

## ***Fabyan Japanese Garden self-guided tour***

Welcome to the Fabyan Japanese Garden. This information was compiled to aid in your enjoyment of this tranquil space by explaining the significance of the major elements in this garden.

This garden has a designated pathway for visitors. After signing in, please begin your visit by taking the path to your left. Directly ahead is the Waiting Bench Chamber. Here you may sit and read the introductory information. The major elements are described below the introduction in order of their occurrence along the path.



The Fabyan Japanese Garden was designed c. 1910 by Taro Otsuka, a well-known landscape designer. We believe the Fabyans commissioned a Japanese garden as a result of their interest in Japanese culture and their love of nature. Japanese Gardens were also fashionable amongst the wealthy of the era. Otsuka designed Japanese gardens for many well-known industrialists in the U.S.

The original Japanese Garden was much more open than what you experience today. What you see now is the natural growth of the original design, some volunteer trees and plants brought into the garden by wind, animals, and even foot traffic, and subsequent restorations in the 1970s and 1990s.

Japanese garden design strives to capture the essence of nature in miniature, and embody a natural representation of timelessness. The art of garden design developed in Japan from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, when formal gardening was imported from China. It has evolved into a unique style with the influence of the Japanese indigenous religion, Shinto, which held that mountains, hills, trees, and stones house divine spirits. Over time types of gardens developed; primarily viewing gardens, hill and pond gardens for strolling and boating, dry stone gardens resulting from the strong influence of Zen Buddhism, and tea gardens designed to enhance the tea ceremony. The Fabyan Japanese Garden was designed as a combination type, and originally had some non-traditional elements as well, such as a gazing ball, tulips, and small animal sculptures. The current Japanese Garden melds the historic garden with easily maintained plantings, to achieve the sense of harmony and tranquility essential to Japanese Gardens.

### **Major Elements in the Fabyan Japanese Garden**

#### Torii Gate



This wooden gateway, where most visitors enter the garden, typically signifies a Shinto Shrine. Shinto, the indigenous religion of Japan, reveres nature, believing that gods reside in trees, rocks, water, and mountains. No shrine was found in this garden but it's possible that the Fabyans considered the entire garden to be a shrine to nature.

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### Dewy Path ~ Roji



Also known as the Path to Enlightenment. Roji is the path through a garden leading to a teahouse. The path in Japanese gardens curves and turns back, giving different perspectives of garden areas. The speed and cadence of movement through a garden is determined by the design of the path. The placement of the path determines how a garden will be revealed. The design of the path surface itself also influences the experience. The material of which a path is made adds the dimension of sound to the garden. It is a journey, with challenge and reward.

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### Waiting Bench Chamber ~ Machiai

This is part of the Tea Garden and is where you would begin your journey to enlightenment. Tea ceremony guests traditionally wait here to release worldly cares and wait for the host to lead them to the inner garden and Tea House. This is a good place to spend several moments taking in the beauty and serenity. The Weeping Spruce directly in front of the Waiting Bench Chamber is original to the Garden, as is the large Ginkgo tree to the left of it. Weeping Spruce trees are believed to grow more beautiful and interesting with age, which Japanese culture also holds true for people. Ginkgo trees are indigenous to Asia and are one of the oldest deciduous trees. You will also note that the Waiting Bench Chamber has a square window to your left and a round window to your right. This is reversed and repeated in the Tea House. The windows serve to frame a vista of small sections of the garden; the use of different shapes provides added interest.

When you are ready to leave the waiting bench chamber please continue on the path to your left. Notice the lantern along the path, donated by the Geneva Garden Club. This lantern and its placement are based on historic photographs of the original garden.

### Mt.Sumeru or Shumisen



These two small hills joined by a bridge represent Mt. Sumeru, the center of Buddhist universe. Before you begin your climb, note the footings where a gateway once stood. The date of 1922 was inscribed in the concrete. The presence of a gate here signals that visitors are about to pass into the Inner Garden.

Opposite the gate footings is the North Gate. In Japanese Garden design dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, gates that mark the four ordinal points represent the four guardian gods, or Shijin. The gods take their form and color from nature: the Black Tortoise of the North, the Blue Dragon of the East, Scarlet Bird of the South and White Tiger of the West.

After you climb the boulder “steps” and cross the bridge on “Mt. Sumeru”, notice the view at the top of the bridge. Originally a dry stream ran under this bridge. The steep path is intended to challenge your spirit and strengthen you in preparation for the Tea Ceremony.

### Inner Garden



After you descend from the bridge you walk over a concrete slab bridge. You may be able to see remnants of the inscription which states in Japanese “Colonel Fabyan’s private park”. This type of bridge is intended to give the visitor a place to pause and absorb the view. The pair of bronze replica Crane statues to the right were donated in 2003 by Friends of Fabyan. The original crane statues were cement, and located by the main lantern.

The stream which flows from the pond at this point added the important element of running water; experienced by sound as well as sight.

### Tea House

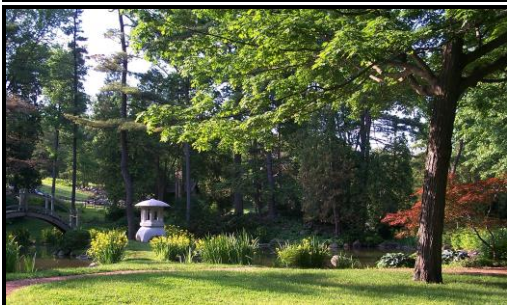


The Tea House is located in an area separated from the rest of the garden by the stream. The bridge and stream denotes an area more sacred than where you have been so far. Next to the Tea House (left side) is an octagonal cement stone that held the ritual handwashing basin, used to wash your face and hands or even drink a little, to help cleanse your spirit symbolically in preparation for the Tea Ceremony. The faint inscription on the basin reads in Japanese “Fabyan”. The last two letters also represent “little tea house”.

The porch across the front of the Tea House is for viewing the moon. The flat stone in front of the porch is for removing your shoes before entering the Tea House. The Fabyan Tea House is not authentic’ as it doesn’t have a separate entrance for the Tea Master or a separate room for preparing food and tea.

After crossing the stream again follow the path past the East Gate. Notice the many “photo spots” in this part of the garden where you can see the bridge, lantern and pond.

### East Garden/Wedding Circle



You will approach a large circle that was added for weddings that are frequently held in the Garden on Saturdays. Most ceremonies take place on or near the curved bridge at the end of the peninsula. This is the Moon Bridge, a typical element in Japanese Gardens, so named because the bridge and its reflection in the pond form a circle, a symbol of unity and eternity. You may cross the Moon Bridge, but please be careful.

The Original Lantern at the end of the peninsula dates to the earliest period of the Garden and was electrified during the Fabyan era. The light openings were originally covered with wood-framed rice paper screens.

### South Garden



As you continue on the path past the South Gate, you will notice a second Weeping Spruce, also original to the garden. There are also Japanese Black Pines and White Pines in this area, some of which are believed to be part of the original design. Incorporated in the south fence line is the back of the drinking fountain rock grotto.

### Pond Stairway



The steps leading down to the pond serve to provide a closer view of the pond and perhaps of the fish that inhabit it. Opposite the steps is a replica Mt. Fuji. It is capped with cement to represent the snow that perpetually tops the actual Mt. Fuji, the highest point in Japan.

As you exit the garden, you will notice the second lantern donated by the Geneva Garden club. This replica is also based on photographs of an original in the garden.

If you have any questions, please ask the guide on duty.  
We hope you have enjoyed your time in the Fabyan Japanese Garden.



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