

Royal Return for Koriyama Curry Chefs

To the delight of their regular customers, Indian chefs **Dwarika Prasad** and **Ram Chandra Nautiyal** are back in the kitchen at the Royal India Restaurant in Koriyama, Fukushima Prefecture. Masaki Yamada presents this report.

During the weekday lunchtime rush, seating at the Royal India Restaurant is near capacity with regular customers. From families with small children in tow to company workers and the elderly, the restaurant's clientele spans a wide range of ages.

According to a company worker in his thirties who comes to dine at the restaurant once a week, "When I came here to have curry at the invitation of a friend, I was at once enthralled by the flavor and deep richness. Plus, since there are around forty different types of curry, from tomato-based to cashew-nut-based ones, you never grow tired of the menu."

Apart from being made slightly sweeter to suit the Japanese palate, the curries that Prasad and Nautiyal prepare are indeed no different from authentic Indian curries.

"We've also developed an original dish known as 'Carrot Nan,' which uses the extremely sweet carrots produced here in Koriyama, and this has also become a popular item on the menu," says the restaurant's owner, Yukiko Kadosawa.

The two chefs came to Royal India Restaurant in 2010. Each had been working at different Indian restaurants, Prasad in Chiba and Nautiyal in Tokyo, when they were introduced to the restaurant and came to Koriyama. "As Koriyama isn't crowded with people like Tokyo and it has abundant nature, it is a really easy place to live," says Nautiyal.

While the restaurant did not suffer any direct dam-



From left, Ram Chandra Nautiyal, Yukiko Kadosawa and Dwarika Prasad in the Royal India Restaurant in Koriyama, Fukushima Prefecture

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age during the Great East Japan Earthquake, the two chefs left Japan for a while.

"I got telephone calls from my wife and children who were concerned for my safety after learning of the nuclear power plant incident. But I was worried about returning home because of my concern for the restaurant. Then Ms. Kadosawa told me to 'go on home,'" explains Prasad.

After the two chefs had returned to India, Kadosawa relied on the recipes they had left behind to push on alone. Then, around a month after the disaster, both chefs returned to Koriyama.

"I clearly explained to my family that everything was alright and that there was no danger, and I gained their understanding. I love the town of Koriyama and the Royal Indian Restaurant, and I wanted everyone in the community to continue to enjoy authentic Indian curry. That's why I came back," says Prasad. "It's both our dreams to work at a restaurant while living together with our families in Japan." 

Masaki Yamada is a freelance writer.