2023/2024

Winter Brochure

EXPERIENCE THE FRIENDSHIP IN ALL SEASONS!
GARDEN RULES

PLEASE STAY ON PATHWAYS

DO NOT CLIMB TREES OR STRUCTURES

NO SMOKING OR VAPING INSIDE THE GARDEN

NO DRONES

Electrical cords, ice, or rocks may be hidden by the snow - please stay on the pathways to avoid injury to yourself or damaging our displays.
From the President...

DAWN SUGIMOTO
President
Lethbridge & District Japanese Garden Society

On behalf of the Lethbridge and District Japanese Garden Society, I want to welcome you to our eighth annual Winter Light Festival. The theme this festival is “Celebrating our Garden’s Seasons,” a new experience for you to enjoy.

You will notice we have added some special elements this season including Japanese parasols, koi fish and specially designed lanterns. None of this would be possible without our special donors, Kim and Sonny Nakashima, and our corporate sponsors. We have three light tunnels, for Insta-worthy photo memories, including an extended Toyota Tunnel leading to our entry gate.

We look forward to many special events and programs this season as we continue to work with our community organizations, partners, volunteers and local businesses. Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden really does reflect the community that nurtures it, and we are grateful for the ongoing support we receive.

I especially want to thank our Nikka Yuko team, the City of Lethbridge and our Board of Directors who worked on the newly designed installation for this year’s display. The early snow fall in October was no match for the commitment of time and effort to make this year’s festival a reality.

The Winter Light Festival is a three-month event that brightens our early sunsets and long, dark evenings while celebrating our Canadian winter. We recognize the Garden is a special place to connect with nature and have an amazing cultural experience. While you walk through the four seasons, haru (spring), natsu (summer), aki (fall) and fuyu (winter), we hope you take a moment to reflect on your journey through the past year and look ahead with hope and excitement for what the new year will bring.

Please enjoy this year’s festival and have a safe and healthy holiday season.
I would like to congratulate Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden for hosting the 8th Annual Winter Light Festival here at Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden. Nikka Yuko is one of Alberta's unique treasures in that it brings traditional Japanese architecture and culture in harmony with Canadian nature. I hope you will enjoy this year’s theme, “A Celebration of Seasons,” as well as the Japanese decorations on display.

I would like to extend my thanks to all of the organizers, staff, volunteers and sponsors who help make events like this possible year after year. This garden is a shining example of the ongoing friendship between Japan and Canada, and I hope everyone in attendance will enjoy the beautiful lights and decorations this winter. Thank you, and have a wonderful time.

On behalf of my colleagues on Lethbridge City Council and the City of Lethbridge, welcome to the 2023 / 2024 Winter Light Festival.

The Winter Lights Festival has quickly become one of the most eagerly anticipated events in Lethbridge, a “can’t miss” night out in what has become a local Winter Wonderland. Each year there is a new twist, more lights and things to see, I am eager to see what the staff of Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden have in store for us this year.

Thank you to all those who continue to support Nikka Yuko and the Winter Light Festival.
Thank you so much to our year-round sponsors who help with our yearly programming and exhibits.

For more information to support Nikka Yuko on a annual basis see our Grow with the Garden Campaign located on our website or contact us at: (403) 328-3511 or info@nikkayuko.com
Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden is honoured to recognize the many talented artists whose work continues to enhance the Winter Light Festival each year. We are grateful for our community’s support each season through their attendance to the Festival, which in turn, allows us to support and promote local artists.

**ERIC DYCK**

Eric Dyck is a cartoonist living and working in Lethbridge, Alberta. Eric writes and draws the non-fiction comic strip, Slaughterhouse Slough, featuring stories about Southern Alberta and some of the people, critters, and plants that he is learning about. Eric is the creator of our Tomo cartoons, see his work in our Kodomo [Kids] Packages.
Lighten up your child’s imagination in our newly expanded, Kids Corner! In addition to our traditional anime movie, Yuki and Hanna, kids can be creative with a new take on an old game. Lite-Brite is here at Nikka Yuko, and it’s a brand-new HUGE addition to our Winter Light Festival.

Experience these old toys in a new and interactive way, as these Lite-Brites stand over 8 feet tall and will bring joy to new faces and brighten the older ones. Experience the wonder, the lights, and the memories for not only the kids but the kids at heart.
Special Event Dates

**Joya No Kane**  
(New Year’s Eve)  
December 31\textsuperscript{st}

**Seijin No Hi**  
(Coming of Age Day)  
January 6\textsuperscript{th}

**Sake Guided Experience**  
(ft Washiyama)  
January 13\textsuperscript{th}  
(TICKETS REQUIRED)

**Setsubun Festival Weekend**  
(Change of Season)  
February 2\textsuperscript{nd} & 3\textsuperscript{rd}

**Lunar New Year**  
(Year of the Dragon)  
February 16\textsuperscript{th}

**Japanese Emperor’s Birthday**  
February 23\textsuperscript{rd}

**Fuyu (Winter) Bike Ride**  
February 23\textsuperscript{th}

**Coldest Night of the Year**  
(Last Day of Winter Light Festival)  
February 24\textsuperscript{th}
Programs & Performances

**Daily Dome Experience**
On Open Days: 5:30 PM, 6:30 PM & 7:30 PM
(TICKETS REQUIRED)

**Date Night in the Dome**
January & February
Friday: 5:30 PM, 6:30 PM & 7:30PM
(MUST BOOK IN ADVANCE)

**Midnight Channel Jazz**
Thursday: 7 PM - 9 PM

**Taiko Drumming**
Friday: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**Minyo Dancing**
Saturday: 7:00 PM

**Family Basha Nori (Horse & Wagon) Night**
December 17th & 24th
Free to Public, First Come First Served

**Marc & The Fire Dancers Performance**
January 6th, February 2nd, February 3rd & February 16th
6:00 PM, 7:00 PM & 8:00 PM

**Little Lethbridge Opera Performance**
December 17th & 31st
6:30 PM - 7:00 PM
Haru (Spring)
Start your journey of the four seasons in spring! View the bright parasol display and enjoy the vibrant pinks and purples replicating the blooming colours of sakura (cherry blossoms).

Featuring:
- Parasol Display
- Kamakura (Igloo) Projection Dome
- Wishing Well
- Kid’s Corner
  - Life-sized Lite-brite
  - Yuki & Hana Winter Anime
Natsu (Summer)
Step into a summer matsuri (festival) and see the friendship between Japan and Canada represented through red and white lights and a path of lanterns.

Featuring:
- Lanterns
- Azumaya
- Firework Lights
- Pagoda

Aki (Autumn)
See the twinkling lights, arches, and red and gold lights that honour the beauty of our garden’s foliage during the autumn season!

Featuring:
- Aki Tunnel
- Friendship Bell
- Island Maples
- Koi Pond

Fuyu (Winter)
The path ends in winter, where blue and white lights portray a frosty snow day. View the grand Mount Fuji display and interact with the mini Kid’s Igloos! Afterwards, make your way back around the path to enjoy everything from a new perspective.

Featuring:
- Mount Fuji Display
- Kid’s Igloos
- Fuyu Tunnel
- Turn-around Area
Christmas in Japan

LIGHTS, CAKE, AND...KFC??

Although it isn’t a national holiday in Japan (as only 1% of Japan’s population are Christian, and the majority are Buddhist), the spirit of Christmas is still widely felt and celebrated throughout the country. It is known as a “time to spread happiness,” where couples and friends gather for holiday parties. Some familiar traditions such as decorations, Christmas markets, and elaborate displays of twinkling lights are part of Japan’s seasonal experience. However, there are a few unique Japanese traditions that set the season apart.

CHRISTMAS EVE
In Japan, “Kurisumasu Ibu,” or Christmas Eve, is considered the most romantic day of the year, similar to Valentine’s Day. Japanese couples will book reservations for dinner at fancy restaurants, exchange romantic gifts, and take a stroll through town to enjoy the Christmas lights. The gift-giving tradition between family members is typically done during New Year’s celebrations. Children don’t need to worry, however, because Santa-San [Mr. Santa] can be found in the shopping malls and will typically leave gifts on Christmas Eve beside their pillows.

JAPANESE CHRISTMAS CAKE
Rather than fruitcake, “Kurisumasu keki,” or Japanese Christmas cake, is traditionally eaten on Christmas Eve. It is a light sponge cake, or shortcake, covered in a layer of whipped cream, and decorated with fresh strawberries, sometimes chocolates, and... KFC??
a Santa on top. The red berries and white frosting symbolize the red and white colours of Christmas.

**KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN(?!)** Instead of roast turkey or glazed ham, fried chicken is the most popular meal for Christmas Day in Japan. In particular, Kentucky Fried Chicken.

It is the busiest time of year for restaurants such as KFC who take orders for holiday buckets of chicken weeks in advance. According to KFC Japan spokeswoman Motoichi Nakatani, it started thanks to Takeshi Okawara, the manager of Japan’s first KFC.

Shortly after it opened in 1970, Okawara woke up at midnight and jotted down an idea that came to him in a dream: a “party barrel” to be sold on Christmas. Okawara dreamed up the idea after hearing two foreigners talking about how they missed having turkey dinner at Christmas, so he thought fried chicken would make a fine substitute!

This tradition turned into a nationwide phenomenon following a successful 1974 KFC advertising campaign called Kentucky for Christmas, or “Kurisumasu ni wa kentakkii.” Every year, an estimated 3.6 million Japanese families treat themselves to KFC for Christmas!
The Yokote Kamakura Festival has a history of more than 450 years and is held in February in the city of Yokote, Japan, traditionally to offer hospitality to deities who came from far away.

This festival features igloo-like snow houses, called kamakura, which are built throughout the city. Inside each kamakura there is a snow altar dedicated to the water deity, to whom people pray to. Families will gather inside the kamakura and grill rice cakes around a small charcoal brazier and enjoy amazake, a type of sweet rice wine.

Hundreds of smaller kamakura are made by school children and line the Yokote River. Their illuminations create beautiful visuals in the snow.

JOYA NO KANE

O-shogatsu, or New Year, is traditionally an important and busy time for the Japanese people. All family members gather together, visit the temple, and enjoy food and drinks as they bring in the New Year.

Joya [New Year’s Eve] No [of] Kane [the Bell] is the traditional ceremony of ringing the bells on New Year’s Eve in Japan. Monks and visitors strike a large bronze bell at the temple 108 times; 107 are tolled in the old year (before midnight) and the last one rings in the New Year at midnight.

According to Buddhist beliefs, the number 108 symbolizes the types of Bonno, the passions and desires that exist in the minds of humans which are generally said to corrupt the mind and heart. The tradition is a type of purification through the bells.

For decades, making and eating mochi has been a celebrated Japanese New Year’s tradition with families and communities joining together to wish good health for the new year.

After soaking and steaming the rice, the mochi is made by pounding the sticky mixture with heavy wooden mallets in a stone bowl. There is a precise rhythm to the striking of the mixture as one or more people hit it with a mallet while another turns the dough after each strike. When it reaches the right consistency, it is placed on a table coated with mochiko, a sweet rice flour, and left to cool.
The Daruma is modeled after Bodhidharma, a monk accredited with the founding of Zen Buddhism. According to legend, he sat facing a wall in meditation for nine years without moving, which caused his legs and arms to fall off due to atrophy.

Today, the Bodhidharma dolls are a good luck charm in Japan. The dolls are purchased with blank eyes so a person can paint one eye in for a goal or wish. Once the goal or wish is achieved the second eye can be painted in.

Light festivals in Japan have become increasingly popular as a way to give people hope and energy to celebrate through the dark months in the fall and winter.

Nearly every major city in Japan features their own version of a light show that starts as early as October and ends as late as February.

These festivals feature millions of lights - a lofty goal for us here at Nikka Yuko!

SEIJIN NO HI

Every year on the second Monday of January, the Japanese celebrate Coming of Age Day, or Seijin no Hi. Sometimes called ‘Adults’ Day,’ this holiday is all about welcoming the country’s youth into adulthood. It is an important rite of passage for all young Japanese and this tradition can be traced back for hundreds of years.

In Japan, youth are officially considered adults at the age of 20. As an adult, they are now allowed to drive, drink alcohol, smoke, and gamble legally.

Coming of Age Day is a public holiday, and elaborate ceremonies are planned with announcements from the mayor, music, and performances. It is also an important spiritual event. Families will go with their new adults to the local shrine to pray for health and success.

The youth will dress up for their Coming of Age Day, with women wearing a long-sleeved kimono called a Furisode [swinging sleeves]. This is the most formal style of kimono worn by young, unmarried women in Japan and is made of fine, brightly coloured silk. The furisode is often rented for the ceremony as they can cost up to 1,000,000 yen or almost $11,000 CDN!
Sponsors

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Sonny & Kim Nakashima

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94-1

CJOC

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Arigatou Gozaimasu!

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