



Concept Design for the Japanese Garden at Peace Park, by Peter Oro

MARCH 2007



Japanese Garden Society News

The Japanese Garden Society has worked since 2003 to create a garden of unity and reconciliation honouring the Japanese Canadian pioneers of Salt Spring Island. When PARC voted in March 2006 to allow the society to design the garden for Peace Park, it launched an unprecedented year of activity.....

A year of achievement

In April, 2006, the society presented its first large-scale public event. We had music by Takeo Yamashiro and Alan Moberg. Rose Murakami and Mary Kitagawa spoke on Japanese Canadian history on Salt Spring Island. The Japanese Garden Society engaged with international students at the local high school, who made a creative display of Japanese Canadian history. The April event was very well-attended and a great success.

A complete site survey was donated by Wolfe-Milner Land Surveyors. Peace Park was carefully studied, and traffic flow, sun, soil and other features mapped. A concept design was prepared by volunteer landscape architect Peter Oro. This design was first presented to the public on Dec 30th. It is still being reviewed by various experts, community groups and committees, and we are soliciting comments from the public. So far the concept plan has been extremely well-received.

Renowned Japanese Canadian landscape architect from Vancouver,

Toshimasa Ito, is a volunteer with the project. He will come to Salt Spring Island to consult with Peter Oro on the design, and give a public talk on March 17th.

The society formed a liaison with a landscape firm in our sister city of Yamanaka in Japan, and this firm has volunteered to advise on the project.

Meanwhile, we did a lot of fundraising! The society has gathered pledges for donations of financial support, expertise, labour and material and obtained major grant funding. (See our "Thank you's" on the back!) We designed a 3-year plan and developed a vision for the garden.

The community outreach committee produced designs for T-shirts and fans and had them manufactured. A raffle was held in December, with prizes generously donated by businesses and individuals in the community

The history committee continued its research, unearthing fascinating new documents and working on the text for interpretive panels for the site.



Mearnie Summers, society president, models T-shirts and fans for sale.

We continued to publish and sell *Ganbaru* by Rose Murakami. A brochure was designed and printed. A website is under development, and this is our first newsletter!

This spurt of activity was not without its stresses and miscommunications. We hope to better integrate volunteers in the coming year. We have developed an organizational structure that should better facilitate this. Maggie Zeigler, an expert in organizational development, led the society in this work.

– Mearnie Summers