

Weekly Cultural News

Substitute for monthly Cultural News May 31 - June 06, 2021 (Reiwa 3)

Keep Japanese Culture Alive

Amb. Tomita to come to 50th anniversary event of Okinawa Reversion Agreement in Southern Calif.

According to the May issue of "Japan Focus" e-mail magazine published by the Consulate General of Japan, Los Angeles, the Japan Information & Culture Center, Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. Koji Tomita is scheduled to visit the Los Angeles area in mid-June.

The ambassador's itinerary in Southern California will include the Richard Nixon Foundation's "Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Signing of the Okinawa Reversion Agreement" and the Port of Los Angeles.

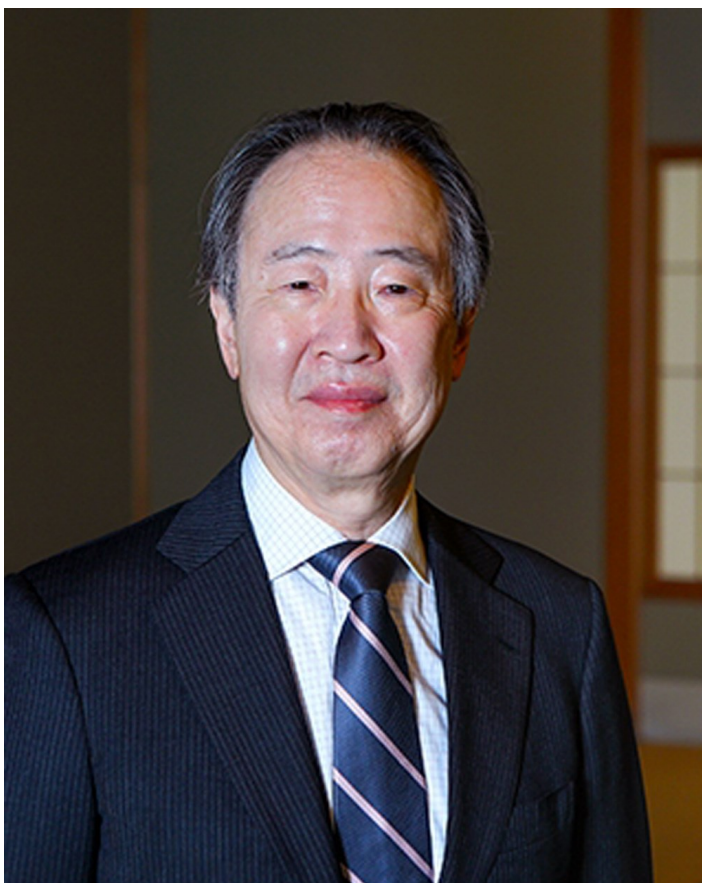
Ambassador Tomita arrived at Washington, D.C. on Jan. 27. Ambassador Tomita, 63 year-old, replaced Ambassador Shinsuke Sugiyma, 67 year-old. Tomita was appointed to ambassador to the U.S. in December when he was serving as ambassador to South Korea.

Tomita's appointment was realized because of his close ties to the Biden administration. Tomita held senior Foreign Ministry posts when Joe Biden was vice president under President Barack Obama and formed a strong network of contacts with U.S. Democrats.

Tomita joined the ministry in 1981 as a career diplomat. He assumed senior ministry posts, including minister at the Japanese Embassy in Washington and director-general of the ministry's North American Affairs Bureau, when Biden was vice president.

Tomita had served as ambassador to Israel before assuming ambassador to South Korea in October 2019.

Tomita, a graduate of the University of Tokyo, is



Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. Koji Tomita

the son-in-law of the renowned novelist Yukio Mishima, who died in 1970.

Ambassador Tomita's message posted on January 27 at the website of the Embassy of Japan in the U.S.A

https://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/ambassador.html

Amb. Tomita to come to 50th anniversary event of Okinawa Reversion Agreement in Southern California

Continued from page 1

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States of America

TOMITA Koji

January 27, 2021

Dear Friends,

It is my great honor and privilege to be appointed Ambassador of Japan to the United States of America. This is my second term at the Embassy, coming just seven and half years since I left Washington D.C. after serving as the Deputy Chief of Mission.

In the United States, President Biden has also just started his duties. When it comes to Japan and the United States, the most important things have not changed – our friendship, our Alliance and our economic partnership. One thing that has changed is that our relationship is expected to play an even greater role in the current security environment, as our solid Alliance creates a strong foundation for regional stability.

Cooperation between Japan and the United States covers a wide range of activities, such as measures against COVID-19 and climate change, or even space cooperation. Our economies have also never been closer.

Thanks to their investments, Japanese companies have become an important part of the American economy and true partners in communities across the country.

Japan has become the world's largest investor in the United States as of 2019.

Beyond security and economic ties, grassroots connections create the third pillar. These strong bonds are nurtured through grassroots exchange, and have helped to provide stability. Without the efforts of people from both countries, the progress in our relationship would have been impossible.

As Spring is arriving soon, I am excited to once again see the trees around Washington D.C.'s Tidal Basin, which were originally a gift from Japan in 1912. The festivities for the cherry trees have become a celebration of our lasting friendship at the grassroots level and of the shared mutual values between two important partners.

As Ambassador, I extend my sincere gratitude to the people of both of our countries for maintaining this important relationship, and I am ready to do my best, under the leadership of Prime Minister Suga and President Biden, to deepen the important ties between Japan and the United States.

As Japan and the United States face COVID-19 and the shared challenges of our world, I will take inspiration from these strong bonds. Facilitating the important cooperation that is taking place between our countries to fight this virus will be my top priority in the months ahead. As we create a path forward together, I hope that you and your family and friends remain safe, and I am looking forward to seeing all of you face-to-face in the near future.

Weekly Cultural News is an alternative publication for Monthly Cultural News which we had to stop the publication in April 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic.



Shige Higashi, Cultural News Editor

higashi@culturalnews.com (213) 819-4100

328 1/4 South Alexandria Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90020-2673

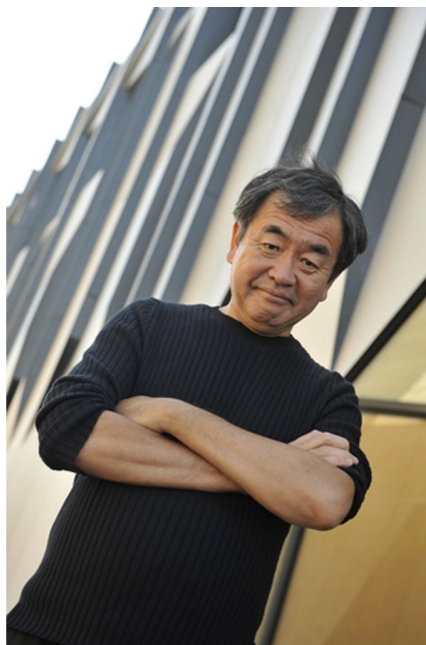
Japan House and Consulate General of Japan to host online conversation with world-acclaimed architect Kengo Kuma

Webinar by Japan House and
Consulate General of Japan

**The World of Kengo Kuma:
New Form of Encounter
between Tradition and
Modernity in Architecture**

**Wednesday, June 23
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM (PDT)**

JAPAN HOUSE Los Angeles and the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles will host an online conversation with world-acclaimed architect Kengo Kuma, who believes that architecture is something that designs the way we live and work.



Architect Kengo Kuma

In these unprecedented times where humanity must address global climate change, natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, what are the roles architecture can play in order for us to coexist with nature?

At this special webinar, Kuma will reflect on some of his major works, including the Japan National Stadium completed in November 2019, which will be featured at the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, and discuss the themes and messages conveyed through his designs. To register, click [HERE](#).

Japan House Los Angeles will present new exhibition [RECONNECTING: A Vision of Unity by Kengo Kito](#) from June 16 through September 6, 2021 at Japan House Gallery, Level 2, Hollywood & Highland Center.

Gallery hours are Monday through Sunday, 11:00 am through 6:00 pm. Admission free.

In RECONNECTING, Kito's repurposed plastic hula hoops serve as a sort of *mitate*, a Japanese



Hula hoop installations at the Ueno Royal Museum

poetic and visual device in which a modern image substitutes for a classical motif – here a hula-hoop structure for Zen circles, lines and space.

In his dynamic work of contemporary art, Kengo Kito forms connections that stretch beyond the physical and delve deeply into the realms of philosophy and emotion. Japan House hopes that the exhibition's playfulness and messages of connection and potential will lift the spirits of all our visitors.

Weekly Cultural News

**Only comprehensive source of Japanese Culture in Southern California
One Month Subscription fee for \$9**

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

Japanese Percussion Lesson #50: Let's learn about Sanbaso

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 previous videos from #01 to #49, visit [Tsuzumibito Chanel at YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsuzumibito)

Ohayashi Juku (Kabuki Series) #50 <https://youtu.be/rYYfuGY3038> is about "Sanbaso."

All of the "Sanbaso" plays in the Kabuki repertoire stem from the Noh play "Okina".

"Sanbaso" is the name of one of the three gods who appears in the Noh play "Okina" and brings good harvest.

Noh "Okina" is said to be the origin of Noh. It is a sacred piece and part of a Shinto ritual. In Noh, "Sanbaso" is performed by Kyogen-kata compared to two others which are performed by Noh performers. Kyogen-kata are the performers who usually play the comedic interludes between plays.

In Kabuki, the main emphasis is always on the jovial Sanbaso character, rather than on the Okina himself. It was picked up at Nakamura in



1678, and since then it has been performed as a very auspicious dance that traditionally opens a Kabuki season or marks the opening of a new theater.

There are many variations of the dance in the Kabuki theater and elsewhere. In this video, we will look at one of the most popular pieces, "Ayatsuri Sanbaso," the Marionette Sanbaso, as an example.

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.

She is currently living in Los Angeles area. Her activities and performances are found at <http://fujijapanesemusic.org>

Crafting a Literati Utopia in 19th-Century Japan: The Plum Blossom Valley at Tsukigase

Huntington Library Online Lecture, June 10, 4:00PM -5:00PM

The Center for East Asian Garden Studies of the Huntington Library presents online lecture *Crafting a Literati Utopia in 19th-Century Japan: The Plum Blossom Valley at Tsukigase* on Thursday, June 10, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm, PDT. Free with reservation. [Reserve](#)

Dr. Yurika Wakamatsu, assistant professor of East Asian art history at Occidental College, explores Tsukigase, a plum-filled mountain valley in today's Nara Prefecture that came to be celebrated as a paradisiacal site in nineteenth-century Japan.

Tracing Tsukigase's transformations during this period, Dr. Wakamatsu examines how poets and painters who worked in the Sino-Japanese mode of literati art constructed a fleeting, utopian realm of reclusion by imbuing this remote landscape with imagery drawn from beloved works of Chinese literature.

The event will be held online via Zoom at 4 p.m.



Okuhara Seiko, *Plum Blossoms in Tsukigase Valley* (detail), 1896, handscroll, ink and colors on silk, 28.4 x 508.2 cm. Koga City Museum of History

in PDT. Zoom link will be sent to attendees in registration confirmation email. This event will be recorded.

Help Cultural News in funding \$30,000 to keep Japanese culture alive

In 1998, **Cultural News** was started by Shige Higashi to promote Japanese culture 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. 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>

Uyehara Travel

Once COVID-19 restrictions are lift, Uyehara Travel provides cruses, Okinawa tours, local tours and customized tours. Please contact Tamiko Uyehara for any questions at (213) 680-2499 and tamiko_uyahara@yahoo.co.jp

お元気ですか？そろそろ旅行に行きたいですね。連絡ください。



Okinawa Tour in 2022

The 7th Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival is postponed to October 2022. To participate the world festival, Uyehara Travel plans the tour from Los Angeles, from Oct. 27—Nov. 4, 2022.



Pasadena Sister Cities Committee to host free online Koto music performance from Mishima, Shizuoka Prefecture

The Pasadena Sister Cities Committee will host free Koto music online event from Japan on Saturday, June 12 at 7:00 pm in PDT.

The Pasadena Sister Cities Committee, Pasadena-Mishima Subcommittee together with the City of Mishima and the Mishima International Relations Association is happy and proud to present a special live performance by the award-winning Mishima Kita High School Sou-Kyoku.

For registration, visit

www.passcc.org/events

Or contact Bryan Takeda at affinity2000@earthlink.net or call (626) 396-9927.



Mishima Kita High School Sou-Kyoku performs at the 60th Anniversary Celebration of the Pasadena-Mishima Sister City relationship in 2016 in Mishima, Japan.

The koto club has captured the Shizuoka Prefectural Championship for over ten consecutive years and has been the Japan National Competition Second Prize winner on two occasions.

Sou-Kyoku is led by instructor Ms. Michiyo Kusama and Teacher in Charge, Ms. Hiroyo Ikomi.

Established in 1901, Mishima Kita High School was appointed by the Ministry of Education as a Super Global High School and is part of their World Wide Learning Consortium.

Pasadena and Mishima have been Sister Cities since 1957.

Japan Foundation hosting Fukushima-born artist's nomadic storytelling exhibition online through June 18

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles is presenting virtual exhibition *Nobuo Anzai: Homage to a Nomadic Storyteller* through June 18. [click here to enter virtual exhibition](#)

This is a retrospective exhibition of late Nobuo Anzai (1935-2019), and curated by Kio Griffith of Los Angeles.

The Fukushima born Anzai spent his childhood during the upheaval years of World War II. At age 23, he emigrated to Brazil to serve two years in agricultural farming.



Nobuo Anzai, "Flying Kites" 1998 from the series "Home in the Seasons" 22" x 30" mixed media.

Upon completing this obligation, he trained to become a sushi chef and open his first shop in Sao Paulo. A natural and adventurous journeyman at heart, Anzai would spend the next four decades migrating to Colombia, Spain, and Los Angeles, California.

Anzai's paintings are heartfelt memories of countries he calls homes – Brazil, Colombia, Spain, and Japan.

They are unseparated in his mind and heart through his life's passages as migrant worker, farmer, chef, and artist.

Phoenix, AZ: Musical Instrument Museum to host Ken Koshio's Japanese folk music and Taiko drumming concert, June 11,12

Ken Koshio: Heartbeats of Mother Earth
Japanese Folk Music and Taiko Drumming

Friday, June 11, 7 pm
Saturday, June 12, 7 pm
Musical Instrument Museum
4725 E. Mayo Blvd,
Phoenix, AZ 85050

\$44.50 [Buy Ticket](#)

Saturday's tickets are sold out.

Ken Koshio believes that music and art are one of the great tools to communicate between cultures and languages.

Taiko is his tool to express the art of drumbeats and the roots of indigenous spirits. His Taiko performances intertwine the art of drumbeats and the roots of indigenous spirits.

Taiko (太鼓) in Japanese language is directly translated to "drumming beats" in English language, and the pronunciation of Taiko shares with the same sound of 太古 or ancient time.

Koshio also believes that since ancient times Taiko has been used as a tool for bridging the gap of time differences. Taiko is made of dry wood or past living tree, and this Taiko creates "life beats" for delivering messages from the past to the future.



Ken Koshio was born in Japan and has traveled around the world as a singer and musician. Currently based in Phoenix, he creates fusion music with Native American artists and has produced a Japanese folktale musical story, *Sakura no Ne*, a stage project with the Japanese Friendship Garden of Phoenix.

Koshio has a certified teaching license of Hiroshima Jidaiko (indigenous Taiko drum) from the Hiroshima Taiko Preservation Society. He is the first person outside of Japan to receive this license.