Student workshop **“Park on Demand”** Dec. 2013
Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music, Nagoya / Japan
Henk Kosche, product designer, Germany

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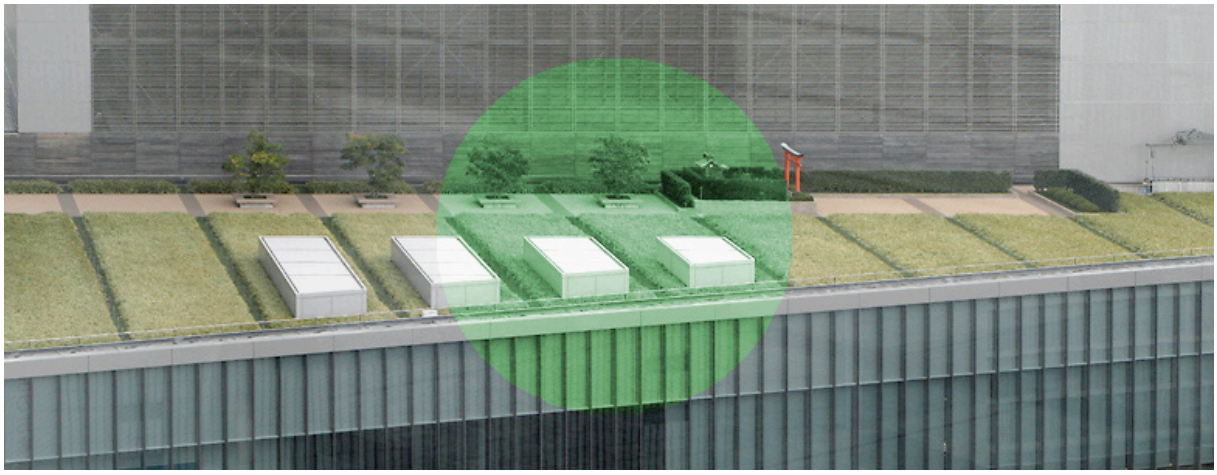
→ http://www.digilogs.de/parkondemand



Introduction

Urban landscapes are common habitats for most people in these days. Transport infrastructure, large residential and commercial areas and urban densities define our quality of life in modern cities. Inhabitants search for recreation and relaxation as an antipole to vitality of urban melting points and an experience-oriented lifestyle.

As creators we define challenges as a result of a deep analysis of everyday life and human behaviour. By means of creativity and curiosity we are able to solve problems involved in the following paradoxical task: combining the desire to act out and the desire to contemplate.

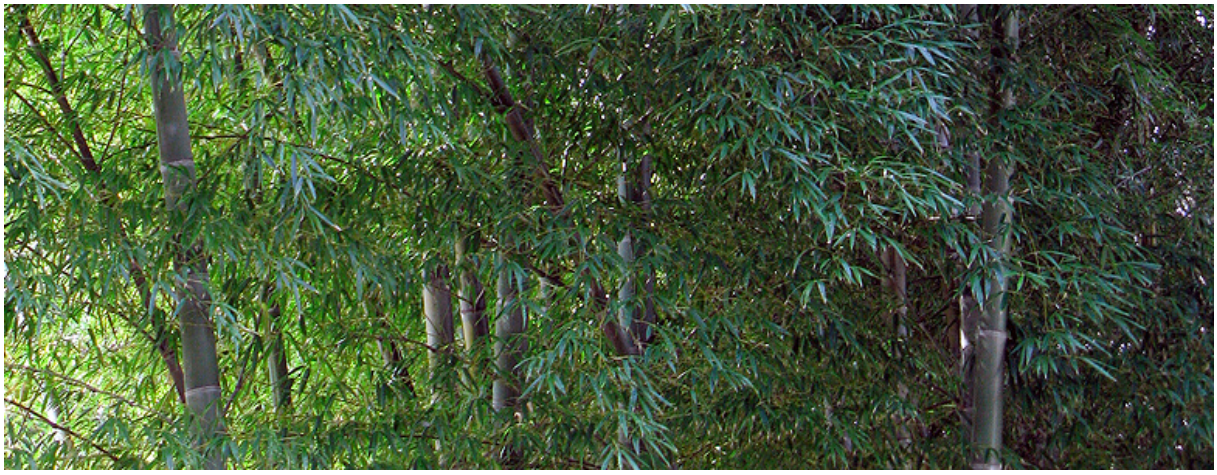
How can design help us to create temporary spaces for relaxation and contemplation in a loud and vitalised urban environment? How good are our cities in terms of their recreational value? Which products or services can help us to temporarily convert uncomfortable urban areas? How can we use urban spaces in a more flexible and convertible way?

Nature of Japanese gardens

The Japanese garden is characterised by four major aspects which distinguish these gardens or parks from artificial green spaces in other cultures (source: Tetsuro Yoshida). First of all, the fusion of garden and architecture is essential.
The concept and planning of green spaces (like parks or gardens) is substantially driven by interdependencies and influences caused by the architecture (e.g. houses, building complexes, urban infrastructure). A fluent passage between building and garden is of great importance – and this is not only a visual requirement. The fusion of inner and outer spaces also fulfills functional requirements in terms of air-conditioning and light guiding.The experience of looking outwards or entering the architecture through the garden’s green area is a highly relevant criterion. Emotional effects caused by this adventure are equally important.

Abstraction

Furthermore, the Japanese park or garden is an abstraction of nature instead of continuation or imitation of nature. The basic concept is to capture nature’s inner spirit.
All creative ideas or actions in the design process of a new park or garden are conducted to this abstraction. In western culture we can observe the prejudice that miniaturisation is an important element in Japanese landscaping (e.g. the art of bonsai).
Quite on the contrary, bonsai also transforms nature’s spirit into artistic objects and does not have any connection to the basic idea to shrink trees to a minimum. We have to consider landscaping in Japan as an artistic challenge. Every single part of the garden “plays” a specific role in order to express something. In Europe we have got rose gardens for pleasure in a variety of shapes and colors, whereas in Japan, a specific plant can embody either a single mountain or even a whole forest.



Monochromaticity

Certainly we have to recognise the strong influence of Buddhism on Japanese landscaping. A park or a garden is in nearly every case a place for meditation and contemplation. In order to relieve our senses or calm down our mental state, the Japanese garden is monochrome. The shades of green are more visible and come alive while contrasts in colour are reduced. Mostly, we cannot find flowers or strong colours in Japanese gardens like there are in Europe.
The aspect of creating an experience and the fact that green space is a space for recreation and relaxation gives us a clear indication of the basic intentions when it comes to defining new concepts. The experience has to be refreshing, encouraging and inspiring in nature. In this case, the main task of a park or garden should be the creation of a source of mental and physical energy and strong aesthetical experience.

Geography

The last characteristic is influenced by geography and climate. Japanese landscapes are distinguished by water (ocean), islands and inaccessible mountains. The hot and humid weather during summer time and the intense rain call for shadiness and shelter.The density of cultivation alongside the costs and in narrow valleys also has an influence on layout and dimension of green spaces.
Maybe one further character trait arises directly from Japanese culture and from the very specific understanding of a creator’s or artist’s role. It is common that an artist’s self-conception is to subordinate themselves to the artwork. This intention is based on the deep conviction that the spectator’s impression is increased.

Goal:
“Park on Demand”- ideas for products and services which temporarily convert urban spaces into relaxing islands

What (object):
- product or product system to realise “green spots” or “silent spaces” temporarily in the streets of modern cities
- the requirement on such spaces is the fulfilment of people’s needs when searching for meditation, relaxation and recreation
- place to relax or recover or recreate

Where (place):
- public space in conurbations (Nagoya)
- independent “Movable Park” for one specific location
  (selection of a particular location during the “24h-Reseach-Tour”)
- however, in the capacity of a serial product, the “Movable Park” has to fit into other places (adaptable and modular)

When (scenario):
- temporarily for one or two weeks (or longer, if the effort to install and remove the installation is high)
- in case of a new established “Quality of Life Week”
  (a new festival hosted by the community or the city administration)
- in case of a neighbourhood party
- in case of a building project (gap sites, construction zones)
- in case of …

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„park“ (synonym > rest/repose):
green space / garden / rest / repose / pause for breath / meditation / contemplation

“on demand“:
movable / mobile / portable / flexible / adaptive / stackable / collapsible / storable

further question → h.kosche@prodlab.com

Agenda:

Tuesday, 17 December 2013
Introduction and work on the analysis

08:50 – 09:50 (all participants)
_Welcome and first come together
_Guests introduce themselves
_Completing and communication of the agenda

10:00 – 11:00 (all participants)
_Introduction of the ultimate project goal
_Expectations and questions (all participants)

11:00 – 12:00 (all participants)
_Teambuilding (optimum 4 persons/members)
_Introduction into the tasks of the “24 hours Nagoya” workshop
_First discussion inside of each teams about the understanding of the goals

13:00
Workshop **„24 hours Nagoya – show me your city, your location for your Park on Demand”**
_Collecting images and developing stories and ideas
_Find an appropriate location for your “Park on Demand” (search in the boundaries of Nagoya)
_Find and reveal the relevant content on a specific location, which is able to create effects on the design goals
_Describe the possible “customer” experiences

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Wednesday, 18 December 2013
Work on the analysis (separated teams) and presentation (24 hours analysis)

13:00 – 16:00
Presentation of findings **„24 hours Nagoya – show me your city, your location for your Park on Demand”**
_ Single teams presenting their findings and ideas (20 minutes each team)
_ Questions and comments
_ Evaluation to focus on two favourite concepts of each team

16:30 – 17:00 (all participants)
_Feedback and next steps

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Thursday, 19 December 2013
Work on the concepts (separated teams) and presentation / evaluation

08:50 – 11:00 (all participants)
_ Welcome and reflection of the first two days (time for questions)
_ Expectations for the next two days
_ Group work and discussions

11:00 – 12:30 (all participants)
Framework program:
talk about “Product design – culture of consumption and competition” (Henk Kosche)

13.30 – 18:00 (all participants)
_Group work and discussions
_Selection of the favourite design idea

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Friday, 20 December 2013
Presentation / exhibition

08:50 – 15:00 (all participants)
_ Preparations for the presentation

15:00 – 18:00 (all participants)
_ Presentation / exhibition