

室生山上公園芸術の森パンフレット

Murou Art Forest

Issued by **Uda City**

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Date Published : March, 2018

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Designed by Dani Karavan



Outline of Murou Art Forest

—Process of Project Promotion

In 1997, Murou Village formulated '**Murou Art Arcadia Project**' as a depopulation countermeasure, with the support from National Land Agency. The aim of this project is to promote community development from the viewpoint of cultural art, by fusing art and public works. The project is based on the concept called '**Forest Corridor Plan**', created by Bukichi Inoue (1930-1997), a sculptor from the village. As the symbol of this project, the concept of '**Monuments on the Mountain**' was created.

NOTE

'**Forest Corridor Plan**' is a concept of rediscovering the village landscape, which is the origin of Bukichi's creation; and making the whole village a museum where humans and nature coexist.

'**Arcadia**' means Utopia rich in nature.

'**Art Arcadia Project**' means a cultural art activity. By bringing art and public works together, this project aims to make a modern Utopia in harmony with humans and nature, as well as culture and nature.

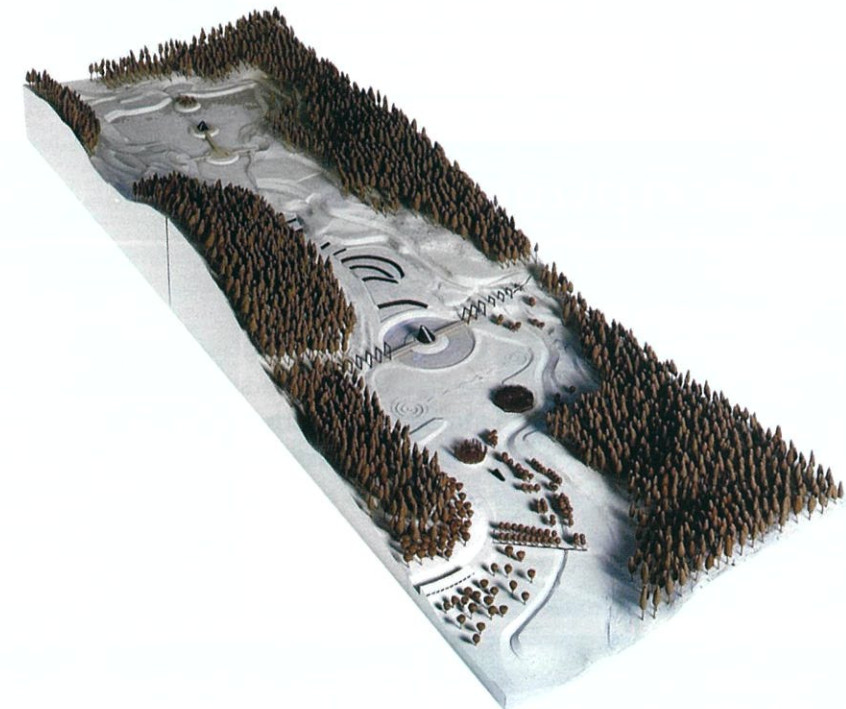
In 1998, Nara Prefecture formulated the '**Plan to Improve Graded Lands**' to turn a graded land into a park as a countermeasure for a landslide control and regional development.

—Significance of Facility Development

- Developing the facility as the second symbol of the '**Art Arcadia Project**' (The first symbol was Roadside Station Murou.)
- Protecting the safety of townspeople by making an effective use of the land where measures were taken against landslides, and planning a cultural development as well from the standpoint of '**Creating a landscape unique to Murou Village**'.
- Stimulating local people's sensitivity and enriching their minds with art. This will eventually lead to regional revitalization, alongside human life improvement.
- Promoting the facility in and out of Japan, as a model case of fusing public works and art. This will help revitalize the region and its tourism.

—Outline of the Facility

- The concept called '**Monuments on the Mountain**', created by a local sculptor Bukichi Inoue, was realized by Israeli sculptor Dani Karavan. This facility offers a relaxing atmosphere that is unique to idyllic and peaceful village of Murou.
- The park is an art in itself, which is expected to become a cultural heritage in the future to promote cultural and art activities.
- With the concept of '**Create the second nature by using nature**', this facility symbolizes a nostalgic landscape reproducing the remains of old Japan, such as forests, terraced rice field, and other traces of the past.
- The monuments are placed to blend in with nature, which makes the park a place of comfort where people's sensitivity and five-senses are stimulated.

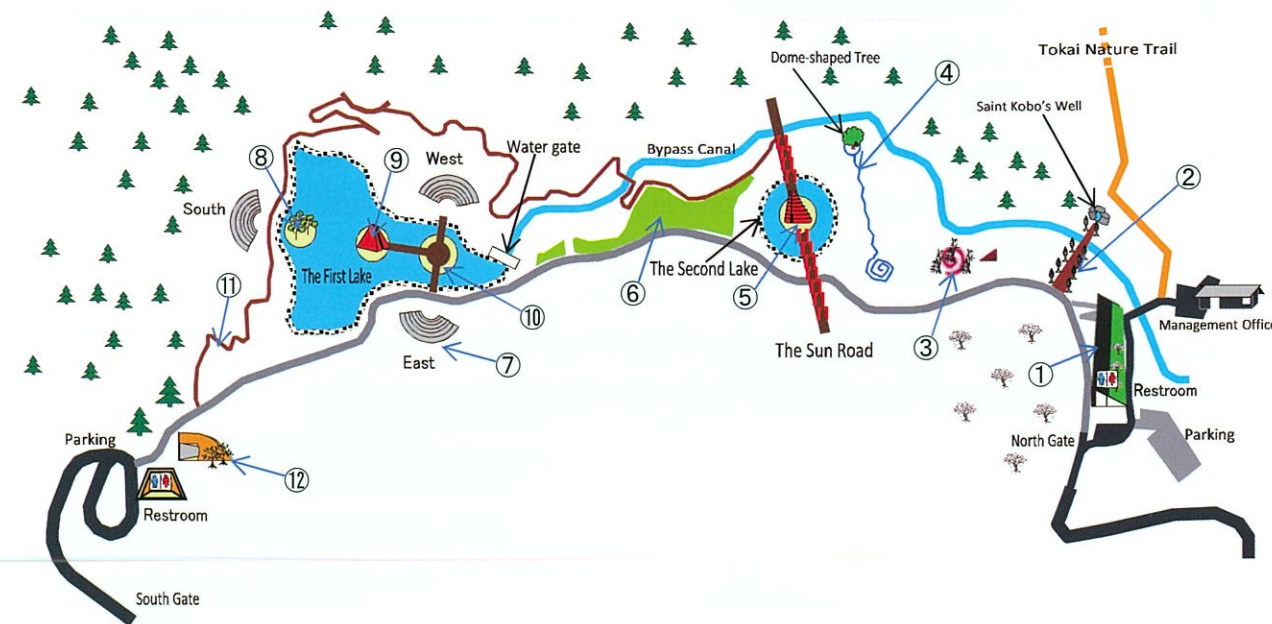


Park overview

■ Welcome to the Art Space Light and Shadow Creates!

This open-air museum was established based on the idea of Dani Karavan, a world-famous Israeli sculptor. Here, you can embrace nature, and feel the stream of time and change of seasons with all your senses. As the name 'Art Forest' suggests, the park is the landscape sculpture in itself and the world-class artwork. Enjoy the monuments with your five senses, and embrace the nature that is letting us live. You can get away from the bustle of big cities and enjoy a relaxing

Murou Art Forest Map



Description of the Monuments



① Facility Center

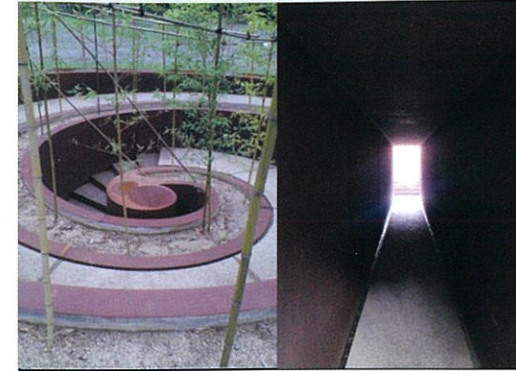
This is a rest area for visitors. This building is harmonious with its surrounding scenery of cherry blossom hill, and its white interior with skylights creates a bright fresh atmosphere. With Dani's art techniques, the shape of the building looks different when seen at different angles.



② 【Wavy Ground】

This wavy trail leads you to 'Saint Kobo's Well' (the legendary well associated with 'Kobo-Daishi' or 'Kukai', a great Buddhist monk in Japan) which has been here since ancient times. The width of this trail looks wider seen from the main path of the park, and narrower as you get closer to the well; whereas, the two tree lines look parallel seen from the well. This technique was often used in Bukichi's sculptures, so Dani used the style for this monument to pay homage to him. You can enjoy an unusual physical experience here. The trees on both sides are Red Robin.

Description of the Monuments



③ 【Spiral Bamboo Forest】

17m in diameter, 4m in depth

Through the bamboo forest, go down the spiral stairs that lead deep into the basement. Then, you will see a tunnel-like passage that will gradually lead you back to the ground level. This is a place you can enjoy complex contrast space: open/enclosed, above/underground, and light/shade.



④ 【Spiral Canal】

Water spirals down in this shallow canal, where kids can play safely. This spiral design is said to be inspired by his experience of seeing a coiled snake running away during his visit at this place. There is a sundial in the middle of the canal. The tree standing at the source is Fragrant Olive.



⑤ 【Sun Tower & Gate】

Tower: 8m in height, 9m in diameter Gate: 6m in height

This circular staircase tower was created to visualize the 'Sun Road', a legendary line of 34 degrees 32 minutes north latitude, associated with the ancient sun worship. The 'Sun Road' runs from Nara to Ise Shrine, going through great shrines and temples, and the Sun Tower rests on this line. The tower is made of anti-weathering steel, and the slit on the south side brings ray of light into the tower depending on time and season, which serves as a sundial. The Gate visualizes the line 'Sun Road' running through east to west, and expresses the sun's path. Here, you can enjoy a beautiful landscape light and shadow creates.



⑥ 【Terraced Rice Field】

Traditionally, locals in this area have been engaged in farming in terraced rice fields; Dani wanted to keep this beautiful landscape in people's memory. Locals actually have been planting and harvesting rice in this field, but they are suffering from severe wildlife damage, even after setting up a fence around the field.



⑦ 【East/West/South Stands】

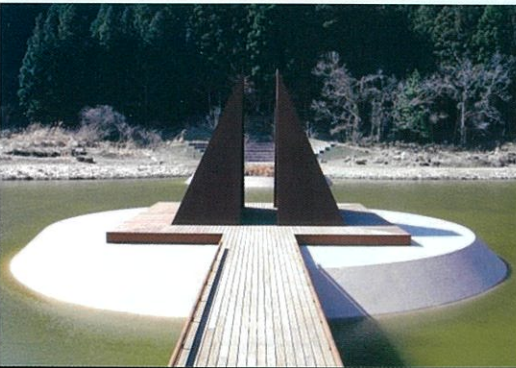
These stair-like benches are a nice place to relax, and to enjoy the view around the first lake. These benches are made of the dark brown concrete called 'Land'. Just like the Visitor Center, Dani intended to make the stands look like something dug out of the ground. 150 people can be seated on each bench.

Description of the Monuments



⑧ 【First Island】

The Island for Bird Watching: 14m in diameter
Trees are planted on the island to attract wild birds living in this area.



⑨ 【Second Island】

The Pyramid Island: 16m in diameter
This wedge-shaped pyramid structure is a great place for bird watching, taking a rest, and meditation. The 'Pyramid', a familiar motif often seen in Dani's artwork, describes an enclosed space such as a tent and a house. Seen from inside, the monument looks like a frame for the sky and the surrounding landscape. The pyramid has a brownish-red rusty surface; unlike other steel materials, this anti-weathering steel enables the color and shape to remain unchanged and the structure to last semi-permanently without coating.



10 【Third Island】

The Open-Air Stage Island: 18m in diameter
A wooden open-air stage, made of tropical timber 'Selangan Batu', is placed on the island. This is a great place for live music concerts, as sounds echo through the surrounding mountains.



11 【Walking Trail】

The park's walking trail is paved with materials mixed with recycled wood chips and resin, and its color and texture harmonizes with its surrounding natural scenery. The wood chips are from artificial forest thinning or tree removal during constructions.



12 【Visitor Center】

This is the park's information center. The building was designed to blend in with its surrounding natural landscape, as if it was dug out of the ground. The building's distinctive features such as the entrance in curve shape and the wings adjoining the entrance make the building look as if it has existed here for long, unlike other 'box-like' building. Regarding the color of the concrete used for the building, it was picked by Dani himself; he took the soil of this park back to France, and picked the color that goes well with the soil. Inside the building lies a courtyard with a moss hill, which harmonizes with the hill located behind. The trees in front of the building are Magnolia kobus.



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