

Internment camp focus of program

Oregon's poet laureate Lawson Inada and writer Hiroshi Kashiwagi will perform readings

By LEE JUILLERAT
H&N Regional Editor

After Hiroshi Kashiwagi was released from the Tule Lake Detention Center, where he lived with his family from 1942 to 1946, he wanted to avoid talking about his experiences.

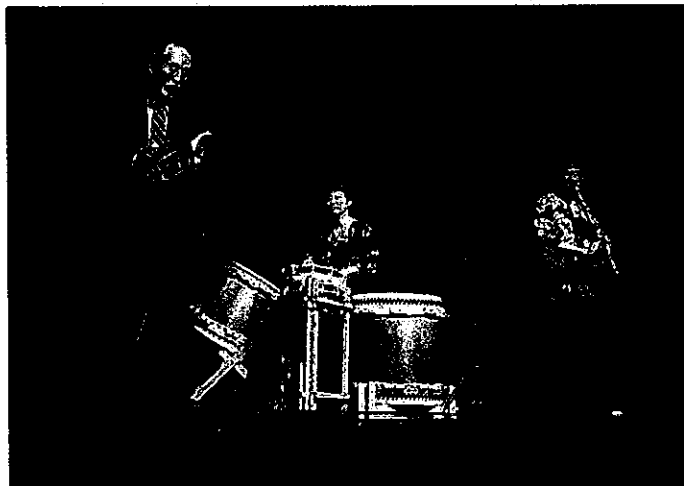
Kashiwagi, now 86, was among the more than 18,000 Japanese-Americans held at Tule Lake, one of 10 internment camps where 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry were held during the World War II years following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

After the war, Kashiwagi attended UCLA, often wearing his father's hat.

"I was trying to be eccentric and stay away from people because I didn't want to be asked about my stay at Tule Lake," he says of wearing the hat. "I was purposely trying to be different."

While at UCLA, Kashiwagi wrote his first play, "The Plums Can Wait," for the Nisei Theater Group. It was performed in Los Angeles and, later, San Francisco and Berkeley. He earned a degree in Oriental Languages from UCLA in 1952 and worked as a translator, librarian and part-time actor in plays and films, including "Black Rain."

It wasn't until 2005 that he would write about his experiences at Tule Lake, and those that



Submitted photo

Lawson Inada, Oregon's poet laureate, hopes to use words from people held at Tule Lake during his part of Saturday night's "A Thousand Cranes Over Tule Lake" cultural program.

Tickets available

Tickets for "A Thousand Cranes Over Tule Lake," a cultural program being offered 7:30 p.m. Saturday by the Tule Lake Pilgrimage 2009 at the Ross Ragland Theater, are \$10 at the door or \$8 with the ad that appeared on page A10 of Sunday's Herald and News.

The program will begin with the presentation of framed scrolls of appreciation for the Tule Lake Unit of the World War II Valor in the Pacific

National Monument by Roy Ikeda.

Appearing on the program will be koto master Barbara Muramoto, the San Jose Taiko, Toru Saito with three songs, poems from Hiroshi Kashiwagi, a performance by the trio of Russel Baba, Jeanne Mercer and PJ Hirabayashi, songs by Jimmy Mirikitani, a reading by Oregon Poet Laureate Lawson Inada, the Tule Lake Taiko and reading by Wendy Watanabe.

followed, in his autobiography, "Swimming in the American: A Memoir and Selected Writings."

Kashiwagi will read the poem he's best known for, "A Meeting At Tule Lake," written on a 1975

pilgrimage to Tule Lake, when nearly 400 pilgrims meet Thursday night at Oregon Institute of Technology.

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PROGRAM

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The author and poet laureate hope to gather stories

At "A Thousand Cranes Over Tule Lake," Saturday night's public cultural program at the Ross Ragland Theater, he hopes to wear his father's old hat while reading another poem, "My Father's Hat."

During the program and pilgrimage, Kashiwagi will be paired with Lawson Inada, Oregon's Poet Laureate, to gather accounts from people held at Tule Lake.

The 71-year-old Inada, who never was held at

Tule Lake but lived with his family in camps in Arkansas and Colorado, hopes to use some of those stories of remembrances during his part of Saturday night's program.

"Depending on what develops at the workshops, where I hope we can tap into their memories, I want to use their words," Inada said of weaving those stories into his section of the program.

Inada and Kashiwagi

will be two of many Japanese-Americans participating in the program, which will also feature excitingly powerful taiko drum groups, songs and jazz infused music.

"We hope the Klamath Falls community will again join us for an evening of entertainment," said Hiroshi Shimizu, one of the pilgrimage organizers. "It's a chance for us to share out culture with the community."