



Seattle Hiroshima Club

シアトル広島県人会

Seattle Hiroshima Club, P. O. Box 94083, Seattle, WA 98124-9483
www.seahiro.org



Nami (Tsukasa) Namekata
President, 2022-2024
Seattle Hiroshima Club

President's Message

After the long-lasting Corvid-19 pandemic, we are gradually returning to our normal lives. Thanks to wonderful help from the dedicated club members and Terry's Kitchen, we were able to successfully hold our New Year Party after cancellations in 2021 and 2022. We were overwhelmed and excited to see so many people attending the party, over 120 in attendance!

Scholarship Committee Chair Ms. Andrea Mano invited 9 recipients from 2021-2023 college scholarship winners to the New Year Party; all of whom achieved outstanding records in all aspects of their high school life. Congratulations! We are very proud of their accomplishments. Please enjoy reading their essays.

As with the previous year, we would like to recognize and honor the 2023 high school and college graduates whose parents and/or grandparents are Hiroshima

Club members. The club will present each graduate with a small gift. Please submit the application form included in this newsletter.

After my wife Keiko and I watched "Hometown Boy" at Seattle Public Theater on May 28th, I asked one of the actors, Dr. Stephen Sumida (SHC member) to write an article for our newsletter. Since we sent SHC members its flyer by e-mail, I hope some members also enjoyed watching this excellent play (see page [12](#)).

We will again be hosting our annual picnic at Seward Park in Seattle on Saturday, August 12th. Please see the picnic announcement and register. We look forward to seeing you all!

From May 19 to 21, the G7 Summit was held in Hiroshima hosted by Japan's prime minister Fumio Kishida

(岸田文雄). G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament stated "We, the Leaders of the G7, met at a historical juncture in Hiroshima, which together with Nagasaki offers a reminder of the unprecedented devastation and immense human suffering the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki experienced as a result of the atomic bombings of 1945. In a solemn and reflective moment, we reaffirm, in this first G7 Leaders' document with a particular focus on nuclear disarmament, our commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all."

https://www.g7hiroshima.go.jp/documents/pdf/230520-01_g7_en.pdf

Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple and our club will conduct the 78th atomic bomb victims memorial service in person at 10:00 AM on Sunday, August 6th. Please attend this special service at Seattle Betsuin. (See its announcement at page [4](#)). Please continue to stay safe and healthy and have a wonderful summer.

2023 New Year Celebration at Terry's Kitchen

By Tsukasa Namekata

Our New Year party was held at Terry's Kitchen on March 4th, 2023, after having to cancel 2021 and 2022 parties due to the corona pandemic. Thanks to Terry's Kitchen and help from many club members, we had another successful New Year Party with more than 120 people in attendance. It was so great to see and greet one another after two years of absence. We appreciated special new year messages from Japanese Consul Ms. Shiori Yamada and Rimban Katsuya Kusunoki from Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple. Scholarship Committee Chair Andrea Mano presented the 2021 - 23 scholarship awards to 9 students with high scholastic achievement, excellent records in extra-curricular activities and community services. Commendations for longevity and hardship were awarded to members 80 years old and over by Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki and certificates were presented to them by Consul Ms. Shiori Yamada who was born in Hiroshima (see page [4](#)).



Namekata announced the deceased members from 2020-2022. 2020: Ms. Terrie Tanino and Ms. Amy Kato; 2021: Mr. Kats Tanino and Ms. Chieko Kubota, Mr. Alfred Fujimoto and Ms. Kiku Hayashi. 2022: Mr. George Mano, Mr. John Matsumoto, Ms. Miyeko Kano, Mr. Yasunori Kawahara, Ms. Fujie Yamasaki, Ms. Rosie Sugahara, Mr. Mickey Hiroo and Ms. Dolly Tokunaga. A moment of silence was observed to remember and honor the deceased.

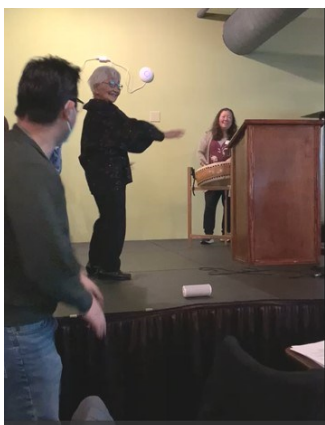
Curt Nakayama introduced new members who joined the club since 2020: Sarah Beland, Jenni Chin, Sandy Fugami, Ed & Tina Fujii, Kate Guion, Dee Goto, Brian Ito, Kristin Jacobs, Loraine Jacobs, Michael Kato, Steven Kubota, Justice Kurihara, Taro & Nami Kusunose, Emi Kusunose, Miki Kusunose, Nina Matsuzawa, Aiko Sato, Laura Shamishima, Kelly Sheffield, Lisa Sheffield, Charlene Mano Shen, Nicole Shimizu, Julie Shoji, Seth & Kristin Sigel, Koshin & Megumi Soga, Ana Tanaka, Brayden Tanaka, Jeff Yokoyama, Kaylee Yokoyama, Michelle Yokoyama, Shelley Yokoyama, Muneo (Mel) Yoshikawa, and Jessica Young.

Namekata honored members 90 years old and over for their longevity and survival from their hardship and presented them with a small gift: Ms. Irene Mano, Ms. Toshiko Hayashi, Ms. Ethel Nayematsu, Mr. Shogo Kusumi, Ms. Fusako Kusumi, Ms. Martha Murakami, Ms. Lily Kato, Ms. Michiko Hirata, and Ms. Fusako Akimoto.

Here are some scenes from the New Year Party. It seems like everyone had a wonderful time.



Seattle Hiroshima Club New Years Party Photos



Updated Website Coming!

By Linda Ishii and Sharon Kosai

In accordance with our objectives to better communicate with our members, appeal to a broader audience and general public, Linda Ishii and Sharon Kosai are working with Aki Nishihata and Tallon Nishihata to update and refresh the Seattle Hiroshima Club website.

Our goals are to create a stronger web presence, provide easier navigation, enable paperless options such as, online payments, and improve accessibility. As part of the greater Seattle Nikkei community, the club website will share information about local Nikkei events as well as our own club events.

A member login and password will provide immediate access to information about the governance of the club, a members' forum, ways to volunteer, as well as access to SHC event photos.

We're excited to share all of the new features with you and plan to launch the new site this summer! We would love to have you check out the updated site and send us your comments.

Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yazaki Awarded 9 Club Members for their Longevity and Hardship in the United States

By Tsukasa Namekata

Certificates were presented to each recipient by Japanese Consul Ms. Shiori Yamada during the 2023 New Year celebration. Many congratulations!



Mr. Hideo Dale Kaku (82)



Ms. Ethel Sakae Nayematsu (95)



Ms. Fusako Kusumi (90)



Mr. Takashi Yasuda (100)



Mr. Curtis Yukio Nakayama (80)



Mrs. Naomi Takemura (81)
Rev. Yoshiaki Takemura (89)



Mr. Donald Koichi Akira (82)

Invitation to the 78th Atomic Bomb Victims Memorial Service at Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple on August 6th

By Tsukasa Namekata

Seattle Hiroshima Club and Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple will cohost the 78th Atomic Bomb Victims Memorial Service at Betsuin Temple on August 6th at 10 AM. We hope that many of you will attend the service to remind us of the enormous tragedy caused by the dropping of A-bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and to pay our respect to our club's relatives and friends who were victims of the bombings. More than 210,000 people lost their lives in both cities. Seattle Betsuin temple is located in 1427 S. Main Street, Seattle, WA 98144.



Our Long-Time Members, Mrs. Aiko Fujii and Mr. Dale Kaku, were Awarded for their Contributions to the Nikkei Community

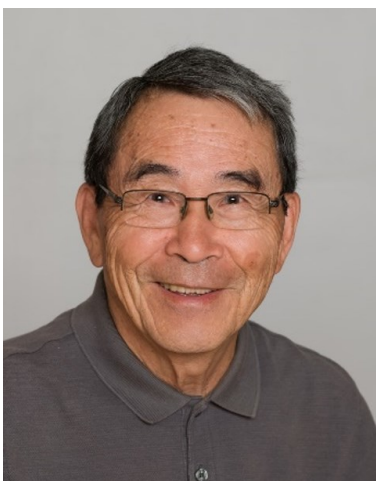
Reported by Tsukasa Namekata



On April 15, 2023, Mrs. Aiko Fujii was awarded the Consul General's Commendation in a ceremony held during the reception at the 48th Seattle Cherry

Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival. She was recognized for her contributions to Japan-Washington State relations by introducing and sharing Japanese culture such as the traditional Japanese arts of Shodo (calligraphy), Ikebana (flower arrangement), and Chado (tea ceremony) in the community for more than 60 years. Please see more information at the link: https://www.seattle.us.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/CGAwardFujii.html

On April 29, 2023, Mr. Hideo Dale Kaku was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays by the Government of Japan in recognition of his contributions in improving the welfare of the Japanese and Japanese American community in the United States and promoting friendship between Japan and the United States. You can see the detailed description of this award from the link: https://www.seattle.us.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/2023SpringDecorationsKaku.html



Our hearty congratulations to the award recipients. Hiroshima Club is proud and honored to have such passionate and dedicated people among its membership.

Seattle Hiroshima Club Picnic August 12, 2023 (10:00am - 2:00pm)

Seward Park Shelter 3 (5895 Lake Washington Blvd. S. Seattle, WA 98118)

Gather your friends and family and join us for our annual club picnic! This is a great opportunity to see old friends, meet new friends, and socialize with club members and their families. We will have some ice breakers and the dishes people bring are a complete delight.

The club will provide hamburgers, hotdogs, condiments, water, tea and watermelon. Please bring a favorite dish to share.

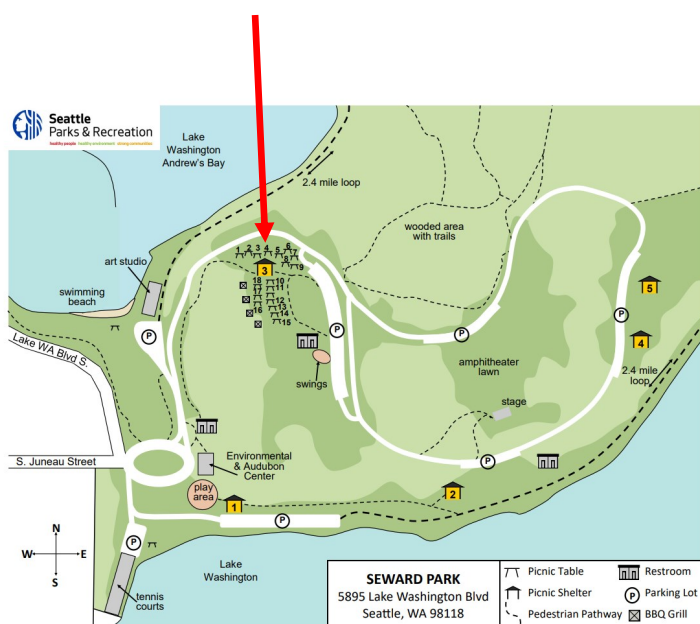
The picnic shelter is wheelchair and walker accessible, with plenty of parking and restrooms nearby so join us for a few hours of FUN!

Are you able to help with the picnic? We would greatly appreciate your help to ensure things run smoothly and the workload is shared. The areas we need help include picnic setup, coordinating games and prizes, a couple of people to take photos, creating the program and clean-up.

Please contact Curt Nakayama at curtn@comcast.net and Dale Kaku danskaku@comcast.net by July 15th, to tell them that you would love to help! Curt and Dale will provide further details about each task.

We look forward to seeing everyone on August 12th!

Picnic Shelter #3



Seattle Hiroshima Club Scholarship Recipients

By Andrea Mano

The Scholarship Committee (Andrea M., Curt N., and Beth K.) would like to again congratulate the 2022 – 2023 Scholarship winners. Just as in past years, the accomplishments and character of this year's scholarship winners are impressive.

Below please find a biography of each winner, along with their essay "What Hiroshima Means to Me".

Ella Chin



Ella Chin is a Senior at Kentridge High School. Parents are Jeff and Jill (Kano) Chin and grandmother is Miyeko Kano. Her interests include piano, violin, crochet and origami. Ella is currently participating in Running Start, taking courses at Green River College, and is on track to earn her two

-year AA degree with academic high honors of 3.9 GPA or higher, at the same time as her high school degree. She currently has a 3.9 GPA in her high school courses.

In high school, Ella was recognized for earning a 4.0 in junior level mathematics. Ella has participated in Key Club, including being on the fundraising committee. She has also participated in the Women in Tech Club and the Cybersecurity club. She is recognized as a team leader for a team of five in an on-line gaming community. Ella has volunteered with helping teachers to grade papers after class. Her high school courses include several honors and AP classes, many math courses and Japanese language.

Ella has been accepted to: University of Washington (Bothell and Tacoma campuses) as well as Western Washington University Chemistry Scholars program. Ella will be attending UW Bothell, studying biochemistry. She would like to become a medicinal chemist.

Ella finds time to work part time and her employer writes that Ella "carries themselves in a polite, respectable manner, and is incredibly reliable. In addition to her hard work, she has one of the best personalities that I have had the opportunity of working with. She is kind, dedicated and levelheaded.

Everyone can always count on Ella making the shift an enjoyable experience. She is able to lift the moods of anyone she works with."

A Professor at Green River College writes: "Ella is doing exceptional work. She is one of the strongest students, and asks thoughtful, insightful questions. She is quick to respond when I pose questions to the class. She is on track to earn a 4.0 in the course. Overall, I truly appreciate Ella's work and contributions to my class. She is a reliable and high-performing student."

A word from Ella:

I am really thankful for this opportunity, especially to my dear grandmother who always encouraged me to stay in touch with my culture. Love you grandma.

What Hiroshima Means to Me

By Ella Chin

A tall brick wall blocked her path, growing taller and taller the harder she tried to pass it. The barriers preventing me from experiencing my culture were cemented from an early age. My grandmother on my mom's side immigrated to the U.S. when she was a child. My grandpa on my dad's side immigrated later in his life. In both cases the language they spoke was lost. My mom never spoke Japanese and my dad refused to teach the little Cantonese he did speak to my sister and I. Over the years the lack of language has caused me to fall further away from my culture. Through various events I've come to realize the differences in language creates barriers between cultures and families.

When I attended high school, I was required to take a foreign language class to graduate and since Japanese was offered it seemed like the obvious choice. Throughout the years I had little contact with my Japanese side except for the internet. Although I never

Chin “What Hiroshima Means to Me” Continued

tried very hard the internet allowed me to stay in touch with my culture. When I first started the class, I was shocked, it felt like a slap to the face. I had never expected the class to be a breeze, but it was way harder than I expected. Japanese was in my blood after all, shouldn't it be easy? It was far from it. The class was the worst grade I had ever received and the fact that it was from a Japanese language class appalled me. The wall between me and my culture grew even taller, and I felt as if nothing I did was ever good enough. Nothing I did would ever allow me to experience my culture properly.

The barriers created between my culture, my family, and I caused by language became apparent. Sometimes I wonder about my situation and how it came to be. I know my experience is not mine alone. Many others have experienced similar feelings. How many immigrant families similar to my own now speak English, with their mother-tongue completely forgotten? The increasingly interconnectedness of the world has diffused many cultures including my own. Was not experiencing my own culture worth the pain and sorrow it brought? It allowed me to better assimilate into American society but was it necessary?

My great grandparents immigrated from Hiroshima to become farmers in Colorado. This summer, I visited the farm where my grandmother grew up. There we saw a memorial dedicated to the Japanese farmers. Being in this environment, I realized how hard it must have been hard to maintain your cultural identity while growing up in America. It reminded me of the choices that my great grandparents, my grandparents, and my parents made, and why I am so far away from my culture and ancestors. They gave me a great life yes, but at what cost? I lack a sense of belonging wherever I go. The tragedy of Hiroshima reminds me to never forget my roots no matter how far away they seem. Although my grandmother has passed, her life and her culture will be passed onto us. I still fold the origami Masu boxes she taught me how to make when I was young, we still make mochi every New Years and eat the Ozoni soup, and my mother still makes so many of the Japanese dishes my grandmother taught her how to make. Although some traditions have been lost, many still remain. Hiroshima reminds me to treasure and value these traditions as I grow older.

Emi Kusunose



Emi Kusunose is a Senior at Newport High School. Parents are Taro and Nami Kusunose and grandmother is Rieko Kuroda. Her interests include singing, needlepoint, embroidery and boxing. She currently has a 3.958 GPA.

Emi will be attending the University of Washington, Seattle, in the fall as a pre-nursing major. She would like to contribute to the well-being of her community by driving changes in healthcare equity and access.

Emi has received the Valor award at Newport High School for volunteerism. She has volunteered with many different organizations including: Cabin Choir/

Songs of Hope, 425 Tutoring, Friendship Circle, JIA and Megumi Preschool. She enjoys singing and has earned varsity letters in both Choir and Vocal Jazz. She was a member of the All Northwest and All-National Choirs, for which she had to audition. Emi also participates in Newport High School Vocal Jazz club. Her high school courses include several Advanced Placement and Honors classes, as well as Chamber choir and Vocal jazz ensemble. She currently has a 3.958 GPA.

One of her teacher's writes: "While Emi was able to find the academic success she was pursuing, it was ultimately her kindness and ability to engage others that truly sticks out as distinctive. She displayed empathy and compassion when considering the experiences of others – both within our school and when discussing current events of the world. She was encouraging to classmates who weren't finding academic success in a challenging AP Class as straight-

Kusunose Essay Continued

forward as she expected – offering to work with classmates after school on several occasions simply to be of service to them.”

The owner of Megumi Preschool, who has known Emi since she was 2 years old, wrote this: “I have had the pleasure of watching Emi mature, particularly when she volunteered at the preschool in 2022. She worked together successfully with multiple team members and would always interact with the children appropriately, in an easy-going manner, using well thought-out, child-friendly language. Emi was well-liked by her coworkers, the children and the parents.”

Here are a few words from Emi:

Thank you so much to the members of the Hiroshima Club for granting me this scholarship. I’d also like to thank my parents, brother, and grandparents for always being my biggest advocates and supporting me for the past 18 years. I’m so excited to begin a new chapter in my life and give back to the community that I’ve been so blessed to be born into.

What Hiroshima Means to Me

By Emi Kusunose

What Hiroshima means to me is simple; it's one of my fondest and most vivid memories from my childhood. The summer of my 2nd grade, I visited Kirikushi, a rural neighborhood on the island of Kirikushi off of the coast of Hiroshima with my mom and brother in the scorching rays of humidity. I remember excitedly gulping down the delicious grape jelly drink for the first time, that I'd carefully chosen out of the overwhelmingly colorful choices of beverages lined up in the shiny vending machines during the ferry ride - an important milestone that marked the beginning of a very beautiful friendship between myself and my eternal love for grape jelly drinks. When we reached the island, my great aunt greeted us with a huge smile curtained behind her red velvet perm and enveloped us warmly and with a heavy Hiroshima dialect. She and my great uncle were sweet to my brother and I and treated us like their grandchildren, and I loved them very much. Like my mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother had, I too attended Kirikushi elementary school through the end of summer.

Every morning, I walked to school in the morning with a herd of my classmates, savoring the strong aftertaste of juicy cut and peeled tomatoes sprinkled sparsely with large crystals of salt that I'd had for breakfast. Before then, I'd disliked tomatoes, to a surprising extent, probably because I'd never tasted the sweet flavor of tomatoes that were freshly picked, and sun soaked. During class, I remember when we made origami, my classmates awed at my pin-sized paper crane I'd constructed along with a family of cranes that I'd learned to do from my paternal grandma in Seattle. When I was in charge of the school lunch, I'd put on my strawberry scented bunny mask that my mom and I picked out, tracing the cute patterns with my fingers before busily serving the soup or rice to my classmates. In my free time at school, I pounced on grasshoppers hiding in tall grass, giggling as they hopped between my fingers, occasionally taking one home by slipping one into the zipper pocket of my backpack. I raised baby roly-polies in a Styrofoam planetarium at school and counted the dew drops on the Morning Glories we raised in the school garden to draw in our journals. At home, we also had pet caterpillars, saved by my merciful brother from my aunt and uncle who would kill the pests that munched away at their vegetables, without a second glance.

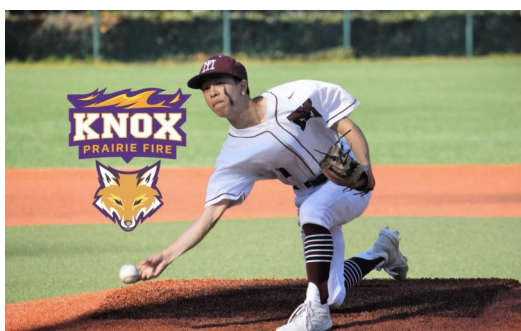
Some nights, I ate fried octopus and fresh raw octopus and aji that my uncle had caught that morning, wrapped in shiso leaves. On the scorching hot nights, we'd sit around the table eating sea snails, picking the sand out of our mouths with a toothpick, staring out into the dark and hot night. Once school had ended, I would throw on my cherry pop tank top that looked so fizzingly sweet and cool in the blazing heat of the sun every day and go down to the small river that pumped fresh water from the mountains and into the ocean on the coast of Kirikushi, with my brother to catch crabs and small fish in buckets. I know I loved Kirikushi because I not only went

Kusunose “What Hiroshima Means to Me” Continued

home, speaking in Hiroshima dialect for a few months, but also because there is no memory that I remember so vividly as I remember this one in all seventeen years I've lived.

Afterwards, I visited Kirikushi a couple of times, but not to the extent that I did in that specific summer from almost a decade ago. Throughout the years, whenever we visited Kirikushi, I'd reminisce these memories as I strolled around the seemingly unchanged small neighborhood buildings. Kirikushi today is still beautiful with the shimmering coast cast with the oyster nurseries and octopus pots, the luscious mountains and fields of scallops that overlook the neighborhood, and the pond loaches that swim in the mini narrow water canals snaking along the pavement. Although Kirikushi elementary school closed down due to the lack of children in the neighborhood, it is being used as an emergency facility. The streets and houses seemed emptier and filled with a serene quiet when I'd walked down the narrow streets. Kirikushi also suffered a severe mudslide a few years ago that resulted in the river being filled up with sand and packs of cute pufferfish. I realized that even the little neighborhood of Kirikushi was not immune to the ticking clock of change. Change can feel odd sometimes, but the precious relationships and memories I made in Kirikushi will never disappear in me and the people who I met. To me, Kirikushi will forever be not just a memory I hold dear, but a hometown that I can return to.

Lucas Fujii



Lucas Fujii is a Senior at Mercer Island High School.

Parents are Ed and Tina Fujii, and grand-

parents are Aiko and Minoru Fujii. Throughout high school Lucas has played baseball, and was part of Mercer Island High School baseball team that won the State championship in 2022. He is a self-taught submarine pitcher and sidearm pitcher. (YouTube handle: LucasFujii2023 for baseball videos). He was awarded Honorable Mention for AAA KingCo district as a pitcher this past season. In addition, he participates on a travel baseball team throughout the year. His interests include spending time with friends, working out and playing video games with friends.

Lucas has applied to several universities. He has been accepted to and has a baseball offer at Knox College, Occidental College and Lincoln University. He has also been accepted to Florida Gulf Coast University, University of Hawai'i Hilo and Washington State University. Recently, Lucas committed to playing baseball at Knox College and he will be studying neuroscience.

Lucas also works part time at Mauna Holu and at

Cloverdale Family Dentistry, and participates in the Green Seattle Partnership. Lucas' high school coursework includes several Advanced Placement and Honors courses, as well as many STEM courses such as Engineering Technology, Biotechnology and AP Computer Science. Lucas currently has an unweighted 3.657 GPA.

One of Lucas' teacher writes that "Lucas has been very active in the school and local community, from all of his AP and honors courses to various sports teams to his voluntary community service projects." He goes on to say that Lucas has an "unique ability to relate to a wide spectrum of individuals in an encouraging fashion that very much helped to create a positive learning environment in our class... Lucas exhibits intelligence, organizational skills, leadership and a contagious enthusiasm for learning."

Another writes that "Lucas is a focused, kind, capable, hard-working and intelligent student who wants to devote his professional career to the field of health care. Lucas has a clear vision of his next steps. He is a member of our Health Sciences of America club and has chosen schools to apply to that will foster his interests in biology and medicine. I think he would make an excellent medical professional."

Here are a few words from Lucas:

I want to thank the Hiroshima club for allowing me to be a part of their organization and awarding me the

Lucas Fujii Essay Continued

scholarship. I am very grateful for being associated with this wonderful program. They have further exposed me to my heritage and where I come from. I also want to thank my family for helping me get here. They have helped me so much in terms of my athletic and academic career.

What Hiroshima Means to Me

Every summer, my grandmother Aiko took me to the From Hiroshima to Hope festival to commemorate the ones that lost their lives during the atomic bomb and she would share stories about her childhood.

The most touching story that my grandmother told me was about my great grandfather. While he was on a streetcar, he encountered an American Soldier distributing Almond Roca to each passenger. As the soldier handed him the candy, he stored it in his pocket rather than eating it right away. The soldier then asked him why he didn't eat the candy like everyone else. After explaining that he wanted to save it for his children, the soldier was touched and gave the tin with the remaining sweets to him. My grandmother still has the tin that her father was given to this day.

To me, Hiroshima represents strength, kindness, and resiliency. I am proud to be a Hiroshima descendant. The way this event has shaped my ancestors has ultimately shaped who I am today. These values have influenced me to further my education in the medical field so that I can also have a positive impact on other people's lives.

Cherry Blossom Festival at Seattle Center

By Andrea Mano

Cherry Blossom Festival was held at Seattle Center on April 14 – 16. Seattle Hiroshima Club had a booth. Thank you to those who helped staff the booth: Nami Namekata, Karen Akira, Dale and Shizu Kaku, Lynn Miyauchi, Aaron Ramos and Irene Mano, Andrea Mano, Charlene Mano and Stephanie Mano.

Nami created a wonderful display of photos from past events and brought pamphlets including a booklet from the Hiroshima Peace Park. Several guests shared that they had visited the Peace Park and taken origami Tsuru that they had folded. Several people signed up to get more information about Seattle Hiroshima Club. Guests left the booth with candy and origami Tsuru.

Please feel free to visit Cherry Blossom Festival video: <https://youtu.be/nwBoVTeFNTY> which includes many different performances.



A poster of Itsukushima Shrine in Hiroshima, a panel showing our club's activities and Hiroshima Carp's T-shirts were displayed.



Aaron, Charlene, Stephanie and Irene help guests to make a paper crane.



Lynn and Andrea describe club activities to several guests.



Announcement of Graduation Honorarium

By Andrea Mano

The Seattle Hiroshima Club will be giving honorariums to 2023 high school and college graduates. The amount will depend on the number of applicants. If you are or will be eligible, please complete the following application. Applicants have to be a current member of the Seattle Hiroshima Club or your parents or grandparents have to be current members of the Club. Those who received the 2023 High School Graduating Seniors Scholarship (which was \$3,000) are not eligible for this honorarium. Questions should be sent to scholarship@seahiro.org

Seattle Hiroshima Club

Honorarium Grant Application (deadline is July 17, 2023)

Information about the High School or College graduate (2023)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____ Email _____

Name of school that you are graduating from _____

Degree you will receive _____

Information on Seattle Hiroshima Club Member _____

Club member Name _____

Club Member Relationship (self, parent or grandparent): _____

Club Member Phone #: _____ Club Member email _____

The Seattle Hiroshima Club will be distributing honorariums for 2023 graduates of high school or college. The amount will depend on the number of applicants. The graduate must be a member of the Seattle Hiroshima Club or a child or grandchild of a current member.

Please return this application to:

Attn: Scholarship Committee

Seattle Hiroshima Club

P. O. Box 94083

Seattle, WA 98124-9483

A Comment on *Hometown Boy*, the Recently Run Drama by Keiko Green

By Stephen Sumida, Emeritus Professor at the University of Washington

I've had the great good fortune of being challenged to act, on stage, since the mid-'70s when we so proudly began Asian American theater in Seattle, under the name, the Asian Exclusion Act that was preceded by the initial Theater Ensemble of Asians (TEA). My challenge has been to develop complex characters. My first major role was as the character named Oka (no given name specified) in our 1976 premiere, workshop production of Wakako Yamauchi's *And the Soul Shall Dance*. My previous acting experience had been in high school, in the roles of Sakini, the Okinawan interpreter, in *Teahouse of the August Moon*, and as Phra Meha Mongkut, King Rama IV, in *The King and I*, not Asian American but Hollywood and Broadway shows. In Yamauchi's play, I took as my personal role models two of the Nisei farmers I had grown up under, in Hawai'i. One of them was stout and quiet, the other more slender and yapping all the time with bossy talk and nervous laughter, which my mom said was because he was covering up his illiteracy, unable to read or write anything but his signature. While unlike each other, both of them worked shirtless under the Hawaiian sun, both of them with skin burnt just darker than the way cream soda used to taste. Wakako Yamauchi saw her characters in the flesh the first time when she came to see our show. She had had no idea that her wife-beating, dirt-farmer Issei character Oka could have any complexity in the way I felt I was obliged to develop, and this, her first drama, went on a year later to be televised on PBS, performed by actors at East-West Players in Los Angeles. Oka was played by the veteran Nisei actor Yuki Shimoda, with the complexities Oka had acquired in Seattle.

Acting in Asian American theater, developing complex characters, was for me like growing up Sansei on our farm on the shores of Pearl Harbor, growing up hearing stories from an aunt about how our farm and family were directly under the flight paths of the Japanese bombers attacking Battleship Row on 7 December 1941 only a half-mile away. We were under attack ourselves—that is, my elders were. (I wasn't born until 1946.) What did it mean, when in Hawai'i

we call ourselves “Japanese”? Or like how I grew up learning that my father's parents had come from Kaita-machi and Funakoshi-cho outside of and near Hiroshima-shi, and that America had atomic bombed “them”? Or was it “us”?

When asked by Dr. Namekata to write an article about our Seattle Public Theater production, just concluded, of *Hometown Boy* by Keiko Green (a native of Georgia, the play being set there, in 2019), I think of my job of playing the part of Walter, born just after the war, raised, and living all his life and profession as a property lawyer there in Georgia. Who? (Walter and his son James are given no surnames.) Where? Japanese Americans in the South? Why? Because the family was “relocated” from California to one of the two concentration camps in Arkansas during WW2—but who in the South “remembers” this history, these people? Even Bill Clinton, former Governor of Arkansas and President of the USA, didn't learn of the camps at Jerome and Rohwer until after he was President. And then he was shocked. And he began taking us Japanese Americans seriously. From the reviews found online, I see that the 2021, Atlanta premiere was the only full production of *Hometown Boy* before ours this month of May 2023, and I infer that few if any of the Atlanta audience members caught the allusions in the play to the WW2 Japanese American history and the “racial identities” of two of the main characters. These characters, Walter and James, seemed in Georgia to suffer from simply “personal” traumas, not “historical” in



Walter acted by Dr. Stephen Sumida and James acted by Michael Wu (Photo by John Ulman)

Hometown Boy Continued

ways shared by all forcibly displaced peoples in the world.

Midway through the run of our show, it occurred to me to look up a Noh drama mask that was vague in my memory. I thought of modeling my face on such a mask at the end of the play. I found it:

This mask is a type of “akujou,” or “bad man,” but not bad in the sense of evil; “bad” in a sense of his being a “bad dude” in the severe intensity of his emotions. This akujou is specifically a Hanakobuakujou a bumpy-nose bad old man, his nose creased by his scowling, his facial hairs signifying his spiritual powers, his gold-colored teeth showing his superhuman strength. The mask is an expression of simultaneous and complex wrath and profound sorrow. To me and others in our cast *Hometown Boy* is a tragedy, of Walter, of James the son, and now of Becks the girlfriend, described by the playwright as a Korean American from Seattle, who have to go on to live with their traumas, if they are to live at all. The three white characters meanwhile go on with their lives, putting their traumas behind themselves. That, the playwright writes, is the kind of “privilege” the white characters have. The Asian Americans are not privileged. This is a difficult, challenging thought that the audience has to take away, at the show’s end. A recognition of continuing trauma is why we observe and not bury Day of Remembrance every 19 February. And Peace Memorial Week in Hiroshima every August. *Hometown Boy* has been our offering for this year’s Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month of May.



Noh drama mask



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On behalf of Seattle Hiroshima Club members, the cabinet members greatly appreciate all the persons who contributed their articles and Mrs. Sharon Kosai for her wonderful job formatting and laying out articles and photos in this newsletter issue. Thank you very much.

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