



## *New England Chapter News*

### *Japanese American Citizens League*

February 2021

Visit our web site: [www.nejacl.org](http://www.nejacl.org)

### ***Pictures from our Cooking Class***

Please take a look at the picture page we've inserted at the end of this newsletter. On January 23<sup>rd</sup> we had an interactive, virtual cooking class with Debra Samuels. Using Zoom, we could watch Deb cook or cook right along with her and ask questions as we did. Of the 31 NEJACL members and friends who took part, at least half were cooking with the class. You won't see all the results of our efforts in the pictures because some of our chiefs were hungry had already eaten theirs by the time the rest of us finished cooking. The dish was *Okonomiyaki*, a popular street food from Osaka and Hiroshima – both cities claim ownership. We were pleasantly surprised at how much fun a virtual event could be. We were also impressed at how many good cooks we have when we saw the results. The event was such a success that we're talking to Deb about another class in the near future. Watch the newsletter for more information.

### **Boston's Asian Communities hit by Pandemic**

Last April, about the time when we were experiencing what we thought was the worst for the Coronavirus pandemic, we printed information about the Asian Community Emergency Relief Fund (ACERF) to provide immediate and direct financial support to members of the Boston Asian community. The initial goal of the fund was to raise \$150,000. ACERF ended up raising more than \$350,000 and was able to provide support for 327 families – totaling 947 individuals. The applicants were predominately Chinese, Vietnamese and Khmer immigrants from Boston, Quincy, Malden, Lowell and Randolph.

Now, while we wait for the vaccine to be distributed and watch Coronavirus numbers grow, the Asian American immigrant community in Greater Boston continues to be among the hardest hit. Most are immigrants who work in food, hospitality, and home and child care sectors that have been closed. Because of language barriers and immigration status, not everyone can access public benefits like unemployment and the new stimulus dollars. These families are in jeopardy of not having enough money to buy basic necessities and pay for housing. To make matters worse, our community is also facing rising anti-Asian sentiments.

The Asian Community Emergency Relief Fund has been reactivated and is undertaking another effort to provide support for the Greater Boston Asian community. The community organizations involved are the Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC) in partnership with the Chinese Progressive Association, Vietnamese American Initiative for Development, Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW), Greater Boston Legal Services' Asian Outreach Unit, and the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association.

For information and to make a donation: <https://donorbox.org/covid19-relief-fund>

## Children's Museum Celebrates the New Year

In lieu of its traditional in-person *Oshogatsu* celebration, the Boston Children's museum has joined with the Boston Japan Society to offer a series of short videos about the Japanese New Year. Topics covered include *Osechi* (traditional New Years food) and customs. A special feature is a series of delightful *Kamishibai* or storytellers. The videos are available on Facebook with additional videos to be released on February 3 and 4. Go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/192561014098234/119872899997244>

## Student Scholarships & Award Competitions

### JACL 2021 National Scholarship program

JACL's National Scholarship program offers \$70,000 in approximately 30 scholarships for incoming freshmen, undergraduates and graduate students. This year the application process will be online with deadline for **freshmen scholarships March 1, 2021**. All other categories of scholarships (undergraduate, graduate, law, creative/performing arts, and financial aid) are **due by April 1, 2021**. For full scholarship details, go to:

<https://jacl.org/jacl-national-scholarship-program/>

### Minoru Yasui Essay Contest

The theme for this year's essay contest is ***Refugee and Immigrant Experiences***. The competition is open to students on two levels: Junior Division, students in grade 8 and below. Senior Division, students in grades 8 through 12. Junior Division awards will be \$200 for first place, \$75 for second place, and three awards of \$20 for finalists. In the Senior Division, \$500 for first place, \$200 for second place, and three awards of \$25 for finalists.

**Deadline for essays is March 12.** Information:

<https://www.minoruyasuilegacy.org/student-contest>

## More Books to Consider

We sometimes receive recommendations about books that might be of interest to our membership. We are not able to review the books, but will pass this information on to you.

***The Unsung Great: Stories of Extraordinary Japanese Americans*** by Greg Robinson.

This collection of stories calls attention to Nikkei beyond the West Coast, including New York and Chicago as well as the little-known history of Japanese Americans in the US South.

Robinson is a scholar and journalist and has written for San Francisco's *Nichi Bei Weekly* and the website *Discover Nikkei*.

***The Last Year of the War*** by Susan Meissener. The story of a German-American teenager from Iowa during WWII. Her father is arrested on suspicion of being a Nazi sympathizer and he and his family is incarcerated at Crystal City, Texas. The young girl makes friends with a Japanese American girl.

***Interior Chinatown*** by Charles Yu. Winner of the 2020 National Book Award, Yu's book has been described as a novel that manages "that rare feat of being both extravagantly experimental and a lot of fun to read."

## AUDIO THEATRE

### Huntington Theatre Company and WGBH

#### ***Tiger Style!* – An Audio Play**

**As a podcast starting Thursday, February 4**

**As a broadcast on WGBH radio on Saturday, February 6 from 6 to 8 pm**

Huntington Theatre's hit 2016 production of *Tiger Style!* has been recorded as an audio play and will be released as a podcast starting Thursday, February 4. The complete production will also be broadcast on GBH 89.7 on Saturday, February 6 at 6 pm. *Tiger Style!* is the story of squabbling siblings Albert and Jennifer Chen – both have reached the pinnacle of academic success, but as adults feel they are epic failures. He's just been passed up for promotion and she's been dumped by her boyfriend. They confront their parents and launch an Asian Freedom Tour from California to China. The comedy examines race, parenting and success with wit and sharp humor. The cast includes Francis Jue, Emily Kuroda, Rubio Qian and John Norman Schneider. The play is by Mike Lew and directed by Maritz von Stuelpnagel. This event is free and open to the public. To receive a reminder from Huntington:

[https://www.huntingtontheatre.org/tiger-style/?utm\\_source=wordfly&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBLAST\\_1.21\\_TigerStyle!&utm\\_content=version\\_A](https://www.huntingtontheatre.org/tiger-style/?utm_source=wordfly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBLAST_1.21_TigerStyle!&utm_content=version_A)

### Pan Asian Repertory Theatre

#### ***Film Chinois: A Radio Mystery in 2 Parts***

**Streaming until February 7 only**

Film Chinois will take you back to 1947 Peking, with a noir infused thriller of spy-versus-spy intrigue and dangerous romantic liaisons in the vein of Hollywood's *The Maltese Falcon*. The cast includes Rosanne Ma as China Doll, a Maoist femme fatale. She is joined by Benjamin Jones as Randolph, a fresh-faced American operative on a secret mission. Dinh James Doan is the mysterious Man and Jean Brassard is the Ambassador. Tickets are \$20. For

Information and tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/film-chinois-a-radio-play-tickets-133884222313>

### Huntington Theatre Company

#### ***The View from MemChurch* by Rosanna Yamagiwa Alfaro**

A short audio play by Rosanna Yamagiwa Alfaro, a NE JACL member, is featured in the Huntington Theatre Company's *Dream Boston* series. Rosanna's play is set in Harvard Yard with a cast that includes Emily Kuroda, Alberto Isaac, and Calley Chase. To listen to the play, go to:

[https://www.huntingtontheatre.org/season/upcoming/dream-boston/memchurch/?utm\\_source=wordfly&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=EBLAST\\_12.8\\_DreamBoston&utm\\_content=version\\_A](https://www.huntingtontheatre.org/season/upcoming/dream-boston/memchurch/?utm_source=wordfly&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EBLAST_12.8_DreamBoston&utm_content=version_A)

## LECTURES, DISCUSSIONS & INTERVIEWS

### ***Yokai: Oni! From Folktales to Demon Slayer***

Tuesday, February 2, at 10 pm (EST), via Zoom

registration required

In Japan, you find *Yokai* (ghosts) everywhere, from folktales to manga and anime. *Oni* (demons) are seen as guards protecting hell and causes disasters and pandemics. The lecturer, Zack Davisson, is an award-winning translator, writer, and folklorist. He has given talks at UCLA, University of Washington, and the Annapolis Naval Academy and has been featured on NPR, BBC, and the New York Times. This program is sponsored by the Japan Foundation of Los Angeles and is free and open to the public. Information and registration: <https://www.jflalc.org/ac-lecture66>

### ***Women in Leadership: Where Power Lies... a Conversation***

Thursday, February 11, at 7 pm (EST)

registration required

This is part of a series of workshops on Women in Leadership presented by the Japanese-American Society of Oregon. Featured are: **Sakie Fukushima**, the first female board member at Sony, Ajinomoto, Mitsubishi Corp., Minolta Konica and Bridgestone. **Claire Chino** is with New York-based Itochu International and Itochu Corporation and was the first executive officer of a major trading company in Japan. **Linda Akutagawa**, active in diversity, equity, leadership and inclusion, heads up a dedicated non-profit, and is a member of several California state boards. Registration fees range from \$15 for a single event to \$75 for the workshop series. Information and registration:

<https://japanamericasocietyoforegon.wildapricot.org/event-4089928>

### ***Japan's Changing Role in Asia: Opportunities and Challenges***

Monday, February 8, at 7 pm (EST), via Zoom

registration required

Two experts will share their views on Japan's evolving role in Asia and what it means to the US. **Hiroyuki Akita**, commentator of the *Nikkei Shimbun* and former Washington correspondent, is one of Japan's top analysts on foreign policy and US-Japan relations. **Thomas Berger**, Professor of International Relations at the Pardee School of Global Studies at Boston University, is one of America's top experts on Japanese foreign policy. The event is sponsored by the Japan Society of Northern California. It is free and open to the public with a recommended donation of \$10 and \$20. For more information and registration:

<https://paybee.io/quickpay.html?handle=jsnc&ppid=21#optionList>

### **Webinar Interview with Kathy Matsui:**

#### ***Japanese Americans & Japan – Legacies***

Tuesday, February 16 at 7 pm (EST), via Zoom

registration required

This video series highlights the careers and life journeys of prominent Japanese American leaders who are pioneers in developing US-Japan relationships. Featured in this interview is Kathy Matsui, Chair of the US-Japan Council Board of Councilors. She is most recently retired as Vice Chair, Co-head of Macro Research in Asia and Chief Japan Strategist for Goldman Sachs Japan. She was named one of the "10 Women to Watch in Asia" by the Wall Street Journal. For information and registration:

<https://www.usjapancouncil.org/events/japanese-americans-japan-legacies-interview-with-kathy-matsui-virtual-event/>

## MUSEUM EXHIBITS

### ***The Kimono in Print: 300 Years of Japanese Design***

**Worcester Art Museum, 55 Salisbury Street, Worcester**

**The exhibit runs from February 6 to May 2**

This is the museum's first exhibit devoted to examining the kimono as a major source of inspiration and experimentation in Japanese print culture from the Edo period (1603-1868) to the Meiji period (1868-1912). This dialogue between print and kimono design is illustrated by approximately 70 Japanese prints. Print artists from this period documented ever-evolving trends in fashion, popularized certain styles of dress, and even designed kimonos.

Information on this exhibit: <https://www.worcesterart.org/exhibitions/kimono-in-print/>

Information on tickets & admission: <https://www.worcesterart.org/exhibitions/kimono-in-print/>

### ***Kimono Couture: The Beauty of Chiso***

#### **Virtual Exhibition**

The **Worcester Art Museum** is partnering with Chiso, the distinguished, 465-year-old, Kyoto-based kimono house to present a view of the world of traditional kimono design and artistry. Over the course of 10 weeks, the virtual exhibit provided a rare, behind-the-scenes look at the creation of the *Worcester Wedding Kimono*, the first kimono ever commissioned as a work of art by an art museum. The final episode of the series will be available on February 6. For information and access to the video series, go to:

<https://www.worcesterart.org/exhibitions/kimono-couture/>

**PICTURES ON NEXT PAGE**



# OKONOMIYAKI!

## OUR GOAL

## Cooking with Debra Samuels on Zoom



## OUR CLASS AT WORK



## THE RESULTS MORE PICTURES ON OUR WEBSITE: [nejacl.org](http://nejacl.org)

