

INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT



Ornamental balcony on the Gee How Oak Tin Benevolent Association building on Seventh Avenue S.

Seattle's Chinatown/International District is located southeast of Pioneer Square, bordered by Yesler Way on the north, Fifth Avenue on the west, Dearborn Street on the south, and I-5 on the east. The historic district within this area was built largely between 1909 and 1929, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Vibrant storefronts are home to restaurants, galleries, gift shops, produce markets, herbalists and other traditional and modern establishments. Visitors may notice the contrast between the lively ground level shops and upper floors that are often vacant, a legacy of changing building codes and complex ownership histories. Buildings which once served as SRO (single room occupancy) hotels catering to immigrant laborers are slowly being restored to serve as housing for new generations of urban residents.

A closer look at this historic district reveals intriguing details of architecture and culture. Dragons perch on light posts, greeting visitors. Recessed ornamental balconies grace the upper floors of Chinese association buildings such as the Gee How Oak Tin Benevolent Association at 519 Seventh Avenue S and the Bing Kung Association at 708 S King Street. For decades, organizations such as these provided housing, a social life and a safety net for immigrants far from home.



Doorway cornices reveal the names of prosperous merchants, such as the Goon Dip Young Building (Milwaukee Hotel) at 668 S King Street. Signs painted on windows and building sides advertise long-lasting establishments such as the Luck Ngi Music Club at 512 Seventh Avenue S. A mural commemorates Filipino-American author Carlos Bulosan in the lobby of the Eastern Hotel at 506 Maynard Avenue S.

Storefronts invite browsing in this walkable neighborhood.



Lunar New Year Celebration at the Chinatown Gate.

One of the grandest buildings in the district is the Chong Wa Benevolent Association at 522 Seventh Avenue S, an important social and cultural center built in 1929. The Nihon Go Gakko at 1414 S Weller Street is the oldest operating Japanese Language School in the continental U.S. A colorful gate marks the historic western entrance of Old Chinatown, at S King Street and Fifth Avenue S. The traditional design includes upturned eaves, a dragon, a phoenix and other good luck symbols.

Community activists have fought to preserve the neighborhood's cultural and architectural heritage. In spite of freeway construction and "urban renewal" projects in the mid-20th century, much of the historic neighborhood remains intact. Community life is documented in publications such as the *International Examiner*, the *Northwest Asian Weekly*, and the *Seattle Chinese Post*, which has both English and Chinese editions.



The Wing Luke Asian Museum preserves local history, such as this c.1925 photo of an elegant party in an open-top car. Courtesy of Wing Luke Asian Museum.

The area east of I-5 around 12th Avenue S and S Jackson Street has become known as Little Saigon in recent years, as newer immigrant communities establish a presence in the district.

Night markets on summer evenings feature traditional cuisine, shopping and entertainment in an open-air setting around Hing Hay Park (see www.cidbia.org for info).

The historic Chinatown/International District neighborhood offers a remarkable urban experience for walking, shopping and dining. A detailed walking guide is available on the City of Seattle's website at www.seattle.gov/tour/HistoricDistricts/ID.pdf.

ABOUT THE CULTURAL GUIDE SERIES

Seattle Cultural Guides are a resource for visitors who want to explore the city's rich cultural heritage. The guides feature museums and historic sites, public art works, and tourist attractions that give visitors an insider's view of Seattle's ethnic communities and unique history.

Seattle is proud of its diverse ethnic and cultural heritage, and its communities continue to value traditions of language, music and dance, food, arts and crafts, and celebrations that mark seasonal cycles and commemorate special events. Visitors are invited to experience these traditions and participate in these events, and in doing so, to see more of Seattle's rich cultural dimensions.

The Cultural Guides series was created by the Cultural Tourism Program of Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau, with funding from 4Culture (King County Lodging Tax) and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. The places, events and stories featured in the Cultural Guides are preserved and shared by dozens of community organizations and small businesses. The Bureau thanks them for their work, and especially thanks the many community volunteers who reviewed and contributed to this project.

Visit Seattle Cultural Guides online at visitseattle.org/cultural for updates and printable guides, as well as additional information on featured cultural sites. This web site also offers a comprehensive searchable calendar of cultural events including museums, performances and festivals.

In Seattle, stop by the **Seattle Visitor Center** at the Washington State Convention Center, on Pike Street between 7th and 8th Avenues, for a full range of information to enhance your visit.

For information about public transit serving sites in this guide, please call 206.553.3000 or visit tripplanner.kingcounty.gov.

www.visitseattle.org/cultural



Front cover image credits, clockwise: Taiko drummer at Bon Odori, photo by Jack Storms; Foo dog guarding Temple, photo by Holly Taylor; Dancers at Chinatown parade, photo by Jack Storms; Lanterns afloat on Green Lake, photo by Harry Conrad; Cherry trees in bloom, photo by Holly Taylor; Taejon Pavilion on Beacon Hill, photo by Holly Taylor. All other images by Holly Taylor/Past Forward unless otherwise noted.

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Asian American Cultural Guide, Second Edition, 2010



SEATTLE CULTURAL GUIDES



WHAT'S INSIDE:

MUSEUMS, HERITAGE SITES, GARDENS, SPECIAL EVENTS AND MORE...

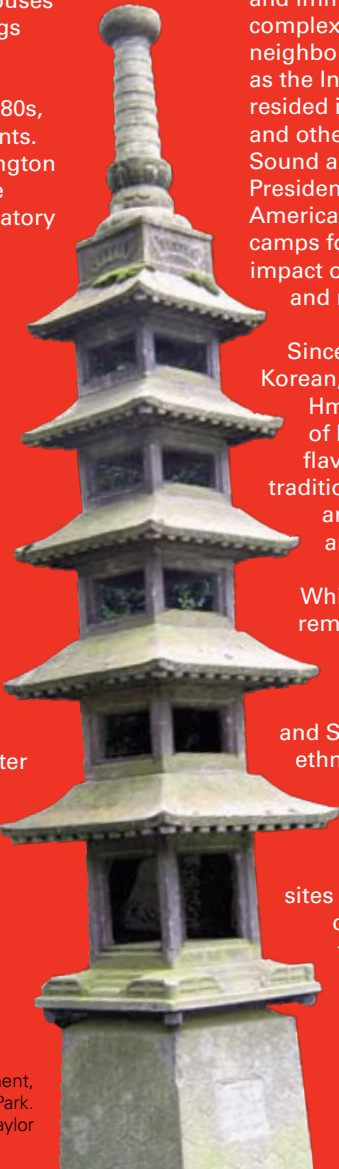
Asian Pacific Americans have played prominent roles in Seattle history from the beginning of the city's settlement. Chinese pioneers, often single men seeking economic opportunities, first arrived in the 1860s to work as laborers for railroads, mines, canneries and sawmills. A Chinese quarter was established on the waterfront, and later moved a few blocks east. Economic downturns triggered anti-Chinese violence and discriminatory laws, but the Chinese remained a vital part of the growing town. After the Seattle Fire in 1889, the center of Chinatown shifted again with the construction of new rooming houses and community association buildings east of Fifth Avenue S.



Lion dancers are traditionally accompanied by gongs, drums and firecrackers, and bring happiness and good luck to Chinese community celebrations.

Photo by Jack Storms

Japanese pioneers arrived in the 1880s, and worked as farmers and merchants. Single men often traveled to Washington Territory and sent home for "picture brides" to join them later. Discriminatory laws related to land ownership often thwarted the hard work of the Issei (first generation Japanese immigrants), although ownership was sometimes transferred to the Nisei (second generation, U.S. born children) or held in other creative ways. A distinct Nihonmachi, or Japantown, grew around S Main Street and Sixth Avenue S, north of Chinatown, which catered to urban residents and also supplied Japanese families living in rural areas.



Japanese Goodwill Monument, Mt. Baker Park. Photo: Holly Taylor

Pacific Islanders have been part of Pacific Northwest history since native Hawaiians sailed to Puget Sound with Captain Vancouver in 1792. In the early 20th century, after the Philippines became a U.S. territory, many Filipinos pursued opportunities for education and employment in Seattle.

Asian American pioneers and immigrants created a complex multi-ethnic urban neighborhood now known as the International District, and also resided in farming areas, logging camps and other communities throughout the Puget Sound area. Executive Order 9066, signed by President Roosevelt in 1942, forced Japanese Americans on the West Coast into internment camps for the duration of World War II. The impact of this policy altered urban neighborhoods and rural areas alike.

Since the 1960s, Seattle has become home to Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, Hmong and South Asian immigrants, and a fusion of Pacific Rim cultures gives our region a unique flavor and aesthetic. The influence of Asian cultural traditions can be seen everywhere in Seattle – in architecture, garden design, regional cuisine, and the arts.

While the International District remains the heart of Seattle's Asian American community, regional communities such as White Center, Bellevue, Federal Way and Shoreline boast vibrant multi-ethnic restaurants and stores. Numerous festivals and events preserve traditions, and a variety of museums and heritage sites interpret the histories and cultures of Asian Americans in the Seattle area.

International District Dragon Photo: Michael Craft Photography © 2009



Lunar New Year Celebration - January or February
Streets of Chinatown/International District.
This multi-cultural event features lively Lion and Dragon dances; taiko drumming; Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipino and Korean dance; arts and craft booths and traditional cuisine. www.cidbia.org

International District Summer Festival - Early July
Hing Hay Park, 409 Maynard Avenue S and surrounding streets.
The Northwest's largest Asian American street fair features Japanese taiko drumming, Chinese martial arts performances, Filipino dancing, Chinese Girls Drill Team, lion and dragon dance performances, arts and crafts, and an array of food booths. www.cidbia.org

Bon Odori - Mid July | *Seattle Buddhist Temple, 1427 S Main Street.*
Bon Odori is a Japanese festival that honors ancestors and celebrates traditions through costumes, music, food and street dancing. The Bon holiday, also known as Obon, is one of the most important Japanese Buddhist holidays of the year, and has been celebrated in Seattle for more than 75 years. www.seattlebetsuin.com

Pista sa Nayon - Late July | *Seward Park, 5902 Lake Washington Boulevard S.*
This "town festival" celebrates Filipino culture, history and community on the shores of Lake Washington. www.pista.org

Chinatown Seafair Parade - Late July | *Streets of Chinatown/International District.*
The parade features drill teams, marching bands, dancers, Seafair queens, Seafair pirates, and a fabulous 100-foot long Chinese dragon. www.seattlechinesechamber.org

From Hiroshima to Hope - August 6 | *Northwest Shore of Green Lake.*
A solemn and beautiful twilight ceremony marks the anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Wood and paper lanterns carrying messages of peace are created by volunteers and floated on Green Lake in honor of those who died and in the hope that nuclear weapons will never be used again. www.hiroshimatohope.org

Tea Ceremonies - Year-round | *Various locations.*
The Urasenke Foundation regularly presents traditional tea ceremonies at locations around Seattle, including the Seattle Art Museum Asian Galleries and the Seattle Japanese Garden. Ceremonies are part of the living art of Chado, or the Way of Tea, part of the artistic and spiritual traditions of Japan. www.urasenkeseattle.org

Festál - Year-round | *Seattle Center.*
Festál is a series of family-oriented community festivals throughout the year at Seattle Center. Several Asian and Asian-American festivals are part of this series of community events celebrating the people, traditions, arts, history, culture, and foods that are facets of Seattle's rich ethnic heritage. www.seattlecenter.com/festal

FESTÁL
Tet Vietnamese Lunar New Year - January or February
Seattle Cherry Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival - April
Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month - May
Northwest Folklife Festival - May
Chinese Culture and Arts Festival - May or June
Pagdiriwang Philippine Festival - June

Tibet Fest - August
Live Aloha Hawaiian Cultural Festival - September
Korean Cultural Celebration - September
Utsav South Asian Performing Arts Festival - October
Hmong New Year Celebration - November



Peace Lantern on Green Lake. Photo by Laura Morton / The Seattle Times.

Photos: Jack Storms

Hing Hay Park
423 Maynard Ave S
 This park plaza is the International District's primary public square, and features an ornate Chinese Pavilion that was a gift from the people of Taipei.

Wing Luke Asian Museum
719 S King St, 206.623.5124
 Located in the historic East Kong Yick building, the Wing Luke Asian Museum is the only pan-Asian Pacific American museum in the country. It is the first Smithsonian Institution affiliate in the Pacific Northwest, and its displays explore issues related to culture, art and history. The Museum is named in honor of Mr. Wing Luke, who joined the Seattle City Council in 1962, the first Asian American to hold elected office in the Pacific Northwest. Chinatown Discovery Tours begin at the Museum and offer guided tours of the Chinatown/International District. www.wingluke.org

Uwajimaya
600 Fifth Ave S, 206.624.6248
 In 1928, Fujimatsu Moriguchi began selling homemade fishcakes and other items from the back of his truck to Japanese laborers working in logging and fishing camps in the Puget Sound.

Uwajimaya is still a family run business, and is a feast for the senses, providing ingredients for Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese cuisine. It also offers cooking classes, a selection of restaurants and gifts in a space that fills a square block. www.uwajimaya.com

KOBO at Higo
602-608 S Jackson St, 206.381.3000
 KOBO occupies the former home of the Higo Variety Store, which was run by the Murakami family continuously for 75 years. Vintage store fixtures, antique paintings and historic exhibits complement a contemporary gallery featuring furniture, textiles, works on paper and photography. www.koboseattle.com

Panama Hotel & Tea House
605½ S Main St, 206.515.4000
 The Panama Hotel is a National Historic Landmark, and provides a unique glimpse into Seattle's Japanese American history. Built in 1910 in the center of Seattle's Nihonmachi (Japantown), the hotel operated a sento, or traditional Japanese bathhouse, in the basement. The Panama continues to operate as a hotel and tea house, and offers educational tours. Historic photographs of the neighborhood are on display, and a cut-away portion of the tea room floor offers a poignant view of items left behind by Japanese Americans who were interned during WWII and did not return to Seattle to claim their personal belongings. www.panamahotelseattle.com

Panama Hotel & Tea House



Kubota Garden
9817 - 55th Ave S, 206.684.4584
 This extensive garden in the Rainier Beach neighborhood is the work of Japanese American Fujitaro Kubota, who founded the Kubota Gardening Company in 1923 and created the garden in 1927. The garden presents Pacific Northwest plant materials in a traditional Japanese manner. This elegant landscape is now a city park, and is supported by the non-profit Kubota Garden Foundation. www.kubota.org



Seattle Asian Art Museum
1400 East Prospect St in Volunteer Park, 206.654.3100
 The elegant art deco building in the Capitol Hill neighborhood opened in 1933 as the original home of the Seattle Art Museum. The building became the domain of Asian Art in 1994 when SAM opened a new museum downtown. Today, it houses one of the nation's premier collections of Japanese, Korean and Chinese art. Japanese American sculptor Isamu Noguchi's iconic *Black Sun* is located outside the museum. www.seattleartmuseum.org

Guanyin (Avalokitesvara), 8th century, Chinese, Seattle Asian Art Museum Collection.

Although the Space Needle is the most famous monument remaining at Seattle Center from the 1962 World's Fair, there are three notable features from the Fair that are associated with Asian American heritage.

The **Kobe Bell** was given to Seattle in 1962 by its first sister city, Kobe, Japan, and is housed in a pagoda made of Japanese cypress near the Intiman Theatre. Other gifts from the people of Kobe include Japanese pine and cherry trees and a stone lantern at Kobe Terrace Park in the International District.



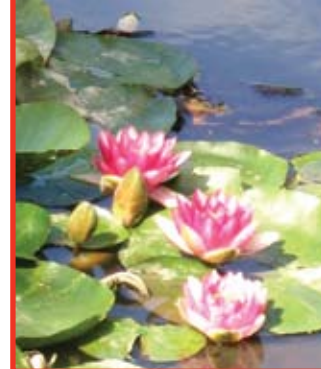
Japanese American artist **Paul Horiuchi** designed the monumental mural near the Space Needle, which gives the Mural Amphitheater its name. The mural is made from 160 shades of glass mosaic on 54 concrete slabs, and was considered to be the largest work of art in the Northwest at the time of its completion.

The **Pacific Science Center**, originally the U.S. Science Pavilion, was designed by Seattle-born Minoru Yamasaki in association with NBBJ Architects. The Pavilion features five graceful arches that rise high above reflecting pools, blending Japanese and Gothic aesthetics. Yamasaki went on to design the IBM Building and Rainier Tower in Seattle, and the ill-fated World Trade Center in New York City.



www.seattlecenter.com
 University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections Division, #UW10571.

Japanese Garden, Arboretum
1075 Lake Washington Blvd E, 206.684.4725
 Located within the Washington Park Arboretum, this 3½ acre formal garden was created in 1960 by renowned designer Juki Iida, and features hundreds of granite boulders from the Cascade Mountains placed among azaleas, flowering trees and evergreens. The garden also features stone bridges and lanterns, a traditional tea house, and a koi pond wreathed in water lilies. www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/japanesegarden.htm



Bruce Lee's Grave
Lakeview Cemetery, 1554 - 15th Ave E, 206.322.1582
 Acclaimed martial artist, actor and director Bruce Lee is buried in Lakeview Cemetery, just north of Volunteer Park. His grave, and that of his son Brandon Lee, are located east of the circular drive in the center of the cemetery, and are often visited by fans wishing to pay tribute to the kung fu legend. www.lakeviewcemeteryassociation.com/lees.php

Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI)
2700 - 24th Ave E, 206.324.1126
 MOHAI's permanent exhibit *Essential Seattle* features Asian American stories and characters from throughout the city's 150 year history. An exhibit titled *Salmon Stakes* highlights the complex relationship between Asian American cannery workers and the fishing industry. www.seattlehistory.org



Lao Spirit House, Burke Museum Collection.

Burke Museum
17th Ave NE & NE 45th St, 206.543.5590
 The Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture is located on the University of Washington campus. The museum's long term exhibit *Pacific Voices* features the arts, ceremonies and stories of Asian and Asian American cultures and communities around the Pacific Rim. www.burkemuseum.org

Peace Park
NE Pacific St & NE 40th St
 The Peace Park at the northwest corner of University Bridge near the University of Washington honors Sadako Sasaki, a young Japanese girl who survived the bombing of Hiroshima but later died from radiation sickness. The statue of Sadako is often draped with garlands of folded paper cranes which symbolize hope for peace in the world. www.seattle.gov/parks



Sadako and the Thousand Cranes sculpture was created by artist Daryl Smith. Photo by Astrid Cerny.

Pike Place Market
First Avenue & Pike Street, 206.682.7453
 Seattle's hundred year old public market has a strong connection to Asian American communities. In the early 20th century, the majority of market stalls were filled by Japanese American farmers, who supplied Seattle residents with an abundance of berries and seasonal vegetables grown on truck farms in the Green River Valley and other nearby areas. Today, many Hmong and other Southeast Asian immigrants grow and sell summer bouquets and a variety of produce. www.pikeplacemarket.org



Photo by Jack Storms

Great Wall Mall
18230 East Valley Highway, Kent 425.251.1600
 This remarkable Pan-Asian experience highlights Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai, Filipino and Taiwanese cultures. The Great Wall Mall merchants range from an expansive food market to a traditional herbalist, and serve increasingly diverse communities south of Seattle. www.greatwallmall.com

White River Valley Museum
918 H Street SE, Auburn 253.288.7433
 Exhibits highlight the Japanese American community that once flourished in South King County's rich farming areas, including a display recreating the Iseri family's farmhouse in the historic community of Thomas. www.wrvmuseum.org



Historic Japanese American dairy farm, courtesy of the White River Valley Museum

Washington State History Museum
1911 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma 888.238.4373
 Stories of Asian American pioneers and immigrants are woven into exhibits on Washington's early agriculture and industry, as well as more recent events such as the Japanese American internment during WWII. www.wshs.org

5th Avenue Theatre
1308 Fifth Ave, 206.625.1900
 Opened in 1926, the interior of the magnificent 5th Avenue Theatre incorporates design motifs from Imperial China's Forbidden City, Temple of Heavenly Peace, and Summer Palace. Frequent performances as well as free guided tours (call in advance to schedule) provide opportunities for visitors to see the theatre. www.5thavenue.org



5th Avenue Theatre. Photo: Dick Busher

Seattle Central Library
1000 Fourth Avenue, 206.386.4636
 Artist George Tsutakawa's *Fountain of Wisdom* graces the Fourth Avenue entrance of the Central Library. This abstract bronze sculpture was the artist's first fountain commission, and was created for Seattle's previous library built on the same site in 1959. Tsutakawa's artwork enhances many of Seattle's public spaces, including *Sandworm* at 5th Avenue & James Street; *Naramore Fountain* at 6th Avenue & Seneca Street; and *Heaven, Man & Earth* at Maynard Avenue S & S Jackson Street. www.spl.org

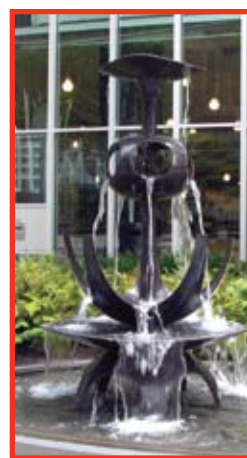


Photo courtesy of Seattle Public Library.

The Chinese Room at Smith Tower
506 Second Ave, 206.622.3131
 The Smith Tower was Seattle's first skyscraper when it opened in 1914, and remained the tallest building west of Chicago for almost 50 years. The elegant Chinese Room and open-air Observation Deck on the 35th floor offer commanding views of Seattle, the harbor and surrounding mountains. The Chinese Room is appointed with an antique hand-carved ceiling, lacquered furniture and artwork, all gifts of the last Empress of China. Opening times vary. www.chineseroom.com

Beacon Hill Parks
 The Beacon Hill neighborhood is one of Seattle's most culturally diverse, and two parks commemorate aspects of Asian American heritage and offer views of Seattle and the surrounding area.



East is West mosaic artwork by Valeriano Laigo.

Dr. José Rizal Park at 1008 - 12th Avenue S is named in honor of a hero of Philippine independence. The park features artwork by Filipino American artist Valeriano Laigo and sweeping views of downtown Seattle and Elliott Bay.

Taejon Park at 1144 Sturgis Avenue S is named in honor of Seattle's South Korean sister city. The Park features a traditional Korean pavilion and views of Mount Rainier. www.seattle.gov/parks

ATTRACTIONS MAP

- LEGEND**
- SEATTLE MAP**
- A. 5th Avenue Theatre
 - B. Bruce Lee's Grave
 - C. Burke Museum
 - D. The Chinese Room at Smith Tower
 - E. Japanese Garden, Arboretum
 - F. Kubota Garden
 - G. MOHAI
 - H. Pike Place Market
 - I. Sadako Peace Park
 - J. Seattle Asian Art Museum
 - K. Seattle Central Library
 - L. Seattle Center
 - M. Taejon Park and Dr. José Rizal Park

- INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT DETAIL**
1. Hing Hay Park
 2. Kobo at Higo
 3. Panama Hotel & Tea House
 4. Uwajimaya
 5. Wing Luke Asian Museum



FURTHER AFIELD

Yao Japanese Garden at the Bellevue Botanical Garden
12001 Main Street, Bellevue 425.452.2750
 The Yao Garden is a Northwest interpretation of a Japanese strolling garden, and was named for Bellevue's sister city in Japan. The Tateuchi Viewing Pavilion just outside the Yao Garden overlooks the Bellevue Botanical Garden's hillside plantings. www.bellevuebotanical.org

Bloedel Reserve
7571 NE Dolphin Drive, Bainbridge Island 206.842.7631
 The rock and sand Zen garden is one of the highlights of this historic garden on Bainbridge Island, less than an hour west of Seattle by ferry. A traditional Japanese garden surrounds an elegant guesthouse on this former private estate which is now open to the public. Reservations are required. www.bloedelreserve.org

Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Eagle Harbor Drive & Taylor Avenue, Bainbridge Island
 In 1942, Bainbridge Island's Japanese American residents were the first of nearly 120,000 other *Nikkei* — people of Japanese ancestry — forcibly removed from their homes and exiled from the West Coast. Their point of departure, the former Eagledale ferry landing adjacent to Pritchard Park, is being transformed into a memorial with the motto *Nidoto Nai Yoni*, "Let it not happen again." www.bijac.org

Bloedel Reserve Zen Garden photo by Richard A. Brown

