



PACIFIC CITIZEN

A massive Shohei Ohtani mural titled "L.A. Rising" was unveiled in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo on March 27, a day before the Los Angeles Dodgers' home opener at Dodger Stadium. Painted by acclaimed muralist Robert Vargas of Boyle Heights, Calif., the mural's unveiling occurred just as news broke that Ohtani's longtime interpreter, Ipei Mizuhara, had been accused of stealing millions of dollars from the MLB baseball star to cover huge gambling debts.

PHOTO: SUSAN YOKOYAMA

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JACL Riverside Holds Installation Luncheon.

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NPS Welcomes Amache as National Historic Site.

'L.A. RISING'

A massive Shohei Ohtani mural is unveiled in Little Tokyo.



SHOHEI OHTANI'S Ex-Interpreter Charged With Stealing \$16 Million

Days after a massive mural featuring the superstar is dedicated in Little Tokyo, his former interpreter faces federal charges.

By Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Federal authorities charged the longtime interpreter for Los Angeles Dodgers star Shohei Ohtani on April 11 with federal bank fraud, alleging that he stole more than \$16 million from the Japanese sensation to cover gambling bets and debts.

Interpreter Ipeei Mizuhara, a constant presence beside Ohtani in baseball stadiums across the country since 2018, abused the two-way player's trust in him and exploited the language barrier to plunder a bank account that only he could access, prosecutors said.

U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada said Mizuhara was so intertwined in Ohtani's life and career that he became the star's "de facto manager."

The role enabled him to withdraw money from the account — at times lying and impersonating Ohtani to bank employees — to finance his "insatiable appetite for illegal sports betting."

The April 11 announcement, at a packed news conference in downtown Los Angeles, ended weeks of speculation about Mizuhara's self-admitted gambling problems, the wide-ranging federal investigation and Ohtani's role in the scandal.

Estrada said that there is no evidence that Ohtani was aware of his interpreter's actions, adding that Ohtani has cooperated with investigators.

"I want to emphasize this point: Mr. Ohtani is considered a victim in this case," he said.

The criminal complaint — de-

tailing the scheme through text messages, financial records and recordings of phone calls — showed even Mizuhara knew the game was over. In a message to his illegal bookmaker on March 20, the day the *Los Angeles Times* and ESPN broke the news of the investigation, he wrote: "Technically I did steal from him. It's all over for me."

Mizuhara faces up to 30 years in federal prison if he's convicted of a single count of bank fraud. His attorney, Michael G. Freedman, declined to comment.

Federal investigators say Mizuhara made around 19,000 wagers between December 2021 and January 2024 — nearly 25 bets per day on average. The wagers ranged from roughly \$10 to \$160,000 per bet, averaging around \$12,800. Estrada

said investigators did not find any evidence Mizuhara had wagered on baseball.

While Mizuhara's winning bets totaled over \$142 million, which he deposited in his own bank account and not Ohtani's, his losing bets were around \$183 million — a net loss of nearly \$41 million.

Ohtani said he first became aware of Mizuhara's gambling problem during a team meeting after the Dodgers' March 20 win over the San Diego Padres in Seoul during MLB's first game in South Korea. The *L.A. Times* and ESPN published their stories hours later.

Five days later, Ohtani told a Dodger Stadium press conference that he never bet on sports or knowingly paid any gambling debts accumulated by his interpreter. He placed responsibility entirely on Mizuhara, and refuted the interpreter's inconsistent accounts of whether Ohtani had paid off Mizuhara's gambling debts.

"I am very saddened and shocked someone whom I trusted has done this," the Japanese star said through a new interpreter. ■

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* Your donations will help build and preserve a cohesive library of the *Pacific Citizen* to educate future generations.*

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2024 SPRING CAMPAIGN

'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





May We Gather
co-organizer
Rev. Duncan
Ryūken
Williams walks
at the front of
a procession
of Buddhist
leaders in
downtown
Antioch, Calif.,
on March 16.

PHOTO: JULIANA YAMADA

BUDDHISTS GATHER FOR HEALING IN ANTIOCH

California city was site of anti-Chinese immigrant violence in 1876.

By Associated Press

ANTIOCH, CALIF. — For one afternoon, on Antioch's main street and tranquil riverbank, the fragrance of burning incense was paired with the sound of Buddhist and Tao chants. Their cumulative calming energy was meant to be a balm of sorts to soothe the racial and religious hate that cast a shadow on Antioch's legacy.

Antioch's dark past, specifically its horrific mistreatment of early Chinese immigrants, motivated about 200 Buddhists to undertake a recent pilgrimage to the city of about 115,000, tucked deep in the delta that drains into the San Francisco Bay. Their goal was to supplant the negative with the positive by reconciling a dreadful past and anxiety-filled present — both time periods when Asian Americans nationwide have faced hate and discrimination — with the hope for a more egalitarian and harmonious future.

In the 1800s, thousands of Chinese immigrants came to the area during the gold rush to work in mines and build railroads and levees. Those who lived in Antioch were subject to sundown laws and used secret tunnels to commute to and from work, according to local newspaper reports. Eventually, the city's Chinatown, spanning a couple of city blocks — which also housed a Buddhist/Tao temple where new immigrants congregated — was burned down.

On March 16, the group of Buddhists gathered for the pilgrimage, an event they titled "May We Gather." It was intentionally scheduled on the third anniversary of the Atlanta mass shooting when a white gunman targeted female employees at Asian American massage parlors because he saw them as "sources of temptation." Six of the eight victims were women of Asian descent.

Duncan Ryūken Williams, a Soto Zen priest of Japanese descent and one of the event's organizers, said the Atlanta killings bore eerie similarity to Antioch in 1876 when raging locals burned down the homes of Chinese women branded as sex workers. In 2021, Antioch became the first U.S. city to issue a public apology for the mistreatment of early Chinese immigrants during the gold rush.

Williams, who also is a religion professor

at the University of Southern California, said event organizers desired not just a political reaction, but "a Buddhist response that draws on our teachings and practice," which aims to honor ancestors and heal racial trauma, past and present.

So in Antioch's El Campanil Theatre, a gathering of Buddhist monks and leaders from across the diaspora engaged in a process of "karmic healing." They offered chants and prayers at the altar of the thousand-armed Guan Yin, the goddess of mercy and compassion. Four tablets rested at the altar bearing the names of victims of hate and violence.

The Buddhists in attendance came from various countries and traditions — Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Thai, Tibetan, Indian and Sri Lankan. Holy chants rang out in multiple languages including Pali, the antiquated language closest to what the Buddha himself spoke.

Grace Song, an ordained minister and a department chair at the Won Institute of Graduate Studies in Warminster, Pa., said she had never been part of a peace-building event that celebrated diverse Buddhist traditions until now.

"I hope we get closer, build solidarity and support each other as we deepen our roots in this country," she said.

Khenpo Paljor, a Tibetan lama from Des Moines, Iowa, offered prayers at the Birthplace of Antioch marker erected in 1850 by the first European settlers. Here, attendees placed multicolored Tibetan kata, which are traditional prayer scarves. Williams said the colored scarves reflect a Buddhist scripture that speaks of pure souls as colored lights shining in unison, with none canceling out the others.

For Cristina Moon, a Honolulu-based Zen priest, karmic healing is the process of changing "our relationship to what happened and the ways in which we can control how to act in the future."

"It's important we recognize what happened and acknowledge it's uncomfortable," she said. "It's about not getting stuck in a painful past but moving forward in a positive manner."

Russell Jeung, co-founder of Stop AAPI Hate, sees these Buddhist ceremonies as Asian Americans reclaiming their traditions to recover in "the face of moral injury."

"When Trump mocked Asians and stigmatized the group by calling (Covid) 'the Chinese virus,' that really is a case of moral injury, where we as Americans are betrayed by our elected officials," Jeung said.

News Briefs

Mich. Congressman Clarifies Nagasaki Comment

Following his comments made at a March 25 townhall meeting in Dundee, Mich., Rep. Tim Walberg (R-Mich.) issued a statement to clarify news reports in which he invoked Japanese cities that were atom bombed during World War II with regard to the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. Responding to a question at the meeting about the U.S. spending money to construct a temporary floating pier from which to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza, Walberg, 72, said, "We shouldn't be spending a dime on humanitarian aid. It should be like Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Get it over quick. The same should be in Ukraine. Defeat Putin quick." In a statement issued by his office, Walberg said, "As a child who grew up in the Cold War Era, the last thing I'd advocate for would be the use of nuclear weapons." Rather, he referenced the two Japanese cities to emphasize ending both conflicts as quickly as possible.

RFK Jr. Taps Shanahan as VP Running Mate

Independent presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. announced March 26 that Oakland, Calif.-born political neophyte Nicole Shanahan, 38, will be his vice-presidential running mate in his bid for the White House. Shanahan, whose mother emigrated to the U.S. from Guangzhou City, China, and whose father emigrated from Ireland, is an attorney and former spouse of Google Co-Founder Sergey Brin. So far, the only state in which Kennedy is on the ballot is Utah.

Jury Finds Former L.A. Deputy Mayor Chan Guilty

A jury in a federal corruption case on March 27 found former Los Angeles Deputy Mayor Raymond Chan, 67, guilty on 12 of 12 counts, including racketeering conspiracy and bribery. The focus of the case was on financial benefits from real estate developers. Chan was tapped by former Mayor Eric Garcetti to serve as deputy mayor over economic development. Sentencing is scheduled for June 10.

UCLA Law School to Recognize Alumna Gee

When the UCLA School of Law bestows its Alumni of the Year Awards on May 2, it will present its Distinguished Alumni in Public Service to Judge Dolly Gee, a 1974 graduate of the law school. In 2009, President Obama nominated her to a seat on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California; Gee was inducted in 2010 and became chief judge on March 31. The law school will also present its Distinguished Alumni in Professional Achievement to William Kahane.

Coach Yoshikawa Leads West Valley College to Championship

The No. 1-seeded West Valley College Vikings of Saratoga, Calif., defeated the second-seeded College of the Sequoias Giants 59-51 on March 17 at the California Community College Athletic Assn. men's basketball championship game held at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, Calif. The Vikings were undefeated in their season,

finishing 33-0 and were led by head coach Danny Yoshikawa, a San Jose native who played for the Vikings before graduating from the University of California, Davis, with bachelor's degrees in international relations and Japanese and earning a master's degree in kinesiology from San Jose State University. Yoshikawa has won Coach of the Year honors on multiple occasions and also spent two seasons as a head coach in Japan's professional basketball league.

LTSC's Shimada Retires

After a 15-year stint at the Little Tokyo Service Center, Margaret Shimada retired at the end of March. She served as director of Service Programs. According to the LTSC, in that role she oversaw mental health programs, advocacy efforts, case management and domestic violence support, as well as helped to spearhead the creation of LTSC's Homeless Services program, which is focused on outreach, direct services and housing navigation.

United Methodist Church Issues Statement on Nakagawa

The California-Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church issued a statement March 7 that it has begun a "formal complaint process" over the actions of Mark Nakagawa, a retired clergyman who also recently retired as a district superintendent. In the meantime, Nakagawa's attorney has issued an apology on his behalf for drawing a graffiti resembling a swastika on a Jewish neighbor's groceries. Nakagawa, long active in Los Angeles-area Japanese American and UMC communities, was recorded on security video shot in the late evening of Dec. 5, 2023, using a marker to scrawl an image resembling a swastika, known in Japanese as a *manji*, on a box of seltzer water that had been among groceries delivered onto neighbor Leah Grossman's doorstep of the condominium complex in which both she and Nakagawa reside. In video that was shared with TV news outlets in March, when Grossman, who was alerted by her video security system, confronts Nakagawa, he denies any involvement or knowledge about what had happened. Nakagawa later was reported as saying his intent was to teach Grossman that the symbol, which was inaccurately rendered, stood for love. In its statement, the UMC said it "does not condone any form of hate or discrimination."

Terusaki New BCA National President

Steven Terusaki of Albany, Calif., was installed as the president of Buddhist Churches of America in late February. He is the founder and CEO of SEIDO Consulting.

Sacramento's Nakaoka Earns Eagle Rank and Gold Award

Kianna Nakaoka, 17, recently earned the rank of Eagle as a member of Scouts BSA Troop 50G and the Gold Award as a member of Girl Scout Troop 569. Both troops are sponsored by the Buddhist Church of Sacramento. She is a senior at John F. Kennedy High School, where she co-founded its powerlifting club and has set several records in her division.

— P.C. Staff

» See ANTIOCH on page 12

Rep. Mark Takano Installs Riverside JACL Officers, Board Members

Luncheon speaker Judge Yabuno discusses law career, Japanese American roots.

By P.C. Staff

What's rarer than 13-year-cycle and 17-year-cycle cicada broods emerging at the same time? How about having a member of the House of Representatives, who just happened to be attending your annual Riverside JACL installation as a guest, administer the oath of office to your chapter's incoming officers and board?

Thanks to a scheduling conflict, that is exactly what happened on March 9 at the Riverside JACL chapter's luncheon, held at the Cactus Cantina. With Pacific Southwest District Gov. Ryan Yoshikawa, who had been busy installing incoming JACL chapter officers and boards throughout Southern California, out of state for other JACL business, master of ceremonies Douglas Urata "deputized" Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.), who was in attendance, to take the reins.

In actuality, perhaps having a visiting dignitary administer the oath of office to incoming JACL chapter leaders may not be quite as rare as the joint appearance of two disparate cicada broods — but Takano was not in the least bugged by the task, swearing in Michiko Yoshimura (president, scholarships), Beverly Inaba (vp), Dr. Clyde Wilson (treasurer), Helen Yoshikawa (recording secretary), Jennifer Betancourt (membership chair, youth adviser), Braeton Buckley (newsletter editor, youth adviser), Meiko Inaba (1000 Club), Taka Tanaka (civil liberties), Urata (PSWD delegate), Irene Ogata and Sara Morita (social media) and Akio Yoshikawa (member at large).

In her remarks as president for some 20 years, Yoshimura thanked Emily Sarashina for serving as the chapter's representative to the University of California Riverside's Nikkei Student Union. She also thanked Helen Yoshikawa for her work with the chapter's scholarship committee. In addition, Yoshimura spoke about an upcoming event on May 1, when Highland Elementary School will be renamed Harada Elementary School, in honor of the Harada family and their successful legal battle over the right to own property at a time when California's alien land law prevented



Pictured (from left) at the installation luncheon are Akio Yoshikawa, Doug Urata, Jennifer Betancourt, Braeton Buckley, Michiko Yoshimura, Beverly Inaba, Meiko Inaba, Helen Yoshikawa, Clyde Wilson and Rep. Mark Takano PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON



Judge Glenn Yabuno addresses those gathered for the Riverside JACL Chapter installation luncheon at the Cactus Cantina.

noncitizens from doing so.

With that legal precedent in mind, it was fitting that Urata then introduced the afternoon's speaker, the Hon. Judge R. Glenn Yabuno, immediate past presiding judge of the California Superior Court of San Bernardino County. His topic: "A Sansei's Journey to the Bench."

Raised in Fresno, Calif., Yabuno earned his undergraduate degree from California State University, Fresno, his J.D. from Santa Clara University School of Law and was admitted to the California State Bar in 1983. The next year, he joined the San Bernardino County District Attorney's office. In 2010, he was appointed by then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to the bench with the Superior Court of San Bernardino County.

Yabuno highlighted one of the most important cases he was associated with, namely a deadly train derailment in the Cajon Pass caused by a faulty brake line. Serving as an example of how the law can be used to prevent such disasters from happening in the future, it was mandated that trains be equipped with "end of train" devices that allow an engineer to activate the brakes not just from the front but also from the rear in case of a kink in the brake line.

Regarding the size of jurisdiction of the Superior Court of San Bernardino County, Yabuno said, "Whether you're aware of it or not, San Bernardino is the largest county in the 48 states. It's a little over 20,000 square miles. It stretches from L.A. to the far west to the Arizona and Nevada borders to the east. Our furthest courthouse, which is the Needles courthouse, is four hours from downtown San Bernardino. Barstow is about an hour and change. We also have a courthouse in Joshua Tree."

Regarding the changes he has witnessed in his career over the decades since moving

of his enthusiasms: genealogy. For Japanese Americans interested in tracing their family trees in Japan, he highlighted the necessity of obtaining one's *koseki*, or official family register, maintained by local municipal offices in Japan. He also emphasized the importance of getting personal histories from family members. "I would encourage all of you to go back and get that part of history for your family before it's too late. . . . Talk to your grandparents and your parents and everybody else and get those names," he said.

On a related topic, Yabuno discussed how Japanese Americans whose relatives were incarcerated by the federal government during World War II could get those family records as well.



"The National Archives has the War Relocation Authority records that you can access, and I just did that," he said. "It's amazing what you can find in those records that will be sent to you from the National Archives."

(Editor's note: Yabuno left photocopies of Chester Hashizume's "Discovering Your Japanese American Roots" and "References for Discovering Your Japanese American Roots" for luncheon attendees. Copies of the PDF of Hashizume's documents may be downloaded at tinyurl.com/hahd8j9d and tinyurl.com/pys6rmk9.)

With the installation and speech completed, it was raffle time, conducted by Helen Yoshikawa. Among the prizes were bags of oranges grown in the Inland Empire. Alas, because of pest control protocols that had nothing to do with cicadas, they weren't allowed to be brought into Los Angeles County. ■

L-R: Emily Sarashina, Glenn and Cathy Yabuno, Michiko Yoshimura, Doug Urata and Rep. Mark Takano








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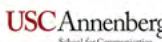


DEFINING COURAGE






★ Tuesday, April 30, 2024 - 6 pm ★
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- ★ A live show honoring WWII's heroic Japanese American soldiers
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BRIDGING CONNECTIONS PART II: KAKEHASHI 2024

Nikkei from across the U.S. journey to Japan to develop and strengthen their connections to Japanese culture.

By P.C. Staff

In January, 71 Nikkei and three chaperones traveled from the U.S. to Japan to participate in Kakehashi 2024, where they visited numerous historical and educational sites, experienced traditional and cultural activities and participated in lectures and workshops with the goal of building a mutual understanding between the U.S. and Japan for future friendship and cooperation.

Divided into three groups, participants began their trip in Tokyo and then traveled on to Hiroshima and Okinawa, depending on their group destination assignment. This “once-in-a-lifetime dream trip” to Japan was made possible thanks to coordination by the JACL and the Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) and supported by funding from the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Following is Part II, personal trip reflections, from several of this year’s participants.

LAUREN IWAMIYA

Group B

“What makes you proud to be Japanese American?”

Kohei-san, one of our homestay hosts, asked this less than four hours into meeting us.

In our more-than-broken Japanese and their equally steadfast attempts at speaking English, that was what we were talking about.

At the time, I was so astounded by the depth of the question and the fact that this could be asked in a space with little shared language, that all I said was, “I don’t know,” as I sat in stunned silence.

Throughout my time in Japan on the JACL Kakehashi Program 2024 trip, my understanding of what it means to be Nikkei was reshaped and continuously challenged.

As a Gosei Japanese Chinese American, I came into the experience slightly hesitant. I know that Japanese people living in Japan often invalidate the identity of Nikkei because of our distance from our Japanese roots. I was excited to meet my cohort on Kakehashi, but I was also afraid that being in Japan would make me feel more nationless.

Instead, I was enveloped by mutual understanding about what it means to be



Lauren Iwamiya (left) bids farewell to her homestay family (right).

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF LAUREN IWAMIYA

“Nikkei.” Everyone held such different cultural experiences, identities and lives, yet we all came together as Nikkei.

But what is it that connects us as Nikkei?

In Japanese American history, there are divisions within the Nikkei community that trace back to World War II and still stand today. My family was incarcerated in Tule Lake. I hold a great sense of pride in my family for checking No and No on questions 27 and 28 of the loyalty questionnaire. But so many

Nikkei identify with the pride in their families for serving in the 442nd and in the Military Intelligence Service.

This is a pivotal divide in how Japanese Americans label Nikkei identity. I believe that my Nikkei identity lies in the fact that I belong neither in America nor Japan. I will never be Japanese enough for Japan, and America can never have my unbidden loyalty because they unconstitutionally forced my family into incarceration camps. On the other side, the

Nikkei identity is proudly American because they proved their loyalty by laying their lives on the line for America despite their unjust treatment.

In spite of the chasm of how our families responded to WWII questions of American loyalty or how our families were not impacted by incarceration, everyone in my Kakehashi cohort connected under *ganbatte* and the struggle to negotiate our circumstances in the camps and in America. It is the struggle and pain, but also the celebration and deep pride for the perseverance of our ancestors.

At the closing of our homestay experience for Kakehashi, we performed the Bon Odori song “Ei Ja Nai Ka” for our homestay families. It means “Isn’t it good?” and celebrates the perseverance of our immigrant ancestors. “Ei Ja Nai Ka” represents where our pride in Japanese American identity lies. It is in a community that celebrates and honors our ancestors and their *ganbatte* spirit by embracing our heritage.

What makes us Nikkei — what makes us proud to be Nikkei — is *ganbatte*. And the people I met on Kakehashi helped me realize this.

KENNETH KITAHATA

Group B

Throughout the 2024 Kakehashi Project, I looked for connections between growing up Japanese American in Hawaii and our weeklong trip through Tokyo, Hiroshima and Suō-Ōshima. For instance, friends on the trip shared moments of familiarity when our homestay family prepared chawanmushi (steamed egg) or as we slept on tatami mats. I saw many Nikkei values passed down by my family, like humility and politeness, reflected by the local Japanese community throughout the trip. Even barely speaking Japanese and being thousands of miles from home, these similar values made Japan feel so familiar.

As a young professional on the Kakehashi Project, I thought about how Japanese values like collectivism often feel at odds with working in corporate America where individual performance, speaking up and comfort with conflict are rewarded. I’ve always had a quieter style at work and never related to stereotypes of executives as fiery and charismatic. One time after getting questioned by a director on my team after presenting, I remember thinking I just had thin skin for criticism. But, I wanted to continue showing up authentically, especially working at an impact investor trying to reimagine capitalism.



These ideas around my Nikkei values continued to pop into my head as the trip to Japan approached and Kakehashi held an orientation on Japanese etiquette. We were introduced to Japanese culture through traditional tea ceremony values like *Wa* (harmony) and *Kei* (respect). Even if we didn’t speak Japanese, we could show respect by removing our shoes indoors or limiting noise while riding the train.

These values of harmony and respect reminded me of my own family, so I made it a point to ask my Kakehashi friends what Japanese sayings they grew up hearing. In Suō-Ōshima during our homestay, I learned of the saying, *Deru kui wa utareru* or “the nail that sticks out gets hammered down.” Something clicked for me hearing this Japanese proverb on conformity; I realized that my tendency



JACL Kakehashi Group B at the White Walls of Yanai.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF LAUREN IWAMIYA

toward respect and conflict aversion might be shaped by the country my great-grandparents emigrated from over a century ago.

Hearing my homestay family tell me about this nail-and-hammer proverb reminded me of the Japanese sayings I grew up with.

One I often heard at family dinners was *enryo*, when my dad would refuse the last piece of food out of politeness even when he was still hungry. This taught me that politeness means putting aside my wants. Even today, my partner often has to offer me the same thing twice before I accept it. Part of this restraint comes from the legacy of World War II incarceration when many Issei said *shikata ga nai* and endured countless hardships as they were stripped of their civil liberties. I wrote

about my grandfather’s experience joining the 442nd Regimental Combat Team to prove his loyalty in the 2017 Go For Broke essay contest.

After returning from Kakehashi, I reflected on ways my Nikkei values of respect benefit me. At work, it makes me a team player and emphatic people manager as I’ve recently been able to hire and manage a data analyst. I’m also trying to become more comfortable with inevitable conflict in my relationships and at work, with my first step trying to recognize when I’m feeling flooded.

During our closing ceremony in Tokyo, I read a quote from previous Kakehashi participants that “we serve as Kakehashi by finding commonalities and also actually understanding each other well enough to meet in the middle.” The Kakehashi Project showed me the Japanese origin of my values of respect and humility growing up as a fourth-generation Japanese American.

It will continue being a learning journey to balance these values of collectivism and individualism by recognizing the influence of both Japan and America in my life. The Kakehashi Project has given me the wisdom of perspective in discerning between Nikkei and Japanese culture, and it simultaneously helped me discover that my strength to show up authentically is rooted in my diverse cultural values.

YUBI MAMIYA

Group A

Standing on the sparkling beaches of Okinawa, I gazed in amazement at the expanse of soft, ivory sand. It was speckled with branching coral skeletons and intricate sea shells. But these wonders were obscured by garbage.

I picked up another chunk of seaweed-strewn Styrofoam and stuffed it into our overflowing bag of trash. Piece by piece, we slowly revealed the beauty buried beneath during the beach cleanup with Natural Blue for the 2024 Kakehashi Project.

Twelve million tonnes of plastic is dumped into the ocean every year. The United States and Japan rank No. 1 and 2 in terms of per-capita plastic-packaging waste emissions. Our nations have a collective responsibility to improve our waste management system, create innovative solutions to replace plastic and restore respect for the environment.

I was inspired to learn that Natural Blue is driving environmental stewardship by leading beach cleanups and educational lessons on global pollution for divers and visitors in Okinawa. They encourage us to care for our land and oceans by fostering a love for nature



Members of the 2024 Kakehashi Project visited Natural Blue in Yomitan, Okinawa, to learn about the effects of plastic pollution on marine life and participated in a cleanup for a local beach.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF YUBI MAMIYA

and opportunities to care for it.

We have much to learn from Okinawan communities on teaching environmental stewardship to young people. During my homestay at Yomitan Village for the 2024 Kakehashi Project, I had the remarkable opportunity to learn about and participate in sustainable farming practices alongside elementary school students.

On an early, humid morning, we learned how local farmers built greenbelts to prevent agricultural runoff. Their interactive demonstration

modeled how rainfall washed nutrient-rich fertilizers into the ocean, where they led to eutrophication and death of marine life.

I was incredibly grateful for the support of the Kakehashi Project staff, who helped expand upon the farmers' explanations in English and answered my curious questions about the creation of greenbelts. Who knew that the beautiful hibiscus flowers lining the roads blocked farm soil from polluting the surrounding lands? Or that the vetiver plant that was also a base note for Chanel No. 5

perfume could hold down nutrients and fertilizers during heavy rains? I was touched to see local children help plant vetiver greenbelts along the farms with such enthusiasm, a testament to the intimate relationship between Okinawans and their environment.

It is imperative that we foster U.S.-Japan collaborations between students, innovators and government leaders to promote environmental stewardship. My insightful discussions with the students at the University of Ryukyu for the 2024 Kakehashi Project opened my eyes to the diverse perspectives and experiences they contribute to the global conversation on sustainability.

We are eager to increase the impact of innovative solutions pioneered by Japanese companies, such as the development of plastic alternatives. Kaneka Biotechnology Research Labs is creating marine biodegradable plant oil pellets, and Nippon Paper Industries is coating their paper products with a biodegradable resin to replace plastic barrier films.

I look forward to working with Japanese and Japanese American young people to promote these innovative solutions around the world. Together, we can create a sustainable and beautiful future.

NAOMI SUZUKI

Group A

Despite having both a first and last Japanese name, I have always felt anything but. Born to a Korean immigrant mother and a fourth-generation Japanese American father, I grew up eating *kim* rather than *nori*, and *tteok* instead of *mochi*. The few Japanese words I did know were mostly Hawaiian slang, which is where my grandpa is from. See? I don't even call my grandpa Oji-chan.

Because of this, when people would ask if I was Japanese, I would always respond, "I'm only half." Only. As if I was implying that something is missing or that I am not fully Japanese American. In my head, saying I was Japanese felt like a lie.

When I started at UCLA, I joined the Nikkei Student Union and Kyodo Taiko to connect more with my JA side. Though I have learned about Japanese American culture through the community I found at school, I still felt out of place at times. Most of my new Japanese friends had grown up in the JA community and had many shared experiences I couldn't relate to.

Before Kakehashi, I had never met another Gosei before, but when I made it to Japan, I found that so many of my peers were just like me. Many of us grew up with bits and pieces of Japanese culture but felt like we weren't "Japanese enough." Getting to experience Japan with young Japanese Americans who shared my experience is a huge part of what made this trip so special.



Kakehashi Group A (Okinawa) participants, JACL chaperone Julie Abo and JICE staff in front of the Tokyo Tower

PHOTO: MIKIKO YANASE, GROUP A JICE COORDINATOR

For a part of my Kakehashi experience, I visited Okinawa. While there, I participated in a homestay with three other girls from my cohort, and this ended up being a transformative experience for all of us. I felt truly immersed in Okinawan culture and got to see all the nuance and complexity of their society.

We learned how to play the sanshin, ate their famous purple sweet potato (*beni imo*) and learned some of the local dialect from Oji and Oba (our homestay parents). Despite Oji and Oba speaking almost no English, I found that we were still able to connect and create meaningful experiences. By the end of our stay, I felt like I was visiting my grandparents.

At one point during our trip, we visited a small farm with a bunch of Okinawan families where we learned about the importance of practicing environmentally conscious farming methods. We learned how fertilizer from the farms on the island will drain into the ocean,

killing the surrounding coral.

In order to protect the surrounding reefs, Okinawan farmers implement a greenbelt where they plant certain plants around their farms to filter out the fertilizer as the water drains. Watching this community learn about how to protect their land and the surrounding oceans was incredibly powerful. In America, we place extreme value on individualism, but for many Asian American kids, we grow up instilled with values of community and family. Despite not speaking Japanese or going to Obon as a kid, I discovered that I resonate with other fundamental values represented in Japanese culture.

Okinawa is largely known for the American military base that takes up a big portion of their land, and before visiting, I thought the base was unwelcome and should be removed. But, after speaking to Oji and other Okinawans, I realized it has become a fundamental part of many of


their lives. Having been there for so long, it provides many jobs for the Okinawan people, and without it, their economy would crumble.

One of the foods I ate at my homestay was a fusion dish called taco rice. It's basically taco ingredients: tomatoes, lettuce, ground beef, cheese and hot sauce, but over rice instead of in a taco shell. It's a popular dish in Okinawa and is representative of the huge influence of American culture on Okinawan people.

People still have mixed feelings about the base, including myself, but ultimately, it has become intertwined into Okinawan lives and culture. I realized the relationship between the U.S. and Japan is extremely multifaceted, but that's why it is so important to make efforts to create connections and a shared community across our cultures. How else can we maintain strong connections without understanding each other's experiences?

My Kakehashi journey instilled in me a profound pride in my Japanese heritage and fostered meaningful connections with my fellow participants. I will always be grateful for the endless "conbini" runs, long walks in Shibuya at night or doing a farewell Okinawan dance with our homestay families.


Now, when people ask me if I'm Japanese, I refrain from the reflexive "only half." To be JA is to be a part of a diverse community where we each have our own definition of what it means to be Japanese American. I may be half-Japanese, but I am wholly Japanese American. ■



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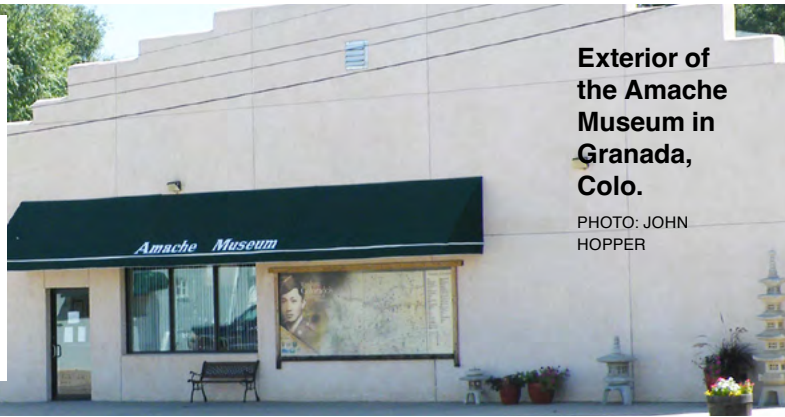
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Monument to Japanese Americans from Amache who lost their lives in WWII after volunteering to serve in the Armed Forces, as well as those who died in the camp while incarcerated

PHOTOS: GIL ASAKAWA



Exterior of the Amache Museum in Granada, Colo.

PHOTO: JOHN HOPPER



Archeologist Bonnie Clark, seen in this 2014 photo, points out an object on the site of the Amache concentration camp.

Min Tonai, who was incarcerated at Colorado's Camp Amache, addresses pilgrims in May 2018 via a bullhorn held aloft by John Hopper, a local social studies teacher who has incorporated the history of the site in his curriculum.



President Joe Biden (center) signs the Amache National Historic Site Act on March 18, 2022, to put Camp Amache under the National Parks Service.

PHOTO: THE WHITE HOUSE



NPS Welcomes Amache Site as National Historic Site

Official designation for Colorado concentration will help prevent erasure of history.

By Gil Asakawa,
P.C. Contributor

(Editor's note: Nearly two years after President Joe Biden signed the Amache National Historic Site Act, which designated the Amache site as part of the National Park System, Interior Secretary Deb Halland on Feb. 15 formally established the Granada War Relocation Authority Center, aka Camp Amache, as the Amache National Historic Site. Amache, which during World War II incarcerated 7,318 ethnic Japanese, most of whom were U.S. citizens near the town of Granada, Colo., was one of the 10 American concentration camps operated by the federal government's War Relocation Authority.

In a statement, Halland said, "As a nation, we must face the wrongs of our past in order to build a more just and equitable future. The Interior Department has the tremendous honor of stewarding America's public lands and natural and cultural resources to tell a complete and honest story of our nation's history. Today's establishment of the Amache National Historic Site will help preserve and honor this important and painful chapter in our nation's story for future generations."

The following article elaborates on the path to this status and provides background about Japanese American pilgrimages to the site and how the local Colorado community has embraced its role in preserving the site for historical purposes.)

The first pilgrimage to Amache, one of the 10 Japanese American incarceration camps on the U.S. mainland and the only one located in Colorado, was held in 1975. This year, almost 50 years later, the pilgrimage will hold special significance: In February, Amache officially became a National Historic Site, part of the National Park Service system alongside Manzanar in California, Minidoka in Idaho and Honouliuli in Hawaii.

The bipartisan legislation that cleared the

way for the park status, sponsored by Colorado Congressmen Ken Buck, a Republican, and Joe Neguse, a Democrat, was passed in the House in 2021 and then led through the upper chamber by Colorado Sens. John Hickenlooper and Michael Bennett. It was signed into law by President Biden in 2022. But it didn't become official until after the town of Granada, Colo., worked out details (water rights, etc.) with the National Park Service and signed over the deed to the land outside of town.

The site was named Amache after WWII — the government's official euphemism for it was the Granada War Relocation Authority Center — and the camp was dubbed Amache, after an indigenous woman who helped build bridges between Native Americans and their white oppressors.

It's been a long, slow road to official park status. Amache was listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 1994, named one of Colorado's most endangered sites in 2001, then designated a National Historic Landmark in 2006. These designations helped give the site a bigger national profile, but the federal support as a National Park site will bring resources beyond the community-led efforts that have funded the site for decades.

The Japanese American community, including Amache survivors and descendants from across the country, but mostly in California and Colorado, hold pilgrimages to far southeast Colorado (a four-hour drive from Denver) site on the weekend before Memorial Day weekend.

John Hopper, a social studies teacher hired at the town's K-12 Granada School, learned about Amache while growing up about 60 miles away. His mother was friends with a survivor who told Hopper about Amache. When he was hired to teach in Granada, he saw an opportunity to engage students in living history right outside of town. The students from that class, and each subsequent year's classes, eventually formed the Amache Preservation Society and have taught about its history in public presentations not just in the area, but

in neighboring schools and states.

The Granada students even opened a museum in a donated home a block from their school and jampacked it with artifacts and displays they created for talks they give across the region and over multiple states. Each year, a new crop of dedicated students sign up for the class — Hopper is today the dean of students at the school and still teaches the Amache class and heads the Preservation Society. One of his students even teaches history today at the school, and Hopper expects he could take over when he retires. Hopper was even given a special commendation by the Consul General of Japan at Denver in 2014 for his tireless work.

In a very Japaneselike aw-shucks way, Hopper, who also served on the town council while teaching and running the Amache efforts, deflects his accomplishments and praises "all the great students over the years that kept me going," he said. "Let's just put it that way."

In all the years he has worked on preserving Amache and keeping its legacy alive with generations of students, Hopper says he didn't imagine a day that the camp would become a national park.

"No, no, no, not even close," he insisted. "You know, I thought, 'Oh, no.' I mean, I'll be honest with you. When I started this thing, I didn't think we'd have a brand-new museum. Yeah. I'm getting ready to order thousands of dollars of brand-new display cases and stuff. I didn't ever believe this ever, ever. No, never."

The Amache Preservation Society opened a tiny, crowded museum in an old house a block from the school some years back to display artifacts and photos donated by survivors, as well as models of the camp created by the students. In 2019, a bank donated its building across the street from the school as a newer, bigger museum.

Hopper and the APS have diligently funded all their volunteer work and equipment for maintaining Amache and the museum through donations from the community including JA and non-JA, civic organizations, grants

from preservation organizations. That needs to continue even after the NPS sets up the site because the museum is not part of the National Historic Site, and the NPS doesn't display artifacts (it stores artifacts at a site in Arizona). So, Hopper will continue to maintain the museum site separate from the nearby national park.

The students have had one steadfast partner for the long run, the Denver Central Optimists Club, whose core members were Japanese American incarceration survivors dedicated to preserving the history of their experience.

Derek Okubo, who served as the executive director of the City of Denver's Agency for Human Rights and Community Partnerships (the modern iteration of the agency that legendary Nisei attorney Min Yasui ran for decades), is the son of Hank Okubo, who as a child was incarcerated at Amache.

Hank Okubo was one of the founders of the Denver Central Optimists Club in 1983, which organized each year's pilgrimages, worked to clean and preserve the camp and raised money to erect a stone memorial at the camp's cemetery to all the incarcerated and the men who left Amache to join the U.S. military.

Once Hopper got involved with Amache, he met and worked with the Optimists Club and coordinated the cleanup, preservation of the site and reconstructions of a guard tower, a water tower and, most recently, an entire barrack, as well as the restoration of a rec center building that had been used for decades by the town of Granada as a storage shed for equipment in a town park.

One of the keys to Amache being named a national park has been the support from the community, both in Granada itself but also in Denver and across the country. All the individuals, organizations and institutions that have worked to preserve the camp show that the site is deserving of its designation, says Tracy Coppola of the National Parks Conservation Assn., a nonpartisan nonprofit that worked with the NPS to

Sign near the site of Camp Amache, which was formally put under the direction of the National Parks Service on Feb. 15 as the Amache National Historic Site.

PHOTOS: GIL ASAKAWA



shepherd Amache's progress and lobby Congress on its behalf.

"Amache is really like the example in my heart of an opportunity to connect with living history, the hearts of people who were at Amache and their descendants and all of the various perspectives about why this park is important. We saw early on the foundation that the stakeholders and the descendants had really laid to make the voice not be forgotten, you know, and really without that, I don't think it would have been nearly as powerful a campaign."

Rob Buscher, executive director of the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium (and a former *Pacific Citizen* editorial board chair), agrees. "I think it's a really great development for this site, specifically because it's something that a lot of the descendants and survivors have been working toward for a long time," he said. "I think the nature of the local partnerships here are really encouraging to see, as well as the local residents of Granada and Lamar, who have been really supportive of the historic preservation in the decades leading up to this moment."

One of Amache's many stakeholders is Bonnie Clark, a professor of archaeology at the University of Denver, who read an Archeological Survey report about Amache in 2003 that had been funded by the Optimists Club. "There were like two things about the report that struck me," she said. "One was just that the findings were amazing to me. And, then it was the fact that the community had supported the archeological study."

The same community involvement and passion eventually helped spark the national park designation. In 2005, Clark met Hopper in Amache, and in 2006, she began

to take students every other summer on an archaeological dig to collect artifacts. Over the years, she has accumulated a large collection of everything from toys and tools to ceramics, and she has displayed them at the university's museum and created a traveling exhibit of images of objects from Amache with text from community members about the items.

It's one way that shows the legacy Amache has had far outside of the corner of Colorado where more than 7,000 Japanese Americans were imprisoned during WWII.

Derek Okubo is especially looking forward to this year's pilgrimage to Amache in May because he knows his father would have cheered the day. "It's pretty amazing, actually, because I remember that it was a dream of my dad's, and you know, he knew it was going to be a long-term effort.

"And so, to finally say it happened is pretty amazing," he added. He only regrets that the other founders of the Denver Central Optimists Club and many leaders of other organizations that helped achieve the park status aren't here to celebrate.

"It was something that he and all these guys who were really the ones who started it all wanted to happen, and they never lived to be able to see it."

They'll be smiling from wherever they are, though.

(The next Amache Pilgrimage is scheduled for May 17-19. To learn more about the Amache Preservation Society, visit amache.org/amache-preservation-society/.)

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



New Amache NPS sign by Chris Mather, site manager, March 2024

KANSHA PROJECT SET FOR JUNE

The transformative program from JACL Chicago will hold its Culmination Event on June 29.

By Ayako Tischler, MDC Youth Representative

The Kansha Project is a transformative program from JACL Chicago that provides young Japanese Americans, ages 18-25, in the Midwest with the opportunity to learn about our community's history, develop unique insights about our community's legacy and allow participants to explore their identity with other Japanese American young adults.

Participants engage in an in-depth examination of the World War II confinement site experience through an immersive educational trip to Los Angeles' historic Little Tokyo neighborhood and Manzanar National Historic Site. Through workshops with local experts and community activists, historical tours and group reflections, participants work to interpret and promote the stories, lessons and legacy of the Japanese American confinement site experience.

Upon returning from the trip, participants share reflections on their experience and present creative and heartfelt projects summarizing their experience to the wider community. The Kansha Project provides an entry point for community engagement and a pathway for youth leadership that is vital to the future of the Japanese American community.

As we approach the 12th trip of the Kansha Project in June, we'd like to take the time to uplift our alumni and ask for your support to help fund this important initiative.

Our alumni are part of what makes the Kansha Project so special to our community. The three core tenets that represent the Kansha Project are legacy, gratitude and remembrance. We would like to share how Kansha alumni continue to uphold these values.

Katie Masano Hill served on the Kansha Alumni Leadership Board in 2023, and we are proud of the work that she continues to do for our community. It is through the donations and support of JACL members that the program flourishes and enables participants to grow and become active members of our community.

Read how Kansha impacted Katie:

Hello! My name is Katie Masano Hill, and I am currently a senior social major at Valparaiso University and an incoming graduate student at the University of Oklahoma's Masters of Museum Studies Program. As a fifth-generation descendant of family members incarcerated at Tule Lake and Heart Mountain, I am incredibly passionate about honoring the legacies of our ancestors and ensuring they are never forgotten.

I have been privileged to make this mission part of my life in several ways, including participating in the Kansha Project in 2022, serving on the ALB in 2023, receiving the honorable Chiye Tomihiro Memorial Scholarship from JACL Chicago, taking a pilgrimage to Heart Mountain and conducting qualitative research related to violence, suicide and improper mental health treatment during incarceration based on my own family's experience.

To me, Kansha has provided the opportunity to process intergenerational trauma and bring healing to myself while reinforcing my role in the Japanese American community. In the future, I hope to continue working with this amazing community by conducting archival research and studying War Relocation Authority records to bring healing and justice to those affected by wartime incarceration.

The Kansha Project would not be possible without the generous donations from our community. Your donation of any amount will impact the continuity of the Kansha Project. Please mail checks to JACL Chicago at 5415 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60640 with "Kansha Project" in the memo.

Online donations can be made at <https://donorbox.org/2023-kansha-project>.



Kansha alumni Katie Masano Hill at JANM in Little Tokyo

PHOTO: COURTESY OF KANSHA PROJECT



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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NATIONAL

Irei — A National Monument for the WWII Japanese American Incarceration
Los Angeles, CA
JANM
100 N. Central Ave.

The *Ireichō* contains the first comprehensive listing of more than 125,000 persons of Japanese ancestry who were forcibly incarcerated during World War II. Visitors can now view the book and leave a special *hanko* (stamp/seal) for each person in the monument as a way to honor those incarcerated. The project's online archive is now searchable alphabetically or by camp.
Info: Visit ireizo.com for more information and janm.org.

NCWNP

Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival 2024
San Francisco, CA
April 20-21
San Francisco Japantown
Sutter Street
Price: Free

All are welcome to join in the festivities as the city celebrates Japanese and Japanese American culture. There will be food, entertainment, exhibits, and much more to enjoy!
Info: Visit www.sfcherryblossom.org.

Japanese Heritage Night With the San Francisco Giants
San Francisco, CA
May 17; 7:15 p.m.
Oracle Park
24 Willie Mays Plaza
Price: Starting at \$32 for JCCCNC Members

Join the JCCCNC at Japanese Heritage Night as the San Francisco Giants take on the Colorado Rockies. This year's special event giveaway is an exclusive Giants Cherry Blossom Jersey, which will be available with your electronic ticket.
Info: Visit <https://www.jcccnc.org/japanese-heritage-night-2024/>.

'Taken From Their Families: Japanese American Incarceration on Angel Island During World War II'
San Jose, CA
Thru June 23
Japanese American Museum San Jose
535 N. Fifth St.
Price: Museum Admission

This exhibit features stories from 24 individuals from Hawaii and the West Coast

who were incarcerated on Angel Island after Dec. 7, 1941, and whose lives were forever changed because of it.
Info: Visit <https://www.jamsj.org/exhibitions>.

PSW

'My Lost Freedom: A Japanese American World War II Story' Book Signing With Author George Takei
Los Angeles, CA
April 21; 2-3:30 p.m.
JANM
100 N. Central Ave.
Price: \$16 General Admission; Free for JANM Members

Actor and activist George Takei will discuss his new children's book "My Lost Freedom: A Japanese American World War II Story," alongside the book's illustrator, Michelle Lee. There will also be a reading, conversation and book signing.
Info: Visit www.janm.org/events. Tickets include admission to JANM on April 21.

'Defining Courage' Performance
Los Angeles, CA
April 30; 6-7:45 p.m.
USC's Bing Theatre
3500 Watt Way
Price: Registration Required

Join the Center on Public Diplomacy for the first-ever private performance at any university of "Defining Courage" to celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Revisit WWII battlefields in Italy, France, Germany and Japan and discover the heroics of the Nisei soldiers in this innovative and unforgettable performance.
Info: To register, visit <https://events.usc.edu/esvp/code/definingcourage>. For questions, email [Cesar Corona](mailto:CesarCorona@usc.edu) at coronaco@usc.edu.

Sake in the Park
Los Angeles, CA
July 26; 7-10 p.m.
Grand Park in Downtown Los Angeles
Price: Fundraiser Event

Save the date! Summer is just around the corner, which means that Sake in the Park is almost here. This year's celebration will take place in Grand Park, the biggest venue in the event's 16-year history. This event is a fundraiser for the Little Tokyo Service Center and will include an inclusive ticket with unlimited food and drink. Early bird tickets go on sale June 1.
Info: Visit www.ltscc.org/sake.

'Giant Robot Biennale 5'
Los Angeles, CA
March 2-Sept. 1
JANM
100 N. Central Ave.
Price: Museum Admission

This recurring art exhibition partnered with Eric Nakamura, founder of Giant Robot, highlights creative works celebrating the ethos of Giant Robot, a staple of Asian American alternative pop culture and an influential brand encompassing pop art, skateboard, comic book, graphic arts and vinyl toy culture.
Info: Visit www.janm.org.

'J. T. Sata: Immigrant Modernist'
Los Angeles, CA
March 15-Sept. 1
JANM
100 N. Central Ave.

James Tadanoo Sata (1896-1975) created some of the most adventurous photographs made in America in the 1920s and '30s. At the onset of WWII, he was forced to abandon photography and instead made drawings and paintings about life in the camps.
Info: Visit www.janm.org/exhibits/jt-sata.

Okaeri Connects! LGBTQ+ Support Group Virtual Event
English Speaking LGBTQ+ only — Second Sundays from 4-5:15 p.m.
Japanese Speaking LGBTQ+ only — Third Sundays from 4-5:15 p.m. (9 a.m. JT)
Japanese Speaking Parents/Allies — Third Sundays from 2-3:15 p.m. (7 a.m. JT)
Price: Free

Are you a Nikkei LGBTQ+ individual or have a Nikkei LGBTQ+ loved one? We create affirming spaces by sharing our personal experiences and stories. We believe that building relationships, being seen and connecting ourselves within our Nikkei community can improve the quality of our lives.
Info: To register, visit Okaeri.org connects. For questions, please email connects@okaeri.org.

PNW

Genji Mihara: An Issei Pioneer
Seattle, WA
Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Washington
1414 S. Weller St.
An Issei pioneer, JCCCW's feature ex-

hibit on the life of Issei leader Genji Mihara (1890-1982) is part of a larger biographical project on Mihara, who immigrated to Seattle in 1907. Features include original photos and artifacts donated by Mihara's family, historical research and quotes from oral history interviews, including one from Mihara himself in the 1970s.
Info: Visit www.jcccw.org.

MDC

Japanese American Veterans Memorial Program
Minneapolis, MN
May 16; 10-11 a.m.
Fort Snelling National Cemetery
7601 34th Ave. S

Save the date for this important event that will honor more than 100 local Japanese American veterans. Volunteers are needed for various tasks in preparation for the event.
Info: For more information, email chiratadulas@tcjacl.org.

IDC

2024 Topaz Art Pilgrimage
Salt Lake City, UT
May 2-4
Utah Museum of Fine Arts
410 S. Campus Center Dr.
Topaz Museum
55 W. Main St., Delta, UT
Price: \$80 to attend the May 4 gathering; some additional/optional fees available.

The Friends of Topaz Museum and the Topaz Museum announce the 2024 Topaz Art Pilgrimage, which will pay tribute to the 11,212 people of Japanese descent who were incarcerated at the WWII American concentration camp at Topaz and explore the legacy of the artists of Topaz. The pilgrimage will be held in conjunction with the exhibition "Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi and Miné Okubo."
Info: Registration is required. Visit <https://topazmuseum.org/pilgrimages/>.

47th Utah Asian Festival 2024
Salt Lake City, UT
June 8; 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Utah State Fairpark
1055 W. North Temple
Price: Free

This annual festival demonstrates unity in the Asian community and showcases a wealth of traditions, including performances, exhibits and food. Don't miss this event that features something for the entire family to enjoy.
Info: Visit <https://utahasianfestival.org/>.

'Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi and Miné

Okubo'
Salt Lake City, UT
Thru June 30
Utah Museum of Fine Arts
Marcia and John Price Museum Building
410 Campus Center Dr.

This exhibit reveals a broader picture of the American experience through artworks and life stories of three Japanese American women from the pre-WWII generation.
Info: Visit <https://umfa.utah.edu/pictures-of-belonging>.

EDC

Japan Festival Boston
Boston, MA
April 27-28; 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
Boston Common
16 Charles St.
Price: Free

After three years, the festival finally returns with Japanese food, music, performances, vendors and much more.
Info: Visit <https://www.japanfestival-boston.org/2024-festival>.

Book Talk: 'The Notes'
Cambridge, MA
April 30; 7 p.m.
Porter Square Books
25 White St.
Price: Free

Catherine Con Morse will talk about her poignant debut YA novel "The Notes," about dealing with academic pressures, falling in love for the first time and finding yourself.
Info: To RSVP, visit <https://www.portersquarebooks.com/event/catherine-con-morse-author-notes-conversation-mia-tong>.

Second Asian Street Food and Music Festival
Cambridge, MA
May 5; 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Harvard Square Church Street
Price: Free

This festival will feature live performances, crafts curated by international vendors and delicious street food. This event is presented by the Harvard Square Philippine American Alliance.
Info: Visit www.hspaa.org.

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TRIBUTE

TOM IGE



Tsutomu "Tom" Ige was born on Aug. 26, 1930, in Terminal Island, Calif., to Kamaroku and Kama Ige of Okinawa, Japan. He was the third of three boys (Hiro and Ken) and also had a younger sister (Yas).

His father was a fisherman and spent many days out at sea while his mother worked at the cannery.

He remembers that he was used to seeing battleships of the Navy anchored along the breakwater. On Dec. 7, 1941, he went fishing with his brothers and noticed that all the ships were gone. That is how he first learned about the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Being a fisherman, his father was taken away fairly quickly. Soon after, the rest of the family was forced to leave Terminal Island and went to live with some friends in Los Angeles and eventually ended up at Santa Anita Racetrack, where the family of five had a stall to live in. He lived there from around April to September of 1942, when his mom and siblings were sent by train to Rohwer Relocation Camp in Arkansas.

After the war was over, he was reunited with his father, and the family went to Tule Lake, Calif. His father wanted to return to Japan, although his mother did not. But when he left first, she decided to keep the family together and returned to Japan in February of 1946.

As a U.S. citizen, Tom went to work for the Army working in the mess hall stock room. He eventually got a job at the PX (post exchange) as a pricing and editing clerk. This move changed his life. He found his life's work and met Helen, who was to become his wife.

In 1952, he was drafted for the military in the United States, but instead of heading back to the States, he went with some friends and joined the Air Force at the recruiting office in Tokyo. He did basic training there and was assigned to work for the PX and the Air Force clothing store.

He was released from active duty on Nov. 20, 1957. Asking about continuing to work for the PX, he was offered the job of store manager at the PX in Korea. As a civilian, he now was working for AAFES (Army Air Force Exchange Service.) He stayed in Korea for about three years, taking a leave to go back to Japan to get married to Helen on Oct. 10, 1959.

In October 1960, he managed to get transferred to Misawa Air

Base, where Helen was working. He was merchandise manager of the BX. This was the first time the married couple got to live together. Their only child, Natalie, was born on Aug. 16, 1961, and they enjoyed their lives there.

However, he received his first transfer to the United States in 1965 to Fort Monmouth, N.J., with a promotion to retail operations manager. Additional promotions moved the family to Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri and Fort Ord in Monterey, Calif. With lots of family in Los Angeles, this was an ideal posting, but after a few years, he was on the move again. This time with a promotion to general manager of the Puerto Rico Exchange, which was headquartered at Ramey AFB. Two years were spent in this beautiful location, until the base was closed and he was transferred to Fort Buchanan in San Juan.

An additional two years was spent here, working hard, golfing and going to occasional concerts, such as Diana Ross and Tom Jones at the high-end hotels in San Juan.

The next promotion and move was a big one, sent to be the general manager of the Blue Ridge Area Exchange and stationed in Fayetteville, N.C. He was offered a transfer after three years to Okinawa Japan, but decided to pass it up so that Natalie could graduate high school with her friends. However, as soon as she graduated, the family was off to Panama for another big assignment. In 1979, Tom received the Extraordinary Achievement Award (the first of three times he received this honor) and was requested to go to Panama. The Panama Canal treaty was going into effect in October 1979, and there were some big projects that had to be completed prior to that international event. All of the Panama Canal Zone facilities had to be returned to Panama, and new facilities set up for the Americans stationed there. Tom was known

to his superiors as a calm, smart and effective manager who could deal fairly and rationally with complicated situations. So, he was the perfect one to oversee this huge transition.

All went well, and he made the last move of his AAFES career to Norton AFB in San Bernardino, Calif., in 1982. This brought him back to his home state, and he retired there in 1985 with a rank of GS-15.

After retirement, Tom enjoyed golfing and traveling and spending time with friends and family. He also became quietly involved in the Nisei community, contributing to many institutions that meant a lot to him, such as the Japanese American National Museum, *Pacific Citizen* newspaper, the JACL and the Okinawa Association of America.

Interviewed once by the *P.C.*, Tom stated, "To me, the *Pacific Citizen* is the 'eyes and ears' of the Nikkei community and other readers. It gives our community what it needs in terms of informing us what is important in our daily lives and also the many contributors that express interesting personal opinions and experiences that have a bearing in the lives of us all. I implore you to consider supporting the Japanese American Citizens League and the *Pacific Citizen* as part of your legacy."

Supporting these and other organizations, supporting his family and friends was really what Tom was all about. After losing his beautiful wife, Helen, in 2012, he traveled with his daughter Natalie and her husband, Ray, to Las Vegas, Hawaii and Japan. In 2017, he moved into Nikkei Senior Gardens assisted living in Arleta, Calif., where he continued to make friends and affect lives.

He was incredibly kind and very generous and will be remembered and mourned by many. He requests that in lieu of flowers, any donations be made to Nikkei Senior Gardens.

PLACE A TRIBUTE

'In Memoriam' is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. Tributes honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of \$20/ column inch.

CONTACT:

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Owen, Eiko, 93, Louisville, KY, Dec. 13, 2023; she is survived by her siblings, Taeko Yokomizo and Yasuhisa Kariya; several cousins.

Tawa, Yukiko (Kik) Mori, 96, St. George, UT, Jan. 31; member, Mount Olympus JACL Chapter; activities included working on the Miss Teen Sansei pageant; she was predeceased by her siblings, Miyeko Kiriya, Shigeru Mori and Nobuo Mori; she is survived by her daughters, Keiko Tawa and Michiko Ann Otello; siblings, Tom Mori (Betty), Selma Yagi (Junior, deceased), Floyd Mori (Irene) and Steve Mori (Nancy); gc: 4; ggc: 2.



Watanabe, Mike, 77, Los Angeles, CA, Nov. 3, 2023; veteran, Army; B.A., California State University Northridge (sociology); M.A., UCLA, (social work); honorary doctor of humane letters, CSUN; during his 46-year-long association with Asian American Drug Abuse Program, he served as its served as CEO and president; other activities: Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council (president) and Los Angeles County Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Commission, California Dept. of Alcohol and Drug Programs, National Asian Pacific Families Against Substance Abuse; Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council (past president); and Asian and Pacific Islander Constituent Committee; he is survived by his wife, Suzie.

Aratani, Sakaye, 104, Los Angeles, CA, March 18; during WWII, her family and she were incarcerated at the Poston WRA Center in AZ; a philanthropist, her activities included the Japan America Society, Nisei Women's Golf Club; Japanese American Montebello Women's Club; Japanese Women's Society of Southern California; City View Hospital (board member); Nisei Week grand marshal (1980); Asia America Symphony Assn.; Sumitomo Bank of California (board member); the PTA; Women's Welfare Service; Girl Scouts; Los Angeles-Nagoya Sister City Alliance; Nichi Bei Fujinkai; Keiro Nursing Home; Aratani Foundation (president); recipient, Order of the Sacred Treasure, Fourth Order from the Japanese government; she was predeceased by her husband, George Aratani; she is survived by her daughters, Donna Kwee (Kwee Liong Tek) and Linda Aratani; gc: 7; ggc: 10.

Marumoto, Toyoko, 93, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, Nov. 30, 2023; she was predeceased by her husband, Noriyuki Marumoto; she is survived by her children, Roger (Kathleen), Marumoto, Patricia (Gary) Lehto, Todd (Joni) Marumoto and Kimberly (David) Barbis; sister, May Kaneshiro; gc: 7; ggc: 2.

TRIBUTE

RICHARD SHIMAMOTO



Richard (Dick) Shimamoto, 82 of St. Louis, Mo., March 15, 2024. Preceded in death by his wife, Vicky, in 2020, he was father to Sherry (Herman) Leilt and Cindy Shimamoto, dear grandfather of Seth (Abby) Pratt and Wesley Pratt; and Mickey, Kiera and Cody Hosack. Dear brother to David (Joyce) Shimamoto, Ed (Diane Broughton) Shimamoto, Lois Adams of Bella Vista, Ark., and Lynn (Don Brubeck) Shimamoto of Seattle. He left many cousins, nieces and nephews.

Dick was born to Naokichi "George" and Kimi Shimamoto. His family was relocated to a WRA camp in Rohwer, Ark. After the war, his family moved to St. Louis, Mo.

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AARP's Livability Index

By Scott Tanaka

Last month, I had the opportunity to attend the American Society on Aging's 2024 Conference in San Francisco. It was my first time attending the conference in person, and it was great connecting with colleagues and friends that I haven't seen since before the pandemic.

Throughout the conference, I staffed the AARP booth and shared with attendees about AARP's Livability Index. I thought this would be a good time to share this helpful resource that my colleagues in AARP's Public Policy Institute developed. The AARP Livability Index platform is a groundbreaking, web-based tool that scores every neighborhood and community in the United States for the services and amenities that affect people's lives the most.

Using more than 50 national data sources, the AARP Livability Index platform provides the clearest picture yet of how well a community meets the current and future needs of people of all ages, regardless of income, physical ability or ethnicity. The AARP Livability Index website measures

61 indicators spread across seven categories of livability: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement and opportunity.

The AARP Livability Website works to:

- Help prospective residents decide where to live
- Prepare communities for an aging population
- Encourage advocacy for livability improvements
- Inform key stakeholders, including public leaders, policymakers, nonprofit organizations and community advocates
- Encourage effective changes in policy, planning, investment and development at the state and local levels
- Identify opportunities for private and public developers to meet development needs

How Does It Work?

To get started, visit the AARP Livability Index website by going to <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/>. This tool is free and available to everyone. Once you go to the page, you will see where you can look up

how livable your community is by entering an address, city, state or zip code.

The more information you include, the more specific the score will be. Each neighborhood, city, county or state is scored on a scale from 0-100. The average location scores a 50. Those communities with more livability-friendly practices earn a score above 50, and those facing obstacles to livability score lower.

As I mentioned earlier, the Livability Index tool measures 61 indicators across seven categories of livability: housing, neighborhood, transportation, environment, health, engagement and opportunity. Within each of these categories, there are several metrics that are calculated into the overall livability score.

For example, under housing, we look at housing accessibility. One way we measure accessibility is the percentage of housing units with zero-step entrances. We know that most Americans want to stay in their homes as they age. Many will host guests or have older family members with restricted mobility. It's desirable to have a home that's both accessible and aesthetically pleasing. To learn more about the other indicators and how Livability scores are determined, visit <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/methods-sources>.

Scott Tanaka is a member of the JACL Washington, D.C., chapter and is a policy, research and international affairs adviser at AARP.

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Hatred of the Chinese during the gold rush was fueled by political rhetoric as well. The only article that addressed a racial or ethnic group in California's constitution, which was ratified in 1879, stated that "no Chinese shall be employed on any State, county, municipal or other public work, except in punishment for crime." The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 barred Chinese laborers from immigrating.

Kaishin Victory Matsui, a priest at the Brooklyn Zen Center, said faith can be used as a way to heal the harm of racism.

"We come to these historic sites where trauma has occurred to bring peace and healing," she said. "The idea is to remember the past so it is not forgotten. This event connects Asians across time and ethnicity and reminds us of how vast and powerful we are."

Longtime Antioch residents viewed the event as necessary for the city to move away from its traumatic past and become more inclusive. Antioch made headlines recently after several civil rights lawsuits involving 20 plaintiffs alleged they were victims of police misconduct, excessive force and racial profiling.

Karen J. Oliver said she was horrified but not surprised to learn about how her city had mistreated Chinese immigrants.

"We all need peace and reconciliation and whatever road we can find it on, we need to take that road," she said.

Frank Sterling, who has Indigenous roots, saw the Buddhist rituals as a major step in healing the entire community.

"You can't do that until you acknowledge the past, and there is a lot for us to move on from," he said. "This is a good start." ■



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