

Future Concerns

These four broad themes were barely defined before the roundtable concluded. They suggest many different directions for discussion, research, and design practice. To discern some of these future concerns, participants were asked to identify a major topic or question they would like to pursue further. Some of the common concerns are listed below:

1. The agricultural basis of landscape design.
2. The role of water in sustainable landscape design.
3. Comparison of landscape design in different climates.
4. Measurement of “sustainability”.
5. Comparison of Muslim new towns and Israeli kibbutzi.
6. Diffusion of sustainable design innovations.
7. Extension of local lessons to the regional scale.
8. Examination of the flows of arid zone experience between East and West.
9. Public education and sustainable landscape design.
10. Sustainable landscape design and curriculum development.
11. Longer term studies of the roots and sources of sustainable landscape design in theory and practice.
12. Attention to the role of humans in heavily modified landscapes.
13. Emphasis on the “range of choice” available to arid zone occupants.
14. Comparisons of sustaining and non-sustaining human behaviours (as in the Iranian case studies).
15. Adaptation and transformation of colonial patterns in post-colonial environments of the arid realm.
16. Consideration of economic class in sustainable arid zone landscape design.
17. Greater attention to theories of culture and order.

It is perhaps a reflection of these case studies, drawn from widely different cultural geographic contexts, and of the challenging issues they raised, that most of the roundtable participants would choose to pursue the fundamentally human dimensions of sustainable landscape design in arid environments.

Coda

The well known preface to the *Gulistan* (Rose Garden) of Sadi states:

“You are not ignorant that the flower of the garden soon fadeth, and that the enjoyment of the rose bush is of but a short continuance; and the sages have declared that the heart ought not to be set upon anything that is transitory...

I am able to form a book of roses which will delight the beholders, and gratify those who are present; whose leaves the tyrannical arm of the autumnal blasts can never affect, nor injure the blossoms of the spring.”¹

In the *Gulistan*, the listener throws away the flowers he has collected to listen to poems, “that will flourish forever”. In this roundtable discussion and related efforts, however, we return to the vulnerability, transitoriness, and beauty of the actual “rose gardens” that grace this world (*dunya*) and for which we bear a responsibility.

NOTES

1. Sadi, M.S. 1980 reprint. *Gulistan*. Trans. Francis Gladwin. Islamabad: Lok Virsa Publishing House, xv-xvi