

AMHERST

FALL

2002

**Carl Woese '50
Adds a Branch to
the Tree of Life**

**A Surgeon and a
Size-22 Shoe**

**Ted Lee '93 Cracks
the Peanut Problem**



A Japanese “friendship” garden

Secluded behind Kirby Theater, through dark green cushions of moss, rough granite steps wind up a steep bank to a bamboo gate. They lead the eye and imagination to the top of a ravine that’s been transformed—with coarse boulders, simple furniture and angular pines—into an exquisite Japanese garden. It’s the latest improvement to the college grounds and a tribute to Amherst’s historic ties to edu-

cation in Japan—especially its 127-year-old association with the school that is now Doshisha University in Kyoto. Doshisha was founded in 1875 by Amherst graduate Joseph Hardy Neesima.

The \$250,000 garden project, completed and dedicated in September, was supported by the gifts of Amherst friends and alumni, including many Japanese. The garden was designed by Shinichiro Abe of Zen Associates, Inc., an international landscape design firm in Sudbury, Mass.

One of the firm’s best-known installations is the Peace Bell Garden at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. Abe noted in an interview that the Amherst project is the first that his company has ever designed for a college or university campus. Also, he said, it is one of only a

black pines, for instance, must be removed every year, and various plantings should be carefully pruned at frequent intervals. With attentive maintenance, and with time, Abe said, the garden should become more and more beautiful.

Prominent features of the garden include a water basin, a tall, 500-year-old stone Japanese lantern given to the college by Eiro Yamashita ‘61 of Tokyo, and rugged natural boulders taken from the woods of Shelburne and Conway, Mass. It took a



Frank Ward photos

few really “authentic” Japanese gardens that his group has created, because a true Japanese garden is a never-finished work that needs extensive ongoing maintenance and development, and most of his clients require low-maintenance designs. The spring candles that grow on the Japanese

180-ton crane with a 125-foot boom to lower the massive rocks into place.

The garden has been named “Yushien,” which means, roughly, “garden of friendship.” And expressions of friendship marked its dedication on Monday, Sept. 23, when speakers including President



Tom Gerety and President Eiji Hatta of Doshisha spoke to a sunlit gathering at the foot of the garden in the connector linking Webster Hall with Kirby. Gerety conferred an honorary doctor of humane letters degree upon Hatta, saying "hundreds of students and faculty from the schools [Amherst and Doshisha] have enjoyed opportunities for educational exchange. Today, Amherst is proud to be able to renew and strengthen these ties by honoring you . . ."

In response, Hatta noted that the new garden "is a symbol of Japanese traditional culture being valued at Amherst College . . .



a sign that we will continue to have an even more fruitful friendship." The prime mover behind establishment of the garden, Ray A. Moore, professor of history and Asian languages and civilizations, spoke about the many historic connections between Amherst and Japan; and Michael C. Kiefer, the college's chief advancement officer, opened the ceremonies with welcoming remarks.

In an introduction in the printed pro-

COLLEGE ROW

gram, designer Abe suggested that the garden with its steep steps climbing upward could symbolize the famous words that an Amherst graduate spoke to Japanese youth in the 1870s: "Boys be ambitious!" The admonition came from William S. Clark (1848) after he organized a college in Sapporo that later became Hokkaido University. In our interview, Abe explained that "every kid in Japan grew up listening to those words.

"But you can interpret the garden any way you want," he added cheerfully. "We don't need too much explanation, and it isn't for the designer to say!"

