



SALT LAKE BUDDHIST TEMPLE

*211 West First South
Salt Lake City*

Welcome to Salt Lake City's Nihon Matsuri. Having been born and raised in Salt Lake City, I would like to thank the Nihon Matsuri committee for all their hard work in bringing our Utah Japanese American community together for this wonderful celebration.

The first generation (Issei) and second generation (Nisei) have sacrificed so much so that we Japanese Americans could become contributing members of American society. The devastating effects of the concentration camps, i.e. Topaz, Heart Mountain, and the stigma and stereotypes of World War II were difficult hurdles for our forefathers to overcome. Our current political climate shows us how important it is that we never forget these national atrocities and work as a free society, so that they will never happen again.

As one ethnic group's story among the tapestry of American stories have shown us, through hard work and humility, we Japanese Americans are now an established and integral part of the greater American society. We are the living embodiment of the dream of our Issei grandfathers and grandmothers. With the exception of the first peoples of this land we now call the United States of America, all of us are from immigrant stock and I believe this is important for all of us to remember in our current political climate.

I hope that those of you who attend the festival enjoy yourselves and learn something new about the cultural diversity of Utah. I also hope that our community will not forget where we came from and to help our diverse community work towards the abolishment of racial, religious and sexual discrimination in all its forms. I believe that it is our responsibility as Americans and the beneficiaries of so much sacrifice by our parents and grandparents to work towards this dream of a country that does not judge by color, creed or sexual orientation. This Matsuri is one step in that direction.

Once again thank you and congratulations to the Nihon Matsuri planning committee for all your hard work.

Sincerely,

Rev. Jerry K. Hirano
Salt Lake, Ogden and Honeyville Buddhist Temples