



Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai Newsletter



Volume XIII, Issue 1

1st Quarter 2025

2025 New Year Luncheon and 120th Anniversary Celebration February 23, 2025

The day could not have been more beautiful for the Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai's New Year Luncheon and 120th Anniversary Celebration! One hundred members and guests attended the special event in the Skyview room at the Quiet Cannon Banquet Facilities in Montebello.

MC **Aki Fukuhara-Vaughn** welcomed everyone then introduced special guests: Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles, the Honorable **Kenko Sone**; Author, UCLA Professor, and former KNBC-TV News Anchor, **Dr. Tritia Toyota, PhD**; Field Rep. **Chloe Tachibana** from CA State Assembly-member **Al Muratsuchi's** office; Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai President **Kihei Otani**; Director/Writer of the film *Little Tokyo Reporter* **Jeffrey Gee Chin**; CEO/President of the Go For Broke National Education Center **Dr. Mitchell Maki, PhD**; Producer/Director/Author **Robert Horsting**; and NYK member and decorated WWII veteran, **Yoshio Nakamura**.

Also introduced were kenjinkai presidents: **Keiro Koga** (Fukuoka); **Susan Yoshikawa** (Hiroshima); and **Mari Kawaguchi** (Tottori). Rafu Shimpo was represented by our friend **JK Yamamoto**.

Former NYK President **Arturo Yoshimoto** introduced the 2025 Board Officers for member approval: President **Bruce Kimura**; VP **Florence Ochi**; Secretary **Aki Fukuhara-Vaughn**; and Treasurer **Naomi Suenaka**. The members approved the appointments.



Bruce Kimura receives a Proclamation from Chloe Tachibana.

Bruce Kimura presented celebratory greetings via video from **Yamaguchi Governor Tsugumasa Muraoka** followed by greetings from Consul General **Kenko Sone**; a proclamation presented by **Chloe Tachibana**; and congratulatory greetings from Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai president **Kihei Otani**.

Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai's 120th Anniversary was marked by the *Kagami Biraki* Ceremony (breaking the sake barrel). After the barrel was broken, former NYK President **Patrick Seki** gave the toast of Cheers, Banzai, and Kampai!



L-R: Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai President Kihei Otani, Calif. State Assembly Field Rep Chloe Tachibana, NYK President Bruce Kimura, Keynote Speaker Dr. Tritia Toyota, and Japan Consul General Kenko Sone.

New Board member **Judith Takata Hawkins** then gave the Invocation.

During dessert, Aki Vaughn presented a PowerPoint review of **2024 NYK** and **Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai** events.

The entertainment portion of the program featured three excellent artists: Koto musicians **Saeko Kujiraoka** and **Sakura Jimenez** and traditional dancer **Shiho Tendou**. Their performances were exciting, riveting, and enjoyed by all.

Board member **Lorraine Kimura** then presented "Year of the Snake" gifts to members who were born in 2013, 2001, 1989, 1977, 1965, 1953, 1941, and 1929. Members received snake souvenirs donated by Board Member **Lisa Hernandez** (see photo on page 4).

(Continued on page 4)

Event Photos by Photographer Shogo Hayashi

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Guests of Honor—Senior NYK Members 80+



Please contact us at nankayamaguchikenjinkai@gmail.com if you would like to have copies of any photos.



2025 New Year Luncheon and 120th Anniversary Celebration —Cont'd. from page 1



NYK Board Member Lorraine Kimura (left) with Year of the Snake members.

The highlight of the afternoon was a very informative presentation by Keynote Speaker and Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai member, **Dr. Tritia Toyota, PhD**. She spoke about the growth of Issei immigrants called

“Shin Issei” to the United States, particularly those who migrated between 1980-2020. Dr. Toyota’s latest book, *Intimate Strangers: Shin Issei Women and Contemporary Japanese American Community*, explores the daunting experiences Shin Issei women faced during 1980-2020. Dr. Toyota generously offered to sell her book at the event at a substantially discount-



*Keynote Speaker
Dr. Tritia Toyota, PhD.*

ed price of \$20 to members with the proceeds to benefit Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai. We are very thankful to Dr. Toyota for her generosity and for graciously staying late to sign her book.

Next on the agenda was honoring our elder members 80 years of age and older. Board member **Atsuko Kimoto** called their names and, with the help of our former scholarship recipients, **Lauren Tsuneishi**, **Kristin Kimura**, **Manami Hayashi** (now a Board member), **Madison Hashibe**, and **Luca Mukai**, goodie bags were distributed to our special members.

Treasurer **Naomi Suenaka** announced numbers for the raffle drawing. Lucky members won prizes from David Akiyoshi wine to See’s Candy certificates to cash awards.

Aki Vaughn and Patrick Seki then led everyone in a sing-along of “Sukiyaki.”

All Board members, former scholarship recipients and volunteers gathered on stage to thank everyone for attending and closed out the event with *Sanbonjime*, the farewell clapping by all attendees. And with that, the 120th Anniversary and 2025 New Year celebration luncheon came to a joyous close! ///



*Bruce Kimura with Japan
Consul General
Kenko Sone.*



*Former NYK President
Patrick Seki.*



NYK Board Members, Volunteers, and former Scholarship Recipients bidding thank you and farewell to all!

In Memoriam



Yoshiko Kishimoto



Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai is sad to announce the passing of a beloved member, **Yoshiko Sally Kishimoto**. She was born in Iwakuni, Yamaguchi-ken, and resided in San Gabriel.

Mrs. Kishimoto was an active member who volunteered at every NYK event. Everyone looked forward to

her delicious *kintoki* at annual picnics.

Yoshiko was predeceased by her husband Kiyoshi Kishimoto and is survived by her family: son Kazuto (Linda), grandson Mark (Ria Vanessa), grandson Mathew (Kaori), great grandchildren (Sho & Kairi), sisters and brother and many nieces and nephews.

Mrs. Kishimoto was a generous, lovely lady and we will miss her.

Garry Yutaka Monji

Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai member Garry Monji passed away on December 11, 2024. He was born in Los Angeles on February 20, 1953 and attended San Fernando High School. He was very active in the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community City sports, participating in baseball, basketball, and judo.

Garry received a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling in 1978 and worked as a vocational rehabilitation counselor at the Department of Affairs for 18 years until his retirement.

Garry is survived by his wife of 42 years, Joy (Katayama); daughters Lori (Patrick Sato), Kristy (Lawton Chung), and Julie (Timmy Nguyen), grandchildren, many cousins and nieces and nephews.

Garry will be remembered and missed for his kind and thoughtful soul. ///

2025 Scholarship Forms Now Available!



Scholarship applications are **NOW AVAILABLE** to graduating high school seniors who are descendants of Yamaguchi-Ken.

The scholarship application forms can be downloaded from our website at www.yamaguchisocal.com. For any questions, please contact Scholarship Chair **Manami Hayashi** at namihayashi22@gmail.com.

APPLICATION AND ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN April 27, 2025.

Selected recipient(s) **MUST** be present at our annual picnic on Sunday, June 8, 2025 to receive his/her award. ///

2025 NYK Annual Picnic



George Elder Park

1950 Wilcox Avenue

Monterey Park, CA

Sunday, June 8, 2025

Watch your email and mail for details!



Finding Your Roots Seminar

Are you interested in how to research finding your family roots in Japan? You will learn how to navigate the difficult hurdles when you attend the next "Finding Your Roots" seminar:

Contact **Florence Ochi** at florenceochi19@gmail.com with any questions. ///

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Website www.yamaguchisocal.com

Instagram Username: Nanka.Yamaguchi.Kenjinkai
If you have any pictures you would like uploaded onto the Instagram account, please send them to nankayamaguchikenjinkai@gmail.com with the subject "Yamaguchi Instagram Picture." In the email, please give us your name and caption to go along with the picture.

Email Nankayamaguchikenjinkai@gmail.com



*Event photographer
Shogo Hayashi (age 16)
With dad Arturo Yoshimoto.*



*Treasurer Naomi Suenaka
greet's WWII Veteran
Yoshio Nakamura.*

Special Acknowledgements

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Tritia Toyota, PhD

Entertainers

Saeko Kujiraoka, Sakura Jimenez, Shiho Tendou

Rafu Shimpō

JK Yamamoto, Staff Writer

Photographer

Shogo Hayashi

Audio Visual Operator

Mike Vaughn

Orchid Centerpieces

Donated by San Gabriel Nursery
*San Gabriel Nursery was founded in 1923 by
NYK Pioneer Fred Yoshimura*

King's Hawaiian Bakery

Rolls procured by Florence Ochi

Mutual Trading

Sake Barrel and Sake

Donations from Bruce and Lorraine Kimura

120th Commemorative Wooden Coasters
Tamaki Rice and Portable Charger (Raffle Prizes)
Hand Sanitizers and Mirror Centerpiece Base

Donations from Arturo Yoshimoto

120th Banner and 120th VIP Wooden Sake Cups
Printing of Programs

Donations from Lisa Hernandez

Entertainers' Performances, Year of the Snake Gifts
David Akiyoshi Wine and Snacks
Centerpiece Decorations

Donations from Naomi Suenaka

Orchid vases, Famous Amos cookies,
2-\$25 See's Candy Certificates (Raffle Prizes)

Donations from Mike and Aki Vaughn

Cash (Raffle Prizes)

Special Thanks to

Judith Hawkins, Manami Hayashi, Atsuko Kimoto,
Laura Lee, Michi Otake, and Patrick Seki

Volunteers

Madison Hashibe*	Kristin Kimura*
Manami Hayashi*	Kevin Lee
Juli Kimoto	Luca Mukai*
Bryan Kimura	Tricia Tao
	Lauren Tsuneishi*

**Former Scholarship Recipients*

Donations

Ayako Fujita	\$50.00	Hisako Ishigame	\$100.00
Helen Yasuda	\$50.00	Yoshie Ishigame	\$100.00
Jane Masuda	\$65.00	Mary Nakayama	\$100.00
Mari Kawaguchi	\$70.00	Yaeko Tanaka	\$100.00
President Tottori Club		Roy Wakamiya	\$100.00
Atsuko Kimoto	\$70.00	Patrick Seki	\$100.00
Momoyo Yasuda	\$75.00	Ameer Shakir	\$100.00
Keiro Koga	\$100.00	Naomi Suenaka	\$100.00
President Fukuoka Kenjinkai		Kihei Otani	\$200.00
Kimiko Fujita	\$100.00	Pres. Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai	
Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai		Lisa Hernandez	\$325.00
Susan Yoshikawa	\$100.00	Michi Otake	\$500.00
President Hiroshima Kenjinkai		Arturo Yoshimoto	\$500.00
Joann Fukuhara	\$100.00		

Every donation is appreciated!

Your continued support of the Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai allows us to provide events to maintain connections that our forefathers established in 1905.



Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai

2025 Board Officers

Bruce Kimura	President
Florence Ochi	Vice President
Aki Fukuhara-Vaughn	Secretary
Naomi Suenaka	Treasurer
Laura Lee	Yamaguchi Government Liaison
Mike Vaughn	Legal Counsel

2025 Board Members: Judith Hawkins, Manami Hayashi, Kysa Hayashi, Lisa Hernandez, Atsuko Kimoto, Lorraine Kimura, Michiko Otake, and Arturo Yoshimoto.

2025 Board Advisors: Victor Fukuhara, Patrick Seki, Helen & Henry Yasuda, and Arturo Yoshimoto.

Facebook & Instagram Administrator	Laura Lee
Webmaster	Atsu Kimoto
Newsletter Creator	Aki Fukuhara-Vaughn