



LITTLE TOKYO

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A COMMUNITY BENEFIT PROGRAM OF THE LITTLE TOKYO BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Oshogatsu Welcomes Year of the Snake

Thousands arrived in Little Tokyo on January 1 to usher in the New Year with taiko drums and ceremonial breaking of the sake barrel. The annual celebration was presented by the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California and Japanese Chamber of Commerce Foundation at two locations on Wednesday, Jan. 1, at Weller Court and Japanese Village Plaza.

The Year of the Snake was welcomed with traditional Japanese food, entertainment, children's cultural activities, a sake fest, a kimono fashion show, and more.

The event is presented with the support of the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles, Nisei Week and other community organizations.



Drummers from the Taiko Center.

Little Tokyo Business Association General Meeting

Wednesday, February 19, 2025
250 E. 1st Street, 2nd floor, Room 201
11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Join us in person or with this Zoom [link](#).

RSVP by 2/11 to add items to Agenda

Call (213) 880-6875 or email board@visittokyo.org for information about the new, property-based Little Tokyo Business Improvement District (BID), which in 2026 is scheduled to replace the current merchant-based BID. [Click here](#) for a copy of the Management Development Plan.

Year of the Snake: Don't

Worry. It's a Good Thing



Contrary to western perceptions of the snake as symbolizing wickedness and danger, proponents of Asian astrology view the Snake as guardians on a mission to restore harmony and balance. Those born in a Snake year are not content to simply be leaders, they are visionaries who aspire to change the world.

Those born in Snake years (2025, 2013, 2001, 1989, 1977, 1965, 1953, 1941, 1929) tend to be cautious, methodical, and introverted, preferring to have few friends. Beneath the surface, they are wise and sensitive. In emergencies, Snakes usually remain calm and dependable. On the other hand, Snakes are also impatient, which is one reason they prefer to work alone and not on a team.

Snakes are also ambitious and goal-oriented and can rise to the top of their fields. For instance, Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish, Kanye West, Paul Simon, and Bob Dylan are Snake-born stars who have had a significant impact on the music industry. Muhammad Ali became a sports icon, and Oprah Winfrey and Martha Stewart are household names.

Leaders such as the late President John F. Kennedy (1917), President of France Emmanuel Macron, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Kim Jong-Il of North Korea, and Xi Jinping, President of the Republic of China are examples of Snakes whose reach extends beyond their country's borders.

Little Tokyo Unveils Kouraku Marker

Hiroshi Yamauchi assumed ownership of the Kouraku Restaurant in 1986. His mission: Introduce Americans to the style of home cooking he learned growing up in Tokyo.

Yamauchi lived out his dream for the next 34 years until his passing in 2020. Today, Mamoru Tokuda is honoring Yamauchi's memory by continuing the culinary tradition begun by his predecessor while also adding contemporary

features such as a robotic server.

On Jan. 29, the City of Los Angeles recognized the eatery as the oldest continually operating ramen restaurant in America. City Councilmember Ysabel Jurado presided over the unveiling of a marker designating Kouraku's historical significance. It was her first monument dedication since taking office in mid-December.

Ramen, the noodle dish with dozens if not hundreds of variations, owes its local popularity to Kouraku, a Little Tokyo-based restaurant that opened in 1976.

Consul General of Japan

Kenko Sone asked those present to consider the challenges that Japanese restaurant owners must have faced in the 1960s, when Japanese food was not as popular in America as it is today. Sone commended current owner Mamoru Tokuda for continuing the business, upholding the traditions while also bringing something new.



President's Message

Let's Look at the Upcoming Events

I am proud to announce that the New Year brings new opportunities for our affiliated organizations--Little Tokyo Business Association and Little Tokyo Legacy Foundation--and our signature program, the Little Tokyo Business Improvement District. Here are other programs coming up this year:



U.S.-Japan Junior Soccer Exchange

For the first time, we are launching a program to send middle school soccer players to Japan this summer in association with Japan Football Academy.

Community Care Days

Our outreach program to provide food, clothing, mobile showers, medical, and dental services to the unhoused is entering its third year. Special thanks to the USC Keck School of Medicine and Ostrow School of Dentistry. Next events: Feb. 1, May 3, Aug. 9, and Nov. 1.

First Anniversary of Unveiling of Robert Vargas' Shohei Ohtani Mural - On March 27, we will be celebrating the first anniversary of the Ohtani with a presentation by State Assemblymember Mark Gonzales at the Don Tahara's Far Bar. Join us for cake and a toast.

Yamagata Cultural Event

In July, we will be welcoming a master chef, city officials, and maiko (dancers) and artisans from Yamagata, Japan to Little Tokyo's Eigikutei Restaurant and Japanese Village Plaza.

Annual Party for Unhoused Children

In September, we will host our sixth annual event, bringing together unhoused families from two Downtown shelters as well as from other parts of L.A. County. Volunteers are always welcome. Hello Kitty has been asked to return.

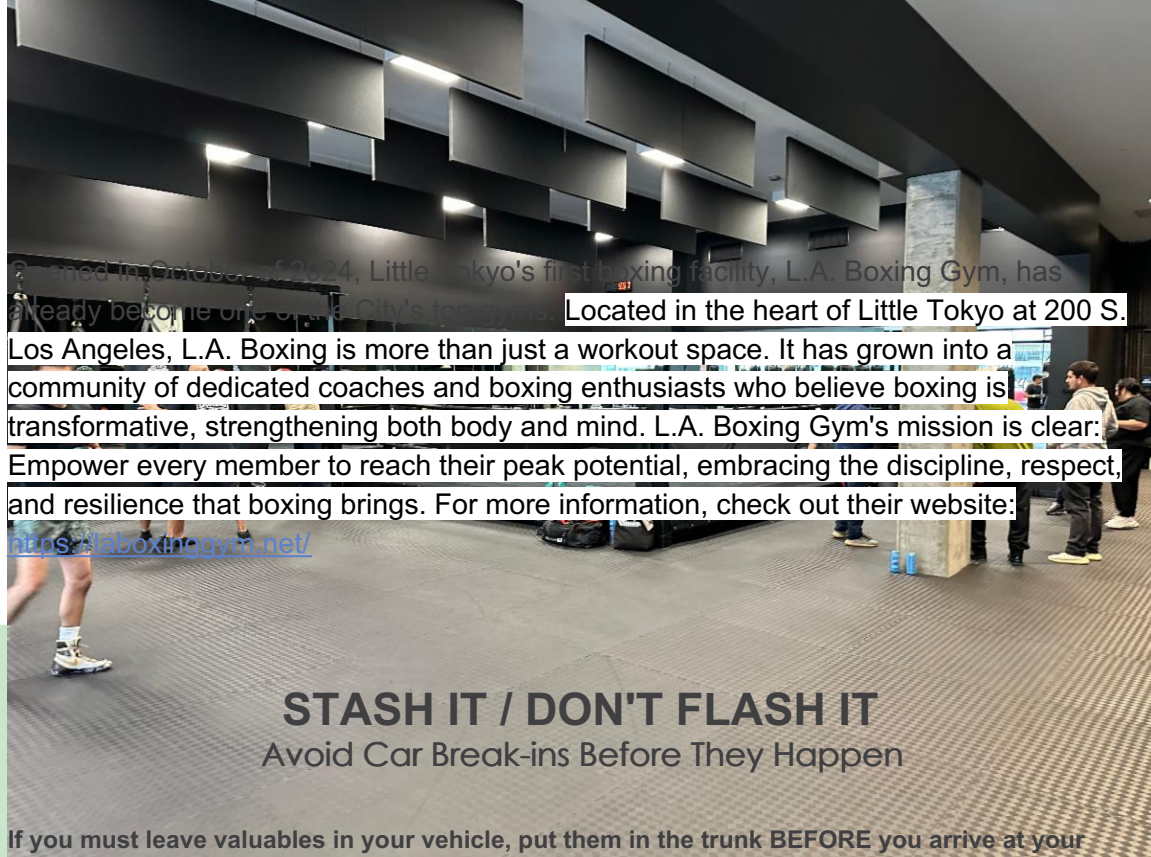
More to come...

Little Tokyo Fire Relief Collective Convened

Steering Committee of the Little Tokyo Fire Relief Collective, led by Kevin Onishi, Keiro Chief Operating Officer, has put together the following list of resources for those impacted by the wildfires:

- **LA County Household Relief Grant** – This grant may be a valuable resource for impacted community members. Please help spread the word to those who might qualify. Deadline to apply is March 12.
 - **Worker Relief Fund** – The County and City of Los Angeles and partners have launched the new LA Region Worker Relief Fund that helps workers impacted financially by the windstorm and wildfires by providing cash assistance grants of \$2,000. Deadline to apply is March 12 at 5 pm.
 - **Small Business Relief Fund** – The County and City of Los Angeles and partners have launched the new LA Region Small Business Relief Fund to provide cash assistance grants for small businesses and nonprofits impacted by the windstorm and wildfires. Deadline to apply is March 12 at 5 pm.
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Boxing Gym Opens in Little Tokyo



Opened in October 2024, Little Tokyo's first boxing facility, L.A. Boxing Gym, has already become one of the City's top gyms. Located in the heart of Little Tokyo at 200 S. Los Angeles, L.A. Boxing is more than just a workout space. It has grown into a community of dedicated coaches and boxing enthusiasts who believe boxing is transformative, strengthening both body and mind. L.A. Boxing Gym's mission is clear: Empower every member to reach their peak potential, embracing the discipline, respect, and resilience that boxing brings. For more information, check out their website: <https://laboxinggym.net/>

STASH IT / DON'T FLASH IT

Avoid Car Break-ins Before They Happen

If you must leave valuables in your vehicle, put them in the trunk BEFORE you arrive at your destination. This will avoid the possibility of someone seeing you with your valuables and breaking into your trunk.

The Little Tokyo BID extends a big thank you to the Arts District L.A. BID for providing "Stash It / Don't Flash It" signs to remind motorists to remove (or at least hide) valuables from their cars.



How to File a Police Report

We all hope nothing bad ever happens, but if you are the victim of a crime, we encourage you to file a police report. [Click here](#) to learn how to report a crime online. You can report such crimes as hit-and-run, identity theft, harassing phone calls, theft from vehicle, vandalism, and illegal drug activity. For non-emergencies that require a police response, dial (877) 275-5273. In case of an emergency, dial 9-1-1.

Little Tokyo BID Safety Patrol Dispatch
(213) 880-6875

For Graffiti Removal, Bulky Item Pickup and other City services
Dial 3-1-1 or Call (213) 473-3231

Little Tokyo BID Helpline. Call, text, or email.
Phone (213) 880-6875 ~ board@visitttletoyko.org

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