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Food for Thought: Oral Histories of the Central Coast's Asian-Pacific Foodways

5-13-2021 (Date of Interview)

Interview with Haya Sushi

ChangSu Kim (of interviewee)

Interviewee: ChangSu Kim

Interviewer: Judy Kim

Location: Haya Sushi

Collection: Food for Thought: Oral Histories of California's Asian-Pacific Foodways, JAPN 317: Pacific Food Empires, Spring 2021

Length: 00:10:40

Overseen by: Dr. Dustin Wright

Biography: ChangSu Kim is the owner of Haya Sushi that immigrated to Sacramento, California from South Korea a few decades ago. He used to own a Dental lab up until (year) where he decided to sell that business and decided to open up his own sushi restaurant.

Summary of Transcript: Start off with introductions and some background information on Changsu Kim's life as well as his family life. Begin asking questions in Korean so that the interviewee can more easily understand what's being asked due to some language barrier while he responds back in English.

Transcript of Interview:

JK: It's May 13 and my name is Judy Kim. I'm here at Haya Sushi to interview ChangSu Kim. Um, we will probably be doing this interview mostly in Korean due to the language barrier, but that will be translated. [Korean] So we're good to go?

CK: Mm? Yes.

JK: [Korean] Okay, could you please tell me your name?

CK: Uh, my name is ChangSu Kim.

JK: Oh okay! Um, then... Could you please explain your work and family background, please?

CK: Yes, uh, I'm uh Judy's father, and uh Judy has two uh older brothers there. Uh and, and then my wife, and me. And then I have uh parents. My parents live in Sacramento.

JK: Okay thank you I will be starting the questions, [Korean] Since when did you start thinking about immigrating to America?

CK: Mm, I'm uh. I'm born South Korea and then my moms sister and then she's living in the Sacramento and then she immigration about 1971 and she... [Korean] What is it? To come... what is it?

JK: Told you to come.

CK: Yes.

JK: Okay.

CK: Uh around 1979 and then my uh my parents they came to the United States 1979. And after two years later, I came to the United States.

JK: [Korean] Why did you choose to immigrate?

CK: Making better life. Uh they wanted more successful and make the more business, that's why.

JK: [Korean] When you first came to America, what was the most difficult thing for you?

CK: Language.

JK: Language?

CK: Mmhm.

JK: Okay, [Korean] was that the only obstacle?

CK: Language and um maybe... language and different, not used to people.

JK: Ah okay, um [Korean] Then when and why did you decide to open this restaurant?

CK: So I was before I got a totally different job I have. And so hard to, ah, everything is um involved me and making hard to choose. Before I was a dental lab I was doing I just think about it uh 19... uh 2000.... 2010 I wanna change my job that's why it's maybe I wanna make uh like uh different job and so I think that the restaurant is more easier than is my uh.. Better than

dental lab. That's why I make the 2013, October 11. I starting the restaurant. I make the uh so... 2013 uh... I built everything.

JK: [Korean] Okay uh... next is... mmm when you first opened the restaurant, was it hard to try and get customers?

CK: Very hard because nobody knows. Here is a new restaurant there and then I put in the appetizers and the other newspaper and then so people looking for a new place. So after one year, better. So lotta customers come in.

JK: [Korean] Before COVID hit, how was the business going?

CK: Uhm. Before COVID-19, so business really really good. And then after so that year 2019 is uh, uh... lotta customers and then so lotta peoples (Phone chime) coming here.

JK: [Korean] So how did things change in the business once COVID happened?

CK: From... from the March so Governor tell and 50% inside people. After then people uh so my employee very worrying about their you know so COVID-19. That's why they some people quit their job. Some people is working and from the that time so I just do and take out only. And then since, in so over... over year and then business is uh really really go down.

JK: Mm... [Korean] Then, what did you like the most about making this business? This restaurant.

CK: [Korean] So when making this restaurant, what did I like the most?

JK: [Korean] Yes like what was the most fun aspect for you when making this restaurant.

CK: [Korean] Oh what was the most fun? Uh... [English] Making food. So customers very satisfied and very happy and you know they tell "Oh food is great! Service is great! Everything is great!" and that time I'm really really happy.

JK: Mm okay, [Korean] Lastly-

CK: Mhm

JK: [Korean] When you think about it now, what do you miss the most about Korea?

CK: Friends.

JK: Friends?

CK: Yes I just think about it my old friend. And sometime uh if I have time go visit you know, talking, and then mmm some eat food, enjoy, and that one is uh only just think about it.

JK: Only think about it?

CK: Yes.

JK: Mm okay, then that's it for the interview. Thank you so much for the interview.

CK: MM Thank you, thank you. No problem.