

# **AN INTERVIEW WITH KAKU MAKINO AND JULIE KANO**

An Oral History Conducted by Vanessa Concepcion, Stefani Evans, Kristel Peralta  
Cecilia Winchell, and Ayrton Yamaguchi.

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Reflections: The Las Vegas Asian American and Pacific Islander  
Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center at UNLV  
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Oral History Project

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The transcript received minimal editing that includes the elimination of fragments, false starts, and repetitions in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the material. In several cases photographic sources accompany the individual interviews with permission of the narrator.

The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of Reflections: The Las Vegas Asian American and Pacific Islanders Oral History Project.

Claytee D. White  
Director, Oral History Research Center  
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## PREFACE



*“He worked so hard at one thing, he’s good at that. He woke up so early and then came home and dropped at the front door...” - Julie Kano*

Kaku Makino, the King of Japanese Buffet, was born in 1943 and raised in Tokyo, Japan, in a traditional, wealthy family. After surviving mumps at age four, he suffered a severe hearing loss. His father encouraged Kaku to play baseball, and he excelled. But his father died when Kaku was twenty years old, and, as the oldest of four sons, he had to support the family. He became a chef—an occupation he followed for twenty years in Tokyo before following his younger

brothers to the U.S. in 1989. In about 1992, Kaku opened his flagship Todai restaurant in Santa Monica, eventually opening a total of eighteen Todai locations in California, Florida, and Hawaii; many of these locations have since rebranded as Makino. In 2000, Kaku came to Las Vegas and opened Makino on Decatur Boulevard at Flamingo Road, his nineteenth restaurant and the only one he continues to personally operate.

Kaku's partner, Julie Kano, was born and raised in Ōtsu city in Shiga Prefecture, Japan. Wanting to experience life outside her town of 600 people, Julie migrated to Los Angeles and enrolled at Cal State Northridge to become a social worker. She did not complete her studies, but she did meet and marry her first husband and gave birth to her son. Like Kaku, she also arrived in Las Vegas in 2000 and now handles the business end of the restaurant. Makino represents the high standard and dedication Kaku and Julie bring to their work. In this interview, they recall their different childhoods, business successes and struggles, surviving COVID-19, and making Las Vegas their home.

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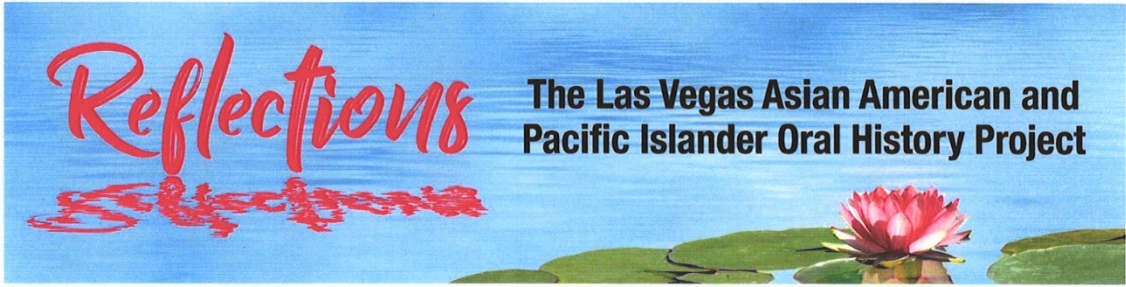
Interview with Kaku Makino and Julie Kano

March 22, 2021

in Las Vegas, Nevada

Conducted by Vanessa Concepcion, Stefani Evans, Kristel Peralta,  
Cecilia Winchell, and Ayrton Yamaguchi

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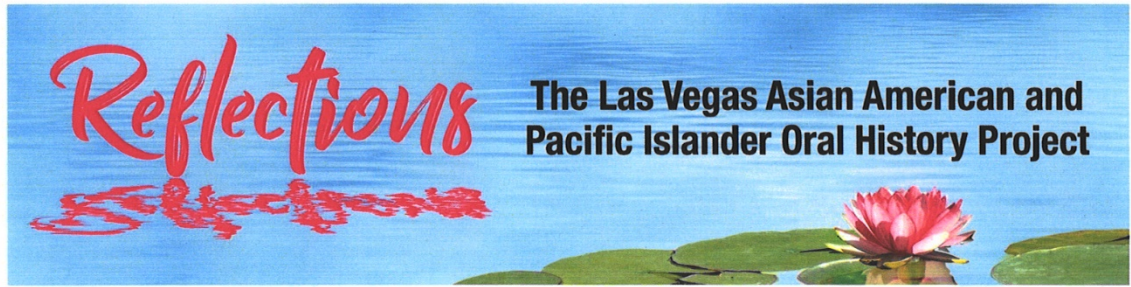
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**Thank you guys for joining us today and thanks for letting us into your restaurant. Today is Monday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021. It's me, Vanessa Concepcion...**

**Kristel Peralta.**

**Cecilia Winchell.**

**Ayrton Yamaguchi.**

**Stefani Evans.**

**We're joined with Julie Kano and Kaku Makino. If you could each spell out your name for the recording?**

His name is Kaku, first name, K-A-K-U. Last name M-A-K-I-N-O. And my name is Julie Kano; J-U-L-I-E, last name K-A-N-O.

**Thank you. We're going to start off now with the interview.**

**KP: This question is for Kaku. Could you tell us about your family, your childhood, your parents, siblings, and life growing up?**

Since he has a hearing problem, I know most of it. He came from a very rich family, Yamanashi. Their family owned a big mountain and then they had a wool company. Then Japan lost World War II.

I make it very long, sorry.

**No, that's good.**

After the war, after we lost World War II, his father was one of the first Japanese who worked with the GHQ to reborn, reenergize Japan at that time. He was looking into railroad first. Before, we only have a wooden railroad—what do you call this?—rail. But he's the one who turned it into steel because...they are from Yamanashi, but I think at that time the family moved to Tokyo, Japan, right next to Imperial Palace. Then because of the war they burn everything, of

course, the war burned everything, so he wanted to make everything resistant to fire. First he wanted to rework rail, and then he wanted to—back then we have a little—I think in America, too—we have a little shopping mall with an arcade. Not like these days it's a big complex of a whole shopping mall scale. But before that we have a small-town, only-for-the-local-customer arcade. He turned this arcade roof into a plastic (holder), fire extinction, so we don't get fire. He did that for almost all over Japan.

He was born 1943. When he was four he got mumps, and then he lost a nerve for hearing for his ear, and so...

[Speaking with Kaku] When you were four.

Then his father introduced him to a professional baseball player when he was seven. Then he got into baseball and he was very good. He worked so hard at one thing, he's good at that. He wake up so early and then came home and dropped at the front door, his mom said. He was that much tired. He just give everything to the baseball, like that until his father passed away. He has two other brothers, so he is the first one, oldest one, so he had to take care of his family business, which was a construction company then. But because of his hearing issue, his dad wanted him to be a baseball player. Then he worked so hard to get into a professional baseball team, but he couldn't communicate, so he gave up that. Then his father passed away when he was twenty. He had to take care of his father's company, but because of his hearing problem, he couldn't do it.

His mom made him a chef. Chef, you don't really need to talk...with his own restaurant. He had a catering business in Tokyo for twenty years. He was serving two thousand bento, very popular, two thousand bento. Waking up three in the morning, and then he was doing everything until six p.m., things like that for twenty years.

Then he became over forty. He has three brothers, and then two of them were already here in the United States. Because his father was working with American businesspeople, so his family was always affiliated or associated with American people. His two little brothers, after the college they already went out to the United States. Then this oldest one, he was always fond of America, American lifestyle, American car. He was driving Cadillac. But he was so busy because doing this restaurant business, well you know, it's so hard. After twenty years, he thought, "My life is bento business for twenty years and I'm already forty. Hmm, my little brothers are doing fine in the United States. Why don't I just go and take a look?"



*Fig 1: A Large Octopus fixture within Makino*

He came. He's a chef and those two others are not. But his littlest one was—I think this is before Todai—he actually created a concept of Sushi buffet before him. Then he sold that, and he was staying for two years to see all the American restaurant, working in his little brother's restaurant. Then he opened, first, Todai in Santa Monica, and that's 1994, '92 or something like that. Bento business and buffet is very similar. You make a lot at one time and then expect to eat a little later. It was so easy for him, he decided to open his own restaurant; that was Todai in Santa Monica.

Then he got so good, then ever since he opened eighteen Todai restaurants in Southern California. Then his restaurant in Las Vegas is the nineteenth. Then he likes to gamble, so he's ready to come over. That was twenty years ago. He opened this restaurant—I didn't meet him then. I am his second wife. His first wife... When he was a child, he was just working so hard. He was just doing baseball. He's very... What you call, imaginative?

**SE: Very focused?**

Yes. One thing, one thing. Baseball, right? And after that, bento business. But before he went into bento business, he got married and he's got two beautiful children. One is boy, one is girl. They are in Denver, Colorado right now. His son is doing a French Japanese restaurant. Yes, Denver, Colorado. Then he was building so many Todai, his first wife got scared. You know women, we want a stable life. His life is like... he loves to gamble. They split and he just gave everything to his ex-wife, and then he started to explore. That's how he opened nineteen restaurants.

This is the nineteenth. We came here in 1989 and it's been twenty years here, too. Other than that he just focused on one thing he bought, and then he take care of his employees so good. He is very strict inside of kitchen, but all are amigos. They started from busboy and then they become other chef.

We opened Hawaii last year, two years ago. Biggest mistake. Biggest mistake. I didn't know this corona... I never imagined this thing happening in my life. It was getting very good and then it was very successful right in Waikiki, but we gave up that one and then came back here. The main reason is to save our employees. We wanted to get PPP and then keep their jobs. He's that kind of person.

He loves golf. He used to play a lot, but not anymore when his knee...He's seventy-seven. He still comes to work every single day. He used to watch so much golf.

**KP: I wanted to circle back to his life as a sushi chef. I heard that it takes extensive training to perfect the art of sushi, so you could you tell us more about that type of education he went through and what it was like being a sushi chef in Japan?**

Back in old days, you need fifteen years to become a real chef, and we have that kind of master chef from Japan. He passed away last year. He was seventy-nine. The Japanese Culinary Association, run by Japanese government, send five or six Japanese sushi men forty-five years ago, and he's one of them. He's a master chef, yes. Actually, he went into a culinary school in Japan and got a license and that's it. He's not really specializing in sushi. Sushi chef is very, very dedicated, and our last sushi man's sushi was the best I ever had. Yes, you have to learn how to cut. Rice is very important, how to make rice. Yes, it's...I think we don't have many master sushi chefs in the United States, or even in Japan anymore. He can cut it, but his fish is so big. He's a buffet guy, so he's very generous.

**KP: When he first arrived in Las Vegas, what was his first initial memories?**

**[Julie and Kaku are conversing.]**

It's part of his American dream, plan. He used to come here and gamble, but he liked this city because all the casinos have a buffet. He wanted a challenge if his food is compatible with all the casino people. They have the top of the line over there, but he thought he wanted to challenge with his food. Actually, he was driving around and then saw this building, too. Yes, it was good. At first, people didn't know about Makino. Who cares was the Makino? But then after one year or two years, he felt good because we served something that nobody else was serving, sushi.

**KP: What are some traditions or festivals that are important to his family?**

**[Julie and Kaku are conversing.]**

We were living with his mom. She was born Meiji era, very, very strong, very clever, very nice lady. She was a gambler, too. [All laughing] She really didn't care anything; she was a very free woman. She was a second wife, as well, and then she was twenty-four years younger than his dad. His dad passed away and then she was the one who was supporting all these...raising kids and everything after World War II, it must be very, very hard. But then first one came to the United States and then second one. Then this last one went up, so she came, too, when she was seventy. Can you believe that? Change whole life when you are seventy? So she was a very brave lady, and I don't believe she carried any Japanese tradition.

For the Japanese, the New Year is the most important thing. Then if you have a kid, in March third is a girls' festival, May fifth is a boys' festival. But nowadays, Valentine's. Americanized, same: Valentine's, Christmas. But, yes, we eat certain strange things at New Year's. Something like that.

**KP: Touching back on his grandparents, could you elaborate on how the transition was after World War II and to how he grew up and how that affected him and his family?**

Oh, the world turned upside down because of the war. I don't think he remembers anything, but...

**[Julie and Kaku are conversing.]**

He is still remembering what his parents told him when they got attacked from Americans. But after war is finished, then whole city turned and very, very busy and a lot of activity started, the economy getting good.

[Kaku is speaking]

The economy was booming. Everybody got so busy and then we get all the technology. Japanese worked so hard to catch up with other countries, and we were working so hard, so busy.

**KP: My next question involves his siblings. You mentioned that when his siblings came here, they already had a restaurant. Could you tell me more about what his siblings do now and where they are? And their names?**

The little one is actually a Honda racer. Because their family is rich, so I think it costs so much. Now he is running a body shop in L.A. Everybody knows him. And then the third one, this is the one who created original, it's called Hadoko. He created original Hadoko, smaller size of Todai. He change it to Todai; it's more upscale, bigger scale. This little brother is...very similar, but they are very different even though they are in the same industry. He's like a chef; he's working, not thinking anything, he's just working, working, working. This little brother is— (indiscernible)—he is more creative. He is good at managing. And then they together made Todai very popular.

And then after they got a Korean, when they get partner with Korean investor, his partner investor want either of them leaving with their company, so his little brother left Todai and then he become Makino. Then he left Todai after several restaurants he opened with his ex-investors. But then he went into Hong Kong. He opened [indiscernible]But SARS hit him. It's very funny. But he lost it to SARS. Then he went into Hawaii, and he opened five or six Makinos over there, but he lost, so he was in hardship. That's the only reason we went to help him over there. We opened the restaurant and then we were working together. But then this corona hit. His little brother lost everything with SARS, and then we lost Hawaii with corona.

[Waitress arrives and leaves]

A lot of hardship happened to his little brother and then him, but they never give up. They always find a way, a solution, they get creative and then we came all the way until SARS, except SARS and corona. You cannot fight with those things. It's just out of our control.

Lucky we still have this one. I think after corona everybody is so nervous about self-serving. Well, Caesars decided not to reopen casino buffet, so we...we just shut down the buffet counter. You cannot do self-serving. But right now it was 25 percent seating and now 50 percent seating, we could do with just existing employees, but if we have to serve ourselves to you, we need extra people to serve. Either way, buffet is very, very thin profits, and then we're always watching payrolls. Without PPP help, I don't think we can be as we were before. But we're going to survive. We have to survive. I want to survive as the original sushi buffet. If he is not surviving, anybody else can't survive. I'm sure there is a market for the buffet still, so we have to find a way that's safe and still the buffet has to be generous. If people give it to you, it's not buffet. You have to get whatever. You have to get whatever. Who cares? I'll get this and this much, and don't tell me what to do. That's buffet. It has to be generous. So I don't know how we can...we have to find a way, but it has to be...

This corona will continue. We have to live in this kind of world: Social distance, masks and hand sanitize, air circulation. But we are all seniors, so it's tough. Vegas is very...I think I admire Vegas' administrative, governors and everything. Very quick to respond. Vaccine, L.A.—of course we're not huge. Because we are lucky we're a small town. Japan hesitate. Well, they started, but they were very cautious. Just get it done. It all has to get done (vaccine) at the same time, whole wide world. That's the only way we can stop it. Yes, we have to survive the corona. Okay, what else?



**You mentioned that you own multiple franchises and businesses. Where are those locations besides Hawaii and California?**

That was Todai. Todai in California and they went into Florida, Denver. We went to Denver, too. Denver, all over. He created twenty-eight after that. I think his ex-partner sold Todai name to China and Korea, too.

**What does he like most about living in Las Vegas?**

Gambling, I can tell you.

**[Julie and Kaku are conversing.]**

He is appreciating having this environment with the gambling and golf and all the restaurants, all the world's top first class restaurants.

**[Kaku is speaking]**

His motto is play hard, work hard; work hard, play hard.

Before (Kaku), I work until forty. When I came here to the United States, I found something I can enjoy myself, too. Vegas is the...I think this is the best scene ever you can imagine. They have everything here and it's compact. You know L.A. you have to go all the way, an hour and a half with the traffic, to see your girlfriend. And then Hawaii is so small. I only know L.A. and Hawaii, but I miss Vegas so much. You have everything here in ten, twenty minutes. Yes, a small city.

**KP: Now, I'd like to turn it over to you. Could you tell us about your family and your childhood and where you grew up?**

I'm nobody. You don't need my story, no.

**KP: No, we'd love to hear it. Please share.**

I lived twenty years in L.A. Me and my ex-husband had a computer company. Then we got divorced. My company was issuing in the community...little books. I had experience with him; I did the interview. I was surprised...I never see this kind of old-fashion Japanese man in my life before. Because he was raised—it's not his fault or his credit; it's the mother. Mother born in the Meiji era, long time ago, and then those older those girls are stronger, Meiji girls, so strong, so very strict. He was very determined to be a number-one buffet restaurant in the United States. I was so impressed with his interview.

Then right after I got divorced, I needed a job. I didn't know anything about the computer. I got the real estate agent license. At that time I was living in Temecula, a little town between San Diego and Orange County. I thought, if Todai come to town, it will be perfect because it was a booming new town, a lot of Asians, maybe 40 percent Asian at that time, twenty years ago.

Then I met him and then I came here. At that time he lost Todai name. He shouldn't. I think he should keep Todai brand. He wanted to go on by himself with Makino brand. I wanted to help because he had a hearing problem.

I grew up in a little town right next to Kyoto. I wish I could go back to when I was fourteen. I made a lot of mistakes, wrong decisions. I don't know how long I should go back, but I was very straight student, but my mom was very strict, so I wanted to get out. I was raised in a small town, six hundred relatives. Everybody knows me. When I'm walking on the street, they know me. "I saw your granddaughter," or, "I saw your daughter." They love me so much. I was so blessed with all the family and relatives, but I wanted to get out. Now I miss everybody, ever since. I've been here for forty years.

I came to UCLA as a student. Then I went to Cal State Northridge. I wanted to become a social worker, but I gave up the school and I met with my ex-husband. I told my son, "I'm nobody. I don't have any profession. I'm just helping men." I was blessed with my son. That was the best thing that ever happened to me. But I still should have pursued my own profession. I have next twenty years I want to go work at it. Twenty, twenty, twenty. We have long way to go still. Get a vaccine and then keep on going, right?

**SE: That's right.**

**KP: I wanted to touch on how you mentioned his mother was raised in the Meiji era. Could you elaborate on what that means and how the parenting contributed to how he was raised?**

What is it? One more time.

**Could you elaborate more on what it means to be raised in the Meiji era?**

A Meiji era lady is like a samurai wife, very strong here. Back then you have to raise so many kids, so many kids, and you have to discipline the kids. Some are very strict. I think before with the...it's not really a religion, but as a Japanese man, very stereotypical Japanese men, strong. If you are the oldest kids, you have to take over the family business. Men shouldn't cry. That kind of thing. Men are supposed to be strong. I don't cook, but he always complains. Woman has to cook; men go out to work. That kind. In order for a woman to raise that kind of kids, you have to be very strong. All Japanese ladies know how to sew and cook. My mom, too. You learn that too.

**To cook?**

Yes, cook and then sew. That's a fundamental thing; you have to be able to do it. You can't make the excuse, ah, I can't cook, or I can't sew. You know how to. You have to know how to

sew. But mostly it's their soul is like a samurai wife; you have to...you don't whine. Crying for help visibly. You have to compose yourself, strong, because mom is the most important thing in your family; they are all control [indiscernible].

**KP: I want to talk more about how you came to Vegas and what your first thoughts were when you came to the city.**

I just follow him. Vegas to me, impression is gambling city. Before that, before I was staying and living here, you visit Vegas once in a while, right? This is not my place to live. This is a gambling city. And then I had a little kid. So, no way. The air was dusty, but, too, clean compared to L.A. First couple of years I missed that dirty air. [Laughing] Other than that...being a woman, easy to adjust, wherever we go we're happy with that. Then I meet new friends. City was small, so easy to explore.

**Are there any traditions that you celebrate yourself?**

We don't really celebrate. Only New Year's we buy certain food and stuff like that.

**What kinds of foods do you buy on New Year's?**

What kind of food?

**Yes.**

It's like a bento box. It's a preservative food for three years. Only those January first, second, third, your mom don't have to cook. It's a tradition because she's been cooking all these days. She cooks all the salty food and then bring the box and we keep eating that.

**KP: Now I wanted to talk more about what's going on currently and how it affected you. Have you ever, or Kaku, experienced the racial discrimination that's been going around, and how has that experience affected you?**

Racial discrimination? Yes, in L.A. Then I was in South Bay, major is Japanese. Then when I was living in Santa Monica or even downtown, I never felt anything, anything like I felt when I come to this city. This city, I feel a little bit of a discrimination—it's not a discrimination, but they don't understand my intonation because L.A. people, they grew up with the Asians and so they are familiar with a strange intonation. But here, we have a lot of Italian old men. They don't understand me. A lot of Italian or... Arabic people here and they don't even know sushi at that time, twenty years ago. Yes, it's little...little...L.A. is very mixed. Probably one of your kids grew up where their neighbor is Asian, right? Japanese. Here, my son only has one Japanese. Japanese population, eight thousand or something? Very small. But they are just making those casino machine, right?

**Now I'd like to ask about the Makino business. What is it like running the business together with Kaku?**

Fun. Fun. They made us see the pictures that we couldn't buy ourselves. His image is so—his picture is so big and so fantastic and almost fantasy, so we drew to him. But the actual buffet restaurant worked; it's all divided into a small specialty. You don't have to know the whole picture. You just do what you're supposed to do. And then he's very patient. If you have to teach him twice and that's it, right? I don't have the patience. He's been doing this for forty years. He come here and work and then tell chef what to do, to do everything. And then he is watching Japanese or all the videos and books. He has so many Japanese cooking books. He is learning, studying every single day. When somebody opens a new restaurant, we go and check. And he copies right away.

[All laughing]

**Do you have a popular dish at the restaurant?**

Tempura, ramen, sushi of course. We have a very good dessert. I want to try [indiscernible]. You want to take a picture before somebody touch. Ten more minutes.



*Fig. 2: Sushi buffet a Makino.*

**KP: Now I'd like to turn it over to my colleagues if they had any questions. Thank you so much.**

**I'll go first. I'm curious what do you all miss the most about living in Japan.**

Huh?

**What do you guys miss the most about living in Japan?**

Ah, the food. The food.

**[Julie and Kaku are conversing.]**

Kaku says hot spring.

**All: Oh.**

**[Kaku is speaking.]**

Yes, hot spring. Hot spring make me relax.

**[Kaku is speaking]**

I think it's the humidity. Japan is very humid. When you taste, you can taste. The big continent like United States, dry, right? You don't taste. Yes, because you feel different; you taste different.

**[Kaku is speaking]**

We can't go back to Tokyo or Japan. We used to go back every year to see Japanese food and beverage commission, or something important. He is the first one that brought sushi machine to the United States. He loves this new gadget. Yes, we use sushi machine. We use rice machine, rice mixer. Everything he wants to get that kind of automation because you don't want to touch.

**[Kaku is speaking]**

The reason he couldn't take over his father's business is because of hearing, and then he went into a restaurant. At that time he thought, oh, maybe what would I like to do? He's at home and he liked eating, so I want to get into a restaurant. Simple. I like that.

**AY: How do you keep the quality of sashimi so high serving on such a large scale?**

Yes. Very expensive. Very expensive. I know how much. This is off the record.



*Fig. 3: Cooks preparing Sushi Rolls before opening.*

**AY: Do you guys bring your fish in from Japan?**

No. You can do that these days from Tsukiji directly. I think the casino people are doing that; it comes by air every single day. I don't know about this year, at this moment. But FDA...you have to get it from certain vendors. Because we are a buffet, people sometimes eat one thing a lot, so that's very dangerous. We're very careful, but being Vegas, it's a big benefit, is Nobu, biggest Japanese restaurant, they have top quality. Sometimes they don't use that much, then we get it, and half the price. That's how. So you have to check it. We have very good fish. We use fresh tuna, fresh yellowtail, fresh salmon; same as the other restaurant, higher-end restaurant. It's the same. Then our rice is very good. Sushi is more important, is rice, not the fish. Rice is very important. Then, of course, craftsmanship, the skill of this one. But nobody can do it anymore, so we use machine. If you know (chuturo, okaro, fatty tuna), sometimes we do; we have to check it every single day because there's no guarantee. If some casino expensive restaurant don't want it, then we get it.

**CW: I wanted to ask if you or Kaku could give advice to up and coming entrepreneurs because you mentioned how Kaku and his family are just hardworking people and his mother is a hardworking woman, too. If there's any advice for up and coming entrepreneurs or chefs that want to start a business, what would you tell them? Specifically an Asian American.**

Actually, Asian American, I think he should be a member, but he cannot because of his hearing. I want to dedicate the rest of my life to help those people because I see a lot of big Japanese restaurant people went into Beverly Hills, of course, for all of your life, and then fail. They spent zillions of money and then they failed. It's happening in Waikiki, too. Now I know. I saw it. They spent so much money, but who they are coming through with? Lawyer or Realtor, they



don't know anything about the restaurant. Restaurant, we know. I only know here and L.A. and maybe Waikiki a little bit. I think those people—it's not the Olympics. I want to win in this race. As a Japanese, we want to win in sushi or Japanese restaurant. We need a very good management company. That's what I've been trying to get. I was looking at Japanese big corporation to support people, like small people like us. We need management. But the little local knowhow, you have to ask a local restaurant owner. There is supposed to be one line and people reach out and maybe you guys make a site like that. Then maybe you are the one who is dealing with those people who need the help, and then you ask us or other local restaurant owner if somebody is looking for this kind of information. I think Koreans have a network. Chinese is very aggressive. But I don't know, somehow Japanese are so weak. Binding power we don't have. I don't know why. We are all separate, but if you looking at it closely, we have some little network here and there. We need somebody to control everybody.

**Would you say the food community here, are you guys very close, like the local?**

Not at all. Not at all.

**Would you say it's disconnected?**

Just close friends that are also restaurant owners. No association, no system like that. We need to. It would make it efficient because we are looking at something and we can serve the resource.

**KP: Does anyone else have any questions?**

**SE: Who were some of Kaku's mentors while he was learning to be a chef?**

**[Julie and Kaku are conversing]**

His idol is Rocky Aoki. He has Benihana. He wanted to be like that. But he doesn't have an actual mentors.

**SE: Self-taught.**

Yes, he's just self-made.

**[Julie and Kaku are conversing]**

He opened a restaurant and then he learned from Aoki.

**[Kaku is speaking]**

Sushi bar was a new concept and nobody had it before. That's why I did it. A regular Japanese restaurant was already here when he came to Vegas.

**[Kaku is speaking]**

They have a lot of Chinese buffets, but not the Japanese buffet. And then casino buffet is not like this.

**This one is from Claytee. She's wondering if you're planning to open another restaurant here or anywhere.**

Yes, we want to. We are looking for a site right now.

**SE: What is the ideal site?**

A big one.

**If you ever have any ideas, you should open in Henderson because that's where I am.**

**SE: Julie, you said you're from a small town. What's the name of it?**

Otsu, Otsu in Shiga prefecture, right next to Kyoto. It's very small, but very historical. Beautiful city. (Indiscernible)

**KP: thank you so much—**

Thank you.

**—for having this interview with us.**

Sure.

[Pause in recording]

**SE: Julie, I'd like to ask you about your experience as a judge with the Saturday Language School.**

Oh, it was stunning. I was so impressed to see all the foreign kids. I know it's so hard to learn Japanese. It's totally different. But not only they speak, but they created such a nice speech. Every time I was so impressed. I was honored to participate in these kind of things. I got so busy after that. We opened Irvine. We went to L.A. and Hawaii. So I just withdrew myself. But if I had a chance...It was fun.

**How long did you do that?**

I had it a couple of times, three or four times, I think. Three or four.

**How many students competed?**

Like twenty. Twenty, thirty.

**Do you remember what year it was?**

No. Ten years ago? I don't remember. Last five years is hectic. My memory is all gone.

**All: Thank you.**

**[End of recorded interview]**

1 家族  
 2 行き事  
 3 仕事  
 4 下  
 5 家  
 6 仕事  
 7 仕事  
 8 仕事

Fig. 4: Japanese script written by Julie Kano for conversations with Kaku Makino. Numbered for translation.

1. Family
2. Seasonal, Japanese traditional Event
3. like.. New Years Day (~~O-shogatsu~~ <sup>Shogatsu</sup>)
4. Things that are important to me
5. War
6. ~~Economy~~ ~~Bus~~ Business.
7. Things in Japan.
8. What do you miss from  
Japan

Fig. 5: Translation of Japanese script written by Julie Kano.