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Japanese gardens in Edwardian Britain: landscape and transculturation

Setsu Tachibana ... Charles Watkins  

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Abstract

This article examines ideas of gardening, landscape and transculturation in Edwardian Britain through the fashion for Japanese gardens. Emphasis is placed on the writing and practice of two influential figures: Josiah Conder (1855–1920) and Reginald Farrer (1880–1920). Conder was one of the leading proponents of Japanese gardens and his book *Landscape Gardening in Japan* (1893) was a crucial source of ideas about Japanese gardens in the English speaking world. Farrer, who wrote extensively on rock gardens and developed his own plant nursery, was strongly influenced by his travels in East Asia and Japan. We focus on the creation of three different gardens in Britain: Newstead Abbey, Nottinghamshire; Cowden Castle, Clackmannanshire and Ingleborough Hall, Yorkshire. We show how Ethel Webb, the owner of Newstead Abbey, was strongly influenced by Conder's book and used it to produce a pattern book Japanese garden. At Cowden Castle, the employment of Japanese garden designers and

gardeners helped in the creation and management of an "authentic" Japanese garden. At Ingleborough Hall, Farrer created his own "natural" rock gardens using exotic alpine plants. His gardening and estate management around Clapham village can be seen as an attempt to create a "hybrid" landscape garden.



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