

## Naito Family comes to Japan to visit roots

Stephanie Naito, a member of the Reedley Buddhist Church (California, U.S.A.), together with a total of 34 family relatives and friends spanning over 4 generations came to Japan on a Naito Family tour. On July 19 and 20, they visited Hongwanji and Otani Hombyo (mausoleum) donning their Naito Family t-shirts. (photo)

Today, there are 126 family members, including great-great-grandchildren of the deceased Shigeo Naito, the pioneer of the Naito Family in the U.S. Each year, members of the Naito family gather from throughout the U.S. for a family reunion.

This year, the family reunion was a Japan tour in conjunction to a world exhibit called

the *Art of Gaman*, which was recently on display at the Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum. Among the various artifacts made by internees during WWII were some of the wooden carvings made by Shigeo Naito who used scrap pieces of wood found in the camp. This Japan trip was the first of its kind for the Naito Family as they spent time visiting with their counterparts in Japan and learning of the Naito roots.

Coming to Japan again after 70 years, Setsuko (85), Shigeo's third daughter shared, "I am so grateful to have been able to visit Hongwanji and see my father's collection on display."

Prior to the war, Shigeo immigrated to California and operated a farm. However, in 1941 at the start of WWII, he was sent to an internment camp in Arizona. After being released at the end of the war, Shigeo once again re-opened his farm until he passed away in 1972 at the age of 83. His granddaughter Stephanie comments, "Grandpa did not talk much about the war. I wanted to learn more about his thoughts through his artwork. Coming to Japan was a new experience for many of the relatives."

The exhibit is on until September 1st, with 100 pieces on display depicting the harsh living conditions of the time.



A group from the Monterey Peninsula Buddhist Church, led by resident minister Rev. Dennis Shinseki, visited the Hongwanji on June 18, 2013. Three members from the group also took part in the Confirmation Ceremony and received their Dharma name.

"I began studying Buddhism 30 years ago, and last year decided to take part in the confirmation ceremony as a way of expressing my faith. Being able to take part in the ceremony at Hongwanji is a big effect on my life. I plan to live each day consciously." shares Stuart Crymes (66).



Members of Ume Taiko from Placer Buddhist Church (California, U.S.A.) performed for the Hongwanji Chuo Kindergarten (Kyoto) on June 26, 2013. A charity performance was also held in Nara with proceeds going toward the Hongwanji Relief Fund drive in assisting support programs following the East Japan Great Earthquake.

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