

# Kazan Sculpture

## Lower Waterfall Garden

### Dedicated to Old Tahara and Kazan

**Sculptor Amy Rogers developed this original piece from studies of two sculpture pieces in Tahara. The three dimensional sculpture in front of an elementary school captures the young Kazan with affect of determination. Ms. Rogers is a Georgetown resident and native of Kentucky. She works in mixed media and found objects. Jeff Bright of Bright Art Foundry, Louisville, did the bronze casting. Toshi Suzuki, Tahara resident and friend of Georgetown, assisted Ms. Rogers with a detailed photographic study of the Kazan sculptures in Tahara. Nobuko Toda Patton and Nathan Patton, Georgetown residents, translated and interpreted the story of Kazan below.**

The Kazan sculpture represents Watanabe Kazan at age twelve when he had a moment of insight which guided his life. The story is taught from Hokkaido to Okinawa. He became a famous artist, hero, patriot, wise administrator and philosopher. As the wise and compassionate administrator of Tahara, Kazan's legacy and spirit have been carried forward by the citizens and leaders of Tahara for over 150 years. Kazan sacrificed his life in 1841 during the late Edo Period for his advocacy of opening Japan to world-wide ideas and reaching out to the West for new technologies. Georgetown-Scott County held the first exclusively Kazan art exhibit in the United States in 2000 in honor of its sister-city, Tahara-cho.

Kazan was born on September 16, 1793 into the house of the Tahara lord in Edo (currently called Tokyo). The Tahara clan was relatively small, and not economically prosperous. It was difficult for Kazan's parents to make ends meet with their 8 children, and the situation became even more desperate as Kazan's father suffered from a long illness and the accompanying medical costs. The family could only keep the bare essentials in their house such as pots and pans. Kazan's mother had to sleep on the bare, broken, and frigid straw mat without a futon or blankets even in winter. However, no matter how poor they were, the Kazan house was always full of love. For instance, Kazan's mother remade her husband's kimono so that Kazan could avoid being shamed by his attire. For his part, Kazan, who was the oldest son, hoped to be able to support his parents as much as possible economically, and he was eager to get a job. Every night Kazan massaged his father.

It was in these circumstances that in 1804 at the age of 12\*, Kazan Watanabe had an experience that changed his life. It started with a journey to get medicine for his father. As Kazan was racing home across the Nihon-bashi bridge (in the center of Edo) after getting the medicine, he accidentally bumped into something and fell backward. Kazan then heard someone yell, "You rude boy." He looked up in shock as he realized that he had run into the lead samurai of a parade of samurai. During that era, common people could be killed for committing rude acts towards samurai. Kazan thought that he had made a huge mistake. Since there was nothing else he could do, he silently knelt down and bowed deep enough for his head to touch the ground. The samurai yelled, "Tell us your name!" and taunted Kazan by saying, "I thought you were a beggar, but I see you have a sword, so you must be the child of a samurai. Who is your lord?" The samurai then struck Kazan with a powerful hand. Kazan clenched his teeth and said nothing. He felt that he had made a mistake and he did not want to dishonor the family by giving his name. He felt he must silently endure the insults and the beating from the samurai. The beating he received was severe. After the beating, the samurai looked satisfied as they returned to line formation.

After the beating, Kazan briefly looked up from his deep bow to notice the son of a lord traveling by palanquin (a type of basket carried by servants in which rich people rode). The lord's son rode on a thick cushion and wore gorgeous clothes. His clan was thirty times larger than Kazan's. What most caught Kazan's attention was the fact that the lord's son was Kazan's age. Kazan anguished over the situation, wondering why he was treated the way he was while the lord's son was treated so differently. After the line of samurai finally passed by him, Kazan summoned the courage to look up from his seated position and glare at the samurai as they faded out of sight. Kazan then pledged to himself that he would rise to a position above the lord's son in the palanquin. After he returned home, he decided that he would teach the lords, because this was the only way to rise above the lords. Kazan then dedicated himself to train to be a teacher.

Kazan suffered a lot in his life. But for Kazan these sufferings motivated him to work even harder, and helped him to be the great artist, scholar, and politician that he became.

\*Note: By current methods of counting, Kazan would have been 10 or 11 years old at the time. During Kazan's era, a newborn baby was considered a 1 year old. Furthermore, a year would then be added to the age of a baby each New Year's Day.