

Okinawa American Association of New York

2019 年 Summer Newsletter 夏の会報

<http://oki-ny.jimdo.com/>



ニューヨーク沖縄会



Jose Azama  
2 Ray St.  
Elmwood Park NJ, 07407



August, 2019

Page 2

## Greeting from the New Preident of the OAANY: Jose Azama (“Key”)



Greetings OAANY members! I hope everyone has been enjoying the warm weather these past few months and that this Year of the Pig finds everyone with good health and fortune! I have only been president for a few months and wanted to thank everyone for supporting us in this transition. The changes within the organization have slowed down event planning, and I appreciate all the effort and cooperation from everyone. We are looking forward to future opportunities to gather our community and share different experiences. In the coming months, we will begin discussions to start working with our members to collaborate to make these goals a reality.

These are a few things that we are thinking of taking on the next few months:

- Refresh of the OAANY Website
- Social Media presence
- Newsletter articles

I think the best way to grow and have a healthy community is communication. I want to ask our members for their support for this initiative. By no means can we do this alone. Please feel free to contact me if you have any comments, suggestions or concerns at

[keyazama@gmail.com](mailto:keyazama@gmail.com).

With the end of summer bringing a new school year, I'd like to wish best of luck to all our students! We have recently been in contact with the Okinawan American Association and have been given details of the renewal of the Okinawan Emigrants' Descendent and Asian Scholarship Program, better known as the "Kenpi Scholarship".

More information can be found on page 5.

---

**"Essay re. Nikkei Cuisine" by Gerardo Tan, Secaucus, NJ**



One of the food topics I'm most intrigued by, is the recent popularity of Nikkei cuisine. First, let's go over the definition of where and what makes Nikkei cuisine. Nikkei on its own means: "a Japanese emigrant or a descendant thereof who is not a citizen of Japan". When we speak of Nikkei cuisine of these descendants of Japan, we typically are always referring to Peruvian Japanese cuisine. For some reason, Japanese Brazilian food never gained in popularity. This could possibly be something some of our other members can help us out with.

Being of half Okinawan descent from Peru leads me to have strong opinions on this new cuisine fad. I call this cuisine "new" because 99% is unrecognizable in its plated finished forms. Sure, some of the ingredients and techniques might be Japanese but the mixture is foreign. The original mixture of Peruvian and Japanese food fusing in

Page 4

Page 4

Peru came out of natural evolution, like Okinawan soba made with chicken broth instead of pork broth.

I don't want to attribute full fault to all these new restaurants opening up here in the United States, because this all started in Peru. In my opinion, this was done to provide Japanese food to satisfy Peruvian (limeños) tastes. Japanese food in Peru wasn't popular until the mid 2000s. Nikkei cuisine has really taken off across the world. For most Peruvians, if they want a salchipapa (hot dogs and French fries) they want it with regular hot dogs, no Japanese kurobuta hot dogs needed. If we want ceviche, one shouldn't make it with soy sauce or sesame oil.

What bothers me the most about Nikkei cuisine is the complete lack of representation of Okinawan cuisine. We (Okinawans) make up the majority of the Japanese population in Peru. For us to not get any representation is a complete lack of research of these restaurants. For higher end cuisine to overlook the history and make their own interpretations on our cuisine is an insult. I will not say that they need to go to Okinawa and get culinary ideas there, as food culture around the world changes with time and circumstances. So for example they can't make taco rice and call it a Nikkei experience. For example, taco rice became popular after World War 2 when the Americans set up their bases on Okinawa. We Nikkei from Peru mostly came before World War 2 so we have no idea what taco rice is. All I'm asking is please do something that truly represents all of the Japanese immigrants that went to Peru. Don't just highlight the trendy Japanese popular cuisine, mix it with Peruvian ingredients and techniques (or vice versa) and voila' call it NIKKEI!

## Scholarship Announcement

Every year, the Okinawa Prefectural Government offers scholarships for young Okinawans (ages 18 to 35) to study in Okinawa for one year (April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021). Titled the Okinawan Emigrants' Descendent and Asian Scholarship Program (or colloquially known as the "kempi scholarship"), "this program selects talented youths of Okinawan descent living abroad [...] to participate in exchange study at a host university or training at local businesses or traditional arts facilities. Participants have the chance to not only deepen their understanding of Okinawan history, culture, and customs, but also to grow into exemplary individuals Kenpi capable of actively serving as a bridge between their home country and Okinawa." (excerpt from the official application)

➡ This exciting program offers three options:

- ➡ 1. Study at one of Okinawa's universities (including Japanese language)
- ➡ 2. Six months at a university and six months training at a company
- ➡ 3. Study a traditional art (e.g., sanshin, dance, textiles (bingata), lacquerware, sanshin or taiko making, cuisine, etc.)

➡ Application requirements include, but are not limited to: Basic conversational Japanese skills (higher proficiency required for certain university programs and to train at a company) and a relative or family friend who lives in Okinawa to act as the applicant's guarantor.

Applicants must be members of their local Okinawa kenjinkai (prefectural association) and apply through that organization.

If selected, the applicant will be representing that organization and their home country. For more information please contact: [oaanykai@gmail.com](mailto:oaanykai@gmail.com)



## **Okinawan Folktale: A Mermaid and the Tsunami Warning When a Mermaid Speaks Pay Attention**

The story comes from Ishigaki and a place called Nohara Village.

On moonlit nights youngsters would sing and dance at a beach. From out at sea, music and singing could sometimes be heard. An old man fishing with nets was surprised by his extraordinary catch one night. One toss of the nets, gave him an unusually heavy load to haul ashore.

When he raised his torch to see what was caught in the nets, he spotted this beauty. She cried, begging the fisherman to release her.

To the man, she looked like a young maiden but, she explained, she was a mermaid. The gal had to be released to live in the sea. She had come to warn the villagers of Nohara about a tragedy about to happen. The fisherman untangled her from the nets and promised to let her return to the ocean.

But, he wanted her to tell him about what terrible event was about to occur in the village.

A tsunami would hit the island, the next day and, destroy everything, she told him. She warned him to go to the mountains before morning. The fisherman released her and, she swam away, singing once again. The villagers were warned and, went to the mountains. They dispatched someone to warn the people in the adjacent village. The villagers in the next town didn't believe the tsunami story and refused to evacuate.

The next morning, from the mountaintops, the villagers of Nohara watched. The waves, reached high into the skies and, ripped the villages from the island. People from Nohara lost their homes but, their lives were saved. Those who didn't believe the mermaid's story were washed out to sea with their homes.

The 1771 Great Yaeyama Tsunami hit Ishigaki and Miyakojima Island and killed a total of 12,000 people.

### **REFERENCE:**

Okinawan Folk Stories ISBN978-4-99009-146-0

<https://www.ryukyulife.com/2015/06/okinawan-folktale-mermaid-and.html>



Ryukyuan Classical Music (琉球古典音楽) is the music of elegance and dignity, the type of music played at the Palace in Shuri, which use to be capital of the independent Ryukyuan Nation (琉球國).

Agi Chiku Ten Bushi ♪ ♪ ♪

揚作田節 (あぎちくてんぶし)

Hutahwa kara Njiti  
Ikutushi ga Hwitara  
Iwawo Dachi Machi nu Mutei Jurasa



Since the First Growth of Only Two Leaves,  
How Many Years Have Passed ?  
The Luxuriant Pine Tree Embedded in the Rock; How Beautiful It Is !

ふたふあ から んじてい  
いくとうし が ふいたら  
いわを だち まち ん むていちゅらさ

二葉から出て  
幾年が経たか  
巖抱く松の栄えの清らかさよ



Announcements / お知らせ

 **YOU ARE INVITED**

**OAANY Yearly Summer Party!**

**BRING YOUR FAVORITE DISH AND LOVED ONES!**

**ALL ARE WARMLY WELCOME!!**

**Date/日時 : September 14, 2019 (Saturday)**

**12:00PM - 17:00PM**

**Place/場所: American Legion**

**1165 River Rd, Edgewater, New Jersey 07020**

