

the Moongate

Winter 2007-2008



SEATTLE CHINESE GARDEN



Site Work Begins for Knowing the Spring Courtyard

On an auspiciously sunny day in October, the first turns of the earth marked the start of site preparation for the garden's first courtyard. Across the Pacific, the Chinese contractor selected by the Chongqing Parks Bureau is fabricating courtyard components such as stone work and roof tiles. In early April we will welcome 25 to 35 Chinese artisans and construction workers. See page 2 for more details.

Chinese Art and Garden Expert Named Chief Curator

Yangming Chu, a Chinese art historian with extensive expertise in Chinese gardens, joins the Seattle Chinese Garden on December 1 to manage the final design and construction of Knowing the Spring Courtyard. As chief curator, he also will work with the board and staff in the areas of strategic direction, master plan implementation, and garden operations.

In a similar position from 1997-99, Chu supervised the construction, installation, and operations of the New York Chinese Scholar's Garden at the Staten Island Botanical Garden. He then moved on to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art as a research associate from 1999-2004. There he co-authored a multivolume catalog of the museum's permanent collection of Chinese paintings and calligraphy, managed research materials, and was a liaison with Chinese scholars and officials regarding loan exhibitions and cultural programs. During an earlier stint at the museum in the mid-1990s, he coordinated with the Suzhou Chinese Classical Garden Architecture Company in the renovation of the Astor Court, a re-creation of a Ming Dynasty courtyard.

Chu has just returned from over two years in Beijing, where he was deputy director and curator of the Beijing World Art Museum. This striking *(continued on pg 2)*



Yangming Chu

*"We enter the
entire culture
of China
through the
moongate of
the garden."*

Edwin T. Morris



The Groundbreaking Team From left: Mike Craig (executive director), Jan Whitner (board member), Paige Miller (past board member), Jim Dawson (vice president), Jon Geiger (president), Jill Wakefield (president of SSSC), Evelyn Yenson (former executive director), and Melanie Blommel (general manager).



Site photo by Dewey Webster

Chan Education Center Update

Construction is nearly complete on the Judge Warren and Nobie Chan Education Center south of the Chinese Garden site. The next newsletter will feature photos and information on spring programs in our garden classroom.

Courtyard to Rise in Spring

With the traditional turns of the shovel, an informal groundbreaking on October 5 signaled the start of site preparation for Knowing the Spring Courtyard. Our local contractor, Krekow Jennings, has finished basic grading. In January and February, they will excavate the foundation, put in underground utilities, and erect cast-in-place concrete walls and steel column cores to ensure the structures meet earthquake codes.

Paul Olson of Jones and Jones Architects, Brad Detering of Krakow Jennings, and Yangming Chu, our chief curator, visited Chongqing in late October to meet with the garden designers and Chinese contractor on final design and construction plans. All three are impressed with the expertise and high quality of the contracting team selected by the Chongqing Garden Bureau.

We are eager to welcome them to Seattle in April. An early spring issue of *the Moongate* will bring you more details.

Chief Curator (from page 1)

new institution disseminates knowledge of world arts to the broad Chinese public and features works loaned from major European and American institutions.

Chu also has served as a special consultant to the Seattle Chinese Garden for the past five years, advising society leaders on garden design and assisting in negotiations with Chinese design and construction service providers, selection of craftsmen and materials, and aesthetic and construction issues.

“Yangming Chu is the perfect person to guide Knowing the Spring Courtyard to completion,” said Jon Geiger, society president. “His depth of experience and expertise will be invaluable as we move forward in all areas of garden construction, operations, and programming. We are thrilled to welcome him to Seattle.”

“It is a great honor and pleasure to participate in this great project,” Chu said. I have always admired the vision and constant effort of Seattle Chinese Garden Society members and supporters to attain their ideal.”

A native of Yangzhou, an ancient city known for its elegant gardens, Chu earned his BA in English at Sichuan International Studies University in Chongqing and began his career there at the renowned Sichuan Fine Arts Institute. He edited the art journal, planned cultural and educational exchange programs, coordinated exhibits, gave lectures, and led gallery tours. His wife, Rongxiang, is a native of Chongqing.

In 1988, graduate work drew Chu to Columbia University in New York, where he earned an MA and MPhil in art history and is completing his doctorate.

“The completion of the Knowing the Spring Courtyard and the rest of the Seattle Chinese Garden will make a unique and significant contribution to the prosperous development of Seattle’s art and cultural life,” Chu said. “It is time to make the dream come true.”

Thank You ~ 2007 Garden Supporters ~ Xie Xie

We deeply appreciate the generosity of members and community friends who supported the Seattle Chinese Garden through the Capital Fund, Annual Fund, and memberships at the ambassador level and above in 2007. And thank you once again to the many private benefactors (listed in the summer issue) who contributed to the capital fund for the Judge Nobie and Warren Chan Education Center.

Knowing the Spring Courtyard Capital Fund

\$1.2 million

Municipality of Chongqing (pledged)

\$500,000

State of Washington

\$318,000

City of Seattle (appropriated)

\$200,000

King County

\$25,000 to \$49,999

David Skinner

\$10,000 to \$24,999

Dr. Ellsworth and Nancy Alvord

Furman and Susan Moseley

Eric and Margaret Rothchild

\$5,000 to \$9,999

The Boeing Company

Catherine Roach

Hugh and Jane Ferguson Foundation

\$1,000 to \$4,999

David Buck

\$100 to \$999

Ms. John Devine

Steve M. Erickson

Annual Fund 2006

(recorded in 2007)

\$1,000 to \$9,999

David Buck

Judy Koenig in honor of Victor Wang

Richard Peterson

Swedish Health Services

\$500 to \$999

Chester Chen

\$100 to \$499

Edgar Bottler

Karen Hadman

Jermaine Magnuson

Coco McDougall

Annual Fund 2007

\$10,000 and above

Jonathan and Heidi Geiger

David Skinner

\$1,000 to \$4,999

Steve and Sherrill Elliott

\$100 to \$999

Margaret Britton

Chin Tong China Club

Carol J. Finn

Ida Culver House

Virginia Leland

Membership Gifts

\$1,000 and above

Everett and Andrea Paup

\$500 to \$999

Neal A. Broidy

Judy Koenig

Francisca Erickson

Tom and Beth Morgan

\$100 to \$499

Mr. and Mrs. Don G. Abel

Virginia Anderson

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Seattle Garden Club

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Donna Yu and Larry Sieker

President's Dinner of Appreciation for Donors

To express our gratitude to past-year donors at the \$500 level and above, Jon and Heidi Geiger opened their lovely home and garden for a reception and dinner on Sunday, August 19. More than 50 supporters and friends of the garden enjoyed drinks on the terrace, live music, a delicious dinner of Asian cuisine, and convivial company.



Photos by Victor Wang (below and top right) and Liz Hattemer.



Correction:

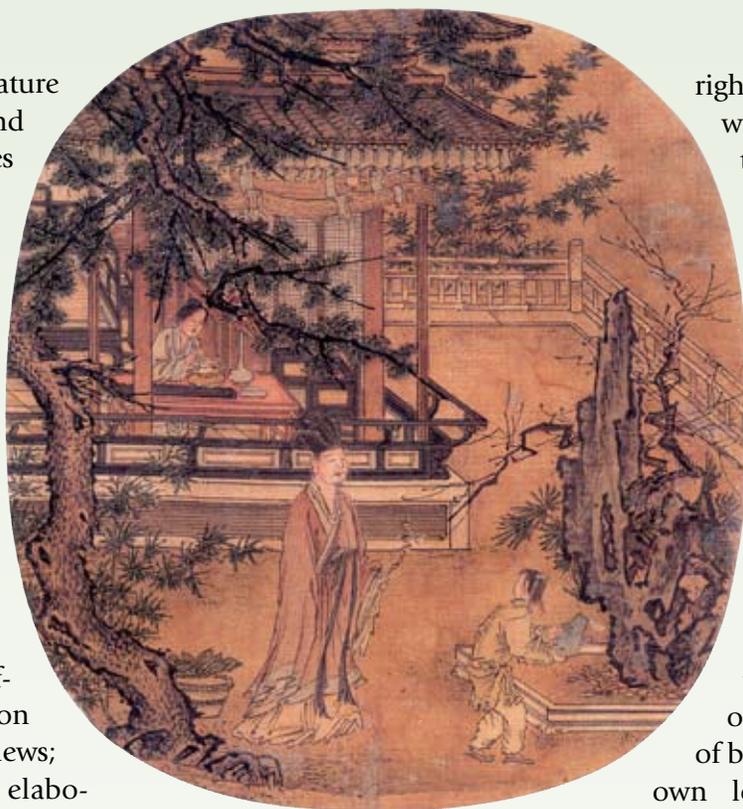
In the summer issue (vol 2:1, pg 3), the list of private benefactors for the Judge Warren and Nobie Chan Education Center placed the Wyman Youth Trust in the wrong category. The trust is at the \$20,000 to \$49,999 level.

Chinese gardens feature a larger number and wider variety of structures than any other garden type, chiefly because such gardens are designed to serve through all seasons and most weather conditions as centers for family gatherings or, in the case of public gardens, for community activities.

Among the classic Chinese garden structures are the *ting*, a small, freestanding pavilion often sited near water or on an elevated site with views; the *tang*, a larger, more elaborate pavilion or hall usually adjacent to a family's main living quarters; the *zhai*, or scholar's study, a secluded room meant for enjoying reading, artworks, and musical pursuits; and the *lang*, a covered walkway that often connects garden buildings, making all parts of the garden accessible throughout the year.

The most ubiquitous Chinese garden structure of all, however, is the courtyard. "He who possesses a Chinese courtyard possesses both by day and by night a well of light, which the seasons endlessly fill with incalculable riches," writes George N. Kates, an American who lived in a traditional hutong in 1930s Beijing.

In this passage he describes two major functions of a Chinese courtyard. One is to admit light and air into the home. For this reason, Chinese courtyards, from time immemorial, have usually faced toward the sunny south. The second function is to permit the natural world to unfold seasonal changes



right outside the door and windows, thus ensuring that nature is a part of a householder's daily experience. Kates, for instance, recorded the views in his courtyard during a spring night, when the full moon shone on tall lilac bushes heavy with scent and blooms, through a sunny winter day on which he saw "a small tree at its wintry barest, when of a sudden there was a celestial rush of wings, and a large flock of blue jays...substituted their own lovely plumage for the leaves now withered and gone."

Part of the mystery of a Chinese garden plan is that courtyards sometimes nest within each other, as if they are individual jewel boxes placed within a larger treasure chest. The Forbidden City in Beijing, for example, features intricately connected courtyards of varying sizes and shapes — visitors wandering from "room" to "room" easily get lost, as they would while attempting to wind their way through a maze. Experiencing this spatial dislocation is part of the charm of visiting a large Chinese garden. But even the smallest, stand-alone courtyard

offers visitors a sheltered space in which to enjoy a lotus floating on a pond's surface, birds scuffling in ground-covers, chirping crickets, clouds massing and dispersing high above the surrounding walls, and bamboo rippling in the wind. If a Chinese garden is a miniature world, then a courtyard functions as the center of that delightful world.

Center of the Garden World

He who possesses a
Chinese courtyard possesses
both by day and by night a well of light,
which the seasons endlessly fill
with incalculable riches.

President's Message

Jon Geiger



We've had a wonderful year for our Seattle Chinese Garden Society and I extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you. Through the combined efforts of our members, board, and staff, and our volunteers, docents, and many generous donors and friends, we have made great strides this year. The garden is under construction at last!

Among notable achievements is the imminent opening of The Judge Warren and Nobie Chan Education Center, complete with our own dedicated classroom for programs and activities and a spacious reception room with a garden "discovery center." We hope you will have the opportunity to visit the Chan Center and participate in a program in 2008. Members and friends will receive announcements by email or flyer.

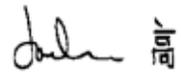
We are excited that ground has been cleared and leveled for Knowing the Spring Courtyard, and we eagerly look forward to welcoming the Chinese construction team in April. Equally exciting was the December 1 arrival of Yangming Chu, our highly regarded chief curator and project manager. He is on staff full time to supervise construction of the courtyard and further build our educational programs.

Donor recognition is an important focus of attention. Many donors at the \$500 level and above enjoyed the annual president's thank you dinner in August. It has been my pleasure to become better acquainted with so many of you.

I am pleased to report that we have raised over \$2.3 million of the \$3.7 million required to complete Knowing the Spring Courtyard. Just as this issue went to press we received word that the 2008 Seattle city budget includes \$318,000 for the capital fund. Our city leaders recognize the great cultural and educational value of the garden.

We still have a ways to go to complete funding for Knowing the Spring Courtyard. Your support at this time is important and will help see us through to the laying of the last paving stones and placement of the final roof tiles. Please take a few minutes to make a contribution today. We deeply appreciate your gift, large or small, and promise to recognize your support in an appropriate fashion.

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you at Garden Society events and at the opening of Knowing the Spring Courtyard next summer!



A birds-eye view from Song Mei Pavilion on a fine autumn day.

Board of Directors Elects Two New Members

Margaret Britton has extensive experience in China as she worked for 20 years with Seattle-based PATH (Program for Appropriate Technology in Health) to improve the health of women and children throughout China and South Asia. She managed projects in more than 20 sites in China to improve the quality and safety of reproductive health products and served as PATH's chief liaison with national, local, and provincial representatives. She also has served on the Washington State China Relations Council board and held various local and regional volunteer positions with the U.S. China People's Friendship Association. A native of North Carolina, Margaret earned a BA in biology and an MS in public health at the University of North Carolina.

Sandy Marvinney is a long-time docent and volunteer with the Garden Society and edits the newsletter. She became active through her affiliation with the Seattle-Chongqing Sister City Association, which she served as president from 1990–2000, and now as vice president. She has organized several delegations to China and programs for visiting Chongqing officials, professionals, and students. Sandy is a senior communications specialist in the Office of Development and External Relations at the University of Washington College of Engineering. She also serves on the boards of the Washington State China Relations Council and the Seattle International Children's Festival, and the advisory council of the Trade Development Alliance of Greater Seattle. Sandy is a native New Yorker and earned a BA in nonwestern history at Middlebury College.



Docent Margaret Rothchild shares information with visitors attending the final second-Saturday program on October 13.

Docents Conclude Busy Year of Programs and Site Tours

Visitors from all over the Puget Sound region, from Portland, and even from as far away as Italy, dropped in on the monthly Saturday docent tours from March through October. They enjoyed a slide presentation on the historical and cultural significance of Chinese gardens, a walk through the SSCC arboretum, and a visit to the garden site and Song Mei Pavilion. In addition to the regular tours, docents also led numerous special programs for civic clubs, senior centers, and educational groups. Thank you to docent program coordinator Judy Koenig and docents Sandy Marvinney, Susie Parrent, Deborah Prince, Margaret Rothchild, Lorraine Toly, Dewey Webster, and Jan Whitner for introducing hundreds of visitors to the vision for our garden.

SEATTLE CHINESE GARDEN

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