

KIMOCHI NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1973

Newsletter Staff

Editor: Wayne Nakayama
Translation: Miyo Slattery
Collation: Kimochi Members

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GREETINGS:

It was two years ago in March, when Kimochi-kai began to grow its small unassuring sprout in Nihonmachi. As most of you remember, many Issei, Nisei and Sansei, the mayor, city councilmen and people from the Japan Consulate joined us in celebrating the beginning of the organization. Thinking back to that time made me want to think back further to the time when the sprout was still growing in the ground, before it poked its head through the surface.

So, I got together the story from the originators -- the story of the beginnings. As you know, Kimochi-kai is a very unique organization. Therefore, it is very hard to decide when and where the seed started to sprout. It is not like growing a tulip or dahlia bulb which had been planted over and over again. With a bulb you can count the days before it comes up.

You may be surprised if I say the first signs of the seeds growth was the black peoples' riot in Watts. What I mean to say is: The Watts riot caused other riots to occur throughout the United States, but at the same time it caused thoughtful Americans to reflect on the causes of these riots -- that is, the racially unjust American society. Young sensitive students in racial minority groups had come to recognize themselves racially, in a sense that was never done before. Recognizing racial injustice in the educational system, they demanded that school administrators put out a just program in all aspects.

Unfortunately that came to cause frequent disturbances in schools, strikes and movements, and so on. But the movement did accomplish setting up special studies and education for racial minority groups.

Those students who went through those times received a kind of education that they looked for, and began to re-examine the community that they lived in. At last, at this point, the Kimochi seed had reached Nihonmachi.

At the beginning they went through an unsuccessful period of trying to form a group with young and old together. They attended the Hamilton Senior Cen-

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ter seeking, but not knowing, what had to be done.

They gained confidence at the first Mochi-tsuki, when they found about ten Issei participating. They named the group Kimochi-kai. They started to gain more and more confidence through "bus corner services" and sponsoring trips to Okei's grave site, and with the help of National Breamar they got a home base for their activities.

When the Lounge started to have a lived-in look, with carpet, couch, and tables that were donated by people, it seemed that the Kimochi seed had sprouted to see the light of day.

Because they tried to run the Lounge all by themselves, and most of them were students, they could not keep it open every day. They had it opened about three days a week, and waited for people to come in, with tea and cookies ready, but nobody came in. It was a time of sighing.

After a while they sought the help of some Issei, and first they asked the late Mr. Taniguchi for help. He came every day to open the Lounge. And then they asked Mr. Mitsuda and Mr. Teranishi for help. They came seven days a week, punctually, to open and staff the Lounge, and assisted more and more Issei who came in to rest.

The sprout that was under the ground for a long long time began to grow leaves, and started to be able to afford to think about making its roots stronger in order to grow bigger.

The following are the people who went through the suffering and finally, the joy of giving birth to Kimochi-kai from its contemplating period.

Sansei: Ron Kobata, Stan Abe, Kaz Maniwa, Mike Ikeda, Larry Ruggiero, Lucy Kubota, Julia Nagamoto, Junko Shioya, Tsuneko Seno, Boku Kodama, Bob Kiyota, Ellen Sawamura, Diane Yamashiro, Mike Inouye, Marian Okamura, Sharon Tashiro, Kathy Kojimoto, Carrie Kojimoto, Lynn Toyana, Jean Kaneshaki, Gary Mizono, Steve Nakajo, Wayne Nakayama, Greg Marutani, Sandy Ouye, June Ikemoto, B.J. Johnson, Paul Yamashita, Marilyn Namekawa, Sandy Wong.

Nisei: Harry Mitsuda (Kibei-Nisei)

Issei: Mr. Teranishi, Mitsu Yashima, the late Mr. Taniguchi

- Mitsu Yashima

JIYU NA IKEN

(Irene Fujimoto, Kimochi secretary, recently went to Japan for the first

time in her life. The following are some of her experiences there.)

I had the opportunity, along with 68 others from around the world, to take part in a Japanese language program sponsored by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Gaimusho). The course was held in Japan and all travel, lodging, and meal expenses came out of the Gaimusho's budget. From the United States, 15 persons were sent -- 5 from Los Angeles, 5 from the Bay Area, and 5 from Hawaii. All of us "Amerikajin" were students except for 4 teachers from Hawaii.

The program was entitled, "The Short-Term Course for Japanese Language Teachers and Students". The range of proficiency in the language was from beginners to those who taught the language. In general, the group could be divided in three categories: businessmen and women whose companies had trade relations with Japan; teachers of Nihongo; and students of Japanese/Asian studies. Only a few of us, including myself, didn't fit into these categories.

The participants came from the countries of Bolivia, Uruguay, Brazil, Peru, Paraguay, Argentina, Egypt, Iran, India, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Khmer, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the United States, and Mexico. We had language classes 6 days a week which included lectures on Japan's society, culture, history, art, and economics. On Sundays, there were tours of Tokyo, Hakone, Kamakura, and other sites. The program lasted for 3½ weeks, the last 5 days being a tour of Takayama, Kanazawa, Kyoto, and Nara.

Unfortunately, my impressions of Japan are based largely on what I experienced in Tokyo. Even though Tokyo is the capital of Japan, I feel that it isn't (or maybe shouldn't be) the symbol of the country. Japan would appear to be ultra-technologized, crowded land, lacking any quality of living. Because housing is so expensive in the middle sections of Tokyo, people who work there must live in the outskirts of the city. And because there are so many people (10 million population) the transportation lines are always packed (even though the subway and railway systems are fantastic). The subways and national railway cars resemble sardine cans, and the people must brave these conditions for 2 to 4 hours every day. In addition, the street traffic is continually "rush hour".

It was the little, everyday differences that impressed me the most. For example, the traffic runs in the opposite direction from the traffic in the US. Street signs are like the European ones. Of course, all the billboards, store signs, etc., are in Japanese, though some are in Romaji. In the restaurants, the salad is served last. I kept thinking that these Japanese are strange -- serving the salad last. It wasn't until the last week that I found out that the European custom is to serve salads last, whereas in America, the salad is always served first.

The toilets are different, too. The modern buildings would have "Western style" and Japanese toilets. The Japanese style resembles a rectangular

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hole in the ground lined with enavel and with a good at one end. Instead of sitting on it, you squat over it. Actually, it's more sanitary than Western style toilets because no part of your body touches the toilet. However, the public restrooms had a tendency towards having a foul, foul smell. Fortunately, I had a nose cold or sinus problems during my short stay.

There were several themes that kept occurring during the visit. One was that we participants in this program were subtly being used as a vehicle for promoting Japan in our respective countries. Our program must have been significant since the heads of the Gaimusho and Monbusho (Ministry of Education) were taking part. They continually told us to go home and tell everybody about Japan, lavishing all courtesy and luxury on us. I personally dislike being used in this manner -- to propagandize an idea without my own enthusiasm behind it. In a way, it was like a very grand television commercial or publicity stunt to sell a product, i.e., Japan. And I didn't want to be forced to buy. However, no one in the program could have foreseen this because almost everyone was given divergent information about the program from whomever they were in contact with in their own countries.

I regret that I didn't have the opportunity or initiative to learn more about the people of Japan -- what they're like, what they think of their country. Perhaps if I had talked to the people, my first impressions of Japan would not have been so negative.

From what I've been saying, it may seem that I'm very unappreciative of this opportunity that I had. That isn't all together true. I am grateful for having this once in a lifetime chance of seeing my "homeland" free of expenses. I think most Sansei wonder about Japan and about their roots. I learned that identity does not mean identifying with the Japan of today -- its culture and lifestyle. From what I felt in Japan, we Sansei are not Nihonjin, and at the same time, we're somebody different from the typical American. The trip also helped me to break down several illusions I had about Japan. It isn't all tranquility and pagodas and temples. On the other hand, it isn't all neon lights, girls reviews and geishas. Japan is a strange mixture of all these values and customs -- not really a mixture either, but layer upon layer of these conflicting ideas.

I think if I ever go back to Japan, it will be when I have mastered the language well enough to be able to converse. I also would want time to experience the country at my leisure, to absorb what is there and to make it a comfortable learning experience.

- Irene Fujimoto

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NIHONMACHI RESIDENTS' COMMITTEE

A residents' committee has recently been formed in the Nihonmachi area. It is entitled C.A.N.E., Committee Against Nihonmachi Eviction. The group consisted of tenants, small business interests and other interested individuals who are concerned with the future redevelopment plans of Nihonmachi.

The committee is not totally against the redevelopment project of Nihonmachi, but it wants more concrete information on the future plans of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and improve communication ties concerning the redevelopment of Nihonmachi, and how this will affect the residents of this area.

The housing vacancy rate in San Francisco is at a stand-still, there is very little or no open housing at all to move in to. These residents who received or will receive the eviction notices from the Redevelopment Agency are in a perplexing predicament, with very limited alternatives, and the need for more information and legal aid for the situation they are involved with. One phase of the redevelopment project they support is JARF. This is the Japanese American Religious Federation, which will provide low-cost housing as an alternative residency for tenants that do not want to move out of the Nihonmachi area.

The group is presently structured into two committees: the legal committee and the community-support committee. The legal committee which consists of members of the Asian Law Caucus and other individuals to aid residents who received their eviction notices and what their rights and alternatives are. The community-support committee wants the participation and support of various community organizations that are concerned or want to get involved with their actions with the redevelopment agency.

If you want more information or want to attend the general meetings, contact Guy Ono at 567-7029 or Wayne Nakayama, Kimochi Lounge at 563-5626.

- Wayne Nakayama
Newsletter Editor

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

On April 23th, James Hirabayashi of San Francisco State University is going to give us a lecture along with many slides, titled, "Farmers in Japan", from the viewpoint of a Nisei anthropologist.

In May, we are planning to have a second Issei Week.

Each Kimochi class is carrying on busily and joyfully. In the reading class,

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we are starting to study history after the Meiji Restoration. It seems to be pretty interesting to know about the background of the times that we actually have lived through.

Wouldn't any of you like to initiate a kimono sewing or exercise class?

- Mitsu Yashima

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WEAVING CLASS

Weaving had been routine domestic work in Japan since ancient times. But weaving at home became unnecessary after clothing and material began to be mass produced in factories.

Wouldn't you like to enjoy the taste of handmade material, the taste of old Japan, through touching the thread and yarn and feeling the material.

Our class does not have looms, as such, but we do have frames, and make tapestry, bags, and table cloths -- leisurely.

This class is held every Monday from 1:30 PM in the Kimochi Lounge. If you are interested please join us! This weaving class will continue until April 30th.

- Keiko Nelson

Weaving instructor

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UJCS BOARD MEETING

I got a telephone call from Mrs. Tashiro asking me to attend the UJCS board meeting on March 1st as an Issei representative from Kimochi. Sandy Ouye came to get me and we got to the Kimochi Lounge where the meeting was held, at just 7:30 PM. The Lounge was already filled and they were already in the middle of discussing something. Since I did not know anything about what was going on, I sat at the very end of the couch and started to take notes. The talking was all done in English; Miyo Slattery translated for us.

UJCS is a rather new organization and it consists of JCYC, JCS, and Kimochi. The reason why this organization was formed was because they felt a need of something like an umbrella organization that could work for all phases of the Japanese community by combining the three organizations. Therefore, the UJCS board consists of 6 representatives from each of the three organizations. UJCS got funds from United Bay Area Crusade (UBAC) in January of 1973. But since the amount was not very much, they decided to use the money for direct

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programs, instead of spending on hiring as many staff members as they were planning to hire. They have so far hired only a program coordinator, Teru Hirano.

The agenda of this meeting was to find an office or to find a place where UJCS members can have activities. The site proposed was the building on Pine Street which was a former Filipino church. It is a very big three story building but very old and the roof leaks, windows are broken and floor is rotten, they said. But anyway they are thinking about sharing the house among the three organizations. They need volunteers to fix a room where Kimochi will be using. Vents have to be put in also.

The rent is \$400 per month and the owner of the building, the Methodist Mission Council, will do the major repairs.

Kimochi-kai is thinking of using the space they will get in the building for classes and other special activities.

Furthermore, the three organizations will be in charge of the fund, therefore it seems that they are going to have the system that whenever they write a check, it has to bear three people's signature -- one from each organization.

- Mrs. Gamogano

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MONTEREY TRIP As told by Mr. T. Doi

Because it's been such a wet year, I was worried about the weather, but it became to be such a fine day for the trip. It was the weather that Mrs. Okamoto often calls "Senior Weather".

A bus full of 40 people with obentos left Nihonmachi. Since we know all the people in the bus, people formed groups and conversation started. Some were singing. Everybody was having a ball! It was such a relaxing ride with a careful driver. Outside of the window we could see the grass was growing pleasantly from a lot of rain that we had.

After the bridge the ocean started to appear and we went by the Fort Ord. The hiway around here was fixed so grand that it is hard to recognize it. Green artichoke fields were spread in thousands of acres. Yellow mustard and other wild flowers added their colors. Rows of rocks and pines and white beach seemed to continue on endlessly. Way out on the ocean we could see rocks that seagulls and cormorants rest on, and seals occupied their place to take a nap. Upper part of the rocks were white with the birds' dung. That reminded me of the people in my village who went to Bird Island on the Southern Sea to get thousands of tons of bird dung. Waves crushed against the rocks but seals were not at all bothered by it. We went all the way to

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Carmel and came back and stopped at the site of an old custom building with its yard made into a park. Until recently, the building still maintained its old look with the original bricks, but now it's painted white and the dignified taste was gone. But the intricately designed garden with the miniature mountain was beautiful.

Small groups of people feeling something in common got together and had lunch in the warm sunshine. After the lunch we took a walk to the Fisherman's Wharf and strolled around thinking back to the time when the Wharf was lively with fishermen coming in and out. There were many fish restaurants and shops that sold fish. Some people were buying fish. By the time we left the Wharf everybody was happily tired and got on the bus to head home.

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REFLECTIONS ON THE BUNRAKU PERFORMANCE

It was a pleasant day for an outing. Although it was still winter, signs of spring were definitely in the air. As I led a group of eager Issei from the Lounge to the Nourse Auditorium, I kept recalling what my parents had told me the night before. This was going to be my first experience with a Bunraku performance, and my parents were convinced that I could not appreciate or enjoy it without some foreknowledge of the art, so, at the last minute, I read some short news articles that provided background material. As we arrived at the auditorium and found our seats, the excitement of the Issei started to rub off on me. I kept asking the time, wishing that the performance would start. The auditorium quickly began to fill up with high school students as the time to start came closer and closer. Luckily, we had purchased the tickets early and our seats were located predominantly in the first six or seven rows. Afterwards I would realize that that was the most favorable position for viewing the movements and expressions of the puppets and to hear and watch the recitations of the joruri. The time for the performance came and as the lights dimmed, the joruri and the shamisen player emerged from backstage and sat to the right of the stage on a raised platform. The shamisen player began, and as the joruri droned out the first lines, I found it very disgusting when some individuals from the high schools laughed out loud unrestrictedly. I looked up at the joruri, but he continued with his recitations uninterruptedly, oblivious to the rude audience. As the play progressed, I noticed that the audience (including the high school students) had drifted into the rhythm of the actions of the life-like puppets. The black-masked puppeteers were, at first, very distracting, cluttering the stage, but listening to the story the joruri was reciting and getting into the mood of the actions suggested by the intensity of the shamisen playing, gradually allowed the viewer to see only the puppets. It was incredible how skillfully the puppets were manipulated. The dexterity of the movements of the limbs surprised me. I can clearly see where the Kabuki actors took their famous exaggerated actions. The joruri, I found, was just as exciting, if not more, as the puppets. Sitting just below him, I was able to see how much he put

into his performance. I was amazed at his great ability to change immediately from the falsetto of a woman's part to the rough, bellowing of a man's part. I'll never forget the expression on the joruri's face when I looked up at him after about fifteen minutes into the play, he was sweating profusely and rolling his eyeballs, as he thrust himself into the characters he was portraying. After the performance ended, the applause was deafening, as the audience brought back the performers for three curtain calls. I was glad that the rest of the audience felt the same way I did. My feelings of anger towards the hecklers was forgotten and a feeling of contentment came over me. I was proud that I was able to appreciate this form of art that was new to me and since then, I've been looking forward to the time when other forms of Japanese art and entertainment would be made available to American audiences.

- Diane Takeshita

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THOUGHTS I HAD WHILE I WAS SICK by Mrs. Mochizuki

I have walked through the Japan Trade Center to Kimochi Lounge full of earthly greed, frustration, grudge, pain in my heart. I have often felt like taking my shoes off and carrying them so I can walk faster. I did not know why I was in such a rush all the time. When I come to think of it now, I think it was surely a surely a work of sickness demons trying to pull me and push me from all over the place into the world that is full of sickness.

I started to make the paper dolls that most of you have seen, a year ago after I started to get sick, since the time when we had the festival in Nihonmachi. I was making them for people whom I met out of fate to try to show my modest appreciation for them, and also to make up for the troubles that I gave to my late mother. I made the dolls everyday one by one. I made about a thousand dolls while I also made the record of not vacuuming the house even once during that time. I forced people to take the dolls. But then at last the pipes of my heart were filled with dirt, which seems understandable since my house was so dusty that the dust tayed on me, too.

And suddenly I was in the selfless and uncalculating kindness of Kimochi-kai people. They took me to the hospital twice a day and provided transportation whenever we needed it. I can't describe how much we appreciate it. Kimochi also helped us with their translators about medicare and insurance. For a sick person it is such a relief to be able to depend on someone without a feeling of enryo and without worrying that you are giving trouble to other people. I thank you people of Kimochi sincerely.

I also recieved concern and encouragement from Issei and other people. I have been feeling very warm happy and gentle inside of me, even with the sickness. I received all these sympathy maybe because the feeling I described before got through to people. I thank Kami, and my mother also for this.

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One thing that I realized after going through a sickness is that a square edge of my mind got round, and when I meet everybody at the Lounge again I would be a person whom people will be happy to be with.

I am looking forward to that day to come, and to taking care of myself and to feeling joyful and happy.

I hope to be able to see you again soon and make you laugh with my bragging.

I put my pen down wishing health to all of you and looking forward to the day when I'll see you again.

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MOUSE'S SOLILOQUY by Kiyo Hirano

Please listen to my introduction for a moment. I was describing myself as just Watakushi -- I, but I identify myself as Boku (means I but for a male) -- from now on, so please keep this in mind.

I saw and heard many things since I started to live here and I think that made me smarter a little and I can think now and at the same time I started to have a mind to doubt about things. I don't know whether it's good or bad. I wonder if it's a natural phenomenon?

The thing I started to have doubts about first was the characters of people around me. As you can see the size of my body is only a few hundredths of a person's body. Yet when people see me, look what happens! If it's a man, he chases me around swinging a stick; if I'm unlucky I'll be killed. If it's a woman she will fuss. I wonder if the appearance of my body is so frightening, or else do they think I would bite them to death? Or I wonder if they think all the mouse family carry pests and give them to people? The idea is so discouraging that I get depressed, since I trust people so much.

But then on the other hand, people draw pictures of my family, or make origami of us, or have us in one of the twelve animals in the Chinese calendar, or some people think that we are messengers from the Kani of Luck (Daikoku-sama) and they always paste our pictures by his statue.

People are so contradictory; they puzzle me. Am I bad? I spend my time thinking and still can't understand people's minds, and now I started to feel that I don't know myself.

If somebody among the newsletter readers who could give me some clue of what people really think, please let me know.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Those who are not on the newsletter mailing list or other mailing lists should let us know, or they can pick up the newsletter at the Lounge.

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APRIL CALENDAR

12	Thursday	San Francisco Area Planning Agency for the Aged meeting, 1:30, Booker T. Washington Senior Center, Presidio and Sutter
20	Friday	Dance, 9 PM to 2 AM, Kabuki Theatre, donation \$2
21,22	Saturday, Sunday	Sakura Matsuri Food Bazaar
28	Saturday	Lecture by Jim Hirabayashi, 10:30 AM, Kinochi Lounge
28	Saturday	Issai General Meeting, 1:30 PM, call the Lounge for location
29	Sunday	Visitation, 1:30 PM, meet at Lounge

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NIHONGO LESSON

"Irasshaimase"	Welcome (to a guest)
"Dozo, ohairi kudasai"	Please, come in.
"Dozo, osuwari kudasai"	Please, have a seat
"Kyotsukete kudasai"	Please be careful
"Otearai ni ikanakereba naranai"	I have to go to the restroom
"Nihongo wo naraitai desu"	I want to learn Japanese
"Nani ka otetsudai koto ga arimasu ka?"	Can I help you with anything?

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