

CHAPTER IX

A JAPANESE INTERLUDE



TO THE EAST OF THE PIGEONNIER AND THE PALISSADES ALONG THE Lombardy allée bordering the woodland near William Wessel's six-foot grasshopper sculpture, a staircase leads steeply down into the woodland. The stones are rough and rounded and set in cement, and there are bamboo railings at either hand, underplanted with *Adiantum pedatum* mixed with *Tsuga canadensis* 'Cole's Prostrate'.

At the foot of the staircase a stone path leads through a thick and shaded grove of spruce between ground-covering panels of the dwarf tsuga, on one of which sits a large mosquito sculpture. These are followed by panels of *Shortia galacifolia*, thriving in the deep shade. From a T-junction, stepping stones to the right lead to a Shi-shi-otoshi, a bamboo seesaw that fills regularly with water, then tips, empties, and falls back on a stone with a resounding clack. Its repetitious sound has registered subconsciously from a distance, serving one of its principal purposes, namely, to draw one towards it for closer examination. In fact, it is saying: "Come and look over here, it may interest you!" At the same time it is serving the broader purpose of keeping unwelcome fauna, demons, or evil spirits at a safe distance.

On the left the T-junction leads through a Nakamon, or ceremonial gate, towards the edge of the Ravine. The stone path is flanked by thick panels of *Galax urceolata*. Beyond the Nakamon there are flanking panels of *Adiantum pedatum* backed at first with bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and then further down the path with thuja hedges overhung with *Amelanchier canadensis*. Near its thuja-hedged terminus there are thick panels of *Diphylleia cymosa*, the umbrella leaf of Appalachian gulleys; an underused showy native plant whose large leaves and bright blue fruits on tall red stalks lend interest to the woodland garden. Here the rough stone path ends. To the left, a dirt path leads up through conifers to the entrance to the lower of the two rope bridges. *Rhododendron yakushimanum*, underplanted with *Shortia galacifolia*, is abundant throughout this part of

OPPOSITE

The Kan Son Tei, consisting of an Azumaya and, in the background, a Ho gyo, contemplation pavilions that contemplate one another across a courtyard.

ABOVE, RIGHT

A carp from a scroll acquired in Shingo, Wakayama Prefecture, that hangs in the Azumaya's tokunoma.