

November 9, 1998

Nancy Swearengen
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Dear Nancy,

We very much enjoyed meeting with you and Elaine Sedlack at the Japanese Garden at Berkeley and at our follow-up meeting. Sylvia joins me in appreciation of your interest.

You raise some interesting questions about the Botanical Garden's Japanese Pool which I will answer in sequence as completely as I can.

Is it true that the rock work was a part of the Japanese exhibit at the 1939 World's Fair on Treasure Island?

The rock work was a part of the exhibit at the 1939 World's Fair on Treasure Island. The stones were imported from Japan for the World's Fair garden., then given to the Garden At Berkeley. As I recall, I arranged for that. In addition, rocks were obtained on the grounds of the Botanical Garden itself.

These were not remounted in the original design, because that design came from Japan and was specific for the needs of the World's Fair. The designer in Japan was a fellow hired by the Japan Group to design the garden.

How did the University of California come to acquire it? Was Kan involved in the original design?

I don't recall exactly how I first became involved in this, but I did make the arrangements for use of the rock, and I recall transportation arrangements, including fundraising to pay for the transportation costs.

Kan was not involved in the original design-as I indicated a designer was hired from Japan to do this, but he did work on the installation at the World's Fair, and was still at Berkeley. This enabled him to connect Berkeley's needs with the available rocks when the Fair closed.

Is the Botanical Garden installation significantly different from the World's Fair exhibit?

Yes, I think it is different. It wasn't a copy of the one at the World's Fair. The contour of the land was different, and I did a design to follow and enhance the contour of the area.

If the rocks were not a part of the World's Fair, how did they come to the Botanical Garden? Legend has it they came from Japan.

It is true that the rocks for the World's Fair came from Japan. In addition, we added to the rocks, where necessary, appropriate specimens found in the

Botanical Garden. The rocks sent from the World's Fair to the Botanical Gardens definitely came from Japan.

Legend also has it that there were originally three lanterns instead of just one. Do you remember how many there were?

There were originally three lanterns in the garden at Berkeley. I recall that when we visited the garden several years ago, I noted that only one was left.

How did Kan get involved with the project?

Kan does not recall precisely, but putting the pieces together, it does seem that he made the connection between the natural conformation of Strawberry Canyon, appropriate for a Japanese waterfall, and the reuse of the stones brought from Japan for the World's Fair, which he knew from his work there.

How did the rocks get from Treasure Island to Strawberry Canyon?

As I have said, the stones were trucked to the park, and there was fundraising to pay for part of these costs.

Did the pool already exist or did the pool happen because of the rocks?

The stones from Treasure Island were used to fill parts of the Berkeley Botanical Garden, particularly the waterfall. The definition of the waterfall and Japanese identity was strongly established by these rocks.

Do you remember any particular challenges or amusing incidents that occurred during the project?

No, I don't remember anything. If we could only get together a group of the same guys, maybe we would remember.

When did the project happen? Right after the World's Fair, or after WWII?

All this happened right after the World's Fair and was good way to extend, in effect, the life of the rocks in a new, continuing role.

My experience with you and your group, the visit to the garden, and talk helped bring back memories of helping in the construction.

I hope to visit the garden with you again.

Sincerely yours,

Kaneji Domoto and Sylvia Schur Domoto