

The Manju Shop Transcript



Narrator: Shuei-Do Manju store is a small Mom and Pop shop that first opened in the early 1950's. Manju is a Japanese delicacy made of sweet rice and bean paste. The shop's current owner, Tom Kumamaru, began with his story.



Tom: The original owners, John and Sue Ozawa noticed that there was no manju shop in San Jose. Sue Ozawa always wanted to open a manju shop somewhere, so she decided San Jose would be a good location. So they hired a manju maker from Japan to teach them how to make manju and that's how the manju shop in San Jose got started.



Tom: Mr. and Mrs. Ozawa and Judy's dad used to go fishing a lot together. Then one day Judy's dad asked them what they were going to do when they retire, who's going to take over the manju shop. He said none of his kids wanted to take over, so Judy's dad asked well when you do decide, let me know and maybe one of my kids would want to take over. So when he decided to retire, he asked us if we wanted to do it, Judy and I, and we thought about it and we said sure we'll give it a shot.

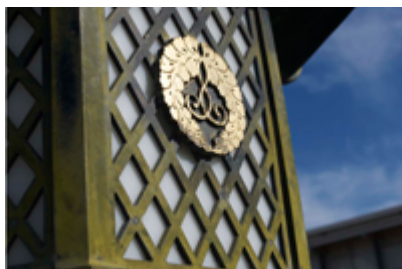


Tom: Working for a company before I started working for the manju shop in a managerial position I had four departments that I had to run so dealing with people and employees was very helpful when I came to the manju shop.

Judy: And I used to work in a dental lab. I was doing really intricate work where I had to make teeth and I had to do waxing and everything had to be so precise. And when I started making manju I go, "Oh this, you know, is a lot easier because it didn't have to be perfect."



Tom: When we first started i think it affected our family life a lot because we were here most of the time, almost seven days a week and we really didn't have an outside life at that time. But as the years went by, we made it a lot easier to work around the schedule of our kids.



Judy: We are very fortunate to be located in San Jose Japantown. It's in the Japanese community, and we are a Japanese manju shop, and it's a place where everyone kind of gathers here because of the Buddhist church.



Tom: I get here around 5 in the morning. The first thing I do is I weigh all my ingredients and then I mix it. And then I start the process of making the manju. The first one we make is all the steamed stuff. And then I start preparing for the mochi ones which is the rice flour ones, so when my wife Judy comes in, we can start right away. So I mix it and put it on the steamer so it will be ready to make when Judy comes in.

Judy: So by the time I get in, usually the mochis are ready for me to start wrapping. And then the ladies usually open up, but all the manjus in the display case. And open at 9:00 usually and we just keep making them one right after the other, until we finish making all of them, and then start preparing for the next day.



Judy: In the last 22 years, we've never missed work. And the only time I missed work is the day I delivered my son, Kevin, who is now seventeen years old. And as soon as he was delivered, about an hour later, Tom had to rush back to the manju shop, get everything started and he had to work the whole day, all night, all by himself to fill all the orders.



Tom: I think making everything hand-made puts a special touch to our manju.



Narrator: Setsuko is an employee at Shuei-Do. She works four times a week and has been working at the shop for the past seventeen years. Hisako is another employee that works in the front of the shop. She has been working at Shuei-Do for three years now.

Setsuko Shiroma: My name is Setsuko Shiroma. I don't want to stay home, that's why I want to come talk to the customers and the owners who are nice people. I am of old age now, so I cannot work at an office now, so that's

why I'm working here.

Hisako Halvorson: My name is Hisako Halvorson. I work here twice a week. I like to talk to people, the customers, and I am comfortable with Tom and Judy.



Tom: I think the biggest challenge is to keep our quality up, keeping the customers happy. And to talk to customers if they have any issues, we have to talk to them.



Linda Yamauchi: I've been coming to the manju shop since I was a very little girl and I used to come with my mom and dad every weekend to buy manju.
Linda Yamauchi: On a scale of one to ten I think the Shuei Do manju store is definitely a ten. I know that all of my friends and family always go to the manju store to pick up their manju and they have the best ones in Northern California.



Katie Yamauchi: Knowing that the shop is a family-owned business, it does make me want to come more because I know that everyone is family and friends with each other and they will all bring good hospitality.



Judy: Hopefully in the future, we'd like to have at least one of our kids take over the manju shop, because i sure would hate to have it be gone forever, so maybe Kevin, our youngest son. He's still young yet, but if he wants to, maybe he will decide to take it, in the future.



Judy: When Mr. Ozawa was alive, he would bring manju over to my parent's house and we would all enjoy the box of manju. So I try to keep that up with them. And I bring manju over to their house every holiday or whenever I get a chance.



Tom: All the comments that we get on yelp are pretty good. So that kind of motivates us to keep on doing what we're doing, making the best manju we can. and it makes us feel good that we are keeping up the quality that the previous owners the Ozawa's did because they always had good reviews and people would praise their manju where ever we travel. Like down south and up north, people know about the Shuei-Do Manju. So that feels good that were keeping up their reputation.



The end!