

Japan America Society of Minnesota



通信

The Tsūshin is a membership publication of the Japan America Society of Minnesota

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Recap: Shinshunkai Summer Throwback

During the third week of August, JASM held the online *Shinshunkai (Spring Festival) Summer Throwback*, bringing back many of the amazing artists and performers from our Shinshunkai in March. Those who missed out or wanted to view these videos again were able to throughout the week.

Some of the returning acts included a stunning drag king performance by Damien “Nijiya” D’Luxe, Thunder Wave, taiko, kendama, and some brilliant shamisen playing by Momokusu Iwata. *The Story of Obon* event from July was also included, for those looking to learn more about Obon both here and in Japan. Although this year we were not able to hold our usual Como Park Obon Festival, the annual summer festival for commemorating our ancestors, we hope everyone was able to enjoy this wonderful throwback while taking shelter from the sweltering summer heat.



**Shinshunkai Summer
Throwback, Aug. 15– 21, 2021**

We thank everyone who attended and, of course, all the artists and performers who joined us again (listed below) for this delightful occasion.

Ensō Daiko (Formerly MU DAIKO)

Damien “Nijiya” D’Luxe

Thunder Wave

Kazha

Tomoko Drake, Dango making

Kendama Institute

Yuki Tokuda

Momokusu Iwata, Shamisen Player

Twin Cities Buddhist Association

Dick Stahl Receives Order of the Rising Sun



Mr. Dick Stahl (left) and Consul-General Kenichi Okada (right)

JASM is pleased to announce that former Honorary Consul of Japan in Minnesota and former JASM President Dick Stahl received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette on Thursday, August 12. The award is in recognition of Mr. Stahl’s significant and continuous contribution to the Japanese community in Minnesota as well as in Chicago before he moved to Minnesota. The conferment ceremony and the reception took place at the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

Recap: Mini Obon Festival

On August 15th, Como Park Zoo and Conservatory held a brief lantern releasing ceremony. Every summer, JASM, along with St. Paul Nagasaki Sister City Committee, have been holding an obon festival at Como Park. This year, due to the pandemic, we had to cancel the festival yet again. In the place of the large obon festival, the park held a small commemoration this year.

The event began at 8pm with Rio Saito, Executive Director of JASM, sharing the story of obon and how it is celebrated in Japan. Her remarks were followed by a koto performance by Fern Davidson. As we enjoyed the beautiful sound of koto throughout the park, dozens of lanterns were released in the Frog Pond. It was perfect weather for a relaxing quiet evening of beautiful music, lanterns, and thoughts of loved ones now gone.



*Rio Saito, JASM Executive
Director and Fern Davidson,
koto player*

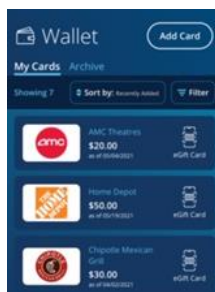
JASM Fundraising Opportunity with "ShopWithScrip"

2020 was a challenging year for JASM, along with most nonprofit organizations across the country. Thanks to your generous support during these troubling times, JASM has been able to forge forward, fulfilling our mission of building bridges between the people of Minnesota and Japan. However, as a small nonprofit focused on education, arts, cultural services, and business relations, JASM remains very vulnerable.



We are asked every day to make charitable donations to worthy causes from limited resources. However, this is not another request for a donation. Well, kind of... What if there was a way to help raise funds for JASM just by leading your normal life, making standard purchases? Well, there is! With the RaiseRight

mobile app by ShopWithScrip you can help raise money for JASM doing everyday activities, like buying groceries, gas, shopping on Amazon, or getting your morning Caribou or Starbucks. This is done by buying gift cards for local merchants via the app. You receive the full value of the card while a percentage is also donated to JASM.



I am amongst a couple JASM members who have been using this service for several months and find it a fun, fast, and easy way to support JASM while I go about my daily life. With just one or two of us taking advantage of this fundraising activity, the impact is understandably small. But what if 10, 20, 50, 100 members chipped in? That would make a HUGE impact and help secure the survival of JASM long into the future.

Please give me a call or send me an email if you are interested in learning more about how you can help support JASM via your daily purchases!

Marc Blehert, mblehert@yahoo.com, 763-280-2108

If you would like to order physical gift card through ShopWithScrip, please contact jasm@us-japan.org Please click [here](#) to download the flyer below.



JASM Seeks for New Interns



JASM is currently searching for new interns. We are looking for individuals who are:

- Interested in Japan
- Have a familiarity with SNS and Microsoft Office programs
- Undergraduate students or recent graduates
- Willing to work flexible hours (10-25hrs) and participate in JASM

events

As JASM internships are unpaid, we offer meaningful work experience and intangible benefits. The networking opportunities introduce interns to influential individuals working within Japanese-related businesses and organizations. For more information regarding details on a specific position, please visit our website at mn-japan.org/Internships-for-College-Students.

If interested in applying, please email a resume and cover letter to: Yoko Ueno, Program Manager; ProgramManager@mn-japan.org.



We are looking forward to working with you!

Membership News (7/21-8/20, 2021)

Thanks to the following new JASM members:

Michael Erickson, William and Patricia Freiert,
Zach Garr, Naoko Hayase, Daniel Johnson,
Katherine Meyer, Alexa Schendel

Thanks to the following renewing JASM members:

Hisako Bickner, Kat Dalager, Bruce and Tomoko Drake,
William French, Sam and Mirja Hanson, Seikei Hibino,
Yumiko Hoshiba, Noriko Ishida, Sachiya Isomura,
Aki Ito, Ron Leonhardt and Molly Kinney Leonhardt,
Hiroko Nagai, Elisheva Perelman, Steven Ray,
Setsuko Rittmiller, Daniel Rolf, Kelly Rynda,
Hiroko Saeki, Yoshio and Naomi Satoh,
Steven Savitt, Andrew Scott, Sanae Tomita,
Yoko Torigoe

Thanks to the following renewing Corporate members:

Dorsey & Whitney LLP
Taiyo International
Fredrikson & Byron, P.A.
Saint Paul Saints Baseball Club
Japan Lifeline

Greetings from a New Curatorial Team Member at Mia, Mai Yamaguchi

JASM would like to welcome Ms. Mai Yamaguchi to Minnesota. She arrived in Minnesota this summer as the new Assistant Curator for Japanese and Korean Art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. We are delighted to share her message to our community.



*Mai Yamaguchi,
Photo: Daniel Dennehy*

Hello, JASM members. My name is Mai Yamaguchi, and I am the new Andrew W. Mellon Assistant Curator of Japanese and Korean Art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia). I received my BA from the University of Chicago, and an MA and soon a PhD from Princeton University. During my graduate studies, I was a Fulbright Japan fellow at Waseda University and the Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

I grew up by the ocean in sunny San Diego, California. My parents wanted me to retain my Japanese roots and cultivate my language proficiency, so I attended Japanese supplementary school on Saturdays in addition to normal American school during the weekdays. As a child, I loved going to Japanese school because I could see my Japanese friends who were from different parts of southern California and Mexico.

When I first entered college, I knew that I wanted to study art history but did not know that I would end up pursuing Japanese art history. In elementary school, a teacher introduced me to works by Claude Monet and Vincent van Gogh, and I was delighted to learn that they were inspired by Japanese art. I initially planned to focus on French art and only took a class on Japanese art history to satisfy a major requirement. I fully switched to Japanese art when I realized that it allowed me to conduct research in all the languages I know, which are English, Japanese, and French.

This is my first time living in Minnesota, and I am excited to be here. While I miss the ocean, I love that I can conveniently access the beautiful river and lakes. The people here are so welcoming, warm, and generous. I am also slowly getting acclimated to the weather. Having lived in Chicago and New Jersey, I am used to the snow, but have yet to experience the famous Minnesota winters.

As a curator at Mia, I am looking forward to organizing exhibitions that will foster curiosity and understanding about Japanese art and culture. Mia has one of the most comprehensive collections of Japanese art in America, and as a specialist of Edo-period art, there is no better place to be. Especially now when we are restricted in traveling, I hope that the museum can act as a window into Japan.

*Mai Yamaguchi
Andrew W. Mellon Assistant Curator of Japanese and Korean Art
Minneapolis Institute of Art*

Keiro no Hi/ Respect for the Aged Day: September 20, 2021

Respect for the Aged Day (敬老の日, *Keirō no Hi*) is a Japanese designated public holiday celebrated annually to honor elderly citizens. It started in 1966 as a national holiday and was held on every September 15. Since 2003, Respect for the Aged Day is held on the third Monday of September.

On this holiday, people return home to visit and pay respect to the elders. Some people volunteer in neighborhoods by making and distributing free lunch boxes to older citizens. Entertainment is sometimes provided by teenagers and children, with various keirokai performances. Special television programs are also presented by Japanese media on this holiday.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Respect_for_the_Aged_Day



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with your support!*

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Becoming Global Citizens: A Story of JET Alumni Association of Minnesota (JETAAMN)

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Program is a competitive employment opportunity that allows young professionals to live in Japan. As a short series in the JASM newsletter, we would like to introduce you to JETAAMN (Jet Alumni Association of Minnesota). We will explore JETAAMN members' experiences and explain what JETAAMN is doing today.



My name is Ben Eagan-Van Meter and I taught in Kobe city for 2 years from 2014-2016, working with both elementary and junior high school students. Following a study abroad in Tokyo, I really wanted to return to Japan to learn and grow further, expanding my anthropological cultural studies there. I had studied and written my final paper on the publishing industry

and its interlinkages with other cultural facets of Japanese society. I hoped teaching and living in Japan would allow me to continue my learning as well as allow me to explore new areas of society I could not previously. In participating in JET, I got the opportunity to work with my colleagues and students, learning and growing alongside them.

Over the course of my time, there were a few things that surprised me, like the lack of A/C or heating in my apartment as well as in my schools where portable heaters were used. I ended



up having rather mixed experiences with those heaters in the staff room. I greatly enjoyed sharing several delicious sweet potatoes cooked in foil by fellow teachers over top of the heaters. However, later I ended up melting multiple holes in the arm of my winter coat after inadvertently leaning too far back in my chair and accidentally pressed my hanging coat against that same heater. Thankfully my colleagues showed their kindness once again by directing me to stores where I could quickly acquire a replacement winter coat (and they moved the heater further back to avoid a repeat incident).



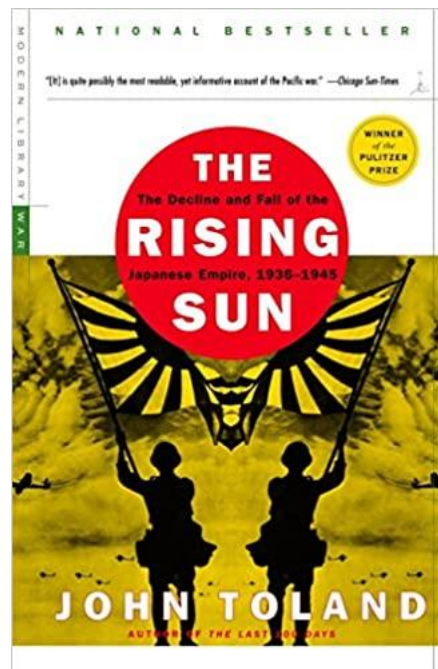
I would strongly recommend the JET program to others as an opportunity to learn, grow, share, and ultimately serve as a cultural bridge to different parts of the world. It helped enhance my understanding of

communicating across lingual and cultural barriers, and created enduring skills that I carry with me.

It encouraged me to further appreciate differences in perspectives others bring to shaping and understanding the world around us. It is an incredibly rewarding experience that I hope many others continue to take the chance to pursue.

Ben Eagan-Van Meter

Tom Haeg's Book Review



The Rising Sun: Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire 1936-1945; John Toland, Random House, 1970.

It is often said that one should read classical literature twice: once when young, and again when old (uh, mature). *The Rising Sun* is no exception. Published in 1970, it was the go-to history for policymakers for everything Japan from 1936-1945. It was found in every municipal library, and on every bookshelf and coffee table in America. There was a boundless appetite for an historical perspective explaining Japan's meteoric rise as the world's number two economy. It fed this hunger.

And boy did it ever. Over 1,000 pages, Toland reviews documents from the Japanese Military History Archives and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, scours diaries, and interviews those who fought the war. If it isn't recorded in this book, then it probably didn't happen.

Toland's affinity for nuance is quite remarkable. To explain the Japanese inability to fight, he even references the soldier's daily caloric intake. In writing this book, I get the impression Toland had to dig down deep and got dirt under his fingernails.

There is one caveat. Admittedly, he wrote from the Japanese perspective, not the American. Nonetheless, he does a wonderful job balancing it with Allied perspectives to lend credibility and accuracy.

To that point, in the Foreword, he pulls no punches asking the basic question: "How could we have come to admire and respect a people who often acted like barbarians during the war?" He is not shy about shoveling ballast into the bin to balance this observation with a 1922 quote by Tyler Dennett: "Each nation, the United States not excepted, has made its contribution to the welter of evil which now comprises the Far East question."

The Rising Sun as a classic is a great second read. I look forward to the third, too.

Tom Haeg

August Commemorations: Saint Paul Nagasaki Sister City Committee



*Photos:
Commemorative Tea Ceremony,
Thursday, August 5th, photos taken by
Amy N. Kelley and Ceremony of the
Cranes, Friday, August 6th, photos taken
by Charles Miller*

On the gentle summer evening of Thursday, August 5th, 2021, the Yukimakai tea study group presented a Commemorative Tea Ceremony at the Lyndale Park Peace Garden in Minneapolis. This event takes place on August 5th, to coincide with August 6th in Japan, the day of the Hiroshima bombing. In addition to remembering the victims of the bombing, the ceremony also honored St. Paul-Nagasaki Sister City Committee (SPNSCC) members who have passed away this year. Cyndy McKeen, a dear friend of Sister Ann O'Neill, was first tea guest, and Robert Palmer, who remembered Don Crannell, Yoshio Matsumoto, and Kazutoshi Yamashita of Nagasaki-Saint Paul Sister City Committee (NSPSCC), was second guest. Gail Wong was the graceful tea master, with Jeromy Thotland as her assistant.

The Ceremony of the Cranes, held in the early morning on Friday, August 6th, 2021 at the Lyndale Park Peace Garden, commemorated the bombing of Hiroshima and, as always, included the story of Sadako and the 1,000 paper cranes. Our keynote speaker was Vietnam Veterans for Peace member, Tom LeBlanc, an enrolled member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota and a poet. Tom told of his connections with Japan, where he participated in peace marathons and met many hibakusha. Larry Johnson and Elaine Wynne told the story of Sadako, and Vets for Peace rang their bells 11 times. After a procession to the Peace Garden Bridge led by Karen Levad and some 30 people holding elements of the Peace Ribbon, Nancy Hyvarinen led a meditation for healing and peace.

The Nagasaki Commemoration on Sunday, August 8th, 2021, coinciding with August 9th in Japan, took place at the Global Harmony Labyrinth in Como Park in St. Paul. A replica of Sachiko Yasui's grandmother's bowl was filled with ice and placed in the center of the labyrinth. Mayor Carter sent a proclamation with his aide, Mariam DeMello, declaring the day to be "Nagasaki Day." SPNSCC members Katie Fournier and Adam Sinley read "On That Summer Day," we rang the Nagasaki bell to mark our moment of silence, and Charbara (Char and Barbara Engen-Mangskau) sang "Sadako's Song". Following this, Caren Stelson and twelve-year-old Oliver Verrette read "A Bowl Full of Peace," followed by a beautiful dance presented by Alys Ayumi Ogura. Unfortunately, it began to rain lightly but persistently as the ceremony was beginning and continued throughout. Thus, we could not show the video greetings from our friends in Nagasaki.

If you were not able to attend Sunday's Nagasaki Commemoration, the recording made by Carla Riehle of Women Against Military Madness (W.A.M.M.) is linked below, with greetings from NSPSCC included at the end, from the 40:00 minute mark: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysOYViGO6v0>

JoAnn Blatchley, Saint Paul-Nagasaki Sister City Committee, Co-President



Photos: Nagasaki Commemoration, Sunday, August 8th, photos taken by Charles Miller



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September 2021

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a non-profit, non-political association engaged in bringing the peoples of Japan and the United States closer together in mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Through programs and interchange, it endeavors to promote an appreciation of cultural, educational, economic, public, and other affairs of interest to both peoples. Membership in the society is open to individuals, corporations, and other organizations interested in furthering its programs.

The Japan America Society of Minnesota is a member of the National Association of Japan-America Societies.

Please report any inaccuracies you find in this publication to jasm@us-japan.com

August Events



*Above: Shinshunkai Summer Throwback
Left: Mini Obon Festival
Bottom: The conferment ceremony and the reception
for Mr. Dick Stahl*

