

SHUKAN NEW YORK SEIKATSU

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A Historic Establishment Embarks on a New Era

This summer marked a significant milestone for the venerable Restaurant Nippon, a New York institution that celebrated its sixtieth anniversary. Akiyo Furuya, sister-in-law to the restaurant's founder, Nobuyoshi Kuraoka, has continued to uphold his vision and philosophy since taking over the reins of the reborn Restaurant Nippon following his passing. After persuasive efforts by Furuya, Naoki Kinoshita returned to the company last summer, ending his five-year absence, to assume the role of CEO. Like founder Kuraoka, who was once the captain of Keio University's Kendo team, Kinoshita was a member of the university's volleyball team. Joining the restaurant in 1979, it was Kinoshita's first job out of university and marked the beginning of his life in New York. With his return, Kinoshita has been entrusted with the task of elevating the restaurant's profile once again, making Restaurant Nippon the first choice when people think of Japanese cuisine in New York. To achieve this, owner Furuya, CEO Kinoshita, and the entire staff are dedicated to enhancing the customer experience to match the reputation of the esteemed establishment.

Rather than resting on its laurels, the revitalized Restaurant Nippon is committed to evolving with the changing times and meeting the evolving needs and preferences of its customers. In response to growing interest, the restaurant has introduced delectable vegan dishes and courses alongside their traditional Edo-style cuisine and has broadened its clientele. As they put it, "Japan has a rich history of world leading Shojin cuisine, which we aim to introduce to more American clients." To celebrate the restaurant's sixtieth anniversary, Nippon is offering its \$88 Vegan Kaiseki course for just \$60 (for a limited time, reservations required).

Bridging Cultures Through Japanese Food

Restaurant Nippon's sixty-year history intertwines with the rapid expansion of Japanese companies into the United States during Japan's post-war era of remarkable economic growth. To describe Nippon's historical role as a bridge between nations through food culture in the heart of the world's economy is no exaggeration. It was Kuraoka's relentless and often lonely pursuit that paved the way for the explosive popularity of sushi and other Japanese cuisine in New York and across the nation.

On August 19, 1963, Kuraoka opened the Hinoki cypress-clad Restaurant Nippon in Midtown Manhattan. Nippon made its mark by introducing Japanese inflight cuisine on Japan Air Line's inaugural flight between New York and Tokyo in 1966, and it has since been providing inflight meals for 57 years across all three service classes. According to Nippon's inflight catering heads, Sakata and Ikehata, "our enduring relationship of trust with JAL allowed us to weather adversities like 9/11 and the coronavirus pandemic."

In 1975, Nippon catered the dinner party at the Japanese Consulate in honor of the Showa Emperor and Empress' visit to New York. In 1989, the restaurant's successful efforts to gain FDA approval to import Torafugu pufferfish received widespread media attention, and Fugu has since become a New York winter delicacy. The restaurant's ever-popular Ni-hachi (2:8) soba has its roots in 1990 when the

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