



# Japan Institute

A Global Cultural Initiative of  
Portland Japanese Garden





## In Pursuit of Peace

— This present moment  
that lives on  
to become  
long ago

- GARY SNYDER

Portland Japanese Garden (PJG) was founded in 1963 by a group of community members interested in healing the wounds of World War II. It was created as a garden of beauty designed to bring a better understanding of Japanese culture to Portland. What it has brought to the world is so much more.

Often referred to as a museum for Japanese gardens, PJG is a living classroom that offers tremendous opportunities for experiential learning to all who enter its gates. Its lessons are many and varied and they are felt the moment one walks along its paths. Heart rates slow, minds open, senses awaken to what is beyond the surface. **The effect of a Japanese garden is felt in the spirit.**

Visitors noticed the benefits immediately. From this garden came peace. First, an inner peace and later a peace among those who had been so angry with one another following the war. Word of this garden grew and for the next 60 years, PJG became a model for Japanese garden stewardship within North America, maintaining a steadfast focus on authenticity and delivering programs of the highest quality. Visitors continued to come, from within the community, then from around the country, and later from around the world, seeking out its gifts of beauty and cultural understanding.

Today, nearly 500,000 people come each year to Portland Japanese Garden. As they leave, they use simple superlatives: “serene,” “contemplative,” and “peaceful.”

Later, visitors describe something deeper, like an awakening. Whether it is a connection to their own Japanese heritage, or a safe place where Asian culture is celebrated, or a journey of understanding for whom Japan was otherwise a foreign place across the Pacific.

Portland Japanese Garden was born out of a hope that the experience of peace can contribute to a long lasting peace. Today, as polarization and violence against diverse communities have increased, an organization like this is sought out and needed now more than ever.

As the organization grew, we came to understand that our responsibility was not only to maintain our own extraordinary garden, but to expand our role in cultural diplomacy in pursuit of a more peaceful, sustainable world.



# The Japan Institute

Inspiring Harmony and Peace

The Japan Institute is being created to further advance our mission of *Inspiring Harmony & Peace*. We believe that through culture, art, and nature, at the intersection of the built, natural, intellectual, and creative environments, that humanity can come to better mutual understanding of ourselves and each other.

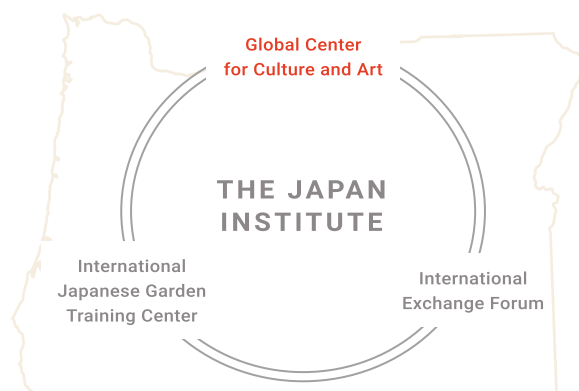
Our goal is to expand programs more broadly around the world, expand international partnerships, while continuing to engage diverse people in shared experiences and conversations about peace, beauty, and connection of nature. Innovative programs, global collaborations, and experiential education for youth and adults are the hallmarks of the Japan Institute, organized around three centers:

1. Global Center for Culture and Art
2. International Exchange Forum
3. International Japanese Garden Training Center





## Global Center for Culture and Art



The Global Center for Culture and Art (Center) explores the interrelationship of humanity and nature through the lens of Japanese arts and culture. An ever-expanding array of Japanese visual and performing arts and cultural practices from *sumi-e* to *chado*, *urushi* to *bonsai*, and *kabuki* to *ikebana*, are presented in ways intended to reduce the need for language, translation, prior knowledge, or instruction.

Taking a more inclusive approach, the means of presentation are intended to spur curiosity about the internal mind-set intrinsic to these arts and practices plus external conversations about the personal meaning each audience member is finding in these arts and cultural practices amidst the beauty and calming influence of Portland Japanese Garden's eight gardens, or wherever in the world the learner may be.

It is the heart that is opened to the possibility of a new understanding of a previously unknown form of human endeavor, the journey that is begun towards appreciation of a heretofore unknown human creation, and the conversations that ensues between people which is the purpose of the Center.



Portland Japanese Garden, and now by extension the Global Center for Culture & Art, becomes an entry point, the gateway for all to experience the heart and soul of Japan. The Center presents artists, musicians, performers, and practitioners from Japan but also from other corners of the world where influences from Japan have been absorbed or because their art forms reveal intriguing parallels and contrasts to Japanese arts and culture.

Portland Japanese Garden is a living classroom that offers tremendous opportunities for experiential learning to all who enter its gates.

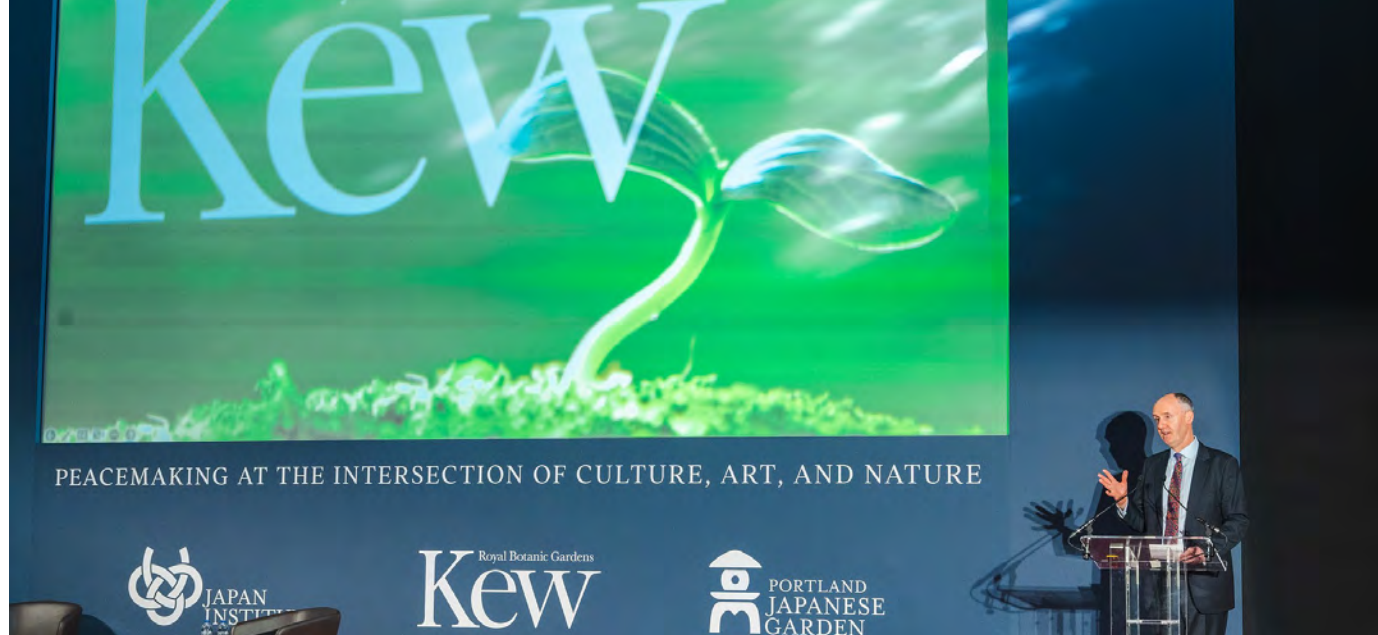
Its lessons are many and varied and they are felt the moment one walks along its paths.



The Center's focus on living artists and practitioners generates opportunities for conversations connecting global artists with each other and global audiences. As the Center expands its programs further, embracing the new opportunities brought forth by a host of new technologies in virtual programming, it will continue to nurture long-term relationships and friendships with and among these artists, fostering creativity and dialogue and creating new opportunities for innovative collaborations.

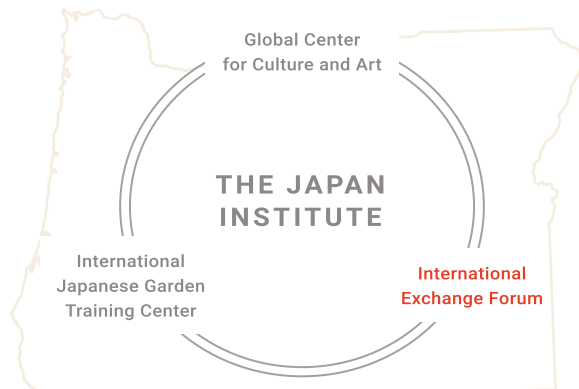
Specific programs of the Center include Art Exhibitions, Artist in Residence Programs, Traveling Exhibition Programs, Japan Eats Culinary Series, Chado, Ikebana, Bonsai, Shodo, Haiku classes and demonstrations, Japanese Craft workshops, Performing Arts Programs, Go-Sekku Festivals, the commission of new works across a range of mediums and genres, and the presentation of rarely available events outside Japan such as *Yabusame* and *Sumo*. Bringing the art and culture of Japan to the world, while supporting and providing opportunity for a myriad of artists and practitioners to share their gifts with audiences outside of Japan.





The Director of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richard Deverell, gives opening remarks at the Peace Symposium in London in 2022. Photo by Kyle Mannoock

## International Exchange Forum



The International Exchange Forum connects global communities for dialogue through exploring those ideals of Japanese culture which resonate in every culture around the world, including appreciation of fine craftsmanship, a deep personal connection to nature, and the search for internal and external peace. The Exchange Forum connects individuals and organizations around these shared interests. Together, participants build global relationships, exchange and explore ideas critical to modern life, evolve theory and practice in their respective fields, and collaborate to implement the ideals of Japanese gardens, arts, and culture in varied and meaningful ways for communities around the world.

“I think there are a number of thoughts that immediately come to mind that links this concept of gardens, landscape, horticulture, and peace. The first is perhaps most self-evident. Gardens are very safe and tranquil places. They encourage you to be convivial, to be honest, to perhaps drop some barriers to engage with your fellow humans. And I think even if you were angry or distressed, going into a garden would diminish your anger and distress. They are common, safe places in the broader sense of the word.”

- Richard Deverell,

Executive Director of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew,  
in an opening speech at the London Peace Symposium in 2022

## Global Conferences and Symposia

The Japan Institute regularly convenes conferences and symposia which cross boundaries between organizations, between fields, and between countries, facilitating conversations about peace, art, and the human relationship to the natural world.

The international Peace Symposia, *"Peacemaking at the Intersection of Culture, Art, and Nature"* is the signature program of Japan Institute. These symposia explore the interplay between and convergence of landscapes, architecture, and arts in shaping new civic conversations and efforts for peacebuilding through cultural diplomacy.

### JAPAN INSTITUTE HAS HELD FOUR PEACE SYMPOSIA AROUND THE WORLD

2022: Tokyo, Japan

2022: London, England

2023: New York, United States

2023: Cape Town & Johannesburg, South Africa

Japan Institute's peace programming is made possible through Robert and Deborah Zagunis.



Nobel Peace Center's  
Director, Kjerst Fløgstad.  
Photo by Hayley Madden.

## Collaborative Programs with International Cultural Organizations

Global relationships continue to reveal new opportunities for discussion and collaboration on initiatives important to varied communities around the world.

These projects are some of the first collaborative efforts:

- **Sister-institution relationships modeled on the established collaborations between Portland Japanese Garden and Taizo-in (Kyoto), International House of Japan (Tokyo), and Keihanna Garden (Kyoto)**

“Portland Japanese Garden is one of the finest Japanese organizations in the world, serving as both a place to connect with nature, and a forum for education and the exchange of ideas.”

- CAROLINE KENNEDY

Former U.S. Ambassador to Japan **Caroline Kennedy** addresses a delegation from Portland Japanese Garden in Yokohama in 2015.



Former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) **Christine LaGarde** tours Portland Japanese Garden.

Collaborative projects (continued):

- **Ongoing Living Traditions webinar series in conjunction with the Government of Japan and Japan Society, exploring the influence of centuries-old traditions on many of today's most popular trends.**
- **Collaboration with Japan's Ministry of Culture, Garden Society of Japan, North American Japanese Garden Association, and others to achieve UNESCO designation of intangible world heritage for Japanese garden art form – 2016 through 2026**

In addition, the International Exchange Forum is working to create global connections among gardens and Japanese cultural organizations with plans to host these conferences in future years:

- **National Association of Japan America Societies Annual Conference - August 2024**
- **The Inaugural Great Gardens of the World Leadership Forum in Portland, Oregon - July 2026**



*Her Imperial Highness, Princess Takamado, Her Imperial Highness, Princess Tsuguko, US Ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel, and CEO of Portland Japanese Garden and Japan Institute, Steve Bloom at a reception preceding the Tokyo Peace Symposium in 2022. Photo by Ken Katsurayama.*



A tour with Portland Japanese Garden patrons visits the studio of former Prime Minister **Hosokawa Morihiro**.

## International Tours

The Exchange Forum creates customized national and international travel programs for audiences to explore and contrast Japanese gardens, art, and culture with other similar and contrasting destinations around the world. A decade ago, Portland Japanese Garden began conducting these tours with a sole focus on Japan. However, gardens, art, and culture are a universal phenomenon found in almost every society throughout

human history. This program will be expanded to include comparative tours to see other culture's gardens and art forms as well as cultural interpretations of Japanese gardens as they've migrated to the far reaches of the world. Through this exploration, individuals find renewal for themselves as well as opportunities to understand people from other cultures.



A reception at the **U.S. Embassy in London**, hosted by Portland Japanese Garden and Japan Institute. Photo by Hayley Madden

## Strategic Exchanges among International Organizations

Subjects of urgent and common interest become apparent through the Exchange Forum's network of global relationships. Gatherings of scholars, cultural practitioners, craftsmen, and artists are organized by the International Exchange Forum to facilitate conversations about a range of issues, subjects, challenges, and opportunities. These round-table gatherings will occur in Portland, in appropriate locations around the world, and virtually.



The **Nobel Peace Center** in Oslo, Norway, a highlight of the patron tour in 2022.





## International Japanese Garden Training Center

The International Japanese Garden Training Center (Traing Center) serves diverse audiences who are seeking in-depth learning opportunities about Japanese gardens and their cultural context. The Training Center offers programs for all levels of adult learners, from beginning amateur to seasoned professional. These formal learning opportunities are structured to be interactive and trans-disciplinary, convening together individuals from disparate fields and backgrounds and opening the door for them towards new connections with each other, with the natural world, and with Japanese culture. While this learning journey takes audiences deeper into the specifics of Japan's culture, it concurrently builds capacity for wider cross-cultural empathy and conversation.

The Training Center also serves as the premier center outside of Japan for skills training,



knowledge exchange and new thought about Japanese garden arts, and for teaching about the cultural context that is essential to Japanese gardens. At the Training Center, hands and hearts collaborate to preserve, nurture, and share the living legacy of Japanese gardens. The Training Center teaches the skills and techniques for creating and stewarding Japanese gardens located outside of Japan for future generations while also acquainting students with the heart and soul of aesthetics at the root of understanding and practicing Japanese garden design, construction and maintenance.

The Training Center combines Western teaching methods of lectures and classes with traditional Japanese emphasis on mind-body learning through hands-on participation. The Japanese tradition of learning to be a garden craftsman differs sharply from non-Japanese learning approaches.

Apprenticeship has been the mainstay of learning traditional garden arts, and other crafts in Japan. A gardener's training is predicated not on directive teaching but on long term observation of and interaction with a master garden craftsman.

A further difference is that design, implementation, and stewardship are perceived as an organic whole: the artisan designs, constructs, and cares for a garden for a lifetime. It has been said that it takes 20 years to become a master Japanese gardener – implying the essential importance of accumulated wisdom passed down intact through many generations. The basic principles of Japanese garden aesthetics and maintenance are reflected in traditional cultural practices such as *chado*, *ikebana*, *shodō*, *baiku*, and the cultivation of *bonsai*. The concentration, discipline, hands-on



apprenticeship, lifetime of practice, and aesthetic principles of these related art forms all provide a model for how to learn about and practice the art of a Japanese garden.

Yet in the 21st century, few people are likely to choose training requiring such time commitment. Leveraging the burgeoning technologies and non-conventional forms of virtual learning, new methods and approaches must be developed to continue to be able to pass on this knowledge to gardeners over the generations and across nations. The Training Center embraces and values different educational traditions by providing a traditional, hands-on training approach supplemented by a wide variety of other learning tools and using cultural arts to provide the context for understanding the origins and meanings of Japanese gardens as an art form, as well as understand the relationship of architecture to the natural environment.

Since 2008, the Training Center has been forging strategic partnerships with leading academic institutions, organizations involved with craft, landscape design, and architecture, think-tanks, and renowned Japanese gardens. Through these partnerships, the Training Center has developed an ever-expanding circle of advisors and instructors for its programs while ensuring that its educational goals and methodology keep abreast of new research and best practices. Soon, the Training Center's resources and network will be available to these organizations to support their own development and delivery of programs.





