



SHINZEN FRIENDSHIP GARDEN

DOCENT SCRIPT

Before You Begin a Tour...

- Make sure you have any personal notes you might need
- The gate house will have an apron and docent tour booklet for you to use
- Remember to have fun! Not only are you improving your speaking skills, you are educating others about Shinzen Garden!

Here are some notes on how to start every tour!

Once you have your group, take them right outside the garden gate. This is the time to get to know your tour group and for them to get to know you. Introduce yourself and share a bit of information about yourself. You may even ask your visitors a few questions before you begin. These questions can include: *Who has visited the Garden before? What are you looking forward to the most on the tour?*

Look at your group! This will help you gain a lot of information on how to present the tour.

- Is it a children's group? You may want to put an emphasis on discovery, rather than information.
- Does this group need longer or more frequent breaks?
- Are they plant and garden enthusiasts?
- Are they a social or work group on an outing?

THE FRONT GATE



Key Points In This Area

- Shinzen translation
- Kochi sister city
- The mon gate

Area Script

Our name is the Shinzen Friendship garden. What does shinzen mean? It translates to friendship. So we are the Japanese Friendship Garden. The Garden was dedicated in 1981 by a delegation of 40 people from Kochi, Japan. When it was dedicated, a maple tree was planted to the right of the entrance. On the 25th anniversary of our garden, a flowering cherry was planted on the opposite left side. To this day, the garden has been open for 41 years. Let's turn our attention to the gate of the garden.

The gate was a gift from the Kochi Sister City delegation. You may ask yourself, what is a sister city? After WWII, Eisenhower created the sister city initiative. This would allow friendship and good faith to be established with that sistering city. Fresno and Kochi became sister cities in 1965 and is Fresno's longest continuous sister city. Kochi is the capital of Kochi Prefecture on Shikoku Island, which is one of 4 major islands that make up Japan.

Looking more closely at the gate, you can see some unique features. This type of gate is called a Mon style gate. This gate is constructed of wood, which was made to fit together without nails. It is left unpainted, so the beautiful wood shines through and gives it character. On this Gate, you can see that there is a Thompson grape leaf emblem in the center. This symbolizes the Garden's geographic context in the Central Valley, where the grape industry thrives.

If you look below your feet, there is a mill stone design on the walkway. This is a traditional mill that is used to grind grains. It was constructed by Kodo Matsubara.

INSIDE THE GARDEN



Key Points In This Area

- Park creation
- 4 Seasons concept
- Paul Saito

Area Script

In 1961, Ralph W. Woodward left 1.6 million dollars to be allocated to the creation of a park and bird sanctuary. In 1967, after the plans were drafted councilman J.D. Stephans proposed a 2 acre Japanese garden within this park. The city approved 2 acres and began construction with the “Woodward Park Japanese Garden Development Committee” heading the project. To this Day, the committee still exists and runs the garden.

One of the larger players in the creation of the garden is Paul Saito. He was selected in 1972 to design the Japanese Garden. He looked to Shiro Nakagawa for inspiration. Saito and Nakagawa decided on the theme of four seasons: Spring, Summer, Winter and Autumn. We will walk through each of these seasons that are represented in the garden. After planning with the City of Fresno, they got to work constructing it. One of the more problematic issues that came up was the plants and trees themselves. Our climate is different from Japan, what thrives there might not thrive here. There are several plants that were substituted for others because of this. Although some of the plants might not be the same, they were still curated to mimic those that are grown in Japan. Everything you see here is by design, ponds, streams, waterfalls and even the hills were man made to create the garden envisioned by Saito and Nakagawa. Paul Saito had served on the board of directors for many years, and to this day he still comes to volunteer

UME GROVE



Key Points In This Area

- Spring Garden
- 1992 Ume grove donation
- Torii style gates

Area Script

The Ume grove is a 1-acre addition to the original 2 acres of the garden. This is the first season represented in the garden design, which is spring. This entry way into the ume grove is a Torii-style gate. This gate is themed after a traditional Japanese gate found at entrances to a Shinto shrine. This area was also designed with wandering paths. That way, the pre-existing trees could remain standing in the garden. The trees you see around you are mostly ume trees. In 1992 the Taira family donated 80 Ume trees for this area. These trees actually grow fruit called ume plums. Not to be confused with regular plums, these are incredibly sour and bitter. They are usually eaten after being pickled in vinegar and salt. These trees represent rebirth in Japanese culture. These are to represent new growth after coming out of the winter months because of their early blooming

At this point, a good resting/viewing stop for everyone is the waiting shelter.

If you look around, you can see Japanese black and red pines, plum and cherry trees. These are often found in Japanese gardens. In Japan there are many events around the cherry blossom season because of the beautiful blooms. The cherry blossom symbolizes the ephemeral nature of life. Which means all things are impermanent and fleeting.

CAMEILLA GROVE



Key Points In This Area

- Shaman's rock with haiku
- Hide and reveal design concept
- Bird sanctuary across the lake
- The sounds of water

Area Script

The Camellia Society donated camellias and azaleas for the spring section of the Garden to showcase the plants in 1985, 1986 and 1987.

Borrowed View: Borrowed view is a garden design term used when a garden 'borrows' a view from another space. In this case, Shinzen utilizes the main lake in Woodward park to give the perception of space in the garden. As you walk along the banks of the water, there is a sense that the Garden is much larger than five acres. This feature emulates the Stroll-Pond gardens popular in the Kamakura period (1186-1334). From here, you can also see the bird sanctuary across the lake

Hide and Reveal: Hide and reveal is a concept used throughout the Garden. As you wander through the Garden, the paths wind and curve. This creates a sense of suspense to see what is around the next curve. Not only do you see new features and areas, you also are constantly changing your surrounding scenery

Topography: Topography is used to provide the garden with different perspectives. All of the water features, and hills were created in order to give someone the best viewing experience. The highest point in the garden gives the best view of the double moon bridge, lake and other features all at once.

The sound of water: The sound of water is used throughout the Garden. There is a large waterfall on the hill and another in the Ume grove. There is also a bubbling brook running through the autumn section, koi pond and main lake. The sound of water is viewed as soothing and creates a cool atmosphere for viewers of the garden.

TEA HOUSE AND GARDEN



Key Points In This Area

- Tea garden
- Tsukubai basin
- Tea house history/construction

Area Script

The tea garden was completed in 1989. It is known as *roji*, which translates to dewy ground. The planting pattern is mute and free of color, which is fairly common in Japanese landscaping. Off to the side you can see the tsukubai basin. This was used to clean your hands and face. There is also a lantern used to guide the path of the guest if the event takes place at night. This lantern and the others throughout Shinzen are not lit. They are currently being used as sculptural elements.

The tea house was dedicated on June 2, 1990. It is dedicated to the Issei generation of Japanese Americans that arrived between 1890-1910 and made a profound impact on the agriculture industry in the central valley. It is 325 square feet and has 3 rooms. These 3 rooms are the preparation room, a guests' anteroom; or a waiting area, and the main area where the host greets the guest. There is also an alcove where a seasonal scroll (*kakemono*) would be hung. Inside, the floor is made of tatami straw mats. The sides are made of *shoji* screens, which are a thin movable wall, covered by Amado doors. Tea houses like this were made to be plain and relaxing, so it can serve as an escape for richer families to decompress.

The tea house was custom made in Japan from pre-cut pieces of Japanese red cedar wood. A group from San Marino bought this tea house in Japan, took it apart for shipping and reassembled it here in Fresno in only 10 days. The tea house had a thatched roof made of zebra grass. The roof was arranged with bamboo stems that were covered in bundles. This was built up in layers and ended up becoming 18 inches thick. After that it was finished with a superstructure of bamboo to prevent leaking. It was later changed to a shingle roof because the peacocks began nesting in the thatched one.

DOUBLE MOON BRIDGE



Key Points

- Summer garden
- Double moon bridge
- Turtle island
- Koi fish

Area Script

One of the biggest features of the garden is the double moon bridge. This bridge is made of stone and is also known as a drum bridge. Light reflects off of it, it resembles a full moon. If you look to the center of the pond, you'll see a small island. Historically in the Heian period, bridges had a spiritual meaning in the Buddhist faith. Many stroll gardens had a central island as well, that represented the "Pure Land of Amida Buddha". Crossing over to the island represented the possibility for rebirth. Here you can also see the summer garden.

Inside this pond, you can see the many residents we have at the garden. These fish are called Koi fish. They are prized for their markings and a lot of people love to collect them. There are even some rare koi that breeders can sell at auctions for over hundreds of dollars. Koi symbolize luck and longevity, many have been rumored to live over 100 years. Some of these fish in our pond here are from 2001, but there are some as recent as a year ago thanks to local donations.

ROEDING PARK LANTERN



Key Points

- Autumn garden
- 1939 lantern

Area Script

The largest lantern in the garden is this lantern. In 1939 the granite lantern was given to the City of Fresno by the Young Men's Association League. It was hand-carved, originally 11 feet tall and weighed 3 tons. It once stood on Washington Island in Roeding Park and was the focal point of the Japanese garden that used to be there.

Once WWII happened, the lantern and Rodeing's garden were destroyed. The lotus bud top, and the inscription were gone from the lantern. After that, it disappeared, no one really knew where it was for several years. There were rumors on who took it, and where it was, but as one final resort, the police were tipped off about its location. At one point a helicopter went over the area, looking for the lantern in people's yards, and they managed to find it and took it back. That lantern was later placed here in the Shinzen Garden in 2001.

AUTUMN TEMBO DAI



Key Points

- Tembo dai
- Borrowed view
- Bird refuge

Area Script

At this point, is a good resting/viewing stop for everyone

As we walk towards Woodward's lake, you get a prime example of a borrowed view. You can look past the garden, to see the bird sanctuary and lake. This makes the 5 acres of the Garden feel much larger from this view.

Here is the tembo dai waiting shelter. Here, the high roof and open walls let visitors rest and enjoy a nice breeze.

BONSAI GARDEN



Note: The bonsai Garden is run by the Clark Bonsai Collection. It IS possible that it is closed while on your tour.

If The Garden is CLOSED

Area Script

This area is the Clark Bonsai Collection. Inside are several bonsai on display, almost like a living museum. Normally people tend to call it bon-sai, when the actual pronunciation is bone-sai. Bonsai trees are ornamental trees that are grown in a pot, and prevented from reaching their normal size. That means that any tree can be a bonsai. It is highly recommended that you come back when they are open, the trees inside are beautiful works of art.

If The Garden is OPEN

Area Script

This area is the Clark Bonsai Collection. Inside are several bonsai on display, almost like a living museum. Normally people tend to call it bon-sai, when the actual pronunciation is bone-sai. Bonsai trees are ornamental trees that are grown in a pot, and prevented from reaching their normal size. That means that any tree can be a bonsai. It is highly recommended that you stop inside after your tour. The trees inside are beautiful works of art.

WINTER TEMBO DAI



Key Points

- Winter Garden
- Large Waterfall
- Highest point in the garden

Area Script

As we walk to the Winter Tembo Dai, you can see the winter garden and sago palm grove. This viewing shelter was constructed in 1985. It is the highest point in the Garden and gives you an amazing panoramic view of the Moon Bridge and lake. In this area, there is a big waterfall. The sound of water here is supposed to evoke coolness and relaxation. As you have seen throughout the garden, water is a big concept in a Japanese garden. Buddhist found the natural flow of water from a mountain source, flowing down a waterfall, and eventually calming into the sea, as a metaphor for human existence. Birth, growth, death and rebirth.

AZUMAYA



Key Points

- Azumaya tembo dai
- End of tour

Area Script

This is the largest of the tembo dai in the garden. It was built in 1998. This signifies the last stop on our tour. Please take your time and maybe walk through the garden again, you might find more details that you didn't notice on our tour. Around every winding path is a new discovery. If you really enjoyed the garden, and want to become a member or volunteer, check out our website! Thank you for touring with me and now I'll let you go off for your own exploration.