

# **Obon Dancers Needed for Stanford Film About Umenoki Senior Home – Ei Ja Nai Ka Performed by PJ and Roy Hirabayashi of San Jose Taiko – Thurs July 8th – 5-8 PM**

Dear Friends,

We are looking for volunteers to join a fun group to dance “Ei Ja Nai Ka” for the closing scene of a documentary about the Umenoki Senior Home. PJ and Roy Hirabayashi and Irene Matsumoto, formerly of San Jose Taiko, will be performing.

PJ’s [Ei Ja Nai Ka is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary](#) this year. It is especially symbolic for this film which focuses on unique aspects of Japanese American culturally-adapted senior care. The goal of the scene is to show how our ancestors are celebrated at Obon with taiko music elucidating happy memories for seniors and everyone as they dance.

Our goal is to have a large group for the film. You do not have to be a good dancer because they will pan back to film the large group and focus close ups on the good dancers. Filming is scheduled for Thursday, July 8th from 5-8 PM outdoors in front of the Southern Alameda County Buddhist Church in Union City. They would like all the dancers to wear happi coats or yukata to pretend that we are dancing at Obon. If you need help putting on a yukata, please contact me because Karen Suyama has kindly offered to help us dress. Stanford will need everyone to sign a video release form so that they can use our images in their film. For a refresher, here’s a link to an [Ei Ja Nai Ka instructional video](#). <https://fb.watch/6kwEZsIDpJ/>

Please feel free to send this invitation to anyone who is willing to dance in the film, even if they don't know the dance very well! Please let me know if you can join us so that the Stanford film team can order dinner for you. For more information, please contact me at [naoko.fujii@gmail.com](mailto:naoko.fujii@gmail.com) or 650-485-1560.

We are looking forward to a fun evening on July 8<sup>th</sup>. Hope to see you soon.

*Naoko*

Umenoki Gardens Senior Home Volunteer and daughter of Umenoki residents Moss and Ann Fujii

Here’s Background on the Film Project:

Dr. Bryant Lin, a co-founder of the [Stanford Center for Asian Health Research and Education](#), has a grant to make a documentary on Asian health issues. He would like to feature the [Umenoki Gardens Senior Home](#) as an example of culturally adapted end of life care that enhances the quality of life for Japanese seniors. The film is planned for up to an hour of footage and will tell the story of several of the Umenoki Resident families, with interviews of Rev Miyaji and the Umenoki staff.

After interviewing several seniors, happy memories of taiko and Obon emerged as a common theme. The goal of this taiko/dance scene is to end the film on a happy note with the symbolism of celebrating our ancestors. Plan A was to film the senior home residents watching the SACBC Obon dancing, however, Obon dancing is cancelled this year so we are creating a happy Obon-like scene.

Both my parents were cared for by the kind staff at Umenoki Senior Home until they passed away. My mother was born in Japan so when her Parkinson's disease with dementia progressed, she would only eat Japanese food and sometimes forget English. Umenoki provided Japanese food, language and celebrated the Japanese and American holidays that brought joy to her final years. In gratitude for the care my parents and family received, I have been volunteering at Umenoki Senior since 2007.