

# Weekly Cultural News

Substitute for monthly Cultural News    December 28, 2020 - January 03, 2021

## Keep Japanese Culture Alive



### Outdoor New Year's Day Services with Goma ritual to be held at Koyasan Buddhist Temple in Little Tokyo

Following the COVID-19 health regulations, the Koyasan Buddhist Temple in Little Tokyo will conduct outdoor Goma ritual and accept New Year's visits from Jan. 1-3, 9 am – 4 pm.

The temple gate will open at 9 am for visitors to enter the temple yard to offer incense, pray for the new year, and submit their [Omamori Order forms](#) and other donations. Omamori will not be sold that day. The Temple building, including restrooms, will be closed to the public.

#### New Year's Day Services - Hatsumode

9 AM - New Year's Goma Service. Bishop Matsumoto will conduct a Goma Ritual that will be closed to the public but will be live-streamed on Zoom and Facebook.

10 AM - Outdoor Goma Service. Bishop Matsumoto will conduct outdoor Goma Ritual.

Due to Covid-19 health regulations and for the safety of everybody, visitors that come will not be allowed to stay for the whole ritual and must leave after they take their optional picture with their camera in front of the main entrance, offer money into the donation box, offer incense, pray, and drop off their Omamori Order Form with staff.

Visitors will be allowed to offer a donation at check-in and purchase special three sticks of Incense for a \$5 donation.

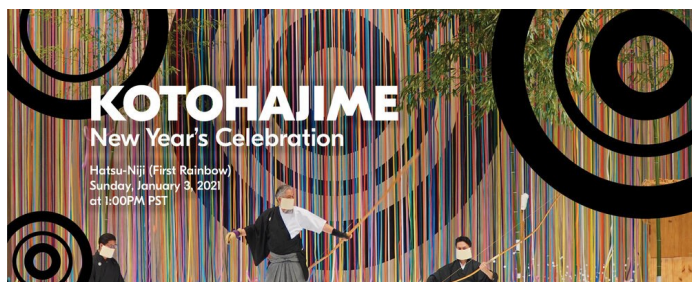
The incense is from Okunoin, the Mausoleum where Kobo Daishi is enshrined at Mt. Koya (Koyasan) in Japan.

For more information about the New Year's visits at Koyasan Buddhist Temple, check <http://www.koyasanbetsuin.org/>

Due to Corona pandemic, we had to stop publishing monthly Cultural News in April 2020 and started publishing Weekly Cultural News in June 2020

Shige Higashi, Cultural News Editor

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**The Japanese American Cultural and Community Center** in Los Angeles will present virtual 38th Annual Kotohajime event on Sunday, January 3, 1:00 pm, PST.

This is free event. For registration, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/virtual-the-38th-kotohajime-hatsu-niji-first-rainbow-tickets-133152961091>

Literally meaning “the beginning of things,” Kotohajime will celebrate the Year of the Ox with the theme Hatsu-Niji or “First Rainbow.”

Every January, Little Tokyo becomes the center for celebrating the Japanese New Year in Southern California. The annual Kotohajime is a signature JACCC performance that greets the New Year with a unique blend of Western and Japanese performances, arranged by JACCC Master Artist in Residence, Hirokazu Kosaka.

The theme of “Hatsu-Niji” is a meditation on new beginnings and the beauty that can be found once dark storm clouds and clashing elements subside.



**OSHOGATSU**  
VIRTUAL FAMILY FESTIVAL  
2021 Year of the Ox

**The Japanese American National Museum** in Los Angeles invites the public to virtual Oshogatsu Family Festival from Sunday, Jan. 3 through Friday, Jan. 8

The Oshogatsu events will be held for a week of virtual, kid-friendly activities to celebrate the New Year. From interactive, offline festivities for all ages to multi-lingual story times and play performances, welcome the Year of the Ox with JANM.

Keep checking back for updates, then return the website starting Sunday, Jan. 3 to download the activities and watch the live events: <http://www.janm.org/events/2021/oshogatsufest/>

**Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California** will be hosting Oshogatsu in Little Tokyo – the virtual event program on January 1, 2021. The program is on the [JCCSC website](#), on [Facebook](#) and on [Instagram](#).

**The Shinto Shrine of Shusse Inari in America** will provide a YouTube live stream at <https://youtu.be/ZzpRu-OQAow> on Thursday, Dec. 31 at 7:00 pm, PST, to observe the New Year's Eve Shinto service.

Shige Higashi started **Cultural News** in 1998 to build a network of Japanese cultural community in Southern California. Due to Corona pandemic, the format of **Cultural News** had to change from monthly paper to weekly PDF. But the mission of **Cultural News** remains the same: promoting Japanese culture and art in Southern California. Non-profit organization Cultural News Association has been formed to support the mission of **Cultural News**. Your contribution would be appreciated at <https://www.culturalnews.com/donation>





## An online meeting cues Michigan donation drive for Kumamoto heavy rain disaster

A heavy rain hit the southern region of Kumamoto Prefecture on July 4, 2020. Unprecedented volume of rain flooded 8,000 houses along Kuma River, and killed 65 people and destroyed 600 houses.

Mr. Hirokazu Tsunoda, disaster volunteer leader in Chiba Prefecture, started visiting Kumamoto Prefecture in July 2020 in spite of the travel restriction order by the government due to COVID-19 pandemic.

On August 30 in the U.S., Tsunoda who put his topknot on his head appeared in the webinar on Kumamoto Disaster Update organized by the Japan Business Society of Detroit. Because of his topknot wherever he visits disaster area, Tsunoda has been called Topknot Chef (Chonmage Taicho).

In the webinar, Tsunoda explained how to help people in the affected area with not only sending donation but also several ways of sending moral supports. More than 80 people, mostly from Michigan and Japan and Mexico, participated in the online meeting.

By October 20, 2020, the Japan Business Society of Detroit Foundation has collected \$12,410 from individuals and companies in Michigan State.

In early November 2020, Mr. Takashi Tak Omitsu, Executive Advisor to the JBSD, made a trip to Kumamoto with Tsunoda to see the aftermath of the disaster.

Omitsu said "This trip gave a good insight how to distribute the donation to the three locations." On Nov. 21, 2020, Omitsu visited Kumamoto again to distribute the donations to three places:

1) Koyaji Temple in



Rev. Tesshu Iwasaki of Shinshoji Temple, left, and Mr. Hirokazu Tsunoda or Chonmage Taicho in Konose neighborhood, Kuma Village.

Hitoyoshi City which recovered fairly quick, even a lot of their facilities are not recovered at all. Kayaji has been helping people every day by delivering food and supporting family events.

2) Neighborhood organization, Shimo Shin-machi Cho, is the support center for not only for its own neighbors but also adjacent neighbors. Shimo Shin-machi Cho receives volunteers from other prefectures in Japan. Mr. Masanobu Ieki, president of the neighborhood association, is the driving force of support works. He distributes bulletins daily to the neighbors to articulate issues and activities.



Mr. Takashi Omitsu of Michigan meets Mr. Masanobu Ieki and Ms. Nichi at Shimo Shin-machi Cho.

3) Kuma Village is even not recovered at all since it was so isolated from neighbor town Hitoyoshi City. Shinshoji Temple in Konose neighborhood in Kuma Village received the donation from Detroit. Because Shinshoji has been a center of rescue works for the local people from life threatening situations.

## Japanese Percussion Lesson #28: Let's look at difference between western and kabuki costumes

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.

To view the video from #01 to #27, visit [Tsuzumibito Chanel at YouTube](#)

Ohayashi Juku (Kabuki Series) #28, <https://youtu.be/Kvmh62ThQ7k>, "Costumes of Western Music and Japanese Music" is the last video which explores the difference between the Western orchestra and Japanese Kabuki music. We previously learned how Japanese music is played without a conductor.

Why they always perform in a straight-line arrangement. Why they perform on a platform while Western orchestras may play inside of an orchestra pit, and the reasons why Japanese musicians always stay very still when on stage and make minimal precise movements. In this video, we look into what kind of uniform Japanese musicians wear for performances outside the kabuki theater and in the Kabuki theater.

We will first look at western musicians what they



wear for their orchestra concerts. Then, we look at what makes Japanese costumes formal or informal, then what is worn for concerts. We will look at crest, what they are and when they are used.

Lastly, we learn about Kamishimo, the most formal wear that are worn for kabuki performances. The most formal garment they wear over a kimono is surprisingly not black. Different genres of shamisen music, Nagauta and Gidayu wear different Kamishimo for different dances.

This completes the structural differences between Western and Japanese music. Next, we will look at the differences in the "Characteristics of Music" between the two.

*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. <http://fujijapanesemusic.org>*

**Weekly Cultural News** introduces virtual events of Japanese art and culture in the U.S. One Month Subscription fee for \$9  
<https://www.culturalnews.com/subscription>

## Cultures are becoming major reasons for ordinary people to have relationships in the public

By Shige Higashi  
Cultural News Editor

I started **Cultural News** in summer 1998 to introduce Japanese art exhibitions and local Japanese cultural events to the general public, native Japanese and American-born Japanese.

I eventually discovered there were more than 100,000 native Japanese in Southern California, and many of them became U.S. citizens.

In last 20 years, there are more international marriages than Japanese marriages in not only Los Angeles but also in the US.

Cultures such as language, songs, dances, foods, visual arts and martial arts, are becoming major reasons for ordinary people to have relationships in the public.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, all cultural events and art exhibitions are disappeared in Los Angeles since March 2020.

I had to change the format of **Cultural News**: from monthly paper to weekly PDF.



Cultural News Editor Shige Higashi in a Zoom meeting.

But the mission of **Cultural News** remains the same: promoting Japanese culture and art; and building Japanese culture-base community in Southern California.

Along with publishing **Cultural News**, I started to host Zoom meetings and Zoom webinars recently to keep Japanese culture alive in Los Angeles .

Non-profit organization Cultural News Association has been formed to support the mission of **Cultural News**.

Your supports to Cultural News are welcome.

<https://www.culturalnews.com/donation>

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