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Courtyard dedicated Sunday for developing Seattle Chinese Garden

About 200 people gathered Sunday afternoon to watch martial-arts demonstrations and lion dances, part of an open-house celebration of Seattle Chinese Garden's first major completed structure.

By Brittney Wong Seattle Times staff reporter

David Leong struck a large, black drum with sticks like rolling pins. Accompanied by a cymbal and a gong, he etched out a beat for dancers embodying five Chinese lion costumes, their bright colors vivid against the overcast sky.

The boisterous clanging is meant to scare away any negative energy and to promote good luck for the open-house celebration of Knowing the Spring Courtyard, the first major structure built for the developing Seattle Chinese Garden.

About 200 people gathered Sunday afternoon to watch the dedication and performances in the courtyard, part of the 4.6-acre garden adjacent to South Seattle Community College.

Some \$8 million has been raised for the garden so far, said Stella Chien, who has been involved with the 25-year-old project since 1988. Seattle and its Chinese sister city, Chongqing, came up with the idea to foster the relationship between the two cities.

"This garden represents a physical reminder of the people in China every day in Seattle," said Gregg Rodgers, chair of the Washington State China Relations Council. "We're reminded that there are great similarities among the people. It's not just businesses or governments, it's the people."

Chien hopes the rest of the garden will be finished within five years. She said the courtyard, which workers completed in February, is approximately one-eighth of the entire project.

Along with the lion dance, the day's events included martial-arts presentations and calligraphy demonstrations. Though Chinese artisans completed the courtyard months ago, the Seattle Chinese Garden Society, the nonprofit group responsible for creation of the garden, wanted to celebrate in the spring.

"All the plants we planted inside the courtyard are early-spring plants, telling you that spring is here," Chien said.

Workers will probably build the Floating Cloud Pavilion



COURTNEY BLETHEN RIFFKIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Oey Chang, 14, was part of a martial-arts demonstration at an open-house celebration Sunday of Seattle Chinese Garden's first major completed structure, the Knowing the Spring Courtyard.

Visit the garden

Hours: The garden is open Wednesdays through Sundays at noon. Until March 31, the garden closes at 4:30 p.m. From April 1 to June 15, the garden is open from noon to 5:30 p.m. The hours are extended to 7 p.m. in the summer.

Admission: Admission is free to Seattle residents, Seattle Chinese Garden members and children under 5. Otherwise: adults \$6, seniors 62+ \$5, students \$5. Please visit the Discovery Center to enter the garden and to pick up a self-guided tour pamphlet.

Source: www.seattlechinesegarden.org

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next, a four-story tower visible from far away, said Jim Dawson, founding president of the Seattle Chinese Garden Society.

"The central axis of the garden lines up the Floating Cloud Pavilion and the Space Needle, as a representation of the strong connection between the two cities," he said, referring to Seattle and Chongqing.

When Dawson visited China in the mid-'80s, he saw the passion and energy that would make China the economic cont where people f consider all the

"There's a lot of lion dance. "But that peaceful e

Brittney Wong

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