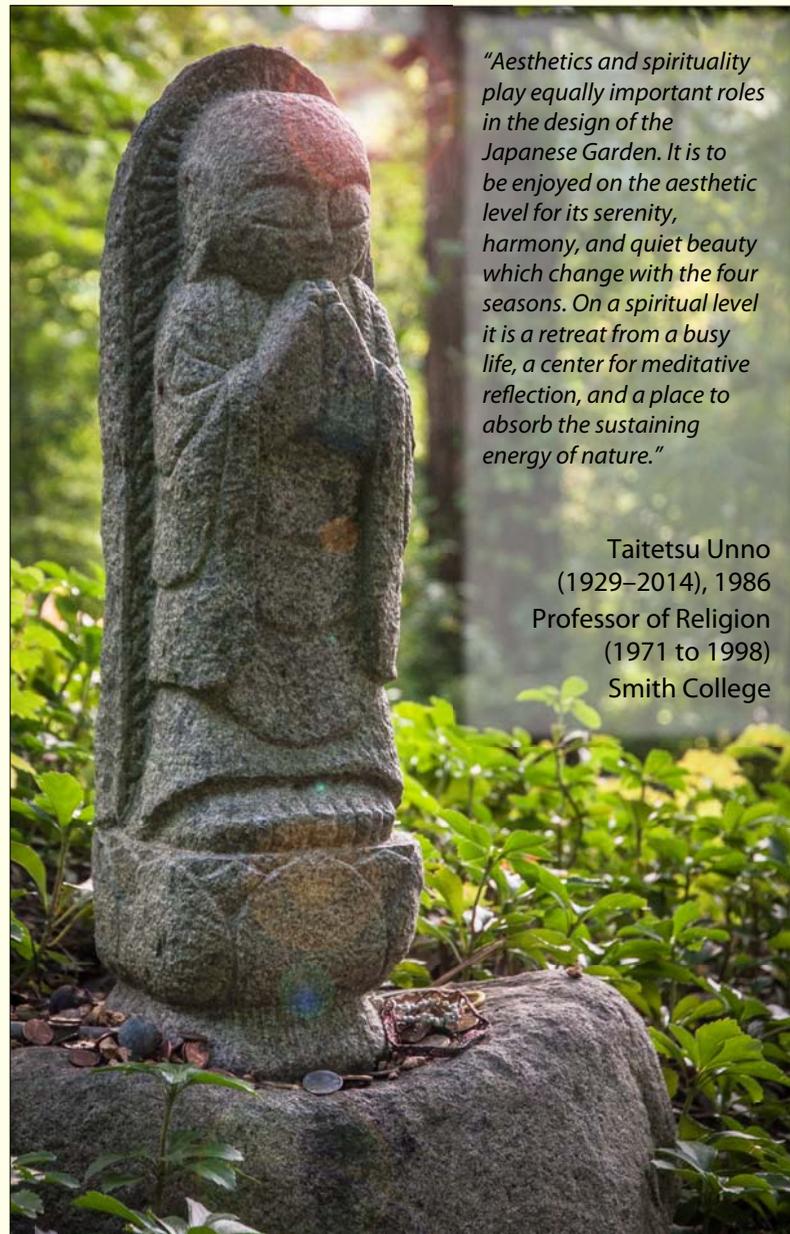


Japanese Garden for Reflection and Contemplation

First proposed in November of 1984 by then Smith College president Jill Ker Conway, the garden was designed to show appreciation for Asian culture and to serve as a place of meditation for the campus and community. Construction began under David Slawson, an internationally recognized Japanese garden designer. In 2016, the garden was reimaged and restored, with the college hiring Japanese garden specialist John Powell to transform the space.

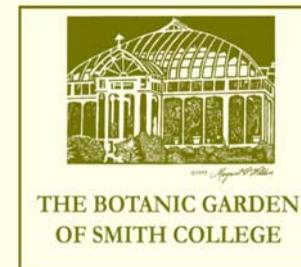
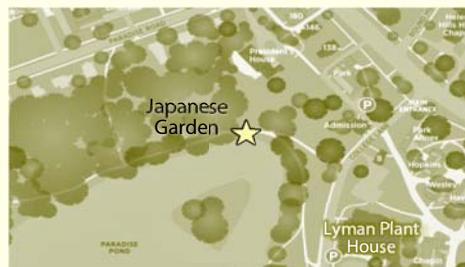
Each plant and design element helps to shape the garden as a place for harmony where visitors can connect with nature. Small yews, *Taxus × media* 'Densiflora,' planted into the hillside will, over time, become a sweeping mass. Seven stone arrangements in the garden, the backbone of Slawson's original design, represent events in the life of the Buddha. The rock formations are accentuated with wild ginger, *Asarum europaeum* and sprigs of creeping lily turf, *Liriope spicata*. A luxuriant carpet of moss provides a fine ground cover texture. Stepping stones encourage visitors to consider each step as the path twists to providing different views at each turn, before ultimately reaching a bench atop the garden. At the top, Paradise Pond and Mt. Tom are echoed in the garden's stone basin and the mountain shaped boulders.

The garden contains a mix of Japanese and New England plants and is not a traditional Japanese Garden. It is rather a place where traditional Japanese design is adapted to a New England setting; incorporating locally collected rocks and vegetation to create a place of reflection for the campus and wider community. As Japanese gardens are planned for growth and change, so this garden will develop and continue to provide a place of respite for years to come.



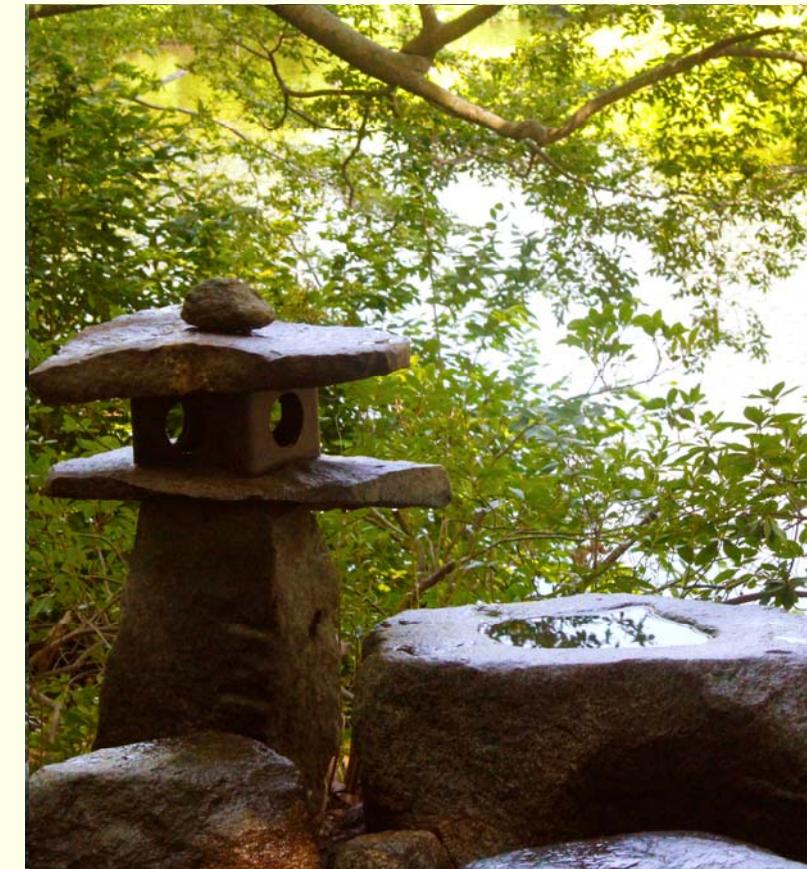
"Aesthetics and spirituality play equally important roles in the design of the Japanese Garden. It is to be enjoyed on the aesthetic level for its serenity, harmony, and quiet beauty which change with the four seasons. On a spiritual level it is a retreat from a busy life, a center for meditative reflection, and a place to absorb the sustaining energy of nature."

Taitetsu Unno
(1929–2014), 1986
Professor of Religion
(1971 to 1998)
Smith College



Japanese Garden for Reflection and Contemplation

THE BOTANIC GARDEN OF SMITH COLLEGE



www.smith.edu/garden

Rock Formations

The stones in the Japanese Garden were collected from the hills of the Connecticut River Valley. Each formation in the garden has a deeper spiritual meaning based upon events in the life of the Buddha and important Buddhist teachings.



1. The Birth Scene at Lumbini Garden
Legend states that the infant Buddha at birth took seven steps, symbolizing the transcendence of the six realms of delusion and the affirmation of dignity for each form of life. The central rock is the infant Buddha, flanked by representations of his mother, Queen Maya, to the right, and the god Indra to the left.

2. Renunciation of Worldly Life
The youthful Buddha leaves the luxuries of the palace at the age of 29 in the quest for enlightenment. He is accompanied by his faithful servant, Channa, and his favorite horse, Kanthaka

3. Enlightenment Scene
Amidst the craggy rocks and mountains representing the insatiable desire for fame and fortune, the Buddha, seated on the meditation rock, attains liberation and enlightenment at the age of 35 in Buddhagaya.

4. First Sermon at Benares (Turning of the Wheel of Dharma)
The Buddha gains his first converts, the five ascetics who abandon their practice of self-mortification and follow the Middle Way.

5. Parinirvana, or the Great Death
The Buddha passes away at the age of 80 in Kusinagara, lying on his side with his head facing North and surrounded by lamenting disciples and animals of the forest.

6. The Three Gems
The Three Gems—Buddha, Dharma (teaching), and Sangha (community) are basic to all schools of Buddhism. The Buddha Triad—the Buddha flanked by bodhisattvas of wisdom and compassion—is a common motif in Mahayana Buddhist art.

7. The Four Noble Truths

1. Life is suffering (“life does not go according to one's wish”).
2. The cause of suffering is insatiable greed.
3. In reality, life is fulfilling and meaningful.
4. The path to this reality is the Middle way and the Eightfold Noble path