



# FOOTPRINTS

*Impressions from where we were to where we will be*

The Newsletter for the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego

Summer Issue 1997

Volume 6 Number 2



## DATES TO REMEMBER

June 29: JACL Annual Picnic Sun.  
11 a.m. East Crown Point Shores

July 13: Reception and Opening  
Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit  
SAN DIEGO PUBLIC LIBRARY (Downtown)  
with following Sunday 2 p.m. lectures:

July 27: Film on Canadian  
Relocation with speaker to be  
determined

July 20: Prof. Peter Irons

Aug. 3: Prof. Don Estes, slide show  
on relocation

Aug. 10: Film on Japanese American  
National Museum with speaker

Aug. 17: UCSD Prof. Leland Saito and  
UCI Prof. Tom Fujita-Rony on  
Evacuation and Resettlement.  
All at the San Diego Public Library

OCT. 4: JAHSSD ANNUAL MEETING  
BUDDHIST TEMPLE OF SAN DIEGO "ON TRACING  
YOUR FAMILY TREE" Chester Hashizume of JA  
National Museum tentatively scheduled

## CHIEF ABBOT OF THE NISHI HONGWANJI-HA, KYOTO, VISITS SAN DIEGO

By Yuki Kawamoto

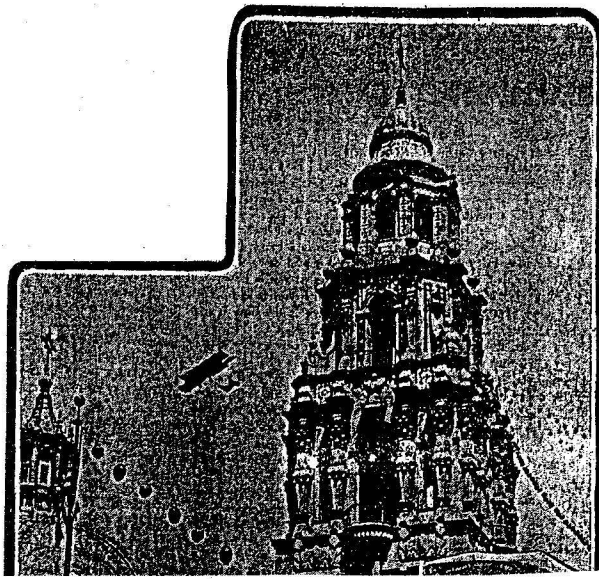
The Buddhist Temple of San Diego on April 3rd was honored with a visit by his Eminence, Go-Moshu Koshin Ohtani, Chief Abbot of the Jodo Shinshu Nishi Hongwanji-Ha in Kyoto, Japan. Go-Monshu Ohtani is the spiritual leader all Jodo Shinshu Nishi Hongwanji Buddhists, the largest school of Buddhism in Japan. He is a direct descendent of Shinran Shonin, founder of the Jodo Shinshu Sect, and is the 24th successor to the title of Go-Monshu. His visit to San Diego was part of a tour of the United States where he also visited temples in Los Angeles, Venice, Gardena, Pasadena, Portland, Seattle, Sacramento and San Francisco.

Go-Monshu Ohtani was feted at a banquet in his honor at the Marina Marriott Hotel, where he was presented with a Padres baseball shirt with "K. Ohtani" and "24" inscribed across the back.

See Go-Moshu page 3

## IN THIS ISSUE

Chief Abbot Visit	page 1
Nikkei Air Show at Expo	page 2
Caught Doing Something Nice	page 3
442 Co. E	page 4
Poston 3 Reunion	page 5
Shinkichi Tajiri	page 6



Man Asakawa, pioneer Issei airman, flies his self-built air machine over Balboa Park during 1914 Expo.

## A NIKKEI AIR SHOW AT THE EXPO

by Don Estes

On the evening of January 1, 1915, as thousands of excited San Diegans watched with anticipation, an event that had been in the planning stage for over five years came to fruition. Three thousand miles to the east, President Woodrow Wilson pressed a button and a light suspended from a balloon suddenly illuminated the newly constructed buildings of the Panama-California Exposition located in Balboa Park.

Eight months later, on Wednesday, August 4, 1915 the exposition featured "Japan Day." As the *San Diego Union* described the event, "... The entire Japanese population of San Diego County, and 300 visitors from Los Angeles united in celebrating Japan Day, one of the most successful events held since the opening."

The day began with a parade of kimono clad children, and was marked by demonstrations of Japanese martial arts, games, and the obligatory speeches. Exposition President G. Aubrey Davidson expressed his thanks to the local Nikkei community for the extensiveness and the quality of the Japanese exhibits. California State Senator Leroy A. Wright eulogized the local Japanese and their achievements by declaring that, "... the agricultural districts of this state would be better off if they had a population of 100,000 Japanese." Senator

Wright's pronouncement is interesting in light of the fact that two years earlier, in 1913, the California Legislature had passed an alien land law specifically designed to deny Issei farmers the right to own or lease agricultural land.

Speaking for the Nikkei community Masaharu Kondo, president of the San Diego Japanese Association, and owner of the MK Fishing Company, responded that he hoped that the two nations would continue to enjoy peaceful relations. Kondo noted in his conclusion that the entire exposition had been built for less than the cost of one battleship.

Games for everyone followed the speeches including a community tug-of-war, a spoon and hashi race, and a candlestick and lantern race.

Certainly the highlight of the event was a flying demonstration put on by pioneer aviators, Man Asakawa of Venice, California, and Tokuji Nakamura of San Diego who had learned to fly at the Glenn Curtiss Flying School on North Island. While Nakamura flew one of Curtiss' air ships, Asakawa flew a plane he had constructed in his garage. So it was, that a scant twelve years after the Wright brothers first powered flight, two Issei pilots soared together over the exposition dropping Japanese coins and balloons on the heads of the onlookers crowded into the Plaza de Panama.

On landing in the exposition's tractor field, Asakawa damaged his propeller and, despite the best efforts of his ground crew, was unable to make a scheduled evening flight. That night, Nakamura flew over the exposition with, "... colored fire streaming from his machine." By all accounts, it was a spectacular flight.

Exposition officials pronounced the Japan Day activities as one of the most interesting and successful held on the grounds.



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## A MORE PERFECT UNION

On July 20, 1997, The San Diego Public Library, the JAHSSD and the SD JACL will be sponsoring a six-week exhibition of the traveling Smithsonian exhibit, "A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the Constitution." The exhibit, featuring eleven photo panels and an interactive video recounts the detention of the West Coast Nikkei during World War II.

The JAHSSD will be supplementing the exhibit with materials from our collection that will help illustrate the local San Diego County camp experience.

Beginning on Sunday, July 20, 1997, the sponsoring organizations will offer a series of five weekend programs related to the Nikkei experience. These programs will include scholars from the Southern California area including Prof. Peter Irons and Prof. Leland Saito of UCSD, Prof. Tom Fujita-Rony of UC Irvine, and a special guest speaker from the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles.

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*Go-Moshu continued from page 1*

proclamation from the City of San Diego and welcome greetings from the Inter-religious Council of San Diego were also presented to Go-Monshu Sama. The banquet was ably emceed by the Honorable Municipal Court Judge Gale Kaneshiro. President Ben Segawa represented the JAHSSD at the banquet.

Prior to the banquet, the Go-Monshu confirmed 40 Buddhists as followers of the Jodo Shinshu Buddhist faith in an impressive confirmation ceremony, called Kikyoshiki, at the Buddhist Temple of San Diego. In the ceremony, each participants head was symbolically shaved and was given a Buddhist name by the Go-Monshu.

## CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

You may recall reading in our last issue of the *Footprints*, that on January 26, 1997 the San Diego JACL and the JAHSSD jointly dedicated a monument to the Issei pioneers of the South Bay. More than 100 people attended the ceremony on that rainy, windy Sunday afternoon.

The memorial plaque was mounted on a stone which was placed in a landscaped plot of ground located at the corner of Palomar and Broadway in Chula Vista. Accentuating the stone was an eight foot, shaped pine tree donated by the Yasuda Nursery.

Late in April some admirer of our pine tree removed it from the site and disappeared. To date the location of the \$1,500 tree is unknown; as is the whereabouts of the low life who removed it.

## CAUGHT DOING SOMETHING NICE

Our Society and our many friends are a group dedicated to the preservation of the local Nikkei experience. Without the assistance of each of you, we would not have been able to begin the task of building, what we are sure, will ultimately be a first rate collection and archive.

The JAHSSD would like to recognize the following individuals for their efforts on behalf of all of us.

*See Caught Doing Something Nice page 5*



## REgenerations in San Diego

By Susan Hasegawa

The dictionary defines regeneration as:

(1) to form again; be made anew; and  
(2) to be regenerated; be reborn  
spiritually or reconstituted. REgenerations:  
Rebuilding Japanese American Families,  
Communities, and Civil Rights in the Re-  
settlement Era embraces all these concepts  
and will document the struggle and  
perseverance of the Nikkei communities  
in the different years after World War II.  
Funded by the Civil Liberties Public Education  
Fund, this collaborative project will bring toget-  
her four regions to create a model of joint cooperation  
and information sharing. The Japanese American  
Historical Society of San Diego (JAHSSD), the  
Japanese National Museum, Japanese American  
Resource Center/Museum, and the Chicago  
Japanese American Historical Society are  
collaborating partners. The grant of \$62,000 will bring  
together the regions in joint trainings. It will also fund  
interviewers and transcribers to document  
approximately ten to fifteen oral histories in each  
region.

In addition to conducting oral history interviews,  
tentative project activities include a community forum  
to solicit input. This is an exciting opportunity for  
JAHSSD to network and share information with other  
regions across the country. In March, regional  
coordinator Susan Hasegawa attended a gathering of  
Japanese American oral history projects in Seattle,  
Wash.. Meeting attendees were extremely impressed  
with activities in San Diego including the exhibit at the  
Museum of San Diego History, the quarterly  
newsletter, and the commemoration of the *gakuen*  
site in Chula Vista.

In April, Don Estes, San Diego regional scholar for  
the project, and Susan Hasegawa attended a one-  
day coordinating meeting in Los Angeles; Darcie Iki,  
Life History Coordinator for the Japanese American  
National Museum reciprocated with a presentation to  
the JAHSSD board a couple of weeks later. REgenerations  
is an exciting opportunity for  
involvement and action. The project is recruiting  
transcribers, interviewers, and prospective  
interviewees for San Diego. If you are interested, or  
know of individuals interested in the project, please  
contact Susan Hasegawa at 483-2206.



Don Estes and Elaine Hibi Bowers with Co. "E"  
Members at 442 Reunion Ben Aihara, Ben Yamanaka,  
Robert Ichikawa, Jou Okitsu and Nob Takashima

### **SOUTHERN CAL CHAPTER CO. "E" 442 RCT GATHERS FOR REUNION**

About 55 years ago, they shared experiences  
only few of us could imagine. It was wartime and the  
talk they shared occurred in cold, wet foxholes in  
some distant battle field in Europe -- a free trip paid  
for by Uncle Sam. For many, it would be the last trip. A  
vacation it was not.

On April 19, 1997, 39 of those old foot soldiers  
and spouses gathered in San Diego for the annual  
reunion of Southern California's Chapter of Co. "E"  
442nd RCT Association. San Diegans in the group  
included Frank Wada, Nob Takashima and Harry  
Kowase.

Frank and Jean Wada were the hosts for the  
reunion, which included a hurried visit to the  
JAHSSD's "One Hundred Year Road" exhibit at the  
Museum of San Diego History in Balboa Park.

Co. "E" is the most active of the numerous  
organizations that sprung the 100th Battalion-442  
RCT Association. In the past, they have paid visits  
across the country, including a visit with one of their  
own members, Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, in  
Washington, D. C. (Sen. Dan couldn't make this one.)

Frank said one of the things that attracted the  
group to San Diego was the Balboa Park exhibit. The  
JAHSSD hosted a reception at the museum for the  
visiting guests with Elaine Hibi Bowers, Don Estes,  
See Co. "E" page 5

Yuki and Mits Kawamoto, Jeanne Elyea, and Naomi and Mich Himaka helping.

Elaine took groups of the guests through the exhibit explaining the history of Japanese Americans in San Diego as presented through the photos and memorabilia on display, including the replica of the barrack Frank built.

Two of the guest, Jou Okitsu and Ben Aihara, recognized themselves in pictures on display in the military section of the exhibit.

"It was taken after I came back from overseas," Okitsu said. He had been wounded in the shoulder by machinegun fire and was later taken prisoner by Germans for six months. He said the last time he saw the photo was 1945.

After visiting the exhibit, the group gathered at Frank and Jean's home for a Mexican dinner.

After dinner, they all met at Lawrence Welk's resort in the Fallbrook area to spend the rest of the weekend.

The unscheduled reunion was greatly appreciated, Frank said. "They really seemed to enjoy the exhibit and the reception," he said.

The mini-reunion was well covered by the *Union-Tribune* and KUSI-TV (Chan. 51/9)

## POSTON 3 REUNION

BY Yukio Kawamoto

Some 450 ex-Postonites and friends gathered in Laughlin, NV, on April 7th, 8th and 9th to renew acquaintances and friendships and to reminisce old times. Poston 3 Reunion #8 was held at the Gold River Hotel and was hosted by the Los Angeles committee. Attending from San Diego was a busload of 48 people, plus others who traveled by car.

Activities at the reunion included dinner for each of the 3 rokus on Monday night, a trip to Poston on Tuesday morning, a banquet Tuesday evening and a continental buffet breakfast Wednesday morning. The trip to Poston included a stop at the Poston monument, a drive by tour of the Camp I high school auditorium, a tour of the Colorado River Indian Tribes Museum in Parker and a stop at a camp barrack building in Parker. At a lunch break in Parker, we were met by Bob Drew and Patty Silvestri of the Parker area Historical Society with whom our historical society has developed close ties.

After lunch, Bob Drew led the group to a camp

barrack which had been relocated to Parker. Except for being cut in half and weather beaten, the barrack was the way it was in our camp days, double roof and all. Behind the barrack was another half barrack with just the floor left-- the roof and all the walls were gone. The floor was as we remembered-- wide cracks and knot holes covered with tin can covers. There are other camp barracks which were relocated to Parker, but they have all been remodeled (stuccoed, reroofed, plumbing installed, etc.). The visit to the old barrack proved to be the highlight of the trip, bringing back a flood of memories, both good and bad.

All those attending the reunion, agreed that it was a fine reunion.

*Caught Doing Something Nice continued from page 3*

Our sincere appreciation goes out to, **George and Pat Kusaka** of Kusaka Brothers Strawberry Farm in Chula Vista for their very generous donation of ten dozen (120) long-stemmed, hand-dipped, chocolate-covered strawberries, and an additional crate of field ripened strawberries, for the "E" Company, 442nd RCT reception held at the Museum of San Diego History. George and Pat spent more than a few long hours preparing all those strawberries for the veterans. **"E" Company, 442nd RCT** - Thanks folks for your thoughtful donation of \$50 in support of the work of our society.

Thanks to the following individuals and groups for their support of the "E" Company reception. **Elaine Hibi Bowers** for producing a perfect reception and **Jeanne Marumoto Elyea** for her usual all-around assistance; **Mitsuko Kawamoto** for her cookies; and **Naomi Himaka of Keidan Floral Design** for her truly stunning floral piece; and **Mich** for his donation of Mrs. Fields chocolate chip cookies. Thanks also to the **San Diego Buddhist Temple** for the loan of the appropriate pots and pans for the reception.

We also wish to acknowledge the gift of **Mr. and Mrs. Toki Yano** of a copy of their "burned wood" tomato label to our growing collection of Nikkei vegetable and fruit labels.

**Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Yoshioka**, long supporters of our society have donated a second set of child's kendo gear to match the set they donated earlier. The pre World War II kendo equipment is in near perfect condition. We thank them for their continuing support.

## UCSD PROF. IRONS DISCUSSES INTERNMENT CASES

About 30 people turned out April 6 to hear UCSD Prof. Peter Irons discuss the federal cases against Min Yasui, Fred Korematsu and Gordon Hirabayashi, more commonly known as the Japanese American Internment cases. Irons played a key role in helping those cases eventually to be overturned by the appellate courts.

His insight and knowledge of the case histories was an informative session, even if one had lived the experience. It was interesting listening to another's viewpoint of the internment experience.

## 1992: Ex-San Diego Artist Honored by Dutch Queen

By Mich Himaka

You all knew this all along but we're just finding out...Five years ago, former San Diegan and artist-sculptor Shinkichi George Tajiri, was commissioned an officer in the Order of Orange Nassau by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, the second highest decoration awarded by that nation.

The appointment is an honor rarely given to a foreigner. Shinkichi, who was born Dec. 7, 1923, in Los Angeles, has been a resident of Castle Scheres, Baarlo, The Netherlands since 1962.

He and his family moved to San Diego in 1936. He was the fifth child of Ryukichi and Fuyo Tajiri. His older siblings included Larry, who was a journalist and drama/film critic with the Denver Post; Vincent, also a journalist and photo editor for Playboy Enterprises; sister Yoshiko, a journalist who worked with the Pacific Stars and Stripes; brother James, who retired as an Army Lt. Col. and taught at Hartnell College; and brother Thomas, who passed away in 1989. Shinkichi gained world renown for his monumental "Friendship Knot" sculptures now found throughout the world. Queen Beatrix has one in the Royal Palace Park in The Hague. The Rockefellers have one in their garden overlooking the Hudson River in New York. There is one in the Mall of America in St. Paul, Minn. In all, there are more than two dozen "Knot" sculptures of varying shapes, sizes and types.

One is found near the French town of Bruyeres, which was liberated by the famed 100th Battalion/442 Regimental Combat Team of which Shinkichi was a

member serving with Co. M, 442nd RCT. The sculpture and a plaque were dedicated at the 1994 50th anniversary observance of the Battle of Bruyeres during which the famed combat team rescued the (Lost) 141st Infantry Battalion.

One "Knot" is located at the New Otani Hotel in Little Tokyo in Los Angeles. (*Editor's Note: Unbeknownst to Mr. Tajiri when he sculpted the piece, it was raised on to a base with a bronze plaque honoring Morinosuke Kajima, who played a key role in enslaving Chinese laborers during WWII. The Kajima Corp. owns the New Otani Hotel chain. Mr. Tajiri has made it known he favors any action to remove the Kajima name from the artwork.*)

Shinkichi, who volunteered for the Army while in Poston III with other San Diegans, was seriously wounded in his left leg during the Little Cassino campaign.

He lives in The Netherlands with his wife, Suzanne van der Capellen and continues to work as a multimedia artist. He has two grown children, Giotta Fuyo and Ru Vinci.

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## FROM YUTAKA'S COOKBOOK

Yutaka Kida of Block 330, Colorado River Relocation Center recorded the following meal for the block on October 3, 1942:

**BREAKFAST:** 1 Apple, Oatmeal, Fried Rice, Butter, Toast, Jam, Coffee

**LUNCH:** Boiled Beef in Spanish Sauce, Boiled Potatoes, Pickled Beets, Spice Cake, Bread, Jam, Tea.

**YUTAKA'S 330 Spice Cake:**

8 pounds of sugar.  
4 pounds of shorting  
1/2 cup of salt  
50 eggs  
10 pounds of flour  
8 ounces of baking powder  
4 1/2 quarts of milk  
2 ounces of cinnamon  
1 ounce each, nutmeg, cloves, allspice

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## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The JAHSSD thank and welcome Mr. and Mrs Gregg Hamamoto, Mr. And Mrs. George Shitara and Mrs Dell Farnham as new members and supporters of our Society.



## JAHSSD SEATS NEW BOARD MEMBER

Susan Hasegawa has agreed to fill a vacancy that existed on the organization board of directors. Susan will head the REgeneration project to line up oral interviews of Japanese American community members. A native of Hawaii, Susan has been active in the organization for months having worked on the 100 Year Road exhibit currently on display in Balboa Park. The board welcomes her assistance.

## HALL OF PEACE DEDICATION HELD

About 150 community members turned out on May 18 to dedicate the new Hall of Peace Columbarium in Cypress View Mausoleum.

The Rev. Dr. Tom Fujita of the Ocean View United Church of Christ, the Rev. Akio Miyaji of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego and the Rev. Brian Nakamura of the Japanese Christian Church participated in the ceremonies

Min Sakamoto, who spearheaded the community effort to sell \$100,000 of the niches, was specially honored by those in attendance. The three ministers unveiled a plaque bearing the names of the founding families.

Also honored were the community organizations, which also participated in the effort to meet the goal deadline of Dec. 31. They included the three community churches, the San Diego JCC, the Japanese American Memorial VFW Post 4851, UPAC, San Diego JACL and Kiku Gardens.

Certificates of appreciation were presented to representatives of those organizations. Officials of Cypress View Bonham Bros. Mausoleum also participated including Paul Hickman, vice president; Robert Gordon, sales director and Yolanda Froelicher, assistant sales director. Ms. Forelicher may be contacted for information on niche availability and purchase at 458-6534.



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## JAHSSD Board of Directors

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Susan Hasegawa	483-2206
Michio Himaka	660-9865
Mas Hironaka	233-0590
Carol Kawamoto	287-7583

## Newsletter Staff

Editors: Michio Himaka  
Yukio Kawamoto

**Footprints** is a publication of the Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego. Subscriptions are free with membership. Comments and questions from readers are welcome. Please address your letter to:

**Footprints** Editor  
P.O. Box 620988  
San Diego, CA 92162-0988

## POSTON III Y.B.A. BOOK FOR SALE

In 1945, the Young Buddhist Association of Poston III published a pictorial book, "Mohaveland," as a record of people and life in Poston. The JAHSSD has reproduced the book and it is now available for sale. Although the book was published by the Young Buddhists Association, we believe that it is of general interest and a valuable publication, not only as memento of the times, but in giving a glimpse of camp life to our children and grandchildren.

If you would like to order a copy of the book, please fill out the order form and send it to the address indicated on the form along with a check made payable to "JAHSSD"

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