



Gresham Japanese Garden Tsuru Island



A GIFT

In the early 1970's a number of Japanese American Nisei (children born of Japanese parents) became interested in doing a project at Main City Park. Many of these families were associated with the Gresham-Trousdale Japanese American League. Kazuma (Kaz) Tamura and others, started the project we know as Tsuru Island. "Tsuru" as the Japanese name for crane.

The Tamura family migrated to this area in the early 1900's, logging off and farming the current family

where they grew vegetables and bedding plants. They raised their two children Paul and Pamela (Oja) while managing both farms until the Tamura parents passed. Kaz and Helen were involved in the Japanese-American League, the Epworth Methodist Church and the Oregon Farm Bureau.

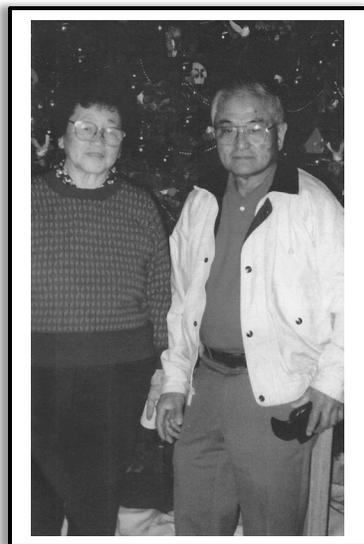
As many of you know, Tomiko was fortunate enough to obtain the original scrap book from the early 1970's garden project. This album is on display at most GESCA functions

The crane referred to here is the Red-crowned crane only found in East Asia. It is one of the rarest cranes on earth. It is also a symbol of longevity, luck and fidelity. Check out the "Dance of the Crane" on the internet.

owned farm-site. Kaz was born in Gresham in 1921 and graduated from Benson High School. He hoped to get involved in radio repair school after obtaining his ham radio certification. That all changed for Kaz and his family and other Nisei during WWII. The families were forced to leave homes and were incarcerated at the Minidoka Internment camp in Idaho. Three years later the family returned to the Gresham farm and continued their successful farming operation.

In 1944, Kaz and Helen Taniguchi were married and purchased a separate farm in Carver, Oregon,

Kaz & Helen around 1980



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Behind the Scenes

Volume 1



In 2012 we were asked to host a group of students from Barlow High school that wanted to come to the "Garden" and work for several hours. With 30 to 40 students, teachers, and teacher assistants, the work day was a great success. The "Ocean" rock in the garden got installed. All stones were hand placed and pushed down into the mud that was also prepared that day. This was a major accomplishment and was right down the alley of what I had imagined for the garden. It should be a platform for educational opportunities for the community.

In 2013 we were contacted by Jenny Halley at Gresham High School who was interested in her students coming to the garden to help out and learn. She was referred to me by one of the people from Barlow HS. With that it became a Gresham Japanese Garden partnership with Gresham High School.

Jenny is a Gresham High School special education teacher who uses the classroom time to educate students for employment and volunteering opportunities in the community. For 10 months out of the year, her students volunteer several hours per week/month at the garden. Most of the time there are 4-5 individuals who come two days a

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The Gift, cont.

and is available for private showings on request. Included in that information are pictures of the project, the landscape, the park and the surrounding areas. Kaz visited the garden in later years as shown by the Gresham Outlook. He was disappointed with the up keep and maintenance of the garden at that time. He attempted to get assistance from the City and the community to help maintain the garden without success. We are reminded of the feelings that Kaz had in those days when our volunteers visit or come to work in the garden and see trash or vandalism. Kaz and others had hoped to undertake a refurbishment of the garden in the 1980's and 1990's, but little was accomplished.

Kaz passed away after a tragic tractor accident on the farm in October of 2009 and was preceded by Helen in August 2000.

What a gift to the community. We thank Kaz and all of the original volunteers for giving us a place that we can enjoy, grow with and pass on to a future community...we are honored to be a part of restoring their vision

Volunteer t-shirts in honor of Kaz



Next month:



This is the first "Behind the Scenes" article. It will focus each month on a person or organizations that works with "Friends of Tsuru Island". Most of the projects in the garden have individuals that work behind the scenes providing a service, a product or volunteer time. We want our readers to know who they are, how we became aware of them and how they contribute to the garden. No ONE person can do what we do, it takes a network. We hope you enjoy seeing and becoming acquainted with these individuals



HELPFUL HINTS

- ◇ Keep smaller evergreens healthy by shaking them gently from time to time, to get rid of debris and spent needles held between branches.
- ◇ Have your pruning shears handy when working with your evergreens to snip away any growth missed previously. Always start at the top and work down.
- ◇ Most evergreens shed their older needles in fall. When they begin to look thin-haired, it is usually because of insects or poor trimming.
- ◇ Brown-headed cowbirds lay their eggs in other birds' nests. They have been found in nests of more than 220 other species.
- ◇ Trees do not heal like a cut finger might. They compartmentalize. Trees have a unique defense. The wood around the wound begins to produce special compounds in the wood cells that set up a wall or barrier to isolate the infected area. Once compartmentalized, discoloration and decay will spread no further unless one of the barriers

Behind the Scenes Cont.

week with a teacher's assistant. You can find them walking from the school down Main Street to and from the park, rain or shine.

They learn vital employment skills which include specific hands-on training and work duties. These duties include planting, learning plant names, weeding, sweeping / vacuuming and cleaning windows in the shoebox. For team work instruction they set up tables and chairs for events in the shoebox. Jenny includes all the students to work on the park grounds as a larger group once per month.

As the students work at the garden/shoebox they also gain employment skills that they will carry with them for the rest of their life. They work on effective communication skills, listening skills, on the job accuracy, adaptability, analyzing problems, attention to detail, how to prioritize, team work and so much more.

Jenny continues to develop this program. This program parallels other standard study requirements.

We **thank Jenny** and her staff and directors for not only the work that they do for our community each day but for something else as well. This is the first group to accomplish one of the major goals of Tsuru Island: *a platform for educational opportunities for the community!*

is broken. Keep your pruning tools clean to prevent transfer of disease.

Questions or comments go to Gresham.japanese.garden@gmail.com

Info taken from Birds & Blooms, Jerry Baker - master gardener, and James Card



Bonsai or Niwaki

One of the garden volunteers told me about a day they had been working in the garden and some visitors came through and made a comment about the aesthetically pruned pines being *bonsai*.

The question that the volunteer had for me was if the term *bonsai* really pertained to the trees that we have in the garden or are *bonsai* only in small containers.

That can be determined by the meaning of *bonsai* in Japanese. It is roughly "planted in a container". These plants can be just about anything. The owner has the opportunity to keep the plant small, contained and trained using selective pruning and shaping methods. A *bonsai* can be either indoor or outdoor plants. The outdoor plants need to go through the same changes in seasons that other outdoor trees and shrubs would. They may need to have the root system protected during a freeze and/or kept in a sheltered area from the wind.



If our trees are not *bonsai*, then they are called *Niwaki*. The Japanese word refers to the shaping and training of trees as part of Japanese customs and procedures. Sculpting trees is a very common part of gardens and the general landscape in Japan. One writer refers to it as creating the atmosphere or ambiance of the garden area. For the purposes of our discussion I will use the pine as the tree of choice. One critical likeness between *bonsai* and *Niwaki* is the effort to keep the plants miniaturized and/or controlled.

This is a learned technique through practice and understanding of how the plant presents itself. Each and every plant is different once the process has taken place. Both processes *bonsai* and *niwaki* are going to take dedication, time and above all ... patience.

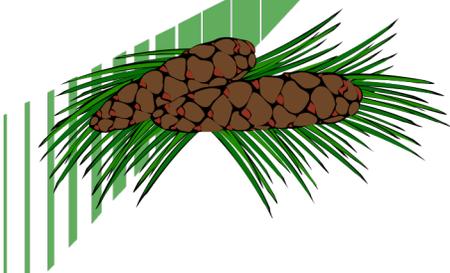
Most Japanese influenced gardens will have trees hand selected, with the specific tree and shape in mind. Some will be selected for that "framed" view from a precise place in the garden. For me the character of the tree means everything, maybe not what is seen today but rather what will be seen in several years.



Have you ever noticed that trees cared for in gardens of all types do not have the same growth patterns as those in many neighborhoods? That is because they are being pruned each year. Branches never get a chance to cross over other branches and the shape of the tree is an ongoing process. Most pines are not capable of offering new growth from the old wood, so when removing growth it will not be replaced with new growth. A clear understanding of what you want the future of the tree and/or branch to look like is a priority. Pines are trained in the *Niwaki* process through "needling", "candling" and patience for

sure. Candling is a process where the new growth pushing out is removed from the new buds that form early in the year. Waiting for the candle to fully extend and slightly harden is important. The energy that would have been put to the candle(s) growth will now be directed to the remaining candles and branches changing the shape of the tree as time passes. A variety of pines will perform differently in our Pacific Northwest area and individual micro-climates. This means that two trees in the same garden may not respond the same even with the same soils and watering habits. Most of the time one can remove the candles by snapping them off with your thumb and fingers. However, I prefer to use a fine pointed set of pruners such as the ARS 7" needle nose pruner- HP300L (sells for about \$15.00). Remember that some candles will be left different lengths to create new growth that will be in the form of forks. This allows the future vision of the tree/branch. So when thinking about the overall goal of our pruning efforts, some techniques may be to contain the growth while creating density or opening and spreading appearance to fill a space.

**1975 Kaz on Main St.
Gresham**



DUBBED THE "FATHER OF MODERN ARBORICULTURE"

One of the main characters within the world of tree research in North America was Dr. Alex Shigo, . He invented several tools that allowed him to determine the health, density and the age of the tree without removing it. He also learned and provided the knowledge to understand how trees can survive in the forest without any influence by humans. Shigo explains "People should know that trees are generating organisms, instead of re-generating organisms like human beings. Trees generate their own food from carbon dioxide, sunlight and water, while human beings must intake food from elsewhere. Therefore, tree food is a misnomer. While such supplements, like fertilizer, provide important elements, they do not provide an energy source," he says. Dr. Shigo's colleague Richard W Harris has written several books including a series called Arboriculture. Both of these men provide fascinating reading.



Photo by Buford Sommers

GRESHAM, Ore. — Gresham-Troutdale JACLers contributed over 800 man-hours to landscape a Japanese garden in honor of Issei pioneers and which was dedicated Sept. 2, 1975, at Gresham's Main Park. Designed by Sam Iwamoto, rocks lining the paths

were handpicked, boulders moved in by tractor, a Yanagi tree and azaleas planted on the island site named, "Tsuru". (Details were published in the Jan. 30 PC "Chapter Spirit". Black and white photos of other chapter projects are welcome.)