

Tamiko Rast Interview Transcript Feb 27, 2024

De Anza College Winter 2024 quarter

Steve Nava and SOC 14 student interviewer: Faye Garcia; Brisa Micik; Sarah Galtman; Ekta Chilucuri; Omar Servacio Servacio

Spaces of Belonging Project: Hidden in Plain Site/Sight

NEH Grant

Interview link:

[https://youtu.be/w2g\\_bqvEflU?si=sNnjMpOm0dMLbFls](https://youtu.be/w2g_bqvEflU?si=sNnjMpOm0dMLbFls)

Summary:

**Tamiko Rast** is president of the San Jose Japantown Business Association and owner of the State of Grace tattoo shop in Japantown where she lives. She is Roy Murotsune's (1925-2021) granddaughter. Mr. Murotsune is locally known for running Roy's Gas Station in SJ Japantown until 1990 when he had to close due to the high cost of updating their gas storage system. In this oral history interview Tamika Rast of the well-known Rast family who currently own and operate Roy's Station a popular coffee shop in 5th and Jackson Street in San Jose reflects on growing up in Japantown under her grandmother's care while her parents' were working. She talks about experiencing negotiating being *hapa* or "mixed race" (Swedish- and Japanese-American) and growing up part of a multi-racial brood of adopted and biological siblings in a place where Japanese ethnic pride was strong in the aftermath of order 9066 or Japanese concentration camps during WWII. She reflects on her love for Japantown as the president of the Japantown business association and the town-like experience living and working in the neighborhood where she played as a child. She shares a positive outlook on this space where her family continues to nurture the local community through volunteer services, community gatherings, and lively businesses entrepreneurship.

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00:00:05.593 --> 00:00:31.473

Tamiko Rast: My name is Tamiko, born in 1979, I'm 44 years old. I identify as a she. I'm technically a website designer but I also have my own private tattoo studio and I do a lot of volunteering for Japantown, including, serving as kind of like the executive director role as president of the Japantown Business Association.

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00:00:32.443 --> 00:00:38.813

Steve Nava: Yes, yes. And the first question is, tell me a little bit about your family background.

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00:00:39.023 --> 00:00:45.703

Tamiko Rast: Okay? I'm fifth generation Japantown, my grandparents

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00:00:46.003 --> 00:00:57.953

Tamiko Rast: had a gas station here on the corner of Fifth and Jackson, also known as now currently [Roy Station](#). We turned the gas station into a coffee shop with my parents and

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00:00:58.113 --> 00:01:00.642

Tamiko Rast: I've lived in San Jose my entire life.

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00:01:00.803 --> 00:01:03.443

Tamiko Rast: It's kind of a neat

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00:01:03.483 --> 00:01:18.352

Tamiko Rast: kind of neat thing that I'm in a place where my grandparents were born, and my great, great grandparents also were, you know, my grandparents went to concentration camp or internment camp.

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00:01:18.353 --> 00:01:35.512

Tamiko Rast: like most Japanese Americans here in Wyoming and Arizona, and my parents met in middle school here in San Jose they both went to Hoover and Lincoln, and so they met. They fell in love, had kids. I'm the eldest of 8.

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00:01:35.583 --> 00:01:46.963

Tamiko Rast: there were three of us that are biological, and then we adopted five. So we go from 44 to I think the youngest is like 23 and

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00:01:47.013 --> 00:01:57.913

Tamiko Rast: yeah, I've it's a unique background to be half Japanese, half Swiss in Japantown. I think it's becoming a lot more.

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00:01:57.993 --> 00:02:04.913

Tamiko Rast: you know, a lot of the mixed *hapas* are coming out in force. But yeah, that's that's our, that's my background.

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00:02:06.773 --> 00:02:10.553

Ekta Chitukuri: What was it like growing up during the time and place of your childhood?

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00:02:10.823 --> 00:02:30.483

Tamiko Rast: It was pretty neat, I mean, it was a standard. I'm a standard eighties kid. You know what I mean, Nintendo, skating outside, biking around the neighborhood. I hung out here in Japantown. I grew up in downtown. My, my, our family home is actually where the arena site is. So we were eminent domained

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00:02:30.483 --> 00:02:41.503

Tamiko Rast: by the arena and had to, we actually picked up our Victorian house and moved it to another part of San Jose. But when I was being babysat by my grandparents, I hung out in Japantown.

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00:02:41.603 --> 00:02:51.603

Tamiko Rast: and so you know it was, you know, just kind of running around driving my grandparents nuts, you know. Because my grandpa had the gas station. He had this

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00:02:51.643 --> 00:03:08.942

Tamiko Rast: little ding-ding, we call it the ding-ding bell, like it was this little hose that would let you know that the cars would come into the station, and one of our favorite things was just jump up and down on that thing until he told us to knock it off, you know. So, it was. It was pretty fun being down here.

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00:03:09.333 --> 00:03:11.762

Tamiko Rast: yeah, it was. It was a nice place.

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00:03:12.553 --> 00:03:24.352

Brisa Micik: And during that time did you have like a firm community you felt connected to and like. Were there places that you felt like a sense of belonging like places you went to as a child, that you still go to these days.

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00:03:24.503 --> 00:03:45.523

Tamiko Rast: Kind of kind of it's so. It, I love being down here. But there was. There was also this tension from being a *mixed kid*, you know. There were comments made probably by, you know, internment survivors that, you know, were a little bit derogatory [she nervously laughs]. You know, [we did feel less than](#)

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00:03:45.603 --> 00:04:05.453

Tamiko Rast: compared to some of the fully 100 Japanese kids. And so there was always a little bit of that that tension there. So, I love being here. I loved running around going to like [Kogura Company](#), which is still here, or [Nikaku Arts](#), which is still here. You know I, my grandparents

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00:04:05.733 --> 00:04:19.482

Tamiko Rast: had an apartment complex next to the gas station, and I used to sit and watch the barbershop in the from the front window and just sit there and watch this guy named Sam Dakota cut hair, and he's he retired, you know

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00:04:19.613 --> 00:04:24.002

Tamiko Rast: those. But those were some of my favorite memories. I love being here. But there was also that.

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00:04:24.033 --> 00:04:29.142

Tamiko Rast: you know, kind of unspoken thing where every now and then somebody would say, something's

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00:04:29.213 --> 00:04:41.172

Tamiko Rast: very derogatory about, you know. Oh, yeah. Well, you you you're not like the other ones, or, you know, made us feel a little less, and that that part I didn't much care for.

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00:04:43.653 --> 00:04:48.733

Sarah Galtman: Can you talk about your teenage years? Did you join a community or group with similar interests?

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00:04:48.973 --> 00:04:53.492

Tamiko Rast: No, I wasn't at all involved in Japan my teenage years.

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00:04:53.813 --> 00:05:13.323

Tamiko Rast: during that time we were busy re renovating my parents' house, you know, cause we had moved it from the arena site to like the outskirts of Willow Glen and it. We were dealing with a lot of stuff in regards to problems, with the city problems, with redevelopment agency.

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00:05:13.422 --> 00:05:14.743

Tamiko Rast: we were

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00:05:15.023 --> 00:05:20.352

Tamiko Rast: virtually homeless. For 3 years, you know, we lived in our garage and then had

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00:05:20.373 --> 00:05:35.773

Tamiko Rast: meals in a trailer, and we had an outhouse out front for three years, so that whole time was spent trying to survive and just get through things that those were my early teenage years from like 10 to 13

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00:05:35.893 --> 00:05:49.022

Tamiko Rast: and then, by the time I was 15, my parents decided to adopt, and then all of our emphasis was on raising the kids. My siblings are all special needs.

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00:05:49.353 --> 00:06:16.852

Tamiko Rast: kids that, you know, came from the area their parents, unfortunately, were were addicted to drugs. So, we had some unique challenges in raising them. And, you know, bring them into the family. So that was that was all we did was just work on the house, the family and I was also home schooled at that time, so I wasn't really going out or doing anything outside of the house.

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00:06:17.113 --> 00:06:22.873

Tamiko Rast: I got my GED equivalent when I was 15, and by the time I was

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00:06:22.903 --> 00:06:38.343

Tamiko Rast: 15 and a half I went to City College, so by then I was focused on going to college so, my attachment or participation in anything civic or Japantown was negligible at that time.

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00:06:39.553 --> 00:07:04.942

Tamiko Rast: And how did the transition from young adulthood shape your participation in like the communities that matter to you, like what has change and what has stayed the same for you it. I think the realization really occurred in my twenties. So, when I was about 25, I you know my brother, my sister and I were the eldest three. Wanted to move out, we, I mean, we

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00:07:05.033 --> 00:07:18.253

Tamiko Rast: were working to, you know, with my dad's construction company. We were raising the kids, our kids, you know. And but we were like, Okay, it's time to get out, you know. And honestly,

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00:07:18.783 --> 00:07:25.003

Tamiko Rast: [rent's expensive here](#), you know, it's impossible to find a place to live. That's it's still true.

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00:07:25.033 --> 00:07:45.382

Tamiko Rast: Almost 20 years later, you know. And so I had reached out to my cousin and inquired about a space above [Gombe restaurant](#). And that's where I am right now, I said. Hey! Can we rent this space and live here? And at the time my brother and I had kind of started our

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00:07:45.493 --> 00:08:07.492

Tamiko Rast: website design business. So, we were doing that in my parents' basement, and we needed a place where we could also live and work. And so we we moved here. And at the time my mom [[Carole Rast](#)] was like, "Why, why are you going to Japantown? I do not understand this move because," she goes. "You weren't treated great as a kid. Why do you want to come back?" and I said, what

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00:08:07.603 --> 00:08:13.323

Tamiko Rast: [it's cheap rent](#). I need to go someplace, you know. So that's it wasn't

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00:08:13.493 --> 00:08:29.203

Tamiko Rast: until like a couple of years in of being here that I realized, oh, my goodness, there's there's something here that I need to to take care of and appreciate. You know it's not like I didn't appreciate it before, but the gravity of realizing this is where you're you're

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00:08:29.283 --> 00:08:37.073

Tamiko Rast: great-grandparents. Great, great grandparents are from or died, you know. You kind of go. Wow! There's like

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00:08:37.373 --> 00:08:45.713

Tamiko Rast: I belong here, you know, cause I'd I'd always anticipated that by my mid twenties I was. This was just a quick landing spot before I moved to San Francisco.

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00:08:45.783 --> 00:09:01.412

Tamiko Rast: It really didn't. I was kind of a late bloomer, and and seeing the importance of of remaining here. And so that's kind of what changes I and I don't even know what it specifically was, but it kind of dawned on me, and I was like, Oh.

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00:09:01.463 --> 00:09:07.752

Tamiko Rast: oh, no, we're part of something here. So that that's what happened in our like mid-twenties.

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00:09:13.493 --> 00:09:28.962

Faye Garcia: Can you talk about a community? Your most part? Most recently felt shocked. Sense of belonging. Did you experience growing up? Shape the work you do with your current community life and do connect cultural workers to the Japantown community.

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00:09:28.993 --> 00:09:57.342

Tamiko Rast: Okay? So Japan, is it for me like, I'm here 24/7. This is where I feel the strongest ties you know I live and work here on the same block. We eventually moved out of this office space. We kept it as an office. But I moved. I'm renting a place down the street. We open the coffee shop, and you know.

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00:09:57.543 --> 00:10:11.343

Tamiko Rast: literally I almost never leave like people laugh at me when they see me in downtown, or any other neighborhood, because they're like, you're just always in Japantown. And this is this is where I feel the strongest sense of community.

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00:10:11.763 --> 00:10:12.723

Tamiko Rast: it's

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00:10:13.103 --> 00:10:32.903

Tamiko Rast: [it really is like a small town](#), and that's what I'm appreciating about is that I know all my neighbors we like. It takes me thirty minutes to walk home, even though it's the same block, because you run into every neighbor you say. Hi! Check in, you know. God forbid! I walk in front of the coffee shop, and then that I get stopped. Another, you know. Amount of time.

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00:10:32.983 --> 00:10:54.503

Tamiko Rast: But it it truly is home, and the sense of community is very, very strong here. Everybody knows everybody else. I think to some degree that my mom was kind of cautioning on that like when we moved here like your life is, [gonna be under a microscope](#). How are you gonna like it? And I

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00:10:54.903 --> 00:11:05.162

Tamiko Rast: I'm totally fine with that you know what I mean. It's, I have no problem with it. Everybody knows everybody's business. It's it's it really is an extended family.

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00:11:05.233 --> 00:11:11.632

Tamiko Rast: And so you asked, How does it shape the work I do? It's not really.

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00:11:11.643 --> 00:11:24.022

Tamiko Rast: It kinda is not related like the the business that I have with my brother doing website. Design is almost like a separate entity. I mean, we do have. We do have some nonprofit clients within the community.

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00:11:24.203 --> 00:11:45.123

Tamiko Rast: Broad is helping people out with, you know, technical stuff or web stuff, but it's almost like that's truly secondary to the civic stuff that we do. You know my brother and my father and my sister sweep Japantown every morning like they sweep Jackson Street from Fourth to Sixth.

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00:11:45.313 --> 00:11:47.802

Tamiko Rast: I run the [farmer's market](#)

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00:11:48.103 --> 00:11:52.383

Tamiko Rast: from May to to October.

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00:11:52.603 --> 00:12:10.132

Tamiko Rast: every every person in this family volunteers almost to a kind of ridiculous degree. So I would say that it's it's the civic participation that informs more of the life than than the corporate work does. [Corporate stuff pays the bills](#). You know what I mean?

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00:12:10.143 --> 00:12:18.782

Tamiko Rast: and then asked. Do I connect cultural workers to the Japan town community? Can you clarify that question? What does that mean?

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00:12:20.483 --> 00:12:27.033

Steve Nava: I can actually clarify it? Actually, cause. I know that you did. You did some mural projects with the community

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00:12:27.223 --> 00:12:49.872

Tamiko Rast: oh, yeah, the Japan Mural project I was tasked by the office of cultural affairs to do a mural around what is now 6th and Jackson an apartment complex a block away, and the contract and discussion phase went so long that by the time it was they I had to meet the deadline.

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00:12:50.193 --> 00:12:57.392

Tamiko Rast: It was not possible for me to create something to span a quarter of the city block. We were talking about over 60 panels

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00:12:57.623 --> 00:13:05.812

Tamiko Rast: to wrap Sixth Street, and then Jackson Street and I was. I was freaking out. I literally just lost my mind because I was like

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00:13:06.063 --> 00:13:13.563

Tamiko Rast: I wanted to do a good job, but it wasn't possible to create 60 individual pieces of artwork for the parcel.

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00:13:13.613 --> 00:13:28.123

Tamiko Rast: And so what I had done was I reached out to all the folks that I knew in Japan that either worked here, lived here, created art here, had studio space here, and asked everyone to be part of this and

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00:13:28.293 --> 00:13:42.392

Tamiko Rast: had fifty unique artists. We I got artists from the middle school, you know the the former Brunette Middle School is now Muwuekme Ohlone. They created a panel, and and

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00:13:42.492 --> 00:13:47.723

Tamiko Rast: by spreading it out it was it wasn't an intention to

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00:13:47.742 --> 00:14:06.932

Tamiko Rast: relieve myself of work as much as I just thought it'd be cool to see other people's stuff, too, and inadvertently it made this huge project that everyone felt really proud about, and and it further reinforced their commitment or their feeling towards Japan.

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00:14:07.133 --> 00:14:14.733

Tamiko Rast: so that that part was pretty cool. [I didn't expect it to go to be as powerful as it was to the people who participated in it.](#)

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00:14:16.283 --> 00:14:34.242

Faye Garcia: Has the community space into Japantown changed over time, and if it has, how has it affected the community members? And did you see Covid have an effect on the

community? And I know that you mentioned Roy's coffee shop. Have you seen any generational mom and pop stores close like that over time?

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00:14:34.423 --> 00:14:44.912

Tamiko Rast: Yes, over time. This place has become a lot more diverse and more inclusionary, I mean, I remember I was really proud

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00:14:45.003 --> 00:14:46.813

Tamiko Rast: the first time I saw

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00:14:46.993 --> 00:15:12.652

Tamiko Rast: a gay couple holding hands, walking down the street in Japantown, and I was like, we've finally reached a point where people feel safe to be themselves here, and that had I didn't think that was even possible. You know what I mean. There are growing pains as things change, because there, we've got our old guard and new guard. We've got some folks who don't want to see things change too much, and I understand that.

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00:15:13.533 --> 00:15:42.583

Tamiko Rast: But there, there's always a little. Sometimes there's a little tinge of nationalism with that. And I wanna be respectful of fact that yeah, I would love to see more Japanese businesses here. I wanna see more of the ex. The legacy business owners continue to pass things down generationally to their grandkids. But I also wanna make sure that there's space for other people. And so we all the new business owners here are Filipino, Korean, Hispanic...

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00:15:42.813 --> 00:16:06.793

Tamiko Rast: we've got, and it's amazing. It's I think it's the most one of the most diverse neighborhoods that you could be part of. So I wanna make sure that you know you've got one hand in the past and then also look towards future without making anyone feel unseen or unheard. But so part of my role is, you know, with the JBA. Is to make sure

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00:16:06.803 --> 00:16:12.183

Tamiko Rast: that everyone is kind of happy. Maybe, like you just acknowledge the feelings.

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00:16:12.343 --> 00:16:24.542

Tamiko Rast: dear things in a certain way that the new businesses take guidance. Really. Well, I always give them the parameters of what Old Guard expects, and how to make things right to

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00:16:24.733 --> 00:16:25.823

Tamiko Rast: you know.

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00:16:25.973 --> 00:16:52.952

Tamiko Rast: Make sure that they don't mistakenly offend anybody. You know what I mean. There, there are certain things that we have to be respectful of, that historically, I think, are important, and it's not even about respecting Japanese Americans. But historically, this place, these feelings, that and the new, the new guard. They're totally cool with adopting, you know these parameters. So. it goes as well as I think anything could.

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00:16:52.953 --> 00:17:04.863

Tamiko Rast: Covid strained a lot of the businesses financially, I mean, none of them closed because of Covid, as far as I can tell, but it did prompt some early retirements.

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00:17:05.033 --> 00:17:15.813

Tamiko Rast: you know some of these things just didn't make it into the news where you know I businesses had been on the fence for a little while, and that just kind of pushed him over the edge.

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00:17:16.033 --> 00:17:17.163

Tamiko Rast: so

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00:17:17.703 --> 00:17:19.322

Tamiko Rast: yeah, that that

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00:17:19.583 --> 00:17:47.402

Tamiko Rast: everyone's still, I think, feeling the effects of it. You know what I mean, and it's mainly not covid per se. It's inflation. It's staffing. It's really hard to find staff right now. Cost of goods is very expensive, you know, for a while, like for voice. We couldn't get straws. Couldn't get plastic cups, you know things like that. So I think thing people are starting to feel a little bit better about stuff. We're starting to come out of it a little bit more. So

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00:17:47.503 --> 00:17:49.433

Tamiko Rast: yeah, I'm I'm optimistic.

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00:17:53.393 --> 00:17:55.073

Faye Garcia: What does he, oops.

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00:17:57.403 --> 00:18:00.393

Faye Garcia: you got this? [Faye allows Omar to ask the next question]

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00:18:00.613 --> 00:18:15.613

Omar Servacio: Yeah. Hi, I was gonna ask, what does it mean to belong in a community. I know you talked about how different. You know, diversity and inclusivity has happened in Japan Town. But what does it mean to belong in in that community.

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00:18:15.963 --> 00:18:30.472

Tamiko Rast: I think it means a different thing for everybody. We've got our business owners, we have our residents, we have people who come visit, but I think the people who are the most embedded in the community live and work here. And I think we have a pretty high pop.

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00:18:30.483 --> 00:18:42.083

Tamiko Rast: High percentage of people who both live and work here, and I think it informs them in a different way than people who just come in. And I'm even speaking about like Japanese Americans, who

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00:18:42.113 --> 00:18:53.002

Tamiko Rast: like maybe they grew up here and went to the church here, went to Obon festival, went to [Nikkei Matsuri](#), but then they lived someplace else. So they only come back during festivals, and

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00:18:53.583 --> 00:19:05.513

Tamiko Rast: I'm trying to get more of them to actually be here, because there's the day-to-day things that only the people who live and work here pick up on. You know what I mean. So

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00:19:05.963 --> 00:19:25.012

Tamiko Rast: we have anything from, you know, people volunteering, volunteering on a daily basis with [Yu-Ai Kai](#) giving out meals to seniors, to running some of the retail stores. I mean, those are some of the most deeply connected community members. And then you have people who

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00:19:25.033 --> 00:19:42.002

Tamiko Rast: that that whole spectrum, the people who come here on the weekends and enjoy going to Nijiya or pick up some shave ice and everybody's welcome. It's there's no, not a greater importance assigned to people who live and work here. I just think that they're they're

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00:19:42.393 --> 00:19:45.962

Tamiko Rast: their knowledge of what's actually happening here is a little bit more informed.

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00:19:48.343 --> 00:19:52.173

Ekta Chilukuri: How do you account for the changing sense of community in Japan?

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00:19:52.743 --> 00:19:55.353

Tamiko Rast: It's it.

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00:19:55.363 --> 00:20:19.012

Tamiko Rast: It's popular. It's becoming popular. I think social media has made a big difference in changing who comes to visit here like in the nineties. We were always told that Japantown almost died like you could lay down in the middle of Jackson Street in the middle of the day and nobody run over would run you over for like hours. You know it was that much of a ghost town?

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00:20:19.313 --> 00:20:20.523

Tamiko Rast: and

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00:20:20.913 --> 00:20:34.553

Tamiko Rast: you know, little by little, you know we have coffee shop. We have new businesses coming in. We have a influx of new residents, and that is, that's changing the dynamic significantly. So

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00:20:34.663 --> 00:21:04.062

Tamiko Rast: good and bad. I mean, I think that the great part, is that there a whole new generation of people appreciating Japantown, coming to visit learning about Japanese culture putting on kimonos. I mean, it's not an appropriation thing put on a kimono. Come dance with us, you know, last year the Obon festival. This San Jose Obon festival got the record for the most dancers in a Continental US Obon.

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00:21:04.283 --> 00:21:18.363

Tamiko Rast: which is awesome, you know. I love to see that so. I think word of mouth has really taken off. And and it's it's interesting. When I leave the area and I'll go to downtown Willow Glen.

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00:21:18.383 --> 00:21:28.053

Tamiko Rast: Santa Clara. And people will say, Oh, yeah, I know about Japantown, whereas, like a few years ago, people were like, I didn't know there was a Japan town in San Jose.

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00:21:28.373 --> 00:21:52.202

Tamiko Rast: and we are one of the last three in the United States, and we're considered like one of the most historic, because we have all the old buildings still, and a lot of the same legacy businesses. But to see people come in and and you always tell when somebody's new, because they're walking around. They kinda like staring around, not, you know, watching where they're going. But yeah, I think

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00:21:52.863 --> 00:22:01.413

Tamiko Rast: every everything's adding up. I think there's a group of people who feel comfortable coming back now that it's more diverse like us *hapa* kids

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00:22:01.513 --> 00:22:12.032

Tamiko Rast: We're coming back. Some of the grandkids are coming back. We've got a new audience coming back, finding it through social media or through their friends.

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00:22:12.073 --> 00:22:20.612

Tamiko Rast: So yeah, there's there's a lot of things at play. But I it. It's definitely changing from year to year as far as

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00:22:20.913 --> 00:22:25.412

Tamiko Rast: Who's here? Who's moving here? We see a lot more people moving here.

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00:22:25.483 --> 00:22:28.752

Tamiko Rast: yeah, it's it's pretty neat.

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00:22:29.783 --> 00:22:51.252

Tamiko Rast: And what places do you find yourself like going to nowadays like I'm just here. I'm here all day long, like, if I have a business meeting it'll be at Roy's. It might be at [Jtown Pizza](#). You'll find me at [Kaita](#) to having dinner, you know. Like it. It's just everything's here. And then

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00:22:51.403 --> 00:23:02.182

Tamiko Rast: I try to find I try to bring in folks that I think will get along here and like want to open businesses in things that I want, you know. So

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00:23:02.363 --> 00:23:04.512

Tamiko Rast: for example, we've got

113

00:23:04.593 --> 00:23:24.762

Tamiko Rast: a breakfast space a breakfast place that will be opening in the next couple of years. We finally have a pizza parlor, you know. Jtown pizza. I've always wanted a pizza place. Yeah, a pizza place down here. With. I've even encouraged another coffee company to come in

114

00:23:24.873 --> 00:23:42.272

Tamiko Rast: even though we have a coffee shop, or my parents have a coffee shop. There's another coffee vendor that I want to bring in, because he's a good person. As a friend. He's kind of. He gets the whole dynamic of what we're trying to build here. So anyone who I think, gets the sense of community and

115

00:23:42.493 --> 00:23:53.323

Tamiko Rast: understands what it means to to not just try to [suck the life out of an area and profit off of it, but be part of it in a positive way.](#)

116

00:23:53.603 --> 00:23:56.783

Tamiko Rast: That's where I'm gonna be. That's what I'm encouraging to come in.

117

00:23:58.303 --> 00:24:03.232

Faye Garcia: One interest we have is learning what you think the future of Japantown should be like.

118

00:24:04.093 --> 00:24:07.072

Tamiko Rast: okay, what it should be like there. Okay.

119

00:24:07.703 --> 00:24:08.902

Tamiko Rast: she would be like

120

00:24:09.083 --> 00:24:27.602

Tamiko Rast: should 'behave.' That's one that's one big thing that I really care deeply about. I'm kind of. I'm kind of a jerk about that. It's a matter of being respectful. I can't say that everyone's 100 on this, but I really do impart the belief that if you're gonna be here, don't be a jerk

121

00:24:27.763 --> 00:24:31.283

Tamiko Rast: We've we have a couple of entities.

122

00:24:31.323 --> 00:24:33.182

Tamiko Rast: That

123

00:24:34.153 --> 00:24:45.362

Tamiko Rast: just don't play by the rules, you know. I mean, during Covid we had a shooting, you know, at an illegal nightclub here that was very destructive, you know. I

124

00:24:45.453 --> 00:25:04.743

Tamiko Rast: you know, for the most part you want to see people do what they can to make a living. You know what I mean. You want to respect their boundaries, but if anybody's doing anything that harms their neighbor, or causes conflict or stokes racial tensions

125

00:25:06.173 --> 00:25:08.343

Tamiko Rast: I just I can't.

126

00:25:08.433 --> 00:25:33.353

Tamiko Rast: I am not cool with that. So that's what my feeling is is what Japan should be. It should be a place where people feel safe. People can be themselves. They can, you know. Gay couples can walk down the street holding hands. You can dress up in a furry costume. I don't care. You know what I mean. Come down from [Furcon](#) or anime. I don't care but be respectful.

127

00:25:33.373 --> 00:25:42.692

Tamiko Rast: I want it to be clean. We care very much about cleanliness, you know, with our family cleaning Japantown every day, we're really on on

128

00:25:42.853 --> 00:26:01.163

Tamiko Rast: respecting each other's spaces, making sure it stays clean, and people don't leave dog shit or things like that. You know what I mean. Be a good neighbor, that's what I think the future of Japan should look like if it if it sways a little bit more Japanese or a little Filipino, you know, bring in some more cultural businesses. I'm cool with that

129

00:26:01.313 --> 00:26:07.353

Tamiko Rast: but it's just a matter of just like I would like to see harmony where this

130

00:26:07.843 --> 00:26:17.693

Tamiko Rast: [I want it to be a model for the other parts of San Jose](#), where you can have appreciation for all these cultural differences and yet everyone gets along.

131

00:26:17.773 --> 00:26:26.393

Tamiko Rast: you know, nobody feels like oh, I can't go there because I'm not Japanese. I really don't want any of that type of feeling down here.

132

00:26:27.833 --> 00:26:37.143

Tamiko Rast: So what, however, it looks like I don't know, but it just has to have that vibe. You know what I mean. You gotta feel like you're coming down here. You can enjoy the place. You enjoy the food you enjoy the festivities.

133

00:26:37.273 --> 00:26:40.453

Tamiko Rast: and you know nobody's gonna be looking down their nose at you.

134

00:26:43.243 --> 00:26:49.192

Sarah Galtman: Do you have any questions about this interview process, or did it bring anything to mind that we didn't cover

135

00:26:49.763 --> 00:27:02.182

Tamiko Rast: Well, I was just kinda curious. Who else? I do know of another friend that you all talk to and I'm curious. What are you gaining out of this? And in talking to individuals?

136

00:27:04.813 --> 00:27:17.332

Faye Garcia: For me, personally? I think just the different perspectives from the community members in Japan and getting like gaining an understanding of how we should.

137

00:27:17.453 --> 00:27:33.413

Faye Garcia: I guess, interact with other people, but also give me an understanding of just the historical and cultural context of where we live, especially with sounds like such a diverse place. And just using also just meeting a bunch of really cool individuals who are really passionate about what they do.

138

00:27:33.933 --> 00:27:35.253

Tamiko Rast: Oh, that's neat.

139

00:27:35.313 --> 00:28:01.503

Brisa Micik: And I think that. So what's kind of weird is, I guess I didn't put this together. I in like, when I was 15, we had this project actually about Japantown and I, me and a group of other [Santa Teresa](#) students went to Roy's Coffee Station. I think we interviewed your mom like so I don't know. Like

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00:28:01.513 --> 00:28:04.842

Brisa Micik: like Santa Teresa's students are still doing that or

141

00:28:05.463 --> 00:28:17.922

Tamiko Rast: years. It's been a few years since my mom's talked to a class, but that was really cool. I you know, that was when that started happening. I was really thrilled. So I'm glad that you're I mean.

142

00:28:17.993 --> 00:28:21.803

Tamiko Rast: So that was important, very informative for you. I guess

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00:28:21.943 --> 00:28:29.403

Brisa Micik: it was just. It was really cool to like dissect another another culture like cause

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00:28:29.473 --> 00:28:32.422

Brisa Micik: I went to like the [Mexican Heritage Plaza](#) as a kid.

145

00:28:32.573 --> 00:28:38.933

Brisa Micik: So it was interesting to like talk about another culture and another group like history.

146

00:28:38.953 --> 00:28:45.972

Brisa Micik: And it was just it was just a cool thing. I don't know where that voice memo is. But like I have a few process somewhere.

147

00:28:46.183 --> 00:29:13.373

Tamiko Rast: Oh, that's super cool. Yeah, I'm I mean, we got friends who work at MHP. We are really tied in with MHP, so I mean, it's I love seeing this collaborative process between the different areas, because I mean, I'm old enough. I remember when there were certain parts of town you just didn't really want to go to certain times of day, or you were warned against it, you know your parents would tell you. Oh, you know, don't hang out here, and

148

00:29:13.543 --> 00:29:34.042

Tamiko Rast: even in Japantown I wasn't allowed to go to [7 Bamboo](#) like when I was, you know in my early twenties just stuff like that. And it's nice that I think. we're we're change. Everybody's changing that dynamic a little bit. You know what I mean like it's it. Every place feels a little bit more welcoming than it did when we were growing up.

149

00:29:37.283 --> 00:30:02.213

Sarah Galtman: I think for me, what I like about this is that? Yeah. Insights into different communities. Cause for me. I'm originally from Gilroy, where you know I'm 33 years old. And so when I was younger it was still like, I mean, it's extended a lot, but it's still pretty small when I was younger just to see like the similarities like, Oh, yeah, like everyone knew each other's business, you know, like the different storefronts and everything like, Oh, I went to high school with that guy and stuff like that. So, it's kind of cool to see that

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00:30:02.363 --> 00:30:08.692

Sarah Galtman: the parallels so like San Jose, is bigger than yours. But you still have those, you know, in like, you know, your area.

151

00:30:08.853 --> 00:30:11.523

Sarah Galtman: So I think that's really cool

152

00:30:12.063 --> 00:30:40.523

Tamiko Rast: that totally and sounds it really is a smaller town than anyone anticipates like you throw a stone. You're gonna hit somebody, you know, through 6 degrees of separation. It's it's just. And you know, the more you get out and talk to folks. You go. Oh, my God! It's a good thing I'm not misbehaving, or anything, because, like this person knows my cousin, who dated my friend, like it all comes background. So it really is the biggest small town you can imagine.

153

00:30:40.523 --> 00:30:49.933

Tamiko Rast: and I feel like Gilroy is I mean, it's growing so much right now, and so many of my friends are moving from San Jose to Gilroy. And you know it's

154

00:30:50.643 --> 00:30:52.882

Tamiko Rast: yeah it. It's cool. It's cool to see.

155

00:30:57.372 --> 00:31:15.402

Faye Garcia: I have another question. I'm just really curious about have you? How's your relationship, I guess, with other business associations, or kind of your, like the [Japantown Business Association](#) relationship with, like the City Council, or know your guy's, [Council Member Omar Torres](#). So I'm just more curious on that

156

00:31:15.743 --> 00:31:27.872

Tamiko Rast: we're good. We're, I mean, I've talked to the [Downtime Association](#) on a semi regular basis. I've got friends who work for the SJBA. So we we

157

00:31:27.943 --> 00:31:42.292

Tamiko Rast: it. It only helps. If people talk to each other. You know what I mean. We've got friends with the [Will Glenn Business Association](#) and I'm actually being pulled into talk to other business improvement districts. To

158

00:31:42.533 --> 00:31:53.923

Tamiko Rast: kinda I wouldn't. I don't know if I'd say advise them, but just offer them our perspectives because we have a budget of next to nothing. All the things that we're doing here are completely volunteer.

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00:31:54.053 --> 00:32:07.642

Tamiko Rast: My role is volunteer. Our Board's role is volunteer. The [farmer's market](#) is run by volunteers. You know, so I think people are kind of like, how do you do this with no money, you know?

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00:32:07.643 --> 00:32:34.952

Tamiko Rast: and being able to say, well, this is what we've learned over certain amount of time. It only benefits the everybody else in San Jose. We don't want to go. Oh, look! Japantown is so cool! Everybody else is having a hard time. That that just doesn't do. That doesn't help anyone. So, for example, I went to another business association and there it's all very grassroots. They're like, okay, what do we? What would you focus on? And I'm like cleanliness. Number one, I said.

161

00:32:35.003 --> 00:32:46.603

Tamiko Rast: get out there and sweep in front of your stores something super basic, right, you know. But just sweep to the curb. People don't want to go someplace that's not clean. This is why people.

162

00:32:46.673 --> 00:32:49.113

Tamiko Rast: for all of its it's, you know.

163

00:32:49.263 --> 00:32:56.802

Tamiko Rast: issues, [Santana Row](#). A nice place to go. You walk around. You're not gonna step in mud, you know it. It's

164

00:32:57.053 --> 00:33:01.392

Tamiko Rast: you want to go to a place where? And I say, wash your front windows.

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00:33:01.433 --> 00:33:27.552

Tamiko Rast: Nobody wants to go into a store that has crappy windows, you know, because it's almost like the whole vision of what you're offering. If you can't take like, if you're not gonna welcome people on the outside of your store, they're not gonna feel welcome when they go in. You don't wanna have like it's all cool to have this hole in the wall place where you go. Oh, once you go in, it's so lively and clean. But if it's dirty on the outside, you're not gonna get that new audience, so I always say.

166

00:33:27.553 --> 00:33:33.513

Tamiko Rast: and it doesn't cost anything to do that to go outside, get a broom, sweep your front step.

167

00:33:33.513 --> 00:33:41.852

Tamiko Rast: wash your front windows. Basic stuff like that, and then get to know your neighbors, you know. Keep an eye out for your neighbors, you know. So

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00:33:42.033 --> 00:33:43.403

Tamiko Rast: it's

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00:33:43.963 --> 00:33:50.983

Tamiko Rast: yeah, I whenever it comes to collaborating with other business districts, I do my best

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00:33:51.133 --> 00:34:13.452

Tamiko Rast: and hopefully, at some point, you know, we can pass the torch, I don't plan to be in this position forever. I really don't wanna be it. It needs to go to the younger generation needs to go to somebody else, and they can take their vision and go with it. But I think there's certain things that always remain true. People wanna go someplace clean. So

171

00:34:14.213 --> 00:34:35.973

Tamiko Rast: you know, whatever that takes, you know, extra brooms, extra cleaning extra mops. I don't know, but that's what I tell most starting business districts that are starting out, you know, like my dad was cleaning graffiti long before the city was even subsidizing that they still don't. He walks around with acetone. He's got all this stuff. He cleans it off, you know it. That's just what we do.

172

00:34:36.033 --> 00:34:39.042

Tamiko Rast: So. And I think that's what people like to see

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00:34:42.863 --> 00:34:54.752

Steve Nava: one. One question I could add to that as an added question is what is your sense of the challenges in terms of cross-generational organizing around preserving the community

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00:34:55.073 --> 00:34:57.993

Steve Nava: as being, you know, locally owned?

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00:34:58.233 --> 00:35:07.713

Steve Nava: Do you see certain differences in perspective in terms of how things should look and how

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00:35:07.893 --> 00:35:09.832

Steve Nava: you should move forward as a community.

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00:35:10.153 --> 00:35:34.833

Tamiko Rast: Oh, yeah, [there's always a difference intergenerationally](#). So, there was when we first started out. I used to hear this complaint a lot like, Oh, well, Japantown needs to look more Japanese, and then I turn right back around and go. Okay, so do your grandkids own a business here? When's the last time they were here helping clean, they're like, "Oh, yeah, I guess," it's like you can't...

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00:35:34.833 --> 00:36:01.763

Tamiko Rast: like I laugh whenever I see somebody on Reddit saying, Oh, Japantown is so not Japanese anymore. And I'm like, I can't force people to open Japanese businesses here like, I can't force somebody to go into the restaurant business, which is, you know, the one of the hardest businesses you can go into and go. Oh, by the way, I like I got a wish list. Don't get me wrong. I would love to see another Udon place. I would wanna see another yakitori place. I would like this

179

00:36:01.763 --> 00:36:26.982

Tamiko Rast: like, yeah, it would benefit me to have a variety of Japanese foods here, but I can't force somebody to do that. Whoever wants to come in wants to come in, and is willing to put the money towards infrastructure. And you know it's just a massive endeavor, especially with the difficulty it is to open a business in San Jose. So, whenever I hear like a perspective from

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00:36:27.093 --> 00:36:33.892

Tamiko Rast: maybe 40 to 50 years old, and I'm just going, "Things are different now," like I even spoke with

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00:36:34.123 --> 00:36:50.892

Tamiko Rast: with a landlord who used to have a restaurant about 40 years ago, and he goes, "I don't understand why this business isn't making money," and I said you ran a restaurant 40 years ago. The margins are not like they are now. You can't use that same metric

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00:36:50.963 --> 00:36:55.642

Tamiko Rast: any more to determine somebody's availability or their success.

183

00:36:55.673 --> 00:37:07.583

Tamiko Rast: So you know, I'm kind of the loud one where if someone bitches about something else and they go, things are things are different now, let's be realistic, you know.

184

00:37:07.753 --> 00:37:26.063

Tamiko Rast: so if in it, then I tell him like so, would you rather have no businesses here? So you don't want? If let's say, you just want it to be Japanese that cuts out like 80% of Japantown, because even the Japanese businesses are sometimes run by Filipinos, Hispanic families and so forth.

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00:37:26.163 --> 00:37:40.132

Tamiko Rast: So what does it matter? You know what I mean? So, the main thing is that we have a lively and robust area that it still honors its heritage. It doesn't have to be all Japanese, you know. And so

186

00:37:40.713 --> 00:37:47.032

Tamiko Rast: the with regards to sustainability, [I think it's gonna be harder and harder for](#)

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00:37:47.423 --> 00:37:53.662

Tamiko Rast: [private entities to maintain businesses here, because it's not](#)

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00:37:53.673 --> 00:37:55.193

Tamiko Rast: [financially reasonable.](#)

189

00:37:55.323 --> 00:38:09.893

Tamiko Rast: [corporations are able to buy in bulk. They're able to negotiate low rents.](#) That may not always be the case here. You know what I mean. So my main

190

00:38:10.013 --> 00:38:18.443

Tamiko Rast: concern about the sustainability of this area is [maintaining small businesses and so individual landlords.](#) So

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00:38:18.673 --> 00:38:27.162

Tamiko Rast: you know how that, how we're able to make that work? I'm racking my brain on it. I'm I do want to establish

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00:38:27.483 --> 00:38:36.473

Tamiko Rast: a **land trust**, you know, so that that we have **community-owned buildings here. And it's not for residences. It's mainly it's for businesses.**

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00:38:36.593 --> 00:38:43.802

Tamiko Rast: Because everybody down here. Ha! This is their side gig outside of the restaurant tours.

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00:38:43.803 --> 00:39:06.782

Tamiko Rast: Literally, everybody here has a real job. You know what I mean, and it gets to a point where it's really hard, like I I'm fried. I'm super burnt out trying to maintain a corporate job and the civic stuff and everyone down here is doing the same thing. It works in when you're in your twenties, and you got a little bit more energy. But by the time you hit your forties.

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00:39:06.913 --> 00:39:10.553

Tamiko Rast: you have kids, you have responsibilities, you

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00:39:10.663 --> 00:39:20.702

Tamiko Rast: you want to relax. You just don't have the same energy and maintaining that same ferocity is very difficult, so

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00:39:21.083 --> 00:39:29.123

Tamiko Rast: I always tell people like have a little bit of flexibility, have a little bit of understanding, because everybody here is working double shift. So

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00:39:29.603 --> 00:39:36.452

Tamiko Rast: you got a clothing store that's really a clothing store, but they really have another job. You know. How often can you say that like

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00:39:36.623 --> 00:39:45.502

Tamiko Rast: you go to a community where everyone's, you know, got two jobs and trying to maintain a front facing presence. It's not easy, you know.

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00:39:46.453 --> 00:39:47.223

Tamiko Rast: So

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00:39:47.373 --> 00:39:57.482

Steve Nava: you know. One suggestion was to get [grant funding to fund civic leaders](#) in the community. Do you think that would

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00:39:57.593 --> 00:40:01.353

Steve Nava: help so that they wouldn't have to spread themselves so thin?

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00:40:01.583 --> 00:40:04.002

Tamiko Rast: Yes, yeah, I do, because

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00:40:04.063 --> 00:40:25.862

Tamiko Rast: we don't have the same kind of engagement that we want, both in volunteerism and civic leadership. My role as the president of the JBA [Japanese Business Association]. I also just stepped down as Vice President of the Community Congress. I'm a Commissioner for the downtown parking board, so I can report back on our parking meters.

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00:40:26.073 --> 00:40:27.303

Tamiko Rast: and

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00:40:28.413 --> 00:40:34.723

Tamiko Rast: it's very hard to get other people to want to sign up for this stuff because they're taxed already, you know

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00:40:34.813 --> 00:40:50.732

Tamiko Rast: you don't get paid for this. You don't get paid to be on a board, but everybody here is is, you know, giving up their evenings and weekends, and trying to make it work for the sake of the neighborhood. And at a certain point it's not sustainable, you know.

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00:40:51.533 --> 00:40:56.403

Tamiko Rast: Somebody's gotta if the landlord's got to help out with their tenants by.

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00:40:56.423 --> 00:41:06.182

Tamiko Rast: if if they can, giving them lower rent so that they have that little extra bandwidth to donate back to the community. It could be the landlord's

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00:41:06.403 --> 00:41:09.513

Tamiko Rast: charging. The business is a little bit less

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00:41:09.603 --> 00:41:22.773

Tamiko Rast: for the rental spaces, so that there's a little bit more bandwidth. You know what I mean. Everybody can do a little bit of a little bit of something. But having some sort of Federal structure, or some sort of subsidy of

212

00:41:22.893 --> 00:41:31.463

Tamiko Rast: our leaders would be very helpful, because right now we're tax. We're taxing the same people over and over and over again. Expecting them to.

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00:41:31.543 --> 00:41:41.643

Tamiko Rast: you know, participate. Like I get emails and phone calls 24/7, where people like, "Can you join this meeting? Can you join that one? Can you give your feedback?" And I'm like, I'm

214

00:41:41.663 --> 00:41:48.322

Tamiko Rast: I'm gonna shoot off an email as quick as I can because I can't. I I'm literally, you know, I got

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00:41:48.563 --> 00:41:56.342

Tamiko Rast: not able to give more, and everybody in Japantown is in that same boat. They're they're already giving up too much.

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00:42:01.073 --> 00:42:09.203

Steve Nava: So, and answering your earlier question, we did interview [Rory Fukuda](#) and [Lynne Santo Yamaichi](#), and

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00:42:09.393 --> 00:42:14.632

Steve Nava: those are, you know, some elders that we? We were picking their brain, you know, about

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00:42:15.233 --> 00:42:22.413

Steve Nava: their experience growing up and you know, some of the topics that come up is the internment or the you know.

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00:42:22.623 --> 00:42:28.552

Steve Nava: the effects of that on the community, you know. Like we said Covid

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00:42:28.583 --> 00:42:31.893

Steve Nava: and just one of the sort of

221

00:42:32.143 --> 00:42:37.372

Steve Nava: big questions is, How do we work intergenerationally? But also, you know.

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00:42:37.573 --> 00:42:43.763

Steve Nava: how has maybe technology shaped some of this transformation of community and the meaning of community.

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00:42:43.953 --> 00:42:51.712

Steve Nava: And those are the kinds of the questions that come up. Maybe technology is something that you could talk just really briefly about, and how that plays a role in

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00:42:51.733 --> 00:42:55.502

Steve Nava: and sort of shaping the way that community plays out.

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00:42:56.553 --> 00:43:04.052

Tamiko Rast: I think you know, as far as sharing our our resources and stories. Technology has definitely helped.

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00:43:04.133 --> 00:43:15.903

Tamiko Rast: It's also a little bit of a stumbling block in the sense that everyone is having to change their procedures, you know, like the organizations are having to get tech savvy?

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00:43:15.923 --> 00:43:19.102

Tamiko Rast: And there are always, you know,

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00:43:19.503 --> 00:43:47.332

Tamiko Rast: stumbling blocks. With that, you know, getting everybody to have their their materials in a safe cloud storage, having everybody with appropriate permissions to you know the website to your back end documents, your formation documents, making sure that everyone understands how to use the emails properly. That's where you see the intergenerational, you know little bit of bubbles, you know, popping up

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00:43:48.273 --> 00:44:00.493

Tamiko Rast: as far as but but getting the word out there, there's no better, you know, tool. You know. I use Instagram. We use Facebook. We use Facebook for communication a lot.

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00:44:00.633 --> 00:44:21.882

Tamiko Rast: we have a group that we share notices with each other. That's way better than, and has a better engagement rate than email. You know what I mean. Emails just get lost. So people are using the tools appropriately. And I think it's helping them level up. But the learning curve is also a little trickier when it comes to orgs and stuff.

231

00:44:21.903 --> 00:44:51.333

Tamiko Rast: yeah, I mean, I love what Miss Lynn is doing. She's raising. She's raised so many of us, and she's it's it's cool to see my cousins, who were students at [Lotus](#) now bringing their kids in to be taught by her. I absolutely love. It makes me so happy. You know my nieces went to Lotus. You know. And then, [Rory \[Fukuda\]](#), he's he grew up with my parents, you know. So his father had a was it

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00:44:51.343 --> 00:45:05.803

Tamiko Rast: a barber on Jackson Street? And when his father passed, Rory gave me all of his father's barbering equipment. So I mean love that guy. Every everyone has their part in our history, you know. So.

233

00:45:06.933 --> 00:45:13.103

Steve Nava: And you said you are doing art, too, right as part of one year one year. Curriculum.

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00:45:13.183 --> 00:45:19.782

Tamiko Rast: Well, one of so whenever I can, I do graphic design, for you know, like the banners in Japan, I designed.

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00:45:19.813 --> 00:45:30.552

Tamiko Rast: I do some public arts projects when I can. I'm I have a tattoo studio that I occasionally work out of.

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00:45:30.713 --> 00:45:32.362

Tamiko Rast: yeah, I've I've covered in

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00:45:32.473 --> 00:45:46.743

Tamiko Rast: tattoos, you know. That's my thing. Yeah, I love. I love them. But I just. I need to spend more time tattooing. And then, you know I'm I'm a classically trained painter. These are my paintings. I, and that honestly, I do miss

238

00:45:46.973 --> 00:45:58.383

Tamiko Rast: doing more art because it doesn't pay the bills. You know I have to do the corporate stuff. but my hope is to get back into art a lot more. But

239

00:45:59.213 --> 00:46:01.183

Steve Nava: and do you think the

240

00:46:01.433 --> 00:46:05.023

Steve Nava: The aesthetic in Japan town reflects

241

00:46:06.003 --> 00:46:12.973

Steve Nava: kind of what you would like to see or do. You feel like there has to be some sort of so sort of cultural work around

242

00:46:13.023 --> 00:46:16.813

Steve Nava: an aesthetic that reflects both the old and the old and the new.

243

00:46:17.243 --> 00:46:19.273

Tamiko Rast: Hmm! That's a good question.

244

00:46:20.813 --> 00:46:22.313

Tamiko Rast: I think

245

00:46:23.603 --> 00:46:31.803

Tamiko Rast: I think it's done a pretty decent we're we're got a decent thing going on, you know what I mean. We have our monuments. The the

246

00:46:32.053 --> 00:46:40.742

Tamiko Rast: the priority over the last couple of years has been getting them back getting them repaired. We had our

247

00:46:40.973 --> 00:46:54.502

Tamiko Rast: Nikki lantern, which is that white angle that's on the corner. Fifth and Jackson that was had been. The lights have been dead for 10 years, if not longer than that. We we got that repaired with the help of Palmer Electric.

248

00:46:54.603 --> 00:47:03.532

Tamiko Rast: We've got our lanterns on Fifth and Taylor. Palmer Electric also donated the time to repair those

249

00:47:03.783 --> 00:47:22.273

Tamiko Rast: Empire 7 is constantly creating working with the landowners to have murals on the sides of their buildings, you know, getting getting the landlords to like. Let go a little bit and have artwork on the side of their building has been huge, so I don't know that we need to necessarily

250

00:47:22.533 --> 00:47:32.122

Tamiko Rast: do any more to honor the past. We have our our lanterns. We have the benches, the historic benches that tell the stories of the parcels that they sit in front of.

251

00:47:32.263 --> 00:47:45.982

Tamiko Rast: I feel like that's been covered in so many ways. We have monuments all over the place. So but we're we're also starting to get a lot more. The new new vibe in here, too, and I'm happy to see that. So

252

00:47:46.383 --> 00:47:48.133

Tamiko Rast: I haven't really

253

00:47:48.613 --> 00:48:05.322

Tamiko Rast: thought that we need to do more in terms of enhancing that so much as we're still kind of in repair mode, you know. I mean, there are storefronts that need new awnings. There are. We need sidewalks to be repaired. We are slowly taking out trees that are dying

254

00:48:05.333 --> 00:48:15.803

Tamiko Rast: need to be replaced. Things like that, just to to help with the general ambiance not necessarily make it more Japanese or more historic or anything like that.

255

00:48:16.883 --> 00:48:40.153

Steve Nava: Okay, wow, that's great. So we got a lot of interesting answers in in a very quick sort of energy Tamiko Rast way. Thank you so much for your time it's about to 2:19pm. Is there any anything last things anybody wants to say? Besides, thank you so much for for this

256

00:48:41.873 --> 00:48:43.393

Steve Nava: anybody wanna say anything?

257

00:48:43.453 --> 00:48:47.613

Sarah Galtman: I have a question. You mentioned tattoos. How long have you been tattooing

258

00:48:47.883 --> 00:48:49.372

Tamiko Rast: about a decade

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00:48:49.443 --> 00:48:57.222

Tamiko Rast: about a decade, and my, I got started because my friends saw that I was classically trained, and then they kind of forced me into it. So

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00:48:57.343 --> 00:49:01.953

Tamiko Rast: as soon as I started getting tattooed, they said, You know this is a natural fit for you.

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00:49:01.993 --> 00:49:09.302

Tamiko Rast: And I went through the process of you know I set up a shop. It's fully licensed, fully certified. And

262

00:49:09.343 --> 00:49:38.942

Tamiko Rast: you know, I probably only ink once a month. But I really do wanna get back into it. And it's just there. There's something about it that's a lot different than being in front of a computer. You know what I mean. You, you talk to people. You engage with them. It's very personal. There are, people tell. It's like therapy. You know what I mean. They tell me stuff that like nobody else knows, and I feel very honored that I'm part of that. So, and I'm not ashamed to tell people that's bad idea. Don't do that because it's not my.

263

00:49:38.943 --> 00:49:48.982

Tamiko Rast: It's not my main gig, so I will tell somebody that's don't do that. That's not a good idea. You're gonna regret that. Let's wait. You know, every everyone comes in through word of mouth.

264

00:49:49.303 --> 00:50:07.533

Tamiko Rast: I'm not on yelp, not on any one of those things. It's just. There's no signage. My shop is right on the other side of Roy's [Station]. you know. You know you can always find me somewhere in Japantown, and and I love that so I it's almost like growing with people. You know what I mean. I tattoo families, I tattoos

265

00:50:07.673 --> 00:50:14.283

Tamiko Rast: the kids of the people I work with at the city. You know what I mean stuff like that. I it's

266

00:50:14.573 --> 00:50:16.622

Tamiko Rast: I'm very grateful for that.

267

00:50:16.653 --> 00:50:20.693

Tamiko Rast: So that's super cool. That's awesome. Thanks.

268

00:50:21.343 --> 00:50:23.653

Ekta Chilukuri: I actually had a question.

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00:50:23.803 --> 00:50:33.512

Ekta Chilukuri: when your when your parents decided to adopt. Was that like a strange thing in your community at the time, like, did people have any reaction to it?

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00:50:33.863 --> 00:50:58.133

Tamiko Rast: Yeah, I would, I would have to say that there were family members that could not understand it, and our siblings are all mixed race. African American so that that caused some issues because people were like, you know, those are kuru-chan. Well, you know, black kids, and it's like didn't ultimately doesn't matter. You know what I mean, and my younger sister Crystal.

271

00:50:58.343 --> 00:51:18.192

Tamiko Rast: She is so she's more Japanese than I am. It's really neat to see. So she eats better with chopsticks. She knows how to cook Japanese food. She works here in Japan Town. She's I consider her like the next generation of leadership for Japantown. She's getting involved.

272

00:51:18.383 --> 00:51:25.103

Tamiko Rast: I think, she's joining the Japantown Neighborhood Association. And so, people, if

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00:51:25.623 --> 00:51:34.563

Tamiko Rast: let's let's face it like the folks who came out of internment had had the I wouldn't say the justification, but they had the reasons for hating pretty much a lot of folks.

274

00:51:34.673 --> 00:51:47.412

Tamiko Rast: Fair or not, and I don't want to dismiss those feelings, but I just I don't want to adopt them, either. You know what I mean. My grandparents weren't thrilled, but they came around

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00:51:47.483 --> 00:51:49.883

Tamiko Rast: and

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00:51:49.893 --> 00:52:09.193

Tamiko Rast: people find out. I think there, there's just a lot of fear that came out of internment where people are like. Well, we don't trust this person. We don't trust that

person, you know. Maybe this person was assigned to take care of the family's property, and then sold it out from under them. There's not. It was a lot of fearbased reactions to things. And then you've got.

277

00:52:09.323 --> 00:52:15.882

Tamiko Rast: you know, adoption. And people are just like well shit if they have a hard time acknowledging a mixed race

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00:52:16.073 --> 00:52:19.103

Tamiko Rast: pairing, how about, you know, adoption?

279

00:52:19.393 --> 00:52:28.663

Tamiko Rast: But ultimately, you know, I think, attitudes and perspectives towards all of those things have changed significantly last 20 years.