

PACIFIC CITIZEN

CELEBRATING
96
Years

Bachan's
sauces
founder and
CEO Justin
Gill and his
Bachan Judy
Yokoyama

PHOTO: COURTESY
OF BACHAN'S

BACHAN'S Enters the Mainstream

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Adds Flair to
Japanese Recipes.**

JACL SCOFFS AT JAN. 6 INSURRECTION REMARK

Interim U.S. attorney for D.C. compares prosecution to JA WWII incarceration.

By P.C. Staff

Following recent written remarks by Interim U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Ed Martin that described the prosecution of Jan. 6 insurrectionists as the “greatest failure of legal judgement since FDR and his Attorney General put American citizens of Japanese descent in prison camps and seized their property,” the Japanese American Citizens League issued a statement calling for an end to “inappropriate, inaccurate and offensive comparisons of Capitol rioters to the mass incarceration of innocent Japanese Americans during World War II.”

Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.), meantime, issued a statement of his own about Martin’s comments, which were contained in an email. “I am appalled by Mr. Martin’s remarks. To compare violent insurrectionists to innocent families imprisoned without due process because of their ancestry is offensive and detached from reality,” said Rep. Takano.

“It diminishes both the seriousness of the January 6th insurrection and the injustice of Japanese American incarceration. A U.S. Attorney should know that justice is based on accountability, not wild distortions of the facts,” he continued.

Takano’s parents and grandparents were among the more than 125,000 ethnic Japanese, the majority of whom were U.S. citizens, who were forcibly removed from the West Coast during WWII and herded into concentration camps.

In its statement, JACL asserted: “To compare the decision to incarcerate over 125,000 people only because of their Japanese ancestry, the majority of whom were United States citizens who remained loyal to our Constitution and the rule of law, to the decision to prosecute and obtain convictions of individuals who broke the law in such a violent fashion is disrespectful to the history of what Japanese Americans endured.”

‘A U.S. Attorney should know that justice is based on accountability, not wild distortions of the facts.’

— Rep. Mark Takano

The entirety of the JACL’s statement may be read at tinyurl.com/yt5fsszt.



LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY’S PERSPECTIVE

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

According to AARP, almost 90 percent of people over age 65 want to “age in place.” But the feasibility of aging in place begins with your physical health. If you plan to age in place, you’ll have to consider whether your home can safely accommodate you in the years to come. If your health and mobility are in good condition, you’ll face far fewer obstacles to remaining in place compared to someone who requires frequent medical attention and home assistance.

However, conditions like arthritis, dementia or a stroke can throw off your balance and judgment to the point that everyday tasks, such as cooking or getting dressed, become difficult. Occasionally, a simple trip to the bathroom is fraught with danger. If your home becomes hard for you to navigate safely, you need to ensure that your home is free of hazards and has special accommodations that can help keep you safe (source: *Special Health Report, Harvard Medical School, Aging in Place*).

At the Front Entrance:

The front of your home should be easy for you to access — no matter what your mobility limitations are. If you have steps leading up to your front door, think about how reasonable — and affordable — it would be for you to replace them with a ramp. Check to see that your front entrance meets all of the following criteria:

- There are few to no steps leading up to the entrance of your home. If you do have steps at your home’s

entrance, they should be in good shape, with no crumbling bricks or sagging wood.

- There should be a sturdy handrail on one or (preferably) both sides of the stairs and no potted plants or other obstacles in the way of the front door.
- Your front doorway is at least 36 inches wide to accommodate a wheelchair or walker. Adding offset hinges is a low-cost way to widen a narrow doorway.
- The threshold to your house is less than 1/2-inch high.

On the Stairs:

Climbing up and down the stairs can be difficult enough, especially if you have arthritis or other mobility issues. When stairs are dimly lit and poorly maintained, they become a serious fall hazard. Check to see that your stairs meet all of the following criteria:

- The stairs are well lit from top to bottom. For nighttime trips up or down the stairs, consider installing lights that illuminate each time you take a step — or at least put a light switch at both the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Sturdy handrails are on both sides of the stairway, and they extend all the way to the top and bottom steps. There is enough room between the handrails and the wall that you can easily get your hand around them.
- Carpet is tacked down completely. If the stairs aren’t carpeted, there are nonskid strips on the edges. If you can no longer negotiate the stairs consider

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➤ installing a stair lift.

In the Hallway:

A narrow hallway might not be a problem for walking, but it can become inaccessible to a wheelchair or walker. Doorways also need to be wide enough to accommodate any mobility device you might need in the future. Check to see that your hallways meet all of the following criteria:

- Doorways are at least 36 inches wide to fit a wheelchair or walker.
- The doorway thresholds are less than 1/2-inch high.
- Rugs are tacked down, have a nonskid backing and aren't frayed or worn.
- Doorknobs are easy to turn. If not, replace them with lever handles.

In the Bathroom:

Bathrooms can quickly become inaccessible when mobility is limited or a wheelchair comes into play. Step-in showers and high tubs are trip-and-fall hazards. And low toilets can become too painful to use when arthritis grips hip and ankle joints. Check to see that your bathroom meets all of the following criteria:

- There is a clear space around your bathtub, shower and sink in case you need to get around with a wheelchair or walker.

- You have a night light.
- Your sink is low enough that you can sit to get washed up and has enough knee clearance to accommodate a wheelchair.
- Your toilet is high enough that you can sit down easily and reach the toilet paper. If not, add a seat extender.
- There are grab bars next to your toilet, shower and/or bathtub.
- Your shower has a low entrance, or you have a curb-less shower and/or bathtub.
- Your shower has a permanent or fold-down shower seat and a handheld showerhead so you can bathe sitting down.

In the Kitchen:

The kitchen may be the hub of your entire home. It's where everyone comes together to eat and socialize. If you cook, you may spend a significant time here preparing meals. Check to see that your kitchen meets all of the following criteria:

- The lighting is bright enough so that you can read labels and recipes and see what you're cutting.
- Stove and oven controls are clearly marked and easy to turn.
- Cabinets are easy to reach or feature pull-down shelves.
- The sink and counter are low enough to accommodate a stool



PHOTO: PETRA_PIXABAY

or wheelchair.

- The oven is high enough that you don't need to bend over to move food in and out.
- Faucets have levers, rather than harder-to-turn knobs.
- Doors and drawers have easy-to-open D-shaped handles.
- Any islands are on wheels, so you can push them out of the way to have a wider path through the kitchen.

In the Bedroom:

The location of your bedroom is important. Right now, a second-floor bedroom might not be a problem, but if your ability to climb stairs is ever compromised, can you easily relocate your bedroom to the first floor? In your bedroom, you need plenty of space to navigate and easy

access to your clothing. Check to see that your bedroom meets all of the following criteria:

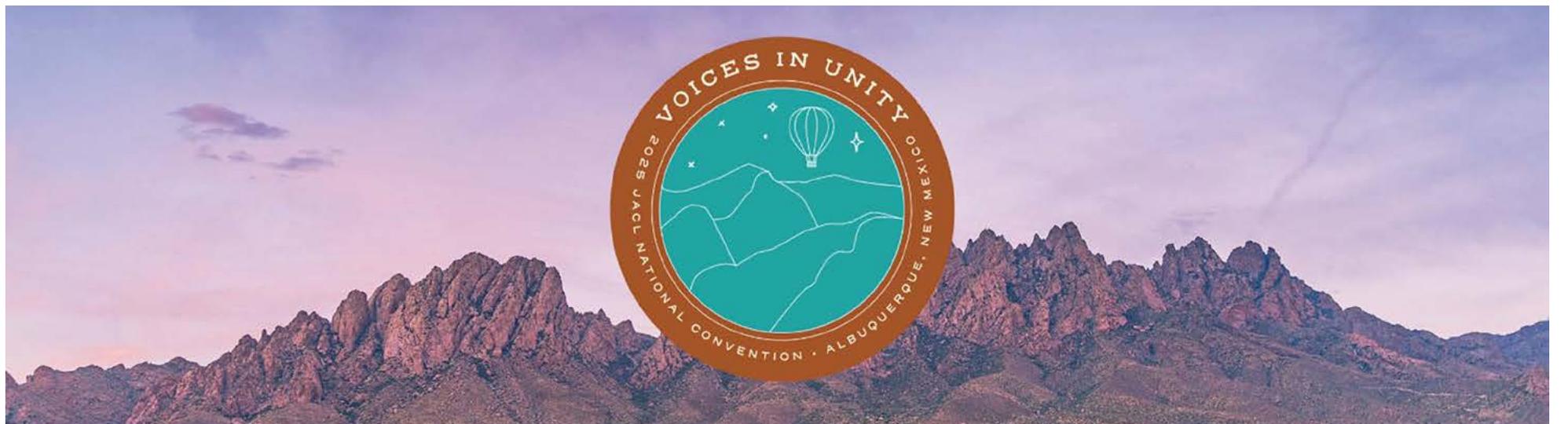
- You can set your feet flat on the floor when you sit on the edge of your bed. There shouldn't be more than 18 inches from the floor to the top of the mattress.
- Your mattress is firm enough that you don't sink back into it when you try to stand up.
- You have a clear pathway through your bedroom and to your bathroom.
- You can easily reach your clothing in the closet. If not, consider installing lower rods and shelves or use grasping tools to reach items on high shelves.

In conclusion, don't underestimate the importance of good lighting.

No matter how clear your vision was years ago, time inevitably takes its toll on visual clarity and focusing power. In your 60s and beyond, conditions such as, dry eye, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration can gradually blur and obstruct your vision. By age 60, you'll need about three to four times more light to see than you did in your 30s.

Make sure you have adequate lighting in every part of your home — especially in areas where dim lighting might trip you up. Older eyes also have more difficulty discerning objects with low contrast. Design your house with high-contrast colors, if possible. Lastly, be sure to visit your ophthalmologist for regular eye exams and keep your eyeglass or contact lens prescription up to date.

Judd Matsunaga is the founding attorney of Elder Law Services of California, a law firm that specializes in Medi-Cal Planning, Estate Planning and Probate. He can be contacted at (310) 348-2995 or. The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or constitute legal or tax advice and should not be treated as such.



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Four Years Later, SPA SHOOTINGS ARE REMEMBERED

The event ties the tragedy to a decades-long pattern of Asian hate, anti-Asian laws.

By George Toshio Johnston,
P.C. Senior Editor

Just a day short of a reprehensible act that had taken place four years prior — March 16, 2021 — attorneys, politicians, law professors, community activists and other interested parties gathered at the Rosemead Community Recreation Center in Rosemead, Calif., to commemorate the eight lives — six of which were Asian women — snuffed in a Georgia shooting spree.

That contemporary incident shone a light on a chain of other massacres, as well as lynchings, roundups and anti-Asian legal policies going back more than 150 years, driven then and now by xenophobia, racism, white supremacy, immigration fears, nativism, mass media portrayals and inflammatory rhetoric that resulted in what now gets called anti-Asian violence.

Titled “Remembering: The Atlanta Spa Hate Shootings,” the event packed a plenitude of perspective into four panel discussions: “Atlanta Spa Shootings Remembrance” and “Asian Voices,” running simultaneously, and “Civil Rights & Human Rights” and “Immigration & Birthright Citizenship.”

Before the breakout sessions, though, was a keynote speech by U.S. Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.), followed by a short address by California Assemblyman Mike Fong (D-49th District). For the congresswoman, the commemoration of the 2021 tragedy was a teachable moment.

“Discussions like these help to educate and mobilize our community,” Chu said. She noted that the female Asian victims were, in their lives, “hard-working daughters, mothers and grandmothers. Some were in their 50s and 60s, and one was as old as 74, and they were working hard, simply trying to support their families.”

Chu also noted that what led to the tragedy did not occur in a vacuum. “(When) President (Donald) Trump used the words ‘China virus’ and ‘kung flu’ to describe the Coronavirus in 2020, he fanned the flames of



Assemblyman
Mike Fong



Pictured (from left) are Seaton Tsai, Vinh T. Ngo, Calif. Assemblyman Mike Fong (D-49th District), Cyndie M. Chang, Justin Kim, Robert S. Chang, Karen Umemoto, Andrew Yam, Gerald S. Ohn and Robin S. Toma.

xenophobia.” Then, she said, over the next three years, there were “11,500 anti-Asian hate incidents and crimes reported.

“These were things that were going on all across this country, and we know that the remnants of this are still occurring,” Chu continued. As she wrapped up her talk, she said, “I will continue to combat these discriminatory actions and support Asian American Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders through the 119th Congress and beyond.”

Speaking next, Fong emphasized that “hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are not new.” But what led to the Atlanta slayings may have been novel, due to “a backdrop of pandemic isolation, anti-Asian rhetoric from the administration and a steep rise in Asian hate crimes.”

For his part, Fong has tried to take a practical approach. “Here in California, the Legislature has passed the AAPI equity budget, dedicating over \$165 million to not only respond to the surge in anti-Asian hate, but also to address long-standing racial inequities that have harmed our community for generations.”

In quick interlude between the

speeches, Chu presented half of the participants with congressional certificates of recognition, followed by Fong similarly presenting the others with California State Assembly certificates of recognition.

The “Asian Voices” panel, moderated by Dr. Ethan Huynh, was comprised of Seaton Tsai, a past president of the Asian Pacific American Bar Assn.; Monterey Park Mayor Vinh T. Ngo; and attorney Cyndie M. Chang, a managing partner at Duane Morris LLP.

Taking place simultaneously was the “Atlanta Spa Shootings Remembrance” panel, moderated by attorney Gerald Ohn and comprised of Dr. Karen Umemoto, director of the University of California Los Angeles Asian American Studies Center; Ed Choi, a content creator for TikTok, Instagram and YouTube; Heidi Lau, Hate Program manager at Asian Youth Center; and Esther Young Lim, former chair of the AAPI Advisory Board for the Los Angeles District Attorney’s Office.

Umemoto began by noting that people of Asian ancestry have been in the United States for more than 200 years and have “grown to a population of 25 million over 50 ethnic groups in over 100 languages” — but

in numbers that amounts to just “7 percent of the U.S. total population.” She also related how the latest wave of Asian hate was actually “one of a series of waves,” citing the Los Angeles Chinatown massacre of 1871 as an early, notorious example. From her perspective, “education is really the key” remedy to counteract anti-Asian violence. “We say Asian American history is American history,” said Umemoto, “but we also say you can’t understand American history without understanding, without seeing it through the eyes of Asian Americans and other groups in this country.”

Umemoto also reported that the UCLA Asian American Studies Center is looking for beta testers for its free online multimedia textbook on the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

For Choi, the Atlanta spa shootings reoriented him to use his platform to fight Asian hate — and his contribution to the cause is storytelling and cultural sharing, but in a way that isn’t all “doom and gloom.”

“I started to realize that in order to help eradicate racism, it’s not just about telling our stories, it’s also about being able to show people that we have similarities, that our foods are similar, cultures are similar, families are similar.”

In Lau’s presentation, she referred to a survey conducted by the AYC during the pandemic of 300 people from the San Gabriel Valley. It found that that 31 percent of respondents said they or family members had experienced a hate incident based on their race or ethnicity, with 37 percent of respondents reporting

Pictured (from left) are Mitchell Matsumura, Marina Shwe Lwin Shyan, Dr. Ethan Huynh, Christina Ku, Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.), Dr. Gay Yuen, Matt Weisbly, Dean Z. Pamphilis, Hyepin Im, Heidi Lau and Florence Lin.

PHOTOS: GEORGE T. JOHNSTON



Rep. Judy Chu

they had noticed an increase in racial discrimination or harassment during that period and 45 percent saying they felt less safe in their community compared to before the pandemic.

Lau also reported that AYC had conducted bystander intervention training, partnering with Asian Americans Advancing Justice. “For the bystander intervention training, we wanted to educate community members to be an ally and also stand up for the community members when they see . . . (a) hate incident happening in the San Gabriel Valley,” she said.

Lin explained how she had created a booklet titled “How to Report a Hate Crime.” Originally written in Korean and intended for her elderly parents, the booklet would eventually be translated into 19 languages and be distributed in six different states.

For Lin, creating the booklet was especially important for the Asian immigrant community members who, for cultural reasons, might be reluctant to report hate incidents because it at least provided a choice. “It’s their right to decline to report because they don’t feel comfortable,” she said. “One thing I learned is that not to push a victim into reporting if it’s against their will because . . . if they are involved in a situation that was out of their control, they want to take some aspect of their life back in their control, so that willingness or unwillingness to report is within their control, and that is their choice.”

On the topic of what constitutes a hate crime, on hand to elaborate on that was Los Angeles Police Department Detective Orlando



Hyepin Im



Dr. Karen Umemoto



Mitchell Matsumura

» See SHOOTINGS on page 9

IS MSG MAKING A CULTURAL COMEBACK?

With Aji-No-Moto's help, the umami flavor enhancer is on the rise again and gaining favor in popularity.

By Gil Asakawa,
P.C. Contributor

For Japanese Americans of a certain age (boomers), there was an ubiquitous presence on our kitchen tables growing up: Alongside the salt and pepper shakers and, of course, shoyu (in the iconic Kikkoman hour-glass-shaped bottles), there was also the short glass jar with the red shaker top of crystals, Aji-No-Moto. Monosodium glutamate. MSG.

You'd be hard-pressed to find Aji-No-Moto at the family table today or at Japanese restaurants. That's because MSG was struck a terrible reputational hit more than 50 years ago — and it's still recovering from its repercussions.

In 1968, a letter to the editor published by the *New England Journal of Medicine* noted that the author, a Chinese university professor, often ate Chinese food at a local restaurant but felt aftereffects, including numbness of his neck, arms and back, as well as headaches and dizziness. The letter ran with the headline, "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome," and the title remains a meme to this day, with

Aji-No-Moto founder Dr. Kikunae Ikeda and his company partner, Saburosuke Suzuki II

PHOTOS: AJINOMOTO GROUP



Dr. Kikunae Ikeda
Discoverer of the Umami taste

Saburosuke Suzuki II
Founder of the Ajinomoto Group



According to the company's website, the origins of the Ajinomoto Group lie in this ideal: "Eat Well, Live Well."

many Chinese restaurants posting signs announcing "No MSG" in the decades since.

Governmental agencies, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, have tested MSG, with the FDA classifying it as "Generally Recognized as Safe." The National Institutes of Health agreed with the FDA. The World Health Organization also tested MSG and found it safe. But the taint of that "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome" letter has stayed with MSG ever since.

Japanese restaurants haven't been the target of the anti-MSG message, nor have they made a big deal of either using or not using MSG. But

the controversy has had one visible effect: Japanese community cookbooks, a staple of Japanese American churches, women's groups and JACL chapters, used to include MSG, or the brand Aji-No-Moto, in most recipes.

The 1966 "Nisei Favorites" cookbook by the Gardena Valley Baptist Church Women's Missionary Society matter-of-factly has "Ajinomoto" as an ingredient for a number of dishes, including Chinese Chicken (or Crab) Salad, Pork Curry on Rice, Kikkoman Shoyu Wieners, Flank Steak Teriyaki, Yaki Niku and more.

By the late 1970s, though, some cookbooks dropped MSG as an ingredient. A 1978 cookbook, "Treasured Recipes," published by the Denver Buddhist Temple Women's Assn., only lists "m.s.g" as an ingredient in several main dishes: Kombu Maki with Pork, Sweet and Sour Chicken and Chow Mein Soft Noodles.

MSG was discovered and trademarked as "Aji-No-Moto," essence of taste, in the early 1900s.

Biochemist Dr. Kikunae Ikeda, who was trying to find the secret behind the delicious savoriness of his wife's dashi soup, isolated the main ingredient: the kombu seaweed that she used as a base for the soup. He called this flavor "umami" and helped popularize the use of the term. He also figured out how to crystallize the secret ingredient, and in 1908, he and a partner, Saburosuke

Suzuki II, started Aji-No-Moto, the company that dominates the production of MSG in Japan and operates in 34 countries, manufacturing not just Aji-No-Moto but also packaged and frozen foods.

Costco stocks many Ajinomoto products, including gyoza and instant ramen bowls. (The company uses the one-word name, but the product is still spelled with the hyphens the way it was launched more than a century ago.)

Ajinomoto has led the way in rehabbing the reputation of MSG in the U.S., with a marketing campaign to counter what it considers is the myth of "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome." The company has signed on celebrity chefs such as David Chang and Eddie Huang to say that MSG isn't harmful. It also successfully lobbied Merriam-Webster to add to its dictionary listing for Chinese restaurant syndrome to acknowledge that MSG doesn't cause negative symptoms in healthy people and tone down the stigma against Chinese food and MSG.

It didn't help when Covid spread throughout the world in 2020, and President Donald Trump called the disease "kung flu." A wave of anti-Asian hate crimes spread along with the disease. Today, the aftereffects of that racism are still present, said Shige-yuki Takeuchi, associate general manager at Ajinomoto in Japan.

"It lingered for a long time, and then we've had these waves of anti-Asian sentiment," he said. Takeuchi also noted that when the original Chinese restaurant syndrome phrase caused an outcry against Chinese restaurants, there was already strong sentiment in the country about emerging environmental and lifestyle issues.

He cited the 1962 book about environment science, "Silent Spring," by Rachel Carson, which merged by the late 1960s with the

emerging hippie, back-to-nature and even organic food movement, as laying the groundwork for the anti-MSG sentiment. "Of course, monosodium glutamate sounds chemical. People thought it was a bad substance. Even today, there's a negativity, but that's rapidly changing due to our efforts."

Aji-No-Moto isn't produced from kelp anymore like it was when Dr. Kikunae first discovered it and called it umami, the fifth taste (in addition to salty, sweet, sour and bitter — umami was officially named a scientific term in 1985). It's made from grains such as wheat in the U.S. (and sugar in Brazil, where sugar cane is more abundant), that is fermented to create the glutamic acids that make MSG.

Although Aji-N-Moto retreated from American grocery store shelves over the years, Takeuchi said Chinese restaurant syndrome didn't hurt its sales in other markets worldwide. He admitted, though, that in Japan, sales of Aji-No-Moto have dropped, but not for the same reason as in the U.S.

"The interesting thing is that the powder itself had gone down in sales," he said. "It's because people who made powder seasonings or liquid seasonings, we only had shoyu (soy sauce to compete with), but people started to make ponzu and all sorts of specific seasonings for nabe hot pots or teriyaki sauce, and so people no longer had to use MSG, the single ingredient, because they already had umami."

However, Takeuchi reported that there is currently a renaissance in interest for MSG and umami thanks, in part, to a popular social media influencer, and sales are rising.

But there are consumers who are still skeptical of MSG.

DEAR NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE,

It's time to talk about an injustice that occurred 56 years ago.

But first, we applaud your recent series revisiting historical biases throughout the Journal's past. It's powerful when influential institutions like yours reflect deeply on their cultural impact.

We, too, have felt the impact of injustice since 1968, when NEJM introduced the term "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome" in its April issue. Those three words have haunted the AANHPI community, and many others around the world, for over 50 years.

Though the published Letter-to-the-Editor made no scientific claims, the title the Journal attached to it sparked lasting racist myths.

For decades, "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome" spawned baseless fears, not just about Chinese food, but all Asian cuisines.

To this day, the stigma of Chinese Restaurant Syndrome lives on, with 29% of Asian people in the U.S. having personally experienced it.

Longstanding culinary staples, like MSG, have never fully recovered. This century-old seasoning was listed as a potential cause of "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome" in the original letter, but despite no evidence of causation, consensus by numerous food safety authorities, plus support from top chefs and dietitians, the speculation lingers.

We've made major strides in educating people about MSG, but misinformation is a stubborn foe. In the spirit of your commitment to address historical injustices, we, the undersigned, ask the Journal to revisit the term "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome," and the 1968 letter that introduced it to the world.

We believe this is an important step towards ending the chapter on this xenophobic myth and, hopefully, retiring this racist phrase once and for all.

Today, in partnership with The Ajinomoto Group, we are sharing our stories in the hope that you will recognize the impact of this legacy and address these injustices directly.

Without an acknowledgement from NEJM, it's impossible to truly close the book on "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome."

SINCERELY,

- Calvin Eng, CHEF & OWNER OF BONANZA'S
- James Park, COOKBOOK AUTHOR
- Xiel Liang, OPT., COOKBOOK AUTHOR & FOOD WRITER
- Tommy Park, RECIPE DEVELOPER
- Cary Northstreet, MS, RD, LD
- Jessica Threlk, DPH, MPH, PHD
- Teresa Nguyen, MS, RD
- William L. Goldberg, MD

AND PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY THE AJINOMOTO GROUP

1. "The Food Intolerance Report." The Ajinomoto Group with research by Youdon, April 2024.

The instantly recognizable red shaker top Ajinomoto bottle



To rehab the reputation of MSG in the U.S., Ajinomoto created a marketing campaign to counter what it considers the myth of "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome."

» See MSG on page 8

ON ITS WAY TO BECOMING A CONDIMENT STAPLE

Bachan's BBQ sauce brings Japanese American flavors to the mainstream.

By Gil Asakawa,
P.C. Contributor

Last summer, much to many foodies' surprise, Bachan's Japanese BBQ Sauce hit the top of the charts as the most popular barbecue sauce sold on Amazon. The popularity wasn't unexpected — Bachan's is a delicious, umami-packed, soy-sauce-based condiment.

But barbecue is a category that's usually dedicated to bottles of tomatoey sauces that are rooted in regional recipes such as Kansas City-, Memphis-, Carolina- or Texas-style flavor profiles to slather on meat.

Bachan's BBQ Sauce has Japanese roots and comes from a Japanese American family run business based in Sebastopol, Calif., north of San Francisco — not exactly a hotbed of hickory smoke and spareribs.

Bachan's is a brand launched in 2019, but its history goes back to its founder and CEO Justin Gill's grandmother (yes, Bachan of the company name), Judy Yokoyama.

Yokoyama was a child during World War II when her family was sent from Sebastopol to Amache concentration camp in Colorado. In the decades after the war, when she returned to Northern California, she began cooking with the sweet and salty marinade that became a family favorite, served with beef, chicken and, yes, ribs. The company's website features recipes for anyone to try.

Gill's packaging of Bachan's Japanese BBQ Sauce has been a brilliant blueprint of how a new product born of old traditions can be introduced and then expanded on to the masses. Within a short time, Bachan's has grown its product lineup to include not just grandma Judy's Original sauce, but other flavors such as Sweet Pineapple, Roasted Garlic, Hot & Spicy, Sweet Honey, Hot Honey, Hella Hot, Miso and Yuzu Citrus, as well as a Gluten-Free option.

The company has also added thicker Dipping Sauces in Original, as well as Sweet & Spicy flavors, for use with dishes to dip or drizzle over Japanese classics like tonkatsu.

In an email interview, Gill explained the back story of naming Bachan's. "Japanese barbecue sauce is a term my family and I used to describe our family sauce, and I continued the tradition when bringing



Justin Gill with his Bachan and family



A meal complete with Bachan's dipping sauce

PHOTO: GIL ASAKAWA



Bachan's Justin Gill with his Bachan Judy Yokoyama

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF BACHAN'S

Bachan's to market," he explained.

But, Gill admitted, "Japanese barbecue sauce isn't really a thing. While Americans are most familiar with teriyaki sauce, and occasionally describe ourselves as teriyaki-ish to make it easy, Japanese barbecue sauce is technically Japanese Tare sauce. Tare sauce is used for grilling and dipping in Japan. With that in mind, Japanese barbecue sauce is a soy or tamari-based sauce, sweetened with honey or sugar featuring mirin and optional fresh ingredients like ginger and green onion. The consistency tends to be less viscous than American barbecue sauces, which lends itself to a variety of uses from marinating, finishing, dipping, drizzling, dressing and more."

The brand's quick popularity and visi-

bility has been a blessing, Gill admitted. It's available not only online from the Bachans.com website and Amazon.com, but in national big-box and supermarket chains, as well as, of course, Japanese and Asian markets.

"We've been so grateful for the incredibly rapid growth of Bachan's. It's been a real whirlwind," Gill said. "Four years ago, I was in-store with my daughters, sampling the sauce throughout the Bay Area. Today, we're available nationwide in more than 25,000 stores, including Whole Foods, Sprouts, Target, Walmart, Costco, Albertson's, Publix and many more."

The ultimate goal he has for his grandmother's sauce, Gill said, is to make it ubiquitous. "My dream has always been for Bachan's to become a condiment staple, and we're on our way. As the business has grown, so have the challenges. We have a lot of big things locked in for the next few years, and we need to execute on them. If we can continue to execute in the way that we always have, there is a very bright future for Bachan's and my family legacy."

One of the challenges is producing a culinary product that reflects Japanese culture and educating people to the foodways that Yokoyama grew up with and handed down to her children and her grandson, Gill.

"Bachan's mission is to bring families together through food, culture and family,"

Gill explained. "This purpose directly seeks to not only bring nuclear families to the table to enjoy food together, but also bring society together as a whole through new cultural flavors, experiences, awareness and discussions."

Bachan's sauces are reviewed often by non-Japanese foodies on social media and on YouTube, and the brand is often mispronounced. "I've heard every pronunciation of Bachan's over the years, and I think it's normal when introducing non-English words into American culture," Gill said. "I'm sure Sriracha and açai had the same struggles in the beginning. It's an ongoing process, and I'm honored to be in a position to share our family's sauce and story in the hopes it will bring new flavors and experiences to everyone who tries it."

One future frontier on the horizon: launching Bachan's in Japan, where Gill has attended the major food trade show. "Every year at the big EXPOWest Trade Show, we get a number of people from Japan and Japanese Americans by our booth expressing their love for our sauce," he said. "I'd like to think that Bachan's could succeed in Japan. It would be a huge honor."

This article was made possible by the Harry K. Honda Memorial Journalism Fund, which was established by JACL Redress Strategist Grant Ujifusa.

A variety of Bachan's BBQ sauces

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BACHAN'S



Wafu Cooking

Everyday Recipes with Japanese Style

A new cookbook has ways to add a Japanese flair to all your dishes.

By Gil Asakawa,
P.C. Contributor

Sonoko Sakai's new book, "Wafu Cooking: Everyday Recipes With Japanese Style," delivers exactly what the title promises: many basic, easy-to-cook dishes and condiments that would fit on a dining table in Japan and also on a table in the U.S. Sakai, who is a Shin-Nisei born in New York to Issei parents (her father was a postwar employee of Japan Airlines who was sent to open up air travel between Japan and America), is a writer, cook and teacher based in California.

In her previous cookbook, "Japanese Home Cooking: Simple Meals, Authentic Flavors," published in 2019, Sakai focused on helping people make Japanese food that is authentic and not "appropriated" or Americanized.

Her new book, "Wafu Cooking," embraces bringing Japanese elements to Western cooking. The word *wa* means Japan — *washoku* refers to traditional Japanese food, while *yoshoku* is the word used to describe Western dishes made in a Japanese style. Sakai points out that *wa* also means harmony, and in that spirit, the recipes in her cookbook are meant to balance Japanese ingredients in Western plates for Western palates.

The best example, and one of her favorite recipes that she has created, also happens to be a favorite recipe according to her many fans from her talks, demos and social media posts: Miso Apple Pie, which sounds like a delicious, if unexpectedly incongruous, combination that appears on page 280 of the book.

Sakai noticed that people have started putting miso into cookies, and so she decided to add miso to her apple pie recipe. "I won second place in an apple pie contest that (public radio station) KCRW sponsors every year. Five hundred pies were submitted, and my pie made it to second place," she said.

But Sakai didn't announce it as a pie with miso in it. "I kept it hidden," she said. "I called it Wafu Apple

Sakai's "Wafu Miso Apple Pie," won an award in an apple pie contest and is also featured in her new book "Wafu Cooking"

PHOTO: SONOKOSAKAI.COM



Cookbook author/teacher/writer Sonoko Sakai's recipes feature easy-to-make Japanese dishes.



Pie. And the people who were tasting it said, 'Waffle apple pie — is this a typo?' And I said, 'No, it's not. So, I was happy.' It passed the contest taste test and has been adopted by Sakai's cooking students. It has even showed up on social media posts.

"Wafu Cooking" isn't just a book of recipes, however. It also includes well-researched history and information about Japan's food culture and Sakai's personal memories, like a memoir woven into a cookbook.

"I think it's doing well," Sakai said happily. "Wafu Cooking" has been praised by the *New York Times* as one of the best cookbooks and has also received coverage by the *Los Angeles Times*, *Boston Globe* and *Esquire* and *Forbes* magazines. "It's really getting an incredible reception."

"And the *New York Times* had me write a story about Milky, the Japanese candy, because Japan was a nondairy country for many centuries, and the average Japanese person didn't start really drinking milk until after the war, but once we learned how to drink milk, then these companies came up with milk candy and milk bread and milk souffles and matcha latte and all kinds of dairy stuff that is actually now being re-exported overseas," she said.

The culinary cultures between Japan and the West have gone both ways for centuries (tempura was introduced to Japanese during the samurai era by Portuguese priests, for instance), so Sakai likes to embrace the things about Japanese food that are

being adapted and adopted here in the U.S.

"What I see this book doing is kind of turning the tables to the idea of *yoshoku* (Western food) and things like curry, things like even tempura, right? If that's your food in a way, then 'Wafu-ing' is exporting our value system to the food we eat here in America or around the world outside of Japan."

The goal with the cookbook, Sakai said, is to "do things in harmony and in balance. I think that's what 'Wafu' is about. So, I really talk about 'Wafu' being not just cooking that infuses umami into foods, but it's about presentation. It's about your sensibility. It's about technique. It's many things coming together in harmony.

"I thought that I could reverse my pursuit, and instead of trying to be authentically Japanese, which I already did with my last cookbook and trying to prove myself that I'm Japanese enough, I said I'm going to do how I live," Sakai concluded. "I've straddled both cultures. And I want to celebrate that. I want to give myself permission to do what works for my palate — and my mother cooked that way. I don't want to call it fusion because I think it's different."

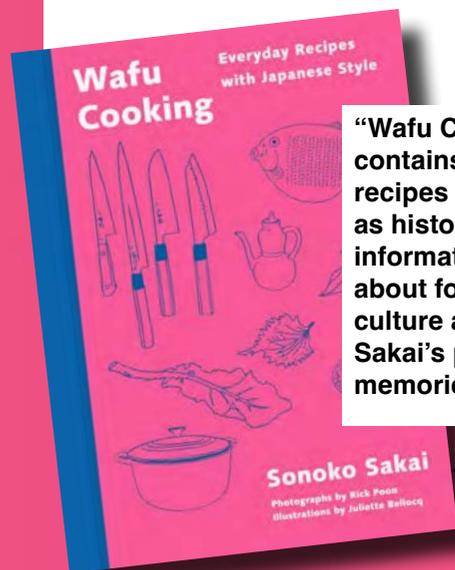
Let's just call it simply, Wafu.

This article was made possible by the Harry K. Honda Memorial Journalism Fund, which was established by JACL Redress Strategist Grant Ujifusa.



Also featured in "Wafu Cooking" are recipes for Grilled Onigiri with Miso Butter (left) and Sesame Butter Cookies

PHOTOS: SONOKOSAKAI.COM



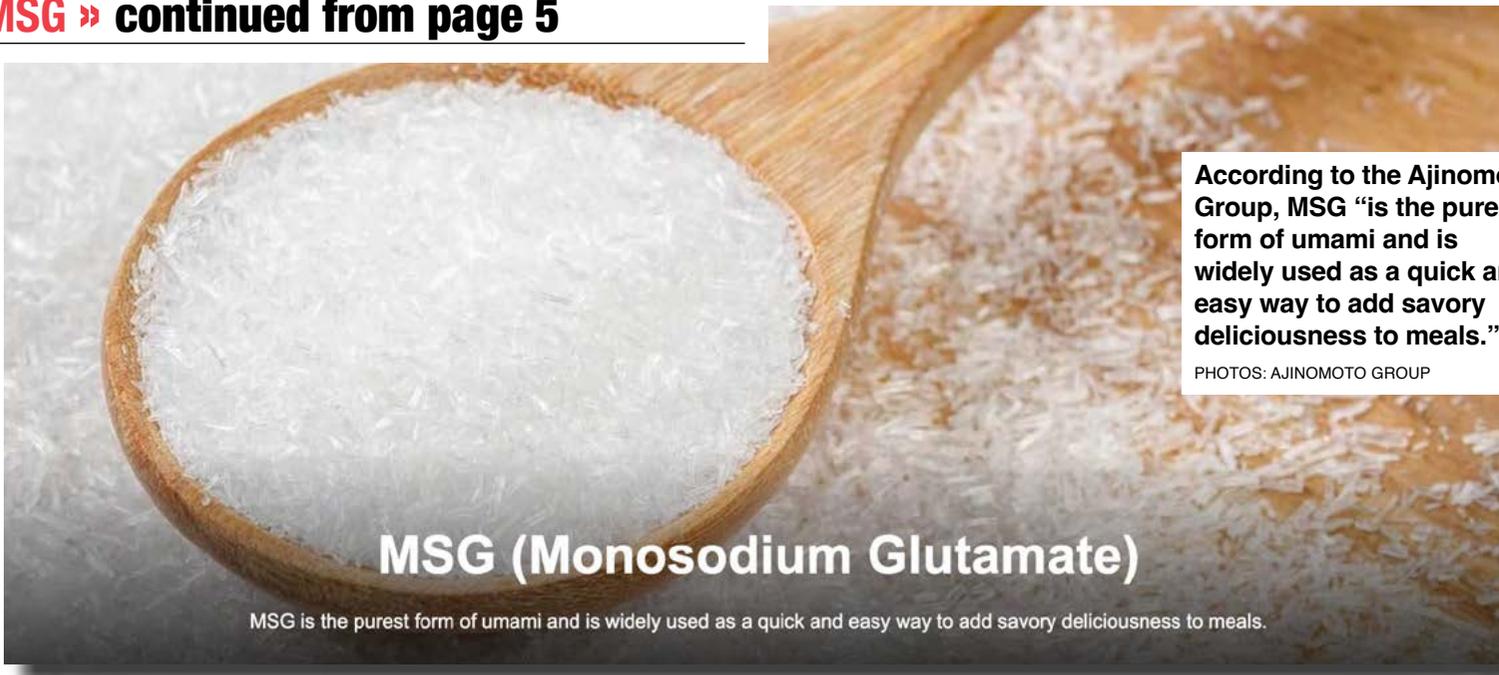
"Wafu Cooking" contains recipes as well as history and information about food culture and Sakai's personal memories.

Sonoko Sakai

Photographs by Rick Poon

Illustrations by Juliette Bellocq

MSG » continued from page 5



MSG (Monosodium Glutamate)

MSG is the purest form of umami and is widely used as a quick and easy way to add savory deliciousness to meals.

According to the Ajinomoto Group, MSG “is the purest form of umami and is widely used as a quick and easy way to add savory deliciousness to meals.”

PHOTOS: AJINOMOTO GROUP



(Top) The glutamic acid extracted from kombu by Dr. Kikunae Ikeda in 1908; (bottom) the original Aji-No-Moto in 1909

Noted Erin Yoshimura: “When I go eat dim sum, I have the same effect where eventually, I can start feeling my fingers getting swollen, and I get these, like, really weird little like bubbles popping in my head and feel like an out-of-body sensation. It’s mild, but it’s enough to notice.”

As a Japanese American in Colorado, she grew up eating Chinese food both in restaurants and at home and never noticed such effects before. She has recently been eating Japanese dishes cooked with a little bit of Aji-No-Moto and hasn’t felt any ill effects, so maybe the dim sum restaurants use more MSG.

“I think it’s probably because some people can handle it,” she said. “I think it’s just like any other thing, like wheat — some people can eat gluten, some people cannot. So yeah, I think it depends on your body makeup.”

One woman’s body definitely has a strong reaction to MSG. Journalist Anita M. Busch in Los Angeles wrote, “MSG is deadly to me because it causes neurotoxicity and overstimulates the vagal nerve and sends my heart into tachycardia that then goes into atrial fibrillation with rapid ventricular response of 180 to over 200 beats per minute.”

“I end up in the cardiac intensive care unit each and every time I accidentally ingest it,” Busch continued. “I cannot even take a small amount of it, and it is disguised under many other names like modified milk protein

or natural flavors, so I have learned through a dangerous game of Russian roulette. There are many names food manufacturers are allowed to use to hide this from the public, and that should never be the case. Asian food is particularly hard for me to even entertain trying, and that is hard when those in my family are 100 percent or 50 percent Japanese.”

It’s true that MSG is in a lot of foods, snacks and processed food products. Nacho Cheese Doritos, a favorite snack for many people, has MSG. So does (perhaps not surprisingly) instant noodles and ramen, soups, fast foods and frozen packaged foods. But some natural products, including produce, have MSG, too: tomatoes, mushrooms, cheese and, as mentioned before, kombu kelp and seaweed.

Calvin Eng, a young award-winning chef who operates a Cantonese American restaurant in Brooklyn named after his immigrant mother’s American nickname, Bonnie’s, is a spokesperson for Ajinomoto, who is upfront about using MSG in his cooking.

“I didn’t really know how to use MSG until I started cooking professionally; the restaurant I was at right before here was where I would order 100-pound barrels of Aji-No-Moto at a time, and that’s where I learned how to use it in cooking properly,” said Eng. “During that time is when I realized the power of MSG and what it can do. I always

knew that it wasn’t bad for you, like I was educated enough on the topic to know that it’s a safe ingredient to use, so that was never my concern.

“But I found out about all the negative connotations that MSG does have,” he continued. “So, I wanted to be more open about the use of it and talk about it and just celebrate it in a way that hasn’t necessarily been done before, like we put it on our menu.”

It’s not just an ingredient in his food, either. He serves an “MSG Cocktail” made with gin or vodka and, yes, MSG. He’s even published a cookbook, “Salt Sugar MSG: Recipes and Stories From a Cantonese American Home.”

There isn’t such a pushback from Japanese restaurants, which haven’t suffered from an anti-MSG movement over the years. Some restaurants do not use MSG, but many quietly do.

In Denver, Takashi Tamai, the owner and chef of award-winning Ramen Star restaurant, said he doesn’t use MSG and prefers to flavor his dishes the old-school way with ingredients that might take longer or be more expensive to use.

But Miki Hashimoto, award-winning chef and owner of Tokio restaurant, also in Denver, said he thinks “pretty much for sure, 99 percent of Japanese restaurants use MSG. If they say they do not use Aji-No-Moto, I sip their miso soup, and I can tell immediately.”

He adds that he uses MSG in small amounts to a few items, and never in sushi, to achieve a balance of flavors that enhances umami.

With Aji-No-Moto making what appears to be a cultural comeback, we may eventually see those ubiquitous bottles with the bright red tops on our kitchen tables once again.

This article was made possible by the Harry K. Honda Memorial Journalism Fund, which was established by JACL Redress Strategist Grant Ujifusa.



AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

2025 TOUR SCHEDULE

- JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) **WAITLIST** . . . May 11-23
Tokyo, Ashikaga Flower Park, Yamagata, Sakata/Shonai, Akita, Morioka, Sanriku Railway coastal train ride, Hanamaki Onsen, Matsushima, Nikko/Kinugawa Onsen, Tokyo.
- MUSIC CITIES HOLIDAY TOUR** (Carol Hida) . . . **WAITLIST** May 12-19
New Orleans, Memphis, Nashville.
- GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR** (Ernest Hida) Jun 15-25
Tokyo, Hakone, Hiroshima, Kyoto. Craftmaking hands-on experiences. **WAITLIST**
- HOKKAIDO SUMMER HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) Jul 13-25
Hakodate, Lake Toya, Noboribetsu, Otaru, Sapporo, Wakkanai, Rishiri Island, Asahikawa, Furano, Tokyo.
- DANUBE RIVER CRUISE** (Carol Hida) . . . **WAITLIST**. Aug 27-Sep 9
Pre-cruise in Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, Weissenkirchen, Linz, Passau, Vilshofen, Post-cruise in Prague. **Bonus Discount - Limited Time Offer.**
- JAPAN AUTUMN COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) Oct 16-27
Tokyo, Sado Island, Kanazawa, Amanohashidate, Tottori, Matsue, Tamatsukuri Onsen, Hiroshima.
- KENYA WILDLIFE SAFARI HOLIDAY TOUR** (Carol Hida) . . **WAITLIST** . . . Oct 15-28
Nairobi, Amboseli-Nakuru Lake-Masai Mara National Parks, Mt. Kenya Safari Club, Sweetwaters Tented Camp, Jane Goodall Chimpanzee Sanctuary. **FINAL TOUR**
- OKINAWA HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) Nov 13-23
Naha, Onnason, Islands of Ishigaki, Iriomote & Taketomi.

For more information and reservations, please contact:
AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL
312 E. 1st Street, Suite 240 * Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (213)625-2232 * Email: americanholiday@att.net
Ernest or Carol Hida



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SHOOTINGS » continued from page 4

Martinez. “I know that we call it hate crime, but by law, it’s not hate. They don’t have to hate you, and they can have a protected characteristic themselves. Think of it as bias. It’s just any type of bias,” he explained.

As for what one could do if one were the target of a bias-motivated incident, Martinez gave some options. The first go-to might be to call 911, which, of course, involves law enforcement. “If you don’t want to report to law enforcement, you have LA vs. Hate,” he said, referring to what its website describes as the “community-centered system designed to support all residents and communities targeted for hate acts of all kinds in Los Angeles County.”

Continuing, Martinez said, “You have 211. You just call 211, and you can report these without having to deal with law enforcement. But I want you to encourage your friends and your family to report these things because if we know about it, we can try to do preemptive things to prevent the next person or going through it.”

During the lunch break, more

speakers gave presentations. The first was Kasowitz Benson Torres LLP attorney Dean Z. Pamphilis, who described a 21st-century form of anti-Asian violence that came in the form of a lawsuit inspired by a conspiracy theory.

According to Pamphilis, he had been hired to represent Eugene Yu, the CEO of Michigan-based election logistics company Konnech Corp. Pamphilis said Yu was targeted by a pair of election-deniers promulgating a two-related conspiracy theories, one of which was that an unnamed source claimed that 2 million U.S. poll worker records had been found on a computer server that Yu had in Wuhan, China, and that he was “also acting as an operative for the CCP, that he was committing espionage.”

“So, he hired me — I’m a trial lawyer — to sue them. And so I sued them for defamation because everything they were saying was false,” said Pamphilis. Konnech Corp. had contract with Los Angeles County when Yu was arrested in Michigan “on the authority of the



Matt Weisbly



Kathleen Kim



Robert Chang

L.A. County DA under a sealed indictment.

“We found out that the people who were behind the indictment were in fact the same election deniers that we were suing, that they had been working with the County to bring these charges,” Pamphilis said. Ultimately, in January 2024, Los Angeles County settled, paying Yu \$5 million for his 2022 arrest. “The charges were dismissed,” said Pamphilis, who also noted that Yu was eventually declared factually innocent. “But my client’s business was destroyed. He lost over half of his customers.”

The next lunch-break speaker was Hyepin Im, founder of FACE or Faith and Community Empowerment, whose data-heavy address included several PowerPoint slides. One of her targets: the model minority myth, which she said “does rob our community of needed investments.”

“Part of the reason why we are perceived as a model minority is because we love education. And you know, everyone thinks and believes — and I think it’s true — education is key to advancement,” Im said. “At all levels, bachelor, masters and professional, we literally surpass any other group, white, Black and Hispanic, so that education investment should translate into success out in society.” Im’s next slide, however, came to a different conclusion.

“Asians have the lowest likelihood of any group of being promoted into management,” Im said. “It does pay off for the Black and Hispanic communities in terms of their probability going into management. But Asians, it actually goes down further.”

Brothers Justin Kim and Ray Kim, entrepreneurs behind a health supplement beverage named the Plug Drink, and Randell Nuguid of the Boiling Crab restaurant chain

were next, explaining how they collectively helped raise \$100,000 for wildfire relief.

One of next two concurrent panels was “Civil Rights & Human Rights,” which featured Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations Board Chair Dr. Gay Yuen as moderator and as panelists Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California CEO Connie Chung Joe and Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations Executive Director Robin Toma.

The other was titled “Immigration & Birthright Citizenship,” and serving as panelists were National JACL Education Programs Manager Matthew Weisbly, Loyola Law School Associate Dean and Professor of Law Kathleen Kim and UC Irvine School of Law’s Fred T. Korematsu Center for Law and Equality Executive Director Robert S. Chang.

Moderated by Mitchell Matsumura, Greater Los Angeles JACL chapter president, the panel began with Weisbly providing background about something that has been receiving news coverage after the Jan. 20 inauguration of President Trump, namely his use of the Alien Enemies Act. Weisbly noted it was enacted in 1798 when it was one of four laws known as the Alien and Sedition Acts, created when the still-young United States was on the brink of war with France.

“Congress passed these laws to sort of combat any possible enemy aliens or enemy saboteurs who were in the United States at that time,” Weisbly said, noting that politicians were wary of being “taken out from within.” He noted that three of the four parts of the Alien and Sedition Acts “have either expired or been sunsetted,” leaving just the Alien Enemies Act, which has no expiration date. He also acknowledged that until Trump invoked the AEA in January,

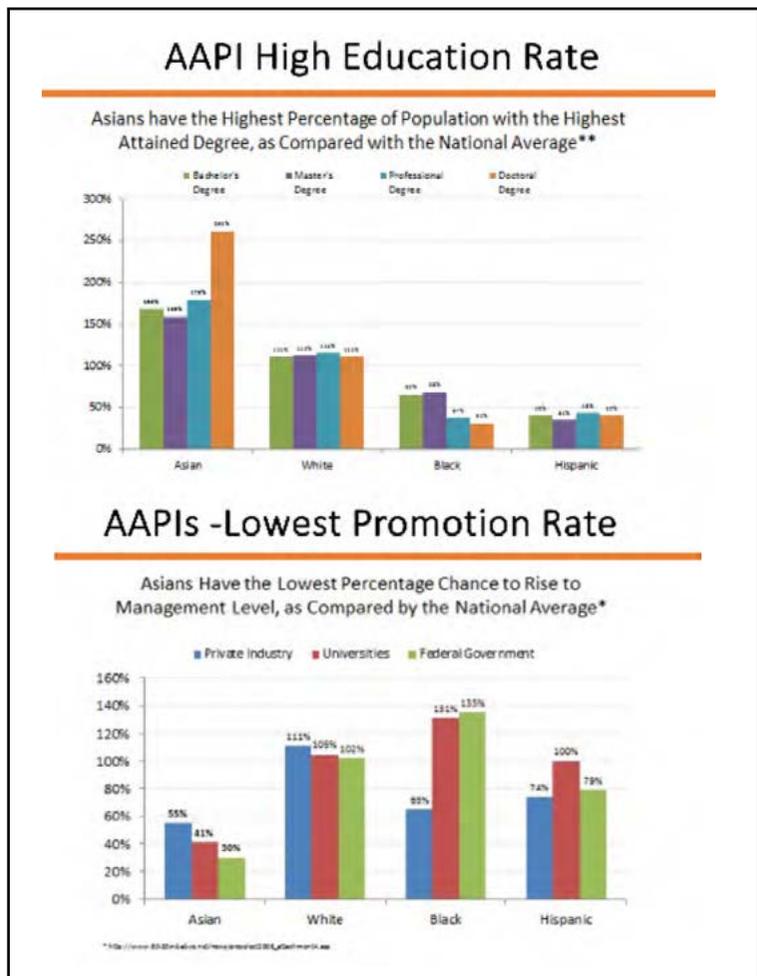
it had only been used three times: the War of 1812, World War I and World War II, when it was applied to some 2,000 Japanese nationals (who at the time were barred from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens), 1,000 German nationals and 200 Italian nationals.

“Anyone who is not a naturalized U.S. citizen, anyone who’s here in the U.S. without a green card is liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured and removed,” Weisbly said. “Basically, in a time of war, the president, the government, anybody, can take an alien national or someone who is not a U.S. citizen, and deport them without a trial, without basically without due cause even.”

Although a key part of the AEA is that it may only be used in a time of war — which only Congress may declare — the Trump administration has nevertheless claimed it has the authority to invoke it and deport noncitizens without due process. “There was also a provision that was added later that says that if there is some extenuating circumstances where Congress cannot declare an act of war, that the president can still invoke the Alien Enemies Act without Congress’ approval — which is terrifying,” said Weisbly.

Next up was Kim, author of the 2023 book “Feminist Judgments: Immigration Law Opinions Rewritten.” Her focus for the panel was on the history of legislation and lawsuits as it pertained to Asian Americans and Asian immigration to the U.S., such as what led to the passage of the 13th (elimination of chattel slavery) and 14th Amendments (birthright citizenship and equal protection doctrine) to the Constitution.

(EDITOR’S NOTE: Part 2 of this article will appear in the May 2 issue.)





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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NATIONAL

2025 JACL National Convention
 Albuquerque, NM
 July 17-20
Price: Early Bird Registration Now Open.

Save the date for this year's JACL National Convention in the beautiful city of Albuquerque! This year's event will feature plenaries, special events and the annual Sayonara Gala. Full details, including how to register, are available on the JACL website.
Info: Visit www.jacl.org.

NCWNP

CAAMFest 2025
 San Francisco
 May 8-11

San Francisco Area Theaters
Price: Ticket Prices Vary
 This year's CAAMFest reflects on the histories that have shaped our present. This year's films will remind us of the enduring impact of place and memory.
Info: Visit <https://caamfest.com>.

San Francisco Giants' Japanese Heritage Night

San Francisco, CA
 May 16; 7:15 p.m.
Oracle Park
24 Willie Mays Plaza
Price: Special Event Ticket Needed; Ticket Prices Vary

Cheer on the Giants and celebrate Japanese Heritage night as the team takes on the Sacramento A's. All special ticket holders will receive an exclusive sakura hooded shirt.
Info: For more information, visit jccnc.org.

PSW

56th Manzanar Pilgrimage
 Independence, CA
 April 26; 11:30-2 p.m.
Manzanar National Historic Site

This year's annual pilgrimage will include the Manzanar at Dusk program as well as the Ireicho "Book of Names" national tour stop by appointment. This year's keynote speaker is Dr. Satsuki Ina.
Info: Email info@manzanarcommittee.org.

Children's Day
 San Diego, CA
 May 4; 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Japanese Friendship Garden and Museum

2215 Pan American Road East
Price: Free
 Guests are invited to celebrate Children's Day at the garden where they can make special koinobori, play games and eat kashiwamochi. Performances will run throughout the day in the Inamori Pavilion.
Info: Visit <https://www.niwa.org>

CCDC

Art of the Word: 'Once Upon a Book — Featuring the Illustrations of Grace Lin'
 Fresno, CA
 Thru June 29
Fresno Art Museum
 2233 N. First St.

Price: Museum Admission
 This exhibit features Grace Lin's original illustrations from "Once Upon a Book," co-written with Kate Messner.
Info: Visit <http://www.fresnoartmuseum.org/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/>.

PNW

Side by Side: Nihonmachi Scenes by Tokita, Nomura and Fujii
 Seattle, WA
 Thru May 11
Wing Luke Museum
George Tsutakawa Art Gallery
 719 S. King St.

Price: Museum Admission
 This exhibit features the works of Kamekichi Tokita, Kenjiro Nomura and Takuichi Fujii, who received widespread praise

for their paintings, which provide a view of what nihonmachi's familiar streets, alleys, storefronts and houses looked like before WWII.
Info: Visit www.wingluke.org.

IDC

2025 Amache Pilgrimage
 Granada, CO
 May 16-18
105 E. Goff
Price: Events Are Free

This year's pilgrimage is the 50th anniversary of the first Amache Pilgrimage. The weekend's activities will include events hosted by Amache Alliance, the University of Denver Amache Project, National Parks Conservation Assn., Colorado Preservation and the Sand Creek Massacre Foundation.
Info: Visit <https://amache.org/pilgrimage/>.

MDC

Kansha Nisei Lounge Fundraiser
 Chicago, IL
 May 8; 6:30-9:30 p.m.
3439 N. Sheffield Ave.

This community bartending fundraiser is a great opportunity to engage with Kansha folks and the community. All cash tips will go toward the Kansha Project program, a JACL Chicago program. The event is 21+.
Info: To RSVP, visit https://bit.ly/kansha_niseilounge2025.

Jerome/Rohwer Pilgrimage
 Little Rock, AR
 May 21-24
Price: Registration Fee \$350
 The Jerome/Rohwer Pilgrimage program includes an event in McGehee, Ark., that includes an Obon festival to honor the spirits of our ancestors.
Info: Visit <https://jeromerohwer.org/index.php/pilgrimage/registration>.

EDC

2025 Boston AAPI 5K
 Boston, MA
 May 17; 8:30 a.m.
Metropolitan District Commission Pavilion
 Celebrate AAPI Heritage Month and raise funds for local nonprofit organizations.
Info: Visit www.movement.cc/events/2025_boston_aapi_5k.

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In MEMORIAM

(Editor's note: Boldfaced names in blue in the PDF version of this page are active hyperlinks to published obituaries for the decedent.)

Arakaki, Francis Yoshisada, 89, Kaneohe, HI, Feb. 6.

Aoki, Linda Rae, 77, Honeyville, UT, Dec. 11.



Endow, Minoru, 104, Los Angeles, CA, Feb. 23.

Higashi, Nancy Nobuko, 88, Los Angeles, CA, Nov. 2, 2024.



Iboshi, Sunny, 79, Hillsboro, OR, October 11, 2024.



Inouye, Harry Seishi, 95, Sacramento, CA, Dec. 12, 2024.

Katsuda, Tomie, 93, Santa Maria, CA, March 20.

Kawamoto, Galen Hideo, 77, Portland, OR, Aug. 6, 2024.



Kawamura, Miyoko, 95, Lodi, CA, Jan. 7.

Kumai, Kathryn Yuuko, 74, Cerritos, CA, Jan. 31.

Masada, Gregg, 58, Monterey Park, CA, Feb. 19.

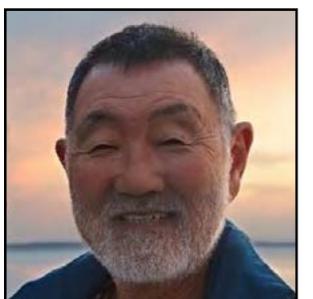


Morales, Takeko Kato, 90, Phoenix, AZ, March 10.

Nakauchi, Kikuko & Yoshimi, 93 & 100, Morgan Hill, CA, Jan. 25 & Jan. 31.

Nishikawa, Masayo, 95, Pasadena, CA, Dec. 27, 2024.

Nishitsuji, Gary, 72, Rosemead, CA, Dec. 31, 2024.



Omura, Jim Kazuhiro, 83, San Francisco, CA, Aug. 29, 2024.

Osaka, Stuart, 66, Los Angeles, CA, Feb. 22.

Otani, Yaeko, 93, Fountain Valley, CA, Feb. 26.

Sakamoto, Howard, 84, Alhambra, CA, Feb. 17.



Suzuki, Francis 'Frank,' 85, Sacramento, CA, Jan. 24.

Takasugi, Ken, 100, Campbell CA, Feb 18.

Tanaka, Dianne Claire, 86, Excelsior, MN, March 17.



Tano, Alice Katsuko, 86, Gresham, OR, Feb. 6.

Tomooka, Tom, 92, Scottsdale, AZ, March 4.



Umeda, Daniel Yutaka, 85, Sacramento, CA, March 6.

Waki, Russell Fumio, 71, Rossmoor, CA, Feb. 5.

Yamaguchi-Rumbaugh, Ann Misa-to, 91, Fresno, CA, Nov. 24, 2024. ■

News Briefs

Judge Sentences Former Girardi Keese CFO Christopher Kamon to 10 Years

United States District Judge Josephine L. Staton on April 11 sentenced former Girardi Keese LLP CFO Christopher Kazuo Kamon, 51, to 121 months in federal prison for “enabling the embezzlement of millions of dollars from the firm’s injured clients and for embezzling money” from the now-defunct Los Angeles law firm. Staton also ordered Kamon to pay \$8.9 million in restitution. In October 2024, Kamon pleaded guilty to two counts of wire fraud. According to United States Attorney Bill Essayli, Kamon had enabled the firm’s namesake Tom Girardi to “defraud vulnerable clients” for nearly two decades, noting the irony that “it was Kamon’s own lies that accelerated the law firm’s demise.” Girardi was convicted of four counts of wire fraud in 2024 but to date has not been sentenced. Along with Girardi’s son-in-law, David R. Lira — himself a former Girardi Keese attorney — Girardi and Kamon also face federal charges in Chicago for defrauding survivors of plane crash victims. The trial date is set for July 14.

Yokoyama to Serve as Cerritos, Calif., Mayor, Lead All-Asi-Am City Council

The Cerritos, Calif., City Council selected Frank Aurelio Yokoyama to serve as mayor. Serving as mayor pro tem will be Lynda Johnson. New councilmembers installed at the March 26 special meeting were Mark Pulido, Jennifer Hong, and Sophia Tse. In his comments, Yokoyama noted that it was the city’s first all-Asian American city council and its first majority female city council. The Asian American theme continued as State Attorney General Rob Bonta administered the oath of office for Pulido, San Gabriel Mayor John Wu did the same for Hong and ABC Unified School District School Board President Ernie Nishii and Deputy Superintendent/CFO Toan Nguyen conducted the ceremony for Tse.

Arakawa, Hackman Buried 2 Months After Being Found Dead in N.M.

The remains of the married couple, which had been unclaimed for several weeks following the discovery of their corpses in late February, were laid to rest last weekend with actor Gene Hackman’s adult children in attendance, according to published reports. Hackman, 95, and pianist Betsy Arakawa, 65, who died days apart in their Santa Fe, N.M., home, were discovered by a contractor Feb. 26. It is now believed that Arakawa died first, around Feb. 12, of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, with the Oscar-winning Hackman, who was described as having “advanced” Alzheimer’s disease, likely having died on Feb. 18 of hypertensive and atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease.

AAcomp, VMCA Mark JA Vietnam War Vet Milestone at Tanaka Farms

On the occasion of the Library of Congress having accepted the nonprofit Asian American Community Media Project’s 104th video submission for its Veterans History Project, AAcomp and the Veterans Memorial Court Alliance — the nonprofit behind Little Tokyo’s Japanese American National War Memorial Court — jointly held a celebratory luncheon March 29 at Tanaka Farms in Irvine, Calif. AAcomp, in conjunction with the Japanese American Vietnam Era Archives, recently began recording oral histories of Japanese American military veterans who served during the Vietnam War and contributing them to the Veterans History Project. (See Pacific Citizen, Nov. 1, 2024). Seventy-five vets whose interviews were recorded were in attendance. In addition to a screening of filmmaker David Brodie’s documentary “The Volunteer” (See Pacific Citizen, Nov. 15, 2024), attendees viewed a congratulatory message from Monica Mohinra, director of the Veterans History Project. Attending veterans each received a custom-designed challenge coin and a personalized flash drive containing their complete interview.

JANM Announces 2025 Toshizo Watanabe Democracy Fellowship Recipients

Takashi Ishimori, Misako Kono, Sato Sekimoto, Risa Shibata, Daisuke Shirakawa, Hiromi Shirakura, Ayumi Wajima, and Chihiro Yago are this year’s winners of the fellowship, a yearlong professional development program designed for emerging leaders from Japan across sectors. The fellowship’s goals are to advance global democracy, strengthen ties between the U.S. and Japan by promoting democratic values and foster understanding and cooperation between the two nations.

Loyola Marymount Names Dr. Thomas Poon as Its 17th University President

LMU’s board of trustees has announced that Thomas Poon, Ph.D., will succeed Timothy Law Snyder, Ph.D., in the role on June 1.

— P.C. Staff

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