ON AIR WITH THE JACL

‘Asian Pacific America With Robert Handa’ features the 88-year-old civil rights organization on its Aug. 6 show.

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JACL CONDEMNS WEEKEND ACT OF TERRORISM AGAINST MINNESOTA MOSQUE

The Japanese American Citizens League, the oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization in the U.S., condemned the Aug. 5 bombing of a Bloomington, Minn., mosque as an act of terrorism and hate against a religious group.

This is a clear affront to the rights of the Muslim community to worship in peace. We are grateful that there were no casualties, but that does not reduce the impact this act of terror has upon the worshipping community.

The Twin Cities JACL chapter has worked previously with the Muslim community in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. The Twin Cities JACL chapter supports the Muslim community in the face of increasing discrimination and hate. The Twin Cities JACL actively advocates the pursuit of global justice, civil liberties and human rights, hope, compassion and love,” said Twin Cities Chapter President Amy Dickerson.

It is particularly poignant that this act of terror took place on the fifth anniversary of the Oak Creek, Wis., massacre of six Sikh worshippers preparing the day’s meal. Like the Aug. 5 bombing, that event could have been much worse had the timing been different. An hour later, the temple would have been filled with children attending classes.

The JACL stands proudly in support of the Muslim and Sikh communities and for the right of all Americans to worship peacefully and without the fear of attack from terrorism.

We affirm the fundamental American right of worship and freedom of assembly as guaranteed in the Bill of Rights.

For more information about the Twin Cities chapter, please refer to its website at www.tcj acl.org.

JACL CONDEMNS WEEKEND HATE RALLY IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Japanese American Citizens League on Aug. 14 denounced the racism, bigotry and violence in Charlottesville, Va., that resulted in three deaths over the weekend.

One of the deceased has been identified as Heather D. Heyer, a Charlottesville resident who was among a crowd of people counterprotesting a white nationalist rally.

Heyer, 32, was killed when a man drove his car into the crowd; 19 people were also injured. Police identified the driver as James Alex Fields Jr., 20, of Maumee, Ohio. He was arrested after the incident and charged with second-degree murder and three counts of malicious wounding.

The other two who lost their lives as a result of the white nationalist rally were Virginia state troopers H. Jay Cullen, 48, and Berke Bates, who would have turned 41 on Aug. 20. The helicopter the two were aboard to monitor the situation in Charlottesville crashed, killing both troopers.

According to JACL, this is not the first overt act of terrorism against a minority community in 2017, but it was the first to result in deaths.

The JACL said in a statement that the “unbridled white supremacist ideology espoused at the rallies in Charlottesville and Seattle must not be accepted as free expression of opinion, but repudiated as an incitement to commit hate crimes against minority communities and individuals,” adding, “hate speech leads to hate crimes.”

The 88-year-old civil rights organization added: “We take this opportunity to call attention to actions less violent in nature, but equally steeped in racist and bigoted ideology and equally devastating in effect upon minority communities. The Trump administration has systematically dismantled the very instruments our government has in place to protect minorities from discrimination.”
By Gil Asakawa

The recent 72nd anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima went by quietly on American news (in part because there's just so much news to cover exploding out of our own White House). So, on Aug. 6, I turned to the one place I knew would give the commemoration of the bombing its due coverage: NHK World, Japan's English-language public television network.

NHK World didn't disappoint. The network aired live the annual solemn ceremony at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park that included dignitaries including Kazumi Matsui, the mayor of Hiroshima, and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The speeches were translated into English, and the dolorous seriousness of looking back at a history we know so well was that much more powerful to be able to watch it live.

Sure, there are other ways to keep up with news from Japan. I have a digital subscription to JapanTimes.com, the website of the respected English-language newspaper. An aggregator called JapanToday.com compiles news from various sites and is a helpful stop to catch up on the headlines at a glance. The Asahi Shimbun's English-language website (asahi.com/enjp) is also good.

But NHK has been the bridge to Japan for a lot of people in the U.S. My mom watches Japanese-language programming via satellite exclusively, which means she never even tunes in to another channel, even though she pays for a full service and the extra to get NHK.

If my mom is home, the TV is on, blasting do-rah-ma (dramas, or soap operas), wacky game shows, talk show, music and comedy variety shows, sumo tournaments and even children's programming. The network also broadcasts news, of course, with its low-key and understated anchors (the game show hosts, on the other hand, seem as if they've just downsized a gallon of cold-brew coffee before the cameras have been turned on).

My mom loves the samurai doramas and pastoral nature shows, but she gets puzzled watching the news. I've visited her when the news is on, and she has no idea what many contemporary words that Japanese use mean. Having come to America in the mid-1960s, she never learned more modern terms like peacon (personal computers) or yoppus mucho (pop music). Even though I have limped Nihongo ability, I can pick out the "katakana words," as she calls them, and end up telling her what the report is about. Katakana is the alphabet that's used for foreign words.

For years whenever I traveled to other cities, I'd check the hotel TV menu to see if it carried NHK World, the English version of the network my mom watches.

I like the headline news presented every half-hour, though I admittedly get a bit tired after several hours of seeing the same news. But I really love the lineup of feature programming, which tends to focus on cultural and travel topics.

Earlier this year, NHK World finally came to Denver's cable carrier, Comcast (on channel 262 for Denver-area readers). It's been a pleasure to finally have it available without checking into a hotel. I put it on when I'm tired of politics on the U.S. news networks, and we're caught up on "Game of Thrones."

I still count on the top headlines every half-hour, and I still get tired of seeing the same stories after a while. But other than that, I like to tune in to a variety of programming that introduces me to areas of Japan I haven't visited, plus, NHK World teaches me about the country of my heritage.

>> See NHK on page 12

By Staci Yamashita-Iida, Esq.

Will my Will work? Can I trust my Trust? If you’ve created your Estate Plan online, these are questions you may want to ask yourself.

Nowadays, legal websites advertise do-it-yourself (DIY) wills and trusts. The appeal is easy to see: You can create your Estate Plan at a fraction of the price in comparison to visiting an experienced attorney. So, what’s the downside?

While it is fully plausible that online, DIY Estate Plans result in a trouble-free situation, that’s not always the case. If you have used a low-cost website to prepare your Estate Planning documents or are thinking of doing so in the future, I’d caution you to take the following into consideration.

**Issue No. 1: Assets May Not Avoid Probate**

For most people, the main purpose of creating a Revocable Living Trust is to ensure that their loved ones receive their assets with ease and without high costs, i.e., by avoiding the probate process. Unfortunately, online trusts do not always accomplish these goals.

Below are two real-life stories experienced by our Probate Department:

Ken and Kate created their Living Trust through an online website. The process seemed simple enough: They filled out a questionnaire, the company generated documents for them to sign and they received said documents in the mail. The company stated that Ken and Kate would need to sign the documents before a notary public in order to be legally binding. Ken and Kate meant to go that weekend, but then life happened: Their son got sick, then they went on vacation and then it was the holidays. Eventually, they forgot that they were ever supposed to get the documents signed.

Years later, Ken and Kate passed away. Their son brought in the unexecuted documents, hoping they would suffice to avoid probate. Unfortunately, they did not, and Ken and Kate’s son ended up paying thousands of dollars in legal fees in order to receive his parents’ assets.

Mary also created her Living Trust through an online website and, unlike Ken and Kate, she was able to get all documents signed and notarized before her death. However, when her son came to see our law firm after Mary had passed, he was shocked to learn that his mother’s assets still required probate. While there was a signed Quitclaim Deed that transferred the family home into the name of the trust, Mary had never recorded it with the county. Similarly, all of Mary’s bank accounts were not put into the trust, and there was no beneficiary listed. Mary had likely assumed that, by creating the trust, the assets were automatically in it.

There were pages and pages of instructions of what Mary was supposed to do tucked away in the back of a binder, but understandably, she likely did not read them. While it did help that Mary had a trust in place, her son was not spared of the time and money it took to undergo the probate process.

The moral of these stories is that if you do choose to create your Estate Planning documents online, make sure that they get signed and notarized and that your assets are properly funded into your trust. If the company does allow you to speak with an attorney, utilize the opportunity by asking what specifically needs to be done in order to guarantee that probate is avoided.

**Issue No. 2: Mistakes Can Have Disastrous Consequences**

Mistakes happen; we are only human. Unfortunately, in the case of DIY Estate Planning, these mistakes can result in expensive, unintended results.

Take Ted, for example. He created an online Living Trust with the intention of leaving his assets to his two children. His daughter was disabled and received SSI, so he wanted her to receive the family home. That way, she would always have a place to live. Ted also wanted to be fair to his son, so he wanted the money in the savings account to go to him. Both the home and the savings account had the same approximate value. Unfortunately, because Ted simply stated he wanted his assets to be split equally between his children and did not indicate that the home and the account were to go to each child specifically, probate was required. Both children received 50 percent of the home and 50 percent of the bank account. Ted’s daughter ended up losing her benefits and, because her brother forced the sale of the home, she ended up losing a place to live as well.

Now not all situations are that dramatic. But even a simple error can have consequences that are just as devastating.

>> See PLANS on page 12
**SUS ITO WORLD WAR II PHOTO EXHIBIT SET TO OPEN**

Dr. Susumu “Sus” Ito in France, 1944

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The Fullerton Arboretum in Fullerton, Calif., is hosting a new exhibit featuring Dr. Susumu “Sus” Ito’s World War II images at the Orange County Agricultural and Nikkei Heritage Museum from Sept. 10 to Oct. 29. In addition, on Sept. 17 from 1-3 p.m., Lily Azev V. Wicky Tamai will give a keynote talk for the opening reception of this exhibit. Tamai interviewed Ito before his death in 2015 at the age of 96. She went on to publish an article about him and this exhibit is the Southern California Quarterly, a Historical Society of Southern California journal.

Ito’s World War II photographs document his tour of duty through Europe as a member of the celebrated all-Japanese American 442nd Regimental Combat Team’s 522nd Field Artillery Battalion. While Ito participated in the rescue of the Lost Battalion and the liberation of a subcamp of Dachau, his photographs, taken with a prohibited camera, capture the humble daily lives of young Japanese American soldiers serving in the segregated unit. Many of the photos show his fellow soldiers poising next to their jeeps, walking in the snow, swimming in a river, playing chess and even visiting tourist destinations while on leave. Ito went to great depths to preserve the negatives, carrying his photos nearly 5,000 miles across Europe and having his film developed at villages along the way. Unfor­tunately, decades later, these images provide a fresh and personal look into the soldiers’ lives.

In the years following the war, Ito studied biology with the help of the GI Bill and later received his PhD in biology and embryology. He joined the faculty of Harvard Medical School in 1960 and eventually served as the James Stillman Professor of Comparative Anatomy Emeritus from 1991 until his death.

No tickets or reservations are needed for the Sept. 17 presentation, but seating is limited. The exhibition is open Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from Noon-4 p.m.

For more information, call (657) 278-4010 or visit http://fullertonarboretum.org/museum_nikkei_current.php.

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**U.S. VETERAN RETURNS JAPANESE SOLDIER’S FLAG**

HIGASHISHIRAKAWA, JAPAN — Tatsuya Yasue buried his face into the flag and smelled it. Then, he held the 93-year-old hands of Sepia Furuta, 93, wept silently as Tatsuya placed the flag on her lap.

Marvin Strombo, who had taken the calligraphy-covered Japanese flag from a dead soldier at WWII island battlefield 73 years ago, returned it Aug. 15 to the family of Sadao Yasue. They had never gotten his body or — until that moment — anything else of his.

Yasue and Tatsuya’s sister, Sayoko Furuta, 93, wept silently as Tatsuya placed the flag on her lap.

“Tatsuya Yasue last saw his brother in 1943. A year later, his family received word of his death. I was so happy that I returned the flag,” Strombo said. “I can see how much the flag meant to her. That almost made me cry . . . .” — Associated Press

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**San Fernando Valley JACL Announces 2017 Scholarship Winners**

The San Fernando Valley chapter of the JACL is pleased to honor five talented college and college-bound students with scholarships to support their academic and social justice organizing pursuits.

Seira Narita, who is headed to the University of California, Davis, in the fall, received the Dr. Sanbo and Mrs. Kay Sakaguchi Graduating High School Scholarship. Olivia Mazzuccato (University of California, Los Angeles), Kara Tanaka (Santa Clara University) and Nova Weng (University of California, Los Angeles) received the Dr. Sanbo and Mrs. Kay Sakaguchi Undergraduate Scholarships, while Dean Caudill (University of California, Berkeley) received a chapter undergraduate scholarship. The chapter recognized the breadth and depth of each student’s scholastic achievements and level of engagement with their school and larger community. Each recipient is also well-versed in contemporary issues facing Asian Americans such as media representation, LGTBQ rights and immigration politics. They are currently (or aspiring) journalists, artists, musicians, veterinarians and policymakers.

The Dr. Sanbo and Mrs. Kay Sakaguchi Scholarships are funded by a longtime chapter supporter and named for pillars of the San Fernando Valley Japanese American community. The scholarship committee specifically awards students with interests in civil rights and community service. For more information about the scholarships, visit the chapter’s website (http://sfvjacl.webby.com/scholarships-and-internships.html).

— Jean-Paul deGuzman

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**AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL**

**2017 TOUR SCHEDULE**

Eastern Canada Holiday Tour (Carol Hida) WAIT LIST . . . . Sept 6-14
Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, Toronto, Niagara Falls.

Classical Japan Autumn Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) WAIT LIST . . . . Oct 5-16
Tokyo, Mt. Fuji, Yamanashi, Shizuoka, Nagoya, Gifu, Hiroshima, Kyoto.

Japan Autumn Countryside Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) . . . . Oct 19-29
Tokyo, Suito Island, Kanazawa, Amanohashidate, Tottori, Matsue, Tamatsukuri Onsen, Hiroshima.

New Orleans & Deep South Holiday Tour (Elaine Ishida) . . . . Nov 5-12
New Orleans, Natchez, Lafayette.

So. America Patagonia-Easter Island Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) . . . . Nov 7-22
Buenos Aires, Ushuaia, Calafate (Perito Moreno Glacier), Punta Arenas, Santiago, Easter Island.

**2018 TOUR SCHEDULE**

Hokkaido Snow Festivals Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) . . . . Feb 3-12
Lake Akan, Abashiri, Sounyo, Sapporo, Otaru, Noboribetsu, Lake Toya.

Danube River Holiday Cruise (Carol Hida) . . . . Apr 23-May 4

Heritage of America Holiday Tour (Elaine Ishida) . . . . Apr 27-May 6
New York City, Philadelphia, Gettysburg, Shenandoah Valley, Charlottesville, Williamsburg, Yorktown, Washington DC.

Cape Cod-Islands of New England Tour (Carol Hida & Elaine Ishida) . . . . Jun 1-8
Providence, Newport, Boston, Cape Cod, Martha’s Vineyard, Hyannis, Nantucket.

Grandparents-Grandchildren Japan Tour (Ernest Hida) . . . . Jun 17-26
Tokyo, Hakone, Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto.

Hokkaido Summer Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) . . . . July
Classical Japan Autumn Holiday Tour (Ernest Hida) . . . . Oct
New England Autumn Holiday Tour (Carol Hida) . . . . Nov 7-15
Costa Rica Holiday Tour (Carol Hida).

For more information and reservations, please contact:

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL
312 E. 1st Street, Suite 330 * Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (213) 625-2232 * Email: americanholiday@att.net

(CST #200526-10) Ernest or Carol Hida
Elaine Ishida (Tel: 714-269-4534)
ON AIR WITH THE JACL

'Asian Pacific America With Robert Handa' devotes its Aug. 6 show to the 88-year-old civil rights organization.

By P.C. Staff

A

sian Pacific America With Robert Handa" first aired on KNTV-NBC Bay Area in September 2014 and is currently the only Asian cultural affair show on network television in the greater San Francisco Bay Area.

The half-hour show devoted its entire running time on Aug. 6 to highlighting various aspects of the Japanese American Citizens League, the nation’s oldest Asian American civil and human rights organization, which is headquartered in San Francisco.

Founded in 1929, the JACL monitors and responds to issues that enhance or threaten the civil and human rights of all Americans, as well as implements strategies to effect positive social change, particularly in the Asian Pacific America community.

Host Robert Handa felt that in featuring the JACL, he hoped “people will not only understand the historical role that the JACL plays in helping the community, but also see its relevance to our world today. These lessons seem particularly valuable as other ethnic communities face similar issues and threats now.”

The JACL, working to promote cultural, educational and social values, as well as preserve the heritage and legacy of the Japanese American community, National JACL President Gary Mayeda led off the show by talking about the organization and his family roots.

Mayeda and Handa found that they shared something in common, learning that their families were both incarcerated at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming during World War II.

“Surviving the experience of our family being incarcerated taught succeeding generations to overcome societal adversities. Giving back to the greater APIA community in our own ways became another common trait we both shared,” Mayeda said.

The second segment of the show focuses on the work of a local JACL chapter, the Sonoma County JACL, which was founded in 1934. In July, the chapter received a JACL Legacy Fund grant at the organization’s National Convention in Washington, D.C., for its Kumi Shihi educational project, which serves as a resource guide on Japanese culture.

The Sonoma County JACL is an active organization, counting among its many successful programs a Taiko and Japanese Culture workshop, essay contest and Oral History Group and Speakers Bureau.

Mark Hayashi, co-president of the Sonoma County JACL, was a guest on “Asian Pacific America,” and he talked about his chapter’s Oral History Group and Speakers Bureau, which reaches 2,000-3,000 people a year. Volunteers from the chapter educate teachers and classrooms on their personal incarceration experiences during WWII so that people will learn that such personal injustices must never happen again. (For further information on the Sonoma County JACL, please check the chapter’s website at http://www.sonamacojcl.org.)

And with 2017 being the 75th anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, which authorized the forced removal of 120,000 people of Japanese and Japanese American descent to American concentration camps during WWII, the JACL supported the February opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of American History’s new exhibition “Rigting a Wrong — Japanese Americans and World War II.” JACL also collaborated with the Smithsonian to host a private reception and viewing of the exhibit as part of this year’s National Convention.

The show’s third-segment guests Nan-uki Ukai, a Berkeley JACL chapter board member, and Patti Hirahara, contributor to the Pacific Citizen and Greater Los Angeles JACL chapter member, talked about the significance of this exhibition and its importance in educating the public about this dark chapter in U.S. history.

Ukai helped the Berkeley JACL chapter create two events last fall that supported the Smithsonian exhibition by sharing stories of camp artifacts and putting many on display. In seeing how many stories could be told through camp artifacts, she developed a new National Park Service Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Project entitled “50 Objects/50 Stories of the Japanese American Incarceration.” (To learn more about this project, visit https://www.facebook.com/50ObjectsNikkei.)

Hirahara talked about the significance of seeing the original E.O. 9066 document at the Smithsonian exhibition, which has been extended through Dec. 8, 2018, as well as her continued promotion of the Washington State University Libraries George and Frank C Hirahara photo collection of Heart Mountain. (For more information on this exhibition, visit http://americanhistory.si.edu/exhibitions/righting-wrong-japanese-americans-and-world-war-ii.)

The JACL is well-represented. Pictured (from left) are Sonoma County JACL member and “Asian Pacific America” coordinating producer Lance Lew, upcoming new Sonoma County JACL member and “Whispering Light” performer Kevin Village-Stone (Iwamura), JACL National President Gary Mayeda, “Asian Pacific America” host Robert Handa, Berkeley JACL’s Nancy Ukai, Sonoma County JACL Co-President Mark Hayashi, P.C. contributor and Greater Los Angeles JACL’s Patti Hirahara and “Whispering Light’s” Lindy Day.

With the JACL having such a presence in Northern California and being headquartered in San Francisco, this is great exposure to all that may not be aware of the JACL. I hope new millennials join to continue the important work and educational activities for future generations,” Hirahara said.

Each “Asian Pacific America” show also usually highlights a performing group at the end of the program. This show highlighted the performance of upcoming new Sonoma County JACL member Kevin Village-Stone (Iwamura) and his award-winning local guitarist Lindy Day from the performing group “Whispering Light.” The duo performed “Spirit’s Dance” from their “One Tribe” CD, in which both musicians play all of the instruments featured in the album.

Village-Stone is a native of the San Francisco Bay Area and is of Cherokee and Japanese ancestry. He lives in Lake County and has been in the musical and post-production industry for decades as a composer, performer and producer and recording engineer. (For more information on “Whispering Light,” visit www.whisperinglight.com.)

“We are glad to promote national organizations such as the JACL that are part of our local community, and we hope to highlight more JACL stories on ‘Asian Pacific America’ in the future,” Handa concluded.

THE UNTOLD STORY OF ASIAN AMERICANS IN EARLY HOLLYWOOD

Early Asian American actors persevered to make a name for themselves in a film world dominated by their Caucasian counterparts.

By Rob Buscher, Contributor

In 1910s Hollywood was a Japanese immigrant named Sessue Hayakawa. Hayakawa would go on to become the first (and to this day only) Asian American to own a Hollywood studio, which netted more than $2 million in profits at the height of its popularity in the late 1910s.

Born in 1889 as Kintaro Hayakawa in Chiba Prefecture, he emigrated to the United States to pursue a degree in political economics at the University of Chicago. After returning home became waylaid when he caught a theater performance in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo — he fell in love with the stage.

Hayakawa became a regular player at the Japanese Playhouse in Little Tokyo, where he was discovered by Hollywood film producer Thomas H. Ince. Against all odds, Ince agreed to pay him the extraordinary sum of $500 per week to star in the silent film adaptation of a stage play called “The Typhoon” in 1914.

“The Typhoon” starred Hayakawa as a Japanese diplomat to France who, after having an affair with a chorus girl, stranded her to death in a fit of passion. Despite the negative stereotyping of his character, Hayakawa’s brooding good looks made him an undeniable sex symbol amongst white women across America.

Cast in a similar role the following year by legendary director Cecil B. DeMille, Hayakawa shared the first-ever onscreen interracial kiss with a white woman in the 1915 film “The Cheat.” Although the studio took a substantial risk by visually suggesting miscegenation, it still made him the villain by making his character brand his lover with a hot iron after she tries to break off their affair.

As the developing industry and its concomitant profits at the height of its popularity in the years 1918-22, elicted a similar ‘forbidden’ fan response, and that from a very light-complexioned Italian. I think the industry was quietly but completely determined not to allow Asians or nonwhites to become ‘stars.’

Fed up with the self-proclaimed Orientalist roles that he was being cast in by the major Hollywood studios, Hayakawa decided to go out on his own by founding Hawai Pictures Corp, where he subsequently released 19 films between the years 1918-22.

Gong elaborated on Hayakawa’s tenuous relationship with race in Hollywood.

“I think at the time he was working, all filmmakers were using stereotypes as tools of the trade to get people to watch, and hopefully pay a few cents for the pleasure,” he said. “I don’t think many people were thinking critically about authentic cultural or ethnic representation before the 1960s or 1970s. That said, Hayakawa was aware of the racism behind his character in ‘The Cheat’ and was determined therefore to play the hero in his own Hawai and Hayakawa Feature Play films — albeit many of those employed stereotypical depictions of Chinese, Mexicans, Indians and others.”

Alas, the rising anti-Japanese sentiment in early 1920s California made Hayakawa unpalatable to Hollywood moguls looking to cash in on their majority white audience. Hayakawa spent the next decade working in Europe, and by the time he returned to Hollywood in the 1930s, his thick Japanese accent pigeonholed him as a character actor in the new talkie era.

Hayakawa’s return to Hollywood coincided with the rise of another Asian American star — Anna May Wong, who coincidentally had a starring role in Hayakawa’s 1931 sound debut “Daughter of the Dragon.”

The American-born daughter of Chinatown laundry owners, Wong holds a special place in film history as the first Asian American actress to become a major Hollywood sensation.

“Anna May was fascinated by film from a very early age … She played hooky from school to watch movies and sometimes sneak into shoots on the streets of Chinatown. From those humble beginnings, she rose to prominence against great odds and paved the way for the current generation of Asian film actors to make their mark,” said filmmaker Peilin Kuo, who is an authority on Weng.

The majority of films featuring Wong were released after the Motion Picture Production Code went into effect in 1930. Better known as the Hays Code after President Will H. Hays of the Motion Picture Association of America, this agreement amongst executives from each major Hollywood studio outlined what should and should not be permitted onscreen. With anti-miscegenation laws active in California until 1948, this prevented Weng from taking on roles that involved romance with a white male lead.

“During her Hollywood career, [Wong] suffered from the frequent stereotyping of Asian women as ‘China dolls’ or ‘Dragon ladies.’ Despite her prodigious talent and screen presence, she was usually relegated to playing secondary roles to white actresses,” Kuo said. “The closest she came to a lead Asian role in a major studio film was in ‘The Good Earth’ (1937), but she lost the role to Luise Rainer, a white actress in yellowface, who won an Oscar for the role.”

By the 1930s, romantic Asian male leads were virtually nonexistent, and when the script called for one, Hollywood frequently cast white men in yellowface. Even in these
Another familiar Asian face in 1920s-30s cinema was Sabu Dastagir, known by audiences simply as Sabu. An Indian national, Sabu began his career in cinema at the young age of 13, when he was cast in the titular role of Robert Flaherty's 1937 film "Elephant Boy." Based on an adaptation of the Rudyard Kipling novel "The Story of the Jungle Books," the film would set the tone for most of Sabu's career as a comical sidekick whose image would become inseparably linked with the orientalist fantasy embodied in Kipling's work.

"Daughter of Shanghai," in which Wong portrayed Ahu, the daughter of a wealthy Chinese merchant who goes undercover as a taxicab dancer to try and expose the illegal human-trafficking operation that led to her father's death.

Despite the potential for onscreen romance with Ahu, the couple barely holds hands, let alone kisses, before she agrees to marry him in the closing scene, suggesting perhaps that even onscreen romance between two Asians was deemed inappropriate by Hollywood tastemakers.

Reflecting on her own relationship with Wong's role, Kuo said, "As an Asian woman myself, I related to her struggle as a person caught between East and West. Even though she was born in a different time, I was so inspired by her strength, her will to fight, her persistence to fulfill her dream. Although Ahu's May was the biggest Asian American movie star during her career, her career was limited by prejudice and the star system. Nowadays, she is often held up as an object lesson of a major talent whose career was thwarted by discrimination in Hollywood. In a real sense, her career hovers over today's conversation about the underrepresentation of women and Asians in major Hollywood films."

Sabu in an undated photo

Sabu (kneeling, center) is pictured with his fellow pilots of the 13th Army Air Force during World War II.

Sabu starred as Mowgli in the 1942 film adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's "The Jungle Book." and was featured in Rudyard Kipling adaptations that sensationalized Sabu as a 'real' jungle boy to the press," said performance studies scholar Jyoti Aragd. "Often playing a 'sidekick' to the white hero, he appeared as an affable savage child or an effete prince who was powerless before British colonial authority. Many a time he portrayed what could be termed 'Orientalist stereotypes.'"

Sabu earned his first shot at Hollywood when the outbreak of WWII forced London Films to relocate production to California while shooting 1940's "The Thief of Bagdad," a remake of an earlier 1921 film that coincidentally starred Wong in a minor role.

In this film, Sabu played one of his most valiant roles, albeit race-bending as an Arab, beginning the story as a humble street beggar who, after vanquishing a genie and completing a series of trials, becomes the Prince of Thieves. Achieving success with "The Thief of Bagdad," London Films' follow-up picture also shot in Hollywood and starred Sabu as Mowgli in the original 1942 live-action adaptation of Kipling's "The Jungle Book."

Sabu's best-known roles in American cinema were perhaps his most problematic, in which he starred after signing a three-film contract with Universal Pictures. Part of a larger trend of wartime escapism in Hollywood, Universal marketed these titles as "exotic films" known for their far-flung locales, action-packed plots and scantily-clad women.

Together with Jon Hall and Maria Montez, Sabu starred in 1942's "Arabian Nights," 1943's "White Savage" and 1944's "Cobra Woman." Sabu adopted a subservient comic relief role in each film and race-bends as either Arab or Pacific Islander; meanwhile, his counterparts were highlighted as the romantic leads. Although Montez as a Dominican and Hall, who was half-Tahitian, were of different races, they were allowed to stand onscreen as lovers, perhaps because neither was technically white.

While there are no documented remarks from Sabu showing criticism of his relegation to subordinate roles, his choice to enlist in the U.S. Military and subsequent naturalization as a U.S. Citizen suggests that he was actively seeking to elevate his position in American society. From 1943-45, Sabu flew more than 30 missions as a ball-gunner in the 13th Army Air Force's famous Lone Ranger bomber group and became one of Hollywood's most-decorated war heroes.

Unfortunately, upon returning to Hollywood, Sabu's attempts to regain his wartime stardom were unsuccessful.

"When Sabu returned from the war, the caliber of his roles began to dwindle," said Aragd. "He no longer headlined as the lead. Once Hollywood studios began to replace the 1930s genre of 'exotic' adventures with movies more inclined toward post-WWII social realism, Sabu's career as an 'exotic' in fantasy films diminished."

While circumstances differ between Hayakawa, Wong and Sabu, each of their careers came to a premature end. Had they been given the opportunities of their white counterparts, one wonders if film studios might remember Hayakawa alongside Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks or consider Wong as a true contemporary to Joan Crawford and Ginger Rogers.

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AAPI MEDIA DEPICTIONS: CHANGE COMES SLOWLY

By P.C. Staff

In 1919's 'Broken Blossoms or the Yellow Man and the Girl,' the man who played the Chinese character was a Caucasian actor employing prosthetic makeup, a practice later known as yellowface. Anna May Wong, a Los Angeles-born Chinese American actress who started her career in silent movies, was denied the chance to play the lead role of a Chinese woman in the China-set 'The Good Earth' in 1937. That part went to white actress Luise Rainer, in yellowface. She won the woman's best Oscar.

Shiomi noted that Asian American movie actors face a similar situation, but that theater actors at least have the Asian American theater world to get the opportunity to hone their craft and gain legitimacy.

Forty years later, in 2015, Japan-based Sony Pictures Entertainment’s Columbia Pictures released ‘Aloha,’ in which Emma Stone played a woman of mixed Asian, Pacific Islander and white ancestry. In 2016, Disney’s Marvel Studios division produced ‘Dr. Strange,’ and a few months later in 2017, Paramount Pictures released ‘Ghost in the Shell,’ a movie adaptation that deviated from source material by, respectively, changing an elderly Tibetan man into a younger white woman (Tilda Swinton) and a female Japanese character into, yet again, a white woman (Scarlett Johansson).

It was in this milieu that a workshop titled ‘AAPI’s Portrayal in the Media & Arts’ was held on July 8 at the JACL National Convention in Washington, D.C. The informal panel was moderated by Rob Buscher, Philadelphia JACL chapter board member and director at the Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival.

On the panel to address those and other issues were playwright Rick Shiomi, choreographer Makoto Hirano and journalist Kathryn Tolbert. Buscher noted that each one had a slightly different trajectory and perspective as Nissei people — for Hirano as a Shin Issei, for Tolbert as a person of mixed Japanese ancestry and for Shiomi as a Japanese Canadian.

For Hirano, a Philadelphia-based dance, theater and spoken-word artist — and former Marine — his outlook was influenced by being born in Japan, having Japanese parents and speaking Japanese as his first language, but also by growing up in Chicago.

He said that looking back on his early years as an artist, it’s much clearer now than at the time why he took the direction he did. ‘I think I had to figure out how much of my identity was going to be placed in being Japanese or Japanese American because that was the obvious place to come from,’ Hirano said. ‘I felt very Japanese, but not Japanese American. I had to consider all these things early in my career, and it was kind of a weird, uphill battle.’

Ultimately, Hirano realized that everything he created was, by default, going to be Asian American or Japanese American.

Tolbert, the deputy editor of the Washington Post’s Talent Network for freelance journalists, has spent most of her nearly 40 years as a professional journalist with mainstream newspapers.

She described her native Japanese mother who married a white U.S. serviceman after World War II as a “tiger mom” who wanted her to be a writer or a journalist, and she pushed her first-born daughter in that direction.

As it turned out, Tolbert’s Japanese ancestry helped in her quest to become a foreign correspondent when, early in her career, Japan’s then-ironing economy was a hot topic. She landed jobs with the Associated Press, the Boston Globe as foreign editor and at the International Herald Tribune as deputy Asia editor.

Still, Tolbert said she never considered herself a minority. “For me, the fight was really for women’s positions,” she said. “It was less about being part-Japanese than being a woman.”

For the last few years, however, as Tolbert worked on a documentary titled ‘Fall Seven Times, Get Up Eight: The Japanese War Brides,’ she seemed to reassess her identity. “I started to explore what it meant to be American and, I guess, Japanese American, though I never thought of myself as Japanese American,” she said.

For Shiomi, writing plays for the Asian American theater world was key for his professional development. ‘It wasn’t until I really learned my own history about the Japanese Canadians and the Japanese Americans that I really found my voice as a writer,’ he said, ‘and then going down to San Francisco where I was able to get involved in the Asian American Theater Co. there and write my first play called “Yellow Fever.”’

As for why Asian Americans and Asians have been misrepresented since the earliest days of Hollywood, Shiomi — whose résumé includes co-founding Theater Mu, receiving a 2015 McKnight Distinguished Artist award and serving as the co-artistic director of the new Full Circle Theater Co. in St. Paul, Minn. — referred to his experience in Asian American theater and asserted that for the past 200 years in the U.S., ‘the premise of existence is that you’re white, you’re of European American culture.’

‘So, if you were an Asian American, you were an anomaly, you were always the other, you were always the one they didn’t know what to do with,’ said Shiomi. ‘Within that system, there will always be a handful of [Caucasian] artists who are just brilliant enough to break through, and on the people I would say is an example of that is David Henry Hwang.’

Shiomi noted that Asian American movie actors face a similar situation, but that theater actors at least have the Asian American theater world to get the opportunity to hone their craft and gain legitimacy.

When an audience member asked how long it might take for acceptance by American audiences for actors of Asian descent on stage and screen, Hirano said, ‘The way that America looks right now, if it continued on this path, it will never change.’

Citing how demographic changes are trending right now, Shiomi said he disagreed with Hirano’s assessment, saying that it would happen — but that it would take 50 years ‘if we’re lucky.’

Shiomi also cited a different trend that has emerged in recent years that bodes well for the improvement of the status quo, namely young Asian Americans — who have gained fans on YouTube, i.e., American comedian-actor Ryan Higa, who supposedly has more than 4.8 million followers under his username ‘higahiga.’

‘There’s this whole online, Internet world that’s happened in the last 20 years. What’s interesting about that is Asian Americans are doing extraordinarily well in that medium,” Shiomi said. ‘That’s because it’s a medium that doesn’t have a producer who’s going to have an appeal. It just says, ‘You put your video up on YouTube, and we’ll see how many people look at it.’

‘If 200,000 people are looking at an Asian American person in their bedroom talking to the camera, something’s going on, something that the people who are running the [entertainment] industry don’t understand,” he concluded.

As the panel wound down, Buscher urged those in the audience to support Asian Americans in the arts and with regard to movies by and/or starring Asian Americans.

‘Do your best to try and see that movie in theaters, and if you can, go on opening weekend,” Buscher said. ‘Because that’s the surefire way to send a message to the theater, to the company distributing the film and even to the filmmakers themselves that this is something people care about.”

Pictured (from left) Rick Shiomi, Makoto Hirano and Kathryn Tolbert talk about AAPI's portrayals in the media during their workshop presentation at the JACL National Convention.

PHOTO: GEORGETOSHIO JOHNSTON
Puyallup Valley Chapter Set to Host ‘Camp Harmony’

The 75th remembrance program of the Puyallup Assembly Center begins on Sept. 2 at the Washington State Fair.

In September 1942, the final incarcerated left the Puyallup Fairgrounds in Puyallup, Wash. The popular fair had been taken over by the U.S. military in April 1942 and turned into a makeshift community of forcibly removed people of Japanese ancestry following the signing of Executive Order 9066 in February 1942.

The center’s first residents were Japanese Alaskans, who arrived by bus following a trip that stopped at various Alaskan ports along the way.

In all, more than 7,600 men, women and children from Alaska, Seattle, Fife and small rural areas of Pierce County called the Puyallup Assembly Center their temporary home before they were transferred to the War Relocation Authority camps at Minidoka, Idaho; Tule Lake, Calif., and Heart Mountain, Wyo., for the duration of World War II.

Also known as “Camp Harmony,” the center’s barracks were designed to allow 50 square feet of space per person, along with one small window, an electrical socket and wood stove.

Now 75 years later, the Puyallup Valley JACL is hosting the 75th remembrance program of the Puyallup Assembly Center on the Washington State Fairgrounds, formerly the Puyallup Fair, where it all began.

In cooperation with the fair’s staff and board, the program will begin Sept. 2 on the Coca-Cola Stage at 10 a.m. Lori Matsukawa of KINO 5 News will serve as mistress of ceremonies and Densho Executive Director Tom Ikeda, whose grandparents were among those incarcerated at the fairgrounds, will give the keynote address.

This event is intended to honor all living survivors of the Puyallup Assembly Center along with recognition given to anyone who was incarcerated in any detention facility.

Taiko drummers will then lead a procession to the George Tsuchikawa sculpture “Harmony,” where a new plaque will be dedicated and unveiled by the Tsuchikawa family. At the same location, banners of names will be displayed with all 7,600 names and family numbers of those incarcerated at the fairgrounds.

While this remembrance event is for one day, the museum exhibit, which will house interactive exhibits and displays, will be open for the duration of the fair season, which runs from Sept. 1-24.

Replicas of a family barrack room and a horse stall furnished with period items will demonstrate to fairgoers the crowded and primitive living conditions endured by families incarcerated at the Puyallup Assembly Center.

In addition, the video “The Silent Fair,” which features interviews with 12 former residents who were aged 4-18 at the time, will be played continuously inside the exhibit.

And in an effort to teach and educate the general public, there will be interactive, hands-on activities for children and adults, as well as photographs and themed displays. All are encouraged to attend, especially Japanese American survivors and their families from all assembly centers, camps and detention facilities.

For more information about this event and project, visit the Puyallup Valley JACL website (www.puyallupvalleyjacl.org). For complimentary tickets visit www.TheFair.org/pac.

Seattle JACL Set to Hold Leadership Seminar

The Seattle Chapter of the JACL is holding a seminar on leadership development for emerging leaders, early career professionals, students and other young adults on Sept. 30 at Keirō Northwest.

Titled “Gaining Influence — Developing Leaders for Equity and Justice in Private, Public and Nonprofit Sectors,” the daylong seminar will allow participants to meet influential Asian American leaders in the private, public and nonprofit sectors, as well as learn how their professional success is intertwined with their championing of equity and social justice.

Hyoeok Kim, deputy mayor of the City of Seattle, will give the keynote address.

The seminar was planned and is supported by the Seattle JACL Presidents Youth Leadership Fund, with final support provided by the Robert Chinn Foundation.

Admission for the seminar is free, but registration is required.

For more information, visit https://jaclleadershipsept30.eventbrite.com.
NCWNP
Second Annual Osaka Matsuri San Francisco, CA
Sept. 23
San Francisco Japantown
Price: Free
This year, the city is celebrating its 60th anniversary of the sister city relationship between San Francisco and Osaka, Japan. Japantown will host a variety of booths to commemorate the occasion.

2017 Silicon Valley Fall Festival Cupertino, CA
Sept. 9; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Cupertino Memorial Park
21255 Stevens Creek Blvd.
Price: Free
The City of Cupertino is proud to host this year's event, which coincides with the Moon Festival. Celebrated in Asia for more than 1,200 years, the Moon Festival marks a time to reflect upon the bounty of the summer harvest, the fullness of the moon and the myth of the Moon Goddess. It is among the most popular holidays in Asia. There will be plenty for the whole family to enjoy here, as the festival will offer music, dance, a robotics competition, and an Earth Zone.

JAMS 50th Anniversary Celebration
San Jose, CA
Sept. 24
Noon
Hayes Mansion
200 Edenvale Ave.
Price: $125; register by Sept. 8
Come celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Japanese American Museum of San Jose. The luncheon will feature master of ceremonies Mike Inouye from Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center, the fullness of the moon and the memories' of the Iwanaga family, dance, and an Earth Zone. The City of Cupertino is proud to host this year's event, which coincides with the Moon Festival. Celebrated in Asia for more than 1,200 years, the Moon Festival marks a time to reflect upon the bounty of the summer harvest, the fullness of the moon and the myth of the Moon Goddess. It is among the most popular holidays in Asia. There will be plenty for the whole family to enjoy here, as the festival will offer music, dance, a robotics competition, and an Earth Zone.
Info: Visit JAMSJ.org.

Kimochi Silver Bells Arts & Crafts and Food Fair
San Francisco, CA
Dec. 16; 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
The Event Center at St. Mary's Cathedral
1111 Gough St.
Don't miss this one-stop shopping event for all your holiday giving needs! This popular event will feature unique homemade and crafted items perfect for everyone on your gift list. A free shuttle service will be available to/from Japantown, and all proceeds will benefit Kimochi.

PWN
‘Matsuri’ the Festival
Los Angeles, CA
Aug. 31; 5-9 p.m.
The Japanese Foundation Los Angeles
5700 Wilshire Blvd.
Price: Free
Enjoy live music, food, and drinks, plus kimono dressing, photo sessions and more in this main event of “Japan Week on the Miracle Mile & Beyond,” which celebrates JFLA’s 40th anniversary.

PNW
‘Gaining Influence — Developing Leaders for Equity and Justice’
Seattle, WA
Sept. 30; 10 a.m.
Kawerro Northwest
1601 E. Yesler Way
Price: Free; registration is required
This daylong seminar, presented by the Seattle Chapter of the JACL, and supported by the Seattle JACL Presidents Youth Leadership Fund, with financial assistance by the Robert Chinn Foundation, will offer emerging leaders, early career professionals, students and other young adults the opportunity to meet some of the most influential Asian American leaders in the public, private and nonprofit sectors, as well as learn how their professional success is intertwined with their commitment to social justice.

MDC
Grateful Crane Ensemble’s ‘The Camp Dance: The Music & the Memories’
Dearborn, MI
10:30 a.m.
Arab American National Museum
13824 Michigan Ave.
Price: $15
In this musical revue, the Grateful Crane will go back to the high school dance days of young Japanese Americans held behind barbed-wire fences in internment camps during World War II. Prior to the performance, a free town hall event titled “Executive Orders: Japanese Internment & the Muslim Ban” will be held featuring leaders from the Japanese, Arab and Muslim American communities.
Info: Visit arabamerican.org.

IDC
Mill High JACL Movie Night Portland, OR
Sept. 18; 1:30-4 p.m.
Portland Japanese American Citizens League
1537 Alton St.
Price: Free
This exhibit explores the celebrated Japanese artist’s immersive Infinity Mirror Rooms — the artist’s life-sized kaleidoscopic environments — alongside large-scale installations and key paintings, sculptures and works on paper. Tickets go on sale beginning Sept. 1. Don’t miss your chance to view this rare exhibit of Kusama’s greatest works.
Info: Visit thebroaderart/art-special-exhibitions/yayoi-kusama-infinity-mirrors.

Mile High JACL invites you to a double feature movie night featuring two films about Japan: the 1957 film "Sayanora," starring Marion Brandon and Miyoshi Umeki and the 2014 film "Our Little Sister" directed by Ken Ogiali, which was the opening night movie of the Colorado Dragon Film Festival in 2016. You won’t miss the films, eat some food and meet members from the chapter. Donations received will benefit the chapter’s scholarship fund.
Info: Visit milehighjACL.org.

EFD
Second Annual PAFF Asian Chef Experience
Philadelphia, PA
Sept. 9; 4-9 p.m.
Asian Pacific Development Center
Event Room
1637 Alston St.
Price: Free; donations are welcome
For more information, visit the Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival. This event will feature a luncheon, silent auction and guest speaker John Matsunaga, a Minneapolis-based Asian American history, identity and experience, with an emphasis on the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans. He is currently a member of the education committee of the Twin Cities chapter.
Info: Visit japc.org.

The Art of the Dumpling with Fresh Zen
Boulder, CO
Sept. 22; 6-8 p.m.
The Boston Public Market
100 Hanover St.
Price: $25 (Nonmembers); $60 (Nonmember)
Ruby Chan of Fresh Zen Foods will show participants how to create a variety of dumplings, from preparing the homemade dough to shaping and filling the dumplings. The evening’s menu includes chicken and scallion dumplings, vegetarian dumplings and pork and sauerkraut dumplings.

FOR Library’s Themes of Immortals Exhibition
Hyde Park, NY
Thru Dec. 31
FOR Presidential Library & Museum
4079 Albany Post Road
Price: Regular hours and admission apply
This special exhibit provides a visual record of the forced removal of Japanese Americans during World War II and includes more than 200 photographs by WRA photographers Dorothy Lange, Clem Albers, Francis Stewart and Hikaru Iwasaki from the National Archives. The exhibit also features photographs taken by Ansel Adams at Manzanar and a selection of photos from the WSU Global Heritage Center.
Info: Contact Zen Matsuda at Zenchiropractic inc.

Chrysanthereum Banquet Bloomington
Sept. 9; 6:30-9 p.m.
121 N.W. Second Ave.
Price: $50 (Advance); $60 (Nonmembers)
The Bloomington Chapter of the JACL will hold its Chrysanthereum Banquet. The program will includedrinks, hors d’oeuvres, and a silent auction.
Info: Contact Mike Honda’s office at (213) 620-1767.

Twin Cities Golf Tournament Bloomington
Sept. 7; 1-4 p.m.
Hyland Golf Course
10100 Normandale Blvd.
Price: $35 (Nonmembers); $20 (Members)
Come support the fundraiser and have a day out on the golf course.
Info: Contact Zen Matsuda at Zenchiropractic inc.

Yayoi Kusama: ‘Infinity Mirrors’ Los Angeles, CA
Oct. 21 - Jan. 1, 2018
The Broad Contemporary Art Museum
221 S. Grand Ave.
Price: $25 (advance tickets); $30 (standby tickets); children 12 and under free
This exhibition explores the celebrated Japanese artist’s immersive Infinity Mirror Rooms — the artist’s life-sized kaleidoscopic environments — alongside large-scale installations and key paintings, sculptures and works on paper. Tickets go on sale beginning Sept. 1. Don’t miss your chance to view this rare exhibit of Kusama’s greatest works.
Info: Visit thebroaderart/art-special-exhibitions/yayoi-kusama-infinity-mirrors.

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Sept. 18; 1:30-4 p.m.
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Info: Visit milehighjACL.org.
Yuki Carbaugh and Masato Hayase, his siblings, George Kato, (Grace) sister, Sumiko Taguchi; VG, NV, July 13; she is survived by Fukushima, Toshiko, 89, Los Angeles, CA, July 16; she is also survived by her siblings, Mike (Grace) and Susan Ajioka-Yamashita; gc: 4.

Blankshaw, Gloria Kazuko, 89, Torrance, CA, July 23; she is survived by her son, Donald Blankshaw, brothers, Mike (Johanna) and Jerry (Cristy); sister-in-law, Donna Ishii; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 3.

Kamada, Masaru, 85, Los Angeles, CA, June 13; he is survived by his wife, Karen Kyoko; children, Kenji Akiyama and Cole Miller, a brother and sisters; gc: 4; ggc: 2.

Kamimura, Fumiko Nakamura, 98, Gardena, CA, Aug. 6; she is survived by her children, Stephen Kestato (Karen), Robert Gerald (Nelia) and Alison Kim Freud; brother, Kazu Hayase; gc: 4.

Kobayashi, Emiko, 95, Los Angeles, CA, July 31; she is survived by her children, Marie Kobayashi Ball, Mike (Johanna) and Jerry (Cristy); sister, Huyne Masukawa; gc: 5; ggc: 4.

Kamamura, Funiko Nakamura, 98, Gardena, CA, Aug. 6; she is survived by her children, Kazu Nakamura; she is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 3.

Kamada, Masaru, 85, Los Angeles, CA, June 13; he is survived by his wife, Michael and Dany; sister, Bridget Silva; she is also survived by nieces and nephews.

Nakamura, Sakae, 94, Los Angeles, CA, July 15; he is survived by his wife, Karen Kuroko; children, Bruce Minokura Nakamura, Lynne Mayumi (Gary) Umoto, Marc Mitsui and Todd Mitsui; gc: 4; ggc: 6.

Eshima, Karen, 86, Pacific Grove, CA, July 29; she is survived by her husband, Michael; children, Rich, George and their children, Loren, Sharon Yumi and Loren; siblings, Lena Higa and Michael Sekido; gc: 1.

Sakado, Ralph Toshiyuki, 79, Honolulu, HI, July 15; he is survived by his wife, Mabel; sisters, Mildred Hirokawa and Ellie Hailfax; he is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Sato, A. Stanley, 96, Sacramento, CA; during WWII, his family and they were incarcerated at the Tule Lake and Topaz WRA Centers; he is survived by his wife, Ethel, brother, Art; son-in-law; Tomiyoshi Sato; he also is survived by many nieces and nephews.

Sugihara, Takashi, 96, Tustin, CA, July 5; during WWII, his family and he were incarcerated at the Heart Mountain WRA Center in WY, from which he later voluntarily served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and was awarded the Bronze Star; he was predeceased by his son, Michael, and his siblings, Paul and Masako; he is survived by his wife, Sumiko; daughter, Corinna; grandchildren, Kazuko and Hideko; he is also survived by nieces and nephews; gc: 1.

Sunida, Elko, 96, Palo Alto, CA, July 23; she is survived by her husband, Masao, and their 4 children.

Tagawa, Charlie, 81, Cupertino, CA, July 30; he was predeceased by his wife, Masako; he is survived by his children, Nori and Leon (Heather); gc: 3.

Takami, Mary S., 94, Los Angeles, CA, July 24; she is predeceased by her husband, Toku-Sh Diane; her children, Emi, and Terri (Usana); he is survived by his son, Emi (Marylin) and Stephen (Denise); gc: 4; ggc: 6.

Nakahara, Jun, 79, La Palma, CA, July 15; he is survived by his wife; Karen Kuroko; children, Bryon Minokura Nakamura, Lynne Mayumi (Gary) Umoto, Marc Mitsui and Todd Mitsui; gc: 4; ggc: 6.

Tamashiro, Martha, 82, Kaneohe, HI, July 9; she is survived by her husband, George; children, Tom; she is survived by their children, Wayne and Alan (Sharon) Ajioka-Cullen; she is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Matsukawa-Cullen; she is survived by her children, Wayne and Alan (Christine); son-in-law, Mike Cullen; a brother and sisters; gc: 3.

Matsuo, Masako ‘Betty’, 92, Portland, OR, July 30; she was predeceased by her husband, George, sisters, Jane Yasamaki and Lillian Kyota; she is survived by her children, Miki (Kaz) Geo, Phyllis Fuji and John (Carrie) Matsuo; Mary Burnett; gc: 5; ggc: 8.

Blankshaw, Gloria Kazuko, 89, Torrance, CA, July 23; she is survived by her son, Donald Blankshaw, brothers, Mike (Johanna) and Jerry (Cristy); sister-in-law, Donna Ishii; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 3.

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Kamimura, Funiko Nakamura, 98, Gardena, CA, Aug. 6; she is survived by her children, Kazu Nakamura; she is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 3.

Kobayashi, Emiko, 95, Los Angeles, CA, July 31; she is survived by her children, Marie Kobayashi Ball, Mike (Johanna) and Jerry (Cristy); sister, Huyne Masukawa; gc: 5; ggc: 3.

Koyama, Eugene Shigeho, 85, Encinitas, CA, July 10; he is survived by his wife, Miyo; children, Kim (June), Kyle (Linda), Kristi (Brian) and Kelly (Shane); gc: 9.

Kumamoto, Midori May, 89, San Pedro, CA, July 28; she was predeceased by her husband, Akio; she is also survived by her children, Kar, Kris (Kim) and Darrell Kumamoto; she is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 5.

Marquette, Susan Wataoka, June 13, 93, Sacramento, CA, Aug. 6; she was predeceased by her husband, Arthur; she is also survived by her daughters, Sandra and Susan; she is also survived by her sisters, nieces and nephews.

Masuda, Etsuko, 75, Torrance, CA, Aug. 6; she is survived by her sons, Shintaro, Satoro (Hitomi) and Kentaro (Junko) Masuda; sister, Michiko Inoue; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 5.

Hayase, Hannah Hanako, 92, Los Angeles, CA, July 16; she is survived by her children, Rick, Nena and Audrey (Rudy) Hayase; siblings, George Kato, Yuki Carbaugh and Masato “Harry” Shinskai she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 9; ggc: 8.

Hasegawa, Tom, 91, Los Angeles, CA, July 24; she was predeceased by her husband, Dan (Sue); kids, Ken (Ken) Kusumoto, Roy (Jennie), Jay and Ken (Grace); sister, Sumiko Taguchi; brother-in-law, Takashi (Takashi) Fukushima; sister-in-law, Elko Fukushima; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 9; ggc: 8.
There's a smart mix of programs that cover both traditional and contemporary culture, from profiles of artisans who've mastered an ancient art form or craft such as traditional carpentry, to fun insider looks at today's colorful fashion industry or shows about anime or J-pop music.

"J-Melo," which describes itself as the only Japanese music program in English, has a worldwide audience, and each episode spotlights viewers and J-pop fans from other countries.

There are also shows that place traditional culture in modern context, like "Kabuki Kool." Some of the channel's programming it features are Japanese shows dubbed into English; some have English subtitles; and some (like the newscasts) are entirely in English. In between shows, there are often short bits of content that might introduce viewers to a traditional Japanese dish, or teach a few words in a quick language lesson.

The website is also worth spending time on, especially if your local cable carrier doesn't include NHK World. Most of the shows are archived online, and there are helpful categories of shows such as News, Travel & Culture, Food and Learn Japanese. Like many stations, you can also view NHK World in real time streaming at the click of a button.

NHK World has introduced me to towns and regions of Japan I wasn't familiar with that I now want to visit. When they air a documentary about a region like Hokkaido or a city like Beppu, I go to Google Maps and find out where that is, so that I might remember to try and get there sometime.

And though I'm not a fanatic and tune in like my mom, NHK World broadcasts highlights during each national sumo tournament. I was surprised to find that I like watching the sport, which I remember from my childhood in Tokyo.

When there's an event like a natural disaster such as typhoons, floods, earthquakes or tsunami, NHK World is my go-to for updated news and information. That's why I knew it would be covering the 72nd anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Check it out, and I know you'll feel more deeply connected to Japan than before.