

# The Garden Path

Celebrating Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage

April/May 2024



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HAIKU

An April evening  
Off the nearby trees – the sun  
a murmur of gold

– Peter Kendall

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Dear Members,

When I walk through Portland Japanese Garden, many things catch my eye. As the owner of a landscape design + build and garden center company, the first thing I tend to notice is, naturally, the plant life. April and May are some of the most visually amazing months of the year here at the Garden, when cherry blossoms and rhododendrons and azaleas almost look like fireworks against the backdrop of green. Beyond this, however, and more personally, I see the story of my family.

As I have written to you before, the Snodgrass family has been involved with Portland Japanese Garden since its inception. Throughout the landscape, I see flowers that were almost certainly propagated by my grandparents Bernard and Florence Esch. I see a wisteria arbor that my father, Robert Snodgrass, helped with back in the 1960s. I myself have always been an active supporter and admirer of the organization and in 2011 I followed family tradition by getting even more deeply involved by joining the Board of Trustees. In 2022 I had the honor of becoming Board President. At the end of May, my term will conclude.

These two years have marked one of the most meaningful and important stretches of my life. Portland Japanese Garden represents something much larger than an attraction. It tells the story of how even a scarred landscape (as it was when the old zoo left) can become something majestic. It tells the story of how if you build a place where all feel welcome, long-lasting friendship can be conceived. It tells the story of how a community only needs to look within and to one another to find the peace it seeks.

I am very proud to have been Board President as we launched much of the initial programming for Japan Institute, including but not limited to our international Peace Symposia. At the end of last year, we had nearly 1,000 people attend our symposia in Cape Town and Johannesburg in South Africa. As you may have read in the last issue of *The Garden Path*, it was a remarkable series of events that were inspiring and motivational. I learned a lot about how our Garden's story parallels much of what the incredible communities there have done and are doing. Also, as a plant man, I was happy to help put a memorial tree in the soil of Johannesburg Botanical Garden! On page 12, you can read about a recent gathering the Institute held in Portland.

In my first letter as Board President, I began by noting my feeling that the future is bright. Two years later, that feeling remains true. Between the everlasting serenity and vital importance of Portland Japanese Garden and the exciting future of Japan Institute, we have so much to look forward to. I feel confident that with the steadfast support of our community, the exceptional leadership of the Garden staff and its Board of Trustees and Foundation Board, and incredible contributions of our volunteers and members, Portland Japanese Garden will continue to provide a worldclass haven for harmony and peace.

With gratitude,

Drake Snodgrass  
President, Board of Trustees

## Member News & Events

### *Kodomo no Hi,* Children's Day

May 5

Children's Day is observed in Japan as a day to honor all children in the hopes that they will grow up healthy and strong. Cloth carp streamers, or *koinobori*, are flown to bring good fortune to children. Come to the Garden with your family to listen to *taiko* music performed by children, participate in a scavenger hunt, create origami projects, and satisfy your curiosity about koi.



A young garden guest working on some origami during Children's Day in 2023. 📷 Julie Gursha

### Annual Meeting of the Membership

May 6

Join us for the Annual Membership Meeting! Our CEO, Steve Bloom, will give an annual overview for members and will present about the organization's future. Our guest speaker is Anne Burroughs, President and CEO of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, California.

*This is a member-only event.*

To register, go to: [japanesegarden.org/annual-meeting-2024](https://japanesegarden.org/annual-meeting-2024)

### Mark Your Calendar: Summer Hours Have Returned!

Portland Japanese Garden will have expanded hours beginning April 1st and will continue to be open Wednesdays through Mondays (closed Tuesdays).

Member Hours: 8:00 - 10:00am (every day the Garden is open)

Public Hours: 10:00am - 6:00pm (guests exit by 7:00pm)

The Umami Café, Gift Shop, and Pavilion Gallery will be open from 9:00am - 7:00pm\*

\*Last seating for the Umami Café is 6:30pm

Meanwhile, special Extended Hours for members return starting in May! Take advantage of the extended light of summer and enjoy quiet evenings at the Garden. Advance reservations are not required, and member guests are welcome. Details for additional extended hours can be found on our website, [japanesegarden.org/events](https://japanesegarden.org/events)



The Membership Center, opening soon, between the Strolling Pond and Flat Gardens, adjacent to the wisteria arbor. 📷 Portland Japanese Garden

### Coming Soon: New Membership Center in the Heart of the Garden!

We are very excited to share that Portland Japanese Garden's new Membership Center will be opening by this summer, located in the heart of the Garden, adjacent to the wisteria arbor. Garden Members will be able to come in and ask questions, get support, renew their memberships, or even buy gift memberships for the loved ones in their life. Additionally, visitors to the Garden will be able to turn their paid admission into memberships here!

Our dedicated phone line, (503) 796-9180, and email ([membership@japanesegarden.org](mailto:membership@japanesegarden.org)) will still be available for members and prospective members. We look forward to providing more in-person support for our members! To stay informed about the new Membership Center, make sure you subscribe to our e-newsletter.

### Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May

AANHPI Heritage Month is a time to reflect upon and celebrate the remarkable role of those who are Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander ancestry in our nation's history. Founded in 1963 to heal the wounds of World War II, Portland Japanese Garden is proud to represent this community and exist as a place that can continue to inspire harmony and peace. We'll be sharing how we'll be celebrating the AANHPI community in our weekly e-newsletter.

### *Behind the Shoji* Annual Summer Marketplace Returns This June

Join us for a Golden Crane and member-only preview and reception to gain first access to our annual artisan marketplace, *Behind the Shoji*. Advanced reservations for members and those in the Golden Crane Recognition Society will open in May. *Behind the Shoji* will then open to the public on June 29th and runs through September 2nd.

For all the latest details on Garden events, including dates and times, go to [japanesegarden.org/events](https://japanesegarden.org/events) and for reminders and updates, sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at [japanesegarden.org/newsletter](https://japanesegarden.org/newsletter)



Miyo Iwakoshi (back left), the first known Japanese immigrant to Oregon with her daughter Tama Nitobe Takaki (back right) and Miyo's grandchildren. 📷 Japanese America Museum of Oregon.

## Honoring the AANHPI Community in May

### The Experience of Oregon's Nikkei

Portland Japanese Garden is often referenced as “more than a garden.” What does this mean? Beyond the serene spaces, the Garden is a non-profit, cultural institution that allows visitors to experience Japanese culture through its events and programs. This allows the Garden to be a representation of cultural diplomacy—the act of sharing one’s cultural gifts to evoke peace and human connection.

The Garden just celebrated its 60th anniversary last year. To have gone from a post-World War II landscape of hostility to a flourishing garden that doubled in size within a generation is nothing short of remarkable. Portland Japanese Garden began with a seed of hope and healing but its reason for existence started even before that. To understand the full story of Portland Japanese Garden is to know the context in which it was established.

As we celebrate Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month in May, we reflect on what it means to be an organization that represents this community by diving further back into our history. The experience of Oregon's *Nikkei* (the Japanese diaspora) has been filled with triumph and accomplishment. It has also been rife with tragedy and turmoil. Despite the best efforts of the *Issei* (first generation Japanese immigrants) and *Nisei* (second generation) to live the American dream as so many others have and will, they were often marginalized, assaulted, and incarcerated simply because of who they are. The battles they endured were not so long ago—and while there has been progress, the path to equity continues to be paved today.

As a Japanese American mother in Portland, I feel fortunate, inspired, and reassured knowing that a place like Portland Japanese Garden exists, where I can bring my children to connect to our heritage in a setting they love—nature! I'm grateful to share the opportunity to learn more about the Japanese experience in Oregon so that together, we can help create an ever more harmonious and vibrant community for generations to come.

- Megumi Kato, Director of Marketing (Nisei)

### ...A Community Grows in Oregon

In 1880, Oregon would receive its first Issei, Miyo Iwakoshi, her brother Riki, and daughter Tama. Iwakoshi and her partner, an Australian-Scottish professor named Andrew McKinnon, would open a mill in Gresham named “The Orient.” When McKinnon passed away only a few years later, Iwakoshi would have to overcome the adversity of being left to fend for herself in a frontier state and she did.

Iwakoshi earned notice for demonstrating that silkworms could produce silk in Oregon and her knowledge of the area and her willingness to help others would lead her to becoming known as the “Western Empress” to Oregon’s Japanese community. Her daughter Tama would wind up constituting half of the state’s first Japanese marriage when she wed merchant and labor contractor Shintaro Takaki later in the decade.

It was a time of growth for the population of Oregon’s Issei. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a federal piece of legislation that forbade Chinese immigration to the United States, had left employers with less workers to exploit. With Japan experiencing the rocky Meiji era (1868-1912), some of its population would seek stability and maybe even fortune across the Pacific. They would be welcomed by railroads, logging outfits, and agricultural endeavors. Paid less than their fellow immigrants from Europe, the early years for the Japanese laborer were tough going; often they could only find shelter in freight cars, barns, and tents. Some would even have to resort to living in caves.

It was in these early years those of Japanese ancestry here in Oregon would demonstrate *gaman*, or “strength, endurance, self-discipline, an awareness of others, and the ability to keep the future in sight.” The ability to tap into *gaman* would be required of them. Because of this reserve of fortitude, many of the area’s Issei would begin to thrive.

Toward the end of the 19th century, Portland’s Japantown, or *Nihonmachi*, developed in what today is known as the Old Town neighborhood, a curve of the earth in the northwestern part of the city that touches the Willamette River. A combination of racism that prevented their free movement across the city and surely their own desire to build community with those with whom they shared a common background, the streets between 1st and 6th Avenues would see the establishment of Japanese-owned hotels, restaurants, barbershops, and other businesses. By 1900, Japan would open a consulate office in Oregon to serve the 2,500 Issei who were now living here...

To read the full article go to [japanesegarden.org/oregon-nikkei](http://japanesegarden.org/oregon-nikkei)

An outdoor market in Japantown. 📷 Library of Congress





Chloe Lee when she returned to the Garden to volunteer during the winter of 2023.  
 📷 Portland Japanese Garden

## Traversing New Grounds

### Partnership with University of Oregon's Portland Internship Experience

During the summer of 2023, University of Oregon student Chloe Lee joined Portland Japanese Garden's Marketing Department as an intern as part of her school's Portland Internship Experience program (PIE). PIE students receive a philanthropically-funded stipend, and career preparedness, and all while contributing to organizations that aim to make a difference in their community. Here is an article in which Lee reflects on her time with the Garden.



Last summer, I was welcomed as Portland Japanese Garden's Marketing and Communications intern. Through the University of Oregon's Portland Internship Experience (PIE), a summer program that partners with local Portland businesses and nonprofits to give back to the community, I was able to join the Marketing Department during the Garden's momentous 60th year.

Over the course of my internship, I was primarily responsible for archiving historic materials documenting Portland Japanese Garden's lifespan, including over 8,000 photographs and more than 60 years of press clippings. Archiving and cataloguing these materials not only made them available for use across the organization, but also acquainted me with the Garden through an intimately human perspective: vignettes from those who helped transform the Garden from an abandoned zoo into one of Portland's most serene destinations.

I believe a good story is memorable, but a great story is compelling. Day after day, I have seen the Garden gently plant roots in visitors' hearts, fostering timeless connections to its serene landscapes and foundations of cultural connections. These same roots blossomed in my soul and encouraged me to pursue further work with the Marketing Department beyond the initial 10-week internship period. With an appreciation for the Garden and admiration for my colleagues, who are world-class mentors, 10 weeks became 13 weeks, as well as continued volunteer work once I return to school. Here, I have found an everlasting well of fulfillment, a desire to maintain a close relationship with the Garden's harmony.

Portland Japanese Garden is captivating. Each element of the Garden elicits contemplation, vivid curiosity, and implores a lifelong willingness to learn. A garden requires the utmost compassion and mindfulness from all involved, and those responsible for Portland Japanese Garden embody these qualities with a humane determination that I am endlessly grateful to have learned from firsthand. Portland Japanese Garden is not just a garden, but one of the greatest stories of compassion, diligence, and mutual understanding.

A full version of this article can be read at [japanesegarden.org/internship-experience](https://japanesegarden.org/internship-experience)

*Chloe Lee is a senior at the University of Oregon, set to graduate in June of 2024 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art & Technology. Her interests lie in vulnerable storytelling through a breadth of media disciplines, as well as writing, with a particular emphasis on relationships between people and nature. Lee also contributes regular hours as a volunteer with Portland Japanese Garden's Marketing Department.*

Portland Japanese Garden has often been described as a "living classroom," where education is fostered through a variety of means, including internships, workshops, and seminars, and even guest gardener exchanges with professionals in the Japanese gardening field across the world. We're proud to be an organization that helps people learn more about Japanese gardening and culture, and embraces the opportunity to learn from others so we can continue to pursue our mission of *Inspiring Harmony and Peace*.

A photo taken by Chloe Lee during her summer internship of the Flat Garden. 📷 Chloe Lee





"Lights of My City," 2023. 📷 Yūki Uryu

## Each and Every Light

### New Garden Exhibitions Showcase the Beauty of Sapporo & Hokkaido

In an effort to heal the lingering division of World War II, Portland, Oregon and Sapporo, Hokkaido reached across the Pacific to become sister cities 65 years ago this year. The sister city partnership also helped catalyze the foundation of Portland Japanese Garden. To commemorate this longtime friendship, Portland Japanese Garden presents *Vision of Place*, two photography exhibitions sharing different perspectives of Hokkaido and its capital city of Sapporo.

In the Pavilion Gallery, *Shashin: Photographic Frontiers of Hokkaido* is a collaboration with The North Finder, a Sapporo-based group of photographers, that aims to share the natural beauty of our sister city and its surrounding prefecture. Kenta Nakamura, Chairman of The North Finder and one of the exhibiting artists, commented that unlike other artistic mediums, photography requires a subject in the real world. This is not a limitation, however, as it gives the group the opportunity to share what they love about Hokkaido with international viewers. Through the eyes of The North Finder, enticing scenery reveals the beauty of all four seasons across a range of landscapes from urban to remote and showcases the importance of humankind living in harmony with their natural surroundings. Participating photographer Yūki Uryu shared his insight on why he wanted to present his photograph of a frozen Tokachi River, and the city glimmering in the distance with visitors to Portland Japanese Garden:

*"Each and every light shapes Sapporo. The people who live here, the people who come here, and the people who pass through create the scenery of Sapporo."*



"Winterview," February 2023. Teshikaga, Kawakami-Gun, Hokkaido, Japan. 📷 Sandra Chandler

While natural splendor and similar latitudes constitute much of our common ground, it is ultimately the people of Sapporo and Portland and their ability to share, protect and promote the place they call home that make our sister-city relationship so meaningful.

*Vision of Place* continues in the Calvin and Mayho Tanabe Gallery and Jordan Schnitzer Japanese Arts Learning Center with *Quiet Reflections of Hokkaido Winter: Photography by Sandra Chandler*. Winter snow covers Hokkaido for five months of the year. This clean and elegant coating over the landscape appealed to Chandler, who comes from a long career in interior design, and values the ability to distill the essence of an environment into its simplest form. Originally, photography was a way for her to record what she was seeing as she traveled, but as she continued to journey abroad and study the potential of photography, capturing the impression of a place over the factual details became a bigger priority. Chandler comments,

*"When I have the opportunity to see an exhibition it expands my curiosity. It expands my knowledge base and exposes me to different parts of the world or different concepts. I come away feeling fuller than when I went in. And if I can share some of my work, share my experience and my voice just a little bit to enrich somebody else's experience, that's huge. That's really a joyful concept."*

Since photography's invention, it has been a medium for capturing unique moments experienced solely by the photographer yet preserved for others to see. As we celebrate the 65th anniversary of Portland and Sapporo's Sister City relationship, we hope these photography exhibitions aid in fostering a sense of wonder and deeper respect between our cultures.

*Vision of Place* is now open through June 10.

More information can be found at [japanesegarden.org/vision-of-place](https://japanesegarden.org/vision-of-place)



Ken Tadashi Oshima (far left) leading the concluding panel discussion with the day's speakers, (left to right) Dorothee Imbert, Shohei Shigematsu, and Yuko Hasegawa. © Arthur Hitchcock

## The Essential Mediation of Art and Design

### Japan Institute Brings Living Traditions Series to Portland

On February 3, more than 200 people gathered in the atrium space of Wieden + Kennedy (W+K), an iconic Portland advertising agency with offices around the world along with deep ties with Japan. Presented by Japan Institute of Portland Japanese Garden supported by the Prime Minister's Office of Japan, Living Traditions - a series of conversations and talks that explore some of the most iconic facets of Japanese culture and traditions - has featured cultural stewards from a diverse range of creative disciplines exploring the intersection of culture, nature, and human ingenuity. This marked Japan Institute's first event of 2024, and importantly, it was held at home, in Portland.

"[A representative] from the Prime Minister of Japan's Office told me, 'I wish the Prime Minister could have seen this to feel firsthand the overwhelming energy and creative vibes that Portland Japanese Garden generates for the entire community.'"

AKI NAKANISHI | ARLENE SCHNITZER CURATOR OF CULTURE, ART, AND EDUCATION

"Portland Japanese Garden is a very successful case study in peace making through cultural diplomacy rooted in our reverence for nature," Aki Nakanishi, Portland Japanese Garden's Arlene Schnitzer Curator of Culture, Art, and Education shared, explaining the thought process that led to Japan Institute. "Building off this, we started talking to our Japanese counterparts in Japan, to talk about the potential a garden might have for community building, urban planning, and addressing social issues."

Among the guests who gathered in this assembly of global thought leaders were keynote speaker Yuko Hasegawa, Director of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art in Kanazawa, Japan, speaker Dorothee Imbert, the Director of the Knowlton School of Architecture at The Ohio State University, and speaker Shohei Shigematsu, a partner at the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). They were joined by the event's moderator, Dr. Ken Tadashi Oshima, Professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Washington.

Yuko Hasegawa delivered remarks first on how she views art and nature as sharing deep and inextricable bonds and that in the face of a rapidly changing climate, art will remain vital to our existence. "...Art and design [are] essential mediators, facilitating sensory learning and addressing conflicts, divisions, and imbalances," Hasegawa noted. "Aesthetics and ethics, fundamental to human existence, find their expression through art, fostering empathy, imagination, and intellectual renewal."

The theme of Shohei Shigematsu's presentation was the interconnectedness built structures have with land. "Architecture had been responding to landscape until the Industrial Revolution and invention of air conditioning," he shared. This philosophy is seen in the Garden, such as how the Jordan Schnitzer Japanese Arts Learning Center has glass walls and wooden partitions that slide open to blur the line between indoors and outdoors.

Dorothee Lambert discussed how despite the "significant impact" a landscape has on our collective physical, emotional, environmental, and social wellbeing, it is often "downright invisible" with an inherent structure that vanishes as functions and meanings are laid upon it. What is exciting, then, about gardens is that they can avoid invisibility—because they are both simultaneously a place and the "representation of an ideal." "The idea of a garden holds great potential for disruption of our distracted state," Imbert noted.

Read the full article at [japanesegarden.org/living-traditions-2024](https://japanesegarden.org/living-traditions-2024)





To see this list online, go to [japanesegarden.com/support-your-garden](http://japanesegarden.com/support-your-garden)  
For corrections, contact [development@japanesegarden.org](mailto:development@japanesegarden.org)

Cumulative giving to the Annual Fund from October 1, 2022 through November 30, 2023.

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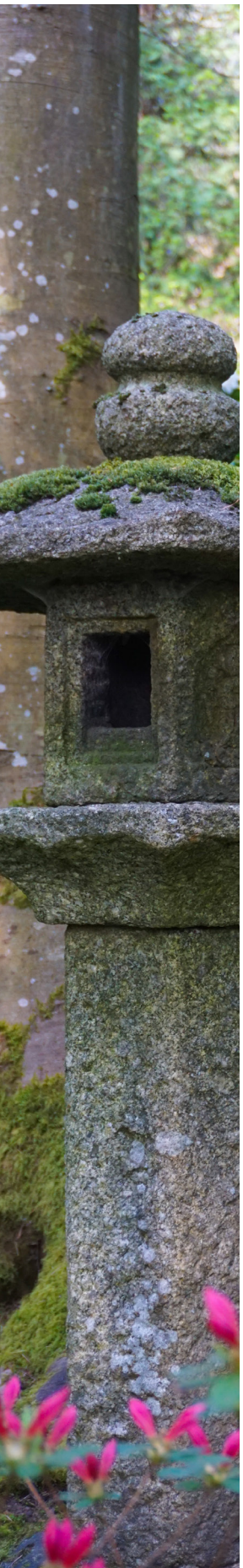
Portland Japanese Garden

**Thank you**



If you would like to make a donation or have any questions about the Golden Crane Society, please contact Claire Eisenfeld, Director of Philanthropy, at (503) 542-0281 or [ceisenfeld@japanesegarden.org](mailto:ceisenfeld@japanesegarden.org).





Portland Japanese Garden



Members of the Phoenix Legacy Society have named the Garden as the ultimate beneficiary of a planned gift. We are grateful to the following people for letting us know of their plans to support the Garden in this enduring way.

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For inquiries on supporting Japan Institute, please reach out to our Chief Development Officer, Jennifer Baumann, at (503) 595-5225 or [jbaumann@japanesegarden.org](mailto:jbaumann@japanesegarden.org)

Recognizing all those who have made a gift in support of our Path to Peace Campaign for Japan Institute, helping us be a leading global voice for cultural understanding, in pursuit of a more peaceful, sustainable world.

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Participants in an ikebana workshop in the Yanai Family Classroom. 📷 Portland Japanese Garden



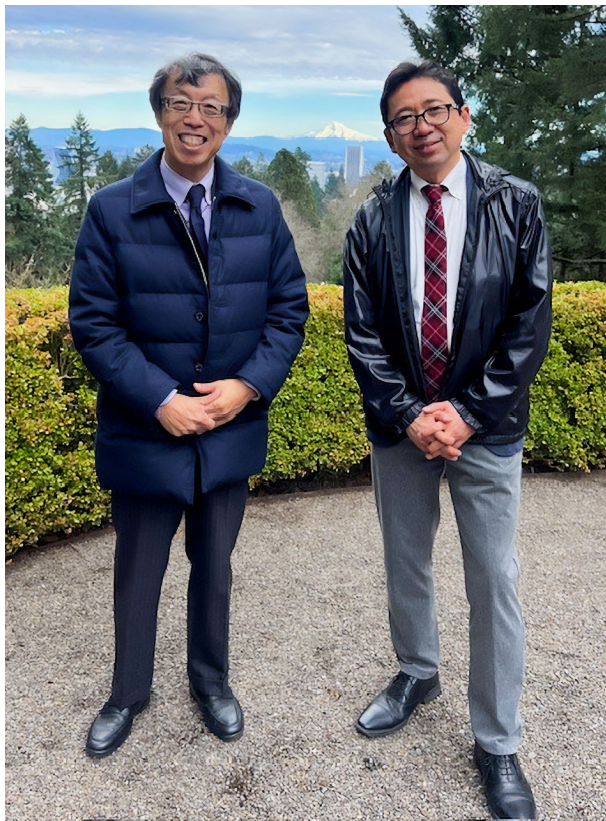
Portland Japanese Garden and Japan Institute staff meeting with the organizations' International Advisory Board in Tokyo in March. 📷 Portland Japanese Garden



Makoto Iyori, Consul General of Japan in Seattle, with his wife Yuko during a visit to the Garden in March of 2024. 📷 Portland Japanese Garden



A young Garden guest gets a closer look at a performance by TAKOHACHI – Kotori Kai Shamisen School during our Hina Matsuri celebration in March. 📷 Portland Japanese Garden



Kazuyoshi Umemoto, President of The Japan Foundation (left) and Hideki Hara, Managing Director of Japan Foundation's Department of Japanese Studies, during a visit to Portland Japanese Garden in January. 📷 Dorie Vollum



Portland Japanese Garden Executive Director Lisa Christy (center) with Oregon Governor Tina Kotek (left) and Oregon First Lady Aimee Wilson (right) at the Consular Office of Japan's celebration of the Emperor's birthday at the Hilton Portland Downtown. 📷 Portland Japanese Garden



Families enjoying a sunny winter day at the Garden. 📷 Portland Japanese Garden

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To know Portland Japanese Garden is to understand it represents something much more than 12 acres of beautifully fostered land. Its story is inextricable from the history of the Oregon Nikkei (Japanese diaspora), a manifestation of their contributions and perseverance and hopes for the future. That Portland, a community too often bereft of common decency to its neighbors would manage to overcome rank hatred and build, foster, and expand a Japanese garden is a remarkable achievement and a testament to the dedication of the Japanese and Japanese American communities in Portland and their allies. Below is a picture of two visitors in front of the Sapporo Pagoda Lantern in the 1970s.



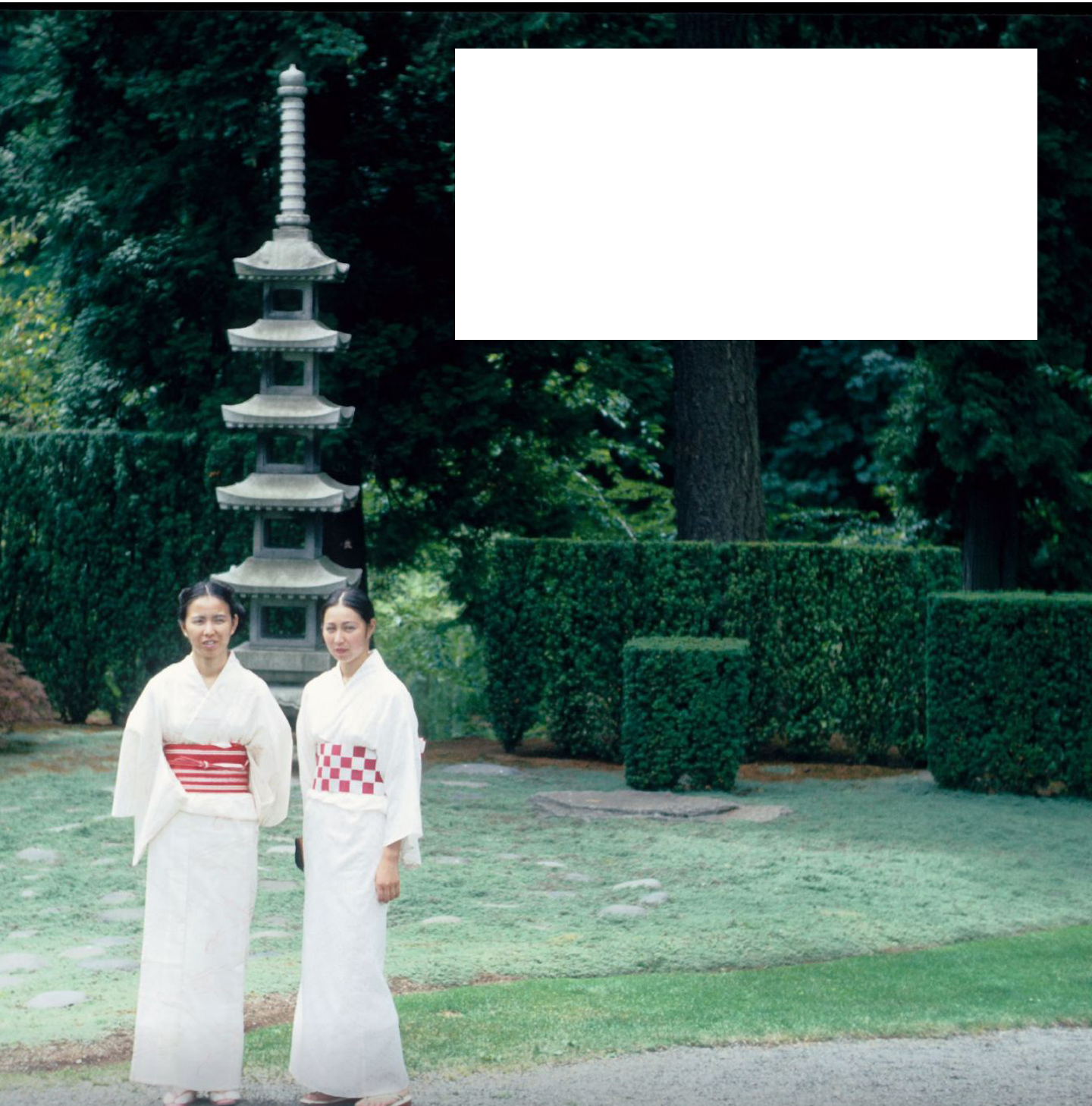
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