

On Monday, February 5, 2018, Ms. Yori Oda of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Tokyo, Japan, passed away after a recent illness.

Born in Tokyo before the Second World War, as a young child Yori Oda lived with her family in the cosmopolitan city of Shanghai. It was the first taste of the adventurous life she was to lead in the years to come. After the war ended, Yori's father who worked for the Bank of Japan was sent with his family to Hiroshima to help rebuild the city. After some time in Hiroshima, Yori was sent on to boarding school at Sacred Heart Women's School in Tokyo where she made life-long international friends.

Having traveled from Japan to England by cargo ship, she later completed her Bachelor's degree studies at the University of Manchester. She returned to Japan only briefly, where a serendipitous meeting with Prof. Howard Hibbett inspired her to apply to a graduate program at Harvard University.

In 1966 Yori Oda arrived at Harvard as a student in the Regional Studies East Asia Program to study economics. After she received her master's degree, at the encouragement of Prof. Henry Rosovsky, she became a teaching assistant in a Japanese language course. Oda-sensei, as she was known to hundreds of students and colleagues, spent the next 35 years teaching Japanese language in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations.

Oda-sensei continued teaching students about Japanese culture on her own time at Harvard's Leverett House where she was a lifelong Senior Common Room Member. Always working towards educating people about Japan, from 1970 to 1996 she served on the board of directors of the Japan Society of Boston, building bridges between the two countries. She also served as a member of the JET Program selection committee for the Consulate General of Japan in Boston for over 21 years.

Often seen wearing one of her many kimonos to official and private events, Oda-sensei would share with the curious why a particular kimono was appropriate for that season or occasion and patiently explained the influence of the art and the culture of Japan on the traditional clothing of Japan.

Among many acknowledgements and awards, in 2004 Yori Oda was awarded a special Minister of Foreign Affairs Commendation from the Japanese government in recognition of her significant contribution to the promotion of cultural exchange between Japan and the United States. And in 2013, she was honored to receive the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold and Silver Rays, from the Emperor of Japan in recognition of her significant lifelong contributions. However, of her many accomplishments in promoting knowledge of Japan and its culture in Boston, her most lasting legacy will be her tireless dedication to the Boston Children's Museum.

Serving as an interpreter for the Mayor of Kyoto during a sister city visit to Boston, Yori Oda was instrumental in bringing the traditional Japanese House (*Kyo-no-Machiya*) as a gift to the

Boston Children's Museum in 1979. As an Honorary Trustee of the Boston Children's Museum, she continued to work toward educating people about Japanese culture. Each year, almost half-a-million visitors can experience and learn about Japan and Japanese life while visiting the Boston Children's Museum.

Yori Oda leaves behind her younger brother, Ken Oda of Australia, and innumerable friends and colleagues around the world who will miss her dearly. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Donations in her name may be made to the Boston Children's Museum, 308 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210. To leave a condolence message or to share a memory of Yori, please visit the online guestbook at www.DeeFuneralHome.com.