



# JASH Newsflash

A Summary of Recent Events of the Japan-America Society of Hawaii

Summer 2021

## The Role of the U.S. & Japan in the China-Taiwan Relationship

The Japan-America Society of Hawaii (JASH) was honored to host a Zoom webinar panel discussion on “The Role of the U.S. and Japan in the China-Taiwan Relationship.” Broadcast on June 3, 2021 via Zoom, our esteemed panelists were Major General (Ret.) Suzanne Vares-Lum (Owner, Vares-Lum Indo-Pacific Consulting, LLC) and Dr. John Hemmings (Associate Professor, Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies), with a special welcome by the Director of APCSS, Rear Admiral (Ret.) Peter Gumataotao. Our guest moderator was JASH Director Ms. Barbara Tanabe (Owner, Ho’akea Communications, LLC).

Dr. Hemmings led the discussion with his presentation on the history and current status of the relationships between the U.S., Japan, China, and Taiwan. While the U.S.-Japan alliance has remained strong and



L-R: JASH Director Barbara Tanabe; (Ret.) Suzanne Vares-Lum; and Dr. John Hemmings

continues to grow over the years, the increasing friction between China and Taiwan have leaders concerned over the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait.

Major General Vares-Lum spoke on the history, present role, and vision of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), and shared about

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## President’s Message

Late Spring and early Summer 2021—it’s been a little over a year since the COVID-19 pandemic began. We at JASH forged ahead with creative pivoting in our educational programming, as you will see in the articles about Japan Day and the APCC program, as well as quality member programs such as the webinar we produced on the issues between China and Taiwan.

Thank goodness for Zoom, as I cannot imagine what we would have done these last 15 months without it! Even when we get past this pandemic, and are able to gather again, one positive outcome from this experience is that we all learned to make use of technology to connect and make experiences happen, and we can continue to use technology to broaden our reach and our horizons.

As we continue our battle with COVID-19 and its variants, let’s all do our part to get to the other side of this hurdle. Our students are eagerly awaiting travel and exchange opportunities with Japan, and I know all of you, our members, cannot wait to travel to Japan and to welcome family, friends and business associates to Hawaii! I look forward to seeing you in person again.

With Aloha,  
Reyna

## Virtual Luncheon



This year marked the 20th anniversary of the sinking of the Uwajima Fisheries High School training ship Ehime Maru off the coast of Honolulu on February 9, 2001. Nine lives, including four students, two teachers, and three crew members were lost in that tragic accident.

The Ehime Maru Memorial Association (EMMA), of which JASH serves as Administrator, was established in November 2001 with the purpose of overseeing the development and maintenance of a memorial at Kaka’ako Waterfront Park. The memorial

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## Japan Day—JASH’s Longest Running Educational Program



Screenshot of Mr. Hideaki Oshima demonstrating the use of a soroban (abacus).

Japan Day is JASH’s longest running educational program which is offered free to Hawaii’s middle and high schools. Since its inception in 1993, over 7,200 students from 65 different public and private schools have participated in this educational event.

With the inability to hold in-person programs due to the COVID-19 pandemic this past school year, JASH transformed the conventional in-person Japan Day program into a virtual offering. In this way, students could experience Japanese culture and art remotely from their homes or classrooms despite current social distancing restrictions

due to the pandemic. In addition to two video segments on Karate and Manga that we produced last year, we invited two more volunteer-instructors to lead workshops on Peace Studies/Sadako Sasaki Story and Soroban (Japanese abacus).

The links for the four video segments were shared with the schools invited to participate in the Japan Day program. Generous funding from the McInerney Foundation enabled JASH to produce high-quality videos of select Japanese cultural activities and expand the Japan Day program to include more schools, thereby impacting more students. Additional funding from the Freeman Foundation allowed more neighbor island schools to participate virtually as well.

Through virtual Japan Day, students are encouraged to follow the video lessons and get hands-on experience in Japanese arts and culture by participating in the activities while they watch. Japan Day also illustrates how

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## Japan Day

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art and culture in different societies can influence and enhance people’s lives, and how these cultural values are perpetuated by devotees of the arts.

JASH held its Spring 2021 Japan Day program during the months of April through May. Approximately 270 students from Hilo High School, Kailua High School, Lanai High School, Maui Hui Malama, Moanalua High School, Molokai High School, Nanakuli High School, and Washington Middle School participated in the virtual Japan Day program Spring 2021.

A student from Hilo High School commented in the post-program survey, “I thought it was all very interesting and taught me a lot of new stuff. I also like how all the lessons had interactive parts so you could try and make cranes and do katas and be that more in with the culture.” Another student also wrote,



Screenshot of Ms. Naomi Hirano-Omizo telling the story of Sadako Sasaki and world peace.

“(Japan Day) really opened my eyes to the similarities and differences Western and Japanese culture share and how they are connected in Hawaii specifically.”

Mahalo to McInerney Foundation and the Freeman Foundation for providing funding to host this fun and culturally-rich educational program.

## EMMA Appreciation Luncheon



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was established on February 9, 2002. Since that time, a cadre of loyal volunteers have helped to maintain the memorial every week.

On Tuesday, March 30, 2021, EMMA hosted a special luncheon via Zoom to celebrate the efforts of our dedicated volunteers from local Japanese American community groups. These volunteers have continually donated hours of service to clean and maintain the memorial over the years.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings, the February 2021 memorial ceremony was cancelled and a private wreath laying ceremony was conducted and videotaped in its place. The ceremony is typically attended by many of our volunteers, family members of victims, along with several VIP visitors from Japan. During the virtual luncheon, the video

of the ceremony was presented while attendees partook in special bento from Natsunoya Tea House that were made available for drive-through pick-up earlier that morning.

EMMA President, Reyna Kaneko, expressed sincere gratitude to the volunteers who have cleaned the Ehime Maru Memorial each Saturday of the year since its unveiling. One of the volunteers commented that she enjoys meeting Japanese visitors who come to the memorial to pay their respects while her group cleans the memorial.

Mr. Ken Saiki, EMMA Director, who coordinates the volunteer groups for weekly maintenance and cleaning, also thanked and encouraged them to continue nurturing the relationship with Ehime Prefecture and Uwajima City through their activities.

EMMA would like to thank all the volunteers again who continue to support and care for the memorial and in turn, the bereaved families. A huge Mahalo to Minamoto Kitchoan and Lotus Spirits for donating favors for our volunteers. JASH, as the administrator of the Ehime Maru Memorial Association, works to preserve the memory of the lives lost in this tragic accident and to maintain the memorial in perpetuity.

## Role of U.S. and Japan

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the individual and joint operations of USINDOPACOM and the Japan Self-Defense Forces. Although the relationship between the U.S. and Japan is healthy and stable, Maj. Gen. Vares-Lum hopes to continue seeing increased cooperation throughout the entire Indo-Pacific region.

Maj. Gen. Vares-Lum and Dr. Hemmings concluded the program by fielding a variety of thoughtful questions from our moderator, Ms. Tanabe, as well as from program attendees. From cyber warfare to expansion into space, our panelists shared their research, experiences, and insights on various hot topics in global security.

Thank you to our esteemed panelists and moderator for hosting this highly informative and educational webinar.

## NexGen Pau Hana



L-R: Delle Tanioka; Ryan Layman, Michelle Hirose, Steve Sombrero, Reyna Kaneko, Monchalee Ota, Rich Kiyabu, Jessica Ogasawara, and Mika Morigawara

Social-distancing restrictions put in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic kept interactions with so many groups like the NexGen to a virtual-level. After over a year of meeting through Zoom, the NexGen Advisory Committee finally was able to meet in person on May 25, 2021 at Aloha Beer Company in Kakaako.

Seven members of the committee along with JASH President Reyna Kaneko and JASH Chair Steve Sombrero got together to begin planning for the NexGen’s next major event, the Second Annual JASH Natsumatsuri on July 29, 2021.

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2021 APCC Delegates Prepare for Virtual Summer Camp



The Asian-Pacific Children's Convention in FUKUOKA

Since their selection at the beginning of this year, our 2021 Asian-Pacific Children's Convention (APCC) Junior Ambassadors (JAs) have been busily preparing for their Virtual BRIDGE Summer Camp.

The virtual summer camp will be a series of international Zoom workshops which will run from August through October 2021. Although they will not be travelling to Fukuoka this summer due to the pandemic, our JAs have had their hands full learning about Japanese culture, daily life, and language, and also researching the cultures of other participating regions throughout Asia and the Pacific.

April's workshop held via Zoom featured the curriculum from our Japan-in-a-Suitcase educational program, introducing the JAs to the daily life of Japanese elementary school students. They were surprised to learn that many students their age commute to and from school without an adult.

In May, our monthly workshop returned to the JASH office! We were joined by Lynn

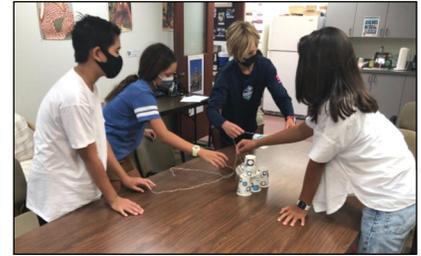


From L-R: Takako Miyazawa, Chaperone Sandy Takeda, JAs: Jackie Furuta, Willa Stack, Loch Moorman, and Rhegen Villarimo, Lynn Lethin-sensei, and Christianne Ono

Lethin-sensei, who has taught students of diverse backgrounds at schools such as Hawaii Tokai University, the University of Hawaii Outreach College, and most recently, Island Pacific Academy.

The JAs learned how to do jikoshoukai to introduce themselves and talk about their likes and dislikes through a fun, interactive lesson. Mahalo to Lynn-sensei for the special lesson!

For June's workshop, our JAs learned about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); thought critically about sustainability in the three major spheres of the environment, society, and the economy; and applied these new concepts to their observations of life in Hawaii. To relax, the



JAs and program chaperones played a variety of team-building games!

To round out their dive into the SDGs, in July, the JAs and chaperones will travel to the 'Akahiao Nature Institute to spend a weekend at Hue Hue Ranch in Kona. There, the JAs will have hands-on experiences learning about sustainability as it relates to our environment here in Hawaii. We're very excited for this long-awaited off-island excursion!

If you know a young leader born between August 1, 2010 and July 31, 2011, they could be in our next group of Junior Ambassadors! Join our APCC listserv to be the first to know about future programs.

For more information, contact Program Coordinator Christianne Ono at [cono@jashawaii.org](mailto:cono@jashawaii.org).

NexGen Pau Hana Event



Leaders of tomorrow, bridging the U.S. and Japan relations.

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The inaugural Natsumatsuri "Summer Festival" was launched in 2020 as a social and fundraising event that called on JASH's next generation of leaders to plan, organize, and execute an initiative that perpetuates Japanese culture in Hawaii. The 2021 Natsumatsuri features a hybrid program, with guests attending both the in-person livestream and virtually via Zoom.

Shout out to Natsumatsuri Co-Chairs Monchalee Ota and Michelle Hirose for leading this year's Natsumatsuri team! Mahalo to Mr. Steve Sombrero, JASH Board

Chair, for graciously hosting this gathering at Aloha Beer Company.

If you are interested in being a part of the JASH NexGen and getting involved in perpetuating Japanese culture, having fun, building your leadership skills, and meeting new people, please contact Lila at [lfrisbie@jashawaii.org](mailto:lfrisbie@jashawaii.org) for more information.

JASH Newsflash

JASH was founded in 1976 to promote understanding and friendship between the people of Japan and the United States through the special and unique perspective of Hawaii.

The JASH Newsflash newsletter is published quarterly. Visit our website at [www.jashawaii.org](http://www.jashawaii.org) for more information.

JASH 5:01 Reconnected

On Wednesday, June 2, 2021, JASH piloted the year's first 5:01 Reconnected Pau Hana program exclusively for our JASH Board Directors. For the first time in over a year, our Directors safely gathered in-person at the Aloha Beer Company. As all meetings had been held virtually since last year, "Reconnect" is truly what everyone did, laughing, talking-story, and expressing how wonderful it was to see familiar faces outside of Zoom.

Mr. Steve Sombrero, JASH Board Chair and owner of Aloha Beer, graciously opened the venue to host this event. He shared with attendees his journey through the pandemic as a business owner and his future plans to expand.

Thank you, Mr. Sombrero and all of the Directors who attended! Stay tuned for the next 5:01!