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HEARING DATE:	**December 6, 2017**
CASE NUMBERS:	**2014.1050L – 1610 Geary Boulevard**
TO:	**Historic Preservation Commission**
FROM:	**Desiree Smith** **Preservation Planner, 415-575-9093**
REVIEWED BY:	**Tim Frye** **Historic Preservation Officer, 415-575-6822**
RE:	**Landmark Recommendation Resolution**

On June 21, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) adopted Resolution No. 876 to initiate Article 10 landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza at 1610 Geary Boulevard. Under Article 10, initiation and recommendation are two distinct steps of the landmark designation process which require separate hearings and resolutions.

The following summarizes activities that have transpired since landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza was initiated:

- On August 16, the HPC considered a motion to recommend approval of landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza to the Board of Supervisors. At that time, the HPC voted to continue the agenda item to its September 20th meeting after learning that Board President London Breed (District 5) was concerned that landmark designation might negatively impact planned remediation and renovation work for the plaza.

- On September 14, HPC President Andrew Wolfram and Department staff met with President Breed's office and representatives from the Recreation and Parks Department to discuss how landmark designation would or would not affect future work at Peace Plaza.

- On September 20, at the request of Supervisor Breed, the HPC voted to continue the Recommendation hearing for Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza a second time, to December 6. The continuance was requested by Supervisor Breed so as to allow time for her office, along with staff of the Planning Department and the Recreation and Parks Department, to meet with representatives of the Japantown Task Force to further discuss how landmark designation might affect plaza remediation.

- On September 26, staff attended a meeting with the Peace Plaza Ad Hoc Committee of the Japantown Task Force along with staff from Supervisor Breed's office and the Recreation and Parks Department. As a result of that meeting,

Department staff provided the Supervisor's office and the Japantown Task Force with a revised draft landmark designation ordinance for the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza that would have exempted certain scopes of work from requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness. The scope of work proposed for exemption included work to address waterproofing, accessibility, and failed paving material – all known problem areas affecting the plaza.

- On November 8, the Department received a letter from the Japantown Task Force requesting to delay landmark designation of the Peace Plaza, but to move forward with designation of the Peace Pagoda at this time.

Attached is an updated Landmark Designation Report for the Peace Pagoda, which retains the historic contexts for the Peace Plaza, but no longer contains a discussion of the Peace Plaza in the section entitled, "Article 10 Landmark Designation" (beginning on page 69). Separately, the Landmark Designation Report (dated December 6, 2017) was revised to include a new section on the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival, additional in-text quotes from long-standing Japantown residents, and transcripts of three oral interviews conducted with Judy Hamaguchi, Richard Hashimoto, and Robert Sakai.

Also attached is a revised ordinance and draft Resolution to recommend approval of Article 10 landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard, to the Board of Supervisors. The ordinance and resolution have been revised to omit the Peace Plaza from landmark designation. The Planning Department recommends adopting this Resolution.

ATTACHMENTS:
Draft Resolution
Draft Designation Ordinance
Draft Landmark Designation Report
June 21, 2017 Case Report
Resolution 876
Letter from Japantown Task Force dated November 8, 2017

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Historic Preservation Commission
Draft Resolution No. XXX

HEARING DATE DECEMBER 6, 2017

RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF THE PEACE PAGODA AT 1610 GEARY BOULEVARD, , ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO. 0700, LOT 023.

1. WHEREAS, on September 18, 2013, the Historic Preservation Commission added the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza at 1610 Geary Boulevard to its Landmark Designation Work Program; and

2. WHEREAS, Planning Department Preservation staff meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards prepared the Landmark Designation Report for the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza at 1610 Geary Boulevard, which was reviewed by Planning Department Preservation Coordinator, Tim Frye, for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and

3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of June 21, 2017, reviewed Department staff's analysis of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza at 1610 Geary Boulevard's historical significance pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated June 21, 2017 and initiated landmark designation through Resolution No. 876; and

4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the Landmark Designation Case Report for the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza dated June 21, 2017 is in the form prescribed by the Historic Preservation Commission and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and

5. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission determined that, due to public comments provided after Resolution No. 876 was adopted, landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, but not the Peace Plaza surrounding the Peace Pagoda, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 022, is appropriate at this time; and

6. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard conveys its significant architectural qualities as the work of a master architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi, while employing a Modernist style based on traditional Japanese forms; and

7. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard conveys its historical significance for its association with the redevelopment of

Japantown, serving as a visual landmark and embodiment of the community's identity and perseverance in the face of adversity;

8. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard meets the eligibility requirements of Section 1004 of the Planning Code and warrants consideration for Article 10 landmark designation; and

9. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of character-defining features of the Peace Pagoda, as identified in the Landmark Designation Report, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the property's historical significance and retain historical integrity; and

10. WHEREAS, the proposed designation is consistent with the General Plan priority policies pursuant to Planning Code section 101.1 and furthers Priority Policy No. 7, which states that historic structures be preserved, for reasons set forth in the June 21, 2017 Landmark Designation Case Report; and

11. WHEREAS, the Planning Department has determined that landmark designation is exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical); and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby recommends to the Board of Supervisors approval of the landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard, Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023 pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on December 6, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ADOPTED: December 6, 2017

[Planning Code - Landmark Designation of Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard]

Ordinance amending the Planning Code to designate the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, as a Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and making public necessity, convenience, and welfare findings under Planning Code, Section 302, and findings of consistency with the General Plan and the eight priority policies of Planning Code, Section 101.1.

NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
Additions to Codes are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.
Deletions to Codes are in ~~*strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*~~.
Board amendment additions are in double-underlined Arial font.
Board amendment deletions are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
Asterisks (* * * *) indicate the omission of unchanged Code subsections or parts of tables.

Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

Section 1. Findings.

(a) CEQA and Land Use Findings.

(1) The Planning Department has determined that the proposed landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, is subject to a Categorical Exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code sections 21000 et seq., "CEQA") pursuant to Section 15308 of the Guidelines for Implementation of the statute for actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment (in this case, landmark designation). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____, and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board of Supervisors affirms this determination.

(2) Pursuant to Planning Code Section 302, the Board of Supervisors finds that the proposed landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in

Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, will serve the public necessity, convenience, and welfare for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. _____, recommending approval of the proposed designation, which is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____, and is incorporated herein by reference.

(3) The Board of Supervisors finds that the proposed landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, is consistent with the San Francisco General Plan and with Planning Code Section 101.1(b) for the reasons set forth in Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. _____.

(b) General Findings.

(1) Pursuant to Section 4.135 of the City Charter, the Historic Preservation Commission has authority "to recommend approval, disapproval, or modification of landmark designations and historic district designations under the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors."

(2) On September 18, 2013, the Historic Preservation Commission added the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lots 022 and 023, to the Landmark Designation Work Program.

(3) The Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza Designation report was prepared by Planning Department Preservation staff. All preparers meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards, and Planning Department Preservation staff reviewed the report for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10 of the Planning Code.

(4) The Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of June 21, 2017, reviewed Planning Department Preservation staff's analysis of the historical significance of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel No.

0700, Lots 022 and 023, pursuant to Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated June 21, 2017.

(5) On June 21, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission passed Resolution No. 876, initiating designation of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lots 022 and 023, as a San Francisco Landmark pursuant to Section 1004.1 of the Planning Code. Said resolution is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. _____ and is incorporated herein by reference.

(6) Subsequently, in response to public comments provided after Resolution No, 876 was adopted, Planning Department Preservation staff determined that landmarking of the Peace Pagoda, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, but not the Peace Plaza surrounding the Peace Pagoda, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 022, is appropriate at this time.

(7) On December 6, 2017, after holding a public hearing on the proposed landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, and having considered the specialized analyses prepared by Planning Department Preservation staff and the revised Landmark Designation Case Report, dated December 6, 2017, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended approval of the proposed landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, in Resolution No. _____.

(8) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, has a special character and special historical, architectural, and aesthetic interest and value, and that its designation as a Landmark will further the purposes of and conform to the standards set forth in Article 10 of the Planning Code.

Section 2. Designation.

Pursuant to Section 1004 of the Planning Code, the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, is hereby designated as a San Francisco Landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code.

Section 3. Required Data.

(a) The description, location, and boundary of the Landmark site consists of Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, located at 1610 Geary Boulevard in San Francisco's Japantown neighborhood.

(b) The characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation are described and shown in the Landmark Designation Case Report and other supporting materials contained in Planning Department Case Docket No.2014.1050L. In brief, the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard, in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, is eligible for local designation under National Register of Historic Places Criterion A (as it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history) and National Register of Historic Places Criterion C (as it embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction and represents the work of a master architect). Specifically, designation of the Peace Pagoda at 1610 Geary Boulevard in Assessor's Parcel No. 0700, Lot 023, is proper given its association with the redevelopment of Japantown in the 1950s through 1970s, the social history of the neighborhood, and as an architecturally significant work of master architect Yoshiro Taniguchi. The Peace Pagoda is one of the most prominent extant structures that serves as a visual landmark and embodiment of the community's identity and perseverance in the face of adversity.

(c) The particular features that shall be preserved, or replaced in-kind as determined necessary, are those shown in photographs and described in the Landmark Designation Case

Report, which can be found in Planning Department Docket No. 2014.1050L, and which is incorporated in this designation by reference as though fully set forth herein. Specifically, the following features shall be preserved or replaced in-kind: The entirety of the Peace Pagoda, identified as:

(1) A central core of reinforced concrete piers;

(2) Rounded roofs clad with copper plates;

(3) A nine-ringed bronze spire, or "kurin," surmounted by a golden flaming head, or "hoshu," topped with a ball finial;

(4) Bronze dedication plaques in English and Japanese (but not their current location); and

(5) The podium platform, including only a single perimeter step.

Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

By: _____
VICTORIA WONG
Deputy City Attorney

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DRAFT

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

Peace Pagoda

Peace Plaza, Japantown

Draft Article 10 Landmark Designation Report submitted to the Historic Preservation Commission, December 6, 2017

City and County of San Francisco
Edwin M. Lee, Mayor

Planning Department
John Rahaim, Director

Landmark No.
XXX

Cover: Peace Pagoda, 2013.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a seven-member body that makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding the designation of landmark buildings and districts. The regulations governing landmarks and landmark districts are found in Article 10 of the Planning Code. The HPC is staffed by the San Francisco Planning Department.

This Draft Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the initiation and designation process. Only language contained within the Article 10 designation ordinance, adopted by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, should be regarded as final.

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Peace Pagoda
Japantown

Built: 1968
Architect: Yoshiro Taniguchi

OVERVIEW

The Peace Pagoda is located in what was historically the heart of San Francisco's *Nihonjinmachi*, or "Japanese people's town." Japanese residents began moving to this area of the Western Addition soon after the 1906 Earthquake, and by the 1920s had established a thriving and self-contained community. By 1940, Japantown embraced more than a dozen blocks and was home to more than 200 businesses owned by Japanese Americans. At the outbreak of World War II, however, all persons of Japanese ancestry in the neighborhood were forcibly removed and sent to concentration camps.[1] Their former homes were soon occupied by thousands of newly-arrived war workers, most of whom were African American.

Following the war, many Japanese returned to the Western Addition and worked to reestablish themselves within the neighborhood. The area's aging building stock and multi-racial, multi-ethnic demographics, however, led some civic leaders to characterize the area as "blighted." This opened the door to the federally-funded Western Addition Redevelopment projects A-1 and A-2, administered by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. Though vigorously opposed by many leaders of the African American and Japanese American communities in the Western Addition, these projects would eventually demolish dozens of blocks and displace thousands of residents.

The Peace Pagoda and its setting, Peace Plaza, are products of Western Addition Redevelopment Area 1, which demolished the core of historic Japantown. In its place was constructed the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center, a bi-national corporately-funded endeavor largely tenanted by prominent Japanese companies. The Peace Pagoda was deliberately placed at the center of the development, but unlike other elements of the project, its construction was funded through donations drawn largely from San Francisco's sister-city, Osaka Japan. It was given to San Francisco as a symbol of friendship and peace between Japan and the United States.

From the beginning, Peace Plaza and the Peace Pagoda have served as focal points for an array of community cultural events, most notably the Cherry Blossom Festival and Nihonmachi Street Fair. Thus, although their construction was intimately associated with the bitterness of redevelopment, the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza have in many ways transcended their origin and today serve as the most emblematic features of Japantown. In particular, the Peace Pagoda is an iconic visual landmark, and in no small measure can be viewed as a physical manifestation of the community's identity and perseverance. It is a remarkable duality—that the signature element of the neighborhood's redevelopment has been reclaimed by the community as a place to bear witness to both its past and future.

Part of this embrace may spring from the refined aesthetic qualities of the Peace Pagoda, which is an architecturally significant work by Japanese master architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi. Its design is based on a pagoda form developed during the 8th century during a period of artistic blossoming in Japan. Taniguchi deliberately chose this design because of its associations with an act of Buddhist piety by the Japanese Empress Koken, and by proxy its associations with prayer and peace. Yet, despite the ancient origin of its form, the design of the Peace Pagoda is also decidedly Modern; it is a pagoda born of reinforced concrete and advanced engineering techniques. Thus, the Pagoda also has a dual nature that combines history and modernity in a way that mirrors the identity of Japantown itself.

[1] The terms "incarceration camp," or "concentration camp," are preferred by the Japanese community rather than "internment camp."

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Peace Pagoda

The Peace Pagoda (APN 0700/023) is a reinforced concrete structure, approximately five stories in height and one hundred feet tall. It is located in the southwest quadrant of Peace Plaza (APN 0700/022), a 160' x 197' public park at the center of the block bounded by Laguna Street, Webster Street, Post Street and Geary Boulevard. The plaza is flanked by buildings constructed as part of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center development.

Designed in a Modernist interpretation of a traditional Japanese pagoda form, the circular-plan structure consists of a core of twelve, vertical concrete posts supporting a series of five broad, circular, conical roofs clad in copper plates. Exposed concrete beams, resembling rafters, radiate from the central core to support the conical roofs, which decrease in diameter from 46 to 34 feet as they increase in height. The Pagoda is crowned with a nine-ringed bronze spire, or "*kurin*," surmounted by a golden flaming head, or "*hoshu*," topped with a ball finial.

The structure rests on a five-sided concrete podium composed of two inner concrete steps and three concrete outer steps. Further out is another concrete platform with three concrete steps. A copper plaque is located near the north end of the second step of the podium and reads: "THE PEACE PAGODA – Presented in Friendship to the People of the United States by the People of Japan – March 28, 1968." Another copper plaque with Japanese writing is affixed to one of the concrete posts of the central core. Translated it reads: "This Peace Pagoda was given to the People of America from the People of Japan as a token of friendship between two countries - March 28, 1968."

Plaque located at the base of the Peace Pagoda

View north of the Peace Pagoda podium

Detail of the central core of the Peace Pagoda

Detail of the Japanese dedication plaque attached to one of the piers

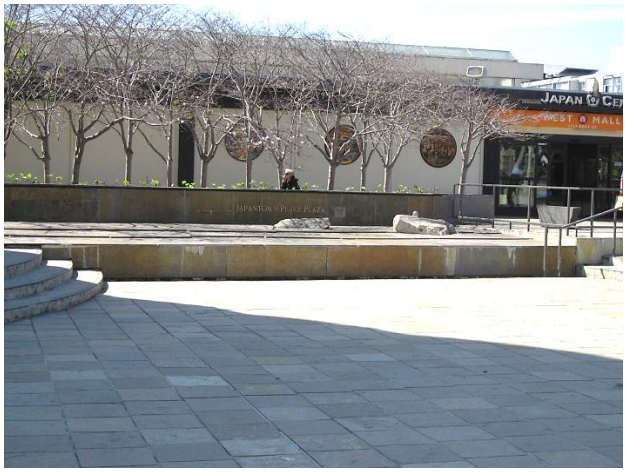
Looking up in the central core of the Peace Pagoda

Detail of the kurin and hoshu

The northwest and southwest portions of the Peace Pagoda podium are intersected by a waterfall (currently non-functioning), consisting of a raised platform featuring rectangular slate panels interspersed by natural stones. On the back wall is a dimensional letter sign reading "Japantown Peace Plaza." Immediately north of this lettering is an eternal flame of Peace, located behind a glass block inserted within the wall.

A portion of the waterfall also wraps the southwest portion of the Peace Pagoda podium, and features identical cladding materials. This area also features an accessible path of travel marked by a curving concrete wall with a metal railing

View west showing a small portion of the waterfall located south of the Peace Pagoda podium.



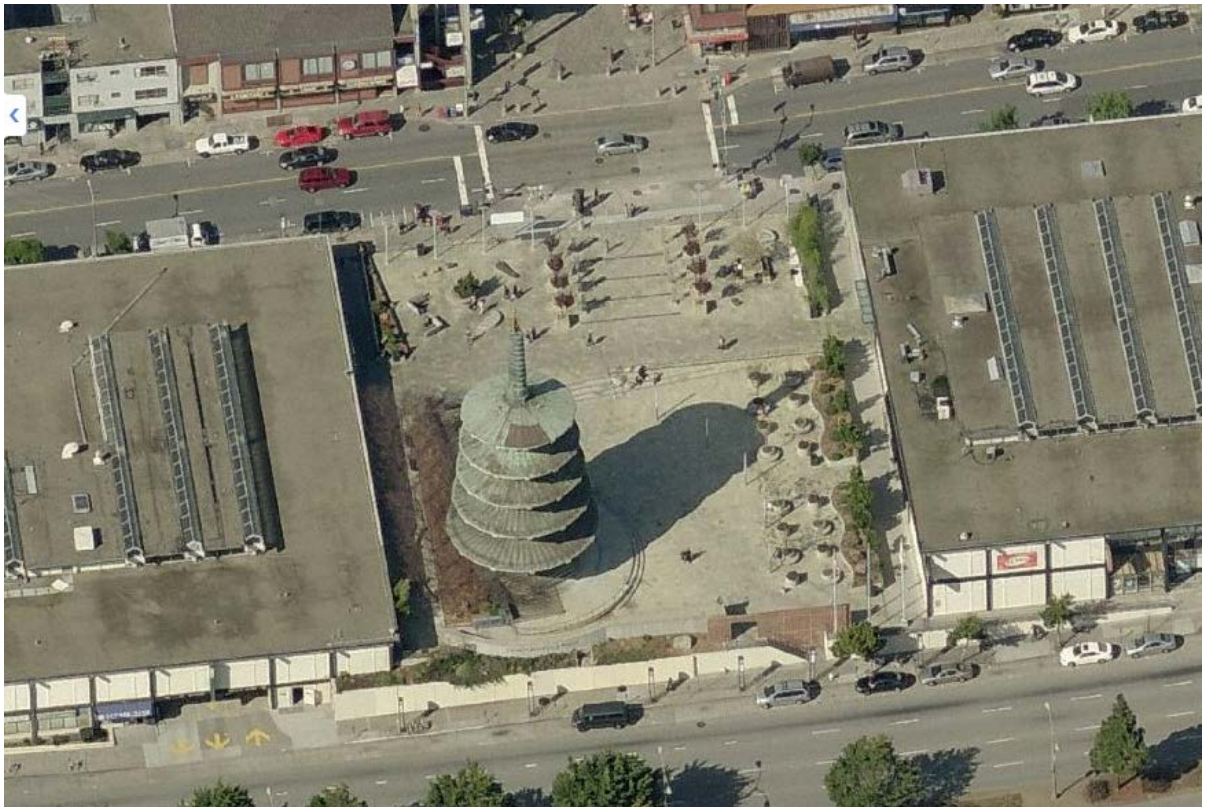
View west showing the main portion of the waterfall located north of the Peace Pagoda podium.

Detail of the back wall of the waterfall showing the eternal flame.

Peace Plaza

The Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza stand atop a partially subterranean parking garage. As originally designed, the Peace Pagoda stood within a keyhole-shaped reflecting pool decorated with large stones which held the English and Japanese language dedication plaques for the Peace Pagoda. An eternal flame of peace was also located within the reflecting pool. The current form of Peace Plaza is the result of a 2000-2001 renovation project which removed most of the Plaza's original features. Today the Plaza is characterized by a large, open area featuring pastel, polychrome stone pavers and a variety of landscaping elements, light standards and sculptural elements. Generally speaking, the Plaza is divided into northern and southern halves by a guardrail and concrete steps leading to a sunken plaza located at the south end. Both of these halves feature linear arrangements of planters and light standards.

The eastern edge of Peace Plaza is lined with low concrete planters backed by a wall clad with slate veneer. The landscaping consists primarily of pine trees, bamboo and shrubbery. The west end of the Plaza also features linear concrete planters, although these are arranged on a slight northwest to southeast diagonal. They are planted primarily with cherry trees.



Aerial view north of Peace Plaza and the Peace Pagoda. Geary Boulevard is at bottom. (Bing Maps)

The center of Peace Plaza is aligned with the north-south axis of Buchanan Street. At its northern end along Post Street, this central axis is flanked on either side by three light poles crowned with circular disks. Marking the center of the Plaza's entrance is an obelisk installed in 2005 featuring various bronze bas reliefs which represent the Issei ("first generation" of Japanese-born immigrants to the U.S.), Nisei ("second generation" or U.S.-born) and Sansei ("third generation") generational history of Japantown. The monument was built following the passage of SB307, the California Japantown Preservation Pilot Project, and with funds provided by the California State Library's California Civil Liberties Public Education Program. Text on the obelisk notes that it is one of three semi-identical landmarks placed in the three remaining Japantowns in San Francisco, San Jose and Los Angeles. The reliefs were created by

artists Louis Quaintance and Eugene Daub. A poem entitled "Footsteps lead to destiny" by Janice Mirikitani is also inscribed on one of the obelisk faces.

Behind this obelisk is a plaque inset on a stone face. It describes the origins and challenges that have confronted San Francisco's Japantown, and was sponsored by the California Japanese American Community Leadership Council and the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California.

View south from Post Street showing the obelisk and plaque at the entry to Peace Plaza.

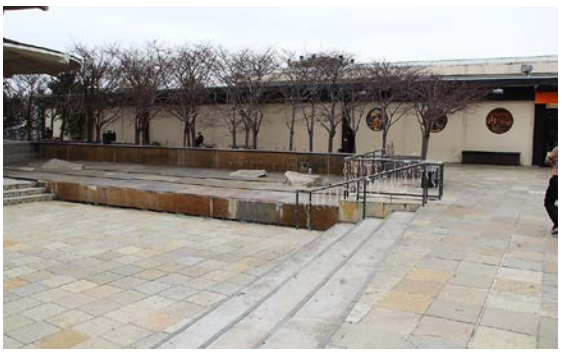
Details of scenes on the obelisk depicting (left to right) the Issei, Nisei and Sansei generations of Japantown.

Semi-circles of mosaic paving radiate outward from these memorials into the Plaza. To the south of the memorials are two parallel rows of metal light standards inspired by Japanese *tōrō,* or lanterns. These light standards are in turn flanked by parallel rows of raised planters clad with a tiled stone veneer and landscaped with Japanese plum trees.

The entire east end of the Plaza is lined with a concrete wall clad with slate veneer. The northeast quadrant of the plaza includes a square concrete planter with wood bench seating, and two rectangular seating benches clad with a tile veneer. Located nearby is a large boulder that originally stood in the Peace Pagoda's reflecting pool. The southeast quadrant features two parallel lines with an alternating sequence of circular concrete planters, and circular planters ringed by bench seating. A third planting bed at the east end features a serpentine concrete retaining wall. Between the circular seating areas and the Peace Pagoda are four tubular light standards. The northeast and southeast quadrants are separated by a wall with metal guardrail aligned with the walkway and entrance to the East Mall of the Japan Center. At the west end of this guardrail are several boulders, one of which includes a plaque stating: "Japantown Peace Plaza Renovated and Dedicated on this 21st Day of April, 2001 Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr. City and County of San Francisco"

View of light standards and planters in the northeast quadrant of Peace Plaza

View of light standards and planters in the southeast quadrant of Peace Plaza



View of the southwest quadrant of Peace Plaza

View of the northwest quadrant of Peace Plaza

The northwest quadrant of Peace Plaza includes circular planters, concrete bench seating and large, sculptural stones. The planter wall at the west end is clad with a stone veneer. The southwest quadrant is accessed via a series of concrete steps. At the west end is the raised platform of the waterfall described above. Behind the rear wall of the waterfall is a linear planting bed landscaped with cherry trees. Concrete bench seating is located adjacent. To the west of this wall is the Kinetsu Center, or West Mall of the Japan Center. To the south of the mall's entry are three circular plaques painted with images related to Japanese history and culture.

The southern edge of Peace Plaza along Geary Boulevard (Google Maps)

The southern edge of Peace Plaza abuts Geary Boulevard. A tall concrete wall and *Tōrō* light standards line the sidewalk. Behind the wall is a planting bed. Adjacent to the Peace Pagoda is a rounded concrete wall with a ribbed concrete finish. A dimensional letter sign is affixed to this wall facing Geary Boulevard and reads "Japantown Peace Plaza." The east end of this wall is accessed from Peace Plaza by a metal door.

View west near southeast corner of Peace Plaza.

At the southeast corner are concrete entry stairs which rise to meet a wall clad with red-colored tile veneer with an entry portal. Dimensional metal signs with stylized Japanese calligraphy are affixed to both sides of this wall and read: *heiwa*, or "Peace." Three flagpoles are located immediately east of the entry stairs. These flagpoles are original to the Plaza, although they have been relocated from their original location fronting Post Street. Immediately west of the portal, within a planting bed, is a boulder that originally stood in a reflecting pool for the Peace Pagoda and was subsequently relocated here.[2]

CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

Construction of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza was a product of the redevelopment of the Western Addition by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) during the 1960s. As discussed in greater detail later in this report, the area that is now Japantown was part of a larger multi-racial, multi-ethnic neighborhood that had begun to take root after the 1906 Earthquake. During World War II, the incarceration of the area's Japanese American residents opened up housing opportunities for thousands of newly-arrived African American war workers, further intensifying the neighborhood's diverse demographics. As Japanese Americans sought to reestablish themselves in the area during the post-war period, they were again subject to removal by powerful economic interests which viewed the Western Addition as ripe for redevelopment. This included the demolition of hundreds of homes and independent businesses at the heart of Japantown, to be replaced with a new commercial center constructed with corporate financing. As related in the *Japantown Historic Context Statement*:

> A prominent feature of SFRA's redevelopment plan for the area was the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center. The first major project undertaken by SFRA director, Justin Herman, the Center was designed to solicit investment from Japan and to create a retail destination that would appeal to San Francisco's tourists. National-Braemar, a firm backed by investors from San Francisco and Hawaii, was selected by SFRA to be the master developer for the large mall complex, with the Center's structures to be operated by four different entities upon completion. In 1962, National-Braemar brought Kintetsu Enterprises Company of America, a new investment arm formed by Japan's Kinki Nippon Railway, into the project. The Center's design, like its funding, was a bi-national project.[3]

The idea for a Japanese-themed commercial complex was being discussed as early as 1953. That year the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California's planning committee reported that a suggestion had been made to

[2] Richard M. Hashimoto, Corporate Manager, Japan Center Garage Corporation, personal communication April 1, 2015.
[3] Donna Graves & Page & Turnbull, *Japantown Historic Context Statement*, Revised May 2011, (San Francisco, Page & Turnbull), 59.

develop the "block bounded by Post, Buchanan, Geary and Webster streets as a center specializing in [the] sale of Japanese goods. Development of the center would be part of the city's proposed redevelopment program."[4] In 1959, the San Francisco Chronicle reported that the Redevelopment Agency sent up a "trial balloon labeled "Japanese Cultural Center" and that it had been "promptly deflated" by concerns that it was not big enough and did not have enough parking. Redevelopment Director, Justin Herman stated that "When we sell this property we not only want the fair market value, we want plans for something outstanding and fine for this beautiful city."[5]

In keeping with the SFRAs vision for the neighborhood, the Japan Center would showcase Modern design and materials. Conspicuously, though, its design was also overtly Japanese. Prior to redevelopment, very few buildings in the neighborhood featured any architectural flourishes that announced the ethnic identity of the residents. In 1939, writer Charles Caldwell Dobie had even criticized the neighborhood for not looking sufficiently Japanese: "It is a shabby, gray part of town of which the Japanese have brought nothing in the way of charm or beauty …. They adapt themselves to any drab surroundings that come to hand."[6] However, as pointed out by Donna Graves, most of Japantown's businesses were "operated out of buildings that had been constructed and altered by others and often were originally intended for other uses. These structures, like most found in early 20th century urban ethnic enclaves, did not announce the identities of their immigrant residents – they did not "look Japanese."[7]

View north from Post Street showing the east side of Buchanan Street. 1942. (Dorothea Lange via the Bancroft Library).

A Peace Pagoda was envisioned for the Japan Center as early as December 1960, when the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that: "The Japanese government has agreed to back a $1 million Peace Pagoda in the Japanese cultural and trade center."[8] A petition in support of the idea was signed by Japanese Premier Hayato Ikeda, with the idea that the Japanese Diet would approve a contribution of $500,000, with the balance provided by Japanese businessmen. Other aspects of the Japan Center's design were also partially developed, including designs for a eight story hotel, theater and 500-car underground parking garage.

The decision to include a pagoda as part of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center's design is credited to Masayuki Tokioka, a Hawaiian financier and President of National-Braemar, developers of the Japan Center. In 1961, seven years before the Peace Pagoda was constructed, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported on discussions between San Francisco mayor, George Christopher, and members of the Japanese government about installing a pagoda at the

[4] "Merchants Propose S.F. 'Japantown,'" *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 8, 1953.
[5] "Cultural Center Plan 'Vetoed,'" *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 25, 1959.
[6] Charles Caldwell Dobie, San Francisco A Pageant, (New York: D. Appletion-Century Company, 1939), 270.
[7] Donna Graves & Page & Turnbull, Japantown Historic Context Statement, Revised May 2011, (San Francisco, Page & Turnbull), 33.
[8] "Japan Plans Gift to Trade Center," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 7, 1960.

Japanese Cultural and Trade Center. The article mentions Tokioka's involvement, and also shows that even at this early date, the architect Yoshiro Taniguchi was identified as the proposed designer of the Peace Pagoda:

> Mayor George Christopher made overtures to the Japanese government this week for the gift of a "Pagoda for Peace," to be put in the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center in the Western Addition. The Mayor said he had learned that Premier Hayato Ikeda and other Tokyo officials had suggested that if San Francisco invited such a gift, the Japanese government would favor it.
>
> The idea of importing a pagoda originated with Masayuki Tokioka, a Japanese born Honolulu banker. He envisioned it as a symbol of Japanese-American friendship in the way that the gift of the Statue of Liberty enhanced Franco-American amity.
>
> Mayor Christopher made his approach through a letter to Secretary of State Dean Rusk.
>
> M. Justin Herman, the City's redevelopment director, said the design of the pagoda would be under the direction of Professor Yoshiro Taniguchi, architect for the Japanese Crown Prince's palace. The pagoda would exhibit Japan's historic and contemporary fine art, he said.[9]

Masayuki Tokioka was born in Japan and educated in the United States. According to one source, Tokioka chose the location for the Japan Center because of its historic connection to the Japanese American community. In 1969, the *Nichi Bei Times* reprinted an interview with Masayuki Tokioka that had originally been published in the Honolulu *Star Bulletin*. In it, Tokioka describes the origins of the Japan Center and his inspiration for the Peace Pagoda:

Masayuki Tokioka, shown in the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's Peace Pagoda pamphlet

> It was in 1960, he recalled, when three influential members of San Francisco's Japanese community came to his office "out of the clear blue sky" and dropped the challenge into his lap. Tokioka said that the center site was the heart of the business district for the Japanese who had settled in the area, known as "Nihon-machi" (Japan town)…. According to Tokioka, city officials there wanted to give the Japanese community in San Francisco a chance to develop the site because the scar of the tragic war evacuation remained on the conscience of the city and a center of exchange, they felt, would symbolize that the past was indeed the past. Tokioka said that Japanese groups in San Francisco wanted to undertake the project, but couldn't quite swing it financially. It was at that juncture that Tokioka was approached ….
>
> Under the terms of the agreement, the city sold the land for a nominal $1.6 million. A bond was floated and largely underwritten by the Bank of America for a $3 million underground parking garage for 800 cars. The title to the garage, which runs the length and breadth of the center, is held by the city, but the developers retained the air-rights. [10]

[9] "Gift Pagoda from Japan Invited," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 23, 1961, 8,
[10] Tomi Knaefler, "Pagoda of the Dream Come True," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, March 10, 1968. Reprinted in the *Nichi Bei Times*' Japanese Trade Center Commemorative Edition, Spring 1969, 59-60.

> The idea of the pagoda, he [Tokioka] said, grew out of the blistery student uprising in Tokyo in June, 1960, that forced former President Eisenhower to cancel his visit to Japan. As he recalled "how hurt and embarrassed I felt … The incident made me want to do something to show that the majority—a big majority—of the Japanese people are friends of the Americans." And so it was that "my dream" for a Peace Pagoda was born.
>
> He felt that the symbol could be meaningful only if the Japanese people themselves made the contribution. So keenly did he feel this that he made several trips to Japan to discuss the matter with business and government leaders, including the late Prime Minister Ikeda, who encouraged the project. Donations have come in from various quarters, particularly from the business community. Among the first contributors was industrialist Taizo Ishizaka, general chairman of Osaka's Expo '70 (Osaka and San Francisco are sister cities.)
>
> The pagoda was designed by Prof. Yoshiro Taniguchi, a leading architect-author with a trail of notable credits, including the palace of the Crown Prince. The selection of Taniguchi's contemporary design ended a brief flurry of controversy between those who favored a traditional design and those who didn't. The circular concept in Taniguchi's design was adapted from the pagodas dedicated to eternal peace by Empress Koken 1,200 years ago in Nara, Japan's ancient capital …. Tokioka said that the pagoda will be completed in several stages and that it will cost over $400,000 to fully finish the project. He strongly believes that San Francisco is the most appropriate site for the pagoda because Japan's first envoys to the U.S. landed there and the city was also the setting for the signing of the treaty that ended World War II.[11]

Drawing of the proposed Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza (San Francisco Chronicle, April 3, 1963)

As described above, backers of the "Friendship Campaign" to solicit donations for construction of the Peace Pagoda initially preferred a traditional pagoda design. In 1962 the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that during a meeting with the San Francisco Art Commission's Civic Design Committee, the pagoda's sponsors wanted "a traditional pagoda or nothing."[12] At the time, members of the Civic Design Committee, which included architects Joseph Esherick and Burton Rockwell, stated that a replica of the Daigo-ji Pagoda in Kyoto could be placed in the proposed Peace Plaza. (A fuller discussion of the features of traditional Japanese pagodas, as well as origins of the Peace Pagoda's design, is discussed later in this document.) Nevertheless, the architect of the Japan Center, Minoru Yamasaki, was reported to prefer Yoshiro Taniguchi's Modern design, described as having been "designed last year."[13]

In April 1963, the *San Francisco Chronicle* published a rendering of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza, which appears extremely similar to what was eventually built. As discussed in the article:

> The plaza, at Post and Buchanan streets, will include a stylish, five ring concrete pagoda designed by a progressive architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi. The plans were announced yesterday by M. Justin Herman, the city's redevelopment director, who has just returned from negotiations in Tokyo on

[11] Tomi Knaefler, "Pagoda of the Dream Come True," *Honolulu Star Bulletin*, March 10, 1968. Reprinted in the *Nichi Bei Times*' Japanese Trade Center Commemorative Edition, Spring 1969, 52-53.
[12] James Benet, "Traditional Pagoda --- Or Nothing," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 20, 1962.
[13] Ibid.

details of the $14 million cultural center. That ultramodern pagoda was his pet idea. He confided yesterday that when he arrived in Tokyo he was greeted as something of a cultural villain for his campaign to scrap construction of a pagoda with a 1000-year old tradition. He had felt that homely wooden replica of the Daigo-ji Temple in Kyoto would look odd amid the ultramodern décor of the center.

But nobody told him that across the sea the sensitive Japanese were brooding about this affront to their proud history. And, anyway, a Peace Pagoda Construction Committee headed by Kazune Kato, of the Daiwa Bank, had even organized a "pennies-for-pagoda" drive based on the traditional Buddhist shrine.

The Tokyo committee included such big names as Taizo Ishizaka, president of the Federation of Economic Organizations of Japan, a utilities magnate. During a week of peace talks, Herman said, he persuaded the committee to listen to the creator of the avant-garde pagoda plan: Professor Taniguchi, whose architectural designs include the new palace for the Crown Prince and the Okura Hotel.

"He was able to show them by photographs that the modern pagoda design was derived from a pagoda much older than the Daigo-ji model they were using," Herman said. Taniguchi demonstrated a lineage traceable to the Horyu-ji Temple, which was built at Nara in 607 A.D.—350 years before the Daigo-ji Temple was completed, Herman said. Then came the clincher. Not only was the Horyu-ji concept more ancient, it was also more peace-loving. The committee was so pleased with Taniguchi that they asked him to design the entire "peace plaza" here, Herman said. The plaza will also include a reflection pool, gardens and display areas for Japanese works of art.[14]

In May 1963, architect Yoshiro Taniguchi prepared a several page narrative describing his design intent for the Peace Pagoda—later reproduced in a 1965 booklet prepared by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. In it he describes what he feels are the key elements of its design: its cylindrical shape, the *Kurin*, or spire, and the shape of its reflecting pool. Some elements described by Taniguchi, however, were never realized, such as his plans to cover the interior walls of the first story with mother-of-pearl, as well as install a sculpture covered with cultured pearls. As described by the architect:

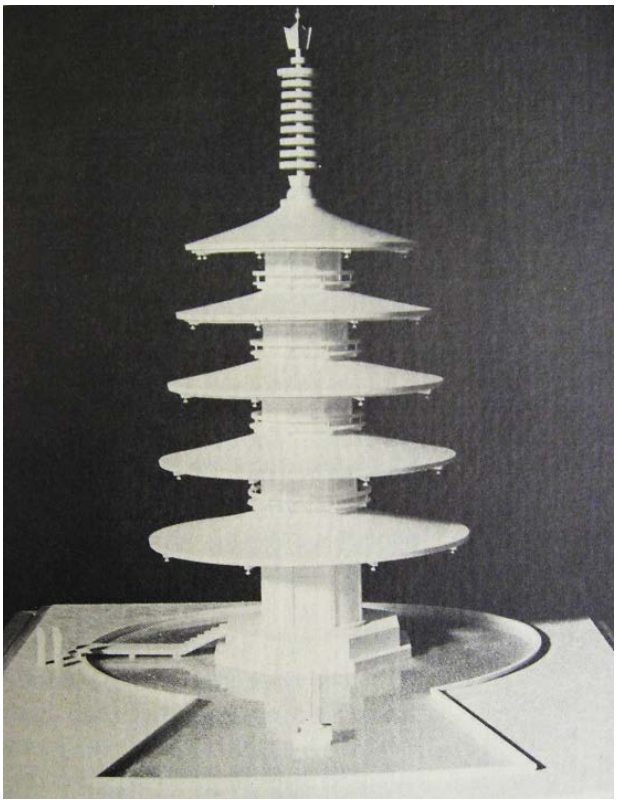
The Peace Pagoda to be placed in the inner court of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center in San Francisco has been designed as a proper symbol of Japanese interpretation of the time-honored beauty and, at the same time, as a monumental expression of the real heart of the Japanese people, who sincerely aspire to the firm friendship and good understanding of the people of the United States …. [I] hope sincerely that the structure will have a congenial appeal to the mind of the American people, inasmuch as the essential spirit of this Pagoda consists in the inmost "Prayer" of human beings to the infinite. The Supreme Existence above us is sure to perform the sacred mission of creating integral peace and harmony by giving her final touch to the top of the Pagoda pointing to Heaven.

The Peace Pagoda lifts up its hundred-feet-high spire to the skies of California. It presents a magnificent view to all esthetically minded people who raise their eyes up to the horizon on the perimeters of San Francisco. The five roofs of the Pagoda are of the round type instead of the usual square shape; and in proportion to the increased height of each storey, the roofs are designed to become smaller in their size. The cylindrical construction of the tower-body will contribute to the sense of stable equilibrium.

The most important part of a pagoda is the "Kurin," or nine ringed spire placed on the topmost roof, which is intended to designate the highest virtue; and every part of the pagoda below

[14] Donovan Bess, "A Japanese Gift to City—'Peace Plaza', *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 3, 1963.

"Kurin" is to serve as a base of this spire. These rings are made of bronze gilded with gold on the surface. And the "Kurin" is given the proper balance by an ornamental ball with a flaming head named "Hoshu" as weight for pressing and arranging the rings in good order.
The color of the nine-ringed spire and the decorative weight over it on the topmost roof is gold. Each roof is covered with copper plates on its surface, which is tinged with antique looking green-rust. The body of the Pagoda is of the tuned harmony of black and white.



Yoshiro Taniguchi's model of the Peace Pagoda, as shown in a Peace Pagoda booklet produced by the SFRA in 1965. (Collections of the San Francisco Public Library)

The interior walls on the first storey are set with resplendent shells, the mother-of-pearl. And in the center of this storey is placed a symbolic image of Peace which is studded with Japanese cultured pearls. A glance must be cast to the clear pool on the foot of this Pagoda. The pool is of the singular form which is named "Zen-po Ko-en" in Japan. The literal translation of this word is "Square-front and Circular-rear shape" … The idea of this geometrical figure was given from the typical shape of the old burial mounds dedicated to the deceased nobles in the fifth or sixth century …. The Pagoda will be beautifully reflected in the clear water of the pool; and as night draws on, the whole structure will look extremely picturesque with the illumination shedding its soft light on the Pagoda. It looks as if the Pagoda is carved in relief against the nocturnal sky and floating on water in a fairy land. I should be very happy if I could successfully transplant the authentic "Shibui" flavor [intrinsic aesthetic qualities] of the Japanese historical monument on the soil of San Francisco.

Serious consideration is to be given to the desirable harmony and match of the Pagoda with the surrounding construction in the same area, where Mr. Minoru Yamasaki, one of the most illustrious architects of the United States …. The cylindrical form of the Pagoda will have its place in the midst of linear straight erections of Mr. Minoru Yamasaki, shimming in with each other by creating an agreeable contrast between rectilinear and circular figures….

The Peace Pagoda is a reinforced concrete structure. The body of it is to be cast by the sliding-form system in the site in San Francisco. The pieces of framework of precast concrete are to be attached to each layer as the corresponding roof. The whole surface of the Pagoda is equipped with various sorts of finishing and decorative materials which will be shipped from Japan. These materials include metal and wooden works and fabrics refined up for more than a thousand years in our history of fine arts and also the advanced estheticism and handicrafts of the contemporary times. The stones and rock to be arranged in the pool and the inner court are to be sent from Japan. The Peace Pagoda is, thus, the very product of technical cooperation between the United States of America and Japan concerning the constructive formula, building materials and decorative patterns of both countries.[15]

[15] Yoshiro Taniguchi, "The Peace Pagoda – Its Beauty and It's Spirit," Typewritten manuscript on file at the San Francisco Public Library, May 0, 1963.

From the outset, the Peace Pagoda was being promoted as the defining feature of the Japantown redevelopment. In 1965 the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency published an illustrated pamphlet solely about the Peace Pagoda, extolling the key role it would play in the overall design of the Japan Center.

> The Pagoda will form the hub of the new Japanese trade and service area which will include shops, a contemporary theater, a hotel, restaurants, travel services, banking facilities, etc. Contemporary Japanese décor will be used throughout. A sizeable portion of this area will be dedicated to formal presentations of the arts, crafts and services of Japan. Hopefully the Pagoda will mark the axis of a neighboring four-block area to be renewed by Japanese-American residences, businessmen and institutions to be known as Nihon-Machi, or "Japanese Town." [16]

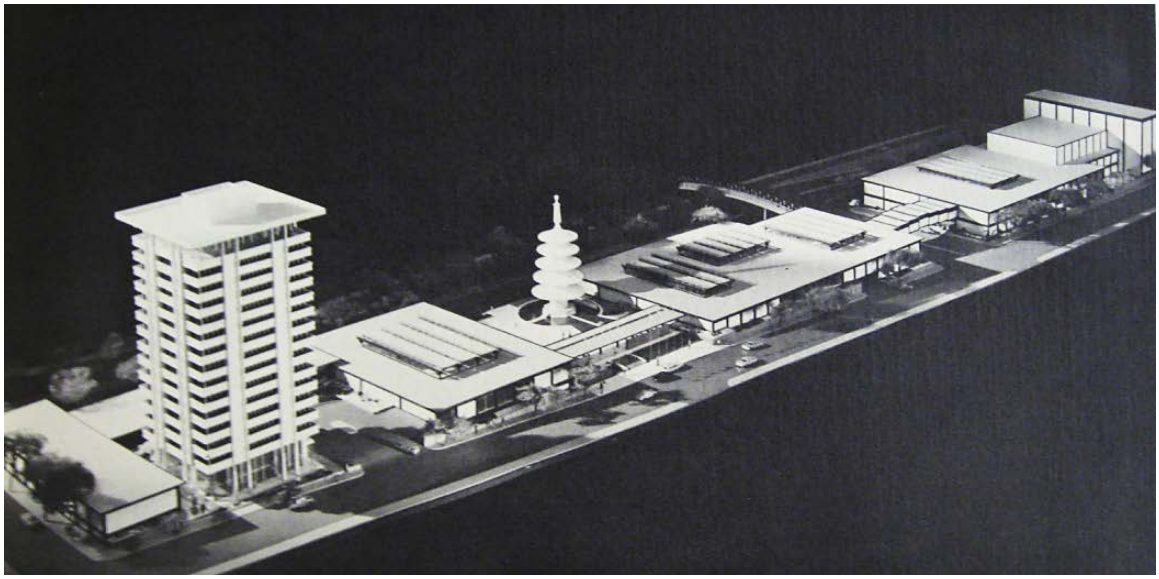
Sumi painting and calligraphy by San Francisco artist, Mrs. Masae Yamamoto, used as the cover image of the Peace Pagoda booklet produced by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency in March 1965. (Collections of the San Francisco Public Library)

Construction work on the Japan Center began in the spring of 1965.[17] The scale of the project was jarring for neighborhood residents. As recalled by Judy Hamaguchi, "It didn't look like J-Town. We had Victorians everywhere. I watched it going up from my window, and everything changed."[18] Lance Burton, then a teenaged African American resident of the neighborhood, recalls the construction of the Japan Center with a note of surprise. Up until that time he had not realized the extent of the Japanese American community: "It wasn't until that bank and the pagoda were built, and we were like, 'wow, Japanese people are here.'"[19] Burton also notes that construction of the Japan Center exposed a fault line in redevelopment. "I'm sure there were grumblings about the difference between

[16] San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, "The Peace Pagoda," San Francisco: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, March 1965.
[17] "Work to Start on Japan Center," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 4, 1965.
[18] Judy Hamaguchi, personal communication, May 12, 2015.
[19] Lance Burton, personal communication, July 15, 2015.

north of Geary [Boulevard] and south of Geary. There were buildings that were actually going up in Japantown, getting built, while the buildings south of Geary were still lying flat."[20]

Months before completion of the Peace Pagoda, the commercial facilities of the Japan Center were dedicated in March 1968 with a Shinto ritual attended by San Francisco Mayor, John F. Shelley. Also present was Isamu Saheki, head of Kitetsu Enterprises of America, who stated, "We chose San Francisco for our investment of $10 million because it is the sister city of Osaka, our company's headquarters; because San Francisco is the gateway to the Orient; because its climate is perfect, ifs people friendly and its women sophisticated."[21] At the time, the *San Francisco Chronicle* described the project as "the first major investment of foreign capital in an American urban renewal project."[22]



Drawing of the proposed Japanese Cultural and Trade Center from a booklet produced by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency in March 1965. (San Francisco Public Library History Center)

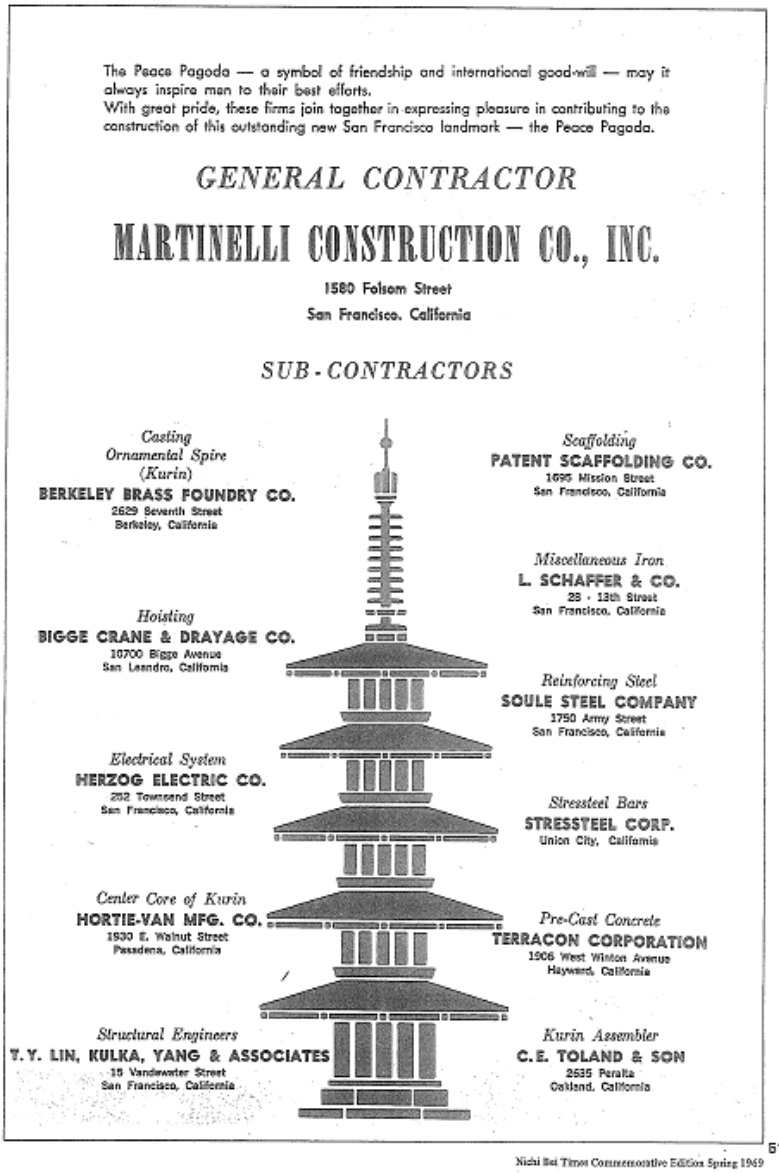
The formal dedication of the Japan Center was held on March 28, 1968. The new $20 million development included the 172-room Miyako Hotel, a Japanese consulate building and the Kintetsu Shopping Center.[23] The opening included a procession of Shinto priests and the lighting of an eternal flame in Peace Plaza, and was attended by Japanese Ambassador, Takeso Shimoda, and the deputy mayor of Osaka, Yasushi Oshima. The eternal flame was lit from a torch that had been brought by Japan Airlines from the *Sumiyoshi taisha*, or "Sumiyoshi Grand Shrine," founded in the 3rd century in Osaka.[24] This is the main shrine of all the Sumiyoshi shrines in Japan. The Japan Center dedication was followed by three-days of festivities for the annual Cherry Blossom Festival.

By July of 1968 the tiered roofs were being installed on the Peace Pagoda, while the *kurin*, or spire, was in the process of being cast.[25] The general contractor overseeing the Pagoda's construction was Martinelli Construction Company of San Francisco. The fabrication and installation of the various component pieces required a number of sub-contractors. According to an advertisement appearing in a commemorative edition of the *Nichi Bei Times*, published in

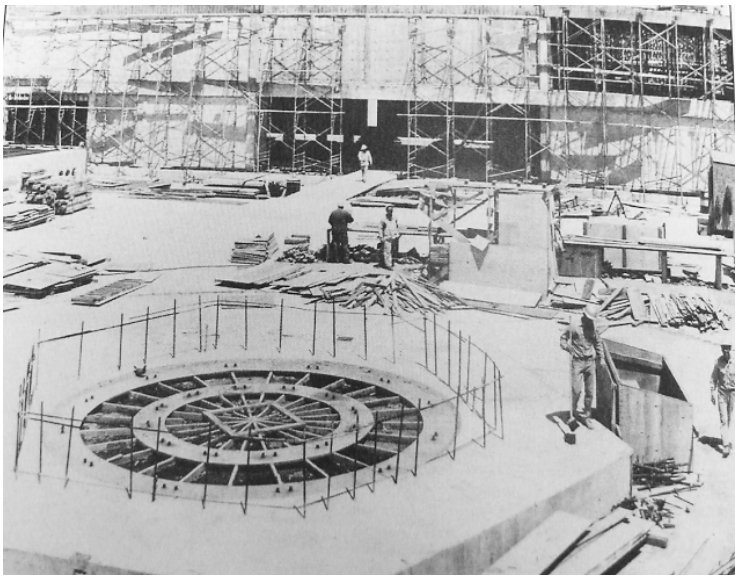
[20] Lance Burton, personal communication, July 15, 2015.
[21] "Shinto Dedication for S. F. Japanese Center," also "The Tycoon Behind the Center," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 19, 1968.
[22] "The Japanese Center," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 6, 1968.
[23] "Japan Town Opening," *The Argonaut*, March 27, 1968.
[24] "S.F. Japanese Center Dedicated," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 29, 1968.
[25] "Pagoda Roofs," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 13, 1968.

conjunction with the dedication of the Peace Pagoda, these sub-contractors included the Berkeley Brass Foundry Company, which cast the bronze *kurin*; C. E. Toland & Son of Oakland, which assembled the *kurin*; Hortie-Van Manufacturing Company of Pasadena, which built the center core of the *kurin*; and Terracon Corporation of Hayward, which supplied the pre-cast concrete for the piers and pagoda roofs.

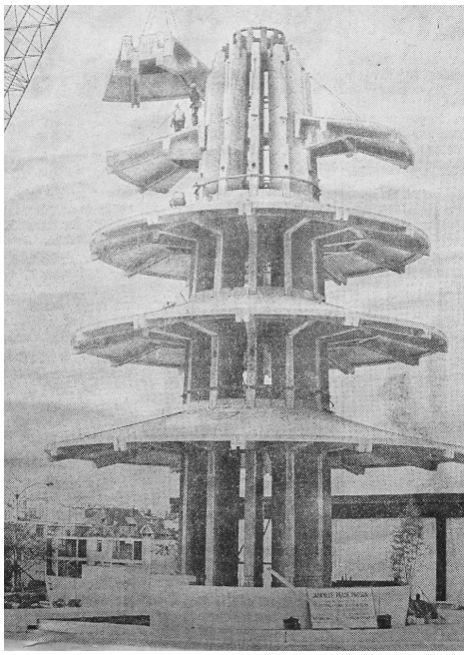
A partner at Terracon, George Lew, managed the concrete casting. Each of the twelve concrete piers forming the central core of the Pagoda were 65 feet tall, weighed 12 tons, and were made with pre-stressed steel reinforcing rods to enhance their seismic resistance. The circular roofs were pre-cast in forms and covered with copper plating designed to weather into a green patina.[26]



[26] "A Unique S.F. Peace Pagoda," San Francisco Examiner, April 11, 1968.



Construction of the foundation for the Peace Pagoda, circa 1967. (Japanese American National Library Collections)



The Peace Pagoda under construction, July 1968 (San Francisco Chronicle, July, 13, 1968)

The Peace Pagoda was dedicated and the *kurin* ritually blessed during a ceremony held at Peace Plaza on September 15, 1968. The event was attended by a 70-member delegation from Japan, including members of the Japanese Diet and several ministers. According to an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "The Peace Pagoda – Roses, Hope," more than 1000 persons witnessed the dedication:

> The 100-foot-tall pagoda, designed by Dr. Yoshiro Taniguchi, is a $185,000 gift from Japan to the people of the United States. The Rev. Nicholas M. Iyoya called it a "magnificent testimony to man's fervent hope for peace on earth."
>
> Incense was offered, gongs sounded and rose petals tossed in the air by the nine Buddhist priests as "homage to the buddhas of the universe" …. San Francisco Mayor, Joseph Alioto, was quoted as calling the ceremony "a day that will live in glory," and characterized the Pagoda as a "magnificent shrine."[27]

The San Francisco Chronicle heaped considerable praise on the design, calling it "an extraordinarily fine work of architectural art, from which the whole city will benefit."[28]

> The clean strength, dignity and idealistic mood of the pagoda design are an honor to its noted Japanese architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi …. No ordinary architect could have hit on such a design. It is beautifully imaginative, graceful, unified and varied.
>
> …. At the pagoda's base will be a shallow pool, in a large keyhole shape similar to the shape of ancient Japanese burial mounds. A surrounding Japanese garden already has begun to include greenery, gravels, sand and huge imported rocks. Also there is a pedestal for a Sacred Flame.

[27] "The Peace Pagoda – Roses, Hope," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 16, 1968.
[28] Alexander Fried, "A Gift to Be Proud Of," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 15, 1968.

> The taste and proportions of the cylindrical pagoda seem just right as a complement and contrast to the rectangular and cubist forms of the other Japanese Center buildings on Geary Blvd. in the Western Addition. Thoughtful illumination, in due time, should make the Peace Pagoda one of the night sights of our city.[29]

The Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza as Constructed

The Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza were constructed above a parking garage accessed from the southeast end of the Kinetsu Center, or West Mall, of the Japan Center. As originally designed, Peace Plaza was substantially different than its contemporary appearance. The entirety of the design was distinctly Modernist, while simultaneously rooted in traditional Japanese forms. A fuller discussion of these influences is discussed later in the report on page 30. A large pavilion with an adjacent reflecting pool was installed along the northern portion of the Plaza. The pavilion featured a metal roof with flared eaves and was supported on rounded concrete posts. A paved walkway bisected the reflecting pool and included bench seating at the sides. Immediately north of the reflecting pool was a linear strip of landscaping and at least 12 flagpoles arranged in groups on either side of the entry gate.

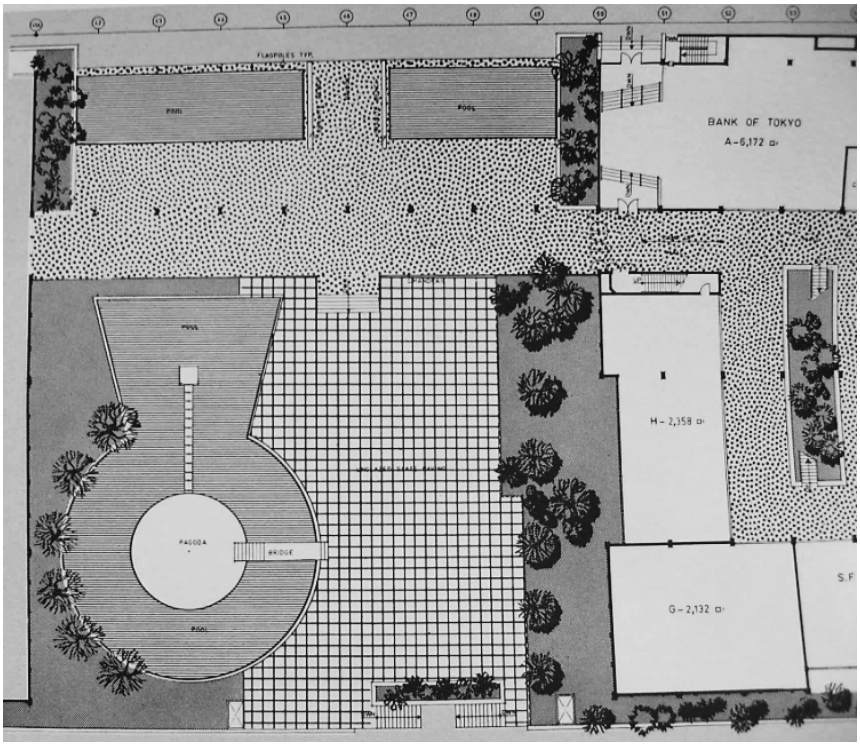
Circa 1970s postcard view looking south across Post Street toward Peace Plaza and the Peace Pagoda. The ornamental wooden gate is a yagura, or wooden tower, that appears to have been erected prior to Japanese Emperor Hirohito's visit to San Francisco in October 1975.[30] *(Sanfranciscodays.com)*

The central portion of Peace Plaza was paved with slate and entered via a series of steps descending from the center of the pavilion. The Peace Pagoda stood at the southern end of a shallow, keyhole-shaped reflecting pool, reflecting the "Zen-po Ko-en" shape described by Yoshiro Taniguchi. Within the pool, directly north of the Peace Pagoda, was a square concrete pedestal veneered with granite housing an eternal flame of peace. Access to the Pagoda was provided by a granite bridge and steps which crossed the pool from the east to meet stairs leading up to the central core of the Pagoda. Small pedestals or stones appear to have been placed at the base of the piers within the central

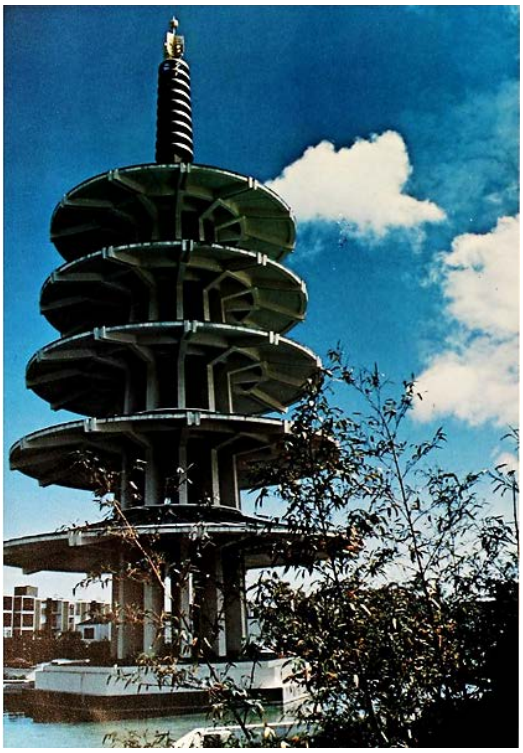
[29] Alexander Fried, "A Gift to Be Proud Of," *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 15, 1968.
[30] Rosalyn Tonai, email communication, March 19, 2015.

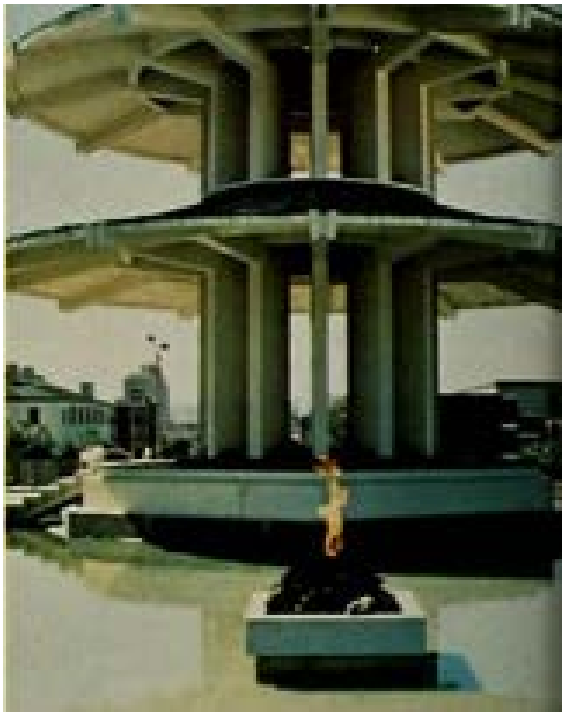
core of the Pagoda. South of this bridge and within the pool were two large stones brought from Japan. At least one of these appears to have included one of the dedication plaques for the Peace Pagoda. The western and southern edges of the reflecting pool's retaining wall were landscaped with trees and shrubbery.

Circa 1970s view looking east of the reflecting pool and Pavilion fronting Peace Plaza at Post Street
(San Francisco Public Library Historical Photo Collection, AAB-9232)

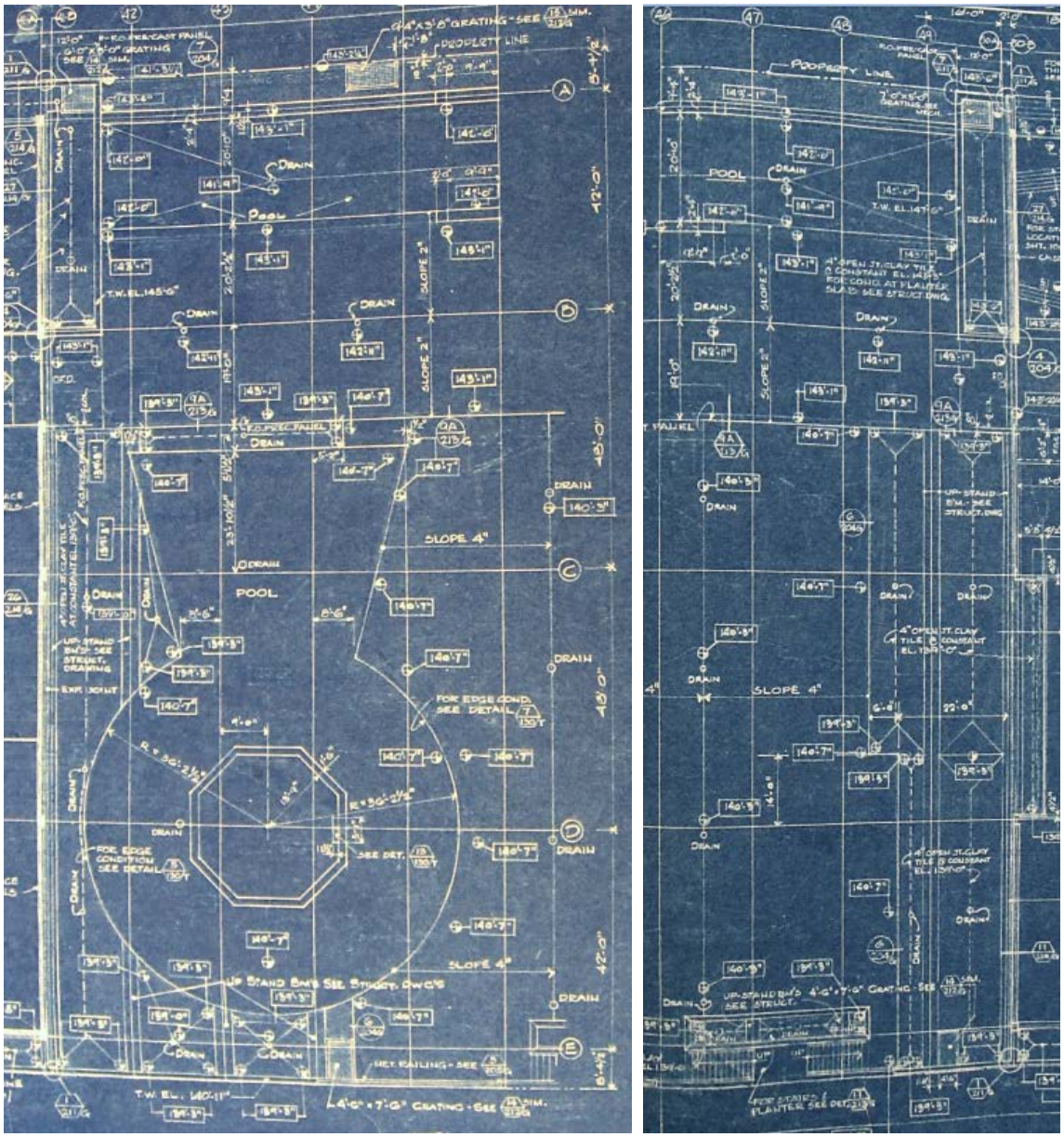


Plan of Peace Plaza, as shown in a ca. 1970 brochure, "Nihonmachi,"
published by National-Braemar, Inc.
(Collections of the San Francisco Office of Investment & Infrastructure, Successor to the SFRA)





Circa 1970s views of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza. From the top, clockwise: The reflecting pool and eternal flame (San Francisco Redevelopment Agency: The Decade Past and Decade to Come, p. 21); Cover of a Japan Center Brochure (SFRA Archives); Screen capture of video showing Peace Plaza from a October 22, 1971 KPIX News report (San Francisco Bay Area Television Archive)

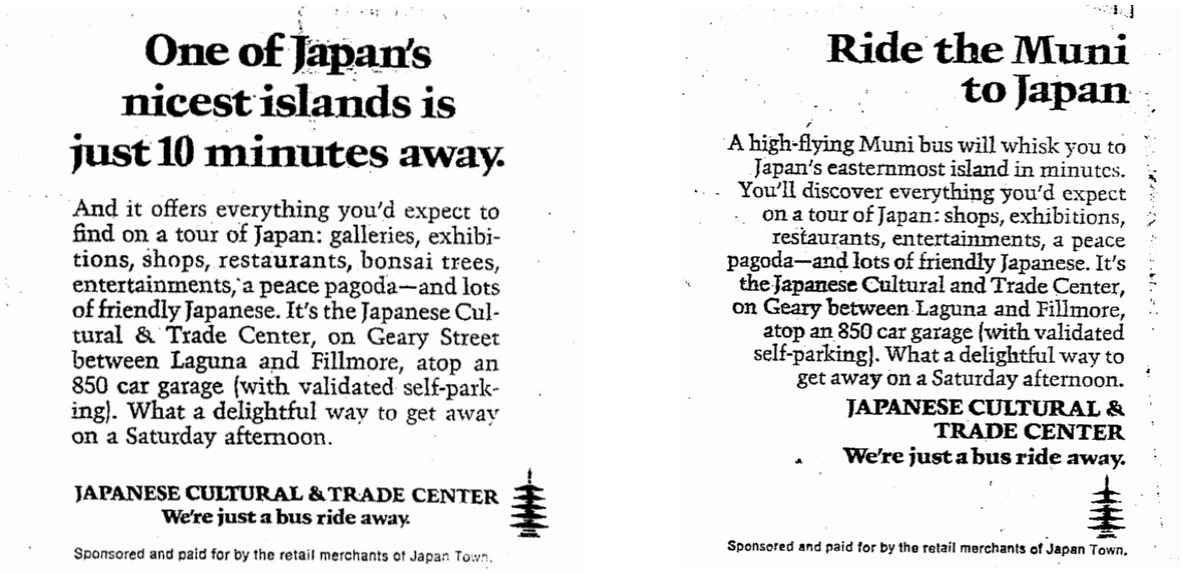


Original blueprint drawings prepared by Minoru Yamasaki & Associates and Van Bourg / Nakamura & Associates dated May 4, 1964.The western portion of the plaza is at left, the eastern at right.
(Collections of the City of San Francisco Japan Center Garage Corporation)

View north of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza, circa 1970s
(Hiroyuki Fukuda, via Heather David/Historypin.com)

Circa 1970s postcard view north of Peace Plaza. Note the reflecting pool encircling the Peace Pagoda. The eternal flame is located within the pool between the Pagoda and pavilion.
(Private collection)

The south end of Peace Plaza adjacent to Geary Boulevard was marked by a large concrete wall with twin concrete stairs rising toward the eastern end. Within the Plaza, the area adjacent to the stairs included a raised planter landscaped with shrubbery and a few trees.



Advertisements for the Japanese Cultural & Trade Center appearing in the San Francisco Chronicle in October and November 1968

Subsequent Changes to Peace Plaza

Not long after Peace Plaza was constructed, problems became evident with water leaking from the reflecting pools. Indeed, a photo on page 20 indicates that even as early as 1971 the reflecting pools were often kept dry. As related in a memo prepared by SFRA Executive Director, Edward Helfeld:

> The original 31,448 square foot Plaza had Japanese gardens and two reflecting pools. The focal point of the Plaza is a unique, 100 foot high, five-roofed cylindrical peace pagoda (most Japanese pagodas have square roofs). The property covered by the key-shaped pool that surrounds the base of the pagoda and the pagoda itself were paid for and presented to the people of San Francisco by the people of Osaka, Japan. The balance of the Plaza area was retained for maintenance by the developer for open space. Apparently due to poor construction, the plaza area had poor drainage, when the pools were filled or gardens were watered, the water would leak into the garage below. [31]

During the mid-1980s ownership of the Japan Center changed hands, leading to speculation that portions of Peace Plaza—which was not publicly owned at the time—might be developed for commercial purposes. This eventually led to the City acquiring the Plaza. As discussed in the memo prepared by Edward Helfeld:

> In the mid-1980's National-Braemar, Inc. sold its interest in the Japan Center to others in connection with the bankruptcy proceedings of its parent company – Hawaii-based Manoa Finance Co. This included the sale of the non-city owned portion of Peace Plaza.
>
> The subsequent owners stated that they had no current plans for the Plaza but felt that it was a "buildable piece of property." However, a community newspaper revealed that in discussions with the new owners they had indicated that they wanted to construct a 8,500 square foot commercial facility on a portion of the Plaza including the stage area used for community performances.

[31] Edward Helfeld, SFRA Executive Directory, Memo regarding a request of funds to renovate Peace Plaza, February 2, 1993, typewritten manuscript on file with the *San Francisco Office of Investment & Infrastructure, Successor to the SFRA.*

> Although any change in use required the approval of the Agency Commission, no such plans were ever presented to the Agency ….
>
> Nevertheless, the statement by the new owner galvanized the Nihonmachi community into action to preserve the Plaza as permanent open space. At the urging of the Nihonmachi community, on June 3, 1985, the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution urging the Agency to preserve the Plaza as a permanent open space and that resolution was subsequently signed by Mayor Dianne Feinstein. In the light of this resolution and also at the urging of the community, on June 25, 1985, the Agency Commission adopted a resolution reaffirming its position that the Plaza remain permanent open space. Because of concerns that a subsequent Redevelopment Commission could change this policy, the community sought public ownership of the Plaza. [32]

In 1987, the City's Recreation and Park Commission voted unanimously to undertake eminent domain proceedings against the owner of Japan Center Peace Plaza. As noted in the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "The Peace Pagoda, which towers over the plaza in Japan Town, was given to the city many years ago. The city has been negotiating to buy the surrounding plaza from owner Sinclair Louie, but Louie reportedly wants to keep a portion of the plaza to develop."[33]

Undated postcard view of the Peace Pagoda.
Note that a planter blocks access to the Pagoda core.
(Private collection)

[32] Edward Helfeld, SFRA Executive Directory, Memo regarding a request of funds to renovate Peace Plaza, February 2, 1993, typewritten manuscript on file with the *San Francisco Office of Investment & Infrastructure, Successor to the SFRA.*
[33] "Park Commission Oks Harvey Milk Mural," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 17, 1987.

The Japantown community rallied in support of public ownership, and "after a long struggle, in 1989, the Nihonmachi Community was able to persuade the City Recreation and Park Department to buy the Plaza as permanent open space."[34] Though publicly owned, ongoing problems with water leaking from the Plaza into the garage below led to the permanent drainage of the reflecting pools and the removal of all landscaping in 1990. In 1991, the *San Francisco Chronicle* noted the deteriorated condition of the Plaza:

> Few passers-by are enticed to the bleak setting around the five-tier Peace Pagoda, except during the annual Cherry Blossom Festival and Nihonmachi Street Fair. The pagoda's reflecting pool has been dry for years because of the drought, and nearby concrete pits once planted with cherry trees and shrubs now sit bare. Dead leaves and garbage collect in the empty spots, and other areas are filled with stagnant water from recent rain …. The original Peace Plaza garden was uprooted last year when the city waterproofed a garage underneath.[35]

The article also noted that a nonprofit group, Friends of Japan Town Peace Plaza, was in the process of raising funds to restore portions of the Plaza:

> The [restoration] scheme would bring back a Japanese-style garden, designed by architect Kimio Kimura, of bonsai trees and native California plants amid a landscape of boulders and gravel. The keyhole-shaped pagoda pool would be converted to a garden and walkway, which could require removing the Peace Flame inside the pool. An 18-foot high wall enclosing the greenery would double as seating for visitors, and new drainage for the garden would be hooked up by the city. [36]

Yukio Kitagawa, a manager of Sumitomo Bank of California holding plans to rehabilitate Peace Plaza. (San Francisco Chronicle, 11/11/1991)

A fundraising brochure prepared around this time by the Friends of Japan Town Peace Plaza provided further illumination of the proposed restoration:

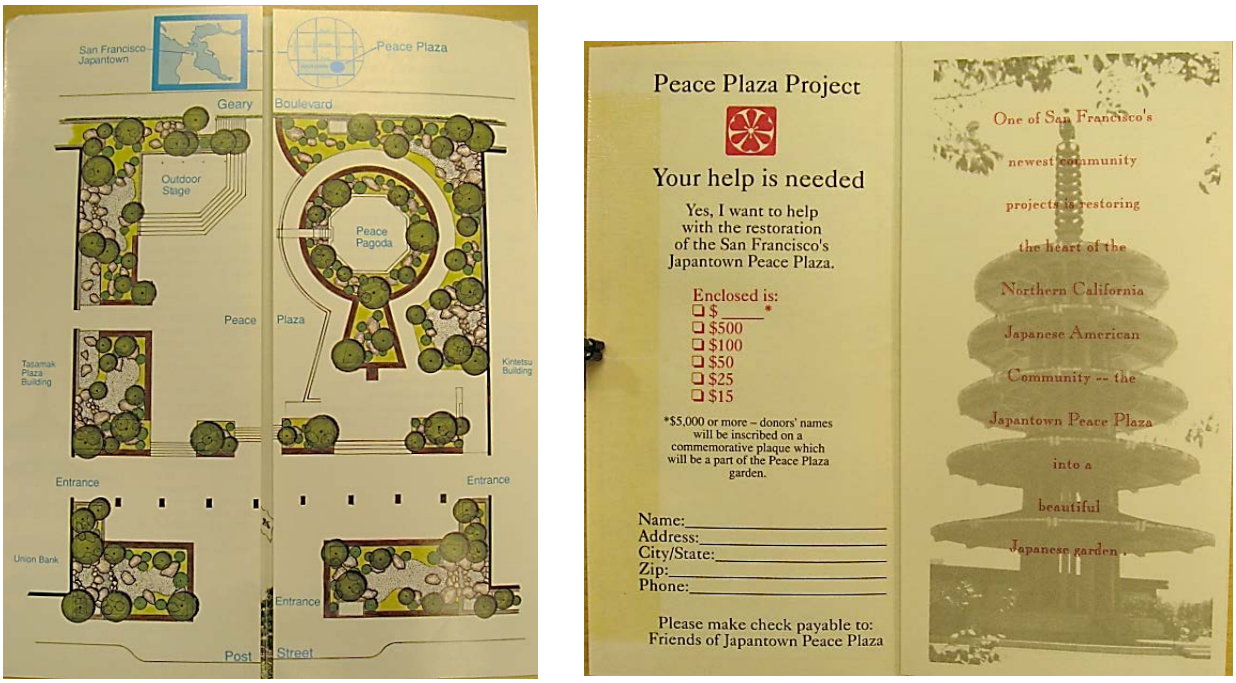
> Originally, the Peace Plaza was beautifully landscaped with flowering cherry trees, plants and reflecting pools. These, unfortunately, had to be removed in 1990 as part of a waterproofing project undertaken by the Japan Center Garage which is located beneath the Plaza. It is now time to rebuild the Peace Plaza. Kimio Kimura, an internally acclaimed designer of Japanese gardens is the project's landscape architect. His plan—the winning design in a

[34] Edward Helfeld, SFRA Executive Directory, Memo regarding a request of funds to renovate Peace Plaza, February 2, 1993, typewritten manuscript on file with the *San Francisco Office of Investment & Infrastructure, Successor to the SFRA.*

[35] "Plan to Renovate Japantown Plaza / Businesses Hope to Draw Pedestrians Back to Tattered Garden," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 11, 1991.

[36] "Plan to Renovate Japantown Plaza / Businesses Hope to Draw Pedestrians Back to Tattered Garden," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 11, 1991.

competition held in 1990—features a wondrously imaginative use of trees, plants, boulders and gravel to create a beautiful garden that will be a source of pride…. Although the Peace Plaza is owned by the City of San Francisco and administered by the Recreation and Park Department, there are not ample funds in the city budget to cover the cost of renovation.[37]



Pages from an early 1990s brochure produced by the Friends of Japantown Peace Plaza. At left a map of proposed landscaping. At right, a donation card. (Collections of the San Francisco Office of Investment & Infrastructure, Successor to the SFRA)

At the request of the Friends of Japantown Peace Plaza, the Redevelopment Agency Commission's 1994-1995 budget included $600,000 from the tax increment funds for renovations to Peace Plaza. The funding was to be coordinated through a resolution by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors stating that redevelopment funds will "eliminate blight upon the surrounding area."[38] In other words, redevelopment funds were now being allocated to rehabilitate a blighted redevelopment, then only sixteen years old.

On February 28, 1995 the San Francisco Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 43-95: "Approving a Transfer of $600,000 to the City and County of San Francisco to be Used for Rehabilitation of the Peace Plaza Western Addition A-1." The Basis of Resolution states in part:

> 2. The Peace Plaza is an integral part of a culturally diverse Western Addition community and is a gathering place for cultural events and activities within the Western Addition….
>
> 4. The Peace Plaza's deteriorated condition is a blight upon the area. Rehabilitation and renovation of Peace Plaza will assist in the elimination of this blighting condition.

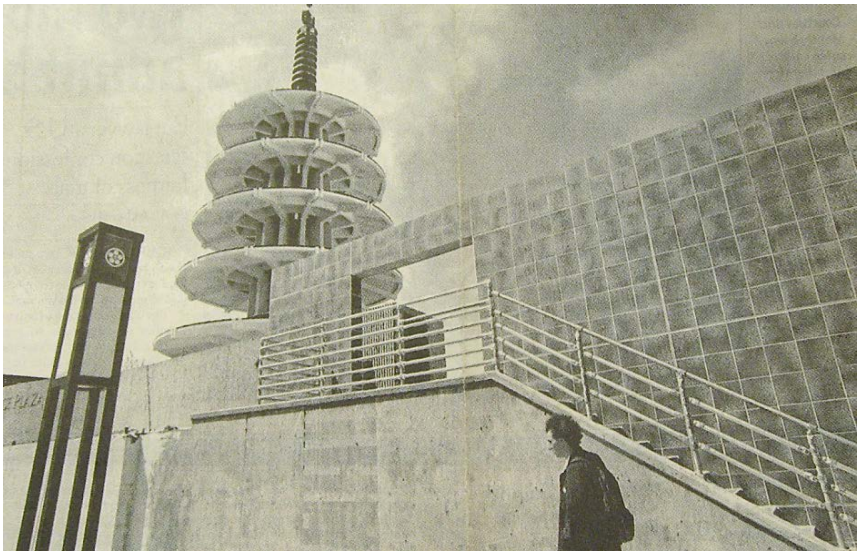
[37] Friends of Japantown Peace Plaza, Japantown Peace Plaza Project, circa 1992 brochure held in the collections of the San Francisco Office of Investment and Infrastructure, Successor to the SFRA.
[38] Clifford Graves, Executive Director of SFRA, Memo to John L. Taylor, Clerk of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, March 21, 1995.

5. The rehabilitation and renovation of the Peace Plaza will be an economic benefit to the Nihonmachi Mall as tourists attending events at the Peace Plaza, such as the Annual Cherry Blossom Festival, are likely to shop at the stores located in the Mall.

6. The City and County of San Francisco has committed funds from its Open Space funds and the Friends of the Peace Plaza will contribute funds through its fundraising efforts.

By March 1995, Friends of Japantown Peace Plaza had retained H.O.K. Architects (Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum) to rehabilitate the Plaza. Later that same year, it became evident that the leakage of water from the Plaza into the garage beneath it remained a serious concern. This included leaking at drainage pipes and other penetrations into the garage area, as well as evidence of widespread leaking through cracks in the garage ceiling. Various memos, such as that prepared by Hirsch, Wright & Associates, Roofing & Waterproofing Consultants in September 1995, detail some of the issues. In describing the previous attempts to alleviate the leaking, they noted the new waterproofing membrane had been placed over old, and that new concrete had been encapsulated between layers of membrane—neither of which were considered best practices.[39]

It was decided later in the year that The Friends of Japantown Peace Plaza would continue to proceed with the rehabilitation project, but would include the costs for repairing the leakage in the overall project costs. H.O.K. was directed to value engineer the project to accommodate leakage repair.[40]



The new wall and stairs installed along the Geary Boulevard facade of Peace Plaza, described as one of the final projects of Japantown's redevelopment. (San Francisco Examiner, May 8, 2000)

The rehabilitation project continued to languish until June 1998, when members of the Japantown community requested assistance from San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown. Allen Okamoto, Chair of the Friends of Japantown Peace Plaza, noted that $800,000 was then available, and asked the mayor to push the renovation project forward. A memo from the meeting states that Mayor Brown related that Peace Plaza was "one of his favorite places to go in the neighborhood," and that he had announced his candidacy "from this very spot."[41]

In May 2000, the *San Francisco Examiner* reported that the SFRA was on the verge of officially closing Western Addition A-1 as a designated redevelopment area. A photo accompanying the article shows a new wall and stairs

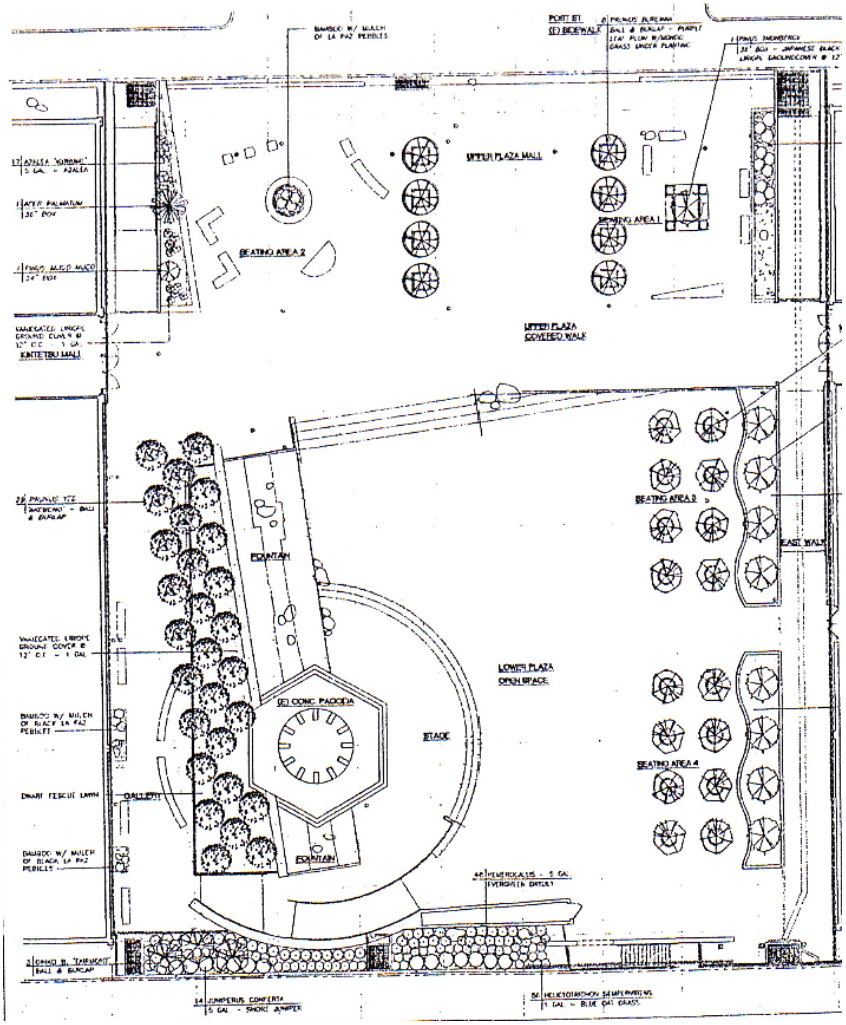
[39] Hirsch, Wright & Associates, Memo to Jeff Mori of The Friends of the Japantown Peace Plaza, entitled "Pre-Design Inspection Japantown Peace Plaza San Francisco, California," September 8, 1995. Collections of the San Francisco Office of Investment and Infrastructure, Successor to the SFRA.

[40] Elena Barnick, SFRA, Memo to Kathy Doi regarding the Japantown Peace Plaza Renovation, January 4, 1996. Collections of the San Francisco Office of Investment and Infrastructure, Successor to the SFRA.

[41] Richard Kono, Senior Deputy Executive Director Western Addition, A-2, Memorandum June 11, 1998 discussing a meeting between Mayor Brown and the Nihonmachi community. Collections of the San Francisco Office of Investment and Infrastructure, Successor to the SFRA.

located along Geary Boulevard, described as "one of the final projects of redevelopment that has received mixed reviews."[42]

Construction of the new wall along Geary Boulevard appears to have coincided with the commencement of the rehabilitation of Peace Plaza. According to Allen Okamoto, the rehabilitation project was carried out by the Department of Public Works (DPW), with the architect, design and materials chosen by DPW.[43] It was this project that resulted in the current appearance of Peace Plaza.



Circa 2000 plan of Peace Plaza as remodeled, attributed to the architect Kenji Murokami

The new design eliminated Peace Plaza's reflecting pools at Post Street, as well as the covered pavilion. The reflecting pool for the Peace Pagoda was replaced by a fountain consisting of a slate wall embedded with the eternal flame. The renovation also included the relocation of two large stones, or boulders, which previously stood in the Peace Pagoda's reflecting pool. One is located today near the northeast corner of the Plaza adjacent to Post Street. This stone originally held the English language dedication plaque for the Peace Pagoda. Another boulder is located in the

[42] Ilene Lelchuk, "Japantown 'renewal' leaves scars," *San Francisco Examine*r, May 8, 2000.
[43] Allen Okamoto, email communication March 19, 2015.

southeast quadrant of Peace Plaza in a planting bed adjacent to the red-colored tiled wall near the stairs entering Peace Plaza from Geary Boulevard.[44]

Two boulders that originally stood in the Peace Pagoda's reflecting pool. At left, the boulder which held the English language dedication plaque located near the northeast corner of Peace Plaza. At right, the boulder which presumably held the Japanese language dedication plaque located near the entry stairs from Geary Boulevard.

Following the renovation, problems with water intrusion from Peace Plaza into parking garage continued to be problematic. By 2004 the new fountain flowing had been drained. According to Linda Jofuku, then Executive Director of the Japantown Taskforce, "water began leaking into the public parking garage below the plaza soon after the redesign work was done," and that leaks continued "even when the fountain is not on."[45]

Since that time, the most prominent addition to Peace Plaza is the previously mentioned obelisk fronting the Post Street entrance to Peace Plaza. It was installed in 2005 as part of a project to honor the historic heritage of California's three remaining Japantowns. Three monuments were built following the passage of SB307, the California Japantown Preservation Pilot Project, and with funds provided by the California State Library's Civil Liberties Public Education Program and funds from Proposition 40. Each landmark stands nine feet high and its faces depict the Issei pioneers, World War II incarceration, and current community life. The San Francisco landmark varies slightly from the others in that its depiction of community life includes an image of the Peace Pagoda. San Francisco's landmark was dedicated in June 2005, while the landmark for San Jose was installed in the fall of 2005 in front of the Issei Memorial. The Los Angeles landmark was unveiled at the Union Center for the Arts in Little Tokyo in August 2006.[46]

[44] Richard M. Hashimoto, Corporate Manager, Japan Center Garage Corporation, personal communication April 1, 2015.
[45] Suzanne Pullen, "Chronicle Watch: Working for a Better Bay Area," *San Francisco Chronicle,* March 20, 2004.
[46] California Japanese American Community Leadership Council, "Civil Liberties, accessed March 27, 2015 from: http://cjaclc-ca.org/2014/03/12/civil-liberties/

ARCHITECTURAL INFLUENCES

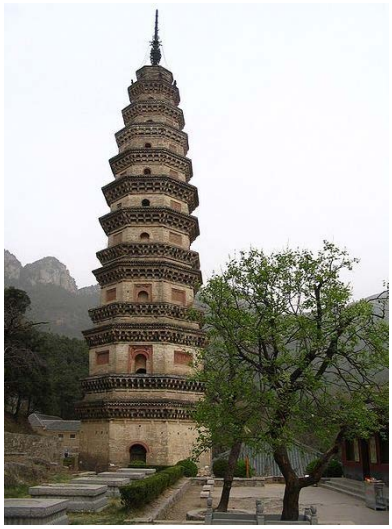
As originally designed and constructed, the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza were overtly Modernist, yet simultaneously rooted in traditional Japanese architecture and aesthetics. To provide context for this blending of influences, the following explores the development of the pagoda form, as well as the advent of Modern architecture in Japan as an influence on Yoshiro Taniguchi.

The Origins of the Pagoda Form

The pagoda form originated in India as the stupa, a dome or bell-shaped monument used for the storage of sacred relics. The form was adopted by the Buddhist tradition and came to symbolize the tomb of the Buddha, as well as the spread of Buddhism throughout East Asia. One of the central features of these stupas was the use of a *yasti*, or mast, which rose from the top of the stupa. This symbolized the axis mundi—the point at the center of the universe that connects heaven and earth.

Along with Buddhism, the stupa form reached China by the 3rd century, where its architecture was blended with that of Chinese watchtowers and pavilions, eventually resulting in a more familiar image of a multi-tiered structure with projecting roofs and a crowning finial. Chinese pagodas were also sometimes built to enhance the *feng-shui* of a given locality. Thus, the pagoda could be used to secure the "geomantic influences for the good of the surrounding district."[47] Most early Chinese pagodas employed masonry construction and served as important public monuments, as well as the most prominent vertical markers within the landscape.

The Great Stupa at Sanchi in India, initially constructed in the 3rd century B.C.E. (Wikipedia)



The pagoda at Pizhi, China originally built in 753 and reconstructed in the 11th century (Wikipedia)

In Japan, the pagoda form arrived with Buddhism in the 6th century and may have been adapted as an extension of the concept of the sacred column. In the central Japanese creation myth, the god Izanagi and goddess Izanami encircle a giant column linking heaven and earth. The concept of a sacred column was frequently applied to Shinto shrines, where tree trunks were installed at the center of the sacred space. Thus, some have described the pagoda—as it applies to Japanese architecture—as being "essentially a 'splendidly ornamented pillar' in the same tradition as the

[47] C.A.S. Williams, *Chinese Symbolism and Art Motifs*, (Tuttle Publishing: North Calrendon, VT, 1974), 296.

sacred Shinto column."[48] Some have also opined that the structures have a spiritual mystique because of "their considerable height and metal spires, pagodas are regularly struck by lightning."[49]

The use of a central pillar in Japanese pagoda design also provided seismic stability. As related by William H. Coaldrake in *Architecture and Authority in Japan*, "In order to stabilize pagodas against earthquake shock they were equipped with a tall, mast-like pillar at the centre known as the *shinbashira*, or 'heart pillar,' which runs from the foundation podium through each storey and culminates in the bronze finial."[50] Some architectural historians have even suggested that Frank Lloyd Wright, following his exposure to Japanese pagodas while building Tokyo's Imperial Hotel, used this concept of a central mast in his designs for rigid-core high-rise structures.[51]

Japan's monumental pagodas are constructed from wood with interlocking posts and beams spreading from the central column. Typically, pagodas have either three or five stories with squared roofs featuring flared eaves. Among the earliest and most famed Japanese pagodas is the one at Hōryū-ji (Temple of the Flourishing Law) in Nara prefecture. The pagoda's central pillar has been dated to 594 A.D., and it is considered one of the oldest wooden buildings in the world. The architectural historian Udo Kultermann has said that Hōryū-ji pagoda "must be the most remarkable work in timber of the world," characterized by "strength and a vigorous handling of materials."[52] The pagoda at the Daigo-ji temple in Kyoto, constructed in 951 A.D., is also considered a National Treasure of Japan. As discussed earlier, a replica of this latter pagoda was originally envisioned for the Japan Center.

The Pagoda at Hōryū-ji temple in Nara prefecture (Wikipedia)

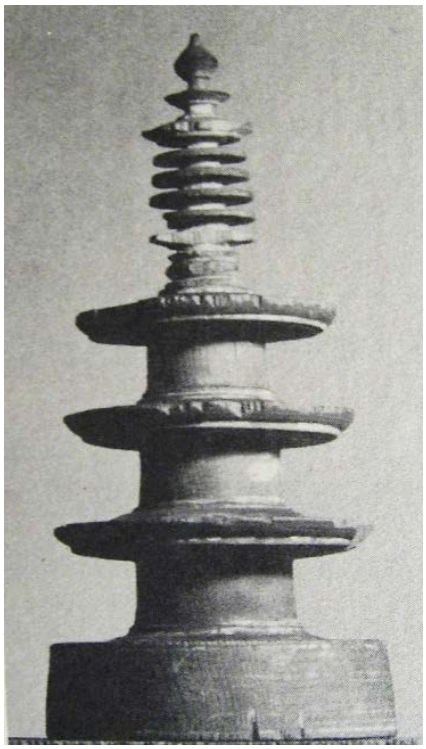
The pagoda at the Daigo-ji temple in Kyoto (japantravelmate.com)

[48] Kevin Nute, Place, Time, and Being in Japanese Architecture, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 30.
[49] Maya Nogami, "Pagodas" accessed 3/30/2015 from: http://thekyotoproject.org/english/pagodas/
[50] William H. Coaldrake, *Architecture and Authority in Japan*,(London: Routledge, 1996), 126.
[51] M. F. Hearn, "A Japanese Inspiration for Frank Lloyd Wright's Rigid-Core High-Rise Structures, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians,* Vol. 50, No. 1 (March 1991), 71.
[52] Udo Kultermann, *New Japanese Architecture*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 9.

The Origin of the Design of the Peace Pagoda

Although Japan's monumental pagodas were among the tallest structures of their age, numerous smaller pagodas were also carved from wood and stone. According to Yoshiro Taniguchi, it was actually one of these smaller pagodas that served as inspiration for his design of the Peace Pagoda. As related by Taniguchi in 1965:

> The first construction of the Pagoda in Japan dates back to the seventh century; and during its long history extending over 1,300 years, the style of this religious tower has attained its characteristic grace and refinement in the fundamental design and the details. Japanese pagodas were originally intended to symbolize the sense of beauty peculiar to this country and also to give expression to the psychological inner reality of our urge to "Prayer" common to the whole of mankind ….
>
> Contrary to the regular style of the Oriental pagoda which is mostly square or octagonal in its plane, I, the designer of the Peace Pagoda, had a preference for the cylindrical plane, which was devised in the ancient Japan of the eighth century (Nara Period). That era witnessed a flowering of Japan's intrinsic culture. A brilliant civilization flourished and prospered there …. In 770 A.D., Empress Koken was so pious as to contribute a hundred thousand miniature pagodas, not more than a foot high, to each of the ten grand temples designated as representative spiritual strongholds for her subjects. Thus the total number of the cylindrical pagodas donated by her reached as many as a million. Thereafter they were commonly named "Hyakuman-to" or the "Million Pagoda."



One of the miniature "Million Pagodas" that inspired Yoshiro Taniguchi's design for the Peace Pagoda (San Francisco Redevelopment Agency)

> They showed such a graceful and exquisite quality with their three- or five-storied, round roofs that these pagodas marked a new epoch in the history of Japanese formative art. …. Though confined to her own domain, this Empress' act of religious contribution was ascribable to her heartiest wishes that the world should remain guided by the absolute principle of "Peace" forever

and ever to come. "Prayer for Eternal Peace of the World" – this was the prevailing cult among the Japanese forefathers. Dedication to this principle should not be allowed to diminish in any age.

Needless to say, the new Pagoda is far from the mere replica of the ancestral device of many centuries ago; it is intended to make full use of the advanced architectural technique so that it would be enjoyed by contemporary people equipped with a modern sense to appreciate the architecture in its true light.

The Peace Pagoda is the cream of architectural beauty attained by the sincerity and painstaking effort of our predecessors. The sublimated grace with its historical significance will strike a responsive chord in the hearts of those who lift up their eyes to this Pagoda.[53]

The "million pagodas" described by Taniguchi were carved of wood and included a hollow cavity at center that was accessed by removing the finial. Inside were small scrolls of paper with Buddhist sutras, or *dharanis*, printed on them. They were commissioned by Empress Koken following the successful repression of a rebellion, and are the first instances of mass-produced text in Japan, as well as some of the oldest printed texts in the world.[54]

The Peace Pagoda at left, and an original "Million Pagoda" at right
(San Francisco Planning Department / Metropolitan Museum of Art)

The reflecting pool for the Peace Pagoda also draws upon traditional Japanese influences, such as the mirror pond used at the *Kinkaku-ji*, or Golden Pavilion at Kyoto. There, the stone islands and rock compositions condense the essence of the world into simple elements and evoke a strong sense of nature and place. As related in *Zen Gardens*, "This connection to nature and the sense of serenity and self-relfection that accompany it go back to the inherent role of nature in Japanese culture, born out of the conditions of the natural environment of Japan."[55]

[53] San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, The Peace Pagoda, (San Francisco, San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, 1965),
[54] Metropolitan Museum of Art, "One of the One Million Pagodas (Hyakumanto) and Invocation, accessed March 16, 2015 from: http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/44955
[55] Mira Locher, *Zen Gardens: The Complete Works of Shunyo Masuno,* (North Clarendon, VT: uttle Publishing, 2012).

The Advent of Modern Architecture in Japan

In ascribing influences to the design of the Peace Pagoda, it is also useful to understand the origins of Modern architecture in Japan, which represented a break from traditional methods in use for more than a millennium. As noted by Udo Kultermann in *New Japanese Architecture*, "all traditional Japanese architecture is fundamentally an architecture of wood."[56] This was both a factor of the country's forestry resources and frequent earthquakes—but just as importantly of the Japanese affinity for nature. In addition to timber framing, wood products were employed in a variety of ways: as roof shingles, paper screens, plank flooring, etc. The overall aesthetic emphasized simplicity, fluid function, and a desire to showcase the inherent beauty of natural materials.

The traditional construction methods used in Japan remained relatively unchanged until the mid-19th century, when Japan was forced to trade with foreign powers—most notably following the 1853 expedition into Tokyo harbor led by Commodore Matthew Perry of the U.S. Navy. Japan's trade and interchange with foreign powers increased dramatically during the Meiji period (1868-1912), as the country embarked on a rapid course of industrialization. This necessitated the need for new architectural methods and engineering expertise. As related by Kultermann, "The light, traditional, Japanese building methods with wood could not be applied to the construction of railway stations, city office blocks and factories. Architects were, therefore, commissioned from Europe, who used their own materials and methods."[57] At the same time, the traditional arts and architecture of Japan made a strong impression in the West, particularly on the Arts and Crafts movement and its emphasis on natural materials and 'honest' construction.

Initially, the prominent buildings designed by westerners in Japan largely copied neoclassical European models and frequently employed masonry construction. Such designs were typical of the British architect, Josiah Conder, who for many years also taught a new generation of Japanese architects at the Imperial College of Engineering. As one critic has noted, "most of these architects, and official Japan as well, were caught in the vicious circle of 19th-century architectural pomposity, deluded by … a false and meaningless version of what Europe had originated and experienced centuries ago."[58]

The Hisaya Iwasaki residence in Tokyo, designed by Josiah Conder and completed in 1896.

If the initial influence of Western architects was tuned to Neoclassical European models, the Japanese would also absorb the influences of the European avant-garde. The late 1910s and early 1920s in Japan were a particularly formative period. Some of the major forces at play were debates between the *Kozoha*, or "structure advocates," who

[56] Udo Kultermann, *New Japanese Architecture*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 7.
[57] Udo Kultermann, *New Japanese Architecture*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 10.
[58] Udo Kultermann, *New Japanese Architecture*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 11.

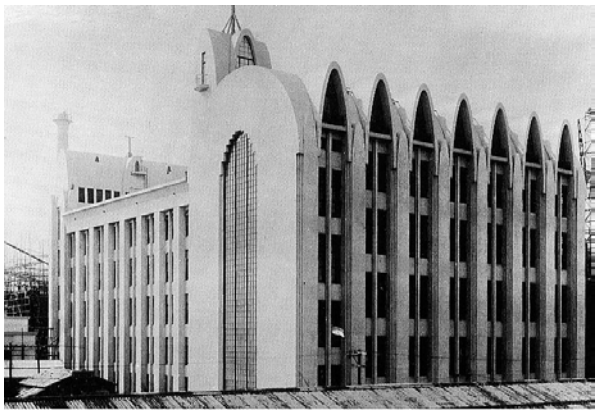
felt that good architecture should flow from scientific principles, and those who felt that architecture was an expression that encompassed both structure and beauty.[59]

In 1920, a group of architecture students at Tokyo Imperial University founded *Bunriha Kenchiku Kai*, or the Secessionist Architectural Society, a name inspired by the influential Vienna Secessionist movement of the turn of the century. As described by Rosa and Lepik, "The organization came to be perceived as a neo-Secessionist group that rose against the teaching of traditional, historical European building style. Its real inspiration was German Expressionism that in the years after World War I was the most powerful force in German architectural life."

One of the *Bunriha Kenchiku Kai*'s founders, Ishimoto Kikuji, travelled to Germany in 1922 and became the first Japanese architect to work with Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus school.[60] During this same period, Frank Lloyd Wright was working in Tokyo on the Imperial Hotel where he associated with a number of Japanese architects and draftsmen.[61] A pupil of Wright's, Antonin Raymond, arrived in Tokyo in 1919 to assist with construction of the hotel and would soon establish an influential and longstanding practice in Japan.

Perhaps no other event was more important to the development of modern Japanese architecture than the great Kanto earthquake of 1923 which set off devastating fires in Tokyo and the port city of Yokohama. The earthquake clearly demonstrated the seismic and fire resistant qualities of reinforced concrete construction, including the survival of Wright's Imperial Hotel. As such, the ideas of the *Kozoha* "structure advocates" resonated with many Japanese. In 1923, Japanese Consul General Oyama stated, "The nations of the world will go on progressing. We shall rebuild Tokio more as a modern city. Our architecture is not as safe in a big city. We must have reinforced concrete and the stable designs of the modern engineer."[62] Nevertheless, during the rebuilding, some of the major buildings constructed in Tokyo were designed by members of the *Bunriha Kenchiku Kai*, including the Shirokiya Department Store, by Ishimoto Kikuji, and the Central Telegraph Office by Yamada Mamoru, both completed in 1925.[63]

Postcard showing Tokyo's Shirokiya Department Store, redesigned by Ishimoto Kikuji in 1925. (Private collection)



The Central Telegraph Office in Tokyo, built in 1925 and designed by Yamada Mamoru. (Wikipedia)

The members of the *Bunriha Kenchiku Kai* continued to hold exhibitions through 1928, though increasingly Japanese architectural ideas focused on rational architecture, as espoused by the *Nihon Kokusai Kenchiku Kai* (Japan International Architectural Association), founded in 1929. During this period a number of Japanese architects

[59] Amani Daiki, "The Founding of Bunriha Kenchiku Kai: "Art" and "Expression" in Early Japanese Architectural Circle, 1888-1920," *Aesthetics*, No. 13 (2009), 235-236.
[60] Iride Rosa and Andres Lepik, "The Berlin-Tokyo connection from late 19th Century to late 1920s," Mori Art Museum, accessed 3/13/15 from: http://www.mori.art.museum/english/contents/tokyo-berlin/about/img/Architecture_the_Berlin-Tokyo_connections.pdf
[61] Kathryn Smith, Frank Lloyd Wright and the Imperial Hotel: A Postscript," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June, 1985), 300.
[62] Robert H. Willson, "Japanese," San Francisco Examiner, December 23, 1923.
[63] Peter McNeil, "Myths of Modernism: Japanese Architecture, Interior Design and the West, c. 1920-1940," *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1992), 283.

traveled to Europe to train with leading figures in Modernist architecture. These included Iwao Yamawaki and Bunzo Yamaguchi, both of whom worked with Walter Gropius between 1928 and 1932, and Junzo Sakakura who worked with Le Corbusier between 1928 and 1936.[64] These architects all returned to practice in Japan, bringing with them new ideas, as well as books and journals.

European Modernists also visited Japan, including Richard Neutra in 1930, and the German Expressionist, Bruno Taut in 1933. Ironically, both Neutra and Taut gravitated to traditional Japanese design, with Neutra mourning that it "will quickly disappear without trace, when the new construction methods and materials are enlisted, like concrete, steel, glass windows."[65]

Yoshiro Taniguchi, Architect

It is during this period of architectural ferment that the architect of the Peace Pagoda, Yoshiro Taniguchi (1904-1979), received his degree in architecture and began practicing. Mr. Taniguchi was born into a family of prominent ceramics makers in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan. He entered the architectural department of Tokyo University in 1925 and graduated in 1928. Among his classmates were city planner Kunio Maekawa, structural technician Fugaku Yokoyama, and architect Junzo Sakakura. In time, their various careers would prove so productive that they earned the nickname "the golden generation."[66]

Yoshiro Taniguchi as pictured in the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's 1965 Peace Pagoda pamphlet

In 1931, Taniguchi became an assistant professor at Tokyo University. The following year he received considerable acclaim for his design of a Hydraulics Laboratory for the Tokyo Institute of Technology. Devoid of any ornamentation, the design of the Laboratory was decidedly Modernist and exhibited many hallmarks of what would come to be known as the "International Style," a name coined for a seminal exhibition on Modern Architecture held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1932.

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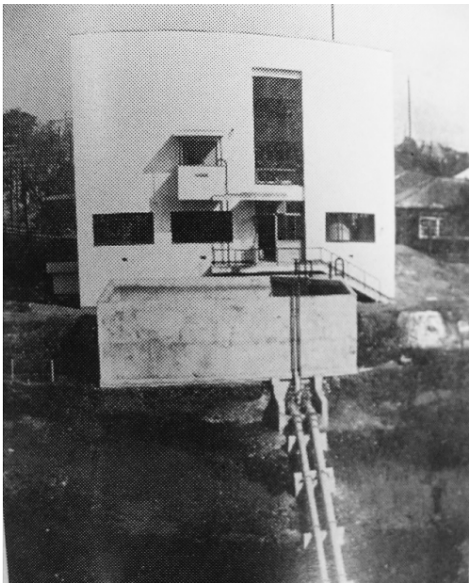
[64] Peter McNeil, "Myths of Modernism: Japanese Architecture, Interior Design and the West, c. 1920-1940," *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1992), 282-283.
[65] Peter McNeil, "Myths of Modernism: Japanese Architecture, Interior Design and the West, c. 1920-1940," *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (1992), 282 .
[66] Hiroki Onobayashi, "A Profile of Yoshiro Taniguchi," *The Japan Architect*, May 1966, 14.

In 1938 Taniguchi traveled to Germany to work on the Japanese Embassy in Berlin where, according to Hiroki Onobayashi, he was greatly impressed with both the architecture of Karl Friedrich Schinkel and Classical architecture.[67] In 1942, Taniguchi received the Japan Institute of Architects' Arts and Science Prize, and the following year received his doctoral degree in engineering and became a professor at Tokyo Industrial University.[68] During this early period of his career, Taniguchi was frequently associated with the designs for International Style institutional buildings. These included several buildings for Keio University in Tokyo, including the Yochisha Main Building (1937), and later the Student Hall and Third School Building for Keio University's Mita campus (1949). The latter two were awarded the Architectural Institute of Japan's Prize in 1949.[69]



The Tokyo Institute of Technology Hydraulics Laboratory (1932)
*(*The Japan Architect, *May 1966, page 15)*

Yochisha Main Building at Keio University (1937)
(Keio University)

In 1947, Taniguchi designed a memorial hall for the author Toson Shimazaki in the town of Magome, Gifu Prefecture. The design of this building blended the form of a traditional Japanese house with contemporary architecture, a feature that would become a hallmark of Taniguchi's subsequent career—especially in the design of memorials and cultural monuments. Indeed, Taniguchi's work during the 1950s, though varied, was marked by a string of important memorial commissions that earned him widespread acclaim.

[67] Hiroki Onobayashi, "A Profile of Yoshiro Taniguchi," *The Japan Architect*, May 1966, 14.
[68] James Philip Hoffsingere, Ph.D., "Yoshiro Taniguchi: Artist-Architect of Japan," *Vance Bibliographies Architecture Series: Bibliography A-436*, February 1981, 2.
[69] Keio University, "The Architecture of Keio University." Accessed February 12, 2015 from: http://www.keio.ac.jp/en/keio_in_depth/keio_view/2014/09.html

The Toson Shimazaki Memorial designed by Yoshiro Taniguchi in 1947
(The Japan Architect, May 1966, page 15)

In 1952, Taniguchi joined Japan's Cultural Properties Specialists Council. That same year, sculptor Isamu Noguchi teamed with Taniguchi on the design of a faculty room and sculpture garden at Tokyo University's Mita campus called *Shin Banraisha*, or "New Building of Welcome." Described as a "landmark of postwar modernism in Japanese art and architecture,"[70] and a "milestone in 20th-century Japanese cultural life," *Shin Banraisha* was designed to honor Noguchi's father, Yone Noguchi, a Japanese poet and instructor at the university.[71] Of interest, Yone Noguchi had lived in San Francisco between 1893 and 1897, where he published two books of poetry.

The Shin Banraisha faculty room at Keio University, designed by sculptor Isamu Noguchi and Yoshiro Taniguchi. (ArchNewsNow)

[70] Japan's Architectural Functionalist, Tokyo Institute of Technology Bulletin, No. 4, 2007, accessed 3/10/15 from http://www.lapis.co.jp/bulletin/archives/no4/history.html
[71] The Noguchi Room at Keio University: Saved or Destroyed?," ArchNewsNow, July 15, 2003, accessed 3/10/15 from http://www.archnewsnow.com/features/Feature116.htm

Following his work on *Shin Banraisha*, Taniguchi designed a number of additional monuments, including a memorial for poet Kyukin Susukida (1956); a memorial for pianist Nobu Koda (1958); a memorial for author Mokutaro Kinoshita (1958); a memorial for Japanese Prime Minister Kei Hara (1959); and the Chidorigafuchi War Memorial (1959). The latter was based on the shape of a Buddhist temple in Kyoto known as the Rokkaku-dō for its hexagonal shape.

Chidorigafuchi War Memorial, built in 1959
(The Japan Architect, Jan-Feb 1959, page 28)

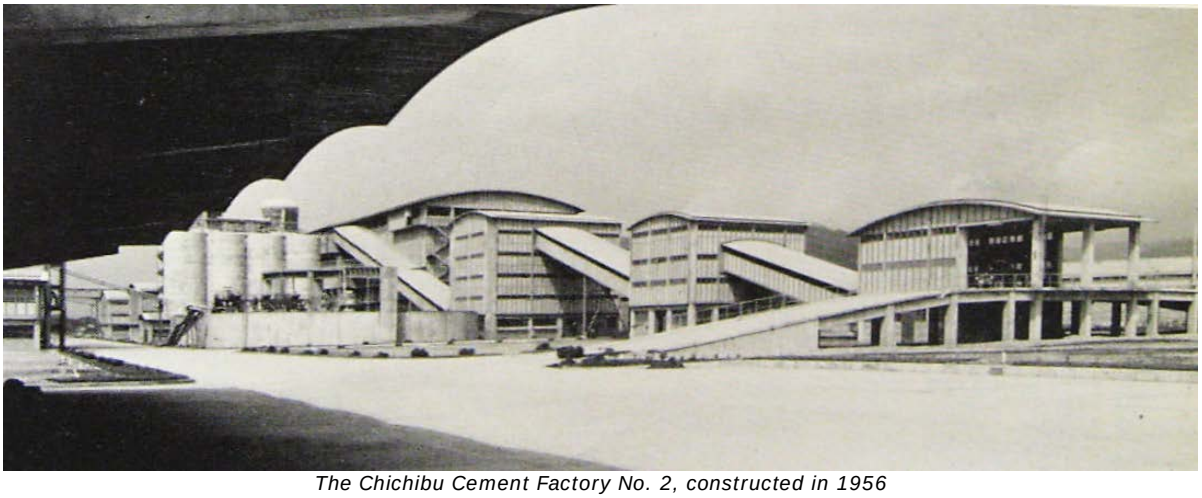
By this time, Taniguchi had earned a reputation as "a link between the newer school of modern architects and the more conservative school that based its work more directly on Japanese vernacular traditions."[72] It is abundantly clear that Taniguchi was interested in traditional Japanese architecture during this period. In 1955 he authored "Today's Focus on the History of Japanese Art" for an exhibit at the National Museum of Art. The following year he wrote an article for *Japan Quarterly* entitled "The Traditional Japanese House and its Contemporary Significance." He also published a book about his impressions of the Shugakuin Imperial Villa in Kyoto, of which he said: "These ideas continue to impress people for many years to come. Such a power may be attributed to the life of beautiful designs expressed in the formative art of the past."[73]

Visiting the Shugakuin Villa over a period of many years and during different seasons, Taniguchi was sometimes poetic in his praise, focusing on senses such as touch and sound:

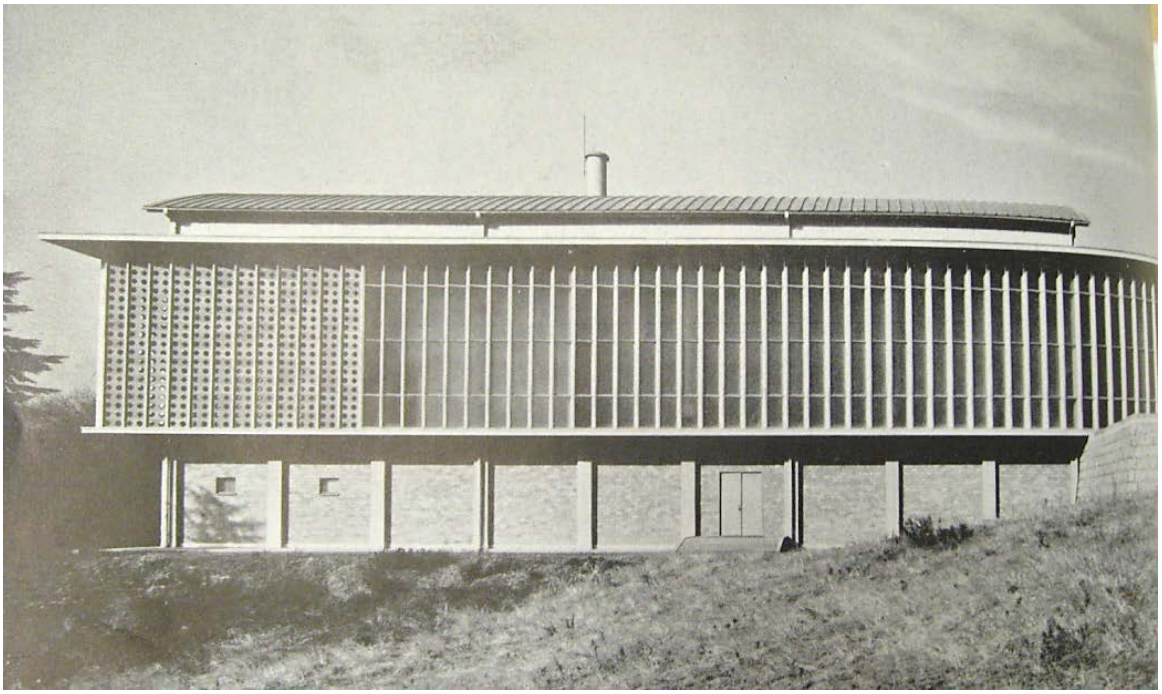
> The moss is so beautiful that it looks like a work of art, inducing us to refrain from walking on it. We feel like removing our footgear and walking on it barefooted to get the feel of the moss directly on the soles.[74]
>
> The sounds of water in this garden are different from natural ones. They are artificial in a way, having been so devised as to be pleasing and cleanse our ears. This is an important design premeditated in constructing the garden … Katsura Imperial Villa too has a pond, and due consideration is given to the plan for the water that pours into the pond and flows out of it. But the primal importance there was laid on the surface of the pond and the views of the buildings, the sound of water being a secondary matter.[75]

[72] "The Architects," *Japan 1962, A Special Issue of the Architectural Review*, Vol. CXXXII, No. 787, September 1962, 222.
[73] Yoshiro Taniguchi, *The Shugakuin Imperial Villa*, (Tokyo: The Mainichi Newspapers, 1956), preface.
[74] Yoshiro Taniguchi, *The Shugakuin Imperial Villa*, (Tokyo: The Mainichi Newspapers, 1956), 2.
[75] Yoshiro Taniguchi, *The Shugakuin Imperial Villa*, (Tokyo: The Mainichi Newspapers, 1956), 3.

Whereas with one hand Taniguchi was interested in designing memorials that captured deep, historic cultural tones, he was also able to make monuments of raw industry. In 1956 he designed the Chichibu Cement Factory No. 2, described "a masterly example of the use of iron and concrete."[76] Writing in Architectural Review, Hiroki Onobayashi states that Taniguchi's "use of simple clear forms and rows of columns in some parts of the buildings, and the buildings' proportions suggest they are actually a part of a background of Renaissance spirit and principle. It is true that Le Corbusier and the modern architecture influenced Taniguchi, but he is also in sympathy with Classical, particularly Renaissance, architecture."[77]



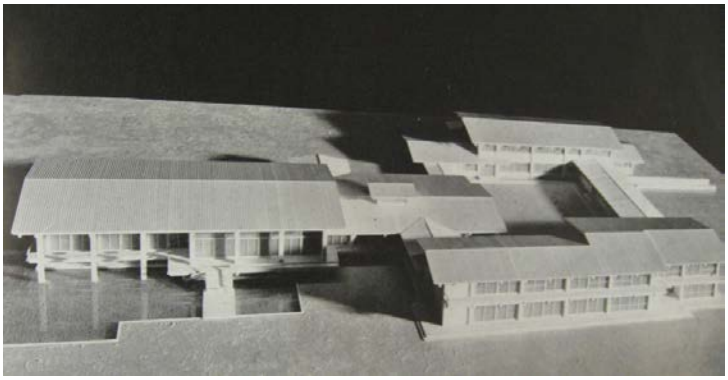
The Chichibu Cement Factory No. 2, constructed in 1956
(The Japan Architect, May 1966, page 15)



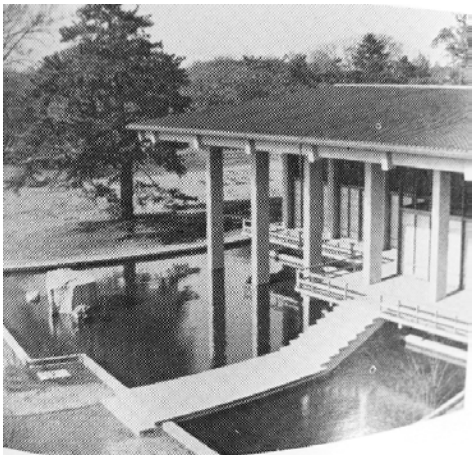
Tokyo Institute of Technology Auditorium, built in 1959
(The Japan Architect, Jan-Feb 1959, p.32)

[76] Udo Kultermann, *New Japanese Architecture*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 29.
[77] Hiroki Onobayashi, "A Profile of Yoshiro Taniguchi," *The Japan Architect*, May 1966, 14.

At the close of the 1950s, Taniguchi designed one of his most famed works, the *Tōgū-gosho*, or palace for the Japanese Crown Prince, Akihito, at the Imperial Akasaka Estate in Tokyo (1959). As described by Hiroki Onobayashi, "Rows of columns and a placement centering on a pond like those in the mansions of medieval aristocracy characterize this palace … On the interior the structural members are clearly exposed in a rational architectural expression."[78] In his work on the Togu Palace, Taniguchi used devices that would be repeated in his designs for the Peace Pagoda, including the use of a reflecting pool with islands of stone, as well as a flat bridge and steps.



Model of the Togu Palace for the Crown Prince
*(*The Japan Architect, *May 1966, page 15)*



Detail photo of the Togu Palace
(Keio University)

Fresh from the acclaim for his work on the Palace, and with his reputation for building memorials and monuments, it is not difficult to understand why Taniguchi was a natural choice as architect for the Peace Pagoda. Writing in 1960, Udo Kultermann stated:

> Yoshiro Taniguchi must be regarded as one of the most widely known, and, in the best sense, popular architects in Japan, whose work can by no means be described as avant-gardiste. Conservative would be a better term…. Taniguchi is also well known for his writings and has made a name for himself as a designer of tombs, monuments and memorials which are all exquisite in themselves and suited to their surroundings.[79]

In 1961 Taniguchi was awarded by the Japan Academy of Arts and the following year was asked to join the organization. His work during this decade included a number of prominent institutional and commercial projects, including the Hotel Okura in Tokyo (1962), the Yamatane Art Museum (1965), and the lobby of the Imperial Theatre in 1966. He was also promoted to Professor Emeritus of Tokyo Industrial University in 1965. Taniguchi would close out the decade with the design of the Toyokan wing of the Tokyo National Museum (1968), and a redesign for the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (1969).[80] A contemporary article in *The Japan Architect* offered Taniguchi high praise: "Not only is he today one of the leading architects of the nation, he also occupies a unique position as a representative artist-architect of highly literary ideas. He is also known as a writer, and several of his many essays have won awards."[81]

[78] Hiroki Onobayashi, "A Profile of Yoshiro Taniguchi," *The Japan Architect*, May 1966, 14.
[79] Udo Kultermann, *New Japanese Architecture*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 29.
[80] *The Japan Times*, "Yoshio Taniguchi: Thriving in the Shadows of Greatness," accessed February 12, 2015 from: http://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2014/09/06/style/yoshio-taniguchi-thriving-shadow-greatness/#.VN1A_ZJ958E
[81] Hiroki Onobayashi, "A Profile of Yoshiro Taniguchi," *The Japan Architect*, May 1966, 14.

The Hotel Okura in Tokyo
(Wikipedia)

The lobby of the Hotel Okura in 1964
(Domus)

The Toyokan wing of the Tokyo National Museum
(Wikipedia)

During the final decade of the architect's life, architectural bibliographies indicate he remained active. This included collaborative work on the Kanazawa Sky Building and the Hotel Okura in Amsterdam, as well as a guest house annex for the Togu Palace and a Cemetery for the Temple Josen-ji. In 1973 he was awarded the Order of Cultural Merits for "his work in preserving the Japanese style in construction."[82] Taniguchi died of cancer at a Tokyo hospital in February 1979, and it appears his only commission built in the United States was the Peace Pagoda. His son, Yoshio Taniguchi (1937-) is also a prominent architect, best known for his redesign of the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2004.

[82] Anthony C. White, "Yoshiro Taniguchi: A Selected Bibliography," *Vance Bibliographies*, Architecture Series: Bibliography #A 2360, 1990, 1.

In some respects, Taniguchi's career during this period was symbolic of a larger trend in Japanese post-war architecture—that of the need to find meaningful cultural expression while still using contemporary materials. As described by Udo Kultermann in 1960:

> A new recognition is emerging in structural techniques of the particular "Japaneseness" of Japan, and this has led to a critical attitude toward Western developments. In concrete frame construction—although often reflecting recent works by Le Corbusier—forms have been devised essentially suited to the Japanese climate, which correspond better to their traditions than the functionalist designs of the twenties. It is characteristic that today not only one side of Japanese tradition, that of the tea house and of the palace of Katsura is considered important, but also the other, recorded in the majestic temples and towers of the Nara period. The one-sided approach to building, which was a product of a European attitude of mind, has been overcome in Japan, and a complete expression of the innate character and spirit of the peoples is now sought.[83]

[83] Udo Kultermann, *New Japanese Architecture*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 13.

THE FORMATION OF JAPANTOWN

The following narrative is largely reprised from the 2011 *Japantown Historic Context Statement* prepared by Donna Graves in association with a historic survey by Page & Turnbull. This document traces the evolution of *Nihonjinmachi*, or "Japanese people's town," from the Japanese settlement of the Western Addition through World War II, followed by the redevelopment of the Japantown area. As noted in the document:

> The historic Japanese community of San Francisco, centered for the past century in Japantown, is the first and oldest urban community of its kind in the continental United States. Japanese began to arrive in California in 1869, when a handful of men and women migrated to San Francisco …. After Japan liberalized emigration restrictions in the mid-1880s, the number of Japanese coming to the United States climbed more rapidly as young men sought to leave sparse economic opportunities in their home country.
>
> …. Early Japanese immigrants to San Francisco had settled in Chinatown. This co-location of Asian immigrants fit a pattern that was replicated across the Western United States during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Communities of Japanese and Chinese immigrants have distinctive but related histories shaped by immigration policies, changing demands for cheap labor, restrictions on land ownership, and racial animus …. Areas of town already inhabited by Chinese immigrants, who began arriving in California during the Gold Rush, were often the only neighborhoods that permitted the first waves of Japanese immigrant men to find residences and set up small businesses.[84]

The primary catalyst for the formation of San Francisco's Japantown was the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, which destroyed the northeastern portion of the city and displaced hundreds of thousands of residents. Many took refuge in the Western Addition, a large area in north-central San Francisco that had largely been spared by the disaster. Laid out in a grid pattern, the Western Addition was created in the 1850s and expanded the city's original boundaries westward from Larkin to Divisadero streets. Although formal development of the area was initially sparse, more concentrated development arrived in tandem with the extension of new privately-owned streetcar lines during the final quarter of the nineteenth century. These included the Geary Street Railroad and Sutter Street Railroad, as well as the Metropolitan Electric Railroad running out O'Farrell Street and the California Street Cable Railroad.

With direct connections to downtown and the financial district, the Western Addition emerged as a "streetcar suburb," with much of the new construction geared to meet the demands of the city's growing middle class. This included rows of semi-identical row houses developed by firms such as The Real Estate Associates, as well as enclaves of larger, architect-designed homes for the more affluent. Demographically, the area was dominated by persons of European ancestry, with most non-European residents employed as domestics. Notably, the area also included a large Jewish population as evidenced by the construction of Congregation Ohabai Shalom's temple at 1881 Bush Street (1895), as well as Congregation Sherith Israel's temple at 2266 California Street (1904).

The Development of Nihonjinmachi

In the wake of the 1906 disaster, portions of the Western Addition underwent a rapid demographic shift as displaced residents sought places to live. As related in the *Japantown Historic Context Statement*:

> Many of the neighborhood's stately pre-disaster buildings, which had previously functioned as single-family dwellings, were divided into flats and rooms and let to boarders to satisfy the acute housing shortage. As the neighborhood became more densely occupied, it also grew more racially and ethnically diverse and more working class in character. In addition to the Japanese population formerly of Chinatown and South Park who sought new homes in the Western Addition neighborhood, the Jewish population grew, and Mexican Americans, African Americans, Filipinos and other ethnic groups also gravitated to the Western Addition-Fillmore area.[85]

[84] Donna Graves & Page & Turnbull, Japantown Historic Context Statement, Revised May 2011, (San Francisco, Page & Turnbull), 25, 27-28.
[85] Donna Graves & Page & Turnbull, Japantown Historic Context Statement, Revised May 2011, (San Francisco, Page & Turnbull), 16-17.

> … San Francisco's Japanese population relocated here [the Western Addition] in significant numbers. This process was recorded and encouraged by editorials in *Shin-Sekai* (The New World newspaper, originally a publication of the Japanese YMCA until it split off in 1897), which predicted that rents in the area would soon be forced down as ruined parts of the city were rebuilt. The publication encouraged Japanese to establish a new and permanent community in the Western Addition.

Among those who relocated to the Western Addition following the 1906 earthquake was the grandfather of Robert Sakai, third generation business owner of Uoki K. Sakai Market. Named after Robert's grandfather, the market was Japantown's oldest and longest-running grocery store until it closed in 2012. Sakai retells the story of how his grandfather opened the market in Japantown's formative years:

> My grandfather started out as a fish peddler and because he was a cook, he made connections with a lot of people at the wharf. He would go down to Fisherman's Wharf and buy fish and sell it in the community. Eventually he got a horse and buggy. Most of the community was down in the South of Market before the 1906 earthquake, but after the 1906 earthquake land was cheap…He was able to rent a place on Geary and that's where we started our business...right across from the 1600 block of Post. We were right next to Benkyodo, on the same block… Benkyodo started the same year as our market. That was the beginning of the current Japantown.[86]

View east on Geary Street at Webster Street, December 8, 1911. The future site of the Japan Center is at left. (SFMTA Photo Archives)

[86] Robert Sakai, interview with Desiree Smith, 8 June 2017.

Japantown continued to develop as a neighborhood as more and more Japanese or Japanese American moved into the area and established businesses and community services. This is described in more detail in the *Japantown Historic Context Statement*:

> By the time of the 1910 Census, the core area of Japantown, bounded approximately by Bush Street (north), Geary Street (south), Webster Street (west), and Laguna Street (east), was home to more than 50 Japanese-owned commercial establishments, and to most of the 4,700 Japanese residing in the city. The commercial infrastructure included ethnic mainstays such as Japanese grocery stores, importers, and restaurants. Support for the still largely single male population was visible in several Japanese pool halls, residence hotels, and employment agencies. The growing presence of families was reflected in a Japanese kindergarten, a dressmaker, and several midwives. However, property records from the same time show no Japanese owners in the area, even though the Alien Land Law restricting Asian immigrants from owning property did not occur until 1913. Rather, Japanese Americans at that time typically lacked the accumulated capital to purchase property. Later, when the Alien Land Law did restrict Asian immigrants to three-year leases on property, the practice of recording property ownership in legal trust under the name of a cooperative (non-Asian) partner who could legally own property became common **….**
>
> Japanese names began to appear as property owners in the area in the 1920s, as the *Nisei* generation took ownership of their family homes and businesses. By 1930, at least 55 parcels were Japanese owned. Prior to American entry into World War II, this number had more than doubled to 122. While some Japanese purchased property and recorded it in the name of their American-born children, many continued to use the convention of land trusts with cooperative partners because of the ongoing political agitation against the Japanese, which included efforts to divest American-born children of Japanese descent of their U.S. citizenship.[87]

As with many other immigrant communities, the residents of Japantown did not announce their ethnic identity with architectural monuments or colorful displays, but rather sought to blend in with the fabric of their adopted country. This fact seems to have perplexed Euro-American residents of San Francisco, possibly because they were comparing the Japanese colony to the Chinese and their more readily identifiable enclave in Chinatown. Foreshadowing the comments of Charles Caldwell Dobie a decade-and-a-half later, Robert Willson wrote in the *San Francisco Examiner* of December 1923:

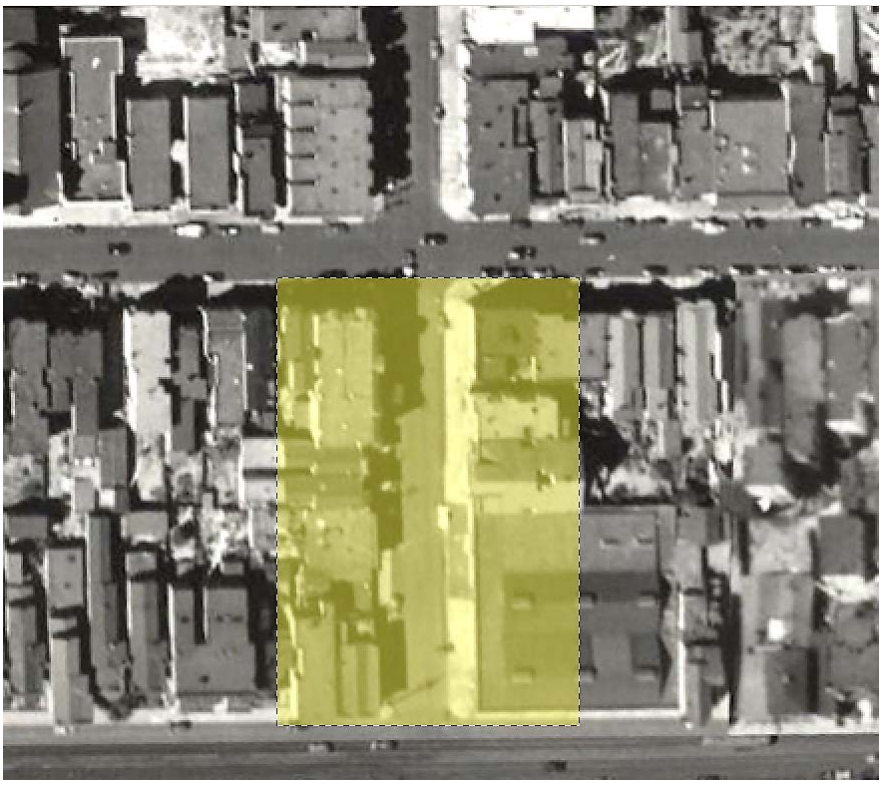
> The Japanese colony has secured a firm footing in the very heart of San Francisco. Geary, Post and Sutter streets between Van Ness and Fillmore Street, have become a Japanese district. Stores and shops for the Japanese are in this district. Japanese stores for the American trade cling to Grant Avenue and share in the business of Chinatown even to the extent of Chinese wares.
>
> It is the picturesque that the outsider looks for in a foreign land or in a foreign colony. "Little Tokyo" – you may have heard of it, and imagined some quaint locality of Oriental architecture, kimono-clad butterflies and strange temples. But the Japanese have never built in San Francisco, and have sold kimonos to others for the drab costume of "civilization" ….
>
> The Japanese race once stood as an example among races of the poetic, fanciful, picturesque and aesthetic, made a part of everyday life and environment. These aspects are passing in Japan as they are laid aside here, apparently with little regret. The practical side of life—business, commerce and political ambition—have taken firm possession of the Japanese mind.[88]

[87] Donna Graves & Page & Turnbull, *Japantown Historic Context Statement*, Revised May 2011, (San Francisco, Page & Turnbull), 29-30.
[88] Robert H. Willson, "Japanese," San Francisco Examiner, December 23, 1923.

The practical side of the residents of Japantown served them well as San Francisco and the rest of the nation entered the depths of the Depression during the 1930s. On the eve of World War II, the neighborhood was in some ways as prosperous as it had ever been. As related in the *Japantown Historic Context Statement*:

> …. Hard work, frugality, and a largely family-based labor pool allowed Japantown businesses to weather the Depression … By 1940, Japantown boasted more than 200 Japanese-owned businesses and a population of over 5,000. The thriving community included its own professionals – doctors, dentists and lawyers – as well as Nisei architect Gentoko "George" Shimamoto, whose practice at 1534 Geary Boulevard had designed Buddhist churches in San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose. There were stores to fill every need – dry goods, groceries, books, bicycles and hardware. Hungry diners had choices of American-style soda fountains, sushi and chop suey restaurants and freshly made manju. Nikkei auto mechanics, plumbers and cobblers worked on cars, houses, and shoes. It was not uncommon to find a diverse, multi-racial group of patrons eating side-by-side at the family-run businesses such as the Mikado Cafeteria, which served hot dogs and ham-and-egg sandwiches, as well as its popular fried noodles. Japantown of 1940 was part of the web of modern American commerce, but still featured four traditional *sentos*, or public bathhouses. Employment agencies still helped Issei newcomers find connections to prospective employers.

Japantown merchants Dave Tatsuno and his father shortly before removal, April 4, 1942. (Dorothea Lange, via the U.C. Berkeley Bancroft Library)



1938 aerial photo with the approximate location of Peace Plaza highlighted (Harrison Ryker via David Rumsey Map Collection)

World War II and Its Aftermath

Two months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt had signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942 which allowed for the establishment of restricted military zones on the West Coast. At the headquarters of the Western Defense Command at the Presidio of San Francisco, General John L. DeWitt issued a military proclamation that "all enemy aliens and all persons of Japanese ancestry" were subject to military regulation.[89] As related in the *Japantown Historic Context Statement*:

> By late March 1942, DeWitt began issuing Civilian Exclusion Orders expelling "all persons of Japanese ancestry, including aliens and non-aliens" from the West Coast military zones. In a little over 4 months, more than 120,000 Americans of Japanese Ancestry were forced from their homes and interned by the government under the guise of national security. Forty years later, after extensive research and testimony, the Congressional Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians would find that Executive Order 9066 and the internment of Japanese Americans was "a grave injustice" arising from "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership."
>
> The entire Japanese community of San Francisco, both citizens and foreign-born, was ordered to register and eventually report for processing to various sites throughout San Francisco including the Kinmon Gakuen building on Bush Street, the YMCA Building on Buchanan Street, and Raphael Weill School (now Rosa Parks Elementary), from which the last busloads of Japanese Americans departed the City. By April, they were sent to various "Assembly" centers, like Tanforan, a hastily and poorly converted racetrack in San Bruno that was used as a temporary detention camp. From there, they were shipped out to permanent internment camps in rural areas throughout the

[89] Donna Graves & Page & Turnbull, *Japantown Historic Context Statement*, Revised May 2011, (San Francisco, Page & Turnbull), 42.

Western U.S., where they lived under armed guard in temporary housing and surrounded by barbed wire. Most San Francisco residents were relocated to a camp known as Topaz, located near Delta, Utah ….

A bus loaded with persons of Japanese ancestry bound for the Tanforan Assembly Center, April 29, 1942. (Dorothea Lange, via the U.C. Berkeley Bancroft Library)

Hiroshi Shimizu, whose parents had been relocated from San Francisco to various incarceration camps, was born in Topaz, also known as the Central Utah Relocation Center. Shimizu describes his "extensive history of incarceration" from birth through age five:

> From birth to about four months, I was in Utah. Then our family moved to, or was transported to, Ellis Island for deportation, or, for exchange. But, the ship was full and they didn't need us, so we were sent to Rohwer in Arkansas, which is another of the American concentration camps. We were only there for about a week and were then transferred to Tule Lake in Northern California, which was the segregation center for the so-called disloyal Japanese. We were there until I was three. And because my parents had renounced their American citizenship, we were detained for over two years after the war ended. It was at the end of 1947 when we came to San Francisco - my parents returned to San Francisco and for my two sisters and me, it was our first visit.[90]

Shimizu's two sisters were also born in incarceration camps - one was born in Tule Lake, California and the other in Crystal City, Texas. He reflects on what the experience must have been like for his mother:

> It wasn't really until much later in life that I grasped how much of a life change it was for my mother to enter incarceration as a wife and emerge three and a half years later as a mother of three children. [91]

[90] Hiroshi Shimizu, interview with Desiree Smith, June 8, 2017.
[91] Ibid.

Another first-hand account comes from long-time Japantown resident and business owner, Robert Sakai:

> My father was very hurt by the relocation, because he had really bought into the idea that America is a melting pot and that if you work hard and you keep your nose clean, that this is a place where you could live and make a good life. And I think it really hurt him that the government would come in and without really any evidence, just tell them you have to get on a bus and leave. [92]

The years after the war saw many Japanese Americans return to Japantown, as described in the *Japantown Historic Context Statement*:

> Following the war, many Japanese Americans returned to Japantown, which had largely become occupied by wartime defense industry workers. Starting over was a particular hardship for most Japanese American families who did not own property, as temporary housing was often full…. The War Relocation Authority coordinated formal resettlement of San Francisco's Japantown after Proclamation 21 of December 18, 1944 rescinded the West Coast ban on persons of Japanese ancestry. From its San Francisco base, the Northern California WRA office oversaw resettlement of evacuees from San Jose to Santa Rosa up until May of 1946, when the WRA regional office in San Francisco closed … Approximately 2,500 Japanese resettled in San Francisco in the first months of 1946, nearly half of the pre-war population, and almost two-thirds had arrived by October of that year to begin the complex task of rebuilding individual lives, businesses and community organizations ….

Japanese Americans continued to resettle back into their old neighborhood in San Francisco, as explained in the *Japantown Historic Context Statement*:

> By 1949, Japantown had regained a lively, if reduced, commercial sector centered at Post and Buchanan streets. A 1948 Evacuation-Resettlement Directory published by the *Nichi Bei Times* listed over 150 Nikkei businesses and services, down from pre-war listings of more than 400 businesses …. Nikkei were rebuilding the Japantown community within a neighborhood that had witnessed a dramatic transformation during the war years. The area was still multi-racial, but was now widely known for its African American population, and especially a thriving nightlife supported by Black jazz and blues clubs.[93]

[92] Robert Sakai, interview with Desiree Smith, 8 June 2017.
[93] Donna Graves & Page & Turnbull, *Japantown Historic Context Statement*, Revised May 2011, (San Francisco, Page & Turnbull), 42-52.

Geary Boulevard just east of Buchanan Street, 1949. This block would be redeveloped as the Japan Center, with the east end of Peace Plaza replacing the building at far left. (San Francisco Public Library Historical Photo Collection, AAX-0177)

Jerry Johnson, an African American resident of the Western Addition, recalls that the relationship between Blacks and the Japanese was cordial:

> I arrived in 1946. My mom was already here. Before that l lived in New Orleans. I enlisted in the Navy when I was 17. My mom was living on Post and Fillmore. My sister was living on Sutter and Buchanan. All of those houses had been occupied by Japanese. They [Japanese who had been sent to incarceration camps] started coming in shortly after I got here. They came in drips and drabs. The first account I opened was with the Bank of Tokyo. It was very cordial relationships between Japanese and Blacks. It was a good relationship. One of the first things to open up was the *Nichi Bei Times*, and then gradually they began to open restaurants. Blacks had opened up several restaurants as well. [94]

Robert Sakai also remembers how the lives of Blacks and Japanese Americans in the neighborhood overlapped on a regular basis when he was a young child. Jimbo's Bop City, a famous African American jazz club, was his grandparents' neighbor:

> I walked to school. But afterschool I wouldn't come home right away because my parents were both working. So I went to the [family] store at 1680 Post. The market was on the ground floor and my grandfather, my single uncle, and my two single aunts lived upstairs with my grandmother. I would be there with them. I think it was interesting that Jimbo's Bop City was right next to us. I remember Mr. Jimbo used to be really nice. Later on I was always surprised that my grandmother and my uncles and aunts would not get more upset with him because he had that jazz club. From what they told me, a lot of very famous jazz players went there and that had to have happened at night, right? I was never there at night, because my parents would take me home after they closed the store. It had to have been noisy. But he was a really nice guy. They always thought he was a pretty good neighbor.[95]

[94] Personal communication with the author, July 15, 2015.
[95] Robert Sakai, interview with Desiree Smith, 8 June 2017.

When asked to describe what Japantown was like when he was growing up there in the 1940s and 1950s, Hiroshi Shimizu notes the community feel, and reiterates the interrelated lives and relationships between Japanese Americans and Blacks in the neighborhood:

> It was a real community at that time….especially Post Street between Laguna and Webster. That's where a lot of the businesses and commerce were located - grocery stores and barbershops. There was a hotel too. My first dentist was on that block, on the south side of Post Street. There was a Nissei barbershop that was run by Willie Ito. His son was a friend of my friend's older brother; he was a little bit older than me. There was Post Street Market, whose owner was a friend of my fathers because they had come from the same prefecture in Japan. Takahashi's was right around where the bank is right now… On the other side was the Uoki Sakai Market, and the Bop City was right there too. Soko Hardware was right on the corner. I think this was a little bit later, somewhere in the mid-1950s or so; Wong's Bakeshop was there on Post Street. They were our neighbors on Laguna Street. In fact, they were just the next building over… it really had a community feel.
>
> …During the internment, all the Japanese families had to leave their possessions and their homes. Some left them in the care of African Americans in the community with the condition that they'd be allowed to come back after being released from camp. That allowed African American families to save up enough money to buy their own homes, because they lived there rent-free during the three to four years that Japanese Americans were incarcerated. Once they got out of camp and moved back in to their homes, the African Americans started buying properties in the Western Addition community. So that goes back a long way when we had these connections.[96]

Redevelopment

The multi-racial, multi-ethnic nature of the Western Addition stood apart from many other San Francisco neighborhoods. The aging and crowded building stock was frequently neglected by absentee landlords, and racial animus hampered efforts by would-be buyers to obtain loans. In just a few years, the influx of war workers had more than quintupled the number of African Americans residing in the city, from approximately 5,000 in 1940 to 32,000 in 1945, with most living in the Western Addition.[97] As recounted in the *Japantown Historic Context Statement*:

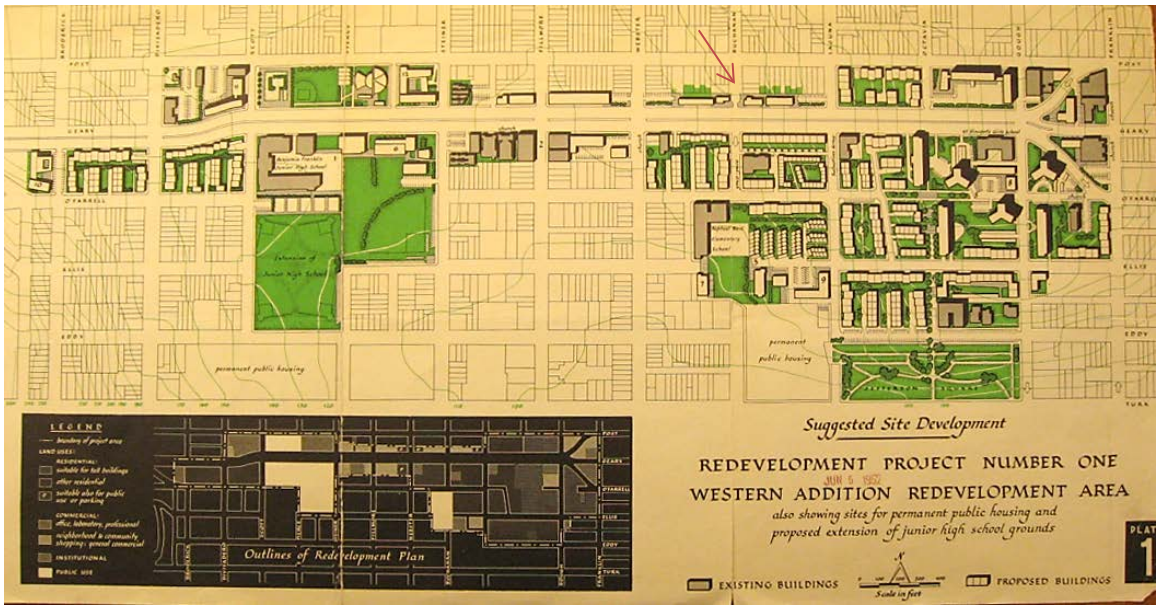
> As early as 1942, while many of its residents were being interned, Japantown was being targeted for "slum clearance." In April of that year, the *San Francisco News* announced that civic and business leaders "went all out to find a suitable plan that will prevent the Japanese district from turning into the worst slum in the history of the city." … In 1948, a portion of San Francisco's Western Addition including much of Japantown was selected as one of the first large-scale urban renewal projects in the nation. The National Housing Act of 1949 set forth federal policies designed to address areas of "urban blight," which were defined as neighborhoods with major influxes of new residents, overcrowding, cases of tuberculosis, and populations other than those of European descent–all characteristics of the Japantown-Fillmore area. San Francisco's Planning Department had already begun establishing a case for rebuilding older neighborhoods with maps of blighted areas and a pilot study of redevelopment possibilities for the Western Addition…
>
> The Western Addition fit the needs of city planners and downtown developers, who saw the neighborhood as the best site for new commercial and housing developments that would increase tax revenues and provide new vehicle access through the city, connecting downtown with the middle-class neighborhoods of the Richmond and Sunset districts. By cataloguing the Western Addition's "substandard and slum housing conditions, overcrowding, lack of recreational space and intermixture of deleterious influences," eligibility for federal redevelopment funds was

[96] Hiroshi Shimizu, interview with Desiree Smith, 8 June 2017.
[97] Tim Kelley Consulting, The Alfred Williams Consultancy, VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting, *San Francisco African American Citywide Historic Context Statement 1579-2014*, January 2015, 43,

established, and economic and social arguments were made for removing the businesses, residences and residents of the neighborhood.

From its inception, leaders of the ethnic communities that now called the neighborhood home were alarmed and worked to rally opposition to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's (SFRA) plans. In July 1948, the Buchanan Street YMCA hosted a meeting of over 300 residents, who heard NAACP President and publisher of the Sun-Reporter, Dr. Carleton Goodlett, speak about the threats posed by urban renewal. *Progressive News* publisher, Michi Onuma, cautioned the gathered throng that "no guarantees have been provided that new housing built in the area will not be priced out of the range of the average worker living there" and that "scores of small businessmen would be wiped out by the plan." The Council for Civic Unity organized a meeting of Japanese American property owners and pledged to fight for "protection of minority groups in redevelopment plans." The JACL expressed its acute concern about redevelopment impacts and demanded that the SFRA incorporate several points into its plan to protect the rights of residents and small business owners ….

Despite these prophetic voices, and years of delay caused by lawsuits and the complications of developing a plan for relocating residents, the SFRA began acquiring properties in the late 1950s and mass clearance of much of the neighborhood through the use of eminent domain was accomplished within ten years. This undertaking was conducted in two project areas: A-1 and A-2.



Map of Redevelopment Area A-1, date stamped June 1952.
The arrow at top has been inserted to show the future location of Peace Plaza.
(San Francisco Public Library History Center)

The A-1 redevelopment area encompassed an irregular area of 27 blocks, including much of Japantown south of Post Street. The SFRA's Western Addition Project Office was established in the Buchanan YMCA building in 1958 …. Eight thousand residents were evicted by the A-1 phase of redevelopment, displacing the neighborhood's multi-ethnic populace without a comprehensive plan for finding new homes. Nearly all of the area's residents rented or leased their homes and commercial establishments before urban renewal and thus received no relocation assistance or

compensation. Additionally, only 686 units of the 2,014 new housing units constructed under the SFRA plan were offered at low to moderate rental prices, making it almost impossible for most previous tenants to return to the neighborhood.

Funds from the federal highway program created the new Geary Expressway, which sliced through what had historically been the Japantown-Fillmore neighborhood with its southern border along O'Farrell Street. Hence, the Geary Expressway became a physical and psychological dividing line between the African American community to the south, where public housing projects intended for low-income populations were built, and the more affluent communities of European ancestry to the north, with Japanese Americans located at what Doris Matsumoto described as the "grey area in the middle."[98]

Richard Hashimoto's lived experience supports this finding:

We share this really great history with the African American community and we had a really close connection but when Redevelopment came in and built Geary Boulevard, it sort of separated the two communities.[99]

View west on Geary Street at Webster Street just prior to widening, December 1958. (SFMTA Photo Archives)

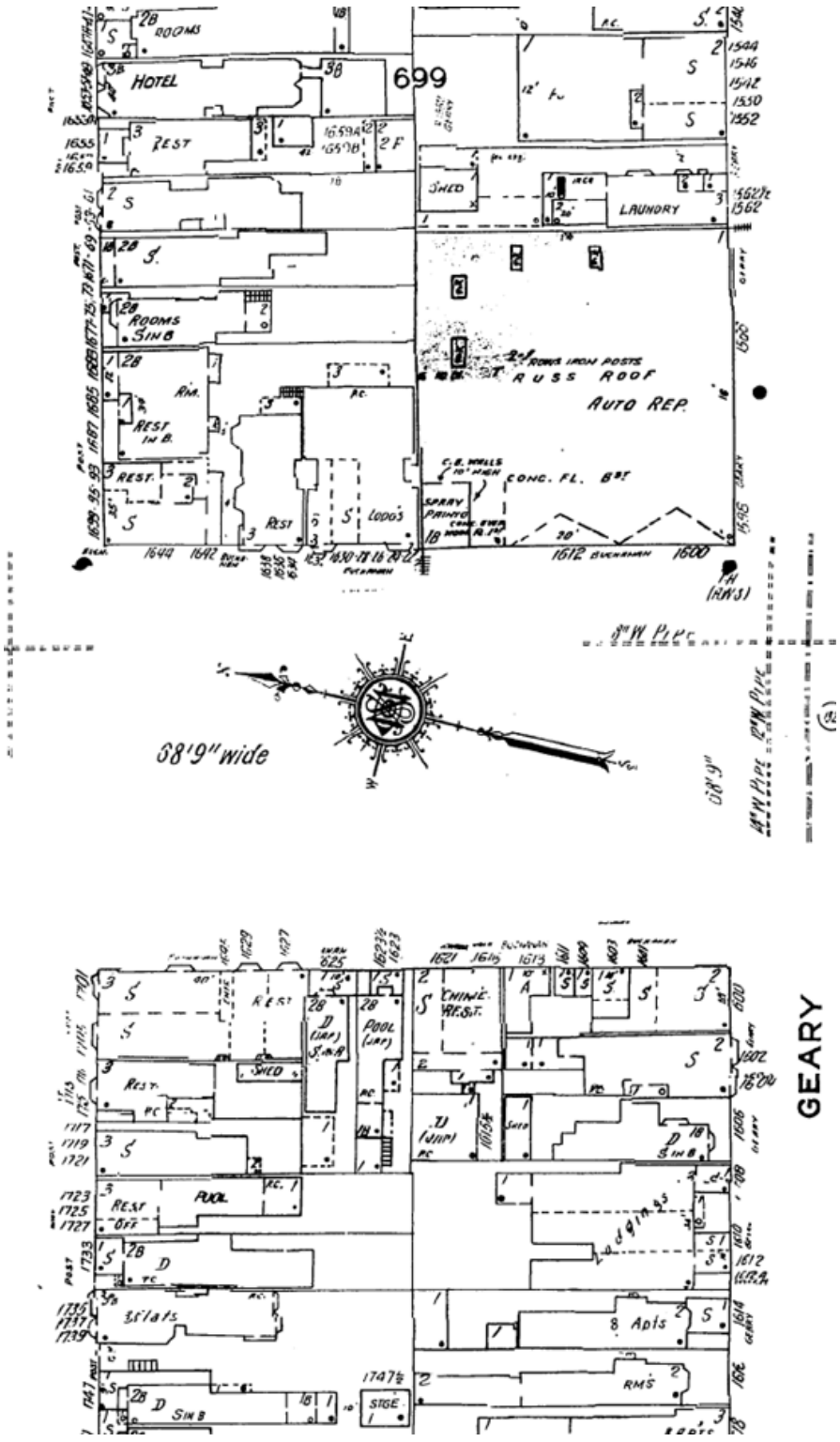
The area where Peace Plaza stands today was, in the early 1950s, a thriving commercial district characterized by shops restaurants, dwellings and lodging houses. According to the 1953 city directory, some of the businesses located along the 1600 block of Buchanan Street included Ken's Barber Shop (1603), Lucky Bait Shop (1605), Man Far Low Restaurant (1615), Fuji Hotel (1622), Tosbie's Barber Shop (1629), Mikado Hotel (1645) and the Five Stars Luncheonette (1649). Nearby businesses on the 1600 and 1700 blocks of Post Street included the Tokyo Parlor Restaurant (1669), Spiritual Record Shop (1673), Mt. Trinity Baptist Church (1681), Soko Hardware (1698), Nakagawa Shohinkan Co dry goods (1701), Gosha-Do Books & Stationary (1705), the Nakashima Theatrical Agency (1711) and Minato Japanese Dishes (1715) .

[98] Donna Graves & Page & Turnbull, *Japantown Historic Context Statement*, Revised May 2011, (San Francisco, Page & Turnbull), 53-59.
[99] Richard Hashimoto, interview with Desiree Smith, 8 June 2017.

In an oral interview, Hiroshi Shimizu discusses how the neighborhood no longer felt like the tight-knit community he knew it to be before Redevelopment:

> It didn't occur to me how much the fabric of community was destroyed by redevelopment, but you know, afterwards I saw that it did. Most, well, I think all of the businesses that were there had to move because of redevelopment. They moved and closed shop soon after or just went out of business and they were not replaced by businesses that felt like they were a part of community.[100]

[100] Hiroshi Shimizu, interview with Desiree Smith, 8 June 2017.

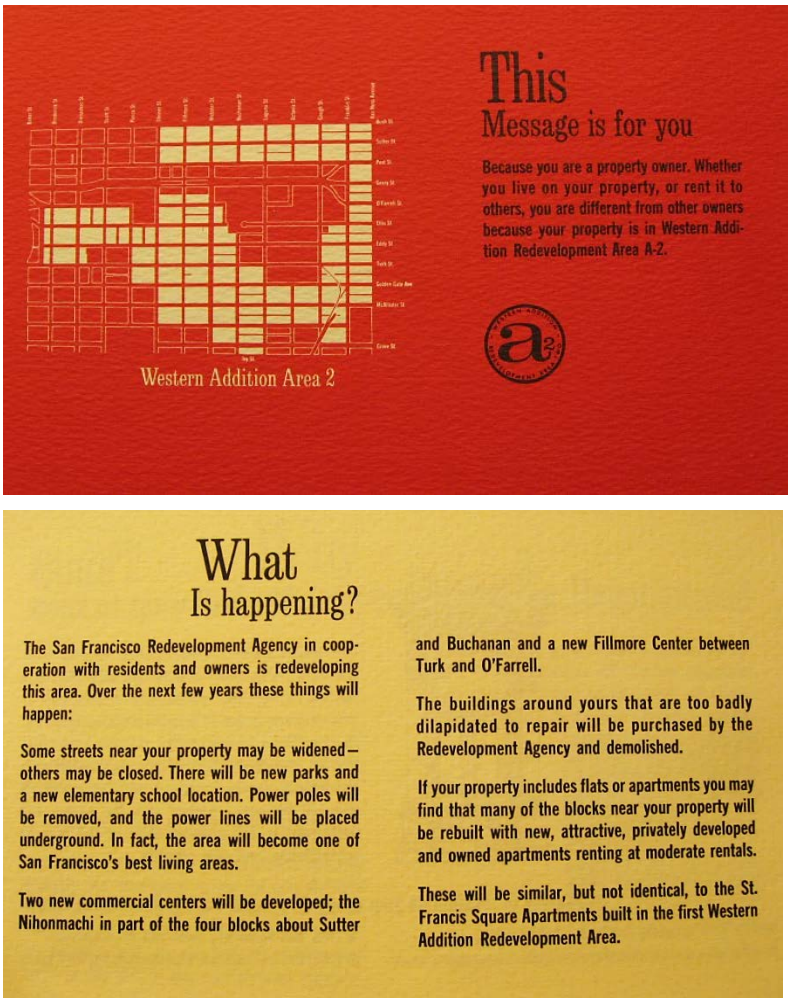


1950 Sanborn Map showing the approximate future location of Peace Plaza.
Note the concentration of restaurants and shops along Buchanan (middle) and Post streets (top).

Western Addition Project Area A-2

The A-1 Redevelopment was followed by the A-2 phase, approved in 1965. The A-2 project area encompassed a larger portion of Fillmore Street and the surrounding blocks, and led to the displacement of approximately 13,000 persons.[101] While much of the A-1 Redevelopment was completed relatively quickly, the A-2 Redevelopment was even more divisive and would take nearly 25 years to fully complete. As related in the *Japantown Historic Context Statement*:

> Planning for the A-2 phase of redevelopment began even before ground was broken on Japan Center, and encompassed an even larger area of seventy blocks and 277 acres surrounding the A-1 area and extending from Bush to Grove streets and from Broderick Street to Van Ness Avenue. As the SFRA announced plans for the launching of the A-2 phase, community members who had witnessed the ongoing mass evictions and clearance of the neighboring A-1 area became concerned and alarmed at the possibility of the same occurring in the remainder of Japantown. SFRA director, Justin Herman, stated his commitment to preserving existing buildings in the project area "as much as possible." In part at the urging of the SFRA, the United Committee for the Japantown Community (UCJC) was formed in 1962 with over 200 members. The group's "Statement of Policy" included retention of Japanese American residents and businesses as the highest priority. After negotiations with the SFRA, the UCJC formed the Nihonmachi Community Development Corporation (NCDC) in 1964, which became responsible for "allocating development sites to its members, undertaking the financing and development of shared facilities, [and] coordinating community interests" with the Agency. "Nihonmachi" became the formal designation for the four-block area bounded by Webster, Sutter, Bush and Laguna streets.
>
> The architectural team of Rai Y. Okamoto and Van Bourg/Nakamura, was selected by the SFRA from a list of consultants drafted by the UCJC to prepare concept plans envisioning a new "village-scale" development and a



Back cover (left) and page from a SFRA pamphlet, "Rehabilitation Western Addition Area 2," produced in September 1966 and distributed to owners and residents
(San Francisco Public Library History Center)

[101] "Ilene Lelchuk, "Japantown 'renewal' leaves scars," *San Francisco Examiner*, May 8, 2000.

community center for Nihonmachi. Okamoto and Van Bourg/Nakamura's urban design study for Nihonmachi describes "the wishes of the local citizens" for an environment characterized by an "intimate scale of buildings and spaces."

These objectives were clearly a response to the massive scale of Japan Center and its erasure of historic Japantown. The report devoted several pages to discussing the implications of the SFRA and UCJC's expressed desire that "ethnic character" be encouraged wherever possible. Rather than propose that particular eras or styles of Japanese design be the model for a new Nihonmachi, the authors listed aspects of traditional and contemporary design in Japan as "critical areas where sensitivity and good judgment should be applied." Attention to Japanese use of materials, structure, space, modularity, roofs and gardens by "gifted architects and landscape architects" would "serve the special needs of a Nihonmachi."

Plans for Nihonmachi Western Addition Area 2 by Van Bourg/Nakamura and Rai Y. Okamoto, from a March 1968 SFRA pamphlet (Collections of the San Francisco Office of Investment & Infrastructure, Successor to the SFRA)

These objectives were clearly a response to the massive scale of Japan Center and its erasure of historic Japantown. The report devoted several pages to discussing the implications of the SFRA and UCJC's expressed desire that "ethnic character" be encouraged wherever possible. Rather than propose that particular eras or styles of Japanese design be the model for a new Nihonmachi, the authors listed aspects of traditional and contemporary design in Japan as "critical areas where sensitivity and good judgment should be applied." Attention to Japanese use of materials, structure, space, modularity, roofs and gardens by "gifted architects and landscape architects" would "serve the special needs of a Nihonmachi."

Not surprisingly, Buchanan Mall, the central component of the A-2 phase, designed by Okamoto's firm in the 1970s and completed in 1976, reflected these qualities. The central plaza was framed by two-story commercial structures that referred to traditional Japanese villages through scale, massing and decorative patterns on the facades. Okamoto invited sculptor Ruth Asawa to create two fountains that punctuated Okamoto's "cobblestone river" as it meandered from a decorative gate at Sutter Street through the center of the Buchanan Mall and into the Peace Plaza of Japan Center across Post Street. Asawa's Origami Fountains, like the architecture surrounding them, echoed Japanese cultural traditions in modernist form. Asawa also added bas-reliefs to cast concrete benches along the mall – the panels, created with local children, depicted figures and scenes from Japanese folk tales.

View south along Buchanan Mall with Ruth Asawa fountains in foreground, February 2015.

Van Bourg/Nakamura and Okamoto advised that "the retention of existing commercial enterprises together with selected new activities" would create the optimum mix for achieving neighborhood and SFRA goals. Ultimately, redevelopment dramatically raised property values, and increased rents prevented many small businesses that previously served the neighborhood from returning to Japantown after being displaced for construction. Newspapers at that time reported property taxes tripling in areas adjacent to the new Japan Cultural and Trade Center. As more and more affordable housing and small family businesses were removed to make way for hotels and larger businesses, the tightly woven historic fabric of the neighborhood was further unraveled.[102]

[102] Donna Graves & Page & Turnbull, *Japantown Historic Context Statement*, Revised May 2011, (San Francisco, Page & Turnbull), 60-62.

Judy Hamaguchi grew up in Japantown and remembers the demolition of her surrounding neighborhood and the construction of the Japan Cultural and Trade Center:

> I watched the whole construction of that, including the Buchannan Mall. I had many friends whose homes were completely demolished. All my neighbors moved out, all my friends, all the stores that I went to, Sugar Bowl, all the places we went to every day. The streets, the sidewalks gone. Back in the day, five and six year-olds were allowed to walk to school by themselves for a few blocks. I just remember thinking, everything was gone. My friends were gone and all the places that were familiar to me were gone. I don't think anybody who remained on the Buchanan side thought of it as Japantown at all anymore. It was just different. You felt like you were living in another place. I think the biggest thing was displacement. And I think it happened early on because of the language barrier. People couldn't protect themselves because they didn't have the skills to say no, they didn't know how to say no and that's when a lot of the youth came in. But you know, those Issei and older Nisei, they didn't know how to fight back. They just figured, well, we were sort of guided into this ghetto and we are just being guided right out of the ghetto…
>
> You know, my mother would always say, "goddamnit, if I could speak English," she would tell people off. But you know, she could never articulate, and so I think that was the problem for a lot of the Issei and Nisei. They could not speak the language. It was easy to push them out.[103]

Richard Hashimoto offers further reflection on the changes that were brought on by Redevelopment projects in Japantown:

> We had many friends. That's one of the things I want – to try and get this community back together because before redevelopment, everybody knew each other. Japantown was about 36 square blocks, and after redevelopment it decreased to the 12 square blocks we have today. All the families just moved out of area, relocated. We no longer have that community feeling that existed prior to redevelopment when all the families knew each other. I hung out with all the kids in the community, ran around, and you know, things like that. But after redevelopment, it was all gone. There was no longer a sense of community...
>
> They were forced to leave Japantown and some moved to the Outer or Inner Richmond District or Sunset. So, we didn't go to school with those classmates any longer, and we just lost touch with them after a while. You know, the biggest problem I have with that time period was that even though we had these certificates of preference, Redevelopment didn't build anything for at least 20 years. Everything was left as open lots, and that's why a lot of families who got displaced never came back – because there was nothing built. There were no residences built during this 20-year period. I think that was something the Agency purposely planned because they didn't want these families to move back to the community.[104]

Robert Sakai provides another perspective:

> I think that my parents and a lot of people were not surprised. The relocation and redevelopment are interlinked in a lot of ways. In the eyes of my family, we didn't matter to the powers that be. There's the idea that forces larger than us, more powerful than us, are just going to tell us what they are going to do. The best we can do is to try and survive. I think that may be why my emotional attachment is more towards things I remember before Redevelopment. I'm old enough that I have those memories.[105]

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[103] Judy Hamaguchi, interview with Desiree Smith, 30 May 2017.
[104] Richard Hashimoto, interview with Desiree Smith, 8 June 2017.
[105] Robert Sakai, interview with Desiree Smith, 8 June 2017.

The Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival

Present and former Japantown residents who lived in the neighborhood before and during construction of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza have expressed both negative and positive sentiments with the site. In oral interviews with long-standing Japantown residents, most positive memories shared of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza are associated with the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival, which first occurred in 1968 to celebrate the grand opening of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center. Since then, the event has become the largest in Japantown and represents premier celebration of Japanese culture in San Francisco.

Robert Sakai, who grew up in Japantown during the redevelopment era, articulates the mixed emotions held in relation to the Peace Plaza:

> I think with the Peace Plaza, it felt kind of cold and abstract for me. It didn't feel like my neighborhood…You know, I think that the Cherry Blossom Festival was probably the first thing outside of [Boy Scout] Troop 12 to start to draw me out of the store, and into the community.[106]

Another long-standing resident of Japantown, Richard Hashimoto, has volunteered for the Cherry Blossom Festival for 30 years, serving as the festival co-chair for 15 of those years. He shares the story of its founding during an interview:

> The plaza is our only open space and serves as the venue for the Cherry Blossom Festival, which is the community's biggest event that attracts over 200,000 people every year. When I first got involved with the festival fifteen years ago as one of the leaders, I helped build it up from one of our regular community festivals into what is now the second-largest cherry blossom festival in the country. It's the largest outside of Washington DC, and is considered one of the best ten in the world. It's a great attribute. Peace Plaza is the only open space available for all these community festivals….
>
> It [the Cherry Blossom Festival] goes back 50 years. We just celebrated our 50-year anniversary. The festival started with the grand opening of the Japan Trade Center and the Peace Plaza dedication ceremony. In preparation for the 50th anniversary of the Cherry Blossom Festival, we started going back to our archives and dug up all these old files and newspaper clippings and articles, and we found a lot of things that even I was surprised by….
>
> It was the local Japanese business people and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce that came up with the idea. Hisao Inouye was the president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce at the time and he said, "We've got to do something with this state-of-the-art building, something else besides the opening ceremony. There should be a festival." At the time, Washington D.C. had its Cherry Blossom Festival on the east coast and he argued that we should have one here on the west coast. Everyone agreed and with that, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and local business people all came together and helped organize the event. I also think it formed during the time when "Made in Japan" products were being bashed. Mr. Inouye, being the thinker he was, argued that by hosting the festival, people might change the misconceptions they had about Japan and Japanese products. He wanted to promote Japan and educate people about the quality of newer products originating from Japan.[107]

Since 1968, the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival has nurtured and promoted the Japanese heritage of San Francisco with the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza serving as its culmination point.

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[106] Robert Sakai, interview with Desiree Smith, 8 June 2017.
[107] Richard Hashimoto, interview with Desiree Smith, 8 June 2017.

At left, an aikido demonstration in Peace Plaza during the 1987 Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival. An image from the 1977 festival at right.
(SF Travel / Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival)

SISTER CITIES: SAN FRANCISCO AND OSAKA

It is certain that donations for the construction of the Peace Pagoda came from across Japan, and the official dedication plaque states that it is a gift from the Japanese people. Nevertheless, most contemporary sources describe the Pagoda as a gift from San Francisco's sister-city, Osaka, Japan. Sister-city partnerships, also known as "twin towns," have their origins in the aftermath of World War II, when a number of English cities began sending aid to European cities which had shared similar experiences during the war. For example, Coventry, which had been heavily bombed by the Germans, formed a link with the Soviet city of Stalingrad. The university town of Oxford likewise partnered with the Dutch university city of Leiden.[108] Sister city arrangements were also made with German municipalities. While these partnerships initially focused on supplying relief aid, they soon grew into mutual exchange programs which helped foster international cooperation and encouraged reconciliation.

The sister cities program as we know it today was an outgrowth of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's White House Conference on citizen diplomacy, held in September 1956. The conference included the formation of a number of "People to People" committees, designed to diffuse Cold War tensions through cultural exchange and mutual understanding. As stated by President Eisenhower, the value of cultivating international relationships was "based upon the assumption that no people, as such, want war; that all people want peace."[109]

On October 7, 1957, San Francisco formed its first sister-city partnership with Osaka, Japan, which was also the first sister-city relationship between the United States and Japan. The ceremonies were held in Osaka and attended by Japanese Foreign Minister, Aiichiro Fujiyama and the U.S. Consul General at Kobe, George Emery, who acted on behalf of San Francisco mayor, George Christopher.[110] The following year Osaka shipped a variety of gifts to San Francisco, including large Japanese lanterns and a collection of paintings by Osaka school children.[111] Historic newspaper indexes do not reveal extensive documentation regarding the San Francisco – Osaka Sister City relationship. Articles in the *San Francisco Chronicle* point to various exchanges over time. In 1963, San Francisco sent a delegation to Osaka led by San Francisco's Chief Administration Officer. Mayor George Christopher also attended a Mayor's Conference in Kobe, Japan that year. In 1965, October 29 was declared "Osaka Day" in San Francisco to celebrate the eighth anniversary of the program.

Following the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, the citizens of Osaka donated approximately $425,000 dollars to help fund relief efforts—the most of any city in Japan.[112] Similar donations were organized in San Francisco by the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) following the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake that devastated Kobe in 1995.[113]

Most recently, in 2007, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved a resolution to designate Osaka Way as an honorary street name, located on Buchanan Street between Sutter and Post streets. Today San Francisco has 19 sister cities across the globe, including Paris, Seoul, Manila, Sydney, Barcelona, Taipei, Ho Chi Minh City, Amman Jordan, Cork, Ireland and Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

Though not associated specifically with the sister-city program, San Francisco has two historic streetcars that were built in Osaka during the late 1920s. The first is streetcar No. 578(J), used in the cities of Kobe and Hiroshima before coming to San Francisco in the mid-1980s. Streetcar #151 was acquired by the city circa 1988. Neither are currently in operation, although No. 578(J) is undergoing renovation for use as part of the city's F-Market streetcar line.

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[108] Rolf D. Cremer, Anne De Bruin and Ann Dupuis, "International Sister-Cities Bridging the Global-Local Divide," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Jan, 2001), 380.
[109] President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Press Conference Speech, September 11, 1956. Video clip accessed February 13, 2015 from: http://d.lib.ncsu.edu/collections/catalog/AV2_FM_296-people2people
[110] "S.F., Osaka Now 'Sister Cities," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 8, 1957.
[111] "Gift for City," *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 20, 1958.
[112] "Agnos Thanks Japanese," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 7, 1990.
[113] Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California, "Northern Japan Earthquake Relief Fund," accessed April 13, 2015 from: http://jcccnc.wix.com/kokoro4japan#!about

Two 1920s Osaka streetcars. At left is No. 151. At right is No. 578J.
(Market Street Railway / Peter Erlich)

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION

This section of the report is an analysis and summary of the applicable criteria for designation, integrity, period of significance, significance statement, character-defining features, and additional Article 10 requirements.

Criteria for Designation

Check all criteria applicable to the significance of the property that are documented in the report. The criteria checked is (are) the basic justification for *why* the resource is important.

_X_ Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
___ Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.
_X_ Embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
___ Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

Statement of Significance

Characteristics of the Landmark that justify its designation:

As described in the introduction to this report, the Peace Pagoda is located in what was historically the heart of San Francisco's *Nihonjinmachi*, or "Japanese people's town." Founded in the aftermath of the 1906 Earthquake, the community prospered despite restrictive policies and racist sentiment. Forcibly removed from their homes during World War II, the residents of Japantown nevertheless returned to the neighborhood and within a few years had made great strides to reestablish their community.

Almost immediately, though, the neighborhood—which was then the most ethnically and racially diverse in San Francisco—was targeted for redevelopment. As acknowledged by the Redevelopment Agency itself, "the removal of Japanese American residents and commercial establishments from this area so soon after returning from World War II concentration camps is known by some in the Community as the "Second Evacuation."[114]

The heart of Japantown was demolished and divided by Redevelopment Project A-1. The widening of Geary Boulevard sliced the neighborhood in two, creating what the SFRA called a "barren corridor between massive concrete walls."[115] In place of the neighborhood's shops, hotels, restaurants and homes rose the new blocks-long Japanese Cultural and Trade Center which, despite its overt associations with Japanese identity, was not an organic product of neighborhood. More upheaval would follow with Redevelopment Project A-2, leading to years of bitterness and resentment.

Although the Peace Pagoda and its setting, the Peace Plaza, stood at the very center of the redevelopment, they also stood apart. Unlike other elements of the project, their construction was funded through donations. They were devoted not to the commercial, but the contemplative. The open space at Peace Plaza became a natural gathering place for community events and cultural celebrations—as well as community protest. Thus, despite its connection to redevelopment, Peace Plaza was reclaimed as a focal point for the community, with the Peace Pagoda its visual landmark. As with its historical antecedents, the Peace Pagoda marks the axis mundi, serving as a sacred shaft, or even a lightning rod, that fixes sacred ground in Japantown's history. On it can be projected the stories of the neighborhood's birth, the horrors of World War II—both at home and abroad, the perseverance of a community, and friendship between nations.

[114] Edward Helfeld, SFRA Executive Directory, Memo regarding a request of funds to renovate Peace Plaza, February 2, 1993, typewritten manuscript on file with the *San Francisco Office of Investment & Infrastructure, Successor to the SFRA.*
[115] San Francisco Redevelopment Program, *1995-1996 Summary of Project Data and Key Elements*, 133.

For these reasons, the Peace Pagoda is significant for its association with the redevelopment of Japantown. Though it ranks among the most bitter episodes in the neighborhood's history, redevelopment is clearly a significant historic event. It entirely reshaped the architectural fabric of the neighborhood, while simultaneously creating a significant disruption of its social fabric.

Beyond its symbolism as a marker for the Japantown community, both past and present, the Peace Pagoda is also an architecturally significant work of master architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi. As outlined in this report, Taniguchi's career was informed by a deep appreciation for traditional Japanese architecture, though his works were realized using modern engineering techniques and materials. As Taniguchi stated: "the new Pagoda is far from the mere replica of the ancestral device of many centuries ago; it is intended to make full use of the advanced architectural technique so that it would be enjoyed by contemporary people equipped with a modern sense to appreciate the architecture in its true light." [116]

The Peace Pagoda is significant as an extraordinary example of Taniguchi's ability to fuse the ancient and contemporary. Although the genesis of its design was born in the 8th century, the Peace Pagoda is nevertheless a greatly refined work of Modernism. As a property type, it is virtually unique to the city. While wooden pagodas exist in Golden Gate Park and elsewhere in the Bay Area, none but the Peace Pagoda are monumental works in steel and reinforced concrete. As such, it significantly embodies the distinctive characteristics of a period and method of construction.

Significantly, Taniguchi was associated with the design of numerous memorials—particularly during the decade leading up to his work at Peace Plaza. These memorials were greatly admired by the Japanese people as places of reflection and renewal. With this understanding, the Peace Pagoda can in some respects be viewed as a memorial for the people of Japantown. The idea for the Peace Pagoda originated with Masayuki Tokioka, who was sincerely devoted to the idea of peace and friendship between Japan and the United States. But he was also acutely aware of the bitter experience of the Japantown community during World War II. And it is almost certain that Yoshiro Taniguchi likewise understood where the Pagoda would be constructed. Thus, although there is nothing in Taniguchi's writings about the Peace Pagoda that suggest it is anything other than a symbol of peace, his desire to create a space that performs "the sacred mission of creating integral peace and harmony" is one that has deep resonance for the neighborhood.

Periods of Significance

The period of significance for the Peace Pagoda is defined here as 1968, marking the year the Pagoda was completed.

Integrity

Peace Pagoda

The seven aspects of integrity are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association in relation to the period of significance established above. Considered as an independent structure, the Peace Pagoda clearly retains five of the seven aspects of integrity, including location, design, materials, workmanship and association. Its integrity of setting, however, has been degraded owing to a redesign of Peace Plaza undertaken in 2000-2001. The project removed the keyhole-shaped reflecting pool and its eternal flame at the base of the Peace Pagoda, and substituted for them new features and materials. As a result, integrity of feeling was also affected to some extent. Nevertheless, as a work unto itself the Pagoda retains more than sufficient integrity to convey its architectural significance as a work of master architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi, as well its associations with the redevelopment of Japantown.

[116] San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, The Peace Pagoda, (San Francisco, San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, 1965),

ARTICLE 10 REQUIREMENTS SECTION 1004 (b)

Boundaries of the Landmark Site

Encompassing all of and limited to Lot023 in Assessor's Block 0700, located along the axis of Buchanan Street between Post Street and Geary Boulevard.

Character-Defining Features

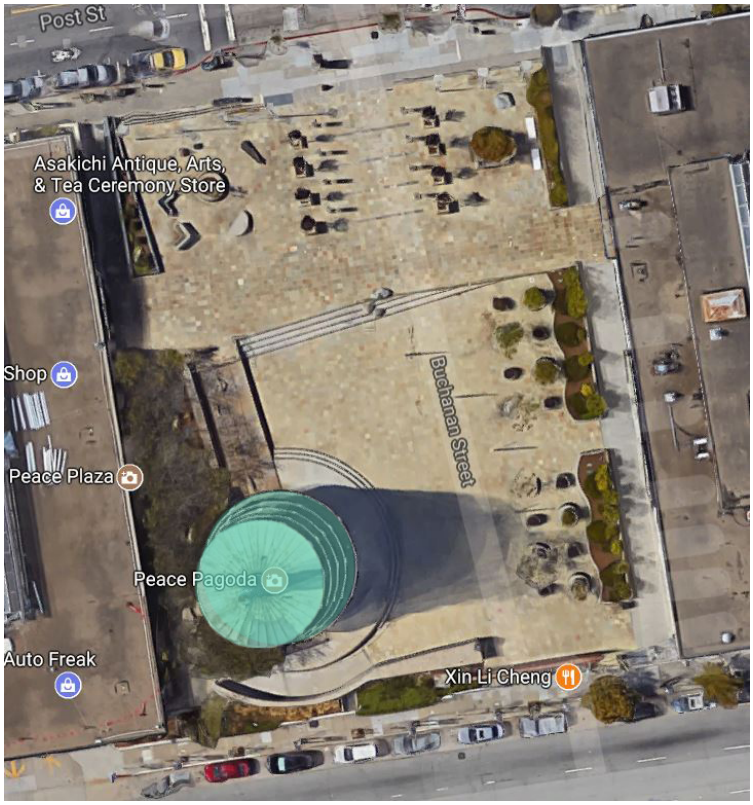
Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 Landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark. The character-defining features of the property are identified as follows:

Peace Pagoda

The entirety of the Peace Pagoda is character-defining, including the following:

- A central core of reinforced concrete piers
- Rounded roofs clad with copper plates
- Nine-ringed bronze spire, or "*kurin*," surmounted by a golden flaming head, or "*hoshu*," topped with a ball finial.
- Bronze dedication plaques in English and Japanese (but not their current location)
- The podium platform, including only a single perimeter step, as shown in historic photographs.

The green shaded area in the graphic below illustrates the location of the Peace Pagoda.



PROPERTY INFORMATION

Historic Name: Peace Pagoda

Popular Name: n/a

Address: 1610 Geary Boulevard

Block and Lot: Peace Pagoda (0700/023)

Owner: City and County of San Francisco

Original Use: Architectural monument

Current Use: Architectural monument

Zoning: NC-3 Neighborhood Commercial Moderate Scale

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Appendix: Interviews with Japantown Residents

Judy Hamaguchi
Interviewed by Desiree Smith
Japantown, San Francisco, California
May 30, 2017

Smith: My name is Desiree Smith. This interview is intended to inform a landmark nomination for Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda. Staff is trying to capture the broader community history from the first-person perspective as it relates to the story of the neighborhood before, during, and after construction of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza. Thank you for joining me today. Let's go ahead and get started. Can we start with you stating your name, age, and where you are born and where you grew up?

Hamaguchi: I'm Judy Hamaguchi and I came to San Francisco as a child in 1951. I lived in various locations, including Post Street, Webster Street, Sutter Street, O'Farrell Street, and finally Buchanan Street, above Soko Hardware, which is still standing. My parents owned a restaurant on Buchanan Street, Hisago Restaurant, for many years from the 1960s until Redevelopment came in and removed everyone out of that location.

Smith: Where did you move from in 1951?

Hamaguchi: I was born in Honolulu then went to Japan. My father was in military so went from Hawaii to Japan to the United States.

Smith: Can you tell me a little bit about your parents' restaurant? Do you have any favorite memories of them owning that restaurant? Were you involved at all when you were younger?

Hamaguchi: Originally Hisago Restaurant, between Post and Sutter on Buchanan Street, was owned by another husband and wife from Japan. I don't know what year they came to America, but that was somewhere around 1920 something, according to my parents. My parents bought it from the Mama-san and Papa-san of Hisago in 1962 because the owners decided to retire and go back to Japan. So my mom and dad owned the restaurant until 1974, I believe, when everything had been demolished. They moved their business to Lombard Street – same name, same restaurant, same mom and pop operation. In the 1950s, my mother worked as a waitress on various restaurants on Buchanan Street – Miyako, Otafuku. There were many immigrant, first generation/Issei-owned businesses on Buchanan Street. It was predominately the Issei bachelors and war brides, from what I understand, and many geisha who came to Japantown and started businesses. I think that is interesting.

Smith: What kind of businesses were they?

Hamaguchi: Restaurants. Everything you wanted was here. My mom and dad didn't buy a car until 1974 because everything was here. We just needed to walk or take Muni, so everything was really, very compact. Like a village. Shoe repairs, electronic stores, barber shops, beauty shops, pool halls. So much that made Japanese Town self-contained.

Smith: Did you have any favorite shops, stores, or restaurants that you would go to?

Hamaguchi: Minato Restaurant, which is right across the street from Soko Hardware. It always reminded me of a cruise ship, because it had windows all across the front. Right above it was an artist compound. A lot of artists lived in the apartment above and below there was a pool hall, a neighborhood pool hall called Tamaba. I used to hang around in the pool hall; they allowed me to sit in the pool hall when I was little. And the department store Honnami, Goshado. There were so many businesses just right in that circle, so the center core of business for me was Buchanan Street.

Hamaguchi: Benny Bufano was a regular to Hisago. Seiji Ozawa used to come all the time. There were sumo wrestlers like Rikidozan. He was one of the famously huge sumo wrestlers. He left my mother a hakama and it's at least five feet wide.

Smith: What were your parents' names, the owners of the restaurant?

Hamaguchi: Paul and Yoneko Omai.

Smith: What did you do, where did you go to school?

Hamaguchi: Raphael Weill Elementary School, which is now Rosa Parks, and Benjamin Franklin Junior High School. And I went to George Washington High School.

Smith: Where did you, did you have any memories hanging out in the neighborhood at all? Like after school or on the weekends?

Hamaguchi: All the time. So many.

Smith: Where were your hangout spots as high school student?

Hamaguchi: Just the streets really- Koga's Fountain, Evergreen, getting ice cream and hamburgers, and always seeing the teenagers with their pompadours, rolled jeans, ratted up basketball-size hair. They were always hanging on the corners, and at the fountain.

Smith: What was your experience like when redevelopment came?

Judy: Well, I watched an entire side of Geary get bulldozed. Since I lived on the corner of Post and Buchanan, I just sat on the fire escape and watched them demolished everything. Ultimately it sort of became a huge dump and our playground. We used to play in the dumps and build things out of bricks and just play in that area. My fondest memory is riding my Flexie. Do you know what that is? It looks like a ski or snow sled with two breaks in the front. You lay down on your belly and control it. I used to ride my flexi from Laguna all the way down to Fillmore as they were building the Geary corridor, which was not opened yet. So we'd take rides on Flexies, our bikes, or a Little Red Wagon, go to the top of the hill, and take it down all the way. There was no traffic, there was nothing. I still have that Flexie, by the way. It must of worth something.
But I think, you know, as a kid, you do not understand what's going on. But I did see my parents struggle through that and they tried to fight it as best as they could. CANE was starting to stand in the street. The most horrifying story was that the City sent huge guys to stand in front of my mom and dad's restaurant to prohibit customers from coming in because my dad refused to close. They just stood in front of the door of Hisago's daily and wouldn't let any customer in. Dad was offered $24,000 for a piece of property and he said "no way." My dad fought it and he got his own attorney. He did his best but it was, you know, there's just no way to push back. I just recall the turmoil for my family and how sad it was for them. They worked so hard to build it and they couldn't come back.
Smith: So they were forced to close and they were not able to open up again?

Judy: Trying to get back to Japantown on Buchanan Street was pretty bitter. The amount of money they wanted for them to come back in was beyond what they could afford.

Smith: Would you say that was the case for the other Japanese American owned businesses?

Judy: I would say so, yes. I watched the whole construction of that, including the Buchannan Mall. I had many friends whose homes were completely demolished. All my neighbors moved out, all my friends, all the stores that I went to, Sugar Bowl, all the places we went to every day. The streets, the sidewalks gone. Back in the day, five and six year-olds were allowed to walk to school by themselves for few blocks. I just remember thinking, everything was gone. My friends were gone and all the places that were familiar to me were gone. I don't think anybody who remained on the Buchanan side thought of it as Japantown at all anymore. It was just different. You felt like you were living in another place. I think the biggest thing was displacement. And I think it happened early on because of the language barrier. People couldn't protect themselves because they didn't have the skills to say no, they didn't know how to say no and that's when a lot of the youth came in. But you know, those Issei and older Nisei, they didn't know how to fight back. They just figured, well, we were sort of guided into this ghetto and we are just being guided right out of the ghetto. And that's what it was - it was a ghetto, and nobody should say anything other than that because it was cockroach-ridden, rat-ridden. Things were just in horrible shape. We never changed the carpet in our flats because we couldn't afford to do it. And that was just the way it was. But everyone did the best they could and

made Japanese Town a clean and lively place to live. An enclave of culture, values and support. The way it was they said, "get in here, this is a great area, we're going to push you in here, mixed in with everybody" and then they determined where we were going to live and when we were going to get pushed out so, you know, that's the mentality of the people at the time. It was that whole shikataganai (しょかない- cannot be helped) thing, you always think that, well, there's nothing you could do. You know, my mother would always say, "goddamnit, if I could speak English," she would tell people off. But you know, she could never articulate, and so I think that was the problem for a lot of the Issei and Nisei. They could not speak the language. It was easy to push them out.

Smith: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me.

Judy: No, thank you. This is interesting. It's not often I get to tell the story. I hope it helps.

Richard Hashimoto
Interviewed by Desiree Smith
Japantown, San Francisco, California
June 8, 2017

Smith: My name is Desiree Smith, here with Richard Hashimoto. This interview is intended to inform a landmark nomination for Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda. Staff is trying to capture the broader community history from the first-person perspective as it relates to the story of the neighborhood before, during, and after construction of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza. Thank you for joining me today. Let's go ahead and get started. Can we start with you stating your name, age, where you were born, and if you grew up in Japantown?

Hashimoto: My name is Richard Hashimoto. I was born in Los Angeles, California. My father was a merchant seaman so he traveled up and down the west coast. He's actually from Seattle, so we lived in Seattle for few years and moved down here in 1960. I lived in this community since 1960 and, in 1977 when I finished high school, I started working at the Japan Center Garage, and I've been there ever since. My parents at the time lived at 1782 Sutter Street. They were evicted or forced to move during urban renewal.

Smith: So, about approximately when did they live at the Sutter Street location?

Hashimoto: I want to say early 1970s to late 1970s.

Smith: Do you remember that time, when they were evicted?

Hashimoto: I do remember that time because the Redevelopment staff kept visiting our home. I would say probably about five or six times they came over and met with my parents. I don't know what they were discussing specifically, but I think they were talking about resettlement or relocating - finding another living space for us.

Smith: Where did you and your family move after being evicted?

Hashimoto: After that, we moved to 2033 Pine Street. That's Pine between Laguna and Buchannan, which was fine because it was still within the community, but there were steep grades going up to that residence. Fortunately, my mom was still able to climb the hills, but she couldn't do that today.

Smith: Did they still live there?

Hashimoto: No, they're deceased now. When we were evicted, the Redevelopment Agency gave us a Certificate of Preference allowing us to come back in the community at a below-the-market rate, eventually my parents were able to purchase a home – a condo – right across from Safeway, next to Rosa Parks Elementary.

Smith: Did you know others who were affected by Redevelopment?

Hashimoto: We had many friends. That's one of the things I want – to try and get this community back together because before redevelopment, everybody knew each other. Japantown was about 36 square blocks, and after redevelopment it decreased to the 12 square blocks we have today. All the families just moved out of area, relocated. We no longer have that community feeling that existed prior to redevelopment when all the families knew each other. I hung out with all the kids in the community, ran around, and you know, things like that. But after redevelopment, it was all gone. There was no longer a sense of community.

Smith: So you were able to stay within the community, but were others able to do the same or were they forced to relocate outside of the neighborhood?

Hashimoto: Right, they were forced to leave Japantown and some moved out to the Outer or Inner Richmond District or Sunset. So, we didn't go to school with those classmates any longer, and we just lost touch with them after a while. You know, the biggest problem I have with that time period was that even though we had these certificates of preference, Redevelopment didn't build anything for at least 20 years. Everything was left as open lots, and that's why a lot of families who got displaced and never came back – because there was nothing built. There were no residences built during this 20-year period. I think that was something that the agency purposely planned because they didn't want these families to move back to the community.

Smith: Nothing in 20 years – that's a long time.

Hashimoto: Yeah, 20 years. At that point, you've already reestablished yourself somewhere else. You don't want to move back in. Still, even though they built something after 20 years, the units they built were really small. They were these little one and two bedroom apartment buildings that were too small to raise a family in. A family of four or five needs a lot of square footage.

But during the time when the Japan Center was built, it was an open lot. I remember as kids we would go in and harass some of the construction workers and we would go in and build these little clubhouses, as we used to call them. We'd make a clubhouse out of vacant/empty rooms in what eventually became the Japan Center Theater. Well, we had several because we would get kicked out but then we'd find another one.

Smith: How old were you at that time?

Hashimoto: Maybe around 12-14 years old. But I also remember the organization, Citizens Against Nihonmachi Evictions. The acronym was CANE. CANE really fought against the displacement and evictions of the residents here. They put on a long struggle but unfortunately lost, and then the developer, National-Braemar, built the Japan Center. It was quite something. It was a state of the art commercial center housing a lot of Japanese corporations like Kikkoman, Nissan, Datsun (Nissan), Mitsubishi electronics, and major manufactures from Japan at the time. Then there was the state of the art theater complex. It had a revolving stage, nice special effects, stage elevators, rain and wind machine. We're talking about the late 1960s, so at that time it was very state-of-the-art. The theater was meant to house actual Kabuki performances from Japan and although they had a few Kabuki performances, it was way ahead of its time and never really caught on in America.

Smith: Did you go to any of the performances?

Hashimoto: I did, and it was quite amazing. At that time I didn't understand it fully because I was still young. But it was quite amazing to see those special effects on stage and it's something that I wish we still had.

Smith: When did that close?

Hashimoto: Let's see, it was sold to the AMC Theaters in 1986.

Smith: Is that a place you went often?

Hashimoto: Yes, I worked at the Japan Center Theater too. When they closed and sold it to AMC Theaters, it was changed into a multiplex, which became the first multi-cinema/multiplex in United States. Yeah, it was just sad to see that all the special effects and the old theater gone.

Smith: Do you remember or did you attend the unveiling of the Peace Plaza and/or Peace Pagoda?

Hashimoto: I don't recall. I remember there was dedication ceremony, but there was no pagoda. They just had a model. It was maybe a year later when the pagoda was erected on that site.

Smith: Did you go to that dedication ceremony?

Hashimoto: I was there, yes.

Smith: What was that like?

Hashimoto: It was nice. There were all these dignitaries in attendance, even from Japan. It was quite something.
Smith: Do you remember how other families or friends felt about launch of the plaza or pagoda after it was constructed?

Hashimoto: It was a big deal. But again, at that time, a lot of families didn't want that, it just invited more Japanese corporations and businesses to the community and that's something the community did not want, to see commercialism in our community.

Smith: So they had mixed emotions about everything.

Hashimoto: About everything, yeah. It was quite something because we had this modern building design surrounded by all these Victorians. It was just a big change. People didn't really want to accept or get used to this change in the community.

Smith: How would you characterize the reaction of most of the community members to the new development?

Hashimoto: There were mixed emotions. Most people were disappointed. Most people were frustrated. See, because the Japanese Americans been through incarceration, they been through redevelopment and tried to fight City Hall, and they sort of gave up. There was a lot of anger, I recall. But most of the time, you just can't fight City Hall. They just threw their hands up and surrendered, even though CANE put up a good fight. But ultimately they lost as well.

Smith: Does the Peace Plaza symbolize anything for you?

Hashimoto: No, not in its current condition. You know, because I work there, Desiree, I get a lot of people, visitors that come and ask, "Where's the Japanese culture?" But this design – the current design – is something that the community did not want. We had selected an architect that was culturally sensitive to the community and what we wanted was an authentic Japanese-style garden. That's something we all wanted but during the last renovation, which took place from 1998-2001, the city again forced this architect on us. The architect, although he's Japanese, just designs hardscapes of concrete fixtures, which is not Japanese at all. Nothing Japanese was included except for the cherry trees. And on top of that, cherry trees are sacred to Japanese traditions and beliefs. The trees in the plaza are planted so close to each other, but cherry trees need room, they need sun for photosynthesis, they need to spread their branches out to collect all the sun rays, but they were planted so closeand if you look at them they are kind of deformed. They are trying to grow into these open spaces, but they can't, so they are kind of suffocating themselves. He didn't know that. He just wanted 23 cherry blossom trees because the number symbolized something and he wanted all of them to fit in a row. That's something we fought. We fought all that too.

Smith: Did the community have a different plan for the plaza that it supported?

Hashimoto: Yes, we did. It was created through a community process called the Friends of the Peace Plaza. Friends of the Peace Plaza actually raised about $200,000 through a concerted community effort to see a plaza that they could be proud of. But again, the City came in and said, "If you already have the money, allocate it to us and we will rebuild the plaza," but again, the City required that we use their architect.

Smith: But it was the community that raised the money?

Hashimoto: It was, yes. You know, in addition to that, the Japan Center Garage, whom I worked for, was operated by a formal parking corporation – Western Addition Parking Corporation. The City was paying the gross receipt tax on behalf of the parking corporation. Around 1998, the Fillmore Jazz Center needed a garage, but there was no money for it. Then-Mayor Brown was very smart and came up with this concept of dissolving the Western Addition

Parking Corporation so that the city could save the money it would have spent on the gross receipts tax to assist in establishing bond debt service to build the Fillmore Jazz Garage. When the former parking corporation was dissolved, $500,000 was given as a gift to the City to go towards the renovation of the plaza. Then there was a second renovation in 2001 when the current parking corporation contributed another $550,000. So all and all, there was about $1.25 million this community gave toward that plaza.

Smith: Do you have any other thoughts on Peace Plaza - its history or meaning to the community?

Hashimoto: The plaza is our only open space and serves as the venue for the Cherry Blossom Festival, which is the community's biggest event that attracts over 200,000 people every year. When I first got involved with the festival fifteen years ago as one of the leaders, I helped build it up from one of our regular community festivals into what is now the second-largest cherry blossom festival in the country. It's the second largest outside of Washington DC, and is considered one of the best ten in the world. It's a great attribute. Peace Plaza is the only open space available for all these community festivals. That's why we're upset about its current design – all these hardscapes and light fixtures are right inside of the middle of the plaza, taking up all the precious open space.

Smith: How it's currently designed?

Hashimoto: How it's currently designed, yes. Before this redesign, it was pretty much all open space. All open space and a large stage at the end, on the Geary Boulevard end of the plaza.

Smith: You liked that design better?

Hashimoto: Well, it's not that I like it better but it was usable open space.

Smith: More functional.

Hashimoto: Yeah, and then whatever the landscaping was, it was authentic to the Japanese culture.

Smith: Can you tell me about the Cherry Blossom Festival and your involvement?

Hashimoto: It goes back 50 years. We just celebrated our 50-year anniversary. The festival started with the grand opening of the Japan Trade Center and the Peace Plaza dedication ceremony. In preparation for the 50th anniversary of the Cherry Blossom Festival, we started going back to our archives and dug up all these old files and newspaper clippings and articles, and we found a lot of things that even I was surprised by.

Smith: Oh yeah, like what?

Hashimoto: The dedication is sort of joggled in my memory, but there was a dedication ceremony for the plaza, before the pagoda was constructed. We had this whole delegation of people, must have been around 300 to 400 people on the plaza. I think that was the time when the eternal flame from Osaka was brought over; it was lit at that time.

Smith: Did the Cherry Blossom Festival happen the year the plaza opened?

Hashimoto: Yes. It was probably the last weekend of March 1968.

Smith: So the Cherry Blossom Festival is connected very directly to Peace Plaza?

Hashimoto: Oh yeah. It is symbolic of the Cherry Blossom Festival and the grand opening of the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center.

Smith: How did the Cherry Blossom Festival come about, do you know?

Hashimoto: It was the local Japanese business people and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce that came up with the idea. Hisao Inouye was the president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce at the time and he said, "We've got to do something with this state-of-the-art building, something else besides the opening ceremony. There should be a festival." At the time, Washington D.C. had its Cherry Blossom Festival on the east coast and he argued that we should have one here on the west coast. Everyone agreed and with that, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and local business people all came together and helped organize the event. I also think it formed during the time when "Made in Japan" products were being bashed. Mr. Inouye, being the thinker he was, argued that by hosting the festival, people might change the misconceptions they had about Japan and Japanese products. He wanted to promote Japan and educate people about the quality of newer products originating from Japan.

Smith: When did you got involved with the Cherry Blossom Festival?

Hashimoto: I got involved about 30 years ago as a young kid, just volunteering here and there. Then I dropped out for a while, and then came back. When I came back, they were in the midst of trying to select a chairperson so they asked me if I could serve in that capacity for one year. So I said, "Sure, I'll do it for one year." I ended up as chairperson for 15 years. And I said, "Oh my God."

Smith: How long were you the chairperson?

Hashimoto: Co-chairperson. I started 15 years ago, so early 2000.

Smith: Are you still the co-chair?

Hashimoto: Yes, I am the co-chair currently, but I publicly announced my resignation this year, after the 50th anniversary. It is a year round job. Because of the culture, it's all volunteer-run. There's no paid person, so you have to do this all within your free time. It does become a year-round job because of all the financials – the accounts payables, account receivables, a lot of that paperwork. On top of that, because we receive public funding from Grants for the Arts, there certain fiduciary responsibilities that must be met.

Smith: Is it a non-profit?

Hashimoto: Yes, it is a non-profit corporation.

Smith: Can you describe what the Cherry Blossom Festival means to you? What is its significance to you personally or to the community, in your opinion?

Hashimoto: It's not only community, but the culture – Japanese culture. You know, just promoting Japanese culture, tradition and customs of the culture, and trying to promote that to our visitors. It's sad now the younger generations are losing their connection to Japanese culture or don't have that connection period. We are trying to expose them to the traditions and culture. There's a disconnect between their culture and the community, so this gives them an opportunity to get involved in or see their culture. Right now we have the hype of the J-Pop culture, the modern day culture, which is fine, and we've actually included that in the festival for the third of the fourth year now, but we want the young people to get exposed to the traditions as well. Even back home in Japan, so I've heard, a lot of young folks are losing their connection to traditional culture. So there's a disconnect there too. They also have a festival specifically for traditional culture.

Smith: Do you have any favorite memories of co-chairing the festival for the past 15 years?

Hashimoto: Just that I wish we could have done more. Japantown's footprint is so small but the festival is increasing. The popularity is increasing, but we can't grow because we don't have the space to grow and that's why the J-Pop Festival moved from Japantown to Fort Mason. It was small and we've actually grown so large. I don't think any community in San Francisco can accommodate the growing festival. But for me, as a chairperson, I'm just glad to have handed the reigns over to a younger person willing to take on the challenges. It's a lot for any one person to

manage because there is so much involved. You have to get the sponsorships and all that, and coordinate all the cultural groups that perform. So it's huge.

Smith: Especially not having a full time staff.

Hashimoto: And we need to be self-sustaining and hire somebody to do that, to manage telephone calls and voice messages and all that.

Smith: Can you tell me what you do at your job?

Hashimoto: As I mentioned, I started working right out of high school at the Japan Center Garage. I then slowly progressed into an assistant manager position, and then became manager. I left work for about seven years and went into contracting. Contracting didn't agree with my body of course, because a lot of heavy work was involved. So at that time, the City, or what was called the Parking Authority, asked me to come back to the garage to be its manager. Since I had a history in Japantown I agreed to accept the position. I've worked there since 1998 until now as the corporate manager.

The Japan Center Garage is a non-profit, quasi-public corporation. When this and other garages were built in the 1960s, they were City garages. The City couldn't issue bonds to build the garage so they asked the developer to form a parking corporation so it could issue a bond to build the garage on City property. The non-profit corporation was formed to administer the bonds which funded the construction of the garage. The garage is now technically owned by the City, but the nonprofit corporation provides the oversite.

Smith: That helps me understand the history of the garage a bit more.

Hashimoto: The parking garage helps make businesses, merchants, and community organizations successful. Although now we're seeing decline in use because a lot of people are using car sharing services. Revenue is actually increasing but the number of vehicles using the garage is decreasing.

There's another thing. We share this really great history with the African American community and we had a really close connection but when Redevelopment came in and built Geary Boulevard, it sort of separated the two communities.

Smith: How would you describe the connection between the Japanese American and African American communities?

Hashimoto: During the internment, all the Japanese families had to leave their possessions and their homes. Some left them in the care of African Americans in the community with the condition that they'd be allowed to come back after being released from camp. That allowed African American families to save up enough money to buy their own homes, because they lived there rent-free during the three to four years that Japanese Americans were incarcerated. Then once they out of camp and moved back in to their homes, the African Americans started buying properties in the Western Addition community. So that goes back a long way when we had these connection and even the Black Panthers had a storefront here on the Fillmore Street. As kids, they would invite us to come in.

Smith: You were a kid?

Hashimoto: Yeah, out of Benjamin Franklin Junior High School.

Smith: What did they do there?

Hashimoto: It was a barber shop where they would just hang out. I didn't know there was a basement downstairs and later found out there was a gun range or something.

Smith: Where was that located?

Hashimoto: It was on Fillmore between Geary and O'Farrell.

Smith: How would you describe your friends growing up?

Hashimoto: Growing up. Well, when we first moved here, my father lost his job, so he was unemployed for a while. At the time I lived at the Pink Project or the Pink Palace housing development, as they called it. All of my friends were African Americans when we lived there.

Smith: Where is that located?

Hashimoto: It's on Turk between Webster and Buchanan. We used to call it the Pink Projects housing project.

Smith: How old were you when you lived there?

Hashimoto: I'd say about 8 or 9.

Smith: How long did you live there?

Hashimoto: About two years.

Smith: Do you have any memories from that time?

Hashimoto: I didn't know this until my mother told me later in life, but their elevator doors were notorious for opening unexpectedly. There'd be no elevator cars on the other side of the doors. As kids, the doors open and you run in, and that's what I did at the Pink Projects. I ran in but there was no car on the other side, so I fell. Luckily it was the ground floor so I only fell one story. And you know, I was unconscious for a while. But my mom ran across the street to the Fire Department to get help. We were fortunate that the Fire Department was so close.

Smith: You poor thing. That's crazy.

Hashimoto: That's what I relate my mental capacity to. I fell and was knocked out for a while!

Smith: It made you tough.

Hashimoto: But if it had been higher, than that I would have been gone.

Smith: That's terrible. So when you were kid and teenager, where did you like to hang out?

Hashimoto: Let's see. The Japan Center was the only thing around the time. They had all these vacant spaces so we would just run around the vacant spaces, kids being kids, and I remember I belonged to an organization called JCYC, which stood for Japanese Community Youth Council. This reminds me, I think you should also interview Jon Osaki. He's currently doing story on redevelopment.

Smith: Writing a story?

Hashimoto: Yes, well he's actually creating a video documentary.

So at the time, JCYC had moved into one of the vacant spaces in the redevelopment area that was scheduled to be demolished a few years later. In the meantime, they allowed these community organizations to temporarily occupy the space. I remember we had this luau where we cooked a whole pig. We dug a hole in one of the open lot space and

laid down some tea leaves and charcoal and all that stuff, put in the whole pig, and about six to eight hours later we went back and checked on it. It was done!

Smith: Where did the luau take place?

Hashimoto: It was at JCYC, which was probably located where Hotel Buchannan is now.

Smith: It sounds like you all kind of made that whole area a playground.

Hashimoto: As kids you find anything to amuse you, everything in your community, you know, we were growing up poor. We didn't have car. We got around on Muni and our bicycles.

Smith: This is all so interesting. Before our time ends, is there anything else that you would like to mention about your memories of the redevelopment area, Peace Plaza, or Peace Pagoda?

Hashimoto: Just one thing about the Redevelopment Agency. When we were evicted, I didn't understand why some homes were allowed to remain, because all these residences and homes were being demolished, but there were a few that were left standing there on their own. Why were those not destroyed? I found out later that they had been purchased to be renovated and sold later on. They were going to help somebody make a profit.

Smith: Private property owners purchased these homes?

Hashimoto: I don't know. But I think it was probably people from outside the neighborhood purchasing the properties to profit off of later. I know that certain developers purchased property to build apartment buildings, which they probably made a fortune from. Yeah, don't believe everything you hear about how good redevelopment is because it destroys the community. Look at what happened to Sacramento's Japantown. There's no more Japantown because of redevelopment. Same thing with Seattle– Seattle had a huge Japantown. There were over forty Japantowns in just northern California alone. And it has all been destroyed by urban renewal.

Smith: What do you think about designating Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda as a landmark?

Hashimoto: I think it's great. I hope the pagoda does get landmarked and maybe the plaza, but I heard that plazas usually don't get landmarked because they are open space. But if it can be, it'd be great for this community, so that the facility can remain in perpetuity as an open space. The only problem is that the plaza is essentially the roof of the garage, which does leak. There's a remediation plan to renovate the water-proofing, but and that's something we need to work with the city on.

Robert Sakai
Interviewed by Diane Matsuda and Desiree Smith
Japantown, San Francisco, California
June 8, 2017

Smith: My name is Desiree Smith, here with Richard Hashimoto. This interview is intended to inform a landmark nomination for Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda. Staff is trying to capture the broader community history from the first-person perspective as it relates to the story of the neighborhood before, during, and after construction of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza. Thank you for joining me today. Let's go ahead and get started. Can we start with you stating your name, age, where you were born, and if you grew up in Japantown?

Sakai: Robert Kiichi Sakai. I'm 66 this year. I was born in 1950 at the UC Medical Center. The first 12 to 14 years in my life I lived on Bush Street, the 2000 block of Bush Street. That was an apartment my family had. It's still in the family. Actually, I own it. So I've lived in Japantown for a long time. My parents and my grandfather had a market, which he started in 1906. The first one was on Geary Boulevard. It was a rental from my understanding. I'm not sure about that. Then in the 1920s we moved to 1656 Post Street where our store was founded. We ran that for many years, interrupted by the war, but once the war was over we opened up the business. Then in 1969 we moved up the street to 1680 Post Street and then in 2012 I closed the store.

Smith: Okay

Matsuda: So why did you have to move up the block?

Sakai: It got too small. My father tamotsu realized that he needed more space and so we moved in to the 1680 Post Street building. Roy Watanabe was the architect. It was a larger store and so with that we were able to do volume purchases, which economically make the store much more successful. I took over in '71. I made one complete renovation in 2009, which is when I started thinking about how all the fixed assets that needed replacement. We had a pretty neat maintenance program so we cleaned them all up regularly so they are able to last for quite a while. I think I did the first major renovation in the early '90s so they lasted 20 years. But by that time it was ready to go and it would require quite a bit of money to go in. At that point I decided to close it. So I renovated, which turned out more expensive than I thought but the buildings are all up to earthquake standards. We tried to maintain the appearance of the building that Mr. Watanabe made, so I saved the character signs. You still see those two Chinese characters in front

Smith: And what was the name of the business?

Sakai: It's Uoki K. Sakai

Matsuda: Who came up with the name?

Sakai: That was my grandfather. The characters are a play on his name. It means "happy fish market" and the second character is part of his name. His name was Kitaichi and actually, my Japanese name is Kiichi. It was tradition to hand down a similar name.

Smith: What kinds of things did you sell in the market?

Sakai: We sold Japanese products. In the early days my grandfather and my father were big into the ship channeling business. They also sold Japanese products in the valley. My father used to take one trip to the valley with his truck. He would sleep in the truck, and he would take orders from all farmers. He would go up and down the farming community and he'd come back to the city and buy everything. Then he'd go out on the second trip and deliver it all. The other part was the ship channeling business. He would supply the Japanese merchant marine fleets that came into the harbor. It's kind of actually why he was prepared for the relocation, because he noticed the change of

behavior on the merchant marine ships. What he told me was that he knew they had been taken over by government when war became imminent. He said that there's something called keigo, which is a type of grammar. He said the language spoken on the ship changed from an informal kind of merchant-marine style to a more militaristic style. All those things made him feel like things were changing.

Sakai: That was my father. My grandfather started out as, I don't know what they called it, but he started out cooking in a home. He came in the 1890s and he started doing house work.

Matsuda: Where are your roots from in Japan?

Sakai: Matsumoto, Nagano .

Matsuda: Nagano Prefecture.

Sakai: Yeah I still have relatives in Matsumoto.

Matsuda: Nice castle there.

Sakai: Yeah.

Matsuda: So Robert, you are a third generation Japanese American?

Sakai: Yes.

Smith: You said your family's business was interrupted by the war. So you must have been very young at that time?

Matsuda: Not born yet.

Sakai: I was born after.

Smith: You were born after, okay.

Sakai: Both my father and mother were born here. My mother was from Oakland and her parents had a laundry in Oakland.

Matsuda: Where did they meet?

Sakai: They met in Topaz.

Matsuda: Both were incarcerated in Topaz Concentration Camp?

Sakai: Yes. My father said it was his first extended vacation. My grandfather started out as a fish peddler and because he was a cook, he made connections with a lot of people at the wharf. He would go down to Fisherman's Wharf and buy fish and sell it in the community. Eventually he got a horse and buggy. Most of the community was down in the South of Market before the 1906 earthquake, but after the 1906 earthquake, land was cheap. It's just like when we had that earthquake in the Marina. The property value dropped significantly afterwards. Well, the same thing happened back then. He was able to rent the place on Geary and that's where we started our business.

Matsuda: Geary and what?

Sakai: It's right across from the 1600 block of Post. It's right across Geary. We were right next to Benkyodo on the same block. I think Aishizawa -were no they were after the war - but anyway Benkyodo started the same year. That was the beginning of the current Japantown.

Smith: You grew up here in Japantown?

Sakai: Yes. On Bush Street, the 2000 block, which is between Buchannan and Webster. It's right across the street from Kinmon Gakuen. We were on the north side of Bush.

Smith: What was it like growing up in Japantown? What do you remember about it as a child?

Sakai: It was much larger.

Matsuda: So were your neighbors Japanese?

Sakai: Yeah, they were. I don't remember exactly all of them, but they were.

Matsuda: But do you remember looking at your door and knowing your neighbors?

Sakai: Yeah, I think so. I used to play with Masato Shibasaki. He used to work for me in the store.

Matsuda: Where did you go to primary school?

Sakai: Redding Elementary School

Matsuda: Where was that?

Sakai: That's at Bush and Polk.

Matsuda: You didn't go to Rafael?

Sakai: I don't know why I went to Redding.

Smith: Who were your friends, if you remember?

Sakai: Mostly it was through the friends I had at the United Presbyterian Church, which is in Japantown.

Matsuda: Right across where I am right now.

Smith: Okay.

Sakai: I joined the pack 12.

Matsuda: Its boy scouts troop, troop 12.

Sakai: Troop 12 boy scouts. Yeah. And my oldest friends are still people from the pack 12 days. Very few of them live in San Francisco. I think Robert Koka is the only one that lives in San Francisco. He was younger than me.

Matsuda: Could you go back in time to tell us about your daily life? What was it like to live on Bush Street at age 12? What did you do? Did you go to Kinmon Gakuen right across the street? What was around you? What was on Fillmore? What was here?

Sakai: Well, I spent most of my time at the store. After school I'd go to the store and that was at 1680 Post Street.

Matsuda: You would walk?

Sakai: I walked to school. But afterschool I wouldn't come home right away because my parents were both working. So I went to the store at 1680 Post. The market was on the ground floor and my grandfather, my single uncle, and my two single aunts lived upstairs with my grandmother. I would be there with them. I think it was interesting that Jimbo's Bop City was right next to us. I remember Mr. Jimbo used to be really nice. Later on I was always surprised that my grandmother and my uncles and aunts would not get more upset with him because he had that jazz club. From what they told me, a lot of very famous jazz players went there and that had to have happened at night, right? Because I was never there at night, because my parents would take me home after they closed the store. It had to have been noisy. But he was a really nice guy. They always thought he was a pretty good neighbor.

Smith: Did your family members ever go to Jimbo's?

Sakai: No.

Matsuda: Following up on that, was Post Street a mix between African American and Japanese American?

Sakai: Yeah I think so.

Matsuda: Is that how you remembered it?

Sakai: Yeah that's how I remembered it, yeah.

Matsuda: Tell us more about what it was like to walk down Post Street or Bush Street or Sutter Street, because when I walk down it now, it's probably a totally different feel from when you walked down it.

Sakai: Well it was more, maybe it's because I was viewing it as a kid, but I always considered it a really warm and friendly place. I mean, I walked all the way down Fillmore Street by myself a lot.

Matsuda: And never had any fear?

Sakai: No.

Matsuda: Could you talk about racial diversity?

Sakai: Redding was a mixed school. There were a fair number of Asians and a lot of African Americans and a lot of Caucasians. It was a pretty mixed. My two best friends were Jim Snyder and Paul Wilson. Paul Wilson was African American and Jim Snyder was German American, I think. But you know that was something, I thought about later, I think some of my favorite memories were the movie nights at the basement of the language school, Kinmon Gakuen. My dad, along with the other businesses and all the churches would throw these movie fundraisers. He would buy tickets because we were supporting the local group, so we always had tickets. I remember they were big tickets and had all the Japanese writing on it. So at night I would go across, because we lived right across the street, so I'd go across all the time and watch Japanese movies. That was neat. I remember that. And then I used to take Judo down there. Kimura sensei was the teacher and he would lead Judo classes during the week at Kinmon. We used to roll out the mats at night, before working out, but yeah I used to enjoy going to that theater.

Matsuda: So tell us about what was around you. When you think about being 12 years old, what did you see on Bush Street?

Sakai: Well, we used to have Chinese restaurants.

Matsuda: On Bush Street?

Sakai: On Post Street. The only thing I remember on Bush Street was the, I forget the name of it, but it was the place that sold the aquatic stuff. My uncle Jimmy Hirano had an antique store one block east of us and then next to him was the fish store.

Matsuda: What was the store called? Do you remember?

Sakai: No, I remember I used to go Jimmy's. He brought in antiques from Japan and he sold them. Then next to him was a fist store, I think. They sold all kind of fish. They had this aquarium and pools in the back. They moved out onto Geary for a while and then I …

Matsuda: Nippon Goldfish?

Sakai: Yeah, that's it. And then I think they moved onto Geary for a while. Then I think they got overtaken by internet sales. They had trouble keeping up with that, but we used to go there a lot and just run around.

Smith: You can buy fish over the internet?

Matsuda: Goldfish.

Sakai: Yeah.

Matsuda: Literally they are goldfish. So tell us more about what it was like to walk down Post Street or walk down Sutter Street or when we look at Bucannon Street, we see a totally different flavor. What do you remember? What kind of shops were here? What did people do on their days off? Do you remember seeing people hanging around?

Sakai: Yeah. I remember the one place I was not allowed to go to on Post Street is right where the Denny's building is. There was a pool hall there. And I was told that I would get a severe whipping if I ever went in there. So it was always kind of like forbidden food.

Matsuda: What was it called? Do you remember?

Sakai: No, I don't remember. But that the one place forbidden to me.

Matsuda: What was Post Street like before the center was built on that side, on the South Side?

Sakai: Well Soko Hardware was over on that side. Because the Ashizawas were living there across the street then.

Matsuda: Right across from where they are now?

Sakai: No, a little bit up the street. My memories are quite faulty, just want to put that on the record. But I think it was across the street on 1656 Post. That's where I think the Ashizawas were. They lived over there too. I used to go and play with Philp and Mark in their backyard.

Matsuda: That is where the hotel is?

Sakai: Yeah, a little bit below, a little bit west.

Matsuda: Like where Ichiban-kan is?

Sakai: Yeah, that's what I recall. Because I used to go across the street all the time and I play over there.

Matsuda: What else was there? On that side.

Sakai: I was only allowed to go to certain places. My parents were very security conscious. So the places I went to were places that they knew and were kind of like second homes to me. Like when I went to my uncle Jimmy's antique store next to that aquatic store, I just walked in there and kind of sat down and walk around. Then I'd go into the aquatic store and stuff. There were certain places I was allowed to go because they were friends of my parents and they knew me.

Smith: Where else were you allowed to go?

Sakai: I don't know.

Matsuda: You didn't have to go to Japanese school?

Sakai: Oh yes, Hori sensei.

Matsuda: at Kinmon Gakuen?

Sakai: No, Buddhist church.

Matsuda: Soko Gakuen?

Sakai: Soko Gakuen. Because it was on the way to Redding, my elementary school, coming back I stopped there, and that was a total waste of time. I feel sorry for Hori sensei, because that was the last thing we wanted to do.

Matsuda: Was your family active in church activities? Were they members of a certain church?

Sakai: No, my parents really devoted themselves almost exclusively to the store. They worked pretty hard. My dad used to always tells us that your first responsibility is to your family and if you have anything left over you give to your community and that the world's problems would be more manageable if everybody took care of their own first. So he instilled that in us; that was our job. You go to school, get a good education, raise a family, and then if you're fortunate enough then you can afford to spend time doing other things. So I spent most of the time working. I think my only real activity was serving as the treasurer for the Buddhist Church Youth Athlete League. I did that for about 15 years.

Matsuda: When you were how old?

Sakai: Well I was pretty old then. This was when my kids started…

Matsuda: So you were already a parent.

Sakai: Yeah I was a parent.

Matsuda: Let's go back before you became a parent. That's still okay, so let's at age of 12 what happened to you?

Sakai: I went to elementary Redding Elementary School and then when I got to be junior high school, I was ready to go to Benjamin Franklin.

Matsuda: Between Geary and Divisadero.

Sakai: One of the teachers told my mother that I would get a better education if I went to Marina Junior High School. And my mother told her, "Well that's not in our district," and the teacher said, "You just ask the board of education for a waiver." She said that many of the children of the people working at the Salvation Army who lived nearby all got waivers to go to Marina Junior High School. So my parents decided to ask for a waiver and they were told no, and my dad even knew Joe Alioto at the time and he asked if he could intervene.

Matsuda: So this was 1960?

Sakai: 61 or 62, year, somewhere around there. They were not successful but what my dad said is that he was told to get an address in the district. So my parents decided that they were going to do that, so we bought a piece of property in the Marina District and my aunt lived there. I became a resident staying in her house, essentially. So we ended up going to the Marina because my dad couldn't end up getting a waiver and he was really not surprised, but it just reaffirmed his sense of the way world works.

Matsuda: Meaning in terms of, did he think it was race related?

Sakai: That's what he told me.

Matsuda: At the time, was the Marina a mostly white community?

Sakai: No, it was a pretty mixed community.

Matsuda: mixed as in what kind of ratio

Sakai: A lot of Asians but also a significant amount of Caucasians because the hills over the Marina District are very high-end homes, so a lot of those children went to Marina too. So it was a pretty mixed school – good portion of African Americans, good portion of Asians, and good portion of Caucasians. Those were the three main groups. There were very few Hispanics. When I was younger you didn't come into contact with a lot of Hispanics outside of the Mission.

Matsuda: Where did you go to high school?

Sakai: I went to Lowell, which had an application process.

Matsuda: Right.

Sakai: You applied and got recommended and you got in. So I went to there.

Smith: Do you have memories of the Redevelopment era?

Sakai: Oh yes.

Smith: what was your experience and perception of that time?

Sakai: You know, when I reached close to my retirement age, I started volunteering my services to a lot of organizations. JCHESS was one of them. Bob Hamaguchi was a good friend of mine. One of the most interesting revelations that I had during my involvement with JCHESS was the origin of my skepticism about the government. And I think it came from my parents' experience with redevelopment. Because, and as a child you don't put these thing together. We used to have weekly family dinners at my grandmother's and we'd sit on this big table.

Matsuda: This was on Post Street?

Sakai: Post Street, 1680 Post Street. And my Uncle Eiji's family was there and my uncle Yozo, who's single and she's from Sako, and Shizu and Fasako, and our family. So there were a lot of people because the kids were there. In retrospect, JCHESS stimulated all these memories of redevelopment - my dad talking about the fact that redevelopment took our backyards and made the parking corporations, which I'm now the president of, and wouldn't give us any money for it. They used eminent domain, according to my dad, and they didn't give us any money. They just gave us stock in the parking lot. In the early years you didn't get dividends. You had to give money so the parking lot could break even. It was kind of like adding insult to injury. And then in the house where we'd

have those dinners, I remember my dad telling us that we had to leave that house because redevelopment was requiring that we sell it. He said he had talked to redevelopment and asked if he could work with them to renovate the house and bring it up to standards. Then I remember him saying that they said no, that he was just going to have to sell it to them, and that was the end of it. And so that house was relocated to Fillmore.

Matsuda: Do you remember how much they paid you for that?

Sakai: No, my dad made the decisions. I just listened.

Smith: So that house was relocated. Were you able to move into it?

Sakai: We had enough money to keep the property, because you had to prove that you could redevelop it in accordance with redevelopment's vision of what the neighborhood should look like. But I think the whole process was disappointing to my father because it really wasn't a cooperative exercise. It was redevelopment telling us what they were going to do and we could either play by their rules or we could leave the neighborhood, which unfortunately, is what many people did because they couldn't afford to redevelop the way that they wanted it to redevelop. It just seems like first the war came. Before the war my dad said the neighborhood was much larger, and I remember that in the 1950s it was a whole lot larger than it is now. I remember cottage row being where I hung out as a kid, running around and that kind of stuff.

So it was large, but my dad said that before the war it was even larger. After the war very few people could come back to Japantown. My dad was lucky he knew the war was coming. He had a friend who owned a public warehouse so he purchased space at the warehouse and stored his inventory there. Over the course of the war, when his annual property tax bill was due, his friends sold the Takenoko and miso and shoyu, and all the things he stored. They sold them primarily to the Chinese American businesses because all those products, which primarily came from Japan, were no longer coming in. Supply and demand made those products much more desirable, so he was able to sell-off the inventory he put in the warehouse in anticipation of this to pay the property taxes. There were the very few people who were able to do that. I remember my dad telling me, he laughed about it, but his brother and sisters, there were eight of them, were really angry at him because every evening he made them put everything away. They boarded up the windows. This was before the evacuation order. But he even rolled the truck into the store. We had a storefront that's on the ground floor and they opened the doors and they pulled the truck in and put it on blocks. He said the one thing he forgot to do is he forgot to disconnect the battery, so when he came back from the incarceration camp, he tried to start it up but the battery had died. But after the war was over, because the county had been turned into an armament factory, there were no scales, there were no cash registers. All those factories had been focused on making war materials. In the beginning, even if you wanted to, you couldn't buy those things. So a lot of people didn't have the money to open their stores again. Even if you could, you couldn't buy anything to run the business because it took years for the industries to refocus themselves away from armament. Then just when we started getting our footing again, redevelopment came in, as my dad would say. It was kind of like one hit after another. And we are still trying to recover from that.

Matsuda: How did redevelopment come in? Can you remember your father talking about it?

Sakai: When I thought back, those meals were probably about the only thing that I remember. My dad was telling his brothers and his mother and everyone that we're going to have to leave. As I grew up, I have always been very cynical about whether or not government helps communities or hurts communities. But I had never drawn the connection before as to why I felt that way. You just absorb the message but you don't really intellectually understand where it came from. That's probably the most interesting thing that that came out of JCHESS to me. We talked about it. I remember Rich Hashimoto talking about how painful it was for him getting kicked out of the neighborhood.

Smith: Do you remember when the Peace Plaza and/or Peace Pagoda were created?

Sakai: I was thinking about that. One of my most fun memories is – you know when they took the entire block down across the street from the store? It was all sand and dunes for a long time because they didn't do anything with it. My younger brother Dale, who is going to be 60 this year, he was a little kid at the time, I remember him going out there, and just kind of having fun in the sand, and he brought back all these neat glass bottles. They were hand blown glass bottles, the old ones. He brought a whole bunch of them and I remember my uncle saying, "Look at you, you bought in all this junk!" He threw it in trash and Dale was all upset, but there were a lot of interesting artifacts. He came back with the bottles because he thought they were neat. I've seen those kinds of bottles in museums. They have that funny blue color because they were hand-blown.

Matsuda: Do you remember seeing the demolition of those houses?

Sakai: Yeah, kind of vaguely. I remember my dad saying he didn't think it was going to be successful because he thought the concept, while being logical, was not a good business concept. He saw it as locking everyone in. There weren't a lot of entrances or exits. The one they have now they actually cut entrances and exits, but the original one had very few entrances and you couldn't get out. My dad used to tell us that the marketing concept was to bring the customers in and then they're kind of stuck there to shop. I got the impression that it was never really successful honestly.

Matsuda: Can you tell us what you remember about the Peace Pagoda being built or any comments you remember your parents making or people in the community making?

Sakai: Not about the pagoda itself. I remember there being more Japanese businesses in that area. I remember, was it Panasonic International? They had a showroom in there. We used to go in there a lot and look. I remember it being almost kind of an exhibit hall where they talk to you about the things they were doing. So that was always there. I remember going in there and kind of watching those things.

Matsuda: Did you feel like they were a part of the community? Or what were your feelings about the showrooms?

Sakai: You know my childhood community was the one before the center. That kind of neighborhood. And I considered Fillmore part of my neighborhood. I mean, I used to walk down there a lot, I'd actually sneak out at night. But yea, those were the things that I remember. I don't remember the big things. I remember the small neighborhood stores - the Marino's and Babe's Coffee Shop, and Benkyodo.

Matsuda: Where did you used to hang if you wanted lunch or if you wanted a snack?

Sakai: I came home

Matsuda: I see.

Sakai: My parents are probably stricter.

Smith: What did you do when you were at the store? You said you spent a lot of time there as a kid.

Sakai: Well the first thing I had to do when I came home was I had to do my homework. That was first thing and then I remember I used to fill toilet paper. That was the first job. I got it because they were lightweight. I used to drag the big box and walk back and fill it with toilet paper, and I'd go and stock it. Most days I was upstairs doing my homework. My parents were always very strong about that. My dad used to say you have to have an education.

Matsuda: Did he go to college?

Sakai: Yeah, he went to Berkeley. I always thought he had never graduated because the Depression had started and he had to go and take care of the family business. But after my mother passed away we emptied the house and I found a diploma from Berkeley, so I guess he did graduate.

Smith: What did what was the degree?

Sakai: I don't remember that.

Matsuda: Did he have expectations for you to take on the business, or did he want you to do what you wanted?

Sakai: No, he was pretty good about that. Joining the business was my idea.

Matsuda: Your decision.

Sakai: Yeah, my decision. But he was the one that told me when it was time, so when I finished my graduate studies, I went to work downtown for a company called Arthur Young. It's called Ernst Young now but it was Arthur Young at the time.

Matsuda: Was your father the oldest son?

Sakai: Yes.

Matsuda: And you are the oldest son of your father?

Sakai: No, I'm not. My brother was.

Matsuda: so you're the middle son?

Sakai: Yes. My brother did not want that responsibility and I didn't look at it as a responsibility, so I guess it was easier for me to make that decision. But yeah, he was supposed to take over the store. My dad was pretty good about letting us make our own decisions so that's what I'm like with my kids. None of them are interested in taking over the business and I'm fine with that.

Matsuda: And your younger brother? He didn't want to take over the business?

Sakai: Well, he was seven years younger than me, so I don't think my father even though it was a possibility because he hadn't reached an age he could make that determination.

Matsuda: So tell us more about your thoughts of construction of the Pagoda. You said it was an interesting place to go in to the Japan Center, but did you feel like they were part of the community? Can you share some of those thoughts?

Sakai: I never had a sense that it was something that was close to me. The church - Christ United Presbyterian Church - was probably the place I felt most connected to. It was Sturge Memorial Hall on Post Street when I used to go there. They moved when I was almost out of high school. I think there is an apartment building there; it's right behind the Hinode Tower. So that's where we used to go. They later moved to where they are currently located. Paul's father was the architect of the building at the new location. But I went to the old location. My parents never went to church, by the way. They used to drop me off every Sunday and I'd attend church. My best friend, Sterling Sakai, no relation, we used to go to church together. There was a chapel; we had service and right behind it was the residence, they called it Sturge Hall. We used to go there for Sunday class lessons afterwards.

Matsuda: What kind of lessons? Sunday school?

Sakai: Sunday school, yeah. And then after that, after service and after the Sunday school, I'd walk down to the store. Because this is on Post right? So I walked down to 1680 Post Street and I'd go upstairs to my grandmother's and get something to eat.

Matsuda: Your store was open seven days a week?

Sakai: No, but my grandparents lived above the store. So I would just go upstairs and ring the doorbell and go in and get something to eat. My parents eventually came and picked me up. Yeah, so, that's the Japantown that I remember. I think that, as I think back, the Japan Center was kind of something that was just always there, kind of like too large and too impersonal for me to develop an emotional connection to it. I remember the Panasonic National Store and I remember a lot of the Ikebana people were still there.

Matsuda: Yes.

Sakai: I remember that sort of stuff, but they always seemed separate from the Japantown that I grew up with, which had the Buddhist Church obon odori on the street.

Matsuda: On Post Street?

Sakai: Not on Post Street. On the street in between Bush and California, or the next street, but yeah, that's the Japantown that I remember, where we'd go to the Bizarre. I'd go to the Bizarre a lot and just hang out. Also I think it had that sense that it was something that was created for us, rather than with us.

Matsuda: That's an interesting comment. So fast forward. What did you think about the Japan Center, or the Peace Pagoda, or Peace Plaza then? Did that start to integrate to become part of your community?

Sakai: You know, I think that the Cherry Blossom Festival was probably the first thing outside of Troop 12 to start to start to draw me out of the store, and into the community.

Matsuda: So you were still in high school then, weren't you?

Sakai: Yeah.

Sakai: I was an explorer at that time. I think that the festival was probably the biggest thing. My parents and I are pretty conservative. I have the mentality of a small businessman, so I have a dislike of excessive government regulations, but I also have a real deep faith in markets. You realize that you control your life if you run a good business, you put your energy into it, and you can make a profit and take care of your family. So our emphasis was always on that. When a lot of the social disruption happened in Japantown my parents were very suspicious. My father was very hurt by the relocation, because he had really bought into the idea that America is a melting pot and that if you work hard and you keep your nose clean, that this is a place where you could live and make a good life. And I think it really hurt him that the government would come in and without really any evidence, just tell them you have to get on a bus and leave.

Matsuda: As an American citizen.

Sakai: Yeah. As an American citizen. But regardless of that, he still said life is about balance and you put things on a scale positive and negative, and he said this country still has been very good to us. He said, you know, I can afford to send you to college, and you don't have to say, I can only go here, I can't go there. He said you can go anywhere you want and I can take care of it, because this economic system has allowed us to have a certain amount of affluence. So he was very pro-American, even though he was realistic enough to realize that there is a political reality in this country that favors certain groups over others. But his conservatism really made him skeptical of people who wanted to destroy the system, because there were a lot of things going on. He said, it's not easy but you need to organize within the rules allowed by this government and of course, he said it's not going to come easy. You're going to get opposition every step of the way, but it's not an appropriate response to take up guns. He said anarchy is worse than what we have now. And so, I was discouraged to participate in CANE, let's put it that way.

Matsuda: But they were around. Did you find that they in some ways helped with the redevelopment process, in terms of allowing of some kind of residential input?

Sakai: Well, I think they did some really good things.

Matsuda: You know about CANE right? This is for Citizens Against Nihonnachi Eviction.

Sakai: I think this is going back to that old saying that the squeaky wheel gets the oil. So, if you don't say anything, and I think that's probably, if there's any major weakness of Japanese Americans, it is that they are very polite. I think a lot of its roots come from Confucianism, which is the acceptance of authority and willingness to try to live within the rules. And so I think that modification is necessary. It's all a balance though. But with my parents, you're going to go to college, and you're going to get a good job, you can do whatever you want do, go wherever you want, but you're not going to get a police record.

Matsuda: What do you think about the landmarking Peace Pagoda? Have any thoughts about that?

Sakai: You know that's an interesting question.

Matsuda: Does that involve like bad memories, good memories? Or, if you have to leave a legacy of what Japantown should be remembered as, as we move forward 50 years, what would that be?

Sakai: Well, for me, the building that I have the most positive feelings for is Kinmon Gakuen. Because I think that I have some really strong memories, positive memories about, like I said, going and watching movies there. I remember we used to sit in the front, my friends and I, and we all would just laugh. Because all these Japanese movies, they seemed to us to be overly tragic. Everybody dies. You know, so I remember one night we were just laughing because so many people were dying. I remember the ushers had to kick us out because all the ladies were crying, with Kleenex and everything and we would disturb the entire mood. But that's a good memory for me. And then Judo with Kimura Sensei. I remember upstairs we used to take our clothes out and put our gi on, and then we rolled out the mats. And you know, there was a whole ritual, bowing and being respectful of the school and the whole process. So that building probably has the most memories for me. And like I said, I think with the Peace Plaza, it felt kind of cold and abstract for me. It didn't feel like my neighborhood.

Matsuda: Can you share some of your thoughts about Japantown then and now?

Sakai: You know, I guess if I were to think about it, when I was a kid, I really felt like it was a neighborhood. It's kind of like those small-tube TV movie series where kids run around and people hang out on the stoop and all that kind of stuff. That sense of, I guess the word is warmth, I remember. I don't get that sense these days. These days, I really think the neighborhood is on a precipice and can go either way. Like I mentioned earlier, part of the reason why I volunteered at the center, and why I was going to take the NPC position and the volunteer position on the JTF Land Use Committee, is that I want to feel for myself that if the neighborhood should disappear, that I at least tried to help prevent that from happening. So for me part of what I tell people is that, you know, being a Japanese American in this country is difficult. Because we are so influenced by media, and you know, you don't see many Asian American or Japanese American athletes, you don't see many Japanese American actors. And wealth has been concentrated in a group that is predominately European in its origin. So for young Japanese Americans, it's difficult to find a reference point to help define their identities. And so for me, Japantown is one reference point that I'd like to keep for the next generations. This is a physical point where young Japanese Americans can come and take look and say, you know, we've been here for a while. And this is part of who we are. Not as Japanese, but as Japanese Americans. I think when you grow up and you are looking for someone to model yourself after, it's difficult in this country because you don't see many similar faces. When I went to Japan – I spent my junior year abroad – I found it very interesting that as you walk down Tokyo, they are all Japanese faces. I went to school in Iowa and everyone was Caucasian. But that's kind of why I try to do what I can to help. You know we have this community benefit district that I think is going to move forward. I actually had a conversation with Hamaguchi today about that.

Smith: Well, thank you so much for your time. Do you have anything else regarding Peace Plaza, Peace Pagoda that you can, thoughts you didn't get to?

Sakai: I think that my parents and a lot of people were not surprised. The relocation and redevelopment are interlinked in a lot of ways. In the eyes of my family, we didn't matter to the powers that be. There's the idea that forces larger than us, more powerful than us, are just going to tell us what they are going to do. The best we can do is to try and survive. I think that may be why my emotional attachment is more towards things I remember before redevelopment. I'm old enough that I have those memories.

Smith: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me.

Hiroshi Shimizu
Interviewed by Desiree Smith
Japantown, San Francisco, California
June 8, 2017

Smith: My name is Desiree Smith, here with Hiroshi Shimizu. This interview is intended to inform a landmark nomination for Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda. Staff is trying to capture the broader community history from the first-person perspective as it relates to the story of the neighborhood before, during, and after construction of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza. Thank you for joining me today. First, can you start by stating your name, age and place of birth?

Shimizu: My name is Hiroshi Shimizu. I'm 74 years old, and I was born in Topaz. I guess the official name for Topaz is the Central Utah Relocation Center. I had a kind of extensive history of incarceration from my birth to when I was almost five years old. Our family was released from Crystal City internment camp in September of 1947.

Smith: Do you have any memories of living in the incarceration camps?

Shimizu: I have a lot of memories from Crystal City. I got to Crystal City when I was about three and released when I was almost five.

Smith: Was that also in Utah?

Shimizu: No, that was in Texas. From birth to about four months, I was in Utah. Then our family moved to, or was transported to, Ellis Island for deportation, or, for exchange. But, the ship was full and they didn't need us, so we were sent to Rohwer in Arkansas, which is another of the American concentration camps. We were only there for about a week and were then transferred to Tule Lake in Northern California, which was the segregation center for the so-called disloyal Japanese. And then we were there until I was three. And because my parents had renounced their American citizenship, that's why we were detained until about two years, or a little over two years after the war ended. And so, it was at the end of 1947 that we came to San Francisco- I, my parents returned to San Francisco and, for me and my two sisters it was our first visit.

Smith: So your parents had lived in San Francisco prior?

Shimizu: Yes.

Smith: Were your sisters also born in concentration camps?

Shimizu: Yes. I was born in Utah, I had a sister that was born in Tule Lake, and then I had a sister that was born in Crystal City, Texas. So it wasn't really until much later in life that I grasped how much of a life change it was for my mother to enter incarceration as a wife and emerged three and a half years later as a mother of three children.

Smith: Right, that's amazing.

Shimizu: Yeah.

Smith: Do you have any recollections of what it was like for your parents to return to Japantown? Or do you remember them talking about their experience returning to San Francisco?

Shimizu: When people returned to San Francisco from the camps, housing was really difficult to find. The gym of the Buddhist Church and other places with large halls served as temporary housing for the community. I know a number of families were housed in Hunters Point in the housing that they had created for the workers at the naval shipyards. So they were kind of everywhere and anywhere that they could find residence. That would have been in early 1946, late 1945. But by the time we returned, there wasn't a flood a people looking for housing. Before the war, right here at the corner of Sutter and Laguna, was a hotel called the Kashi Hotel. It was owned by a Japanese man that was a friend of my father, but during the years of the camps, it was managed by African Americans. When we returned in 1948, it was being managed by African Americans although the Japanese man who had owned it originally, continued to own it. He arranged for us to stay in the attic of that hotel. It was the first place we lived upon our return from the camps.

Smith: Do you know where your parents lived before the concentration camps?

Shimizu: On Webster Street.

Smith: Do you know if they owned the property on Webster Street? Or were they renters?

Shimizu: No, they were renters.

Smith: How long did you live in the attic of the hotel?

Shimizu: I don't know how long, but it was no longer than a year, and then we found a place to rent, right across the street on Laguna, between Sutter and Bush, and let's see, that must of been about 1950, 1951 or so. We lived there until 1956 and then we moved to another rented house on Pine Street, between Buchanan and Webster.

Smith: Where did you go to school?

Shimizu: So I went to Brown School, which is now Rosa Parks. After graduating from there I went to Benjamin Franklin Junior High, which is now Newcomer High. It's on Geary at Scott. And before the war, it was a girl's high school. I think the name of it was Girl's High School.

Smith: So when you were young, growing up in Japantown, where did you hang out? Where did you spend your time as a pre-teen and teenager?

Shimizu: Well, the main place of congregation for me was the Konko Church, which at that time was located at 1909 Bush Street. It's now right at the corner. They may have taken the address, I'm not sure. But you know it's the church on the corner of Bush and Laguna.

Smith: Were you active in the church?

Shimizu: Fairly active. I met the two youngest sons of the minister of that church in Crystal City, also the minister. They were at Crystal City. We ended up in San Francisco right around the corner from that church and then that church began a Boy Scout troop. It was a Boy Scout troop that was organized at the church and the only Boy Scout troop in Japantown at the time that didn't require members of the troop to be members of the church. There was a Buddhist Boy Scout troop and you know, I'm kind of assuming that you had to be a member of the church to be a member of the Boy Scout troop. But I think that it was from the members of the church that they drew members for the boys scout troop. And there was a Christian church right at the corner, where the hotel used to be, that had a Boy Scout troop. But at that time, before it moved there, that church used to be on Post Street, near Octavia. It was the Christ Genetic Presbyterian Church

Smith: So you were active in the Boy Scout troop?

Shimizu: Well, yeah I was active, and it was the center of, I guess you could say, my social life – the Boy Scout troop and the church itself.

Smith: What kind of church was that?

Shimizu: It was called the Konko Church.

Shimizu: It's a church that uses Shinto ceremony but it's not really a Shinto religion. It's a religion that was established independently in Japan in the 1850s.

Smith: Moving forward a little bit in time, to the era before redevelopment, how would you describe the neighborhood and the community of Japantown at that time? What was it like?

Shimizu: Well, it was a real community at that time. And to me the area that was enclosed by Laguna and Webster down to Geary, well, maybe even beyond Geary because the YMCA was inside of Geary between O'Farrell and Pine Street, was a vibrant, active community. Especially Post Street between Laguna and Webster, that's where a lot of the businesses and commerce was located: grocery stores and barber shops, there was also hotel. My first dentist was on that block, on the south side of Post Street. There was a Nissei barber shop that was run by Willie Ito. His son was a friend of my friend's older brother; he was a little bit older than me. There was Post Street Market, whose owner was

a friend of my father because they had come from the same prefecture in Japan. Takahashi's was right around where the bank is right now.

Smith: What kind of business was that, Takahashi's?

Shimizu: What do they call that? They sold ceramics.

Shimizu: The business was notable because the owners had modernized the front of the building so it had a modern look, while most of the other places retained the old look. They were on the south side of the street. On the other side was the Uoki Sakai Market, and the Bop City was right in there. Soko Hardware was right on the corner. ThenI think this was a little bit later, somewhere in the mid 1950's or so, Wong's Bakeshop was there on Post Street and they were our neighbor on Laguna Street. In fact, they were just the next building over.

Smith: Everybody knew each other it sounds like - neighbors and family friends ran the businesses?

Shimizu: Yeah, so it really had a community feel and later on, I think around the early 1960s, I got a job at Osoto Brothers, which was right on the northeast corner of Post and Laguna; the building is still there. At the time that I went to work with them, they had just built that building and so it was brand new and I remember it seemed huge at the time but after they started getting supplies and stuff, it didn't seem so big. They were on Post Street, on the south side, between Laguna and Buchannan, before they moved there into the corner property at Post and Laguna.

Smith: What kind of business was it?

Shimizu: They sold food stuff like shoyu. They made senbei there – the ones that are like fortune cookies, that kind of thing. They had a machine and baked them there.

Smith: What did you do there? What was your job?

Shimizu: I was just a young hand there. Do you know what the pickled scallions are?

Smith: No.

Shimizu: That was kind of interesting. They would get these short barrels of pickled scallions from Japan. They'd get shipments of around forty. When they came from Japan they would be in a brine bath. We would have to take the wooden corks out for all the bottles, turn them over and drain the brine out, and then fill it with kind of a vinegar sugar water solution, and then recork it, let it pickle for a while, and then sell them. So you know things like that. They would import shoyu from Japan and the senbei, the kind you get in bars, and so they would be in boxes downstairs and we would have to move that. So it was just general work. They sold to most of the grocery stores and the whole Bay Area.

Smith: Do you remember the time during Redevelopment or leading up to it? Can you talk about it? How old were you around that time?

Shimizu: Let me see, I was about 30 I guess.

Smith: Were you still living in this area, in this neighborhood?

Shimizu: No, I was not.

Smith: Were you in San Francisco?

Shimizu: Yea, I was. My parents still lived here; my dad was working in this location anyways.

Smith: Literally. So he worked for the Buddhist newspaper?

Shimizu: Yeah, the Hokubei Mainichi. Well, at that time I guess I kind of knew it was Buddhist newspaper, but I didn't really distinguish it in that way.

Smith: So it was community newspaper?

Shimizu: Yeah.

Smith: Focused mostly on Japantown area or the Japanese American community?

Shimizu: That was one of the focuses, and any news that involved Japan was also important to the newspaper. My father was the editor for the Japanese section and the editor in chief of the paper, and various other people were the editors for the English section during those years.

Smith: So it was bilingual newspaper?

Shimizu: Yes.

Smith: Do you know how long he was working out of that location before Redevelopment?

Shimizu: Oh yeah, so they were here. My father felt fortunate to have gotten the new location for the newspaper on Post Street. You know where the new People's Building is now?

Smith: No.

Shimizu: It's right across the street from the center on Post. It's the new building that was just constructed a couple years ago. I think it was the Japanese Union Christian Church before the war. It was about 2006 or 2007 when Okubei (I was on the board on the time), sold that property to a Japanese company to rebuild there.

Smith: Do you remember how redevelopment affected your father's newspaper?

Shimizu: He, my father, was not happy about redevelopment. But, I don't know if I could say he was happy, but he was not displeased with the new location that they got.

Smith: Did he get the new location right away?

Shimizu: Pretty quickly. I don't know the particulars of it, but it was a deal that was handled by redevelopment. And you know, in total, the location was only a block and half away, but, it seemed more central, a more central location in Japantown.

Smith: You weren't living in Japantown during the Redevelopment era, but do you remember how the neighborhood changed afterwards? When you would come back to visit and spend time, how do you perceive the whole thing?

Shimizu: I loved the old Victorian style buildings that were here, and I was really disappointed to see them destroyed. It didn't occur to me how much the fabric of community was destroyed by redevelopment, but you know, afterwards I saw that it did. Most, well, I think all of the businesses that were there had to move because of redevelopment. They moved and closed shop soon after or just went out of business and they were not replaced by businesses that felt like they were a part of community.

Smith: Do you remember when the Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda were created?

Shimizu: I remember when they went up, when the whole complex went up. I didn't hate it, but I mean, I wasn't particularly fond of it either. And I remember when the Kabuki Theater first went up. I went to the grand opening of that, mainly because my father had gotten tickets for it and you know, they had this revolving stage and I think the first part of the show was kabuki and then the stage rotated around and these dancing girls came out like the rockettes.

Smith: Very exciting when you're a kid. So did you like the Kabuki Theater? Did you go back?

Shimizu: I never did, no. Well, um, I'm basically a jazz guy, you know.

Smith: That must have been a pretty good neighborhood for jazz.

Shimizu: I was a huge jazz fan, but I never went to Bop City. You know, they opened at 2 and closed at 6 a.m.

Smith: You were young at the time.

Shimizu: There were some years when I could have gone, but that was not the kind of schedule I was living in, you know. But I knew that there was a place called Jacks on Sutter that would open at six a.m. I knew people that still wanted to party after Bop City closed at six in the morning so they would go to Jacks because they were just opening at that time. They had an organ. Through all of that period I would go to the jazz workshop on Broadway and the Black Hawk at Turk and Hyde, but never got into going to Bop City.

Smith: Going back to the Peace Plaza- in the years following its opening, did you ever spend time there?

Shimizu: Yeah, I was there just this year right after Trump's inauguration. We had a program, Japantown for Unity, there at night. At that gathering I thought the Pagoda looked really nice; it had blue lights on it or something.

Smith: Does it have any meaning for you, the Peace Plaza or Peace Pagoda? Does it symbolize anything?

Shimizu: There were other gatherings held there. I remember after 9/11, the community held a program in support of Muslim Americans at the Peace Plaza. Mainly due to the fact that it is an open space it has been used a lot. I've been chairing the Day of Remembrance for the San Francisco community and a couple of years we held our program at the Kabuki Theater, from where we led a candle procession to the community center in Sutter Street. A couple of times the procession went from the theater to the Peace Plaza and on to the community center.

Smith: Not regularly, though?

Shimizu: No, not regularly. I think part of the reason for that is use of the plaza requires a permit. I think one time we held the event there, it was a big deal.

Smith: Could you tell me a about the Day of Remembrance?

Shimizu: The purpose of the Day of Remembrance is to remind everyone that we have to keep the incarceration experience in mind because it was the greatest constitutional injustice, I think, in our history. It's become more of an immediate concern because of 9/11 and the reaction to Muslims in America. And that our legacy is not ever led, that sort of, that same constitutional infraction happens again.

Smith: That's wonderful. Well thank you so much for your time. Is there anything else that comes to mind about the Peace Plaza or Pagoda that we didn't catch during the interview?

Shimizu: I don't think so.

Smith: Thank you so much.

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Landmark Designation Case Report

Hearing Date:	June 21, 2017
Case No.:	**2014.1050L**
Project Address:	**1610 Geary Boulevard**
Zoning:	(NC-3) Neighborhood Commercial, Moderate Scale
Block/Lot:	0700/022, 0700/023
Property Owner:	City and County of San Francisco 25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 400 San Francisco, CA 94102
Staff Contact:	Desiree Smith – (415) 575-9093 desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By:	Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822 tim.frye@sfgov.org

PROPERTY DESCRIPTIONS & SURROUNDING LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Peace Pagoda (APN 0700/023) is a reinforced concrete structure, approximately five stories in height and one hundred feet tall. It is located in the southwest quadrant of Peace Plaza (APN 0700/022), a 160' x 197' public park at the center of the block bounded by Laguna Street, Webster Street, Post Street and Geary Boulevard. The Pagoda is a monumental structure featuring a reinforced concrete core, five conical roofs clad with copper plates, and an ornamental bronze spire. Peace Plaza provides the setting for the Pagoda and is characterized by a mix of hardscape and landscaping features. The Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza were designed by the Japanese master architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi, in a Modernist style based on traditional Japanese forms. The attached draft Landmark Designation Report contains a detailed architectural description on pages 4-9.

The subject building is located above a parking garage within the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center (Japan Center), located in the Japantown area of the Western Addition. This area was redeveloped by San Francisco Redevelopment Agency projects A-1 and A-2, and is characterized by three distinct areas. The Japan Center is a linear strip of large commercial buildings constructed during the late 1960s. It includes shops, a movie theater, a hotel and parking garages, and is bounded by Post Street, Geary Boulevard, Laguna Street and Fillmore Street. To the north is the Nihonmachi redevelopment, characterized by smaller-scale commercial buildings constructed during the 1970s along Buchanan Mall between Post Street and Sutter Street—as well as an extension to the east and west along Post Street. Both the Japan Center and the Nihonmachi development were designed with a blend of Modern and traditional Japanese architectural influences.

South of the Japan Center is Geary Boulevard, an eight lane thoroughfare that descends into a sunken expressway as it approaches Fillmore Street. In the vicinity of the Japan Center, the south side of Geary

Boulevard fronts the St. Francis Square Apartments, a cooperative housing complex characterized by three-story multi-family buildings constructed during the early 1960s.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The case before the Historic Preservation Commission is the consideration of the initiation of landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code, Section 1004.1, and recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve of such designation.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS

The Planning Department has determined that actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment (specifically in this case, landmark designation) are exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight - Categorical).

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES

The Urban Design Element of the San Francisco General Plan contains the following relevant objectives and policies:

OBJECTIVE 2: Conservation of Resources that provide a sense of nature, continuity with the past, and freedom from overcrowding.

POLICY 4: Preserve notable landmarks and areas of historic, architectural or aesthetic value, and promote the preservation of other buildings and features that provide continuity with past development.

Designating significant historic resources as local landmarks will further continuity with the past because the buildings will be preserved for the benefit of future generations. Landmark designation will require that the Planning Department and the Historic Preservation Commission review proposed work that may have an impact on character-defining features. Both entities will utilize the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* in their review to ensure that only appropriate, compatible alterations are made.

SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1 – GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Code Section 101.1 – Eight Priority Policies establishes and requires review of permits for consistency with said policies. On balance, the proposed designation is consistent with the priority policies in that:

a. The proposed designation will further Priority Policy No. 7, that landmarks and historic buildings be preserved. Landmark designation of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza will help to preserve an important historical resource that is significant for its associations with San Francisco's Japanese American community, as well as architecturally significant as a work by master architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi, that displays high artistic values and is an important example of a type and period.

BACKGROUND / PREVIOUS ACTIONS

The Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza were added to the Landmark Designation Work Program on September 18, 2013.

OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED

If the Historic Preservation Commission decides to initiate designation of the subject property as an Article 10 landmark at its June 21, 2017 hearing, the item will again be considered by the Commission at a future hearing. During this subsequent hearing, the Commission will decide whether to forward the item to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation supportive of designation. The nomination would then be considered at a future Board of Supervisors hearing for formal Article 10 landmark designation.

APPLICABLE PRESERVATION STANDARDS

ARTICLE 10

Section 1004 of the Planning Code authorizes the landmark designation of an individual structure or other feature or an integrated group of structures and features on a single lot or site, having special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value, as a landmark. Section 1004.1 also outlines that landmark designation may be initiated by the Board of Supervisors or the Historic Preservation Commission and the initiation shall include findings in support. Section 1004.2 states that once initiated, the proposed designation is referred to the Historic Preservation Commission for a report and recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve, disapprove or modify the proposal.

Pursuant to Section 1004.3 of the Planning Code, if the Historic Preservation Commission approves the designation, a copy of the resolution of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors and without referral to the Planning Commission. The Board of Supervisors shall hold a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation.

In the case of the initiation of a historic district, the Historic Preservation Commission shall refer its recommendation to the Planning Commission pursuant to Section 1004.2(c). The Planning Commission shall have 45 days to provide review and comment on the proposed designation and address the consistency of the proposed designation with the General Plan, Section 101.1 priority policies, the City's Regional Housing Needs Allocation, and the Sustainable Communities Strategy for the Bay Area. These comments shall be sent to the Board of Supervisors in the form of a resolution.

Section 1004(b) requires that the designating ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors shall include the location and boundaries of the landmark site, a description of the characteristics of the landmark which justify its designation, and a description of the particular features that should be preserved.

Section 1004.4 states that if the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days.

ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK CRITERIA

The Historic Preservation Commission on February 4, 2009, by Resolution No. 001, adopted the National Register Criteria as its methodology for recommending landmark designation of historic resources. Under the National Register Criteria, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association, and that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or properties that have yielded, or may likely yield, information important in prehistory or history.

PUBLIC / NEIGHBORHOOD INPUT

The Department received a letter from the Japantown Task Force in support of landmark designation of Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda. That letter, dated May 24, 2017, is included in this packet. There is no known public or neighborhood opposition to designation of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza as an Article 10 landmark. The Department has, however, fielded several questions from members of the Japantown Task Force regarding the ability of the Peace Plaza to be renovated or altered in the future should it be designated as a landmark. Staff understands there is a desire to renovate the plaza and conduct repairs in the future. In responding to these questions and concerns, staff communicated that landmark designation will not preclude future work at Peace Plaza to rehabilitate or modify items, and that HPC and/or Departmental review of proposed projects at the plaza in the future would be limited to discussions governing the essential historic features of the landmark site. Additionally, HPC President, Andrew Wolfram, sent a letter to the Japantown Task Force back July 15, 2015 addressing similar questions; that letter is included as an attachment to this packet. The Department will provide any public correspondence received after the submittal of this report in the Historic Preservation Commission's correspondence folder.

PROPERTY OWNER INPUT

The property owner is the City and County of San Francisco. The Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza are administered through the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department.

STAFF ANALYSIS

The case report and analysis under review was prepared by Department preservation staff. The Department has determined that the subject property meets the requirements for Article 10 eligibility as an individual landmark. The justification for its inclusion is outlined below under the Significance and Integrity sections of this case report.

The draft Peace Plaza and Peace Pagoda Landmark Designation Report was shared with the Japantown Task Force, consultant Donna Graves, and HPC Commissioner Diane Matsuda for their review and input. The Department received several comments, including a recommendation to add quotes, testimonials, and first-person accounts from members of the community with Japantown connections in order to

amplify community voices and perspectives within the document. In response, staff has conducted a number of oral interviews with longtime Japantown community members over the past several weeks and is currently in the process of transcribing those interviews. The final draft of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza Landmark Designation Report will include these transcriptions, as well as in-text quotes from these interviews. Lastly, the final draft will also include a graphic highlighting the character-defining features outlined in the report.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza appears eligible for local designation due to significant associations with the history of Japantown and with Japanese master architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi. Specifically, the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza are the most prominent extant structures associated with the redevelopment of Japantown, serving as a visual landmark and embodiment of the community's identity and perseverance in the face of great adversity.

The Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza are located in what was historically the heart of San Francisco's *Nihonjinmachi*, or "Japanese people's town." Established following the 1906 Earthquake and Fire, the community prospered despite restrictive policies and racist sentiment. Forcibly removed from their homes during World War II, the residents of Japantown nevertheless returned to the neighborhood and within a few years had made great strides to reestablish their community. The Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza are products of Western Addition Redevelopment Area 1, which demolished the core of historic Japantown. In its place was constructed the Japanese Cultural and Trade Center, a bi-national corporately-funded endeavor largely tenanted by prominent Japanese companies. The Peace Pagoda was deliberately placed at the center of the development, but unlike other elements of the project, its construction was funded through donations drawn largely from San Francisco's sister-city, Osaka Japan, and was given to San Francisco as a symbol of friendship and peace between Japan and the United States.

Since their construction in 1968, the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza have served as focal points for an array of community cultural events, most notably the Cherry Blossom Festival and Nihonmachi Street Fair. Thus, although their construction was intimately associated with the bitterness of redevelopment, the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza have in many ways transcended their origins and today serve as the most emblematic features of Japantown. The Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza simultaneously embody the neighborhood's painful redevelopment era as well as its legacy of resistance, community affirmation, and celebration.

The Peace Pagoda is also associated with Japanese master architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi. Its design is based on a pagoda form developed during the 8th century during a period of artistic blossoming in Japan. Taniguchi deliberately chose his design because of its associations with an act of Buddhist piety by the Japanese Empress Koken, and by proxy its associations with prayer and peace. Yet, despite the ancient origin of its form, the design of the Peace Pagoda is also decidedly Modern; it is a pagoda born of reinforced concrete and advanced engineering techniques. Thus the Pagoda also has a dual nature that combines history and modernity in a way that mirrors the identity of Japantown itself.

INTEGRITY

The seven aspects of integrity are location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association in relation to the period of significance established above.

Peace Pagoda

Considered as an independent structure, the Peace Pagoda clearly retains five of the seven aspects of integrity, including location, design, materials, workmanship and association. Its integrity of setting, however, has been degraded owing to a redesign of Peace Plaza undertaken in 2000-2001. The project removed the keyhole-shaped reflecting pool and its eternal flame at the base of the Peace Pagoda, and substituted for them new features and materials. As a result, integrity of feeling was also affected to some extent. Nevertheless, as a work unto itself the Pagoda retains more than sufficient integrity to convey its architectural significance as a work of master architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi, as well its associations with the redevelopment of Japantown.

Peace Plaza

The original design of Peace Plaza was substantially modified by the 2000-2001 renovation described above. Several prominent elements of the Plaza's original design were removed, including a reflecting pool and pavilion adjacent to Post Street. During this same period the site wall along Geary Street was also modified and a new wall constructed. Changes were also made to the Plaza's paving, planters and landscaping elements, light fixtures and seating. In 2005, a memorial obelisk and plaque were also placed in Peace Plaza. Considered as a whole, Peace Plaza only retains good integrity of location, association and setting. However, it does retain some general features related to integrity of design and materials, such as a mixture of hardscape and landscaping elements, and a sunken plaza surrounding the Peace Pagoda. Overall, the Department has determined that the Peace Pagoda retains sufficient integrity to convey its historical and architectural significance. The integrity of Peace Plaza has been greatly degraded, but it does retain several general features that allow it to be understood as an open space and setting for the Peace Pagoda.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Whenever a building, site, object, or landscape is under consideration for Article 10 landmark designation, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to identify character-defining features of the property. This is done to enable owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

As described in the Landmark Designation Report, the following is a list of exterior and interior character defining features of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza.

The character-defining features of the property are identified as:

- Peace Pagoda
  - All exterior elevations, architectural ornament and rooflines
  - A central core of reinforced concrete piers
  - Rounded roofs clad with copper plates
  - Nine-ringed bronze spire, or "kurin," surmounted by a golden flaming head, or "hoshu," topped with a ball finial.
  - Bronze dedication plaques in English and Japanese (but not their current location)
  - The first step of its podium (but not the additional steps)

- Peace Plaza
  As discussed above, the integrity of the Peace Plaza has been degraded by prior alterations. Thus the following are general, rather than specific character-defining features, which still contribute to the Plaza's significance:
  - An open space characterized by a combination of hardscape paving and planters, combined with landscaping elements including shrubbery and, specifically, cherry trees
  - A main entrance aligned with Buchanan Street
  - A sunken plaza in the southern half of the Plaza which provides the setting for the Peace Pagoda
  - The use of large stones as a landscaping element
  - The presence of perimeter flag poles (originally along Post Street, now along Geary Boulevard)
  - The presence of a raised wall along the Geary Boulevard elevation, as well as stair access to the Plaza from the Geary Boulevard sidewalk

BOUNDARIES OF THE LANDMARK SITE

The proposed landmark site encompasses Assessor's Block 0700, Lots 022 and 023 – on which the subject property is located.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Based on the Department's analysis, Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza is individually eligible for Article 10 Landmark designation for its association with events that are significantly associated with San Francisco's ethnic, social and fraternal history, as well as for its outstanding architectural expression. The Department recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission approve the proposed designation of **1610 Geary Boulevard** as a San Francisco landmark.

The Historic Preservation Commission may recommend approval, disapproval, or approval with modifications of the proposed initiation of Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza as a San Francisco landmark under Article 10 of the Planning Code to the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Planning Code Section 1004.1. If the Historic Preservation Commission approves the initiation, a copy of the motion of approval is transmitted to the Board of Supervisors, which holds a public hearing on the designation and may approve, modify or disapprove the designation (Section 1004.4). If the Historic Preservation Commission disapproves the proposed designation, such action shall be final, except upon the filing of a valid appeal to the Board of Supervisors within 30 days (Section 1004.5).

ATTACHMENTS

A. Draft Resolution initiating designation
B. Draft Landmark Designation Report
C. Draft landmark ordinance
D. July 15, 2015 Letter from Andrew Wolfram to Japantown Task Force
E. Letter of Support from Japantown Task Force

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Historic Preservation Commission Resolution No. 876

HEARING DATE JUNE 21, 2017

Case No.:	2014.1050L
Project:	**Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza**
	Recommendation to Initiate
Staff Contact:	Desiree Smith (415) 575-9093
	desiree.smith@sfgov.org
Reviewed By:	Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822
	tim.frye@sfgov.org

RESOLUTION TO INITIATE ARTICLE 10 LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF 1610 GEARY BOULEVARD, HISTORICALLY KNOWN AS PEACE PAGODA AND PEACE PLAZA, LOTS 022 AND 023 IN ASSESSOR'S BLOCK 0700, AS LANDMARK NO. XXX PURSUANT TO 1004.1 OF THE PLANNING CODE.

1. WHEREAS, on September 18, 2013, the Historic Preservation Commission included 1610 Geary Boulevard, Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza, on its Landmark Designation Work Program; and

2. WHEREAS, Planning Department staff meeting the Secretary of Interior's Professional Qualification Standards prepared the Draft Landmark Designation Report, which was reviewed by Tim Frye of the Department for accuracy and conformance with the purposes and standards of Article 10; and

3. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission, at its regular meeting of June 21, 2017, reviewed Department staff's analysis of the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza's historical significance per Article 10 as part of the Landmark Designation Case Report dated April 3, 2017; and

4. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the 1610 Geary Boulevard nomination is in the form prescribed by the HPC and contains supporting historic, architectural, and/or cultural documentation; and

5. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 1610 Geary Boulevard conveys its significant architectural qualities as the work of a master architect, Yoshiro Taniguchi, while employing a Modernist style based on traditional Japanese forms. 1610 Geary Boulevard is also significant for its association with the redevelopment of Japantown, serving as a visual landmark and embodiment of the community's identity and perseverance in the face of adversity, as well as an important site for cultural celebrations including the annual Cherry Blossom Festival and the Nihonmachi Street Fair.

6. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that 1610 Geary Boulevard, meets the eligibility requirements per Section 1004 of the Planning Code and warrants consideration for Article 10 landmark designation; and

7. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the boundaries and the list of character-defining features, as identified in the draft Landmark Designation Report, should be considered for preservation under the proposed landmark designation as they relate to the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza's historical significance and retain historical integrity; and

8. WHEREAS, the proposed designation is consistent with the General Plan priority polices pursuant to Planning Code Section 101.1(b) and furthers Priority Policy No. 7, which states, that historic buildings be preserved, for reasons set for the in the June 21, 2017 Case Report; and

9. WHEREAS, the Department has determined that landmark designation is exempt from environmental review, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 (Class Eight – Categorical); and

10. WHEREAS, the Historic Preservation Commission has directed Department staff to work with members of the Japantown community to conduct oral interviews in order to obtain first-hand historical accounts that will be added to the final landmark designation report; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Historic Preservation Commission hereby confirms the nomination and initiates landmark designation of 1610 Geary Boulevard, the Peace Pagoda and Peace Plaza, Assessor's Block 0700 Lots 022 and 023, pursuant to Article 10 of the Planning Code.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission at its meeting on June 21, 2017.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES:	Hyland, Johns, Pearlman, Wolfram
NAYS:	None
ABSENT:	Hasz, Johnck
RECUSED:	Matsuda
ADOPTED:	June 21, 2017

JAPANTOWN TASK FORCE
日本町の経済発展・計画・保存
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING & PRESERVATION OF JAPANTOWN

November 8, 2017

Mr. Andrew Wolfram, President
Historical Preservation Commission
City and County of San Francisco
1650 Mission Street, #400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear President Wolfram:

The Japantown Task Force (JTF) has decided to pursue only landmarking of the Peace Pagoda at this time. As you are probably aware, JTF is currently moving forward with efforts to address urgent repairs to the Peace Plaza. In order to expedite this remediation and to respond to concerns from other City departments who are involved in this process, we have agreed to delay the landmarking of the Peace Plaza until these repairs are completed.

We hope that the landmarking of the Peace Pagoda can proceed and be separated from the draft report. We would like to sincerely thank the HPC for all of the time and attention that has been dedicated to this effort.

Sincerely,

Alice Kawahatsu

Alice Kawahatsu
President

cc: Desirée Smith
Tim Frye
Diane Matsuda
London Breed
Kayleigh Lloyd

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