



Philippine Nikkei-Jin Legal Support Center Inc.

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January 2025

A Heartfelt Reunion: welcoming Japanese Relatives to the Philippines

Samuel Akaiji, aged 82, was born in Coron, Palawan to a Japanese father and Filipina mother. He was one of the stateless war-displaced second generation that were left behind in the Philippines. Akaiji cases begun when his brother, Noboru, filled out the PNLSC's General Registration in 2014 and Samuel in 2016. Even after a long search of PNLSC, they were not able to locate 1st gen.'s family registry, but miracle happened in Dec. 2023. Samuel became a member of home coming tour to Okinawa. When the case was covered by local media ahead of the tour, one of the possible relatives came forward and the research was proceeded quickly by the relatives themselves. In December 2023, Samuel was able to visit Okinawa with the support of Crowd Funding initiated by Councilor Ayaka Shiomura, where many of his relatives welcomed him with warm open arms.

Samuel's petition for the Japanese citizenship was filed at the Japanese family court in April 2024.

Even some of Samuel's relatives expressed their wish to visit Samuel in Coron. This plan was materialized in November 2024. Third and fourth generation relatives living in Manila welcomed them on Nov.14. What a good timing that after their arrival in Manila, finally, Samuel's petition was approved! And on the following day at Coron, the relatives conveyed the good news to Samuel.

Relatives in Manila, 3rd and 4th gen under Noboru, welcomed three cousins of Samuel at the Manila Airport with welcome banner. They proceeded to a restaurant for dinner. They enjoyed the dinner while talking to each other and taking lots of pictures. One of the relative, Mr. Yasuyuki Toma showed his talent by singing a Tagalog song called 'Sana'y Laging Magkapiling' by April Boy Regino, while Mr. Sachio Kamura gave a heartwarming message before day ends. They also exchanged tote bag with their name and signatures on it for

keepsakes.

" It was surreal moment for us. Language barrier is not a hindrance to know each other and to have a conversation with them and to have bond. It was full of amazing memories that we will treasure forever. Looking forward that one day we will visit Japan and to meet more of our relatives" said Hazel Joy Donde, grand-daughter of Samuel's deceased elder brother, Noboru.



(At Coron, Palawan airport)

(Palawan) On November 15, 2024, our family experienced a truly special moment as we welcomed our Japanese relatives to the beautiful shores of Coron, Palawan.

In preparation for their arrival, we poured our hearts into making sure they felt the warmth of Filipino hospitality at the house of the elder brother of Samuel who died in 2014, and we adorned them with garlands as a sign of our love and respect. To share the richness of our local culture, we prepared an array of traditional Filipino dishes, showcasing flavors that speak of home. From savory lechon (roasted pig) to sweet kakanin, fresh seafoods, every dish told a story of family and unity.

Our Japanese relatives - Yasuyuki Toma, Sanchio Kamura, and Keiko Shimabukuro - were visibly touched by the warm reception. A poignant part of their journey was visiting the site in San Nicholas where our grandfather, Kamitaro, tragically lost his life. This solemn occasion brought everyone together in reflection.

(continuation on page 2)



(Place where Samuel's father was murdered by guerillas during the war.)

As they paid their respects to their uncle, Yasuyuki, Sanchio, and Keiko expressed gratitude for the opportunity to connect with their roots. Their gestures of reverence and love reminded us that family bonds transcend time and distance.



(The day when relatives told Samuel about the approval of his petition.)

That evening, we share to the family the good news received in the morning about the approval of Uncle Samuel on his petition as Japanese national. As part of celebration, we have decided to immersed our Japanese relatives in the vibrant tapestry of Filipino culture by joining a traditional 'sayawan' (a festive community dance event, showcased the joy and camaraderie of Filipino gatherings) during the barrio's awarding celebration. Under the glow of string lights and amidst the lively beat of music, our relatives experienced the essence of Filipino life. The laughter, the clapping, and the warm smiles of the barrio folk made Yasuyuki, Sanchio, and Keiko feel not just like guests but part of the community.

The visit also deepened our mutual understanding of our shared heritage. While the stories of the past carry pain, they also highlight resilience and unity. Our relatives shared tales of Kamitaro's life in Japan, and we recounted how his legacy continues to inspire our family in the Philippines.

On the second day, November 16, we took them to Minanga, more than a pilgrimage - it was a celebration of the enduring power of family to bridge continents and generations. We visited the grave of our

grandmother, Clementina, Kamitaro's devoted wife. This solemn moment was an opportunity to honor her legacy and the love she shared with Kamitaro. Together, we explored some of the scenic beauty of Coron, creating new memories to cherish.



As our Japanese relatives departed, we felt a mix of joy and longing. Their visit reminded us of the importance of keeping family connections alive, regardless of borders or time. Through this reunion, we not only honored the memory of our grandfather but also strengthened the ties that bind our two families.

In our hearts, this gathering was more than a reunion; it was a celebration of life, love, and the enduring power of family. We look forward to the day we can reunite again, whether in the Philippines or in Japan, as one family united by shared history and boundless affection. *(Michiko Ormido Schmidt, 3rd generation of Noboru Akaiji, elder brother of Samuel)*



"I'm so glad that my relatives came for the purpose of seeing me. And they informed me that my Japanese nationality had been recognized. I've never been this happy before." - Samuel



"I'm so delighted at my cousin Samuel's restoring of Japanese nationality. Thanks to everyone who supported us, including lawyers and Japanese government. Please keep going so that as many salvations as possible come true for the Okinawan 2nd-gen war orphans in the Philippines."

(Y. Kamura cousin of Samuel)

MOVIE SHOWING: ABANDONED



On December 7th, 2024, the Filipino-Japanese Descendants Association (FJDA) in Toronto, Canada held a film screening of “Abandoned: The Stories of Japanese War Orphans in The Philippines and China.” The first ever Canadian screening was attended by 90 people (Canadian, Japanese Canadian, Japanese Filipino, university students and professors) and was the first time people in Canada were able to learn about this ongoing struggle for recognition. In the diaspora, Nikkeijin around the world are only now learning about our story as Philippine Nikkeijin.

We would like to thank President Ines Yamanouchi P. Mallari (PNJK Rengokai), Stephen Buñi (Manila Central Luzon Nippi Association), Leah Takara (Panay Nippi Kai Inc) and Attorney Hiroyuki Kawai for their kind messages to us here in Canada!

After watching the movie, many people wish to hear updates about what the Japanese government is currently doing to support Nikkeijin. In 1988, Nikkeijin here in Canada had received “redress” in the form of compensation and an official apology by the Canadian government for their unjust internment during the war. Many attendees are shocked that even though Japanese Canadians received redress, Philippine Nikkeijin have yet to receive their justice.

One Japanese man said they found “Theory of War damage acceptance” (戦争被害受忍論) appalling, as the theory suggests that those who suffered during wartime have no legal right to redress and must accept this as a reality of war. However, the Japanese government **must** resolve this issue for Philippine Nikkeijin as it is now not only a state issue but an issue of statelessness under international law.

Many of you know it is a very difficult and exhausting process to gain recognition, especially for Category C. My own *lola* “Basilia Cura” passed away when I was a child, and she was unable to uncover her father’s identity. As her grandson, it is my duty as a Yonsei (fourth generation) to search for him so that my grandmother can finally be at peace. I continue to pray and support the *lolos* and *lolas* in our shared struggle for recognition. And for those who have already become Japanese citizens, let us not forget the hard work of our PNLSC family – for interviewing and assisting us in gathering our documents – as well as our local Nikkeijin chapters that continue to support us in our journey from the Philippines to Japan.

As we begin 2025, we must ask ourselves: why does this issue **STILL** remain unresolved almost 80 years after the end of the war? Our association here in North America will continue to promote our story and search for more Philippine Nikkeijin in 2025, so that the Japanese government may take notice of our global efforts. We also plan to share this film again across Canada, so that we can help bring attention to this issue before it is too late.

Happy New Year!



Jun Cura-Bongolan

President of the Filipino-Japanese Descendants Association

*FJDA was established in Canada in 2024 and they currently have about 30 members. If you know anyone in Canada who would like to join, please message us on our FB page!



(SCAN to visit FB page.)

MOVIE SHOWING: ABANDONED



The Panay Nippi Kai, Inc. (PNKI) and selected partners proposed the public screening of “Nihonjin no Wasuremono” or “What the Japanese Forgot: Japanese Nationals Left Behind in the Philippines and China” (aka “Abandoned”) to expand and enhance the understanding of the nikkei-jin phenomenon among audiences beyond of the metropolitan areas of the country. The dissemination of information on their experiences, status, and conditions raises awareness of the neglect, scorn, and discrimination they have long endured and facilitates their

inclusion into Japanese or Filipino registries and socio-economic life. The screening was held on Oct. 20, 2024 at the UPV Cinematheque, Iloilo City Campus of the University of the Philippines Visayas.

Following the opening prayer and welcome remarks by Ma Leah Takara M. De la Cruz, President, Panay Nippi Kai, Inc. (PNKI), messages from the event partners were read. The documentary screening was approximately 98 minutes, followed by reactions and local testimonies by the nikkei-jin and other guests. Ms. Shirley T. Porras, PNKI Vice-President, and PNLSC Iloilo Chapter Project Administrator made the closing remarks and acknowledgments. The afternoon’s event was hosted by Dr. Ma. Luisa (Meloy) E. Mabunay, retired UPV Professor and PNKI Adviser.

This documentary, produced in 2020 by Atty. Hiroyuki Kawai in collaboration with the Philippine Nikkeijin Local Support Center (PNLSC), is a fitting introduction to the nikkei-jin issue in the Philippines as an aspect of postwar Japanese government policy on the forgotten or the abandoned. This screening also introduces the investigative and support activities of the PNLSC for verification of Japanese nationality and nikkei-jin status to the general public in this part of the country.

As the film producer and a prominent human rights lawyer, the message of Atty. Hiroyuki Kawai from Tokyo highlighted that the war that Japan waged destroyed peaceful and prosperous Japanese immigrant communities and tore families apart. Moreover, the Japanese government holds responsibility for resolving the nationality issues of Japanese left behind in the Philippines.

Dr. Michiyo Yoneno-Reyes, Vice Director of the Center for Global Studies, School of International Relations, University of Shizuoka, promised support for the screening rights requirement. Her message drew attention to an Iloilo-born Okinawan who returned to Japan at the end of the war.

The long-established research on the Philippine nikkei-jin by Dr. Shun Ohno, academic, journalist, and social advocate, has included several families from Panay. As a participant in the documentary and a board member of the PNLSC, he generously shared information on recent actions and developments on the Japanese and Philippine sides of the efforts to help improve the status of the nikkei-jin.

Director Tsutomu "Ben" Suzuki of The Japan Foundation, Manila accommodated support of funding request for the screening. *(Ma. Luisa Mabunay, PNKI Adviser)*

Juliana Shiraishi



All of us children of Juliana Shiraishi thank God for giving us the PNLSC for assisting in our mother’s petition and it has been approved. We will never forget what you did to help our family. Thank you that we have been granted the long-awaited good result. We thank our mother Juliana Shiraishi that she became our mother as well as our grandfather Shozo Shiraishi. Thank you very much.

- Limon Elisa Vergara, 3rd gen



Benita Shiraishi

We are overwhelmed and thankful to all the people who helped us for processing our mother Benita Shiraishi’s documents. As her daughter I'm grateful that we could finally go and see the beauty of our ancestors country. My family is very excited to see and come to Japan to finally have decent work to earn money to support their family. - Rhonda Shiraishi Aque, 3rd generation

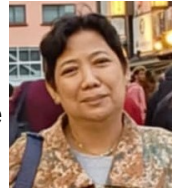


APPROVED SHUSEKI MESSAGE

Maria Corazon Nagai



Mabuhay to everyone. We are still very grateful and happy to have received the good news of my mother, Maria Corazon, being approved. This would never be possible without PNLSC's kindness and understanding to help us pursue this matter. Believe me, when we saw a Japanese, we were happy to talk to them and we didn't feel any different. It will always run with the blood. Now that the time has come true. We are very happy. And what makes her most happy is regaining her dignity and confidence as a child of Japanese after seeing her father's picture.



Really, dreams do come true. It is a very different feeling to realize who you are, and having all of the questions from a long time ago answered. Especially the Lord, in his time, gave the blessing to her as a reward for all her goodness and sacrifice. Thank you, PNLSC! - *Ruth Gomez, 3rd gen*

Samuel Kamura

I am grateful and very happy that my Japanese nationality has been approved. Thank you to all the people who helped me, thank you very much to the Japanese Government for giving me the opportunity. I just wish that my children and grandchildren of that our dream of working in Japan will come true, thank you very much.



Arigato gozaimasu.

Purificacion Idemoto



I was very happy when I received a message from miss sylvia of CNJK that my Shuseki petition was already approved. Before I always tell myself that even though I don't have document proving myself to be a descendant of Japanese, but in my heart, I am a child of Japanese and I am always proud to be a Japanese descendant. Now my dream becomes a reality. I would like to thank Atty Hayashida from handling my case, to Yoko Tajika, Mr Norihiro Inomata, Ms Estrella Siega and Ms Sylvia Apuado of CNJK. Thank you very much. I will never forget all of you.

APPROVED UPGRADING MESSAGE

Benito Miyasako

We have been waiting for this day - to have our family registration be ungraded. Its upgrading is indeed a welcome opportunity and privilege as well as it means that the Japanese Government now fully recognizes us and boosts our pride as Japanese descendants. Hence, from the bottom our hearts, we express our gratitude and utmost appreciation for your relentless efforts and noble deeds of



kindness to make our dream a reality. You just don't know how happy and grateful we are as some members of the family who were not given the privilege to come to Japan before will now have the chance and enjoy the benefits of what it takes to be bonafide Nikeijin. Honto ni DOMO ARIGATO GOZAIMASHITA! May God bless you all. - *Cresilda Gaspar Miyasako-Flores , 3rd gen*



Marina Miyasako



In behalf of our late grandparent, the Miyasako family originated from Hiroshima under the name of my mother Marina Miyasako, we would like to thank God for granting upgrading of Kosekitohon into our second-generation last November 27, 2024. Especially through the help of PNLSC Manila & Japan. Thank you very much for wholeheartedly support for this to put into success. I hope that you continue to help those people like us who is in need. May God Bless us All. - *Pilar Jasmin Sanday Tanque, 3rd gen*



<—continuation

CHAPTERS REPORT



The war has long ended, but these 2nd generation descendants, whose fathers were of Japanese nationality still continue to appeal for the Japanese government to recognize them. On November 23, two Nisei's appeal for recognition of Japanese nationality.



Carmen Teruya, whose father was repatriated in Okinawa Japan after the World War 2. It is now the fervent hope of Carmen Teruya that she must be given her legal identity as a child of Kashin Teruya. Being of advanced age, she prays that even for a short time of her life, she can feel and be proud of being a Japanese descendant as she is the only child of Kashin Teruya and Catalina Cael.

The second is Angelita Oshiro, who was born on January 15, 1939 in Davao City. To date, Angelita has limited information about her father Shyein Oshiro and she does not know if this is the correct spelling of his name. But she is definitely sure that he is Oshiro from Okinawa. She says that she is now in her sunset years, and she earnestly wishes the Japanese government will grant her hope to be recognized as the child of Shyein Oshiro and Bernardina Hilamon.



The visit of Director Norihiro Inomata together with Ms. Yuko Kinjo and Mr. Taro Arai from Okinawa QAB Ryukyu Asahi Broadcasting is expected to be of great help to these 2 nisei's in providing Japanese people and its government the information on their situation and their hopes to be recognized as a Japanese national. *(Helen Tiu Escovilla)*



Cotabato

Iloilo

Cebu

Manila



Leonora Uehara's interview

On November 21, Consul General in Davao Yoshihisa Ishikawa, accompanied by PNLSC Norihiro Inomata, personally visited Leonora Uehara, 2nd generation, in her home in Maguindanao, with the assistance of Ms Estrellita Diaz, PA Cotabato chapter. This case has been one of the oldest cases that PNLSC have. It was once denied by family court and now, PNLSC is still continuing to think of better approach of this case. *"As long as I live, I will never give up looking for my relatives in Okinawa, Japan."* said by Leonora.

Then, on November 26, Mr. Inomata, Ms. Leah Takara and Ms. Shirley Porras together with Consul General in Cebu, Toshio Yadomi went to Shibalom Antique to visit and interview the Inayama siblings namely Angela and Maria. And on November 27, had an online interview with Rafaelita Mizuno who is currently in US. They were very happy to meet the Consuls and very thankful for the effort and time given to them.



Rogelia Yano's online interview

Lastly, on December 18, Mr Inomata with staff and 3 student volunteers travelled to visit the residence of Rogelia Yano, a member of Iloilo chapter now living in Batangas. There they setup an online interview with Consul General Takahiro Hanada and Shinobu Kurihara, Iloilo chapter PA Shirley Porras also joined the interview. Rogelia was in a good mood and able to answer the questions given. She always says that she wanted to go to Japan someday to meet her many relatives in Japan.

This interview with the Consul General is just one way of showing support and assistance of the Japanese government to the second generation here in the Philippines.

Life Story of Nikkeijin in Japan



My Japanese grandfather is Chojiro Denda, who came to the Philippines in 1930s and had studied in Manila. He was a member of Japanese soldier during the War. My father, Antonio Denda, is a 2nd generation Japanese descendant, he was born in 1944. After the War, my grandfather was repatriated to Japan with my grandmother and my father.

My father had grown up in Japan until 12 years old, and went back to the Philippines with his grandmother, after that, there are no contact from the grandfather. In 1990s, my father went to Japan again with tourist visa and tried to locate his father. He went to his father's hometown in Nagano to visit Nagano city hall and told his personal story to the staff. He could get his father's information and know his father had passed away already.

I started to live here in Japan in year 2010 holding a long-term residence visa. I resided and worked in Nakaminato, Ibaraki with my father and brothers but sadly, I experienced and witnessed the tsunami that struck Japan last 2011 so I decided to go back in the Philippines for a while. I came back here in year 2012, after 6 years, my husband decided to go here with me after he retire early from his work in the Philippines.

My father really wanted to be a Japanese citizen. Also, I and my brothers want to bring our children here with us, they are 4th generation Japanese descendants and already over 18 years old when we applied for a certificate of eligibility for them so it was being denied.

I was eager to achieve my desire for my children to live, work and gain knowledge about Japanese culture as we have Japanese ancestry that's why I'm constantly browsing and searching in the internet until I reached PNLSC and found out that they are searching of war displaced Japanese descendants that left behind in the Philippines, and they can file a petition to obtain recognition as Japanese citizen thru Shuseki petition and my father is one of them because he was born during the war.

In January of 2024, we started communication with PNLSC regarding Shuseki petition of my father and we then prepared all the necessary documents and evidences for the procedure.

With the continuous help of PNLSC and attorneys, my father's petition was submitted to the family court last May 2024 and finally, it was approved after 4 months.

Now, me and my brother are currently preparing for our children's certificate of eligibility (COE) application and looking forward to live happily with our entire family here in Japan.

Me and my husband, as well as my parents, Antonio and Linda, my children (Domiehl and Laicah), brothers (Kenneth and Allan), sister-in-law (Marilou), nieces (Diane and Nicole) and nephew (Jiro) are all grateful to Attorney Kin, PNLSC's head Mr. Inomata and staffs for continuously helping us to achieved all of this.

I am Leila Denda Dimailig, a 3rd generation Japanese descendant.



Our family.
Taken last year's Christmas eve.



Taken last 2022,
double birthday celebration of nanay
Linda and tatay Antonio.



Nikkeijin Members and Donors

[October 1 to December 23, 2024]

RENEWAL

Antenor Unn Daido	Armando Tada Berot
Rudy L. Vallentos	Francisca Mendez Paciben
Ceferino Dongel Pagua	Lydia Yawaka Ligid
Delia Muto	

NEW MEMBER

Exequiel Escultura
 Maria Candel Darunday
 Kurt Ethan Yagi-Vicencio
 Khloe Michiko Yagi-Vicencio Sun
 Kari Aleksei Yagi-Vicencio Sun
 Teresita Nitta Escultura
 Edgard Vallentos

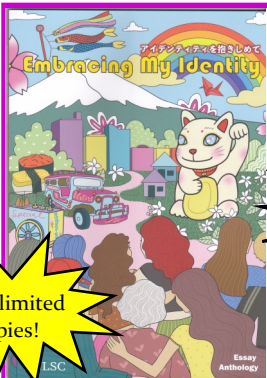
REGULAR MEMBER

Preciliano Ruiz Jr.

DONOR

Rudy L. Vallentos
 Pretzel Yagi family

Introducing...



Embracing My Identity BOOK

NOT FOR SALE!

The printed **limited** booklet copy of the winners' essays are now available!

Only limited copies!

This is the result of the first ever *Essay Writing Contest* that PNLSC conducted in commemoration of their 20th anniversary working for the Philippine Nikkeijin. This is a bilingual book where you can find the original essay and its translation.

We hope that this book enlightens many people in both countries to understand the history and current situation of Philippine Nikkeijin as well as offer suggestions for mutual understanding of both people.

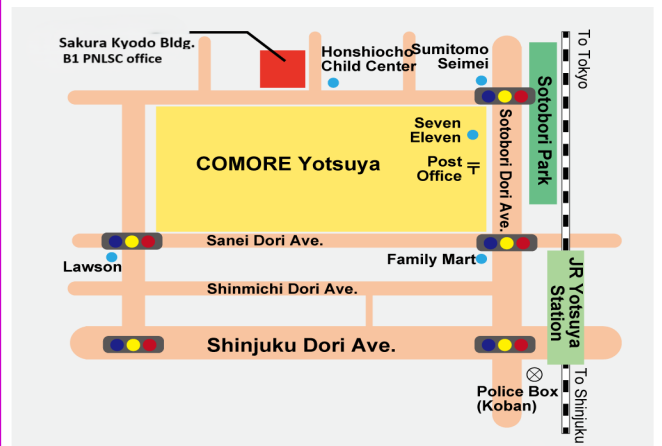
For those who still want to get a copy, please contact us!

Just pay for delivery fee.

And we also welcome your *donation*.

LIPAT OFFICE

New Year! New Office Address!



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(5 minutes from Yotsuya station.)

For visitors, please make sure to make an appointment or at least inform us in advance before coming to office. Thank you!

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