














Photos by Donald Yungling, Mimi Araki Shiraishi, and Peter Weber

2025 Shinnenkai New Year Celebration Recap

by Juli Kodani

Despite the questionable weather on Sunday, February 16, almost 400 members, their families and friends showed up at this year's annual event celebrating the Year of the Snake. President **Tetsuo Ishisoko** asked for a moment of silence for 4 members we already lost this year: Calvin Abe, Takeko Cox, Roger Tauber and Toshiko Slagle. We will certainly miss them all. Later, the mic was passed to MC **Megan Calhoun** who introduced the NCOKK Officers, Board members, Area Representatives and acknowledged 2 new Board members, **Kenny Higa** and **Kazuki Kinjo**. Certificates of Appreciation were handed out to **Fumiyo & Tsutomu Tomita** for their dedication to promote and foster our Okinawa Shimadaiko. There were 10 *Tushibi* members born in the Year of the Snake: **Keiko Coats** (oldest), **Toshi McRorie**, **Yoneko Rieker**, **Harumi Pearson**, **Minoru Arakaki**, **Tom Ducharme**, **Mariko Oshiro Dantzer**, **Ethan Yuji Kuniyoshi**, **Francine Austin** and **Ryan Christopher Austin** (youngest). We also recognized 11 new members **Toshiko & George Alpi**, **Liz Baker**, **Trese Bulan Benzon & Jjay Mendoza**, **Chloe Shizuka Bock, Ryan Kaneshiro, Takuya & Brianna Oshiro, Jason Raquino, Monica Stephens, Katie Stuhlmacher, Azusa Tokashiki**, and **Stephanie Yue**. Again, **Akane Matsuo** and **Keiko Nakamura** received another well-deserved accolade for their beautiful program design and layout. A special shout-out went to some members who drove 156 to 223 miles (2-1/2 to 3-3/4 hours) to attend: **Sueko & Mayumi Strohmaier** from Madera, **Yoneko DeBernardis & Anna Perez** from Fresno, **Mako De Los Santos** from Tulare and **Shizuko Rutherford** from Sanger. Before the start of the afternoon's entertainment, President Ishisoko introduced the VIPs from the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco: **Yusuke Teruya**, Advisor for Community Affairs and **Ryan Okada**, Coordinator of Cultural & Community Affairs. After his greeting, Mr. Teruya originally from Okinawa, led the traditional *kanpai ondo*!

The traditional opening number *Kajadefuu* by Master **Kinuko Mototake** of Azama Honryu Seifu Ichisenkai Mototake Kinuko Ryubu Kenkyusho USA with **Kyo Yohena** was followed by the **Dushigwa Group** performing the popular *Medetaibushi*. Next Master **Kinuko Mototake** performed *Kuinuhana* and *Kanayo Amakawa* with **Kyo Yoneha** and *Yotsudake* with **Akiko Journeay** and **Suzu Suarez** (who were paired in *Tanchame).* Later **Mieko Merrill**, **Ritsuko Spalding**, **Yori & Courtney Nakaishi** of Miyagi Honryu Otori Kinsen Kai Arakaki Noriyoshi Ryubu Dojo danced *Minatokuribushi*. *Sunu Bujoh* a solo by **Mieko Merrill**, *Kurushima Kuduchi* & *Nuchibana* (Azama Honryu Saifu Ichisenkai) and *Zei* solo by Master Kinuko Mototake completed the dance part of the program. The obvious crowd favorite was a group of 4 young girls **Ayumi Clarke**, **Keiko & Emiko Weber**, and **Lizbeth Suarez** performing *Yuiyuiyuimaaru* on stage for the first time! Another new Uta Sanshin group **Teada Kankara Sanshin** debuted on this year's stage too. We wish them ALL good luck!

(continued on pg.8)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Hai-Sai, *Gusu-yo, Chu-uganabira!*

Happy New Year! As we welcome March on the calendar, new buds are beginning to sprout from the branches in our gardens, signaling the arrival of spring. The cold is gradually easing, and we can feel the excitement of a new season. I hope this message finds you well. I look forward to another wonderful year with you all.

Last year, with the support and cooperation of our members, we successfully held our three major annual events: the *Shinnen-kai* New Year's gathering, the summer picnic, and the *Keiro-kai* (Respect for the Elderly Celebration). Our New Year's gathering saw the highest turnout since the COVID-19 pandemic, and nearly 100 attendees joined us for the summer picnic for the first time. Additionally, at the *Keiro-kai*, we were honored to welcome Takane Kochi, a folk singer from Okinawa, who gave a spectacular performance to celebrate the occasion. Each of these events was filled with smiles and warm interactions, making for a truly lively and memorable year.

On the other hand, one of our key goals for last year—registering and obtaining recognition from the IRS as a charitable organization—has not yet been completed. This remains our top priority for this year, and we will continue working towards this goal.

This year started on a high note, as the *Okinawa Shima Daiko* group gave a powerful performance at the NBA Golden State Warriors' halftime show on January 4. Their dynamic display was met with enthusiastic cheers from the audience, creating an electrifying atmosphere. Additionally, our New Year's gathering had over 400 attendees, the highest number since I became president. Four young junior Ryukyuan dancers made their debut, marking an important step for the next generation. Furthermore, the formation of the new *"Tiida Kankan" Sanshin* group was announced, adding to the excitement. Thanks to the dedication of our performing arts division, this year has started off with great momentum.

Every year, our New Year's gathering and *Keiro-kai* are enriched by the performances of our *Geino-bu*, which showcase traditional Ryukyuan and Okinawan performing arts. Many of our members look forward to these performances as a highlight of our events. However, we are facing a significant challenge: our performers are aging, and if this trend continues, the future of our *Geino-bu* is at risk. Passing down and revitalizing our proud Ryukyuan and Okinawan culture is a critical issue for us moving forward. As an executive committee, we will actively develop concrete plans to pass on, teach, and preserve these traditions for future generations. We kindly ask all our members to reflect on how they can contribute to preserving this valuable cultural heritage and offer their support and cooperation.

This year's zodiac sign is the Snake (巳, "*Mi*"). Just as snakes shed their skin repeatedly, this year is believed to bring opportunities for renewal and transformation. With this in mind, our organization will focus on two major goals: officially registering as a charitable organization with the IRS; developing and executing a sustainable plan for passing down Ryukyuan and Okinawan performing arts to the next generation. We sincerely appreciate your continued support and cooperation in these endeavors.

Meanwhile, although the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza have calmed compared to their peak, peace has yet to be fully realized. We hope that those who cherish peace will continue to pay attention to these situations and follow their developments with concern.

As we transition between seasons, please take extra care of your health. Wishing you all a happy and healthy year ahead. "*Nuchi du Takara*"

ハイサイ、グスーヨー、チューウガナビラ！

明けましておめでとうございます。暦の上では三月を迎え、庭の小枝からは新芽が顔を出し、少しずつ春の訪れを感じられるようになりました。皆様はいかがお過ごしでしょうか。寒さも和らぎ、新しい季節の始まりに心が弾む頃かと思います。今年もどうぞよろしくお願いいたします。

昨年は、当県人会の三大年間行事である新年会、夏のピクニック、そして敬老会を、皆様のご協力のもと盛大に開催することができました。新年会には、コロナウイルス感染症以降最多となる多くの皆様にご参加いただき、夏のピクニックでは初めて 100 名近くの方々にお集まりいただきました。また、敬老会では沖縄出身の民謡歌手・東風平高根さんがお祝いに駆けつけてくださり、素晴らしい演奏で会を盛り上げてくださいました。どの行事も多くの笑顔と温かい交流にあふれ、大変賑やかな一年となりました。

一方で、昨年の目標として掲げていた、当県人会の慈善団体としての IRS への登録・認定は、まだ完了しておりません。この目標は本年の最重要事項として、引き続き取り組んでまいります。

さて、今年は新年早々、沖縄島太鼓グループが 1 月 4 日に NBA・ゴールデンステイト・ウォリアーズのハーフタイムショーで勇壮な演舞を披露しました。観客からは大きな声援が送られ、会場は大いに盛り上がりました。また、新年会では、私が会長に就任して以来最多となる 400 人以上の参加がありました。さらに、次世代のジュニア舞踊家 4 人が初舞台を踏み、新たな一歩を刻みました。そして、「ティーダカンカン」三線グループの結成報告もあり、新年会は大いに盛り上がりました。このように、今年は当芸能部の尽力により幸先の良いスタートを切ることができました。

毎年、新年会や敬老会では、当芸能部による琉球・沖縄芸能の披露が宴会を盛り上げており、多くの会員の皆様がこれを楽しみにご参加くださっていることと思います。しかしながら、芸能部員の高齢化が進んでおり、このままでは近い将来、芸能部の存続が危ぶまれる状況となります。誇り高い琉球・沖縄文化の継承、そして芸能部の活性化は、今後の大きな課題です。執行部としても、次世代へ琉球・沖縄芸能を伝え、指導し、継承していくための具体的な計画を検討してまいります。つきましては、会員の皆様におかれましても、この大切な文化の存続に向けて、どのような形で貢献できるかを今一度お考えいただき、ご支援・ご協力を賜りますようお願い申し上げます。

今年の干支は「巳」です。ヘビが脱皮を繰り返す姿になぞらえ、再スタートや変化のチャンスに恵まれる年と言われています。当県人会も、「慈善団体としての IRS への登録」および「持続可能な琉球・沖縄芸能の次世代継承の計画・実行」を最大の目標に掲げ、取り組んでまいります。皆様のご支援・ご協力を心よりお願い申し上げます。

また、ウクライナやガザ地区における戦闘は一時期よりも沈静化したものの、いまだ平和には至っておりません。平和を願う皆様におかれましては、引き続き関心を寄せ、成り行きを見守っていただければ幸いです。

2025 CALENDAR of EVENTS イベントカレンダー:

April 12-13, 2025 58th Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival, San Francisco Japantown
北カリフォルニア桜まつり
Oshiro Karate Dojo (4/13), 12:30 pm, @ The Center, 1840 Sutter St., Main Stage

& April 19-20, 2025 Okinawa Dance & *Eisa Shima Taiko* (4/19), 3:30 pm, @ The Center, 1840 Sutter Street, Main Stage

April 26, 2025 Berkeley Bay Festival 2025, Shorebird Park, 160 University Ave, Berkeley, 9am – 4:30pm, DMAX Dragon Boat team participating, contact Annette Adams 916-675-2844

April 27, 2025 Cupertino Cherry Blossom Festival, 10:00am-5pm, Memorial Park
クパチーノ桜祭り, 場所:メモリアルパーク, 時間:10:00am – 5:00pm
Azama Honryu Seifu Ichisenkai USA, Kinuko Mototake Classical Okinawan Dance Academy & *Eisa Shima-Daiko*, Outdoor Amphitheater from 12:30 pm & Quinlan Center Stage (indoors) from 4:00 pm

June 30, 2025 NCOKK High School Scholarship DEADLINE (see details on our website ncokk.org)

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:
We are looking for volunteer members interested to become the Regional Representatives for the **408 & 510** Area Codes. The job is to call / contact members in the telephone area code and pass on timely kenjinkai information to them. A listing of those in the telephone area will be provided for you.

408 および 510 エリア コードの地域代表に興味のあるボランティア メンバーを募集しています。仕事は、電話エリア コードのメンバーに電話 / 連絡し、タイムリーな県人会情報を伝えることです。あなたの電話エリアのメンバーのリストが提供されます。

THANK YOU
to our generous members:
Donations from 2025 Shinnen-kai:

Anonymous, Annette Adams, Tianna Andretti, Steve & Patty Arakaki, Ryoji & Yayoi Arakaki, Toyoko Araki, Kazuko Bray, Yoshiko & Tom Canevari, Masako & Albert Citero, Kyoko Clemons, Fujiko Dandoy, Evelyn Frank, Maria Frye, Donn Ginoza, Dennis & Julia Haley, Tim & Lisa Haley, Yasuko Heffner, Yoshiko King, Kazuki Kinjo & Harold Chaput, Juli & Fred Kodani, Akiko Kohler, Kazuko Lerseth, Yoriko Nakaishi & Courtney Reyes, Alain Oyafuso, Haruko Profumo, Yoneko & Tom Rieker, Saesha Rushing, Dorothy Shull, Grace Sicat, Yukiko Smith, Katie Stuhlmacher, Kazuo Sunabe, Fumiko Tweedy, Sam & Norma Uchihara, Uyehara Travel (Tamiko Uyehara), Kiyoko Winter, Matsue & Wayland Woo, Stephanie Yue, Yoneko Yungling

(If you made a donation in money or in-kind and we did not recognize you by name, please know that it was not intentional. We appreciate all the support we receive and will make every effort to acknowledge you in the future by having donation envelopes at the reception desk. What you have done matters. Thank you for your understanding.)

Hiroko & James Paramo – NCOKK Scholarship Program

Add correction to last issue:

We were remiss in not acknowledging that the Keiro-kai photos on the first page of the Fall 2024 issue of *Tayui* were taken by *Carl Gutekunst and Rachael Greathouse.*

Bea Shiroma at 103!

Beatrice is healthy and busy attending Shinnen-kai celebrations around Honolulu and marveling at the fact that she's still alive!

She wishes everyone a Happy New Year and best wishes for long healthy lives!
(from her daughter, Yukie)

Embracing Connection: A Journey of Poetry on Okinawa

by India Wade

Last year, after many years away, I finally had the opportunity to revisit Okinawa. The months before my trip were filled with busyness and stress, so I flew across the Pacific craving connection: to creativity, nature, ancestry, spirituality, and myself. I was also hopeful that, after some recharging, I would have the energy and inspiration to dedicate time to a book of poetry I have been ideating on for several years.

It will come as no surprise to this audience that Okinawa provided exactly the grounding and inspiration I needed. During my first four days, I drove, walked, and sat quietly in the *Yambaru* forest, exploring the winding jungle roads, and attempting to avoid the palm-sized rain spiders I quickly learned were my roommates in the traditional *kominka* where I stayed. I found beaches hidden from sight by dense sugarcane fields and stopped at rest stop after rest stop on Route 58 trying to find the *kakigori* (shaved ice) vendor my mother used to take me to when I visited as a child.

Next, I spent five days on *Ikeijima*, a quiet island connected to *Uruma* City by a bridge where I remember taking photos with my grandparents and cousins on our way to see the limestone caves. During the day, I walked the island, photographing the rainy winter scenery and visiting the neighboring islands for Okinawa soba and *kokuto* (brown sugar) lattes. At night, I spread my writing across the unvarnished wood floors of my Airbnb, organizing, writing, rewriting, and reflecting on the poems that will make up my book.

One night, still jetlagged and unused to the feeling of staying in an unfamiliar house alone, I stayed up reading about *ryuka* - Okinawan poetry - and exploring the few pieces I could find that are translated into English. As is often the case when reading poetry, I was floored by the resonance of the words, written hundreds of years before in a social, political, and cultural context so different from my own. It reminded me that poems are a magical medium with the ability to bridge time, culture, and language, to surface pieces of universal human experience and truth.

I am not ready to share too much yet, but reading about *ryuka* and the history of poetry in Okinawa gave me the idea for the title and theme of my book, which will explore human connectedness and how individual stories are all part of a collective whole. I am incorporating quotes from *ryuka* and folk song lyrics as thematic anchors for each chapter of the book, which has been a joy to research and incorporate.

My time in Okinawa was restoring, inspiring, and grounding. I am grateful for the progress I made on my writing, and am excited to share more with the NCOKK community as the book comes together. There are also more experiences from my trip I am eager to share, including a uniquely wonderful experience at the *Yambaru* Hotel with my mother and her cousin. I hope to contribute a piece on that to the next *Tayui* newsletter, and for now, I am including two poems I wrote while in Okinawa. The first was written on *Ikeijima*, and the second while sunbathing on a beach in *Nakijin*.

Okinawa

There is an imposter syndrome
to observing the place you were born
through foreign eyes.
To fumbling through your first-language
with the embarrassment
of it having become your second.
Your tongue having to relearn words
that your lungs remember the shape of
but hesitate to expel.
Is any of this still mine,
your heart has to wonder?

And still, and still,
the taxi driver, and the *bingata* store manager,
and my mother's best friend
all say to me without any hesitation:
Okaerinasai - Welcome home.

Welcome home to this Kingdom
of travelers and traders,
of leavings and homecomings,
of the most bitter tragedies
and of the softest, unyielding kindness.
Welcome home to this Kingdom where
like the star-shaped grains of sand
and the spider's thread between the banyan trees,
like serpent's fangs
and the suffocating fecundity,
you
are an irrevocable piece
of this overwhelming whole.

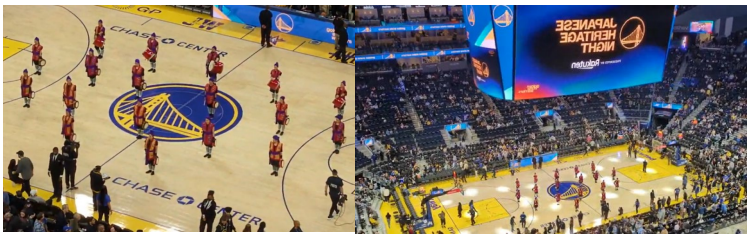
Brightness II

It's all so bright:
the sun,
the sea,
the green of the jungle
that grows itself
to the very edge of the earth,
threatening to dig its roots
into the quiet waves.

My eyes squint struggling
to take it all in.
It feels so familiar,
but I can't sense where it begins.
Have I ever known brightness
this saturated and thick?
Have I ever known
light like this?
Do they remember me
these sunbeams,
this intensity,
this heat
of my homeland?

Editorial Note: This is India's 2nd article for *Tayui.* She last wrote for our Fall 2021 issue, entitled *Shima Uta – Island Song*. As a lover of poetry, she connects with lyrics of a song. Check out her Okinawan music playlist 海のうた on Spotify: https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5YmWs8Dkzwbew0ifkqLxHU?si=FpHdrtXbTcK_8B_RS9HjBg&dl_branch=1&nd=1&dlsi=75af7f8415034641.

EISA SHIMA DAIKO PERFORMS AT GSW HALFTIME SHOW



On January 4, 2025, our own Okinawa Eisa Shima Daiko, 18 members strong, performed at the halftime show of the NBA Golden State Warriors thanks to the efforts of the Japanese Heritage Night Committee! Performing on the court in front of 18,000 Warriors fans, as well as members of the Japanese and Japanese American communities, was a proud moment for our group. It reaffirmed the importance of sharing and preserving our cultural heritage with the broader community. Through their hard work and dedication under the tutelage of Master Kinuko Mototake, it made the experience unforgettable for all our members.

Here are the links to see their spectacular performance at San Francisco Chase Center's Japanese Heritage Night:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/10H3J0ZTL0u5twzMiQfRzjLEZkhh9D---/view
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9UN7Y0GDFo

めんそーれー

New Members / Address Changes as of 3/16/2025:
新会員加入 2025 年 3 月 16 日付

Liz Baker
Shizuka Bock
Yuto Kakazu
Ashley Magana
Thuy Nguyen
Yoshiko Nishihara
Takuya & Brieanna Oshiro
Katie Stuhlmacher
Monica Stephens
Azusa Tokashiki

Address Change:
Norie Westphal

Junglia Okinawa Opening July 25

According to Kyodo News, a jungle theme park will open in **Nakijin**, Okinawa on July 25, hoping to attract tourists with an immersion in nature offering 22 attractions, including a dinosaur-themed ride and a balloon ride for a panoramic view of the surrounding jungle area. Visitors will be able to hop on a vehicle to explore the jungle and simulate the experience of fleeing from pursuing dinosaurs. The roughly 60-hectare park, located in the protected region of Yambaru, a UNESCO World Heritage site, also has an open-air bath that allows visitors to enjoy scenic views of the southern island. This jungle theme park is forecast to have an economic impact of about 6.8 trillion yen in the first 15 years after its opening and create more than 880,000 jobs, according to an estimate by Kansai University. The entrance fee will be 8,800 yen ($58) per adult and 5,940 yen ($40) for a child aged 4 to 11 for travelers from overseas, while the price for domestic visitors will be 6,930 yen per adult and 4,950 yen per child. Children aged 3 or younger are free of charge. The company began selling package tours, including entrance tickets, in late January.

COMMENTS FROM OUR MEMBERS & COMMUNITY:

About the January 4 Eisa Shimadaiko performance at NBA Golden State Warriors half-time show:

Thank you for sharing the news about Eisa performance at such a big event. We are so proud of your Eisa group and our culture. *Sachiko Aldop, Fayetteville Okinawa Kenjinkai*

Fantastic! What a great opportunity and performance! *Diane Wong, Exec. Director, J-Sei*

Wow! Congratulations, I wish I was there. *Rosalyn Tonai, Exec. Director, NJAHS*

That was a great performance with their colorful costumes and synchronized movements. I am glad the Warriors brass is broad-minded enough to invite other ethnic groups to highlight their culture. Thanks for sharing. *Samuel Uchihara*

Many thanks to Tetsuo Ishisoko and Juli Kodani for contacting me regarding my grandfather, Tokusuke Uema. I hope to find descendants of his family/friends through my upcoming contacts with people in NCOKK! His descendants attended the 2025 New Year's party as my guests. There are at present 27 living blood-descendants plus one more on the way! *Liz Baker (new member)*

A TIP OF THE HAT, TO OUR MANY KEIRO-KAI VOLUNTEERS! by Juli Kodani

We want to thank ALL of you for helping make this year's *Shinnen-kai* a rousing success (IMHO)! Of course, there are always some glitches in any event, but all in all, this year's event was a BIG achievement in my years of being a part of this kenjinkai! Not only in the sheer number of people who attended (estimated to be close to 400), but also the number of volunteers and their families who helped us pull it off!

As always, the *Geino-bu* put together a superb program of performers, including the *eisa taiko* group, fresh off their powerful performance at the NBA Warrior's half-time show and the dancing little tykes debut! Special thanks to Yas Matayoshi, Akiko Nagayama, Tsuneko Silva, and Stan Yogi for carpooling other members who would not have come otherwise.

We have so many members AND their families to thank for this year's successful *Shinnen-kai* beginning with hanging the banner! Mieko Perry-Blang, who has been serving refreshments for many decades got help from this year's team of dedicated ladies, birthday girl Yoko Balanon, Tomoko Quinchocho and new member Mina Tamashiro; Harumi Ducharme, this year's Volunteers' Coordinator and her husband Tom came early and took charge of every aspect of the event, on the fly; cousins Christine Oyakawa and Joyce Tamanaha-Ho and family sold the 2022 *Uchinanchu Taikai* T-shirts; familiar faces Kazuki Kinjo & Harold Chaput manned the Silent Auction table; Yasuko Heffner passed out membership rosters & programs; the entire raffle assembling process was managed by sisters Annette Adams and Evelyn Frank who also went around selling tickets as did Mimi (Araki) and Richard Shiraishi; Quin Perez-Adams & Iman Adel distributed bentos like last year; Miana Adel & son Iman (again!) ran the busy Kazuo Sunabe T-shirt & hoodie table; Wendy Knight sold Yoshiko Canevari bags; the lovely program was compiled and designed by Keiko Nakamura and Akane Matsuo; Ben & Barbara Kobashigawa sold used books; MC Megan Calhoun took charge of the mic; Chris Ishisoko controlled the AV equipment with Tsutomu Tomita timing the program; Donald Yungling was our roving photographer; Greg Kawabata did the videotaping; Juli & Fred Kodani with Kenny Higa managed the reception area; and last but not least, filling in wherever he was needed, President Tetsuo Ishisoko! A special shout out also goes to Kinuko Mototake, the creative director of the entertainment program and assistant Fumiyo Tomita. Foothill College students from Okinawa, Yoshiya Kinjo and Maika Gibo helped too. We appreciate everyone who helped in some way and look forward to your continued support! *Nifedebiru* everyone!

サンシングループ Teada-Kankara-Sanshin

by Fumiyo Tomita

2 月 16 日、にぎやかに開催された 2025 年、新年会の席においてついにサンシングループが誕生したことを紹介させて頂きました。そのサンシングループの名前は、てぃだ-かんから-さんしん (Teada Kankara Sanshin) と言います。この名前は、沖縄の太陽と、かんからサンシンの 2 つの言葉を一つに合わせました。てぃだ-かんかん🌼 かんから-さんしん🎸 Teada-kan kan + Kan Kara-Sanshin

楽しく三線を学びながら、沖縄の太陽のように明るく、サンシンの音色を通して多くの人に希望を与えられるサンシングループになれるようにという願いを込めて名付けました。

練習は、月 1 回のペースで最後の土曜日の 1 時~3 時 に行っています。会場はメンバーのお一人でもあります、オークランド市のギボンズ ふみ さんのお宅で行っています。ちなみに 3 月の練習は 3 月 29 日 土曜日 1:00 pm-3:00 pm に行います、毎回 10 人ほどのメンバーが集っています。サンシンができる方も、これから習いたい方も大歓迎です。サンシン始めたい方は是非ご連絡下さい。(ご連絡はテキストメッセージでお願いします)

これからも琉球舞踊、エイサー、そしてこの三線グループを支援し、美しい沖縄文化を広めていきます。

芸能部アシスタント 富田文代, fumiyotom@gmail.com, 510-426-2833

On February 16th, at the lively 2025 New Year *Shinnen-kai* Celebration, we announced the birth of a new Sanshin Group. The name of the Sanshin Group is Teada-Kankara-Sanshin. It combines the two words "Okinawa Sun" and "Kankara Sanshin" into one: Teada-kan kan + Kan Kara-Sanshin

We named it with the hope that we can become a Sanshin group that is as bright as the Okinawan sun and can give hope to many people through the sound of the Sanshin, while having fun learning the Sanshin.

Practice is held once a month on the last Saturday from 1pm to 3pm. The venue is the home of one of our members, Fumi Gibbons, in Oakland. The March practice will be held on Saturday, March 29th from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, and about 10 members gather each time.

Those who can play Sanshin and those who want to learn are both welcome. If you want to start playing Sanshin, please contact us by text message. We will continue to support Ryukyu dance, *eisa*, this Sanshin group, and spread the beautiful Okinawan culture.

Contact Performing Arts Department Assistant Fumiyo Tomita, fumiyotom@gmail.com, 510-426-2833

IN MEMORIAM

Takeko Iha Cox 1941 – 2025

by James Cox

Takeko Iha Cox passed away on January 12, 2024 in San Francisco, with her husband and son by her side. She was born in Iramina, Yomitan, Okinawa on October 13, 1941. Her parents, Kamado Iha and Kameye (Yogi) Iha, also born in Okinawa, had emigrated to Hawaii at a young age. They met and married in Hawaii before returning to Okinawa in 1939 with their first son, Takashi (Frank) Iha. Her younger brother, Takao (Eric) Iha was born in 1944.

Takeko's parents, who spoke English and knew Americans in Hawaii, followed the instructions on US leaflets to move north of the island to avoid the worst of the battle in April 1945. Even though the US troops initially landed in Yomitan, the family was able to survive the difficulties of the war. Unfortunately, her father passed away at the end of the war in 1946 and never returned to Hawaii. Initially the family could not return to Yomitan after the battle ended and were relocated to the other side of the island. The first school in Okinawa to open after the war was in that village. Although Takeko was not of school age, she just followed the other children to the school and started early. Eventually, they were able to return to Yomitan and live in Iramina. With assistance from her mother's family in Hawaii, her parents were able to return to Hawaii during 1954-55, but Takeko stayed in Iramina, attended school and cared for her younger brother alone, until they were able to join the Hawaii family in 1957.

Takeko's Journey: Despite the difficulties of her early years, she was always interested in nature, culture, music, art, and science. She graduated from the University of Hawaii with a degree in Medical Technology, eventually working in the lab at UCSF Parnassus Hospital in San Francisco. She explored California and traveled with her friends and aunts from Hawaii. After working a few years, she took time off to explore Europe alone and served as a VISTA volunteer in Illinois where she met her future husband, James W. Cox. After marriage, her adventures continued with a summer-long exploration of Mayan and Aztec ruins in her Volkswagen camper. Takeko's explorations included all the US states (except Alaska), Japan (all provinces), China, Hong Kong, Bermuda, Canada, Mexico, numerous countries in Europe, Turkey, Malaysia, Borneo, Cambodia, Thailand and a safari in Kenya. While in Singapore, she worked as a translator for many tours to Japan. Some of her adventures included riding horses in the mountains, sailing their boat from Tokyo to Okinawa and back (she received a captain's license in Japan), hiking and camping.

After her mother passed away, Takeko moved with her husband for his business, living in Illinois, New York, Tokyo, and Singapore. At the end of 2017, she moved with her husband back to San Francisco to stay with their son.

Takeko is survived by her husband, James W. Cox, son Forrest Tetsuo Cox, brother Takao Eric Iha (Miyoko), Takashi's wife Evelyn Iha, numerous in-laws, cousins, nieces and nephews. A Celebration of Life will be in Hawaii and Illinois.

IN MEMORIAM

Calvin Abe 1948 – 2025

by Donna Fujii

It is with deep sorrow we announce the passing of Cal Abe, a cherished family member and valued member of the San Francisco community. Calvin passed away unexpectedly on January 1, 2025, leaving a legacy of kindness, integrity, and dedication to his profession and loved ones.

Born and raised in Salinas, California, the Abe's had a big extended family. Calvin had three siblings, Barry, Ryan and Vivienne. His grandfather and father were leaders of the Buddhist Church of Salinas. Calvin played baseball, golf and was lead guitar in a rock band, called The Deceptors. He attended the University of California Santa Barbara and earned his law degree at the University of California in Davis. He worked as California Deputy Attorney General, staff attorney at Legal Service of California, San Francisco Rent Control Commissioner, Advisory Board San Francisco Assessment Board. Even in his later years, Calvin remained a trusted voice in legal matters, respected for his knowledge and unwavering ethical standards.

Calvin loved music, especially the Beatles, and was a big supporter of community causes, especially traveling to Japan and Okinawa. He made many endearing friends in Okinawa, was writing a book on Okinawan longevity and was about to start a green powder business.

Friends to many diverse communities, he struck up conversations with everyone. People said that he was an inspiration, a gentleman, caring, generous, compassionate and adventurous. He was everyone's best cheerleader, totally in awe of everyone's talents and inspiration. His sudden passing is a profound loss to those who knew and loved him, but his impact will live on through the lives he touched.

Calvin was very proud of his daughter Kayla and he cared for his mother who lived to 102 years. Beyond his career, he was a beloved husband, father, son, brother and friend. Calvin is survived by his wife, Donna Fujii, daughter, Kayla, brother Barry, nieces Valeria and Andrea.

REVISED TAYUI DISCLAIMER (2022)

SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES FOR *TAYUI* NEWSLETTER:
You are invited to submit requests for any community announcements or other events that you feel are important to promote for our NCOKK members in the quarterly *Tayui* Newsletter. This includes Okinawan dance performances, concerts, Japanese festivals, local fundraisers,
school events, etc.

Please consider if what you want to promote will benefit the NCOKK member community. The Tayui Editing Team reserves the right to make editorial and formatting changes to your story if space is limited.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. It must be in **English** and **Japanese (if available)**
2. It must be emailed to the Editing Team at sfokkjuli@yahoo.com, at least **two (2) weeks** PRIOR to printing.

(***continued from pg.1***)
Guest singers **Akane Matsuo** and **Akiko Nagayama** were popular as always. **Okinawa Eisa Shimadaiko** performed *Miruku Munari, Ashibinaa* and *Shichigwachi Eisaa Machikanti*. The program concluded with an electrifying *eisāa* medley for everyone to dance the *kachāshi*! It was a grand finale to a very entertaining Sunday!

We appreciate the many members who not only purchased Raffle tickets and Silent Auction items, but also donated items for both! Thank you to everyone who also contributed to the Used Book Sale, bought our orange 2022 Uchinanchu Taikai T-shirts, Okinawan goods from Uyehara Travel, and other members' craft items. A special THANKS this year goes to **Kazuo Sunabe** who donated 100% of the proceeds from sales of his original designed T-shirts, sweatshirts and hoodies! As always, all the monies made this year, will be used toward our high school scholarships, event rental costs, performers' equipment and future kenjinkai activities. Thank you *Nifee debiru*! 御拝でーびーる!

UYEHARA TRAVEL TOURS HIGHLIGHTS

Uyehara Travel has the following tours scheduled for **2025**:

Taiwan Tour, April 6, 5 nights/6 days.

Hokkaido Tour, May 5, 5 nights/6 days.

Northern European Cruise, August 18, 4 nights/5 days aboard Celebrity Apex including 2 nights with tour in London before the cruise and an optional 3 nights tour of Paris after the cruise.

Okinawa plus optional Yaeyama Islands, October 30, 5 nights/6 days, 2 nights on Yaeyama.

Nakayoshi Christmas Tour, December 2, 2 nights/3 days, Palm Springs.

For more information:
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