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**Sakura Trees and Ottoman Gardens:
Two Cultures in One Place**

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Sakura Trees and Ottoman Gardens: Two Cultures in One Place

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Abstract

According to Bozkurt Güvenç, “Culture is not found ready-made in nature yet it is composed of anything added to nature by humans”. These words by him emphasize the synthesis of nature and culture. Flowers had an undeniable importance in Ottoman culture. Establishment of the post called “Çiçekçibaşı” (the flower expert) is a great indicator of the importance given to this subject. The Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden (NGBB) carries on the spirit of our culture from centuries ago under the name of “Istanbul Island” and grants us the chance of going beyond the limits of the culture we read from the books and therefore gives us an opportunity to experience that ambiance and perhaps awakens a centuries-old feeling in us. “Istanbul Island” has been declared as one of the 2010 European Capital of Culture projects, enabling us to live our cultural values “just as it was back then” by reviving the centuries ago at this place. The Ertuğrul Island which is inspired by a different culture is another culturally important place in NGBB. Cherry Blossom, also known by its Japanese name Sakura, is identified with, and represents, Japan; it is also one of the most well-known symbols of the country. In the memory of the our sailors who died when Ertuğrul Frigate sank off the coast of Kushimoto while returning back after a return visit to Japan during the period of Abdülhamit II, 527 Sakura trees were planted on Ertuğrul Island and named after our martyrs. Our martyrs are commemorated every year with the blossoming of the trees. This study will discuss how NGBB - as a cultural place- manages to keep both Ottoman and Japan cultures alive in the same garden.

Key Words: Culture, Sakura, Ottoman Garden, Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden

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INTRODUCTION

Culture, as defined by the Turkish Language Association (TDK), is “All material and spiritual values created through historical and social development and the entire set of tools that is used for creating these values and conveying them to next generations; and which demonstrates to which extent humans are capable of controlling their natural and social environment.

Another definition of culture is as follows: “Culture, as a concept associated with humans, is a system of significance and value created throughout the history. A system of beliefs and traditions which is used by a group of people in understanding, arranging and structuring their individual and collective lives.” (Parekh,2002:3)

Marquet defines culture at its simplest form as “the lifestyle of a group”.

Unfortunately, the modern life is accompanied by cultural degeneration. People remain insensitive to their cultural heritage and disregard the cultural memories of other countries. Due to the lack of interest in the history and the past, today people are not able to adopt their cultural values or pass such cultural heritage to next generations. In this respect, NGBB attracts interest as a botanical garden where the cultural values are kept alive.

Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden (NGBB) was established in 1995 as a memorial park; however it was turned into a botanical garden which carries the mission of "Searching, promoting and protecting the botanical world." Adopting the vision of “being as famous as the grapevines of Babel”, NGBB carried this vision further and went into restructuring to keep two different cultures alive within itself. Istanbul Island which represents the Ottoman garden culture and Ertuğrul Island where 527 Sakura trees planted in the memory of the martyrs of Ertuğrul Frigate turn green are the two culture-oriented places of the garden. The content analysis to be performed based on these two islands will examine how the cultural values are preserved, lived and kept alive; and how these two islands contributed to the fellowship between two nations by representing the cultures of different countries.

Beyond keeping these cultures alive within itself, NGBB opened its doors free of charge to visitors in 2002 and gave all people an opportunity to experience these cultures.

NGBB is located on the Asian side of Istanbul, at the crossroad for highways of the Atatürk and Fatih Sultan Mehmet bridges and the Anatolian highway (Ankara). The garden is placed on the islands between main roads and link roads. Being developed by Ali Nihat Gökyiğit (ANG) Foundation, NGBB is the first and only botanical garden in the world that is placed on a crossroad. According to the protocol signed between Directorate General of Highways and ANG Foundation, the garden area is allocated for this service until 2025.

The main criteria of maintaining our presence within our own direction in a world that becomes globalized are preserving cultural values, conveying cultural heritage to next generations and adopting our culture. Beyond its mission, Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden created Ertuğrul Island and Istanbul Island in order to preserve and maintain cultural values and

furthermore it opened these two islands to its visitors, offering them a real experience of these cultural values. NGBB was chosen as the focal point of our study since it carries a very important mission in the present day.

1. METHODOLOGY

This study will analyze Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden through a content analysis to be performed.

“A content analysis always addresses to a conclusion or to a link. Therefore, the aim of the content analysis is not limited to analyzing a text within itself; its main target is to create a link to the extratextual elements. In another wording, content analysis assumes that there is more or less a relation between the text and content and in this respect it aims to reach conclusions about the extratextual world (source/audience/reader and situation) through the subject text of the analysis. This important feature of the content analysis is usually ignored. Within this respect, content analysis is not a technique but a method - which is quite similar to the methods used in social sciences. (Gökçe O., 1994:25)

Globalization has led cultures to intertwine and raised new concepts such as multiculturalism. Today, preserving cultural heritage has become more and more important. In order to maintain a culture, it has to be lived and kept alive. In this present study, the cultural elements of two different nations and the method to keep alive these two cultures in cultural places will be addressed with the content analysis to be performed. One of these cultural elements is the Ottoman garden culture and the other one is the Cherry Blossom (Sakura) Ceremonies which is very important for Japanese. The place to live and keep these two cultures alive is “Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden”.

2. CULTURE AND PLACE

2.1. The Concept of Culture

Culture is the combination of all elements that make up that society. To put it more broadly;

“Culture is a conceptual word used in anthropological discourse and works, and corresponds to the following concepts:

1. Culture is an accumulated civilization of a society or all societies.
2. Culture is the very character of the society.
3. Culture is the product of a range of social processes.
4. Culture is a theory of human nature and society.” (Güvenç, 2005: 95)

Considering these definitions, we can see the indissoluble bond between the culture and society. It is highly important that the societies are able to maintain, adopt and hand down to next generations their own cultures. To summarize, the sustainability of a culture is crucial for a society to maintain its existence.

According to Mehmet Ergin, culture is “all epiphanies of life that distinguish nations and make up that society and nation. Such epiphanies of life are unique and national values of the nations.” Accordingly, preserving cultural heritage is crucially important.

“It often told that the culture is a unity or system. However, it is quiet difficult to define what system is. Because culture is not a fact or it is not entirely material or observable. It is an abstract concept.” (Güvenç,2005:104)

It is possible to reflect this abstract concept in a physical place. So the first thing to do is to define clearly the concept of place.

2.2 The Concept of Place

Although the term place is subject to different approaches; most simply, it can be defined as “an area that separates humans from their environment -to a certain extent- and is convenient for maintaining their daily activities” and “a portion of space the boundaries of which can be observed by the observer(s).” (<http://tr.wikipedia.org>)

The importance of preserving cultural heritage and cultural diversity is an undeniable truth. One the main ways of ensuring this protection is to create cultural places. A cultural place is capable of preserving the non-material cultural heritage in its natural context. Protection of the cultural place is equal to the protection of culture.

Two cultural sites created in Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden fills a significant gap with its mission of maintaining and keeping alive two different cultures. Of course, this is not the only role of Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden. NGBB is also a scientific research institute. There are various islands in NGBB other than Istanbul Island and Ertuğrul Island. In this sense, we should address all islands within NGBB and the reasons behind their existence.

3. NEZAHAT GÖKYİĞİT BOTANICAL GARDEN (NGBB)

Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden was established in 1995 by Ali Nihat Gökyiğit as a memorial park in the name of his wife Nezahat Gökyiğit. Initially, a planting and forestation plan was applied in this area within to purpose of creating a "memorial park". Afterwards, the idea of creating a "botanical garden" instead of the memorial park was discussed and necessary actions were initiated to fulfill this purpose. After the necessary changes were completed, the garden was opened to public in 2002 and its name was changed as "Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden" in 2003. Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden is the first and only botanical garden in the world that is established on a crossroads for highways. (Güner, 2011: 8)

There are 8 islands in NGBB. Among these, Central Island, Picnic Island, Ertuğrul Island, Istanbul Island and Arboretum Island are open to visit. The two islands chosen as the subject of this study are Ertuğrul Island and Istanbul Island. Ertuğrul Island representing the Japanese Culture and Istanbul Island reviving the cultural values of Ottoman gardens are open for visitors. Since

İzmit Island is not open to visit, it will not be mentioned in the information given below. Detailed information about the specific purposes of the seven islands within NGBB are as follows: (Güner,2011:18-26)

Central Island

The entrance and management division of NGBB are located in this section. This island consists of dwarf coniferae collection, natural reserve, bulbous plants collection, rock garden, rock crack garden, hedge garden, dry and halophytic garden, fruit and vegetable garden, nursery and ateliers. The dwarf coniferae collection which was arranged in the memory of our martyrs, gardener kids training area, water lily ponds, large pools and henhouse are must-see places of Central Island.

Picnic Island

The construction of the Picnic Island started in 2007 and was opened to visit on April 23, 2009. The Picnic Island was built to provide a more relaxed area to the visitors who come to the garden for Picnic and to eliminate the burden on collection areas. Visitors can access to the island through the bridge located on the upper parking lot at Central Island. Entrance for visitors of NGBB was moved to Picnic Island on March, 2011. After passing the entrance on Ataşehir side, a passage to the garden is provided through a culvert galeria. This enabled direct public transportation inside NGBB. The sections of Picnic Island are Picnic Area, Discovery Garden and Culvert Galleria.

Ertuğrul Island

Ertuğrul Island was named after the monument placed in the memory of 527 sailors died when Ertuğrul Frigate sank while returning from Japan to where a visit was ordered by Abdülhamit II in 1890. The significance of the monument was complemented by Sakura trees donated by the Japanese Sakura Foundation in 2005, at the 115th year of the disaster, and planted in memory of the sailors.

Istanbul Island

The past and current roles of Bosphorus strait and Golden Horn and the city of Istanbul have unique incomparable characteristics. One of its unique features is its flora. The legend which starts with soil, water, fire and air and roots back to a metaphor from Anatolia, gains a new perspective with plants. Therefore, an island is reserved for Istanbul in Nezahat Gökyiğit Botanical Garden.

Anatolia Island

The biggest island of the botanical garden. It lies in east-west direction, at the northeastward of the Picnic Island. It was named as “Anatolia Island”, since it has a similar geographical location to Anatolia with its east side being the highest section. It is not open to visit.

Oak Islands

One of the targets on the master plan of NGBB was to establish the biggest oak collection of the world. The two islands at the southward of the main road are reserved for oak collection.

Arboretum Island

It is located at the eastward of the Istanbul Island. Arboretum Island was planned especially for demonstrating the natural woody plants of Turkey.

4. THE CULTURAL PLACES IN NGBB

Nezahat Gökyigit Botanical Garden set its area of interest as discovering, promoting and preserving the world of plants. Furthermore, its two islands keep cultural values alive and serve as cultural places which contribute to the protection of the cultural heritage. These cultural places keep these two cultures alive: the Cherry Blossom (Sakura) Ceremonies which is very important for Japanese and the Ottoman garden culture.

4.1. Japanese Cultura, Sakura and the Story of Ertuğrul Frigate

4.1.1. Sakura's Place and Importance in the Japanese Culture

Cherry blossom is so undeniably important for the Japanese that there are songs composed for it. The most famous Japanese folk song called "Sakura" is full of praises for this bloom. Sakura has a very important place in Japanese Culture.

Cherry Blossom, also known by its Japanese name Sakura, is identified with, and represents, Japan and is also one of the most well-known symbols of the country. The early April is known as Sakura period which signifies the blossoming of the tree as the symbol of fresh starts.

"As marriage, school terms and financial periods are associated with the blossoming of the cherry tree during early April, these blossoms hold deep meanings for Japanese people. Festival, meetings and parties are held in parks or other places throughout Japan to watch cherry blossoms. Also many families have picnics under the trees covered by cherry blossoms." (Çelik, 2010:1)

While Sakura represents the mortality with its short-lived blossoms in Japan, it is the symbol of womanhood in China and the blossom leaves that fall off to the ground represent the warriors, the Samurais died in wars. The reason behind the deep meaning of cherry blossom for Japanese relates to their still existing spirit of Samurai lifestyle.

Cherry blossom fall apart when they reach their most beautiful and mature shape. As suggested by the philosophy of cherry blossom, this scene makes Samurais to think that they may die anytime during the war. Cherry blossoms indicate an important point, representing the life of Samurai and yet at the same time reminding that they may die any time. Owing to its short yet glorious life, Sakura is identified with the heroic death of Samurais in young age.

Just like other colors of Japanese culture, the Samurai culture is also a unique concept. Until early 20th century, Samurais were the symbol of feudal lords' (daimyo) committed warriors, the fearless representatives of the war path and command and idealism.

The jest of Sakura Foundation to give Sakura trees -which has such an important place in the Japanese culture- as a present to Turkey, is triggered by a historical fact: the Ertuğrul Frigate disaster. Ertuğrul Frigate disaster forms the basis of Turkey-Japan fellowship. Before discussing the fellowship established as a result of the disaster, the starting point for Turkey-Japan relations should be addressed.

"The affairs between Ottoman Empire and Japan started in 1875 upon the following motion by the Japan Minister of Foreign Affairs made to the Prime Minister: "Turks are establishing diplomatic affairs with Europeans as a non-Christian western nation. In this respect, Japanese and Turks are similar to each other. We can learn a lot from them. Therefore, it would be to our benefit if we could initiate diplomatic affairs with them. Even though the foundation of the affairs with Japan is explained with the above-written motion, there are written sources which suggest that Abdülhamit had interest in Japan even before coming to the throne." (Şimşek,2006:58)

While the ground of relations between Ottoman-Japan nations were set with the above-mentioned opportunity, Ertuğrul Frigate disaster is also very important for the Turkey-Japan fellowship. The story for the disaster is summarized below:

"In 1887, Prince Kamatsu, representing the emperor of Japan, visits Istanbul on a warship and gives Sultan Abdülhamit II the Great Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum and brings various gifts. After the visit of the Japanese Emperor's nephew on a warship in 1887, Abdülhamit II orders a return-visit and sends his delegation to Japan. Abdülhamit II sends a diamond order of loyalty and various gifts to the Japanese Emperor with the ship. Ertuğrul Frigate raises anchor from Istanbul on July 14, 1889 and sails toward Japan. After exactly 11 months, the ship reaches the Harbor of Yokohama in Japan on June 7, 1890. This also represents the starting point of the diplomatic affairs with Japan. (Orbay, 2010:1)

After completing its 3-month visit to Japan, the ship departs from the Yokohama Harbor on September 15, 1890; but unfortunately it is caught in a typhoon off the coast of Kushimoto and sinks after crashing to the rocks. Only 69 people survive out of a crew of 650.

"Japan Ministry of Marine allocates two warships Hei and Kongo to bring those 69 survivors to Istanbul. On 18 October 1890, casualties are divided to the ships and they sail toward Istanbul. (Şimşek, 2010:1)

A monument was built in memory of sailors who lost their lives in the disaster. The first monument was built by Japanese in 1891 and they enlarged it in 1929. Also the Japan Emperor visited the Martyrs Memorial on 3 June 1929. Annual commemoration ceremonies are held at the monument which was restored by Turkey in 1937.

The journey of Ertuğrul Frigate which ended by a tragic disaster led to close relations between Turkish and Japanese nations. Local people showed deep concern for the survivors. Relief campaigns were held for the families of martyrs and casualties.

“One of the famous newspapers of Japan organized a charity initiative and the fund was sent to our country with Sataro Mado and the donations made by the wealthy of Tokio were brought by Torajiro Yamada, the Chief of the Near East Trade Chamber. Abdülhamit accepted these two envoys and asked them to stay in Istanbul and teach Japanese to Turkish Officers. After the Japan Emperor accepted this request, these two people stayed in Istanbul for a very long time and taught Japanese to Turkish Officers while learning Turkish themselves. (Şimşek, 2010:1)

The fellowship established between Turkey and Japan after the Ertuğrul Frigate disaster, has been preserved until this present day.

The Japanese has enhanced their fellowships bounds with Turkey through Sakura - which has a very important place in their own culture-, turning Sakura into a peace symbol. Japanese transformed their “Cherry Blossom Ceremonies” -which is also their philosophy of life- into a universal culture by sharing young sakura trees with various countries.

Exactly 100 years ago, Japan started to give foreign countries cherry trees as a gift in order to enhance fellowship. The view of Sakura tree attracts thousands of people in Washington DC, New York, Berlin, Sao Paulo and many other countries. (Takagi,2010: 2)

Japanese people gained a universal aspect to the culture -which they preserve in its entirety- by introducing it to other countries they want to establish a fellowship bound.

The traditional Cherry Blossom Spring Ceremony is held on Ertuğrul Island in NGBB with the Sakura trees given as a present by the Japanese.

4.1.2. Ertuğrul Island

The content analysis performed with the visual material is evidenced as follows:



Ertuğrul Monument Torajiro Yamada Amphitheatre Sakura Trees

527 Sakura trees given as a present to Turkey by the Japanese Sakura Foundation in 2005 were planted in memory of the sailors who lost their lives in the Ertuğrul Frigate disaster.

The amphitheatre inside Ertuğrul Island was named after Torajiro Yamada who taught Japanese to Atatürk and provided any support to Turkish people.

The first Cherry Blossom Ceremony held in 2010 brought Japanese people and Marine Forces together. This ceremony gives an opportunity both to commemorate our martyrs who lost their lives in the disaster and hold the traditional Cherry Blossom Ceremony of the Japanese. During this period of the year, Ertuğrul Island is almost covered by the rose-pink blossoms like the

gardens in Japan. Following the eulogy section of the ceremony, Martyrs Memorial and the blossoms are visited; and the views similar to the gardens in Japan makes Japanese people who live in Turkey feel at home.

Cherry Blossom Ceremonies took its first steps in becoming traditional as it has been held in Turkey since 2010. The ceremony was participated by both Japanese Consulate General and the Marine Forces as 2010 is the "Japanese Year in Turkey" and the young trees donated to Turkey six years ago by Sakura Foundation started to blossom. The ceremony held in 2011 was also a very splendid organization.

"Cherry Blossom Ceremony" is gradually becoming more popular and traditional across the world and held concurrently in many countries. The initiative of the Japanese people to further strengthen their fellowship bounds by spreading cherry blossoms - a very important symbol of the nation which conveys deep meanings and is given great importance- around the world undoubtedly serves the purpose of peace in the world and make physically far-off countries drawn to each other.

The annual cherry blossom ceremony for the sakura trees donated in memory of our 527 martyrs will continue to be held in NGBB and Turkey will be one of the host countries for these universal celebrations.

Istanbul Island in NGBB keeps another cultural element alive, demonstrating the magnificent Ottoman gardens just as it was back then.

4.2. THE PLACE OF OTTOMAN GARDENS IN OTTOMAN CULTURE

4.2.1. The Place and Importance of Garden in Ottomans

As known, the garden is very important for the Ottoman civilization. Back then, it is known that palaces and pavilions of sultans have their own garden like any other houses and mansions in Istanbul.

"During the era of Süleyman the Magnificent, the flower and garden culture in Ottoman was quite rich and new types of flowers started to be brought to Istanbul in this period to produce new species. (Gökyiğit,2010: 17)

Art historian Atasoy (11) states that the flower gardens were very important in Ottoman period and indicates an official document from the second half of 18. Century which shows purchasing information for certain flowers and plants in Ağa Garden (literally *Garden of Landlord*) such as Linden at different heights, Everbearing clove, Everbearing rose, Rosa Gallica, Yellow rose, Woodbine, Jasmine, Philadelphus and *Hasan Yusuf Katmer*.

"Garden concept for Turks is not about creating a decorative space but fulfilling the need for green areas and a neat surrounding. (Ertuğrul,1983: 36).

"The yearning for neat and beautiful surroundings is not only the pursuit of beauty but also the utility and convenience. That is the reason why fruit trees are one of the essential elements of Turkish gardens. (Korkut,1992: 8)

"In other words, Turkish people wished to meet their daily needs with fruits and vegetables besides the nice view of flowers. Thus, the fruit trees which provide unique natural beauties with its flowers and fruits became an essential element of Turkish gardens." (Gökyiğit, 2010:12)

“Gardens of the Ottoman period should be regarded as only a production of national luxury and emotion like the Ottoman architecture. This luxury and emotion which praises „logic“ and „utility“ against „ornament” showed its effects on the garden created and thus fruits and trees were also cherished besides flowers." (<http://www.msxlabs.org>)

The glory of the gardens was ascertained with the elements used in their arrangements.

“With the desire to create a paradise-like space in a earthly place, Ottomans established the characteristic Ottoman garden by using such living and non-living materials." (<http://www.msxlabs.org>)

Water was undeniably important in Ottoman gardens.

“Water was an important landscaping element. Usually moving water was preferred to still water. In addition to *Selsebil* (Paradise Spring) and fountain pools, elements such as *copur* stone and fish pool was also used to animate the water flow adding fun and melody the water area. (Gökyiğit, 2010:15)

“Growing flowers and creating new species had become a passionate art like poetry and music in Istanbul culture during the Turkish period. For those who wanted to become a gardener, “pleasant gardens” books were written. Most of the private gardens of sultans were built by Mimar Sinan.” (Gökyiğit, 2010:18)

Flowers are not only used in Ottoman gardens, we encounter with this fundamental element everywhere.

It’s a known fact that flowers hold an important place in fabric patterns, miniatures, murals, carpets and every branch of art but the fact that these are indeed a special means of communication between people is not mentioned. Thomas Allom, an English artist famous for his valuable XIX century Istanbul engravings, states with illustrations that Turkish people attach a great value to flowers, particularly roses, and they use a flower language in which every flower represents a specific meaning. According to him, orange blossom, marigold, aramantus and tulip symbolizes hope, despair, constancy and unfaithfulness respectively, while the flower bouquets called “selam (salute)” substitute letters (Atasoy, 1971:15).

Giving brief information on the importance of garden and flower in the Ottoman era, we should mention how the culture is structured in the Istanbul Island of the NGBB.

4.2.2. Istanbul Island

Istanbul Island is one of the islands created in NGBB. Chosen as one of the projects under Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture organization and opened on May 2nd, 2010, the island's general characteristics exactly correspond with the XVIII century Ottoman gardens.

The content analysis performed with the visual material is evidenced as follows:



XVIII century Ottoman Mansion Garden The Bosphorus Neighborhood Fountain

General characteristics of the XVIII century gardens can be summarized as follows: (Istanbul 2010 Application File)

The interior garden which comprises a set of gardens with different themes such as recreation, ornament and utility is located in the main structure and separated from the exterior area with a gate and walls.

There is a main axis surrounded by secondary axes. Paths, flower beds and walls are built in neat structure.

View-based levels are created in the garden by using retaining walls. The ground level is lowered by leveling the land with horizontal sofas or creating hollow gardens even in plain areas.

Water features are significant elements of the garden. One or more pools are placed in the garden structure which varies depending on the season. Mostly running and moving water is preferred. Typically the pools feature fountains. The water runs down through different levels. The water's flow is sourced from a supply and ends in a pond. An equally popular system is running water through an open channel instead of a fountain.

Turkish gardens have the feature of a recreational garden rather than a promenade garden with a pergola as a main feature.

The flower has a special place both in terms of plant species and use. In Ottoman Gardens, the flowers are used for their scents and decorative features rather than creating a color composition or patterns, thus a mixture of colors and species is not common. Cypresses, daphnes, pomegranates, potted lemons, myrtles, boxwood fences, roses, dianthus, jasmines and definitely tulips are indispensable plants of the Ottoman garden. Parterres occupy the biggest part in the decorative garden. They are surrounded by paths and walls. Parterres are no bigger than a few square meters. Each of them are planted with flowers of the same species and color. These parts are generally of the same size and form. Narrow pathways made of hammered stone, sand, pavement or malta-stone lie around these parterres. Towards the end of XVIII century, boxwoods started to surround parterres.

The garden is a recreational garden rather than a promenade garden. Wooden and metal pergolas are ornamented with ivies and grapevines.

In the Ottoman Gardens where the themes of "logic" and "utility" are praised against "decorative gardens", fruits trees which are the constituents of "utility gardens" are used as much as flowers.

The garden typically continues with a stony ground around the house.

The XVIII century Mansion Garden located in the NGBB Istanbul Island provides a demonstration of all these characteristic features.

The Bosphorus area, an important feature of Istanbul Island, is a small-scaled version of the "Istanbul Strait". The view of the miniature bosphorus with its water's color, bridges, Maiden Tower, Galata Tower and its bloomy "Seven Hills" ornamented with different flowers throughout four seasons can be enjoyed at the terraces and scenery platform in the island.

The neighborhood fountain represents one of the main landmarks of social communication network. Until the late period of the Ottoman Empire, there was not any household pipe connection to the main water supply. The residents had to go to the street fountains to supply water. Thus, the fountain visits used to represent a kind of socialization activity especially for women.

The neighborhood fountain in the NGBB is integrated with the mansion garden. Constructed from travertine, it has carved relief motifs of the NGBB Iris logo. Water from this fountain reaches the spiral pond ('copuri') which is the source of the water channel by running through a closed channel with its own appeal.

Istanbul plants exhibition area is a part of the Istanbul Island. This area is reserved for the presentation of the rich floral texture of Turkey owing to its unique geographical position, with a focus on Istanbul through a modern approach to the garden design. The area hosts some endangered plant species which are identified with Istanbul.

Istanbul Island also has an amphitheatre for cultural events with a capacity of 450 people thanks to the topographic structure of the area.

The Island will host several organizations including three photograph exhibitions: "Gardens and Flowers of Istanbul", "Happy Trees in Istanbul" and "Flowers of Istanbul".

The exhibition themed "The Importance of Gardens and Flowers in the Istanbul Culture and Life" will showcase various photos of objects bearing flower and tree motifs and will always be open to visitors.

The theme of the exhibition "Happy Trees in Istanbul" can be described as follows: Istanbul embody several climate zones in a small area, therefore it hosts a diverse range of plants and trees in its natural flora. The exhibition features photos of various trees from plane tree and redbud which are the symbols of Istanbul to rare species such as *Aesculus neglecta* and tulip tree.

The famous photographer Fatih Orbay photographed the flowers of Istanbul for the photograph exhibition named "Flowers of Istanbul". The exhibition "Flowers of Istanbul" features the photos of 35-40 flowers of Istanbul, particularly endemic ones.

The Istanbul Island, introduces Ottoman Horticulture to its visitors through its gardens, fountain, plane tree terrace and other demonstrations and exhibitions it presents.

GENERAL REVIEW AND CONCLUSION

Istanbul is the most populated and rapidly developing city of the country and has a rich historical and cultural texture. The community of Istanbul is on the verge of losing touch with nature due to the conditions of the surrounding environment. NGBB gives Istanbul residents an opportunity to experience the

nature in the middle of a highway. There is not any other garden in our country that collectively adopts such missions. The botanical garden put into service with the cooperative efforts of Directorate General of Highways and ANG Foundation and enables the community to live in touch with the nature. The trainings organized within NGBB helps children to engage with nature. Furthermore, such cultural places enable the visitors of NGBB to pass beyond reading the cultures from books and give them the opportunity of living and reviving it while enjoying the ambiance of the past.

According to Wiesler, "Culture is the lifestyle of the society". NGBB revived the lifestyles of two nations on two islands and the cultural values of these two nations are now cherished and kept alive on these two islands.

As known, one of the key elements in maintaining cultural values is to create cultural places.

These two cultural places created by NGBB serve to this purpose.

Cherry Blossom (Sakura) Ceremony, which is kind of a national symbol and has great importance for Japanese, is held on Ertuğrul Island every year. First celebrated in 2010, this ceremony has become a tradition and started to be celebrated every year at NGBB as a symbol of fellowship between Japan and Turkey.

Each of the Sakura trees donated by the Japanese Sakura Foundation in memory of the soldiers died in Ertuğrul Frigate disaster is named after our martyrs. This ceremony gives us an opportunity both to commemorate our martyrs and to hold the Cherry Blossom Ceremony which is very important for Japanese and therefore it strengthens the Turkey-Japan fellowship, the foundations of which were laid years ago. The event which takes place in NGBB keeps the Japanese cultural values alive in Turkey and gives Turkish people a chance to witness those values while enhancing the fellowship between Turkey and Japan.

Istanbul Island was built in parallel with the characteristics of the XVIII. Century Ottoman Garden. Istanbul Island, an Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture project, opened on May 2, 2010 with the participation of Dr. Kadir Topbaş. The mansion garden placed in the Istanbul Island is complemented by a neighborhood fountain and a terrace under the plane tree. Water features are significant elements of the garden. One or more pools are placed in the garden structure which varies depending on the season. The Bosphorus area, an important feature of Istanbul Island, is a small-scaled version of the "Istanbul Strait". Istanbul plants exhibition area is a part of the Istanbul Island. This area is reserved for the presentation of the rich floral texture of Turkey owing to its unique geographical position, with a focus on Istanbul through a modern approach to the garden design. In addition to the structural and floral garden exhibitions, an amphitheatre with a capacity of 450 is built for cultural activities. Some of the activities within this project are the Photograph Exhibition "Garden and Flower Culture in Istanbul", the Photograph Exhibition "The Happy Trees of Istanbul" and the Photograph Exhibition "The Flowers of Istanbul".

The main conclusion arrived after the content analysis performed is that NGBB provides a natural living space to people. In a culturally deformed society, NGBB achieves to keep Ottoman garden culture alive and gives people the opportunity to enjoy that ambiance. Living a culture is what makes people more humanitarian.

In this way, we will be able to hand down our cultural values to next generations and as long as this garden survives, there will be an opportunity to sustain our cultural heritage from generation to generation. In the opening ceremony of Istanbul Island, the waiters in Ottoman style costumes served the guests hot Ottoman paste (a traditional candy). This taste took our guest back the past. Similarly, the annual Cherry Blossom Ceremony held on Ertuğrul Island is very important both in terms of giving us the opportunity to commemorate the Ertuğrul martyrs and organizing a ceremony which has great importance for Japanese. Witnessing the cultures of other societies and learning the graces of those cultures make two societies familiar of each other and thus secures a firm fellowship ties while many other methods are ineffective in this respect.

In other words, NGBB has proved its unique importance as a garden which ensures that the cultural values are maintained, nations are drawn closer to each other, memories are cherished and remembered and the ties of fellowship are enhanced.

Giving us the opportunity to get in touch with nature in a metropolis like Istanbul, NGBB went beyond its mission and opened cultural places to visit. Greeting spring in the middle of the rose-pink Sakura trees which are the symbol of Japanese culture-; looking at the captivating harmony created by the flowers of mansion garden; enjoying the view of Bosphorus channel from the terrace under the plane tree and washing our faces at the neighborhood fountain naturally take us back to years ago and gives us the opportunity of not only understanding the Ottoman garden culture but also living inside of it.

Living through and maintaining this cultural value undeniably gives people an inner joy. As Wiesler puts it, "Culture is the lifestyle of the society". This lifestyle can only be sustained by creating cultural places like NGBB and with the efforts of the ones who gave us the opportunity to live through these values; and living through and keeping alive these cultural values is only possible with sustainability.

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