Atsushi Nobayashi *Editor*

Making Food in Local and Global Contexts

Anthropological Perspectives

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Preface

This book is a collection of anthropological and other research papers on food. The papers are based on presentations given by the author at the international symposium "Making Food in Human and Natural History," held at the National Museum of Ethnology on 18 and 19 March 2019. Each paper has been revised for this volume based on the discussions at the symposium and, as such, constitutes original work. The symposium was held as part of the National Museum of Ethnology's Special Research Project, "Contemporary Civilization and the Future of Humanity: Environment, Culture and Humans." This is an international collaborative research project carried out over a six-year period from FY2016 to FY2021, which adopts a solution-oriented approach to the most pressing issues facing contemporary civilization.

Western civilization, which originates from modern Europe and is comprised of science and technology, political and economic institutions, social organization and thought, has influenced many countries and regions of the world and propagated the view that scientific and technological development will enrich human life and society. On the other hand, the prosperity of modern civilization has brought with it great costs to human society, including population growth, environmental destruction, war, resource depletion, water shortages and air pollution. In order to interrogate contemporary civilization using the "knowledge" of local societies that has developed in response to it, we have oriented the research in this project toward the analysis and solution of the various problems facing contemporary human society.

This particular symposium was organized as part of the project "Human and natural history on system of food production," headed by Atsushi Nobayashi. This research project critically examines the ways in which humanity has "manipulated" food. Specifically, we have chosen to focus on the following: how food production systems connect households, communities, nations and economic zones; the relationship between disparities at the individual level and food production, supply and consumption and the contradiction between the maintenance of traditional culture, food culture and food production systems. Tourism, foodscapes and the concept of translocal were widely discussed in the meeting. This is a clear indication of some of the current trends in food studies in anthropology and was particularly evident in the presentations of researchers from abroad. I feel that there was much to learn for

the Japanese researchers who participated. It was my honor and pleasure to welcome 12 invited speakers from China, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Mexico and Japan.

In the general discussion section of the symposium, the Director-General, Dr. Kenji Yoshida, and the former director of the museum, Dr. Naomichi Ishige, who has been a leading figure in Japanese food research, joined in the debate. In particular, Dr. Ishige's participation provided an opportunity for researchers to gain a new understanding of the process of food culture studies in Japan, which seems to have been a unique feature of the institute's special research project. The participation of young researchers from the museum and young foreign researchers living in Japan also contributed to active discussions on the relationship between food production and consumption in cold and tropical regions and on issues related to science and technology and food production, which were not covered in the presentations.

This is a collection of papers that has emerged from a symposium involving a wide range of researchers of food culture and those interested in food issues, and, as such, I hope it will provide readers with an insight into the importance of food in civilization, as well as the fascination in considering these issues.

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Contents

Introduction: Making Food in the Cultural and Civilized Contexts

Atsushi Nobayashi

1 Scope of This Book

The purpose of this book is to critically examine the activities of human beings which relate to the making of food. Taking an anthropological viewpoint, it addresses the question of how food production systems are connected to ecosystems, individuals and households, communities, states. It also considers the future of food uniformity in the wake of globalization, as well as the power of the local community to create food and the intrinsc power of this food.

Originally, food was no more than one element required for an individual to stay alive; this was when human lived was an ecological existence within the ecological cycle of the Earth. Food was the most primitive form of wealth, and it provided the beginning of greater economic activity through production (including gathering and hunting), storage, and exchange. At the same time, food, which is closely linked with the local environment, so has long served as an expression of social and cultural identity for local communities, as well as a means of communication, through activities, such as communal eating and the exchanging of gifts.

The relationship between humans, the environment and food is undergoing dramatic changes in modern society. The explosive increase in the global human population, particularly from the 20th century onwards, was the cause of major changes. Humans create artificial food production environments to feed 'growing populations'. However, this system of food production. Does not always provide enough food for the entire global population, leading to situations of surplus or shortage of food in different countries and regions. An over-supply of mass-produced food also creates the problem of mass food waste. The resulting mass production

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and mass disposal of food resources in modern society can, therefore, be considered a dark, new side of civilization that human society has not previously experienced.

Furthermore, structural hunger, e.g. individual hunger caused by economic inequalities, also sarises when food is supplied to society in large quantities.

Food has also becomes an element of the principle of integration of nations and communities. In recent years, it has even attracted attention as a diplomatic tool used to deepen economic and political relations among nations, as can be seen with the practice of "Gastrodiplomacy" or culinary diplomacy. This situation has encouraged debates that relate the challenges of human food within the context of larger political and economic systems in modern history (Colás et al. 2018).

Of course, anthropology has not neglected these issues. Written by the anthropologist Sidney Mintz's in the mid-1980s, the book *Sweetness and Power* successfully delineated the power structure that existed in the transatlantic space over a period of 100 years, based on the dynamics of distribution and consumption of sugar produced from sugar cane plantations. At the same time, it highlighted how the "life revolution" in British consumer life, which developed from urbanization and industrialization in the 19th century, gave rise to the "tea complex" (Mintz 1985). This was the combination of tea and sugar which helped to support the culture of long working hours and low wages in the region. Mintz was one of the first to introduce a framework of time and space into the study of food, showing that food can be located in the relationship between the individual and the collective, between production and consumption. Needless to say, food is spatially diverse and changes over time.

However, even within a macroscopic system of production and consumption, the way food is presented may reveal microscopic changes. Jack Goody considered the factors behind microscopic changes in food intake, while arguing that production and consumption strongly influenced the economic aspect of food.

Goody explored the principle behind "simple" and "luxury" diets, based on qualitative comparisons of food cooked across large geographical areas, such as in Africa, Europe, India, and China. One conclusion he drew was that the stratification of dietary life was greatly influenced by the social classes, and that a society with a strongly defined class system saw higher levels of dietary diversity and peculiarity among its elite (Goody 1982). In other words, it is now generally accepted that being able to choose food is a means of pursuing a privileged and superior position, and that the food produced by a specific time and place is always changeable and never fixed.

On the other hand, we are, of course, directly connected to food through the activities of acquiring, preparing, and eating it. Along with research that discusses food within the system of political economy, anthropology which observes this series of human behaviours is necessary when considering humanity's current food shortage and the situations that derive from it. In today's society in particular, where individuals use smartphones to transmit information without borders through social networking services, it is impossible to ignore the actions taken by each individual at the point of presence. The majority of this book is to considers the process by which food comes into being in modern society, and how it deviates from ecological adaptation in the political and economic context. This is approached from the perspective of cultural

anthropology, rather than from the conventional macroeconomic approach to food problems.

Another feature of this book is the juxtaposition of Western and Asian food-making processes. At first glance, this may appear to the reader to be a disjointed collection of chapters. However, the following explanation may help you to understand the book better. The majority of the regions covered by the book are located in the middle and lower latitudes mainly in the temperate zone, and each region has a relatively smooth circulation of information and goods. What all this means is that the chapters in this book tell the story of the present state of food in a region where agriculture has seen historical development and where stable populations have survived in a mature civilization. Within its own local context, each chapter addresses, the question of what it is that people who have experienced civilization and globalization, while having common ecological conditions in each region, have sought and are continuing to seek in food.

The author believes that this awareness of anthropological issues exists in many parts of the world because of the long history of anthropological studies of food in each region. In order to discuss the local environment and the food of the local people nurtured there, it is necessary to discuss the ecological history of the local food and the way in which food research has captured it. The author also hopes that this book will be a starting point which demonstrates the importance of developing these research processes globally. It is not possible, due to the constraints of space, to present the entire ecological history of food and food research in each region, but the author would like to briefly introduce the scope of food research in Japan as an example.

2 A Japanese Study of Food in Civilization and Culture

The human diet in culture and civilization has, in fact, been discussed extensively in Japan since the 1970s. One of the pioneers of the study of food culture in Japan was the anthropologist Naomichi Ishige.

Food research up to and including the 1980s mainly focused on the fields of agriculture and economics in relation to food production, as well as physiology and nutrition in order to understand the relationship between food and the human body. Ishige however, proposed a "Map of food culture", with production and consumption on the horizontal axis and natural and social sciences on the vertical axis, as a new research field of "*shokubunka*" (food culture) (Ishige 1998: 31). The map shows the various disciplines related to eating. In other words, the term food culture was born as a concept that encompasses everything related to human food, from the production and acquisition of food, to distribution, cooking, nutrition, tableware, cooking areas, eating manners, eating spaces, setting up and cleaning up, disposal, and excretion, as well as natural science, history, folklore, thought, religion, law, economics, society, literature, arts and crafts, etc.

However, Ishige's research into food culture is based on a thorough observation of the food scene. Ishige argues that *shokutaku* (食卓), or the place of food consumption, is a straightforward expression of the interweaving of environment and culture in the *fūdo* (風土) of food, and points to the importance of inquiry from the site where food is eaten (Ishige 2011: 32). The word *fūdo* itself was imported from China, and monographs describing the local geography and features were described as *fudoki*, meaning the report or record of a local area. The philosopher Tetsuro (1889–1960) was the first to give a philosophical insight into Fūdo in modern Japan (Watsuji 1935). Watsuji's definition of *fūdo* can be reasonably explained as follows:

> We are all inescapably environed by our land, its geography and topography, its climate and weather patterns, temperature and humidity, soils and oceans, its flora and fauna, and so on, in addition to the resultant human styles of living, related artifacts, architecture, food choices, and clothing. This is but a partial list, but even this sketchy list makes clear that Watsuji is calling attention to the many ways in which our environment, taken in the broad sense, shapes who we are from birth to death.[1]

This series of ideas about the connections between things through food may be related to the concept of "foodscape" often used in anthropology and other cultural and social studies of food.

Ishige also identified the characteristics of human food as cooking and communal eating, and the chapters of this book refer to both of these things in many places. Of course, Ishige saw these two features as ethnographically observable, but he also recognized the importance of considering them from the perspective of human evolution and natural history. This was probably due to the influence of ecological anthropology or the ecological approach (Lee and Devore 1968; Rappaport 1968; Harris 1985), which set the trend in the field of anthropology during the 1970s and 1980s.

3 Foodscape and Local Food

'Thinking about *fūdo* of *shokutaku*' by Ishige could be translated into 'thinking about local food in foodscape.'

Kawai (2020), who also contributes to this book, argues critically that the term "foodscape" has been used so polysemantically that what it refers to has become ambiguous, in the light of recent developments in foodscape research. He then identifies two trends in foodscape research: first, the connection between images of food and space, or more specifically, the issue of food as a landscape making force; and second, the shift from a critical examination of the global food system to a discussion of contemporary society, including issues such as consumption and the body. The second point, in particular, was predicted by Ishige and his colleagues in their food research during the 1980s, but was not studied in earnest.

[1] https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/watsuji-tetsuro/. Accessed August 1, 2021.

Since the 1990s, there has been a great deal of research into human connections in the global age (Appadurai 1996), which demonstrate how assumptions about the inseparability of regions and groups can no longer be made, and this has had a major impact on the study of food culture. If we move away from a universal and homogenous concept of space, we can see that contemporary food comes into being in a multilayered world of imaginaries according to the positions of multi-level actors, including global corporations, nations, diasporas, families, and individuals. The dynamics of the reflux of globalization and localization can be understood in some of the essays in this collection.

The danger of dietary monoculture, perhaps even more so than globalization, is the mass production of food. This is the efficient production and distribution of food to support a growing global population. Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that the role of local food has come under scrutiny.

Local food aims to meet consumer demands for a variety of quality and tourism needs, promote environmental ethics, and encourage target producers in local communities that are not suited to mass production. According to Feagan, the local food system is defined as the relocalization of the mass production and distribution system (Feagan 2007). It is expected to achieve social justice, social participation, equitable access to resources, and the preservation of ecosystems. Tachikawa recognized localization as a move against the environmental impact of industrialized agriculture in the international division of labor and the standardization of food according to the 7agricultural products produced (Tachikawa 2007).

Schoenhardt et al. consider the local food system to be an important factor in the creation of a sustainable society and are analyzing it from the viewpoints of ecology, economy, society, and individual wellbeing (Schönhart et al. 2008).

In this way, local food is often presented with high expectations of being an alternative food system that is opposed to the modern mass food system. However, it is difficult to imagine how local food can be free from the mass-produced food industry and impact of globalization. This is because it is almost impossible to establish a local dietary life by only producing, distributing, and consuming foods limited to a specific area. Local food prices and quality may also be subject to competition within the region, and it is necessary to maintain a price and quality advantage over food from outside sources. Local food, therefore, exists in relation to the outside world (Nobayashi 2019).

This does not necessarily imply a negative view of the limitations of local food and its limitations. Systematic comparisons of historical experiences of alternative food systems, such as local food production, distribution, and consumption, will hopefully shed new light on the potential of local food.

4 Cooking as Art

Local or traditional foods have existed from a time when they were, to some extent, complete within the environment in which they were nurtured. They have continued

to exist to the present day by adapting to the globalization of goods and information, and to changes in lifestyles involving mass production and consumption. While the trend for local food systems emphasizes the potential of "new local foods", it may be less concerned with the internal contradictions they have already experienced, the historicity of external economic influences, and the imagined table settings in which individuals make food choices. The study of local food, and the use of food-scape research as a methodology for capturing it, may be a helpful springboard for rethinking how people choose, produce and eat their food.

It should be noted here that the food that we were originally born into and inherited from the land may also have also undergone various transformations over the course of its long history. As mentioned earlier, this is precisely why Ishige believes that food needs to be considered in the context of human evolutionary history. Cooking, in particular, is a concept that is central to the food-making process - the subject of this book - and is also a concrete example of human behavioural evolution. This author believes that the following five periods have brought about a major shift in the culinary behaviour of mankind.

(1) Humanization through the introduction of fire: when *Homo sapiens* developed a different way of eating from other animals during Pleistocene.
(2) The emergence of domestication in early Holocene: the shift from exploitation of nature to production-oriented forms of food.
(3) The transcontinental transfer of the products of domestic communication, sometimes referred to as the Columbian exchange, in the 16th century.
(4) Full-scale introduction of electricity in the production of food. The first half of the 20th century saw a revolution in storage, refrigeration and freezing, and the second half of the 20th century saw the invention of microwave ovens that enable cooking and processing using electromagnetic waves.
(5) The current global distribution of information and the impact this is having on food.

The Pleistocene event was the development of the cerebrum due to changes in the meat-eating behaviour of human beings (Aiello and Wheelar 1995; Wrangam 2010). For some time after the emergence of domestication, humans continued to depend on the resources available from their surrounding environment however the situation changed drastically in the post-Columbus era. For example, wheat production is now much higher in areas such as China and the United State, than in West Asia, where wheat originally came from.

The rapid increase in population became particularly notable from the latter half of the 20th century. Mankind's strategy for feeding its growing population has been to cultivate major crops. This initiative is commonly called the "Green Revolution" and is marked by the improvement of major grain varieties, irrigation, pesticide use, and mechanization. This significantly changed the food production landscape from what had gone before. For example, the tall wheat fields seen in The Grain Harvest by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, who is famous for his landscapes depicting European society in the 16th century, are rarely seen on today's farms. Even if we eat the same agricultural products, they may be very different from what they once were.

Freezing and microwaving are convenient technologies that have made it possible for people to eat their favourite meals at home or at work at any time. From the point of view of food science, the advantages of microwave cooking are that it is easy and convenient, and it preserves the colour of the food. The short processing time means a reduction in the loss of nutrients, and loss moisture escape during cooking, which keeps the food fresh and moist. On the other hand, the advent of freezers and microwave ovens may have made the act of eating less seasonal, and may have even deprived people to some extent of the creative process of cooking. Perhaps the fundamental reason we are not satisfied with microwaved frozen food is that we instinctively sense that we are giving food away.

In the words of Ishige, human beings have created an artistic environment for food that does not necessarily depend purely on their own natural environment by incorporating the environment in the form of information, reviving the recognized memory, and reproducing the environment in their head as an image, even though they are separated from that environment (Ishige 2011: 14–15). That is, wildlife eats food produced in its natural environment as it is, while humans often eat food that has been modified to a state that does not exist in nature. For this reason, Ishige stated that "humans are animals that cook" and presented the idea that the vector of cooking creates diversity in human eating behaviour and diet. We can say that cooking is a system of "artistic environment" that gives diversity to human behaviour. As this artistic environment has moved from the realm of culture to that of civilization, man has come to have a major impact on the global environment.

Wild life in their natural environments exists in an equilibrium in which they are part of that environment. Consumption by wildlife is complete within the environmental system, and it does not make disproportionate use of specific ecological resources or significantly alter the environment in any way. By contrast, one of the characteristics of human beings' use of ecological resources is the imbalance between selectivity and consumption. These biases in resource use cannot be explained by physiological conditions alone. The social and cultural factors that cause this bias need to be considered together. One possible factor is the advent of cooking. The history of human beings is well known; as they have actively engaged in the selective use and mass consumption of ecological resources to further their self-interest, they have, in the process, destroyed specific animals and plants. On the other hand, domestication emerged as one of humankind's adaptation strategies. Domestication relates to selective use and mass consumption, and as a result of it, there has been an explosive increase in the number of livestock and cultivated species - including the human population itself. This author once defined cooking as the process of selectively extracting ecological resources from the natural environment and all the processes that determine it (Fig. 1). We need to understand that this cycle is not driven by the individual, but by the human population.

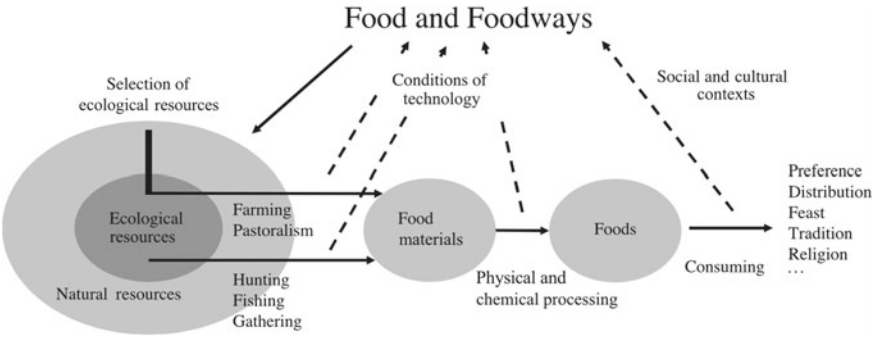

Fig. 1 Cooking as the process of selectively extracting ecological resources (Nobayashi 2018)

5 Food in the Individual and the Population

The triangular model of food choice is known as a framework for considering the intentional food choices made by human beings, in which the top of the bottom is "Identity", the top of the top is "Convenience", and the top of the whole is "Responsibility" (Belasco 2008:7–9).

"Identity" involves personal preferences, habits, memories, traditions, and habits. Individual values and "character" often affect food choices. "Convenience" involves economics. For example, rather than cooking something that requires a lot of effort when there is no time, people tend to opt for simple meals, eating out, or takeout. This is often the case with modern eating habits, as food is placed in a relationship with other factors over time. "responsibility" at the apex of the triangle, " is about placing ourselves in the various chains that connect us to food as nodes, and it involves both short-term and long-term choices. The conditions under which food is determined vary by people's awareness, the economic situation they are in, and the values that they have always had. However, if food is considered to be a social product, it is necessary to consider how the population chooses it.

Ishige once devised a scheme to illustrate an analogy between language and food that individuals experience as they are born and made aware of their various belongings (Figure 2). Perhaps it is this simple scheme, overlaid with multilingual environments and a variety of regional and national circles, that paints the real picture of food as it exists within individuals and groups. This is the reason why we have added part 4 in this collection, which looks beyond the regional framework to the national perspective.

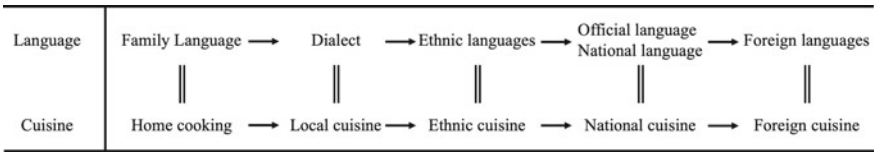

Fig. 2 Analogy between language and food (Ishige 2000, The author transt.)

6 Contents of Each Chapter

In Chap. "Introduction: Making Food in the Cultural and Civilized Contexts", the editor, Atsushi Nobayashi, explains the structure of the book, the background to previous research, and the significance of taking an anthropological approach to the moment when food is born.

Part "Ecology and Food" contains an ethnographic paper which considers the process of food creation from an ecological perspective. In Chap. "Gastronomical Goods as a Biocultural Value of Wood Pastures in Eastern Europe", Varga et al. draw on ethnographic research on the traditional use of wild fruits in Hungarian communities in Transylvania and elsewhere in Romania to present the interrelationships between food culture and the ecological environment that mutually underpin the maintenance of customary diets and food culture and the preservation of the forest-pasture environment which provides the foodstuffs. In Chap. "The Socio-Cultural Reception of MSG (Monosodium Glutamate) in Thailand", Yoshimi Osawa has analyzes the process by which MSG (monosodium glutamate) became established in Thailand in the context of the local diet and the changes in diet associated with economic development. Consumers' experiences of eating MSG suggest that the luxurious images of a Japanese food manufacturer's brand, in addition to an unconventional taste, helped to popularize MSG in Thai society. This may be the essence of seasoning, where ecological tastes and social values converge. In Chap. "Merroir in the Making: Provenance Fetishism and the Social Construction of Taste in the Japanese Seafood System", Shingo Hamada proposes the concept of "meroir" as the taste of the sea (as opposed to terroir, the taste of the land), and examines the social structure in which this occurs, using a case study of oyster farming in Japan. This is an interesting paper which demonstrates how revering a particular location as a food's place of origin can lead to an inferior quality of food product.

Part "Social Context of Food" focuses on the social aspect of food and eating. The papers how food and eating influences social relationships and is influenced by them today, within the context of local community, civil society, and family. In Chap. "Rethinking Foodscapes: Does It Matter How Food Reaches My Plate?", Cristina Grasseni presents several ethnographic examples of local food and her own 'Food Citizens' project, arguing that how we source and share food can be an indicator of our participation in society. It is a thought-provoking essay on 'food democracy.' Chapter "Sharing Food and Conviviality in the Mediterranean Diet: Some Ethnographic Examples", by Elsabett Moro and Rosella Galetti, is a powerful refutation of modern individualism, which tends to estrange human relationships. The Mediterranean diet, recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010, is not only an act of eating and consuming, but a long-lasting lifestyle with a large social component meade up of customs, rituals, and festivals. In Chap "Rethinking Family Commensality: Through Japanese Cases and Italian Ones", Taeoko Udagawa develops a more substantive anthropological discussion. Comparing the cases of Japan and Italy, the question of what the act of eating together tells us about social relations raises further questions about the traditional definition

of the family and the function of food within the family. Udagawa suggests that one of the functions of food is to create micro-power structures and hierarchies. She also demonstrates that material culture is also an important clue to thinking about family commensality.

The chapters in Part "Ethnicity in Foodscape" include multilayered discussions of foodscapes in terms of, translocality, ethnicity and tourism, and aim to further the recently developed field of foodscape studies. In Chap. "Tubawan and the Play of Authorial Slippage: The Sani Yi People's Practice of Hospitality Business and the Making of Indigenous Foodscape", Ronglin Ge carefully considers the visibility and authenticity of tradition in the process of tourism, revealing the background to the formation of what is now served as the traditional cuisine of the Yi and Sani ethnic minorities in Shilin, Yunnan Province, China. Hironao Kawai offers an unprecedented perspective on the trend of Hakka food culture research in Chap. "The "Making" of Hakka Cuisine: A Case Study for the Formation of Ethnic Food and its Foodscapes in Southeast China". Critically examining traditional essentialist arguments, he argues for the need to take a linear view of Hakka cuisine as it spreads throughout the country. In Chap "Translocal Foodscapes Gastronomic Creativity in Mérida, Mexico, and Seville, Spain", Steffan Igor Ayora Dias presents a translocal perspective on how the local cuisine and food service industries, which developed in Seville, Spain, and Mérida, Mexico, respectively, and were influenced by tourism and transformed by the global values of UNESCO's recognition of an intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

Part "Food and the Nation" focused on how the state, enterprise, intellectuals, mass media, and the common people are involved in food strategies and governance, and clarifies the process and mechanism by which traditional or local cuisine transforms against a backdrop of modern nationalism and globalization. In Chap. "The Tea Industry in Modern China and Public Demand for Tea", focusing on the industrialization of the modern Chinese tea industry, Jiangping Guan clearly argues that tea has attributes of value that go beyond consumption, and that this is the so-called "culture of tea." He also compares this culture of tea to the tea culture in Japan. Guan points out, however, that this view of culture is incompatible with some aspects of national economic policy. In Chap. "On the Formation of Chinese National Cuisine: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives"Haruhiko Nishizawa shows the historical background to the formation of the concepts and contents of "Chinese food" and "Chinese cuisine," terms which we use so casually. He argues that the framework for thinking about "national" food needs to be changed according to the scale and scope of the subject matter. For example, it is not easy to use the same framework to think about food at the national level in Japan, a nation in the Japanese archipelago where Japanese is generally spoken, and China, a nation on the Chinese mainland where there are many regional languages among the Han Chinese alone.

Unlike the foraging behaviour of wild animals, which is passed on from one generation to the next as a form of adaptation to the ecosystem, the act of human eating is maintained and passed on as a form of culture, and has a tendency to spread across regions and across the globe. This book highlights the importance of adopting a research perspective that ap-proaches human eating as a cultural issue in

discussions about 'food-making' in con-temporary society. It goes without saying that an anthropological approach is the best way to analyze the dynamics of food production, distribution and consumption in terms of land and place. On the other hand, to understand the principles of human behaviour in relation to food, it is useful to take the perspective of human history across time and to take a bird's-eye view across regions.

In the early 1980s, when Ishige was getting serious about his research into food culture, the French ethnobiologist Jacques Barrau published a monumental work, *Les Hommes et leurs aliments* (Barrau 1983), which placed human food in the context of human history. In the last chapter of his book, he says that the mass production of food and the consequent homogenization of diets in the (then) modern world raises questions about the diversity of cultures and civilizations (Barrau 1997: 330). Through the work of editing this book, this author has found that Barrau's words are as relevant today as they were about 40 years ago. It will be worth looking back in the future to see how we have approached the issue of food in the last half century.

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Ecology and Food

Gastronomical Goods as a Biocultural Value of Wood Pastures in Eastern Europe

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Abstract Traditional agroforestry systems such as wood pastures have been a widespread land-use type across Europe for thousands of years. Today, demand for healthy and organic food is growing. Agroforestry systems, which are based on traditional land-uses, could be a promising way to address this issue. In order to facilitate this, understanding traditional knowledge relating to agroforestry systems is an essential starting point. Our aim was to gather traditional and local knowledge about wild edible fruit trees common in wood pastures from Hungarian communities living on our field sites in the regions of Kalotaszeg, Transylvania in Romania. We made participatory observations and conducted semi-structured interviews with farmers at these field sites. The wood pastures are still used by the local community today and they mainly gather *Cornus mas* and *Pyrus pyraster*. Syrup, jam, fruit brandy and also dried fruit can be made from the fruit of these two trees. The traditional uses of wild fruit are known to locals even up to the present day, however some practices

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have been driven into decline. The use and maintenance of wood pastures is crucial in preserving the living traditional knowledge of gastronomy.

Keywords Agroforestry · Traditional knowledge · Edible wild plants · Cultural landscape · Ecosystem services

1 Introduction

The benefits provided by nature to people are summarized by ecologists using the fashionable term "ecosystem services" or, as suggested by a recently published study, "nature's contributions to people" (Schulp et al. 2014; Díaz et al. 2018). The extent of the services as food (wild edible plants and fruits) is influenced by the level of biological diversity (Shulp et al. 2014; Moreno et al. 2018).

Alongside the traditional old style fruit varieties, the edible fruit of trees listed as forest trees constitutes an important part of fruticulture in the European cultural landscape (Agnoletti 2007; Szani 2011). In many cases, it is very difficult to draw the line between what is a wild or a domesticated fruit tree, as the former were kept as trees of edible fruit within the traditional vernacular husbandry system. They were cared for and tended the nature to, just as the Indians of California did (Anderson 2005; Turner et al. 2011; Carvalho and Barata 2017). Wood pastures are one of the most essential habitats of wild fruit trees (Hartel et al. 2013; Roellig et al. 2018). Classified as agroforestry systems, wood pastures are maintained habitats, consciously developed using a form of husbandry over thousands of years, by those living on the European continent (Hartel and Plieninger 2014; Hartel et al. 2015). As a result of their transient nature and mosaic-like pattern which alternates between forest and grasslands, wood pastures and pasturing forests provide quite a high number of ecosystem services (Rackham 1998). The single best known type of ecosystem service originating from these habitats is that of provisioning: providing supplies such as meat and dairy products derived from livestock grazing on these lands and a number of edible wild plants and mushrooms (Moreno et al. 2018). Wild fruit trees are of special significance among edible wild plants. Found on wood pastures, they were originally spared, and then eventually actively planted and nursed to fruiting. The collection of their fruit constitutes an integral part of the traditional uses of wood pastures, including the traditional or local ecological knowledge related to them (Varga and Molnár 2013, 2014; Varga 2017). Research of traditional knowledge on edible plants and medicinal herbs in the region has a history of several centuries. However, because studies on these topics were published in the native languages of a number of specific countries, they are less known to the scientific community (Priszter 1990; Paládi-Kovács 2001; Szani 2011; Dénes et al. 2012; Łuczaj 2012; Szani 2014). With the increasing recognition and strengthening of the role of traditional ecological knowledge and ethnobiology, more and more papers from the Central and Eastern European regions have been published on the topic in English as well (for example, Łuczaj and Szymański 2007; Łuczaj 2012; Szani 2014; Łuczaj et al. 2012, 2015; Simkova and

Polesny 2015; Sõukand et al. 2015; Dénes 2017; Papp et al. 2017; Savić et al. 2019). In our present work, we would like to provide data on the ecosystem services offered by wood pastures, in order to substantiate the close connection between gastronomy and biodiversity using the example of wild fruit trees. Our work involved ethnobiological research on the traditional local use of wild fruit trees on wood pastures, and the related knowledge base, conducted in the East-Central region.

2 Field Sites and Method

Our research was carried out in three villages in the Kalotaszeg Region of Western Romania: (1) Stana (Romanian), Sztána (Hungarian); (2) Jebucu (Romanian), Zsobok (Hungarian) and (3) Petrinzel (Romanian), Kispetri (Hungarian). Most of the settlements are inhabited by Hungarian communities. In 2011, there were 144 inhabitants in Stana, 321 in Zsobok and 123 in Kispetri (Molnár and Molnár 2015). The main woodland habitat types of this area are: beech, oak-hornbeam and thermophilous oak woodland. The most important land-use types are wood pasture, forestry, grassland (formerly used as arable land) and traditional orchard (Gerner et al. 2015).

In the study area, a large number of wild fruit trees were found during preliminary field trips and through existing literature (Péntek and Szabó 1985). Our aim was to collect traditional and local knowledge among the Hungarian ethnic group about wild fruit trees and the collection and use of their fruits. In 2013, we conducted participant observations, field trips and semi-structured interviews (Newing et al. 2011). We talked to 42 local people on the topic in their home and out on the field too. Based on local recommendations, we conducted indoor interviews with 26 knowledgeable informants (14 women and 12 men). The interview materials were typed, coded by subject and expertly interpreted.

During our work we followed the International Ethnobiological Society's Code of Ethics (ISE 2006). The data presented in this article has also been published in Hungarian in Varga et al. (2015a).

3 Results

3.1 Wild Fruit Trees in Sztána, Zsobok and Kispetri

The best known wild fruit trees are the cornelian cherry (*Cornus mas*), wild pear (*Pyrus pyraster*) and wild apple *(Malus sylvestris*). Some interviewees also mentioned wild cherry (*Cerasus avium*), hawthorn (*Crataegus sp.*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), wild rose (*Rosa* spp.) and European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*). Our paper focuses on the data collected about cornelian cherry, wild pear, wild apple and

wild cherry as the most common trees of the wood pastures in the region and the local people recognized as the most important wild fruit trees in the interviews.

*3.2 Cornelian Cherry (*Cornus Mas*)*

Presence of cornelian cherry was reported at two sites; one, a hillside, is located on the boundary of Sztána, which has been used as both pasture. The other site is found close to Zsobok, towards Bikal on a hillside called Marton. Gardens are important habitat for cornelian cherry in all three villages, where it typically grows in the front garden or as part of the fence. A few individual specimens were found in orchards. Even though cornelian cherry is present in neighbouring forests, it was not mentioned as the typical habitat of the species: "we do not have the cornelian cherry in the forest, everyone has it in their gardens". There is a hillside in Sztána, towards the train station, which is full of cornelian cherry trees. Cornelian cherry is thought to grow naturally on that hillside: "I do not know when it got there, it is natural reproduction, no one ever transplanted it". Cornelian cherry trees which grow in the gardens were once planted by either our sources or one of their ancestors. Transplantation is practiced even today (Fig. 1).

Cornelian cherry is naturally a bushy plant, although it can be shaped as a tree with conscious trimming: "Well, they are all bushy, if they are not slashed, cut". The earliest blossoming tree generally produces its small yellow flowers around March to April: "Cornelian cherry blossoms early, and ripens late, in autumn. The fruit that ripens latest is the cornelian cherry. And it blossoms the earliest". Its fruit is green in June, the earlier type ripens by July and the later type of the species ripens by August or September. Cornelian cherry can be classified based on the size of the fruit (small, large), time of ripening (early, late) and its colour (red, maroon, pink, white and yellow): "I do have the two kinds here. There are two trees, they are different. One is the later fruiting type, the other is the earlier". "Well, they are different, there are types. For example, there are two sites on the Bikal side that bear all yellow, all yellow cornelian cherry". It was also emphasized that the fruit has fine and delicious peel: "When it ripens, it is as good as or better than some cherries". The amount of fruit also varies: "Not every year is the same. One year has more, one year has less". Some suggest that this variation is due to either the management of the trees or the weather: "What does its growth depend on? Well, it depends on how you clean the base of the tree and how you manage it".

3.2.1 On the Management of Cornelian Cherry

Only the cleaning of the cornelian cherry trunk and trimming of the offshoots were mentioned as a management practice for the species:

Fig. 1 Managed cornelian cheery (*Cornus mas)*, Sztána, Romania (2013, photographed by Anna Varga)

> Nothing, it is as God gave us! Well, trimming the twigs, so it won't go crooked, but no spraying or anything like that, nothing. No! Once its crown is done, nothing more. It just grows. It grows in an open place, it gets sun and everything, so it matures.

"Well, you have to cut off the offshoots at the base with an axe. That is all. The base twigs are trimmed".

There was a disagreement on whether this type of management is required or not, because grazing animals gnaw away the shoots: "Goats were around gnawing away. Sheep and all other animals were around".

Nevertheless, some think that proper management determines the size of the yield.

3.2.2 Use of Cornelian Cherry

Flower

The flower is used as an ornamental flower around Easter: "It is the first one we bring in, after the snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*)". "I know that women go out 1–2 weeks before Easter, so they collect small branches which have the young buds, and they put it into water indoors and it blossoms in 1–2 weeks". "As the flower buds ripen,

you take it in, and then it blossoms in 1–2 weeks. So it is common for Easter. Well, it is like the golden chain bush (*Laburnum anagyroides*) and small plastic eggs are hung on it".

Wood

Its wood was used for its strength and toughness: "This cornelian cherry is a strong, solid, compact wood. It is very strong, I bent my axe with it". "Yes, and it does not break well, because it is so strong". Nowadays, metal and plastic tools are used instead of equipment made from cornelian cherry wood. Its wood was mainly used for rake tines and handles, ladder steps, shepherd crooks, hammer handles and it was also placed into pickled cabbage to give a better taste:

> For rake tines, we did not have this plastic rake back then, but it was wood, and then cornelian cherry wood was used for the tines. It was drilled, rounded off and beaten in. It was left a bit thicker here.

Its trunk was used for tools, it is a very good wood for that. It is the strongest wood for rake tines, hammer handles and things like that. So it is the best". It was considered to be good firewood, although it was too branchy and its trunk was too small. Cornelian cherries were important for shepherds: "Once shepherds eagerly sought it out, since cornelian cherry wood was used for the knobstick, because it is very strong". It was known to be strong among children too: "It was slingshot wood for the kids. For sure. Very strong, it does not break. We also made bows from it.

Fruit

The fruit of the cornelian cherry was mainly collected and is still collected to this day due to its taste and medicinal properties. People were aware of its medicinal usage during collection. Sometimes it was hand-picked one by one: "By hand then. The nicer pieces". Although it was occasionally shaken off, knocked off or people waited for the ripe fruit to fall down:

> You should leave it, till it is ripe and then collect it. It was always set up under the tree. It was shaken and then fell down, if it had ripened well. It gave a better taste, if it was brewed for *pálinka* (a traditional Hungarian fruit brandy). A large bedsheet was set under the tree, the fruit all shaken off when it was ripe. Then, if he wants to drink cornelian cherry *pálinka*, then he would shake off 8-10 trees that would give 2-3 bushels worth of fruit.

Collected fruit was eaten raw: "I brought a small bowl and then we washed and ate it", and it was consumed as a conserved beverage or food. The most common food preservation method was drying: "no one made compote back then, lady! They dried it, there was no sugar back then".

> We also dried back then, because there was not as many fruit in winter or chocolate or sweets, but we dried the plum and the cornelian cherry. There were these wide boards with a tiny

> lip so the fruit did not roll down. So, after bread baking, they put the fruit in, on a drier. The name of this board is 'the drier'. Then, it was spun, in case it was not totally dry. They baked the bread and then they put it in again (the cornelian cherry), and then it was packed into a small cloth haversack, and it was stored in the attic and they brought it down only in winter. And then we ate that dried cornelian cherry.

Nowadays, it is more common to make compote and jam from the fruit. On making jam:

> When I pick them, they are more ripe and then I leave them for 1-2 days to soften and wash, and filter them…., but you have to cook it for a long time, till it comes away from the seed and then I add 25 decagrams of sugar to 1 kilogram of cornelian cherry. Then you have to stir it. Well, I have to rub it with my hand, till it goes through, we need patience for that, well, I can bear that, wild rose hip jam too… I stir it till all the sugar dissolves and it hardens. It is very good for different kinds of cakes it is very good in pancakes, it is good and greasy. I put salycil into it and stir it, otherwise it turns sour. I was just looking at the cornelian cherry tree, well, one of trees has some fruit, but quite small. I am running out of cornelian cherry jam, so I will make cornelian cherry jam from it.

Primarily, cornelian cherry is used for fruit brandy (*pálinka)* production, but it is getting more and more popular to produce wine, syrup and liqueur from it. Cornelian cherry is mainly used for *pálinka* production whenever the plum yield is low. Cornelian cherry *pálinka* is considered a good tasting and high-quality drink: "It's not a large amount but it has a very good flavour". On the methodology of *pálinka* production and the production of cornelian cherry wine and liqueur:

> Liqueur and wine can both be produced, anything can be produced from it. I put some sugar into the cornelian cherry liqueur, like into sour cherry, and then wait till it dissolves. I shake it every day and as it dissolves, I pour some *pálinka* on it. You cannot taste it, but it is good with the distilled alcohol. And I make the cornelian cherry wine. I pour the water, I do not put salicyl in it, as it prevents fermentation. So I pour in the water, I stir for 2-3 days and then drain and add water and then it boils, very delicious. It cleaning itself, no need to add gelatine, nothing like that. Very tasty.

> When we took the cornelian cherry into the 5 litre jars, we added 1 kilogram of sugar to half a jar of cornelian cherry. As the sugar dissolves, it softens. To dissolve it, we take it to a sunnier place, so it gets warm and then we pour on half a litre alcohol, or one litre. Then some vodka could be added, like a weak *pálinka*, or even plum could be added, it did not really matter.

Medicinal use of cornelian cherry is also significant. Dried cornelian cherry, compote (Fig. 2), jam or *pálinka* are utilized for digestive problems (diarrhoea, infections) and for fever: "the compote is very delicious. It is good for diarrhoea". "In winter, when we slaughter the pig, we eat loads of fat, so we eat compote when the fat causes digestive problems". It is said that cornelian cherry *pálinka* makes a great medicinal beverage".

> I had enteritis, the chronic one. Then I saw a doctor in Hunyad, and he suggested I drink cornelian cherry *pálinka.* All the bacteria produced in the gut are killed by this *pálinka.* He said, that his father was a pharmacist and they had suggested cornelian cherry *pálinka* for all stomach and gut sicknesses.

Fig. 2 Cornelian cherry (*Cornus mas*) compote, Zsobok, Romania (2013, photographed by Anna Varga)

> "And yes, we made the compote, so when the kids had fever, we gave them this cornelian cherry compote". "Well, this small half jar of cornelian cherry can reduce fever better than two pills".

3.2.3 Collection of Cornelian Cherry

In the 1980s collection of cornelian cherry was an important income source for the residents of Sztána, Zsobok and Kispetri. The collected fruits were taken to the Sztána train station by Dr. Lajos Martin. This money aided the parents and children at the beginning of the school year in autumn: "we made money from it in my childhood. So we picked the cornelian cherry, took it home, cleaned it from the stem and the leaves and we took it to Sztána". "Out there, close to the train station, foresters collected it and we used this money for our education". "We received 2.5 or 3 lei for one kilogram of cornelian cherry". "And those women went to the hillside and collected like 20 kg, they were there all day". The delivered fruits had to be good and clean: "oh, we picked the fruit in the daytime and we cleaned the stems at night, because we had to clean it properly". "Take off the stem and the leaf, so it was clean as gold. To take off every stem. If there was one stem it was not accepted". The fruits were then placed into barrels and transferred for use as medicine or jam. Some think that

the fruit was exported abroad: “cornelian cherry was taken in barrels by train and on carriages. It was said that medicine would be produced from it”.

> Well, they were sent abroad in barrels, it was mixed with some chemical and conserved. They were taken abroad in 200 litre barrels. I cannot tell how or what it was used for. But we collected loads. There were days when we collected one hundredweight and sent it out.

*3.3 Wild Pear (*Pyrus Pyraster*)*

3.3.1 Common Knowledge on the Wild Pear

Wild pear is found mainly in open areas, pastures (Fig. 3) and alongside roads around all three villages: “wild pear did not grow in the middle of the forest, among trees, it does not like this. It liked to be in pastures, as a wild apple, where it grows free”. People were aware which seedlings to cut out or leave and let grow on the pastures and wild pears were left there on purpose: “when they cleaned the pasture, they left some shade for the animals, so then they did not cut the wild pear tree. They did not clean the pasture like they cut everything, but some was left for the animals, and men”. “They figured out which one was nicer”. “The elders kept it clean and tidy.

Fig. 3 Wild pear on the wood pasture, Sztána, Romania (2013 photographed by Anna Varga)

Here there are some young men who still manage it, like my son, the neighbour, and some others, who like to manage it". The trees are scattered around the pasture:

> They often get struck by lightning, as they are isolated. Isolated by distance, and they are not in groups, that is why. When the really bad weather comes, those isolated trees get hit by lightning, I have seen many. If you have been to those pastures, you must have seen some in real life.

The number of wild pear trees have declined over the last few decades. Many were cut during the communist era: "farmers cut them. They did not give us wood during communism, so everyone cut one wherever they could". "I think, after the regime change, we sold some trees from the pasture. Then we cut out one or two for ourselves". The biggest threat to wild pear trees today is the practice of setting them on fire.

3.3.2 Uses of Wild Pear

Tree and Wood

Wild pear commonly provides shade and fruit on pastures and along roads: "it was there for sure, to keep the shade at noon when we had some rest". Besides that, occasionally wild pear seedlings are taken care of, and their branches trimmed on the field. The seedlings are dug out around age three and are taken to the orchards. There they are inoculated with other breeds. Its leafy branches were also used for their green leaves and branches at festivals, for example, on the occasion of a wedding:

> The branch of the wild pear, it was so neat, it had massive branches. I would cut the top of the tree, it has such a nice look! Well, the wild pear or the plum, they have neat branches. Long ago they made different green branches for special occasions for example weddings.

Wild pear wood was also used for boards and firewood:

> For board. You see, over there: it is cladded on the barn, that one is wild pear board (…) Around 35 centimetre boards. I cut down a big wild pear tree on the pasture…Those healthy ones are very nice, when they are processed. It has those bits in it, like at the root of the tree, nice shapes. Like in the alabaster".
>
> "Wild pear wood is only good for firewood. You know, we do not rely on wild pear trees from the pastures in our area, we have many forests around, we do not need that. But the wild pear wood is not for tools, but for firewood.

Fruit

On the wild pear fruit: "if there is pear, there will be wild pear as well". "All the wild pears tastes dry". Many only recognize one type of wild pear based on its fruit: "I know only one kind of wild pear". But others identify different types by their taste or shape: "There are more types, we do not know their names". "Well, only when you taste it. You cannot tell by looking at it". "But there are the so-called, wild pear with

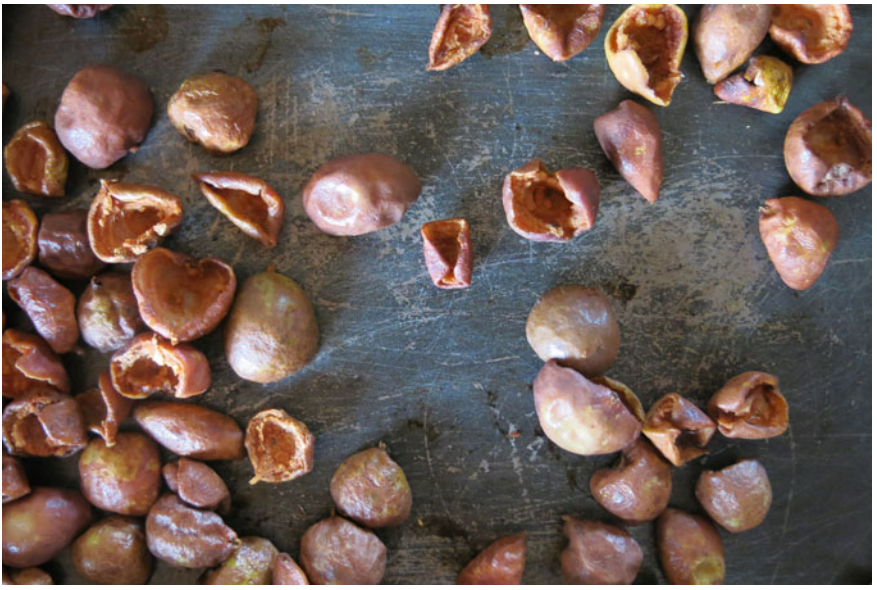

Fig. 4 Dried wild pear (*Pyrus pyraster*), (Nagyesztergár), Hungary, 2016, (photographed by Anna Varga)

a bottom. It was bigger than the wild small type". The fruit is considered fully ripe when it falls from the tree: "when it is ripe, it falls down, under the tree". The fruit is collected after beating the tree with a stick and then taken home in bags: "with many bags. Take the stick and beat it down", "we beat and shook it from the tree with 10–15 bags of fruits". Wild pear was once dried in furnaces, but its importance has declined: "there are some big fruiting wild pear trees, almost like small pears. They soften and then you can dry them well, I do dry them" (Fig. 4).

> We cut them in half, and we have this board drier, and we set the fire in the furnace, but less than for bread baking. Then we waited a bit for cooling, and we were careful with the coal, we pulled it out all properly to prevent the boards being set alight. Just like that. Sometimes it does not dry at once and then we had to light the fire up again. I prepared one or two sets, because we have three (driers) that fit in the furnace, and I put in the new set. So I dried it all.

The most common mode of consumption of wild pear is a fruit brandy (*pálinka).* It is typically produced when the plum yield is not plentiful:

> Now, there is one, the third neighbour, he does not have many plum trees, so when there is wild pear, he gets the wain and the horse and goes out. He takes the stick and beats it down, using many bags. Like last year, he brewed *pálinka* from many wild pears, so they still brew *pálinka.*

"With my man, we went there and beat and shook it with 10-15 bags, as there were no plums, but there was wild pear. So we brewed the *pálinka* from that. Construction was in progress, so we needed fruit brandy (*pálinka)*". "We did pick it for *pálinka.*

That is what you have, if you do not have plum. But there is no other *pálinka* as good as this one". Production of wild pear *pálinka* is similar to the production of plum *pálinka* with the addition of one step, where the ripe fruit must be smashed and minced: "just like from the grape or plum. When the wild pear is ripe they soften and then they smash or mince it and place it into a tub…"

> We had to break up that wild pear. You know, it did not start the fermentation in one piece of the fruit. You just had to smash it and then it fermented. As it fermented, we took it to the cauldron and distilled it right away. It did not ooze as much as the plum, but it was good. Some preferred wild pear *pálinka* to the plum *pálinka*. So we did things like that.

In years of ample plum yield, the wild pears fell down and were eaten by grazing animals: "nothing was done with the wild pear, it was eaten by sheep. There was an abundance. In reality, some did not have apple or a plum yield, so they made *pálinka* from it". "Sheep wander on the pastures in autumn and gorge on wild pear, and then they drop it and it sprouts. I have a field here, as you go towards the tunnel. The shepherd asked whether he could take the sheep over there in autumn. I let him do so. Once I walked there, and all around there stood wild pear trees".

*3.4 Wild Apple (*Malus Sylvestris*)*

3.4.1 Common Knowledge on Wild Apple

Wild apple almost always grows in open areas, in pasture and alongside roads: "only on the meadow". "It did not grow in the middle of the forest, among trees, it does not like it there, it likes being in the pastures, as a wild apple, where it grows free". Two types of wild apple are known; a yellow type and a red stripy type:

> For sure, there is the red and the yellow one. There are some that grow almost as an apple tree with many small apples. There is another place, called Kosárbükk, where a wild apple tree has nice apples with stripes, red stripes just like a Jonathan apple.

"There was a wild apple, like a stripy, yellowish stripy one".

> Well, there were some small ones. As I said, there were some like this, on my father's meadow called Veresdomb. That was not good enough for vinegar! That was not very delicious. Then, there was this totally red one at Cérkán's, in Bükkszeg, but it was always collected. And it turned mushy in winter, so they ate it.

3.4.2 Uses of Wild Apple

The wild apple seedlings were used for inoculation. Sometimes they brought home wild apple and inoculated it with the Jonathan and *sóvári* apple breeds. Fruits were consumed in a form of a special apple juice, called *csiger*:

> Those were smashed and minced with a grape grinder, used for mincing grapes. After letting it settle, it was drained, and then it was like the juice of an apple or grape or anything. Some sugar was added and then it was so tasty!

Before vinegar became available in stores, people produced it from wild apples. They smashed the fruit, it underwent fermentation and some sugar or honey might be added as well. This method is not practiced any longer: "oh, I had a great recipe. Oh, great vinegar was made with it. Vinegar in the shops is nothing like that! But I do not know how to make it, how much you need". "Vinegar was made from wild apple back then".

> Long time ago! Not anymore, when my mother was alive…when we were kids. There was no apple grinder, there was no grape grinder…it was smashed with a kind of wooden mallet…left for a while to let the fermentation start and sugar and honey was required as well. We made it back then as well… Since we have this vinegar, we do not make it.

Lately the number of wild apple trees has declined in all three villages: "about the wild apple, I do not think I can show you even 1–2 places where it grows, it is about to vanish. Those new breeds, cultivars appeared. And this one is wild, wild because it has wild roots. It grows into a tall trunked tree. It is not like that these days".

*3.5 Wild Cherry (*Cerasus Avium*)*

Different types of wild cherry were identified based on the fruit: "but there are more kinds, like the crispy, the blistery, the black and the red one". "There are many kinds around. All of them are wild cherry. There is a big inoculated one which has fruit the size of a plum, it does not taste like wild cherry". The fruit is hand-picked when it ripens in around June: "we climbed up, from the tree, from the branches we often collected half a handful of cherries from one group". "When it is ripe, at the beginning of June". "Wild cherries are dried and used for producing *pálinka*". "As I said, I dried the wild one". "Oh, it was so great, the wild cherry! But there was not too much. I could make *pálinka* and dried it as well".

4 Discussion

Wild pear, cornelian cherry dogwood, wild apple and wild cherry are known and used traditionally in the whole of the Central-East European region (Paládi-Kovács 2001; Dénes 2012; Łuczaj 2012; Papp et al. 2017; Savić et al. 2019; Szani 2011). The wild fruit trees were basement of the fruit food culture in the Carphatian Basin for centuries. It was part of the local, poorer people cousins, but also the aristocratic class eat them as a basic food element. The wild fruits were dried and prepared for soup, sauce or eat just raw. These wild trees not just provided the edible fruits, but also had important role to nursing the domestic varieties. It was very common that

wild fruit trees were recognized one by one and local people had knowledge about the quality and taste of their fruits (Hegyi 1978; Andrásfalvy 2007; Dénes et al. 2012).

Wild pears and wild apples were mainly eaten raw, dried or in the form of vinegar (Sõukand et al. 2015; Savic et al. 2019). Their role has declined significantly today. They began to gain ground and recognition again as a result of a renaissance of edible wild plants and the spread of fermented food (Łuczaj 2012; Dénes 2017). The use of wild pear saplings as wild stock for grafting is a well-known practice in all region. Traditional fruticulturists use wild pear seedlings most frequently for the purposes of preservation and propagation of ancient fruit varieties (Szani 2011, 2014).

Cornelian cherry is an interesting wild fruit to eat, but it is very difficult to define whether it belongs to the wild plants or domesticated ones and it is therefore kept on record as a semi-domesticated species (Priszter 1990; Turner et al. 2011; Szani 2014). Its versatile use as a medicinal plant and food is wide ranging in the region (Papp et al. 2017). Wild fruit trees also provide cultural ecosystem services, for instance, since cornelian dogwood is one of the first flowers of the springtime, their budding, blossoming twigs were used for decoration (Shulp et al. 2014; Szűcs 2015; Carvalho and Batata 2017). The role wild fruit trees played in gastronomy dropped significantly with the decline of traditional land-use practices, i.e. the abandonment of wood pastures (Varga et al. 2015b). Further research would be expedient to explore how changing ways of eating have altered the landscape, the relationship between land and society and in demonstrating the interwoven and close connections between natural values and human nutrition (Carvalho and Batata 2017).

5 Conclusions

Food is the basis of life for any living organism. Humans are a special living organism, who do not simply gather, harvest or hunt the food from their surrounding natural environment. Instead we have tended the wild landscape for thousands of years, to develop and maintain social-ecologically productive landscapes around the world. Changing environments and the use of resources have always created challenges for human society. We have to find the right balance between consumption and maintenance of these resources for the future. In Europe, wood pasture, which is a high natural and cultural value agroforestry system and habitat type, provides one of the best opportunities to dig deeper into the food-human-landscape relationship in a historical context.

The four plants, wild pear, wild apple, wild cherry and cornelian cherry studied mentioned in this paper were important for the local food culture and the dogwood for the economy too. These plants had essential role as nursing domestic varieties, using as medicinal plants and highlighted as specialty of the region.

Wood pastures are one of the most threatened biocultural hotspots of Europe, with their ancient trees, diverse wildlife and related traditional knowledge and heritage. These and the remarkable landscape aesthetic provided by wood pastures already bring joy to many, from local users to visitors. Both policy- and decision-makers

are increasingly supportive of wood pastures as they offer an innovative way of sustaining agroforestry systems. To make their support efficient in practice, farmers must primarily be convinced of the importance of protecting wood pastures. One of the ways of realizing this is to further involve the public in consuming products which come from wood pastures, as well as in enjoying regional gastronomy. It is a universally acknowledged truth that everyone finds it delightful to eat healthy and delicious food. In the last few decades, the most serious threat to wood pastures of the region has been their abandonment, which has resulted in the encroachment of shrubs and trees, and the loss of knowledge about them. Recently, more and more farmers have started to restore wood pasture back to their high natural and cultural value status. There are many good gastronomical examples of farmers' support for high natural and cultural value farming. One of these focuses on wood pastures. In appreciation of the efforts of farmers and to increase the awareness of wood pastures, *Gastroangel*, the most popular food show in Hungary, has made an episode about how you can contribute to preserving ancient trees and associated values by consuming certain products. We hope that the individuals' personal experience of enjoyable eating will create an awareness of the importance of wood pastures and will lead to potentially playing an active part in the conservation of biocultural heritage.

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Merroir in the Making: Provenance Fetishism and the Social Construction of Taste in the Japanese Seafood System

Shingo Hamada

Abstract Over the course of human history, large-scale extractive fishing methods have led to the decline in aquatic food resources and the collapse of regional stocks in many parts of the world, as well as countless intentional and unintentional changes to the marine environment. Aquaculture produces target species by controlling their feed and attempting to control their growing environment to meet and maximize commercial benefits, and often to promote branding strategies. Such histories of fisheries and environmental changes are not known for contemporary food consumers in the industrial food system in which many foods are made, commoditized, and branded in a distance. Based on an ethnographic case study of human-oyster relations in Akkeshi, Japan, this paper examines the social construction of *merroir* (the taste of ocean) with reference to Japan's provenance fetishism (*sanchisūhai*) produced by distancing and shading in contemporary food systems. Many consumers are concerned about the origin of food products, as they believe certain places produce better quality seafood than others. However, they purchase seafood without knowing where the origin of the product is geographically located. The author aims to demonstrate that the practice of merroir is good to think for understanding of how the branding of food with a place and taste creates mythical values while promoting the externalization of environmental and actual local histories in the consumer society.

Keywords Seafood · Aquaculture · Oyster · Merroir · Provenance fetishism · Environmental change

1 Introduction

The relationship between human and oceanic creatures changed rapidly in the Era of Anthropocene. Now humans feed oceans and aquatic creatures in various ways as much as they feed humans. Aquaculture produces target species by controlling

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their feed to meet and maximize commercial benefits. Furthermore, anthropogenic effluents flow and feed nutrients into coastal seascapes with nurturing freshwater, while causing desertification and eutrophication, along with acidification from the air-feeding CO_2 to oceans. Recently, we have also been feeding micro-plastics to marine species. These result in the devastation of nursery sea beds and habitats for many species and cause death on a massive scale for marine creatures through starvation and suffocation, due to the build-up of plastics in their stomach. Needless to say, the long-term impact of global warming is uncertain and human and nonhuman beings alike share experiences of unforeseen natural events. Thus, some scholars call the oceans today the AnthropOcean, the ocean with the accumulated irreversible changes in human-nonhuman relations at sea (Brugidou and Fabien 2018).

Such histories and current states of fisheries and environmental changes are not known for contemporary food consumers in the industrial food system in which many foods are made, commoditized, and branded in a distance. Many consumers are concerned about the origin of food products because they believe certain places produce better quality seafood than others. However, they purchase seafood without knowing where the origin of the product is geographically located and who are producing, and without considering the sustainability of the fishing or aquaculture practices involved.

This paper examines the contexts of place-making with taste and Japan's provenance fetishism (*sanchisūhai*), produced by distancing and shading in the contemporary food system. The practice of merroir (the taste of ocean) is good to think for understanding of how the commoditizing and branding of food with a place and taste creates mythical values in the consumer society. This paper problematizes that distancing and shading of food production promote the externalization of local environmental and cultural histories. This paper presents some of the ethnographic research that the author has been conducting in Akkeshi, a coastal fishing community in Hokkaido, Japan, to capture how oysters are farmed and branded while local environmental and social histories are distanced and unseen from the world of consumers.

2 Fishery Resources

Seafood has been a significant part of the human diet and human history since time immemorial. Fishing was the first real industry; dried and salted fish were among the very earliest foods traded over long distances around globe (Fagan 2006). Processed seafood with a peculiar taste, such as garum, became one of the first branded commodities traveling long distances between the sites of production and consumption (Frédéric 2019). Large-scale production, centralized processing and packaging, and transportation enabled fish and shellfish to be transported and consumed at great distance from the source. Reliance on perishable seafood required planning, highly specialized technology, group cooperation, and new ways to preserve and store food,

and this in turn was a stimulus for the growth of the first permanent towns and villages (Fagan 2017).

The development of navigation, transportation, and fishing technologies led humans to engage in further extensive and intensive fishing activities. Until steam power was invented and introduced, fishing in the sea and large lakes was constrained by the wind and capacity of physical human strength. By the end of the age of sail in the late eighteenth century, giant iron clipper ships were each carrying up to 1 million pounds, or 454,000 kg, of cargo from China around Africa to England in 3 months or so (Jefferson 2014). Fishing technologies greatly advanced and accelerated the intensified seafood industry in the 1870s with the advent of steam power, followed shortly by large-scale steam packing of canned food and machinery to produce cheap ice for refrigeration (Longo et al. 2015). The significance of these technological advancements was to enable the mobilization of seafood products over great distances.

3 Distancing, Shading, and Branding

While the actual locations of seafood origins are often unknown when the fishing takes place at a distance, and the products are packaged and processed with other materials, place still matters greatly to seafood consumers, especially in Japan. Japanese consumers recognize and are concerned about the origin of food products. According to the annual consumer survey on food purchasing and information on food labels conducted by Onoff, Inc. under contract with Japan's Consumer Affairs Agency in 2018, the number one concern for Japanese is price (84.4% of respondents), followed by best before and expiration dates (83.3%).[1] They are also highly concerned about food safety (68.0%) and functionality (60.1%). Meanwhile, 67% of respondents said they care about the ingredients that the products they purchase are made from, and 68.5% of them said they check the labels to see the origins of the products' ingredients. Those figures related to food origins are higher than the ones for nutritional values (64.6%), genetically modified organisms (43.0%), food additives (57.7%), allergens (27.7%), and brand (26.9%) (Onoff 2019). This indicates that, aside from temporal aspects of food (best before and expiration dates), place matters more than the materiality of food for most Japanese consumers.

However, food can pass through so many hands and be processed together with so many ingredients on its way to our plate that we end up with no connection back to its origin. Everything in the food chain pushes us to a distance from the real people, the real oceans and farms where our food begins its journey (Hamada and Wilk 2018:68).

Moreover, as the distance from food origins extends and becomes difficult to trace, consumers themselves are also distanced from the environmental and social

[1] The figure includes two responses out of five possible choices ("always check" and "frequently check").

costs of seafood production, because food labels and packages shade and black-box inconvenient information about them. Such a kind of externality often found in food production is called distancing and shading (Princen et al. 2002). Though most consumers are now aware, or have at least heard, of the Anthropocene and the impact of human activities on fishery species, such as bluefin tuna and eels, they may still believe that the oceans are so vast, powerful, and beyond human's control that these species are able to fix problems at sea themselves. As land animals, we still tend to believe there are unlimited resources of fish available in the sea. The myth of superabundance is socially constructed with distancing and shading, both of which are forms of social interaction that sustain, and are sustained by the global capitalist food system. General consumers choose and purchase seafood in the de-aminalized forms of filets, sashimi-slices, grilled, smoked, etc., in supermarkets, unknowing the form and size of actual fish, rather than buying a whole fish. Most shellfish cleaned its shell to be seen as if they grew up in environmentally unproblematic wild water, and they are shucked and packed by the time consumers see them. Distancing and shading of food production emotionally and symbolically detach consumers from sea creatures, which are de-animalized and de-ecologized in the transformation from a living being to a commoditized thing (e.g., Harfeld et al. 2016). This characterizes the problematic relationship between producers and consumers over environmentally and socially unsustainable practices of industrial food choice.

In Japan, place-based branding is highly valued in the evaluation of food products, and this tendency is known as *sanchisūhai* (worshipping the origin of products). Many seafood products have a geographic reference in their brand name. Japanese consumers differentiate between domestic and imported products, blindly believing that most domestic made-in-Japan products are naturally safer and taste better (Hatanaka 2020). This can be regarded as the fetishized origin of products; a phenomenon whereby the place of origin, whether real or fictional, gains mythical power and a superior taste as it travels in distance and time.

Sanchisūhai derives from the Japanese culture of nature-worshipping (*shizensūhai*) (e.g., Kalland and Asquith 1997). The more natural the food origin is the better. This cultural attitude is reflected in the wild-farmed seafood dichotomy, in which wild captured fish is valued higher than artificially farmed products.[2] However, in the contemporary industrial food system, characterized by distancing and shading, this can be translated as the more unknown the better. That is, if one does not know the actual location of production provenance, or even whether such a place really exists or not, the origin of taste is mystified and taken out of physical space.

Even if a place of origin is branded and fetishized, fine quality seafood requires more than provenance, because of its perishability and necessity of care throughout distribution, from the net on the boat to the display at the store. There are many seafood products that have a geographical reference in their brand name, although the association between the place of origin and the quality of the final products is black-boxed. As mentioned previously, Japanese consumers differentiate between domestic and imported products, but most consumers are not aware of the differences

[2] For critical discussion of the wild, see Whatmore (2002).

in ways to catch or farm fish, and to handle the landed products from the production site to fish mongers and retail stores. The place name where the fish are yielded is often used as the prefix of the product names; *Sekisaba* (mackerel from Seki), *Kinkasaba* (mackerel caught near Kinkasan Island), Ohmanomaguro (Bluefin tuna caught near and landed on Ohma, Aomori prefecture), and *Akkeshikaki* (oysters from Akkeshi) to name a few. Unless intentionally or unintentionally mislabeled, those place-identified seafood products tell consumers where the fish were caught, but they are left none the wiser about how the seafood was physically treated in the process of distribution. This is crucial, especially for seafood, which is highly perishable and vulnerable to temperature, humidity, and physical pressure.

4 *Merroir*: Branding and Placing Taste

While the industrial food system reproduces the material and relational distances between production and consumption, the branding of taste in association with a place further developed in the post-fordist economic system, with the concept and practice of *terroir* (Yamashita 2009). *Merroir* is a recently invented concept that applies the terroir concept of agricultural production to seafood and marine environments. In an article in the Seattle Times on March 14, 2003, Greg Atkinson and John Lowry used the term merroir to describe the quality and its determiners of oysters grown and produced in the State of Washington in the United States (Atkinson 2003). In the meantime, the Washington Post reported in 2011 that a local oyster production company in Chesapeake Bay opened a scenic-view seafood restaurant, named merroir, with the purpose of revitalizing the local oyster population and business, stating that it was the first time the term merroir had been used in print (Martell 2011; Stephen 2015).

While terroir is a concept that was developed by the global wine industry to protect the quality of production attributed to a specific region, the merroir concept developed mainly with oysters farmed in Chesapeake Bay and the coastal area of Washington State in the US. The internalization of the terroir concept in French AOC (*appellation d'origine contrôlée*) and other provenance certification systems requires systemic criteria to understand taste, evaluate, and categorize a variety of products.

In the case of oysters, the merroir is greatly influenced by the characteristics of the seawater where the oysters grow. Each one filters approximately two liters of seawater where they grow every day (Jacobsen 2008). For example, Le Ferme Des Bedaines, a French oyster farm, explains the distinct taste and quality of oysters by region based on minerals and phytoplankton in the water. Salinity and water temperature in coastal seawaters produces the taste, texture, and final quality of the oysters. The salinity differs from one oyster farm to another, even if they are situated in the same bay. In particular, oysters farmed in a brackish lake have less salty yet more robust mineral flavors (Martell 2011). Other factors that also influence the quality of oysters are the microalgae the oysters eat, the direction and speed of current the oysters are

exposed to, the distance from the seabed, precipitation, the water and air temperature, and seasonality. Water quality is subject to the amount of freshwater flowing from rivers and soil substances coming into the coastal water after heavy rains. The human impacts such as the anthropogenic eutrophicated coastal water also influence the resource abundance, safety, and taste of oysters (Kurlansky 2007). Rappahannock Oyster Co., a Chesapeake Bay-based oyster farming company, states, "nothing captures a sense of place more honestly than an oyster" (https://www.rroysters.com).

Understanding the origin of seafood requires us to consider a broader dimension of provenance than just temporal and spatial origins. In addition to environmental factors, material factors, including the biological and physiological characteristics of each oyster, cultural factors, such as history, knowledge, and the craftsmanship and ethos of producers, also play important roles in constructing merroir. The origin and quality of seafood includes who catch and harvest the fish and shellfish, in what ways, and with what gear, and how landed fish and shellfish is treated and managed. The site and moment of landing should also be factors that count toward the creation of origin, as they greatly influence the quality. Further, the merroir discussion requires an examination of the social history of seafood, which changes its values by embedding various actors in fishing and landing sites, wholesale and retail locations, and the phenomenological production of locality.

The following sections discuss how the merroir is formed and practiced in creating a place of fine oysters, with particular reference to Akkeshi, Hokkaido. The case of branded Akkeshi oysters shows that the environmental and social contexts in which oysters came to be farmed are distanced from consumers while the naturalness is fetishized and enhances the value of commoditized seafood.

5 Case Study: Pacific Oysters in Akkeshi, Hokkaido, Japan

Akkeshi, situated in eastern Hokkaido, Japan, is characterized by its long history of fishing and oystering, which dates back to prehistoric eras (Fig. 1). The place name Akkeshi is believed to derive from an indigenous Ainu word. Geographically, Akkeshi fisheries benefit from rich environments created by brackish Lake Akkeshi, approximately 24 km of coastline, and Akkeshi Bay opening its mouth onto the Pacific Ocean. Most of the population concentrates along the coastal areas, with a few small agriculture-centered districts located inland. The surrounding wetland area is a protected area for migratory birds registered by the international Ramsar Convention, and various nourishments flow from the rivers into the coastal seawater, where oysters, clams, shrimps, kelp seaweed, and others grow.

Akkeshi is known for its branded Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*). As Hokkaido is located further north than the rest of the major islands, the seawater temperature is colder than most other oyster production sites in Japan. For this reason, Akkeshi oyster farmers and buyers state they can produce and distribute oysters for raw consumption all year long.

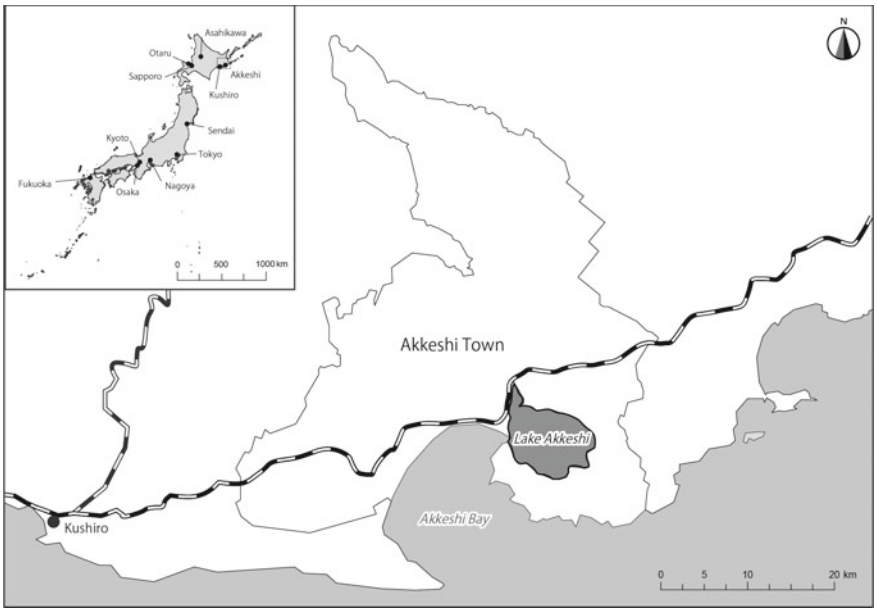

Fig. 1 Map of Akkeshi

5.1 Environmental History of Oysters in Akkeshi

Lake Akkeshi provided natural oyster grounds for a long period of time until the 1980s. The water in Lake Akkeshi used to turn white during the summer spawning season (Hamada 2009). Before the Japanese settlement developed in the 1890s as part of the government of Meiji Japan's geopolitical strategy, the human population around Akkeshi was still small, and oyster harvesting had not adversely impacted the sustainable reproduction of native oyster populations.

The settlement of ethnic Japanese in Akkeshi developed synchronically with the industrialization of food production; dried oyster production started in 1874 and the canning of oysters was started by the Kaitakushi early-Meiji administrative unit in 1880. Toshibei Kojima, a private entrepreneur, moved to Akkeshi in 1875 and pioneered businesses for drying oysters, fermented oyster sauce (*kakijoyu*), pickled oysters, oyster soup, and canned oysters (Akkeshicho 2012). While the local oyster food industry developed, over-harvesting of native oysters impacted the productivity of oysters after the highest yield year of 1887. The Hokkaido Government and Hokkaido Fishery Experiment Center implemented regulatory measures, which created two protected areas for oyster reproduction and divided oyster harvesting grounds into 351 sections, which were allocated to 252 licensees. Additional regulations introduced in the early twentieth century set limits on size and prohibited harvesting during specific periods, but these regulatory efforts failed to halt the depletion of native oyster populations (Nishihama 2001).

The subsequent approach for the recovery and maintenance of the Akkeshi oyster industry was the introduction of non-native oyster spat from other areas. Oyster spat from Miyagi Prefecture and Hokkaido's Lake Saroma was translocated in to Akkeshi, and this helped the recovery of the local oyster population. The translocated oysters were successfully naturalized in Akkeshi coastal environments, and approximately 500 tons of shucked oysters were produced in 1951. However, the number of oyster farmers increased in the 1960s, and the intensified extraction of oysters caused a decline in the annual yields in the 1960s and 70s, dropping to 20–30 tons annually. The translocation of non-native oyster seeds continues to this day, and oyster farming is one of the major and stable seafood industries in Akkeshi, in terms of annual yields and numbers of fishers, compared to other small-scale fisheries struggling to maintain their yield and labor force (Figs. 2, 3).

One of the major incidents that Akkeshi oysters and oyster farmers experienced was the large-scale death of oysters in 1982 and 1983. Local oysters failed to reproduce in 1982, resulting in a great decline in number. Inukai and Nishio (1937) attributed this to the unusually low water temperature of Lake Akkeshi during the summer, which may have influenced the attachment and settlement of oyster larvae and their growth. The seawater temperature may have also influenced the availability of plankton and other oceanic nourishment required for the growth of oysters. The

Fig. 2 Racks of oysters in an ultraviolet-treated tank before daily auction. All oysters produced under the Akkeshi name are stored in an ultraviolet-treated purified water tank for at least 48 hours to reduce the risk of food poisoning (August 11, 2018, photographed by the author)

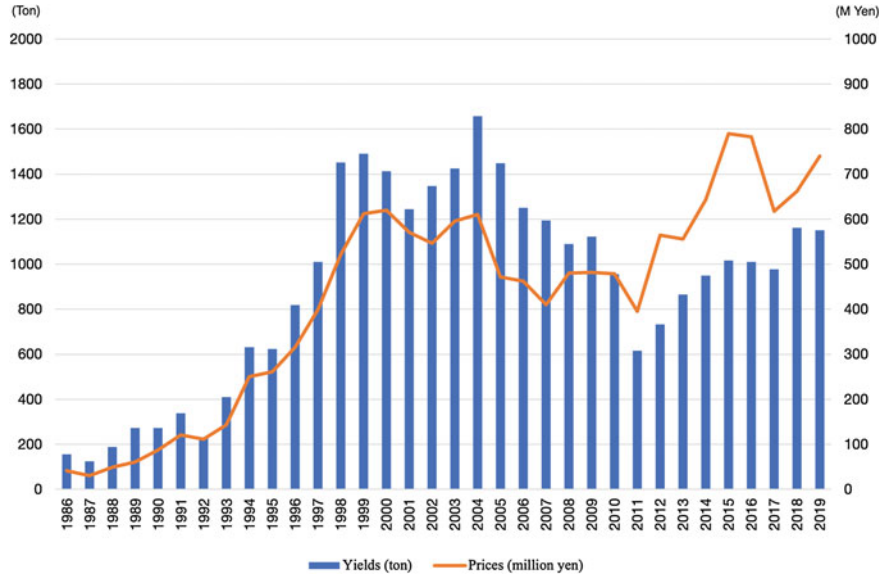

Fig. 3 Annual yields and prices of oysters in Akkeshi (1986–2017). *Source* Akkeshi Town, Akkeshi Fishing Cooperatives

second potential cause for the death of local oysters was the effect of the inland grassland development and intensive logging activities. While Inukai and Nishio (1937) argue that the runoff from agricultural lands through the Bekkanshiushi River affects the local aquatic ecosystem in Lake Akkeshi, my local informants argued that residential effluents and the construction of a new fishing port greatly altered Akkeshi's coastal seascape, which inevitably influenced water flows and the oysters' habitat (see also Kawabe 2006). Finally, others suggest that the continuous over-harvesting subsequently caused the failure of new recruits in the local oyster ecosystem (Wakana 2007).

After the incident of 1982–83, the Lake Akkeshi environment changed significantly with the development of enhanced Japanese littleneck clam (*Ruditapes philippinarum*) semi-aquaculture. Intertidal lands previously known as oyster reefs (*kakisho*) and islands (*kakijima*) were transformed into littleneck clam nurturing beds by reclaiming vast amounts of sand gravel in intertidal areas of Lake Akkeshi (Figs. 4, 5). While the littleneck clam helped local fishers secure a certain level of income, especially after the loss of their oysters, the translocated gravel constantly floats into other areas of seawater. This caused tension between clam harvesting licensees and others who mainly target coastal fish species, such as herring, using gill nets and set nets.

The oyster farming method in Akkeshi also shifted from releasing to bagging as a result of the intertidal reclamation for clam enhancement. The oyster farming areas were moved from shallow and intertidal lands to deeper water areas for hanging lines

Fig. 4 Lake Akkeshi intertidal areas. Vast areas of soil-filled land emerge in between tides (April 7, 2012, photographed by the author)

with oyster bags. Today, much of the area of Lake Akkeshi is covered with intertidal clam islands and lines of bagged oyster farms, while the rest of the space is jointly used for other fishing activities and navigation.

Modifying the coastal seascapes of Akkeshi may have also impacted the oyster ecology. According to local oyster farmers and fishers using Lake Akkeshi, the coastal development in 2005 narrowed the mouth of Lake Akkeshi connected to Akkeshi Bay, and this limited the oceanic current inflow and decreased the nutrient cycle. They also attributed this to the over-accumulation of sludge in the lake, where previously the "ocean ebb and flow used to sweep some away from the lake to the bay, and to the Pacific Ocean."

Furthermore, the tsunami caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake reached Akkeshi shorelines in March 2011, damaging intertidal clam lands and numerous lines of oyster bag strings. Though the exact number of bagged oysters was unknown, the total cost of the 2011 tsunami in damage to the Akkeshi fishing industry was estimated to be approximately 287 million yen in value (Asakura and Terada 2012).

However, while oyster farmers expressed grief over their economic losses, many cooperative members and staff stated that the 311 tsunami also had a positive impact on the local ecosystem by clearing away the seabed sludge and cleaning Lake Akkeshi. Oyster farmers also stated that the oysters they brought in to replace the ones lost after the tsunami grew better than those they used to farm in the pre-311

Fig. 5 Clam harvesting on an intertidal land in Lake Akkeshi (April 7, 2012, photographed by the author)

farming environment, admitting that too many oysters were introduced and grown in the limited aquatic space, which caused the accumulation of sludge on the bottom of Lake Akkeshi.

These changes in human-oyster relations along with environmental changes led to the re-organization of distribution for fishing rights and allotment of farming areas. Today, individual household oyster farmers, who must be members of local fishing cooperatives, de facto privatize their allocated lanes for hanging oyster bags in designated spaces, each of which have different degrees of ecological impact, such as saltwater inflow from Akkeshi Bay and freshwater runoff from the rivers.

5.2 The Birth and Merroir of Akkeshi-Branded Oysters

In 1999, Akkeshi town established a municipal oyster seed production center with the purpose of crafting "authentic Akkeshi product" (*jun-Akkeshi-san*) oysters, under the motto of "oysters born and raised in Akkeshi" (*umare mo sodachi mo Akkeshikaki*).

This led to the creation of branded oysters, *kakiemon*, in 2003. *Kakiemon* oysters are produced using the so-called single-seed method, which was introduced from Clarence city in Australia, one of the Akkeshi's international sister cities. These

newly branded oysters are artificially propagated, and their larvae are produced in the municipal seed production center. Larvae are nurtured and attached to powder-crusted oyster shells, approximately 0.2 mm in height, in temperature-controlled tanks. They are translocated in to Akkeshi water when their shells grow to over 3-5 mm in height (Hokkaido Research Organization 2013). In the single-seed method, each oyster is given an individual farming bag rather than living together with other oysters in the same bag hung underwater. The oyster in each bag does not compete with other oysters for nutrients and space.[3] Because the spats are not attached to anything and instead are allowed to flow freely with the seawater, at least within the bag, their shucks are more or less round in shape, creating more space inside for the oysters. *Kakiemon* oysters are said to have a puffy body and tender meat texture, a thick adductor (thus creating a chewier texture), and a profound sweetness in taste.

There are currently three kinds of brand-named oysters in Akkeshi—*kakiemon*, *maruemon*, and *nagaemon*. Their differences derive from the seedling methods used and the duration of time the oysters spend living in Akkeshi coastal waters. The production methods of the maruemon and nagaemon oysters are technically distinguished as *yoshoku* (farming) and *chikuyo* (fattening/keeping), respectively. *Maruemon* oysters are grown in Akkeshi, but their spats are originally from the Sanriku coastal area of the Tohoku Region, which includes Miyagi Prefecture. The spats are grown for about 1 year in the Sanriku Region and then translocated to and farmed in Akkeshi for 1–3 years (Fig. 5). Nagaemon oysters are grown for 2–4 years in the Sanriku Region, and then are translocated into and farmed in Akkeshi waters for several months, before being sold to market as Akkeshi oysters (Fig. 6). I was told that *nagaemon* oysters could also obtain the Akkeshi taste even by only living in Akkeshi waters for a few months.

Furthermore, a newly branded oyster, named *bentenkaki*, was recently created and began production in 2017. While they use the same single-seed and nurturing methods used for crafting *bentenkaki*-branded oysters, *bentenkaki* oyster larvae are propagated from Akkeshi-grown, rather than non-native translocated oysters. As such, they claim to be "fully" Akkeshi-grown. Akkeshi oysters are stored in and propagate larvae in tanks in the municipal production center. The larvae are attached to scallop shells and grown in controlled water for approximately 1 year. They are moved individually to farming bags and grown in seawater for 1–3 years. Oyster farmers who produce bentenkaki told me that they taste very different, especially their richness and firmness, as they grow in cold water from birth.

5.3 The Merroir of Akkeshi Oysters

The distinguishable difference in taste—merroir—is attributed to various environmental factors, including the complex mixture of salt and freshwaters, locations of

[3] This does not mean that single-based oysters live outside of the ecosystem altogether. They must still compete with other species, such as acorn barnacles.

Fig. 6 Oyster spat ready to be translocated into Akkeshi Lake. They are attached to scallop shells and transported from their origin of place in Tohoku Region (May 8, 2012. photographed by the author)

farming baskets and/or floors, and the coastal landscape. According to fishers, oyster farmers, and local wholesale buyers, Akkeshi oysters taste sweeter compared with oysters produced in other areas. This taste difference is attributed to the freshwater inflow from rivers and wetlands to Lake Akkeshi. The degree and balance of salt-water and freshwater differ from one place to another, and one time to another, with the ebb and flow of the sea. This results in the differences in taste of oysters farmed in different locations.

Furthermore, informants argue that the colder water temperature makes Akkeshi oysters grow slower than oysters produced in other regions. Filtering and digesting seawater and brackish water for a longer period of growing time make Akkeshi oysters taste particularly rich and creamy, and gives the meat a thicker texture. Each farming location has a different water current exposure, so the taste of oysters varies according to each merroir.

The Akkeshi oyster merroir is inseparable from the craftsmanship and individual efforts for enhancing the quality of the oysters. Akkeshi oyster farmers transfer their oyster spats, juveniles, and matures several times in order that their oysters experience different seawater temperatures and depths. Water temperature fluctuates differently from one site to another within Akkeshi, and accordingly oyster farmers sometimes move their bagged oysters from the saltier Akkeshi Bay area to the sweeter

(meaning less salty) brackish Lake Akkeshi. There are specific places for keeping oyster spawn, fattening them, tightening their meat texture, and balancing their taste (Hamada 2009). The timing of transfer and duration of place used are based on the individual farmer's experience, knowledge, and conditions of the oysters and coastal environment. Therefore, although kakiemon oysters are branded through the local fishing cooperative as a whole, their quality management is practiced by small-scale, individual, and household-based farmers.

While environmental factors tend to dominate the discussion of the oyster merroir, the laborious manual work done by household oystermen and women should also be considered when discussing the development and maintenance of Akkeshi-branded oysters. Instead of leaving their oysters in the underwater bags, oyster farmers go out to the bay and lake to take oyster bags out of the water and bring them back to shore. Oysters and their bags with fine meshes are frequently covered with sludge and other sea creatures, such as acorn barnacles. They shuck them off the bags and oysters one by one using water and gimlets. Neglecting this work results in low-quality oyster products, as the oysters must compete with the other organisms covering their shucks over the nutrients required for their growth. Furthermore, a local wholesale buyer stated that all shelled oysters need to be cleaned even after oyster farmers clean them, because they often sell the un-shucked oysters to their business partners as a branded seafood product. Consumers usually see raw oysters with or without shucks in seafood sections at stores, and they may not be aware that farmed oysters need to have their shucks cleaned multiple times at shore before being sold (Figs. 7, 8, 9, 10).

6 Discussion

The allegory of the Akkeshi oyster merroir needs to be ecologized with three social phenomena underlining the provenance fetishism. Firstly, most consumers do not know where Akkeshi is. Indeed, most consumers, including Japanese, cannot read the Japanese characters for Akkeshi (厚岸), because of the phonetic application of characters to the unfamiliar indigenous Ainu toponym. Secondly, most consumers do not know about the environmental history of Akkeshi oysters, although they care about the naturalness of the seafood they consume. Thirdly, most consumers do not know the life history of branded Akkeshi oysters, most of which have their origins in the coastal areas of Miyagi Prefecture. That is, despite valuing the origin of products, most consumers do not know where or how oysters grow and are grown.

All "*-emon*" branded oysters are distributed in the market together as Akkeshi oysters. Indeed, while the origins of their seed (Akkeshi or Miyagi) and birth conditions (seawater or tank) are different, they are identical in terms of scientific taxonomy; they are all Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*).[4] Most consumers may not

[4] In addition to the scientific taxonomy, a local, folk taxonomy operates in many food cultures. As for Akkeshi oysters, indigenous oysters are called ezogaki (trans. Hokkaido oyster) and nagakaki

Fig. 7 Oyster spat being translocated in to Akkeshi Lake. (May 9, 2012, photographed by the author)

know which *-emon* branded oysters they purchase and eat, although they are aware that Akkeshi is a well-known place for oysters. While Akkeshi as a production place is fetishized, the similarities and differences among those *-emon* branded oysters remain unnoticed by most consumers.

Provenance fetishism tends to silence the different quality of products within a branded merroir and homogenize it in the market-based food system. Work efforts and ethics, especially in crafting kakiemon, vary and differentiate the quality of branded seafood among oyster farmers. Full-time oyster farmers are able to focus their time and budgets solely on branding oysters, while part-time farmers, who may be engaging with other fisheries throughout year, may not invest as much energy. Therefore, the quality of *kakiemon* is not identical among Akkeshi oystermen and women. Local wholesale buyers, who scrutinize the quality of oysters, often make decisions on auction purchases and prices based on the individual names of farmers, rather than specific locations of production. One oyster buyer expresses his ambivalent roles in branding Akkeshi oysters—while he hopes to sell and promote the branded oysters nationwide, he also values and feels responsible for responding to the different amount of efforts that individual oyster farmers make for producing

(trans. long oyster), because they tend to have a longer, larger shuck. This oyster used to be given a different scientific name (*O. talienwhanensis*), but is now considered the same as the Pacific oyster (Kira 1996).

Fig. 8 Farmed oysters retrieved from coastal waters for cleanup (September 3, 2015, photographed by the author)

good qualities of oysters because oysters are individual living beings and acquire a merroir differently according to their farmers. However, commodizing and place-based branding of oysters de-animalize them, and de-ecologize them from living environments and individual farmers who nurture them.

What makes the matter of place complicated is the mislabeling and misleading naming of other oyster products, even if unintentional. For example, genuine Akkeshi-branded oysters grow and experience two more or less distinct physical environments—Akkeshi Bay and Lake Akkeshi. The work of transferring oysters between the saltwater coastal bay and brackish lake helps Akkeshi oysters develop a sweeter taste. However, oyster farmers who live and operate their oyster aquaculture in southern Akkeshi Bay, which is closer to the open Pacific Ocean, grow their oysters only in Akkeshi Bay, because they do not have permits to use the oyster farming allotments in Lake Akkeshi. Their oysters are sold as oysters produced in Akkeshi Bay. While most consumers do not notice the difference in place-naming between Akkeshi products (*Akkeshisan*) and Akkeshi Bay products (*Akkeshiwan-san*), local wholesale buyers criticize this practice, worrying that the reputation of Akkeshi-brand oysters could be damaged. “The difference (in taste) is obvious. Fishers should manage and behave themselves (for protecting the brand) before criticizing us (for unsatisfactory local auction prices).” Yet, ironically, the provenance fetishism seems to minimize

Fig. 9 Oysters grown underwater are nearly completely covered with other marine species. Oyster producers clean each of them to help their oysters grow and taste better (September 3, 2015, photographed by the author)

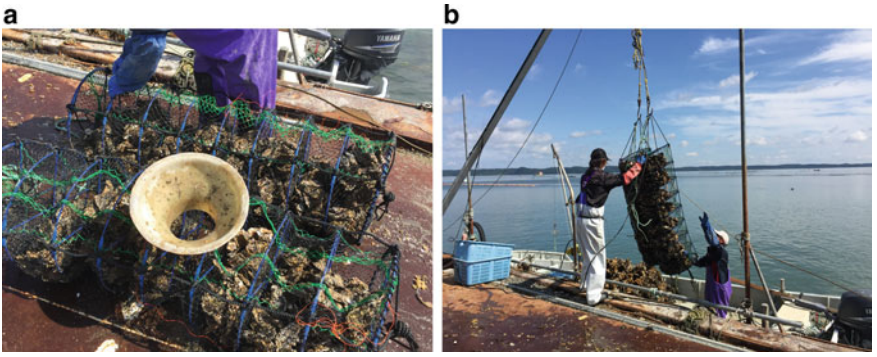

Fig. 10 (**a** and **b**) After cleaning, oysters are returned to coastal waters to grow and capture a merroir—a fine and particular balance of quality and taste (photo by the author, September 3, 2015)

the effect of the misleading labeling of Akkeshi oysters, because Akkeshi as a signifier is enough for most consumers to consume both materially and symbolically the taste of coastal Hokkaido, by taking pictures of oysters and posting them to their SNS pages before eating them.

Though the taste of wine and other fine food and drink is annually evaluated as a vintage, the terroir and its spatial boundary for each product generally remains unchanged. Taste is placed in each land plot, area, or region, and the territorialized terroir forms the world atlas of taste as if they remain unchanged. This risks the marginalization of cultural and regional diversity and dynamics within a particular terroir. Tasting the terroir can be both objective and subjective, and essentializing the determiners and the territorial settlement of taste demand critical discussions in order for us to understand the complexity of practicing and structuring the taste of place in today's post-industrial world.

While place definitely matters, in the case of kakiemon and other Akkeshi oysters, the crafting of branded oysters is locally evaluated according to the name of individual and household oyster farmers. As the timing and exact location for transferring oysters among several farming spots are invariably different from one oyster farmer to the other, some local wholesale buyers pay great attention to the names of farmers at the daily auctions. One local buyer even goes as far to say, "All oysters are same—what counts is the farmers' name. Some oystermen cheat middlemen by putting small oysters underneath larger ones (in the containers they use to bring the oysters to the local wholesale market)." While some oyster farmers criticize the fact that local wholesale buyers unjustly benefit from their oysters by "just boxing and shipping them," local buyers also play key roles in developing the Akkeshi merroir, promoting and maintaining the brand quality of Akkeshi oysters. He told me that oystermen who try to cheat would receive lower auction values from then, often by as much as 20 yen per oyster.

The largest concern that the author has for provenance fetishism is the distancing of impacts of climate changes and the shading of the subsequent changes of merroir—taste of ocean. Little study has been done on how climate change influences the terroir and merroir, with a few exceptions (c.f. DeMaster et al. 2019). Interviews with local coastal fishers and buyers often turned to the topic of climate change and local environmental history, when they were questioned on what they think of the quality and taste of seafood. Threats posed to merroir include the acidification and eutrophication of oceanic waters. This can affect coastal faunal diversity, which is responsible for creating and maintaining the nursery seabed for many fishery-targeted species. Effluents from terrestrial human livelihood also introduce various artificial, unnatural substances into rivers and coastal waters. A few buyers and oyster farmers touched on the relationship between water quality and the risk of virus infection, which could potentially decimate the brand power of Akkeshi oysters.

Furthermore, the impact of the tsunami caused by the 311 Great East Japan Earthquake was physically and economically evident, and local informants talked about how the Akkeshi coastal seascape changed after the tsunami swept away the sludge from the bottom of Lake Akkeshi; some stated that the excrement from intensively farmed oysters had overloaded and accumulated on the bottom. They

were also concerned about the potential environmental impacts from post-tsunami coastal defense construction. Additionally, many coastal fishers mentioned summer typhoons and rapidly developing storms ("bomb cyclones"), which greatly affect mainland Japanese islands but never used to reach northernmost Hokkaido in the past. These cause rough waves and prevent them from going out to sea to fish and harvest. Localized torrential rains caused by these weather events result in an unusual amount of freshwater inflow into coastal areas. Overflowed silt can affect the growth and quality of oysters and can even cause death by suffocation for many of them. Ethnographic documentation of these problems has not been extensively conducted or reported yet (c.f. Hamada 2020).

Most informants did not mention those negative environmental impacts when discussing the taste and merroir of Akkeshi oysters, even as they attributed those impacts to the historical depletion of native oysters. The quality of their products was not discussed as much as the quantity. This is perhaps for protecting their place-based branding, regardless of their intentionality. They may not notice the change of taste because environmental change.

In the meantime, once place-based branding is successfully created and marketed, consumers reproduce provenance fetishism in the food system, by distancing and shading various local concerns, such as the threats of global warming, from their food experience and evaluation. Provenance fetishism continues to create and reproduce mythical values of industrial seafood products while promoting the externalization of environmental and actual local histories in the consumer society.

7 Conclusion

This article provides an overview of the concept of merroir and the issue of place fetishism, based on a case study of Akkeshi-branded oysters in Japan. Fishery-targeted species are renewable resources for humans by nature, but the social construction of inexhaustible oceans and characteristics of fisheries as a common resource pool has made many fisheries unsustainable in human history. As the distance between seafood production and consumption continues to be wide and possibly untraceable, the relationship between place and taste becomes more relevant and important in food studies than ever. While many consumers care about the geographical origin and identification of food, the discussion of taste often tends to be reductive to biological and physiological dimensions of sensing a taste, and the environmental dimensions of making a taste. The merroir concept and practice are good for thinking about how seafood is made and how its value changes in the distancing and shading of food production. Place matters, and the interaction between tasting place and placing taste require further discussion within the context of environmental changes in the Anthropocene.

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The Socio-Cultural Reception of MSG (Monosodium Glutamate) in Thailand

Yoshimi Osawa

Abstract This chapter examines the process of how MSG (Monosodium Glutamate) has become part of food culture in Thailand. Since its invention by a Japanese chemist in 1908, MSG has been used as a seasoning, as well as a flavor enhancer not only in Japan but also internationally. MSG transcended its national boundaries and has now become one of the most widely consumed food additives and seasonings in the world. MSG seasoning is more commonly used in East and Southeast Asia than in any other parts of the world. In Thailand, MSG seasoning is regularly consumed in different forms and has become one of the most significant food products in Thai culinary culture and practice. This chapter explores the spread of MSG seasoning, tracing its course from its initial introduction to Thailand, and focusing in particular on how it has been adopted as a "taste" and "commodity," based on anthropological research conducted in Thailand, as well as examinations of its historical process.

Keywords MSG · Thailand · Deliciousness · Food additives · Taste · Seasonings

1 Introduction

MSG (Monosodium Glutamate) is one of the most commonly used food additives and seasonings in the world. The current world consumption of MSG is approximately 3.6 million tons and this is increasing year by year (Nikkan Keizai Tsushinsha 2018). MSG is mainly used as a seasoning in household kitchens and as a food additive by the food industry. About 60% is used by households, and the remaining 40% is used by food manufacturers as an ingredient of processed food products. MSG is characterized by its taste known as umami, a so-called a fifth taste (Bellisle 1999). Taste plays an important role in understanding the nature of food during selection. Humans physiologically evaluate that foods which provide energy and nutrients necessary for the body are delicious, and that foods which are bad for the body are not desirable. Humans prefer sweetness as a sign of energy, and avoid bitterness

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and sourness as indications of poison and rottenness. It has been argued that the glutamate taste is an indication of protein, and therefore humans have a physiological preference for the umami taste (e.g., Bachmanov and Beauchamp 2007). Humans' quest for deliciousness has produced new seasonings and additives, such as MSG.

While MSG has spread worldwide, its consumption and consumption patterns vary by region and country. Northeast Asia accounts for 60% of total global consumption, followed by Southeast Asia and Oceania at 26%, Africa at 4%, North America at 3%, Western Europe at 2%, and finally Central and South America at 2% (Makrit 2022). It should be noted that MSG is consumed more in Asia (about 86%) than anywhere else in the world. In addition, while it is rare to see MSG used as a seasoning in Europe and North America (as opposed to being used in processed food), it is much more common in Asia for MSG seasoning to be considered a kitchen essential (e.g., Van Esterik 2008). Whether MSG is used as a seasoning or added as an ingredient of a processed product may differ largely in terms of people's awareness. While adding MSG as a seasoning is a matter of personal choice, the consumption of MSG in processed products is likely to be unconscious.

Given the fact that MSG produces a physiologically delicious taste, why is there a difference in consumption and form of consumption among regions? Nobayashi (2019), who studied the development of the preference for sweetness in Taiwan, suggests the importance of understanding the historical process of how a certain taste or flavor takes root in food culture. There have been several historical studies on the global spread of MSG. Sand (2005) has historically elucidated how MSG spread in Japan and across East Asia and North America, revealing how MSG preferences have been created and changed over time within in each social context. For example, he illustrates how MSG was introduced and accepted as a symbol of modernity by being legitimized by science, and how sales were targeted at food experts and "educated" housewives. On the other hand, MSG in China in the 1920 s and 30 s was seen as a symbol of Japanese imperialism and domestic MSG emerged as a substitute. At the same time, it was also used as a substitute for meat for vegetarians.

Regarding the spread of MSG in Thailand, there are several studies focusing on the management and marketing strategy of the Japanese company Ajinomoto, a global producer of MSG (Ota 1997; Hiramatsu 1997). These studies focus on how the company turned Ajinomoto into a highly popular and internationally successful product, and describe in detail the company's marketing strategy in Thailand, from a management history perspective.

At the same time, previous studies may lack the consumer's perspectives on how MSG was actually received and assimilated into people's daily lives as a flavor and seasoning, a commodity, and a "thing," particularly in the context of existing food culture and society at the time. By taking advantage of the historical fact that MSG has taken root in Thailand only relatively recently compared to other countries such as Japan and East Asia, I would like to examine the process by which MSG seasoning was introduced to Thailand and how it has established its current status as a popular industrialized product, based on Thai people's recollections.

The data in this paper are based on preliminary field research conducted in Chiang Mai Province, northern Thailand, between September 2013 and March 2014, as well

as a total of five field studies conducted in Bangkok, central Thailand, and Chiang Mai Province and Lampung Province, northern Thailand, between August 2018 and September 2019. Based on the results of the preliminary survey, I estimated that the period when MSG first became commonplace in Thailand was after the Second World War, and therefore conducted interviews with people aged 60 or older, who remember the eating habits during that period. In addition, in order to understand the situation in both rural and urban areas at that time, I selected Chiang Mai City and its surrounding areas (urban area), and B District, Lampung Province (former rural area), about 35 km southeast of Chiang Mai City, as the main survey areas. Interviews were conducted with a total of 45 people aged 60 years or older, of whom 17 were men and 28 were women (17 in their 60s, 12 in their 70s, 15 in their 80s, and 1 in 90s).

2 History of MSG in Thailand: From Japan to Thailand

The origin of MSG goes back to 1908 in Japan. A Japanese chemist, Kikunae Ikeda (1864–1936), published a paper entitled “New Seasonings” in the Journal of the Tokyo Chemical Society. This new seasoning, which Ikeda derived from kombu stock, was composed of MSG, and he claimed that it had a “delicious” taste that did not correspond to the sweet, sour, salty, and bitter tastes. Ikeda named the taste "umami” for the sake of providing a convenient explanation. In 1909, a year after the paper was published, the new seasoning was put on the market in Japan under the trade name “Ajinomoto” by Suzuki Shoten, the current Ajinomoto Company and largest MSG manufacturer in the world. The company soon focused on overseas markets after the sales of Ajinomoto in Japan. In particular, the company focused its efforts on promoting the product in East Asia, and first developed markets in Taiwan, South Korea, and mainland China.

According to Ajinomoto Company’s history, it appears that MSG was first introduced to Southeast Asia as an export from Japan around 1922 (Ajinomoto 1990). Table 1 shows the amount of Ajinomoto overseas exports from Japan including Southeast Asia between 1922 and 1937. Initially, the target of Ajinomoto exports were Japanese residents in East Asia (Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria, and Shanghai) living in areas that were under Japanese occupation at the time. Sales were then gradually expanded to include locals (Ajinomoto 1990). In 1927, Ajinomoto opened its first Southeast Asian office in Singapore, and began active sales promotions in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. In Thailand and Malaysia, in particular, sales were promoted through the establishment of agency systems based on the existing business networks of overseas Chinese. This was particularly demonstrated by the sales promotion to Chinese restaurants in Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia.

The amount of MSG exports from Japan to Thailand steadily increased during the post-war period, except for the period between 1954 and 1955 when the Thai government banned the import of MSG from Japan to try and address the trade imbalance

Table 1 Ajinomoto exports from Japan (1918–1937)(ton) *Source* Adapted from Ajinomoto(1990)

Year	Southeast Asia	Taiwan	Korea	Manchuria	China
-	-	12	5	–	4
1918	1	29	17	10	10
1922	7	50	29	18	23
1926	9	58	40	21	27
1927	5	79	42	27	29
1928	4	102	48	30	66
1930	5	112	51	24	62
1931	5	113	58	24	39
1932	5	156	67	54	12
1933	15	175	80	94	34
1934	22	261	103	121	72
1935	36	359	136	155	90
1936	38	483	175	209	84
1937	29	546	218	278	98

between the two countries. From around the late 1950s, Ajinomoto Company and other overseas MSG producers stepped up their efforts to produce MSG domestically in Thailand. This was due to several reasons, including the increasing popularity of MSG in Thailand, easy access to cassava starch (the main material used in MSG production), and the introduction by the Thai government of a new policy to encourage industrialization by endorsing foreign investment. In 1960, Ajinomoto Company set up Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd. (Borisat Ajinomoto (Pratet Thai) Chamkgat in Thai) and began construction of its own production plant in the Thai province of Samut Prakan (Ajinomoto 1990). Around the same period, several Thai MSG companies were established in cooperation with Taiwanese and Hong Kong companies, such as, for example, Thai Churos company in 1958, and Thai Fermentation Industry Company in 1967. However, Ajinomoto has remained the largest in terms of MSG sales since its establishment in Thailand. It is also interesting to note that other MSG seasonings often mimic Ajinomoto seasoning by packaging the product in a clear plastic bag with red font and images, or using the term aji (meaning taste in Japanese) or chuu ros (to enhance flavor/taste) in the product name. Table 2 summarizes the key events in early MSG history related to Thailand.

Table 3 shows the quantity of MSG produced at the Ajinomoto Company's overseas plants including Thailand from 1962 to 1979. As the table shows, there was a sharp increase in MSG production at the Thai plant during the 1970s, although it should be noted here that this includes production for exports, particularly to Singapore and other Southeast Asian markets. Ajinomoto's sales were mostly concentrated in the Bangkok metropolitan area (about 70–80% of the total sales) during the 1960s through to the mid-1970s (Ota 1997), however after the mid-1970s, it started being consumed more and more in rural areas of Thailand. Some data also suggest

Table 2 List of events related to MSG and Thailand

Time	Events
1909	First sales of MSG seasoning (Ajinomoto) in Japan
1922	First export of MSG to Southeast Asia including Thailand
1954–1955	Ban on Ajinomoto import by Thai government
1958	Establishment of the Thai Churos Co., Ltd.
1960	Establishment of Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd.
1961	Commencement of MSG plant by Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd. in Samut Prakan Province
1967	Establishment of Thai Fermentation Industry Company

Table 3 Production of MSG at Ajinomoto Overseas Plants (ton), Source: Adapted from Ajinomoto (1990)

Year/ Country	Thailand	Philippines	Malaysia	Indonesia	Italy	Peru	Brazil
1962	**445**	98	–	–	–	–	–
1963	**653**	600	–	–	–	–	–
1964	**792**	922	–	–	–	–	–
1965	**1009**	1632	405	–	–	–	–
1966	**1572**	2620	682	–	713	–	–
1967	**2229**	2641	1044	–	3345	–	–
1968	**2822**	3646	1498	–	4735	–	–
1969	**3804**	4520	1171	–	5309	341	–
1970	**4842**	4727	1910	742	5892	743	–
1971	**7526**	5448	1513	2079	6400	1043	–
1971	**8508**	5106	1527	1884	6110	1090	–
1973	**9231**	5772	2130	2132	6630	1416	–
1974	**10,854**	5697	2740	2159	9772	1762	–
1975	**11,712**	5663	2980	2482	8171	200	–
1976	**9185**	6269	3343	4986	8097	1977	–
1977	**12,262**	7575	3401	5940	4120	2001	3724
1978	**14,077**	7189	3896	7422	–	3163	8011
1979	**14,667**	9517	4066	9135	–	3288	10,385

Bold signifies the Thailand's production volumes

that MSG probably spread into rural areas in the late 1970s. According to a study on food habits conducted in three farming villages "being described as relatively developed compared to other rural areas" in Lamphun Province in northern Thailand between 1979 and 1981, the use of MSG seasoning, particularly Ajinomoto, was observed in two out of the three villages (Suthasupa et al. 1982). Taken together,

these data suggest that MSG was first introduced into Thailand in the 1920s primarily in Bangkok through Chinese business networks including Chinese restaurants. By the early 1980s it had spread from Bangkok to the countryside, from urban to rural areas, and from restaurants to the general public.

While MSG seasoning is only made with MSG, there are other types of seasonings made by adding other flavors to MSG. Currently, these MSG-based seasonings are also popularly used in Thailand. Some of the most popular seasonings of this kind are RosDee and Knorr which are both commonly known by their trade names. RosDee is a product of Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd. RosDee, which literary means good taste, is an MSG-based flavor seasoning powder, blended with sugar, meat or fish extracts, garlic powders, etc. The powder is used for a wide range of dishes, including soup, stews, and stir-fried dishes. RosDee has a relatively shorter history, dating back to 1979, when chicken-flavored RosDee first became available, followed by pork-flavored RosDee in 1988. The flavor seasonings market in Thailand totaled around 70,000 tons in 2015, and consumption since then is expected to have grown both in households and in the restaurant market, mainly at food stalls (Ajinomoto 2016). On the other hand, Knorr is known for broth or bouillon cubes, and as products of British-Dutch company Unilever. It has pork, chicken, and fish flavors and is commonly used for soup or curry-type dishes. It is clear that the precedent for establishing and popularizing these flavored seasonings was set by MSG seasoning.

3 MSG and Its Affinity to Local Taste System

In Thailand, MSG seasoning is commonly called Aji-no-moto after the trade name of the most well-known MSG seasoning and *pong chuu ros*, which literally means flour/powder to enhance taste[1]. There are several data on MSG consumption in Thailand. According to a national survey on food security and nutrition status in Thailand (2005–2011), in 2011, the urban population consumed an average of 0.8 g of MSG per day, while the rural population consumed 1.3 g per person per day. Different data suggest an average MSG intake of 4.0 g/day in Khon Kaen Province, in the northeast of Thailand (Insawang et al. 2012). Consumption of MSG in Thailand occurs in a variety of forms, including as a seasoning in household kitchens, food stalls, and restaurants, and also as an ingredient of processed foods. MSG is also added to some seasonings such as fish sauce (*nam pla*) and oyster sauce (*nam man hoi*). MSG is in the form of a white crystalline powder with a similar appearance to sugar or salt and is easily dissolved in liquids. While Aji-no-moto is the most popular brand, there are other Thai brands such as Thai Churos produced by The Thai Churos Co., Ltd. and Rachachuros produced by Thai Fermentation Industry Co., Ltd. MSG is available at many types of shops, from small local general stores in villages, to fresh markets, convenience stores, supermarkets, and hypermarkets. For household

[1] In English-speaking countries, it is also often regarded as a flavor enhancer, which can enhance the taste and flavor of food.

use, it is common to purchase MSG in plastic packages, the sizes of which vary. For example, Ajinomoto offers everything from a 9 g sachet of MSG costing 1 Thai Baht (about 0.033 USD) to a 3 kg bag costing 290 Thai Bahts (about 9.6 USD).

MSG seasoning can be found in almost all Thai kitchens. It is normally used during meal preparations and cooking. It is added to almost all types of food, such as soup or curry (*tom*, *kaeng*), stir-fried dishes, dipping sauce (*nam chim*), chili paste (*nam prik*), salad (*yam*), or as a marinade for meats with other seasonings and spices. As MSG seasoning is colorless and odorless and technically only provides taste, it works with any type of savory dish without impacting on the dish's smell or color. MSG is also commonly used in small- and medium-sized restaurants, including street food stalls.

Previous research has suggested that the existence of umami-yielding foods and seasonings in traditional Asian diets may be part of the reason why the use of MSG has been so widely accepted in the region. Various types of fermented seasonings are traditionally used in East and Southeast Asia and they have played a significant role in each country's culinary and taste cultures. Ishige proposes the idea of an umami cultural sphere to describe East and Southeast Asia (Ishige 1998). Such a sphere can be defined as that where fermented seasonings play a significant role in the taste system, since umami is the specific and predominant taste of these seasonings. Ishige further divides the umami cultural sphere into two zones: a zone of fermented grains and soy sauce prominence, and a zone of fish sauce prominence. The grains and soy sauce prominence zone covers China, the Korean peninsula, and Japan. The fish sauce prominence zone covers the area of Southeast Asia, including Thailand.

He contrasts the areas where livestock farming has been traditionally conducted, such as in the western part of the Eurasian continent, with the umami area, where fermented sauces have been traditionally used. The area where livestock faming has been traditionally conducted tends to rely on an animal-based diet and therefore culinary styles involving the use of animal fats, such as butter and other dairy products, were developed. On the other hand, in the areas where rice has been traditionally cultivated in East and Southeast Asia, the consumption of meat is generally low, and the consumption of fish is greater than in other areas. Rice has long been consumed as the starch staple and the intake of energy is largely derived from rice consumption in these areas. Fermented sauces and seasonings have, therefore, played a role by adding umami and saltiness to the diet in order to help with the consumption of large amounts of rice. Thus, Ishige claims that the use of fermented seasonings in the umami cultural sphere explains the high consumption of MSG seasoning compared with other parts of world. MSG seasoning tends to be used together with fermented seasonings in this area, in order to possibly reinforce the preference for the umami taste. What is suggested here is that MSG had a high affinity with the existing taste system.

In the area of northern Thailand which forms the main site of this study, various types of fermented seasonings are used during cooking on a daily basis, including both fermented fish and soy seasonings. There is a variety of fermented fish sauce, such as *pla la* (fermented fish seasoning with rice bran or flour and salt) and *nam pu* (fermented crab paste), as well as relatively newer seasonings, such as *nam pla*

(fermented fish sauce with salt) and *kapi* (fermented shrimp paste), which both introduced to northern Thailand from central and southern Thailand. Fermented soy seasoning, called *tua nao*, is also commonly used, but less frequently than *pla la*.[2] Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the umami provided by fermented seasonings used in Thailand is related to the establishment of MSG as an everyday product as claimed by Ishige.

4 MSG and Its Sweetness

Although there is no exact term to describe the umami taste in Thai, during my fieldwork I found that MSG is generally perceived as something tasty or which makes a dish tastier, as exemplified by a Thai expression *mai sai mai aroy* (if you don't add it, it won't be tasty). Several people I interviewed recalled when they had MSG for the first time in their life and most of them remembered it as something tasty (*aroy* in Thai, *ram* in northern Thai).

At the same time, I observed a strong association between MSG seasoning and sweetness. Firstly, there were several cases where people mentioned that they decide whether or not to add MSG according to the level of sweetness in the dish they are preparing. While it depends to an extent on the type of dish, if the food is sweet, people tend not to add MSG. For instance, a woman in her 60 s told me that she never used MSG for cooking *kai luuk kuey* (fried boiled egg seasoned with tamarind-based sauce), because it is already sweet. The sweetness of the dish is derived naturally from the tamarind and palm sugar. I also observed two cases of meal preparation where the people checked the taste of the food and commented that they did not need to add MSG or MSG-based seasonings, because it was already sweet enough. Secondly, the relationship between sweetness and MSG was also seen in terms of taste preference. Several elders mentioned that they do/do not like food with MSG because it is sweet. For instance, a mother and daughter of one family mentioned that their grandfather does not eat food cooked with MSG as he objects to its sweet taste. On the other hand, some like to add MSG to food because it makes the dish sweeter, mild, and mellow. Thirdly, the local naming of MSG seasoning suggests a relationship between sweetness and MSG. In northern Thailand, MSG is called *pen waan* (sweet flour). The etymology of the term is not clear,[3] however the naming of

[2] In Northern Thailand, there are various food cultures according to region and ethnicity and so on, and there are regional differences in the use of fermented seasonings made from soybeans or fish.

[3] When I asked why MSG is called *pen waan*, answers were, for example, because it is sweet or because it was difficult to tell that it was *pong chuu rot* when MSG came to where they lived for the first time.

sweet flour is observed in southern Thailand[4] as well as in different parts of Southeast Asia (i.e., *bot ngo*, sweet powder, in Vietnam Nomura 2019).

Thus, the association of MSG with sweetness was observed through several aspects of food and taste, including adjusting the flavor during cooking, taste preferences, and the local naming of MSG. This association of umami with sweetness demonstrated here is contrary to previous studies which have suggested that umami is associated with saltiness among different populations, in terms of both taste description and categorization (e.g., American and Japanese for Ishii and O'Mahony 1987, Japanese and English for Osawa and Ellen 2014). Since these results are based on experimental studies, the discrepancy may be due to differences in the perception of taste obtained from taste perception in everyday life settings and/or cultural taste perception.

Although the taste of MSG was generally perceived as sweet, like the taste of sugar, there were some cases where the sweet taste of MSG was exemplified as the sweet taste of meat, particularly pork ribs or Chinese radish (*Raphanus sativus* var. *hortensis*). For example, when making soup or curry (*tom* or *gaen*) type of dishes, radish and pork ribs are often added and simmered first. It is believed that by doing so, a sweet soup can be made. In this way, the same expression of sweet can be perceived differently by considering whether it is the sweetness of sugar or the sweetness of soup made from stewed radish, based on the relationship with these specific foods.

This association of MSG with sweetness could be analyzed on two levels. Firstly, there is a possible overlap of tastes between sweet, umami, and tastiness or deliciousness in terms of linguistic expression. Yoshida, who conducted a cross-cultural comparative study of taste vocabularies (1998), suggested that "sweet" as a qualitative term for taste could be derived from an evaluative term to describe tastiness. According to Tosa (2019), the umami type of taste, such as the taste of dried shrimps or fish sauce, is described as sweet in Myanmar, although people do differentiate between the two tastes, sweet and umami. Thus, since the taste of MSG was generally perceived as something positive, and there was no Thai word to exactly express the taste of MSG, it is arguable that the term *waan* (sweet) was used to express the taste quality of MSG.

Secondly, it should be carefully analyzed in relation to diet and food habits in Thailand were studied. Salt and fermented fish seasoning (*pla la*) and/or fermented soybean seasoning (*tua nao*) were traditionally used as basic seasonings in northern Thailand, while some seasonings which are commonly used nowadays, such as fish sauce (*nam pla*), oyster sauce (*nam man hoi*), and shrimp paste (*kapi*), were introduced more recently from south and central Thailand. Food in northern Thailand is often described as less sweet than food in other parts of Thailand, especially in

[4] MSG is also called *pen waan* in the southern part of Thailand. I interviewed a female in her 30 s originally from southern Thailand, and currently living in Bangkok, about the naming in the South. She said she had never heard of the term, however she learnt that her family called MSG *pen waan* after checking with them. She deduced that the reason why it is called sweet flour is possibly because MSG is made from sugarcane. However, the naming of MSG would seem to predate people's awareness of sugarcane as an ingredient of MSG, which came about more recently through Ajinomoto advertisements, such as TV commercials.

central and southern Thailand. This is due to the more limited use of coconut milk and sugar in cooking.

When MSG became popular in Thailand around the 1970s, there was a much lower level of sugar consumption in general. According to National Nutrition Survey of Thailand by the Thai Ministry of Public Health, the consumption of sugar per capita increased rapidly during the 1960s and 70s; in 1960 it was 0.2 g, rising to 7.0 g in 1975, and then to 13.6 g in 1986 (Kosulwat 2002). Thailand experienced a dietary and nutritional transition during the 1970s and 80 s with large increase in the amounts of oils, sugar, and animal protein, and decrease in the amount of fruit and vegetables consumed (Kelly et al. 2010). In this case, it is considered that the physiological palatability of MSG was perceived positively (in most cases) as delicious or sweet in the context of a lower general use of sugar, oil, and animal protein, which were all deemed physiologically delicious.

5 MSG as a Commodity

A woman in her late 60 s who I interviewed runs a canteen in a residential area of Chiang Mai. She clearly remembered when she first encountered MSG seasoning. It was when she was about 10 years old, which would have been sometime in the late 1960s. She told me that a member of Chiang Mai's preeminent family, who lived in the neighborhood, gave her family Ajinomoto. It was her first time to taste it and she thought it was delicious. When she was a child, it was not easy to come by MSG seasoning and only the rich could get hold of it. According to her, it was almost like ice, which was as valuable and expensive as Ajinomoto at the time. She went on to explain, however, that the seasoning has recently become cheaper and easier to obtain, and that rich people do not use it much anymore. During my fieldwork, I heard other similar stories about how MSG was a valuable commodity in the past. Some people remembered noticing and eating Ajinomoto for the first time in the city, as they had never seen it before in the countryside. A man from a village in rural Chiang Mai, who was over 90 years old, clearly remembered when he saw MSG for the first time. It was at the wedding ceremony of a villager when someone brought Ajinomoto from town to prepare the meals for the ceremony. Thus, in interviews with older people, many recalled that MSG used to be expensive and was available only to the rich and in urban areas.

It should also be noted that through the Ajinomoto brand, MGS was commonly recognized as a "Japanese" product. MSG spread into Thai society in the late 1960s and 70 s, coinciding with the spread of Japanese products in Thailand. Japanese brands such as Toyota and Sony gained popularity in Thai society in the 1970s. Since the introduction of MSG in Thailand, the Japanese name "Ajinomoto" has been used, and the Japanese lettering of the product name has been consistently featured on the packaging. In Thai society, Ajinomoto symbolizes Japan as a brand in much the same way as Toyota, Nissan, or Sony. It has been pointed out that the acceptance and

popularization of Japanese brands in Thailand since the 1960s are based on establishing a high level of trust, particularly with regards to quality. According to Ota, who conducted interviews with Ajinomoto Thai Co., Ltd. in 1996, Ajinomoto's sales strategy stated the following: "You don't eat it with your tongue, you eat it with your head" (1997:21). This demonstrates that the importance Ajinomoto Company placed on branding MSG came from an understanding that people choose food products not only based on the actual taste of the food, but also on the implication of meaning and image of the food. Given that MSG was generally perceived as a Japanese, urban and upscale commodity, it is necessary to consider the changes in lifestyle and society related to food. As mentioned in the previous section, Thailand went through a dietary and nutritional transition during the 1970s and 80 s due to social changes caused mainly by economic development. Thai society transformed rapidly from a traditional agrarian to an urbanized industrial and service society; money and the influence of the commodity economy permeated into agrarian society. For instance, tooth paste, soap, shampoo, etc. were introduced as commodities into rural society and have since become daily essentials (Kitahara 1973).

There were various changes in the household kitchen at this time, including everything from new kitchen facilities to new taste structures. The spread of the gas stove; electronic appliances such as cookers; new cooking appliances such as the wok; new seasonings such as oyster sauce, soy sauce, and vegetable oil; and new cooking methods such as deep frying and stir-frying, all impacted the way people prepared and ate food every day. These changes occurred not only because of the preference for new tastes, but also for the sake of convenience and economization of cooking time. The convenience of MSG as a product is another reason for its popularity. In addition, MSG is sold in packages of various sizes; the smallest being a sachet of less than 10 g. It is a part of many companies' marketing strategy; the so-called base-of-the-pyramid (BOP) business to make the product available to a larger yet poorer economic group of people with lower priced and smaller sized products. In the context of these various changes, MSG has become ever more widespread.

6 Conclusion

I presented the process and history of how MSG became a part of Thai food practices, starting with the importation of MSG from Japan in the first half of the twentieth century. The field research revealed how MSG was accepted into Thai food culture through people's memories of MSG, its contemporary use in the kitchen, its relationship with food, and many other narratives of MSG. The affinity for the use of MSG in the so-called umami cultural sphere as described in previous studies may be present in the case of Thailand. This is because MSG is never used as the only seasoning in cooking, but is always used to reinforce the flavor brought about by other seasonings, especially fermented seasonings. This can also be seen in the term "*pong chuu ros*," a powder that enhances the taste.

However, in this study, there was no narrative that equated the taste of fermented seasonings with that of MSG. The examination of how MSG was perceived as a taste in this study revealed that people rather experienced it as something sweet and delicious. This may appear to be related to the low consumption of physiologically highly palatable foods, such as sugar, oil, and animal protein, in the Thai diet at the time. At the same time, the spread of MSG coincided with the period of economic development and the nutritional transition experienced by Thai society, when consumption of not only MSG, but also other types of new food and seasonings, including sugar, vegetable oil, animal protein, and processed foods, increased rapidly.

MSG, particularly as represented by the Ajinomoto brand, also had the value of being a new, convenient, luxurious product in Thailand. In this way, the use of MSG spread as part of the process of major changes that Thai society underwent, including the introduction of a new commodity economy, and changes in the structure of diet and food practices. Thus, in the context of these social changes, MSG, as a Japanese, urban, and upscale commodity, has gradually become popularized, crossing boundaries between social-economic classes, between the capital Bangkok and other cities, and between cities and rural areas. The study of the process of MSG's assimilation into Thai society has therefore shown that new flavors, such as MSG, were introduced into Thailand in the course of food industrialization and internationalization, and were part of the socio-economic transformation of Thai society. It is important to say that MSG did not simply exist as a taste, but also as more of a social element, by accruing value as a commodity.

Later, as the use of MSG became more commonplace, there was an increase in negative associations toward the product, and even in those rejecting its use altogether. For example, when I was researching how a dish was prepared in a kitchen, a lady in her 50 s kindly lined up the ingredients to show me. When I tried to take a picture of them, she grinned saying, "We do not need this," and removed the MSG from the workbench so it would not show up in the picture, even though she was actually using it in the cooking. As mentioned previously, an elderly woman told me that "MSG used to be the stuff of the rich, but now the rich do not eat it, and only people who don't have money (like us) eat it." These stories illustrate that the value of MSG as a commodity is declining. Although MSG's taste and commercial properties remain unchanged, its value as a product has changed. The reasons for the rejection or negative aspects of using MSG, which was once accepted both as a taste and a product, possibly lie with safety concerns over the negative health effects related to MSG consumption. This paper focuses only on MSG acceptance in Thailand and does not address these recent developments. It will be a further challenge to understand how the perception of food changes from the case of MSG in Thailand.

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Social Context of Food

Sharing Food and Conviviality in the Mediterranean Diet. Some Ethnographic Examples

Elisabetta Moro and Rossella Galletti

Abstract The Mediterranean Diet is a millenary lifestyle that was recognized as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2010. In doing so, the UN agency clearly focused on the social engagement produced by a specific way of promoting conviviality, sharing food, harvesting, fishing, and cooking, which had combined to create a substantial traditional heritage. All these elements were very present to Ancel and Margaret Keys, the two American scientists who discovered the Mediterranean Diet in 1951, and who coined the term "Mediterranean Diet" in 1975. The Keys understood from the beginning that the very high rate of longevity in Italy and the absence of cardiovascular diseases in the south of the country are not only due to special food ingredients or cooking secrets, but are also the result of an especially harmonious way of inhabiting the Planet. Today we would say that they lived a Slow Life, in tune with the seasons, creating many good tastes, sharing food at feasts, spending time in conversation, and respecting the environment. In Italy, conviviality and hospitality have always been a dominant issue. All the important moments of life are celebrated at the table, because food is an instrument for reinforcing relations. Two ethnographic case studies have been chosen by the authors as significant examples of conviviality in southern Italy: the Christmas feast in Naples and weddings in the province of Salerno. Both rituals are largely characterized by the exchange of food gifts and greetings, family gatherings, visiting each other, and convivial banquets; collective actions aimed at creating social communion and the community itself. This specific social model, known as Mediterranean Diet, includes a vast number of social practices, rituals, festivities habits, and traditions, involving contemplative moments, which are able to counteract contemporary individualism. For this reason, it deserves special academic attention, and it may stimulate some relevant scientific reflections.

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1 The Mediterranean Diet as a Cultural Pattern of Conviviality Promoted by UNESCO

1.1 Introduction

Food is the primary need of any human group.[1] Migrations, colonizations, coalitions, and wars, most of the time, are due to food shortages. Nevertheless, every community, even in the poorest natural contest, chooses what to eat and when, through a very complex collective process in which taste and availability deal with knowledge, prejudice, symbols, habits, rituals, myths, and history. In a certain extent, food is always a thing and a representation. And every food system is at the same time the result of an historical heritage and of a specific way of projecting the future (Lévi-Strauss 1966, 1971; Sahlins 1972; Douglas 1966; Callari Galli 2005: 78–102; Buttitta 1996).

This general rule, as I have already stated in a previous work (Moro 2016a: p. 657), also works for the Mediterranean Diet, which I defined as a form of storytelling, written and re-written several times, and above all a cultural pattern (Benedict 1934), to give the sense of a unity of institutions, ideas, and traditions that, connected to one another, create what we usually call a culture. The Mediterranean Diet, in the larger sense of a lifestyle, is the story of centuries of cultural exchanges in a small sea basin in which, at the time of the hero Odysseus (tenth–eighth century B.C.), any information or merchandise could go from Carthage (Tunisia) to Athens (Greece) within 7 days. To us, this may seem a long time, used—as we are—to delivery by Amazon within 24 h. However, at that time, if one sent a bottle of olive oil from Rome to Paris, it took 24 days.

As a matter of fact, the Mediterranean Sea was a hub that promoted exchanges, and this produced a very powerful interaction of people, institutions, ideas, and traditions, which developed over centuries within a specific geographical area. This led to a certain way of farming, nourishing, feasting, praying, producing goods, and worshipping Gods (Moro 2016a: p. 657).

1.2 The Cultural Model of the Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean Diet was designated a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010. In the official nomination file, it is underlined that it is a

[1] This chapter is divided into two parts, part 1 being written by Moro and part 2 by Galletti. The conclusion is co-authored by both authors.

lifestyle resulted from many interactions between peoples, cultures, communities, generations, farmers, fishers, workers, cookers. There is no mention of the nutritional pyramid which has been theorized in the Nineties of the last century starting from the scientific and nutritional evidence emerged from the studies on the Mediterranean diet (Willet et al. 1995).

Instead, what UNESCO officially recognized was that «The Mediterranean diet constitutes a set of skills, knowledge, practices and traditions ranging from the landscape to the table» (Petrillo 2012: 224). As a matter of fact, «what UNESCO recognized was the anthropological pattern concerning the culture of food that all the communities involved have created, invented and transmitted for centuries. Rhetoric and social policies have transformed simple foods into a symbolic operator, a community factor and a marker of identity. What they created is a unique way to use food as a tool in order to build a community. Eating together and food traditions in this geographic area are elements of an alimentary code that transforms the table into a metaphorical field in which the *koiné* (community) is constantly built and re-built (Detienne 1972; Detienne and Vernant 1977; Braudel 1985; Niola 2015; Teti 2015)» (Moro 2016a: p. 656).

The seven nations and their emblematic communities involved in the UNESCO process (Pollica/Cilento in Italy, Koroni/Coroni in Greece, Agros in Cyprus, Brač and Hvar in Croatia, Soria in Spain, Chefchaouen in Morocco, and Tavira in Portugal) all agreed in the following definition of their special intangible heritage:

> The Mediterranean Diet—derived from the Greek word *díaita*, way of life—is the set of skills, knowledge, rituals, symbols, and traditions, ranging from the landscape to the table, which in the Mediterranean basin concerns the crops, harvesting, picking, fishing, animal husbandry, conservation, processing, cooking, and particularly sharing and consuming the cuisine. It is at the table that the spoken word plays a major role in describing, transmitting, enjoying, and celebrating the element.
>
> Served for millennia, the Mediterranean Diet, the fruit of constant sharing nourished as much by internal synergies as by external contributions, a crucible of traditions, innovations, and creativity, expresses the way of life of the basin communities, particularly those of the seven States Parties submitting this nomination and more precisely that of the communities of Agros, Brač and Hvar; Soria; Koroni/Coroni; Pollica/Cilento; Chefchaouen; and Tavira.
>
> With regard to its utilitarian, symbolic, and artistic popular expressions, it is important to highlight the craftsmanship and production of ancestral domestic objects linked to the Mediterranean Diet and still present in everyday objects, such as receptacles for the transport, preservation, and consumption of food, including ceramic plates and glasses, among others.
>
> As a unique lifestyle determined by the Mediterranean climate and region, the Mediterranean Diet also appears in the cultural spaces, festivals, and celebrations associated with it. These spaces and events become the receptacle of gestures of mutual recognition and respect, of hospitality, neighborliness, conviviality, intergenerational transmission, and intercultural dialogue. They are opportunities to both share the present and establish the future. These communities thus rebuild their sense of identity, belonging, and continuity, enabling them to recognize this element as an essential component of their common and shared intangible cultural heritage.[2]

[2] www.unesco.org.

It is quite significant that the Mediterranean Diet received the UNESCO imprimatur—at the same time as the "Repas gastronomiques des Français" and "Traditional Mexican cuisine—ancestral, ongoing community culture, the Michoacán paradigm"—because until 2010, food was not included in the common idea of cultural heritage. Furthermore, until that time there was very little comprehension of the responsibility of certain food systems in climate change and pollution. Moreover, the anthropocentrism was far from being accused of a cruel approach to animals and a predatory approach to natural resources. On the contrary, the rediscovery of the Mediterranean Diet is inserted in this new cultural landscape, «which is the result of different, local food cultures and, at the same time, a global intellectual product. In fact, the UNESCO Mediterranean Diet is not just the product of an acknowledgment of the existence of something, but is also the outcome of a crossing of heteroclite perspectives that has progressively identified, created and idealized a real "form of life" starting from the 1950s» (Moro 2016a: p. 657).

This is the result of the influence of the culture of the Ancient Greek, for whom the word *Diaìta* (diet in ancient Greek) meant rule of life or life style, but also home, habitat, and research of harmony (Moro 2014: 16). Inspired by this and other idealized approaches to life, many intellectuals and influencers started theorizing a new recipe for the future marked by frugality, simplicity, eco-sustainability (Latouche 2012; 2004; Thunberg 2018; 2019).

Professor Jeremiah Stamler (2013), emeritus of Northwestern University in Chicago, an international star of cardiology, promoter of the Mediterranean Diet as a lifestyle capable of preventing the cardiovascular diseases, and last, but not least, colleague of Ancel Keys, wrote a letter to the UNESCO Commission supporting the candidature of the Mediterranean Diet. He pointed out the cultural pattern behind it—and he defined it as a social practice rather than a clinical nutritional diet—was a system of social solidarity in which conviviality and sharing are at the base of its community value:

> The Mediterranean Diet is for us a shared heritage of value for our well-being, handed down from one generation to the next, uniting social classes, and bringing families and friends together to share common moments of delectable and healthful pleasure (…).
>
> We are, for these reasons, convinced that the registration of the Mediterranean Diet in the prestigious UNESCO List would represent for our community a further guarantee of the safeguard of this tradition and, at the same time, it can strengthen the UNESCO List that therefore can be perceived by many people as the ideal place acknowledging traditions that unite and enhance countries, cultures, religions, and community histories that are seemingly different (Signed: Professor Jeremiah Stamler M.D. President of the Association for the Mediterranean Diet – Pioppi/Pollica Cilento) (Moro 2016a: p. 657).[3]

During my research on the cultural and social aspects of this intangible heritage I was surprised by the difficulty that many Mediterranean people have defining this

[3] This letter by Jeremiah Stamler is part of the dossier that the Italian Ministry of Agriculture has attached to the dossier of candidature. Another interesting case of a process of identification, definition, and collective construction of a Cultural Heritage fitting into the UNESCO interpretative grid is the Val di Noto in Sicily, studied by Berardino Palumbo (2011).

lifestyle, and I came to the conclusion (Moro 2014; 2017) that the reason had to be investigated starting from the genealogy of the name and of the concept of Mediterranean diet. The question is that both name and concept are the result of an heterogeneous vision, due to two American scientists who focused their attention on this "exotic heritage" in the Fifties of the short century. They were the physiologist of the Minnesota University Ancel Keys, and the chemist of the Mayo Foundation Margaret Haney, as a matter of fact a married couple.

1.3 The Discovery of the Mediterranean Way

The story starts at the FAO Congress in Rome in 1951, the first public convention realized by this Agency after the end of World War II. During his speech, Ancel Keys explained that, in the US, 50% of males from the age of 39 to 59 were condemned to death by a heart attack, and nobody could explain why. With his great surprise—as written in his private memories *Adventures of a Medical Scientist*[4]—nobody of his colleagues made a comment, except for Gino Bergami, a doctor from the University Hospital of Naples, and at that time Italian Minister of Health. The Italian professor explained him that the cardiovascular diseases were absent in the hospital he run. Unfortunately, he did not know the reason of this positive data. This unanswered riddle offered to both of them the possibility to help each other starting a new, potentially useful research. When Keys returned to England for his sabbatical year, first of all he shared this new with Haney, and they decided to write a telegram to Gino Bergami, in order to check more accurately if the information he gave him was correct. From the city of Vesuvius a second telegram announced: "Why don't you come to Naples and check yourself?". Keys replayed with: "We are arriving" (Keys 1999: 43–44; 1995: 1322S; Moro 2014: 25–26; Moro 2016a). Few weeks later this small equip was at work.

After 1 month of blood analysis, it was evident that local workers, compared to the men under Keys' observation in Minnesota, had a lower cholesterol rates. At that time the physiological effect of cholesterol was unknown, but nevertheless the Keys pointed their finger at it. At the same time, they started observing the workers' nutritional habits. And, also in this case, they noticed a great divergency between the rich food consumed by Americans and the Italian lower class that ate red meat only once a week, on Sunday evening. It was the main ingredient of a traditional sauce for pasta, called ragù, which was, and still is, a custom at lunch on Sundays when families meet together around the table (Moro 2014: 25–26).

This Italian families consumed large portions of vegetables, like broccoli, cabbage, tomatoes, lettuce, and eggplant. Many kinds of fruits, like watermelon, peaches, grapes, and apples. Frequently they ate cereals, like barley and grains in soups and bread. Pasta was still very expansive and reserved to Sunday lunch. Legumes/pulses like beans, lenses, chickpeas, fresh, or dry peas were regularly cooked three times

[4] I analyzed this book during my research and included it as evidence in my essay (Moro 2014).

a week on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Little portions of dairy products, like ricotta, mozzarella, and cheese, were frequently consumed. Blue fish and shellfish were abundant and very much appreciated for their taste. The beef was consumed rarely; the pork more frequently. Neapolitans loved soups (what we Italians call *minestre and minestroni*) made with vegetables, olive oil and a bit of pasta. This is not the same thing as French soups made with cream or butter. About this, it is quite interesting to read what the Keys wrote in their notes: «Bean soup, pumpkin soup, green pea soup, lentil soup and zucchini soup. Those who could afford pasta would add a few spoons of the so-called short pasta; not long spaghetti, but small sized pasta. If pasta was unavailable, they replaced it with rice, hard bread or the so-called biscotto or *fresella*—dried whole wheat bread, cooked twice in order to preserve it for long periods» (Moro 2016a: p. 658). Ancel and Margret concluded that food was probably the key factor. This pioneering observation pushed the Keys to start an international research project called the Seven Countries Study (Keys 1995; Kromhout et al. 1993). Thanks to this revolutionary Study, the scientific community got to know all the benefits of the Mediterranean Life Style. The Keys' theory about the relationship between food and health had a great eco in the scientific community, and also in the media world to the point that Ancel Keys was featured on the prestigious cover of Time Magazine in 1961, and his advice on food started to be demanded all over the world (Moro 2014).

1.4 The South of Italy

Ancel and Margaret Keys retired in 1963 and moved to Italy with the intent of preserving their health thanks to a very healthy and Mediterranean lifestyle. But in the meantime, many of the Italian food habits had changed and the western diet, with its status of richer regime, had replaced many old traditions. Neapolitans, indeed, disposing of a larger budget per day, they were in the middle of a great food transition, consuming red meat, dairy product, animal fats, sugar more frequently than before. Besides, families had added processed and packaged foods to their traditional diet. In Italy and Greece, the combination of high levels of consumption of industrial food and immoderation became very quickly the causation of several chronical diseases, like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases (Alexandratos 2006). However, the old Mediterranean alimentary model was fortunately still alive in Cilento, where the industrialization and economic development had not undergone. Therefore, Keys and Haney first bought a little hill in the village of Pioppi, and then built their house. Other international scientists also settled in the area around them, creating a sort of community; a Bloomsbury of Cilento that was named Minnelea (Moro 2016a: p. 659). This term is a combination of Minneapolis and Elea, a blending of the names of the north American city where they worked, and the ancient city where Parmenides and Zenone gave birth to western philosophy with the Eleatic School (Moro 2014: 44, 118).

Ancel and Margaret lived in Minnelea for 35 years until 2004, and during all that time they wanted to learn from common people how to cook in a healthy way. Their very special teacher was Delia, the cook.[5] They made ethnographic research on food, recording interviews with housewives, fishermen, and peasants. All of this documentation inspired their third famous book, titled *How to Eat Well and Stay Well. The Mediterranean Way*, published in the US in 1975 (Keys and Keys 1975). For the first time, the wider public came to learn of the term Mediterranean Diet, invented by the Keys as a contrasting alternative to the trend of unhealthy weight loss diets (Moro 2014: 44, 118).

When Galletti and I interviewed Carrie Keys D'Andrea,[6] Ancel and Margaret Keys' daughter, she confessed that it was the editor who insisted on using the term "Mediterranean Diet," and that he would have also liked to have printed it on the cover. But the Keys preferred the softer expression, Mediterranean Way. From their point of view, this was a more accurate description, but one which was much more difficult to explain. In the 1975 book, they used the term Mediterranean Diet no more than 12 times, and in one chapter they even explain that they hesitate to use this term, because they are afraid it may not encourage food lovers. Indeed, in Italy, there was resistance to accepting the value of their discovery, and a rejection of the MD label. The use of the word "diet" created many consequences, not all of which were positive. This was because in common parlance, the word "diet" had taken on the almost exclusive meaning of "calorific restriction." The term therefore prejudiced many people and doctors against it. Furthermore, the term "Mediterranean Way" also didn't work very well, as 30 years ago the concept of lifestyle was, similarly, too difficult to grasp. In any case, some kind of name was required, and Mediterranean Diet seemed to be the easiest one.

1.5 A Lifestyle from the Past with Benefits for the Future

What the Keys experienced living in the small village of Pioppi was essentially a special idea of time, linked to seasonality. It was a time cycle manifested in food traditions and gastronomic rites, such as the Christmas Eve dinner, Easter lunch, name day feasts, wedding banquets, birthday celebrations, New Year's Eve dinners, and so on. Each traditional event is associated with a special menu, repeated year after year, and inherited from the family or community. This conservative attitude is much more present in the southern Italian culture than in other areas of the peninsula. For

[5] The full interview I did with Delia Morinelli can be viewed at the following web address: http://www.unisob.na.it/ateneo/galleria.asp?vr=1&idev=56. and on the website Virtual Museum of the Mediterranean Diet at the following address: https://mediterraneandietvm.com/delia-morinelli-la-cuoca-della-dieta-mediterranea/.

[6] The full interview Dr. Galletti and I did with Caroline Keys D'Andrea can be viewed at the following web address: https://www.unisob.na.it/ateneo/galleria.asp?vr=1&idev=81. and on the website Virtual Museum of the Mediterranean Diet at the following address: https://mediterraneandietvm.com/caroline-keys-dandrea-la-figlia-della-dieta-mediterranea/.

this reason, still today southern families eat homemade food every day, and in many country sides they also produce wine, vegetables, cheese, and cold cuts on their own. Feasting is still a very important social activity and a special occasion to reinforce relationships. Sunday lunch is a clear example and it is until today mandatory to gather with family members and friends. This meal has the structure of a ritual, with many special dishes served in a particular and long sequence, that keeps all the guests busy around the table for many hours. Usually, Sunday lunch for married couple is organized alternatively: 1 week in the parents' home of the bride and the next in the parent's home of the husband. That means that belonging to a certain lineage is constantly reconfirmed. And food is the language used to express sentiments, emotions, love, and to create a strong bond between people. If for Protestant and Puritan cultures food doesn't have a central role in the life of people and tendentially it doesn't have a strong symbolic role, in reverse in the Mediterranean cultures, both Christian and Muslim, it does. Because it is a very ancient heritage capable to produce a strong sense of belonging true a very material and common instrument like food. And even if the scientific definition of the Mediterranean Diet is quite recent, the social model of the Mediterranean Diet is ancient.

It can be argued that the Mediterranean Diet is a contemporary myth, based on the fact that it is a cultural model extrapolated from a millenary culture by foreign scientists. However, its values, such as sharing food and knowledge, conviviality, and hospitality, are a concrete reality.

Claude Lévi-Strauss demonstrated the central role of mythology in human cultures in small tribes of the Amazonas as well as in cosmopolites nations. Because every myth is like a bridge, it gives us the possibility to reach a meaning that stays on the other side of the river (Lévi-Strauss 1962). In this sense, Ancel and Margaret Keys tried to build a bridge, and in doing so they contributed to the creation of a mythology. Indeed, the Mediterranean Diet is the result of a historical process whose authors are not only natives, but also foreigners and international institutions. The interaction of these parties has, in some cases unintentionally, resulted in the creation of a cultural product that is at the same time both local and global, ancient and present, anchored in traditions while connected to the future.

1.6 Weddings and Conviviality

In Italy hospitality has always been a dominant issue. All of the important moments in life and the main religious feasts are celebrated at the table, because eating together is a ritual to reinforce relations. As a matter of fact, when one wants to point out that there is no special connection or relationship with another person, the typical rhetorical question used is, "Did we ever eat together?" This sentence serves to underline the fact that people who never shared food together are perfect strangers to one another.

By contrast, when one celebrates marriage, the main "problem" in the country of the Dolce Vita is how to limit the number of people it is mandatory to invite

to the wedding. For example, in the "Mediterranean Diet emblematic UNESCO community" of Pollica, a village of 800 people located in the province of Salerno (where we have been conducting our ethnographic research since 2012),[7] when a marriage is celebrated, the entire community has to be formally invited to the ceremony, which includes the religious ritual in a church (very seldom a civil marriage ceremony), followed by a sumptuous banquet. This tradition is meant to strengthen the ties among the population. Every member of the community has to participate in the religious ceremony. All of the families raise money to give as a gift to the couple, but only two representative members of each family actually attend the celebration, since it is well known in the community that the participation of the entire village would mean an excessive cost for the spouses. However, when the wedding is done, the married couple has to go to every single home and visit all the elderly people in the village, bringing them souvenirs, pastries, and special wedding candies. It is a cultural ritual that expresses sharing and social solidarity through the gift of food. All over Italy weddings are meaningful, convivial events, even if the number of guests admitted to the feast is not so great. In any case, a great variety of different types of food and various sophisticated dishes are offered to the guests during the banquets. This sumptuous abundance represents a striking display of hospitality. The guests are expected to eat heartily and to congratulate the families of the bride and groom for the quality and quantity of food offered. Most of the time, this kind of meal ends with a common feeling of indigestion. That is very traditional too.

2 The Neapolitan Christmas Feast: A Case Study

2.1 The Circuit of the Gift of Food in the Neapolitan Christmas Feast

In order to better understand some of the profounder characteristics of Italian conviviality, I will analyze a case study from the Neapolitan Christmas feast.

Christmas in Naples is characterized by the exchange of gifts and greetings, family gatherings, visits to one another, and convivial banquets. During this time, a circuit of exchange emerges where some of the main characteristic of the culture of the city appear, especially «the contractual and solidary mutuality that orders its community values» (Niola 2003: 14). In the streets, until the last decades of the previous

[7] The MedEatResearch—Centre of Social Research on the Mediterranean Diet, University of Naples Suor Orsola Benincasa, has been conducting research on the Mediterranean Diet since 2012. More information and some of the research work can be found at the following web address: https://www.unisob.na.it/ateneo/c002.htm?vr=1 and on the webiste Virtual Museum of the Mediterranean Diet (https://mediterraneandietvm.com/).

century, "little carts full of merchandise brought gifts to owners, military commanders, medical doctors and midwives"[8] (Rea 1990: 35). The gifts consisted mainly of food, having a symbolic meaning.

In Naples, as in other areas of southern Italy, a man's honor was established by donating part of his wealth during the Christmas period; for this reason I would define it as the last big contemporary *potlach* (Mauss 2002; Lévi-Strauss 1995). In the gift, the social group recognized one of the characteristics of its collective self-representation and redefined the links between the various members, making them visible (Lévi-Strauss 1965; Librandi 2002: 204). The honor of every man was guaranteed by the fact of being able to supply an abundance of food and the necessary expenses for the entire family.

The poor were reminded of being at the bottom of the social ladder because, unable to exchange the gifts received, they were left in debt and with a feeling inferiority. On the other hand, the rich felt superior through their generous social performance. From the pastry shops and the delicatessens, the porters came with boxes of sweets and other food products bound to feed a ceremonial exchange circuit.[9] As Marcel Mauss (1965; 2002) once said, *it was a real fait social total*, which linked different social actors belonging to different social levels, in a network of giving and receiving gifts.

In a text dating back to the early twentieth century, the Neapolitan writer Matilde Serao (1976) witnesses the custom of offering sweets to the less wealthy. At Caflisch, a famous patisserie of the city (no longer in existence), the wealthy offered pastries and Malaga (sweet, fortified wine) to the less fortunate. The principle of food sharing was central.

The "zampognari," a traditional musical group of bagpipers, who used to arrive in the city from the mountains of Molise and/or Abruzzo and went from door to door playing religious holiday songs, was offered a hot drink and meal, or a glass of wine.

In this context, the so-called "basket" was created as a unique social security device: starting from the Christmas Eve that was about to finish, customers of the delicatessens would pay a negligible amount that was recorded in a personal register with a stamp by the owners of the deli-shops. According to the number of stamps registered, on the Eve of the following Christmas, they would receive "il ben di Dio" ("the good of God" which is an Italian syntagmatic expression that indicates an abundant set of foods). Thus, in the days preceding Christmas, the gift of baskets filled with food from the parties were carried from one house to another. The basket was a symbolic representation of the pact of mutual trust that bound the seller to the costumer.

The Italian word "convivio" comes from the Latin *cum-vivere*, which literally means living together. The idea of "living together," therefore, is inherently conflated with the notion of commensality; in other words, being together around the table. Food is a synecdoche of life, and communion is a metaphor for *communitas*. Thus,

[8] Translation by the author. Rea writes about Christmas in the year 1938.

[9] What was written in this paper derives from an ethnographic survey I conducted on witnesses aged 60–98 in the years 2011–2013 in Naples and from research of the literature.

being together means the sharing and mutual exchange of foods. Sharing the same food means belonging to the same community. It is precisely in the *convivium*, as well as in the *symposium*, that the social bond is strengthened (Latouche 2012: 54–55; Brillat-Savarin 2002; Benveniste 2001:51–54). This is evident in the Neapolitan Christmas rituals.

It is not just a case that the Neapolitan Christmas crib (the nativity scene) is a true and rightful Cockaigne, in which the profusion of food reminds one of the abundance and opulence that derives from the ability to dominate time and act upon nature. It is details like this that, until relatively recently, were a festive utopia. They have since become a reality in those abundant markets that are today's supermarkets. The significant difference, however, is that today, seasonal produce is available all year round because of intensive methods of cultivation. These are methods practiced by huge greenhouses, laboratories, and biotechnology, which effectively completely delocalize nature and traditional seasonal cultivation. Within the Neapolitan crib, an exuberance and abundance of food was a perfect tool for distancing Naples from its image of a city threatened and in constant fear of hunger; a reality that, until the middle of the twentieth century, was so prevalent in Neapolitan society (Niola 2012; 2009: 25; 2005; Ranisio 2003: 63–80; Pizza 2012: 40–46).

2.2 The Ritual of "Capitone"

The undisputed king of Christmas banquets was the "capitone" (in Italian); the female species of the *Anguilla anguilla* eel. On the night of Christmas Eve, every man, rich or poor, had to bring home a package of "capitoni," if he did not want to lose his honor (Rea 1990). The ethnographic research and the numerous literary sources demonstrate the binding and obligatory character of the Neapolitan Christmas banquet. It is a sort of "total social fact" that calls into question and stages roles, memberships, functions, and social hierarchies through the code of nutrition (Belmonte 1979).

Thus, for a man, losing his honor meant not having the qualities of a husband and father that the collective attributed to that role. Therefore, in order for everyone to have the same respect, in Naples, during the Christmas feast, eels were also given to needy people, so that they could take part in the ceremonial exchange circuit as well. This would allow them to have the same role of honor as the wealthy (Mauss 2002; Librandi 2002: 54; Lévi-Strauss 1965). Regarding this topic, the Neapolitan writer Giuseppe Marotta wrote:

> On Christmas Eve a Neapolitan can be poor or rich, healthy or sick, alone or accompanied, reasonable or crazy, honest or dishonest, but not without, better yet not orphaned, the ritual eel on the plate (Marotta 2011: 186).

The social and symbolic centrality of the "capitone" at the Christmas Eve dinner is evident.

Starting in mid-December, Neapolitan streets were full of fish stands crowded with people. The "capitone" was the protagonist of a ritual ordered and cadenced by some

highlighted moments, destined to be repeated year after year. They corresponded to the articulation of different tasks assigned to each member of the family according to their gender.

It was the duty of the man, the head of the family, to purchase a live "capitone" at the fish market or from a fisherman.[10] The head of the house, therefore, was entrusted with the task of being the food procurer.

Once introduced into the home, the "capitone" had to be kept alive until the night of Christmas Eve. It was common for the rich to put it in the bathtub, whereas the poor kept it in a basin full of seawater. The mother or the grandmother had the task of killing and cooking it. This could not be carried out without a certain degree of risk. The slippery "capitone" was difficult to handle and always tried to escape. Once she was able to keep it still, she would cut it with a huge knife and blood would splatter all over the place. Even after being chopped into big pieces, the "capitone" continued to jolt and move; a scene that would be defined today as a real-life pulp fiction, and which gives it a sense of sacrifice.

The killing of the "capitone" would certainly not be delegated to an outsider, such as a fisherman or fishmonger, as used to happen and still happens in some cases for other fish on the night of Christmas Eve. The execution of the food victim was a real domestic ritual that involved each member of the family emotionally. Children used to be frightened of the long, trembling eel that would quiver tremulously until the end, when it would be chopped into pieces and thrown into the frying pan. But the tradition obliged everyone, including the children, to eat it.[11] The reasons for the different social processes can be interpreted through the interviewees that represent an anthropological memory. In this regard, parts of the interviews of Liliana (67 years old) and Myriam (90 years old) were collected and reported. Their age difference exemplifies the continuity in the traditional custom of sacrificing the capitone on Christmas Eve:

> As a child, I remember how the capitoni used to be put in a bath tube alive filled with sea water. I used to be shocked when I used to see them taken out of the tube and killed the next day. There was so much blood – a terrible scene – and the pieces of the capitone would move in a violent and jerky way. The impact with the boiling oil would be their last jolt. We would eat them floured and fried. And I would be forced to eat it even if I didn't want to (Liliana).

> The capitone was the most important dish for the Christmas Eve dinner. My father used to live in America, so my mother would go and buy it. She would purchase it alive. As soon as she arrived home, she would put them in a container with water. The day after she would take them out and kill it. I would be traumatized because they looked alive when they were dead. She would cut it into pieces and it would still move around. I remember one time a capitone escaped from my mother's hands; it was a horrifying scene! However, it had to be an important part of the Christmas Eve dinner tables (Myriam).

In this context of values, owning a paper cone of capitoni gives a high rate of social significance. It almost becomes a metaphor of the Neapolitan holyday cuisine

[10] What is written in this paper derives from an ethnographic survey I conducted on witnesses aged 60–98 in the years 2011–2013 in Naples and from research of the literature.

[11] What written in this paper derives from an ethnographic survey I conducted on witnesses aged 60–98 in the years 2011–2013 in Naples and from research of the literature.

and its ritual characteristics: the recognition of an overall and collective exchange that passes through the relationship that the Neapolitan food culture maintains with fish belonging to eel family.

In these cases, the obligation provided evidence of a communion through a specific food act that bonded everyone. The food communion and the act of giving food performed at the Christmas banquets in Naples constitute the social fabric that nourishes relationships and represents solidarity, literally giving shape to the metaphor of the social fabric (Niola 2005: 16; Lévi-Strauss 1975: 73; Baudrillard 2007).

In the Neapolitan Christmas feast, the identity of Neapolitan people is strengthened through the representation of food and reaffirms their autochthony. This autochthony is a myth, because in reality food could not be further from an autochthonous product (Niola 2012: 13–18; Geertz 2001; Palumbo 2009; Herzfeld 2003). It is a ritualized myth that comes into action precisely during the festive period. When the passing of time is not neglected, as someone could suppose, and therefore we cannot talk about timelessness in reference to the Neapolitan Christmas. We can however refer to hyper-temporality; time does not flash by but is repetitive, as Marino Niola has suggested (2005). The representation of time is somewhat exaggerated and very far from "non-time," as in a time that synthesizes and condenses something total and completely unified, which in turn reinforces the social tie.

2.3 Local Habits and Food Globalization

As we have seen, this specific social model that we have called the Mediterranean Diet includes a vast number of social practices, rituals, festivities—such as the Neapolitan Christmas feast—habits and different food ways for fostering conviviality (Moro 2014; 2016a, b). As Moro wrote (Moro 2016a), it is the litmus test of a new conventional wisdom which is symbolic and makes food the epicenter of a planetary transformation of attitudes, feelings, and collective responsibilities toward nature and living species. The path is not just the food itself, but the traditions, knowledge, and social customs, which we have termed conviviality and hospitality: eating and cooking together, sharing knowledge and solidarity. All these "values" could stimulate scientific reflections and contemplative moments that can counteract contemporary individualism.

However, the values of the Neapolitan Christmas feast and Mediterranean Diet characterize a part of the poetics of Western society, where a frugality, which is also expressed through solidarity, underlines the basic, humble, and very local food and food practices (Palumbo 2009; Herzfeld 2003). The characterization of this contemporary moral economy (Asad 2003) can be regarded as a resistance strategy that opposes the McDonaldization of food, the wastefulness of food and modern biotechnologies that draw food further and further away from its existence and origin as organic matter. Today, the Neapolitan case study analyzed shows a way to oppose a culture that portrays food as impersonal and hedonistic. Ultimately this is a political battle, where food is the protagonist. This battle pits the globalization and mass

industrialization of food against a culture that wishes to establish its identity through a deep connection to food and humans; a culture identified by food that must be local, seasonal, and organic, and by human relationships that must engender communion, hospitality, solidarity, and conviviality (Asad 2003; Foucault 2005; Palumbo 2009; Pizza 2012).

Food defines our day-to-day life and does not simply have a nutritional function, but also an important cultural role. It has a biosocial dimension and it offers the possibility to activate strategies that humans carry out in a constant and pervasive manner. It therefore renders the body a political object, in which there is a profound thought process behind nutritional consumption—a micropolitical action (Foucault 2005; Goody 2012: 171–183, 205–225).

Behind this "Mediterranean" turning point, acknowledged by UNESCO, there is likely a desire to show a fair and just diet that "can now be seen in the UNESCO communities." This desire is very much driven by recent generations and international trends.

The Neapolitan Christmas feast could be regarded as a category that takes contemporary man, within the context of "nature," closer to the practice of food and consumption connected to an image of the notion of tradition, and which brings us closer to the myth of a past, in which people and food were better and more genuine. This ancestral rhetoric and poetry, in which the sense of bewilderment and modern man's identity crises is placated, could represent an alternative to thinking again about the future bond between humans and nature.

3 Conclusion

The research on the Mediterranean Diet that we have been carrying out for over 10 years, and in particular the two cases concerning the weddings in Cilento and the Neapolitan Christmas banquets have led us to identify in conviviality one of the key factors in defining the identity of the communities under the study, and in the construction of their social practices. We can therefore say that it plays a central role in the social performances of our social actors and can be considered an anthropological category.

The holiday banquets in these areas of the Campania Region can be viewed as places where it is possible to exchange and share not only food and beverages, but, above all, gestures, words, feelings, values, opinions, and social roles. These are places where symmetric and asymmetric relationships are established, and where hierarchies are perpetuated or subverted. In these contexts, the exchanged goods can work either as interaction mediators more or less formalized between two or more social actors, or as objects imbued with a symbolic value that can be re-usable, according to the representations and positions taken by the subjects of the relational context, and which acts from time to time (Bonanzinga and Giallombardo 2011). We can imagine an uninterrupted movement, subject to the flow and transformation in

this exchange that takes place at various levels; here the identity representations are remodeled and re-contextualized (Prosperi 2016; Remotti 1996; Fabietti 1995).

It is precisely in the actions and food practices that you can understand the processes of identity construction of different social groups that give rise to particular visions and different ways of acting around the world (Asad 2003); as well as the processes of objectification and essentialization of cultures and their elements.

If what Debora Battaglia says in *Rhetorics of Self-making* (1995, pp. 2–3) is true—that there is no personal identity outside the concrete and interactive ways of putting it on stage—we need to pay attention to the narrative and pragmatic forms (the rhetoric and poetry), thanks to which the different subjects act, shape their identities, and talk about themselves more or less smoothly (Palumbo 2009, p. 25).

Therefore, the ethnographic studies we undertook on weddings and Christmas banquets demonstrate that so-called "conviviality" defines much of what is practiced and desired in the "Mediterranean" life. Convivilaity reveals salient traits of the Mediterranean "culture," because it holds many significances tied to ordinary and extraordinary events. Eating together is a way to say "Hello! Welcome back! I love you! I am glad to see you again!" It is an expression of friendship and love, of reinforcing relationships and, above all, a way of being in the world.

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Rethinking Foodscapes. Does It Matter How Food Reaches My Plate?

Cristina Grasseni

Abstract As an anthropologist I interpret *foodscapes* as an invitation to rethink what it means for us to focus on how food reaches our plate, in social and cultural terms. This piece focuses on 'alternative' food procurement, in particular on which kinds of alternatives are being pursued and how this choice articulates diverse and sometimes conflicting stances, which must be understood in their own context. I will use ethnographic anecdotes as examples, introduced by a preamble on alternative food procurement and its meaning.

Keywords Alternative food procurement · Foodscapes · Alternative food networks · Conviviality · Food citizenship

1 Introduction

Alternative food networks have been variously described as ushering in change, not only in practice but principally in the mentality toward food provisioning. The global food system—the prevalent mode of production and consumption—has reached its limits and yet fails to see them; producing water scarcity on the one hand and floods (through climate change and soil erosion) on the other; reducing soil fertility while increasing desertification; making overproduction and hunger coexist. There is increasing awareness that food production has been actively overlooked in our collective thought, being persistently imagined as fundamentally benign (Sage 2012; van der Ploeg and Marsden 2008). However, increasing documentary and scientific evidence points to the fact that the cattle and dairy industry, for example, is one of the major culprits of climate change.

Recent ethnographic investigation denounces the multiple layers at which CAFOS (*concentrated animal feeding operations*) are a fair, if putrid, representation of the globalized economy. The animals are not the only ones mistreated; the workers themselves are exposed to physical and emotional overload, kept in compounds in

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and outside the working environment, sometimes in conditions of semi-slavery and often easily blackmailed if their status is of illegal immigrants, or kept segregated according to their ethnicity and languages, so that no information can travel easily across different departments (Blanchette 2015).

Visual arts and documentary films are attempting to form an alternative public imagination around food production. This has been achieved by diametrically different styles of films, such as the documentaries *Food, Inc.* or *Cowspiracy* (Kenner 2008; Andersen and Kuhn 2014) and the Sensory Ethnography Lab production *Leviathan* (Castaing Taylor and Paravel 2012). While the former articulate the abominations of intensive farming and animal agriculture, the latter offers a wordless, tantalizing exploration of life at sea on a commercial fishing vessel.

Meanwhile, a sizable scholarship debates what kinds of alternatives are being implemented and questions whether they are in fact *alternative* at all, or what it is they would present an alternative to (Whatmore et al. 2003; Kneafsey et al. 2008; Goodman et al. 2012).

2 Alternative to What?

Many people worldwide now believe that the global food economy is not self-sustainable from an environmental, financial, and social perspective. Citizens and consumers are therefore organizing themselves into local groups and networks, to try to replace supply-chain consumerism with a higher control of production and distribution through direct producer–consumer collaborations (sometimes called "co-production": Grasseni 2013).

This is often a bottom-up social phenomenon that lacks definition in a single conceptual framework, as it is grounded locally in many different contexts and histories. Yet, these groups have emerged in several countries and are now joining together in national and transnational networks (see, for example, urgenci.net, ripess.org). In the process, they develop knowledge in areas beyond food production per se, such as logistics and accounting, leadership, management, and communication. They also develop skills, such as liaising with public administrations, doing outreach in schools, and managing listservs and websites. Sometimes these networks succeed in establishing a new model for local, quality supply (such as community-supported agriculture, for example, in the United States: see Henderson and Van En 2009), but sometimes they remain limited in their impact or inclusiveness (as with some Faith and Justice groups in Italy and the US; see Valer 1999).

By comparison with other forms of direct food provisioning, these networks of consumers seem to have appropriated the discourse of 'food sovereignty' that is more typical of the farmers' movement. 'Food sovereignty' is in fact a grassroots concept proposed by marginalized producers contesting the global food system, claiming rights to self-determine seed provenance and access to markets (Wittman 2009; Via Campesina 1996). Claiming more self-determination for both producers and consumers (Thivet 2014) means claiming the right to participate in decision-making

about food systems—what Lang has termed a form of food 'democracy' (Lang 1999). 'Civic agriculture' was originally advocated in North America to critique the societal implications of industrialized agri-food systems, namely their lack of transparency and the resulting consumer deskilling and food insecurity in 'food deserts' (Hinrichs and Lyson 2009). Others underline how only broader agendas of societal equality can guarantee food 'justice' (Alkon and Mares 2012).

There is an elusive convergence between direct food provisioning and 'food democracy' (Renting et al. 2012). I say it is sometimes an elusive convergence, because in most commercial schemes for community-supported agriculture, for example, consumers only 'participate' by buying. Also, in the development of Fair Trade, the critique is that by scaling up, and as brokers stepped in, consumers lost a say 'in the construction of the commercial relations preceding their purchases' (Dubuisson-Quellier et al. 2011: 311).

Increasingly, economic and political players are also attracted to projecting their good will toward positive change (in the name of corporate social responsibility, or promoting the advantages of a 'green' economy, for example). However, a proliferation of narratives of change does not necessarily correlate to impactful or meaningful practices of change. Transitions to sustainable lifestyles are being imagined as a matter of finding the right 'technology fix' and implementing it with the right policies, with little attention given to the relevance of culture to the practice of procurement, and to the diversity of styles of participation.

The current policy debate on transitions to (food) sustainability seems to be based on an expectation of getting clear, simple, imperative solutions such as engineering flood-resistant crops through genome editing (Bailey-Serres and Voesenek 2020) or solving the increased global demand for proteins with an equally global switch to an insect-based diet. For example, considering that some insects are already mass-farmed to produce food coloring, it should not be too difficult to package suitably tasty and nutritious ersatz protein-rich foods (van Huis et al. 2014). The following question is, of course, 'How do we make them swallow it?' (Dekker et al. 2020). This is answered by a corresponding increase in calls for 'nudging' strategies to be systematically employed at policy level to change lifestyles (Harbers et al. 2020).

The opposite but complementary trend is that of over-burdening individual consumers with the civic responsibility of making the right, informed choice. This also follows an imaginary of diffused technologies, for example, the idea of being able to tag every single apple, so that the conscious consumer can scan it in the supermarket and see exactly what its food miles and ecological footprint are, and 'choose' for the best. This very imaginary was at work in the 'Supermarket of the Future' pavilion visited by hundreds of thousands during Milan's 2015 Universal Exhibition (Expo) on the theme Feeding the Planet. Energy for Life. An interactive installation designed by MIT MediaLab for the Italian cooperative supermarket chain COOP would allow visiting 'customers' to visualize not only the price and location of origin, but also food miles and nutritional value (Ecochamber 2016).

The sociocultural dimensions of diversity, skill, and scale are silenced by these imaginaries, which do not appreciate the fact that individuals grow up and act in diverse social environments and are capable of being involved in an informed debate

on the diversity of solutions at hand. Food procurement can constitute a space of 'transgression' (Goodman and Sage 2014) and of 'counter-epistemologies' (Grasseni 2013). Citizens can re-signify producer–consumer relations, which feed back into innovative social practice. Food procurement networks can thus be read as 'citizenship laboratories' (Forno et al. 2015), where people educate themselves about sustainability, frugality, or global justice, but also learn to exercise their democratic capacities through situated deliberation and practice. In this sense, it can enable forms of 'lifestyle politics' (de Moor 2017), relying on consumers' agency (Dubuisson-Quellier et al. 2011). The issue of food sustainability takes different meanings and leads to specific practices according to local concerns, such as those of the ageing, those of the postindustrial poor, and of immigration, outmigration, and gentrification.

3 Anthropology of and with Food Procurement

Anthropological scholarship is less interested in formulating universal definitions and solutions, and more inclined to observe and voice diverse processes from the bottom up. This means recognizing both the limits and potentials of the actual practices and narratives that are emerging. Anthropology's mission is precisely '… to seek a generous, comparative but nevertheless critical understanding of human being-and-knowing in one world we all inhabit … to describe the lives of people other than ourselves, with an accuracy and sensitivity honed by detailed observation and prolonged first-hand experience' (Eriksen 2016: 6).

My current project 'Food Citizens?' on collective food procurement in European cities (see Foodcitizens.eu), and my previous work on Italian solidarity economy networks (Grasseni 2013), explore how and why people take the initiative of organizing into groups in order to rethink the logistics of food provisioning. Beyond a strict interpretation of citizenship as the formal granting of affiliation in a national register, anthropological readings of citizenship have insisted on the ethical and political aspects of active participation in a polity. How we procure and share food is central to cultural understandings of how we act and participate in our societies. Food is a mediator of relations within social networks, not just a commodity or nutrient. Eaters are not just consumers, but social actors whose meaning-making depends on faith, gender, age, income, or kinship.

Food studies often focus on the 'macro' scale (for example, the logistics of food systems) or the 'micro' scale (for example, the individual deliberations or habituated reflexes of consumers in supermarkets). At the 'meso' level of sociocultural analysis, we find people's collective participation in the production and distribution of the food they consume, at multiple levels.

We can categorize three types of networks: 1. Those directly active in foraging and food production (for example, in allotments or community gardens); 2. Those engaged in setting up short chains, where producer and consumer come directly into contact; and 3. Those active in food governance (for example, in food policy councils). These multiple forms of collective food procurement have not yet been

comparatively analyzed in Europe in terms of their broader implications for what it means to participate in society through collective food choices. This is an important challenge if we consider how currently, considerable attention goes to food procurement in cities (for example, in relation to its (un)sustainability), but with little notice paid to cultural diversity—even within Europe.

Place-based foods may underscore gender-conservative agendas, political localism, or be oblivious of social inclusion; exclusive solidarity feeds on self-reliance. For example, survey data about Italy's Solidarity economy networks (more than 7,000 families in Lombardy alone) tell us that they are mostly highly–educated, white, middle-aged women (Forno et al. 2015). Collective food procurement may thus enable new forms of participation and solidarity, but in the same breath confirms degrees of segregation between classes, gender, faiths, ages, or ethnic groups. Does it matter how food reaches my plate? Increasing numbers of people think it does, and act accordingly, but how this matters is variously interpreted, even in conflicting ways. For example, there are 'short food chains' which focus on a 'zero mile' diet, in the belief that rediscovering seasonality and eating local food as much as possible is important to increase the sustainability of our food system. This option can be described as a choice to keep close to one's territory and traditions as a form of food heritage (Grasseni 2017). Additionally, local foods are usually posited as fresh, since they don't have to travel so far or (supposedly) spend too much time being refrigerated before arriving in our pantries.

Local foods are imagined as simple, genuine, and sometimes as tokens of shared roots in a peasant past. Local foods are not expected to be highly processed, or be industrial products from large manufacturing plants. The aesthetics of small scale usually, and sometimes tacitly, accompanies the morality of the local (Grasseni 2014). However 'local' foods may well not be simple foods. To appreciate this, one needs to place them in the context of globalized food systems, namely the seed-to-table large organized distribution not only of food, but of food components, machinery, tools, and materials; a chain dominated by multisector and multinational corporations, which deal not only with agriculture, but with laboratories, transport, marketing, and veterinary facilities. I shall illustrate this with two ethnographic examples.

4 Ferraris and Potlucks

As part of my fieldwork in the 1990s I lived with dairy farmers and cattle breeders in the Italian Alps (Grasseni 2009). Here, views are opposed between breed 'improvers,' who practice progeny breeding to intensify milk production, and defenders of multi-functional farming and local breeds that are less productive, but more adapted to the local terrains. At cattle fairs organized by breed associations, the 'queen' of the fair is usually the product of progeny breeding. My hosts made use of embryo transfer to obtain as many heifers as possible out of one genetic line, combining a potentially excellent mother with the semen of progeny bulls raised in specialized 'genetic centers.' In principle my hosts would love to practice cloning to maximize their line

of production ('if you can have ten Ferraris why have only one?' summarized an agricultural consultant)—only, cloning is forbidden by law.

These conversations happened in remote valleys at the southern feet of the Alps, but even mountain farmers were not unaware of developments in the plains of Cremona, where Galileo, the first cloned progeny bull, was obtained for scientific research in 1999. Vice-versa a practitioner who does not accept progeny breeding to intensify milk production will view the same queen of the cattle fair not as a 'Ferrari,' but as an 'anorexic pin-up'—all udders to produce more milk. This language articulates visions underlying competing professional cultures of intensive agriculture on the one hand, and of sustainable, multifunctional farming on the other.

In my monograph (2009) I explained how breed improvement was powerfully backed up by scientific discourse and a capillary network of breed advisors and experts to whom registered farmers would turn to keep one's dairy farming business 'modern' and thus qualify for agricultural aid and project funds. In these circles, multifunctional farming and the refusal of progeny breeding would be seen as backward and uneconomic. Later developments in the European Common Agricultural Policy recognized organic and multifunctional farming as key to ecosystem services and also to social services (for example, in the form of didactic farms) but making a living out of dairy farming without specializing in milking machinery and progeny breeding—for example, as part and parcel of subsistence agriculture or of eco-tourism—remains prohibitively challenging (Pe'er et al. 2019).

Another ethnographic example of competing visions with regards to how foodscapes should make us rethink how food reaches our plate comes from the Hairst, a yearly harvest fair held at the village of Huntly, north of Aberdeen in Scotland. In September 2018 I participated in the ceilidh dinner What's On Your Plate. Here, a variety of vegetarian, vegan, and non-vegetarian dishes were presented by their cooks, who were each invited to explain not only the recipe, but also their meaning and motivation, often in broader terms of sustainability debates and food politics. This 'Potlatch supper' was intentionally presented as a moment of anthropological encounter—potlatch being the original Kwakiutl ceremony studied, among others, by American anthropologists from the native nations of the North West Pacific Coast of the United States in the nineteenth century.

The word has now seeped into everyday American English as 'potluck,' half preserving the idea of a ceremonial feast at which each party contributes an elaborate, unique dish, and introducing an element of 'luck' or surprise. In this particular case, the idea of Huntly's Deveron Projects was to ask professionals of different backgrounds to reflect on food and its commitment. An additional original characteristic of the Potlatch (for which it was banned by US authorities in the late 19th Century) was the aggressive gifting and conspicuous consumption that would shame one's guests and challenge them to reciprocate. Perhaps unwittingly in line with their native American precedents, most of the Huntly participants had respectfully polemical contributions to make, standing up to present their dishes. For example, a local fumigation practitioner presented us with a pot of spelt porridge—an apt visual cue for the multiple types of pests that endanger our stored grains. His hardly appetizing anecdote was about maggots, and how they would annihilate half of our crops if

we did not enforce industrial and potentially highly toxic methods of fumigation—a powerful reminder of how the safety of our daily feeding is enmeshed with the provisions of agrochemical industry.

Another confronting speech was given by a breeder of Angus beef. She had cooked beef stew and explained to all present, including vegans and vegetarians, how the beef and dairy industry of the Highlands is the most sustainable she could conceive of, given that it could—and had—provided for the region with no need for imports, and is entirely local and seasonal. She then argued how other dietary options require a number of ingredients that do not grow locally, and, while she was happy to cook for vegetarian farm guests and visiting volunteers, she also felt that it was an imposition of a double burden on her as cook and homesteader. The implication was that decreasing CO2 emissions on a global level by cutting down on animal proteins requires local ways of implementing the general principle.

If a transition to vegetarianism in the Highlands meant eating processed and imported foods, that would actually increase the role of global distribution of ingredients with which agro-business is reshaping the environment globally, especially industrial and largely GM crops such as soy. The question she posed was this: What is ultimately better; eating beef (perhaps a dairy cow at the end of her production cycle) from a local farmer, or not eating meat at all—perhaps patronizing the global food system by purchasing highly processed vegetarian 'non-meat' burgers? Making this choice would probably lead to different decisions on a day-to-day basis, according to where we are and how much we know about how and where we procure our food (cf. Weiss 2014).

There was no public responses nor a collective debate about these questions, as the speeches were held in turn one after another, and the dining party accepted them at face value while being free to eat each from whichever dish had been presented for sharing. Very few of us lead lives that afford the luxury of the information needed to answer each of the challenging questions raised about knowledgeable access to food, because this information is intrinsically tied to practice: it depends on how much we travel, how long we stay in the places we live, how well we know the socio-economic environment surrounding us, how connected we are to the local food systems and to the producers of the food we consume.

On the other hand, while a political preference for short food chains usually goes together with a rediscovery of cooking skills, and a cultural preference for fresh food (as well as the cultivation of canning, pickling, and fermenting skills), from a social point of view, this can also mean consuming pricier foods and finding the time to cultivate these skills. Neither money nor time is readily available to most of us. Or rather, they are differently available to specific groups in society, and differently available in different societies. As an example I offer an ethnographic cameo from recent first-hand experience, based on my family's choice to buy vegetables as much as possible from a local social garden.

5 Potential and Limits of Local Food

The Food for Change garden grows vegetables for eating and selling at a popular location in Utrecht, situated in the middle of a large housing estate. It is one of six community gardens and five city farms currently managed by an independent foundation, which exists since 2015 with an independent director, advisory board, and budget, but was previously part of the city administration under the 'Nature and Environment Communication' section. The foundation has the mission of cultivating municipal land for social purposes, thus the actual growers are residents and volunteers and what is not needed for their subsistence is sold to fund the operation. In this sense this is very different from a traditional food allotment scheme (volkstuinen), whereby an individual pays a yearly rent to the municipality to exploit a piece of land for own use. In the case of city gardens (sociale tuinderij or sociale stadstuinderij) the cultivation of vegetables or flowers is secondary to the function of connecting social actors, for example, local schools, residents, or in specific cases asylum seekers or patients under rehabilitation. Both the individual garden and the foundation keep a website (in Dutch) and actively communicate their mission and activities.

Located at the heart of a large park in the middle of a popular housing area, our visit on the way back from school with the children in the middle of February 2019 is a luxury. We are the only customers. As is often the case with gardens with a social or educational function, there is just one part-time employee present, whose duty it is to both look after the garden and supervise a variety of users, some of whom are in vocational training and some in therapeutic practice. The leader of the garden tells someone she calls a 'student' where to go and look for cabbages that would be good for us to take, as well as some tiny carrots and a red cabbage. She also tells her to go get the potatoes from the store for us, and we take about 1 kg at 1.50/kg. She shows her how to get rid of the biggest and dirtiest cabbage leaves. A few steps up from the muddy fields there is a kitchen and sales area, which is nice and warm, and there are some baskets that have apparently been prepared for selling, containing herbs and dried tomatoes, as well as seeds or spices in small paper pouches. Here the so-called student weighs our veggies with my son and draws up the list which comes to 6,50 Euros.

The young woman catering for us is indeed probably a student. We conclude this from her fine hands and the slow and careful movements with which she puts our cabbage in the plastic bags we brought from home, as well as the interactive and educational way in which she gets our son involved in drawing up the list of veggies (she has dirty hands from the mud) and adding up the bill: 6,50 Euros for a giant cabbage, various sorts of other cabbages, tiny carrots, and potatoes stored from the previous harvest. My husband only has a card or 10 Euro note. The store does not have a card reader and finding change requires calling in the woman in charge for the cash box. Luckily I have the exact amount in my purse. The student has dug up the carrots from the wet bed and they are covered with shiny, dark brown mud. After a good half hour of washing and brushing, though, even the tiniest one (as small as a fingertip) delivers an explosion of taste—almost spicy—in my mouth. Baby

carrots we call them; most of them with double roots so unsellable on the market. We conclude that we enjoy the privilege of time, as most people could not or would not want to spend this time and money on dirty misshapen vegetables.

6 Food for Citizenship?

I presented three very brief ethnographic anecdotes from a field site, an open festival I was invited to, and a public site that has become part of my family everyday routine. I place them side by side because engaging anthropologically in the food chain means unpacking the 'wisdom of the ordinary' or 'the banality of the everyday' as Katarzyna Cwiertka (2011) and Michael Herzfeld (2007) have defined it. Pausing on each interaction gives us insight into the multiple ways in which different actors in the food system invest food with meaning and purpose. Their choices are shared and articulated in multiple—even conflicting—ways and they are deeply felt by each as moral choices about what it means to participate in and shape one's global and local destiny.

For example, dairy farmers thinking of cows as 'Ferraris' articulate the acceptance of progeny breeding as a technology for the management of animal lives to produce milk. Others reflect more critically on more diverse ways of engaging with food production, not as a monoculture but as one side of a multifaceted practice which includes animal welfare and multifunctional agriculture. However this vision of agriculture is far from majoritarian in European policy (Pe'er et al. 2020). The second example reflects on the variety and nuances of different positions on how to change or adapt our diets. Veganism and carnism emerge from the Huntly Hairst potluck as both profoundly motivated choices, rooted in specific local practices and considerations, in ways that common sense and media rarely recognize. To even just find a commons space where to voice them both in a convivial way, leaving further debate to the small talk and serendipity of conviviality, meant encouraging commensality as a way not just to eat together but to reason together. The third and last example is a personal reflection from own experience, on the fact that not everyone has the luxury of engaging with food at a slow pace and on a local basis. A factor that structurally hinders the capacity to engage with food in civic ways, if this is only possible on the basis of personal motivation and investment.

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Rethinking Family Commensality: Through Japanese Cases and Italian Ones

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Abstract This paper is the discussion on family commensality or family co-eating. Family commensality is said to be a typical form of commensality in general, that best demonstrates the social functions and significances of food. Currently, it has been receiving a lot of attention as declining, but in fact there are few clear evidence regarding its decline. This suggests that family meal research itself has serious problems; not only are there very few research even now, but the indicators and definitions are ambiguous, so cultural and historical comparisons are rarely made. This often leads us misunderstanding the actual situation of family co-eating. Therefore, this paper, with the primary purpose of making appropriate progress in future research, highlights those problems mainly referring to the case study conducted by the author in Italy and the case studies conducted in Japan. From there, it emerges that family eating together has more diverse forms and meanings than previously imagined, and that a priori idealized images of family meals that both researchers and subjects of research assume are of particular concern. It can be called "family commensality myth." Then, we will discuss specific ways to counter and overcome these problems, introducing a unique and stimulating research conducted on Japanese family meals by Ishige (Ishige and Inoue in Gendainihon ni okeru Katei to Shokutaku: Meimeizen kara Chabudai he. National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka, 1991). This also provides significant suggestions for reconsidering the study of commensality in general.

Keywords Commensality · Family meal · Family meal research · Italy · Japan

1 Introduction

Food forms a social bond. The social aspects and functions of food that reflect and symbolize this are well known. It goes without saying that among these, commensality is especially important.

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Commensality means eating together with someone else. Eating, for the most part, is an activity which relates to the needs of individuals; maintaining bodily functions or responding to feelings of hunger. At the same time, however, the act of eating is often done together with someone, and it is even considered preferable to do so. This means that eating is thought to be a social act in principle. In this sense we could say that communal eating is one of the clearest manifestations of food's social aspects, and furthermore a clear display of the kind of sociability that sets humans apart from animals. The Japanese anthropologist Ishige says that humans are animals with the shared habit of eating together (Ishige 2005:12).

In this paper I will look at commensality, but the focus will not be on commensality itself, rather on the nature of research into commensality. While most of us have a particular image of commensality, we have not discussed in any depth the diversity and complexity of its reality. This may be because the images associated with commensality are so natural and positive that we have stopped thinking about or unconsciously suppressed any negative ones. This has had a detrimental effect on the study of commensality. This is particularly the case when it comes to family meals, which are generally imagined to be a typical form of commensality. In this paper, therefore, I will focus on family meals, discussing how they have been researched and debated so far. I believe this will also contribute toward a reevaluation of the study of commensality in general.

For the purposes of this discussion, I will use case studies of Italian and Japanese family meals. The former is mostly based on a survey that I conducted in Italy, and the latter on previous studies accumulated in Japan. While dealing with evidence, this paper does not represent a comprehensive review of the data, and moreover does not engage in precise comparative studies between Italy and Japan. Its aim is to create a set of general principles that should precede these kinds of studies. Family meals have been reported through various cases in various locations, but the study of family meals is not at a stage where a proper comparison can be undertaken. The task of systematically describing them and considering their reliability still remains to be done. Contrasting two cases provisionally here enables us to understand that the discussion needs to be further refined.

In the following sections I first briefly outline the previous discourse and studies related to the issue of family commensality and commensality in general, and highlight the problems I have identified, with reference to my discussion of Italian cases. Then returning to the study of family meals, I explain how the a priori images of family meals that both researchers and subjects of research unconsciously assume are of particular concern. I term this phenomenon "family commensality myth." As a way of countering and overcoming this problem, I introduce some unique research that has been conducted on Japanese family meals. This also provides significant suggestions for reconsidering the study of commensality in general. Besides it is necessary to add some points about the usage of the terms, "family meal" and "family," in this paper. "Family meal" is used to refer to everyday meals, including meals at weekends, and excludes meals related to special events such as festivals and ceremonies. "Family" is a controversial term, but in this paper, whose focus is not family per se, I use it in a broader, less strict sense; that is, I use it in accordance with the relevant family's consciousness of their own family unit.

2 Close Connection Between Family and Commensality

As mentioned above, the most commonly cited example of commensality is the family meal. When you think of eating with someone, family is the first thing that tends to come to mind. The same can also be said of family life. It is very common for commensality to be considered the most important element within family life and it is often assumed that there is a very close relationship between family and commensality.

For example, in Japanese we have the expression *kazoku danran*. *Kazoku* (家族) means family. *Danran* (団欒) refers to sitting in a circle and has the meaning of "gathering to spend enjoyable time together." *Kazoku danran*, therefore, expresses the idea of the family gathering to spend quality time, and while this in itself does not explicitly refer to meals, the family mealtime is the image that is generally conjured up. In Italy too, there is a very close relationship between the family and meals, as I will describe later.

The strong association between family and eating has also been highlighted by anthropological research. For example, Nakane, a Japanese anthropologist, surveyed the ethnographic studies that had been previously conducted in different societies around the world, and found that, while no uniform definition exists, there are four major functions and elements that constitute family; meals, co-habitation, economic factors and blood ties (Nakane 1970). Nakane does not argue that meals are the common element of all families, but does focus on their importance. Carsten (2000), who provided a new approach to kinship research through the concepts of "substance" and "relatedness," have recently highlighted the importance of shared food or commensality. They argue that daily accumulations of relations as well as norms and regulations are required for the consciousness of a family bond, and that in many societies sharing and eating food together is one of these key elements.

The same thing has been pointed out in sociology, psychology, and other disciplines. For example, Kaufman, a sociologist who conducted interview research in France, showed in great detail how family meals form family connections, including the associated power relationships and conflicts (Kaufman 2005). Lupton, who argues that food and eating are emotional experiences that are central to creating an individual's subjectivity, explains that "it is in the context of family that the social dimensions of eating and those of emotion are particularly tied together" (Lupton 1996:37).

It seems, therefore, that there is a natural relationship between family and commensality. However, is this true? Has this not been exaggerated? For example, despite the value we seem to place on this relationship, we do not always eat with family, and moreover do not even seem particularly concerned about that situation either. Moreover, if you look at societies other than your own, you may observe other forms of family meals. One researcher who conducted field research in Sundanese villages in Indonesia told me that families there rarely eat together on a daily basis

and each member of the family is permitted to eat food in the kitchen at any time.[1] This suggests that the strong relationship between family and commensality has not yet been fully examined or validated. I would argue that this is one of the most important problems in the study of family meals.

3 Problems of Commensality Studies

Firstly, it is worth noting that there has been surprisingly little discussion on what commensality specifically refers to. The importance of commensality has already been pointed out by many scholars. For example, Simmel wrote that "persons who in no way share any special interest can gather together at common meal…There lies the immeasurable sociological significance of the meal" (Simmel 1997:131). However, the study of commensality itself has only begun in recent decades (Mennell et al. 1992). Even now, relatively little quantitative or qualitative research has been done about any commensal circles, and as a technical term there is still no clear definition of commensality (Fischler 2011; Sobal and Nelson 2003). Is commensality just a question of everyone eating at the same time in the same place, or does it include other elements, such as conversation? What about frequency? Is it OK if the food being taken is different, or does it have to be the same? As soon as we start trying to think about the definition and indicators of commensality, a variety of questions arise.

Indeed, the occasions and situations of commensality are generally very varied. Faced with this problem, Grignon (2001) looked at commensality in terms of frequency, the relationships between the people involved, and its character, and tried to categorize them into three axes of conflict: Domestic Commensality (e.g., meals at home) versus Institutional Commensality (e.g., at schools and hospitals); Everyday Commensality versus Exceptional Commensality (e.g., special occasions such as ceremonies); and Segregative Commensality (e.g., a club party attended only by its members) versus Transgressive Commensality (e.g., a banquet where a king served a meal for all social classes in the medieval era). This scheme provides lots of suggestions, but it is just an initial hypothesis, as Grignon himself conceded. There has not been any subsequent discussion on how to develop this hypothesis yet, and that might indicate the difficulties involved in studying commensality.

A similar situation has been also highlighted in the study of family meals (Mestdag and Glorieux 2009; Murcott 1997; Sobal and Nelson 2003), which is still the most studied area of the few commensality studies that exist. To sum up their arguments here, the first problem of family meal research so far is that the actual number of studies that have been conducted is still very small. The second, related to the first, is that the definition and indicators of family commensality are still unclear. For this

[1] Kosaka Satoko' s research report, presented at the academic meeting of the project: The Constellation of Food in Civilization, New Development in Ecohealth Research in Asia. 2016,12,09. National Museum of Ethnology, Japan.

reason, even if surveys are being conducted, the respective indexes are often different, preventing sufficient analysis and comparison from being performed. This becomes even more acute when sociocultural differences are also brought into consideration, as in the case I will discuss later.

The third problem is the difficulty of the survey itself and, in particular, the question of data reliability. Family meals are part of people's private lives, so many are reluctant to participate in investigations. This makes it very difficult to collect data. Moreover, those respondents who do participate tend to display a subconscious bias in their answers that deviates from reality. For example, when asked about who they dine with, many say they eat with their family, despite regularly eating alone. The reason may be that they are unconsciously trying to convince themselves or others that they are observing the social rule of eating together with one's family. I will consider why this happens later, but in any case, the survey results often reflect the opinions of the respondents rather than their actual reality. Researchers need to carefully examine the method of investigation, too.

The last and arguably biggest problem is the view of family meals held by the researchers themselves. I have already mentioned that there is a strong association between family and commensality as something positive and natural. Researchers also share this view, and this has had a detrimental effect on their understanding of the reality of family meals. For example, there is a tendency to accord a positive image to family meals as something fun and intimate, but in fact there are other various aspects which conflict with this view, such as strict seating arrangements and table manners, as well as occasional discord and arguments between family members. In previous studies, these negative aspects have been so barely noticeable or visible, that family meals have been imagined to be a universally ideal form of commensality. Arguably it is this overarching problem that has led to other ones listed above. Researchers strongly influenced by this image may not have had any significant impetus to pursue surveys of the family meal or discuss its definition and indicators—at least not until recent years when worries over the decline of family meals are growing as mentioned below.

Next, in order to further clarify this issue, I will present my case study of Italian family meals, focusing reflectively on how I have discussed it as a Japanese anthropologist. This is an attempt of thinking about family meals from a comparative cultural perspective, which will further elucidate the problems of family meal study.

4 Is the Italian Family a Commensality Group?

4.1 My Survey in an Italian Town

To be honest, the starting point for my interest in writing this paper was an ethnographic survey I conducted in an Italian town (hereafter named R). It is located in the area called I Castelli Romani, to the immediate southwest of Rome, and had a

population of about 8,000 in 1986, when I conducted my first survey. For the further details on the town of R, please refer to my works (Udagawa 1989, 2015).

It is said that in Italy family is one of the most valuable things and Italian family bonds are very strong. This is often referred to as "familism," including by Italians themselves. Family, therefore, has been one of the most important and controversial topics in Italian studies, especially since an American anthropologist Banfield highlighted this by coining the term "amoral familism" in his 1958 work, The Moral Basis of a Backward Society. There have since been numerous discussions on Italian families from diverse perspectives by both Italian and foreign scholars (Bagnasco 2006; Meloni 1997; Kertzer and Saller 1991; Barbagli and Kertzer 1992; Udagawa 1987).

Soon after starting my first field study in the town of R, I discovered for myself that Italian family ties were as strong as previous studies had pointed out. I also found that these ties were closely related to the habits surrounding family meals. Back then, people in this town usually had lunch with their family at home, as their lunch break was a few hours' long. This gave workers enough time to return home. But that was not all. On Sundays I saw extended families eating together. People who were married and living apart from their parents visited their parental home to have lunch. They also had to visit their spouse's parents, so they would adopt a policy of alternating their visits each week. If they lived far away, they would return to their parental home in the summer vacations and other holidays with their children.

Let me present the case of A (Fig. 1), an elderly lady I rented a room from during my first research (Udagawa 1989). At that time she had already lost her husband, and her four children had all married and moved out, so she was living alone. Two of her children lived in the same town, while the other two lived in neighboring ones. When they all gathered at A's house on Sundays bringing their children, there were more than fifteen of them. What was of particular interest was that in this circle there were also two nieces (L&M) who had lost their parents, and a non-blood-related woman (N) with her daughter, who for some reason had broken ties with their blood relatives and had been looked after by A who lived nearby.

Generally speaking, their actual range of commensality varied depending on each individual's circumstances. But, at least on Sundays they would make every possible effort to ensure that the family and close relatives gathered to eat lunch together, even if they were not living together. In the weeks when this was not possible, they would visit their parent's house on the Saturday evening (that is, the day before) and have dinner together. I have actually seen a number of such cases in the field. They often explicitly acknowledged those they were eating together with (especially on Sundays) as family, using possessive pronouns (for example, *miei*, which is equivalent to English "mine," in the sense of "my family"). I therefore termed their family a "commensality group" (Udagawa 1989).

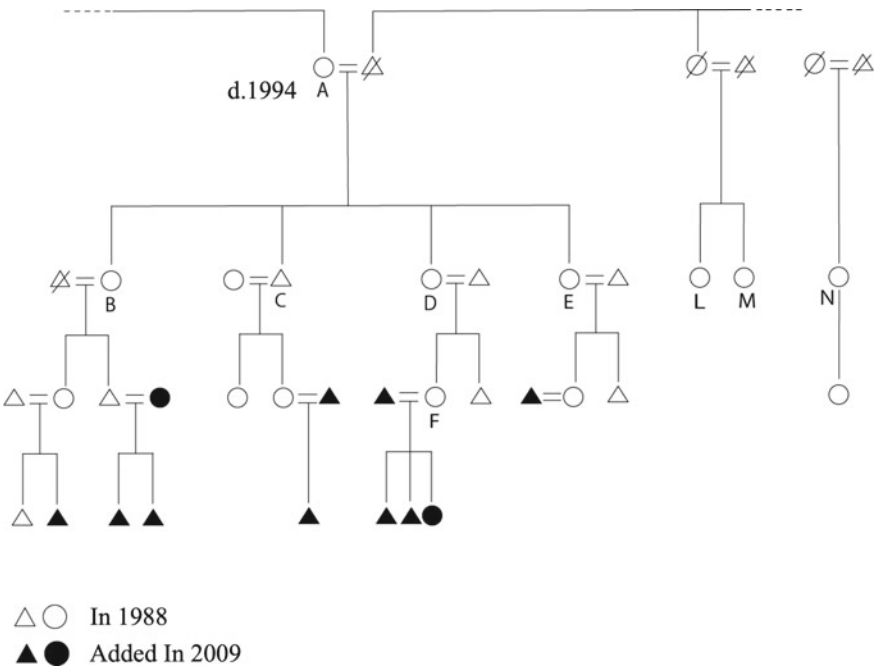

Fig. 1 A's family as her "commensality group" (Udagawa 2011: 585)

4.2 Comparative Discussion of Italian and Japanese Family Meals

This high tendency to eat together could broadly indicate one of the major characteristics of Italian families in general, but it is, of course, necessary to take into account other such aspects as regional diversity.[2] One further thing to note especially here, is that my research and discussion above was inevitably done in comparison to the Japanese family which I had personally experienced growing up in, albeit unconsciously. This is the very problem that I would like to highlight here.

Unlike in Italy, in Japan there are only a few occasions when members of a family who have left home get together to eat. Once the grandchildren have grown up, those occasions become even less frequent, with family gatherings only occurring once or twice a year at New Year's and other events. As a result, relationships with relatives outside of the household (which in almost all cases means the nuclear family unit[3]),

[2] I have already summarized the regional differences of Italian families in a previous paper (Udagawa 1986), but that was a debate about the family, rather than their family meals. Moreover, it should also be noted that they vary not only by region, but also by social class and age.

[3] Japanese families also have regional differences, and these were particularly distinct before World War II. In some regions the multi-generational extended family-household was normative and dominate, but now, the nuclear family type is the majority in most areas across Japan.

such as cousins, nephews and nieces, uncles and aunts, tend to be more distant. If grandparents are not actually living with their grandchildren, it is rare that they even meet, let alone eat together. When compared with this kind of Japanese family, it seemed to me that Italians expend a huge amount of energy on, and build family relationships through, commensality.

To be clear, first of all, my argument is not that the Italian family is built solely by "eating together." As Nakane points out, functional or structural elements of family in any society are not characterized by one single thing; Italians believe that it is important for their families not only to eat together, but also to live together or close to each other. After marriage, many Italians move away from their parents, but try to live as close as possible to their parental home. However, in Italy the greatest weight is placed on "eating together." The same is true for Japanese families. In Japan, too, importance is accorded to the idea of families eating together, but the idea of "living together" is given greater weight. We can see this clearly in the Japanese word *Kazoku* (家族), which means family. *Kazoku* is a relatively new word from the late nineteenth century that was made by translating the English word "family." Prior to that the Japanese word used to mean family was *ie* (家), which also translates as "house." This means that the previous Japanese word *ie* had two meanings; family and house. Thus, a new word *kazoku* was invented with the exclusive meaning of family, using 家 (the character for *ie*). *Kazoku* (家族) literally translates as "*people* (族) of *house* (家)." This fact demonstrates that the Japanese consciousness of family has a strong association with the idea of co-habitation. It could be said that the Japanese family is a "cohabitant group" while the Italian family is a "commensality group."

Now, it is clear that my point about the Italian family being a commensality group is an illustration of its characteristics when compared with a Japanese family. It is, therefore, important not to over-state these differences between Japan and Italy and not to essentialize the image of the Italian family as a commensality group and the Japanese family as a cohabitant group. Besides, I have to confess and stress that this argument I did above is based on research about Italian families, rather than their meals. In my research, as well as in most other previous studies, the actuality of their family meals has not yet been investigated in detail, and little has been said about which aspects of them could be called commensality. Nevertheless, if we only point out that the Italian family is a commensality group, and cease all further consideration, it indicates that we have been influenced by the notion of an a priori connection between family and commensality, and that we have confused both without sufficient examination.

5 Family Commensality Myth

This widespread and persistent idea can be called "family commensality myth," and it can also be seen and discussed prominently in the recent debate over the decline of family meals.

The family meal in decline is a frequently cited issue these days, particularly in developed countries, and is regarded as a serious social problem. In Italy, too, people often deplore the decline of family commensality in recent times, and it is certainly evident to see. For example, in the case of A's family, after A's death in 1994, her eldest daughter (B in Fig. 1) became the center of commensality for a while, but the frequency of family meals gradually decreased. Each of A's children then transitioned to family meals with their own children, and moreover, in recent years there has been a decline in the kind of Sunday meals I previously described. Even in cases where people live in the same town as their parents, it is increasingly common to have lunch before going to visit the parental home.

It may be true that the number of family meals is decreasing almost everywhere in the world. Factors behind this trend include changes in lifestyles and working practices, the development of the food service industry and school lunch system, and so on. Families have less time to eat together, and on the other hand, the spread of fast food and the like has made it easier for people to eat alone.[4]

However, recent research on whether family meals really are in decline have thrown up many doubts about this generally accepted view (Fischler 2011; Mestdag and Glorieux 2009; Murcott 1997; Sobal and Nelson 2003; Sobal et al. 2002). Researchers have pointed out that while we may have seen a decline in the last few years, it is not easy to say what the situation was like prior to that. The first reason for this is that there is very little evidence to properly reconstruct the past. Previously commensality has been considered and recorded most often in connection with special occasions such as ceremonies and festivals, so there are very few documents relating to everyday meals. Even in cases where records of some kind exist, it is difficult to compare on the same horizon as the current survey data, as their indicators are often different or unclear.

And the second problem is; people tend to idealize past family meals and miss their reality easily. To consider this point, I would like to share the results of an interesting survey of Japanese family meals for urban housewives conducted in the late 1990s (Iwamura 2009). The survey consisted of three stages: in the first phase, the participants answered a questionnaire; they then submitted daily written and photographic records of their meals; and then finally they took an interview. According to Iwamura, who conducted this survey, many of the participants replied on the questionnaire that they ate together as a family, but in the second phase of the research it was revealed that this was not actually the case. When the discrepancy was checked in the interview, the respondents answered that "it just happened to be the case on that day," or "it was an exception." Iwamura noted that participants didn't seem to see a problem with the discrepancy.

This suggests that the respondents were unconsciously reconstructing reality because they were so strongly influenced by the idea of a connection between family meals and commensality. I think that this way of thinking also pervades the recent discourse concerning the contemporary decline of family meals. That is, we tend to

[4] One example of this kind of research is Shinada (2015), a study that closely examined the transformation and background of family meals in Japan over the last 30 years.

apply this idea to the family meals of the past, idealizing and romanticizing them. As a result, it is often thought that the contemporary family meals are on the wane by comparison to the idealized picture of the past. If this is the case, we must reconsider carefully whether the recent discourse reflects reality. In fact, the argument that family meals are in decline has not yet been proven clearly in recent studies, as mentioned above. They also cast doubt on whether the real situation of family commensality has ever existed (Murcott 1997).

Thus, we must strongly recognize that our society as a whole, including both researchers and respondents, is greatly affected by "family commensality myth." Why and how this idea has become popular is not the purpose of this paper. But I note here very briefly that it is closely related to the idea of "modern family"; a new family image which was born during the process of modernization and has been the basis of today's family. According to "modern family" theory, during the industrial revolution and establishment of the modern state the family was reformed as an intimate relationship or place for breeding good workers and citizens (Ochiai 2000). The bourgeoisie which emerged around the same time, embodied and spread this new family with their lifestyle and thinking; a family consisting of parents and children, fixed gender roles, and happy homes filled with love. What is interesting as part of this process of change, is that the dining table became regarded as one of the most important symbols of family intimacy. Eating together around the table became the most central image of this new family, and thus "family commensality myth" was born.

It can be said that "modern family" has generated "family commensality," or at least has strengthened its value. In fact, the discourse of the current decline of family meals is often equated with the decline of the family itself. A lot of research is still needed on this subject. However, in any case, it has become clear that the link between family or family meals and commensality is arguable intrinsically.

6 Ishige's Research on Japanese Family Meals

Then, how can we proceed with research on family commensality without drawing facile links between family meals and commensality? It is first of all necessary to investigate the reality of family meals more precisely. The reason why families eat together is not only because they value commensality; indeed, the main reason may be one of convenience. If everyone eats food together that has just been prepared, it can be eaten before it gets cold, and the cooking and clearing away can all be finished in one go. Moreover, when we consider that the home is the place where people receive their most regular supply of food, we can see it as the source of nutritional sustenance for each individual, and a place for distributing and sharing food. Considering the presence of children, eating together with the family functions as an act of feeding and child-raising, and is often a good occasion for education. In short, there are various meanings, functions and reasons associated with family

meals. Until now we have overlooked these or reduced them to the single aspect of happy family circle commensality.

However, as I have already noted, trying to understand the actual situation of family meals is not easy. Here I would like to introduce an intriguing case study of Japanese family meals that might provide useful suggestions for further consideration.

This case study was part of a research project entitled "Life history about family meals," conducted in 1983–4 by a team led by Ishige from the National Museum of Ethnology in Japan (Ishige and Inoue 1991). Its aim was to clarify how Japanese family meals changed in the twentieth century through interview surveys. The interviewees were 284 men and women aged 70 or older at the time who lived their lives during the twentieth century. In the interviews, the researchers asked each interviewee to answer a set of very detailed questions in relation to each stage of their lives. The questions included with whom and in which room they ate, how the seating was arranged, what kinds of tables and tableware were used, what the atmosphere was like, whether there was any conversation, and so on. No other research in the field of Japanese family meals can compare with this study, in terms of both quality and quantity. This study ultimately revealed how a happy family circle was formed in Japan during the twentieth century.

Let's take a closer look. In contemporary Japan, most homes use a Western-style table as their dining table. However, until the 1970s, a low, round (or occasionally square) dining table named as *chabudai* was used, and before that, a small tray table individualized for one person, named *zen,* was popular. In other words, Japanese family meals in the twentieth century can be roughly divided into three eras depending on the type of table used: the era of the Western-style table, the era of the *chabudai*, and the era of the *zen* (Fig. 2).

In the era of the *zen* (it is difficult to identify its origin, but it is thought that it spread widely in early modern times), at family mealtimes each person would eat from tableware on their own individual *zen.* One of its popular types was a box-type

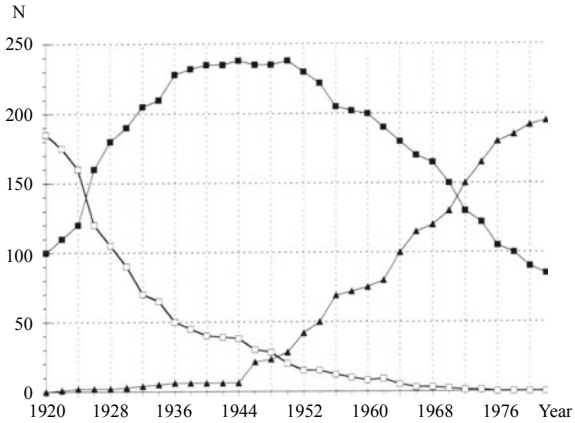

Fig. 2 Transition of dining table types in Japan in 1900s (Ishige and Inoue 1991:69). The vertical axis represents the number of cases (total of 284 cases surveyed). □ = Zen, ■ = Chabudai, ▲ = Western-style table

Fig. 3 Scene of meal at the *chabudai*. A screenshot of the Japanese film *Meshi* in 1951

one known as *hako-zen* (*hako* means box), which had a place to put away tableware. After eating, therefore, each person would wash their tableware and stow it in the *hako-zen*. What is particularly interesting is that in meals with the *zen* a family (not all families) would eat in different locations; the father would eat alone in the *tatami* room (that is, the highest-ranking room), and the mother and children would sit on the wooden floor in the kitchen. The content of the meal was also different often, with the father enjoying more lavish dishes. Furthermore, the mother was not permitted to eat until the father had finished his meal. So strictly speaking, in terms of both time and space, it is hard to describe this as family commensality. Family members were also required to observe strict table manners. Conversation was actively discouraged during the meal. This was clearly very far from the atmosphere of a happy family circle.

Around 1920, with the shift to the *chabudai* from the *zen*, the form of the whole family sitting around the *chabudai* table to eat began to emerge (Fig. 3). That is to say, everyone now shared the same table, so they began to share the same eating time. The *chabudai* was actually developed around 1900, when modernization began in Japan.[5] Back then some thinkers even heralded the invention of the *chabudai*, at which the whole family could eat together, as modernization and democratization of the home

[5] The modernization of Japan is said to have begun when the Meiji government was established (1868), following the end of the policy of seclusion under the Edo shogunate (1854).

(Ishige 2005:159). Unlike with the *zen* tray tables, where everyone would start the meal with their own individual dishes, with the *chabudai* the practice emerged of placing dishes in the middle of the *chabudai* for everyone to share. In this sense, the *chabudai* enabled family commensality to materialize further.

However, Ishige' research points out how the mealtime atmosphere was not so quick to change. The father's meal continued to be more lavish than everyone else's, and there was still little conversation or enjoyment. It is said that conversation during meals only became desirable after the Second World War with the spread of the Western-style dining table. This is how I remember growing up. My family was a nuclear one, comprised of me, my parents and my younger brother. In 1972 we rebuilt our house, modernized the dinning-kitchen room and purchased a dining table. Before we had a *chabudai* in the *tatami* room. Kneeling at the *chabudai* to eat meals required good manners, particularly of children, and conversation was considered bad manners. In addition, before mealtimes, we used to serve a cup of tea or a simple meal as an offering in front of the photo of my deceased grandparents, which created an even more ritualistic atmosphere. I recall that things did not change immediately after switching to the Western-style table, but at least we were no longer kneeling, and there was an increased sense of freedom.

7 Discussion

The detailed facts about Japanese mealtimes that Ishige's study revealed are very interesting and valuable, but here I would like to discuss some points that have implications for future family meal research.

First, it has been demonstrated that the "family commensality" norm materialized during the process of modernization in Japan, although more research is needed.[6] This means that family commensality is not a natural phenomenon, but a historical one. And of particular note is how Ishige's study has revealed and highlighted this. I have already mentioned several times that family meal studies face many difficulties even at the data gathering stage, as people's strong unconscious commitment to family commensality can easily distort their perception of reality. Despite being based on memories of the elderly, however, Ishige's research has succeeded in alleviating this problem by actively focusing on material and concrete aspects of family meals, such as tables, tableware, rooms, and so on. Such a thorough focus on material culture could represent an effective way of freeing ourselves from our assumptions and reconstructing a more detailed and objective reality. This is also useful for research in other societies. For example, even in Italy, there are documentary records which state that family members rarely ate together in the past because of a lack of dishes

[6] Now some progress has been made in this area with studies such as Omote's research (2010), which scrutinized articles and photographs of newspapers, magazines and school textbooks in the modernization era of Japan.

and chairs (Scarpellini 2012). Ishige's work may provide a new model for future family meal research also in a methodological sense.

Next, what is of even further interest in his research is that it reminds us of the importance of reconsidering what and how family meals exactly are. I have already stated that the meaning and function of family meals is not just to foster intimacy and bonds through eating together. In Ishige's research, it emerges clearly that importance was placed also on manners and the hierarchy of family relationships, especially in the era of the *zen* tray table. Mealtime was a place where power relations between family members were reflected and reproduced. For children in particular, meals were a kind of a training ground for becoming well-behaved and educated. This is very similar to the situation described in Norbert Elias' *The Civilizing Process*, which charts the changes in dietary etiquette from the Renaissance to the modern era in Europe. In adittion, gender roles are another important aspect of this, often with women (as mothers, wives) being required to prepare and serve the food even now. Therefore, the family meal is also a place where various discord among familial members often comes to the surface, as, for example, Kaufman (2005) highlighted in his French survey. Now these diverse functions and meanings of family meals need to be carefully researched and analyzed.

This also suggests that it is inappropriate to think about all everyday meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, including Sunday ones) in a uniform way, and that each has its own functions, meanings, and even forms. I previously described the Italian family as a commensality group, but in fact this relates mainly to the Sunday meals, not to their other meals (Udagawa 1992). On weekdays, the commensality range at home is generally limited to the family members living together, and there are also many meals which are eaten separately due to the provision of school meals, work commitments or the time different family members return home. In particular, there is almost no expectation of eating breakfast together. Each family member attends to their own breakfast for personal health reasons and as a means of supplying energy. Regarding evening meals, the recent trend is for people to use them rather than lunch for family commensality, but also eating with friends is often observed in the evenings, as before. When I did the first research in R town in 1980's, men in particular were more likely to have evening meals with friends than family.[7] This situation still needs further examination, but if we release ourselves from the myth of "family commensality," we can see that there are various forms of meals, including ones where families do not eat together without it representing any particular problem.

Thus, we finally arrive at a stage of fundamentally rethinking the concept of family commensality. As mentioned before, many researchers have already stated that the definition of commensality is still unclear, and that this is one of the serious obstacles to further research. For example, in the era of the *zen* that Ishige described above, Japanese family meals took place under the same roof, but they were often eaten in

[7] As mentioned at the end of this paper, until recently, evening meals were occasionally taken together with family, but were often an opportunity to eat with friends (Udagawa 1992). However, the introduction of school lunches and shortening of lunch hours have made it difficult for families to gather for lunch, so dinner has recently become a place for family meals.

different rooms and at different times. We still have no clear judgment as to whether this form can be considered as eating together, but I think we should not do so easily. Not only in this case, but in other cases as well, even if the family seems to be eating together, the details are very diverse, such as how to use tables and tableware, etiquette, and whether or not there is conversation. It will be further diversified if we include whether or not the foods eaten there are the same and whether or not they are made at home. We should first look into much more details of family meals, both ethnographically and historically, before easily defining indicators and definitions.

Moreover, if family commensality itself is a historical philosophy or value created in modernization, as previously discussed, it is problematic to consider this term as one of fundamental tenets of the discussion. Looking back at Ishige's research again, it can be said that in Japan family commensality was an aspiration during the twentieth century, but it remains questionable whether it has been fully realized. This leads us to further questions as to whether the term "commensality" itself might be considered as just eating together, or an idealized word that incorporates a certain value; happiness, harmony, solidarity, sharing, and so on. In the latter case, commensality should only be used as a historical and cultural concept, or at least as a word that describes aspects of the value or atmosphere of eating together, and not as a technical term that indicates just eating with someone. I have used the term "commensality" so far without being clearly aware of the implications of these two dimensions, but in future a stricter distinction needs to be drawn between them.

So, if not only the forms of family meals but also the values for it may differ depending on the times and societies, it may be too soon to conclude that having fewer opportunities for families to eat together will lead to less family commensality, as with my previous discussion comparing the cases of Italy and Japan. Certainly in Japan, there are fewer opportunities than in Italy, and there are some societies (like the Sundanese mentioned at the beginning of this paper) where families do not share meals on a daily basis. However, this does not mean we can automatically claim there is little or no family commensality ideas in those societies. It would be more appropriate to say that they have their own forms for manifesting these ideas. We do not get to the answer, until we can explain what kind of situation is or was considered for them as commensality and how that importance is or was felt. What we can say now with certainty is that the forms and values of family meals vary greatly. Therefore, we need to reinvestigate them in more detail, especially focusing on how each era and society has defined and valued them on its own.

8 Conclusion

As a matter of fact, I've only just begun considering this issue of family commensality, and especially in the case of Italy, I have not yet done enough research on their family meals themselves. Therefore, the discussions in this paper leave many points to be verified, including Japanese cases, and I intend to tackle them in the future. Thus, in conclusion, aside from the discussions on these specific cases, I would like to

briefly summarize the discussions so far in terms of making the appropriate progress in family meal study in general, and point out some further possibilities.

Firstly, when considering family meals, we need to extricate ourselves from "family commensality myth," which appears to be a product of the modern age. From this point of view, it becomes clear that family meals have and, in the past, had a greater variety of forms and meanings than we previously imagined. When describing and discussing such diverse situations, we also need to pay close attention to the use of basic terms such as "family meal," "commensality," "eating together," and so on. This is the first step in gaining a nuanced understanding of family meals, including their various aspects that have tended to be overlooked. I would add that this approach to family meals may also help reveal complex family relationships in greater detail and make a major contribution to family theory, too.

From this standpoint we can open the doors to a wider debate about other kinds of commensality or eating together. As mentioned at the beginning, in any society around the world, commensality occurs on a daily basis not just within the family, but also between neighbors, friends, coworkers, etc. In fact, what left the greatest impression on me with the survey in Italy was not only the family commensality, but also the fact that people so frequently ate with friends especially in the evenings (Udagawa 2015). Thinking about these other occasions of eating together is also important in thinking more deeply about family meals. Whatever the occasion of eating together we are trying to understand, we need to look at the other kinds of meals in that society and consider it with them as a whole.[8] This will also lead us to a deeper consideration of the social power and function of food and eating.

There are still more problems and issues remaining, but finally I would like to point out that the most important and difficult one is about the idea and sense of commensality or eating together. For example, in some societies, it might not be considered commensality when the participants at the meal do not eat the same food, while in others, cooking and preparing meals together might be considered as an essential part of commensality. If so, we must reconsider that the concept commensality itself might need to be examined without limiting it to the act of just eating. Furthermore, we must also take into account that the form and sense of eating together may have changed more radically in recent years. For example, Traphagan and Brown (2002) have revealed that today's proliferation of fast-food establishments provides opportunities for new intergenerational commensality and intimacy in Japan. There is also an interesting experiment to explore the possibility of "remote commensality," such as using a technology probe to enjoy the feeling of eating together even when away (Grevet et al. 2012). And now this "remote commensality" on Internet is unexpectedly and rapidly spreading among people who have been forced to stay home due to the effects of the coronavirus. It would

[8] I have already considered the difference between breakfast, lunch, and dinner in R town, focusing on the content of the meal and who to eat with. And I have revealed that these three meals, while having their own characteristics, were opportunities for people to build not only their families but also their local communities (Udagawa 1992).

be interesting and also necessary to examine how this phenomenon changes our real eating behavior and its feeling.

At first glance the concept of commensality or eating together appears very basic and natural, so it may not even seem worthy of detailed discussion. However, like Simmel's words quoted at the beginning, commensality or eating together is a place or occasion where everyone is able to connect to various aspects of society in more diverse ways than we may have expected and imagined. In this sense, it is a topic which should be given further consideration, particularly in our modern society where eating has become such a big issue.

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Ethnicity in Foodscape

The "Making" of Hakka Cuisine: A Case Study for the Formation of Ethnic Food and Its Foodscapes in Southeast China

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Abstract This paper aims to reconsider the notion of Hakka cuisine. Firstly, I highlight how there is a real variety of dishes in the region where the Hakka people live. Based on that, I discuss the historical process by which one part of this cuisine was selected as this group's distinguishing feature, and the category of Hakka cuisine was formed.

Keywords Category of food · Foodscape · Hakka · China

1 Introduction: What is Hakka Cuisine?

China[1] is a multi-ethic country comprised of 56 ethnic groups with the Han people as the majority. Although the Han commands an absolute majority (about 92%) in China, the cultures of everyday life among the Han peoples are vastly diverse. Food culture is no exception. The Han's food can be divided into many regional or ethnic foods. It is generally considered that Hakka cuisine (*kejiacai*), which this paper will focus on, also belongs to a sub-category of Han food now.

Hakka people (*kejiaren*) are a sub-ethnic group of the Han. The general historical view is that the Hakka have their roots in the Central Plain region dating back to the time of an ancient dynasty in northern China, and that they migrated south to escape armed conflict from around the end of the Tang Dynasty. Along the way they were influenced by the southern natives and geographical environment, and formed their own original culture. The most famous example is *tulou* (enclosed and fortified earth building), which has been registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is said that, at the same time, the Hakka created their own original food culture through the

[1] In this paper, I designate mainland China as China, in order to highlight the geographical (not political) difference from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

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process of migration. Previous research has argued that the distinguishing features of Hakka food were formed from the Song Dynasty onwards, and the prototype of Hakka cuisine was created during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Those distinguishing features on the one hand succeed the food culture of the Central Plain, on the other hand, were created to adapt to the southern living environment (Li 2004: 41, 2006). According to the majority of recipe books and guide books, the Hakka engaged in heavy labor, such as farm work, so created a food that was salty (*xian*), fatty (*fei*) and fragrant (*xiang*). This kind of opinion has now become the "common knowledge" surrounding Hakka cuisine (Zeng 2011: 4; Wang 2015: 5, etc.).

However, previous research has not addressed the basic and important premise of what Hakka cuisine is. Some historians and anthropologists have recently pointed out how the concept of the Hakka has not existed since ancient times, but was rather generated under the socio-political situation during the period toward the end of the Qing dynasty and Republic of China (Ijima 2007; etc.). In addition, the concept of Hakka cuisine also did not exist before the period of the Republic of China. It is important to note that the category of Hakka cuisine did not appear in encyclopedias on Chinese Food until the 1980s. It was not until the middle of 1990s that recipe books and guide books on Hakka cuisine started to appear. Now we have come to a point where we need to research the process by which the concept of Hakka cuisine was created.

For that purpose, I will firstly show the diversity of foods and foodways in the Hakka regions, in order to demonstrate that Hakka cuisine has no distinguishing features, as such. Many contemporary researchers and local elites continue to insist, in spite of this, that the category of Hakka cuisine exists in real society. In view of this situation, I secondly discuss how some specific dishes have become categorized as typical Hakka food. In doing so, I will clarify the formation process of Hakka cuisine from a foodscape perspective.

2 The Diversity of Foods and Foodways in Hakka Regions

I started doing fieldwork in Hakka regions of southeast China in 2003. Local elites and scholars were always keen to tell me which dishes exemplified Hakka's characteristic features when I interviewed or had dinner together with them. At the beginning of my studies, I did not yet question the authenticity of Hakka cuisine, and believed that it had genuinely existed since ancient times (Fig. 1).

However, while conducting fieldwork in some Hakka regions in China and the Pacific Rim, the question of "What is Hakka cuisine?" came to puzzle me more and more. This is because there are multifarious customs and material cultures within Hakka society, some of which can actually be found in non-Hakka regions. As mentioned above, previous research has barley discussed the concept of Hakka cuisine itself. So in the first instance, we should consider the definition of Hakka cuisine; that is, does Hakka food refer to "all food in the Hakka regions," or "food particular to the Hakka group?" It seems that there is currently no clear distinction

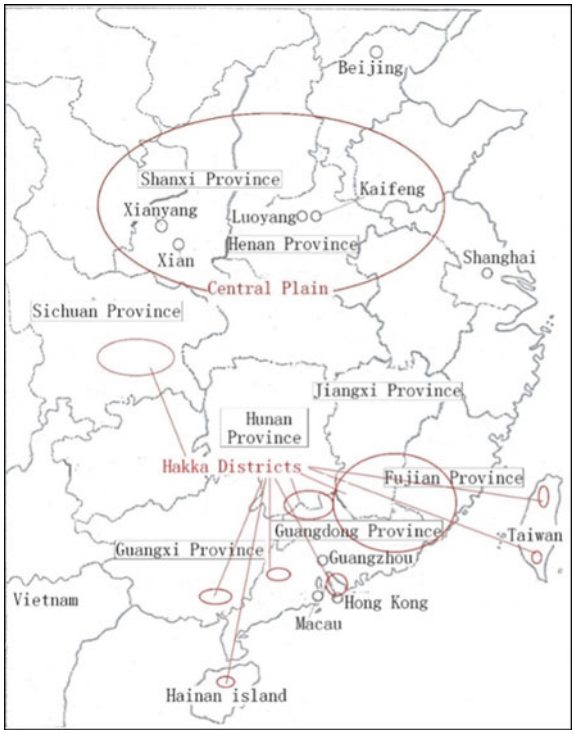

Fig. 1 Main Hakka regions in China and Taiwan

made between these definitions and the research to date has been largely based on a confused mixture of the two.

If we take Hakka cuisine to be the former of these definitions, then the food eaten by the Hakka is very varied indeed. In this case, the concept of Hakka cuisine can be said to include food served in global fast food restaurants, such as McDonald's, KFC, and Starbucks.[2] However, generally speaking these foods are not considered as Hakka food by local elites and scholars, who tend to see Hakka food as "a traditional food" eaten by Hakka people in Hakka regions. That is to say, Hakka cuisine is considered as "food particular to the Hakka group."

It is certainly true that in the case of a particularly small community, it is possible to distinguish between Hakka and non-Hakka food. For example, the She people speak the Hakka language and eat a similar cuisine to the Hakka, except for one thing; they don't eat dog meat. This is because the ancestors of this people are thought to be dogs. We can say that dog is a totem for this ethnic group (Fig. 2). Hakka who live nearby She villages in China, on the other hand, eat dog meat, so in this community it constitutes a distinguishing Hakka feature (Fig. 3). However, as is commonly known,

[2] A global-chain store, Ajisen Ramen Noodles was founded by Japanese Hakka people, and some Hakka people like to eat this. However, Ajisen Ramen Noodles is not generally considered as Hakka food.

Fig. 2 The She people see dog as ancestor (2007, photographed by the author)

Fig. 3 Hakka people see dog as nutritious food (2012, photographed by the author)

dog meat can be found all around the world, so you cannot extrapolate from this that it is a distinguishing feature of the Hakka group as a whole.

Given that people and ingredients have circulated around the world for such a long time, it is practically impossible for there to be a food which is only limited to the Hakka region. Moreover, foods can easily change according to the political and economic situation of the time. As Segawa (1993) and I (Kawai 2011, 2012) have already pointed out, the food of the Hakka and of their neighboring ethic groups, such as the Chaoshan people (Chaozhouren), the Guangfu people (Guangfuren), the Minnan people (Minnanren), and the She people, exist along a continuum, rather than being clearly delineated. For instance, *nyangdoufu*, *meicaikourou* and *yanmian*, *leicha* and the similar dishes which I discuss below can be found in other regions of China, especially in the Chaoshan People's region (Kawai 2018a, b).

Among the traditional dishes found in the Hakka region, some foods which the Hakka people regularly eat can easily be found in the Chaoshan, Guangfu, Minnan,

Fig. 4 Traditional Sashimi in Ninghua, Fujian (2015, photographed by the author)

or She regions, and there are even a few that are similar to those found in Japan. For example, Sashimi has been eaten traditionally in Wuhua prefecture, east Guangdong province, and Ninghua prefecture, west Fujian province (Fig. 4). The traditional dish called *ciba* in the Hakka regions of Guangdong province may be slightly different in shape, but has the same flavor and uses the same ingredients as *kinako mochi*, or sticky rice cake, from Japan.

Having surveyed Hakka and non-Hakka regions in China, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, Oceana, and Peru in South America, I have found that, even within the same Hakka region, there is a very wide variety of dishes, and it is impossible to find a food that can be said to be entirely unique to the Hakka. However, the important point here is that, even if there is no actual cuisine unique to the Hakka, an awareness system exists in people's (including researchers, restaurant owners, and local inhabitants) minds by which they identify cuisine belonging to the Hakka group. Indeed, some restaurant owners, local elites, and Hakka researchers seek to turn this kind of regional example into a category, symbolizing the Hakka as a whole. Therefore, to paraphrase the anthropologist Roy Wagner (1975), in order to do research on Hakka culture, we researchers must first question our own conceptualization and categorization of Hakka food.

As it turns out, I consider that the category of Hakka food formed in the latter part of the twentieth century, and has been especially widespread since the 1970s. To illustrate this point, I will overview in the next section food practices from the 1930s to the 1960s according to available field data and historical materials.

Fig. 5 Typical Hakka food in Guangdong China. **a** *nyangdoufu*; **b** *meicaikourou*; **c** *yanjuji*; **d** *yanmian* (2016, photographed by the author)

3 Food Practices in the Hakka Region of Guangdong: 1930s–1970s

Contrary to what previous research has suggested, I do not think that Hakka food has continued unbroken since the ancient dynasty over a period of several hundred years. Rather, I am opposed to this essentialist argument. For me, the issue is when and how the notion and category of Hakka cuisine was created. Methodologically my study focused on one part of a regional food and questioned how it came to be assigned this symbol, and then how these symbols were grouped together and the category of Hakka food formed. Specifically I looked at five dishes which have now come to exemplify typical Hakka food: (a) *nyangdoufu* (釀豆腐); (b) *meicaikourou* (梅菜扣肉); (c) *yanjuji* (鹽焗雞); (d) *yanmian* (腌面); (e) *leicha* (擂茶). These dishes are commonly known as (a) Hakka tofu; (b) Hakka pork; (c) Hakka chicken; (d) Hakka noodles; (E) Hakka tea (Fig. 5).[3]

In recipe books and guide books on Hakka food (Zeng 2011; Wang 2015; Song and Luo 2015, etc.), these dishes often are characterized as being salty, fatty and fragrant. Some dishes have folklore stories which are related to the Hakka's migration from the Central Plain. In the case of *nyangdoufu*, there is a folklore story that it was first

[3] In addition, a traditional local liquor, *nyangjiu*, is translated as Hakka wine.

Fig. 6 Map of Dongjiang area, Guangdong

created when people, originally from the Central Plain, who were the ancestors of the Hakka, tried to make Central Plain dumplings. In the south there was no flour to make the skins, so instead they wrapped the filling in tofu (Fig. 6).

These five dishes originated from central and eastern Guangdong. This zone is in the basin of a river called the Dongjiang river, so is known as the Dongjiang region. In other words, these are Dongjiang dishes, or to put it another way, they are Dongjiang cuisine. What we must not overlook here is that Dongjiang cuisine is a regional concept, and furthermore, that it is not just Hakka who live in this region. Chaoshan, Guangfu and She people also live here. The area that is often focused on as being the center for Dongjiang cuisine is Meizhou city and Heyuan city in the east and the surrounding provinces. Here Hakka make up more than 90% of the population. For that reason, I would like to focus on Meixian, a central district of Meizhou city from this point onwards.

I have conducted fieldwork in Meixian for around 15 years from 2004 to the present day. While I was there I read numerous works of regional literature and interviewed countless people. I also investigated the food practices and histories of these five dishes. What I learnt there was the following three things. Firstly, *nyangdoufu*, *meicaikourou* and *yanmian* already existed in Meixian in the first half of the twentieth century, but *nyangdoufu* and *meicaikourou* were ceremonial dishes for wealthy households and were almost never eaten in everyday life. Secondly, until the start of open-door Policy in 1978, *yanjuji* and *leicha* was not consumed by the general Hakka citizens in Meixian. Yanjuji was invented in the 1950–60s by a famous chef, Huang Hua, in Huizhou city, also in the Dongjiang region, and is therefore an example of so-called creative cuisine (Huo 1996) (Fig. 7).

Fig. 7 *Youcha* (油茶) of Yao people in Guilin. Similar to *leica*, youcha also consists of tea, rice, nuts, etc. Yao people 'eat' this kind of tea after finishing work (2017, photographed by the author)

Thirdly, *leicha* was not originally found in Meixian. This is a regional dish from areas of Dongjiang with mixed Hakka and Chaozhou populations, or Hakka and She populations, such as Puning, Haifeng, and Lufeng, and Heyuan (cf. Liao and Chen 1992; Huang 2004, etc.). *Leicha* is a tea which can be eaten, consisting of a mix of tea and other ingredients such as rice, nuts, and sesame seeds. This kind of tea can be found in non-Hakka regions, including Hunan province, and areas inhabited by ethnic minorities (photo 6). In addition, Inazawa (2017) noted that *leicha* was seen as a cultural symbol of the Haifeng and Lufeng people (sub-groups of the Chaoshan people).

My investigations into Meixian have revealed that there was a great variety of dishes before the establishment of the Communist party in 1949. According to some older men and women in the old town of central Meixian, there were various types of small restaurant which served dumplings, fried noodles, *yanmian* noodles, dog meat, mutton, etc. The dishes from before the 1940s which two Meixian citizens, Mr. Wenzheng and Mr. Wenshan, recorded are as follows:

(a) *shahe* noodles (*shahefen*), maltose (*maiyatang*), beef jerky (*niurougan*), beef meatballs (*niurouwan*), white lotus baked cake (*baitanglianhuatang*), tea egg (*chadan*), mung bean slush (*lvdousha*), ice-cream (Wenzheng 1976: 30–33).

(b) fried noodles (*chaomian*), big steamed stuffed buns (*dabao*), simmered dumplings (*wenjiaozi*), *shaomai*, *niangdoufu, yuanbanzai*, *rouwan*, salted pork in jelly crystal sirloin (*shuijinrou*), fish skin soup (*yupigeng*) (Wenshan 1976: 34–37).

More than half of them (for example, maltose, beef jerky, tea egg, ice-cream, fried noodles, simmered dumplings) are not only limited to the Hakka region, but rather are readily available in every region of China, and indeed all around the globe. In addition, beef meatballs are often categorized as typical Chaoshan food in today's Guangdong province. On the other hand, only Wenshan referred to *nyangdoufu*,[4] along with

[4] Wenzheng did not call *nyangdoufu* Hakka tofu at that time.

some other dishes. Neither of them referred to Hakka pork, Hakka chicken, Hakka noodles, or Hakka tea at that time, despite the fact they are now considered to be typical Meixian Hakka dishes.

The food practices during 1950s–70s were different from the period prior to the 1940s. All of the elderly men and women I interviewed in Meixian told me their life was very painful during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Meixian people, and especially the members of some rich clans, were able to eat various kinds of meats before the 1940s, but they suddenly found it much harder to get ingredients after the system of food rationing started in the 1950s. They recalled that during the 1950s–1970s the most commonly eaten side dish was *xiancai*(咸菜), a kind of pickles, and that the tofu they most often consumed was not *nyangdoufu*, but rather *doufuhua*(豆腐花). A professor born in 1952 in rural Meixian told me that it was not until 1976 that he was able to eat *nyangdoufu.* Most Meixan women and men in their fifties and sixties said they mainly had vegetables and grains in their childhood, because they were poor. It was difficult to get meat, so they often went to catch frogs and rabbits in fields, or kept fish in their own ponds.

This is why the five dishes were not naturally viewed as Hakka cuisine by Meixian Hakka people at that time. To begin with, they rarely saw or ate these dishes before the end of the Cultural Revolution. In that case, when did the five dishes start to be considered as typical Hakka food? How did the category of Hakka food appear in literature?

4 The Formation of Hakka Food and Its Foodscape: 1960–2010

According to the literature, no concept of Hakka cuisine or anything similar had existed in China prior to the 1970s.[5] One of the reasons is not unrelated to the fact that the concept of Hakka itself had still not spread widely among the folk societies of Southeast China prior to the open-door policy of 1978 (Kawai 2013). Although some of the local elites started asserting their Hakka identity in the first half of twentieth century (Ijima 2007; Xia 2012), even they did not talk about the characteristic features of Hakka dishes. Take the studies of Luo Xianglin, who is the founder of Hakka Studies, as an example; he systemically noted the immigrant routes, language, and customs of the Hakka people in his famous book *The Introduction of the Hakkas*published in 1933. In this book, he explained the architecture, religion, and Fengshui of the Hakka, which are related to their migration from the Central Plain and their local characteristic features, but he did not refer to food. No description of

[5] Only the concept of Dongjiang cuisine had existed in China prior to 1970s.

the category of Hakka cuisine can be found in the subsequent literature published in China prior to the 1970s in China.[6]

In this regard Taiwan was a forerunner to China. In Taiwan, *nyangdoufu*, *meicaikourou* and *yanjuji* emerged as dishes particular to the Hakka in the middle of the 1960s. Here it became connected to the history surrounding the migration of the Hakka from the Central Plain and the frugal nature of the Hakka people. It is worth noting that the people who propagated these stories migrated to Taiwan with the Chinese Nationalist Party in the 1940s and were Hakka from Meixian. They are known in Taiwan as Mainlanders (Waishengren).[7] The background reasons as to why the Mainlanders Hakka were keen to promote the distinguishing features of their culture has to do the Taiwanese political situation at the time. The Mainlanders, who had been chased from the Chinese mainland, claimed that they were the true successors of orthodox Chinese culture. In this context the Hakka were keen to emphasize their Central Plain heritage.

Some Mainlanders Hakkas started emphasizing the characteristic features of Hakka dishes in *The Series of Central Plain Culture*. This series of books has been edited and published since 1965 in Taiwan by Mainlander's Hakkas. The earliest description is an essay entitled "Menu of Hakka cuisine" written by Liang (1965: 19–22), and the second earliest description is an essay entitled "Food, Clothing, Shelter, and Occupation of the Hakkas," written by Heng (1967: 6–8). Both essays refer to the characteristic features of Hakka cuisine. The dishes they recorded include *nyangdoufu*, *yanjuji*, *xianca*i, which are described as dishes related to the culture of the Central Plain.

Following this, in 1978 the Taiwanese Hakka researcher Chen Yundong published a book called Hakka People, which brought together this discourse and was perhaps the first place to propose the concept of Hakka cuisine. I have discussed this in another paper (Kawai 2011), but he was the first researcher to lay down a definition for the concept of Hakka culture. Chen Yundong's concept on the one hand refers to the Hakka's lifestyle, while on the other, expresses the distinguishing characteristics of the Hakka people. The concept of Hakka cuisine is discussed as an extension of this culture theory. In Chen's description, therefore, Hakka cuisine is at one and the same time "all food in the Hakka region," and "food particular to the Hakka group." The confusion I mentioned before maybe originated here, as this concept of Hakka cuisine spread beyond Taiwan, to Japan and China.

The concept of Hakka cuisine first appeared in Hong Kong no later than the middle of the 1980s. The book *Meixian District* published in Hong Kong in 1987 has a section on Hakka cuisine, and there are 15 different dishes featured in it (The Editorial Board of Meixian Prefecture, Chinese Cities and Regions Series 1987). These include *nyangdoufu*, *meicaikourou*, and *yanjuji*. Then in 1995 the first Hakka recipe book was published in Guangzhou. Following that there was a sharp increase

[6] After the Communist Party became established in China, the government emphasized a "single" Han ethnic group, and denied the existence of diversity within this group. Under this policy, very few Hakka studies were conducted until the 1970s, except for some studies of the Hakka language.

[7] Mainlanders (Waishengren) means a person from China since World War II.

in the number of Hakka recipe books published across China. In journals and general books on Hakka themes, the category of Hakka cuisine was mentioned as a matter of course, and *nyangdoufu*, *meicaikourou,* and yanjuji were presented as standard dishes of the genre. While the *Cooking Encyclopedia of China*published in 1992 did not include the category of Hakka cuisine, it is fair to say that by the latter half of the 1990s, the category had firmly established itself.

Here we also cannot ignore the fact that from the 1990s the government of Meixian promoted a Hakka culture policy. The Hakka region of China is in a mountainous area with poor transport links. It is relatively impoverished economically and depends largely on support from overseas Chinese. Overseas Chinese in this case includes Hakka in Taiwan and Hong Kong. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Meixian government started putting a lot of effort into promoting Hakka culture, and Hakka cuisine became a tourist attraction. In particular, *nyangdoufu*, *meicaikourou,* and *yanjuji* gained political and economic legitimacy as symbols of Hakka cuisine. Restaurants and souvenir shops began to sell these dishes under the name of Hakka cuisine, and the two Chinese characters for Hakka began to adorn the shop displays. Hakka cuisine did not just stop at a textual dimension, however; it began to assume a physical presence in the real world. In other words, "food particular to the Hakka group" began to emerge as a scene in which economic profit was created, that is to say, it began to appear as a foodscape (Fig. 8).

What I would like to focus on here is the change that occurred in the Hakka cuisine category. Firstly, from around 2007, *leicha*, which did not originally exist in Meixian, began to line the shelves of souvenir shops as characteristic Hakka goods. The people who migrated from Haifeng to Taiwan in the 1940s succeeded in promoting and selling *leicha* as a kind of tea particular to the Hakka people. It was then later fed back to Meixian under the same pretext. As you can see in photo 7 on the right, in the theme park constructed in Meixian in 2006, there is a *leicha* area. In

Fig. 8 *Leicha* (擂茶) started to be sold in souvenir shops (left) and a theme park (right) in Meixian as typical Hakka food (2014, photographed by the author)

the last few years, *leicha* has been promoted in the Hakka region of Shenzhen city where this kind of tea historically did not exist (Figs. 9 and 10).

Then around 2010, *yanmian* became the next dish to be held up as particular to the Hakka. Hakka noodle shops suddenly began springing up in Meixian, as well as other cities in Guangdong Province, such as Guangzhou and Shenzhen. On the other hand, Kunfu tea, which had once been considered a Hakka drink in Taiwan in the 1970s (Watanabe 1979), became known as a popular drink in the Chaoshan region, and ceased to be considered as something particular to the Hakka. This indicates that the category of Hakka cuisine is in a dynamic state of flux, with some dishes being newly discovered as Hakka cuisine, while others lose the Hakka cuisine tag.

Fig. 9 Menu of *yanmian* (腌面) which is sold as (客家) noodles (2016, photographed by the author)

Fig. 10 Kunfu tea in a Chaoshan's home (2012, photographed by the author)

5 Conclusion: Between the Food Practice and Food Category

Previous Hakka food culture research has been carried out according to a mixture of two definitions of Hakka cuisine as "all food in the Hakka region," and "food particular to the Hakka group." I therefore separated out the two definitions, and looked at each one in turn. As I have mentioned previously, food in Hakka regions is varied and in a state of flux. For example, a Hakka woman who migrated from Mexian to Hong Kong became friendly with a neighbor who had migrated from Sichuan, and they exchanged information about recipes and getting hold of ingredients. As a result, she started to make *mapodoufu*(麻婆豆腐) which is viewed as typical Sichuan cuisine, more regularly than *nyangdoufu.* While she and her Hakka husband never visit the Hakka restaurants in Hong Kong, she is constantly inventing new dishes through the influence of her friend from Sichuan. In this way, each individual creates their own cuisine according to political and economic situation, personal relationships, and material conditions of each time and place. To describe it in terms used by Tim Ingold (2007), the image of these kinds of food practices is of flowing "lines."

However, the researchers have frozen the flow of that line at a particular point to make the category of Hakka cuisine. Hakka cuisine symbols such as *nyangdoufu* are included within this category. The image of this kind of category is a "surface" (Ingold 2007). In this paper, I have investigated the process by which this "line" converts to a "surface." Specifically, I have demonstrated how some foods which can be found in non-Hakka regions (food as three dimensions) have come to be seen as typical Hakka food in the literature (food as two dimensions) under particular political and economic situations, focusing mainly on five dishes. I have also presented evidence that the concept of Hakka cuisine was born in Taiwan under the control of Chinese Nationalist Party. Hakka nationalists who emigrated from China started asserting their Hakka consciousness and characteristic features from the middle of the 1960s.[8] In this context, some foods which can be shown to have a link with the Central Plain became considered as characteristic Hakka cuisine. After that, the category of Hakka cuisine was fed back to Hong Kong and southeast China. Local governments, developers, and merchants started using the concept of Hakka cuisine to highlight the spatial feature of each Hakka region. Originally, dishes in the Hakka region and in neighboring non-Hakka regions existed along a continuum, so cuisine particular to the Hakka group did not exist in the phenomenal world, but rather existed in the mind. However, some images of characteristic Hakka cuisine (two dimensions) started appearing in souvenir shops, restaurants and theme parks (three dimensions). That is say, the images of Hakka food and its surroundings began to create the Hakka-styled foodscape. Moreover, the foodscape is constantly changing due to the needs of consumers.

[8] They kept international networks with the Hakka members of the Chinese Nationalist Party in Hong Kong and other overseas Chinese communities, and held the 1st World Hakka Conference in Hong Kong in 1971. The 2nd World Hakka Conference was held by the Hakka members of the Chinese Nationalist Party in Taiwan in 1973.

In this paper, I have criticized the essentialist approach of previous Hakka food culture research, and have presented the process by which the concept and category of Hakka cuisine have been formed. However, there is still scope for debate on the details of this formation process, because this approach is just beginning. For example, I have not fully discussed the process by which the overseas Chinese communities, especially the Hakka communities in Southeast Asia, contributed to the formation of the category of Hakka cuisine. Although I have yet to find a description of the characteristic features of Hakka food in literature published in Southeast Asian countries, I am sure it is only a matter of time before I do. I hope that further research will be conducted on the formation process of the Hakka food category, and the model presented in this paper will be modified. In addition, I believe that this kind of formation process for ethnic cuisine can be applied not just to Hakka cuisine, but to other cuisine systems. I look forward to reading and conducting further comparative studies on ethnic food in the future.

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Tubawan and the Play of Authorial Slippage: The Sani Yi people's Practice of Hospitality Business and the Making of Indigenous Foodscape

Rongling Ge

Abstract Food fulfills the most basic need of human beings. The essentialness of food opens it up to many forms of significance, especially the relationship with the sense of place. Tourists are drawn to diverse locations in today's global economic explorations of local food. When food is presented to inexperienced outsiders, however, its regional and socio-cultural associations are usually lost. In this paper, I will discuss the intriguing means which some rural Sani Yi restaurant entrepreneurs in Southwest China have employed to explore their food hospitality business. Through some artful tactics of authorial slippage, local stakeholders have asserted authority over various untraditional food contents, while managing a dynamic, interactive relationship with tourists. I will argue that it is precisely the process of de-contextualization and re-contextualization that gives local restaurant food a flavor of indigenousness in the cosmopolitan world.

Keywords Sani Yi people · Tourism · Indigenous food

1 Introduction

It seems that eating has become a new cliché of cosmopolitan citizenship these days. With the global popularity of mass tourism and the rapid increase in global mobility, the relationship between people and the food they consume has become complex and diverse.

On the one hand, food, its cooking methods, and its practitioners can move quickly and relocate to a foreign land thousands of miles away, and soon find their niche there. On the other hand, consumers can travel freely to almost any corner of the world to taste the local cuisine. In both cases, judging to whom or where the food should be ascribed has become an issue. This issue has nevertheless opened up a new arena for people to contest identity and authenticity for economic and other gains. The

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dynamics of this paradox of cosmopolitanism and the local desire has led to a new movement in the making of local, native, and indigenous food.

Among various attempts, the French concept of *terroir* (soil, land) made a contemporary genesis (Trubek 2008: xv–xvi) around the world with many adaptions and definitions. Terroir represents the notion of linking place to taste as common sense. The now-ubiquitous strategy of terroir designation, much like UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage designation, is often institutionalized and ideologically produced (Trubek 2008; Brulotte and Di Giovine 2014; Herzfeld 2017a) in response to global economic demand. Its practice in local and everyday life, however, is diverse and colorful. Tomasik explains the subtle effect of the wordplay of *terroir*. It is an insightful discovery by Michel De Certeau, but it is easy to get lost when translated into English, or other languages. A French vendor in a big market may tag his products "produits *de* terroir" instead of "produits *du* terroir." By doing so, he tries to sell his *"local"* products which are not from a "*specific"* place. It is a strategy of *geographic slippage* by which specific or localized products become more general or almost universal (de Certeau et al. 1998; Tomasik 2001: 524). This wordplay, with its recognition of the mutability of the signified, is a form of semantic slippage. This method was introduced into anthropological analysis by Herzfeld (1983). He insightfully pointed out that we should notice the folk rhetorics rather than pursue the so-called pure truth, since there is no absolute factuality from a contextualist point of view.

In China, there is a very similar concept to *terroir*. It is *tu* (Chinese character 土 and the literal meaning: soil, earth, land) in Mandarin. For example, *tuzhu* (土著)means native or aboriginal. Just like the French concept of *terroir,* the prevalence of the desire for "the taste of place" (*goût de terroir*) has challenged and re-defined local food practices to a large extent within the context of tourism development in recent years. In this paper, I will discuss the intriguing means which some Sani Yi stakeholders have employed to explore their food hospitality business. While promoting their local food-set of *tubawan* (eight *tu* bowls) to the culinary tourism market, these stakeholders sneaked both new contents and meanings into it. Through the practitioner's artful language performance, authorial slippage takes place. The local food which is cooked and served in the hospitality industry goes through a dual process of de-contextualization and re-contextualization, and its indigenous authenticity is thereby paradoxically established.

2 Shilin Tourism: A Brief History

Shilin is a Yi autonomous county near Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan, China. As an autonomous county, the Yi, of whom the Sani Yi make up the vast majority, are slightly over one-third of the total population. Yi people are considered indigenous to the newcomers, the Han Chinese, who account for about two-thirds of the county's total population. Shilin, with a literal meaning of Stone Forest, is famous for its limestone formations, which have been listed as a *World Natural Heritage Site* since

2007. The Stone Forest Park, which overlaps the terrain of the heritage site, was established as early as 1931 and began to offer ticket tours to both domestic and overseas tourists from 1978. The state-planned tourism of the park mainly focuses on the natural scenic landscape of a magnificent 350 square-kilometer area of strangely shaped limestone.

The scale of sightseeing tours to the park has grown enormously. According to statistics of the county annals (1996: 471–472), in 1980 the number of visitors was about 0.14 million. In 1988 the number reached 1 million. Since 2015 it has been over 4 million (*Shilin Yearbook* 1999–2017). The way the local people participated in the development of Shilin tourism, however, used to be very limited. Although the Sani Yi's ethnic culture is employed for tourism purposes, the last remaining village community that once dwelled within the park was relocated about ten years ago, under the pretext of protecting the World Natural Heritage. Some Sani members, especially the younger female ones, were hired by the state-run tourism company as tour guides to work in the scenic park. Famous Sani myths and folklores were also borrowed to add some exoticism to the landscape.

Travelers from cities consider themselves cosmopolitan. The locals should think so too. It could be understood as *discrepant cosmopolitanism* as Clifford (1997: 36) has proposed. Swain (2001) pointed out that cosmopolitanism has varied complementary meanings. Cosmopolitan people are those who have been freed from national limitations, no matter by traveling to many parts of the world, or relating a local uniqueness with (the imaginary of) the rest of the world. In that sense, the Sani Yi people in Shilin, inevitably globalized by the development of ethnic tourism, made their successful cosmopolitan turn precisely by claiming their minority ethnicity of "Saniness," celebrating cultural diversity and engagement with the changing world.

After a while, some tourists began to explore the surrounding residential areas. Local people started to become aware of the potential economic value of their indigenous identity. As Han and Graburn have pointed out (2010), drawing upon a 'unique' cultural resource is a typical way of starting a tourism business in ethnic areas of China. Soon after the turn of the new century, Sani people who lived outside the park began to explore the tourism business in their communities. The typical way of doing this was to cook and serve *tubawan* in their own houses. *Tubawan* is a Mandarin translation of a Sani banquet-style food-set. It is natural for the Sani stakeholders to present this menu in Mandarin since the majority of tourists are domestic Han Chinese. Moreover, this term resonates with the Han tourists, who have developed a long history of agriculture and a sentimental feeling of nostalgia and connection. Along with some help from tourist imaginaries (Salazar and Graburn 2014), this *peripheral* practice of providing a food hospitality business outside the scenic park, although still very scattered, has slowly re-shaped the regional tourism landscape in recent years.

Over the past four years I carried out intermittent ethnographical observations in a Sani Yi village called Nuohei. The activities of the small-scale family-run Sani restaurant I am about to describe in this paper are mostly from those field observations. Nuohei was among the first communities which initiated *tubawan* as a menu for culinary tourism. The village is about 40 min drive along a country road from

the stone forest scenic area. There are currently nine families in the village community running a hospitality business, opening inns in their own houses. Three of them provide meal services. Under the leadership of the restaurant *Yi King's Banquet*,[1] the owners established an association in 2004, whose primary purpose was to regulate the cuisine style, size, and price. *Tubawan* was selected as their unified menu. In practice, each restaurant later made some changes to satisfy different types of guests—fieldtrip students, artists, and regular tourists. A few years later the association itself also broke up. Nonetheless, the form of *tubawan* has generally been maintained. The practice of *tubawan* in the rustic restaurant, in conjunction with both printed and digital promotional materials, has become normalized. *Tubawan* is now widely accepted as the standard cuisine presentation of the Shilin Sani Yi people.

The word *tu* in the Chinese language refers to many meanings. Firstly, it is a physical reference to "land, earth, soil," which is very much like the French term *terroir*. In this case, it implies that the ingredients of those "eight bowls" are locally produced. Secondly, it is a spatial reference to the "rural, local, indigenous, native," indicating that *tubawan* is a vernacular form of mainstream food culture. Finally, it has a temporal hint of the "old, traditional, out-of-fashion." In Southwest China, the eating custom of "eight big bowls" had been widely popular. The word *Tu* (and often together with the ethnic name *Yi*) is added to the front, suggesting a rural, indigenous, and exotic flavor.

The name alone, however, is not enough to deliver a sense of indigenousness. In practice, the means by which the restaurant owners defend the title, and how they justify those means, are the fundamental questions.

3 Number-Play

The pursuit of authenticity in local and indigenous food often goes in two delusional directions. One is tracing the provenience, genealogy, or lineage (Peng 2013: 118; Brulotte and Di Giovine 2014: 7) of the foodstuff. The other is believing in the traditionality of the foodway. Both local foodstuff and foodways are constantly in flux. It is, therefore, wise that the food hospitality industry takes a discursive form (Brulotte and Di Giovine 2014: 7; Tomasik 2001) to build the notion of *terroir/tu* and indigenousness in their food. In the Sani case, *tubawan* is a pre-fixed menu that the local restaurant entrepreneurs organized together. The historicity of the foodstuff and the traditionality of the foodways are both included in discursive practices.

The Eight-big-bowl food-set is a local banquet custom to host valued guests in Shilin. As the owner of the *Yi King's Banquet* explained to me, "We Sani people value hospitality very highly, and we serve the best food to our guests. I believe the Eight-big-bowl was a king's banquet style in the old times. It is the best thing we can offer." It was also because of this that he named his restaurant the way he did. It

[1] This is a translation from the Han language. The original name in the Sani Yi language is "Yi King's Guests".

Fig. 1 A New Year's Banquet (January 2019, photographed by the author)

was he who initiated the restaurant association in the village to make a unified menu of *tubawan*. From my observations, Sani communities very often have commensal meals together, and they do use the form of Eight-big-bowls (Fig. 1).

Eight is just an approximate and nominal number. The host usually serves more than eight bowls to express generosity to his guests. Those dishes are divided into two categories: "big" (major) dishes and "small" (side) dishes. This classification is not based on the size of the container, however, but on the contents of the serving. In general, the *big dish* refers to the ones mainly containing meat, such as pork, beef, lamb, and fish. The *small dish* refers to those with vegetables, as well as nuts and rice noodles. *Big dishes* should constitute at least half of the whole table. Contents can be arranged alternatively as long as the classification principle is followed.

The usual form samples are as follows:[2]

- Boiled goat meat; braised home-kept chicken; fried eggs; stewed bacon slice with red kidney beans; fried goat's cheese with pepper; pickled cabbage and potato soup; boiled pumpkin; boiled tender tofu.

Other servings include:

- Snacks: Buckwheat cake with honey.
- Cereal: Yi family pilaf—rice, buckwheat, and corn mix.
- Entertainment: toast songs.

[2] Although the actual food contents of each serving will vary, some official publications and online media in Shilin have selected eight dishes as the standard serving. To me, this kind of presentational practice is the making of the visual foodscape of *tubawan*. The example listed here is a copy from those publications. See Shilin Yizu Zizhixian Minzu Zongjiao Shiwuju 2017: 235–238. See also the official social media site of Shilin Scenic Area Administration, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/iryOcnsC8RVolGElihUxng Accessed 11 August 2021.

The Eight-big-bowls are normally used by the local community to celebrate festivals, ceremonial events, end of harvests, or any other special occasions. The feast takes place in large and open spaces, and the contents can be seen by anyone who passes by.

It has been adopted and developed into a restaurant menu—this form of serving favors group tourists, and the tourists who come to enjoy the local food are indeed mostly in groups. It is a bit awkward for a single traveler to come here to eat, but the owners can pick out a few dishes from the *tubawan* menu to feed the visitor. The family-run restaurants have no printed menus. Their servings follow the Eight-big-bowls varieties. Yi restaurants in the county center are more flexible than the ones in the villages. There are differences in the contents of the *tubawan* served in different villages. Different restaurants in the same village receive various types of customers, so the contents and prices vary accordingly. Within the same restaurant, the contents may also change daily depending on the ingredients the owners get on that day.

In tourist destinations, it is common for the so-called local food supplied to tourists to differ greatly from the local daily diet. Its authenticity is often questioned as a result. In this case the mutability of the Sani restaurant food is also a factor, but in fact it is well received by the local community. One reason is that there are frequent eating gatherings in the villages, and this gives villagers the opportunity to evaluate the dishes served in the local family-run restaurants. Another reason is that the culinary practice of the restaurants has slowly provided some modifications to the community diet.

Even the strict guardian of local culture has been compromised. In the eyes of my Bimo friend, a Sani intellectual who leads local indigenous ceremonies, the contents of the eight bowls are essential. Some food ingredients and materials are autochthonous, and some are foreign. Each represents different meanings and has different hospitable values. This Bimo believes that those local entrepreneurs only know the form of *tubawan* and do not understand much of its social and cultural significance. It does not matter, though, according to him, since tourists do not understand it either. It is acceptable, as long as the basic principle is not violated. For example, at least four *big* dishes must be served on one table.

4 Wordplay and Authorial Slippage

"So those friends who have never had a hot meal in our home have presumably another threshold of intimacy to cross." (Douglas1972: 66) As Mary Douglas has famously pointed out (Douglas 1972: 61), the pattern of social relations, such as inclusion, exclusion, and transactions across boundaries, are all messages that food hospitality encodes. The hospitality industry mobilizes not just economic, but also socio-cultural exchanges. The growing hospitality business in rural and ethnic China is creating a conversational space with a high capacity for social interactions between the host and tourist. Food, although it is paid in exchange for hospitality, acts as an active channel of communication.

From a comparative point of view, *tubawan* is neither locally nor ethnically unique. As a matter of fact, *Tubawan* is a ubiquitous form of feast in Southwest China. There are Han people's *tubawan*, Bai people's *tubawan*, and Halal *tubawan*. Using search engines, we can find an enormous variety. How to indigenize it, therefore, became a significant question for the Sani stakeholders.

In the local government's official publications, websites, and other promotional materials, Shilin's *tubawan* gradually became unified in form and content. From the sources I have, it seems this process started around 2016,[3] after about a decade of development in the *tubawan* culinary tourism of the village communities. In a book published by the County Bureau (Shilin Yizu Zizhixian Minzu Zongjiao Shiwuju 2017), the section on "local taste" only covers the ethnic cuisine of the Yi people, who account for just one-third of the county's total population. One group is thus used to represent the entire region. By ethnicizing the geographical space, the group of Sani Yi stands out, and other groups become invisible. As a result, ethnic food becomes local food. The taste of *terroir* and the taste of the indigenous are fused.

As the head Bimo mentioned, many materials and ingredients used in *tubawan* are imported. Cooking techniques and recipes are also circulating freely among different groups. To make a taste of *tu*, or to fulfill the tourist's imagination of the place, local entrepreneurs have adopted and invented many tactics.

5 The Question of Green Food Versus Non-green Food

One afternoon in the summer of 2018, three young female tourists came to *Yi King's Banquet*. They asked for vegetarian dishes. Unfortunately, the restaurant was hosting the celebration of a newborn baby that day (Fig. 2). The owners and their helpers had been preparing food from the day before, and there was an enormous amount of it, waiting to feed more than two hundred guests. However, there were no vegetarian dishes. The hostess told me that she felt sorry for the three girls, but she couldn't spare a hand to prepare another meal for them. "It's all meat today. There is only one dish that looks vegetarian, the cabbage soup. But there are ham slices in it." With a full spoon of goat meat in hand, she gave me a look of sorrow mixed with a little pride.

After dinner, I had a conversation with those girls and learned that it was their first time to Shilin. One girl was from the nearby city of Kunming. She felt very sorry for not having done sufficient homework for the trip, "We just thought, you know, this is a rural place. There must be fresh green vegetables. We thought we might have some wild ones, too, since this is a minority village."

That inspired me to have a discussion about green food with the local people. Nowadays there seems to be a new form of common wisdom. People believe that by

[3] The earliest online mention of *tubawan* was posted on Aug 13, 2007. It was a tour ad. for Nuohei village on a rural tourism e-business platform. See http://www.51qcl.com/Mobile/Menpiao/Info-2069.html. Accessed 11 August 2021.

Fig. 2 Celebration dinner for a newborn baby (June 2018, photographed by the author) The dishes on the table are: 1. boiled goat meat; 2. fried pork; 3. fried beef; 4. fried ribs; 5. fried shrimp; 6. century eggs; 7. Chinese yam with boiled rib bones; 8. fried crispy pork; 9. Chinese cabbage boiled with ham slices; 10. bean noodles; 11. chili dip

traveling to rural places they can enjoy some *green* food; either real green vegetables or some healthy or organic meals. It is, however, just a city illusion of a mythological countryside (Williams 1973).

Tourists believe the green vegetable is valuable, whereas the Sani think that it is worth very little. It is not because the villagers grow too many vegetables. On the contrary, the Sani people mostly live in the mountains and rarely grow vegetables, due to the lack of water. According to the Bimo, who is an expert in Sani traditional knowledge, greens are reminiscent of the grass and weeds that are used to feed the animals. This association devalues green vegetables. The host will lose honor if he serves his guests with a green dish at a banquet. Some foods, especially meat, are considered to be the best when cooked with domestic products. That is, the native animals Sani people breed and raise themselves. The preciousness of some other foods depends on how challenging they are to obtain. That explains why nuts, tofu, and lotus roots are higher in the dish hierarchy. Those ingredients are not produced locally, and people used to go to markets far away to buy them. In the past, some nuts were imported from other countries, such as Vietnam. Those ingredients are considered suitable for entertaining guests.

6 "I Laid the Eggs Myself"

The argument of "whether to serve the greens" reveals a give-receive tension of hospitality food across cultures. The owners have, of course, long known that city people like to eat locally produced, green vegetables. One of the female entrepreneurs told me, "Now, I have learned some tricks. When I serve dishes, I explain to the tourists that I grew the vegetables myself. I also tell them that I laid the eggs myself! My guests always laugh. It's fun to make jokes on our poor Han language." It is an interesting wordplay. Eroticization (de Certeau et al. 1998: 23–33) is sometimes adopted in the food business. The self-laid eggs joke is believed innocent and harmless, as it takes no real action, according to the stakeholders. Different values are exchanged between the inside and outside, or even smuggled into each other. The owner is trying to satisfy the tourist by applying the tourist's value.

On the other hand, she substitutes the ideology of green-health with the values of home production and hard work. She made an artful conjuncture of both values to avoid the moral dilemma. Through this amusing chicken-human authorial slippage, the local authenticity of the green dish is now well accepted in the *tubawan* food system.

7 Is Local Food a Representation of the Local Land?

How can you show the historical and indigenous traces of food? Or how can you use a menu to hide the fact that those traces are already lost?

The way the Sani people used to cook was much more straightforward. Many of my Sani friends told me the story of how their cooking style changed. Until relatively recently, food ingredients were not supposed to be mixed. When cooking meat, for example, they boiled it just with water. Later, about 20–30 years ago, the Sani people went down to the county market and started to try Han food. They found that the Han people preferred to mix different ingredients and use all kinds of seasonings and spices. At first, the Sani people laughed and thought the dishes made by the Han people were messy. After a while, though, they decided it tasted better that way, and began to learn to do so too.

Steel (2008, 426–427) mentioned the fact that man's appetite/ food has a direct influence on the land and landscape of the countryside. It is impossible for people to believe that the food materials in the Sani kitchen are all sourced locally. However, the efforts made to present a sense of localness are conspicuous. For example, the host uses a lot of hanging home-made bacon, old-style liquor jars, and earthen bowls to express the taste of *tu*. However, it is interesting to note that food and the landscapes that produce it sometimes lack cohesion. Despite promoting indigenous food, the tourist Sani village Nuohei is, conversely, trying to hide some of the local scenes that reflect its localness. The current village committee director talked with me many times about his plan of refining the village landscape. First, it is necessary to remove

the plastic and iron roofs and use traditional tiles or slate instead in order to restore the architectural landscape. Another vital measure is to hide anything dirty or unsightly for a more sanitized view. Things, such as pig pens, should be moved to a place that cannot be seen by tourists. The play of visibility and invisibility is much like the play of authenticity. To borrow Herzfeld's (2017a, 198) comment on traditionalism, the pursuit of food of *tu* erases its local traces in the production of indigenous food.

8 The Use of Earthen Bowls

Using the *tubawan* name and menu is an ambitious display of the *tu* feature of Sani Yi food. Furthermore, the local restaurant managers make extra efforts to articulate this feature. In addition to the presentation of Sani ethnicity with local embroidery, costumes, and toast song performances, the food containers have also been carefully selected to reflect the characteristics of *tu*. "Those restaurants in *Achodi* village are still using white bowls," the owner of Yi King's Banquet commented of his rivals one day. "I don't think it's a good idea for the business. If we serve *tubawan*, we'd better serve it in real *tubawan*." The first use of *tubawan* refers to the food, and the second refers to its containers (earthenware). In Shilin, this kind of earthenware is rare to find now. People can only recall it from their childhood memories. It was a very coarse, clay-colored pottery, which was replaced by refined, white porcelain (Fig. 3) several decades ago. It was not possible to find and buy that kind of earthenware in the market, either. The restaurant owners substitute it with a set of clay-colored porcelain ware (Fig. 4). This type of container is mass-produced in factories and can also be found in restaurants in big cities. The nostalgic look of the new bowls allows a crafty conjuncture of *ersatz tradition* (Herzfeld 2017b: 292) with modern business; of indigenousness with cosmopolitanism (Swain 2001).

These practices together illustrate the coexistence of fluidity and rigidity in the indigenous food hospitality industry—the interactive dynamics between the insiders and outsiders, the comparative gaze on peers, and the wordplay to imbue authority. I once asked the owner of Yi King's Banquet whether, as far as he knew, other ethnic groups also have *tubawan*. He thought about it for many seconds before telling me that he had been a guest in Han houses and had noticed that some dishes, such as buckwheat cake and goat's cheese, had never been served by the Han hosts. That's because Han people don't plant buckwheat. They don't make goat's cheese, either. "Thus, those Han dishes couldn't be called *tubawan*," he concluded. Some Sani Yi restaurants in the area, he continued to argue, replaced too many meat dishes with vegetables. That cuisine is not *tubawan* anymore, either. In short, not every eight-bowl is *tubawan*. Entrepreneurs like him should take responsibility to maintain its formality. It is especially important to cook with the specified ingredients, such as home-kept chicken, home-smoked bacon, and goat's cheese made from goats reared by Sani people. The restaurant stakeholders have created some new exchange networks of food materials in the village in recent years to support the hospitality

Fig. 3 Bowls sold at a local market (January 2019, photographed by the author)

business. His insistence on the specific local ingredients, however, is an intentional but interesting blindness to the fact of Sani people's admiration for imported foods, such as nuts, tofu and bean noodles, and the devaluation of local greens.

9 Conclusion and Further Discussion

In the town center area of Shilin, a Yi restaurant opened called *Pushi Lao Minzu,* literally "cosmopolitan old minority." *Pushi* means "universal, cosmopolitan, worldly." *Lao Minzu,* or "Old Minority," used to be a discriminatory common name referring to the indigenous people in Southwest China. Putting "old" and "minority" together reminds us of the "exotic-past" link identified by Lowenthal (1985). The restaurant owner found business opportunities from this subtle allegory. According to the owner's explanation, the old is tradition, and the indigenous is cosmopolitan. Half-pig sized bacon hangs in his yard all year round. Photos of the bacon appear on almost every post on the food review websites. This restaurant has been in Shilin

Fig. 4 Bowls used in a Sani rural restaurant (January 2019, photographed by the author)

for nearly 20 years. In 2019, it opened a branch in the provincial capital Kunming. Ideologically it is just a larger scale *tubawan* business in the town. It is not so much self-exoticism as a strategy for the local indigenous people to *englobe* (Herzfeld 1987) cosmopolitanism with their hospitality.

Indigenous seems a questionable term in today's globalized world. However, it answers to globalization in a meaningful way, with significant economic and socio-cultural values. Compared to autochthonous, James Clifford (1997, 250–269) explains that indigenous is a historical identity of the newcomers. In the current context of tourism development, indigenous is not just a historical identity, but also a notion of authorial authenticity. I do not intend to explain repeatedly in this paper the economic driving force behind this articulation, but to present and analyze the means by which it is justified.

As a response to cosmopolitanism, *terroir* has become a useful proposition. In the culinary business, territorialization (Ayora-Diaz 2010, 2012) has become a new trend and shows the dynamics of the paradox of culinary flux and authenticity (Herzfeld 2017a: 197). *Terroir* is about exclusiveness, suggesting that the taste will change if not produced on a particular land. This ideology awards the terroir-marked product a unique value. It is also why the discourse of terroir is often institutionalized.

The notion of *tu* in t*ubawan* culinary tourism is about inclusiveness, though. Its practice is very much individualized and kept on a folk scale. Although *tu* refers to the idea of soil and land as well, the Sani stakeholders use it with more fluidity. To promote *tubawan*, the stakeholders sometimes have to de-contextualize it. By doing so, it opens more opportunities for the inexperienced tourist to conceptualize and

re-contextualize the dishes. Since the production process and cultural information is invisible, tourists can only imagine the ethnic and indigenous characteristics of *tubawan* through the framework of its representation. The variability of the food contents and mutability of the meanings also add to the seemingly rigid menu.

When the Sani people started to promote their *tubawan* to tourists for business, they did not know of the existence of the French concept of *terroir*. Nor were they aware that scholars are constantly trying to deconstruct the idea of authenticity. Through the everyday practice of the food hospitality business, they solved some of the dilemmas they faced through interactive conversational dynamics between the host and the tourist.

Authenticity is always questionable. If we continue to deconstruct it in real life, however, we might miss the significance of authenticity as the means instead of the purpose. "The taste of place" (*goût de terroir)* is an old idea, a pursuit of the ascribed feature of an ever-in-flux food. In a constructivist and contextualist way, the significance of tourism food is that it allows co-authorship (the government official, Bimo, the village head, restaurant owner, tourist) within mono-ownership (indigenous). The ascription of food is both fluid and rigid. It also brings out a distinctive feature of the hospitality industry. The exchange between the host and the guest is destined to transcend the economic transaction.

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Translocal Foodscapes: Gastronomic Creativity in Mérida, Mexico, and Seville, Spain

Steffan Igor Ayora-Diaz

Abstract In this paper I argue that gastronomic practices change as the foodscape in which they are meaningful changes as well. The existence of foodscapes depends on the individuals who navigate it, and their meaning depends both on the entry point of each subject, and on the relative social, economic, age, gender, and ethnic position they occupy. Contemporary foodscapes have expanded and fragmented on account of the mobility of people, edible goods, culinary and gastronomic knowledge, and technologies required for cooking meals from different cultural culinary traditions. In addition, I argue that the concept of translocality is needed to understand the foodscape. Here I explain how these two concepts intersect. Based on fieldwork conducted among chefs and restaurateurs working in restaurants in Mérida, Mexico, and Seville, Spain, I explain how translocal processes create the conditions for gastronomic creativity, (retro)innovation, and invention. In the global market of regional and national cuisines, the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage has been turned into a source of added symbolic and economic value to restaurants. Hence, I argue that we need to understand contemporary gastronomic changes as a result of an expanding and fragmented foodscape constructed by global–local and translocal processes.

Keywords Foodscapes · Translocality · Creativity · Culinary heritage · Yucatán · Andalusia

1 Introduction: The Changing Foodscape

In contemporary global society, the decision to eat out is a complex one. For example, during the early 1970s in Mérida, Yucatán, when the urban population was around 250,000, choices seemed limited; Yucatecan or Lebanese food were the two main options for eating out. In those years, there was a French restaurant infamous among locals for its small portions and large prices. At the end of the 1970s the foodscape

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began to change. This began slowly at first, with the emergence of a couple of "Mexican" restaurants, and then, soon after, "Italian" and "Chinese" restaurants. The "non-Mexican" restaurants were opened by Yucatecan migrants who returned home from the United States, so the Italian and Chinese restaurants served meals that followed recipes of US-based Italian and Chinese restaurants; recipes that appealed to the taste of North American consumers and did not correspond to the gastronomic codes of these foods' countries of origin. This shaped the local taste for meals under these national denominations in a way that was similar to what had been happening in the United States at the time (Ayora-Diaz 2014). This transformation was mirrored on a smaller scale in other cities in the state of Yucatán.

In the 1990s the city's growth accelerated, as did the speed at which the foodscape expanded. French, German, Italian, and Spanish restaurants all emerged, along with regional Oaxaca restaurants. Other new additions to the urban foodscape of Mérida during this decade included Mexican restaurants chains, such as *Sanborns'* and *VIP*, as well as the usual US transnational fast-food establishments, such as *McDonald's*, *Burger King*, *Pizza Hut*, *KFC*, *TGI Fridays*, and *Chili's*. At the turn of the century in the year 2000, Mérida already had around one million inhabitants, and the foodscape had further expanded to include restaurants specializing in food from Cuba, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Thailand, Japan, various regions of China, and India (although this latter venture was unsuccessful). There was also a variety of Mexican regional restaurants mainly specializing in food from the states of Campeche, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, and Sonora.

This transformation in urban Yucatán is similar to the transformation in regional foodscapes seen around the globe, where US transnational food chains have expanded, and where immigrants from different parts of the world seek to make a living through restaurants where they adapt their national or regional recipes to the local availability of ingredients, and to local taste preferences (Beriss 2018; Fantasia 1995; Roberts 2002; Watson 1997). It is the social, cultural, political, and economic forces of globalization that help to expand and shape the foodscape, and make it easier for cooks to find spices and ingredients from different parts of the world, including religiously certified ingredients, such as *kosher* and *halal*—at least in the large cities of many countries (Ayora-Diaz 2010; Cho 2010; Dolphijn 2005; Fischer 2011; Horowitz 2018; Lytton 2013).

I understand the *expansion of the foodscape* as a result of processes related to globalization. Contemporary socio-cultural phenomena can be explained, at least partly, by the mobility and deterritorialization of people, technologies, money, ideas, and ideologies, as well as the simultaneous processes of re-territorialization; that is, the strategies local people employ to variously appropriate, adopt, adapt, or reject what the global brings in (Appadurai 1996). These processes can be described as fluid "*landscapes*," which include the foodscape. This concept has the advantage of allowing us to study the positionality of subjects within global–local and translocal intersections. This (inter)subjective positionality stresses the fact that it is people's experience and navigation strategies that bring the foodscape into existence. Each person enters and navigates a foodscape in a way which is different from others.

Gender, age, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic class, cultural capital, and political-ideological dispositions can explain when and how a person enters the foodscape, how they traverse it, the quality of the experience they draw from it, and the effects that compel the subject to explore that space of culinary choices—affects that, in turn, are structured by the social, intersubjective experience of the foods that person finds available.

Before I discuss the traits that define the foodscape, I believe it is necessary to highlight the part played by gastronomic ideologies that help shape the types of food we receive at our tables in restaurants and transform our culinary and gastronomic choices over time. First, we must recognize the historical hegemony of French *haute cuisine*, which went unchallenged for a long time. The aesthetics of French cuisine, in addition to the normative character of its sauces and stocks, became a globally accepted paradigm, and French gastronomic cooking influenced the definition of high cuisine everywhere (Ferguson 2004; Spang 2000; Trubek 2000). Second, it is within the logic of *haute cuisine* that the notions of "innovation" and "creativity," also disseminated through French cooking, have become normative and have spawned diverse forms of gastronomic experimentation (Beaugé 2012; Parasecoli 2018). Among these forms of modernist experimentation, molecular gastronomy has become the leading paradigm for designing a new aesthetics of plating and for applying new technologies in the search for innovation in professional and domestic kitchens (Abend 2011). Thirdly, foods are continuously re-signified through branding, labeling them as local, ethnic, regional, or, as has more recently happened, though their recognition as cultural heritage, thus increasing their symbolic value and the price consumers must pay to enjoy them (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009, see also Medina 2018).

The local and regional multiplication of cuisines and the increasing availability of spaces to experience and consume other foods together represent a challenging environment for cooks, chefs, and restaurateurs. In the neoliberal, late capitalist economy and culture, chefs who specialize in different culinary and gastronomic "traditions" must design strategies to carve out and maintain their own culinary niche. It is in this context where the judgment emitted by food critics and general diners on how creative or innovative a chef or cook is, is turned into an asset; an added value for the restaurant and the foods it sells. Chefs must translate these values into the food they list in their menus and the aesthetics of the food they serve.

2 Foodscapes and Innovation

What are foodscapes? I argue that there are several traits that define them. First, they are not restricted by spatial boundaries. That is, for the individual actor the foodscape *may seem to be* a local accumulation of resources. However, each foodscape is an assemblage of food resources (cookbooks, cooking instruments, edible goods, procedures, and cultural tastes, among other things) that have been deterritorialized and reterritorialized; that is, made global and local at the same time. In

the global–local context, there are always translocal forms of culinary and gastronomic exchange among groups of people. This leads to a second trait: foodscapes are multi-scalar. That is, the contemporary structure of an *apparently* local foodscape that an individual or group of people must navigate, as well by its relationship with wider foodscapes encompassed by other larger foodscapes. In this sense, the urban foodscape of Mérida, for example, can only be understood within a structure of relationships with other rural and urban foodscapes that coexist within the broader regional foodscape, which in turn is encompassed by the national, as well as global foodscapes. Thirdly, foodscapes possess a temporal dimension that may sometimes give the illusion of continuity, but are instead characterized by fractures, such as the arrival of other ethnic, religious, and national groups that may or may not become integrated within regional society, by processes of colonial or imperial expansion, and by expansions and contractions in global trade flows and economy. Fourthly, and finally, foodscapes change according to the actions and strategies of individuals who become agents in this transformation, whether innovating or maintaining "traditional" practices.

With these traits, foodscapes contain: (A) *Places to eat*, ranging from small eateries to expensive high-end restaurants, as well as street food from street hawkers to more expensive food trucks. Places to eat can be diverse, including, as previously mentioned, local, ethnic, regional, and national cuisines, but also other alternatives, such as slow food, kilometer zero (also known as locavore restaurants), vegetarian, vegan, kosher, halal, fusion, "modernist," molecular, and many other possible culinary offers; (B) *textual sources* such as bookstores, websites, virtual media in general where professional and domestic cooks can learn the "correct" procedures, the ideal technologies, and ingredients necessary for cooking any type of food; (C) *stores*, ranging from supermarkets to departments stores and specialized businesses where cooks can acquire the cooking instruments, appliances, and ingredients necessary for cooking a meal; (D) *culinary schools* and special courses offering a range of options, from learning to cook a specific type of meal, to training to become a professional chef; (E) *TV shows and Internet videos* where the person interested in cooking can learn about the lives and skills of different chefs, and also get acquainted with values associated with cooking, from efficient time-saving recipes, to what is considered to be high cuisine, and the importance of improvisation, creativity, and innovation as values that define personal styles of cooking (Ayora-Diaz 2019c).

How are innovation and creativity possible today? One approaches the foodscape, whether voluntarily or not, by simply moving through the space of a city. For example, in Mérida, *Miyabi* is a Japanese restaurant run by a Japanese woman whose Yucatecan husband learned to cook in Japan. This establishment uses fresh and high-quality ingredients, and the price of a meal is high (compared to usual Mexican prices). Alternatively, if someone cannot afford to eat there, but has grown fond of the sushi fashion, they can get their meal from *Sushi-Ito*, a fast-food chain that sells pre-packaged, refrigerated, cheap versions of Mexicanized sushi—that is, cooked with Philadelphia cheese, jalapeño peppers, and avocado, among other ingredients—or buy pre-packaged sushi from *Costco*'s or *Wal Mart*'s refrigerators.

Once the individual gets "hooked" on any rendition of Japanese food, he or she can go to local bookstores that sell Japanese cookbooks. Thus, depending on the area in question, the foodscape includes a greater or lesser degree of access to cookbooks, recipes from the Internet, and TV shows. Later, the cook may seek the ingredients and technologies necessary for cooking Japanese cuisine in different local supermarkets, where the quality and price vary according to the purchasing power of the population of the neighborhood in which they are located. Thus, one can find in Mérida different qualities of cookbooks, different types of rice, different qualities of fish, cheap and expensive chopsticks, a wide range of *Santoku* knives of different prices, sushi mats, assorted Japanese sauces, *Ajinomoto*, wasabi, and other implements and ingredients. This is also true for cooks interested in experimenting at home with other cuisines.

The experience, at home and at the restaurant, depends on how much he or she can afford to spend on everyday and celebratory meals. The domestic cook may see themselves as "creative" when they add soy sauce to a Yucatecan dish, for example. Professional chefs may believe they are "innovative" because they make sushi with jalapeño chili peppers, with Oaxaca cheese, or by fusing soy sauce with habanero peppers.

Within an expanding, dynamic, and fluid foodscape many restaurateurs face the challenge of ensuring their businesses' success. It is in this contemporary context that many chefs and restaurant managers and owners adopt the mantras of "creativity" and "innovation." On TV channels dedicated to food—*The Food Network*, for example—these values have everyday currency. Watching shows such as *Chef's Table*, or contests such as *Master Chef*, one repeatedly hears about the importance of "improvisation," "creativity," and in a few selected cases, "innovation." These are values attached to both cooking practices and the resulting food aesthetics that professional food critics and users of Instagram, TripAdvisor, and other media use to grant recognition, with forms of evaluation ranging from Michelin stars to massive customer accolades.

In anthropology, when we find a set of values constantly deployed to validate an individual's cooking, a restaurant's menu, or the customer's preferences, we are compelled to interrogate the social, cultural, political, and economic grounds on which they have been turned into markers of the quality of a food, the abilities of a chef, or the novelty in a restaurant's menu. These values are culturally constructed, and their meanings shift according to the space and time in which food practices, from production to consumption, are being staged. In the following paragraphs I will briefly discuss their theoretical importance, and ethnographically illustrate the different ways in which these values are mobilized in favor of cooks, chefs, and restaurant owners and managers.

3 A Critical Approach to Innovation

Von Hippel (2005: loc. 67) does not find it necessary to reflect on what innovation is when he suggests that "innovation is being democratized"; that is, in his view, there has been an important shift displacing the responsibility for innovation from corporations' designers toward users/consumers: "Users that innovate can develop exactly what they want, more than relying on manufacturers to act as their (often very imperfect) agents" (loc. 67). By contrast, Leary (2018: loc. 224), in his book *Keywords. The New Language of Capitalism*—a volume that seeks to update Raymond Williams' 1979 book *Keywords*—reminds us that language is not a direct, transparent reflection of the way things *are.* Instead, he argues, we need to be aware that socio-cultural, political, and economic contexts historically shape the meaning of words. "Innovation," "creativity," and "design" are words that may have been coined long ago but have acquired a new meaning in contemporary society—a meaning layered on top of previous ones—in response to current neoliberal economic contexts (loc. 274). He argues that "Innovation and entrepreneurship have become such commonsense concepts and so widely accepted as virtues that they often remain undefined by those who use them in earnest. Binding words also *bind* in another sense, as constraints that manacle our imagination" (loc. 325).

Leary provides a genealogical examination of these concepts. Innovation, he argues, was in the past a pejorative concept that made reference to subjects who challenged the status quo; individuals who were thought to be social deviants. But later, innovation came to mean a process aimed at satisfying a human need. More recently, tied to technological romanticism, it has been turned into the "profit-making insight of the technological visionary" (loc. 1865). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Schumpeter distinguished between innovation as "the refinement of a process or a product," and invention as "the creation of something entirely new" (loc. 1890). Innovation lends to creativity, Leary adds, a "specific professional, class dimension" (ibid). Creativity, he suggests (loc. 875), connects "imagination, aesthetic practice, and religious faith in the pursuit of private gain." Thus, creativity is tied to artistry, a disposition turned into an economic asset analogous to the "spirit of the entrepreneur" (loc. 902). It requires ingenuity, vision, and intuition to make new things. In sum, Leary argues, these concepts have become marked by contemporary capitalist demands placed on the workers, who now must be taught how to be creative and to innovate to secure individual gains.

Reckwitz (2017) argues that there are two sides to "creativity": on the one hand, there is the subjective desire to be creative (which not all may have) and to generate new things; and on the other, there is an economic imperative to be creative. To be functional in contemporary late capitalism, one *must be* creative. In his view, we have seen the emergence and consolidation, throughout the last couple of centuries, of a *creativity dispositif* (2017: loc. 280). He borrows Michel Foucault's term to designate the articulation and correspondence of different discursive, practical, economic, and aesthetic processes that result in the hegemonic domination of this normative push to

be creative. Hence, late capitalist society provides the cultural context in which we see cooks and chefs seeking to validate their work as "creative" and/or "innovative."

As the complexity of the global foodscape increases, and translocal and local foodscapes expand, the restaurant business becomes more competitive. Chefs must ensure they can sell their products by attaching some sign-value to them—branding them. Often the value of *novelty* is explained as arising from the *creativity* of individual chefs who possess the ability to *innovate*. Very few contemporary chefs have been considered to be truly innovative and, if we look closely, we can see that they all move within the parameters of what has been called "modernist cuisine," installing a new aesthetic vision and codifying the formal structures of the presentation of the plates, creating successful and safe forms of fusion food, and/or introducing principles and technologies derived from molecular gastronomy.

Parasecoli (2018: 160) has suggested that "modernist cuisine" is often used to refer to a scientific approach to the production, preparation, and cooking of food both in professional and domestic kitchens, apart from industrial settings. Hence, modernist cuisines adapt different contemporary influences reflected in the minimalist aesthetics of the food and plates, the preference for fresh, local, artisanal and organic products, the fusion of culinary traditions, or the use of different technologies to create new food shapes and textures. Adrian Ferrà, of *elBulli* fame, is considered a true creator and innovator in modern cooking—applying the principles of molecular gastronomy, using liquid nitrogen, carbon dioxide, lecithin, and other chemical substances to make, among other gimmicks, foams and spheres, and surprising his customers with meals in which the substance does not correspond to the form (for example, an artichoke made out of rose petals) (Abend 2011: 65–66). After Ferrà closed *elBulli*, the Danish chef, René Redzepi, of *NOMA* fame, and Massimo Bottura, of the famous *Osteria Francescana*, have taken on the mantle as the new forces steering gastronomic innovation, blending the values of local, seasonal foods and organic ingredients, with the aesthetics and technology of modernist cuisine—which does not necessarily include the techniques developed within molecular gastronomy.

The contemporary hegemony of these values also explains why chefs have to be trained to embody practices considered to lead to creativity and innovation. This is well illustrated by Karen Page, who, in her book *Kitchen Creativity*, defines the concept broadly as "bringing into being something new and useful to drink and eat" (Page 2017: loc. 189). Her book addresses aspiring chefs saying, "the goal of *Kitchen Creativity* is to… **inspire you to tap *your* uniqueness, and start cooking in a way that expresses who *you* are and allows you to connect with and please others through *your* food**" (loc. 189. Her italics and bold font). To achieve this end, she identifies three stages: *Mastery*, which is the embodiment of the techniques taught by the great masters of the field; *alchemy*, or the ability to transform classic recipes and to use ingredients to create something new; and *creativity*, the imagination to connect disparate elements into new creations. She then prescribes the combination of spices, different cooking ingredients, and taste of dishes, as well as the drinks that should accompany them, pointing out which combinations are allowed and expected. Once the cooks master these prescriptive-normative rules, they can create new combinations and new recipes, which, implicitly, correspond to an established

and hegemonic code of innovation. Her volume brings us back to the capitalist, corporate appropriation of these values. They transform creativity and innovation into individual dispositions, such that if the individual disappoints at innovating, it is his or her failing and not that of the economic system.

In what follows I will be examining the specific context that affects the regional foodscape in Mérida, Yucatán, and Seville, Spain. As I illustrate for the Mexican case, the taste of and for Mexican foods has been changing under the effects of the inclusion of the Michoacán Paradigm in the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Ayora-Diaz 2019b), while in Seville I found only marginal references to the Mediterranean Diet.

4 Translocal Contexts for Innovation

An important aspect of the translocal foodscape is the discursive representation of the foods of a town, city, region or country. There is a sometimes fluid and sometimes restricted flow of cooking instruments, edible commodities, recipes, and, most importantly, of people who travel carrying these goods and objects from their place of origin to their new living territory, where they seek to recreate the taste they prefer (although they must often adapt their recipes to the local availability of ingredients and cooking technologies). In addition, the number of people we call "gastronomic tourists" has been increasingly growing. Tourism is one of the main motivators of creativity, innovation, and redefinition of culinary and gastronomic "traditions." According to the most recent statistics I was able to find, in 2016 more than 94 million people visited Mexico, injecting close to 20 billion pesos, or around one billion USD, into the country's economy. Of these tourists, almost two million visited the state of Yucatán (INEGI 2017; SECTUR 2019). In Yucatán there were, at that time, 561 restaurants, 329 of which are located in Mérida (INEGI 2017: Table 21.10).

By comparison, of the nearly seven million tourists who visited the region of Andalusia in the same year of 2016, it is estimated that over one million visited the city of Seville (de Andalucía 2019). These numbers refer to the tourists who practice what the province's government categorizes as Urban Tourism (*Turismo de ciudades*). That is, they count the visitors to the cities of Córdoba, Granada, Málaga, and Seville, and do not take into consideration those who visit rural enclaves (de Andalucía 2017). The Regional Government boasts thirteen Michelin-starred restaurants; among these, one (*Abantal*) is located in Seville (Seville 2017). I find it surprising that, despite the importance of tourism in Andalusia, the province's statistics do not show how many restaurants there are in any of the cities. All I found during my fieldwork there was the claim that Seville has close to ten thousand establishments, including restaurants, *abacerías*, bars and other small eateries (Fig. 1).[1] The provincial government only

[1] In Seville, tourists and local people find a vast array of places to eat. These range from expensive, gourmet restaurants, to a variety of smaller places, such as tapas restaurants, coffee shops, ice cream parlors, bars famous for their snails, fried fish shops, abacerías (small retail shops that have evolved

Fig. 1 Entrance to the Abacería San Lorenzo, Seville (2018, photographed by the author)

offers a qualitative assessment claiming that Seville caters two types of clienteles: those who seek authored cuisines, signed by well-established and celebrated chefs; and those who seek "traditional" meals. In this general context, one more discursive dimension has emerged to add value to the food one finds in the regional foodscapes of Yucatán and Andalucía; the declaration and inclusion of food "traditions" in the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

While UNESCO *may be* prepared to include different traditional culinary practices in their list, with the aim of protecting them regionally and nationally, these nominations arise from specific economic and political interests. Mexico failed a first attempt to obtain this recognition in 2005, when the application highlighted the vastness, diversity, and richness of Mexican cuisines (Moncusí and Santamarina 2008). The whole endeavor was sponsored by food corporations, such as *Maseca*, which produces industrialized corn flour and tortillas, and *Bimbo*, which produces wheat flour and bread. In 2012 UNESCO admitted the Michoacán Paradigm into their list. This is a very localized culinary tradition that emphasizes the use of pre-Hispanic ingredients (corn, beans, and chili peppers), the use of *chinampas* (horticultural gardens in rivers and lakes), and the cooking techniques of a Purepecha

to selling tapas and, in some cases, "traditional" *cocidos*, or stews), restaurant chains, tapas bars, and small restaurants specialized in Indian, Turkish, Chinese, Peruvian, Mexican, and Japanese food.

ethic group in western Mexico. This recognition was appropriated by the Conservatory of Gastronomic Mexican Culture, which assimilated the term as a metonymy of Mexican cuisine to promote its own nationalist agenda. This organization has, among other activities, assembled groups of women under the banner of "traditional cooks" in different Mexican states, and coordinates Annual Gatherings of Traditional Cooks, at which they seek to demonstrate that all the different cuisines of the country can be reduced to their use of beans, corn and chili peppers (Ayora-Diaz 2019a). As I have suggested elsewhere (Ayora-Diaz 2017), this corresponds to a process of internal cultural colonialism by which centralist Mexican ideologues seek to erase the existing regional culinary differences.

The inclusion of the Mediterranean Diet in the UNESCO list in 2010 was also controversial (Medina 2018; Moro 2014) and charged with contradictions. There were originally four countries in this application, but the list was later expanded to seven in 2013. This diet was "discovered" and publicized in 1959 by the nutrition specialists Ancel and Margaret Keys, as the results of a study conducted in seven countries. Their invention was originally based on another triad: olives, wheat, and grapes. The emphasis with this diet was on the primarily vegetarian, rural life of the peasants in Italy, Dalmatia (a region of Croatia), and Greece. It was later expanded to include fish, which was important within the study known as *the Dalmatians' cohort* (see the website: https://www.sevencountriesstudy.com/mediterranean-dietary-patterns/). For the UNESCO application, the authors of the dossier chose to include Agros in Cyprus, Brac and Hvar in Croatia, Soria in Spain, Koroni in Greece, Cilento in Italy, Chefchaouen in Morocco, and Tavira in Portugal (see Moro 2016; https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/mediterranean-diet-00884). From the time this diet was initially promoted and became popular, there were voices pointing out that it did not "really" exist, but it was, instead, a nutritionist's invention that homogenized the food culture of a broad region encompassing very diverse diets. The diet of people in countries such as Italy, fully within the Mediterranean, was not all vegetarian, as exemplified by the high level of meat consumption among the population in the north of the peninsula (Camporesi 1993; Medina 2018). Furthermore, as reported by González Turmo and Medina (2012), the elaboration of the dossier led to a debate over various issues, such as whether they were asking for the recognition of the Mediterranean Diet or Mediterranean Nutrition, and whether or not "ancestral" and "traditional" were appropriate terms to ascribe to this culinary system (Medina 2018).

Both the Michoacán Paradigm and the Mediterranean Diet were included in the UNESCO list, not to validate food triads, but to recognize the need to protect production and consumption practices in these regions. However, in contrast to the Mediterranean Diet, those promoting the Michoacán Paradigm seek to root one single Mexican culinary tradition in pre-Hispanic food choices, hence privileging the presence of the triad consisting of corn, beans, and chili peppers. In what follows I take these recognitions of the *Michoacan Paradigm* and the *Mediterranean Diet* as part of a general cultural context and focus on its effects on the creativity and innovation of chefs and cooks in both Mérida and Seville.

5 Creativity and Innovation in Seville and Mérida

The growth of Seville in Andalusia and Mérida in Yucatán, due to both an increase in the local population and the diversity of immigrants, plus the increasing number of tourists that arrive every year, play an important part in the expansion and diversification of translocal foodscapes. Here I focus my attention on some transformations in both cities that I find relate to the added value accorded by the inclusion of the Mediterranean Diet and the Michoacán Paradigm in the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Seville. Europe in general—and Spain in particular—is currently seen as an important space for creativity and innovation in restaurant kitchens. The gastronomic reputation of the Basque country, Catalunya, and Galicia also serves now as an umbrella for Andalusian restaurants, particularly in the larger cities. Many restaurant chefs have appropriated the aesthetics of modernist cuisine, especially in the minimalism and elegance of the small portions presented on their plates (Fig. 2). Inspired by molecular gastronomy, in some restaurants, foams, mousses, and spheres make an appearance, adorning the food and surprising the palates of the clients. Others have adopted the principles of classic fusion food; that is, the marriage of Asian and Latin–Asian flavors with European ingredients and techniques. *Ceviches* with rice vinegar, tuna tartar with soy sauce; *leche de tigre* (tiger's milk—a white sauce made with fish, onion, garlic, cilantro, ginger, and lime juice) are Peruvian-Asian influences in some Seville restaurants. Other restaurateurs draw from "traditional" recipes, although they renew the aesthetics of presentation, and may on occasion add flavors from other cuisines. Finally, another set of restaurants have chosen to bank on the simplicity and the reputation of "traditional" Andalusian cuisine. In these local urban restaurants, bars, and *abacerías*, the owners, managers, and chefs stress the freshness, seasonality, and localness of the ingredients. I was particularly surprised, therefore, that even in high-end restaurants, when we ordered anchovies, boquerones, or *ventresca de atún* (tuna belly), what arrived at the table were often plates of preserved fish, in either

Fig. 2 Serving of Hake at the restaurant El ConTenedor, Seville (2019, photographed by the author)

oil or vinegar. I once asked at a high-end restaurant why it was that we were getting preserved rather than fresh food, and the waiter appeared confused and unable to respond. His gestures were meant to convey "this is how we eat this food!" On their websites the canning companies proudly merchandise what they define as "artisanal" products, albeit packaged in cans and glass containers, claiming that their products are free of chemical preservatives and the usual chemicals that make aluminum cans a health hazard. In restaurants this practice was restricted to a few dishes, and we did not find any restaurants in Seville specializing in canned products. However, we found this to be a "creative" development that the chefs at Lisbon's *Can the Can* introduced to affirm the potential of preserved and processed foods to render gourmet, haute cuisine recipes by relying exclusively on good quality preserved and canned ingredients.

While walking in the downtown area, where most tourists stay and stroll around, I only found one restaurant that announced their food as deriving from, and upholding the values of, the Mediterranean Diet—although looking at the menu posted in their window, they seemed to offer the same food as other restaurants in the area. In my interviews and conversations with *Sevillanos* and *Sevillanas*, and with restaurant owners and chefs, they did not mention the virtues of the Mediterranean Diet. When I asked, they did not follow up on the topic in our conversation. This seems to suggest that, in effect, "Mediterranean diet" is an *etic,* as opposed to an *emic* denomination. The name is a meaningless designation for local people, although it may possess great symbolic value for the gastronomic tourist.

How have restaurant owners and chefs affirmed and indexed "creativity" in Seville? One young restaurant owner, whose family has been in the restaurant business for two generations, acquired a building close to the *Maestranza* opera house. He sought to attract customers firstly through the "modern" décor of his restaurant. Elegantly and casually furnished, it resembled the small, fancy bars of New York or London, with dimmed lights, shelves stacked with wines on the walls, an elegant wooden bar, a *barista* in charge of drinks and cocktails, casually dressed but elegant waiters, and a short menu with local dishes presented according to modernist aesthetics (small portions, minimalist presentation. See Fig. 3). His success allowed him to expand and buy an adjacent house that he decorated in the style of the "traditional" restaurants of the city. Here, with candles on the tables, wooden furniture, and a cozy environment, commensals can find some privacy and good quality food. Both restaurant and bar share the same kitchen, so they serve the same food in both places, but, while at the corner bar the ambience is rather informal with tall tables and seats, the full restaurant feels homier and more "traditional".

Setting is important for defining the novelty and creativity of restaurateurs. Restaurants like *Eslava*, *Petit Comite*, *La Azotea*, *Lobo López*, and *Oriza*, serve foods that correspond to the modernist aesthetics already described. They are decorated with contemporary chairs and tables, lights, and bars well supplied with gin, scotch whiskies, rums, vodkas, and wines. Most of them seek a younger, more affluent clientele who can afford their prices. Others emphasize their "traditionalism." *El rinconcillo,* for example, occupies an old house and claims to be the oldest restaurant in the city, dating its origin to 1670, and restricting its menu to exclusively

Fig. 3 Modernist Aesthetics at the restaurant Petit Comité, Seville (2019, photographed by the author)

"traditional" dishes. *Otaola* is located in a section of a small, declining market that the restaurateurs have purchased, decorated, and fitted with air conditioning. They serve foods inspired by Basque and Galicia cuisines (the owners' regions of origin), specializing in various rice recipes, as well as fish and seafood, for which they charge a rather high price.

On the streets near and around the *Alcazar* (the city's ancient Muslim fort) the tourist can find in the many restaurants surrounding it menus that include Spanish potato tortillas, paellas, gazpacho, and other stereotypical Spanish tapas and food. These are often inexpensive restaurants where the tourist gets the food on the table quickly, quenches his or her thirst with a *caña* (glass) of cold draft, industrially produced beer, or orders cheap wines mixed into *sangrías* or *tinto de verano* (red wine with lime soda and ice). Some seek to innovate on old, established dishes. For example, on San Fernando Street there are fourteen restaurants within a stretch of about 200 m. Among them, one that recently opened serves "traditional" recipes with some additional "modern" twists. For example, on *huevos rotos*, which usually consists of fried eggs served on top of fried potatoes, this restaurant's chef adds minced black truffles (and truffle oil). In this area of the city, gazpachos are safe for tourists who are in no desire for unexpected variations or unpleasant surprises. In general, the food at bars and small restaurants is influenced by the seafood and fish culinary taste of Malaga and Cadiz, on the southern coast of Spain. Some friends insist that this food is "traditional" in Seville, while other local friends say that the traditional food of the region consists of *guisados* and *caldos* (stews and broths with abundant chick peas, lentils, and sausages). In fact, restaurants that offered limited menus including rabbit, lamb, pork loin, sausages, and different pork cuts, were

someway off from the very touristy area. A restaurant owner-cook once told me something that might be true of Seville in general: "Some years ago, everything was soy sauce, *leche de tigre*… those things. I got bored of them. Now I only want to cook the traditional food of the region." In most restaurants, menus list the usual regional dishes, but highlight that they are cooked using ingredients exclusively from the region, while changing the plate's aesthetics. The challenge these chefs and restaurant owners face is how to reinterpret local foods in ways that are meaningful for the local clientele.

Mérida. In Yucatán the inclusion of the Michoacán Paradigm in the UNESCO list has had a more evident impact. One of the leaders of the Conservatory of Mexican Gastronomic Cultures visited Yucatán looking for recipes with corn, beans, and chili peppers. He found some of them and declared that Yucatecan is Mexican food. There are now websites which establish an equivalence between a local dish, *papadzules*, and enchiladas. This redefinition has allowed cooks of one relatively new and popular restaurant among tourists to prepare the local dish with cream, an ingredient one may expect in enchiladas, but which has never before been used in papadzules, thus "innovating" the recipe in ways pleasing to central Mexican tourists, but alien to local consumers (Ayora-Diaz 2020).

A well-established restaurant, *Los Almendros*, founded in the town of Ticul, moved to Mérida in 1962. Facing recent stiff competition from a growing number of restaurants claiming to cook regional food, the manager has finally decided to "innovate", offering trays with samples of different meals, as well as small portions of *botanas* (tapas-style small plates of local foods). A former manager of the restaurant (now deceased) used to dismiss this practice as "cantina food." Now it is common to see these trays on this restaurant's tables, satisfying the desires of domestic and foreign tourists willing to try as many recipes as possible during the short time of their visit.

It seems to me that the preservation of the taste of Yucatecan food is more important to older Yucatecans. Younger generations grew up in a city with an increasing availability of varied national and international foods. They have gradually lost their attachment to Yucatecan food, and do not pay as much attention to the taste of their meals. In view of this change, a new restaurant called *Las Yuyas* opened in 2016 on the east side of Mérida. The chef who helped the owner to develop the menu is a Yucatecan who previously worked at high-end restaurants in California. The owner requested a Yucatecan menu and the chef obliged, but they agreed that in order to appeal to the taste disposition of younger people, they had to introduce some changes to the recipes. They made them lighter, with modernist aesthetics of plate presentation, and emphasized the presence of ingredients that were formerly used in smaller amounts (such as *epazote* and whole roasted squash seeds), or that were not originally part of the recipe (Fig. 4). While it is true that some young people find these meals satisfying, I often hear older consumers complain about the presentation and the flavor of the food, saying that "it is not like it should be."

Some other restaurateurs claim to uphold traditional Yucatecan food—a cuisine they consider to be creole rather than indigenous—that combines local ingredients with those brought into the region from the Middle East, Asia, and Europe, as well as from the Caribbean. Their restaurants, which include *La Prospe*[*ridad*] *del X'tup*,

Fig. 4 Serving of Lomitos de Valladolid at the restaurant Las Yuyas. It is topped with epazote leaves, a local ingredient alien to the original recipe for this meal. Mérida (2018, photographed by the author)

Manjar Blanco, *La Jarana*, and *Principe Tutul Xiu*, seek to replicate the flavors of the past, even though some may change the presentation to something more in tune with what they understand as "modern" cuisine.

In more evident forms of innovation, if we shift our attention toward the regional scale of the foodscape, we find restaurants in some nearby towns, such as Motul, Tixkokob, and Baca, as well as a couple of restaurants in Mérida, which are involved in what I have termed retro-innovation. The *pib* is a pit which cooks fill with very hot rocks. Food trays wrapped in banana leaves are placed on them and covered with branches of aromatic wood. This procedure has been used for a long time to cook *cochinita pibil*, or to dry the meat of venison hunted in the fields, so that it can keep for a long time. Since this has been widely recognized as a "traditional" technology, a number of restaurants, such as *La Tradición* and the *Museo de la Gastronomía Yucateca* in Mérida, and *Pueblo Pibil* in Tixkokob, claim to cook all or most of their meals using this technology in a bid to highlight their adherence to "tradition", while omitting to mention the fact that many of those meals were not previously cooked in a *pib* (Fig. 5).

Thus far, only one restaurant of Yucatecan food, *Kuuk*, has adopted the principles of molecular cuisine, and they make it clear they do not have a kitchen but a "laboratory." Here they make foams, spheres, and mousses from the leaves of a local plant (*chaya*), as well as small edible spheres out of other ingredients (Fig. 6).

Their tasting menu lists Yucatecan food, but the techniques, technology, and ingredients used are rather alien to the established forms of cooking for Yucatecan recipes. Although the chef has recently been recognized as one of the ten best chefs in Mexico, local people find his prices too expensive for what they eat. Chaya is a humble plant, regardless of whether you make a foam with it. Local people do not believe it justifies the approximately 45 USD each individual must pay for the tasting menu. Furthermore, as far as I am aware only one restaurant, *Apoala*, has decided to make an incursion into fusion foods, blending the tastes of the regional foods of Oaxaca and Yucatán, but also using Asian tastes, such as *Leche de Tigre*, which is a fusion of Peruvian and Japanese flavors.

Fig. 5 Restaurant chefs taking Cochinita Pibil out of the pib at the restaurant MUGY. Mérida. (2019, photograph by the author)

Fig. 6 Plate of grouper at the restaurant Kuuk. Mérida. (2019, photographed by the author)

6 Conclusion: Translocal Foodscapes and Gastronomic Innovation

Both the food of Seville and Mérida are the product of translocal processes. These cities' cooks and chefs draw from the recipes and cooking traditions of smaller cities and towns around them and codify the culinary-gastronomic assemblage into recognizable codes that identify Andalusian and Yucatecan tastes. In both cases,

these traditions are the outcome of a long-lasting process of sedimentation, which includes culinary fractures and appropriations as the regions have been conquered by other cultures, and in contemporary society they have become the migration target for different groups of people. As domestic and global tourism becomes a force in the global–local gastronomic market, different individuals and groups in these societies have become mediators between global, local, and translocal influences. Some seek to create new cuisines, some to defend what they consider "traditional" and "authentic", while others seek to blend different gastronomic traditions. These changes help us understand the conceptual intercrossing of foodscape and translocality. Also, as argued in this paper, the UNESCO inclusion of the Michoacán Paradigm and Mediterranean Diet in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage has been turned into a branding strategy that justifies different changes as modes of "creativity" and "innovation."

Innovation and creativity are values and assets within the contemporary restaurant industry. Chefs desire to be creative and innovative, but at the same time, being creative is a social and cultural demand in the contemporary neoliberal economy. Those who refuse to be creative—to innovate—face the prospect of their business failing. Either forward-looking innovation, such as seeking to introduce technologies, procedures, ingredients that will provide the consumer with novel experiences, or retro-innovation, such as reinventing and re-signifying "traditional" recipes, lead the forms of self-representation among restaurant managers, owners and chefs.

In Yucatán and Andalusia, most local consumers of restaurant food look for known tastes, while tourists seek foods that will surprise them. Some expensive and exclusive local Yucatecan restaurants are seeking to introduce heirloom pork in their menu, but their small scale, specialized production renders it an expensive product, which most local restaurant clients are unwilling to pay for. Price often becomes a limiting factor on how much innovation (including retro-innovation) is possible, including everything from expensive ingredients to costly cooking technologies.

Finally, the expansion and fragmentation of the foodscape in its different scales is a product of the post-Fordist logic of production and consumption. It is the individual chef who must desire to innovate; it is the consumer who must also desire that what they eat is a new fashion. In the contemporary economy, food is not, and maybe it has never been, only nourishment. It is charged with sign values that are codified and re-signified in different contexts and at different times. In contemporary restaurants—and even in street food—combinations of "tradition" and "modernity" signify culinary practices as forms of creativity, innovation, and invention that add value to restaurant foods. In this translocal foodscape, cooks and chefs must be adept at introducing indexical markers into their menus that locate the food in global systems of value, including the recognition of local culinary practices as part of UNESCO's list of intangible heritage.

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Food and the Nation

The Tea Industry in Modern China and Public Demand for Tea

Jianping Guan

Abstract In the late nineteenth century, China experienced a great change from dominating the international tea market to losing it. A century later, although China never regained its past glory, it has made huge achievements in rebuilding its tea industry, and has become the world's largest tea exporter. By developing its tea industry, China aims to develop its economy and improve its people's living standards. Considering the special environmental conditions for tea planting, the tea industry has played a key role in implementing strategic economic development in poverty-stricken areas. All levels of the government are also playing a leading role in the efforts to develop the tea industry. Tea's popularity among urban consumers is closely related to the cultural demands of the Chinese people. In less than 30 years, the term "tea culture" has become a household term with the tea ceremony as its most representative product.

Keywords Tea culture · Festival economic activities · Tea industry

1 Introduction

As the inventor of tea, China dominated the world's tea market until the United Kingdom successfully transplanted Chinese tea trees into its colonies and hired Chinese technicians to produce tea. As the UK applied modern technologies and concepts to its tea production and business, China lost its tea monopoly.

Additionally, China's tea industry declined at an unimaginable rate. Dao Dechen, who has studied the economic history of tea in China, divided modern tea trade into four stages. In the development stage from 1840 to 1870, China dominated the world's tea market; in the peak stage from 1871 to 1890, China's tea exports started to decline, although 100,000 tons of tea were still exported annually; in the stage of rapid decline from 1891 to 1922, India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia surpassed China

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Table 1 Total tea exports from major tea-producing countries and their share of the world tea market (1,000 pounds)

	1891	1894	1898	1902	1906	1910	1914	1918	1922
China	233,337	248,308	205,147	202,561	187,217	208,106	199,439	53,895	76,810
	49.83%	48%	37.20%	32.76%	27.38%	27.74%	23.99%	7.57%	11.19%
India	108,028	127,325	152,346	183,711	236,090	256,439	302,557	326,646	294,700
	23.1%	24.6%	27.68%	29.70%	34.50%	34.05%	36.39%	45.87%	42.94%
Ceylon	67,721	85,367	122,396	150,830	170,527	182,070	193,584	181,068	1,718,081
	4.46%	16.50%	23.19%	24.39%	24.93%	24.26%	23.28%	25.43%	25.03%
Dutch East India	5,947	6,074	9,814	15,637	26,516	33,813	70,344	67,135	91,605
	1.27%	1.17%	1.77%	2.52%	3.87%	4.50%	8.46%	9.43%	13.34%

in tea exports; and from 1923 to 1949, despite early signs of recovery, China's tea industry ended in bankruptcy (Tao and Wang 1999, Table 1).

The recovery of the tea industry has played a role in developing the national economy. Since the late Qing dynasty, the Chinese government has sent students to Japan, Europe, and the US to study modern ideas and technologies. After returning to China, they applied their knowledge to the development of the tea industry and made some advancements. As the embodiment of China's economy, the tea industry's decline drew attention from all sectors. Zhu Wenjing from Yunnan, Wu Juenong from Zhejiang and Hu Haochuan from Anhui were sent to Japan. After returning, they further studied the state of the tea industry at home and abroad, and put forward a rejuvenation plan. In the meantime, they immediately started toiling on the front lines of tea production. In 1917, an experimental tea farm that used mechanical tea making was opened in Anhui, Hunan. In 1933, inspired by equipment used in other countries, Wu Junong led a team to come up with mechanical drawings for the procedures of steaming, frying, rubbing, and drying. Tea making equipment developed by Shanghai Universal Iron Works was used in experimental (improvement) farms in Anhui, Hunan, and Jiangxi provinces.

In addition to technical improvements, tea-producing provinces and municipalities introduced a new model of technical education to replace traditional apprenticeships. In 1909, a tea training workshop was established in the Yangloudong demonstration site in Hubei. In 1910, the director of the Sichuan administration of salt and tea opened a provincial tea training workshop in Guanxian county, which was relocated to Chengdu and renamed Sichuan Provincial Tea College with a three-year system. The Tea Discipline of Fudan University was the most famous among the various forms of tea education. The efforts to develop the tea industry yielded good results. Because of the contributions of tea experiment (improvement) sites across the country, China witnessed improvements in the quantity and quality of tea production. However, the outbreak of the Pacific War and the Chinese Civil War once again put the tea industry into a tight spot.

The history of the tea industry during the late Qing dynasty and the era of the Republic of China represents a mixture of glory and shame for the Chinese people. Currently, some tea specialists simply state, "Because of our glorious history, we surely have the capability to rejuvenate the tea industry." This belief is one of the spiritual motives for the rapid development of China's tea industry, although there is no such logical relationship between the ancient and modern tea industries.

2 Economic Reforms and the Tea Industry

After the wars, tea became an important foreign trade commodity in China, a country that was still behind in industrial technology. As a popular saying in the tea community went, "A representative of the tea industry must be present at any national economic conference composed of ten delegates." In papers summarizing tea consumption before the country reformed and opened up, researchers usually emphasize that the current ideology considered tea drinking part of a bourgeois way of life, which impeded greater tea consumption. Such a tendency did exist on the surface. However, the fundamental reason is that China, where productivity levels were low, followed the Soviet planned economy to prioritize the development of heavy industry. In other words, with limited production capability, the country failed to realize that production capacity should be developed to meet consumption needs. This is why the consumption of tea and other commodities was inhibited and the country could not rapidly increase domestic tea consumption. However, the goal of developing foreign tea trade was consistent. To obtain foreign exchange earnings, the country had to ensure the requirement of foreign trade. When domestic consumption increased, along with other commodities where supply failed to meet demand, tea was supplied with a coupon to ease the pressure. China failed to adjust the supply–demand relationship in an economic and price-oriented manner because of the nature of the planned economy. In fact, even during the Cultural Revolution, tea consumption slowly increased and was not banned like other "bourgeois" things.

In the 1980s, as the country transitioned from planned economy to market economy, tea, a non-necessity, was among the first products to be liberalized. In 1983, the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Finance submitted a report on tea production and marketing to the Secretariat of the Central Committee, Communist Party of China and the State Council. The report argued that China's tea production had increased by a large margin for successive years from 1978. However, inventory increased as exports failed to catch up with production. Therefore, the report said, while striving to increase exports, the country should shift its focus to expanding domestic sales. It also put forward suggestions in terms of tea variety, open markets, tax adjustments, further increase in exports, and comprehensive utilization. With the improvement in socio-economic conditions, tea, a popular and traditional luxury consumer good, was among the first to take off. As tea demand gradually increased, production and consumption complemented each other. As domestic consumption increased, exports also surged. According to customs statistics, China exported

204,600 tons of tea in 1989, reaching the highest level in history and making it the world's second largest exporter of tea. However, from 1994 there was a significant decline in tea production, putting both production and operations in a tight spot. In December 1996, the "Report on Improving the Management of Tea Export and Promoting the Development of Tea Production" by the State Economic and Trade Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, the Ministry of Domestic Trade, All of China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives and the Ministry of Agriculture was approved by the State Council. The State Council called for improving the planned quota management of tea exports. The improvements were as follows: tea export operations and management should be adjusted, unified joint operations of black tea export should be suspended, some limits on export management of green tea should be removed, the management and coordination of tea exports should be monitored by the China Chamber of Commerce of I/E of Foodstuffs, Native Products and Animal By-products (CFNA), quality management of tea to be exported should be strengthened, designated ports should be established for unified handling of commodity inspection, and customs supervision should be strengthened to combat tea smuggling. In 2006, China's tea output exceeded 1 million tons, making it the largest tea producer in the world. In the same year, the country canceled quota management of tea exports and fully liberalized the right to operate tea exports. Against this background, China's tea export sector entered a stage of civil war. Enterprises competed against each other by cutting prices to gain market share overseas, thus leading to a reduction in export profits. The quality standard for tea in the domestic market was different from that in international markets, where low-end tea with limited profit was the mainstream. As a result, the profit gap between domestic and foreign markets widened. Rising tea prices in the domestic market were not only attributed to overall inflation, but also the fact that tea was recognized as a luxury good. Besides, tea culture played an important role in changing the public perception of tea.

3 Rise and Significance of Tea Culture

Luxury consumption is strongly associated with cultural imprinting. Tea is a traditional Chinese luxury, which makes it easier for Chinese people to accept. Tea is also a household word, which makes it harder to be linked with the expensive nature of luxury. This is why consumers refuse to recognize it as a luxury. The idea of tea as a luxury is strongly influenced by the way in which tea culture is promoted.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, many books on tea appeared in China, but the majority of them were strictly technical. In the 1980s, a large number of Chinese books on tea use, culture, and history emerged, including Chen Binfan's *New Chapter on Tea Classics* (Chen 1980, the author trans.), Zhuang Wanfang et al.'s *Free Talk of Tea* (Zhuang 1981, the author trans.), and Zhang Fangci et al.'s *Simple Explanation of Tea Classics* (Zhang 1981, the author trans.). Tea culture comes from consumption. The rising trend of tea culture is reflected in the exquisite tea

set. China's white liquor (*baijiu*), also a luxury, is easy to consume. In contrast, as a semi-finished product, tea consumption requires hot water and the appropriate utensils. The quality of the tea essentially depends on how and when the hot water is combined with the tea leaves. Tea consumers have to work hard to choose the right utensils. The simple demand for tea quality thus becomes a starting point for the rise of tea culture.

The demand for tea culture coincided with the "culture craze" in the 1980s. The campaign was based on two thoughts: one was criticizing traditional Chinese thoughts and culture, and the other was learning from advanced Western thoughts and culture. Many ideological and cultural factions and groups emerged in the culture craze. Criticizing and negating traditional culture was the mainstream practice. For example, the Academy of Chinese Culture aimed to restore and popularize traditional Chinese culture and introduce the viewpoints of modern Neo-Confucianism. These visionary and fundamental groups' importance and influence became more visible after the 1990s. From the 1980s to the 1990s, Chinese society experienced a sharp transformation. In this process, ideological culture was also transformed, in particular from humanistic qualities to social sciences. These complex changes, whose ideological essence deserves further study, reaffirmed traditional Chinese culture in terms of form and carrier. With economic success, the country called for cultural confidence. Against such a backdrop, tea culture was widely supported.

When commenting on the short-lived culture craze in the 1980s, Xu Youyu from the CASS (The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) Institute of Philosophy made a pertinent evaluation.

> The exploration and construction of ideology and culture since the 1990s is a long and continuous process. The ideological and cultural landscape in the 1990s is quite different from the culture craze in the 1980s. Political philosophy has replaced aesthetics as an everlasting hot spot. People talk about civil society rather than the poetic dwelling claimed by Martin Heidegger, the difference between British and American traditions and German and French traditions rather than the difference between Blue Civilization and Yellow Civilization, and the conflict between positive liberty and negative liberty rather than the difference between id and ego. The powerful cultural heroes give way to lawyers, journalists, and NGO volunteers dedicated to human rights and poverty reduction. Cultural idealists have a sense of reality. In the 1980s, they wholeheartedly supported reformists within the party. In the 1990s, they called for the ruling party to commit to the reform of the political system. They failed in the 1980s. This might be true now. However, people are smarter because they focus more on reality and never get disappointed. Although society is destroyed and harmed, it is still alive with new vitality and cannot be destroyed. The future of China lies in the growth and development of society (Xu n.d. the author trans.).[1]

The development of tea culture shows that cultural development in the 1990s was vulgarized. However, vulgarization came with popularity, which was in essence the modernization of ancient culture and actualization of cultural dreams. Perhaps the cultural construction in the 1990s misunderstood the culture craze in the 1980s. The culture craze unexpectedly encouraged the development of tea culture. The simple

[1] Xu Youyu, *Culture Craze in the 1980s: Mainstream Thoughts and Their Transcendence*, https://wenku.baidu.com/view/d29bd860fc4ffe473268ab75.html. Accessed 31 August 2019.

cultural demand was essentially the result of a loose political environment and basic food guarantee. There was no more than a vague sense of what tea culture is.

4 Role of China International Tea Culture Institute (CITCI)

From the 1980s, numerous Chinese books on tea started to emerge, including agricultural historian Zhu Zizhen's Selection of Chinese Tea Historical Data and Compilation of Lost Works of Chinese Tea Historical Data (Zhu 1981, 1991, the author trans.), tea scholar Chen Chuan's General History of Tea Industry (Chen 1984, the author trans.), Wu Juenong's Comments on Tea Classics and Selection of Tea Historical Data in Chinese Local Chronicles (Wu 1987, 1990, the author trans.), and historian Liu Zhaorui's The Art of Drinking Tea in Ancient China (Liu 1987, the author trans.). Despite being less academic, these works represented the first attempt to look at tea culture from the perspective of cultural history. They demonstrated that tea culture had drawn attention from the academia.

In 1990, an international symposium on tea culture was held in Hangzhou. In response to participants' calls for follow-up research, a social organization on tea study, later known as CITCI (China International Tea Culture Institute), was planned. With the establishment of CITCI, the conference was later recognized as the first China International Symposium on Tea Culture. CITCI has become the most important tea culture society in China. Tea culture seminars were set up in provinces, cities, counties, and districts. The province of Zhejiang has become especially famous for its professional tea events. Tea culture was widely accepted as a special term.

The establishment of CITCI was almost simultaneous with the emergence of tea culture as a concept. Government officials with cultural aspirations, including the institute's first president Wang Jiayang, played a decisive role in the rapid emergence of Chinese tea culture research. The institute is mainly composed of retired government officials and is supported by tea professionals who organize the planning and implementation of specific tasks.

The establishment of the institute symbolized the emergence of organized study on tea culture in China. The biennial symposium, now in its 15th event, normally publishes a collection of works. However, the initial stage of tea culture research is still characterized as tea science, which is a third level discipline of horticulture under agronomy, restricting the academic research on tea culture (Guan 2001). The institute, which has cultural demand, lacks academic consciousness. In addition, the policy "*Wenhua datai jingji changxi* (Developing economy on the cultural basis)" makes culture nothing more than a means for developing the economy. Most members of the institute argue that its main task is to sell more tea through tea culture promotion events. Therefore, the previous symposiums, including tea culture activities around the country, were in essence economic festivals, intending to promote tea consumption.

Such the festival economy is one of the required intangible assets. Specifically, a region or an industry works with the administrative department, or administrative and professional associations as well as cultural, art, and public communities to create unique historical culture, folk customs, natural and humanistic landscape, characteristic industries and production and operation activities within a specific space–time range. These new or traditional festivals are designed to increase the flow of people, logistics, information, capital, technology, and projects conducive to local social and economic development by tens or hundreds of times, so as to promote the product or the development of the industry or region by hundreds or thousands of times (Ji 2003: 57).

Festival economic activities are characterized by economy, popularity, innovation, locality, leisure, and sustainability. It is an undisputed fact that the recent 30 years have seen a significant increase in tea price and per capita consumption of tea, although there is a lack of reporting on the economic effect of tea culture activities represented by the institute (Ji 2003: 57). By hosting the international symposium on tea culture, the CITCI has managed to promote tea-centered festival economic activities across the country. However, the institute's tea culture research has gone from bad to worse, which is closely associated with its transformation.

The past three decades have witnessed the transition of the institute's president from cultural official to technical official. The government administrative functions of the institute have been strengthened. Experienced retired officials at all levels continue to undertake various specific tasks in planning and promoting the development of the tea industry. With the increasing economic benefits of the tea industry, its social significance is fully revealed. The economic narrative has a stronger legitimacy and full confidence, so there was an attempt to "correct the name", trying to change the name of CITI to the Tea Culture Promotion Association, with a clear focus on industry.

5 From "*Wenhua datai jingji changxi*" to Poverty Alleviation Project

"Wenhua datai jingji changxi" has been the consensus of all sectors of Chinese society since the end of the 1980s and the consistent commitment of the institute. The initial focus was placed on using the culture to set the stage. After more than twenty years of research, no one could answer the question of how much in terms of economic benefits was brought by the cultural research. There are few impressive results from tea culture, except for rising tea prices and booming tea trade. As visible economic progress is there for all to see, there is no need to pursue cultural research. As a matter of fact, under the guidance of the policy of *"Wenhua datai jingji changxi"* to put on the show, tea culture research was mainly undertaken by tea professionals. Academia generally looked down on life and culture research, so the few scholars who actively participated in tea culture research failed to gain academic support. Thus,

researchers often attended symposiums on tea culture simply for publicity. When it comes to tea culture research, strictly trained scholars always replace information and data with experience and values. Instead, the majority of alternative tea culture researchers, in turn, aim to become leaders of the tea people, who approach culture with a religious sensibility and hold scholars as godfathers. This is why tea culture research gets nowhere. Research conforming to academic norms was considered something personal, which has nothing to do with society and the development of the tea economy. This is why the institute intends to change its name to the China Tea Culture Promotion Association. The new name will not only justify the target of promoting tea consumption and tea industry economy and related efforts, but also create enabling conditions for the establishment of an academic organization on tea culture research to provide opportunities for the development of standardized academic research on tea culture.

The institute's achievements in developing the tea economy are also attributed to the fact that its vision is consistent with national policy. The primary task of reform and opening up is to develop the economy and improve people's living standards. Since 1983, the Chinese government has invested more resources in economic development in poor areas, while continuing to support poor households in developing production. With the support of relevant government departments, organs, and organizations, once poverty-stricken areas have risen from poverty and achieved prosperity by taking full advantage of local benefits, tapping the potential of resources, opening up production channels, pursuing a diversified economy, and enhancing self-development capacity. The process of strengthening the poverty alleviation policy is consistent with the development of the tea economy. "The Schematic Map of Modern Tea Districts in China" (Chen 1992) shows that tea-producing areas are mostly located in inland mountainous regions where the development of industry and agriculture is limited. Because mountainous areas contribute to the growth of tea trees, the tea industry has become the most attractive traditional industry in such regions. One of the successful examples is Anxi County, Quanzhou City, Fujian Province, a producing place of the Tie Guanyin variety of oolong tea.

In 1985, the per capita industrial and agricultural output of Anxi County was 277 RMB, and farmers' per capita net income was 270 RMB. About 313,700 of the residents lived in poverty, accounting for 39.6% of the total population. It was the largest national poverty-stricken county in Fujian Province. In terms of the natural environment, Anxi has 2,461 mountains with a height of more than 1,000 m.

By 2011, the total area of tea plantations in Anxi County was 600,000 mu (about 400 square kilometers). The annual output of tea was 65,000 tons, contributing 9.2 billion RMB to the total output. Tea revenue was 5,340 RMB, accounting for 56% of farmers' per capita net income of 9,541 RMB. Anxi ranked number one across the country in terms of its total area of county-level tea plantations, total annual output of tea, total output value of tea, number of tea workers, estimated number of beneficiaries, and proportion of tea income of farmers (Chen 2012). This shows how important the tea industry is to Anxi.

By 2013, thanks to the successful strategy of eliminating poverty through tea, Anxi was among China's top 100 counties. In 2014, Anxi ranked number 71 among

China's top 100 counties and cities regarding comprehensive strength in small and medium-sized cities and number 33 concerning investment potential among top 100 cities and counties in small and medium-sized cities. By 2014, Anxi County's GDP increased 10.6% to 41.019 billion yuan, exceeding the 40 billion RMB milestone for the first time. In light of environmental considerations and industrial safety, poor villages and poor households in Anxi are encouraged to switch to diversity agriculture by developing projects for Chinese yams, ginger, maize, oil-tea camellia, water oats, flowers and plants, tea plantation reconstruction, black chicken, goats, and rabbits.

In 1981, the government of Anji County, Zhejiang Province introduced white tea and helped poor local villagers experiment with it through subsidies, technical introductions, and skill training. The efforts to spread and develop the white tea industry yielded results. About 90% of the families in Huangdu Village, Xilong Town are now engaged in the cultivation, processing, and marketing of white tea. The village is home to a national ecological white tea base and owns 1500 mu of organic tea plantation.

In 2018, villagers of Huangdu Village donated 15 million white tea seedlings to help poor households in the recipient areas. White tea planting experts were sent to teach planting and management techniques to poor families. Following the principle of commitment to harvest and poverty alleviation, they help the poor households handle plantation and marketing. The State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development asked an association called Social Participation in Poverty Alleviation and Development of China to coordinate the work through public solicitation. As an "Internet+" platform for social poverty alleviation under the guidance of the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, Social Participation in Poverty Alleviation and Development of China's mission is to encourage all sectors of society to help alleviate poverty. Upon receiving instructions, it immediately released its first Special Notice and undertook registration, announcement, coverage, and follow-up support and coordination as its official online platform. On October 18, white tea seedlings were delivered to recipient areas, including Qingchuan County in Sichuan Province and Pu'an County in Guizhou Province. Guizhou is the fastest growing province for the tea industry in China. It is an inland province with many plateaus and mountains. Mountains and hills account for 92.5% of the total area. Known as a place of rich mountains and scarce water and farmland, it is the only province in the country that does not rely on plains. Tea has thus become an important project to develop Guizhou's local economy.

Against this background, by replacing its name with tea culture promotion association, the institute aims to clarify the orientation of its work. Since its inception nearly 30 years ago, the institute has played an important role as an organizer, promoter, and planner in the successful development of the tea economy. In particular, the contribution of President Zhou Guofu, a retired government official in charge of the agricultural economy, cannot be left unrecognized. Except for the foiling atmosphere, tea culture research by tea professionals has yielded no substantial academic work. In terms of publicity, the tea ceremony is much more effective than "chicken soup" speeches by tea specialists.

6 Tea Ceremony

From April to May 1981, the company China Tuhsu organized the first China Tea Expos in five Japanese cities: Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Sendai, and Hokkaido. The main exhibits included nearly 200 varieties of tea, including Oolong, Pu'er tea, and scented tea. Various kinds of tea were made on site for consumers to drink. Other exhibits included Luyu's Tea Classics, tea sets from the Ming and Qing Dynasties, and tea poetry and tea paintings by ancient masters and modern celebrities, which aroused great interest from visitors.

This was a unique form of marketing. Before the appearance of the concept of "tea culture," the tea industry instinctively felt the significance of culture for the tea industry. At the start-up stage of the tea economy, tea culture was constantly mentioned, giving the impression that culture is the "natural ally" of tea. Interestingly, 30 years of research fails to prove how much profit tea culture research has brought for the tea industry. The tea industry, with its industrial self-confidence, has lost confidence and patience in the study of tea culture. In the tea industry, the tea ceremony is often regarded as being synonymous with tea culture, since the tea ceremony is the most sizable and operable product of modern tea culture. In all kinds of festival economic activities involving tea, the tea ceremony has become the most common and acceptable program with rich cultural significance, which embodies the dream of Chinese tea professionals for beauty.

In the 1970s, the tea ceremony emerged in Taiwan. The tea ceremony is a tea drinking method modeled on Kungfu tea, which goes into selecting the ingredients, roasting it, storing it and brewing it. Its basic elements are the same as those of *chanoyu*, or the Japanese tea ceremony. In the late 1980s, the tea ceremony was introduced to the mainland, becoming much more popular than in its birthplace. Unlike Taiwan, the mainland has a long tradition of tea drinking and conveys the impression that tea drinking is a refined culture. As the economy has gradually recovered, tea consumption in the mainland has spread rapidly. The most famous and common type of tea drinking, Beijing Big Bowl Tea, was the basic form of folk tea drinking. Upon its introduction, the tea ceremony immediately captured consumers' hearts with its cultural nature, and was quickly adapted to the local situation. In 1996, "*chayishi*", tea master, was included in the occupational classification system released by the Ministry of Labor, making it a recognized type of work. This led to a boom in vocational training.

In 2002, the Ministry of Labor approved the implementation of the occupational standard for tea master. The Shanghai Labor Bureau asked the Shanghai Tea Science Society to establish an occupational tea training center. In a response to the training plan submitted by the Shanghai Tea Science Society, the bureau stated that the plan lacked technical content. The Society's representative argued that the center's mission was to teach culture, which left the relevant officials speechless. The reason was that there was too big a difference in thinking between the Labour Bureau and the Tea Science Society. The plan was adopted in August 2004.

The Shanghai Tea Occupational Training Center was located in the most attractive place in the bureau's training building, making its atmosphere elegant, simple, and rich with cultural ambience. In the same building, there are various training centers for photographers, bartenders, and other professions. Participants in tea master training are special because some of them are full-time housewives who drive their own cars to attend the training. The tea master training was subsidized by government funding and was designed to provide occupational training for the unemployed seeking job opportunities. The training was attended by socially vulnerable groups, including unemployed women over 40 years old and unemployed men over 50 years old. As owning a car was a sign of wealth at the time, the participation of women with their own cars ran against the original mission of the training. They participated in the training just for fun and education, which signifies that tea master training includes rich cultural elements. As the protagonist of economic festivals, the tea ceremony is also characterized by economy, popularity, innovation, locality, leisure, and sustainability. In other words, the tea ceremony is a form of mass culture. Obviously, this property is not the goal of government training, nor the appeal of the "elite" class. Some even asked why the government spent so much taxpayer money on training tea enthusiasts rather than professionals. In 2018, a motion was proposed to cancel government funding for tea master training, but it did not pass. The tea ceremony community struggled to substantiate the tea ceremony. Some progressive tea professionals even separated tea learning from government training, and explored it as a niche culture. Interestingly, they started to learn *chanoyu*.

7 Conclusion

Tea is a traditional Chinese beverage. Chinese people believe that tea is the healthiest and safest drink in the world. Those who have the appropriate economic status and social experience will choose tea as their beverage. As citizens of an ancient civilization, Chinese people yearn strongly for culture. Today's situation of having a cultural story of history without a cultural product of reality reinforces the Chinese people's desire for culture.

The history of the modern Chinese economy merging into the world economy is very short. In terms of philosophy and method, China is far different from the West. Most of the tea enterprises in China are small. Developing the tea industry is often the last choice for economically backward areas. The tea industry was not well planned at the beginning. However, the modern tea industry has been built up with great success. Today, with a certain amount of accumulation, one should be prepared for danger in times of peace and take stock of the lessons learned from the modern tea industry, especially in the comparison with the West to identify China's problems and summarize China's experience.

The past success gives today's tea industry confidence in its development. We should also draw lessons from past failures to avoid repeating the same mistakes. At the peak of the tea industry in the late Qing dynasty, a grim analysis emerged.

On June 19, 1872, the eleventh year of the Tongzhi Reign in the Qing Dynasty, the newspaper *Shen Bao* warned against China's tea industry in an article on Indian tea production:

India studies tea planting technology. The procedures of planting, collecting, and baking are well controlled. The tea is extremely lush and has a good aroma. India's tea exports are estimated to be 18 million pounds. China's tea exports were 150 million pounds last year. Although India exports less tea than China does, its tea production was started just a few years ago. Who knows how much it will produce in the future? It is true that where there's a will, there is a way.

History has proved that this analysis was very accurate and forward-looking, but it was completely ignored by the Chinese tea industry at that time. Lack of criticism is probably the most dangerous aspect of the tea industry in modern China. Today's enthusiasm for the development of the tea industry needs to be examined on the basis of rationality.

Tea not only supports local economies, but also embodies the Chinese people's pursuit of culture. Academic research is one of the prerequisites for cultural development. Research involves undergoing strict academic training and complying with academic standards. Promotion is a method of publicizing academic achievements. Cultural promotion cannot replace academic research. Academic research cannot replace the efforts of the tea industry. It is a problem for government and industry in demanding direct academic and cultural delivery, and the transformation of academic results and cultural theories into products requires the efforts of industry itself.

Compared with tea consumption, it is more difficult to realize the consumption of tea culture. Modern China's understanding of culture mainly comes from the fictional mirage created by the poetry of the Tang and Song Dynasties, Thirteen Classics, and other ancient Chinese classics, but it lacks real-life experience. Early advocates of tea culture, represented by Wang Jiayang, the first president of CITCI, aimed to add a cultural dimension to life through tea. This belief was supported by society, although there was a major difference in understanding. The belief and confidence not only came from the classics, but was also supported by the successful experience of *chanoyu*. This is why they were so committed to the tea ceremony. The tea ceremony is the Chinese version of *chanoyu*. However, the tea ceremony was neither artistic nor popular. In the beginning, no one was eager to criticize the tea ceremony because it did make sense for something so new to succeed overnight. Those who watched tea ceremony performance gradually get sick of the tea ceremony and tea culture, and argue that tea culture is just a by-product of tea ceremony and tea.

In fact, such an awkward situation comes from Chinese people's misunderstanding of *chanoyu*. First, the Chinese think that the Japanese drink tea through *chanoyu*, and thus believe that Japanese tea life is full of culture. Little do we know about *sencha*, *bancha*, and barley tea. Secondly, the modern Chinese tea culture models Japanese tea culture to build the tea ceremony, the Chinese version of *chanoyu*, but is unwilling to learn *chanoyu* thoroughly due to its strong self-esteem, making the tea ceremony. Thirdly, China underestimated the difficulty of creating tea culture products, lacked professionalism, and could not build or even learn tea culture. Fourthly, as there is no research and no real requirements, consumers do not know what they need, and

producers do not know what to produce. However, the modern Chinese tea industry is embarking on an audacious journey. Because of their different values, many tea masters have pursued different paths and created their own versions of tea ceremony according to their understanding. Of course, it will take time for China to have mature tea culture elements like *chanoyu*. Do remember that it took Japan at least 300 years to digest Chinese tea culture and create *chanoyu*.

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On the Formation of Chinese National Cuisine: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives

Haruhiko Nishizawa

Abstract It is surely beyond dispute that "Chinese cuisine" has the form of a unique "ethnic" or "national cuisine" with a single system. Given that this is the case, when and how did the concept of "Chinese cuisine" first become established? In order to address these big questions, this paper will first identify Chinese cuisine's systematic characteristics, before examining the historical development of Chinese cuisine, as well as the formation process of regional cuisine, also known as "*Sida caixi*" (China's four major styles of cooking) or "*Bada caixi*"(China's eight major styles of cooking). Looking at the history of terms and concepts such as "*Zhongguo cai*" and "*zhongcan*", I will explain how Chinese cuisine was first born at the end of the Qing dynasty. By comparing it to other national cuisines, I would also like to discuss the specific Chinese characteristics demonstrated in its formation process. Based on the notion that cuisine is something that is constantly evolving, I will look at the kind of changes we can expect "Chinese cuisine" to undergo in the future. Finally, I would like to touch on some new developments in "Chinese cuisine" that there have been in recent years.

Keywords Chinese cuisine · National cuisine · Regional cuisine

1 Introduction

Few would argue with the notion that Chinese food makes up a type of national or ethnic cuisine. The Chinese themselves are well aware of this, and the perception of Chinese restaurants abroad backs this up. The question is, how did Chinese food come into its current form as a national cuisine? This has always been a big question, and the goal of this essay is to present several issues encountered when approaching the question itself.[1]

[1] For more on the debate about "national cuisine", please refer to *Kokuminryori no Keisei*, edited by the author (Nishizawa 2019a, b).

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2 The Historical Development of Chinese Food

To debate the position of Chinese food as a "national cuisine", we must first fully understand the history of its development. As one might expect from a such a vast country with such a lengthy history, its cuisine has absorbed the traits of many regions and taken a long time to develop into the form it takes today. Behind the world-famous Chinese cuisine are the many long-standing Chinese cultures that have nurtured it. The history of Chinese cuisine can be seen to change according to China's socio-economic developments.[2] Thus, the Han, Tang, and Song dynasties are thought to be the most important periods in its development. Firstly, during the Han dynasty, fermentation techniques were applied to soybeans to create *douchi* and other such processed flavorings. Further, by importing flour-making techniques from western Asia, sticky grain products (flour kneaded and heated into disk shapes) and noodles became widespread. These developments in wheat and soy use are referred to by some researchers as the "quiet food revolution".

During the Tang and Song dynasties, northern China moved from its staple foods of millet variants to rice and wheat. As hunting declined, so too did the consumption of wild animals, while geographical expansions of territory broadened the variety of vegetables (cucumbers, onions, peas, spinach, etc.), fruit (peaches, grapes, pomegranates, etc.), and spices (sesame, pepper, garlic, etc.) available to people. Preservation techniques were developed, which prompted the introduction of dairy products, and the habit of drinking tea as well as a variety of alcoholic drinks (brought on by the arrival of distillation technology) grew and expanded (Nishizawa 1985; 1988; 2001). Vegetarianism as a health measure was first conceived during the Tang dynasty. Behind the Chinese attitude toward food is the notion that food is medicine; Chinese food therapy is the embodiment of this idea. Thus, there are many historical recipe books and texts on herbal medicine in China today. As far as cooking techniques are concerned, the spread of ironworks and improvements to hearths during this era gave rise to the iron *caiguo* (known in English as a wok and in Japan as a Chinese pan).[3] This resulted in the addition of stir-fries and fried foods to what previously mostly consisted of boiled or stewed foods, such as *geng*. The development of cities and transport of goods during the Song dynasty also created restaurants and other food service industries, which in turn helped to form a refined cooking style in each region. Further, during the Song dynasty, folding chairs from West Asia (which were called *huchuang*) led to the habit of sitting on chairs. This prompted a move from the old system, where each person would sit at their own small table, to a new system where everyone would sit around a single table to eat, as is still the custom today.

Later, during the Ming dynasty, the adoption of fast-growing Champa rice from Vietnam made two harvests a year possible, supporting the explosive population

[2] Authoritative sources on the history of Chinese cooking include Osamu Shinoda (1974, 1987), Takashi Nakamura (2000, 2004), and Chang (1977). The points below are based on their research. I have also written reviews (1980, 1984) on the works of Chang (1977).

[3] For more on Chinese cai guo, please refer to the previous publications (Nishizawa 2011a).

growth of the Ming and Qing dynasties. Additionally, crops from the new world such as corn, sweet potato, peanuts, and chili peppers were introduced. This liberal attitude toward foreign foods, as well as the Chinese people's passion for cooking, can be said to have created the current wealth of variety in Chinese cuisine.

3 Development and Historical Geography of Chinese Cuisine

As demonstrated above, what we know as Chinese cuisine has grown through the assimilation of many ingredients and cooking methods from the surrounding regions with the expansion of Chinese territory.

In this sense Chinese cuisine can be said to be an open system. As shown in (Fig. 1), as far as regional exchange is concerned, the effect of West Asia meant that the east–west axis was the most significant from ancient times up until the Tang dynasty, after which the north–south axis overtook it in prominence.[4] One of the major themes running throughout Chinese history is the southward movement of the Han people as they were pursued by northern ethnic groups, and this movement of people has had a visible effect on culinary culture. However, that effect was not a one-way route from north to south, but one that traveled in both directions. During the Ming dynasty, China was unified under the southerners who held onto traditional Chinese culture even under the Yuan dynasty. Unsurprisingly this led to new ingredients and cooking methods (noodles, stir-fry, and sticky rice, developed in Jiangnan) being brought to the north. Elaborate etiquette for feasts, as well as eating noodles and rice with chopsticks, was both southern practices. The *Manhan Quanxi*, literally Manchu Han Imperial Feast, which occurred during the Qing dynasty can be considered the ultimate fusion of northern and southern ingredients and techniques.

The differences between north and south continue to this day; the north favors wheat (in *mantou* buns and *bing* pancakes) and mutton, while the south prefers fish and pork, with rice as its staple. Small wonder then that Jiangnan is called "the land of fish and rice". This difference is reflected in its luxuries and drinks as well. People in the north like to drink *baijiu*, a distilled drink, and flower-scented teas, such as jasmine teas. Meanwhile, the perennial favorites in the south include *huangjiu* (Zhejiang), a brewed drink, as well as green tea (Zhejiang, Jiangsu), the half-fermented *oolong* tea (Fujian, Guangdong), and the fermented *pu'er* tea (Yunnan). Incidentally, this talk of the north–south exchange, as shown in (Fig. 2), refers only to the agricultural regions south of the Great Wall. Taking a broader view, we can see the pastoral areas north of the Wall were occupied for centuries by such peoples as the Xiongnu, the Xianbei, the Celestial Turks, the Mongolians, and the Manchurians, who lived there and threatened the agricultural regions of the Han on several occasions. The prevalence of mutton in northern China is much easier to understand in light of this.

[4] For more on the historical development of Chinese cuisine across north–south and east–west axes, please refer to the previous publications (Nishizawa 2004).

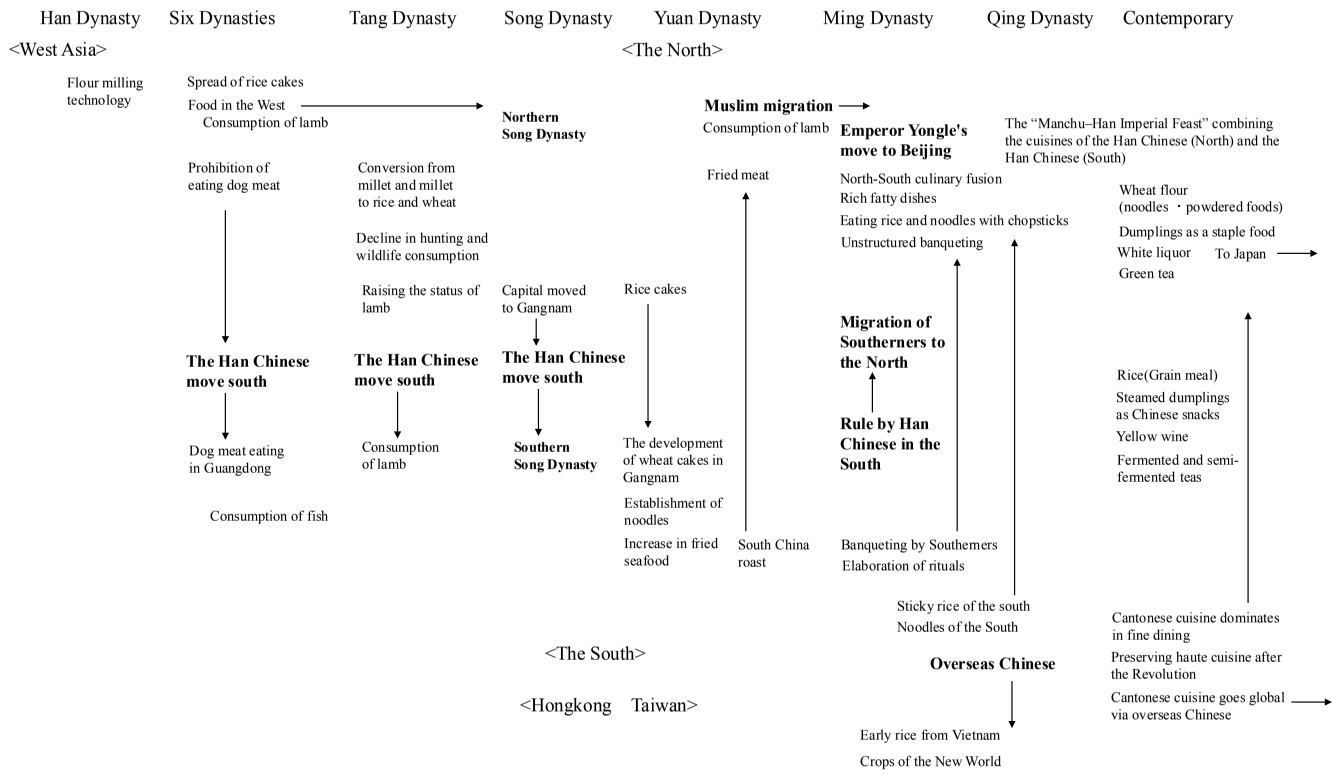

Fig. 1 Interaction between north and south in terms of ingredients, cooking methods, and diet

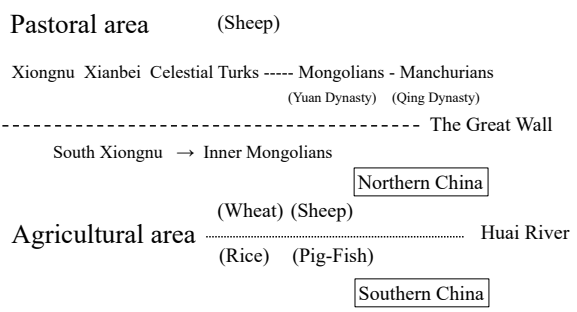

Fig. 2 Geographical division of subsistence and main foods in China (Based on Fei 1989)

The next issue is considering whether there is a true "center" of China. Recent archaeological results have overturned the old theory of a single Chinese origin and shown that Chinese culture has always had many sources. Fei Xiaotong's *Many Origins, One Whole: The Structure of the Chinese Ethnic Group* uses this as its premise to model how the "Chinese ethnic group" might have been formed (Fei 1989). This is also relevant in considering the regional cuisine that developed in various parts of China.

Where the archaeological world proposes the theory of multiple origins, the linguistic field has offered an intriguing model. Essentially, it is as shown in Table 1.

Mantaro Hashimoto argues in Geo-Linguistic Theory that the "Chinese language" did not exist from the start (Hashimoto 1978; 1980). Instead, he proposes a bold theory that it was formed from the long-term melding of two cores: Uralic and Altaic languages in the north and Thai in the south. In other words, the theory regards the Chinese language as a hybrid. This is one variation of the multiple origin theories, but easier to follow, as it places one core in the south and the other in the north, rather than in many different centers. Hashimoto's model also matches with the history of exchange between the pastoral region north of the Wall and the agricultural region south of it. This is an effective model for considering not only language, but also geographical traits and the process of formation for Chinese cuisine.

In examining the geohistorical developments in Chinese cuisine, we can see that, in addition to ecological conditions, multiple complex elements have led to its current form. These include whether the people of a region were the subjects or subjugators, changes in dynasties, movements of the capital and migration, developments of cities and transport of goods, and more.

Table 1 Comparison of Uralic-Altaic and Thai languages (Based on Hashimoto 1978)

	Uralic-Altaic languages	Thai languages
Syntactic structure	SOV	SVO
Negative prefixes	p	m
Name of the river	-he	-jiang

4 The Systemic Traits of Chinese Cuisine

Kwang-chih Chang raises the five following points when considering what it is that has defined Chinese food throughout its history: (1) ruled by resources (raw foods and dairy products did not claim primary positions); (2) the parallel relation of grain (staple diet) and *cai* (subsidiary articles of diet); (3) flexibility and adaptability (as seen in the dishes themselves, the Chinese people who create them, the knowledge of food demonstrated in texts such as the Compendium of Materia Medica, and the wealth of preserved foods); (4) the perception of food (food therapy, yin and yang philosophy); and (5) the importance of food in Chinese culture (ancient traditions, the importance of food and drink in the palace and in various ceremonies).[5]

As mentioned previously, the Chinese food we know today was formed after the Tang and Song dynasties, but the parallel relationship of grain and *cai* is one that has existed since ancient times. In addition to Chang's five points, I would like to summarize some of the traits of modern Chinese food in comparison to Japanese food. The greatest trait is that the *cai* of Chinese food (which can be defined as side dishes) mixes multiple flavors and ingredients as its basis, such as meat, fish, and vegetables. The flavorings and spices are also more varied than in Japanese cuisine, with a prevalence of lard and vegetable oil. Chicken bones and other animal sources are preferred for deriving umami, and unlike Japan, kelp and katsuobushi (also known as bonito flakes) are not used to create stock. There are infinite combinations of ingredients, which is perhaps why so many Chinese dishes exist. This is in contrast to Japanese cuisine, which seeks to maximize the flavor of each ingredient by presenting it individually. The second trait is that whether it be water, egg, fish, or vegetables, nothing is ever consumed in an uncooked state. This is because of concerns over water quality and parasites. However, in the case of raw fish, there is an exception to this, as seen in the yusheng of the Guangdong Province.[6] The Japanese preference for raw food comes back to the previous point; the emphasis is on extracting as much of the ingredient's inherent flavor as possible. Except for the period during the Tang dynasty, Chinese people did not traditionally eat dairy products such as butter and cheese. The third point is a preference for warm, cooked meals. From the boxed meals served in trains to the tea, everything is served hot. The fourth is a strong preference for meat. In Chinese, meat dishes are termed *huncai*, while vegetable dishes are referred to as *sucai*. With regard to animal proteins, there are historical and geographical differences, but while there is a preference for mutton in the north, overall China has such a strong tendency toward eating pork that the Chinese character for "meat" is synonymous with "pork". There remains a fondness for game meat too. When making offerings to the gods, Japanese people traditionally used grains and seafood, while Chinese people offered animal meat. The Japanese consume large amounts of meat today, but historically, there was a strong preference for seafood and very little meat was consumed by comparison with China. Fish is

[5] Introduction in Chang (1977).

[6] For more on raw food in China, please refer to the previous publications (Nishizawa 2013).

eaten in China as well, but this is predominantly freshwater fish, apart from in coastal regions of the country.

The above are the historical trends and features of Chinese cuisine. This should not be taken as an itemization of "ethnic foods", but rather as a general representation of one way of eating. In other words, this is the basic concept and "grammar" of Chinese food.

5 The Formation of Regional Foods

To create a national cuisine, there must first be well-defined local cuisine. Given China's multi-ethnic nature, in addition to regional differences, it is also important to consider the effects of different religions and the distinction between the Han Chinese and ethnic minorities (such as the Manchu Han Imperial Feast during the Qing dynasty). We know that the Buddhist *sucai* cuisine (*shojin ryori* being the Japanese term) and Islamic *qingzhencai* cuisine (halal foods) have existed for a long time independently of regional distinctions.

The publication of cookbooks is one way by which culinary awareness can be measured. The oldest existing Chinese culinary text is *Qimin Yaoshu*, published in the sixth-century Northern Wei Empire (Tanaka et al. 1997). This is technically an agricultural text, but contains writings relating to cooking.[7] However, this is the cuisine of the Shandong Province, and by no means "Chinese cuisine". Even without reaching for the multiple-origins theory of Chinese culture, it goes without saying that in a vast nation, there will inevitably be many regional variations in food.

Awareness and a clear definition of these regional cuisines are thought to have emerged after the Song dynasty, when cities developed, and the movement of people and goods became more common. In other words, it might be supposed that capital cities like Bianliang and Lin'an made shops to provide local dishes to visitors from other provinces. *Dongjing Meng Hua Lu,* or *The Eastern Capital: A Dream of Splendor,* which is a memoir of Bianliang, the capital of the northern Song dynasty, lists shops selling Sichuan and Jiangnan-style food (Meng 1147). This process is much the same as that of the emergence of ethnic food stores overseas. When considering China's regional foods, one other reason to focus in particular on the Song and post-Song period is that Chinese cuisine and cooking methods changed dramatically during the Tang and Song dynasties; a line can be traced back to that period from today's regional dishes.

As for the flavor of these regional cuisines, there is a phrase that can be roughly translated as "sour in the east, spicy in the west, sweet in the south and salty in the north", but depending on which researcher you talk to, there are numerous other classifications. For example, as shown in Fig. 3, there are the four great traditions, which refer to Shandong cuisine from the lower Yellow River, the Sichuan cuisine

[7] The author has a previous publication (Nishizawa 1990) and a joint translation (1997) on *Qimin Yaoshu.*

Fig. 3 The four and eight great traditions in Chinese cuisine

of the upper Yangtze, Huaiyang cuisine of the lower Yangtze, and Cantonese cuisine from the Pearl River area. However, some add the central Yangtze's Hunan, as well as the cuisines of Fujian, Anhui and Zhejiang to create the eight great traditions. The Beijing and Shanghai styles familiar in Japan are not included, but from a historical perspective, there is a basis for the four or eight great traditions. Regional cuisine is historically formed, so just changing the time period in question can introduce large differences.

Go back a few centuries, for instance, and Shanghai is just a river delta of the Yangtze. Not only does Shanghai cuisine not exist, but neither does the city of Shanghai as we know it. Contemporary Shanghai cuisine can be said to be formed on a base of Zhejiang and Huaiyang cuisine. Meanwhile, Beijing cuisine is not included because today's Beijing cuisine is based on Shandong cooking, together with the traditions of court cuisine, and regional influences introduced by various governors. For example, the famous "Peking duck", or *Beijing kaoya*, was probably brought from *Jinling* kaoya when Emperor Yongle moved the capital. Since Beijing is in the north, its cuisine is also heavily influenced by Mongolian foods, including mutton, as exemplified by *shuan yangrou*, which is also known as instant-boiled mutton.

Incidentally, the most intriguing aspect commonly seen with the four and eight great traditions is the fact that regional foods were not formed on a provincial level, but strictly in cities. The term Jiangsu cuisine might not be inaccurate per se, but it is more precise to say its base was formed in Huai'an and Yangzhou.

Nanjing, which unified these, is also a major city. Yuan Mei, a writer from the Qing dynasty, penned the *Suiyuan Shidan* (1792), but as he was from Hangzhou, his cooking is said to have been heavily influenced by Hangzhou cooking (Yuan

1980). Anhui cuisine, too, is something that developed in the Huizhou District, and by no means the entire Anhui Province. From this point of view, Shandong cooking can be seen to have developed in Jinan and Qufu, Sichuan cooking in Chengdu, Guangdong cuisine in Gunangzhou, and so on. The cities were the platforms for these developments. From this, we can be certain that a more refined regional cuisine was developed in prosperous cities, and it can be safely said that defined outlines for regional cuisine emerged from the Song dynasty onward.

The reason the notion of the eight great traditions makes geohistorical sense is that it also matches quite neatly with the distribution of dialects. In Chinese linguistics, the Chinese language is broken up into seven major dialects, as shown in Fig. 4. They are Northern (Mandarin), Southwestern (Sichuan), Xiang (Hunan), Gan (Jiangxi), Wu (lower Yangtze regions), Min (Fujian), and Yue (Guangdong). Considering that changes in language create changes in culture, it should come as no surprise that there is a certain degree of correlation between regional cuisine and the distribution of dialects. The difference in the seven great dialects and the eight great traditions is that Shandong, Jiangsu, and Anhui are all part of the northern dialect, but possess unique cooking forms, while Jiangxi has its own dialect but not its own unique form of cooking.

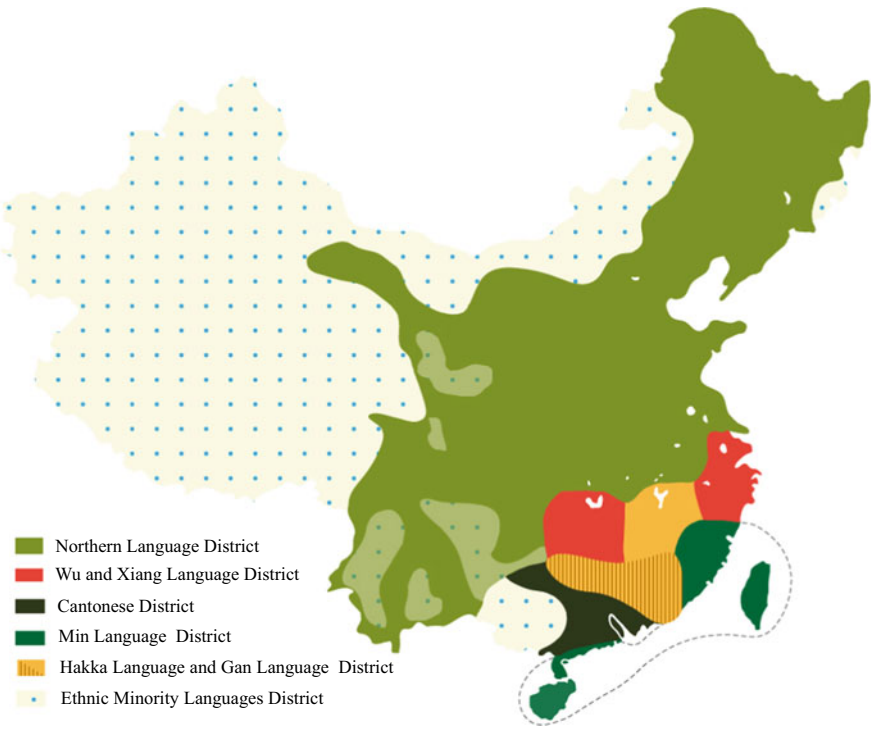

Fig. 4 Major dialects in China (Based on Hashimoto 1980)

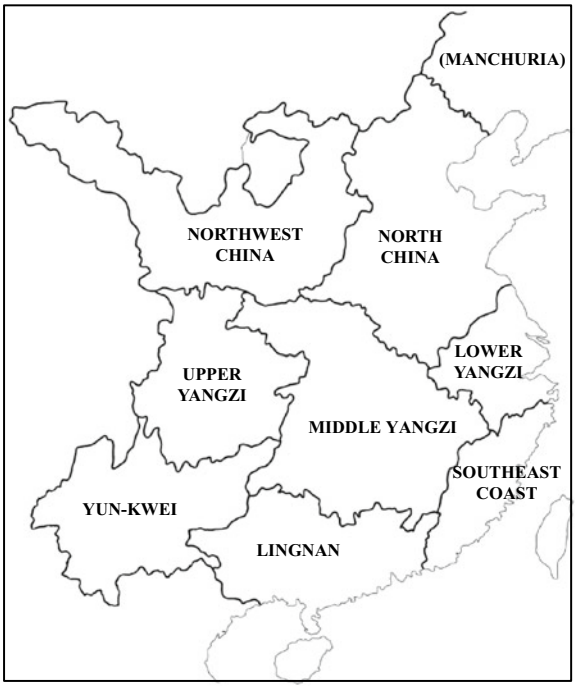

Fig. 5 Macro regions of agrarian China in relation to major rivers (Based on Skinner 1977)

In addition, the regions of the eight great traditions, as indicated in Fig. 5, correspond to the macro regions in relation to major rivers proposed by George William Skinner. Skinner proposed that traditional China was made up of eight regions that constituted distinct, independent economic zones. They are: (1) Northern China, (2) Northwest China, (3) Yunnan-Guizhou, (4) Upper Yangtze (Sichuan), (5) Middle Yangtze (Hunan-Hubei), (6) Lower Yangtze (Jiangsu-Zhejiang), (7) Fujian, and (8) Guangdong. Of these, the only ones that don't correspond to a regional cooking style are Northwest China and Yunnan-Guizhou, making them the only independent economic zones without their own unique forms of cooking. However, Yunnan had many Sichuan immigrants from the Ming and Qing dynasties onward, and the frequent use of chili in Yunnan cooking is similar to Sichuan cuisine.

When you compare menus from restaurants in different regions you find that they don't offer completely different foods; every region has its own dishes, but regardless of whether you go to a Sichuan or Guangdong restaurant, about one-third of the menu will be the typical, nationwide popular staples. For example, *mapodoufu* will appear in non-Sichuan restaurants, and *Beijing kaoya* can be found outside of Beijing restaurants.

In other words, the barometer of regional cooking can be said to be how many non-nationwide dishes it offers.

One thing to be cautious about here is the relationship between restaurant food and home cooking. When speaking of Chinese cuisine, the inevitable tendency is to

think of restaurant food, but it should not be assumed that these refined dishes are what is eaten every day around the table in people's homes. We do not have accurate data on how much regional difference there is at a household level. We know that classic items from regional cuisines exist, and we can find out what ingredients and seasonings are commonly used in a region, but understanding differences in cooking methods presents an altogether different challenge.

There is no doubt that the Japanese-held image of Chinese food is heavily biased toward restaurant food. For example, according to a Chinese person from Zhejiang, eastern Zhejiang home cooking uses simple seasonings and never mixes multiple ingredients. Zhou Zuoren, a Shaoxing native, also wrote that most Chinese students in Japan cannot adapt to bland and plain Japanese food, but the cooking he grew up on was similar, so he had no difficulties.[8] In recent years, the Japanese brand Gyoza no Ohsho withdrew from the Chinese market. This was said to be because Chinese people did not take to the greasy stir-fries which the Japanese had presumed to be typical Chinese dishes.

6 The Growth of Self-Awareness of Chinese Food

So far we have examined Chinese food in terms of geohistory, but how did Chinese food form as a national cuisine, and why? As far as I am aware, there is no detailed research on this process. Thus, I would like to propose my own theory. If we take the establishment of a nation state as the requirement for the creation of a national cuisine, then this must surely have happened from the end of the Qing dynasty and beginning of the Republic of China (ROC). Under the various dynasties prior to this, all manner of regional cuisines had existed. However, while a unified "Chinese cuisine" may have existed in reality, there was no such perception of it. After all, the Manchu Han Imperial Feast held by the Qing, a dynasty which originated in Manchuria, brought together the cooking of the Manchu and Han people; there were ethnic divisions, but no national consciousness.

Now, as a reference point, I would like to examine a linguistic issue. Setting an official national language is one of the first jobs of a nation state. The Qing dynasty used Mandarin as the shared language of officials who passed imperial examinations. It was quite literally the language spoken by mandarin bureaucrats. If you learned this language, you would be able to make yourself understood wherever you went or wherever you were from. The same was true for foreigners. Christian missionaries who entered late Qing China began by proselytizing to the coastal areas, but had to learn Mandarin as well as multiple dialects, such as Yue and Wu Chinese. However, as they made their way inland, they discovered that Mandarin allowed them to speak to all of China.[9] Mandarin was in effect the common language, but it was not officially the state language of the people. The designation of an official national language

[8] Refer to Zhou Zuoren (2002).

[9] Regarding this point, please refer to two of the previous publications (Nishizawa 2011b, 2014).

only came about with the establishment of the ROC. This was set based on northern Mandarin, and the regional dialects remained in existence. After the foundation of the People's Republic of China, *Guoyu*, namely, the shared national language written using *Zhuyin* phonetic symbols, was replaced by *Putonghua*, which uses *Pinyin*. This has remained the case to the present day. (Note that *Guoyu* is still used in Taiwan and among Chinese expatriates.) Used in formal education and media, *Putonghua* is rather more prevalent than *Guoyu*, but given their long tradition and vast size of the country, regional dialects have not entirely disappeared. The rich variety of cultures in China can be closely tied to its variety of languages, and this is true of its food as well. One point we must take note of is that, while dialects may be mutually unintelligible, the written form of Chinese averts this issue; the characters may be spoken differently depending on the dialect, but the meaning they represent is identical. This can be seen as a unique mechanism that allows China's diversity and unity to exist side by side.

The formation of a "national cuisine" can be thought to have several causes. As far as internal causes go, there may be intentional standardization as a result of unifying the nation (for instance, publication of cookbooks, nationwide cooking classes, and identical school meals). Externally, there is the influence of different cooking methods from foreign countries. One sign of the formation of a "national cuisine" in China is said to be the creation and spread of the term "Chinese food" itself.

In China, the formation of the ROC puts the country on the road to nation state consciousness. However, given the vast geographical expanse, strong regional identities, and the continuing wars and revolutions after the nation's formation, it can be assumed there was little internal impetus for forming a "national cuisine". As for the unifying power of court or palace cooking, it is believed that this had very little influence. Although the Manchu Han Imperial Feast existed, it cannot be thought to have much connection to the formation of a "national cuisine". If anything, the ROC defeated the Qing, which it considered a foreign ruling power, and denied it any place in the new regime at all. The other sign of the formation of a "national cuisine" is the publication of cookbooks. There is research of "Sino cookery" recipe books published in Japan, but the next challenge should be research of such books published in China during the period of the Republic.

In China, meeting with foreign cultures can be thought to have been a major force in forming self-awareness and shaping the idea of a national cuisine. Let's first examine the historical process by which Chinese people became aware of their own cooking.

This self-awareness is typically thought to have derived from contact with foreign cultures. The same phenomenon can be observed with "Tang sweets" during the Japanese medieval period and the "southern barbarian sweets" of the Edo era, as well as with "Western cookery" and "Sino cookery" which emerged from the Meiji era onward; these gave rise to the internal term and concept of "Japanese cooking". This created the notion of "Washoku", or Japanese food, as opposed

to "Youshoku", or Western food, which in turn led to the further distinctions of "Japanese/Western/Chinese" food.[10]

China is a continental nation, so awareness of foreign peoples had existed since ancient times. They were known by the Chinese as the Dongyi, Nanman, Xirong, and Beidi (the barbarians of the east, south, west, and north, respectively). The differentiation can be seen in food as well. The *Book of Rites* notes that some of the Xirong and Beidi do not eat grains, while Dongyi and Nanman do not eat cooked food. However, it is important to note that defining these peoples as "others" was a way of reaffirming Chinese superiority. Thus, it is thought that by noting one group's preference for eating uncooked food, the intention was to characterize those people as primitive. The *Records of the Three Kingdoms* writes that "the land of Wo (Japanese) is warm, and they eat raw vegetables in both summer and winter". It goes on to note that among Wo, food is eaten with one's bare hands, suggesting that the writer's intention was to show China in a favorable light (in a cultured nation like China, no one would ever eat vegetables raw). Meanwhile, the word "hu", as seen in the words for black pepper, sitting cross-legged, and flat, wheat-based bread with sesame and walnut, is widely thought to refer to things of western Asian origin, with an implied sense of admiration. It might be used with similar intent to the Japanese term "*karamono*" (literally "things of the Tang").

Incidentally, the Guangdong dialect intriguingly uses the Chinese character "Tang" to denote "China" the country. The Chinese are the "Tang people", a China-town would be a "Tang people's street", and Chinese food is *Tangcai* or "Tang cuisine". This is a reflection of the awe the Tang dynasty inspired and is similar to the way that the people of the Han dynasty were referred to as the Han people, and the written characters they used were called *Hanzi*. This is unique to the Guangdong people, who took pride in their historical migration from the central plains to the south. Thus, Chinese cuisine is not referred to as *Tangcai* in standard Chinese. If heard by people unfamiliar with Guangdong or other southern dialects, they might imagine specific Tang era Chinese dishes.

This contrast with foreign peoples has been ongoing since ancient times, but the "Western shock" experienced at the end of the Qing dynasty was particularly impactful, as it was the first time China confronted a culture that was in a relatively superior position. With regard to cooking, in the northeast, the meeting with Russian cuisine might have easily given rise to a concept of "Chinese food", while the same may also have happened in port cities such as Shanghai or Guangdong when they encountered Western food.

[10] There is a great deal of prior research on the history of Japanese cuisine, including "Nihon Ryori" and "Washoku" as concepts and terms. Refer to publications by Shoko Higashiyotsuyanagi (2005, 2008, 2015), and by co-authors Katarzyna J. Cwiertka and Miho Yasuhara (2016), etc. In addition, Higashiyotsuyanagi's research is collected as a doctoral dissertation in *Katei Seikatsu to Nashonaru Kuijīn no Sōshutsu - Kindai Nihon ni Okeru Kindaisei to Dentōsei*, International Christian University, 2018 (only available in Japanese).

7 The Birth of *Tangcai*, *Zhongguocai*, *Huacai*, and *Zhongcan*

Some collective terms for Chinese food are *Tangcai*, *Zhongguocai*, *Huacai*, and *Zhongcan*. How did they come to be used? As ever, our first sources are cookbooks, but it is difficult to browse late Qing/early ROC cooking publications in Japan. Our next source would be magazines and newspapers, but the time required to analyze these is immense. Fortunately, these texts are beginning to be compiled into databases. Thus, we will examine issues of the daily Shanghai publication, *Shen Bao* (1872–1949), from the late Qing to early ROC period. Using this, we search for the phrases *Tangcai*, *Zhongguocai*, *Huacai*, and *Zhongcan*, as well as the collective terms for foreign foods: *Fancai*, *waiguocai*, *Xicai*, and *Xican*.

Then ordering these terms for Chinese food by order of earliest appearance, we find *Tangcai* (1877), *Zhongguocai* (1884), *Huacai* (1884), and *Zhongcan* (1912). When the same method is applied to Western foods, we find *Fancai* (1873), *Waiguocai* (1875), *Xicai* (1879), *Yangfan* (1886), and *Xican* (1901).[11]

Within *Shen Bao* specifically, the term *Fancai* was the first to be used as a collective term for foreign foods (1873), with *Waiguocai* appearing 2 years later, and then in 1877—a further 2 years later—we first see *Tangcai* as a collective term for Chinese food. Later, in 1884, we see *Zhongguocai* and *Huacai*. *Xican* as a collective term used specifically for Western food came quite a bit later (1901), while *Zhongcan* as a term for Chinese food came later still, emerging in 1912 during the era of the Republic. This is because the original meaning of *Zhongcan* was "lunch", and it probably took some time for the word to become redefined. In any case, we can see the close relations of the terms *Tangcai*, *Zhongguocai*, *Huacai*, and *Zhongcan* with *Fancai*, *Waiguocai*, *Xicai*, and *Xican*. It seems natural to understand these terms as being created in contrast to one another. This is a phenomenon that closely matches the terms Western and Japanese cooking in Japan, or *Youshoku* and *Washoku*. Additionally, *Yangfan* was used specifically with the characters for "West" and "shop" to indicate a restaurant serving western food. After this, it fell out of use.

It would also be prudent at this point to sort the use of these phrases by frequency. When ordered by frequency of appearance, *Zhongcan* has the most with 3,629 counts, but the majority of those indicate lunch, since its use to denote Chinese food only began in 1912. Determining the exact number of cases where the term is used to signify Chinese food would require painstakingly sorting through every case, but from the fact that the phrase *Zhongcan* is only used in combination with *Xican* 36 times, we can assume that the number is quite low. *Zhongguocai* (including those with the character for "building" to indicate a restaurant) appears 341 times, while *Huacai* (as part of *Zhonghuacai*) appears 306 times. *Tangcai* used to mean Chinese food only appears twice. Using this method, we see that both *Zhongguocai* and *Huacai* have counts of over 300, so we can assume they were the two most common phrases.

[11] For further analysis, please refer to the previous publication (Nishizawa 2019a, b).

At first, I believed that of these, *Tangcai* was the oldest and that the term evolved from there into *Zhongguocai* and *Huacai*. This is because in Guangdong, *Tangcai* is used as a term for Chinese food to this day. In the late Qing period, the first to leave overseas were people who spoke the Guangdong dialect. I thought they might have interacted with foreign food and described their own cuisine as *Tangcai* in contrast to it. However, a quick inspection of *Shen Bao* proved this theory quite wrong. *Tangcai* is certainly the oldest phrase, but only as with *Tangfancai*, contrasting it with *Fancai*. It is by no means something first used by Guangdong expatriates.

Notably, the point where *Tangcai* first came to be used as a collective term was in 1879 before the terms *Zhongguocai* and *Huacai* had emerged. This was around the time when the Manchu Han Imperial Feast and *Jingsudacai* (Nanjing and Jiangsu cuisine) occurred. In Shanghai at the time, these might have been thought of as the two things that could stand against *Waiguocai*. Incidentally, in *Shen Bao*, the first regional cuisine to be mentioned was *Guangdongcai* (in the context of a restaurant) in 1885.

Three years later, in 1888, we see references to *Yuecai* (Cantonese), *Sucai* (Jiangsu), *Jingcai* (Beijing), and *Zhecai* (Zhejiang) cuisine. Looking at it this way, aside from the nearby *Zhecai* and *Sucai*, we can see that in Shanghai, Guangdong, and Beijing cooking were considered to be on a different level at that time. The first mention of Sichuan cuisine, or *Chuancai*, is much later in 1915, while local *Ningbcai* and *Benbangcai* only emerged in 1924.

Going by *Yingfachaocai*, which was first printed 1888, we can see that Fancai and waiguocai referred specifically to *French* and English cuisine. This is no great surprise considering that the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842 saw the English Concession (later International Settlement) and French Concession opened in Shanghai. *Fagucai* (French food) was given its first individual mention in 1914, while *Eguocai* (Russian food, mentioned here as *Eguocaiguan*, indicating a restaurant) was first used in 1926.

Putting aside the Manchu Han Imperial Feast and *Jingsucai*, we can conclude that Guangdong cooking occupies a special position, and this is equally true of Chinese restaurants abroad—whether in Europe or the US. This relates to the fact that the mother language for many Chinese immigrants was the Guangdong dialect. In *Shen Bao*, it explains that many Chinese restaurants (*Zhongguocaiguan*) in France, Japan (Kobe, Osaka, the Kanda District of Tokyo), and the US (San Francisco, New York) are run by Guangdong natives, and writes about them in detail.

The term "Chinese food" written as *Zhngguoliaoli* originated in Japan, and only became frequently used in mainland China after the Chinese economic reform.

Originally, the word *liaoli* in Chinese only meant "to process" or "to organize", whereas "to cook" used the words *pengtiao* or *pengren*. Alternatively, cooking meat would be expressed as "*zuorou*". The noun for "Chinese cuisine" would be *Zhongguocai*. Japanese food, likewise, is known as *Ribencai*. The question then is why this phrase came into use. It might be because signs for Japanese restaurants in China advertised themselves as *Ribenliaoli* (intending to mean "Japanese food"). The term *Ribenliaoli* may then have become popular among Chinese people, particularly younger people, because of its exotic sound.

Alternatively, it might be due to influence from Taiwan, where the term *liaoli* was used in the same way as in Japan; indeed, this is thought to be due to Japanese influence on Taiwan.

Now the term *Ribenliaoli* has become completely naturalized, which may be why similar characters are used for Chinese cooking. The site Baidu Baike also has an article for *Zhongguoliaoli*.

On the other hand, there is also one for *Zhongguocai*, and the contents are quite similar. However, when referring to regional Chinese cuisine, *cai* is used rather than *liaoli*. Guangdong cooking is referred to as *Yuecai*, and Sichuan cooking as Chuancai, while Muslim food in China is called *Qingzhencai*, rather than *Qingzhenliaoli*. Similarly, home cooking is referred to as *Jiachangcai*, not *Jiachangliaoli*. In light of this, it seems the term *Zhongguoliaoli* is largely used to compare and contrast with foreign cuisine.

Similarly, the term *chukaryori* in Japanese (*Zhonghualiaoli*, if pronounced in Chinese) is used only in Japan and South Korea, not in mainland China. Interestingly, on Baidu Baike it explains that *Zhongguocai* is also termed *Zhonghualiaoli* in Japan and South Korea. The site also has an entry for this term, suggesting it may spread in China in the future. Surprisingly, *Shen Bao* also mentions *Zhongguoliaoli* (first entry in 1911) and *Zhonghualiaoli* (first entry in 1931). However, these are articles relating to restaurants in the Korean Peninsula and Japan, not in mainland China.

8 Chinese Food as National Cuisine

The reality is that before China became a modern nation, Chinese cooking had already become quite systematized on a regional level. Therefore, it was only a matter of acknowledging the reality of the situation by giving it a collective name. There may not have been a need for any special changes to ingredients or methods to create "Chinese cuisine". Or to put it another way, the current "Chinese cuisine" may still only be a collective term for the various regional cuisines. Regional foods exist in Japan too (often thought of as hometown cooking), but there is no classification system like the four or eight great traditions.

This is due in part to the size of the country. It may be difficult—unfeasible even—to have such contrasting dishes as the heavily nomad-influenced mutton dishes of the north, the fish dishes of Jiangnan, the curry powder of Guangdong, and the fruitier foods of the south all bundled into one category as "Chinese cuisine".

Since the economic reform, foreign restaurants are becoming more common in the great coastal cities of China, but they are not as common as in Japan, where one might be found on almost every street.

Certainly, it has not reached the same level as Japan in home meals, where Japanese food, Western food, Chinese food, and curry might be eaten on rotation. This is true for eating out as well. When eating out in Japan, you would first consider if you want Japanese, Western, Chinese, or ethnic food. Should you pick Japanese food, you would then narrow it down to sushi, or soba, or something else.

In China these kinds of distinction are not used as much. You would start from deciding between a Guangdong restaurant, or seafood, or Sichuan food, and so on. In other words, in Japan people think of "Japanese food" simply as one food group in contrast to foreign foods. This is not how *Zhongguocai* is thought of in China. Put another way, Japanese food has far clearer definitions in Japan, owing to the fact that it is a smaller country with a more homogenous population, compared to the nebulous *Zhongguocai*.

Baidu Baike's entry for *Zhongguoliaoli* lists five traits: color, scent, taste, intent, and shape. This is so narrow that it does not really reveal much of the actual traits of Chinese food at all. Meanwhile, the article for *Zhonghualiaoli* goes into more detail. The clever mixing of various ingredients is one of the traits given (the use of ingredients unique to China creates the distinct flavor of Chinese dishes), the flexible welcoming of ingredients from abroad another (international trade brought wheat and sheep from West Asia in the BC era, fruit and vegetables from Central Asia in the Han and Tang eras, and peanuts and sweet potatoes in the Ming era). In contrast, it notes that dairy products have yet to earn a strong position in Chinese cooking. These are all traits of Chinese cuisine, but there is more to it. It may be possible that Chinese people themselves do not completely grasp what makes Chinese food distinct, as some of it is only visible when looking in from the outside.

When considered this way, the very idea of a national cuisine may need a different set of standards for a continental nation. The US is another continental country whose national cuisine is no more than a collection of regional dishes, but which still earns the right to be called "American cuisine". The distinction, however, is that unlike the US, China has close ties between dialects and regional cultures. The US, owing to mass immigration over a short period in relatively recent history, lacks dialects. There are distinctions in where the immigrants originally came from (for example, Francophones in New Orleans), but the regional differences are greater. In this case, it may be easier to take a collective view of the US. By contrast, in China, it can be argued that the end of regional dialects was the beginning of the unification of Chinese cooking.

Furthermore, the recognition of Chinese cooking as a national cuisine is something that has lasted over time, and is not just unique to the Republic period. After the Chinese Communist Revolution, however, the political actions culminating in the Cultural Revolution left little time for thinking about the national cuisine. Once China opened up and became more economically prosperous, Chinese cooking began to attract attention again, becoming the subject of research. This began at first as an attempt to understand and document the full extent of Chinese cuisine. The *Zhongguocaipu* and *Zhongguoxiaochi,* published in the 1980*s* and later, were efforts to document each region's recipes. The magazines *Zhongguo Shpin* and *Zhongguo Pengren* followed. In Japan, Osamu Shinoda and Seiichi Tanaka edited and published a collection of existing historical Chinese recipes entitled *Chugoku Shokkei Sosho* in 1972. This publication by Japanese researchers seems to have sent shockwaves through China, and similar projects began there from the 1980s onward, leading to the publication of *Zhongguo Pengren Gujicong Kan*, complete with translations into

modern day Chinese. Publications from numerous researchers followed in the wake of this and new works continue to be published to this day.

9 New Movements in Chinese Cuisine

Finally, I would like to look at new developments in Chinese cuisine.[12] Cooking changes with the times, but post-reform China has changed at a particularly dizzying rate, and so too has its food. This cannot be ignored when considering Chinese food as a national cuisine. The first change is that foreign restaurants have spread in coastal cities and the Chinese people's tastes have changed with this. US-style fast food eateries such as hamburger shops and steak restaurants have increased consumption of beef, while pizza shops and the like have created a taste for cheese among the younger generations. Additionally, there is now much less resistance to eating raw vegetables, such as in Western-style salads. These have been popular in Hong Kong for some time now, so could be said to have simply spread from there to the mainland.

Japanese restaurants have grown in number as well, as the Chinese have become less resistant to the idea of eating raw fish in sushi and sashimi, and such foods have also become more common in supermarkets. Once again, these kinds of foods have been eaten in Hong Kong and Taiwan from some time ago, so there is no particular reason why Chinese people would not be able to consume these dishes safely, as long as the necessary level of hygiene is maintained. While not necessarily served in Japanese restaurants, the influence of Japanese food can be seen in the consumption of sashimi (*shengyupian* in Chinese).

Guangdong Province originally had *shengyu*, or raw fish dishes, and these may have undergone a revival due to the popularity of Japanese sashimi. I had an opportunity to eat this dish in Ha'erbin, and what I received was thin slices of freshwater fish and cucumber, which was exactly a *kuai* dish. To remove the smell of the fish, you dip it in a sauce made from dissolving Japanese wasabi in water. There are also ramen restaurants that call themselves "Japanese style ramen". However, they use various herbs and spices for seasoning, making them Chinese in this respect. The rapid spread of *bianlidian*, or convenience stores, is thought to be a factor in this spread as well. In particular, Japanese and Taiwanese chain stores such as Lawson and Family Mart offer rice balls, sushi rolls, oden stew, and sandwiches, just like in Japan. They also sell Japan's boxed bento meals (termed *biandang* in China). The spread of convenience stores has replaced the traditional warm tea with cold water in PET bottles. Sandwiches, rice balls, and other cold foods no longer meet as much resistance as they once used to. Such changes in eating habits are expected to spread inland to regional cities as well.

[12] For new developments in Chinese cuisine, please refer to some of the previous publications (Nishizawa 2005; 2006; 2009a, b).

The second change is that in restaurants—particularly the higher end ones—Guangdong cooking (specifically Guangdong cooking in a more refined Hong Kong style) is beginning to dominate across the whole of China.

Such movements have existed to limited degrees since before the reforms. The fad for prefixing dishes with *Gangshi* showing the Hong Kong style) and the *Yamcha* style of early morning breakfasts are two examples of such movements. Since the handover of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong style has become fashionable and spread to large cities such as Shanghai and Beijing. Even in vocabulary, *dishi* (taxi), *maidan* (a phrase used when asking for the check; *jiezhang* in standard Chinese), and other Guangdong terms have spread. However, local traditional foods have not been replaced by the Hong Kong style. That said, in recent years, more expensive restaurants have invited Hong Kong chefs in, suggesting that Hong Kong cooking is on the verge of replacing regional cooking. Hong Kong food certainly tastes good and has an air of refinement to it. These expensive restaurants are often used for client dinners and business entertainment, suggesting that the fashionable Hong Kong meals are preferred to local food. In addition, Chaozhou dishes, which constitute one branch of Guangdong cooking, have brought a wave of seafood restaurants to coastal cities. This may also bring about a shift from the previous preference for freshwater fish to saltwater fish. On one level it is something of a shame to see local flavors disappearing (at least from restaurants) and the increasing homogenization of China. This is far from true, however, in the case of Chengdu in Sichuan Province. Sichuan has always felt a strong resistance to Beijing and Shanghai, and so they may yet stop the "invasion" of Hong Kong cooking. Conversely, Sichuan cooking is spreading throughout China, but as food for ordinary people, rather than fashionable, high-end dining.

It will be interesting to see whether this is simply a temporary fad, or if Guangdong (Hong Kong) cooking will sweep through China to become one of its quintessential styles. A similar trend can be observed in Japan with Kyoto-style meals taking over high-class Japanese restaurants. If Guangdong cuisine continues to maintain its superior position, this will prove to be an especially important point in the long history of Chinese cuisine. Perhaps in reaction to this, and in opposition to the theory of the superiority of Guangdong cooking, there has been a movement to "re-evaluate" regional cooking in recent years. That said, these movements all relate to high-end restaurants in large cities, and do not have any particular bearing on the daily meals of ordinary people.

If Sichuan cuisine is staunchly opposed to Guangdong cuisine, this can be largely attributed to traditional "Sichuan nationalism". Even so, the geographical difference between inland and coastal areas is also significant. In the prosperous coastal regions, a new upper class has been born, with many parties and banquet dinners at high-end restaurants. The advance of Guangdong cooking is not only due to the geographical difference of coastal cities, but also to the success it has had in moving up the vertical hierarchy of social classes. Access to "foreign foods", largely represented by US fast food and Japanese food, is also limited to coastal cities.

Under socialist rule, the equality for all theoretically extended to food as well. Due to China's vast size, regional traditions remained intact. It was, essentially, a society that lived off the land and local production based on a sort of "slow food"

principle. Since the economic reform, however, the flow of people and goods has shrunk geographical differences while expanding economic ones. In particular, the large coastal cities have brought in foreign foods and made stark changes to the traditional tastes of Chinese people. Naturally, that effect will be felt in Chinese cuisine as well.

In this sense, Chinese cuisine might be currently undergoing another new development in its long history.

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