

The AACCP Newsletter

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An Interview with Norman Masuda of Kariyushi Kai

By Norman Masuda and Leonard D. Chan

Kariyushi Kai (<http://www.kariyushikai.org/>), the Okinawan Classical Music and Dance Society, is one of several interesting groups that will be performing and presenting at our 8th Annual Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration in San Mateo on May 10, 2008. Norman Masuda is the Executive Director of Kariyushi Kai.

Here is our interview with Norman Masuda.

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I have been studying Uta-sanshin (Okinawan classical music) since July 1979 when I was introduced to and began taking lessons from my teacher, Harry Seisho Nakasone. Nakasone Sensei (Teacher) was the first American-born Okinawan American to attain the highest degree in the Nomura School of Okinawan music. Thanks to my teacher, I have learned Okinawan music and have been able to continue studying under him.

Tell us about Kariyushi Kai - what does your name mean?

Kari means "luck" and Yushi means "good," and Kai means "organization or society"= The Good Luck Society

What is your mission?

Our mission is to introduce Okinawan culture and music/dance

(performing arts) to the community and also to help Okinawan-Americans to keep in touch with their culture.

How did it all begin?

A group of students of music and dance decided to start this group in 1984 and we have been doing it ever since.

What does Kariyushi Kai current do?

We have practices on Sunday mornings twice/month and perform for various functions. Last year, we performed at Los Gatos High School (five evenings)for their production of "Rashomon."

During our first meeting, I learned a little about how Okinawan culture shared similarities with Chinese culture. This was completely new to me. I believe most Americans share my ignorance about Okinawa and might at most remember it for the WWII battle fought there. Please tell us a little bit about the history and culture of Okinawa.

Okinawa was an independent kingdom called Ryukyu until the 15th century. Later, Okinawa paid tribute to Ming and Qing China as a tributary and was also subject to control from Japan. In the late 19th century, Okinawa was annexed to Japan and has been so ever since.

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Cressey A Place and Time

AACP is proud to introduce our latest book Cressey: Land of Sand and Stars.

This is AACCP's first published book not written by an Asian Pacific American. The reason I feel compelled to mention this is that some of you may assume that Eugene Lee is of Chinese descent. Since we are an Asian Pacific American (APA) organization some of you may believe that APAs write all of our books.

During the course of my tenure at AACCP, I've had this conversation with many people about who is more qualified to write about Asian Pacific Americans than APAs. This is one area that I have always wanted to dedicate a whole editorial to because I am of the opinion that this attitude, that only APAs should write about APA related issues, borders on chauvinism and is an attitude that I hope we could get away from.

Unfortunately, I don't have the time to write this editorial right now and this article is meant to celebrate the wonderful achievement of Eugene Lee.

Cressey is a wonderful memoir that also serves to tell a slice of history about small town life in California - specifically the Central Valley town of Cressey during the Depression Era. Cressey was a racially diverse community, which included many Japanese settlers. The better known Japanese American colony called Yamato is within the greater region of Cressey.

So much of the history we may read or see is about grand or major events. Often what is lost are the personal aspects of life and how we lived. Cressey is a valuable record of just that - life in a period personally known by a generation that is fast disappearing.

Thank you Eugene Lee for allowing us to help you preserve these memories.

We hope many of you readers out there will enjoy this book as much as we enjoyed making it.

Give Us Your Feedback

Please feel free to send us your reviews, comments, and book suggestions. You can contact us at -
aacpinc@asianamericanbooks.com

Up Coming Events

Here are some events that AACP will soon be attending. Invite us to your events.

Date/Time	Event	Location
May 10	8th Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration in San Mateo	Central Park Recreation Center San Mateo, CA
June 28 4-10pm	San Mateo Buddhist Temple Annual Bazaar	2 S. Claremont St. San Mateo, CA
Other Event of Interest that AACP May Not Attend		
April-May	San Mateo Library Asian Film Festival	San Mateo Main Lib. San Mateo, CA
May 4 10am-5pm	5th annual Foster City Pacific Islands Festival	Leo Ryan Park Foster City, CA
May 4	Nikkei Matsuri Arts and Crafts Festival	San Jose, CA
May 27-31	National Conference on Race & Ethnicity in American Higher Education	Coronado Springs Res 1000 W Buena Vista Dr Lake Buena Vista, FL
June 21 11am-6pm	Japanese Cultural Fair	Mission Plaza Park Santa Cruz, CA

Editor's Message

Hello Everyone,

Yes, this was suppose to be the April Newsletter and for those of you living in Hawaii and reading this right after I send this, it still qualifies.

Our upcoming event, the 8th Annual Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration (APAHC) in San Mateo, has been keeping us very busy this year. After I finish this newsletter, I'll probably have to do a few more things for this event before I go to sleep.

Please come to our May 10th event. AACP and the local Chapters of the JACL and OCA have worked hard to make this event the best ever. We invite you all, especially non-Asian Pacific Islanders, to come to our event. In order to truly bridge communities we require all to participate and not just our own APA community.

Okay on to other business - my apologies to all of you that wrote me after the last newsletter. Thank you very much for your feedback, I hope to reply to you all some time after the 10th :).

Thank you Norman Masuda for our interview. We look forwards to having you at this year's APAHC.

Thank you to the APAHC committee for all of your hard work and bearing with my often absent leadership (especially while working on this newsletter and on the book). Thanks especially to my co-coordinator Martin Jung - we couldn't do it without you.

Thank you Sharon for your help on the newsletter.

Hey Uncle Gaing, I'll try to get to an article on Oroville for our June travel newsletter. That's right everyone, summer time is just around the corner. Send me your suggestions on APA significant travel destinations for our June newsletter. I got dibs for the inside scoop on the Oroville Chinese Temple - you other APA news organizations, hands off, this one is really mine :). Stay tuned everyone. Bye for now.

Leonard Chan
Executive Editor

An Interview with Norman Masuda of Kariyushi Kai

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Please tell us about Okinawan music and dance - the differences and similarities to other forms and its uniqueness.

Okinawan music and dance owe much to the cultures of Southeast Asia, China and Japan. The musical tonal system is similar to that of Indonesia, the costumes owe much to Chinese and Japanese clothes, and the themes of the dances have been influenced by those of China and Japan.

Okinawa developed its own music and dance and poetry that were set to music. Musical instruments include the Sanshin (from the Chinese sanxian) later transmitted to Japan as the Shamisen. The Kutuu (Japanese koto), Hanso (flute), and teeku (Taiko drums).

With issues of Tibet in the news and how many Tibetans are struggling for some autonomy and cultural freedom, do some Okinawans also wish for more autonomy and cultural preservation? Is Okinawan culture even being lost in Okinawa?

Okinawans, although citizens of Japan still retain an identity as Okinawans and have a language and culture that are unique and different from that of Japan.

Do you have some idea about the size of the Okinawan American population?

In Hawaii, Okinawan-Americans are about 10% of the Japanese-American population.

There seems to be a sizable population in the San Francisco Bay Area region. Are most Okinawans American concentrated in this area or where else?

The largest group of Okinawan Americans are first in Hawaii, then Los Angeles and San Francisco. San Francisco once had a large population of Okinawan American, but they moved south following the 1906 earthquake.

Are there any records about when the first Okinawans arrived in the US? Any idea as to when that might be?

The first Okinawans arrived in Hawaii in 1900.

Tell us about your appearance and performance at the San Mateo Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration

Our music teacher: Harry Seisho Nakasone, honored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Japanese Government for a lifetime achievement as a career in Okinawan music

Our dance teacher: Mitsuko Toguchi, head of her school in Hawaii and part of the Ryusei Honryu Yanagi no Kai in Okinawa.

What will you be performing at our event?

Our group will be performing:

Kajadifu - Performed on all happy occasions as the first dance and music of the program. The words are:

To what do I owe the happiness I feel today.

It is like the morning dew on the budding flower.

Musical Interlude - Tachiutushi and Aha-Bushi (a song of celebration)

Kayui buni - The ferryboat - about a ferry that traveled between Okinawa and the Japanese mainland.






Nubui Kuduchi - A young man's dance about an envoy from the Ryukyuan court traveling to the Satsuma Clan in Kyushu.

Tell us about the discussion/demonstration that you will also be doing after the performance, in our in door demonstration area?

We will be showing the musical instruments and talk about the dances performed.

ADDITIONS TO OUR WEBSITE

The following books are discounted for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end May 18, 2008.

	<p>Cressey Land of Sand and Stars By Eugene Lee 2008, 217 pages, Paperback.</p> <p>See the article on page 1 about this book.</p> <p>Item #3500, Normally \$18.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$15.16</p>
	<p>American Inquisition The Hunt for Japanese American Disloyalty in World War II By Eric L. Muller 2007, 197 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>American Inquisition is a fascinating new study of the draconian system that was used during World War II to determine if Japanese Americans were disloyal or not. In any era, especially in times of paranoia, it is important to examine the failings of our past to avoid making the same mistakes in the present. This book helps to shed some light on another awful facet of the Japanese American Internment.</p> <p>ORDER -- Item #, Normally \$27.50 ... for newsletter subscribers \$22.00</p>
	<p>Motherbridge of Love Illustrated by Josée Masse 2007, 28 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>Motherbridge of Love is a beautifully illustrated and poetic story that splendidly broaches the issue of adoption for young adoptees.</p> <p>ORDER -- Item #3502, Normally \$16.99 ... for newsletter subscribers \$13.59</p>
	<p>In the Leaves By Huy Voun Lee 2005, 24 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>This is a nicely illustrated story that shows how Chinese characters are shorthand symbols for the words they represent. As told in a story about a boy and his friends' trip to a farm it both amusing and educational.</p> <p>ORDER -- Item #3503, Normally \$16.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$13.56</p>
	<p>Fortune Cookie Fortunes By Grace Lin 2004, 24 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>This is a charming tale that captures the fun involved in opening and reading fortune cookie fortunes.</p> <p>ORDER -- Item #3504, Normally \$15.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$12.76</p>

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