

hungry," Fukuhara said, laughing about his 31-month stint in Kasama, Japan.

In the presence of Fukuhara, I couldn't shake the thought that he was familiar with the foundation, as if he knew something about the garden no one else knew. He spoke about the origins of the garden that was originally owned by his parents, Mary and Henry Fukuhara, as a nursery that provided plants and garden-related supplies to the local community from 1955 to 1986. The nursery was out of commission until Fukuhara returned with the help of Long Beach Community Activist, Dixie Swift.

"It was nothing like this. It was just flat with weeds, rocks, and broken bottles; you name it, it was all here. I came in 1999, and a friend (Swift) of mine asked me if I wanted to work with at-risk youth and it was to supervise youth how to glaze on tile," reflected Fukuhara

while looking at some point between the sky and him self. "These tiles, they would put them in Long Beach public park restrooms. I had to youth and it lasted for three summers and we finished 16 parks. Each park had two restrooms, each with four murals and every tile was original. I got a lot of the ideas from the demographics of a park. I looked at everything and I put my own style to it. Like I would see a Mayan priest and put my own twist to it." He chuckled.

"I built this place for the people in Central Long Beach because I grew up in Central Long Beach and if I would have had something like this as a youth, man, it would've opened up a lot of doors for me. If money wasn't an object I would make Long Beach a scene, man, and everyone would be living in harmony," Fukuhara said.

Fukuhara has a unique perspective when it comes to deciding whether his art will be displayed or not. "I get to a point where a piece won't exist unless I like it. I may complete a piece, or be half way into a piece, and something about it won't click. I won't have any reservation destroying that sucker. Not one ounce of reservation because that piece won't exist unless I'm satisfied," Fukuhara said with a serious tone. "First of all, the spirit has to be there. My work has 100 percent love put into it," he explained. "In a sense, I'm kind of a conservationist because I don't believe in polluting the world with things I don't like.

"I like to think of myself as universal consciousness and there is so much energy in the earth, the plants, or the soul of any living thing and that's how I can keep connected," Fukuhara said regarding the state of mind he is

in when he creates his art. Trace Fukuhara has given Long Beach residents a place to meditate

**"As I grew older, I realized I was an artist all my life, I just never knew it."** Trace Fukuhara

and observe the work he has created with the Pacific Winds Arts Sculpture Garden. The experience of being in the garden is one that needs to be experienced by the individual. Whether you want to look at the art or sit down and read a book, there will be a calming and peaceful feeling surrounding you. Today, Fukuhara is living in San Pedro with his family.

