

LOS ANGELES *up!*

PRODUCED BY MASATO OCHI

Masato Ochi, a producer of projects of all genres, including TV programs in Japan, gets closer to the real people of Los Angeles, revealing the unique stories of success, hardship and happiness.

GUEST *of the month*

Mr. Mitsuyasu Shigeta
Owner of Shin-Sen-Gumi Restaurant Group



Challenger



Mitsuyasu Shigeta is the owner of Shin-Sen-Gumi restaurant group in Los Angeles. Specializing in Yakitori, Ramen and Nabe Hot Pot,

his restaurants are known for its samurai spirited energy. And no wonder. Mr. Shigeta comes from Kagoshima city in Kyusyu prefecture, known for their samurai spirited energy. He also holds a U.S. Karate Championship gold medal, and teaches karate once a week at his karate dojo. He came to Los Angeles in 1988 as "a reckless rebellious youth" to "conquer the world". But things didn't happen that easily. After many trial and errors, in 1992 he was able to open his first "Shin-Sen-Gumi" Yakitori restaurant in L.A. Why Yakitori? Because he couldn't forget the taste of his home town Yakitori.

Ochi (O): So how was it when you first opened "Shin-Sen-Gumi"?

Shigeta (S): Right from the start the Japanese customers came because of its famous name "Shin-Sen-Gumi". I thought, "Wow, the restaurant business is easy!" But due to my lack of experience, we often messed up the orders. The customers would get angry and shout at us. Second month, the sales dropped to less than half of what we started.

O: Oh no.

S: It wasn't as easy as I thought. So I made a resolution, to "work without any days off, and give up sake until the sales goes go back up!"

O: Wow...

S: Discipline gives me the strength I need.

O: Amazing...

S: That's my style. So when all the Japanese restaurants closed during the New Years, we stayed open. I worked 365 days a year, nonstop. After a full year of doing that, the sales finally picked up to the level where we started.

O: So no weekends or holidays?

S: No. And not a drop of sake.

O: That's discipline! (Laughs)

S: After the restaurant started doing well, people in my home town began to ask me if I could take care of their sons. So I hired them. As time went by, I saw them becoming aware of things they couldn't see before, or customers would remember their names and ask for them. That made me so proud. And suddenly I realized my life's mission; to guide these youth to their full potential. When I saw that, it felt like a fog has lifted from my head.

O: Hmmm!

S: When I went after success or money, the money went away. But once I realized my purpose, suddenly the sales begin to soar.

O: Wow! Do you ever have parents saying "can you take our punk and discipline him?"

S: Oh, yes, frequently.

O: And so the youth comes with a lot of

attitude...?

S: Oh, yes. Happens a lot.

O: So what do you do?

S: First I take him to my Karate *dojo*.

O: (Laughs) Scary...! ..

I would never go!!!! (Laughs)

S: That's the fastest way.

O: He must be freaking out!! (Laughs)

S: So I tell him "let's spar". (Laughs)

And things work out after that.

O: So the youth changes overnight?

S: Yes, I can tell.

O: I bet the youth fears death!!! (Pretending to be the youth scrubbing the floor)

"If I don't work hard, I'll die!!!" (Laughs)

S: I think of them like they are my own children. I don't want anything in return. I just want them to realize their full potential.

O: They should be paying lesson fees for that! (Laughs)

S: My motto is to have a restaurant with the world's number one passion and devotion. I also think of our restaurant like a (karate) "dojo" for one to learn about the joy of contributing to society through hard work.

O: Sounds great, but the (karate) "dojo" part sounds scary! (Laughs)



Masato OCHI ~ おちまさと ~
Born in Tokyo on December 23, 1965, Masato Ochi is a well-known producer in Japan. Wide range of activities includes producing a variety of TV programs and events, designing for both fashion and corporate branding. <http://twitter.com/ochimassuo>