



**BOYS TOYS.** This Shogun warrior, a boys doll, will be one of the items displayed during the 39th Annual Sukiyaki Dinner Sunday, March 5, at the Wapato Buddhist Hall from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

# Traditional meal

## *39th Sukiyaki Dinner to be served at Buddhist hall Sunday*

By Stephen McFadden

WAPATO—Mas Seto invites Central Valley residents to come sample an original Japanese dinner on Sunday, March 5.

The meal will be served from 11:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Buddhist Hall.

Seto is co-chair of the Wapato Buddhist Hall's 39th Sukiyaki Dinner.

Each year the group hosts between 1,000 and 1,500 guests for the meal. The benefit event generates funds for the group to continue operating its facilities.

Today the church maintains about 30 active members representing approximately 20 families. In its prime, the Buddhist Temple served upwards of 85 families.

That was before the Yakima Valley's Japanese residents were moved to internment camps during World War II.

Today, the membership is shrinking, Seto said, mainly because young people are moving away, searching for other places to live and better paying careers.

Still the Sukiyaki Dinner prevails. Seto sees the meal as a time of reunion for Japanese families and their friends.

"A lot of us use this for our annual reunion, just so we can see some of the other folks," Seto said. "It's the one time out

of the year that we all get together."

To host the meal, a group of 80 to 100 volunteers is needed to prepare the fresh food, decorate the hall, spruce up the landscaping and serve the meal.

At the same time, Seto said the meal continues to be an important way to keep the community linked to the Buddhist community.

"We try to give the atmosphere and try to keep it like traditional festivities," he said.

Inside the hall, hungry supporters are greeted by Japanese lanterns and colorful decorations. Many of the volunteers wear traditional dress, including kimonos.

Cranes displayed in the room, Seto said, are a sign of good luck and happiness.

On the stage each year is a collection of display items for visitors to examine. This year's collection features a complete set of boys' dolls. These dolls, including the Shogun, are displayed annually on Boys Day in May.

The theme for this year's dinner is "The Year of the Dragon."

Those born in 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988 and 2000 were born in the Year of the Dragon. According to the history, Dragon People have lots of energy and are seldom sick.

Everyone likes dragons because they are honest and trustworthy.

Full of vitality and enthusiasm, the dragon is a popular individual even with the reputation of being foolhardy and a "big mouth" at times. Dragon People are intelligent, gifted and perfectionist, but these qualities make them unduly demanding on others.

Dragon People are well suited to be an artist, priest or politician.

Some famous Dragon People include Joan of Arc and Pearl Buck.