



# PACIFIC CITIZEN

CELEBRATING 92 YEARS

In normal times, the Nisei Week Festival brought together many generations of Japanese Americans in joyful dance.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

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## LITTLE TOKYO LOVE

Enduring generations, a look at how a community's treasure continues onward despite uncontrollable change.

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Tadaima!  
Virtual Pilgrimage Returns

# JACL STATEMENT ON AFGHAN REFUGEE CRISIS

By JACL National

The scenes that have come out of Afghanistan in the last few days are all too familiar to many within the Asian American community, with many people noting the eerie similarity to images from the Fall of Saigon in 1975.

Then, just as now, the United States has a duty to help those scared and vulnerable civilians who are attempting to evacuate in order to protect themselves and their families. The time for debate about the war and its impacts will continue to happen, but now the priority must be to protect those who are at risk and give them refuge.

When the United States left

Vietnam in 1975, over 130,000 civilians and refugees were evacuated as part of the withdrawal process, albeit by supposed “rogue” civilian and military personnel.

Currently, under a special visa program for Afghan citizens, less than 2,000, of 20,000 who have applied, have been evacuated. Many more have not had the chance to apply and are still searching for a way out.

The top priority for evacuation should be given to those most at-risk members of Afghan society such as women and girls who are targeted by the Taliban, the LGBTQ community, the disabled community, interpreters and others who supported the United States in Afghanistan.

The JACL has long supported

the immigration of refugees seeking asylum in the United States. Four different administrations have been in power during the War in Afghanistan, and now it is on the current administration and Congress to ensure that our Afghan allies that have stood by us throughout the conflict are not abandoned.

We call on the Biden administration and Congress to accept as many refugees as possible; through expanding the resettlement limit, increasing the number of Special Immigrant Visas and Priority 2 status refugees, as well as designate Afghanistan as Temporary Protected Status. It should also ensure that there are sufficient transportation sites for refugees seeking to leave

the country.

The U.S. should ensure that there is adequate assistance in areas such as housing, health care and other basic necessities and that these immigrant communities are not targeted for deportation in the same fashion that many other post-war immigrant communities were treated.

We are still seeing the struggle of Vietnamese, Hmong and Cambodian refugees who came in the wake of the Vietnam War and who are now at risk of being deported and incarcerated at higher rates than many other Asian American communities. We cannot allow any incoming refugees to suffer this same fate in the future.



## THE HON. REGINA M. RODRIGUEZ ASSUMES SEAT ON U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR COLORADO

In a formal investiture ceremony held at the Alfred A. Arraj Courthouse in downtown Denver on Aug. 13, the Hon. Regina M. Rodriguez was feted by local dignitaries and family after being officially sworn into office on July 1 by Chief Judge Phillip A. Brimmer.

Rodriguez, 58, was nominated to the court by President Joe Biden, his first judicial appointee for Colorado, on April 19; she was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on June 8 by a vote of 72-28.

Joining her family in attendance at the ceremony were U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet (who, along with Sen. John Hickenlooper, recommended her candidacy to the vacant seat on the seven-member trial court for the



Among those in attendance at the investiture ceremony of Judge Regina M. Rodriguez (second from right) were (from left) Marla Rodriguez (sister), JACL's David Inoue, Linda Takahashi Rodriguez (mother) and Erika Moritsugu, deputy assistant to the president and AA and NHPI senior liaison.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DAVID INOUE

District of Colorado), Ambassador Executive Director David Inoue to Mexico Ken Salazar, JACL and four of the seven state Supreme

Court justices.

During her Senate confirmation hearing in April, Rodriguez, the daughter of a Mexican American father and Japanese American mother, spoke of her family's World War II incarceration in Wyoming and the path to her decades-long professional law career.

“My grandmother had heard that there was still discrimination against Japanese in California. But she heard that the governor in Colorado (Ralph L. Carr) was welcoming. So they moved the family to Colorado in Denver, and that has been the beginning of the legacy there,” said Rodriguez during her hearing.

» See RODRIGUEZ on page 9

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*'I'm glad to see the Pacific Citizen growing and evolving with its website, and especially LOVE the much easier-to-navigate digital archives. It's a treasure trove for JAs to learn about our community's history, and for scholars and journalists looking to connect the past with the present. Thanks for the improvements, P.C.!'*

— Gil Asakawa



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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# DAMNED IF YOU DO, DAMNED IF YOU DON'T

By David Inoue,  
JACL Executive Director

This past month or so has been pretty amazing for Asian and Asian American sports fans. While JACL was concluding our annual National Convention, Collin Morikawa was wrapping up his PGA Open Championship for his second major victory in as many years. The Tokyo Olympics brought the names of Jay Litherland, Justine Wong-Orantes, Lee Kiefer, Torri Huske, Erica Sullivan and, of course, Sunisa Lee into America's awareness. Asian Americans and Japanese Americans were well-represented amongst the athletes and the medal winners.

Bookending all of this were Shohei Ohtani's appearance in MLB's All-Star Game as the brightest star in

baseball, and recently, he became the first player to reach 40 home runs in a game where he pitched eight innings, giving up only one run. Yet, despite his achievements on the field, the stories around both those events were not actually about Ohtani, but the remarks of individuals from the sports media.

Before the All-Star Game, Stephen A. Smith, an often-controversial personality on ESPN, asserted that Ohtani is harmful to the league as the face of baseball because he communicates through an interpreter. Just last week, Jack Morris, a former pitcher for the Detroit Tigers and now an announcer for Tigers' television broadcasts, used a mocking accent when talking about Ohtani.

This was a perfect example of damned if you do, damned if you

don't. Ohtani was criticized for using an interpreter because his English is not proficient enough to respond to media questions in English, but even if he were to do so, it would be with an accent worthy of mockery by that same sports media.

It is an unsurprising, yet all-too-often refrain when talking about Asian athletes. Rather than focusing on the performance, distractions around issues of language have taken the front seat in news about Ohtani. It is especially ironic when sports are thought of as a meritocracy, and yet for all the successful athletes seen at the Olympics, we don't always see similar success in the professional leagues.

Former NBA basketball player Jeremy Lin alluded to this when not a single NBA team picked him up during his recent time spent in the NBA's development league despite performing at a high level, with stat lines comparable to or better than those of players who were elevated to NBA rosters. Instead, he has returned to China to play professional ball there, where there is no stigma to being an Asian athlete in a league where there are few others that look like him.

It largely went under the radar, but also within the past two weeks, a Green Bay Packers wide receiver

was quoted using the word "ch\*nky." The reality is that whether it is in sports, or wider society, these incidents continue to happen.

Within the context of over 9,000 reported hate incidents to the site StopAAPIHate.org since March 2020, it is not a stretch to wonder how many more of these incidents happen behind closed doors, whether it is in the locker rooms or the board rooms, where Asian and Asian American representation remains minimal.

What these incidents demonstrate is the myth of the meritocracy. The myth of meritocracy is peddled in tandem with the idea of the model minority, that Asians are successful when we are judged purely on our merits through test scores and quantitative assessment. Quantitatively, Lin should probably have been playing for an NBA team these past few years instead of going to China. Clearly, that is not the case.

All of these incidents demonstrate that anti-Asian racism exists in the supposedly purely meritocratic world of sports, it is not much of a leap to believe that racism impacts playing-time decisions, whether it is in the Major Leagues or the Little Leagues.

I have been coaching my son's Little League teams since he started

in tee-ball. Coaches at that level possess immense power in saying who gets to play what positions and how much. Decision making as inconsequential as making the lineup for my son's team can still have ripple effects further down the line.

A player who gets encouragement early, or maybe discouragement, will change how they see the game and whether sports is a viable path for them. Seeing how players like Ohtani are treated by the public also influences how younger players might expect they will be treated in their futures.

These incidents of seemingly minor racism and xenophobia only scratch the surface of how those attitudes impact much larger decisions and why not only Major League Baseball but also the National Football League and all of America need to examine our prejudices and how they impact our decisions regardless of the type of discrimination to which it eventually takes form. We must do better so that today's little leaguers can aspire to be the next Shohei Ohtani.

*David Inoue is executive director of the JACL. He is based in the organization's Washington, D.C., office.*



## LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY'S PERSPECTIVE

# I CARE A LOT

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

Perhaps you have seen the 2020 American film on Netflix called "I Care a Lot." At the 2021 Golden Globes in February, Rosamond Pike won best actress in a motion picture — comedy or musical for her role in the movie. Pike stars as Marla Grayson, a ruthless con artist who swindles money from the elderly after she deceives judges to appoint her as their "legal guardian."

One of the major tenants of the concept of guardianship is "trust." I am sure that there are many guardians who work tirelessly in the best interests of their charges. Most people assume the role of a guardian for good reason (like caring for a parent), but there are also many cases where victims (largely senior citizens) were subjected to physical abuse, financial theft and neglect.

"I Care a Lot" reveals America's negligent treatment of its senior citizens from the loopholes in America's guardianship system. The film exposes how America's flawed legal guardian system can

be manipulated for profit and power. A Guardianship is also called a Conservatorship in California.

J. Blakeson, the movie's writer-director, said in a 2020 interview, "The idea first came when I heard news stories about these predatory legal guardians who were exploiting this legal loophole and exploiting the vulnerability in the system to take advantage of older people, basically stripping them of their life and assets to fill their own pockets" (source: *Cosmopolitan*, March 2, 2021).

To Blakeson, these stories were "horrifying" but "not uncommon." So, while the film is not based on any one specific true story, it's true to life in the fact that there are lots of these predatory guardians who do pray on vulnerable and elderly people and sort of entrap them in these guardianships and basically sort of strip their life apart.

"Marla Grayson is a fictional character, but people like her do exist," said Blakeson. In fact, in a 2010 report called "Guardianships: Cases of Financial Exploitation, Neglect and Abuse of Seniors," the U.S.

Government Accountability Office identified over 150 reported victims where guardians stole \$5.4 million in assets from their wards between 1990 and 2010.

The American Bar Assn. published the statement that "an unknown number of adults languish under guardianship" even if they no longer have the need for someone to make decisions for them (or never did). The ABA study also asserted the guardianship situation is typically permanent, leaving few ways out for the adults under care.

Guardians require a high level of oversight, but there is very little data on whether adequate oversight is occurring because the courts typically don't keep track when guardians are found to financially abuse their wards. Thus, unscrupulous court-appointed guardians can more easily slip through the cracks and continue to abuse the system and their wards' assets.

According to an article in *Forbes* (July 29, 2019), the United States Senate Special Committee on Aging undertook a study of the problem. In a nutshell, their conclusions included:

- Once guardianship is imposed, there are few safeguards in place to protect the wards from abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- There is a lack of education for everyone involved as to what constitutes appropriate guardianship behavior and responsibilities.

- In the event the ward regains full capacity, there is no process for restoring their rights, and restoration rarely occurs, leaving them tethered to the guardian.

The craziest part of this is that many of those seniors had loving and caring family members, who were unable to protect their senior family members. Seniors without children are particularly vulnerable to this kind of gross abuse of power because there is no clear and obvious guardian for them if and when they lose capacity to care for themselves and make good decisions.

That's why it is especially important for seniors to have a power-of-attorney for health care, and a power-of-attorney for finances "just in case." Without one, judges may favor these professional guardians, who are paid for their services straight from the elderly person's assets. In some cases, the elderly person is treated poorly as their hard-earned savings accounts are being drained by a guardian they never wanted in the first place.

Pamela Teaster, director of the Center for Gerontology at Virginia Tech and one of the few scholars in the country who studies guardianship, told the *New Yorker* that the guardianship system is "a morass, a total mess."

She said, "It is unconscionable that we don't have any data, when you think about the vast power given to a guardian. It is one of society's

most drastic interventions." (*How the Elderly Lose Their Rights*, Oct. 2, 2017)

The most important thing is not to wait. Many seniors resist planning for incapacity, thinking they're "strong and healthy." However, things can happen to us at any age, and the likelihood of a serious illness or accident increases the older we get. Stroke, dementia, accident, execute the POAs before you suddenly need it. Because after the accident, the stroke or the fall, it might be too late.

As you mentally survey the landscape in your own network of family and friends, finding the right person (and one or two backups) is only the first step. Next comes the conversations with them. It isn't fair to anyone concerned to name people and not discuss it with them. Plus, you or your loved one are far more likely to receive the treatment you would have chosen if your wishes are well communicated and understood by all.

*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 judd@elderlawcalifornia.com. 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.*



**A MOTHER'S TAKE**

**LIFE QUALITY**

By Marsha Aizumi

I met up with a friend from San Francisco recently, and we started to talk about some quotes that have impacted our lives. I shared some of my favorites with Kris, and she shared this quote with me by Esther Perel: "The quality of your relationships determines the quality of your life."

It seemed like such a simple quote, and it kept playing over and over again in my head, almost beckoning me to think more deeply about what it meant. And so, I added the quote to my "favorite quotes" journal to revisit at a later time.

Days later in a quiet moment, this quote popped into my head again. I began to think about what these words meant to our family and how it affected my life. I realized that at the saddest, most difficult times in my life, it wasn't the challenges that I faced, but my connections to people I loved that affected how



The above quote is one of Marsha Aizumi's favorite sayings.

I felt the most.

As our family struggled through Aiden's coming out, it was his withdrawal from our family, his depression, and inability to talk to us that made me the saddest and most afraid. It made all my success at work unimportant. It made moments that could have been full of happiness tarnished with melancholy.

But when Aiden and I again began to communicate and share vulnerably and honestly with compassion, even the most difficult decisions

we faced, the most difficult things to hear, were filled with hope and possibilities. Yes, my life was better because my relationship with Aiden was better.

I also realized that my quality of life was better when my relationship with myself was better.

For a long time, I beat myself up, thinking I was such a bad mother. I remember walking around not noticing all that was good, but feeling like the one thing I vowed to be, a good mother, now felt like an empty promise. I imagined people judging me, but in truth,

it was I who was judging myself the most harshly.

In the past, I have highlighted in my column parents who have mentally challenged, autistic or Down Syndrome children. I have shared about a father who overcame alcoholism and is focused on repairing his relationship with his two adult daughters.

If you look closely at how their life is today, so much is based on how the parents have been able to create wonderful relationships with their

children in spite of the challenges they have had to overcome.

Recently at an event, an Asian mother spoke about how her life has changed so much since her child came out as LGBTQ+. This mother is living at a level of greater purpose, connection and love, and so is her child.

In fact, at the event, the mother vulnerably shared her pride, gratitude and deep love for her child in public, and as she did, her child cried. And then the child shared how proud she was of her mother, how much she appreciated her mother standing up for her and how loved she felt. And as she spoke, her mother cried.

When Aiden and I present together at book events for "Two Spirits, One Heart," people always want to know some of the important lessons we have learned on our journey. Our most impactful lessons have been around our relationships. Here are just a few of the things that we have learned along the way:

1. In any challenging situation, patience and empathy were key attitudes for our family.
2. Listening to understand Aiden drew us closer together. And when I listened to him, truly listened to understand... he was more willing to listen to me.
3. Being grateful allowed more

gratitude to flow into our lives.

4. Saying I am sorry has kept our hearts open to each other. When we forgave each other, it kept us connected. I may be a broken record on this lesson, but it has been one of the most important and humbling lessons I learned.

5. Another broken record point: Reach out for support. We don't have all the answers.

6. Finally, besides "I am sorry" and "Thank you," "I am proud of you" and "I love you" have been some of the most key words we have said. And when these words were expressed, I could feel the effect was greater when we made eye contact and said the words with more sincerity and feeling.

Through intention, communication, apology, forgiveness and empathy both for myself and others, I am living the life I dream. So, Esther Perel, you are so right: My relationships absolutely determine the quality of my life. And today, my life is good . . .

*Marsha Aizumi is an advocate in the LGBT community and author of the book "Two Spirits, One Heart: A Mother, Her Transgender Son and Their Journey to Love and Acceptance."*

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# TADAIMA!

## VIRTUAL PILGRIMAGE RETURNS

An expansive film program is among the highlights of the four-week lineup that seeks to continue building community connections.

By Rob Buscher, Contributor

Following the success of Tadaima! Virtual Pilgrimage that took place over nine weeks during summer 2020, Tadaima returns for a shorter four-week iteration from Aug. 29-Sept. 25 and will feature online exhibits, workshops, performances, lectures, panel discussions, film screenings, a community archive and more.

This completely free program is a collaborative undertaking by more than 60 Japanese American community organizations and seeks to continue building the connections that were developed throughout last year's virtual programming.

As curator of the Tadaima online film festival, I set out to program Tadaima 2021 to address many of the themes that I observed to be central in the nationwide discourse among Japanese Americans over this past year of the pandemic.

Among these are: Representations of Japanese-ness in Hollywood, Remembrance and Interpretation, Reconciliation, Social Justice and Inter-ethnic Solidarity and Japanese Identity. Rather than dividing films of a particular theme into separate weeks as we did last year, nearly the



entire film program will be available throughout the duration of the virtual pilgrimage unless noted.

The first Tadaima program focused largely on the history and remembrance of wartime incarceration, which is, of course, present this year as well. However, many of the films included in this year's festival are not explicitly related to the wartime incarceration. Those that are tend to offer contemporary interpretations through the lens of Sansei, Yonsei and beyond.

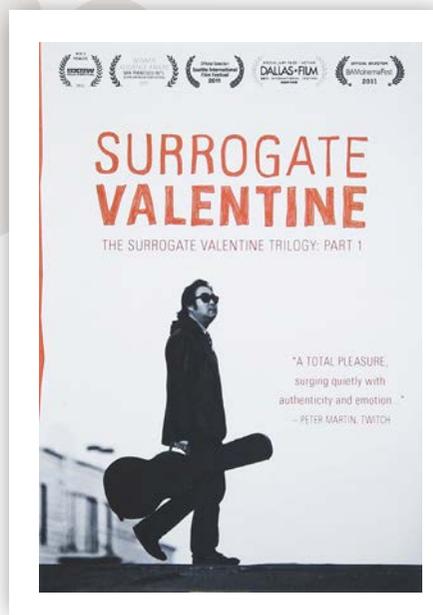
Fewer camp survivors remain with each passing year, and it will soon



"Hatsu"



"Surrogate Valentine's" Goh Nakamura will take part in a livestream conversation about his career on Sept 16.



"Surrogate Valentine"



"Gabriel's Heart Mountain 3.0"



"Picture Bride"

be up to those of us who did not experience the wartime incarceration directly to pick up the mantle by continuing to share these stories with future generations in new and interesting ways.

One example can be found in the short film "Gabriel's Heart Mountain 3.0," co-directed by Renee Tajima-Peña and her son, Gabriel, in which he leads a group of middle-schoolers to develop a Minecraft rendition of Manzanar.

A wholly different approach at interpretation is offered by filmmaker Rea Tajiri, whose experimental documentary "History and Memory: For Akiko and Takashige" is itself an exercise in piecing together the past through incomplete family narratives.

In a more literal sense, films like "Picture Bride" (available Sept. 6-12 only) present stories related to the Hawaiian plantation era of early Japanese immigration, lovingly told by the descendants of Japanese Hawaiian plantation workers. This year also includes lesser-known stories like "Hatsu," a short film about the Japanese Peruvian experience during World War II.

A large section of the program has been dedicated to parallel experiences of oppression that Japanese Americans share with other historically marginalized communities.

Jon Osaki's short documentary "Reparations" makes a compelling case for why our community

needs to take an active role in advocating for African American reparations. Akira Boch's film "9066 to 9/11" connects the Japanese American experience in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor to that which Muslim Americans faced after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack.

Rex Moribe's "Dear Thalia" and Ciara Lacy's "Out of State" (available Sept. 19-25 only) reveal the relative privilege that Japanese Hawaiians possess, comparative to the marginalization of Native Hawaiians who experience homelessness and, in some cases, enter the carceral system in greater numbers than any ethnic group in Hawaii.

Of particular note is the new release documentary "Manzanar, Diverted: When Water Becomes Dust" (available Sept. 23-25 only), a compelling reminder that all land we inhabit in the United States once belonged to indigenous communities, as well as the need for all people to work together toward environmental justice.

Another theme that emerged in the wake of the Atlanta Spa Shootings is the role that mainstream media stereotypes have on Asian Americans. Related to this is a section of the program of which I am particularly proud — the retrospective of Postwar Hollywood films.

In last year's program, we explored how Hollywood colluded with the U.S. military to produce anti-Japanese propaganda films.

American filmmakers continued working under the guidance of the U.S. military in the postwar era, only this time, it was to create "friendship propaganda" between the U.S. and Japan, our new Cold War ally.

"Japanese War Bride," starring Shirley Yamaguchi (better known to Japanese audiences as Ri Kōran and renowned for her roles in Sino-Japanese Imperial propaganda films), offers the first attempt at destigmatizing interracial relationships between Japanese women and white American men.

Similar themes can be seen in 1957's "Sayonara" (available Sept. 6-12 only), starring Marlon Brando and Miyoshi Umeki ("Flower Drum Song"), who until recently was the only Asian female to win an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress.

In contrast to the begrudging acceptance of these white male/Asian female filmic relationships, Nisei James Shigeta stars in "Bridge to the Sun" (available Sept. 6-12 only) as the Japanese diplomat husband of a white American woman whose relationship is doomed by the war. Shigeta would go on to become something of an Asian male sex symbol for a brief period during the late 1950s and early '60s, culminating in his starring role in "Flower



(Above) "Japanese War Bride"  
(Top Right) "Bridge to the Sun"  
(Right) "Sayonara"

# HOW TO LOVE LITTLE TOKYO

The love affair between the place and its people has endured generations, but where is this love grounded, and how does it continue through uncontrollable forces of change?



Nisei Week organizers hope next year's festival — its 80th — will be a return to an exuberant in-person gathering.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



In normal times, the Nisei Week Festival brought together many generations of Japanese Americans in joyful dance.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



Actress Tamlyn Tomita (above) participates in the Nisei Week parade in 2018.

(Below) The appeal of Nisei Week stretched far beyond its Nikkei origins.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



Among the grand parade highlights is the Nisei Week royal court, shown here dancing in an undated photo.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

In normal times, the Nisei Week grand parade attracts a sea of people dancing and shouting in a public display of love and community pride.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



By Lynda Lin Grigsby,  
Contributor

Once upon a time, there was a place where many people felt warm and comfortable. It was a place that welcomed the beleaguered masses to rest their weary bones and joyfully dance in the streets. For generations, the connection between the place and its people flourished like an epic love story.

One of the main characters in the story is a five-block district in Los Angeles. Because anyone who loves Little Tokyo knows it is alive.

The palpitation of human feet on the sidewalks orchestrates its heartbeat. Its storied history shapes its soul, and its neon lights beckon its long-lost lovers to return. For all its darkness and light, Little Tokyo inspired historical books and Hollywood mystery movies, but at the core, it is a love story.

"There is a certain level of nostalgia that really anchors your heart," said Nancy Okubo, president of the Nisei Week Foundation, which organizes the annual festival that takes over the streets of Little Tokyo in a normal August.

But this is not a normal time. For the second year in a row, Nisei Week was a virtual event. On the Saturday when the virtual celebration went live on YouTube, the streets of Little Tokyo were quiet, except for echoes of an anti-vaccine rally that turned violent a few blocks away at Los Angeles City Hall.

In a pandemic, the love story between Little Tokyo and its people has turned into a long-distance relationship. Distance and time are forces that can change the dynamics of a relationship that, at the very least, came to rely on rituals and annual events to bring

people back to their place. What happens to the relationship when these cultural touchstones are physically absent?

This year's virtual Nisei Week theme, "Ibashi," reflects the community's reckoning with its changing relationship with the place. In the absence of its people, Little Tokyo continues to morph and change. Shuttered storefronts dot the cityscape next to longtime family owned and new businesses. *Ibashi* is a Japanese word that means "a place to belong," and it lays the foundation for the question: How do you find belonging in a place that continues to change?

If this is a love story between people and a place, then at this critical juncture, it is prudent to examine where the love is grounded and how to find connection points when forces of change continue to shift the relationship.

And like any other modern-day romance, a good place to start with this reckoning is with a therapist.

## START WITH HONORING THE GRIEF

Dr. Lisa Nakamura is a clinical psychologist in Oakland, Calif. She specializes in helping individuals and families cope with mood disorders and intergenerational trauma. She is also a Sansei, who grew up deeply connected to San Jose's Japantown. Because of her experience working on the Tule Lake Committee, she smoothly adapts her expertise from humans to an interaction between people and a place.

In the relationship between Little Tokyo and its people, Nakamura says, it is important to recognize that a lot of rapid life changes can make people feel uncertain. Last March when Los Angeles city officials issued stay-at-home orders to fight the spread of Covid-19, Little Tokyo businesses closed or tried to pivot while many people worked from home. For the area's residents, whose median age skews older than the rest of the city, the threat of Covid-19 restricted movement.

Almost overnight, the district's bustling streets fell quiet. Its pulse weakened. In 2020 and '21, more than 20 Little Tokyo businesses closed, including its 111-year-old institution Mikawaya. These closures can be small shifts in the cityscape, but the effect can be much larger in a community that built connections despite historic losses.

For the Japanese American community, said Nakamura, a space like Little Tokyo is sacred because it — like its people — survived the World War II incarceration. Brick-by-brick it was reclaimed and rebuilt after the forced removal of its people.

**Little Tokyo was established in 1886.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



**The Nisei Week grand parade took over Little Tokyo's streets in 1949.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



**The first Nisei Week festival in 1934 was established to bring new business to Little Tokyo.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

To love Little Tokyo means to see the beauty of its brutal history. Poets, philosophers and artists of many kinds have spent lifetimes trying to put a precise definition on the elusive sensation of love, leading American writer Susan Sontag to throw up her hands in surrender to its majesty and write, "Nothing is mysterious, no human relation. Except love."

The love of Little Tokyo starts as a place of community. It is a place a person can leave, come back and, in most cases, fit right back in. It's the idea of going to a place and running into people who know family members and have a shared history.

"It's being surrounded by so much history, by so much culture, by a sense of place and the sense of neighborhood and community, and also being surrounded by so many Japanese American people of all different experiences and all different walks of life," said Sarah Kuhn, an author who writes about the magic of the place in her new book, "From Little Tokyo, With Love."

Love also blossoms in the connection to beloved foods — like the warm feeling of always having a home-cooked meal or trusted access to a sweet ice cream mochi treat. When these connections vanish, it can feel devastating.

It is important to honor that grief, said Nakamura. Pay attention to the feelings of what you miss about the place, what you wish you had done, and did not get to do.

"Once you have some level of acceptance for that loss, then you can make room for what the relationship could look like," she said.

**WRITE YOUR FEELINGS**

Last summer, when Los Angeles was in one of its coronavirus surges, Kuhn wrote most of "From Little Tokyo, With Love," a contemporary young adult novel about Rika Rakuyama, a judo-loving biracial Japanese American young woman, who rhapsodizes about her neighborhood of Little Tokyo like it is a magical living being.

**Tokio and Suye Ueyama (left) founded Bunkado gift shop in 1946 after returning from Amache.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BUNKADO



"When I walk those streets, I can feel that. That sense of history and community and struggle and passion," Rakuyama says in the book. "There are so many stories jammed into every block — the whole neighborhood feels so alive."

"From Little Tokyo, With Love," the author says, is a fictionalized version of the real Little Tokyo with some references of places she loves like Bunkado, Suehiro and the garden at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center.

The novel also centers Little Tokyo in the similar way New York often gets romanticized in movies and books. If the Empire State Building can be an iconic romantic rendezvous point (Deborah Kerr's character gets tragically hit by a car in front of the landmark in 1957's "An Affair to Remember"), why can't the garden at the JACCC?

"It just feels like it is a setting for a modern fairy tale," said Kuhn about Little Tokyo.

Like Rakuyama, Kuhn is a biracial Japanese American woman who struggled to find a place to belong — her Ibasho. She grew up in a small town in rural Oregon and came to Little Tokyo as an adult.

"I do remember that as soon as I set foot there, I did feel very much at home," she said. "It was sort of this heart connection. And I think the only other time I really felt that is when I've been amongst

my family or my close friends."

"From Little Tokyo, With Love" is a love letter to a place, written almost entirely from a pandemic-induced distance. Kuhn said this was difficult because she could not witness the color and vibrancy of the neighborhood and all its traditions.

"I started to feel a little bit weird because I was writing a contemporary novel that is supposed to be set in our world, but the version of our world I was writing about seems like science fiction," she said.

Let's be honest, distance can make a person feel a certain way about a relationship. At a year and half into the pandemic, Zoom fatigue is real, and enthusiasm for virtual experiences is threadbare. Distance can erode a connection, or it can make the heart grow fonder.

"Maybe it will increase the appreciation for what we had," said Okubo, who is the Nisei Week Foundation's first pandemic president. The 2021 Nisei Week virtual experience went live Aug. 14 on YouTube, where it is available for replay.

The Nisei established the festival in 1934 during the Great Depression to help revitalize Little Tokyo businesses. It is one of the longest-running ethnic festivals in the United States, according to the Nisei Week website. Events that happen year after year for decades can be taken for granted — like indoor dining at restaurants or watching movies in theaters with strangers. In their absence, there is a sense of loss and a hope for revival.

This is not the first time Nisei Week was interrupted. During WWII, the festival went dark when its people were forcibly removed. Then in 1949, it roared back. Next year will be Nisei Week's 80th, with a hope of an in-person celebration.

For now, a fictionalized version of the festival is written in "From Little Tokyo, With Love" based on Kuhn's real-life love and imagination. In the novel, Rakuyama describes the grand parade in a way that stir memories and feelings:

*"I love the parade, because it's the one day a year when all the magic bubbling under the surface of Little Tokyo comes out to play, amplified by the wonderstruck crowds of locals and tourists. The cavalcade of bright colors is*

**Many Japanese American celebrities served as grand marshal in the grand parade, including photographer Toyo Miyatake in 1978.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO



**Suye and Tokio Ueyama founded Bunkado at its current location on 340 East 1st Street.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BUNKADO

*more vibrant, the creepy hidden-away nooks and crannies are even darker and the juxtapositions of things that shouldn't go together are just more. That crumbling, overstuffed souvenir shop crammed next to the modern swoop of the most elegant hotel in the city looks even more beautifully improbable."*

**HELP SHAPE THE NEW RELATIONSHIP**

Little Tokyo has always survived under threat, said Michael Okamura. Its location two blocks away from Los Angeles City Hall has always made it a precarious target for expansion of civic area.

The origin of Little Tokyo, like other ethnic enclaves at the turn of the century, is a sad story about people who came together because they could settle nowhere else. In 1884, Charlie Hama was the first Japanese American to open a business — an American-style café on East First Street called Kame Restaurant. The neighborhood grew from there, said Okamura, president of the Little Tokyo Historical Society.

Okamura's paternal grandparents, Toshiyuki "Boshicho" and Chiharu Okamura, met and married in Little Tokyo. Later, they owned and operated Toyo Florist & Nursery on the parcel of land that today is Toriumi Plaza.

When Okamura walks around Little Tokyo, he walks in the footsteps of his ancestors. In a pandemic, there are fewer opportunities to do this except on weekends, when he goes to the LTHS office to shift through mail. During these trips, he sees Little Tokyo changing — vacant storefronts appear, non-Japanese



**Sarah Kuhn is the author of "From Little Tokyo, With Love," a new young adult romantic love story.**

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF SARAH KUHN



***'I feel like I can't go to that neighborhood without running into someone I know.'***

**—Author Sarah Kuhn**

## TADAIMA » continued from page 5



"The Dragon Painter"

Drum Song."

Although shown in a more sympathetic light than silent film actor Sessue Hayakawa, an Issei who became Hollywood's first male sex symbol in the mid-1910s, Shigeta also embodied many of the same qualities in his early romantic roles for the postwar generation.

On that note, another highlight of the festival is Hayakawa's "The Dragon Painter," a silent film produced in 1919 in which he stars opposite his wife, Tsuru Aoki, an Issei actress who also made it big in early Hollywood.

In advance of the 100th anniversary of the film's release, the Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival commissioned indie rock musician Goh Nakamura to compose a new original soundtrack to the film in 2017, which accompanies the version of the film being shown.

Nakamura will also be making an onscreen appearance as we screen the "Surrogate Valentine" trilogy of indie films in which he stars as a fictionalized version of himself. Join me on Sept. 16 at 5 p.m. PT for a livestream conversation with Goh, where we will delve into his career as an actor and musician.

Another livestream session that I am excited about is one that I have affectionately titled, "Say Hello to the Bad Guys," which features Japanese American actor Yuji Okumoto ("The Karate Kid II") and Japa-



"Forgive, Don't Forget"



"Hafu"

nese Canadian actor Peter Shinkoda ("Daredevil").

On Sept. 3 at 7 p.m. PT, I will be moderating a panel with Okumoto and Shinkoda related to Japanese masculinity and negative stereotyping within Hollywood that has often relegated Japanese men to the role of villain.

With 2021 marking the 80th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, reconciliation is another central theme that we explore through cinema on both sides of the Pacific. "Forgive, Don't Forget" follows the journey of an American filmmaker as he attempts to reunite a surrendered Japanese sword to its original Japanese owner.

"Samurai in the Oregon Sky" tells

a parallel story of redemption where Japanese pilot Nobuo Fujita, who flew the only bombing mission over the U.S. mainland during WWII, is invited back to the region, where he would begin a 35-year friendship with the people of a small Oregon town he once sought to destroy.

Another film in this section, "When the Fog Clears," recounts the stories of Japanese and American families who were bereaved through the Battle of Attu and how they connected nearly 70 years later through their mutual sense of loss and forgiveness.

One of the more unique stories in this section is told by the short documentary "A House in the Garden: Shofuso and Modernism," which explores the artistic interconnections between renowned Nisei woodworker and architect George Nakashima, the husband-and-wife design team of Antonin Raymond and Noémi Pernessin Raymond and Japanese architect Junzo Yoshimura — who designed and built a traditional Japanese house at New York City's Museum of Modern Art just eight years after WWII ended.

The final section explores topics related to Japanese culture and identity, particularly the shifting definitions of Japanese-ness as both Japan and the Japanese diaspora become more diverse.

Greg Lam's documentary "Being Japanese" explores the growing diversity in Japan while asking the fundamental question: What makes

a Japanese person Japanese?

Shot almost a decade ago, "Hafu: The Mixed-Race Experience in Japan" (available Aug. 29- Sept. 14 only) approaches a similar topic from the specific lens of five biracial Japanese individuals, long before Naomi Osaka or Rui Hachimura became household names.

Two episodes of the PBS TV food documentary series "Family Ingredients" will also be showcased, which highlight the influence that chefs of Japanese and Okinawan ancestry have on contemporary Hawaiian cuisine.

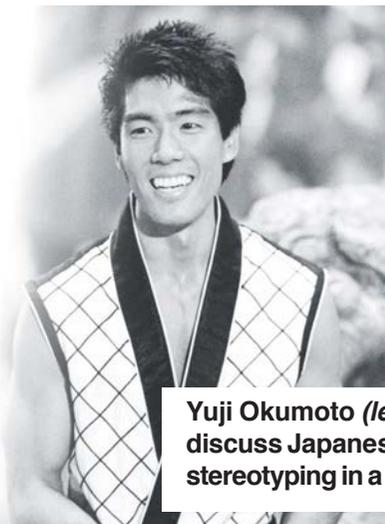
One of the programs I am most excited about is the selection of music videos by hip-hop artist and spoken-word poet G Yamazawa that will be featured in this festival. Born and raised in Durham, N.C., the curated collection of Yamazawa's music videos imaginatively explore his myriad identity as a Shin-Nisei Japanese American from the American South.

Join us for a livestream conversation on Sept. 2 at 5 p.m. PT, where we will discuss the intricacies of multiple overlapping identity as conveyed through film and music.

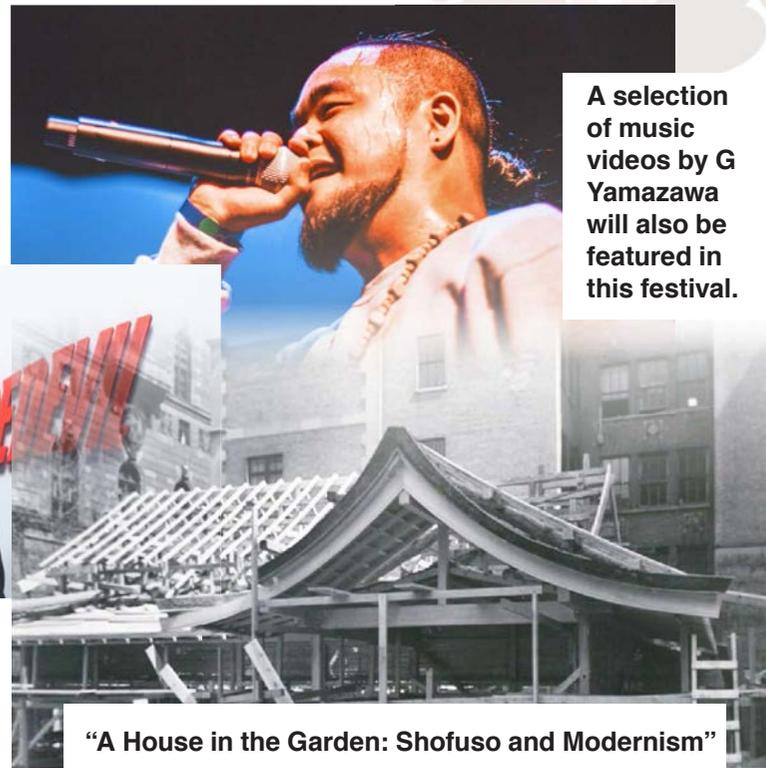
I hope this program will contribute in some small way at least toward continuing to foster these community conversations as we endure what I hope is the last phase of the pandemic. While the pandemic has forced us to physically distance ourselves, as a mixed-race Yonsei who was raised on the East Coast, I have never felt closer to the Japanese American community than I have over the past year, in large part through the many connections I developed through Tadaima.

I believe that we will emerge stronger after the pandemic than we were before, having had this time to reflect, connect and realign our mission as the stewards of Japanese American legacy organizations and the community-at-large. Thank you for joining us for Tadaima 2021, and whether you are a returning audience member or first-time attendee, *Okaeri* ("Welcome Home").

*For more details on the Tadaima! Virtual Pilgrimage and to watch these films and others free online from Aug. 29-Sept. 25, visit [www.jampilgrimages.com/films-tadaima-2021](http://www.jampilgrimages.com/films-tadaima-2021).*



Yuji Okumoto (left) and Peter Shinkoda will discuss Japanese masculinity and negative stereotyping in a panel discussion on Sept. 3.



A selection of music videos by G Yamazawa will also be featured in this festival.

"A House in the Garden: Shofuso and Modernism"



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**RODRIGUEZ »**  
continued  
from page 2

Rodriguez formerly worked as a prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Colorado and most recently served as partner at Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Door, LLP, from 2019-21. In 1985, she earned her bachelor's degree, with honors, from the University of Iowa and, in 1988, received her J.D. from the University of Colorado School of Law. ■



Judge Regina M. Rodriguez

# JANICE MIRIKITANI, POET, SAN FRANCISCO CHURCH LEADER, DIES

By Associated Press

**SAN FRANCISCO** — Janice Mirikitani, a beloved San Francisco poet laureate who together with her husband ran the city's Glide Memorial Church, which caters to the poor and homeless, has died. She was 80.

Mirikitani died suddenly July 29, the church confirmed in a message to supporters who were scheduled to attend a virtual justice event later in the day, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported.

Mirikitani was married to the Rev. Cecil Williams, who transformed Glide Memorial Church, in the heart of the city's largely poor Tenderloin district, from a traditional Methodist church to a decidedly liberal one that advocated for gay rights and welcomed members from all walks of life.

"Jan Mirikitani was one of our City's true lights. She was a visionary, a revolutionary artist and the very embodiment of San Francisco's compassionate spirit," Mayor London Breed said. "She served our most vulnerable residents for decades and provided a place of refuge and love for all."

Mirikitani joined Glide Memorial Church in 1964, a year after Williams arrived in San Francisco to lead the church. He turned services into "celebrations" and started a wide range of community programs. Along the way, he never

shied from political and social issues, ranging from gay rights to compassion for the homeless.

With nearly 10,000 members, Glide became the largest Methodist church in Northern California and one of the largest in the nation.

"Janice was a force of nature," Glide President and CEO Karen Hanrahan said. "She was fearless and transformational in the honesty with which she loved us all and held us all accountable. Janice's legacy and her unique, powerful voice is all around us. It will continue to inspire Glide's work as we transform hearts and minds, and the landscape of poverty and homelessness, in San Francisco."

Mirikitani led the Glide Foundation and was executive director of the Janice Mirikitani-Glide Family Youth and Child Care Center.

"We lost a legend today, the First Lady of the Tenderloin, a poet, someone who loved people, all people, and had endless compassion, grace, and vision," Supervisor Matt Haney, whose district includes the Tenderloin, said in a tweet.

Mirikitani, a third-generation Japanese American, was named San Francisco's poet laureate in 2000, succeeding Beat legend Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who became the city's

Janice Mirikitani was an activist, poet and community church leader. She passed away unexpectedly on July 29.

PHOTO: FACEBOOK



first poet laureate in 1998.

She was the daughter of Japanese American chicken farmers from Petaluma, Calif. She was a 1-year-old when her family was swept up in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's controversial decision to [incarcerate] Japanese Americans. Mirikitani and her parents were sent off to a camp in Arkansas. That experience informed a lot of her poetry.

"For me, the role of poet is as a voice to connect with the community," said Mirikitani, who published four books of poetry. "What's great about San Francisco is its diversity. It's the mecca for diversity, and that's what turns me on about being the laureate," she told the newspaper after her naming. ■



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- Norman Y. Mineta, Honorary Chair, Centennial Education Fund

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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

# CALENDAR

**DUE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS IN THE U.S. BECAUSE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PLEASE CHECK REGARDING THE STATUS OF EVENTS LISTED IN THIS ISSUE'S CALENDAR SECTION.**

## NATIONAL

### Tadama! Virtual Pilgrimage 2021

Aug. 29-Sept. 25

#### Virtual Event

**Price: Free; Registration Now Open**  
JAMP in partnership with the National Park Service will co-host the second annual event that will run virtually, with new content provided daily centering on identity, indigeneity and intersectionality as it relates to the WWII incarceration. **Info: Visit [jampilgrimages.com](http://jampilgrimages.com).**

### Densho Anniversary Gala: '25 Years of Story'

Oct. 23; 5-6:30 p.m.

#### Virtual Event

**Price: Free**

Join Densho as it celebrates its 25th anniversary! Join Densho for an evening of storytelling, art, music and community at this virtual event that will allow supporters from across the country and world to participate. More event information and exciting opportunities associated with this momentous occasion will be announced soon. There is also a "Dedication Wall" where participants can share a special message or memory located on the official website.

**Info: Visit <https://padlet.com/denshoproject/jqs9fb41fupjjq82> to visit the "Dedication Wall" and Densho.org for additional information.**

## NCWNP

### Midori Kai 25th Anniversary Arts & Crafts E-Boutique

San Francisco, CA

Sept. 5-18

#### Virtual Event

**Price: Free**

Midori Kai, a nonprofit professional women's organization, will offer its online boutique for 14 days featuring unique Asian arts and crafts, jewelry, clothing, vintage kimonos, pottery and food items from throughout the Western U.S. and Hawaii. There also will be a virtual silent auction. In honor of the event's anniversary, congratulatory videos from throughout the community will be shown from the community.

**Info: Visit [www.midorikai.com](http://www.midorikai.com) for more information.**

### 'Ramen for a Strong Immune System' — Asian American Herbalism Virtual Workshop With Erin Wilkins of Herb Folk

San Francisco, CA

Sept. 11; 1:30-3 p.m.

#### Virtual Workshop

**Price: \$30 JCCCNC Members \$30; General Public \$35**

This class features Yonsei acupuncturist and herbalist Erin Wilkins, owner of the Herb Folk shop in Petaluma, Calif. Registration includes a natural immune-boosting herb kit you can use to follow along with Erin in your own kitchen. This class will teach how and why to infuse broth herbs into stock or dashi, healing properties of common soup herbs and instructions on

how to re-create two recipes at home.

**Info: Registration deadline is Sept. 4. Visit [www.jcccnc.org](http://www.jcccnc.org) for additional details.**

### Kaiseki Fall 2021 Virtual Cooking Workshop

San Francisco, CA

Sept. 18; 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

#### Virtual Workshop

**Price: JCCCNC Members \$10; General Public \$15**

Zoom Login Provided Upon Registration  
Join instructors Larry Sokyō Tiscornia and Kimika Soko Takechi will teach this seasonal Kaiseki workshop consisting of an elegant multicourse meal using a menu of fresh ingredients that reflect the fall season. This workshop will be primarily taught through demonstration and easy-to-follow recipes will be provided. Tasting menu includes maguro (raw tuna) and okra, grilled eggplant and miso, poached fish and burdock tubes, mixed rice with chicken and shaved burdock root and soup stock.

**Info: Visit [www.jcccnc.org](http://www.jcccnc.org) for full details.**

### 'Gambatte! Legacy of an Enduring Spirit' Exhibit

Sacramento, CA

Thru Nov. 7

The California Museum

10th and O Streets

**Price: \$7-\$10**

Don't miss this encore presentation of contemporary images taken by photojournalist Paul Kitagaki Jr. that echoes historic images by U.S. War Relocation Authority photographers who documented the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII. Updated and expanded for 2021, the exhibit returns with 30 new photographs, audio interviews and behind-the-scenes video highlighting the resilience of Japanese Americans during WWII.

**Info: Visit <https://www.californiamuseum.org>.**

## PSW

### Ventura County JACL Japanese Treasures Upscale Resale

Newbury Park, CA

Sept. 18; 1-4 p.m.

St. Matthews United Methodist Church

1360 Wendy Dr.

**Price: Free**

Look through your cupboards, garage, closets and more for Japanese treasures you'd like to donate to this fundraiser. Bring them to the event on Sept. 18 at 9 a.m. While there, you'll get the opportunity to check out other treasures as well! At the end of the sale, all remaining items will be donated to a charity to be determined. Volunteers are also needed. As this is an indoor event, please be prepared to wear a mask or face covering. **Info: Please contact Marcia Miyasaka to sign up to help or for questions at (805) 499-2117 or email [eim@aol.com](mailto:eim@aol.com).**

Los Angeles 37th Asian Pacific Film Festival

Los Angeles, CA

Sept. 23-Oct. 2

### Virtual and In-Person at Various Los Angeles-Area Theaters

**Price: TBA**

Visual Communications is proud to present a hybrid edition of this festival that will run virtually and in person at various L.A. theaters. It will feature an exciting lineup of productions by Asian and Pacific Islander artists from across the globe. This film festival is the largest festival of its kind in Southern California and is the premier showcase for the best and brightest of Asian Pacific cinema. The festival's official website is coming soon. **Info: Visit <https://festival.vcmedia.org/2021/> for official website and additional information.**

### 'Hayao Miyazaki' Inaugural Exhibit

Los Angeles, CA

Sept. 30-June 5, 2022

Academy Museum of Motion Pictures

6067 Wilshire Blvd.

**Price: Advanced ticket reservations required. Adults \$25; Seniors \$19; Students \$15; Free for Children 17 and Under.**

The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures is pleased to announce details of the museum's inaugural "Hayao Miyazaki" temporary exhibition. Curated in collaboration with Japan's renowned Studio Ghibli, which Miyazaki co-founded in 1985, the exhibit marks the first North American museum retrospective dedicated to the acclaimed artist and his work. More than 300 objects will be featured, exploring each of Miyazaki's animated feature films, including "My Neighbor Totoro" and the Academy Award-winning "Spirited Away." **Info: Visit [www.academymuseum.org](http://www.academymuseum.org) for additional details and information.**

### A Life in Pieces: The Diary and Letters of Stanley Hayami

Los Angeles, CA

Thru Jan. 9, 2022

JANM

100 N. Central Ave.

**Price: Timed advanced tickets are required; JANM members do not need a timed ticket. Just show your membership card for free admission.**

Stanley Hayami's diary and writings from camp and during his wartime incarceration are brought to life in this presentation that reveals the hardship he and his family faced during World War II. At the age of 19, he was killed in Italy after being drafted into the U.S. Army's 442nd Regimental Combat Team. His legacy lives on through these letters, which were donated to JANM by his family. **Info: Visit [www.janm.org](http://www.janm.org).**

### Welcome Back to JANM!

Los Angeles, CA

Japanese American National Museum

100 N. Central Ave.

11 a.m.-5 p.m. PDT Friday, Saturday and Sunday only; closed Mon.-Thurs.

**Price: Timed, advanced tickets are required. No walk-in visitors. Admission is accepted up to 30 minutes after ticket time. No ticket refunds. Please contact JANM to rebook a new time.**

JANM has reopened! Reserve admission tickets to visit the museum once

again. Current exhibits include "Under a Mushroom Cloud," which commemorates the 75th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; "Common Ground: The Heart of Community," which chronicles 130 years of Japanese American history.

**Info: Visit [www.janm.org](http://www.janm.org).**

## PNW

### 'Where Beauty Lies' Exhibit

Seattle, WA

Thru Sept 19

Wing Luke Asian Museum

719 S. King St.

**Price: Museum Admission Fees**

What defines beauty? The museum's latest exhibit examines the complicated history, culture, industry, psychology and politics of beauty from the Asian American perspective. Personal stories, reflections, art and artifacts representing a diversity of identities and experiences all showcase the ideas of what beauty truly means.

**Info: Visit [wingluke.org](http://wingluke.org). All visitors are required to sign a Coronavirus/Covid-19 waiver of liability. Health and safety protocols are in place. Check the museum for exact hours of operation.**

## CCDC

### Fields of Fresno AG Tour:

'A Farmer's Story'

Fresno, CA

Sept. 18; Begins at 7:15 a.m.

Kearney Museum

7160 W. Kearney Blvd.

**Price: \$85**

The Fresno County Farm Bureau is offering this engaging and educational tour in and around Fresno County, beginning with breakfast at the Kearney Mansion Museum, followed by a brief history of M. Theo Kearney and his legendary Kearney Ranch and Fruit Vale Estate. Next, a coach bus will depart for three planned stops at Fresno County Farms, followed by lunch at 1:15 p.m. Each guest will also receive a bag of goodies. Space is limited.

**Info: Visit <https://www.valleyhistory.org/ag-tour> to purchase tickets and for additional details.**

## IDC

### Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple

2021 Obon Odori

Denver, CO

Aug. 28; 6 p.m.

Pacific Mercantile Parking Lot

On Lawrence, Between 19th and

20th Street in Downtown Denver

**Price: Free**

Don't miss this year's Obon Odori festival that will be held in person! Obon/Hatsubon service will begin at 3 p.m. in the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple Hondo. Food will be available to purchase between Hatsubon services and dancing. Everyone is welcome to attend. All are also invited to join the temple for dance rehearsals on Aug. 24, 25, 26 from 7-9 p.m. Parking is available in the temple garage (entrance on Larimer St.). **Info: Visit [www.tsdbt.org](http://www.tsdbt.org) for more information.**

### 2021 Colorado Dragon Boat Festival

Denver, CO

Sept. 25-26

Sloan's Lake Park

**Price: Free**

While the summer festival is normally held in July, this year's event has been rescheduled to September to adhere to public health concerns in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. This year's event will

feature the renowned Dragon Boat races, exhibitors, food vendors, live music and performances and much more!

**Info: Visit <http://www.cdbf.org> for more information.**

## MDC

### Kishi Bashi Multimedia Concert in Collaboration With the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

St. Louis, MO

Sept. 17

Powell Hall

718 N. Grand Blvd.

**Price: Ticket Prices Start at \$40.**

Acclaimed Japanese recording artist Kishi Bashi collaborates with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra for the very first time. The collaboration will include "Improvisations on EO9066," a multimedia piece inspired by EO 9066. Additional repertoire will be announced from the stage. In a companion learning opportunity, the Soldiers Memorial Military Museum in downtown St. Louis features the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit "Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and World War II," which is on view until Oct. 3.

**Info: To purchase tickets, visit [slo.org](http://slo.org) or call the boxoffice at (314) 534-1700.**

## EDC

### Glenn Kaino: 'In the Light of a Shadow'

Thru Sept. 4

MASS MoCA

87 Marshall St.

"In the Light of a Shadow" is inspired by the connection between two protests — the tragic events known as "Bloody Sunday" from Selma, Ala., and Derry, Northern Ireland. The installation provides an immersion experience of moving shadows and evocative soundscape and spans the entire football-field size of the Building 5 gallery. Kaino is known for previous exhibits at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, the Andy Warhol Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, among others.

**Info: Visit <https://www.wbur.org/artery/2021/04/02/mass-moca-glenn-kaino-in-light-of-shadow>.**

### Conservation in Action: Japanese Buddhist Sculpture

Boston, MA

Museum of Fine Arts

465 Huntington Ave.

Don't miss this rare behind-the-scenes look at the conservation of seven Buddhist sculptures. Visitors are invited to watch as conservators study and treat the sculptures in a public conservation studio. The wooden figures, images of worship depicting Buddhas, Guardian Kings and a Wisdom King, are decorated with polychromy or gilding and date from the 9th-12th centuries. The conservation project occupies an entire gallery in the museum, allowing visitors to observe the techniques employed to carefully clean the sculptures.

**Info: Visit [www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org).**

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# **In MEMORIAM**

TRIBUTE

## **RIKI SHIMOGAKI**

Shimogaki, Riki, 90, Basin, Wyo., July 30 2021. Born in Seattle, Riki and his family were incarcerated at the Tule Lake WRA Center. He was a Korean War veteran, having served in the U.S Air Force. He was predeceased by his siblings, Yosh (Mary), Haruki (Elenor), Tosh, Frank, Teruo and Kim (George). He is survived by his wife, Kimie, and his children, Joyce, Ben (Julia) and Janice (John), and their children.

TRIBUTE

## **LILLIA TOMIKO YAMADA**



**March 6, 1933-July 20, 2021**  
Lillia Yamada, 88, peacefully passed away on July 20 in Castro Valley, Calif.  
During her early years, her family and she were incarcerated at "Camp Amache" in Granada, Colo.  
She was preceded in death by her husband, Hideo "John" Yamada.  
She is survived by her sons, Wesley and James, daughter, Sherry, son-in-law, Ron Noda, and sister, Florence Hongo.

**Mayeda, Florence, 92**, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 27; she was predeceased by her husband, Mack Masahiko Mayeda; she is survived by her children, Brian (Terri) Mayeda and Karen Mayeda; brother, Masayuki Harry (Takeko) Ikegami; she is also survived by nieces and nephews.

**Mayeda, Mabel Yoshiye, 97**, San Gabriel, CA, June 2; she was predeceased by her husband, Tamiki; she is survived by her children, Phyllis and Glenn (Karen); brother-in-law, George Mayeda; sister-in-law, Kristine Mayeda; gc: 3; ggc: 4.

**Mibu, Reiko, 90**, Los Angeles, CA, March 8; she was predeceased by her husband, Osami; siblings, June Kajiwara, Mary Oshima and George Iwamoto; and sister-in-law, Sajiko Oda; she is survived by her son, Scott (Stephanie) Mibu; sister, Chiyo Inouye; sister-in-law, Kay Arima; gc: 2.

**Nakamura, Reiko, 94**, Los Angeles, CA, March 6; she was predeceased by her husband, Shinji Nakamura; she is survived by her son, Paul Nakamura; sister, Hisae Kotow; sister-in-law, Shimeko Nakagawa; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Nakaoki, Emma Mineko, 100**, Torrance, CA, July 7; she was predeceased by her husband, Tom; she is survived by her daughters, Sharon (Kenneth) Kawakami, Linda (Alan) Ishibashi and Carol (Richard) Tanizawa; gc: 5; ggc: 3; step-ggc: 1.

**Nakashima, Tom, 98**, Los Angeles, CA, April 20; he was predeceased by his brother, Joe Noboru Nakashima; he is survived by his sister, Sumiko Hayamizu; he is also survived by 3 nieces and many grandnieces and grandnephews.

**Sugai, Rose Tsuruko, 95**, Los Angeles, CA, June 14; she was predeceased by her husband, Henry Sugai; she is survived by her children, Edwin (Debby) Sugai, Laura (David) Mancha, Raymond (Teresa) Sugai and Alan (Cathy) Sugai; gc: 8; ggc: 17.

**Tashima, Janet (Tsuchiya), 98**, Livingston, CA, and Turlock, CA; Dec. 7, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Noriyuki; she is survived by her sons, Niel (Cathleen Crain) Tashima and Eugene (Jaye) Tashima; gc: 2.

**Whang, Mae, 94**, Los Angeles, CA, March 2; she is survived by her daughters, Lorene (Michael) and Vanessa; siblings, Joan Yukitomo and Robert Takamine; she is also survived by nieces, nephews, in-laws and friends.

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## AS WORKPLACES REOPEN, FAMILY CAREGIVERS ARE WORRIED ABOUT INFECTION RISKS AND BALANCING THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

By Ron Mori

We can all agree that caregiving for loved ones has been stressful during the pandemic, many of those who also hold down jobs have appreciated accommodations made by their employers — and they hope that flexibility continues. My start date back to the office was recently changed, due to the Delta variant spreading across the country. I can't imagine what our "new normal" is like for caregivers.

New research from AARP explores how the pandemic has affected people who are both working and providing care to a loved one, as well as their concerns about returning to prepandemic routines.

Covid has impacted many working caregivers' load, leading to increased stress for about four in five caregivers. More than three in five reported that they were spending more time caring for their loved one. When asked about the next 12 months, two-thirds of all working caregivers expect some or a great deal of dif-

**New research from AARP explores how the pandemic has affected people who are both working and providing care to a loved one.**

PHOTO: AARP

iculty balancing both of their roles.

The AARP study found that just over half of working family caregivers were offered new benefits during the pandemic, including flexible hours (65 percent), paid leave (34 percent) and mental health or self-care resources (37 percent).

About half of those surveyed were able to telework due to Covid; by early July, 22 percent were still working from home full time, and 30 percent were working from home at least part time.

For those who could work from home, nearly nine in 10 said it

helped them balance work and care responsibilities — and 75 percent are worried about how they will manage when their prepandemic schedules resume.

"Employers would be wise to consider how benefits like paid leave and flexible hours can help the one in six workers who are also caring for a loved one," said Alison Bryant, senior vp at AARP Research. "Living through the pandemic was challenging for working family caregivers — while some were helped by new workplace benefits and flexibility, the vast majority are worried about how to balance both roles going forward. Our research opens a window into how the pandemic changed the workplace and what working caregivers are concerned about in the coming year."

As offices and other in-person workplaces begin to reopen, many caregivers reported concerns that they would bring the virus home to their loved one (63 percent) or contract Covid at work (53 percent).

About three in five are worried about leaving the person they care for alone while they go to work. Among those who were able to work at home during the pandemic, almost nine in 10 would like the option to continue doing so at least some of the time.

And more than four in 10 caregivers

said they would consider looking for a new job if the benefits they were offered during the pandemic were rolled back.

If you are an employer, AARP offers a range of free tools and resources that can help you retain working caregivers, including tip sheets, tool kits and online training for managers. At the same time, if you are a working caregiver, share these resources with your employer at [www.aarp.org/employercaregiving](http://www.aarp.org/employercaregiving).

- Start With Creating a Culture of Awareness
- Building Workplace Policies, Benefits and Programs
- Getting Buy-In From the C-Suite
- Challenges of Implementing New Caregiving Benefits — and Potential Solutions

The survey was conducted by phone and in an online panel from July 1-7 and included 800 U.S. residents 18 years or older who are currently providing unpaid care to an adult relative or friend and employed either full-time or part-time (but not self-employed).

*Ron Mori is a member of the Washington, D.C., JACL chapter and manager of community, states and national affairs — multicultural leadership for AARP.*

## LITTLE TOKYO » continued from page 7

Toshiyuki "Boshicho" and Chiharu Okamura got married in Little Tokyo in 1927.



Masao Tsukada operated a shop called Tsukada Company in Little Tokyo.



Toshiyuki "Boshicho" and Chiharu Okamura operated Toyo Florist and Nursery in Little Tokyo.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF BUNKADO

Irene Tsukada Simonian grew up in Little Tokyo. Her parents, Masao and Kayoko Tsukada, operated a gift shop called Tsukada Company down the street from Bunkado. In the 1970s, the two businesses combined into the First Street location.



arises from life changes could be a good sign — it is an opportunity for emotional growth.

"I almost feel like this is an opportunity for sharpening our ways to adapt to a situation and to think about how there are other ways of creating community," said Nakamura. If people are open to it, how can one be creative and include some of those voices in a spirit of renewal? Love is not fixed. It can morph and stretch infinitely.

"And you can help shape it," said Nakamura. In a scene "From Little Tokyo, With Love," community members gather in a room and reckon with its rigid adherence to tradition — at the expense of inclusivity.

"Communities need to change and grow along with the people in them," said Auntie Och, one of Rakuyama's no-nonsense aunts.

It's a sentiment Bunkado's third-generation owner echoes in real life. Founded by her aunt and uncle, Suye and Tokio Ueyama, the Little Tokyo gift shop celebrates its 75th anniversary this year. Tsukado Simonian's parents, Masao and Kayoko Tsukada, ran a different gift shop called Tsukada Company nearby. In the 1970s, they combined the two businesses at Bunkado's current location.

The feeling that Little Tokyo is just for Japanese Americans prevailed during the Issei generation, said Tsukado Simonian. Today, boba shops and Korean barbecue restaurants share retail space with longtime Japanese American-owned businesses like Anzen Hardware and Fugetsu-Do Confectionery.

"There are non-Japanese businesses that are coming to Little Tokyo, and that's OK," said Tsukado Simonian. "If there's some appreciation for the culture. I think it's part of the success of the community."

Little Tokyo love is a symbiotic relationship between business owners and the visitors who love and appreciate the place. Tsukado Simonian calls it a "magic sauce."

The pandemic created many losses, but also some gains in the staying power of businesses like Bunkado. Tsukado Simonian grew up in Little Tokyo, where she felt she had no privacy until she moved away to New York and had nothing but anonymity. The gift shop called her back home.

When she works in the store, the acoustics make it so that every comment is perfectly audible. Mothers come in with their children to walk the same aisles that they did as little girls with their bachans. Those comments

flow directly into Tsukado Simonian's heart.

These days, when she walks through Little Tokyo, she likes to approach visitors who look lost. She stops and gives directions because she cares.

That is what you do when you love.

Kuhn walked by Bunkado one day and saw copies of her book on display in the window next to "My Neighbor Totoro."

"I feel like that is like a very high compliment," Kuhn said.

The author signed copies of her book to sell at the gift shop she referenced. It's a scene that blends real life with romantic fiction in a modern-day fairy tale that really can only happen in Little Tokyo. ■



**"It's very important just because of its staying power," said owner Irene Tsukada Simonian about Bunkado gift shop, a Little Tokyo legacy business.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

American businesses move in and an encampment of unhoused people settle in a corner of Toriumi Plaza.

"Change is one of those things you love, and you hate," said Irene Tsukado Simonian, owner of Bunkado gift shop.

Love it or hate it, Little Tokyo is changing. Psychologists say the feeling of discomfort that