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ASIAN AMERICAN CULTURAL HERITAGE GUIDE

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Photo: Alan Alabastro



Seattle Chinese Community Girls Drill Team. Photo: Kenny Williams

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SEATTLE CULTURAL HERITAGE GUIDES are a resource for visitors who want to explore the city’s rich cultural heritage. Learn about museums, historic sites, public art and neighborhoods that will give you an insider’s view of Seattle’s vibrant ethnic communities and unique history.

The guides are produced by the Cultural Tourism program of Visit Seattle, and supported by funding from **4Culture** (King County Lodging Tax) and the **Office of Arts and Culture**.

Learn more about Seattle and access expert travel advice at visitseattle.org. Or stop by one of our Visitor Information Centers at 1st & Pike in downtown Seattle or the main floor of the Washington State Convention Center at 7th & Pike.

Our sincere thanks to all the community members who helped contribute to this project and who preserve and protect Seattle’s cultural legacies.

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visitseattle.org/culturalheritage

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Cover photo: Vanessa Lee from Hengda Dance Academy dances “Flying Angel” at A Glimpse of China festival. Photo: Jonathan P. Beck, Courtesy of Festál

Asian Pacific Americans have played important roles in Seattle history. Chinese pioneers, often single men seeking economic opportunities, first arrived in the 1860s to work as laborers for railroads, mines, canneries and sawmills. A Chinese quarter was established near the waterfront. Economic downturns triggered anti-Chinese violence, but the Chinese remained a vital part of the growing town. After the Seattle Fire in 1889, the center of Chinatown shifted with the construction of new rooming houses and community association buildings east of Fifth Avenue S.

Japanese pioneers arrived in the 1880s – often men working as farmers and merchants who sent home for “picture brides” to join them later. Discriminatory laws related to property ownership limited opportunities for the Issei (first generation Japanese immigrants), although homes, businesses and farms were sometimes transferred to the Nisei (second generation, U.S. born children) or held in other creative ways. A distinct Nihonmachi, or Japantown, grew north of Chinatown around S Main Street and Sixth Avenue S, which catered to urban residents and also supplied Japanese families living in rural areas.

Pacific Islanders have been part of Pacific Northwest history since native Hawaiians sailed to Puget Sound with Captain Vancouver in 1792. In the early 20th century, after the Philippines became a U.S. territory, many Filipinos pursued opportunities for education and employment in Seattle.

Asian American pioneers and immigrants created a complex multi-ethnic urban neighborhood now known as the International District, and also resided in farming areas and logging camps throughout the region. Executive Order 9066, signed by

President Roosevelt in 1942, forced Japanese Americans on the West Coast into internment camps for the duration of World War II. The impact of this policy profoundly altered both urban and rural communities.

Since the 1960s, Seattle has become home to Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, Hmong and South Asian immigrants, and a fusion of Pacific Rim cultures gives our region a unique flavor and aesthetic. The influence of Asian cultural traditions can be seen everywhere in Seattle – in architecture, garden design, regional cuisine, and the arts. While the International District remains the heart of Seattle’s Asian American community, surrounding communities such as White Center, Bellevue, Federal Way and Shoreline boast vibrant multi-ethnic restaurants and stores.

Aki Sogabe, *Song of the Earth*. Image courtesy of Pike Place Market Foundation





SPECIAL EVENTS

CHINATOWN / INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT

Seattle’s Chinatown/International District is located southeast of Pioneer Square, bordered by Yesler Street (N), Fifth Avenue (W), Dearborn Street (S), and Rainier Avenue (E). The historic district within this area was built largely between 1909 and 1929, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Vibrant storefronts are home to restaurants, galleries, gift shops, produce markets, herbalists and other traditional and modern establishments. Buildings which once served as SRO (single room occupancy) hotels catering to immigrant laborers are slowly being restored to serve as housing for new generations of urban residents.

A closer look at this historic district reveals intriguing details of architecture and culture. Dragons perch on light posts, greeting visitors as they enter the neighborhood. Ornamental balconies grace the upper floors of Chinese family association buildings such as the Gee How Oak Tin Benevolent Society at 519 Seventh Avenue S and the Bing Kung Association at 708 S King Street. For decades, these organizations provided housing, a social life and a safety net for immigrants far from home.

Doorway cornices reveal the names of prosperous merchants, such as the Goon Dip Young Building (Milwaukee Hotel) at 668 S King Street. Signs painted on windows and building sides advertise long-lasting establishments such as the Luck Ngi Music Club at 512 Seventh Avenue S. A mural commemorates Filipino-American author Carlos Bulosan in the Eastern Hotel at 506 Maynard Avenue S.

One of the grandest buildings in the district is the Chong Wa Benevolent Association at 522 Seventh Avenue S, an important social and cultural center built in 1929. The Nihon Go Gakko at

1414 S Weller Street, now known as the Japanese Cultural and Community Center, is the oldest operating Japanese Language School in the continental U.S. The Danny Woo International District Community Garden and adjacent Kobe Terrace Park provide green space in this dense urban area.

A colorful gate marks the historic western entrance of Old Chinatown, at S King Street and Fifth Avenue S. The traditional design includes upturned eaves, a dragon, a phoenix and other good luck symbols.

“Night markets on summer evenings feature traditional cuisine, shopping and entertainment in an open-air setting.”

Community activists have fought to preserve the neighborhood’s cultural and architectural heritage. In spite of freeway construction and “urban renewal” projects in the 20th century, much of the historic neighborhood remains intact. The area east of I-5 around 12th Avenue S and S Jackson Street has become known as Little Saigon in recent years, as newer immigrant communities establish a presence in the district.

Night markets on summer evenings feature traditional cuisine, shopping and entertainment in an open-air setting (see cidbia.org for info). The Chinatown/International District website also offers a helpful guide to shops and restaurants in the neighborhood at cidbia.org.

A detailed walking guide is also available at seat.tl/IDwalkingmap.

LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

January or February | Streets of Chinatown/International District
This multi-cultural event features lively Lion and Dragon dances; taiko drumming; Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Filipino and Korean dance; arts and craft booths; and traditional cuisine. cidbia.org

SEATTLE ASIAN AMERICAN FILM FESTIVAL

February | Northwest Film Forum, 1515 12th Avenue
Held at Northwest Film Forum, the festival showcases feature-length and short films by and about Asian Americans across North America, with an emphasis on filmmakers from the Pacific Northwest. seattleaaff.org

DRAGON FEST

Early July | Hing Hay Park, 409 Maynard Avenue S & surrounding streets
The Northwest’s largest Asian American street fair features Japanese taiko drumming, Chinese martial arts performances, Filipino dancing, Chinese Girls Drill Team, Lion and Dragon dance performances, arts and crafts, and an array of food booths. cidbia.org

BON ODORI

Mid July | Seattle Buddhist Temple, 1427 S Main Street
Bon Odori is a Japanese festival that honors ancestors and celebrates traditions through costumes, music, food and street dancing. Also known as Obon, it is one of the most important Japanese Buddhist holidays of the year, and has been celebrated in Seattle for more than 80 years. seattlebetsuin.com

PISTA SA NAYON

Late July | Seward Park, 5902 Lake Washington Boulevard S
This “town festival” celebrates Filipino culture, history and community on the shores of Lake Washington. pista.org

CHINATOWN SEAFAIR PARADE

Late July | Streets of Chinatown/International District
The parade features drill teams, marching bands, dancers, Seafair queens and pirates, and a 100-foot long Chinese dragon. seattlechinesechamber.org

SEATTLE DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

Late July | Lake Union Park, 860 Terry Ave N
The ceremonial tradition of dragon boat racing takes place at Lake Union Park, along with music and crafts. seattledragonboatfestival.net

FROM HIROSHIMA TO HOPE

August 6 | Northwest Shore of Green Lake
A solemn and beautiful twilight ceremony of floating lanterns marks the anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. fromhiroshimatohope.org

SEATTLE SOUTH ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL

October | Seattle Asian Art Museum, Volunteer Park
Tasveer presents this annual series of film screenings, panel discussions, workshops and cultural programming focused on South Asia and its diaspora. tasveer.org

FESTÁL

This series of family-oriented community festivals throughout the year at Seattle Center includes several Asian and Asian American festivals celebrating the people, traditions, arts, history, culture, and foods that make up Seattle’s rich ethnic heritage. seattlecenter.com/festal

- **TET VIETNAMESE LUNAR NEW YEAR** - *January/February*
- **SEATTLE CHERRY BLOSSOM & JAPANESE CULTURAL FESTIVAL** - *April*
- **ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH CELEBRATION** - *May*
- **A GLIMPSE OF CHINA CHINESE CULTURE AND ARTS FESTIVAL** - *May*
- **NORTHWEST FOLK LIFE FESTIVAL** - *May*
- **PAGDIRIWANG PHILIPPINE FESTIVAL** - *June*
- **TIBET FEST** - *August*
- **LIVE ALOHA HAWAIIAN CULTURAL FESTIVAL** - *September*
- **HMONG NEW YEAR CELEBRATION** - *November*
- **DIWALI LIGHTS OF INDIA** - *November*

Hmong New Year Celebration. Photo: Jonathan P. Beck, Courtesy of Festál



CHINATOWN / INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT



ID1. WING LUKE MUSEUM OF THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN EXPERIENCE
719 S King Street, 206.623.5124
Located in the historic East Kong Yick building, The Wing is the only pan-Asian Pacific American museum in the country. It is the first Smithsonian Institution affiliate in the Pacific Northwest, and its displays explore issues related to culture, art and history. The Museum is named in honor of Mr. Wing Luke, who joined the Seattle City Council in 1962, the first Asian American to hold elected office in the Pacific Northwest. Chinatown Discovery Tours begin at the Museum and offer guided tours of the Chinatown/International District. wingluke.org



ID2. KOBO AT HIGO
602-608 S Jackson Street, 206.381.3000
Kobo occupies the former home of the Higo Variety Store, which was run by the Murakami family continuously for 75 years. Vintage store fixtures, antique paintings and historic exhibits complement a contemporary gallery featuring furniture, textiles, works on paper and photography. koboseattle.com



ID3. HING HAY PARK
423 Maynard Avenue S
This park plaza is the International District's primary public square, and features an ornate Chinese Pavilion that was a gift from the people of Taipei. seattle.gov/parks



ID4. PANAMA HOTEL & TEA HOUSE
605 1/2 and 607 S Main Street, 206.515.4000
A National Historic Landmark, the Panama Hotel provides a unique glimpse into Seattle's Japanese American history. Built in 1910 in the center of Nihonmachi (Japantown), the hotel operated a sento, or traditional Japanese bathhouse, in the basement. The Panama continues to operate as a hotel and tea house, and offers educational tours. Historic photographs of the neighborhood are on display, and a cut-away portion of the tea room floor offers a poignant view of items left behind by Japanese Americans who were interned during WWII and did not return to Seattle to claim their personal belongings. panamahotelseattle.com



ID5. UWAJIMAYA
600 Fifth Avenue S, 206.624.6248
In 1928, founder Fujimatsu Moriguchi began selling homemade foods and trade items from the back of his truck to Japanese laborers working in logging and fishing camps in the Puget Sound region. Still a family run business, Uwajimaya is a feast for the senses, providing ingredients for Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Thai, and Vietnamese cuisine, as well as gifts, restaurants and cooking classes. uwajimaya.com



ID6. NISEI VETERANS COMMUNITY HALL
1212 S King Street, 206.322.1122
This community hall features historical exhibits and educational programs, and a Memorial Wall honors the legacy of Japanese Americans who were interned during WWII or who served in the military. nvcfoundation.org

ASIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE SITES



A. BURKE MUSEUM
17th Avenue NE & NE 45th Street, 206.543.5590
Located on the University of Washington campus, the museum's long term exhibit Pacific Voices features the arts, ceremonies and stories of Asian and Asian American cultures and communities around the Pacific Rim. burkemuseum.org



B. PEACE PARK
NE Pacific Street & NE 40th Street
Located at the northwest corner of University Bridge near the University of Washington, this park honors Sadako Sasaki, a Japanese girl who survived the bombing of Hiroshima but later died from radiation sickness. Daryl Smith's statue, *Sadako and the Thousand Cranes*, is often draped with garlands of folded paper cranes which symbolize hope for peace in the world. seattle.gov/parks



C. BRUCE LEE'S GRAVE
Lake View Cemetery, 1554 15th Avenue E, 206.322.1582
Acclaimed martial artist, actor and director Bruce Lee is buried in Lake View Cemetery, just north of Volunteer Park. His grave, and that of his son Brandon Lee, are located east of the circular drive in the center of the cemetery, and are often visited by fans wishing to pay tribute to the kung fu legend. lakeviewcemeteryassociation.com/lees



D. SEATTLE ASIAN ART MUSEUM
1400 E Prospect Street in Volunteer Park, 206.654.3100
The elegant art deco building in the Capitol Hill neighborhood opened in 1933 as the Seattle Art Museum. The building became the domain of Asian Art in 1994 when SAM opened a new museum downtown. Today, it houses one of the nation's premier collections of Japanese, Korean and Chinese art. Japanese American sculptor Isamu Noguchi's iconic *Black Sun* is located outside the museum. seattleartmuseum.org



E. JAPANESE GARDEN, ARBORETUM
1075 Lake Washington Boulevard E, 206.684.4725
Located within the Washington Park Arboretum, this 3.5 acre formal garden was created in 1960 by renowned designer Juki Iida, and features hundreds of granite boulders from the Cascade Mountains placed among azaleas, flowering trees and evergreens. The garden also features stone bridges and lanterns, a traditional tea house, and a koi pond wreathed in water lilies. seattlejapanesejardens.org



F. MUSEUM OF HISTORY & INDUSTRY (MOHAI)
Lake Union Park, 860 Terry Avenue N, 206.324.1126
MOHAI's permanent exhibit *True Northwest: The Seattle Journey* features Asian American pioneers and stories from diverse immigrant communities, including an examination of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. mohai.org



G. SEATTLE CENTER
Fifth Avenue & Broad Street
Although the Space Needle is the most famous monument remaining at Seattle Center from the 1962 World's Fair, there are three notable features from the Fair that are associated with Asian American heritage.

The **Kobe Bell** was given to Seattle in 1962 by its first sister city, Kobe, Japan, and is housed in a pagoda made of Japanese cypress near the Cornish Playhouse.

Japanese American artist Paul Horiuchi designed the monumental mural near the Space Needle, which gives the **Mural Amphitheater** its name.

The **Pacific Science Center**, originally the U.S. Science Pavilion, was designed by Seattle-born Minoru Yamasaki in association with NBBJ Architects. The Pavilion features five graceful arches that rise high above reflecting pools, blending Japanese and Gothic aesthetics. Yamasaki went on to design the IBM Building and Rainier Tower in Seattle, and the ill-fated World Trade Center in New York City. seattlecenter.com

See the **Festál** section under Special Events for some of the festivals held at Seattle Center.



H. 5TH AVENUE THEATRE
1308 Fifth Avenue, 206.625.1900
Opened in 1926, the interior of the magnificent 5th Avenue Theatre incorporates design motifs from Imperial China's Forbidden City, Temple of Heavenly Peace, and Summer Palace. Frequent performances as well as free guided tours (call in advance to schedule) provide opportunities for visitors to see the theatre. 5thavenue.org



I. PIKE PLACE MARKET
First Avenue & Pike Street, 206.682.7453
Seattle's public market has a strong connection to Asian American communities. In the early 20th century, the majority of market stalls were filled by Japanese American farmers, who sold berries and seasonal vegetables grown on truck farms in the Green River Valley and nearby areas. Today, Hmong and other Southeast Asian immigrants grow and sell summer bouquets and a variety of produce. pikeplacemarket.org



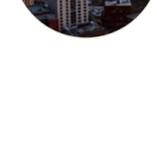
J. SEATTLE CENTRAL LIBRARY
1000 Fourth Avenue, 206.386.4636
Artist George Tsutakawa's Fountain of Wisdom graces the Fourth Avenue entrance of the Central Library. This abstract bronze sculpture was the artist's first fountain commission, and was created for Seattle's previous library built on the same site in 1959. Tsutakawa's artwork enhances many of Seattle's public spaces. spl.org



K. SMITH TOWER 35TH FLOOR OBSERVATORY
506 Second Avenue, 877.412.2776
This cultural icon opened in 1914 as the first skyscraper in Seattle, and one of the tallest buildings in the world standing 522 feet high. The 35th floor Observatory, formerly named the 'Chinese Room,' offers 360-degree views and a graciously appointed café and bar with an antique hand-carved ceiling, historical exhibits and artwork, and the famous "Wishing Chair," said to be a gift of the last Empress of China. Opening times vary. smithtower.com



L. JAPANESE CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY CENTER OF WASHINGTON (JCCCW)
1414 S Weller Street, 206.568.7114
The oldest operating Japanese Language School (Nihon Go Gakko) in the continental U.S. has transformed into a center to preserve heritage, celebrate culture and host special events. jcccw.org



M. BEACON HILL PARKS
The Beacon Hill neighborhood is one of Seattle's most culturally diverse, and two parks commemorate aspects of Asian American heritage and offer views of Seattle and the surrounding area. seattle.gov/parks



DR. JOSÉ RIZAL PARK
1007 12th Avenue S
Named in honor of a hero of Philippine independence, Dr. José Rizal Park features artwork by Filipino American artist Valeriano Laigo, and views of downtown Seattle and Elliott Bay.



DAEJON PARK
1144 Sturgis Avenue S
Daejon Park is named in honor of Seattle's South Korean sister city. The Park features a traditional Korean pavilion and views of Mount Rainier.



N. CHINESE GARDEN AT SOUTH SEATTLE COLLEGE
6000 - 16th Avenue SW, 206.934.5219
The elegant Knowing the Spring Courtyard was dedicated in 2011, and the garden is gradually expanding. When completed, this traditional Sichuan-style garden will be one of the largest outside of China, showcasing stone, architecture, plants, water elements and territorial views. Annual events include the Peony and Bamboo Festival in April, and a Kite Festival in August. seattlechinesegarden.org



O. KUBOTA GARDEN
9817 - 55th Avenue S, 206.725.5060
An extensive garden in the Rainier Beach neighborhood is the work of Japanese American Fujitaro Kubota, who founded the Kubota Gardening Company in 1923 and created the garden in 1927. This complex landscape presenting Pacific Northwest plant materials in a traditional Japanese manner became a city park in 1987. kubotagarden.org



G. SEATTLE CENTER
I. PIKE PLACE MARKET



H. 5TH AVENUE THEATRE
J. SEATTLE CENTRAL LIBRARY



K. SMITH TOWER



L. JCCCW



M. BEACON HILL PARKS



N. CHINESE GARDEN AT SOUTH SEATTLE COLLEGE



O. KUBOTA GARDEN

FURTHER AFIELD

GREAT WALL MALL - 18230 East Valley Highway, Kent 425.251.1600
A Pan-Asian marketplace that highlights Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai, Filipino and Taiwanese cultures. Merchants range from an expansive food market to a traditional herbalist. greatwallmall.com

PACIFIC BONSAI MUSEUM - 2515 S 336th Street, Federal Way 253.353.7345
This collection is a cultural gem of contemporary and traditional bonsai exhibits from around the world. pacificbonsaimuseum.org

WHITE RIVER VALLEY MUSEUM - 918 H Street SE, Auburn 253.288.7433
Exhibits feature the Japanese American community that once flourished in South King County's rich farming areas. wrvmuseum.org

YAO GARDEN - 12001 Main Street, Bellevue 425.452.2750
Located at the Bellevue Botanical Garden, the Yao Garden is a Northwest interpretation of a Japanese strolling garden, and was named for Bellevue's sister city in Japan. bellevuebotanical.org

BLOEDEL RESERVE | 7571 NE Dolphin Drive, Bainbridge Island 206.842.7631
The Zen garden is one of the highlights of this historic landscape on Bainbridge Island, a former private estate which is now open to the public. bloedelreserve.org

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND JAPANESE AMERICAN EXCLUSION MEMORIAL
4192 Eagle Harbor Drive NE, Bainbridge Island
In 1942, Bainbridge Island's Japanese American residents were the first of nearly 120,000 Nikkei - people of Japanese ancestry - forcibly removed from their homes and exiled from the west coast. Islanders' point of departure, the former Eagledale ferry landing adjacent to Pritchard Park, is now a memorial with the motto Nidoto Nai Yoni, "Let it not happen again." bjac.org



TACOMA ASIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE SITES
The **Asian Pacific Cultural Center** at 4851 South Tacoma Way (253.383.3900) offers exhibits and programs including luaus, tea ceremonies, and new year celebrations. asiapacificculturalcenter.org

Near the Old Town waterfront, the **Chinese Reconciliation Park** commemorates a challenging episode in the city's history. tacomachinesepark.org

A restored Japanese Pagoda surrounded by a traditional garden are a highlight of **Point Defiance Park**. metroparkstacoma.org/pagoda



Bloedel Reserve Zen Garden, Photo: Richard A. Brown