

Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai Newsletter



Volume I, Issue 4

4th Quarter 2012

Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai Members Meet Iwakuni Mayor



*Mayor
Yoshihiko Fukuda*

Members of the Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai attended a dinner at the Miyako Hotel on October 6, 2012, to welcome the Mayor of Iwakuni, **Yoshihiko Fukuda**, and his English-speaking Secretary, **Takeshi Murakami**.

The Mayor was in the United States to attend the 50th Anniversary of the Iwakuni/Everett (Washington) Sister Cities. Before his return to Japan he made a three-day stop in Los Angeles to meet with members of the Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai.

The dinner was attended by about 40 club members, many of whom were originally from Iwakuni. The young and congenial Mayor met with each member and graciously posed for photographs.

The evening began with a welcoming speech by Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai's (NYK) Advisor, **Henry Yasuda**. President, **Richard Fukuhara**, introduced special guests: Nanka Kyogikai President, **Hisamori Iwashita**, the principals from the film, *Lil Tokyo Reporter* (see page 6); and Los Angeles Superior Court Judge **Ernest Hiroshige**, with his lovely wife, **Michelle**. A side note: Judge Hiroshige, a sansei raised in Los Angeles, is Mayor Fukuda's uncle.

The Mayor showed a video travelogue of Iwakuni and announced the opening of the city's Kintai-kyo Airport on December 13, 2012.



*NYK president, **Richard Fukuhara**, accepting a gift to the club from Mayor Fukuda.*



***Victor Fukuhara** (2nd from right) showing Secretary **Murakami** & Mayor **Fukuda** the pens he made for them.*

As a gift to the Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai, the Mayor presented a beautiful blue plate, adorned with the Kintai-kyo Bridge. The club in turn presented the Mayor and his Secretary wooden fountain pens handmade by **Victor Fukuhara**. Also presented to the Mayor was a video and poster of the film, *Lil Tokyo Reporter*, and a book about **Sei Fujii** from club member, **Michiko Otaya**.

The evening's entertainment was emceed by **Patrick Seki**, who brought up several singers from the club:

Rev. Kiyoshi Igawa; Dana Okamoto and her little son, **Kenny; Tsutomu Suenaga; Henry Yasuda;** and **Aki Fukuhara-Vaughn**. The Mayor, a really good sport, sang a terrific rendition of Paul Anka's "Oh, Diana".



***Rev. Kiyoshi Igawa, Mayor Fukuda, & Patrick Seki** singing Karaoke.*

The evening was very enjoyable; and special thanks must go to the event planners and coordinators for a job well done: **Richard Fukuhara, Rev. Kiyoshi Igawa, Arlene Nakamura, Patrick Seki, Naomi Suenaka, Candace Watase, and Helen and Henry Yasuda**.

Mayor's L.A. Tour—Oct 8

Richard Fukuhara and **Henry Yasuda** escorted Mayor **Fukuda** and Secretary **Murakami** on a whirlwind half-day tour of Los Angeles. They visited the Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, drove down Rodeo Drive, viewed the mansions in Beverly Hills, and lunched at Farmer's Market. When the Mayor was asked what he wanted to eat, he requested a Mexican burrito! Their last stops were a tour of UCLA, the Santa Monica Pier, and a walk along the beach.

Before Mayor **Fukuda** and Secretary **Murakami** left for Japan on an 8:00 p.m. flight, they expressed their deep appreciation for the wonderful reception given to them by the members of the Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai.

See the Mayor's thank you letter to the Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai on page 6.

###

Keiro Home Visit

On September 16 several members from Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai brought a little sunshine to the patients of the Keiro Nursing Home in Los Angeles. The club's annual community service event was attended by **Richard Fukuhara**, **Yasuko Katayama**, **Yoshiko Kishimoto**, **Aki** and **Mike Vaughn**, **Helen** and **Henry Yasuda**, and **Patrick Seki** (who brought along a few of his singing students).

The club members entertained with Japanese songs: "Haruga Kita", "Nanatsuno Ko", "Aogeba Totoshi", "Kitagunino Haru", and "Furusato", to which the patients sang along. Patrick soloed on several Japanese songs and Aki sang familiar American 40's tunes. The members then passed out *manju* to the patients. A CD/radio player was donated to the nursing home from our club.

To see the smiling faces of the patients is worth a few hours out of one's day, so if you can volunteer next year, please join us!

###

Memorial Service

The Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai (NYK) memorial service at the Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple on October 14 was attended by about 60 members. The annual memorial honors the lives of members who have passed away during the year and in years past. Our club lost two beloved members in 2012: **Kosuke Okamoto** on April 20 and **Hiromi Matsumura** on September 18. The Peru Yamaguchi Kenjinkai also lost a long-time member on May 29 with the passing of **Elena Yukie Yoshimoto**, the mother of NYK Vice President, **Arturo Yoshimoto**.

After the service, which was officiated by **Rev. Miyoshi**, members adjourned to the dining room for a bento lunch from California Rice. If you were not aware, the Yamaguchi Kenjinkai Fujinkai was disbanded this year, so volunteers made up of both men and women came early to set up the dining room and to clean up afterwards. Thank you volunteers for your help!

###

Kyogikai Bowling Tournament

Novices and highly experienced bowlers put on their game faces for a day of friendly competition at the 6th Annual Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai Bowling Tournament on Nov. 4.

Playing at the AMF Bowl-O-Drome in Torrance were 28, 4-person teams consisting of the following Southern California Kenjinkai: Akita, Ehime, Gifu, Hiroshima, Iwate, Kagoshima, Kansai, Kumamoto, Miyazaki, Okinawa, Tochigi, and Yamaguchi.

Despite many gutter balls, the day was filled with cheers, laughs and high-fives. A great time was had by all!

Kyogikai Talent Show

The Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai (all So Cal Kenjinkai) held its annual talent show at the Quiet Cannon in Montebello on October 21. The Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai was well represented by our member, **William Christopher Ford**, who danced "Karashishi Botan". According to those who attended, his performance received the biggest applause of the day.



*William Ford performing at the Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai Talent Show.
Photos by Richard Fukuhara.*

William, whose mother **Mrs. Umeno Ford** is from Yamaguchi-ken, was born in Long Beach and raised in Torrance, Gardena and Australia. He is the head instructor at the Kaizen Dojo in Torrance and was inducted this year into the Masters Hall of Fame at the 13th Annual Awards Ceremony in Costa Mesa for a Lifetime Achievement in Martial Arts. Ford Sensei is a 5th dan in Okinawan Shorin Ryo Karate (Kobayashi Ryu).

Not only is William a talented dancer, he is also an actor, most notably having played the role of the "bad boy" character, Dennis, in *Karate Kid III*.

The Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai is very grateful to William for sharing his talent and making us proud!

###



Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai Bowling Teams

Kneeling from left: Lora Nakamura, Richard Fukuhara, and Evan Nakamura. Standing: Irene Uyeda, Yoshi Nakaoki, Arlene Nakamura, JoAnn & Trace Fukuhara, Aki & Mike Vaughn, and Masako & Victor Fukuhara.



"Getting to Know You" Member Profiles

はじめまして

Patrick Mitsuo Seki



Where and when were you born?

I was born on August 31, 1940 at the home of Mrs. Kato, a midwife, who lived in Boyle Heights. My mother, **Rachel Chisaye Miura**, was 3rd generation and born in Hawaii. She spoke no Japanese until she met my father, **Miki Seki**, who owned Mickey Seki Jewelry Store in Little Tokyo.

I grew up with three brothers and one sister: Stanley **Sakaye** (1932), **William Chitoshi** (1936), **Lillian** (1942), and **Calvin** (1944).



With his mother, Rachel.

Where were you during

World War II? When the war broke out, we went to Santa Anita and then to Manzanar in Block 28. My father was a Kibei and was sent to Santa Fe Prison in New Mexico. When I was 4-6, we went to Tule Lake where we met others from Yamaguchi-Ken.

After the war in January 1946 the whole family went to Japan to Takamori, Kuga-gun, Yamaguchi. When I was 8, I started 1st grade at Takamori Shogakko and Takamori Chugakko (Jr. High School).

My parents forfeited our U.S. citizenship to return to Japan, but then later protested and regained citizenship in 1954.

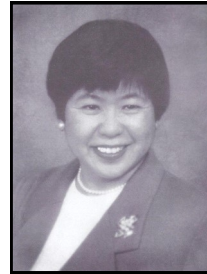
What were you doing after WWII? We returned to the U.S. in April, 1954. I went to Stevenson Jr. High School in East Los Angeles to re-learn English.

I graduated from Garfield High School and then attended East L.A. College for 1-1/2 years before joining the U.S. Air Force in March, 1960. I served as a radio communications repairman and was sent to Okinawa; Waco, TX; Venice, Italy; and then to Sacramento.

I was out of the Air Force in 1968 and, on the G.I. Bill, went to South Gate Watch Making School and Glendale Jr. College to learn how to make jewelry. I took GIA (Gemological Institute of America) courses, and in 1972, I took over the Mickey Seki & Son Jewelry Store.

(Continued on page 4)

Michiko Ota



Where and when were you born?

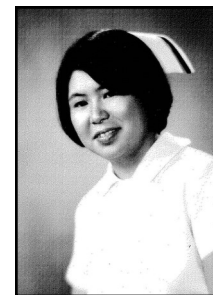
I was born in Iwakuni-City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, in 1949 as an only child, but I always wished I had brothers and sisters. I attended Kawashimo Elementary School, and Kawashimo Junior High School until I was 13 years old when I came to the U.S.

What did your family do before and during WWII? My father was a Kibei and when he was in Japan, he worked as a barber. Just before WWII, he worked at my uncle **Kishimoto's** farm.

My father was in Manzanar during WWII. After the war he returned to Iwakuni, got married, and I was born. He returned to Los Angeles and worked at a pizza company. My mother and I joined him later. He passed away when I was 18 years old and I never asked him about his experience in the camp or what he thought about camp experience.



What kind of work do you do? I am a Registered Nurse and worked at the Los Angeles County/USC/Medical Center for 3 years in the Burn ICU; then transferred to the Central Health Center. As a Public Health Nurse, I have been working for the past 20 years in the tuberculosis field at the Rand Schrader Clinic (HIV Clinic).



When did you join Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai? I went to a Yamaguchi Kenjinkai picnic many years ago, but became a regular visitor about 15 years ago. **Mr. Kiyoshi Kishimoto**, a cousin of my father, and his wife, **Yoshiko-san**, were instrumental in getting me more involved with the club.



Rina

In which city do you reside? Since 1979 I have lived in San Gabriel where I live with my dog, **Rina**, a terrier mix I adopted from the

(Continued on page 4)

Patrick Seki—*Cont'd from pg. 3*

We moved our store in 1977 to S. San Pedro Street. I had 11-12 employees then and I started playing golf and singing *shigin* (classical singing of poetry).

Are you married? I married **Luz Gloria Oshiro** in 1971. Luz was born in Peru and was attending LACC and working at the Keiro Japanese Hospital in Lincoln Park. We met when she came in to get a watch repaired. We were married in Los Angeles and had our reception at the San Kwo Low Restaurant.



Luz & Patrick—1971.

Do you have children? We have two daughters: **Sharon Kumi**, born 11/12/1973, and **Lysandra Michi**, born on 7/7/77 at 7:00 am.

When did you join Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai? My father was Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai Secretary in 1958 under **Mr. Kaneichi Yamamoto**.

In which city do you reside? We have lived in Rosemead since 1971.

Where have you traveled? While stationed in Italy, I would travel all over Europe whenever I was on leave. I've been to Germany, England, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, and Monaco. I've also traveled to Hawaii and Wake Island.

Do you have a special or proud memory? My father had a *shigin* school, so I started *shigin*, too. I eventually received my *shigin* teaching certificate in 1989. Also, I was very proud singing and performing "Zatoichi". In full kimono and with sword, I was asked to perform the number about the blind swordsman at many venues throughout Southern California.



Patrick (on right) performing "Zatoichi".

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? In addition to running my store, Miki Seki Watch & Jewelry Repair in Little Tokyo, my time is totally filled with teaching *shigin* and Karaoke 8 times a week, and on Saturdays and Sundays teaching voice, so I have time for little else.

Note from the Publisher of this newsletter: Patrick always makes time out of his busy schedule to lug his

Michiko Otake—*Cont'd from pg. 3*

animal shelter. She is almost 16 years old, blind and deaf, but still good company.

Where have you traveled? My work in nursing has taken me to many countries around the world to visit hospitals and clinics, teach public health nurses, and speak at conferences. Since 1976 I've been to Japan, South Korea, Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Denmark, South Africa, Spain and Switzerland. I've vacationed in Japan and England.

In 1995 I attended the Suzuki International Conference in Japan with a planned post tour to China, however, the Tiananmen Square incident happened and we were not allowed to visit there by the U.S. government.

Do you have a special or proud memory? In 1998 in Switzerland, I was selected as one of 10 nurses in the entire world to give an oral presentation for the International AIDS Conference. But I am most proud of my five years of work in L.A.'s downtown skid row with **Dr. Davidson**. I worked with him from 1987 to 1992 to start Directory Observed Therapy (DOT) of Tuberculosis treatment. Downtown L.A. used to be known as the TB Capital in the U.S. We were the pilot project of the CDC (Center of Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia) in the USA. Because of our success, the entire country adopted some form of DOT. Our program provided housing and meal vouchers, which some states are not able to provide. Ten years later, the World Health Organization declared that DOT is the way to treat TB patients.



Michi with Dr. Davidson.

I was not initially interested in tuberculosis work until I met Dr. Davidson. He was selected as one of top 10 pulmonary doctors in North America and is one of most caring and toughest doctors I've ever worked with. And

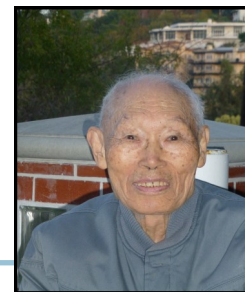
with his great leadership, I think I could grow as a nurse as well as a human being.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? I need to work in my garden. I love it, but it certainly is a lot of work. I watch Japanese TV, documentaries, history, and programs about anthropology. I listen to classical music on KUSC. My love of classical music started when I got involved with Suzuki Violin as a volunteer interpreter. Sometimes I read books, which used to be my #1 hobby.

###

Featured Member Profile

This new page will profile long-time members who have supported our organization over the many years. **Fred Ichiro Kimura** is the featured member this month. Note: Much of this article was taken from Fred's story in the Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai 100th Anniversary Book.



Fred Ichiro Kimura

Where and when were you born? I was born in Monteta, CA (now known as Gardena) on October 6, 1917 to



Fred's parents: **Josuke Kimura**, seated on left, and **Aya Kimura** on far right.

Josuke Kimura and Aya (Aikawa). Both my parents were from Iwakuni, Yamaguchi-ken, but when my father was 19, he went to live in Kauai, Hawaii, for 10 years. He left for Gardena and started a 40-acre truck garden. He went back to Iwakuni to marry my mother. They returned

to the U.S. and had 3 children: **Chizuko**, me (**Ichiro Fred**) and **Tonayo**.

I am considered a Kibei-Nisei because, though I was born in the states, my family and I returned to Japan in 1921 where we had a farm with one cow. My mother had 2 more sons there, **Esuke** and **Shigemi**.

What kind of work did you do before World War II?

At the age of 19, I left my family in Japan and returned to the U.S. In January 1937 I entered Central Jr. High School in L.A. for one semester to learn English. Though I was 19, I told them I was 17 so that I could attend. I worked as a "schoolboy" (cooking and cleaning house) for Dr. Nipper and his family at \$10 a week. I then went to Belmont High School and graduated in 1941. I enrolled at Santa Monica Junior College for half a year. Then everything changed with the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Where were you during World War II? I was first sent to Pomona Assembly Center and then to the Heart Mountain, Wyoming concentration camp. While there, I was able to leave camp to work on a sugar beet farm. Tapping beets was one of the most difficult jobs, and it was during this time that I experienced health problems—a heart murmur and thyroid condition that, together, led to a heart attack. I was able to see a specialist in Billings, Montana, who performed successful surgery on my thyroid.

Whom did you marry? Before returning to Los Angeles after the war, I married **Yoshiko Tsuji** in Block 17 Mess Hall at Heart Mountain in 1945. Yoshiko was originally from Auburn, Washington.



50th Wedding Anniversary in 1995 with son, **Bruce**.

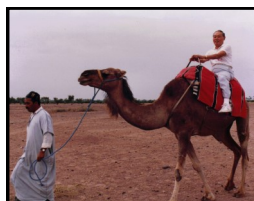
What kind of work did you do after the War? I began working at The Shopping Bag Grocery Market (which was bought out by Von's) and later at Pioneer Market. Together, I worked for the two stores a total of 33 years, and retired when I was 64 years old.

Do you have children / grandchildren? Our only son, **Bruce Kenichi**, an Optician, was born in Los Angeles in 1952. He is married to **Lorraine (Lee)**, who is a Special Ed teacher's aide, and they have two children: **Bryan** (22), a recent graduate of UC Riverside with a major in biology and working towards the Optometry field, and **Kristin** (20), who is a student at UC Irvine studying Japanese and economics. Kristin was a Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai scholarship recipient.



Yoshiko and Fred.
Standing: **Lorraine, Bruce, Bryan & Kristin** in 2005.

Do you have a special or proud memory? Education was always important to me and my parents were proud that I was able to graduate from high school. While working at the grocery market, I bought and managed a 20-unit apartment building. Finally, I'm proud (and lucky) to have made good decisions in the stock market.



Morocco 1989

Where have you traveled?

Yoshiko and I have been very fortunate and have traveled all over the world: South America, Central

Europe, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan and throughout the U.S. Paris is my favorite city.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time? After retiring I enjoyed just resting! When I was young I liked to

Shinnenkai Luncheon

2013, the year of the Snake, is coming fast! We will be holding our New Year's luncheon at a new venue and hope you can join us to ring in the new year!



Date: Sunday, January 27, 2013
Location: Quiet Cannon Banquet Facility
901 Via San Clemente
Montebello

Time & Price to be Announced.
Watch your email for details!

###

Lil Tokyo Reporter Film



The narrative short film, *Lil Tokyo Reporter*, is a story about Sei Fujii, an Issei born in Iwakuni, Yamaguchi-ken, who courageously fought for the civil rights of the Japanese in Los Angeles. His legal case against the constitutionality of the Alien

Land Law, *Sei Fujii v. State of California*, was ruled "that the land law is invalid and in violation of the 14th Amendment."

The principals of the film attended the dinner for the Mayor of Iwakuni on October 6 and presented him with a video of the film and a poster: Producer, **Fumiko Carole Fujita**; Director, **Jeffrey Gee Chin**; Lead Actor, **Chris Tashima**, as Sei Fujii; and Interpreter, **Takamachi Go**.

Upcoming screenings will be held in Huntington Beach on the following dates:

Sat, Nov 17 - 5pm & 6pm
Sun, Nov 18 - 11:30am & 12:30pm

Regency Charter Center Cinemas
7822 Warner Avenue (at Beach Blvd)
Huntington Beach, CA 92647

General admission: \$9; Seniors and Students: \$7
Tickets can be purchased at the theatre or online.

###



NYK on Facebook!

Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai is now on Facebook! Get the latest news and follow us at:

www.facebook.com
Yamaguchi-Kenjinkai-Los Angeles

###

Mayor Fukuda's Thank You Letter

October 11, 2012

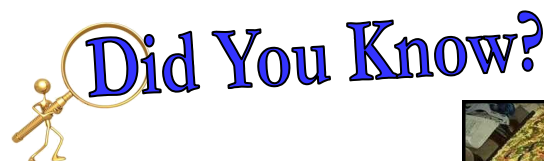
Dear Mr. Fukuhara:

Thank you so much for having me with you in spite of your busy schedule. I had a great time in Los Angeles thanks to you and the other members of the Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai.

I sincerely appreciate your hospitality. I will always remember this memorable visit to Los Angeles. Please give my best regards to the other members.

Sincerely yours,

Yoshihiko Fukuda
Mayor of Iwakuni City



Iwakuni sushi, known as the "Lord's Sushi", is made by pressing rice into a five-layered mold. The rice is flavored with vinegar and sprinkled with Spanish mackerel and lettuce. The sushi was invented over 300 years ago by Miharaya, a chef for Lord Hiroie Kikkawa of Iwakuni. Miharaya used his feet instead of his hands to press down the mold of five layers. Iwakuni sushi is a specialty and is still enjoyed today.



###



Nanka Yamaguchi Kenjinkai

2012 Board

Richard Fukuhara President
richard@fukuharafoto.com
Arturo Yoshimoto Vice President
kensay@usa.net
Candace Watase Secretary
kencanlau03@gmail.com
Naomi Suenaka Treasurer
NSDerr@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Arlene Nakamura arlenenakamura@gmail.com

Newsletter Creator & Publisher

Aki Fukuhara-Vaughn aki.vaughn@yahoo.com

Contributors to this Issue

Richard Fukuhara, Bruce Kimura, Arlene Nakamura, and Henry Yasuda.