The Year in Review
N
ext year the Japantown community will be recognizing two very important anniversaries: the 110th anniversary of Japantown in the Western Addition and the 5th anniversary of the 3/11 earthquake and tsunami that devastated the Tohoku region of Japan.

The JCCCNC is taking the leading role for both of these significant anniversaries. For the 110th anniversary of Japantown we will be acting as the administrator and coordinator of the overall activities for 2016. A commemorative brochure featuring the history of Japantown from 1906–2016 and scheduled community events to celebrate the anniversary will be produced by the Center and available in early January.

We will have several of our own events to celebrate the occasion, including the return of the Grateful Crane production, “Nihonmachi the Place to Be,” which is about a manju shop that is closing after three generations of operation. The JCCCNC helped to create the original play, which was written especially for the 100th anniversary of San Francisco, Japantown.

We are also planning a Nisei Tribute lunch in recognition of the Nisei generation who helped rebuild Japantown following the war and will be creating an Issei Remembrance Garden in the Cottage Row Mini Park on Sutter Street between Webster and Fillmore. This Japanese garden will be the first dedicated public recognition in Japantown to honor the Issei generation who established our community in 1906.

On Friday, March 11, the JCCCNC will be organizing a Remembrance Ceremony to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. On that same day five years earlier the JCCCNC established the Northern Japan Earthquake Relief Fund, which raised $4.2M for the recovery efforts.

We have supported the recovery efforts for the past four years, primarily focusing our activities in Fukushima prefecture.

Plans for the 5th anniversary also include organizing a Cultural Tour to the Tohoku region of Japan visiting all five prefectures to experience the beauty of the region and to reflect upon five years of recovery. The trip is planned for October and due to limited space, it will only be open to our members.

Additional plans include inviting a group of senior women living in a temporary housing facility in Fukushima. These women have been instrumental in the on-going recovery efforts and will share their stories, so that we will not forget those still struggling to recover. We will also host three traditional cultural artists who are trying to sustain their businesses and, more important, their art-forms of daruma, kokeshi and akabeko alive in their small towns following 3/11. They will be conducting workshops, lectures and demonstrations during their stay in San Francisco.

Be sure to look out for more information on our 3/11 programs in our newsletters, on our website and Facebook page and flyers, and the 110th anniversary brochure that will be available soon.

Next year is going to be very busy for the JCCCNC and we are looking forward to it!

Paul Osaki
Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT

The JCCCN is a non-profit organization which strives to meet the evolving needs of the Japanese American community by offering programs, affordable services, and administrative support and facilities for other local organizations. The JCCCN also provides educational, cultural, and recreational programs that meet and address the interests and concerns of the community. Our goals remain rooted in preserving the Japanese American cultural and historical heritage as well as fostering the foundation for future generations of Japanese Americans.
Meet Mr. Yamada

Full name: Yasunari George Yamada

Born: Imabari, Ehime-Ken (Ehime Prefecture), Japan

Mr. Yamada is best known for his skills as a manju-maker. He is the retired owner of Yamada Seika which during their time was one of the best places to buy fresh manju (Japanese sweets) and was the main suppliers of sweets for the Urasenke Tea School.

His confectionery skill was no accident, Mr. Yamada first leaned baking from his father, who owned a confectionery store in his hometown, at the age of ten. He graduated from the Japan Seika Gakko baking school specializing in Japanese and European-style baking in 1952. Two years later he was on a ship to come to the United States. In the US he received his degree in Cake, Pastries, Bread & Rolls and opened the famous Yamada Seika in July, 1963.

Yamada Seika was a favorite stop for many in Japantown for 36 years. Mr. Yamada is still grateful to his customers and the community for their patronage and support. What he misses most about mochitsuki at Yamada Seika is the customers who supported him and the young people he hired to help him during the days leading up to New Year’s Day. Over the years and to this day, he is still in touch with many of them, and like a proud father, he gloated that they were all hard workers and well-educated, as they are now professionals with some even becoming doctors.

Mr. Yamada is still lending his service to the community and helps the JCCCNC with mochitsuki every year. He enjoys seeing the multi-generational families spending time together and learning about Japanese culture. He also enjoys passing down his secrets to turning the hot rice into perfect mochi.

Story of the usu

Paul Osaki recalls the days leading up to the closing of Yamada Seika on Fillmore Street, which is just down the block from the JCCNC, and remembers asking Mr. Yamada what he was going to do with the usu (mortar) and motorized kine (hammer). Mr. Yamada replied, “I have no use for this,” and was going to throw it away. Paul said, “You can’t, it’s a part of our (community) history,” so Mr. Yamada agreed to donate it to the JCCNC. It took several men to transport it from the store to the JCCNC, but it has a new home where each year since Yamada Seika’s closing, that the JCCNC has hosted mochitsuki workshops – sharing the culture and community with younger generations.
The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) hosted its annual fundraising dinner, TABEMASHO 2015: Cultural Connections on Saturday, September 19, welcoming over 380 community members and guests as well as 200 volunteers in the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Nisei Community Hall. But equally important, we also recognized two longtime supporters, Japan Airlines (JAL) and Kintetsu International (KIE), who have contributed to the growth of JCCCNC’s U.S.-Japan programs and events and have created “cultural connections” between the United States and Japan for the past 25 years.

The commitment of JAL and KIE to the JCCCNC and our organizational goal to enhance the understanding and appreciation among the Japanese American community, American public and people of Japan, has allowed the JCCCNC to create programs and coordinate travel to Japan on multiple levels. Visits and meetings with high level government officials, business leaders, local and prefectural governments, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), schools, senior centers, orphanages, YMCAs and many other organizations, many of whom we still partner with today, have played an important role in enhancing our Japan cultural programs.

With the support of JAL and KIE, we have organized over 50 trips to Japan, connecting thousands of individuals through JCCCNC sponsored or coordinated programs and projects, such as:

- **Conferences and Workshops** that bring together leaders, ordinary citizens and academic, culinary and health professionals, to share their knowledge and expertise, like those of the 2007 San Francisco-Osaka Culinary Tour celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Sister City Relationship.

- **Programs** for youth, families, seniors and children that connect them to their ancestral roots and provide a first-hand experience to learn about and feel Japan through sports and homestays, like the Shinzen Goodwill Program, researching their ancestors, or even just to smile over a cup of tea.

- **Cultural Tours** that allow participants to see, taste and experience cities such as Hiroshima, Osaka and Sapporo, but also towns like Kurashiki in Okayama, whose canal area dates back to the Edo period and the historic town of Arimatsu, which is famous for its high quality shibori textiles.

- **Relief Support** that gave donors to the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake (Kobe) and Northern Japan Earthquake Relief Fund the chance to provide love and hope to survivors in Japan.

“Our partnership with JAL began in 1990. Those early visits to Japan opened the doors that have allowed us to establish relationships that paved the way for all of the exchange programs we have created for the past 25 years.”

– Donna Ong-Kimura, President

“Without KIE many of our cultural exchange programs would not have been possible. It has been their expertise especially with their staff in Osaka, like Morimichi Hiratsuka, that have been invaluable to us.”

– Paul Osaki, Executive Director

The JCCCNC celebrated the two Cultural Connections honorees with its usual flair, followed by the Takeo Okamoto Community Leadership Award to June-ko Nakagawa and Kay Okamoto Volunteer Award to Suzanne Yamada. Popular Bay Area restaurants and businesses, such as Bashamichi, Delica, Izakaya Roku, Kirimachi Ramen, Kui Shinfu, La Mar, True Sake and Yamasho lined the Center’s beautifully decorated gymnasium serving Hors d’oeuvres and sake tastings; community chefs, lead by Facebook’s Wade Tamura who served delicious home-cooked treats and Nikkei comfort foods; and SF Awakko Ren who took the stage to rally the crowd with an awadori performance.

The event also presented a sweepstakes raffle drawing and silent and live auctions featuring a trip to Asia for two with airfare donated by JAL and five-night accommodations in Japan provided by KIE.

Supporting the event were Presenting Sponsors Japan Airlines, Kintetsu International, The Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation, and Union Bank; Benefactor Sponsors Comcast and Wells Fargo; Patron Sponsors Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California, Minami Tamaki LLP, and Pacific Gas & Electric Company; Media Sponsor NBC Bay Area.
The JCCCNC would like to thank the JCCCNC community for generously supporting the 2015 Sweepstakes drawing held on Saturday, September 19, 2015 at our annual event, TABEMASHO 2015: Cultural Connections.

The winners of the drawing were:

**Kimura Family:**
Two round trip premium economy tickets to Asia plus 3-night hotel accommodations in Japan courtesy of Japan Airlines and Kintetsu International
Donated back to JCCCNC

**Gordon Wong:**
$1,000 CASH

**Emi Nakahiro:**
Apple Watch 42mm in Space Gray (Aluminum Case with Black Sport Band including AppleCare+)

Proceeds from the 2015 Sweepstakes helped support the JCCCNC’s over 80 on-going classes, programs, and special events featuring an array of cultural arts, social, recreational, and educational classes for all ages and backgrounds.

For more information about the 2015 Sweepstakes or other giving opportunities, visit www.jcccnc.org/giving or contact Susie Kagami at (415) 567-5505 or skagami@jcccnc.org.
Arts and Culture

Basic Drawing
Join instructor Rich Tokeshi, one of the original art instructors at Japantown Art & Media (JAM), which flourished in the ‘80s and ‘90s. This eight week course will teach you basic drawing skills and techniques. The class is open to all skill levels and single class drop-in classes available.

Instructor: Rich Tokeshi
When: Saturdays, 10:00am-12:00pm
Cost: $70 Member/$90 Non-Member (8 consecutive weeks)
$11 Member/$14 Non-Member Drop-In

Ikebana
Learn the traditional art of Ikebana, or flower arrangement. Create a harmony of linear construction, rhythm and color. In this class, you will have the opportunity to create your very own Ikebana flower arrangement each week. Participants are encouraged to bring a vase but it is not required.

Instructor: Chizuko Nakamura
When: Wednesdays, 6:00pm-8:00pm
Cost: $198 Member/$252 Non-Member/Stamp Card (10 classes)
$99 Member/$126 Non-Member/Stamp Card (5 classes)
$22 Member/$28 Non-Member/Drop-In

Senior Women’s Writing
Preserve the written stories and memories of the Asian American senior women of our community and preserve Asian American history. This class is open to both new and experienced writers.

Instructor: Genny Lim
When: Mondays, 10:00am-12:00pm
Cost: $110 Member/$125 Non-Member/Stamp Card (10 classes)
$55 Member/$62.50 Non-Member/Stamp Card (5 classes)
$14 Member/$16 Non-Member/Drop-In

Tougei Ceramics
Learn various ceramics techniques including hand-building, wheel throwing and surface decoration to create unique sculptures and/or functional wares. During this eight week class you will also learn glazing techniques to create personalized pieces.

Instructor: Tomoko Nakazato
When: Tuesdays, 6:00pm-9:00pm
Cost: $175 Member/$225 Non-Member (8 consecutive weeks)

Washi Ningyo
Discover the art of Japanese paper doll making and create your own beautiful Japanese washi paper. Learn the basics or perfect your skills in this class of all skill levels. *Participants must register for workshop before participating in ongoing class.

Instructor: Rochelle Lum
When: 3rd Saturday each month
Cost: $10 Member/$15 Non-Member (+ materials fee)

Watercolor
Learn the basics of watercolor painting and slowly bring your artwork to life with the help of Instructor, Wendy Yoshimura. This class is open to all skill levels.

Instructor: Wendy Yoshimura
When: Mondays, 10:00am-12:00pm
Cost: $100 Member/$120 Non-Member/Stamp Card (10 classes)
$50 Member/$60 Non-Member/Stamp Card (5 classes)
$11 Member/$14 Non-Member/Drop-In

Dance

Hula – Beginning
Learn both Auwana (modern) and Kahiko (ancient hula). You will experience anaerobic (low impact) exercise while learning to dance hula as well as make friends. No dance experience required.

Instructors: Denise Teraoka & Joyce Chen
When: Wednesdays, 6:00pm-7:30pm
Cost: $70 Member/$100 Non-Member/Stamp Card (10 classes)
$35 Member/$50 Non-Member/Stamp Card (5 classes)
$10 Member/$15 Non-Member/Drop-In

Hula – Gracious Ladies (Adults)
Learn both Auwana (modern) and Kahiko (ancient) hula. You will experience anaerobic (low impact) exercise while learning to dance hula as well as make friends. Class participants also have the opportunity to join the Halau, Hālau Ka Liko Pua O Kalaniākea for an additional fee.
Instructor: Mary Leong
When: 1st and 3rd Thursdays, 5:30pm-7:00pm
Saturdays, 11:30am-1:00pm
Cost: $23 Member/$28 Non-Member/Monthly (Thurs. Only)
$45 Member/$55 Non-Member/Monthly (Sat. Only)
$60 Member/$75 Non-Member/Monthly (Thurs. & Sat.)
$126 Member/$153 Non-Member/Stamp Card (10 classes)
$14 Member/$17 Non-Member/Drop-In

Hula – Keiki (Kids)
Give the gift of hula to your child as s/he learns coordination, grace and teamwork through working on both modern and traditional hula.

Instructor: Mary Leong
When: Saturdays, 10:30am-11:30am
Cost: $30 Member/$40 Non-Member/Monthly
$90 Member/$108 Non-Member/Stamp Card (10 classes)
$10 Member/$12 Non-Member/Drop-In

Hula – Kupuna (Seniors)
Learn ancient and modern hula while keeping your coordination and memory sharp.

Instructor: Mary Leong
When: Saturdays, 11:30am-1:00pm
Cost: $45 Member/$55 Non-Member/Monthly
$126 Member/$153 Non-Member/Stamp Card (10 classes)
$14 Member/$17 Non-Member/Drop-In

Line Dancing
Learn dance steps to smooth R&B and pop music and keep in shape while making new friends. This fun anaerobic (low impact) dance class is open to all skill levels. No dance experience required.

Instructor: Alan Kitashima
When: Tuesdays & Fridays, 1:15pm-2:45pm
Cost: $4 Member/$5 Non-Member/Drop-In

Martial Arts and Fitness

Karaté
Karate is an Okinawan martial art meaning “empty hand.” Develop self-defense skills and strengthen yourself mentally and physically. Our karate class is part of the International Karate League (IKL) which instructs a modified Shorin-Ryu style of karate. This class is open to all skill levels age 6+

Instructor: Craig Hamakawa
When: Mondays & Wednesdays, 6:00pm-8:00pm
Cost: $30 Member/$48 Non-Member/Monthly
$9 Member/$14 Non-Member/Drop-In

Senior Chair Aerobics
Designed for seniors who want to build basic physical strength in a low-impact class. Students will use a chair to participate in exercises to increase flexibility, muscle coordination and strength. Classes end with a hands-on massage to relieve any lingering stress.

Instructor: Kaeko Inori
When: Mondays, 12:30pm-1:30pm
Cost: $4 Member/$5 Non-Member/Drop-In

Yoga Prema
To Tone up your body, heal an injury, lose weight, increase flexibility or to relieve stress... whatever your purpose to start yoga is, once you start and continue practicing, you’ll feel more energized as your body condition improves and your mind becomes clearer. This class is open to both the beginner and experienced.

Instructor: Ai Tanaka
When: Saturdays, 10:30am-12:00pm
Cost: $28 Member/$40 Non-Member/Monthly
$80 Member/$120 Non-Member/Stamp Card (10 classes)
$9 Member/$12 Non-Member/Drop-In

Zumba Gold - Beginner
A low impact fitness class that utilizes up-tempo Latin music to create a fun and enjoyable workout.

Instructor: Noriko Rovner

Kase Nikkei Community Scholarship Program
Applications for $5,000 scholarship available soon!

Patty Yamazaki, 2015 Kase Scholarship Intern, a San Francisco native attends the University of San Francisco and is majoring in Biology. “Along with learning what it’s like to work in an office environment, I’ve broadened my knowledge of Japantown and refined skills that I can carry into the next chapter of my life. I have also gained more confidence in myself and developed stronger opinions and emotions regarding my place in the community and the role I play,” mentions Patty when asked about interning at the JCCNC since June.

Continued on page 9
When: Sundays, 9:30am-10:15am  
Cost: $27 Member/$32 Non-Member/Monthly  
$70 Member/$90 Non-Member/Stamp Card (10 classes)  
$8 Member/$10 Non-Member/Drop-In

**Zumba Fitness**  
A high energy workout that uses up-tempo Latin music to create an exciting workout. Bring hand weights for the toning exercises!

Instructor: Noriko Rovner  
When: Sundays, 10:30am-11:30am  
Cost: $32 Member/$44 Non-Member/Monthly  
$90 Member/$120 Non-Member/Stamp Card (10 classes)  
$10 Member/$14 Non-Member/Drop-In

**Music**  

**Chorale May**  
Be part of a male chorus group and sing a variety of songs, mainly in Japanese with some English.

Instructor: Ruriko Miura  
When: 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 7:00pm-9:00pm  
Cost: $25 Member/$31 Non-Member/Monthly

**Ensemble Shiki**  
Be part of a mixed chorus group and sing a variety of songs, mainly in Japanese with some English.

Instructor: Ruriko Miura  
When: 1st, 3rd, & 5th Tuesdays, 7:00pm-9:00pm  
Cost: $25 Member/$31 Non-Member/Monthly

**Kirakiraboshi**  
Students will learn Japanese by singing and playing traditional Japanese children songs. Students will also learn to pre-read music/notes using the Kodaly method and gain performance skills by performing at community events.

Instructor: Kaori Nakano  
When: Wednesdays, 5:00pm-5:45pm  
Cost: $35 Member/$45 Non-Member/Monthly

**Minyo/Hauta/Shamisen**  
Improve your voice, tone, and projection while singing popular contemporary Japanese songs and learn how to play the traditional Japanese stringed Shamisen.

Instructor: Hideko Nakajima  
When: 2nd & 4th Sundays, Individual Lessons between 9:00am-2:00pm

**Social**  

**Bambi**  
Meet with Japanese speaking parents and their children for a morning of play.

When: Tuesdays, 10:00am-12:00pm  
Cost: Free

**Bridge**  
Keep your mind sharp while playing bridge in a fun, social environment.

Coordinator: Alice Moriguchi  
When: Fridays, 12:30pm-4:00pm  
Cost: $2 Member/$3 Non-Member/Drop-In

**Hanafuda**  
Learn Hanafuda, flower card, a traditional Japanese game dating back over 350 years, with varying styles similar to Gin Rummy.

Coordinator: Bobby Hirano  
When: Wednesdays, 12:30pm-4:00pm

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*All information subject to change. Please confirm details directly with the program coordinators.*
Mah Jongg
Engage in social activity and develop creative strategy skills by playing the popular Chinese tile game

Coordinator: Yone Higashigawa
When: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30pm-4:00pm
Cost: $2 Member/$3 Non-Member/Drop-In

Sports
Community Volleyball
Create a team for your non-profit/service/interest organization and join us for a league filled with fun, food and volleyball! Each team must consist of either board/staff members or volunteers.

When: Tuesdays, 7:00pm-10:00pm
Cost: $35 Member/$45 Non-Member/Season

30 and Over Basketball
Sign up for JCCCNC’s Monday Night Basketball League. Participate in games that are competitive, but friendly!

When: Mondays, 6:00pm-10:00pm (up to 15 weeks per season)
Cost: $90 Member/$115 Non-Member/Per Season

40 and Over Basketball
Get your friends and join the mature, wise and friendly Wednesday Night League.

When: Wednesdays, 6:00pm-10:00pm (up to 15 weeks per season)
Cost: $85 Member/$110 Non-Member/Per Season

Kase Nikkei Community Scholarship Program
The Kase Nikkei Community Scholarship Program provides financial support for youth who are pursuing their college education, an opportunity to obtain experience supporting the work of Japantown community nonprofit organizations, and guidance to support their future professional endeavors. To learn how you can become a 2016 Kase Scholarship Intern, visit our website at www.jcccnc.org.

Construction Notice
Our neighbors Nihonmachi Little Friends (NLF) have begun construction on their new building adjacent to the JCCCNC at 1830 Sutter Street. NLF hopes to complete their project by the end of 2016. Construction will continue Monday-Friday from 7:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m., with some weekend work expected. We were informed that the sidewalks will remain open during this time, but we anticipate an increase in noise, dust and some traffic issues on occasion. Programs and classes should not be affected, but we ask that you allow adequate time for parking and be cautious when walking near the construction area.
Recent events at the JCCCN

Halloween

The Center’s gym was filled with ghosts, goblins, and minions who came for an evening of haunted fun, pie eating and the spirited costume contest. Visit our Flickr site http://bit.ly/2015halloweencarnival to see the winners and others who attended the Halloween Carnival.

Hariko Workshop

Hanjiro Sawafuji, a master Hariko (paper-mache) artist from Iwate Prefecture taught participants how to craft and paint their own doll and mask. Partial proceeds from this workshop were donated to support local artist in the Tohoku Region affected by the 3.11 earthquake and tsunami.

Sake Day Celebrates 10 years!

Kanpai! Sake Day 10th Anniversary at the San Francisco Armory included breweries from Japan, local craft sake and a crowd of over 800! Proceeds benefitted the JCCCN’s ongoing programs. Thank you Beau, True Sake and Ichinokura for your support and generosity! Be on the lookout for True Cup sake bar in early 2016.

What’s at the JCCCN?

Mochitsukiri with Mr. Yamada

Saturday, December 19 (various shifts available)
Join Mr. Yamada in making traditional mochi (sweet rice cakes) that is eaten in New Year’s ozoni (soup). See steamed rice pounded in the usu (mortar), learn how to cut them into komochi (small mochi balls) and enjoy them with sweet beans or kinako.

Remembering 3.11 – 5th Anniversary

2016 marks the 5th Anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. The JCCCN will host a remembrance event on March 11, as well as other projects to remember and support the rebuilding efforts in Tohoku, particularly those in Fukushima Prefecture. Some of the projects will include artists/crafts from Fukushima like the akabeko (red cow), daruma and kokeshi.

110th Anniversary of San Francisco Japantown

2016 community calendar of events will be available soon!
Looking Back-Looking Forward is a new addition to our newsletter. We will be reprinting some old press releases and articles dating as far back as the 1970s when the JCCCNC was just a dream.

We hope in looking back at our history, it will help us look forward to our future.

It’s has been over 30 year since this article was printed in the Hokubei. Take a look back and at this article written by Rev. David Nakagawa on why Japantown needs a Community Center.

J-Town Needs A Community Center

Editor’s Note: The following article was written by Rev. David Nakagawa of Christ United Presbyterian Church in San Francisco and appeared in the church’s newsletter, The Visiting Pastor.

The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) project seeks to build a multi-use community center in the heart of Nihonmachi, on Sutter Street, between Buchanan and Webster.

I have taken an active role in this project because I believe that the Community Center will be one of the best things that can happen to Nihonmachi and will certainly benefit the life of the Japanese American community of San Francisco and Northern California.

Nihonmachi has been built anew. It is a fine place to be in compared to the former years. I remember how it used to be when I was a student going to college. There weren’t any good restaurants in the area. Maybe the food was good, but the atmosphere was a downer. I remember going to eat at Minaken, a low ceiling restaurant on the corner of Post and Buchanan. Short as I was, I had to duck at certain places, lest my head hit a low hanging beam. A trip to the bathroom was a real journey and adventure, weaving through the kitchen and back to a dimly lit cubby hole.

That was how life was back then and since I couldn’t afford anything better, I guess I didn’t complain. But in the approximately 20 years I was gone from San Francisco, the area underwent tremendous change. Many Japanese moved out as the area declined. Then vast changes began to happen as the Western Addition A-1 and A-2 projects got underway.

Yes, there was much human suffering as redevelopment got underway and gradually learned how to be more humane to the people and fairer towards the small businesses. At any rate, now Nihonmachi is changed! It is a place where people gather and you are proud to bring your friends into the area and take them to a restaurant. Quite a few of the national committees of our Presbyterian denominations stay at the Kyoto Inn and meet at our church and eat at the neighborhood restaurants. That would have been unthinkable in the old Nihonmachi.

But, good as the improvements have been, there is one great thing lacking a Community Center! People can come down here to shop, or attend church, or attend a meeting, or go to the bars, or restaurants, or attend a big dinner at the Miyako Hotel. However, there is really no place for significant community activities! There is no facility which will bridge the gap between generations and religious groups, and be rather inclusive as to the types of activities which will take place within its walls.

Other than the bowling alley, there is no place where young people can come into Nihonmachi and “hang around,” and some people question whether the bowling alley is the best place for our youth to hang around. There is no place where youth and adults can truly mix together, apart from the churches, and thus bridge the generation gap. There is no place where large community gatherings can take place at minimal cost, because the Miyako Hotel certainly is not a low-cost gathering place.

In short, Nihonmachi is mainly good for shopping (people who have money to spend) or going to church (if you are of a particular religious persuasion). For the vast majority, there is no facility which says “WELCOME!” in big letters and encourages you to develop new relations with other people in the Japanese American community. So, the community center is a very much needed facility.

I hope that you will support the project as the Community Center committee begins its community fund-raising campaign this month.
The ‘joy’ of cooking can get a little old if you follow the same repertoire every day, but did you ever stop to consider that your lack of enthusiasm may stem from not using and appreciating the right kitchen tools?

As this issue of JCCCNC’s newsletter enters you into the holiday gift giving season, you may want to think about purchasing or passing down a Japanese kitchen gadget that would not only aid in the ease of preparing a meal, but also bring you visual and cultural happiness.

Washoku, the traditional dieting culture of the Japanese, was identified as an intangible cultural heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2012. A large part of this recognition is attributed to the foundational tools and methods of preparing a meal that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Upper photo: Who says that you have to use items for their original purpose? This is a lid or futa from a large rice pot that has been repurposed as a display piece. Date of construction is unknown but it is at least 50 years old!

Right photo: This oroshigane is now with its third owner. Originally purchased during “Occupied Japan”, (1945-47), it still looks as good as it did over 70 years ago! Courtesy of the Yamane-Aizawa family.

Upper right photo: Good old tawashi - the all purpose scrubber made of palm and lasts longer than any sponge you can buy!
Japanese craftspeople take great pride in creating tools for the kitchen that follow centuries of tradition and are guaranteed to last several generations of use.

Featured below are a few favorite tools that are greatly admired for its beautiful but sturdy construction. You may also want to think about giving one of your own handcrafted kitchen tools to a member of your family or a good friend with some hints on how you have used the tool and the recipes made with it-it is sure to be a sacred item for years to come!

Also, if you are a gifter of books, there is a book called “Cool Tools” by Kate Klippensteen with photos by Yasuo Konishi (Kodansha) 2006.

Left photo: katsuo kezuriki (bonito plane)-this cool tool shaves a dried piece of smoked bonito into thin sheets to fall into the drawer below. Originally purchased by JCCCNC member Masako Martha Suzuki, circa 1960. Still used by its second owner.

Right photo: This Nambu tetsubin (cast iron tea pot) from Iwate Prefecture is not so old but receives constant use. Many Japanese say that their tea tastes better when brewed in a cast iron pot.

Left photo: this is a hand size oroshigane – a grater used at the dinner table to compliment special dishes.

Left photo: This Nambu tetsubin (cast iron tea pot) from Iwate Prefecture is not so old but receives constant use. Many Japanese say that their tea tastes better when brewed in a cast iron pot.

Left photo: katsuo kezuriki (bonito plane)-this cool tool shaves a dried piece of smoked bonito into thin sheets to fall into the drawer below. Originally purchased by JCCCNC member Masako Martha Suzuki, circa 1960. Still used by its second owner.
White snow covered the grounds, the roofs, and the hills. Long icicles hung from the eaves, and smoke rose from hundreds of chimneys. This scene could have been from a Christmas card, but no, this was Tule Lake concentration camp, U.S.A. We were in the middle of an icy desert. There was not a tree in sight, just sagebrush as far as I could see. This was a Christmas season with no cheer, just dark clouds hanging over our camp. How could I create a Christmas mood? I headed to Canteen #1 at Ward 4, where my older brother was a manager. With my monthly clothing allowance check of $3.50, I bought a set of construction paper in various colors. Back in our barracks, I cut up the dark green paper and glued the pieces into a shape of a Christmas tree. Small round shapes in red, orange, yellow, pink, and chartreuse were snipped from the paper and pasted on the tree to look like ornaments. This paper Christmas tree was only about a foot tall, but it did help to brighten up the mood of our first Christmas behind barbed wire fences and guard towers. Finally, I was able to say, “Merry Christmas.”

Story originally published in “From our Side of the Fence: Growing up in America’s Concentration Camps”

Learn More about From Our Side of the Fence: Growing up in America’s Concentration Camps

“From Our Side of the Fence” contains the first-person accounts of eleven former internees who recall their memories of childhood and youth in America’s concentration camps. This collection traces each author’s personal and psychological journey through war, giving voice to a history that has been silenced. Emerging from a writing workshop taught by the editor, Brian Komei Dempster, and offered through the JCCCNC, this book also offers lesson plans for use by educators and students, and for internees who wish to tell their own stories.

Editor: Brain Komei Dempster

Published: 2001
Paperback: 155 pages
Price: Members $14; Non-members $18
Woodchips in my Mochi

BY CASEY IKEDA

My favorite way to eat mochi is the way my mom use to make it for me in the morning before school, toasted until it puffed up into a deformed bubble with a crispy shell and a gooey center, dipped in shoyu and sugar, and with bits of woodchips sprinkled in.

The woodchip tradition started in my Grandpa’s garage where we would pound rice and when I could barely lift the wooden mallet. My Grandpa had made smaller mallets for my sister and me, so I stepped up the stone usu with the confidence of a seasoned mochi pounder. I swung the mallet with a force that I assumed would pulverize the grains of rice into instant mochi. Unfortunately the mighty swing came in contact with the stone usu, with only the splinters of wood coming in contact with the rice. My Grandpa laughed, “Good fiber” and with a wink and lighting quick hands the splinters were folded back into the rice.

Mochi pounding was a holiday tradition in my family. Each year my role grew a bit from my first year as “woodchipper” (though I would reclaim that role in many future years) and with each role learning a bit more about this tradition. From soaking the wooden box and mallets the night before so the wood could expand, steaming the rice and working in pairs to switch out the boxes when the rice was ready, and learning that you need a lot of mochiko on your hands if you don’t want the mochi to stick to you when you are shaping it.

Still, even after years of perfecting the tradition, woodchips would always be in the mochi. Woodchips from a new person experiencing pounding for the first time, woodchips from an older mallet starting to break, woodchips from a new wooden usu that was made to stop the stone usu from chipping the mallets, woodchips, woodchips, woodchips!

At some point the tradition stopped. Mochi pounding just became too much work. My Grandpa was getting older and it was harder for him to bend over to fold woodchips into the rice. The holidays became too busy and remembering to soak rice for pounding the night before, soaking and repairing the mallets, making the azuki, all to have woodchips in the mochi just seemed a bit too much. The woodchips in my mochi stopped.

Last year we decided to bring back mochi pounding and it was to be brought back in epic fashion. We would be pounding batches and while we waited for the next batch to finish steaming we had an electric mixer that popped out batches of almost instantly. We had set up a charcoal grill and grilled fresh mochi on the spot. We also brought in all sorts of fillings like azuki, strawberry, peanut butter, chocolate, coffee bean, Nutella, and by the end my mom was digging through the fridge and yelling out crazy suggestions, “what do you think about chashu? I can hard boil some eggs?!”

I tried all of them and some were surprisingly good and some were predictably bad, but I got one with a woodchip in it. I had to chew on it for a long time to make sure it wasn’t a coffee bean or wasabie pea. Chewing on the uncomfortable piece of wood I was reminded of the “good fiber” and in a brief moment knew I was sharing something that my Grandpa felt whenever he got woodchips in his mochi. The woodchips will connect future generations to my Grandpa. If I ever have a kid who steps up to the usu and swings with a force to pulverize the grains of rice only to have splinters of wood, those woodchips will connect that kid to me.
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The Daruma (or tumbling) doll always rights itself if it falls. It’s a great reminder to us to persevere in our own lives. The 2011 Japanese earthquake and tsunami disaster has been the reason people all around the world have come to know about Fukushima.

In their own way, these Daruma will help support people from this area. We hope to encourage young artists in the area to continue the tradition of the Shirakawa Daruma doll. And hopefully provide some cheer to those affected by the disaster.

Shirakawa Daruma have been loved since the Edo period (1603–1868) in Shirakawa City, Fukushima. The Japanese believe that it’s a lucky charm. Traditionally, Daruma are produced without the eyes being painted in. You are expected to paint in the left eye of the Daruma (e.g. using a marker pen), then make a wish. Later, after your wish has come true, you paint in the right eye to give thanks. People often wish for things like the safety of their family, business success or completion victory. Even today, it continues being loved by people all over Japan. Sadly, there has been a steady decline in the number of artists and craft-people working in traditional Japanese handiwork. In fact, there are only two stores still making Shirakawa Daruma, one of them is Watanabe Daruma.

Custom Orders
Watanabe Daruma can make a variety of designs of Daruma. They are great as corporate gifts at parties and conferences, they make distinctive trophies or are great as decorations in your office.

They make great personal gifts too; for birthday presents, wedding gifts and the like.

You can customize the shape, colors, as well as add text and logos to the front, back and side of the Daruma. Please contact the art lab shop with your ideas, and we can help with the design.

Size: from 1.5 cm height (key ring) ~ 93cm height

Process of Ordering Daruma
1. Please contact the art lab shop with your requirements including: size, quantity, color, schedule, and design proposal
2. We will give you a quote
3. If you ordered a custom design, we will work with you to create your design.
4. When you have confirmed payment into our account, we will begin making your Daruma.
5. When complete, we will ship the Daruma from Japan to your place.

To order, contact:
Masayo Colley
mail: info@artlabshop.com
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GET YOUR JINS DARUMA EYEGLASS CASE AND SUPPORT THE JCCCNC! CASES ARE $5 EACH - 100% DONATED TO THE JCCCNC. AVAILABLE SPRING 2016 AT THE JINS STORE IN UNION SQUARE: 151 POWELL STREET, SAN FRANCISCO

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Visit www.jccnc.org/giving/donate to register.
Upcoming Events

Mochitsuki Workshops with Mr. Yamada

Saturday, Dec. 19, 11:00am-6:30pm (various shifts available)

$12 for JCCCNC members, $17 for general public

Register by December 17. Group rates available for parties of 6 or more.

Register online at: http://bit.ly/2015mochitsuki

Winter Kaiseki Cooking Workshop

Our popular seasonal Kaiseki cooking workshop taught by instructors Kimika Soko Takechi and Larry Sokyo Tiscornia will teach you how to prepare elegant and healthy traditional multi-course meals in the Kaiseki tradition. Originating in Zen temples of Japan, Kaiseki cuisine emphasizes the use of fresh, seasonal ingredients in an ensemble of dishes that are both delicious and sumptuous.

Saturday, December 12, 12 noon to 3:00 p.m.

$35 for JCCCNC members, $45 for general public


Bulldog Basketball Camp For Boys and Girls Ages 8-15

December 21-23, 2015, 9:00am-12:00pm

$85 for JCCCNC members, $105 for general public

Includes a t-shirt and Bulldog basketball

Register online: http://bit.ly/2015bulldogcamp