



## Shuho Bon Yagi

Country/Region: United States of America (New York)

Age: 69

Current Occupation: President, T.I.C. Restaurant Group

### ● **Contribution to the Dissemination of Japanese Cuisine and Food Culture in the U.S.**

- Focusing on Japanese cuisine other than dishes such as sushi and tempura that had been long known in the U.S., Mr. Yagi opened specialized Japanese restaurants, such as sake restaurants and soba noodle restaurants, and contributed to the expansion of the Japanese food market.
- Mr. Yagi constructively conducted planning and marketing of restaurants appealing to the taste of New Yorkers while also actively importing ingredients and food products from Japan. .
- He is highly acclaimed as a Japanese restaurant business pioneer, dubbed as the “Japanese ambassador to Manhattan’s East Village” with reverence in the restaurant business world in New York.

Mr. Yagi left for the U.S. in 1968. Based in New York, he has played a leading role in promoting Japanese cuisine and food culture, which was barely recognized in the country when he arrived. Currently, in addition to operating 16 restaurants, he, as a board member of the Japanese American Association of New York (JAA) and the Gohan Society, engages in charities and fund-raising activities to give back to local society. In 1990, Mr. Yagi planned and organized a Japanese festival, boosting the atmosphere of the East Village as “Japan Town,” Mr. Yagi is working on the dissemination of Japanese food culture, making it his motto to let people “Enjoy Japan Without Airfare.”

He purchases about four million dollars’ worth of Japanese-produced foodstuffs a year from Japanese-American food distributors. The breakdown is about three million dollars of Japanese ingredients, such as beef, buckwheat flour, dried bonito flakes, soy sauce, *yuzu* citron products, salt, tempura batter mix and dried kelp; and about a million dollars of alcoholic beverages including over 250 brands of sake, whiskey and *shochu*.

Thanks to the expansion of his T.I.C. Restaurant Group’s Japanese restaurant business in the East Village, which generates 20 million dollars in annual sales, not only Japanese cuisine but also food culture has become popular and well-known among quality-oriented New Yorkers. Consequently, Japanese cuisine has gradually become widespread in the U.S., contributing to the significant increase in imports of Japanese foodstuffs.