

# Weekly Cultural News

Substitute for monthly Cultural News May 16 –22, 2022 (Reiwa 4)

## Keep Japanese Culture Alive

### Japanese American actors to join to winners announcement event of annual Imagine Little Tokyo short story contest

Little Tokyo - The ninth annual Imagine Little Tokyo short story contest will celebrate the winners in three categories on Thursday, May 26 at 6 PM through the Zoom platform in a free program hosted by the Japanese American National Museum. The contest is presented by the Little Tokyo Historical Society (LTHS) in partnership with the museum's Discover Nikkei project.

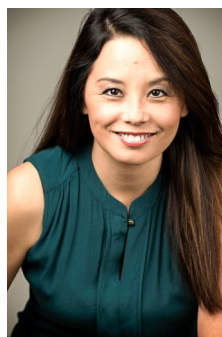
Actor and comedian Derek Mio will take the emcee reins in an exciting program featuring noted actors Keiko Agena, Helen Ota and Megumi Anjo providing dramatic readings of the winning stories in the categories of English language, Japanese language and youth (18 and younger). Attendees need to pre-register by going to the web page <https://www.janm.org/events/2022-05-26/9th-annual-imagine-little-tokyo-short-story-contest-virtual-celebration>; a Zoom link will then be e-mailed to them before the program.



Keiko Agena

Keiko Agena is best known for her series regular roles on the shows, "Prodigal Son," where she played Dr. Edrisa Tanaka and "Gilmore Girls," where she played Lane Kim for seven years and reprised the role in Netflix's "Gilmore Girls: Seasons." As an improviser she's performed at UCB Sunset/NY, IO WEST and is a recent addition to the main

company of Impro Theatre. In between Agena has been a series regular on Hulu's "The First" and recurring on "Better Call Saul," "Dirty John," and "13 Reasons Why." As a guest star she has appeared on such shows as "Shameless," "Scandal," and "NCIS Los Angeles." Keiko has recently published an artist workbook, *No Mistakes*, through Penguin Random House.



Helen Ota

Foundation, and is an advisory council member of Kizuna.

Helen H. Ota is an actor and singer with the Grateful Crane Ensemble and former artistic director and performing member of Cold Tofu, the nation's premiere Asian American comedy improv troupe. She's also an active community member serving on the board of directors of the Nisei Week Foundation, Veterans Memorial Court Alliance, Zentoku



Megumi Anjo

She has played various roles in such productions

Megumi Anjo is a Japan-born actor, singer and accredited master of Japanese traditional dance. Moving to the US in 2011, she performed in the musical production, "The Pirates of Penzance," at West Valley Playhouse, and completed the Applied Music Program (Vocals) at Los Angeles Valley College.

## Imagine Little Tokyo Short Story Contest Winners to be announced by Japanese American actors

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as “Hymn to Otsuchi” “Vip LA,” and the fourth season of NBC’s “Good Girls”. Most recently, she made her major US screen debut in “Licorice Pizza.”



Derek Mio (photo) grew up in Huntington Beach and earned his B.A. from USC's School of Cinematic Arts in Film Production. He has acted in several commercials, television shows and movies. He can be seen in the Netflix anthology series “Medal of Honor,” and in the AMC television series “The Terror: Infamy.” He

has also performed stand-up comedy at The Comedy Store, The Laugh Factory, The Hollywood Improv, The Ice House in Pasadena, and HaHa Comedy Club in North Hollywood.

The purpose of the contest is to raise awareness of Little Tokyo through a creative story that centers around or demonstrates knowledge of Little Tokyo, and captures the spirit and cultural essence of Little Tokyo. Each category winner will be awarded \$500 in cash and their short story will be published in *The Rafu Shimpo*, and the websites of Discover Nikkei and Little Tokyo Historical Society. Again, to attend, please pre-register by going to the web page <http://www.janm.org/events>; a Zoom link will then be e-mailed to them before the program.

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## Mystery Writers of America awards Naomi Hirahara

April 28, 2022, New York, NY - Mystery Writers of America announced the Winners for the 2022 Edgar Allan Poe Awards, honoring the best in mystery fiction, non-fiction and television published or produced in 2021. The Edgar Awards were presented at the New York Marriott Marquis Times Square and livestreamed on [YouTube](#).

Mystery Writers of America awarded Naomi Hirahara The Simon & Schuster Mary Higgins Clark Award for *Clark and Division* at a ceremony held at the New York Marriott Marquis Times Square.

[Naomi Hirahara](#) is an Edgar Award-winning mystery



Naomi Hirahara

writer of multiple traditional mystery series. *Clark and Division* is her first historical mystery. Naomi and her husband Wes make their home in Southern California.

*Clark and Division*, a well-known intersection in Chicago, follows a Japanese American family from life in pre-World War II Los Angeles to being held in Manzanar detention center to finally early release to Chicago. When the older sister, Rose, is killed in Chicago, it's up to the younger sister, Aki, the narrator of the story, to discover what really happened and carry her immigrant parents through a chaotic period of their lives.

### Weekly Cultural News

is an alternative publication for

Monthly Cultural News which we had to stop publishing in April 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic. (Cultural News Editor)

## National Park Services appoints new superintendent at Manzanar National Site

**SAN FRANCISCO** - The National Park Service (NPS) has selected Brenda Ling to serve as the permanent superintendent of Manzanar National Historic Site. She is currently the director of the public affairs division at Gateway National Recreation Area in New York and New Jersey. Ling will begin her new role in June.

“As a 19-year veteran of federal service, Brenda brings a keen sense of working with other agencies that will serve her and the park well in this role,” said Regional Director Frank Lands. “During her tenure with the National Park Service she has proven to be an outstanding communicator and collaborative leader.”



Brenda Ling to serve as the permanent superintendent of Manzanar National Historic Site.

Manzanar,” said Ling. “The story of this site, and the incarceration of people of Japanese descent, including American citizens, needs to be preserved and shared. I look forward to working with the dedicated park staff, partners, visitors; and engaging with local and Japanese American communities to share this important history with the public.”

Prior to joining the NPS, Ling served as public information officer with the USDA Agricultural Research Service in North Dakota and as public affairs specialist with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Wyoming.

Ling joined the NPS in 2018 as a member of the public affairs program at Gateway National Recreation Area. In 2020, she started the Asian American Employee Resource Group (ERG) within NPS along with 11 colleagues. The group, which provides professional support and camaraderie, has since grown to more than 150 members across the country.

In her current role at Gateway National Recreation Area, the fourth most visited site in the NPS system, Ling is a member of the park’s leadership team. She also served in a 120-day detail as acting superintendent at Manzanar from November 2021 to March 2022.

“It is an honor to be selected as the superintendent of

Ling grew up in New York City. After graduating from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, she worked as a newspaper journalist, earning numerous awards at publications, such as the St. Cloud Times in Minnesota, Des Moines Register, Valley News Dispatch in western Pennsylvania, and USA Today. While earning a master’s degree in English from the University of North Dakota, Ling worked as director of communications for the school’s alumni association and foundation.

Ling is looking forward to relocating to the Owens Valley with her husband Chuck Kimmerle, a landscape photographer, and Zi, their bilingual dog who understands commands in Lakota and English . [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

### Weekly Cultural News

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# Kabuki Music Series #99: Nagauta's "Genroku Hanami Odori" Part IV

By Mariko Watabe

There are dance videos and shamisen videos. But KABUKI HAYASHI (Japanese percussion) videos are rarely found or discussed especially in English or with English subtitles.

I have decided to make them as I believe this art is too precious to be hidden or lost. With the guidance of Master Katada Shinjuro, I am trying to uncover the world of HAYASHI by producing YouTube videos in Japanese language with English subtitles.

Ohayaashijuku (Kabuki Series) #99 [https://youtu.be/pKy5xLJ\\_R4](https://youtu.be/pKy5xLJ_R4) is for Nagauta's "Genroku Hanami Odori" Part IV.

The fourth video of Genroku Hanami Odori, is the last section of "Genroku Hanami Odori" which describes the view of the Toeizan Kan-ei ji temple in Ueno hill that is crowded with many people. There are many performances going on at the stage of the Kiyomizu dera temple. This song ends by expressing the celebration and joy of the people in spring.

For hayashi, the "KATA SHAGIRI" pattern for the taiko is introduced in this video as well as the differences in the "SHAGIRI" that are used after each act. The "KATA SHAGIRI" is used for many purposes such as a musical prelude, or ending of the song, but also within songs. I will introduce ones is used within songs.



The "KATA SHAGIRI" pattern is very long and it is categorized in four parts and is unique in the fact that the second part is played only by the right stick.

There are more challenging techniques in this song. However, this hayashi accompaniment makes the end of this song most exciting. This concludes the four-part series of "Genroku Hanami Odori".

To view the previous videos from #01 to #98, visit [Tsumibito Chanel at YouTube](#)

*Mariko Watabe has been introducing Kabuki dance and music to American audiences nationwide for over 40 years. She goes by her stage names such as; Kimisen Katada for Hayashi, Kyosho Yamato for Yamatogaku, Kichitoji Kineya for Nagauta; and Marifuji Bando for dance.*

*Her activities and performances are found at <http://fujijapanesemusic.org>*

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# Uyehara Travel

## Okinawa Tour in 2022

Uyehara Travel provides the 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival tour from Oct. 28—Nov. 5, 2022 from Los Angeles.



**Tour Fee: \$2,800 + fuel surcharge, tax per person in twin room. \$400 surcharge for single room use.**

**\$300 deposit required upon reservation.**

The Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival has been held in Naha, Okinawa since 1990 to honor the achievements of Okinawan people from all over the world.

The 7th Festival originally planned in 2021 has been postponed to 2022 due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The 7th Festival will start the eve event on Oct. 30, and the main festival will be held from Oct. 31 through Nov. 3, 2022. In 2022,

many events also will be prepared for the 50th anniversary of Okinawa Reversion from the U.S. Uyehara Travel also provides airline ticket arrangements for deviating plans.

## Uyehara Travel

# (213) 680-2499

Email: [Tamiko\\_uyehara@yahoo.co.jp](mailto:Tamiko_uyehara@yahoo.co.jp)



Art Exhibition

# TANAGOKORO

Alternative Crafts by 16 Japanese Contemporary Artists

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles presents "[TANAGOKORO: Alternative Crafts by 16 Japanese Contemporary Artists](#)" from March 12 - May 28, 2022, at the Japan Foundation, 5700 Wilshire Blvd., #100 Los Angeles, CA 90036.

Exhibition Hours: Monday - Saturday 12 pm - 6 pm.  
Closed on Sundays. Admission: Free. *Face mask required.*

*Tanagokoro* references matters that virtually fit in the palm of one's hand. As in Yasunari Kawabata's book, *Palm-of-the-Hand* stories, the narratives are concise and portable, yet imbued with characteristic depth.

The skills involved in handling tools highlight the premium placed on manual dexterity in Japanese culture. The centuries long investment in craft as the primary vehicle for the expression of aesthetic and spiritual values in Japan registers across the board in traditional folk, commercial and classical arts, from silk weaving to street fashion and anime.

*Tanagokoro* exhibition introduces sixteen Japanese artists trained in traditional craft-making techniques yet committed to engaging contemporary issues and concerns. This special exhibition is the first reopening of the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles' gallery space.

This exhibition is curated by Kio Griffith and organized by the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles.

Featuring artist:

Nobuki Mizumoto 水本伸樹 (Hiroshima) - Wood

Chiaki Saito 齋藤千明 (Ibaraki) - Printmaking

Ayako Yokoyama よこやまあやこ (Nagano) - Lacquerware

Akihiro Yasugi 安来明宏 (Shimane) - Wood

Sakiko Ooba 大場咲子 (Ehime) - Etching

Akira Shikiya 志喜屋徹 (Okinawa) - Sculpture / Repurpose

Tengshing Kazama 風間天心 (Hokkaido) - Sculpture / Buddhism

Rie Takanokura 高野倉里枝 (Ibaraki) - Fiber

Mai Yasugi 矢杉麻衣 (Nagano) - Miniature Books

Masayuki Fukunishi 福西雅之 (Okayama) - Ceramics

Naohiko Onodera 小野寺直彦 (Shimane) - Metal

Hiroto Ito 伊藤博敏 (Nagano) - Stone

Caori Fujita 藤田薫 (Hiroshima) - Lacquerware

Mokusi Morohashi 諸橋柰子 (Tokyo) - Wood

Atsushi Adachi 足立篤史 (Kanagawa) - Sculpture / Print

Minako Kumagai 熊谷美奈子 (Saitama) - Sculpture / Paper

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